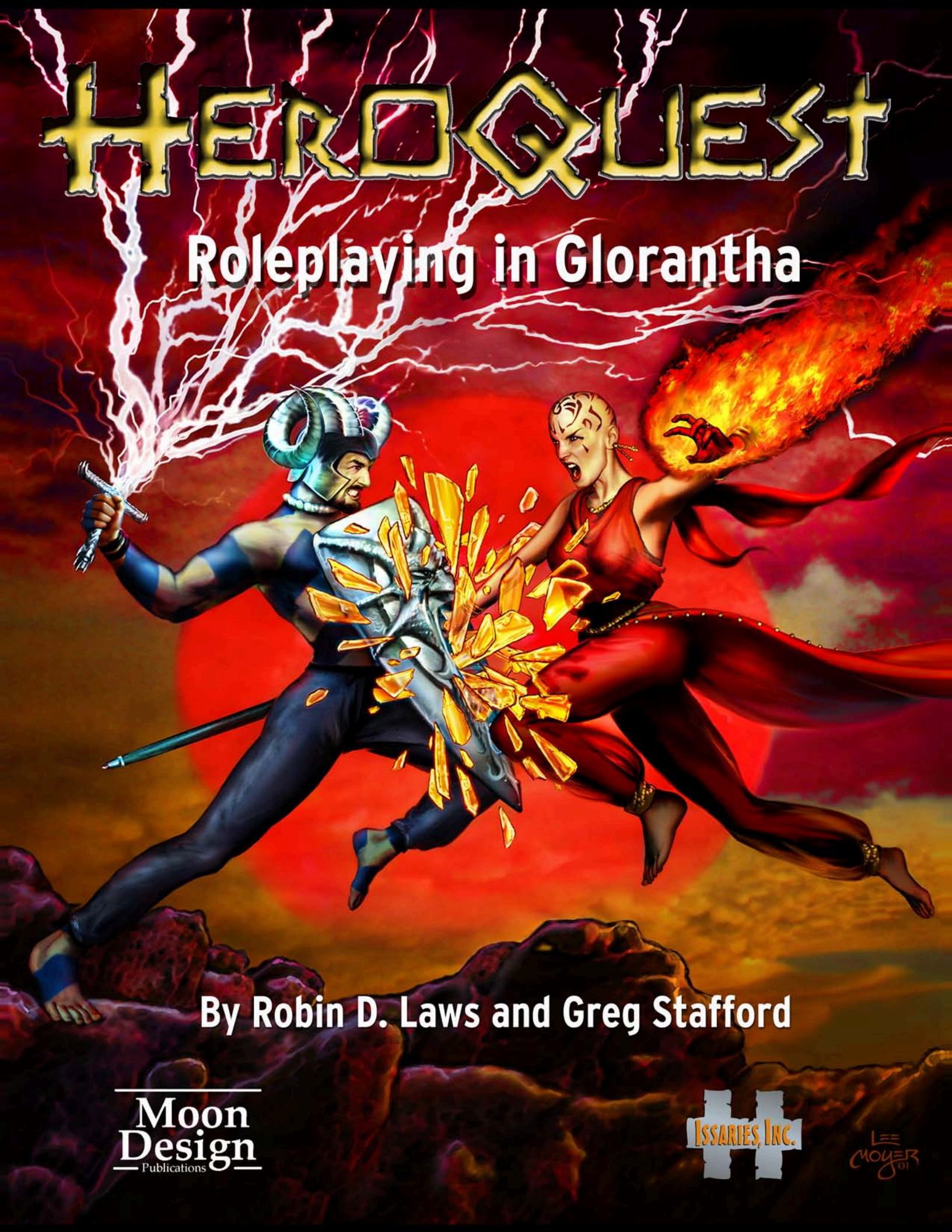


HEROQUEST

Roleplaying in Glorantha



By Robin D. Laws and Greg Stafford

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HEROQUEST

Roleplaying in Glorantha

*All you deities, spirits, and saints
that look upon humankind,
we ask you to look here upon us.
We stand upon the edge of war,
gazing into the abyss
and hearing the roar of annihilation.*



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GLORANTHA TRADING ASSOCIATION

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The publisher and authors give thanks to the members of the Glorantha Trading Association who have made this possible. Your contributions have made *HeroQuest* a reality and you have proven yourselves to be true members of the Glorantha Tribe. May the favor of all the gods, the luck of all the spirits, and the blessings of all the saints be upon you. Thank you, friends!



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Are you interested in learning more about the GTA?
Check out the web site at: <http://www.HeroQuest-rpg.com/gta>



CONTENTS

Forewords and Introduction	6
π Playing HeroQuest	9
Roleplaying in Glorantha	9
The First Rule: Play the Story, Not the Rules.....	10
The Hero Wars.....	11
Magical Landscapes	11
Our Story Begins (Example of Play)	12
Map of Glorantha and the Hero Wars.....	14
The Character Sheet	15
⌘ Heroes	17
Your Hero.....	17
Personal Information	17
Keywords	17
Character Creation Methods	19
Abilities and Ratings.....	19
Narrative Method	20
Sample Narrative Hero: Galan	23
List Method	24
Sample List Hero: Hazeel.....	25
Creating a Hero “As You Go”	26
Sample “As You Go” Hero: Jane	27
Abilities.....	28
Occupations.....	31
Map of Genertela and Homelands.....	36
Homelands.....	37
Homeland: Bison People.....	38
Homeland: Dara Happa	40
Homeland: Esrolia	42
Homeland: Esvular	44
Homeland: Grazer.....	46
Homeland: Heortling	48
Homeland: Puma People	50
Homeland: Seshnela.....	52
Homeland: Tarsh.....	54
Homeland: Teshnos.....	56
∞ Hero Improvements	58
Gaining Hero Points	58
Using Hero Points.....	58
Δ Core Rules	60
Contests	60
Resistance.....	61
Die Rolls: Success and Failure	61
Contests: Victory and Defeat	62
Contest Notation	63
Contest Sequences	63
Automatic Success	63
Simple Contest	64
Simple Contest Sequence.....	64
Extended Contest	66
Extended Contest Sequence	66
Advantage Points	67
Extended Contest Options	69
The Big Fight (Example of Play)	72
Contest Consequences	74
States of Health	74
Nonlethal Combat	76
Modifiers and Augmentation.....	76
Modifiers	76
Augmentation	79
Healing and Recovery.....	81
✱ Relationships	83
Personal Relationships.....	83
Followers	84
Supporting Characters	86
Community Relationships	87
Types of Communities	87
Community Requirements.....	88
Community Support.....	88
Requesting Community Support	89
Levels of Support	90
Guardians and Hero Bands.....	92
Guardians.....	92
Your Hero Band.....	95
℞ Basic Magic	97
Using Magic	97
Magical Abilities	97
Magical Contests	98
Resistance to Magic.....	98
Modifiers to Magic.....	100
The Killing Bone Ritual (Example of Play)	103
Common Magic	104
Common Religions	104
Specialized Religions	105
Membership	106
Concentrating Magic Use	108
Secrets	109
Sample Common Religions	111
✦ Theism	114
Pantheons	114
Deity Ranks.....	114
Worshippers.....	115
Communal Worshipper	115
Initiate.....	116
Devotee	118
Subcults and Daimones	120
Changing Cults.....	121
Sample Deities	122
The Divine Landscape	127
Temple Guardians	128
Landscape Daimones	129
The Divine Realms	130
✧ Animism	131
Traditions.....	131
Spirit Ranks.....	131
Practices	132



Worshippers.....	133	The Hero.....	195
Spiritist.....	133	Ritual Preparations.....	195
Practitioner.....	136	Community Support.....	195
Shaman.....	139	The Crossing.....	197
Leaving Practices and Traditions.....	141	Crossing Over.....	197
Sample Traditions and Practices.....	141	The Quest.....	198
Independent Practices.....	147	Opponents.....	199
The Spirit Landscape.....	148	Heroquest Moment.....	200
Medicine Bundles.....	148	Station Results.....	202
Sample Landscape Spirits.....	148	Heroquest Challenge.....	203
Sample Nature Spirits.....	150	The Climax.....	204
The Spirit World.....	151	The Return.....	204
Shamanic Circles.....	151	▽ Creatures.....	206
Spirit World Denizens.....	151	✧ Introduction to Glorantha.....	222
✠ Wizardry.....	153	Mythos and History.....	222
Churches.....	153	The Mortal World.....	224
Sainly Orders.....	155	Dragon Pass.....	226
Wizardry Schools.....	155	Map of Dragon Pass.....	227
Worshippers.....	156	‡ HeroQuest Adventures.....	231
Lay Member.....	156	Adventures.....	231
Liturgist.....	158	Adventure Format.....	231
Orderly.....	160	Campaigns.....	232
Order Liturgist.....	162	The Hero Wars.....	232
Adept.....	162	Narrator Characters.....	233
Leaving the Church.....	165	Narrator Character Leader Format.....	233
Sample Churches, Sainly Orders, and Wizardry Schools.....	167	Sample Adventures.....	234
Widespread Sainly Orders.....	171	High Pressure Front.....	235
Independent Wizardry Schools.....	172	Chasing Kites.....	240
The Essential Landscape.....	173	Fish Rain.....	248
Reliquaries.....	174	Heavy Earth.....	253
Sample Essences.....	174	△ Blank Character Sheet.....	256
The Essence Planes.....	176	⚡ Appendix: Sample Hero Bands.....	257
III Narrating.....	177	Sample Guardians.....	257
The First Rule: Your Glorantha Will Vary.....	177	Arshkuveth's Own.....	258
Heroes.....	177	Heartdrummers.....	260
Character Creation.....	177	Prophets of the Golden Age.....	262
Hero Points.....	178	∞ Appendix: Runes.....	264
Narrating the Heroes.....	179	✠ Appendix: Bibliography and Sources.....	266
Contests.....	182	✠ Appendix: Game Aids.....	268
Abilities.....	182	Character Creation Synopsis.....	268
Choosing Resistance.....	185	Rules Synopsis.....	269
Extended Contests.....	186	Consolidated Hero Point Costs.....	272
Narrating <i>HeroQuest</i>	187	Sample Resistances.....	274
Getting Started.....	188	∴ Glossary of Essential Game Terms.....	276
Narrating Contests.....	188	Υ Index.....	280
Drama.....	189	Keywords and Common Magic.....	280
The Final Rule: Maximum Game Fun.....	190	Contests.....	281
* Heroquesting.....	191	Illustrations.....	281
Heroquests.....	191	Listing.....	282
Types of Heroquests.....	191		
The Story.....	192		
Selecting a Myth.....	192		
Object of the Quest.....	193		
Stations.....	193		



FOREWORDS

Anyone who knows anything about heroquesting can tell you that unexpected dangers lie around every mist-shrouded corner, and that you can't always be sure of what you might bring back with you when you return to the world of men. This was the lesson we learned in 1998 when we first began work bringing Greg Stafford's classic fantasy world, Glorantha, back to active life as a roleplaying game. We aimed to create a simple, story-based game that would appeal to the worldwide network of stalwart fans who have loved the setting since its first appearance in 1975, while also bringing a new wave of players to its wonders, drama, mystery, and humor.

The birth of that game, *Hero Wars*, was a difficult one. You might even say that we returned from the Hero Planes before we had fully completed our daunting quest, so eager were we to bring back a great treasure for the Glorantha Tribe. Even so, the fervent legion of Glorantha fans embraced it, worked to plumb its mysteries, and now deserve our undying gratitude for their devotion to both the world and the game.

I am very proud to see that this new incarnation of Glorantha, *HeroQuest*, is infinitely clearer and better presented than its predecessor, much closer to my original vision. Now it is truly ready not only for its established adherents, but for the new generation of fans that is sure to come. In the back-to-basics roleplaying scene we now find ourselves in, with dungeons once more filled with monster-bashers and treasure-seekers, we need the mind-blowing, imaginative sweep of Glorantha more than ever. Our long, arduous heroquest has finally succeeded.

—Robin D. Laws, January 2003

The Hero Wars are Between...

Boxes placed throughout this book describe some of the many conflicts brewing in the time of the Hero Wars. These give a sense of the strains pulling upon the world, peoples, and religions of Glorantha. Your hero will not be torn by *all* of these conflicts, but they are going on around him. These texts provide some deep background to help understand the cosmic war.



"One day I helped a dragon, who whispered hot words of gold and legend to me."

I was twelve when I read those words, in the foreword to a board wargame called *White Bear and Red Moon*, and I have been entranced by Glorantha ever since. It was the richness of the writing, the quirky humor, the epic sweep, but above all the sense of immersive and seductive depth, the sense that there was a whole world to be experienced, not just a few battles to be re-enacted with cardboard counters and dice.

This commitment to making the reader more participant than spectator was evident from the first. The game presented itself as "the instrument for the unfolding history of Dragon Pass, Fantasy and yourself." Ultimately, though, it was just a boardgame, and I wanted more. Shortly thereafter, *RuneQuest* emerged, a fantasy role-playing system that in many ways redefined the genre, precisely by placing at its very heart the world, its cultures and mythologies. We had fun adventuring with *RuneQuest*, but this was still not a game of the heroic scale Glorantha demanded. And yet, right at the back of the book, was a tantalizing hint of future glories, mention of a game called *HeroQuest*: "a revolutionary approach to myth, magic and role-playing" in which the players could be those heroes, and travel into legend and history.

That was in 1979.

Since then, so many false starts, tantalizing hints, and cruel rumors. *RuneQuest* rose, fell, rose again, and fell again for the last time. For years, the torch was held aloft by Glorantha's dedicated—indeed, I'm tempted to say fanatical—fans, especially the magazine *Tales of the Reaching Moon*. And running like a thread of hope through this all were the hints and promises. *HeroQuest* would be out soon. Maybe next year, maybe the year after. But soon. It became in part an in-joke among the fans, but always with that edge of expectation and anticipation. Like a messiah, we knew it would come some day, and when it did, it would change everything.

And here it is. Foreshadowed by *Hero Wars* (which showed what could be), *HeroQuest* really is out. Not next year, not "sometime soon," but now. At last, it is time to listen to that dragon's whispers, it is time to be a hero.

—Mark Galeotti, March 2003





Here is *HeroQuest*.

Here is the game, 37 years in the making. In 1966 Glorantha poured into and through me for the first time, and I imagined having a team of people who could work to manifest it, for surely that was too much for just me. Now, in 2003, after much effort and the assistance of many, it is a reality, and this game its latest output.

I am very pleased with this game and feel it is the best representation of Glorantha so far. The rules system and story-telling support each other. It has allowed me to put down the best image of the interweaving and interlocking magic systems that generate the world. I am extremely pleased to at last give examples and statistics for magical hills, guardian spirits, and the effect the housewives of a clan can have in withholding support for the actions of their husbands. Glorantha has been a lifelong ambition and revelation for me. This, its latest incarnation, is the best.

I want to thank some key individuals for making this possible.

First, to the members of the Glorantha Trading Association, without whom *Issaries* and this book would never have been real. You are the tribe, and your tangible support has made this creation possible.

Secondly, to Stephen Martin, who has borne the burden of administration for *Issaries*, and whose unflinching reliability and support have made it possible for *Issaries* to release this book.

Third, to Robin Laws whose creativity sparked the

breakthrough for this game. I asked him to do this because I was tired and weary of my burden. He bore it like a sprinter and delivered the manuscript on time. His design for *HeroQuest* is a perfect fit of method and content.

Next is Jonathan Geere, the right man in the right place at the right time. His previous diligence in commenting on products had earned him a look at *HeroQuest* when I was weary of it. He stepped in to make some critical organizational revisions and changes, and pointed out some flaws. When I was most weary, he bore the project forward.

Next, to Mark Galeotti and Roderick Robertson, each of whom has authored portions of this work perfectly to my instruction and design. More importantly, they did the work on short notice, with professional content and good cheer.

Also to Fergie (Dave Ferguson), whose enthusiasm and game play provided the breakthrough

for me in seeing how the system works.

Finally, to the crowd of others listed in the credits whose parts, large or small, have contributed to this work with a spirit of community and creativity. It is better for their help, and we hope we have not left anyone out. If we have, we apologize.

These all have made the good parts of this book, and the faults, slips of type, and oversights were all mine.

At last, I give my thanks to my wife Suzanne, for encouraging this project and providing moral support in dark times, and dinners.

—Greg Stafford, *HeroQuest* Designer

*The Hero Wars are between...
Cosmos and Chaos*
The deities are the keepers of the Eternal
Order that is called the cosmos.
Ever since Creation, the cosmos has been
opposed by Chaos, which is everything that
does not fit within or exist inside of the
cosmos. Chaos eternally seeks to reclaim or
destroy the cosmos, and the very essence
of the deities is to resist its entropy.





INTRODUCTION

The gigantic fist splintered the oak door. Javern and his companions pressed themselves into the corners, each chanting their favored prayer or spell. Javern's hauberk glowed briefly, then pulsed from bright to dark as his magic solidified upon the bronze to make it like dull, dark iron. The hand opened long fingers the color of rotten grass, with claws between them like poison cat claws each the size of a big man's leg, smelling like vomit. Across the hall, on the farthest corner, Olyssa's spear rang its sharp clanging war cry, Bardar's bared hands glowed green hot. The structure groaned as the demon heaved its shoulder, cracking the doorjamb. Javern looked down to where Eva huddled behind the worktable, clutching her straw paper in her hand. The demon hand slapped blindly once and shattered the hay cart into javelins and darts that rained down upon on her. The fist clenched again, its bony joints cracking like old men's knees.

"Now, Oroctor," commanded Javern. The spirit woke up and his shield glowed as he leapt forward into the room and, with a single stroke, lopped off a thumb the size of a child. Hot blood drenched Javern as the fist recoiled and the cabin shook with its roaring outside. Javern barely raised his shield as the fist twitched and grabbed him, clutching like a man might grab a mouse that bit him. Snaky veins rose on the fist and fingers when it flexed, and Javern nearly drowned in the surging blood searing his skin. The dark magic of his armor pulsed once in response to the crush that could have pulped an elephant. He was hanging in the fist, near the ceiling.

Bardar leapt forward, grabbed Javern's feet, and pulled. His hands glowed green, his arms were orange, and his body and feet were a deep green that seemed to merge into the earth beneath him. A moment later Olyssa rushed in, screaming her Killing Howl, and thrust her spear deep into the wrist over her head and twisted it out. Though the blood gushed, she nimbly somersaulted to safety beyond, unsullied.

The demon outside roared again and the fist jerked open. Javern dropped to the floor, still held by Bardar. They scrambled but failed. The hand, palm open, slapped down on both of them so hard that Eva, crouched and kneeling, was knocked down. She struggled up, still clutching her paper figure.

She had her best paper, her feather paper, imported from the farthest East. Now it was ready. She felt it moving in her hand, joyfully alive and strong in the way only feather paper can be. She looked up. Olyssa stabbed again, her spear pierced deep, nearly to her own handhold. But it did not stop the momentum of the

hand once again slapping hard onto the two prone men. Even Olyssa was thrown to the ground by it, loosing her grip on the spear. Javern looked dead, unmoving and covered with blood, but he had his armor and should not need help. Bardar, though, was twisted in a way that living people should not be, so Eva concentrated to make the Harmonious Yellow Songbird to heal him. Olyssa was up, drawing her sword, and might expect a Snowflake Dripping Blood. Beebee, her secret spirit helper, was screaming

over and over again, "Your butterfly hat! Your butterfly hat!" because it was afraid of them being killed and always wanted that protection. But she made the Gio Elephant, breathed on it to be weighty, and tossed it into the fray. The little paper creature tumbled over when it hit the ground, but had already begun to grow. When it gained its feet next to Javern it was already three feet tall, and when the palm slapped down again it

was the elephant that took the brunt. It did not stagger or stop, but its tusks had hardened already as it rushed through a wall, not stopping at all. Javern was on his knees now—he had rolled aside and was tugging Bardar to the edge of the barn. The hand slapped empty floor, though everyone fell down.

Outside the demon howled again, but this was not the rage and deathly slaving this time. It was a cry of pain and surprise as the thing pulled its hand from inside the barn. The thing pulled so hard and the barn was so damaged that the structure crashed down around them and pinned them. Nonetheless Eva twisted through the splinters and boards to peep out of a crack. She saw the demon, sooty and horned and covered with scabs, tumble to the ground upon an elephant half its size. The lumber that had been a barn creaked and shook from the fall, several screams and moans sounded, and bits of paper flew into the air as the demon ripped his foe to shreds.

"What's that?" shouted Olyssa, unable to see. "What's coming now?" The shredding stopped and the demon sat down, clearly cut and hurt by the tusks along its legs and groin as well as upon the mutilated right hand. It surveyed the carnage of the barn, and looked at its hand. It kicked a piece of paper around, it was already fading like light tissue now, and looked at its legs. It groaned once, a terrible groan of suffering and pain that made Eva smile with satisfaction. It lumbered to its feet, unsteady and favoring one leg. Blood ran from its wounds, leaving a clear striking trail where it went. It moaned as it left.

"Are you women all right?" asked Javern. "Where are you?" "How's Bardar?" asked Olyssa.

YGVV:
Your Glorantha Will Vary.
This publication is a starting point, not the ending point. Whether you are a narrator or a player, if you need a solution, YOUR answer is the right one.



PLAYING HEROQUEST

HeroQuest is a Game of Discovery. Starting is quick and easy, because learning the rules is part of the story. All the information you need is in this book. The rules encourage you to play the game and in doing so discover the world of Glorantha, where gods are real and heroes leave their mark. Sentences beginning with “**∞** Want to Discover More?” lead you to places where you can learn about that subject.

HeroQuest is a Game of Adventure. The game is set during the Hero Wars, a time when cosmic forces stir, demons escape their bonds, and empires hang in the balance. While playing *HeroQuest*, your hero will face wily foes, defend kingdoms, slay monsters, and overcome obstacles presented by the narrator as the story unfolds. The game encourages you to adventure into the myths and conflicts of this ancient and magical world and make it your home.

HeroQuest is a Game of Heroes. You oversee the actions and decisions of a hero, and creating this character is itself part of the adventure. You choose your hero’s abilities and magic, so you can make him the way you want him to be, and can begin adventuring right away. Although your hero’s short-term goals might differ from other heroes in your band, the desire is the same: to quest to become an immortal hero of legend!

Roleplaying in Glorantha

Roleplaying is a form of entertainment in which the players tell a collective story. It has formal roots in fantasy wargaming, but it is much older. Since the earliest humans we have told stories through playacting and listened in the dark to tales. Whether playing “knights” or “cops and robbers” with sticks as weapons, or telling stories of ghosts or culture heroes, imagination and acting are the true roots of roleplaying.

To play a roleplaying game you gather with a group of other players, in person or perhaps through an Internet chat facility. By talking, and every now and then rolling some dice, you and your friends together create an unpredictable adventure story featuring the heroes you have created, all set in the world of Glorantha.

HeroQuest is a story-telling game, with emphasis on plot, personality, and consequences instead of numbers, charts, and detailed spell lists. Play focuses on the *story* as the center of action, not the rules. Players only use dice—the Great Randomizer—in moments of crisis or drama.

One person takes the role of the narrator who plays a wide array of **narrator characters**—everyone except the player heroes.

The narrator also plays the world—tells what the weather is, how steep a mountain is, how suspicious a person seems, and so on. The narrator’s job is to place limits on the heroes, confronting them with entertaining challenges as they try to accomplish their goals. Some game groups have one narrator who runs all the games; others may rotate the narrator position, allowing everyone a chance to play and to narrate.

Everyone else plays an imaginary character, one of the heroes whose actions together shape the story. Your hero is your persona in the Gloranthan setting. You determine what your hero is like, how he interacts with other heroes, and what he or she does when confronting the dangers and mysteries of the Hero Wars.

Heroes are not usually lone wolves, for their survival and development calls for them to form **relationships**. In *HeroQuest* one of the most important features of heroes is their ability to recruit followers or join with other heroes, often in a **hero band**. They will fight together, support each other in debates, and guard each other’s backs while they explore the world and encounter strange things. Heroes come from a community—you choose if this is a village or an entire nation—which can give them the support and followers they will need to succeed.

Individual *HeroQuest* stories are referred to as adventures or scenarios. A series of adventures sharing heroes and other plot elements is called a campaign.

To play, talk and describe what your hero is doing; say what your hero says. *HeroQuest* is a talking game, not a numbers game. Most of the time players just say what their hero does (or tries to do). In cases where failure is possible, the narrator decides how difficult the act is, she and the player each roll a die to determine relative success or failure, and the narrator describes the results with the player’s help. Then the game and story go on.

Your Hero

Heroes are extraordinary individuals, capable of becoming great movers and shakers in the world, and destined for fame. Your character is a hero, and he will do great deeds. **∞**

Hero is a broad definition, covering a huge span of possible powers. At one end are ambitious beginners, like your character. At the other end are mega-beings with super-heroic abilities, such as Harrek the Berserk and JarEel the Razoress, who wield the power of demigods. Great heroes come to represent greater principles, forces, and hopes.

Your hero is not just numbers on a piece of paper. He is a living being, with a past and a future. He will change and grow during play. Be ready to let him change his mind and learn new things. Heroes need to develop spiritually.



Sedenya, the Moon Goddess worshipped in the Lunar Empire, has three primary aspects. In front is Taraltara, the Mystic Moon. Standing behind her is Natha, the black and white goddess of the Vengeful Moon. Beyond both is Rufelza, the material Red Moon that is visible in the sky to all.

Sometimes a dramatic event calls for a closeup on the action. Such a critical challenge is generally the climax of an adventure. It uses the **extended contest**, but the process is much the same. The players tell the narrator what their hero is doing, the narrator tells what the world is doing, the dice are thrown to determine results, and the results are applied to those pitted in the struggle.

Glorantha is a magical world and the game focuses on exploring its magic. *HeroQuest* lavishes detail on magic and magical conflict in one basic and three specialized magic chapters. Your hero will learn his preferred way of magic, and then explore the strange and wonderful oddities, exceptions, and mysteries of Glorantha—the greatest of which is the heroquest, when the heroes cross over to the world of myth.

Text Conventions

Important game terms are printed in **boldface** the first time they are used or defined, or for emphasis.

Runes and Game Symbols

Throughout the book, you will see text marked with special symbols called **runes**. (The Gloranthan runes are discussed in the Runes appendix, page 264.) A few runes mark text with a special purpose:

- ⚡ *Note to Players:* Hints to help players make the most of the game.
- ✱ *Note to Narrators:* Hints to help narrators run a better, more exciting game.
- △ *Example:* Examples of the game in play.
- ⚔ *Masteries:* Indicates one or more masteries in an ability; see page 19 for details.



The First Rule: Play the Story, Not the Rules

The focus of *HeroQuest* is the story, not the rules. Nothing destroys the pacing and emotional intensity of a story quicker than a pause to look up rules or special cases. Let your hero and his goals direct the story, and turn to the rules only when his actions or desires conflict with someone or something else.

So, if the emphasis is not on the rules, what else does this book contain?

First are sample homeland, occupation, and magic keywords so that you can choose who you want to be and what you want your hero to do. These are but a small selection of the thousands of Gloranthan cultures and religions, but they are enough to get started.

Second is advice on how to play *HeroQuest*. These include suggestions like those presented in the boxed text scattered through this chapter. However, more important are the examples of play that run through the book. These examples do not just illustrate the rules, they *show* you how to play the game and what tactics will help you succeed.

What You Need

To play *HeroQuest*, you need these things:

- This book.
- A group of players. (You can find them via the internet if you can't find a group near you. Go to www.HeroQuest-rpg.com/support for help.)
- One twenty-sided die (d20) for each person. These are available at most specialty game stores.
- Paper, pens, and pencils.
- Optional: a book from the *HeroQuest* or *Hero Wars* Player's Book series. These are helpful, but are not required—this book contains everything you need to play the game. See the Bibliography on page 266 for a list of available titles.
- Optional: miniature figures. Some players like to use these to represent their heroes. They can show relative position in combat or location on a map. These are available at most specialty game stores.

⚡ *Epic Adventure:* Ways to use the visual or descriptive elements of fantasy novels, epic stories (such as the *Iliad* and the saga of Gilgamesh), and adventure movies in your game.

A Note on Pronouns

To help make the rules easier to follow, we use female pronouns for narrators and male pronouns for players.

What was *Hero Wars*?

Hero Wars was the first roleplaying game produced by Issaries, Inc. It is now out of print. *Hero Wars* was a different game than *HeroQuest*, but it used the same core rules system, so books published for *Hero Wars* are useable with this game—see the Bibliography on page 266 for titles. Go to www.HeroQuest-rpg.com/hw/HQConversion.html for notes on converting each product.

The Hero Wars

The Hero Wars mark the end of Glorantha—or at least The End of the World as We Know It. Monstrous dangers have risen, great causes have been born, and the gods have woken. Many different struggles are occurring all at once, and the conflicts between these various groups threaten to end all of existence. Cataclysms like this have occurred before. Everyone knows it. The question is, “What will you do about it?”

The Hero Wars Begin in Dragon Pass

Dragon Pass is the fuse of Glorantha; from it have burst many of the cataclysms that have ripped apart the world before. It is burning again.

500 years ago—Dragons exterminate all human life in Dragon Pass.

300 years ago—Humans move back in and crowd out the elder races, who retreat to strongholds where they have grown angry after centuries of abuse.

20 years ago—The Lunar Empire invades and conquers the natives of Dragon Pass.

Now—The Empire has put on the squeeze, but it may have bitten off more than it can chew...

⚔ Want to Discover More? See the Introduction to Glorantha chapter on page 222.

Make Your Own Part

All heroes are extraordinary and destined for *some* fame in the world of Glorantha. This is guaranteed, since they are individually guided by a higher power: you, the player.

Your heroes will have the chance to be involved in the great events of the Hero Wars, such as the Bejeweled Invasion of the East Isles, the War Against War, and raising the Jarn Dragon. Such events are not just for the super-powerful; they require the participation of your hero at whatever level of power he has achieved. Your hero is not *expected* to become a god, but he could. This is up to you and your narrator.

*The Old World is Ending...
What will you be doing?*
Your hero is in a story.
You are going to talk his way through the epic.
And the old world is ending...

Magical Landscapes

The Mortal World is the world of time and mundane things, where people live, strive, and die. It contains continents, oceans, and islands; mountains, rivers, forests, and their inhabitants; and hundreds of peoples and religions.

These many religions interact with the Other Side, the worlds of magic and the supernatural. Three distinct Otherworlds give magic to mortal beings: the God World, Spirit World, and Essence Planes. Some magic originates in the Mortal World, and so each of Glorantha's four worlds is the source of a different magic system. The Otherworlds are separated from each other. Only the Mortal World, the world of people, indirectly connects them.

Beings native to the Mortal World are usually born with a mixed spiritual nature. Through worship and magic use, this untrained spiritual nature will refine until it is a pure soul, spirit, or essence. Some few beings are born with their spiritual nature already partially or fully formed.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See the Theism chapter (page 114), Animism chapter (page 131), Wizardry chapter (page 153), and Introduction to Glorantha chapter (page 222).

Otherworld Entities

Each Otherworld is home to entities that are born, created, or otherwise come into existence with a pure soul, spirit, or essence. Some Otherworld denizens appear strange or monstrous to humans, others seem almost identical to mundane beings, animals, and plants. An entity from the God World is called a **daimon**, **soul**, deity, god, or goddess; an entity from the Spirit World is a **spirit**; and an entity from the Essence World is an **essence**, psyche, or saint. An entity from the Underworld (which is sometimes distinguished from the three Otherworlds, sometimes not) is often called a **demon**. Other-

world entities with natural homes within the Mortal World are usually referred to as beings rather than entities.

Petty daimones, simple spirits, weak essences, and little demons live in their Otherworld and rarely interact with the Mortal World unless brought there by magic. Mortals worship more powerful entities, who give magic to their worshippers. Worshipped entities usually have subservient denizens that support them and provide servants or additional magic. Thus, many deities have subservient cults, majestic spirits control lesser spirits, and the great churches of the West are filled with orders and schools founded in the distant past by saints.

The World is Made of Everything

The world of mortals is called the Mortal, Inner, Natural, or Mundane World. Its innate magic is called **talents**, but it is also permeated with much more powerful magic from the Otherworlds. The Mortal World is a mixture of the Otherworlds. Thus, most trees, animals, and people are a mixture of the various magic types and are affected by all of them. Most places are mixed—most rocks are just rocks, and one part of a forest is usually much like another. However, some rocks embody souls, some spirits, and some pure essences. Similarly, in that forest can be found places of power, like a sacred valley or rock outcrop that inspires a moment of awe or beauty, or extraordinary trees inhabited by spirits or daimones. Enchanted elf forests, for example, often combine god and spirit powers.

The distribution of magic in the world is unequal. Some places are a concentrated center of magical power, closely connected to one of the Otherworlds. For instance, Kero Fin Mountain is a concentration of theist power, and people commonly talk of that mountain as a goddess. Its plants, animals, and terrain features mostly possess theistic souls. Likewise, spirit places

exist, such as Chalk Man Hill and The Creek. Finally, places like The Stream, extents of Trackgrass, and the linings of some dwarf tunnels are concentrations of essence. The world has many such sacred mountains, spirit valleys, and holy rivers. Together these form the magical landscape of Glorantha.

Otherworld Interactions

Three basic forms of interaction between the Mortal World and the Otherworlds exist: worship, magic, and heroquesting.

Worship goes from the Mortal World to one of the Otherworlds. On holy days, mortals open a way to the Otherworld with their rites and interact with the mythological realm. Their holy world and the Mortal World overlap.

Want to Discover More? See the Basic Magic chapter, page 97.

Magic transfers power from an Otherworld into the Mortal World. To learn specialized magic, a hero must journey into or through the appropriate Otherworld and, usually, experience the first time that magic was used. The hero thereby learns the proper words, gestures, actions, and philosophies to bring the power he experiences in the Otherworld and duplicate it in the Mortal World. Although just about everyone uses magic, many people use common magic, a mix of all four magic systems.

Want to Discover More? See Common Magic, pages 29 and 104.

Heroquesting is less common than worship or magic; only a few powerful or adventurous mortals practice it. Heroes open a way to the Other Side and face great dangers to gain magic for their communities or themselves. Most heroquests follow set paths recorded in the myths of the religion.

Want to Discover More? See the Heroquesting chapter, page 191.

Holy Places

Holy places are concentrations of power, doorways between the Mortal World and one of the Other Sides: the earthly presence of a deity, a gateway to a spirit demesne, or a portal that connects to a saint's node. They are also found where worshipped beings exist in the Mortal World, and where mortals can start a heroquest. They can take almost any form: a grove of trees, a cave, a mountaintop, a building, or a spirit stick stuck into the ground. Holy places are known by many names, including shrine, temple, spirit place, axis mundi, church, and sanctuary.

Permanent holy places are found where some supernatural deed was done. Many are holy to a particular Otherworld

△ Our Story Begins

If you were to eavesdrop on a group beginning a HeroQuest session, you might hear something like this:

Kathy (the narrator): Your league chief, Valdamare Squint-eye, summons you to her hall. I assume everyone shows up?

The players all nod their heads in agreement.

Kathy: You know that something must be up because all your dependent farmers are there, too. Valdamare announces that a catastrophe has befallen the community—the Screaming Spear, a precious magical treasure, is missing! She needs you to find it and bring it back.

Rick (speaking in character as his hero, Hengal, a hotheaded warrior): “I’ll punish whoever shamed us in this way!”

Kathy: The assembled villagers grunt their agreement with Hengal. “Whoever has done this must pay!”

John (playing Ingomar Horsefriend, speaks out of character): My guy says we should kill them all for what they have done!

Frederick (playing Mr. Puma, a shapechanger who wants to be human): You guys will fight anything, won’t you? Let’s at least find out what is going on.

Kathy: Valdamare says she trusts your band, which has saved the village so many times in the past, to do what is right when the time comes. She urges you to get started at once!

Rick (calmer now): “What help can we expect from you, my good leader?”

Kathy: “The usual. Go to the priest for a blessing.”

Rick: Oh wait, wait. “Chief, I’m not done here!”

Kathy: “Yes, what else?”

Rick: “Good chief, we are going on a dangerous mission against someone that is surely powerful. Have not they stolen from the best people in the world? And of course we are strong and powerful, so they must have had some great magic to help them. Can’t we get some?”

Kathy: Squint-eye’s not happy about this. She’s frowning. “God’s Ear, man, what do you want?”

Frederick: I see that Hengal’s smiling now. The chief’s swearing! Hey buddy, go for it!

Rick: “Surely for something as dangerous as this we can count on more than the usual blessing?” What’s the crowd think, Kathy?

Kathy: Some agree with you. But I think most of them are with Valdamare, who disagrees. “I’m chief here,” she says. “You are out of place to make demands, even if you are famous.”

John: Ingomar isn’t afraid. He’ll say something about Valdamare the Sissy or something.

Kathy: Hold on, now. That’s an insult, John. Ingomar is from around here. He knows that such a taunt is bad business. Something to fight about. This chief is a pretty macho gal, but she doesn’t have to do her own fighting, she can have some of those tough-looking warriors who surround the dais beat you up.

Frederick: I’m going to get out of here now.

Rick: Me too. I’m not getting beat up for you again.

John: OK, I won’t insult her. I don’t want to make trouble. I just want to make her give us something or tell us why not.

Kathy: Oh, OK. Maybe incite the crowd or something.

John: OK, I’ll do that.

Frederick: Me too.

Rick: Doesn’t our league law do something here?

Kathy: Yes, I am sure. But here’s what’s important. The chief is unhappy, but she knows what has to be done. She gets everyone quiet, and then speaks. “We will debate, Mr. Hengal and I, and decide.”

Now the game changes. We have a chance for failure here, and Kathy has decided that it is to be determined by dice. Now they must call on the rules to find out whether the hero succeeds or not. The players discuss their tactics.

Kathy: She is going to use her *Relationship to Clan* to sway them, but she’s going to get an automatic augment from her *Chief* magic. She’s pretty tough here, you know.

Rick: Hmm, I’ve only got 17 in my clan relationship myself. What’s her stat for that?

Kathy: Oh, mmm, about 5^W [5-mastery] plus the umm, +7 for her various personal augments. That’s 12^W.

entity. Magicians often have the rites and artifacts necessary to create a temporary holy place when no permanent site is near.

What is Myth?

Glorantha is a mythical world, full of stories that are true, and not just for their worshippers. But what is a myth?

To some of us, “myth” means something that does not exist. We say things like, “It’s a myth that men are smarter than women.” *HeroQuest* does not use myth in that way.

Myths are usually stories about the deities, spirits, saints, sages, and heroes who fought in the struggles that made the world the way it is. Myths like this include stories of the gods, like Zeus, Odin, or Indra and their pantheons. It includes minor deities like Triton, demigods like Gilgamesh, and great human heroes like King Arthur. These are stories such as we know today from extinct mythologies. They have plots and characters, sometimes a moral to show. *HeroQuest* has a lot of this kind of mythology.

Myths also explain the world, a person’s place in it, and the meaning of life. The myths of a homeland often overlap those of its neighbors, and by looking across the entire world a roughly unified mythology is discernable between all the religions. Thus, every culture and religion has its own myths that explain how the world was created, how it was changed in the

Gods War, how it plunged into a terrible Darkness, and how it was made whole once more. These myths provide examples of how to act, of how the universe works, of how to address your cousin, and so forth. They tell what to do, especially in a sacred way or during ceremonies. They explain what and why things are; they define a culture and explain its customs, values, and laws. They allow people to live actively and consciously with the invisible powers of society and nature. *HeroQuest* has a lot of these myths as well.

Myths join humans with the Otherworlds. They provide instructions on how to bring the power of the Other Side into the realm of men. Myths allow the interface of the underlying laws of the world with individual people, which allows them to do magic. This is why the learning of powerful magic always involves a journey to the Other Side, for every act of magic has at its heart a myth. This kind of myth is integral to *HeroQuest*.

Myths, finally, hint at deep philosophies about death, truth, and cosmological consciousness. The myths are maps—some better than others—towards the experience of deep truths. These are the ultimate answers. The treasure, in the end, is always some form of awareness that is gained. The experiences transcend normal consciousness altogether. Discovering and using these myths is a goal of many heroes.

Rick: I want to tell everyone how brave we’ve been.

Kathy: OK, you can do that here. This is a bunch of guys boasting and arguing about how to use clan resources. Sure, Brave works. Any other augmentations?

Rick: My Brave is 17, so I get a +2. How about a combat ability? Can I use that?

Kathy: No, not a chance. That’s like you’re going to threaten to fight your own chief!

John: Can I help him out? Can I get the crowd going too?

Kathy: Sure. You’re gonna get the crowd going then, like shouting and saying, “Yeah, he’s brave!”

John: Yeah, that’s it. “Hey, he’s brave!”

Kathy: OK, you can use your best skills to help him. What do you have that might be really good to incite the crowd?

John: I have Brave too. It’s 17.

Kathy: OK, that’s +4 so far. How about Mr. Puma, Frederick?

Frederick: Can I do some magic here? This says I have a “passion spirit.” Can I make them more passionate?

Kathy: Umm, maybe. But here’s the problem, Frederick: you are a stranger here with your weird shamanic magic. You know that. These guys aren’t quite used to you yet. If they see you using spirit magic, the thing might backfire and make people vote against Hengal. What does it say there, about the passion spirit?

Frederick: Huh, nothing.

Kathy: OK, you could use it to try incite the crowd then, but you’ll have to roll for it. It will afterwards be an *Excite Crowd* spirit. Do you want to do it?

John and Rick are making frantic signs to discourage Frederick from doing this. Frederick decides it would be foolish and shakes his head. Rick breathes a sigh of relief.

Rick: Good thing, Frederick. Everyone is basically pretty paranoid about strangers.

Frederick: I noticed... Can’t they see that I am human too?

Kathy: OK, let’s go for it then. What’s Hengal’s Brave, and John, your guy’s? OK, so it’s your relationship of 17 plus the Bravery augment of +2, then another +2 from Ingomar’s courageous vocal support. 21, I mean 11.

John: Yeah, he’s brave! He’s brave!

Rick: Can’t I use my magic too? To augment myself?

Kathy: Like what?

Rick: Anything. It’s all warrior magic. She’s using her chief magic, and I’m trying to be a warrior.

Kathy: Oh, OK that seems fair. So you are looking glorious and deadly now as a result of your magic. You can augment with one *Warrior* affinity, then.

John: Me too then? I can use mine to help him?

Kathy: Oh, OK. You look brave too and can augment your magic onto the total. OK, it’s another +3 for you and a +2 from Ingomar then. Let’s see, everything is added up here, OK: 11+3+2 is 61.

Rick: Less than her!

Kathy: Yes, but she has some more help, too. The big priest steps up, and he makes it clear he’s on the chief’s side. He’s going to augment the chief, and he’s giving a +5.

Rick: Plus five! Yikes, he’s gotta have—humm—

Frederick: 5112, at least. In magic? Glad he’s just augmenting!

Kathy: Yes, in his magic. He’s the community priest, remember. He could be more powerful than that.

Frederick (rolling his eyes): I’m never crossing him, then!

Kathy: Good thinking. Ready to roll, Rick?

Frederick: Use your lucky dice.

Rick: OK, my 611 against her final 1711, right? Here goes. I roll a 3. Success.

Kathy: I roll a 19. I failed. You win. Minor victory. You convinced her to give you some more help.

John: He’s brave! He’s brave! What do we get?

Kathy: Wait a minute. The chief and priest are conferring. Let’s see.

Kathy is clearly unprepared for this outcome. Luckily for her, the doorbell rings.

Kathy: Uh, someone answer the door will you? Aha, yes, that’s it: they’re going to lend these other guys for your task. (Three more players—Bill, Steve, and Christine—enter the room.) Hi guys, got heroes yet?



The War Against War

Alien forces strive to crush the valiant, virtuous Kingdom of Loskalm and unleash monstrous energies.



Five Arkats Return

The greatest hero of history returns in five forms, fighting himself and everyone else!



Moon Revolutions

Artists, teachers, and philosophers unleash mighty forces against cruel overlords.



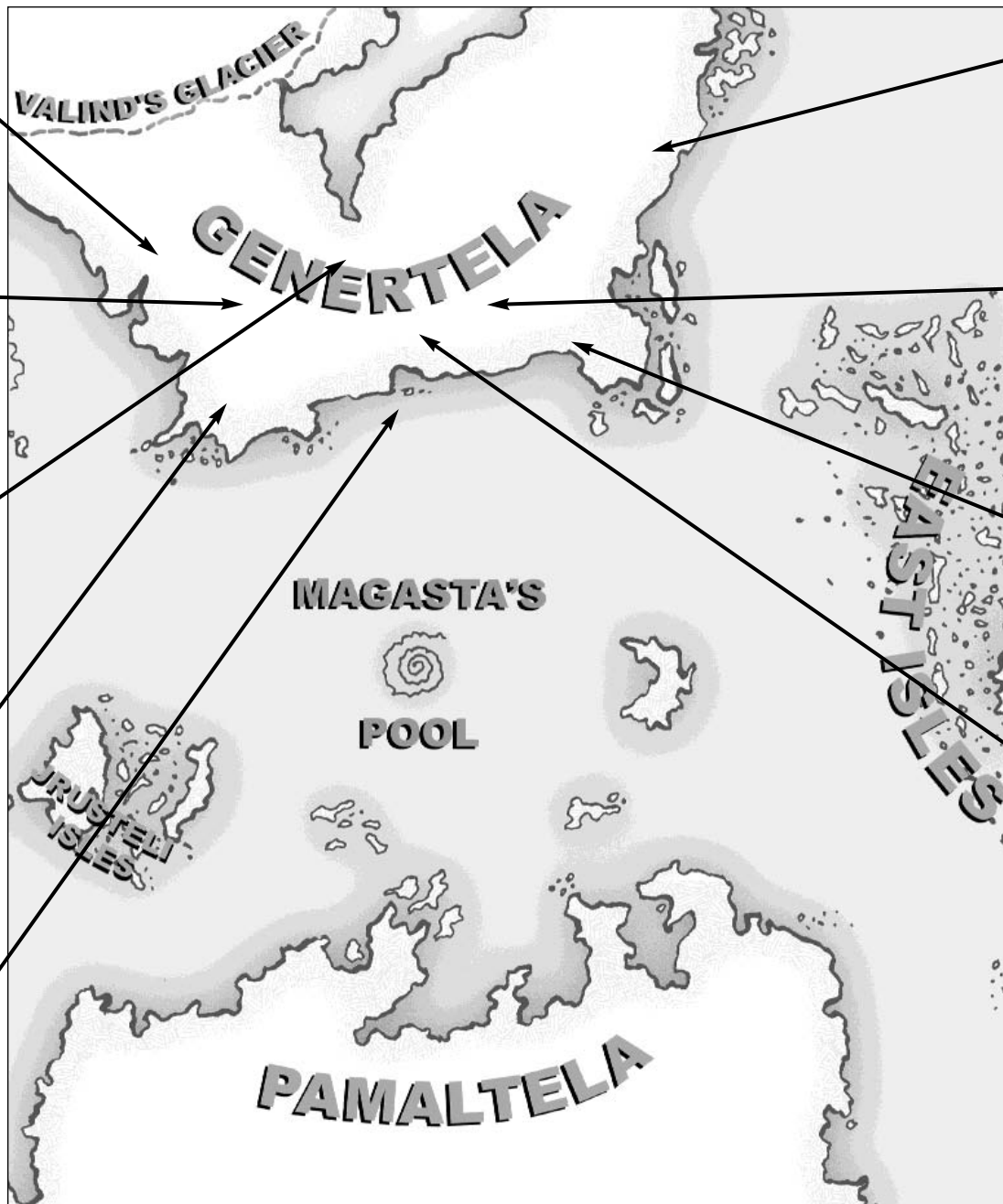
The Icon War

The One Church and the One King destroy everything that will keep them from ruling the One Kingdom.



The Wolf Pirates

Naval hordes ravage ancient strongholds and release monsters, fiends, and demons of old.



The Blood Sun War

Sleeping Dragons rise against prehistoric monstrosities and blood falls from the sky.



Chaos Regurgitation

The ancient foe vomits forth in unearthly power against the last defenders of the Genert Wastes.



The New Law War

Ancient deities transform themselves to overcome grim foes that rise from Deep Mysteries.



The Sartar Rebellion

Rebels resist Imperial advance with drastic, desperate magic that will change the world.



Elder Races Resurgence

Dwarves, elves, trolls, and mermen release centuries of pent-up power, each in their own fanatic project.



The World of Glorantha

The Mortal World, including the major continents and island groups.

Note that Pamaltela and the islands seem placid right now, unaffected by the Hero Wars. That will change.



Personal Information
See page 17.

Hero Points
See page 58.

Runes
See page 29.

Keywords
See page 17.

Name: HENGAL
 Player: Rock
 Description: ARMOR; BIG, TRADITIONAL CLOTHING
 Goals: MEET THE INHUMAN KING OF DRAGON PASS AND SURVIVE

Hero Points: 3

Keywords

Homeland:	DARA HAPPA	18
Occupation:	FOOT SOLDIER	20
Specialty:	SNOCK	
Magic:	GERENDETHO	18
Common Magic:		18

Skills

DAGGER FIGHTING	20
SPEAR & SHIELD FIGHTING	5w
(SPEAR +3/ARMOR & SHIELD +4)	
SNOCK TROOP COMBAT	20
JAVELIN	3w
SCOUTING	19
CLIMBING	2w
SING AND DANCE	18
STRONG	19

Relationships

LOVE FAMILY	18
RESPECT ANCESTORS	15
LOYAL TO WARBAND	20
LOYAL TO LEAGUE	18
WORSHIP SOLAR PANTHEON	18

Hero Band

Member of:
 Awareness:
 Blessing:
 Defense:

Magical Abilities

COMMON- ATTACK ENEMY SPIRIT FEAT	2w
HIDE BETTER TALENT	19
TALK TO ANCESTOR TALENT	
STAY WARM TALENT	
WOLF CHARM	
INITIATE OF GERENDETHO	18
EXPLORATION AFFINITY	19
FIGHTING AFFINITY	19
GOAT AFFINITY	18

Personality

BRAVE	20
HOT-HEADED	13
AMBITIOUS	15
DISCIPLINED	3w
HARD WORKING	15
LOYAL	20

Followers

Possessions & Wealth

Standard of Living: COMMON

Wealth: MEDIUM ARMOR & SHIELD SPEAR, JAVELIN, DAGGER 13

MAGIC ITEMS:

CROAKING DANGER ROCK	15
MYSTERIOUS LITTLE SKULL	15

Skills
See page 28.

Relationships
See page 28.

Magical Abilities
See page 29.

Hero Band
See page 92.

Personality
See page 28.

Followers
See page 28.

Special and Magical Items
See page 30.

Possessions and Wealth
See page 30.





HEROES

This chapter first describes the kinds of information and abilities that your hero will have, including his appearance, keywords, and abilities.

Begin by conceiving Your Hero, the character who will adventure in Glorantha. Any person you can imagine, you can create in *HeroQuest* using either the Narrative Method, List Method, or “As You Go.” Heroes can have many types of Abilities, including skills, personality traits, relationships, and magic. *HeroQuest* offers ten Homelands and thirteen Occupations for your hero. Your hero gains common skills and magic from these keywords, but he also has special abilities that no one else has.

You may copy the blank character sheet on page 256 and online at www.HeroQuest-rpg.com/support/hero_sheet.pdf for personal use. You can use one of the sample heroes at www.HeroQuest-rpg.com/support/sample_heroes.pdf as your starting character if you are in a hurry.

Your Hero

There are four steps in creating your hero: detail personal information, select your keywords, use one of the methods of character creation to describe your hero, and write your abilities and ratings on your character sheet.

Personal Information

Before you think about your hero’s characteristics, form a concept him in your mind of who your hero is.

Name

Everyone has a name: perhaps a traditional name chosen by parents, a nickname given by friends, or one signaling an omen that attended the hero’s birth. Play around with your first choice until it sounds right and you are comfortable with it.

Your hero’s name should suit who he is and also the land he comes from. Names common in each homeland are given in the homeland keywords.

Appearance

Imagine what your hero looks like, and write down a few notes. Consider his stature, build, face, bearing. How would he describe himself? Describing your hero’s appearance helps you and the other players to envision him.

You might also include how *others* perceive your hero: he may think he is dashing or handsome, but those who know him well might disagree. Finally, do not neglect the symbolic ways character is expressed. Let the fact that Orlaront is a good Heortling show in his traditional dress, his poetic speech, and his habit of running around naked in every rainstorm!

Goals

What does your hero want to achieve, and what drives him to it? Describe your hero’s main motivations and goals. Writing them down will point you to where he is going and what he may need to succeed.

Keywords

A **keyword** is a character “template” that includes a set of abilities (skills, magic, relationships, etc.) that the hero picked up, has been taught, or which “everyone knows.” If your hero has a keyword, he has all of the abilities detailed in it. Even abilities not listed in these rules under a keyword can be used at the keyword rating, if the narrator agrees. Your hero starts with several keywords.

- An occupation keyword is the name of an occupation and the typical abilities of that job. It answers the question, “What do I do?” Thus, the Warrior keyword includes all the abilities a warrior has, such as *Scout*, *Fight*, *Guard Camp*, and so on. *HeroQuest* provides 13 basic occupations, starting on page 31. A hero can take **only one occupation keyword**. Special magical occupations are described in the specialized magic chapters.
- A homeland keyword gives the name and native abilities of a particular culture or people. It answers the question, “Who are my people?” For example, the Teshnos keyword includes all the abilities a person from Teshnos has, such as *Know Jungle Ways*, *Teshnos Customs*, *Teshnos Geography*, and so on. *HeroQuest* provides 10 sample homelands, starting on page 36. A hero can take **only**

Selecting Your Hero’s Goals

Think of our ordinary personal goals: graduate school, get rich, find a partner, buy a farm, and settle down to a leisurely life of breeding horses. Perhaps your hero has grander hopes. Does he want to be the best in his profession or die gloriously in battle? He might want to bring civilization to the barbarians or write a book about them. Does he burn to defend his people from the evil forces of the Chaos-tainted Red Moon? Is he determined to pursue a villain or right some wrong? Does he yearn to champion the weak and oppressed, or to conquer new lands? Does he want to train serpents to be pickpockets? Discover a new kind of ice? Perhaps found a college where the Elder Races have teaching positions?

When you play *HeroQuest*, you will discover chances for your hero’s dream to come true. It might be achieved or thwarted, and time will very likely change it, just as it will change your hero.



one homeland keyword. Your narrator may stipulate that all heroes in the group belong to the same homeland. If not, you may choose any homeland.

- Every homeland includes a religion keyword: a theist pantheon, animist tradition, or wizardry church. This is the normal religion of that homeland, and unless a player says that his hero does not belong, it is assumed that he participates in communal worship. Membership in a religion provides both benefits and obligations. Each specialized religion has a religion keyword that essentially adds on to the homeland keyword. The hero automatically gains the abilities in his homeland's religion keyword.
- A magic keyword is either **common magic** or a specialized magic keyword. It answers the question, "What is my magical power?" *HeroQuest* provides dozens of magic keywords, which can be found in the four magic chapters. A hero can have the common magic keyword or a specialized magic keyword (both if the narrator allows). If your hero has only one magic keyword, he may concentrate his magic at no additional cost. This limits his choice of magic, but makes it less expensive for the hero to gain or improve magical abilities after play begins. For more information, see "Concentrating Magic Use" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 108.
- Nonhuman races have species keywords that express their exotic abilities and differences. Unlike most keywords, it does not start at 17. Instead, each ability in the keyword has its own rating. Some species keywords appear in the Creatures chapter, beginning on page 206. Check with your narrator if you want to play a nonhuman hero, and be prepared to tell the story of *why* he travels and deals with ignorant human beings.



The Lunar religion includes a sect of warriors known for their double-scimitar use. These "whirling blades" martial artists scorn ordinary magic and revere only Taraltara, the mystic Lunar Goddess.

A keyword will occasionally require that you choose between two abilities; you cannot have both as part of the keyword.

Know Jungle Ways *or* Urban Survival

Initiate of Destor *or* Devotee of Destor

Common Magic Keyword

The common magic keyword **automatically** includes five magical abilities of your choice. These five abilities are part of the keyword, and do not have to be specifically mentioned in your narrative or list. You can start with more than five by specifying the additional ones in your narrative or list.

Specialized Magic Keyword

Many heroes have a specialized magic keyword. It is written as the level of worship and Otherworld entity: Devotee of Destor, Spiritist of Praxian Tradition, Liturgist of the Order of Saint Ehilm, etc. Each magic keyword includes all the abilities a worshipper has. A hero can take only one specialized magic keyword during character creation.

If the hero starts with a specialized magic keyword, this indicates initiate, practitioner, liturgist, orderly, or adept level. A hero can begin with a higher magical level with his narrator's

permission; see the character creation methods for details. The exact magical abilities a hero gains from his specialized magic keyword vary:

- Members of a theist cult begin with all of the keyword's affinities at 17.
- Members of an animist practice begin with one of each of the practice spirits listed in the keyword, with ratings determined by the narrator.
- Liturgists begin with all of the keyword's scriptures at 17.
- Members of a saintly order begin with talismans for all of the keyword's orderly spells at 17.
- Members of a wizardry school begin with all of the keyword's grimoires at 17 plus talismans for three wizardry spells from each grimoire at 17.

First-time Narrators

Start with the keywords in this book. As the players learn the system, they can experiment with keywords from the player's handbooks, mixing and matching keywords, or creating entirely new ones.



The Hero Wars are between... Tradition and Novelty
Upstarts and opportunists disrupt the ancient proven ways of life and peace. Elders and traditionalists are outraged at this social breakdown. The young and creative see themselves as innovators and saviors.

You Want Special Abilities

Your hero is set apart by his special abilities and magic. Ordinary people have only keywords with perhaps a few specialties. You should select and improve a few unusual or magical abilities that will let your hero stand out from the crowd.

Keyword Rating

Except for species keywords, keywords have a rating of 17. All the abilities within the keyword begin at that rating, so you do not need to write them all down on your character sheet unless you want a reminder. Some magic keywords may specify magic with a set rating or range of possible ratings. In this case, the ability does not start at 17, but at the specified rating.

You cannot raise a keyword's rating, but you can improve specific abilities within the keyword during character creation or play. When you do, write the ability and its actual rating under the keyword name on your character sheet:

Cavalry Soldier 17
Lance 20
Riding 18

An ability often appears in more than one keyword, but your hero gains no advantage if this occurs other than to keep the one with the higher rating. If you include an ability during character creation and then discover that it is in one of your hero's keywords, ask your narrator if you can replace it with a different ability.

Character Creation Methods

HeroQuest offers three ways to turn your ideas into a hero. If you choose the **narrative method**, you write a short description of your hero and what he can do. With the **list method**, you simply list your abilities. Finally, you can discover your hero's abilities "as you go" during play. This last option works well for beginning players.

Abilities and Ratings

An ability is any skill, knowledge, attitude, item, power, relationship, or magic that your hero can use to do something. You decide what abilities your hero has: an ability name can be anything you want, subject only to narrator approval. You are not limited to the abilities in your keywords or mentioned somewhere else in this book. Your hero's real character emerges when you decide how he is *different* from everyone else.

Each ability has a name, a word or phrase that indicates the actions you can attempt with it. The **ability rating** is a number that lets you pit the ability against foes and obstacles. The higher the number, the better the ability or more extreme the trait. Write abilities on your character sheet:

Strong 14
Listen 17
Weakness for Women in Distress 16
Ironbone Sword 15

Broadly Defined Abilities

Sometimes players choose abilities that are extremely broad in their application. It is not fair to other players if one hero uses *Move Quickly* in every circumstance, whether drawing a sword

or getting to the dinner table. If your hero has a broadly defined ability, your narrator may deal with it in any of several ways.

- She may tell you to select a more specific ability name.
Hunting 13 *becomes* Tracking 13 or Hunt Bear 13
- She may apply modifiers when the broadly defined ability is used in specific circumstances: "I don't see how your *Move Quickly* will help keep your head above water, so apply a -20 to your roll." If you insist on keeping the ability, you should select one specific ability as a specialty (either when you create your hero or the first time he uses the ability); any other use will take a penalty.
Close Combat 13 *becomes* Close Combat 13 (Mace and Shield Fighting)
- She may rule that the ability is just another name for an occupation. In such a case, the player needs to decide what sort of hero he really wants to play, and modify his hero accordingly, changing either his occupation or the broadly defined ability.
Versatile Musician 13 [extra ability] *becomes* Entertainer 17 (Versatile Musician) [keyword, with one specialty]
- She may treat the ability as an extra keyword, and allow you to specify one or more abilities within it. Because it is an extra ability it starts with a rating of 13 rather than 17, even though as a keyword it cannot be improved (although specialties within it can be).
Move Quickly 14 *becomes* Move Quickly keyword 13 (Quickdraw, Run Fast 14)
Know Languages and Customs 13 *becomes* Languages and Customs keyword 13 (Heortling, Kralori, Pentan)

W Mastery

Powerful abilities have a mastery, shown by a Mastery rune (W) with the ability rating. A level of mastery represents 20 points in that ability. If you have an ability rating of 20 and you raise it by one point, it becomes 1W ("1-mastery") instead of 21.

An ability with a mastery will usually beat an ability without, because the mastery gives your die roll a **bump up** (see page 62). You want your hero to be a master at his best abilities and powers.

If you face an opponent with a number to the right of the Mastery rune (such as 11W2), be worried. It means they have double mastery or more. If you improve a 20W ability by one point, it becomes 1W2 ("1-mastery-2"). The more masteries a hero has in an ability, the better he is.

1W is a journeyman. "It's finished." or "Nice piece of work."

1W2 is a master. "Beautiful craftsmanship."

1W3 is a master's master, who can take on tasks impossible for normal people. "I could never do that!"

1W4 approaches the godlike. Harrek the Berserk and JarEel the Razoress have four masteries in their best abilities.

Narrative Method

The **narrative method** lets you flex your creative muscles. Write a 100-word description of your hero, including all his personal information and abilities. (Note that any proper name counts as a single word.) Rather than a list of abilities or his entire life history, write a short narrative sketch outlining what he does, is part of, and feels.

You should include the following in your narrative:

- Personal Information
- Keywords
- Your hero's other important abilities, followers, and special possessions. See "Abilities" on page 28 for common ability types, but note that you cannot specify more than one sidekick in your narrative.

Compose your description in complete, grammatical sentences. No lists of abilities; no sentence fragments. Your narrator may choose to allow sentences like the last one for emphasis or rhythmic effect, but not simply to squeeze in more cool things your hero can do.

One strong idea is more powerful than a dozen unconnected ones; the 100-word limit encourages you to keep your hero simple. It also provides a challenge: the 100 words you choose will determine *all* of your hero's starting capabilities. Don't bother describing how good your hero is, since such words do not affect his ability ratings.

Not everything in your description needs to pertain to a helpful ability. You may want to describe flaws that disadvantage your hero and give him character, or tell about his past history or current situation. These choices may not make your hero more effective, but they give you some control over the course of the story. Your narrator will draw upon these elements to inspire plots during her campaign. You can also use them to seek inspiration or bonuses to specific situations.

We encourage you to add to your hero's narrative during play, reflecting important changes (such as to his goals).

△ Galan Bisonman

Bill composes a 100-word narrative about his hero:

Galan is a middle-aged nomad of the Bison People experienced in fighting, especially against Chaos. He has traveled around the Greatlands and knows the languages, customs, and magic of neighboring peoples. Now he seeks a spirit that called him. He had a family and herds before leaving on his quest. He earned the Bright Stone String, Collapsing Ladder, and magic sword Ironbone. He has a follower spirit, Bison Brain, who speaks to his animals and inhabits his riding beast. He has several extra bison, a herder, and another warrior helper.

"That's 90," says Bill. "I'm saving some for later."

Work with Your Narrator

Your narrator has to be familiar with the heroes in the game. Always check your description and analysis with her. She may grant bonuses as well as restrictions. Additionally, you might not have underlined words that can be abilities, like personality traits or flaws; your narrator can help you wring all possible abilities out of your narrative.

Finishing Your Narrative

Once your narrative is finished, you need to convert the description into a set of abilities. Mark any keywords with double underlines. Mark any other word or phrase that could be an ability with a single underline. Then write these keywords and abilities on your character sheet.

There is no limit to the number of abilities you can gain from a single sentence, as long as the sentence is not just a list of abilities. If your narrator decides a sentence is just a list, she may allow you the first two abilities, or she may tell you to rewrite the sentence. Note, however, that you cannot specify more than one sidekick and one specialized religion keyword in your narrative.

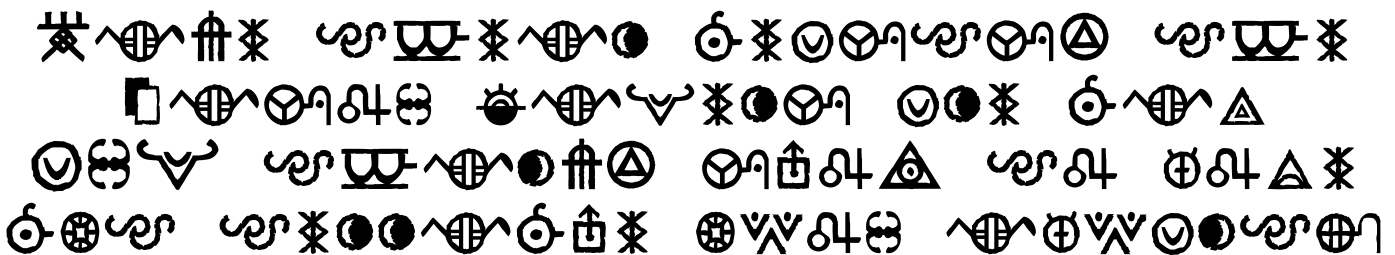
△ Bill Checks His Narrative

Galan is a middle-aged nomad of the Bison People experienced in fighting, especially against Chaos. He has traveled around the Greatlands and knows the languages, customs, and magic of neighboring peoples. Now he seeks a spirit that called him. He had a family and herds before leaving on his quest. He earned the Bright Stone String, Collapsing Ladder, and magic sword Ironbone. He has a follower spirit, Bison Brain, who speaks to his animals and inhabits his riding beast. He has several extra bison, a herder, and another warrior helper.

"Bison People" indicates his homeland (see page 38).

"Nomad" indicates his occupation (see page 34).

"Magic" indicates the common magic keyword (see page 29).



His skills (see page 28) are synopsized and written down: Fighting, Widely Traveled, Languages and Customs, and Resist Chaos.

He writes down his followers (see page 28), including one spirit: Bison Brain, a herder, and a warrior.

Under Possessions (see page 30), Galan writes “Bison herd (6 total)” and some magical items: Bright Stone String, Collapsing Ladder, and Ironbone, a sword.

Assign Ability Ratings

Give each ability a rating. Keywords and their abilities start at 17, additional abilities at 13, and flaws as determined by the player and narrator (see pages 26-29).

Next, distribute 20 points to improve the rating of any abilities you choose (not keywords), with no more than +10 going to any one. You may not use these points to add additional abilities; that is what the narrative is for. It costs 1 point to raise any ability by +1. You may use 3 points to change your level of membership in a specialized religion from initiate to devotee, with your narrator's permission. Starting as a shaman may require Advanced Experience (see page 178), since a shaman usually requires at least three abilities with 1W2 ratings (see “Shaman” in the Animism chapter, page 139).

Finally, go over your narrative with your narrator to finish filling out your character sheet.

△ Bill Assigns His Ability Ratings

Looking in the Homelands and Occupations sections of this chapter, Bill finds his keywords: Bison People, nomad, and common magic. He puts down their ratings of 17.

He checks the sample common magic abilities and decides that *Fight Well* is certainly among those he wants, and so chooses it. He also wants to have the *Bloodclot* and *Find Lost Animal* talents. *Bloodclot* is not on any of the common magic lists, but Kathy says it is the kind of thing his people would have.

Language and travel are apparently outside of his normal experience, and so are written with a starting number of 13.

Looking at his keywords, he sees he gets both *Spear Fighting* and *Sword Fighting* from his Nomad keyword. He adds 8 points to make *Sword Fighting* his best ability, at 5W.

He adds 6 points each to *Resist Chaos* and *Friend of Bison Brain* to make them 19, although he is not sure what Bison Brain is yet.

Creating an Entertaining and Effective Hero

Sympathy

Heroes of adventure fiction have one thing in common: even if they are deeply flawed, the audience is sympathetic to them. In a roleplaying game, your audience is your narrator and your fellow players. See that your hero is likeable or admirable in some way, and you will find that he lives longer. No hero in *HeroQuest* can expect to live forever, but if everyone likes your hero and enjoys having him in the game the narrator will be more likely to act in his favor to keep him around when the chips are down. Other players will be more inclined to risk their heroes to rescue yours when he runs into trouble. If your hero has no redeeming characteristics, they will wave him goodbye.

Backstory

Character description is not a biography. Some players like to write much more than one hundred words about their heroes. Such an extended background is called a backstory. The 100-word narrative gives the current condition of the hero; the backstory explains how he got that way. For example, you can use the backstory to explain where the hero got certain abilities.

At the end of each play session, check to see how much of your material has actually been heard by the other participants. Choose one aspect to focus on before each session and try to work it into the present story, the one everyone is telling together.

Narrators can use part of a backstory to set up an adventure. Common elements in heroes' backgrounds can tie the group closer together. Thus, if they all hate the same clan, or served together in the same unit in the army, the narrator may bring in characters from their past, even if they are not written in the Relationships section of the hero's character sheet.

Indispensability

If you create a unique hero, your narrator and fellow players will probably help to keep him alive. Maybe your hero has some ability or status that makes him important to the campaign. Maybe he is just plain entertaining. Either way you have made him indispensable, which is a useful technique in roleplaying games.

On the other hand, if your hero is uninspired and run-of-the-mill, or if you tend to play the same hero every time, regardless of his abilities or hero description, neither narrator nor players will care much when he bites the dust. They will expect you to create another one just like him anyway.

Ambiguous References

Depth and wonder in the world background comes from the references to things that will either get described later, or remain as a hook on which the reader can hang their own imagination. When creating heroes, it is often fun and effective to use this approach.

Sometimes an ambiguous but poetic phrase can get you more than a precise but prosaic one. Glorantha is a world of mystery and wonder, so the more evocative your description, the better. This is particularly true of supernatural abilities, which are wide open to interpretation. You might have only a vague idea of what a phrase means when the hero embarks, waiting for an appropriate moment in the course of play to propose an exact meaning for the intriguing reference. Ambiguous details can be used for anything: a purpose, a magical treasure, a relationship, or a magical ability.



△ Kathy Looks over Bill's Narrative

Kathy starts with a correction.

Kathy: Proper names only count as one word each, so you've actually got, umm, 88 words.

Bill: Hey, neat. Can I be a member of the Little Bush Brother Society? I wanted to earlier, but didn't have the words.

Kathy: OK, you can add "He's a member of the Little Bush Brother Society." That's six more words, so you're up to 94. In fact, that's where you got some of your items. The Collapsing Ladder—what's that look like?

Bill: It's a rope ladder with steps, and I can roll it up small. In fact, it rolls and unrolls itself.

Kathy: OK, nice. Well, a spirit lives in the ladder. It just rolls and unrolls the ladder, that's its function. And what about the Bright Stone String?

Bill: Can I just save up the Bright Stone String for later?

Kathy: OK, sure. Let me know when you figure out what it does. Why don't you write it as a charm in your common magic keyword, that would be simplest. You get two more common magic abilities, what do you want?

Bill: *Protect My Bison*, of course! And let's see, um, *Climb over Hill and Dale* sounds good, from the *Flesh Man* talents. It does say "magic of neighboring peoples" in my narrative. So, what about the sword *Ironbone*?

Kathy: Well, it's iron, so it will have some potency against trolls and elves. It gives an extra +3 weapon bonus just for being iron, plus another +3 against elves and trolls. It has an ability rating that you can raise, so you can use it for an automatic augment when you use the sword. This is really rare and valuable stuff; you need to watch out, or someone will probably try to steal it from you or kill you and take it.

Your *Languages and Customs* is really broad, so I'll make it an extra keyword that starts at 13. Under it are *Pentan*, *Kralori*, *Teshnan*, *Lunar*, and *Heortling*. You can improve each of them and add new ones, but you can't raise *Languages and Customs* like a normal ability.

Your whole society loathes Chaos, so you can make *Resist Chaos* 17, not 13. Your herder helper is a healing woman. That's how the *Bison People* do it. She gets a bonus ability of *Healing Magic* at 17, but she can't fight. The warrior can fight at 17.

Bill: I would get *Fighting* at 13, but I already have *Spear Fighting* and *Sword Fighting* at 17 from my *Nomad* keyword. What should I do?

Kathy: Just pick another fighting ability to have at 13. How about *Lance Attack*, that's something a lot of *Bison People* use.

Bill: OK. What about *Bison Brain*? What can he do? I want it to be a sidekick. I looked up bison in "Creatures" and wrote down the three abilities of *Charge Foe*, *Large*, and *Strong*.

Kathy: Oh, don't waste the abilities. It is always large and strong like that. Just put down its normal ratings and give it a bonus for being a sidekick, if you want. Hmm, you've written that it can speak to your animals, so how about making *Speak to Bison* one of its abilities. What other two abilities do you want to improve?

Bill: *Charge Foe* and *Butt*, I guess, if it's always large and strong.

Kathy: OK, they'll start at the normal level for a bison, and *Speak to Bison* starts at 13. Now add the 15 points to any of those three abilities.

Bill: I'll keep it simple and just add 5 to each. And it's a magic spirit bison, of course.

Kathy: Oh? OK. It's a special bison, a conscious spirit. If it's killed you can't replace it, understand? But for now, it can act on its own, without your commands, and acts like a regular spirit ally in the rules. It can even fight on its own.

Bill: Agreed.

Kathy: Oh, and you get a relationship to your personal riding bison at 17, not 13. Is that *Bison Brain*?

Bill: Yeah, it is. So my rating is 3W? Neat.

Kathy: OK, you're also a spiritist of the *Praxian Tradition* if you want to be. You have to spend some time in the religion, but you would get a bunch more charms.

Bill: Spend time in the religion? You mean find a shaman or something every once in a while? Nah, I'll just have the common magic for now. I can always come back into the fold later.

Kathy: OK, but it will cost you 3 hero points when you do. Now for the bad news. Your guy is an excellent cavalry-type warrior, and you can do tricks on this critter's back. But if you ever have to fight on foot, not mounted on a bison, you are going to have a negative modifier against your combat abilities. Always. Got it? Also, your missile weapons are woeful. You wrote that down from your occupation, I know, but it starts at 6, like any ability not written on your sheet. That's how the *Bison People* do it. They don't use missiles. And you can't swim, so start it at 6, too.

Bill: Uh, we hate bows and arrows? OK, I won't even have one then. I'll be zero. Can I get a javelin spirit or something then?

Kathy: OK, but make it a rating of 6, that's the rating for doing something you have never done before. No spirit unless you want to change the ones you have.

Bill: No, I don't want to. How about a hero band?

Kathy: None. You don't have one. You are wandering around and will meet these guys.

Bill writes in the stats and other information. You can see the results on his character sheet.



List Method

The **list method** is simple: just make a list of the attributes and abilities you want for your hero. Write the following on a piece of paper:

- Personal Information
- Keywords
- List 10 other important abilities, followers, and special possessions. See “Abilities” on page 26 for common ability types, but note that you cannot specify more than one sidekick in your list.
- Select up to 3 flaws (see page 29) to give your hero personal obstacles and some character.

△ Steve Creates His Hero

Steve has read *Glorantha, Introduction to the Hero Wars*. He gets a rough idea of what he wants and makes up his hero using the list method. He settles on this starting hero:

Name: Hazeel

Appearance: Black eyes and hair, mahogany skin, rippling robust body, great teeth and smile

Goal: Learn to surf

Homeland: Teshnos

Occupation: Foot Soldier. From the homeland description, Steve knows that he was a private guard of a noble before he left.

Common Magic Keyword: Steve scans the sample common magic and also the specific Teshnos common magic. Nothing except Clean Clothes tempts him.

He writes down all the abilities under his homeland and occupation. So far, this has all been pretty standard. But then his desire to optimize his hero comes to the fore and he selects a string of unusual abilities:

1. Balance
2. Flirt and Seduce
3. Swimming
- 4., 5. Two retainers: 1 goonda, 1 Thoskali
6. A ring that squeezes his finger if a woman is attracted to him
7. Really nice set of clothes
8. Join the Teshnos Pantheon as a communal worshipper
9. Join the Service and Comfort Society
10. Join the cult of Vai Madar Sa as an initiate. He lists the abilities from it.

Assign Ability Ratings

Give each ability a rating. Keywords and their abilities start at 17, additional abilities at 13, and flaws as determined by the player and narrator (see pages 26-29).

Next, distribute 20 points to improve the rating of any abilities you choose (not keywords), with no more than +10 going to any one. You may not use these points to add additional abilities; that is what the list is for. It costs 1 point to raise any ability by +1. You may use 3 points to change your level of membership in a specialized religion from initiate to devotee, with your narrator's permission. Starting as a shaman may require Advanced Experience (see page 178), since a shaman usually requires at least three abilities with 11W2 ratings (see

“Shaman” in the Animism chapter, page 139).

Finally, go over your list with your narrator to finish filling out your character sheet.

△ Kathy Looks Over Hazeel's Sheet

Steve distributes 9 of his 20 extra points: +4 to Scan for Danger, +5 to Archery.

Kathy: First, you have to choose what type of foot soldier you were.

Steve: Oh, OK, he was a skirmisher. I figured that by putting points in Archery you'd get that.

Kathy: Also, um, Glorantha doesn't have surfing. No surfboards.

Steve: That's a terrible fault. I want Hazeel to invent it, then.

Kathy: I suppose he can try. Hmm, you've only got one ability under Common Magic, and you only have 9 of your 10 abilities listed. Most Teshnans follow the *Works of Chal*—do you want to as well? Yeah? OK, put “Student of Book of Well-Being 17” under Relationships, and get the *Spell of Health* from it.

Steve: I don't have any abilities left for the membership, do I?

Kathy: Yeah, because you get the pantheon from your homeland—it's automatic, you don't need to list #8. Are you still a member of both the Service and Comfort Society and Vai Madar Sa? It will take up a lot of your time.

Steve: No, he quit the Society when he became a bodyguard, but he kept the magic. But he left the unit, too—he doesn't have any loyalty to them now. I figure Hazeel is a bit of a man-about-town, maybe even a bit of a rogue.

Kathy: Well, I kind of figured that from your special abilities. Keep the Society on your character sheet in case you ever run into any of them, OK? But I won't count it as one of your ten abilities, since you're not currently a member. You left in good standing, I assume.

Steve: Yeah, he's a charming rogue! Hmm, I don't have to take *Callous*, do I? [Kathy shakes her head no.] Oh, I guess I can pick my other three common magic abilities from the Society, huh?

Kathy: If you want, sure. I like you taking the goonda, and the Thoskali hunter gives you access to another culture's skills. Tell you what, since you're integrating this character nicely into society, why don't you take one of them as a sidekick.

Steve: OK, I'll have the goonda as my sidekick, and the Thoskali is my retainer.

Kathy: Your goonda has the species keyword *Goonda*, and *Strong 5W, Sense Dangerous Animal 17*, and *Swing Through Trees 17W*. This is more than normal, but he is only semi-intelligent—more like a smart orangutan than a human—so he won't be as independent as a normal sidekick. Your Thoskali has the *Hunter* keyword, with *Jungle Lore* and stuff like that.

Steve: What about my fancy clothes, can I get bonuses for them?

Kathy: OK, you'll get a bonus for wearing these under appropriate circumstances, but they can be damaged and simply worn out from use, so their bonus will drop unless you take care of them. Now, you still get one more ability and 11 points to add, what do you want to do about that?

Name: **Hazeel**
 Player: **Steve**
 Description: Black eyes & hair, mahogany skin, rippling robust body, great teeth & smile
 Goals: Learn to surf

Hero Points: III



Keywords
 Homeland: Teshnos 17
 Occupation: Foot Soldier 17
 Specialty: Skirmisher
 Magic: Vai Madar Sa 17
 Common Magic: 17

Skills

—Teshnos 17—
 Chalite Teachings
 Dancing (socially)
 Enjoy Food
 Know Myths of
 Teshnos Pantheon
 Sit Quietly
 Speak Teshnan
 Teshnos Customs
 Teshnos Geography
 Urban Survival

—Skirmisher 17—
 Army Regulations
 Identify Foe
 Make Camp
 March
 Mass Combat (Skirmish)
 Scan for Danger +4
 Scouting +3
 Swear like a Soldier
 Shortsword Melee Combat -5
 Archery +15
 24/7 Door Lockers
 Unit Traditions

—Vai Madar Sa 17—
 Hand Archery
 Mythology of Vai Madar Sa
 Pinpoint Concentration

Balance 13
 Flirt & Seduce 13
 Handsome 13
 Swimming 10

Relationships

* Chief to Followers 13
 Former Member of the Service and Comfort Society 17
 Member of Vai Madar Sa 17
 Master of Goonda 13
 * Member of Local Vai Madar Sa Temple 17
 Love Family 17
 Revere Ancestors 17
 Student of the Book of Well-Being 17
 Worship Teshnos Pantheon 17

Hero Band

Member of:
 Awareness:
 Blessing:
 Defense:

Magical Abilities

—Common Magic 17—

(Vai Madar Sa)
 Hand-Archery charm
 Farshooting Multiarrow spell
 Sacred Archery feat

(Other)
 Clean Clothes talent
 Five Special Wine charm
 Nap Pillow charm
 Self-Moving Fan charm
 Spell of Health +3

(Magic Item)
 Ring that squeezes finger if a woman is attracted to me 13

Personality

Brave 17
 Disciplined 14
 Eclectic 17
 Enjoy Life 17
 Loyal 17
 Clean 17
 Fear Dragons 17
 Hate Akorgat the Demon 17
 Hate Kralori Red 17
 Dragon Society
 Open-minded and Accepting of All Peoples 17
 Peaceful and Unexcitable 17
 Pious towards All Forms of Worship 17
 Suspicious of Kralori 17

Followers

Retainer-Thoskali Hunter 17
 Goonda (Sidekick) 17
 -Sense Dangerous Animal 17
 -Strong 5W
 -Swing Through Trees 17W

Possessions & Wealth

Standard of Living: Common Wealth: 13
 Weapons
 Camp Equipment
 Really nice clothes 13

Steve has written down all of his keyword abilities so that he won't forget them during play, and used tally marks for his hero points. The asterisk (*) next to two relationships is a reminder that his followers' keywords and abilities are in the Followers section.

Creating a Hero “As You Go”

You can create your hero “as you go,” discovering things about him as they are needed. This is sometimes the best method if you are in a hurry, but ask your narrator first. Start with your hero’s name, his goal (if you know it), one ability that is obvious to observers, and—if possible—a keyword. Decide whether you will use the **narrative method** or the **list method** as you develop your hero further. As play goes on, you add abilities until you reach your limit: all of your keywords; 100 words (for the narrative method) or a list of 10 abilities (for the list method); and a total of 20 points added to ability ratings.

Creating your hero “as you go” has both freedom and danger. You can make your hero to suit your needs, but you also give the narrator power to impose some discoveries upon him in return.

Assign Ability Ratings

Give each ability you have written so far a rating. Keywords and their abilities start at 17, additional abilities at 13, flaws as determined by the player and narrator. When you add more abilities, they also start at 13, 17 if part of a keyword.

All rules and restrictions of the chosen character creation method apply normally to your hero. Thus, you have 20 points to distribute among your hero’s abilities now or during play, with no more than +10 going to any one ability. You can choose

a specialized magic keyword, but must pay 3 points if you want to be a devotee. And, of course, you cannot have two sidekicks or two specialized magic keywords.

△ Christine Creates Her Hero As She Goes

Christine knows little about roleplaying and nothing of Glor-antha. She has been watching her friends make heroes, listening quietly and skimming the first pages of the rulebook. When Kathy is finished with Steve she turns to Christine.

Kathy: What do you look like, anyway?

Christine: A four-foot-eight-inch woman. She’s named Jane.

Kathy: Maybe you can start with one of the prepared heroes.

Christine: Maybe... No, I kind of like this woman in the front holding that folded piece of paper. I wanna be like her.

Kathy: Hmm, we don’t really know anything about that kind of magic except the tiny bit on that page there.

Christine: Can we try anyway? Look, I can fold origami myself. [*She makes a paper rain hat.*]

Kathy: Well, that is pretty open-ended, but I guess so. We can try.

Christine smiles and tips the paper hat to her. Kathy wonders if Christine is a dummy or a genius. Further examples of Christine’s game will show how her “as you go” hero is assembled.



The example heroes, assembled and ready for adventure. The Bison Man Galan holds his spirit bison’s reins and stands next to Hengal, beloved of the goat-god Gerendetho, who readies his spear. The Vanchite swordsman Ingomar Horsefriend whispers his thoughts to Jane, who is folding a rhinoceros from three-side paper. Mr. Puma is as curious as ever but, fearing trouble, the Teshnan archer Hazel nocks an arrow and prepares to enchant it. Behind him, his goonda servant simply awaits orders: as far as he is concerned, it’s just another day with this bizarre bunch of hairless misfits.



Name: Jane
Player: Christine
Description: Small, 4' 8" tall
Goals: _____

Hero Points: 3

Keywords

Homeland: _____ 17
Occupation: _____ 17
Specialty:
Magic: Origami magic 17
Common Magic: _____ 17

Skills

Relationships

Hero Band

Member of: _____
Awareness: _____
Blessing: _____
Defense: _____

Magical Abilities

Common magic

origami magic

Personality

Followers

Possessions & Wealth

Standard of Living: _____
Wealth: _____

Note that Christine has only written her magic keywords on Jane's character sheet. She has included both the common magic keyword and her origami magic, but has no abilities written under them.

Abilities

Your hero has **abilities** that define who he is and what he can do well. Special abilities are what make your hero unique.

An ability is either mundane or magical. Skills, personality, relationships, and *Wealth* are mundane abilities. Magical abilities include talents; affinities and feats; fetishes, charms, and spirits; scriptures, blessings, curses, spells, and grimoires; and secrets. Magic can often achieve a result more easily than a mundane ability with the same rating. Possessions and even special items can be mundane or magical, depending on what they are and do.

Default Ability Rating

If your hero tries an action for which he has no relevant ability, he uses a default rating of 6. Of course, the narrator may rule instead that the hero has no chance of success, say with a foreign language.

△ Mr. Puma Plays a Harp

Frederick wants his hero to play a harp. Frederick says his hero's claws will surely help out in this. He says his natural tactile sensitivity and acute hearing will help him, of course. And he says that he has watched harpists very closely for all his life.

"Are you paying hero points to learn this?" asks Kathy.

Frederick says no. He has never done this before, so the default is 6. Although his reasons are not really good enough to give him a bonus, Kathy was amused, and gives him a +1 for all those pitiful attempts to get one, and records this on his character sheet as Play Harp 7.

Skills

A **skill** is a mundane ability that lets a character do something. This may be primarily a physical skill (such as *Climb* or *Sword Fighting*), primarily a mental skill (such as *Good Memory* or *Debate*), or a skill that could be either or both (such as *Card Shark* or *Survive Battle*).

Personality

The Personality section of your character sheet has space for notable **personality** traits. Some religions or cultures expect, encourage, or attract certain behaviors—such abilities are called **virtues**. Epic passions and strong virtues demand respect. They can command heroes' lives, causing them to do things that most people would consider foolish or crazy, or to act in unnaturally heroic ways. Like any other ability, personality abilities can be used actively by a character in a contest, although they will sometimes affect the hero as a **flaw**.

Sample Personality Traits: Afraid of Spiders, Angry, Avenge Dad's Murder, Calm, Crazy, Determined, Emotionless, Enduring, Fanatical, Fatalistic, Fearless, Focused, Frenzied, Gentle, Hate Heartlings, Implacable, Ingratiating, Inquisitive, Live for the Spirit, Love Family, Love My Wife, Obey God, Rebellious, Seek Justice for All, Seek Truth, Sensitive, Spiritual, Uncouth, Wanderlust.

Relationships

In *HeroQuest*, your hero's personal ties and commitments are quantified as **relationships**. It is good for your hero to have con-

nections that can bring help in need. Your hero will often adventure to establish new relationships or change old ones.

Relationship abilities have three parts. First write the type of relationship (perhaps Love, Hate, Member in, or Employer of); name the object of the relationship (such as Retainers, Wife, Hero Band, or Temple); and finally write the ability rating. This number measures the strength of the connection.

Employer of Groom 17

Leader of Sidekick Sonook 19

Love Family 7

Employee of Patron Sir Narib 19

Member of Sword Brothers hero band 17

Relationships can be with an individual or with a community. Your homeland and occupation suggest relationships your hero can start with. When you write each one down, decide *what kind* of relationship it is. Not everyone will have *Love Family*; instead someone may have *Ignore Temple*, and maybe your hero will be *Slavishly Devoted to a Patron*.

When a hero forms a relationship with an individual, the person is either a **follower** or a **supporting character**.

Followers

Followers are minor characters controlled by the players. For instance, your hero might start off with a groom and a bodyguard under his command. The relationship's ability rating starts at 13 (17 if the follower is listed in the Typical Followers part of a keyword), but the follower will have one or more abilities of his own. There are two types of followers: retainers and sidekicks.

Retainers have a keyword at a rating of 17. Their commitment is usually not personal, so they are paid servants, distant relatives, or the like. (Still, it is always more interesting if they have names.) Rather than having a separate relationship with each retainer, you can have one relationship (such as *Leader of Followers*) that covers all of them.

Sidekicks are more individual. They have a keyword at a rating of 17 and three abilities at starting ratings of 13 each. You can then spend a total of 15 points to increase those abilities, giving no more than +10 to any one ability. Nonhuman sidekicks may have higher natural abilities (often as part of their species keyword), but come with their own disadvantages as well.

You should give your sidekick a name and personality. You must have a separate relationship with a sidekick.

Want to Discover More? See "Followers" in the Relationships chapter, page 84.

Recording Followers

On your character sheet, you write down information about your hero's followers, and his relationship with them, in two different places.

In the Relationships section, describe the nature of the relationship with the follower. Then add the name of the person or group, and an ability rating—for example, *Master of [Follower] 17*.

Second, in the Followers section at the bottom of the character sheet write in the follower and his keyword and, if a sidekick, his additional abilities.



△ Ingomar Gets a Friend

Ingomar gained a sidekick between adventures. John decides Ingomar ran into an old friend who needs employment and companionship. He writes *Loyal to Bonniak 13* under Relationships on the character sheet. Then, in the Followers section he puts Bonniak's name with his keyword (Warrior 17) and three additional abilities (Mace Combat 19, Observant 17, Ride Horse 18).

Supporting Characters

Supporting characters are relationships controlled by the narrator. They include your hero's family, rulers, priests, and even cults and gods.

Five roles describe supporting character functions in *HeroQuest*: **adversary**, **ally**, **contacts**, **dependent**, and **patron**. They are described in the Relationships chapter on page 86. Heroes will have to fully interact with this important group of characters in order to receive help.

The narrator plays supporting characters if they appear in the game. Some have their own abilities; others do not need them because their relationship with the hero is distant.

Hero Bands

In Glorantha, heroes join together in **hero bands**. Your hero probably does not belong to one at first, but if your group of player heroes forms one it will gain significant benefits. Your narrator will help you to learn what this means, and how to become part of a hero band, during the first several sessions of play. Before that, your hero can join hero bands temporarily.

Flaws

A **flaw** is an ability that is usually a problem, not a benefit. It might be physical, like *One-Handed*; psychological, like *Angers Easily*; or behavioral, like *Drunkard*. A player might take one during character creation, or the narrator might inflict a flaw after a grievous event or a heroquest, like *Seek Revenge* or *Fears Giant Insects*. Start a hero's flaw at whatever rating you and the narrator decide upon. A flaw with a rating 13 or 17 is considered minor. How much will this hero struggle with his demons?



Flaws are story devices. They work like any other ability within the game system and can affect certain actions, maybe help kill a hated foe or make it difficult to stay hidden when that foe passes nearby. They can even be used actively as an ability in a contest in certain circumstances, although normally they are a hindrance to a character, an obstacle that he must overcome.

Removing a flaw from a character sheet is difficult, not something that can simply be done by spending hero points. Obtaining revenge might take a hero seasons or years of searching, for example, and a fear of giant insects might never be completely vanquished. A hero who seeks to overcome a flaw should first consider what he can do to improve himself and overcome possible penalties. If he is afraid of giant insects, perhaps gaining and improving a *Brave* trait will help; he may still fear giant insects, but he can offset the penalty that might give him in combat with a bonus from his *Brave* ability.

Magical Abilities

Everyone has some magic. Most people just do whatever little common magic abilities they have been taught. Your hero is exceptional, however, and will probably have a lot of magic.

Common Magic

Common magic comes from the Mortal World, and is the most basic kind of magic. You use a common magic talent, charm, feat, or spell in play to give a bonus to any ability that matches

its name. For example, *Sharpen Sword* can augment any combat ability, if you are using a sword. The sample abilities below are widespread, and some variation (whether as talent, feat, charm, or spell) is found among humans almost every-

where in Glorantha. The homeland write-ups contain additional common magic found in that land. Your hero might know any of these, or others that you create.

✦ *Sample Common Magic*: Assured Tone, Blind Foe, Extend Water Rations, Extinguish Fire, Find Lost Animal, Fix Hurt, Flickering Sword, Gain Strength, Harden Skin, Heal Arrow Wound, Heal Bone Break, Heal Chill, Heal Drowning, Heal Fever, Heal Frostbite, Heal Horse, Hide Better, Hurt Them, Kill Rat, Look Better, Marching Endurance, Melt Bronze, Overcome Cold, Point to Predator, Project Voice, Purify Bronze, Quick Parry, Refresh Grinder, Resist Heat, Scare Foe, Shape Bronze, Sharpen Axe, Sharpen Sword, Shout, Soothing Talk, Start Fire, Stop Bleeding, Strengthen Maul, Strike Foe, Transfix With Conversation, Witty Repartee.

Most people have a common magic keyword that contains several magical abilities. Unless your narrator says otherwise, you can choose five common magic abilities for your new hero. These abilities can be any combination of talents, feats, charms, and spells. A magical ability written on the character sheet but not defined as a feat, charm, or spell is assumed to be a talent within the common magic keyword. (Narrators might allow a player to leave an ability ambiguous until its nature becomes important.)

The common magic keyword starts at 17, so a starting common magic ability adds a bonus of +2 to appropriate abilities (see "Automatic Augment" in the Core Rules chapter, page 79).

✦ *Want to Discover More?* See "Common Magic" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 104. For a complete listing of all common magic lists in *HeroQuest*, see "Common Magic and Keywords" in the Index, page 280.

Where Does This Power Come From?

You can read a system of symbols, called runes, that give you magic. Remnants of a long-lost magical language can be found throughout Glorantha, expressed as those runes. No one knows the whole language, and most people are possessive of their parts. No one taught you this, but you have always known the meaning of certain signs that you have seen cut into wooden slats, painted over doors, sewn into clothing, or carved on sticks. The rune held in hand empowers the magic when its name is spoken, its lines traced, or its meaning concentrated on.

✦ *Want to Discover More?* See the Runes appendix, page 264.

Your Hero
is your interface with the magical worlds.

Specialized Religions and Magic

Homelands give a variety of magical organizations (religions, cults, practices, orders, and schools) that provide specialized magic keywords. Enter the organization name as a keyword, and write down magic obtained under it. If you start the game as a member of a magical organization, you treat it as a normal keyword, albeit usually with restrictions imposed by the religion. However, if you join the organization during play, you do not automatically gain all of these abilities; consult the appropriate magic chapter for details. If your hero does not start off in one of these religions, he will be able to join one later. In the examples that follow, Hazeel joins such a group.

Possessions and Wealth

Possessions are those prized and special things that people have. Your hero's possessions include any equipment, clothing, goods, or even cash that he carries with him. He can use them to aid him, and can trade them for other goods or services, such as a meal or a place to stay for the night.

Each character also has a *Wealth* rating that represents the sum of his assets and social status. Assets encompass property, commercial ventures, and large goods as well as less tangible resources such as rich relatives, generous patrons, and owed favors. Social status is your standing within the community. *Wealth* is not a hoard of silver coins; it is not about spending money, but about standards of living, public image, personal appearances, and financial dealings. It is not used to out and out buy something. Instead, it can influence people economically, gain your hero a line of credit, impress a visitor, acquire prestige, and so on. If you want to buy something, think about what you are asking for. If it amounts to a hero improvement, your coins can be the rationale, but you must still spend hero points (see page 58). If you just want some ale after a long adventure, remember that getting a mug of ale in a bar is something no self-respecting hero should ever need to worry about having the cash (or wiles) for.

An average person's starting *Wealth* is 13, which reflects a "common" standard of living. Everyone knows what rich and poor are, and how rich the rich people are. *Wealth* may come from several sources, including income from land use, herds of cows, and of course the work you do in your occupation. You don't need to know the full extent of these sources, but it can be useful to know *what* they are. This can help the story by indicating what kind of goods are readily available to your hero in a pinch (such as food to a farmer). Additionally, they help the narrator determine if your *Wealth* is likely to suffer in the face of disaster befalling the community: a drought might affect the wealth of a rich farmer, but not the income gained by a petty noble from the peasants working his lands in a distant kingdom.

Your hero's occupation keyword determines his starting *Wealth*. If he leaves that profession, his source of *Wealth* may be severed.

Special and Magical Items

Your hero may have inherited, won, found, or been given a special object that helps him to solve problems. The most obvious examples in a fantasy world are the familiar weapon or suit of armor, but any item can have an ability. It might be magical or simply well made. Either way, such items are abilities, and begin with a rating of 13. Invent a name or description for your item. Learn what secret ability or curse it may have later during play.

Like any ability, the rating of a special or magical item can be improved. This does not necessarily mean that the item becomes more powerful. An item might be intrinsically powerful, but perhaps the hero does not know how to use it properly, or is only partially attuned to it. As the rating increases, more of the item's power becomes available.

Sample Special Items: A trained horse, a trained bat, a Wyrms Friend quill pen, an inquiring parakeet, a knife with attitude, a set of boots that leave no footprints, boots that let you walk on water, a wig that changes your face, a knife that can cut anything, a flint knife of great beauty and sharpness, a family heirloom sword, a page of a book long lost, a rock from the beach of creation, a shelled creature that whistles when danger is near, a clay pot that always has some water in it, an idol that changes color to foretell weather, a rattle that makes you dance, a pot of face paint that is half red and half black, a centaur's bow, from the ancestors a basket of living vines, a cow's eye that you can see through as if it was yours, a ring that squeezes your finger if a woman is attracted to you, a stone that gets warm when gold is nearby, a rope that sticks to whatever it strikes and disconnects on command, a bottle that contains twenty ways to suffer, a tiny net that can stretch to be huge, a cut flower that is always in bloom, a lightning band, a tiny seed that sings a holy song, a rock that croaks if danger comes while you are sleeping, a bag with a healing song from your great-great-grandmother, a wolf-skin that protects better than an iron helmet, a wooden medallion from before Time that makes elves friendly to the wearer, a miniature painting of a person who lived a thousand years ago, a rope necklace your ancestor wore at the Dawning, a belt that was worn by a survivor of the Battle of Grizzly Peak, a rock that will always strike what it is thrown at, the tiny skull of an extinct animal.

Wealth and Standard of Living

Standard of Living	Wealth	Examples
Minimal	6	Hungry people, such as menials, prisoners, slaves, drafted common laborers, beggars.
Common	13	Most people, including farmers, minor crafters, civilized soldiery, peddlers, boat captains, lesser priests, most shamans, journeyman adepts, village clergy.
Prosperous	5W	Master crafters, professionals, shop-owning merchants, large traders, ship captains, knights, thanes, weapon-thanes, minor nobility, notable champions, powerful priests or shamans or adepts.
Rich	15W	Nobles, clan chieftains, counts, earls, important priests, heads of wizardry schools.
Very Rich	10W2	High nobles, tribal kings, high priests, dukes, bishops.

Occupations

Here are thirteen starting occupations to choose from. Your homeland keyword (see page 36) lists the occupations available there, and your narrator may also offer guidance.

Once you have decided, write down the occupation on your character sheet and later fill in the details, such as specific abilities your hero excels at, when needed.

Format for Occupation Keywords

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Suggestions for ways a member of this profession might become involved in activities in the *HeroQuest* game.

Appropriate Homelands: A list of homelands in *HeroQuest* where the occupation appears.

Abilities: Typical activities of the occupation, the things a person can do when they have been in it.

Typical Personality Traits: Usual temperament of a member of the occupation. A hero may take any, all, or none of these as abilities.

Typical Relationships: Communities or people that can be counted as a relationship. A hero may take any, all, or none of these as abilities.

Typical Followers: Typical, suggested, or possible followers. You can choose to make these into either retainers or sidekicks.

Standard of Living: Typical living standard provided by the occupation (see previous page).

Typical Equipment: Typical equipment carried or owned by members of this occupation.

Cavalry Soldier

Cavalry soldiers are professional warriors from civilized homelands. Unlike nomads or mounted warriors, they are trained and equipped by an organization, not from their own resources. Soldiers must be part of the army, which expects obedience. Officers must obey the commands of their leaders and relay them to their underlings.

Cavalry soldiers must specialize as one of three types: regular, shock, or skirmishing cavalry. Regular cavalry wear some armor, and may use both missile weapons to skirmish and melee weapons for close combat. Shock cavalry are heavily armored, intended to break up enemy formations with lance charges, then

cut them to pieces hand-to-hand. Skirmishers shower their foes with arrows or javelins but avoid close combat, relying on their speed and maneuverability. Skirmishers' horses carry less weight, and so skirmishers are generally faster than regular horse soldiers, who are in turn faster than shock cavalry.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Starting player heroes are likely to be ex-soldiers, especially if you play in an all-military campaign. Heroes might be cast into adventure because their term of service is over, they were wounded, their unit was disbanded or exterminated, or perhaps they have deserted.

Appropriate Homelands: Dara Happa, Esrolia, Esvular, Grazer, Seshnela, Tarsh.

Abilities: Army Regulations, Camp, Care for Horse, Identify Foe, Riding, Scan for Danger, Scouting, Swear like a Trooper, [Unit Style Mass Combat], [Unit Melee Weapon], [Unit Missile Weapon], [Unit] Traditions.

Fighting Skills: Modify cavalry soldier starting abilities based on specialization:

Regular—No bonuses or penalties.

Shock—Disciplined +3, Melee Weapon +5, Scouting -3; no Unit Missile Weapon.

Skirmisher—Disciplined -3, Melee Weapon -5, Missile Weapon +5, Scouting +3.

Typical Personality Traits: Brave, Combative, Disciplined, Loyal, Obedient.

Typical Relationships: to Commander or Unit; to Old Comrades.

Ex-soldiers usually have no obligatory or contractual relationships, but commonly form lifelong friendships in the ranks. Retired soldiers often maintain strong contact with their military roots.

Typical Followers: Horse. A squire or groom may accompany a cavalry soldier from some places, and typically has his own small horse too.

Standard of Living: Common.

Typical Equipment: A horse, weapons. Generally:

Regular—Agile horse, melee weapons, missile weapons, medium armor.

Shock—Strong horse, melee weapons, heavy armor.

Skirmisher—Fast horse, missile weapons, light melee weapons, light armor.

Entertainer

Every society needs distraction from everyday life, and entertainers make a living out of providing it, whether diverting the commoners with ribald songs and conjuring tricks or else performing plays and reciting verse to the elite. Entertainers are either patronized or freelance. Patronized entertainers have an employer, usually at court. Freelancers live a wandering life, and may have joined a band for companionship, protection, or even to chronicle their deeds.

They spread news on their travels and their songs, stories, and dramas remind people of their traditions. Many work as individuals, but others band together into troupes. Most entertainers have a specialty, such as minstrel, bard, singer, acrobat, juggler, or poet; your hero should select such a specialty. Entertainments that are common in one homeland are a wonderful novelty in another.

Choose Your Horse

Four regular kinds of horses are available; pick only one. Any can help you in combat.



Agile Horse: Sure-Footed 3W.

Fast Horse: Run Fast 20W.

Long Distance Horse: Run Long Distance 3W.

Strong Horse: Strong 12W.

Does your horse have a special ability? Maybe it comes when you whistle or has an additional ability to fight? Such special animals must be listed as followers (see page 28).

Most horses in Glorantha are too small to bear much armor into battle. Even cavalry chargers often tire quickly when ridden by big people wearing lots of armor. Shock troops are thus relatively rare and will stand out.

Fighting Skills: Modify foot soldier starting abilities based on specialization:

Archer—Disciplined +3, Unit Melee Weapon –5, Unit Missile Weapon +5.

Ordinary—No bonuses or penalties.

Shock—Disciplined +3, Scouting –3, Unit Melee Weapon +5; no Unit Missile Weapon.

Skirmisher—Disciplined –3, Scouting +3, Unit Melee Weapon –5, Unit Missile Weapon +5.

Typical Personality Traits: Brave, Callous, Disciplined, Loyal.

Typical Relationships: to Commander or Unit; to Old Comrades.

Typical Followers: Infantry soldiers of note or renown may have a couple of people following them around after discharge. Ambitious cousins wanting to learn the trade will lug stuff around, servants can be hired, and friends from the service may be hanging on.

Standard of Living: Common.

Typical Equipment: One or two weapons, armor, and camp equipment. Generally:

Archer—Missile weapon, light armor, sword and shield.

Ordinary—Melee weapons, medium armor; may have a javelin or other missile weapon.

Shock—Melee weapons, heavy armor. Also, some form of exotic loot is possible.

Skirmisher—Missile weapons only; may have a knife or dagger for personal defense.

Healer

The world offers many sources of harm. Healers repair the injured, cure the ill, and soothe the troubled. They are vital after the battle or tending the sick of the village. They know all kinds of basic care.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Healers have plenty to do in *HeroQuest* and are welcomed by most adventuring groups. Many armies have healers attached to units, thus offering those opportunities for adventure stories.

Appropriate Homelands: Every homeland has healers. The benevolent nature of healers tends to allow cross-fertilization of cults and practices.

Abilities: Calm Patient, Carry Wounded, First Aid, Herbalist, Make Medicine, Recognize Disease, Treat Disease, Treat Poison.

Typical Personality Traits: Calm, Comforting, Empathetic.

Typical Relationships: to Community or Patients.

Typical Followers: Accomplished healers typically have a student or two who serves in exchange for training.

Standard of Living: Common.

Typical Equipment: First aid kit with bandages, salves, and ordinary medicines.



Hunter

Hunters ambush, stalk, or trap animals for a living, working beyond the edges of the wilds where people normally do not go. They know the habits and habitats of animals. They can prepare animals for food and goods, such as hides, fur, or other special parts. The bow and arrows are the most widespread hunting weapons.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Hunters have useful survival abilities. Hunters often serve as scouts for the military, outriders for traders, and bandits.

Appropriate Homelands: Bison People, Grazer, Heortling, Puma People, Seshnela, Tarsh, Teshnos.

Abilities: Archery, Butcher, Dodge, Hide, [Individual or Mass Hunting Style], Keen Senses, Know Animals, Know Local Area, Retrace Path, Skirmish Combat, Track, Wilderness Survival.

Typical Personality Traits: Patient, Solitary, Wily.

Typical Relationships: to Hunting Band.

Typical Followers: Most hunting involves teamwork, and a couple of followers are common. They can carry equipment and game, set up camp, help out on watch, and so on. Alternatively, ask your narrator if you can have a pack of hunting dogs (or hunting cats) as a retainer (Hunting Dogs 17) or a single dog as a sidekick (Hunting Dog 17, with *Help Hunt* as one of the three additional abilities).

Standard of Living: Minimal.

Typical Equipment: Bow and arrows, traps, survival gear, furs and other spoils of the hunt.

Merchant

Merchants buy and sell food, goods, or even exotic imports. Some are specialists who deal with particular commodities, others trade in anything and everything; some may be happy working out of one market, others travel widely (usually on a regular route), but all work with an eye for opportunity and a nose for business.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Merchants might leave their shops to find new markets because they went out of business, because they are peddlers, or they are looking for a new source of goods to buy.

Appropriate Homelands: Dara Happa, Esrolia, Esvular, Heortling, Seshnela, Tarsh, Teshnos.

Abilities: Bargain, Carry Heavy Loads, Cudgel Fighting or Staff Fighting, Estimate Market Value, Know Customers, Know Local Area, Load Pack Animal, Persuasive, Tend Pack Animal.

Typical Personality Traits: Canny, Eloquent, Entrepreneurial, Outgoing, Profit-Motivated, Shrewd.

Typical Relationships: Loyal to Customers; Member of [Trade Guild].

Typical Followers: Poor peddlers have none; others may have a beast of burden (perhaps a donkey, mule, or ox) and a couple of helpers.

Standard of Living: Common (although all of course seek a higher standard of living).

Typical Equipment: Trade goods, pack animal, staff, perhaps a small shop or wagon.

Nomad

Nomads ride upon beasts and do not live in one place. They follow herds, either domestic or wild, and trade their goods to foreign merchants. Life is difficult, typically in harsh terrain, and the surviving people are generally tough.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: The nomad nations of Glorantha are restless, and many young riders travel far and wide. Some nomad leaders have sent spies and scouts to other lands. Perhaps you are sick of being poor. Did your herd die, was your family murdered, or did you flee a battle?

Appropriate Homelands: Bison People, Grazer.

Abilities: Archery, Care for [Herd Beast], Find Good Pasture, Hardy, Herding, Know [Land], Listen, Ride [Beast], Sleep in Saddle, Spear Fighting, Sword Fighting, Trick Riding.

Typical Personality Traits: Confident, Free-Spirited, Reliable.

Typical Relationships: Special steeds may merit an individual relationship.

Typical Followers: A nomad usually has a servant or assistant, who has his own mount. You can list a special steed as a follower.

Standard of Living: Common.

Typical Equipment: Steed, rope, weapons, place in the family tent. See page 31 for information on choosing a horse (or page 39 for information on your bison, if you are one of the Bison People).

Petty Noble

Nobles are individuals born into privilege. Sense of justice or honor steps aside so aristocracy can maintain power. Family (with ancestral roots, secret history, and social obligations) is the only requirement to belong. Cultural differences shape the details, but nobles generally obtain privilege by assuming social obligations such as protecting constituents, regulating trade, and coordinating the public good. Petty nobles are the only ones likely to adventure; important nobles have serious obligations and are too busy to leave their duties to be player heroes.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Social climbers and younger children of rich families are great candidates for heroes. Petty nobles often seek success through adventure and intrigue, traveling foreign lands, undertaking dangerous ventures, in their pursuit of glory and reputation.

Appropriate Homelands: Dara Happa, Esrolia, Esvular, Seshnela, Tarsh, Teshnos.

Abilities: Dueling, Exert Authority, Grooming, Identify Social Status, Politics, Protocol, Ride, Sing (or some other refined pastime).

Typical Personality Traits: Ambitious, Aristocratic, Elitist, Snobbish.

Typical Relationships: Court Contacts; to Family or Noble House.

Typical Followers: A body servant, a groom, and a bodyguard are common for petty nobles.

Standard of Living: Prosperous. But, playing a rich hero is a privilege, and you should expect your narrator to limit his access to his assets, at least to start with. He might receive a small annual stipend, enough for him to live on and keep a few retainers, but not enough to support all his friends (a.k.a., the other player heroes).

Typical Equipment: A horse, weapons, fine clothes.

Sailor

Sailors are tied to life on their ships. They may be captains, crew members, or boatmen with their own smaller crafts. Sailors are naval specialists who travel over the waters. They must be prepared to brave the elements and accept that life for a sailor can be full of excitement, yet also often very short.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Sailors are obvious choices for coastal and sea-based campaigns. They often have the wanderlust, and may even be found far from sea. Sailors could be adventurers, wanderers, and fugitives from justice or simply carrying on the ways of their families or communities.

Appropriate Homelands: Esrolia, Esvular, Heortling (Heortland only), Seshnela.

Abilities: Agile, Boating or Sail [Ship type], Brawling or Cutlass Fighting or Dagger Fighting, Climb, Endure Weather, Hold Drink, Know Local Waterways or Know Sea, Navigate by Stars, Seamanship, Swim, Tie Knots.

Typical Personality Traits: Boisterous, Dour, Superstitious, Swashbuckling, Wanderlust.

Typical Relationships: to Captain or Ship; to Fellow Sailors.

Typical Followers: None, in general. Maybe an old friend hangs around to help out his cleverer shipmate.

Standard of Living: Common.

Typical Equipment: Dagger, rope, trinkets brought back from distant journeys.

Scholar

Some people seek learning, for its own sake or for the power or wealth it can bring. Scholars have knowledge and lore, oral in some tribal societies, more often as a specialized written knowledge in urban lands. Scholars work as administrators, advisors, and teachers. Most are literate and supported by a patron, whether a chieftain, rich man, or the government. Scholars usually lack survival skills, but their wisdom and their hunger for learning can make them valuable allies.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Adventuring scholars might be off on their own, seeking new information, recording dying cultures, seeking objects or secrets of power, or even running from the hectic city life to the idylls of the barbaric frontier. Home-loving scholars might be ousted out under instruction from their patrons. Maybe they were ejected from libraries forever, scarred by reading something from the Forbidden Library, or are haunted by ghosts of lost reference works.

Appropriate Homelands: Dara Happa, Esrolia, Esvular, Heortling, Seshnela, Tarsh, Teshnos.

Abilities: History, Know Customs of Strangers, Know Trivia, Make Writing Materials, Memorize Text, Read [Language], Speak [Other Language], Write [Language].

Typical Personality Traits: Authoritative, Curious, Pompous.

Typical Relationships: to Patron.


Typical Followers: A scholar will commonly have a servant, apprentice, or student to help him.

Standard of Living: Common.


Typical Equipment: Books or other forms of written text, writing equipment.



Puma People
 Shapechanging cat-human people, at home wherever they roam.




Dara Happa
 Civilized, urban elitists, the greatest people of a great empire that is tens of thousands of years old.




Tarsh
 Newly sophisticated barbarian land, the leading edge of the mighty Lunar Empire.



Bison People
 Primitive animal-riding nomads who inhabit the Wastes of Prax, which they call the Greatlands.




Grazer
 Once nomadic barbarian nobles, who naturally rule over lesser people as most men rule over beasts.




Heortling
 Barbarians who worship unruly, sometimes violent storm gods, and who value freedom more than life itself.



Seshnela
 Grim knights of a warlord kingdom, conservative adherents of an equally grim faith.




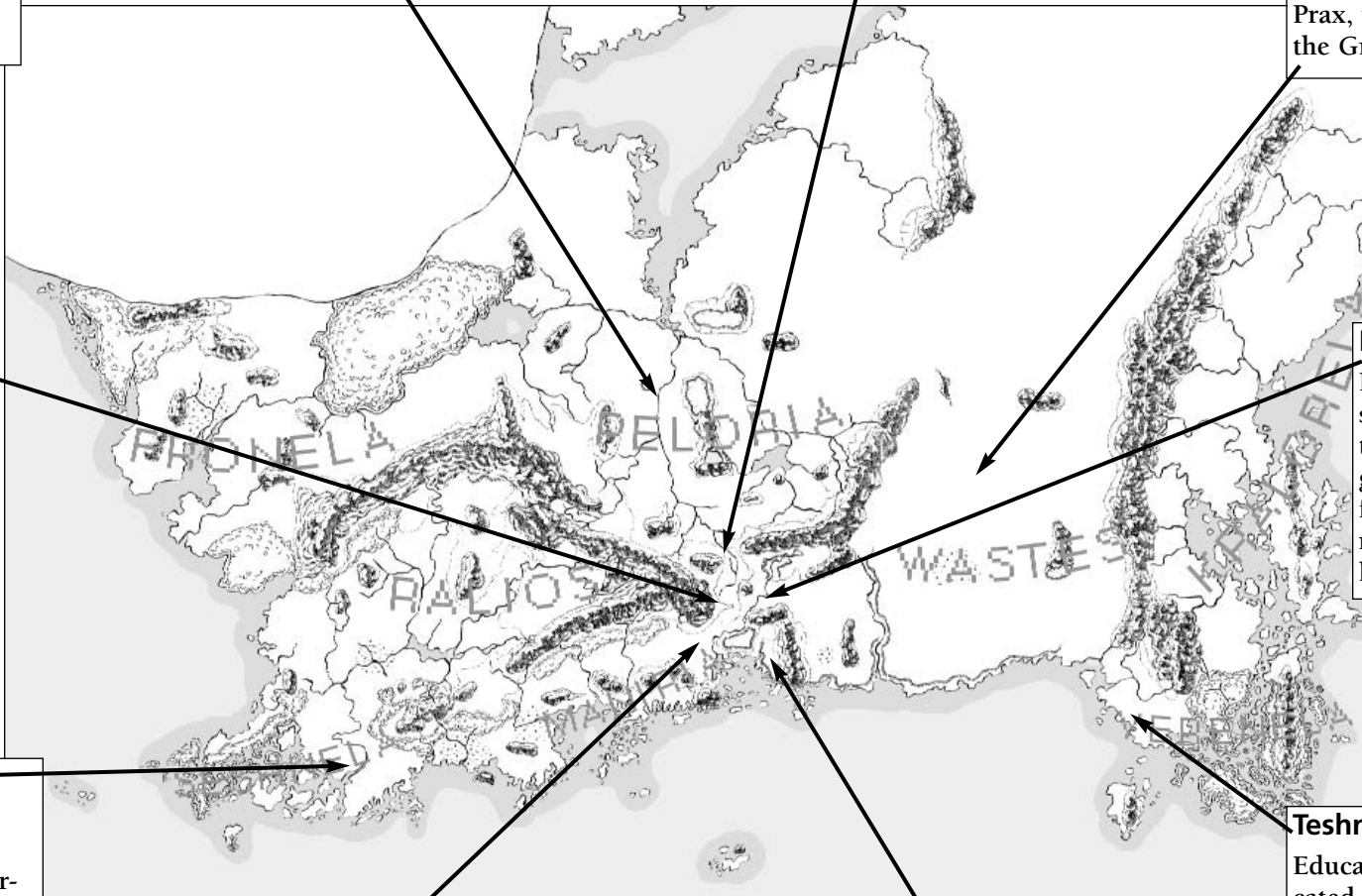
Esrolia
 Advanced barbarian queendom, stable and diverse, urbanized and earthy.



Esvular
 Sophisticated urban people in the throes of religious expansion and political turmoil.



Teshnos
 Educated, sophisticated city-dwellers who worship noble gods and practice arcane arts.

Homelands

Your hero's homeland is his beginning. It taught him what he is and what he is not, how to live, has shown him myths that reveal knowledge of the Other Side, and has given him the skills and magic he needs to survive. It gives meaning and context to his actions, whether he wishes it to or not.

Adventurers can, and will, come from every place in Glor-antha. A universal hostility will envelop the whole world. It is starting now. Ten homelands are presented that breed heroes in the early Hero Wars of Dragon Pass. Check with your narrator to see if other homelands are available to you.

Each homeland tells you who the people are, the story they tell about their origins, common and specialized religions worshipped in that homeland, and why a hero may have left home to join the maelstrom of the Hero Wars. Each also provides a homeland keyword, a religion keyword (which establishes the basic benefits of community membership), and a list of sample specialized religions for heroes to choose from.

Format for Homeland Keywords

Occupations Available: Choose your occupation from those found in your homeland.

Native Abilities: Typical things that a person from this homeland can do. Some homelands produce people inept at particular abilities, so some abilities will be lower than normal or recorded as flaws on your character sheet.

Typical Personality Traits: Typical traits of a member of that homeland. Your hero may take any, all, or none of these as abilities.

Typical Relationships: Regular communities or people that a hero is expected to maintain a connection with. Your hero may have any, all, or none of these as abilities. You are encouraged to give your hero variations, so that he might have *Distant from Family* instead of *Love Family* as part of his keyword, if it is appropriate to his background.

Magic: The main kinds of magic practiced in the homeland and the religions that provide it.

Common Magic—Each homeland provides one or more sample common religions with typical powers, but players can choose any common magic abilities they wish, and are not limited to this list.

Specialized Religions—Each homeland has a dominant religion, and your hero is a member of that religion

Background

Everyone is from someplace, and your hero is rooted in one of the many homelands of Glor-antha. Read your hero's homeland write-up, which details common experiences and attitudes of people raised in that area. Your hero need not embody all of these attitudes, but he will be considered unusual if he varies too much.

Once you know your homeland, decide how your hero feels about it. Is he from the city or a farm? Are his parents still alive? Does he have siblings? What childhood events shaped him? Maybe you do not know the answer. This is fine, and fits right into the structure of the game. *Hero-Quest* is about discovery: you will find out more about your hero as you play.



unless you state that he is not. Each specialized religion has a religion keyword, whose abilities are added to those of your hero's homeland keyword. Once you are familiar with specialized magic, your hero can join one of the sample cults, practices, saintly orders, or wizardry schools (provided under each specialized religion as *suggestions* of common entities worshipped by each occupation found in that homeland).

Common Names: A sampling of male and female names: choose one for your hero or just get a feel for the style.

Format for Religion Keywords

Abilities: Typical things that a member of this religion learns or does.

Virtues: Desired personality traits of the religion. Your hero may take any, all, or none of these as abilities.

Relationships: Mundane relationships that a member of the religion normally has. Your hero may have any, all, or none of these as abilities.

Magic: The specific magical abilities available to basic members (communal worshippers, spiritists, or lay members) of the religion. Generally, your hero will get all of these as part of the keyword.

Other Side: The Otherworld home of the religion. Worshipers usually travel there during holy day ceremonies.

This is all you need to play.

In some cases, more information is available about a homeland if you want to delve more deeply, but that is voluntary. It is just as valid to find out about these homelands as you play your hero, interpreting details as you wish.

Homeland: Bison People

Who are you? Do you know the Way of Waha?

Bison People are tough nomads who ride and herd wild bison and other animals. Their relationship to their herd is not that of a farmer to domesticated animals, but that of a kinsman. The herds range across the parched Greatlands upon their eternal natural cycles, and the humans protect them. The animals are not tame, but they allow the riders to feed upon them because of ancient pacts.

Prax is the ancestral homeland, just east of Dragon Pass, but most Praxians live further east in the Greatlands. Outsiders call this place the Wastelands because it is mostly chaparral and desert. Wooded areas are found in the few river valleys and oases. Natural predators are dangerous, but chaotic monsters make it even worse. Even nature is dangerous. Storms of ice and snow, grinding sand, or even poisonous metals burst from the ground without warning. Rivers are irregular and treacherous, prone to flash floods.

Men are warriors, bachelor outriders until they prove themselves capable of tending a herd; and women are mothers and healers, bearers of life. In general men manifest the forces of war, violence, destruction, and death, while women manifest powers of peace, life, sustenance, healing, and fertility.

Family means parents, children, and siblings. Families stay together and share a herd, gathering seasonally in large groups where they worship, trade, and arrange marriages. Young men go away to join their wife's herd.

Metallurgy does not exist and wood is scarce. Rock is common, and anyone can work it to make tools, though only men can gather it safely. Many items are made from bone.

Bison People Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Nomad.

Men only—Hunter, Warrior.

Women only—Healer.

Native Abilities: Bison Husbandry, Bison People Customs, Geography of Prax and the Greatlands, Herding, Leather Working, Live in the Chaparral, Recognize Chaos, Ride Bison, Speak Praxian, Work Bone and Rock.

Men Only—Butchering and Skinning, Find Tool Rocks.

Women Only—Gather Sacred Plants, Know Healing Herb Lore, Tend Herd Animals.

Native Flaws: Can't Swim (start at 6); Poor at Missiles (start at 6); Riding is a way of life, so many foot-bound activities receive a modifier of -10.

Typical Personality Traits: Avoid Immersion in Water, Fear Dragons, Hate Chaos.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Family; to Personal Herd Beast; to Shaman.

Magic: Common magic, Praxian Tradition (animism).

Common Names:

Men—Barzaad, Bimabwe, Caylash, Jaldon, Joshfar, Kagrunner, Kareel, K'ruta, Maharo, Mokwaha, N'krun, Orgwaha, Shulkan, Somsadkei, Talkil, Wahagrim, Yazurkial.

Women—Adelsa, Delenda, Egajia, Ernyne, Kranaka, Lalira, Norayeep, Saberak, Walyne, Varaema.

Origin

Genert, Son of the Creator, made the world. The world was inhabited by giants then. But Chaos came and destroyed, polluted, and diminished everything. That is why everyone from Prax has a cultural virtue of *Hate Chaos*. The religion of the Bison People is the Praxian Tradition.

Traditional tribes have strict gender roles. All men worship Waha, and no women do. Waha taught everyone how to live in the world. He is present in men, in their weapons, in the bulls of the herd, and in the spirits of the tradition. Women worship Eiritha, the Herd Mother, whose daughter founded the herds of the Bison People. She is present in women, in the cows of the herd, and in the spirits of the tradition.

Common Religions

Survival Tricks

These are talents that Waha taught to everyone, even slaves, captives, and visitors.

R Sample Talents: Cure Cattle Disease, Destroy Chaos, Fight Well, Find Water, Hide Trail, Kill Hyena, Kill Lion, Kill Ticks, Listen Hard, Protect from Sandstorm, Protect My Bison, Running, Stop Bleeding, Stop Wind.

Cult Societies

Many small cult societies exist among the Bison People and other animal nomads. People generally belong to at least one.

Big Hungry Gray One

R Feat—Stop Smells and Sounds.

R Charms—Find Water, Healing, Hide Trail.

R Spell—Bash Essence.

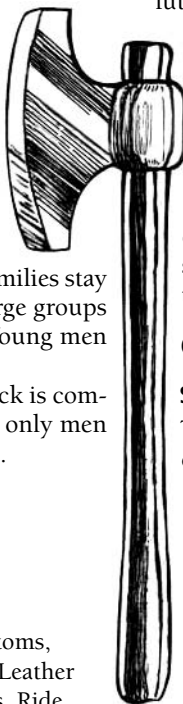
Horn Dweller

R Feat—Stay Awake.

R Charms—Drive Out Disease, Listen Hard.

Kneebone Society

R Talents—Protect from Broos, Protect from Copper Sand Storm, Shout like an Arrow.



This land is harsh, its pickings slim. What do I need? A sharp spear, a strong woman, the shaman's strongest fetishes, a green plain, and this great beast between my thighs. All else is mine to take today and throw away tomorrow.

Little Bush Brother

- ✦ Charms—Fight Well, Cure Cattle Disease.
- ✦ Spells—Destroy Chaos, Point at Food, Protect from Sandstorm, Protect My Bison.

Sacred Hoof Friend

- ✦ Talents—Healing, Running, Second Aid to Animals.

“You Who Helps Me”

- ✦ Feats—Destroy Godling, Fight Well.
- ✦ Spells—Kill Hyena, Kill Lion, Kill Ticks, Stop Bleeding.

“You Out There Listening”

- ✦ Feat—Big Healing.
- ✦ Charm—Stop Wind.
- ✦ Spell—Stay Afloat.

Specialized Religion—Praxian Tradition

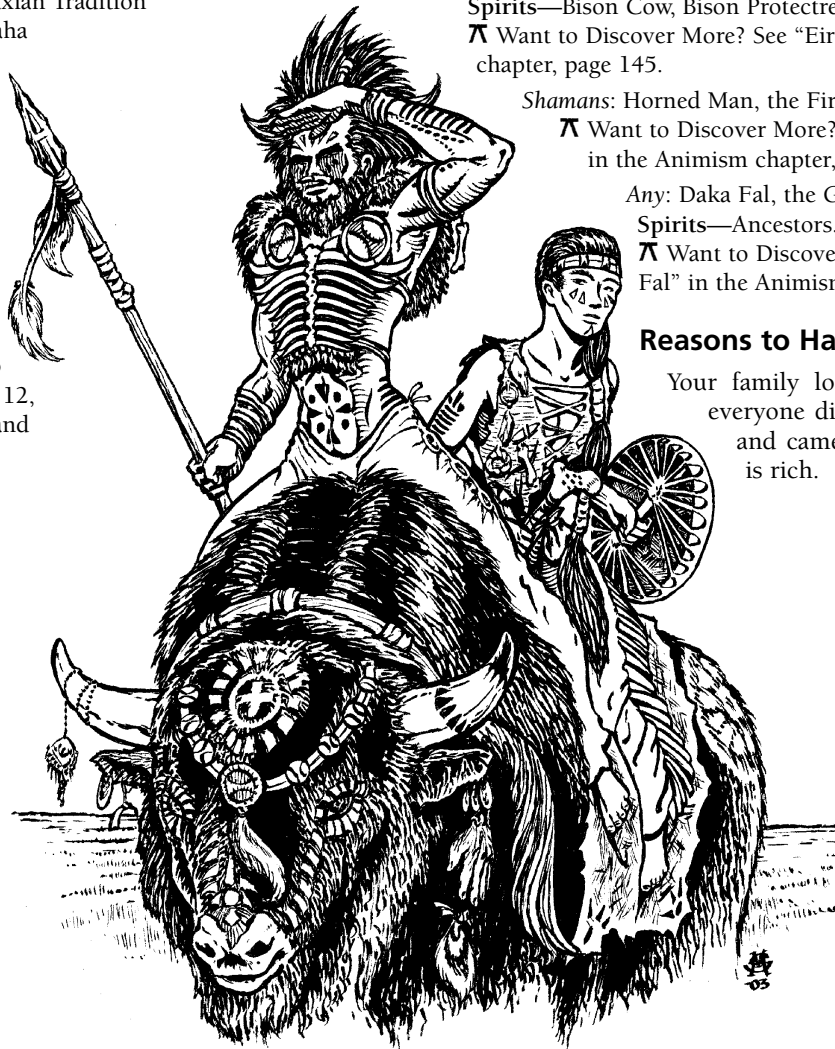
Most people join the dominant Praxian Tradition, which is gender-differentiated. The primary male practice is Waha, the primary female practice is Eiritha. Your hero is probably a spiritist of the tradition, and so gains the benefit of the Praxian Tradition keyword, below. Most adults are practitioners of the Eiritha Practice (women) or Waha Practice (men).

Praxian Tradition Keyword

Abilities: Knot-Reading, Praxian Tradition Knowledge, Worship Waha and Eiritha.

Virtues: Conservative, Pious, Strong-Willed, Tough.

Magic: Tradition spirits (members usually start with 5 charms):
▣ Survival Spirits—Endure Elements 7 to 15, Find Water 6 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Resist Enemy Magic 9 to 2 \mathbb{L} , Ride without Tiring 12, Sense Spirits 19, Withstand Damage 9 to 16.



Your Bison

You have a favorite war bison to ride, and perhaps some others if the narrator allows it. But take good care of them, because replacements are not readily available.

Your bison is *Large* and *Strong* at 10 \mathbb{L} each, and has *Charge Foe* at 7 \mathbb{L} . (For more information, see “Bison” in the Creatures chapter, page 207.) Does your bison have a special ability? Maybe it comes when you whistle or has an additional ability to fight? Such special animals must be designated as followers (see page 28).



Other Side: Between lives, Bison People rest in the land of the wondrous dead called the Wide Plains with Waha and Eiritha. The bodies of Eiritha’s worshippers are buried in unmarked sites, whilst those of Waha’s followers are burned. Without proper rites the dead become hostile ghosts.

Sample Majestic Spirits of the Praxian Tradition

Men: Waha, the Founder

Spirits—Brother Dog, Killstick, Trail Seeker.

✦ Want to Discover More? See “Waha” in the Animism chapter, page 146.

Women: Eiritha, the Herd Mother

Spirits—Bison Cow, Bison Protectress, Herd Mother.

✦ Want to Discover More? See “Eiritha” in the Animism chapter, page 145.

Shamans: Horned Man, the First Shaman

✦ Want to Discover More? See “Horned Man” in the Animism chapter, page 146.

Any: Daka Fal, the Great Ancestor

Spirits—Ancestors.

✦ Want to Discover More? See “Daka Fal” in the Animism chapter, page 145.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Your family lost its main herd and everyone dispersed. You survived, and came here where the grass is rich.

Homeland: Dara Happa

Sun-glow and Lod-warm to you, foreigner! Where do you come from, where do you go?

Dara Happa is a proud, ancient civilization with teeming cities ruled by powerful elite families. The Sun God made it, and his declarations still rule it. He declared Dara Happa should have castes, so your hero's profession is determined by the family profession. Your cavalry hero comes from a cavalry family, your merchant hero from a merchant family, and even your thief hero from a family of thieves. Dara Happa is patriarchal. Women are kept in their place. (Women who disagree may now join the Lunar religion, an option that was not available before the Moon rose.) Dara Happa is part of the Lunar Empire.

All families are part of a league. Most leagues include families of several occupations. Leagues were established ages ago and rarely change. Many have acquired peculiar and special benefits and problems over the years.

Leagues are joined into associations. Associations are like large leagues, organized by a noble family that oversees them all. Associations often gain or lose leagues, and noble families are often leaders of several associations. Even a small city has several traditional associations, with others across the surrounding countryside. Large cities have many associations.

Dara Happa Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Shock, Skirmisher), Entertainer (Dancer, Flautist, Harpist, Singer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Shock, Skirmisher), Healer, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief.

Native Abilities: Cudgel Fighting or Dagger Fighting, Dara Happan Customs, Dara Happan Geography, [Home City] Politics, Know Place in Society, Speak Dara Happan, Urban Survival.

Typical Personality Traits: Conservative, Fear Dragons, Loathe Orlanthi Religion, Scorn Lunar Religion.

Typical Relationships: to Association; to Family; to League; to Temple.

Magic: Common magic, Solar Pantheon (theism).

Common Names:

Men—Anerash, Boshukevan, Greshvudros, Khorkenus, Khorvenazelm, Labgatha, Lukaresh, Manalaketh, Murhardavu, Ordanesdaves, Vanyoradach.

Women—Amena, Chalda, Delrya, Hilla, Jelvera, Kassia, Mari, Naqia, Shani, Tera.

Origin

The Sky Gods made the world and rule it. Deities descended to earth from the sky, materializing and enlivening the world. They made people, a perfect society, and ruled in the Golden

Age. Then bad gods, the Underworld beings, Otherworld entities, and nonhumans came and destroyed the good. Now Dara Happan people struggle for the Light.

Common Religions

People Talents

Everyone carries little baked clay figurines or shapes, stamped with magic signs, that are the source of much common magic in Dara Happa.

R *Sample Talents:* Avoid Bad Winds, Dart against Wizards, Dull Hunger, Fall in Love, Find a Job, Fix My Sister, Hide in the Dark, Knock Trolls, Light in Darkness, Magic Torch, Purify Food, Purify Water, Roof House, Run in Crowds, Scamper over Walls, See Clearly, Sprint, Tolerate Dull Work.

League Magic

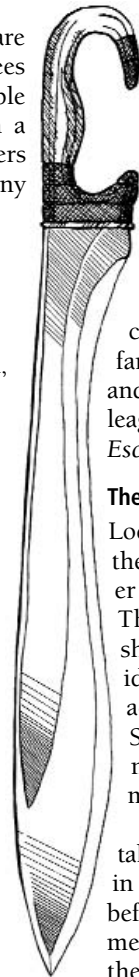
Most leagues have the "Three Justices," which are the People's Fetish, with the power to *Convince Leaders*; the Boss' Command, a spell to *Command Follower*; and the Lord's Sacrifice, which grants the feat of *Protect from Harm*.

Additionally, most leagues also have several feats, charms, or spells that are particular to that league, often specific to the occupation. Thus, the famous OranDuvali warrior family gets the feats of *Attack Giant Bird*, *Blunt Enemy Missiles*, and *Trip Running Foe*, while the widespread mercantile family league of BurenEtyr has the charm *Point to Thief* and the spells *Escape from Combat* and *Fighting Stick Help*.

The Great Parents

Lodril and Oria are the Great Father and Great Mother of all the Mortal World. Their method of worship includes whatever local powers are important, whether god, spirit, or essence. The popular Triplets cult that celebrates every Day Fifty worships She, Her, and That One, triplets born to Oria. They are identical except that She is a goddess, and performs all interaction with the God World; Her is a spirit, dealing with the Spirit World; and That One is an oracular rock-dropping method that is a movable grimoire that makes spells and communication with the Essence Planes possible.

Annual cycles of worship vary from place to place, always taking into consideration the local entities. Thus, every place in Dara Happa has some kind of planting rite, but some are before the inundation, some are after, some are when the frosts melt off the hilltops, and some when the seed goes down. Tying these together is the oversight of Oria and Lodril, the Great Parents. The Sky Gods are worshipped nearly everywhere on the same holy days, which are nearly all celestial events like the solstices, equinoxes, and special planetary conjunctions.



Like the ziggurat, which reaches to the heavens in stepped magnificence, so too does Almighty Yelm's celestial order place us all in our rightful tier in a manner as precise as it is undeniable, from Dara Happans to other humans and thence down to the animals.

Your League

League names are generally three-word titles: a descriptive term (color, appearance, or location), a place or thing (a building, geographic feature, or body part), and a third reflecting status. Higher-born leagues tend to use the name of a bird or a celestial body or being, while the lowborn use a word relating to their trade.



Sample League Names: Golden Temple Comet League (starwatchers), Many-Pillared Cave Mouth Blackface League (coal miners), Red Hill Eagle League (noble family).

Specialized Religion—Solar Pantheon

The dominant religion of Dara Happa is the theist Solar religion, which includes Lodril and his wife Oria and their hundreds of children; Lodril's brothers Yelm the Emperor Sun and Dayzatar, his chaste priest brother; Shargash, God of Destruction, with Death his servant; Dendara, Yelm's Noble Wife; and many others. Your hero is probably a communal worshipper of the pantheon, and thus gains the benefits of the Solar Pantheon keyword, below.

Lodril is the Earth Father and Lord of Matter, who turned his back on the purity of the Sky World to embrace the world and its pleasures, thereby bringing Life to it. He is the everyman, known by every man. He is so vast that people worship him through subcults. His wife is Oria, a goddess as great, vast, and mysterious as he. She is in no way his inferior, but an independent partner in a cosmic relationship. They are usually worshipped together, in mixed groups, and are the most worshipped gods in Peloria. Many of their cults define social roles, and leaders gravitate towards specializing in those.

Most Dara Happans are communal worshippers only; they do not initiate or devote themselves to gods, although they do not frown on those who do. Thus, your hero may be an initiate or devotee if he wishes; see the listing below for sample deities.

Solar Pantheon Keyword

Abilities: Know Solar Pantheon Myths, Worship Solar Pantheon.

Virtues: Conservative, Honorable, Obedient.

Magic: Divine aid.

Other Side: The Solar Realm is Yelm's mighty and orderly domain. At its heart is the golden ziggurat of the Imperial Palace, from which radiate the Ten Perfect Ways.



Sample Deities of the Solar Pantheon

Cavalry Soldier: Kastok the Great General
Affinities—Commander, Horseman, Mounted Combat.

Entertainer: Hyraos the Harper
Affinities—Harp, Loyalty.

Farmer: Navestos the Harvester
Affinities—Farming, Fertility, Fighting.
Want to Discover More? See “Navestos” in the Theism chapter, page 125.

Foot Soldier: Gerendetho the Great Billy Goat
Affinities—Exploration, Fighting, Goat.
Want to Discover More? See “Gerendetho” in the Theism chapter, page 124.

Healer: Eriisa the White Goddess
Eriisa is an entirely pacifistic, non-violent goddess whose initiates may never fight, at the risk of losing their magic.
Affinities—Cure Disease, Heal Body, Heal Soul.
Want to Discover More? See “Eriisa” in the Theism chapter, page 124.

Merchant: Lokarnos the Wagon Master
Affinities—Endurance, Gold, Trade.

Petty Noble: Antirius the Most Man
Affinities—Justice, Nobility, Sky.

Scholar: Buserian the Celestiologist
Affinities—Administration, Celestiology, Scribe.
Want to Discover More? See “Buserian” in the Theism chapter, page 123.

Thief: Veskerele the Faceless
Veskerele is the Dara Happan form of Lanbril. As well as the usual Face of Lanbril talents, he also provides some reflecting his famous ability to blend in with the urban crowd.

Talents—Just Another Beggar, Lull Watchman.

Want to Discover More? See “Lanbril” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 112.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Dara Happa is chafing in its subsidiary position beneath the insufferable bureaucrats and illusionists of the Red Moon. Some people have been sent out to seek opportunities for their association or league. Other people have left the associations on their own accord, unhappy with the stifling ways.

Homeland: Esrolia

Welcome, in Imarja's name. I touch your hand. Which is your city?

Esrolians are a wealthy, educated, and peaceful people with a long history of powerful city-states based on a prehistoric matriarchal society. Esrolia, the “great-rivered land,” is so widely domesticated it has no hunting grounds sufficient to allow for that occupation. Farms, orchards, and grain fields are common, and even wildlands are owned by pig and goat herders. Nochet (at the mouth of the Lysos River) is just the largest of many cities in the land.

Most rulers are women, both elected officials and inherited matriarchs. Long ago the Esrolian people rebelled against the stupid ways of the gods and kings, and instead set before them goddesses and queens. They are proud that their land is consensual, communal, and cooperative; and contrast it with any surrounding land that is hierarchical, individual, and competitive. Men are kept in their place.

People are in families that are defined by distaff lineages traced from thirty-two ancestresses. Men who marry go to their wife's family.

Esrolia Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Cavalry Soldier (Regular), Entertainer (Drummer, Piper, Puppeteer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Skirmisher), Healer, Merchant, Petty Noble, Sailor, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

Native Abilities: Esrolian Customs, Esrolian Geography, Find Cooperative Solution, Speak Esrolian, Urban Survival.

Typical Personality Traits: Fear Dragons, Peaceful. Women know their country is unusual and are generally proud of their status; men are often resigned to theirs.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Family; to Temple.

Magic: Common magic, Earth Pantheon (theism).

Common Names:

Men—Bezarando, Bruveldt, Dalarok, Harstagar, Normald, Orntar, Pavel, Tork, Torkovlast, Wintar.

Women—Aranda, Bruvela, Dorenda, Estrin, Faladusa, Hendira, Imarjarin, Irminga, Nearsha, Orenda, Phillia, Vandana, Varadis, Yllyen.

Origin

Before things began, people were equal. Then slowly the men took control and everything went wrong. They fought each other and once killed all of themselves. Imarja moved the survivors to Esrolia where She revealed herself to the women. They bonded with the land and have ruled there ever since.

Common Religions

Imarja and Our Good Friends

Imarja is the great supernatural being of Esrolia. She makes common magic available to people in her land. Her worship also includes several specialized religions, encourages people to join various societies, and allows veneration of various powers as well.

R *Sample Talents:* First Aid Self, Hide in Cover, Listen to Ancestor, Make Fire, Seduce, Stay Awake, Stay Sober.

Most people participate in Imarja's worship. Sacrifices, dances, and readings occur every twenty days to the Ten Devotees of Imarja, known as Our Good Friends. Regular attendance at these rites gives the chance to learn additional magic.

R *Feats:* Be Calm, Cook Tasty Food, Look Good, Run Away, Strike Deity.

R *Charms:* Cook Food Well, Protect Child, Smell Good, Stand Still, Strike Spirit.

R *Spells:* Dodge Combat, Resist Lust, Sleep Soundly, Strike Essence, Unpoison Food.

R *Talent:* Fix Hurt.

T *Want to Discover More?* See “Imarja” in the Basic Magic chapter, on page 111.

Magical Societies

Esrolia is home to many societies that cater to social needs and provide help and support to members.

Badger's Protection Society

R *Charms*—Cook, Find Food, Fire.

R *Spells*—Confuse Opponent, Hold Door Closed, Throw Rock.

R *Talents*—Dull Hunger, Protect from Fire, Protect from Hurt.

Curbside Society

R *Feats*—Banish Ghost, Hardhat, Sharp Edge, Talk to Ancestor.

R *Charms*—Cook, Fire, Hand-to-Hand Combat, Listen to Ancestor, Resist Seduction.

R *Spells*—Confuse Opponent, Seduce, Stay Sober, Talk to Ancestor, Throw Weapon.

Specialized Religions

Earth Pantheon

Ernalda is the most popular goddess, worshipped in her many aspects by the majority of the common people. Many cults of gods are known and encouraged, including several of Ernalda's Husband-Protectors. Your hero is probably a communal worshipper of the pantheon, and thus gains the benefit of the Earth Pantheon keyword, below, unless you choose to have the hero belong to a different specialized religion (such as the Storm Pantheon of the Heortling homeland; see page 48).

Many Esrolians initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing below for sample deities.

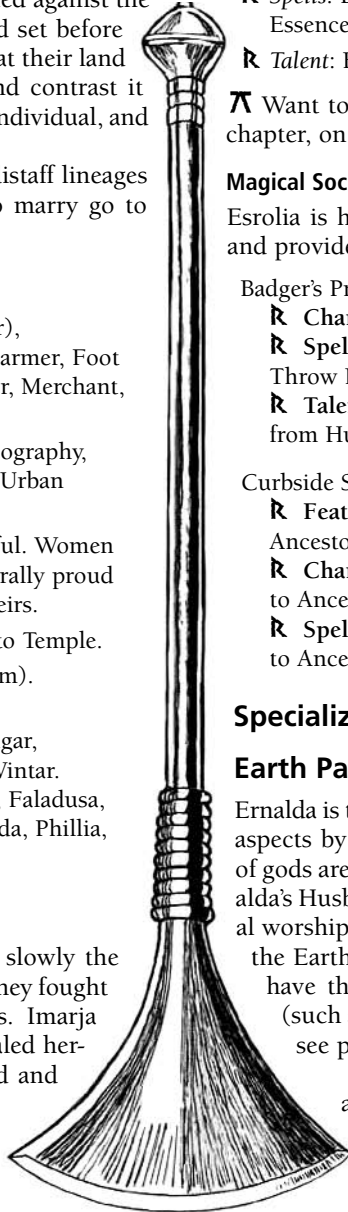
Earth Pantheon Keyword

Abilities: Know Earth Pantheon Myths, Worship Earth Pantheon.

Virtues: Nurturing, Practical.

Magic: Divine aid.

Other Side: The Earth Realm is a place of loamy fields, rich orchards, and deep, dark springs, a place of growth and plenty, where the great cycles of nature pass like days.



Sample Deities of the Earth Pantheon

Cavalry Soldier: Voudisea the Lance Goddess

Affinities—Cavalry Combat, Horsemanship.

Entertainer (men): Donandar the Bard

Donandar provides no affinities. Instead, he provides common magic to his worshippers.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Donandar” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 111.

Entertainer (women): Skovara the Storyteller

Skovara is one of the Donandar cults. In addition to her affinity, her worshippers teach each other Donandar's common magic.

Affinities—Bless Family, Bless Mothers, Low Entertainment.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Skovara” in the Theism chapter, page 126.

Farmer: Esra the Barley Mother

Affinities—Barley, Bless Domestic Animals, Bless Domestic Plants.

Foot Soldier (women): Vinga the Spearwoman

Affinities—Combat, Movement, Protection.

Healer: Bevara the Medic

Affinities—Heal People, Heal Relationships, Self Defense.

Merchant: Harst the Merchant

Affinities—Communication, Merchant, Store Goods.

Petty Noble (men): Argar Argan the Dark Husband

Affinities—Exchange with Others, Husband-Protector, Son of Night.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Argar Argan” in the Theism chapter, page 122.

Petty Noble (women): Ernalda

the Matriarch
Affinities—Earth Queen, Find Another Way, Matriarch.

Sailor: Pelaskos the Fisher

Affinities—Boats, Fishing, Overcome Sea.

Scholar: Epikhor the Librarian

Affinities—Knowledge, Librarian, Literacy.

Thief: Thelados the Contortionist

Thelados is a local form of Lanbril; as well as the regular Face of Lanbril talents, he is especially known for his ability to contort his body to escape any trap.

Affinity—Contortionist.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Lanbril” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 112.

Warrior (women): Babeester Gor the Avenger

Affinities—Blood Beer, Combat, Sacred Revenge.

Warrior (men): Humakt the Sword

Affinities—Death, Honor, Sword Combat.

Wizardry

During character creation, you may decide that your hero worships in a wizardly church rather than the Earth Pantheon. This is uncommon, but acceptable. If you choose to do this, simply change *Worship Earth Pantheon* to *Worship [God]* and replace the Earth Pantheon keyword with the appropriate Church keyword. Several wizardry churches are known and accepted, including many of the ones described in this book.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Cerise Church,” “Rokari Church,” and “Ship of Life Church” in the Wizardry chapter, beginning on page 170. The Aeolian Church is not worshipped in Esrolia.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Esrolia is a placid place for the most part—perhaps too much so for your hero. Local small-town pressures encourage non-conformists to leave. Times are changing, too, and even many happy people have a sudden, unexplained urge to leave.



Homeland: Esvular

Peace be with you. Come, take bread with us. Have you heard the Word of Saint Aeol?

Esvulari are city folk from a small kingdom on the southern coast of Maniria. Esvulari are excited to be opening the sea trade, and looking forward to a great future. Their urban ways have exposed them to the customs of many neighboring peoples and their religion allows them to go easily and settle among strangers.

Esvular is the high coastal plateau of southern Heortland. The Bullflood River is its northern border. Esvulari also live in Sartar and Tarsh, and among the mixed populations of other Holy Country cities, including Nochet, Rhigos, and Karse; as well as newly founded ports in Maniria.

Esvular Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Shock), Entertainer (Bagpipes, Lute, Puppeteer, Singer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular), Healer, Merchant, Petty Noble, Sailor, Scholar, Thief.

Native Abilities: Esrolian Customs, Esvulari Customs, Heortling Customs, [Home City] Geography, [Home City] Politics, Speak Esvulari, Urban Survival.

Typical Personality Traits: Ambitious, Enterprising, Fear Dragons, Open-Minded.

Typical Relationships: to Congregation; to Family; to Liege Lord.

Magic: Common magic, Aeolian Church (wizardry).

Common Names: Heortling names are common as well, especially in the countryside.

Men—Aeoling, Andric, Challath, Durith, Eperandal, Haloric, Worlev.

Women—Aperenia, Earena, Lisith, Tathorine.

Origin

The people of Dawn Age Esvular had no religion. Since then they have tried any and every religion they could to find their true way. Some learned the Orlanthi Way after the Dawn, while others persevered in their ancient atheism. Missionaries from Western and Eastern religions found converts at different times. For centuries various monotheist Western churches held dominant urban power, and now the Aeolian Church is popular.

Common Religions

No God Church

Widespread throughout Esvular is the No God Church. It is the oldest religion of the land. Its adherents claim that their religion invented, discovered, or released all the common magic known in the land, even in the world! They claim everyone is a liturgist if they learn any common magic. They refuse to tithe or attend regular services, however. They teach their common magic to anyone, and learn whatever magic other people will teach them. Because of this, members have access to a wide variety of common magic (including all of the sample talents provided in any of the homelands in this book). No particular morality is required. No Otherworld troubles them. Death is final and absolute, with no afterlife. They have one primary rule: “Be good!”

Unknown God Church

One group of people survived both Gods War and Darkness because they were skeptical defeatists. When they lost their contact with the supernatural, they resolved to accept anything and go on anyway. Even the worst defeats (like when all fire was lost) were only mildly unexpected, and so were tolerable. They called their land God Forgot. When the Sun rose it was just one more event, important temporarily but ultimately meaningless.

A woman named Hee first spoke a great Truth, which was written down as the scripture *No One Knows God*. It is short and powerful enough that leaders often memorize it, yet remain illiterate. The liturgists do not work as a single organization, but as hundreds of little churches. Liturgists are self-appointed; as long as they can do the magic, followers stay with them. Any other magic is allowed to members as well. Members often join whatever local church or cult holds sway in their local area.

Scripture: *No One Knows God*, a pamphlet proving humans cannot know God, but that they can know magic if they follow a set of behaviors. It teaches one way to sacrifice, with four variations to get four feats; six charm-making methods; and five spells.

R Feats—Climb over Hill and Dale, Hide in Cover, Jump Safely, Stay Warm.

R Charms—Fire Stick, Frighten Stick, Light Stick, Night Stick, Throwing Stick, Warm Stick.

R Spells—Attack Enemy Spirits, Conceal Object, Hide in the Open, Protect from Ancestor, Talk to Ancestor.

Specialized Religion—Aeolian Church

The dominant local religion is the Church of Saint Aeol, commonly called the Aeolian Church. It is original, ambitious, energetic, and eclectic. It recognizes certain pagan gods as being holy saints that serve its One God. It is the religion of King Bandal Tigerbane and his ruling faction. Your hero is probably a lay member of the church, and thus gains the benefit of the Aeolian Church keyword, below (unless you specify that he belongs to another Church, such as the Ship of Life Church; see the Wizardry chapter, page 170).

Many Aeolians use specialized magic. An orderly joins one of the sample saintly orders listed below. A liturgist may or may not join a saintly order, at the player's option. An adept joins one of the sample wizardry schools listed below.

Aeolian Church Keyword

Abilities: Doctrine of the Aeolian Church, Dutiful Worker, Sing, Worship the Invisible God.

Virtues: Hard Working, Staunch, Tolerant.

Magic: Benefit from blessings of *The Examples of Karatch*.

Other Side: Saint Aeol's energies and consciousness are concentrated in a magical node called Peaceful Passage. It is a “false node” on the God World that has cosmic connections only with the Holy Sound Paradox. The Saintstones are worldly holy places.

Disadvantage: The saints and wizardry founders of the Aeolian Church are deities venerated as if they were essences. This practice is decried in “Misapplied Worship” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 110.

Sample Orders and Schools of the Aeolian Church

Cavalry Soldier: Saint Ehilm, the Watchful Sun (saintly order)

Formulary—*Ten Dozen Horses*.

Scripture—*The Manual of the Watchful Sun*.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Saint Ehilm” in the Wizardry chapter, page 167.

Entertainer: Saint Donandar, the Choirist (saintly order)

Although the practice is generally forbidden by the church, many members of the Order of Saint Donandar learn Donandar’s common magic.

Formulary—*The Blue Hymnal* (sample spells: Entrancing Sound, Find Page, Lullaby, Peerless Voice, Remember Hymn, Sing away Fear).

Scripture—*Five Principal Chords* (sample blessings: Communicate in Song, Natural Harmony, Remember Tune, Sing away Heathen Spirits, Sing away Pagan Demons, Uplifting Hymn).

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Donandar” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 111.

Farmer (men): Saint Bartath, Mister Farmer (saintly order)

Formulary—*Mister Farmer’s Book of Days* (sample spells: Lift Rock, Mighty Strength, Plow Through Hard Earth, Shrivell Weed, Smell Rain, Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child, Straight and Narrow Furrow).

Scripture—*Plough and Stead* (sample blessings: Bless Plough, Defend Family, Drive Out Vermin, Preserve Grain, Strong as a Horse, Work for Hours).

Farmer (women): Saint Earna, Missus Farmer (saintly order)

Formulary—*Missus Farmer’s Homemaking* (sample spells: Find Needle, Fix Roof, Kiss Cut Better, Light Fire, Lull Child, Mend Pot).

Scripture—*The Dutiful Wife and Mother* (sample blessings: Bless Newborn, Calm Family, Find Child, Mend Clothes, Resist Temptation, Sober Husband Up).

Foot Soldier: Saint Ehilm, the Watchful Sun (saintly order)

Formulary—*Ten Dozen Spears*.

Scripture—*The Manual of the Watchful Sun*.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Saint Ehilm” in the Wizardry chapter, page 167.

Healer: Saint Chalarn, the Healer (wizardry school)

This is a totally nonviolent school whose members must never participate in any violence. Doing so puts their magic at risk.

Grimoire—*Saint Chalarn’s Herbiary and Sundry Remedies* (sample spells: Bless Corpse, Bless Herbs, Break Fever, Dispel Pain, Drive Out Pagan Disease Spirits, Heal Wound, Prepare Healing Poultice, Preserve Herbs, Purify Water, Resist Natural Poison, Staunch Wound).



Merchant: Saint Ishaar (saintly order)

Formulary—*For Greater Goods*.

Scripture—*Ledgers of Honest Profit*.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Saint Ishaar” in the Wizardry chapter, page 167.

Petty Noble: Saint Worlath’s Lower Circle (saintly order)

Formulary—*The First Disquisition on Virtuous Air* (sample spells: Blow Away Clouds, Blow Missiles Off Course, Calm Storm, Command Sylph, Control Wind, Redirect Lightning, Summon Breeze, Summon Gust).

Sailor: Saint Dormal, the Sailor

Although there are several orders dedicated to sailor saints, common sailors worship Dormal, the first person to successfully sail on open water after the curse of the Closing. Instead of using formularies or scriptures, most of his worshippers learn Openwater Sailing common magic.

Feats—Buoyancy, Know Upcoming Weather, Loosen Knot, Mend Canvas, Point to Nearest Land, Run on Wave, Strengthen Rope, Weaken Opposing Wind.

Spell—Open Seas.

Scholar: Saint Ankormy (saintly order)

Formulary—*Ankormy’s Collected Encyclicals* (sample spells: Attract Book, Duplicate Manuscript ritual, Impart Knowledge ritual, Mimic Sound, Translate Foreign Script).

Scripture—*The First Encyclopedia* (sample blessings: Communicate Meaning, Deep Memory, Know What I See, Sense Connections, Sense Others’ Meanings, Teach Well).

Scholar: Ankormy School (wizardry school)

Grimoire—*The First Lexicon* (sample spells: Affirm Own Honesty, Communicate Clearly, Hear Meaning, Remember Conversation, Understand Grammar).

Thief: Saint Tarkil, the Redeemer

Saint Tarkil is the local name for Lanbril. The “formulary” of this order, *The Honest Rogue’s Tale*, is in fact a non-magical collection of tales of his exploits stealing from those who deserved it. Instead of spells, his worshippers learn the Face of Lanbril talents, to which he adds his specialties.

Talents—Cheat Cheater, Sniff Out Miser, Sniff Out Venal Official.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Lanbril” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 112.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Tumultuous times have propelled many petty nobles and other individuals to become mercenaries. The newly opened seas present many opportunities to the ambitious.

Homeland: Grazer

You are not one of us. Do you know the sun dance and the horse beat, or are you just a vendref, one of the standing ones?

Grazers are a hereditary class of overlords descended from their ancient Sun spirit. They regard themselves as the greatest people in the world, whose purity must be maintained to allow them to perform the Great Magic and so save themselves, the World, and the Cosmos. They are taught that it is their destiny to stick by the tribal ways that are tried and true. They live in the Grazelands, a region of rich valleys and difficult hills in south-western Dragon Pass. The Grazers have performed great magic that prevents effective roads from being built in their lands.

The Grazers shun houses and ride horses even though they have many farms and towns as subjects. The elite live in tents, worship only spirits, and ride on magical horses. They never do ordinary work, and if they did so would be expelled from their family and tribe. Thus, their occupations are limited.

Their religion is of the Majestic Horses. These are La-Ungariant the Feathered Mare and Yu-Kargzant the Burning Stallion. The Majestic Horses created their family, and all families. Today, lineages trace their descent from these great spirits. Traditional families divide members into age groups, which have set occupations and worship specific age- and gender-oriented majestic spirits.

Grazer Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Entertainer, Nomad.

Men only—Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Skirmisher), Hunter, Warrior.

Women only—Healer.

Native Abilities: Celestial Lore, Grazelands Geography, Grazer Customs, Herd Horses, Hill Survival, Horsemanship, Leather Working, Ride Horse, Speak Grazer, Tracking.

Men only—Archery.

Women only—Tend Horse.

Typical Personality Traits: Aloof from Common Affairs, Disdainful of Vendref Slaves, Fear Dragons, Hate Praxians, Love Horses.

Typical Relationships: to Age Group; to Family; to Shaman; to Tribal Queen or Warband Chief.

Flaws: Riding is a way of life, so many foot-bound activities receive a modifier of -10.

Magic: Common magic, Majestic Horses Tradition (animism).

Common Names: Shamans often give up their name and retain only their title (such as “Always Awake Twice” or “Splendid Among the Proud”) as a defense against evil spirits and thieving foreign magicians.

Men—Avarkorda, Bandroste, Benoste, Chukorda, Dalastorl, Dastandros, Dinalish, Endarkorda, Endars, Hendrengard, Hyalar, Jalorast, Jendetarin, Karndaro, Penraltan, Taradarin, Varnatol, Yanasdral, Yaranrast.

Women—Alaye, Chodani, Danegara, Elistina, Eneera, Falara, Garenia, Liriant, Rallar, Tarene, Umisi, Valene, Yorissa, Zatani, Zayla.

Origin

Yu-Kargzant was the brightest, most fiery power in the universe, who ruled a just and happy world until his foes united against him, friends betrayed him, and he was thrown down. But he persevered, tended his herd secretly in the Sky World, and then returned to continue the fight.

Common Religion—Innocent and Guilty Magic

The Grazers recognize that some people have spontaneous magic, but only some powers are approved by the culture, called the “innocent magic.” Other powers are known and recognized, but they are usually suppressed by society, referred to as the “guilty magic.”

Grazers scorn mixed worship. They have the perfect religion, established by ancestors ages ago and maintained in purity for centuries. Mixed worship is for inferior beings like their vendref slaves, Sartarites, and Tarshites.

R *Innocent Magic Talents:* Attack Enemy Spirits, Blast Tree, Destroy Enemy Gods, Escape Combat, Fight Giant Bird, Find Fodder, Heal Breathing Disease, Heal Eye Disease, Heal Pox Diseases, Hilltop Holy Fire, Hurt Predator, Leap Far, Leap High, Leap up Cliff, Ride over Water, Run Long, Stand Heavy.

R *Guilty Magic Talents:* Hide Guilt, Hide Magic, Seduce, Slow Down Horse, Speak Against Brother, and Strike Confidence are the six “common guilts”; every other effect not innocent is guilty as well.

Specialized Religion—Majestic Horses Tradition

The dominant local religion is the Majestic Horses Tradition. All full adults belong to either the La-Ungariant or Yu-Kargzant Practice, either as spiritists or practitioners depending on their age group; see the listing below for sample majestic spirits. Your hero is probably a spiritist of the tradition, and thus gains the benefit of the Majestic Horses Tradition keyword, below. Some people learn the spirit ways very young and become spiritists before they are adults.

The Feathered Mare and the Burning Stallion made humans and taught them how to live right and well. Foreigners are people who lost their way. Ancestor spirits are in Goldenland in the Spirit World, and come to help their living kindred.

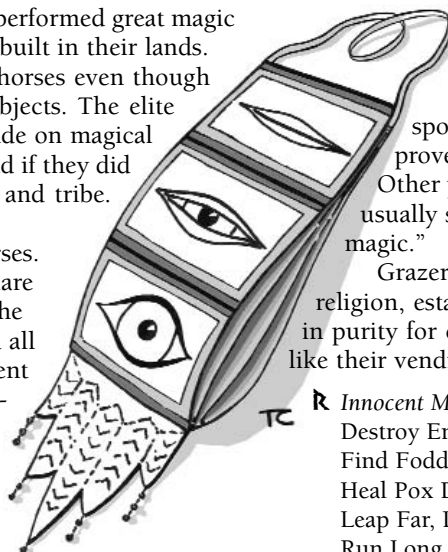
Majestic Horses Tradition Keyword

Abilities: Majestic Horses Tradition Knowledge, Worship Majestic Horses.

Virtues: Cautious, Conservative, Hate Trolls, Proud.

Magic: Tradition spirits (members usually start with 5 charms):

☞ **Majestic Horses Spirits**—Fix Hurt 12, Jump 14, Look at Sun 2L2, Run 14, Run Faster 18, Stare Down Outsider 18.



Your Horse

The Grazers are famous horse breeders. Leaders, shamans, and great warriors ride magical horses, a breed your people claim is the ancient, magical hyal, once ridden by the Hyalorings of Saird. Only some are uniformly the golden color attributed to the ancient breed, but all have unique yellow-colored eyes, hence their common nickname “goldeneye.” Their statistics are similar to those of common horses (see “Horse” in the Creatures chapter, page 214), but have Jump 18 \square , Kick 13, Run Fast 20 \square 2, and Understand Commands 14. When a goldeneye accepts a rider, it gains a *Rider Bond* 13 talent automatically.

Like the ancient breed, goldeneyes are among the fastest horses alive. However, their superior performance diminishes if they are ridden by anyone other than Grazers (–10 to *Run Fast*), who claim kinship with them. Goldeneyes are intelligent (for horses), and are easily trained to respond to whistles or voice commands. They normally allow only



their own riders to mount them, but can understand commands such as “Let this man ride you.”

Although anyone can ride a goldeneye if it allows them to, only a Grazer who has succeeded at the Goldeneye herquest can bond with his horse to create a magical partnership. When ridden by its bonded rider, a goldeneye may augment any ability with its *Rider Bond* talent.

As a Grazer, you automatically have a superior horse. This horse is *not* a goldeneye, although you can include one in your narrative or list as a sidekick or gain one during play. You may then choose from among the common magical abilities known to goldeneyes who have bonded with their riders if you wish; any such talents are counted among the three additional sidekick abilities.

R *Typical Goldeneye Talents:* Great Leap, Never Lose Rider, Run Extremely Fast, Run up Cliffs, Spirit Sight, Spirit World Travel, Unseen in Sunlight.

Other Side: Goldenfield is where Ancestors are now, safe in the Spirit World. The majestic spirits have demesnes there that are landmarks: Dastal’s Valley, Denbitos’ Forbidden Lands, Jordan’s Hills, and so on.

Sample Majestic Spirits of the Majestic Horses Tradition

Cavalry Soldier: Jordan the Warrior
Spirits—Bowman, Braveman, Fightman.
T Want to Discover More? See “Yu-Kargzant” (page 144) and “Jordan” (page 145) in the Animism chapter.

Entertainer: Folorene the Wanderlore Spirit.
Entertainers also learn appropriate common magic from travelers and foreigners, a habit that helps explain their low social status and difficulty finding suitable marriage partners.
Spirits—Contrary, Wanderlore.
T Want to Discover More? See “Folorene” in the Animism chapter, page 143.

Healer: Lereen the Mother
Spirits—Family Blessing, Health Blessing.
T Want to Discover More? See “La-Ungariant” (page 143) and “Lereen” (page 144) in the Animism chapter.

Hunter: Dastal the Youth
Spirits—Hunting, Rider.
T Want to Discover More? See “Yu-Kargzant” and “Dastal” in the Animism chapter, page 144.

Nomad (men): Dastal the Youth
Spirits—Hunting, Rider.

T Want to Discover More? See “Yu-Kargzant” and “Dastal” in the Animism chapter, page 144.

Nomad (women): Charai the Rider
Spirits—Maiden.

T Want to Discover More? See “La-Ungariant” (page 143) and “Charai” (page 144) in the Animism chapter.

Shaman: Denbitos, the First Shaman
Spirits—Starfire.

T Want to Discover More? See “Denbitos” in the Animism chapter, page 143.

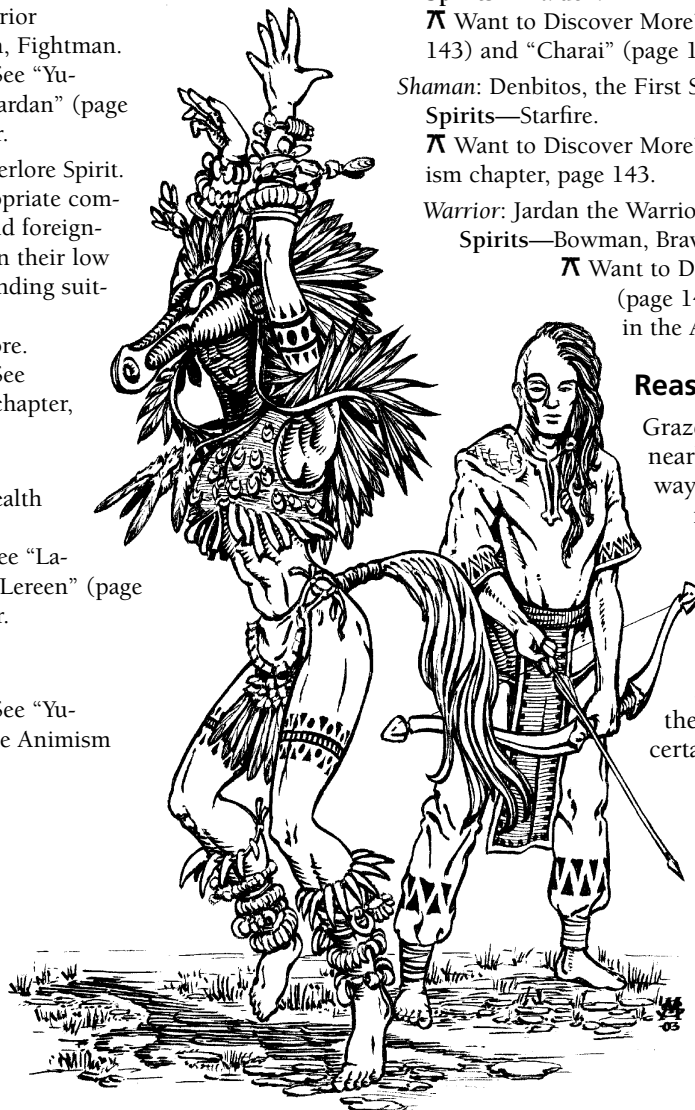
Warrior: Jordan the Warrior
Spirits—Bowman, Braveman, Fightman.

T Want to Discover More? See “Yu-Kargzant” (page 144) and “Jordan” (page 145) in the Animism chapter.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Grazers are encouraged to see the nearby world, learn something of its ways, and then return home to their family once they have seen that their traditional ways are better.

Some are exiled for crimes such as robbery or murder, or run away from charges of sacred robbery or secret murder. Sometimes spirits they have tell them to leave their homeland to do certain things.



Homeland: Heortling

*Halt, stranger! Who comes this way, to a place that is not allowed to everyone?
Do you come in friendship, or as a foe?*

The Heortlings are the rebellious Orlanthi barbarians of Dragon Pass and the northern Heortland peninsula, a wild place of forested hills and fields, untamed and dangerous everywhere. Most people live in little self-sufficient farmsteads often hidden in difficult places to find. Sometimes a whole valley is cleared and settled, with clans living amidst its cultivated fields. They farm and herd sheep, and for entertainment they feud, raid, and ambush the Imperial caravans. People are independent and easygoing, yet violent when provoked. Everyone holds grudges until they are settled, whereupon they are forgotten.

The Lunar Empire currently occupies the land. Soldiers live in its cities, magicians plot against local gods, and plunderers regularly collect taxes from locals. The Empire is bent upon destroying the people of Orlanth. A terrible and brutal event is about to erupt here.

Heortling Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Entertainer (Bagpiper, Puppeteer, Skald), Farmer, Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Sailor (Heortland only), Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

Native Abilities: Dragon Pass Geography, Farming, Heortling Customs, Speak Sartarite, Walk with Snowshoes, Wilderness Survival.

Men only—Spear and Shield Combat.

Women only—Spinning and Weaving.

Typical Personality Traits: Fear Dragons, Hate Chaos, Hate Lunars.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Bloodline or Family; to Clan; to Temple.

Magic: Common magic, Storm Pantheon (theism).

Common Names:

Men—Angtyr, Asborn, Bofrost, Dangmar, Enestakos, Garrath, Harvald, Hiord, Kallai, Leik, Oddi, Olend, Orngerin, Ranulf, Rostandos, Rurik, Sartark, Torvald, Varmand, Vastyr.

Women—Ailrene, Branbriga, Enfrewa, Griselda, Jenesta, Londra, Rana, Sasara, Valensta, Willema, Yrsa.

Origin

Orlanth and his gods lived here, and the Ancestors. Orlanth killed the great dragons. His clan overthrew the corrupt and evil Emperor, and liberated the world. The terrible Gods War erupted, Evil won, Darkness fell. Heort, the brave hero, preserved his people through the Great Winter. Heort called Orlanth back, and since then no conquest has been permanent. At times empires, dragons, and trolls have all held sway here, and now the Lunar Empire reigns. But the Heortlings have thrown off everything, and shall again.

Common Religions

Flesh Man

The Heortlings' ancestor, called Flesh Man, provides common magic to the religion.

R *Flesh Man Talents:* Attack Enemy Spirit, Climb over Hill and Dale, Conceal Object, Gesture to Ward Off Magic, Heal Flesh, Hide in Cover, Hide in the Open, Jump Safely, Light, Make Fire, Protect from Ancestor, Stay Warm, Talk to Ancestor, Throwing Stick.

Specialized Religion—Storm Pantheon

The Storm Tribe is the dominant religion. Everyone attends sacrifices to Orlanth as the king, father, and warrior farmer, and to Ernalda the queen, mother, and housewife.

Orlanth is the Great Storm, king and father of the Heortlings. He is a great god, so vast that even wise people see only aspects of him. People focus on the part of him they need to know. Ernalda is the Earth Mother, source of peace and family, Orlanth's wife, Great Earth to his Great Storm. As with Orlanth, her full power is too awesome for most of her worshippers, who concentrate on a subcult that relates to their life, job, or personality. Your hero is probably a communal worshipper of the pantheon, and thus gains the benefit of the Storm Pantheon keyword, below.

Most Heortlings initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity. Orlanth and Ernalda's large family of unruly children provides dozens of deities to oversee various tribal duties. Most Heortling people join one of those cults. Members of other professions worship friendly (but non-related) deities that are part of Orlanth and Ernalda's household.

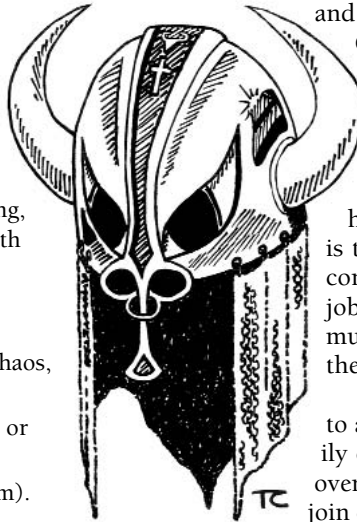
Storm Pantheon Keyword

Abilities: Know Storm Pantheon Myths, Worship Storm Pantheon.

Virtues: Brave, Generous, Honorable, Just, Proud, Wise.

Magic: Divine aid.

Other Side: The Storm Realm is a wind-blown land, within which is a mighty ring of mountains, within which is the Storm Village, within which Orlanth, Ernalda, and their tribe live a life of adventure, feasting, and heroism.



*Hail to the Heortlings, Children of Thunder,
Orlanth their chieftain, Ernalda their queen.
Quick is their anger, quicker their honor,
Freedom their sword-blade, kinship their shield.*

Sample Deities of the Storm Pantheon

Entertainer (men): Drogarsi the Skald

Affinities—Combat, High Entertainment, Movement.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Donandar” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 111.

Entertainer (women): Skovara the Entertainer

Affinities—Bless Family, Bless Mothers, Entertainer.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Donandar” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 111, and “Skovara” in the Theism chapter, page 126.

Farmer (men): Orlanthcarl the First Farmer

Affinities—Allfather, Farming, Making.

Farmer (women): Ernalda the Steadwife

Affinities—Bless Family, Bless Mothers, Bless Stead.

Healer (women): Pranjala the Healer

This is a totally nonviolent cult whose members must never participate in any violence at the risk of losing their magic.

Affinities—Calm Fear, Cure Disease, Heal Wounds.

Hunter: Odayla the Deep Hunter

Affinities—Bear, Hide, Hunting.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Odayla” in the Theism chapter, page 125.

Merchant: Gultha Goldentongue

Gultha is one of the children of Issaries, the Merchant God who invented the magical trade language called Tradetalk. Worshipers of Gultha gain *Speak Tradetalk* as part of their magic keyword.

Affinities—Communication, Merchant, Travel.

Scholar: Lhankor Knowing

Lhankor Mhy is the only Heortling god whose followers learn to read or write languages.

Affinities—Knowledge, Law, Literacy.

Heortlings and Lunars do not usually mix!

Always discuss with your narrator who is or is not appropriate.

Thief: Desemborth the Thief

Affinities—Combat, Movement, Stealth.

Warrior (men): Destor the Adventurer

Affinities—Combat, Movement, Wind.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Destor” in the Theism chapter, page 123.

Warrior (men): Humakt, God of Death

Affinities—Death, Honor, Sword Combat.

Warrior (women): Vinga the Defender Storm

Affinities—Combat, Defender Storm, Movement.

Other Deities

The Storm and Earth Pantheons have much in common, including worship of Ernalda, Queen of the Gods, and many other deities. During character creation, you may decide that your hero worships one of the Earth Pantheon deities instead of the ones listed above. This is unusual, but accepted.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See “Sample Deities of the Earth Pantheon” in the Esrolia homeland, page 43.

Reasons to Have Left Home

The Heortling lands have been under tremendous stress since their occupation by the Lunar Empire. People have left home to find food, work, or a means of revenge.



Homeland: Puma People

*Greetings, settled-person. I am just passing through, as we all are in life.
Would you share food and shelter for stories?*

There are many different kinds of animal people in Glorantha. Some are related to each other (like the many *hsunchen* tribes of Genertela), others are completely on their own, like the Puma People. They are normally solitary creatures in the wild, and are spread thinly and widely across the entire continent in every ecological zone. Large groups are never seen.

The Puma People tend to avoid each other, except during mating season, but this does not mean that they necessarily avoid other peoples. In the wild they use tools and weapons only of natural materials, so they can generally make things out of wood, leather, and stone.

Make two separate ability lists for these heroes, to differentiate between abilities in feline and human shapes. Most abilities (including perception skills) are the same for either shape. During character creation or at any time thereafter, you can freely spend points on abilities for either shape.

Puma People Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Healer, Hunter, Thief, Warrior.

Native Abilities: Hide, Puma Customs, Speak Puma, Stalk, Wilderness Survival, Work Stone and Wood.

Innate Magical Abilities: Shapechange to Puma.

Typical Personality Traits: Argumentative with Pumas, Curious, Fear Dragons.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Bush Voice or Shaman. Pumas do not normally retain ties to their parents or siblings, and are reluctant to give loyalty to powerful leaders.

Magic: Common magic, Puma Ancestors Tradition (animism).

Common Names (men and women): Eraranaris, Eraror, Furanaris, Mar, Rar, Saramiss, Urandas.

Origin

Pumas have always been. In the most ancient times people and animals were pretty much the same, and the Puma People have not changed. Now, however, instead of seeming to be neither beast nor human, they appear to be both. This appears to outsiders as shapechanging. The Puma People have survived relatively intact because of their supreme adaptability. They are found in every age and every natural niche.

Common Magic

The Puma People learn their common magic from the people among whom they secretly live. Thus, one from Esrolia would know any of the *Imarja* common magic.

Special Puma People Magic—Shapechange

All Puma People have *Shapechange to Puma* as an innate magical ability. To change shape, a Puma Person need only achieve any level of victory against a resistance of 14 (see the *Core Rules* chapter for details about contests and resistance). The actual victory level indicates the speed of change, where complete victory results in instantaneous, complete change, while a marginal victory might only transform the hero partially over the course of a few minutes. Puma People do *not* take the normal D+20 resistance modifier for using difficult magic (see

“Inherently Difficult Magic” in the *Basic Magic* chapter, page 101) when using this shapechange ability (only). Puma statistics are available in the *Creatures* chapter, page 216.

△ Mr. Puma Tries to Climb a Tree

Kathy: So, you hear someone coming, what do you want to do?

Bill: Let's all hide in the brush so we won't be seen until we are prepared.

Frederick: I'll climb into this tree so that I can see them sooner. Pumas often attack by leaping out of a tree at their foe.

Kathy: What's your Climb ability?

Frederick: I don't have one, so I guess it's 6. But if I change into a puma, I have *Climb 18*.

Kathy: OK, but you'll have to roll a contest to change shape, because you don't have much time before they see you. Let's see, the resistance is the base 14, +20 because shapechanging is inherently difficult...

Frederick: But I'm a Puma Person, it says here that if I shapechange myself into a puma then I don't take the modifier. So it should be my 17 against the resistance of 14.

Kathy: Oops, that's right. OK, let's see, comparing our rolls means you get only a marginal victory. That isn't enough to help you—if you want to climb the tree, you can use the shapechange ability as an augment, but that's it.

Frederick sighs, and in the ensuing contest against the tree obtains a minor defeat.

Kathy: OK, you fall out of the tree right in front of the merchant who was coming along the road, spooking his mules. And his guards.



Specialized Religion—Puma Ancestors Tradition

The Puma ancestors, Most Ancient First Grandmother and Most Ancient First Grandfather, had a secret power that Creator told them to hide. The other animals were jealous and constantly harangued, bargained, and tricked to learn of it. At last, Coyote got it loose. It was Death, and the Puma ancestors could not recapture it. The wolves killed so many that the world was haunted until Most Ancient First Shaman sent the spirits to the Spirit World.

Everyone reveres their ancestors. Your hero is probably a spiritist of the tradition, and thus gains the benefit of the Puma Ancestors Tradition keyword, below. Puma People are sometimes encouraged by parents to adopt whatever local religion and worship helps them to survive. Members often belong to a cult, tradition, or a church. Other lineages are more conservative, and encourage only their own ancestral tradition. Regardless of what religion they worship, their individualism often provokes members to concentrate their worship.

Ancestor spirits are important, usually placed in a charm formed from the fragile skull of a small animal. The worshipper crushes the skull to release the magic. These are usually carefully wrapped and kept in hard leather pouches.

Puma shamans are extremely rare. More common are the Adoptees of Bush Voice, practitioners who conduct ceremonies to make fetishes and charms. Many Puma People belong to the Puma Ancestors Practice as spiritists, and few other practices are known. Many Puma People also worship other entities, often even gods and saints.

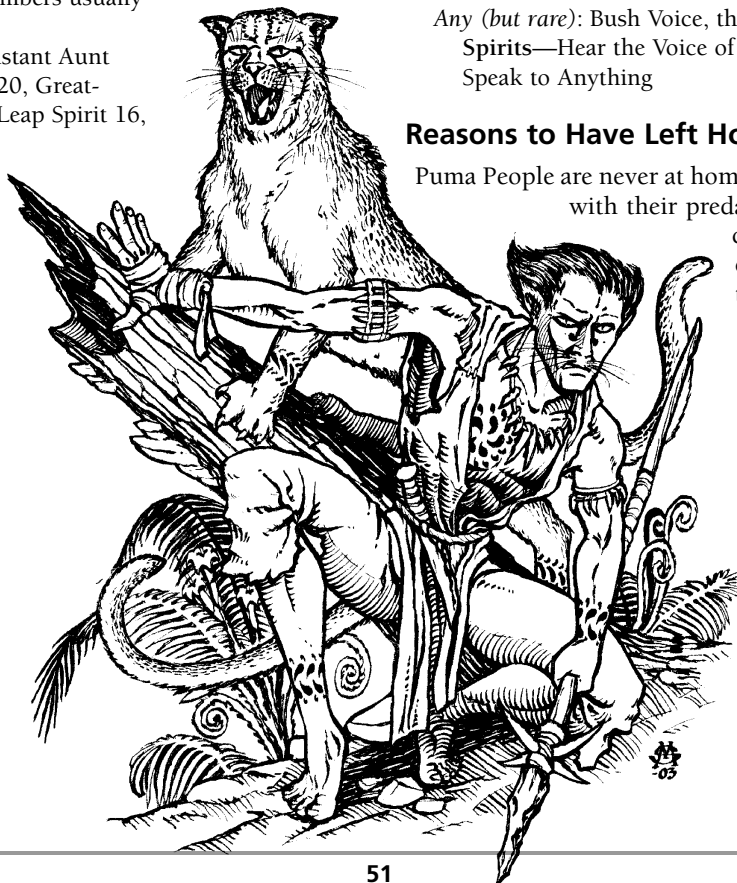
Puma Ancestors Tradition Keyword

Abilities: Puma Ancestors Tradition Knowledge, Smell Presence of Death, Worship Most Ancient First Grandmother and Grandfather.

Virtues: Pride in Ancestry.

Magic: Tradition spirits (members usually start with 5 charms):

- ✦ Ancestral Spirits—Distant Aunt Bright Light Spirit 14 to 20, Great-Seventh-Grandma Huge Leap Spirit 16, Great-Uncle Healing Wounds Spirit 18, Second Cousin Blinding Spirit 14 to 20, Second Star Guide Uncle Hiding Spirit 18 to 5W, Uncle Strong Spirit 18.



**If I stayed for a week,
I'd learn new stories.**

**If I stayed for two,
I'd make good friends.**

**If I stayed for three,
I'd father a kid.**

**If I stayed for four,
I'd not be a Puma.**

Other Side: The Puma Ancestors roam where they will and can be found in all sorts of Otherworld places, usually where they are not welcome or expected. However, their Big Wide Hunting Land is the demesne of Most Ancient First Grandfather and Grandmother, and they live there most of the time.

Sample Majestic Spirits of the Puma Ancestors Tradition

Any (but rare): Bush Voice, the Little Speaker Spirits—Hear the Voice of the Wilds, Speak to Anyone, Speak to Anything

Reasons to Have Left Home

Puma People are never at home. They usually live in the wilds with their predatory wild kin. Sometimes they come among other people out of curiosity, compulsion, or duty to the Grandmother.

Homeland: Seshnela

*Rokar's Blessing upon you, outlander. Does the count know of your arrival?
Here we are pious folk, so curb your pagan ways and ill-bred manners.*

In feudal Seshnela a mighty king and a powerful church work in tense cooperation to unite their land against foreigners, false gods, and heretics. Society is rigidly hierarchical and hereditary, with little room for individuals to change occupation. Nobles (including churchmen) own almost everything, petty nobility and knights form a standing cavalry army, and foot soldiers garrison castles. Cities are numerous but generally small. Both nobles and the Church work to keep the use of magic to a minimum among the numerous peasants and the occasional middle class.

Seshnegi (the people of Seshnela) are members of their family, but can swear loyalty to a lord who thereafter takes precedence over family. Many people swear loyalty to an institution such as the Church or another religious order.

Seshnela Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Shock), Entertainer (Minstrel, Puppeteer, Raconteur), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Shock), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Sailor, Scholar, Thief.

Native Abilities: Assess Social Standing, Obey Superior, Rural Survival, Seshnegi Customs, Seshnelan Geography, Speak Seshnegi.

Typical Personality Traits: Fear Dragons, Obedient, Pious.

Typical Relationships: to Congregation; to Family; to Vassal Overlord.

Magic: Common magic, Rokari Church (wizardry).

Common Names:

Men—Bailifes, Dagobort, Enroval, Fortinbras, Guilmar, Heremel, Ioan, Luc, Macrinus, Maldron, Rickard, Romaine, Salvid, Saval, Trymir, Ulianus.

Women—Amelie, Bernaditte, Endria, Illura, Iyuliya, Kateleyn, Lizametha, Menena, Otalora, Svalahyl, Xuzele.

Origin

Seshnela is a prehistoric kingdom that has lasted for millennia. It has always been a local power, and centuries ago nearly ruled the world. Lately, the king and ecclesiarch have recovered its glory under the guidance of the One True God. Lords, wizards and clergymen, and commoners are the natural order of mankind and these have given the kingdom its strength.

Common Religions

My Big Friend

A rebellious church is found throughout Seshnela, labeled by authorities as Shadow Worship. Its chief entity is called My Big Friend, and it provides common magic. Its rites are banned by Church writings, but it persists where central authority is weak, where regular veneration is forbidden (such as in prison), or where spiritual rebellion festers.

R Talents: Attract Lover, Avoid Bad Gods, Avoid Clergymen, Dig and Bury a Hole, Escape Fight, Fight Illness, Fix Wound, Healing Bandages, Run Away.

The Little Saints

The little saints are the heroes of local stories (often homely and humorous, and sometimes raunchy) that recall when these small magics were discovered. These are often gods or spirits in disguise, offering local or practical powers to individuals who seek beyond the limited powers of *The Abiding Book*. The Rokari Church frowns on the religion, recognizing its pagan origin, but where the clergymen and liturgists are not looking it thrives.

Some of the Little Saints are deities or spirits venerated as if they were essences. This type of worship is described in "Misapplied Worship" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 110.

Barbaro

Life is hard, the lords are uncaring, and Solace is far away, so Barbaro helps the peasant who helps himself.

R Feat—Hide.

R Charm—Hide Something.

R Spell—Confuse Overlord.

Ferdo

Ferdo is the simple, no-nonsense Little Saint who knows what is really important to a woman: to keep her man happy and her children hale.

R Feat—Delicious Food

R Spell—Please My Man

R Talents—Break Fever, Douse Fire, Make Beer

Malastak

To the simple peasant family their crop is their life, so who better to teach them secrets than Malastak, the Little Salad Saint?

R Charms—Bean, Cabbage, Carrot, Find Wild Food, Turnip

Pane

Life is painful, the lords are hard, and Solace is far away, so Pane helps the peasant who needs a little relief once in awhile.

R Feats—Enhance Appearance, Sober Up

R Charm—Distract Bully

R Spell—Confuse Gamekeeper, Strengthen Ale

Specialized Religion—Rokari Church

Rokarism is the dominant religion, and the central authorities demand that members avoid all other forms of magic. It has churches in almost every village and town, and several in the cities. Everyone knows that God is Makan, the Great Mind; Malkion is the founder of the religion; Rokar is the founder of the Church; and Theoblanc is the "great mind of the Church." Your hero is probably a lay member of the church, and thus gains the benefit of the Rokari Church keyword, below (unless you specify that he belongs to another Church, such as the Ship of Life Church; see the Wizardry chapter, page 170).

Some Rokari use specialized magic. An orderly joins one of the sample saintly orders listed below. A liturgist may or may not join a saintly order, at the player's option. An adept joins one of the sample wizardry schools listed on the next page.



Rokari Church Keyword

Abilities: Doctrine of Rokari Church, Recognize Church Authority, Worship Makan.

Virtues: Be Content with Lot in Life, Obedient.

Magic: Benefit from blessings of *The Abiding Book*.

Other Side: All good Rokari go to Solace, Makan's heaven, which they know to be a place where Virtue builds bright shining cities and Obedience shines in the skies, while below toil and suffer the sinner, the pagan, the apostate, and the dissenter.

Sample Orders and Schools of the Rokari Church

Cavalry Soldier: Saint Gerlant Flamesword (saintly order)

Formulary—*Miracles of the Saints, Volume IV*.

Scripture—*The Life of Saint Gerlant*.

Want to Discover More? See "Saint Gerlant" in the Wizardry chapter, page 169.

Entertainer: Lay membership only.

Many entertainers use common magic, although this is against Church doctrine.

Farmer: Order of the Plow (saintly order)

Most farmers use common magic rather than becoming orderlies, even though this is against Church doctrine.

Formulary—*Work for Good* (sample spells: Chastise Disobedient Son, Hobble Errant Daughter, Ignore Own Fatigue, Repair Plow, Strike Wife Dumb).

Scripture—*The Plow Benedictions* (sample blessings: Awaken Refreshed, Fertile Fields, Fertile Marriage, Keep Working, Plow Deep).

Foot Soldier: Saint Dalan the Doughty (saintly order)

Formulary—*Fist of Righteousness* (sample spells: Close Wound, Find Weapon, Reinforce Shield, Shatter Foe's Armor, Shatter Foe's Blade, Strengthen Arm).

Scripture—*The Life of Saint Dalan* (sample blessings: Doughty Resolve, Hear Orders, March All Day, Smitte Pagan, Stout Armor).

Healer: Saint Xemela the Blessed (saintly order)

Formulary—*For Others*.

Scripture—*The Life of Saint Xemela*.

Want to Discover More? See "Saint Xemela" in the Wizardry chapter, page 171.

Hunter: Saint Orvar the Mighty (saintly order)

Most hunters use common magic rather than becoming orderlies, even though this is against Church doctrine.

Formulary—*Saint Orvar's Fireside Wisdom* (sample spells: Erase Tracks, Grab Salmon, Invisible to Deer, Light Campfire, Preserve Meat, See at Night, See Tracks, Strip Off Skin).

Scripture—*The Hunts of Saint Orvar* (sample blessings: Clean Skinning, No Scent, Quick as a Fish, Quiet Step, Spot Spoor).

Merchant: Saint Mistandar the Fair (saintly order)

Formulary—*The Ledgers of Credit* (sample spells:

Convincing Offer, Polish Goods, Preserve Grain, Preserve Meats, Sense Others' Wealth, Strengthen Lock).

Scripture—*The Life of Saint Mistandar* (sample blessings: Chastise Thief, Estimate Right Weight, Hide Money, See Through Counterfeit, Sense Imminent Theft).

Petty Noble: Gerlant, the Noble Saint (saintly order)

Formulary—*Miracles of the Noble Saint*.

Scripture—*The Life of Saint Gerlant*.

Want to Discover More? See "Saint Gerlant" in the Wizardry chapter, page 169.

Sailor: Saint Dormal the Sailor

Although there are several orders dedicated to sailor saints, common sailors worship Dormal, the first person to successfully sail on open water after the curse of the Closing. Instead of using formularies or scriptures, most of his worshippers learn the Openwater Sailing common magic.

Feats—Buoyancy, Know Upcoming Weather, Loosen Knot, Mend Canvas, Point to Nearest Land, Run On Wave, Strengthen Rope, Weaken Opposing Wind.

Spell—Open Seas.

Scholar: Saint Rokar Read Right (wizardry school)

Members of this "Order of Saint Rokar" include liturgists in addition to adepts. The liturgists invoke blessings for the adepts at regular and special worship services. They do not use grimoires or learn individual spells.

Scripture—*Right and Wrong Reading* (sample blessings: Ignore Impious Words, Keep Reading, Preserve Holy Book, Sense Presence of Holy Book).

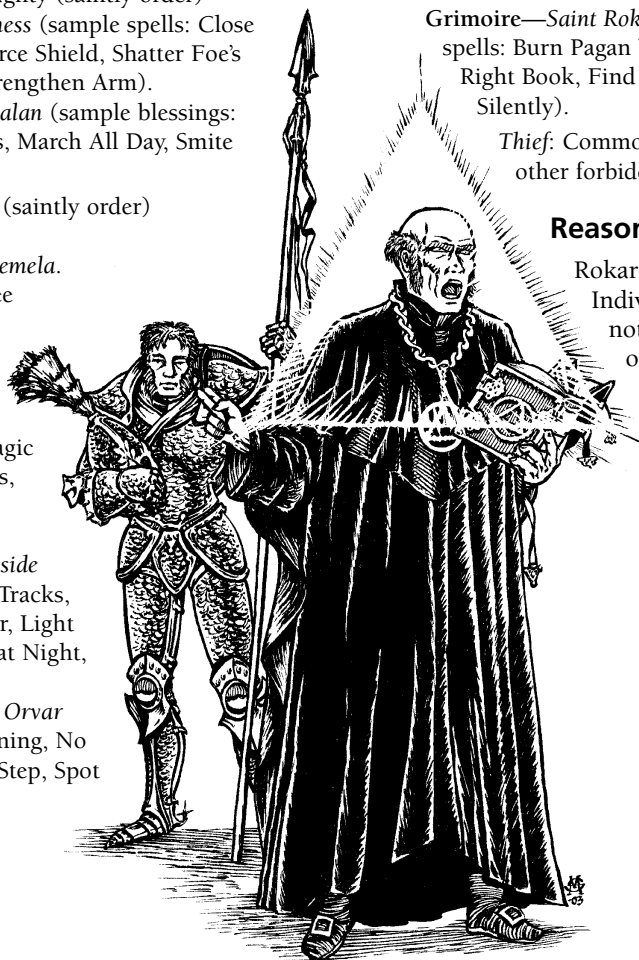
Grimoire—*Saint Rokar's Third Encyclical* (sample spells: Burn Pagan Writings, Enter Library, Find Right Book, Find Right Page, Read Book, Read Silently).

Thief: Common magic, foreign thief cults, and other forbidden magic only.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Rokari society is inflexible and caste-like.

Individuals, misfits, and self-achievers do not fit and often depart to seek better opportunities. Many cities have become more restrictive lately in enforcing their laws, and so have driven many people out.



Homeland: Tarsh

*Welcome to royal Tarsh! I know you not, but I tell you this:
he who comes is welcome, but he who comes with the axe shall die by the axe.*

Tarsh is a kingdom on the rise. Its king is of Imperial blood, its nobles follow Imperial custom, and its farmlands are enlivened by rich Imperial luxuries and Lunar inspiration. Inclusion in the Lunar Empire brings wealth and stability to the people. Tarsh is the southern tip of the Empire, and is the largest of the Imperial Provinces.

Several powerful noble families control different regions, basing their rule on a mixture of old traditions and new Lunar government institutions. They advise the king, who has raised monumental public works and built a mighty army. Local products are traded for goods from distant lands, and the wealth from selling grain to the Empire is bringing unprecedented affluence to the lowlands and cities. Foreign trade enters the Empire through Tarsh. The Red Moon has brought peace, prosperity, and pleasure to the Tarshites; only rebels and bumpkins worship the old gods.

Lunar Tarsh Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Shock), Entertainer (Bagpiper, Drummer, Skald), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Shock), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

Native Abilities: Axe and Shield Fighting, Know Tarshite Myths, Speak Tarshite, Tarshite Customs, Tarsh Geography, Urban Survival.

Typical Personality Traits: Fear Dragons, Provincial Subordination to Imperials, Sophisticated Superiority to Foreigners and Bumpkins.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Family; to Local Ruler; to Missionary or Temple.

Magic: Common magic; Lunar Religion (specialized magic).

Common Names:

Men—Argrand, Arim, Barastaros, Belkar, Borni, Danbal, Dwirindos, Engkarnos, Hengis, Horngren, Kornos, Leik, Pharon, Torkal, Wyredd.

Women—Brigidda, Drenna, Igarne, Leika, Katlene, Mirinna, Myfanwe, Olene, Traytha, Verstenbora.

Origin

Tarsh was empty four centuries ago, scoured of human beings by dragons. Courageous people led by brilliant leaders reclaimed the land and established a proud new realm. A hundred years

ago the great and wonderful goddess HonEel brought the Lunar Way to Tarsh so the land has flourished ever since. The rulers have joyfully converted, the city and valley folk as well.

Common Religions

Our Old Magic

People learn this from each other: practical things useful day to day. These are the magical abilities that people generally agree are still acceptable, even in light of their new religion.

R Talents: Attack Enemy Spirit, Climb over Hill and Dale, Conceal Object, Fire Stick, Frighten Stick, Hide in Cover, Hide in the Open, Jump Safely, Light Stick, Make Fire, Night Stick, Protect from Ancestor, Stay Warm, Talk to Ancestor, Throwing Stick, Warm Stick.

The Good Old Religion

Certain entities and customs remain among farmers and others that are from the former religion of the area before the truths of the Lunar Way came in. The Good Old Religion is practiced by hicks, rednecks, and yokels, and is chiefly oriented towards farming. They scrupulously avoid worshipping the Bad Old Religion, whose ways have been banished and persecuted out of existence in Tarsh. One of the more popular forms of this common religion includes seasonal dancing and sacrifices to Esrola and Her Boys; annual rites to Oakfed, Our River, and the Bright Sun; and propitiatory rites to the Five Demons of Vice, Illness, Starvation, Winter, and Night.

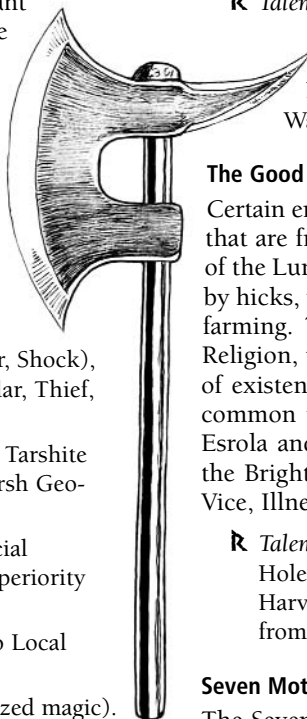
R Talents: Bash in the Face, Be Warmer, Dig and Fill a Hole, Drive Out Illness, Drive Out Vice, Endure Hunger, Harvest Endurance, Make a Fire, Plant Crops, Protect from Hail, Tend Herd Beast, Wake Up for Danger.

Seven Mothers Cult

The Seven Mothers is the preeminent Lunar cult in the Provinces. It is the Lunar missionary cult that is promoted in all the frontier regions and, after some time, is replaced when worshippers join more specific Lunar cults from within the Empire.

The Red Moon that hangs in the sky, visible to all day and night, was born only three centuries ago after seven human beings brought her to life. Those seven became, in turn, gods and are called the Seven Mothers (even though some of them are men). Their followers continue to give birth to Her power in the world by teaching Her Ways.

T Want to Discover More? See “Seven Mothers” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 112.



*Iron-axe'd buscarls, saga-speaking poets;
Ripe gold-tress'd maidens, canny old crones;
Silver-ringed merchants, broad-handed farmers;
These are the people of royal Tarsh.*

The Seven Sisters

The Seven Sisters society is the lay association of the cult. It takes in the homeless, feeds the hungry, and listens to the babbling masses of lonely, rejected, and needy people. It teaches the five Hero Seven Magics as common magic.

- ✞ Feats—Fight Back, Heal Self.
- ✞ Charms—Calmness, Heal Madness.
- ✞ Spells—Make Writing Talk.

Specialized Religion—Lunar Religion

Specialized worship in Tarsh generally involves one of the Lunar cults popular among those able to indulge. Wealthy and leading families and up-and-coming individuals tend to worship one of these cults. Your hero is probably a communal worshipper of the religion, and thus gains the benefit of the Lunar Religion keyword, below.

The Lunar Religion is unique among specialized religions in that it includes theist, animist, and wizardry organizations. Although each functions as a separate religion, they are united and share common characteristics. Many Lunars worship a specific deity, majestic spirit, or saint. See the listing below for sample cults, practices, and orders.

Lunar Religion Keyword

Abilities: Know Lunar Religion Myths, Speak New Pelorian, Worship Sedenya.

Virtues: Accept Lunar Way, Adaptable, Inclusive, Nationalist.

Magic: Divine aid, Lunar cyclic magic (see page 113).

Other Side: Rufelza, the physical Red Moon, is present in the God World, Spirit World, and Essence Planes. On and around the Red Moon are wonders and horrors, platitudes and paradoxes.

Sample Deities, Majestic Spirits, and Saints of the Lunar Religion

Cavalry Soldier: Yarandros the Great Horseman
Affinities—Cavalry Combat, Horsemanship.

Entertainer: Donandar the Eternal Entertainer
Common Magic—Left-Hand Talents, Right-Hand Talents.

✞ Want to Discover More? See “Donandar” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 111.

Farmer: Barntar the Plowman
Affinities—Agriculture, Domestic Animals, Honest Work.

Foot Soldier: Yanafal Tarnils, the Lunar Warrior
Affinities—Combat, Soldier, Warlord.

Healer: Deezola, Lunar Goddess of Healing
Affinities—Heal Body, Heal Mind, Heal Soul.

Hunter: Odayla the Bear
Affinities—Bear, Hide, Hunting.
 ✞ Want to Discover More? See “Odayla” in the Theism chapter, page 125.

Merchant: Selven Hara the Companionable Traveler
Affinities—Discovery, Travel, Travel Safely.
 ✞ Want to Discover More? See “Selven Hara” in the Theism chapter, page 126.

Petty Noble: Natha, the Red Goddess
Affinities—Balancer, Nathic Combat, Otherworld.
 ✞ Want to Discover More? See “Natha” in the Theism chapter, page 125.

Scholar: Saint Henshelek, the Wanderer and Wonderer (saintly order)
Formulary—*Henshelek’s Annotated Sketches* (sample spells: Copy Picture ritual, Memorize Picture, Memorize Text, Preserve Picture, See Meaning Behind Numbers, Speak Through Pictures, Work Out Unknown Script).
Scripture—*Travels and Wonders* (sample blessings: Bless Artist, Bless Book, Bless Calligraphy, Bless Picture, Bless Scholar, Bless Traveler, Draw Well, Good Memory, Keen Eye, Teach Well, Write Well).
 ✞ Want to Discover More? See “Cerise Church” and “Henshelek” in the Wizardry chapter, page 168.

Shaman: Jakaleel and the Five Spirit Moons Practice
Spirits—Full Moon, Half Moon, Hollow Moon, Waning Moon, Waxing Moon.
 ✞ Want to Discover More? See the “From Dark Tradition” in the Animism chapter, page 141.

Thief: Twisted Orgrim, Hunter of the Gullible
 Most thieves use common magic as well as worshipping a god like Orgrim.
Affinity—Cunning Ruse.
 ✞ Want to Discover More? See “Lanbril” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 112.

Warrior: Phargentes Kingslayer
Affinities—Cunning, Indefatigable, Warrior.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Tarsh is a land full of people on the move. Some large families encourage members to find new opportunities elsewhere, others just send extra children out on their own. On the other hand, ambitious people often seek their fortunes in this rich land.



Homeland: Teshnos

Sun shine upon you, here is my hand, there is my life flame. It would transform my dull and unproductive day if you would take dates and water with me, however meager and stolid the fare.

Teshnos basks in tropical listlessness. It is an ancient civilization half lost in its jungle and dreams. Cities languish happily, surrounded by natural orchards and forest plots that practically farm themselves. Castes dominate society, but life is so easy no one cares. Temples, however, are meticulously kept by busy priests and priestesses, and when they conduct their ancient rites the ceremonies are attended by humans and several other races. Slaves are forbidden.

The Foot Soldier occupation indicates employment as a private guard. Petty nobles often learn “the ancient arts of violence” along with their guards.

Teshnos Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Entertainer (Dancer, Drummer, Flautist, Singer, Sitarist, Snake-Piper), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Regular, Skirmisher), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief.

Native Abilities: Chalite Teachings, Dancing (socially), Enjoy Food, Know Jungle Ways or Urban Survival, Sit Quietly, Speak Teshnan, Teshnos Customs, Teshnos Geography.

Typical Personality Traits: Clean, Fear Dragons, Open-Minded and Accepting of All Peoples, Peaceful and Unexcitable, Pious towards All Forms of Worship, Suspicious of Kralori.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Family; to Temple.

Magic: Common magic, Teshnos Pantheon (common and specialized magic).

Common Names:

Men—Amadhara, Bhindish, Ganeshi, Garusharp, Kamakshi, Kshatralal, Pubnashap, Sandhya, Sudevi, Vasu, Vasudev.

Women—Aichit, Bhirapati, Chanaya, Lishina, Madhuri, Nirupama, Nita, Primiralna, Taravati, Uma, Vishakhri.

Origin

First was Endi Varo, the Great Emperor and Father Sun, the self-contained Creator who made the universe out of mystical origins. Primeval powers lived here first, and a hundred dynasties of gods after them. The latest dynasty began with Chal the Wise who instructed the king, who ordered the people and made sacrifices to Somash.

Common Religions

The Book of Well-Being

Most people in Teshnos know and use this little volume, a synopsis of the *Works of Chal*. Only a few can read it, but almost everyone follows its regimen of exercises, dietary restrictions, prayers and meditation exercises, and virtues, represented in *HeroQuest* by the *Chalite Teachings* ability. As a result, almost everyone can perform the *Spell of Health*.

R Spell: Spell of Health.

The Service and Comfort Society

An organization of service employees who serve whomever can pay them.

R Charms: Five Special Wine Spirits, Grow Food on Trees, Grow Ten Noble Spice Plants, Nap Pillow Spirit, Self-Moving Fan.

We All Know This

Teshnos has been home to a vast collection of cults, spirits, and churches, which have left behind some common magic. They say they know a million magics, but here are just a few of the popular ones that make Teshnos life so pleasant.

R Talents: Brewing, Clean Clothes, Cook Better, Drop Food from Trees, Grow Food on Trees, Look Great, Make Tasty Drink, Nurture Banana, Nurture Breadfruit, Nurture Coconut, Nurture Plantain, Talk Smooth.



Common Religion—Teshnos Pantheon

Five hundred religions are practiced in Teshnos. These all hold loosely together by a casual mystical overview of the esoteric Chalite Practices. For most people the important god is Somash, the sun with many faces. He is worshipped at sunrise as Creator, at mid-morning as Healer, at noon as Great Emperor and Father, at mid-afternoon as Merchant, and at sunset as Scholar. His consort and rival is Kab Vanarana Sa, whose nine hundred daughters are the local goddesses of farming, food, and family.

Unusually among major religions, the Teshnos “pantheon” does not specialize in one form of magic, and is separated from the common religions above only for convenience. Your hero is probably a communal worshipper of the religion, and thus gains the benefit of the Teshnos Pantheon keyword, below. Some Teshnans initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing below for sample cults, some of which are actually common religions (using mixed magic) rather than pure theist cults.

Teshnos Pantheon Keyword

Abilities: Know Teshnos Pantheon Myths, Worship Teshnos Pantheon.

Virtues: Eclectic, Enjoy Life.

Magic: *The Book of Well-Being*.

Other Side: The Fire Realms are vivid and blazing lands in which golden palaces look down from mountains of light.

Sample Cults of the Teshnos Pantheon

Any: Calyz Mandar, the Ancestor God

Affinity—Talk to Ancestors.

Entertainer: Somash Veren, the Beauty Sun

Affinity—Entertainment.

Farmer: Kab Vanarana Sa and her Nine Hundred Daughters

Affinity—Farm.

Foot Soldier or Petty Noble: Alen Somash Sa, the Warrior Sun, one of the Moving Gods
Affinity—Horsemanship.
Spells—*Chal's Rules, Part 3* (Deity Detection, Fight Theistic Beings, Heal Before Combat, Magic Protection, Spirit Combat, Spirit Detection).

Foot Soldier or Petty Noble: Kab Tolat Solf, the Great Destroying Warrior Planet, one of the Moving Gods
Worshippers of Kab Tolat Solf do not use *The Book of Well-Being*.
Affinity—Combat, Fight Against Gods or Spirits.

Foot Soldier or Petty Noble: Vai Madar Sa, the Great Star Archer, one of the Moving Gods
Common Magic—"The Bow of the Heavens Chants":
feat: Sacred Archery.
charm: Hand-Archery.
spell: Farshooting Multiarrow.

Want to Discover More? See "Vai Madar Sa" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 113.

Healer: Mairnali Har, Mother of Mankind and Source of Compassion
Affinities—Healing, Meditation.
Talents—Calm Madness, Comfort Song, Sleep, Soothe Invisible Parts.

Hunter: Velit Maniz, the Invisible Leopard
Affinity—Hunting.
Talents—Leap into Treetop, Motionlessness, Quick Kill, Scentlessness, Send away Ghost, Soundlessness, Stalk, Trueshot.

Merchant: Somash Mimi, Who Makes Us All Rich
Affinity—Trade.

Petty Noble: Somash Edi Varo the Judge, and a Moving Deity (see "Reasons to Have Left Home," below)
Affinity—Adjudication.

Scholar: Somash Hero Madoro, the Dutiful Archivist
Affinity—Preserve Manuscripts.

Thief: Besdi Solf Du, the Seventh Little Destroyer, the "Taker of Things"
Affinities—Excess, Stealth.

Talents—Conceal Item, Leap into Treetop, Leap onto Roof, Motionlessness, Scentlessness, Send away Guard, Soundlessness.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Many people have the chance to leave their sleepy jungle or city homes in Teshnos. In particular, the Three Moving Gods (Alen Somash Sa, Kab Tolat Solf, and Vai Madar Sa) allow people from any caste to join in them and leave home. These deities are known to outsiders because their worshippers often depart from their own homeland. They are all associated with celestial bodies, hence "moving deities." All are worshipped both inside and outside of Teshnos in different ways.





HERO IMPROVEMENTS

Hero Points are the currency of *HeroQuest*. They provide the way for you to improve your hero or change the results of any die roll you make.

Gaining Hero Points

The narrator decides how many hero points you gain, and when.

Hero Points Per Adventure

- Your beginning hero starts with 3 hero points, to reflect his uncommon potential.
- At the start of each adventure, the narrator assigns each hero 1 to 5 hero points.
- At the end of a long, difficult, or multi-session adventure or quest, the narrator should give each hero another 1 to 5 hero points, depending on the group's success or failure and how well you roleplayed your hero.
- The narrator may give your hero additional hero points after an adventure for individual success, good role-playing, or achieving personal goals.

Using Hero Points

You spend hero points to improve your hero's skills, magic, relationships, equipment—to make any permanent change. Hero improvements are made between adventures, and there is no limit on how many abilities can be added or improved at a time.

Improvements to a hero should make sense in the context of the story. Some improvements, however, seem to come from nowhere—the player just decides that it would be fun or useful to have a certain ability or to get better with a skill he has never used before. If an improvement is not related to a recent game session or the hero's established goals and backstory, you pay double the hero point cost.

- △ John wants Ingomar to know how to make beer. Consulting with Kathy, he decides Ingomar learned it from one

Heroic Growth

In epic adventure fiction, characters are often young or unskilled when you first meet them. Over time, they gain more abilities, mature in their relationships and personalities, and win followers or political power. This progression from youthfulness to maturity is an essential component of *HeroQuest*. Your hero starts out as an important person in his local area, but must gain experience to face the challenges of (and win fame in) the wider world.



of his strange uncles. This is not in Ingomar's backstory, has never been mentioned before, and relates to events that happened long ago, so Kathy states that gaining this skill costs 2 hero points. Ingomar can now make beer.

Required Hero Point Expenditures

Advanced magic requires heroes to commit time and resources. When you join a magical organization, you must give it part of your time, and spend the same proportion of hero points on related advancements. The narrator should adopt a broad attitude towards "related" abilities—for a healing deity, any ability listed under the Healer occupation is appropriate. These percentages apply only to hero points spent on improvements, not hero points used on bumps (see below). See "Time and Hero Point Allocation" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 107, for details.

Adding New Abilities

Add a new mundane ability to your hero for 1 hero point.

- △ Frederick finally decides to buy *Play Harp* for Mr. Puma. In the course of the game he studies under a renowned harpist, then spends 1 hero point to get the ability *Play Harp* at 13.

New abilities begin with a rating of 13. If your narrator decides it is part of one of your hero's keywords, its rating is instead equal to 18 (the keyword rating +1 for the hero point spent).

The Hero Wars are between...Man and Immortal

The Immortals of Glorantha are the gods, heroes, spirits, saints, and other inhabitants of the Other Side. They have given up the opportunity for growth in exchange for immortality. This makes them fearful of men, who can still change and gain power.

As more heroes are becoming immortal and winning permanent homes on the Other Side, the Immortals are mustering to prevent mortals from supplanting them.

△ Rick wants Hengal to be better than usual at sensing when a person is an enemy or harbors ill will. Kathy agrees that it is an ability called *Sense Enemy*. Since this is part of a warrior's duties, she declares that Hengal already has the ability equal to his occupation keyword of 17. Rick decides to add 1 hero point to it, and so writes *Sense Enemy* 18 underneath his Warrior keyword.

Learning New Magical Abilities

Your hero can usually learn a common magical ability whenever he wishes, although he may have to specify who he learned it from if the ability is not common in his homeland. Learning a common magic ability costs 2 hero points unless your hero has **concentrated** his magic (see "Concentrating Magic Use" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 108).

To learn specialized magic, your hero must usually be a member of a religion. When a hero joins a specialized religion, he may gain some magical abilities immediately, but must spend additional hero points to learn others. See the magic chapters for exact costs.

Improving Abilities

You can spend hero points to permanently improve your hero's abilities. This represents training, practice, a greater commitment to a community or temple, deeper intimacy or trust in a relationship, and so on. To improve a mundane ability by 1 costs one hero point. The cost to improve a magical ability varies; see the magic chapters for exact costs. **Keywords cannot be improved with hero points, although individual abilities within them can be.**

△ Rick decides that Hengal really needs to raise his relationship with the league if he's going to be challenging Valdamare any time soon. He erases one hero point and raises his Loyalty to League from 17 to 18.

You can improve an ability faster than normal, but this costs more hero points—see the "Hero Improvement Cost Multipliers" table below. Still, if you want to raise an ability quickly (perhaps you failed in a contest in the last session, or the rating is near a mastery level), you might spend more points now.

△ Frederick wants to increase Mr. Puma's *Climb* ability because he fell out of a tree in the last adventure. He could spend 1 hero point to increase it to 19, but instead decides to spend 6 hero points to raise the ability rating by 3, from 18 to 11 $\frac{1}{2}$, which gives him a mastery. If he had waited to spend the hero points over two more game sessions, he could have had the increase for only 3 hero points total.

Basic Hero Improvement Costs	
Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play
Gain a new mundane ability at 13	1
Learn a new talent, feat, charm, or spell within the common magic keyword	2
Improve a mundane ability by +1	1
Improve a common magic ability by +1	2
Improve a keyword by +1	N/A
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1

Overcoming Flaws

You cannot remove a flaw simply by spending hero points. To combat a flaw, build up a positive trait until it is stronger than the flaw. The flaw may then be ignored for normal play (with the narrator's permission), though it remains, dormant.

Alternatively, your hero may overcome the flaw during play. A crisis might offer a chance to exterminate old failings. Some kind of desperate confrontation *despite* the flaw might end it: an especially brave deed, slaying an adversary, or completing a particular heroquest, for example.

Cementing Experiences

Characters in serial adventure shows and books often succeed at goals—wealth, love, or magical knowledge—only to forget them by the next adventure. If your hero wins some advantage and you want to ensure that this benefit continues, you must spend hero points to **cement** the benefit and add it to your character sheet. Otherwise, your narrator may deprive your hero of it without recourse, usually before the next adventure begins. If the benefit gained is a standard one, such as a sidekick, the normal hero point cost applies. If the ability is not standard, such as a magical item, the cost to cement it is 1 hero point.

Abilities cemented with hero points may still be lost during the course of the game, but the hero will have an opportunity to keep or "rescue" the ability. Of course, the narrator always has the option of charging fewer or even no hero points for a standard benefit gained during play.

△ In the last adventure Hengal gained a wind spirit. He cements it with 1 hero point and notes the magical ability *Wind Spirit* on his character sheet. If he had not done this, Kathy might have started the next adventure by saying, "The league elders are very pleased that Hengal gave them the wind spirit to use."

Cost of Improvements

The "Basic Hero Improvement Costs" table lists the hero points required to improve or gain mundane and common magic abilities. Later chapters include similar tables with more detailed information—see pages 96, 109, 122, 140-141, and 166. You will also find a Consolidated Hero Improvement Costs table in the Game Aids appendix on pages 272-273.

△ Hengal wants to improve the rating of his *Fighting* affinity by +2. Although the improvement is related to the events of the most recent session, Hengal must pay a total of 18 hero points for this improvement: the cost to raise an affinity by +1 (6 hero points) \times 3 (for raising it by +2 at one time). If Hengal had concentrated his theistic magic, this cost would be halved, and he would pay only 9 hero points for the improvement.

Hero Improvement Cost Multipliers	
Improvement	Cumulative Multiplier
Any improvement unrelated to play, goals, or backstory	cost \times 2
Concentrated magic use (<i>specific magical abilities only</i>)	cost \times $\frac{1}{2}$
Improve any ability by +2 at one time	cost \times 3
Improve any ability by +3 at one time	cost \times 6
Improve any ability by +4 at one time	cost \times 10



CORE RULES

HeroQuest is a talking game. Each player states his hero's intent, and the narrator offers obstacles, questions, or other challenges thrown up by the story. Sometimes the narrator lets the hero succeed automatically. But she may also choose to introduce an element of unforeseen drama and resolve the conflict by rolling dice in a contest.

The core rules for *HeroQuest* involve Contests and their Consequences: Automatic Success, Simple Contest, and Extended Contest. Modifiers and Augmentation help the players and narrator figure out how circumstances, armor and weapons, augmenting abilities, and other elements of the story affect a hero's (or opponent's) abilities. Healing and Recovery allow heroes to overcome the effects of defeat.

Contests

Even a hero can fail. Glorantha has many foes who try to stop the heroes' plans, dangerous regions, and things of magic not easily tamed or changed. No one knows quite what will happen until it occurs, so *HeroQuest* has rules to determine if your hero succeeds or fails. When the story throws up a challenge, you pit one of your hero's abilities in a **contest**.

Sometimes, the action is something "no self-respecting hero would ever fail at." In these cases, the narrator simply declares the action an **automatic success**, without any need for a contest.

Usually the challenge is settled with a **simple contest**: you decide what to try and what ability to use, the narrator does the same for the opponent or other **resistance**, and then both roll a die one time. The rolls decide who wins.

A simple contest resolves actions that take just moments, challenges that may be difficult but are not the focus of the adventure. For dramatic confrontations, the narrator can use an **extended contest** instead.

Abilities

To overcome the challenge your hero faces, choose the ability on your character sheet most relevant to the action you intend.

Comparing Abilities

Consider the vocabulary of abilities in light of the situation. For instance, in one speed contest the abilities of *Run*, *Run Fast*, *Sprint*, *Cross Country Racer*, and *Move Quickly* may be equivalent and all used with their full ability rating. But if the race is a short one, *Cross Country Racer* may take a penalty because it is a very different ability from the one used in a short race, whereas *Sprint* is so precisely the skill at hand that it may get a bonus to its target number. Similarly, abilities like *Lie*, *Fast Talk*, and *Bargain* may have different modifiers depending on whether the contest involves debating, seduction, a rivalry, or haggling.



The narrator considers the ability's name and how your hero has used it in the past, and decides if the ability is suitable. Work with her to determine which abilities are appropriate.

Modifiers

Anything that influences the effectiveness of a hero's ability calls for a **modifier** (see "Modifiers and Augmentation" on page 76). Improvisation, magic, equipment, help from friends, and other conditions can affect a hero's actions.

Target Number

The total of the ability rating plus or minus all modifiers is called the **target number**. The target number shows how capable the character is for the current contest.

Contestants

In a contest, there are often only two **contestants**: the hero and his opponent. Player heroes normally act individually during a group contest, so each is a contestant. However, a hero's followers usually do not act separately, but enhance the hero. As such, they are usually not separate contestants: they do not roll a separate die for their actions. A pack of five trollkin *can* be five contestants (with the narrator rolling a separate die for each), but such insignificant foes are often better treated as a single contestant with one die roll.

The Hero Wars are between... Life and Death

Life and Death are both a part of the world. Plants, animals, people, even the world itself live, die, and then are reborn. This is the way of existence.

But there are those who seek to interrupt this cycle, so that everything that dies remains dead. The defenders of Life are starting to awaken again to resist the destroyers, and they will not allow their world to be destroyed.

Why Do Passive Resistances Try To Succeed?



Although it is obvious why some resistances try to succeed (for example, a lock resisting a thief's efforts), some resistances seem "passive." A wounded hero may wonder why his injury is trying to resist treatment when he definitely wants to get better! The resistance roll here represents the unpredictability of the hero's condition. Maybe he responds badly to medicine, or the broken bones might not easily set in the right alignment, or the wound not mend. The narrator should warn players that things do not always go their way, and some problems end up being harder than they look.

Resistance

In all contests, your hero's ability is opposed by a **resistance** number. Resistance may be an active opponent with his or her own ability, a natural force, or even an attribute (such as the height of a tree). A more difficult task presents the hero with a higher resistance. The narrator can use the Sample Resistances below to help determine the resistance, and the Game Aids appendix suggests more on pages 274-275.

The **default resistance** for natural and ordinary things is 14. Use this number for normal tasks or "passive" resistances, or if the resistance is hard to gauge. 14 is the normal minimum resistance—if a hero has no appropriate ability to resist in a contest, he can at least "passively" resist and hope that his opponent makes a mistake. The narrator may decide that a hero offers a lower resistance, typically the default ability rating of 6. However, such an easy task might be an automatic success, even for the hero's opponent. Thus, a hero who has been drugged into unconsciousness might offer a resistance of 6 to being tied up, but the narrator is more likely to simply declare that he can do nothing about it.

Magical abilities sometimes use the default resistance instead of a more difficult value. See "Natural Resistance" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 98.

△ Galan Loses a Bison

Kathy: Bill, one of Galan's bison has wandered off in the night.

Rick: What? Darn it Galan, we need to get going.

Bill: I'll have Bison Brain call for it. He has *Speak to Bison*, so I'll have him tell it to get back in the herd. His ability is 17, what's the resistance?

Kathy: 14. I rolled a success, what did you do? Success? But I rolled lower than you—Bison Brain calls, but nothing happens. All you hear is echoes of his mooing.

Bill: Drat. OK, I'll go track it then. I assume that my Nomad keyword includes some sort of tracking ability.

Kathy: Well, there was a lot of wind last night. Normally the resistance would be 14, because the bison wasn't trying to hide its tracks, but the wind has blown sand over the tracks. So it's a 4W resistance.

Die Rolls: Success and Failure

To determine how well your hero uses an ability, roll a 20-sided die (d20). Compare the rolled number with the target number (ignoring masteries for now); low rolls are better than high. At the same time, the narrator rolls for the resistance.

Critical: If the die roll is a 1 (even when the target number is 1), you succeed so brilliantly that the narrator may reward your hero with an additional, unexpected effect.

Success: If the die roll is greater than 1 and less than or equal to the target number, you succeed, but there is nothing remarkable about the success.

Failure: If the die roll is greater than the target number but not 20, you fail. Things do not happen as you hoped.

Fumble: If the die roll is a 20, you fumble (even when the target number is 20). This is the worst result possible, and you will suffer a disturbing or entertaining catastrophe.

The degree of success or failure of the hero and narrator's rolls are compared in either a simple or an extended contest.

Sample Resistances

Climbing

Shallow slope: Automatic success.

Very steep slope: 14 to 20.

A cliff: 17 to 10W2.

A city wall: 10W to 10W2.

Combat

Dara Happan peasant: 6 to 13.

Dara Happan typical soldier: 17 to 18W.

Dara Happan elite soldier: 10W to 10W2.

Heortling cottar: 14.

Heortling weaponthane: 17 to 18W.

Heortling clan champion: 10W to 10W2.

Romance

Seduce a willing, interested partner: Automatic success.

Seduce a potential partner: 20 to 10W2.

Come across as a lovable rogue: 1W.

Seduce someone who is married or in love: 5W to 20W2.

Social Conflict

Spread rumors: 14 to 20.

Spread malicious rumors: 17 to 5W.

Passionately sway a friendly crowd: 17 to 20W.

Deny malicious rumors: 20 to 10W.

Discredit opponent's argument: 1W to 20W.

Win over a neutral crowd: 1W to 15W.

Win over a hostile crowd: 15W to 10W2.

Tracking/Finding Your Way

Find your way in a familiar region: Automatic success.

Follow an animal's tracks: 14.

Follow verbal directions in a familiar region: 14.

Follow a map in a foreign land: 17 to 5W.

Retrace your steps in a foreign land 20 to 5W.

Follow an animal's tracks on a windy day: 1W to 5W.

Follow someone's verbal directions in a foreign place: 10W.

Follow an animal's tracks in the rain or over bare stone: 20W.

Bumps

A **bump** affects the degree of success or failure of the die roll. A **bump up** improves the degree of success by one step, changing a fumble to a failure, a failure to a success, or a success to a critical. Bump ups come from two sources: masteries and hero points (applied in that order). A **bump down** reduces the degree of success of your opponent. Bump downs come from one source: masteries.

Bump Up with Mastery

You get one bump up for each level of mastery your hero has greater than your opponent's. Opposed masteries cancel out (based on target numbers, not beginning ability ratings), so if your opponent has as many or more masteries as you do you will not get a bump up.

△ Hazeel tries to sweet-talk his way into the heart (or at least arms) of a pretty girl. She has *Chaste* 6W and he has *Flirt and Seduce* 13. Their target numbers are 6W and 13, so after both roll a success her result is bumped up to a critical. He is defeated: she rejects him with a sneer.

Later, while trying to impress the girl, Hazeel gets into an archery contest with a rival for her affections. He has *Archery* 7W, but his opponent is a master archer with a target number of 4W2. One mastery cancels out, so the two begin the competition with ability ratings of 7 and 4W. Hazeel rolls a failure, as does the rival, but the rival's result is bumped to a success. Hazeel's chances of winning the girl are starting to look pretty slim.

Bump Up with Hero Points

You can spend a hero point to bump up any result by one step. You cannot spend multiple hero points to gain more than one bump on a single result, and you may only bump your own rolls, not a friend's, follower's, or opponent's. You can decide to use a hero point for a bump *after* the die roll results are calculated (including any bump ups resulting from masteries).

Heroic Uncertainty

HeroQuest encourages you to use the narrative conventions that make fiction, adventure movies, and TV shows entertaining. This is *not* the logic of a rigidly simulated reality with dragons and magic thrown in, but the dramatic logic used by storytellers since the first times.

Your heroes are not as invincible as those of an over-the-top action film. They often fail, and might even die. Roleplaying demands more fallible heroes so that their creators—you, the narrator and players—are as surprised by the course of the story as you would be when watching a TV show or reading a novel.

This uncertainty sets a roleplaying game apart from other forms of storytelling. There's no replay button. Your hero takes risks with consequences. Bold heroes seek these challenges.



The ability to change the result of a die roll is the most powerful tool a player has in HeroQuest. Use it wisely! Most of the time it is used to make a success into a critical or a fumble into a failure.

Bump Down with Mastery

A bump down works like a bump up, but in reverse. It **decreases** the result by one step: a critical to a success, a success to a failure, or a failure to a fumble. If you have a critical and still have one or more “unused masteries,” you can use them to bump down an opponent, since you cannot get a result better than a critical for yourself. The opponent receives one bump down for each level of mastery remaining. Bump downs come from masteries, never hero points.

△ Ingomar Climbs

Ingomar attempts to climb a cliff with a resistance of 14W2. He has *Climb* 17. Both roll a success, but the cliff's is bumped up to a critical. The remaining, unused mastery bumps down Ingomar from a success to a failure. The result is a major defeat for Ingomar. He falls off the cliff and twists his arm and leg badly.

Contests: Victory and Defeat

In all contests, the degrees of success or failure of the opposed die rolls are compared to find the level of victory or defeat. *HeroQuest* uses five terms to designate levels of victory or defeat: **marginal**, **minor**, **major**, and **complete**, plus a **tie**. Simple and extended contests determine this in different ways, but the effect is the same. Both victory and defeat have the same level: if your hero wins a marginal victory, his opponent suffers a marginal defeat. The level of victory and defeat guides the narrator in describing what happens as a result of the contest.

Tie: Tie means no result. Effort was expended, but the net result is that nothing consequential occurs, or else both sides lose or gain equally.

Marginal: A nominal victory or defeat, with little gain or loss. The victor gains only the immediate benefits of winning. The loser suffers no lasting effects of his defeat beyond the end of the contest.

Minor: A clear victory or defeat, with a significant but limited effect. The victor gains the immediate advantage of his victory, plus the defeat has some lasting effects, although they are typically annoyances. The loser suffers penalties that last for at least a day, possibly longer.

Major: A resounding victory or defeat, with serious consequences for all participants. The victor may gain fame or glory. The loser is prevented from pursuing his plans until he somehow counters the results, and he will likely suffer lasting penalties. For both, the effects are long-term, lasting weeks or even seasons.

Complete: A total victory or defeat, with momentous consequences for all involved. These repercussions are often permanent or irreversible; the narrator might make their removal the goal of an entire adventure or campaign. The victor will be famous (at least for a while). The loser suffers a severe penalty.

Contest Format

Appropriate Abilities: Sample abilities you can use to resolve the contest. Numbers in parentheses suggest improvisational modifiers for abilities that do not quite match the task (see “Improvisational Modifiers” on page 77).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Anticipated influences and common abilities that might modify the appropriate ability used.

Resistance: Resistance.

Victory Level(s): Consequences for each level of victory.

Defeat Level(s): Consequences for each level of defeat.

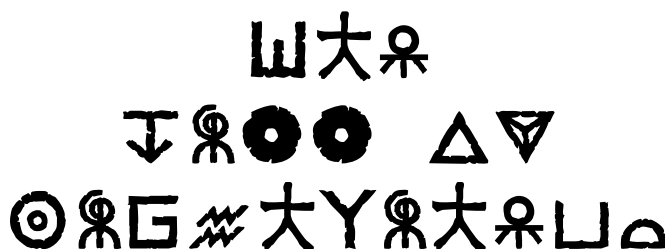
No Repeat Attempts

The point of contests is to introduce suspense and uncertainty, so that not even the narrator knows ahead of time exactly what is going to happen. Therefore, a contest represents *all* of your hero’s attempts to overcome an obstacle. If you are defeated it means that no matter how many times you tried to solve the problem with your ability, you finally had to give up. You can try again only if you apply a new ability to the task or your narrator agrees that special circumstances exist.

How Good are Masteries?



- A hero with the same ability rating as an opponent will win about half the contests they fight.
- One mastery will beat anyone who is a full mastery lower about 75% of the time.
- If the hero is two full masteries higher, the chance of victory is about 95%.
- At three levels, he is all but certain to win.
- At four, the hero will always be victorious, although the opponent *might* survive to tell the tale...



Automatic Success

Much of the time, your hero can do normal actions with no chance of failure. Either they are easy, or it is just not interesting or dramatic enough to bring in game rules and dice. This sort of **automatic success** just happens, and can include both everyday events that no one even thinks about, and challenges that would be serious for non-heroic characters, such as routinely knocking out a guard or traveling through the hostile wilds for two days.

1. State what your hero is trying to do.

State the action clearly.

2. Hero succeeds.

The hero automatically succeeds.

△ Successful Travel is Easy

The war party has set off on its journey.

Bill: We are going to get our stuff and our followers, and go traveling. We’ll use our normal precautions.

Kathy: OK. You travel for about two days.

“Get our stuff” and “normal precautions” indicate trivial tasks, or standard routines that have been worked out by the players and narrator early in the campaign.

Contest Sequences

Automatic Success

1. State what your hero is trying to do.
2. Hero succeeds.

Simple Contest

1. State what your hero is trying to do and which ability he uses.
2. Figure your target number using the ability rating and any modifiers.
3. The narrator selects the resistance.
4. Roll a die to determine your degree of success or failure, then apply any bumps. The narrator does the same.
5. Determine level of victory or defeat.
6. Determine contest consequences.



Extended Contest

1. State what your hero is trying to do and which ability he uses for his first action.
2. Calculate your starting advantage point total using the target number plus any source of additional advantage points you may have.
3. The narrator selects the resistance and figures its starting advantage point total.
4. Carry out one or more rounds:
 - a. State your hero’s attempted action, ability used, and advantage point bid.
 - b. The narrator selects the resistance.
 - c. Roll a die to determine your degree of success or failure, then apply any bumps. The narrator does the same.
 - d. Compare your result to your opponent’s to determine AP gains and losses.
 - e. Now it is your opponent’s turn.
 - f. Repeat as necessary.
5. Determine contest consequences.

Simple Contest

You use simple contests to resolve conflicts that are quick or minor. Simple contests are also suitable for events that are dramatic but abrupt.

Simple Contest Sequence

1. State what your hero is trying to do, and which ability he uses.

State the action clearly, but don't describe the effects in detail, because you don't know what will happen yet.

2. Figure your target number using the ability rating and any modifiers.

Your **target number** is the rating of your ability, plus or minus **modifiers** the narrator may give you—especially if the ability is not well-suited to the task. The higher the number (and the more masteries), the more capable your hero is.

3. The narrator selects the resistance.

The narrator opposes your hero with a **resistance**—the harder the task or tougher the opponent, the higher the resistance. If the narrator is not sure of the resistance, she can use the default resistance of 14.

4. Roll a die to determine your degree of success or failure, then apply any bumps. The narrator does the same.

Roll a twenty-sided die for your action. At the same time, the narrator rolls for the resistance. Compare the number you roll with your target number to see how well you succeeded or failed with your ability, as described in “Die Rolls: Success and Failure” on page 61. Remember to apply any bumps from masteries or hero points, as described previously under Bumps.

5. Determine level of victory or defeat.

Compare your success or failure with the narrator's on the Simple Contest Results table to find your level of victory. It is possible for a character to succeed at his die roll but still be defeated.

6. Determine contest consequences.

Describe the result based on “Contests: Victory and Defeat” on page 62. If necessary, compare the level of victory or defeat with the Contest Consequences table on page 74.

Occasionally, the result of a simple contest will be inconclusive. For example, a hero tries to cross a river, and both the player and narrator roll a 20. If neither has a mastery, the result is a tie. What happens—does he cross the river or not?

In situations like this, the narrator must decide what happens. The hero might actually succeed in crossing, but only after being swept several miles downriver. Maybe he fails, but can immediately try again with the same ability, even though the rules normally do not allow repeat attempts. Perhaps one of the other players can augment him, even though no one stated that they were doing so during the contest. As with any unclear situation, the narrator should make her decision based on what is best for the story.

△ River Crossing

The war party has reached an obstacle. They want to cross a river but the bridge has been destroyed. The players decide to swim across. Everyone decides they are going to try it separately.

Every hero has a *Swimming* skill of 17 except Galan, who has a 6, and Hazeel, who has 14. Kathy reckons that the river is flowing easily and is not too wide, with a resistance of 17. This gives everyone except Galan at least a 50% chance of victory.

Rick rolls for Hengal. He rolls a 12, lower than his target number and hence a success. Kathy rolls 18, higher than the target number and hence a failure. Comparing the two results gives Hengal a minor victory. He gets across.

John rolls for Ingomar. He has heavy armor and a shield that have a +6 bonus in combat. Kathy declares this is a penalty for swimming, so his score is only 11. He rolls an 8 anyway, while Kathy rolls a 4. Both succeed, but Kathy gets the better roll, so Ingomar suffers a marginal defeat and does not get across. Kathy tells him he is wet and cold, and back on the bank where he started.

Frederick rolls 12 for Mr. Puma, a success. But Kathy rolls a 4, a better success! The river wins a marginal victory. “It must have been a cold water surge that surprised Mr. Puma,” she says. Mr. Puma was not successful enough to escape a marginal defeat. Kathy declares that he did not get across, but can shake off the trivial effects of defeat quickly.

Steve rolls for Hazeel: a fumble with a 20, bumped to a failure. Kathy rolls a 15, a success, so Hazeel ends with a minor defeat. Kathy declares that not only did he fail, he lost some gear. “You wash back up on shore where you started,” she

Simple Contest Results

Player's Roll	Opponent's Roll			
	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	Low roll receives marginal victory, else tie	Player receives minor victory	Player receives major victory	Player receives complete victory
Success	Player suffers minor defeat	Low roll receives marginal victory, else tie	Player receives minor victory	Player receives major victory
Failure	Player suffers major defeat	Player suffers minor defeat	Low roll receives marginal victory, else tie	Player receives minor victory
Fumble	Player suffers complete defeat	Player suffers major defeat	Player suffers minor defeat	Tie*

* In a group simple contest (see next page), the narrator may declare that both contestants suffer a marginal defeat to indicate that, although their results cancel out with respect to each other, their situation worsens compared to other contestants.



declares. “But the last you see of your mule it is struggling in the current as it goes around a bend downstream.”

Christine rolls for Jane, and the die comes up a 1. Best possible roll! Kathy rolls a 3, a success. However, Christine had a critical roll, which is better—Jane wins a minor victory. Kathy declares that the river surged abruptly, but clearly Jane overcame the trouble and swam right to the opposite bank.

Finally Bill rolls for Galan. He gets a 1, and Kathy does too! “Tie means no result,” quotes Kathy from the rules. “You swam steadily across the river, but you were washed downstream a ways, so you aren’t where you wanted to be. You’ll have to make your way up to the others.”

John: Hey, I’m stuck over here. Can I roll again?

Frederick: Yeah, Mr. Puma too.

Kathy: No, because you guys who made it across hear some horses approaching from behind you as you look across the river at your stranded companions.

Frederick: Oh crap.

Steve: Hazeel is getting his bow ready.

Bill: Do I see this? I want to try to charge into the fight.

Group Simple Contests

A conflict between three or more characters or forces can be resolved by a sequence of simple contests. The contestant with the highest target number goes first and singles out one or more opponents. Then, if still in the contest, the second highest picks an opponent, until everyone has acted or is out of the contest. If opposing people remain then additional “rounds” of simple contests ensue until one side wins or one side cuts its losses and beats a hasty retreat.

A group simple contest can have strange results, because a simple contest cannot take into account the benefits of many followers, or all the players working together as a team to accomplish a single goal (such as win a game of tug of war). In such cases, an extended contest may give more believable results. For contests that are not important or dramatic enough, the narrator can instead have the players select a “leader” for the action, with the rest of the heroes acting as his followers; see “Mass Effort” (page 183) and “Dealing with Hordes” (page 186) in the Narrating chapter.

Sample Contest Consequences

Climbing

Complete Victory: You reach the top in record time, possibly helping your companions along the way.

Major Victory: You climb quickly and competently to the top.

Minor Victory: You make slow but steady progress to the top, albeit without flare.

Marginal Victory: You took a long time and had some problems, but you reached the top.

Marginal Defeat: You got nowhere, and may be hurt.

Minor Defeat: You made no progress, and are tired, sore, and perhaps impaired.

Major Defeat: You fall while climbing, and are injured.

Complete Defeat: You fall from a great height, and are badly wounded, perhaps even dying.

Combat

Complete Victory: Your opponent is down, probably dying; or they surrender.

Major Victory: Your foe is badly injured and stops fighting.

Minor Victory: Your foe takes a significant wound.

Marginal Victory: Your opponent is slightly wounded, but otherwise intact.

Marginal Defeat: You are hurt enough to affect your ability and want to get out of the fight.

Minor Defeat: You are wounded enough to significantly affect your abilities.

Major Defeat: You are injured badly enough that your ability to escape is compromised.

Complete Defeat: You are dying.

Finding Your Way

Complete Victory: You got there the best and easiest way.

Major Victory: You are very sure of your way, and get there quickly and without problems.

Minor Victory: You know where you are going, and get there easily.

Marginal Victory: You get there, but it takes awhile.

Marginal Defeat: You thought you knew where you were going, but take a wrong turn.

Minor Defeat: You went off track somehow.

Major Defeat: You are utterly lost.

Complete Defeat: You are lost, and in a dangerous place.

Romance

Complete Victory: She is like putty in your hand, besotted by your presence and eager to do whatever you want.

Major Victory: She smiles and stares into your eyes, rapt in your presence and eager to please you.

Minor Victory: She smiles at you and stares into your eyes.

Marginal Victory: She smiles at you.

Marginal Defeat: She turns away.

Minor Defeat: She frowns.

Major Defeat: She gives you a very cold look and makes an accusation of impropriety and insult.

Complete Defeat: She makes a detailed accusation of lewdness in front of a crowd, and wants you run out of town.

Social Conflict

Complete Victory: You have driven your opponent from the company in disgrace.

Major Victory: You have acutely embarrassed your opponent in front of his peers.

Minor Victory: You made your opponent look foolish.

Marginal Victory: You seem to be right, but it is debatable.

Marginal Defeat: You are uncertain of your behavior.

Minor Defeat: You embarrass yourself.

Major Defeat: You are abashed and cannot look people in the eye. Your social standing is affected.

Complete Defeat: You are mortified to the point of having to leave or do something drastic. Your social standing is affected permanently, and you may face exile, demotion, or punishment of some kind.

Extended Contest

Extended contests are longer and more dramatic than simple contests. You use extended contests when the outcome of the struggle is important, to generate suspense for the players, or when the narrator wants a back-and-forth struggle. It is something the players and narrator should visualize and describe.

An extended contest consists of one or more **rounds**, in which the contestants perform actions that are similar to simple contests. However, actions and rounds do not decide the outcome of the whole contest, only who gains or loses **advantage points (AP)** at that time. Contestants take actions in turn, losing and gaining the advantage, until one of them runs out of advantage points and so is defeated.

Extended Contest Sequence

At the beginning of an extended contest, you and the narrator explain your overall goals in the contest: to track dragonewts through fenland, defeat an opponent in a ritual fight, impress your beliefs on a council, and so on. It is possible to change this overall goal during the contest. Although you will likely change the ability you use to accomplish this new goal, your AP do not change since the contest has not yet ended.

Events almost always make it clear who acts first, usually the character who initiates the contest. The sequence below assumes it is your hero, but it could just as easily be a narrator character.

1. State what your hero is trying to do and which ability he uses for his first action.

State the first action your hero takes to achieve his goal, choose an ability to use, and figure your target number. State the action clearly, but don't describe the effects in detail, because you don't know what will happen yet.

2. Figure your starting AP total using the target number plus any source of additional AP you may have.

Advantage points (AP) measure how well a hero is doing against his opponent in an extended contest. Each contestant's **starting advantage point total** equals the target number of the ability he uses in his first round of the contest, including all modifiers and augments (page 67). The AP include +20 for each level of mastery, and can also be increased by followers.

3. The narrator selects the resistance and figures its starting AP total.

The narrator selects the "goal" of the opposition (often just "stop the hero") and opposes the hero's action with a **resistance**—the

harder the task, the higher this rating will be. If the narrator is not sure of the resistance, she can use the default of 14. This resistance to the hero's initial action determines the opponent's starting AP total; this can be a different ability from the one the opponent will use when his turn to act comes. This resistance may be an active source (such as an opponent), and so may have modifiers, followers, magic, or other sources of additional AP.

Because the opponent's starting AP total is based on his response to the hero's first action, it is always clever to take an initial action that forces your opponent to resist using an ability with a low rating. That way, his advantage point total will be lower for the rest of the contest.

4. Carry out one or more rounds.

Each round is an action and immediate response; it might represent a few seconds (in a fistfight) or a season (blazing a secret trail through the mountains). For your action, you risk a number of your advantage points in an attempt to reduce your opponent's AP, but if you fail the attempt you lose AP yourself. When you have finished, it is your opponent's turn to do the same. Thus, each contestant's advantage point total rises or falls during the contest as he gains the upper hand or is driven back.

Roleplay each glorious advance and bitter setback of your hero's struggle—describe the events as an onlooker would see them. The ebb and flow of AP is a tool to help the players and narrator in narrating the contest; see "Advantage Points and Combat" on page 68.

a. State your hero's attempted action, ability used, and AP bid.

Describe your hero's immediate action towards the desired outcome, what ability he uses, and how much risk he takes. "I want to climb straight up to that outcrop, taking chances if needed." You can specify your AP bid; if you do not, the narrator will determine this based on the amount of risk you are taking. If this is the first round of the contest, you already stated the ability your hero would use, in step 1.

The size of the **bid** mirrors how bold and risky your hero's action is. Extreme or aggressive actions mean a high AP bid, and cautious actions require less. Cooperation is in order to figure this. See the "Sample Bids" on page 68 for examples of inconsequential, cautious, normal, determined, and reckless bids.

b. The narrator selects the resistance.

If this is the first round of the contest, the narrator already determined the resistance. Otherwise, she should determine what the exact resistance to the current action and ability is. This does not have to be the same as it was during the first round. Addi-

Extended Contest Results

Opponent's Roll

Player's Roll	Opponent's Roll			
	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	High roll <i>transfers</i> ½x bid, else tie	Opponent <i>transfers</i> 1x bid	Opponent <i>transfers</i> 2x bid	Opponent <i>transfers</i> 3x bid
Success	Player <i>transfers</i> 1x bid	High roll <i>loses</i> ½x bid, else tie	Opponent <i>loses</i> 1x bid	Opponent <i>loses</i> 2x bid
Failure	Player <i>transfers</i> 2x bid	Player <i>loses</i> 1x bid	High roll <i>loses</i> ½x bid, else tie	Opponent <i>loses</i> 1x bid
Fumble	Player <i>transfers</i> 3x bid	Player <i>loses</i> 2x bid	Player <i>loses</i> 1x bid	Tie *

* In a group extended contest, the narrator may declare that both contestants lose ½x bid to indicate that, although their results cancel out with respect to each other, their situation worsens compared to other contestants.



tionally, the ability used to resist your hero's "attack" does not have to be the same ability the opponent will use when it is his turn to act.

c. Roll a die to determine your degree of success or failure, then apply any bumps. The narrator does the same.

Roll a twenty-sided die for your action. At the same time, the narrator rolls for the resistance. Compare the number you roll with your target number to see how well you succeeded or failed with your ability, as described on page 61 in "Die Rolls: Success and Failure." Remember to apply any bumps from masteries or hero points, as described previously under Bumps.

d. Compare your result to your opponent's to determine AP gains and losses.

Compare the results of the two die rolls on the Extended Contest Results table to determine who loses AP; only when a player has a critical can his character gain AP from his opponent.

1/2x, 1x, 2x, 3x: The AP bid is multiplied by this number before applying the results. Thus, if a player bids 3 AP and the result is "Opponent loses 2x bid," the loser loses $3 \times 2 = 6$ AP. Round half points up.

Loses: The bid is subtracted from the loser's advantage points total.

Transfers: The AP bid is subtracted from the loser's AP total and the same number is added to the winner's AP total. The victor can never add more advantage points than the loser actually had, but the loser still loses the full amount, possibly driving his AP below 0. Thus, a hero may have to transfer 6 AP, but have only 2 remaining. He falls to -4, but his opponent adds only 2 AP to his total. Because of transfers, a contestant can temporarily have more advantage points than he had at the start.

Tie: Neither contestant loses AP.

e. Now it is your opponent's turn.

The narrator describes the opponent's action, you say what your hero does about it, and it is resolved as described above. The narrator makes her bid, and your hero provides the resistance.

f. Repeat as necessary.

Once the hero and his opponent have both performed an action, a new round occurs if both have positive AP totals. In most cases, the same contestant will start each round.

5. Determine contest consequences.

Exchanges continue until one contestant reaches 0 advantage points or fewer. At that point, the contest is over (even if it is the middle of a round). The loser's **final AP total** determines whether the victory and defeat are marginal, minor, major, or complete; see "Contests: Victory and Defeat" on page 62 and, if necessary, "Contest Consequences" on page 74.

Once the contest ends and consequences have been applied, advantage points "dissipate." Your hero does not have any until the next extended contest begins, when you calculate them all over again.

Advantage Points

Bidding Advantage Points

The size of your AP bid needs to reflect your hero's action in the round. Describe his action and intent, and say how many AP you want to bid. Your bid must be consistent with your hero's stated action: if you describe an all-out offensive with your sword

cutting vicious arcs, you need to bid a lot of AP; if you say your hero is circling his foe cautiously, a low bid is in order. The narrator will look at the level of risk your hero is taking, and may suggest that you change your bid to better match your hero's action. If you do not declare a bid before rolling the die, she will decide how many points are bid (using 3 as a default), with riskier actions calling for higher AP bids.

Followers and Advantage Points

Followers can act in different ways during a contest, augmenting the hero with their abilities or allowing him to use one of their abilities as if it were his own. Alternatively, a follower with a relevant ability or keyword can simply add its AP to the hero's at the beginning of the contest. Remember to figure any modifiers into the follower's ability before adding it to your hero's **starting AP total**.

Neither the player nor the narrator makes action rolls for the followers. Instead, their actions are subsumed into those of their leader. The follower's relevant ability or keyword is used solely as a source of advantage points.

One hero can assign his followers to another, although the hero may have to command a reluctant follower to do this.

How Much Should I Bid?



Some players will want to let story and hero considerations dictate their choices: when the hero feels like taking risks, he will bid high. When he feels cautious, he will set small stakes. This is a fun way to decide how much to bid, and is certainly a good approach to take when getting used to the system. However, we cannot avoid looking at the numbers. Until you have played through a few contests, it is hard to know how many advantage points to bid on any given action. On a mathematical level, some choices are more likely to succeed than others.

- Start out with a low stake in the first round. Wait until later rounds (when you can ask for your opponent's current advantage point total) before betting big.
- If you think your opponent has a better target number than you, limit the contest to as few rounds as possible by making large bids. The fewer rounds, the better the chance that luck will counter his superior skill. On the other hand, if you think your target number is higher than his, you can afford to pick low stakes for a while, letting statistical odds work in your favor.
- Don't stake more than half your advantage points until your opponent's AP total is low enough for you to put him out of the contest with one action. Even then, think about the consequence you want him to suffer and the consequences you risk if you fail. Decide if the benefits outweigh the risks.
- When the story is at its most exciting, don't be afraid to let the story outweigh the math. There is no drama without risk.

Advantage Points Knowledge

Once your opponent has won or lost advantage points during the current contest, you can ask the narrator at any time what his AP total is. This is where the element of skill comes in. When choosing how many AP to stake, you must weigh the effect you want to get if you succeed versus the risk you face if your action fails.

Tracking Followers in Extended Contests

You may wish to track each follower's own fate, rather than treating them as a generic "AP pool." The simplest way is to list each follower with the advantage points he contributes. As the hero loses AP, assign the loss to one follower. When that follower's points are "used up," he drops out of the contest and the next follower on the list begins taking AP losses.

A follower "comes back" when the hero's AP once again rises above his threshold.

▲ In melee, Bill normally lists Galan's followers on a sheet of scratch paper. One has the Warrior keyword at 17, the other a Healer keyword at 17. When entering combat supported by both, Galan has +34 AP.

Galan's starting ability is 8W, or 28 AP plus the followers for a starting AP total of 62. When Galan falls to $62 - 17 = 45$ AP, one retainer drops out of the contest. When he drops to $45 - 17 = 28$ his other one does as well. If Galan gets a transfer that raises his AP above his starting 28 then one of his followers comes back into the contest.

Advantage Points and Combat

HeroQuest combat is modeled on popular fictional sources. You rarely see or read about fighters delivering a succession of permanent wounds to each other until one of them finally keels over. Instead, they jockey for a favorable position, ducking, dodging, knocking each other over, tossing each other around, and smashing up the furniture. Up until the final blow, they generally deal out only minor bruises and cuts. Advantage points thus reflect much more than the contestants' physical condition:

- Advantage points measure a fighter's position: Is he upright, or has he been thrown to the ground? Does he have his balance? Does he have the advantage of high ground, or is he fighting from below? Is he on even, uncluttered ground and therefore able to move easily, or is he encumbered by hazards such as clinging vegetation, broken flooring, sucking mud, or cliff edges? Does he have his weapon in hand? If not, is he close to objects

that make for impressive and entertaining impromptu weapons or shields?

- Advantage points also measure a character's emotional state. Is he ready and willing to fight, or has the instinctive fear response that impels us to run from danger taken over? Is he clear-headed enough to make split-second decisions, or is he dominated by anger, a thirst for violence, or concern for his reputation?
- Advantage points eventually determine if the hero is wounded, but they are *not* "hit points." Until a character drops to 0 or fewer advantage points, any wounds will be superficial. They may well cause considerable pain, ruining his concentration and slowing him down, and even heroes that are never hit will begin to tire as they fight through their third or fourth round. But in the end, if a hero finishes the fight with a positive AP total, he is not wounded.

Group Extended Contests

When an extended contest involves three or more contestants, it is a **group extended contest**. The conflict is often between two groups; each side wants to knock the other out of the contest by reducing all of its opponents to 0 or fewer advantage points. Sometimes a contest will be a free-for-all involving three or more groups.

Rounds in a group extended contest differ in that the order of resolution is more complicated. At the start of the round, each contestant states his action and AP bid (or his level of daring, see "Sample Advantage Point Bids" below) and singles out one or more opponents. The narrator then determines the order in which the contestants act. Taking surprise, withdrawals, and similar situations into effect, she has three options:

- Contestants can go in order from most daring to least daring bid: a reckless bid goes before a daring bid, as defined in "Bidding Advantage Points" on the previous page. Thus, the most heroic actions take precedence, acting in order of decreasing boldness. (In case of a tie, the contestant whose actual bid is higher goes first.)

Sample Advantage Point Bids

Inconsequential, it does not matter at all: 1 or 2 AP

Climbing: "I'll just look for a way up."

Combat: "I'm trying to stay out of it, but not running away."

Romance: "I'll glance at her."

Social Conflict: "It's no concern of mine."

Tracking: "I'm being cautious and won't commit myself yet."

Cautious, petty: Around 3 to 5 AP

Climbing: "I'll take it slowly, finding good holds as I go."

Combat: "I'm going to slowly whittle him down."

Romance: "I'll smile at her."

Social Conflict: "Is that so?"

Tracking: "I'm going to take a look but not go too far."

Normal Engagement, trying hard: 1/2 to 1/3 of starting AP total

Climbing: "I'll push on and make some real headway."

Combat: "I'll commit myself to fight."

Romance: "I'll make small talk and joke with her."

Social Conflict: "I doubt that."

Tracking: "I'll scout nearby, checking for good routes first."

Determined Effort: 1/2 to 3/4 of starting AP total

Climbing: "I'll try that short, difficult-looking part of the cliff over there."

Combat: "I'll go for the killing blow."

Romance: "I'll take her hands and kiss them."

Social Conflict: "That's a lie, I'll tell him that right now!"

Tracking: "I'll make everyone be still, scrutinize the signs and ways, and take as long as it takes."

Reckless: All AP are bid/Desperation Stake

Climbing: "I'll climb up there fast as I can. Safety rope? Nah."

Combat: "I'm going to jump on his head, holding my sword in both hands like this."

Romance: "I'll take her in my arms and kiss her."

Social Conflict: "By Storm's Bulls, Kallai! Leave or I'll punch your nose off!"

Tracking: "After my careful exploration I can confidently say, 'Follow me, no trolls here!'"

- Contestants can go in order from highest bid to lowest: a bid of 20 AP goes before a bid of 5 AP. (In case of a tie, the contestant whose bid is the most daring goes first.)
- Contestants can go in order from highest to lowest AP total. (In case of a tie, the highest or most daring bid goes first.)

In the first round of the contest, the order in which contestants act has a big impact on AP totals. The contestant who acts first bases his starting AP total on the ability he acts with, and his target bases his AP on the ability he uses to resist that action. As each contestant acts or resists for the first time in the contest, the ability he uses determines his starting AP total.

During a standard extended contest an opponent immediately responds to your action with his own, but in a group extended contest this is not true—he cannot act (against you or anyone else) until his turn comes. You may want to change your declared action if another character attacks you first, and your narrator will normally allow you to do so, usually to return an attack in kind.

The order in which contestants act is also important because a character (whether hero, opponent, or a follower of either) can be knocked out of the contest before his turn comes. If your chosen opponent is knocked out before your hero acts, the narrator decides if you can change your declared action.

A contestant always has the option of delaying and allowing other contestants to act before him. He can jump back into the action at any time during the round, although again the narrator determines if he can change his stated action.

When all characters still in the contest have completed their action, the round ends and a new one begins.

Extended Contest Options

Parting Shot

When you defeat an opponent in an extended contest, you can act again *immediately* to try to make the consequences of his defeat more severe. This is called a **parting shot**. You once again bid AP and use an appropriate ability against your opponent. If you succeed, his AP will decrease; his level of defeat may or may not change, but he cannot finish the round by taking an action against you.

Parting shots are risky; if you fail, an AP transfer might bring your opponent back into the contest. Your stumble can give him an opening that he can exploit in an effort to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

The consequences of defeat can remain after a parting shot, if the narrator chooses. Thus, an opponent might keep a -10% penalty from a defeat even if he is handed another chance by his opponent's failed parting shot.

Keeping Track of the Action

You may find it helpful to keep a pile of scrap paper or index cards on hand. Write down each contestant's name and starting AP total; at the start of each round, record their actions and AP bids. Then encourage the players to narrate the story, going in order.



A nervous Lanbril thief, deep in the bowels of a Dara Happan mercantile league's headquarters, pits his skill against the unknown defenses of this treasure chest, even as his feline companion begins to wonder if this might not instead be some murderous decoy.

△ Ingomar Debates

On their way back after the fight with Fancypants, our heroes are surprised by a shaman and some bandits. They do not attack immediately, but demand a “toll” to allow the heroes to pass through their “territory” unharmed.

Ingomar recognizes the shaman, Greim, and some of the bandits confronting them. He tries to convince them that Greim is unworthy of their trust. Greim says that Ingomar is trying to mislead them. In the contest that follows, Greim receives a marginal defeat. Ingomar has convinced the outlaws, but he wants to destroy Greim's credibility throughout the valley. John decides that Ingomar will deliver a parting shot. He initiates another action against Greim, and has Ingomar insinuate that Greim will double-cross the gang. He bids 6 AP.

John and Kathy each roll the dice, but this time John loses the contest. Greim rolls a 1, a critical, and transfers the 6 AP, adding them back to his total. Ingomar clearly overstepped his bounds by trying to discredit the shaman. The outlaws are now sympathetic to Greim again. With revived tenacity he is back, and attacks Ingomar as a gossip and slanderer, but Kathy decides that his marginal defeat prior to the failed parting shot gives him a -1 penalty. The bandits look on the squabbling rivals with increasing distrust.

Growing anxious that he may land himself in hot water if he does not end the argument with a clear win, John decides to finish off Greim after another marginal victory. Ingomar says that the outlaws should chuck out Greim from their gang. John bids 10 AP and spends a hero point to bump this new parting shot, and so Ingomar wins. As a consequence of Greim's minor defeat, several members of the gang turn and ride away. The remaining few look at each other uneasily or stare at Greim.

Desperation Stake

Heroes can stake *more* advantage points than they currently have, to a maximum of their **starting AP total**. This allows a hero to attempt a desperate retaliation even when he is within a single AP of defeat. Abstract forces can never stake more advantage points than they have, nor can followers or most narrator characters; it is one more mark of the importance of the hero. The narrator can allow a major narrator character to use a desperation stake.

△ Mr. Puma Debates Poorly

Seeking to take advantage of Ingomar's victory, Mr. Puma addresses what is left of the gang.

Frederick: "Maybe you'd like to join us," says Mr. Puma. "We're looking for some strongarm help. Let's talk this over."

John: "We are?" says Ingomar.

Kathy: Greim insults Mr. Puma. Greim tries to convince the group that Mr. Puma is unworthy of their trust.

Frederick: Um, I will defend myself. I'll, uh, argue back.

Kathy: So you are 13 then, at *Argue*? OK, write it down, you start with 13 AP. Greim argues that Mr. Puma is not human.

A contest ensues that leaves Mr. Puma at -3 AP. Greim has convinced the bandits that Mr. Puma is not human, but he wants to permanently damage his credibility. Kathy decides that Greim will attempt to deliver his own parting shot. She stakes 8 AP so that, if she succeeds, Mr. Puma will finish the contest at -11 AP and suffer more lasting consequences for his defeat.

Kathy: Greim says, "And I know you were in on the murder of the actresses!"

Frederick: What's *that* mean?

Kathy: Some kind of gossipy accusation. It doesn't matter, let's just see if the bandits think it is true or not.

Kathy and Frederick both roll the dice, but once again Greim suffers from Kathy's failure, for Frederick rolls a success.

Frederick: I'm going to bump that up to a critical.

Kathy: OK, Mr. Puma transfers 8 AP from Greim. Greim clearly overstepped his bounds by trying to incriminate you, and now the bandits know that Greim was lying.

Frederick: Since he failed I'm back in the contest, so it's my turn to act. I'm going for it. I'll say something to discredit him.

John: How about accusing *him* of murdering the actresses?

Frederick: Yeah, I'll do that. Mr. Puma has only 5 AP, but Greim is down to 11. Mr. Puma gathers his last reserves of wit. I'm getting desperate. I'll wager his maximum possible, the 13 AP he started with. If he loses he'll be in big trouble, but if he wins, Greim will go down. Success, with a 6!

Kathy: OK, I rolled, um, a success with 17. Greim loses half the bid, so he's at 4 AP now.

Frederick: Dang it! Well, at least I didn't lose this time!

Unrelated Action

You can forfeit your action to do something unrelated to the object of the contest. You might want to try to open a door, haul an important piece of equipment out of your saddlebags, heal yourself with magic, or augment an ability. Depending on the circumstances, you may have to engage in a simple contest to find out if you succeed at the **unrelated action**.

Positioning and Movement

If you want to move during an extended contest, you can take an unrelated action and sprint up to 50 yards, perhaps more if you have an ability such as *Fast* or *Fleet of Foot*. Terrain (such as a steep hill, a slippery deck, or cluttered rooms) and heavy burdens may reduce the distance moved. Moving distances of up to about 10 yards can often be combined with another action.

Positioning and movement are often less relevant in magical and other long-distance contests than they are in a melee.

Switching Abilities

You can usually switch freely from one ability to another in the middle of an extended contest. It makes sense to do so if you think a different ability will yield a better result. You may need to do an unrelated action to switch abilities—for example, when changing weapons or equipment.

Your AP total stays the same when you change your ability, so it makes sense to start the contest with your best ability (appropriate to your goal, of course). If this seems odd, remember that advantage points measure *advantage*—how well the character is doing in the contest at the current moment. They do not measure proficiency; that is what the target number is for.

When you switch abilities, your goal does not necessarily change (although it might), just the means by which you pursue it. When you switch your goal itself, of course, the ability you use to pursue the new goal will probably change as well.

△ Laugh Trumps Debate

Frederick: Can I stop this debate?

Kathy: You or someone else. What do you want to do?

Frederick: Anything! What can I do?

Steve: Try intimidating him. Use *Attack* or something. You gotta have a better ability than your 13 to argue with him! Can't you run away or reverse ambush or something?

Kathy: Well, first, Greim gets an action. Obviously, the actresses weren't killed by either one of you. The bandits are unimpressed. Greim tries again. "This guy isn't even human, how can you trust him?" It's a pretty lame attack, and he only bids 2. He gets a 15, success.

Frederick: I get a 12, lower success, so he loses. I still have 5 AP, he has what, 2 now?

Kathy: That was a marginal victory? He only loses 1, so 3.

Frederick: I know, I'll use my *Infectious Laughter*.

Kathy: Your what?

Frederick: I'm going to use my last words and points from character generation to have *Infectious Laughter* 3u.

Kathy: Well, OK! Go for it. What bid?

Frederick: My maximum, 23. I want to use it to break this off. I want to bust him right down to nothing.

Kathy: Slow down! You may have a rating of 3u, but you can only bid the 5 AP you have left. Unless you want to do another desperation stake and bid up to 13. OK, which will it be, 5 or 13?

Frederick: Can I do 7?

Withdrawing from an Extended Contest

If you want to withdraw from an extended contest before being defeated, the narrator may simply determine that your opponent lets you. But if your opponent wants to prevent you from withdrawing, the contest continues with the same AP totals but possibly with new objectives: you try to withdraw, he pursues. If you are the only hero on your side of a contest and you successfully withdraw, the contest ends. In this case, you do not “hurt” your opponent, because that is no longer your objective. But if you fail, he still inflicts consequences (such as injury to your body or reputation) on you.

If you withdraw from a group contest and later decide to rejoin it (or are forced to), you rejoin with the advantage point total you had when you left. If you can show how your leaving and returning substantially changes the situation, the narrator may restore some of your AP—for example, if you leave a street fight to get your followers from a nearby tavern. Leaving a contest just to pick up a weapon or catch your breath is an unrelated action, and does not change your advantage points.

AP Lending

AP lending is a common and important option in extended contests. Heroes or narrator characters can transfer some or all of their advantage points to another hero engaged in a group contest on their side. With more advantage points, he can stay in the contest for longer, or make larger bids without driving himself to failure.

A contestant cannot lend advantage points to himself. If a follower’s AP are already included in your AP total, the follower cannot lend them to you. The only exception is for certain spirits of animist religions, which have special abilities as described in “Practice Spirits and Fetishes” and “Spirit Ally” in the Animism chapter, pages 136-137.

Use an unrelated action and describe what your character is trying to do to improve the position of the target. For example, your hero might throw him a weapon, jeer at an opponent, or simply shout words of encouragement. Then, state the number of AP you are trying to lend. (The narrator may suggest a higher or lower bid based on the action you describe.) This determines the resistance you face in a simple contest, with results as determined below. Beware: heroes trying to aid their comrades in this way risk worsening their friend’s position.

Contest: Lend Advantage Points

Appropriate Abilities: Any ability that could help the target character in the story.

Resistance: The number of advantage points you are attempting to lend.

Complete Victory: Target gains the attempted AP; lender does not lose AP.

Major or Minor Victory: Target gains the attempted AP; lender loses the AP.

Marginal Victory: Target gains ½ the attempted AP; lender loses ½ the attempted AP.

Tie: No effect.

Marginal Defeat: Target gains nothing; lender loses ½ the attempted AP.

Minor or Major Defeat: Target gains nothing; lender loses the attempted AP.

Complete Defeat: Target and lender each deduct the attempted AP from their totals.

Δ Magical Help

Mr. Puma fails with his *Infectious Laughter*, and Greim convinces the bandits to attack the heroes. During the battle, Hengal is reduced to -3 AP by one of the bandits, who has clouded his mind with magic.

John: Ingomar will use his *Rally Warriors* feat to drive away the magic and get Hengal back on his feet.

Kathy: OK, that’s an AP loan. You need to lend at least 4 points to get Hengal back to positive AP.

John: That means I have to start with at least 8 AP, ’cause I’ll probably get only a half transfer. That means my resistance is 8 against my 17. No wait, that’s 16 because of the -1 hurt I took earlier. I still roll a success.

Kathy: I rolled a failure. That’s a minor victory, so you transfer 8 AP to Hengal. He’s up to 5 AP, you’re down to 3.

Rick: “Thanks, Ingomar, you have driven away my confusion.”



Two scholars meet and debate the fine points of their religions. The civilized Buserian clerk grins, mocking the Lhankor Mhy sage’s desperation as he tries emphatically to make his point.

△ The Big Fight

Kathy: OK then, this is it. Here they are, and there you are. Seven of them, two of you—Rick and Christine, you're on your own. Frederick, John, and Steve, you guys haven't crossed yet, Bill you're downstream a ways. How many of you have followers?

Rick: None.

Bill: I've got two, and my bison is with me, of course.

Steve: I've got my Thoskali archer.

Christine: What's a follower?

Kathy: You don't have one, don't worry. What do you want to do? We'll take it in order around the table.

Rick: What are they doing?

Kathy: They are here, at the tree line, rushing out across the clearing at you. You can't tell what they are doing yet because they are just coming out. What do you want to do before the action starts?

Rick: Hengal gets ready to fight. He's armed, got his first magic ready, and is looking around for any advantageous feature to help him out. His armor was packed, so he doesn't get that bonus. Any rocks to jump on?

Kathy: No, just the field. Pretty much open. Bill?

Bill: I'm gonna charge up the bank until I get there. My warrior and healer will follow me.

Kathy: OK, that won't take too long, you ought to be there by the time the fighting starts.

Bill: I won't even slow down when I get there, just charge in at full speed!

Steve: Hazeel is going to watch everyone and shoot arrows at whoever seems to be looking at him. Lots of arrows, augmented by my *Farshooting Multiarrow* spell, which ought to let me shoot over the river easily.

Kathy: OK, you'll be able to shoot at them. You can get an augment while you wait.

Christine: I'm going to ride around and avoid everything to see what is going on. I want to spend the time getting as much magic on as I can.

Kathy: What magic is that? You don't have anything written down there.

Christine: What can I get? I just want to stay out of the fight.

Bill: Just choose some kind of common magic.

Christine: What is common magic?

Kathy: Um, you have a talent called "Avoid the Fight." Write it down right there, and then write 17 after it.

Christine: What's that mean?

Kathy: Steve, explain what common magic is to her, please.

What we know right now is that you are running around back and forth around here looking at things carefully. So everyone, they are just about there. It's extended contest time. Frederick and John, you don't really have anything that will reach this far, you'll have to sit this one out.

OK, look at this map. Here's how it looks. This is Rick and Christine, this is the tree line, and this is them. Rick, these two guys are rushing you. The guy in front is a normal weaponthane-looking guy, but this fancypants guy in the back with the spear is well dressed, a foreigner. Bill, you look at everyone and decide that this guy, with ram horns on his head, is the leader. He's got two guys with him. And these two, Steve, they're both shooting crossbows at you. Christine, everyone is ignoring you, 'cause you're just a little girl on a deer bouncing all over the place. Statements of intent, please. They're all determined.

Rick: Hengal is trying to close as fast as possible with the guys charging him. I'll go with a determined bid.

Bill: I'm gonna charge Hornhead. Reckless, total, even if I don't have time to get my magic.

Steve: I'll shoot at those two crossbow guys. My Thoskali will support me. I'll go with a normal bid, but I'm shooting at both of them, me and my archer follower.

Christine: Do I have weapons? Yeah, yeah, I know: "read this."

Kathy: Steve, tell her about weapons. Bill, you are going to have the first action. Galan is riding down on his guys, and these two are standing fast with spears held out. This third guy, at the last moment, steps aside.

Bill: I'm gonna chop at the second guy as I crash through these guys.

Kathy: Separate from your bison, then? You'll use two attacks instead of one big one?

Bill: Bison on this one, I chop this second guy as we go past. I'll worry about the leader later.

Kathy: OK, figure your two target numbers, then.

Bill: Bison is gonna use his *Charge Foe* at 12 \blacklozenge , augmented by its *Large* and *Strong* for +3 each, plus his horns and hide: 1 \blacklozenge 2, that gives him a starting AP total of 41. And then for me, *Mounted Sword Fighting* 5 \blacklozenge , plus my *Fight Well* charm and an augment from *Bison Brain*, +8. And I'll use my *Ironbone* sword, that's another +7 for a total of 20 \blacklozenge , that's 40 AP for Galan.

Kathy: OK, I'll even let *Bison Brain* augment you at the same time it charges, since you can benefit from its momentum. These two guys are going to strike separately. They resist with their combat abilities. They're both housecarls, with 10 \blacklozenge or so, and +6 for all their magic and preparations and weapons and stuff, so their starting AP is 36 each.

We'll do the bison strike first. You are being reckless, so its AP bid is going to be its whole AP. That's 41 points. Masteries cancel out. It's 16 versus *Bison Brain*'s 1 \blacklozenge . I roll 12, a success.

Bill: I got a 15, with the bump that's also a success.

Kathy: Both succeed, but *Bison Brain* has the higher roll. He loses half the bid: 21 AP. The first guy does his attack for the round now—he's trying to spear *Bison Brain*. He bids 18 points, and I get a 10, success.

Bill: I got a 4. Another success versus success, but I had the lower roll, so the housecarl loses half the bid. That's 9 AP.

Kathy: Second guy now. He's also determined, and will bid 18. *Bison Brain* is -3 on its target number because he is resisting a second attack.

Bill: Wait a minute, I'm reckless, so I get to hit him before he hits *Bison Brain*. I'm going all-out—a 40 AP bid. I got a 7, a success.

Kathy: I got a 12, also a success. The housecarl loses 20 AP.

Bill: I want to bump that up with a hero point so I critical and get a transfer. That means the transfer is 40 AP, not 20. Yeah, I'm at 80 AP now!

Kathy: OK, the spearman loses 40 AP, to -4. This puts him out of the fight. Wait, you don't get the full 40, only the amount of positive AP he actually had, so you're at 76, not 80. OK, finally the priest then. He's got lots of magic going on and he attacks with his *Strike Foe* feat of 12 \blacklozenge , augmented by his *Sword Fighting* of 19 and his *Protection* feat 9 \blacklozenge , for 17 \blacklozenge . He hasn't been attacked yet, so his starting AP total is based on this, giving him 37 AP.

Masteries cancel. He's determined, and his bid is 18. He gets a 4, a success.

Bill: I get a 4 too. That's a tie!

Kathy: He's still up. You and your bison go crashing into the trees and brush here. But your bison just smashes through there—you can charge back the next turn. Rick? You guys next.

Rick: Hengal is yelling "Gerendetho!" A real attack, but not reckless. I wanna cut him down fast.

Kathy: OK, Rick, go. What's your target number?

Rick: OK, so Hengal is 5 \blacksquare to start with, plus weapons and armor for +7, and my first magic was a *Fighting* affinity for a +2 bonus. And his *Big* for +2. Can I get +2 for *Brave*? How about *Hot-Headed*, +2?

Kathy: Sure, if you want. Total is 20 \blacksquare , right, so you start with 40 AP? Determined attack is 27, OK? OK, so this guy is the leader, a tough warrior from someplace you don't know. Nice clothes, eh? The other guy will act as a follower, not by himself. Fancy pants has got a final target number of 3 \blacksquare 3, which gives him a total of 63 AP using his combat ability to resist and then attack in kind. Masteries cancel, it's your 17 versus his 3 \blacksquare 2. He's not as determined, so you strike first.

Rick: Don't I take a -3 because there's two of them?

Kathy: No, he's a follower, really just part of Fancy pants.

Rick: I get a 4, a success.

Kathy: I get a 20, which would be a fumble but his masteries makes it a success. Still, you had the lower roll, so Fancy pants loses 14 AP. He attacks back, 26 point bid, with a 3. With the bump, that's a critical.

Rick: Ouch! I got a success with 9, which means I lose 26 AP. Ouch!

Kathy: Actually, he has a bump left, so you get a failure. The priest adds your 40 AP to his total, and you're down to -12. You're left on the ground, Rick. Hengal has been cut.

Rick: Blood's running down my arm.

Kathy: Your sword arm, yep. It's dripping on the ground. You can't tell how bad it is, though.

Steve: Do I have time to use my *Farshooting Multiarrow* spell on my assistant too? Can I give him an auto augment?

Kathy: Not if you are pelting these guys with arrows.

Steve: No? Then I'll just shoot. I've got a 7 \blacksquare Archery, plus the bow and arrows give +3 and my augment for umm, +3, that's 13 \blacksquare ; 33 AP plus my Thoskali gives me another 17 for 50 AP. I'll bid 17 AP, that's a third of my total. And I don't take -3 because I have a follower too.

Kathy: OK, so you are concentrating on this. They're armored archers. 15 \blacksquare combat skills plus their weapons and augments. They're armored, but each takes a -5 improvisational modifier for resisting with *Archery*, they know where and how to stand, that sort of thing. So each resists with 16 \blacksquare and gets 36 AP against you. They're determined too, and bid half their AP. That's 18. But you can attack first. Remember that masteries cancel.

Steve: I get a 6, a good success.

Kathy: And I get 12 and 14, successes, but your roll's better than both. You can split the 9 AP loss between the targets.

Steve: Drat, I was hoping for a better result. All 9 AP go on one guy.

Kathy: OK, the first guy shoots back, but now he doesn't have the -5 so he's at 1 \blacksquare 2. Masteries cancel, so it's 8 versus 1 \blacksquare . 18 AP bid, like I said. 6, a failure, bumped to a success.

Steve: 8? Oh, if he gets -5 for resisting *Archery* with *Archery*, so do I, yeah. I succeed with a 7.

Kathy: So you lose 9 AP.

Steve: I've got 41 AP left.

Kathy: So this guy's got an arrow in him, and he stuck one in you. The other one, number seven, is going to attack back with another shot. I get 18, another failure.

Steve: 19, even worse. That's another 9 AP. I'm down 18, to 32. My Thoskali is out. Hey, the arrows are stuck in him, not me!

Kathy: OK, fine. So here is the situation. Hengal is over here fighting with two guys, Galan is on his bison floundering around in the trees and brush here somewhere, Hazeel is shooting arrows at these two guys who are shooting back, and Jane is running back and forth here.

Christine: Can I have a crossbow pistol? Like in that terrible King Arthur movie with Richard Gere? I want to have two of them.

Kathy: Umm, no, but you can have one. You have to use your other hand to load it. So you have this exotic weapon. It's very strange. No one else has one like it here. You've got a pouch with a bunch of darts for it, too, they'll give you a +1 weapon bonus.

Christine: Cool. I want to start shooting at people.

Kathy: OK, who?

Christine: Who needs the most help?

Kathy: Your decision. You see what is happening here, as I described it. Hengal is down, remember.

Christine: So, two on Galan, three on Hengal, and two firing at Steve. Well, I'll help Hazeel anyway. He's been the nicest to me.

Kathy: Sure, what do you want to do to help? How much help?

Christine: Just stay back and shoot at the bad guys when I get a chance. I don't want to rush in there or anything.

Kathy: OK, well then I'll make that an augment. What is your ability at that?

Christine: I start at what? 13? And I'll add 8 points from my starting batch too, plus one point for the darts. That's 2 \blacksquare , I believe? Not too bad, right? So I augment him then? He gets a plus from me?

Steve: Yeah, I get +2, unless you have some magic that can raise that by three points.

Christine: I see, so I'll just start it at 5 \blacksquare then instead, OK? I've used 11 of my character generation points, 9 left.

Kathy: OK, sure. So this round you will support Hazeel. But you can't use an automatic augment on him. You have to roll for it.

Christine: Fine, I got a 2, a success, bumped to a critical. Hey, wait, if I have to roll, I don't need to spend the extra 3 points. So I'm keeping the base rating at 1 \blacksquare , and I still have 12 left.

Kathy: And I got a 4, a success for the resistance of 15. So you got your +3 for Hazeel. Anyone else changing anything? No? OK, Christine, just keep track of Jane's AP in case you need them later, she starts with 22.

So Rick, Hengal is on the ground over here with this guy and his follower closing in on him. You're bleeding, they're not. Bill, you and your bison are thrashing around here in the woods, but you can come out easily enough. This spearman is menacing you, Hornhead is doing something else—preparing some magic. Steve, one of the guys will keep firing at you, but this other one drops his crossbow, pulls out his sword, and rushes at you.

Steve: But I'm on the other side of the river!

Kathy: Oh, yeah, that's right...



Contest Consequences

When a character is defeated, the narrator may impose a penalty to any or all of his abilities, depending on the nature of the contest. The penalty is usually a measure of how badly the hero is “wounded,” whether it is a physical ailment such as a cut or broken bone, a blow to his self-esteem or social standing, or a failure of his magic. This penalty should be applied in situations related to the hero’s defeat.

The Contest Consequences table gives suggested penalties for defeat. “States of Health,” below, provides more details, but remember that a defeated character is just that: defeated.

Contest Consequences			
Simple Contest Defeat Level	Extended Final AP Total	Contest Result	Penalty
Marginal	0 to -10 AP	Hurt	-1 penalty to appropriate ability
Minor	-11 to -20 AP	Impaired	-10% to appropriate ability
Major	-21 to -30 AP	Injured	-50% penalty to appropriate ability
Complete	-31 or fewer AP	Dying	No actions allowed

Followers and Defeat

In a contest, a hero’s followers suffer one more level of defeat than he does. For example, if a hero is hurt in combat (marginal defeat), his followers are impaired (minor defeat).

Final Action

If your hero falls to 0 or fewer advantage points in a standard extended contest, he is defeated. In a group extended contest, however, he can still try a **final action** to stay in the contest as long as he is not **dying** (which allows for no actions). A final action represents the knack to come back when your opponent turns away to gloat or deal with the other heroes. Your hero may only attempt one final action in any contest. (Be warned: important narrator characters might also have this option.)

To attempt a final action, your hero must be free from attention by the opposition. You can use a relevant ability in a simple contest against the number of advantage points your hero is below 0. Even if you succeed, the consequences of the original defeat still apply: a hurt character who succeeds at a final action still takes a -1 to appropriate abilities until healed.

You cannot try a final action if your opponent is attempting a parting shot, since you are not free of his attention.

Contest: Final Action

Appropriate Abilities: Any ability relevant to the current contest and/or planned final action: *Tough* or *Ignore Pain* in combat, *Sneak* or *Hide* to avoid being jailed after a botched burglary, and so forth.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Contest consequences based on current negative AP total; improvisational and circumstance modifiers (see page 77) are common.

Resistance: Equal to the negative AP total.

Any Level of Victory: Regain AP equal to the target number of the ability used (counting each mastery as 20 AP).

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: No effect; the contest is over for your hero (and all his followers, etc.).

Complete Defeat: Level of defeat increases by one (i.e., a marginal defeat becomes a minor defeat), with corresponding increase in contest consequences.

△ Ingomar Gets Back into the Fight

In the brawl, Ingomar is knocked down to -6 AP, but the rest of the band keeps fighting.

Kathy: OK, the bandit that knocked down Ingomar goes to double-team Hengal. Mr. Puma is still fighting Greim and his spirits, and you other guys are facing one bandit each.

John: No one is watching Ingomar? Fine, I’ll try to get back in the fight. I’ve got *Loyalty to Warband* at 18. I can consider these guys my warband for right now, can’t I?

Kathy: Yeah, sure, go ahead. The resistance is a mere 6, and it rolls a ... failure.

John: I roll a success with a 3, so I get 18 points back, putting me at 12.

Kathy: Nope, you had a -1 from being hurt in the first place, so your target number was really only 17. You’re back to 11 AP. And keep track of that -1, too.

States of Health

Despite care, talent, armor, and the like, sooner or later your hero will be wounded. In *HeroQuest* these wounds are quantified and affect your hero’s chances of success. In all activities with physical risk (such as fighting or climbing), a hero is wounded in any contest in which he fails. For simple contests, this is after the dice are rolled and the results figured. In extended contests, this is at the end of the contest, when the defeated character has 0 or fewer advantage points.

HeroQuest uses six “states of health” to summarize how healthy, wounded, or defeated a hero is: **healthy**, **hurt**, **impaired**, **injured**, **dying**, and **dead**. Contests without physical risk have similar consequences; for simplicity, *HeroQuest* uses these terms to describe the results of any contest, regardless of its nature.

Healthy

This is the state of health to aspire to. Nothing is wrong with the character, for now, and he neither gains a bonus nor takes a penalty to any action.

Hurt

On a marginal defeat, the character has been **hurt**, although not too badly. His body, pride, or spirit is bruised, bashed, and cut; maybe he has just lost the will to continue. A little time or treatment and he will be as good as new.

A hero can suffer from multiple hurts. Each hurt imposes a -1 penalty to some or all ability ratings, depending on the nature of the contest. A hero hurt in combat *might* have all of his faculties intact, and so take the penalty only to physical abilities. A person who takes a hurt in a debate will likely suffer the penalty only to his debating ability and perhaps some relationships.



Impaired

On a minor defeat, a character is **impaired**, and suffers from one or more picturesque symptoms of trauma, illness, or ridicule. In combat, these might include a bloody nose, cuts and bruises, or that perennial favorite: ostentatiously-displayed blood-soaked bandages. Outside of combat, this might be a painful cough, loss of social standing, or embarrassing rebuke. Nevertheless, when called on to exert himself the character struggles valiantly against this impediment, letting it affect him hardly at all.

An impaired hero suffers a -10% penalty to all appropriate ability ratings, as described above. If the hero also suffers from one or more hurts, those penalties are applied after the impairment penalty is calculated.

Injured

On a major defeat, the character is **injured**: badly maimed, publicly humiliated, or debilitated by disease. When it comes to taking action again, he is mostly helpless. He can do little except lie prone and suffer, walk away in shame, or drown his sorrows.

An injured hero suffers a -50% penalty to all appropriate abilities, again depending on the nature of the contest. At the narrator's discretion, a physically injured hero may be conscious and clear-headed, but still suffer the -50% penalty to his ability ratings. If the hero also suffers from one or more hurts, those penalties are applied after the injured penalty is calculated.



Many intelligent races inhabit the oceans. Seemingly united to landsmen, they are often as hostile to each other as humans are to trolls, dwarves, and elves. Here members of the two great merman kindreds face off: a sword-wielding ludoch fighting a hungry malasp seeking a meal.

Killing Helpless Foes

Players might be keen for the grisly end to every combat. But killing human beings is never easy, even during the deadly Hero Wars. *HeroQuest* goes into detail about killing and dying because it is a critical part of being human under those circumstances.

Glorantha is a violent place, and the Hero Wars will see the death of gods, not just mortals. But in *HeroQuest*, it is extremely difficult to bring a character to dying (requiring a complete victory, attainable only by a critical-fumble combination, a large mastery imbalance, or by risking lots of AP). Making the dying character dead cannot result solely from dice rolls. It must be a deliberate act, approved by the narrator.

Still, sometimes death is the only option. Some heroes belong to cults or societies that must kill (berserker cults like Zorak Zoran or Urox) or that see death simply as a natural act (the cult of the death god Humakt). Although heroes may kill a helpless foe in combat, alternatives exist for defeated opponents. Most homelands and religions have laws or rules about killing, and ways to avoid needless death:

Knockout: If the heroes are deep in an enemy fortress, they may lack the time or resources to haul along prisoners. Rather than killing their defeated foes, they can knock them out. This keeps them from interfering, but spares their lives. (See “Nonlethal Combat” on page 76.)

Ransom: The defeated hero may offer money or goods to his captor in return for sparing his life. He may give his parole—meaning that he will not try to escape while his ransom is collected—or may be kept under close guard. Some homelands even allow the captured hero to leave the company of his captor, trusting his honor to see that the ransom is paid.

Slavery: Captured prisoners may be sold into slavery, or forced to work for their captors. This is accepted in some homelands. The nomads of Prax and the

Wastelands keep slaves from other tribes, or sell them to Lunar or Kralori slavers at the edges of their lands.

Threat of Vendettas: A member of the slain man's family may declare a vendetta against the killer, hunting him through thick and thin. Entire families can become involved in the feud. Feuds and vendettas often spiral out of control, affecting more and more people in a cycle of death and vengeance. They almost always end in tragedy for the families and society.

Threat of Psychic Damage: Many, even most, people have a hard time killing in cold blood. The narrator may assign a psychological flaw to the hero based on the circumstances of the killing. This should never be given lightly.

Wergild: The slayer may have to pay money to the relatives of the deceased to compensate for his death. Wergild is normally much more than one person can raise, so is usually assessed against the killer's family or hero band. Most barbarian homelands have a variation of wergild.

Narrators will decide how much of this to stress. But if pursued, they should always describe the consequences *in game terms* for literal-minded players. Different players require different approaches. Look at the “To Kill or Not to Kill” example on the next page to see how Kathy would apply the social and psychological damage for each player.

Dying

Characters begin **dying** when they suffer a complete defeat. In contests that carry the risk of physical harm, “dying” accurately describes their state of health. In other types of contests, complete defeat indicates different results: in danger of exile, loss of a fortune on a bad business deal, or watching your love prepare to marry another man. Once a hero is dying, generally only magic can bring him back from the brink of doom, though this is up to the narrator. Dying characters are usually unconscious, imprisoned, inconsolable, or otherwise unable to act, but the narrator can always allow the dying hero one chance to gasp out his last words.

Dying characters (even heroes) rarely get better on their own; usually they succumb to their wounds. They can hang on to life or hope for as long as seems practical, allowing the heroes time to race to the rescue, find a magician with major magical healing, or stop the wedding. This is not to say that all dying characters will linger on. Sometimes a quick death, bankruptcy, or elopement furthers the plot more than rescuing the hero would. Ultimately, the final decision lies with the narrator.

Dead

A dead character is, well, dead, and under most circumstances is out of the game. We say “most” because resurrection is possible, although extremely rare, usually the secret of a magical organization (see “Secrets” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 109). Resurrection should be the goal of an entire adventure. In the meantime, you will want to create a new hero to replace your dead one. If the dead hero beats the odds and is resurrected, you can set the new hero aside as a backup.

A non-violent contest will not result in death, but a complete defeat in such contests has equally drastic and permanent effects.

△ To Kill or Not to Kill?

Kathy (to Rick): Hengal wants to kill Greim, sure, but he is suddenly aware that this is another human being, with a wife and kids, and that he has a choice. And if he *does* do it then he'll have a reputation as being *Cold-Blooded 18* that is going to undermine all his social interactions ever after.

Kathy (to Bill): Yeah, he means nothing to Galan, and you can have Bison Brain stomp him now, but Galan realizes that he's in a realm where everyone is a stranger and foreigner, and if he kills them because of that then he'll have to kill everyone. I'll give him some kind of behavior for this, like *Hate Everyone*.

Kathy (to John): Ingomar will get a flaw of *Guilt*, and it will be an automatic penalty against his fighting skills. Remember in the *Spider-Man* movie where he pauses when he recog-

nizes that the criminal is Norman? Ingomar is going to have that hesitation.

Kathy (to Frederick): Mr. Puma has a flash: if he does this he will be an animal, not a human.

Kathy (to Christine): If you kill him then you are going to get a trait of *Psychopathic Pleasure from Killing*. Killing in general will appeal to you and I'll make sure that you use it in the wrong circumstances.

John: Can I get that one instead of *Guilt*?

Poison and Disease

Defeat in a contest involving poison, disease, or similar attacks is rarely different from the effects of combat. If a hero is defeated, he suffers a penalty based on his level of defeat. This might be delayed, so that the effects of a poison might not take effect for several hours or the symptoms of a disease develop over several days, but the contest is no different than any other. Many times, poison and disease will simply give a bonus to a mundane attack, so that the venom in a giant spider's bite simply makes the bite more effective, resulting in a worse defeat for the victim.

Nonlethal Combat

In adventure fiction, especially in movies and TV shows, characters that wish to subdue their opponents by knocking them unconscious almost never kill them accidentally.

To announce your hero's intent to engage in nonlethal combat, describe an appropriate means of attack, such as an assault with fists, the flat of a blade, or the traditional “blunt instrument.” If you reduce your opponent to 0 or fewer advantage points in this way, he is unconscious. The worst he can suffer is to be **hurt**; any more grievous consequence is disregarded. At the narrator's discretion, this rule can be applied to non-combat abilities and contests as well.

The narrator may rule that certain attacks cannot deal nonlethal damage (or, conversely, that one can only deal nonlethal damage). You cannot knock someone out with the sharp edge of a sword! Most combat magic is meant to inflict maximum harm and so cannot be used for a nonlethal attack.

Dazed or Unconscious

Sometimes defeated characters become dazed or unconscious, rather than wounded. Heroes may want to capture opponents, or a *Sleep* spell might knock your hero out. The hero regains consciousness when the narrator deems it interesting, or perhaps as the result of a new contest. If knocked out in a fight that he and his companions lost, he will likely find himself a prisoner of his enemies.

Modifiers and Augmentation

Modifiers add to or subtract from your hero's ability rating (not the resistance faced). Used in all types of contests, modifiers are applied to the ability rating to give the **target number**. A **bonus** adds to the rating, while a **penalty** subtracts from it. A modifier is written as a plus or minus sign followed by the modifier number: +3 represents a bonus of 3; -2 indicates a penalty of 2.

The narrator gives modifiers when anything alters the effectiveness of your hero's ability. If something significantly helps the ability (such as fighting from higher ground) then the hero receives a bonus. If anything impairs the hero's effectiveness with the ability (such as trying to use an inappropriate skill for a task), a penalty is applied. The guidelines below

will help the narrator assign modifiers.

Players can also gain a bonus by using one ability to aid another. This method of creating modifiers from your hero's abilities is called **augmentation**. Players should use the story to gain as many bonuses as possible.

Modifiers

Target Number Reduced to 0

If an ability rating is reduced to zero or below by modifiers, your hero should use another ability or he will automatically fail.

Gaining or Losing Masteries through Modifiers

Modifiers may raise an ability rating above or drop it below a mastery level. This may allow a player to use a mastery bump he could not before, or could take away the mastery advantage he normally receives.

△ Mr. Puma is swimming across a slow-moving stream. Kathy gives him a +4 bonus; added to his rating of 17, his *Swim* target number becomes 11 \square . When he makes his die roll, he will thus bump up the result.

Hengal is getting a ride from Galan, so Kathy says he has a -10 modifier to his Javelin ability when he casts javelins from bison back. His Javelin ability is 6 \square (including the weapon bonus) so his target number drops to 16. Since his target number does not have a mastery, he cannot bump up his results.

Improvisation

Improvisational modifiers are very common. When your hero attempts to use an ability that is not exactly right for the task, it takes a penalty of from -1 to -20, with -5 as the default. The narrator may suggest a more suitable ability, and should disallow the use of an entirely inappropriate one (such as when the improvisational modifier would be more than -20).

Here is a selection of abilities with possible actions and their improvisation modifiers. If your hero has an ability specifically matching one of the actions, he can use its full rating—which is a big incentive to have precisely defined abilities.

Sword and Shield Fighting

- Fight with two swords at once: -5.
- Without a shield: -5.
- With a shield and a similar handheld weapon (e.g., a scimitar): -5.
- With a handheld weapon unfamiliar to the hero (e.g., a morning star): -10.
- With a weapon that is not normally used as a handheld weapon (e.g., a lance): -20.
- Use a dwarf's repeat crossbow: Not possible.

Speak [Language]

- Same language but different dialect (e.g. a Seshnegi speaking to a Castellán): -5.
- Related but different language (e.g. Heortling to Esrolian): -10.
- A completely different language: Not possible.

Recognize Chaos

- Identify local Chaos creatures: No penalty.
- Distinguish between similar chaotic and non-chaotic creatures: -5.
- Know a chaotic creature's life cycle: -20.
- Identify a particular creature's Chaos feature: -20.
- Know Chaos myths: Not possible.

△ Hengal Improvises in a Fight

Hengal is caught in a fight against some skinny blue trollkin without his spear. He grabs a bench to defend himself. He uses his ability of Spear and Shield Fighting 5 \square , but spears are not benches. The narrator decides the improvisation modifier is -10 because the bench is big and unwieldy.

Circumstances

Conditions are not always perfect. Your hero's situation and environment can increase or decrease his chances of success.

Fighting

- Surprise attack from behind: +20.
- From a higher level: +10.
- Elf fighting in elf woods: +10.
- Know foe's hidden weakness: +5 to +15.
- Standing on a sharply angled ramp: -5.
- Standing on a pitching ship deck: -10.
- Elf fighting in non-wooded area: -10.
- Human fighting in partial darkness: -10.
- Troll fighting in full light: -10.
- Human fighting in total darkness: -30.
- Trollkin fighting in full light: -30.

Debating in front of onlookers

- You had time to prepare yourself on the subject: +5 to +10.
- Speaking with a foreign accent: -10.
- You aren't from around here: -10.
- While hung over: -10.
- With judge biased against you: -20.
- About something you are ignorant of: -30.

Attracting a lover

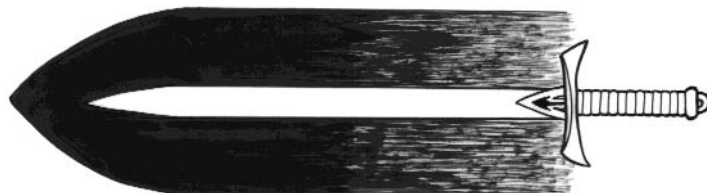
- You have great clothes: +5 to +15.
- There is a good chance that you will marry them: -5 to +20.
- You are filthy and stinking from the hunt: -10.
- Member of an enemy family, clan, or tribe: -20.
- A relative of someone you killed: -40.

Exertion

- You have not slept in a day: -5.
- You have not eaten in two days: -10.
- You have been fighting for an hour straight: -10.
- You have been using magic constantly for an hour: -10.
- You have fought several battles already today: -20.
- You have fought several magical duels already today: -20.
- You have not had any water in two days: -20.
- You have not slept in a week: -30.

△ Table Bonuses

- Rick*: Hengal is confronting the trollkin with his bench. He leaps on top of the table too, to have a height advantage.
 - Kathy*: OK, the bench is a -10 penalty, but I'll give you a +15 advantage for being so much higher than the trollkin. They'll have a hard time hitting anything other than your feet.
 - Rick*: That makes my target number 18 \square . Yee hah! Take that!
-



Story

Previous events in the adventure (and results of past contests) may give a modifier to the current contest.

△ A Bad Memory

Rick: Yeah, that's right, there were 22! None of them a leader!

Christine: That was terrible. I guess you'll never go without your spear again.

Steve: In your host's presence? On his lands? What bad manners.

Kathy: They must have been starving, I guess. You hear a noise outside.

Rick: A noise? Like what?

Kathy: Are you going to look?

Rick: OK.

Steve: Me too.

Kathy: It's a huge bunch of these skinny blue trollkin.

Steve: Weird trollkin? Let's capture some.

Kathy: Rick, is Hengal staying? Yeah? Make a courage roll, but with a -5 because you are worried about them.

Armor, Weapons, and Tools

High-quality equipment aids any task, from climbing a wall to the grisly job of killing. Your hero is assumed to have appropriate gear from his homeland and know how to use it. A complete suit of armor or a particular weapon or tool can give modifiers.

Light Armor: +1 (hardened leather, tough skin or fur).

Medium Armor: +3 (chainmail, lamellar, scale armor).

Heavy Armor: +5 (plate armor, chainmail made by a true master armorer).

Shield: +1 (note that use of two-handed weapons precludes use of shield at the same time).

Light Weapon or Tool: +1 (cudgel, dagger, dart, rock, self bow, throwing axe, whip; hammer and pins, short or flimsy rope).

Average Weapon or Tool: +3 (1-handed spear, battleaxe, crossbow, javelin, long bow, mace, sling, sword; crowbar, excellent rope).

Heavy Weapon or Tool: +5 (2-handed spear, great axe, greatsword, lance, maul, siege crossbow; lockpicks, metal cable).

Rune Metals



Metal in Glorantha is magical, like all things. Since the world is made of everything, however, most metal is not pure, and even a metal that is *almost* pure loses its magical properties. The most common metal in Glorantha is an alloy similar in appearance and properties to bronze. Bronze is the standard metal; when anything is said to be made of a metal not otherwise specified, you can safely assume that it is bronze, a naturally-occurring alloy of copper and tin, and hence has no magical properties.

Pure metals are usually soft and unsuitable for weapons, armor, or useful tools. Many magical organizations know the secrets to purify and forge runic metals so that they gain their full magical abilities and a hardness equal to bronze. Dwarves know the secrets of purifying all of the metals, and are the only beings in Glorantha with easy access to iron.

Aluminum/Quicksilver: The elemental metal of water exists in two forms: liquid quicksilver (called sa-metal) and solid aluminum (called lo-metal). When refined, this metal does not sink in water, allowing the user to swim with no penalty.

Brass: Brass (also called hu-metal) is the metal of air, and is almost identical to bronze. It is rarely refined, since doing so has no effect other than to allow a weapon to wound creatures that can only be harmed by magic.

Copper: Copper (also called ga-metal) is the metal of earth. It is the metal most commonly used by elves. Refined copper armor gains a bonus equal to $\frac{1}{10}$ the armor's magical ability rating (if it has one).

Gold: Gold (also called el-metal) is the metal of light and the Sun, and is favored by solar worshippers. Refined gold glows softly, and doubles the effect of light magic cast upon it.

Lead: Lead (also called na-metal) is the metal of darkness, common among trolls. Refined lead armor does not reflect or clang, and so will not reduce the user's chances

of sneaking or hiding. Refined lead crushing weapons (maces, mauls, hammers, etc.) gain a bonus equal to $\frac{1}{10}$ the weapon's magical ability rating (if it has one).

Silver: Silver (also called ul-metal) is the metal of the Moon. It has no special powers when refined other than to allow a weapon to wound creatures that can only be harmed by magic.

Tin: Tin (also called ze-metal) is a metal of the Sky World, and is rarely refined, since it has no effect other than to allow a weapon to wound creatures that can only be harmed by magic.

Iron

Iron (also called ur-metal), the metal of death, is a rare metal created by the alchemy of the dwarves to kill elves and trolls. Iron is superior to bronze, protecting better and keeping a sharper edge. Properly refined, iron doubles the bonus provided by weapons and armor, as well as providing an additional bonus equal to $\frac{1}{10}$ the item's magical rating (if it has one). Thus, an iron sword has a $+3 \times 2 = +6$ bonus.

Elves and trolls are especially vulnerable to iron, and their opponent adds the normal weapon bonus again. Thus, a dwarf carrying an iron sword would gain a total bonus of +9 against an elf or troll: +3 for the sword; doubled to +6 for being iron; then +3 again because he is facing a foe vulnerable to iron. If the iron sword had a separate magical rating of 13, the normal +1 bonus for the magic would be also doubled (to +2), giving a total bonus of +11.

Iron (whether refined or not) dampens magic. Anyone holding iron receives a penalty when they cast magic (or a bonus when they resist it) equal to the item's total bonus.

Narrators should be extremely careful about allowing such a precious and powerful material loose on their campaign. It is much sought after, and once out of dwarf hands changes owners frequently, for almost everyone desires it.

Higher and lower quality weapons and tools can alter the bonus, so that a poorly forged sword might only give a +2 bonus.

Armor and weapons can incur penalties outside of combat. Thus, a man cased in metal is harder for a giant eagle or angry troll to pick up. On the other hand, armored warriors run slowly, sink in water, make a lot of noise, and may frighten or offend normal people. Such actions suffer a penalty equal to the combat modifier, or even a multiple of the modifier.

Multiple Opponents

Sometimes, your hero may engage more than one opponent.

In any contest, it is harder to attack and defend against multiple opponents than it is to focus energy and attention on one.

Narrators should use common sense to determine how many individuals can attack a single target; the “rule of six” says that about six people can effectively act against one person. In combat, only about six attackers can reasonably surround and attack a defender of about the same size; in a contest of words, too many attackers will completely drown each other out; etc.

Multiple Defense Modifiers: A hero can defend against any number of opponents, but he suffers an accumulating -3 modifier for each defense after the first. Thus, he resists the first opponent using his full ability rating, he resists the second at -3, the third at -6, etc.

Multiple Attack Modifiers: In an extended contest (only), a hero can attack multiple opponents in a round. He must use one ability, rolls the die only once, and suffers a cumulative penalty of -3 for each extra opponent. Each opponent gets a die roll, and the narrator uses their best roll to oppose the hero. If the hero wins, he divides his AP bid against the defenders in any way he likes.

△ The Trollkin are upon Them

Hengal is attacked first by five trollkin, then by their leader. Hengal decides he will save his attack for the main enemy. His ability is *Spear and Shield* 5W (medium armor +3, spear +3 = 11W).

Against the first trollkin, Hengal defends with 11W.

The second squeals and strikes; Hengal defends with 8W.

The third bites at his leg; Hengal defends with 5W.

The fourth jumps on his back; Hengal defends with 2W.

The fifth vomits on him in fear; Hengal defends with 19.

Hengal wins the opposed roll each time, and does not lose any AP.

Finally, the troll himself comes forward. Hengal acts first. The troll also has a mastery, which cancels out Hengal's, so he attacks with 11. He attacks cautiously to see how tough the monster is, and his success causes it to lose 6 AP. The troll then crashes his maul in a deadly arc. Hengal defends, this time with a 16. He fails, and loses 7 AP, bringing him down to 24.

The next round, Hengal attacks the trollkin to try to eliminate their numerical advantage. With his 11W skill, he attacks three of them. His ability rating is reduced by 3 for each extra opponent, so the -6 penalty reduces him to 5W. He bids 24 AP and rolls; his failure with a 7 is bumped up to a success because of his mastery advantage. Kathy rolls for the trollkin, getting two failures and one success,

the latter with an 8. This would be a $\times\frac{1}{2}$ AP loss for the trollkin, but Rick spends a hero point to bump his roll to a critical, so he gets to transfer 24 AP instead. He can divide the AP loss against the three trollkin in any way he wishes. Each has 10 AP, so he takes 10 each from two of them, reducing them to 0 AP and knocking them out of the contest. The remaining 4 AP is transferred from the third trollkin. Hengal now has 48 AP, so he is in a much better position to face the troll and remaining trollkin in the next round.

*Modifiers add to
or subtract from the ability rating.
They represent different influences
on your hero's ability rating.*

Followers and Multiple Opponents

Followers allow your hero to negate multiple opponent modifiers on a one-to-one basis. Thus, a hero with two followers can face three opponents with no penalty, but the fourth opponent gives him a -3 penalty.

Augmentation

Your hero can use one ability to increase the rating of another. You could use *Strong* to augment *Sword Fighting* or *Convince Buyer* to augment *Trade*. The two abilities have to be relevant to each other. Thus, a magical *Fight Undead* ability could augment *Sword Fighting* if the contest was against undead foes, but would not help against the living.

You can augment with any number of mundane or magical abilities, if they are appropriate and the narrator agrees. You may only use a particular ability to augment another once during a single round. Thus, you cannot use *Strong* twice to augment *Sword Fighting*, and magical abilities often have limitations on stacking (see “Stacking Magic” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 101). The narrator may decide that it takes a certain amount of time to apply multiple augments, even with mundane abilities.

An augment lasts for the duration of the current contest. In most cases this will be for a short time, but it could be days or weeks for an extended contest involving a political struggle with a rival or a romance. The narrator may limit augmentation during such lengthy contests to a single round, which usually represents a distinct set of interactions.

Automatic Augment

This is the simplest way to use an ability as a modifier. You state what ability you are going to use, and then automatically gain a bonus to your target number. You can only gain an **automatic augment** from an ability or keyword written on your character sheet (i.e., you cannot gain an augmentation from an ability with the default rating of 6).

The value of the automatic augment is equal to the target number of the augmenting ability divided by 10 (round up fractions of 0.5 or more). Thus, *Hate Lunars* 18 could give an automatic augment of +2 to *Sword and Shield Fighting* when facing Lunars, and a magical *Jumping 14* gives a +1 to *Leap*. No die rolls are made, and there is no chance of failure.

Some abilities are inherent characteristics, such as *Strong*, *Clever*, or *Large*. It usually takes no time to augment with them, so even augmenting with multiple abilities does not take an unrelated action in an extended contest. Thus, during each round of combat a giant automatically gets +6 each for its *Large 18W2* and *Strong 18W2*, and another +3 for its *Tough 10W*.

Not all abilities are inherent, and augmenting with an active ability takes time. The narrator decides if an automatic augment

takes an unrelated action. Even an automatic augment from a magical ability does not *automatically* take an unrelated action.

△ Hengal Uses Fighting Magic

Rick decides that Hengal needs an edge against the trollkin. He already augmented his last attack with his *Brave 17* and *Strong 19*, which gave him a +4 bonus. This time around, he tells Kathy that he wants to use his *Fighting* affinity as an augment. His rating in the magic is 18. Kathy decides that this does not take an unrelated action.

Kathy: How big a bonus do you want to try for?

Rick: I don't; I just want the automatic +2.

Kathy: OK, you have another +2. That brings your target number up to 17. Your AP don't change, though.

Rick: I know, I should have thought about augmenting when I jumped in. That's why Hengal has *Hot-headed 17*, he never thinks about these things.

Variable Augment

You can try for a higher bonus by taking an unrelated action and rolling for a **variable augment**. You can try to get any bonus, but your hero may overreach himself and suffer a penalty instead. This is resolved by comparing the augmenting ability's rating against the resistance of the bonus in a simple contest. Unless you bump with a hero point, do not get too ambitious, because the chance of failure increases as you roll for larger bonuses.

Contest: Variable Augment

Appropriate Abilities: Any appropriate to the contest or story. (Remember to state which ability you are trying to augment.)

Resistance: Desired bonus × 5 (5 for +1, 10 for +2, 15 for +3, 20 for +4, 5.0 for +5, etc.).

Complete, Major, or Minor Victory: Target ability gains the attempted bonus.

Marginal Victory: Target ability gains ½ the attempted bonus.

Tie: No effect.

Marginal Defeat: Target ability incurs a penalty equal to ½ the attempted augment.

Minor, Major, or Complete Defeat: Target ability incurs a penalty equal to the attempted augment.

Augmenting Others

Your hero can provide support to someone else, perhaps a hero who is more active or is a band's expert. You may say, "I'm going to hang back and throw javelins," or "I'll help him out, when it's not too dangerous." You can then augment that hero with an appropriate ability.

You can use either an automatic augment or a variable augment on another person, but in either case you *must* use an unrelated action. If the person you augmented finishes on the losing side, you suffer the normal consequences of defeat in a group contest, even if your only involvement was to augment him. Depending on your statement of what your hero is doing, the narrator may require that you roll for a variable augment rather than allowing you to provide an automatic augment.

△ Jane Pitches In

Christine: Dang, I don't have anything like *Close Combat*. I don't want to get too involved, but is there something that I can do? Maybe just run around to distract them?

Automatic Penalties



Keep in mind that some abilities may cause an automatic penalty. A *Huge* hero will have difficulty hiding or squeezing through gaps. As with weapons and armor, the penalty might be equal to the opposite of the automatic augment, or might be a multiple of it. Thus, if that giant tried to sneak away, it would take a -6 to its *Move Quietly*; if it tried to hide from the vengeful wolf pack summoned to drive it off, it might take a -12 to its *Hide* (not that a giant normally has either *Hide* or *Move Quietly* abilities, of course). Flaws often work this way.

Kathy: Yeah, OK. You can take an ability and use it to augment Hengal. They might still try to hurt you, though.

Steve: You haven't finished your character creation, why don't you say you have *Sword Fighting* and wade in instead? Hazeel will even loan you a sword.

Christine: No, Jane will use her *Origami Magic* to make sharp pieces of paper and throw them at the trollkin. Paper cut them to death! My *Origami Magic* is 17.

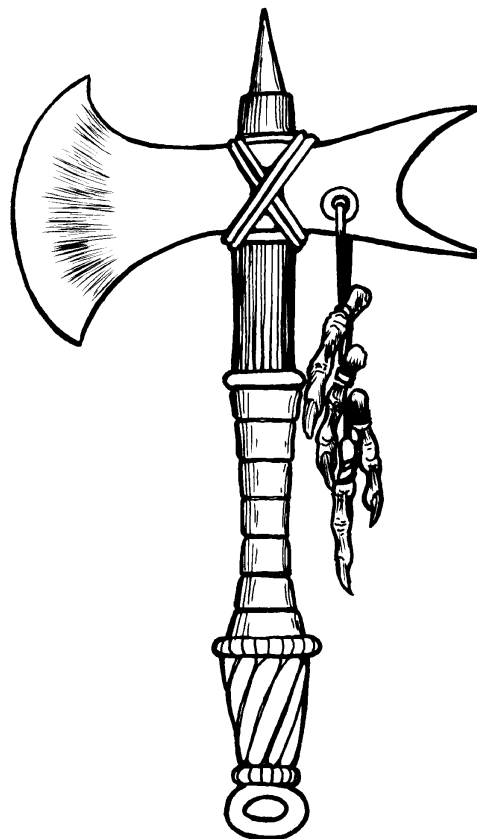
Kathy: How much of a bonus do you want to try for? That's too risky for you to get the automatic +2.

Christine: If I try for a +4, even if I get a marginal victory I'll still have +2, so I'll go for that.

Kathy: OK, your target number is 17, and a +4 bonus has a resistance of 20. The resistance gets a 12, success.

Christine: I roll a 10, also a success. Darn, that's only a marginal victory, so I get the +2.

Rick: No, Hengal gets the +2! Thanks, Christine.



Replicas of Babeester Gor's grim axe (like the one above, found in the Temple to All Deities in Apple Lane) are placed in most Earth Pantheon temples to ward them from defilers.

Healing and Recovery

If your hero is wounded, he has four possible ways to recover. **Mundane healing** and **minor healing magic** are common, and can cure or reduce the severity of most wounds. **Major healing magic** is rare, but can heal a character completely, even bringing him back from near-death to full health. Lastly, **time** slowly heals almost all wounds, except dying.

Although we say “healing” and concentrate on combat and wounds in this section, these rules apply to the consequences of *any* contest. A companion or friend can use *Boost Confidence* to encourage someone who has failed to climb a tower, for example. An influential friend can use his *Relationship to League* to keep the hero from being punished. A *Command Storm Tribe* secret (see “Secrets” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 109) counts as “major healing magic” and could return even a hero on the verge of exile (i.e., **dying**) back into the good graces of his clan. And, of course, time heals all wounds, even those of pride or the heart. As always, the narrator will determine if a particular ability can “heal” the consequences of a contest.

Healing Resistance

The resistance to any mundane healing attempt either comes from the Healing Resistance table (simple contest) or uses the patient’s final negative AP total (extended contest). Thus, dying at -40 (resistance 20W) is harder to heal than dying at -31 (resistance 11W). Like all magic, magical healing abilities usually face a resistance of 14 (see “Natural Resistance” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 98), as long as the use exactly matches the magical ability’s description. To heal poison, disease, or malign influences, the resistance is usually the strength of the opposing force. Special magic is required to cure these consequences, since magic intended to heal wounds will not affect them.

Mundane Healing

First Aid and similar abilities like *Treat Wounds* can remove the penalties from hurts or impairments, but can only stabilize injured or dying patients (keeping their condition from deteriorating, perhaps as part of the story). Such minor healing is usually resolved as a simple contest. Only one attempt at mundane healing (successful or not) can be made for each wound.

Contest: Use Mundane Healing

Appropriate Ability: Any mundane healing ability.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Patient’s *Tough*, *Resilient*, or similar ability (bonus).

Resistance: See the Healing Resistance table.

Complete Victory: All hurts and impairments are removed within a few minutes. Dying patients improve to injured, injured patients improve to impaired.

Any Other Victory: Impaired characters improve to hurt, hurt characters improve to healthy (even if they have multiple hurts), all within an hour or so. Dying and injured patients are stabilized.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The wound is not healed. Only magical healing or time can heal the wound.

Complete Defeat: The patient’s condition worsens, from hurt to impaired, impaired to injured, or injured to dying; dying worsens to dead at the narrator’s discretion. Only major magical healing or time can heal the wound.

Minor Magical Healing

Minor magical healing is available from many common religions, cults, practices, orders, and schools, even ones not dedicated to healing. Minor magical healing can remove or reduce any wound’s severity. Such minor healing is usually resolved as a simple contest. Each wound may be affected by only one attempt; after that, only major magical healing or time can accomplish additional healing.

Contest: Use Minor Magical Healing

Appropriate Ability: Any minor magical healing ability*.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Patient’s *Tough*, *Resilient*, or similar ability (bonus).

Resistance: 14 (if there is no active resistance).

Complete Victory: All wounds are removed instantly, leaving the character healthy.

Any Other Victory: Dying patients improve to injured, injured patients improve to impaired, impaired characters improve to hurt, and hurt characters improve to healthy, instantly.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The wound is not healed. Only major magical healing or time can heal it.

Complete Defeat: The patient’s condition worsens, from hurt to impaired, impaired to injured, or injured to dying; dying worsens to dead at the narrator’s discretion. Only major magical healing or time can heal the wound.

* Abilities that can be used only for augmentation (common magic, affinities, charms, blessings) cannot be used as the healing ability itself.

Major Magical Healing

Major magical healing is rare and special. It is available only to worshippers of powerful Otherworld entities, usually as the secret of a healing cult or practice. Major magical healing removes all damage due to injury, illness, or malign influences (as appropriate to the secret) with any level of victory. Such major healing often involves an extended contest, since such secrets often specify an active resistance. Additionally, many major magical healing abilities require a ritual (see “Ritual Magic” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 101), and so may take hours or even days to work.

Contest Consequence	Healing Resistance	
	Mundane Healing	Magical Healing
Hurt(s)	14*	14
Impaired	17	14
Injured	5W	14
Dying	20W	14

* At the narrator’s option, healing 4 or more hurts at once can face a resistance of 6 +3 per additional hurt after the first: 15 for 4 hurts, 18 for 5 hurts, etc.

Contest: Use Major Magical Healing

Appropriate Ability: Any major magical healing ability.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Patient's Tough, Resilient, or similarly appropriate ability (bonus).

Resistance: 14 (if there is no active resistance).

Any Level of Victory: All wounds are removed instantly; the patient becomes healthy.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The wound is not healed. Only time can heal it.

Complete Defeat: The patient's condition worsens, from hurt to impaired, impaired to injured, or injured to dying; dying worsens to dead at the narrator's discretion. Only major magical healing or time can heal the wound.

Time

Without medical aid, hurt characters recover at the rate of one hurt per day if they have a chance to rest, eat, and drink normally and do not perform stressful actions. The narrator may alter this to account for the character's actions (hiking on a wounded leg instead of resting in bed), environment (cold and wet vs. warm and dry), or other factors. Impaired characters heal more slowly, over an adventure or a week or so, but recover completely once healed.

Injured heroes recuperate more slowly still, over at least one adventure. All mundane abilities should be reduced by half while the character heals. He will need to eat well, practice his skills, and generally spend his time getting better. Some healing abilities can help speed the process along. Even when he is fully healed, he might suffer a permanent reminder such as a physical or mental scar that acts as a flaw. Only appropriate major magical healing can prevent this or remove the affliction later.

Healing During an Extended Contest

If your hero has a healing ability he can try to heal or strengthen himself or another character during any extended contest. To heal himself, he either uses the above rules (if he has taken a wound of some kind) or uses the healing ability to provide an augment. (Remember, a hero can never lend AP to himself.)

To heal others, he can do either of the above or use the rules for "AP Lending" on page 71. Even heroes with 0 or fewer AP can be revived. If the subject rises above 0 AP as a result of the healing, he can rejoin the contest. Even if his AP remain negative, his final condition at the end of the contest may improve. Thus, if you bring a hero from -35 AP to -15 AP before the contest ends, he will only be impaired, not dying.

Healing Otherworld Entities

Otherworld entities can be healed when hurt, impaired, injured, or dying, but only with a magical ability that specifies such entities. A hero cannot improvise healing for Otherworld entities from ordinary magical abilities intended to heal an embodied being. ✖

△ Hazeel Heals Hengal

Kathy: Well, Rick, that's it—Hengal is down to -11 AP, and you can't do a final action because the troll is advancing on you. Now, let's see...

Steve: Wait, can't I help him? I have my *Spell of Health*, I could use that to heal him.

Kathy: Yeah, you could do that.

Steve: I want to lend him some AP so that he can stay in the fight.

Kathy: How many AP do you want to give him?

Steve: If I give him all of mine, I'll be out of the contest, and might end up hurt. So I'll try to lend him 12, that will bring him back to positive but still leave me with some. I roll a 4, success.

Kathy: OK, the resistance is 12, and I get a 10, a success. That's a marginal victory, which means you only transfer 6 AP. That brings him up to -5, not enough to keep him in the contest.

Steve: But it's enough to give him a hurt instead of an impairment. If we can just keep that troll from nailing him with a parting shot.



The proud barbarians who worship Orlanth refuse to come under the rule of the Lunar Empire. Here, two Heortling defenders respond in their normal manner to strangers.



RELATIONSHIPS

Danger crushes anyone who is friendless. People need society and form relationships with individuals and communities. They help their society and in return they expect support and aid.

The web of relationships binds Glorantha and is valuable to your hero in *HeroQuest*. Your hero does not have to use this support, but his life will be easier and safer if he does. Friendship, loyalty, love, and social bonds must be addressed to fully portray the epic scope of the Hero Wars.

Everyone has relationships. Relationships in homeland keywords are usually required for full participation in society—your hero was raised with a sense of belonging because no one has a choice on such things. Most heroes also have Personal Relationships: followers who travel with him, allies and patrons who help him, and other supporting characters. You hero will have several Community Relationships as well: his family, religion, political organization, or professional group. These relationships are important because a hero can gain bonuses from Community Support. Guardians and Hero Bands provide an additional source of support for heroes.

Recording Relationships

Under Relationships on your character sheet, list the special people or groups that your hero has connections to. Some relationships come from your hero's keywords, others your narrative or list, and still others during the course of the game.

Each relationship is recorded in three parts. First, describe the nature of the relationship—it could be *Master*, *Archrival*, *Partner*, *Acquaintance*, *Tyrant*, *Brother in Arms*, or *Best Friend*. Next, record the name of the person or group. Finally, indicate the relationship's ability rating, which represents the relationship's depth of sentiment.

Clan Brother to Shnicol 17

Sociable with Olav 3W

Binder of Akaagack 18

Initiate of Argar Argan 19

Member of Sword Brothers hero band 17

Relationships start with an ability rating of 13, 17 if part of a keyword. The story may determine that some people start with closer relationships, which should be recorded on your character sheet if they are significant. Maybe the narrator decides certain narrator characters are childhood friends, lovers, or dependent kin with deep or intense feeling.

Personal Relationships

Personal relationships are defined within two broad categories. **Followers** are under the control of the players and often accompany the heroes on their exploits. Other social and personal relationships are formed with **supporting characters** (see page 86), which are played by the narrator. *HeroQuest* divides followers into two types: **retainer** and **sidekick**.

- **Retainers** are part of your hero's retinue—the faithful manservant or squire.
- **Sidekicks** are loyal (but subordinate) friends and junior partners of your hero.

HeroQuest divides supporting characters into five types: **adversary**, **ally**, **contact**, **dependent**, and **patron**.

- An **adversary** is an archenemy or bitter rival.
- An **ally** is a friendly or helpful peer who appears from time to time.
- Many heroes have **contacts** in their profession, community, or religion. These are the helpful friend in the army, the street urchin, and the priest at the church who the hero calls on for a tip.
- **Dependents** are the hero's friends and family who seem to exist only for the hero to rescue or take care of: the boyfriends/girlfriends, old maiden aunts, or sick kid brothers. They do provide moral support and comfort, and occasionally the unexpected helping hand.
- A **patron** is venerable character who often shows up at the beginning of the adventure to give the heroes their assignment, or makes a cameo appearance to provide information or resources.

The Hero Wars are between... Our Way and Their Way

Every person in Glorantha needs companionship, defense, and support.

Everyone considers their ways the best, and resists the efforts of others to impose foreign customs. An example of this conflict is seen in Dragon Pass, where the

Heortlings resist the seductive ways of the Lunars.



The shell deer are sacred to many peoples, in part because of their role in keeping them alive during the Great Darkness, in part for their natural ability to detect Chaos, no matter how insidiously well-hidden it may be.

Followers and supporting characters need not be sentient or even living beings. If your horse or dog is important enough, you can have it as a dependent or follower. You can even have a relationship with an item, such as a magic jewel that aids and advises your hero or a bloodthirsty sword that demands acknowledgement as an individual.

Followers

Followers are minor characters controlled by the players, not by the narrator. For instance, your hero may start off with a bodyguard who will do what he wants. A follower might just as easily be an advisor, herald, shield-bearer, apprentice, or hunting beast.

Your hero must have relationships with his followers; the relationship's rating starts at 13 (17 if the follower is typical for one of your keywords).

Like any other ability, a follower is considered part of the hero. Followers are either faceless retainers or the more distinct sidekicks.

Retainers

Retainers receive one keyword (usually an occupation) to use in the game at the normal level of 17, but they cannot be improved using hero points. A nonhuman can also be taken as a retainer, but still in game terms has just this keyword.

A **retainer's** commitment is not personal—he is a paid servant, distant relative, or the like. Rather than having a separate relationship with each retainer, you can have one relationship (such as *Leader of Followers*) that covers all of them:

- Employer to Squire 17
- Employer to Retainers 13
- Master of Followers 13

Recording Followers



There are two places to write information about followers on your character sheet:

In the **Relationships** section, put down the nature of the relationship with the follower. Then, decide if you want to group together several followers (e.g. *Employer to Retainers 17*) or just list one individual (*Friend of Sidekick Barntagor 13*). The ability rating here represents how strong the connection is between the hero and follower.

In the **Followers** section of your hero's character sheet, list each follower, his keyword, and any sidekick abilities.

△ Hengal Gets a Follower

Rick is convinced of the value of a follower. He asks Kathy if he can look for one during the game.

Kathy: Yeah, but it might take a long time.

Rick: Hengal wants some backup now. "Bare is brotherless back," said Lodril. Can I just hire someone trustworthy for this around here?

Kathy: Sure. Are you picky or just hiring a thug?

Rick: Uh, he's tough, just a thug I guess.

Kathy: That's what you got, then. He's a retainer, and his occupation is Warrior. No special abilities, just his keyword.

Spend 1 hero point, add *Retainer: Warrior 17* to your Followers, and *Leader to Retainers 13* in your Relationships.

Rick: But I'm a warrior, too. Can't I get my relationship at my keyword rating? It says that warriors often have followers who are good at fighting.

Kathy: OK, make that "Leader to Warrior Retainers 17" instead of 13.

Sidekicks

Sidekicks are individuals, not anonymous retainers. They can be trusted to go away to perform assigned tasks and to do their best, and are capable of some independent decision-making. Most importantly, you can use hero points to continue to develop them during the game.

A human sidekick has a keyword at 17 and three additional abilities that start at 13 each. The sidekick's keyword is often the same as one of your hero's. Nonhuman sidekicks always gain the benefits and disadvantages of their natural abilities, including a species keyword for intelligent nonhumans. They can have a keyword if the hero wishes, but more likely use only their natural abilities. Thus, a shell deer sidekick gains all of the normal shell deer abilities at their base ratings (see the *Creatures* chapter, page 217) rather than a Shell Deer keyword. Any additional abilities you give the nonhuman sidekick start at 13, as described above, unless it already has a similar ability in its statistics. Regardless of the nature of the sidekick, once you have its base abilities you can spend a total of 15 points to increase up to three of them, adding no more than +10 to any one ability.

Barntagor

Keyword: Scholar 17 (occupation).

Significant Abilities: Bargain 17, Bodyguard 19, Healing 18.

Lukippus

Keyword: Tarsh 17 (homeland).

Significant Abilities: Body Servant 17, Hand-to-Hand Combat 18, Healing Magic 19.

This keeps all of the necessary ability information ready for easy reference during play.

Describing Your Followers

Followers *can* be used as faceless cannon fodder, but they are more interesting and useful when fleshed out. You should at least give each follower a name, and you are free to go into as much detail as you wish about their relationship with the hero, personality, and background. Such details enliven the game and feed into the story. Losing a nameless and boring hanger-on has no meaning, but parting with a named and trusted retainer can be a poignant event.

Chaseity, a Shell Deer

Significant Abilities: Dodge Attack 20, Scan for Danger 11, Survive without Food 20.

Narrators may assign extra abilities to develop a sidekick. Use the story to give the sidekick some color, challenge, and personality. A flaw or weakness might reflect a failure or wrongdoing (but remember: *everyone* Fears Dragons). Events of a story might reveal *Brave, Shy, Cooking, or Drink Troll Beer*. Less welcome, yet possible, might be *Nitpicking, Mean, or Loves Gold*.

Your hero *must* have a separate relationship with each sidekick, which normally cannot be subsumed under a general *Relationship to Followers* ability.

△ Jane Gets a Companion

Christine has been reading up on Glorantha. As everyone prepares for the evening's session, she tells Kathy she wants to add a sidekick.

Kathy: Have you read the rules about sidekicks?

Christine: Yeah. I'll have to pay 3 HP for it.

Kathy: HP? Oh, hero points. Six, it's out of play.

Christine: I have six. But I want to have one of these as my sidekick. [She shows a picture of a shell deer.] I want to ride it around and do stuff like his bison does.

Kathy: OK, what do you want it to do?

Christine: I want it to Run Really Fast, I want it to Notice Danger, and I want it to Jump All Around.

Kathy: Jump all around? Evade?

Christine: Yeah, evade arrows and spells and biting dragons.

Kathy: OK, subtract the hero points. Put *Sidekick: Shell Deer* in your Followers section. Shell deer have *Dodge Attack* as an innate ability, so write that down; the base is 15. It also already has *Run Fast* at 5 and *Scan for Danger* at 18. You can add a total of 15 points to three abilities, do you want to increase Run Fast past 5 or pick an additional ability to start at 13?

Christine: OK, so she has Run Fast 5 and Scan for Danger 18 without me doing anything? I'll give her Dodge Attack 20, Scan for Danger 11, and, um, it says they only eat a rare fungus. I want her to be able to *Survive without Food*, can I do that?

Kathy: Sure. You have 7 points left, so that would be *Survive without Food* 20. And because you are so small it can carry you as a rider, and you don't have to break it in or tame it. It's like a domesticated animal for you, but only you. Put *Friend to Shell Deer Sidekick 13* in your Relationships section. And heck, for 6 hero points you also deserve to get the ability of *Shell Deer Husbandry* at 13.

Christine: I'm going to name her Chaseity, because she likes to chase things.

John: Can my guy get something like that? I want a rhino.

Changes to Followers

During play, you can change a follower's role. You can "promote" a retainer to a sidekick at a cost of 2 hero points. With the narrator's permission a sidekick can be changed to a retainer or perhaps "released" to be a supporting character instead. You do not get any hero points back for such changes.

Changing a retainer to a sidekick reveals more about the nature of the follower, and allows you to select three additional abilities for the follower, as described above under Sidekicks. The former retainer's keyword does not change.

△ Galan's Retainer is His Cousin

During play, Hazeel has been flirting with Galan's bison herder retainer, a healer whose name is Imbroya. Bill thinks Galan wouldn't tolerate this with his cousin.

Kathy: Cousin?

Bill: Sure, it must be. She knows how to tend bison, she's gotta be some kind of kin of mine. Maybe no blood, but bison is bison. Out here, away from everything, she's a cousin.

Kathy: So what do you want here?

Bill: I want something that will amuse us all by rebuffering Hazeel during play.

Kathy: Add some characteristics to her? You can do that. Why don't you make her a sidekick? Just pay the two additional hero points and add three abilities.

Bill: Two hero points or four?

Kathy: Two. This isn't exactly something that is happening during play, but you've had her around enough to count.

Bill: Good. I'm going to give to her the abilities of *Resist Seduction 19* and *Very Pretty 18*. That should drive him crazy. And finally, um, *Cook Delicious Food 17*. And of course she still has the Healer keyword at 17.

Kathy: Wouldn't you rather give her *Healing Magic* instead of one of those?

Using Follower Abilities

In a contest, a follower may:

- Augment a character, the least risky option.
- Use its ability directly instead of the hero's.
- Provide its AP for the hero to use: see "Followers and Advantage Points" in the Core Rules chapter, page 67.

You cannot use a hero point to bump a follower's die roll.

Commanding Followers in Play

Followers will obey and perform the task they are hired to do. Someone with *Combat, Fight, or Bodyguard* will fight to the death; a page or backboy will tend horses; a cook or householder will do all the dull daily tasks of cleaning clothes or dusting off ceremonial equipment; and so on. If your hero asks a follower to act beyond his duty, you must roll a contest (usually a simple contest) using the hero's relationship. The narrator judges the resistance based on the follower's reluctance, along these lines:

Replacing Followers

Followers are useful, but they are also fragile, with a higher mortality rate than heroes.

Between adventures, your hero can replace retainers who die or otherwise leave for no hero point cost, assuming a suitable pool of replacement candidates exists. Your hero's [Relationship to Followers] ability is what allows this. Naturally, replacements will be harder to come by if your hero acts in a way that discourages loyalty. If he has abandoned or sacrificed a retainer, for example, the narrator might require you to roll his [Relationship to Followers] ability against an appropriate resistance to recruit a new one. She might even assign a penalty if the hero loses his follower in a particularly callous or horrible manner.

Sidekicks are more personal than retainers, but can be replaced by spending hero points (the narrator may also require a contest). Replacing the sidekick must be done as soon as possible after it is lost, or the narrator may require that you create a completely new sidekick, with the base ability ratings.

Follower Reluctance

Action	Resistance
Something trivial and meaningless. "Cook, please wear this badge while in my employment," or "Fighting guy, would you bring that table over here?"	14 or automatic success (at the narrator's option)
Something out of the ordinary but reasonable under the circumstances. "Healer, will you come help us move this boulder?" or "Butler, stay up all night and stand watch at this window, will you?"	17
Something that is very much outside the expected actions of the follower. "Penny-counter, dig that garden and plant these beans," or "Fighter, pick up my horse droppings in the parade."	5 ω
Something frightening, gruesome, or sickening. "Page boy, fetch that bashed-in head with the brains hanging out. Don't forget that eyeball there."	20 ω

Supporting Characters

Supporting characters are controlled by the narrator and can include your hero's family, rulers, religious hierarchy, and even enemies. Your narrator will help you to detail them as needed. Some supporting characters have their own abilities. Others do not need them, at least initially, because of the nature of the hero's relationship to them. If the game were a television series, supporting characters would be the supporting cast. Some may appear once and then fade from memory, or be killed off in a memorable adventure. Others may grow into more prominent roles.

The relationship's ability rating marks how close the supporting character is to your hero. This could be depth of loyalty (for an ally) or willingness to give support (for a patron). It is your chance to affect another character's activities in the story. Your hero might put pressure on an ally, for instance, and this would require a contest.

You can gain or replace a supporting character for 1 hero point. You cannot spend hero points to improve a supporting character's abilities, but can improve the rating of the relationship.

Adversary

An **adversary** is a supporting character who stands in your hero's way. He might be a detestable villain, but could just as well be an honest person with goals contrary to your hero's. The rating of the relationship represents his hatred of or rivalry with the hero. The narrator decides when the adversary appears to make trouble, and will decide his significant abilities when needed.

Ally

An **ally** is about as accomplished as the hero, with roughly equal status. He may come to the hero's aid when needed, provided he is not busy doing something else—he has a life and goals of his own and is not at the hero's beck and call. Sometimes an ally will save the hero; sometimes he will get in trouble and the hero will need to rescue or protect him.

Contact

One of the best ways to solve problems is to seek out colleagues and old acquaintances. Rather than acting directly like most supporting characters, **contacts** provide information and other indirect aid. As the relationship's rating increases, your hero can get more and better assistance. Contacts may be an individual or, commonly, a category of people, such as *Friends among the Trolls*, *Trade Contacts*, or *Admired by Wizards*.

The rating represents your hero's chance of locating one of the contacts and getting useful information or minor favors from him. Contacts will give help only if the cost is trivial, or if it is somehow in their interest to do so. Bigger or dangerous things accrue penalties when exercising the relationship. Con-

tacts can usually be gifted with money, favors, or the like, which are figured as a bonus.

When a hero finds a new contact, the narrator will assign a name, abilities, and personality traits as the story demands.

Dependent

A **dependent** is a supporting character whom the hero is obliged to protect or support, but who can do little to aid him in return. Family members are common dependents. Having a dependent is often viewed as a flaw because the hero's enemies may strike at them, and sometimes the hero's options will be reduced because he has to care for them. Yet dependents provide comfort and support, and occasional aid or advice. Besides, they make a hero sympathetic—who could fail to admire a hero who sacrifices his own immediate interests on behalf of his loved ones?

Patron

A **patron** is a supporting character of greater accomplishment or social status than the hero. The patron may aid the hero on occasion, but expects favors and service in return. In other words, the narrator uses patrons as a device to get the heroes involved in her plot lines, and perhaps to aid them when they are stuck. In effect, the hero is a follower of the patron.

A patron's primary ability is generally rated much higher than the hero's, but is often a relationship or *Wealth* rather than a mundane or magical ability. The patron often provides help by calling upon one of his other connections, not joining in himself.

Adding New Supporting Characters

Forming new relationships is common, and might be the goal of an adventure. Alternatively, charismatic or powerful heroes may attract supporting characters of any type. Adding a supporting character costs hero points, just like any other ability.

Changes to Supporting Characters

Like heroes, supporting characters change over time. A hero gains new supporting characters as he matures or grows in fame, and his existing supporting characters can grow and improve with him. A supporting character might leave or be killed (and perhaps replaced). A supporting character can also grow and change until they no longer fit their previous role. A dependent kid brother may grow up to become a follower, an ally, or even an adversary. A parent who has always been there to lend a hand and give you tasks (patron) may become old and infirm and come to rely on you for help (dependent).

Changing a supporting character's role costs 1 hero point if the story moves it that way, although the narrator might allow you to make the change for free. Sometimes you can keep the ability rating of the relationship when the type of relationship changes. Thus, a *Friend of [Ally]* 2 ω in your clan may develop into a *Friendly Rival of [Ally]* 2 ω .

Community Relationships

Heroes are parts of communities, and communities have a lasting impact on their lives. Relationships to communities show your hero's place in the social world. They can be used to determine if the community gives him help with a problem.

Your hero is a part of some communities automatically: his family (unless he has been disowned); his village or clan or city; his religion; and his temple or congregation. He may belong to a nation, a regiment, or a hero cult. He can leave a community or join another, if they approve.

Being part of a community means your hero has to meet requirements and obtains support. A community can heal, equip, and shelter its members. Its people can even provide magical support, especially when the hero journeys beyond the Mortal World into the realms of the deities, spirits, or essences. But communities require that their members back them in return, even when they have other cares.

Types of Communities

Communities vary in power, resources, and makeup. Although there are hundreds of possible types, *HeroQuest* uses a few broad categories to describe all of them.

Relatives

Relatives are blood kin, the origin of all social order. They include a person's mother and father, siblings, children, and spouse. They often include in-laws as well. Usually a family has limited resources to lend, but is very supportive. Relatives can also include larger, more organized bodies, such as clans or tribes. The many names for this level of family vary between homelands.

Religion

Everyone in Glorantha is born into a **religion** or belief system, which is written on the character sheet as the relationship of *Worship [Pantheon]*, *Worship [Great Spirit]*, or *Worship [God]*. Your hero must belong to a religion to learn more than just common magic.

A religion itself is unlikely to provide support to its members, but institutions within that religion usually do. Thus, a cult or local temple where a hero worships regularly is more likely to give him support than the deity or church itself. A religion has its many cults, practices, orders, or schools, and heroes have a separate relationship with each group of worshippers: *Member of [Temple]*, *Follower of [Shaman]*, *Member of [Order]*, etc.

Government

A **government** includes political leaders and the followers who implement their decisions. Governments typically oversee a variety of smaller communities. Thus, both the tribal kings of the Heortlings and the Imperial hierarchy of the Lunar Empire coordinate relationships among religions and unions, albeit with quite different methods.

Political office gives an individual great personal status and power. Such status demands a commitment of time and attention to the everyday tasks of political life. Normally, a political leader can call on his followers to perform above and beyond their normal duties with little difficulty, but if he is callous or despotic he will find resistance, and even rivals, to his power.

Union

A **union** is a collection of people formally working together for something that is not familial, religious, or governmental. Most do not call themselves unions, but *HeroQuest* uses the term for all such groups, including guilds, leagues, military units, and societies. Sample unions include the Leatherworkers' Guild, the Draconic League, the Granite Regiment, and the Union for Study of Brithini Art. A union may or may not have an economic focus, and is often selective about membership and progression within its ranks. Many unions are supportive of members in good standing, but others look on their members as replaceable parts that need no consideration other than paying them on time (and some are not even that conscientious!).

Hero Band

A **hero band** is a group of people who share a common goal and a magical **guardian** who helps them obtain that goal. A hero band can be nearly any size. Many transcend race, religion, and homeland, and require only a dedication to the cause and a loyalty to the band. Hero bands give diverse heroes a common purpose and help explain why they are friends.

Hero bands are the operative community in *HeroQuest*. Any sort of community can qualify to be a hero band in the rules, since most formal organizations have a guardian.

➤ Want to Discover More? See "Guardians and Hero Bands," page 92.



The Wastes of Prax (east of Dragon Pass) are occupied by several tribes who ride upon various exotic beasts, which they view as kin. These Praxians are savage warriors who scorn buildings and the "rabbit folk" that live in them. This brave belongs to the Sable Tribe, which allied with the Lunar Empire a decade ago, branding its members as Chaos to many other tribes.

Supernatural Support

A community can support your hero magically when he performs a ritual, heroquest, or other momentous undertaking. For instance, a hero setting off to enter the enemy camp and challenge a champion in ritual combat might get such a bonus, at the narrator's discretion.

Supernatural support is a type of magical bonus granted by a community. The bonus is applied to an ability, often for a portion of the myth during a heroquest. The exact wording would say, "I ask for a blessing for my fight against Wakboth on the Quest of the Great Cloud," or "I ask for healing blessings while I take this message to the King of Tarsh." Supernatural support requires the services of a guardian (see "Guardians and Hero Bands" on page 92) to channel the aid from the community to the hero.

Levels of Support

The narrator must decide to what extent a community is willing to support the hero. Depending on the results of a contest, the aid he seeks, and the possible outcome, the community might provide anything from total support to rejection of the request to complete condemnation of the hero.

Total Support: The community pledges itself completely to assist the hero, to the exclusion of everything else. A hero can receive total support only when he is the focus of the community, whether in this world or the Otherworld. Anything that happens to him, mundane or magical, for good or ill, happens to them as well.

Total support can go beyond mundane relationships into the supernatural. Any blessings or harm received by the hero accrue to the community as well. Only a hero questing on behalf of his community, or who is recognized by them as a great hero, will receive this commitment, which is the equivalent of worship.

Extraordinary Support: The community supports the hero, putting all available resources to the task without interrupting normal functions. The community is not directly affected by the hero's good or bad fortune. It can, of course, be affected indirectly by events set into motion by the hero. Heroes who seek to gain benefits that they will use for the community often receive this level of support.

Moderate Support: The community supports the hero, but commits itself only cautiously or casually. It is rarely affected by the actions of the hero, who does gain some help with large-scale actions.

This level of commitment is often the highest members can receive if their request stands to benefit themselves alone.

Ordinary Support: The community does not actively support or resist the hero, but provides its normal benefits. It does not intervene in any issue, and the hero receives no effect for good or ill in large-scale actions such as warfare or magical rituals.

Objection: The community objects to the issue and/or the hero, possibly with hostility, even though the community is rarely affected by the hero's actions. Followers from within the community will need to be coerced to go against the community's objection.

Forbiddance: The community expressly forbids the hero from pursuing the issue. Followers from within the community may desert the hero for the duration of the mission (although they will probably return after it is over).

Condemnation: The community condemns the hero for even asking such a thing. If the hero continues, the narrator should assign large penalties to his ability ratings, even have community members show up as opponents. The hero is likely to be expelled from the community, as are any who support him.

Condemnation can go beyond all mundane relationships into the supernatural. Any blessings received by the hero come at the expense of the community, which ties its future to the failure of the hero.

Requesting Community Support

Heroes cultivate relationships with groups so they can ask for something. Communities are self-serving and cautious, and need to be convinced. The risks they are asked to take are real, so they will not risk their resources, magic, or lives to help a stranger.

As a starting point, a community provides **ordinary support** to its members: individuals with an established Relationship to the community. This is normal aid: farmers provide food, warriors provide leadership during raids, and so on. Heroes without a community relationship on their character sheet have no home, and cannot expect aid from other people.

Greater levels of support require that the hero convince the community and its leaders. The leaders' job is to protect the community interests selfishly, and to allocate resources wisely. The selfish desires or reckless hopes of heroes often incite fear from leaders, and so can increase resistance. On the other hand, if the hero has aided the community in the past beyond what is expected, he is more likely to receive support, especially if his request promises to benefit the community as well as himself.

The level of support requested sets the base resistance for the contest. Larger communities have more resources to provide but are typically harder to convince, so the size of the group directly affects the resistance.

At the narrator's option, several heroes with a relationship to the community can either seek individual support or can pool their resources and ask for support collectively. In the latter situation, one hero makes the formal request, augmented by the other heroes; if victorious, the heroes may divide the bonus among themselves in any way they wish.



There are dwarves who are "broken" and have turned their backs on the hive-like communities of their race and the certainties and technologies they represent. Some are sullen and withdrawn, others—like this hardy warrior—embrace the primitive ways of the surface world with glee.

Contest: Request Support from Community

Appropriate Ability: Member of [Community].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Circumstances (see below), support from a related group (see “Support from Multiple Communities” on the next page).

Resistance:

- Total support**—20 \square plus [total support bonus]
- Extraordinary support**—5 \square plus [total support bonus $\times \frac{1}{2}$]
- Moderate support**—17 plus [total support bonus $\times \frac{1}{10}$]
- Ordinary support**—Automatic success or 14 (narrator’s option)

Complete Victory: Hero receives one level of support greater than he requested.

Major or Minor Victory: Hero receives requested support.

Marginal Victory or Tie: Hero’s request turned down without prejudice. He still receives **ordinary support**, and may be referred to another group for the requested support.

Marginal Defeat: The community provides limited resistance, but not enough to cause a penalty.

Minor Defeat: The community actively opposes the hero, resulting in **objection**.

Major Defeat: The community actively opposes the hero, resulting in **forbiddance**.

Complete Defeat: The community actively opposes the hero, resulting in **condemnation**.

Sample Circumstance Modifiers

- The request violates the community’s morality: –20.
- The plan sounds stupid or dangerous: –10.
- The request will not benefit the community: –10 or more.
- The hero has brought trouble down on the community in the past: –5 to –20 or more.
- The group has had bad omens about this: –5 to –10.
- Past aid from the hero: +3 to +10 or more.

△ Ingomar Seeks Help

Ingomar wants to get some warriors to get rid of Fancy-pants. He has talked it up among his kin and friends, with mixed reactions. If he can get the family to approve, his request to the chieftain will have a better chance of success. But he knows that the trouble with Hazeel and the cheese maker will have a negative effect, and that the bison incident will also harm his chances. Still, Ingomar goes and asks the assembled family if they will help him.

Kathy: Don’t even roll. They saw you talk around, but they can’t encourage support for it. They’ll give you some food to take with you, that’s it. But you get one follower anyway, if you want, for one hero point: a cousin who wants to go with you. He’s a javelineer.

Ingomar accepts his young cousin as a follower. He is still determined to see if the clan will help him.

Levels of Support

Level of Support	Bonus	Mundane Benefits
Total Support	The total support bonus listed in the Community Support Bonus table.	In addition to the benefits of extraordinary support, the hero gains the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unique grants. These are one-use items or magic, and their loss is permanent to the donor.
Extraordinary Support	$\frac{1}{2}$ the total support bonus.	In addition to the benefits of moderate support, the hero gains the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loan of ritual items, spirits, or other magic “for the duration.”
Moderate Support	$\frac{1}{10}$ the total support bonus.	In addition to the benefits of ordinary support, the hero gains the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Followers lent for specific purposes. ● Loan of better equipment for a specified duration.
Ordinary Support	Possibly a +1 “morale bonus” (narrator’s option).	Members in good standing of a community can expect ordinary benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food and lodging (likely minimal). ● Welcome at social functions and religious rites. ● Protection from strangers.
Objection	$\frac{1}{10}$ the total support bonus applied as a penalty to the action.	The hero is denied the benefits of ordinary support if he proceeds, and suffers the following as well: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Possible interference by individual members of the community. ● The base resistance to requests made of individual community members in the face of objection is 5\square.
Forbiddance	$\frac{1}{2}$ the total support bonus applied as a penalty to the action.	The hero suffers the effects of objection if he proceeds, as well as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loss of previous gifts and support given by the community. ● Likely interference by individual members of the community. ● Increased resistance to support by other related communities, such as religious communities, political institutions, and even the hero’s own family. ● The base resistance to requests made of individual community members in the face of forbiddance is 20\square.
Condemnation	The total support bonus applied as a penalty to the action.	The hero suffers the effects of forbiddance if he proceeds, as well as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Withdrawal of support by other related communities. ● The base resistance to requests made of individual community members in the face of condemnation is 5\square3.

Guardians and Hero Bands

Hero bands are common in Glorantha. Every group that has some sort of formal status (such as a clan, guild, family, or warband) has a magical **guardian**, and so acts as a hero band. Hero bands vary tremendously in size, from a few heroes to hundreds or even thousands of people. Player heroes who form a small warband are in effect acting as a casual hero band. If they can find a guardian, they will obtain more power and influence in the world. With new members, followers and narrator characters, they will start to be taken more seriously. Members, leaders, and guardian: together they are a hero band.

Although warbands are a common type of hero band, people unite in other ways and for other purposes. Depending on the hero band's objectives and religious background (if any), each band has reached its own conclusion on how to act. See the Sample Hero Bands starting on page 257 for some philosophies. These sample bands can also be used as a source of narrator characters (allies or villains) and resources. Their actions also show how individuals get benefits for being a member of a hero band. Player heroes who seek one should think about what they want, and then adventure to find it.

△ Our Heroes Find Employment

The group is still in the city.

Kathy: All your abilities are at -5 because you're so hungry. You're very glad that the water's free. You guys remember Hengal's hungry relatives? They lived in that shack over there? They, and anyone else really, tell you that if you go to the city of Furthest then you can get fed for free by the Seven Mothers cult.

Christine: Why haven't they gone there?

Kathy: They say they're too weak to walk that far.

Hengal: Well, we have to do something. Maybe we can just go out and hunt for a while.

John: We could join those mercenaries, or go in the army.

Bill: No army, mercenaries might work. Are there recruiters or something like that?

Steve: I've got *Urban Survival* here, at 17. I must be able to find those places. If they are actually hiring strangers they have to have some kind of presence.

Kathy: OK, yes of course. You've seen them while you were wandering around. Down by the temple.

Rick: We'll go there then, right?

Kathy: You do. OK, so they hold office in a corner above that public house, and their boss has a private room off the back. The guy you want to talk to is Larkippus the Clerk.

Christine: We're there.

Kathy: OK, you have to talk to this guy, then that guy, and they size you up and all. But at last you see Larkippus. He is delighted at your presence.

Rick: Where are we, again?

Kathy: OK, so you went through the streets and got here. This is the public house, called, um, "Turtle and Pig." There's a stairway outside to the second floor, and it goes up here. There's a guard room, an official's room, and a guy takes your information. A wizard-looking woman comes in and looks everyone over, exposes some knucklebones towards everyone, and withdraws to cast them privately.

Rick: And we are in what kind of room?

Kathy: An outer office. You want to be inside, which is a fairly opulent private meeting room. All kinds of trophies and foreign stuff is on the walls.

Here is the boss. She is a tall thin Lunar noblewoman not quite bald, dressed in a red fringed miniskirt of decadent Glamour fashion, smoking a Red Fish pipe, bangles on her arms that change color. Several armed guards and scribes wait around the room, watching or writing. But she has read the papers, seen the knucklebone reports, and is happy to see you.

"Such a wonderful variety! Our clients will love it. An actual bison man! Excellent, excellent. And are you from Prax, then? Wonderful." She offers you employment in her company as guards. Standard wages, temporary employment for half a year, you gotta go where they say and risk your life, et cetera. You have to follow the membership requirements, and you will be temporary members of the traveling hero band. Let's see, you must "swear the Wayfarers' Oath to protect travelers and treat with them honestly, to speak no ill of the Red Goddess or her ways, and to obey their tour leader." Here, read this if you want. If you agree, you have a job.

Steve: Tour leader?

Kathy: You'll have fun here. Any place in Glorantha you want to see?

Steve: Yeah, I want to see where they surf.

Kathy: It'll take a while to get there.

Guardians

Hero bands form a relationship with a **guardian** whose origins are normally from the Mortal World. Occasionally they come from the Otherworld, the realms of deities, spirits, or wizardry essences. The guardian binds the members together and provides them with protection and magical aid, and in return gains influence in the world. Examples include the guiding spirit of a ship, the guardian essence of a Western military unit, the daimon protector of a caravan, and the lares of a Lunar vexilla (warband). A guardian is not always an actual being—the reliquary that protects a Western church is not a distinct entity, but a source of magical energy directed by the liturgist during worship.

A guardian has four attributes. First is the **method** it uses to interact with the hero band. Next is its **communication** with members of the band. Third are the specific **guardian requirements** that each imposes. Finally, each guardian provides one or more magical **functions** to members of the band.

△ Good Guardian

Kathy: OK, the caravan is traveling along. This hilly area is where, and you're going along a dirt road through here someplace. It's not supposed to be dangerous, but there are always bandits.

Rick: We're in our usual formation, then. Are we the only ones guarding this tour?

Kathy: No, you are half the group. The crew chief is named Esteemed Elk. He's a shapechanger, he can turn into a deer. He's wearing a medallion of the Red Goddess, though.

Bill: Galan too. We are looking to the right to see.
Frederick: Not again! Can't my cat senses pick this up?
Kathy: No. Not a bit. Sorry. You don't get to do anything while they all get to act.
Bill: There's room to ride my bison? I'll just turn and charge.
Christine: I'll dodge and evade. Look for the enemy.
Rick: Armed, ready for arrows.
Kathy: Frederick, you need to attempt to make some sort of perception roll. Do you have something like that?
Frederick: Nothing special. Isn't that part of my Hunter profession? I'm 17 then. It's my Feline Danger System.
Kathy: So it must be your Feline Danger System that lets you see the gazzam that is running right down the road.
Christine: Gazzam?
Bill, Rick, and Frederick together: A dinosaur.
Rick: We don't sense a dinosaur?
Kathy: Not with that talking in your head.
Rick: And the guardian doesn't tell us about it?
Kathy: It didn't. A huge swarm of wasps buzzes into sight right about here. So large that you can watch it go by. It's going towards the tourists.
Christine: What reaches them first, the wasps or the dinosaur?
Frederick: I want to watch where the payroll pony goes.

Guardian Requirements

Membership requirements of a hero band are partly dictated by the guardian, which requires that members act in a certain way. If they do not, the guardian withholds its magic. Typically, requirements include some personality trait, a particular action or ceremony members must perform regularly, or both. These requirements usually do not include magical obligations, and so members can often use different types of magic without problems. Guardian requirements may be more extensive and restrictive among traditional or long-established hero bands.

Sample Guardian Requirements: Always Wear Gloves, Be Boastful, Be Bold in Danger, Be Humble, Desire Gold, Drink Water if Offered, Drink Wine to Excess on the Seventh Day, Eat No Birds, Eat Only Meat Every Third Day, Fear Dwarves, Fear Red-headed Women, Hate Dragons, Loathe Desirous People, Scorn Elves.

Three Functions

The common guardian of a hero band has three functions with a default ability rating of 18 each. Gaining a stronger guardian should occur as part of an adventure, perhaps a heroquest.


Awareness is the first function. The guardian has a supernatural perception ability that it uses to aid members.

Sample Awareness Functions: Identify Tree, Know Cultural Antiques, Know Way Out, Locate Food, Locate Water, See Through Sham, Sense Cult Affiliation, Sense Disembodied Spirit, Sense Enemy, Sense Enemy over the Hill, Sense Gold, Understand Foreign Languages.

Blessing is the second function. Although sometimes an offensive ability, it can as easily be a physical augmentation (such as giving everyone additional strength or endurance) or an occupational augmentation (such as blessing all the basketmakers, barley farmers, or silversmiths in a guild).

Sample Blessing Functions: Digest Poison, Drive Away Dogs, Fight Against Chaos, Fight For Family, Heal Members, Nimble Fingers, See in Dark, Sense Dragons, Start Fire with Finger.

Hero Band Hierarchies

The link between a guardian and hero band often allows the band to join with a larger group, as long as all membership requirements are met. This allows members to benefit from each guardian. This generally follows a natural hierarchy, so that clan warbands only join tribal warbands or their kingdom's army, local markets can join together into a great market, etc. 

Defense is the third function. The guardian has a power to help defend individuals or the group. These abilities generally cannot be used offensively.

Sample Defense Functions: Defend Against Magic, Defense in Combat, Defense in Woods, Dodge Arrows, Flee Enemy, Hide in Woods, Magical Protection, Never Sink.

The exact effects of the functions vary. All functions can be used as automatic augments on band members, usually all members at once if they are acting together. An archetype usually allows the leader to use its functions as if they were his own abilities. An emanation must be directed to use its functions, some only by the leader, some by any band member. A manifestation can use its abilities on its own, but not while augmenting the band.

Other Powers

Some guardians have greater, more exotic, or even unique powers. A starting hero band can expect opportunities to discover the hidden powers of their own guardian as the adventures progress.

Examples of Additional Powers: More or stronger functions; functions that act like theist affinities, each with several feats (see page 120); a bonus to cross the Otherworld Barrier; special defenses while in an alien Otherworld; a special link that gives everyone simultaneous access to each other's magic; power over some part of nature; unusual friends; etc.

Worshipping Guardians

People benefit from nearby guardians even if they are not part of a formal organization. Thus, people who live near The River may gain the benefit of its functions if they treat it properly. Some people go further, and worship guardians as if they were gods, spirits, or saints. In return, they can learn the guardian's functions as common magic feats, spirits, or spells.

A guardian in the Mortal World is considered a native being, not an Otherworld entity. Even if it is obviously a daimon, it is an embodied daimon, and cannot respond properly to sacrifice. Because of this, worshipping a guardian always counts as misapplied worship (see "Misapplied Worship" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 110). Additionally, the magic is always limited in distance, time, or effect. Finally, worshipping a guardian in this manner weakens it, lowering its functions. This last explains why most hero bands do not worship their guardian.

People are practical; religion is their spiritual foundation, but they must live in harmony with nature, lest it destroy them. Even in strict religions like the Rokari Church, people worship local nature daimones and spirits as common religions, despite the demonization of such entities by Church doctrine.

Want to Discover More? See "The Divine Landscape" in the Theism chapter (page 127), "The Spirit Landscape" in the Animism chapter (page 148), and "The Essential Landscape" in the Wizardry chapter (page 173).

Dissolution of a Guardian

Guardians can die, disappear, or dissipate. Without members they can vanish permanently; as a rule, little ones go quickly and larger ones slowly. That is why a guardian can be found that is currently weak, but has many hidden powers waiting to be discovered.

Archetypes and manifestations are distinct beings that can be attacked, captured, or even destroyed. Even emanations can be forced into the Otherworld if their physical form is ruined. Heroic action by the members of their band can sometimes bring them back.

Your Hero Band

The first part of creating a hero band is to tell the story of how it gains its guardian. The narrator will work with you to find an entertaining guardian appropriate for your heroes. Your band will also be defined by what it believes in and how it acts.

Membership Requirements

A candidate must fulfill certain requirements before he can join a hero band. The guardian has its own requirements as described earlier, but hero bands themselves often have additional requirements. There may be entry tests based on the band's needs or prejudices, so that a hero band of scholars will have knowledge tests, fighting bands have combat tests, and so on.

Since each member of a hero band can strengthen the guardian for all members, no one can join for free. You must spend hero points separately for your hero and each of his followers to join the band and benefit from the guardian's magic. Depending on the band, the hero's followers may or may not have to meet the same entry requirements as he does.

Hero bands are not always exclusive, but if a hero belongs to more than one, the membership requirements and goals must be compatible. However, many hero bands do not accept members of other hero bands because of a lack of trust, suspicion of lesser commitment, or a sense of exclusivity. Loyalty to a single hero band does give benefits in terms of trust and advancement, so most people belong to only one hero band at a time.

A hero generally must give 10% of his time and energy to his hero band. To represent this, members must spend 10% of their hero points on skills, virtues, relationships, and magical abilities consistent with the needs of the band and its guardian. This usually includes abilities from compatible keywords.

Guardian Entities

Most guardians are native to the Mortal World, and suffer a -20 penalty if they go into the Otherworld (see "Alien World Penalty" in the Heroquesting chapter, page 197). Some guardians *are* Otherworld entities, and suffer the -20 penalty in the Mortal World. These entities are referred to as guardian daimones, guardian spirits, and guardian essences. Such guardian entities have the normal characteristics of that type of entity, as described in the individual magic chapters and the Creatures chapter.

Later in the book you will see that some Otherworld entities are described as if they are guardians. This is usually because these entities are not regularly worshipped, and the rules for guardians reflect their presence and influence in the Mortal World. Thus, in Dragon Pass the god of The River (see page 129) has a personality, and indeed has a few dedicated worshippers. However, he usually manifests his powers as functions that benefit nearby inhabitants.



Constructing Your Guardian

When forming a hero band, work with the narrator to select the guardian's **method**, **communication**, **guardian requirements**, and **three functions**. These may all be suggested by the guardian's nature, by the format of the hero band, or as part of the story. If the band has a strong leader, an archetype may be the best method of interaction; if you are less interested in role-playing the guardian, an emanation might be more appropriate. Your hero band's guardian might be a revered ancestor, a renowned hero, a demigod, a haunting presence, or the spirit son of a monster: anything that supports or provokes the story.

Everyone should work together so that their guardian and hero band fit, but the players should set the tone. If no player has any particular ideas about functions, it helps to work out some events of the guardian's original "life." Thus, if the guardian was once a nature spirit, its functions probably have to do with harmony with nature.

Whenever possible, the narrator should act as a guide; it is the players' guardian! The players and narrator should negotiate to find the right balance for the game. The narrator can then work it into the future story line so that the players can get some extra powers if they take on extra responsibilities. That is the nature of *HeroQuest*.

Function Ability Ratings

The guardian of a new hero band has a default rating of 18 in each of its three functions. Alternately, your narrator may let you customize your guardian by starting each function at 13 and then distributing an additional 15 points among them. She may also choose to impose limits or grant bonuses depending on the story's needs. If your entity is newly discovered, its functions and their values may be unknown at first, mysteries to be revealed through play. Some established hero bands have guardians with higher function ratings, such as the three sample hero bands (see pages 258-263).

Improving Your Guardian

Guardians have the capacity to grow, but this depends on many factors, primarily the number of followers they have. To calculate the guardian's maximum *potential* function ratings, determine the total number of active band members, then add the corresponding **total support bonus** from the Community Support Bonus table (see page 91) to each rating. How and when the guardian's function ratings increase towards this maximum is up to the narrator. She may allow members to spend hero points to improve the functions (at a cost of +1 hero point *per member* for each +1), may grant the guardian the occasional hero point after an adventure, or may simply increase the ratings over time to reflect the growing connection between the guardian and its members.

Upper limits for growth exist, so that even millions of worshippers may not affect the power of some guardians beyond a certain point. Other actions can increase a guardian's power as well, independent of the maximum potential based on the size of the band. A successful heroquest can increase the function ratings of a guardian or give it additional powers.

What's Your Sign?

Most guardians have a mark that identifies them. Work out how your heroes will mark themselves as members of the band: a slogan, war cry, symbol or "gang sign," secret handshake, attitude, costume, tattoo, activity, or the like.



Thus, a small and weak guardian has the ability to develop and reveal hidden inherent powers as new members join. The narrator will reveal these developments when the guardian gets strong enough to expose new aspects. Although these are often good for the members, sometimes they are useless or even dangerous. Occasionally, a guardian turns out to be something very different from what members thought it was.

△ We Are the Tri Lambs

Bill: I bet we can get a better guardian than the one we signed up with. It's basically stupid. Whoever programmed its commands was a dunce.

Rick: So, you're telling us it didn't tell us about a *dinosaur* because it got fooled? Distracted?

Kathy: Blocked, actually. The ambushers had countermagic to conceal the dinosaur. The wasps were a danger, and it was them that distracted you. The guardian was right to warn you about them.

Rick: Let's form our own band and make our own guardian. After much deliberation they agree that each pair of players will choose one function. They come up with the following: *Warn Us of Attack*, *Drink Hearty*, and *Fix Wounds*.

Kathy: Do you guys want to customize this, or just take the standard rating of 18 in each function?

Bill: The standard. It is a little gazzam, and every morning we all put a couple of drops of our blood into its food. Its name is Tri Lamb, and we're the Tri Lambs, just going to slaughter.

Kathy: OK, everyone needs to put in a hero point to get the relationship *Member of the Tri Lambs* 13. That way, Tri Lamb can use its magic on you. If you want your followers to be part of the group also, that will cost another hero point for *each* follower. Anyone want to do that? No? OK.

With just the six of you that's a +2, so each of Tri Lamb's functions has a maximum potential rating of 20.

Tri Lamb




Method: Manifestation.

Form: A triceratops about the size of a cocker spaniel.

Communication: Group contact. Each member understands its roars and grunts as if it were speaking his native language.

Guardian Requirements: Offer it a few drops of blood each day.

Functions:

-  Awareness—Warn Us of Attack 18.
-  Blessing—Drink Hearty 18.
-  Defense—Fix Wounds 18.



Leaving a Hero Band

Members can quit a hero band and break their relationship with the guardian. The consequences depend on the story. Most of the time, the remaining members of the band impose the only reprisal, if any.

However, guardians are naturally reluctant to commit to a relationship with someone who is likely to renounce them. A guardian may be happy to allow members to join as many hero bands as they wish. The problem occurs each time a hero quits a band and then wants to join another. After quitting even a single band, any new relationship with another guardian costs an extra hero point. Thus, if one hero band is abandoned, the next costs 2 hero points to join; if another is abandoned later then the cost rises to 3 hero points; and so on. Your story may modify this, so that if during play an entire group disbands, merges with a larger band, or replaces a guardian that is destroyed, the narrator might not impose this penalty.



Hero Improvement Costs—Relationships

Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1
Gain a retainer (gain a separate <i>Relationship to [Follower]</i> at 13 for free if desired)	1
Gain a sidekick (gain a <i>Relationship to [Sidekick]</i> at 13 for free)	3
Gain a supporting character (gain a <i>Relationship to [Supporting Character]</i> at 13 for free)	1
Join a common religion without establishing a relationship with it (must purchase any abilities separately)	no cost
Gain a relationship with a common religion at 13	1
Gain a relationship with a specialized religion at 13	3
Gain a relationship with a hero band at 13	1 or more*
Gain a relationship with any other community at 13	1
Change a retainer to a sidekick (gain three significant abilities at 13 each for free)	2
Change a supporting character's role	1 or 0, at narrator's discretion
Replace a retainer or supporting character	no cost
Replace a sidekick with one of equivalent experience	1
Improve a relationship with a follower or supporting character by +1	1
Improve a relationship with a specialized religion by +1	2
Improve a relationship with a hero band by +1	1
Improve a relationship with a common religion or any other community by +1	1
Improve a sidekick ability rating by +1	normal cost for that type of ability

* If the hero has previously joined and then quit a hero band, the cost increases by +1 for each band previously abandoned.



BASIC MAGIC

Magic flows from the Other Side to the Mortal World, where beings use it to create, destroy, and transform. It has changed history, when mighty magicians crushed kingdoms. But not just the mighty have it! Everyone has a little. A humble farmer uses magic to improve his crops, a trader uses it to make herself more persuasive, and an artisan improves the quality of his handiwork. Some people have a lot, and not just elderly wizards with long robes and white beards: even heavily armed warriors, cunning generals, and shadowy criminals can be powerful magicians.

This chapter explains Using Magic and engaging in Magical Contests. It describes Common Magic and introduces the three types of Specialized Religions that your hero can belong to. The three chapters that follow explore these systems in depth. Concentrating Magic tells players how to get the greatest benefit out of their religion, whether it is a specialized religion or one of the Sample Common Religions that complete the chapter.

Using Magic

All magic follows certain basic precepts. The specialized magic chapters provide specific rules about how each system of magic works beyond these basics.

Magical Abilities

Magic works “here, now, and against that” without any penalty. If you want your magic to affect a target further than about 50 yards away, last longer than the current contest, or affect multiple targets, you may suffer a penalty (see “Modifiers to Magic” on page 100).

Magic is used to perform an action or augment an ability. Limits and exceptions exist. For instance, certain spirits can add their full ability rating to a hero’s as a special power, but theist affinities can only augment other abilities, and cannot usually be used as active abilities.

The description of magic is intentionally open-ended. Most magical abilities—whether talents, feats, spirits, or spells—are not defined. When your hero uses magic you should explain what is happening. Tell how you interpret the situation at hand. If the narrator agrees that your interpretation fits the name of the ability, the use of magic, and the dramatic logic of her game, you can go ahead and use the ability in that way.

Magic Casting Requirements

To perform any magic, your hero must be free to make gestures and sounds. He must be clear-headed and able to concentrate his mental energy.

If your hero cannot see his target, he generally cannot use magic against it. However, there are ways around this restriction. Stationary things like cities and forests can be targeted if the caster has been there, knows exactly where it is, and can visualize the place in his mind. Some magical abilities allow the magician to send his senses out to search for the target. Some magic can be targeted using part of the target, such as some blood or a lock of hair. Finally, detection magic does not need a specific target, since its whole purpose is to find something.

Some magic requires physical contact between the magician and the target. Such things as crafting an item or healing wounds usually cannot be done at a distance, although the narrator is the final arbiter.

Some magical abilities require a **focus**: a physical object that the magician must hold or touch, such as a book, staff, or tattoo. Charms (see pages 134 and 135), fetishes (see page 136), scriptures (see page 158), grimoires (see page 164), and talismans (see pages 161 and 164) are all types of foci. If your hero lacks his focus, he cannot use the magic until he gets it back or replaces it. If the focus is destroyed the magic is gone, although a hero can usually replace the focus without having to learn the ability all over again.

Captives are typically bound and gagged to prevent them from using magic. They may be drugged or beaten in order to cloud their minds. They may be blinded. Pouches, icons, and jewelry are removed as a matter of course, and tattoos may be defaced by knife cuts.

The Hero Wars are between... the Mortal World and the Other Side

The entities of the Other Side—whether deity, spirit, or essence—have their own agendas, which they expect mortals to fulfill. Most mortals have no say in their destinies, but heroes can resist the machinations of the Otherworld and make their own futures, even to the point of crossing to the Other Side to confront its inhabitants directly.

Magical Contests

Magic uses the same rules as other contests, but there are additional factors that the players and narrator should bear in mind.

Magic Visibility

Magic is “sensible”—it can be seen, heard, felt, or otherwise sensed when it is used. People glow, sparks shoot out of their hands, or a colored nimbus wavers around them. Attack magic is usually bright and makes a loud noise, detection magic makes the perceptive organs or the studied object glow, and healing sends gentle waves of energy flowing between healer and patient; the closing of the wound in a few seconds makes it even more obvious that magic is at work.

Magic seems “more real”—it appears clearer, brighter, or the like. It is not just flashy special effects. Enchanted items might appear larger, like a huge spear or sword. Something protected might shimmer or appear out of focus. The more powerful the magic, the greater its visibility to normal people. Heroes with their magic in force glow with a “hero light” that makes it obvious to everyone how powerful they are. Expert magicians have magical senses, and they can tell the type of magic by how it “looks” to them.

Potential magic cannot be sensed in this way. Once a magic effect ends, the object reverts to its normal appearance. Magical senses let magicians discern active magic, and some may even see the residue of magic that has long been spent. But normal senses cannot tell that a person is a powerful devotee, sense that a rock

has a big spirit residing in it, or measure how many spells an adept knows. However, when the devotee reveals himself the air fills with swirling



When a hero is charged up with his magic, he is said to be in his “hero light.” The magic has visual effects that can manifest in many ways: light, flames, wind, increased size, etc. Weapons and armor may even take on an Otherworldly appearance.

dust and the wind howls; when a sculptor hammers the rock its spirit flashes into sight to cast off the blow; and when a spell is cast it causes its target to glow, the adept’s hands or staff to shine, or the like. Active magic is always visible on the Other Side, where everything is supernatural.

These visual effects are emphasized for humans. Creatures with a different primary sense perceive magic in their own way. Trolls have poor eyesight but superb echolocation, and sense magic as unusual sounds. *Earthsense* allows dwarves to feel magic, as if it were heat or pressure.

Resistance to Magic

Unless providing an automatic augment, every use of a magical ability encounters a resisting force. Your hero must overcome that magical resistance, even if he is casting magic on himself or a willing target.

Sample magical resistances can be found in “Consolidated Resistances” in the Game Aids appendix, page 274.

Natural Resistance

Magical abilities have an advantage over similar mundane abilities. When your hero uses magic appropriately against a passive resistance, he faces the default 14 resistance instead of a normal mundane resistance. This is the resistance to cast magic upon one’s self, and the passive resistance of the Mortal World to magical change. Significant improvisation with the magical ability might not gain this special advantage, facing a personal resistance (see below).

- When a hero uses a *Jump up Cliff* magical ability to jump up a (non-magical) cliff, the resistance is 14, no matter how tall or steep the cliff is, because it is a normal cliff and the magic is being used properly.
- A hero who uses a magical *Jump up Cliff* ability to leap to the top of a battlement takes a penalty for improvising the magic’s use *and* takes a mundane resistance based on the height of the wall.
- Using *Jump up Cliff* to jump over a person or across a river would not work at all.
- Attempting to jump to the top of Kero Fin would face the mountain goddess’ own supernatural resistance (see below).

If you are in doubt as to whether a use of magic is improvisational (and thus takes a penalty) or a new use (and thus might not), think about how the hero has used the ability in the past. If the current attempt uses the ability in the same way as the past, but for a different effect, the narrator will apply the modifier. If the use is completely different, but still consistent with the ability description and the entity that provides the magic, your narrator might reward you for your ingenuity by not assessing the penalty. **Be creative!** If you use *Jump up Cliff* to jump over the Cliff River, the magic might work to leap across it.

△ Jane and Oddi Jump

The band has its first job. They are hired to carry a relic, called the Box of Masks, to Furthest. They are given the route they must travel, supplies to get them there, and a rock that the leader must carry with him. Galan asks his rock spirit buddies about this, and they tell him that it’s a

R
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communication rock. Their employer will know where they are at all times by keeping track of this rock.

The Box of Masks is a wooden box, cubical in shape and about six feet per side. An elaborately carved and painted face is on each side of the box. It is lashed to two long poles that extend in front and behind, big enough for two bearers each. They hire bearers. All goes well while upon the river, and OK for a little longer crossing Saird. Plans are thrown off when Jane, out scouting, runs into a native.

A village leader, handsome curly-haired Oddi, has challenged Jane's right to be there, questioned her right to ride on a shell deer, and sneered at her right to be out without a male escort.

"I am leader here because I am important, handsome, and able to do this. Please watch." His servant takes his cloak. He walks over to this big bramble bush as tall as himself, sprints at it, and jumps up and over it, landing safely on the other side.

"Go the other way, you inferior being," says Oddi.

"That's nothing," says Jane. She knows Oddi is tremendously good at this, known all around for his High Jump [its rating is 7 \mathbb{W} 2]. "How about that one there?" And she points to this big old oak tree. How big is it?

Kathy says, "Huge. Look it up. It's Tall 10 \mathbb{W} 3."

"Well, I have *Tree Leaping* magic at 17," says Jane. "It's a pair of magic boots." She writes this down on her character sheet.

Oddi must overcome the tree's resistance of 10 \mathbb{W} 3, but Jane needs only overcome the default resistance of 14, because she is using magic. Jane's chance of being victorious is much higher than Oddi's. Sure enough, they jump and Jane wins the contest. Oddi is clever and gets partway up the tree, then leaps from those branches higher. But it is clear that Jane has done better.

"That's only one test," he growls. His eyes swirl around like spiral pupils. Little sparks are coming out.

"Ease up, boss," says one of his henchmen. "She's gotta have connections somewhere."

Magical Augmentation

When a magical ability is used to augment another ability, this does *not* make a mundane ability magical. Thus, a hero using a magical *Jump Over Tree* ability to augment a non-magical *Jumping* ability still faces the mundane resistance based on the height of the tree.

Pompous Magic

Just the name of a magical ability does not mean that it succeeds or takes full effect every time it is used. For example, it would be appropriate to rule that *Decapitate Foe* only actually beheads an opponent on a complete victory; on any lesser victory, it might have little effect, or none at all. *Death Glance*, *Wither Enemy*, and *Kill Everything in My Path* are grandiose names, but their effectiveness is proportional to the level of victory, just like any other ability.



Personal Resistance

Beings resist enemy magic with their best relevant ability or keyword, whether mundane or magical. Thus, a magical *Resist Disease* ability and a mundane *Healthy* ability can be used equally to resist a disease spirit. If you don't think your hero has an appropriate magical defense, be creative and try to come up with a way your hero can use an ability to resist the magic. Depending on the circumstances, your hero might call on cult knowledge, a magical ability, or even a relationship. A hero can always say, "I call on [deity/spirit/saint] to repel this attack," and

use a piety ability such as *Worship [Great Spirit]* or *Initiate of [Deity]* to resist the magic. Any such vague defense takes an improvisational modifier. This might be only -5 if the magic being defended against is very similar or directly opposed to that provided by your patron entity, but should be up to -20 for unrelated magic or magic that comes from a different Otherworld.

*Everyone knows how
magic works.
Even so, exceptions and contradictions
always exist. They make the stories and
events of the Hero Wars.*

△ Jane Resists Oddi's Magic

Jane feels a magical probing even though the little sparks from Oddi's eyes do not reach Jane.

"Well," Christine says, "what can I do?" And everyone agrees that her best option is to pick an appropriate common magic ability and then use her common magic keyword to resist. She selects *Gesture to Ward Off Magic*, and so can resist using her common magic keyword.

"A keyword is pretty vague, so you'll take a -5 penalty."

"I'll spend 4 more of my character creation points, then, so that my rating with this talent is 1 \mathbb{W} . That will give me a 16." Kathy says that's appropriate. She rolls a failure, Christine a success: minor victory.

The sparks stop coming from his eyes.

"OK, you are right. I will calm down," he says. "You, tree-jumping woman. Accept my invitation to meet my leader, Great Riverbend Council, in the spirit of hospitality."

Supernatural Resistance

Anything of supernatural origin or power provides its own resistance, the personal resistance of the being that lives there. Thus, most trees offer a passive resistance of 14, but a tree with a resident nymph uses her magical power to resist. A spirit embodied in a rock is not an ordinary rock with a resistance of 14, and resists with its own power.

Magic and Consequences

Using magic is always risky. Narrators should strive to be creative in applying fitting consequences when magic fails.

If a hero is defeated while using magic, he suffers a modifier based on his defeat level as detailed in the Core Rules chapter. This normally affects the magical ability used in the contest, but it might penalize only a particular usage or even all the hero's magic, depending on how the narrator interprets the defeat (shakes his confidence, calls his faith into question, damages his focus, etc.).

△ Jane and Great Riverbend Council

Great Riverbend Council is a big fat man with long curly hair. He's sitting in this throne, and it's carried by these eight strong trollkin. They're wearing uniforms, red on one side and white on the other. There's this person, a human in that same uniform. She is keeping the trollkin scared into working, and has this glowing whip. Several people, bodyguards and wilderness courtiers, are standing around.

"So you are the great tree leaper? Wonderful, I hear. But this is something I need to see for myself. Please, if you would, jump over that tree there, the elm with no leaves on it."

"That one? So small? Let me impress you rightly and leap over that big redwood or whatever it is there. The really tall one."

"No, the elm with no leaves, or you will be a fraud and we shall have to keep you until the magistrate visits."

"The resistance," says Kathy, "is 12W2, OK? I succeed, bumped to a critical. You succeed, bumped down to a failure with my extra mastery. Major defeat. You jump and crash into the tree trunk. Splat. You're dazed here, kind of out of it. You can't do anything when they grab you and tie you up."

"12W2? That little tree? Not an 'everything' tree, I guess. What was it? Can you tell me?"

"A local guardian spirit. That's all you know."

"And they have a jail? A cell?"

"Sort of. His boss has an essence called Mind Wipe."

"OK," says Kathy, "you can try that. Simple contest. But you have a -20 penalty because this is wizardry."

"Mr. Puma does his mumbo jumbo stuff then, and blasts. Huh. What does a fumble mean in this case?"

"It means you better find a real healer."

"That one we heard of is nearby, isn't she? What's her name?"

"Danbrilla."

"I'm sure she can help us."

Modifiers to Magic

As indicated before, magic works "here, now, and against that." In *HeroQuest*, "here" is a visible target within about 50 yards, "now" is for as long as the current (or immediately following) contest, and "that" is a single opponent. If your hero tries to extend his magic beyond these limits he suffers a penalty to his target number; guidelines are shown on the Modifiers to Magic table. Variations in the landscape, the vagaries of time, and inconsistent unity of opposition mean that these modifiers are never this fixed.

Some magic is instantaneous, with no duration—a spell to freeze water makes an instant change and then dissipates, leaving behind no active magical energy. Such magic can often be given a duration, for example to ensure that the ice does not melt even on a hot day. Similarly, a spell that requires touch might be given a range.

The narrator is free to assign a greater or lesser modifier depending on circumstances. Thus, in contests lasting days or weeks (such as a hero wooing a maiden), magic used might last for only one round, or it might benefit the hero for the entire duration of the contest without taking a duration modifier. Other types of modifiers (see "Modifiers and Augmentation" in the Core Rules chapter, page 76) apply normally, so that a magician who is exhausted and facing a foe who has defeated him badly in the past may take further penalties.

First Magic

First magic is magic that is ready to work at once. This is the prayer on your lips, the spirit at your side, or the spell at your fingertips. People train themselves to have this ready to go; not "triggered," but ready. Thus, most contestants can augment with one magical ability before the contest starts, provided they were not taken by surprise. Your hero can use any magic as first magic, as long as it does not involve flipping through the pages of a grimoire, performing a ritual, opening the way to an Otherworld, or the like.

Dispelling Magic

Ongoing magic can be dispelled before its duration expires. Your hero can usually dispel his own magic without making a die roll. He can dispel someone else's magic with an appropriate magical ability in a contest against the rating of the magic being dispelled:

- Magic that specifically includes the capacity to dispel magic: a *Cancel Enemy Combat Magic* spell can dispel a *Flamesword* affinity that is augmenting a foe's *Sword Fighting* skill.
- Magic similar to that being dispelled: a *Truesword* feat can dispel the effect of a *Sword* spirit.
- Magic opposed to that being dispelled: a *Darkness* spirit can dispel a *Light* spell.

On any victory, the ongoing magic immediately ends, although any effects it has caused (such as damage) remain. If your hero knows that someone is trying to dispel his magic, he can resist using an appropriate ability (thus replacing the resistance of the magic with that of another ability) or can augment his own magic first.

△ Mr. Puma Can't Help Jane

"So we got her from the pit and fixed her up and she's still mindless?"

"Or numb, or blind, or in some dream world or something."

"It's magic," says Mr. Puma. "Can't we make it go away somehow? Any way to dispel it? Heal this? What do I see if I look at her with my Second Sight?"

"An essence is there, suppressing her."

"Aha, well I am just going to blast it with my *Blast Spirit* magic then. This should dispel it."

Modifiers to Magic			
Distance	Duration*	Number of Targets	Modifier to Magic
100 yards	30 minutes	2	-3
150 yards	1 hour	3	-6
200 yards	4 hours	4	-9
300 yards	6 hours	5	-12
500 yards	10 hours	6	-15
1 mile	A day	10	-20
5 miles	A week	100	-40
25 miles	A season	300	-60
125 miles	A year	1000	-80

* It is possible to create permanently enchanted items, but that is a special and arcane form of magic and outside the scope of the basic rules.

Stacking Magic

Your hero can use multiple magical abilities to augment a single ability, if he has time. If he has warning of a contest, he can augment with up to three magical abilities before the contest begins. Any single magical ability can only be stacked once, as normal. Stacking these abilities takes at least one to five minutes each, as the narrator judges. The narrator may also apply a penalty of -3 for each additional ability stacked beyond the first.

Augmenting with more than three magical abilities takes longer, and often requires practice. Special bonuses from outside sources like communities, friends, or allies take longer still, and usually involve a ritual (see “Ritual Magic,” below).

Remember, too, that magic is visible, and preparing magic before an ambush (for example) will be self-defeating if the enemy sees your “hidden” hero’s magic. If you see an enemy coming who has unearthly, glowing, translucent forms darting around him and an impossibly gigantic weapon in hand, you will know that he is mightily enhanced. Act accordingly.

Inherently Difficult Magic

Tasks listed in the Inherently Difficult Magic table are very radical and contrary to the nature of Glorantha. Just as important, they are game-busters. Narrators should feel free to add to the list if they find other abilities that consistently render story lines boring or unbelievable.

Such magic is always harder to perform. “D+X” in the table indicates the increased resistance for difficult magic. The number after the “D” is added to whatever is resisting the magic, whether it is the default 14 or a character’s more potent defenses. Using a vague magical ability may take an improvisational modifier *in addition* to being inherently difficult. For example, a generic *Shapechange Self* spell not only faces a +20 resistance, it also takes an improvisational modifier depending on how different or difficult the form taken was. Transforming yourself into a monkey might only take a -5 penalty, but trying to change yourself into an elf or a specific person should take a -20, and might not even be possible without a more specific ability.

As with everything, of course, exceptions exist. For example, the Puma People (see page 50) have an inherent magical ability that lets them change their own shape into that of a puma (and nothing else) without suffering the D+20 modifier.

△ Danbrilla Steals a Thought

Danbrilla wants to find out what Jane learned about the Faceless Clay Jar Prophecy. Jane wasn’t telling before, but now she and her friends are unconscious thanks to Danbrilla’s magic. Danbrilla tries to read her mind using her *Steal the Hidden Thought* spell. Jane does not get her *Gesture to Ward Off Magic* because she is unconscious, and she doesn’t have any other ability she can use. Because reading minds is a D+20 resistance, Danbrilla must overcome a total resistance of 14W.

Kathy says, “Jane, you are having a very bad time there, even unconscious. You are having a nightmare.” Then she rolls the dice, and leaves the 13 hanging there for everyone to see. “Jane, remember when you heard ‘Who cannot face this wind will defeat it?’ Well, you just forgot it.”

“What’s that like for Jane?”

“Like having a mouse crawl inside your head and rip out your eyes from behind.”

“You other guys,” says Kathy, “are waking up about now.”

If Danbrilla wished to implant the suggestion that Jane should treat her as her confidant, she would face a D+40 resistance, for a total resistance of 14W2. At the moment, Danbrilla tries nothing.

“I’ve never been asleep,” says Frederick. “How much time passed? I’ve been looking around.”

Ritual Magic

Any magic that opens a way to an Otherworld and requires sacred items or is affected by holy times and places is ritual magic. Rituals include regular worship, heroquests, preparing for battle, propitiatory worship, and so on. Many rituals require a community to provide support to the leader and other participants.

A ritual is a set of instructions to invoke power from the Other Side. Distinct elements (a place, time, ritual item, ritual role, or action) must be performed or included for the magic to work. (Substitutions are possible, but cause a penalty; see the Ritual Modifiers table on the next page.) Specific items or ingredients may be used up or sacrificed during the ritual. The more powerful the ritual, the more exact the elements must be; if certain ones are missing or wrong, the ritual might automatically fail.

Some magical abilities are defined as ritual abilities (such as the *Six Stones Heroquest ritual*, which if successfully performed opens the way to a specific place in the Underworld). They require that a ritual be performed before the hero can use the ability in any way. As such, ritual abilities take time to perform, and cannot be used as first magic (see page 100) or during a contest.

Most of the time, the leader simply gathers his ritual items and followers at the right place and time and conducts the ritual. He then adds together the individual modifiers for each element (as shown on the Ritual Modifiers table). The total is a bonus to one ability rating for a specific contest. Unless the narrator determines that there is some resistance, the leader applies the modifiers to the chosen ability. Thus, if the leader wants to use a ritual to augment his *Combat* affinity for an upcoming battle, he applies the appropriate bonuses to that ability’s rating. Some rituals allow several participants filling ritual roles to benefit, in which case the bonus is split among them.

If the ritual succeeds, the leader gains the ritual bonus as described above. If the ritual fails, the standard result of the defeat is applied to the chosen ability: if the leader receives a minor defeat ritual, the ability’s rating is reduced by 10%. (This penalty may also apply to the ability used to conduct the ritual.) Complete defeat causes the leader to take a -100% penalty, so

Inherently Difficult Magic	
Task	Resistance
Read the thoughts of an intelligent being	D+20
Change own form	D+20
Teleport by sight (instantly travel to a visible place)	D+20
Directed teleport (instantly travel to a predetermined spot)	D+40
Change another being’s form (willing or not)	D+40
Force an intelligent being to follow a command	D+40
Become invisible	D+60
Teleport another (instantly summon ally or follower)	D+60
Become insubstantial	D+80

the magic cannot be performed as originally intended. It also indicates that something goes badly wrong. An important participant may be abducted or killed; a piece of ritual equipment might be lost, broken, or stolen; or any number of other disasters could occur.

Sometimes, a hero will face resistance to the ritual itself. In such circumstances, the leader must perform a contest to determine if the ritual succeeds. The leader must select an appropriate ability to perform the ceremony, usually a worship or mythology ability such as *Myths of [Deity]*, *[Tradition] Knowledge*, or *Venerate [Saint]*. The resistance depends on the opposition the leader faces. For example, an enemy priest who tries to block the ritual provides the resistance based on the ability he uses. The leader gains the normal ritual modifiers to the ability he uses to perform the ritual.

**Ritual roles
allow participants to directly
affect the outcome of a ritual.**

Holy Days, Sacred Places, and Ritual Items

The day, location, and items used in a ritual determine its potency. Holy and cursed days and places (see the Ritual Modifiers table, below) are the result of auspicious deeds, ignominious defeats, and the Great Compromise, as recounted in the myths. The Lunar cycle provides a multiplier to the ritual bonus that the magician gains from the Occasion; see page 113 for details.

Ritual Roles and Community Support

Besides the leader, most participants in a ritual are supporters. Their presence provides a bonus to the ritual from community support (see “Community Support” in the Relationships chapter, page 88). Many rituals designate one or more **ritual roles**: roles taken by companions of the myth’s main character. These special participants provide a direct modifier by their presence and proper actions. (Participants filling ritual roles do not count towards determining the community support bonus.)

An individual filling a ritual role must use an appropriate relationship or other ability. Usually, a worshipper of the specific deity, spirit, or saint will use his *Piety* relationship to augment the ritual. Other abilities can be used with an improvisational modifier. The individual provides an automatic augment; he can try for a variable augment, but if he fails in the attempt then his presence hinders the ritual with a penalty. In either case, how well the individual fits the role gives a modifier to his final augmentation, as shown below.

Ritual Role Augmentation Modifiers

Devoted member (devotee, shaman) using proper Piety relationship for the role: +5.

Using proper Piety relationship for the role: No modifier.

Using a Piety relationship of a subservient cult or spirit or other directly related entity: -5.

Using an appropriate magical ability of the worshipped entity: -5.

Using a Piety relationship of the proper religion: -10.

Using an appropriate mundane ability of the worshipped entity: -20.

Using a Piety relationship of the proper religion when a dedicated worshipper is available: -20 (but could also cause the ritual to automatically fail).

Using an inappropriate magical ability of the worshipped entity: -20 (but could also cause the ritual to automatically fail).

Using an appropriate magical ability of a different entity: -20 (but could also cause the ritual to automatically fail).

Preparation

The more complex the ritual, the longer it takes to gather the participants, prepare the site, and bless the equipment. A ritual takes a minimum of 1 hour per +3 bonus received from all sources, including community support, ritual modifiers, and ritual roles. (Individual rituals might specify different times.) This includes the time it takes for each element of the ritual to be waved, touched, killed, spoken, danced, sung, or otherwise used. Any penalty received is counted as a bonus for the length of time needed for preparations.

Many rituals require that certain elements be done at specific times. This means that days, seasons, years, or centuries can separate the elements of a ritual. If you do not spend the time, you do not receive the ritual bonus.

Commanding or Summoning Otherworld Entities

Some magicians have magical abilities to control Otherworld entities. If the magical ability specifies the type of entity (*Command Air Daimon*, *Command Ram Spirit*, etc.), the ability uses its full rating, although the entity (or its summoner) can always resist if it has an appropriate ability. If the ability is general (such as *Command Fire Entity*), the magician takes an improvisational penalty. For entities of the same magic system (e.g. using a spell to command an essence), this might be only -5; for entities of another magic system, the penalty is always -20.

Summoning an entity from the Otherworld involves crossing the Otherworld barrier; the magic requires a ritual and faces a resistance of at least 10W3. Once the entity is summoned, the summoner can usually give it a single command without facing an additional contest. The entity will perform the command to the best of its ability, then return to the Otherworld when the magic ends. If the summoner wants the entity to perform additional commands, he must use other magic to compel it. A *Summon [Entity]* ability usually cannot command an entity that the magician did not summon.

Ritual Modifiers			
Location	Occasion	Ritual Item	Modifier
Enemy holy place	Inauspicious day	Inappropriate or missing item	-10 to -20
Auspicious place	Holy or auspicious day	Expensive item	+1 to +10
Power spot	High holy day	Rare item	+10 to +15
Place where the myth actually happened	Unique day	Unique item	+20

There is theoretically no maximum to the bonus you can receive from a given category of ritual modifier, so if you have ten unique items you could receive a +200 bonus. The narrator is free to declare several elements as a “collective” that provides a single bonus, or rule that such unique items do not work well together.

△ The Killing Bone Ritual

Back in Alda-chur, Jane's friends are going to help in a ritual to destroy her mind-haunting enemy, Danbrilla.

Hench, the shaman she has hired, is famous because he has the Killing Bone of Old Angu, a great shaman of prehistory who lived nearby. Hench is experienced and knows the nearby power spots that he can use. He charges dearly to perform the ritual. "And it has to be soon," says Jane. Hench has traditional costs to collect: a couple of sheep, some tubers, a bag of metal, some blankets, and a couple jars of strong beer. Jane also has to get other goods that are going to be used in the ritual, such as mats for everyone to sit on, paints and colored flour to make signs, some black roosters to be killed, and a pile of firewood. Finally, she has paid Hench's relatives to prepare a big meal for everyone to celebrate afterwards.

Hench takes everyone to a nearby power spot where Angu once used his Killing Bone to kill his enemy who was very far away. Hench will do the attack, Jane will support him with her energy and attention, and the friends have a choice: they can either help damage the enemy once the blow is struck, or they can increase the chance of success. After some discussion everyone agrees they are going to help the Killing Bone. They know that Hench probably needs help to strike against someone he does not know, and what would be the point of doing more damage if they never struck in the first place? Jane will use her *Loathe Danbrilla* to target the curse by taking the role of Bush Child, who helped Angu find his enemy.

Hench's *Curse of Old Angu* rating is 5W, increased by Angu's Killing Bone (a unique artifact worth +20) and an auspicious place (+5), but the rush prevents good timing, so the occasion is inauspicious (-5). In the ritual, Hench represents Old Angu, a spirit of his tradition, so his *Worship [Great Spirit]* ability of 6W gives him an automatic augment of +3. Because of the magical connection between Danbrilla and Jane, the fact that Danbrilla is still nearby, and the nature of the curse, Kathy rules that the magic takes only a -10 penalty to affect Danbrilla at a distance.

Jane is filling a ritual role. She is not a member of the tradition, but Kathy says she is using an appropriate mundane ability, so her bonus would be +1. Christine decides to try for a +4 augment, but receives a marginal defeat, thus yielding a total bonus of +11, for a final target number of 16W.

The ritual itself is fairly short, but the preparations take fifteen hours (+28 bonus and -17 penalty yield $45 \div 3 = 15$). Finally, Hench says to everyone, "When I start chanting 'Angu Danbrilla, Aka Chu,' join in with me and let go."

"You see his Killing Bone. It's like a huge femur, with a ball joint at one end, a sharp broken splinter at the other end. His assistants carry it in and stick it into the ground for the ceremony. It starts.

"OK, so you are sitting around the fire and Hench has been doing his chanting and rattling. He has a couple of assistants who throw things into the fire, join in songs, drum and rattle at various times, and answer questions from the others. This thing is going on for a pretty long while, when at last he lifts up the six-foot-long Killing Bone, straddles it like a horse, and starts a new, angry chant. 'Angu Danbrilla, Aka Chu.'

"Jane, you're weeping because you remember the whole thing.

Everyone else, imagine what your hero is thinking at the moment, sitting out here in the cold watching Jane cry.

"This is the moment. Now tell me: what ability do you have to contribute to this moment of death to her enemy? Tell us, please."

Kathy is indicating that all of the heroes are filling ritual roles. Most can only add small bonuses because they are not good matches for the roles they are filling.

Mr. Puma wants to use his *Member of the Tri Lambs* for +1, but Kathy says that with the -20 modifier it won't give any bonus at all. She says he can roll for it, but he doesn't want to mess up like Christine did. Hazeel rolls for his *Fiery Magic* and gets a +3. Bill decides that his *Bright Stone String* is an anti-wizardry magic, and also gets a victory, good for +2. Rick asks if his *Wolf* charm can act here, and Kathy says it gives +2 because it was a wolf that held Angu's enemy with his teeth so he could deliver the killing blow.

"OK, good, that's another +7 for Hench. His final attack is 12W2. Jane, roll your die please. I'll roll the resistance." They roll, and Kathy studies the dice.

"Hm," says Kathy. "OK, so you guys see Hench, he's sitting on this big bone, growling and spitting at the universe, and all of a sudden this hand, big like about the size of a...uh...a big dog, it appears, makes a fist, and SLAMS into Hench. Pow! He's knocked so hard he staggers back, dropping his Killing Bone and barely keeping his feet."

"Uh-oh," says Mr. Puma.

"Danbrilla is, you now discover, a powerful sorceress, and her standing magical defense is 15W2. This results in a minor defeat for Hench.

"You all see a pale green yellow form rise up out of the fire. It's a specter weasel. A spell thing. It materializes there and confronts Hench. It is really angry and everyone can hear it clearly. It stretches two hands and arms out, they stretch way out really long, around Hench's neck."

"Who sent you?" says the specter.

"Her," says the shaman. "She did." And since Hench paid off the question with the truth, the weasel lets go of him and turns around and looks right at Jane. The rest of you, it doesn't matter where you are sitting, you see this too. Jane sees the face of Danbrilla, looking at her.

Danbrilla says, "I'll be back. I'm watching you."

"Come now," snarls Jane. The specter weasel glows and spits out a bolt of fire.

"Steve, it's got an attack of just 18, what's your best defense to this magic?"

"What, me? Er, can I use Tri Lamb's *Warn Us of Attack*?"

"Um, OK, sure. OK, you get warning of the attack right before it happens, and manage to dodge it. The weasel fades away, the fire goes out—that one, in the center of your ceremony—and the assistants move quickly to help Hench. One of them goes to restart the fire. You guys?"

"That was a minor defeat?"

Using Magic

Use your imagination to apply the magic. If you want to use a *Wind* spell in combat, tell how it will affect the fight. Will it blow dust into your foe's eyes? Carry the arrows farther? Chances are, if you cannot describe how it will work then it should not be applied at all.



Common Magic

The Mortal World is where the Three Otherworlds overlap, a shared space that partakes of all kinds of magic. **Common magic** is the most basic form of magic, a mix of magic from all four worlds. It is found only in the Mortal World, although specific abilities often originate with a daimon, spirit, or essence.

Common magic is available to almost everyone as a keyword. Within the common magic keyword are several magical abilities. You must list the specific abilities your hero knows on your character sheet; he cannot use others unless he pays the hero points to gain them. Most heroes have access to several sources of common magic. For example, a Dara Happan might have a feat and spell learned from his league, several charms from the Great Parents, and some People Talents. You can also select from the basic list (see "Common Magic" in the Heroes chapter, page 18). All common magic abilities you choose are part of your common magic keyword. If the Dara Happan traveled to Dragon Pass and learned a talent from Flesh Man, this would become part of the same keyword.

Common magic can include four types of abilities. First is **innate magic**, often referred to simply as **talents**. Talents originate solely in the Mortal World. Additionally, common magic often includes **feats**, **charms**, and **spells**. All common magic abilities cost 2 hero points to learn or improve by +1.

Common magic can augment any appropriate ability. Thus, a *Healing* talent, feat, charm, or spell can help a mundane *First Aid* ability or a magical *Heal Injury* spell. Common magic cannot cause an active effect, unless the worshipper has concentrated his innate magic (see "Concentrating Magic Use," page 108).

Innate Magic

Innate magic comes from the Mortal World. It is inherent in living beings, being an overflow of the life force that permeates and defines the everyday world. Philosophers often argue otherwise, but common magic has no origins in the Otherworlds. The fact is that within some people magic forms spontaneously. This magic takes the form of **talents**. Heroes can learn talents from common religions, but this is not required; *any* magical ability whose nature is not specified during character creation is assumed to be a talent.

Common Feats, Charms, and Spells

Common magic feats, charms, and spells originate with Otherworld entities native to the Mortal World. While these entities might have dedicated worshippers to whom they grant specialized magic, some people worship them in a communal or propitiatory manner, and in return learn a feat, charm, or spell that works as described above when learned as common magic. They are part of the common magic keyword, and can only be used to augment another appropriate ability; they cannot be used as the active ability in a contest. Limitations described in the Theism, Animism, or Wizardry chapters usually apply as well. Thus, a common magic spell requires a talisman (often a spellstick of some kind). However, a common magic charm's rating *can* be improved by spending hero points.

Like talents, common magic feats and spells *cannot* be used as active abilities (unlike the feats and spells provided by specialized cults) unless your hero concentrates his magic.

Common Religions

Common magic comes spontaneously from the Mortal World, and it is what most people do. It is a mixture of innate magic, theism, animism, and wizardry, mixing up various parts into the *mélange* that is everything. Although common magic *requires* no larger religion, a local **common religion** often oversees it. These religions are often accepted by the homeland's major religion, and common magic is often the magic of choice for communal worshippers of theist religions, spiritists of animist religions, and lay members of wizardous religions. Common religions provide no direct access to any Otherworld, however.

Many common religions exist throughout Glorantha. They sometimes misapply a method of worship, so that members dance to essences, recite scripture to obtain spirits, or sacrifice to numbers, all without favor or prejudice. Many common religions emphasize one method of worship at the core of their customs, and some are "pure," providing only one of the four types of common magic abilities. Others access two, three, or all four.

Characteristics of Common Religions

Origin: Mortal World.

Beings: Any.

Worshippers Have: Mixed spiritual nature.

Magic: Talents, feats, charms, spells.

Members: Any.

Leaders: God-talkers, bush priests, wise women, spellmen, and the like.

Type of Worship: Any.



Donandar is the patron of arts both sublime and ridiculous. Realizing that their usual act is unlikely to go down well in dour Seshnela, these two itinerant entertainers have chosen self-parody and comic operetta in the hope of ingratiating themselves with the local lord and earning themselves a bed for the night.

Specialized Religions

Specialized religions concentrate on one type of magic to the exclusion of all others. They specify one type of worship and draw magic from one of the Three Otherworlds. **Theism**, **animism**, and **wizardry** are self-consistent, but mutually exclusive.

All Otherworlds have an ideal type of worship which, if used exclusively, allows a magician easier access to its magic. Sharing a magic system, however, means nothing to a Gloranthan. Thus, rivalry exists between different theistic pantheons, shown most notably in *HeroQuest* as the conflict between the stormy Orlanthe and cyclic Lunars, or between different wizardry religions, such as Rokarism and Navigationalism.

The next three chapters explore the three specialized magic systems. Although all magic uses the same contest resolution system, each has important differences in how magic is perceived, learned, and used. The three systems form a spectrum of ease of use and power. Theism is easy to learn and use, and is relatively weak at the bottom and powerful at the top. Animism is easy to learn but harder to use, relatively powerful at the bottom end, but relatively weak at the top. Wizardry is difficult to learn and use, and like theism is relatively weak at the lower echelons but very powerful for those few at the top.

Theism

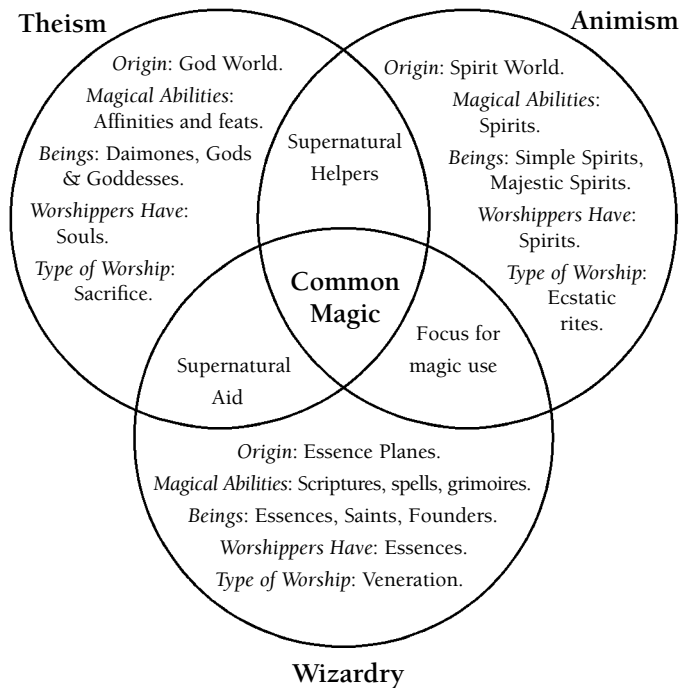
Theist magic comes from the God World. Gods and goddesses grant magic in exchange for regular sacrifices and participation in their rites. Each deity has one or more affinities, broad categories of magic such as *Wind*, *Death*, and *Fertility* that can augment appropriate abilities. Within the affinities are feats, specific magical abilities that emulate an action performed by the deity.

Sacrifice is the primary worship employed by theists. It requires the worshipper to give away, transform, or destroy some valuable or living object in return for magic. Burning is common, as are burial and disposal in water. Breaking or melting an object is regularly done, and sometimes the things just disappear, sent to the deities. This ceremonial exchange is recognized as a part of the mystery, and is not viewed as a loss by the worshippers.

Animism

Animist magic comes from the Spirit World. Traditions are animist religions that identify and describe the various spirits that can be summoned, bargained with, or conquered. A distinguishing characteristic of animism is the many Relationships worshippers form with individual spirits. In return, worshippers gain charms and fetishes. Charms augment an appropriate ability; fetishes can also be used actively. Some animists form an especially close relationship with a spirit ally or fetch.

Animists perceive and communicate with spirits through ecstatic worship, with individual traditions favoring different techniques. Ecstatic worship variously involves music, dance, deprivation or indulgence, intoxicants, and other practices to induce a trance state. The shamans or practitioners then open the way to the Spirit World. Ecstatic rites are held at certain times of the year to give offerings to tradition and practice spirits, to create or refill charms and fetishes, and to propitiate enemy spirits. During worship the Spirit World becomes visible as the spirits manifest; nearby wandering spirits are often attracted to the rites, as are ghosts and other hostile spirits. The participants are protected as long as they remain within the sacred circle.



Some common characteristics of Specialized Religions

Magical Ability Runes

Magical abilities commonly have associated runes, and different religions often use the same runes. This is due to prehistoric accidents, and causes tremendous rivalry. Thus, Humakt and Zorak Zoran hate each other because each considers himself the rightful owner of Death. Rivals can be distinguished from each other in writing by their *individual* entity runes.



All of the runes used in *HeroQuest* are described in the Runes appendix, page 264.

Charlatans and False Belief

A world full of magic can also be a world brimming over with charlatans, hucksters, and exploiters claiming magical powers they do not have, espousing false religions, and promulgating useless magical techniques. Many crackpots and deluded souls wrongly believe that deities, spirits, pure forms, or entities of their own fevered imaginations have favored them.

Just as there is never a shortage of deceivers, the supply of gullible Gloranthans is also inexhaustible. The many false claims about magic partly explain the extreme conservatism of most Gloranthan homelands; the people who have thrived are those who refused to try alternative magic.



Wizardry

Wizardry comes from the Essence Planes. A distinguishing characteristic of wizardry is the importance of individual worship at every level of membership. Worshippers receive blessings invoked by liturgists from sacred scriptures. Liturgists also cast curses against enemies. Members of orders learn spells that let them emulate their saint. Adepts cast spells from grimoires passed on to them by their founders. A blessing provides an augmentation to an area or entire congregation, while a successful curse causes the target or targets to take a penalty. Spells are more specific, and can be used actively to cause a specific effect.

Wizardly religions practice veneration. They worship a transcendent God, or intermediaries to God who convey the reverence of mortals up to God and magic back down to worshippers. God created the Mundane Plane and the immutable laws of the Other Side, and saints and prophets teach how to manipulate those laws to make magic. Typical veneration requires a leader and a congregation that follow the rituals and formulae laid down in their sacred scriptures. Each church and order has its own precise methods.

Membership

Being in a religion comes with benefits and obligations that fall into common categories. These benefits and obligations vary with the level of dedication of the worshipper. Minimal commitment is expected from all members. Communal worshippers, spiritists, and lay members belong to their religion, but are simply part of the religious community, with few benefits or obligations. Most have worshipped in the religion all their life, and became officially recognized as a member when they reached adulthood. A beginning hero automatically belongs to his religion at this level. It is assumed that his parents took him to weekly worship, and that he grew up steeped in the ways of the religion. Such minimal commitment requires that the hero spend about 10% of his time and resources on the religion.

Committed members exist in all religions. In exchange for stricter obligations, they gain access to greater benefits, including powerful magic. Committed members spend about 30% of their time and resources on the religion. Although initiates, practitioners, liturgists, and orderlies are not required to concentrate their magic to attain this level, many are encouraged or ordered to do so by the religious hierarchy. Devoted members spend about 60% of their time and resources on the religion, and in exchange have access to the greatest magic powers available, including secrets. Devotees and shamans must always concentrate their magic prior to attaining this level of worship.

Pass the Test

Before your hero can join or progress in a religion, his knowledge and dedication will be tested by the temple hierarchy and possibly the Otherworld entity itself. Your hero will normally face the test during play. This is often a simple contest using the player's choice of a relationship to the local religious hierarchy, a cultural or religious virtue, or a Piety relationship (see below). Your narrator might waive the contest entirely if your

hero has demonstrated his dedication and fitness during play. On the other hand, if he has been lax in his participation she might require three separate contests or state that the test automatically fails. (If you do face three contests, the narrator will usually reduce the resistance faced by each.)

Some religions have specific **entry requirements** that every applicant must possess to even take the test. Also, no augments using the religion's own magic are possible, as the examiners will automatically detect this. A hero might use magic gained from other sources, but will likely be in trouble if this is discovered.

If you achieve any victory, you generally pay 3 hero points and record the new relationship. A new member usually receives a Piety relationship and some magic for free when he joins.

Resist being a renegade and joining a cult where your hero does not belong (such as a warrior joining a pacifistic cult). Misbehaving always provokes a response from both the mundane religious hierarchy and the magical world. Also, avoid claiming religious status you don't have. If your hero says he is a devotee of a god but is not, for instance, sooner or later he will be found out and suffer the consequences.

Worshipper Abilities

Each level of worshipper has certain abilities associated with it. Although the specifics vary, most abilities fall into one of five categories. Members can generally learn or improve any of these abilities without having to pay double hero point cost for an unrelated improvement (see "Using Hero Points" in the Hero Improvements chapter, page 58).

Magic

This entry lists the magical abilities available to that level of worshipper. Not all heroes will automatically have all of these abilities.

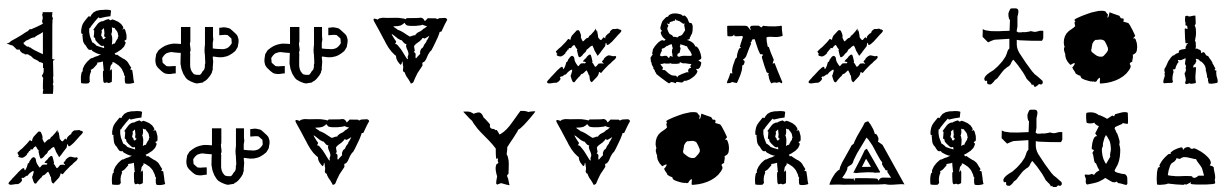
Mundane Relationship

Members of a religion benefit from the support of their leaders and fellow worshippers. Members enjoy community ties, magical protection, and the ability to experience the divine. The religion defines magic, behavior, thought, and all principles of interaction with the Other Side. The worship services open the way into the Otherworld, and the combined participation of the worshippers allows them to invoke the blessings of the gods, spirits, or saints upon the entire congregation.

Heroes must have a mundane relationship to interact with the worldly organization of their religion, such as *Member of [Temple]*, *Follower of [Intercessor]*, or *Member of [Congregation/Order/School]*. Some people are closer to the magical community than others, and this is reflected in a higher rating in this mundane relationship.

Myths and Rituals

Casual worshippers learn *Know [Pantheon] Myths*, *[Tradition] Knowledge*, or *Doctrine of [Church]*. More committed members learn *Mythology of [Deity]*, *[Practice] Knowledge*, or *Rule of [Saint/Founder]*, which provides more detailed knowledge of the particular entity worshipped. These mundane abilities are used to remember a mythic act, an association of the entity, or the necessary elements of a ritual.



Piety

Relationships to worshipped entities are known as **piety**. Piety includes adherence to the goals and morals of a religion, expressed as *Worship [Pantheon/Great Spirit/God]*, *Initiate/Devotee of [Deity]*, *Follower of [Majestic Spirit]*, *Know [Saint/Founder]*. It can be used to ask the entity for aid, and might be tested in the Mortal World or on the Other Side. Previous actions may give a modifier, especially for inappropriate behavior.

Piety is a “magical relationship,” and costs 2 hero points to improve the rating by +1. As with other magical abilities, this cost is halved if the worshipper has concentrated his magic.

Virtues

Virtues are personality traits that define correct behavior. Heroes are not required to take these mundane abilities, but those that do often gain greater favor, while those who stray may find their religious advancement more difficult.

Religions vary in their requirements of adherence. Most see that perfect accordance is unrealistic, so normal people have some leeway. Dedicated members are held to a stricter standard, however. Theist devotees, for example, must emulate their god more than lower-ranked initiates do, and a devotee without a high rating in at least one of his god’s virtues is likely to face problems.

Time and Hero Point Allocation

Specialized worshippers must spend a portion of their time and energy in worship. To represent this, you must spend a percentage of your hero points on skills, virtues, relationships, and magical abilities of his religion—perhaps including abilities from suitable occupation keywords. Regularly allocating these hero points means the worshipper is paying due attention to his sacred tasks. For example, theist initiates must put 30% of their points into abilities related to their religion. In general, communal membership requires 10%, specialized religion membership requires 20–30%, and devoted membership is 50% or more.

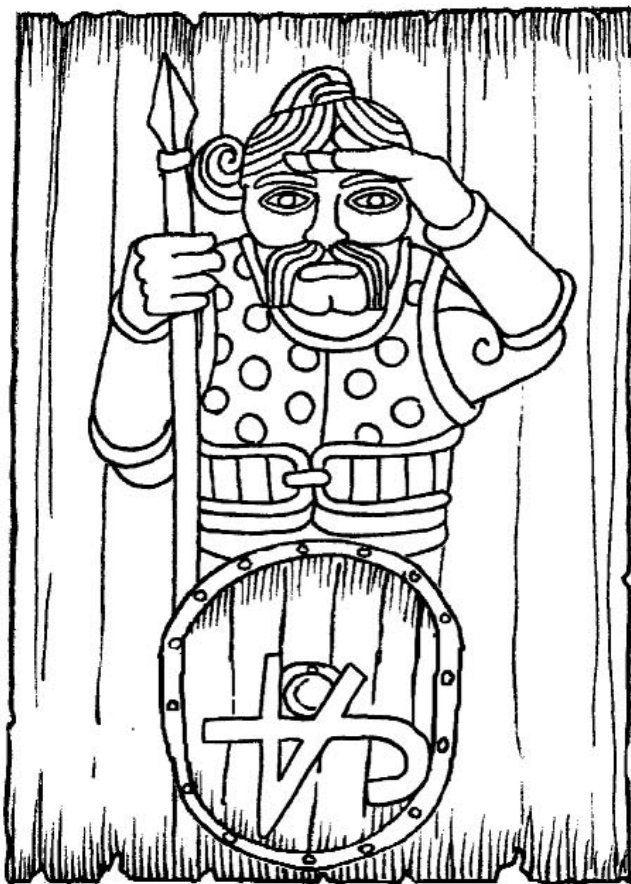
Hero points spent on bumps do not count towards this total.

▲ Hengal is an initiate of Gerendetho, a fighting god. He must spend 30% of his time and resources serving his god, so Rick must spend 30% of Hengal’s hero points on his *Initiate of Gerendetho* relationship or any abilities in the *Gerendetho* or *Warrior* keywords.

Overlapping Time Commitments

A hero’s occupation often overlaps his religious duties. Everyone spends 10% of their time in worship and ceremonies, but part of the rest of your hero’s religious commitment may be met by his occupation. These examples are typical.

- Purely religious or magical jobs (priest, spirit-talker, and clergyman) include the 10% requirement of community worship.
- A devotee of a warrior deity can meet much of his religious time requirement by serving in his clan’s warband, but still must spend time worshipping his god. All but 10% of his 60% commitment to his god might be subsumed within his occupational duties, since riding patrol, standing night watch, and the like coincide with the duties his cult expects of him.



Destor is the Adventurer form of Orlanth. His image (in the traditional Heortling woodcut form) shows him scanning the horizon, seeking new experiences and challenges.

- An apprentice of a wizardry school spends all except his personal time serving the school and its adepts, and so his religious commitment is fully subsumed within the time he spends being an apprentice. Here, his occupational and specialized religious duties overlap completely.

Worshippers whose occupation and religion do not match may have difficulty meeting the time demands of both. A merchant who worships a healing deity will have trouble doing everything required by his deity while trying to make a living. Some heroes are “employed” by a patron or their community, who feed and house them in exchange for serving the community or performing missions for their patron.

Apostasy and Divine Retribution

If your hero neglects his worship or abuses his religion, the religion or worshipped entity may retaliate. The narrator judges if penalties come, what abilities they affect, and how severe they are. The following punishments are normal:

- Religious officials visit the hero to tell him he is straying. Eventually, the religion will censure him.
- An Otherworld entity (agent of retribution) warns the hero, plagues him until he reforms, or attacks to remove his specialized magic.
- The worshipped entity makes magic harder to perform (–20 to magical abilities) or withholds its aid entirely.
- The religion expels the hero or the entity abandons him.

Concentrating Magic Use

Many people practice mixed worship, caring little whether the source of a magical ability is a deity, spirit, essence, or being native to the Mortal World. Humans are born with “undifferentiated” spiritual organs, and they can live just fine all their lives that way. Most religions allow mixing magic types, so a worshiper can use both specialized magic and common magic. There is an easier way to do magic, however, for connection to multiple Otherworlds interferes with the magic flow to and from each of them.

Your hero can **concentrate** his magic, committing himself to a single magic system and giving up all magical abilities from the others. This makes it easier to learn and improve magic, at the cost of limiting magic choices. A magician can concentrate any of the four types of magic: innate magic, theism, animism, or wizardry.

Concentrating magic is often a prerequisite to advance in a specialized religion. Thus, an initiate can concentrate his magic or not, but a devotee is required to. Only by concentrating magic can a hero qualify to learn his religion’s secret.

Innate Magic: Your hero must give up all magic derived from the Otherworld: affinities, feats, charms, fetishes, spirits, scriptures, spells, and grimoires, erasing them from his character sheet. He retains only his talents.

Theism: Your hero must give up all knowledge of talents, charms, fetishes, spirits, scriptures, spells, and grimoires, erasing them from his character sheet. He retains his affinities and feats, from any source.

Animism: Your hero must give up all knowledge of talents, affinities, feats, scriptures, spells, and grimoires, erasing them from his character sheet. He retains his charms, fetishes, and spirits, from any source.

Wizardry: Your hero must give up all knowledge of talents, affinities, feats, charms, fetishes, and spirits, erasing them from his character sheet. He retains his scriptures, spells, and grimoires, from any source.

Concentration does not require that a hero give up common magic spells if he concentrates on wizardry, for example, since

they originate in the proper Otherworld. His religion, however, may require him to.

Concentration costs 1 hero point. It halves the hero point cost to learn or improve magical abilities of the concentrated magic system. Thus, instead of spending 2 hero points to learn or improve a spell, the hero pays only 1 hero point. Additionally, any common magic abilities retained can now be used as active abilities, not just as augmentations.

A hero can backslide, “breaking” concentration by learning excluded magic. The hero must now pay the “not concentrated” cost to gain or improve magical abilities. Additionally, any magic that requires concentration becomes useless to the hero. A devotee would act in all ways as an initiate, a spirit ally would act as a practice spirit. (A hero who has learned a religion’s secret cannot learn other types of magic, and so cannot backslide.)

Restricted abilities are not erased from the hero’s character sheet, but cannot be used until he re-concentrates his magic, again paying 1 hero point (which in this case represents penance, purifications, etc.). Any lost status (devotee or shaman) is not automatically regained: the hero must once again meet all the requirements, including passing the entry test and paying the requisite hero points.

Selfrock Teaching

You are not a Rock

The Selfrock Teaching is a widespread method of concentrating common magic use. Anyone who knows the Selfrock Teaching can teach it to someone else, so it spreads. The teaching always includes the student talking to a rock that he must ever after keep with him; if he loses it, his concentration is broken.

To learn the Selfrock Teaching, your hero must study with someone who knows it. When he is ready, he must find a rock and learn how to talk to it. Some students find their rock quickly, others take longer. Once the right rock is found, your hero faces a contest to connect himself to it. Many local variations of the teaching specify a certain type of rock (an uncut ruby in Esrolia, a self-drilled river stone for Heortlings, etc.). If your hero uses the appropriate rock for his homeland, you get up to a +5 bonus to your contest.

If you are victorious, your hero can concentrate all of his common magic, not just his innate magic. He can thus use talents and common magic feats, charms, and spells as active abilities rather than just as augmentations. He must give up any specialized magic, but obtains common magic at half cost.

Contest: Selfrock

Appropriate Abilities: Common magic ability with the highest rating (only).

Typical Modifiers: A local teaching can provide up to +5 if used on the correct type of rock.

Resistance: 10 \square .

Any Victory Level: Your hero pays 1 hero point and concentrates all common magic.

Tie or Any Defeat: No effect, although you can try the teaching again with a different rock.

Why Doesn’t Everyone Concentrate Their Magic?

You might ask, “Why would anyone ever belong to a religion that costs double hero points to raise abilities?” The answer is simply that no one in Glorantha knows what hero points are. Hero points are a game convention that players use. People are also practical. The world is made of everything, and so they worship any important entity that they need. For many people, using common magic rather than joining a specialized religion is normal.

Additionally, most people follow ritual precepts without question. They do not wonder why it is easy or hard to advance in magic. They follow the religion that they were born into, or else join a new religion because it appeals to them or is the only source of magic that they need. People may not care that they seem less powerful, or that they have to make extra sacrifices to their god to gain magic, because they know that proper worship is more important for salvation than is personal power.



Secrets

Many worshipped Otherworld entities have a magical secret that is available only to their most dedicated worshippers. An entity's secret is the core its magic. This is not always useful in everyday life or helpful to player heroes. Powerful entities have powerful secrets (such as major magical healing), while hero cults and subcults have petty secrets.

A hero can use a secret just like any other ability. Additionally, most secrets have a "special effect" that lets the hero do something that is normally impossible, makes difficult magic easier, or allows the use of one ability at the same time as another. With most secrets, the magic takes full effect on any victory level in a contest.

Secrets are a magical feature of an Otherworld entity, not a game rule. The special game mechanics do not mean that the secret is that type of magic—a secret that acts like an affinity is *not* actually an affinity, even if the worshipped entity is a deity. However, the worshipper can use the secret exactly as if he were a devotee using an affinity.

A hero can only learn a secret after attaining a certain level of worship and magic. In most cases, your hero must have three specific abilities at a rating of at least 1W2 each; he may then spend 3 hero points to learn the secret at 13. He permanently ties himself to using that magic system to the exclusion of all others, and can never again use any magical ability that originates in a different Otherworld.

Mortal beings can learn only one secret in their lives. If a hero who knows a secret abandons his religion for another he loses the secret but cannot learn a new one. A hero who learns a secret thus makes an act of commitment that cannot be undone. As with everything else, there are exceptions to the "one secret" rule: a shaman who learns the secret to awaken his fetch can later learn another secret, and any hero who knows a secret can eventually learn the great secret of his religion.

A secret permanently marks the worshipper who knows it. Magical sight can reveal that a hero has concentrated his magic and identify the specific Otherworld, but not the entity he worships. Knowing a secret makes the hero's link with the worshipped entity discernable (to magic senses), and identifies its pantheon and nature.

Heroforming

Some theist and animist secrets allow **heroforming**—the incarnation of a hero or ancestor into the body of a worshipper. If the hero is successful, the heroform's abilities provide a bonus to the hero if he possesses those abilities (or very similar ones) as well. If he does not possess a heroform's ability, he can instead use it as a feat or spirit with a rating equal to the bonus it would have given.

Contest: Heroform

Appropriate Abilities: Heroforming secret (only).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Appropriate virtues.

Resistance: 1W.

Complete Victory: Full incarnation; hero gains +100% bonus to abilities he and heroform both possess.*

Major Victory: Incarnation; hero gains +50% bonus to abilities he and heroform both possess.*

Minor Victory: Identification; hero gains +10% bonus to abilities he and heroform both possess.*

Marginal Victory: Inspiration; hero gains +1 bonus to abilities he and heroform both possess.*

Tie or Any Defeat: No effect, although complete or repeated failure might cause a reduction in the rating of the secret, at the narrator's option.

* The hero may never have a higher rating than the heroform itself possesses because of this bonus.

Great Secrets

The greatest entities have great secrets. A hero who learns a great secret touches the infinite; he becomes one with the magical entity and achieves transcendence. The hero is automatically removed from play. He may ascend bodily into heaven, turn into a beam of light and disappear, or even remain as a narrator character: he may become a madman, prophet, temple guardian, or ascetic, but will be too involved in transcendent issues to be of much use in a *HeroQuest* game. Great secrets are a feature of entire religions, not ordinary entities or their aspects. Normally, a theist or animist must first learn a cult or practice secret and improve its rating to 1W2 before he can learn the great secret of the religion. A wizardry user normally only attains the great secret of his Church upon his death, and then only if he has been virtuous in life.

Great secrets are a tool for the narrator and player to retire a hero. It is a graceful end: perhaps a final escape from death as the hero lies in the arms of a companion and calls out for Orlanth to take him. The hero might return from time to time, whether as a divine agent or an exalted religious official, but he remains a narrator character.

*A hero who learns
a great secret becomes one with the entity
he worships. He achieves transcendence
and passes out of play.*

Hero Improvement Costs—Basic Magic

Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play	
	Not Concentrated	Concentrated
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1	1
Concentrate magic use	1	N/A
Join a common religion without establishing a relationship to it (must purchase any abilities separately)	0	0
Learn a new talent, feat, charm, or spell within the common magic keyword	2	1
Improve a common magic talent, feat, charm, or spell by +1	2	1
Misapplied worship (see page 110)	as above	no benefit (cost is the same as "Not Concentrated" cost)

Misapplied Worship

Each type of worship is like a key that unlocks the barrier separating the Mortal World and a particular Otherworld. Many people worship an entity the “wrong” way, perhaps not understanding its true nature. In return, these entities provide the magic sought by the worshipper, so that a majestic spirit worshipped with sacrifice might grant an affinity with several feats.

Magic gained through misapplied worship does not benefit from concentrating magic, nor can misapplied worship obtain any magic that requires concentration (such as a secret or a spirit ally). Also, worshippers are handicapped when traveling in the Otherworld, since their magical organization cannot provide the knowledge to travel safely outside of the Mortal World.

△ In Heortland, a small church worships Saint Aeol, a great wizard saint of their past. In addition to being the church founder, he established a wizardry school that specializes in air magic. His grimoire *Walking the Spiral* contains spells to control and summon winds and storms. However, Aeol actually draws on the magic of the Thunderous aspect of the great god Orlanth. To learn the *Use Walking the Spiral* ability costs a member 6 hero points. Creating a talisman for any of the grimoire’s spells costs 2 hero points, even if the hero has concentrated his magic.

△ Flamebringer is worshipped as a god in Tarsh and Saird. It costs a worshipper 6 hero points to learn or improve his *Flaming Sword* affinity at a target number of 13, even if the hero has concentrated his theistic worship. This is because the Flamebringer cult is actually misapplied worship of Saint Gerlant, who is properly venerated by members of the Flamesword Order.

Otherworld Travel and Safety

The Other Side that worshippers enter is a **false home** located on the entity’s true Otherworld, and thus a source of alien magic and entities. Such locations are troubled, subject to attacks by demons and monsters: that Otherworld’s normal denizens, who seek to eliminate them whenever possible.

Although worshippers are relatively safe in the false home, leaving it is very dangerous. The worshipper will be traveling in an alien world, and will thus suffer the **-20 alien world penalty** (see “Alien World Penalty” in the Heroquesting chapter, page 197). Thus, for example, shamans can easily become lost and unable to find their way home if they leave the “false demesne.”



Effects of Misapplied Worship

Type of Worship	Magic Available from		
	Deities	Spirits	Essences
Misapplied Sacrifice*	—	<i>Great Spirit</i> : One or more affinities. <i>Majestic Spirit</i> : One affinity, or perhaps just one or more feats. <i>Practice or Simple Spirit</i> : No result.	<i>Prophet or Church Founder</i> : One or more affinities. <i>Saint (order) or Founder (school)</i> : One affinity, or perhaps just one or more feats.
Misapplied Ecstatic Rites**	<i>Great Deity</i> : One or more charms. <i>Deity (or aspect of a great deity)</i> : One or more practice spirits, or perhaps just one or more charms. <i>Subcult or Hero</i> : One practice spirit, or perhaps just one charm.	—	<i>Prophet or Church Founder</i> : One or more charms. <i>Saint (order) or Founder (school)</i> : One or more practice spirits, or perhaps just one or more charms.
Misapplied Veneration***	<i>Great Deity</i> : One scripture with appropriate blessings. <i>Deity (or aspect of a great deity)</i> : One or more scriptures or grimoires, or perhaps just a formulary with one or more spells. <i>Subcult or Hero</i> : One or more blessings, curses, or spells.	<i>Great Spirit</i> : One scripture with appropriate blessings. <i>Majestic Spirit</i> : One or more scriptures or grimoires, or perhaps just a formulary with one or more spells. <i>Practice or Simple Spirit</i> : No result.	—

* Misapplied sacrifice does not give access to divine aid (see page 115).

** A hero cannot awaken his fetch in a “false practice,” but an existing shaman can gain spirits using misapplied worship.

*** Misapplied veneration does not give access to Miracles (see page 157).

Sample Common Religions

Format for Magic Keywords

A description of the worshipped entity is followed by the actual keyword. Your hero receives all keyword abilities if he takes a magic keyword during character creation, but does not automatically gain all of them if he joins a religion during play.

Entry Requirements: Specific requirements for the character to join the religion and take the keyword. These might include gender, occupation, culture, or family restrictions, or even specific abilities and ratings.

Homeland or Religion: The homeland or religion of which the magical organization is part.

Abilities: Typical things that a person can do when they have been in this religion. Your hero can select some of these to specialize in, thereby setting himself apart from the normal membership.

Virtues: Desired personality traits of worshippers. Your hero may take any, all, or none of these as abilities.

Magic: The specific magical abilities taught by or available through the religion (such as affinities and feats; spirits; formularies and spells; scriptures and blessings; or grimoires and spells).

Secret: The secret that dedicated worshippers can eventually learn from the religion, if any.

Other Side: The Otherworld home of the worshipped entity. Worshippers usually travel there during holy day ceremonies.

Disadvantages: Unusual restrictions faced by worshippers.

Keywords for specialized religions may have additional entries, such as the *Talismans* entry of saintly orders and wizardry schools.

Donandar

The Cosmic Harmony

Donandar is the high god of music. He descends from transcendent beings, and transcendence is a key to his being. He is the son of two gods from the Gloranthan Court, named Ralforisus and Tylenea. He is experienced only through performance, hence only performers learn of him. His worship always occurs in conjunction with a more familiar entity, such as Mercario the Street Entertainer or Skovara the Puppetress. Those entities all have their own existence and stories that can include Donandar, but do not require him. Thus, Heortling women who worship Skovara rarely worry about her wayward father except to learn his skills and magic from (or teach them to) other entertainers.

Donandar transcends pantheons, and worshippers of entertainment gods often wander far from their homelands. For example, Hyraos the Harper and Molamin the Choreographer come from the Solar Pantheon, but are known wherever Donandar is found. Other entities harmonized by Donandar include Dathar (a Praxian spirit who plays the ribcage harp and “low blow” pipes), Danfathar (a syrinx-playing

god of the Talastar wilds), and Drogarsi and Skovari (Heortling gods). Even Hombobobom, the troll drummer, acknowledges a connection to Donandar and other musicians.

⚡ Want to Discover More? See “Mercario” (page 124) and “Skovara” (page 126) in the Theism chapter.

Entry Requirements: A commitment not just to enjoying music, but to playing and sharing music with others.

Homelands: Any.

Abilities: Harmonize with Strangers, Memorize Music, Mythology of Donandar, Perform, Play [Instrument], Read Emotions, Sing, Worship Donandar.

Virtues: Happy, Musical, Outgoing.

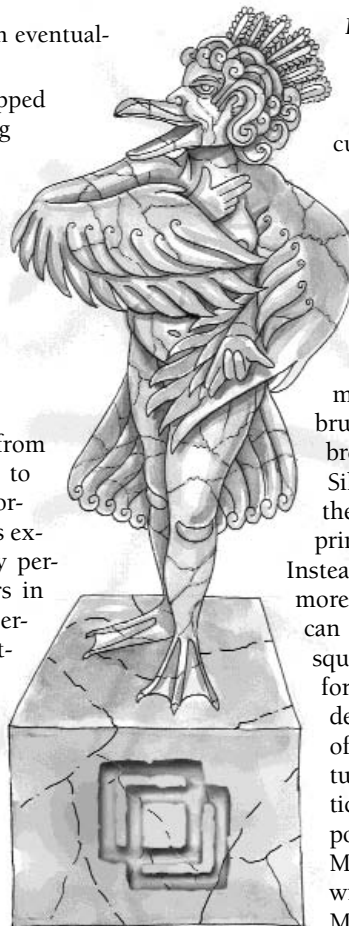
Common Magic:

⚡ **Left Hand Talents**—Animate Puppet’s Face, Imitate Bird Sounds, Sing in Another Language, Vocal Sound Effects, Weave Illusion with Words.

⚡ **Right Hand Talents**—Feel Tones, Make Music Visible, Perfect Pitch, Sing Any Note, Unforgettable Melody.

Other Side: Donandar’s Troupe moves regularly through the realms of several pantheons, and is welcome in many more.

Disadvantages: Donandar’s worshippers may acquire magic from one of the entities associated with or representing him, but otherwise only gain common magic. They sometimes break cultural codes and are often itinerant, so they are also treated with a degree of suspicion and mistrust by outsiders, even as they flock to attend their performances.



Imarja

The Great One

Imarja is the great being of Esrolia, the wise mother who saved her children when fractious and brutish men took to warring against each other. She brought them to Esrolia and taught them the Eight Silent Songs to bind them to their land, as well as the Ninth Silent Scream to halt men’s follies. She is a primal feminine force, rarely depicted as a human. Instead, she is represented either as a female animal or, more often, by artifacts relating to female roles, which can mean anything from a goodwife’s distaff to the square-bladed axe of a city guardswoman. No single, formalized way of worshipping her is known. Indeed, most of her worshippers cannot even conceive of her Feminine Allness. As a result they instead turn to more specific religious societies that fit particular social needs and draw on some aspect of her powers. Thus, for many, Imarja is simply the Bigger Mother who helps people find the common magic within themselves, what most Esrolians call “Home Magic” or “Mother’s Little Tricks.”

Entry Requirements: Open to any prepared to respect the land.

Homeland: Esrolia.

Abilities: Esrolian History, Mythology of Imarja, Worship Imarja.

Esrolians represent their deities using statuary. Imarja, the primal goddess of their land, is perhaps the most unusual. Placed upon a cubic pedestal representing the solid earth, this representation emphasizes her link with the Esrolian Snow Goose, one of the symbols of this land.



Virtues: Feminine, Practical, Sensible.

Common Magic: Imarja provides common magic and helps her worshippers understand it. For other magic she expects them to join an appropriate magical society or specialized religion. See Homeland: Esrolia on page 42 for sample common magic.

Other Side: Imarja resides in the Safe Warm Home, which mirrors Esrolia and contains the caves, square-houses, and lodges for the many magical societies she supports.

Disadvantages: Imarja's worshippers share a tie to their land. In normal circumstances this simply manifests as homesickness when outside its borders. However, if the land suffers some terrible cataclysm, this also affects Imarjans. During the terrible Dry Womb Blight, for example, few women could conceive children, while the Three Season Storm gave every Imarjan man a thundering headache and a runny nose. Conversely, any large-scale good event benefits them all, such as the several Seasons of Pleasure that have occurred sporadically in the past.

Lanbril

The Faceless Thief



Much like Donandar, Lanbril is an outsider, of no specific pantheon or homeland. He represents as much as anything a transcendent concept, given shape and character: Theft. There are those who claim to worship him but never begin to understand his mysteries and there are those who have never heard of Lanbril and yet exemplify his virtues. A son of Grandfather Mortal, Lanbril was the quiet one who raged on the inside. When the other gods rejected him and his kind as inferior because their father had been the first victim of Death, he was warped by his rage and devoted himself to vengeance. He was no warrior, no sage, no great speaker, no mighty lover. So if he could not triumph on his own virtues, he would steal those of others. His became an existence of disorder, illusion, stealth, and deceit.

Entry Requirements: Be recruited by an existing worshipper.

Homelands: Dara Happa, Esrolia, Esvular, Heortling, Puma People, Tarsh.

Abilities: Hide, Knife Fighting, Lie, Mythology of Lanbril, Sneak, Streetwise, Worship Lanbril.

Virtues: Deceitful, Greedy.

Common Magic:

R Face of Lanbril talents—Avoid Discovery, Cause Little Pain, Conceal Small Object, Confuse Onlooker, Confuse Victim, Darken Window, Face in the Crowd, Lose Pursuit, Silent Step, Unerring Throw.

Other Side: Lanbril's Den is somewhere on the God Plane, Spirit World, or Essence Planes, connected by secret

routes to many other places. Worshippers learn the way to one of these routes, without ever finding out where the Den really is.

Disadvantages: In some places, merely knowing Lanbril magic is a crime punishable by death or exile. In others, it simply ensures a careful watch by the authorities. Also, while the support of the thief ring can be very helpful, the Lanbril worshipper is also expected to provide that support to other ring members.

The Seven Mothers

The Provincial Church



The Red Goddess that hangs in the sky was reborn only four centuries ago after seven human beings brought her to life. Those seven became gods, and are called the Seven Mothers (even though some are men). Their followers teach Her Ways, continuing to give birth to Her power in the world.

The Provincial Church is a form of the Seven Mothers cult, simplified for the understanding of barbarians, Provincials, and converts. Rather than confuse potential converts with the full variety of Lunar theology, the missionaries of the Church offer a simple introduction through worship of the Seven Mothers. Some within the Provincial Church dedicate themselves to one of the Seven Mothers, but most just worship them together as a common religion in return for its magic. The Provincial Church actively encourages the mixing of magic types, and provides a variety of abilities.

Of the Seven Mothers, three are not detailed here: Danfive Xaron, Teelo Norri, and "She Who Waits."

Entry Requirements: Open to any who open their hearts and minds to the Lunar Way.

Homeland: Any.

Abilities: Mythology of the Seven Mothers, Sedenyic Philosophy, Worship the Seven Mothers.

Virtues: Dedicated, Inclusive, Open-Minded.

Common Magic: Worshippers have access to a few common magic abilities from the Seven Mothers.

III Deezola—Heal Hurt feat.

Y Irippi Ontor—Read Anything feat.

✂ Jakaleel—Resist Fear charm.

† Yanafal Tarnils—Combat Attack talent.

Other Side: Each of the Seven Mothers has his or her own domain—most are on the Red Moon, but Danfive Xaron's Gate Keep is on the so-called Moon of the Moon, Destix, while the center of Jakaleel's power is in the Twenty-three Delayed Realm, on the Spirit World.

Disadvantages: Subject to the Lunar cycle (see nearby boxes). Members of the Provincial Church tend to be patronized by Lunar Heartlanders and may be considered traitors

by traditionalists in newly conquered border regions.

W Want to Discover More about the Lunar Way? See "Natha" (page 125) and "Selven Hara" (page 126) in the Theism chapter; "From Dark Tradition" in the Animism chapter, page 141; and "Cerise Church" in the Wizardry chapter, page 168.

Lunar Phases and Goddesses

Phase	Form of Sedenya	Appearance of the Red Moon	Effect on Lunar Magic
Dark	Rashorana	From black to a red crescent	x 0.3
Crescent Come	Orogeria	From a red crescent to half red	x 0.5
Empty Half	Natha	From half red to fully red	x 1
Full	Zaytenara	From fully red to about half black and half red	x 1.5
Full Half	Verithurusa	From half red to a red crescent	x 1
Crescent Go	Lesilla	From a red crescent to black	x 0.5
Dying	Gerra	Black	x 0.3



Vai Madar Sa

The Mystic Archer

Vai Madar Sa is the Great Star Archer, visible as a prominent constellation. He lived as a god and a human, and transcended both. He is widely worshipped, especially throughout the Vithelan and other Eastern areas, often under different names or as specialized aspects and subcults. He fought and destroyed Akorgat the Demon and the Kralori Red Dragon Society.

Vai Madar Sa was born when Karki, god of fire and war, threw down his weapons in despair over killing his twin sister. The spawn of that act are collectively the Ananjano, who are either the Rising Children (now mostly in the sky) or Falling Children (now mostly in the Underworld). He opposed Sshorg and his legions. He had many temples and worshippers everywhere. He followed the Principles of the High Gods, and was one of the most revered entities in the God Age. Nonetheless, at the end of that age he was thrown down and forced to live as a human being for the reign of Oorsu Sara. Most gods accepted this defeat as a part of their nature, but Vai Madar Sa found no comfort. He regained his godhead and was worshipped through the Happy Conquests. His followers led the reconquest of the world by three heroes and their followers. The Good People worshipped differently, but recognized that they revered the same entity. Together, they were able to overcome their foes.

When the Underworld erupted it was led by Herespur, who entered the sky and overcame Vai Madar Sa. He ripped the crown and armor from him, the rings from his fingers, the eyes from his head, and even his toes, which he put into a jar by his throne. Vai Madar Sa again took refuge as a human being, and

in that lifetime met Darja Danag, an avatar of the Great Bolt. After great struggles he again regained his position. He is called one of the Three Moving Deities because his constellation moves in the sky and his people travel across the world.

Entry Requirements: A worshipper must have killed with an arrow already.

Homeland: Teshnos.

Abilities: Archery, Mythology of Vai Madar Sa, Pinpoint Concentration, Worship Vai Madar Sa.

Virtues: Determined, Hate Akorgat, Hate Red Dragon Society, Honorable.

Common Magic:

R The “Bow of the Heavens Chants”—Contains three common magic abilities: Sacred Archery (a feat that can skewer even magical beings); Hand-Archery (a charm that aids unarmed combat and allows bowless archery); and Farshooting Multiarrow (a spell).

Other Side: Vai Madar Sa exists in the Sky World, for in the heart of the Great Archer constellation is his Seat of Peace.

Disadvantages: History has left the cult with many obligations and enemies.

The Good People

At the start of the Demigod Cycle, Vai Madar Sa was popular in three widely separated places: Opi Island, where Hong Melagum established the Temple of the Golden Arrow; Tova, in the Kang Islands, where Hessa Mevala established the Golden Fleet; and Forng, where Kenman Imo established the Temple of the Golden Fist.

Lunar Magic

Sedenya, the Lunar Goddess, released a tremendous force when she ascended to the top of the Mortal World. She took her place and subjected her powers to the seven-day Lunar cycle. Lunar magical abilities wax and wane based on the phase of the Red Moon. The seven-day cycle either increases or decreases all Lunar magic, as detailed in the Lunar Phases and Goddesses table on page 112. This is the penalty of worshipping the pinnacle of the Mortal World.

Sedenya is the great being of all Lunar magic. Anyone subject to her cycles can choose to concentrate magic on the Lunar Way rather than exclusively on innate magic, theism, animism, or wizardry. The hero must give up all non-Lunar magic of any source; he then has two choices. If he worships a Lunar deity, spirit, saint, or founder he can concentrate his specialized magic but still retain any Lunar common magic he knows. Alternately, he can concentrate his Lunar common magic (with the same effect as the “Selfrock Teaching” on page 108) but still retain any specialized Lunar magic he knows. In either case, the specified magic (either a specialized religion or common magic) gains the benefit of concentration but the “retained” magic does not. This is the benefit of worshipping the pinnacle of the Mortal World.

The Lunar Cycle

Glorantha has many particular magical effects that are local or subtle enough to be ignored for now. The Lunar cycle, however, cannot be ignored. Its effects are dramatic and easily recognized by everyone in Glorantha.

The ascent of the Red Goddess into the sky released the Lunar power into the world. The Lunar power had been inaccessible before to all but some esoteric and obscure groups



that wielded no significant force. But the Red Moon hovering in the sky gives her Lunar magic to anyone initiated into the Sedenyic Mysteries or who offers regular worship to any of several Lunar deities, spirits, and saints.

Looking at the Red Moon, people see an orb whose color changes from red to black to red again. The red is visible day and night, the black only in the daytime (though the black moon can be tracked by the stars and planets it obscures). Available power is directly related to the phase of the Moon visible. Thus, it might be a Dark Moon day for an observer in one part of the Empire, while a magician in another part might see the Moon in its full phase.

In *HeroQuest*, the variability of the Lunar magic is manifest as a change to the ability ratings of all Lunar magical abilities.

The Glowline

The Glowline is an immaterial barrier at the edge of the Empire. The Red Emperor begot a powerful goddess named Yara Aranis whose purpose is to defend the Empire and contain the great power of the Red Moon. From outside the Empire the Glowline is visible as a wall of faint light that is entirely insubstantial. Within the Empire no visual effect occurs, except that many people see a red nimbus around the Moon during its black phase.

Within the Glowline, the Lunar power does not wax and wane, so Lunar magic takes neither bonus nor a penalty regardless of the phase of the Moon. Lunar worshippers who have learned the secret of their religion have an even greater connection to Sedenya. While within the Glowline, their Lunar magic is always boosted as if under a Full Moon. This is a tremendous aid to the Empire when it defends itself from outsiders, and is one of the reasons for the great sense of security felt by Imperial citizens.



THEISM

Theists worship the gods and goddesses who made Glor-antha. These deities are immortal and eternal, and are paths to magic and deep knowledge. People worship a pantheon of familiar deities, gaining protection and divine aid in return for worship. A committed few become initiates and devotees, whose powers emulate those of the gods.

Deities provide minor magic to even their humblest followers. Divine favor is essential to survival in a world where most ways of making a living are very difficult. Divine magic allows worshippers to augment abilities used in pursuit of their livelihoods: farmers bless their crops, smiths strengthen their metalwork, hunters make themselves silent on the trail, and so on. Whenever a ceremony takes place, the ordinary worshippers participate in and witness the events led by their priests and priestesses.

This chapter introduces the Pantheons of theist religions and details how Worshippers gain magic from gods and goddesses. Sample Deities illustrate the magic available to worshippers. The Divine Landscape describes the deities that empower the Inner World. The God World is sacred and eternal, and defines how theists view and use magic.

Pantheons

A theist religion follows a **pantheon**, a group of deities that it acknowledges as “our gods and goddesses.” Pantheons have many deities: some are enemies, but most are friendly, and teach men and women the normal way to live. Some deities can be found in several pantheons, such as the great Healing Goddess, who is known in many homelands by many names. Many pantheons have deities who appear similar to each other. Thus, Hunter and Trickster deities are found in many pantheons, and both Yelm and Elmal are the Sun God. The great gods show up in each other’s mythologies as rivals or foes.

Some worshippers belong to individual cults that worship one deity directly. The cult gives access to the magic—affinities and feats—of the deity, as well as the cult secret.

Characteristics of Theism

Otherworld Origin: God World.

Name for Mortal World: Inner World.

Entities: Gods and goddesses, daimones.

Homelands: Dara Happa, Esrolia, Heortling, Tarsh, Teshnos.

Worshippers Have: Souls.

Magic: Divine aid, affinities, feats.

Members: Communal worshippers, initiates, devotees.

Leaders: Priests.

Type of Worship: Sacrifice.

Deity Ranks

Deities are ranked by their relative power and importance as great gods, gods, demigods, daimones, or heroes.

Each pantheon has at least one **great god**, usually its leader. Great gods are immense, so powerful and with so many spheres of influence that they can never truly be known by mortal beings, who must instead worship the great god’s aspects as if they are separate deities. Their power ranges from 10 \mathbb{L} 8 to 10 \mathbb{L} 12. They are “great” because their influence reaches wide and deeply. A great god is known as himself even outside his own pantheon and mythology, and has many allies and subordinate deities. The secret of a great god is of cosmic importance.

Common **gods** and goddesses usually have many worshippers and many temples or holy places. Their power ranges from 10 \mathbb{L} 6 to 10 \mathbb{L} 8. They usually have a secret that is of major (but not cosmic) importance to worshippers. A deity’s most important effect in the world is often the presence and actions of his living worshippers. The changes of the seasons, growth of the crops, and movement of the winds depend on their worship.

The smallest worshipped gods are called **demigods**, petty gods, godlets, or godlings. If confronted in the God World, their greatest power is usually about 10 \mathbb{L} 3 to 10 \mathbb{L} 5. They may have only one or two priests and usually only a few local wor-

The Hero Wars are between...Storm and Sky

War has raged between Orlanth, Storm Rebel, and Yelm, Sun Emperor, ever since the beginning of myth. Overhead the storm clouds broil, forever raging against the stagnant law of the Solar Empire. They have fought for leadership before, and their worshippers claim that it is time to settle the score for good.

shippers. These minor deities provide at most one affinity, or, if part of the Inner World, act as a guardian (see page 92). Even these small gods generally do not manifest in the Inner World.

The lowest denizen of the God World is the **daimon**. Daimones can be of many types. Some are followers of the gods, and seem almost like humans. Others are the empowering soul of a place or thing, nearly indistinguishable from the landscape. Most gods use daimones to cause magical effects—a feat to bring a breeze often causes a wind daimon to fly to the magician, for example, thus creating a wind. Daimones native to the Inner World sometimes act as guardians.

Many mortals have earned immortality through their deeds. Many are remembered with regular worship ceremonies, their stories still told centuries after their rise to godhood. Most **hero cults** are small and have little magic to offer, usually only a single feat.

Enemy Deities

All pantheons recognize enemy deities—entities opposed to the correct way of life. These are often deities from other pantheons (or close analogues of them), but many are unknown outside of the pantheon. Enemy “deities” might even be spirits or essences.

Enemy deities do not receive worship in the same way as good gods do. Their actions helped make the world, but no right-thinking worshipper initiates or devotes themselves to an enemy. Most often they appear as ritual foes and must be fought tooth and nail. Occasionally people propitiate them, offering a sacrifice to keep them away from the community or to fix something they have caused, like an illness or blight. Sometimes they can be bribed to attack an enemy. Followers of enemy deities are generally opponents of the entire culture.

Worshippers

Theists have different levels of commitment to their religion. A greater dedication gives greater magic and also greater restrictions. Basic **communal worshippers** can call for divine aid. Those who are **initiated** to a single deity learn its magical affinities. The most committed are **devotees** who make themselves like their deity to gain specific feats.

Concentrating Theism

As described in the Basic Magic chapter (page 108), a hero can concentrate his magic use on theism. After giving up all talents, charms, fetishes, spirits, scriptures, spells, and grimoires, the theist pays half the normal hero point cost to learn or improve any theist magic, even if it does not stem from his pantheon (such as common magic feats). Any theist can do this, but it is required before gaining a divine companion or becoming a devotee and learning feats within a deity’s affinity.

Communal Worshipper

Everyone from a theist homeland starts as a communal worshipper. They participate in the public festivals and sacrifices throughout the year. In return, they get the community benefits for worshipping local guardian deities, and also for the occasional sacrifices performed for special purposes.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to join a theistic religion during play is questioned by a priest on his knowledge of the pantheon, his relationship with the temple, and his cultural or religious virtue. If successful, he takes an oath to obey the great deity of the pantheon. The hero is now a communal worshipper and can participate in religious rites that renew the world, keep evil at bay, and speed the rebirth of plants and animals.

Benefits and Obligations

A communal worshipper can call for divine aid. He can usually keep all his common magic if he wants. He must attend the religion’s seasonal rites, obey the rules of magic and religion of the pantheon, and make obligatory contributions. He thus spends about 10% of his time and resources (including hero points) in worship.

Contest: Become a Communal Worshipper

Appropriate Ability: [Cultural or Pantheon Virtue], Know [Pantheon] Myths, Member of [Temple].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 14.

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to join the religion and gain the ability *Worship [Pantheon]* 13.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not yet ready, but may reapply later. He should spend more time learning the mythology of the pantheon or forming a relationship with the temple.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the priests or deities so greatly that he can never attempt to join the religion again.

Communal Worshipper Abilities

Magic—Divine Aid. Communal worshippers are not required to concentrate their magic.

Mundane Relationship—Member of [Temple] shows how much attention the hero spends on his local temple to the pantheon’s great deity. It is about social interaction, cooperation with other worshippers, and being subordinate to leaders.

Myths and Rituals—Know [Pantheon] Myths tells how much the worshipper knows about the gods and goddesses, their powers, common rites, and ritual enemies of the pantheon.

Piety—Worship [Pantheon] is a magical ability that measures the contact and harmony a worshipper has with his pantheon, how easily he can contact and use that power, and his accumulated knowledge of the God World.

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the pantheon keyword as abilities.

Divine Aid

Requests for divine aid usually address the great deity of the pantheon, so a worshipper of the Solar Pantheon would simply cry out, “Great Sun help me!” If the plea succeeds, magical help is provided by a fitting deity—a deity can only respond in a way that it acted in its myths. Usually, some petty god of the





pantheon manifests a local power, such as the earth shaking a jar loose from a window to crash on a thief's head, an intruder suddenly feeling drunk, or a tiny fire quickly growing huge to combat a bad winter storm.

To be heard and answered, the prayers must cross over the magical barrier to the God World. Most requests for divine aid (those that are answered, at least) come from entire communities rather than individuals, with a priest or devotee invoking divine aid with community support (see page 88).

Initiates generally do not use pantheon divine aid (although they can); instead, they call on the deity that they initiated to. Devotees cannot call for divine aid from any deity except the one they have devoted to. When an initiate or devotee calls on his own deity for divine aid, he uses the appropriate Piety ability and faces a lower resistance, but is limited to aid in a form appropriate to his deity.

Contest: Pray for Divine Aid

Appropriate Ability: Worship [Pantheon] (communal worshipper); Initiate of [Deity] (initiate); Devotee of [Deity] (devotee).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Community support, ritual magic modifiers; very pious acts (bonus), vile and antisocial behavior (penalty), nature of requested aid (penalty).

Resistance: 10W6 (pantheon) or 10W3 (initiate/devotee calling on own deity).

Any Victory: The deity intercedes, in a form chosen by the narrator and with a magnitude based on the level of victory.

Tie or Any Defeat: Nothing happens. The deity does not hear the request, ignores it, or is testing the faith of his followers.

Initiate

Initiation means “starting.” It is a life-changing ritual that opens the way for spiritual development. An initiate commits his time and attention to a single deity, not the entire pantheon. Initiation occurs among all theist peoples; it is common for many, and is the standard in a few. Initiation is sometimes part of a child's journey to adulthood, or it may occur later in life. Some homelands have a path of successive initiation through the stages of life, with a new deity to mark milestones, such as becoming a teenager, parent, or elder.

New Occupation: Priest



Priests and priestesses are full-time holy workers, perhaps a community leader, missionary, or political appointee. A priest leads public worship for the annual cycles of life and handles matters of the gods for his community. A priest might work within a large temple or be the only one in the neighborhood.

Priests must normally be initiates or devotees of a deity, although the occasional communal worshipper might offer sacrifice to all the deities of the pantheon. They must undergo a test, probably overseen by the local priestly hierarchy and witnessed by the community they will serve. Priests are ordained by the religion, not the deity, and so might need nothing more than political influence to gain the position. In some homelands, priests are chosen by their ability or a ritual association (for example, the head of a family who intercedes with the ancestors).

Divine Aid and Resurrection



Death is common in Glorantha, for danger is everywhere: enemies, disease, poison, and accidents all take their toll. Restoring life to a dead hero is possible, but it is rare and difficult. Few magical organizations have the ability, which is always the secret of an Otherworld entity, and requires an Otherworld quest.

Alternatively, divine aid can resurrect a person by narrator fiat. Desperate heroes might call on their deity at the moment after death to try to avoid the fatal result. Narrators might offer them a chance if they are successful at two things. First, the player must convince the narrator that his hero's deity could intervene at all. Then, he should persuade the narrator of the great deed (i.e., plot hook) that his hero will undertake in return for this extraordinary act. If the narrator thinks it will be good for the story, she should allow it.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to initiate to a deity during play must be at least a communal worshipper of the religion. The priests conduct rites to determine his suitability and commitment, and summon Otherworld entities to explore his hidden magic and secret thoughts. They test the applicant's knowledge of the pantheon and deity, his relationship to the temple, and his dedication to the deity.

If the hero is accepted, he participates in a special ceremony that takes him to the God World and links him to his deity. The new initiate may be marked by the god, gifted with special powers, or have strictures imposed on his behavior. *Be sure to put the deity's rune in a prominent place on your character sheet.*

Benefits and Obligations

An initiate has all the benefits of communal worshippers. He can continue to call on the pantheon for divine aid, but can also call on his patron deity with a greater chance of success (see “Divine Aid” on the previous page). He can spend hero points to learn the affinities in his deity's keyword. He can join his deity's subcults and hero cults, or simply spend hero points to learn their magic. If he concentrates his magic, he can keep any common magic feats he knows and use them as active abilities. However, most cults frown on use of magic that comes from other sources, especially magic opposed to the nature of

Priest Occupation Keyword

Abilities: [Chant or Sing or Pray] for Hours, Charismatic Presence, Lead Sacrifice.

Typical Personality: Pious. Most deities have certain traits that they expect of their priests.

Typical Relationships: to Temple and/or to Worshippers.

Followers: Priests always have a servant to help them with labor, often two or three. Unless they belong to an impoverished cult, they usually have bodyguards as well. Poor priests, without congregations, have no servants or followers.

Standard of Living: Common or Prosperous.

Typical Equipment: Accommodation, fine clothes, ritual regalia and implements.

△ Hengal Joins Natha

Rick: Hengal wants to join a cult.

Frederick: Uh-oh.

Rick: I mean it. We need some help. There is only one obvious choice for me, and I want to ditch the cult of Gerendetho, my ancestor, and join Natha.

Kathy: You don't have to ditch Gerendetho, you know. They are not incompatible.

Rick: Hengal doesn't have the time for multiple cults. Wherever we go we'll have Natha overhead, so I want to worship her. Will Gerendetho come after me for this?

Kathy: Hengal will have to wait and see, but normally it wouldn't be a problem. You don't have to renounce Gerendetho or anything, it's all part of the same religion.

Rick: So, where are we this week? Alda-chur? Surely there's some Natha priestess here?

Kathy: Yes, of course. There's a temple, everyone knows about it. It's a big Lunar Temple, with several cults in it. Natha, Seven Mothers, Rufelza, all of them. It's actually a Sedenya Temple, of course. But for you, Natha is what matters.

Your relationship with the temple is important. How long have you been in town? Did you start going here right away? As a special deal, for this one time only, I'll let you say "Yes" to those if you pay 1 hero point right now for that ability. Member of Alda-chur Sedenya Temple, 13, OK? So you joined when you got to town. Any of you other jokers go too?

Christine: Jane did, but I'm already in Seven Mothers.

Kathy: OK, so Rick. It's test day. Hengal gets dressed up and goes to the temple to petition for membership. First, as a Gerendetho initiate he is already a member of the Solar Pantheon, which is related to the Lunar Pantheon. So, I guess you can use your *Know Solar Pantheon Myths*, even with a -5 modifier it's higher than your temple membership or virtues. [They roll dice.]

OK, you have a minor victory. They lecture you on virtues because you're not *Inclusive*, a virtue they feel is very important. You pay your sacrifice, a bunch of sheep, bales of wheat, pots of oil, and so on, and, oh, one hero point because it is compatible with the Solar Pantheon. You are recognized as a communal worshipper of the Lunar Religion. So you are acknowledged as a member of the reli-

gion and welcomed to the ceremony. The priestess dismisses some of the guards and releases some protective magic. Food is brought out but candidates must stand and wait until everyone else is done eating.

Now you will test for Natha, more specifically. Do you want to be an initiate or a devotee?

Rick: I want to be an initiate only. Maybe a devotee later.

Kathy: OK, so here are your tests. Let's see, you don't have any Lunar mythology; your Gerendetho and Lodril and Oria Mythologies won't help you here. And you don't seem to have any of Natha's virtues. So that just leaves your dedication to the Alda-chur temple, at 13, against a resistance of 1W.

Rick: I'll bump with a hero point if I need to. [They roll dice.] I pass, but I had to burn the point.

Kathy: OK, remove 4 hero points as they take you to Natha's Fortress on the Red Moon. She looks you over, and sees that you are a true believer. Now, we need to make a bunch of changes to your character sheet.

First, you lose your Gerendetho magic and Initiate of Gerendetho ability. Just erase them, you've lost all contact with Gerendetho. You get to keep your Gerendetho keyword abilities and virtues though.

You get *Worship Lunar Pantheon* and *Initiate of Natha* at 13 each. You can choose one of the following three affinities for free: *Balancer*, *Nathic Combat*, or *Otherworld*. You get it at 13. Have you concentrated your magic? No? Then you can pay 6 more hero points each if you want the other two.

Rick: I definitely want *Otherworld* and *Balancer*. I had *Fighting* as an affinity under Gerendetho, can I just switch it to *Nathic Combat* if I pay the hero points?

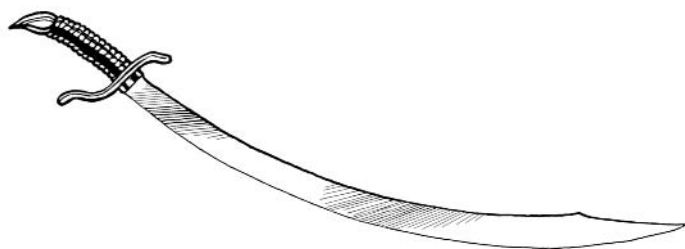
Kathy: Yeah, it's close enough, I suppose. So you spend another twelve hero points and get all three affinities. *Balancer* and *Otherworld* are at 13, but *Nathic Combat* is 18.

Rick: Do I also get all those abilities under the Natha keyword?

Kathy: Nope, you'll have to buy them with hero points. But since you are a worshipper of Natha, they won't be unrelated to your hero, as long as you attend temple regularly. Remember that you've got a 30% hero point requirement to Natha—I'll let you count points that you put into abilities from the Natha keyword and your Warrior keyword, just like we did with Gerendetho, because Natha is a pretty martial goddess.

the deity (such as an initiate of a healing deity using combat magic, or a light worshipper using darkness magic).

In ceremonies, the initiate may be called upon to stand in for his deity, to bring his deity's presence and power to the rituals as no communal worshipper can. He must continue to attend the communal religious rites as well as the more private cult rites. He spends roughly 30% of his time and resources (including hero points) in worship, the communal 10% plus the cult's additional 20%.



Contest: Become an Initiate

Appropriate Ability: [Cult Virtue], Member of [Temple], Mythology of [Deity].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 1W.

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to become an initiate and gain the ability *Initiate of [Deity]* at his current *Worship [Pantheon]* rating. He receives one affinity at 13 for free.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not ready. He should spend more time forming relationships with the hierarchy or learning about the god. He may reapply later.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the priests or deity so greatly that he can never become an initiate of this deity, and might even be expelled from the religion.





Multiple Initiation

Your hero may be initiated to more than one deity, but he must follow the restrictions and observances of all his cults. Naturally, no conflicting obligations or virtues can exist, but the narrator will decide when the situation is less clear-cut. For example, no one worships both Chalana Arroy (goddess of peace) and Humakt (god of war), nor enemy gods from the Lunar and Storm pantheons. If the narrator approves the second initiation, record a separate *Initiate of [Deity]* relationship and write the new deity's affinities separately.

In some religions, initiates may join as many cults in the pantheon as they wish, spending an additional 20% of their time and resources in each, as long as their obligations do not total more than 100%. Initiation to two deities is unusual, to three cults extremely rare. The ritual requirements of two or more gods are often oppressively heavy.

Initiating to two deities from different pantheons generates many obstacles from both. Such interpantheon worship is rare, and the hero will probably be forced by the religious hierarchies involved to choose one or the other. Still, gods exist who are basically unattached to any pantheon and so can bypass this problem.

Initiate Abilities

Magic—Affinities, Soul Vision.

Initiates are not required to concentrate their magic.

Mundane Relationship—*Member of [Temple]* specifically rates the hero's relationship with a temple, shrine, or other group of worshippers of his deity. Alternately, the hero might have *Follower of [Priest]* to indicate his relationship to a priest or devotee of his deity.

Myths and Rituals—*Mythology of [Deity]* rates knowledge of the deity's myths, rituals and sacrifices, and conflicts with other deities, spirits, and essences.

Piety—*Initiate of [Deity]* is a magical relationship that rates the worshipper's connection to his deity and tells how easily he can invoke the deity's magic.

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the deity's magic keyword as abilities.

Affinities

An affinity is a broad magical ability. Worshipers draw upon one of their deity's core powers, sometimes called its runes or "spheres of influence," and gain magical aid.

A hero cannot use an affinity as an active ability. Instead, he uses it to augment any appropriate ability. For example, an initiate's *Heal Wounds* affinity could augment his *First Aid* skill. An initiate *can* improvise any named feat in the affinity (see page 120) as an active ability with a -10 penalty (-5 if he has concentrated his magic use), but can never cement such use, and cannot learn these feats as abilities unless he becomes a devotee.

Common Magic Feats

Any theist who concentrates his magic can use the common magic feats he knows as active abilities, even though he cannot learn the feats of his deity's affinities until he becomes a devotee.

Soul Vision

Soul Vision is how a theist senses and identifies magic or Otherworld entities nearby, with better victory levels providing more information on the nature of the magic or entity. Identifying or even sensing magic or entities originating in another Otherworld takes a penalty of -20. *Soul Vision* faces the default resistance to magic of 14 unless there is active resistance (such as concealment magic or an Otherworld entity trying to remain undetected).

Devotee

A worshipper may devote himself to one deity, isolating it for intense personal worship. The devotee spends the majority of his time in activities meant to please or emulate his deity. He performs special rites, adopts certain attitudes, and participates only in set ways during the pantheon ceremonies. Not all theist religions practice devotion equally; in some it is common, in others practically unknown.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to be a devotee must have already concentrated his magic use, and furthermore must abandon all magic that does not come from his god. He must pass difficult tests given not just by the temple hierarchy, but by the deity itself. He is tested on his piety, his knowledge of the deity's myths, and his virtue.

If the hero is accepted, he enters the God World and devotes himself solely to the deity. He may be marked by the god, gifted with special powers, or have strictures imposed on his behavior. *Be sure to put the deity's rune in a prominent place on your character sheet.*

Although devotees are normally initiates first, at the narrator's discretion a communal worshipper can undertake the initiation tests and devote himself at the same time. In this case, your hero must meet all requirements and hero point costs of both initiation and devotion, and must pass both sets of entry tests.

Benefits and Obligations

A devotee has all the benefits of an initiate, except that he can call for divine aid only from the deity he worships. He can pay hero points to learn his deity's affinities (gaining 3 of that affinity's feats for free) and feats. He can join subcults and hero cults of his deity (only), or can simply spend hero points to learn their magic. Generally, religions do not allow devotees to be initiates of other gods as well.

The devotee spends 50% of his time and resources (including hero points) serving his deity, *in addition to* the 10%



The great god Orlanth is the restless and rebellious god of storm and weather. Here we see him in his Thunderous aspect, accompanied by some of his whirling winds.

required of a pantheon worshipper. He must follow the deity's virtues and ethics. Deities expect their devotees to follow a stricter code of behavior than initiates, and so are liable to punish a devotee for minor infractions.

Contest: Become a Devotee

Appropriate Ability: [Cult Virtue], Initiate of [Deity], Mythology of [Deity].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 20W.

Any Victory:

Currently an initiate of this deity— Pay 3 hero points for your hero to become a devotee. Change *Initiate of [Deity]* to *Devotee of [Deity]* at the same rating. For each of the deity's affinities he knows he gains three feats for free.

Currently a communal worshipper— Pay 6 hero points for your hero to become a devotee. He gains *Devotee of [Deity]* at his current *Worship [Pantheon]* rating, and gains one affinity at 13 and three of its feats for free.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not yet ready. He should spend more time learning about the god or strengthening his virtues. He may reapply later.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the deity so greatly that he can never become a devotee, and might even be expelled from the cult.

△ Ingomar Devotes Himself to Death

John: I read those rules. I read them, and I want to be devoted to Humakt.

Kathy: Where did you read about Humakt?

John: Christine showed it to me. It's in your own book, right there. This guy sounds just like Ingomar, doesn't he? Fighting, swords, wears black...

Steve: Sociopathic.

John: Yeah, whatever. He wants to join.

Kathy: Oh, good. Even though you're using the "as you go" method, since you haven't mentioned anything about this before, all costs are going to be doubled, you know.

John: Yeah, that's OK, I've got it all figured out, and that last adventure gave me enough hero points. It would be 6 to

join the pantheon, but I should get that from my homeland. If I came from Vanch then I'd know their pantheon.

Kathy: OK, agreed.

John: So, 2 points to concentrate my magic out of play so I don't double all of the costs again. Now, I need $6 \times 2 = 12$ points to become a devotee if I'm only a communal worshipper, another 12 to pick up the second and third affinities. So, that's 26.

Kathy: Clever, and expensive. But if you want to pay for that, OK by me. You saved your points, do what you want.

John: All right. My best ability...

Kathy: Don't worry about that. You've been a good worshipper so far, and any player willing to spend 26 hero points all at once doesn't need to roll for it.

John: All right! I already selected my nine feats for this. You want to look, or can I just write them all down?

Kathy: I'll review it. And you'll spend 60% of your hero points on Humakt abilities?

John: Yeah. I'm glad I've found the right god. So see, look, 26 hero points. I'm in, right? I'm a devotee of Humakt, right?

Kathy: Right, you're in.

John: Yeah! So, what's "sociopathic" mean, anyway?

Devotee Abilities

Magic—Affinities, Feats, Soul Vision, Cult Secret. Devotees must concentrate their magic.

Mundane Relationship—A devotee may have a *Member of [Temple]* ability (see "Initiate Abilities" on page 118). Some devotees do not regularly attend a temple, and instead lead a band of initiates, with whom they might have a *Leader of [Initiates]* relationship.

Myths and Rituals—*Mythology of [Deity]* (see "Initiate Abilities" on page 118).

Piety—*Devotee of [Deity]* is a magical relationship that rates the worshipper's connection to his deity and tells how easily he can invoke the deity's magic.

Virtues—A devotee usually has all of the virtues in the deity's magic keyword as abilities.

Followers—Depends on the cult, but a devotee often leads a group of cult initiates and/or communal worshippers.

△ The Otherworld in Action

The company has taken a job guarding some alchemists going into the giant flower gardens to collect giant-sized pollen for their experiments.

Shadows Dance is a name given to the troll lands to the east. The shadows dance because huge blobs of shadow lurch or flow around the territory, visible in the daytime, to protect the lands beneath them. This is an ill day, because the shadows rolled fast and far during the night, and when the Sun dawns it is behind a gray sky shield that makes the sunlight weak.

The darkness goes deep, into the bones of everyone with a soul, spirit, or an essence. This is the Underworld, another realm, spilling over into the everyday world. It is what the scholars hired you to protect them against. It feels thick, like being in an alien world. You don't even have to roll with your *Soul Vision* to sense it all around you.

"I have an affinity for Otherworld," says Hengal. "I want to use that in some way to protect us. Let me see, I can sur-

round us with it, maybe, and make our region safe from the alien world penalty? So it will be the Otherworld, but it'll be MY Otherworld."

"That's nice," says Kathy. "Let's try. What's the phase of the Moon today? Half full, so you're at the standard -10 for improvising a feat. The shadow is petty, you know. It's just..." She rolls a d20. "A Darkness rating of 8."

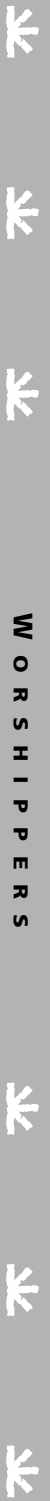
"I only got a 5, but I get a 1, a critical. I dispel that darkness!"

"OK, I got a 12, so it works for the area around you, then. So during the day you guys huddle around Hengal. The scholars stand closest, then their horses and supplies, then you guards. You're all inside his aura though. You can see some things moving around outside there sometimes."

Steve: I'm going to shoot one with my arrows. Or three, as it were. Here's my roll, what happens?

Kathy: OK, you do. You hear a yelp, some trollkin weeping, and a whip snapping.

"Uh-oh."





Feats

Unlike initiates, devotees can actively use feats. Feats are magical abilities that enable your hero to perform a specific effect, repeating an act that the god performed in its myths. Feats can be used either actively or to augment. However, because feats learned as part of an affinity are not distinct abilities, a hero can only augment another ability with one of an affinity's feats at a time. Devotees can spend hero points to improve the rating in a feat, with the improvement an addition to the affinity's rating. Devotees can also improve their rating in the affinity itself, which thus improves the affinity's feats as well. Write a feat on your character sheet under the affinity (with any addition), and add them together whenever the feat is used.

Death Magic 17
Decapitate Foe +2

A devotee can improvise a feat from an affinity, with a penalty determined by the narrator based on how close the feat is to the affinity and the myths of the deity. (Although improvised feats cannot be cemented, the narrator may allow the hero to learn the feat permanently by traveling to a specific temple to the deity and paying the normal hero point cost.) You cannot improvise *from* a feat, only an affinity. If you try to use a feat in a new or unusual way, your narrator will tell you if your proposed action is acceptable (in which case there is no penalty) or is beyond the feat's power.

Learning a new feat within an affinity involves a trip to the God World or Hero Planes to learn the magic from the deity. (This heroquest does not always have to be played out in the game.) Feats given in magic keywords are common for the deity. Other feats exist, often the exclusive province of a temple, clan, or secret shrine. Be creative and work with your narrator to determine exactly what feats your hero knows.

△ Ingomar Uses Death Magic

They waited where the roads met. Foolish shadows. Ingomar's hand wrapped his sword hilt. No sound came as he shouted his battle cry. When he drew the sword, his companions were pale in its colorless light. Their weapons were faint and distant, except for their swords. Their swords were very clear.

The sword was a cut in the middle of the world, just as the crossing paths formed a sword on the ground below him. No one looked as the troll fell, the sword eating his screams. The dark man seemed surprised, as if no one before him had died, as if he were the first. Ingomar turned to the next.

On the road, the band is ambushed by a band of trolls. During the fight, Ingomar uses his Humakt magic.

John: Since I'm a devotee, I can use Humakt's feats. In my *Sword Combat* affinity, I picked the *Cut Deep*, *Decapitate Foe*, and *Truesword Stroke* feats. I want to use all three to augment my fighting ability. That gives me a rating of...

Kathy: Don't bother adding it up. You have those feats, sure, but you can't use all of them to augment your fighting. Only one feat from that affinity can augment at the same time.

Steve: What a rip!

Personal Devotion



Personal devotion is a type of worship similar to theistic sacrifice. However, it endorses a personal relation with a single deity, without the interface of a priest. The worshipper devotes his entire life to the deity, but does not necessarily lead others in worship. Devotion is uncommon even in most purely theistic cultures (such as in Dara Happa), but is common in a few (such as the Heortlings).

John: Yeah, why can't I do that?

Kathy: Um, because the rules say so. I guess the feats are like part of the affinity, OK?

John: Well, I can use a feat from another affinity, right? My *Visage of Fear* feat ought to help with combat by making me look fearsome. What about *Shame Coward*? Can I use that to insult my opponent's bravery and rattle him?

Kathy: Only if he's actually a coward. Do you know him, know of any cowardly deeds he's done? No? Then you can't use it here. OK, so what's your rating after augmenting with the two feats? And don't forget that -1!

Cult Secret

Most theist cults have similar requirements to learn a secret. The hero must be a devotee of the deity, and must have a minimum rating of 1W2 in each of the deity's affinities (not individual feats). Once a hero meets these requirements he can learn the secret at 13 by spending 3 hero points. He can improve the secret's rating by spending hero points, but can never raise its rating above that of his lowest rated affinity gained from the deity.

Subcults and Daimones

Subservient cults (subcults) worship petty deities or heroes and provide one affinity or feat; some offer only variants of a deity's affinities or feats. Initiates and devotees may join subcults and hero cults, giving about 10% of their time and resources (including hero points) to each one. As well as magic, members have access to the mundane abilities and knowledge taught by the cult. A few worshippers become devotees of subcult deities or heroes, rather than of the deity itself. They can then learn the individual feats within the subcult affinity, and also the subcult secret if they raise the affinity or feat to 1W2.

An initiate or devotee of the same religion can learn the subcult's or hero cult's magic without actually joining, as long as he is eligible to join. He spends the hero points to learn the affinity (as a normal affinity) or feat (as a stand-alone magical ability). Even a devotee of the deity cannot use the feats within the affinity without switching his devotion to the subcult, although the narrator might allow an initiate or devotee to learn a single feat from an affinity, rather than spending hero points to learn the affinity itself.

If subcults and hero cults are not given for a deity, the narrator or player can come up with new feats and affinities as needed and describe the subcult that provides them.

Experiencing Myths

Theists travel during their worship ceremonies to their god's portion of the God World. They participate in their religion by experiencing the myths and actions of their deity. When they learn magic, they always do so by reliving their deity's mythology.



Drawing on the powers of reflection and illusion, this Lunar priest rises above the rabble to display his personal relationship with his goddess, whose face can be seen in the mirror he holds.

△ Ingomar Learns Loyalty Magic

After a fight, Ingomar decides he wants to learn magic to make others more loyal.

John: I want to learn an *Inspire Loyalty* feat from Humakt. Does he have one?

Kathy: Let's see. Yeah, it says here that he has a subcult that offers a *Loyalty* affinity, and that's one of the feats. Do you want to join the subcult of Makla Mann and learn it?

John: No, I just want the magic. And I don't want to spend 3 points for an affinity, I might as well join the subcult, and I don't want to spend the time. Can't I just learn the feat?

Kathy: Sure, why not? OK, pay 1 hero point. You know the *Inspire Loyalty* feat. It starts at 13.

Initiation and Subcults

In some pantheons, each deity is distinct from the others. This is true of the deities of the Teshnos Pantheon, who provide their affinities and feats directly to worshippers, even if the different deities are recognized as aspects of one entity.

In other religions, worshippers belong to at least one subcult as part of their initiation. Thus, Heortlings initiate to a god of the Storm Pantheon (with two core affinities) and one of its several subcults (which grants a third affinity) at the same time, requiring no extra contests or hero points. Thus, an initiate of Humakt is assumed to be an initiate of the Hu the Sword subcult, which provides the *Sword Combat* affinity. (Compare the affinities provided by Drogarsi the Skald, Desemborth the Thief,

Destor the Adventurer, and Vinga the Defender Storm in "Homeland: Heortling" on page 49.)

Lunar deities often seem to operate similarly, for many are mortals who were elevated to godhood by the patronage of a more powerful deity. These gods generally partake of one or two of their patron's affinities, then provide one more that stems from their own divine attributes.

Divine Companions

If your hero pleases his god through acts and sacrifices, or performs a specific heroquest, he might be granted a daimon that provides advice and magic. A *divine companion* is typically a sidekick, although the narrator might allow one as an ally or patron. The player must dedicate a portion of his time and resources to the divine companion as if it were a cult, usually 10%. Most divine companions serve devotees, but an exceptional initiate may be granted one by his deity, if he has concentrated his magic use and the narrator approves.

Like all daimones, divine companions must inhabit a material body in the Inner World. This is usually an item or animal significant to the deity. As a rule, a divine animal is a supernatural version of a cult animal: alynxes come from Orlandth, pigs from Ernalda, dogs from Shargash, and kitty cats from Oriá. The divine companion's body ties it to the Inner World—if it is killed or destroyed, it returns to the God World.

Work out a divine companion's abilities like any sidekick (see page 84). In addition to its sidekick abilities, a divine companion can always speak to its hero with either true speech or telepathy; either way, only the hero can understand it. Many divine companions are initiates and so might have a cult as their keyword or an affinity as one of their three significant abilities.

Changing Cults

Changing from one cult to another within a pantheon may be common, accepted, frowned upon, or forbidden. In some religions, it is a standard practice as people move through life or their fortunes change. In others it is rare, although your hero should usually be able to change cults with little trouble, as long as he does not begin worshipping an enemy deity. Changing devotion is more difficult; it usually requires permission from the deity, and always needs permission from the narrator.

When a hero leaves a cult, he loses his piety relationship and all magic gained from that deity. If he later recants and returns, he starts over as if he were a new worshipper. In some cases, the hero may return with his relationship and magic intact, but this is rare and subject to the deity's (and narrator's) whim.

If an initiate moves from one deity to another within a pantheon, and both have a similar affinity, the hero may keep his current rating if the narrator allows. Any specific feats known by devotees are lost, however.

Leaving the Religion

Normal people do not change their pantheon except under duress. Nonetheless it happens, especially among unusual and experimental individuals like player heroes.

Deities look poorly upon losing worshippers, and they usually send an *agent of reprisal* (a petty deity of revenge or punishment) to haunt the apostate. The particular daimon depends on the former worshipper's level of commitment and which deity (if any) he followed at the time he abandoned the pantheon. These agents seek to avenge the god through various means of assault upon the soul, being, or body of the apostate worshipper. They rarely try to destroy the person.

Sample Deities

Argar Argan

Son of Night



Argar Argan is the god who communicates for humans with trolls (who call themselves Uz). He was born on the surface world after the trolls arrived from the Underworld. In the Darkness Age, Argar Argan fought and conquered Lodril and forced the humiliated fire god to build the great Palace of Black Glass on the Shadow Plateau. From here, Argar Argan's son the Only Old One ruled Kethaela and brought unity to the diverse creatures and nations of that region. When Chaos came, he aided any who called upon him, setting aside even old hatreds to fight a common foe.

After the Dawn, the Only Old One ruled the Kingdom of Night, which lasted until the coming of the Pharaoh in 1313. Although the Only Old One and the Black Palace both met their demise, the cult of Argar Argan was not suppressed. Today it is still a force that promotes trade and friendship with Darkness among humans as one of Ernalda's Husband-Protectors.

Entry Requirements: The prospective worshipper must have an open mind in dealing with others. He can be from any non-troll race as long as he is not a Chaos creature (trolls worship Argar Argan differently than described here).

Homeland: Esrolia.

Abilities: Bargain, Command Trollkin, Devotee of Argar Argan or Initiate of Argar Argan, Gauge Value, Know

Customs of [Homeland], Know Geography of [Homeland], Mint Bolg, Mythology of Argar Argan, Soul Vision, Speak Tradetalk, Speak [Other Language], Spear and Shield Fighting.

Virtues: Open-Minded, Outgoing.

Affinities and Feats:

⚔ **Exchange with Others** (Command Messenger Daimon, Convince Buyer, Convince Seller, Interpret Other's Meaning, Safeguard Item)

● **Husband-Protector** (Befriend Uz, Hide Wealth, Overcome Rival, Protect Earth, Sheltering Shade)

● **Son of Night** (Command Darkness Daimon, Create Shadow, Enchant Lead, Preserve Darkness, Sense Lead, Walk Unseen in Shadows)

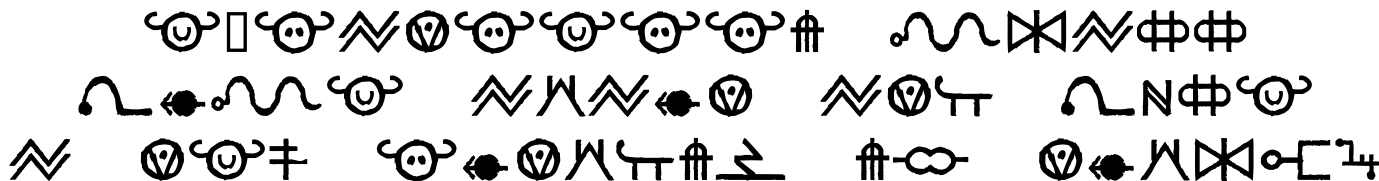
Secret: **Transcend Perspective** (Gives an automatic augmentation of ¼ the secret's rating to any ability used to peacefully interact with a Darkness creature.)

Other Side: Argar Argan's Black Palace lies in the Turning Darkness. From there, worshippers join with Xentha's Veil of Night as she travels across the sky each night.

Disadvantages: Other humans look suspiciously at the alien troll mannerisms and habits that a worshipper may adopt.

Bolgs

The trollish form of money is a lead coin known as a bolg, minted through the cult secrets of Argar Argan.



Hero Improvement Costs—Theism

Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play	
	Not Concentrated	Concentrated
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1	1
Concentrate theist magic use	1	N/A
Become a communal worshipper (gain <i>Worship [Pantheon]</i> at 13 for free)	3	3
Become an initiate of a deity or subcult (gain <i>Initiate of [Deity]</i> at 13 and one affinity at 13 for free)	3	3
Become a devotee (gain <i>Devotee of [Deity]</i> at 13 and 3 feats in each known affinity for free)	N/A	3
Gain a divine companion as a sidekick	N/A	3
Learn an affinity at 13	6	3
Learn a feat within the common magic keyword	2	1
Learn a feat within an affinity (devotees only)	N/A	1
Learn a cult secret at 13	N/A	3
Learn a pantheon secret	N/A	3
Improve <i>Worship [Pantheon]</i> or <i>Initiate of [Deity]</i> by +1	2	1
Improve <i>Devotee of [Deity]</i> or <i>Relationship to [Divine Companion]</i> by +1	N/A	1
Improve an affinity by +1	6	3
Improve a feat by +1	2	1
Improve a cult secret by +1	N/A	1

Buserian

The Recorder of All

Yelm made his third son, Buserian, the Court Recorder. He invented Principled Organization and wrote down all that happened in the Court, especially Yelm's decrees. He was fastidious in his task and recorded everything, even the notes of the songs sung and the steps of the dances danced. Buserian created the first library to store all of his writings and devised a system to catalog the records so he could find them later.

When Anaxial the Sailor landed his ship and resettled Dara Happa after the floods he conferred the priestly powers upon Buserian as only he still retained the knowledge of all the gods and goddesses and how to call them. During the Great Darkness, Buserian remained on the world, watching the skies, until he spied Polaris directly overhead. The appearance of the Pole Star gave Buserian hope and after a long time he noticed other stars appearing for he learned to see that which has been hidden from mortal sight.

When Buserian was found by a band of survivors, he agreed to help them. He taught them to read the stars and they protected him; they started to call themselves the Stargazers. With the return of Yelm, the Stargazers made their home in Buserian's chosen city of Yuthuppa where they continued to watch and record the movements of the Celestial Court and receive the guidance of their god. Throughout Imperial history, Buserian has been the scribe for the Empire as well as the lore master for all aspects of the Sky and the patron of priests.

Entry Requirements: Advanced education (scholar or similar).

Hometown: Dara Happa.

Abilities: Alphabetize, Devotee of Buserian *or* Initiate of Buserian, Excellent Night Vision, Mathematics, Mythology of Buserian, Read Buserian Code, Scan the Sky, Soul Vision, Stellar Myths, Tell Time from Stars, Write Buserian Code.

Virtues: Conservative, Pedantic, Precise, Unimaginative.

Affinities and Feats:

☞ **Administration** (Audit Books, Defend Filing System, Empower Memory, Repel Auditor)

☞ **Celestiology** (Commune with Celestial Body, Discern Constellations, Divine Future, Point Right at [Planet], Read Horoscope)

✍ **Scribe** (Everfull Quill, Illustrate Text, Repel Inkblot, Tireless Hand)

Secret: See **the Unseen** (Automatically puts character into a contest whenever there is an unseen entity, being, or fact nearby, even if the character is not actively looking for such a thing. The character may augment his *See the Unseen* rating with any appropriate magic.)

Other Side: Buserian's Desk is near the Throne in Yelm's Imperial Palace in the Solar Realm. After death, worshippers join Buserian in the bliss of divine accounting, ever adding to their account of power in the next life into which they will be born.

Disadvantages: Looked down on by warriors and other "manly men."



Destor

The Adventurer

Destor is the wanderer and explorer wind, one of the Thunder Brother sons of Orlanth. His specialty was to find ways through places where no one had been before. He is the explorer, always curious about what lies over the next hill or the next pass. He is always in front.

Orlanth made Destor when he was young, full of life and energy, and without the commitments of family or even clan. He explored the world, and when he turned back to the Inner World, Destor kept going. When young Orlanthi do not know what life will bring them or what they will bring to life, they are caught in the winds of Destor. Adventure is part of younger warriors, scouts, and hunters.

Entry Requirements: Only men worship Orlanth; prospective candidates must be willing to fight for their community, generally as members of the clan's warband.

Hometown: Heortling.

Abilities: Boast, Devotee of Destor *or* Initiate of Destor, Dodge Attack, Jump, Mythology of Orlanth, Mythology of the Thunder Brothers, Sense Change in Weather, Soul Vision, Sword and Shield Fighting.

Virtues: Active, Curious, Proud, Responsible, Wanderlust.

Affinities and Feats:

† **Combat** (Armor of Woad, Enchant Silver, Flickering Blade, Leaping Shield, Overbear Foe, Throw with Wind, [Weapon] Help)

☞ **Movement** (Burst of Speed, Find a Way, Jump over Tree, Leap over Obstacle, Run on Mud, Run up Cliffs, Sunset Leap)

☞ **Wind** (Call Clouds, Call Wind, Drive away Clouds, Hear Words on the Wind, Summon Umbroli Air Daimon)

Secret: **Last Gasp Recovery** (Automatically succeed at a single final action during any contest in which the hero has successfully used his *Wind* affinity, even if he normally would not be allowed a final action.)

Other Side: Orlanth's Hall lies in the middle of Storm Village at the heart of the Storm Realm. The Thunder Barracks is nearby, a place of loud boasts and louder carousing, good-natured sparring, and the hatching of daring plans.



Buserian is the Dara Happa god of scribes, scholars, and compulsive nit-picking pedants. In this depiction (in characteristic Dara Happa pottery style), he is also fulfilling his primal role as Stargazer.

Erissa

The White Lady

Erissa is the most powerful healing goddess in Glorantha. She is called the White Goddess or the White Lady because she is always dressed in white robes. During the Darkness, Erissa wandered the world teaching people her healing gifts. She taught them which plants were good and which were bad. She taught them to sing the Bone Mending Ballad and No Pain Psalm. Where she found hatred she brought love, where she found pain she brought joy. Erissa confronted a horde of monsters ravaging the countryside. She stood before the entrance to a small town and bid them fare elsewhere. No insult leveled at her would cause her to raise a hand to harm the monsters. She shared the power of Harmony with them and they turned away from the town.

Finally, the pain in the world grew too much for her. She set out to enter the Land of the Dead and heal Yelm so that he would reenter the lands of the living. On her journey, Erissa met the Rebel Gods. She avoided their violence and healed their hate. When the rage cleared from their eyes they thanked Erissa for her gift and promised to journey with her to the Underworld; they promised to beg the Emperor's forgiveness and petition him to return to the land and save the people from the Darkness. In the Halls of the Dead they found Yelm and Erissa healed his anger and restored him to life. The Rebels received his forgiveness and accompanied him back into the land of the living.

Entry Requirements: Pledge never to harm a living being.

Hometown: Dara Happa.

Abilities: Brew Healing Potion, Chirurgery, Devotee of Erissa or Initiate of Erissa, Find Healing Herbs, Herbal Lore, Mythology of Erissa, Soul Vision, Treat Disease, Treat Poison.

Virtues: Calm, Caring, Gentle, Merciful, Pacifist.

Affinities and Feats:

☯ **Cure Disease** (Cleanse Wound, Fight Disease Spirit, Fight Illness Daimon, Fight Unhealthy Essence, Prevent Infection, See Source of Disease, Stop [Disease])

☯ **Heal Body** (Bone Mending Ballad, Heal Chaos Wound, Heal Dying, Heal Injury, Regenerating Touch, Seal Wound)

☯ **Heal Soul** (Calm Rage, Cast Out Possessing Spirit, No Pain Psalm, Somnolent Whispers, Song of Peace)

Secret: **Resurrection ritual** (The healer must heroquest to the Underworld to bring back the soul of the recently dead. This is a recreation of Erissa's own dangerous Underworld quest.)

Other Side: Erissa maintains her Hospital in the outskirts of the Celestial City in the Solar Realm. After death, her worshippers join her in healing the ills of the cosmos.

Disadvantages: Erissa's worshippers are passive, and have sworn not to harm another living thing through action or inaction.

Gerendetho

The Great Billygoat

Lodril is lusty and carefree, and his love for Oria has not prevented him from engaging in many dalliances. His fertility is such that he has thus fathered many, many children. Gerendetho is one such, a god called Raiser of Hills, Long Runner, Spear Shaper, and "Three-one." He is especially



revered in Kostaddi, where he is known as Father of Men, but is generally popular with wanderers, adventurers, and other wastrels throughout Peloria.

Gerendetho is hot-headed and hot-blooded. He goes on many explorations and adventures with his friends, but is also a loyal retainer for his Lord, when kept under tight check.

Entry Requirements: Open to men or women, who must obey the Three Laws.

Hometown: Dara Happa.

Abilities: Belly Laugh, Climbing, Devotee of Gerendetho or Initiate of Gerendetho, Earth Lore, Know Local Lands, Mythology of Gerendetho, Mythology of Lodril and Oria, Sing and Dance, Soul Vision, Strong.

Virtues: Adventurous, Honest, Loyal, Passionate.

Affinities and Feats:

☚ **Exploration** (Flee, Get Food, Get Water, Hide, Live Outside, Shelter Us)

☚ **Fighting** (Get Me out of Here, Help Him Fight, Hurling Spear, Magic Spear, Wrestle Mightily)

☚ **Goat** (Bear Discomfort, Eat Anything, Run down Slope, Run up Slope, Strength of the Earth, Walk All Day)

Secret: **Escape** (When the devotee is in imminent danger of death [i.e., he is reduced to dying in a contest], his body disappears, then reappears in the nearest Gerendetho temple after a journey through Gerendetho's House in the God World. None of his possessions escape with him.)

Other Side: Gerendetho and his family live in a very pleasing beehive-shaped stone hut at the center of Goodwill in the Oldlands, in the Solar Realm. After death, worshippers enjoy the feasts and erotic rites there until it is time for them again to serve as mortals.

Disadvantages: Gerendetho initiates are freeloaders, not working the goods of Lodril and Oria to make their own food. They are only productive when under the firm hand of a strong leader or within Kostaddi, where cultural constraints encourage them to constructive work.

Mercario

The Street Entertainer

Mercario is a man who became a god, thanks to his own cleverness. He was a flamboyant thief and confidence trickster who made his living from games of "chance," impromptu street performances, and occasional dabbling with stolen property. Later he organized troupes of performers for festival and holy days, eventually becoming head of the entertainers' guild. His cult is widespread, throughout the Empire and as far away as Dragon Pass, fostered by street entertainers, tavern comedians, and confidence tricksters.

Mercario is associated with Donandar (see the Basic Magic chapter, page 111), and his worshippers usually know some of the Right Hand and Left Hand talents.

Entry Requirements: None.

Hometown: Dara Happa (but accepted by many pantheons).

Abilities: Balancing, Ceaseless Chatter, Devotee of Mercario or Initiate of Mercario, Juggling, Mythology of Mercario, Sleight of Hand, Soul Vision.



Virtues: Debonair, Irrepressible.

Affinities and Feats:

• **Street Entertainer** (Breathe Flame, Devastating Retort, Distract with Words, Hypnotic Tonality, Improbable Balancing Act, Invisible Hands)

Secret: **Grand Finale** (Using this secret, performers may end their act balancing, juggling, singing, and offering round the hat—all at once. At the culmination of a show in which he has used any entertainment magic, the devotee may “stack” any number of appropriate mundane and magical abilities, each one after the first causing a –3 penalty to the secret’s rating. If the devotee receives any level of victory, he successfully performs all of the “stacked” abilities. Of course, certain combinations are limited by physical impossibility.)

Other Side: Mercario’s Booth is just outside the Ketpalo, or Lodril’s Palace, but Mercario and his followers can be found wandering all across the God World.

Disadvantages: Worshipers are generally considered of suspect morals and irresponsible by the very communities they entertain.

Natha

The Cyclical Power



Natha is the reincarnating Moon Goddess. She dies, She is reborn, always in a different body, whether mortal, divine, spirit, or essence. She has seven forms, each manifesting a different power of cyclicism and a different stage of Her life. Natha is the Changing Goddess, now the Red Goddess, currently the owner behind the moon; but has previously been white, a different red, two different blues, black, and invisible and in due course will change again to white. Natha is the current form of the Cyclical Goddess. Natha the Justice Moon is the most common subcult.

Natha is known as the Avenger, and is always depicted as half black and half white, for she embraces contradictions. She heals and kills. She is thoughtful, calculating, even intellectual, but also furious and passionate. She is forgiving and vengeful. These paradoxes define her, for she is an agent of morality and balance. In her various aspects, Natha is widely worshipped by intelligent, concerned, thoughtful people, especially women; by professionals engaged in tasks directly related to the court systems; and by citizens seeking the more subtle benefits of the Lunar Way.

Entry Requirements: Embrace Natha’s contradictions and commit to the Lunar Way.

Homeland: Tarsh.

Abilities: Devotee of Natha or Initiate of Natha, Mythology of Natha, Mythology of the Moon, Optimism, Remember Who Wronged You, Sedenyic Philosophy, [Sickle or Scimitar] Fighting, Soul Vision, Turn from Attack.

Virtues: Implacable, Just.

Affinities and Feats:

① **Balancer** (Assess Appropriate Restitution, Avenging Fury, Heal Self Beforehand, Heal What I Hurt, Hurt What I Healed, Perfect Balance)

† **Nathic Combat** (Cutting Edge, Dance Past Blades, Devastating Riposte)

① **Otherworld** (Cut Otherworld Entity, Defend against Magic, Depart from Essence Planes, Depart from Spirit World, Enchant Silver, Recognize Open Way)

Secret: **Achieve Balance** (The worshipper is empowered to right wrongs by taking vengeance, and receives an automatic augment equal to ¼ the secret’s rating to any ability used to these ends.)

Other Side: Natha’s Fortress is a great palace. It stands upon the Nathic Plain near the Mountains of Revenge that cut across the surface of the Red Moon. Natha’s worshippers join her there after death and enjoy safety, comfort, and indulgence before they are reborn into a world they made better. From her palace, questers can exit to the surface of the Moon or to Sedenya’s Throne.

Disadvantages: Subject to the Lunar cycle (see page 113).

Navestos the Harvester

The Hard-Working Farmer



With his wife Oria, Lodril raised his Ten Sons, servant gods who themselves do the labor of the gods. Like their father, they are simple and unruly, passionate, respectful and loyal towards Yelm, but nonetheless often distracted by pleasure. Navestos is the Harvester, who bears the sickle and the basket. He obeys the orders of Morurder the Master, Mohenjar the Overseer, and Morkartos the Foreman, but sees himself as superior to his other brothers, the workers and diggers.

Entry Requirements: Open to men (women join the companion cult of Oria), who must agree to work hard, keep their place, and obey the Three Laws (see previous page).

Homeland: Dara Happa.

Abilities: Belly Laugh, Devotee of Navestos or Initiate of Navestos, Earth Lore, Farming, Know Local Lands, Mythology of Lodril and Oria, Mythology of Navestos, Sickle Fighting, Sing and Dance, Soul Vision, Strong.

Virtues: Hard-Working, Honest, Loyal, Passionate, Rustic.

Affinities and Feats:

♣ **Farming** (Bear Discomfort, Burn Weeds, Dry Field with Earthwarmth, Strength of the Earth, Work All Day)

✕ **Fertility** (Bless Crop ritual, Conceive Children, Pleasure Woman, Sow Oats, Tireless Lover)

† **Fighting** (Help Him Fight, Lava Spear, Slicing Sickle, Wrestle Mighitly)

Secret: **Harvest Crop** (Gives an automatic augment equal to ¼ the secret’s rating to any ability used in harvesting crops. It can also be used to augment a sickle attack.)

Other Side: Lodril’s Palace is in the center of Voshgatyuth, the Third Underworld. Here his worshippers revel and feast, enjoying at last the fruits of their dutiful labors until it is time to be reborn.

Disadvantages: Worshipers of Navestos are clearly identified as peasants and can expect to be treated as such by their social betters.

Odayla

The Deep Hunter



Odayla is the god of hunting, a son of Orlanth and the Lady of the Wild. He is most famous for wrestling the Great Bear into submission, although some say he is the Great Bear, who dies but awakens again each year. He lives with the wild things and has learned the magic of each creature that dwells in the wilderness. He is one of the Thunder Brothers, and during the Darkness he gave the Heortlings the skills and magic they needed to stay alive amid the monsters.

Entry Requirements: Be willing to live in the wilds, far from civilization.

Homeland: Heortling.

Abilities: Animal Lore, Archery, Climbing, Devotee of Odayla or Initiate of Odayla, Find Shelter, Fishing, Know Plants, Mythology of Odayla, Mythology of the Thunder Brothers, Soul Vision, Wrestling.

Virtues: Brave, Persistent, Respectful of Nature.

Affinities and Feats:

- ▼ **Bear** (Bear's Hide, Bear's Strength, Foraging, Hibernate, Identify Scent, Terrify Prey)
- **Hide** (Hide in Foliage, Mask Scent, Move Silently, Remain Motionless, Walk among Prey)
- ✦ **Hunting** (Acute Vision, Arrow Sureshot, Attract Game Animal, Run over Snow)

Secret: **Sleep Back to Life** (A devotee who dies of injuries can attempt to heal himself and return to life, if his body remains intact. In the wilderness, normal animals will not disturb an Odaylan corpse, for they know it is not food. If he succeeds, over a few days to many weeks [depending on the body's condition] the corpse heals completely, at which time the devotee awakens. Until his body recovers, the hunter's soul moves through the Otherworld. Some devotees know to begin certain hero-quests with *Sleep Back to Life*, dying and then continuing the quest on the Other Side before returning to their bodies. They must be cautious, for anything that happens to the quester may affect his body's ability to heal and thus cause true death.)

Other Side: Odayla's Camp is in Engziland near the Storm Eagle Tree, on the border of Orlanth's tula in the Storm Realm. After death, Odaylans range the wilds of the Storm Realm stalking and trapping wild, immortal beasts in the eternal thrill of the immortal chase. They also search for the best place to be reborn in the Inner World.

Disadvantages: Uncomfortable with civilization.

Selven Hara

The Companionable Traveler

Selven Hara was once a woman, but with the magic of Sedenya she became a goddess. She was born in the Fifth Wane (about 150 years ago) into a league of Lunar merchants. She traveled widely and studied the teachings of Etyries, the Lunar goddess of travel, trade, and communication. At Gostolos she heard and absorbed the Word of Etyries, whereupon she began her thirty years of ministry. After death she became a goddess to protect the organization that she had founded, the Ibex Moon Society, which exists to help Imperial citizens travel to and experience new lands and ways. Her followers are thus in part a form of travel agent, in part guides and explorers.

Entry Requirements: Accept the Lunar Way.

Homeland: Tarsh (but found in many places).

Abilities: Describe Surroundings, Devotee of Selven Hara or Initiate of Selven Hara, Draw Accurate Map, Knowledge of Foreign Lands, Knowledge of Foreign Ways, Make Good First Impression, Mythology of Etyries, Mythology of Selven Hara, Ride, Scan Terrain, Scimitar and Shield Fighting, Sedenyic Philosophy, Soul Vision, Speak [Language].

Virtues: Adventurous, Curious, Gregarious, Tolerant.



Affinities and Feats:

- ☞ **Discovery** (Encourage Trust, Find Hidden Paths, Interpret Spoken Language, Learn Local Gossip)
- ☞ **Travel** (Calm Pack Animals, Detect Ambush, Endurance, Read Trail)
- ☞ **Travel Safely** (Be Understood by Anyone, Calm Strangers, Detect Enemy, Find Shelter, Run)

Secret: **Escape Safely** (Automatically succeed at a single final action in any contest in which the character has used the *Travel Safely* affinity, even if a final action would not normally be allowed.)

Other Side: Selven Hara is ever on the move. Her Forwarding Address is a small office off Etyries' Crossroad in the center of the City of Understanding, which lies between Hero City and Saint City on the surface of the Red Moon. She rarely stays there, but she passes through regularly. Her worshippers likewise spend little time there before being reborn—there is no time to waste and too many things to see!

Disadvantages: Subject to the Lunar cycle (see page 113).

Skovara

Song and Puppet Girl



Skovara is a daughter of Ernalda born in the Green Age. With her husband Skovari, she has been entertaining people with her antics and jokes as long as anyone can remember. She knows how and when to make people laugh, cry, love, or hate. Her followers perform all manner of entertainment, but are best loved for their sacred puppet shows.

Skovara is associated with Donandar (see the Basic Magic chapter, page 111), and her worshippers usually know some of the Right Hand and Left Hand talents.

Entry Requirements: Only women may worship Skovara, but her husband Skovari provides similar abilities and magic.

Homelands: Esrolia, Heortling.

Abilities: Animal Lore, Control Children, Craft Puppet, Dance, Devotee of Skovara or Initiate of Skovara, Mimic Sound, Mythology of Ernalda, Mythology of the Weaver Women, Plant Lore, Puppetry, Sing, Soul Vision, Weaving.

Virtues: Cheerful, Flamboyant, Motherly, Unmerciful to Enemies.

Affinities and Feats:

- ☒ **Bless Family** (Beautify Self, Comfort Sick Child, Conceal Family, Ease Fears, Get Everyone's Attention, Make Children Laugh, Make Husband Laugh)
- ☒ **Bless Mothers** (Aid Conception, Aid Contraception, Bless Birth, Bless Domestic Animal, Bless Marriage, Bless Pregnancy)
- **Low Entertainment** (Make Audience Afraid, Make Audience Happy, Make Audience Sad, Make Music without Instrument, Make Puppets Look Real)

Secret: **Entertain Audience** (Allows the devotee to ignore multiple target penalties during a performance. It can also augment any affinity used on an audience member.)

Other Side: Skovara's Cottage is just outside Ernalda's Loom House. However, she is very rarely there, for she travels the Storm Realm and Earth Realm, spreading laughter and common wisdom. From her cottage, questers may travel to any other part of either the Storm or Earth Realm.

Ygg of Threestep Isle

Lord of the Sea Storm

Ygg is the Sea Storm. He sends raging winds to tear sails and hard rain to freeze ropes, both to test his worshippers and to destroy his enemies. He sends crushing icebergs to destroy ships, both to ensure that his worshippers sail supreme and to indulge his joy and love of destruction. He was a son of a glacier god at the height of its glory. Although his father and grandfather were defeated or tamed in the Gods War, Ygg was never conquered. He cared only for his worshippers, a band of nearly lost seafarers who sailed their ships through seas of salt and ice. Ygg steered them to refuge from the Black Ice and the Cascading Glacier. After centuries of isolation in their northern homeland, Ygg sent a great hero to lead his people to freedom. Dormal came and taught the rites of Openwater Sailing to the Yggites. Now they sail once again on the waters of the world, raiding all those they meet to give glory and sacrifices to their god.

Entry Requirements: None.

Abilities: Devotee of Ygg or Initiate of Ygg, Endure Cold, Ignore Ice and Snow, Mythology of Ygg, Soul Vision, Tough.



Virtues: Obedient, Reserved.

Affinities and Feats:

✓ Northern Sailing (Freeze Triolini, Pivot Ship, Resist Cold, Shipspeed, Stormsailing)

⊕ Sea Storm (Buckle Timbers, Fray Ropes, Howling Windblast, Summon Ice, Tear Rigging)

Secret: **Sail Through Ice** (Affects an entire ship [without multiple target penalties], allowing the sailors and captain to sail through ice and icy waters without their ship becoming stuck or damaged.)

Other Side: Ygg's God World home is his great longship Howling Stead, which is made of iron-hard ice that crushes its way through glaciers and floes upon the Icy Sea. A hurricane-force ice storm always blows around it, driving it where Ygg wills. His favored worshippers are his crewmen, cheerfully toiling over oars in freezing blasts so that they can occasionally raid other gods. Ygg can sail his ship anywhere in the Gods War.

Disadvantages: Worshippers are violent and rootless, distrusted everywhere. They come from many homelands originally, but all have lost or given up their families.

The Divine Landscape

Gods and goddesses are numberless in Glorantha. Their conscious attention normally resides in the God World, but comes to the Inner World in response to worship. One third of the material in Glorantha came from the gods. They made the world

through struggle and cooperation, with love and with rivalry. Many died and gave their substance to make the Inner World, but others live on and affect everyday life. Many deities are indifferent to people, some are hostile, and a few are cooperative and receive sacrificial worship.

Although the World is Made of Everything, places abound that are still made of one Otherworld. Gods, usually small, still inhabit parts of Glorantha. They are not people that walk around (most of the time), but instead are the divine parts of the world. For example, a theist river differs from an ordinary river in that a god (and his family) dwells there, hence the term "divine landscape." These deities are not usually worshipped in full cults (although they can be), but they often grant magic as **guardian daimones**.

Although only a small number of deities are anthropomorphic, these are naturally the ones with whom most humans associate. Thus, to most humans it appears that mainly human-like deities inhabit the universe. Trolls see their deities as troll-like, and other races see their deities as reflections of themselves. Even so, the wind is still the wind, the earth is still dirt and stone, and the waters are still fluid.

Daimones

A daimon is a petty god that serves its more powerful kin. Some are unique individuals, the children of gods of the pantheon. Others are representatives of a divine race, the common inhabitants of the God World. Within the Inner World, daimones inhabit powerful parts of the landscape, those that are not just part of the mixed everything of the Mortal World.

In *HeroQuest*, landscape daimones use the same rules as guardians. This is not to say that guardians and daimones are the same type of entity, just that they work using the same game rules.



Skovara the Puppetress is a form of Ernalda, the Allmother of the Orlanthe peoples, including the Heortlings and Esrolians. With her dancing puppets and uncanny mimicry, Skovara can as easily entertain the clan's children on a wet afternoon as bring home the inner truths of a half-understood myth.

△ Meeting a Daimon

The approach of the Whirlwind Desert is all that matters today. It devastates whatever land it travels over. It leaves a scoured terrain behind. Officials have offered a huge reward for anyone who can save the town.

Mr. Puma made the connection that the Faceless Clay Jar would have the solution to the Whirlwind Desert. Of course! What else would it mean that “Who cannot face this wind will defeat it”? So the band has gone to free the Faceless Jar.

We pass over the hasty journey over the Dragonspine, then north upriver. We leave out the sessions of plan making, plotting, and stealing food along the way. We do not retell how Hazeel was insulted and Ingomar went berserk, how Mr. Puma found the way and Jane broke the jar. We describe how it looks when its lid is lifted free:

It is a thing of six colors, each a stripe in a flapping ribbon of body like a rainbow eel snapping its tail in place, grinning at the onlookers. Twenty feet tall it is, exuding thin smoke from a line of pores along its length. Faces on the ends of its several antennae mock onlookers by mirroring their images, looking back on themselves. The head has no face, just a great mouth, open wide.

Everyone throws their sand, then, upon the flapping body. The sand from the Whirlwind Desert that has been burning holes in their pouches for days. That sand, yes it is a good idea. Throw it.

At that, when the flakes of his enemy strike him, Mr. Faceless Rainbow Eel rises up like a snake going to strike. It looks around, far around and way past the people beneath it. Its little faces slowly sniff the air, and then its mouth points towards where the Whirlwind Desert is. And it turns and swims on, towards it, faster than any people can go. It leaves the summoners behind, and it goes off to the battle that is seen for miles and miles around for the next day and a night.

When the heroes get back to Alda-chur, they find a great celebration just ending. It has marked the victory of Jon Fairweather, a wizard, who got credit, payment, and fame for ending the Whirlwind Desert.

Demigods

A demigod is part god and part human. Deities occasionally mate with human beings, resulting in the birth of a superhuman but not immortal person. The demigod is usually like a human in every way except that he possesses supernatural powers. He owes his power to inheritance, not personal deeds, and that inheritance depends upon the parent's power:

Parent was a demigod: +40 to one or two abilities.

Parent was a daimon, village deity, etc.: +40 to all affinities, or possesses the daimon's functions as magical abilities at about this level.

Parent was a god or goddess: +40 to all affinities and several other abilities relevant to the deity, perhaps as much as +60 in the most important one.

Sacrificing to Landscape Deities

A landscape deity's functions can be gained as feats, as described in “Worshipping Guardians” in the Relationships chapter, page 94. Gaining a feat from a function counts as misapplied worship.

The hero makes a sacrifice to the daimon as normal, but can only use the feat in the vicinity of the deity. The more powerful and encompassing the entity, the farther afield the magic works. Hedkoranth's Hill is fairly small, so the feat would work only in the local area (or perhaps only for as long as the worshippers needed to raid a nearby clan). Kero Fin is tall and powerful, and her magic can be used throughout Kerofinela. If the hero leaves the deity's area of influence (which can vary depending on factors such as the time of year), he cannot use the feat until he returns and again offers sacrifice to the entity. (A player hero does not have to spend additional hero points to regain the feat.)

Worshipping landscape deities weakens them, for some of their magic is invested in the worshipper instead of their natural home. Each feat known by a worshipper decreases the appropriate function's rating by 1, even if the feat is never used or the worshipper is out of the area.

Temple Guardians

Most temples have a guardian daimon, often the temple's founder or a famous priest. Temple guardians can act only within the temple and its grounds, and most have a physical form that ties them to the Inner World, such as an altar, sacred statue, or ritual item. The guardian's nature and power depend on the temple's importance, history, and number of worshippers. Thus, a seemingly minor location might have a powerful guardian if it used to be more important, while a ruined temple's guardian might weaken over the years as it is forgotten. Temple guardians are rarely worshipped directly in exchange for magic.

If the guardian's physical form is lost, stolen, or damaged, the guardian becomes impotent until things are put right. The temple can still be used for worship. Destroying the sacred item does not harm the daimon, but it does deconsecrate the temple, which no longer provides the ritual bonus for being a holy place.

Orandta the Both

The temple of Five Full Tuns lies a few miles outside the walls of the great city of Nochet in northern Esrolia. It is one of the most sacred temples of Esra, the Barley Mother. Pilgrims travel from far and wide to throw a handful of barley into the Offering Pit, and in return receive a single blessed barleycorn from the First Tun to take home. The temple is guarded by Orandta the Both, named for her dual manifestations.

Form: Most of the time, Orandta is a gentle, welcoming presence in the temple. When the temple is under threat, however, she manifests as a shrill-voiced and wild-haired harridan, with a hemp sack in her hand into which she plucks the fortunes of those who cross her.

Functions:

☉ Awareness—Gentle

Presence 5W.

⚡ Blessing—Fertile

Barleycorn 5W.

☒ Defense—Curse with Ill

Fortune 1W2.



Landscape Daimones

The sample daimon cults on this page detail small, local divine beings of Dragon Pass. Variations abound, and narrators are encouraged to shape their own deities.

Earthtop Hill

There are many Earthtop Hills, for the beings described here are common Earth daimones. The Earth Goddess was involved in numerous mythical events, and in most of those places where the event occurred a lesser goddess has since been present. Worship of the lesser goddess began, and now she is a daimon with a unique function based on whatever the Earth Goddess did. Earthtop hills usually have an open-air altar with a rock in the center where she receives sacrifice.

Form: The hill. When she appears to worshippers she manifests as a gigantic woman the color of earth.

Functions:

☉ Awareness—Hill Awareness 15 \mathbb{L} 2.

☞ Blessing—[Blessing] 15 \mathbb{L} 3.

Determine what the Earth Goddess did here, and add the appropriate function: escaped pursuer (Hide from Foe), found her daughter or son (Springtime Bonus), laughed (Emotional Comfort), mated (Increase Fertility), rested (Healing Sleep), fought (Smash Foe), or taught farming (Bless Crops).

☐ Defense—Defend My Priestess 15 \mathbb{L} 2.

Hedkoranth's Hill

Many hills throughout Dragon Pass are sacred to various wind entities. Hedkoranth's Hill is a representative sample. It is a tall hill in Sartar with an ancient altar at the top where sacrifices are burned.

Form: The air over Hedkoranth's Hill.

Functions:

☉ Awareness—Area Awareness 5 \mathbb{L} 2.

☞ Blessing—Protect Followers on This Hill 5 \mathbb{L} 2.

☐ Defense—Throw Object with Wind 15 \mathbb{L} 2.

Mr. or Mrs. Village Deity

This is a pretty standard settlement deity. It acts as a guardian to a village, stead, or other small home of people. Each has its own shrine and local name, but all embody basic survival abilities to help the people live. These are casually called "Three Fs and One S" (Feed, Fight, and Fornicate; and the First Law, "Share"). These rough beings have a center of power instead of a mortal body.

Village deities do not attack enemies or defend directly, but always give their powers to a local representative or favorite. In the God World, the common farmers who patiently labor in the fields of the ruling deities are of this magnitude.

Form: A statue, holy rock, grave, unusual land formation, or the like.

Functions:

☉ Awareness—Find Food 15 \mathbb{L} 2.

☞ Blessings—Healthy Children 15 \mathbb{L} 2, Share and Share Alike 15 \mathbb{L} .

☐ Defense—Fight Well 15 \mathbb{L} 2.

The River

Dragon Pass is home to the first River, named Engizi. In the Chaos Age, Engizi came from the God World as a flood and drowned the Chaos gods. He falls now from the sky at Skyfall Lake, and flows pure and divine as The River until he reaches the Upland Marsh. There his body mingles with other waters and becomes a normal part of the mixed world.

Engizi is worshipped by a few dedicated individuals as a full deity, but most of the fishermen and durulz who live near The River worship him as a guardian daimon.

Form: The River, from Skyfall Lake to the Upland Marsh.

Engizi rarely appears in person, instead sending a huge pillar of standing water (a daimon) to claim his sacrifice.

Functions:

☉ Awareness—Know The River's Currents 15 \mathbb{L} 2.

☞ Blessing—Ford The River 15 \mathbb{L} 4.

☐ Defense—Wash Enemy Down The River 15 \mathbb{L} 2.

Children of The River

Engizi has several well-known children who appear to worshippers, especially to help them if needed. The best-known are detailed here. These are daimones who share in their father's sacrifices, but receive no direct worship themselves. These supernatural beings can appear only within the confines of their father's realm, The River and its tributaries.

Dendelle, Peaceful Lake

Dendelle lives in the longest peaceful stretch of The River, and is the most common messenger to appear for his father. He grants his blessing when worshippers need help getting food. He appears as a man with a turtle's head and a fishy body from the waist down.

Abilities: Eloquence 15 \mathbb{L} 2, Initiate of Engizi 10 \mathbb{L} , Send Food 5 \mathbb{L} 3, Sense Hunger 5 \mathbb{L} 2.

Tactics: When he uses his *Send Food* blessing, fish swim into nets or onto hooks, frogs hop onto boats or the shore, edible water plants bob to the surface, and so on.

Greatfall, The Deadly Wave

Greatfall is a fighter, who avenges wrongs done to his father. He appears as a twenty-foot-tall wave that rises out of The River and flows overland to drown its foes.

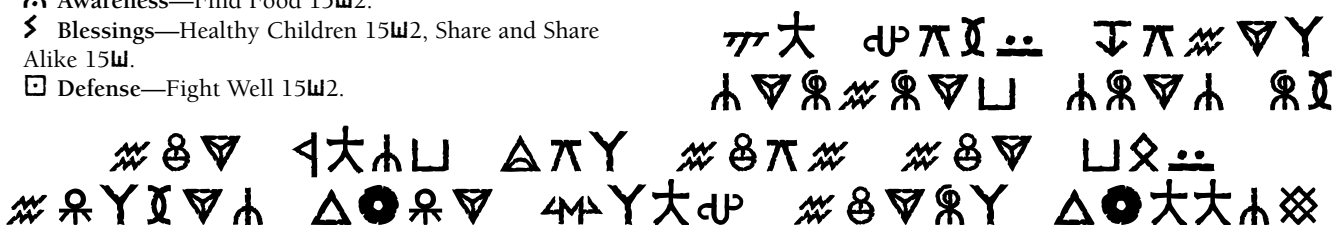
Abilities: Deadly Wave 10 \mathbb{L} 3, Fast 5 \mathbb{L} 2, Initiate of Engizi 10 \mathbb{L} .

Tactics: Greatfall must bid all of his AP on a single attack.

Varlene, Crossing Guard

Varlene is Engizi's ferrywoman. She appears as a female human, beautiful to look at but with an impersonal, inhuman voice. She manifests when people need to cross The River, and may carry them within her watery body, take the shape of a boat or raft, or cause the surface to become solid.

Abilities: Bear over Water 10 \mathbb{L} 3, Flow from Harm 1 \mathbb{L} 2, Initiate of Engizi 10 \mathbb{L} .



The Divine Realms

All deities come from the divine realms of the God World, a vast, nearly measureless region that contains all of their divine houses and abodes. It is alive but unchanging, where deities and heroes do what they have always done. Every deity in each of its forms exists here simultaneously. The God World resembles the Inner World, but is more vibrant and extreme—the Storm Realm is always windy, the Solar Realm is always blessed with sunshine, and the Darkness Realm is full of shadows and monstrous (to human) entities.

Worshippers normally enter the God World through the house of their deity. The mythic terrain of the pantheon surrounds each god's abode. The abodes of enemy gods are farther away. The dwellings of foreign deities lie farther yet, usually far beyond caring. The deity's house is usually in some place beyond the Inner World: in the Sky, the Underworld, or the depths of the Ocean. Yet, by the nature of the sacrifices, these distant regions become coexistent with the place of worship.

People shape the world through their worship, which vitalizes the deities to reenact their cosmic lives. During worship, people sacrifice things to the deity (including their time and attention) in a ceremony. The sacred precincts—the temple and worship area—are literally united with the deity's house, its home on the God World. On holy days, the deity departs its house and performs the myths that made it what it is, witnessed or perhaps even aided by its worshippers.

Houses of the Gods

The house of a deity is in touch with the eternal truths that underlie myths. It is where the secret of the deity is kept or revealed. Worshippers, however, see the deity's house differently depending on their understanding of the deity. The Wenelians, for example, see Orlanth as a great boar, much different from the Heortlings' view of Orlanth as a clan or tribal chieftain. The Wenelians and Heortlings see different parts or aspects of the Storm Realm when they visit it during worship services. As a deity's powers are revealed to his worshippers, they can see more of his house—parts they never noticed before, but that were always there. As a deity loses followers and power, parts of the house disappear from sight, although they still exist.

The secret home of the deity is unchanging, but it also exists in all "times" of the deity's myths. Worshippers see and remember the divine magnificence in detail and glory, but usually do not recognize the fellow who sat at their elbow and talked all night.

Outside of the divine house, the world is very different, for leaving the house usually sends the worshipper into the Hero Planes. Some God World "paths" do exist, such as the Golden Pathway followed by Lokarnos and Lightfore, the great Spiral Storm, or the many Roads to Hell. These routes lead to and from the houses of related deities, but do not "go" anywhere else.

Time passes in the God World at a different rate than it does in the Inner World. When a worshipper spends an hour in the God World, his supporters might experience up to seven hours. Occasionally, a quester will experience more time in the

God World than his supporters, but this is rare. The rate at which time passes is not always arbitrary, and usually does not vary for a given journey. Most people cannot predict how quickly time will pass in the God World, but after seven times the expected time has passed, most supporters assume that their hero has perished or been lost.

While the worshippers are gone, an outsider will still see the physical building of the temple filled with the bodies of the congregation, who stand, kneel, sit, dance, sing, and respond to unseen events. However, it is difficult if not impossible to attack or interact with the congregation. Even if the temple is burned, the initiates and devotees will be unharmed until they return from the God World.

Want to Know More? See the Heroquesting chapter on page 191.

God World Perceptions

Perception in the God World is not the same as in the Inner World. Individual focus and expectation affects awareness. Also, because of its nature, the God World erases human individuality. In the God World, people see what they expect or need to see. While flying in, Orlanthi focus on where they are going, looking ahead and skipping everything unimportant.

This concentration is necessary for worshippers to reach their destination, and everyone is trained to do it. Thus, most Orlanthi flyers see a vast and nearly featureless forest beneath them, but Odayla's worshippers see their god's hunting camps and the trails of the Great Bear. Heortlings are most familiar with Orlanth's Stead and the Storm Realm, but they know of the other realms as well through their myths and rituals. The Spirit World and Essence Planes are alien territory, where their magic does not work properly. Heortlings do not normally enter these planes except during the few heroquests where their gods entered them.

Most deities
do not personally appear. Their manifestations are through worshippers using their feats and affinities, or through intermediary daimones and demigod servants.

What the Priest Says

Is this just a dream? Does no substance hold here?

Wherever you do not look seems insubstantial, about to change. Use your Soul Vision, however, and you can see it clearly. Your vision is reversed. At the edges, in the corners of your eyes, everything is now sure and fixed. Things in the center of your vision are indistinct until you focus your attention on them. As you do so, a place or object often reveals itself as an entity. If they are abstract and mutable, it is into themselves that they change, showing parts of an entity so vast that no eye can encompass it.

Likewise wherever you travel. Nothing is quite fixed, and everything is either spectacular or anonymous. If you know this place or thing then it takes form, so that a hunter can recognize the dangers and delights of the Limitless Forest that is in the wilderness between the homes of civilized gods, or the nobles will know the beings in their god's palace. But beyond your own experience lies the unknown.



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ANIMISM

Animists live in a world alive with spirits that are to be treated with, feared, or worshipped. People belong to animist religions called traditions, which teach a way of life and tell how to live among Nature without hostility. Tradition members use ecstatic ceremonies to worship the spirits, led by their visionary spirit-talkers and shamans. In return, they gain the favor and protection of the spirits that made and make up the world.

Traditions unite several practices that are more useful to people. Practices are, in a word, practical. Advanced animists have relationships with individual spirits, who in response draw closer and lend more magic.

This chapter introduces the Traditions of animist religions and details how Worshippers gain magic from spirits. Sample Traditions and Practices illustrate the magic available to worshippers. The Spirit Landscape describes the spirits that inhabit the Natural World. The Spirit World can be dangerous, but it is the home of the spirits, and it defines how animists view and use magic.

Traditions

A **tradition** is a complete animist religion. It defines the spirits worshipped and how worshippers should behave, and provides basic knowledge about ecstatic rites, spirit relationships, and the Spirit World. It teaches its members how to invoke spirits and access their powers. All traditions contain one or more **practices**, which teach how to deal with a spirit or group of spirits.

Spirits in the Natural World have a proper place, and in that place they are generally inoffensive as long as they are respected. Traditions include the knowledge to properly interact with these spirits through ceremonies led by spirit-talkers or shamans.

Characteristics of Animism

Otherworld Origin: Spirit World.

Name for Mortal World: Natural World.

Entities: Great spirits, majestic spirits, practice spirits, tradition spirits.

Homelands: Bison People, Grazer, Puma People.

Worshippers Have: Spirits.

Magic: Charms, fetishes, spirit allies, fetches.

Members: Spiritists, practitioners.

Leaders: Spirit-talkers, shamans.

Type of Worship: Ecstatic.

Otherworld spirits have no native body. When brought into the Natural World they are generally hostile to living beings. Most traditions provide protection against such entities. Similarly, anything material that acts alive but has no spirit is unnatural, and cannot help but be harmful.

Spirit Ranks

Spirits are divided by function and magnitude into **great spirits**, **majestic spirits**, **practice spirits**, and **simple spirits** (also called tradition spirits).

Great spirits are the centers of traditions. They are generally 10 \mathbb{L} 8 to 10 \mathbb{L} 12 in power. These entities are so great that no magic is obtained from them directly.

Majestic spirits are the objects of practices. Worshippers act as followers to these entities in order to advance their personal magical power. Majestic spirits are individual entities, with best abilities ranging from 10 \mathbb{L} 5 to 10 \mathbb{L} 7 (or rarely) 10 \mathbb{L} 8; some practices have multiple majestic spirits, who might each have a best rating of 10 \mathbb{L} 4 to 10 \mathbb{L} 6. Although a majestic spirit almost always has a secret, many independent majestic spir-

The Hero Wars are between... This World and the Otherworld

The Otherworld is normally separate from the world of mortals, perceived by only a few powerful people. But the barriers between men and spirits seem to be breaking down. The traditions that have always protected people against bad spirits no longer work as well as they once did, or else the wicked ones who allow bad spirits to come into the world have become more powerful. When the wall between worlds disappears, there will be no room for normal people. Only the bravest of men and most skilled of magicians can stop the evil from breaking through the barrier.

Worshippers

Animist traditions have different levels of membership commitment. Greater commitment yields better magic. The basic members, called **spiritists**, gain charms, but have no direct relationships with particular spirits. **Practitioners** are more committed. They have personal relationships with spirits, and gain stronger magic from them. They deal primarily with spirits in the Natural World. **Shamans** are specialists who can go to the spirit Otherworld with near impunity. There they hunt or bargain with spirits to gain their magic.

Much of the challenge of being an animist is locating the spirits that can grant desired magic. Narrators should treat this search as any other character goal, putting interesting story obstacles in the animist's way.

Practitioners and shamans are often considered crazy by outsiders because they do things that ordinary people do not, like talk to rocks, eat forbidden foods, or wear their clothes inside out. Other animists understand this behavior, for they know that the shaman or practitioner is merely following the taboos of the spirits he has befriended.

△ Galan Wants a New Tradition

Galan wants more magic. Bill was impressed with the abilities of Barvanro, a practitioner, in the Adventure of the Faceless Clay Revenge, and decides that he wants to join the Speaking Rocks Practice. Since everyone is recovering from wounds, Galan accompanies him partway home.

Galan pays 1 hero point to gain the relationship of Student of Barvanro at 13. Barvanro explains his religion.

Barvanro is a member of the widespread, but small, Brilliant Visions Tradition. Galan spends some time with Barvanro to learn how the visionary shamanic religion sees the universe, the names and places of its spirits, his attitudes towards the rest of the world, and where other members live. He learns that a shaman named Lighting Up made the world, that the Spirit World is his fetch, and that the gods and Western saints are shadows of the majestic spirits of the tradition. Barvanro looks into Galan's spirit and declares it a good "baby spirit." Bill decides that Galan accepts this and decides to learn *Brilliant Visions Tradition Knowledge* at the starting level of 13. Since this is done during play it costs him just 1 hero point.

After the session is over and the group is back at Alda-chur, Bill decides he wants to raise his relationship and his new *Tradition Knowledge* and spends 1 hero point for each to raise them to 14. Later, Bill decides that Galan wants to join the tradition. Kathy reminds him that Barvanro lives in Irist Hold. Since the band is just then setting off on a pollen-collecting expedition into the Vale of Flowers, he has to wait. He consoles himself with raising his *Tradition Knowledge* by +1 before the expedition, and his relationship with Barvanro afterwards.

Concentrating Animism

As described in the Basic Magic chapter, page 108, a hero can concentrate his magic use on animism. After giving up all talents, affinities, feats, scriptures, spells, and grimoires, the animist pays half the normal hero point cost to learn or improve animist magic, even if it does not stem from his tradition (such as common magic charms). Any animist can concentrate his magic, but it is required to learn certain types of magic, such as gaining a spirit ally or learning a practice secret (including becoming a shaman).

The hero can use any common magic charms that he has as active abilities after concentrating his magic. However, tradition and practice spirits in charms (see below) cannot be used in this way, and still provide only an automatic augmentation.

Spiritist

Everyone from an animist homeland starts as a spiritist. They attend communal festivals and dances throughout the year. In return, they get the community benefits for worshipping local spirits, and also for the rites performed on special occasions. Spiritists may or may not commit themselves to a specific practice (depending on the tradition). Membership in a practice gives additional magic, but the tradition defines the regular cycle of community rites and overall picture of the world.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to join an animist religion during play is questioned by a spirit-talker on his familiarity with the tradition, his relationship with the community, and his cultural or religious virtue. If successful, your hero takes an oath to obey and worship the great spirit. He is now a spiritist.

New Occupation: Spirit-Talker



Spirit-talkers are full-time spirit workers for their tradition, usually a community leader, shaman, or specialist in a local type of spirit. A spirit-talker leads public worship for the annual cycles of life, and dances for and provides offerings to all of the spirits. He also leads the community in propitiatory rites to keep enemy spirits at bay. Many spirit-talkers were born with natural spirit powers.

Spirit-talker is an occupation and a way of life, not a level of worship. Still, performing his duties requires that a spirit-talker be a practitioner or shaman, not merely a spiritist. Candidates undergo a test, perhaps overseen by a local religious hierarchy, but always witnessed by the spirits and the community they will serve. Spirit-talkers are occasionally appointed by the tradition or tribe, and so might need only a personal relationship to someone in power to gain the

position. In most homelands, however, they are chosen by their ability or a ritual association (for example, the head of a family who intercedes with the ancestors).

Abilities: Charismatic Presence, Dance for Hours, Herbalism, Know Local Spirits, Lead Ecstatic Worship.

Typical Personality: Mysterious. Most spirits have certain traits that they expect of their spirit-talkers.

Typical Relationships: to Family, Spirit Place, Tribe, or other group of Spiritists; to Practice.

Followers: Spirit-talkers often have an assistant to help them.

Standard of Living: Common or Prosperous, usually a step higher than the community's common standard of living.

Typical Equipment: Accommodation, ritual costume and accessories, special implements.

Benefits and Obligations

A new spiritist receives five charms containing tradition spirits. Any practitioner from his tradition can provide more. He can usually keep all his common magic if he wants.

The hero must participate in religious rites that renew the world, keep bad spirits at bay, and speed the rebirth of plants and animals. These rites take up about 10% of the spiritist's time and resources (including hero points). They occur at the times of year when people naturally get together, and sustain the everyday social fabric.

Contest: Become a Spiritist

Appropriate Abilities: [Cultural or Tradition Virtue], Relationship to [Intercessor], [Tradition] Knowledge.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 14.

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to join the religion and gain *Worship [Great Spirit]* at a rating equal to his [Tradition] Knowledge; if he does not have [Tradition] Knowledge, he must pay a hero point at once to gain both abilities at a rating of 13 each.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not yet ready, but may reapply later. He should spend more time learning about the tradition or improving his relationship with the spirit-talker or community.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the spirit-talker, community, or spirits so badly that he can never attempt to join the religion again.

△ Galan Joins a Tradition

The band has to travel to the Grazelands to escort a merchant on the Red Plaid Blanket Adventure. Bill has Galan convince everyone to go by way of Irist Hold and so he gets to visit his teacher again.

Barvanro is happy to see his student, and is deeply pleased that Galan wants to become a spiritist. Barvanro draws some runes on the ground and casts his speaking stones upon them. He gets down on his hands and knees and puts his face right against each stone and stares. At last he rises, uncrosses his eyes, and says that *Lighting Up* wants Galan as a worshipper. He makes an announcement, and followers begin to gather from all around for the ceremony. During the rites, Barvanro cuts the sacred symbol into Galan's forehead and announces the good news.

Galan is now a spiritist of the Brilliant Visions Tradition. Since this is done during play it costs Bill 3 hero points. He gains the ability of *Worship Lighting Up* at 15 (equal to his current *Brilliant Visions Tradition Knowledge* rating). He also acquires five tradition spirits in charms. Galan can select two, but Barvanro assigns the other three.

Kathy: Barvanro has no choice in these matters, and so he gives you *Braining Rock*, which you've seen in action...

Bill: It's why I wanted to join!

Kathy: ... at 18, *Stay Awake* at 14, and *See Spirits* at 10. Do you know what you want to take?

Bill: Can I choose them later?

Kathy: OK, sure. Choose from the *Sample Charms*, though, or I'll need to approve it.

Spiritist Abilities

Magic—*Tradition Spirits and Charms.* Spiritists may be able to join a practice and receive practice spirits in charms even if they do not become a practitioner. Spiritists are not required to concentrate their magic.

Mundane Relationship—*Relationship to [Intercessor]* tells how in favor the hero is with the practitioner or shaman who conducts the ecstatic rites or shows a connection to the spirit place where local rites are conducted.

Myths and Rituals—*[Tradition] Knowledge* shows understanding of the important spirits, rites of worship, and natural enemies of the tradition; of customs and ways of life; and of facts hidden from outsiders. This ability is of no use when dealing with spirits that are not part of the tradition, since even spirits that seem similar to tradition spirits come from different parts of the Spirit World and have different attitudes.

Piety—*Worship [Great Spirit]* represents the hero's piety, knowledge of the Spirit World, and personal connection to the tradition's great spirit.

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the tradition keyword as abilities.

Tradition Spirits and Charms

Charms are ritually made objects that hold tradition spirits. A charm has a single ability with a set rating, which cannot be changed or increased. Spiritists can only use common magic charms or those from their tradition.

A charm gives an automatic augment whenever the owner performs any action related to its ability, as long as the charm is touching his skin or is otherwise on his person. No contest is needed: it is always on, and so acts as a "lucky charm."

A tradition knows how to work with certain spirits, which provide a small medley of useful magic. Some traditions are rich in spirits, others poor. Tradition spirits are usually simple spirits (see "Spirit Ranks" on page 131), with a single ability.

Adding a charm with an ability rating up to 20 costs 2 hero points, but more powerful charms are more expensive; see the *Hero Improvement Costs—Gain a New Charm or Fetish* table on page 141 for details. For simplicity, charms are often described by the magic they grant, not the spirit they contain.

✂ *Sample Charms:* Antler Fighting 16, Breathe Underwater 10, Fly like Beetle 19, Hard as Rock 18, Jump over Water 14, Run like Hare 17, Scale Cliff Wall 2W, Sharp Vision 14, Sniff Food 14, and so on.

Common Magic Charms

Most common religions have a member who serves as a leader at local rites, and whoever does this can make common magic charms that work like tradition charms, except the hero can raise their ability rating, just like any other common magic ability. This is very likely the person who introduced the hero to the common religion in the first place.

Any animist who concentrates his magic can use the common magic charms he knows as active abilities. He can continue to increase their ratings as normal for common magic.

△ Near the end of the Red Plaid Adventure

Kathy: OK then, those three are dead and the others are gone.

Since you rolled a critical, Rick, Hengal senses that they are in panic, going away, and no one is around. You won.

Rick: Good thing. Hengal is out of hero points!

Bill: I could have died! I don't have much in the way of useful magic. If I had some more powerful charms I might do better next time. Do I have to go to Irist Hold for that?

Kathy: You can go to any practitioner to get more charms. Did you spend any time learning where your other practitioners were?

Bill: I guess so. Wouldn't I know that?

Kathy: You would probably try. Tell you what, use your Tradition Knowledge to find if there's anyone nearby who can create more for you. That's um, Brilliant Visions, I think.

Bill: Can I use my *Student of Barvanro* instead? It's higher.

Kathy: Well, that would only tell you where another one of his followers or students is. You can get charms from anyone in the tradition, so use that one. But you can use your relationship as an augment.

Bill: Yeah, fine. What's the resistance?

Kathy: Let's see, we know that the tradition is widespread but scattered. I'll make it 17. I made it, you beat me though. Marginal victory for you means there is one around. You remember that boss—what's his name there?—Barvanro, told you about a friend of his nearby who was a fire worshipper. He can make you some new ones.

Bill: I'm going to go there, then. I have to. You guys with me?

Spiritists and Practices

When people join a tradition, their interaction with the great spirit often involves one of the tradition's core practices. Thus, a spiritist sometimes joins a specific practice without actually becoming a practitioner. This costs 1 hero point, but generally does not require a contest.

A spiritist member of a practice cannot gain any magical ability restricted to practitioners. He can spend hero points to gain or improve [*Practice*] Knowledge or Follower of [*Majestic Spirit*] (see "Practitioner," below), but does not get them for free. What he *does* have is a ready source of practitioners to create charms for him, including charms containing practice spirits.

A spiritist must give 10% of his time and resources (including hero points) to each practice that he joins in this way, in addition to the 10% he dedicates to the tradition. If he later becomes a practitioner, he must pay the full hero point cost.

In many traditions, few members remain spiritists. Instead, rather than just joining a practice, most immediately undergo the second test to become a practitioner.

Practice Charms

A practitioner can place a practice spirit into a charm and give it to a spiritist member of the practice. This practice charm works just like a tradition charm, and costs the same number of hero points. Even if the practice spirit has more than one ability, the charm has only one, set by the practitioner when he binds the spirit. If the spiritist leaves the practice, the spirit will depart the first time it is used, and the charm will stop working.

△ Galan Gains a Practice Charm

Bill: Doesn't this tradition have any better spirits than the ones I have? I need something more useful in combat, like Crushing Fists. The book says nothing about this tradition. But I want to be in the Speaking Rocks Practice.

Kathy: OK, what do we need here?

Bill: I know my *Brilliant Visions Tradition Knowledge* and *Worship Lighting Up* already. I want to ask Barvanro for a Crushing Fists spirit.

Kathy: Don't you want to be a practitioner? Then you could get it on your own.

Bill: No, not yet. I want to see how good it's going to be.

Kathy: Well, OK, I assume you don't tell him that, so he's amenable. Do you have 2 hero points? This is offscreen.

Bill: Yep. So I'll erase them, then?

Kathy: OK, so Barvanro was in town, and he is pleased that you are continuing your spiritual development. You learn that Rockface is the majestic spirit that spat out all of the speaking and other magic rocks that you will learn about. Galan, because you are just joining the practice as a spiritist, you don't receive *Speaking Rocks Practice Knowledge* or *Follower of Rockface* for free, but you can pay the hero points for them now if you want to.

Bill: Do I have to?

Kathy: No, but it'll help you when you become a practitioner.

Bill: Nah, I'm not worried about that now. So I'm a member of the Speaking Rocks Practice, then?

Kathy: You're in.

Bill: Great. And I can get a practice spirit?

Kathy: Yes, in a charm. It will give you an augmentation just like your other charms.

Bill: Yeah! I want
Crushing Fists.



The Plateau of Statues is a monument to forgotten gods and fallen peoples. Travelers are dwarfed by the wreckage of an unearthly chariot, itself towered over by the distant statues of dead spirits and unworshipped gods.



Practitioner

Most animists become practitioners, worshippers with special relationships to spirits that give them obligations and powers beyond those of a spiritist. These “practitioners of the Arts” lead ceremonies, befriend spirits, create charms and fetishes, and intercede for others with a set of spirits defined by the practice.

Practitioners serve a practice, not just the tradition. The majestic spirit they follow has stories and a personality of its own, and gives a different set of rites. Majestic spirits are more important and accessible to practitioners than the tradition’s great spirit. In return for worship, majestic spirits provide practice spirits to practitioners. Majestic spirits are often the source of some of the tradition spirits as well.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to become a practitioner during play must be a spiritist of the tradition. A spirit-talker will test his connection to the practice’s majestic spirit and his understanding of the practice’s knowledge and custom. He will summon practice spirits to explore the candidate’s hidden magic and secret thoughts. It is usually helpful to be a spiritist member of the practice first, and some practices require this.

If the hero is accepted, he participates in a special ceremony that opens the Spirit World so that he can pledge himself to the majestic spirit. *Be sure to put the majestic spirit’s rune in a prominent place on your character sheet.*

Benefits and Obligations

A practitioner has all the benefits of a spiritist. He may spend hero points to gain magic from his practice. He can join helper practices to gain spirits from them. Practitioners who concentrate their magic can keep any common magic charms that they have and use their abilities actively. However, many spirits frown on magic that comes from outside the tradition.

A practitioner spends 10% of his time and resources (including hero points) in the tradition, and another 10% in each practice he joins. This time is spent making charms, teaching members, and dealing with spirits. If a practitioner has one or more *Friendship with [Practice Spirit]* relationships, he must give a total of 10% of his time to these spirits (the narrator can require more if he has many); a spirit ally requires a further 10% (see page 137). A practitioner’s requirement is thus from 20% to 40% or more, depending on his spirit relationships.

Contest: Become a Practitioner

Appropriate Abilities: Follower of [Majestic Spirit], [Practice Virtue], [Tradition] Knowledge (–10) or [Practice] Knowledge.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 1W.

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to become a practitioner. He receives one friendly practice spirit (and the corresponding *Friendship with [Practice Spirit]* at 13) for free, with no additional contest needed. If he does not already have *Follower of [Majestic Spirit]*, he gains it for free at his current *Worship [Great Spirit]* rating.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not ready. He should spend more time improving his relationship with the majestic spirit or studying the practice. He may reapply later.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the spirit-talker, community, or spirits such that he can never attempt to join the practice again. If he is a spiritist in the practice, he is expelled from it.

Practitioner Abilities

Magic—Open Spirit World, Practice Spirits and Fetishes, Spirit Ally, Spirit Face, Practice Secret. Practitioners are not obligated to concentrate their magic unless they wish to gain a spirit ally.

Mundane Relationship—*Relationship to [Intercessor]* (see “Spiritist Abilities” on page 134). A practitioner who leads the rites himself (even if only on certain occasions) has an *Intercessor for [Spirit Place]* ability to rate his connection to the spirit place where he leads ecstatic rites.

Myths and Rituals—*[Practice] Knowledge* provides mundane knowledge of the practice’s spiritual teachings, ecstatic rites, spirit places, and spirits.

Piety—*Follower of [Majestic Spirit]* rates the worshipper’s dedication to his majestic spirit and his ability to participate in and lead the ecstatic rites to contact, befriend, and appease the practice spirits.

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the practice magic keyword as abilities.

Open Spirit World

Open Spirit World is a ritual common to most animist traditions and practices. It opens the barrier between the Natural World and the Spirit World. This sacred ceremony is used for worship, teaching, and seeking spirits for charms and fetishes. Worshippers do not actually enter the Spirit World. Instead, the Spirit World becomes visible around them, and spirits and mortals can see each other. Since the rite ensures that the opening is into friendly territory in the Spirit World, usually only friendly spirits will appear, but any rite that pierces the barrier between worlds is dangerous.

Opening the barrier between worlds entails a contest against a resistance of 10W3 (see “The Crossing” in the Heroquesting chapter, page 197).

Practice Spirits and Fetishes

Practice spirits have more powers than the simple spirits kept in charms, and are available only from practices. The number, size, and type of practice spirits available are determined by the majestic spirit’s relationships.

Practice spirits can be placed into charms, as described above. To make full use of its magic, however, a practitioner must befriend the spirit and bind it in a fetish—a spirit object similar to a charm. This is usually done at one of the regular worship rites. The practitioner matches his *Follower of [Majestic Spirit]* ability against a resistance determined by the spirit’s attitude. Any victory establishes a *Friendship with [Practice Spirit]* at 13; this rating can be raised at a cost of 1 hero point per +1. A practitioner cannot establish a friendship with a spirit in a tradition charm, but he can transform any practice charms into fetishes by releasing the spirit and establishing a friendship with it.

Pacing Spirit Contests

Narrators should use their storytelling judgment to find the best way to handle a spirit encounter. If this is a large spirit that will eat the hero’s spirit if he fails, make it an extended contest. If this is just another minor spirit captured for a member of the tribe, use a simple contest or just give the practitioner an automatic success.



Contest: Befriend a Spirit

Appropriate Abilities: Follower of [Majestic Spirit].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: [Practice] Knowledge; ritual magic; established friendship with spirits hostile to the new one (penalty). Community support cannot aid this contest.

Resistance: See “Spirit Attitude” on page 132 to determine the resistance.

Any Victory: The practice spirit is bound into a fetish.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The spirit is not bound.

Complete Defeat: The spirit is not bound. Your hero offends it so greatly that it becomes hostile towards him, even if its attitude towards the practice is friendly or neutral.

Most fetishes act as charms, but usually with two or three abilities that give an automatic augment. The practitioner can also use any of the spirit’s abilities as an active ability in a contest.

A practice spirit can be released from its fetish to grant a greater bonus. The hero performs a short ritual (which takes an unrelated action in an extended contest). The spirit’s ability rating is then added either to the hero’s advantage points *or* as a bonus to an ability. (This is an exception to the normal rule that starting AP in a contest equal the target number). Even if the spirit is released before the start of the contest, however, it cannot give the bonus *and* add to his AP.

The spirit leaves at the end of the contest. It goes back first to its natural home, then returns to its fetish. This journey takes some time, exactly how long varies with the spirit and where its natural home is. It will always be back and available to the hero at the beginning of the next adventure, and might be back sooner if the current session spans a day or more of play time. If the hero has a little quiet and time to focus, he may be able to use *Open Spirit World* to locate the spirit even sooner.



The centaur race lives in Dragon Pass and some nearby regions. Like all of the so-called “beast-men,” they distrust humans and avoid them if possible.

Contest: Release a Practice Spirit

Appropriate Abilities: Friendship with [Practice Spirit].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Ritual magic. Community support cannot aid this contest.

Resistance: See “Spirit Attitude” (page 132) to determine the resistance.

Any Victory: The spirit is released and can aid the practitioner.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The spirit is not released, and remains within the fetish.

Complete Defeat: The spirit is released but cannot aid the hero, who must bind it back into the fetish before he can use its magic again.

Practice Spirits and Charms

Practitioners bind spirits into charms for their own or another’s use. A practitioner can create charms containing tradition or practice spirits. Only friendly or neutral spirits from within the tradition can be placed into charms, not foreign spirits (even if friendly) or hostile ones.

To create a charm, the practitioner must have an appropriate object to hold the spirit. Then, he must find the desired spirit. This is most easily done by going to the home of a natural spirit (e.g., that oak tree) or using *Open Spirit World* (see page 136). Once the spirit is located, the practitioner engages it in a contest to entice or convince it to enter the charm. The spirit’s resistance is determined by its spirit attitude.

Once a spirit is bound in a charm it can be used by any member of the tradition or practice, as appropriate. Whoever will use the charm must cement it with hero points, the number depending on the charm’s rating.

Contest: Create a Charm

Appropriate Abilities: Follower of [Majestic Spirit] (to create a charm containing a practice spirit); Worship [Great Spirit] (to create a charm containing a tradition spirit).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: [Practice] Knowledge *or* [Tradition] Knowledge, as appropriate; ritual magic and community support bonuses can help.

Resistance: See “Spirit Attitude” on page 132 to determine the resistance.

Any Victory: A charm is created with a fixed rating equal to the spirit’s ability rating.

Tie or any Defeat: No effect.

Spirit Ally

A friendly practice spirit can be turned into a **spirit ally** by a practitioner who has concentrated his magic. Alliance implies equality, so majestic spirits cannot be allies, but their servants can. A practitioner can have only one spirit ally at a time.

A spirit ally has all of the abilities of a practice spirit, but it acts as a follower as well, and can perform normal tasks without requiring a contest. It can release itself from the fetish whenever desired, with no resistance and without taking an unrelated action. It can work its magic and, when done, automatically returns to its fetish as described above.

Nature spirits that become allies generally still reside in their habitat, so that Old Berry Brother lives in a nearby patch of thorns. They can also reside in a medicine bundle made by the practitioner or shaman, so that their abilities can be used even when the practitioner is not near the spirit’s home.

To gain a spirit ally, Friendship must first be established

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with the spirit. Your hero can then ask the spirit to be an ally. A hero must dedicate 10% of his time and resources to his relationship with the spirit ally. Additionally, spirit allies often require specific actions, taboos, or attitudes of those they aid.

Contest: Ally a Friendly Spirit

Appropriate Abilities: Friendship with [Practice Spirit].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Usually none.

Resistance: 14 augmented by the spirit's highest ability rating.

Any Victory: Pay 1 hero point to make the spirit a spirit ally, keeping all of its ability ratings intact. Like any spirit, its ability ratings cannot be increased.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The spirit does not consent to being a spirit ally, but remains friendly.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the spirit so that it becomes neutral or hostile towards him in the future (although he retains his Friendship with the spirit). It remains bound into its fetish as a practice spirit.

Spirit Face

Spirit Face is a common magical ability taught in almost all practices. It is how animists sense spirits in the Natural World and detect the approach of hostile disembodied spirits. Some seers visualize auras, some feel the vibrations of the spirits, and others hear spirit voices.

Spirit Face allows the practitioner or shaman to sense and identify magic or Otherworld entities, with better victory levels providing more information on the nature of the magic or entity. Identifying or even sensing magic or entities originating in another Otherworld takes a penalty of -20. *Spirit Face* faces the default resistance to magic of 14 unless there is active resistance (such as concealment magic or an Otherworld entity trying to pass unseen). Rare individuals are born with a natural *Spirit Face* ability, often called "the eye" or "second sight."

Spirit Face is also a way to communicate with and defend against spirits. When used in this manner it appears as a "spirit mask" that moves from the worshipper to interact with the unknown spirit. If the spirit is neutral, *Spirit Face* can be used in an attempt to convince it to leave the animist alone. If the spirit is or becomes hostile, it can be used as a defense against its attacks. *Spirit Face* cannot be used to bind a spirit and make use of its magic.

Practice Secrets

Animist secrets are usually ways of dealing with a certain type of spirit, such as laying the restless dead, controlling the spirits of a place, or full integration into the practitioner of a special spirit. The secret of a shamanic practice is always to awaken, locate, or otherwise gain a relationship with the fetch. (Once a shaman has awakened his fetch he *can* learn the secret of another practice, in defiance of the normal rule that an individual can only learn a single secret in their life; see "Fetch," page 140.) Each practice has its own criteria for learning the secret; some allow practitioners to learn it, others allow only shamans.

To learn an animist secret, a worshipper must have concentrated his animist magic and have three specific abilities at 1W2 each. One of these abilities is always *Follower of [Majestic Spirit]*, but the other two vary with the practice; see the sample practices later in this chapter for examples. Once a hero meets the requirements, he can learn the secret. The hero can improve the secret's rating by spending hero points, but can never raise its rating above that of his *Follower of [Majestic Spirit]*.

Multiple Practices

Practitioners often belong to more than one practice, as long as time and the concerns of the spirits are not in conflict. In some traditions people are expected to be in more than one, or to progress from one to another. Regardless, a practitioner must always belong to a core practice of his tradition.

△ Galan Becomes a Practitioner

Several adventures go by. Galan survives the Whirlwind Desert, and the second defeat by Fancypants. But he decides he wants to get some more potent magic.

Bill: Do I have to go to Barvanro to become a practitioner?

Kathy: Yes, he is the Rockface specialist, isn't he? Your Oakfed pal and the Kolat guy aren't going to be able to contact Rockface for you.

Bill: Then I want to go back to Irist Hold.

Rick: I hear there is a big fight brewing up there. I'll go.

Steve: Hmmm, let's see, I will go! I can visit Big Barda again!

Christine: I'm good.

Kathy: OK, so you go. You travel over this road again and can get there in about, um, twelve days. Call it eleven, if you aren't going to stop for anything. On the road to Boldhome you learn that there is trouble brewing. On your way to Irist Hold you fall in with some warriors going to a job there. When you get there, Barvanro is waiting to take you out to the countryside. He says the spirits told him you were coming. The rest of you are at the fort carousing as usual, OK?

Steve: I'm looking for Big Barda.

Kathy: Of course, I'll get back to you all. So, Bill, Barvanro takes you to the spirit place. Some others are there. You recognize them from other ceremonies here. You all sing, drink some sacred medicine, Barvanro surrounds everyone with protection, and the Otherworld appears outside the circle. Rockface is there, laughing and feasting, and his followers are all about. He welcomes you to the feast, and when you take the first bite you feel like something is different, as if unnecessary parts of you are being replaced as you eat by a new spiritual nature. You feel complete in a way you never have before. OK, pay the hero points.

Bill: Can I count the hero point I spent before to join the practice?

Kathy: No, you don't get a break here. This will cost the full 3 hero points. OK, so you get *Follower of Rockface* at the same rating as your *Worship Lighting Up*.

Bill: That's *Practice Knowledge 13* and *Follower of Rockface 15*.

Kathy: OK. You get one friendly practice spirit for free. Is there some special spirit you want?

Bill: Yes, I want one that is going to give me an Otherworld power, like I saw in action, and also makes me as fast as a bird.

Kathy: Tell you what, here she is. It is this beautiful female spirit, she is Otherworld Hawkeye with the abilities of Otherworld 14, Fly 2W2, Jealous 18.

Bill: Jealous 18?

Kathy: If you ignore her for other females she will pout and you'll get a -2 to everything. You have *Friendship with Otherworld Hawkeye* at 13. Decide what the fetish is where she lives now.

Bill: I want to ally it.



The shaman, safe within his protective circle, summons the Spirit World to gather around him. He seeks a beast spirit to place within a fetish, so that he can call it forth when he needs its magic.

Kathy: Your 13 against its 14 + 4 = 18? You can try.

Bill: I've been saving up for this. I may not be back to see Barvanro and I want to learn all I can. What did you get?

Kathy: I rolled a 16, a success.

Bill: I got a 15, a failure. So, I am going to use a hero point to bump up this roll and qualify for alliance with a marginal victory! And here's 1 more to cement it with. And so finally, I have some hero points left, so I am going to learn *Spirit Face* and *Open Spirit World* so I can make my own fetishes from now on! Let's see, that's 7 hero points total, but it's worth it.

Frederick: You're armed now.

Kathy: As for you, Steve, Hazeel finds Big Barda of course, and she is happy to see him, but she insists on one simple thing: do you love her? Will you take care of her? Will you write down a relationship with her on your character sheet?

Shaman

Shamans are dedicated animists who can go to the Otherworld. They live in both the Natural World and Spirit World, and are subject to many unpredictable and inscrutable allures, forces, and motivations. Many enter traditional paths and work within the local structure of ceremonial leaders. Others are chosen by a specific spirit, and may specialize in particular powers.

Future shamans are born preternaturally sensitive to spirit magic. They have an intimate rapport with the spirits, but untrained talent is not enough. Few mortal beings have this potential, and only specialized shamanic practices have the secret to awaken a shaman's fetch.

Shamans give over their lives to dealing with spirits, and in return have the power to interact with the Spirit World and survive among the hostile entities there. All shamans have a fetch, a spirit guide that keeps the Spirit World constantly open to the shaman. Many ways exist for a person to awaken their fetch, and each tradition teaches at least one of these. Shamans are found in almost all animist religions; in some, they are the primary intercessors between humans and spirits; in others, they are specialists who intrude only occasionally into the lives of spiritists and practitioners.

Entry Requirements

If your hero believes he is to be a shaman, he must concentrate his magic use. He must then persuade a shaman to teach him (they are typically choosy about students) and join the shaman's shamanic practice as a practitioner. He may belong to other practices before and possibly even during the time he belongs to the shamanic practice, as long as he has never been a member of an enemy practice. He may not ever have learned another magical organization's secret.

The student trains under the shaman and serves as his assistant for years before he can safely make his first shamanic journey into the Other Side. In game terms, a student must have *Spirit Face* and the shamanic practice's [Practice] Knowledge and Follower of [Majestic Spirit] at 1W2 or greater before he can learn the secret. This secret is not just the way to awaken the candidate's fetch; in game terms, the *Fetch* itself is the secret, which costs 3 hero points.

When his master deems him ready, the candidate goes to a secret place to awaken his fetch. The candidate undergoes an ordeal that culminates in his first solo journey into the Spirit World. If the hero succeeds, he returns to the Natural World a shaman; his *Fetch* begins with a rating of 13, like other secrets (see page 109). **Be sure to put the shamanic spirit's rune in a prominent place on your character sheet.**

Benefits and Obligations

A shaman has all the benefits of a practitioner. He can belong to other practices, and can even learn another practice's secret. A shaman may be associated closely with one or more practices, so that a particular shaman might be known as a "Chalk Man shaman." Do not be fooled by the name, for such shamans usually have additional powers beyond those of that one practice.

A shaman searches for spirits in the Natural World and the Other Side, maintains defenses from hostile spirits, and oversees local spirit beings. He devotes 10% of his time and resources (including hero points) to the tradition (usually leading ecstatic rites) and another 10% each to his shamanic practice and his fetch. Membership in additional practices adds 10% for each, and any *Friendship with [Practice Spirit]* relationships add 10% (more if the shaman has many). A shaman can have multiple



spirit allies, but each adds a further 10% to his commitments. Almost all shamans have one or more friendships with practice spirits and belong to a practice besides their shamanic practice, so their total obligation is usually at least 50%.

Shaman Abilities

Magic—Fetch, Shamanic Escape, Spirit World Travel. Shamans must concentrate their magic.

Mundane Relationship—*Intercessor for [Spirit Place]* or *Intercessor for [Community]* rates the shaman's relationship to the spiritists and practitioners he leads in ecstatic rites, even if he is not a full-time spirit-talker. If the shaman has no fixed home, and wanders from spirit place to spirit place, he will have an *Intercessor for [Practice]* ability instead.

Myths and Rituals—*[Practice] Knowledge* (see "Practitioner Abilities" on page 136). A shaman almost always has at least two such abilities.

Piety—*Follower of [Majestic Spirit]* (see "Practitioner Abilities" on page 136).

Virtues—A shaman usually has all of the virtues of the tradition and practice keywords as abilities (even if they seem contradictory). Because of their constant presence in the Spirit World and their many friendships with spirits, shamans often have taboos and requirements that seem strange to ordinary humans, and so many people label them as antisocial, weird, or just plain crazy.

Followers—Shamans often have an assistant who serves them while learning how to become a shaman himself.

Fetch

Every shaman has a unique spirit part called a **fetch**, his invisible self. The fetch forms a permanent contact with the Spirit World. A shaman can have only one fetch, and once awakened it never goes back to sleep; if it is somehow destroyed, he dies. However, once awakened the fetch does not change its nature, even if the shaman leaves his tradition and joins another.

In many ways the fetch is like a follower, lending AP to the shaman. It can help shield him from multiple opponent penalties like any follower, but only when he faces noncorporeal foes. In return for its help, the fetch expects the shaman to behave in a certain way. The exact demands vary according to tradition, and sometimes with each fetch.

The fetch normally cannot manifest in the Natural World except when the shaman is in the Spirit World. Thus, a shaman cannot simply send his fetch to attack someone. If he is in the Spirit World, however, observers might see his fetch hovering over his body to protect it, and in such circumstances it can use any of its or the shaman's magical abilities to defend him.

With his fetch, the shaman has two standard shamanic abilities: *Shamanic Escape* and *Spirit World Travel*. These are always used at the same rating as the *Fetch*. Because the fetch determines the ratings of the shamanic abilities, it cannot augment them. Fetches sometimes grant an additional shamanic ability according to the shamanic practice that taught how to gain the fetch. See "Denbitos" (page 143), "Ganval" (page 147), "Horned Man" (page 146), and "Jakaleel" (page 142) for examples of fetches and shamanic abilities.

When befriending a spirit, a shaman can augment his *Follower of [Majestic Spirit]* ability with his *Fetch* rating. Unlike a practitioner, a shaman can bind any spirit into a fetish or charm, although he must use his *Fetch* (instead of *Follower of [Majestic Spirit]*) to bargain with or conquer a hostile spirit or a spirit from outside his practice(s) or tradition.

Hero Improvement Costs—Animism

Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play	
	Not Concentrated	Concentrated
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1	1
Concentrate animist magic use	1	N/A
Become a spiritist in a tradition (gain <i>Worship [Great Spirit]</i> at 13 and five tradition charms for free)	3	3
Join a practice as a spiritist (gain one practice charm for free)	1	1
Become a practitioner in a practice (gain <i>Follower of [Majestic Spirit]</i> at 13 and one friendly practice spirit for free)	3	3
Become a shaman and gain <i>Fetch</i> at 13 (same as learning the secret of a shamanic practice)	N/A	3
Learn a charm within the common magic keyword	2	1
Gain a new charm (tradition or practice spirit) with a rating determined by the narrator	see top of next page	see top of next page
Befriend a practice spirit and gain a fetish with a rating determined by the narrator	see top of next page	see top of next page
Gain <i>Open Spirit World</i> or <i>Spirit Face</i> at 13	2	1
Gain a spirit ally as a retainer	N/A	1
Gain a spirit ally as a sidekick	N/A	3
Learn a practice secret (including awakening a <i>Fetch</i>) at 13	N/A	3
Learn a tradition secret	N/A	3
Improve <i>Worship [Great Spirit]</i> or <i>Follower of [Majestic Spirit]</i> by +1	2	1
Improve <i>Friendship with [Spirit Ally]</i> by +1	N/A	1
Improve <i>Open Spirit World</i> or <i>Spirit Face</i> by +1	2	1
Improve a common magic charm by +1	2	1
Improve a charm (tradition or practice spirit) or fetish (practice spirit) by +1	N/A	N/A
Improve a practice secret (including <i>Fetch</i> rating) by +1	N/A	1

Hero Improvement Costs—Gain a New Charm or Fetish

Ability Rating	Hero Point Cost of Charm		Hero Point Cost of Fetish	
	Not Concentrated		Not Concentrated	
	Concentrated	Concentrated	Concentrated	Concentrated
up to 20	2	1	6	3
1W to 20W	6	3	12	6
1W2 to 20W2	12	6	20	10
1W3 to 20W3	20	10	30	15

Shamanic Escape

Shamanic Escape allows the shaman to leave the Spirit World quickly. This is most needful when the shaman is losing a contest against a spirit, or when he encounters powerful hostile spirits. Rather than engaging in or even continuing a contest, the shaman simply uses his *Shamanic Escape* as a magical ability against a resistance of 14. If he succeeds, he leaves the Spirit World and instantly returns to his body.

Shamanic Escape works only to escape the Spirit World, not the God World or Essence Planes.

Spirit World Travel

Shamans can cross to the Spirit World through a shamanic circle or power spot or by ecstatic rites by overcoming the normal 10W3 barrier. Once in the Spirit World, they act like a spirit; the *Spirit World Travel* ability is used to enter and navigate the Spirit World. Like other magicians, the shaman can gain bonuses by performing his ritual on sacred days, in spirit places, or with the support of his community (page 102).

People who travel the Spirit World without this ability have no control over their environment. They cannot travel to a specific location, follow a fleeing spirit, or escape from a hostile one. If they are extremely lucky, the eddies of the spiritual flux may bring what they seek within their grasp, but usually they are hostages to the whims of the spirits.

Leaving Practices and Traditions

Most traditions have no prohibition against leaving, as long as the worshipper leaves on good terms. (Leaving the core practice is the same as leaving the tradition.) A hero who leaves after committing crimes may be haunted by sendings, hostile spirits sent by shamans. Additionally, spirits of the former tradition will generally be hostile to him, rather than neutral or friendly.

An animist who leaves a practice or tradition must give up all charms received from it, for the spirits will no longer aid him. He maintains any Friendship established with individual spirits, but their attitude becomes neutral or hostile. Once he releases a spirit to aid him as described on page 137, it will not return. A spirit ally becomes neutral or hostile to the hero, as the narrator determines. For practitioners, this means they leave immediately. Any animist who knows a practice secret loses it if he leaves the practice.

A shaman who leaves a practice or even tradition retains his fetch and its shamanic abilities. He may keep any spirit allies with the new attitude, but if he ever receives any level of defeat in a contest against the ally, it leaves him. His charms and practice spirits are affected as above.

Sample Traditions and Practices

From Dark Tradition



Path of Forbidden Secrets

Jakaleel is the spirit shadow of the Goddess who teaches of the Spirit World and of death. She founded the inclusive tradition called From Dark, which recognizes Sedenya as its great spirit. Her form of ecstatic worship deals with spirits and the dead, and the additional protection of the Moon.

Jakaleel was first a human woman, called the Spindle Hag of Jord Mountain. She joined the rebel leaders who became the Seven Mothers as the Seeker in the Darkness. She was the first person to meet and forge alliances with Moon spirits. Jakaleel died at the First Battle of Chaos, but she had made her place as a majestic spirit. Jakaleel's Five Spirit Moons Practice is considered the main shamanic practice within the Lunar religion.

Animist worshippers of Sedenya belong to this tradition. Theist worshippers of the core Lunar Goddess cults (Sedenya, Rufelza, Natha) and certain others may use Lunar charms.

Abilities: From Dark Tradition Knowledge, Sedenyic Philosophy, Worship Sedenya.

Virtues: Inclusive.

Core Practices: The Five Spirit Moons Practice is widespread throughout the Empire.

Tradition Spirits:

① **Lunemari**—Possess with [Madness] 10 to 10W (see “Spirit Possession” on page 152 for more information).

① **Moon spirits**—Mob 9 to 5W, See in Moonlight 6 to 5W, See Other's Point of View 10 to 20, Sense Madness 10 to 20, Sense Spirits 20.

Great Secret: Part of the Sedenya Religion (see “Lunar Magic” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 113).

Charms and Fetishes: From Dark fetishes are typically crafted from ebony and silver (or other black and white materials) bound with red rope, cotton, ribbon, or gut.

Other Side: The Red Moon exists in the Spirit World as well as the Natural World, God World, and Essence Planes. As well as being a spirit entity in its own right, it is the demesne of many Lunar spirits, including the Five Spirit Moons and their discoverer, Jakaleel.

Disadvantages: Worshippers are subject to the Lunar cycle (see page 113). Spiritists of the From Dark Tradition cannot join practices unless they become a practitioner.

Majestic Horses Tradition



Imperial Sun and First Wife

Yu-Kargzant and La-Ungariant are the original Grazers. They are the great spirit pair that made the world. They caused hills to rise, clouds to rain, and the water to collect in lakes. Their children are the majestic spirits of the religion.

The Majestic Horses Tradition is ancestral, restricted to people born into it, and very strict and conservative. It is a religion of the elite rulers of the country. They were once nomads and their spirits reflect that origin. Ignored here are the many spirits that are not practical to them today.

The tradition's core practices center on the series of age groups. Adolescents are initiated together and form an age group that usually stays together for life, all members advancing from youth to adult to leader to elder, transferring their relationships to their next-stage majestic spirit. Advancement through the age groups is one-way; you can never go back to what you were. The ages of advancement given here are approximate, and an exceptional man or woman can break them, especially in times of crisis. The tradition also includes several specialty helper practices.

See "Homeland: Grazer" in the Heroes chapter, page 46, for the Majestic Horses Tradition keyword.

Core Practices: The tradition has two core practices: Yu-Kargzant, worshipped by men, and La-Ungariant, worshipped by women.

Great Secret: Be the Sun.

Denbitos (Shamanic Practice)

The First Shaman



Creator made the world, and just before he left he taught Denbitos how to be a Grazer shaman. Denbitos is the star at the center of the sky. He gives Grazer shamans their fetishes. Denbitos shamans are widespread, and dominant among the Grazers. The traditional hierarchy of shamans and leaders has been formalized over centuries to reinforce tribal unity and the ways of Yu-Kargzant. The shamanic circle drawn by Denbitos shamans is the Star Spirit Circle.

Entry Requirements: Must be a member of the tradition and have the capacity to become a shaman. Most potential shamans are first identified during the manhood rites, and do not join the Yu-Kargzant Practice until after they have awakened their fetch (if then).

Abilities: Denbitos Practice Knowledge, Follower of Denbitos, Open Spirit World, Spirit Face.

Virtues: Chaste, Deadly to Foes, Kind to Tribe, Punctual, Tidy.

Practice Spirits:

☉ **Starfire spirits**—Awaken Magic in Tin 20, Bright Light 10 to 10 \mathbb{W} 2, Flaming Light Weapon 10 to 10 \mathbb{W} , Ignite Fire 14 to 20, Inferno Destroys Magic 10 to 10 \mathbb{W} 3, Starfire 20, Stay Still 18, View from the Stars 12 to 10 \mathbb{W} .

Fetishes: Denbitos shamans make Denbitos fetishes only for themselves, and so their accoutrements are distinctive among the Grazers. The flints imbedded in the shaman's head are indicative of his status; those in the flesh of his arms are merely useful.

Secret: **Second Star Fetch** (The shaman's fetch appears as a bright star when visible.)

Shamanic Abilities: Resist Star Magic, Shamanic Escape, Spirit World Travel.

Other Side: Denbitos is the master of the Hidden Sky Runways that arc over the Pastures of the Endless Sun.

Disadvantages: Denbitos shamans may not deal with spirits of elements other than fire.

Folorene



Spirit of Wanderlore

Denbitos told everyone to accept Folorene as one of them. She was a man in a woman's body, or vice versa, or both or something similar. Or perhaps it was a horse that became a person, or vice versa; or maybe a star that fell and did not return to the sky, or perhaps a spirit that had no mother but was part of the tribe. The Folorene Practice is where Grazer misfits collect.

Entry Requirements: The very desire to follow Folorene marks out the misfits who may join the practice.

Abilities: Disguise, Follower of Folorene, Folorene Practice Knowledge, Open Spirit World, Sense Hostility, Spirit Face.

Virtues: Contrary, True to Self, Unorthodox.

Practice Spirits:

⚔ **Contrariness spirits**—Balanced Walk 18, Daywatch 18, Dig Fast 18 to 10 \mathbb{W} , Light Fire 15, Mad Attack 17, Squirm from Grip 5 \mathbb{W} , Stand Up to See Enemy 18 to 5 \mathbb{W} .

🐾 **Wanderlore spirits**—Cope with Foreigners 18, I've Heard of That 20, Keep on Going 15, Spot Ambush 17 to 5 \mathbb{W} .

Secret: **Be Unseen** (The practitioner does not become invisible so much as unnoticed; anyone unable to resist the secret's rating simply fails to look at, hear, or otherwise perceive him. Multiple target penalties do not apply.)

Practice Secret Requirements: Disguise 1 \mathbb{W} 2, Follower of Folorene 1 \mathbb{W} 2, Sense Hostility 1 \mathbb{W} 2.

Charms and Fetishes: Fetishes are made from wolf teeth, rabbit ears, weasel spines, bear paws, and/or rat tails, always tied onto a red leather cord.

Other Side: Folorene has no specific demesne, but wanders the Pastures of the Endless Sun at will.

Disadvantages: The Folorene practice welcomes people who do not normally fit within the Grazer practices. They are outcasts, ne'er-do-wells, outsiders. Membership in this group confers certain tribal protections and privileges. Grazers view them with awe and caution.

La-Ungariant



Feathered Horse Queen

La-Ungariant is the daughter of Orest, the Earth. She bested her sister Tara to become the Firstwife of Yu-Kargzant. La-Ungariant is patron of women, horses, breeding, tents, nurturing, sewing, and cooking. The La-Ungariant Practice has a different majestic spirit for each age group, which provide appropriate magic and abilities to worshippers (spirits given under each majestic spirit are available to women of that and all later age groups, but not to women of younger age groups). Of the four age groups, only the two likely to be available to player heroes are provided here; Estei the Firstwife and Henedra the Elder are worshipped only by leaders and elders.

The Feathered Horse Queen is leader of the La-Ungariant Practice, as much sacred queen as shaman. She wears the ancient regalia that provide her title, and always rides a Goldeneye horse. She is guarded by a band of fanatically loyal vendref (non-riding slaves) who worship Hiiia Swordsman, a subcult of the Heortling god Humakt (see page 49).





Yu-Kargzant

He Who Rises

Yu-Kargzant is the most powerful spirit of the Majestic Horses Tradition. He is the source of fire, stallions, good men, action, morality, good weather, and life itself. He made himself visible to ordinary people, and so gallops across the sky each day, visible as the Sun to outsiders. At night he raids the Underworld and releases the spirits of his people from Hell. His wife, sons, and daughters serve him, as do a host of stars, planets, horses, and other spirits.

The Yu-Kargzant Practice has a different majestic spirit for each age group, which provide appropriate magic and abilities to worshippers (spirits given under each majestic spirit are available to men of that and all later age groups, but not to men of younger age groups). Of the four age groups, only the two likely to be available to player heroes are provided here; Hen-ird the Chief and Josad the Elder are worshipped only by leaders and elders.

Entry Requirements: Must be male member of the tribe.

Practice Spirits:

☉ **Fire spirits**—Blinding Glare 15, Bright Light 10 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Flaming Lance 15 to 10 \mathbb{L} , Inferno 15 to 1 \mathbb{L} 2.

♂ **Stallion spirits**—Endurance 10 to 10 \mathbb{L} , Gallop Through Sky 10 to 1 \mathbb{L} 2, Gather Mares 20, Leaping 15 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Speed 18, Strength 15 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Virility 20.

Spirit Ally: Worshippers of Dastal the Hunter and Jordan the Warrior cannot have a spirit ally.

Charms and Fetishes: Yu-Kargzant worshippers make their charms and fetishes from bones and feathers, or paint them onto horses or their own bodies.

Other Side: Yu-Kargzant's demesne is the grassy Pastures of the Endless Sun in the Spirit World, which he rules with La-Ungariant. After death, worshippers join him and his sons there to carry on in the Spirit World as they did in life, but now hunting down spirit enemies, battling spirit armies, and being witnessed by the great family of ancestors and founders. Yu-Kargzant chooses people to be reborn again into the family at his own pace.

Disadvantages: Must submit to La-Ungariant shamans in matters of magic.

Dastal the Hunter

Dastal allows all men into his dances and ceremonies. Every year he circles all the way around the sky performing his duties. He is the patron of young men, obedience, archery, and herding. He is the chief of the Hunting Spirits, which he dispenses to men. He is also young and naive, well-intentioned but ill-informed and without wisdom or experience. He works with the young who have not qualified to become adult warriors. His worshippers are hunters, herders, and those learning those tasks.

Entry Requirements: Be a man in the Rider age group (initiation usually occurs around age 14).

Abilities: Follower of Dastal, Yu-Kargzant Practice Knowledge.

Virtues: Cautious, Chaste, Obedient, Patient.

Practice Spirits:

🏹 **Hunting spirits**—Archery 18, Escape 18, Hear Enemy Coming 18, Horse-Help 15, See Hidden Tracks 16.

♂ **Rider spirits**—Heal Own Horse 2 \mathbb{L} , Night Watch 15 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Ride Quietly 18, Stampede Prey 16.



Entry Requirements: Must be female member of the tribe.

Practice Spirits:

♀ **Mare spirits**—Beauty 13 to 20, Endurance 13 to 17, Horse Fertility 12 to 1 \mathbb{L} , Speed 14 to 8 \mathbb{L} , Strength 6 to 15.

☐ **Earth spirits**—Berry-ripening 17, Gravel-shifting-underfoot 13, Healing Mud 10 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Stone Skin 20, Strength of Earth 18.

Spirit Ally: Worshippers of Charai the Rider and Lereen the Mother cannot have a spirit ally.

Charms and Fetishes: La-Ungariant worshippers make their charms and fetishes from braided horsehair, or paint them onto horses or their own bodies.

Other Side: La-Ungariant's demesne is the grassy Pastures of the Endless Sun, which she rules with Yu-Kargzant. After death, worshippers become powerful horses and healing women to protect the great ancestors, until La-Ungariant blesses them once again with a new life amid the family.

Disadvantages: Women are subservient to men in most matters.

Charai the Rider

Charai is a young maiden's First Friend, who teaches the Six Ways to tend horses. She is both happy and melancholy—a true friend, whose dances are full of exuberant joy, but who knows that her charges soon will grow up and move on to womanhood.

Entry Requirements: Be a woman in the Rider age group (near menstruation, about age 14).

Abilities: Follower of Charai, La-Ungariant Practice Knowledge, Sense Horse in Distress.

Virtues: Chaste, Compassionate, Obedient.

Practice Spirits:

♀ **Maiden spirits**—Bareback Rider 12 to 1 \mathbb{L} , Don't Look 18, Find Horse Fodder 14 to 20, Run Fast 9 to 15, Shout For Help 16, Tease Boy 15.

Disadvantages: Members may not have sex, hunt alone, fight a foreign enemy, marry, own property, farm, draw blood among each other, or speak at council. Charai worshippers may not be practitioners, but are practice members, and so can receive practice spirits bound into charms.



Lereen the Mother

When a Charai worshipper marries she begins worshipping Lereen. Her *Follower of Charai* ability is replaced with *Follower of Lereen* at the same rating, with no hero point cost. She keeps her charms, and can now become a practitioner if she wishes.

Lereen is the Mother, loving and respectful of her husband, caring and responsible to her children. She is a source of healing and blessings. Although all women progress to worship Estei, most continue using the familiar Lereen charms and spirits.

Entry Requirements: Be a follower of Charai and a woman of the Mother age group (20+).

Abilities: Calm Husband, Follower of Lereen, La-Ungariant Practice Knowledge, Spirit Face.

Virtues: Love Family, Obey Husband.

Practice Spirits:

🏠 **Family Blessing spirits**—Fertility 14 to 18, Find Child 14, Preserve Yurt 14 to 18, Watch in the Night 15.

🩹 **Health Blessing spirits**—Ease Birth Pangs 14 to 20, Fight Disease 12, Kiss Wound Better 14, Soothe Pain 18.

Disadvantages: Lereen's followers are expected to obey their husbands in all matters. They may not gain a spirit ally.



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Disadvantages: Members may not have sex, marry, fight from the ground or with the sword, own property, farm, draw blood among each other, or speak at council. Dastal worshippers may not become practitioners but are practice members, and can receive practice spirits in charms.

Jardan the Warrior

When a Dastal worshipper becomes a warrior he begins worshipping Jardan. His *Follower of Dastal* ability is replaced with *Follower of Jardan* at the same rating, with no hero point cost. He keeps his charms, and can now become a practitioner.

Jardan is the bright planet that crosses the sky each night, keeping watch over the sleeping Grazers and their herds. He is the patron of lancers and all who strive face-to-face against their foes. Only men who have proved their martial ability, courage, and riding skills can worship Jardan. They fight against enemies and defend the tribe, and most begin accumulating their bride price so that they can marry. Jardan is also the patron spirit of the Golden Bows, an elite warband who ride Goldeneye horses and have special powers in both the Natural and Spirit worlds.

Although all men progress to worship Henird, most prefer to continue using the familiar Jardan charms and spirits.

Entry Requirements: Be a follower of Dastal and a male warrior (age 24+).

Abilities: Follower of Jardan, Lance Combat, Spirit Face, Sword and Shield Fighting, Yu-Kargzant Practice Knowledge.

Virtues: Alert, Brave, High-Spirited, Obedient.

Practice Spirits:

† **Bowman spirits**—Arrow Protection 7 to 18, Curved Arrow Flight 15, Escape 15, Flaming Arrow 11 to 9 \mathbb{L} , Shoot Great Distance 20.

† **Braveman spirits**—Hill Climbing 4 to 19, Leap Far 13 to 19, Leap High 8 to 1 \mathbb{L} , Resist Fear 16 to 10 \mathbb{L} .

† **Fightman spirits**—Glaing Lance 10 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Shield 7 to 1 \mathbb{L} , Strike Down Bird 19, Sword Protection 11 to 2 \mathbb{L} .

Disadvantages: Jardan's followers must obey the commands of leaders, even if ordered to die fighting. They may not gain a spirit ally.

Praxian Tradition

Spirits of the Wastes

Prax was once rich and green, until the Devil slew the great spirit Genert and his Garden became the desolate Wastes. The Praxian Tradition is dominated by the needs of survival and follows the ways set down by its founder, Waha, son of Eiritha the Herd Mother and Storm Bull the Desert Wind. Waha made the Survival Covenant, dividing the tribes between those who would eat and those who would be eaten, people and animals. Men join the Waha Practice, while women follow Eiritha. However, there are many other spirits and practices in Prax. Some are widely known, such as Daka Fal ancestor worship or the shamanic practice of the Horned Man. But as Prax is a land full of dead and sundered spirits, there are also many other local practices and independent spirits that can be contacted to save a clan from hunger or lead a raid to victory.

See "Homeland: Bison People" in the Heroes chapter, page 38, for the Praxian Tradition keyword.

Core Practices: The tradition has two core practices: Waha, worshipped by men, and Eiritha, worshipped by women.

Great Secret: None.

Daka Fal

Judge of the Dead

Daka Fal was Death's first victim, and he now shows the living how to recognize the dead and send their spirits to the proper place. His knowledge can also be used to contact the spirits of ancestors and even summon them from the realms of the dead.

Entry Requirements: Be the child of a Daka Fal Practice member or be a follower of a Daka Fal shaman. Worshippers must take the *Respect Ancestors* virtue as an ability.

Abilities: Daka Fal Practice Knowledge, Follower of Daka Fal, Genealogy, Open Spirit World, Spirit Face.

Virtues: Independent, Respect Ancestors.

Practice Spirits:

✠ **Ancestors**—Usually two powers: Find Trail 11 to 3 \mathbb{L} , Find Water 17 \mathbb{L} , Knows Names 10 to 6 \mathbb{L} , Lash Out with Anger 17, Make Children 15, Run Away 3 \mathbb{L} , Settle Argument 10 to 2 \mathbb{L} , Shut Them Up 12.

Special Spirits: A follower of Daka Fal may call upon any Praxian spirit he can prove a genealogical link to.

Secret: **Incarnate Ancestor ceremony** (The shaman may incarnate any ancestor that he knows; see "Heroforming" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 109.)

Practice Secret Requirements: Follower of Daka Fal 1 \mathbb{L} 2, Genealogy 1 \mathbb{L} 2, Open Spirit World 1 \mathbb{L} 2.

Charms and Fetishes: Bones prevail.

Other Side: Bison People spirits go to Waha's Happy Herding Ground when they die. Daka Fal follows them, calling to those ancestors who are summoned to aid the living by the throbbing beat of the Spirit Drum, deep within the caverns of the Heavy Bone Dip.

Disadvantages: The ancestors are all Otherworld human beings, and can provide no herds to live on. Thus, Daka Fal worshippers must also be members of another practice to survive in the Greatlands. All spirits utilized by a practitioner must be friendly or neutral to each other.

Eiritha

Herd Mother

Eiritha is the Herd Mother, source of the beasts of the plains and thus of Life itself. When the Devil came to kill her, she survived by hiding beneath the earth, so now she cannot walk the surface.

Entry Requirements: Must be a woman who has come of age in the tradition.

Abilities: Eiritha Practice Knowledge, Follower of Eiritha, Open Spirit World, Spirit Face, Understand Bison Needs.

Virtues: Enduring, Resourceful.

Practice Spirits:

✠ **Bison Cow spirits** (two of these)—Bless [Herd Beast] 12 to 1 \mathbb{L} , Communicate with [Herd Beast] 15, Control [Herd Beast] 1 \mathbb{L} , Find Good Forage 14 \mathbb{L} , Find Lost [Herd Beast] 19, Heal [Herd Beast] 12 to 7 \mathbb{L} .

☐ **Bison Protectress spirits** (two of these)—Dodge Attack 7 to 8 \mathbb{L} , Heal Warrior 19, Hide Against Earth 19, Hide Scents 14 to 4 \mathbb{L} , Hide Trail 13 to 2 \mathbb{L} , Restore Courage 17, See Far 1 \mathbb{L} .

✠ **Herd Mother spirits** (two of these)—Bless Mother 15, Command Earth Spirit 2 \mathbb{L} , Find Healing Plant 8 to 6 \mathbb{L} , Heal Child 14 to 1 \mathbb{L} , Heal Mother 9 to 4 \mathbb{L} , Save the Children 16 \mathbb{L} , Summon Earth Spirit 20.





Spirit Ally: A practitioner can only have a herd beast spirit of her own tribe as a spirit ally.

Secret: **Eiritha's Balm ritual** (This ritual uses enchanted earth to heal any physical wound. On a complete victory it will even call a Praxian spirit back from recent death to inhabit its body again.)

Practice Secret Requirements: Follower of Eiritha 1W2, Spirit Face 1W2, Understand Bison Needs 1W2.

Charms and Fetishes: Fetishes are fashioned from treated portions of a herd beast, with stones or knotted cords attached.

Other Side: Eiritha is honored in Waha's Happy Herding Ground. There, she lives in the Greatest Green in the mellow shade of the Sixty Hundred Year Palms.

Disadvantages: May not use combat spirits.

Waha

Khan of Khans

Waha brought the hunting and dog spirits to help Bison People, freed the animal spirits, and arranged for people to live. He made the Happy Herding Ground where Bison People go after death, taught how to contact the good spirits, liberated the herd mothers, and tamed the wild bulls. He established the customs of people eating animals, taught the ecstatic rites to people, and named Dancing Spirit as ruler of the Spirit World. He separated the worlds of living and dead, of animals and people, of good and bad, and of men and women. He stated that the chiefs would be bulls, with many wives, and that most men would be expendable warriors, fearless for the good of the herd.

Entry Requirements: Must be a man who has come of age in the tradition.

Abilities: Follower of Waha, Open Spirit World, Peaceful Cut ceremony, Spirit Face, Waha Practice Knowledge.

Virtues: Brave, Proud.

Practice Spirits:

☞ **Brother Dog spirits**—Find Sustenance 15 to 5W, Hunting 15 to 5W.

☛ **Bull Helper spirits**—Hurt Chaos 12 to 9W, Stand Against Chaos 14 to 8W.

☞ **Keeneye spirits**—Call Camp Warding Spirit 6 to 4W, Control Earth Spirit 7 to 19, Dismiss Otherworld Enemy 12 to 18.

† **Killstick spirits**—[Clan/Tribal Weapon] Strike 12 to 19, Fearless in Battle 18, Hurt Chaos 12 to 9W.

† **Mean and Meaner spirits**—[Clan/Tribal Weapon] Strike 12 to 19, Hurt Otherworld Enemy 6 to 17, Ignore Pain 12 to 3W.

☞ **Trail Seeker spirits**—Find Trail 12 to 4W, Sleep Safely 10 to 5W.

Spirit Ally: A practitioner can only have a herd beast spirit of his own tribe as a spirit ally.

Secret: **Greatlands Survival** (Gives an automatic augment of ¼ the secret's rating to any ability used to help a community led by the practitioner survive in the Greatlands. The bonus affects any or all members of the community, without suffering multiple target penalties. The secret is equally effective in the Natural World or Spirit World.)

Practice Secret Requirements: Follower of Waha 1W2, Open Spirit World 1W2, Peaceful Cut ceremony 1W2.

Charms and Fetishes: Fetishes are fashioned from special herd parts bound together with sacred knots.

Disadvantages: May not use healing spirits.

Independent Practices

Ganval (Shamanic Practice)

Beloved of Kero Fin

Ganval is an independent shamanic spirit found in Dragon Pass, including among the Grazers. His shamans are known for their miraculous ability to return from death. If the shaman's body is killed (whether his spirit was in it or on the Spirit World), he has one chance to return to life if he can return to his body using *Shamanic Escape*. He can use his *Heal Own Corpse* shamanic ability to try to bring the body back to an **injured** (or healthier) status, then reinhabit it. The shamanic circle drawn by Ganval shamans is called Kero Fin's Necklace. Ganval shamans never create charms for the special practice spirits they control.



Horned Man (Shamanic Practice)

Father of Shamans

Horned Man is tricky and mysterious. During the Long Night he sang great runes using all of his wit, skill, and deadliness to trick Chaos into letting him go. He visits each Bison Rider child in its first week of life; if they do not cry out then he knows that their spark of life is that unknowable color that marks out one destined to be a shaman. When the Horned Man beat out the Headcount Rhythm that started the heartbeat of Time, he used the whole world as his drum.

Horned Man shamans are powerful allies for a clan trying to eke out a life in the barren Wastelands. They are terrible enemies to their foes, not least because of their ability to pour out their spirit, passion, and magic in the blasting eruption known as a *Soul Wind*. The shamanic circle drawn by Praxian shamans is the Axis Mundi.

Entry Requirements: Must be a member of the Eiritha Practice or Waha Practice and have the capacity to become a shaman.

Abilities: Follower of Horned Man, Horned Man Practice Knowledge, Open Spirit World, Spirit Face.

Virtues: Mysterious, Unpredictable.

Special Spirits: Horned Man shamans are the only ones who can contact the many powerful spirits of the Wastelands, such as Lightning Boy, Brother Dog, and Frog Woman. While a member of those helper practices, they often have exotic spirits serving them.

Secret: **Spirit Double** (When visible, the shaman's fetch appears as his exact double, except that it always has antlers [not necessarily those of his tribal beast].)

Shamanic Abilities: Shamanic Escape, Spirit World Travel, Soul Wind.

Fetishes: Horned Man fetishes vary depending on the specific spirit being worshipped.

Other Side: The Horned Man lives under the constant roar of the Soul Winds in his Manhide Tent.

Disadvantages: Horned Man shamans are seen as uniquely powerful but dangerously unpredictable. Many ordinary people will not catch their eyes or cross their shadows for fear of a curse. Thus, they are never part of society.

Entry Requirements: Open to anyone who has the capacity to become a shaman and is accepted as an assistant, as long as they have never worshipped or had friendship with a wolf spirit.

Abilities: Confounding Hand Tricks, Craft Beautiful Fetish, Follower of Ganval, Ganval Practice Knowledge, Geography of Kerofinela, Open Spirit World, Spirit Face.

Virtues: Bad Action (certain sanctioned antisocial actions), Good Humored, Hate Wolves.

Practice Spirits:

✓ **Creek spirits**—Flow Downhill 14 to 1W, Swim 20.

● **Dancing Shadow spirits**—Drive Away Animals Shout 10W.

⊕ **Flower Wind spirits**—Help Hurt 12 to 9W.

□ **Little Mountain spirits**—see page 150.

⊙ **Oakfed Fire spirits**—see page 150.

Spirit Ally: A Ganval shaman cannot have more than one spirit ally of each type of practice spirit.

Secret: **Fetch** (During his first shamanic journey, the shaman-to-be dies and then undergoes a Shamanic Rebirth, bringing himself back to life with a fetch. Each shaman's fetch is different, but most appear as an animal when they manifest.)

Shamanic Abilities: Heal Own Corpse, Shamanic Escape, Spirit World Travel.

Fetishes: Mostly finely carved wooden bangles, although for especially dangerous or powerful fetishes the shaman will instead hunt a wolf and whittle rings from its bones.

Other Side: Ganval's Hide is close by the Little Mountain, always near the Wild Wolf Forest, a source of constant conflict.

Disadvantages: Enemy of Hrognar (see page 221), who killed his children. Ganval slew Hrognar and brought them back to life, only to see them slain again by Hrognar's spawn. Now any sign of Hrognar nearby requires practitioners to hunt down him, his children, and his followers. This makes worshippers permanent foes of the Telmori wolf people of Dragon Pass.

Oakfed

Wild Fire

Oakfed is a tremendously powerful fire spirit that inhabits Dragon Pass and nearby Prax, Maniria, and Tarsh. The same stories are told about him by the local traditions, each of which claims credit for conquering him. Oakfed devoured all of the trees, and no rain could quench his fire. At last a hero or shaman fought against Oakfed and caught him in a bundle of fibers and wood, from which he could not escape. Among the Grazers, the spirit who conquered Oakfed is Jordan, among the Praxians it is Waha, and among the Heortlings it is Kolat. Ganval shamans claim to have taken a part of Oakfed's power during the Darkness to light the way for the local spirits, but never claim to have mastered the wildfire.

Each spirit made Oakfed teach the Three Fires to mankind. Now humans all can do them, according to their power (as it is tested when they undertake the difficult and dangerous Blood of Fire Rites). Most people have only simple fire spirits. Leaders can get Bonfire spirits, and shamans (except Ganval shamans) can try to master Holy Fire spirits. Oakfed himself no longer leaves the Spirit World, for he would burn the whole Natural World up if he did.

Oakfed is usually simply worshipped at any fire, but he has some spirit places, especially used for contacting large and powerful fire spirits, like the Charcoal Oak in Dragon Pass and the three Burning Pots in Tarsh.

Entry Requirements: Membership in a tradition that knows the ways of taming Oakfed.

Abilities: Breathe Smoke, Endure Flames, Follower of Oakfed, Oakfed Practice Knowledge, Open Spirit World, Spirit Face.

Virtues: Greedy, Hate Darkness.

Practice Spirits:

⊙ **Oakfed Fire spirits** (see page 150).

Spirit Ally: Only a practitioner who gives up membership in their tradition and commits himself solely to Oakfed can gain a spirit ally from him.

Charms and Fetishes: Rare pieces of flint occur naturally that are hot, and sometimes spontaneously shoot off sparks that can start fires. Oakfed fetishes must be made using one of those flints, usually to carve sticks of wood that are decorated with the feathers of hot birds, strips of fur from hot animals, and which must be kept in a red leather bag with fringe.

Other Side: Oakfed still rages and blazes freely in the Fireheart Plains, an endless plateau of flammable deadwoods fanned by unpredictable winds.

Disadvantages: Oakfed can be conquered, but never really tamed. Those who follow his ways can be useful to a community but risk being blamed if fires break out unexpectedly (as they often do).



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SAMPLE TRADITIONS & PRACTICES
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The Spirit Landscape

When Death came to Living Nature, things were separated. Now only the embodied spirits in the living Natural World are good. The dead, disembodied spirits occupy the Otherworld and occasionally intrude into the Natural World as specters—ghosts, illness, curses, and other horrors. Embodied spirits that dare to intrude into the Spirit World are called shamans.

Embodied spirits are good spirits because they have a material connection to the Natural World, being embodied life forms and spirits of nature. Bad spirits have no material connection to the Natural World and dwell in their own realms in the Spirit World. That world's residents are generally hostile to all embodied beings.

Humans who have spirits (instead of souls or essences) are essentially embodied spirits. Spirits are generally not anthropomorphic unless they were humans in their lives.

The spirit landscape of the Natural World is formed from embodied spirits, but their distribution seems random and irregular. For instance, sometimes a single tree is a being, other times a being takes care of a whole grove or forest. Sometimes a being is a little pebble, sometimes a huge mountain.

The power an animist can have depends on the spirits, embodied and disembodied, he can control. However, as well as being potential allies or even having practices of their own (like Chalk Man and Mallia), spirits are also often honored as **guardian spirits** or even granted propitiatory worship to avert some greater ill.

Landscape Spirits, Charms, and Fetishes

An embodied spirit's functions can be gained as spirits, as described in "Worshipping Guardians" in the Relationships chapter, page 94. Gaining a spirit from a function counts as misapplied worship.

The practitioner creates a charm or fetish for the spirit as normal, but the magic is limited. As long as the owner stays in the general vicinity of the natural spirit's home, he can use the charm or fetish normally. If he goes outside of its area (and this range can vary even with the same spirit), or even if enough time passes, the spirit starts to fade. The magic can still be used, but its rating decreases the farther the animist is from its source. Returning to the source does not reverse this process. Once the rating drops to 0, the embodied spirit returns to its source. If the hero returns to the area he can refill the charm or fetish as described in the appropriate sections of this chapter.

Using spirits in this way weakens the entity. Each such spirit currently in use decreases the appropriate function's rating by half the charm's or fetish' hero point cost, even if the spirit is weakened by distance or is never used.

Medicine Bundles

Practices (and even some individuals) acquire their own spirit guardians. These spirits must be embodied into a physical object, generally known as a **medicine bundle**. Medicine bundles take many forms, sometimes being similar to a fetish or charm, at other times immovable, tied to a place or geographic feature. One might be a simple carving, another a pouch containing a dozen ritual items. Over time, additional spirits are often bound into the bundle, each caretaker adding spirits to its defenses. As a result, some ancient medicine bundles are very powerful.

If the medicine bundle of a practice is lost, stolen, or damaged, the majestic spirit becomes inaccessible until things are put right. Existing fetishes and charms continue to work, but

new spirits cannot be bound, and any practice spirits released from their fetish may not return until the bundle is restored. Destroying a medicine bundle does not harm the spirit, but would likely cause it to curse its former followers until they regain or reconstruct it.

Each local group of practitioners will have their own medicine bundle, even though they might be only one group among many to worship that majestic spirit. The spirits within each medicine bundle collectively act like a guardian entity for the local members of the practice. Together, these guardian spirits use one or more functions to defend the medicine bundle and practice members. They may provide the officiating shaman or practitioner with a bonus when contacting the spirit, or might provide bonuses to members who fight to protect it.

Moosehorn Spur

Puma People are naturally solitary, but even they have reason to gather from time to time to find mates, resolve disputes, and simply share tales of their travels and adventures. Loose communities known as concolorations sometimes emerge, usually founded by a particularly sociable and charismatic individual, and often lasting for generations. One concoloration is active in Dragon Pass, centered on the Moosehorn Spur. It gathers once or twice a year, but the spirit of the Spur blesses its members all the time, wherever they might be. The spirit does not manifest to them, instead simply enhancing their natural understanding of each other.

Form: The Moosehorn Spur, a distinctive natural rock feature in the Quivin Mountains.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Know When it is Time to Gather 11W.
- ⚡ Blessing—Share Experiences 20.
- ☑ Defense—Gather in Secret 18.

Sample Landscape Spirits

Chalk Man

Chalk Man is an Earth spirit that rose up from the ground from near Donalf Flats, and left behind him the great outline still visible there where no plants ever grow. Chalk Man heard Grazer was imprisoned by Rabbitface and went to free him. He gambled, but lost and had his eyes taken out. He went away, stayed at Granny Vo's tent and killed the thieving badger for her, and married her daughters Dara, Dera, and Dora. His new uncle gave him gambling sticks and he went back to Rabbitface. He wagered his wives in a bet with Grazer as the other wager, and he won, then he wagered for Grazer's brothers and won, and then he won back the other spirits, the other plants and animals, and finally all the people. Then Rabbitface was killed. Chalk Man did some other great deeds too, such as sending the mountain giant away to settle elsewhere and founding some families of humans. In the end, he retired to an underground chamber whose spectacular but nearly impassible entryway is near where he raised himself from the ground.

Chalk Man is the majestic spirit of an animist practice, whose practitioners use gambling sticks as fetishes. However, near his hill he is also a popular guardian, to whom local communities turn for luck and protection. They use chalk collected from his hill to draw his silhouette on a wooden board and thus gain his protection.

Form: A great chalk figure on the side of Chalk Man Hill.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Know the Odds 7♣.
- ⚡ Blessing—Good Luck 20.
- ☒ Defense—Good Luck 20.

The Creek

Krikans is a local majestic spirit of Dragon Pass almost always simply called The Creek. During the Gods War, a shaman called forth the spirit waters, and The Creek answered. It washed away all other waters and has remained unpolluted ever since. It is pure spirit water from its headwaters to the mouth that merges with The River, since all of its tributaries are also spirits.

People who live along the banks of The Creek seek Krikans' protection by making offerings at any of several spirit places, such as the Stagland Sour and Onki's Jetty.

Form: Krikans does not manifest, instead sending followers: one of the Seventeen Siblings, the smaller spirits associated with his tributaries.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Sense Water Pollution 20.
- ⚡ Blessing—Purify Water 5♣.
- ☒ Defense—Stop Drowning 18.

Denjereli, the "Little Trees"

Denjereli ("little trees") have tiny bodies, but appear huge when viewed with *Spirit Face*. They accept offerings and dances on any Fireday, and in return hide people who sleep under them. They are found across most of Genertela, including the Genert and Valind Wastes, but excluding most of the West. They are uncommon, and are only rarely found near each other.

Form: A tree so small most people never notice it among the grass.

Functions:

- ☒ Defense—Conceal Sleeper 2♣2.

Granny Vo and Uncle

Granny Vo is Old Grandma, the power of Nature before people intruded on it. She and her brother (known only as Uncle) are capricious, and are arbitrarily cruel or kind when visited at their tent on the Great Empty Plain. They have been here from before the oldest stories. People who live near one of Granny's Crannies (always located in the wilderness many miles away from any habitation) leave them offerings.

Form: Granny Vo and Uncle appear as crooked and twisted old folk, always with a different face but always carrying blue-painted sticks, pierced in the center and tied to a walnut shell with a cord of rabbitskin.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Know When Time is Right 20.
- ⚡ Blessing—Heal 20.
- ☒ Defense—Kill 15.

Great Trees

Where a grove of spirit trees grows there is often a great tree. Such spirits can manipulate their grove's life cycle, such as withholding fruit in a given year. When a great tree dies, the oldest or most powerful tree spirit becomes the successor, and thus the collective spirit survives as long as any part of the grove



The Chalk Man's outline remains forever etched on this hill in northern Sartar, a site of power and mystery.

does. Local practices often include ceremonies to appease nearby great trees, and thus gain benefits from them as a guardian.

A great tree can communicate tree thoughts and, if old and powerful enough, communicate intelligently. Shamans benefit most from these worship rites, because they can communicate spirit to spirit, and so can understand these alien thoughts more easily than can practitioners. Great trees are a primary source of the special awareness that elves, dryads, and other Aldryami have in Aldryami forests.

Form: The great tree of the grove.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Sense Health of Community 1♣.
- ⚡ Blessing—Center of Community 2♣2.
- ☒ Defense—Summon Nearby Followers 5♣.

Mallia

Mallia is the evil spirit of disease, sickness, and plague. Only evil beings such as broo worship her in a full animist practice, but many people propitiate her with sacrifices and ecstatic rites, especially in places far from worshippers of dedicated healing entities. Such communities set up a log in a secret place and leave offerings, spirit wards, and sick people there.

Form: Mallia herself manifests as a bloated headless body with many arms and a gaping maw in her belly. When her powers are summoned, even for propitiatory services, a faint shadow of this shape is visible through the use of *Spirit Face*.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Avoid Diseased One 16.
- ⚡ Blessing—Cast Disease onto Scapegoat 1♣.
- ☒ Defense—Resist Disease 17.

Gambling Stick Game

The Gambling Stick game is played with five sticks that are rounded into oval shapes, so that they have two sides that share edges. They are black on one side and white on the other. Each has various runes and signs carved on it, usually only on the black or white side, not both. The sticks are dropped or thrown down all at once on the ground, results are read, and bets are exchanged. Although the game has a considerable random element, people friendly with the sticks "know how to throw them."

Propitiatory Worship

Propitiatory worship is a type of worship given to an entity, usually to obtain some sort of protection from it or its minions. Thus, people sacrifice to Mallia, the Plague Mother, in the hopes that her diseases will avoid them. Propitiatory worship is often found among theistic and animistic cultures, but normally is forbidden by religious hierarchies, who see it as both a lack of faith in their own religion and a diversion of energy and resources to an enemy entity. Propitiatory worship is also found in monotheist homelands, and is always proscribed by the churches.

Sample Nature Spirits

Animists usually interact with spirits that are the embodiments of Nature, such as the spirits of creeks, trees, or winds. Such spirits are respected but not feared, since they are of our world and have a body. Some reside on the Spirit World between lives; others have spiritual bodies in both worlds. Most are appeased by local traditions and practices and are rarely hostile if the proper rituals are followed.

A nature spirit in *HeroQuest* has one or more magical abilities that animists can use if they place the spirit into a charm or fetish. The spirit does not really use these abilities so much as it is these abilities. Thus, a gold spirit is gold, and can only inhabit gold. It does not really *Shine*, but it cannot help but to be *Shiny*.

A nature spirit's ability rating is independent of the volume of material it inhabits—a powerful earth spirit might inhabit a single acre of soil, while a weaker one might be the embodiment of many square miles. If a nature spirit is captured in the Spirit World, it can be forced to inhabit any amount of material, so that an immense river spirit could be imprisoned in a pail. A nature spirit will usually only have one of the typical magical abilities given below, although powerful ones may have more.

Little Mountain Spirits

Little Mountain is a piece of Great Kero Fin, and was given so that people could go up and greet the great mountain every day. "Find Ganval up the cliff top," they say. Little Mountain spirits are found only in Dragon Pass, and are a specialty of the Ganval Practice, friendly only to them.

Much of the time, Little Mountain spirits manifest themselves as natural mountainside phenomena such as rockfalls, but if forced to take a mobile form they look like small bearded men formed of pieces of rock assembled dry-stone fashion, which creak and rumble as they move.

- ☐ Little Mountain spirits—Know Safest Climbing Route 20, Run up Cliff 10W, Survive Rockfall 1W.

Oakfed Fire Spirits

Oakfed's spirits are hot-tempered and hungry, eager to consume. They are released from fetishes only when they touch potential fuel, which they immediately attempt to ignite. They can also enter an existing fire and make it hotter. Typical spirits (*Burn* 15) can burn wood or paper, and powerful ones can ignite living plants, flesh, or even stone. Commonly, tinder has no resistance, dry wood resists with 14, wet wood 10W, soaked wood 10W2, living flesh 10W3, and stone 10W5.

Once ignited, the fire continues burning as long as fuel is available, thereby providing the necessary substance (fire) for the spirit to inhabit. The fire will grow naturally and ignite anything it touches that has a resistance less than its *Burn* rating. If

the fire spirit is still controlled, the shaman can order it to ignite less flammable items as well. Most human traditions use fire spirits, but troll, merman, and elf traditions treat them as foes.

Simple fire spirits have *Burn* ratings of up to 10W, but Bonfire spirits are powerful enough to resist magical extinguishment. The sacred conflagrations of Holy Fire spirits are usually only seen during rituals or summoned in times of dire need.

- ☉ Camp Fire spirits—Burn 10 to 10W.
- ☉ Bonfire spirits—Burn 10W to 10W3.
- ☉ Holy Fire spirits—Burn 10W3 to 10W5.

Tree Spirits

Aldryami (see the Creatures chapter, page 206) are the plant beings of the world. They are examined here in some detail to provide an example of the diversity of spirit life. Heroes may run into any of these across most of Dragon Pass, albeit spread thinly. They will meet many (as well as other things) if they go into elf woods.

Simple Tree Spirits

Individual spirit trees have no innate intelligence. Taking the spirit from the tree requires a fetish made from the tree, which always dies if the spirit is kept from it for too long. Most shamans take tree spirits from the Spirit World, where the spirits of dead trees collect in vast Ghost Forests.

- ☿ Simple Tree spirits—Bear [Fruit] 11 to 3W, Ever Green 12 to 20, Self-Defense 7 to 15, Shade from Sun 13 to 20, Strong 17 to 10W, Tall 20 to 14W.

Damdo, the Tattletale Bush

These spirits are hostile to kolatings (shamans who follow Kolat, a spirit brother of the god Orlanth), and although harmless they set up a shrill piping sound whenever any is within a hundred yards or so. They grow wild, but are cultivated by enemies of Kolat.

- ☿ Damdo Tree spirits—Warn of Nearby Kolatings 2W2.

Karagum, the Bluegum Oak Tree

All bluegum oaks are spirit trees. Generally, a couple of bluegums stand among other trees (but not other oak trees). They have properties to combat breathing illnesses. Shamans can capture the spirits in bluegum leaves, use them in a healing ceremony, then release them.

- ☿ Karagum Tree spirit—Drive Out Breathing Illness 1W2.

Wind Spirits

Simple Wind Spirits

Simple winds are little breezes, commonly released by a practitioner by exhaling or squeezing the spirit out of a bag. They have no inherent direction like many stronger winds, and go where their master sends them.

- ☉ Simple Wind spirits—Breeze 10 to 20, Cool Off 2 to 10.

North Wind Spirits

These winds blow from the cold north. Most serve a majestic spirit called Lord of Snows, though some have no master. They are favorite spirits of trolls, and roam freely in winter. They are willful, but can be relied upon to blow in a certain way when directed by a shaman.

- ☉ North Wind spirits—Blow Relentlessly 10 to 2W2, Freeze 3 to 2W2, Hate Summer 19 to 10W2, Howl 2 to 19.

The Spirit World

The Spirit World is the Otherworld of the animists. It has no bodies in it, and its denizens mean harm to all who are alive. That makes it a dangerous place for ordinary people. Practitioners can open the way for magic and worship.

Shamans are sacred workers who have the powers to go into that world and survive. They go there to gain information (such as where hunting is good), to gain magic for themselves and their followers, and even to affect events (like trying to force the deer spirits to go to a specific place).

Shamans go to the Spirit World to capture spirits, binding them into fetishes and charms for use by themselves or others. Worship ceremonies are generally the only time that other animists glimpse the Other Side.

Shamanic Circles

A shaman normally works from within his personal **shamanic circle**, a pattern that he marks off around himself, and around which the Spirit World forms. Inside the circle all are safe, and outside of it spirits become visible. Ordinary people take refuge within the circle's protection. At first they see only nearby beings, so that the forest beings become visible within the trees and the nearby river being becomes visible within the water. As the ceremony deepens the bodies outside the circle also fade away, so that only the spirits of forest and river are seen. Only within the circle do embodied beings remain—a rock or fire is visible along with its spirit, as are fetishes and charms.

The Spirit World lies outside the circle. Spirits are visible and they are often frightening to see. It is common to glimpse wispy, snarling illness spirits, smell the unburied dead, hear the wail of ghosts, and sense large, formless things that feel like curses.

Walking with the Spirits

Leaving the shamanic circle is an extraordinary act. Doing so means entering the Spirit World, a vast region without direct connections to the physical world and with ever-changing features. The Spirit World is especially dangerous because it does not have any firm boundaries to separate regions where enormously powerful and dangerous entities dwell. Indeed, it often seems to distort and flow as if in a hallucinatory dream.

Shamans have the magical perception to discern separate entities within the vast and archetypal landscape of the Spirit World. They can see where to find the simple spirits or those of beasts, plants, diseases, and thoughts, and even the great spirits. They are able to move about in the Spirit World, something that non-gifted people cannot do. When they encounter spirits they can bargain or fight, and if all else fails can flee the Spirit World through their ability of *Shamanic Escape*.

What the Shaman Whispers

When you go to the Spirit World you must close your eyes and ears, for you no longer possess them. Put on your Spirit Face instead, and your spirit will expand based on your might. The space around you gray and featureless until you sense another spirit and, by sensing it, allow it to sense you. Until you gain experience you will perceive these spirits as shapes, colors, smells, sounds, and other physical sensations. Ignore these distractions, and sense the spirits for what they are, even as they know you by your Spirit Face.

Time passes at a highly variable rate in the Spirit World, all “events” mixed together in a nebulous No-Time. No one can predict whether an hour, a day, or even longer will pass between the time the shaman leaves the circle and when he returns. Spatial relations are also highly variable. The Spirit World is a shifting, amorphous place of dreams and visions. Some “landmarks” can be discerned, but they flow and move without apparent pattern, and the relationships between them constantly change. It may be only a few “miles” from one shaman's circle to the palace of the King of Winter, hundreds of miles for another, even though it is thousands of miles from *both* shamans' homes in the Natural World to Valind's Glacier. Even armed with the proper knowledge, a hero cannot control his movement in the Spirit World without the *Spirit World Travel* ability.

Spirit World Denizens

The Spirit World is a realm of three- and four-dimensional relationships. Imagine that an individual spirit is a volume of space, with others similar nearby, some overlapping, all encompassed by some larger spirit, itself enclosed by four spirits and partially by three more. Some of these are hostile to others, causing waves of danger and devouring pain; some are cooperative, moving like schools of fish inside larger fish. Narrators need not worry about narrating tales in such a place, however. Most visits will be to pass through a friendly demesne to get to the Gods War to heroquest.

Afterlife

After death, most animists enter the Spirit World to serve the spirits. Spiritists become servants of the great spirit, while practitioners serve their majestic spirit. Many are simply among the ancestors. Depending on the tradition, worshippers may become the various types of spirits that the religion has to offer its members, such as a fire spirit of Oakfed, a stallion spirit of Yu-Kargzant, and so on. Individuals generally lose all trace of their personality in this function after a year or so in the Spirit World, but this is considered natural, not tragic. Eventually, all such spirits are reborn into the Natural World to continue in the cycle of life and death.

Great Spirit Demesnes

Important and powerful spirits have their own places in the Spirit World. The more powerful the spirit, the more likely it is to have its own demesne, such as the icy castle of the King of Winter or the Underworld palace of Kyger Litor. These great spirits are surrounded by the spirits they control, so Kyger Litor has a retinue of darkness, hunger, and troll spirits (including ancestresses of the troll families), and the King of Winter rules over rowdy wind, snow, ice, and frost spirits. Some spirits roam the Spirit World, avoiding the great spirits. It is important to remember, however, that a demesne is not a place (although many mortals must of necessity perceive it as such), but the space occupied by all of its spirits, including the larger spaces of the majestic spirits and the all-encompassing space of the great spirit itself.

Ancestor spirits usually collect in their own demesne. They form a relatively safe spiritual landscape in the otherwise hostile realm. Nonetheless, even ancestors are usually hungry and will ravage entities that enter their realm unguarded. They are eager to make living kinfolk and even strangers stay among them.



Hostile Spirit World Denizens

If heroes do get off their trail and into unknown parts of the Spirit World, they will encounter dangerous and hostile spirits. Some of these are defined by their tradition and practices, but most are not. Almost anything can appear in the Spirit World, for it is a realm of possibilities and imprecise definitions.

Sample Hostile Spirit World Denizens

Brain Splitters: Attack inside Head 16. Appear in bands of five, ten, or fifteen, who augment each other during contests.

Destroyer of Spirits: Destroy Spirits 5W3.

Great Seizing Lord: Hates Embodied Things 10W3.

Mad Turtle: Eat Smaller Spirits 10W2 to 5W3.

Piercing Arrow Enemy: Appears one at a time and strikes with one blow. Seize and Devour Half My Foe 2W2.

Savage Tribe Followers: Appear in groups from 3 to 13, with Destroy Invader 13 to 16W.

Zooming Hate Master: Hates Embodied Things 5W3.

Spirit Possession

Spirits may take over the body of a person, resulting in **possession**. This is most often the result of a defeat in a contest with a hostile spirit, but there are other possibilities. Spirits of disease attack people and cause illnesses, and shamans may send a disembodied spirit to attack a person who has offended him or the spirits.

There are two types of possession: **hidden possession**, where the spirit inhabits the body but does not attempt to take it over, and **dominant possession**, where the spirit takes complete control of the host. Illness caused by a spirit is an example of hidden possession; ghostly possession is an instance of dominant possession. A person possessed by a dominant spirit may or may not remember what happened during the possession. Hidden possession usually leaves the victim with a clear memory, since his thoughts and actions were at most influenced, not controlled.

Most possessions are malign, such as illness, madness, or a ghost possessing a mortal in order to complete a task left undone when it died. Benign possession by a hero or ancestor occurs when a person heroforms (see page 109). Some traditions routinely invite spirits into their bodies for short periods to make use of their magic.

The possession ends when the spirit leaves its host body.

Some spirits may voluntarily leave after a time, or after achieving a specific goal. Others must be forced to leave by a shaman, practitioner, or other magician.



△ Otherworld Hunting

Galan and Mr. Puma want to find special Destroy Essence spirits.

The shaman, Unwatched Delightful Terror, has agreed to bear them under his protection to a place where they can try to capture some. Unwatched Delightful Terror will not engage the spirits, he only guarantees getting you there and out again, either with your spirit if you get one, or out safely if you fail. You have to pay, do you have the six sheep and two bear cubs? The jugs of fire water? The copper ingots? The twelve herbs? The three blankets? The thread and needles? The money? Good, excellent. We can begin soon.

Unwatched Delightful Terror encloses a space with dirt from a sack he carries, summons spirits from there, and then releases several others from his belt. First the spirits of the surrounding landscape become visible, glowing intensely among the Natural World that is only partially, a little bit, made of spirit. Then the spirits only are visible as a gray fog closes in on everything outside the power spot. Finally the gray fog fades and the Otherworld appears around all. Unwatched Delightful Terror moves his hands in a secret way, and a sphere of blue power surrounds the power spot. The landscape inside the power spot disappears, and the shaman bears his assistants and the two passengers away from safety. They hurtle as if flying. Sometimes beneath them Mr. Puma and Galan see valleys and forest, an empty void, barren hills and rich verdant plains, a pit of sparkling eyes, a river of screaming spirits rumbled and tumbled upon the creek of horror. And overhead, as they fly, are clouds of color, flocks of birds and insects, a great green shape that covers the sky, or a swirling aurora of lights that whisper what you need to know, but cannot remember.

To the Edge of Everything, a place that overlooks a pit of maggots. "They'll come soon," says Unwatched Delightful Terror. "They hate you. Destroy what are not spirits. Capture what you need and we will go. Do not linger, they get stronger and stronger."

That one, with the extra eyes, is a demon, and that one next is a god-killer. Mr. Puma hides behind his Uncle Protect Me, a great fighter; Galan stands with his spirit bison, both as one. Maggots fall, die.

And the shaman says, "Those there, they are the essence killers." They are plainly so, and Mr. Puma attacks one with his Spirit Face power. Galan and his ally and his combat fellow fight, and totally destroy theirs.

"Are you crazy?" asks Mr. Puma. "Why did you let it go? Get one and get out of here."

"It was too small," said Galan. "Go on if you need to, I will be there soon."

"Not yet." The shapeshifter who never changes shape is reluctant to flee. Two more larger, hungry, sliming stink worms rumble towards them. They spit blue burning acid out of their eyeballs. Mr. Puma wins, but only with a hero point. Galan is hurt, but swears to go on. The Essence Destroyers come again, and this time Galan engages one and, with the victory, puts it into his fetish.

"Look down," he said, and below them was a wave of slurping starving worms, movement on a sea of them, a limitless sea. Eaters of the world.

"Let's get out of here. Mr. Unwatched Delightful Terror, please extract us as your bones allow, according to the agree ... ment. We're here, we made it. Here is my fetish, right? Good."



WIZARDRY

The Essence Planes are the source of wizardry. Three types of organizations use this magic in different ways. Churches venerate God, and in turn are blessed by His presence. Saintry orders venerate individuals whose blessings and magic are brought into the Mundane Plane. Wizardry schools know the world and its laws and use a time-tested, logical worldview to manipulate magical energy.

This chapter introduces monotheist Churches and explains how Worshippers gain magic from God, the saints, and wizardry schools. Sample Churches, Saintry Orders, and Wizardry Schools illustrate the magic available to worshippers. The Essential Landscape describes the magical energy that permeates the Mundane World. The Essence Planes form the universe, stretching from the depths of the Underworld up to the One God.

Churches

A **church** is a magical organization that follows a sacred text, called a scripture. All churches channel veneration to God and draw forth magic from the Essence Planes. In return, members rely upon their organization for magical support. Churches are sometimes called **sects**. The Western religions are sometimes collectively called **monotheism** because most believe in one Supreme Being, although many members use common magic or belong to common religions and some minority churches venerate multiple entities. *HeroQuest* uses this term because it describes the idealized vision of a majority of worshippers who venerate the Invisible God.

Countless churches exist, from the huge Rokari Church—with thousands of clergy and millions of lay members—to a single charismatic liturgist with a few dozen followers and his own interpretation of the holy books. Rivalry between faiths is endemic, and even those that share scriptures often dispute their interpretation bitterly.

Most churches contain one or more saintly orders. A saintly order venerates a saint, who gives spells to members called orderlies. Some orders are found only in one church, others have chapters in many churches.

Characteristics of Churches

Otherworld Origin: Essence Planes.

Name for Mortal World: Mundane Plane.

Entities: God, founder.

Homelands: Esrolia, Esvular, Seshnela.

Worshippers Have: Essences.

Magic: Miracles; scriptures, blessings, and curses.

Members: Lay members.

Leaders: Liturgists, clergymen.

Type of Worship: Veneration.

Most churches also include one or more wizardry schools, sometimes called high orders. The adepts of these schools have access to grimoires of spells. Some schools exist outside of any church, although most such schools are considered heretical by the churches, their members condemned as sorcerers.

The Chain of Veneration

Veneration is the worship of God and his saints, led by liturgists as laid down in the scripture. When a congregation worships, a part of their religious essence is channeled through the liturgist. He uses a portion of the worship energy to bless the congregation, reliquaries, and orderlies. He then conveys most of the worship energy to his superiors and so on up the line until the highest authority passes it to the Supreme Being on the Venerable Plane.

This hierarchical chain of veneration was laid down in *The Abiding Book* itself. Each link in the chain passes on the energy to the next. The energy lasts for seven days and then disappears, but is renewed at the next worship service.

Virtue

Virtues are actions and thoughts that benefit the community and church. The general virtues of Western religions are Follow Church Doctrine, Obedience, Compassion, Temperance, and Charity. Some churches match virtues to sins, so that Temperance is offset by Intoxication and so on.

The Hero Wars are between...Law and War

The laws of the Invisible God define the world and provide the rules by which men must live. But the Kingdom of War knows no law. Its ravenous appetite for destruction and death threatens everything with oblivion. All of Fronela is mustering to oppose it, led by the Order of the Swallow, which must show that law is more powerful than war.

W I Z A R D R Y

Solace

Solace is the Eternal Bliss that awaits the pious after death. Each religion describes it differently, poetically or mystically, but all describe the same thing. Solace is a promise for the future, not a reward in the present. No matter how bad life may be now, there is always Solace in the hereafter.

Solace is the great secret of most churches. Uniquely, it is attainable by *anyone* upon death, so long as they are virtuous and obey the precepts of their church.

Joy

The Blessing of Joy allows worshippers to experience Heaven and God's eternal grace. The Old Seshnegi say, "Solace is Heaven. Joy is His Grace." The presence or absence of Joy is a matter of theological dispute, and it is not recognized or valued by all churches. The Rokari Church, for example, recognizes Joy but denies its value.

△ Curiosity Strikes

As part of the payment for the Red Plaid Blanket, Mr. Puma gets a copy of *The Abiding Book*, which he cements with a hero point. He reads it.

He discusses it with Hengal, the group's sophisticate. Mr. Puma wants to know, Hengal replies knowingly. Hengal compares everything with his goddess Sedenya, who encompasses everything and even nothing. He praises her inclusiveness, applauds her enclosure of all species and peoples, and glorifies her ultimate ambiguity, all at the expense of the teachings of *The Abiding Book*. An odd thing occurs, for when Hengal means to be sarcastic, Mr. Puma hears him praising, and where Hengal means to be cynical, Mr. Puma hears it as urgently positive. Mr. Puma finally concludes, "This is a human religion. If I join this, I will be human."

One day, after the disappointments of meeting Fancypants again, some of the band are talking.

"I'm going south," says Hazeel, "to the ocean. I'm bored and I'll never learn about surfing here. Let's go there." Jane says she will go too.

Mr. Puma says, "Do you know about 'shaking hands' that they do there? It's some kind of Western thing. Let me show you how they do it."

So they get their stuff together and travel through Heortland to Esvular.

Saintly Orders

Orders venerate a saint who taught people a way to act or worship. Liturgists lead worship, and an administration often oversees overall control and decision-making throughout the church. Large orders are divided into smaller chapters or monasteries. Some saints are unique to their church, such as Saint Henshelek (see page 168). Others are venerated in separate orders in different churches, such as Saint Gerlant (see page 169). A few orders have chapters in many lands, and members can belong to any local church that acknowledges the saint; this is true of Saint Xemela (see page 171).

Orders are diverse in their nature and purpose. Most are practical, and provide magic that is immediately rewarding. Most common are military, healing, and monastic orders. Many orders are common among certain occupations, so that in some lands every warrior belongs to one or another fighting order. Less common orders oversee mining, trade, childbirth, trade relations between cities, heraldry, or making armor. In Ralios, several orders are dedicated entirely to their own city-states.

△ Hazeel Finds a Church

Mr. Puma shops around to find the best church. He finds a Rokarite bishop who wholeheartedly states that his church is the "One True Great Human Religion." He then assures Mr. Puma that he could join his congregation but would never find salvation, because he's not really human.

The liturgist of Your Own Church listens patiently to Mr. Puma. "I'm the one for you," he says. "Your own God, I know Him." If he pays a regular small fee for instruction, a goodly amount to the liturgist, and more for the bishop, then he can apply to join. "But you must never mention these payments to anyone. It is part of the secrets of our religion." Mr. Puma recognizes a hustle when he sees one, and keeps searching.

"Oh, join me," says Jane, "and find God in a paper fold. It's easy!"

Mr. Puma is not searching for something easy, though, and keeps looking. He rejects the No God Church and the Unknown God Church. They are just too silly for him. At night the three friends huddle in a little room and share their day's experiences.

The Abiding Book

The One True Book

The Abiding Book is the prime scripture for both established and marginal churches in the West. God wrote it a thousand years ago while witnesses watched. It is a sacred history whose magic has been proven. It tells how Creator became (or made) the Law, the Prophet, the Founder, and at last the Person who was martyred. It documents the Survivor Tales of the people who venerated Malkion against rivalry and doom, and glorifies those who brought about His wide acceptance. It contains homilies, parables, and the basic rites of the Church to invoke blessings and curses.



entity that corrupted the world. It is the source of evil and sin. Gods and spirits are usually held to be devils, and Chaos is always identified as part of the Devil. The Devil is blamed for everything that goes wrong, whether moral, spiritual, physical, or social. It is a slippery entity whose identity is not agreed upon even by members of a single religion, but whose presence is known by all.

Sin

Sins are actions or thoughts that go against the teachings of the Church. Most churches recognize all the sins mentioned in *The Abiding Book*, then add to the list. Most churches believe sin to be the Devil leading the worshipper away from God. Sinners do not achieve Solace when they die.

Sins of The Abiding Book: Intoxication, Lust, Murder, Food Hoarding, Theft, Adultery, Questioning Church Beliefs, Apostasy, Worshipping Pagan Gods or Heathen Spirits.

The Devil

Western religions recognize a being commonly called the Devil. Whatever its name or names, churches agree it is the

"Nobody knows anything about surfing. But I met these guys whose God is pretty cool, and I'm going to join! I can get spells for Riding a Wave, Buoyancy, and Repair Hull. I'm gonna invent surfing by myself!"

"You'll have to give up all your other magic, though! You're pretty invested in that," says Jane, who wishes she was as good at archery as Hazeel's magic makes him.

"Nothing, just a passing job that I'll give up to fulfill my life's dream."

"I know what you mean," says Mr. Puma, "about that dream stuff. I wish I could be so lucky to find mine."

"Whine whine whine. Your identity issues are messed up. Have you ever considered," says Jane, "looking at yourself as superhuman instead of subhuman? It's not about God, it's about you."

Wizardry Schools

A **wizardry school** is a teaching that uses one or more grimoires to define its view and use of magic. For members of schools, wizardry is exclusively the art of spell casting. It accesses the closest of the Essence Planes using the will of the individual and knowledge of the laws rather than community participation.

Schools are completely independent from each other. Their size and wealth depend on the grimoires and spells they use, the prestige of the school and its adepts, and the attitude of the local society. Each school teaches its spells to its members, and often casts them (for a fee) for outsiders. Most wizardry schools are traditional, conservative, and uptight. Failure to follow the commands of the masters leads to the offender being punished, expelled, or even declared an enemy of the school.

Founders (either saints or mighty adepts) established the schools. Each wrote or compiled their school's grimoire, which was then copied, annotated, commented on, and used by followers. Many petty grimoires exist, perhaps thousands, but only a few are so insightful and effective that they have become widespread and popular. Some schools are independent of any religion, but these sorcery schools (as they are called) are outside the scope of this book.

An academy is a community within a school. Academies share the same founder and grimoires but operate at least partially independently. Each has its own center, with staff to teach and support its members. Each has its own copy of the founder's grimoire, but these may be unique versions, with additional or variant spells. The same school may have academies in different churches.

Unique Characteristics of Saintry Orders

Otherworld Origin: Saint Plane.

Entities: Saints, Prophets.

Magic: Spells; scriptures, blessings, and curses.

Members: Orderlies.

Leaders: Orderlies, order liturgists.

Unique Characteristics of Wizardry Schools

Otherworld Origin: Magic Plane, Saint Plane.

Entities: Founders.

Magic: Grimoires and spells.

Members: Adepts, apprentices.

Leaders: Wizards.

Sorcery Schools

Some people use wizardry outside the confines and support of any church. Most such organizations function like a wizardry school, but their members are not also lay members. Such use of wizardry is termed **sorcery**, and it is considered bad and dangerous by most churches.

Most monotheists commonly assume that those who use sorcery accept a simple trade-off, sacrificing potential power in return for greater freedom of thought and action. After all, a church can offer moral and magical support far beyond the resources of any secular school. However, this is by no means true in every case. Sorcerers are often free to practice proscribed magics such as **tapping**, a process (banned or restricted by churches) that involves draining the essences of places and beings for a magician's own use. Some sorcery schools have spells whose use established churches would find questionable at best, sinful at worst. A **magus**, one of the mightiest sorcerers, may have discovered those secrets that granted a sorcery school's Founder the knowledge and power that allowed him or her to establish a school in the first place. Perhaps one of the reasons the Churches are so intolerant of sorcerers is precisely because they know how dangerous and unpredictable they can be.

New Occupation: Clergyman



A clergyman is a functionary or clerk in a church. Many clergymen are liturgists (see page 158), who maintain the chain of veneration by collecting and directing magical power from their congregation's worship. At least two ranks are needed: liturgists and a head of the church. The Rokari Church has liturgists, bishops, archbishops, and the Ecclesiarch. Some clergymen have no liturgical ability, and are simply officials in the church hierarchy.

To become a clergyman, your hero must be a member of a church and have a patron who will sponsor him in his first step on the ladder of advancement. A church examiner (usually another clergyman) tests the candidate, although this is often a formality). Most clergymen give up common magic to focus on their religious duties.

Clergyman Keyword

Abilities: Counsel Worshipper, Dignity of the Church, Hear about Scandal, Identify Heresy, Political Infighting, Read [Language], Write [Language].

Typical Personality Traits: Obedient, Patient, Stern.

Typical Relationships: Member of [Congregation], Patron [Noble or Clerical Lord].

Followers: Sometimes have several servants to cook and clean, maintain the church grounds and building, and the like. These are usually held in common with other clergymen, and may in fact be clergymen as well.

Standard of Living: Common or Prosperous.

Typical Equipment: Copy of scriptures, ceremonial robes and regalia, place to live as sumptuous as they can afford.



Worshippers

Most monotheists are **lay members**. In return for their worship they are promised Solace, experience Joy, receive blessings, and may pray for miracles. A **liturgist** leads the worship and can invoke blessings and curses as he sends veneration to God. A worshipper may become an **orderly** and worship a saint in return for more tangible magic: orderly spells. Finally, an **adept** casts spells with the power of the relatively close Magic Plane. These commitments require time and discipline.

Concentrating Wizardry

As described in the Basic Magic chapter (page 108), a hero can concentrate his magic use on wizardry. By giving up all talents, affinities, feats, charms, fetishes, and spirits, the user of wizardry pays half the normal hero point cost to learn or improve any wizardly magic, even if it does not stem from his church, including common magic spells (which thereafter can be used as an active ability just like any wizardry spell).

Lay Member

Everyone from a monotheist homeland starts as a lay member. Lay members worship God through the mediation of a church, attending regular worship led by liturgists; day to day, however, their church gives little in return. The Supreme Being is distant from ordinary affairs. The spiritual benefits are Solace, the promise of heaven after death; Joy, the sublime experience sometimes known during worship; and blessings cast on the congregation by the liturgist. Membership in an order gives access to more active magic, but the church defines the overall vision of the world.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to join a church during play is questioned by the clergy on the basic tenets of the faith. Most churches simply require that the hero memorize the credo and repeat it to the liturgist. Various sects may add specific requirements. If successful, the hero takes an oath to obey the church and worship their version of God. The hero is now a lay member and starts to attend weekly worship services that maintain the world, keep sin at bay, and speed his spiritual development.

Benefits and Obligations

A lay member benefits from the blessings invoked by his congregation's liturgist, and can pray for miracles. He can hope to achieve Solace upon his death, and in some churches will experience Joy many times during worship.

In return, a lay member must give up about 10% of his time and resources (including hero points) to the religion. This time is generally spent attending regular weekly worship services and the occasional special service.

Why would anyone join a church?

Because most people are ordinary, hoping for an afterlife. The promise of Solace (for many, backed up by the experience of Joy) is worth a lack of manifest magic. If a worshipper knows about other forms of worship, he also knows that they are inferior religions, misunderstandings of the one true way.



Contest: Join a Church as a Lay Member

Appropriate Ability: [Cultural or Church Virtue], Doctrine of [Church], Member of [Congregation].

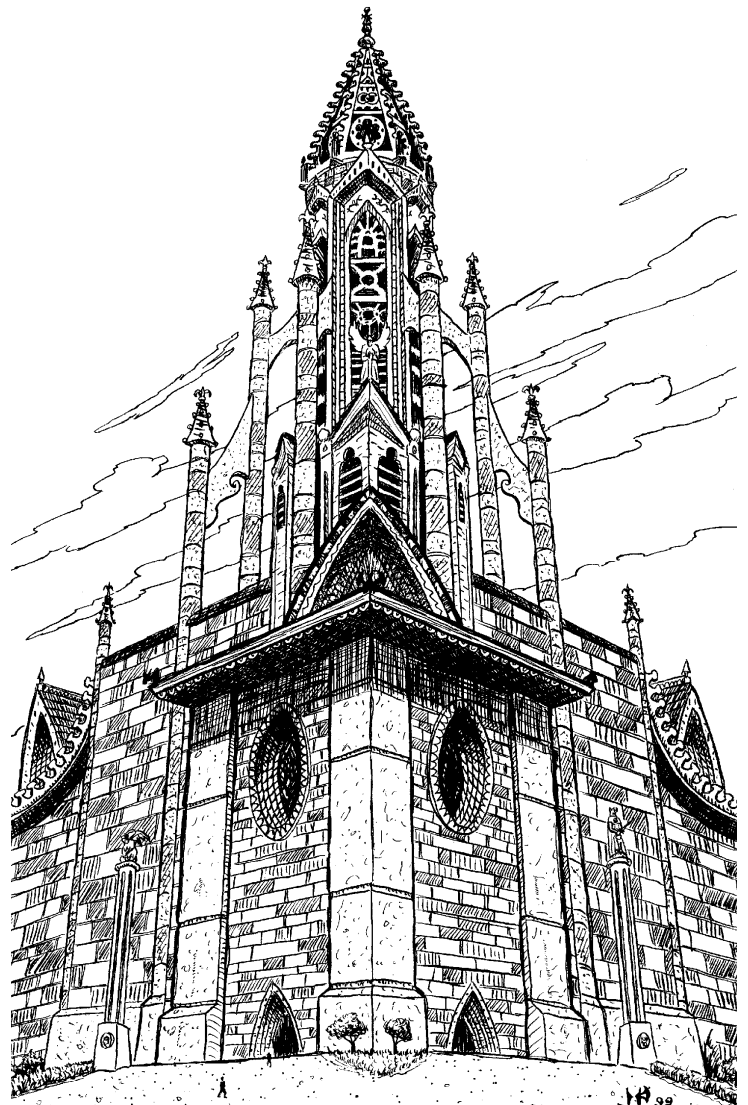
Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 14.

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to join the religion and gain *Worship [God]* at 13 for free.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not yet ready, but may reapply later. He should spend more time learning about the church or establishing a relationship with the congregation.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the clergymen so badly that he can never attempt to join the religion again.



Magic lives and grows in the churches and palaces of Loskalm. Southpoint is a large city that has thrived on the benefits of its favorite saint and martyr, Hrestol, Prophet of the Joy. His great cathedral is a small mountain of architecture that defies natural laws to glorify Hrestol. Through this holy palace flow all the prayers of thousands of dedicated worshippers and, in return, the sweet Joy of the Heart that brings comfort to humanity.

△ Mr. Puma Joins a Church

Mr. Puma visits another small Rokarite congregation that meets weekly in the basement apartment of its liturgist. He has brought some silver coins as an entry fee, and has reviewed parts of *The Abiding Book* that he feels he will be tested upon. He feels especially prepared to argue for his inclusion as either a subhuman, a semihuman, or a superhuman (thanks Jane!).

Mr. Puma plans to give no answers on things he does not know, but if asked what he thinks about anything at all he'll say, "It says here, in *The Abiding Book*, so and so, but I need instruction to know what it means." He is going to tell them he was raised by human slaves in Peloria who had been Rokarite worshippers, who taught him how to read and the rudiments of their beliefs. He is going to tell them that he heard voices telling him to come here and ask for salvation and protection, in the name of Rokar and Malkion.

Mr. Puma slips into the back of the room as the rites are about to begin. A couple of people look at him, but say nothing. He watches them and he does whatever they do, standing and kneeling throughout the Opening, Preparation, and Sermon; leaping at the Excursion; putting his hands over his face in the Penance; kneeling quietly, eyes closed (well, almost closed) during the Blessing; and again the kneeling and standing to Return, Respect, and Repay. The liturgist dismisses the congregation with the admonishment to "Live with God." After it is over, Mr. Puma feels pretty good about being able to do the movements of the ceremony correctly.

Everyone is leaving the room. The liturgist is at the door, being thanked and chatting with his parishioners. Mr. Puma tries to be last, but some others there are trying too, and they are members and looking at him pointedly. He rises then, and greets the liturgist.

"Hello, stranger," says the liturgist warmly, and takes Mr. Puma's hand to shake it, not in the Western manner but taking it in both of his own.

"Sir," he says, "um, I would like to join your church."

The liturgist is looking directly into his eyes, and smiles kindly. "Welcome," he says. "You are one of us. We meet here weekly at this time."

"Here, uh, is a little gift for joining."

"You are most generous!" he says, lighting up. "And so kind not to shame the others by your generosity. Thank you,

and I look forward to seeing you next week. Don't be so shy next time. Come sit up front."

"That's all?" says Frederick, a little surprised and disappointed. "I'm in?"

"Yes, you have to pay the 3 hero points, but you now have *Worship Makan 13* and the mundane relationship *Member of Vizel Rokari Church* at 6. The local members aren't fond of new people just throwing offerings around, so you'll need to spend some time to get in good with the rest of the congregation."

"Just 6? I have read the book, I have a skill at it here."

"Yes," says Kathy, "but if you come here for a year you can jump right to 13."

"A whole year? Can't I just spend a hero point?"

"A year, maybe more or less. Mr. Puma better count on it."

"Maybe I can do something good for these people, and shorten my time."

Lay Member Abilities

Magic—Blessings, miracles. Lay members are not required to concentrate their magic.

Mundane Relationship—*Member of [Congregation]* shows how much attention the worshipper spends on his local congregation. It is about social interaction, cooperation with other worshippers, and being subordinate to leaders.

Myths and Rituals—*Doctrine of [Church]* provides mundane knowledge of the church's moral and spiritual teachings, and of the lives of the prophets and the church founder.

Piety—*Worship [God]* rates the worshipper's piety, accumulated knowledge of and experience with the Essence Planes, and ability to adopt the proper venerative attitude towards God.

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the church keyword as abilities.

Blessings

The faithful are blessed by their liturgist at each weekly worship service. Blessings give an automatic augment to one ability, usually for a week (until the next worship service). The narrator will tell you what blessings you receive, although you can try asking your liturgist for a specific blessing. Some common blessings are provided in *The Abiding Book*, see page 159.

Miracles

Any member of a church can pray to God to intervene with a miracle. The plea of any single worshipper is unlikely to be answered, but when more people ask for the same thing, the chance increases that God will intervene. The form a miracle takes is up to the narrator. Most often, the effect is supernatural rather than overtly magical. A fire might be extinguished by a sudden shower or a bird descend and fly away with the burning brand in its beak. The Hand of God reaching down from the heavens is extremely rare. Philosophers debate whether the scarcity of miracles is due to God being so far away, because He has no concern with individuals (just the Grand Scheme of Creation), because it is the Will of God, or because God has turned his back on sinful mankind.

To be heard and answered, the prayers must cross over the magical barrier to the Venerable Plane. Most requests for miracles come from entire congregations rather than individuals, with a liturgist asking for a miracle with community support.

The Blessing of Joy

Know Joy is actually a blessing taught by Saint Hrestol, a prophet from the Dawn Age. His writings describe Joy and teach how to experience it in life.

Hrestol's scripture is not part of *The Abiding Book*, nor is the *Know Joy* blessing. *The Abiding Book* does not condemn it either, although it condemns many other practices. Nonetheless, its exclusion from *The Abiding Book* causes some churches (especially the Rokari) to exclude it from church doctrine. The official Rokari doctrine is that the Joy experienced by other churches is a spell cast on the congregation by unscrupulous liturgists, who are trying to beguile and mislead the congregation into false worship, ending ultimately in damnation.



W I Z A R D R Y

Members of a saintly order can pray to their patron saint for a miracle rather than calling on God directly. Orderlies and order liturgists face a lower resistance to their pleas if they call on their patron saint, but saints only respond with miracles and acts they performed during life.

Contest: Pray for a Miracle

Appropriate Ability: Worship [God] (lay member or liturgist); Know [Saint] (orderly or order liturgist).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Community support, ritual magic modifiers; very pious acts (bonus), sinful behavior (penalty).

Resistance: 10 \blacklozenge 9 (God) or 10 \blacklozenge 6 (orderly or order liturgist to own saint).

Any Victory: God intervenes in a manner chosen by the narrator.

Tie or any Defeat: Nothing happens, good or bad.

Liturgist

Liturgists are the common religious intercessors of churches. They follow the rituals and formulas laid down in scripture to contact the Other Side, lead worship to channel veneration to the higher powers, and bring the higher powers into the world as blessings and curses. The blessings a liturgist invokes on his congregation are the only magic most will experience in their lifetime.

Liturgists are not automatically clergymen, and many have just enough learning to read their scripture. Villages, trade guilds, and even individual ships may have their own liturgist. Most come from the same caste as their congregation. Most liturgists belong to a church, leading their congregations in worship and serving as counselor, worship leader, and spiritual advisor. Historically, liturgists are clergymen schooled, tested, and regulated by the church hierarchy. Church approval is not necessary, however, and increasingly in the West the magical duties of liturgists are separated from the occupational duties of the clergy. Some liturgists are demagogues, lone preachers with nothing but charisma, a copy of their scripture, a rag-tag band of followers, and the Word of God. Many liturgists belong to saintly orders, working with and leading worship for their brother orderlies. A liturgist in a fighting order, for example, might very well be a soldier or warrior rather than a clergyman.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to become a liturgist during play must be a lay member of the church, able to read (or memorize) scripture, and must understand and interpret the liturgy. They will be questioned by the church hierarchy, and must succeed at a contest representing their knowledge of the tenets of the faith, their standing in the church or among their supporters, and their virtues. If successful, the hero promises obedience (and possibly takes other vows) and is invested by the church as a liturgist.

Miracles are Rare!

10 \blacklozenge 9 Resistance! That's huge!

Yes, it is! Basically, lay members never have their wishes come true. Worshippers know that a direct appeal to God is usually in vain. If they want magic, most turn to intermediaries: the saints and prophets.



Benefits and Obligations

A new liturgist receives the ability to invoke blessings and curses from one scripture, usually *The Abiding Book* (or its equivalent in his church).

A liturgist must commit a total of about 25% of his time and resources (including hero points) to his church and congregation: 10% in worship plus 15% performing sacred duties, such as leading weekly worship services. Many liturgists are clergymen as well, and spend most of their time on church duties of one type or another.

Contest: Become a Liturgist

Appropriate Ability: Doctrine of [Church] or [Church Virtue], Member of [Congregation], Worship [God].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by the hero.

Resistance: 1 \blacklozenge .

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to become a liturgist. He receives one *Use [Scripture]* ability at 13 and *Venerate [God]* at 13 for free.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not yet ready. He may reapply later, when he has spent more time learning the testaments of the faith.

Complete Defeat: Your hero may never become a liturgist in this church or any of its orders, and may be forced to leave his congregation.

Liturgist Abilities

Magic—Scriptures, Venerate [God]. Liturgists are not required to concentrate their magic, but most do, and many churches and orders expect it.

Mundane Relationship—*Leader of [Congregation]* shows how much attention the liturgist spends on his congregation. It is about social interaction, availability to congregation members, and being the leader of the local church. A hero who becomes a liturgist may replace his *Member of [Congregation]* ability with *Leader of [Congregation]* at the same rating, with no hero point cost.

Myths and Rituals—*Doctrine of [Church]* provides mundane knowledge of the church's moral and spiritual teachings, and of the lives of the prophets and the church founder.

Piety—*Worship [God]* (see "Lay Member Abilities" on page 157).

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the church keyword as abilities.

Scriptures

It is a liturgist's duty to bless his congregation and curse its enemies, reading from a copy of his scripture. The scripture acts as a focus for the energy to pass from the Otherworld to this one. Most churches use *The Abiding Book* or a similar scripture. Many have an additional volume, which often outlines additions or exceptions to the information in that holy work.

To invoke the blessings and curses in a scripture, the liturgist must have the appropriate *Use [Scripture]* ability. This ability includes knowledge of all of the scripture's blessings and curses. The liturgist may learn or improve a *Use [Scripture]* ability using hero points, but cannot use hero points to learn or improve individual blessings or curses.

The liturgical magic of *The Abiding Book* includes three types. **Common blessings** are the core of the liturgy, and litur-

gists invoke them during every regular worship service. **Special blessings** include rites of faith and blessings for specific occasions. A liturgist can invoke one special blessing during regular worship or in a special service. A **curse** seeks to cause harm to an enemy of the congregation. Curses are usually used in special ceremonies, but a liturgist may invoke a curse during the regular weekly service, *instead of a special blessing*. A few special blessings and curses are reserved to higher levels in the church hierarchy (such as investing a new liturgist), and cannot be invoked by common liturgists.

All church scriptures have similar divisions as *The Abiding Book*.

Invoking Blessings

A liturgist invokes all of his scripture's common blessings as part of the regular weekly worship service. Although this can require a separate contest for each blessing, most of the time you will only need to roll if the events of the story dictate. As long as the blessing is used properly, it faces the default resistance of 14; multiple target penalties apply, as do ritual bonuses, community support (usually total), and guardian essences. Common blessings last a week; they do not take a duration modifier, but cannot be extended to last longer.

During the regular weekly worship service, the liturgist can invoke a single special blessing on the congregation or its property. Thus, in addition to the standard blessings, he can do one special thing during the service, such as confirm a group of children as adults and lay members, bless a home, or caution against the evils of lust. A liturgist can also hold a special service to invoke a single blessing. For example, if someone in the congregation is dying, the liturgist can hold an impromptu rite to invoke the *Staunch Wounds* blessing, without the benefit of community support.

A successful blessing provides an automatic augment to every member of the congregation who supported its invocation. The augmented ability need not be the same all week, but it must be appropriate to the blessing's description: a successful *Hide from Foes* blessing would add a bonus to a worshipper's *Conceal* or *Stalking*, but not his *Avoid Wife*. For a particular worshipper, only one ability can be augmented during a single contest. The effect of a blessing lasts for one week (whether or not the bonus is ever used), then must be invoked again during a new worship service.

Contest: Invoke a Blessing

Appropriate Ability: Use [Scripture].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Community support, ritual magic, congregation's guardian essence; multiple targets (penalty).

Resistance: 14.

Any Victory: The blessing provides an automatic augment to appropriate abilities.

Tie or Any Defeat: No effect.

Invoking Curses

A liturgist can invoke a single curse in place of a special blessing, either during the regular worship service or as part of a special rite. The target of a curse resists with any appropriate ability, with one exception: a member of the congregation guilty of the crime for which he is cursed cannot resist with any ability gained from that church. Most curses are invoked against external enemies of the church. Such groups usually have a guardian that provides their resistance to the curse.

The Abiding Book



The Holiest Scripture

Sections of *The Abiding Book* are instructions on how to cast a blessing or curse. Many of these are encoded: "He used the mercury finger of his left hand on that curse." Liturgists and others that know the spiritual teachings understand what this means. Sometimes people coax other magic from *The Abiding Book*, so that each church has a special blessing known only to them that they have extracted from its deeper meanings.

△ *Common Blessings:* Be Content with Life, Bless Congregation, Find Peace, Hide from Foes, Renew Faith, Till the Land.

♣ *Special Blessings:* Absolve Sin, Bless Building, Bless Corpse, Bless Food, Bless Home, Bless This [Animal], Bless This [Bunch of Animals], Bless This [Crop], Confirm Adult, Consecrate Relic, Dedicate Infant, Find Way Home, Name Child, Protect from Illness, Resist Heathen Spirit, Resist Intoxication, Resist Lust, Resist Pagan God, Sanctify Marriage, Staunch Wound.

♠ *Curses:* Curse Adulterer, Curse Apostate, Curse Food Hoarder, Curse Murderer, Curse My Enemy, Curse Thief, Curse Vadeli, Excommunicate Sinner.

A successful curse causes the target to take a penalty to all appropriate abilities, as determined by his level of defeat. *Curse Apostate* might apply a penalty to all church abilities, whereas *Curse Thief* might only affect abilities related to thieving. The effect of a curse lasts for one week, then must be invoked again during a new worship service.

Contest: Invoke a Curse

Appropriate Ability: Use [Scripture].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Community support, ritual magic, congregation's guardian essence; multiple targets (penalty).

Resistance: Provided by the target. If the target is a community, the resistance is usually its guardian's Defense function.

Any Victory: Use the normal Contest Consequences (see page 74) to determine the penalty.

Tie or Any Defeat: No effect (although the target may be aware that a curse was attempted, and retaliate with his own).

Venerate [God]

Venerate [God] rates how good a liturgist is at releasing congregational energy to God through the chain of veneration. It is also a form of magical perception that senses essences and liturgical magic in the area, with better victory levels providing more information about the nature of the magic or entity. Identifying or even sensing magic or entities originating in another Otherworld takes a penalty of -20, and is only possible if the alien magic disrupts the chain of veneration or otherwise intrudes on the liturgist's perception of nearby essences. *Venerate [God]* faces the default resistance to magic of 14 unless there is active resistance (such as concealment magic or an Otherworld entity trying to remain undetected).

Venerate [God] is a distinct ability from *Worship [God]*.

Orderly

An orderly is a member of a saintly order who uses spells. All of the larger churches venerate saints, who are links between the Supreme Being and humans. They provide divine guidance and comfort to followers. They receive veneration on the Saint Plane, and so reduce the barriers between worshippers and the church founder's experience of Solace. Saints grant magic after death in the form of spells that emulate the miracles they performed during life.

Entry Requirements

A hero who wishes to become an orderly during play must belong to an acceptable church, and must be sponsored by a current member of the order. He must meet the order's specific requirements and demonstrate his knowledge of the saint's life, rules, and virtues. If successful, the hero takes a vow to obey and worship the patron saint. *Be sure to put the saint's rune in a prominent place on your character sheet.*

Benefits and Obligations

An orderly may (and often must) learn to cast spells. He must vow to obey the order's rules, which often dictate how to act, what to eat, what to wear, who to associate with, and how to worship. He attends regular worship services to the saint, in addition to attending weekly church services.

An orderly spends around 15% of his time and resources (including hero points) on the order, in addition to the 10% he spends as a church member. If he joins more orders, he must commit another 15% to each.



An orderly of the TrueFlame Order prepares for battle, using his magic to consecrate his blade while a liturgist intones blessings over him.

Contest: Become an Orderly

Appropriate Abilities: [Order Virtue], Rule of [Saint], Worship [God] (-10) or Relationship to [Sponsor].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 1W.

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to become an orderly. He receives Know [Saint] and three spells at 13 each for free.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not yet ready, and should spend more time learning about the saint and order. He may reapply later.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the other members, and can never again attempt to join this order.

△ Mr. Puma Joins an Order

Mr. Puma has been a member of the Vizel Rokari Church for a year now, so he has *Member of Vizel Rokari Church 13*. He feels a need to know more, and has decided to join an order called Core of Belief.

Kathy: What can you tell me about this order?

Frederick: It is an order of inquiry, which seeks to learn more about God. They have a formulary called *The Faces of God*, and the orderly spells are all about learning of the Creator.

Kathy: OK, where did you learn about this?

Frederick: Oh, from some guy in the church.

Kathy: OK, let's assume then that the founder of this order was a local guy...

Frederick: Woman, I think. Jerenila is the name I've used.

Kathy: OK with me. So this is a local order, not known much outside of Vizel. You got to the church room there, into the liturgist's sanctum, and he and the members of the order are ready to quiz you. You can use your relationship with the congregation without a penalty, because most of them are orderlies or have family who are.

Frederick: I think I'm ready. I have studied about Jerenila and paid a hero point, so I know *Rule of Jerenila* at 13. My relationship with the congregation is 13 now, I've been here almost a year. And I am *Curious 17*, one of the order virtues. That gives me a rating of 19.

Kathy: The resistance is 1W. Let's roll. 12 for me with a bump, 10 for you. A marginal victory, you made it! Pay 3 hero points to become an orderly. Write down *Know Jerenila* at 13, and add *Member of Core of Belief Order* at 13, like your congregation relationship. What else do you have to do? Let's see, "...obey the order's rules...how to act, what to eat, what to wear, who to associate with, and how to worship...15% of their time...An orderly may (and often must) learn to cast orderly spells..." You get three spells at 13 for free, just run them past me before you assume you've got them, OK?

Frederick: I want to learn the orderly spell called "Opening the Way."

Kathy: OK, as long as the "Way" is to the Wizardry World.

Orderly Abilities

Magic—Saintly Blessings, Orderly Spells and Talismans. Many orders require that orderlies give up all non-wizardly magic before they will allow them to learn spells.

Mundane Relationship—*Member of [Order]* shows how much attention the hero spends on his local chapter and its members. It is about social interaction, cooperation with other worshippers, and being subordinate to leaders.

Myths and Rituals—*Rule of [Saint]* provides knowledge of the order's moral and spiritual practices and the life of the saint.

Piety—*Know [Saint]* rates the worshipper's piety and ability to adopt the proper venerative attitude towards the saint. This is a distinct ability from *Worship [God]*.

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the order's magic keyword as abilities.

Saintly Blessings

At the order's regular worship ceremonies, a liturgist invokes one or more blessings on the members of the order. These blessings reconsecrate the orderlies' talismans, and may provide bonuses as described in "Blessings" on page 157.

Orderly Spells and Talismans

Orderlies use spells to emulate their saint, bringing his or her magic into the Mundane Plane. Each spell must be learned individually, and each has its own rating that the orderly can improve by spending hero points. These spells are contained in the order's **formulary**, a non-magical book that contains the specific formula used to cast the spell.

When an orderly learns a spell, he must create a **talisman** for it. This talisman is often one of the tools of his trade, such as weapons or bandages. During the ceremony in which the orderly learns the spell, an order liturgist blesses this talisman to conduct the saint's magic into the Mundane Plane. Multiple spells can be linked to the same talisman. Most orderlies of Saint Gerlant, for example, link all of their spells to one sword.

To cast the spell, the orderly must use the talisman as specified in the formulary. He must be in physical contact with the talisman, and must invoke his saint with a prayer, blessing, or the like. He can cast a spell at any time, using it as an active ability or an augment. A spell effect may not be improvised, nor may it be used outside its intended purpose (e.g., a narrator may disallow the use of a *Boil Water* spell to boil blood).

Once an orderly has used a spell (successfully or not), he cannot use it again until he "recharges" the talisman. This occurs during his order's next regular worship ceremony, during which all of his talismans are reconsecrated, recharged with the Saint's power. An order liturgist can hold a special worship ceremony to reconsecrate the talismans. Fighting orders, for example, always hold a special worship service before they enter combat, to ensure that all members' orderly spells are available.

If a talisman is lost, stolen, or broken, the orderly cannot cast any spells linked to it until he replaces it. This can be done during a special worship service, and usually occurs between adventures without hero point cost. An orderly cannot learn the same spell several times in order to cast it multiple times between worship services.

△ Jane Folds God

Jane wants to activate this paper folding she has going.

Christine: I think I know how it can work. I'll explain. First, look at the Humble Calligraphers. It's like them, but less organized. Here's what I propose: the book is called, um, *Starting Origami*. The spells are the shapes that she can fold up. Like this one in the introduction, the paper rhino? I will know that one, called Rhinoceros, and two others, Mosquito and Swan.

Kathy: Who is the entity of veneration?

Christine: Well, I think that Jane is from somewhere up here, what was it called, Steve? Darsen or someplace like that. So I'm just going to say that it's the god that is venerated up here. Who would that be?

Kathy: That would be, uh, Idovanus: Carmanian God of Light.

Christine: So Jane worships Idovanus, I guess. Creator used sky paper, earth paper, sand paper. He must have wrinkled a page and made the mountains and hills of Dragon Pass.

Kathy: And folded them for Peloria, with all those river valleys. Idovanus folded it like a fan, look at that map. So you worship Idovanus Paper Folder.

Christine: Yeah, and in the church, though there's no hierarchy or anything like that. It's like those godless churches in Esvular. We have demagogues for liturgists. And our magic is to fold these things.

Kathy: Very amusing. But it seems like you are not a church but an order. You have a formulary, a book that contains the spells you know. You know how to make talismans for your spells by folding the paper with the right magical intent behind it. Your magic comes from the Saint Plane. Do you know what it's called, your node?

Christine: I dunno, maybe House of Cards?

Kathy: That's funny, but I know that there's a House of Cards in Doblian. Instead, your node is called Ending Origami. It's the place that your magic will take you to, from start to finish, ending in this heaven.

Christine: Whatever you say, sounds good to me. So Jane is now a paper folding orderly, eh? Who was her God again?

Kathy: Does it matter? It's not God, it's the paper.

Christine: But what do I write on my character sheet?

Kathy: Oh, right. *Worship Idovanus 17*.

Order Secrets

Although it is possible that saints have secrets to provide to their worshippers, this is not the normal practice in Western churches. Even if it were, orderlies and liturgists do not have a strong enough connection to the Essence Planes to learn such a secret.

Order Liturgist

An order liturgist leads the ceremonies of an order. He knows the prayers and rituals to open the way to the Saint Plane and send veneration to the patron saint. In return, he receives the power to reconsecrate talismans, invoke the saint's blessings and curses, and ordain new orderlies. Depending on the order, an order liturgist may or may not have to be an orderly as well. (Some wizardry schools have liturgists whose sole function is to minister to the adepts and invoke blessings during regular and special worship services. Such liturgists never learn individual spells or use the grimoires of the "high order.")

Entry Requirements

A liturgist who wishes to join an order must meet all of the requirements and pass the normal entry test, even if he does not become an orderly. If he becomes an orderly at the same time, he pays 3 hero points as described in orderly “Entry Requirements” (page 160), and gains the normal benefits of being an orderly. Otherwise, he pays only 1 hero point to gain *Member of [Order]* at 13 and *Venerate [Saint]* at the same rating as *Venerate [God]*, for free. (If he later becomes an orderly, he must pay the full 3 hero points, and may have to pass the entry tests again.) Either way, he must spend additional hero points to learn any *Use [Scripture]* ability available from the order.

An orderly who wishes to become a liturgist must meet all of the requirements of his church and pass the normal entry test. He pays 3 hero points as described in liturgist “Entry Requirements” (page 158), and gains the normal benefits of being a liturgist. The *Use [Scripture]* ability gained is always for the order’s special scripture, if it has one.

Not all orders allow liturgists to be orderlies as well.

Benefits and Obligations

An order liturgist must meet the time and resource requirements both for being a liturgist and a member of an order, even if he

is not an orderly. He thus spends a minimum of 40% of his time and resources (including hero points) on the church and order. If he joins more orders, he must commit another 15% to each.

Order Liturgist Abilities

Magic—Scriptures, Venerate [Saint].

Mundane Relationship—*Member of [Order]* (see “Orderly Abilities” on page 161). Note that liturgists are not automatically or even usually the leaders of an order.

Myths and Rituals—*Rule of [Saint]* (see “Orderly Abilities” on page 161).

Piety—*Know [Saint]* (see “Orderly Abilities” on page 161).

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the order’s magic keyword as abilities.

Scriptures

Saintly orders have at least one scripture, often *The Life of [Saint]*. This scripture always contains the common blessing *Reconsecrate Talismans*, and occasionally others. It often includes one or more special blessings or curses as well. A liturgist may invoke a single cure or special blessing during a worship service, as described in “Scriptures” on page 158.

New Occupation—Apprentice



An apprentice is a student of a wizardry school. Apprenticeship is a special state of magical existence in which a student prepares to access the Essence Planes through rigorous training. Apprenticeship is not normally a keyword players choose at character creation. It is an intermediate step between a previous occupation and becoming an adept.

To become an apprentice, an applicant must be or become a member of the church, show the proper attitude and aptitude for a life steeped in magic, and be sponsored by an adept of the school (or perhaps by an influential patron). He must usually know how to read. Individual schools or masters may have other requirements as well. Most schools require that the apprentice give up all non-wizardly magic, and some require that the apprentice give up even wizardry that does not come from the school. (Ironically, apprentices in large or established schools often have common magic spells that they teach each other.)

If the applicant is accepted, he must obey the masters and rules of the school, keep its secrets, and venerate its founder. His new master (either an independent adept or a member of an academy) will create a magical link between himself and the apprentice. The adept begins to reshape the apprentice’s essence to be a suitable channel for wizardry. After several years of training, the apprentice’s essence and skills will be sufficient for him to channel the energy himself, so that he can attune himself to a grimoire and use it to cast spells. Prior to that, the apprentice may be taught one or more spells (usually spells from *The Abiding Book* such as *Aid My Master*), but he must use them as common magic.

Apprentice is a full-time job: students spend 75% of their time working for the school. This includes their studies plus menial tasks such as cooking and cleaning (new apprentices) and aiding adepts (advanced pupils). Discipline can be harsh, and many do not make it through the entire process. Apprentices may often be punished or even expelled from the academy at the whim of one of the masters.

The student must pass many tests during his apprentice-

ship. In some schools, the penultimate test is to open the door to the school’s magic room by himself. The final test is always to create a portal of power to the founder’s node on the Saint Plane. The apprentice is usually assisted by his master and supported by the rest of the school using the community support rules. Once in the node, the apprentice spends 3 hero points to become an adept, and emerges to the celebration of his fellows and new equals.

Contest: Become an Apprentice

Appropriate Abilities: Relationship to [Patron], Read [Language], Rule of [Founder].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 1W.

Any Victory: Pay 1 hero point for your hero to become an apprentice. Gain a relationship of *Member of [Academy]* or *Apprentice of [Master]* at 13 for free. Gain one spell for free (always *Aid My Master*), and may spend hero points to learn other spells available to the school’s apprentices.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not accepted by the academy, but may apply to a different master or academy (or reapply to this one) at a later date.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends the masters so greatly that he will never be accepted by any academy of this school.

Apprentice Keyword

Abilities: Create Portal of Power, Read [Language], Rule of [Founder], Symbolic Sight, Write [Language].

Typical Personality: Curious, Methodical, Obedient.

Typical Relationships: Apprentice of [Master] or Member of [Academy], Relationship to [Sponsor].

Typical Followers: None.

Standard of Living: Poor.

Typical Equipment: Poor clothes, cleaning equipment, pens, paper, chalks and powders, a cot in a corner of his master’s home or a small cell in an academy dormitory.



Venerate [Saint]

Venerate [Saint] rates how good a liturgist is at releasing congregational energy to God through the mediation of the saint. It is otherwise identical to *Venerate [God]*, including its use as a magical perception ability. Depending on the order, some types of magic may be easier or harder to sense with *Venerate [Saint]*.

Venerate [Saint] is a distinct ability from both *Know [Saint]* and *Venerate [God]*.

Adept

Adept is a magical rank, not an occupation. Many adepts are wizards, and spend all their time practicing magic, researching new spells, and improving their arts. Some adepts are not full-time magicians, and instead use magic to aid their true profession, be that merchant, scholar, or warrior.

Wizardry schools teach magic in stages. Initially, a student is accepted to an academy (or by an adept) as an apprentice. An apprentice is not a committed magician, and remains a lay member of his church. After learning the basics of magic (including how to read, if he does not already know), he is aided by his master in opening a portal of power and attuning his first grimoire. If successful he becomes an adept.

Entry Requirements

Once the hero has completed his apprenticeship (which takes several years), he can apply to be recognized as a journeyman and become a full member of the academy as an adept. If he succeeds in convincing the masters, he must pass a final test as described above. The narrator may require the hero to achieve a victory in the normal entry test, in a contest to open a portal of power, or both. Once he has passed the test(s), the hero is released from his vow of obedience, but must still venerate the school's founder. He may or may not be required to serve the school, but if he is his duties will now involve teaching apprentices and similar duties. *Be sure to put the founder's rune in a prominent place on your character sheet.*

Benefits and Obligations

An adept must support his school and academy, and must aid his masters when they require it. They teach apprentices, lead or support rituals, and aid lay members or other adepts; these duties take up 15% of their time and resources (including hero points), in addition to the 10% they spend as lay members of their church. An adept who belongs to more than one school or academy must commit another 15% to each.

Contest: Be Released from Apprenticeship

Appropriate Abilities: Apprentice of [Master] or Member of [Academy], Rule of [Founder], [School Virtue].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The other two abilities may augment the ability used by your hero.

Resistance: 10W.

Any Victory: Pay 3 hero points for your hero to become an adept. Gain one of the school's *Use [Grimoire]* abilities at 13 for free.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Your hero is not yet ready. He should spend more time studying the works of the founder and learning from his masters. He may reapply at a later date.

Complete Defeat: Your hero offends his masters so greatly that they expel him from the school. He may not reapply to any master or academy of this school.

Adept Abilities

Magic—Create Portal of Power, Wizardry Spells and Talismans, Grimoires, Symbolic Sight. Most schools require that apprentices give up all magic that does not have its origins in wizardry before they will allow them to become adepts.

Mundane Relationship—*Member of [Academy]* shows how much attention the hero spends on his local school. It is about social interaction, cooperation with other members, and being subordinate to leaders.

Myths and Rituals—*Rule of [Founder]* provides mundane knowledge of the school's philosophical and spiritual teachings, and of the history and tenets of the founder and school.

Piety—*Know [Founder]* rates the worshipper's piety and ability to adopt the proper venerative attitude towards the founder.

Virtues—Your hero may take any, all, or none of the virtues in the school's magic keyword as abilities.

Create Portal of Power

A portal of power is a gateway between the Mundane Plane and the Essence Planes. An adept must open a portal to create a talisman for a spell, attune himself to a grimoire, or travel beyond the Essence Planes to the Gods War.

To create and open a portal of power, an adept must first draw, paint, or carve the portal in a symbolic representation of the node to which it will attach. It must be at least large enough for him to stand inside. Once he has inscribed the portal, he chants the words of power to open it and thus pierce the barrier between worlds, usually supported by other adepts. While a powerful adept can make a portal to link a talisman on his own, it is beyond most mortals to open a portal to attune a grimoire by himself.

Established academies and powerful adepts often have special magic rooms with permanently inscribed portals for their founder's node or specific spell nodes. These portals provide a ritual magic bonus. Magic rooms are guarded by anti-trespassing spells, wards, physical protection, and even guardian essences. Some ancient magic rooms literally groan under their loads of musty old warding spells.

Contest: Open a Portal of Power

Appropriate Ability: Create Portal of Power.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Community support, ritual magic; appropriate *Use [Grimoire]* ability (if linking a talisman to a spell node).

Resistance:

Link a talisman—10W3 (Magic Plane).

Attune a grimoire—10W6 (Saint Plane).

Any Victory: A portal is created and opened successfully. Any adept standing in the portal may pass through to the node (and so can pay the hero points to gain the new spell or grimoire ability).

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Portal does not open.

Complete Defeat: A portal is created, but it connects to a random node, or to the realm of the Devil, or to Chaos (although you do not know this until the portal opens). You might discover a new spell or grimoire, allow a demon to enter the world, or be sucked into oblivion.

Wizardry Spells and Talismans

Adepts use spells to bring about a change in the Mundane Plane. Each spell must be learned individually, and each has its own rating that the adept can improve by spending hero points. This rating is independent of any *Use [Grimoire]* ability the adept knows (see below).

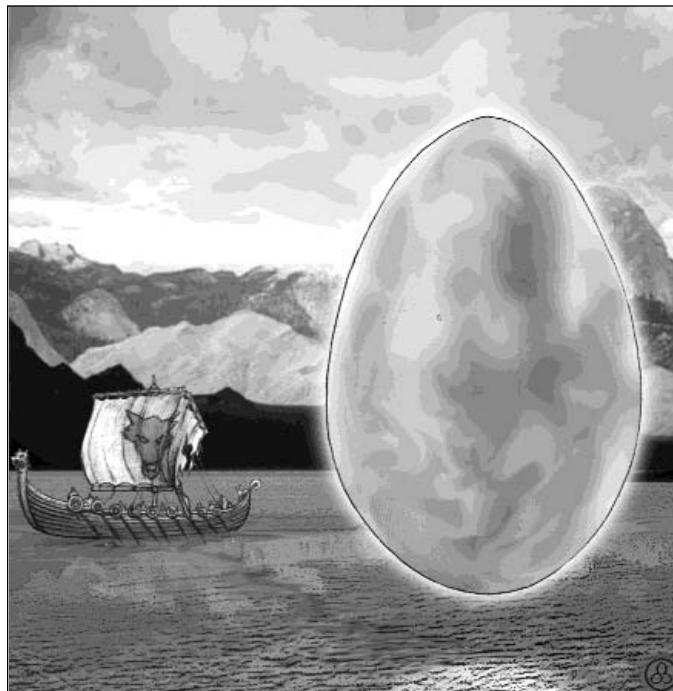
When an adept learns a spell, he must create a **talisman** for it. This talisman is often a wand, staff, or amulet. The adept opens a portal of power to the correct spell node on the Magic Plane, then imbues his talisman with that part of the Otherworld. When the adept returns to the Mundane Plane, he spends hero points to add the spell to his character sheet. Multiple spells can be linked to the same talisman.

To cast a spell, the adept concentrates and exercises his will to bring the energy into the Mundane Plane. Abilities such as *Self-Control* or *Focused Will* can augment, but active passions such as *Hate* or even *Love* can hinder him, as determined by the narrator. He must be in physical contact with the talisman, and must be free to manipulate it, make magical gestures, and chant his incantation. An adept can cast a spell at any time, using it as an active ability or an augment. Since each spell has its own rating, even multiple spells from the same grimoire can be used to augment a single other ability or each other.

Unlike orderlies, adepts do not need to recharge their talismans, and can cast a spell as often as they like. If a talisman is lost, stolen, or broken, the adept cannot cast any spells linked to it until he replaces it. This can be done by linking a new talisman to each spell node, and usually occurs between adventures without hero point cost.

Common Magic Spells

The local leader of a common religion that knows any spells can make talismans for them, often an object called a rune stick or spellstick. Common magic spells work like wizardry spells, and



The Egg of Erangalos Karastomabor

Floating a few meters above the surface of land or water, this immense indestructible egg has intrigued philosophers and mystics since Time began. Its purpose and origin are a mystery, although theories abound. The Egg's specific color depends on the race viewing it: pale blue to humans, medium red to elves, pale orange-yellow to dwarves, and bright blue-purple to trolls.

thus are useable as often as the person wishes. There are no common magic grimoires.

Any user of wizardry who concentrates his magic can use the common magic spells he knows as active abilities. However, this is proscribed by most churches, orders, and schools.

Grimoires

Grimoires are books of spells, but they are more than just formularies. Each is physically composed of one or more volumes, all of which use the same notations and codes. The volumes give the crucial instructions to create a portal of power and connect to the source of magical power on the Essence Planes. Grimoires come with recipes for magical substances and apparatuses, instructions for creating talismans and casting spells, and warnings of otherworldly perils (the latter sometimes added as scribbles in the margins).

Grimoires are usually focused on one type of spell: aiding friends, healing, blessing fields, or combating pagan deities. Thus, the Iron Blood School (whose function is to support soldiers in battle) has two grimoires: *The Book of Conflict* (with spells that enhance combatants' powers) and *The Mysteries of Health* (which contains spells for healing men and horses). Most modern grimoires are descended from earlier grimoires, with additions and deletions according to the skill, prejudices, and discoveries of the school founder.

A grimoire is magically connected to the founder's node on the Saint Plane and then attuned by the adept who will use it. Like a talisman, a grimoire is a magical focus. Instead of using a talisman, however, an adept can cast any spell contained in the grimoire, whether or not he knows the spell separately. When he does so, he uses his *Use [Grimoire]* rating to cast the spell, even if he has a higher or lower rating for the spell itself. (An adept who has a separate rating in the spell can use one ability to augment the other, as long as he uses the grimoire and talisman together.) An adept cannot use multiple spells from the same grimoire to augment another ability or each other.

New Occupation—Wizard



Wizards are full-time magicians. They are qualified to practice according to the rules of their school and church. Most new wizards are still making a name for themselves, and many seek knowledge and power. They may cast magic for payment, wander the world, or serve a patron or master. Many wizards remain at their academy as a master, taking on and teaching apprentices.

To be a wizard, a hero must be an adept and have some means to support himself. Most concentrate their wizardry.

Wizard Keyword

Abilities: Focused Will, Read [Language], Write [Language].

Typical Personality: Curious, Disciplined, Methodical, Obedient.

Typical Relationships: Member of [Academy], Patron [Master or Noble].

Followers: Often an apprentice, who does mundane chores when he is not studying. A wizard may have one or more servants or bodyguards as well, depending on his status and wealth.

Standard of Living: Common or Prosperous.

Typical Equipment: Fine clothes, inkstands, pens, paper, chalks and powders, talismans for spells, a place to live.

The adept may learn or improve a *Use [Grimoire]* ability using hero points, but he cannot use hero points to gain a bonus to the *Use [Grimoire]* rating with individual spells. He can spend hero points to learn or improve wizardry spells as separate abilities, as described under “Wizardry Spells and Talismans.”

△ Hrindak is a journeyman wizard, an adept from Carmania. His character sheet contains the following entries:

Use Alhidar’s Grimoire of the Winds and Elements 18
Draw Rain from a Cloud 15

When Hrindak wants to cast his *Draw Rain from a Cloud* spell, he has two choices. He can use his talisman (an aluminum figurine of a trident) and engage in the contest with an ability rating of 15. If he is in a place where he feels safe taking his grimoire, he can instead cast the spell using his *Use Alhidar’s Grimoire of the Winds and Elements* rating of 18. In either case, if he is successful the spell takes effect in exactly the same way. Hrindak does not have a talisman for the spell *Brighten a Sunbeam*, so he can only cast it using the grimoire, again at a rating of 18.

Later, Hrindak wants to create a talisman for the spell *Brighten a Sunbeam* so that he can cast it even without his grimoire. He inscribes a gold medallion with the rune of Idovanus, then opens a portal of power and links the talisman to the proper node. He has already concentrated his magic, so he spends 1 hero point to gain *Brighten a Sunbeam* at 13.

Making Grimoires

A grimoire is greatly valued by all adepts, as it makes using magic much easier. Copying a grimoire is a difficult task. Just copying the words and diagrams does not make a grimoire—it must be linked to the proper node on the Saint Plane. Every adept does this as part of their training.

Creating a completely new grimoire is a completely different matter. Even if a wizard knows several spells, he cannot just write their instructions into a book, then spend hero points to learn a new *Use [Grimoire]* ability. Creating a new grimoire requires that the adept create a new node on the Saint Plane, then forge links between it and each of the spells he inscribes into it. If he succeeds, he can teach others the pathways, and they can copy the grimoire as well. This is exactly what the school founders all did in the past.

Many academies and schools know independent spells in addition to those contained in their grimoires. Because of the difficulty in creating a link between even an existing grimoire and a new spell, most adepts simply create talismans for these additional spells rather than trying to create a new version of the grimoire that includes them.

The Abiding Book



The Great Grimoire

The *Abiding Book* is unique in being both a scripture and a grimoire. Its spells are generally known to all schools, even though they have often been revised and rewritten without reference to that work. Many adepts learn only a few of these spells independently, preferring to concentrate on their school’s special spells.

Hierarchical Spells: Aid My Apprentice, Aid My Master.

Community Defense Spells: Banish Daimon, Calm [Beast] (Lion, Mastodon, Serpent, etc.), Encourage Bravery, Exorcise Spirit, Hurt Foe, Listen Intently, Turn away Waters.

Community Service Spells: Clean Chamber, Cure Fever or Festering Wound, Focus Attention, Preserve Food, Speak and Be Understood, Track Thief.

Special Spells: Ban Adept ritual, Exert Will, Memorize Text, Read Unclear Script, Recognize Demon, Resist Cold, Resist Fire, Resist Sorcery, Run Quickly.

Symbolic Sight

Symbolic Sight is a wizardry ability of magical vision. It senses and identifies magic or Otherworld entities in the area, with better victory levels providing more information on the nature of the magic or entity. Identifying or even sensing magic or entities originating in another Otherworld takes a penalty of –20. Symbolic Sight faces the default resistance to magic of 14 unless there is active resistance (such as concealment magic or an Otherworld entity trying to remain undetected).

School Secrets

Although it is possible that the founders of wizardry schools have secrets to provide to their worshippers, this is not the normal practice in Western churches.

Leaving the Church

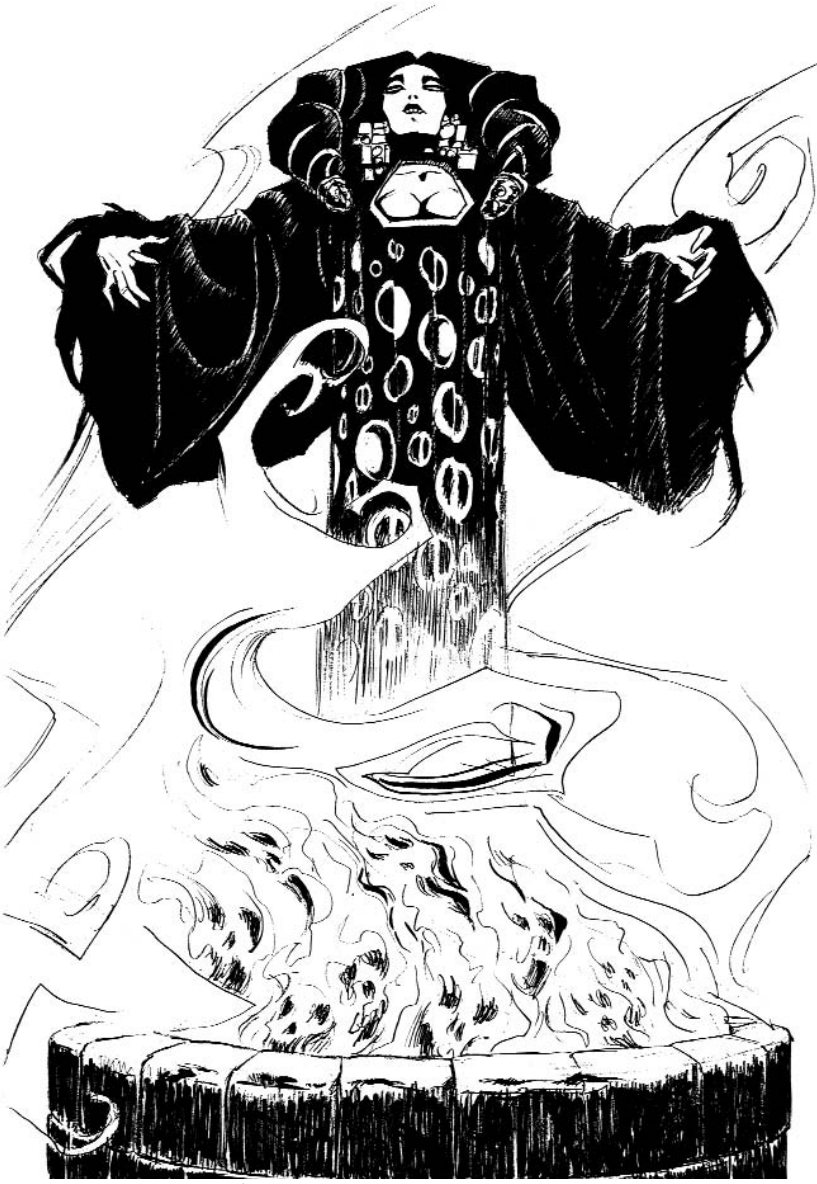
A member of a church who leaves is considered an apostate. For lay members, this is of little import. They lose the ability to call for miracles, and no longer benefit from blessings invoked by liturgists. Many Church curses can be cast against the apostate using a standard resistance of 14, as they are unlikely to have an appropriate defense against *Curse Apostate* or *Curse Murderer*. But most lay members are not important enough to warrant such effort.

Summary of Wizardry Organizations Characteristics

Magical Organization

	Monotheist Church	Saintly Order	Wizardry School
<i>Otherworld Origin:</i>	Venerable Plane	Saint Plane	Magic Plane
<i>Entities:</i>	God	Saints	Spells, essences
<i>Worshippers Have:</i>		Essences	
<i>Magic:</i>	Solace, Joy, miracles, scriptures	Orderly spells, scriptures	Grimoires, spells
<i>Members:</i>	Lay members	Orderlies, liturgists	Apprentices, adepts
<i>Leaders:</i>	Liturgists, clergymen	Orderlies	Wizards
<i>Type of Worship:</i>		Veneration	

W O R S H I P P E R S



Within her portal of power, this Lunar adept evokes the magic that allows her to send her psyche into the Essence Planes. Once there, she can learn new spells and seek out powerful essences.

Leaving a Saintly Order

An orderly or liturgist who leaves their saintly order loses the special magic that they gained from it. Depending on the order and circumstances, they may or may not be subject to curses or mundane reprisal of other members. Most remain lay members or liturgists of their church, and can usually join other orders in the future.

Leaving a Wizardry School

Schools and academies are jealous of their knowledge. Only rarely can a person belong to more than one school and academy. Most adepts spend their entire career in one academy. Within a church, however, specially favored or gifted adepts may be sent to seek instruction from other schools.

An adept who leaves one academy for another in the same school rarely suffers any reprisals or ill will. An adept who leaves a school, however, is generally considered a spy or thief. He is cut off from its library, and loses access to its grimoires, spells, and portals. He must give up any *Use [Grimoire]* gained from the school. Although he can continue to use and improve the school's spells that he already knows, he cannot create talismans for new ones, for the school will Ban him. This strips him of his rank in the school, and acts as a curse to make access to the school's nodes more difficult. Depending on the school and circumstances, he may or may not be subject to spell attacks or mundane reprisal from other members, who may even be able to track him any time he uses magic that draws on any of the school's nodes.

A Church adept who sins or otherwise acts improperly may be demoted within the hierarchy, and may even be banned from his school's nodes until he repents and does penance.

Hero Improvement Costs—Wizardry

Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play	
	Not Concentrated	Concentrated
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1	1
Concentrate wizardly magic use	1	N/A
Become a lay member of a church (gain <i>Worship [God]</i> at 13 for free)	3	3
Become a liturgist (gain <i>Venerate [God]</i> at 13 and one <i>Use [Scripture]</i> at 13 for free)	3	3
Become an orderly (gain <i>Know [Saint]</i> at 13 and 3 orderly spells at 13 each for free)	3	3
Become an apprentice (gain <i>Apprentice of [Master]</i> or <i>Member of [Academy]</i> at 13 and <i>Aid My Master</i> at 13 for free)	1	1
Become an adept (gain <i>Know [Founder]</i> at 13 and one <i>Use [Grimoire]</i> at 13 [usually one of the school's specialties] for free)	1	1
Learn a spell within the common magic keyword	2	1
Learn <i>Use [Scripture]</i> or <i>Use [Grimoire]</i> at 13	6	3
Learn a spell at 13 and link it to a talisman	2	1
Improve <i>Know [Founder]</i> , <i>Know [Saint]</i> , <i>Venerate [God]</i> , <i>Venerate [Saint]</i> , or <i>Worship [God]</i> by +1	2	1
Improve <i>Use [Scripture]</i> or <i>Use [Grimoire]</i> by +1	6	3
Improve a spell by +1	2	1

Sample Churches, Saintry Orders, and Wizardry Schools

Aeolian Church

The Word and the Wind

Saint Aeol founded a unique monotheistic church in southern Heortland several millennia ago. Aeol was a contemporary of Malkion and venerated the Invisible God. He taught the values of thrift, hard work, good deeds, and leading by example. Aeol was harassed by the local priests and their gods, but he revealed his way of worship. He showed that the gods could be venerated, and he promised that worshippers would also gain access to Solace and the Invisible God. Aeol organized a local church that has survived for millennia. In the last decade it has grown even more popular, especially among the nobility. An Aeolian community today is recognizable by its “saint stone,” a large plinth decorated with the runes of Saint Mister Farmer (whom the pagans call Barntar).

Most worshippers are merely lay members, combining their blessings with local common magic. The Church’s ultimate ideal is a nonviolent way of life, as soon as the world is right. In the meantime, the Church blesses especially the military order of Saint Ehilm. Aeolians are expected to communicate: in the words of the original Kachasti Communicators (of whom Aeol was one), “Dialogue is the First Option, Warfare the Last.”

Homeland: Esvular.

Abilities: Doctrine of the Aeolian Church, Dutiful Worker, Sing, Worship the Invisible God.

Liturgists only—Venerate Invisible God.

Virtues: Hard-Working, Staunch, Tolerant.

Scripture: *The Examples of Karatch*

△ **Common Blessings**—Bless Congregation, Communicate Peaceful Intent, Concentrate on Work, Endure Wind, Harmonize Joyful Song, Renew Faith, See Potential.

⚡ **Special Blessings**—Bless Funeral Pyre, Bless Home, Communicate with Foreigner, Confirm Adult, Consecrate Relic, Dedicate Infant, Name Child, Resist Heathen Spirit, Resist Pagan God, Sanctify Marriage, Turn Aside Blows, Turn Aside Evil Magic.

⚡ **Curses**—Curse Adulterer, Curse Food Hoarder, Curse Murderer, Curse My Enemy, Curse of Miscommunication, Curse Thief, Excommunicate Sinner.

Great Secret: None.

Orders: The Church recognizes many saints, many of whom have their own orders. Samples here are Saint Ehilm and Saint Ishaar.

Other Side: Aeol’s node is called Peaceful Passage. It is a “false node” on the God World that has cosmic connections only with the Holy Sound Paradox and the nodes of individual saints of the Church. The saint stones are worldly holy places.

Disadvantages: The Aeolian Church is unusual in that it is a common religion even though members use only wizardry. This is because the Aeolian Church practices misapplied worship—all of their veneration is misapplied to entities from the God World (see page 110). As a consequence, members gain no benefit from concentrating their worship (although many do so anyway).



Saint Ehilm

The Watchful Sun

Saint Ehilm is the patron of guards and horsemen, and is called upon when defending property from invaders or thieves. He is worshipped primarily by the military Order of Saint Ehilm in Jansholm. This elite force guards against troll raiders from the Shadow Plateau and the Troll Woods.

Entry Requirements: Only open to men.

Abilities: Endure Pain, Know Saint Ehilm, Ride, Rule of Saint Ehilm, Spear and Shield Fighting, Stay Awake, Tend Horse.

Liturgists only—Venerate Saint Ehilm.

Relationships: Member of Order of Saint Ehilm.

Virtues: Brave, Protective.

Scripture: *The Manual of the Watchful Sun*

△ **Common Blessings**—Bless Horses, Reconsecrate Talismans.

⚡ **Special Blessings**—Banish Horse Disease, Blazing Lance, Bless Gold, Bless Sword, See through Subterfuge, Stand Fast, Strong Shield, Watchful Sentry)

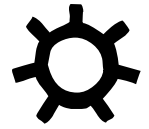
Formularies:

† **Ten Dozen Horses** (horseman spells: Burnish Armor, Dazzle Foe, Flaming Blade, Heal Horse, Radiant Shield, Rally Footmen, Speak to Horse, Stay Awake)

† **Ten Dozen Spears** (footman spells: Burnish Armor, Dazzle Foe, Incandescent Spearhead, March At Horse’s Pace, See in Darkness, Stay Awake)

Talismans: Members use small golden disks as talismans, typically mounted on helmet, sword pommel, or gauntlet.

Disadvantages: Worship of Saint Ehilm is misapplied worship.



Saint Ishaar

The Honest Prophet

Saint Ishaar is the patron of merchants and traders of all types, from clan reeves to wandering peddlers to city shop owners.

Abilities: Assess Exchange Rate, Inventory, Know Saint Ishaar, Rule of Saint Ishaar, Speak Tradetalk, Tally.

Liturgists only—Venerate Saint Ishaar.

Relationships: Member of Order of Saint Ishaar.

Virtues: Honest, Thrifty.

Scripture: *Ledgers of Honest Profit*

△ **Common Blessings**—Reconsecrate Talismans.

⚡ **Special Blessings**—Bless Market, Detect Swindle, Lock, Silver Tongue, Understand Foreigner.

⚡ **Curses**—Brand Thief.

Formulary:

⚡ **For Greater Goods** (Amicable Smile, Know Fair Deal, Know Value of Trade Goods, Pack Goods Neatly, Sense Intruder in Shop, Strike Swindler Dumb, Trip Thief)

Talismans: Saint Ishaar’s orderlies buy talismans of other Aeolian orders in honest trade, then consecrate them for their own spells. As such, they can use almost any object as a talisman.

Disadvantages: Worship of Saint Ishaar is misapplied worship.



Cerise Church

The Lunar Church



Emoxitles, a Holayan scholar, wrote *The Cerise Book* as an account of his magical exploration of the nature of Sedenya. He discerned secrets of the Lunar Way by understanding its order, place, and number. The result is a wizardly form of the Lunar Way, which demonstrates how Sedenya, the Supreme Being, transcends the accepted boundaries of life and magic.

The Cerise Church works throughout the Empire, but is strongest in regions where its proselytizers have been accepted for their wizardry. It has about 200,000 members (mostly in the north and west of the Empire plus parts of Fronela), but it has little formal organization, with few clergymen and liturgists that largely operate autonomously. Its wandering liturgists, commonly called "Cerisians," generally help the common folk.

The Church has three sacred texts, but liturgists prefer to use *The Twelve Hundred Names of Rufelza*, also called the "Easy Red Eye Grimoire." Emoxitles' second and simplest work, this addresses practical issues relevant to peoples' day-to-day lives, explained through parables and memorable proverbs. More settled liturgists, known as "Moon Readers," tend to be a little more elitist and aloof, grappling with the deep secrets of Emoxitles' third and most impenetrable work, his *Annotated Seven Steps of Life and Birth*. This scripture exhorts its readers to "Bend your Will past the Mask, behind where the eyes of the Ultimate peer." Disputes and discipline are the responsibility of the twenty-one Blindfold Preceptors.

Homelands: Dara Happa, Esrolia, Tarsh.

Abilities: Doctrine of Cerise Church, Sedenyic Philosophy, Worship Sedenya.

Liturgists only—Venerate Sedenya.

Virtues: Egalitarian, Inclusive, Seeking Understanding.

Scriptures:

Annotated Seven Steps of Life and Birth

△ **Common Blessings**—Be Aware, Become Something Better.

✂ **Special Blessings**—Bless Birth, Bless Death, Bless New Undertaking, Bless Rebirth.

⚡ **Curses**—Curse Pessimist.

The Cerise Book

△ **Common Blessings**—Bless Congregation, Find Peace, Learn from Life, Renew Faith.

✂ **Special Blessings**—Bless Change, Bless Family, Bless Home, Bless Marriage, Confirm Adult, Consecrate Relic, Dedicate Infant, Forgiveness, Lead Prayer, Leave Sorrow Behind, Make Just Atonement, Name Child, Renewal, Resist Divine Magic, Resist Spirit Magic, Take Just Revenge.

⚡ **Curses**—Curse Apostate, Curse Betrayer, Curse Food Hoarder, Curse Murderer, Curse Thief, Excommunicate Sinner.

The Twelve Hundred Names of Rufelza

△ **Common Blessings**—Bless Worker, Comprehend Common Cause.

✂ **Special Blessings**—Bless Food, Bless Friends, Bless Mob, Feel Unity, Resist Deference.

⚡ **Curses**—Curse Oppressor.

Great Secret: Reincarnation (Instead of achieving solace upon death, a virtuous worshipper is assured of reincarnating into a new body, thus rejoining the cycles of Life).

Orders: There are few orders unique to the Cerise Church, but one of them is that of Saint Henshelek. Instead, the

comparatively few orderlies generally worship one of the many saintly orders from other Churches that are recognized by the Cerisians.

Other Side: The Cerise Chapel is a node upon the Saint Plane. It is linked to those few other Lunar saints and (through strange magic whose mysteries are known only to a few) to the Red Moon.

Disadvantages: Worshipers are subject to the Lunar cycle (see page 113).

Saint Henshelek



Wandering Student and Wondering Scholar

Henshelek was a Counting Scholar. One day, the fog of numbers, columns, and calculations around him was pierced by a scarlet ray through a half-open window. As the light from Rufelza bathed his ledgers, he saw them for what they were: dead descriptions of a world he had locked himself away from. *The Cerise Book* (which he had once read purely as an exercise in learning New Pelorian) suddenly burst into life in his heart. At once he finished tallying that return (for he was clear about his duties) and forthwith left the Counters. He turned his pale, bookworm's face to the skies, exchanged his garret for sturdy boots and a good supply of parchment, and set out to see the world he had hitherto only experienced as figures and tax assessments.

As Henshelek traveled, he preached his new zest for life under the Red Moon and the importance of grasping opportunities and experiences as they presented themselves. His curiosity was as wide as all Glorantha, and his interests as varied. Here he recorded local folk songs, there he sketched women's hair styles. He has become a patron of scholars of a more adventurous sort, and his worship is especially strong at the borders of the Empire. Before his death he began his great work, *Henshelek's Guide to the Wonders of the World*, in which he catalogued the marvels and wonders of each land he visited.

Entry Requirements: Be a member of the Cerise Church.

Abilities: Know Saint Henshelek, Numerate, Read New Pelorian, Rule of Saint Henshelek, Sketch, Walk Long Distances, Well Traveled, Write New Pelorian.

Liturgists only—Venerate Saint Henshelek.

Relationships: Member of Order of Saint Henshelek.

Virtues: Curious, Enthusiastic.

Scripture: *Travels and Wonders*

△ **Common Blessings**—Reconsecrate Talismans.

✂ **Special Blessings**—Bless Artist, Bless Book, Bless Calligraphy, Bless Picture, Bless Scholar, Bless Traveler, Draw Well, Good Memory, Keen Eye, Teach Well, Write Well.

Formularies:

Ⓞ **Henshelek's Annotated Sketches** (Copy Picture ritual, Memorize Picture, Memorize Text, Preserve Picture, See Meaning Behind Numbers, Speak Through Pictures, Work Out Unknown Script)

Talismans: Members of the order generally use their writing and drawing implements as talismans, typically taking a pen or stylus, wrapping it with scraps of parchment, and dunking it in varicolored inks.

Other Side: Saint Henshelek's Den is an untidy repository of books, pictures, scrolls, and sketches of every kind, connected to the Cerise Chapel.

Disadvantages: Worshipers are subject to the Lunar cycle (see page 113).

W I Z A R D R Y

Rokari Church

The One Church of Seshnela

The Rokari Church is the largest organized religion of western Genertela. It is a big, hierarchical, patriarchal religion with clergy, bishops, archbishops, and the Ecclesiarch. It has gained control by cooperating with the current king, Guilmar, and each has sharply defined their powers. “One God, One Church, One King,” they say. The Church dominates all of Seshnela and parts of Ralios and Fronela, has members far and wide amidst rival religious territories, and has scattered congregations in the coastal ports. Most of the bishops in outlying cities have only tenuous or simply formal connections with the Great Church in Seshnela, but they nonetheless follow its rites. Several breakaway churches have formed, basing their rebellion on scriptural interpretations that have given them different blessings or curses. The Ship of Life Church is one (see page 170), worshipped by the rebellious coastal sea lords.

The Rokari Church recognizes Makan as God. The First Prophet Malkion gave the scripture called *The Abiding Book*, and then the prophet Rokar revealed their meaning in *The Rule of Law*. Rokarism discourages Joy, and requires anyone who has experienced it to join the monkish order called the Student Body. Instead, it exalts obedience, chastity and mortification of the flesh, penance, and dedication. While there are clergy who are compassionate, greedy, independent, or lecherous, as a faith the way of Rokar is austere and disciplined.

One man oversees the Church, Theoblanc the Ecclesiarch. He is over 150 years old (surely a sign of his great piety) and has forcefully united the Church under his leadership. He also has the skill to manipulate its vast pools of power to his agenda. Theoblanc directs the liturgical worship to Makan and conveys his philosophy via *The Theoblanc Papers*, wherein he explains *The Rule of Law*. Theoblanc preaches that worshippers squander piety by being in orders, especially the numerous saintly orders.

The Rokari Church stresses the virtues of orthodoxy and conservatism. It upholds rigid caste boundaries, preaches intolerance of other faiths, and supports the secular authority of the King—so long as he recognizes the Church’s moral mandate and traditional privileges. The size of the Church inhibits fine control of the clergy and laity. Nonetheless, it is one of the most disciplined and organized churches, with Theoblanc’s writ enforced by sometimes brutal methods. Theoblanc is adopting an increasingly iconoclastic line (ordering saintly images removed from view or even destroyed), and even the sanctioned saintly orders are coming under pressures to merge with the mainstream ‘One Church’ under his personal authority.

Homelands: Esrolia, Seshnela.

Abilities: Doctrine of the Rokari Church, Worship Makan.

Liturgists only—Venerate Makan.

Virtues: Obedience.

Liturgists only—Chastity, Poverty.

Scriptures:

The Abiding Book (see page 159)

The Theoblanc Papers, which includes *The Rule of Law*

▲ **Common Blessings**—Bless Leader of Congregation, Obey Church, Remember Rokar’s Laws, Work Hard for Church.

✦ **Special Blessings**—Resist Change, Resist Greed, Resist Temptation, Work Off Sin.

⚡ **Curse**—Curse Idler, Curse the Insubordinate, Curse Questioner, Curse Sorcerer, Curse Temptress, Curse Worshipper of Graven Images.



Credo of the Rokari Church

I believe in Makan, the One Invisible God, Creator of the Universe, who separated Matter from Energy, Shapes from Principles, and Elements from Powers. By these actions He made the Kingdom for our ancestors, the Chosen People. He created Malkion who was betrayed by Zzabur, was cursed, suffered, failed, died, and was separated. From this He created Solace, and brought the resurrection of the world. Malkion wrote The Abiding Book and gave its true version to Rokar, who reinstated the Tests of Faith, and taught us Malkion’s Resurrection. Through repentance and the Grace of Makan I shall rise above this Mortal World to perfect life in the paradise of Makan. I believe there is no God except Makan, that Malkion and Rokar are His True Prophets, writers of the Holy Books, and makers of the Sanctified Legacy. Amen.

Great Secret: Solace (see page 154).

Orders: Theoblanc sanctions only the Student Body, the military orders of Gerlant the Pure and James the Good, and the four sacred wizardry orders (Defenses of God, Inquisitors’ School, Iron Blood, and Lordly Advisory). Several additional wizardry schools are linked to the Church, and receive support in return for confining themselves to Church business. Many other orders and schools still exist, but all fear an official Church sanction, and most are experiencing declining membership. Even the worshippers of blessed Saint Xemela, beloved by all, fear that she will be sanctioned with the rest.

Other Side: Rokari know that on their death, if they have proven worthy, they will gain Solace, finding unity with the Invisible God.

Saint Gerlant

The Household of Great Fire

Gerlant was a great hero in the Gbaji Wars. He began a humble knight and ended as the wisest of the kings of Seshnela. He was a follower of Arkat, but broke with the betrayer when he became apostate. Gerlant refused the “war of shadow against dark” and went home to lead his people in a long and prosperous reign.

Saint Gerlant is recognized by most churches, even the Rokari. Each church has its own Order of Saint Gerlant. They are not associated with each other, and are often rivals or even enemies, but all are similar in their organization and magic. The Rokari order is known as the Household of Great Fire. Common names such as Gerlantings and Fireblade Templars are used for all of them.

As military orders with a thousand years of history behind them, the orders are high-minded bands of crusaders, known for their chivalry, idealism, and commitment. The basic unit of the order is the household, which resembles a military hero band. The ideal size of a household is 57 members, after the household that Gerlant himself commanded: a marshal with one bodyguard, three messengers, one body servant, two grooms, and one cook; and six captains, each with five knights and two grooms. Within a Church, all households are led by the Marshal General.



Entry Requirements: Warriors within the order must be knights, recognized as such according to the doctrine of their Church and the caste structure of their homeland.

Homelands: Esrolia, Esvular, Seshnela.

Abilities: Broadsword Fighting, Know Saint Gerlant, Resist Temptation, Rule of Saint Gerlant.

Liturgists only—Venerate Saint Gerlant.

Relationships: Member of the Household of Great Fire.

Virtues: Devout, Disciplined, Obedient, Stern.

Scripture: *The Life of Saint Gerlant the Pure*

▲ **Common Blessings**—Pray Right for Right, Reconsecrate Talismans.

✂ **Special Blessings**—Bless Armor, Burning Blade, Resist Cold, Resist Pagan Magic, Shrug Off Hurt, Strong Horse.

Formularies:

† **Miracles of the Saints, Volume IV** (knight spells: Burn away Pagan Magic, Burn Pagan, Burn Wound Closed, Commanding Shout, Defend Superior Officer, Flaming Sword, Heal Me Now, Ignite Kindling, Keep Me Warm, Protect Him, Rally Followers, Surprise Ghost, Sword Cutting)

† **Miracles of the Noble Saint** (noble spells: Burn away Pagan Magic, Burn Pagan, Commanding Shout, Flaming Lance, Flaming Sword, Heal Me Now, Keep Me Warm, Protect Me, Rally Followers)

Talismans: Orderlies commonly use their sword as the primary talisman of their spells. Armor, amulets, and horse trappings can be used as well.

Other Side: Gerlant was a humble man, and he promises his followers no more reward than that offered by their Church. His node on the Saint Plane, Gerlant's Chapel, is an austere place near the Unfaithful Forest.

Disadvantages: Members have many constraints to maintain the high standards of the order and the military units it sponsors. Obedience is absolutely required (all members must take *Obedient* as a personality trait), and expulsion from the order is a common punishment for even minor infractions.

Notes: Members must be from the appropriate church, and cannot renew their orderly spells during worship services to the saint conducted within any other church. They are required to learn spells from the appropriate formulary, depending on their caste (knight or noble). Members of the order are strongly discouraged from knowing or using common magic, and most concentrate their magic.

Iron Blood School

The Iron Shepherds

The Iron Blood School is the oldest order of the Rokari Church—indeed, it predates Rokar, and its spells include some spoken in the tongue that Zzabur spoke. The school has now become inextricably linked with the Rokari Church. The purpose of the Iron Blood School is to support warriors, originally called on for great crusades but increasingly used for any military expedition supported by Theoblanc. Some cynics even suggest that he is prepared to hire out their services in return for grants of land or promises of political influence. Their spells fortify armor, strengthen sword blows, and bring succor to the downed, giving them courage to re-enter the fray.

The Iron Blood School is unusual among Rokari orders in



that it contains both liturgists and adepts. There are no liturgist-adepts: members belong strictly to the “low” or “high” segments of the school, but all work together to bless and enchant the soldiers before battle.

The portal of power created by Iron Blood adepts is the Gate of Iron Blood.

Entry Requirements: Open only to men.

Homelands: Seshnela.

Abilities: Blacksmith, Know Iron Shepherd, Rule of Iron Shepherd.

Adepts only—Assess Course of Battle, Create Portal of Power, Symbolic Sight.

Liturgists only—Venerate the Iron Shepherd.

Relationships: Member of the Iron Blood School.

Virtues: Brave, Unbending.

Scripture: *The Iron Shepherd's Flock*

✂ **Special Blessings**—Bless the Army, Bless Battle Standard, Bless Our Guarding Troops.

⚡ **Curses**—Curse the Enemy.

Grimoires:

▲ *The Abiding Book* (see page 165)

† *The Book of Conflict* (Augment Lance Strike, Augment Sword Blow, Give Soldier Courage, Melt Iron, Strengthen Armor)

III *The Mysteries of Health* (Heal Horse Hurt in Combat, Heal Soldier Hurt in Combat, Heal Horse Impaired in Combat, Heal Soldier Impaired in Combat, Heal Horse Injured in Combat, Heal Soldier Injured in Combat)

Talismans: The school uses talismans formed by pouring molten iron into water, where it solidifies into irregular droplets of ‘iron blood.’

Other Side: The Iron Shepherd's Forge is a node on the Saint Plane. Once it was connected to the nodes of other churches, but now it links only to Rokari nodes.

Disadvantages: Members are expected to carry out their duties even in the thick of battle, and the school accepts and even anticipates casualties.

Ship of Life Church

The Navigationalist Church



Eliavar was a prophet of the Fourth Action, one of the primeval ages. He established how to reach Makan the One through the process, art, and experience of boating. The Vadeli tried to kill him but he fled here and there, finally settled and established a temporary regime, then was killed anyway. His fleetmates were blessed by his grave, contacted him, and formed a small church that died out when the Curse of the Closing swept all ships from the sea, apparently proving it to be a false religion. The lands where he lived are in modern Pasos.

About 40 years ago, the great shipman Dormal opened the seas to sailing for the first time in five centuries. The hermit of Eliavar's forgotten tomb came forward with his scripture, *Infinite Sea Wisdom*, and the Great Navigator's words were spoken again. Parts of *Infinite Sea Wisdom* are also in *The Abiding Book*, and philosophical clergy claim Eliavar's words presages all the rest of that scripture.

Navigationalism started as just a small order, but it was adopted as a religion in Nolos after the Fourth Action Debates, when Eliavar was proven to be equal to Rokar. Many lay members and liturgists convert from the Rokari Church, but the

Ship of Life Church is increasingly becoming more flexible and liberal, appealing to the explorers, merchant-adventurers, and seafarers of this new age of maritime trade and discovery. Several independent bishops in southern Seshnela recognize and support each other, but acknowledge no superior. Many smaller congregations have sprung up in ports all along southern Genertela, including Esrolia and Heortland. These outposts are controlled by coastal barons and financed by lucrative maritime trade.

Homelands: Esrolia, Esvular, Seshnela.

Abilities: Float, Navigationalist Doctrine, Worship Makan.

Liturgists only—Venerate Makan.

Virtues: Enterprising, Optimistic, Seagoing.

Scripture: *Infinite Sea Wisdom*

△ **Common Blessings**—Be Content with Life, Bless Congregation, Bless Ship, Find Peace, Hide from Foes, Renew Faith.

✂ **Special Blessings**—Absolve Sin, Bless Food, Bless Home, Confirm Adult, Consecrate Relic, Dedicate Infant, Find Way Home, Give Corpse to the Sea, Name Child, Protect from Illness, Resist Heathen Spirit, Resist Intoxication, Resist Lust, Resist Pagan God, Sanctify Marriage, Staunch Wound.

⚡ **Curses**—Bad Winds, Curse Apostate, Curse Food Hoarder, Curse the Lazy, Curse Murderer, Curse My Enemy, Curse Thief, Curse Water-tainter.

Great Secret: Find the Promised Land.

Orders: The church has only one unique order, that of Eliavar the Great Navigator, but also includes the order of Saint Dormal. Most other orders are compatible, if somewhat irrelevant.

Other Side: Liturgists promise worshippers a future in Solace as Eliavar envisaged it: sailing their own course on the great Sea of Souls; tacking effortlessly between the great winds of Hope, Love, and Ambition; calling in at the Lifepath Isles; and following the mighty Current of History.

Disadvantages: Although it has local support from nobles, merchants, and commoners, the Church is not known much outside Nolos, so worshippers have little support in other lands.

Credo of the Ship of Life Church

I believe in Makan, the One Mind, Creator of the Universe, who separated Matter from Energy, Shapes from Principles, and Elements from Powers. By these actions He made the Promised Land for our ancestors, the Chosen People. He created the Great Navigator who was betrayed, cursed, suffered, failed, died, and was separated. From this He created Solace, and brought the resurrection of the world. Malkion wrote The Abiding Book and gave its true version to Eliavar the Seaman, who reinstated the Tests of Faith, and taught us Resurrection. Through repentance and the Grace of Makan I shall rise above this Mortal World to perfect life in paradise. There is no God except Makan, and Eliavar is the True Prophet, Writer of the Holy Books, and Maker of the Sanctified Legacy. Amen.

Widespread Sainly Orders



Saint Xemela

Blessed Mother of Hrestol

One of the most respected orders in the West is the Hospital Order. It was founded by Saint Xemela, the First Saint, queen of Seshnela, who gave her life to save her people from the Black Swelling. She is now the patron of those who heal and cleanse, sometimes at the expense of their own health and lives. “What is a life, when the soul is pure?” said the saint.

The Hospital Order is one of a very few orders that accepts worshippers from any church, and which is accepted by all modern churches. Its size and power give it the political weight to work across church boundaries. The order is divided into hospitals, each of them semi-autonomous. Some hospitals are small, with perhaps a dozen members; others, like the Great Hospitals at Hingswell and Arnlor, each have over a thousand surgeons, apothecaries, and purificants. The head of a hospital is the Ministress Prime.

Members are encouraged to know as much healing magic as possible, so most seek out common magic that heals. They are not required to learn orderly spells, but those that do not cannot rise far. Xemela’s hospitallers work wonders to heal the sick and the injured body and soul, even at terrible cost to themselves, but also keep up an unending stream of improving advice and religious catechism.

Entry Requirements: Swear the Hospitallers’ Oath to follow Xemela’s Rule (see below) and take *Pacifist* as a personality trait.

Churches: Any.

Abilities: Clean, First Aid, Know Saint Xemela, Rule of Saint Xemela, Work Hard.

Liturgists only—Venerate Saint Xemela.

Relationships: Member of Hospital Order.

Virtues: Do-Gooder, Pacifist, Pious, Self-Sacrificing.

Scripture: *The Life of Saint Xemela*

△ **Common Blessings**—Bear Suffering, Reconsecrate Talismans.

✂ **Special Blessings**—Bless Poultice, Bless Sleeper, Cast Out Sickness, Cope with Pain, Keep Surgical Tools Clean, Preserve Healing Herbs, Prevent Spread of Disease, Speed Natural Healing.

⚡ **Curses**—Curse Plague-bringer.

Formulary:

III **For Others** (Bring Merciful Sleep, Endure Pain, Ignore Own Suffering, Preach Clean Living, Sear Hurt Clean, Sleep to Heal, Stay Awake, Take Impairment onto Self, Take Injury onto Self, Take Pain onto Self, Take Sickness onto Self)

Talismans: Orderlies use potions, mortar and pestle, scalpels, kerchiefs, and small amulets as talismans.

Other Side: The House of Ill Respite and Santus Bonum is a clean and healthy node on the Saint Plane, its airs filled with the sound of gentle song and the faint trace of carbolic soap, with connections to the nodes of all the churches that revere her.

Disadvantages: Hospitallers must embrace Xemela’s Rule to never hurt another being with a soul, spirit, or essence by action or inaction, and to heal hurts whatever the personal cost. Failure to do so results in expulsion from the order.



Independent Wizardry Schools

Bardan's Book

The Martial Wizards



Bardan was by turns a knight who refused to fight except for a cause, a bishop who spoke of peace but did not fear war, and an adept who turned his magic into a means to aid armies. He assembled many fragmentary grimoires into two of his own, *The Book of Accuracy* and *The Army Book*. His adepts are prized on the battlefield, both in assisting an army's missile troops and in launching magic missiles of their own.

There are four schools of Bookmen, called companies: the Russet Cross, the Bright Fletching Company (Nochet), the Deristophelian Company, and the Bardan Bond Company (Otkorion). Each has about six adepts and twice as many apprentices. They are mercenary adepts who believe that magic is a weapon, like any other. The portal of power created by adepts of Bardan's Book is called a Battle Circle.

Entry Requirements: Members must have previous military experience.

Churches: Any.

Abilities: Create Portal of Power, Know Bardan, Military History, Military Magic Tactics, Rule of Bardan, Symbolic Sight.

Relationships: Member of [School of Bookmen].

Virtues: Pragmatic, Warlike.

Grimoires:

△ *The Abiding Book* (see page 165)

† *The Army Book* (Augment Lance Strike, Augment Sword Blow, Give Soldier Courage, Right Makes Might, Stand Fast, Strengthen Armor, Strengthen Shield)

† *The Book of Accuracy* (Augment Arrow Accuracy, Augment Arrow Damage, Augment Arrow Distance, Shoot Far and Deadly, Shoot Magic Arrow)

Talismans: Bookmen use parts or images of weapons as talismans, such as an arrowhead, a link from a mail shirt, or a small replica of a siege catapult.

Other Side: Bardan's Turret is a node of keen invention and warlike passion on the Founder Plane.

Disadvantages: Dedication to war offends many peaceful peoples, so adepts of this school are disliked, feared, or hated by almost everyone (except their employers).

Debaldan School

Lords of the Waters



Debaldan adepts were originally found only among the seafaring Waertagi, who founded schools in each of their ports. Over time, humans in the Sog City University shared knowledge of the grimoire, copies were made, and now many schools exist. Every chapter is independent of the others. Debaldan chapters are now found in all the larger port cities around western and southern Genertela; three rival schools are in Nochet, Rhigos, and Storos. An adept of the Debaldan School may be a member of any church, but many do not bother.

The Debaldan School provides magic to clients that need water control. The common chapter has ten adepts, seventy apprentices, and a couple hundred servants, taxpayers, and other supporters. Traditional clothing consists of flowing blue robes with glistening quicksilver accoutrements. Apprentices must wear a shark fin on each shoulder. The portal of power created by adepts of the Debaldan School is the Nexus of Water.



Wizards are often highly prized military specialists. This mercenary wizard of Bardan's Book school is carefully enchanting siege artillery so that it may penetrate the defensive sorcery thrown up around a rival city-state's battlements. Such is the 'arms race' generated by the use of magic in warfare.

Entry Requirements: Swimming 13.

Churches: Debaldan schools are not a part of any church.

Abilities: Create Portal of Power, Know Debalda, Read Waertagi, Rule of Debalda, Symbolic Sight, Water Lore, Write Waertagi.

Relationships: Member of [Debaldan School].

Virtues: Fascinated by Water, Proud.

Grimoires:

✓ *Beyond Aquatic Laws* (Boil Water, Call Water from Distant Source, Change Water to [Liquid], Communicate with Water Being, Float and Sink, Freeze Water, Hurt Foe from Here, Not Drown, Purify Water)

✓ *Debaldan Deeps* (Bless Us Dry, Bless Us Wet, Curse on Him, Curse on Them, Change Aluminum to Quicksilver, Change Quicksilver to Aluminum, Enchant Aluminum, Enchant Quicksilver)

Talismans: Debaldans use parts of sea creatures conquered with magic to fashion their talismans.

Other Side: Debalda's node on the Founder Plane is the Little Pier, constructed around a fragment of the original Pier built by Waertag. The Little Pier seems to jut out over and connect to several other nodes of Water power.

Disadvantages: Debaldan adepts must always avoid starting conflict against any air creatures. However, they see themselves as the Lords of the Waters, and are obligated to vanquish any sea being that refuses to acknowledge their superiority.

Humble Calligraphers

The Adept Scribes



Scripture is central to the monotheists of the West, and the Humble Calligraphers are one of the few institutions able to operate within both the Rokari and Hrestoli churches. In part this is because of their rigidly neutral stance: members take a solemn oath never to repeat or amend anything they are instructed to write. It is also a reflection of their power: bishops, dukes, and merchant-princes alike depend on their services to transcribe documents, make and break codes, and notarize accounts and copies.

The Primary Scriptorium is located in Sog City, near the University. Smaller scriptoriums with one or two adepts and their apprentices can be found in most major cities in Seshnela and Fronela, as well as one in Nochet. Members of the school cultivate an air of grave indifference, modeled on that of their founder, Albrechtus Unmoved. Their black robes conceal inks, pens, vellum, and the other tools of their trade. Individual

adepts may be court scribes, wandering scribes, or live and work in a city.

The portal of power created by the Humble Calligraphers is called an Illuminated Portal.

Entry Requirements: Literacy 17.

Churches: Any.

Abilities: Accurate Copy, Create Portal of Power, Know Albrechtus, Remain Inconspicuous, Rule of Albrechtus, Symbolic Sight.

Relationships: Member of the Humble Calligraphers school.

Virtues: Discreet, Honest, Impartial, Secretive.

Grimoires:

△ *The Abiding Book* (see page 165)

✧ *The Closed Scriptorium* (Break Code, Compare Documents, Create Code, Flawless Calligraphy, Keep a Secret, Make Exact Copy, Preserve Text, Protect Document, Quick Copy)

Talismans: All talismans are quill pens, each specially crafted to match the spell.

Other Side: The Quiet Duplicatory is the node Albrechtus inscribed on the Founder Plane. Reflecting his dedication to remaining neutral from all powers and forces, it connects to no other nodes.

Disadvantages: The Calligraphers depend on their reputation for discretion and honesty. Jeopardizing this reflects on the entire order, and so even minor transgressions are harshly punished.

The Essential Landscape

First was Danmalastan, the world of perfect beings living in pure essence. In some manner, much debated, other worlds came into contact with it. Their contact polluted the pure way, and improper, impure, and heretical practices have existed ever since. Now the World is Made of Everything, not just essences.

Within the created world are some places that escaped the pollution of the Gods War. They are naturally strong with pure magic from the Essence Planes. Such places are uncommon even in the West (the center of monotheistic power), but a few are found even in theist-dominated Dragon Pass. Adepts seek their potent materials; local customs vary concerning how to treat such visitors. These essences are never the patron of a formal saintly order or wizardry school, but they often grant magic as **guardian essences**.

Using Essences

An embodied essence's functions can be learned as spells, as described in "Worshipping Guardians" in the Relationships chapter, page 94. Learning a function as a spell counts as misapplied worship. The magician must create a talisman for the spell as normal, but the spell is limited.

Once the spell is cast (or after a week in any case) the talisman must be "recharged" as if the user were an orderly (see page 161). Rather than being reconsecrated during a worship service, the magician must take the talisman to the site and perform the specific ritual he used to create it in the first place. (A player hero does not have to spend hero points to regain the spell.)

Most essences can also serve as raw magical energy to boost the effects of any blessing, curse, spell, or call for a miracle. To use the essence in this manner, the magician must physically touch the essence's physical form. The ratings of the essence's

functions are added together as a single ability rating, and the magician can use this either as AP or to provide an augment. The magician can use all or part of the essence's total rating at any one time, as he wishes. Using an essence in this manner does not cost hero points, but requires that the magician either succeed in a contest to properly utilize the energy, or else have performed a special ritual to attune himself to the essence's source. (Alternately, the narrator may allow you to spend a hero point to attune the essence source out of play.)

Using essences in either way weakens the entity. Learning a spell from an embodied essence decreases the appropriate function's rating by 1 for each talisman that is currently in use, even if the spell is never cast or the talisman has lost its "charge." Using raw energy to power magic reduces the functions by the rating used to gain the bonus, dividing this loss evenly among all functions. The essence is recharged during the next normal worship service. (If the essence is used to boost magic during a normal worship service *for that essence*, the veneration recharges the essence, and the function ratings do not decrease.)

Contest: Attune an Essence Source

Appropriate Abilities: Know [Founder], Know [Saint], Venerate [God], Venerate [Saint], or other appropriate magical ability.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Ritual magic; community support cannot aid the hero.

Resistance: Total rating of essence source.

Any Victory: Magician is attuned to essence and can draw on its raw essence at any time without an additional contest.

Tie or Any Defeat: The magician has not attuned himself to the essence.

Contest: Use an Unattuned Essence Source

Appropriate Abilities: Venerate [God], Venerate [Saint], or other appropriate magical ability.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Ritual magic.

Resistance: 14 + amount of essence used.

Any Victory: Hero gains the desired amount of essence to use as described above.

Tie or Marginal Defeat: Hero fails to draw out the essence, which remains in the source.

Any Other Defeat: Hero does not properly use the essence, which is drained from the source.

Reliquaries

Most congregations have a set place of worship, ranging from the basement of a liturgist's house to the grand cathedral of Saint Hrestol in Loskalm, where thousands of people worship each week. All well-established houses of worship are founded with one or more holy relics, often an ancient copy of a scripture, a piece of ceremonial regalia, or the remains of a saint. These reliquaries function as a guardian essence for the congregation. The strength of the essence is independent of the size or piety of the congregation.

If the reliquary is lost, stolen, or damaged, it cannot store energy during worship, and ceases to aid the congregation. If the relic is destroyed, the essence returns to the Essence Planes. Reliquaries cannot provide spells in exchange for veneration.

Saint Caspodi's Exacting Censer

Caspodi was a militant preacher and warrior who was canonized for his selfless defense of the Three Hooded Bishops during the Baptismal Crusade. He was famous for the lengthy and inspiring sermons he preached to his troops before battle as he rode up and down before them, swinging his great bronze censer, trailing a cloud of incense and sanctity. His censer is now housed in the Vaulted Hall of Saint Gerlant in Whitewall. The reliquary is used during regular worship services to both Saint Gerlant and Saint Caspodi, and is called on whenever the house musters for battle.

Form: The censer is a great bronze ball pierced with square holes. It is mounted on a long chain, each link of which is carved with a different line of Saint Caspodi's Epitaph.

Communication: When the liturgist uses the censer to bless his congregation or defend the chapter house, he can feel Saint Caspodi's presence as a strength of purpose.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Know Commander's Location 18.
- ☞ Blessing—Be Brave 10W.
- ☒ Defense—Resist Hostile Sorcery 1W.

Sample Essences

Gemborg Essence Diamonds

Gemborg is a dwarf settlement inside a large, inactive volcano south of Esrolia. It is often called the Noise Volcano because of the terrible, deafening noises that issue forth from it constantly. Ironclad guards keep all non-dwarves out. It is the source of most essence diamonds, and was built atop a huge one that gives the resident dwarf adepts a huge power reserve to draw on. They use it to blanket out all magic around the mountain. All non-Mostali magic used in the area, no matter its origin, must over-

come a resistance of D+50 (see "Inherently Difficult Magic" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 101). In addition, theists and animists suffer as if in an alien world (see "Alien World Penalty" in the Heroquesting chapter, page 197), receiving a penalty of -20 to their ability rating.

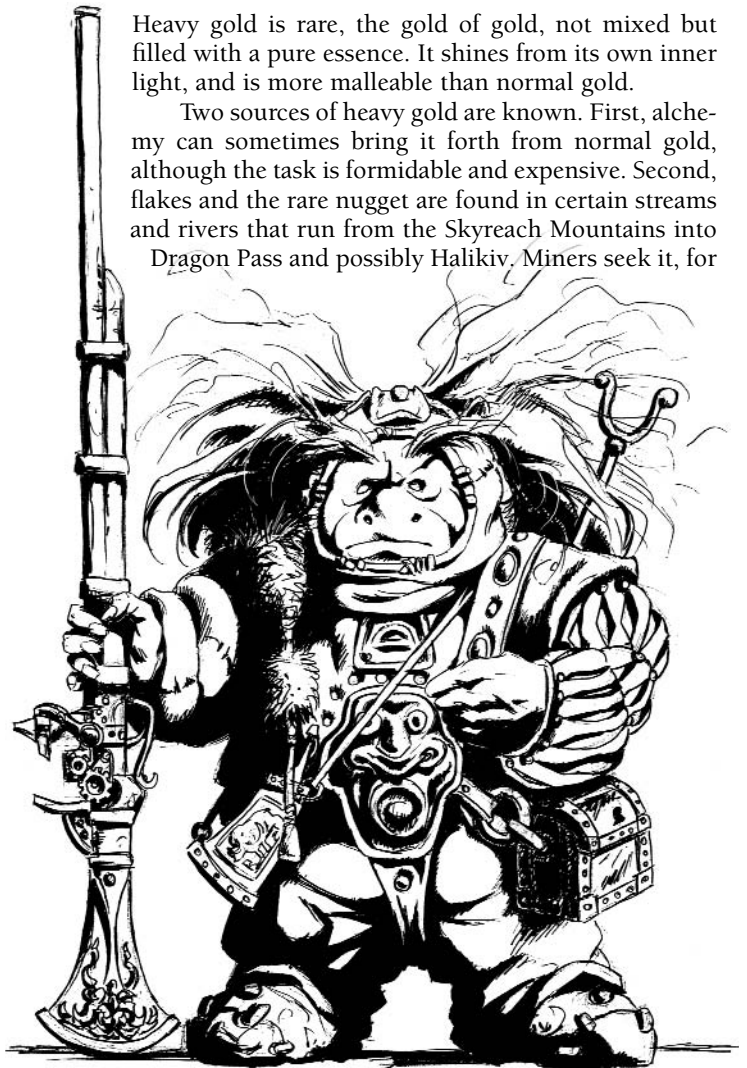
Essence diamonds are jewels that hold raw energy. They are valuable to dwarves for reasons beyond human ken, and their allure often causes humans to desire them as well. They are extremely rare. Most dwarf strongholds have several of them lodged in places accessible only to the residents. During the Gbaji Wars, the Gemborg dwarves revealed two that were so huge they had to be hauled about on great iron wagons.

Anyone trained in any *Use [Grimoire]* skill may attune himself to an essence diamond and use it as a reserve of power. Each diamond can be attuned to only one person at a time. Treat it as if it was a follower with no abilities, but advantage points that depend on its size. A tiny chip (such as might be used in a ring or jewelry) has 20 to 30 AP. A larger stone (up to the size of a fist) has 50 to 80 AP. Stones up to the size of a person's head hold 100 to 150 AP, one the size of a torso 250 to 400 AP, and so on. These AP can only be used once, then are gone forever.

Heavy Gold and the Mother Lode

Heavy gold is rare, the gold of gold, not mixed but filled with a pure essence. It shines from its own inner light, and is more malleable than normal gold.

Two sources of heavy gold are known. First, alchemy can sometimes bring it forth from normal gold, although the task is formidable and expensive. Second, flakes and the rare nugget are found in certain streams and rivers that run from the Skyreach Mountains into Dragon Pass and possibly Halikiv. Miners seek it, for



Dwarves are the only technology-oriented creatures in Glorantha. This elite guard is armed with a technological super-weapon—a flintlock gun. Such weapons are rare, almost never seen outside of the underground dwarf fortresses, and usually made so that they will not work for any but a dwarf.

its value is ten times that of normal gold. Most miners believe its appearance is also related to various cycles, perhaps abstract Mostali practices. They search for its source, the great Mother Lode, with patience and zeal.

Heavy gold is inherently magical, and does not have to be enchanted. It gives an automatic penalty to all non-wizardry magic cast by or at the wearer, but augments any wizardry cast by the wearer. A piece of this living metal has a rating of 8 \square per ounce (a volume equal to an armband weighs about one ounce).

The Stream

In Dragon Pass there is a stream of pure essence water. It has been here since the era of Danmalastan, when Malkion stopped and blessed it. The purity of its source persists even as The Stream is swollen by tributaries of normal water, becoming a smaller current of pure essence water in the flow. Its last drop of independence disappears when it becomes part of the Creek-Stream River.

The Stream does not provide awareness, blessing, or defense functions to those who live near it or use its waters. Its essence is a vast undine that is generally dormant within its waters, but which is visible to anyone using *Symbolic Sight*. The Stream Undine is so vast that it cannot be summoned in its entirety by any mortal being, but adepts gain a +20 bonus to their magical ability when they call forth a undine from its waters. Such is the power of The Stream, however, that many adepts are overwhelmed by it. To reflect this, the minimum size of undine that can be summoned from The Stream is 10 cubic yards, and this minimum size increases to about 30 cubic yards as the adept gets closer to The Stream's hidden source.

Undine

Undines are essences that adepts can force to animate water. They have no fixed size, and large undines are no more difficult to control than small ones. Larger undines *do* require more energy to form, and so are more difficult to summon. On the Essence Planes, undines do not exist as distinct entities, and so lack any attributes.

To summon an undine, the adept first determines the size desired, expressed in cubic yards. (A typical undine has a volume of 2 cubic yards, and few exceed 10 cubic yards.) He then draws the precise amount of energy needed from the proper node. If he achieves any level of victory in a contest against the elemental's *Resist Summoning* ability, it animates the desired volume of material. An elemental can animate a smaller amount of material if that is all that is available, but this reduces its abilities; the excess energy dissipates.

Undines can inhabit any liquid that is primarily water: wine, for example, but not quicksand. Undines cannot animate ice. An undine that contains insoluble matter, such as sand or sediment, can expel this quickly, but it cannot remove dissolved substances, such as salt. Once summoned, an undine takes the form of a pool of water.

Undines have only a single active ability, which they must use or any action that they attempt (they can use their other abilities only to resist in a contest). If the action is clearly appropriate, such as flowing over something or downhill, the ability works normally. If the action is less appropriate, such as flowing uphill or up a body and into a person's mouth, the narrator should apply an improvisational modifier. Undines flow only slowly across land, but move swiftly through water. They can perform tasks such as helping to propel a becalmed ship, augmenting with their *Be Water* rating. They can engulf a victim to drown him, attacking directly with their *Be Water* ability. This may take an improvisational modifier in some cases, such as an undine trying to draw water away from an aquatic creature's gills in order to "drown" it.

Magical Abilities: Be Water 5/cubic yard, Move Rapidly through Water 15, Resist Damage 3/cubic yard, Resist Summoning 6/cubic yard.

Tactics: Undines are mindless, and act only when commanded by their summoner. The undine automatically ignores any command that would have it act against its nature, such as a command to stop flowing.

Trackgrass

Places exist that are collections of wizardry power. Adepts call one kind "trackgrass" because grass grew there when Eskaval, the Pure Beast, stopped during its travels around Danmalastan. The smallest tracts are about thirty feet square, usually oddly shaped. All non-wizardry magic used in a Trackgrass region is hampered by a D+20 resistance.

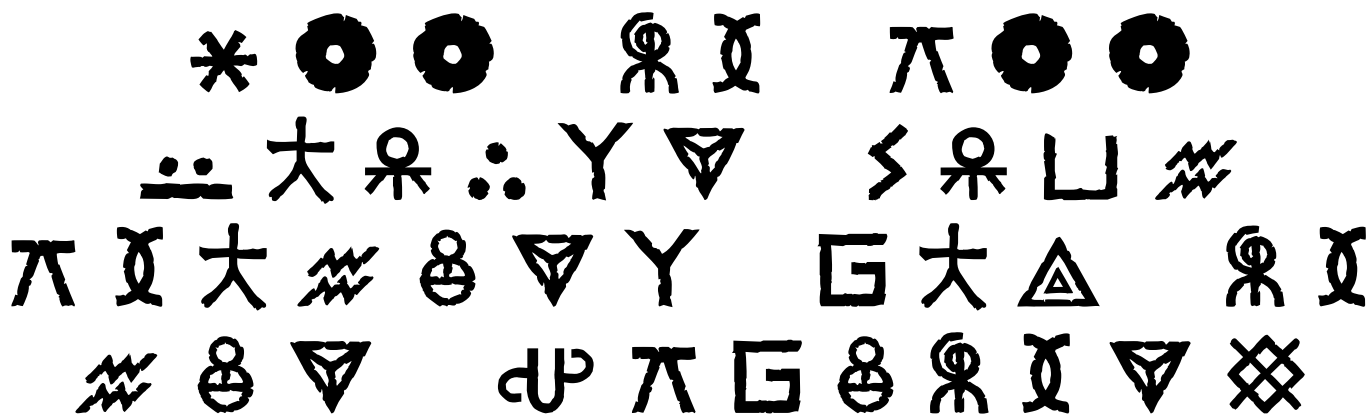
The *Green Blade* teaching tells how to eat some of the grass in a certain way, then tie some more into a straw man that can later be crushed for a burst of power or thrown at a pursuer to facilitate an escape by casting a *Get Away* spell.

Form: Trackgrass does not appear differently than other grass except to *Symbolic Sight*, which can discern the geometric perfection of each blade of grass' shape.

Magic:

☞ Blessing—Boost Wizardry 5 \square .

☐ Defense—Get Away 2 \square .



The Essence Planes

The Essence Planes are dimensions of thoughts and connections, with no “active” inhabitants. Each plane is composed of **nodes** that connect to each other and (less frequently) to nodes on other planes. Humans perceive these planes from inside the nodes. Adepts can travel between nodes, but cannot explore the part of the Essence Plane that lies outside them (if such even exists).

Nodes are the spiritual forms of saints, founders, essences, and God. Spells, grimoires, essence creatures (such as unicorns), and even types of energy have distinct nodes. Scriptures contain instructions for accessing specific nodes, and grimoires contain the instructions for moving between nodes.

An adept does not take his material body to the Otherworld. Instead, he creates a portal that allows him to move his psyche from his physical body to his **essential body**, which like all essences is part of the Essence Planes. When he heroquests, his essential body becomes manifest in the Gods War.

The universal essence ultimately originates in the Venerable Plane, diffusing and materializing through proven universal Laws. People can use the Laws and thereby use magic. Disagreement exists about details, but all who use wizardry agree on how the Magic and Saint planes work, and so gain the same practical results. Time moves at a steady pace in the Essence Planes, and cannot be manipulated. Adepts can closely estimate when a traveler on the Essence Planes should return.

Several Essence Planes exist. In ascending order they are the Underworld Plane, the Mundane Plane, the Magic Plane, the Saint Plane, and finally the Venerable Plane. Each plane is increasingly immaterial and abstract, and thus is successively harder for humans to reach. Philosophers and adepts know that there are higher planes beyond the Venerable Plane, but reaching these is beyond the ability of most mortals, and returning from them is impossible even for most immortals.

Underworld Plane

The Underworld is the origin of all magic that is not subject to normal laws. After the Creator made everything that was perfect, there were some troublemakers who got together and made the Underworld, a parody plane of the perfect world that Creator had made. From that came the Devil, gods, spirits, and demons.

Mundane Plane

The Mundane Plane is the ordinary Mortal World. It is the material day-to-day reality, the intersection of Time, Space, and Thought. In general, it is the place where standard resistance applies. By quirk of creation and nature, as well as the interference of evil and stupid beings, energy and magic in the Mundane Plane are unevenly distributed.

Magic Plane, Adept Plane, Spell Plane

The Magic Plane is behind a 10 \mathbb{L} 3 barrier. Spell nodes, ready to burst into life, are found there. Nodes often appear to worshippers to be a room or chamber, like a scroll nook in a larger library, but just as often are an abstract energetic space ready to burst into existence.

A spell node is activated every time the spell is cast. It is the exchange of veneration and will that causes magic. The spell node exists precisely on the interface between the Mundane Plane and the Immaterial Planes. When an adept passes

What the Adept Utters

I call this the Everything Plane, because it has all things within it and is made of everything. The Church calls it the Mortal Plane, because they want to frighten everyone with death. We know what the Other Side is like, and we are not afraid. This world is dull and mundane, the Magic Plane is alive.

through a portal of power to link a talisman to a spell node, he learns to connect directly to the node, and can cast the wizardry spell afterwards at will. An orderly spell, by contrast, is connected to the spell node through the saint's node. This process does not involve travel to the spell node (and so is easier), but only allows the orderly to cast the spell one time before the connection must be renewed.

Spell nodes connect to a saint's or founder's node on the Saint Plane. Adepts learn to go to their founder's node via a spell node. Thus, they can travel through two 10 \mathbb{L} 3 barriers instead of a single 10 \mathbb{L} 6 barrier. This requires triple the time it takes to get to the spell node.

Saint Plane, Founder Plane

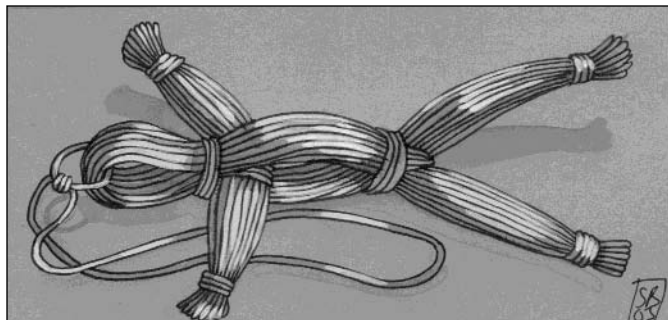
The saints and school founders that inhabit this plane lie behind a 10 \mathbb{L} 6 barrier. They revealed portions of the Law and thereby established a node on this plane that can be reached by worshippers. The saints each exist inside their own abode where human beings can go in moments of extreme piety and vision. They created their own nodes. Other nodes on this plane were created as emanations of Creation from the Venerable Plane. These are places of residence for the essence beings of creation, like the early creatures, archetypes, and immortal concepts.

When people from these religions heroquest they travel from their earthly lands to this plane, into the realm of their saint or founder. From there they travel to the Gods War.

Venerable Plane

The Supreme Being, the Creator or creative force of the universe, exists on this plane. It is alone, all-encompassing, and quite inexplicable to the human mind. Even so, it has been investigated and documented by adepts and experienced (briefly) by many receiving the Blessing of Joy. It is Heaven, the presence of God. It is behind a 10 \mathbb{L} 9 barrier.

Religious worship is the only way to contact this plane. Religions are different in the details of worship, even different in the name for the One God they worship. But because veneration works, each is equally connected to the Venerable Plane if they truly worship the Supreme Being.





NARRATING

The focus of *HeroQuest* is the story, not the rules. Nothing is more galling than having to spend limited preparation time generating pages of game statistics instead of working on the characters, experiences, and surprises of the campaign. Let the narrative direct what happens, and turn to the rules only when drama demands that chance make the outcome uncertain. Apply common sense, and do not make a decision that seems wrong just because it is what the *rules* say to do.

So, if the emphasis is not on the rules, what else does this book contain?

First are guidelines and samples that show you how to tell stories set in Glorantha. This book includes a broad sampling of cultures, magic, and creatures, which other books expand. We expect that you will use, modify, or ignore this information in a way that will help your story.

Second is advice on how to run *HeroQuest*. You have to decide what obstacles the Heroes will face, how to resolve Contests, and how Glorantha appears to them. This last especially may make narrating *HeroQuest* seem like a daunting task. A lot of this book is about making *you* comfortable with that responsibility. This chapter gives advice to help you create details the rulebooks do not provide, resolve player and hero problems, use the rules to resolve any contest, and narrate rules and story elements together to make an engaging story.

Most importantly, we want you to have as much fun as the players do. Over the years, we have learned that the best narrators always seem to have a lot of fun themselves. Develop your childish enthusiasm. Enjoy yourself!

The First Rule

The first rule for narrators of *HeroQuest* is: **Your Glorantha Will Vary.** In telling your story, do not confine yourself to events described in a rulebook. Instead, create the events your story demands. We will never nail down every aspect of Glorantha, so

your campaign will inevitably vary from official material. *HeroQuest* is the game of discovery, so make up the details as necessary. We sanction and encourage this, and hope you enjoy the differences, plot twists, and new facts you encounter. If something is later published that contradicts your game, feel free to ignore, modify, or use it as suits you and your players.

We want to hear from you, too. Support material is available online at www.HeroQuest-rpg.com/support, including keywords, adventures, and articles by narrators like you. If you create material for your game, we want to see it and share it with other narrators and players.

Heroes

Heroes are beyond the ordinary. Compare your game with a TV or book series. The heroes are the permanent cast, the individuals chosen by the creators as the most interesting characters. They are both the focus of trouble and the ones who solve problems. Colleagues or allies who are not series regulars are just not as good at working things out as they are, regardless of their rank or supposed expertise.

Character Creation

This book assumes that beginner player heroes are competent and have heroic potential but are not yet among the mighty. Instead, you might want the characters to start as ordinary farmers or advanced champions. Your Glorantha may be more or less tough to survive in than the norm. A simple way is to start young or inexperienced heroes with lower ratings (such as keywords at just 13 and only 15 extra points to distribute). Powerful heroes should start with higher ratings, perhaps 5 \square for keywords, 17 for other abilities, and 25 or 30 points to distribute.

Virtue is Not Its Own Reward

Part of a player's concept for his hero may seem to demand that he start an ability with a high rating. The player might say that his hero is exceptionally *Strong* (i.e., higher than he can make it during character creation) because of his virtue. You must decide whether or not to allow this, but we recommend that you

The Hero Wars are between... Free Will and Imposed Order

The intelligent beings of Glorantha follow the dictates of the deities, spirits, or saints, yet need to express themselves outside the constraints of the Otherworld.

Most people stay obedient to their Otherworld masters, but a few hardy souls strike out on their own, taking paths not sanctioned and not explored.

not give in to hero concept at the expense of the story. If you allow one hero to start with higher than normal ratings, chances are that the other players will want to as well.

Instead, try to give an explanation that keeps the rating at the basic level without invalidating the player's concept. A hero who is supposed to be immensely strong might have been so in the past, but endured some failure that reduced his strength to merely heroic levels. His efforts to restore his strength to its previous level can then help to drive the story (and campaign) forward. Similarly, an item called The All-Powerful Eye of God might have the *potential* to become all-powerful, but it should start the game at a standard rating, perhaps reflecting that the hero is not fully attuned to it yet or does not know how to properly call on its powers.

You can use the **advanced experience** and **multiple occupation** methods given below to develop experienced heroes. For minor improvements, however, just assign extra points or give a hero a particular skill or relationship. If you and the player agree that it would be interesting to have a hero begin with an overwhelming love or hatred, for example, just have him start with a higher rating. Just be sure that the hero and his passion do not become pivotal to the story at the expense of the other heroes.

Advanced Experience

Players may want to start with a character in a more powerful position, but it is up to you to allow it. You might want someone to be a chieftain, or you may feel that the group would function better with a natural leader. (See "Player Heroes as Group Leaders" on page 180 for additional advice on this topic.)

You can assign bonuses to keywords for advanced experience. A good rule of thumb is +1 to a single keyword or related group of abilities for each year of advanced experience. Work with the player to figure out what will best fit the story and group of players.

△ Hengal is an Experienced Hero

When they first began playing *HeroQuest*, Kathy decided that Hengal was an experienced and mature hero, so she allowed him superior starting abilities. She decided that his hero had spent many years wandering the world, and assigned him an extra +2 to several of his skills to reflect those years of travel.

"I'm middle-aged," protests Rick. "Only +2?"

"Yes," she insists. "But I see your point. I'll tell you what, you can add a total of up to six points to your keywords."

"The keywords? The whole thing?"

"Yes. You were fighting, you were learning magic. You spent six years doing those keyword things and so I say you got the generalized experience. The rest of the time you were a traveler."

Rick adds 3 to his Foot Soldier occupation keyword. It is now 20, and all his abilities are 20 plus any points he distributes. The other 3 points go to his other keywords (including common magic), and he decides to give each +1.

Multiple Occupations

A person's occupation depends on how and where he was raised, and is usually decided by the time he starts acting socially as an adult. After that, the hero might change occupations through apprenticeship, forced relocation, or other causes. Because of this, a hero may have had multiple occupations over the years. To represent this, you can allow the hero an additional occupa-



Elves, or Aldryami, are not flesh and blood but mobile, sentient plants. They rarely venture outside of their forests, which other plants help them defend. Here, a timid elf watches intruders from behind a tree, his Elfsense already telling the dryads and Protectors of the danger.

tion keyword at 9, 13, or 17. After play begins, keywords cannot be gained or improved, so heroes who want to change careers do so by adding new abilities instead.

Although heroes can have as many abilities as they want, you may need to remind them that improving a lot of abilities is not useful for advancement. Extra occupations might give many abilities, but the player will need to focus on four or five of them if the hero is to reach a heroic level.

Hero Points

Hero points are the currency of the game, because they allow the players to change their characters permanently or to "cheat fate" at an opportune moment. And you, as narrator, control hero points. Start by giving players hero points as suggested in the Hero Points chapter. However, if the heroes consistently crush their opponents because they have a large stock of hero points, you are probably awarding too many. If the players can only afford to raise one or two abilities, or they are reluctant to use them on bumps, you may be awarding too few. It is easier to start out giving too few hero points than too many, because players will appreciate getting an increase, but will likely be frustrated if they receive less than they are used to.

You might need to take into account how often you play *HeroQuest*. If your group meets daily, the heroes may advance too quickly if you give hero points every day. On the other hand, if you play irregularly and there are long gaps of time in Glorantha between adventures, you may have to give out more hero points at the end of each session to ensure that your players receive enough.

Free Abilities

You may assign gifts to a hero because of what happens in the story. You can give them a magical power or mundane ability at no cost in hero points; or a flaw, perhaps a fear or hatred. Warn the players! When you dispense these abilities consistently and plausibly it should help to make the hero's character sheet reflect what they are becoming.

Improving Broadly Defined Abilities

Broadly defined abilities allow a hero to achieve many possible tasks, but it is unlikely that he will use all or even many of them in a single session. As such, a player will rarely be able to pay the "related to play" hero point cost for improvements. Just using *Tough* to perform a final action, for example, is not a broad enough use of the ability for the hero to justify improving his overall toughness. Unless the hero engaged in a contest that specifically focused on toughness (such as being tortured), completed a session that tested his endurance over time (such as a forced march in midwinter), or has *Resist Pain* as a specialty of his *Tough* ability, he must pay double hero points for any improvement to this broadly defined ability.

Religious Advancement

Joining or advancing in a religion often requires that a hero have minimum qualifications or meet certain requirements. Rather than specifying actual ability ratings in such cases, *HeroQuest* usually suggests an entry test. Many such contests are detailed in the specialized magic chapters. This is not to say that magical and mundane organizations do not have minimal requirements. But, in the game as in real life, exceptions are always made, and a candidate who is weak in one area may have other strengths that allow him to succeed anyway.

Whether or not you require the hero to engage in an actual contest is up to you. Most heroes will attempt these tests only a few times in their careers, but in some games it just will not be something you or the heroes want to spend much time on. If that is the case, there is nothing wrong with telling the player, "You pass your test with flying colors. Pay your hero points and see the steward for your new ceremonial hat and robes."

Sagas

Some roleplaying campaigns follow the heroes day to day and week to week. Another kind of story—from the Norse and Icelandic sagas to the *Star Wars* movies—tells a multi-generational story of long lives and friendships; of families, clans, or kingdoms. You can run your *HeroQuest* campaign in this way, playing out one adventure each season or year and telling what happens between in broad strokes.

In this case, so that the heroes advance in pace with the saga, you should give more advancements, perhaps like this:

- At the end of each year, each hero improves a single keyword by +1.
- Give each hero 3 additional hero points to spend on hero improvements (only) as they wish.

Decades pass between the first soundings of the Hero Wars and what might be their end, and this is one way to experience them in their entirety. You might start your campaign long before the Hero Wars start, so that the players truly get to know their heroes and community.



On the other hand, the test may be important to the story. The hero has spent years getting ready for the day when he becomes an adept—all that time polishing alembics and mixing powders; helping his master summon creatures from the pits of Hell; studying in the library when he should have been sleeping. The player may have been figuring out arguments to convince you to give him modifiers based on the hero's social relationships, status, and the like. He may have been looking forward to the moment of truth, when he sees if he can actually pass the test, or if he is doomed to another year of apprenticeship. And now you rob him of his moment of glory by saying, "OK, you've met the requirements, pay your three hero points and see the steward."? What a letdown!

Narrating the Heroes

HeroQuest requires cooperative creation. Let the player help determine what is important or fun. When players insist on their actions, it is a sign that they are establishing their hero's character. Let them, when you can.

△ Uncle Farhenri is Here

Kathy: A visitor is here, a long-gone favorite uncle, to see Hengal. His name is Farhenri.

He gets Hengal alone and says, "How long has it been since you were home? Did you get the letters we sent? Our first messenger searched for you all through Furthest, but couldn't find you, so the family insisted that I come. We're so glad you are safe, and powerful, and here." Rick, how does Hengal feel about this old guy showing up like this?

Rick: Nothing. Who is this guy?

Kathy: He's your father's brother, an old guy who you liked when you were a kid. He says "the league needs your help." How do you feel about the league? What's your relationship to them? They're your family, you ought to want to help them.

Rick: It's 17, but what have they done for me? What about when we faced Greim, or the Feathered Tree, or Fancy-pants? Where were they then? I don't think we should have to help them just because they're kin.

Kathy: He says, "Certainly it has been a long time, and we have done little to help you over such a distance. We understand your reluctance, but we thought you might do this for the family that raised you. Is that not enough?"

"You know we would take you in if you came back. You went away, but surely we are still one family. We need your help. We are being ruined by this rival. Will you refuse this one request that we have of you, good relative? We will give you a good reward, you know, even for doing this family business. Is that not enough? If that is not enough, then, we can only say one more thing. OK, then, here is the truth. I wanted to give you good reasons for doing the job first. I wanted to see where your virtues were. Let me tell you this: Danbrilla, the sorceress, is our ruin. We need your help to destroy her."

Rick: "Danbrilla, huh? OK, I'll go help you."

Kathy: He is happy. You have given him your agreement, your word, to help him out. Understand? OK, so what will you say to your companions here?

Rick: Um, you'll all agree, right?

“Yes, but...”

Players will come up with all sorts of wacky plans, schemes, and ideas. Your main job as narrator is to make sure that *everyone* is having a good time. To that end, you should cultivate a “Yes, but...” attitude when the players ask for something outrageous. Unless it will totally derail the game, try never to give a flat “No” to a request. “Yes, but...” allows you to give the player what he wants, as long as he understands that there is a downside to it.

Player: Can I have Flaming Hair?

Narrator: Yes, but you’ll get a negative reaction from just about everyone you meet. You’ll set stuff on fire. Elves will hate you.

Player: Can I jump across the Pit and attack the monster with my sword?

Narrator: Yes, but if you fail your *Leap* it’s a long way down...

Player: I’ll use my final action to roll onto the bomb the dwarf threw into the room.

Narrator: How heroic! You’ll save the lives of your companions, yes, but you *will* die in the attempt.

Always give the player the consequences of the “but” before he goes ahead with the action—he might not have realized the circumstances, or perhaps he had a different picture of what was going on than you did. If he persists even after the “but,” then be sure to follow through with the consequences.

“How about...”

When you offer alternatives to players, do it in a way that will enliven the game:

“How about if you can make your hair flame on or off, perhaps as a talent?”

You can use the occasion to state what you think the hero needs to do, perhaps as one of several options:

“OK, your hero has a choice: he can do nothing, go back, jump headlong into the Pit of Hell, or ask Mr. Puma’s ancestor what she did when she was here.”

Sometimes, however, you should just state the obvious:

“This is a good time to run. It looks like you can all get away before the bomb goes off.”

Narrating Supernatural Aid

As narrator, you may be intimidated by the ability of heroes to ask for aid “in a way that it acted in its myths.” Since no complete list of these myths or powers exists, how can you know what is or is not allowed here?

There is a simple way to deal with this. If the benefit the player wants sounds too weird (or advantageous), ask where the entity got that power—doing what in myth? If the story sounds wrong, then do not allow it and tell them that that effect is not within the entity’s power or sphere of influence. After all, your job is to maintain consistency, even when the player is discovering his own Gloranthan deity, spirit, or saint. This is a time when “Yes, but...” may need to give way to “No, but...” Immediately after rejecting the idea, however, offer something else, preferably including some of the player’s hints. Suggest another effect more suitable to the entity, or tell him about a different entity who might be appropriate.

Player Heroes as Group Leaders

If you allow one of your players’ heroes to head a community with many resources, you should be aware of the difficulties this

can bring. Roleplaying campaigns generally work best when the heroes have mutual goals and roughly equal ability to affect the story. Be cautious when one player’s character concept threatens to reduce the other heroes to supporters. Although it is possible to run an interesting campaign in which one hero is a leader and the others are members of his entourage, it is difficult. If you depend on a single hero to drive the plot of your campaign, it can stop dead when the player fails to show up. Of course, next time he should not be surprised to find that his hero has fallen out of the limelight, or that you made decisions for the hero so that the game could go on without him.

△ What’s in It for Us?

Steve: What is in it for us? It’s all well and good for you to go help Uncle Oldguy, but what about us?

John: I’ll go. I’ll go kill something. I don’t want anything.

Frederick: Yeah, I am sure you will feel that way sleeping in the rain and starving some day back there in Dara Happa.

John: I’ll just kill someone.

Steve: This might be a good chance to get rid of both of you.

Bill: Galan doesn’t care.

Frederick: I want a letter of protection and free passage.

Steve: At least! How about some room and board, plus pay?

Rick: What is this mercenary stuff all about here?

Steve: Simple, buddy. You may be doing this for the good of your league, but we’re just strangers there. You do it for Uncle Oldguy. But us, if we go, we gotta treat this like a business.

Rick: That’s cold! After all we have been through?

Steve: Yep. Look, just tell me this: does Hengal guarantee us safe passage, food and board and protection in his home, and swear on his immortal soul that it will be done?

Rick: Hmmm, Kathy, is that something that Hengal can do? Can I swear that?

Kathy: You can swear it, but it’s not something you alone can guarantee. Your league might.

Rick: They can guarantee that for us? Can I swear that in the name of my league?

Kathy: Well, you can swear it. But will they support you? Look at your relationship. You can tell these guys whatever you want, but you will eventually have to go and ask your league to cover your vow.

Rick: Yeah, but from what I know, will they be likely to do that?

Kathy: Some yes, some no, but most of them will be waiting to see if you can do what they need you to do.

Rick: Hmm. Well here it is then. “My good brothers and sisters in blood and magic, I will swear, to the best of my ability, to make you, my band, as brothers of adventure, welcome there among my blood kinsmen.”

Kathy: So you are going?

Rick: Yes, but one more thing here. I need to be named as the leader of this band. My league will be able to accept everyone if they are my servants or followers, but not as equals.

Frederick: I don’t want to be your underling. None of us do!

Kathy: How about if one of you is named leader, then, and that person agrees to work for him?

Rick: It’s necessary, the league won’t do it any other way. But you don’t have to be underlings. We can form a new hero band, maybe, and I’ll just be the leader of the band, the one the new guardian talks to. My league will accept that.

Death

Death is a part of the world, and heroes risk it every time an insult is hurled, a weapon drawn, or magic flies. Death is a narrator character whose appearance causes great impact. It should not be completely absent, but neither should it be ubiquitous. Threat of death must be present to lend excitement and meaning. To remove it completely trivializes the game and gives players a feeling of invulnerability that robs the game of tension. If they know they cannot be defeated then no drama exists.

Death never occurs simply because of a roll of the dice. It must always be a conscious decision on the part of the narrator or player. Players may wish to end the life of a villain or his henchmen, and may state “I kill him.” How you handle this statement depends on your campaign, the circumstances of the story, and the importance of the villain in question.

At the low end of the scale of character importance, you might just say, “Okay, he’s dead.” This falls under the “No Self-respecting Hero” rule. Low-level guards and followers are easily disposed of in this manner. An especially bloody campaign might have even high-ranking villains dispatched by this method.

Midway up the scale of importance, you might want the player to roll a parting shot to actually inflict the fatal wound. This gives the villain a chance to duck away from the blow, possibly even turn the tables on the hero. Of course, the villain will resist the blow with his best ability, and not necessarily a combat ability. *Fast Talk* (“If you kill me you’ll never know my secret.”), *Wealth* (“My ransom is 200 cattle.”), *Relationships* (“I am your father.”), even *Infectious Laughter* might stay the blow, at least long enough for the villain to escape.

At the top end of the scale, you might make the player use a hero point to “cement” the villain’s death. Sure, the villain plunges over the waterfall to certain death; but if the hero does not actually see the body, can he ever *really* be sure that he died? As narrator, you ultimately control if the villain stays dead or will return later, perhaps due to major healing magic or resurrection. Even if the villain does die, events may follow that the heroes are unprepared for, such as an angry son or vengeful mob of supporters, political repercussions, or feelings of remorse.

The Death of a Hero

The death of a hero is always difficult. Players have invested time, creativity, and concern in their heroes. The rules themselves will never kill an important character—for example, a contest leaves a hero dying at worst. Nor should death be an accident: the heroes’ ship should not sink in the middle of the ocean (sending them to a watery grave) without a reason. Instead, death should result from plot elements and failed opportunities. Death might come if a hero does something stupid, such as leaping off a thousand-foot cliff or into the ocean while in full armor. Both actions deserve a quick death unless the hero has taken some clever precautions; even then, although plot twists or bizarre circumstances can alter fate, you should not twist reality to suit the whim of foolish or manipulative players. If a hero does something stupid, regardless of your warnings, let him die.

Death must come, also, in heroic circumstances. Deliberate self-sacrifice for the greater good provides one of the most moving and meaningful moments in roleplaying. A single hero staying behind while his companions escape should not be trivialized. It might be that there will be some eleventh-hour escape, but will this improve the game, or will it cheapen the player’s heroic actions?

Group play is shaped by the participants, and losing an established hero creates problems unless the player himself is

leaving the group permanently. While death must be an ever-present threat, you should never treat the death of a hero like an ordinary event.

Replacing Heroes

When a hero dies or otherwise leaves, the player will of course want to continue to participate in the game. The easiest way to do this is to allow him to play a new yet equally competent character. Players and narrators may find such a new hero disconcerting, and may have a hard time working him into the game. This may be easier if you introduce the new hero during an adventure, as part of the story. Think of it as adding a new character to a TV show after a series regular leaves. The new character may be a new arrival, or he may be promoted from a sea of background characters. Although this convention of series fiction may seem phony if you are concerned about its “real-world” logic, it is used again and again because it works emotionally. People want to relate to a small number of characters, and adventure narratives demand that the central heroes solve most problems.

There are many ways to justify the new hero to other players. A follower might reveal that he was more capable than the heroes had thought, perhaps a prince in hiding or a magician testing the heroes to see if they were worthy of his aid. There may be forces that will not let their purpose fail—if one servant falls, they send a new one. A relative of the hero, perhaps a brother or cousin, may show up to avenge his death or take advantage of his glory.

It’s Their Glorantha, Too

As narrator, you have the task of presenting the world as a place of adventure. However, the players will have more fun (and your job will be easier) if you let them help with presenting and even creating the world. Let the players provide story elements, create minor bits of scenery or bystanders, reinterpret backstory to suit the current plot, and so on. If you do not know the details of a culture or what kinds of animals live in an area, do not contradict a player who suggests something just to “stay in control.” After all, it’s their Glorantha, too.

△ A New Band

Christine: Another band? Didn’t we lose out on that already?

Rick: We can do better now. We don’t have to be Tri Lambs.

Frederick: Yeah, we don’t want to be tri lames!

Rick: Let’s try something else. We are going into dangerous territory. This is Danbrilla. Remember that fire weasel?

Frederick: And with this spirit cat to help us, we can surely do better than that triceratops we made up.

Kathy: Spirit cat?

Frederick: Yeah, one of the local cats comes to us in the night. It has a spirit, all the cats around here do, and it says it will help us if we treat it properly and help it find god and essence mice to catch.

Kathy: How do you know the local cats have spirits? This is a god-dominated land, not animist territory.

Frederick: Is there some reason they can’t?

Kathy: No, I guess not. OK, do what you want, it’s going to be your guardian.

They make a new hero band. Less clowning around this time.

“I’ll just be in temporarily, though,” says Hazeel.

It costs 2 hero points to join this band, because the players simply abandoned their last one.

Contests

HeroQuest does not have hard and fast rules for how long a contest takes to play out. You can emphasize an activity by making it an extended contest, or dispense with it quickly using a simple contest. One of your tasks is to use common sense and dramatic logic to determine how long it should take to complete a given task. Use the different contest types to pace the story's action. If you want to represent months of negotiations among squabbling tribal leaders with one simple contest, you can. But if you want to play out encounters with each minor potentate as detailed extended contests, you can do that too.

You should not spend an entire session in a series of extended contests; one or two at climactic points is enough. Knowing when to use an automatic success, simple, or extended contest is an important part of being a narrator.

Give Everyone Something to Do

Nothing is more frustrating than having one player dominate every scene. Try to prepare encounters and situations that involve all the player heroes, or which give each of them a chance to shine. Even when there is a contest that one hero dominates, try to make sure everyone has something to do, whether it is taking on the villain's henchmen or just adding augments to the foremost hero. If you make some players sit around, they will soon go investigate your refrigerator or book pile instead of playing the game, and that is not why they (or you) are there.

Allow Repeat Attempts

Normally, a single contest covers all of a hero's attempts to overcome an obstacle. Time's passage allows for new attempts, of course, and as narrator you control the passage of time. For example, failing to swim across a river deserves another try awhile later. The rule of "no repeat attempts" exists to give you the tool to shape opportunity. If another attempt contributes to the excitement, suspense, and fun, allow it. If it is just someone rolling again and again to get across the damn river when everyone else is already across, then just make it so! (Though perhaps with an appropriately embarrassing description.) Of course, you should not require a roll for unimportant or meaningless tasks in the first place.

Abilities

Improvisational Modifiers

You will often have to decide how large a penalty a hero will receive for improvising an ability in a contest. By deciding how close the use of the ability is to the action, you can judge whether to apply no modifier, a slight modifier, a significant modifier, or a serious modifier.

No Modifier

Do not apply a modifier when the hero is using the ability exactly as it is described, unless the ability has a broad description (often just a single word, such as *Fighting*, *Healing*, or *Smart*). Thus, *Sword Fighting*, *Heal Injury*, and *Memorize* should not take a modifier when used as their names would imply.

Unless broadly defined, most magical abilities cannot be improvised from. *Heal Dying* is very specific, and you might therefore rule that it can only be used to heal (or augment an ability used to heal) a patient who is *dying*. If the patient only suffers from a hurt, the magic would not help at all.

Slight Modifier, about -5

The -5 slight modifier is the default in *HeroQuest*. When an ability's use is *close* to its description, a modifier of around -5 is usually appropriate. Thus, a *Sword Fighting* hero might take only a -5 penalty when using any other stabbing and slashing weapon, such as an axe or dagger, but might take -7 if fighting with a stick as if it were a sword.

A slight modifier is the minimum applied to a broadly defined ability. If a hero has *Hunting*, he takes a -5 to his rating for almost any use of the ability. Many magical abilities are broadly defined, and so any use must be improvised. Heroes who have concentrated their magic take at least a slight improvisational modifier: *Heal Wounds* takes a -5 modifier when used to heal a hurt, and might take a greater penalty to heal a patient who is impaired, injured, or dying.

Significant Modifier, about -10

A significant modifier applies to any use of an ability for something not directly related to its description. A hero engaged in an endurance contest (perhaps struggling across the desert without water) might be able to use his *Sword Fighting* ability at -10, arguing that his training would build up his endurance.

Many magical abilities are broadly defined, and heroes who have not concentrated their magic use a significant modifier when using them. Other magical abilities cannot usually be improvised from, but you might allow certain uses. For example, *Heal Injury* can only be used to heal a patient suffering from an injury. If the patient only suffers from a hurt, you *might* allow the hero to use this feat with a -10 modifier, since a hurt is a lesser consequence of a contest than an injury. The hero would not be able to use *Heal Injury* to help a patient who is dying.

Serious Modifier, about -20

The largest improvisational modifier you should normally allow is -20. This applies when an ability is used for something very different from its description, but still has some connection to the task. Thus, using *Ride Horse* to try to surf and "ride the waves" warrants a very large modifier. If you allow it at all.

Most magic takes a serious modifier when it deals with the wrong Otherworld. Thus, a Command Fire Elemental *spell* is intended to command elementals originating in the Essence Planes. A magician *can* use it on a fire daimon or fire spirit, but he takes the -20 modifier because, although those entities are technically elementals (see page 211), their nature is alien to that of the adept's magic.

Larger Modifiers

If you feel that a hero should receive an improvisational modifier of more than -20 (such as applying a -30 to *Ride Horse* to surf), the ability is not appropriate to the task. We *recommend* that you have him use a different ability.

Languages

Language is one of the factors that keep different homelands isolated. Most cultures speak their own languages and dialects. The closest thing to a universal tongue is Tradetalk, a rudimentary pidgin that allows basic negotiation and commerce, but provides no vocabulary for complex conversation. Despite this reality, if foreign characters must win a contest before they can speak to the heroes it will be almost impossible to bring them to life. And a group of heroes without respectable ratings in a common language might as well just go home!



Some people fear death as an ending, others welcome it as a new beginning. As the Hero Wars near, though, one thing is sure: death will be a familiar companion to many whose safe and predictable lives are about to be upset forever.

You can solve this problem by following literary convention and letting characters from different cultures converse in Tradetalk or some barely known language with eloquence and nuance. Any character with a rating in a language automatically succeeds in understanding and speaking it in simple conversation, as any self-respecting hero would. Only especially challenging or sophisticated uses of language require contests. Even if heroes lack languages on their character sheet, assume they know enough to speak to important characters they meet, perhaps by allowing them all to have *Speak Tradetalk 6* without spending any hero points.

Speaking, reading, and writing a language are separate abilities. Most Gloranthans are illiterate.

Mass Effort

Mass effort is any contest that involves large numbers of individuals to work together, such as a battle between armies, a race between rowing teams, or governing a town. In such conflicts, do not run an extended contest where each side has thousands of AP. Instead, individuals are subsumed within the whole military unit, group of rowers, or political organization.

Most people have mass effort skills as part of their occupation—soldiers fight in formation, sailors sail a ship, etc. A *[Mass Effort]* rating represents a hero's ability to follow leaders, take pride in his group, and work as a member of a team. If he has no relevant mass effort ability, he may use any appropriate keyword or ability with an improvisational modifier. Thus, trained soldiers have a *[Unit Style Mass Combat]* ability, while other heroes would have to use their highest fighting ability with perhaps a -10 modifier.

In a contest, average the *[Mass Effort]* abilities of the members, then add any augmentation from leadership abilities, magical aid from a guardian, and the like. Circumstances can also affect the rating; see "Sample Mass Combat Modifiers" below as an example. Next, refer to the Community Support table in the Relationships chapter, page 88. The size of the support bonus added to the group rating depends not only on the number of members, but also on their level of commitment and how effectively they work together. For an organized and motivated group, the **total support bonus** for their membership is used. However, groups suffering from clashes of egos, lack of organization, or the like might provide only $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{10}$ of this bonus, or even no bonus at all. This is when a leader is valuable.

Mass effort needs a leader, for without proper leadership some of the participants often do more harm than good. The leader must use an appropriate leadership ability (*Chief of Village*, *Organization*, etc.) or a related *[Mass Effort]* ability. He can augment the group rating with this ability, but more importantly, he can use it to motivate and organize the group so that it gains a better bonus from the Community Support table. If the leader is a hero, you may or may not require that he engage in a separate contest to motivate and organize the group.

The *[Mass Effort]* rating is matched against a resistance (often an opposing group's *[Mass Effort]* rating).

Mass effort is such that most heroes cannot affect the outcome directly. Heroes who want to determine individual outcomes, however, can engage in a separate contest. To see how they fare, have them use an appropriate ability (such as *Survive Battle* or *[Mass Effort]*), modified by any penalty from their group's defeat.

Sample Mass Combat Modifiers

- Outnumber enemy 2 to 1: +5
- Favorable weather: +5
- Foes disorganized or retreating: +5
- Favorable terrain: +5 to +10
- Attacking from surprise: +10 to +20
- Outnumber enemy 5 to 1: +20
- In home territory: +20

△ Winter is approaching, so the village turns out to bring in the harvest before the rains destroy it. Almost everyone, even the chief, helps out in the harvest. Seventy-five of the workers are farmers with *Bring in Harvest 17*. Kathy decides that the fifty non-farmers use *Bring in Harvest 13* except for the five Esra worshippers, who instead use their *Barley affinity 14*. This is just enough to push the average up to 16.

The village is lucky to have a devotee of Barntar to act as the harvest chief. There are 125 people helping out in the fields for +13, yielding a *Bring in Harvest* rating of 9 \blacksquare . The devotee's *Farming 10 \blacksquare* and the village guardian's *Work Tirelessly 6 \blacksquare* each give a +3 augmentation, which raises the total to 15 \blacksquare .

Winters are harsh, and can spring up suddenly. Kathy determines that this year the winter rains "attack" with a 12 \blacksquare ability. A contest between the clan's *Bring in Harvest* and the violence of the storms will determine how well fed the clan will be this winter.

Missile Combat

Sometimes a contest consists of people throwing or shooting things at each other, such as arrows, javelins, rocks, and spears. Opponents can defend with a missile or magical combat ability, *Dodge*, *Hide*, or something similar. Armor, cover, and other special circumstances will all modify this resistance.

All missile weapons have a maximum range, and this can be important to the story. Missile weapons can go up to about double this range, but this cuts the missile user's ability rating in half. Conditions such as visibility, wind, precipitation, temperature, target size, and desperation can also change the effective range.

How Far Can I Shoot?

- Hand-hurled axe, dagger, rock, or spear: 10 yards
- Hand-hurled javelin: 20 yards
- Javelin with atlatl: 30 yards
- Bow and arrow, crossbow, or sling: 50 yards
- Composite bow or heavy crossbow: 75 yards

It may make no sense to the player (or you) that an archer behind cover who runs out of AP is put out of an extended contest, when his target was never able to reach him with any sort of attack. Remember that "defeated" does *not* automatically mean "wounded," even in combat. It simply means the archer is unable to continue for some reason. Maybe he ran out of arrows or broke his bowstring, or rain and wind prevent him from seeing or hitting his target. Perhaps he has become scared or frustrated or given up in despair. His target may have reached cover or passed out of range. Consider both what the archer *and* the target intend to do—this is what the contest is about.

Sample Missile Combat Modifiers

- Target firing through an arrow slit: -40
- Dense fog obscures vision: -30
- Target hiding behind an overturned table: -20
- Target constantly changing shape: -20
- Sun is in shooter's eyes: -20
- Cold enough to numb fingers: -10
- Strong wind from the side: -10
- Target is in trees or brush: -10
- Target is running around: -5 to -10
- Strong wind from the front: -5
- Dust/mist/snow/shadows interfere with vision: -5
- Strong wind from the back: +5
- Target cannot see shooter: +10
- Attacking from surprise: +10 to +20

△ Ambushed!

Hazeel leads a few raiders and ambushes a small caravan. Driving off the guards and caravan master, Hazeel leads his booty back towards the camp.

Atraxos the merchant races through the woods over a shortcut and gets into a good hiding place. He hears, then sees Hazeel, weighed down with loot. He looses an arrow at him. Atraxos has *Bow and Arrow* at 17 \blacksquare . It is a long-range shot (-5) in the woods (-10), so his target number is 2 \blacksquare .

Kathy: You are leading a mule, and carrying a heavy bag of loot. Make a detection roll of some kind against a resistance of 18.

Steve: I've got Scan for Danger at 1 \blacksquare ... but I rolled a 19. A failure, bumped to a success.

Kathy: Not enough, though. Suddenly, an arrow comes streaking out of the woods over there. [*Atraxos would normally augment with his Ambush ability for +2, but Kathy does not apply this because of Steve's success.*]

Steve: My Skirmisher keyword should have some sort of *Dodge* ability, I use that.

Kathy: Nope, not only are you heavily loaded down, but you didn't detect the ambush. Basically, it's a free shot for the archer.

Steve: Hey, but I'm wearing armor! I should at least get something for that. And what about this big bag of loot? Doesn't it protect me at all?

Kathy: OK, you can add your armor to the base resistance of 6, that's what? +3? And I'll even throw in another +2 for your bag of loot, for a total resistance of 11. I rolled a failure for the *Bow and Arrow*, bumped to success, with an 18.

Steve: I rolled a 15, too, a failure. That shouldn't be too bad.

Kathy: It's enough for a minor defeat—you have an arrow sticking out of your arm, and will be at -10% to your physical abilities until it is healed. Fortunately for you, there are no more shots. Looks like the ambusher was content to pink you.

Steve: Ow!

Wealth

Players can use their heroes' *Wealth* to improve political influence, create sumptuous rituals, or for anything else that the players and narrator can agree on. The story is what is important. Remember, if a hero wants something, he will normally go to his family, clan, patron, or the like and ask for it. If they feel he is worthy, they will give or lend it to him. Of course, this may require a contest using the appropriate relationship.

Heroes generally have free access to the goods and services usual to their profession. A warrior can get a new sword, a merchant will have some trade goods, and a petty nobleman can throw a decent party in his villa. You should only introduce resistance if circumstances are unusual or the story hinges on acquiring these goods: a warrior needs to hire a company of mercenaries, a merchant wants to build a warehouse, or a petty nobleman must entertain his liege lord (and his entire household) for a long stay. In these cases, the narrator can use the hero's *Wealth* rating as an indicator of how difficult it will be for the hero to cover these expenditures.

Do not worry about the underlying economic realities: economics is rarely the focus of the story in *HeroQuest*. Instead, the story should dictate what resources heroes have access to. Literary heroes rarely count their pennies (although poverty

may certainly be the background to a treasure-hunting story and wealth to one of courtly intrigue). Wealth gained in one story is often squandered by the next; the poverty that drives the hero to desperation is replaced by gainful employment.

Treasure

People tell hundreds of stories about treasure, and *HeroQuest* is no exception. Treasure can exist as individual items (such as special animals, magical artifacts, and talking rocks) or as great hoards of coins and gems. Finding great treasure is an extraordinary occurrence, but is not necessarily part of every game session!

In *HeroQuest*, treasure is a story element. It does not automatically increase a hero's *Wealth* rating, even temporarily. Furthermore, remember that even if it could, *Wealth* itself cannot be used to buy things that amount to hero improvements—that is what hero points are for. You must decide how to deal with a player's request to buy something with treasure. If the request fits the story and does not gain his hero an advantage over other players (or opponents), allow it. If it would unbalance the game, do not allow the player to get the item using treasure alone. If a player wants to have his hero buy training in skills, learn new common magic, or even increase his *Wealth* rating, his hero's coins do not save the player from having to pay for those improvements with hero points. Instead, the treasure becomes a story element that explains *why* the hero has the sudden opportunity to gain or improve abilities. Since the improvements are "bought" with treasure gained during an adventure, only extraordinary improvements should require the doubled cost of out-of-game improvements.

Choosing Resistance

You must decide how much resistance heroes face when undertaking challenges. Fiction authors base the difficulty of obstacles faced by their heroes on the requirements of the *story*. If the consequences of victory or defeat do not matter in the story, an otherwise difficult task is easily accomplished. If, on the other hand, an obstacle occurs in a pivotal or climactic scene, it will be the most challenging—and therefore the most suspenseful and entertaining—part of the story. No matter how good a mountain climber a hero is, he usually has an easy time climbing the first mountain in the story, and finds himself faced with the climbing challenge of his life at the climax.

After deciding the structural importance of a hero's action, determine the factors that make it difficult or easy. Sample resistance values are provided in the Game Aids appendix (see page 274) to help you rate the difficulty of specific actions. Keep in mind, however, that these values are only guidelines as to what is "normal." Your stories can always be exceptional, but it is a good idea to let the heroes first understand what normal is so that they can then appreciate the extraordinary when it happens. Vary the resistance each time a task is attempted so that the players can never be sure just how difficult it will be. Vary the numbers even if several heroes are attempting a task at the same time: if heroes are swimming the same river, have them face different resistances, even let them trade spots if they want so that the less skilled heroes face lower resistances. And remember that the resistances—especially for heroic or magical beings—are there for a reason. Climbing Mount Kero Fin is not for amateurs or the faint of heart!

When setting resistances, keep two statistical features of

the contest mechanics in mind. First, no matter how much augmenting a hero or his opponent does, there is rarely more than 1 chance in 20 of a complete victory. Second, even if one contestant is greatly superior, the main factor that decides whether a victory is minor or major is the resistance. In other words, although chance plays a prominent role, you can adjust the likely final results by setting a resistance higher or lower.

While higher victory levels give better results, they should never be a *requirement* for the heroes' success. A hero trying to remember a fact with his *Know Chaos* ability rolls against a resistance based on the

obscurity of the information. *Any* level of victory should allow him to remember the fact; a complete victory might be distinguished by the hero making an intuitive leap to a new understanding, effectively realizing something he never actually learned. Thus, by setting the victory level you control whether or not a hero succeeds. If you want to make a task harder, do not put the basic result at a high victory level; increase the resistance instead.

Treasure
is a story element in *HeroQuest*.

△ Jane Exploits Herself

Christine: I recall I left a good part of myself back there, didn't I? How about if I try to contact that lost part of myself? We can get as close as we can, and I'll try to reintegrate myself into that lost part. If we make us a hero band, all for one and one for all, then maybe we can all go into that magical space at once. Possible?

Kathy: Jane will regret it. She should be afraid. There will be consequences.

Christine: But it will work? I'm doing it.

Kathy: OK, so you hear the pipes and drums again, but this nightmare spirit comes out that makes you remember the entirety of the intrusion into your soul. So you are sort of suspended there in this gray mist, just hanging and you can't see where you had been before. Christine, roll now.

"My *Loathe Danbrilla* ability?" asks Christine. "Done. What's the resistance?" Kathy glances at the die.

"That's enough," she says. "So you fall down, paralyzed."

"Paralyzed? Hey, I made my roll," complains Christine.

"Good thing too, or you'd be dead," says Kathy. "You are fading back into reality now, and you can see around you. The rest of you have materialized behind Jane, and you are in this little crowd. Here, here's the diagram. This is you, here's Jane, here's Danbrilla, and here's a circle of others. And the entity is here, in the middle."

"What's the crowd we're in?"

"Remember the barking thing that nearly killed your guy, Galan? That's right, um, here. And you all remember the fire weasel, right? Well, it is hovering right here."

"It's her helpers, am I right?"

"Maybe," says Kathy. "I can only tell you what you see."

"Do they see us?"

"Not yet."

"And what's in the center of the circle?"

"It looks like this huge head hovering there, but instead of eyes it has faces. Here, look at this picture. And as you watch it, one of the faces in one of the eye sockets turns to look right where you are."

Automatic Abilities

Some abilities are innate and automatic, and are not rated. For example, a bird no more needs a *Fly* skill than a human hero needs *Walk!* Abilities such as *Aerobatics* and *Dodge Attacks* reflect excellence at maneuvering, while those like *Fly Fast* and *Run Fast* define speed.

Senses work in the same way. Most creatures have standard senses. A human's vision gives him information about his surroundings. A human hero without *See Things* is not blind; sight is a natural and automatic ability. The hero would need a special ability if he engaged in a contest, however, such as *Keen Vision* or *See Hidden Things*. If the hero does not have a relevant ability to *resist* in a contest and the default rating of 6 does not seem appropriate, the narrator can always allow the hero to use the passive resistance of 14 instead. She should not allow a hero to use this rating as an *active* ability in a contest, however.

Extended Contests

Do Not "Nest"

Never "nest" one extended contest inside another. If an extended contest is in progress and a hero wants to perform an action that you would normally feel requires an extended contest, make it an unrelated action anyway, or disallow it completely during the current contest. If necessary, you can run two extended contests simultaneously, but never hold up one extended contest to run another.

Picking Advantage Point Bids

As narrator, you have a responsibility to help the players have fun. In a choice of entertainment value or a rigorous evaluation of the opponent's tactics, always favor entertainment. An extended contest may be dragging on forever, with cautious bids passed endlessly back and forth. You can throw caution to the wind and stake all your remaining advantage points on a last exchange. The contest system gives you control over the amount of time spent on contests. Take advantage of this control when necessary.

Dealing with Hordes

You may find yourself in the situation of having dozens of small creatures (rats, piranhas, trollkin, birds, whatever) attacking the heroes. If the heroes are potent enough, even "normal" humans can be treated as a horde—a hero with 10W4 won't be too bothered by peasants with weapon skills that are only 13.

There are several ways to deal with this situation. There are times when you will simply want to run a normal extended contest and have the opponents use the regular "Multiple Opponents" modifiers in the Core Rules chapter, page 79. (This option works well for monsters that can make multiple attacks each round.) If you prefer to run a simple contest, or perhaps if you want to reduce the number of die rolls in an extended contest, you can use one of the following options.

A Horde is One

The action sequence in which a single hero overcomes a horde of minor opponents is a staple of adventure stories. Use the "Followers and Advantage Points" rules (see the Core Rules chapter, page 67) or provide an automatic augment for each horde member when the entire group is about as formidable as a single opponent. In an extended contest, remember to describe one of the opponents being taken out of the contest each time the horde loses a sufficient number of AP.

△ Hengal faces a gang of food trollkin while raiding a troll cave. Kathy assigns an ability rating of 6 to the leader and a collective value of 30 AP to the entire gang. She decides that there are five trollkin. During the first exchange, the gang forfeits 12 points. Kathy describes the result: "Hengal grabs one of the trollkin by the arms and hurls him into another. Both of them crumple into a heap, and stay there."

By the time Hengal is finished with the trollkin, their collective AP total is -16. The leader is impaired and the rest of the gang are injured. They are all trying to crawl away.

A Horde is a Horde

To give the players the feeling of a never-ending mass, roll each attack separately; remember the "rule of six" (see the Core Rules chapter, page 79), although with smaller creatures more can get into contact. This means a lot of work for you, as you'll end up making many, many rolls. Apply the -3 each for multiple attackers to defending heroes, as this is where it will really affect the outcome. The heroes may well be swept away by the horde; use this method when the horde should have a good chance of winning. Individual members of the horde will be easy to defeat, but they will be replaced again and again.

△ Hengal and the gang are swarmed by large beetles sent by the trolls. There are 60 beetles, and each hero faces 10 beetles per turn. While each beetle only has a Bite 5 attack and 5 AP, Hengal will defend against the last one at a whopping -27 penalty.

A Horde is Somewhere in Between

Mixing these two methods, you can have "horde leaders" each with followers. You can regulate how many "leaders" there are, and so how many multiple attacker penalties the players face. This results in a few low-level attacks backed up with many AP. This makes a good mid-range contest that could go either way.

Edges (∧) and Handicaps (-∧)

For special situations, particularly with giants, dragons, plagues, or special magic items, narrators can use **edges** and **handicaps**. Edges and handicaps are designated using a Force rune (∧5, for example), handicaps with a minus sign (-∧5).

Edges and handicaps affect only the advantage points bid in an extended contest. An attacker's edge is added to his AP bid when his opponent must forfeit or transfer AP. An attacker's handicap is subtracted from his bid when his opponent forfeits or transfers. A contestant's edge or handicap never affects his AP when he defends, only when he is attacking.

In earlier supplements, edges and handicaps were more integral to the rules. Narrators may allow players to use such modifiers at her sole discretion, or she can convert them into bonuses and penalties on a 1:1 basis.

△ After surviving the trollkin and beetles, Hengal and the gang find themselves facing a huge troll, 12 feet tall and wielding a small tree trunk as a club. Before they can react, the great troll swings the club at Hengal. Kathy bids 8 AP and rolls a success, while Rick rolls a failure. Hengal would normally lose 8 AP, but Kathy has given the great troll a ∧3 edge to reflect its size and strength. Because of this, Hengal actually loses 8 + 3 = 11 AP.

Narrating HeroQuest

If you have never narrated a roleplaying game before, it may seem like a lot to take in all at once and remember. Like any other skill, the ability to narrate a fun game develops with experience. Don't be afraid to try things, to make mistakes, and to experiment while you build your confidence. You may not know it, but you have been training for years to be a narrator! Growing up in a media-saturated society, you have been exposed to a staggering quantity of narrative entertainment. Chances are that the standard devices and structures of storytelling are stored in the back of your mind, just waiting for you to put them to use. Whenever you are faced with a decision in the course of a game and you don't know what to do, stop for a moment and ask yourself how this would be portrayed in your favorite novel, movie, or TV series.

Perhaps the most important skill in running a roleplaying game is flexibility: try to hone your ability to react creatively to decisions the players make. Your aim is not to make the heroes adhere to your prepared script (a script they have not seen and can only guess about), but to spontaneously create a story that is as much the fruit of the players' imaginations as your own. If the players surprise you and force you to improvise a new direction, your game is going well.

The sample adventures in this book are a good way to get started. They give you an idea of the structure of a roleplaying adventure, and allow you to learn how to run a game first, then deal with the creation of characters, scenes, and story lines a session or two down the road.

Time

As narrator, you control time in the game. It is a great power, with many opportunities for drama, and you should think of it when leading the narration. The *HeroQuest* rules operate on three types of time, and your job is to determine which to use when.

Abstract Time: Covers a lot of time quickly. "Days pass" or "When the stars are right." This happens during travel, over the winter, and the like. It is used most often between sessions or to gloss over uninteresting and unimportant events during play.

Now Time: When players speak for their hero's actions it is now time. Most of the game is now time. Simple contests are resolved in now time.

Slow Time: Critical events and extended contests happen in slow time. People want to fine-tune their actions and intentions, and as a result segments of slow time often have more rules to apply. They often take longer for the narrator and players to run than the experience lasts in "real time" for the heroes.

Playing About with Time

Time in *HeroQuest* need not always flow evenly or in one direction. One of your options during slow time, for example, is whether to ask the players' intentions before or after stating the narrator characters' actions. If you want to give the heroes an advantage, tell them what the narrator characters are doing first.

Flashbacks can also be a powerful tool. Earlier events of a hero's life can be played out, possibly adding depth and understanding of his current situation. Flashbacks can be especially useful at the start of a game or campaign, to establish the supporting cast, or to give the heroes a motivation.

Some narrators start each game with a "flashback" that recaps the previous session. Rather than doing this, you can jump right into the action. If the last session ended with the heroes hiding from a gang of bandits in the cellars of an old ruined hill fort, you might begin the next game by stating: "You are home enjoying your first bath in weeks when a messenger from the king interrupts you." What happened to the bandits? Did the heroes hide their loot before returning home, as they had planned? It is uncertain. Since you have jump-started the game, they are free to later declare that the Scepter is hidden, or to decide that they have kept it with them. The action can be moved forward several times in a session, skipping parts of the story, only to discover later what (if anything) happened during the skipped parts. This way, the game focuses on story, not events irrelevant to the main action. And both the narrator and the players have the opportunity to surprise and be surprised during the session.

△ The Isfalt

The band is resting now, having given all of their reports to the league officials. They get good food, some healing, and plenty of sleeping potion. After some time the priestess, seer, and fortune teller all return together.

"We know what that was," they say. "You have shown us the source of Danbrilla's power. It is the Isfalt."

"What's that?"



Just when adventurers think they know what to expect, Glorantha throws another surprise in their way. Sometimes it is a delight or a wonder, but it is unlikely that the Isfalt counts as either of these.

“It is a demon from either the deepest Underworld, from Chaos, or from among the tribe of the Vithelan antigods. It has its own special and unique power, not from any Otherworld. What it does is, well, look at Jane there. That’s what it does.”

Your heroes all remember the last session, when Jane pulled them to Danbrilla’s sanctum. Jane made her roll, but still ended up paralyzed, unable to think or act. They experience again the struggle to get away before the Isfalt turned its eyes on them and paralyzed them, too. You’ll never know how lucky you are that Danbrilla didn’t notice you!

Everyone is quiet, thinking about the relief they felt when Kathy didn’t make them fight Danbrilla and her demons. After a minute, Rick speaks up.

“Well, what defeats it, then?”

“We don’t know,” they say. “It is not part of our mythology. It was defeated by someone else.”

“Then we will go,” says Mr. Puma, “to the Gods War to see what defeats it. That is, if you will support us.”

“Only Hengal can ask that of us,” says Valdamare, the chief.

“Go get Uncle Farhenri,” says Hengal. “I want him to plead our case.”

Getting Started

Start simple. Have just one pantheon or a few Otherworld entities for your campaign. The intricacies of the religious structure or the entities’ deeper secrets are not important right now. Just have affinities, spirits, or a grimoire, and enjoy.

Start simple, but let play reveal the richness that is possible. Use the games to show the clan council in action, or to teach how to bribe your way through civilized society. Later you can say “they vote” or “usual bribe routine needed here.”

Allow the complexity to develop at its own rate. Little things, like a new god or a new affinity, are worthy of a whole adventure to explore. Make each one a marvel to be seen. Do not get overly complex and make the players feel they are missing something. Let them know they already know everything they need to know, though they can volunteer for more if they wish.

Tempt the players, do not browbeat them. Most people do not want to read or study; they just want to play and have a good time. Let them! But entertain yourself with little bits of new magic and information. If they want to know more, tell them where they can find it.

Let the players choose their style of play. Some want immersive games, some want to fight, some want romance, and others just want to hang back and play. Work with everyone.

Preparation and Improvisation

One of the big differences in style between narrators is in how much they prepare before a session. Some narrators do not feel ready unless they have set up an adventure as fully detailed as a published one. Others sit down to the gaming table without the faintest idea of which way the evening’s adventure will go, ready to weave a spur-of-the-moment story from the heroes’ motivations. Most narrators are somewhere in between.

The approach that works for you depends as much on your players as on your own tastes. Many players like the clear objectives provided by a scenario detailed in advance; your campaign may bog down if you expect a group like this to inspire you for fully improvised adventures. Other players thrive when allowed to head off in any direction, and will find a way to deviate from even the tightest plot.

Until you know the strengths of your group, it is safest to jot down a premise and at least a few evocative words for your opener, rising action, and climax before getting started. (Do not be surprised if you have to adapt your approach when your play group changes—the departure or arrival of a single player can radically alter a group’s dynamic.)

Published adventures are not sacred. They are formatted so that you can adapt them to your needs. Some narrators are happy to deviate wildly from a published adventure, making their way to an alternate but equally satisfying conclusion. If you feel inspired to work an entertaining twist, trust your instincts and have fun your way.

Narrating Contests

Describing contests may seem difficult at first, but all you have to do is avoid describing actual results until the final consequences are determined. For many types of contests, setbacks can be very transient—the hero loses a point in an argument, but is back on top with his next retort.

Describing combat can be difficult, because even when an opponent is at 1 AP he can still come back and win the contest, escaping completely unscathed. When the hero loses AP, narrate the effect as vividly as you can without describing permanent consequences, such as a terrible wound that unaccountably disappear when he wins! Results that are colorful in victory can later prove embarrassing when the hero is ultimately defeated. Avoid descriptions like the following:

He breaks your jaw. You feel loose teeth jangling around in your mouth like dice in a cup.

He grabs the spear and twists, dislocating your shoulder. Your hand flip-flops through the air from her slash.

Work on your descriptions until they sound more like this:

He punches you in the face; you reel back from the impact, seeing stars and spitting blood.

She grabs the spear and twists. The pain is incredible; it feels like she’s dislocating your shoulder.

She rushes at you with the knife, stabbing so you feel it scrape along your bone.

If you make a mistake, extemporize:

It seemed that way. But your jaw isn’t really broken.

Your shoulder is messed up, but not dislocated.

Your hand hurt so bad you were convinced it was cut off.

Such narrative methods will quickly become second nature for you, but if players are having a hard time, help them. For example, some players have a hard time explaining what their heroes are *trying* to do, and often just describe the desired

Adventure: the Impossible Occurs

Use a few game sessions to establish among everyone a shared experience of what everyday things are like. Then start the *real* story, which is not about everyday stuff, but the unusual or even impossible things.

That creature you see is extinct.

You saw a person in the crowd who you *know* is dead.

That place was not there yesterday.

This feat is not working right.

That person hasn’t moved in eight days and nights.



△ The Execution

Your barge or reed boat has stopped in this port city. The crew go off to indulge their local custom in private. The passengers must be back tomorrow, at dawn, but otherwise are on their own.

Everyone is in good humor. A major entertainment is scheduled for today: Mak Bigs the River Pirate is going to be executed, with all his crew.

Tell the players, “Your hero is oddly attracted to this event. For some reason, and you can tell me why if you wish, you feel compelled to go.” Ask them what they will do to get to the front of the crowd. It’s not a contest here, just a chance to let them try their favorite methods for crowd interaction.

Explain how everyone is having such a good time. Vendors are there selling beer and sausages, a lot of people are here from their daily jobs and free for the day, many are from out of town and happy to see a real sacred political execution, city-style.

“My people,” says one foreigner, “would’ve just cut his throat when they caught him. Done, and be done.”

When he is brought forward ask everyone, “What was the name of the guide on the first job you had?” If someone remembers, or has it written down, you might even give them a hero point for it. It was Esteemed Elk.

“This outlaw, brought out as Mak Bigs, is Esteemed Elk. He is under heavy guard, and his crewmen are already there, chained together by their necks, with hands tied behind them, blindfolded.”

“I hear we’re killing forty of them today,” laughs a bystander to his girlfriend.

When Mak Bigs is brought out the crowd boos and throws rocks and garbage at him. There’s this long walkway with lots of crowd control on both sides, and he is marched down along this. He ignores all the stuff being thrown at him. He’s dignified. He is not blindfolded, and his hands are tied behind his back. He has a bronze collar about his neck, and four ropes attached to it, each held by a guard.

So he is brought up to the decapitating dock there, and as is

MGF:
Maximum Game Fun
is the final rule for both
narrators and players.

usual, a scribe in this long flowing star-spangled toga steps forth and says, “Last words, mister?”

“By Thanga and Barkkor, by your Umaliar and Inkspot I declare this, I make an offer of my infinite soul to your Great Mayor Lord. If you agree to behead me first, and then to free each of my crewmen who I walk past as they kneel there so bravely, then I will tell you where the treasure of Aborn is hidden.”

At that the headsman, this guy with the big axe and hood over his head, whips off his mask. The crowd gasps in surprise. It’s their Great Mayor Lord himself!

He says, “Whisper it to me.”

Esteemed Elk laughs a bit, says, “Agree out loud, my lord.”

“I agree,” says the mayor. “I will behead you first, and every one of your crewmen that you pass shall be spared if you walk past them. Now kneel.”

And the pirate says, “Unbind my crew,” and they do. So Mak Bigs kneels, and after the pirate whispers the location of the treasure to

him the mayor chops his head off with one blow. It bounces off the platform into the crowd right amidst you guys!

And then, even as the blood is gouting out of the neck arteries—sploosh sploosh—the big, bronzed, tattooed body gets up. It’s unsteady, of course! It has no head! It is moving slowly, too! It has no head! But it staggers along the line of his crewmen, shackled and tied there before him. Each man passed shows pleasure, relief, or surprise.

Will you do something here? He is walking along the line of these cutthroats, murderers, and plunderers. The mayor is frozen stiff, looking at the head. Remember when Jane met that curly-haired guy long ago? He turned you in, remember that? He’s there, down the line a bit. He is going to be spared. Hey, Mr. Puma, remember when you got everyone out of Danbrilla’s palace? Remember that guy with the two-handed axe you fought? He’s there, down the line a bit.

Look at the crowd. Everyone else is basically frozen watching this blood-spurting corpse lurch down the line past his crew. It has no head! And you?

The Final Rule: Maximum Game Fun

The final rule for both narrators and players of *HeroQuest* is: Maximum Game Fun.

As narrator, your job is to entertain *and* be entertained. You will find yourself in many situations where your story will be interesting precisely *because* someone breaks the rules, like Aeolians using veneration to worship gods; or because something exists that “should not be,” like an origami-folding woman riding a shell deer; or because someone wants something “inappropriate,” like wanting to go surfing; or where heroes do something silly, like having coke and pizza for dinner because that’s what you were eating when you played. Your job is to establish the mood and maintain some order, just as the players are expected to play within the parameters of the shared Glorantha. But fun is what roleplaying games are all about.

And not just the heroes, either. Be ready for many laughs and ironic mockery of the characters by some players, bad jokes, bad accents, and inter-player banter. All games include both the in-world experience and the social interaction of the players. Some players concentrate on the game and minimize interaction, although side conversations still occur. Some players are there primarily for the social gathering, with the game secondary, almost casual. Most games include people of both types, and the narrator has permission to find the balance between them, just as a player must find a balance between himself and his hero.

Enjoy yourself! Ultimately, what is good for fun is good for the game.



HEROQUESTING

Heroquesting is a magical journey to take part in the mythic actions that made the world. Despite the primordial danger of that realm, with the support of their communities, brave and wise heroes may bring back the most powerful and rare form of magic. Everyone knows heroquesting as a voyage of high cost and great risk. But it is always present, for there will always be ordinary people who want to become extraordinary.

Mythology records the acts and conflicts of the deities, spirits, and saints. Worship ceremonies recreate and revisit these events. This is a normal part of religion, and happens in every worship ceremony. Heroquesting is special, however, because it involves a small number of participants taking a greater than normal risk in the hopes of gaining a greater than normal reward.

Heroquesting begins with the Story, which tells the Hero how to proceed through the Crossing, the Quest, and the Return.

Heroquests

All heroquesting is based on the ceremonies performed by religions. This method is so prevalent that it is the only one we discuss here. Other heroquesting methods have been used in the past that are beyond the scope of this book, and new ways will be discovered during the Hero Wars. Heroquesting has the following five stages:

- Select the Story and determine the stations and challenges.
- Determine who will lead the quest as the Hero, who will go with them, and who will support them from the Mortal World.
- Perform the Crossing ritual, then travel from the Otherworld to the Hero Planes.
- Perform the Quest by following the story.
- Determine the hero's success or failure, and then Return to the Mortal World.

Types of Heroquests

There are three basic types of heroquests. A **practice quest** involves ritual questing in the Mortal World itself, usually to give a hero familiarity with the heroquest before he attempts it on the Hero Planes. An **otherworld journey** to the worshippers' Otherworld is common in all religions, usually as a means for worshippers to gain "standard" magical abilities. What most people consider "true heroquesting," however, takes place on the **Hero Planes**.

Practice Quest

People undertake a "practice quest" in the Mortal World by following a myth without actually crossing to the Other Side. The quester performs an appropriate ritual or ceremony, then departs from the sacred ground and seeks "random" encounters as he travels. These encounters "stand in" for the events of the myth.

Practice quests are often performed with some or all of the opponents supplied in advance. This has the advantage of predictability, but requires preparations over weeks or seasons to capture appropriate foes. These preparations are not required, however. The nature of myth is such that the world will "supply" appropriate foes for a practice quest by drawing on the mythic world. The foes encountered are often heroquesters as well, which can prove dangerous to the quester if he acts incorrectly or is not properly prepared.

Many practice quests simply provide a bonus to the quester (often for use in the full heroquest later), and work exactly the same as any ritual (see "Ritual Magic" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 101). Other practice quests have specific benefits as their goal, such as an awakened animal familiar or a new magical ability.

You can perform a practice quest as many times as you wish, but the benefits are not cumulative—if you get a benefit, the only reason to do the practice quest again is to replace a lost or used up benefit, or to improve the benefit you received the previous time by achieving a better victory level. And if you do not do as well, the benefit might be reduced instead, or lost completely if you are defeated.

Otherworld Journey

Otherworld journeys are common in all religions, for they are the normal way that worshippers learn the religion's magic. Theists travel to the God World to pledge themselves to their god, and sometimes to learn affinities or feats. Animists open the way to the Spirit World to master spirits and place them into charms and fetishes. Monotheists bring the Saint Plane into the world to empower their blessings and talismans, and adepts travel to the Magic Plane to learn new spells.

Heroes can quest in the God World, Spirit World, and Essence Planes, but they cannot change what is there. If a hero attempts to make a change to an Otherworld location, he is forced into the Gods War instead. An item cannot be taken from the God World, for example—any attempt to move or take a divine object merely puts the hero into a Hero Plane where a "duplicate" of the object exists and can be taken. Permanent change is possible—a theist can make his own house and receive worship in a hero cult, a great spirit's demesne can encompass a new majestic spirit, and a powerful adept can create a new grimoire node on the Founder Plane. But such actions are exceptional, part of the story of *HeroQuest* rather than the rules.

HEROQUESTING

The Hero Planes

Heroquests occur on the Hero Planes and take place in the Gods War, a period of tremendous upheaval and destruction between the deities, spirits, saints and founders, and demons. The differences of mythology are alive and hostile in that age. Spirit bears fight god-bears, and both hate the essence Fire Bear. Storm fights storm and sun fights sun, and they all fight each other. This time of destruction begins with the Storm Age and ends in the Age of Chaos, also called the Great Darkness.

Rather than set places, the Hero Planes are a “cosmic memory” of mythological events. That is, the events define the places, not the other way around. The Hero Planes include the first actions, those that set the model for all subsequent activities. All the deities, spirits, saints, and founders are there, eternally enacting their successes and failures, their victories and defeats. These events are unchanging unless acted upon by an external force. Even when they are changed, the original “versions” often still exist. In this way, the same event

might exist several times in the Hero Planes, each event with a different focus, perspective, or even outcome. Things, beings, and places exist in the Hero Planes that have no correlation to the Mortal World. There is no time within the Hero Planes, for all events take place the same way they always have.

A heroquester uses the myths and rituals of his religion to navigate the Hero Planes, passing from event to event, meeting

the same friends and foes as in the story. These entities may be the actual ones faced in the myth, but more often they are other heroquesters passing through the realm on their own quests. Sometimes a quester will recognize his foe as a rival or individual from his own place and time, but foes can just as easily come from the past or future. The quester often cannot distinguish their

nature or identity, for they appear in the guise of the entity that was faced in the quest the first time. The only people a heroquester can be sure of on the Hero Planes are those who embarked with him on his quest.

*The Hero Wars are between...
What Was and What Will Be*

**The cycle of Destruction and Rebuilding
has come around again. The actions of
your heroes will set the tone of the world.
Will they stand by the ancient ways or
create a new world from the ashes of the old?**

The Story

Heroquesters use a set of instructions to guide them through the quest. Theist instructions are in the form of myths that questers must emulate. Animists are guided by the directions of spirits, passed down as part of oral tradition. Monotheists and adepts look to carefully demarcated maps of the Invisible Measure and the experiments of past wizards, seeking to duplicate their results precisely. These types of information are all part of the religion’s *[Myths and Rituals]* ability (see “Worshipper Abilities” in the Basic Magic chapter, page 106). In this chapter, we use the word “myth” to refer to all of these information sources. It is possible, but very dangerous, to travel through the Other Side with no myth, no prior knowledge of the denizens, places, and forces you will encounter.

Every religion has hundreds or thousands of myths. Some are huge and cosmic, and explain the mystery of Creation. They tell how the world was made, where people came from, and why people die. On the other end of the scale, many myths tell about local affairs—how the upland wind god was befriended or antagonized, where an important animal was born, why a certain food can or cannot be eaten, how ancient enemies were conquered, or how to heal people from innumerable maladies. Every homeland has legends of their ancestors, ancient kings, and the heroes who formed their way of life.

Myths are about the creation of something. Some turn their regard on events leading to the creation, others on the consequences. Through them, worshippers experience the primal events—a chance to understand the meaning of life, of why things are the way they are. *HeroQuest* quantifies this as the power that can be gained through the magical disciplines.

Selecting a Myth

Choosing the right myth is usually easy, because every hero knows the common myths of his people, which tell him what to do. If drought parches the land, heroquesters perform the myth where their god, spirit, or saint brought water to the people. If an enemy army threatens them, they enact the myth where their patron overcomes huge odds. The mythical quest confronts the original problems again, and grants blessings and rewards scaled to the level of victory. Naturally, the myth must be of one’s own culture: you cannot reenact an enemy god’s story in the same way.

To ready himself for a journey to the Other Side, the hero first must know the proper myth. This might be as simple as recalling a sacred story known to every member of his community, or as complicated as ransacking a buried vault to find the moldering notebooks of some long-dead adept. General myths of a religion are represented by a hero’s *Know Myths of [Pantheon]*, *[Tradition] Knowledge*, or *Doctrine of [Church]* ability. Of course, committed and devoted worshippers will always know more about the actions and myths of the entity they worship. As such, a hero’s *Mythology of [Deity]*, *[Practice] Knowledge*, or *Rule of [Saint]* ability will be of more use in some situations, especially if he is the **main character** in the heroquest (see page 195).

Myths are often long, complex stories, and can be perilous. Multiple versions of each myth exist, each with different details. Entities in myths are powerful beyond the might of human heroes. Unexpected events can always occur, which questers cannot prepare for.

△ Searching for Stories

Hengal and his band spend as much time as possible preparing for this heroquest. They listen to common storytellers, official court versions, and deep myths whose meaning is hidden from the uninitiated.

They have a pretty good idea of what to expect. The story is not well known, and so they find only four variants of the Isfalt story. The court version is an excerpt from a longer poem, and reveals the most information.

The Isfalt is a creature known from the Gods War era, the protector of the Little Claws People. They were humanoid in shape but with heads kind of like a beetle, with antennae and all, and with two hands on the end of each arm, and with little claws on both hands.

One time Bonborn, the Son of the Spirit, came to our lands and asked for help to fight “Isfalt, the evil head with faces.” He asked Aranvalus, an ancient hero of ours, who refused to help. Bonborn fought Isfalt on his own and in some manner overcame it.

If you undertake this, it is your task to enter the Gods War in the era of Aranvalus, but this time to go with Bonborn and see how he destroyed Isfalt. Help if you can or must. But at all costs one of you must come back with the knowledge we need to destroy it.

Objective of the Quest

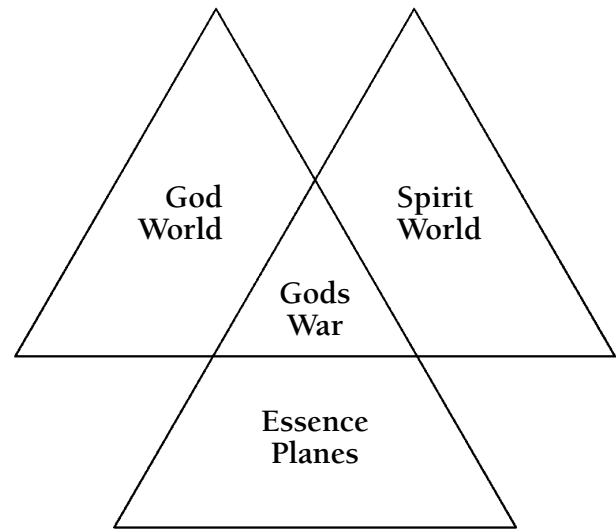
Before setting out, the main character must decide first whether he intends to benefit his community or himself. He can keep the rewards of the myth for himself, but a community will rarely lend support to a quest if it does not stand to benefit.

Next, the hero must decide the goal of the quest. Even within a given myth, the reward that the hero brings back can differ. If he sets off to get “the help that Orlanth brought back from Thrinbarri Clouds,” the narrator has a lot of latitude to determine the reward unless he states his goal more specifically, such as asking for a blessing on the clan warband’s *Sling* skills. If he does not state what he is seeking at all, and simply goes off for “something to help his people,” he cannot know until the very end what he will get—Harmast returned with Arkat, who in many ways turned out to be a curse. Some heroes choose to go on a heroquest for reasons other than the main, obvious point. Myths often tell of the main character gaining friends, magic, and treasures along the way. A hero might go on such a quest to gain those things instead of the “real” reward.

The greater the reward sought, the more powerful the opponents will be. If the quester seeks a blessing on the clan’s babies for the coming year, the quest will be easier than if he wants a permanent blessing for the clan. The danger of failure also depends on his goal—if a hero fails the first quest, the resultant curse only applies for a year; if he seeks a permanent blessing and fails, the curse is also permanent.

The quester’s final victory level has little effect on the duration of any blessing he brings back. He is either victorious and gains the reward, or he fails and does not. If he seeks a blessing to make a baby, he gets a blessing to make a baby, nothing more and nothing less. If he seeks the Sword of Five Dooms (a much more difficult quest than just seeking a “magic sword”), he gains the sword for as long as he can keep it.

A hero cannot bring anything material back from the Hero Planes. Although *all* heroquest rewards are usually manifest in a physical item such as a sword or a helmet, the object does



Relationship between the Gods War and the Otherworlds.

not simply “appear” out of nothing. Heroquesters know this, and usually take along a specific object that has been prepared to hold the desired blessing. The quester takes the object with him, it shapes itself or is shaped to be the reward, and he returns with it. This can be as simple as taking a ritually prepared helmet along to hold the magical abilities of Hervald’s Helm, or as dramatic as one quester giving up his life so that an ancient hero can walk the world again. The reward can also show up in other ways:

- An Otherworld entity that accompanies the questers back, or that enters the Mortal World once the community has prepared a suitable body for it.
- An ability to create a magical item for community members.
- An item “finds” its way to the community from somewhere else in the Mortal World through mortal intermediaries.
- A blessed object that becomes part of the community guardian’s regalia, giving it a new function.
- A tattoo, scar, or other mark that holds a magical ability gained by the quester.

Stations

Myths can be broken down into **stations**, each an important encounter or event. Success at these stations reinforces the pattern of the myth. Importance to the myth is part of what makes an event a station—other encounters may happen in the myth that do not affect its purpose (although it might have significance in a different quest).

The narrator decides what obstacles and contests the heroes will face when they attempt to reproduce each station. Make sure that a couple of surprises await them, items that the myths do not fully prepare them for. Tests of personality and resolve are at least as common as chances to show off pumped-up combat and magic abilities. If the myth tells of defeating a monster,

It’s Simple: Do the Story, Get the Magic

Ritual reenactment is the key. The hero must act just as the god, spirit, or saint did, must win or lose the same way. If everything is done right, and most things go the same way as in the myth, then he will obtain a reward comparable to the one in the myth.



Narrating the Story

You may be tempted to tell the heroquest story exactly as it appears in the path: one station after another. Resist this. Narrate the story, not the stations.



The Gods War is Glorantha, but in “another time and place.” Even so, just tell the story like you usually do. Do not say, “OK, on to the next station.” Ask the players, “What do you do next?” Let them participate by deciding the next step. This is important, because everyone engages in the session in their usual way, and the narrator can use this to surprise and entertain the players. Instead of saying, “OK, you are coming to a surprise now,” say, “You set off to go down the Road Everyone Knows, which everyone knows goes into the Old Familiar Meadow. As you go along about half a mile, you enter a forest. Which heroes made your perception abilities versus my success of 7? You can see that you are being followed by a flock of hooded crows. I know, they’re not in the story.”

Describe the setting around, of distant cities and marvels, of roads that intersect the main trail. Later on these interconnections are important when heroquesters start going off the beaten path to unknown realms. Use your imagination to create these things. Don’t worry if they are official or “real,” just discover them through the story. Remember, Your Glorantha Will Vary.

the monster could easily be a monstrous act by an opponent, a monstrous emotion the hero must overcome, or an ally who betrays the hero at a critical moment. Victory or defeat at a station may hinge on how well the quester treats an enemy, how quickly he scales a totem pole, what color the clouds are, or what he says to an old lady.

The narrator determines what type of contest occurs at a given station. For most stations, a simple contest will suffice, but the final station and any **heroquest moment** (see page 202) are always worthy of an extended contest. Victory at a station gives the quester a bonus or other benefit that he can use later in the quest. This may be a general benefit he can use when he wants, or may apply to a specific station (whether or not he knows it). The benefit might be a bonus to an ability, friends at a god’s court, release from captivity, healing, a warning, or an important object or piece of knowledge that can be used at a critical event later. (See “Bonus Applications” on page 202 for more information.) Defeat has the opposite effect, inflicting a penalty or disadvantage of some kind on the quester. Occasionally, the quester *must* fail at a task to pass a station, because that is what happened in the myth. A saint may have been defeated in one station and carried as a captive to another. A hero suffers a penalty if he succeeds at such a station, but gains a bonus by failing.

Some stations are **critical stations**. The results of the contest at these stations always carry forward directly to the heroquest’s climactic station. Defeat at these stations directly affects the quester’s chances of success for the entire heroquest, and could even force him to end the quest immediately.

Members of a religion know the public versions of myths, but these versions are always incomplete. Committed worshippers often know more about the story, and may have even been there once or twice during worship. Thus, most myths have **hidden stations** that are not revealed to outsiders. They are usually critical stations, and are often events where the entity was defeated. They are hidden so that the entity’s weaknesses are not shown to strangers, or to ensure that foreigners will be unprepared if they attempt the quest. A significant part of the main

character’s ritual preparations is to learn how to succeed at these hidden stations. The knowledge may be taught to all committed worshippers as part of their training, or leaders may share them only with questers that satisfy other obligations. Devotees and shamans often know even more about a myth and its stations than do less committed worshippers.

△ Bonborn’s Story

Telling all the myths takes thousands of words and hours of rapt attention. At last, the questers have their story for the heroquest.

Aranvalus’ House is the starting place.

Bonborn departed, and after going east for a time reached the River of Knives. He crossed it, and went into the Shadow Woods. A great lion [*or wolf or horde of beasts*] attacked, but he fought and killed it. [*It is important to fight here, and fight hard. If this “attack by monsters” is appeased or avoided, they return later at a bad time.*]

He ran into a woman who was angry at him. He was genuinely sad at this, and so instead of killing him she took him to build a bridge. Because he was successful here, help came to him later. [*In one story he fails to make the bridge, and so gets no help at the climax.*]

Bonborn escaped prowling trolls as he crossed the Fungal Forest, the Trees of Coal, and the Shadowleaf Miles. Beetles were on his track, but he tricked them. Shadowing (who had been born of an eclipse) sailed overhead and from it came zombies to suck life from warm bodies.

All the sources agree: Bonborn went to the right of the mountain and gave the Raccoon a diamond. With the Raccoon’s help, he came at last to Isfalt Valley. Bonborn had to fight, and won only because he carried the Rock of Life that his family had given him. His family helped him then, as did his master.

“All of us, our band, shall be Bonborn,” says Hengal. “We will learn and experience the Isfalt’s weakness then.”

Differences in the Story

Heroquesting is not a science, and even the same myth reenacted by a hero of the same culture may be different each time. The nature of heroquesting in the Gods War is that things change. Cultures separated by distances in time or place may know different versions of the same myth, and these can intrude into each other in certain circumstances. Opponents in a quest are often heroquesters reenacting their own myth, and a great victory on their part can provoke change. Many heroquests cross paths, and changes in one myth can cause changes in any of the myths that cross it. Often, something simply is not as it ought to be—the myth has a unique variation that has not been seen before, and which does not repeat again.

Differences in the story can be as simple as a similar foe being faced at a given station, or as profound as an entire landscape being different or a new station revealed. These differences are often opportunities that can give a hero unexpected benefits or options, a chance to do something differently. Is this the right maiden to rescue? The right bear to talk to? The right darkness thing to befriend? Can this monster be killed for a change, rather than run away from? Of course, any change to an established quest is dangerous as well, especially since questers have no way to prepare for “random” events (except to always be prepared for anything).

The Hero

An individual who participates in a heroquest does so in one of three ways, each with its own benefits and level of commitment.

Main Character

The main character takes the central role in the story. For the duration of the quest he is the Otherworld entity that performed the mythical deeds. He completes the same tasks, suffers the same defeats, and in the end gets the same rewards. The fate of the expedition depends upon his success or failure.

If a quester goes alone he is inevitably the main character. Worshipped beings always have many myths in which they are the main character. Sometimes the main character is a collective, such as the Thunder Brothers or the Sons of Light.

A hero can only attempt a given heroquest once as the main character. This limitation applies only to quests enacted on the Hero Planes, regardless of the magnitude of the opposition or reward; practice quests are not so limited.

Even with this limitation, a hero has many options for participation. He can enact the same quest as a supporter any number of times, and can be each companion on the quest a single time as well. Additionally, many heroquests are actually composed of several individual quests. For example, the Heortlings have a quest called the Slaying of Worch. Each of the many stations of this quest (such as the Reclamation of Sivilis and the Reclamation of Velun) exists as a separate heroquest. A hero can be the main character in each of those individual quests, and can also be the main character in the Slaying of Worch.

Companions

Companions accompany and help the main character. Much of the time they get no personal credit for their actions, but they are there. Often they are present in a metaphorical way—the myth tells of an artifact or magic, but a companion is that power. Thus, Ernalda has a rug called “Orventili” that she uses to help make peace. When Heortlings follow Ernalda heroquests, they prefer to have a worshipper of the goddess Orventili as a companion.

The importance of the companion varies with the myth. In some, he simply supports the hero, but never has a specific role to fill. In others, he comes to the forefront at a particular station, becoming the main contestant. His victory or defeat at this station determines the modifier the main character will receive later in the quest. Companions are sometimes at the fore in a myth, with the main character taking no important action until the climactic station. Thus, Peace Boy goes forth with his band, and it is the companions’ successes along the way that ensure his final victory.

A companion gets no direct benefit from the quest. He is there to help the main character, whose final victory is his reward. Sometimes the myth grants him his own boon, whether or not the main character is victorious.

Supporters

Supporters have the easiest role to play in a heroquest, and in return get the least benefit. A supporter is a witness, a soldier in the army, a clansman in a raid, the companion of a companion, or a faceless member of the mob. Myths are full of these people who have no name, but are present and blessed thereby.

Supporters go along on the myth with no part to play until the battle occurs, the mountain crumbles, or the town burns

down. Often, they are present on the quest in name only, and simply give their community support bonus to the hero at the correct time.

Supporters are often worshippers trying to learn some kind of magic on the heroquest. At some point, they have a chance to meet a challenge and use an ability against some resistance, often their *Piety* ability against a resistance of 14. They wait for the right moment, then support the leader when he performs the magic. If victorious, they learn the magic. (Their victory or defeat in this contest does not usually affect the outcome of the myth.) Of course, a supporter must qualify for the magic he seeks: an adept cannot sneak along on the How Peace Was Made heroquest and learn the *Reach Consensus* feat just by being there, even if he has a *Mythology of Ernalda* ability.

Ritual Preparations

Wise heroquesters do everything they can to prepare themselves. If the quest involves powerful spirit opponents, the hero should have adequate defenses against animist magic (perhaps by seeking support from an animist community or even bringing a shaman along as one of his companions). If the story involves a contest against a specific deadly foe, it would be a good idea to learn its weaknesses, perhaps by going on a different heroquest first. Many heroquests have standard preparatory quests (often practice quests), and victory in the main quest usually requires that the hero have completed the other heroquests first.

Some quests have special preparations that can or must be completed beforehand. This may involve assuming a geas, having the appropriate Virtues as abilities, performing a special ritual or obtaining a certain ritual object, or the like. This often involves the hero engaging in a separate contest. This process is not without danger, for if the ritual preparations are not performed correctly the hero will start the quest with a penalty. Despite bad results from botched preparations, it is dangerous for the hero to abort the main quest, since the penalty will affect him (and possibly his community) for days, seasons, or even forever.

Community Support

To enter, survive, and be victorious in the Other Side is an arduous prospect for mortals, so heroquesters go to their communi-

Leaderless Quests

Player heroes might all choose to be companions rather than volunteer to be the main character, usually because the main character in the myth meets a fatal end. For example, in Seshnela knights often assemble as the Laughing Warriors to reenact Saint Talor’s fight against the Werewolf Tribe in the Trackless Forests. For the quest to succeed, the main character must die, as Saint Talor did. Few player heroes, at least, are likely to be willing to fill that role.

When no player hero takes the lead, a narrator character should fill the role. If this occurs, **do not roll dice against yourself!** Your narration needs to move quickly through the story, so it is easier and more dramatic to simply say, “Orlanth gets up the mountain on his chariot and kills the stinking Dog-like-a-cat.” It is certainly more fun for the players than just sitting there watching you roll dice.





Bats are holy to the Red Moon, whether the terrible Chaos-twisted Crimson Bat or these Little Bats, the eyes, ears, and messengers of hidden leagues of bat-wrangling Lunar priestesses.

ty for support. As such, it is usually communities that reap the rewards of heroquesting. Most people belong to a family, a religious organization, and a political group of some kind. Each group can provide support, and so can benefit from the quest.

For a community to aid a heroquest, it must provide **total support** (see “Levels of Support” in the Relationships chapter, page 86). Any lesser level of support might provide ritual elements that give a bonus to crossing over to the Otherworld, but the group’s aid can only follow the hero beyond the barrier if they provide total support. This links the community to the quester spiritually. If the hero is victorious, the community will receive a benefit; if he is defeated, they will suffer a curse. The narrator will judge how willing or reluctant each group is. For a community to support a heroquest, it must have a guardian to act as a conduit between the quester and the community.

Each group’s support is granted in a ritual to one hero. The ritual makes a connection between the hero and the community, embodied in a ritual object. The Arming of Murharz-

arm is a Dara Happan ceremony that allows multiple communities to support a quester. When the hero approaches a community for support, he does not ask them to “support my *Spear Fighting*,” but to “be the Spear of Light for me.” Each community leader or representative provides one of the hero’s accoutrements—his spear, helmet, or breastplate, for example. This ritual object links the community and its guardian to the hero. If he loses the object, the guardian has no way to reach him, and he cannot use that bonus.

Most communities also support the quester during the ritual to pierce the barrier to the Otherworld. The hero can ask for this help in addition to requesting aid for the quest itself. Aiding the hero in crossing the barrier does not tie the community to him in the same way that aiding him during the quest does.

Bonus Applications

A hero can apply a community support bonus in one of three ways. He must specify how the bonus will be used when he asks the community for support. Bonuses received from different communities can be used in different ways.

General Application: Community

Support Bonus $\times 1$. The hero applies the bonus to all die rolls during the heroquest with one set ability:

“Mum, dad, and little sister, I know you love me and will help me. I am strong, but whenever I need that strength I ask your help to make me stronger.” [*Strong*]

“Good friends, I ask you to risk your lives to bless me, to help me hear success in all my decisions.” [a single *Decision-making or Leadership ability*]

Event Application: Community Support

Bonus $\times 1$. The hero applies the bonus to all die rolls made at a single predetermined station:

“I ask for your help and commitment when I confront the Violet Ogre and his minions.”

“I ask for your souls to be put at jeopardy when I am traveling in the Land of Seven Bone Masters.”

Precise Application: Community Support Bonus $\times 3$. The

hero applies the resulting bonus to a single die roll at the final station or a predetermined critical station (usually during an extended contest):

“Dear compatriots, I ask you only to power my arrow that seeks the hole in the dragon’s diamond armor.”

“Make me blink when she stares at me that way in the arbor.”

At the narrator’s option, a general application bonus may be granted for a broadly defined ability, but she can instead require that it apply only to a specific use of that ability (such as a single feat or specialty).

The Crossing

Strong barriers separate the Other Side from the Mortal World, and only dedicated magicians have the knowledge *and* power to cross them.

Crossing Over

To cross to the Other Side, a hero must perform a ritual to pierce the **Otherworld barrier**. At an auspicious time, worshippers convene at a holy place and begin the ceremony. Theists usually cross over in a temple, animists use a spirit place or draw a shamanic circle, and adepts create a portal of power. The worshippers expect to enter the Otherworld home of their patron—a deity's house in the God World, the Spirit World demesne of a majestic spirit, or a node in the Essence Planes.

The leader of the ritual must engage in a contest against the strength of the barrier, usually 10 \mathbb{L} 3. If he is victorious, the desired part of the Otherworld becomes one with the holy place. From there, the quester travels through the Gods War—the hero enters the Gods War as soon as he leaves his starting point or takes any action related to the quest, without another contest. This transition may be gradual (“As you walk along, the sky darkens and Eiritha’s Wide Grassland gives way to dead ground.”) or sudden (“When you look back after leaving your Ancestors’ hut, you see only a dead, ruined forest.”). Questers may not realize they have entered the Hero Planes until something different happens. When a quester enters the Hero Planes, his body disappears from the Mortal World.

Contest: Cross Over to Other Side

Appropriate Abilities: Mythology of [Deity], Spirit World Travel or Open Spirit World (–5), Open Portal of Power or Venerate [Saint].

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Community support, ritual magic.

Resistance: 10 \mathbb{L} 3.

Any victory: The expected Otherworld appears.

Tie or Marginal or Minor Defeat: The Otherworld does not materialize.

Major Defeat: A seemingly random part of the Otherworld appears. This can cause trouble, perhaps a curse that robs the community of something minor, like all of their doors or sandals. No matter what, however, it will still be the correct Otherworld: a shamanic circle will never open a way to the God World or Essence Planes.

Complete Defeat: The opening leads to part of the Gods War instead of the correct Otherworld. This always means trouble for the worshippers: it might be monsters, disease, or a curse that robs the community of something of great value, such as all of the grain or all their children.

Can Something Come Out?

Yes, entities can enter the Mortal World through temples, shamanic circles, and portals of power. To do so they need two things. First is opportunity, either detecting the opening or being in the right place at the right time. More importantly, they must *want* to pass through. Most entities want to stay in their home, because being in the Mortal World causes pain or discomfort, represented by the **alien world penalty** (see the next page).



Δ Entering the House of Aranvalus

Aranvalus’ House is the starting place.

The priesthood has control over this. The square Court of the Earth has been swept, mopped with holy water, and dried with special herbs. Old priests and priestesses sit in each corner, assistants clustered around. Each corner has an altar. Temple workers clad in knee-length black and yellow robes stand in a circle inside the square.

At the center is a chair, and before it sits the band. Hengal is dressed in ceremonial robes of Gerendetho, adorned with marks of rank for Natha, accompanied by his assistant and his two bodyguards. Mr. Puma sits primly in his best suit and bears a scepter, a book in a pouch at his side, and some very fancy ropes about his shoulders, body, neck, and limbs. Galan is armed and armored, on foot of course, his healer by his side, with Bison Brain and his other spirits disincorporate but present. Jane stands nearby with her special paper in a couple of little pockets sewn to her shirt (“Did I just invent pockets?”), and badges of Sedenya. Hazeel is armed and armored, but quite uncharacteristically is without his goonda carrying his surfboard. (“This is serious. I want to win. I want Hengal’s family to owe me a big favor.”)

“It is too bad,” says Jane, “that Ingomar is no longer with us. It looks like a lot of fighting ahead.”

Everyone nods their head, remembering their companion, lost to them for so long.

The league, Hengal’s kin who are sponsoring this, are here to help. They wear their ceremonial clothing and they sit in concentric circles around the hero band. As many members are here as can be spared from routine, over four hundred concerned people.

Amidst them are leaders from the Garlin Block Armsmen, the Bigface Sister’s Wailers, and the Second Count Priesthood. They are all associated with the league, and have come to bless the band for combat and for sorrow.

The Sun finally sets. “Lodril is here,” says the high priest, and all the fires in the square ignite. Drums beat, flutes pipe up, the priests begin their intonation. Their voices are loud and clear. The worshippers chant their part, some loud and fervent, others mumbling with despair and fear. Nothing in the rite is simple, and all have their part. The priests call upon many gods, many others are remembered in the communal prayers, and many goats sacrificed. Fires of different colors come and go, smoke chokes the hall twice, strange vibrations shake everyone where they stand, sit, or kneel. After about eight hours a final ripple passes through the worshippers, coming from the outside in towards the center of the room. Vision wavers. Some people pass out.

Most of the participants peek into the House of Aranvalus, which is in the God World. They see him sitting tall and proud on his chair. The band crosses the barrier into the Hall and waits to speak to him. As they look beside themselves they see the immortals of the league who lived during the Gods War. They realize that when they move, they are mingling with the petty deities amid the feasters of Aranvalus’ Hall.



HEROQUESTING

Power Spots and Accidental Transitions

A person can pass through to another world without ceremony and worshippers, even without wanting to, through **power spots**, natural “holes” in the Otherworld barrier. Some places coexist in multiple planes, such as a hole in a troll complex that leads all the way to the Underworld. Sites where powerful mythic events occurred may lead to the Other Side. These are often made into temples or churches to revere and protect them. (This is the source of the bonus such sites provide to rituals.)

“Wild” power spots exist that no one has yet discovered or that have been abandoned. At these sites, people may cross to another plane by being tricked or even just by being lost. People know this, and also know that being destroyed in an alien Otherworld imperils their soul, spirit, or essence. They fear such encounters.

Power spots offer less than the normal 10W3 resistance to crossing the Otherworld barrier, possibly providing no resistance at all.

The Edge of the World

The edges of the Mortal World are not clearly defined, and in all directions gradually merge into the Otherworld. Travelers rarely survive the journey, for they encounter more powerful beings the farther they travel from the known world. Still, tales tell of heroes who were desperate or powerful enough to survive and cross to the God World, Spirit World, or Essence Planes by sailing on the Sea of Fire, crossing Valind’s Glacier, climbing Top of the World Mountain, or falling through the Hell Crack into the Underworld.

Alien World Penalty

The Otherworlds are profoundly different from the Mortal World. Any being or entity outside its own world is an alien, unused to operating in the other landscape. The alien forces around them cause pain, discomfort, a sense of doom, and so on. Mortals are aliens on the Other Side, and Otherworld entities are aliens in the Mortal World.

Any being or entity in an alien world is subject to a –20 penalty to all abilities. (The Otherworld entities detailed in the Creatures chapter already have the –20 alien world penalty factored into their statistics.) There are two exceptions. A mortal who has concentrated his magic is not an alien in either the Mortal World or the proper Otherworld, because neither is an alien environment for him. Similarly, an Otherworld being native to the Mortal World (such as a landscape being) takes no modifier in the Mortal World, and also takes no modifier when in the proper Otherworld.

Most beings, mortal or otherwise, take the alien world penalty in the Underworld, because most of it is not clearly of one Otherworld or another. Even most demons are subject to the penalty in most parts of the Underworld, perhaps even their own realm.

In the Gods War, the Three Otherworlds spilled over into the Middle World and mixed in ways that they do not now. As such, the Hero Planes are mixed, with daimones, spirits, and essences present everywhere, sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker. Most of the Hero Planes are like the Mortal World, a mix of everything. As such, questers do not usually suffer the

alien world penalty during heroquests. However, parts of Glorantha in those times were dominated by one world or another in a way that is rare now, and questers who travel into those areas do take the penalty. Thus, when Orlanth and his companions travel into the Far West they go to Sorcery Town. Heroquesters performing the Lightbringers’ Quest suffer a –20 penalty to all abilities while in Sorcery Town, because essences dominate the landscape completely.

In the Gods War,
the Three Otherworlds
spilled over into the Mortal World
and mixed in ways
that they do not now.

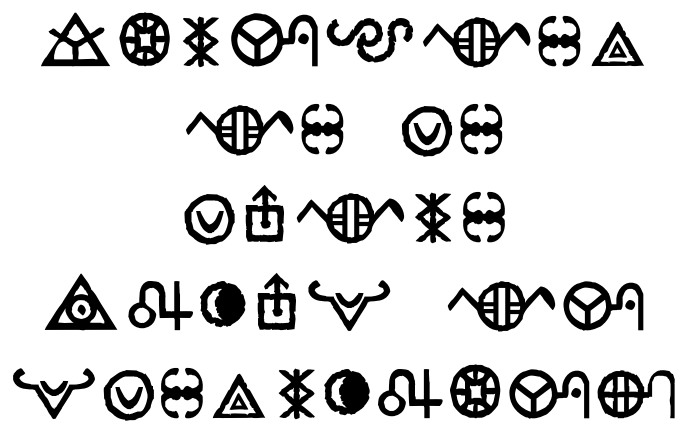
△ Inside the House of Aranvalus

Black Cat, their guardian, is with them. It is a spirit, and cannot be invisible in the God World where the house sits. It is quiet and friendly, but favors Jane and Galan, who have spent the most time saying prayers to him and giving him their little offerings.

Black Cat is having some trouble breathing, and so is Galan, because they are spirits. Mr. Puma, Jane, and Hazeel are all itchy because their essences do not fit well here. At other times their inappropriate presence might be felt other ways. Here, they itch and breathe heavily.

Who can tell what time passes in the immortal happiness of Aranvalus’ home? The band eats and drinks there, they watch the first game of scramble (a game still played in Hengal’s time) against the Vadros League. They see Orvos come and petition their lord, they see the Three Bloodshed Sisters go off with their friends to their doom, and they see Aranvalus receive a long-legged bear as a gift from the lizard spirit lords. At last, when they seem to be at the end of their dreams, a servant comes to them and quietly tells Hengal, “Sir, the Master will see you now.” Hengal slips away and speaks to Aranvalus. Hengal has some difficulty there, because Aranvalus is his ancestral god and he finds it hard to speak at all. But he calls upon his loyalty to the members of his band and finds the strength. Aranvalus listens, and after listening sits up straight and looks over the crowd.

Everyone stops all activity to listen, and at last Aranvalus says, “Bonborn, you have been a scoundrel and a friend. Go, then, and risk your life to see this thing. Take this rock, and also these two others. May Grandfather bless you and your spear.”



The Quest

Myths are arranged as a series of events, which are represented in a heroquest by stations. Most travelers to the Other Side use a set of instructions to guide them from station to station. It is possible to travel through the Other Side without any prior knowledge of its denizens, places, and forces, but this is extremely dangerous.

A worship ceremony or practice quest moves from event to event regularly, but heroquests happen in the Hero Planes, which are not static. The nature of the Gods War is change and conflict, and this works against the questers. The entities there have their own agendas, and it is full of unpredictable entities, hostile environments, and shifting events. In this realm, the *questers* must move the story from station to station. They know what they want, and must actively seek it rather than passively follow the story.

△ Through the Gods War

Bonborn departed, and after going east for a time reached the River of Knives. He crossed it, and went into the Shadow Woods.

Hengal knows the way. They go east. This is his magical homeland, and he has been through it many times. It is looking poor, with many fields fallow, few herds, and many signs of wild animals and monsters. A gang of robbers stands in a line across their path, then attacks them with swords.

The group is later surprised when towers grow up out of the ground around them, tall buildings with dark eyes on the peaks of their roofs. For another day they endure a rain of eyeballs falling from violet and pink thunderheads. A huge bear with tentacles coming out of its head attacks them. They fight hard against it and kill it.

Station Order

In heroquests the events are important, but not always their order. Although a given myth will give the events in order, the quester may experience them differently. The critical stations always come before the climactic station, and some stations always have to happen before others. But nothing is absolute,

and a quester can miss an important event if he does not recognize that it is occurring out of its expected order.

△ Big Barda is Angry

He ran into a woman who was angry at him. He was genuinely sad at this, and so instead of killing him she took him to build a bridge. Because he was successful here, help came to him later.

A woman approaches from a copse of dead trees. Big Barda. “Barda?” says Hazeel. “What is she doing here?”

For Barda this is just her same nightly dream, part sorrow and part revenge.

“Oh good friend, brother part of me, I think this is the time to use that Sorrow Blessing.”

Galan agrees, but Jane questions it. “If we do this now do we forfeit the combat bonus? The story has that come first. Was one of those little battles the Monster Fight?”

Kathy says, “You could have declared any of them to be the Monster Fight, if you wanted, and gotten the bonus. But maybe something bigger is coming, and you’ll need the bonus for that. And it doesn’t matter that this is out of sequence. Your guys know that. ‘In heroquests the events are important, but not always their order.’ OK, Hazeel, you are going to use your relationship to Barda to prove you’re sorry about the way you treated her. That’s 13, -20 for being in an alien world. That gives you a -7!”

“Uh-oh. Hey, what’s the bonus from those association guys back there? What do they give us?”

+3. Anything from Hazeel’s own stock to use?”

“How about an augment for my *Flirt and Seduce*?”

“That’s not enough. My *Scan for Danger? Fears Dragons? Urban Survival*?” [All are rejected.] “What’s her ability?”

“Unmitigated Anger at 13, +1 per year without word or visit from you.”

“Uh-oh.”

“I sent letters. And now is definitely the time to use the Sorrow Blessing!”

The Gods War

The Gods War is a time of war, tumult, and change. Several conflicts are widespread and continue for a long “time,” and so are common elements in many heroquests.

The Coming of Death: Every mythology has a version of this story. In general, it tells how Death comes to one entity, spreads to others, and eventually takes deities, great spirits, and the prophets and saints of old.

The Lesser Darkness: When the Sun falls to death, Night takes over the world. Trolls and other darkness things invade the surface of Glorantha, for the Sun God becomes the Emperor of the Underworld. Many Lesser Suns survive, but one by one they fall to the Darkness.

The Coming of Bad Weather: In every story of the Gods War, the weather is pleasant at the beginning and gets progressively worse. These patterns are not consistent, for deities, spirits, or holy wizards drive back the cold and wind time after time, making the climate pleasant again, only to eventually succumb.

The War for Above: Orlanth and Yelm and their pantheons wage an unending struggle for dominance of the Above.

The Flood: The waters of the world flood onto the land and nearly drown everything. Many people have their essential story of how a deity, spirit, or saint saved their land or people from drowning.

The War between Gods and Spirits: The two worlds never declare war on each other or act in a conscious, unified manner. Yet the conflicts between them are numerous, and grow more and more powerful and belligerent.

The Betrayals: In the West are many stories where powerful beings create, come under the influence of, or simply become the Devil. This in turn leads to the creation of various hostile animals, foreign peoples, elder races, deities, spirits, and demons.

The Coming of Chaos: The Great Mountain at the center of the world explodes, and the Chaos invasions to date pale in comparison to the great horrors that are released from the void. Existence is in jeopardy, and many peoples, entities, and things disappear from the world forever.



HEROQUESTING

Dropping Out and Falling Off

Questers may purposely drop out of their quest. Mistakes, failures, and bad luck can always happen on the Other Side. The questers may be severely wounded or be in danger of being devoured by dragons or absorbed by Chaos. Some quests can be stopped after certain stations, allowing the quester to return to the Mortal World with the benefits he has gained to that point. Other quests require that the entire myth be performed in order to gain *any* benefits; stopping early may inflict terrible curses on the quester and his supporters. A player hero can will himself out of the quest by performing an appropriate action and spending a hero point. He fades from the Hero Planes and reappears at the holy place where the quest began. He may be hurt, frightened, or at the brink of madness, but he is alive.

A hero can also fall off the path against his will. He may be forced out of the Hero Planes by a powerful entity, or he may die. Being killed in the Gods War does not always mean a physical death in the Mortal World, although it *might* if it occurs at a critical station (page 194), during a heroquest moment (page 202), or as part of a heroquest challenge (page 203). Even a “temporary” death casts the hero back into his body, which is always a traumatic ordeal. But he is alive, although probably physically, mentally, or magically wounded. Additionally, the foe that killed him or forced him out might become an adversary.

Whether a quester drops out of the quest or falls off the path, the quest is considered a failure. Any personal changes that occurred during the quest remain, good or bad, so he may bring back some benefit for himself. If he is involved in a contest when he drops out, he must withdraw or otherwise end it as he would any other. If he is defeated in the contest when he leaves, he suffers a penalty from it, as normal.

Regardless of his personal results, the quester’s community suffers a curse if they supported him, even if he never made it to the final station. They lose everything that they gave to support the quest (and so might permanently lose power, members, or ritual items), and suffer the same consequences that the quester does. These are not always literally the same thing, but they suffer an equivalent loss.

Opponents

The entities that confront you are among the greatest hazards you will face. Although the nature of the heroquest sets some of the danger, choosing your part can help determine the nature of your opponent. If you must confront Yu-Kargzant himself (instead of one of his sons or servitors), the great spirit himself comes forth in all of his glory. If you are the companion of a heroquester who is at the hero level, your opponents will be of the next level down—common daimones, spirits, or essences.

HeroQuest Opponent Power Levels	
Type of Opponent	Ability Rating
Great god (aspect), great spirits, Church founders, Zzabur	10W8 to 10W12
Deity, majestic spirit, prophet, saint, wizardry founder	10W5 to 10W8
Hero, subcult deity, demigod, weak majestic spirit, petty saint	1W3 to 10W5
Common daimon, simple spirit, typical essence	Less than 1W3

△ Hiding from Trolls

Bornborn escaped prowling trolls as he crossed the Fungal Forest, the Trees of Coal, and the Shadowleaf Miles. Beetles were on his track, but he tricked them. Shadowwing (who had been born of an eclipse) sailed overhead and from it came zombies to suck life from warm bodies.

As the band travels in the Fungal Forest, they have to escape the trolls who guard the nearby Castle of Lead. Mr. Puma is the scout, so Kathy says it is up to him to lead them safely. Mr. Puma is doing fine, but suddenly comes upon a troll scout. Although seemingly a minor encounter, Kathy says that it is a critical station, for if he fails the entire band will be captured and taken into the Underworld.

Mr. Puma has *Climb Tree* 15W in puma form (which he took as soon as he smelled the troll some time ago). He uses this to augment his *Hide* 18W, giving him a rating of 1W2. The troll has a combat rating of 10W3, but a *Darksense* rating of only 15W because his primary purpose is defense. Mr. Puma gets a minor victory, and so he is able to lead the group around the troll and safely on to the Trees of Coal.

Quest Levels

Performing a heroquest may seem impossibly difficult because the opposing entities in stories are so powerful. Fortunately, myths repeat themselves to tell the same story at different levels of understanding. There might be a story of a god doing something, another of a demigod hero doing the same, and often of a mortal hero doing it too. For example, one of the great Heortling stories involves Orlanth slaying the Blue Dragon, and liberating Heler the Rain God from its belly. A similar story is told about Barntar the Farmer, who must free Heler to fight Daga, Spirit of Drought. In the Dawn Age, the hero Jarankol Solarslayer used a variant of this myth to tame the Oslir River, and thus gained the aid of the river in his fight against Dara Happa.

This layered reality offers heroquesters an alternative. The greater the benefits you seek on a quest, or the longer you want them to last, the more powerful the opponents you will face. Conversely, you can face a lesser risk (both during the quest and if you fail) if you are willing to accept a lesser benefit. You might thus ask, “Can I just do the hero level of this myth?” and perhaps face only opponents of 10W3 ability instead of 10W6.

Most heroquesters recognize three levels of questing: communal, hero, and god.

Communal: The quester is a follower, one of the faceless masses. This level is common for people learning magic during worship. Typical foes are other members of the opposition’s followers, and almost always fall within known parameters.

Hero: At the hero level, the quester is a main character or companion. Foes usually fall within known parameters, but are often established heroes or Otherworld entities. Heroquest challenges are common (see page 203).

God: God level quests are dangerous but rewarding. The quester must be a main character. Foes are powerful, usually the gods, spirits, saints, or founders who opposed the original quester.

Because a person can only attempt a particular heroquest once as the main character, you must decide what type of benefit your hero seeks. If you misjudge your hero’s abilities (or if he is just unlucky), he can lose his only chance to succeed at the quest. (This is one reason heroes often perform practice quests.)

Unmapped Heroquests

It is possible to deviate from the known heroquests and strike off into uncharted territory. This method of questing is extremely dangerous, as there are no landmarks to guide the way. Great powers can be obtained in this way, but the likelihood of achieving them is small. Since no set landmarks are established the stations are unknown, and the opponents can be almost anything.

Religious practice requires that the player heroes act the same as the characters in their myth. Different or subversive actions are dangerous. Where a story requires a specific method or ability, then that one must be used. If it is not, the link with

the myth is broken and the questers are pulled off their path. This could take them into a variant of the myth, push them onto an unmapped heroquest, or even force them into the Great Darkness, the Chaos-dominated era after the Gods War.

Changing paths is dangerous not just for the quester and his supporters, but also for the people whose myths he is usurping and altering. This practice was discovered in the Dawn Age by the great hero Arkat, who is almost universally reviled. During the Imperial Age, the God Learners perfected this technique, and their alterations nearly destroyed the world. They are universally feared, and would be universally hated except that the world retaliated and destroyed the God Learners instead.

Expect Surprises

The Gods War is a time of terrible violence, change, and recovery. Surprise events occur all the time:

Alien Wind Blows: The very atmosphere shifts to be ruled by one of the Otherworld Winds. The alien world penalty applies to all the non-native types who try to do their magic here now.

Beast War Skirmish Draws Close: An aggressive alliance of spirit beasts is at war with divine and essence beasts. Emissaries from their army, often wolves or badgers, insist every animal identify its Otherworldly allegiance, including your pack beasts and bestial followers. They attack every beast that is not a spirit (or that does not agree to become one).

Census Dwarves: They are counting everyone and tabulating whether they are a soul, spirit, or essence.

Chaos: Chaos creatures are common in the Great Darkness, and can appear without warning in the middle of almost any story. They must always be destroyed.

Divine Hill Rises: A burst of god energy causes a daimon to grow into life from ordinary earth.

Dry Now: Your ocean, river, or lake is not here now. It might have been down there once, but now that is all just land. You will have to search for some secret water source.

Elemental Concentrations Appear: A huge body of water pours in without warning. A fire leaps out of control and takes over valleys and hillsides, burning without apparent fuel. Shadows flow out of caves or crevices, clinging to the trees and hanging from clouds and ragged air.

Fat God's Party: No one knows his name, nearly everyone approves of his presence. Some days of carnival always pass unnoticed. He almost never comes back.

Flooding: An ocean, bitter and salt, is rising to fill up the area. Everyone flees, makes rafts, or climbs high.

Forest Turns into Ghosts Overnight: The former wood and leaf have turned into translucent images now fading away.

Gigantic Animal Ancestor: Hares and rats the size of a house, wolves the size of a hill, or a bear the size of a small mountain. They are always of one of the worlds, usually the animist or theist.

A Heaviness Grounds Everyone: Everything is much, much heavier than usual. Nothing can fly. It is even hard to walk around.

Help Needed: A statue claims it is really a true being, and needs your help to get its natural form. Just sacrifice to it in the ways that it says, and it will be freed. You know this is a dangerous and foolhardy thing to do. Evil and destructive things are often entombed that way.

It is Gone: The place you knew is not there. Not uncommonly, known places change to be something else. Fields become badlands, perhaps a marsh with a village of frog people in it, or a lake populated with talking rowboats.

New River Flows: A water being leads, filling in gullies to move the stream uphill. Little streams do this, as do huge god and spirit rivers.

Overflight of Certami: Powerful angelic beings of swords and magic fly in formation overhead. They seek shadows, ghosts, and darkness to banish. Today, they are looking only for enemies from: darkness, water, earth, or storm (choose one).

Sudden Death: All nearby plants suddenly expire. They turn brown and wither, branches drop off dead, and may even molder and rot. Animals take fright and run away, then die of hunger.

Sudden Life: All the nearby area (even barren rock and burning surfaces) blooms with flourishing plant life, flowers and fruits teeming within only moments. The change may last forever, or even progress to have trees sprout and roar into fullness.

Too Early: The fortress or barn is not yet built; the person to meet is still a child; the artifact sought is not yet made.

Unusual or Extinct Animal: Often these are the doomed gazzam, the thunder beasts. They are huge animals, some like dinosaurs, others like mammalian megafauna, and others like only themselves.



The Fat God is a welcome encounter on any heroquest, even though otherworldly hangovers are the least worry for questers who succumb to his temptations, for they risk waking up in strange places, other times, or even different forms.

HEROQUESTING

Heroquest Moment

Your hero must watch for the proper times to use his support bonuses, the critical stations that will help him in the final encounter. When he is at the correct station, he declares it to be the **heroquest moment**. This activates the bonus. You say, “this is the heroquest moment,” and invoke your bonus. The contest that ensues should be an extended contest.

Once the heroquesters recognize the opportunity available in a station and invoke the heroquest moment, an extended contest is expected. The foe probably has its minions to help, the benefits of its native setting, and other assistance. Many modifiers will be used, and the heroes typically expend at least a few hero points. Heroquesting bands with enough time plan ahead and work to get support and magic that will help them in this place.

This may seem straightforward, but recognition and substitution is a very slippery aspect of heroquesting, and questers can easily make mistakes. All heroquests contain uncertainty, and questers often encounter opponents or obstacles that are strange or unlooked for. If the hero invokes a bonus at the wrong station he might benefit from it there, but he will not be able to use it later when he recognizes the correct, critical station. (If the hero fails to identify the correct station, the narrator might not even allow him use of the bonus, now or when he does reach the critical station.) If he fails to recognize the correct stations and use the magic correctly, he is likely to fail the heroquest.

For example, a quest may require that the hero survive being ambushed by trolls. If the hero finds himself assaulted not by trolls but by darkness demons, the main character may choose to invoke a heroquest moment then and there, putting the ambush he faces in place of the one in the myth he has learned. He applies the bonus (as described in “Bonus Applications” on page 196) and is eventually victorious over the demons. However, if he travels on and is later ambushed by trolls, he will realize that he did not use his bonus at the correct time. The bonus was intended to help him against the trolls, and without it he may not do as well, thus lessening the bonus he will receive at the final station. He might even be defeated in this station. Alternately, the hero might be ambushed two or three times, but never by trolls. He might never invoke the moment, and so lose the bonus that his community offered him. These ambiguities add danger and uncertainty to the quest.

△ Wolf Demon

A great wolf attacked, but he fought and killed it.

“A huge wolf, with a pack of lesser ones. They all have big bull horns. Horned wolves.”

“How many?”

“One leader, for your leader in combat; and one other for each of you, and one for each supporter.”

“This the Attack of the Great Wolf,” intones Hengal. “In the land where babies are born and the elderly die with wisdom, there are people who chant against this. I call on them now to help Bonborn the fighter here.”

“What’s my bonus?” asks Bill. “How do I use this spirit bison?”

“It trots up next to you. You can use your relationship to it as your ability in this contest. Use all your combat augments and magic and so on. It’s a melee.”

“Do we get a bonus too?”

“Yes, of course. You are all one. You are Bonborn, and though Hengal is the Fighting Bonborn in this event, you all contribute and risk individually here, each fighting his own

wolf. Or you could, if you want, just leave it all to Bonborn and simply act as supporters. Trouble with that is that you’re going to be tougher than your wolves and likely to win, thereby adding to the net success of this fight. If you’re supporters you just cancel each other out. But it’s your choice.”

“We’ll fight separately.”

“OK, your community has given each of you a bonus of +2 for this event.”

Rick says, “I’m going to go for a maximum augment, and even use a hero point to get a critical success if I can. This is the heroquest moment, and I expect to use up whatever I have.”

“But it’s what we save for,” says Frederick.

“It’s what *you* save for,” says Steve. “I put it all in my magic, too.”

“We’ll be in great shape, then, if we meet the Big Wave. Great.”

Station Results

Regardless of the type of station, all use the standard contest mechanics to determine the outcome. Sometimes success requires that the quester lose the contest and be hurt (or worse), perhaps even permanently losing abilities or magic in a heroquest challenge (see page 203). Communities never support such stations, because they would suffer from the defeat along with the hero, even though the loss is what is required for ultimate success. The hero must thus face this station alone, perhaps with aid from his companions.

Failure to meet a station’s objectives has consequences. Through the rest of the heroquest something will not be right. The quest can go on (in some cases *must* go on) but with dire circumstances known to be ahead. Heroes have probably heard stories of others who failed at this moment. Such knowledge might be helpful to them. Or not. At the very least, the advantage that would be gained at this particular station is lost.

Modifier Gained

The modifier acquired at a station depends upon the success or failure of the heroquester and the magnitude of the opponent (see page 200). The magnitude is equal to the ability rating (*not target number*) used for the opponent’s resistance.

How and when this modifier applies depends on the heroquest. A critical station usually affects the final encounter. A companion’s victory at his special station usually helps the main character at a specific station. Victory at other stations aids a station in between, sometimes a specific episode chosen by the narrator, sometimes the very next station, and sometimes a station or event chosen by the quester.

Heroquest Station Results

Complete Victory: Bonus equal to opponent’s ability rating $\times \frac{1}{2}$.

Major Victory: Bonus equal to opponent’s ability rating $\times \frac{1}{4}$.

Minor Victory: Bonus equal to opponent’s ability rating $\times \frac{1}{10}$.

Marginal Victory: +1.

Tie: No modifier.

Marginal Defeat: -1.

Minor Defeat: Penalty equal to opponent’s ability rating $\times \frac{1}{10}$.

Major Defeat: Penalty equal to opponent’s ability rating $\times \frac{1}{4}$.

Complete Defeat: Penalty equal to opponent’s ability rating $\times \frac{1}{2}$.

△ Hazeel is Dead

Hazeel is dead. Without his old combat magic he has fallen, his arrows broken, his bow bitten in half, his throat torn out. Galan, riotous and rampaging from victory to victory, tramples the triumphant wolf, then runs down the last fleeing survivor.

“You can see its spirit separate from the trampled corpse,” says Kathy. “Its ghost comes up to slip away into the Spirit World.”

“Can I put it into a fetish?” asks Bill. “Can I use my *Spirit Face* to bind it?”

“Umm, not quite. One roll, your *Spirit Face* against its best defense. If you win you get a permanent bonus against wolves, a fear of them if you lose.”

“Considering its best defense is probably 10W2 then I’ll skip the chance.”

“OK, Steve, Hazeel is dead. What do you want to do? You can play Black Cat, your guardian. You can make the decision about what it does and where it uses its magic. Or you can run monsters for me.”

Side Benefits

Individual heroes receive direct boons from a heroquest: the magical **side benefits** obtainable at certain stations. Stories often include an opportunity for a hero to make his own friend, fight his own victory, and find his own treasure. Certain places in the Gods War always give a chance to obtain something personal by performing acts outside the core story of the myth. An enterprising quester is not compelled to give away this reward to his supporting community. Rewards might be an improvement to an ability, a new mundane or magical ability, special magic, or something less tangible. These directed improvements are benefits of story and opportunity. Some occur at known stations, others are secrets, and some are apparently “random,” impossible to plan for in advance.

The magnitude of the side benefit is related to the victory level achieved by the companion at his station. It is thus possible for a companion to gain a powerful benefit even if the main character does poorly or even fails the quest completely.

Not all aspects of a side benefit need be beneficial. Victory at a station may involve the hero receiving a flaw in addition to the side benefit. For example, a troll stealing fire from the solar god Yelmadio at the Hill of Gold receives disfiguring and painful scars; there is no way to avoid this if he is to be victorious. Heroquest challenges often give the victor a permanent ritual foe out of the opponent that he defeats (who is usually a heroquester, not the actual god). In a similar manner, failure at a critical station can have permanent consequences. This is true even if the station is one that the quester is required to fail at for the quest as a whole to succeed. All such consequences are common when the station involves a heroquest challenge (see below).

△ Duped by the Raccoon

All the sources agree: Bonborn went to the right of the mountain and gave the Raccoon a diamond.

So, Mr. Puma, you are the front man, the scout. Here, in the shadowy God World, you are not out of place. It is your job to go ahead and see if there is anyone here except the raccoon, and deliver the Gemborg diamond.

You see the creature there, amidst the shadows, and you both give the right passwords and stuff. You turn over the

crystal to its clutchy little paws, and suddenly without knowing quite how it happened there is a person there instead.

He says, “Mr. Puma, my good man. I am Ferodium Ezar, the sorcerer behind Danbrilla the Great. You and I are here, now, so I can make you an offer.”

“How did you get into this place?”

“I am of raccoon blood, from long and long ago, and I learned their story and came here to meet you. I thought I would just be collecting this gem, but instead I have a chance to free you. If you will help me now, and serve me loyally by bond on your magic and your body, then I can give to you what you wish: to be human. It is yours, if you are mine. And after your wish comes true, you are once again your own, not mine. Just help me once, now.”

Heroquest Challenge

Some heroquests are undertaken expressly to gain new magical abilities. Many religions have traditional challenges that their worshippers can undergo with a good chance of success if the preparations and teachings are followed. This type of **heroquest challenge** is a formal contest in which a quester pits a portion of his very self in a magical battle against an opponent (who takes on a similar risk).

The heroquest challenge is a key element of heroquesting. Heroquest challenges are highly ritualized, and are very difficult, more so if the quester does not follow the steps exactly. Before the quest starts the challenger must declare the ability he will stake and prepare the invocation ahead of time.

Heroquest challenges must be deliberate. Only personal opponents can force a challenge upon an unsuspecting person, and even then the victim will have some warning. If detected in advance, a person can actively resist the draw and sometimes avoid the challenge.

The story is always the starting point. A myth will tell how an entity or hero obtained a great power. A hero can reenact that story in his turn by going to the same location in the Gods War and following the story’s progress. At the climactic station, he and his opponent each pay 2 hero points and name the ability that they declared before the quest. Each risks a portion of his very being in the challenge by wagering his entire rating in that ability, which can be anything on his character sheet with its own rating. The actual **stake** of the challenge is equal to the lower rating of the two abilities wagered.

The two opponents face each other in a normal extended contest using the abilities they wagered. When the contest is over, the contestant who is defeated subtracts the stake from his ability rating; if this reduces his rating to 0 or below, the entire ability is lost. (Depending on the quest, you might actually lose the ability forever, with no option to regain or improve it using hero points.) The loser may suffer further penalties, perhaps a reduction in his *Piety* ability or a flaw reflecting his lack of faith in himself or his religion.

Results for the victor depend on his stated goal when he began the quest. If he performed the quest for community gain, the power taken becomes a magical ability the community can use, usually as a function of its guardian (see “Functions” in the Relationships chapter, page 94). If the quest was done for personal benefit, the victor gains a new magical ability with a rating equal to the stake. Even if he already has an existing ability that is the same as or similar to the one he wins, the power is always recorded as a new ability. He can of course use one ability to augment the other.



The nature of the magical ability is determined by the quest and opponent, not by the victor, even if he has concentrated his magic—a theist could learn a spell, or an adept gain a spirit. Physical objects taken by one contestant can become the property of the winner, although research might be needed to use them. Because the hero points are paid in advance, this benefit requires no hero points to cement.

The hero must face the heroquest challenge alone, without aid from the companions who accompanied him on the quest. If he asked for a community support bonus for this station, he can of course use it here.

The Climax

The final station of a heroquest should always include an extended contest, perhaps an elaborate one. If every preparation was made correctly and each station completed properly along the way, the main character should have bonuses and benefits to help out here.

Even if victory seems assured, play out the climax and conclusion of the myth. As the narrator, share the results of the long journey in a shared storytelling moment with the players.

△ Getting Ahead

With the Raccoon's help, he came at last to Isfalt Valley. Bonborn had to fight, and won only because he carried the Rock of Life that his family had given him. His family helped him then, as did his master.

They see the head. It opens its mouth, and out of it jump about a dozen things. It's the Little Claws People. They look fierce. They assemble quickly into a formation here. You can see their magic popping on. A glow here, a ripple there, the usual stuff.

"I've got the rocks," says Galan. "You hold the bugs off."

The critters leap forward and are on top of everyone before any reaction is possible. They smell like spit.

"Let's rock!" says Galan, and snatches up his Crushing Rocks

from a pouch. He smashes two, then his spirit ally snarls and flies into the maw of a third so that it bursts. Galan sits up, but the two faces in the eyes stare at him and beams of power zap him so hard his clothes nearly burn off. His rocks, sacred and fetish both, clatter to the ground.

He charges full tilt at the head, his lance held upward to pierce it. One of the claw things is still on him, gnawing away. The lance pierces the head, deep, and snaps off as Galan rides underneath. On the far side, Galan looks up over his shoulder. Another huge blast from the back of the head cuts Bison Brain in two and throws Galan to the ground.

Jane shoots a dart into a thing holding Mr. Puma, who throttles one that was grabbing for Hengal. Hengal in turn kills two that are circling Jane. Mr. Puma tries to blast the Isfalt with his spell, but it looks at him and he fares worse than Galan. He is smashed flat, smoldering, by the twin deadly vision. Jane dashes to heal him, and does not resist the ripping claws that shred her. Alas, the job is undone when her parts fall off, severed at the joints. Hengal, ignoring his own wounds, strikes again to keep the things off of Galan, who shakes his head to clear the pain.

"Let's rock," he says again, and gets up as Hengal falls at last. He turns, and Rockface is there, holding one last rock, the Rock of Life. Galan takes it and hurls it at the leering head. It strikes and hits so hard that it goes all the way through, and on the other side knocks out the great eye that watches there. And the two smaller ones too, one at each eyehole, so that the faces there are smashed in, broken. That isn't enough, and Galan takes out two fire rocks and two death rocks and hurls them into the eyes of the faces in the eyes. That is enough, life and death together destroying the Isfalt. That is its secret, its weakness.

"Go home now," says Rockface to him.

"My friends..." he protests.

"They are already gone. Go that way, and find your way home."

And he does, carrying Hengal's barely-breathing body over one shoulder and what is left of Jane under the other arm.

The Return

No quest is over until the heroes return. Describe the heroes handing over whatever ritual object holds the blessing or other reward to the community that helped them. End with celebrations or relaxation, and give extra hero points for finishing an adventure.

Coming Home

Heroquesters generally return first to the Otherworld home they started from, so that theists return to their god's house, animists to their great spirit's demesne, and wizards and orderlies to a node. This may or may not be difficult. Many times, the hero simply "transitions" from the final station of the quest back to the correct Otherworld, the Hero Planes taking him back to where he started. At other times (especially on a failed quest), he may have to retrace his steps back through the events, possibly encountering any foes that remain from the first time. In extreme cases, he may be forced from the Hero Planes directly to the Mortal World, perhaps at his starting point, perhaps thousands of miles from it.

Regardless, once there, the questers must reenter the Mortal World at the place that they began, be it temple, shamanic circle, or portal of power. If the portal was left open for them, the

return is easy. If the portal was closed behind them, they may have to cross the Otherworld barrier again, though perhaps with the aid of their Otherworld patron. It is normally impossible to travel to a different location on the Mortal World using this method. If two questers started in different temples, even holding hands as they walked through the door to the Mortal World would not keep them from returning each to his own temple. The barrier also ensures that the quester returns to his own time, instead of the past or future.

Quest Success

If the main character is victorious in the final station, he returns with the reward that he sought (or that the heroquest truly has to give). This reward can take any of several forms: a new function for the community guardian, a bonus to a ritual, special knowledge, or a relationship between the community and another group, whose friendship itself is the result of the quest. If the climactic station of the quest involves a heroquest challenge, the ability gained in the challenge is the reward.

If the reward is a bonus, its value is determined by his victory level at the climactic station. Thus, if the main character achieves a minor victory against the Rain Dragon (whose rating

was 10 $\frac{1}{3}$), his community gains a bonus of $70 \times \frac{1}{10} = +7$ to its *Rainmaking* ritual. If the reward is a new function for the guardian (or a new ability for the hero), it starts with a rating equal to 12 plus the bonus. Thus, if the clan did not have a *Rainmaking* ritual, its guardian might gain a *Bring Rain* function with a rating of $12 + 7 = 19$. For as long as it lasts.

Depending on what the quester sought when he left, you may need to modify this. Although the magnitude of the bonus is based on the hero's level of victory, the duration cannot be, since a hero on an easy quest will almost always achieve a better victory level than one attempting a hard quest. Instead, adjust the bonus based on the hero's stated goal. If he sought a one-time blessing to make a baby, it might be appropriate to triple the final bonus for a single use. If he sought a long-term bonus, perhaps an annual blessing on the crops or an ability the community guardian can use this year (only), the bonus given in "Station Results" is appropriate. If he sought a *permanent* benefit for the community, such as an ability permanently added to its guardian, the bonus should be multiplied by $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, or even $\frac{1}{10}$ to determine the final value. This may result in a bonus of less than +1, in which case the desired permanent blessing is not obtained, even though the quester succeeded in the quest. Such is the difficulty of bringing powerful magic back from the Otherworlds.

Quest Failure: The Darkness

Failure at the quest results in the advancement of the Great Darkness. Often at the end of a failed quest, the Darkness (in one or more forms) crowds in and surrounds the place of the failure. The questers bring part of the Darkness back, which lingers to trouble their everyday world.

So the community suffers a penalty, calculated from the final station as on page 204. For example, if the quester returns with a minor defeat against the Rain Dragon, the clan receives a $70 \times \frac{1}{10} = -7$ penalty to any ability or ceremony it performs that is related to the original benefit sought.

Finishing the Story

Like any adventure, the narrator should award hero points to the player heroes when they return. The narrator should determine any other rewards using the same standards as for mundane adventures.

△ Coming Home in Triumph and Sorrow

The heroquesters stumble back into the Court of Earth, the Mortal World seeming dull and lifeless after the vivid shades and indescribable textures of the Hero Planes. They have succeeded in their quest, defeating Isfalt and thus robbing Danbrilla of her special powers, but at a terrible cost. Hazeel is dead, torn apart by wolves. His goonda blinks mournfully and begins to rock and keen to itself. Mr. Puma is also gone, his true humanity proven by his life and his death, his search finally over. Remarkably, Jane lives, but she may never recover, her body cut to pieces by Little Claws People.

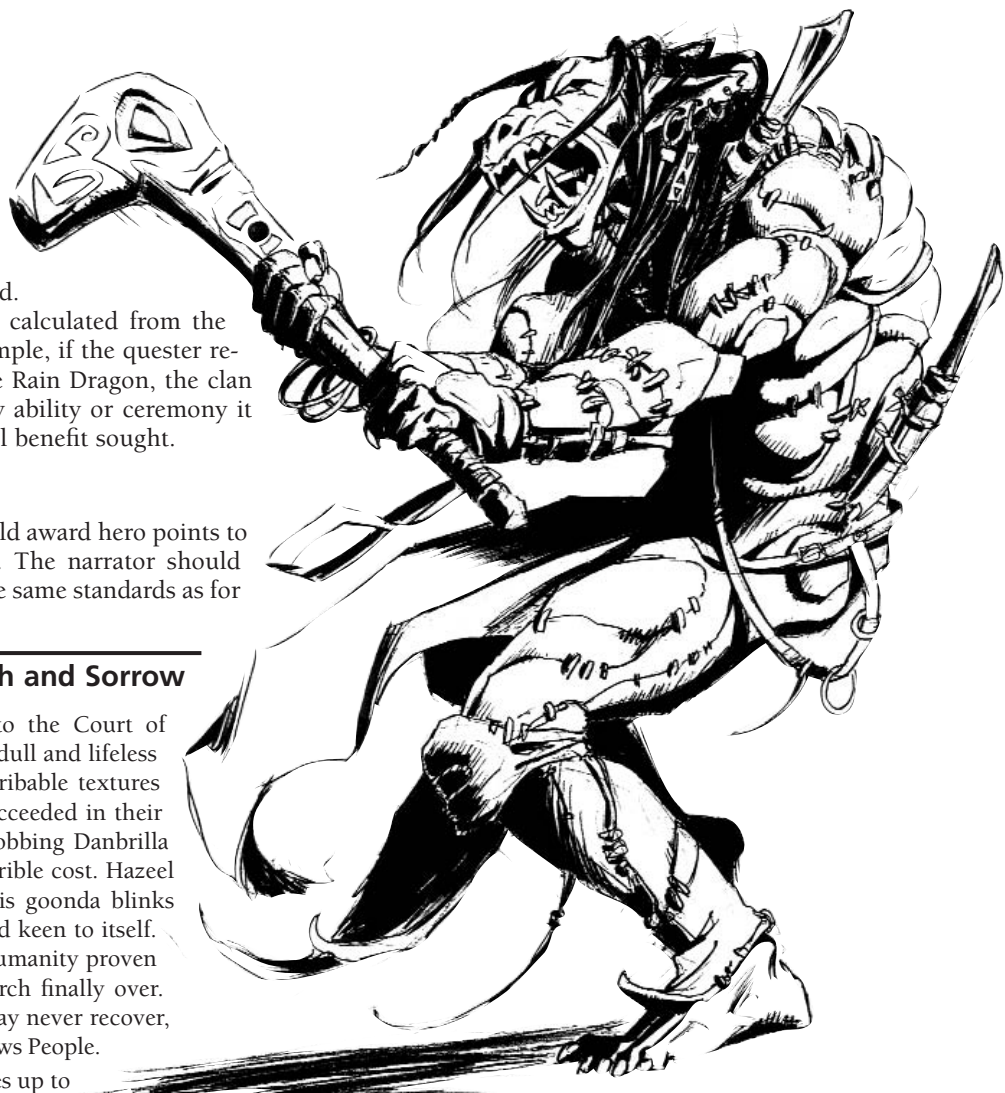
Kathy: Hengal, Uncle Farhenri shuffles up to you and just wraps you in a bear hug. He's crying, but also muttering, "You are a true hero, your father would be proud."

Rick: Sheesh, if this is what being a hero means, maybe I should stick to farming!

Kathy: Around you, the people from the league, the priests, the armsmen, everyone who gathered to support you, are looking haggard, but they are beginning to applaud. First the armsmen start beating their short spears on the ground, then everyone starts cheering and rushing forward. Even Valdamare looks approvingly at you all, which is probably a first.

Rick: I'm expecting some serious goodwill now.

Kathy: You'll get it. What about the rest of you? Galan, you've never really felt part of Hengal's people, but they are treating you just as well as him. There are wine skins being pushed into your hands, women hanging garlands around your necks, men clapping you on the back. They know this was rough, they were part of you while you were on the quest, and later they will join you in mourning Mr. Puma and Hazeel. But here and now, they know that you succeeded in a quest no one else has accomplished in living memory. To them, guys, you really are heroes!



The trolls, or Uz, are a powerful race of nocturnal beings hostile to humans, dwarves, and elves. They can eat anything, including stone, but are burned by iron when they touch it. Here, a troll warrior prepares to kill (and then eat) his opponent.





CREATURES

A million kinds of beasts live in Glorantha and appear in all the stories of the world, from common horses and birds, to huge gazzam (dinosaurs) and dragons, to minor intelligent races like the durulz of Dragon Pass (who resemble ducks) or the goonda of Teshnos (who resemble orangutans). Some are allies or foes, a few are magical harbingers, others are just food. Strange, magical, and unearthly creatures live alongside ordinary beasts. One of these creatures might be a retainer or sidekick, or could even be your hero. You will meet many more than are told of here. These are some common and ordinary creatures, some supernatural ones, and some just plain weird things, all to give you a rough picture of the animal world.

This chapter gives typical abilities for common specimens; large and exceptional creatures and leaders have higher ratings and more abilities. The narrator should adjust the numbers to fit her vision and challenge the heroes.

Definitions Used

Species Keyword: These are given for intelligent species. All members of the race possess these minimum ability ratings.

Typical Abilities: Only skills useful for play are included. This indicates, in most cases, that creature's specialty (scouting, carrying, hunting, etc.).

Magical Abilities: Some creatures have innate magical abilities, and intelligent creatures usually have common magic, specialized religions, or both. Chaos creatures often have *Chaos features* (see page 208).

Weapons and Armor: Describes the normal type of natural armor and weapons a creature has. For intelligent species, this also includes common manufactured weapons and armor.

Tactics: Combat or flight strategies.

Supernatural Entities: Some creatures have supernatural relatives that can be summoned or may otherwise appear in the Mortal World.

Approximate Size			
Large rating	Example	Small rating	Example
6	Human	6	Human
15	Troll	15	Rubble runner, large rat
5 \mathbb{W}	Horse	5 \mathbb{W}	Mouse
2 \mathbb{W} 2	Mammoth	2 \mathbb{W} 2	Large beetle

Large and Small

Many creatures possess a *Large* or *Small* ability to reflect a size significantly different than that of humans. (Humans are considered to have the normal minimum ability rating of 6 in both *Large* and *Small*.) In addition to describing relative size, these abilities may be used in contests.

A human has neither *Large* nor *Small*. These abilities are inappropriate for most heroes without special magic: a human cannot grow to the size of a giant simply by spending hero points. Heroes may possess abilities such as *Big* or *Slender*, but without magic these remain within the hero's racial norms, and your narrator may limit their use in contests.

Unharmed by Non-magical Weapons

Many supernatural creatures cannot be harmed by non-magical weapons. When a hero engages such a creature in a contest, a purely mundane attack is not an appropriate ability if his goal is to *harm* the creature (although it can be used to defend against them). Fighting abilities augmented by magic are appropriate abilities in such a contest, although the attacker should not gain a bonus from an ordinary, non-magical sword.

Aldryami

Aldrya is the great being of the forests. She is the ancestress of green plants, and her descendants are collectively known as Aldryami. To most people, Aldryami means the elves, which are humanoid plants, for they are the only Aldryami most people ever encounter. Outsiders call them the Plant Tribe, the People of the Wood, Tree People, or even Wooden People.

All Aldryami have an innate connection to their native forest that they call the Song of Aldrya, which outsiders call *Elfsense*.

The Hero Wars are between...Dragons and People

Dragons are horrible, fearsome monsters that defy the cosmos and its gods. They are from outside the rest of the world and have strange, terrifying powers. Their descendants, the dragonewts, are an unpredictable and fearsome race. Once before, dragons ate everyone in Dragon Pass. They bide their time, and plot their own course of fate.

Elfsense keeps them in tune with the rhythms of life and provides empathy toward other plants. Unnatural disturbances in the forest cause a discord in the Song and alert nearby Aldryami, who deal with the problem. With *Elfsense* an Aldryami can touch a plant and learn information such as its health and the suitability of its soil. This sense gives them a +10 to all abilities while in an aldryami forest. All Aldryami feel uncomfortable if they leave their forests, for their *Elfsense* is useless. They operate as if under an alien world penalty (for a net penalty of -10 to base ability ratings). Sometimes an elf is born with deficient *Elfsense*. These individuals usually end up as rootless renegades and, unable to feel part of society, often leave their forest. They have no *Elfsense* ability, and so gain neither bonus nor penalty because of it.

All aldryami oare associated with specific plants. Elves are associated with specific trees, runners with small plants such as ivy or holly, and sprites with different flowers. Dryads are spirits associated with trees as well, and are often leaders.

Aldryami in this book appear under Dryad (page 209), Elf (page 212), and Sprite (page 217). The various tree spirits described in the Animism chapter (see pages 149-150) are also Aldryami.

Bear (Brown Bear, Grizzly Bear, Rathorarva)

Several species of bears live in Genertela. Bears rarely attack humans for food, but many become violent if they or their cubs are threatened. A typical brown bear found in forests throughout many parts of Genertela is given below.

Typical Abilities: Charge Foe 2L, Forage 5L, Grapple and Bite 8L, Large 15L, Move Quickly 15, Scent Intruder 15L, Strong 10L, Swim 19.

Weapons and Armor: Claws and Teeth +2, Fur and thick skin +2.

Tactics: Bears attack with *Grapple and Bite* (8L) augmented by *Large* (+4), *Strong* (+3), and its natural weapons and fur (+4 = 19L), and perhaps *Charge Foe* (+2 = 1L2).

Supernatural Entities: Brown bears are kin to Irgara, one of a large family of spirit bears.

Bison (Erambath)

Bison range across Prax, the Wastes, and Pent in herds often numbering hundreds. Smaller groups of ten to twenty live in the forests of Peloria.

Typical Abilities: Butt 20, Charge Foe 7L, Large 10L, Run 8L, Scent Predator 18, Strong 10L.

Weapons and Armor: Horns +1, Thick hide +2.

Tactics: Bison usually act in groups, such as a batch of males defending a herd. They run away from threats when possible but react aggressively if they cannot, especially when their calves are threatened. If provoked, a bison lowers its head to *Charge Foe* (7L), augmented with *Large* (+3), *Strong* (+3), and its natural weapons and thick hide (+3 = 16L). Without room to charge, it can only *Butt* (9L with augments).

Supernatural Entities: The Praxian bison are children of Erambath, a daughter of the great spirit Eiritha (see page 145). The magical bison are her children and servants.

Broo (Goatkin)

All right-thinking beings hate broo. These filthy, fecund beings are ferocious and wildly destructive, delight in filth and corruption, and repulsive in their appearance and habits. Their

purpose and nature is to befoul humanity and the world, for they are of Chaos. Broo have been driven away into wilderness regions, but they are a persistent evil and still raid farms or other settlements. Broo are particularly common in the Wastes.

Broo are born when they eat their way out of their mother, killing it and devouring the body. They are humanoid but have many animal features, especially those that derive from their mother. In the Wastes they resemble antelopes, and in the forests of Ralios they are often deer-like. Since it is difficult for broo to impregnate dangerous creatures such as most carnivores, only rare broo resemble such animals. Regardless of their heritage, all broo are immune to disease and poison.

Species Keyword: Head Butt 13, Infest with [Disease] 5L, Repulsive 19, Tough 1L.

Typical Broo Raider

Typical Abilities: Broo Customs 13, Broo Tradition Knowledge 17, Club Fighting or Spear Fighting 18, Follower of Mallia or Follower of Thed 19, Head Butt 18, Know Local Area 13, Stealthy 14, Track 12, Worship Thed 18.

Magical Abilities: About 1 in 3 broo possesses a random Chaos feature.

Weapons and Armor: Club or spear +3, horns +1, crude sling +2.

Tactics: Broo seek to overwhelm their foes with numbers, and rarely plan their raids in any detail. Because broo weapons are often smeared in filth, and because broo are so rancid and foul, anyone they injure is automatically exposed to the diseases they carry. Broo shamans often send disease spirits to weaken foes before an attack.

Supernatural Entities: At their perverted worship rites the broos summon their terrible ancestors, and among them cavort demonic spirit things from the Underworld.



Three of the twisted spawn of Chaos known as broo look for their next prey. Gluttonous, disease-ridden, sexually voracious, and wantonly destructive, they are the enemy of all civilized peoples and, indeed, of the natural order. Philosophers may ask whether they are the sorriest victims of Chaos, fathered by unnatural intercourse and doomed to a life of insatiable brutality, but most reply that they suffer no woe that cannot be cured by a sharp spear-point or well-aimed arrow.

Centaur (Beast-man, Horse-man)

Centaur's resemble horses with human head, torso, and arms instead of a horse's head and neck. They eschew clothing and use only basic tools, but are expert musicians and archers. They live in patriarchal herds much as horses do; most are hunters, but semiprofessional warriors exist, as do priests and shamans.

In southern Dragon Pass centaurs are leaders of a nonhuman alliance called the beast-men. They hold diligently to their ancestral domain called Beast Valley.

Centaur's are dedicated to preserving their natural wilds and hostile towards cultivation. Centaur's and other beast-men are also friendly to elves and most nymphs. Centaur's speak their own language, but most speak the local human tongue as well to better deal with their neighbors.

Species Keyword: Agile 12, Hoof Fighting 14, Jump 1LW, Large 10LW, Run Fast 1LW, Strong 5LW.

Typical Centaur Hunter

Typical Abilities: Archery 8LW, Beast Valley Tradition Knowledge 16, Centaur Customs 14, Know Local Area 13LW, Lance Attack 14, Play Lyre 18, Track 1LW, Worship [Great Spirit].

Weapons and Armor: Hooves +1, lance +4, bow and arrows +3.

Tactics: Centaur's prefer to skirmish. If forced to melee, they lower their lances and charge to bring their full weight to bear; augment *Lance* (14 +2) with *Large* (+3) and *Strong* (+3 = 2LW). In close quarters, centaur's use the advantage of height and strength to overpower foes. They knock them to the ground where they can trample them, augmenting *Hoof Fighting* (14) with *Large* (+3) and *Hooves* (+1 = 18). Centaur's often lead other types of beast-men into battle.

Chaos Creatures

Chaos blights the world. Its characteristic is an unworldly evil that causes horrible mutations to natural things. Its influence has created many unnatural creatures, spirits, and deities.

Chaos creatures in this book appear under Broo (page 207), Gorp (page 213), Hydra (page 215), and Walktapus (page 220).

Daimones

Daimones encountered in the Inner World are either natural inhabitants or have been summoned by priests and devotees. Such beings share the nature of those they follow, so that there are healing daimones, storm daimones, and the like. In the God World itself, many of the daimones are the remains of creatures now extinct, the souls of departed mortals, or other beings with no single allegiance. Such daimones still embody theist power, however, and are likely to have allied themselves with the rulers of whichever part of the Divine Realms they live in, if only for the sake of safety.

Daimones in this chapter appear under Ghosts (page 212), Ice Daimon (page 215), and Night Fury (page 216). Other daimones are described in the Theism chapter on page 129.

Deer

Deer are common in and around all Genertelan forests, hunted by man and beast. They are generally harmless and flee at the slightest sign of danger. Male and female deer live in separate herds which come together only during the autumn rut. Fallow deer and roe deer are the most common species of small deer. See also Shell Deer (page 217).

Typical Abilities: Dodge Combat 18, Hide in Cover 15LW, Large 10, Leap 12, Nervous 18, Scan for Danger 18, Scent Predator 12LW, Sprint 18LW.

Males only—Wrestle with Antlers 13.

Weapons and Armor: Antlers +2 (males only).

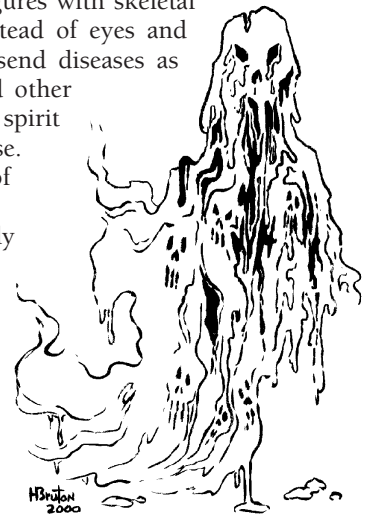
Tactics: Deer are cautious to a fault; most contests will start with the deer's *Scent Predator* (12LW) augmented by *Scan for Danger* (+2) and *Nervous* (+2 = 16LW). Although males can attack with their antlers (13 +1) augmented with their *Large* (+2 = 16), they rarely do so except in contests with each other or when cornered. Females of most breeds lack antlers altogether.

Supernatural Entities: These small deer are all under the protection of Damala, a deer spirit. Her descendants, who are demigod leaders of large herds or sometimes entire species, are most likely to be met. Most species of deer have no Otherworld connection at all.

Disease Spirit

Disease spirits are Otherworld spirits that possess living things and cause illness. When manifested, they appear as emaciated gray clouds or as insubstantial figures with skeletal limbs and with gaping holes instead of eyes and mouths. Some wicked shamans send diseases as curses. Broos (see page 207) and other Chaos creatures worship the evil spirit Mallia, and regularly spread disease.

There are hundreds of types of disease spirits. Their effects range from mild inconveniences to deadly afflictions that can kill a victim in just a few hours. The most powerful plagues are unnaturally virulent. To reflect their potency, such disease spirits have an edge (Λ); see "Edges and Handicaps" in the Narrating chapter, page 186, for mechanics.



Chaos Features

Many chaotic creatures have Chaos features, terrible powers that have allowed them to survive in a harsh world. Although detrimental Chaos features are common, they are contrary to the creature's survival, and hence are rarely seen by non-chaotic beings.



Sample Chaos Features

Absorb [Type of Magic]	Immune to [Substance]
Armored Hide	Overpowering Stench
Belch Fire	Reflect [Type of Magic]
Demoralize Enemy	Regenerate
Drain [Type of Ability]	Resist [Type of Magic]
Excrete Poison from Body	Spirit Attacks after Death
Fight Multiple Foes	Spurt Acid
Fight without Penalty Until Dead	Strong
Great Leap	Swallow Opponent
Hardy	Third Arm (or Tentacle)
	Undetectable
	Walk on [Element]

Magical Abilities: Hidden Possession 20.

Sample Disease ratings—Belly Bloat 2 to 6, Black Dot Fever 15, Brain Fever 12 to 5 \mathbb{L} , Bubonic Plague 18 \wedge 35, Cough in Wet 5 \mathbb{L} to 15 \mathbb{L} , Cross-Eye 19, Dizzy Attack 12 to 2 \mathbb{L} , Flower Allergy 10 to 10 \mathbb{L} , Gut Blood 15 to 18, Hiding Cough 10 to 1 \mathbb{L} , Hot Skin Ulcer 3 \mathbb{L} , Little Cough 12, Ringing Ears 10 to 8 \mathbb{L} , Shakes 5 to 5 \mathbb{L} 2, Sniffles 18 to 5 \mathbb{L} 2, Three Sneezes 18, Trots 10 to 19, Yellow Fever 5 \mathbb{L} .

Tactics: Disease spirits attempt to possess appropriate living things using their *Hidden Possession*. If victorious, the spirit integrates itself into the victim's body. Even if a disease spirit does not possess a person, their presence can serve as a source of infection.

Dragon (Dream Dragon, Frost Dragon)

To most people outside of Dragon Pass and Kralorela, “dragon” refers to these creatures. They are terrible monsters that ravage the countryside and disrupt all social and cosmic order. They are huge, reptilian in appearance, and seemingly genderless. They fly using tremendous wings that grow from their shoulders. They are irrational, greedy, and violently destructive. In Dragon Pass they are called “dream dragons,” for people there know that they are merely the dreams of the true dragons (see below).

Dream dragons are as physical as any other creature, a frightening tribute to the draconic powers of thought. While true dragons sleep, their subconscious desires take solid form. Only when the dream dragon dies does its true nature become apparent: over the course of seasons or years its body slowly dissipates into nothingness rather than rotting away.

Dragons are as varied as the dreams that spawn them, but all are solitary. Although only a thought themselves, they are at least as intelligent as humans. They often possess a wide range of magical abilities, which may seem to be spells, spirits, or feats, but are actually none of those.

The frost dragon described below is rare in the Dragon Pass region, but occasionally seen in winter. Many people say that they are the creations of a true dragon rumored to live in or beneath Ormfang, a peak in the Rockwood Mountains. Other types of dream dragon show a great variation of size, speed, natural weapons, armor, and so forth.

Frost dragons lack the violent and destructive tendencies of most dream dragons. Instead, they are said to manifest a true dragon's prideful nature, for they remain aloof from all lesser creatures. Nonetheless, they may be enraged, and can blast a mortal with icy winds or freezing breath should he be so presumptuous as to approach. They look magnificent, their scales having a sheen resembling precious metals such as silver or gold.

What are True Dragons?

Glorantha's true dragons are huge and terrifying, beyond the comprehension of mortals. They are like pieces of geography rather than living beings; so immense that some mountain ranges are actually dragons piled with the dirt and debris of millennia of sleep. The mere sight of them can drive men mad. They can rearrange the land with a thought and travel outside of the known Otherworlds; a dragon's dreams have their own life.

Each true dragon is unique. They often appear in the mythologies of other races, sometimes as helpers, but usually as enemies who are either slain or (more often) are victorious. Their descendants include dragonewts (see above) and wyrms (page 221).



Typical Abilities: Claw and Bite 8 \mathbb{L} 2, Fly Fast 2 \mathbb{L} , Haughty 10 \mathbb{L} , Hear Intruder 8 \mathbb{L} , Large 5 \mathbb{L} 2, Spot Prey 2 \mathbb{L} , Strong 5 \mathbb{L} 2, Tail Lash 15 \mathbb{L} , Tough 5 \mathbb{L} 2.

Magical Abilities: Breathe Frost 15 \mathbb{L} , Generate Icy Wind 12 \mathbb{L} , Resist Magic 5 \mathbb{L} .

Weapons and Armor: Teeth and Claws +6, tail +5, scales +9.

Tactics: Frost dragons attack from the air, breathing frost on foes until they are either frozen solid or prove to possess some defense. Each blast of frost blankets an area 20' in diameter at a maximum range of about 30'. If forced to fight directly, the dragon will land to bite and claw (8 \mathbb{L} 2 +15 = 3 \mathbb{L} 3), occasionally lashing out with its tail (15 \mathbb{L} +5 = 20 \mathbb{L} ; the narrator may apply a \wedge 6 edge instead of the +6 for their teeth and claws). They can also fly over and snatch up a hero, then drop him from a great height.

Dragonewts

Dragonewts are immature dragons that appear as tailed, beaked humanoid lizards. They seek to perfect their spiritual essences through their draconic disciplines; if successful, they are reincarnated into a higher form, closer to that of the true dragons. The most alien of the major Elder Races, dragonewts are known for their utterly incomprehensible behavior. They do not act predictably, and the same dragonewt may act completely different in identical situations, depending on its current stage of mental, physical, emotional, and magical development.

Dryad (Tree Nymph)

Dryads are tied to a particular grove of trees, and they remain alive only as long as their trees do. Their bodies resemble beautiful human women with pale skin and brown or greenish hair. One tree within the grove is the personal home of the dryad, from which she can project a body at will. As the tree ages the dryad weakens, and eventually dies when the tree does. Another dryad usually appears the next spring to replace her, born from one of the other trees, but created as the collective spirit of the plants in the area.

A dryad has the ability to control the plant life (including sprites) within her home area, and can always perceive events there. Dryads are Aldryami (see page 206), and normally lead elves within their communities. They are also nymphs (see page 216), and have several talents, usually five abilities at 5 \mathbb{L} or more each. They can use these talents as active magical abilities, as if they had concentrated their innate magic use. These effects are particular to each dryad, and give personality to the groves.

Typical Abilities: Aldrya Tradition Knowledge 15 \mathbb{L} , Elfsense 5 \mathbb{L} , Lithe 15, Move Silently 18, Worship Aldrya 9 \mathbb{L} 2.

Magical Abilities: Alluring 2 \mathbb{L} , Control Plants in Home Grove 8 \mathbb{L} 2, Perceive Events in Home Grove 5 \mathbb{L} .

Sample Talents: Change Paths, Command Natural Creatures Born in Home Grove, Deflect Weapon, Extinguish Fire, Grab Limbs, Heal Aldryami, Move Unseen, Unseen Whisper.

Tactics: A dryad tempts mortals, exhibiting her natural attraction of the wilds. She is not hostile if rebuffed, and will speak in a reasoned and personal manner. If threatened, a dryad flees and delays the intruder. She might entangle their legs with long grass, move tree branches to block their way, make the soil soft and trap them, or make a flock of birds fly in their faces. In close combat, dryads are physically helpless (although they will of course use magic). Upon death they fade into the Spirit World.

Duck (Durulz)

Durulz resemble ducks, but have arms with four-fingered hands instead of wings, and thus are unable to fly. They also have forward-looking eyes, lips, and some teeth. Typical durulz are about four feet in height. They are a quarrelsome race, generally despised by their neighbors. Although some durulz heroes have managed to attain considerable power, few outsiders acknowledge this.

The durulz have their own customs and manners. Although they gather and hunt, they grow their crops without a plow, and do not domesticate animals. Many durulz are boatmen on the Creek-Stream River. Instead of paddling or rowing boats, they swim alongside and guide them. If attacked they flip the boat over, soaking (but saving) the lashed cargo.

Many durulz worship the Heortling deities (see *Homeland: Heortling*, pages 48-49), but as a race they have no specific Otherworld relations known. Like human beings, they have a choice. History has caused many to favor the Heortling death god, Humakt.

Species Keyword: Boastful 12, Hold Breath 1W, Nimble 12, Small 10, Swim 2W.

Typical Duck Boater

Typical Abilities: Boating 1W, Creek-Stream River Knowledge 1W, Durulz Customs 17, Initiate of [Deity] 14, Javelin 17, Know Durulz Myths 17, Know Local Waterways 5W, Shortsword Fighting 13, Speak Heortling, Swim 10W, Worship Storm Pantheon 13.

Weapons and Armor: Javelin +3, short sword +1.

Tactics: Innately cowardly, most ducks will flee rather than fight. Duck warriors do exist, however. So they say.



The durulz are derided by those who do not know them, trusted by those who respect them, and dreaded by those who belittle them. This doughty warrior is not only skilled and well-armed, he knows that his enemies will underestimate him, a mistake he does not plan to let them repeat.

Dwarf (Clay Mostali, Underground Man)

Dwarves are short, stocky, bearded humanoids, averaging less than four feet in height. They live in vast subterranean complexes where each performs a specific task to repair the World Machine. They are divided into different caste-occupations, each named after one of the Ancient Mostali races: rock dwarves deal with carving and tunneling, gold dwarves teach workers, iron dwarves are warriors, etc. Dwarves are excellent craftsmen, especially when they work with metal.

The materialistic and reclusive dwarves are friends to none. They hate elves (who are the Growers, thus foes of the Makers) and trolls (who are the waste-making Eaters). Humans are mistrusted for their fickleness and their inability to keep oaths or remember promises for more than a century.

Dwarves have a natural *Earthsense* that lets them measure the spaces around them by sensing heat and air currents. *Earthsense* lets them function normally even in complete darkness. They also have an instinctive sense of time, so their cycles of rest and activity are precisely geared. Most dwarves also have some hobby, an extension of their job that is not strictly required for it. They often use their hobby to perform tasks that take centuries to complete, such as making a set of hand-held perfect solids, learning a dwarf game, carving stone, or drinking Dullbrew, the drink of obedience.

Dwarves are the Makers, and they have made many truly wondrous things to dazzle or destroy humankind. They delight in mechanical devices, and have a highly advanced technology compared to other races. On the surface world they have revealed (and subsequently withdrawn) self-propelled wagons, mechanical giants, exploding keg bombs, and multi-shot crossbows. Legends tell of even more fantastic things inside their lairs where humans trod once. Dwarves have machines, mechanical beings, living stone servants, living jewels, and huge caverns faced by chambers where the workers sleep.

Dwarves are born from vats with all the knowledge they need for their job and a potential to become more. They also have the potential to break. Most do neither, but become cogs in the Machine, and just work, sleep, and pursue their hobby during rest times. As long as they act correctly they are immortal, so most have had centuries to hone their skills. Accordingly, a dwarf can use its occupational keyword as if it were an ability, improvising any appropriate action from its keyword rating as desired. They use only Mostali wizardry specifically geared to their occupations, which can turn their limbs into tools.

Diamond dwarves are the members of each caste who have reached perfection in all their important abilities. They have mastered their inner doubts and troubles, and are linked to serve the World Machine. They are leaders who make non-mechanical decisions. They are magicians with powers extraordinary to even other dwarves. They are, however, almost never seen by anyone but their underlings.

Species Keyword: Earthsense 14, Emotionless 17, Know Exact Time 1W, Mineral Lore 14, [Occupation] 5W, Strong 18, Tough 20.

Typical Iron Dwarf

Iron dwarves are the warriors of the race. They wear iron armor, bear iron weapons, and are assisted by a variety of weird artifacts created to help them on the battlefield. The statistics given below are for a typical iron dwarf, the only type that commonly travels above ground, and then only on important missions. Iron dwarves are encased in iron armor and wield weapons of iron. They have only combat-related spells.

Typical Abilities: Battleaxe or Hammer 9**W**, Combat Tactics 17**W**, Earthsense 17, Fight in Formation 5**W**2, Iron Dwarf Grimoire 5**W**2, Mostali Customs 17, Repeater Crossbow 14**W**, Smith 5**W**, Strong 6**W**, Warrior 15**W**, Weaponcrafting 1**W**.

Magical Abilities: Iron Dwarves learn only approved spells appropriate to their caste.

Sample Iron Dwarf Spells—Chop Trees, Immovable Body, Incandescent Hammer, Shred Darkness, Stop Him, Unstoppable Advance.

Weapons and Armor: Refined iron-tipped battleaxe or hammer +8, refined iron armor +10, iron-tipped crossbow bolts +6 (taken together, these give the dwarf a -24 to any magic he casts [= 1**W**]), and a +24 to resist any magic cast on or against him).

Tactics: Iron dwarves fight in organized groups of at least ten warriors. They are extremely disciplined, and employ predefined military tactics almost instinctively. Their unbreakable shield walls are legendary. They feign retreat to lure enemies into ambush, then hide in caves where *Earthsense* and knowledge of the terrain give them an advantage. Even a small group lays down covering fire so others can advance to melee. Inside their complexes dwarves have a great advantage, with many doorways, stone-carved caverns, mechanical traps, and explosive mines.

An iron dwarf fighting alone will attack from range with his crossbow if he can, shooting as many as five bolts in rapid succession. If he must melee, he will use his *Battleaxe* or *Hammer* (9**W**) augmented by his *Combat Tactics* (+4), *Strong* (+3), and *Warrior* abilities (+4). His spells (+2) and his armor and weapons provide additional bonuses (+18 = 20**W**2).

Typical Broken Dwarf

Some dwarves are unfulfilled by just a hobby. They develop independent thought, have doubts, and finally reach a crisis. They either build themselves up and integrate with the Machine, or they break down. Some feel emotions. Some want things. Some even develop free will. Broken dwarves often had the best intentions, but nonetheless never fit in in Machineland.

Broken dwarves are usually reprocessed into their components, but some flee their enclaves and escape, or are banished, deemed too corrupted to use as raw materials. Occasional communities of these outcast dwarves are known.

The starting abilities of a broken dwarf depend on his original occupation.

Sample Broken Dwarf Occupations: Cannery Worker, Food Processor, Janitor, Mechanic, Metal Polisher, Metal Processor, Power Processor, Stone Mason, Wrench Twister. Each is available as a normal occupation keyword at an appropriate rating.

Typical Abilities: Battleaxe or Hammer 17, Brawl 13, Mostali Customs 13, Smith 13; others based on their occupational keyword.

Magical Abilities: Spells suitable to their original occupation, but nothing else unless they have learned new magic since leaving their enclave. Some apostate dwarves may even use theist or animist magic instead of wizardry.

Weapons and Armor: One-handed axe or hammer +3, bronze mail and shield +4.

Tactics: Most broken dwarves make places to hide, things to protect them, and ways to help them run away.

Elder Races

Several elder races predate the human beings. They ruled the universe for eons, and they brought it to destruction in the Great Darkness that ruined them. They harbor permanent resentment against each other and have warred since Time began. They have had empires, epic wars, great heroes, and supernatural entities that have long since vanished as dust.

Humans are a newer race, a species that was just one minor player in the vast and terrible Gods War. Humans were victims of both the Gods War and the Darkness, but lucky. Many other races lived then and do not live now. Losses nearly exterminated all life.

Since the Dawn humans have reigned. Humans have populated the world, reshaped it, and empowered its supernatural beings. The elder races are now all minorities, usually confined to regions they dominate, but dare not leave. Their numbers are small. Rumors persist that they are building their strength to seize the world once again during the Hero Wars. These beings are normally xenophobic. Ordinary elder race beings are never found outside of their natural roles.

Elder races can be used as heroes, if your narrator agrees. But remember that these beings are alien to humans. An elf is not a human being made out of wood, for instance. Players will need to stretch their minds to encompass the real being of these alien creatures. Enjoy the challenge!

You may just decide it is impossible to play an elder race being and go with the “broken specimen” story. This assumes that any elder race that ventures outside its normal role is somehow “broken” in comparison to its kin. Such individuals often try to act like the humans they meet, so you can decide for yourself what your hero is like. At the same time you should expect to be rejected, at least in part, by your kinfolk. But what the heck: be the troll you want to be!

Elder Races in this book appear under Aldryami (page 206), Broo (page 207), Centaur (page 208), Duck (page 210), Dwarf (page 210), Elf (page 212), Giant (page 213), Harpy (page 214), Mostali (page 215), Troll (page 218), Trollkin (page 218), and Uz (page 220).

Elementals

“Elemental” is a term used to describe any Otherworld entity whose nature corresponds with one of the elements and which must animate or inhabit a body in the Mortal World. Magicians of all magic systems summon entities from their Otherworlds that are “elemental” in nature. Elemental daimones, spirits, and essences are all distinct from each other. All elementals share some characteristics based on their body they inhabit, such as having limited personalities that appropriate to their element. Thus, earth elementals are slow and plodding, while fire elementals are excitable and temperamental.

Elemental daimones always inhabit a set amount of element irrespective of their ability ratings. Some daimones are distinct entities, with intelligence and volition. Many elemental daimones are not individual entities, however, but a portion of a deity that is within nature. Thus, wind deities can command lesser winds and breezes to do their bidding, as can the deity’s mortal worshippers.

Elemental spirits have the same power level whether they embody a small or large amount of matter. While in the Spirit World (disembodied) they are not actually fire, but are instead a spirit that can animate a fire. Thus, a fire can be animated by summoning an appropriate spirit to “possess” it.

Essence elementals are summoned into a specific volume of the appropriate element, and are more powerful the more mat-

ter they animate. They are generally of low to moderate intelligence. Purity is an issue, and unless a pure source of the element is available (such as the essence waters of The Stream), an elemental suffers the alien world penalty to its actions (see page 198) because the world is of mixed substance.

Elementals in this book appear under Hag (page 213), Ice Daimon (page 215), and Night Fury (page 216) in this chapter; Little Mountain Spirits, Oakfed Fire Spirits, and Wind Spirits in the Animism chapter (beginning on page 150); and Undines in the Wizardry chapter (page 175).

Elf (Brown Elf, Deciduous Elf, Mreli, Wood Man)

Elves are gracile humanoids around five feet in height. They generally have pointed ears and large green or violet eyes. They have tree-like features, like leaves growing in their hair or bark-like skin, though individuals vary greatly. All elves become increasingly plant-like as they age, until they finally root soon before death.

Each elf family, or “sapline,” is associated with a particular type of tree, and has some physical features related to it. Thus, willow elves are slim, oak elves are strong and dark-skinned, and redwood elves are tall and longer-lived. Different saplines mix freely and only rarely does one take precedence over any other. Representatives of all parts of the forest comprise the ruling councils, with representatives chosen by merit. Female elves can become “pregnant” in the spring, and after a year give birth to a large seed that is planted into sacred earth. After it sprouts, the baby elf crawls from the earth into the arms of the Gardeners.

Elves have a sophisticated society that includes many professions. Elven craftsmen do not make clothing and tools as humans do, but instead grow and shape them from natural plants. One of the most famous tools produced this way is the Elf Bow, a living plant the size of a self bow that withers if anyone other than an elf tries to use it. Each elf grows their own Elf Bow, which then provides AP or bonuses to the elf in appropriate contests like a retainer.

Humans usually encounter only one type of elf, the defenders who patrol the edges of the forest to ward off intruders. They appear when they wish to reveal themselves. Bands are of two to twelve elves, led by an experienced veteran warrior. All Aldryami speak their own language, and elves that have contact with humans usually learn the local language as well.

Like all aldryami, elves rarely leave their forests. They gain a +10 bonus to all skills when in their home forest, but suffer a –10 penalty to all abilities when in non-wooded areas. Three types of elves are common. They are similar in most respects.

Brown Elves: Properly known as *mreli*, brown elves are the elves of deciduous trees. Brown elves are either male or female, although dryads are often mothers among them as well. No forests are inhabited by brown elves alone. Brown elves sleep through the winter, and in summer months are awake day and night. They take root when the leaves fall from the trees, and awaken again when fresh buds appear, so the period of hibernation depends on the local climate. They are by far the most common elves in Genertela, and can be found all across the continent.

Green Elves: Properly called *vronkali*, green elves are associated with coniferous trees. Green elves are either male or female, but they almost never mate with dryads. Green elves sleep in the nighttime in all seasons, hence are the only elves encountered in forests in the winter. They can be found throughout Genertela, usually with brown elves, whom they protect during the winter.

Yellow Elves: Properly called *embyli*, yellow elves are kin to the broadleaf evergreen trees of the jungles. They are generally smaller than the other types. All yellow elves are males. They mate with dryads to reproduce. They are generally more hostile to outsiders than other elves. They dominate northeastern Pamaltela, but in Genertela are found only in Verenela (including parts of Teshnos).

Species Keyword: Acute Hearing 18, Agile 14, Alert 17, Camouflage Self in Trees 1W, Climb Tree 17, Elfsense 17, Move Quickly in Forest 17, Plant Lore 17, Stealth 18.

Typical Brown Elf Defender

Typical Abilities: Aldrya Tradition Knowledge 17, Aldryami Customs 17, Camouflage Self in Trees 1W2, Elf Bow 8W, Elfsense 1W, Know Local Area 5W2, Plant Lore 16W, Short Sword 14, Worship Aldrya 1W.

Magical Abilities: Disappear into Forest 1W2, Get Healed by Forest 17, Grow Trap Plants 18.

Weapons and Armor: Buckler and bark armor +3, copper short sword +1, elf bow +3 (plus augment or AP lending).

Tactics: When foes penetrate an Aldryami forest the forest defenders are alerted through their *Elfsense*. They quickly take up positions ahead of and around the intruders and lay down missile fire from cover. Only if necessary will they skirmish hand-to-hand. The perimeter of a forest is also protected by many special plants that trip, entangle, poison, or otherwise hinder non-Aldryami, and the forest defenders take full advantage of these.

Essences

Essences are the creation of impersonal forces, and are often associated with specific runes, such as Harmony, Truth, or Theft. Not all are so easy to classify, however, no matter how much adepts might wish otherwise! Many essences are relatively impersonal, but others take on natural forms, and may even be encountered in the Mundane World occupying physical bodies.

Essences in this book appear under Ghosts (see below) and Unicorn (page 219). Other essences are described in the Wizardry chapter, beginning on page 174.

Ghosts

Ghosts are the malign spiritual remains of the unhallowed or unhappy dead, doomed to haunt a specific place or object. They come from many Otherworlds and origins. Some are spirits, some are souls, and some are essences. Most things that die do not become ghosts, only those that are trapped in the Mortal World instead of moving on to the Otherworld.

Ghosts can manifest as a shadowy image of their former self, often with any fatal wounds visible. They have insubstantial bodies that can be harmed by magic, but which nothing physical can touch. Some ghosts can move physical objects, such as throwing a knife or closing a door. A few retain some of the magic they knew in life. All ghosts are hostile to living things, and are frequently insane; a few are chaotic.

Magical Abilities: Dominant Possession 15, Terrify Mortals 18.

Tactics: A ghost uses its *Dominant Possession* to take over the body of any intruder who comes near. It will use the possessed victim either to complete some act left undone (often vengeance on its killer) or to cause as much mayhem and destruction as possible. An especially malign or insane ghost may try to force its victim to kill himself or others.



Giant (Hecalonti, Mountain Giant)

Giants are huge, dumb people. The typical giant is twenty feet or so in height, but smaller and larger individuals are common. A few giants are double this size.

Giants have low intelligence and are aggressive and argumentative, even among themselves. They can use their *Contrary* ability to resist emotion- or mind-affecting magic. They are also primitive, and lack the tools necessary for even simple culture. Almost all other races fear the mindless destruction that giants often cause.

20' Tall Mountain Giant

Typical Abilities: Contrary 10 \blacksquare , Large 18 \blacksquare 2, Short-Tempered 15, Slow 18, Smell Blood 18, Stomp 10 \blacksquare , Strong 18 \blacksquare 2, Throw Boulders 18, Tough 10 \blacksquare , Tree Fighting 8 \blacksquare .

Magical Abilities: Giants rarely worship Otherworld entities, but some do learn common magic.

Weapons and Armor: Boulder +4, skin +3, tree trunk +5.

Tactics: Giants beat on their opponents with tree trunks or simply stomp them into the ground. They use their *Tree Fighting* (8 \blacksquare) augmented with *Large* (+6), *Strong* (+6), and *Tough* (+3), as well as their tough skin (+3) and the tree itself (+5). Their *Slow* ability is always an automatic penalty in combat (-2 = 10 \blacksquare 2; the narrator may apply a \blacktriangle 5 edge instead of +5 for the tree trunk). Sometimes a giant will throw boulders to crush people or dwellings (*Throw Boulders* 18 +4 = 2 \blacksquare ; again, this could be 18 \blacktriangle 4 instead). Giants show no imagination in combat, and are easily outmaneuvered or tricked by a clever opponent.

Supernatural Entities: Giants are left over from the Gods War, but have no connection with a specific Otherworld. Magical beings such as frost giants and the elder giants are unrelated to the common giants described here.

Gorp

Gorp are shapeless, putrescent masses of chaotic protoplasm that drip acid slime as they ooze across land and water. They are unaffected by physical weapons, and their acid dissolves most substances that they contact. They are also immune to poison and acid; only fire or magic harms them. Even magically enhanced weapons are useless, unless the enhancement is fiery.

Typical Abilities: Corrode 2 \blacksquare , Envelope and Dissolve Prey 15 \blacksquare , Large 2 \blacksquare , Ooze Through Water 5 \blacksquare , Ooze Up Walls 15, Sense Organic Matter 5 \blacksquare .

Magical Abilities: About 1 in 10 possesses a random Chaos feature.

Tactics: Gorp are mindless, and simply ooze onto their victim and dissolve them, along with anything carried. Occasionally, indestructible items survive the attack and are excreted and left in a gorp's path.

Gremlin

Gremlins are small humanoid creatures created by dwarves. Each is designed to damage or ruin a specific item: break crossbows, scratch and tarnish metal, etc. The dwarves equip gremlins with appropriate tools or spells and release them so that they might destroy Mostali items that have been stolen by outsiders. Gremlins are usually programmed to avoid detection, and can be difficult to counter. In time of war, Mostali send them to destroy their opponents' siege engines and similar devices.

Typical Abilities: Destroy [Item] 15 \blacksquare , Dexterous 5 \blacksquare , Dodge Attack 8 \blacksquare , Earthsense 18, Hide in Cover 10 \blacksquare , Small 15, Stealthy 10 \blacksquare .

Magical Abilities: Usually none, but some might be equipped with spells to aid them in their task.

Tactics: Gremlins cannot fight, and attempt to flee and hide if attacked. If possible, though, the gremlin will take the time to destroy the item it has targeted, even at the risk of its own life.

Gremlins are incapable of any complex action other than their designated task. If unable to perform its task (for example, if it presently has no items to destroy), a gremlin will sit patiently and await instructions.

Griffin (True Griffin)

Griffins are ferocious flying carnivores with bodies like lions and heads, wings, and forelegs like eagles. They live in communal nests of up to a dozen individuals, located in high places, often in caves or other natural shelter. Their appetite for horsemeat is insatiable. They may attempt to grab a fresh supply even from armed humans, even if other prey is available. Although they give birth to live young like mammals the females do not lactate, and instead feed their young with meat, just as eagles do. Griffins cannot be tamed.

Typical Abilities: Aerobatics 5 \blacksquare , Claw and Bite 5 \blacksquare , Cunning 18, Fly Fast 15 \blacksquare 2, Grab Victim 2 \blacksquare , Large 5 \blacksquare , Spot Prey 2 \blacksquare , Strong 5 \blacksquare , Tough 18.

Weapons and Armor: Beak and Claws +3, thick hide and feathers +2.

Tactics: Griffins prefer hunting in plains or grasslands, often traveling in packs of two to five adults. They generally attack from above using their *Aerobatics* (5 \blacksquare) augmented by *Fly Fast* (+6) and *Grab Victim* (+2) and their weapons and armor (+5 = 18 \blacksquare). If a victim resists the griffin will simply drop it. Once the prey is dead, the griffin carries it back to its aerie. If forced to melee a griffin rakes with *Claw and Bite* (5 \blacksquare) augmented by *Strong* (+3), *Tough* (+2), and the griffin's natural weapons and armor (+5 = 15 \blacksquare).

Several griffins may mob a single attacker. Against aerial opponents, griffins make repeated runs past targets, attacking with beak and foreclaws.

Supernatural Entities: Divine griffins are known, and the griffin god is loyal to the Great Sun God. Demigods rarely appear in the Mortal World, but are numerous in the God World.

Hag (Cave Nymph, Darkness Nymph, Suberiad)

Hags are malignant spirits that dwell in caverns, gloomy woods, shadowy glens, and the like. They are possessed of a malevolent intelligence, and take the form of hideous women with black or dark gray skin. They can form physical bodies only at night, in cloudy or misty conditions, or in the darkness of a cave; if touched by sunlight, the body dissolves at once.

A hag can command nonsentient creatures that inhabit her lair; this often includes ghosts, undead, or other monsters. Hags can always sense events occurring anywhere within their home. Hags are nymphs (see page 216), and have several talents, usually five abilities at 5 \blacksquare or more each. They use these talents as active magical abilities, as if they had concentrated their innate magic use. These effects are particular to each hag, and give personality to the caves and dark places.

Typical Abilities: Claws 18, Climb 15 \mathbb{L} , Cruel 15, Shrewd 18, Strong 2 \mathbb{L} , Worship [Darkness Spirit] 12 \mathbb{L} 2.

Magical Abilities: Command Creatures Dwelling in Lair 8 \mathbb{L} 2, Hide in Shadow 8 \mathbb{L} , Perceive Events in Home Cave 5 \mathbb{L} , Terrifyingly Ugly 18 \mathbb{L} .

Sample Talents: Chilling Touch, Create Deep Shadow, Curse with Nightmare, Extinguish Fire, Extinguish Light, Fly on Shadows, Induce Fear, Paralyze Mortal, Resist Magic, Sense Weakness in Others, Steal Breath.

Weapons and Armor: Claws +1.

Tactics: Hags avoid direct confrontations with those they wish to harm, preferring to work through magic or controlled creatures. If a hag's lair is threatened she descends upon the intruder, shrieking, clawing, and using her magic.

Harpy

Harpies are foul bird-like beings with human faces and mammalian breasts. They are creatures of dung and filth. They live in flocks of up to a dozen adults, and their roosts are so squalid that no humans can approach within twenty yards without gagging on the stench. Unsurprisingly, harpies and their nests are disease-ridden.

Harpies are long-lived. They harass any intelligent beings they encounter. Typically, they steal small items, defecate on food or people, and generally make their targets' lives miserable.

For the all-female harpies to breed requires an intelligent humanoid male; the actual species seems to be irrelevant. The victim is subjected to harpy magic and obscene rites, after which they kill and eat him. A week later each harpy lays a single egg, which eventually hatches a harpy child.

Species Keyword: Aerobatics 18, Cowardly 12, Filthy 18 \mathbb{L} , Fly Fast 4 \mathbb{L} , Resist Disease 15 \mathbb{L} , Revolting Stench 2 \mathbb{L} , Small 12, Spot Prey 15.

Typical Harpy Raider

Typical Abilities: Claw Fighting 15, Defecate on Foe 2 \mathbb{L} , Drop Rocks 14, Know Myths and Traditions of Monster Harpy Mother 17, Vindictive 15, Worship Monster Harpy Mother 17.

Magical Abilities: Many harpies know some harpy common magic, but they observe no organized religion.

Weapons and Armor: Claws +1, dropped stones +1 to +3 (depending on height).

Tactics: Harpies usually drive people off with their *Revolting Stench*. They pester their targets from the air, dropping rocks and defecating from great heights. The latter attack form is one that harpies have raised to an art, and their accuracy is remarkable. Harpy dung smells unbelievably foul; the victim will find it nearly impossible to use any social skills. (The narrator may apply a *Revolting Stench* flaw at a rating of 2 \mathbb{L} until the victim has scrubbed for hours to remove it thoroughly.) The dung may also expose the victim to disease.

If attacked with any force, the flock will screech in terror and flee. If cornered, they scratch with their talons, which may carry disease.

Supernatural Entities: Underworld harpies are demigods, but are not normally found in the Mortal World. They haunt the empty and meaningless lands of the Underworld, harming whatever they meet and tormenting the lost. They have a queen there, a vile goddess spirit demon.

Horse

Most human lands have domesticated horses as beasts of burden and riding animals. Horses are valuable and an indicator of wealth. Humans and horses have been working together since before the Gods War. Many distinct breeds exist, some only locally known, many bred for strength or speed. The sample given here is a typical horse, such as might be used as a riding animal in Dragon Pass.

Typical Abilities: Hearing 12, Jump 18, Kick 15, Large 5 \mathbb{L} , Run Fast 10 \mathbb{L} , Strong 2 \mathbb{L} .

Breeds—There are several different breeds of horse. All are similar, distinguished primarily by having either Sure-Footed 3 \mathbb{L} , Run Fast 20 \mathbb{L} , Run Long Distance 3 \mathbb{L} , or Strong 12 \mathbb{L} .

Weapons and Armor: Hooves +1, Skin +1.

Tactics: Horses normally run away from predators, but can deliver nasty kicks with either hind or forelegs (15 +1) augmented by *Large* (+3), *Strong* (+2), and their thick Skin (+1 = 2 \mathbb{L}). In dominance battles, a horse rears and bites its opponent. Some horses receive *Battle Training*, and so can act as followers for their riders. In a race, a horse uses its *Run Fast 10 \mathbb{L}* , which might receive an augment from *Jump* (+2) and *Sure-Footed* (+2 if it has it), depending on the terrain.



Encrusted with dung and screeching obscenities, a single harpy may be no more than a malodorous nuisance, but a flock can terrorize a clan or ravage a village.

Rider Tactics: When charging on horseback with an appropriate weapon (such as a lance), a warrior may augment his combat skill with both the horse's *Large* and *Strong* (+5) for his initial attack (only).

Supernatural Entities: Most horse breeds have no magic in them: they are mixed well with everything. Their ancestors are lost in the eons of interbreeding that made the modern animals. Still, there are some purebreds, such as the Goldeneye breed of the Grazers (see page 47). Members of this breed, if pure, are connected to their spirit ancestress, and have magical powers.

Hydra, Greater

Greater hydras are vast Chaos entities similar in some ways to dragons. Only thirteen are known, each of which lives alone in an isolated place. These behemoths lay numerous eggs that hatch to produce lesser hydras. Each greater hydra is unique, and only the greatest of heroes can expect to challenge one and survive.

Among the most famous of the greater hydras, and the only one in Genertela, is the Hydra of Hydra Hill, in Dragon Pass. This immense creature is rarely seen, for it never leaves its lair unless enticed out with huge quantities of live food (it is exclusively a carnivore). It has a limbless, serpentine body, and seems to sprout or resorb heads randomly every few seasons. Typically, it has from one to six heads, although it has occasionally been reported with twice as many. It lays one to six eggs per year. Each hatches out a lesser hydra, which rapidly slithers away from its "mother" to find new hunting grounds.

Typical Abilities: Bite 17 \blacklozenge 3, Deafening Hiss 20 \blacklozenge , Drool Acid 15 \blacklozenge 5, Large 5 \blacklozenge 4, Lumbering 18, Regenerate 20 \blacklozenge 2, Strong 5 \blacklozenge 4, Tough 2 \blacklozenge 4.

Magical Abilities: Resist Magic 15 \blacklozenge 4. Each head possesses from 0 to 2 Chaos features, which seem to change as often as the number of heads.

Weapons and Armor: Huge teeth +9, armored hide +6.

Tactics: The Hydra of Dragon Pass can use its heads to attack separate targets. Only one head can attack a man-sized target, but larger targets could face more attacks. Each additional head after the first is treated as a follower, and adds 122 AP to the single attack. The Hydra augments its bite (17 \blacklozenge 3) with its *Drool Acid* ability (+12), *Large* (+9), *Strong* (+9), and natural weapons and armor (+15 = 2 \blacklozenge 6). Additionally, the hydra's bite can swallow whole any creature more than 20 Size smaller than it (this requires a complete victory in a contest against the victim's *Large*).

Ice Daimon (Hollri)

Hollri, or ice daimones, are beings composed entirely of ice. Normally restricted to the frozen Valind Wastes, they sometimes travel south to Fronela or Pent when the temperature there is especially cold. They sometimes travel as far south as the Rockwood Mountains, although only when summoned or during the coldest winters.

When hollri form they are small, but they increase in size and power over the course of several decades or centuries. Unlike most daimones, they are rarely initiates or devotees. Instead, the more powerful develop innate magical abilities, such as *Freezing Breath*, *Flight*, or *Walk through Ice*. Although young hollri are quite stupid (*Slow-Witted* 10 \blacklozenge), older ones can be as smart as humans.

The hollri were born in the Ice Age and Great Darkness. The life force of Himile, the god of Cold, found refuge in the

frozen world and animated the first group. They have never been completely driven away.

Hollri melt in the presence of heat (although a few have special powers that negate this). Thus, they are at a disadvantage when attacked with heated or fiery weapons, as determined by the narrator. A torch, for example, might receive a modifier of +3 against a hollri. The brittle body of a hollri will shatter if hit with enough force (such as when driven to complete defeat in combat). A hollri may also suffer a similar effect if caught in warm weather.

Typical Abilities: Fear Warmth 18, Ice Weapon Combat 8 \blacklozenge , Large 2 \blacklozenge , Slow-Witted 18, Strong 8 \blacklozenge , Throw Icicles 18.

Magical Abilities: Objects that hollri hold become so cold that their touch alone hurts mortals. Thus, any weapon used by a hollri has a magical bonus of +2 (already included below).

Weapons and Armor: Ice dagger +3, ice spear +5, icicle +5.

Tactics: Hollri have no grasp of tactics, and simply attack with whatever weapons they can create from the ice (8 \blacklozenge), augmented by their *Strong* (+3), *Large* (+2), and the weapon's natural and magical bonus (+5 = 18 \blacklozenge for an ice spear). Hollri also pluck icicles from their beards or body and hurl them at foes (18+5 = 3 \blacklozenge).

Mammoth

Mammoths are hairy elephants that live in cold regions, including Dragon Pass. Mammoths travel as solitary males or in small herds led by females of up to five adults and two to five young.

Typical Abilities: Acute Hearing 15, Cunning 15, Gore 2 \blacklozenge , Hardy 18, Intimidate 18, Large 2 \blacklozenge 2, Run Fast 2 \blacklozenge , Scent Food 15, Strong 18 \blacklozenge .

Weapons and Armor: Thick hide and fur +4, tusks +3.

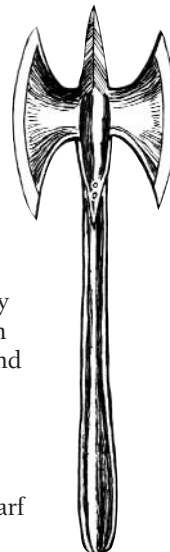
Tactics: Mammoths try to rush a foe, using their bulk to crush opposition: *Large* 2 \blacklozenge 2, augmented by *Intimidate* (+2), *Strong* (+4), and their thick hide (+4 = 12 \blacklozenge 2). They can also attempt to *Gore* (2 \blacklozenge) an opponent with their tusks (+3), augmented by *Strong* (+4) and their hide (+4 = 13 \blacklozenge), but this is less effective, and so used only in desperation.

Supernatural Entities: No Mammoth God lives now, but demigod mammoths appear at times, still fighting the Elephant Wars against mastodons, elephants, and others of similar appearance.

Mostali

The Mostali are free-thinking components of the World Machine. Mostal the Maker created them to maintain it. When it was broken and the Ancient Mostali were nearly exterminated in the Great Darkness, they constructed a new race to help them: Clay Mostali, commonly known as dwarves. The dwarves have been repairing the World Machine ever since, and are the only type of Mostali normally encountered in the present world. Although greatly inferior to their legendary creators, they now vastly outnumber them.

Mostali in this book appear under Dwarf (page 210) and Gremlin (page 213).



Night Fury (Neshantine, Night Woman)

Night furies are dark daimones that haunt the night. They take the form of lithe women cloaked in a hazy blackness that obscures all details save for their softly glowing, silvery eyes. Their hair seems to wave about their head as if in a strong gale, furthering their ethereal appearance, although they are as solid to the touch as any fleshly being. Night furies never raise their voices even under the most acute distress. Instead, they whisper soft words to mortals and talk to each other so quietly that only the most acute ears can catch their strange, unearthly voices.

Night furies serve human gods and goddesses of darkness, never those of the trolls or other elder races. During the day they travail in Hell, a bleak and ugly world that they despise. During the night they fly through the skies, free and joyful until the Sun rises once again. Sometimes they descend to the Inner World, but they desire always to be in sight of the clear night sky, and so hate heavy cloud cover or roofed buildings. A crisp winter night is their favorite time, for the darkness lasts longest then and the stars are always visible.

In the Mortal World, night furies most often walk through empty places far from men, enjoying the stillness of the night and hating the hubbub of human communities. Sometimes they come across lone travelers; to such people they offer a night of passion, if the traveler is a man and is not rude or noisy. Their soft kisses and gentle whispers are given in exchange for whatever gifts it is in the mortal's power to give. Despite their inability to understand human morals they are always honest in their dealings, and never break their word once given—so long as the mortal plays his part and does not abuse their trust. In such a manner, many who have become lost in the wilds after dark have found their way home the very next day, unwilling to speak of how they spent their night alone...

Typical Abilities: Avoid Blow 5LW2, Fear Sunlight 10LW2, Fly 15LW2, Hate Noise 10LW, Make Love 15LW, Night Lore 15LW2, Sky Lore 18LW, Tempt Man 10LW2.

Innate Magical Abilities: Devotee of [Darkness/Night Deity] 5LW3, Find Path 5LW2, Muffle Sound 10LW.

Tactics: Night furies flee from violence as swiftly as they can, escaping into the night sky if possible. If cornered, they try to avoid the blows of their attackers, using natural shadows to misdirect strikes and using feats to confuse or blind attackers. An imprisoned night fury will never help her captor, and will spend her time quietly sobbing and plaintively bemoaning her cruel fate.

Nymphs

Nymphs are a special type of female spirit entity, manifestations of the consciousness of nature. They made and are the grove, lake, river, or meadow. This region is both home to and the body of a nymph. At will, the nymph can form (or dissipate) a mobile humanoid body from the substance of her home, to communicate with other beings. This manifestation is real, a being with a body that has limitations to the greater powers of the nymph.

Nymphs usually take the form of a beautiful and desirable female of whatever species they are speaking to. When several beings look upon them, nymphs seem to be different species to each, if they wish. They can even appear as men when viewed by females. Nymphs manifest the primal consciousness of desire, and so most nymphs appear sexually attractive to sentient beings. Malignant nymphs, on the other hand, reflect a deep sense of rejection and are correspondingly hideous. The beauty or ugliness of a nymph is magical, and causes similar reactions in all humanoid races. Thus, even trolls find dryads alluring

and hags terrifyingly ugly.

Nymphs have many magical powers. They can sense all spirits within their home area (even foreign spirits), and usually “rule” and defend the other natural spirits and beings of their home. They cannot leave this home; if they do, they die and their former sacred area withers and dies too. In addition to their innate magical abilities, most nymphs have several additional talents that they can use as active magical abilities. The ratings for these talents are usually between 5LW and 5LW2, depending on the age of the nymph and the extent of their natural feature. In normal circumstances these things appear to just happen, or else seem to be performed by parts of the nymph's home—plants, shadows, or river currents, for example, might “conduct” one of these abilities.

Nymphs are always members of a local tradition. Some nymphs are so powerful that they are worshipped, often taking the place of a shaman or spirit-talker during ceremonies. At regular or special times such a nymph is called forth to share herself with worshippers who offer wine, dance, hypnotic drums, and long songs in the starlight.

Nymphs in this book appear under Dryad (page 209) and Hag (page 213). Many other types exist.

Puma (Cougar, Mountain Lion, Orvela, Panther)

These tawny cats are among the largest non-magical predators of Genertela. Active mainly at dusk, they are solitary hunters that prey on anything from rodents to large deer. They know man and avoid domestic livestock unless they are particularly hungry or have cubs to feed.

Typical Abilities: Ambush 7LW, Bite 2LW, Climb Tree 15, Cunning 15, Leap 15.

Weapons and Armor: Claws and Teeth +1.

Tactics: Pumas are solitary, nocturnal hunters. They pounce from cover or from up in a tree and deliver a lethal bite to their prey's soft parts using their *Bite* (2LW) augmented by their *Ambush* (+3), *Climb Tree* (+2), and their natural weapons and armor (+1 = 8LW).

Supernatural Entities: Supernatural pumas come from the Spirit World, although there are several different families of spirits. Many are worshipped by humans.

Rubble Runner (Bazak, Rubble Rat)

Rubble runners are big armored rodents with huge jaws lined with razor-sharp teeth. Adults are only about a foot and a half in length, so a single animal poses no threat to skilled warriors. Unfortunately, they normally appear in packs of a dozen or more.

Rubble runners are nocturnal and shelter through the day in caves and tunnels. They are relatively poor burrowers and so usually live where cover is widely available. As their name implies, they are particularly common in and around ancient ruins.

Typical Abilities: Bite 10, Climb 10, Evoke Fear 10, Forage 10, Scamper Quickly 14, Small 15.

Weapons and Armor: Armored hide +1, sharp teeth +1.

Tactics: Rubble runners attack in waves, using their *Bite* 10 augmented by their *Evoke Fear* (+1) and their teeth and hide (+2 = 13). Treat each wave of them as a single attacker augmented by +1 per member of the pack. They come on even though individual rubble runners are sliced, slammed, bashed, and broken.

Supernatural Entities: In the Underworld, oversized, over-nasty rubble runner demigods serve demon lords, or scuttle about in the ruined, empty places of the darkness.

Shell Deer (Jerendal, Kaldamal)

Shell deer are large, solidly built deer a little smaller than elk. They have brown fur, with black markings on their faces; their armor is a burnished golden brown marked with paler splotches. Humans call them “shell deer” because of the segmented armor (like barding) that encases their backs and flanks. They were an important food source for the miserable humans of Saird and Peloria that survived the terror of the Darkness. Small herds survived thanks to their armor, great speed, and a diet tailored to the era, which let them eat fungi. They are rare now owing to the scarcity of their preferred food since the Dawn.

Males have antlers, like all deer, but theirs vibrate and ring when Chaos comes near. People occasionally find the antlers, but the deer never shed them, so such finds are rare. They are sacred creatures, never hunted by humans.

Typical Abilities: Dodge Attack 15, Hardy 12, Hide in Cover 15 \blacksquare , Large 15, Nervous 12, Run Fast 5 \blacksquare , Scan for Danger 18, Scent Predator 12 \blacksquare , Strong 15.

Males only—Wrestle with Antlers 18.

Magical Abilities (males only): Detect Chaos 8 \blacksquare .

Weapons and Armor: Antlers +2 (males only), Armored hide +4.

Tactics: Deer are cautious to a fault; most contests will start with the its *Scent Predator* (12 \blacksquare) augmented by *Scan for Danger* (+2) and *Nervous* (+1 = 15 \blacksquare). Although males can attack with their antlers (18) augmented by *Large* (+2), *Strong* (+2), and their natural weapons and armor (+6 = 8 \blacksquare), they rarely do so except in contests with each other or when cornered.

Specters

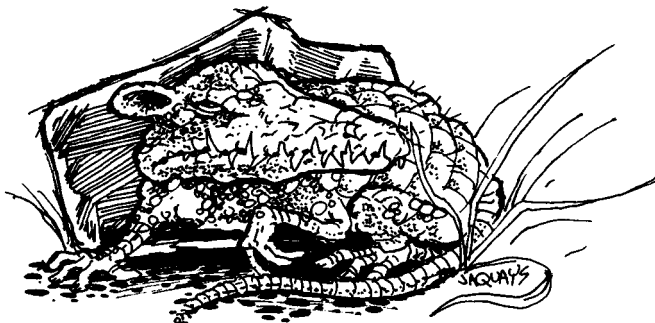
A specter is a type of spirit that has no physical body, just a vaguely visual presence, and normally possesses the body of something else to wreak havoc and harm.

Fear Spirit

Fear spirits manifest as dark holes in space with pale faces and grasping, skeletal hands. They radiate fear so that their mere presence makes animals and people uneasy. Many believe them to be the spirits of cowards, slain while fleeing battle.

While a fear spirit possesses a victim, he gains a *Cowardly* personality trait at 20. The spirit acts any time the victim risks physical harm. It manifests as a flaw, giving a penalty to anything requiring bravery (such as combat). Additionally, if the victim has a *Brave* ability or the like, the spirit's entire ability rating might serve as an automatic penalty to that ability.

Magical Abilities: Aura of Fear 20, Hidden Possession 18.



The rubble runner is a common scavenger in many parts of Genertela. The fact that such small bodies can contain so much furious hunger is amazing ... when considered from a safe distance.

Spider, Giant Hunting

This spider is about the size of a pony. It ambushes its prey instead of spinning a web. It dwells chiefly in forests; similar creatures live in other habitats.

Typical Abilities: Bite 3 \blacksquare , Climbing 5 \blacksquare , Glue (of web) 18, Hide in Cover 18, Large 5 \blacksquare , Paralyzing Poison 2 \blacksquare , Scamper Quickly 15, Sense Prey 18, Strong 18.

Weapons and Armor: Chitin exoskeleton +3, fangs +2.

Tactics: This kind of spider spins together leaves, sticks, or other debris to hide in (+20 to its *Hide in Cover* = 18 \blacksquare). When prey wanders by, the spider shoots a spray of webbing to ensnare it (18). Once the prey is immobilized the spider injects a paralyzing poison (2 \blacksquare) with its bite (+4 = 6 \blacksquare). Alternatively, it fights using *Glue* (+2), *Large* (+3), *Scamper Quickly* (+2), *Strong* (+2), *Paralyzing Poison* (+2), and natural arms and armor (+5) to augment its *Bite* (= 19 \blacksquare).

Supernatural Entities: No supernatural version of this has ever been met. It is a creature of the Mortal World.

Spirits

Most spirits in the Natural World are associated with specific physical entities, such as trees, rocks, and streams. In the Spirit World, such spirits generally appear to shamans as more vibrant and animated versions of their physical selves. Some spirits are normally found only in the Spirit World, and have no physical bodies of their own. Because such disembodied spirits are alien to the material realm, they are almost always malevolent to the beings that dwell there, as their very presence is a sign of a disturbance in the natural order.

Spirits in this chapter appear under Dryad (page 209), Ghosts (page 212), Hag (page 213), Nymphs (page 216), Specters (page 217), and Wolf, Spirit (page 221). More appear in “Sample Nature Spirits” in the Animism chapter, page 150.

Sprite (Faery, Pixie)

Sprites are diminutive Aldryami (see page 206) associated with flowers, herbs, and other small plants. All have gossamer wings, but otherwise they vary widely in appearance, often with colored skin or hair that resembles their associated flower. They are childlike, and have high-pitched, tinkling voices. They are common in all Aldryami woods and jungles, but are also known outside of those strongholds. Most hibernate or die in winter, so each year their numbers vary greatly.

Sprites have limited magical abilities, and rarely seek to increase them. They have a natural talent to turn invisible, but can then do little else, for this state takes concentration. (A sprite does not take the normal penalty for performing “Inherently Difficult Magic,” see the Basic Magic chapter, page 101.)

If commanded by elves or dryads, sprites use magic and set traps and pester intruders with annoying pranks. They avoid direct combat, and never attack except in self-defense.

Typical Abilities: Aerobatics 12, Dodge Combat 2 \blacksquare , Elfsense 12, Fly Fast 18, Mischievous 15, Set Traps 15, Small 20, Sting or Bite 4, Worship Aldrya 15.

Innate Magical Abilities: Invisibility 5 \blacksquare .

Tactics: Sprites are easily frightened by anything unknown to them, and fly away. They might befriend or do favors for non-Aldryami who help them.

Supernatural Entities: Sprites are part of everything, and only in Aldryami forests does supernatural aid appear for them.

Triceratops (Darvon, Gazzam, Quakebeast, Thunderbeast)

Triceratops are bulky reptiles that bear a superficial resemblance to rhinos. They have large bony frills on their heads, a sharp beak, and three long horns. They are as large as elephants and have dark green, almost black, hides. Triceratops herds number several dozen, and they often fight cooperatively, especially against a large carnivore such as a giant. The herd dashes off if panicked, likely crushing anything in its path. Triceratops eat a wide range of plants, their parrot-like beaks enabling them to crop even tough woody shrubs. Some triceratops are used by dragonewts as war animals and beasts of burden.

Typical Abilities: Butt 9**W**, Charge Foe 5**W**, Forage 15, Large 2**W**2, Strong 2**W**2.

Weapons and Armor: Horns +3, Scaly hide and bony frill +5.

Tactics: Triceratops use their horns mainly for fights with other males competing for mates, fencing in a manner similar to deer. Triceratops do occasionally charge at threats, stabbing with their horns. When able to charge in this way, they can augment their *Butt* attack (9**W**) with their *Charge Foe* (+3), *Large* (+4), *Strong* (+4), and their natural weapons and armor (+8 = 8**W**2).

Troll (Dark Troll, Man Troll, Uzko)

Dark trolls are the kind of Uz (page 220) most heroes will meet in the Hero Wars. They are large, nocturnal humanoids with long snouts, large tusks, and slouched posture. Skin is pallid, grayish and greenish. They have a layer of insulating fat beneath their skin, and prefer a cold climate. A typical male stands 6'6" tall and weighs just under 300 lbs.; females are slightly larger.

Trolls have two basic needs. First, they are all perpetually hungry and seek to gorge themselves. They can eat anything, but find organic material more nutritious than rock. Second, they have a powerful need to protect the species and to reproduce. Males know they are expendable and instinctively obey female trolls, so they are the ones sent out into the wilds to face danger and interact with other races. All trolls in Genertela speak Dark-tongue, and only those few who stand between the all-important Mothers and the outside world learn human tongues.

Trolls possess *Darksense*, an innate ability analogous to sonar, which allows them to sense objects at a distance, even in total darkness. Due to their darkness connection, all trolls suffer when exposed to full daylight: dark trolls take a -10 penalty to all abilities, and trollkin suffer a -30 penalty.

Trolls are intelligent with a rich private culture. But they have only simple tools. They never have fire, they need no warmth, they wear crude coverings, if they dress at all. Dark troll society is vast and rich, simple and savage, primeval and vicious. In their native lands they have many occupations, but humans are most likely to encounter bands of male hunters.

Species Keyword: Acute *Darksense* 12, Digest Anything 5**W**, Endure Cold 12**W**, Large 15, Move Silently 12, Strong 1**W**.

Typical Dark Troll Hunter

Typical Abilities: Acute Hearing 17, Digest Anything 4**W**2, Follower of Zong 2**W**, Know Local Area 5**W**, Kyger Litor Tradition Knowledge 17, Mace and Shield 14, Set Traps 14, Sling 18, Stalk 18**W**, Troll Customs 17, Worship Kyger Litor 17, Zong Practice Knowledge 13.

Magical Abilities: Hunter spirit 17 (sample abilities: Deadly Shot, Extinguish Fire, Follow Trail, Noise Over There, Run Away, Slow Down).

Weapons and Armor: Well-crafted chitin armor and shield +5, heavy mace +4, sling +3.

Typical Followers: Possesses three worker trollkin.

Tactics: A dark troll hides or flees in the daytime. At night he stalks, gets in close, and watches. He harasses, perhaps by extinguishing a fire, using magic, or slinging at a tethered horse. In the darkness he may send waves of watch beetles (page 220) and trollkin (below), prodded to swarm, into an enemy's campsite. If success seems likely, he closes for the kill. If endangered he flees, throwing his trollkin at the foe to cover his escape. If ever surprised into hand-to-hand combat, though, a dark troll fights bravely and is a formidable opponent.

Trollkin (Enlo)

Trollkin are warped and degenerate uz (see page 220). They are bent, twisted, and runty. A typical one stands about four feet tall, is scrawny with a shortened snout, tiny light-sensitive eyes, and small or even no tusks. Sunlight terrifies and blinds them, rendering their already weak *Darksense* useless. Most have limited intelligence, immature senses, and live in abject fear and obedience. The smart ones are sorted out and used as leaders for their kind, or are eaten to prevent trollkin revolts.

Trollkin are born in litters to dark troll mothers, yet no dark troll considers a trollkin to be kin, not even a part of the species. Trollkin are rejected by their mothers and kin, treated as slaves and food, and used as expendable bait. They are weak and pitiful. Despite this loathing, they are common in troll communities. Dark trolls periodically cast all trollkin out of the nest when they are too numerous. Hungry hordes roam wild in troll lands and are often a nuisance to nearby humans as well. Trollkin sometimes breed, but most of their offspring are stillborn.

Species Keyword: Carry Load 12, Digest Anything 1**W**, Dodge 17, Fear Dark Troll 16, Fear Sunlight 2**W**, Hide from Master 16, Hungry 2**W**, Look Busy 14, Move Silently 14, Nimble 12, Resist Poison 10, Search for Food 18, Stick Combat 6.

Typical Warrior Trollkin

The statistics below are for a slave warrior, notable for his unusual prowess compared to other trollkin. Warriors are at the top of the heap when it comes to survivability. They have equipment, learn valuable weapon and survival skills, and are rarely eaten by their owners. Dark trolls send each warrior trollkin with a horde of expendable mob trollkin to soften up foes, often in waves. This tactic distracts and fatigues the enemy, at which point the dark troll attacks.

Typical Abilities: Bully Other Trollkin 18, Club and Shield Fighting 17, Fear Sunlight 16, Hide 16, Know Local Area 13, Kyger Litor Tradition Knowledge 13, Move Silently 17, Nimble 17, Sling 13, Troll Customs 13, Worship Kyger Litor 17.

Weapons and Armor: Chitin armor and shield +4, club +3, sling +3.

Tactics: Most trollkin naturally flee enemies. These warriors are little braver, and usually attack foes only because they fear the dark trolls behind them more. Nonetheless, they can be taught discipline, and some areas field organized groups of trollkin spearmen. When not directed by their masters, trollkin will only attack obviously inferior foes, and then only en masse. Warrior trollkin are intelligent enough to make sensible use of any combat magic they possess, even if only to save themselves.

Worker Trollkin

Worker trollkin are the menials of troll society, only a short step up from food. A horde might help in a fight by lending AP when herded to attack with sticks and be chopped by their foes.

Umbarong

Many unique demons inhabit the Underworld. One such entity is Umbarong, a foul demon who serves no master. Umbarong's origins are uncertain. What is clear is that it was spawned in the depths of Hell, where souls, spirits, and essences mix. It is tormented by magic and exists in constant pain, lashing out at everything around it. By consuming the bodies of those who have a connection to one of the Otherworlds it can reduce its pain for a time, as one part of its tripartite nature gains dominance. Before long, however, the other energies reassert themselves and Umbarong must hunt once more.

Umbarong normally dwells in Hell, where it can hunt out daimones, spirits, and essences to sate its hunger, but it is sometimes summoned into the Mortal World to wreak havoc. Once there, it seeks out devotees, shamans, and adepts to consume until it is eventually driven back to its foul dwelling place. It is a crafty being, although if especially hungry it may become frenzied, its normal thinking subsumed in a bestial rage induced by its terrible agony.

Umbarong stands almost 10' tall and has a thin humanoid body of mottled gray and blue flesh that in places hangs loose from its bone structure. Its narrow head bears five eyes in a triangular pattern above a flat nose and a gaping mouth that contains three needle-sharp teeth. It smells of a charnel pit, and communicates only in a bass, moaning howl.

Typical Abilities: Close Combat (Pincers, Putrescent Sinews) 9L3, Hungry 10L3, Large 5L, Rend Matter 17L2, Stench 2L, Strong 10L2.

Magical Abilities: Destroy 8L3, Howl 10L, Resist Magic 10L3, Sniff Out Magician 10L2.

Weapons and Armor: Pincers +4, putrescent sinews +3.

Tactics: Umbarong cares for nothing save consuming magical beings. Any being with a theist, animist, or wizardly magical ability of 1L2 or higher is a potential target of its murderous rage. It is not above setting ambushes but prefers a direct attack, howling out a deep roar and striking with its mighty pincers (9L3 +4), augmented by its *Large* (+3) and *Strong* (+5 = 1L4).

Umbarong uses its putrescent sinews to make its *Rend Matter* attack (17L2 +3), augmenting with its *Destroy* (+7 = 7L3), with which it can shatter, pulverize, or rend any inanimate material. The exact nature of this power varies from time to time, as the magical energies flow and mix within its pain-wracked body. Its *Destroy* changes randomly between a feat, a spirit, and a spell, but one of these predominates after it has had a meal. The more magically powerful the being it ate, the more that form of magic will prevail within its body and the longer it can go without having to feed again.

Umbarong's *Resist Magic* and *Sniff Out Magician* work on the two types of magic that are different from its *Destroy*. Thus, if it presently has a *Destroy* spell, it can only sniff out and resist magic originating from the God and Spirit worlds. These abilities never affect innate magic or magicians who have not concentrated their magic. The demon ignores such people; if one attacks it or gets between it and its prey, it swats them aside and then forgets about them, for it cannot feed off of them.

Unicorn (Lesser Unicorn)

Unicorns are magic, directly connected to the Essence Planes. They are snow-white, pony-sized horselike animals with cloven hooves, long tufted tails, goat-like beards, and single spiral horns that jut from their foreheads. Unicorns living in northern Fronela, near the Glacier, are shaggy, with long fur. Unicorns are incredible animals, rare and hidden from humankind. Most live in Aldryami forests, but some live in the Wastes. Natural animals frequently come to a unicorn for healing.

Unicorns are as intelligent as humans, although they have no material culture. All unicorns are male, and mate with virgin deer, horses, and other lesser animals. They are fearful of all humans save female virgins, but are friendly to most elves. They can speak like humans (often in several languages), but most do not bother to. Unicorns are believed to be immortal, for none has died a natural death since the Dawn. They can heal wounds or illness and can detect poison with a touch of their horns. If a horn is removed it loses most of these properties, but will shatter the first time it touches a poisonous substance.

Unicorns have magic that comes from a special node on an Essence Plane. The node, and its ability, is called Unicorn Law. Treat it as if it was a grimoire; common spells are listed below, but others are possible.



Demons of many types exist in Glorantha. Umbarong is one of the minor demons evil magicians summon from the nether worlds to harass and destroy mankind.

Typical Abilities: Agile 18, Detect Injury 20, Detect Poison 10**W**, Gore with Horn 2**W**, Large 8**W**, Resist Magic 18, Run Fast 15**W**, Spot Intruder 5**W**, Strong 5**W**.

Magical Abilities: Use Unicorn Law 17 (Heal Disease, Heal Friendly Creature, Heal Hostile Creature, Heal Poison, Heal Wounded Animal, Neutralize Poisons, See Deity, See Spirit, Stop Spirit).

Weapons and Armor: Horn +3.

Tactics: Unicorns flee from confrontations but may stand and fight, depending on the foe. In their home forests unicorns may be aided by animals they have healed. If forced, they will *Gore with Horn* (1**W** +3) augmented by *Large* (+3) and *Strong* (+3 = 10**W**).

Uz (Trolls)

The Uz are better known as trolls or the Darkness Tribe. They are tall and muscular, and equipped with long, tusked snouts. They dwell underground, in dead and lightless forests, or in lands blanketed by magical darkness. Always hungry, capable of eating almost anything, and quite warlike, the Uz are feared by all. Cursed by a Chaos god, troll mothers are now more likely to give birth to litters of trollkin, whose twisted bodies are stunted parodies of the original troll physique.

Kyger Litor is their great and beloved ancestress. She is a primeval force of devouring and spawning that came forth before Creation. Her children are the deities and spirits of the trolls.

Several types exist. Uz in this book can be found under the headings of Troll and Trollkin (page 218).

Walktapus

A walktapus looks like a pasty-white humanoid body topped by the body of an octopus. They are amphibious, and can breathe underwater but do not swim well. They prefer to remain moist, but desiccation does not appear to harm them. They are found only in Chaos nests such as Snakepipe Hollow in Dragon Pass. Everyone fears walktapi. Humans usually try to kill them, and to their horror sometimes succeed.

Walktapi regenerate from damage. They do so only slowly, and take several hours to recover fully from serious injury, so the ability is useless during a typical contest. Even if one is hacked apart, it eventually regrows from one of the remaining pieces. Walktapi can even regenerate from fire and similar attacks, although this takes about a day. Despite a voracious appetite, it is almost impossible to starve a walktapus. The only way to kill one is with powerful magic or through total destruction of its pieces (such as by dissolving it in concentrated acid). Walktapi can resist all magic not specifically targeted against Chaos with their *Tough* ability.

Typical Abilities: Fearless 10**W**, Grapple and Constrict 5**W**2, Large 2**W**, Poison Gas Cloud 18**W**, Spot Prey 15, Strong 2**W**, Swim 12, Tough 15**W**.

Magical Abilities: Less than 1 in 20 possesses a random Chaos feature.

Weapons and Armor: Rubbery hide +3.

Tactics: Walktapi attack anything that disturbs them. They do not retreat even if injured or faced with overwhelming opposition. A walktapus' limbs shield it from up to a -12 multiple opponent penalty.

A walktapus begins combat by belching forth a *Poison Gas Cloud* that induces nausea and blindness in all creatures within 15'; this augments (+4) its *Grapple and Constrict* (5**W**2), as do its *Large* (+2), *Strong* (+2), *Tough* (+4), and natural weapons and armor (+3 = 20**W**2).

Watch Beetle

Watch beetles are domestic creatures of the trolls. They are wolf-sized, with clacking mandibles and shiny black carapaces. They do not fly but are fast on their six legs. They have several sets of long antennae and six separate eyestalks. They can be trained to respond to one or two voice commands and mindlessly follow those orders, which are typically "wait here" and "bite that."

Typical Abilities: Bite 18, Fearless 5**W**, Large 15, Run Fast 20, Spot Prey 15, Strong 2**W**, Track by Scent 2**W**.

Weapons and Armor: Chitin exoskeleton +3, mandibles +2.

Tactics: The watch beetle's *Bite* (18) is augmented by *Fearless* (+3), *Large* (+2), and *Strong* (+2) and its chitin and mandibles (+5 = 10**W**). Treat each extra beetle as a +3 bonus to the *Bite* attack.

Wolf

Wolves are the most common large carnivores of Genertela, found everywhere from dense forests, amidst mountain ranges, to loping upon the Pentan plains. They are highly social animals and work in packs of seven to twenty adults. Each pack has a large territory where they prey on deer, rabbits, antelope, or horses; even livestock. Wolves fear humans.

Typical Abilities: Claw and Bite 17, Corner Prey 12, Endurance 5**W**, Run Fast 8**W**, Scent Prey 2**W**.

Weapons and Armor: Claws and teeth +1, fur +1.

Tactics: Wolf packs use highly efficient tactics. Wolves in the pack serve solely as followers for the leader. They participate in all contests involving scenting, chasing, or attacking prey. Individual wolves block off escape routes while others take turns pursuing the prey. In this way, the pack maintains a comfortable pace while exhausting its prey. When they have cornered an animal the pack will circle it and collectively make the kill. Although each maneuver or attack is likely to come from a different wolf the effect is the same: each adds its AP (22) or automatic augment (+2) to the pack leader's *Claw and Bite* (17), which is also augmented by its *Endurance* (+3) and its natural weapons and armor (+2 = 2**W**).

Supernatural Entities: Most wolves are ordinary, but all great wolves worship Telmor. Telmor is the greatest wolf, a spirit being who chased the Sun from the sky and brought Death to the world. He has many enemies.

Wolf, Great

Great wolves are rare, but are found nearly everywhere normal wolves prowl. Three types exist: oversized individuals sometimes lead packs of wild wolves, another type is known that runs only in packs of its own, and a third is the form that Telmori were-wolf folk shapechange into. All have similar statistics.

Typical Abilities: Bite 18**W**, Corner Prey 12**W**, Dodge Attack 18, Endurance 5**W**, Large 15, Run Fast 8**W**2, Scent Prey 2**W**2, Strong 2**W**, Terrifying Howl 18.

Weapons and Armor: Claws and teeth +2, fur +2.

Tactics: First, a great wolf chases the prey down with *Corner Prey* (12**W**) augmented by *Endurance* (+3), *Large* (+2), *Run Fast* (+5), *Strong* (+2), and *Terrifying Howl* (+2 = 6**W**2). Additional pack members add +4 each. For the kill, several wolves attack a target together, forcing their prey to face multiple opponents (see the Core Rules chapter, page 79). Each uses its *Bite* (18**W**) augmented by *Large* (+2), *Strong* (+2), and natural weapons and armor (+4 = 6**W**2).

Wolf, Spirit—Hrognar

Hrognar is a pup of the great spirit Telmor, and might be encountered on the Spirit World. He no longer travels with his siblings, for he left them to teach others about the strength of the pack. When he appears, a dozen or more great wolves usually come from surrounding areas to hunt with him. Hrognar is a powerful spirit, and can summon spirit wolves if needed.

Mundane Abilities: Bite 18 \mathbb{L} 3, Corner Prey 12 \mathbb{L} 3, Dodge Attack 18 \mathbb{L} , Large 5 \mathbb{L} , Run Fast 18 \mathbb{L} 3, Scent Prey 2 \mathbb{L} 4, Strong 2 \mathbb{L} 2.

Magical Abilities: Call and Command Wolf 5 \mathbb{L} , Great Leap 5 \mathbb{L} 2, Paralyze Prey with Fear 12 \mathbb{L} , Terrifying Howl 18 \mathbb{L} 2.

Weapons and Armor: Claws and teeth +4, fur +4.

Tactics: Hrognar uses its *Bite* in combat (18 \mathbb{L} 3), augmented by its *Large* (+3), *Strong* (+4), and its natural weapons and armor (+8 = 13 \mathbb{L} 4).

Wurm

Wyrmes are intelligent, legless, winged dragons, the most common type of draconic creature encountered other than dragonewts. They are slow on the ground, but adroit in the air. They avoid the confines of forests. They like heat and sunlight, but are sluggish in the cold. Newly hatched wyrmes are only 6' or so in length, but grow a foot per year to maturity (about 35'); they grow much more slowly afterwards. They have no fiery breath or other innate powers, but often learn common magic; many practice a religion, especially wind deities such as Orlanth.

Typical Abilities: Acute Vision 12, Adroit Flying 14 \mathbb{L} , Bite 14 \mathbb{L} , Clumsy on Ground 18 \mathbb{L} , Large 18 \mathbb{L} , Strong 5 \mathbb{L} , Tail Slam 8 \mathbb{L} 2, Tough 10 \mathbb{L} .

Weapons and Armor: Armored hide +6, teeth +3.

Tactics: Wyrmes slam opponents with their tails (8 \mathbb{L} 2) augmented by *Adroit Flying* (+3), *Tough* (+3), and its armored hide (+6 = 20 \mathbb{L} 2). They bite only if confined or when their foe is exhausted and unlikely to be a threat. When grounded, every ability takes a -4 penalty from their *Clumsy on Ground*.

Zombie

Zombies are corpses animated by evil magic, abominations that do the bidding of their creator. They continue to rot, exchanging their effectiveness for a loathsome and dangerous stench.

A zombie receives a +8 increase to any existing *Strong* (or similar) ability, with a minimum of *Strong* 14 in any case. Thus, if the corpse of a person with *Muscular* 7 \mathbb{L} is animated, the new zombie will possess *Strong* 15 \mathbb{L} . Other abilities vary with the state of decay at the time of animation, the species and abilities of the original body, and the ritual used to create it. Zombies can range from mildly challenging to absolutely terrifying.

Zombies cannot speak. They do not eat or drink, never tire, and are immune to poison, disease, drowning, and the like. Their odor is the stench of the impossible, and meeting with the living dead assaults the sanity of the living. Magic or special dissolution rituals are the best weapons against them.

Tactics: Zombies attack only as their creators command them. First their *Loathsome Smell* frightens off weaklings. Zombies fight clumsily, but because they are not alive, they must be hacked into many pieces, burnt to a cinder, or otherwise completely destroyed to stop them. To

reflect this, zombies can make AP bids even after reduced to 0 or negative AP, as if using a Desperation Stake (see the Core Rules chapter, page 70). They continue to act until reduced to -41 AP, suffering normal penalties for their current negative AP total (to reflect broken heads, hacked limbs, hewn torsos, and similar damage).

Brand New Human Zombie

Typical Abilities: Fight 15, Loathsome Smell 10, Strong 15.

Half-Rotten Dark Troll Zombie

Typical Abilities: Fight 2 \mathbb{L} , Large 15, Loathsome and Sickening Smell 18, Strong 2 \mathbb{L} .

Half-Rotten Human Zombie

Typical Abilities: Fight 2 \mathbb{L} , Loathsome and Repulsive Smell 18, Strong 15.

Severely Rotten Human Zombie

Typical Abilities: Fight 10, Loathsome and Nauseating Smell 8 \mathbb{L} , Strong 12.



The Servants of the Cleansing are a "hero band" dedicated to cleansing the world of everything that will keep them from coming to power. They employ dark and evil magic to achieve their goals, including the creation of zombies to fight for them and terrify their victims.



INTRODUCTION TO GLORANTHA

Glorantha conforms to the mysterious laws of myth rather than the reliable, repeatable laws of science. It was born of magic, and throughout Mythology and History this force has shaped peoples, empires, and the land itself.

The Mortal World of Glorantha is not a planet moving through space. It is a huge cube of earth floating on an infinite sea, with one surface partially exposed. The sky is a dome that the sun, planets, and stars move within, upon, and beneath. Past the dome is the Sky World, where immortals live. Below the world is the Underworld, a place of ghosts, monsters, and demons. Around the edges of the world the immense sky dome contacts the infinite sea and the Underworld. The edges, too, are home to immortals.

In the center of the world, a gigantic whirlpool sucks all waters into it. Around this central ocean are the continents and islands that mortals call home. The northern continent, Genertela, is the crucible of the Hero Wars. Dragon Pass is the crossroads of the continent, and it is there, among its gods and peoples and ancient races, that the fire will be ignited to spread across the whole world.

Mythology and History

All peoples of Glorantha practice magic. All the various contradictory explanations for the origins of magic seem to work. No one doubts that magic exists; everyone can see its effects. What differs between the methods are the ways worshippers perform magic, the Otherworld from which they draw their power, and the entities they contact.

The Mythic Age

Before Time, the world existed in a mythic state where mundane and supernatural were not distinguished. Although no one knew it, three separate worlds existed (or had the potential to exist), each blissful and perfect on its own. Then the Gods War erupted, a cosmic conflict that created the modern world of Glorantha.

The Gloranthan races and peoples interpret this Time Before Time in their own ways. They share these fundamental stages.

Creation

Every intelligent race on Glorantha has myths about its origins. Yet vast eons of creation occurred before mortal beings were made. Thus no mortal remembers creation, though some have endured it through religious or magical experiences. The

elder races remember events before humans, but even they do not remember the start.

Every religion explains its experience of creation differently. Most have this in common: they were formed in isolation, then came into contact with other forces, other worlds, or other beings. The Three Worlds separated, mixed together, enhanced each other's existence, or grew apart from each other.

Most myths do not say it that way, but such it was, or might as well have been. The meetings of strangers caused the universe to change into the world that is here and now. Mortal people, deities, spirits, and other entities and beings became aware of themselves. Creation was over.

Golden Age

The Golden Age is a time of great peace and plenty. A huge variety of peoples and races exist together in harmony. Heroes make laws, organize nations and ceremonies, and arrange customs and societies. The Emperor, Yelm, is the brightest light in the universe and sits in the center of the Three Worlds. He arranges the gods and goddesses of the world into an orderly hierarchy, and those that are unable to bear his glare flee and hide far underneath it. Some people, the Emperor's Chosen, build great cities along great rivers where artists gather, philosophers join in debate and counterpoints, and strange foodstuffs from across the universe are peddled. The few early troubles are quickly solved by brilliant heroes.

Gods War

The universe could not continue forever unchanged. The Three Worlds crash together, break apart, and negate or amplify each other in unexpected, impossible ways. The combining and canceling of deities, spirits, and essences is sometimes easy, occasionally wonderful, but mostly difficult and painful. Creation becomes destruction. The cosmic impulse that had started the world collapses.

The Gods War is a time of trouble, grief, shortages, and conflict for everyone. It is a war for the cosmos, a battle of deities, spirits, essences, and demons. It starts and worsens slowly, until Death comes. Then people die, animals die, trees die, and soon even the rocks die. Gods and goddesses die, spirits are sent to the Otherworld, and essences become inert. The Sun falls, the Earth sleeps, the Winds stop, the Ocean freezes, and Underworld things come out everywhere.

Great Darkness

The Great Darkness is the end of the world. All sources of light die as the Lesser Suns are extinguished, stars fall, and



planets fail to rise. Fires become harder to light, fail to ignite most wood, and attract hunters and hungry monsters. Soon no lights exist save for the tiniest and most secret sparks. Nothing is good, all water is ice as hard as rock, air is toxic gas, and the earth itself is a putrid poison. Populations vanish, and even mighty gods, great spirits, and first beings disappear. Chaos demons and monsters invade Glorantha from outside of the known universe, and the world itself mutates and crumbles out of existence. Terror, horror, and suffering are the only ways of life. The Spike (the Cosmic Mountain, the center of all being) vaporizes in a huge explosion that cracks reality into its original pieces.

The Darkness should have ended the whole world, and maybe it did. But somehow the cosmos was saved. Every religion has its own explanation, always due to the intervention of its key figures. Common to nearly all is the story of desperate but heroic people fighting for existence against terrible odds. A few survived to see the first Dawn. The Darkness ended, and Time and recorded history began.

History

Most Gloranthans believe that history—and Time itself—began 1,620 years ago. Most divide this history into three ages: the Dawn Age, the Imperial Age, and the Modern Age. The Heortlings of central Genertela use the most accessible dating system; they begin counting the years at the Dawn.

The Dawn Age

The Dawn Age began with the first sunrise. At first only a few organized homelands existed, with other survivors thinly scattered across the continent. The Dawn Peoples of all the mortal races worked together at first to rebuild the world after the catastrophes of the Great Darkness. This cooperation lasted for 150 or so years. As experiences of the Great Darkness became distant stories people competed again. For two centuries warfare grew more common.

In the year 375 the Sun temporarily stopped in the sky. Each race or culture interpreted this event in its own way, but almost everyone agreed it was a disaster, or a portent of disaster. A great empire disagreed, for the Sunstop heralded the birth of their new god: Nysalor, the Divine Light. Everyone else knows him as Gbaji, the Deceiver. Peoples and races fought against him, but Nysalor conquered, unstoppable.

Then came Arkat. He hated Gbaji and destroyed the evil god. Arkat began as a Brithini, but betrayed them and became a Seshnelan. He betrayed them and worshipped Orlanth, then

The Theyalan Calendar

The Theyalan calendar used in much of central Genertela is perhaps the most widespread. It divides the year into five seasons (Sea, Fire, Earth, Darkness, and Storm) and a two week Sacred Time. Each season has eight weeks: Disorder, Harmony, Death, Fertility, Stasis, Movement, Illusion, and Truth. Each week has seven days: Freezeday, Waterday, Clayday, Windsday, Fireday, Wildday, and Godsdays. Each day is twenty-four hours long. Some peoples name the hours.

Dates in *HeroQuest* follow the Theyalan calendar.

Humakt, but betrayed them too, and became a troll. The Dawn Age is said to have ended around the year 500, upon Arkat's apotheosis.

The Imperial Age

After the Gbaji Wars powerful kingdoms became empires and shared the world. Central Genertela was ruled by dragons, all coasts were ruled by the God Learners, and Errinoru the Elf Emperor ruled most of eastern Pamaltela. Each had a new magic of its own. Each engulfed a great region and encouraged communication, trade, and movement within itself. The God Learners clashed with both other empires, and with East Islanders as well.

Each empire overreached itself. After decades of turmoil, dragons turned on humans and devoured millions in Dragon Pass. The God Learners provoked a backlash from the cosmic forces they sought to control. A little fungus wiped out all the Errinoru magic. Finally, to cap the disaster of the Imperial Age, all seas were closed to shipping by a great spell cast by Zzabur, the wizard who was like a god.

The Imperial Age is considered to have ended with the Dragonkill War in 1120.

The Modern Age

For a century people could only retrench and recover. They enjoyed their new isolation and thought there would be no more empires. They were wrong.

In 1247 another great celestial portent shattered the world's comfort. A great red planet rose from the surface high into the sky where it stopped and has hovered ever since. Under it a new empire has risen led by the Red Emperor, son of Sedenya, the Red Moon. One by one the kingdoms and tribes of the central lands have been taken into her strange and mystical embrace. Only the barbarian Heortlings hold out, and they are in desperate straits.

The Hero Wars are between... Magic and Nature

Several times in history, the actions of mortals have had profound effects on the world. In the First Age, the great acts of high magic of several peoples caused the Sun to stop in the sky. In the Second Age, simultaneous curses cleared all oceans of traffic and destroyed several lands. In the Third Age, the long-range plans of a dead goddess caused the rebirth of Sedenya and the rise of the Red Moon. Many peoples are in the middle of centuries-long rituals, and the results they seek, whether Flood or Forest, Reconstructing or Eating, Raising Up or Pulling Down, will determine the course of the Hero Wars and once again reshape Glorantha.

The savage Praxian tribes, though, have not agreed. They must go to their sacred grounds to visit the giant spirits that live there. They must pilgrimage to the graves of their ancestors. They must visit the Paps, where babies come from. They must destroy their foes, the Sable People, who accept Chaos as a friend. Leaders have risen among them. Some like White Bull are great men becoming demigods, others like Orfiyan are demigods born to be men. A few, such as Engrenga Marala the man-eating cow, defy description. They share one thing: the desire to return to Prax. They are coming.

Malkioni

The Malkioni peoples of the West worship an Invisible God and many also pay homage to the saints who attend Him. Foremost among the prophets is Malkion the Prophet, whose revelations helped the people to survive the terrible Ice Age. Second (in some churches) is Hrestol the Prophet, who taught a new, more hopeful way of worshipping God after the Ice Age ended. Two great nations of Malkioni are known, the Hrestoli of Loskalm and the Rokari of Seshnela, but there are dozens of smaller sects as well. Theologies compete for recognition as the one true faith; all practice wizardry.

Most Malkioni societies are feudal. Wizards attend kings, princes, and dukes—nobles who command armored knights, patronize a tiny middle class of artisans and professionals, and tax the serfs who work their lands. People are born into castes and, depending on the church, remain in the caste of their birth until death, progress through the castes, or rise above them.

Kralori

The people of Kralorela toil under the benevolent eye of their Dragon Emperor, a great mystic who has sacrificed spiritual oneness in order to provide guidance to his subjects. Society is crowded and hence polite. Each person knows his place in the intricately ordered society. Each struggles for personal perfection, seeking to bring honor to his household and his ancestors. The highest Kralori value is stability—of thought, of government, and of behavior. Now this stability is threatened by omens and signs that augur a time of great and disturbing change.

Pentans

Fearsome horse nomads roam the harsh grasslands of Pent. They have at times overrun both the Lunar and Kralori Empires. Many small tribes hold territory within the wide lands; each year any may conquer its neighbors and form a powerful force that never outlives its founder. They herd horses, cattle, goats, and sheep; trade raw animal products for the goods of the Citadel Lords; and watch for chances to plunder east, south, or west.

The Islands and Oceans

Between the two continents stretches the Homeward Ocean. At its center swirls Magasta's Whirlpool, a maelstrom whose doom currents suck anything they capture down to Hell. Around the edges of the great ocean lie many islands and archipelagos. To the west is Justela, once a small continent and the residence of the long-dead God Learners, now a broken group of islands home to elder races. To the east is Teleos, once a great pirate kingdom but now as deceptively peaceful as it was at the Dawn; beyond it lie the Ten Thousand Isles of Wonder, commonly called the East Isles.

East Islanders

The East Isles cover a vast expanse in the Eastern Ocean. Mysticism is common there, but most people worship deities, from the High Gods who created the universe to the Low Gods, one on each island. Humans are the most populous race but non-humans are also found here, in particular the duck-like race of Keets. The East Isles have generally remained unaffected by the rest of the world, but the islanders have acted when they needed to, and are ready to act again during the Hero Wars.

The Wolf Pirates

Harrek the Berserk is a great god-killing hero. He leads the Wolf Pirates, infamous sailors who prey on local shipping and coastal lands for food and slaves. Their raids have reached as far as Teshnos and Seshnela, and reavers from across the world have joined them. They defeated the defending fleets years ago, and are the dominant naval power on the southern coast of Genertela.

Now the coast lies waste, and Harrek looks inland towards greater prizes. He smells plunder on the wind, sees fire in the future, and laughs at the thought of the blood of kings, heroes, and gods. He will not stay at sea.

Pamaltela

Pamaltela is a distant continent of jungle, savanna, and desert. Kingdoms, empires, and magical realms have lived and died here, as in the north. Most consider it too far away to be of much immediate importance. But that will change.

Doraddi

The Doraddi live in tribal or extended family units sometimes confederated into nations. The most important thing to a Doraddi is her lineage, which is traced through maternal lines to an original ancestor with a mythic link to a particular type of plant. Status, choice of mate, and the spirits a Doraddi follows are all determined by her lineage.

Fonritans

The overlords of Fonrit oversee a society in which almost everyone is a slave. The most cruelly mistreated slaves are a race of blue-skinned humans descended from the prehistoric Artmali Empire. The warlike overlords are at odds with one another, except when fighting against Aldryami incursions from the Errinoru Jungle to the east.

The Outer Limits

Beyond the edges of the world lies the Other Side. Demigod races dwell in the places where the Mortal World becomes the Otherworld, and mortals do not go there. The deities, great spirits, and saints themselves can sometimes be found in these regions, even if only temporarily.

Four outer lands are known to humans. Beyond Valind's Glacier is Altinela, bordered to the north by Sramake's River and surrounded on the other sides by the Mountains of the Sky. Beyond the East isles lies immortal Vithela, and beyond that is Theyela, the Land of Dawn, where the Sun rises each morning from Dawngate. South of the Nargan Desert in Pamaltela lies Sakum, the most southern and burning desert, home of the immortal agitorani and the bomonoi, men of living fire. In the far west, beyond the vast Western Ocean, lies Luathela, where the Sun passes through the Gates of Death each night, home of the violet-skinned demigods who destroyed Old Seshnela.

Dragon Pass

Dragon Pass is the crossroads of the continent of Genertela. Its mountains, forests, and rugged foothills are cut by few routes of easier travel. Its warm summers are broken by frequent violent storms, and bitterly cold winters make travel impossible.

Throughout history, the civilizations of Genertela have met here and the ruins of their collisions are still scattered throughout Dragon Pass. As the Third Age draws to its close, competing civilizations will clash here again—igniting the Hero Wars.

Recent History

Five hundred years ago, everyone in the lands north of Dragon Pass who could pick up a spear, sword, or sling gathered as the True Golden Horde. Farmers and princes from Peloria marched to annihilate the dragonewts and their nests. They found only death. All of dragonedom returned to defend the nests. Dream dragons swarmed, breathing fire and poison, while true dragons hurtled down like the sky falling. No humans survived. None. People call this the Dragonkill for what the dragons did. A generation of men were gone, and the descendants of those left behind still fear the dragons. No one forgets. For centuries Dragon Pass was off-limits to humans. Only elder races lived there.

Three hundred years ago desperate people risked entering Dragon Pass, fleeing from wars or following ancient prophecies. First were the Grazers from the east, then Heortlings from the south, and last were the Tarshites from the north. They lived in secret at first, discovered and fought each other, and then the outside world learned of them. Dragon Pass again entered history. The Lunar Empire came, conquered Tarsh, and defeated the Grazers.

For generations, the Heortling kingdom of Sartar resisted the Lunar expansion. Then in 1602 the Empire stormed their capital city, Boldhome, and put the royal family to the sword. In 1613, the Governor-General of Dragon Pass, Fazzur Wideread, quashed a Sartarite rebellion. The last rebels fled to wastes and wilds, and now Sartarite slaves labor in farms across the Empire.

By 1620, the only resistance left to the Lunar advance was the besieged hilltop city of Whitewall, where Broyan, the Last High King, held out. The city fell to the Lunars in 1621, and with that success all winds in Dragon Pass stopped, creating a vacuum that began to draw into it all the winds of the world. Orlanth was dead, and his people despair. But the battle against the Lunars has only begun, and both sides are mustering their forces for the next great clash of heroes, magic, and armies.

Land of Thunder

Dragon Pass is an extraordinary land of unique magical places. The hills, waters, groves, hollows, and crevices are the bodies of gods and goddesses. The land lives. In a thousand places the gods and heroes of old trod and did their deeds. The geography marks their presence now with a thousand holy temples, spirit places, and power spots into the Other Side. The entire Pass is itself a holy place, a land of great, living mythology.

At its center, the impossibly tall and steep Kero Fin Mountain juts upward almost eight miles into the air. The great mountain goddess weighs down the land with her power, giving it of old her name as its own: Kerofinela. Above her snow-capped crown the omnipresent cloud of Orlanth surges and swirls, sending winds in all directions. From her icy heights the goddess of snow descends each winter to cloak the land.

Dragon Pass is a highland, but is the lowest point in the con-

tinental divide that runs from southwest to northeast through the precipitous Rockwood Mountains. The series of stony outcrops and undulating hills is the broken back of a great dragon that was a hundred miles long before Orlanth slew it. Its skull, a mile long, sits over a gap in the hills. Caravans that pass over these hills must travel through the fanged skull. Light enters only through the eye sockets and the great crack in the crest.

The northwest of the Pass is drained by the headwaters of the mighty Oslir River. The river formed when an ancient water deity challenged the Emperor to a duel and roared northward, flooding the Lord of the World and instituting a vast flood that nearly drowned everything. Even now, the river is a great force in Dara Happa that defies land, fire, and storm.

The southeast of the watershed is drained by the Creek-Stream River. It combines a god, The River, which flows southward from the eternal rainstorm over Skyfall Lake; a great spirit, The Stream, which flows from the Indigo Mountains that border the troll land of Dagori Inkarth; and a mighty essence, The Creek, which flows out of the Quivin Mountains. The waters combine at the Upland Marsh and then flow south through Heortland.

The Upland Marsh formed in the Pass when an empire fell to civil war, before the True Golden Horde invaded. A resident now called Delecti the Necromancer cursed the land and made it neither land nor water, high nor low, wet nor dry, living nor dead. The result was the marsh that is now filled with undead monstrosities that menace everything around.

North of the Upland Marsh is Snakepipe Hollow, a huge depression surrounded on three sides by vertical cliffs made in the Great Darkness when the earth collapsed to contain the monsters collected there. When they swarmed out of its western mouth they met armies of humans and elder races which, united against Chaos, crushed the foul foe.

Three great mountains mark three of the four corners of the Pass. In the southwest is snow-peaked Arrowmound, the tallest of the three. Atop it live gods and heroes, and upon its steep slopes are nest caverns where winged people called wind children live. Southeast rise Quivin Mountain and his kin, including a great cow and a white raven that have become stone like Quivin himself. Northeast rises Blackorm Mountain, where Cragspider lives with the dragon that gives its name to the peak. Around it storms the tumultuous hole in the sky called the Skyfall, a magical rainstorm that never stops dumping its waters into the lake below.

Three great cities dominate Kerofinela. In the northwest sits Furthest, capital of Tarsh and the greatest of all Lunar Provincial cities. Its tall walls shield apartments and parks, laid down upon gridded streets with markets and wells at the intersections. In the southeast perches Boldhome, rival of the Empire and former capital of the Kingdom of Sartar. It nestles among steep valleys high in the Quivin Mountains, a seemingly impossible place to live, and seemingly impregnable. Yet thousands dwell there, and once it fell to a Lunar assault. North of Boldhome and east of Furthest stands Alda-chur. It has neither gigantic walls nor impossible mountains to protect it, relying instead upon the ancient magic that exudes from the spot and the arms of the brave souls who live there. Only the southwest has no great city, for there the Grazers' ancient powers have forbidden all forms of civilization, and set such a great challenge that no one has yet defied their rough but powerful magic.

Coinage

Most people receive their income in goods, not coins. The most common currency is food. Still, some people do use coins, often in trade or to pay community taxes. These coins are relatively pure alloys, not pure metal.

Currency in Dragon Pass is based on a silver standard, for it is by far the most common monetary metal. However, most Gloranthans never have cause to use anything more valuable than the clack, a copper coin. The silver coin goes by many different names, depending on where you are: silver, crown, lunar, guilder, penny, sovereign, and so on. It is used for large transactions and is worth 10 clacks. The rare gold coins called wheels are worth 20 silvers each. Trolls use a lead coin called a bolg, but these are rarely accepted by human merchants. Certainly no Solar worshipper would handle one, fearing spiritual pollution just from the touch of the Darkness metal.

disagrees, and seeks only peace and plenty for his folk. The hero Karndaro the Leaper protests against both paths, and says that only in the Otherworld will the Grazers find both wide lands and true peace. And the Queen? She tells no one what she knows, although she sees far past the smoke and into the fire of the future.

Black Horse County

Sir Ethilrist commands the mercenary Black Horse Troop. They ride demon horses and sell their services to whomever pays in gold. Sir Ethilrist (now hundreds of years old) plays the mercenary and collects great treasure, but awaits his chance for revenge. He hates the Emperor who cheated him, despises the barbarians who fear him, and holds mere mortals in contempt. This man, who harrowed hell, lays plans for his hidden agenda.

Sun Dome County

The Sun Dome County is a spartan religious community that fiercely defends its independence, until the right price comes along. They serve only the Sun, seek to preserve their freedom, and revere the Son of the Sun above all other entities. They have laid down a magical operation that will take another thirty years of bright sunlight to complete. That is when the world will go dark, their prophecies say. Then the son of a god and a demon shall shine forth from the Sun Dome Temple to complete their plans, for peace or for conquest no one knows.

Heortland

Foreign lords rule in Heortland. The king, Bandal Tigerbane, rules by the power of his knights and foreign mercenaries. He is a hard man, sunk in greed, subject to the Empire.

For decades, mercenaries have ruled and plundered here.

Patriots still ferment rebellion in Sartar and Heortland. Freedom fighters gather in the hills, strike the enemy, then disappear. Despite cruel reprisals sympathizers smuggle the guerillas food, offer shelter, and risk their lives for the cause. A generation born since the occupation still whistles patriotic songs and dreams of a chance to strike a blow against the Empire. Hushed conversations around the hearth recall heroic tales of resistance. The forces of the storm pause only to catch their breath. When they exhale, a hurricane of freedom will scour the land.



Now, the sorcerous knights of the south have become lords over the free men of the north. Now, clan towns are manors of alien sheriffs. Now, castles house outland earls who devastate the countryside to punish any protest. A schism of language and culture stands between the people of Heortland and their rulers. Wealth and power reign from the castles, while famine sits at the hearths of peasants. But the last high king still lives, and Orlanth is not dead.

Whitewall

In Whitewall, independence was capped for years, like wind in a bottle, and King Broyan vowed to die rather than submit. He and his followers resisted magic, threw down armies, and defied the Red Goddess. Fazzur Wideread laughed at their boasts and tightened his siege, and the city fell. But Broyan swore that if defeated he would become venom in the foot that crushed him, an infection in the hand that struck him down. The bodies of only seven defenders were discovered in the city when it fell. And Broyan's was not among them...

Land of Elder Secrets

Beast-men

Ancient magic protects Beast Valley so no human may settle there. Strange races cluster there, part man, part animal: centaurs, minotaurs, satyrs, and fox-women. They gather once a year to dance at the standing stones of the Wild Temple. They remembered Ironhoof, the god who was their chief, and they brought him to life again. They remember other things, more ancient and powerful, and they prepare for the greatest dance they have enacted since the Dawntime.

The durulz are beast-men, called ducks by men. They controlled river trade up and down the Creek-Stream River and were part of Sartar. Fazzur made them scapegoats for rebellion and a cruel bounty drove them into hiding. Many now live as outlaws and men laugh at their trouble. Who could not? What possible power could they waddle out to harm strong men?

Dragonewts

Before history or myth the dragonewts lived in Dragon Pass. They are alien creatures, ever reincarnating through their eggs in their home nests, and changing form as they progress through their different life stages on their journey toward full dragonhood. Humans avoid the areas where dragonewts live, especially the hunting lands around the Dragon's Eye, their central nest. There sinuates the Inhuman King, who has interrupted his transition to true dragon to protect his people. They have secret magic roads that crisscross Dragon Pass, control dragons, dinosaurs, and wyrms, and work magic that defies understanding. Humans are fortunate that they remain aloof. For now.

Esrolia

A Queendom lies across the sea from the Lunar path, but rises to meet the challenge. Ten women of destiny hear the call and muster armies of the living and the dead to meet the foes. They quarrel among themselves, plot against and cheat each other, and steal from their sisters to find who among them is the best. They will find that one—or three, perhaps, if the Basket Prophecy is true. And then they will march, with the Blood Flag at their fore, to quell the trouble, cast down the evil, and bring all of the land to their banner. Who is there to rule, who to fall?



Tusk Riders

Drinkers of blood and eaters of man-flesh live in the Stinking Forest. They are brutal raiders who ride gigantic porcine steeds called tuskers. The last time they ventured out in force, all the peoples of Dragon Pass joined to crush them in the Pig Hunt. But blood runs in small streams from their great temple called the Ivory Plinth, and old daimones have been brought up from the tombs again. A stinking army waits, a grunting cavalry gouges the ground, and red eyes glower so brightly that they blind even friends. They wait. Their chance is coming.

Dwarves

The dwarves methodically ratchet forward their plans to fix the World Machine. They stay in their deep homes, following secret plans to gear up their conquest. In Dragon Pass lives a uniquely friendly one, known to men as The Dwarf, who sometimes rents out dwarf secrets like gigantic stone men, the Cannon Cult, a glass flying machine, or the Alchemical Transformer. But he does nothing for the good of humankind, and plots for his own people. Yet in the short run, who can refuse his aid?

Trolls

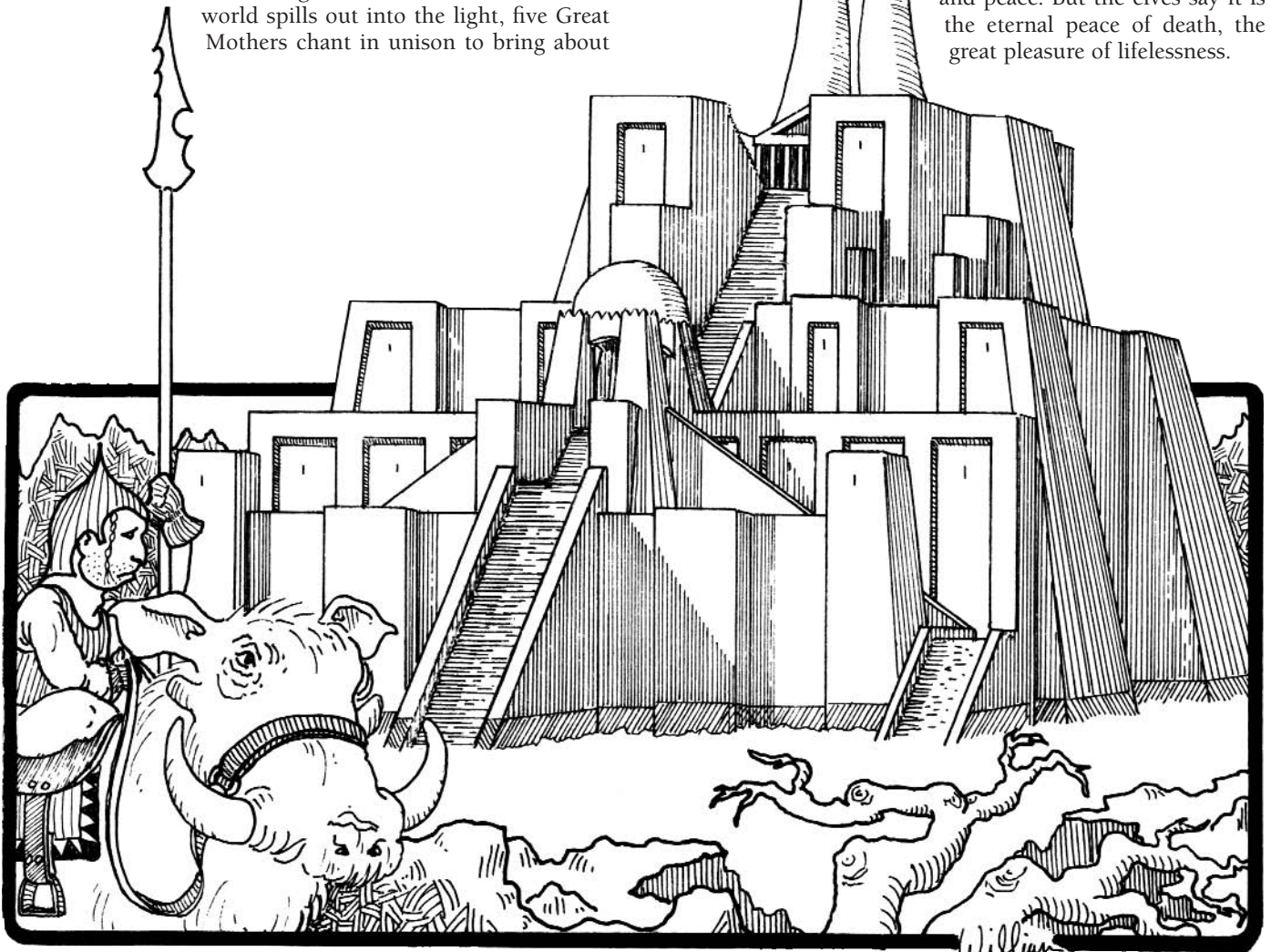
Trolls surround the Pass. Veg Mageg huddles under the desolate Shadow Plateau to the south, where he has found a spell to make a dead serpent of metal rise again. To the east in Dagori Inkarth, where the Underworld spills out into the light, five Great Mothers chant in unison to bring about

the birth of something never seen before. They are sure it will come once they have devoured the Five Foods. North in the Black Dragon Mountains, near Skyfall Lake, the great demigoddess Cragspider whispers to her dragon and brews stone drinks for her troll army. And to the west, in Halikiv, Urukong Mogagar impregnates herself with himself and births litters of trolls that see in the light, hurl rocks that destroy walls, and deafen mortal men with their angry roars.

Each waits, planning and plotting. They send secret messages to coerce and threaten each other, trade presents of might, power, and fear, and await the word of their Greatest Mother. Then they will rise once more and seize first Dragon Pass, then the world.

Elves

A new seed is being planted in the earth. A new earth is being formed among the tribe. A new tribe is growing in secret somewhere in Dragon Pass, born from a tree that has been lost since the Sun first fell. The elves have started their plan in a place so secret that men cannot see it even when they stand in it. Flowers bloom and laugh at the future, showering delighted mortals with multicolored rain. Sweet scents hypnotize people of all races with the promise of pleasure and peace. But the elves say it is the eternal peace of death, the great pleasure of lifelessness.



"I am the War-Teeth of Gouger," reads the main inscription on this blood-stained altar. "Sacrifices offered to appease me, hot blood and quick deaths." The brutal Tusk Riders who follow the Cult of the Bloody Tusk are happy to oblige.

HEROQUEST ADVENTURES

The stories you and the players create together are the heart of any roleplaying experience. When the Adventures are put together, they form a campaign—an epic series of stories that make up the saga of the heroes. Narrator Characters provide color to adventures, whether they are allies, adversaries, or just part of a cast of thousands.

Adventures

Adventures put your heroes inside the Hero Wars. Heroes in many campaigns have only local roles in the great conflicts outlined in the *HeroQuest* regional setting books. The Lunar/Heortling conflict, for example, might generate an adventure that pits small bands of Lunar colonists against Heortling rebels for control of an isolated valley. This adventure will not change the course of history—except for the people who live in that valley. Later, the scope can widen as player heroes encounter or even oppose great figures of Gloranthan history such as Kallyr Starbrow and Sir Ethilrist. Heroes in such campaigns can affect the course of the Hero Wars.

Published *HeroQuest* adventures include sensory details like visual cues to make scenes vivid. Instead of reading out big sections of text, put things in your own words or come up with your own images. The more natural your narration, the more your players will feel part of a spontaneous story that their actions can influence, rather than a canned script that they are being shunted through.

Some ideas are given below on your role in bringing these stories to life. Each adventure can usually be completed in one or two game sessions.

Adventure Format

Published *HeroQuest* adventures follow a standard format to make information easy to find and understand. Not all adventures will need to include all of these sections, but most will have them. You do not need to follow this format when creating your own adventures, but you may find it helpful to do so.

Premise

Each published adventure begins with a sentence or two that tell what the adventure is about and sum up the plot. If you find that your synopsis is much longer than this, your idea is probably too complicated. The number one rule when creating roleplaying plots is: keep it simple!

The simpler and looser your premise, the less trouble you will have when players move the story in an unexpected direction. If events bog down or go off on some odd tangent, you can either try to yank the story back to your plan or abandon it for a new story suggested by the players' impulse. The latter choice is usually best.

Secret

This optional section explains what is really going on. You can expand on this information, or bring it up later if the heroes do not discover the secrets during the adventure.

Involving the Heroes

Many adventures provide notes on ways to involve heroes in the adventure. This allows heroes and bands from different homelands to participate more easily.

Benchmark

The adventure will often contain a **benchmark**: a numeric rating that indicates the approximate difficulty level of the adventure. Heroes going through the adventure should each have at least one appropriate ability at that rating. If they do not, they are likely to fare poorly in the adventure. If they have several abilities at this level or much above it, they are likely too powerful for the adventure as written. In either case, you should consider adjusting all of the resistances in the adventure by the



In ancient times, long before human beings were made or even thought of, immature dragons mated, and from their clutches hatched the race of dragonewts. These strange beings have habits alien to humans, who fear them and avoid them when they can.

difference between the ratings and the benchmark, so that the heroes face challenging (but not impossible) odds.

Scenes

An adventure is made up of a number of scenes. Each scene is a distinct opportunity for action or interaction. Scenes must usually be run in order, and usually assume that the heroes will do or achieve certain things before moving on to the next one.

Key Points

For each scene we begin with the **key points**. This entry gives you some crucial flexibility. The key points tell you what must happen in the scene in order to use the rest of the adventure roughly as written. As long as you somehow fulfill the key points, you can change the details of the rest of the scene while retaining the adventure's basic plot. When writing out your own adventures, you may find it helpful to keep track of the key points in each scene. If they exceed a couple of sentences, you probably need to simplify.

Opening Scene

The opening scene describes how the heroes are drawn into the story line. It tells you what they know at the beginning and why they want to get involved. Published adventures may be vague in this regard; our writers have the disadvantage of not knowing who your heroes are or what impels them to action. Feel free to tailor opening scenes to the goals and personalities of your heroes.

Rising Action

A series of scenes follows that develop the premise. In storytelling, this is called the **rising action** because each scene should build on the last, steadily intensifying the emotions and tension of the story. Each scene presents a conflict or problem that must be resolved before the heroes can move on. The scene should allow a number of possible resolutions—potential routes to the next scene. Some scenes may occur only

Ten Quick Stories

Adversary's Revenge: A hero's adversary strikes against him directly or through his community.

Ally in Trouble: A hero's ally needs his help.

Beware What You Wish For: The hero gets what he most wants in life, but finds that it is not what he expected.

Conflict of Interest: One hero's most cherished goals conflict with the immediate needs of the rest of the group.

Odd Couple: A hero is forced to cooperate with a narrator character who is his complete opposite.

Imposter: An imposter replaces a supporting character; only the hero can tell the difference, and must work to expose it.

Lovestruck: The hero must choose between love and duty.

Moral Crisis: A situation forces a hero to choose between two of his most closely held values.

Out of Character: A hero finds himself in a situation ill suited to his personality. For example, a Uroxi Chaos fighter might be called upon to negotiate a peace treaty or a scholar might be required to lead a desperate defense of his library.

Rival: A rival he cannot fight directly challenges a hero's position within the community. Thus, he must prove himself worthier than the interloper.



because of the heroes' failure in a previous one. No adventure should hinge on success in any single contest of the rising action, or your story will stop dead if the heroes chance to fail. Save the do-or-die stuff for the climax.

Climax

The climax is the final full scene, in which the conflict that drives the entire adventure is in some way resolved. This should be the most exciting scene and the one with the direst consequences for failure.

Denouement

The denouement is a short scene or scenes showing the consequences of the adventure's climax, for good or for ill. It may sow the seeds for a sequel, especially if the heroes suffered a setback and are left pondering their next move.

Campaigns

Each regional supplement contains an outline for a **story arc**. The story arc contains **character-driven**, **triggered**, and **continuity adventures**. You may want to use this model when creating your own campaign.

Character-Driven Adventures

Something happens to one of the heroes and impels him to act. At least half of your adventures should be character-driven. You will have to figure out the premises for these adventures yourself, but if you pay attention to the clues from your players, this should not be too hard. Look over the character sheets and see what sorts of adventures the players seem to desire. Here are some broad ideas for character-driven adventures.

Triggered Adventures

These scenarios are triggered by crises that strike the heroes or their communities. For your own campaign you should figure out three or four concerns important to your group. This is easy to do if the heroes belong to a community or organization whose fortunes they are willing to defend. Some standard factors are a community's wealth, its vulnerability to outside threats, its morale, and its relationship to the Otherworld, but you are encouraged to substitute other factors to suit the spirit of your campaign—political favor, reputation of a famous member of the community, and so on.

Continuity Adventures

These adventures, taken together, form a larger story line that gives shape and a sense of epic consequence to the entire campaign. Just as each adventure has a premise, a rising action, and a climax, each continuity adventure functions as an installment of a larger story that will eventually reach a climax of its own. Some continuity adventures take place at predetermined moments in history, others connect the microcosm of the heroes' home base to the macrocosm of the world-shaking Hero Wars. Your continuity adventures might chronicle the uprising in Sartar, the fight with trolls coming from the frozen wastes of Valind's Glacier, or the struggle against the Kingdom of War.

The Hero Wars

The saga of the Hero Wars goes on and on while ordinary people live their lives. It is so vast only some episodes touch upon it. Those happen now, like magic, and their repercussions will be felt later, deeper in the time when myth comes to life.

Narrator Characters

There are no absolute rules for creating narrator characters. You *can* use the narrative or list methods of character creation, but we recommend that you simply create them “as you go,” giving them whatever abilities and ratings fit the character and their role in the story. Most just need a couple of keywords and a few distinctive abilities.

Opponents should be neither too weak to challenge player heroes, nor so strong they overwhelm them, unless a one-sided contest is part of the plot. As a rule of thumb, a person with a 1-mastery advantage can take on three to five adversaries with a fair chance of winning. A two-mastery difference gives odds of victory somewhere near 6:1.

Do not list every feat or spell, just affinities and grimoires. Thus, a narrator character adept might have *Use [Grimoire] 17* rather than ratings for each individual spell, even though he might leave his grimoire at home and have talismans for all these spells. You are free to improvise skills and feats from abilities narrator characters have, and need not apply a penalty for improvising unless it favors the story. The only rule is “Make it fun.”

Narrator Character Leader Format

Published adventures use a special layout to give statistics on important narrator characters and their followers. A large box

gives the main abilities and possessions of the leader; particular marks that you should persistently use to describe the narrator character; and an illustration.

Ten lines fan out to small boxes; each line represents approximately 10% of the leader's time and resources, and each box is a commitment with related abilities. For example, if the leader is an initiate then three lines go to a box that shows the *Initiate of [Deity]* ability and any affinities known.

Followers are also named and given keywords, significant abilities, and important possessions. Use these abilities when the follower is acting alone. Behind each follower is a symbol identifying his relationship to the leader. This can be anything: a sword for a clan champion, a triangle behind a spearthane or advisor, or a star to identify an Otherworld entity. The sample below uses the five moons of the Five Spirit Moons Practice to show each of her spirit allies. Heortlings commonly have Four Storms as supporters, represented by a sword, circle, square, and triangle. Other homelands have their own systems.

Finally, a **contest synopsis** summarizes the group's main abilities augmented with the Followers in Extended Contests rules. Here, one of the group acts as a lead character with the rest acting as followers. This is the best way to handle contests if you want to keep them easy to manage.

Kohei Longbone
Ancestor Spirit Ally

Relationship: Friendship with Kohei Longbone 10

Significant Abilities: Bone Sword Fighting 5+10, Savagery 5

Note: Kohei bears the Bone Sword, which exists in both the Natural and Spirit Worlds.

GoodnBad
Spirit Ally of Unknown Origin

Relationship: Friendship with GoodnBad 5

Significant Abilities: Cryptic Advice 5, Remain Mysterious 10, Support Ai-Shana 5

The Open Door
Lune Spirit Ally

Relationship: Friendship with The Open Door 20

Significant Abilities: Moonlight 20, Resist Damage 4, Whisper Secrets 20

Contest Synopsis

Close Combat (Kohei): 18+112 AP
Magic Combat (Ai-Shana): 10+130 AP

Lunar Spirit Magic 5+2
Friendship with various practice spirits of the Five Spirit Moons Practice

Ai-Shana Half-and-Half
Lunar Jakaleel Shaman, half beautiful, half withered.

Other Keywords: Dara Happan Noble 7, From Dark Tradition 15

Other Significant Abilities: Appear Unexpectedly 15, Disconcerting Appearance 1, Hook Combat 20, Know Secrets 2+2, Strange Schemes 1+2

Special Items: Lead Hook +5

Personal Augments:
Know Secrets (+4 to negotiation, subterfuge, or vigilance)
Shaman of Jakaleel keyword (+6 to magic use)
Noble keyword (+3 to leadership or negotiation)

Personal Time

Practitioner of the Five Spirit Moons Practice 15

Shaman of the Jakaleel Practice 15+2

Fetch 5+2

Mysterious Quest

Sample Narrator Character Leader: Ai-Shana Half-and-Half

Once a pampered Dara Happan noble, Ai-Shana abandoned her family, past, and comforts on the cataclysmic day the Hollow Moon Box was opened in Dyth. As unborn and unwanted spirits screamed and gibbered through the night while the Nineten Short Judges sought to contain them, Ai-Shana felt herself called into another place, the Twenty-Three Delayed Realm. There, Jakaleel the Witch kissed her left cheek, killing her body but breathing life into her dormant fetch. Since then, she has wandered the Empire and beyond on a mysterious quest. Today she may save a village from the Bloody Coughs, tomorrow steal a child's breath with a sweep of her Lead Hook, never giving reason or apology. She is cursed, cursed with a destiny.

NARRATOR CHARACTERS

Sample Adventures

These four adventures are for starting or moderately experienced heroes whose best abilities are around 10W. For more powerful heroes, strengthen the opposition they face. All are set in or near Dragon Pass, and although intended for specific kinds of heroes can be adapted for others with little trouble. They are independent but can run in sequence, each showing the heroes becoming more influential within their community and district.

Each adventure focuses on one aspect of *HeroQuest* or Glorantha. Things usually left to the narrator's interpretation are sometimes described in detail as examples. However, these are only suggestions; use or ignore them as you see fit.

Hero Band Opportunities

Heroes are rarely loners, and you should encourage the player heroes to form their own hero band. Not only will this give them identity and powers, it will help them interact with the world around them. Chieftains and officials *expect* heroes to be in a hero band, and are disconcerted if they are not.

Each adventure suggests ways for the heroes to acquire a guardian. This may be the spirit of a fallen comrade, a bound demon, or even a friendly minor deity. The details are up to the narrator and the players to decide. The longer the heroes operate outside a hero band, the harder they should find acting in the social world. Feel free to introduce plot complications, penalize their social interactions, and otherwise make it clear that they are failing to live up to the expectations of Glorantha.

Physical Combat: High Pressure Front

This is a relatively straightforward adventure, suitable to start players off, which illustrates the *HeroQuest* contest resolution system. Fighting is always a possibility, and is central to some campaigns. It is important to vary the opponents, and to be challenging and clever. Balance matters too—most fights need

to be “fair,” but it must be possible for the heroes to win without using all of their hero points.

The Social World: Chasing Kites

Only outcasts or madmen live without ties to family, friends, and communities, which are central to this adventure. It is written from a Heortling perspective, but can be adapted for other barbarians, such as Bison People or Grazers. It requires that the heroes display not only diverse martial, magical, and practical skills, but also an awareness of their social environment as they deal with other clans, a mischievous trickster, and the spirits of the dead.

The Magical and Unpredictable World: Fish Rain

Strange things happen often in Glorantha, but strange does not mean meaningless. Heroes will encounter bizarre magic or unexpected sights that they must investigate and understand, for they may presage a catastrophe or offer unexpected opportunities. This unusual adventure shows that even civilized societies are every day confronted with the strange and the unexplained. Its Tarshite Lunar perspective can easily be converted to other civilized homelands, such as Esvular or Seshnela.

Heroquesting: Heavy Earth

Heroquests are the greatest magical adventures, for heroes project themselves into the Gods War. By recreating the mighty deeds of their deities and heroes, heroes can gain great powers or alter the world. “Heavy Earth” is a relatively straightforward heroquest, which can be run for heroes of every kind. All heroquests are difficult and dangerous, though, generally only to be risked by greater heroes. Even then, as here, success usually requires the larger community's support.



High Pressure Front

During a raid, Black Oak Clan members grab the chieftain's son and make off. The heroes are chosen to deliver the ransom and they encounter rough weather delivered by some Gag-arthi, part of a devious Black Oak plot. (If the heroes are not from a Heortling clan, you can use the Cold Rivers clan as the friendly clan in this adventure.)

Secret: The Black Oaks, it turns out, have arranged for the blackguards to steal the ransom, allowing them to demand another possibly higher ransom and cause great strain on the heroes' clan's resources.

Hero Band Opportunity: This is a good adventure for beginning heroes who have not yet established firm bonds of friendship and trust. If one of the heroes falls in the battle, and the players want to form a hero band, they may be able to adopt their slain companion as their guardian. If they were successful, their clan would assist them in this ritual. The new guardian's powers would reflect the hero's (so a hunter with a hatred of Lunars might provide functions such as *Sense Lunar Presence* and *Stealthy Tracker*).

Involving the Heroes: This adventure can be run for heroes hailing from any of the homelands.

Dara Happans—The Empire desires not merely to conquer the Heortlings by force, but to incorporate them as willing subjects. Dara Happans might be sent to help the Cold River Clan in order to promote collaboration, or they might simply be visiting (as tax collectors, missionaries, tourists, traders, or travelers) when the Black Oaks raid and be drawn into the adventure.

Esvulari—Esvulari are an increasingly common sight in Dragon Pass, quietly preaching their message of Saint Aeol among the heathen. They believe in evangelism by example, and have a strong code of right and wrong, and thus would feel honor-bound to assist the Cold Rivers.

Grazers—The Grazers treat the “walking people” with contempt, but have been known to involve themselves in Heortling affairs. Grazers may owe the Cold Rivers a debt of honor. If the Grazers are present during the raid and suffer casualties, there may be blood-price to extract from the Black Oaks.

Heortlings—The Black Oaks raid the heroes' clan (instead of the Cold Rivers), and the heroes are chosen by their chieftain to escort the ransom.

Puma People—Puma People wander freely across Dragon Pass. The Cold Rivers might be allies, or simply the clan providing the heroes with hospitality on the day of the raid.

Tarshites—Tarsh is trying to annex Dragon Pass, in part because of ancient kinship links between the Tarshites and Heortlings. Lunarized Tarshites might help the Cold Rivers in order to win them over, while traditionalist Tarshite highlanders could be visiting distant kin when the Black Oaks strike.

Other—Dragon Pass is a crossroads, and many peoples pass through it. The Cold Rivers might seek mercenaries to handle the ransom, especially if they lost many weaponthanes during the raid. Who knows who might turn up unexpected to assist, drawn by a portentous dream, the promise of future aid, a desire to right a wrong, or simply a grudge against the Black Oaks?

Scene 1: The Raid!

Ask the players if their heroes are doing anything special this day. You want to know where they are when the patrol sounds the alarm that one of the clan's outlying steads is being raided.

The heroes must get to that stead as quickly as they can. If they are not together (or they are competitive) run a simple contest, having each player roll a die and then comparing it to a single roll for resistance.

Contest: Get to the Raid

Appropriate Abilities: Fly, Ride, Run, Sprint, Quick (–3).

Resistance: 14.

Victory and Defeat: Victory levels determine order of arrival: complete victory arrives first, complete defeat gets lost! The difference in level is the number of rounds between arrivals (for example, someone with a marginal victory gets there 2 rounds after someone with a major victory).

The stead stands in the middle of a straggly copse of trees, where the heroes find a confused melee of raiders and clan warriors. Raiders bear down on the heroes. There should be one or two raiders per hero. Their tattoos and battle cries show them to be younger members of the Black Oak Clan, with whom the heroes' clan (if they are local) has a history of sporadic raids and feuds.

Black Oak Raiders

Keywords: Heortling 17, Initiate of Destor 17, Warrior 17.

Weapons and Armor: Spear +3, javelin +3, composite armor and shield +4.

Tactics: Each has used magic to augment his combat ability by +6 (=3LU). They try to pair off with defenders, while the rest loot the stead. They will break off looting to gang up on an especially dangerous defender. They try to put enemies out of action, not kill them: this is a cattle raid and looting expedition, not a war. Defeated raiders try to flee.

Tweak the raiders if needed so that the heroes face stiff but beatable opposition. Should the raiders prove too effective, friendly warriors can arrive on the scene. If the heroes are having too easy a time, give one of the raiders some unusual attack, such as a gust of wind to blow the heroes' swords out of their hands.

Scene 2: Ransom

If the heroes take prisoners, they should bring them to the clan chieftain. If not, they are invited to the chieftain's stead to celebrate the successful defense against the raid. The chieftain and his inner ring, his circle of advisors, are discussing how to respond—the heroes may take part in the planning, boast about their deeds, or otherwise contribute to the general commotion. This makes it difficult to notice that anyone is missing.

Contest: Notice the Chieftain's Son is Missing

Appropriate Abilities: Notice, Observant, Relationship with Chieftain or Son (–3), Quick (–5).

Resistance: 2LU.

Any Victory: The hero notices his absence before the Black Oaks' envoy arrives.

Tie: The hero senses that something is amiss, but does not know what.

Any Defeat: The hero notices nothing.



Just then a sudden uproar is heard outside. The doors of the hall are thrown open and in march two of the clan weaponthanes and between them Inkorving Fleetfoot, an Issaries messenger from the Black Oaks. The laws of hospitality and justice prevent any harm being offered him, but there is much jeering from both the men and the women.

In a cold, clear voice, Inkorving reveals that they have a prisoner—Gulvik, the chieftain's son. He is here to negotiate an exchange and ransom. Unless any of the heroes are either especially forceful or members of the clan ring, they are unlikely to play a role in the haggling that follows. Inkorving will not go below ten cows—not unreasonable, but still an imposition.

While the noisy Heortling negotiations are taking place, the heroes may piece together what happened. While a band of young warriors raided the stead, seasoned Black Oak weaponthanes lay in wait. When young Gulvik, eager to prove his manhood, rushed to join the fray, they sprang their trap and bundled him away, unseen.

Scene 3: Off to the Black Oak Clan

The chieftain is loath to strip the clan of its weaponthanes to deliver the ransom, so he chooses the heroes in the light of their valor during the raid. This is an honor, although it means the clan will learn of their failures as well as their successes.

Travel to the Black Oaks takes almost a day, so the heroes are told to leave early tomorrow. They will be leading a horse loaded with two heavy chests containing several bronze torcs, sixteen carved bone implements, bottles of ritual olive oil from Esrolia, a silver flute, and other goods the clan trader and Inkorving agreed equaled the value of ten cows.

It is a bright, clear day. Add encounters along the way if you wish, but keep in mind that Scene 4 should take place roughly an hour before the heroes arrive at the Black Oak border. Here are a few events that may occur:

- A deer runs across their path—surely they have time for a quick hunt for such fine prey? What if it leads them to a trackless part of the woods, and the heroes become lost?
- The heroes come face to face with some Lunar official, with a guard of spearmen. They are clearly expected to leave the path and let the Lunars past. Do they?
- A sharp-eyed hero spots a much-worn, once-fine bronze dagger in the mud. Close examination (automatic success with *Heortling Customs*) reveals symbols of the Black Oaks. It was actually dropped by Durlen Durlensson, one of the weaponthanes who seized Gulvik, as they sped back to their own lands. It has been in his family for generations, and if it is returned to him he will, grudgingly, owe the hero a favor.

Scene 4: Ambush by the Gagarthi

Late in the afternoon, as the heroes wind their way through the Bottom Woods between their clan lands and the Black Oaks', clouds start to gather. Soon the wind tears at their cloaks and beards, and stinging hail hammers down from the dark sky.

Contest: Resist the Unnatural Storm

Appropriate Abilities: Endure Weather, Hardy, Robust, Tough, Storm magic (–3), Wind magic (–10).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: +5 to heroes who sense the storm's unnatural nature (using *Sense Change in Weather* or other appropriate ability against a resistance of 5 \square) and use magic to resist it.

Resistance: 1 \square .

Any Victory or Tie: The hero shrugs off the rasping wind and stinging hail.

Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The hero is soaked and battered—he takes penalties as if defeated in combat until he has a chance to rest and dry out.

Complete Defeat: As a major defeat, plus the horse carrying the ransom breaks free. It tries to flee back to its warm, safe barn. The heroes can try calming magic, brute strength, or the like to overcome its *Terror* 5 \square . Even if they are defeated they can follow it, but each hero trying to control the horse must resist another attack from the storm.

After a while, the storm abates slightly and the heroes can continue. But they are walking into an ambush by bandits who worship Gagarth, the Outlaw Wind. The bandits have dug a pit trap on the road in front of their position, and will wait to attack until the band is preoccupied trying to rescue a hero who has fallen in. If the pit trap is discovered, they will attack immediately.

Contest: Spot Pit Trap

Appropriate Abilities: Detect Traps, Scan for Danger (–3), Keen Vision (–5), Set Traps (–5), Hunting (–10) Wilderness Survival (–10).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Heroes state they are watching for traps or ambushes (+3).

Resistance: Olend's Set Traps 4 \square .

Any Victory: Heroes avoid the trap.

Marginal Victory, Tie, or Marginal Defeat: Spot the trap just as it opens—make a simple contest of Agility, Quick Reflexes, or the like against a resistance of 14 to avoid falling in.

Minor, Major, or Complete Defeat: Fall in: test Tough, Jump, Quick Reflexes, or the like against a resistance of 14 to avoid getting a hurt from the fall. Climbing out of the pit has a resistance of 16.

When the bandits attack, the air fills with wolflike howls. From their leafy cover, they throw a volley of spears. Each hero is the target of one spear, and in addition the bandit leader, Frithorf Wildwind, attacks the toughest-looking hero.

Contest: Ambushed by the Gagarthi

Appropriate Abilities: Sense Ambush, Scan for Danger (–3), Keen Vision (–5), Listen (–5), Quick Reactions (–5).

Resistance: 9 \square .

Complete or Major Victory: The hero senses the ambush and can warn the other heroes, allowing them all to act before the spears are cast.

Minor or Marginal Victory: The hero senses the ambush, but cannot warn other heroes.

Tie: The hero is taken unawares, but the ambushers do not gain any bonus against him for attacking from surprise.

Any Defeat: The attack surprises the hero, who suffers a penalty to his combat abilities the first round as if wounded in combat.

After one or two rounds, the bandits rush out of cover and charge the heroes. They are a gang of young ruffians gathered by Frithorf Wildwind. He is a devotee of Gagarth with connections to the band known as Gagarth's Wolves. He hopes to turn his gang into a potent raiding force. There should be an average of three bandits (including Frithorf and Olend) per two heroes.

If the Bandits Win


The Gagarthi are after the ransom rather than the heroes' lives, although have no qualms about killing them. They seize the

Olend Shadowfriend

Keywords: Heortling 17, Initiate of Desemborth the Thief 2W (Combat 20, Movement 18, Stealth 4W), Stickpicker 18.

Significant Abilities: Camouflage 3W, Set Traps 4W, Sneak 6W, Spear and Shield Fighting 20, Thrown Spear 3W.

Weapons and Armor: Two spears +5, leather armor and shield +2.

Tactics: Olend is more scout than warrior—he uses his Combat affinity to give him a +2 bonus but also tries to stay near Frithorf. 

Contest Synopsis

Ambush (Olend): 12W (+26AP)

Spear and Shield (Frithorf): 11W2 (+23AP)



Frithorf Wildwind

Crazed Gagarthi Bandit Chieftain

Other Keywords: Heortling 13, Warrior 6W.


Significant Abilities: Spear and Shield Fighting 12W, Strong 1W, Thrown Spear 6W.

Weapons and Armor: Thrown spear +3, two spears +5, chainmail and shield +4.

Marks: Greedy 15 (appeals to his greed are augmented by +2). Shaggy, tattered and half-crazed, one eye closed by the scar that threads across his face.

Hero Points: 2.

Personal Augments:

-  Long-Reaching Spear feat (+2 to Thrown Spear or Spear and Shield Fighting)
- Strong (+2 to Spear and Shield or Thrown Spear)

Tactics: Frithorf raises a storm to soften up potential targets, then augments himself. He may use a hero point in combat, but saves the second to help him escape if things go badly.



Personal Time

Member of Gagarth's Wolves 1W

Devotee of Gagarth 3W

Affinities:  Wild Hunter 2W,  Wild Wind 8W.

Leader of the Pack 3W

(includes Olend Shadowfriend)

Typical Gagarthi Bandit

Keywords: Warrior 19, Initiate of Gagarth 19.

Weapons and Armor: Two spears +5, leather armor and shield +2.

Magic:  Wild Hunter affinity 1W,  Wild Wind affinity 19.

Gagarth

The Wild Hunter

Gagarth is the Most Wild Wind, son of lawless Vadrus and grandson of untamable Umath. He is rootless and destructive, the Whirlwind that scours the land, uproots plants, and leaves nothing but desolation in its wake. Only those few that show the necessary spark of wildness can join Gagarth's ever-changing band of followers by defeating one of them. Win or lose, it means nothing to Gagarth, who only takes pleasure in the hunt and the fight, in bullying and terrifying, in despising society and mocking morals and traditions.


Gagarthi are no longer members of the Storm Pantheon, and can call for divine aid only from Gagarth himself.

Entry Requirements: Be outlawed and demonstrate useful abilities. If the new member is a worshipper of the Storm Pantheon, survive attacks by appropriate agents of reprisal (see page 121).


Abilities: Boast, Bully, Maintain Pursuit, Mythology of Gagarth, Resist Authority, Ride Horse, Spear Fighting, Taunt, Thrown Spear.

Virtues: Cruel, Violent.

Affinities and Feats:

-  Wild Hunter (Long-reaching Spear, Never Lose Spoor, Run Down Prey, Spot the Weakest)




-  Wild Wind (Abrasive Wind, Howl Like the Wind, Stinging Hail, Summon Tornado from Clouds, Windwalking Steed)

Other Side: Various myths tell how Gagarth is granted or takes a stead in the Storm Realm, but then will not tend and care for it. He is greedy and jealous of his rights, however, and will not allow another to claim even what he has discarded. Gagarth's Stead is in the Outlaw Wilds of the Storm Realm; although ruined and abandoned, he will furiously confront any who travel there.

Disadvantages: Gagarthi are outlaws from society, and normal people view them as dangerous, unpredictable, and untrustworthy.

Hero Points for Narrator Characters

Narrator characters can do anything you want or need them to. If it suits the story, they can gain support, achieve goals, or even come back from the dead without a die roll. (It is *always* bad to engage in dice rolling when the heroes are not involved in a contest.) But you may want some challenge too, and have to be trusted not to cheat or act arbitrarily. Experience proves that one way to do this is to assign a couple of hero points to your leading villain for the final confrontation. Do not tell the players how many he has, but do let them know when he uses one. The dramatic effect when you say "He's used another hero point" is what *HeroQuest* is about. 

riches and may take prisoners for ransom. Frithorf is seeking to make a name for himself, and so may just leave the heroes—gagged, bound, perhaps branded—to spread reports of his victory. If, after freeing themselves, the heroes return home instead of continuing on to the Black Oak clan lands, their chieftain sends out an emissary of his own to negotiate another deal, and sends more capable people to deliver the goods, this time!

If the Heroes Win

The Gagarthi are bandits, not berserkers, and they flee if death is the alternative. Olend uses his *Sneak* or *Camouflage* abilities, augmented by his *Stealth* affinity, to melt into the forest if necessary, while Frithorf dashes to his tethered horse and uses his *Windwalking Steed* feat to ride it into the stormy sky. He is a true Gagarthi, a spitting, frothing maniac, and would probably die with his spear in his hand if it came to it rather than be captured, knowing that he faces death for his crimes. Nonetheless, by interrogating captured bandits, the heroes may piece together some clues as to the Black Oaks' plot.

It is, of course, a terrible thing for good Orlanthi to hire outlaws, but terrible things often happen in terrible times. Engthor, the Black Oak chieftain, arranged for Gulvik's capture and the ransom demand in earshot of Olend Shadowfriend, no kin of the Black Oaks but an occasional visitor to their hall. His bandit ties have never been proven. At times he has been useful to the Black Oaks, so he receives a measure of wary hospitality. As Engthor anticipated, Olend told Frithorf, who was unable to resist the lure of such easy treasure... The ordinary bandits know nothing of this—the most they can tell is that Olend, a seeming friend of Frithorf's, rode into their



Frithorf Wildwind is more than just a bandit, he is a worshipper of the brutal outlaw god Gagarth, and can embody his stinging and sterile whirlwind.

camp a week back and the two of them hatched this plot. Olend believes that he cunningly overheard the chieftain planning Gulvik's kidnapping, and that he came up with the idea of seizing the ransom. Frithorf secretly has his doubts and wonders if Engthor was using him, but does not greatly care.

Contest: Question the Bandits

Appropriate Abilities: Discerning, Force Truth, Interrogate, Intimidate, Clever (–3), Fast Talk (–6).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Other heroes may attempt a variable augment with a suitable ability, such as *Intimidate* or *Stare Down Man*.

Resistance: 14 for the ordinary bandits; 10W for Frithorf or Olend.

Complete Victory: The bandits tell you everything they know.

Major, Minor, or Marginal Victory: The bandits tell what they know, but include a red herring—for example, a bandit might say he thinks Olend came from the heroes' own clan.

Tie: The heroes mostly hear irrelevance and lies, with somewhere a nugget of truth.

Marginal Defeat: The heroes hear only irrelevance and lies.

Minor or Major Defeat: The bandits either refuse to speak or else spin empty tales.

Complete Defeat: The bandits find an opening and try to escape or (in Frithorf's case) attack the interrogator.

Scene 5: Arrival at the Black Oak Clan

As the heroes ride up to the Black Oak Clan's boundary stones they see a band of warriors there, laughing and talking among themselves. When they notice the heroes arriving with the ransom, they seem surprised and then form into an "honor guard." With few courtesies they lead them to the hall of the Black Oak chieftain, Old Engthor, known as "the Wolf of the Wold." Meanwhile one of their number spurs his horse ahead to bring word of their coming.

Contest: What's Going On?

Appropriate Abilities: The heroes may try all kinds of methods to gather more clues—attempts to overhear the warriors before they notice their arrival (using *Listen*, *Hear Words on the Wind*, or the like), trying to engage their "honor guard" in conversation (with *Fast Talk* or *Entice*), or something else.

Resistance: 1W.

Any Victory: They learn one of the snippets of information from the list below for each level of victory.

Tie or Marginal or Minor Defeat: They learn nothing.

Major or Complete Defeat: They are fed a lie or believe an incorrect rumor.

- "When he sent us out here, why did Gray Orlkost [the clan's warband leader] tell us that he didn't expect the ransom to arrive?"
- "You know my sister Angarna? She says Engthor's looking pleased with himself this past week."
- "It can't just be the raid, surely—that Gulvik's nothing but a pup."
- "Aye, but when Orlkost sent us to snatch him, he said he'd be worth more than his da knew."
- "Did you see that storm just now? I didn't like the look of that."

- “What was that Olend doing here the other week? Now there’s a rusty knife if ever there was.”
- “He was up to something, that’s for sure—he left first thing, and now Engthor’s said that if we see him, it’s Starkval’s Tickler [a spear point] for him.”

The hall is grim, but impressive, its dark walls lined with trophies attesting to Engthor’s canny leadership. The chieftain sits impassively on a black wood stool. At his side is Gulvik—obviously scared but trying to be brave—flanked by two hard-bit-ten weaponthanes.

Whether or not the heroes have the ransom, the clan members do not react as one might expect, although it takes an observant hero to pick up on this.

Contest: Pick Up on the Atmosphere

Appropriate Abilities: Detect Emotions, Empathetic, Politics, Relationship to Black Oak Clan, Clever (–5), Heortling Customs (–10).

Resistance: 18.

Complete, Major, or Minor Victory: Engthor did not expect us to get here!

Marginal Victory or Tie: Engthor is irked that we are here.

Any Defeat: These Black Oaks are unfriendly people!

If the Heroes Arrive without the Ransom

The Black Oaks feign shock and anger, but Engthor does not seem surprised. He demands that the heroes have but one day to return to their clan and bring back the original ransom and half again. He refuses to bargain. However, heroes may be able to face him down, especially if they have learned enough to credibly allege complicity with the Gagarthi. This is a difficult and dangerous option. They may also roll to see if they pick up on the atmosphere, as above—major or complete victories let them see that Engthor, while putting a brave face on it, is uncomfortable that they are here—this boost to the heroes’ confidence grants them a +10 bonus if they try to face him down.

Contest: Face Down Engthor

Appropriate Abilities: Dominate Meetings, Oratory, Relationship to Black Oak Clan, Speak with Authority, Impress Juror (–1), Clever (–5), Fast Talk (–6), Heortling Customs (–10), Boastful (–12).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: The heroes insult the Black Oaks or break Heortling etiquette (–5), the heroes look unkempt (–3). The heroes may gain a bonus of up to +10 depending on how much evidence they provide, and another +5 to +10 if they undermine Engthor’s support (such as by separately convincing his lawspeaker).

Resistance: 112, Engthor’s personal cunning and stubbornness, plus support from his clan ring.

Complete Victory: Engthor is clearly discomfited. Dismayed murmurs echo in his hall. He admits that he might—by mischance—have let slip his plans to Olend, and showed poor judgment in allowing him to stay in his hall. He agrees to waive the ransom and release Gulvik.

Major Victory: Engthor is taken aback. He accepts that it is possible that Olend overheard something in his hall. He agrees to release Gulvik “as a gesture of neighborliness.”

Minor Victory: Engthor admits nothing, but agrees to release Gulvik because “he is but a boy, and by your words you are clearly men who can look after him.” Gulvik smarts at this insult and blames the heroes.

Marginal Victory or Tie: Engthor makes an airy gesture. “I am a chieftain, not a tallyman. I will agree to release the boy for the original sum of ten cows. Now go!”

Marginal or Minor Defeat: Engthor coolly dismisses the pleas and allegations. “You are clearly unmanned by your defeat at the hands of ragged bandits. This time I will ignore your empty challenge.” Weaponthanes hustle the heroes from the hall and send them on their way.

Major Defeat: As above, but the heroes acquire the flaw *Hated by the Black Oaks* at 17.

Complete Defeat: Engthor is dismissive, the clan outraged. Boltark the Bear (Warrior 1511, Strong 511) challenges the spokesman to a fight. The ransom is now 20 cattle and the heroes gain *Hated by the Black Oaks* 111.

If the heroes compel Engthor to release Gulvik, each acquires the flaw *Enemy of Engthor* 17. They still have to chaperone the boy home (see below; if he is humiliated there is a –5 penalty to their attempts to cope with him). Otherwise, if they return empty-handed then their chieftain sends some more capable clansmen to deliver the ransom.

If the Heroes Arrive with the Ransom

Unless the heroes try something funny, the exchange goes smoothly. Gulvik, unharmed but for bruises, is released into their care and will ride home on the horse used to bring the ransom. He is frightened and embarrassed, relying on his dignity as the chieftain’s son to hold himself together. He acts something of a brat—taking the lead, expecting someone to hold his horse’s bridle as he mounts, and so forth. How the heroes respond will affect the report he gives to his father and their future dealings with him:

Contest: Cope with Gulvik

Appropriate Abilities: Any suitable social ability, Heortling Customs (–5).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Mockery or heavy-handed attempts to put him in his place of (–5 to –10); empty flattery (–5, as Gulvik is young and headstrong, but not stupid).

Resistance: 20.

Complete Victory: The hero or heroes have made a friend for life, gaining a free *Friendship of Ally: Gulvik* 13. He will praise them to his father, the rest of the clan, and the winds.

Major, Minor, or Marginal Victory: Gulvik accepts the heroes’ lead gracefully, and will give an accurate account of their deeds to his father when they arrive.

Tie: Gulvik sulks, and says nothing good or bad about the heroes.

Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: Gulvik sulks, and complains about the heroes to his father when they arrive.

Complete Defeat: This has a catastrophic consequence: Gulvik may demand that they turn back and kidnap Engthor, strikes out at one of the heroes, or rides off on his own as soon as they are out of Black Oak lands, hoping to get home first and pretend that he freed himself...

Aftermath

If the heroes deliver the ransom successfully, or else manage to face Engthor down, they each receive 4 hero points, otherwise only 2. You might assign 1 or 2 more hero points to each hero if they were especially effective in fighting the Gagarthi or facing down Engthor.

Chasing Kites

The heroes become involved in a desperate cross-country chase to save a clan treasure—the mighty Blue Storm Dancer. They will need to draw on wit, negotiation, magical might, and skill at arms to recover the sacred kite before it is too late. The adventure challenges the Heortling virtues of loyalty, hospitality, honor, innovation, valor, and piety.

Secret: An agent of the Trickster steals Blue Storm Dancer. One of the ancestors created the kite long ago. One of his descendants now walks as an unhappy ghost. It is up to the heroes to bring her peace.

Hero Band Opportunity: If they free the ghost of Mykka, instead of simply disappearing to the afterlife she could possibly join the heroes as their guardian, suitably empowered by clan rituals. She would especially suit a band with strong female heroes, perhaps at first manifesting still as a young girl, but “growing” with preternatural speed and assuming the form of an Ernaldan leader or similar forceful character, with powers to match.

Involving the Heroes: This is written from an Orlanthi perspective, but works well too for other barbarians for whom clan rivalries and reverence for ancestors are important. For Praxians, the Madman’s Table could be in diseased scrub around some fading oasis, while Grazers might be flying kites in their plains. Because many highland Tarshites still remember the old ways, this could also easily be used for them.

Scene I: A Holiday

The day before a seasonal holy day is always a busy one. The one before the seasonal holy day to Orlanth (held Winds Day, Movement Week of each season) is doubly so! It is on this day that one of your clan’s secrets is celebrated: Kite Day—a ritual to please the Ancestors and keep them close. Each year the clan remembers the greatest of its ancestors and offers praise to Orlanth, the Great Wind. The air fills with incense, song, and brightly colored kites. One of the highlights is a kite-battle whose winner gains great praise.

Kites are sacred to Orlanth, and many are flown during celebrations and rituals. In your clan, there are kites and then there is Blue Storm Dancer. One of the clan’s founders traveled north, traveled south, traveled east, and traveled west to find the materials for this masterpiece, which he completed on the Other Side. The sacred kite is flown high above the temple only on the most important ceremonies.

When the time and winds are right, your ancestors come from Orlanth’s Hall to ride the mighty kite. They can look down upon you, their descendants, through the kite’s brilliant green painted eyes. With the ancestors so close, the clan’s prayers and wishes are heard more easily. In turn, the ancestors can bestow the favor of the Wind on the deserving. This link to the past is surely why your clan is the home of heroes such as yourselves!

As preparations for Orlanth’s day begin, the sacrifices are readied and the sacred dances and songs practiced. Everything must go right! The god-talkers bring Blue Storm Dancer, the sacred kite, down from its place in the chieftain’s hall. Even to test-fly the kite is a great honor and a kite-fighting contest is held to determine who gets this right. Far overhead, its great green eyes stare down, seeming to look into your souls. Today is a time for the clan ring, priests, and clansfolk to gather, see the

kites, and discuss what they will tell their ancestors tomorrow. Children vie to see who gets to fly the sacred kite—homemade kites swoop and tangle. Other people trade, socialize, or show off. Festivals draw travelers and visitors from nearby clans, making days like this perfect for seeking a wife or husband. Ambitious heroes seek to gain the ear of the clan ring.

At the Gathering

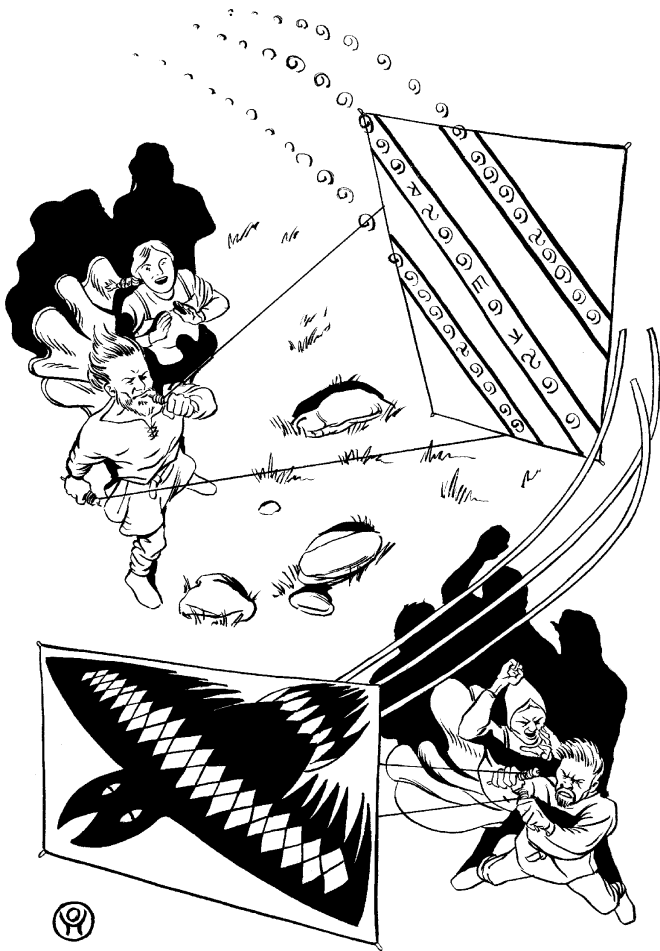
Ask the players if there is anything important (or interesting!) their heroes would like to do. The festive mood makes a wonderful opportunity to court, schmooze, show off, or just stand around and admire the kites. It is a chance to meet important clanfolk or rivals, and advance simmering story lines. Spend some time following up any suggestions the players make.

Sample Events

- Some young bucks are holding spur-of-the-moment contests, such as horse riding, javelin throwing, arm wrestling, or boasting. Winning gains the acclaim of the other contestants and the watching women. Contests like this single out youngsters to watch.
- Traveling peddlers and merchants have rare goods like metal pots, needles, colored dyes, and spices for trade.
- A few visitors from neighboring clans are here, perhaps looking for suitable wives or husbands, or help with the fields or other troubles. Negotiation of dowries, and morning-gifts or pay is expected. From discussions like these emerge future plot lines.
- Two weaponthanes, Jostan Quicklaugh and Varosh the Steady, are holding a duel over who is the better warrior. Lively betting on the outcome favors the young Jostan over the steadier Varosh. Perhaps one of the heroes could judge the contest?
- The Aroling bloodline’s best milk cow just dried up. Some blame spirits of disease, some curses, some say it is just bad luck. Heroes could argue on any side. If they score a victory with a relevant ability against a resistance of 17, they sway the discussion to their viewpoint. Roleplay the debate!
- Kentvent, one of the clan’s best potters, has a sudden need for pure white clay. Any hero with an ability relating to the clan lands or the surrounding territory might know of a source. Helping Kentvent gains the hero a relationship with him at 13. If nobody knows where the clay might be found, the heroes might volunteer to search or trade for it. The grateful Kentvent has influence and could help heroes who need to convince the clan to help them someday.

Disaster!

Suddenly, someone screams in horror when a great black raven dives towards Blue Storm Dancer. It is monstrously huge, with wings as far across as two men can reach. It comes out of the sky fiery gaze with alarming speed. Before anyone can react, its beak severs the strong cord anchoring the kite. In a whirl of ebony wings it catches the cut cord in its talons, tugging the kite with surprising strength. The raven flies away, towing the kite behind as it goes downwind. The rest of the line flutters to the ground, forlorn.



Much as it twists and turns, Holuf's kite *The Blackstorm Bird* is unable to shake off Engord's Orlanth's Gift, much to the dismay of Holuf's mother, Monra.

The clan is aghast! The priests dare not use storm magic lest they harm the fragile kite. Two clansmen fly up to seize it, but one collides with a pigsty and the other falls into the chieftain's hall with a great crash. The priests raise winds to hinder the bird, but it makes surprising headway them. Rising higher in the sky, *Blue Storm Dancer* grows smaller with distance.

Contest: Facts about Ravens

Appropriate Abilities: Know Birds, Mythology of [Trickster or Death God], Know Animals (-5), Know Heortling Myths (-5).

Resistance: 17.

Any Victory: The raven is one of Trickster's favorite forms and figures in many myths. A raven is a servant of Humakt Deathgod, and can be a terrible omen.

Tie or Marginal Defeat: A magical bird like this is probably a messenger sent by the gods, but it could be the servant of a hostile clan or even a spirit sent by a wicked shaman.

Any Other Defeat: "This is terrible, just terrible. The gods must be punishing us!"

Give the players a chance to react. If the heroes are not too busy running around or standing in shock, they will realize that the raven is flying with the prevailing wind towards a lightly wooded area. Any member of the clan would know the following:

- The clan's lands extend for a few miles that way. The terrain there is mostly woods and pastureland, but there are very rough places as well.
- The lands of the Black Oak Clan (one of the clan's enemies) are a few miles in that direction.

Ra'kk'ki Raven Daimon

Mundane Abilities: Acrobatic Flying 15 \square 2, Caw Mockingly 5 \square , Claw and Bite 12 \square 2, Dodge Attack 12 \square 2, Spot Shiny Trinket 7 \square 2, Tough 17 \square .

Magical Abilities: Fly Fast 12 \square , Resist Magic 17 \square , Trickster Magic 12 \square , Worshipper of Trickster 15 \square 2.

Sample Trickster Magic: Embarrassing Fumble, Send Flyer Off Course, Thunder Brother Pratfall.

Weapons and Armor: Claws and beak +1.

Notes: Use the sample trickster magic as a feat, spirit, or spell, as your whim strikes you.

- The Cyrling Clan (not especially hostile or friendly) claims some of the lands in between your clan's and the Black Oaks'.

If the heroes do not give chase within a few moments, the god-talker who was flying the kite bellows: "Get *Blue Storm Dancer* back! Quickly now, follow that raven! Get moving! Hurry!"

If anyone thinks to look for the clan's trickster (should such a creature afflict the clan) she is nowhere to be seen.

Hot Pursuit!

The heroes must quickly decide how to pursue the raven. After the embarrassing pratfalls of the clan flyers, it seems that any pursuit must be on foot or astride a horse. Several horses graze in a nearby pasture but have no saddles or bridles. Heroes can catch the horses easily but tack and harness will take several minutes to arrive. Riding bareback untrained adds a penalty (typically -3). Clever heroes may quickly improvise bridles from rope (resistance 14).

The clan ring, clan priest, and god-talkers must continue to perform the rituals that lead up to tomorrow's holy day. Failure could offend the ancestors and curse the clan with bad luck for the next year. With only moments to grab gear and supplies, the heroes set out. They must pursue the kite and bring it back by morning. Without *Blue Storm Dancer* present, the ancestors will be angered.

Resolution

As long as at least one of the heroes sets off within a few minutes, either on horseback or using a feat to travel swiftly, the raven stays in sight. Heroes following more slowly will find enough herders, farmers, and startled housewives to point out the direction the raven takes.

Contest: Catch Up with the Raven

Appropriate Abilities: Movement magic, Ride, Running (-3), Know Local Area (-8), Fly (-10).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Excellent horses (+3), riding bareback (-3).

Resistance: 16.

Any Victory or Tie: The heroes catch up to the raven before it disappears completely. Remind the players that they may lose the kite if they stop for the night.

Any Defeat: The raven soon outdistances the heroes—they have failed the responsibilities laid on them. Remind the players about spending hero points. A merciful narrator might let a sharp-eyed farmer or herdsman see some Cyrling clansmen (see below) heading off after the kite.

Scene 2: Meet the Neighbors

The raven drags the clan's kite off over the nearest clan's lands. As the heroes reach the border, they encounter a small group led by Swen Malkarson. Pick a clan from your campaign that is neither allied with nor hostile to the heroes'. You can use the sheep-herding, Hedkoranth-loving Cyrling Clan if you don't have a suitable neighbor in your campaign already.

Border Crossing

The heroes ride down a wide path, following the distant bird. The raven stays high out of reach towing the great kite across the wind. Two gray border-stones flank the path; the Law rune (Δ) painted on each gleams dull ocher. Hopefully, the Cyrlings will not mind the trespass *too* much.

Most clansfolk run for cover at the sight of mounted warriors galloping towards them! Describe workers diving into ditches, sheep scattering in panic, and the startled cries of the farmers as the heroes chase across the landscape. Naturally, something goes wrong. Coming over a small rise, the heroes run into a herd of pigs streaming across the road. The pigs squeal and scatter in panic. So do the horses.

Contest: Control Panicking Horse

Appropriate Abilities: Care for Horse, Riding, Calm Patient (-3), Gentle Voice (-5), Know Animals (-7).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Riding bareback (-3).

Resistance: 14.

Any Victory or Tie: The hero retains control of his horse, with varying amounts of dignity intact.

Marginal or Minor Defeat: The horse dislodges the rider but can be recaptured in a few minutes.

Major Defeat: Horse bolts into forest and sheds the rider with a low-hanging branch. Make a contest of Ride, Jump, Acrobatics, or Toughness vs. 17 or take a hurt. The horse heads home.

Complete Defeat: The rider is knocked from the horse. If he fails a contest of Ride, Jump, Acrobatics, or Toughness vs. 17 he is dying. Even with a victory, he is injured. The horse bolts for home.

If the heroes are reluctant to ride pell-mell through another clan's lands, let them proceed more slowly but give them a -5 penalty to tracking the kite.

Welcoming Committee

As the heroes are sorting themselves out after the encounter with the pigs, a hastily assembled group of Cyrlings arrives, responding to desperate cries of "Raid!" The short call of a half-dozen weaponthanes and warriors on horses accompanied by about twenty armed farmers confronts the "invaders."

The warband leader, Swen Malkarson, greets the intruders. He listens skeptically to their story. A silver tongue and offers of future repayment for generosity will help more than a threatening attitude. Convincing him quickly is wise as the kite is dwindling by the moment. Pleading the urgency of their mission or invoking tribal ties might help. Hastily dispatched heroes might ask the loan of one or two horses or some supplies. Loans like this to non-kinfolk are unusual but the Cyrlings relent if they remember the heroes fondly or are impressed by the visitors. Of course, sharp-eyed Cyrlings have noticed the bird and its strange cargo and might deny the heroes so that they can follow it themselves.

Contest: Negotiate Passage

Appropriate Abilities: Friendly to Cyrling Clan (+5), Wealth, Bargain, Intimidate (-5), Tribal Loyalty (-5).

Resistance: 17.

Complete Victory: Heroes gain the help of the patrol which escorts them across the clan's lands by ways only the clan knows. Fresh horses and supplies speed them on their way. Further pursuit contests get a +5 bonus.

Major Victory: The patrol escorts the heroes across the clan's lands. Fresh horses are lent to those who need them.

Minor or Marginal Victory: The Cyrlings grudgingly let the heroes cross their land but require payment—a few coins and the promise of further wealth suffices.

Tie or Marginal Defeat: The Cyrlings grudgingly let the heroes cross their land but require a hefty bribe (at least several cows), and provide a (slow) escort that gives them a -5 in the next contest to keep up with the kite (at the end of Scene 3).

Minor or Major Defeat: Suspicious Cyrlings forbid the heroes passage. Going around their lands takes time and effort.

Complete Defeat: The Cyrlings set out in pursuit of the kite themselves. Add another group of warriors at Madman's Table (Scene 4).

Cyrling Weaponthanes and Fyrd

More than enough Cyrlings are here to drive off or slay a small group of raiders: half a dozen warriors (Warrior 19, Initiate of Destor or Hedkoranth 17) and two dozen militiamen (Spear and Shield 15, Initiate of Barntar 15). They have had time to augment themselves but are only hastily armed and armored. Fighting this force could cause a feud with the Cyrlings.

Resolution

If negotiations are successful, the heroes continue onward with little lost time. If not, they lose several precious hours going around the Cyrling clan lands. Luckily, they somehow keep the kite in sight. Gathering darkness makes following it more difficult (-5 penalty in future).

If the heroes offended the Cyrlings, Swen tries to seize the kite for his clan. He understands the kite's value and in Heortling society possession is often much more than nine tenths of the law. The heroes must deal with him and his warriors; fortunately, only a handful will accompany him off their lands.

Scene 3: Deep in the Forest

Beyond the Cyrling lands, the path winds through deep wilderness, with only small patches of sky visible through the ancient trees. Late afternoon sun slants through the forest but the air is strangely silent with neither bird cry nor animal voice.

Keeping track of the raven becomes harder but the kite is glimpsed occasionally through the overhanging boughs. Its eyes look back, red and somehow accusing, from far ahead. The raven moves across the sky more slowly now. It seems tired. As the Sun sets, the heroes emerge into a rocky clearing, but there is no sign of the raven or the kite in the sky!

If the heroes were relatively slow getting here, you might require a contest to catch sight of the kite again. Otherwise, if the heroes follow the clearing to higher ground, they catch a glimpse of the kite flying near a tree at the top of a nearby hill. Blue Storm Dancer's eyes gleam a sullen red in the light of the setting sun.

Resolution

If the heroes push on, they reach the hill at sunset. If they make camp for the night, they will see the raven early in the morning, but a warband will be mustered against them in Scene 7.

Scene 4: Madman's Table

The last lingering light from the Sun reveals a sloping table of red rock on the top of the hill. Scraggly bushes and one tree dot the huge slab that measures at least thrice the size of a chieftain's hall. The lowest end is almost twice a man's height from the ground while the high end towers nearly thirty feet over the hillside. Nowhere is there less than ten feet of sheer rock to scale. No roots dangle and the hard granite seems unbreakable. An ancient tree grows on the slab's highest end. The tree is little more than a battered trunk and a few branches that seem to strain away from the Table. The raven perches on the largest of these branches, staying well away from the Table. It shivers with exhaustion from towing the kite.

Only a few strides away lie the boundary stones of another clan, one that has no love for the heroes. (If you wish, use any appropriate clan from your campaign instead of the Black Oak Clan.) Strangely, the boundary stones go *around* the slab, keeping this high place out of any clan's lands. To ignore such a commanding site is highly unusual!

Overhead, the kite flutters high above enemy land. Should the raven let go, it will drift over the Black Oak clan's lands.

Contest: What Place is This?

Appropriate Abilities: Know Local Area, Know Local History.
Resistance: 16.

Complete Victory: As below, plus know that the thane was from the heroes' own clan, the story kept secret due to shame. The Table's ghosts have always been too powerful for the clan to cleanse.

Major, Minor, or Marginal Victory: This place is Madman's Table. Centuries ago, a thane brought his family here on a pilgrimage. Ghosts drove him mad. The thane slaughtered his kinfolk then hung himself from a tree. Since then, this haunted place has been shunned.

Tie or Any Defeat: The heroes have no idea what this place is.

The ghosts never try to conceal themselves. Their power is immense, over a score of victims bound here by black magic and terror. Unmistakable signs identify their presence, even if the ghosts cannot be seen.

At the Table

Madman's Table lies halfway in the Mortal World and halfway in the Underworld (the barrier is 15 \square here). It inevitably draws any nearby ghost to it. Many of these unfortunates predate the resettlement of Kerofinela in the 13th century; some might even be from before the Dawn.

Only one ghost is able to move freely about the hill; the others are resentfully bound to the rocky tabletop. The ghosts assault anyone foolish enough to climb the Table. The ravening pack could easily overwhelm an unprepared group of heroes. No one has ever succeeded in driving these anguished ghosts away. Only a powerful cleansing ritual or heroquest could dislodge them. The Black Oak Clan would then seize the cleansed Table as an outpost or shrine.

The only free ghost is that of a young girl, Mykka. She wanders the slopes, playing and singing to herself until her family comes to get her. Her pathetic remains lie under a tangle of

Mykka

Long ago, a foolish little girl climbed to the top of Madman's Table on a dare. The ghosts tore her soul out from her body and left it to wander. Mykka only wants her daddy to come and take her home. She has been waiting for a very, very long time. She no longer remembers where her home is or even who her clan was—just that they were “the best clan.” Mykka is not her real name but a childish nickname. But it is all she remembers. She died before she was given a proper name. Daddy's name is just that—daddy.

Mykka acts like a very frightened and lonely young girl. She wonders why her family is taking so long to find her. She would love to play with someone, and may single out a hero to follow around and speak to. She always says or asks the same things. “You are not dead! No, you are fine. But there are scary people up on top of the rock. They scream a lot. Are you coming to take me home?”

If Mykka fails to possess someone, she will wander off more lost than before. The heroes have no easy way to discover this, but Mykka is a descendant of the ancient kite-maker, and it was he who sent the raven to steal Blue Storm Dancer. Rescuing her from her horrid existence would earn the heroes great favor with the gods and Ancestors.

Magical Abilities: Dominant Possession 12, Frighten Mortals 19, Try to Get Back to Daddy 8 \square .

shrubs at the base of the Table. A small amulet is tangled up in the broken bones, the kind given to young children to ward off bad spirits. She cannot go far from her body, but if the heroes carry her remains away with reverence, Mykka will come along if the carrier “holds her hand.”

Madman's Table Ghosts (at least a score)

Magical Abilities: Dominant Possession 18 to 15 \square 2 (average 8 \square), Drain Magic 2 \square to 19 \square 2 (average 12 \square).

Tactics: The ghosts do not communicate nor negotiate; they exist only to feed on the living. A ghost will attempt to possess a mortal, then drain magic from him. If it reduces him to **dying**, he dies and his soul becomes a ghost as well. Most of the ghosts were once Heortlings, a few worshipped other pantheons, and some are actually spirit ghosts, but all can possess living beings as described in “Spirit Possession” in the Animism chapter, page 152.

The Table inflicts a –10 alien world penalty on any non-Underworld worshipper, ghost, or other entity that stands upon it. Additionally, magic intended to affect spirits or theist souls takes a –20 penalty when used on the wrong kind of ghost.



Ra'kk'ki just watches from his branch during all this, amusement glittering in his yellow eyes. Entreaties by the heroes are ignored (for the moment); he keeps the kite fast in his talons.

Black Oak Clan Raiders

Before the heroes can make a serious attempt to get the kite, a group of Black Oak clan members come for the kite. Half are armed with bows, and all have spears that gleam in the fading light. None seem to be warriors. At first they demand that the heroes leave. They become increasingly threatening but never quite attack unless the heroes move to get the kite.

They are waiting for the arrival of true warriors and are actually quite terrified to find an armed group of powerful enemy clansmen. The heroes may be able to intimidate them. The Black Oaks make no hostile moves yet unless provoked. If forced into battle, they gang up on the heroes as best they can.

Black Oak Hunters and Herders (two per hero)

Keywords: Heortling 13, Hunter or Herder 17, Initiate of Orlanth 15.

Significant Abilities: Brave 14, Spear Fighting 15.

Weapons and Armor: Leather armor +1, bow +3, spear or javelin +3.

Resolution

If the heroes drive off the hunters, they overhear one grizzled fellow say, "Spread out into the forest. We'll catch that kite as soon as the bird falls asleep. We don't want these thieves (*spit!*) befouling our tula." The hunters refuse to leave it at that. Clan pride is at stake and reinforcements are on the way.

The Reinforcements

Ganthan Ox-Arm, a tough and capable Black Oak weaponthane, leads these reinforcements. He is after glory, as he is a contender for the clan ring. Avenging ancient crimes against his clan will go a long way towards this goal. He arrives along with his shieldwoman Cora and another group of quickly gathered hunters, farmers, and herdsman soon after the first assault is defeated. He brings enough clansmen to replace any casualties, and more. The Black Oaks outnumber the heroes by at least three to one now.

The Black Oaks try to rush the heroes sometime after dark. They hurl a volley of javelins and then charge. The whole band augments with magic before the attack, which could give them away to sharp-eared heroes. The Red Moon shines down on Orlanthi fighting Orlanthi.

Ganthan Ox-Arm

Ganthan does not mean to give up "his" kite. Craving glory, he has neglected to inform his chieftain of the situation. If thwarted, he summons more powerful kin but they take several hours to arrive. Parley is only a ploy to buy time for them to come.

Keywords: Heortling 20, Warrior 5LW, Devotee of Destor Adventurous 3LW.

Mundane Abilities: Brave 6LW, Hate [Heroes' Clan] 19, Javelin 8LW, Leadership 2LW, Strong 4LW, Sword and Shield Fighting 11LW.

Magical Abilities: Healing Amulet 18

† Combat affinity 6LW (Armor of Woad, Flickering Blade, Leaping Shield, Overbear Foe, Throw with Wind, Swordhelp)

☞ Movement affinity 2LW (Burst of Speed, Find a Way, Jump over Tree, Leap over Obstacle, Run on Mud, Run up Cliffs, Sunset Leap)

☼ Wind affinity 4LW (Call Clouds, Call Wind, Drive away Clouds, Hear Words on the Wind, Summon Umbroli Air Daimon)

Weapons and Armor: Chainmail armor and shield +4, refined iron bastard sword +9 (rating 13), javelin +3.

Tactics: In battle, Ganthan uses *Hate* and *Strong* to augment his attacks and *Leadership* to augment (or rally) the clan members that act as followers for him and Cora. Note that his iron bastard sword causes any magic he uses (or which is used against him) to take a -9 penalty.

Cora Ragnarsdotter

A young warrior-woman, Cora serves as Ganthan's most loyal follower. She swore to protect him in exchange for his help in a legal dispute years ago. Ganthan rewards her service well.

Keywords: Heortling 17, Warrior 18, Devotee of Vinga the Spearwoman 17.

Mundane Abilities: Dodge Blow 5LW, Javelin 7LW, Spear 4LW.

Magical Abilities:

† Combat affinity 18 (Deadly Spear Throw, Fight Against Rapist, Leaping Shield, Mile Javelin Throw, Spear Help)

☞ Movement affinity 17 (Burst of Speed, Dodge Missiles, Leap Over Water, Run on Treetop, Run upon Snow)

☑ Protection affinity 20 (Find Lost Child, Heal Injury, Restore Morale)

Weapons and Armor: Chainmail armor +3, javelin +3, spear +3.

Tactics: Cora's spear is deadly, but she uses her Dodge Blow ability to avoid harm rather than bearing a cumbersome shield.

Ganthan and his band receive no protective bonus from the Black Oak wyter (the clan's guardian). The Madman's Table has long been forbidden ground and a source of much trouble for them. The Black Oak does enable its people to move through its woods easily and silently.

Clever heroes may try to use the haunted area as a defense. If they befriended Mykka, she aids them by lending advantage points or scaring the "mean people" trying to hurt her new friends. Once half the attackers are disabled, wounded, or seriously drained of advantage points, the group falls back. Darkness and their knowledge of the terrain let them evade pursuit.

A Shot in the Dark

During the battle, a reckless hunter shoots at the raven. Alert heroes who have prepared for this sort of chicanery gain a +4 modifier on contests to notice the hunter (*Stealth 4LW* in the dark forest). If they spot him getting close to the dozing bird, they can attack him with their own missiles. After a few rounds, he retreats.

Hitting the motionless raven is easy (16) from such close range. If struck, Ra'kk'ki sways on his branch but keeps a grip

It is Night

Anyone who cannot see in the dark suffers a -30 penalty during this battle. Torches negate this, but the person holding the torch suffers a -3 penalty and cannot use a shield. Worse, they will probably attract arrows, javelins, and magic like moths to a flame.



on the kite. Seeing this, other hunters target the raven too in hope of forcing it to drop the kite. Let each hero decide what he does—return fire, try to heal the raven by magic, summon winds to blow the javelins and arrows aside, or something else. The raven cannot dodge while perched but is supernaturally tough. The hunters do *not* attack the kite—they know that would invite disastrous luck.

Resolution

The attack is the hunters' last throw of the dice. If the heroes drive them away, the rest of the night passes peacefully.

If the heroes lose the battle, the raven will probably be hit several times by javelins and arrows. Ra'kk'ki releases the kite from his beak as he falls onto the rocky tabletop. Hungry ghosts swarm over him and he disappears from sight. Blue Storm Dancer flutters free, and slowly drifts towards the enemy clan's lands. Each hero has one chance to try to stop the kite somehow as it drifts by about thirty feet above.

If the kite escapes, it may be possible to regain it when it comes to rest. Once on the enemy clan's lands, the heroes are at some disadvantage as the Black Oaks converge on their position. Faced with an invasion, Ganthan puts aside his ambition and gathers all the help he can get. This powerful warband is almost sure to drive the heroes away and claim Blue Storm Dancer for the Black Oak Clan.

Scene 5: Bird Talk

After the Black Oak Clan raiders are driven off, the raven awakens and watches the heroes with a bright yellow eye. He does not fly off again, and the heroes now can attempt to regain the kite. They have several options.

If they try to recover the kite with violence or reckless magic, they run the risk of the kite being destroyed, floating away into enemy lands (see above), or falling onto the Table. Clever heroes might gain Blue Storm Dancer without violence. If the heroes try to bargain with the raven, physically reach the kite and take it, or otherwise obtain it in a peaceful manner, they may gain a bonus depending on their previous actions. For each of the points below, they receive a +2 bonus to any peaceful attempt to get the kite:

- Set out without delay (Loyalty)
- Dealt peacefully with their neighbors (Hospitality)
- Thought up a *successful* unorthodox approach to a problem (Innovation)
- Tried to help or comfort Mykka (Honor)
- Fought their enemies (Valor)
- Acted within the strictures of society and cult (Piety).

In each case, grant the bonus if you feel that the hero roleplayed the values of his deity in an exemplary fashion.

Reaching the Kite

A skilled hero can try to reach the kite without touching Madman's Table. If someone gets close to the raven, its glittering eyes look greatly amused. It croaks derisively and the string falls free of its beak before the hero can grab for it. At that moment, a fortunate wind gust snatches the kite, wafting it to the most virtuous of the heroes (by Heortling standards).

Anyone climbing the tree after the raven leaves finds a few sable pinfeathers stuck into the branch. Any god-talker or kolating shaman could use them in rituals to contact raven, air, or trickster spirits and daimones.

Contest: Reach the Kite

Appropriate Abilities: Climb, Fly, Athletics (–5), Strong (–10).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Any physical attempt to reach the kite takes a –10 penalty due to the necessity of avoiding contact with Madman's Table.

Resistance: 12W.

Any Victory: The hero gets to the branch with more or less trouble. The raven caws and flies away, leaving the kite to flutter free (see above).

Tie or Marginal or Minor Defeat: The hero cannot reach the limb without touching the Table.

Major Defeat: The hero falls without reaching the branch, but does not touch the Table.

Complete Defeat: The hero falls, lands on top of Madman's Table, and is attacked by ghosts.

Taking the Kite

A hero can try to use magic to pull the kite away from the raven. Any such attempt risks damaging or even destroying the kite, but has minimal risk for the hero.

Contest: Pull the Kite Free

Appropriate Abilities: Move Object with Wind, Wind Daimon/Spirit/Essence.

Resistance: 17W.

Complete or Major Victory: The kite is pulled from the raven's grip and wafts down to the hero.

Major Victory: The kite is pulled from the raven's grip and wafts down to the most virtuous hero.

Minor or Marginal Victory: The kite is torn free and flutters away, undamaged, into the forest.

Tie or Marginal Defeat: The raven holds on to the kite but it is not damaged.

Minor or Major Defeat: The kite is torn free and flutters away into the forest, but it is damaged.

Complete Defeat: The kite is destroyed.

Bargaining for the Kite

Should the heroes try to talk to the raven, it watches them sidelong with bright, bright yellow eyes. Appealing to Heortling virtues, offering sacrifices to Trickster, or even trying to trade



the kite for shiny things might work. Entertaining the raven through heroic antics is more worthwhile to him than coin.

Ra'kk'ki communicates by nodding, shaking his head, and making incredibly mocking croaks and cries. It is clear he takes only a desultory interest in bargaining, as he really was here to draw the attention of the heroes to Mykka's plight. Raucous laughter at their expense is payment enough for his work.

Contest: Bargaining with the Bird

Appropriate Abilities: Bargain, Mythology of [Trickster God] (-3), Grovel (-4), Fast Talk (-5), Know Storm Pantheon Myths (-10).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Offering shiny things (+5); amusing play-acting by heroes trying to talk to a bird (+5).

Resistance: 5

Any Victory: The raven releases the kite and flies off. The kite flutters down gently, as above.

Tie or Marginal, Minor, or Major Defeat: The raven's derision is plain to see. Oh the humiliation. The heroes must get the kite another way.

Complete Defeat: The raven caws mockingly and flies away, releasing the kite well into the Black Oak Clan's territory.

Scene 6: Homeward Bound!

Once they have recovered the kite, the raven flies away with a mocking croak. The heroes must now return the kite home in time for the Ancestor Ceremony at dawn: this takes a heroic effort as much time has passed. Remind them how far they have come, how exhausted the horses are, and how hostile their surroundings are. Ask them how they will get back to their clan lands by dawn. Any plausible idea for getting home fast should work. If the heroes survey the land from the tree or the Madman's Table (unlikely), a trade path can be seen in the near distance. With a contest of *Know Local Area* (resistance 15) they realize it leads home. A hard, fast ride through the forest at night or a wild ride through enemy lands brings surprising success! What could go right for the heroes mostly does. Perhaps the Ancestors are looking out for them.

Other ideas might include one hero taking all the horses as remounts or a hero using magic running an all-night marathon. Let the heroes be creative. When they return home, they will be the ones who fly the kite on that sacred moment when dawn breaks over Blue Storm Dancer and the ancestors come close to their adoring kin. Theirs will be the first prayers the Ancestors hear...

Complications

If the heroes delayed getting the kite or waited until dawn, a strong patrol arrives from the Black Oaks. There are easily enough to overwhelm the heroes and they are in no mood to talk. If the heroes retreat, they are pursued. Of course, their mounts are starting to falter as they have had poor grazing and little water or rest in the last day or so. The heroes also are tiring if they neglected to bring food and water.

Contest: Outrun Warband

Appropriate Abilities: Fly, Riding, Know Local Area (-6), Sprinting (-8).

Resistance: 6

Any Victory: The heroes outrun the pursuers, either barely (marginal victory) or with surprising ease (complete victory).

Tie: The heroes outdistance most of the patrol but a few brave riders are on their tail...

Any Defeat: The warband catches up to the heroes. A desperate rearguard fight might buy the kite-bearer time to get back to safety, but everyone who fights takes penalties to their combat abilities as if they were already defeated in combat. Captured heroes' families must pay ransom.

Resolution

If the heroes do not come up with much of a plan but simply ride home as fast as they can, a party of warriors from their clan meets them partway back, guided by divine inspiration. They ride home swiftly with the kite and return in time to perform the ceremony. The heroes will arrive later that day to find the praise of their elders.

If they make no effort to bring the kite back in time, there is no overt penalty. Though everyone is glad to get the kite back at all, any time bad luck strikes for the next few seasons the heroes will be blamed. Grumbles and sidelong glances greet them everywhere and a few clansmen may question their bravery.

Should Blue Storm Dancer be destroyed or lost to enemies, the clan takes the news surprisingly well. Perhaps one of the heroes will walk to the Other Side to get the great kite back, performing the ancient tasks their ancestor did.

Aftermath

Should the heroes return the kite themselves, they each gain 5 hero points plus 3 directed hero points to increase their Piety or a clan relationship. The Ancestors may grant their heartfelt prayers. The clan elders hold a feast in their honor that goes far into the night. Even the Cyrlings praise them.

If the clan warband returned the kite (whether or not the heroes helped), each hero receives 4 hero points plus 1 directed hero point as above. Since they missed the ceremony, their prayers go unheard. That night, the elders praise them during the feast.

Failure to return the kite in time for the ceremony gives the heroes 3 hero points but permanently reduces their *Member of [Clan]* rating by 1. Perhaps young warriors challenge them to duels. Wedding arrangements may be called off.

If the kite is lost or destroyed, the heroes gain only 2 hero points but do not lose any status. Should they somehow rebuild the kite, they earn considerable status and praise—making good a mistake is the soul of Orlanthi virtue.

What about Mykka?

Heroes may decide to take her bones back to their clan for burial, or might come back and perform a ritual to lay her to rest. A clan god-talker or worshipper of Ty Kora Tek (Goddess of the Dead) can send her soul on its way. This pleases the Ancestors greatly! Doing something constructive about Mykka's plight is worth 1 more hero point or gaining a *Relationship with Clan Ancestors 17* (player's choice).

Loose Ends

What about the raven? Was it a trickster spirit? An enemy of the clan? A sending of Humakt, god of honor? Or was it just a great big bird? The local trickster does not know, or so she claims. But then, she was found the next day sleeping off a binge down in a dry well (though perhaps she has raven feathers caught in her bedraggled clothing and hair).

Ganthan Ox-Arm watches the heroes in the future, seeking a rematch. But if the heroes made some friends among the Cyrlings, they can expect hospitality among them.

Fish Rain

A village in the lands of the heroes' patron is experiencing frequent falls of fish from the sky. No one can tell where they come from. This is not a great problem, but a curiosity that *might* have great consequences. The heroes are sent to deal with the mystery.

Secret: The heroes eventually reach the home of Oralprath, a minor local deity who is vomiting the fish from the heavens. He tells them that they need to subdue Varvar the Deep Gulper, which is now being kept in a nobleman's villa.

Hero Band Opportunity: Oralprath is a god (albeit a minor one), and is much stronger along the saltwater coasts in the Holy Country, where he has a couple of temples. Nonetheless, he will be grateful to any heroes able to release him from his curse. If the players need a guardian to form a hero band, he might become their guardian or else offer his magical ally, the Golden Fish, for that purpose. In either case, the guardian would bestow unusual powers over water, fishing, and watery communication, perhaps even gaff fighting! However, Oralprath is a representative of the "Bad Old Gods"—he does not care about politics, but the authorities might look askance at a hero band with such a patron.

Involving the Heroes: Tarsh is a nation in transition: the Lunar Way is on the rise, but the Old (Orlanthi) Gods are still worshipped in the hills. Although the king is trying to impose a centralized, bureaucratic rule, this has not taken hold strongly at the clan or even tribal level. The heroes will be clients or allies of a local clan chieftain, and as such could be locals, Dara Happan adventurers seeking their fortune on the frontier, or any other individuals who happen to have been useful to the chieftain or vice versa. Indeed, they could even be opposed to the Empire, but hoping to win him over to their rebellious ways.

Scene 1: "Take Care of It"

It is just another day; a delegation from one of the clan's outlying steads has come to petition Vlasik the Barbed, chieftain of the Igarni Clan of the Breagalos Tribe and a patron of the heroes. That is not unusual. The heroes are doing whatever they usually do, when a runner from the chieftain's household summons them to his hall. Now, this is unusual.

Vlasik has heard of the fish rain and has been petitioned by the villagers affected to do something about it. He does not care much about this in itself as it is not harmful, but he takes it as an omen and cannot be seen to ignore the petition. Furthermore, he is involved in a political feud with the clan shrieve, an agent of the tribal chieftain responsible for collecting taxes and administering justice. The shrieve, Ozzur Garnathsson, would try to use this against Vlasik, but he is away gathering tribute for the next few days. Vlasik does not know whom to trust among his officers and does not want to give Ozzur the chance to paint him as either overreacting ("yokels spin some story about fish in the sky and before you know it, the superstitious fool is calling up the militia") or negligent ("his people cry for help and he just sits there guzzling seaberries and scratching his nether portions"). He therefore asks the heroes to look into it, giving them a chance to

win his favor. No resources can be allotted to it now, nor will he give any particular instructions: "Why don't you take care of it and let me know?"

If the heroes seek information or advice, they get very little. Poverri or other fishing gods might know something, but they have few worshippers and fewer temples in Dragon Pass. The nearest temple to Irippi Ontor (the Lunar knowledge god) will, for a fee, take a week and provide a list of other occasions fish have rained. It is a sloppy list, including incidents of frogs and snakes falling and other miscellaneous objects. Though interesting, it is of no real value. Ultimately, the heroes must simply go and see what is going on.

Scene 2: "Probably Curses..."

The heroes travel to Threehoof Village (you can choose a different village based on your game, if you wish). Old Dar is the local speaker. He hobbles around to show where it has occurred. He and the villagers do not really know anything, but here is some of the information that they will make sure is heard:

- "They come down with the rain usually, but not all the time."
- "Probably curses from the Windbags." (Orlanthi from Sartar, to the southeast)
- "Lots of different fishes, lots and lots. Big, small, ugly. Not ones we recognize."
- "They ain't poison. First only us really hungry ones ate them, but now everyone does. Nothing happens. We cook 'em like regular fish."
- "Probably curses from the Motherlovers." (Holayans, from the north)
- "They stink and rot after three days. Every vermin for a hundred miles around came to earth the first times. No one ate them, of course. Not the first time."
- "Probably curses from the Praxians." (or some other distant, infrequent, mysterious enemy)
- "They aren't from our waters! Some of these things are monsters and we wouldn't touch them. We made a fire right on top of them and burnt them all."
- "Some were alive when they fell, and we put 'em in buckets, but every one of them died anyway. Pretty fast too."
- "No rhyme or reason to their falls. No patterns or cycles."
- "We looked for a stranger doing this but there's no one new around here. No strangers have come by."
- "Probably curses from that clan over there, our enemy. They're stupid enough to feed us with a curse!"

Remember that the heroes are acting as agents of the local government, and must strike a balance between overfamiliarity (in which case the villagers will not treat them seriously and will mock them behind their backs) and arrogance (which will alienate the villagers and have them putting rabbit droppings in their stew and feeding them worrying lies).

Scene 3: The Fish Rain

The heroes investigate places where fish fell before. At one, they hear a sound, distant at first, like the noise inside a sea-shell. It gets louder and louder, and seems to hover overhead. Then there is a noise like a man vomiting and, without warning, fish start to drop from the clear sky.

Fish are appearing and dropping around the player heroes as they watch. Old Dar screeches and takes cover under a tree. Do the heroes?

Suddenly a huge fish crashes to the ground near the heroes. It is fifteen feet long with a mouth three feet wide and skin like stone. It holds itself up with its pectoral fins, and flicks its powerful tail to thrash deliberately around on the ground. It has about a thousand teeth in its mouth and seems angry. Rolling its big bulging eyes, it launches itself at the heroes.

The Shark-thing

Significant Abilities: Bite 5 \mathbb{W} 2 (5 \mathbb{W} 3 with a -20 penalty for being on land), Thrashing Tail 17.

Weapons and Armor: Teeth +6, skin +10.

Tactics: The shark-thing makes vicious lunges, snaps its jaws, slavers out acid when it shakes its prey, and lashes wildly with its tongue. If anyone goes behind it, it augments its Bite with its Thrashing Tail for +2.

Killing the shark-thing is the only solution. After it is dead Old Dar comes out from under the tree and takes a moment to say how impressed he is, but not very long. He is anxious to get his food and goes among the fish, selecting some and dropping them eagerly into a sack for dinner later. Other villagers can be

seen coming too, with their own sacks.

If left alone, the shark-thing kills all the villagers, then goes to the nearest water and heads downstream.

The Golden Fish







The dead thing thrashes and trembles violently every so often. Everyone stays away. At one point it vomits out another fish, or else the fish flops out of its gashed body. Lying in a shallow puddle, it is golden, looking like it is metal. It opens an eye, and speaks.

“Help me,” it mewes. “Help me.” What do the heroes do?

The fish asks to be put in a pail with water and some salt, and if given that will be able to survive. It hovers in it and points in one direction at all times, even if the bucket is turned. It says, “I can help you with this mystery, and make you famous. Take me home and you will be rewarded.” Its home is in the “Impossible Place,” and its master is important there. It can show them the way because it is pointing in that direction.

Scene 4: The Impossible Route

After some travel the heroes reach a cliff face (resistance 8 \mathbb{W}) with a cave near the top: an impossible climb for fish, but not humans. If the heroes succeed in climbing the cliff, they hear the seashell noise from the cave. When they enter, the scene abruptly shifts. The heroes are outside, with the cave behind them, as if they just came out instead of going in. They are looking upon a walled patio. Overhead is blue sky, in the air is the crash and wash of the sea on the beach, and the smell of salt and dry sand. The heroes have probably never smelled salt and sand.

<p>Young Brygtan <i>Keywords:</i> Tarshite Warrior 10\mathbb{W}, Initiate of Yanafal Tarnils 20 (Combat, Soldier, Warlord). <i>Significant Abilities:</i> Bodyguard 10\mathbb{W}, Scimitar and Shield Fighting 10\mathbb{W}, Loyal to Vlasik 18\mathbb{W}. <i>Equipment:</i> Scale and shield (+4), Scimitar (+3). </p>	<p>Contest Synopsis <i>Close Combat (Orvend):</i> 15\mathbb{W} (+170 AP) <i>Resolve Clan Disputes (Venbors):</i> 6\mathbb{W}2 (+85 AP)</p>	<p>Orvend Five-Heft <i>Clan Champion</i> <i>Keywords:</i> Tarshite Warrior 15\mathbb{W}, Initiate of Phargentes Kingslayer 15\mathbb{W} (Cunning, Indefatigable, Warrior). <i>Significant Abilities:</i> Axe and Shield Fighting 15\mathbb{W}, Lead Militia 12\mathbb{W}. <i>Equipment:</i> Scale and shield (+4), fine battleaxe (+4). </p>			
<p>Whispering Leik <i>Keywords:</i> Tarshite Petty Nobleman 4\mathbb{W}, Fixer 5\mathbb{W}, Initiate of Selven Hara 20 (Discovery, Travel, Travel Safely).  <i>Significant Abilities:</i> Find Out What's Going On 4\mathbb{W}, Sneaky Combat 17, Spread Rumor 10\mathbb{W}. <i>Equipment:</i> Fine sword (+4), range of poisons, drugs and potions.</p>		<p>Venbors Hengisson <i>Clan Lawspeaker</i> <i>Keywords:</i> Tarshite Lawspeaker 6\mathbb{W}2, Devotee of Lhankor Knowing 20\mathbb{W} (Language, Law, Literacy). <i>Significant Abilities:</i> Convincing Debater 10\mathbb{W}, Judge Disputes 1\mathbb{W}2.  <i>Equipment:</i> Numerous scrolls of legal precedent.</p>			
<p>Vlasik the Barbed <i>Chieftain of the Igarni Clan of the Breagalos Tribe</i> <i>Other Keywords:</i> Tarshite 20. <i>Significant Abilities:</i> Barbed Wit 5\mathbb{W}, Command Followers 10\mathbb{W}, Shrewd Politics 8\mathbb{W}. <i>Weapons and Armor:</i> Sword +3, chainmail +3 when ready for combat, otherwise brocaded robe +1. <i>Marks:</i> Well-groomed and -dressed, always smiles before speaking. <i>Personal Augments:</i> \mathbb{W} Lead Clan affinity (+3 to Command Followers or Shrewd Politics) \mathbb{W} Shrewd Politics (+3 to Command Followers) </p>			<p>Relationship to Family</p>	<p>Personal Time</p>	<p>Contacts at Royal Court 2\mathbb{W}</p>
<p>Initiate of Dar the Chieftain 7\mathbb{W} <i>Affinities:</i> \mathbb{W} Allfather, \mathbb{W} Lead Clan, \mathbb{A} Making.</p>	<p>Chieftain of the Igarni Clan 1\mathbb{W}2 (includes his relationship to his Four Storms)</p>	<p>Adversary of Ozzur Garnathsson 3\mathbb{W}</p>			

In the middle of the patio is a figure, manlike though larger, dressed like a fisherman. He is on his hands and knees, dry-heaving violently. The heroes can speak to the daimon here, and he asks if they can help him. Are they able to heal or cure? His active vomiting power is 10W2, so maybe a group effort will help. If victory is achieved he stops (except for the occasional choke) long enough to tell who he is.

Oralprath

He is Oralprath, a fishing god. A great friend of the Twin Fishers (Pelaskos and Poverri), Oralprath was one of those who cast magical nets and dragged up everything that was alive or dead. He hauled in huge nets full of creatures of the deep and shallow waters. Once, Oralprath dragged up something that was both alive and dead: Varvar the Deep Gulper. The two struggled, but Oralprath killed it with his gaff (a pole with a vicious hook on the end, used for landing catch) and hung it up by the gills.

Recently, though, without warning (and seeming to defy the laws of the God World) the trophy puffed up again with water and began to rumble and roar. It was rejuvenated somehow, shook itself from the hook, and flopped back to some waters. That movement made a ripple in the God World that, in turn, woke Oralprath. But he was weak, a mere shadow of a story without anyone who worshipped him now.

Varvar demanded back all the fish and creatures that Oralprath had ever caught. He refused.

Varvar demanded all the unique things that Oralprath had ever caught. He refused.

Varvar demanded back just the golden fish that Oralprath had caught. He refused.

Then Varvar sent this curse, which made Oralprath vomit. He could not hold back anymore, and he is losing all the fish and things that he dragged up from the waters. He just puked into that well hole there. So far it has not been so bad. Only the little things have come out and he has been able to hold down the terrible things. What bothers him is that sharks and killer squid might be next, and then the really dangerous stuff: magic water spirits, living parts of petty gods, forgotten things from the past, and so on.

The players have a choice. Will they try to help Oralprath or not? If not, they can go home and later on this hole in the worlds will spew things that will hunt them to their deaths. If they want to help then only one thing will make him better: bring Varvar back again, and put him on the wall.

Did the players voluntarily reveal that they have the golden fish? If they did then Oralprath is very friendly and happy and volunteers to let them use his Gaff (which has an ability of 15W) if they promise to kill Varvar. If not then Oralprath notices anyway and still lets them use it, but it is less powerful (10W).

Oralprath and the Golden Fish confer briefly, and then Oralprath shows the heroes a vision of where Varvar is now. It is a nobleman's manor house that they know, on the neighboring Drayvan Clan lands.

Scene 5: Land Fishing

The house belongs to Patrikus of Three Two Cities, notorious in the tribe for his high-handed and unsociable ways and his high connections in the Tarshite capital, Furthest. Varvar is being



The unexpected can be a daily occurrence in Glorantha, but even so a shower of fish from the sky is unusual!

kept in the mansion, behind high walls surrounded by fields tended by slaves and paupers.

What options do the heroes have? Their chances of getting outside help are slim: the chieftain has told the heroes to handle it. The only possible help might be from someone outside the band, perhaps one of the rebel leaders. But this would take time, and monsters will continue to rain.

Contest: Know Something About Patrikus

Appropriate Abilities: Gossip, Clan Politics, [Tribal] Politics (-3), Know Local Area (-5), Politics (-10).

Resistance: 14.

Complete Victory: Patrikus? You know him (or one of his retainers) well! He's no Dara Happan, but a distant cousin of the Tarshite king with delusions of grandeur.

Major or Minor Victory: You have heard of Patrikus and his royal link.

Marginal Victory, Tie, or Marginal Defeat: Patrikus is a Dara Happan sorcerer.

Minor Defeat: Who?

Major or Complete Defeat: Patrikus is a Dara Happan, exiled for his anti-Imperial views. He will look kindly on anyone badmouthing the Emperor or the King of Tarsh!

Alternatively, the heroes could ask the field hands. They are slaves, a miserable bunch of otherwise homeless men who are treated as if they were thralls. Some are Sartari and some are from foreign lands. Here is what they can tell:

Who is the chieftain over there?

An ignorant snob without respect for our traditions. He does some kind of magic, probably wizardry. They think he performed human sacrifice a couple of years ago, but probably not since. He is loony and getting worse quickly. He loves honey and has hives but imports more from someplace, probably from Furthest: messengers are always going between the chieftain and the capital. His personal slave is worse in attitude, more full of contempt, but at least he can be bribed.

What defenses are there?

The guards are thugs. They drink a lot and are very careless. They steal from their employer, and the slaves help them do it. They have deadly crossbows and worship a demon that eats little pigs.

What is the manor like? Can you get us in?

They can describe the rough layout. They might be able to help the heroes get in, but only if they agree to kill everyone inside, and then go away forever and leave the slaves with the manor. If the heroes renege on the deal, then the slaves will launch a huge curse upon them—or worse, inform the authorities.

Scene 6: The Manor

The manor is enclosed by a high wall. The obvious ways to enter are to sneak in or to walk through the door.

Sneaking In

To sneak in, the heroes must neutralize or avoid both the magic wardings and the guards. Sneaking in under a wagon bringing in a regular delivery (or similar tactics) will bypass the wardings but still runs the risk of alerting the guards, so it faces a lower resistance than having to get past both. Depending on the circumstances, the narrator can have the heroes roll separately, or can have one hero try to get past and remove the defenses.

Contest: Sneak into the Manor

Appropriate Abilities: Infiltration or Stealth magic, Sneak (–3), Climb (–3), Fly (–3) to bypass the magical wardings; Hide in Cover (–5) for attempts to sneak past the guards.

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Disguised as a slave (+5, guards only), Resist Magic ability can augment.

Resistance: 8LD (5LD if the hero can bypass either the guards or the magical defenses.)

Any Victory: The hero avoids both magical and physical defenses.

Tie or Marginal Defeat: The hero realizes he is about to alert the defenders and can simply withdraw.

Minor or Major Defeat: Magical wardings fill the air with an unearthly keening or a sharp-eyed guard calls out a challenge.

Complete Defeat: Magical wardings suddenly fill the air with an unearthly keening and one of the guards has a free shot at the would-be infiltrator (+10 to his target number).

The guards do not patrol outside the manor but occasionally do within it. They prefer to shoot their crossbows—a rare weapon—from cover. The wall surrounding the manor has several catwalks from which they can shoot or resist climbers.

Resources of the Manor

Six guards: Tarshite 17, Warrior 5LD (augmented to 9LD if prepared); Crossbow 12LD. Axe +3, armor and shield +4, crossbow +3. If firing from cover, they get a +5 defensive bonus.

Leader, Derkor of Igarni: Tarshite 20, Warrior 18LD (augmented to 3LD2), Initiate of Natha 20. Double scimitars +5, armor +3.

Patrikus: Lunar Adept 15LD. Instead of fighting, he draws on his magical abilities to provide a combined augment to the fighters of +5, and can further lend up to 35 AP. He holds a tiny dog (Yapper) close to him at all times.

Yapper: Patrikus' secret weapon, a tiny dog that has a magical Roar Attack 7LD.

Magic Defenses: Ward off Thieves 5LD.

Walking In

Alternatively, the heroes might trick their way in somehow and talk to Patrikus. Guards answer the door: “No begging here. Go away or we'll beat you.” A successful contest with *Bluff* or *Persuasive* against an 18 resistance will convince them; a good story such as pretending to be the messengers from Furthest merits a bonus. A bribe could also work—they like beer or other alcoholic drink. If so tempted, they will get Patrikus' servant, Endirikutes.

First he asks, “Do you speak Dara Happan?” in that language. If no one answers, he calls the heroes “gopher louts” in the same tongue (a terrible insult in Vonlath, his home region), and then asks (in Tarshite, New Pelorian, or Sartarite), “What misery brings you here?” Endirikutes is a Dara Happan slave, purchased as a sop to Patrikus' snobbery. His weakness is money: he will go get his master if bribed (resistance 17).

Patrikus is richly dressed but careless with his appearance: his clothes are food-stained and one sandal is undone. He seems distant and vacant, occasionally troubled if the heroes ask about Varvar. If someone shows him the Gaff (for he cannot see it on his own) he gasps in surprise, recoiling a bit. Then he shakes his head and seems to be engaged in a terrible internal battle. He tilts left, grinds his teeth and struggles, then tilts right and chokes, his eyes rolling in terror. At last he cries out, “Merciful Goddess, boys, is that the Gaff of Oralprath?”

If they admit that it is, then he shouts, “Then for the love of Her, come this way now!” and sets off. He lurches left again, crashing into the wall. “Help me,” he says, leaning right, and once supported flounders the group forward.

Patrician Patrikus (as he prefers to be called, ignoring the snickering of the true Dara Happans) is a member of the petty Tarshite nobility whose wealth came from trade, but he will not talk about that. He is also a distant cousin of the king, which he brings up whenever appropriate. He learned to read and even attended a Lunar magical university for a year. He practices wizardry. He owns a grimoire bound in thin sheets of aquamarine that is called *Two Cities of Blue*. It details spells relating to fishes and underwater beings, including *Breathe Water*, *Heal Fish*, and the *Summon Otherworldly Fish* ritual.

Now he performs experiments. He read of Oralprath in an old journal, and with his magic devised a way to sacrifice to Varvar and free him. Patrikus' magic brought the entity (which was weak at first) into this world. Varvar was installed in the manor's fountain, instructed Patrikus on what minerals to dump into the water, and bit by bit came to dominate him.

Scene 7: The Skate and the Gaff

The climax is a battle between the Gaff and the fish. Varvar is a chaotic skate, a ten-foot-wide beast patterned in black and yellow tiger-stripe that looks neither alive nor dead. It leaps from the fountain basin and thrashes around, throwing itself onto its victims with its oversized maw gaping.

Varvar the Deep Gulper

Magical Abilities: Gulp 5W2.

Weapons and Armor: Fanged mouth +5, skin and fat +4; unharmed by non-magical weapons (see page 206).

Patrikus supports Varvar, raising its Gulp to 10W2, and seeks to avenge it if it is destroyed. Unless he has seen the Gaff, in which case he lies screaming on the floor, torn between Varvar's compulsions and his own will to be rid of it. Of course, Patrikus' screams might bring his guards running...

Whoever wields the Gaff can use its attack unless they have one that is better. The wielder and other heroes can augment it. After the battle, they must return it to Oralprath.

Scene 8: The Report

If the heroes kill Varvar and free Patrikus, he will be shaken and frightened. Before the day is out he will have packed his possessions and fled. If they kill him and his guards, they may join the slaves in looting the villa. Either way, the slaves ransack and then burn the manor house. If the heroes join in, they may gain loot that can increase *Wealth* by +1 for up to 5 heroes, who must each cement the change.

The authorities will be upset. They do not give a whistle about the golden fish or the fisherman god, but a relative of the king may have been killed and his villa destroyed. Any damage to property is considered a criminal act and an act of rebellion. Within a couple of days, officials and troops visit the site, but if not provoked simply put it down to a slave rebellion, or maybe a magical experiment gone wrong and followed by the slaves looting and burning.

One way or another, the heroes will have to report to Vlasik. He does not want to hear the full truth—to suggest that a relative of the king was raising Chaos creatures is politically dangerous.

Contest: Report to Vlasik

Appropriate Abilities: Boast, Lie, Politics, Relationship to Vlasik, Charismatic Presence (–3), Fast Talk (–3), Orate (–5).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Patrikus supports the heroes (+20).

Resistance: 5W.

Complete Victory: Vlasik believes you implicitly and is very impressed: each hero receives 1 directed hero point to gain or increase a relationship with him.

Major Victory: Vlasik sees through your lies, but is impressed by your grasp of politics: each hero receives 1 directed hero point to gain or increase a relationship with him.

Minor or Marginal Victory: Vlasik believes you (or at least decides to say that he does). You are praised publicly.

Tie or Marginal Defeat: He had hoped for a quiet resolution. He is glad you managed to resolve the problem, but knows not to trust you with anything requiring tact in the future.

Minor or Major Defeat: Neither Vlasik nor anyone else believes you. The heroes get a strong feeling that it might be time to move on, not least before investigators from Furthest arrive. Vlasik knows better than to be seen in the company of such dubious characters as the heroes.

Complete Defeat: Vlasik realizes that not only did you persecute Patrikus, you did it in league with Shrieve Ozzur. He orders you arrested while he decides how to deal with such treacherous curs.

Aftermath

If the heroes follow the clues, defeat Varvar, and do not offend Vlasik, he is impressed. He will remember their names now. A scholar or storyteller can now explain why these were saltwater fish falling on dry land: Oralprath is a saltwater fisherman, and in ancient, mythic times this region was a shoreline.

Each hero gains 3 hero points plus 2 additional points to raise their relationship with their clan, with Vlasik, or with Oralprath. In the future, the heroes might be able to travel to Oralprath's home again through the cave. With Varvar mounted on his wall, Oralprath stands straight and seems greater and clearer, more vivid.

Politics, Always Politics

Glorantha may be a world of magic and myth, but there are some human constants that remain, not the least of which is politics.



Politics can drive rivalries. Not all enemies are personal, like the rival for your sweetheart's hand or the bandit you rout. Your enemy might be a person or entire community that you have never met, to whom you have become a threat because of the wider implications of your actions or your beliefs. Thus, the Tarshite mercenary Bulvok thought nothing of it when he impulsively freed a Heortling slave. Unbeknownst to him, his action was then used by a radical Dara Happan anti-slavery league in their propaganda. This in turn brought him into disfavor with his Lunar employer, a fact he only discovered when he was abandoned, wounded and unarmed, for the Heortlings to find.

There are also positive reasons for heroes to pay attention to politics. In many cases, it will be an important aspect of their occupation and religious status. It almost always takes more than simple ability, for example, to rise to senior command in a civilized army or to win the favor of the chieftain.

Heroes must often depend on their communities and patrons for assistance during magical rituals or to provide them with assets that are otherwise beyond their reach. Heroes who fail to consider the political implications of their actions, neglect to cultivate patrons, or fail to look after their allies and supporters may find that their very positions are threatened.

Payback for this support can be a useful way to start an adventure or introduce unexpected complications into the heroes' lives. Of course, sometimes support can be "bought" in advance: Bulvok expected death at the hand of his Heortling enemies, but the clan that found him was the very one that the slave he had freed belonged to. So politics made Bulvok a friend of Heortlings and an enemy of the Empire, when all he had wanted was to fight well.

The Hero Wars are breaking upon Glorantha. On the one hand, they are throwing old alliances into question, tearing established communities apart, and raising new dilemmas for leaders and led alike. But they are also creating new and unexpected communities, as rivals are forced into partnership by new threats or novel opportunities.

Heavy Earth

The lands around the heroes' home have become heavy. Everything on or above them weighs more. Travel is difficult and farming impossible. The heroes must brave the turbulent Gods War to defeat Strong Earth Nephew and return the land to normal.

Secret: In the past, Bush Child subdued Strong Earth Nephew, but the earth god always returns to the service of Great Lord Below, his father and master. Every few generations, a brave hero must tame him again.

Hero Band Opportunity: After the adventure (or even as part of their preparations), the heroes might summon one of the Ancestors who previously defeated Strong Earth Nephew to be the guardian of a hero band. As a guardian, he would provide great gifts of strength, virility, and power over rock and soil, but using his powers to aid mortals might anger Great Lord Below.

Involving the Heroes: The adventure is written so that it can be used for theistic, animist, or wizardly heroes with a minimum of fuss. Earth Witch, Strong Earth Nephew, and the rest can be deities, spirits, or essences, depending upon the campaign setting.

This heroquest is written as if Strong Earth Nephew and Great Lord Below are gods. Thus, the benefits gained are described as feats. Depending on your campaign, they might instead be majestic spirits or powerful essences.

Heavy Dawn—Call To Adventure!

The day starts just like any other. Herdsmen and farmers leave the village to start another day, and now a dreadful thing happens: everything becomes heavy! Birds plummet from the sky. Animals bleat in terror as they collapse in the fields. Even the grain bows under its weight. The local peddler set out for the nearest town but is forced to stop. When he started walking on the road, he felt his weight grow and grow till he could barely stagger. He scarcely made it back to the village before he collapsed. The heaviness seems to be centered on the village and grows stronger the farther one walks into it.

The Heroes Are Summoned

The chieftain and his advisors summon the heroes. When they arrive, the hall is in an uproar. Typical complaints and comments heard:

- “We can't get out of the village! How will we harvest the crops?”
- “Even the village guardian is starting to look heavy. We're next!”
- “It's a curse! We must change our ways!”
- “It's a curse! We must return to old values!”
- “It's a curse! It's them, over the hill!”

Old people and wise folk say this has happened before. Strong Earth Nephew has forgotten his promise—again. Young men and women must confront him and remind him of his place.

Naturally, the heroes are asked to go. Most of the clan elders are either too old or have gone on this quest before, and so cannot bring back the proper benefit to the clan again.

Preparations

A priest or clan elder tells the heroes the story of Bush Child and Strong Earth Nephew (this is the text that introduces each station below). There is little time to prepare—the heaviness grows by the hour. However, the entire clan stands ready to help for their survival depends on the heroes. Heroes have the total support of the community. The community is the beneficiary of the heroquest, though the heroes can gain side benefits.

The elders grant the community bonus to be used when they fight Strong Earth Nephew (Station 5)—a precise application giving triple the normal community support bonus (see page 196) to a single die roll. The heroes may want to have other groups (temples, families) support them elsewhere in the heroquest.

Main Character

- Bush Child helped us claim this land for our own. He wrestled with our enemies and brought them to heel. Long ago, he subdued Strong Earth Nephew and taught him obedience. This role requires a strong hero or one good at fighting.

Companions

- Red Fox was Bush Child's best friend. She is very clever and always wore a red hat. Earth Witch treated her like her own daughter even though she was not (or so they say).
- Three Stripe Stringbean was the clan's best archer. His bow, Never-slack, was blue. His arrows were Death itself to Bush Child's foes.
- Bear Stance Sharp-eye was a great and boastful hunter. He always wore a necklace of bear claws and trained the best tracking beasts. He found the way to Earth Witch's cave.

Supporters

- Several others accompanied Bush Child on his quest, and other heroes can take a minor role.

Station 1: Bush Child Departs

Long ago, before the Sun came back. Before the Darkness came and made everything bad, the People were strong. The land was good. But under the land lived Great Lord Below. He was a greedy, selfish god. He sought to draw all the treasures of the world to himself. Soon everything became heavy. No one could walk. No one could farm. The people looked for a hero to save them then.

Bush Child took his weapons, left his mother's house, and gathered up his friends. His friends and family blessed him. Everyone in the village helped. Each of them gave up a single hair and his mother wove a rope from them. She put all the village's hopes and strength into it. Bush Child and his friends set out from the village to find out what had gone wrong. First they would go to Earth Witch's home, for she knew everything that had ever happened under the earth.

The heroes must travel to the Other Side, as described in “The Crossing” in the Heroquesting chapter, page 197. The community automatically gives the heroes total support, and the village priest conducts the 15-hour ritual to open the way with his *Know [Pantheon] Myths 10W* unless a hero has a better rating in an appropriate ability.

Ritual Elements

- +10 for holding ritual in the clan's most sacred place.
- +10 for a basket of fireberries
- +5 for a [cultural weapon] named Toothsharp
- +5 for a chainmail shirt named Bladeblunt
- +5 for sacrificing something particular to your homeland (bison for Bison People, horses for Grazelanders, etc.)
OR +2 for sacrificing cattle or other normal herd beasts.
- +1 for three hearty cheers from the clan
- 8 for holding the ritual on an inauspicious day.
- Ritual role bonuses for Bush Child, Red Fox, Three Stripe Stringbean, and Bear Stance Sharp-eye.

If the ritual is successful, the heroes find themselves on the God World near a village. Entering the village actually leads them to the Gods War, where they find themselves back in their own village. Everything seems more vibrant and alive—larger than life. The heroes do not recognize anyone, but they know the people here are their ancestors. They find the Heaviness here, too.

Station 2: Berries in a Basket

The friends set out from the village. Everyone knew that Deep Lord Below was behind the troubles. Everyone said so. But no one knew where he might be found. Earth Witch might know but she lived in a hidden cave far away. To please her, they took a basket of Fireberries—her favorite food! The friends wandered through the hills, growing heavier with each step. But Sharp-eyed Bear Stance noticed strange tracks—they did not sink deep into the ground like the others. Hurrying along the path, the friends soon found a dark cave and entered it. The Fireberries lit the way for them.

The heroes need to make their way to Earth Witch's Cave.

Contest: Find Earth Witch's Cave

- Appropriate Abilities:* Track (+5), Keen Senses (-5), Wilderness Survival (-5), Know Animals (-10).
- Typical Modifiers and Augments:* Only magical abilities (or abilities used by magical followers) can augment the ability used by the hero here.
- Resistance:* 10W.
- Any Victory:* The heroes find the cave before the Fireberries start to cool.
- Tie:* The entrance is found, but not quickly.
- Any Defeat:* The heroes stumble around blindly. By the time they find the entrance, they are very heavy and tired. Many Fireberries have gone out. Some may have even rotted! Depending on their level of defeat, they suffer a penalty of -1, -3, -6, or -10 at the next station.

Results

Side Benefits

Bear Stance may gain the *Keeneye Tracking* feat or find a clever hunting dog if he finds Earth Witch's Cave.

Station 3: Earth Witch's Cave

When Bush Child entered the cave, the heaviness departed. Looking around, they found themselves in Earth Witch's home. Her cave was filled with all the good gifts of the earth, things to eat and drink, healing muds and sacred stones. Bush Child gave Earth Witch the basket of Fireberries and Earth Witch offered the heroes a meal in return. Red Fox was too clever and asked if

Grandmother would tell her about the heaviness instead. The old crone smiled at her clever granddaughter and said that Great Lord Below was not their foe but that Strong Earth Nephew was seeking to take everything to himself as a gift for his father. If they can defeat Strong Earth Nephew, the Heaviness will go. Clever and cunning, Red Fox teased clues from her grandmother about Strong Earth Nephew.

The heroes have found Earth Witch's Cave. Once inside, the heaviness departs. She receives them well and asks what gifts they have brought her. Fireberries and wealth please her. The crone offers hospitality but is reluctant to speak against her kin. Fortunately, the heroes are kinfolk too. They should learn the way to Strong Earth Nephew's hogan from her and some clues to how to defeat him.

Contest: Please Earth Witch

- Appropriate Abilities:* Love Family, Member of [Clan], Persuade (-5), Fast Talk (-20).
- Typical Modifiers and Augments:* Clever repartee (+5 or more for good roleplaying); Handsome or Beautiful (augments); bring ripe (+5) or unripe or rotten Fireberries (-5, in addition to the penalty received from a defeat at Station 2).
- Resistance:* 10W2.
- Any Victory:* The crone tells them the way to Strong Earth Nephew's hogan. Earth Witch speaks of her son's weaknesses (such as his club foot or his love of bear meat) and the things needed to overcome him. Depending on the level of victory, this gives a bonus of +1, +3, +6, or +10 to Bush Child in the final contest.
- Tie:* Earth Witch eats the berries and directs the heroes on to her son's home by a roundabout way. The heroes will have at least one random, hostile encounter before reaching Station 4 (see "Hostile Spirit World Denizens" in the Animism chapter, page 152, for ideas).
- Any Defeat:* Earth Witch is unhappy and gives bad advice. Without her aid, the heroes are not able to get to Strong Earth Nephew's hogan easily (indicating at least one hostile encounter, as above). Worse, she warns her son that rude strangers are coming, giving a penalty of -1, -3, -6, or -10 to Bush Child at the final station, depending on the level of defeat.

Results

Side Benefits

Red Fox might gain a *Persuade Elders* feat or increase her relationship with Earth Witch. Other heroes might be given a gift by a pleased Earth Witch in return for the gifts given her—from single-use earth spirits to healing mud or spellsticks.

Station 4: Unexpected Travelers!

Bush Child and his friends left Earth Witch's cave. All around them was dark and still, for they were deep under the earth indeed. They followed the path that Earth Witch told of and traveled ever downwards into the earth. They traveled for what seemed forever, the caverns and paths endless. Bush Child met with many strange peoples and bizarre dangers on this road but he and his friends overcame them all.

The heroes encounter an unexpected station. They are on their own and must rely on their wits and abilities to survive the Gods War.

The myth of Bush Child and Strong Earth Nephew mentions Three Stripe Stringbean as an important companion, instrumental to success, but no version ever records what he does. You should tailor this station to the hero filling this role. We give a sample station here, concentrating on Three Stripe's archery prowess, but you can replace this with something else.

Dwarves

The heroes come across a band of Subterrene Thaumaturgic Explorers, powerful Mostali including gold and iron dwarves. They are frustrated by a chasm almost a mile wide, which their Comprehensive Cartographic Reproduction says should be spanned by a rope bridge. Basalt Mice have nibbled the ropes, leaving the bridge hanging in the chasm. Dwarves are persistent but unimaginative. They do not know what to do beyond complain at this serious flaw in reality relative to their map. One dwarf is taking rope and somehow making it rigid, trying to poke it across the chasm, but he cannot hold it out far enough or anchor it. The heroes need to cross the chasm, too. They could try to leap or fly over it themselves, but perhaps something could be done with the rope?

Results

Heroes who simply cross the chasm gain no further benefit, regardless of their level of victory. Those who help the dwarves cross will find in the future that they are respected by dwarves.

Those who fail to cross the chasm must find a different route, braving the dangers of the Gods War, before returning to their quest. This failure becomes a penalty when they confront Strong Earth Nephew in Station 5.

Side Benefits

A hero taking the role of Three Stripe Stringbean may learn the *Rope-Arrow* feat or gain a magic rope as a side benefit.

Station 5: Bad Earth Boy

The friends traveled deeper into the earth. Eventually they reached the hogan of Strong Earth Nephew. It stood in a clearing, the door covered with a bear hide. They could hear sounds of feasting inside. Bush Child entered and confronted Strong Earth Nephew. He challenged the god to a test of strength and arms. He wagered his service against Strong Earth Nephew's. Not wanting to be humbled before his followers, Strong Earth Nephew agreed. The god brandished his spear Blacksnake but Bladeblunt and Toothsharp were strong and protected the hero. Neither could harm the other. Strong Earth Nephew said that they should wrestle. With a smile, Bush Child agreed.

The men formed a circle, whooping and jeering. Bush Child took up his stance but as the god stared at him, he felt himself growing heavier. When the god grappled with him, it felt like fighting a landslide. Desperate, he called upon his family and with a surge struck Strong Earth Nephew on the clubfoot Earth Witch had told him of. Howling with pain, the god staggered back and Bush Child swiftly pinned him down. Pleading that he was only doing as Great



Lord Below wanted, Strong Earth Nephew promised to serve as he had in the past if Bush Child would forgive him. When Bush Child agreed, there was a feast to seal their bargain.

A hogan is a one-room structure made of earth-covered poles, traditionally built with the entrance facing the sunrise. It is used as a dwelling or for ceremony.

Strong Earth Nephew

Once the heroes locate Strong Earth Nephew, the hero filling the role of Bush Child must wrestle him.

A reckless hero might instead offer to serve Strong Earth Nephew in exchange for leaving his people alone. In effect, the heroes would become his followers and the hero band would serve his interests in the Mortal World.

Contest: Wrestle Strong Earth Nephew

Appropriate Abilities: Wrestling, Strong (-5), other combat ability (-10).

Typical Modifiers and Augments: Strong (augments); Combat magic (augments); Relationship (augments); bonus or penalty from earlier stations.

Resistance: 5L4.

Any Victory: Bush Child defeats Strong Earth Nephew, who swears to leave the People in peace. He further gives up a servant, magical power, or other blessing for Bush Child to bring back to the people.

Tie: The heroes and Strong Earth Nephew are stalemated. The Heaviness ends, but the hero brings back no additional benefit to the community.

Any Defeat: Strong Earth Nephew wins, and wounds Bush Child. The Heaviness intensifies, giving a penalty to the entire community for as long as the blessing that Bush Child sought to bring back.

Side Benefits

The hero taking Bush Child's role can learn one of several feats, such as *Taunting Stance* or *Dragon Suplex Wrestling Strike*. Successful heroes might acquire a supernatural companion from among Strong Earth Nephew's entourage, or he might gift them with treasure or strength.

Station 6: The Return

After the feast, Bush Child and his companions left Strong Earth Nephew's hogan laden with gifts to bear back to their people. It may have been a long time and it may have been a short time but eventually they reached the surface world again just as the sun rose. With the sun's rays, the last of the Heaviness was dispelled. Raising their arms high, with a whoop of pleasure, the friends ran home, bringing with them the good news.

Quest Success

The heroes have defeated the Heaviness, and the village holds a feast. Award each hero 3 to 5 extra hero points.

Companions who gained one of the special feats described during the quest gain it at a starting value depending on their individual victory level at that station; see "Quest Success" in the Heroquesting chapter, page 204.

Quest Failure

The community must still deal with the Heaviness somehow. Perhaps they can appease Strong Earth Nephew with worship and expensive sacrifice? Perhaps the heroes may end up serving him after all.



Name: _____

Player: _____

Description: _____

Goals: _____

Hero
Points: _____

Keywords

Homeland: _____

Occupation: _____

Specialty: _____

Magic: _____

Common Magic: _____

Skills

Relationships

Magical Abilities

Hero Band

Member of: _____
Awareness: _____
Blessing: _____
Defense: _____

Personality

Followers

Possessions & Wealth

Standard of Living: _____
Wealth: _____

Arshkuveth's Own

"A new world is coming, to be shaped by the brave."

Baton-Holder Arshkuveth is a Lunarized Dara Happan nobleman, formerly from the city of Melsorkoth, who turned his back on local politics and made his way to the southern Provinces of the Empire, convinced that he is destined to be a great hero and masterful leader of the new order. He used his substantial personal wealth to raise this retinue, which he employs in a succession of sometimes wise, sometimes hare-brained schemes to win glory and influence. Members of his retinue might one day provide him with a glittering honor guard as he attends some ceremonial feast in the richest temple of Mirin's Cross and the next be riding hard for the border, tasked with stealing a heathen idol, and all because of a drunken boast Arshkuveth made. His failures have been as memorable as his successes. When he managed to recapture the fleeing traitor Chondragath Hole-in-Heart on the snowy slopes of Dwarf Hat Mountain, for example, he was on the verge of being awarded the right to turn his retinue into a full vexilla, an officially recognized private army. However, his subsequent misunderstanding of a conversation overheard in a wineshop in Furthest (which led to his abortive attack on the Provincial Overseer's mother-in-law under the mistaken belief that her sedan chair concealed stolen moon dust) put paid to that particular opportunity.

Arshkuveth is, however, a man of enthusiasm and boundless optimism, and after a day or so of depression, each setback only spurs him to come up with some new scheme, convinced that this time nothing can go wrong. His devotion to the cyclic Lunar goddess Natha seems to help him believe that each such fall from grace is merely the prelude for a new and great rise.

As such, he is often easy prey for rumormongers, opportunists, and confidence tricksters. But he is excitable, not stupid, and also his retinue has largely come to treat him with affectionate despair and has been known to deal directly with those who try to abuse Arshkuveth's trust. Members generally have to be able to hold their own in a fight, but although Arshkuveth's Own has the form of an armed retinue, the variety of missions it may find itself undertaking means that this is not exclusively or even primarily a unit of professional warriors. There are also rogues who may have fallen foul of the law in their home cities, and whose stealth and cunning has proven invaluable, just as there are several members of more

intellectual bent, whose main assets are their wits and their knowledge.

Official Name: Baton-Holder Arshkuveth's Own Bannermen.

Form: Armed personal retinue, a motley collection of hirelings and allies working for their patron's glory.

Ideology: "The world is there to test our mettle."

Look and Feel: A long-suffering but easygoing group, used to taking all sorts of assignments in their stride and priding themselves on not being fazed by their master's latest bizarre idea.

Purpose: To further Arshkuveth's dreams of winning fame and fortune.

Headquarters: Arshkuveth has properties in Furthest (Tarsh), Mirin's Cross (Holay), and Jillaro (Sylila), and travels frequently between them. At present, he sees his best chance to make his name and also help the Empire to be in Dragon Pass, so this is where the hero band is located. This could, of course, change if he sniffs some new opportunity elsewhere.

Reactions: Arshkuveth and his hero band are regarded by elements of the Imperial administration with anything from amused contempt to tolerant advocacy. Many is the time that he will blunder into a situation and upset carefully laid plans. At the same time, his enthusiasm and unquestionable devotion to the Empire disarms his critics, while his off-the-wall tactics have been known to succeed where more conventional plans would have failed.

Resources

Leader: Baton-Holder Arshkuveth, whose strengths are his contagious enthusiasm, optimism, and unpredictable imagination, not his realism or his attention to detail.

Renowned Members: Arshkuveth's Mistress-of-Spears is Bright Ercolina, a fearsome warrior and famed epigrammatist. Arshkuveth's batman and valet Umble Urtre-pesus, whose ability to scrounge and forage to keep his master in comfort even in the field is legend. Thrice-

*The Hero Wars are
between... Us and Them*

*You can trust us, the members of your
band. But can we trust someone
who does not follow our rules?
Who has not experienced the blessings
and protection of our guardian?
Even if they share our goals,
how can we be sure
that they mean us no harm?*



Lucky: once an Orlanth worshipper, he fell into the ways of the bandit god Gagarth before being redeemed by a Lunar priestess and introduced to the honorable worship of Yanafal Tarnils. Zip-Zip Shareenak, a Carmanian scholar whose fondness for other people's treasures led to his unfortunate and speedy departure from his master's service in distant Bindle. His ability to break codes and solve puzzles has several times meant the difference between success and failure for the band.

Membership: Generally Arshkuveth can afford to employ around 60 hirelings, although this can vary depending on his fortunes.

Other Contacts: Sometimes Arshkuveth works alongside the local military and political authorities, more often they operate at cross-purposes.

Organization

The hero band contains all sorts, from grizzled Dara Happans who served his family before to Provincials attracted by the promise of profit and adventure. It is organized however Arshkuveth wants it to be. In practice, although officially divided into seven-warrior "week-squads," Arshkuveth's Own has little formal organization. Instead, ad hoc details are assigned to each task by Bright Ercolina. Player heroes who join together are likely to be kept together (week-squads have been known to have as few as three members and as many as ten) so long as they work effectively. Of course, they may find themselves part of larger groupings if a mission requires it. Generally, week-squads take turns assigned as Arshkuveth's personal "honor guard and protection team" (a.k.a. babysitters).

Membership Keyword

Membership Requirements: Swear an oath of loyalty to Arshkuveth.

Mundane Abilities taught: Polish Armor, Speak New Pelorian, Spear and Shield Combat.

Typical Personality: Flexible, Long-Suffering, Obedient.

Magic: None is taught or prohibited. (In practice, any religion hostile to the Empire [such as Orlanth and most other Heortling gods] would be neither appropriate nor acceptable.)

Concorvus (Guardian)

Arshkuveth's Own have a guardian in the form of Concorvus, an old family daimon-retainer. He is generally found near Arshkuveth, although for some reason he himself cannot see Concorvus in either form, something which irritates him considerably. Concorvus might accompany groups on important missions. He is slyly witty and sarcastic, but ultimately and completely loyal to the unit and its patron.

Method: Manifestation.

Form: Can appear as either a bright red cat or a slender, faintly scarlet human wearing the robes of a Dara Happan manse-holder or chief butler.

Communication: Group contact. In either form, Concorvus talks directly to members in refined New Pelorian.

Guardian Requirements: Members of the unit who do not obey their orders lose any magical protection until they retake their oath in a ceremony presided over by Arshkuveth himself.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—See Magic 10L.
- ⚡ Blessing—Born of Yelm 1L.
- ☐ Defense—Recover from Injury 5L.



Bright Ercolina manages to contain her "enthusiasm" as Arshkuveth strikes upon another "cunning plan."

Heartdrummers

"The old world is falling silent, and we must drum a new world into being."

On the first day of Sea Season in 1595, three peals of thunder rang out from the cloudless sky across the Blue Fox tula. Minaressa, grandmother of the clan chieftain and the oldest woman in the tribe, awoke from her doze in the loom house. She found a small hand-drum next to her and went capering across the tula with an agility she had not shown in a generation, playing all the rhythms of the loom upon her drum.

At the edge of the clan lands she found a young man clad only in rags carrying a massive and magnificent drum. Hand-drum and great drum spoke. Soon the Greeting was exchanged and the stranger returned with Minaressa to the chieftain's hall. She introduced him as Klavis, and hinted that he was a great hero. He was given a seat at the chieftain's table that night.

Klavis explained that he had had a vision of a time soon to come when all the old rhythms would be broken and useless. He followed his vision and found the Heartdrum. It proposed that they capture all the good rhythms of the world, and when the time was right play them into a new rhythm that would help bring a new world into being.

The next day Minaressa did not awaken, but her drum still carried an echo of the rhythm. Three members of the clan left with Klavis that very morning, the start of the band. Klavis still travels Dragon Pass and nearby lands, announcing his presence with beats as loud as thunder. His drumming can sometimes be heard at night on lonely hills; when any Heortling hears it they know it is the music of the heart. Even people from other lands have recently begun to hear their own heartdrums responding to the beat of the Drum, and have joined the Heartdrummers.

Common Names: Drummers, Thunder Drummers, The Banging Band, The Banger Brothers.

Form: Roving band of musicians, outsiders who help others see themselves more clearly.

Ideology: "Would the world be as rich without the purr of an alynx or the sound of butter being churned? We must catch it all in rhythm so that it is not lost."

Look and Feel: Bohemians who understand that their mission is more important than wealth or glory. Core members look little better than beggars, temporary followers may not have thrown off material concerns so thoroughly.

Purpose: To call to those that rightfully belong to the Drum. They are the midwives of the new world, bringing it into being while saving all the best of the old world.

Headquarters: The Heartdrummers have no permanent headquarters, and even their wanderings vary from year to year. However Klavis and his closest companions do show up at the Blue Fox tula on the first day of Sea Season every year to reenact that first time the Heartdrum spoke to men during the Gods War.

Reactions: Conservative members of any Dragon Pass culture look upon the Drummers with distrust. More open-minded individuals at least consider the Drummers as well intentioned and entertaining. A few take the Drummers seriously, and it is from among their ranks that new members come, more every year.

Resources

Leader: Klavis is elderly, but can still play the Heartdrum all day long. His shoulders and arms are as powerful as those of any smith. His total sincerity has overcome many skeptics. With the Heartdrum he can create the thunderdrumming, waves of sound so loud that those nearby find it difficult to do anything. He claims to be an initiate of Hidden Music, a child of Donandar.

Renowned Members: Erana, mother of the current Blue Fox chieftain, is a stationary member. She keeps the Loom Drum, which can capture the thunderdrumming into the very weave of magical cloth, and she can organize a gross of drummers and clappers from her clan in short order. Three-Drums is a deaf dark troll worshipper of Hombobobom who occasionally travels with Klavis, beating three enormous drums louder than any other instrument save the Heartdrum itself. Minaressa, a blind girl who some think is the old chieftain's grandmother reborn, plays the tambour with the grace and energy of one much older than her 10 years.

Membership: The number of drummers traveling with Klavis varies, but is typically around a dozen. There are often a few dozen other roving drummers divided into a handful of bands. Klavis claims stationary members exist all over Dragon Pass, including some in troll and Grazer lands, but will not say exactly how many. "They are both for now and for the future," he says.

The Hero Wars...are but the Cry of the Mishap House

The Heortling phrase "the mishap house" refers to those poor unfortunates disabled or deranged while performing some special task for the clan, typically heroquesters who have paid a terrible price for mythic failure. Many people fear and mistrust talk of the Hero Wars, and wild exhortations to rebellion and renewal. They scorn or silence what they call these 'cries from the mishap house,' pointing to the terrible cost of over-ambitious dreams. For many, after all, the world is just fine as it is, and they hope desperately that it will not change and they can avoid being forced to choose sides.

Other Contacts: Many entertainers look favorably upon the Drummers, and are willing to aid them. The Blue Fox's support for the drummers has never wavered since Klavis came to them, almost a generation ago. The Drummers are viewed as "mostly harmless" by Lunar authorities, and have even entertained Lunar troops on occasion.

Organization

Klavis typically travels with only his core followers, so as not to overload a host's hospitality. With this group he travels all the lands of Dragon Pass. Many stationary followers lead other lives, and only show up when a band comes visiting. Some stationary members are much wealthier and more respectable than are the roving drummers. In addition, many people will grab a drum or clapping sticks when the drummers come around, but have not formally joined the band.

Although Heortling in origin, the Heartdrummers accept almost anyone, of any homeland or magic, as long as they share the band's passion and goal. Klavis knows that inside each man or woman's heart (whether Heortling or foreigner) there is a drum, and the Heartdrum calls to those that belong. When a man hears his heart respond to the Heartdrum, he knows what he has to do. All drummers, whether they play the tambour, hand-drum, great-drum, or an invisible soul drum, are welcome to join in the true music of the heart, either permanently or temporarily.



Klavis, the original Heartdrummer, may be old in years, but as his hands beat out a rhythm his spirit seems as young as ever.

Membership Keyword

Membership Requirements: Anyone can join, if they merely touch the Heartdrum with any percussion instrument, and swear to use it to learn the rhythms of their life, and to come when the drum calls them.

Mundane Abilities taught: Know Heartdrummer Rhythms, Play [Percussion Instrument].

Typical Personality: Idealist, Love Music, Patient.

Magic: None taught. Many members gravitate toward musical cults, such as Donandar or Drogarsi (see page 111), but this is not required.

The Heartdrum (Guardian)

The Heartdrum reaches out through pledged instruments to all those who have joined the Drummers. Although it is not sentient, magicians tend to get a feeling of purpose among the magical rhythms of the artifact.

Method: Emanation.

Form: A large drum made of wood and hide that defy identification.

Communication: Group contact. The Heartdrum communicates through the vibration of its skin, a sound that travels into the very hearts of men so that they feel the words of the Heartdrum within their breast.

Guardian Requirements: Play a drum at least once per day.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—Find Everyday Rhythms 2♣.
- ♠ Blessing—Share in the Heartdrummer Rhythms 1♣.
- ☐ Defense—Block it Out With the Beat 18.

Prophets of the Golden Age

"Nonhumans ruined the Old World, but we will not let them ruin the New World!"

Grandfather Mortal was the First Person. He is the exemplary model of behavior and decision-making for all humans. He made the Path of Death and was responsible for the collection of deities and powers that gathered there afterwards to confront the Devil. He was present during the conference that resulted in the Great Compromise. He was the first being to volunteer for mortality, to maintain the balance of Entropy and Eternity. His cleverness led to the triumph of mankind over the universe, for he won the Gift of Free Will denied to those tied to immortality. It is this Gift that allows mankind to exert their individuality upon the world.

Nonhumans can never share in the Gift. Their origins are in the wild and unwieldy elements, and although mortal they do not have the freedom of mankind. Indeed, the shortness of the reigns of the nonhumans speaks for their ultimate demise. In the Mythical Ages they were great and powerful and mankind suffered at their hands. Since the Dawn they have declined, but they still ruined all the compromises that humans offered them to accommodate them into the new universe of Time. The continued existence of these races is anathema to humans. It is the right and duty of every human to slay or enslave them. Unless humankind does this, it will always suffer the canker of the nonhumans. No matter how friendly they may seem, all are less than Human and do not belong in the New World. History has proven it.

Humans lived everywhere once, even among the nonhumans. Everyone had enough, and no one interfered with anyone else. All was harmonious, until the elves and trolls ruined the world. Aram, Soul of Man, was foolish enough to compromise with the nonhumans in the First Council. In return, they ruined the God Project of the High Council of Dorastor and corrupted our Perfect Man, Nysalor. They turned against humankind, destroyed the Heortling Tribes, and doomed Aram to a tortured worship by hybrid inhuman things. This was the First Betrayal. To any human foolish enough to contemplate cooperation with nonhumans, the Prophets say, "We gave it a chance in the Dawn Age, and look what happened!"

The Prophets were among those known as the Machinists in their glorious attempt to establish a new deity. The dwarves shared their subterranean secrets and helped them create Zis-

tor, but eventually turned against humankind and engineered the destruction of the beautiful Machine City. This was the Second Betrayal. To any human foolish enough to accept aid from nonhumans, the Prophets say, "Humans let them meddle in our great project, and we all know how that ended!"

When Humankind was deceived by Dragonkind and collaborated in the evil schemes of the Youf, it ended in the massacre of the Dragonkill. This was the Final Betrayal. To any human contemplating worship of the dragonewts, the Prophets retort, "Look what happened to the Golden Horde!"

The Prophets have had their victories. Ohlensa Flame-eye called down Tanian's purifying flames on the scaly Waertagi and their slimy fish-kin. Grash Dantaz led the Dark Hunt in the Yolp Mountains, and confounded the secret plans of the Nidan Decamony in the Emerald Blood Battle. A Prophet was among those that unleashed the Skyburn on Erigia to ravage the forests, and another was at the Moonburn in Rist when the Aldryami were vanquished and forced into Dorastor.

Now Glorantha stands on the threshold of a New Dawn. Throughout the world, Humankind recognizes the deceit, evil, and murderous intentions of the nonhumans. It is the dawn of a new age, a Golden Age, when humans will rightly seize their place as the true people of the world. A new era, when the lands and treasures that the nonhumans have stolen from humans and hoarded will be returned to their rightful owners.

Common Names: The Human Order, The Prophets of the New Dawn, The New Prophets.

Form: Pseudoreligious, militaristic fraternal society.

Ideology: All enemies of Humankind are to be hunted down and eradicated. "The only good nonhuman is a dead nonhuman." The iron discipline and unyielding attitude of the dwarves is inhuman in its rigidity. Elves are just walking plants. Trolls are disgusting, merfolk are talking fish, and ducks, well, ducks are just a joke!

Look and Feel: Ruthless fanatics who seek the total dominance of humans over nonhumans.



The Hero Wars are between...Men and the Elder Races

At first, humans were just one minor race among many, and weaker than most. However, the Gods War was hard on the Elder Races. Since the Dawn, their numbers and powers have dwindled, and they have been forced into marginal lands as human civilizations have expanded. Despite some important successes within Time, most humans believe that the Elder Races are weak, and will eventually die. They are wrong. The Elder Races were around before humans were even imagined, and their plots are as ancient. The Aldryami, Mostali, Uz, and lesser races have been mustering their strength for centuries, and are ready to unleash their vengeance against unsuspecting humanity. Soon, their worlds will expand again, and the humans will be exterminated.

Purpose: To assure the continuity and hegemony of Humankind. Oppose, fight, and destroy nonhumans, especially elves, dwarves, trolls, and dragonewts, who have caused so much harm to humans and taken so much from them.

Headquarters: The Prophets have several hidden headquarters, one for each local group. In Dragon Pass, this is in Gold Lamb, outside Swenston.

Reactions: Some fear these fanatics, especially those that worry they could be accused of proffering help to nonhumans. Others, who suffer the ravages of trolls or elves, are glad to know that the Order is close at hand. In areas where dragonewts live the Prophets are particularly popular, as dragonkind are so unpredictable that nobody can trust them.

Resources

Leader: Valstenor the Silver Shadow, who fought the Stone Men in the heart of Ginijji, challenged the Mistress of the Black Mountain, humbled the Fish Queen of Choralinthor, and scorched the New Great Tree.

Renowned Members: Garnathorl Starkvalsson, who single-handedly crushed the warped skulls of three devotees of dark Zorak Zoran. Chalrana Dawn-child, who is both beautiful and beguiling, yet deadly in her hatred of the walking plants that killed her father and polluted the fields of her clan.

Membership: The Prophets claim to be aware of the Elder Race conspiracies of the Hero Wars. They actively recruit those with information about these coming problems, or who seek to combat them.

Other Contacts: The Prophets are secretive, and do not openly form alliances with other groups. Members may belong to almost any organization or cult, and constantly seek like-minded individuals to join the Order.



As an Esrolian banker and doting grandfather, Dalarast minds his own business most of the time. But when there is an elf to kindle, he is the first to raise a torch and a mob in the name of the Prophets of the Golden Age.

Organization

The Prophets are far from a true religion, but they have a similar structure albeit with militaristic titles such as the Grand High Marshal, several generals, and local captains, lieutenants, and first sergeants.

Membership Keyword

Membership Requirements: Swear to resist any nonhuman you encounter; never befriend a nonhuman, or allow one to take over any right that should belong to a human. Never reveal the name or existence of other members.

Mundane Abilities taught: Understand [Elder Race] Tactics.

Typical Personality: Fanatic, Proud, Xenophobic.

Magic: None taught. Most members worship deities that fought nonhumans on behalf of Humankind, such as Vingkot, Starkval, Yelmalio, Elmal, Humakt, Vinga, and Rigsdal.

Last Dance (Guardian)

Last Dance was found in Dorastor during the Second Age. It was battered and broken, like Drogarsi's horn of myth, until the First New Prophet raised it to his lips and blew it so that it burned with the fire of truth and purity. Last Dance has no autonomy, and acts only as commanded by the leader of the Prophets.

Method: Manifestation.

Form: A shining, fiery trumpet seemingly made of solid gold.

Communication: Leader contact. Last Dance communicates by emitting a melody; members hear it as beautiful and inspiring, while nonmembers hear it as brash and discordant.

Guardian Requirements: Show Courtesy to All Humans.

Functions:

- ☉ Awareness—True Power of Purity 20.
- ⚡ Blessing—True Power of Wrath 10W.
- ☒ Defense—True Power of Vengeance 5W.



RUNES

Runes are archetypes or powers. A magical rune has within it part of the potency of the force that it symbolizes. The Sun rune, for instance, draws upon the warmth and life-giving energy of the sun. When a rune is written, the real power of the magical image is present within it. Repetition of a rune does not weaken it, but strengthens its presence in the mortal plane.

To command a rune's power, a person must understand it as more than a symbol. To do this, most magicians seek to know the mysteries of a single magic entity. To learn a single rune and all its permutations of power is difficult, to master more than a few all but impossible. Even the greatest magician rarely tries to use a rune directly; instead, runes are the impersonal forces that empower magic. More than passing knowledge of the uses and meaning of the runes is high magic. Most humans must be content with knowing their own self-rune of Man in their lifetime.

Throughout Glorantha, perhaps thousands of distinct runes are known. Many systems exist, each with **entity runes** unique to its pantheon or philosophy. Each system classifies and organizes the runes its own way, but most recognize a few runes of primal importance. These are the high or **core runes**, usually claimed as the ultimate reality of Glorantha. They are the building blocks of the cosmos, of which all that exists is a manifestation or inflection. All beings that have reached a certain level of psychic development are runic creatures in and of themselves—all humans are living representatives of the Man rune.

Entity Runes

Every religion uses its own runic system to identify and call upon the powers of its deities, spirits, or saints. Each such entity has its own rune that represents and concentrates its magic powers. Throughout this book, individual runes can be found near the magic keyword of each religion, deity, spirit, or saint.

The God Learners traced individual runes back to combinations of core runes. They thus made correspondences between entities of different religions whose individual runes differed, but whose core runes were identical. This is one of the types of magic they abused, and the practice is avoided by most modern Gloranthans, who wish to avoid the God Learners' fate.

The Core Runes

The best-known of Glorantha's runic systems was developed by the God Learners of Jrustela. They called them the **core runes**, and believed them to be the primal runes that empowered all of the other, lesser runes. Some of the concepts of this runic system are common to most peoples; others are almost unique to it. In theory, any feat, spell, or other magic power can be represented by a series of core runes that it draws upon.

The core runes are thirty, divided into five classifications. The **five worlds** map relationships between the Mortal World, magic, and the Other Side. The **five elements** are the raw matter

used to create the physical world, while the **ten ancient polarities** are the powers that compose the Other Side. The **five movements** determine the interactions of matter and energy and the patterns the other runes create. Lastly, the **five forms** can be seen as the inhabitants of the worlds, the basic forms of life whose creation is the ultimate expression of the other runes.

The Five Worlds

Unique in Gloranthan history, the God Learners were able to perceive and explore all of the planes of the Other Side. While codifying the four magic systems portrayed in this book, they saw that the Five Worlds were the basic divisions of the universe, and thus believed them to be the most powerful of the runes. These runes, sometimes identified as the magic runes, are almost unknown outside the God Learner system. Each simultaneously designates a philosophy, a world, a magical power, and an essential transcendent philosophy.

The Five Worlds		
Rune	Name/World	Type of Magic
☩	Mortal World	Innate Magic
☀	God World	Theism
☩	Spirit World	Animism
☩	Essence Planes	Wizardry
☩	—	Mysticism

The Ten Ancient Polarities

The ancient polarities represent abstract forces commonly referred to as powers. They are said to symbolize the ancient Gloranthan Court, identified by different magic systems as the first deities, spirits, laws, or essences. They are opposed in pairs that contest against and/or balance one another to shape existence. The God Learners recognized the power runes as the primal energies that make up the Other Side.

The Ten Ancient Polarities			
Rune	Name	Rune	Name
☩	Harmony, Healing	☩	Disorder
☩	Movement, Change	☩	Stasis, Stability
☩	Fertility, Life	☩	Death, Conflict
☩	Truth	☩	Illusion
☩	Cosmos, Law	☩	Chaos

The Five Elements

The elemental runes are the basic materials that make up the Mortal World. They are the raw and lifeless essence, inert until acted upon by other forces, at which point their potential for creation was realized. They are the ground people walk on, the air they breathe, the water they drink, the sun's light, and the darkness where the other elements are not. Some systems recognize different elements, but these Five Elements of the God Learners are known in most places as the basic substances.

The Five Elements	
Rune	Name
●	Darkness
~	Water
□	Earth
☉	Fire/Sky
☼	Air/Storm

The Five Movements

The movements represent the most primal manipulations of the runes. All forms of worship of and interaction between runes can be seen to stem from these five actions. At least, so claimed the God Learners, who used them to show what aspect of a form, element, or power or world was expressed by an entity.

The Five Movements	
Rune	Name
≡	Equal Exchange, Trade
♁	Recreation, Rebirth
⊖	Balance, Moon
☉	Annihilation, Void
Y	Unequal Exchange, Theft

The Five Forms

The forms characterize the living beings of the Mortal World. They are the basic molds that were used to populate the worlds. Although theoretically each species or type of being has its own unique rune, the God Learners recognized that these five runes depicted the most basic forms taken by life in the Mortal World, including Otherworld beings found as part of the landscape.

The Five Forms	
Rune	Name
⊞	Mineral
♁	Plant
♂	Animal
♂	Man, Human
♁	Otherworld Being

Magical Ability Runes

Most magical abilities seem to channel power from a small pool of runes—basic magical concepts like *Death* or *Fire* or *Military Might*. Although each people uses its own rune to represent a concept, in *HeroQuest* we use a single set of runes to identify broad magical concepts. Many come from the core runes, but those that do not are listed below.

Additional Magical Ability Runes			
Rune	Name	Rune	Name
⚡	Magic, Common Magic	♁	Family
☉	Awareness, Perception	♁	Anti-Chaos
⊞	Defense, Protection	♁	Victory
☼	Blessing	♁	Thunderstone
Y	Literacy, Writing	♁	Orlanth Allfather
♁	Wilderness	♁	Mastery (see pages 10, 19)
♁	Hunting	♁	Crafting, Making
♁	Ernalda Allmother		

Other Runic Systems

Different places in the world have different runic systems, depending on the power matrix that was established before the Dawn and later modified according to their histories. The most powerful of these other systems are known in the West, where the wizards and sorcerers codify the laws of the universe as runes; and in Kralorela, where the mystics categorized the distractions. Dragon Pass, being the crossroads of the continent, had a very fluid system that changed as new invaders or settlers arrived.

Several runes are used in this book that are not explained here or elsewhere, and they are listed in the table below.

Other Runes			
Rune	Name	Rune	Name
♁	Geeteey, the Glorantha Tribes Assembled (5 variations)	♁	Prax, Praxians (see also page 145)
♁	Luck (see also page 10)	♁	Kralorela, Kralori Pantheon
♁	Fate (see also page 10)	♁	Blood Sun
♁	Force (see also page 186)	♁	Teshnos, Teshnos Pantheon
♁	Infinity	♁	Wolf Pirates
♁	Heort, Heortlings	♁	Dara Happa, Solar Pantheon
♁	Hrestol, the Hrestoli Church	♁	Imarja, Esrolia, Earth Pantheon (see also page 111)
♁	Arkat	♁	Aeolian Church, the Esrolvuli (see also page 167)
♁	Rokar, the Rokari Church (see also page 169)	♁	Majestic Horses Tradition, Grazers (see also page 143)
♁	Pelanda Pantheon, Pelandans	♁	Dragonewt



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Inspiration for playing in Glorantha can come from many sources—while some quote Homer, Campbell, and Eliade, other examples come from TV, movies, and modern fiction. Here are a few sources we find particularly useful for Glorantha and *HeroQuest*. Send us your own inspirations!

Myths and Legends

The wealth of myth is too immense to even sample here, but it is one of the chief inspirations of Glorantha and *HeroQuest*.

Television

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997–2003), *Charmed* (2000–2003+): Series like these often take liberties with established myths, which is the kind of creativity that *HeroQuest* encourages.

Mahabharata (1989): Peter Brook's dramatization of the Sanskrit epic. "What is not found here is found nowhere."

Robin of Sherwood (1984–1986): This best screen version of Robin Hood restores the magic and folklore. The relationship between Herne the Hunter and Robin shows one way for heroes to interact with their own hunting gods or spirits.

Xena: Warrior Princess (1995–2001): Xena interacts with gods and mortals alike, and the show is full of Hong Kong-influenced fights and witty concatenations.

Movies

Alice in Wonderland: Several adaptations of Lewis Carroll's book have been made. This modern heroquest is good because it represents the Otherworld as a modified "real world" rather than a totally alien realm.

Atanarjuat The Fast Runner (2001): Inuit legend of love, betrayal, and shamanic magic told with stark mythic precision.

The Bride with White Hair (1993): In this beautiful operatic, romantic knight-errant movie, Brigitte Lin plays one of the most convincing superhumans ever on film.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000): Contains evocative examples of how feats look and feel, and shows how some tragic conflicts have no resolution.

Dead Man (1995): This visionary, oneiric Western is a Humakti heroquest that also evokes animism. "This weapon will become your tongue."

Eric the Viking (1989): This comedy shows what can happen when you end up in the wrong Otherworld.

Gladiator (2000): Eternal clash between good and evil. Ritual preparations affect outcomes. Bleak early battle scene looks like Lunars vs. Heortlings.

The Lord of the Rings (2001–2003): The great modern fantasy epic brought to the big screen. This has everything: passion, relationships, heroic battles, and an epic quest into doom.

The Princess Bride (1987): Although too campy for some, it makes great use of personality traits, passions, and fun, critical elements of *HeroQuest*.

Princess Mononoke (1997): This wondrous, melancholy anime shows what an ancient, spirit-haunted forest is like.

Seven Samurai (1954): A tale of how to help a community help itself. And how to build a hero band! The 1960 remake named *The Magnificent Seven* shows how to adapt a story between contexts.

Star Wars Episodes I–VI (1977–2005): George Lucas sneaks the ancient hero's journey into this action series right under our modern noses. In addition to action and an epic quest, relationships are key to the story and its heroes.

The 13th Warrior (1999): A retelling of Beowulf that shows how heroes can reenact myths and bring them into reality. A great Underworld sequence.

The Three Musketeers and *The Four Musketeers* (1973, 1974): A hero band saves the kingdom. This screen translation of the classic Dumas book shows that comedy isn't just funny.

What Dreams May Come (1998): A brave try at visualizing the Other Side, showing how your belief system can determine what you perceive there, especially in Hell.

Willow (1988): A critical flop, but includes great fights and truly inspirational magic.

The Wizard of Oz (1939): The classic modern heroquest, even if most people never realize it. The transition from black and white to color makes it very obvious when Dorothy crosses into the Otherworld.

Yellow Submarine (1968): A strange, unmapped heroquest into a surreal realm, showing how the Otherworld can lack almost any relation to the "real world."

Zu, The Legend of Zu (1983, 2001): Visual, mythic cinema, with Taoist immortals vs. Underworld demons.

Epics and Sagas

Beowulf (trans. Seamus Heaney, 1999): A true hero faces two great challenges. Inspirational Heortling poetry!

The Epic of Gilgamesh: The earliest extant story. Gilgamesh and his sidekick Enkidu negotiate landscapes magical, social, and divine—the essence of *HeroQuest*.

Homer, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*: The greatest heroes of an age clash in a brawl of epic proportions accompanied by a godly feud. One hero's long, doomed voyage.

Virgil, the *Aeneid*: Migrations, murder, and the birth of Rome. What's not to like?

Sir Thomas Mallory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*: Outlines the birth, challenges, achievements, and end of a once and future king and the members of his "clan ring." Provides one vision of Glorantha's chivalrous, monotheistic West.

Njal's Saga: For the politics and betrayals, and how good men are driven to do evil deeds by their cultural imperatives. Other Icelandic sagas are translated in *The Sagas of Icelanders* (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000).

The Táin (trans. Thomas Kinsella, 1969): Irish myths make good fodder for those cattle-raiding Heortling heroes.

Modern Fiction

- Poul Anderson, *The Broken Sword* (1954): Shows the tragic impact of a human and elf-troll changeling switched at birth. Action includes a trip to Irish fairyland and giantland.
- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (1972): Visionary prose sketches of cities that are states of being. Each page has images, phrases, feelings fit to steal.
- Lindsey Davis, *The Silver Pigs* (1989), *The Iron Hand of Mars* (1992): Splendid series about a Roman “informant” [private detective] that evokes a sense of the gritty underside of civilization. The conflict between empire and occupied is useful for relating to Lunar Tarsh and occupied Sartar.
- Robert Holdstock, *Mythago Wood* (1984): Essential British “hard fantasy”—entering the wildwood finds daimones and metamorphoses, primeval consciousness and deep time. First of the “Ryhope Wood” sequence.
- Robert E. Howard, “Conan” and “King Kull” series: Conan is king of macho barbarian warriors, and Howard’s ancient world has a savage power missing from “refined” fiction.
- Barry Hughart, *Bridge of Birds* (1984), *The Story of the Stone* (1988), *Eight Skilled Gentlemen* (1991): A trickster sage investigates cosmic wrongness, outwits monsters, and quests into the depths of Hell for information.
- Jessica Salmonson, *Tomoe Gozen* (1981): First of a series about subtle magic, dealing with a world filled with myriad gods and demons, and the struggle between duty and honor.
- Harry Turtledove, “Fox of the North” books (1994–1997): The guttering flame of a receding civilization is kept alight by a clever man. Deities and spirits are real but not omnipotent.
- Gene Wolfe, *Soldier of the Mist* (1986) and *Soldier of Arete* (1989): Wolfe’s unconventional hero Latro quests through a world that vibrates with immanent history and meaning and possibility. The books also have examples of landscape beings.

Nonfiction

- Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949): Campbell’s classic work can be slow going, but is the best description of the heroquest and its structure.
- Joseph Campbell, “The Masks of God” series (1959–1968): Campbell’s major long work can illuminate and inspire many Gloranthan homelands and religions.

- Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1954), *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959): Dense but lucid essays on premodern consciousness, which values myth over history. A key to understanding theism and heroquesting.
- Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964): The classic text on shamanism, added to but never surpassed.
- Kathleen Ragan, *Fearless Girls, Wise Women, and Beloved Sisters* (1998): Quests for women don’t always fit the classic model, and this book is chock-full of delightful quests for heroines.
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- Colin Wilson, *The Atlas of Holy Places and Sacred Sites* (1996): Full of ideas and images to populate Glorantha, from the Axum Stelae to the Ziggurat of Nanna.

HeroQuest Titles

Anaxial’s Roster: Creatures of the Hero Wars

This book contains statistics for over 150 creatures for narrators to use in *HeroQuest*. It includes descriptions of many creatures mentioned in this book, such as alynxes, altinae, certamus, dogs, dragonewt, dream dragons, hydra, luathan, ludoch, sable, tusk rider, and tusker. All entries include game stats and origin myths.

Glorantha: Introduction to the Hero Wars

This book contains background on the history, lands, peoples, and religions of Glorantha. It paints the world in broad strokes, occasionally highlighting an interesting feature or important person, such as Arkat, Chaos, Harrek the Berserk, JarEel the Razoress, the Kingdom of War, Mermen, and Theoblanc the Ecclesiarch.

Imperial Lunar Handbook (series)

This series of player’s books details the lands and peoples of the Lunar Empire. The first volume, *The Lunar Empire*, provides an overview of the major homelands, including a magic keyword for Kastok. The second volume, *Under the Red Moon*, details the Lunar religion that holds these many lands together, including magic keywords for dozens of deities, spirits, and saints.

Thunder Rebels: Player’s Book for Orlanthi Barbarians

This book details Heortling culture and religion, including the cults of Orlanth, Ernalda, and their subcults, such as Bevara, Desemborth, Drogarsi, Esra, Hedkoranth, and Orlanthcarl.

Storm Tribe: The Cults of Sartar

This book details the Storm Pantheon. It includes write-ups and magic keywords for many deities, including Babeester Gor, Barn-tar, Chalana Arroy, Donandar, Engizi, Humakt, Issaries, Kero Fin, Lhankor Mhy, Odayla, Pelaskos, and Vinga.

Dragon Pass: Land of Thunder

This gazetteer describes the pivotal land of Dragon Pass in detail. It provides many maps and myths to illustrate the land and its peoples, including a full-color, poster-size map.

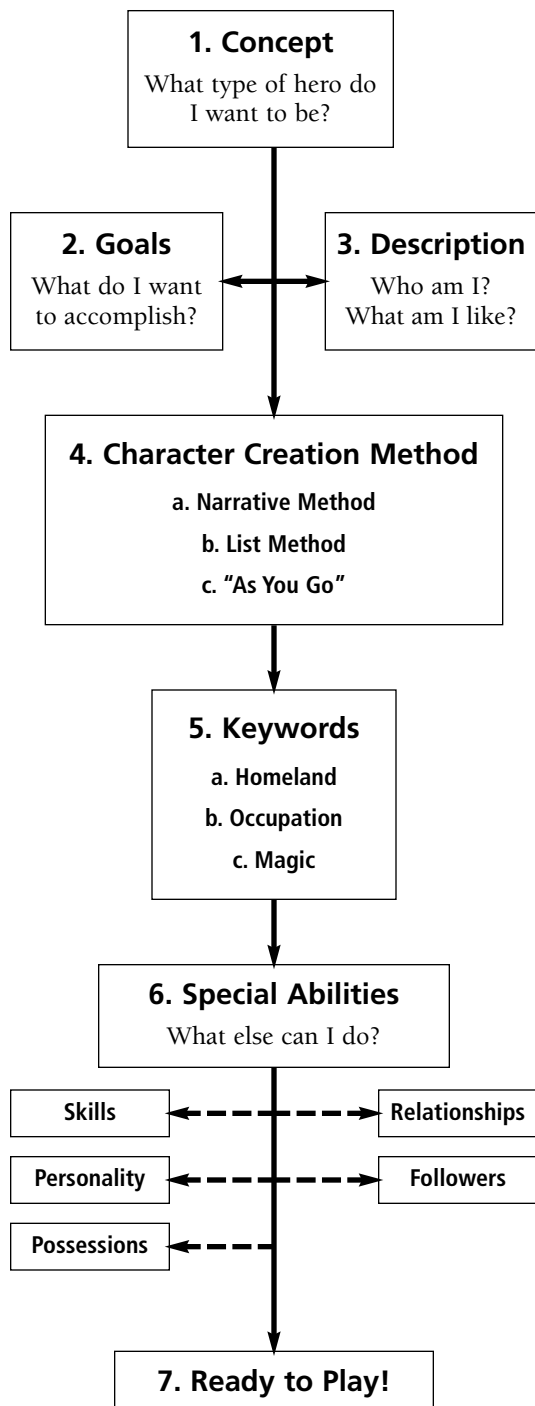
Sartar Rising (series)

This series of adventures details the uprising of the Heortlings against the occupying Lunar Empire. *Barbarian Adventures* is an introduction to the land and conflict. *Orlanth is Dead!* allows heroes to bring Orlanth back at the Battle of Iceland.



GAME AIDS

Character Creation Synopsis



1. Begin with a concept of your hero.

Start with the basic conception of the hero: who do you want to play? This will make the character creation process faster and easier.

2. Select your hero's goals.

Everyone has goals, and your hero should be no exception. Goals may be modest or grand, immediately achievable or long-term.

3. Describe your hero.

Write down your hero's name, appearance, age, and any distinguishing marks. Most of this information will not be used as abilities.

4. Select a Character Creation Method

- a. *Narrative Method*: Write a 100-word narrative describing your hero. This gives you the most control, but requires more work. (See page 20.)
- b. *List Method*: List your keywords and abilities. This is an easy way to make a complete hero, but tells you little *about* your hero. (See page 24.)
- c. *"As You Go"*: Start with a keyword and one ability, then add "as you go." Good for a quick start, or if you do not have a concept yet. (See page 26.)

5. Select your hero's keywords.

- a. *Homeland*: Where your hero is from determines the occupation and magic keywords available to him. (The narrator may limit what homelands are available, or may let you choose any.)
- b. *Occupation*: Choose an occupation that includes the abilities you want your hero to have—if you want fighting skills, soldier or warrior is a better choice than healer or merchant.
- c. *Magic*: Most heroes do fine starting with just common magic, but if you know what you want you can choose a specialized religion right away. Make sure you choose one that fits his occupation!

6. What else can your hero do?

Skills: Special abilities help make your hero stand out from the crowd. It might be a special skill or an ability with a high rating.

Personality: Personality traits make your hero an individual, and help you and others conceptualize him.

Possessions: Mundane equipment is usually of little concern, but special or magical items can greatly influence a game, and merit ability ratings.

Relationships: True power can only come by influencing groups of people, and relationships are how to do it.

Followers: Every hero should have followers. Retainers are cheap, but have few capabilities and little personality. Sidekicks are more flexible and can grow with your hero.

7. You're ready to play!

Unless you chose the "as you go" method, your hero is complete. And even if you did, you are ready to play!

Rules Synopsis

Ability Rating and Target Number

Every ability has an **ability rating**, a number from 1 to 20 that lets you pit the ability against foes and obstacles. The higher the number, the better the ability or more extreme the trait.

Target Number

The total of the ability rating plus or minus all modifiers is the **target number**. The target number shows how capable the hero is for the current contest.

Augmentations

The most important modifiers are augmentations. You can use one ability to augment another. If you wish, you can try for a **variable augment** by rolling a contest (see page 80). Alternatively, you can apply an **automatic augment**, a bonus equal to + $\frac{1}{10}$ the rating of the augmenting ability (round up .5).

Masteries

Abilities with high ratings will have one or more masteries, shown by a Mastery rune (♣); multiple masteries are indicated by a number following the rune. A level of mastery represents 20 points in that ability. If you have an ability rating of 20 and you raise it by one point, it becomes 1♣ (“1-mastery”), not 21.

Compare your final target number (*not* ability rating) to that of your opponent. Opposed masteries cancel out, each contestant reducing their rating by the same number of masteries until only one or neither of them has masteries.

Die Rolls: Success and Failure

To determine how well your hero uses an ability, roll a 20-sided die (d20). Compare the rolled number with the target number; low rolls are better than high.

Bumping

After rolling dice, a contestant with one or masteries remaining gains one **bump up** for each such mastery, until the die roll result becomes a critical, then applies any remaining masteries to the opponent as a **bump down** to reduce his die roll result.

Contests: Victory and Defeat

In all contests, the degrees of success or failure of the opposed die rolls are compared to find the final victory and defeat levels. Simple and extended contests determine this in different ways, but the effect is the same. Victory and defeat always have the same level: if your hero wins a marginal victory, his opponent suffers a marginal defeat.

Success or Failure	
Roll	Result*
1	Critical
2 to target number	Success
target number +1 to 19	Failure
20	Fumble

* For each mastery remaining after canceling masteries, increase your die roll result by one: a fumble becomes a failure, a failure becomes a success, and a success becomes a critical.

Simple Contest

1. State your goal and the ability your hero uses.
2. Figure your target number using the ability rating and any modifiers.
3. The narrator selects the resistance.
4. Roll a die to determine your degree of success or failure, then apply any bumps. The narrator does the same.
5. Determine level of victory or defeat (see the Simple Contest Results table below).
6. Determine contest consequences (see the Contest Consequences table on the next page).

Extended Contest

1. State your goal and the ability your hero uses for his first action.
2. Calculate your starting AP total using the target number plus any source of additional AP you may have.
3. The narrator selects the resistance and figures its starting advantage point total.
4. Carry out one or more rounds:
 - a. State your hero's attempted action, ability used, and advantage point bid.
 - b. The narrator selects the resistance.
 - c. Roll a die to determine degree of success or failure, then apply any bumps. The narrator does the same.
 - d. Compare your result to your opponent's to determine AP gains and losses (see Extended Contest Results table on next page).
 - e. Now it is your opponent's turn.
 - f. Repeat as necessary.
5. Determine contest consequences (see next page).

Simple Contest Results				
Player's Roll	Opponent's Roll			
	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	Low roll receives marginal victory, else tie	Player receives minor victory	Player receives major victory	Player receives complete victory
Success	Player suffers minor defeat	Low roll receives marginal victory, else tie	Player receives minor victory	Player receives major victory
Failure	Player suffers major defeat	Player suffers minor defeat	Low roll receives marginal victory, else tie	Player receives minor victory
Fumble	Player suffers complete defeat	Player suffers major defeat	Player suffers minor defeat	Tie*

* In a group simple contest (see page 65), the narrator may declare that both contestants suffer a marginal defeat to indicate that, although their results cancel out with respect to each other, their situation worsens compared to other contestants.

Extended Contest Results

Player's Roll	Opponent's Roll			
	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	High roll <i>transfers</i> ½x bid, else tie	Opponent <i>transfers</i> 1x bid	Opponent <i>transfers</i> 2x bid	Opponent <i>transfers</i> 3x bid
Success	Player <i>transfers</i> 1x bid	High roll <i>loses</i> ½x bid, else tie	Opponent <i>loses</i> 1x bid	Opponent <i>loses</i> 2x bid
Failure	Player <i>transfers</i> 2x bid	Player <i>loses</i> 1x bid	High roll <i>loses</i> ½x bid, else tie	Opponent <i>loses</i> 1x bid
Fumble	Player <i>transfers</i> 3x bid	Player <i>loses</i> 2x bid	Player <i>loses</i> 1x bid	Tie *

* In a group extended contest, the narrator may declare that both contestants lose ½x bid to indicate that, although their results cancel out with respect to each other, their situation worsens compared to other contestants.

Tie: Neither contestant loses AP.

1/2x, 1x, 2x, 3x: The AP bid is multiplied by this number before applying the results.

Loses: The bid is subtracted from the loser's advantage points total.

Transfers: The AP bid is subtracted from the loser's AP total *and* the same number is added to the winner's AP total. The victor cannot add more advantage points than the loser actually had, but the loser still loses the full amount, possibly driving his AP below 0.

Contest Consequences

When a hero is defeated, the narrator may impose a penalty to any or all of his abilities, depending on the contest. This is a measure of how badly the hero is "wounded," whether in body, mind, or soul. This penalty should be applied in situations related to the hero's defeat. Regardless of any penalties applied, however, remember that a defeated hero is just that: defeated.

Final Action

If your hero falls to 0 or fewer advantage points in a standard extended contest, he is defeated. In a group extended contest, however, he can still try a **final action** to stay in the contest as long as he is not **dying** (which allows for no actions). A final action represents the knack to come back when your opponent turns away to gloat or deal with the other heroes. Your hero may only attempt one final action in any contest. (Be warned: important narrator characters might also have this option.)

To attempt a final action, your hero must be free from attention by the opposition. You can use a relevant ability in a simple contest against the number of advantage points your hero is below 0. Even if you succeed, the consequences of the original defeat still apply: a hurt character who succeeds at a final action still takes a -1 to appropriate abilities until healed.

Dazed or Unconscious

Sometimes defeated characters become dazed or unconscious, rather than wounded. Heroes may want to capture opponents, or a *Sleep* spell might knock your hero out. The hero regains consciousness when the narrator deems it interesting, or perhaps as the result of a new contest.

Followers and Defeat

A hero's followers suffer one more level of defeat: if a hero receives a marginal defeat, his followers receive a minor defeat).

Healing

The resistance to mundane healing comes from the table below (simple contest) or the final negative AP total (extended contest). Magical healing faces a resistance of 14 if its use matches the magical ability's description exactly. The resistance of disease, poison, or the like is the strength of the opposing force.

Mundane Healing

First Aid and similar abilities like *Treat Wounds* can remove the penalties from hurts or impairments, but can only stabilize injured or dying patients. Only one attempt at mundane healing (successful or not) can be made for each wound.

Minor Magical Healing

Minor magical healing is available from many common and specialized religions, even ones not dedicated to healing. Minor magical healing reduces any wound's severity by one level: dying to injured, injured to impaired, impaired to hurt, or hurt to healthy. A wound can be affected by only one attempt; after that, only time or major magical healing can accomplish more.

Major Magical Healing

Major magical healing is rare and special, usually the secret of a dedicated healing cult or practice. Major magical healing removes all "damage" (as appropriate to the secret) with any level of victory. Many major magical healing secrets require a ritual, and so may take hours or even days to work.

Time

Without medical aid, **hurt** characters heal at the rate of one **hurt** per day. **Impaired** characters heal more slowly, over a week or so, but recover completely once healed. **Injured** heroes recuperate more slowly still, over at least one adventure, and may have lingering **hurts** even after healing has finished. A **dying** hero will not heal with time.

Contest Consequences

Contest Result	Results from:		Penalty Assessed to Appropriate Abilities	Resistance to:	
	Simple Contest Defeat Level	Extended Contest Final AP Total		Mundane Healing	Magical Healing
Hurt	Marginal	0 to -10 AP	-1	14*	14
Impaired	Minor	-11 to -20 AP	-10% of ability's rating	17	14
Injured	Major	-21 to -30 AP	-50% of ability's rating	5W	14
Dying	Complete	-31 or fewer AP	No actions allowed	20W	14

* Victory heals all **hurts**. At the narrator's option, healing 4 or more hurts can face a resistance of 6 +3 per additional hurt after the first: 15 for 4 hurts, etc.

Followers

Retainers and sidekicks are followers, minor characters controlled by the player, not the narrator. A hero must have relationships with his followers. In a contest, a follower may:

- Use its ability directly instead of the hero's.
- Augment the hero or another character, the least risky option.
- Provide its AP for the hero to use: see "Followers and Advantage Points" in the Core Rules chapter, page 67.

Followers will obey and perform the task they are hired to do: a warrior or bodyguard will fight to the death, a page will tend the horses, a cook will prepare meals, and so on. If your hero asks a follower to act beyond his duty, you may have to roll a contest using the hero's relationship to the follower. The narrator judges the resistance based on the follower's reluctance.

Community Support

A community supports your hero in a mundane way and, with some persuasion, can support his grander deeds in warfare or magic. Depending on the contest results, the aid he seeks, and the possible outcome, the community might provide anything from total support to condemnation of the hero.

Total Support: The community pledges itself completely to assist the hero, to the exclusion of all else. Anything that happens to the hero, mundane or magical, for good or ill, happens to them as well.

Extraordinary Support: The community puts all available resources to support the hero. The community is not directly affected by the hero's victory or defeat.

Moderate Support: The community supports the hero, but commits itself only cautiously or casually. This level of commitment is often the highest the hero can receive if his request stands to benefit him alone.

Follower Reluctance

Action	Resistance
Something trivial and meaningless.	14 or automatic success
Something unusual but reasonable under the circumstances.	17
Something well outside the expected actions of the follower.	5 \mathbb{W}
Something frightening, gruesome, or sickening.	20 \mathbb{W}

Ordinary Support: The community does not actively support or resist the hero, but provides its normal benefits.

Objection: The community objects to the issue and/or the hero, possibly with hostility.

Forbiddance: The community expressly forbids the hero from pursuing the issue.

Condemnation: The community condemns the hero for even asking such a thing. If the hero continues, he will receive penalties to appropriate abilities, as the community actively opposes him, with members possibly showing up as opponents. The hero is likely to be expelled from the community, as are any who support him.

Requesting Community Support

Communities are self-serving and cautious, and need to be convinced to give aid to heroes. They will not risk their resources, magic, or lives to help a stranger.

As a starting point, a hero receives **ordinary support** from communities with which he has an established Relationship. Greater levels of support require that the hero convince the community and its leaders. The level of support requested sets the base resistance for the contest and determines the bonus the hero receives if he succeeds. Larger communities have more resources to provide but are typically harder to convince, so the size of the group directly affects the resistance. Of course, if the hero has aided the community in the past beyond what is expected, he is more likely to receive support, especially if his request might benefit the community as well as himself.

Community Support Bonus (Expanded)

Size of Community	Resistance to/Bonus Received from			Penalty Received From			
	Total Support	Extraordinary Support	Moderate Support	Ordinary Support	Objection	Forbiddance	Condemnation
2	1 \mathbb{W} 2/+1	6 \mathbb{W} /+1	17/—	14*/—	—	-1	-1
4	2 \mathbb{W} 2/+2	6 \mathbb{W} /+1	17/—	14*/—	—	-1	-2
8	4 \mathbb{W} 2/+4	7 \mathbb{W} /+2	17/—	14*/—	—	-2	-4
16	6 \mathbb{W} 2/+6	8 \mathbb{W} /+3	18/+1	14*/+1	-1	-3	-6
32	8 \mathbb{W} 2/+8	9 \mathbb{W} /+4	18/+1	14*/+1	-1	-4	-8
64	10 \mathbb{W} 2/+10	10 \mathbb{W} /+5	18/+1	14*/+1	-1	-5	-10
125	13 \mathbb{W} 2/+13	12 \mathbb{W} /+7	18/+1	14*/+1	-1	-7	-13
250	16 \mathbb{W} 2/+16	13 \mathbb{W} /+8	19/+2	14*/+1	-2	-8	-16
500	20 \mathbb{W} 2/+20	15 \mathbb{W} /+10	19/+2	14*/+1	-2	-10	-20
1,000	5 \mathbb{W} 3/+25	18 \mathbb{W} /+13	20/+3	14*/+1	-3	-13	-25
2,000	10 \mathbb{W} 3/+30	20 \mathbb{W} /+15	20/+3	14*/+1	-3	-15	-30
4,000	15 \mathbb{W} 3/+35	3 \mathbb{W} 2/+18	1 \mathbb{W} /+4	14*/+1	-4	-18	-35
8,000	20 \mathbb{W} 3/+40	5 \mathbb{W} 2/+20	1 \mathbb{W} /+4	14*/+1	-4	-20	-40
16,000	10 \mathbb{W} 4/+50	10 \mathbb{W} 2/+25	2 \mathbb{W} /+5	14*/+1	-5	-25	-50
32,000	20 \mathbb{W} 4/+60	15 \mathbb{W} 2/+30	3 \mathbb{W} /+6	14*/+1	-6	-30	-60
each \times 2	+10/+10	+5/+5	+1/+1	14*/+1	-1	-5	-10

* Obtaining ordinary support is usually an automatic success, but the narrator may require a contest in certain circumstances.

Consolidated Hero Improvement Costs

You spend hero points to improve your hero's skills, magic, relationships, equipment—to make any permanent change. Hero improvements are made between adventures, and there is no limit on how many abilities can be added or improved at a time.

Improvements to a hero should make sense in the context of the story. Some improvements, however, seem to come from nowhere—the player just decides that it would be fun or useful to have a certain ability or to get better with a skill he has never used before. If an improvement is not related to a recent game session or the hero's established goals and backstory, you pay **double the hero point cost**.

Adding New Abilities

New abilities begin with a rating of 13. If your narrator decides it is part of one of your hero's keywords, its rating is instead equal to 18 (the keyword rating +1 for the hero point spent).

Your hero can learn a common magical ability whenever he wishes, although he may have to specify who he learned it from if the ability is not common in his homeland. To learn specialized magic, your hero must usually be a member of a

religion. When a hero joins a specialized religion, he may gain some magical abilities immediately, but must spend additional hero points to learn others.

Improving Abilities

You can spend hero points to permanently improve your hero's abilities. This represents training, practice, a greater commitment to a community or temple, deeper intimacy or trust in a relationship, and so on.

Improving an ability by more than +1 at a time costs more hero points. Still, if you want to raise an ability quickly, you can spend more points now.

Cementing Experiences

If your hero wins some advantage and you want to ensure that this benefit continues, you must spend hero points to **cement** it and write it on your character sheet. If the benefit gained is a standard one (such as a sidekick), the normal hero point cost applies. If the ability is not standard, such as a magical item, the cost to cement it is 1 hero point.

Hero Improvement Costs—Mundane Abilities

Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1
Gain a new mundane ability at 13	1
Gain a retainer (gain a separate <i>Relationship to [Follower]</i> at 13 for free if desired)	1
Gain a sidekick (gain a <i>Relationship to [Sidekick]</i> at 13 for free)	3
Gain a supporting character (gain a <i>Relationship to [Supporting Character]</i> at 13 for free)	1
Join a common religion without establishing a relationship with it (must purchase any abilities separately)	no cost
Gain a relationship with a common religion at 13	1
Gain a relationship with a specialized religion at 13	3
Gain a relationship with a hero band at 13	1 or more*
Gain a relationship with any other community at 13	1
Change a retainer to a sidekick (gain three significant abilities at 13 each for free)	2
Change a supporting character's role	1 or 0, at narrator's discretion
Replace a retainer or supporting character	no cost
Replace a sidekick with one of equivalent experience	1
Improve a mundane ability by +1	1
Improve a relationship with a follower or supporting character by +1	1
Improve a relationship with a specialized religion by +1 (see also Hero Improvement Costs—Magical Abilities)	2
Improve a relationship with a hero band by +1	1
Improve a relationship with a common religion or any other community by +1	1
Improve a keyword by +1	N/A
Improve a sidekick ability rating by +1	normal cost for that type of ability

* If the hero has previously joined and then quit a hero band, the cost increases by +1 for each band previously abandoned.

Hero Improvement Cost Multipliers (All Abilities)

Any improvement unrelated to play, goals, or backstory	cost ×2
Improve any ability by +2 at one time	cost ×3
Improve any ability by +3 at one time	cost ×6
Improve any ability by +4 at one time	cost ×10
Concentrated magic use (<i>specific magical abilities and relationships only</i>)	cost ×½

Hero Improvement Costs—Magical Abilities

Improvement	Hero Point Cost Related to Play	
	Not Concentrated	Concentrated
Cement a benefit gained during play (if no other hero point cost applies)	1	1
Concentrate specialized magic use	1	N/A
Join a common religion without establishing a relationship with it (must purchase any abilities separately)	0	0
Gain a relationship with a common religion at 13	1	1
Become a communal worshipper (gain <i>Worship [Pantheon]</i> at 13 for free)	3	3
Become an initiate of a deity or subcult (gain <i>Initiate of [Deity]</i> at 13 and one affinity at 13 for free)	3	3
Become a devotee (gain <i>Devotee of [Deity]</i> at 13 and 3 feats in each known affinity for free)	N/A	3
Become a spiritist in a tradition (gain <i>Worship [Great Spirit]</i> at 13 and five tradition charms for free)	3	3
Join a practice as a spiritist (gain one practice charm for free)	1	1
Become a practitioner in a practice (gain <i>Follower of [Majestic Spirit]</i> at 13 and one friendly practice spirit for free)	3	3
Become a shaman and gain <i>Fetch</i> at 13 (same as learning the secret of a shamanic practice)	N/A	3
Become a lay member of a church (gain <i>Worship [God]</i> at 13 for free)	3	3
Become a liturgist (gain <i>Venerate [God]</i> at 13 and one <i>Use [Scripture]</i> at 13 for free)	3	3
Become an orderly (gain <i>Know [Saint]</i> at 13 and 3 orderly spells at 13 each for free)	3	3
Become an apprentice (gain <i>Apprentice of [Master]</i> or <i>Member of [Academy]</i> at 13 and <i>Aid My Master</i> at 13 for free)	1	1
Become an adept (gain <i>Know [Founder]</i> at 13 and one <i>Use [Grimoire]</i> at 13 [usually one of the school's specialties] for free)	1	1
Learn a new talent, feat, charm, or spell within the common magic keyword	2	1
Learn an affinity, <i>Use [Scripture]</i> , or <i>Use [Grimoire]</i> at 13	6	3
Learn a feat within an affinity (devotees only)	N/A	1
Gain a new charm (tradition or practice spirit) with a rating determined by the narrator	see the "Gain a New Charm or Fetish" table	
Befriend a practice spirit and gain a fetish with a rating determined by the narrator	see the "Gain a New Charm or Fetish" table	
Gain <i>Open Spirit World</i> or <i>Spirit Face</i> at 13	2	1
Learn a spell at 13 and link it to a talisman	2	1
Gain a spirit ally as a follower	N/A	1
Gain a divine companion or spirit ally as a sidekick	N/A	3
Learn a cult, practice, or other secret (including awakening a <i>Fetch</i>) at 13	N/A	3
Learn a pantheon, tradition, or other great secret	N/A	3
Improve a relationship with a common religion by +1	1	1
Improve <i>Worship [Pantheon]</i> , <i>Initiate of [Deity]</i> , <i>Worship [Great Spirit]</i> , <i>Follower of [Majestic Spirit]</i> by +1	2	1
Improve <i>Know [Founder]</i> , <i>Know [Saint]</i> , <i>Venerate [God]</i> , <i>Venerate [Saint]</i> , or <i>Worship [God]</i> by +1	2	1
Improve <i>Devotee of [Deity]</i> , <i>Relationship to [Divine Companion]</i> , or <i>Friendship with [Spirit Ally]</i> by +1	N/A	1
Improve <i>Open Spirit World</i> or <i>Spirit Face</i> by +1	2	1
Improve a common magic talent, feat, charm, or spell by +1	2	1
Improve an affinity by +1	6	3
Improve a feat within an affinity by +1 (devotees only)	N/A	1
Improve a <i>Fetch</i> rating by +1	2	1
Improve <i>Use [Scripture]</i> or <i>Use [Grimoire]</i> by +1	6	3
Improve a spell by +1	2	1
Improve a charm (tradition or practice spirit) or fetish (practice spirit) by +1	N/A	N/A
Improve a cult, practice, or other secret (including <i>Fetch</i> rating) by +1	N/A	1

Hero Improvement Costs—Gain a New Charm or Fetish

Ability Rating	Hero Point Cost of Charm		Hero Point Cost of Fetish	
	Not Concentrated	Concentrated	Not Concentrated	Concentrated
up to 20	2	1	6	3
1⚔ to 20⚔	6	3	12	6
1⚔2 to 20⚔2	12	6	20	10
1⚔3 to 20⚔3	20	10	30	15

*Hero Points
are the currency of
HeroQuest.*

Sample Resistances

Best Combat Ability

- Dara Happan peasant: 6 to 13.
- Dara Happan urban watchman: 13.
- Heortling cottar: 14.
- Heortling weaponthane: 17 to 18W.
- Dara Happan soldier (typical): 17 to 18W.
- Heortling clan champion: 10W to 10W2.
- Dara Happan soldier (elite): 10W to 10W2.
- Famous hero (Gunda the Guilty, Sir Ethilrist): 10W3+.
- Superhero (Harrek the Berserk, JarEel): 10W4+.
- Green Age fighter: 10W3.
- Golden Age solar citizen: 10W.
- Golden Age solar guardian: 10W4.
- Golden Age barbarian warrior: 10W4.
- Sky World archer: 10W3.
- Sky World spearman: 10W3.
- Sky World chieftain: 10W4.

Best Magical Ability

- Disease Spirit: 2 to 5W2.
- Elemental (essence): 5/cubic yard animated.
- Rokari liturgist: 10 to 10W.
- Ghost: 15 to 20.
- Guardian (new or weak): 18.
- Sprite: 5W to 10W.
- Nymph: 5W to 10W2.
- Rokari journeyman adept: 10W to 10W2.
- Heortling god-talker: 10W to 10W3.
- Dara Happan acolyte: 10W to 10W3.
- Beginning shaman: 1W2 to 10W2.
- Guardian (long-established or powerful): 1W2.
- Clan shaman: 20W2 to 20W3.
- Rokari bishop: 10W2 to 10W3.
- Clan god: 10W3.
- Wildfire spirit: 10W3 to 10W5.
- Patron of a small saintly order: 10W4.
- Small city god: 10W4.
- Tribal spirit: 10W4.
- Petty god: 10W4.
- Minor god, powerful majestic spirit, saint: 10W6.
- God, prophet or wizardry school founder: 10W8.
- Great god, great spirit, Church founder: 10W8 to 10W12.

Climbing

- Shallow slope: Automatic success.
- Very steep slope: 14 to 20.
- A cliff: 17 to 10W2.
- A city wall: 10W to 10W2.
- Ice-slick steep cliff: 10W2 to 10W3.
- Wall around Glamour: 20W4.
- Cliff to Boldhome: 15W4.
- Kero Fin: 20W6.

Cold and Heat

- Very hot summer's day/cold winter's night: 14 to 20.
- Heat of a torch: 1W to 5W.
- Campfire: 1W to 10W2.
- Bonfire: 5W2 to 5W4.
- Deep winter in Dragon Pass: 5W3.
- Molten iron: 10W6.

Commanding Followers

- Do their job: Automatic success.
- Do something unusual: 17.
- Do something completely outside their job: 5W.
- Do their job if community objects: 5W.
- Do something to which the follower strongly objects: 20W.
- Do their job if community forbids them: 20W.
- Do their job if community condemns hero's actions: 5W3.

Crafting

- Simple tools: 14 to 20.
- Large or intricate objects or structures: 1W to 20W.
- Complex or extensive projects: 1W2 or more.
- Working pure runic metals (modifier):
 - Iron: +40.
 - Any other pure runic metal: +20.

Finding Your Way

- Find your way in a familiar region: Automatic success.
- Follow an animal's tracks: 14.
- Follow verbal directions in a familiar region: 14.
- Follow a map in a foreign land: 17 to 5W.
- Retrace your steps in a foreign land: 20 to 5W.
- Follow an animal's tracks on a windy day: 1W to 5W.
- Follow someone's verbal directions in a foreign place: 10W.
- Follow an animal's tracks in the rain or over bare stone: 20W.

Wealth and Standard of Living

Standard of Living	Wealth	Examples
Minimal	6	Hungry people, such as menials, prisoners, slaves, drafted common laborers, beggars.
Common	13	Most people, including farmers, crafters, soldiers, peddlers, priests, shamans, adepts, clergymen.
Prosperous	5W	Master crafters, shop owners, ship captains, knights, thanes, minor nobles, powerful priests or shamans or adepts.
Rich	15W	Nobles, clan chieftains, counts, earls, important priests, heads of wizardry schools.
Very Rich	10W2	High nobles, tribal kings, high priests, dukes, bishops.

Jumping Horizontally

- Leap over a small obstacle: Automatic success.
- Leap 6' with short run: 14 to 17.
- Leap 6' from a standstill: 1W to 5W.
- Leap a 15' crevice with short run: 10W2.

Jumping Vertically

- Jump up onto a short stool: Automatic success.
- Jump up your height: 10W2.
- Jump down safely from a small tree: 20 to 20W.
- Fall from a small tree without injury: 10W to 10W2.
- Jump down safely from a city wall: 5W2 to 10W3.
- Fall off city wall without injury: 15W2 to 20W3.
- Jump down safely from a fortress tower: 5W3 to 10W4.
- Leap to top of a 10' tree: 10W3.
- Fall off fortress tower without injury: 15W3 to 20W4.
- Leap to top of a city wall: 10W5.
- Leap to top of Kero Fin: 10W9.

Lifting

- Your own ordinary gear: Automatic success.
- Another person: 14 (or 6, at narrator's option).
- Unresisting animal: The creature's Size rating (see page 206).
- Human-sized marble statue: 10W3.
- Chariot with horses and riders: 10W4.
- Trireme: 15W6.

Requesting Community Support

- Ordinary support (without a specific issue): Automatic success.
- Moderate support from immediate family: 17.
- Extraordinary support from family: 7W to 8W.
- Extraordinary support from clan: 15W to 18W.
- Total support from family: 4W2 to 6W2.
- Total support from tribe: 10W3 to 20W3.

Religious Ranks

- Become communal worshipper, spiritist, or lay member: 14.
- Become initiate, practitioner, liturgist, orderly, or apprentice: 1W.
- Become adept: 10W.
- Become devotee: 20W.

Romance

- Seduce a willing partner: Automatic success.
- Seduce a potential partner: 20 to 10W2.
- Come across as a lovable rogue: 1W.
- Seduce someone who is married or in love: 5W to 20W2.

Social Conflict

- Spread rumors: 14 to 20.
- Spread malicious rumors: 17 to 5W.
- Passionately sway a friendly crowd: 17 to 20W.
- Deny malicious rumors: 20 to 10W.
- Discredit opponent's argument: 1W to 20W.
- Win over a neutral crowd: 1W to 15W.
- Win over a hostile crowd: 15W to 10W2.

Swimming

- Short distance in calm water: Automatic success.
- Moving water: 14 to 20.
- Raging water: 10W to 10W2.
- Resist the Homeward Ocean's pull: 10W to 20W2.
- Swim up Skyfall Lake waterfall: 10W6.
- Escape from Magasta's Whirlpool: 10W6 to 10W10.

Using Magic

- Use a magical ability:
 - No active resistance: 14.
 - Active resistance: Rating of ability/attribute used to resist.
- Summon Elemental (essence): 6/cubic yard.
- Befriend Spirit (practitioner or shaman only):
 - Friendly Spirit: 14.
 - Neutral Spirit: Rating of ability being exploited.
 - Hostile Spirit: Spirit's best ability rating.
- Reconsecrate an Orderly Talisman: 14.
- Ally friendly spirit: 14 (augmented by spirit's highest rating).
- Invoke a blessing: 14 (+ multiple target modifiers).
- Use an essence source:
 - Unattuned: 14 + amount of essence used.
 - Attune essence source: Total rating of essence source.
- Heroform a hero or spirit: 1W.
- Selfrock Teaching (concentrate magic): 10W.
- Divine Aid (from own deity): 10W3.
- Cross Otherworld Barrier (including opening a portal of power to the Adept Plane): 10W3.
- Divine Aid (from pantheon): 10W6.
- Miracle (from own saint): 10W6.
- Open a portal of power to the Founder Plane: 10W6.
- Miracle (from God): 10W9.
- Inherently Difficult Magic:
 - Change own form: D+20.
 - Read the thoughts of an intelligent being: D+20.
 - Teleport by sight (to a visible place): D+20.
 - Directed teleport (to a predetermined spot): D+40.
 - Change another being's form (willing or not): D+40.
 - Force an intelligent being to follow a command: D+40.
 - Become invisible: D+60.
 - Teleport another (summon ally or follower): D+60.
 - Become insubstantial: D+80.

Modifiers to Magic			
Distance	Duration*	Number of Targets	Modifier to Magic
100 yards	30 minutes	2	-3
150 yards	1 hour	3	-6
200 yards	4 hours	4	-9
300 yards	6 hours	5	-12
500 yards	10 hours	6	-15
1 mile	A day	10	-20
5 miles	A week	100	-40
25 miles	A season	300	-60
125 miles	A year	1000	-80

* It is possible to create permanently enchanted items, but that is a special and arcane form of magic and outside the scope of the basic rules.



GLOSSARY OF ESSENTIAL TERMS

Words in **boldface** indicate other entries within this glossary.

ability: Any skill, knowledge, **personality trait**, possession, **relationship**, or **magic** that a character can use to **augment** another ability or perform an **action**.

ability rating: A number given to an **ability** to show its relative strength or importance, used to determine **success** or **failure** with a **die roll**. It may have one or more **masteries**. See also **target number**.

action: A single act that a hero attempts. It is either an **automatic success** or requires a **contest** in which an **ability** of the hero is opposed by some **resistance**.

adept: A committed member of a **wizardry school** who can cast **spells** from a **grimoire**.

advantage points (AP): A numerical measure of how well a character is accomplishing his goals in an **extended contest**. In a contest, the advantage points start off equal to the **target number** of the first **ability** the character uses. He suffers a **defeat** if his total is reduced to 0 or below.

adventure: A story played out over one or more game sessions, in which the player **heroes** interact with the situations and adversaries prepared for them by the **narrator**.

affinity: A broad **magical ability** provided by a **god** or **hero** to **initiates** and **devotees**. Devotees can use the **feats** within the affinity.

alien world modifier: A **-20 penalty** assessed to all **abilities** of a **being** or **entity** that travels into a world other than its native one. A dedicated member of a **religion** who has **concentrated** his magic does not suffer this penalty in his religion's proper **Otherworld**.

animism: A system of specialized **magic**, in which worshippers (animists) practice **ecstatic worship** of **spirits**.

augmentation: Using one **ability** to aid another ability, granting a **modifier** its **target number**. See *automatic augment*, *variable augment*.

automatic augment: An **augmentation** that does not require any **action** on the part of the **character**. It adds $\frac{1}{10}$ of the augmenting ability's rating.

automatic success: An **action** that succeeds without needing any **contest** or **die roll**, because no self-respecting hero would ever fail at such a task.

being: A person or creature native to the **Mortal World**.

blessing: A magical effect invoked by **liturgists** from a **scripture** upon **lay members** and other members of a congregation.

bonus: A **modifier** that increases an **ability rating**.

bump: A change to the **degree of success** or **failure** of a **die roll**. Having more **masteries** than your opponent or spending a **hero point** grants *bump ups*, which improve the degree of **success** (such as from a **fumble** to a **failure**). A *bump down* comes only from **masteries**, and increases the degree of **failure** of your opponent (such as from a **success** to a **failure**).

campaign: A series of **adventures** that share **heroes** and other plot elements and form a larger story.

cement: Spending a **hero point** to make an advantage won during play into a permanent **ability** written onto the hero's **character sheet**. If something gained by your hero is not cemented it may not last beyond the current **adventure**.

character: A person or creature within **Glorantha**, either a **hero** controlled by a **player** or a **narrator character** played by the **narrator**.

character sheet: The piece of paper on which a **player** writes the **abilities**, ratings, and other information about his **hero**. *HeroQuest* provides a sample character sheet (page 256), and more are available online.

charm: A **focus** in which a **spirit** is bound, which provides **automatic augments** (only) to its possessor. Also available as **common magic**.

church: A **religion** whose members venerate **God** within the magic system of **wizardry**.

common magic: The most basic kind of **magic**, originating in the **Mortal World**. Characters have a **Common Magic keyword** that can include **talents** (**innate magic**), **feats**, **charms**, and **spells**. Common magic is often available from a local **common religion**.

communal worshipper: A basic member of a **theist religion**, who worships a **pantheon** of **deities** and may ask for **divine aid**.

community: A group of people, such as relatives, a **religion**, a government, or a **hero band**. Characters have **relationships** to communities of which they are part.

community support: Aid granted by a **community** to a **hero** that can give a **bonus** to a **ritual**, **heroquest**, or other **action**. A hero can approach any community that he belongs to and use his **relationship** with it in a **contest** to obtain the desired level of **support**.

companion: In a **heroquest**, a person that accompanies and helps the **main character**.

concentrating magic use: Dedicating oneself to a single **magic** system, either **innate magic**, **theism**, **animism**, or **wizardry**. The hero then learns magic at half the normal **hero point** cost, but cannot use magic from the other systems.

- contest*: A challenge in which the **narrator** and one or more **players** use **die rolls** to determine each contestant's level of **victory or defeat**. See *extended contest*, *simple contest*.
- critical*: A natural roll of 1 on a **d20**, which indicates that the **die roll** succeeds brilliantly.
- critical station*: A **station** of a **heroquest** where the results directly affect the chance of success for the entire quest.
- cult*: A magical organization within a **theist religion** whose **initiate** and **devotee** members **worship** a single **deity**.
- curse*: A harmful magical effect invoked by **liturgists** from a **scripture** upon foes of the congregation.
- d20*: A twenty-sided die, used to help resolve **contests**.
- daimon*: A petty **deity** that inhabits either the **God World** or part of the **Mortal World** as a landscape being.
- dead*: The worst possible **state of health**. In *HeroQuest*, death cannot result from a **die roll**, only a deliberate action.
- default resistance*: The **resistance** used (normally 14) if no **ability** or attribute opposes an attempted action.
- defeat*: Losing a **contest**. See also **level of victory or defeat**.
- degree of failure/success*: The result of a **die roll**: **critical**, **success**, **failure**, or **fumble**.
- deity*: An **entity** from the **God World**. Some deities are worshipped by **theists**.
- demesne*: The **Spirit World** home of a majestic **spirit** or great **spirit**, traveled to by **animists** during **worship**.
- devotee*: A dedicated **theist** who **concentrates his magic** and devotes his life to a single **deity**, and is thus able to learn his god's **feats** and eventually its **secret**.
- die roll*: The number (1 to 20) rolled on a **d20**.
- divine aid*: A form of **magic** used by a **theist** to call upon his **pantheon** or **deity** for general aid.
- dying*: The **state of health** resulting from a complete **defeat**, which prevents the **character** from taking any action related to his defeat. Recovery is possible but difficult.
- entity*: A supernatural entity from an **Otherworld**: a **deity**, **spirit**, or **essence**.
- Essence Planes*: The **Otherworld** where **essences** dwell, contacted by **wizardry**.
- essence*: An entity from the **Essence Planes**. **God**, **saints**, and **founders** are essences worshipped by **monotheists**.
- extended contest*: The longer, more dramatic type of **contest**. Each **round**, characters perform **actions** to reduce their opponent's **advantage points**.
- failure*: Rolling a number greater than your **target number** on a **die roll**, indicating that the attempted **action** fails.
- feat*: A **magical ability** learned by a **devotee** that repeats an act a **deity** performed in its **myths**. Feats are usually part of an **affinity**, but are also available as **common magic**.
- fetch*: A **spirit** guide or awakened part of a **shaman's spirit** that aids him and serves as his link to the **Spirit World**.
- fetish*: A **focus** into which a **spirit** is bound, which provides magic to a **practitioner**.
- final action*: A **simple contest** by which a **hero** can try to come back into a group **extended contest** after he falls to 0 or fewer **advantage points**.
- final AP total*: A **character's** ending **advantage points** in an **extended contest**, after any **final action** or **parting shot** has been completed. This number (usually negative) determines the loser's level of **defeat** and the winner's level of **victory**.
- first magic*: **Magic** that is ready to cast at a moment's notice.
- flaw*: An **ability** that impairs or handicaps a **character**.
- focus*: An item that must be touched to use a **magical ability**; either a **charm**, **fetish**, **scripture**, **grimoire**, or **talisman**.
- follower*: A character attached to a **hero** and controlled by the **player**. A **hero** must have a **relationship** with a follower, which is either a **retainer** or a **sidekick**.
- formulary*: A book containing the instructions for **orderlies** to cast their **spells**. It is not used as a **focus**.
- founder*: The **saint** or **adept** founder of a **wizardry school**. Also used to refer to the founder of a **church**.
- fumble*: A natural roll of 20 on a **d20**, which indicates that the **die roll** fails catastrophically.
- Genertela*: The northern continent of **Glorantha**.
- Glorantha*: The world of *HeroQuest*, including the **Mortal World** and the **Otherworlds**, outside of which is **Chaos**.
- god, goddess*: See *deity*.
- God*: The ultimate god of a **monotheist**, **wizardly church**, often called the **Invisible God**.
- God World*: The **Otherworld** where **deities** dwell, contacted by **theists** using **sacrifice**.
- great secret*: See *secret*.
- grimoire*: A **focus** in the form of a magical book containing **spells**, created by a **wizardry school**.
- guardian*: A magical **being** or **Otherworld entity** that supports and oversees a **hero band** or other **community**, or which empowers part of the landscape of the **Mortal World**.
- healthy*: The **state of health** of a character who has not suffered any **defeat**.
- hero*: A **character** whose actions are directed by a **player**. It also refers to a famous and powerful actor in **Gloranthan history** or **myth**, often worshipped.
- hero band*: A **community** with a **guardian**, often actively involved in the struggles of the **Hero Wars**. Forming their own hero band is a major goal of **player heroes**.
- Hero Planes*: The part of the **Other Side** where the great actions and conflicts of the **myths** take place, visited in **heroquests**.
- hero point*: The "reward" received by a **player** that can be used to make permanent improvements to his **hero** and to **bump the degree of success or failure** of a **die roll**.
- Hero Wars*: A time when ancient and novel **magic** and beliefs clash to remake **Glorantha**. This period is the setting of *HeroQuest*.
- heroforming*: A type of **secret** that allows a **character** to temporarily incarnate a **hero** or **spirit** into his body.
- heroquest*: A deliberate journey into the **Otherworld**. A **heroquest** usually reenacts a **myth** of the hero's **religion**. A **hero** who is victorious gains a **magical ability** for himself or his **community**.
- heroquest challenge*: A special confrontation during a **heroquest** as the result of which the **hero** or his **community** either gains the opponent's **ability** or loses his own.
- heroquest moment*: A place or time during a **heroquest** when a **heroquester** declares it is the right moment to activate a **community support** bonus.
- hidden station*: A **station** of a **heroquest** known in the **myths** of worshippers but not to outsiders.
- homeland*: A **keyword** that shows the **abilities** typically known by everyone in a given culture or region.

- hurt*: The **state of health** resulting from a marginal defeat, which imposes a **-1 penalty** to appropriate **abilities**.
- impaired*: The **state of health** resulting from a minor defeat, which imposes a **-10% penalty** to appropriate **abilities**.
- improvisation, improvisational modifier*: A **penalty** of **-1 to -20** (default **-5**) applied by the **narrator** when a **hero** uses an **ability** that is not quite suited for his **action**.
- initiate*: A committed **theist** who worships a single **deity** above all others, and so can learn the god's **affinities**.
- injured*: The state of health resulting from a major defeat, which imposes a **-50% penalty** to appropriate **abilities**.
- innate magic*: The **magic** inherent in living beings and the **Mortal World**. Innate **magical abilities** are called **talents**.
- keyword*: A template showing the typical **abilities** of a certain **homeland, occupation, religion, species, or source of magic**. You cannot raise a keyword with **hero points**.
- lay member*: A basic member of a wizardly **church** who worships **God** and benefits from **blessings** invoked by **liturgists**.
- level of support*: The degree to which a **community** supports a **hero**, ranging from total support to condemnation.
- level of victory or defeat*: The degree to which a hero wins or loses a **contest**. The level (marginal, minor, major, or complete) applies to the winner's **victory** and the loser's **defeat**.
- liturgist*: A member of a **church** (and sometimes also a **saintly order**) who leads a congregation in **worship** and invokes **blessings** and **curses** from **scriptures**.
- magic, magical ability*: The energy of the **Otherworld** brought into the **Mortal World** through **worship**. The four magic systems—**innate magic, theism, animism, and wizardry**—grant different kinds of magical abilities: **talents; affinities, feats; charms, fetishes; blessings, curses, grimoires, spells; and secrets**. Magic always faces **resistance** to its use.
- magic keyword*: A keyword containing the **abilities** and **magic** taught by a **specialized religion, or a hero's common magic**.
- magician*: A person who uses **magic**, especially one who specializes in magic such as a **devotee, practitioner, shaman, liturgist, or adept**.
- main character*: The central **quester** in a **heroquest**: the **protagonist** of the **myth**.
- mass effort*: Any of several methods used by the **narrator** to assign a single **ability rating** to a group of individuals.
- mastery*: The **rune (L)** in an **ability rating** that equals **20** points. If an ability has more than one mastery it is written with a number after the **L**. Masteries **bump up die rolls**, and provide **20 advantage points** each in an **extended contest**.
- miracle*: A magical action of **God** manifesting in the **Mortal World** in response to the plea of a member of a **church**.
- misapplied worship*: Using the wrong method of **worship** to contact an **Otherworld entity**. The worshipper can gain **magic**, but gains no advantage for **concentrating** his **magic**.
- monotheist*: A member of a **wizardry religion**.
- modifier*: A number that increases (**bonus**) or decreases (**penalty**) an **ability rating** in a **contest**. The rating combined with all modifiers yields the **target number**. Common modifiers include **improvisation, defeat, and augmentation**.
- Mortal World*: The normal, everyday world where mortal **beings** live, as opposed to the **Otherworld**. It is the source of **common magic** and the **innate magic** of **talents**.
- mundane ability*: Any non-magical **ability** of a character: **skills, personality traits, relationships, and possessions**.
- myths*: Stories about a **deity, spirit, saint, or hero**, the actions that are remembered and emulated in **worship** by their followers. Worshipers learn **abilities** such as *Mythology of [Deity]*, *[Practice] Knowledge*, and *Rule of [Saint]*, which are also maps for **heroquesting**.
- narrator character*: A **character** controlled by the **narrator**, who provides aid, information, or resistance to the **heroes**.
- narrator*: The player who oversees a game of *HeroQuest*. She controls **narrator characters** and challenges **heroes** as they try to accomplish their goals in the world of **Glorantha**.
- natural resistance*: The **resistance** that opposes an **ability** used in the natural world, such as **Jump**. The resistance depends on the difficulty of the obstacle; if no specific ability or attribute applies, the **default resistance** is used.
- node*: A "point" in the **Essence Planes** from which the magic of a **scripture, blessing, curse, spell, or grimoire** emanates.
- occupation*: A **keyword** that shows the **abilities** typically known by everyone with a given job.
- order*: A religious organization within a **church** that worships a specific **saint**, from which **orderlies** gain magic.
- orderly*: A basic member of a **saintly order**, able to use **spells**.
- Otherworld, Other Side*: The magical worlds that exist beyond the **Mortal World**, the homes of **entities** and the sources of **magic**. There are several Otherworlds, including the **God World, Spirit World, Essence Planes, and Underworld**.
- Otherworld Barrier*: A barrier separating the **Mortal World** and the **Otherworlds** that offers a **resistance** of **10L3** or more to any **being or entity** trying to cross between them.
- pantheon*: A group of **deities** who share **communal worship** by **theists**.
- parting shot*: An **action** taken immediately upon **defeating** an opponent in an **extended contest** to attempt to make the **level of victory or defeat** greater.
- passive resistance*: The **default resistance** to some actions (such as **magic**) that applies even when there is no active resisting force or attribute. See also *natural resistance*.
- penalty*: A **modifier** that decreases an **ability rating**.
- personal resistance*: The **resistance** provided by the **target number** or attribute of a person or force in a **contest**.
- personality, personality trait*: An **ability** (sometimes a **flaw**) that describes an emotional or behavioral quality of a **character**.
- piety*: A magical **relationship** that measures a character's dedication to his **religion** or the **entity** that he worships.
- player*: A person playing *HeroQuest*, acting the part of a **hero** who is one of the protagonists in the **campaign**.
- portal of power*: A magical symbol used by an **adept** to cross the **Otherworld Barrier** and enter the **Essence Planes** to learn **spells** or begin a **heroquest**.
- possession*: The voluntary or involuntary state in which a **spirit** has entered a mortal's body, influencing him or even taking control of his actions.
- power spot*: A place where the **Otherworld Barrier** is weak or unusually close to the **Mortal World**, lowering the **resistance** that must be overcome to enter the **Otherworld**.
- practice*: A magical organization within an **animist tradition** that worships one or more majestic **spirits** and provides a connection to a group of **practice spirits**. There are four types of practices: **core, helper, shamanic, and enemy**.
- practitioner*: A committed **animist worshipper** who belongs to a **practice** and can create **charms** and **fetishes**.

propitiatory worship: **Worship** to appease an **entity** regarded as evil by the worshipper.

rating: See *ability rating*.

relationship: An **ability** that expresses the connection between a **hero** and either a **follower**, a **supporting character**, or a **community** (such as a **hero band**). A relationship to a religion or **Otherworld entity** is referred to as **piety**.

religion: A magical **community** and a pattern of **worship** and belief that provides **magic**.

resistance: The opposition to an **action** in a **contest**, provided by either the **rating** of a character, force, or attribute, or the default resistance of 14. See also *default resistance*, *natural resistance*, *passive resistance*, *personal resistance*.

retainer: A **follower** whose only statistic is a single **keyword**, and whose autonomy and loyalty are limited.

ritual, ritual magic: A method of **magic** that gives **modifiers** to **magic** based on the **community support**, ritual roles, and sacred times, places, and items used in the ritual.

round: A division of an **extended contest** during which each **character** may make one **action**, likely gaining or losing **advantage points**.

rune: A magical symbol that concentrates **Otherworld power**. Runes represent **magical concepts**, **Otherworld entities**, or fundamental aspects of **Glorantha**.

saint: An individual within a **church** who taught a way to act or worship. **Orderlies** venerate the saint in an **order** and receive **blessings** and **spells**.

scripture: The sacred text of a **church** or **order**, used by **liturgists** to invoke **blessings** and **curses**.

secret: The greatest **magical ability** taught by a **specialized religion**, the innermost nature of the **entity** worshipped. **Devotees**, **practitioners**, and **shamans** can learn the secret, which provides powerful, unique magic. The ultimate entity worshipped by an entire religion provides a great secret.

shaman: An **animist** magician with a **fetch**, skilled in dealing with **spirits** and traveling to the **Spirit World**.

shamanic circle: A special **power spot** opened by a **shaman** to cross the **Otherworld Barrier** and enter the **Spirit World** to find **spirits** or begin a **heroquest**.

shrine, temple: In **theistic** magic, the holy place of a **deity** where worshippers conduct sacrifices and cross the **Otherworld Barrier** to the **God World**.

sidekick: A **follower** defined by a **keyword** and three significant abilities, with some autonomy and a great deal of loyalty.

simple contest: A **contest** that consists of one **action**, in which a character's **ability** is opposed by a **resistance**, and the **level of victory or defeat** is decided by one **die roll** per side.

skill: A **mundane ability** that represents a physical or mental capability of a **character**.

specialized religion: A magical **community** that teaches how to gain **magic** from the **Otherworld** using **worship**.

specialty: A subtype of an **occupation keyword** that provides variations in the typical abilities or **ability ratings** available to members.

species keyword: A **keyword** that shows the typical innate **abilities** common to all members of a given species. Usually used only for intelligent races.

spell: A **magical ability** learned by **orderlies**, who use a **talisman** and a **formulary**; or by **adepts** of a **wizardry school**, who cast spells using **talismans** and **grimoires**.

spirit: An **Otherworld entity** native the **Spirit World**. Many spirits can provide **magical abilities** if bound in a **charm** or **fetish** by a **practitioner** or **shaman**.

Spirit World: The **Otherworld** where **spirits** dwell, contacted by animists using ecstatic worship.

spiritist: A basic member of an **animist tradition**. Spiritists worship a great **spirit** and are given **charms**.

starting AP total: See *advantage points*.

state of health: The degree of "damage" a **hero** suffers from, either **healthy**, **hurt**, **impaired**, **injured**, **dying**, or **dead**.

station: A single encounter or event of a **heroquest**. The **level of victory or defeat** the **hero** receives at the station may incur a **modifier** at a later station in the **myth**.

subcult: A minor **cult** that worships an aspect of a **deity** or a petty **deity** or powerful **hero** associated with the deity.

success: Rolling equal to or less than the **target number** on a **die roll**, which indicates the **action** taken by the **hero** succeeds.

supporter: Anyone who provides support to the **main character** of a **heroquest** without actually taking an active role.

supporting character: An adversary, ally, contact, dependent, or patron of a **hero** that is controlled by the narrator, but with whom the **hero** has a defined **relationship**.

talent: The spontaneous **innate magic** of the **Mortal World**, part of a character's **common magic** keyword.

talisman: A **focus** used by an **orderly** or **adept** to cast a **spell**. Orderly talismans must be consecrated by an **order liturgist**. Talismans are also available as **common magic**.

target number: The number that a **die roll** must be less than or equal to in order for an **action** in a **contest** to be a **success**. It is equal to the **ability rating** plus or minus all **modifiers**. See also *ability rating*.

temple: See *shrine*.

theism: A system of specialized **magic**, in which worshippers (theists) sacrifice to **gods**.

tie: The outcome of a **contest** in which no one receives a **victory** or a **defeat**.

tradition: An **animist religion** in which members worship and use a particular set of **spirits** to provide **magic**.

Underworld: An **Otherworld** where the **God World**, **Spirit World**, and **Essence Planes** mix, home to demons. Regarded as evil by most religions.

unrelated action: An **action** taken during an **extended contest** that does not directly relate to defeating an opponent.

variable augment: An **augmentation** that requires a **contest** to determine the amount of the **modifier**.

victory: Winning a **contest**. See also **level of victory or defeat**.

virtue: A **personality trait** that is desired in a **character** by a **religion** or the **Otherworld entity** that he worships.

Wealth: An **ability** that describes the material assets and social status of a **character**.

wizardry: A system of specialized **magic**, in which worshippers (**monotheists**) venerate **God**, **saints**, and **founders**.

wizardry school: A philosophy or method of teaching **wizardry** based upon one or more **grimoires**.

worship: Any method used by inhabitants of the **Mortal World** to contact **entities** of the **Otherworld** and learn **magic**. The common forms of worship are sacrifice to **deities** by **theists**, ecstatic worship of **spirits** by **animists**, and veneration of **essences** by **monotheists**. See also *misapplied worship*, *propitiatory worship*.



INDEX

Keywords and Common Magic

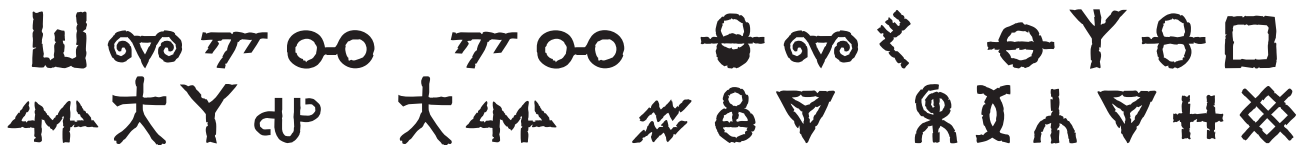
- Aeolian Church 44,167
 Albrechtus
 see *Humble Calligraphers*
 Ancestor Worship 51,145
 Apprentice 163
 Archer see *Foot Soldier*
 Argar Argan 122
 Arshkuveth's Own 259
 Bardan's Book School 172
 Bison People 38
The Book of Well Being 56
 Burglar see *Thief*
 Buserian 123
 Cavalry Soldier 31
 Charms, Sample 134
 Cerise Church 168
 Charai 144
 Clergyman 155
 Common Magic
 see *The Book of Well Being, Cult Societies, Donandar, Flesh Man, Good Old Religion, The Great Parents, Imarja and Our Good Friends, Innocent and Guilty Magics, Lanbril, League Magic, The Little Saints, Magical Societies, My Big Friend, No God Church, Our Old Religion, People Talents, Sample Talents, The Service and Comfort Society, The Seven Mothers, The Seven Sisters, Survival Tricks, Teshnos Pantheon, Unknown God Church, Vai Madar Sa*
 Cult Societies 38
 Daka Fal 145
 Dara Happa 40
 Dastal 144
 Debalдан School 172
 Denbitos 143
 Destor 123
 Donandar 111
 see also *Mercario, Skovara*
 Earth Pantheon 42
 Ehilm, Saint 167
 Eiritha 145
 Entertainer 32
 Erissa 124
 Esrolia 42
 Esvular 44
 Face of Lanbril Talents 112
 Farmer 32
 Five Spirit Moons 142
 Flamesword Order
 see *Saint Gerlant*
 Flesh Man 48
 Folorene 143
 Foot Soldier 32
 From Dark Tradition 141
 Gagarth 237
 Ganval 146
 Gerendetho 124
 Gerlant, Saint 169
 Good Old Religion 54
 Grazer 46
 The Great Parents 40
 Guilty Magic Talents 46
 Healer 33
 The Heartdrummers 261
 Henshelek, Saint 168
 Heortling 48
 Hero Seven Magic . see *Seven Sisters*
 Homeland Keywords
 see *Bison People, Dara Happa, Esrolia, Esvular, Grazer, Heortling, Puma People, Seshnela, Tarsh, Teshnos*
 Format 36
 Horned Man 146
 Hospital Order 171
 Household of Great Fire
 see *Saint Gerlant*
 Humble Calligraphers 173
 Hunter 33
 Imarja 111
 Imarja and Our Good Friends . . 42
 Innocent and Guilty Magics . . 46
 Iron Blood School 170
 Ishaar, Saint 167
 Jakaleel 142
 Jordan 145
 Keyword Formats
 Homeland 36
 Magic 111
 Occupation 31
 Religion 36
 La-Ungariant 143
 Lanbril 112
 League Magic 40
 Left Hand Talents 111
 Lereen 144
 The Little Saints 52
 Lunar Church . see *Cerise Church*
 Lunar Religion 55
 Majestic Horses Tradition . . 46,143
 Magic Keyword Format 111
 Magical Societies 42
 Mercario 124
 Membership Keywords
 see *Arshkuveth's Own, The Heartdrummers, Prophets of the Golden Age*
 Merchant 33
 Mugger see *Thief*
 My Big Friend 52
 Natha 125
 Navestos 125
 Navigationalist Church
 see *Ship of Life Church*
 No God Church 44
 Noble, Petty 34
 Nomad 34
 Oakfed 147
 Occupation Keywords
 see *Apprentice, Cavalry Soldier, Clergyman, Entertainer, Farmer, Foot Soldier, Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Nomad, Petty Noble, Priest, Sailor, Scholar, Spirit-talker, Thief, Warrior, Wizard*
 Format 31
 Odayla 126
 Ordinary Soldier . see *Foot Soldier*
 Our Good Friends 42
 Our Old Religion 54
 People Talents 40
 Petty Noble 34
 Pickpocket see *Thief*
 Praxian Tradition 38,145
 Priest 116
 Prophets of the Golden Age . . 263
 Provincial Church 112
 Puma Ancestors Tradition . . . 51
 Puma People 50
 Regular Cavalry
 see *Cavalry Soldier*
 Religion Keywords
 see *Aeolian Church, Cerise Church, Earth Pantheon, From Dark Tradition, Lunar Religion, Majestic Horses Tradition, Praxian Tradition, Puma Ancestors Tradition, Rokari Church, Ship of Life Church, Solar Pantheon, Storm Pantheon, Teshnos Pantheon*
 Format 36
 Right Hand Talents 111
 Rokari Church 53,169
 Sailor 34
 Saint Ehilm 167
 Saint Gerlant 169
 Saint Henshelek 168
 Saint Ishaar 167
 Saint Xemela 171
 Sample Charms 134
 Sample Talents 29
 Scholar 34
 Selven Hara 126
 Seshnela 52
 The Service and Comfort
 Society 56
 The Seven Mothers 54,112
 The Seven Sisters 55
 Shamanic Practices
 see *Denbitos, Ganval, Horned Man, Jakaleel*
 Ship of Life Church 170
 Shock Cavalry . see *Cavalry Soldier*
 Shock Troop see *Foot Soldier*
 Skirmisher see *Cavalry Soldier, Foot Soldier*
 Skovara 126
 Solar Pantheon 41
 Soldier 31,32
 Spirit Moons, Five 142
 Spirit-talker 133
 Storm Pantheon 48
 Survival Tricks 38
 Talents, Sample 29
 Tarsh 54
 Teshnos 56
 Teshnos Pantheon 56
 Thief 35
 Unknown God Church 44
 Vai Madar Sa 113
 Waha 146
 Warrior 35
 We All Know This 56
 Wizard 164
 Wizardry Schools
 see *Bardan's Book School, Debalдан School, Humble Calligraphers, Iron Blood School*
 Xemela, Saint 171
 Ygg 127
 Yu-Kargzant 144

Contests

- Advantage Points, Lending71
 Ally a Friendly Spirit138
 Ambushed by the Gagarthi . . .236
 Apprentice, Become155
 Apprenticeship, Be Released
 from162
 Attune an Essence Source . . .173
 Augment, Variable80
 Bargaining with the Bird . . .247
 Be Released from
 Apprenticeship162
 Become a(n)...Adept162
 ...Apprentice155
 ...Communal Worshipper . .115
 ...Devotee119
 ...Initiate118
 ...Lay Member156
 ...Liturgist158
 ...Orderly160
 ...Spiritist134
 Befriend a Spirit137
 Blessing, Invoke159
 Catch Up with the Raven . . .241
 Charm, Create137
 Church, Join156
 Communal Worshipper,
 Become115
 Community, Request Support
 from90
 Concentrate Magic (Selfrock) .108
 Control Panicking Horse . . .242
 Cope with Gulvik239
 Create a Charm137
 Create a Fetish . . .see *Befriend Spirit*
 Cross Over to Other Side . . .197
 Curse, Invoke159
 Devotee, Become119
 Divine Aid, Pray for116
 Earth Witch254
 Essence Source
 Attune173
 Use Unattuned174
 Face Down Engthor239
 Facts About Ravens241
 Final Action74
 Find Earth Witch's Cave . . .254
 Get to the Raid235
 Healing81-82
 Heroform109
 Horse, Control242
 Initiate, Become118
 Invoke a Blessing159
 Invoke a Curse159
 Join a Church156
 Know Something About
 Patrikus250
 Lay Member, Become156
 Lend Advantage Points71
 Liturgist, Become158
 Magical Healing81-82
 Miracle, Pray for158
 Mundane Healing81
 Negotiate Passage242
 Notice the Chieftain's Son
 is Missing235
 Open a Portal of Power163
 Orderly, Become160
 Other Side, Cross Over to . . .197
 Outrun Warband247
 Pick Up on the Atmosphere . .239
 Please Earth Witch254
 Portal of Power, Open163
 Pray for...Divine Aid116
 ...a Miracle158
 Pull the Kite Free246
 Question the Bandits238
 Raven242,247
 Reach the Kite246
 Release a Practice Spirit . . .137
 Report to Vlasik252
 Request Support from
 Community90
 Resist the Unnatural Storm . .236
 Selfrock108
 Sneak into the Manor251
 Spirit...Ally138
 ...Befriend137
 ...Release137
 Spiritist, Become134
 Spot Pit Trap236
 Storm, Resist236
 Strong Earth Nephew,
 Wrestle255
 Support, Request from
 Community90
 Trap, Spot236
 Use Magical Healing81-82
 Use Mundane Healing81
 Use an Unattuned Essence
 Source174
 Variable Augment80
 What Place is This?244
 What's Going On?238
 Wrestle Strong Earth
 Nephew255

Illustrations

- Adept, Wizard53,166,172
 Ai-Shana233
 Arshkuveth's Own259
 Babeester Gor Axe80
 Bardan's Book Wizard172
 Bison People39
 Broken Dwarf89
 Broo207
 Brown Elf Protector178
 Buserian Scholar71
 Buserian the Stargazer123
 Bush Child255
 Cathedral of Saint Hrestol . .156
 Centaur137
 Chalk Man Hill149
 Character Creation (diagram) .268
 Common Magic (diagram) . .105
 Concorvus258
 Dara Happans41
 Demon152,219
 Destor the Adventurer107
 Dinosaur93
 Disease Spirit208
 Donandar Entertainers104
 Dragon Pass (map)227
 Dragonewt231
 Durulz (Duck)210
 Dwarf89,174
 Elder Races . . .26,75,89,137,174,
 178,205,210,214,231
 Elf178
 Esrolian Statue111
 Esrolians43
 Esvulari45
 Example Heroes26
 Fall of Boldhome183
 Fall of Whitewall234
 Fat God's Party201
 Fetish50,142
 Fish Rain250
 Flamesword Orderly157
 Frithorf Wildwind237-238
 Gagarthi237
 Genertela (map)37
 Ghost244
 Glorantha (map)14
 Gods War and the Otherworlds
 (diagram)193
 Goldentongue merchant35
 Goonda26
 Grazers47
 Guardian258,261
 Harpy214
 Heartdrummers261
 Heortling Woodcuts . .107,127,147
 Heortlings49,82
 Hero Light98
 Heroes, Typical . .18,26,35,39,41,
 43,45,47,49,51,53,55,57,71,82,
 87,98,121,139,157,166
 Imarja, the Great Earth111
 Iron Dwarf174
 the Isfalt187
 Ivory Plinth230
 Jakaleel the Witch142
 Kites241
 Klaviss261
 Konkon152
 Lanbril Thief69
 Lhankor Mhy Scholar71
 Liturgist53,157
 Ludoch75
 Lunar Adept166
 Lunar Goddesses10
 Lunar Martial Artist18
 Lunar Pottery123,142
 Lunar Priest121
 Lunar Shaman233
 Lunars18,55,121,166,233
 Malasp75
 Maps14,37,227
 Mercario the Entertainer32
 Mermen75
 Narrator Characters . .233,238,249
 Natha the Balancer10
 Oakfed Wildfire147
 Orderly45,157
 Orlanth Thunderous118
 Plateau of Statues135
 Portal of Power163
 Priest121
 Prophets of the Golden Age . .263
 Puma51
 Puma Person26,51
 Raven Daimon246
 the Red Moon10,196
 Rubble Runner217
 Rufelza, the Red Moon10
 Sable Rider87
 Scholars71
 Servants of the Cleansing . . .221
 Seshnelans53
 Shaman139,233
 Shamanic Circle139
 Shell Deer83
 Skovara the Puppetress127
 Specialized Religions
 (diagram)105
 Spirit152,208,244
 Strong Earth Nephew255
 Talisman157,176
 Taraltara, the Mystic Moon . .10
 Tarshite55
 Teshnan57
 Trackgrass Man176
 Troll205
 Trollkin35
 Tusk Rider230
 Umbarong219
 Zombie221



Guardians and Landscape Beings

- Basket Buddy257
 Battle Friend257
 Censor, Saint Caspodi's174
 Chalk Man149
 Concorvus259
 The Creek149
 Denjereli149
 Diamond, Gemborg Essence ..174
 Earthtop Hill129
 Engizi129
 Essence Diamond, Gemborg ..174
 Final Exams257
 Gemborg Essence Diamond ..174
 Get Going257
 Gold Friend257
 Gold, Heavy174
 Granny Vo and Uncle149
 Great Trees149
 the Heartdrum261
 Heavy Gold174
 Hedkoranth's Hill129
 the Holy Comb257
 Krikans149
 Last Dance263
 the "Little Trees"149
 Mallia149
 Medicine Bundle, Sample ...148
 Moosehorn Spur148
 Mr. and Mrs. Village Deity ..129
 Orandta the Both128
 Party On257
 Reliquary, Sample174
 The River129
 Saint Caspodi's Exacting
 Censor174
 The Stream175
 Temple Guardian, Sample ...128
 Trackgrass175
 Tri Lamb96
 Village Deity129

Listing

- The Abiding Book* ..52-53,153-154,
 157,159,162,165,169-173
 common blessings of159
 curses of159
 special blessings of159
 spells of165
 ability ..19,26,28,60,63-64,66,70,74
 active ability79
 adding58
 ambiguous21
 automatic186
 broadly defined19,179,182
 comparing60
 Contest Sequences63
 of devotees119
 improving59,179
 inherent characteristics79
 innate186
 magical28-29,79,97,99,182
 mundane28,99
 special abilities19,26,68
 special items30
 switching ..see *switching abilities*
 ability rating19,21,24,26,60,
 63-64,76,79,177-178,269
 assigning21,24,26
 default28
 Above, the199
 War for199
 abstract time ..see *time: narrating*
 academysee *wizardry school*
 action63-64,66,70
 adept155,162-164,197,219
 adept abilities163
 entry requirements163
 Adept Planesee *Magic Plane*
 advanced experience21,24,178
 multiple occupations178
 advantage points ..63,66,68,70-71,
 137,186
 ...and Combat68
 AP Knowledge67
 AP lending71,82
 "AP pool"68
 bidding66-68,186
 default bid (3)67
 edges and handicaps186,208
 final AP total67
 followers and67
 negative AP total74,81,221
 sample AP bids68
 starting AP total66-67,69,70
 trading AP for penalties189
 transfer67
 adventure231-232
 format231
 key points232
 narrating231
 sample234-235,240,248,253
 adversary ..see *supporting characters*
 Aeolsee *Aeolian Church*,
Saint Aeol
 Aeolian Church44-45,167,265
 orders of167
 Religion Keyword44
 affinity81,118,120-121
 afterlife ..44,142,151,154,156,240
 see also *Essence Planes*, *God*
World, *Heaven*, *Other Side*, *resur-*
rection, *Solace*, *Spirit World*
 Age of Chaossee *Chaos Age*
 agent of reprisal121
 agitatori225
 Ai-Shana Half-and-Half233
 Akorgat the Demon25,113
 Albrechtus Unmoved173
 see also *Humble Calligraphers*
 Alchemical Transformer, the ...230
 alchemy174
 Alda-chur103,226-227
 Aldrya206
 Song of206
 Aldryami ..149-150,178,206-207,
 217,225,262
 see also *Aldrya*, *dryad*, *elves*,
runners, *sprites*
 Aldryami forests ..149,217,219
 Alen Somash Sa57
 Alhidar's Grimoire of the Winds and
 Elements165
 alien world penalty ..see *penalty*
 All Deities, Temple to80
 allysee *supporting characters*
 Alone227
 Altinela225
 ambiguous references21
 see also *ability*
 Ananjano113
 Anaxial the Sailor123
 Ancestors, the240,244,247
 Ancestor Ceremony247
 ancestral practice145
 see also *practice*
 animism105,131,264
 see also *charm*, *ecstatic rites*, *fetch*,
practice, *practice spirits*, *practi-*
tioner, *religion*, *shaman*, *shamanic*
circle, *spirit(s)*, *spirit place*, *Spirit*
World, *spirit-talker*, *spiritist*, *tra-*
dition, *tradition spirits*
 characteristics of105,131
 concentrating ..108,133-134,139
 the spirit landscape148
 Ankormy School45
 see also *Lhankor Mhy*, *Saint*
Ankormy
 Ankormy's Collected Encyclicals ..45
 Annotated Seven Steps of Life and
 Birth168
 Antirius the Most Man41
 apostasy107
 Appius Luxius228
 Apple Lane80
 apprentice162-163
 occupation keyword162
 Aram262
 Aranvalus193
 Aranvalus' House197
 archetype method ..see *guardian*
 Argar Argan43,122
 Black Palace122
 Arkat14-15,169,193,201,223,
 265,267
 apotheosis of223
 Five Arkats14
 Arkat's Hold227
 The Arming of Murharzarm ...196
 armorsee *equipment*
 The Army Book172
 Arnlor171
 Arrowmound226
 Arshkuveth's Own258-259
 Artmali Empire225
 "as you go"19,26,233,268
 see also *character creation*, *hero*
 augmentation76,79,81,269
 see also *automatic augment*, *vari-*
able augment
 augmenting others80
 magical99,101
 automatic augment ..73,79,98,102,
 122,125,146,157,159,186,269
 automatic penalty ..see *penalty*
 automatic success60-61,63,182
 awareness function ..see *guardian*
 Axis Mundi146
 Babeester Gor43,80,267
 backstory21,37,58
 "Bad Old Gods"248
 The Bad Old Religion54
 Badger's Protection Society42
 Bagnot227
 Ban Adept ritual165-166
 Bandal Tigerbane, King44,229
 Baptismal Crusade, the174
 Barbaro52
 Bardan172
 Bardan's Turret172
 Bardan Bond Company172
 Bardan's Book School172
 see also *Bardan*, *Bardan's Book*
Company, *Bright Fletching Com-*
pany, *Deristophelian Company*,
RussetCross
 Bardar8
 Barntar55,167,184,200,267
 see also *Saint Bartath*
 Bartathsee *Saint Bartath*
 basalt mice255
 Basket Prophecy, the229
 Baton-Holder Arshkuveth's Own
 Bannermen
see *Arshkuveth's Own*
 Battle Circle172
 Battle of Grizzly Peak ..see *Grizzly*
Peak, *Battle of*
 Battle of Icelandsee *Iceland*,
Battle of
 bazaksee *rubble runner*
 Bear Stance Sharp-eye253-254
 Beast Valley208,227,229
 see also *beast-men*
 Beast War, the201
 beast-men137,208,229
 see also *centaur*, *durulz*
 Beebee8
 Bejeweled Invasion of
 the East Isles11
 benchmark231
 Besdi Solf Du57
 Betrayals, the199
 Bevara the Medic43,267
 Beyond Aquatic Laws172
 Big Hungry Gray One38
 Big Wide Hunting Land51
 Bigger Mothersee *Imarja*
 Bison People ..20,22-23,36,38-39,
 145-146
 see also *Praxians*
 homeland keyword38
 illustration39
 Black Dragon Mountains230
 see also *Blackorm Mountain*,
dragons: Black Dragon

- Black Horse County229
 Black Horse Troop229
 Black Ice, the127
 Black Mountainsee *Blackorm Mountain*
 Black Oak Clan . .235-236,238-239, 241,245-246
 Black Palacesee *Argar Argan, Palace of Black Glass*
 Black Swelling, the171
 Blackorm Mountain226
 Blacksnake255
 Blackwell227
 blessing81,156-158,161
 see also *Blessing of Joy, curse, liturgist, scripture*
 common blessings158
 invoking159
 special blessings159
 blessing functionsee *guardian*
 Blessing of Joy, the176
 see also *Joy*
 Blindfold Preceptors, the168
 Blood Flag, the229
 Blood of Fire Rites147
 Blood Sun265
 Blood Sun War14
 Bloody Coughs233
 Bloody Tusk, Cult of230
 see also *Aram, Gouger, Ivory Plinth, tusk riders*
 Blue Dragon200
 Blue Fox Clan260
 Blue Funk, the142
The Blue Hymnal45
 Bluegum Oak Treesee *Karagum*
 Boldhome138,226-227,274
 bomonoi225
 Bonborn193-194,199,204
 bonus .76,80,89-90,137,191,194,204
 see also *automatic augment, modifiers*
 “morale bonus”90
 ritual bonus101
The Book of Accuracy172
The Book of Conflict164,170
The Book of Well-Being . . .24-25,56
 bookmensee *Bardan’s Book School*
 Boss’ Command40
 Bottom Woods236
 brain splitters152
 Breagalos Tribe248
 Bright Fletching Company . . .172
 Bright Sun54
 see also *Sun, the*
 Brithini223
 “broken dwarves”see *dwarves*
 bronze78
 see also *rune metals*
 broo38,207-208
 Brother Dog146
 brown elfsee *elves*
 Broyan, King226,228-229
 Bullflood
- bumps, bumping . .58,62-64,67,72, 85,178,269
 see also *degree of success or failure, dice rolls*
 bump down62
 bump up19,62
 BurenEtyr league40
 Burning Pots, the147
 Burning Stallionsee *Yu-Kargzant*
 Buserian the Stargazer . . .41,71,123
 Buserian Code123
 Buserian’s Desk123
 Bush Child103,253-255
 Bush Voice51
 Adoptees of51
 Caladraland224
 Calyz Mandar56
 campaign232
 see also *adventure*
 Cannon Cult230
 Carmania165
 Cascading Glacier, the127
 Caspodisee *Saint Caspodi*
 Castle of Lead200
 Celestial City124
 Celestial Court123
 see also *Gloranthen Court*
 cementing59,181,272
 see also *hero points*
 centaur137,208
The Cerise Book168
 Cerise Chapel168
 Cerise Church168
 orders of168
 religion keyword168
 certami, certamus201,267
 Chal the Wise56
 Chalana Arroy118,267
 Chalarnsee *Chalana Arroy, Saint Chalarn*
 Chalite Practices56
 Chalk Man148-149
 Chalk Man Hill12,149
 Chaos . .14-15,20,22-23,38-39,48, 77,84,87,122,129,146,154,163,18 5,196,199-201,206-208,215,217, 220,223-226,252,264,267
 Chaos creatures208
 Chaos demons223
 Chaos features208
 Chaos god220
 Chaos nests220
 the Coming of199
 Chaos Age129,192
 see also *Darkness, Great Darkness*
 Chaos, First Battle ofsee *First Battle of Chaos*
 Chaos Regurgitation, the14
 Chaos Woods227
 chaptersee *saintly order*
 character creation177
 see also *“as you go”, list method, narrative method*
 advanced experience178
 blank character sheet256
 synopsis268
 character-driven adventuresee *adventure*
- Charai the Rider47,144
 Charcoal Oak, the147
 charm81,134,136-137,141
 common magic charms . . .29,94, 104,108,134
 creating137
 practice spirits135-137
 Sample Charms134
 Choralinthor Bay263
 Chosen People, the169,171
 church153-156,158,160,162, 165,225
 characteristics of153,165
 leaving165
 Church of Saint Aeolsee *Aeolian Church*
 churchessee *Aeolian Church, Cerise Church, Hrestoli Church, No God Church, Rokari Church, Ship of Life Church, Unknown God Church*
 Citadel Lords, the225
 City of Understanding126
 clergyman155,158
 occupation keyword155
 Cliffhome227
 Closed Scriptorium, the173
 Closing, the45,53,170,223
 coinage229
 combatsee *contest*
 Coming of Bad Weather, the . .199
 common blessingsee *blessing*
 common magic . .18,29,37,44,72,81, 104-105,108,115,153,155,162,167
 see also *common religions, innate magic, magical landscapes, talents, “the world is made of everything”*
 feats, charms, and spells . . .104
 innate magic104
 Sample Common Magic29
 common religions . . .104,153,167
 see also *common magic, religion*
 characteristics of104
 sample common religions . .111
 communal worshipper115
 communal worshipper
 abilities115
 entry requirements115
 communities87
 see also *hero band, relationships, religion*
 conditions for membership . .88
 determining size of91
 supportsee *community support*
 community support . . .88,141,159, 162,271
 Community Support Bonus
 table90-91,183,271
 consequences of failure91
 multiple communities91
 mundane support88
 requesting89-90,271
 rituals102
 supernatural support89
 total support bonus . . .90,95,183
 companionsee *heroquesting: The Hero*
 complete victory/defeatsee *level of victory or defeat*
- Comprehensive Cartographic
 Reproduction255
 concentrating magic usesee *magic*
 condemnationsee *levels of support*
 contactssee *supporting characters*
 contest60,62-63,67,81,186
 see also *automatic success, simple contest, extended contest*
 Climbing61,65,68
 combat61,65,68,75,77,81,184
 consequences . . .63-65,67,69,74, 91,185,188,270
 contest format63
 contest synopsis233
 contestant(s)60,68-69,71
 exertion77
 Finding Your Way61,65
 goals66,70-71
 healing81-82
 hordes65,186
 magical contest98
 malign influences81
 mass effort65,183
 missile combat184
 narrating contests182,188
 nonlethal combat76
 physical risk74
 repeat attempts63,182
 Romance61,65,68,77
 sample consequences65
 Social Conflict61,65,68
 Tracking61,68
 contestant(s)see *contest*
 continuity adventuresee *adventure*
 copper sand38
 core practicesee *practice*
 Core Runes, the264
 Cosmic Mountainsee *Spike, the Counters, the*
 Coyote51
 Cragspider226,230,263
 Creation7,176,192,220,222
 Creator (Grazer)143
 Creator (Praxian)38
 Creator (Puma People)51
 Creator (Wizardry) .160,169,171,176
 see also *God, Supreme Being*
 credo156,169,171
 The Creek12,147,149,226-227
 Creek-Stream River . .175,210,226- 227,229
 see also *The Creek, The River, The Stream*
 Crimson Bat196
 criticalsee *degree of success or failure*
 Crossing, thesee *heroquesting, Otherworld*
 Cult of the Bloody Tusksee *Bloody Tusk, Cult of*
 Cult of the Seven Motherssee *Seven Mothers*
 Cult Societies38
 Curbside Society42
 Current of History, the171
 Curse of the Closingsee *Closing, the*

- Ernalda . . .15,42-43,48-49,121,126-127,195,224,267
 Allmother127,265
 Ernalda's Loom House126
 Husband-Protectors of . . .42,122
 the Matriarch43
 Queen of the Gods49
 the Steadwife49
 Errinoru Jungle225
 Errinoru the Elf Emperor223
 Eskaval, the Pure Beast175
 Esra43,128,183,267
 Esrola and Her Boys54
 Esrolia . . .36,42-43,108,111,128,171,174,224,227,229,265
 Esrolians127
 homeland keyword42
 illustration43
 Esrolian Snow Goose111
 Esrolvuli265
 see also *Esrolia*
 essence diamonds
see *Gemborg essence diamonds*
 Essence Planes . .11,40,106,125,130,141,153,155,157,163-164,166,173-176,192-193,197-198,219,264
 see also *Founder Plane, God, Joy, Heaven, Magic Plane, Mundane Plane/World, Saint Plane, Solace, Underworld, Venerable Plane*
 essence source173-174
 see also *reliquary*
 attuning173
 using174
 essences .11,92,97,153,159,166,173,176,198,200,211-212,219,222
 see also *reliquary*
 elemental211
 embodied173
 essence creatures176
 guardian159,163,173-174
 using essences173
 essential body176
 see also *adept, portal of power*
 Estei the Firstwife143-144
 Esvular36,44,161
 Esvulari235
 homeland keyword44
 illustration45
 Ethilristsee *Sir Ethilrist*
 Etyries126
 Etyries' Crossroad126
 Word of126
 Eva8
 Everything Planesee *Mundane Plane/World*
 example heroes16
 Galan20-23,26
 Hazeel24-25,26
 Hengal16,26
 Ingomar26
 Jane26-27
 Mr. Puma26
The Examples of Karatch . . .44,167
 extended contest . . .60,63,66,68-72,182,186,203,269
 see also *advantage points, contest*
 contest sequence63,66,269
 extended contest81
 extended contest options
 see *advantage points: AP*
Lending, desperation stake, parting shot, switching abilities, unrelated action
 Extended Contest Results
 table66,270
 group extended contest . .68,270
 healing during82
 narrating188
 "nesting"186
 rounds63,66
 withdrawing from71
 extraordinary supportsee *levels of support*
 Ezkankekkosee *Only Old One*
 Face of Lanbril talents41,43,45,112
 failuresee *degree of success or failure*
 Falling Children, the113
 false homesee *misapplied worship*
 Far Point region227-228
 Far West, the198
 Fat God's Party201
 Fazzur Wideread226,228-229
 Governor-General of Dragon
 Pass226
 Feathered Horse Queen
143,228-229
 Feathered Maresee *La-Ungariant*
 feat120-121
 common magic feats . .29,94,104,108,118
 improvising120
 Ferdo52
 fetch110,132,138-142,146
 awakening138
 fetishsee *practice spirits*
 Fifth Wane126
 fighting ordersee *saintly order*
 final action . . .74,123,126,179,270
 fire bear192
 Fire Realms56
 fireberries254
 Fireblade Templars
see *The Household of Great Fire*
 Fireheart Plains147
 First Agesee *Dawn Age*
 First Battle of Chaos141
 First Council262
The First Disquisition on Virtuous Air . . .45
The First Encyclopedia45
The First Lexicon45
 First New Prophet, the263
 First Saint, thesee *Saint Xemela*
 Fist of Righteousness53
 Five Demons, the54
 Five Elements, the265
 Five Foods, the230
 Five Forms, the265
 Five Full Tuns, Temple of128
 Five Moon Circles142
 Five Moonssee *Five Spirit Moons*
 Five Movements, the265
Five Principal Chords45
 Five Spirit Moons55,141-142
 Five Worlds, the264
 Flamebringer110
 see also *Saint Gerlant*
 Flamesword Order110
 see also *Saint Gerlant*
 flaws20-21,24,26,28-29,80,179,214
 overcoming29,59
 Flesh Man48
 Flesh Man talents22,48,104
 Flood, the199
 Flower Wind spirits147
 followers . . .21,28,31,39,60,65,68,71,79,83-84,89,268,271
 changes to85
 commanding85
 describing84
 follower reluctance . .85-86,89,271
and advantage points67
and defeat74,270
and multiple opponents . .79
 recording28,84
 replacing85
 retainers28,83-84,271
 sidekicks28,83-85,121,271
 tracking68
 using follower abilities85
 Folorene47,132,143
 Fonrit225
For Greater Goods45,167
For Others53,171
 forbiddancesee *levels of support*
 format
 adventures231-232
 contests63
 creatures206
 followers84
 guardians96
 homeland keywords37
 magic keywords111
 narrator character leader . . .233
 occupation keywords31
 religion keywords31
 formulary161
 Forng113
 Founder Plane176,191
 see also *Essence Planes, Saint Plane*
 Founder, the154
 founders (church)192,200
 founders (wizardry) . .155,163,165,176,200
 four storms233,243,249
 Fourth Action, the170
 Fourth Action Debates170
 Frithorf Wildwind . . .236,237,238
 Frog Woman146
 From Dark Tradition141
 core practices141
 Fronela . . .36,153,168,169,173,215
 frost dragonsee *dragons*
 frost giants213
 Full Moon112-113
 Full Moon spirits142
 fumblesee *degree of success or failure*
 functional practicesee *practice*
 Fungal Forest194,200
 Furthest92,98,226-227
 Gagarth236-238,259
 Gagarth's Stead237
 Gagarth's Wolves236-237
 gambling sticks148-149
 Ganval146-147,150
 Ganval's Hide147
 Gardeners212
 Gate of Iron Blood170
 Gates of Death225
 gazzamsee *dinosaur*
 Gbaji the Deceiver223
 Gbaji Wars169,174,223
 Gemborg174
 Gemborg essence diamonds . .174
 Genert38,145
 Genert's Garden145
 Genert Wastessee *Wastes*
 Genertela14,222
 map of36
 Gerendetho16,41,124
 Father of Men124
 Gerendetho's House124
 Gerlantsee *Saint Gerlant*
 Gerlant's Chapel170
 Gerra112
 ghost(s) . . .42,57,142,148,151-152,170,201,212-213,222,244,246,274
 ghost forests150
 Gift of Free Will262
 Ginijjisee *Snake-Pipe Hollow*
 Gio Elephant8
 Glamour92
 Glorantha10,11,14,21,222
 map of14
 mythology and history222
 Gloranthan Court111,264
 see also *Celestial Court*
 Glowline113
 goalssee *contest, hero*
 goatkinsee *broo*
 God . . .106,153-154,156-159,163,169,171,176,225
 see also *Creator (wizardry), Invisible God, Makan, Supreme Being*
 Hand of157
 Will of157
 God Age113
 see also *Chaos Age, Darkness, Gods War, Golden Age, Great Darkness, Green Age, Hero Planes, Lesser Darkness, Mythic Age, Storm Age*
 God Forgot44,224
 God Learners . .201,223,225,264-265
 God Project262
 God World . .11,40,105,114-115,118,120-121,127,129-130,141,167,191,193,197-198,208,250,264
 God World Perceptions130
 Goddess, the142,224,228
 see also *Moon Goddess, Sedenya*
 Gods War . .13,44,48,127,149,163,173,176,191-194,197-201,203,213-214,222,234,253-254,262
 Gold Lamb263
 Goldedge227
 Golden Age40,222,274
 new262

- Golden Arrow, Temple of113
 - Golden Bows145
 - Golden Fist, Temple of113
 - Golden Fleet113
 - Golden Hordesee *True Golden Horde*
 - Golden Pathway, the130
 - Golden Temple Comet League41
 - goldeneye47,143,145,215
 - Goldenfield47
 - Goldenland46
 - The Good Old Religion54
 - Good People, the113
 - Goodwild124
 - goonda24-26,88,206
 - gorp213
 - Gostolos126
 - Gouger230
 - War-Teeth of230
 - governmentsee *communities*
 - Governor-General of Dragon Passsee *Fazzur Wideread*
 - Grandfather Mortal112,262
 - Granny Vo and Uncle148-149
 - Granny's Crannies149
 - Grazelands46,227
 - Grazer(s)36,46-47,143,145-146, 226,228,235,265
 - homeland keyword46
 - illustration47
 - Grazer (spirit)148
 - Great Bear125,130
 - Great Bolt, the113
 - Great Churchsee *Rokari Church*
 - Great Compromise262
 - see also *Time*
 - Great Darkness48,84,123,201, 205,211,215,222-223,226
 - see also *Chaos Age, Darkness*
 - Great Earthsee *Ernalda*
 - Great Empty Plain149
 - great godsee *deities*
 - Great Lord Below253-255
 - Great Mountain, thesee *Spike, the*
 - Great Navigatorsee *Eliavar*
 - Great Parents, the40,104
 - see also *Lodril, Oriá*
 - great secretsee *secrets*
 - Great Seizing Lord152
 - Great Star Archersee *Vai Madar Sa*
 - Great Stormsee *Orlanth*
 - Great Sun God213
 - great tree149
 - Great Wintersee *Great Darkness*
 - Great-Seventh-Grandma Huge
 - Leap Spirit51
 - Great-Uncle Healing Wounds
 - Spirit51
 - Greatest Green146
 - Greatest Mothersee *Kyger Litor*
 - Greatfall129
 - Greatlands20,36,38,145-146,224
 - see also *Prax, Wastes*
 - Green Age126,274
 - Green Blade teaching175
 - green elvessee *elves*
 - gremlins213
 - griffin213
 - griffin god213
 - grimoires155,163-166,176
 - making165
 - Grizzly Peak, Battle of30
 - group contactsee *guardian*
 - guardian87,89,92-96,100,115, 196,205,234,245
 - ability ratings95
 - communication93
 - community guardian204
 - dissolution of95
 - form93
 - functions94
 - improving95
 - landscape being198
 - medicine bundle148
 - method93
 - other powers94
 - Otherworld entities95
 - requirements94
 - reliquary174
 - sample guardians96,128,148, 174,257,259,261,263
 - temple guardian128
 - worshipping94,128,148
 - Guilmarn169
 - Guilty Magicsee *Innocent and Guilty Magic*
 - Gultha Goldentongue49
 - see also *Issaries*
 - Gunda the Guilty274
 - hag213
 - see also *nymphs*
 - Halikiv174,230
 - Halls of the Dead124
 - handicapssee *edges and handicaps*
 - Happy Conquests, the113
 - Harmast15,193
 - Harmonious Yellow Songbird8
 - harpy214
 - goddess spirit demon of214
 - Harrek the Berserk9,225,228, 267,274
 - Harst the Merchant43
 - see also *Issaries*
 - Harvar Ironfist228
 - "Haunted Lands"see *Shadow Plateau*
 - He Who Risessee *Yu-Kargzant*
 - Headcount Rhythm146
 - healing76,81,270
 - Healing Resistance table81,270
 - recovery82
 - healthysee *states of health*
 - Heartdrum, the260-261
 - Heartdrummers260-261
 - Heaven154,176
 - see also *afterlife, Solace*
 - Heavy Bone Dip145
 - Heavy Earth253
 - heavy gold174-175
 - Hedkoranth129,242-243,267
 - Hedkoranth's Hill129
 - Hee44
 - Heler200
 - Hell130,144,179,225,266-267
 - see also *Underworld*
 - Roads to130
 - Hell Crack198
 - helper practicesee *practice*
 - Hendreiki227
 - Henedra the Elder143
 - Henird the Chief144-145
 - Hensheleksee *Saint Henshelek*
 - Henshelek's Annotated Sketches*55,168
 - Henshelek's Guide to the Wonders of the World*168
 - Heort48,265
 - Heortland44,48,110,171,224, 226-227,229
 - Heortling(s)15,36,48-49,82-83, 108,120-121,127,130,195,223, 226,239-240,252,265-267
 - homeland keyword48
 - illustration49
 - virtues240
 - Herespur113
 - hero, heroes9,177
 - as leaders180
 - concept177,268
 - death of181
 - goals58,268
 - narrating179
 - replacing181
 - hero band29,92,94,257
 - see also *communities*
 - guardian95
 - hierarchies94
 - leaving96
 - membership requirements95
 - samples258-263
- Hero City126,142
- hero cults115,120
- Hero Improvement Costs58-59, 96,109,122,140,166
 - Consolidated Hero Improvement Costs272-273
 - free abilities179
 - unrelated to play58,106,179, 185,272
- "hero light"98
- Hero Planes6,120,130,191-192, 195,197-200,204
- hero points58-59,62,84,86,95,107- 108,178,185,202,237,272-273
 - see also *cementing*
 - required hero point expenditures58,107
- Hero Seven Magics55
- Hero Wars*10
- The Hero Wars are between15, 18,58,60,83,97,114,131,153,177, 192,206,223,228,258,262
- Hero Wars, the6,11,14-15,37,75, 83,179,183,189,191,211,222-226, 231-232,252,260,263
- heroforming109,145,152
- heroquesting6,12,15,120,176, 191,267
 - changing paths201
 - The Climax204
 - community support for195
 - critical stations194,200,202
 - The Crossing191,197
 - dropping out/falling off200
 - The Hero191,195
- heroquest challenge200,203
- heroquest moment194,200,202
- hidden stations194
- narrating heroquests194
- objective of193
- opponents195,200,203
- The Quest191,199
- quest levels200
- The Return191,204
- ritual preparations195
- side benefits203
- stages191
- stations193,199
- The Story191-192
- "true heroquesting"191
- unmapped heroquests201
- variations194
- heroquestssee *Erissa's Underworld quest, Heavy Earth, How Peace Was Made, Lightbringers' Quest, Quest of the Great Cloud, Reclamation of Sivilis, Reclamation of Velun, Six Stones Heroquest ritual, Slaying of Worcha quest*
- Hessa Mevala113
- Hidden Music260
- Hidden Sky Runways143
- High Council of Dorastor262
- High Gods113,225
 - Principles of113
- high ordersee *wizardry school*
- Hiia Swordsman143
 - see also *Feathered Horse Queen, Humakt*
- Hill of Gold203
- Himile215
- Hingswell171
- hollow moon box233
- hollrisee *ice daimon*
- Holy Books, the169
- Holy Country, the224,248
 - see also *Kethaela*
- holy days/times101-102,130,141
- holy places12,101-102
 - see also *power spot, spirit place, temple*
- Holy Sound Paradox167
- Hombobobom111,260
- "Home Magic"111
- homelandsee *keyword*
- Homeward Ocean225,275
- HonEel the Artess228
- The Honest Rogue's Tale*45
- Hong Melagum113
- Horn Dweller38
- Horned Man39,146
- Horned Man's Manhide Tent146
- Hospital Order171
 - see also *Saint Xemela*
- Hospitallers' Oath171
- The House of Ill Respite and Santus Bonum171
- The Household of Great Fire169
 - see also *Saint Gerlant*
- How Peace Was Made quest195
- Howling Stead127
- Hrestol15,156-157,265
 - see also *Saint Hrestol*
- Prophet of the Joy156,225

- Hrestoli Church173,265
Hrestoli225
Hrognar147,221
hsunchen tribes50
Humakt43,49,75,105,118-119,
210,223,241,247,263,267
see also *Hiia Swordsman, Makla
Mann*
God of Death49
Hu the Sword subcult121
the Sword43
Humble Calligraphers161,173
Hunter deities114
The Hunts of Saint Orvar53
hurtsee *states of health*
Hyalorings47
hydra215,267
Hydra Hill215
Hydra of215
Hyraos the Harper41,111
Iames the Goodsee *Saint Iames*
Ibex Moon Society126
Ice Age215,225
ice daimon215
Iceland, Battle of267
Icon War14
Icy Sea127
Idovanus161
Igarri Clan248
Illuminated Portal173
illusionists41
Imarja42,111-112,265
Ten Devotees of Imarja
.see *Our Good Friends*
Immaterial Planes
.see *Essence Planes*
Immortals, the58
impairedsee *states of health*
Imperial Age223
Imperial Overseer228
Imperial Palace41
Imperial Provincessee *Lunar
Provinces*
improvisationsee *modifiers*
independent practicesee *practice*
Indigo Mountains226
Infinite Sea Wisdom170-171
inherently difficult magicsee *magic*
Inhuman King16,229
initiate116-118
entry requirements116
initiate abilities118
initiation and subcults121
multiple initiation118
injuredsee *states of health*
innate magic104,209,264
see also *common magic, talents*
concentrating108
Inner World15,114-115,121,123,
127-128,130,208
see also *Mortal World*
Innocent and Guilty Magic46
Inquisitors' School169
intercessorsee *animism, practi-
tioner, spirit-talker, shaman*
- Invisible God44,153,167,225
see also *Creator (wizardry), God,
Makan, Supreme Being*
laws of153
One Invisible God169
Invisible Measuresee *Essence Planes*
Irgara207
Irippi Ontor112,248
Irist Hold133-135,138
iron22,30,78,170,205,274
see also *rune metals*
Iron Blood, Gate ofsee *Gate of
Iron Blood*
Iron Blood School164,169-170
iron dwarvessee *dwarves*
Iron Shepherd170
see also *Iron Blood School*
Iron Shepherd's Flock170
Iron Shepherd's Forge170
Ironhoof229
Isfalt, the187,193
Isfalt Valley194,204
Ishaarsee *Saint Ishaar*
Issaries35,49,267
see also *Saint Ishaar*
Ivory Plinth230
Jakaleel55,112,141-142,233
Jakaleel Practice142
Jaldon's Wrong River227
see also *Oslir River*
Jansholm167,227
Jarankol Solarslayer200
Jardan47,144-145,147
Jardan's Hills47
JarEel the Razoress9,224,228,
267,274
Jarn Dragon11
Jarsandron Tenherds228
Javern8
Jonstown227
Jord Mountain141
Josad the Elder144
Joy154,156-157
see also *Blessing of Joy*
Joy of the Heart156
Jrustela225,264
Kab Vanarana Sa56
Nine Hundred Daughters of56
Kachasti Communicators167
Kallyr Starbrow228
Kang Islands113
Karagum150
Karki113
Karndaro the Leaper229
Karse44
Kastok41,267
keets225
see also *durulz*
Kenman Imo113
Kero Fin11,98,128,150,185,226,
267,274-275
see also *Little Mountain, Wintertop*
Beloved ofsee *Ganval*
Necklace of146
Kerofinela128,147,226,244
see also *Dragon Pass*
Kethaela224
see also *Holy Country, the*
- Ketpalosee *Lodril's Palace*
key pointssee *adventure*
keyword17-20,26,178
advanced experience178
common magic keyword
.18,20,29
followers84
homeland keyword17,20,37
magic keyword18,30,111
membership keyword259
occupation keyword17,20,31,
116,155,162,164,178,210
religion keyword18,37
specialized magic keywordsee
magic keyword
species keyword18,84,206
treating an ability as19
keyword rating19,21,24,177,210
Killing Bone ritual103
King of Winter151
Palace of151
Kingdom of Night122
Kingdom of War153,232,267
Kingdom, the169
Klavis260-261
Kneebone Society38
Kolats138,147,150
kolatings150
Kostaddi124
Kralorela, Kralori36,75,209,
225,265
Kralori Pantheon265
Kralori Red Dragon Society25,113
Krikanssee *The Creek*
Kyger Litor151,218,220
La-Ungariant46-47,143,144
Lady of the Wild125
Lanbril41,43,45,55,69,112
Lanbril's Den112
Land of Dawnsee *Theyela*
Land of Seven Bone Masters196
Land of the Dead124
landscape beingsee *guardian*
languages182
see also *New Pelorian, Tradetalk*
Last Dance263
Law, the154,176
lay member156,163,166
entry requirements156
lay member abilities157
Leaden Hills227
leadership contactsee *guardian*
League Magic40
The Ledgers of Credit53
Ledgers of Honest Profit45,167
Left Hand Talents111,124,126
Lereen the Mother47,144
Lesilla112
Lesser Darkness199
see also *Darkness, Storm Age*
Lesser Suns199,222
level of victory or defeat62-64,67,
74-76,185,269
levels of support89-90,196
Lhankor Mhy49,71,267
Lhankor Knowing49
The Life of Saint Dalan53
The Life of Saint Gerlant53
- The Life of Saint Gerlant the
Pure*170
The Life of Saint Mistandar53
The Life of Saint Xemela53,171
Lifepath Isles171
Light, the40
Lightbringers228
Lightbringers' Quest198
Lightfore130
lightning band30
Lightning Boy146
Limitless Forest, the130
list method19,24,26,268
see also *character creation*
little bats196
Little Bush Brother Society
.22-23,39
Little Claws People193,204
Little Mountain, the147,150
Little Mountain spirits147,150
Little Pier, the173
The Little Saints, the52
see also *Barbaro, Ferdo, Malastak,
Pane*
"little trees"see *Denjereli*
liturgist92,153,158,159,161-
163,166
entry requirements158
liturgist abilities158
order liturgistsee *order liturgist*
living metal175
Living Nature148
Lodril40-41,122,124,197
Lodril's Palace125
Lokarnos41,130
Long Night, the146
see also *Chaos Age, Darkness,
Great Darkness*
Loom Drum, the260
Lord of Snows150
Lord of the Worldsee *Emperor, the*
Lord's Sacrifice40
Lordly Advisory, the169
Loskalm, Kingdom of14,156,174
Low Gods225
low ordersee *saintly order*
Luathela225
ludoch75,267
Luminous Stallion King228
Lunar Army224
Lunar cycle112-113,125,141,168
Lunar Empire10-11,15,40,48-49,
54,82,87-88,113,168,223-226,
228-229,252,258,267
Lunar Heartland228
Lunars49,83,226
Lunar Goddesssee *Moon Goddess*
Lunar Magic113
Lunar Provinces54,226,228,258
Lunar Religion54-55,118,267
Religion Keyword55
Lunar Tarshsee *Tarsh*
Lunar Way55,113,125-126,168,228
lunemari, lunes141
Lysos River42
Machine City262
Machinists, the262
Machineland211

- Orandta the Both128
 see also *temple guardian*
- OranDuvali warrior family40
- ordersee *saintly order*
- order liturgist161-162
 entry requirements162
 order liturgist abilities162
- Order of Saint Donandar . see *Saint Donandar*
- Order of Saint Gerlantsee *Saint Gerlant*
- Order of the Plow53
- Order of the Swallow153
- orderly160,162,166
 entry requirements160
 orderly abilities161
- orderly spellsee *spell*
- ordinary supportsee *levels of support*
- Orest143
- Orfiyan225
- Oria40-41,121,124
- origami magic8,27
- Orlanth . .15,48,82,107,114,118,121, 150,193,199-200,223-224,226, 228-229,240,267
 Adventurous107
 Allfather265
 death of . .189,226,228-229,267
 Great Boar130
 Orlanth's Hall123,240
 Orlanth's Stead130
 Orlanthcarl49,267
 people ofsee *Orlanthi the Storm Rebel*114
 Thunderous110,118
- Orlanthcarlsee *Orlanth*
- Orlanthi48,130,224
 see also *Heortling(s)*
 Orlanthi Way44
- Oroctor8
- Orogeria112
- Orvarsee *Saint Orvar*
- Orventili195
- Oslir River200,226
 see also *Jaldon's Wrong River*
- Other Side . .110-112,122-127,141- 144,146-147,167-173
 see also *afterlife, Otherworld(s)*
 Otherworld(s)11-13,15,37,39- 40,58,89,92,95,97-99,102,104- 105,119,131,138,152,158-159,16 5,176-177,189,191-193,195-198, 199,204,212,217,222,225-226, 237,240,247,253,264,266
 see also *Essence Planes, God World, Other Side, Spirit World, Underworld*
 immutable laws of the
 Other Side106
 Otherworld barrier . .94,102,131, 136,163,176,196-198,204
 Otherworld beings265
 Otherworld origin . .153,155,165
 Otherworld Travel and Safety .110
 Otherworld Winds201
- otherworld journey
see *heroquesting*
- Otkorion172
- Our Good Friends42
 see also *Imarja*
- Our Old Magic54
- Our River54
- Outer Limits, the225
- Outlaw Wilds237
- Palace of Black Glass122
 see also *Argar Argan: Black Palace*
- Pamaltela14,212,223-225
- Pane52
- pantheon114
- pantheonssee *Earth Pantheon, Kralori Pantheon, Pelandan Pantheon, Solar Pantheon, Storm Pantheon, Teshnos Pantheon*
- Paps, the225
- parting shot69-70,181
- Pasos170
- passionssee *personality*
- Pastures of the Endless Sun . .143
- patronsee *supporting characters*
- Peace Boy195
- Peaceful Cut ceremony146
- Peaceful Passage167
- Pelandan Pantheon265
- Pelaskos43,250,267
- Peloria36,41,124,161,207,217, 224,226
- penalty75-77,79-80,90,182, 208,270
 see also *modifiers*
 alien world penalty .95,110,174, 198,201,212
 automatic penalty80
 multiple target126-127,159
 trading AP for penalties189
- Pent207,215,225
- People of the Woodsee *elves*
- People Talents40,104
- People's Fetish40
- Person, the154
- personality28,88,268
 Virtues . .107,115,118-119,134, 136,140,157-158,161-163
- Pharaoh, the122,224
- Phargentes Kingslayer55,249
- Phargentites, the228
- Pier, the173
- Piercing Arrow Enemy152
- Piety . .102,107,115,118-119,134, 136,140,157-158,161-163,189, 195
 see also *relationships, religion*
- Pig Hunt, the230
- planessee *Essence Planes*
- planet189
- Plant Tribesee *elves*
- Plateau of Statues135
- Plough and Stead45
- The Plow Benedictions53
- poison76,81,207,221
- Polaris, Pole Star123
- portal of power . .162-163,165-166, 170,172-173,176,197,275
- portals of powersee *Battle Circle, Gate of Iron Blood, Illuminated Portal, Nexus of Water*
- positioning and movement
see *unrelated action*
- possession . .141,152,209,212,244
- possessions21,30,268
- Poverri248
- power runessee *Ten Ancient Polarities*
- power spot102,141,198
- practice132,141
 see also *animism, practice spirits, tradition*
 leaving141
 practice charmssee *charms*
- practice questsee *heroquesting*
- practice spirits136-137
 see also *spirit ally*
- practice spirits and charms . .137
- releasing137
- practitioner133,136
 entry requirements136
 multiple practices138
 practitioner abilities136
- Pranjala the Healer49
 see also *Chalana Arroy*
- Prax . .36,87,92,145,147,207,224,265
 see also *Greatlands, Wastes*
- Praxian Tradition22,38,39,145
 core practices145
 religion keyword39
- Praxians38-39,75,87,224,265
 see also *Bison People, Sable Riders*
- priest116,120,130
 occupation keyword116
- Primary Scriptorium, the173
- Promised Land, the171
- Prophet, the154
- prophets199-200
- Prophets of the Golden Age
262-263
- propitiatory worshipsee *worship*
- Protectors, the178
- Provincial Army228
- Provincial Churchsee *Seven Mothers cult*
- Provincial Overseer228
- Puma Ancestors Tradition51
 religion keyword51
- Puma People . .36,50-51,101,148,235
 homeland keyword50
 illustration51
- Queen's Post227
- Quest of the Great Cloud89
- Quiet Duplicatory, the173
- Quivin Mountain226
 Quivin Mountains148,226
- Rabbitface148
- Raccoon, the194,203
- rain demon91
- Rain Dragon204-205
- Ralforisus111
- Ralios36,154,169
- ransom75
- Rashorana112
- ratingsee *ability rating, keyword rating, relationships*
- Reaching Moon, Temple of227
- Rebel Gods124
- Reclamation of Sivilis quest . . .195
- Reclamation of Velun quest . . .195
- Red Emperor . .113,223-224,228-229
- Red Fox253-254
- Red Goddess . .15,92,112,125,142, 228-229
 see also *Goddess, Moon Goddess, Natha, Red Moon, Rufelza, Sed- enya, Taraltara*
- Red Hill Eagle League41
- Red Moon . .10,15,40-41,54,55,112- 113,117,125,141,168,196,223- 224,228,245
 see also *Red Goddess, Rufelza*
 surface of125-126
- relationships19,28,83,181,268
 see also *communities, followers, hero bands, religion, supporting characters*
 ability rating83,86
 community28,89
 magicalsee *Piety*
 personal28,83
- relativessee *communities*
- religion115,192
 see also *animism, church, common religions, communities, pantheon, Piety, theism, tradition, wizardry*
 advancing in179
 entry requirements . .106,111,115- 116,118,133,136,139,156,158, 160,162-163,179
 leaving121
 membership106
 relationship to106
 specialized20-21,30,37,105
 time commitment107
 worshipper abilities106,115, 118-119,134,136,140,157-158, 161-163
- reliquary92,153,174
 see also *essence source, guardian*
 sample reliquary174
- resistance . .60-61,63-64,66-67,71, 80,90,136
 attribute61
 choosing185
 default (14) . .61,66,159,165,186
 describing magical resistance .189
 to healing81
 magical98
 mundane98
 natural force61,98
 passive (6)61,186
 personal99
 to poison, disease, or malign
 influence81
 sample resistances . . .61,274-275
 supernatural81-82,99
- resurrection . .76,116,124,146,171
- retainerssee *followers*
- Rhigos44,172
- Rich Post227
- Right and Wrong Reading53
- Right Hand Talents . .111,124,126
- Rightarm Islands224
- Rigsdal263
 see also *Pole Star*
- Rising Children, the113
- Rist262

- ritual, ritual magic . . .81,89,101,124, 141,146,159,196,204
 - heroquests191
 - resistance to102
 - ritual foes115
 - ritual item102
 - Ritual Modifiers table102
 - ritual preparations194-195
 - ritual roles101-103
- The River . . .94,129,149,226-227,267
 - Children ofsee *Dendelle, Greatfall, Varlene*
 - god of95,129
- River of Knives194,199
- Road Everyone Knows, the194
- Rock of Life194,204
- Rockwood Mountains215,226
- Rokar157,169-170,265
 - see also *Saint Rokar*
 - Rokar's Laws169
- Rokari Church . . .52,94,153-155,157, 160,169-170,173,265
 - credo of169
 - orders169
 - religion keyword53,169
- Rokari225
- rubble runner216-217
- Rufelza10,55,141,168
 - see also *Red Goddess, Red Moon*
- The Rule of Law*169
- "rule of six"79,186
- rune metals78,274
 - see also *bronze, iron*
- rune stickssee *spells: common magic spells*
- runes10,29,105,212,264-265
 - magical ability runes105,265
- runners207
 - see also *Aldryami*
- Russet Cross, the172
- Sable Riders, Sable Tribe . . .87,224
- Sacred Hoof Friend39
- Sacred Time223
- sacrifice105,110,114
 - see also *theism, worship*
 - misapplied sacrificesee *misapplied worship*
- Safe Warm Home112
- saint(s) . . .13,153-155,158,160-161, 163,167,176-177,191-192,199-200
- Saint Aeol44,110,235
 - Word of44
- Saint Ankormy45
 - see also *Lhankor Mhy*
- Saint Barbarosee *Barbaro*
- Saint Bartath45,167
 - see also *Barntar*
- Saint Caspodi174
- Saint Caspodi's Exacting Censer . . .174
 - see also *reliquary*
- Saint Chalarn45
 - see also *Chalana Arroy*
- Saint Chalarn's Herbiary and Sundry Remedies*45
- Saint City126
- Saint Dalan53
- Saint Donandar45
 - see also *Donandar*
- Saint Dormal171
 - see also *Dormal*
- Saint Earna45
 - see also *Ernalda*
- Saint Ehilm45,167
 - see also *Elmal*
 - military order of167
- Saint Ferdosee *Ferdo*
- Saint Gerlant53,110,154,161, 169-170,174
 - see also *Flamebringer, Flamesword Order, Household of Great Fire*
 - the Pure169
 - Vaulted Hall of174
- Saint Henshelek55,154,168
- Saint Henshelek's Den168
- Saint Hrestol174
 - see also *Hrestol*
- Saint Iames169
- Saint Ishaar45,167
 - see also *Issaries*
- Saint Malastaksee *Malastak*
- Saint Mistandar53
- Saint Mister Farmersee *Saint Bartath*
- Saint Orvar53
- Saint Orvar's Fireside Wisdom* . . .53
- Saint Panesee *Pane*
- Saint Plane . . .155,160-162,164-165, 168,171,176,191
 - see also *Essence Planes, Founder Plane*
- Saint Rokar52-53
 - see also *Rokar, Rokari Church*
 - Saint Rokar Read Right53
 - Saint Rokar's Third Encyclical* . . .53
- saint stones167
- Saint Tarkil45
- Saint Worlath45
 - see also *Orlanth*
 - Saint Worlath's Lower Circle . . .45
- Saint Xemela53,154,169,171
 - see also *Hospital Order*
 - Xemela's Rule171
- saintly blessingssee *blessing*
- saintly order153-154,158,160, 162,165-166
 - see also *orderly, saint, wizardry*
 - characteristics of153,155,165
 - chapters154
 - leaving166
 - patron saint158,160
- saintly orderssee *Flamesword Order, Hospital Order, Household of Great Fire, Order of the Plow, Order of the Swallow, Saint Ehilm, Student Body*
- Saird47,217
- Sakum225
- Sanctified Legacy, the169,171
- Sartar Rebellion14
- Sartar, King227
- Sartar, Kingdom of . . .129,226-229,232
 - tribes of228
- Savage Tribe Followers152
- scripture153,155,158,165,176
- Sea of Fire198
- Sea of Souls171
- Seasons of Pleasure112
- Seat of Peace113
- Second Agesee *Imperial Age*
- Second Cousin Blinding Spirit . . .51
- second sightsee *Spirit Face*
- secrets109
 - see also *heroforming*
 - cult secrets120
 - great secrets109
 - learning109
 - practice secrets138
- sectsee *church*
- Sedenya10,15,55,113,141,154, 168,223-224
 - see also *Moon Goddess, Red Goddess*
 - great spirit141
 - Sedenya Temple117
 - Sedenya's Throne125
- Sedenya Religionsee *Lunar Religion*
- Sedenyic Mysteries113
- Seeker in the Darknesssee *Jakaleel*
- The Seeker's Test142
- Selfrock Teaching108
 - see also *magic: concentrating magic use*
- Selven Hara55,126
- sending141
- Servants of the Cleansing221
- Service and Comfort Society24-25,56
- Seshnela36,52,104,169,171, 173,225
 - see also *Old Seshnegi, Old Seshnela*
 - homeland keyword52
 - illustration53
 - kings of169
- Seven Mothers . . .54,112,141-142,228
 - see also *Danfve Xaron, Deezola, Irrippi Ontor, Jakaleel, "She Who Waits", Teelo Norri, Yanafal Tarnils*
 - Seven Mothers cult54,92, 112,228
- Seven Sisters55
- Seventeen Siblings, the149
- Shadow Plateau122,167,224, 227,230
 - see also *"Haunted Lands"*
- Shadow Woods194,199
- Shadow Worshipsee *My Big Friend*
- Shadowing194,200
- Shadowleaf Miles, the194,200
- Shadows Dancesee *Dagori Inkarth*
- Shakeland228
- shaman21,24,131,133,139, 141,148,151,219,224
 - entry requirements139
 - multiple practices139
 - shaman abilities140
 - shamanic abilitiessee *fetch, Shamanic Escape, Spirit World Travel*
 - shamanic rebirth147
- shamanic circle139,141-143, 151,197
 - see also *Axis Mundi, Five Moon Circles, Kero Fin's Necklace, Star Spirit Circle*
- shamanic circlessee *Axis Mundi, Five Moon Circles, Kero Fin's Necklace, Star Spirit Circle*
- Shamanic Escape* (ability) . . .140,141
- shamanic practice139,142
 - see also *practice, shaman*
- Shargash41,121
- "She Who Waits"112
- She, Her, and That One40
- shell deer84,217
- Shepelkirt15
 - see also *Red Goddess, Red Moon*
- Ship of Life Church169-171
 - credo of171
 - orders171
- sidekicksee *divine companion, followers, spirit ally*
- simple contest . . .60,63-65,182,269
 - contest sequence63-64,269
 - group simple contest . . .64-65,269
 - healing81
 - Simple Contest Results table64,269
 - variable augment80
- Sir Ethilrist229,274
- Six Stones Heroquest ritual101
- Sixty Hundred Year Palms146
- skills19,21,28,268
 - see also *ability*
- Skovara43,49,111,127
 - Skovara's Cottage126
- Skovari111,126
- Sky Gods40
- Sky World . . .41,46,78,113,222,274
- Sky, the15,129-130,222
- Skyburn262
- Skyfall, the226
- Skyfall Lake129,230,275
- Skyreach Mountains174
- Slave Wall227
- Slaying of Worchia quest195
- slow timesee *time: narrating*
- Snakepipe Hollow220,226-227,263
- Snowflake Dripping Blood8
- Sog City173
 - Sog City University172
- Solace . . .53,154,156,160,167,169,171
 - see also *afterlife, Essence Planes, Heaven*
- Solar Empire114
- Solar Pantheon41,111,265
 - religion keyword41
- Solar Realm41,123-124,130
- Somash56
 - Somash Edi Varo56-57
 - Somash Hero Madoro57
 - Somash Mimi57
 - Somash Veren56
- Son of the Sun229
 - see also *Yelmatio*
- Sons of Light, the195
- sorcerer169
 - see also *adept, wizard*
- sorcery155,165
 - see also *wizardry*
- Sorcery Town198
- Soul Vision (ability)118-119,130

- Soul Wind146
 see also *shamanic abilities*
- Southpoint156
- Spear of Light, the196
- special blessingsee *blessing*
- specialized religionssee *animism, religion, theism, wizardry*
- specialtysee *keyword: occupation keyword*
- specter148,217
- Spell Planesee *Magic Plane*
- spell160-161,163-166,176
 see also *talisman*
 common magic spells29,94, 104,108,162,164
 independent spell165
 orderly spell161,176
 spell booksee *grimoire*
 wizardry spell164,176
- spellsticksee *spell: common magic spells*
- “spheres of influence”118,180
- Spike, the199,223
- Spiral Storm, the130
- spirit(s)1,11,13,19-20,22,51,92, 97,105,131,139,148,151-152,165, 177,189,191-192,198-200,211, 217,219,222
 see also *charm, fetch, ghost, possession, practice spirit, sending, specter, spirit ally, spirit helper, tradition spirit*
 allyingsee *spirit ally*
 befriending136-137,140
 disease spirits132,151-152, 208,240
 disembodied138,148
 elemental211
 embodied148,151
 great spirits131,151,199-200
 guardian148-149
 landscape148
 medicine bundle148
 nature spirits132,150
 practice spiritssee *practice spirit*
 sample nature apirits150
 spirit attitude132,134,137,141
Spirit Facesee *Spirit Face*
 spirit ranks131
- spirit ally137-138,140-141,144,146
 see also *followers: sidekick*
- Spirit Drum, the145
- Spirit Face* (ability)138,151,203
- spirit helper8
- spirit place11,132-133,140-141, 147,197
- Spirit World11,40,46,51,105,125, 130-133,136,139-141,144-146, 148,151-152,191,193,197-198, 209,216-217,221,264
 denizens151-152
- Spirit World Travel* (ability)140-141
- spirit-talker133
 occupation keyword133
- spiritist133-135
 entry requirements133
 spiritist abilities134
 spiritists and practices135
- sprite207,217,274
 see also *Aldryami*
- Sramake’s River225
- Sshorg113
- Stagland Sour149
- standard of living30,274
 see also *Wealth*
- Star Guide Uncle Hiding Spirit51
- Star Spirit Circle143
- Starbrowsee *Kallyr Starbrow*
- Stargazers, the123
- Starkval263
- states of health74-76,81
- Stinking Forest227,230
- Stone Cross227
- Stonewood227
- Storm Age192
 see also *Darkness, Gods War, Lesser Darkness*
- Storm Bull145
 see also *Urox*
- Storm Eagle Tree126
- Storm Hills227
- Storm Pantheon42,48-49,118,121, 237,267
 religion keyword48
- Storm Realm123,126,130,237
- Storm Tribesee *Storm Pantheon*
- Storm Village123
- Stormwalk Mountain227
- Storos172
- The Stream175,212,226-227
 The Stream Undine175
- Strong Earth Nephew253-255
- Student Body, the169
 subcult, subservient cultsee *theism*
- Subterrene Thaumaturgic Explorers255
 successsee *degree of success or failure*
- Sun Dome County229
- Sun Dome Temple227,229
- Sun, the44,78,144,197,199,222- 223,225,229-230
 see also *Elmal, Somash, Yelm, Yu-Kargzant*
- Sun God40,114,199
- Sun Spirit46
- Sunstop, the223
- supernatural aidsee *divine aid, miracles*
- supportersee *heroquesting: the Hero*
- supporting characters29,83-86
 changes to86
- Supreme Being156,160,168,176
 see also *Creator (wizardry), God, Invisible God, Sedenya*
- Survival Covenant145
- Survival Tricks38
- Survivor Tales154
- Swenston227,263
- switching abilities70
- sylyph45
- Symbolic Sight* (ability)165,175
- sympathy21
- Syndic’s Ban, the224
- Talastar111
- talent11,29,104,209
 see also *common magic, innate magic*
- talisman161,164-165,167,173,176
 see also *adept, orderly, spell*
- Tanian262
- tappingsee *sorcery*
- Taraltara10,18
 see also *Red Goddess, Sedenya*
- target number60-61,63-64,66- 67,72-73,76,269
 see also *ability rating, dice rolls, modifiers*
 reduced to 076
- Tarkilsee *Saint Tarkil*
- Tarpit227
- Tarsh36,54,147,226-228,235
 homeland keyword54
 illustration55
 King of89,228
 Kingdom of228
 Lunar dynasty228
 Lunar Tarsh227
 Tarshites226,240
- Tattletale Bushsee *Damdo*
- Teelo Norri112
- Teleos225
- Telmor221
- Telmori147,220
- temple12,128,130,197
 temple guardian128
 see also *guardian, Orandta the Both*
 sample temple guardian128
- Temple to All Deitiessee *All Deities, Temple to*
- Temple of the Golden Arrowsee *Golden Arrow, Temple of*
- Temple of the Golden Fistsee *Golden Fist, Temple of*
- Ten Ancient Polarities, the264
- Ten Dozen Horses*45,167
- Ten Dozen Spears*45,167
- Ten Perfect Ways, the41
- Ten Thousand Isles of Wondersee *East Isles*
- Teshnos36,56,206,212,225,265
 see also *Verenela*
 homeland keyword56
 illustration57
- Teshnos Pantheon24-25,56, 121,265
 religion keyword56
- Tests of Faith, the169,171
- text conventions10
- Thawing, the224
 see also *Syndics’ Ban, the*
- theism105,114,264,267
 see also *affinity, communal worshipper, daimones, deities, devotee, feat, God World, initiate, pantheon, priest, religion, sacrifice, temple*
 changing cults121
 characteristics of105,114
 concentrating108,115,118
 subservient cults (subcults)120-121
 the divine landscape127
- Thelados the Contortionist43
- Theoblanc52,169-170,267
- The Theoblanc Papers*169
- Theyalan Calendar223
- Theyela225
- Third Agesee *Modern Age*
- Thoskali24-25,72-73
- Three Fires, the147
 see also *Oakfed fire spirits*
- “Three Fs and One S”129
- Three Hooded Bishops, the174
- Three Laws, the124-125
- Three Moving Deitiessee *Moving Deities*
- Three Season Storm112
- Three Stripe Stringbean253-255
- Three Worlds, the222
 see also *Otherworld(s)*
- Threestep Isle127
- Thrinbarri Clouds193
- Throne, the123
- Thunder Barracks123
- Thunder Brothers123,125-126,195
- tie62,64,73
 see also *level of victory or defeat*
- time148,178,182,187,204
 ...and healing81-82,270
 narrating187
- Otherworld time130,137,150, 176,192,194,204
 preparing magic79,100
 ritual preparations101-102
- Sacred Timesee *Sacred Time*
 time commitments87-88,95, 106-107,115-118,121,134-136, 138-139,156,158,160,162-163
- Time30,146,164,211,222-223,262
 heartbeat of146
 Time Before Timesee *Godtime*
- toolssee *equipment*
- Top of the World Mountain198
- total supportsee *levels of support*
- Tova113
- trackgrass12,175
 trackgrass man176
- Tradetalk49,167,182-183
- tradition131-133,141,152
 see also *animism, practice*
 leaving141
- tradition spirits39,46,51,134,141
 see also *charm, spirit(s), tradition*
- traditionssee *From Dark Tradition, Majestic Horses Tradition, Praxian Tradition, Puma Ancestors Tradition*
- Travels and Wonders*55,168
- Tree Peoplesee *elves*
- Trees of Coal, the194,200
- Tri Lamb96,181
- Trickster241,246,247,267
- Trickster “deities”114
- tricksters124
- triggered adventuresee *adventure*
- triolinisee *mermen*
- Triplets cult40
- Troll Woods167,227
- trollkin35,77-79,186,218-220
- trolls14,40,48,75,77-78,98,120, 122,127,150,164,167,199,202,20 5,218,220,229-230,232,262
 see also *trollkin*
 dark trolls218
- True Golden Horde226,262
- True Prophet, the171

- True Prophets, the169
 TrueFlame Order160
 see also *Saint Gerlant*
 Turning Darkness, the122
 tusk riders230,267
The Twelve Hundred Names of
 Rufelza168
 Twenty-three Delayed Realm112,
 142,233
 Twin Fisherssee *Pelaskos, Poverri*
 Twisted Orgrim55
Two Cities of Blue251
 Ty Kora Tek247
 Tylena111
 Umath237
 Umbarong219
 Umbroli123
 Unclesee *Granny Vo and Uncle*
 Uncle Strong Spirit51
 undead213,226
 see also *zombies*
 underground mansee *dwarves*
 Underworld .11,40,101,113,119,122,
 124,130,144,151,176,198-200,
 207,214,216,222,230,244,266
 Emperor of199
 Third Underworld125
 Underworld Plane176
 undine175
 Unfaithful Forest170
 unicorn176,219-220
 Unicorn Law219-220
 unionsee *communities*
 Unknown God Church . . .44,154
 unrelated action . . .70-71,80,186
 Upland Marsh129,226-227
 see also *Delecti the Necromancer*
 Urox75
 see also *Storm Bull*
 Urukong Mogagar230
 Uzsee *trollkin, trolls*
 Vadeli159,170
 Vadrus237
 Vai Madar Sa24,25,57,113
 Vale of Flowers133,227
 Valind Wastes149,215
 Valind's Glacier . .14,151,198,219,
 225,232
 Vanch88,93
 variable augment80,102
 see also *augmentation*
 Varlene129
 Varvar the Deep Gulper . .250,252
 Veg Mageg230
 Velit Maniz57
 vendref46
 Venerable Plane . .153,157,165,176
 see also *Essence Planes, God*
 veneration .106,110,153,160-161,
 165,176
 see also *wizardry, worship*
 Chain of Veneration, the .153,159
 misapplied veneration
 see *misapplied worship*
 Verenela36,212
 see also *Teshnos*
 Verithurusa112
 Veskerele the Faceless41
 victorysee *level of victory or defeat*
 village deities129
 Vinga43,49,245,263,267
 the Defender Storm . . .49,121
 the Spearwoman43,245
 Vingkot263
 Violet Ogre, the196
 Virtuessee *personality, religion*
 Vithela225
 Vizel160
 Voshgatyuthsee *Underworld*
 Voudisa43
 vronkalisee *elves*
 Waertag173
 Waertagi, the172,262
 Waha38-39,145-147
 Waha's Happy Herding
 Ground145-146
 Wakboth89
 see also *the Devil*
Walking the Spiral110
 walktapus220
 Want to Discover More?9
 War Against War, the . . .11,14,189
 War between Gods and
 Spirits, the199
 War for Abovesee *Above, the*
 "war of shadow against
 dark"see *Gbaji Wars*
 Wastelands, Wastes . .14,36,75,87,
 146,149,207,219
 see also *Greatlands, Prax*
 water deities129
 Wayfarers' Oath92
 We All Know This56
 "We Are All Us"88,224
 Wealth (ability) .30,181,184-185,274
 treasure185
 using184
 weaponssee *equipment*
 Weaver Women126
 Wenelians130
 werewolfsee *Telmori*
 Western Ocean225
 Whirlwind Desert128,138
 White Bearsee *Harrek the Berserk*
 White Bull225
 White Goddess33,41,124
 see also *Chalana Arroy, Erissa*
 White Voyager From Death . . .142
 Whitewall174,226-227,229
 Wide Plains39
 Wild Temple227,229
 Wild Wolf Forest147
 Wildfiresee *Oakfed*
 Wilm's Church227
 Wilms227
 wind children226
 Winds, the222
 Wintertop227-228
 see also *Kero Fin*
 wizard163-164
 occupation keyword164
 wizardry106,155,162,264
 see also *The Abiding Book, adept,*
 apprentice, blessing, church, cler-
 gyman, curse, essence, Essence
 Planes, formulary, founder
 (church), founder (wizardry),
 God, grimoire, lay member, lit-
 urgist, monotheism, order liturgist,
 orderly, portal of power, religion,
 saint, saintly order, scripture,
 spell, talisman, veneration, wiz-
 ard, wizardry school
 characteristics of105,153,
 155,165
 concentrating108,156,164
 Mostali wizardry210
 sorcery schoolsee *sorcery*
 the essential landscape173
 wizardry school155,162-166
 characteristics of . . .153,155,165
 leaving166
 wizardry schoolssee *Ankormy*
 School, Bardan's Book, Debaldan
 School, Defenses of God, Humble
 Calligraphers, Inquisitors' School,
 Iron Blood School, the Lordly
 Advisory, Saint Chalarn, Saint
 Rokar Read Right
 wizardry spellsee *spell*
 Wizardry Worldsee *Essence Planes*
 Wolf Pirates14,225,228,265
 wood mansee *elves*
 wooden peoplesee *elves*
Work for Good53
Works of Chal24,56
 Worlathsee *Saint Worlath*
 "the World is Made of
 Everything"11,127,173
 World Machine, the .175,210-211,
 215,230
 worship12,89
 see also *ecstatic rites, religion,*
 sacrifice, veneration
 personal devotion120
 propitiatory worship . . .148,150
 Wyrms Friend quill pen30
 Xemelasee *Saint Xemela*
 Xentha122
 Xentha's Veil of Night122
 Yanafal Tarnils55,112
 Yara Aranis113
 Yarandros55
 yellow elvessee *elves*
 Yelm15,40-41,114,123-124,
 199,222
 see also *Emperor, Sun*
 celestial order of40
 Sun Emperor114
 Yelm's Imperial Palace123
 Yelmalio203,263
 Ygg127
 Yggites127
 Yolp Mountains262
 "You Out There Listening"39
 "You Who Helps Me"39
 Youf262
 "Your Glorantha Will Vary" . .8,194
 Yu-Kargzant . .46-47,143-144,200
 Yuthuppa123
 Zaytenara112
 Zistor262
 zombies194,200,221
 Zong218
 Zooming Hate Master152
 Zorak Zoran75,105,263
 Zzabur169-170,200,223

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CONVERTING FROM HERO WARS TO HEROQUEST

General Conversion Notes for All Books

All references to chapters in *Hero Wars* or *Narrator's Book* should, of course, reference the same or equivalent chapter in *HeroQuest*. References to the Advanced Magic chapter should be to the Basic Magic chapter of *HeroQuest*, although note that several Advanced Magic options from *Hero Wars* are not described in *HeroQuest*.

Abilities

- All references to an ability level starting at or not dropping below 12 should be changed to "starting at or not dropping below 13".
- Since there is no distinction between Physical and Mental abilities, such references should generally be ignored (although in specific instances, such as the Lhankor Mhy cult, they may need to be retained).



- There is no longer a *Close Combat*, *Ranged Combat*, or *Mass Combat* skill. Individual styles listed under those skills should be treated as individual skills. Thus, in the Herder keyword in *Thunder Rebels*, the ability *Ranged Combat (Sling or Archery)* is listed. This would be replaced with separate *Sling* or *Archery* skills. (As an option, the narrator may allow a player to retain *Close Combat*, *Ranged Combat*, and *Mass Combat* as **broadly defined abilities**, with the listed specialties; see *HeroQuest*, page 19, or *Hero's Book*, page 10, for details.) Any references to general *Close Combat* or similar abilities should be taken as “any close combat ability”.
- Ability Tests no longer exist in *HeroQuest*. Final actions use a simple contest (see *HeroQuest*, page 74, or *Hero's Book*, page 19). Any other ability test should be converted to a simple contest against the default resistance of 14.
- Edges and handicaps should be converted to bonuses and penalties (i.e. if a weapon's edge is $\blacktriangle 4$, it receives a +4 bonus instead) unless otherwise noted. The only exceptions to this are the first two books in the *Sartar Rising* series (*Barbarian Adventures* and *Orlanth is Dead!*). In those books, equipment edges should be converted as above, but edges given for magic should be halved. For instance, on page 20 of *Barbarian Adventures*, Iskallus Breathes Free's *Crushing Noise* feat shows an automatic edge of $+\blacktriangle 10$ from his *Thunderbolt* secret. This converts to a +5 bonus.

Magic Difficulty and Resistance

- All references next to magic listing penalties for inherently difficult magic should be ignored if different values are found in the relevant section of *HeroQuest* (page 101).
- All references next to magic specifying the resistance for a given magical ability should be ignored and the information in *HeroQuest* on pages 98-99 should be used instead. In general, any magical ability used properly faces a default resistance of 14, unless it faces active or supernatural resistance. This does not apply when magic is used as an augmentation or to resist an action, only when magic is used as an active ability. Difficult Magic modifiers given for specific magical abilities (as a *[D+X]* note after the feat or whatever) do still apply, as per *HeroQuest* page 101.

Secrets

- Secrets stated to act as ‘integrated passion spirits’ give the $+\frac{1}{4}$ bonus as an automatic augmentation (instead of the normal $\frac{1}{10}$), and may also be used as an active ability.
- Secrets stated to act as a **mystic strike** instead use a normal contest (simple or extended). Any level of victory has the stated result.

Animism

- Heroes and creatures with animist abilities will need some adjustment. Anyone with a *[Tradition] Knowledge* ability automatically has at least one *Member of [Practice]* ability as well. A hero can decide whether to retain the rating and have *Member of [Practice]* 13, or to transfer the rating to his *Member of [Practice]* ability and then have *[Tradition] Knowledge* 13.

- In *Hero Wars*, “talent” referred to an innate ability gained when an animist integrated a spirit. In *HeroQuest*, it refers to a common magic ability. Integrated spirits should be converted into charms as part of the Common Magic keyword. As with all common magic charms, these abilities can be improved by spending hero points. An animist who concentrates his magic can retain these common magic charms and continue to improve them using hero points.

Alternately, with the narrator's permission such abilities can be retained as “Natural Magical”, as defined in the *HeroQuest* online [errata](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

- Determination of fetch and shamanic ability ratings has changed in *HeroQuest*. A shaman should take the average of his *Shamanic Escape* and *Spirit World Travel* ability ratings and make this average the rating of his fetch; the original ratings should be ignored. His *Spirit Sight* rating remains unchanged, and does not contribute to his *Fetch* rating. If the shamanic practice in which he gained his fetch has an additional shamanic ability, he may add it to his character sheet as well. All of his shamanic abilities use his *Fetch* rating.
- Spirits no longer have a *Might* rating, but act in accordance with the rules in *HeroQuest* (p. 132). Generally, a listed *Might* should be taken as the spirit's typical ability rating, and references to *Might* should be read as an appropriate ability.
- Spirit combat is treated no differently than any other contest in *HeroQuest*.

Wizardry

- Most references to “sorcerers” should be taken as “wizards”.
- In cases where a *Read [Grimoire]* entry appears, it should instead read *Use [Grimoire]*. The wizardry user possesses a talisman for each individual spell that he has “connected to;” these talismans have base ratings of 13. For each point the *Use [Grimoire]* rating is over 13, the magician gains 2 hero points that he must immediately spend to increase one or more talisman ratings. No talisman rating can be increased to a rating greater than the original *Read [Grimoire]* rating. Any points not used during conversion are lost.

Miscellaneous Magic

- Mystic magic exists, but will be presented at a later date in very different form than it appeared in *Hero Wars*.
- Magical Home Defenses in *HeroQuest* are provided by or through a guardian (page 92, or *Hero's Book* page 29).
- Extending Magic does not favor sorcerers and wizards in *HeroQuest* as it did in *Hero Wars*. Instead, their widespread use of community support and the energy of essence sources and reliquaries (*HeroQuest*, pages 173-174) for almost all magic use explains their apparent advantage compared to the other magic systems.
- The Elemental Progression still exists, but was cut from *HeroQuest* due to space constraints. It should appear later this year in *Masters of Luck and Death*.

Heroquesting

- The “Heroic Consequences chart” has been eliminated. All contests use a single resolution chart, provided on page 74 of *HeroQuest* and on page 22 of *Hero's Book*, as well as in the [game aids](#).
- Otherworld Safety has been streamlined. The “dangerous” and “favored” categories have been removed, leaving all Otherworld realms either “safe” (no penalty) or “alien” (–20 to all abilities).



Converting Heroes from *Hero Wars* to *HeroQuest*

This is a relatively painless process and should not significantly affect game play. No hero points should be paid unless otherwise noted.

Note: all changes listed here are guidelines. If a narrator wishes to retain use of edges and handicaps as described in *Hero Wars*, she is free to do so in her game. If a player has specific ideas about converting his hero, the narrator should listen to them, but she always has the final say in how to do it.

Step 1: Add the appropriate Religion Keyword with a rating of 17.

Step 2: Increase the homeland keyword to 17 and adjust any abilities accordingly (i.e. add 4 to all abilities listed in the *Hero Wars* homeland keyword).

Step 3: Check all keywords for different abilities. If the player has already increased an ability that was deleted from a keyword, he may keep it at the current rating. He has the option of taking any additional abilities in the *HeroQuest* keyword, but he is not required to take any new abilities if he does not wish to.

For magic keywords, check the ability listings for the appropriate religious level (such as the Initiate Abilities on page 118) for new abilities (such as *Soul Vision*).

All animists must be members of at least one core practice, with appropriate abilities. A shaman should determine his *Fetch* rating as described in the **General Conversion Notes for All Books**.

A sorcerer should convert his *Read [Grimoire]* abilities and talismans as described in the **General Conversion Notes for All Books**.

Step 4: Each player has the option of taking the Common Magic keyword if not otherwise restricted (i.e. devotees, shamans). Any player opting for Common Magic takes the keyword at 17 and may choose up to 5 common magic abilities. Note that taking common magic may change the *future* hero point costs for magical abilities, but it does not affect hero points spent before conversion.

Step 5: *Close Combat*, *Ranged Combat*, and *Mass Combat* should be split into individual abilities, with up to three skills (reflecting existing specialties) receiving the original ability rating. If more than 3 skills are listed under one of these abilities, the player chooses which retain the ability rating and which have a rating of 13. If the player does not have any specialty listed, he should select one at this time to replace the broad ability.

The narrator may require a similar process for other broadly-defined abilities the hero may possess, or may require that the hero simply rename the ability as described in *HeroQuest* (page 19).

Step 6: A hero who wishes may concentrate his magic if he meets all the requirements specified in *HeroQuest* (see page 108). He must spend 1 hero point to do this. If the hero is already a devotee or shaman he is assumed to have already concentrated his magic, but he must immediately eliminate common magic

and other inappropriate abilities to ensure he meets the requirements of concentration, or he loses his religious status during conversion.

Step 7: The player must choose which followers become **sidekicks** and which become **retainers**. If the hero has a single follower, the player can decide if it is a retainer or a sidekick. If he has multiple followers, he may select one to convert to a sidekick for free; the others become retainers unless he immediately pays 2 hero points for each one he wishes to convert into a sidekick. In *HeroQuest*, retainers have a single keyword, while sidekicks have a single keyword and three additional abilities.

Retainers: If one of the retainer's old abilities was a keyword, it becomes his keyword at a rating of 17. Otherwise, the player should select a keyword that encompasses the old abilities. The individual abilities themselves are lost. If the player wants an individual relationship to a retainer, the highest rating of the player's old relationship and the follower's two old abilities becomes the new relationship. Otherwise, the highest of the individual relationship ratings the hero had to his old followers becomes his new *Relationship to Retainers*; the other ratings are removed.

Sidekicks: If one of the sidekick's old abilities was a keyword, it becomes his keyword at a rating of 17. Otherwise, the player may choose a keyword. The remaining ability or abilities should be listed, with the player adding one or two abilities to bring the total to three. Any existing abilities retain their original rating, with the additional ratings assigned as per *HeroQuest* (spending up to 5 points per new ability added). The hero retains his old relationship with the sidekick.

Step 8: Change all edges to bonuses (i.e. if a weapon's edge is $\Delta 4$, it receives a +4 bonus instead).



Anaxial's Roster

When detailed in both places, the entry for a creature in *HeroQuest* should be used in conjunction with the entry in *Anaxial's Roster*. In cases of discrepancies or contradictions, data in the *HeroQuest* entry (such as ability ratings or weapon bonuses) should take precedence. However, where *Anaxial's Roster* has additional information (such as the new powers possessed by nymphs), such were left out of *HeroQuest* for simplicity's sake, and the information in *Anaxial's Roster* is still valid.

General Notes

- *Anaxial's Roster* shows many examples of rounding not in line with *HeroQuest* rules (p. 79). *HeroQuest* rounding should be used instead.
- All references to a **dangerous world modifier** (–10) should be replaced with an **alien world modifier** (–20) instead. Thus, a demon in an “alien” part of the Underworld takes a –20 modifier to all abilities, just as if it was in the Inner World or a foreign Otherworld.

Tapping

- Some creatures have abilities similar to *Tapping*, which is not in *HeroQuest*. Such creatures can use their tapping ability to drain points from entries on the character sheet that match the description of the tap ability. Generally, the highest ability is targeted. If the tapping creature wins the contest, the target permanently loses an amount from its ability based on the level of defeat. The tapping creature adds these points to its abilities as defined in the creature's description, distributing them as evenly as possible. For example, if a memovore attacks Hogar's *Know Local Area* ability and drives him to –14 AP in the extended contest, Hogar suffers a minor defeat and loses 10% of his *Know Local Area 10W* ability, and so loses 3 points. The memovore adds 1 each to its *Aura of Confusion*, *Detect Intruder*, and *Induce Amnesia* abilities. This loss is permanent, but Hogar can spend hero points to increase his rating. If the tapping creature loses the contest, losses from the Consequences Table are applied to its Tap ability. Thus, if the memovore is driven to –14 AP, it suffers a minor defeat and loses 10% from its *Tap Memories*. If this brings the Tap ability of a memovore, hellion, or konkon below zero, the creature ceases to exist. Others suffer the consequences of the Results Table.

Poison

For poison, three entries are listed in *Anaxial's Roster*:

- The first entry (debilitating, instant, lingering) describes how long the poison takes to finish its effect. For *HeroQuest*, debilitating and instant should be considered the same. *HeroQuest* states that poison can be either a simple or extended contest and this entry can be used as a guideline for the narrator in making that decision.
- The second entry (lethal, painful, paralyzing) describes the effect. If a lethal poison wins the contest, the victim suffers based on the level of defeat (if done as an extended contest, lethal poisons will generally attempt a parting shot [*HeroQuest*, page 69 or *Hero's Book* page 19]).
- The third entry, potency, is the ability rating of the poison. Poison is mindless, and will generally bid $\frac{1}{4}$ of its starting AP in an extended contest, although it always up to the narrator, so that an especially virulent poison might make an

“all-out attack” when first injected, reflecting its speed of action and potency and (perhaps) the innate immunity of some people to its effects.

Specific Notes

- p. 11 **Combat Abilities:** As with the creatures in *HeroQuest*, creatures described in *Anaxial's Roster* receive automatic augmentations from appropriate abilities.
- p. 12 **Other Abilities, Variations:** Starting ability for added abilities is 13, not 12.
- p. 29 **Nar sylla:** Integrated spirits should be treated as common magic charms. If a nar sylla concentrates his common magic, he can manifest these abilities as nymphs do (see page 219).
The *Ally with Kolati* talent should be replaced with a **spirit ally**, per the normal rules in *HeroQuest* (pages 137-138).
- p. 52 **Goldeneye:** Ignore references to integrating spirits. Any integrated spirits a goldeneye possesses can be treated as common magic talents in *HeroQuest*.
- p. 62 **Zerapralor:** Consider his talents as common magic talents and assume that Zerapralor has concentrated his magic. He may embody these talents as nymphs do (see page 219).
- p. 70 **Mralotings:** Consider the talents as common magic talents and assume that the Mraloting has concentrated its magic.
- p. 76 **Satyr:** Any talents should be treated as charms, part of the Common Magic keyword and assume that the satyr has concentrated his animist magic.
- p. 77-78 **Unicorn:** Treat a unicorn's *Unicorn Law* ability exactly as if it were a *Use [Grimoire]* ability, with its horn functioning as the grimoire. Unicorns cannot create talismans for the effects that they know.
- p. 80 **Gorthak:** Consider the talents as common magic talents and assume that Gorthak has concentrated his magic. He may embody these talents as described on page 219.
- p. 88 **Manticore:** Narrators should decide which abilities of a devoured foe are “mental abilities.”
- p. 98 **Hrognar:** Consider the talents as common magic talents and assume that Hrognar has concentrated his magic. He may embody these talents as nymphs do (see page 219).
- p. 122 **Typical Male Zabdamar Shaman:** “Typical Talents” should read “Typical Fetishes”.
- p. 125 **Elves:** As described on page 212 of *HeroQuest*, an elf bow should be treated as a retainer rather than a spirit.
- p. 127 **Typical Elf Forest Guardian:** Replace “Elf Bow $\Delta 4$ (acts as a follower, lending 15 AP to Ranged Combat)” with “Elf Bow 17 (+4 weapon bonus)”.

- p. 130 **Occupations:** Ignore the reference to *Close Combat*. Dwarf “occupational abilities” are treated as broadly defined abilities.
- p. 136 **Typical Baboon Hunter:** “Typical Talents” should read “Typical Fetishes”.
- p. 173 **Basilisk:** Note that the *Death Gaze* is not “pompous magic” (*HeroQuest*, page 99), but a very deadly Chaos feature that works exactly as described.
- p. 178-179 **Huan To:** Rather than assigning a D+40 difficulty to healing the effects of Huan To venom, treat it as a magical attack that has no effect unless it attains a complete victory. If it does, only (appropriate) major magical healing, used before the transformation is complete, will heal the victim and prevent him from becoming a ghoul. Once the victim transforms into a ghoul, he is a standard undead creature, and can be killed/destroyed normally.
- p. 196 **Kilin:** Treat the *Curse Foreigner* or *Wicked Person* as a wizardry curse but with doubled effect because of special magic, thus causing a -10 automatic penalty to appropriate ability ratings (rather than -5) if the kilin is victorious in its contest.
- p. 205 **Kivis:** Treat a fire bear’s *Kivis Law* ability exactly as if it were a *Use [Grimoire]* ability, with the bear’s flames functioning as the grimoire. Fire bears cannot create talismans for the effects that they know.
- p. 207 **Luathan:** Most luathans use their weapons and armor as talismans.
- p. 207-208 **Memovore:** See the general notes about *Tapping*.
- p. 211 **Redcap:** The special rules for redcaps may be used as written, or the edges treated as bonuses (see General Notes above) at the narrator’s option. Either way, the redcap loses 1 point for each Hurt, 2 points for an Impairment, 4 points for an Injury, and 8 points if it would otherwise be Dying.
- p. 212-217 **Nature Spirits:** For now, all references to integrating spirits should be taken as binding them into fetishes or charms. If a nature spirit has multiple abilities, usually only one will have a rating equal to the *Hero Wars Might*; the others will generally have lower ratings.
- p. 219-223 **Nymphs:** Although embodied talents seem similar to spirit allies (*HeroQuest*, page 137) in some ways, they are not separate entities, and their description in *Anaxial’s Roster* can be used exactly as written.
 The *Might* given in *Anaxial’s Roster* was for a relatively weak nymph, and determined ratings of both her *Perceive Events in [Home]* ability and her talents (and, for dryads, her *Elfsense*). An older or more powerful nymph will have a higher rating in *Perceive Events in [Home]* and her talents.
- p. 224-230 **Disease Spirits:** All disease spirits replace their *Might* with a specific disease ability. Thus, a Boggle Trot Spirit with *Might 15* now has *Boggle Trot 15*, and a Creeping Chills Spirit with *Might 15* has *Creeping Chills 15*.
- p.225 **Infection:** The default is for a disease to cause an illness penalty of $-\frac{1}{10}$ the disease’s potency, as if it

- were a wizardry curse. However, the narrator is free to apply different penalties, as described in “Illness Penalties” on page 226.
- p. 227 **Fetishes and Integration:** For now, ignore references to living beings integrating disease spirits (last paragraph).
- p. 231-232 **Healing Spirit:** A healing spirit bound into a charm or fetish acts as like any other charm or fetish described in *HeroQuest*, rather than having a limited number of uses.
- p. 232-235 **Passion Ghosts:** These are called specters in *HeroQuest*. Ignore any reference to a separate *Might*; the passion ghost uses its *Aura of [Trait]* as its primary ability.
 Ignore any special description of fetishes and charms; a fetish or charm containing a passion ghost works exactly as described in *HeroQuest*.
- p.235 **Violence Spirit:** See the General Notes for *Storm Tribe* for information on berserker magic.
- p. 238 **Hellion:** See the general notes about *Tapping*.
- p. 240 **Kon-kon:** See the general notes about *Tapping*.
- p. 243 **Boggle:** See the general notes about *Tapping*.



Thunder Rebels

Specific Notes

- p. 65 The ability to seek divine aid through the medium of a god-talker is special magic available to Heortlings, and works as described on page 66, with the god-talker matching an appropriate ability (with ritual modifiers) against a resistance determined by the narrator. (If the god-talker does not have an exact *Pray to [God]* ability, he takes an improvisational modifier for using his *Worship Storm Pantheon* ability.)
- p. 68 **Subcults and Magic:** A devotee must increase his subcult affinity and both of his aspect affinities to a rating of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ each to learn the subcult secret.
- p. 69 In the example, only *feats* improvised from *Fight Elements* and *Storm* suffer an improvisational modifier. Using the affinities for a bonus (augmentation) does not take this modifier, in accordance with *HeroQuest*.
- p. 85 **Protection:** While the **alien world modifier** has changed, the -10 may still apply to foreign priests as an improvisational modifier to an appropriate ability, at the narrator's option.
- p. 101 Although wyters use the rules for guardians in *HeroQuest* (page 92), they use their functions as if they were affinities, rather than as individual abilities. Because most clans are old and well-established, they should determine their *Awareness*, *Blessing*, and *Defense* ratings as described in *Thunder Rebels*.
- p. 153 Add the Storm Pantheon and Common Magic keywords to both the Male Heortling and Female Heortling list (near the bottom of the page).
- p. 155 Players of existing Heortling heroes may add all the abilities from the Storm Pantheon keyword at a rating of 17 (unless the hero already has one of the abilities at a higher rating). We recommend that new Heortling heroes start with the Heortling Homeland keyword from *HeroQuest* (p. 48), but narrators may allow the hero to add the additional abilities listed here (*Housework* for women; *Fyrd Mass Combat*, *Javelin Throwing*, and *Running for Men*), at her option.
- p. 160-168 New Heortling players should use the Entertainer, Farmer, Healer, Hunter, Merchant, and Warrior occupation keywords from *HeroQuest* (pages 31-35) rather than the versions in this book, although narrators may allow them to use these keywords instead as more "Heortling-specific" versions. The unique occupations provided in *Thunder Rebels* (Beggar, Craftperson, Fisher, Gardener, God-talker, Herder, Steadwife, Stickpicker) are available to new Heortling players as well, as are advanced occupations to appropriate heroes.
- p. 191 The narrator may allow players to use either the Skovara keyword in this book or the one in *HeroQuest* (page 126), at her option.
- p. 193 Add the feat *Heal Impairment* to Ernalda the Healer's *Heal People* affinity.
- p. 194 Bevara's *Heal Self Fully* feat is **not major magical healing** (see *HeroQuest*, page 81), but it may act as one at the narrator's option since it only affects the caster, and so is already hindered in ways that a secret most likely would not be. For example, it is not much use during an extended contest since a hero cannot transfer AP to himself. Also, once the contest is resolved, the hero may still suffer an appropriate penalty to the ability if she fails, so an injured hero *will* have her rating in the feat halved. Alternately, this feat can be considered "pompous magic" (see *HeroQuest*, page 99) and so might not necessarily heal the hero fully without a complete victory (i.e., a marginal victory might only stabilize the hero, while a minor or major victory might only reduce the wound "level" by one or two respectively). The narrator should decide based on the needs of her game.
- p. 195 The medicine Jera creates has a rating equivalent to the rating of the *Heal People* affinity or the actual feat used, whichever is higher.
- p. 199 Kadone the Grounder's *Dismiss Air Elemental* feat should actually be *Dismiss Air Essence*.
- p. 203 A Grain Goddess or Animal Mother follower using her affinities does not take an improvisational penalty when using it as an automatic augment, even if not used on her subcult plant or animal.
- p. 229 A follower of Varanorlanth who knows the *Survive Anywhere* secret suffers no **alien world penalty** anywhere in the God World, and only half the normal penalty (i.e., -10) in the other Otherworlds.
- p. 235 When a devotee of Orlanthcarl who knows the cult secret plows a field, he has two choices. He can use a mundane ability to initiate the contest, augmented by the secret's rating. The narrator then sets the resistance based on the terrain. Alternately, the devotee can use the *Plow Any Field* secret itself. In this case, he faces only a resistance of 14 (the default resistance for magic) unless there is an active and/or supernatural resistance (as described in *HeroQuest*, page 99 or *Hero's Book* page 25).
- p. 239 The *Conquer Elements* secret provides a bonus rather than an edge.
- p. 247 Ignore the portion of a manmolaning's description referring to a passion spirit. The rest of the description is accurate in that a victim overcome by a manmolaning suffers a penalty of $-\frac{1}{10}$ of its *Steal Breath* rating.



Storm Tribe

General Notes

Berserk magic gives an automatic augment of +¼ the ability's rating (as compared to the normal automatic augment of +½). However, the berserker is in a blind rage, and in an extended contest must bid at least ½ his remaining advantage points each round. Any attempts to calm the berserker will take a penalty of ¼ the berserk rating.

Specific Notes

p. 15 The +5 bonus Wind Lords receive in ritual situations is above and beyond any bonus they provide if filling a ritual role (*HeroQuest*, page 102).

p. 26 A divine companion should be treated as a sidekick if deemed a follower rather than an ally.

p. 28 These unusual occupations remain available to Heortling heroes.

p. 39 Chalana Arroy's *Heal Wounds* affinity no longer provides the feats of *Regenerate Damage Fully* or *Regrow Severed Limb*. It does, however, include *Heal Impairment*, which should be added.

p. 99 All blessings that are said to increase rank provide an equivalent bonus instead.

p. 132-133 *HeroQuest* does not differentiate between physical and mental abilities. The narrator and player should work together to determine if a specific mundane ability qualifies as a "mental ability" for purposes of membership or advancement in Lhankor Mhy's cult.

Because of changes in *HeroQuest* character creation, it is possible for a hero to begin play with two abilities at 7W each, and so start as a senior apprentice. However, it is *not* possible to start as a devotee, since that would use all 20 points the player has to spend, without the additional 3 points necessary to start as a devotee. As such, the narrator may wish to allow a player to spend more than 10 points on a single "mental ability" during character creation, thus allowing him to start with one ability at 10W and still have at least 3 points left to start as a devotee as well.

p. 135-136 The cost to gain one of the scrolls as a grimoire is now 3 hero points.

Torvald's worship is misapplied worship as defined by *HeroQuest*. As such, worshippers do not take a penalty when using their affinities or calling for divine aid. Instead, even if they concentrate their magic, they pay the full hero point cost to learn or increase their Lhankor Mhy affinities or any of Torvald's scrolls. Once the hero has learned Torvald's secret, he does gain the advantage of concentrating when learning or improving any of Torvald's special magic (i.e., he pays half the normal hero point cost to learn or improve the scrolls or the subcult secret), but still pays the full hero point cost to improve the two base affinities.

There is no longer a dangerous modifier; the full alien world penalty applies to both initiates and devotees in the Spirit World or Essence Planes.

p. 138

Once a jolsedaring has possessed a victim, it will attack the victim's highest knowledge ability weekly. If he has no knowledge abilities, his highest "mental ability" is targeted. If the jolsedaring is victorious, that ability's rating is permanently reduced as indicated by the jolsedaring's victory level (i.e., a result of "hurt" reduces the ability by 1, a result of "impaired" reduces the ability by ½ its rating, etc.). Once a number of abilities equal to ¼ of the victim's *Initiate of Lhankor Mhy* or *Devotee of Lhankor Mhy* rating are reduced to 0, the victim dies and his soul becomes a new jolsedaring.

p. 150

Beast Charms act as fetishes per the animist rules, generally granting a single magical ability and personality trait as listed in the examples. While the hero point cost is "doubled" as stated (i.e., in *HeroQuest* it is the normal cost, unaffected by concentrating magic), using the Beast Charms does *not* affect the Odaylan's ability to concentrate his theist magic and gain the full benefits of doing so (*HeroQuest*, page 108 or *Hero's Book* page 27).

p. 163

Uroxi who attend the *wapentake* bind spirits into fetishes rather than integrating them or gaining common magic charms. They are considered practitioners of the Storm Bull Practice (but not members of the Praxian Tradition), and gain full access to practitioner magic. As long as they only interact with Storm Bull Practice spirits, they can concentrate their Urox/Storm Bull magic, paying half hero point cost for both the Urox affinities and the Storm Bull fetishes. To gain this benefit, they must give up all other feats and spirits.

p. 177

A devotee of Vinga the Avenger who has created a Blade of Vengeance adds the secret's rating to any appropriate *Sword Fighting* ability.

p. 204

When a devotee of Barntar who knows the cult secret plows a field, he has two choices. He can use a mundane ability to initiate the contest, augmented by the secret's rating. The narrator sets the resistance based on the terrain. Alternately, the devotee can use the *Plow Any Field* secret itself. In this case, he faces only a resistance of 14 (the default resistance for magic) regardless of terrain or circumstances, unless there is an active or supernatural resistance (as described in *HeroQuest*, page 99 or *Hero's Book* page 25).

p. 208

A Brastalos devotee's *Eye of the Storm* secret is automatically the resistance for any storm or weather power used near her (unless the resistance would otherwise be higher, in which case the secret provides an automatic augment to that resistance).

p. 210-213

Donandar is now a common religion. Any player who possesses one of his affinities should instead receive all of that affinity's listed feats as common magic. (Affinities gained from subcults like Skovara or Molamin, are not converted in this way.) Each hero point previously spent to increase one of the affinity ratings can be used to improve one of the feats by +1. For more info, see *HeroQuest*, page 111.

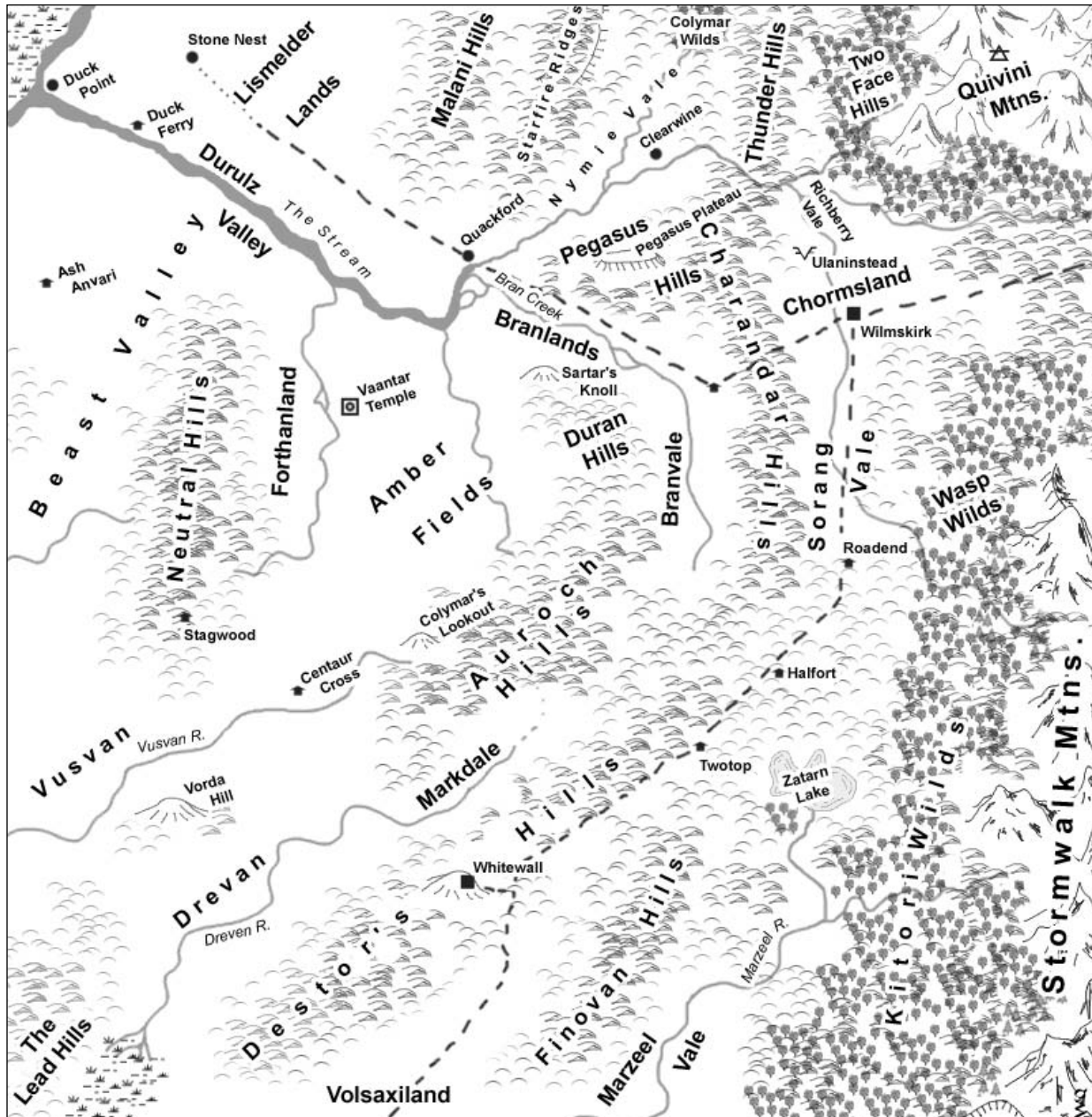
Barbarian Adventures

Specific Notes

- p. 12 Under *Contest Synopsis*, automatic augments should be calculated per normal *HeroQuest* rules (page 79 or *Hero's Book* page 25).
- p. 27 For the Thunder Delta Slingers, treat their talents as innate magical abilities (i.e., talents). If analyzed, they appear as animist abilities but otherwise act like talents.
- p. 28 Under the Silverflames, it states that the *Silverflame Scimitar* blessing provides both a bonus and an edge. This is incorrect; the guardian acts like any other, with the blessing providing an automatic augment of $\frac{1}{10}$ the function's rating.
- p. 45 For Chaos Bee poison, see the note on poison in the *Anaxial's Roster* conversion notes.

Orlanth is Dead!

No special notes needed, but replace the map on page 51 with the more detailed one provided below.



HEROQUEST

Roleplaying in Glorantha

Cosmic forces stir. Gods and goddesses awaken, spirits cross the barrier, and essences flow over the world. Demons shatter their bonds and ravage the world. Demigods lead armies and the dead lurch forth from their graves. Oceans rise, the sky falls. It is the Hero Wars.

A Game of Adventure

Foreigners surge into your homeland. Monsters roam the landscape. Empires rise and fall, and lives hang in the balance. Adventure into the myths and conflicts of this ancient and magical world and make it your home.

A Game of Heroes

You oversee the actions of your hero. You choose the abilities and magic that will propel him towards his destiny. Gather your companions and gain the support of peoples, nations, and religions. Quest to become an immortal hero of legend.

A Game of Discovery

Starting is quick and easy, because the game is designed to teach the rules as part of the story. A colorful narrative illustrates the rules, setting, and flexible nature of the system. All the rules needed to play are in this book.

Selected Contents

Playing *HeroQuest*—Information on Roleplaying in Glorantha, What are the Hero Wars?, and Magical Landscapes.

Heroes—Create your hero by choosing from 13 occupations and 10 homelands.

Hero Points—Use hero points to influence the game or improve your hero.

Core Rules—Rules for Simple Contests, Extended Contests, Modifiers and Augmentation, and Healing and Recovery.

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Creatures—Statistics for 45 creatures to aid or oppose your hero.

Introduction to Glorantha—Mythos and History, The Mortal World, and an introduction to Dragon Pass, land of thunder.

Adventures—Four complete adventures, including the Heavy Earth heroquest.

Appendices—Sample Hero Bands, Runes, Bibliography and Sources, Game Aids, Glossary of Essential Game Terms, and a full Index.

Everyone is a hero in HeroQuest!

HeroQuest, Roleplaying in Glorantha is intended for both players and narrators.

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