

Michael Moorcock's

GLORIAN

OF MELNIBONÉ



CORE RULEBOOK

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ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ

CORE RULEBOOK

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ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ



This book concerns one of the most iconic figures in contemporary fantasy literature: Michael Moorcock's *Elric of Melniboné*. For more than 40 years Michael has chronicled the adventures and fate of Elric, the last prince and Emperor of the doomed isle of Melniboné. Elric's adventures have taken him from one edge of his world to the other and beyond, into other worlds – all part of the sprawling, infinite, Multiverse that lies at the heart of Michael's written works. Elric, carrier of the soul-drinking sword Stormbringer, is a prince and a wanderer; a thief, vagabond and an emperor; a slayer of men, friends and the women he loves. In his quest to find peace, he finds only tragedy, slaughter and regret. There has never been any fantasy character like Elric and, through him, Michael reshaped the way fantasy literature explored heroism, myth and the themes so traditional to good fantasy: good versus evil, order versus entropy. Indeed, Moorcock developed many of these themes into the tropes they have since become, influencing countless other authors and, in the course of his work, influencing the nature of roleplaying games.

This book therefore explores Elric's world as a place for roleplaying adventure using the latest version of the *RuneQuest* Core Rules. In these pages you will discover how to create Young Kingdoms (the lands Elric wanders and is most closely associated with) Adventurers, be they human, Melnibonéan or one of the other fascinating races with which Moorcock populates his worlds. You will learn about the magic of the Young Kingdoms and the way the forces of Law and Chaos seek to control them, shape them and, ultimately, doom them.

The spotlight in Michael Moorcock's novels is firmly on Elric: that is to be expected from the works based on Elric's life but there is still room for Games Masters and individual characters to make a difference. That is where this book comes in.

Elric's saga spans 10 or so years of Young Kingdoms history, from the time Elric leaves Imrryr to travel for a year, through his many years of wandering the world and other planes, culminating in the final battle that reshapes the Young Kingdoms into our own world. This book describes this decade, referring to events in the recent

past, the present and in the near future. Elric is abroad in the world, Theleb K'arna hatches his schemes against the southern continent, Myshella and Tanelorn, and the Sea Lords gather to plan the razing of Imrryr. So the default setting for this game is during the time of Elric but no precise date or period is given. Games Masters may choose any point in the 10 years of the saga, using the momentous events Elric causes, as either a backdrop to their campaigns, or to include the Adventurers in them. There is still time for many adventures in the years before Elric wields Stormbringer in the great battle against Chaos. Although the fate of the earth is set by the stories not everything is cast in stone. Adventurers can still trek across the Weeping Waste, heavy blades held in tired hands as they keep alert for signs of bandit ambush; or stalk through the forests of Jharkor, ever-aware that they are being preyed upon by otherworldly monsters.

WHO IS ELRIC?

If you have read any of Michael's books then the name Elric is unlikely to be new to you. If, however, this is your first foray into the Elric saga, a little background is necessary.

Elric is the last prince and Emperor of the island of Melniboné, home to an inhuman race that ruled the world for 10,000 years. Masters of dragons and dark sorcery, Elric and his kin dominated the Young Kingdoms but have fallen into decline. This is now a time for humans who, having thrown off the yoke of Melniboné's empire, are forging for themselves a new, but no less sophisticated, destiny. New kingdoms have emerged – the Young Kingdoms to which this book and the saga constantly refer – and these kingdoms are now the masters of their own destiny – or so they believe. Melniboné is now in a soporific state; decadent, distanced, dying, slowly, steadily and assuredly.

Elric hastens their demise but not before he has spent time wandering through the new lands that surround the jaded isle of Melniboné. In his travels he gains the fabled and dangerous runesword, Stormbringer, learns of his own place in the schemes of Law and Chaos, challenges gods, defeats monsters and sails the seas that connect the many worlds of the Multiverse together.

In time Elric destroys both Melniboné and his betrothed. Filled with remorse and regret, he wanders continually until, eventually, the battle between Law and Chaos drags Elric into the final battle that will bring about the death of the Young Kingdoms and the world's rebirth into our own.

WHAT ARE THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

The Young Kingdoms are the nations of Elric's world; this is the shape the world took before it was reshaped and formed our own. The Young Kingdoms therefore occupied a different cycle of time to the contemporary world and was its predecessor.

In this game your Adventurers will be residents of the Young Kingdoms or, possibly, travellers to it from elsewhere and elsewhere. You will have the opportunity to explore the kingdoms that have arisen since Melniboné's decline and help forge their destiny. Perhaps you will change history and ensure the Young Kingdoms' survival; or perhaps your Adventurers will, like Elric, contribute to its demise. This game, *Elric of Melniboné*, places you at the heart of the Elric saga and allows your characters to participate in similar adventures to those of Elric and friends.

For the Young Kingdoms are filled with adventure, peril, magic and turmoil. These are new lands with an ancient legacy. Magic is rare but potent; and those who have wielded it in the past have left their marks in ways that the people of the Young Kingdoms must now deal with.

The Young Kingdoms are not like our own world. The continents are different, the countries are unique in character and the world itself is far smaller. At its furthest edges the stuff of Chaos, the raw morass of creation, laps, beckoning the intrepid to carve new lands from it. Your Adventurers might be amongst those who help shape the world; in small ways or grand.

ABOUT MICHAEL MOORCOCK

There are few living authors as prolific as Michael Moorcock. Born in 1939, he published his first novel in 1961. Throughout the 1960s and 70s he was the editor of the hugely influential *New Worlds* magazine, which actively championed ground-breaking fantasy and imaginative fiction. Michael's Jerry Cornelius novel *The Condition of Muzak*, won the 1977 Guardian Fiction prize and he has been accorded no less than three 'Lifetime Achievement' awards. In 2002 Michael was inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame.

Elric is his most famous and enduring creation. The albino began life as a reaction to both the brawny heroes of Sword and Sorcery fantasy, such as Conan (one of Michael's first works was a Conan pastiche, *Sojan the Swordsman*) and the detailed epics of JRR Tolkien. Michael reversed the traditional clichés of fantasy at that time, questioning the role and nature of the 'hero', and delved into the psychology of his most famous character in ways unseen in fantasy literature. Despite killing Elric at the end of only the second book concerning the albino's exploits (*Stormbringer*), he continued to revisit the saga over the course of the next 40 years, adding to it, enriching it and delving deeper into philosophical ideas concerning love, betrayal and the meaning of existence. Elric is, as a result, one of the most detailed and best-drawn fantasy characters ever created. As the Elric stories have progressed, Michael has explored the roles of myth and their interpretation, creating an even deeper body of work that continues to provoke and astound in equal measure.

Michael has never confined himself to one medium. Elric has been the subject of music, poetry and graphic novels (*Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer* being the most recent, detailed exploration of the saga): there are continued rumours of a film.

Michael is highly respected as a writer, critic, editor, musician, thinker, *agent provocateur* and chronicler of the fantastic. He has never shirked from tackling controversial themes in his work and remains as active and as influential as ever. The shelves of book stores might groan under the weight of epic fantasy trilogies, quartets, sextets and more, each penned by a succession of 'new masters of the genre'. But Moorcock was there first: but for his efforts, those shelves would contain meagre offerings.

RUNEQUEST II

This is not a standalone game. To make the best of it you will need a copy of the *RuneQuest II Core Rulebook* and *Elric of Melniboné* makes frequent reference to these core rules. Be advised that as *RuneQuest II* is the up to date version of the *RuneQuest* rules, it is simply referred to as the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* throughout this book.

Otherwise, this book provides everything you need to adventure in the Young Kingdoms. A companion volume, *Cults of the Young Kingdoms*, expands the cults available to Adventurers but is by no means essential. Games Masters may also find the following *RuneQuest* books useful but, again, *not* a requisite for playing *Elric of Melniboné*:

- *Arms and Equipment*
- *Monster Coliseum*
- *Necromantic Arts*

One other thing we recommend: if you have *not* read any of the Elric stories, we advise you to do so – without delay. Most

are still available in collected editions found through most good booksellers and online retailers. If you have read the saga, *then read it again!* There is no substitute for immersing yourself in the saga to gain the right mindset, atmosphere and understanding for making the most of this game and its world.

CONTENTS

This is an extensive setting book and is arranged as follows:

Map

The following page contains a detailed map of the Young Kingdoms and the Unknown East – the chief realms where adventures will take place. The Multiverse itself is somewhat harder to map and we have not made the attempt.

Introduction

Which you are currently reading.

The Young Kingdoms

An overview of the Young Kingdoms and its society, plus a kingdom-by-kingdom description of the nations of the world. Read this chapter to gain a better understanding of both Elric's home and its extensive history.

Young Kingdoms Adventurers

Extensive rules for creating Adventurers for *Elric of Melniboné*. You will need the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* for this chapter.

Equipment

New weapons and armour for the Young Kingdoms. A more extensive list of general equipment is found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Law, Chaos and the Multiverse

An overview and examination of the key themes of the Elric saga: the powers of Law and Chaos and the existence of the Multiverse.

Magic and Sorcery

The various magic and sorcery systems found in the Elric saga. Note that these are different to those found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Cults

A chapter devoted to the cults, religions and religious approaches of the Young kingdoms.

Creatures and Personalities

RuneQuest statistics for a variety of creatures appearing in the Elric saga and game statistics for some of the most important characters from the stories and novels.

Games Masters Chapter

Advice and guidance for new and experienced Elric Games Masters alike.

Alternative Eras

An examination of different time lines and eras for *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns.

The Unknown East

The Young Kingdoms

The Dawn Ocean

Sea of Circles

The Roaring Rocks

The Eastern Ocean

The Oldest Ocean

The Dragon Sea

ESHMIR
The Scar of the Night
The Withered Peaks
The Great Hating
The Capital Towns
Her'sie
The Great Hating
CHANGSHAI
Shaka
Oke
Yulphat
Hakul
Rizau
VALEDERIA
Valephul
Bay of Gesso
Circles
Zobhai
MAIDAHK
Rameer
Yhad
Yasun
SAEEMI
Kamlose
Craghan
NISHVALNLOSS
Haghanin Host
Basik Hills
Forests of Blades
Ink
Amezzan
Jhameer
Kamlose

BASLK
The Ragged Pillars
Kwan
Sighing Desert
Weeping Waste
Imiofa
Kurbak
Gorhan
Kiyasum
VIMMIR
Uvaso
Hakul
Mair
Straits of Water
City of the Yellow Coast
PIKARAYD
Cesh
Dead Hill
DOREL
Avellamain
Kurekbo

TARESH
Pale Sea
Vale of Xanyaw
JHARKOR
Seyquand
Nangosor
Drauos
Straits of Claves
Banava
Alkava
Alkava
Alkava
SHAZAAR
Thokora
Marshes of Mist
Serpents Teeth
The Silent Lands

ARGIMILLAR
Kumasa
Caldaritis
Kasidi
Sagraz
LORMYR
Josaz
Alenaz
OIN
Drazlam
AU
Jungle
Rile-K'ron A'o
Jungle
Boiling Sea
Akhunboon

THE YOUNG KINGDOMS



‘There came a time when there was great movement upon the Earth and above it, when the destiny of Men and Gods was hammered out upon the forge of Fate, when monstrous wars were brewed and mighty deeds were designed. And there rose up in this time, which was called the Age of the Young Kingdoms, heroes. Greatest of these heroes was a doom-driven adventurer who bore a crooning rune blade that he loathed.’

— Stormbringer

PREHISTORY AND THE BIRTH OF MELNIBONÉ

The Young Kingdoms predate our own world. When Elric blows the Horn of Fate he signals the end of his time and the beginning of ours; time begins anew.

This is not, however, the first such cataclysm. A full cycle of time has passed already, although little is known of it. What Melniboné’s scholars do know is that the world was created by the Lords of Chaos and, with it, all life. The first sapient life was a race known as The Doomed Folk and they grew to hate their world with such intensity that they brought about their own destruction.

In the new world that arose from the ashes of the Doomed Folk, several non-human races established themselves. These included the Older Ones, worshippers of the Lords of Law and now long forgotten; the winged people of Myyrrhn, the civilised descendents of the ape-like clakars; and, in the Silent Lands, a strange inhuman race that were distant relatives of the Myyrrhn. The Elemental Rulers: Grome, Straasha, Lassa and Kakatal, vied for power and inevitably came into violent conflict. Twenty thousand years ago the world was reshaped again, this time into the continents of the Young Kingdoms, when Grome and Straasha battled for supremacy over land and sea. The imposing geographical features of the world, such as The Ragged Pillars and the Roaring Rocks, are the result of this supernatural struggle and not plate tectonics.

Then appeared the race that would come to be Melniboné: the Mernii. Their true origins are unclear, even to Melniboné’s own

scholars. Some claim that the Melnibonéans were Nomads of the Time Streams whilst others argue that they were natives of the earth and interbred with the Older Ones. Certainly Melniboné’s first seat of civilisation was not the island of Melniboné but the city of R’lin K’ren A’a, now hidden in the jungles beyond the Boiling Sea. When a race known as the Dead Gods sought to challenge the Older Ones, the Older Ones responded by forging the twin runeswords Stormbringer and Mournblade to slay their enemies. The war between the Older Ones and the Dead Gods resulted in the destruction of both races and the Mernii inherited the world.

At this time the Mernii were allied with the Cosmic Balance and they left R’lin K’ren A’a and settled on the series of islands that became Melniboné. But the sinister powers of the Lords of Chaos seduced certain Mernii, showing them how, through Chaos and sorcery, they could surpass any of the races who had ruled the world before. A vicious civil war erupted with the Balance-aligned Mernii fleeing the dreadful, Chaos-fuelled destruction of their city, H’hui’shan. The Chaos-worshippers who remained inherited the title of Melniboné. They learned to tame the great dragons of their island and built new cities, first and foremost dreaming Imrryr. The Dragon Lords, bearing Stormbringer and Mournblade, conquered the rest of the world swiftly and mercilessly, revelling in their power and new-found cruelty.

The Bright Empire was born.

UPSTART NATIONS AND NEW OPPRESSORS

Melniboné ruled the world for 10,000 years. It did so through a mixture of fear, sorcery and economic might. Melniboné considers humans as an irrelevance; pathetic and uncultured barbarians fit only to be used as slaves or, at best, treated as harmless pets. Melniboné ruled alone although the smaller, more distant, empire of Quarzhasaat – the first truly human civilisation – arose in the north but was annihilated by Melniboné in a great battle in the Sighing Desert.

Nothing could challenge Melniboné's supremacy and nothing did until, approximately 1,000 years ago, when the beast-worshipping Dharzi came from the east and sought to assert themselves over the Bright Empire.

The ensuing war was disastrous for Melniboné. It was forced to call upon every resource it possessed – ancient pacts with the Lords of Chaos, the Elements and Beasts; its mighty, slumbering dragons; its huge, golden-plated Battlebarges and its thinly spread, decadent populace. Melniboné had conquered and grown complacent; it was in no condition to fight a war with an enemy seemingly as mighty as itself. Melniboné prevailed but at huge cost. Its power was depleted and large parts of the Bright Empire were left either ungoverned or ungovernable. It had no option but to retreat to Imrryr, the Dragon Isle's capital.

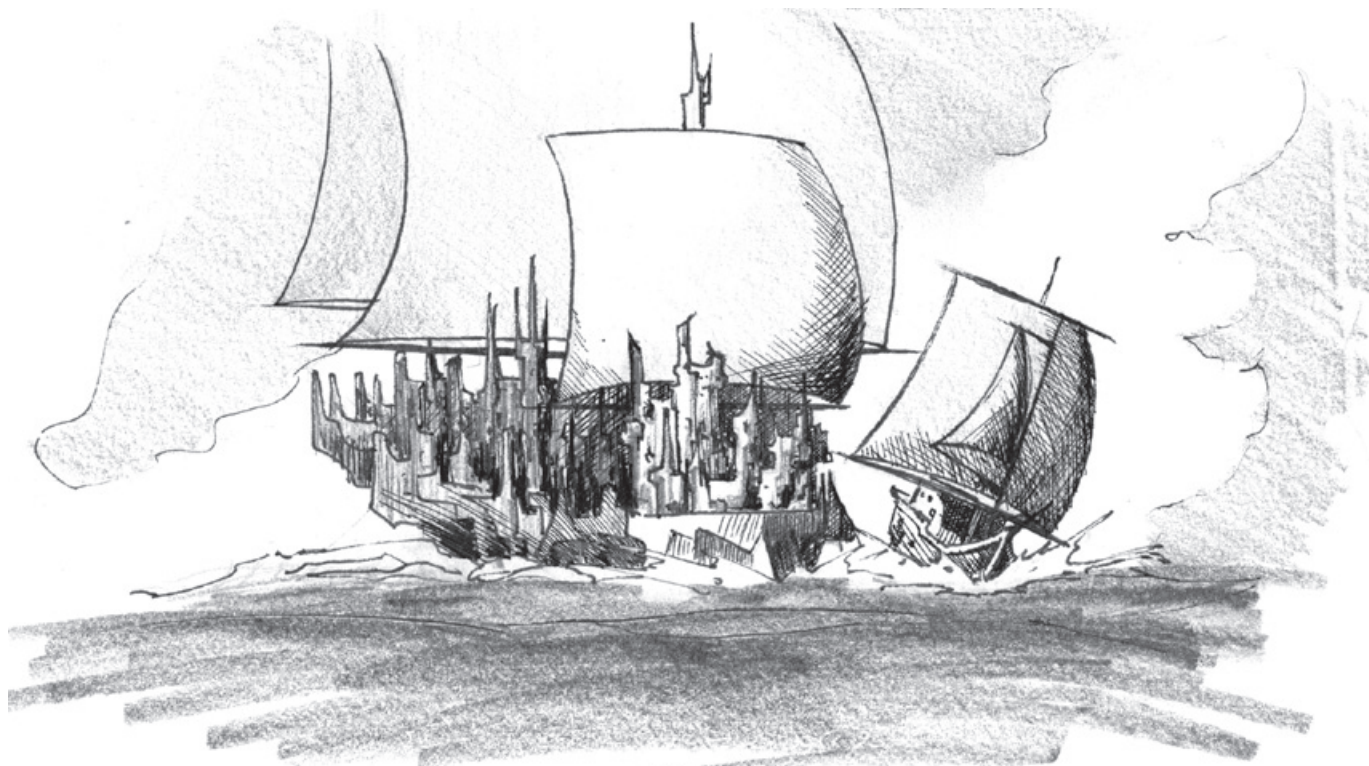
The Dharzi

Little is known of the Dharzi, save that they were Beast Folk, worshipped the lords of the Beasts and created terrifying creatures, such as their Hunting Dogs, a vicious cross between a bird and a huge hound. Although the Dharzi lost its war with Melniboné, remnants of its attempts to colonise the Young Kingdoms are still in evidence throughout the Silent Lands and the Marshes of the Mist, parts of Ilmiora and the Forest of Troos. These ruins contain ancient, terrible, Dharzi secrets and sorcerous machinery; a lure for the brave and foolhardy alike. Opish, the Dharzi language, is still used as a thieves' cant in Quarzhasaat.

Into this vacuum stepped humans, those pathetic, uncultured barbarians, and they seized upon Melniboné's weakness, taking control of abandoned territories and forming their own societies free from Melnibonéan domination. The first was Malador, in the country known as Lormyr. Aubec proclaimed himself earl and established new boundaries and new laws. Earl Aubec's confidence was manifest in his ability to stride to the edge of the world and carve new lands from the miasma of Chaos, creating life and hope. Others followed: Vilmir, Dharijor, the Island of the Purple Towns, Filkhar. Melniboné's grip weakened with every new territory and, although it tried to assert its authority, it found itself impotent. Its dragons were spent and could not be roused. Where once a fleet of battlebarges would have razed any opposition, now it could barely muster a handful of ships.

This was the time of the Young Kingdoms and the start of the Bright Empire's demise, although Melniboné, with typical arrogance, chose to ignore its fate. Its cities in lands such as Shazar and Ilmiora were turned to rubble and new ones took their place. Melnibonéan nobles retreated from their ancestral lands, returning to Imrryr's dreaming spires and a retirement of drugs and decadence. Where once humans had been irrelevant, thus became Melniboné.

It is in the nature of empires to beget empires and the Young Kingdoms were no exception. Seeking to either spite, or emulate, the Bright Empire, Lormyr sought to carve its own from the southern continent, subjugating the new countries of Argimiliar and Filkhar. Further north, Pan Tang sought to replicate Melniboné's sorceries and seized control of the western continent. To the east, Vilmir, cleaving to the Lords of Law, established its own regime, firmly rejecting every aspect, good and bad, of



Melniboné's legacy. The result was a constant state of war and the rise and fall of countless city states and countries. Some, like the desert empire of Quarzhasaat, reached heights of true magnificence, that even Melniboné was forced to recognise, but fell just as quickly and became forgotten. Others, like Pikarayd, seemed to regress, becoming more insular and barbaric, despite the progress being made all around them.

After 400 years of struggles, petty wars and magical, political machinations, the Young Kingdoms have stabilised. Melniboné, whilst still an economic power, still feared by many, has almost fully retreated to Imrryr, rarely bothering to dabble in the affairs of men. Lormyr's southern empire has collapsed and Argimiliar is the ascendant power. Vilmir has all but atrophied under its allegiance to the tenets of Law and the Ilmioran city states prevail. Only scheming, malevolent Pan Tang has sustained its claims to Melniboné's inheritance, with its vassal country, Dharijor, and its vicious pirate navies that prowl the northern sea-routes in search of slaves and sacrifices to the Lords of Chaos.

A YOUNG KINGDOMS CHRONOLOGY OF THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

This chronology charts, in overview form, the history of the Eternal Struggle as it has taken place within the Young Kingdoms. It highlights the involvement of the elder races, the nature of the Higher Powers in pursuit of the struggle and, obviously, Elric's own part in this everlasting war. The chronology takes the end of the previous Cycle of Time as its starting point and the destruction of the Young Kingdoms as its end.

The Shape of the World

The Young Kingdoms occupy an area roughly the size of continental Europe and the British Isles. The world extends much further to the north, east and west but these lands are only scantily described in the Elric saga and are not covered in this book. The unmapped East is the only area accorded anything more than cursory detail, with the countries of Anakhazan, Changshai, Eshmir, Okara, Phum and the Valerian Directorates being identified. It is believed that the Dharzi originated from lands even more easterly.

To the south lies the edge of the world, marked by the turbulence of pure Chaos. Save for Aubec of Malador, none have dared venture into it.

The Young Kingdoms, as they are in Elric's time, are described in the following pages. A general overview precedes the detailed descriptions, giving information on culture, daily life, language

and trade. The kingdoms' descriptions are then gathered into their respective continents with the islands being detailed separately.

SOCIETY

With Melniboné's retreat the nations of the Young Kingdoms have cast-off the isolation once imposed by the Bright Empire and become a hive of social endeavour. Trade between nations, much of it sea-borne, flourishes with the great markets of Dhakos, Cadsandria, Menii, Old Hrolmar and Raschil being respected centres of trade. People sense the opportunities that independence brings and seize them eagerly, either through dignified means or through the motivation of greed and the age-old practices of theft, duplicity, raiding and piracy.

There is a hunger for knowledge and discovery with explorers such as Duke Avan Astran and Smiorgan Baldhead undertaking ambitious voyages into uncharted territories and forgotten corners in search of wealth, magic and new markets. The rich grow richer at the expense of the poorer nations and there is little sympathy for those who accept their lot and prefer a quieter life.

This is a time of great city-states, such as Ilmar, Karlaak and Bakshaan, as well as grinding poverty and depravation such as that of Nadsokor, Dhoz-Kam and Ryfel. The people of the Young Kingdoms still seek to make their mark and the result is a constant succession of border disputes, territorial expansion, piracy and unbridled ambition, as epitomised by Pan Tang's desire to emulate the grandeur of the Bright Empire. Most scratch a living from the soil and lead a subsistence existence but many more flock to the cities and ports to ply old trades and crafts or learn new ones. Society is rich with promise and the intrepid reap the rewards whilst the reticent continue to drudge and moan, almost as though they were still servants of Melniboné.

CULTURE

The Young Kingdoms are a melange of cultures. The richest states have raised great cities and aspire to a level of civilisation enjoyed by Melniboné. In this sense the Young Kingdoms could be considered to be urbanised with a cultural level equating to that of renaissance Europe. Yet sitting beside these centres of creativity and discovery are realms that have either failed to lift themselves from barbarism or have no desire to do so. The city-states might be controlled by noble families and dynastic traditions, with sophisticated social and religious practices, but elsewhere the tribe, the clan and the hearth still predominate, bound by superstition, taboo and fear of the unknown.

This is certainly an age of great cultural achievement in the arts and scholarship. The famed University of Cadsandria claims to catalogue all human learning in its great libraries and colleges. Ilmar is a noted hub for the arts with painters, poets, sculptors and storytellers vying for patronage and recognition. Studious Jadmar engages in scientific endeavour, seeking to establish the

Year	Key Events
-20,000	The Doomed Folk destroy themselves, ending the previous cycle of Time and ushering-in the current cycle.
-20,000	The Elemental Lords battle to reshape the earth. The primitive humans of the time, such as the Pukwadji, worship them as gods. The earth is formed into its current configuration.
-10,000	The Elder Ones control the earth. The Mernii arrive and form their first great city, R'lin K'ren A'a, in the far west. They are adherents of the Balance but sacrifice their city to the Lords of the Higher Powers so that the rules of the Eternal Struggle can be formulated. The Mernii, operating under this pact, brokered with Duke Arioch, move east and discover the island that will become known as Melniboné. As part of the rules of the Eternal Struggle, Law and Chaos agree to refrain from direct meddling in mortal affairs. A barrier to prevent direct intervention is established by Law.
-10,000	The Mernii create a trading empire based on trade and the Cosmic Balance. Alliances are established with the primitive human tribes.
-9,800	White Crow strikes his bargain with Grome: to return the Black Sword to Grome's keeping in return for knowledge of the Actorios jewel. The first of the Pacts with the Elemental Lords is established.
-9,600	A great drought grips the earth as Artigkern of Chaos drinks the oceans. The Falkryn barbarians, worshippers of Arioch, threaten Mernii. Elric of the Mernii bargains with Arioch to destroy Artigkern and, in so doing, gains the gratitude of Lord Straasha. The second Pact of the Mernii with the Elemental Lords is formed.
-9,000	Prince Silverskin is captured by the Karasim and imprisoned. He summons forth Arioch to help him escape and gains control of the Black Blade. In aiding Lassa of the Air, the third Pact with the Elemental Lords is established.
-8,800	King Elric seeks, once again, the Black Sword. He learns of the relationship between Law, Chaos, the Runestaff and the Black Sword and gains the gratitude of Kakatal. When his sister is killed by the Black Blade (and she is found to be the wearer of a Usurper prince's black armour), King Elric pledges to ally with Chaos and renounces any deals he had with humankind.
-8,800 - -8,500	The Mernii fracture into those who cleave to the tenets of the Balance, the Menastrai, and those who side with Chaos, the Mernii. The Mernii prevail and the Menastrai flee. Melniboné is fully born and the Bright Empire becomes one with the forces of Chaos.
-8,500 - -1,000	The height of the Bright Empire's power. The world is subject to its rule and many emperors, each allied with Chaos, come and go. The Menastrai are rediscovered in the far east and Melniboné conquers them. The Mabden arrive in the world, colonising the island they name Pan Tang.
-1,000	The Dharzi launch their offensive from the east. Melniboné is driven to defend its empire. The war lasts decades and is fought on many fronts. Terrible sorcery is unleashed on both sides but Melniboné prevails. It is, perhaps, a pyrrhic victory; its reserves are spent and the Bright Empire begins its gradual decline.
-1,000 - -600	The Young Kingdoms begin to coalesce. In the Lormyrian province of Malador, Earl Aubec drives out Melniboné and human self-rule begins. Aubec travels south and encounters Myshellia. She engages his help in furthering the boundaries of Law and new lands are carved from the stuff of Chaos at the edge of the world. The world grows a little larger. The barriers established by Law, having been weakened by Melniboné's alliance with Chaos, are strengthened once more. Pan Tang begins to develop its own studies and worship of Chaos.
-600 - -300	The Young Kingdoms ascend and Melniboné retreats to the Dragon Isle. The worship of Law is instituted across the Young Kingdoms. Various champions rise and fall. Pan Tang's power grows, as does its understanding of sorcery and the nature of Chaos.
-35 - -15	Elric is born to Sadric 86 th . Tutored in the arts of sorcery and use of the Dream Couches of Imrryr. Undergoes the four Dreamings as part of his training.
-14	Sadric dies. Elric ascends to the Ruby Throne as the 428 th Emperor of Melniboné.
-12 - -11	Prince Yyrkoon begins his plan to usurp the Ruby Throne, replaying similar betrayals from the earliest years of the Bright Empire. Elric calls on his ancient pacts with Straasha and Grome to thwart Yyrkoon's schemes. He also summons Arioch; the first time the Chaos Lord has been summoned by an emperor for centuries. In so doing, Elric awakens the old alliances with Chaos. He goes beyond the Shade Gate to Ameroon where he retrieves Stormbringer. Yyrkoon is defeated but installed as Regent whilst Elric wanders the Young Kingdoms to better understand the world and become a more effective emperor

Year	Key Events
-11 - -10	Elric's travels take him across the Young Kingdoms and into the Unknown East. He joins with the Black Ship and its blind captain to battle Agak and Gagak as part of the Four-Fold incarnation of the Eternal Champion – the first inkling he has of his destiny. Later he ventures to R'lin K'ren A'a with Smiorgan Baldhead and Duke Avan Astran. He learns there of the origin of the Mernii and of the existence of the Eternal Struggle between Law and Chaos.
-10 - -9	Yyrkoon places Cymoril in a sorcerous slumber and declares himself Emperor. Elric makes his alliance with the Sea Lords, leading the Sack of Imrryr and the death of both Yyrkoon and his beloved Cymoril.
-8	The survivors of the Sacking of Imrryr become mercenaries abroad in the Young Kingdoms. Elric, distraught, meets Shaarilla of the Myrrhn and together they search for the Dead God's Book. Elric meets Moonglum. The book is found under the wardenship of Orunlu the Keeper, a servant of the Lords of Chaos who is pacted not to harm those who seek the truth. Elric discovers that Chaos strives to maintain the Eternal Struggle but not to win it. He understands, for the first time, that the world – and certainly himself – is doomed.
-8 - -2	Elric and Moonglum venture across the world and battle many foes. Elric's doom as a pawn of both Chaos and Law becomes increasingly evident, although Elric strives to deny it. Elric meets Zarozinia Voashoon of Karlaak and they marry. Moonglum continues his adventures in the Young Kingdoms. Pan Tang begins to consolidate its power and exercise its desire for conquest. Jagreen Lern seeks the aid of the Lords of Chaos and gains it.
-1	Zarozinia is kidnapped by creatures serving Jagreen Lern. Elric reluctantly takes Stormbringer once more and goes to find her. Pan Tang makes war upon the western continent and Elric aids Queen Yishana of Jharkor in the battle against Pan Tang's forces. Eventually finding Zarozinia as a Chaos-warped prisoner of Lord Pyaray and Jagreen Lern, Elric is forced to kill her. He is captured and tortured by Jagreen Lern, being strapped to a yard-arm of a Pan Tangian ship. Elric survives by entering a dream-state and replaying the Thousand Year dream. When he escapes Jagreen Lern, he encounters Sepiriz of the Nihrain, who explains the final part of the Eternal Struggle. Elric goes in search of the Shield of Chaos and the Horn of Fate, having encountered the Lords of Law who declare that the Young Kingdoms will have to be destroyed if Chaos is to be defeated.
0	The Final Battle. The Lords of Law and Chaos clash over the Young Kingdoms and Elric slays Jagreen Lern. Too weak to blow the Horn for its final time, Elric is forced to accept Moonglum's sacrifice on Stormbringer's blade. The Horn of Fate is blown and the Young Kingdoms is destroyed, our own world being created to replace it. Elric is finally slain by Stormbringer and the Black Sword escapes into the new world – perhaps to haunt this new Cycle of Time, just as it has haunted the previous one.

underlying Principle Laws that unite, bind and describe the whole of reality. Melniboné too embraces the arts, although of a more macabre nature. Its eunuch slave choirs are known the world over; surgically altered to sing at a specific pitch and resonance, sometimes with sorcerous enhancement to achieve truly orchestral effects from a single slave.

Slavery and serfdom are very much in evidence across the Young Kingdoms. Whilst some enlightened nations shun the practice Dharijor, Pan Tang, Pikarayd and some of the Ilmioran city states actively trade in slaves. Of course, the greatest call for slaves is from Melniboné herself and there are many nations who engage in trading criminals, enemies of the state, or even just the poor and dispossessed in the slave auctions of Gromoorva, Hwamgaarl, Ryfel and Imrryr

The Young Kingdoms is a maritime culture. The finest sailing ships are built in Tarkesh but every nation with a decent, deep-water harbour builds solid, ocean-going vessels. Trade routes are well established but still prone to piracy especially in the waters surrounding Pan Tang and some of the more remote stretches of the southern continent's coastline. Privateers – legalised pirates – are supported by many nations, including Vilmir and the

Ilmioran city-states, either as a way of inflicting humiliation upon an enemy or rival, or simply as a means of supplementing the economy.

Ships come in all shapes, sizes and types. Galleys, often slave-powered, are common but masted merchant cogs, brigs and schooners ply the trade waters using speed and manoeuvrability to outrun lurking pirate vessels. And of course Melniboné maintains its fleet of golden-hulled Battlebarges, the size of small towns and powered by both slaves and sorcery, although their presence on the oceans is a thankful rarity.

MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY

Magic and sorcery in the Young Kingdoms are both powerful and rare. As it stems from Chaos, most magicians must bargain with Chaos to both learn and practice their art. Those who become sorcerers risk madness and death as they are forced to deal with powerful and malevolent entities of the various Hells that make-up the realms of Chaos. Even elemental magic, which poses less risk, is still a potent and unpredictable force and there are few brave,

or foolish, enough to pursue that knowledge. Melniboné reserved sorcerous knowledge for itself and those humans who have gained some degree of magical mastery, such as the snivelling, love-struck Theleb K'aarna, have had to spend years of search and study to attain their cognisance. By Melnibonéan standards, even the most accomplished human sorcerers are but amateurs in the art; and Melniboné has forgotten more sorcery than the Young Kingdoms will ever know.

As a consequence the Young Kingdoms view sorcery as something malicious and sinister. While this is primarily a fear born from ignorance and superstition, it is also an assumption not a million miles from the truth. Magic is seen as the purview of dark-hearted men and the decadent Melnibonéans. Sorcery's myriad possibilities and strengths are now largely viewed as foul and unhealthy by the people of the Young Kingdoms. Humanity has turned elsewhere for enlightenment and power, to exploration within the sciences. This prehistoric age will never see anything like the modern technology of our own world but clockwork engineering has been discovered and practically every human realm with some coins to rub together can afford to manufacture blades of clean steel rather than wield weapons of bronze or iron.

LANGUAGE

The Young Kingdoms speaks a common tongue (simply Common) derived from the Low Tongue of Melniboné, although much of the semblance between the languages has been lost over time. Regional dialects and unique vocabularies exist although it is easy enough to communicate with people of different nations and nationalities. Exotic cultures, such as the remnants of Quarzhasaat and the Weeping Waste, have their own native tongues not derived from Melnibonéan influence. Literacy levels in the Young Kingdoms are low with reading and writing being the preserve of those who can afford to educate their children and themselves.

Languages of the Young Kingdoms

Common Tongue: The lingua franca of the Young Kingdoms with considerable regional and national dialects. Derived from Low Melnibonéan and has a written form.

High Melnibonéan: Also known as High Speech this is the formal language of Melniboné and used for all official communications. It is also the language of sorcery (it is claimed that Slortar himself devised the language for communicating with lesser beings) and anyone wishing to work magic needs a good understanding of it. Given its nature, it is very difficult to learn and is structured like no other earthly tongue. In parts, its vocabulary and the demands made upon the voice to utter it, it defies the traditional laws of speech and acoustics. When written, High Speech characters and runes seem to flow from one plane of existence to another.

Low Melnibonéan: Also known as Low Speech, this is conversational Melnibonéan and the basis for the Young Kingdoms' Common. It is deeply poetic in structure and almost

borders on song. It has a complex written form combining a conventional alphabet with the runic characters sometimes attributed to the Older Ones.

Mong: The hard, brutish language of the Weeping Waste. Its terse inflections reflect the environment although it can, at times, be deeply moving especially when used in song. It has no written form.

Opish: The guttural, strained tongue of the Dharzi, a mixture of bestial grunts, mutters and perverse inflections. It has a rudimentary written form extrapolated from what few original Dharzi writings remain. It is used primarily in Quarzhasaat and Nadsokor where it is a thieves' tongue.

'pande: Spoken in the Unknown East. It seems to combine abstract poetry with rigid intonation and formal pronunciation. In its written form it is a mixture of pictograms and flowing calligraphy. It bears some resemblance to both High and Low Melnibonéan but little to Common.

RELIGION

There are many gods in the Young Kingdoms. First and foremost are the Lords of Law and Chaos; diametrically opposed beings standing for absolute adherence to unwavering progress or submission to the randomness of creation and destruction. The names of these lords are legion: Arkyn and Donblas of Law; Arioeh, Chardros, Xiombarg, Mabelrode and Pyaray of Chaos. These are real gods with real powers but kept in check by the presence of the Cosmic Balance, which maintains that neither force shall hold sway, leading to destruction through either stagnation or perpetual, random change.

Chaos is worshipped by Melniboné, Pan Tang, Dharijor and Pikarayd. Law is followed throughout Ilmiora, Vilmir, Argimiliar and Lormyr. Chaos follows a haphazard ecumenical structure whilst the Church of Law is focused on Vilmir and follows a more rigid hierarchy.

The elemental lords, Grome (Earth), Straasha (Water), Lassa (Air) and Kakatal (Fire) are chiefly worshipped in rural, barbarian and primitive regions. The people of the Weeping Waste follow Grome and Lassa, and it is believed that some of the tribes of Dorel follow the sun cult of Kakatal. Straasha is worshipped heavily in northerly Tarkesh and in The Purple Towns. The elementals follow no formal hierarchy although certain cities have developed some codified practices surrounding elemental worship but congregations tend to be small.

Other, minor deities exist. Ancestor worship in Oin and Yu, along with a curious form of animism, is centred on the concept of the country itself possessing a kind of sentience. In Filkhar, a land of bountiful harvests and rich vineyards, several nature spirits, reflecting the nation's bounty, are worshipped alongside both the Lords of Law and Chaos.

A very small cult is allied with the Cosmic Balance, that which keeps Law and Chaos in check. These mystics have achieved a certain degree of enlightenment and have come to comprehend the true nature of the opposing forces and the equilibrium that the Balance represents. Their principle goal is to locate mythical Tanelorn, the city of the Cosmic Balance, or to build it anew in the hopes of averting worldwide destruction.

THE NORTHERN CONTINENT

The vast northern continent includes the harsh expanse of the Sighing Desert, separating the remains of the Quarzhasaat Empire from the major lands of the Young Kingdoms; and the wind and rain-swept plateau-lands of the Weeping Waste. It is home to the great city states of Ilmiora, the lawful lands of Vilmir, the fetid ruin of Nadsokor and the sorcery-torn malevolence of the Forest of Troos.

The northern continent was the first region conquered by the Dharzi and it remained their stronghold for over a century, until Melniboné destroyed them with dragon flame and demon allies. Ruins of the Dharzi can be found by those with the bravery and skill to cross the lonely northern wilds and outwit the wily and territorial desert nomads who prey on the intrepid and unwitting alike.

In the north, the Sighing Desert dominates. The dry, unforgiving sands are home to the nomads who travel between the oases, keepers of secrets from the time of the Dharzi and other magics, such as dream theft. Lonely Quarzhasaat, a crumbling edifice of pettiness and duplicity squats, half-hidden and maudlin, in the desiccating heat. South of the Sighing Desert are the city states of Ilmiora, vibrant, liberal communities where most trades, goods and services can be found, along with decadent indulgences of all kinds.

Seeming to react against the freedom of Ilmiora, Vilmir broods in the south of the continent. Irrevocably tied to the worship of the Lords of Law it has raised bureaucracy and state control to a high art, closely governing the thoughts and feelings of its populace with grim tales of the doom that awaits those who do not aspire to the teachings of Lords Donblas, Arkyn and Miggea.

East of Vilmir and Ilmiora the land breaks and rises to the high plateau of the Weeping Waste, a remnant of the war between Grome and Straasha. This unnatural shelf of land is barren and wind-swept, plagued by an incessant drizzle that frequently breaks into torrential downpours, said to be the tears of Straasha, crying for his stolen realm. The nomads of the Wastes are a resilient, pragmatic folk tied to their land, their clans and their tribes, caring little for the events below their plateau.

Ilmiora

Ilmiora lies south of the Sighing Desert where the sands give way to temperate grasslands, rolling pastures, deep forests and gentle hills. The discrete city state kingdoms are civilised, cultured and liberal. Ilmiora is ruled by a hereditary caste of senators drawn

from the city-states that make up the kingdom, with Ilmar the acknowledged capital. Each senator represents a noble family or a merchant clan of repute and power in the region and they rule over their respective city-states, occasionally feuding and warring amongst each other over matters of law and profit. The greatest rivalry exists between Ilmar and Bakshaan and this rivalry has come close to all-out war on several occasions over the past 300 years. In the time of Elric the city states are at relative peace but tensions are never far from the surface and easily exploited by the unscrupulous and power-hungry.

Great distances separate the city-states, leaving the wilderness open to banditry and brigands who prey upon the many caravans that trundle overland between the trade-hungry cities. The Ilmiorans highly prize commercial acumen but there is never a shortage of those who prefer to acquire their coin through more dishonest means. Beyond the merchant and noble classes, Ilmiora is also a land of farmers, with great cattle herds grazing the grasslands or forming livestock trains between settlements.

The city states foster arts and crafts. Ilmioran leatherworking is especially valued both in and out of the kingdom and even the humblest peasants often trade for (or create their own) high-quality leather clothing or goods for personal use. Leatherworkers with unusual skill can take their trade out to the Young Kingdoms and make a small fortune selling intricately-worked pieces to the appearance-conscious nobility of other realms. Both Ilmar and Bakshaan are patrons of the arts and Karlaak is famed for its high quality steel.

Nadsokor, City of Beggars

Easily the most renowned, and by far the least-loved, region of the northern lands is the city of Nadsokor. Once part of Vilmir, this hive of corruption and filth was abandoned by most of its citizens during a plague long ago. Now the rotting hulk of the city is home to the worst scum of the Young Kingdoms and it is not for nothing that the city earned the name the City of Beggars.

Disease is rampant in the streets here, after-effects of the long-passed plague coupled with the spread of fresh illness and contagion from dirty living and disgusting, squalid conditions. The buildings are tumbledown, mold covered and decaying where they stand. The city walls are blackened with grime, almost as if they stand only to keep disease in, rather than keep invaders out. No one would lay siege to Nadsokor anyway, of course. There is nothing to win from conquering the Young Kingdoms' greatest, filthiest slum.

Nadsokor supplies beggars as much as it shelters them. They spill from the gates and venture out into other lands, panhandling and pleading for coin on the streets of every town and city in the known world. Most of these souls ultimately consider Nadsokor home and serve the only true power in the City of Beggars: the black-hearted King Urish the Seven-Fingered. Whilst impoverished and disowned, the beggars are watchers and listeners, gatherers of

Ilmioran City States

Bakshaan – Wealthiest of the city states, Bakshaan is the largest seaport of the northern continent and the envy of the other Ilmioran city states and neighbouring Vilmir. Its merchant princes and trading guilds are fiercely competitive and often driven by both jealousy and corruption. Assassins, thugs and thieves are easily found in Bakshaan, all of them eager to fill their pockets in any way they can, regardless of how many bodies they step over.

A resident of note is the merchant venturer, Nikorn. Perhaps the wealthiest of Bakshaan's merchants he resides outside of the city in a fortified castle, protected by his sorcerer-bodyguard, Theleb K'aarna of Pan Tang, and a private army. It is Elric's doom to slay Nikorn, despite having pledged to leave him unharmed, after seeking vengeance against Theleb K'aarna.

Gorjhan – Too small and too dour to be a true city-state but often referred to in the same breath as Ilmar and Bakshaan. Gorjhan is close to both Vilmir and the Weeping Waste and influenced by both. The humourless merchants of Rignariom come to Gorjhan to trade with the nomads of the Weeping Waste and the township's narrow streets are usually either dust-clogged, water-logged or mud-choked. It is Gorjhan's doom to fall prey to Terarn Gashtek, the Flamebringer and his horde when they sweep across the Weeping Waste from the Unknown East, murdering all in their path.

Ilmar – Vibrant Ilmar vies with Bakshaan for position and status. Its merchant princes and guilds are every bit as ambitious but less inclined to fractious jealousy amongst themselves, which lends Ilmar an altogether quieter, safer nature. Ilmar has outgrown its walls twice over the years, such is the rate of expansion in the city, and people regularly flock to its bustling port and huge market, eager to seek their fortune.

Fads in fashion, art and architecture are common; the current vogue is to emulate the style of the Bright Empire, leading to a whole slew of ornate towers to be thrown-up around the Ilmari sky-line and for the city's fashion victims to demand goods from the Dragon Isle, including the kinds of narcotics and wines imbibed by Imrryr's dreaming residents. The result is a rapid increase in madness, suicide and other, more depraved activities as the Ilmari fashionistas struggle to control the intense visions and dreams brought about by their excesses.

Karlaak – Otherwise known as Karlaak-by-the-Weeping-Waste, for short, Karlaak is a beauty on the edge of a desperate landscape. A city of squat towers, wide, tree-lined streets, elegant spires, graceful minarets and beautiful, light-catching domes, it is welcoming and homely. It prospers without the need for Bakshaan's jealousy and avarice, or Ilmar's one-upmanship. Karlaak is confident in and of itself; therein lies its strength.

Ruled by the benevolent Voashoon family, Karlaak is a place of peace and tranquillity. Some have mistaken it for Tanelorn. It advocates liberal tolerance and allies itself with neither Law nor Chaos, perhaps in emulation of Tanelorn but more likely from the simple common sense wisdom of Lord Voashoon himself.

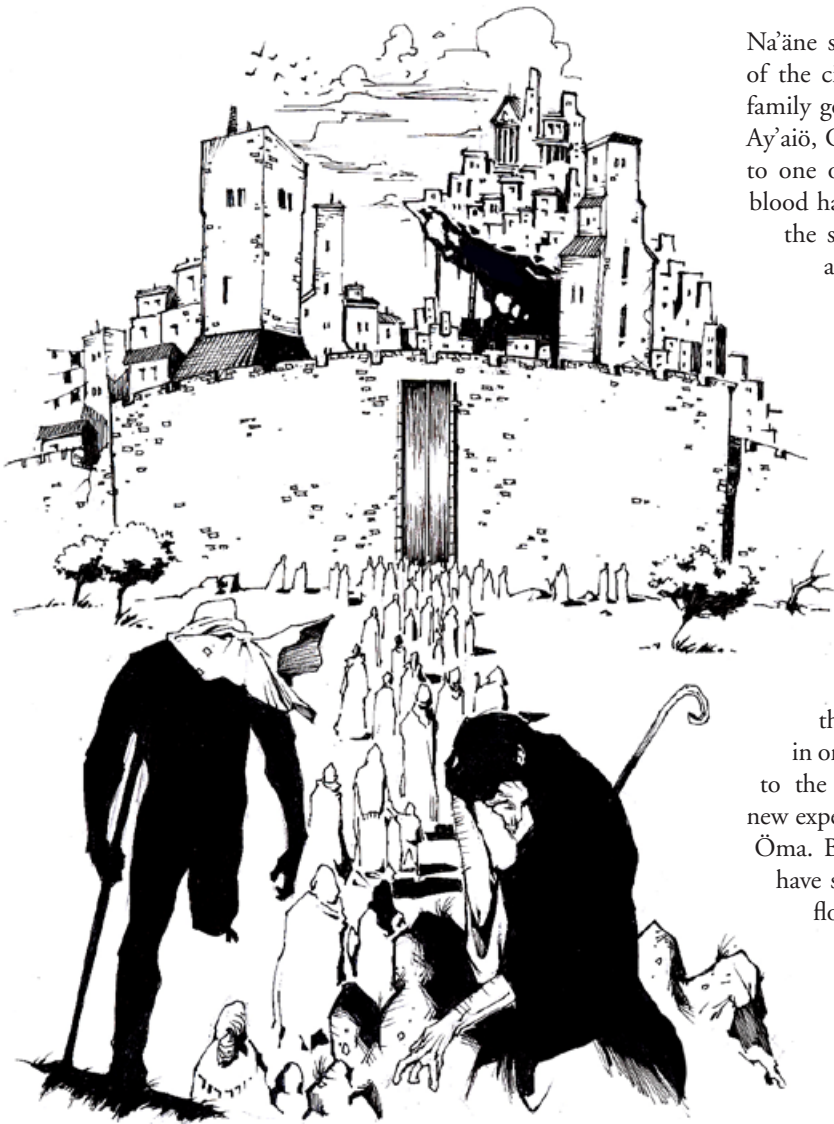
In time Elric comes to make Karlaak his home, when he rescues Lord Voashoon's daughter, Zarozinia, from the nearby Forest of Troos, and marries her. He finds peace in Karlaak and can even closet Stormbringer awhile but fate interrupts his idyll when Zarozinia is kidnapped and Elric must ride out again on his last, cataclysmic adventure.

information that can be fed into the networks controlled by King Urish. With the right methods the beggars' lines of communication can provide knowledge valuable to those who hold subtle agendas. The bureaucrats of Vilmir, despising what the beggars represent, value what they see and hear. So too does the mysterious Mereghn network of the Ilmioran city states, which numbers many beggars amongst its lower orders of informants. Greasing Urish's greedy, mutilated palm with silver puts that knowledge to wider and more sinister uses and has made Urish very rich and drunk with his own, over-inflated sense of power.

Urish dies in the years to come and Chaos takes root in Nadsokor; Narjhan, a Chaos entity, takes Urish's role as beggar-

lord. Out of twisted spite and bitterness, Nadsokor launches ill-fated raids against the city of Tanelorn, seeking to bring down the Eternal City.

Nadsokor-nurtured beggars are known by their peculiar begging bowls. These shallow, yellowing bowls seem, at first glance, to be made from rough clay. In some instances they are rune-covered and the owner may claim his bowl is a vessel for powerful magic. This may be true. Nadsokor beggar-bowls are always carved from a human skull.



Séred Öma

Séred Öma lies north of the mountains that mark the Ilmioran border and check the sweep of the Sighing Desert. Its walls are made from the same sand-coloured brick as its narrow, many-floored buildings and the people of Séred Öma, the Na'äne (pronounced Nayyain) claim it is as old as dreaming Imrryr. Indeed, Séred Öma has passed through many different cycles of prosperity and belief: from its pagan age, when Imrryr was not known by that name and the Bright Empire was being formed, through to an age where gods were rejected and thence to its clerical age, when all gods, Law and Chaos, were received with equal gladness. In that clerical age the priests built a great university at Séred Öma's heart and it was there that the Arts became prevalent within the Na'äne culture, encouraged by both Chaos and Law (but, perhaps, chiefly by the former, because Chaos was ever embracing of the act of creation). The university still stands, although its days of learning have faded, as have the priests who founded it and, once again, Séred Öma has entered a secular age where the Lords of the Higher Powers are not rejected as such but considered largely irrelevant for the purposes of creativity.

Na'äne society is caste-based and centred on the great families of the city, which once governed the Na'äne Hegemony. Each family governed a House, the names of which are known to all: Ay'aiö, Ch'yu, Da'ra, Fh're, N'ofd, Sh'nés and Th'ee. Those born to one of the Houses are the pure-strain Na'äne: those whose blood has not been watered by dalliances with the peoples from the south or east. Below them are the Artisans; those who are born of Na'äne but have a sullied lineage. Once, the social divisions between the Houses and Artisans were deep but time has largely healed that rift and there is now little social difference between the two. Those of a House have, perhaps, a more aloof air and bearing and their position is denoted by the kind of hat they wear: tall, conical and veiled, for women; tall, cylindrical and trimmed with feathers for the men. The Artisans, by contrast, express themselves through their work rather than their headwear but bear the Houses no ill-will.

Life in Séred Öma

Life revolves around art. Everyone is an artist and even those who do not practice art to make their living are skilled in one form of art or another, or elevate their chosen profession to the level of art. Constant improvement, experimentation, new experiences, personal expression; these are the creeds of Séred Öma. But, if the city pursued nothing but art, it would never have survived for this long. Art does not mend a roof or mill flour for bread. So it is that everyone in Séred Öma must be licensed if they wish to make art their living. Only in the oldest quarter of the city, controlled by the House of Th'ee, are artists permitted to pursue their passion unlicensed. Elsewhere, all residents of Séred Öma must prove that their talent (which is always considerable, compared with the rest of the Young Kingdoms) and, at the age of 16, produce one, single example of their chosen art. This piece of work is judged by the heads of the Seven Houses and, if it is deemed good enough, then a license to pursue their art as a profession is granted and they may trade whatever they create freely.

The streets are as busy as those of Ilmar, Elwher, Dhakos, Raschil or Menii; narrow twists and turns crammed with the stalls and galleries of artists. Stores and taverns are pushed into the alleyways, giving way to the workplaces of the licensed. Between them are the tall, narrow, many-floored dwellings of the Houses where the likes of the melancholy Lady Rai-u Th'ee practice their work in seclusion, pursuing the principle rather than the profit. The city is a throb of bartering and contract, the sound of chisels, the music of instruments such as the nine-stringed murmerlan (beloved of the Great King Alo'ofd, who ruled the city 1,000 years ago) and the scrape and scratch of brush and palette knife on swathes of canvas. Merchants from the cities of the Young Kingdoms flock here in search of treasures to be traded in the great markets of the south and nomads from the Sighing Desert and the distant province of Kwan seek temporary refuge from the unforgiving sands, looking for gifts to take to the khans of their peoples.

There are a few temples venerating both minor nobles of Chaos, such as Mashabak and Haldor'jyn of the Intricate Veil, and the Lords of Law, such as Donblas or Miggea, but following the powers of the other worlds does not figure highly in the lives of the people of Séred Öma. There are no longer any priests and no desire to cleave to one force or another. Even the great university at the heart of the city has become a market place for artistic endeavour and is where, once a year, the youth of the city comes to seek a license, bringing with them the single piece or concept that will determine the direction of their lives.

The Sighing Desert

Two millennia ago, the sun-blasted region now known as the Sighing Desert was once the grand and presumptuous Quarzhasaat Empire. Due to the miscasting of a rune during Quarzhasaat's war with Melniboné, 2,000 years ago, the endless seas of sand were spread across the Empire, burying it in the desert found today. The invading Melnibonéans left unharmed; the citizens of Quarzhasaat died in their thousands. From that day forward a moaning wind blew across the dunes, giving the Sighing Desert its grim name. Occasionally the wind peels back the topmost layers of the desert revealing the bones of buried armies or the riches of the sand-drowned empire. Many travellers venture north to see such claims with their own eyes. Most do not return. In the intervening years 14 separate armies have attempted to find and loot Quarzhasaat, only for each one to be lost to the unforgiving sands.

Scimitar-wielding desert-dwellers of the so-called Nomad Nations make their home here, the only human population of the region. These silk-clad warriors are atheistic, a curious cultural aspect among the people of the Young Kingdoms, and took to the Sighing Desert after fleeing the oppression of the Bright Empire many centuries ago. They are a meditative, spiritual people, seeking enlightenment on their own terms with no thought for either Law or Chaos. Each year the clans meet at the Silver Flower Oasis, named for the cactus blossoms found there, trading news and information, as well as enjoying each others' company and indulging in old rivalries.

Active in this region are the strange *Dreamthieves*, men and women who, with their crooked staffs, can enter the dream planes that exist close to our own, searching for mysteries, treasures and other powerful secrets. The Dreamthieves claim not to be native to the plane of the Young Kingdoms and are said to have some knowledge of both the past and the future. As their name suggests, they are able to steal the fabric of dreams, which are bartered in a marketplace within the Dream Realms. Elric himself is guided by the Dreamthief Oone on his quest for the Pearl at the Heart of the World, as desired by Lord Gho of Quarzhasaat.

Hidden in the depths of the Sighing Desert is the lonely mountain stronghold of Mordaga, the Sad Giant, destined to be slain by Moonglum in the quest for the Chaos Shield, a tool Elric uses in the final fight against Chaos. Mordaga is an earth-bound god, stripped of his place in the divine realms. He lives in fear of his own, foretold death and will do anything to avoid it.

Quarzhasaat

The city of Quarzhasaat is a place of intrigue and decadence. Its streets are wide and triumphantly named, such as the 'Avenue of Military Success' and the 'Boulevard of Ancient Accomplishment', each broad street is framed by its beautiful architecture. Run by the Council of Six and One Other (the mysterious 'nameless seventh'), the city operates to a complex system of guilds, sects (the 'sorcerer adventurers') and blood-oaths, all with careless and contemptuous plotting and scheming at their heart. The leaders of the multitude of sects – clans, families and loose affiliations of faith and profession – are intense rivals, each seeking position on the Council of Six and One Other. No trick is too dirty; no connivance too unsubtle, to gain position and prestige. Lord Gho Faazi provides Elric with a 'medicine' that is highly addictive and poisonous to secure his service in obtaining the Pearl at the Heart of the World; he also sends assassins against the Sighing Desert nomads and is responsible for countless other atrocities all committed in the name of power. His greed for power and the Pearl is satiated when Elric makes him eat it...

The Council of Six and One Other rules Quarzhasaat through a mixture of fear and lies. In its arrogance it has convinced its populace that, far from being an empire in complete decline, Quarzhasaat was victorious in its brief war with Melniboné, causing the Dragon Isle to sink beneath the waves. Doubtless other lies are perpetrated to maintain the pretence of grandeur; and, as is the nature of lies, they are there to be unravelled and exposed.

Quarzhasaat sects are named for birds, plants, animals and many other nature symbols that belie the sect's true nature. The Yellow Sect; the Foxglove Sect; and Gho Faazi's Sparrow Sect. All employ convoluted blood oaths and contracts defining membership, duty and codes of conduct. Few are worth the parchment they are written on.

Even the term 'sorcerer-adventurers' may be a misnomer. Many have been sent in search of the Pearl and all have failed. Their talents are certainly dwarfed by Elric's but even by the modest standards of human sorcerers, they may be little more than grandly-titled hedge magicians who know perhaps one or two runes at best.

Org and the Forest of Troos

The kingdom of Org is home to the squat, malformed Orgians. They dwell in a land rumoured to be haunted by monsters only slightly more frightening than the cultureless, violent and primitive Orgians themselves. It is a realm few ever travel to and one that rarely sends its native sons beyond its borders. No other realm in the Young Kingdoms wants much of anything to do with the brutish Orgians or their dark forest realm. The sentiment is apparently returned by the inbred and primal Orgians, who remain in their tree-bordered homeland at all times.

The malevolent Forest of Troos, within the tiny, degenerate kingdom of Org, is a relic of the previous cycle of time and its

rulers, The Doomed Folk. Whilst The Doomed Folk long-since left this plane, a handful of people remained, closeted in the forest, and founded Org, the forgotten kingdom. Even Melniboné's privations escaped it and Org remains, forgotten.

The forest is a dark, sinister place, twisted by whatever forces The Doomed Folk unleashed in their exodus. Shadows cloak the trees and strange plants and all manner of mutated, pathetic creatures, predators and prey alike, haunt its grim glades. For sorcerers Troos is a treasure garden, overgrown with the rare plants and herbs necessary for sorcery and other magics. Few venture here. The forest does not welcome visitors almost as though it possesses a sentience and a wit to reject them. Those who enter Troos soon leave, making it the perfect cover for The Doomed Folk's descendants, secure in their dark little realm.

When Elric travels away from the Ruby Throne, he comes to the Forest of Troos, Stormbringer in hand. Here he will meet and slay the ruler of the Orgians, King Gutheran, as well as the barbaric monarch's family and ghoulish court, such as it is. Until then, Gutheran and his warriors strengthen the hostile reputation of their muddy, bloody realm by butchering any travellers that venture too deeply into their lands.

Tanelorn, the Eternal City

It is claimed by certain sages in the matters of the Multiverse that Tanelorn, or a version of it, exists on every plane at once, a haven for those seeking respite from the fractious nature of Law and Chaos, an oasis of peace and enlightenment. Only those who genuinely seek rest can find Tanelorn; many spend their lives searching in vain, either because they want it too much, or because they seek to pervert it or destroy it somehow. In the Young Kingdoms, Tanelorn has been known to appear at the borders of the Sighing Desert and it appears in this world as a city of flat-roofed homes, beauteous spires, wondrous domes and cobblestone streets, while the air is turned into soft music by gentle birdsong and ululating breezes. Elric himself is destined to one day walk its streets. Indeed, he will be the one and only mortal to ever reside in the Eternal City and find no inner peace; such is his curse.

The truth of Tanelorn is a lesson some mortals will eventually learn. The physical city is a shell, representing a harmonious state of mind. Tanelorn is the physical embodiment of equilibrium; the Cosmic Balance itself. Tanelorn *truly* exists within the souls of all mortal men and women, though it seems to be the fate of most never to make that realisation. Those that do find the physical city and, at the same time, understand that what they seek is freedom from both Law and Chaos and not freedom from one or the other. Tanelorn's residents are those who have sought a way out of their own worlds, to come to a place free of the strictures of gods and the demands of mortal rulers. Here, all is in balance, harmony and the great Lords of Law and Chaos may never enter without the permission of the citizens. In truth, no Law god or Chaos entity can even find Tanelorn without

assistance. Tanelorn is anathema to Chaos in particular and its forces have attempted to seize the Eternal City on more than one occasion. Narjhan, the chaotic ruler of Nadsokor, seeks Tanelorn's destruction repeatedly, to no avail.

Finding Tanelorn

Adventurers might be hired to seek-out Tanelorn on behalf of a patron, or even desire to find it for themselves. Their search will be in vain unless they have a compelling reason – the rejection of Law, Chaos and other unworldly powers – to find it and make it their home. One cannot use Tanelorn as a safe haven or a base of operations. Once inside its walls, an understanding of the harmony of the Balance settles upon its residents and they raise themselves only in the city's defence. Occasionally Tanelorn might dispatch emissaries to seek aid against its enemies and this is perhaps an easier route to finding the Eternal City.

Vilmir

Whilst Ilmar follows a more liberal, enlightened approach to Law, Vilmir takes its doctrines to a logical extreme. A terrible divide exists between the people of Vilmir. The rich live in splendour and the poor are reduced to awful conditions barely above those in the City of Beggars. The whole kingdom is a manifestation of why Law does not necessarily equal good and Chaos does not equate to evil. The entire realm is strangled and decayed by its allegiance, while at the same time profiting from the advances Law offers that are seen nowhere else in the Young Kingdoms. It is this paradox that separates the people and it is this paradox that is killing most of them.

Once, Vilmir's land was a forest paradise. Now it stands as grassland, ruined by the slash-and-burn farming of several generations of land-workers, punctuated by the huge, uninspiring, pyramid-walled cities. Rural life is hard here – crops fail in the poor-quality soil and the ruined earth offers up little bounty. Most citizens are peasants, half-starved and working themselves into early graves just to feed themselves on the destroyed land. Levies and taxes claimed by the noble caste and the state-wide Church of Law mean that most peasants have trouble holding onto any food, coin or supplies beyond the bare minimum required to survive.

The wealthy and the high-placed souls of Vilmir claim almost everything for themselves, parasitically sucking life from those who toil hardest and deserve it most. To be a noble, or a priest of Law, in Vilmir is to be exalted above the masses, though it also means one is likely to belong to a bloodline of inbred weaklings and incestuous relationships with xenophobic relatives. The inbreeding takes its toll on the dynasties and bloodlines of the noble caste and each generation creates increasing numbers of fools, deformities and disease-prone weaklings.

To battle the supply crisis facing Vilmir, King Naclon's state-sanctioned raiders and privateers take what the kingdom needs from other nations nearby, which sours any hopes of diplomacy that might otherwise exist between Vilmir and the other Young Kingdoms. The rule of Naclon is not unopposed, however. The thin separation between church and state means that Cardinal of Law, Garrick, has as much (if not more) power as the monarch himself and in the years to come, after Naclon meets his death in the Sack of the Dreaming City, it is Garrick's choice of puppet-ruler that takes the throne, leaving the cardinal as the true ruler of Vilmir.

This harsh culture is not without its wonders. Clockwork knights – men of metal and ticking gear-joints – stand guard outside the pyramid temples of the Church of Law. Water-driven mills and looms form a burgeoning industry and the first printing presses are spreading the written word to a barely literate populace. Such marvels are counterweighted by the bland sandstone and uniform appearance of Vilmir's growing cities, which are uninspired and uninspiring. Grey is a common colour, from the stone of the buildings, through to the clothes worn by peasant and noble alike.

But there is an exception to this stagnation. A noble by the name of Avan Astran rules over the city of Old Hrolmar. Astran is a beacon of enlightenment amidst the grey and the drab. An explorer who has travelled to the Unknown East, Astran rejects the harsh tenets of the priests and embraces a philosophy akin to that of Ilmar and Bakshaan. In Old Hrolmar he establishes a subculture of those free-spirited artists, philosophers, atheists and artisans who turn their backs on the rule of Law and the leadership of Cardinal Garrick. In his final expedition, in search of legendary R'lin K'ren A'a, he falls to Elric's blade and Old Hrolmar cultural rebellion dies with the duke.

The Weeping Waste

On the eastern borders of Ilmar and Vilmir, raised during the war between Grome and Straasha, the Weeping Waste is an immense plateau inhabited by insular nomadic barbarians who believe their rain-soaked, misty grassland realm is the only true world and all beyond is a Chaos-touched nightmare. They believe, truly, that outside the plains they call home, Hell stretches out in every direction. The Weeping Waste is so called because of the incessant rainfall that batters a plains land broken by rivers and lakes. This is a remote land without villages or towns. Its people are herders and hunters, following the game-trails across the soaked prairies, eking-out a meagre existence whilst attempting to placate Lord Straasha whose tears rain down upon them.

Wildlife is plentiful in the Weeping Waste, though the animals are often predatory and vicious. Bears, mastodon and smilodon prowl the lands and are easily more than a match for most warriors. It is probably fair to say that the humans of the Waste, and anyone travelling through them, are merely competing for space with the creatures that call the realm home.

The barbarians revere nature spirits and elementals, as well as the shades of their own ancestors. Like many nomadic peoples, they are excellent hunters and crafty at life in the wilderness, though their travels take them on traditional tribal journeys along paths unknown to outsiders. On the backs of their shaggy steppe ponies, the hardy warriors of the wastes are well-known as riders almost without compare. With their ritual tattoos and scars and their armour carved from the wood of stunted trees found only in The Weeping Waste (its secrets of production a closely guarded secret known only to a handful of tribes), the Wastelanders are viewed as fearsome and barbaric. Fearsome, certainly; but their knowledge of the land and their customs based around kinship, respect and the natural order of the world, is as enlightened as any in the Young Kingdoms; and, in many respects, much more enlightened than some who claim to be civilised.

THE SOUTHERN CONTINENT

The lands of the southern continent were the first to rise up against the Bright Empire. Lormyr, inspired by Earl Aubec of Malador, seized the opportunities presented by the aftermath of the Dharzi war, forcing Melniboné to abandon its lands and retreat to Imrryr. This victory secure, Lormyr moved outwards across the continent, assisting Filkhar and Argimiliar to similar victories. Lormyr then stepped into the power vacuum and established its own, Lawful Empire for a time which, whilst never reaching the extremes of Vilmir, resulted in Filkharian and Argimiliaran resentment. Many small wars within this new empire took place, each eroding Lormyr's ambitions further. Now, in Elric's time, that empire has faded entirely and Lormyr has lapsed into a peaceful dormancy whilst its neighbours flourish in their independence.

Lormyr's rise and slow decline are now seen with little bitterness among the people of the southlands. But the remains of the Bright Empire are still very much in evidence with tumbledown ruins and ancient, abandoned monuments scattering the southern realms, each seen as demon-haunted, cursed places by the southerners (and many of them are). Adventurers come south to pick through the bones of the empire's golden years but many find secrets that humans were never meant to know.

Argimiliar

Argimiliar is the current power in the southern continent, having risen to ascendancy at Lormyr's expense. It is a land of rich agricultural prospects and high profits, with an educated citizenry and a nobility founded on principles of honour and archaic, Lormyrian chivalry. Most of the country is given over to vast herds of livestock and cattle farms, whilst the prosperous northern cities of Cadsandria and The City of the Yellow Coast are always open to travellers from other lands. The University of Cadsandria, in the world-famous capital, welcomes all with a mind to learn more of the sciences and the world around them. In the far south Andlermaign, once a Bright Empire citadel, is

now the stronghold of the cattle barons. It relaxes in decadent splendour, taking advantage of the Melnibonéan architecture and some of the Dragon Lords' secrets buried deep in the old crypts.

All is not well in Argimiliar. The Church of Chaos is growing in the kingdom, flourishing behind the closed doors of Andlermaign and spilling out, eventually reaching the northern settlements. Law prevails but Chaos is rising and across the land small, secretive cults worshipping Xiombarg, Slortar and other Lords of Misrule are establishing themselves. The spread of Chaos can be traced to the careless reign of the foppish King Jiku. A vain and foolish man, he seeks to hide his flaws by coveting the attentions and affections of those more learned and creative than he. Such traits are found in those allying with Chaos and Jiku has been semi-seduced, turning a blind-eye to the rising storm. All around him, his court and fellow nobles fall into the hedonistic pursuits offered by the Chaos cults.

This will all change when Jiku is killed in the Sack of Imrryr. The ruler who follows is King Hozel, raised in a Lawful monastery and burning with a zeal to rival anything bred in Vilmir. Where his predecessor was weak, King Hozel, given to fits of madness, the result of generations of incestuous unions, takes the throne and institutes a crusade of bloody purges to stamp out all taints of Chaos within his realm. His method is to engender suspicion and treachery in a bid to root-out even the slightest hint of Chaos allegiance. Children betray their parents and parents their children. Sane people are caught in Hozel's blood-lust, accepting the royal shilling to expose Chaos worshippers on the flimsiest of evidence. Eventually even intellectuals, scholars, students and lore masters fall prey to these pogroms, flayed, inch-by-inch, until they confess to their Chaotic 'crimes', begging for death.

Hozel swallowed and spoke, his voice trembling. 'I've seen your muttering kind in the market places, Elric. Men who prophecy all kinds of dooms that never take place – mad-eyed men such as you. But we do not let them live in Argimiliar. We flay them slowly, finger by finger, inch by inch until they admit their omens are fallacious! Perhaps we'll have that opportunity, yet!'

— Stormbringer

Cesh

A dishevelled city state in the dry lands of Dorel, Cesh desires to be great. Perhaps it once was; the imposing walls and gates surrounding the city suggest as much but whatever fortunes Cesh might have had, they have been well and truly squandered by the Cesh and his sprawling, arrogant and greedy family. The city of Cesh lies in southern Pikarayd, tucked amongst the low hills and scraggy valleys that separate the land from Dorel to the south east. The Bright Empire had little time for this corner of the world and so Cesh is a very human city; that is, unambitious in design,

with buildings that emulate grandeur but possess little more than a brave façade.

It was formed from the stronghold of a local barbarian chieftain who called himself the Cesh, which means 'Great and Exalted One' in the local patois. The historians of the city claim that the Cesh, preparing to battle the Dharzi which were, at that time, sweeping through the Bright Empire like an avenging angel, fortified his settlement in a matter of weeks, such was the desperation of the people (in truth, it was fortified with the help of a pact with Chaos but more on this will follow later). In time the boundaries of the settlement expanded and were strengthened with the wooden stockade and halls being replaced with dressed stone. Cesh grew. The goatherds came to trade and never really left. The Cesh raided nearby settlements, frustrated, no doubt, that the expected attack by the Dharzi never happened and so the population became swollen. The Cesh took many wives and fathered many children. The blood-family became so large that the Cesh decreed that society should be separated into two distinct parts: those of the Cesh bloodline, who were clearly pure of heart and soul and those who were descended either from the goat herders or slaves from the raided settlements.

So it was that Cesh the city was divided into the Blood-Cesh and the Bone-Cesh; but the Great Cesh ruled over them all. Yet the city remained small. The Great Cesh, terrified of the sorcery that doubtless lingered across the wastes, decreed that the city had all it would ever need close by. The Blood-Cesh believed this because they believed everything the Great Cesh uttered. The Bone-Cesh did not believe it but had no choice. Anyone leaving the city had to renounce all claim to it, regardless of their caste and, because there was perceived to be nothing beyond the hills, most stayed.

So now Cesh is very much as it has always been. The Blood-Cesh control what little wealth the city has whilst the Bone-Cesh toil and sweat on their behalf because that is what they have always done. All ambition has been bred out of the Bone-Cesh and they accept their miserable position in the city because they know nothing else. The Blood-Cesh, on the other hand, are all descendents of the Great Cesh and constantly fight amongst themselves to inherit the title of the Cesh of Cesh. The different families of the Blood-Cesh savage each other with an intensity that Melniboné would truly enjoy but when it comes to the interests of the city being threatened, especially by interlopers, they are united in their hatred.

Dorel

Separated from Pikarayd by the bleak, snow-swept peaks of the Dying Hills, Dorel is a vast, unwelcoming moorland, forsaken by the civilised lands. Even Melniboné had little time for Dorel. A few, ardent sorcerers made it their base due to its proximity to the writhing stuff of Chaos that marks the edge of the world and a few Melnibonéans found beauty and poetry in its grey and petulant landscape. Their fortresses are ruined now, sacked by the barbarian tribes who live here, though they are a superstitious lot

and fearful of what lies in the wrecked spires and the labyrinthine caves beneath.

Dorel has always bred wild and hardy folk. Lashed by rain and winds, themselves eddied by the brooding stuff of Chaos further to the south, where the world blurs and is unformed. Dorelite shamans have, in the past, called upon their spirit ancestors to help tame the lands but their prayers and sacrifices have been in vain. As the world's demise nears, it seems that the turbulence of Chaos grows ever more restless, threatening to unleash half-formed shapes into the moorlands. The Dorelites are thus ever more fearful, ever more watchful and ever more distrusting.

There are countless barbarian tribes scattered across Dorel. They war with each other frequently and for the flimsiest of reasons. Life is hard in these lands and the many wars ensure that only the toughest and most uncompromising survive. The weak are despised and treated as slaves or sacrifices to their gods: Lashaar the Air Empress and her consort King Grome Earth Father. Ancestor and hero-cults abound amongst the Dorelites and becoming a hero is a simple matter of killing lots of enemies and dying bravely. There are no living heroes in Dorel. Chaos is truly hated and feared. If the Dorelite tribes knew anything of the Lords of Law they might offer worship but for them, Empress Lashaar and Earth Father Grome suffice. If *they* cannot appease Chaos, what chances have any foreign gods?

The Dorel tribes are known for their chariots, drawn by the short, stocky, immensely strong moorland ponies. Favoured chariots are accorded similar worship to heroes with entire clans offering prayers to vehicle and elemental lords alike. Chariots and good ponies ensure victory in raiding – either against other tribes or the small border settlements of Pikarayd and Argimiliar, where the huge herds of the cattle barons offer rich pickings. Filkhar and Lormyr are left alone. Both nations have led small armies against the tribesmen of western Dorel and the message is clear: raid and you will be destroyed.

All tribes are patriarchal and organised on clan and caste lines. Roughly woven tartans and woad tattoos define clan identity and tribe membership and it is the goal of every young Dorelite warrior to be taken to the Breaking Stones of his tribe and there initiated into manhood. Women tend the ponies, forage for herbs and tend the hearth of the tented settlements. Men hunt for boar, marsh deer, terns and herds of wild cattle escaped from the ranches of Argimiliar; and, of course, raid and fight wars. Once a man is too old to keep up with the raiding parties, or a woman too frail to keep up with the travelling clan, they are treated to the final rite of Cairn Sleep, whereby the wise-women prepare a sleeping draft from the roots of the silver gorse bush and the old and frail drink of it willingly, commending their souls to Grome Earth Father. Then, the sleeping bodies are laid in a shallow grave and a cairn of stones is built atop, marking the place of final rest.

Dorel is littered with these cairns and, often, half-buried in the heavy stones that have crushed them, the broken skeletons of awakened sleepers who tried to claw their way out.

Filkhar

Smaller than either Lormyr to the west or Argimiliar to the east, Filkhar is prosperous and booming, claiming a rivalry to Ilmiora (which it closely resembles culturally). The deep water port of Raschil is a thriving hub of trade on the southern continent, outstripping nearby Trepasaz and challenging Cadsandria. The rest of the Young Kingdoms, particularly the Island of Purple Towns, are awakening to Filkhar's markets and their merchants flock to Raschil's wide, welcoming streets.

Once a series of Lormyrian counties, Filkhar was united under Earl Rasch 300 years ago at the height of the Lormyrian Empire. Tired of Lormyr's administrative fickleness and the constant skirmishes with Argimiliar, the counties made a declaration of independence and ceded from Lormyrian control. It was not without struggle. Lormyr's knights fought many battles with Earl Rasch and his irregulars along the borders of Filkhar suffering defeat after humiliating defeat. Eventually Lormyr withdrew its opposition and Filkhar was born, Raschil, named for Filkhar's father, being its capital. Lormyr's dominance of the southern continent was over and the slow decline, still evident today, began.

In the time of Elric, Filkhar and Lormyr enjoy a steady alliance. The same is not always true of its relationship with Argimiliar which, likewise, rebelled against Lormyr. Argimiliar had intended to absorb Filkhar into its own borders, rather than see a separate kingdom arise. It gazes still at the lush countryside of Filkhar with greedy, avaricious eyes, particularly the cattle barons of Andlermaign who have secret plans (it is said) for Filkhar's southern grasslands.

Filkhar is not densely populated with much of the populace living in Raschil and the ever-growing satellite towns radiating south from it. Moving south the land is a lush garden with rolling pastures, many lakes and deep, fine rivers, good soils and acres of free grazing. Consequently it boasts substantial wealth from vast herds of healthy livestock, excellent fishing and shellfish prospects, as well as vineyards and orchards across the country. Filkhar has a reputation for gourmet food and fine wines; cookery is considered a fine art here. Chief amongst these and with a reputation as both lover and cook is Konrad of Raschil, chef to Jerned, the gourmand King. Rumours of Konrad working his way through the women of the court are rife in Raschil and Konrad, ever the consummate performer, confirms (or denies) nothing. There has certainly been a spate of pregnancies in the capital but Konrad, when challenged, merely claimed the quality of Raschil Bay's oysters as the probable reason.

Raschil is also famed for its storytellers, especially in the inns and taverns of the harbour district. Fiercely competitive performers, they strive to outdo each other with increasingly taller tales, more lurid descriptions and unreliable recounts of myth. Most celebrated is the drunkard Ranyart Finn, who seems to improve with the quantity of wine imbibed.

As a result of their wealth, many Filkharians are proud (and often vain) along with their riches. Fashion is a matter of extreme importance in almost all levels of Filkhar's society, with the King, Jerned, and his courtiers leading the way in deciding what stands as elegant couture each season. All tiers of Filkhar's population live well by the standards of other nations and despite the kingdom's modest size the people count themselves as among the most urbane and civilised in the world. It is a land of courts and courtiers, with political intrigue and hedonistic excess all masked behind a façade of respectability.

Lormyr

Lormyr's story begins with Aubec. Five hundred years ago, Lormyr was a collection of many small kingdoms and Aubec was an Earl of Malador in the province of Klant. A hero of the Lormyrian kingdoms and an ardent Champion of Law, Aubec helped spread Lormyr's own rule across the south in the wake of Melniboné's retreat from the southern lands, uniting the disparate kingdoms into the single country that now exists.

Lormyr's key cities follow the mighty Zaphra-Trepek River, which winds its way from the icy southern wastes of the country, eventually bifurcating into the Zaphra and Trepek rivers. The capital, Iosaz, is the seat of King Montan, a cautious, uneasy ruler who mourns Lormyr's lost glories and envies the ascendancy of neighbouring Filkhar. His emissary, the merchant prince Fadan, promises a new Golden Age for Lormyr and convinces Montan to take part in the sack of Imrryr but when Fadan dies in that ill-fated expedition, so do Montan's dreams of a new, Lormyrian empire.

The worship of Law and its respective deities is the legal religion of Lormyr, though it has none of Vilmir's zealotry. The faith of Lormyr is not Law unrestrained but Law as a necessary opposition to Chaos, which grows ever stronger in the world and this philosophy is partly to blame for King Montan's gloomy outlook. Montan's outlook makes Lormyr's eventual betrayal that much bitterer, for, when the Pan Tangians make their war upon the world and Chaos threatens all existence, King Montan spinelessly allies with the theocrat, Jageen Lern.

This defection is instrumental in the fall of the south and the ultimate defeat of Elric's alliance, which stuns the forces of Law, who have always recognised the nobility of Lormyr as chivalrous and honourable. Chivalry is a notion much-prized in Lormyr's upper classes and has been for generations. Chivalry and honour were traditions established by Earl Aubec and the Knights of Malador still guard Lormyr from its enemies, occasionally venturing into the relics and ruins of the Bright Empire, in search

of Earl Aubec's legendary sword (little realising that the weapon, which still exists, is now an heirloom of Melniboné and has been wielded by Elric himself).

Waterborne trade is Lormyr's lifeblood. Barges and merchant vessels ply the Zaphra-Trepek between Alorasaz, the frozen, southern-most city, through Iosaz, Stegasaz and thence to the major ports of Ramasaz (straddling the Zaphra estuary) and Trepasaz, hugging the Trepek delta. Similar vessels are found on the Schlan, a tributary of the Zaphra-Trepek, which eventually becomes thick with white-water rapids and waterfalls as it nears Stegasaz and cargoes must transfer to land before rejoining the Zaphra-Trepek, destined for the coastal cities.

Men of Schlan

Ruddy-featured and noted for their wide, curling moustaches (of which there is much pride and competition), the river-men of Schlan fish the deep, plentiful waters, act as navigators for barges and merchant cogs and as guides for land-bound caravans. The people of the Schlan River are lovers of news and gossip, sharing it with any who pause to listen. They favour heavily embroidered smocks of linen and thigh-length leather boots. In times past, they were staunch defenders of Lormyr, ready to lay-down their nets and lines and take up arms on behalf of their country.

Beyond the river, Lormyr is picturesque and cultured, with pleasant farmsteads, well-nurtured fields and pasturelands, vineyards, famed for their ice-wines and wide, peaceful forests that turn a burnished gold in the autumn months. King Montan's gloom is in stark contrast to the natural beauty of his realm; on the contrary, his people are happy and well-fed, content with everything Lormyr offers.

Alorasaz, the most southerly city, is a place of graceful towers, made from finely carved wood and beautiful, welcoming timber houses and lodges. It is the up-river nexus for fur trappers, miners, timber merchants and craftsmen who work the lush pine forests of the steep hills overlooking the city. The streets are lit and heated by huge braziers, tended night and day by citizens employed to do nothing else but keep the home fires burning. The people of Alorasaz, like most Lormyrians, are open and welcoming. Honest folk in a frozen landscape.

The Empress of the Dawn

In the centre of this room was a bed, draped in ermine, with a canopy of white silk.

And on the bed lay a young woman.

Her hair was black and it shone. Her gown was of the deepest scarlet. Her limbs were like rose-tinted ivory and her face was very fair, the lips slightly parted as she breathed.

She was asleep. Elric took two steps towards the woman on the bed and then he stopped suddenly. He was shuddering. He turned away. Moonglum was alarmed. He saw bright tears in Elric's crimson eyes.

— *The Vanishing Tower*

Farther south than Alorasaz, standing almost at the edge of the world, is Castle Kaneloon, refuge of one of the greatest Champions of Law, Myshella, Empress of the Dawn. Perhaps immortal, Myshella occupied Kaneloon even when Earl Aubec was alive and it was she who tested his prowess (as she has tested, and often taken as lovers, so many heroes over the centuries) directing him to carve-out new lands from the seething stuff of Chaos at the world's edge. More than anyone, save Elric, it is Myshella who holds absolute Chaos at bay



Searching for Theleb K'arna, Elric is brought to Kaneloon by Oonai summoned by Myshella, finding her placed in a sorcerous sleep of Theleb K'arna's devising. Later, in Alorasaz, she comes to Elric as a vision, instructing him to help her against the Pan Tangian, who has allied himself with Prince Umbda and the Kelmain Host, a vicious army serving Chaos from a nearby plane and seeking domination of the entire southern continent. Riding Myshella's fabulously jewelled mechanical bird across the Boiling Sea, Elric travels to another of Myshella's strongholds, Ashaneloon, and confronts one of Theleb K'arna's demons, slaying it and taking its heart – a precious nanorian stone – the only thing that can break the spell holding Myshella in slumber. Elric also returns with a cloth of gold bag containing a pinkish dust, a component in the hideous spell known as the Noose of Flesh, which Myshella uses to destroy Prince Umbda's army.

Castle Kaneloon, should Myshella wish it, can reflect the deepest fears and desires of those who walk its halls. This is how the Empress of the Dawn challenged Aubec and how she has seduced countless other lovers and heroes. In the time of *Elric of Melniboné* Myshella's needs are frequent and it is entirely possible for itinerant adventurers to be summoned to Kaneloon to serve her.

Oin and Yu

Separated by the Ar River, but joined at the hip in the shared capital of Dhoz-Kam, Oin and Yu are considered one by a unity of barbarism and poverty. Prince Yyrkoon, Elric's cousin, fleeing the wrath of the Bright Emperor Elric, seeks refuge in Dhoz-Kam for a time, before claiming the Ruby Throne when Elric decides to wander the Young Kingdoms for a year.

Oin, the more civilised portion of the joint kingdom, is blanketed by an almost tropical rainforest, the result of the warm currents from the nearby Boiling Sea, and the locals claim the forests are plagued by demons and evil spirits. Those who have ventured into the jungles would confirm this and the dark depths echo with the howls, cries and moans of whatever creatures suffer within. Yu is arid and almost lifeless, bleached by hot winds from the Boiling Ocean that laps at its coasts, the soil baked dry in the summer and lashed into vast tracts of mud by the hot rains of the winter.

The primitive folk of Oin and Yu live in dirty, squat cities along the habitable portions of the coast with architecture only barely worthy of the name. The faith of these barbarians is mainly focused around nature spirits and the Elemental Rulers, particularly Kakatal and Straasha, whose eternal war, they believe, creates the Boiling Sea.

Dhoz-Kam is the only city of note. With little hope of working the soil for sustenance, the only industry here is fishing from the great bay next to the city and even this is more a means of survival than one of mercantile enterprise.

Dhoz-Kam is flat-roofed and ugly, consisting of little more than shacks, huts and small buildings each no more than a single storey. The people are destitute and the few visitors to the city are essentially nobility by local standards, though there is precious

little to enjoy even with such relative wealth. The largest building, destined to be inhabited by the renegade Prince Yyrkoon, is a remnant of the Lormyrian Empire and stands a 'mighty' three-storers high.

Pikarayd

Impoverished Pikarayd mirrors its eastern neighbour, Dorel, far more than enlightened Argimiliar, to the west. With the exceptions of Ryfel and Chalal (both small and uncultured as southern cities go) the country is a harsh expanse of inhospitable marshes, moors, bogs and swamps, punctuated by rocky stretches of hills and snow-wracked forests. The people dwelling here are unfriendly to outsiders but that is hardly surprising given that the clans of Pikarayd's wilderness also loathe each other, with battles occurring frequently, be they over new territory or grudges as ancient as the land itself. Although large towns do exist, claimed by the clans, they are small affairs dominated by unease and hatred with a casual attitude to violence and a disregard for life.

Leaders of these barbarian regions offer up hostages to the King of Pikarayd as assurances of goodwill, though they war among each other often enough, sometimes using mercenary armies and with hired generals from more cultured and educated lands. Pan Tang, in particular, has sent many mercenaries to Pikarayd, considering it an excellent training ground for its warriors. At one point Elric's closest friend and companion, Moonglum, is a commander in Pikarayd, working as a mercenary general for one petty clan-noble against another.

King Marvos rules Pikarayd now, from his sprawling, dark-stoned castle overlooking Chalal. His worship of Chaos is open and unsubtle, he is known as Marvos the Bloodthirsty, with the title already finding its way into tomes of lore and history. He has openly courted the attention of sorcerers from Pan Tang and their presence might account in some way for the growing cults of Chaos in Argimiliar.

The people still offer reverence to Grome and Straasha, though these traditionalist ways are being supplanted with new gods: Mabelode, Chardros and Xiombarg dominate in the tribal lands, their-worship spreading and led by a figurehead called only the *Hierophant*. This mysterious figure claims as much power as the tyrant Marvos and has amassed it through much less bloodshed.

Marvos and the Hierophant are not slain with most of the other Young Kingdoms rulers in Elric's treacherous assault on the Dreaming City. Instead, Marvos abstains from the conflict and is usurped several years later by his son, the Balance-worshipping Kolthak. The new king institutes a rule of wisdom and prosperity, dragging his people from the dark age they endured under his father. Although a prophet rises to aid Pikarayd in its era of returning to the ways of Balance, all is for naught when Jagreen Lern's Chaos host sweeps the world bare of human life and the flame of hope in Pikarayd gutters and dies.

THE WESTERN LANDS

Compared with the eastern and southern continents the western lands are insular realms lacking the general vibrancy of the Young Kingdoms. The blame for this lies with Pan Tang, which controls the seas separating the west from the lucrative markets of eastern and southern continents. Pan Tangian privateers and pirates regularly attack the ships braving the Straits of the Chaos and northern reaches of the Oldest Ocean, seizing cargos for Hwamgaarl's stores and the crews for its slave pits. As a result the west is a muted place, fearful of Pan Tang's growing power and that of its vassal, Dharijor. It is only two centuries since most of the western lands finally rejected Melnibonéan dominance. Freedom and independence from the Dragon Lords is still a relatively new concept to the peoples of the west and the Melnibonéans are regarded with particular loathing in most of the western lands.

Yet the western continent is not uncultured. Elric resides here for a while, mainly during his dalliance as a lover with Yishana of Jharkor. As with the other land masses, the western continent boasts its fair share of cultured nations with prosperous cities and hostile, primitive realms, where inhuman beasts prowl the wild lands away from the lights and sounds of civilised men.

Dharijor

Dharijor is the most powerful of the kingdoms on the western continent, having exchanged one form of slavery for another. In casting off Melnibonéan oppression, Dharijor seemingly welcomed the iron-clad rule of Pan Tang. The kingdom is thoroughly subservient and allied to the priesthood of the City of Screaming Statues, rather than the sorcerers of the Dragon Isle. King Sarosto, a descendent of Atarn the City Builder, Dharijor's legendary founder, is the latest in a long line of monarchs relishing the patronage of Jagreen Lern and the sorcerer-priests of Pan Tang. Ruling from his heavily fortified palace in Lashmar, Sarosto binds the scattered provinces together through his legions, enforcing his rule while being supported (and controlled) by the adherents to Chaos. The populace, having little option, follow Sarosto's lead. Sarosto's court is choked with Pan Tangian advisors, who ensure that Jagreen Lern's will, no matter how opposed to true Dharijorian interests, is enforced.

In truth the people of Dharijor are not exactly unwilling victims of Pan Tang's ambitions. They were ever a bloodthirsty and warlike people, travelling from the populated coastal regions of their land in order to raid neighbouring realms for profit and amusement. Both Jharkor and Tarkesh are victims of Dharijor's expansionist ambitions, the former having ceded much territory to Dharijor's incursions. Sarosto's privateers continually raid the Tarkesh coast disrupting trade and feeding Sarosto's swollen coffers.

The warrior is greatly respected in Dharijor and the warrior cults of Chaos – Chardros, Mabelode and Xiombarg – dominate. Gladiatorial contests can be found in all the major cities and Gromoorva boasts the largest coliseum outside of Hwamgaarl.

Thousands flock to the amphitheatres to watch the act of bloodletting, the best fighters being greatly admired by all who witness a skilled warrior slaying his foes.

Life is quieter beyond the cities but tainted with avarice and suspicion. The land is not blessed with fertility, as it is in Jharkor and Tarkesh, and the small towns scratch by on poor quality crops. Sarosto's legions ensure the populace stays quiet and the priests of the Chaos cults harangue the masses regularly, declaiming Dharijor's glory and its destiny to rule the world (with Pan Tang, of course). People are kept in order by the occasional distribution of plunder from privateer raids but the corrupt local rulers and nobles are allowed to treat the peasantry almost as slaves.

Despite their ferocity and renown for casual cruelty, the armies of Dharijor, are disorganised and corrupt. Whilst answering to King Sarosto local generals, who delight in the pomp and finery of their superior armour and weapons, are as corrupt as the land barons and petty nobles. Discipline is lax in the legions but this will not prevent them from eventually marching alongside the hordes of Chaos at the end of the world, armoured in iron plate, darkened to black and intimidating even in its blandness.

Jharkor

Larger than Dharijor, enjoying a balmy climate and fine, wide countryside suited to all types of agriculture, Jharkor is the breadbasket of the west, governed soundly by the much respected (though young) king, Dharmit. A vast fleet answers the monarch's orders and a merchant fleet, even larger still, spreads the name and wealth of Jharkor across the seas of the Young Kingdoms, despite Pan Tang's and Dharijor's predations. In Elric's time Jharkor's power is rising to match that of Ilmiora and the Island of Purple Towns. Yishana will take the throne in time, after Dharmit, her brother, is slain in the Sack of Imrryr. Until then, King Dharmit rules with a moderate hand and an unopposed authority over his people.

The intrigues that grip Dharmit's court tend to focus on Yishana and her notorious enjoyment of strong, young men, mischief and the occasional dabbling with the proponents of Chaos. Yishana is neither young nor conventionally beautiful; but she is an arch manipulator and derives great satisfaction from having people – men especially – in her thrall whilst Dharmit administers the country. This is how she came to be involved with Theleb K'aarna, an emissary from Dharijor who becomes besotted with the princess and later utterly obsessed with her. Yishana, relishing the attention of a sorcerer, and ignoring the warning of her brother, develops the liaison with Theleb K'aarna and in so doing cultivates the jealousy that is eventually his undoing.

Dhakos, the City of Spires, boasts a colossal harbour, the envy of many of the Young Kingdoms. This city is the beautiful and exotic capital of Jharkor, a place of countless graceful spires emulating those of Imrryr, tree-lined avenues and the vast central market place that is always thronged with traders. Overlooking the city is the royal palace, where the monarch is guarded at all times by

Theleb K'aarna's Jealousies

His jealousy and hatred of Elric leads Theleb K'aarna to extract an elaborate and sweeping revenge that includes Myshella and another, unnamed, Melnibonéan who becomes Yishana's lover following the sacking of Imrryr. Yishana, it would seem, delights in courting precisely the kind of men guaranteed to incur the sorcerer's wrath and, in typical Pan Tangian fashion, K'aarna is not averse to inflicting cruel and humiliating deaths on those who dare to take Yishana's bed.

Elric and Jharkor

Jharkor is a principal land of the west in Moorcock's Elric saga, full of dusky-skinned people wearing fine silks suited to their warm climate. Jharkor is second in power only to Dharijor but sees much more detail in the stories due to Elric's affair with Queen Yishana. Despite being loathed for bringing about Dharmit's death, Elric saves Jharkor from the Chaos Lord Balo's attempts to seize control and Yishana even offers Elric the throne. Later, as the armies of Chaos march across the western lands, Elric and Yishana lead one of the decisive battles against the Chaos horde.

a legion of elite royal warriors, *the White Leopards*, clad in the skins of these rare creatures, native to the dense forests of the Western Marches, skirting Jharkor's most westerly border. Jharkor pays lip-service to the Lords of Law but in truth its people follow no single religion and are sometimes sceptical of the supposed fight between Law and Chaos. This scepticism is fundamentally challenged when Pan Tang and its Chaos hordes sweep in from Dharijor and Jharkor's golden-armoured soldiers are forced to march north to meet them in the decisive battle for the west.

Myyrrhn

Hidden far to the west of Jharkor, amongst the western mountains and beyond even the Vale of Xanyaw, is the kingdom of Myyrrhn. The Myyrrhn, also called the Winged Folk, are believed to be the descendants – created through magic – of the winged ape-beasts called clakars. In the realm of Myyrrhn both races exist in miniscule numbers, rarely chancing upon each other but inevitably shedding blood on the rare occasions they do meet.

Little formal society exists among the Winged Folk, who dwell in their mountaintop aeries and care nothing for the world outside of their ancestral lands. The only notable traditions of the Myyrrhn are their complicated and stunning aerial ceremonies for worshipping the Elemental Ruler Laasa (as she is known to the Myyrrhn) and their pictographic language – also called Myyrrhn – which decorates the walls of mountaintop caves.

Ostensibly near-human in appearance, the Myyrrhn differ by virtue of the great feathered wings extending from their shoulder

blades. The race of Winged Folk is delicately-boned in order to aid their flight and all are muscular and deep-chested. Modesty rarely concerns the Myyrrhn, who wear naught but loincloths when among their own kind. The small family-based communities of the Winged Folk survive in solitude by hunting small game and foraging in the mountain forests for nuts, mosses, fruits and berries. The females go through pregnancies of much shorter duration than human women and do not, as some scholars have insisted, lay eggs.

The only real hostile creature in Myyrrhn is the race called clakars, who still take savage joy in butchering their evolved cousins. An ancient ancestral enemy of the Winged Folk were a race of giant white owls, though these are now thought to be extinct since a great aerial war played out many centuries ago.

The Karasim

The green-skinned Karasim, hailing from the abyss of the same name, were, during Melniboné's early days, a threat to the Dragon Isle. Taking hostages from Myyrrhn the Karasim sundered the alliance with the Mernii and launched several vicious attacks from their sylph-powered flying longships. In one such raid they seized the prince of the Mernii, Silverskin. Casting the prince overboard, Silverskin was saved by the Winged Folk who took him to live in their lands for a time. Eventually escaping, with the aid of a rescue party led by his father, King Elrik, the Mernii destroyed many of the Karasim's longships and were pursued deep into The Silent Lands and the Melmane Marshes (now known as the Marshes of the Mist). The Karasim, if they still survive, have not been seen in the Young Kingdoms for 100 centuries but this is not to presume that they do not wait beyond the edges of their abyss, plotting.

Shazar

Quiet Shazar dreams in Jharkor's shadow. It has few aspirations as a nation and is curiously unmoved by the incursions of Pan Tang and Dharijor into its northern neighbour. As the southernmost nation of the west Shazar is rarely troubled by the reavers of the north and it takes care to trouble no one. It is a peaceful realm of plains and grassland often buried in the loose mists born from over the great Marshes of the Mist to the south. Along Shazar's southern coast is a range of vicious crags called the Serpent's Teeth, which are difficult to navigate in the alarming coastal winds and responsible for shipwrecks of countless sailors, unable to cope with the treacherous waters.

Shazar is renowned for the quality of its horses and the inland plains are home to great wild herds that have a mercurial temperament but are the finest stock in the Young Kingdoms. Thoroughbreds from Shazar are prized throughout the world and while most Shazarian folk tend to be skilled riders, the cavalry warriors of this kingdom are exceptional in battle. These bronze-

armoured fighters, the Knights of Aflitain and Dioperda, are regarded as among the finest mounted warriors in the world, clever and well-disciplined. The Knights come to Jharkor's aid at the final battle for the west and, whilst that battle is fought in vain, Shazar's knights fight valiantly.

The Marshes of the Mist

South of Shazar these stinking, mist-shrouded bogs teem with life, all of it unpleasant. Swamp bears, marsh serpents and moaning, half-dead spirits number amongst the foul beings resident here but the most terrifying is the creature known as Bellbane, the Mist Giant. Perhaps Bellbane is the last of its kind, a ghoul of the swamps, feeding on both souls and blood. Bellbane was understood to haunt regions much further to the west but Elric and Shaarilla (a wingless woman of the Myyrrhn who befriends Elric in Aflitain), encounter the monster as they search for the Dead God's Book. Bellbane is ghoulish but not unintelligent. It recognises, and fears, the list of names ('Balaan! Marthrim! Aesma! Alastor! Saebos! Haborym of the Fires Which Destroy!'), sorcerers and minor dukes of Hell, perhaps – Elric screams at it before engaging it in a duel to Bellbane's death.

What brings Bellbane to the Marshes can only be guessed at: is there some treasure or great prize hidden somewhere amongst the quicksand and bottomless reed-beds?

The Silent Lands

Past the Marshes of the Mist are The Silent Lands, where practically no human ever treads. If the legends are true, the hostile marsh was created specifically by Grome's earth magic in order to repel any conquest of The Silent Lands by the armies of Melniboné. The truth may never be known, as the folk of The Silent Lands have no interest in relaying the facts of the matter.

Ten thousand years ago The Silent Lands were home to the diminutive, but courageous, Pukwadji barbarians, venerated of Grome Earth King. They opposed the Mernii when their king refused to return the Black Blade guarded by Grome; in response they threatened to destroy the Mernii's ships, which they relied upon for trade. The hero, White Crow, went in search of the fabled Actorios stone in a bid to make the king relent and return the Black Blade to Lord Grome. His success earned the Pukwadji's trust and sealed the pact with Lord of the Earth that Elric, 100 centuries later, still invokes from time-to-time.

The realm itself is comprised mainly of black mountains that remain forever under dark skies that emit no storms but always seem moments from thunderous rainfall. It is within these black mountains that the last remnants of the Doomed Folk dwell, crawling around in the utter blackness and hating all those who

walk the world in this current, hated cycle. Like the despised kingdom of Org these refugees from the previous cycle of time are rumoured to be half-dead cannibals with foul rites and even fouler gods.

Tarkesh

Most northerly of the Young Kingdoms, Tarkesh is a divided land. The fierce northerners are longship-sailing, axe-bearing raiders, living off stunted crop yields, poor soil and hunting in their mountainous homeland. They regard the southern city-dwellers of Banarva, and rural farmers of the hinterland, as soft and weak, engaged in too close a relationship with sick Dharijor. The cultured people of the south regard the northerners as ignorant barbarians, fur-clad reavers with little learning or culture beyond the lurid decorations that cover their boats.

Despite the divide both northerners and southerners worship the elemental rulers above all other faiths, particularly Pozz-Mann-Llyrr, their god of the sea (and either a kinsman of Straasha, or a guise Straasha assumes for his dealings with the folk of Tarkesh). They have little love for Law but reserve their true hatred for the Chaotic Lord of the Depths, Pyaray, Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets, who feasts upon the souls of drowned sailors.

If one thing could unite Tarkesh, then it is their quality craftsmanship and skill with boats. Both north and south acknowledge each other's talent for creating fine vessels from the dense, pure woodlands that blanket the country. Whether longship raider or coastal bireme, merchant cog or masted clipper, Tarkeshite ships are highly prized by the sailors of the Young Kingdoms and many are wary of trusting their lives to any other kind of vessel.

Young King Yaris is the last ruler to preside over the bitter north-south rivalry, which he tolerates because he has no inkling of how it could, or if it even should, be settled. It is in his reign as monarch that civil war erupts between the north and the south, with skirmishes and outright battles breaking out along the ill-defined borders. Before the world's end, however, Tarkesh is fated for a short peace. King Yaris dies with so many other Young Kingdoms rulers in the Sack of Imrryr and his cousin Hilran takes the throne. When Chaos sweeps over the world, Tarkesh is a unified nation and is ultimately destroyed in this unity by Jagreen Lern.

The Chasm of Nihrain

Older than even Melniboné and once its ally, the chasm-city of Nihrain is unknown to most mortals and forgotten by even the Dragon Isle. Built within a fissure that splits the earth of the western mountains, this strange city-kingdom is home to the black-skinned immortals under the command of Sepiriz, a being who will one day ally again with Melniboné when Elric comes seeking answers in the final days of the world. Sepiriz and the Nihrain are avowed servants of the Cosmic Balance and they rest in a stasis within a volcano not far from the chasm-city

they call home, awaiting the doom of the Young Kingdoms and anticipating the next cycle of Time.

The city of Nihrain is built within the vast caverns of the chasm, a realm of carved statues, twisting spires, spiral staircases and homes made from immense rock formations. Here the almost-human servants of the Nihrain tend to their masters and their unique steeds, which exist in at least two dimensions simultaneously. The steeds of Nihrain are tireless beasts that do not heed the laws of the Young Kingdoms, capable of galloping across earth and sea at great speeds.

R'lin K'ren A'a

Not a part of the western continent as such but located in unexplored lands in the south west of the Young Kingdoms, R'lin K'ren A'a is a city that occupies the steaming jungles and could be the ancestral city of the Mernii predating their migration to the Dragon Isle. In Elric's time R'lin K'ren A'a is nothing but a legend, even amongst Melnibonéans, and Elric doubts its existence – until Duke Avan Astran shows the albino a map claiming its whereabouts and enlists his help in finding the place.

R'lin K'ren A'a received its name after the lords of the Higher worlds chose it as a place to meet to discuss the rules of the cosmic struggle that have shaped their actions ever since. Their arrival signalled the exodus of the Mernii, save for one, who remained behind to spy on their conference. He was discovered and doomed to eternal life, carrying the terrible knowledge of their meeting forever more. The city's inhabitants, these legends say, crossed the sea to Sorcerers' Isle and then further north, to an island inhabited by dragons: Melniboné.

Avan Astran is drawn to seek R'lin K'ren A'a for more practical reasons than ancient history. The tale recounts how the inhabitants left behind a colossal statue of Arioeh, carved from jade, with huge gems for eyes. Astran seeks this treasure, which he believes can reveal the secrets of the higher beings. R'lin K'ren A'a proves to be a reality, as does the statue, but it also proves to be Astran's downfall.

The city is reached by a winding river penetrating deep into the lush, insect-swarmed jungle. It is protected by the olab, reptilian beings with feathered crests and neck wattles but essentially human faces. They move on stork-like legs, towering above the jungle waters, and assail strangers with great clubs that are used to hurl razor-sharp crystalline discs. Beyond them, R'lin K'ren A'a still stands, its walls and buildings broken as though brought down by an earth quake. The place is untouched by weeds or other trappings of the forest and there, at the city's heart and the only thing still standing, is the jade statue Astran seeks.

Still living amongst the ruined buildings and ghosts of the Mernii, J'osui C'rein Reyr, the creature doomed to live, is flesh and blood. The knowledge he holds has driven him beyond madness and despair. He wants rid of the curse, which may only be removed by Arioeh and only if the jade statue is animated and recovers its

eyes so that it may see to leave the city. Elric summons the duke of Hell and is forced into taking Astran's life in the process. Arioch heeds the summons but warns Elric that in obeying his command, a course of events the albino may not desire will be set in motion.

There, in the ruins of an ancient, forgotten city, surrounded by death and one who could not die, Elric determines the doom of the Young Kingdoms.

THE ISLANDS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

Four principal islands are detailed in the Elric saga: Melniboné, the Isle of Purple Towns, Pan Tang and Sorcerers' Isle. With the exception of Sorcerers' Isle, all are major powers. Melniboné's place in the scheme of the Young Kingdoms is now established and at the time of the Young Kingdoms the Isle of the Purple towns is one of the foremost nations, a land of merchant princes and explorers, such as Smiorgan Baldhead. Pan Tang broods in the northern seas, plotting and pillaging, building its reserves of magic and chaotic allegiance, ready to assume an empire of its own – mightier than Melniboné – and institute a reign of Chaos upon the earth.

A fifth, smaller island is also mentioned: Ashaneloon, one of Myshella's fortresses, hidden in the Boiling Sea.

Ashaneloon

Ashaneloon is the name of the palace standing there, rather than island itself but the distinction is moot: Ashaneloon appears on no maps or charts of the Young Kingdoms and it is a place of importance to only one person: Myshella, Empress of the Dawn.

Myshella divides her time between Kaneloon in southern Lormyr and Ashaneloon, a small island hidden in the Boiling Sea. It is here that Elric is sent to fetch the component for the Noose of Flesh. Here, too, he encounters a guardian demon of Theleb K'arna's devising, which has at its heart a Nanorian stone.

The island is small and rocky – easily overlooked, for nothing sails in the Boiling Sea. The palace of Ashaneloon is described as being of slender towers, turrets and domes. The eastern tower holds what Elric looks for – perhaps it holds other Lawful charms too – but he does not have the chance to explore the palace thoroughly. It may be that Ashaneloon and Kaneloon are identical – twin buildings in separate locations. It could also be that they are very different and hold different wonders reflecting Myshella's moods and whims. Does Ashaneloon have its walls draped in the standards and colours of her dead lovers?

Melniboné: The Dragon Isle

Dreadful, dreaming and doomed, Melniboné is the centre of the Bright Empire, home to dragons and the strange, amoral descendents of a Balance-worshipping race that settled legendary



R'lin K'ren A'a more than 10,000 years ago. When the lords of the higher worlds demanded R'lin K'ren A'a as their meeting place, its people fled; first to Sorcerers' Isle and then to the group of four islands they occupy today. Along the way they developed a pact with Arioch and so began their inexorable climb to cruel greatness: they became Melnibonéans.

Dragons occupied the island long before it became Melniboné. The Phoom had built a great city of rock and ash before and had lived there for thousands of years before the Mernii arrived. The Mernii learned to communicate with the Phoom and eventually developed bonds of kinship, sharing their city before establishing their own. Later, as Chaos-aligned Melniboné, the dragons would help forge the Bright Empire, seemingly oblivious or care-free of the changing religious affiliations of their kinsmen.

Chaos came to the Mernii in the shape of Lord Arioch who, having been inadvertently invited to this realm by Prince Silverskin, seduced the Mernii with promises and visions of power. The Mernii divided: the Melnibonéans chose Chaos and the Menastrai chose the Balance. The Menastrai retreated to A'sha'hiian, the first city of the Mernii, while the Chaos-worshippers built a new city, Imrryr, which eclipsed all other cities in beauty and grace. War followed, known in Melnibonéan legend as *The Chaos Wars*, and A'sha'hiian was bombarded with demon magic and dragon flame. The Menastrai, fled, leaving the entire island to Imrryr and Chaos. The ruins of A'sha'hiian still stand at the southern tip of the main island, over-run with weeds and barely visible; but there is still no denying its beauty and grace. Before making their pacts with Chaos, the people of Melniboné were a calm, detached race not given to acts of casual violence and disdainful cruelty. A'sha'hiian symbolises the ruination of Chaos; what might

have the people of Melniboné become if they had continued along the original path of the Mernii?

The smaller islands have been abandoned by the Melnibonéans, although deserted castles of wondrous, impossible architecture still stand and in Elric's time the empire is centred on the main island and Imrryr, the Dreaming City. It is the main island that bears the name of Melniboné and it is formed of a range of steep, wooded hills along its spine, separating Imrryr from the vast Meadows of Lassitude and the Intangible Forest that covers the eastern stretches of the island. To the north, the Isolated Fells hold the Lake of the Moon, a lake of liquid silver amidst the gorse and rocky outcrops. Melniboné's coastline is ragged and treacherous, with wild currents and buried reefs. Only one safe landing place is available; the deep bay where Imrryr stands. It is almost impossible for boats to harbour safely along any of the other coasts, making invasion virtually futile. If any warship could anchor safely, its troops would find their progress across country eventually halted by the steep, sharp hills that divide the island and protect Imrryr. As a result, none have tried.

Imrryr is a huge accretion of spires, towers, domes, minarets and weirdly carved battlements. It is built from a cascade of colours, some sorcerously achieved, and it rises, glittering, above the huge harbour maze that protects the city from unwanted guests. Imrryr was not always known by this name. When the people first arrived it was called H'hui'shan and was a simple staging post that rose to grandeur. It was destroyed in The Chaos Wars and the Menastrai who built it retreated to A'sha'hiiian. The city was raised again by a mixture of slave labour and sorcery and renamed Imrryr. The harbour maze was built at the same time and only specially trained pilots know the safest routes through it, into the harbour itself.

Imrryr is indeed a wonder. The most beautiful city of the Young Kingdoms and the cruelest, it is decadent and amoral, like its inhabitants. The broad avenues and jade towers mask terrible activities and depravities, for the people of Imrryr seek the most extreme and dangerous of pleasures. Drugged slaves, some human, others almost-human and most altered in slight mystical ways, form the overwhelming majority of Imrryr's population. With their obedience enforced by endless drugging and sorcerous compelling, the nobles of the Dreaming City are free to live their race's last days in the blind ignorance of the truly decadent. The Melnibonéans themselves spend most of their time in gentle drugged hazes or at court, dancing to the songs of tortured chorus-slaves or scheming to advance their own status before the eyes of their peers.

Despite its secrets people still flock to Imrryr. Its markets in the Foreigners' Quarter are the greatest in the Young Kingdoms, filled with riches from across the Young Kingdoms and beyond. Melnibonéans rarely tread this quarter's streets, instead sending slaves to conduct commerce on their behalf. Most who visit Imrryr will never progress beyond the Foreigners' Quarter; those that do are destined to be slaves themselves, or worse, and only a handful of humans have been allowed into the streets of the

Dreaming City proper and then allowed to leave unmolested. Imrryr's place as a centre for trade is under threat by the rise of the Isle of the Purple Towns and the markets of Dhakos and Raschil. Merchants have tired of the illogical, resented fact that Melnibonéans must guide each and every vessel that seeks to trade through the sea maze. The Melnibonéans are oblivious to this decline but one, Emperor Elric, 428th Bright Emperor, is sensitive to what threatens Melniboné. His strategy is to gain greater understanding of the Young Kingdoms and perhaps relax Imrryr's dealings with humans. The strategy is not popular. Elric's cousin, Prince Yyrkoon, rejects such notions and would see Melniboné assert itself once again with dragons and battlebarges.

Beneath Melniboné, accessible only by those accorded the rank of Dragon Prince, are the dragon caves. These vast subterranean lairs are where Melniboné's wyrms slumber, dreaming of things unknowable by mortals. The dragons symbolise Melniboné's power and their sleep reflects the empire's decline. It takes great effort to rouse the dragons and they rest a little longer after every disturbance. The oldest and largest, Flamefang, is an immense she-dragon that holds a special empathic bond with Elric. It is Flamefang who carries the albino Dragon Prince into his final battle and she is half as old as the Bright Empire itself, wise in ways alien to mortals but curiously understandable to Elric.

Just as the dragons slumber, so do most Melnibonéans. Dream couches hold sleeping forms, helping their occupants to project their consciousness across the Million Spheres in search of new challenges and pleasures. The dream couches were devised as a tool to train each Bright Emperor, enabling the dreamer to experience many lifetimes in the space of a few nights' sleep. In this way the emperors of Melniboné gained the knowledge and experience for both sorcerous training and the skills necessary to administer, single-handedly, an empire spanning the known world. Now, in these final years of the Bright Empire, the dream couches are used solely for pleasure, their effects enhanced by the powerful narcotics the residents of Imrryr prefer. Not all succumb to the lure of the dream couches but the damage is done. Imrryr is impotent and on the verge of extinction. Its time has passed, fading into half-memory like a dawn-chased dream.

The Sack of Imrryr

So it was, with wind-demons for shipmates, that Elric, last Prince of the Royal line of Melniboné, returned to the last city still ruled by his own race – the last city and the final remnant of Melnibonéan architecture.

— The Dreaming City

In only a few short years, Elric will abdicate his throne in order to walk among the peoples of the Young Kingdoms. During this sabbatical, he wanders across the world as an adventurer, seeking new experiences and coming to terms with his newfound morality. On his hip throughout these journeys is the hellsword Stormbringer, feeding him life for each soul that he slays, negating his need for health-narcotics.

This adventuring comes to an end after a year, when Elric learns of Yyrkoon's treacherous usurpation of the Ruby Throne. Burning with hatred and anger, and driven to the belief that his own people barely belong in this current age because of their decadent and parasitic culture, he leads an assault on Imrryr that sees the Melnibonéans driven to the brink of extinction.

After Elric's betrayal, the remaining Melnibonéans wander the world in small mercenary bands, under the leadership of Dyvim Tvar and his son, Dyvim Storm, Elric's last remaining blood-relative and the only other Dragon Prince left alive. When the world dies, Elric and Dyvim Storm wake the last dragons one final time, riding those few that are able to wake into the last battle for the world.

That has not happened yet but it will soon. Imrryr will burn, the great towers will fall and the world will never be the same again.

Isle of Purple Towns

Named for the colour of its buildings, constructed from a purple stone found only on the island, the Isle of Purple Towns is more notable for what the Melnibonéans regard as its 'impudence'. It has dared to expand and grow into the secondary (and soon, primary) trade hub of the Young Kingdoms, eclipsing Melniboné due to its industrious sailors, wise merchants, ideal location and its money-hungry, ambitious and smart leaders. Traders from the Purple Towns spread throughout the Young Kingdoms, acting as brokers and aides when not delivering their own sea-borne cargoes and raising themselves up as merchant-princes. The ports of the other Young Kingdoms bustle with Purple Town vessels and sailors, and trade routes are established to and from all nations, with old agreements honoured and expanded and new fortunes made on fresh promises and profits.

The powerful nobles and newly-risen merchant-princes of the Purple Towns are a separate lot, comprising of traditionalist feudal lords with slipping fortunes and new money merchants with immense caches of coin invested and stored as they see fit. Menii is the port capital of the island; a trade hub that rivals, and will soon dwarf, that of Imrryr. Kariss is a northern city preferred by the traditional nobility, leaving them largely ignored by most of the island.

Once, the religion of the island was based around the elemental rulers Straasha and Lassa. Now however, as trade booms, a golden pyramid-temple of Law has arisen in Menii and the people are content with their new faith.

Count Smiorgan Baldhead, destined to be a companion of (and eventually betrayed by) Elric, is a noble-born ruler who has made a vast fortune by working alongside and among the new merchant caste. When he is killed in the Sack of Imrryr, the Isle of the Purple Towns suffer a brief destabilisation, even going to war with Lormyr, a nation that has long held a grudge against the ascending nation while it itself dwindles.

The last battle of the Isle of the Purple Towns fleet occurs during the doom of the world. Abandoned by most of their allies and without a hope of victory, the Purple Towners sail against the Theocrat of Pan Tang's fleet, facing death with bravery and honour rather than await it on their island.

Pan Tang

A thousand years ago, a race of humans called the Mabden came to this plane of existence for reasons they never shared with others. They made their home on the barren, inhospitable island in the centre of the Pale Sea and named it Pan Tang. The Mabden are a tenacious people, passionate, creative and bearers of grudges. Perhaps this is why they turned to Chaos. As Melniboné began its inexorable decline as an empire, the Mabden saw the possibilities of Chaos and how the Melnibonéans had let their control of it slip. They would raise their own empire, this time in concert with the Lords of Chaos and not in defiance of them. New pacts were made, temples built and sacrifices offered. Over the steady course of the millennium Pan Tang honed its skills as practitioners of magic, unearthing knowledge carefully hidden by Melniboné, refining their dark arts.

Pan Tang's rise has been patient and cautious. It is only in the last few hundred years, as Melniboné has truly retreated, that it has asserted itself. First, sorcerer-emissaries were sent forth to seduce the fledgling Young Kingdoms. As their influence became established, the theocracy of Pan Tang ensured increasing reliance on the power of both Chaos and its sorcerer-priests. Now, in Elric's time, Pan Tang is poised to reap the whirlwind. Its sorcerers have never been stronger and its influence never more insidious and encompassing. Dharijor, largest of the western nations, is enthralled to the theocracy; Pikarayd is within its control. Its pirate fleets haunt the seas like hungry wraiths and its pacts with the Dukes of Hell have never been stronger. Soon it will initiate war against the Young Kingdoms in a bid for their complete conquest, the Pan Tangian armies swollen with hell-spawned troops.

Pan Tang has but a single city: Hwamgaarl, city of screaming statues, so named because its enemies and dissidents are transformed into the huge, shrieking sculptures lining the city walls, their soul-wracking cries of pain and insanity echoing across the isle. Hwamgaarl's streets are disordered and maze-like, with buildings leaning inwards at impossible angles, creating deep pools of shadow that even the brightest sunlight cannot dispel. The harbour is thronged with ships but these are not the trading vessels of Raschil, Menii and Dhakos; these are pirate boats, slavers and war-galleys. Cargo is not traded but stolen and captured vessels are stripped of their trappings and daubed in the colours of Pan Tang: deep green and black, emblazoned with the merman crest of the theocracy.

Dominating it all, overlooking the harbour, is the imposing and menacing palace of the theocrat. The current incumbent of that exalted position is Jagreen Lern, a cruel and depraved individual, utterly insane and bent on taking his island to conquest. He would

seek to emulate Melniboné's cruelty and decadence but he lacks the aesthetic sensibilities marking Melnibonéans from humans. He is a parody of Melniboné's emperors; thin-faced, dark-eyed but bearing the swarthinness of his Mabden ancestors. His crest is the merman, scores of which inhabit the deep waters surrounding the island, and it flies this device from every flag of every vessel under Pan Tangian control.

The church of Chaos rules all in Pan Tang. Its priests are warriors and sorcerers, all devotees of one or more Lords of Chaos. The patron demon is Chardros the Reaper, grim lord of chaotic death. Others are worshipped: Maluk the stitch-lipped; Hiornhurn the executioner; Pyaray the tentacled whisperer, admiral of the Chaos fleet; Xiombarg the faceless, Queen of the Swords. Temples to these twisted deities abound throughout Hwamgaarl, the chants, shouts and screams of priests, worshippers and victims echoing around the rough-hewn granite walls. The elementals are given lip-service but true worship is reserved for the Lords of Chaos and the warrior-priests of Pan Tang are masters of their secrets.

Pan Tang is feared and loathed, not respected, by the other Young Kingdoms. When the armies of Jagreen Lern rise up to claim the world for Chaos, all who still live will see the influence of the Pan Tangians firsthand. These are the people who doom the world, twisting it with their hatred and their sorcery. They follow Chaos for the power it offers through evil, rather than the natural aspects that serve the Balance. The Chaos Gods, slaving for a chance to claim this world, are eager patrons for the theocrat's armies and keen generals serving at his side.

Tigers and Devil Lizards

Pan Tang's elite troops are the Tyger Guard. They fight side-by-side with trained smilodon, captured from The Weeping Waste or bred in captivity. Guard and sabretooth share an empathic bond and fight as one. The warriors of the Tyger Guard are as ferocious as their pets and before any battle the animals are starved to ensure maximum aggression.

The cavalry of Pan Tang does not ride horses. Instead they ride huge, six-limbed reptilian beasts of appalling viciousness, bred by sorcery. Their riders carry long, curve-bladed sabres, ideal for slashing and beheading; they ride into the fray surrounded by prowling tigers and their grim-faced handlers, intent on the carnage to follow.

Sorcerers' Isle

Magic winds had caught the Filkbarian trader as she crossed the unnamed water between the Vilmirian peninsula and the Isle of Melniboné. She had been borne into the Dragon Sea and thence to The Sorcerer's Isle, so called because that barren place had once been the home of Cran Liret, the Thief of Spells, a wizard infamous for his borrowings, who had, at length,

been dispatched by those he sought to rival. But much residual magic had been left behind. Certain spells had come into the keeping of the krettii, a tribe of near-brutes who had migrated to the island from the region of The Silent Land less than fifty years before.

— Elric at the End of Time

Sorcerers' Isle looms from the dense mists surrounding it. A spiky, almost bare, crown of land surrounded by jagged cliffs of granite appearing through the grey smudge clinging to the sea. The water is strangely calm around the isle – as though entranced into a slumber.

This misty, mysterious island lies south east of the Shazarian coast and due west of Melniboné. For millennia it was the haunt of powerful magicians, hence its name and legend has it that the hellswords Stormbringer and Mournblade were forged there by the Doomed Folk. Sorcerers' Isle was also the first port of call for Elric's ancestors when they fled R'lin K'ren A'a, before they reached the isle now called Melniboné. How long they remained is unknown but clearly Sorcerers' Isle remained on their charts, because Melniboné's sorcerers used it many times over the course of the Bright Empire's reign.

Its last resident was Cran Liret, the Spell Thief, although the fortress he occupied was destroyed by Melniboné many years ago. Cran Liret stole one spell too many from his Dragon Lord comrades and they took their revenge with dragon venom and battle-barge, razing his castle and putting his foul practices to an end.

Sorcerers' Isle is still occupied. The Krettii, a race of stunted, bestial creatures, migrated here from the swamps of Shazaar several centuries ago and made Sorcerers' Isle their home. The Krettii have changed little in their habits or appearance. Their intellect is still limited and their skills confined to subsistence farming, hunting and, when times are hard, cannibalism.

Yet they are not alone. Cran Liret's Chaos Engines – the devices he used to steal spells – still exist within the island. And so too do his ultimate creations, the Spells That Live, still wandering aimlessly. The Krettii fear these remnants but worship their power as others worship the Lords of Law and Chaos.

THE UNKNOWN EAST

Beyond the Sighing Desert and the mountains known as The Ragged Pillars are the kingdoms called the Unknown East – unknown because, by and large, Melniboné has forgotten them and thus the Young Kingdoms at large are ignorant of them – although they know that lands and civilisations to the east exist.

To the Unknown Eastlanders, their realm is called Menastree and it is a very old land, with many links to both Melniboné and their predecessors, the Menastrai; the Balance venerating descendents of the original Mernii.

The Rise and Demise of the Spell Thief

The semi-immortal Cran Liret rose to prominence under the rule of Emperor Yrysool IX, known also as the Shining Emperor. Always an exceptional scholar of sorcery, Cran Liret's talents were recognised and indulged early-on by Yrysool and Cran Liret rose quickly to become the chief architect of the Shining Emperor's plans for the Bright Empire.

A dutiful student of Chaos, and devout disciple of Slortar the Old, Cran Liret's abiding interest was in the nature of the Multiverse itself and his studies led him to discover the fabric of the Million Spheres, perfecting several ways of traversing the Moonbeam Roads. In order to develop his discoveries, Cran Liret retired to Sorcerers' Isle, which had long been a home to scholars of Chaos, but derelict for centuries, and there began the construction of his Chaos Engines. Yrysool, his emperor and patron, visited often, bringing with him those he wanted punished. Cran Liret built two machines, *Forge* and *Sculptor* solely to please Yrysool. Forge was designed to rend souls from their bodies; and Sculptor to redesign them into new shapes. The Shining Emperor was so pleased with these new means of torture that he granted Cran Liret free reign in his experiments.

Through his discoveries of the secrets of the Multiverse, Cran Liret learned how to steal spells. He stole from many of his contemporaries and this angered the sorcerers of Melniboné, who had an unspoken pledge not to plunder each other's secrets. Yrysool turned a blind eye to Cran Liret's thievery but his enemies decided to bide their time. When Yrysool was eventually assassinated by his half-brother, Saber, and the Ruby Throne passed into Saber's hands, Cran Liret was immediately declared an enemy of Melniboné and sentenced to death. Even Duke Arioch endorsed the sorcerer's fate, so angered was he to learn that Cran Liret considered himself the equal of the nobles of Chaos.

Saber sent four battle barges and awoke five dragons to destroy Cran Liret. The Spell Thief, for once unprepared, was taken by surprise and his home on Sorcerers' Isle was quickly reduced to its current rubble by the venom of the Phoon dragons that made the attack. The battlebarges and their warriors made an assault on the island, destroying Cran Liret's followers (of which he had many), but found the Spell Thief's shattered body collapsed beside Forge. Dyvim Vlass, commander of the assault force, was prepared to wreck these machines but Emperor Saber stayed his hand, believing the machines would prove useful at some time in the future. But Cran Liret protected his inventions too well and their secrets of operation could not be unlocked. Forge and Sculptor remained inert and were, in time, forgotten. Forgotten too was Cran Liret's soul, still locked in Forge. The Spell Thief knew that, if taken alive, his torture would be beyond compare. Fooling Melniboné into believing he was dead was the only course of action open to him.

So, trapped in one of his own infernal machines, Cran Liret craves a suitable host for his huge, hideous intellect. The Krettii are simply unworthy; their brains are not developed enough to accommodate the weight of his knowledge and power. A few souls over the centuries have been tested and have failed. But Cran Liret is patient, his consciousness still active, and it sends forth messages, carried as dreams, to lure the perfect, unwitting body, to Sorcerers' Isle.

From the arid lands of the west, through to the lush immensity of the far eastern forests, Menastree is a land of distinct contrasts between its people and their beliefs. Remnants of the Menastrai, almost lost to the onslaught of time, can be found in the ruins of Amerain and Menerain and the old structures of Melniboné, incorporated into many of Menastree's towns and cities, are still to be seen, although the industry of the Eastlanders has forged an identity distinct from the Young Kingdoms.

Amerain and Menerain

The first and second of the great cities of the Menastrai, Amerain and Menerain rivalled Imrryr for beauty and splendour. Sacked by Melniboné and reduced to rubble, they are now overgrown, half-hidden ruins; a sad reminder of what happened to the civilisation that built them.

Their treasures are long gone, plundered by the Bright Empire and others, but beneath the scattered stones of their walls there are still secrets to be uncovered. The Menastrai understood much of the Multiverse and were skilled travellers of the Moonbeam Roads; remnants of their magics and mementoes from their planar travels doubtlessly remain hidden in the deep under-passages of the cities, protected, perhaps, by guardians designed to prevent Melniboné from stealing all the secrets of the Menastrai and using them to their own, bitter ends.

Anakhazan

Ruled by two great families Anakhazan is a nation of contrasts. On the eastern side of the country, the Clan Freyr; on the west, the Clan Guyë, the two separated by the mighty River Meer, dividing Anakhazan into two distinct provinces, predictably named after

the respective families. The Freyr Clan is ruled by Count Kores Freyr, a stern patriarch who, despite being allied to the Balance, sympathises with Law to a great degree and seeks to advance his understanding of it. It was the Freyr Clan that moved Anakhazan into the Valederian Directorates, maximising its trading position in the face of competition from Eshmir and Valederia. Freyr province is a strict place, reflecting the Count's heavy handed rule: laws exist for just about everything and personal freedom is set aside in order to ensure the freedom of society as a whole is maintained. Personal excesses are curbed, with public displays of exuberance tolerated only upon certain, traditional festival days. Many see the eastern side of Anakhazan as a drab, unfeeling place and prefer the far more relaxed Guyë province on the other side of the river.

Guyë province, with Countess Anathaym Guyë at its head, revels in personal freedom. The population is encouraged to behave freely and to speak its mind, public expression being the best way of keeping people happy and tolerant. Guyë province is extremely liberal in what it allows and while it has an amicable, if at times, strained, relationship with Freyr province, it frowns upon the rather sedate and orderly way in which Count Freyr seeks to prevent personal liberty. It is therefore the case that if it is banned in Freyr, it is normally encouraged in Guyë: only the sensibilities of the two Clan heads prevents Anakhazan from descending into the kind of civil war afflicting Changshai – that and a realisation that while differences occur, Anakhazan is above petty squabbles and should, after all, serve the Balance in its entirety.

Anakhazan's southern and central regions consist of deep, wooded valleys, fertile plains given over to farming and viticulture and a scattering of innumerable small towns and villages, each characterised by the deep yellow sandstone that is used in the buildings. In these areas the climate is warm and pleasantly humid with soft winds rolling in from the Bas'lk Hills, filtering through the valleys and forests, bringing with them the scent of exotic flowers and fragrant cypresses. South and central Anakhazan is idyllic. But further north, the temperature drops sharply and the landscape seems to retract, giving way to scarred limestone plateaus and vast stretches of cold, damp moorland populated only by sheep, goat, boar and wolf; cold and unforgiving. Here, the people are harder of mind and spirit, given to the practicalities of the landscape and with little time for the softer, more comfortable, southerners. And always in the distance, the aptly named Withered Peaks: a shattered range of mountains, sharp and jagged, scraping at the cold inhospitable skies, home to the feared wyrms that drink men's souls (see Denizens of the Young Kingdoms). In the winter months, the sky above the Withered Peaks is alive with a blaze of colour – strange lights that flash and fade against the pitch blackness, great sheets of light that writhe and flicker before descending behind the mountains into the uncharted, unreachable, northern territories beyond, where it is said that the world ends.

Anakhazan's major city is Anakheera. Founded during Melnibonéan rule, proud, ancient Anakheera straddles the river Meer, one side belonging to each Clan. On the eastern side, life

is quiet, rational and subject to the justice of Freyr's prefecture, which maintains a level of public sobriety at all times. Taverns exist and street markets flourish but stripped of the exuberance natural to such places, they are dull when compared with the jewels on the other side of the river. The Guyë quarter of Anakheera is a far more lively place; a maze of streets that contrast sharply with the Freyr quarter's grid-like structure, filled with all manner of shops, businesses, taverns, brothels and smoke-houses (where various narcotics can be indulged without fear of damaging public morals). It is to the Freyr quarter that the merchants visit to trade but the Guyë quarter where they flock to spend their profits. At sun set, dozens of bridges spanning the river creak under the weight of bodies as people leave the Freyr quarter and head for the bright lights of the western city.

The Globe of Future Nations

Anakhazan is said to possess a magical globe that displays the nations of the world in the next time cycle and beyond: word of this treasure even drew Elric to Anakhazan, the albino believing that he might find some of the answers that had eluded him during his fraught life. The globe's nature and location is a closely guarded secret with only the heads of the Freyr and Guyë clans knowing its whereabouts and what it professes to show. Forged by the Menastrai before the Melnibonéan conquest, the globe is hidden in an underground fortress far to the north of the country. Guarded by wyrms brought from the Withered Peaks and other, strange enchantments, only those who are pure of spirit, intent and soul are allowed to gaze upon it: even Count Freyr and Countess Guyë have not dared to suppose that they are eligible to learn of its secrets. Anakhazani legend has it that as the end of the world approaches, a Champion will come forth from the deserts to meditate at the Temple of the Globe before taking part in the final battle that will herald in the next cycle of time.

Bas'lk and Nishvalni-Oss

Bas'lk and Nishvalni-Oss are the lands of the Valni, a nomadic people with ingrained superstitions, comprising of hundreds of tribes shifting from one fertile area to another on a seasonal rotation. Although the tribes each have different names for themselves and differing customs, collectively they call themselves Nishvalni (The People) and their lands are called Oss (Home)-hence, Nishvalni-Oss, The Home of the People. Bas'lk is another Valni word and means 'The Good Grazing'.

Valni are black-skinned with tones ranging from dark brown through to midnight black. Hair is always black and grows in a thatch of tight curls. Amongst the Valni common to Bas'lk, the hair is worn long and is set into a complicated pattern of dreadlocks. In Nishvalni-Oss, the style is shorter, sometimes cropped closely to the skull. Living in the hottest part of the east, Valni wear very little. Loincloths for both sexes are generally the norm and these are made from animal skins or plaited grasses, not because they

have never developed cloth as Bas'lk linen is a prized commodity but because thin hides and grass kilts allow the body to breathe while still allowing for a certain amount of protection. Jewellery is extremely popular; all ages and sexes wear beads, necklaces, rings and torcs in a variety of metals, woods, ceramics and bones. The brighter the jewellery, the higher in tribe standing the individual.

The Valni revere the Beast Lords and each tribe has an allied Beast Spirit watching over it, defining its character. Predatory beast spirits make for predatory tribes and these are feared across the Valni lands. Every Valni tribe possesses a head man or woman, known as the **Si** (a male head) or the **Sa** (a female head). The Si/Sa of the tribe is chosen according to the will of the tribe's allied spirit, as administered by the shaman. Those who aspire to lead the tribe may spend years courting the shaman in a bid to prove their worth before the eyes of the spirit. Those who cross the shaman are almost certainly doomed to remain in the rank and file and it is considered bad luck to anger the shaman or go against their wishes. The Si or Sa is chosen when the previous head dies: no-one directly challenges the current leader since this is considered to be acting against the will of the spirit. Only the shaman can depose the Si or Sa, being the only one in the tribe capable of interpreting the spirit's will and thus deciding who is fit to lead.

The Valni lands encompass vast savannas and isolated forests, gradually changing to featureless deserts of bleached stone, parched soil and rough, hardy plants in the south. Although the Ragged Pillars have prevented the advance of the Sighing Desert, Nishvalni-Oss is dry and unsuited to the cultivation of crops. There is usually one heavy rain every few days, caused by the movements of westerly warm fronts breaking against the Ragged Pillars but the rainfall seeps quickly into the dry, loosely packed soil, leaching away vital nutrients. Bas'lk is slightly cooler and here tough savannah grasses have managed to take; the Valni tribes bring their livestock to graze and then harvest the grass for sustenance as they move around their ancient grazing routes.

Aside from the great River of Sand, the only other large sources of water are the three great lakes known to the Valni as The Tears of the Land. The Tears mark the boundary with the Valederian Directorates, the border towns of Im'lk in the north and Heereesh in the East marking the meeting of the two cultures. Both towns are simple affairs where the Valni come to trade goods with the civilised peoples; spices brought from the Forest of Blades, salt from the dry salt-lakes of northern Bas'lk and wooden ornaments carved from the trees of the forests. The civilised traders (mainly from the Valederian Directorates) bring crops, fruit, weapons, alcohol and livestock and have been accused in the past of having deliberately perverted the simple nature of the Valni by encouraging such trade. Indeed, slave caravans from Eshmir and Okara still deal in human merchandise reinforcing this reputation. The more corrigible merchants argue the opposite, explaining that relations would be far worse with the Valni if it had not been for the beneficial effect of mutual trade.

Lone travellers are few in the Valni lands: while strangers are tolerated, they are not encouraged; small bands of vicious Valni

bandits prowl the borders of Nishvalni-Oss, preying on caravans that stray too far from the acknowledged roads.

Changshai

East of the great Shenkh Mountains lies Changshai, the kingdom of the immense, country-spanning, Great Hunting and Careful Forests. Viewed from the eastern slopes of the mountains, Changshai has the appearance of being a gently shifting sea of tree canopy with swells of silver and shadow-green. It is dense; in places little light reaches the forest floor, creating huge pockets of darkness, its silence broken by birdsong and occasional glancing shafts of sunlight that burst through the canopy. The floor of the forest is rich in all manner of plant life, from the simplest fungi through to the most beautiful orchids. Many unique species grow in the Careful Forest and many of these unique plants have uses in healing and sorcery. Insects, as countless in their variety as the trees themselves, crawl through miniature forests of ferns and sweet, lush carpets of grass. Deer, wild boar and large, feral cats graze and prowl the hunting trails: wolves howl throughout the night and, in the northern reaches, silk worms spin their magic while illuminated by glowing flies and luminous fungi. The plants are the true rulers of Changshai, providing protection, food and fuel, with the many animals providing good hunting.

Well-worn paths wind through the ancient woods and terminate in small villages. Buildings cluster in enlarged clearings, made from local timbers and designed to blend with their surroundings. When Melniboné ruled, the Changtse were slaves, bred on the Dragon Isle and brought here to serve the Bright Empire. When the Dragon Princes departed, the slaves were left behind and they quickly spread through the forest, building for themselves the villages and small pockets of community that now pepper Changshai.

Despite its undisputed beauty, Changshai is mired in ugliness. For the past 20 years, a bloody, intractable conflict has raged between the king of Changshai, the Drei Myur, and his half-brother, Kaleg Vogun, Usurper Prince of the Tanghensi. Some claim that Kaleg Vogun is the rightful Drei of Changshai and that Myur is the imposter; others declare that Kaleg Vogun is a demon in kingly guise who seeks to establish a reign of evil upon the Earth. Others claim that the Warrior Priests of Phum engineered the entire affair, interested in seeing the effects of a civil war for some bizarre, chaotic reason. The stories differ according to the teller and there are thousands of permutations of each legend.

Currently Kaleg Vogun is winning. In the early years of the war, Vogun drove Myur out of Changshai's capital, Tanghensi, and forced him to retreat back to the Sadakan Castle-once a summer residence for the royal family. Vogun had the support of the people of Tanghensi and, in usurping Myur's capital, he demonstrated his strength as a ruler. Those who stayed loyal to Myur were purged and eventually Myur's supporters found themselves pushed back through the country and into the foothills of the Shenkh Mountains. Kaleg Vogun holds the country in a vice-like grip: those who openly oppose him die and many have pledged their

support to the Usurper Prince purely out of fear, believing that their best hope is to wait for Myur to either surrender or die so that their lives might once again return to normal.

Vogun commands no structured army: instead, pockets of armed militia hold the forests of Changshai, paying lip service to Vogun's rule but effectively carving little empires of power for themselves. Vogun's forces fight amongst each other for the pettiest of reasons and this confusion adds to the misery that sorrowing Changshai must endure. The only cause that unites Vogun's forces is a wish to see Myur dead. Few know why and few care; 20 years of bloodshed has hardened the hearts, minds and souls of the Changtse, many knowing nothing except The War. They fight because that is what they have always done and if they cannot fight the Drei Myur's forces, they will fight each other.

The Drei Myur has managed to retain a semblance of order amongst his own supporters. When he left Tanghensi, he took with him the loyalty of the nobility and regular army. Those who allied themselves with Myur recognised that Kaleg Vogun was an uncontrollable force and decided that discipline and the old traditions of Changshai should be maintained if they were not to become like the marauding scum supporting the Usurper Prince. When Myur reached the Sadakan, the army reorganised itself, recruiting new soldiers from the refugees who fled Vogun's raiding parties, training them to fight in the manner upheld by the Changshai regiments for centuries. Myur's army is small but organised – it is also loyal. Although 20 years of fighting has taken its toll on the morale of the troops, none have ever lost sight of the fact that Old Changshai must be preserved and to do this the Drei and his bloodline must survive. If the kings falls, then so does Changshai and the war is lost to the Usurper Prince.

Tanghensi, the once proud capital of Changshai, is a forlorn place. Although untouched by the war, its streets have been stripped bare of all the artefacts that had once marked the dynasty of the Drei Myur's family. Vogun has replaced these with gaudy statues and mosaics depicting himself in a variety of victorious and heroic poses. Since formal trade with other nations is nigh-on impossible, food in Tanghensi is of poor quality and quite often in short supply. What little food is imported usually find its way into the hands of the black marketeer – one of the few professions to actively profit from protracted hardship. Mercenaries looking for work amongst the disparate bands of guerrilla fighters at large in the huge forests are a common sight in Tanghensi, many of whom have fled the laws of their own countries, seeking refuge in a place where lawlessness has been elevated to a high art form. Rumour has it that Vogun has recently been courting a number of sorcerers from Phum in an attempt to introduce magic into his campaign and the madness that has entrenched itself in Changshai has made the country ripe for the work of Chaos.

Eshmir

The golden garden of the east; mercantile capital of Menastree, Eshmir is one of the youngest of the eastern kingdoms but is arguably the most wealthy. Lying between the northern Shenkh

The Battle of Eshmir Vale – Making of Moonglum and of Rackhir

Twelve years ago, Kaleg Vogun made a serious misjudgement in his strategies. His confidence inflated at having driven the Drei Myur out of Tanghensi, he turned his sights upon Eshmir. Believing his forces strong enough to be able to attack and annex lands close to the Eshmirian/Changtse border, Kaleg Vogun marched north, sacking a number of small Eshmirian towns as he pressed into the country. He had reckoned without the plucky determination exhibited by the Eshmirians. A counter force confronted the Tanghensi on the northern side of the Eshmir valley, the consequent battle lasted for three days and three nights. Half a million warriors lost their lives with 70 percent of the casualties being suffered by the Tanghensi. Kaleg Vogun was pushed back, his pride shattered and his dreams of an empire stretching across the eastern edge of the continent dashed in the process. Many Eshmirian heroes arose from the Battle of the Eshmir Valley, which is commemorated in Eshmirian songs and stories, among them Moonglum, who gained his first taste of war, and Rackhir who had turned his back on The Warrior Priests of Chaos and hired-out his services as a mercenary.

Mountains and the Scar of the Night, Eshmir boasts the most fertile lands in the east, possesses the most accessible raw materials and has built its rapid success on shrewd dealing and careful management of its reserves.

Eshmir is a nation born of bloodshed. Its lands were once hotly contested by Phum and Okara. Eshmir has endured such attacks and always survived: to preserve its wealth Eshmirians have needed to develop military as well as mercantile skills. It is eventually only the terrible might of Terarn Gashtek, the Flamebringer, that brings Eshmir to its knees as he and his reavers lay waste to much of the civilised East.

The countryside of Eshmir is beautiful to behold. Gently rolling valleys sliced by crystal-blue rivers, the hill sides covered in a wild variety of trees, occasionally giving way to the farms that provide grain, vegetables and meat for the thriving cities of Elwher and Her'is. Further north, in the foothills of the Scar of the Night Mountains, hundreds of mines drag copper, tin, iron, silver and other precious minerals to the surface. Eshmir produces some of the highest quality iron in the Unknown East, much of which is exported to Maidahk, whose advanced smelting techniques have managed to produce some of the strongest steels available. In turn, Eshmir buys in things it cannot produce for itself: cotton, rare grains and spices, olive and other, more exotic oils. The diversity of Eshmir's trade is reflected in the industries the country supports; from the smallest farms and mines, run by family concerns, through to massive ranches and open-caste quarries, owned by powerful merchants and the Eshmirian government.

Eshmir has two major cities. Elwher is the capital, straddling the mouth of the River El. It is a young and vibrant place of gold, marble, silk and gleaming, unpretentious spires. Its wide, arcaded and symmetrical streets, with their sandy-red facades, radiate the flamboyance and style that has made Eshmir famous. Taking its cue from Anakhazan, Elwher is a cultured place where art, philosophy and science mingle and grow. The bulk of its population is literate and while commerce is the city's lifeblood, culture is at its soul. They say that Elwher is the home of all stories and it is true that the people of Elwher hunger for literature, music and new means of artistic expression. It is unlike the dark, torturous streets of the Okaran cities, places long past their prime, but is a city of light, story and song: a twinkling wide-open eye that looks upon the world and likes what it sees.

The second city is Her'is. Smaller than its sister, but no less bright, Her'is sits beside the fast flowing El river on the northern side of the Careful Forest. Her'is is young and built on commerce, its buildings tall and graceful, its streets wide and lined with trees, fountains and open gardens. It is more thoughtful than the impetuous Elwher and is the home of Eshmir's religious philosophy, the Elithior. Amongst the towers and spires of the city, copper-plated domes litter the rooftops, single wide slits opened and trained on the night skies. Within reside the scrutineers, eyes fixed upon telescopes, astrolabes and charts, plotting and watching the movements of the heavens, following the doctrines of the Elithior that forms the heart of Eshmir's religion.

Eshmirians encompass all body types, ranging from the tall and slim through to the short and stocky. Hair is normally brown, red or blond, with the eyes being brown or blue in colour. Eshmirians have a distinctive accent; a soft, lilting brogue that has a soothing effect on the listener, especially when employed in song or story.

Eshmirians like to display their wealth in their dress. Silk, samite, fine linens and colourful robes of rich wool or delicately embroidered cotton are common amongst those that can afford it. Amongst those that cannot, clothes are more simple but normally gaily coloured – reds and greens being a particular favourite in Elwher. Eshmirians are fashion victims with dozens of new styles rising and falling almost weekly. It might be turbans decorated with ostrich feathers one week, peaked hats the next. Social status is evident from the flamboyance of the clothing and how up to date the fashion is.

Eshmirians are noted for the generosity and good humour. Everyone is welcome in Eshmir and no outward prejudice exists towards any of the other nations – save the Tanghensi of Changshai, who so vainly tried to sack the country. Eshmirites love singing and telling stories; they adore conversation and mock debates on trivial themes. The more serious minded nations of the Unknown East – Anakhazan or Valederia for example – can barely understand how a people preoccupied with indulging their whims have come to be the most powerful trading nation in the Eastern Kingdoms. For their part, Eshmirians reckon it is better to keep smiling and have a happy corpse rather than dwell on miseries that cannot be avoided. Eshmirians have a saying: 'Beneath the

stars, optimists and pessimists are alike: but the optimists have a better time...'

The Elithior

'We have an entire philosophy based on the stars in Elwher,' Moonglum replied. 'We regard them as the master plan for everything that happens on Earth. As they revolve around the planet they see all things, past, present and future. They are our Gods.'

— The Stealer of Souls

In 'pande, *Elithior* means constellation. The worship of the constellations that revolve through the sky began shortly after Melniboné's retreat from the Unknown East. Starting amongst the people inhabiting the forests of northern Changshai, the belief travelled with them as they moved into the lands beyond the forests that would one day become Eshmir. As Eshmir coalesced, the belief in the omnipotence of the stars grew, becoming entrenched in Eshmirian culture and eventually developing into its current state of a science and philosophy.

Eshmirians believe that the gods reside in the night time sky, their eyes are the stars, twinkling down from the heavens to view all that happens on Earth, seeing everything that happens at all times and in all places. And, as with all gods, they have their chosen servants on the Earth, those that organise the worship of the masses and interpret their wishes. In Eshmir these servants are called the scrutineers.

People studied the stars, watched the constellations, noting their positions at particular times in the year. To these scrutineers it became evident that certain constellations were ascendant at times that coincided with important events in the Eshmirian calendar. With further study the scrutineers found that they could predict the nature or outcome of certain events by watching the placing of the constellations and it was discovered that specific constellations seemed to dictate the course of specific events. By charting the constellations and monitoring their positions, the scrutineers found that they could not only trace the likely course of history but could also predict to some extent what might take place, depending on the positions of the constellations.

The scrutineers reason that the stars know everything about the world and influence it from their position high above the Earth – they could be nothing if not the eyes of the gods. Not for them the fickle and petulant Lords of Chaos or the sterile Lords of Law but the all-seeing, all-knowing Gods of the Night. The scrutineers gave them names and these names were attached to the patterns made by the stars. Rethwyr, the constellation of the Oak tree, god of Woodlands; Anasyf, the huntress, goddess of warriors and hunters; Angharand, the Chariot, god of travellers and merchant venturers. Hundreds of constellations, hundreds of gods, each watching and shaping the lives of the men, women and children of the world, influencing in subtle ways current events and, depending on their positions, predicting others. The scrutineers, who now comprise of an elite sect of philosopher-

astrologer-priests, watch the stars through their simple telescopes and keep meticulous charts of the relationships between the gods and the Earth. The Scrutineers advise peasants, nobles and kings alike and the people of Eshmir place their faith in the scrutineers' interpretations, questioning little and knowing that their gods watch over them always, even when hidden from view by the sun.

For more information on playing a scrutineer character, see page 49.

Maidahk

South of Anakhazan is Maidahk, the land of the Engineers. Hotter than Anakhazan and more arid, it is a place of rough, stony deserts and great strips of wasteland where little grows except cacti and tough, inedible plants adapted to the intense climate. Yet Maidahk is also a place of arable fields and where some of the most sought after cattle can be found.

Maidahk's strength is in the ingenuity of its engineers. People who have decided to tame the lands around them and turn them into a place fit to support life without resorting to sorcery. Maidahk has spent a great deal of time and energy in developing irrigation schemes, diverting rivers, creating dams and reservoirs, feeding the land to make it green. Rather than being a massive tract of uninhabitable desert, Maidahk is a place of patchwork fields of corn, wheat, barley, oats and orchards bearing exotic fruits. This organic wealth makes it one of the most important members of the Valederian Directorates and what it lacks in military might it amply compensates for in technical expertise.

Maidahk's capital is Rameer, an incredible feat of engineering. Towers and great houses; museums and libraries; palaces, gardens and monuments, all honouring those who achieve. To walk Rameer's streets is to see architecture at its most awe-inspiring and to be surrounded by a thriving community of builders, architects, engineers and all manner of occupations in between. Rameer is a plan of concentric circles, the marvellously Gothic university at its heart – a fusion of complex, impossibly tall towers driving skyward from a collection of narrow, bizarrely shaped buildings clustering around the spires in a conspiratorial huddle. The central ring of the city, girdling the university, is known as The Arc and is the prime residential district, home to the wealthy and the more powerful of Rameer's guilds. Most of the grandest and more elaborate buildings are found in The Arc, including the grandiose and imposing parliament hall, The Scales, designed to resemble a huge balance, built from blood-red sandstone and marble imported from S'aleem. Beyond The Arc, radiating out for about a mile, are the concentric streets and avenues of Rameer's residential areas. Some are grand impersonations of The Arc, while others are little more than ghettos, long forgotten by their designers and now left to the ravages of decay and poverty. The worst of these areas is The Marsh, half a mile from The Arc on the western side and encompassing a block of eight streets and two avenues. The Marsh is a centre for organised crime and its depravity contrasts

sharply with the studious air prevalent throughout most of the city. Travellers are warned to steer clear of The Marsh, especially at night, and even Rameer's elite city guard, The Fencers, refrain from entering this area without very good cause.

The Marsh and some parts of Rameer aside, Maidahk's people are warm spirited, farsighted and committed to improving the country through artifice and hard work. The College of Engineers is called upon from all over the east by those who want to emulate Maidahk's achievements. Maidahkis do not make a great display of personal wealth although it is common for those who have money to sport refined, tasteful items of jewellery such as brooches, filigree rings and discreet ear studs. Weapons, other than short bladed knives, are not normally worn publicly unless one happens to be a warrior and licensed in the use of such hardware. The Fencers sport twin rapiers, which are used together in combat; in fact, the rapier is considered by Maidahkis to be the most noble of weapons and fencing is taught more as an art form than as a method of combat.

Loheb Bakra's Brigand Engineers

Ten years before the fall of Imrryr, Valederia was threatened by the Warrior Priests of Phum. The Blue Assassins had carried out a successful assassination attempt on one of the feared Knights of Tumbru; Sadachar the Black was ambushed and stabbed to death while returning from a pilgrimage into the Shenhk Mountains. The Warrior Priests discovered that the assassins responsible originated from the Valederian town of Ylad and, in seeking retribution, sent the Knights of Turnbru to destroy the town.

Loheb Bakra of Maidahk was in Valed-Hal when the news reached the High Senate of the attack against Ylad. Unable to raise an army of sufficient skill and numbers to go against the Knights of Tumbru, they turned to Loheb Bakra who had been demonstrating his designs for war engines to the assembled heads of the Valederian Directorates. Loheb Bakra agreed to test his machines in the defence of Ylad and so, accompanied by a motley army of raw recruits, a handful of experienced soldiers and a ragtag band of volunteers, he marched north to meet the Knights of Tumbru in the fields and low hills leading down to the sleepy agricultural town.

Bakra's engines were extremely varied in their design: huge, steam-powered trebuchets that delivered boulders six feet in diameter; wind-powered chariots employing vast sails to catch the gentle breezes and scoot through the fields, armed with spears and blades to chop at the legs of approaching cavalry camels and other strange and deadly devices that it was hoped would withstand the onslaught of the Knights of Tumbru and their powerful sorceries.

The Knights of Tumbru expected little resistance when they rode into the Ylad valley and were stunned when, from the hills, the wind-chariots ploughed into their ranks. And then, as they tried to gather together their wits, the steam trebuchets rained rocks onto the battlefield, striking with an accuracy even Loheb Bakra had not imagined.

The battle of Ylad Vale lasted for 10 hours. Eventually the Knights of Tumburu, battered and bloody from their unsuccessful attack, turned and fled. They realised that with all their martial skill and sorcerous knowledge, they had simply not planned for the use of machines on the battlefield, machines that held them at bay and then cut them down when they tried to advance.

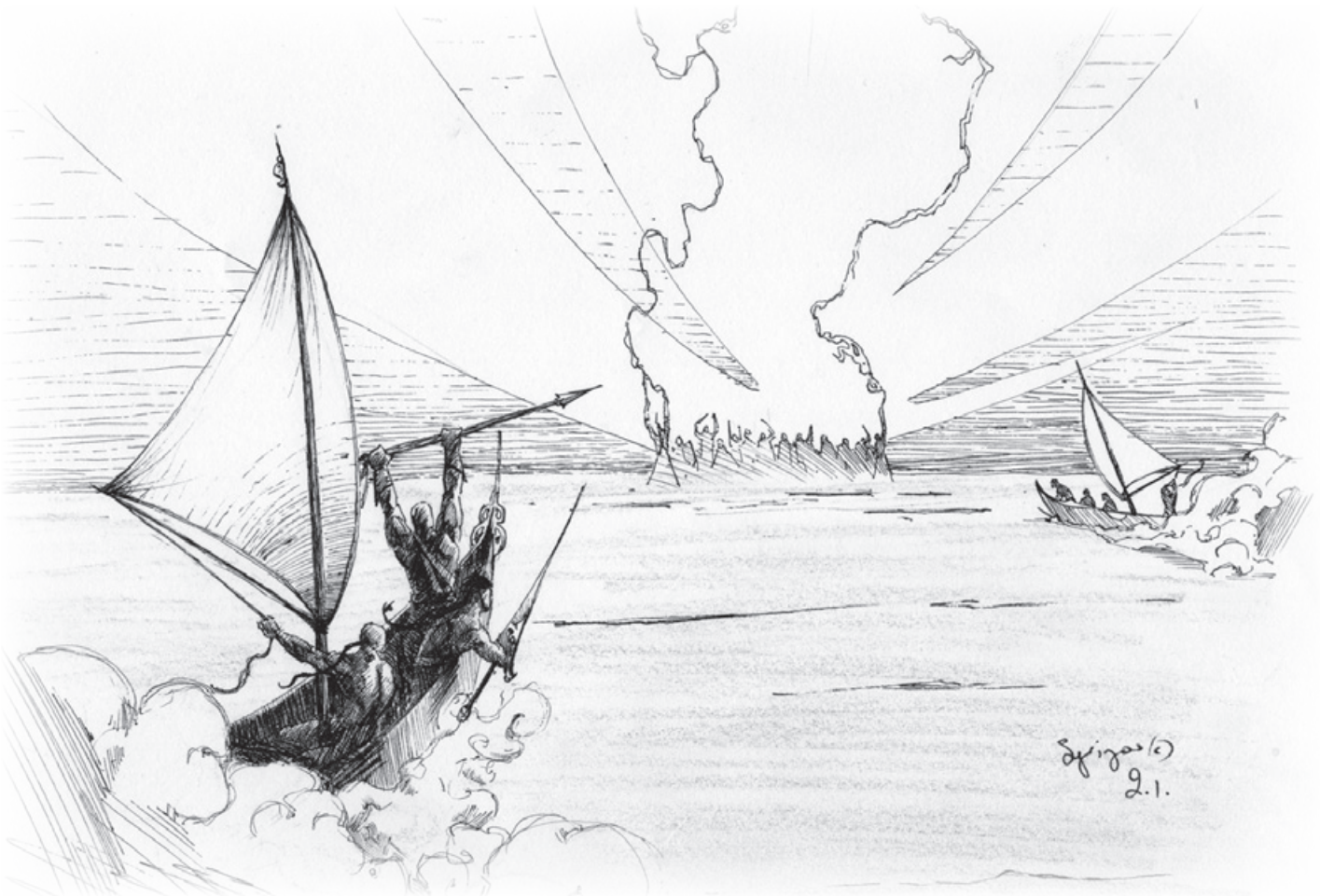
Loheb Bakra was hailed as a hero and the survivors of the battle of Ylad Vale who had operated his machines formed their own company at arms, pledged to the defence of the Valedorian Directorates. Thus were the Brigand Engineers born. Where a threat of arms exists against a village, town or city in the Valedorian Directorates, Loheb Bakra's Brigand Engineers can be found, their ever more bizarre machines ready to take on any odds that might be levelled against them

Okara

Okara has always harboured ambitions towards greatness, to expand its borders beyond those imposed by geography and politics. With each attempt it has failed and with each failure it has become weaker, more fragile and less able to force-feed the other nations of Menastree with its beliefs. Frustrated and alone, Okara resides in a wilderness of its own making, overtaken and overshadowed by the nations surrounding it.

Okara is an uninspiring country; flat and almost barren, it lacks splendour of any kind and the insipid nature of the land contrasts starkly with the unease and frustration shared by its people. In the north the desert laps deeply into its heart; arid and stony. In the east, the Shenh Mountains rear menacingly, separating it from the more temperate lands of Changshai, and in the south, the savannah is largely desolate, save for scatterings of modest villages, too small to be properly called towns. These southern parts of Okara are the domain of the Nomad Lords – large bandit gangs that prey on the weak villages and constantly threaten the struggling King Usheri in his fortress capital of Kosaio, Okara's only true port. It is from among the Nomad Lords that Terarn Gashtek arises, ultimately to lay waste to much of the Unknown East, and his story is told in greater detail later.

King Usheri (known disparagingly as the Beggar King, in wider Menastree), has ruled for 20 years, kept in power by the dark machinations of his large, devious family. Usheri has, at one time or another, courted the favours of all the eastern nations and where his plans for alliance have been rejected, he has tried to use force to make his voice heard. Usheri envisages a Menastree united by the sword. Contemptuous of the success of the Valedorian Directorates and scornful of the independence of Eshmir, Usheri has sought to undermine both at differing times. Few nations trust Usheri and view him with disdain. Every country knows that



he would be the one to control such a united Menastree, seeing no place for others in his great scheme of things.

Few merchant-venturers from other nations engage in trade with Okara; the mines in the foothills of the mountains provide copper, bronze, iron and a small quantity of gold but nothing that cannot be bought elsewhere. Instead Okara has to fend for itself, Usheri ever dreaming of greatness but lacking the means to realise his ambitions.

Okara has three large areas of settlement. Y'shath is in the north, the centre of the mineral trade and closest to Valederia. It is little more than a glorified town with a ramshackle appearance and a reputation for violence and unrest. Mercenaries and outlaws congregate there, the detritus from the rest of the Unknown East, many to hire their services to merchant caravans or enroute to either the Nomad Lords in the south or to fight in the civil war raging in Changshai. A mean and dirty place, Y'shath is frequented by the most desperate and dangerous people of Menastree. On the coast, Kosaio, Okara's capital, is an imposing walled city built by Melniboné and the closest thing that Okara has to grandeur. Its vicious spires loom above the huge, 20 foot thick walls, impossible towers that no human architect could ever design. Within, labyrinthine streets snake between lopsided buildings carved from the rocks upon which Kosaio is built. King Usheri's influence is everywhere in the city. His palace, known to all as *That Excellent Ruin*, squats spider-like at the centre, the other buildings paying homage to it. The entire city seems to be alive with activity: however the discreet observer soon realises that its existence is a sham, a poor impersonation of other cities designed to honour King Usheri's vision. Usheri has urged his people to adopt the ways and customs of other nations, hoping to steal the best parts from each and create the perfect city. Kosaio is far less than the sum of its parts and Usheri's intrinsic mistrust of even his own people has led to the creation of a city where no-one trusts anyone else.

The people of Okara are reserved in their tastes and fashions. Clothing is simple but sturdy, usually comprising of simple, linen shirts with strong breeks and topped with a long-coat or robe. In the mountainous areas the Okarans frequently wear the skins of yaks and other furs, to protect themselves against the fierce cold that permeates the higher altitudes. Turbans are common and hats are unknown but the Okarans do allow themselves some splendour in this respect: amongst the wealthy, turbans are rich and ornate, kept in place with bejewelled pins and decorated with the feathers of peacocks and Birds of Paradise. Even the lowlier classes make sure that their turbans always look splendid and many villages specialise in creating their own designs that provide an identity for the wearer – it is possible for an Okaran to know exactly what region of the country someone is from by the design of their turban and sometimes even which village or town by the style of decoration.

Terarn Gashtek – The Flamebringer

A plague had smitten Eshmir and the locust had stripped her of her beauty. Both plague and locust went by the same name

– Terarn Gashtek, Lord of the Mounted Hordes, sunken-faced carrier of destruction; Terarn Gashtek, insane blood-drawer, the shrieking flamebringer. And that was his other name – Flame Bringer.

— The Bane of the Black Sword

Among the Nomad Lords of southern Okara, the most powerful is Terarn Gashtek. Tired of King Usheri's impotent promises of a world ruled by Okarans, Terarn Gashtek sought to destroy Usheri, snatching the sovereignty of Okara for himself. Certain merchant-venturers from Eshmir learned of Terarn Gashtek's arrogant assertions and took this information back to Elwher. The scrutineers looked to the stars and saw within them the signs of a great struggle looming. Mistakenly believing this to be of King Usheri's making, Eshmir foolishly sent weapons to Terarn Gashtek, hoping that in doing so they might strike up lucrative trade deals with Okara's new ruler.

Gashtek used the weapons to unify the bandit gangs roaming southern Okara and, with a force of 15,000 behind him, launched his attack on Kosaio. The city fell within a week, its large, but poorly trained, militia unable to withstand the siege conditions. Despite Gashtek's promises of safe passage if he surrendered, King Usheri was publicly beheaded in Kosaio's main square and the inhabitants of the city presented with an option: join Terarn Gashtek and conquer the east, or die. Unsurprisingly most chose the latter and by the end of the first week of Kosaio's occupation, the city had been all but purged of dissenters.

It was during this purge that Gashtek made his most lucrative discovery. Lying drunk between two wenches was Drinij Bara, a sorcerer of some repute who had fallen into a squalid style of life consisting of drinking, womanising and gambling. In his drunken ramblings, Drinij Bara foolishly revealed that his cat held his soul and on Terarn Gashtek's orders both sorcerer and familiar were brought before him: Gashtek made the sorcerer an offer he could not refuse. Provide sorcerous aid or have the cat killed, thus ending Drinij Bara's own life.

And so it was that with Drinij Bara's aid; or rather the aid provided by Dag-Gadden the Destroyer, Terarn Gashtek crossed the Shenh Mountains and attacked the capital of Changshai, Tanghensi, which, embroiled in its civil war, was taken completely by surprise. Fire washed over the crumbling city as Dag-Gadden the Destroyer lived up to its name and Kaleg Vogun himself met with Terarn Gashtek's sword on the steps of his own palace. In one cut Gashtek ended 20 years of civil war and earned himself the name of Flamebringer.

By now word had reached Eshmir that Gashtek planned to lay waste to the east. Eshmir hurriedly arranged its forces along the length of the Eshmir Valley, cutting off the main way of entering the country. But, unaware of the sorcerous help Gashtek had enlisted, the Eshmirian army lasted no more than six hours against the might of the Flamebringer's forces – swollen with recruits from the defeated Tanghensi. A ragtag army of 30,000

swarmed into Elwher and proceeded to sack every last building. Some Eshmirians, Moonglum among them, fled the country, seeking refuge in Anakhazan. However Moonglum had heard that Drinij Bara had revealed to Gashtek that richer pickings could be found on the western side of the Ragged Pillars. Realising that The Flamebringer would stop at nothing, Moonglum rode west, intent on warning Elric of the coming threat.

Having taken Eshmir, Terarn Gashtek crossed the Shenkh Mountains again and headed for Valederia. At its border he encountered a force of 100,000 – the amassed troops of the Valederian Directorates, Commanded by Countess Guyë. For two days the opposing forces waited on either side of a long, narrow valley, assessing the strategies open for attack and defence. Finally Gashtek decided that an attack was the only form of defence he would need and ordered Drinij Bara to be taken to nearby Phum, there to enlist the support of the Knights of Tumburu.

Survivors of the following battle swore that Terarn Gashtek's forces had not grown in size but hundreds spoke of an invisible army that cut and sliced its way through the Directorate's ranks even before The Flamebringer had given his troops the order to advance. It is said that half the Directorate forces perished before Gashtek had crossed the valley separating them, although nothing will ever be certain. Some voices muttered that Chardros himself had commanded this invisible attack, at the behest of the Warrior Priests of Phum; others said that it was the Knights themselves having become invisible through powerful sorceries. Whatever the truth, Terarn Gashtek defeated an army of more than twice the size of his own and in doing so seized control of the civilised east.

Phum

Phum is the oldest established province of Menastree. This was the first region colonised by the Menastrai and later it became the centre of Melniboné's empire. It is the cradle of eastern civilisation but is no longer looked upon as the centre of the continent. Phum is feared, despised and ignored by the other nations: the reason? The Warrior Priests of Chaos, the infamous Enclave of Tumburu.

A lack of proper roads makes much of Phum's interior inaccessible and even if other countries wished to trade with it, they would find it extremely difficult. Some merchants are prepared to venture into the Phum heartland but they are few in number. Phum must exist on what it can produce for itself and its resources are limited. Agriculture is subsistence based and only a handful of farms can produce enough to sell. Drought is the scourge of the country; dry seasons cripple the small farmsteads and hundreds have died during such times. Even the considerable power of the Enclave of Tumburu cannot prevent Phum from wasting away when the rains do not come.

The capital is Hasal. Built on the ruins of Melniboné's first city in the east, it is a ramshackle place with hastily erected structures resting uncomfortably against the walls of ruined buildings dating back to Melnibonéan rule. Streets end abruptly in towering blockades, the

remains of the ancient city walls; buildings shift uneasily on poor foundations, some occasionally collapsing for no apparent reason. Sewerage flows between the tenements and black stoned houses, rats the size of small dogs scampering over the debris. Hasal is not a pleasant place to live and it resides in the long shadow of the huge Castle Tumburu, home to the Warrior Priests.

Phumites are accustomed to hardship. Living in a poor country, they are used to shortages of food, disease and the crippling effects of drought. The lives of Phumites are nasty, brutish and usually short. This blighted society has further compounded its problems with its caste system. The social structure recognises three castes: the high caste, which consists of land owners and those that manage to make money by exploiting the less fortunate; the middle caste, consisting of artisans and merchants, people capable of eking some kind of living from Phum's depleted resources; and the low caste, peasants and beggars who either scavenge or starve. The size of each caste is inversely proportional to its social position. The high caste numbers less than 100 families; the middle caste perhaps 2-300; the low caste runs into tens of thousands. Ninety percent of Phum's wealth is held by one percent of the country and no where is the social divide more apparent than in Hasal.

Tattoos are common amongst Phumites, with many members of the high caste going to the pain and expense of having their entire bodies coated in gaudy designs, showing their wealth and standing. The low castes design their own and the poor quality inks lead to infections that can permanently disfigure or poison the blood. Clothing varies. Those who can afford it buy fashions from Valederia, affecting the style and mode of dress, if not the philosophy behind it. The poorer castes wear home-woven garments of coarse wool and tanned animal hide – beggars often wear nothing at all and fights can easily break out over discarded scraps of clothing.

Few Phumites get to travel. Those that do rarely return to their homeland, preferring to stay in whatever countries they drift to. The other nations of the east see Phumites as taciturn and untrustworthy – worse, perhaps, than the Okarans. In their defence, Phumites rarely make trouble and they are all too conscious of this reputation. This relates to the presence of the Enclave of Tumburu in Phum, with almost all eastern nations believing every Phumite to be a Chaos-worshipper. This could not be further from the truth: most Phumites have never heard of Chaos and it is usually the high caste that indulges in actively allying itself with the Lords of Entropy, hoping to find favour with the Enclave of Tumburu. Common Phumites ignore the influence of Chaos, preferring to actively survive from one day to the next without concentrating on bringing further uncertainty into their lives.

The Warrior Priests of Chaos – The Knights of Tumburu

Feared and hated, this strange sect of warrior-monks call themselves the Knights of Tumburu. It is thought that the enclave has its origins in a small group of Melnibonéan knights headed

by Dyvir Sesh Tumburu, a Dragon Prince and favoured disciple of Slortar. It was he who built the huge, labyrinthine castle that squats in the hills overlooking Hasal, inculcating in his followers a martial tradition mixed with mysticism and study of the ways of Chaos. When Melniboné left Menastree, the enclave remained, continuing its secular way of life and maintaining a last bastion of Chaos.

The Knights of Tumburu rarely venture from their castle of basalt and bone. When they do, it is as individuals, either leaving the enclave once their formal education is complete, never to return, or as inducted knights, walking abroad on some mission of Chaos. It is believed that the enclave maintains an army of demons that will one day be released to fight on the side of Chaos when it clashes with Law; but such conjecture has never been proven. No one who is not a devout disciple of Chaos has ever set foot inside the enclave and returned and the sorcerers who leave the enclave never discuss its secrets, for fear, perhaps, of what might befall them if they do.

The Knights of Tumburu pledge their souls to a Lord of Chaos and, in order to prove their devotion, are sent out from the enclave to perform some quest that accurately displays their allegiance. These quests can take many forms and are usually designed to not only test the skill and resolve of the knight but to further the aims of the enclave itself. Knights have been sent out to undermine the Valederian Directorates, to infiltrate the echelons of power in Eshmir, to observe the civil war in Changshai, gain knowledge of the Globe of Future Nations in Anakhazan and so on. Quests can take days, months or years to complete. Some Knights never return, dying in the service of their Chaos Lord. Others are more successful, steadily furthering the aims and influence of Chaos while slowly eroding the equilibrium of the Cosmic Balance.

S'aleem

Hot and flat, S'aleem is mostly open savannah, its huge plains dominated by hardy grasses and herds of antelope and bison. Small villages and homesteads are the most common forms of settlement, sometimes with a single extended family dominating the community. S'aleem supports two cities: Karakose, the City on the Lake, and Graghin, the larger of the two and S'aleem's only sea port. Communication between Graghin and Karakose is excellent: long, narrow-sailed ships ply the currents of the Karak river, transporting produce along S'aleem's spine.

S'aleem lacks the magnificent and ambitious architecture of its neighbour, Maidahk; it lacks the sprightly conflict of Anakhazan and the natural tenacity of Valederia but possesses instead a calm reserve that has often acted as a moderating influence in the political arena of the Valederian Directorates. S'aleem has borrowed much from other nations, especially Maidahk's principles of irrigation to make its own lands fertile. It was for this reason that S'aleem entered the Valederian Directorates: Maidahk promised to help introduce an irrigation system into S'aleem if it would agree to enter the Directorate treaty. The symbiosis has served both countries well; S'aleem's main crop is rice, which it

grows in abundance and trades with the other Directorate nations. The lands around Graghin and Karakose, and almost all the way up the river, are an immense patchwork of paddy fields, fed by the Karak, thousands of man-made tributaries diverting water to the rice crops on either side.

Graghin operates a thriving fishing industry. Square-sailed junks ply the coastal waters, bringing back shark, marlin, tuna, lobster and a hundred other species that are then salted and shipped to Karakose and the other neighbouring countries. The merchant venturers who trade in preserved fish are known as Scalers and it is the Scalers that control the merchant economy in both Graghin and Karakose. Rice is the staple product but fish is more profitable and the Scalers occupy a very powerful position in S'aleem's economy, much to the chagrin of the rice producers and traders.

S'aleemites have a typically olive-coloured skin with dark hair and eyes. The S'aleemite accent is a sharp, clipped version of the rolling tongue found in Maidahk and peppered with the slang terms that are always popular throughout the country. One could be forgiven for thinking that they speak a different language to 'pande altogether.

The Blue Assassins

The cult of the Blue Assassins is shrouded in mystery, yet one thing is certain: they despise Chaos and have pledged to strike at its heart whenever possible. It was the Blue Assassins that attempted to murder Sorana, the beautiful, dread sorceress and lover of Rackhir. It was the Blue Assassins that took the life of Yaldishan Kamiir, the bandit sorcerer who plagued the free roads of Valederia. They have made it their job to attack those in sympathy with the Lords of Entropy and to wipe them from the face of the Earth. It is said that the Blue Assassins originated soon after Melniboné conquered Menastree. A group of Menastrai refugees fled into the lands that would one day become S'aleem, hiding on one of the tiny islands in Lake Karak and plotting how they might somehow bring down the Dragon Princes.

The Blue Assassins are still active. The size of the cult has expanded but is still based within the wilds of S'aleem, where it started. Its actual location is a closely guarded secret and the cult's organisers are said to be direct descendants of the original Menastrai refugees: some even claim that the refugees themselves have survived the centuries through the sustenance provided by certain herbs and benign spells. Whatever the truth, they are extremely secretive and brilliantly organised. Assassins are trained from birth in the arts of stealth and deception, schooled to hate Chaos and taught to lead a double life: normal citizens on the one hand, destroyers of Chaos on the other. Many assassins lead normal lives for years, only rarely being called upon to carry out an assassination. Others are constantly engaged in organising the cult's massive intelligence network, tracking Chaos worshippers and questing Knights of Tumburu. No assassin ever reveals anything about the structure of the cult or its training methods: assassins who are taken alive never talk, despite the foulest tortures, and those that are captured take their own lives rather than betray the cult itself.

Valederia

Valederia dominates central Menastree, running across the continent from the Withered Peaks in the north to the Bay of Circles in the south. Valederia embraces the gamut of climates. The northern quarter of the country, from the foothills of the Withered Peaks to the hills known as the Teeth of Shenhk, is temperate and verdant, suffering no real extremes of temperature or rainfall and thus leading to huge fields of wild grass and fragrant coniferous forests. To the south, temperatures increase steadily and on the coast around Valed-Hal, the nation's capital, it can be miserably hot all year round with little respite in the autumn and winter months, save for the monsoons, where brutal rain lashes the country for up to two hours each day.

Valederia is sparsely populated, the bulk of its inhabitants living in the three major cities of Valed-Hal, Yaan and Rhzau. Small villages, towns and extended farm settlements are scattered throughout the Valederian plains but essentially the country is highly civilised. A rudimentary network of toll roads links the cities and important towns, leading to excellent routes of communication. In this way Valederia remains a unified state despite its size and fragmented population. Despite their lack of numbers, Valederians have an arrogance about them that separates them from the rest of the Eastlanders. Valederia is the largest country; it has, (in their eyes) the fairest means of government and is the instigator of the most powerful trading group in the world. Valederians thus feel that they have much of which to be proud and believe themselves to be in advance of the rest of the Unknown East. Individual Valederians obviously realise that this is not the case and recognise that the general view of the Balance is not shared by everybody. However the general impression Valederians give out is one of thinly disguised contempt for the countries outside the Directorate – and even for those within.

The three major cities of Valederia are uninspiring. Valederia lacks the flamboyance of Eshmir and the architectural vision of Maidahk; its cities are neither impressive nor dismally bleak. Nothing is allowed to dominate anything else and everything has its rightful place and function. Valed-Hal is a major sea port and has been since the Menastrai first came to the east. Over the millennia it has changed many times and none of the original Menastrai or subsequent Melnibonéan buildings have been left standing. One of the largest cities in the Unknown East, it is a very ordered place, with its different functions divided into clearly defined areas. The inhabitants of Valed-Hal live in the north, surrounded by parkland and pleasant communal gardens. The mercantile district, where all trade is conducted, is hidden away from the view of the populace by a barricade of cypress trees forming a huge semicircle around the unpleasing sight of warehouses, shops and stores. The government district occupies Valed-Hal's centre and is a bland neighbourhood of faceless buildings clustered around a small private park used by government officials and civil servants. The harbour district is the only place in Valed-Hal with any true identity. The oldest part of the city, its quay and harbour walls

were built by the Menastrai and are still standing. An impressive maze of interconnecting locks, marinas and small harbours that seethe with the kind of energy displaced from the rest of the city. The harbour front is a mass of small taverns, shops, market stalls and hostelrys of one kind or another. Foreigners are attracted to the Harbour district almost immediately and it often seems to be a settlement that is completely autonomous of the rest of Valed-Hal. The government recognises this as one of the city's strengths and has declared that the Harbour district must not be changed in any way. This means that while the old buildings are left standing, new ones cannot be built and repairs must be in keeping with traditional values. Therefore the harbour district, beautiful and quaint as it is, gradually crumbles away – as more people throng its tiny streets, the decrepitude is accelerated each year.

The Valederian Directorates

The Valederian Directorates is comprised of the four nations of Anakhazan, Maidahk, S'aleem and Valederia. The Directorate itself is a treaty formed about 100 years before the fall of Imrryr and proscribes that the four nations will share a common set of beliefs and philosophies. These are centred on the preservation of the Cosmic Balance and are as follows:

- Each nation will fight against the intrusive influence of Chaos or Law and can rely upon the other nations of the Directorate to provide aid if called upon.
- Free trade exists between the Directorates with importation taxes being levied only on goods coming in from non-Directorate nations. This has the effect of keeping prices of staple foods at a set level and ensures markets for the agricultural producers of the Directorates. Imported goods from outside the group can be more expensive than elsewhere in the Unknown East.
- Ideas are to be exchanged freely throughout the Valederian Directorates and education is to be allowed for all people at all levels in society. The Directorates, principally Valederia itself, are learned countries and have established an educational system of schools and universities far in advance of the Young Kingdoms.
- It is the duty of each member of the Directorates to maintain and uphold the will of the Cosmic Balance: all people are born free and should remain free of the influences of the extremes of Law and Chaos. It is the duty of each nation to ensure that its peoples preserve a tolerant and liberal outlook in matters of politics, religion and society to promote the Balance in the individual.

The Valederian Directorates have been enormously successful. As individual nations their strength is slight but, allied by the common tenets of the Directorate, they present a considerable economic, social and military force. The unity of the Directorate has helped maintained peace throughout Menastree since the demise of Melniboné; a peace that remains until Terarn Gashtek raises arms against the whole of the eastern continent and comes close to wasting it completely.

YOUNG KINGDOMS ADVENTURERS



This chapter explains the Adventurer creation process for *Elric of Melniboné*. It introduces some new races, new backgrounds, new professions and skills and some new Adventurer options for community and background. It concludes with an example of a Young Kingdoms Adventurer, Lady Senilla of Imrryr.

Elric of Melniboné Adventurers are created using a modified *RuneQuest* Adventurer Creation process, summarised as follows:

1. Choose your Adventurer's race. The Games Master will provide guidance on permissible races for the campaign.
2. Define your Adventurer's characteristics (STR, CON, SIZ, INT, POW, DEX and CHA) using the method preferred by the Games Master, as outlined on page 8 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* (Random, In Order; Random, Assign; or Points Buy). The race selected in the previous step may have a bearing on the final characteristics.
3. Figure the Adventurer's attributes (Hit Points, Combat Actions and so on), as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, page 8 onwards.
4. Beginning Adventurers start at age 17+1D10 – so between the ages of 18 and 27. If your Games Master allows it, then your Adventurer can be Advanced (*RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, page 21) – but note the Advanced Adventurer options on page 50 of this chapter.
5. Choose a Kingdom for your Adventurer's homeland; again, race will have some bearing.
6. Choose a culture for the Adventurer, determined by the Kingdom.
7. Choose a profession relating to the culture, choosing from either the permissible professions from the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* or one of the Young Kingdoms specific professions found later in this chapter.
8. Determine the Adventurer's Common and Advanced skills, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. Some new skills particular to *Elric of Melniboné* are described towards the end of this chapter.
9. Distribute Free Skill Points, as per page 20 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.
10. Roll or decide upon one Background Event from the Young Kingdoms Background Events found on page 52 of this chapter.
11. Establish Community, as per the Community rules starting on page 20 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, including Connections with other Young Kingdoms Adventurers.
12. **Optional:** Select a Passion for your Adventurer. See Passions.
13. Determine starting Equipment using the equipment lists from the Equipment chapter in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* and the Young Kingdoms Equipment chapter in this book.
14. If you have not already done so, think of a name for your Adventurer!

Your Adventurer should now be ready for play.

RACES

Most inhabitants of the Young Kingdoms are human. There are, however, a number of unique races that can be used for Adventurers if the Games Master permits it.



The various races from the Elric saga are described here. If using one of these races as an Adventurer note the Special Characteristics that apply to Adventurer creation.

Half-Melnibonean

Despite being disdainful of humans, Melnibonéans frequently breed with them – either slaves or those they find intriguing and/or useful in some way. The offspring, Half-Melnibonéans, combine the physical and mental superiority of their Melnibonéan parent with the softer, worldlier emotions of their human side. Half-Melnibonéans exhibit most Melnibonéan physical attributes; tall, elfin-faced and with narrow, slanted eyes tapering towards the skull but are heavier of frame and darker in complexion. As half-breeds they can never be treated as true-blooded Melnibonéans and many remain as slaves but those who are cunning, clever and ambitious can achieve a certain position in Melnibonéan society, often being used as emissaries to the Young Kingdoms – a task deemed too lowly for someone of pure Imrryric blood. After the sacking of the Dreaming City, many of the city’s survivors are Half-Melnibonéan mercenaries serving under the command of Dyvim Tvar, Dyvim Slorm or other Melnibonéan generals. Some leave behind their semi kinsmen and become adventurers-at-large.

Special Characteristics

Half Melnibonéans Characteristics are adjusted as follows:

STR +1, SIZ +1, INT +1, DEX +1

All Half Melnibonéans are from the Melnibonéan culture.

Karasim

The Karasim are green-skinned giants from the Young Kingdom’s far history. Preferring darkness to light they inhabit an abyss at the western edge of the known world, preying on the rest of civilisation with their immense flying ships. The Karasim are barbaric and cruel, wishing to build an empire to rival that of Melniboné, and they command powerful magics of the air, as well as certain unique bargains forged with the Lords of the Higher Planes.

Karasim are not ideally suited to campaigns based in the contemporary Young Kingdoms – the time where most of the Elric stories are set – but if using one of the alternative eras, as discussed in the Alternative Young Kingdoms chapter then they may be permissible. Games Masters may also rule that the race

has not entirely died out and a few Karasim occasionally find their way into the contemporary Young Kingdoms world acting either as their barbaric ancestors did or, perhaps, forging a new course.

Special Characteristics

Karasim Characteristics are adjusted as follows:

STR +2, SIZ +3, INT -1, DEX -1

All Karasim are from the Barbarian culture.

Melnibonéan

Elegant, aloof and evidently inhuman, Melnibonéans are generally tall, regal-looking, arrogant and almost cat-like in their mannerisms and habits. The skull is narrow and tapered, the eyes slanted and watchful, their ears tapering to a fine point. The skin is invariably pale in complexion and, to humans, every Melnibonéan is never less than striking and unworldly.

They are an emotional people but restrained in their demonstration of feelings; they are, without fault, self-centred and unconcerned with the welfare of others – especially humans. Notions such as kindness and cruelty are alien concepts that they find, at best, mildly amusing but are usually considered an irritation. The pursuit of pleasure is foremost in the Melnibonéan mind and they are unrestrained in how that is achieved. Torture, sexual deviancy and the abundant use of narcotics that would drive humans instantly insane are indulged daily, with no thought for the consequences. Many spend their days in a drug-induced slumber, reclined on dream couches where they travel to distant realms beyond the Young Kingdoms plane, indulging in activities known only to them.

All Melnibonéans have the capacity to be sorcerers and at the Bright Empire's height, many of them were. These days, sorcery

Playing a Melnibonéan

- Treat most humans as slaves, potential slaves or, at best, uncultured simpletons.
 - Adopt a sneer in the voice and a condescending manner.
 - Use archaic language including lots of 'thee' and 'thou'.
 - Never admit to mistakes. Melnibonéans are incapable of making them.
 - Survey everywhere as though you own it. After all, you probably *did*, once.
 - Do not shirk from displays of casual cruelty.
 - Take offence easily and exact a drawn-out, stone-cold revenge.
 - Love deeply and passionately but never display a single ounce of remorse.
-

is considered too time consuming and complicated to pursue, although most know a few runes and have the knowledge required to manipulate them. It is only the most ardent students, such as Princes Elric and Yyrkoon, who have the diligence to study the magical arts and become true practitioners of sorcery.

Special Characteristics

Melnibonéan Characteristics are adjusted as follows:

STR +1, CON +1, SIZ +1, INT +2, POW +2, DEX +1, CHA +1

All Melnibonéans are from the Melnibonéan culture.

Myyrrhn

The winged folk of Myyrrhn are human-like but not human and predate even Melniboné. Their ancestors and mortal foes are the ape-like clakars. Myyrrhn, though, have developed a higher, more cultured form and, whilst very rare as Adventurers, are sometimes found abroad in the Young Kingdoms.

Myyrrhn are slender, tall and very light of frame. Their chests are deep, with improved lung capacity and their shoulders are a complex assembly of wing joints, tendons and musculature; they are naturally agile and move with a distinct grace. Not all Myyrrhn are winged. Shaarilla, who befriends Elric, was born without them, exhibiting just stumps where her wings should be. It is the Games Master's decision whether a Myyrrhn Adventurer is winged or not.

As creatures of the air, they worship Lassa. Their natures reflect this. They have short attention spans, sometimes speaking in fragmented sentences, failing to finish one point before moving to the next. They are observant but prone to lapses of concentration. Clothes, which interfere with flight, are shunned and a simple loin cloth is usually the only apparel. If frequenting human areas, light clothing or simple robes are worn but the Winged Folk *never* wear armour.

Special Characteristics

Myyrrhn Characteristics are adjusted as follows:

CON -1, SIZ +1, DEX +3

All Myyrrhn are from the Civilised culture.

Myyrrhn can also fly, if winged. Wingspan is typically seven to eight metres and the broad, shoulder-mounted wings are extremely powerful. A Myyrrhn can launch himself from a standing position but at the exclusion of any other activity since gaining altitude is very strenuous. In general, for horizontal flight, Myyrrhn have a Movement of 12 metres. However a Myyrrhn can *climb*, in altitude, six metres every Combat Round. Launches are preferred from a position of height to take advantage of air currents, uplift and thermals. Myyrrhn cannot hover.

In flight Myyrrhn can glide for hours without having to beat their wings, at a cruising speed of one and a half times their DEX in kilometres per hour. Greater speed is achieved through active wing beats and a Myyrrhn can achieve up to twice his gliding speed in this way. However, it is tiring to do so for long periods and wing-beat flight can only be sustained for a number of minutes equal to the Myyrrhn's CON before he has to glide for twice this time to recover.

Whilst flying, a Myyrrhn may carry a load of up its STR value in ENC, without unduly affecting its gliding capability.

Na'ane

Native to Séred Öma, the skin of this human-like people carries a golden bloom, reminiscent of the luminous sands of the desert surrounding the city. At one time the Na'ane ruled the entire region between mighty Quazhasaat (lost, now, to the sand) and the great cities of Il'm to the south but now Séred Öma is all that remains of their peaceful empire of trade. The Na'ane are content with this. They know of the fall of the Bright Empire and are somewhat wistful for Melniboné's fate but they enjoy strong relations with the Young Kingdoms, especially with Ilmar, Bakshaan, Karlaak and the other Ilmiroran city states and can, perhaps, be considered almost as an extension of them.

As a people the Na'ane are tall and naturally slender, with long skulls, long fingers and long limbs. They have an aristocratic bearing that reminds all of their ancient culture. They are sensitive, circumspect and naturally curious. But what really defines the Na'ane is their innate skill in the arts: everything from dance to music, painting to sculpture and poetry to storytelling. The artistic endeavours come as easily to them as war comes to Pan Tang. Every Na'ane is born with an artistic inclination and the family nurtures the raw talent over many years to the exclusion of almost all other studies.

Special Characteristics

Na'ane Characteristics are adjusted as follows:

STR -1, CON -1, POW +1, CHA +1

Na'ane are from the Civilised culture and the vast majority follow the Artist profession.

Pukwadji

The Pukwadji are a diminutive, primitive race of Earth-worshippers that are now extremely rare in the Young Kingdoms and found only in the southern, mountainous reaches of Shazar. The bestial krettii are a degenerate form of the Pukwadji. In earlier eras than the contemporary Young Kingdoms the Pukwadji traded with Melniboné and were more commonly encountered. Games Masters may allow Pukwadji in contemporary campaigns or may confine them to one of the Alternative Young Kingdoms eras.

Special Characteristics

Pukwadji Characteristics are adjusted as follows:

STR -1, CON -1, SIZ -3 (to a minimum of 5), POW +3, CHA -1

All Pukwadji belong to the Primitive culture and all are automatically Initiates of Grome's cult.

KINGDOMS

Every Adventurer comes from somewhere and for most this will be one of the Young Kingdoms. The individual nations of the Young Kingdoms are summarised in the previous chapter and players are encouraged to read through and review these summaries before deciding on their Adventurer's homeland. Once decided, though, the Kingdom of choice determines the Adventurer's Culture; in most cases this will be clear-cut but in others there will be a choice.

Kingdom	Culture(s)
Anakhazan*	Civilised
Argimiliar	Civilised, Poor
Bas'lk*	Civilised, Poor
Cesh	Civilised, Poor
Chang Shai*	Civilised, Outlaw, Poor
Dharijor	Civilised, Outlaw, Poor
Dorel	Barbarian, Nomad
Eshmir*	Civilised, Outlaw, Poor
Filkhar	Civilised, Poor
Ilmiora	Civilised, Poor
Choose a city state from: <i>Bakshaan, Gorjhan, Karlaak, Ilmar or Rignariom.</i>	
Isle of Purple Towns	Civilised
Jharkor	Civilised, Poor
Lormyr	Civilised, Poor
Maidahk*	Civilised, Poor
Melniboné	Melnibonéan
Myyrrhn	Civilised
Nadsokor	Poor - <i>Adventurer is automatically a Beggar.</i>
Nishvalni-Oss*	Primitive
Oin/Yu	Barbarian, Poor
Okara*	Barbarian, Outlaw
Pan Tang	Civilised, Outlaw, Poor
Pikarayd	Barbarian, Outlaw
Quarzhasat*	Civilised, Outlaw, Poor
Séred Öma*	Civilised. <i>All Adventurers from Séred Öma are Artists by profession.</i>
Shazar	Civilised, Poor, Outlaw
Sighing Desert	Nomad
Silent Lands Pukwadji	Primitive
Tarkesh	Civilised, Outlaw
Valederia*	Civilised
Vilmir	Civilised, Poor
Weeping Waste	Barbarian, Nomad, Outlaw

**These kingdoms are either in the lands known as the Unknown East or are at the very fringes of the Young Kingdoms, forgotten or ignored by most.*

CULTURE

Elric of Melniboné uses the standard four cultures from *RuneQuest*: Barbarian, Civilised, Nomad and Primitive. It also introduces four new cultures: Melnibonéan, Outlaw, Poor and Wanderer of the Time Streams.

All Melnibonéan and Half Melnibonéan Adventurers come from the Melnibonéan culture.

Poor, Outlaw and Wanderer of the Time Streams are considered *optional* cultures to be introduced if the Games Master wishes it for his campaign.

Melnibonean

Melniboné is an ancient, decadent, sophisticated culture. It is morally ambivalent and self-indulgent, founded on thousands of years of allegiance with the Lords of Chaos. Melnibonéans are, typically, arrogant, selfish, intellectually astute but with low thresholds of boredom, highly cultured in the ways of all the arts but inclined towards materialistic pursuits including drug taking, drinking and the acquisition of quaint, often valueless (to others) trophies. The culture then defines the attitude: morally ambiguous, casually cruel, ambivalent to the suffering of others and dismissive of the 'cruder' young cultures of the world.

Outlaw

You were born to brigands and outlaws living on the edge of society. You might be the child of a camp follower, a bandit or a mercenary. You learned to fight at a young age not because it was considered important but because it was a practical necessity.

Melnibonéan

Common Skill Bonuses	Combat Styles	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Culture (Melniboné) +30% +10% to Athletics and <i>either</i> Brawn <i>or</i> Stealth +10% to Insight and <i>either</i> Influence <i>or</i> Persistence <i>or</i> Resilience	Choose one Combat Style from the following at a +10% bonus: Melnibonéan Warrior (Sword and Shield) Dragon Lord (Spear/ Lance and Shield) Noble House (Twin Blades)	Lore (Melniboné) +30% Language (Low Speech) +50% Courtesy Additionally choose three Advanced Skills from: Art (any), Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (History), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Torture), Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Seduction	4D6 x500 Silver Pieces; half will be in cash, the other half in jewels and gems.

Poor

Your kin are peasants, serfs or beggars; it is possible you have been born into slavery in a land such as Melniboné or Pan Tang. Starvation and suffering were never far from your door and constant toil was your companion. This culture also covers beggars from Nadsokor.

Wanderer of the Time Streams

Certain individuals have been singled-out by fate to wander the Million Spheres of the Multiverse. Sometimes they have no recollection of their travels and sometimes they are all too familiar. Sometimes recollections seem like dreams and sometimes like the ravings of a madman. The Time Stream Wanderer has no control over how and where he will be cast through the myriad planes of existence and it may be months, years, decades or centuries before he will find himself elsewhere. For now he is in the Young Kingdoms, perhaps with vague memories of previous travels but with a unique skill-set born from his wanderings.

PROFESSIONS

Most (but not all) of the professions described in the *RuneQuest* Core Rulebook on pages 16–18 are available to Young Kingdoms Adventurers; the table on page 47 shows which cultures support the various professions. Some of the professions differ from their standard *RuneQuest* counterparts and these differences are summarised in the Notes section of the table.

A number of new professions are also available and these are given a fuller description following the Professions Summary.

Outlaw

Common Skill Bonuses	Combat Styles	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
+30% to Culture (Own) and Lore (Regional) +10% to Athletics and Resilience +5% to Brawn, Perception, Ride and Stealth	Choose three Combat Styles from the following and gain a +10% bonus to each: Sword and Shield, Two Handed Sword, Two Handed Axe, Polearms, Spear and Shield, Spear and Pike, Bows, Sling, Knives, Dagger and Buckler	Language (Native) +50% Survival In addition, choose one Advanced Skill from the following: Boating, Craft (any), Healing, Lore (any), Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Shiphandling, Streetwise, Track	3D6 x20 Silver Pieces

Poor

Common Skill Bonuses	Combat Styles	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
+30% to Culture (Own) and Lore (Regional) +10% to any four of the following skills: Brawn, Dance, Perception, Ride, Sing, Stealth, Swim, Unarmed,	Choose one Combat Style from the following and gain a +10% bonus: Clubs and Cudgels, Dagger and Buckler, Spear and Shield, Polearms, Sling, Sword and Shield, Bow	Language (Common) +30% In addition, choose two Advanced Skills from the following and gain a +20% bonus to each: Art, Boating, Craft (any), Gambling, Oratory, Play Instrument, Seduction, Streetwise, Survival, Track	2D6 x10 Silver Pieces

Wanderer of the Time Streams

Common Skill Bonuses	Combat Styles	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
+30% to Culture (Own) and Lore (Million Spheres) +10% to Insight and Resilience +5% to Athletics, Evade, Perception, Swim and Stealth	Choose one Combat Style from the following and gain a +10% bonus: Clubs and Cudgels, Dagger and Buckler, Spear and Shield, Polearms, Sling, Sword and Shield, Bow	Language (Common) +50% In addition, Wanderers choose two Advanced Skills from the following: Boating, Craft (any), Dreamtheft*, Engineering, Healing, Lore (any), Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Seduction, Shiphandling, Streetwise, Survival, Track	4D6 x20 Silver Pieces

**Dreamtheft* is a semi-magical skill. Any Adventurer taking this skill is automatically a *Dreamthief*; see page 48.

Wanderers of the Time Streams should choose a Kingdom as their current adopted home but may come from anywhere – and anywhen – in the *Million Spheres*, including the *Tragic Millennium of Hawkmoon* or *Corum's Luym-an-Esh*.

Professions Summary

Profession	Cultural Background	Notes
Acrobat	Barbarian, Civilised, Poor	
Animal Trainer	All	
Artist	Civilised, Melnibonéan	The profession is fully described in page 48. Adventurers from Séred Öma are all Artists.
Bard	All	
Beggar	Poor	
Blacksmith	Barbarian, Civilised, Poor	
Champion/Knight/Noble Warrior	All	
Courtesan		The profession is fully described in page 48.
Courtier	Civilised, Melnibonéan	
Craftsman	All	
Diplomat	Civilised, Melnibonéan	
Dreamthief	Nomad of the Time Stream	The profession is fully described in page 48. Dreamthieves use the Dreamtheft rules described in the Magic and Sorcery chapter.
Engineer	Civilised	Unknown East Kingdom of Maidahk Only.
Explorer	Barbarian, Civilised, Melnibonéan, Wanderer of the Time Stream	
Farmer	Barbarian, Civilised, Poor, Primitive	
Fisherman	All	
Guerrilla	Outlaw	Changshai breeds hardy guerrilla warriors.
Herdsmen	Barbarian, Nomad, Poor, Primitive	
Hunter	All	
Mercenary	Barbarian, Civilised, Melnibonéan, Nomad, Outlaw	
Merchant	Barbarian, Civilised, Outlaw	
Miner	Barbarian, Civilised	
Noble	Civilised, Melnibonéan	
Physician	Civilised, Melnibonéan	
Priest	Barbarian, Civilised, Melnibonéan, Nomad	Priests must choose a Cult from the Cults chapter and form a Pact with the appropriate Lord for their cult.
Sailor	Civilised, Poor, Primitive	
Scholar	Civilised, Melnibonéan	
Scrutineer	Civilised	Unknown East Kingdoms Only.
Shaman	Barbarian, Nomad, Poor, Primitive	Shamans use the Spirit Magic rules from the <i>RuneQuest Core Rulebook</i> . More information is provided in the Magic and Sorcery chapter.
Slave	Poor	The profession is fully described in page 49.
Soldier/Warrior	All	
Spy	Civilised, Outlaw	
Thief	All	
Tracker	Barbarian, Nomad, Outlaw, Primitive	
Sorcerer	Civilised, Melnibonéan	Sorcerers use the magic systems described in this book instead of the standard <i>RuneQuest</i> magic systems. The profession is fully described in page 50.
Warrior Priest of Chaos	Civilised	Pan Tang and Phum (Unknown East) Only.
Woodsman	Barbarian, Peasant, Poor, Primitive	

NEW PROFESSIONS

Artist

The artist has dedicated his life to the pursuit of fine, physical art; be it sculpting, writing, painting or even the cruel arts of torture as found in both Pan Tang and Melniboné. The act of creation is the spur and every artist lives to create that masterpiece that has, so far, eluded them but will make their name last for eternity. All Artists have a workshop or small gallery from where they work, most likely inherited from their parents or rented

Common Skills: Evaluate +10%, Influence+10%.

Advanced Skills: Art (any) +20%. One further advanced skill chosen from: Courtesy, Craft (any), Healing, Language, Lore (any) or Oratory.

Beggar

Wherever there are people there are beggars; those who have lost all – or never had it to begin with – and are forced to rely on the charity of others, living hand (or begging-bowl) to mouth, clad in rags, covered in lice and sores and shunned by polite society. But it is never wise to dismiss a beggar too readily: they see much, hear much and know more than one might realise.

Common Skills: Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Perception +10%; Pick One at +10% from: Insight, Resilience, Sleight, Stealth, Unarmed.

Pick One Combat Style at +10% from: Bow, *Clubs and Cudgels*, *Dagger and Buckler*, *Polearms*, *Sling*, *Spear and Shield*, *Sword and Shield*.

Courtesan

Courtesans sell their time and companionship for money – and whatever else the paying customer so decides. A courtesan, be it female or male, can be all things to all people, for the right price and, if they move in the correct circles, a source of knowledge, gossip, insight or real power.

Common Skills: Dance *or* Evaluate +5%, Influence +5%, Insight +5%, Perception +5%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5%.

Advanced Skills: Seduction. One further advanced skill chosen from: Art, Commerce, Courtesy, Lore (any), Streetwise.

Dreamthief

As their name suggests, Dreamthieves steal dreams, brokering them for a price to those who desire certain dreams, crave new experiences or who are simply unable to dream naturally. Dream Thieves are masters of Dream Magic and being such a master is to

become a wanderer of the Moonbeam Roads, the bright threads of the Multiverse that spin through the million spheres web-like, permitting their travellers to visit other realms and planes via their unconscious mind, experiencing these lands as though part of them and gaining from their experiences.

Every Dreamthief has a Dream Staff and 1D4 dreams stored within it. See the Dreamtheft section of the Magic and Sorcery chapter for more information.

Common Skills: Evaluate +5%, Insight +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +5%.

Advanced Skills: Dreamtheft. One further advanced skill chosen from: Art, Courtesy, Dance, Seduction, Streetwise.

Alternatively the Dreamthief may forgo the second Advanced skill and chose a Combat Style, at a +10% bonus, from: Bow, Dagger and Buckler, Quarterstaff, Sword and Shield or Unarmed.

Engineer

The engineers of Maidahk are experts in design and construction. The engineering sciences are a noted tradition in Maidahk and it is considered a more noble profession than almost anything else. Engineers come in many forms, from architects, builders and plumbers through to mechanics, demolition specialists and drainage consultants. Engineer Adventurers should choose a speciality.

Common Skills: Evaluate +10%, Resilience +5%, any One Handed weapon Combat Style +5%.

Advanced Skills: Engineering (Pick a speciality), Lore (Technical speciality). Choose one further advanced skill from: Lore (Geometry), Lore (Mathematics), Lore (Physics), Mechanisms

Every engineer Adventurer should create, in consultation with the Games Master, one item of technical brilliance that showcases their area of expertise.

Guerrilla

Changshai, wracked by civil war, has developed guerrilla warriors on both sides, loyalists and Tanghensi. These warriors are usually arranged in small groups but are quite often solitary individuals, who spend the bulk of their time in the immense forests of the country, seeking-out the enemy with the intent to kill them. Typically hard-bitten and experts in the ways of hit and run warfare, Changshai guerrillas are used to hardship, hazards and death in all its forms.

This profession can also be used for resistance and guerrilla fighters from other Kingdoms – not just Changshai.

Common Skills: Lore (Forest) +10%. Pick Two from: Athletics +5%, Brawn +5%, Dagger +5%, Evade +5%, Evaluate +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Resilience +5%.

Guerrilla Fighter Combat Style +15% (encompasses the use of Twin Blades and Daggers/Shortswords, Sling and Bow), plus any one further Combat Style at +5%.

Advanced Skills: Survival

Scrutineer

The scrutineers are both astronomers and astrologers, experts in the myths and ways of Eshmir's star gods, the Elithior. Men of learning, they study all the constellations but it is typical for them to pick a single constellation that they choose as their patron. Through the study and veneration of their particular deity, they gain a certain amount of sorcery and, of course, enter into a Pact with their god. All scrutineers receive a Compulsion as part of this Pact, chosen from the following list:

Scrutineer Compulsions

- Always ask for the birth date of anyone you meet and then spend 1D4 days preparing an astrologically accurate birth chart to determine their personality. Use this chart to inform all dealings with that person.
- Always speak in a mystical tone, full of allegory, reference to obscure star myths and portents of doom.
- Never carry a weapon of any kind.
- Never drink alcohol.
- Never eat meat.
- Never harm another human being.
- Never make a decision without first consulting the stars, spending an inordinate amount of time in doing so.
- Never strike the first blow.
- Never wear armour.

Common Skills: Influence +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%. One further choice from: First Aid +5%, Persistence +5%.

Advanced Skills: Language (High Speech) +5%, Lore (Elithior), Pact (Elithior Constellation), One Rune pertinent to the constellation venerated.

All scrutineers possess a telescope and an astrolabe. At the Games Master's discretion he may also have a permanent observatory at his place of residence or access to the same.

Slave

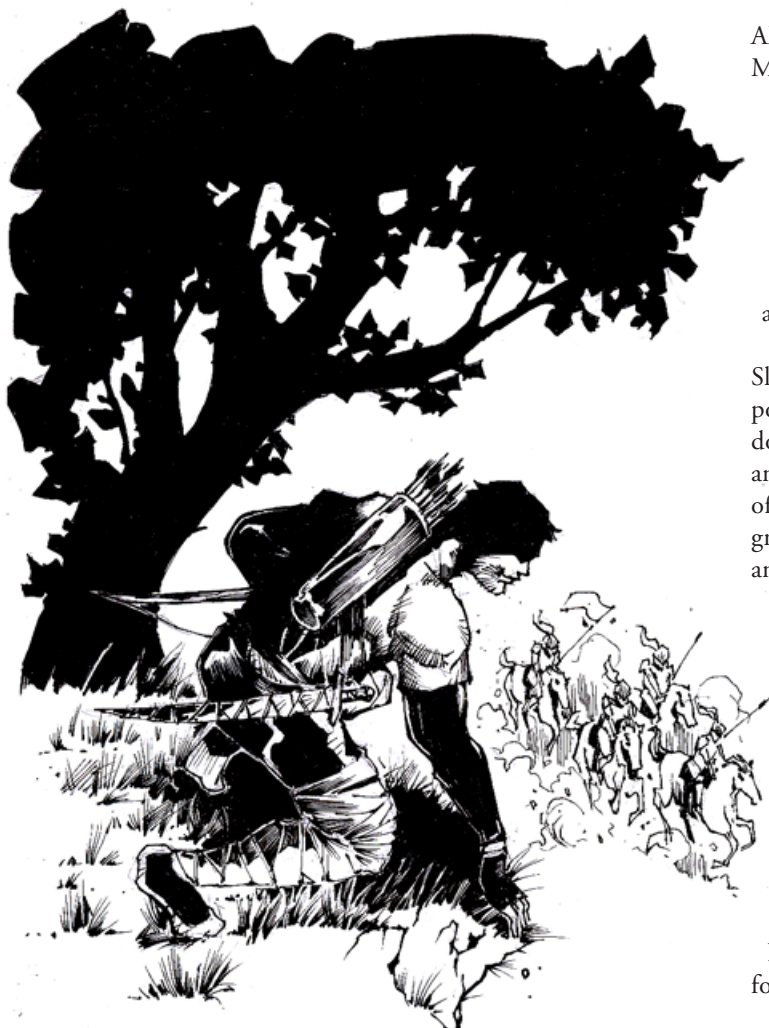
Slaves are common in the Young Kingdoms, most often found in Dharijor, Pan Tang, Pikarayd and Melniboné – although many kingdoms make enemy prisoners into slaves as a humiliating punishment.

Slaves can be well-treated; in Melniboné they occupy privileged positions with a level of life style far higher than many well-to-do Young Kingdoms. Mostly though, it is a life of drudgery and hardship with the slave being denied even the most basic of rights and comforts. The ultimate goal is freedom, hopefully granted by a caring master but often found through rebellion and cunning escape.

Adventurers choosing this profession have a further choice to make:

Serving Slave: The slave is still in bondage to a master, who may be another Adventurer. If so, the slave Adventurer gains an additional 10% bonus to any Common Skill he chooses, or he may buy a new Advanced Skill instead, at its base value.

Free Slave: The slave has been recently freed, or escaped, but is not yet that far removed from his time in servitude. He may still be in contact with his former master – or fleeing for his life.



Common Skills: Evaluate +5%, Lore (Regional) +5%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5%.

Advanced Skills: Courtesy. Two further Advanced Skills chosen from: Artistic Expression, Healing, Language, Lore (any), Streetwise.

Sorcerer

Sorcerers have chosen to study the arcane, often blasphemous, frequently insane, teachings of magic and sorcery. Sorcery offers great power but usually at great cost. Melniboné produced the greatest sorcerers the world has ever seen and Pan Tang seeks to emulate that greatness; but others, a few, seduced by the vast potential sorcery offers, tread similar roads, making bargains and pacts with demons and other, strange beings, in return for magical knowledge. They barter their very souls for such knowledge – and the *true* cost can never be measured.

Common Skills: Insight +5%, Persistence +5%.

Advanced Skills: Language (High Speech), Choose *either* three Rune Casting runes *OR* choose Command and Summon (specific summoning type) – see the Magic and Sorcery chapter.

The subject of sorcery is discussed at length in the Magic and Sorcery chapter. However, players who want to play a sorcerer can create an Adventurer with sorcerous abilities under the following conditions.

- The Games Master *must* approve. Sorcery is *powerful*, potentially dangerous and requires full Games Master assent before any Adventurer can begin the game with sorcerous knowledge.
- The player must provide a plausible explanation and background for how his Adventurer came by his sorcerous skills.
- Next, the player must choose a higher power to nominally serve: Chaos, Law or one of the elements. To learn sorcery one must be a member of a cult. See Lords of the Million Spheres for more details on the higher powers and the cults available in the Young Kingdoms.
- Learning magic from a cult is only possible at Initiate level and greater. Becoming an Initiate requires making a Pact with the god, or one of the gods, worshipped by the cult. See page 127 for more on how Pacts work. Forming a Pact does not cost any of the Adventurer's Free Skill Points but it *does* require a dedication of POW.
- The Adventurer can now buy sorcerous skills using his remaining Free Skill Points. See pages 50 and 51 for details on the sorcerous skills available. Note what runes and summonings are taught by the cult and buy only those skills that are appropriate. Each Rune or Summoning spell is treated as an Advanced Skill and must be purchased as such by starting sorcerer Adventurers.
- Note that the Rune Casting, Summoning and Command skills *cannot* exceed the High Speech percentage. If the basic level of any of these skills would be higher than the High Speech level, then the skill's level is equal to High Speech.

Warrior-Priest

The Warrior-Priests of Phum are the devout soldiers of Chaos in Menastree. Their reputation as unyielding proponents of the Chaos Lords precedes them far and wide and they are justly feared. Many take a wandering life, acting as mercenaries or sellswords, proselytising as they go but many remain in Phum and their enclave, awaiting the call from the Lords of Chaos that will signal the final battle for creation.

A similar tradition of martial sorcerers has also emerged in the violent, Chaos-revering nation of Pan Tang.

Every Warrior-Priest has a Pact with a Lord of Chaos and must dedicate *at least 5 points of POW* to it. The amount of POW dedicated indicating one's status in the cult. As one of their Gifts they may take *any two* sorcery skills from the Sorcery Skills Gift list that follows. In addition to the Compulsions relevant to their Lord of Chaos (see the Cults chapter of this book), they must accept a Compulsion from the following list:

Sorcery Skills Gifts

- Command
- Rune Casting (Rune of Concealment, plus one other)
- Summon Demon (choose a type)
- Summon Elemental (choose a type)
- Witch Sight

Warrior Priest Compulsions

- Always aim for the abdomen of an opponent when engaged in combat.
- Always aim for the chest of an opponent when engaged in combat.
- Always aim for the head of an opponent when engaged in combat.
- Attempt to make one new convert to Chaos each month.
- Dress in only one colour and never wear any other.
- Never surrender, or accept it.
- Never use a shield.
- Never wear armour.
- Specialise in only one type of weapon or form of combat.

Common Skills: Influence +5%, Persistence +5%, any two Combat Styles +10%.

Advanced Skills: Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos).

NEW SKILLS

Adventurer creation has introduced several new Advanced skills for *Elric of Melniboné*, which are described as follows:

Command (POW+CHA)

A combination of magical compulsion, negotiation and willpower, the Command skill is used to direct the actions of a summoned

magical entity. A Command test is always opposed by the creature's Persistence. If the sorcerer is successful, the creature is compelled to carry out a *single* task in-line with its nature and abilities. An air elemental can be commanded to carry the sorcerer over a ravine, for instance, but could not be commanded to provide permanent flight. The task must be worded specifically and carefully by the sorcerer and the creature will carry out the instruction to the letter. For example, ordering a demon of combat just to fight is too vague; it requires a specific foe ('fight that warrior with the poleaxe and bronze helm'). However, a command such as 'protect me from being attacked' is acceptable, even though there is no explicit foe mentioned. Every command must contain a subject and a verb. Issuing a command costs one Magic Point.

If the creature successfully resists the Command, it refuses to perform the action. The sorcerer can repeat the Command but at a cost of one Magic Point for each attempt. If the opposed test is fumbled by the sorcerer or he runs out of Magic Points, the sorcerer's control is broken and the creature may act as it pleases. Elementals usually return to their respective plane but demons and other creatures may behave differently, perhaps becoming troublesome, malicious or violent but this depends on the demon's type and requires Games Master adjudication.

The percentage of the Command skill can never exceed the sorcerer's High Speech skill.

Dreamthrift (POW x2)

Dreamthrift is an Advanced Skill. It combines formal teaching and natural, magical aptitude. It does not rely on any Pacts or any Language. Through the use of the skill, the Dreamthrift, aided by the crook of his profession (which is inherently magical), merges with the body and dreaming mind of the dreamer, their bodies and souls becoming entwined by the power of the crook. The thief then enters the dream state of the dreamer, locates the dream and steals it.

To successfully bind with the dreamer the Dreamthrift matches his Dreamthrift skill against the dreamer's Persistence in an opposed test. Success allows the Dreamthrift access to the dream state of the dreamer. A critical success allows the Dreamthrift access but with a stronger mental fortification: increase the Dreamthrift's available Magic Points by half (rounding up) to use in capturing the dream sought. A fumble of the Dreamthrift roll means the Dreamthrift is repelled by the strength of the dream and also loses a number of Magic Points equal to the dream's intensity.

Rune Casting (Specific Rune) (IN T+POW)

The sorcerer has learned the properties of a specific rune, named in the skill. He understands its geometry, its topology and the way it interacts with the Multiverse. He understands the glyphs and strokes forming the rune and he knows how to voice it using

High Speech. The Rune Casting skill is used to either inscribe or speak a single rune. If a sorcerer comes across the same rune inscribed by another, he recognises it automatically. If the rune is unknown and the sorcerer succeeds in a High Speech test he can, after 1D8 hours of study and contemplation, determine the rune's likely nature.

The percentage of the Rune Casting skill can never exceed the sorcerer's High Speech skill.

Summoning Ritual (Specific Creature/Demon) (IN T+POW)

Summoning Rituals are different for each creature or demon being summoned. They can be complex and time consuming to prepare, requiring seclusion, privacy and utter concentration. A summoning is a mixture of the written, the aromatic, the aesthetic and the meditative disciplines. Whilst the detail varies according to the summoning, the process is broadly similar: the sorcerer spends 1D8 hours preparing the area with the runes, scents and sacrifices prescribed in the ritual, all the while placing his mind into a semi-trance. Once the area is ready the sorcerer commences the summoning, chanting the creature's name repeatedly until the barriers between the planes of the Multiverse shift, separate and allow the creature through.

The percentage of the Summoning Ritual skill can never exceed the sorcerer's High Speech skill.

Witch Sight (POW+CHA)

This is the ability to perceive and read sorcerous powers and emanations. It is the ability to shift the perspective of one's mind to peer between the planes of existence, gaining a glimpse of how magical power has been caused to manifest. A Witch Sight practitioner can learn if a sorcerer is more, or less, powerful than himself by using his Witch Sight to bend his perception to view the aura surrounding the target. When used this way the sorcerer can only tell in *general terms* what the power of the opponent is ('more powerful', 'much more powerful', 'a pathetic fool'); it is impossible to discover anything more precise. Witch Sight can also be used to see the emanations of magical and chaotic creatures and to detect signs of their passing. For every 8 *full* points of Witch Sight the sorcerer can detect a magical trail or aura one day in age and in a one metre area. So, for example, a sorcerer with Witch Sight of 35% would be able to sense any magical residue up to four days old, anywhere within a four metre radius of the sorcerer's position.

BACKGROUND EVENTS

All Adventurers either choose or roll randomly for a Background Event. The following Background Events table is used in place of that found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Background Events Table

1D100	Event
01	Accidentally injured or killed a childhood friend.
02	Afflicted by visions of a Lord of the Higher Planes: roll 1D4 to determine the nature of the Lord delivering these visions... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lord of Chaos 2. Lord of Law 3. Elemental Lord 4. Beast Lord
03	Afflicted by visions of the future – particularly visions of doom and destruction.
04	Amnesia. No memory of life before age of 18. Unsure if current family is real or bogus.
05–06	Attacked or chased by a creature or monster – harbour a deep fear of the creatures as a result.
07–08	Battle. Adventurer witnessed a great battle or other conflict.
09	Birth Mark. Adventurer has a prominent and unusual birth mark that has been mistaken for the holy sign of a particular god.
10	Blind. Adventurer either born blind or struck by blindness later. Other senses have compensated.
11	Body Double. The Adventurer is either a very close likeness or almost identical double of someone famous (or infamous).
12	Born with a Pact forged by an ancestor. The Adventurer must automatically dedicate 1D6 POW to this Pact and roll randomly(1D4) to see which Higher Power he either willingly or unwillingly serves: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lord of Chaos 2. Lord of Law 3. Elemental Lord 4. Beast Lord
13–15	Brother or Sister died or killed.
16–18	Bullied viciously by one or more youths.
19–20	Childhood sweetheart. Adventurer was once married to childhood sweetheart.
21–22	Childhood sweetheart lost. Adventurer's childhood sweetheart married a friend or rival.
23	Deaf. Adventurer either born deaf or struck by deafness later. Other senses have compensated.
24	Destitution. The Adventurer's family fell into destitution. The Adventurer has escaped this fate by becoming thus but seeks revenge on those who placed his family in such poverty.
25	Disappearance. A family member disappeared 1D10 years ago and Adventurer is on a quest to find them.
26	Discovery. Adventurer discovered, by accident, some long-lost lore, formula or piece of knowledge that various agencies are now hunting.
27–29	Disease or Plague. Adventurer suffered disease or grave illness as a child. Lose 1D3 CHA.
30	Family Secret. The Adventurer's family harbours a great secret.
31	Family Treasure. The Adventurer's family is custodian of a great treasure.
32–35	Father died or killed.
36	Feud and Romance. Adventurer's family has a long-standing feud with religious/trade/political rivals. Adventurer has fallen in love with son/daughter of the rival family/organisation – something which must be kept secret.
37	Feud. Adventurer's family has a long-standing feud with religious/trade/political rivals that has recently turned to bloodshed.
38	Foundling. Adventurer was abandoned by birth parents and brought up by adoptive guardians.
39–40	Fraud. The Adventurer has been part of a fraud or scam: or the victim of one.
41	Fugitive. Adventurer gave secret help to a known fugitive.
42	Gender Change. Adventurer was once a member of the opposite sex but changed to current gender through a curse or powerful magic.
43	Identity change. The Adventurer has adopted a new identity for some reason.
44	Inadvertent Comments. Something the Adventurer did or said resulted in a fight, battle or war. The remark or action was innocent but the repercussions tragic.
45–46	Inheritance or Legacy Denied. Adventurer has been cheated out of a huge legacy left by a parent or relative.
47–48	Inheritance or Legacy. Adventurer is set to inherit a huge legacy from a parent or relative.

1D100	Event
49	Kidnapped and/or indentured by a powerful sorcerer who needed an apprentice.
50	Kidnapped or press-ganged into military service.
51	Last Will. Character is on a quest to fulfil the dying wish of a relative or loved one.
52	Local Coward. Well-known in local community for a particularly <i>unheroic</i> deed.
53–54	Local Hero. Well-known in local community for a particularly heroic deed.
55–56	Major Wound. Adventurer suffered major wound as a child that leaves a permanent scar or other sign of injury.
57	Merchant Dynasty. Adventurer is born into a powerful mercantile family or dynasty.
58	Met a great hero at a time when he was relatively unknown.
59	Met a villain at a time when he was relatively unknown.
60	Mistaken Identity. Case of mistaken identity resulted in a period of imprisonment or some other punishment.
61–63	Mother died or killed.
64	Mute. Adventurer either born mute or struck mute later. Fluent sign language communicator.
65	Orphaned. The Adventurer lost both parents through either illness, an accident or some other tragedy.
66–67	Ostracised from family.
68	Penance. Adventurer is undergoing penance for some insult or slight committed against someone in power or authority.
69	Personal Treasure. Found a great treasure and hid it for safekeeping.
70	Physical deformity of a random location. No ill effects, as Adventurer has learned to adapt.
71–72	Pioneers. Family moved to a new country as settlers, refugees or pioneers.
73	Political Family. One parent is a high-ranking political official.
74	Prosperity. The Adventurer rises from destitution to great wealth.
75	Raised by a cult. The Adventurer is an Initiate of a cult he either chooses or rolls randomly (1D4). Must dedicate 1D6 POW to the resulting Pact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lord of Chaos 2. Lord of Law 3. Elemental Lord 4. Beast Lord
76	Raised by a Guild or Military order.
77	Raised by distant relatives.
78	Raised by Melnibonéans but is not treated as a slave. Adventurer may take the Melnibonéan Cultural Background in place of the normal one and adopt Melnibonéan mannerisms.
79	Ran away to sea or to join a travelling troupe.
80	Religious Family. One parent is a high-ranking religious official in a cult of either Law or Chaos.
81	Sect or Cult. Discovered that family is part of a secret sect or cult and disagrees with their views. Trying to escape both family and those who hunt them.
82	Shipwrecked or stranded as a youth and lived alone for several years before rescued or found.
83	Sidekick. Somehow the Adventurer has picked-up a loyal companion or retainer. This does not make the companion a welcome presence, necessarily, but the relationship has somehow endured over the years.
84	Slavery. Spent childhood and young adulthood as a slave before escaping or being freed. Adventurer must take the Slave profession and the Poor culture.
85	Sole Survivor. Family wiped out by some tragedy.
86	Sole survivor of a tragedy that wiped out the Adventurer's entire settlement/community.
87–88	Squire. Adventurer indentured as a vassal or squire to a famous knight or warrior.
89–90	Twin. Adventurer has a twin brother.
91–92	Twin. Adventurer has a twin sister.
93	Visited by ghosts or spirits.
94–95	Well-travelled. The Adventurer, either singly or with family/friends, has travelled widely.
96	Wicked Step-Parent. One parent died and the other remarried. The step-parent is cold, calculating and brutal towards the Adventurer. A typical evil step-parent.
97–98	Adventurer is a Wanderer of the Time Streams. May take the Wanderer of the Time Streams culture in place of his normal one.
99–00	Roll again and take both events

PASSIONS

'She laughed. 'You begin to sound like my brother. Are you testing my love for you, my lord?'

He began to remount his horse. 'No, Cymoril, but I would advise you to test your love yourself, for I sense there is tragedy implicit in our love.'

As she swung herself back into her saddle she smiled and shook her head. 'You see doom in all things, Can you not accept the good gifts granted you? They are few enough, my lord.'

— *Elric of Melniboné*

Grand passions are a central theme of the Eternal Champion saga: tragically doomed love; unrequited love; passionate love; love across the Million Spheres; lost loves, slaughtered loves and love regained. So too does Hatred figure: Yyrkoon and Theleb K'aarna's hatred for Elric, motivated by greed and jealousy; Elric's hatred of his own fate; the beggars of Nadsokor's hatred for Tanelorn.

Just as the game mechanics for *Elric of Melniboné* provide a way of dedicating one's soul to a god (the Pact), so too can Love and Hate be quantified. This section provides an **optional** set of mechanics for Games Masters to use to simulate the effects of love and hate in their *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns (and, equally, in *Hawkmoon* and the forthcoming *Corum* game).

Pacts of Love and Hate

An Adventurer's Love or Hatred for a thing is measured like any other skill or Pact – on a scale of 1 to 100 and above and should be recorded as an Advanced Skill on the Adventurer sheet. The object of Love or Hate can be anything – a person, a group of people, a country, an object, an ideal. Love or Hate can be established at any point – either during Adventurer Creation or, and perhaps most interestingly and appropriately, during game play. All an Adventurer needs to do is stipulate that he intends to Love or Hate something. If this is stated during Adventurer Creation, there is no cost: the Love or Hate skill is not counted as either a cultural, professional or freely chosen skill, it simply comes into being.

If the Love or Hate is established during play, then it costs 1 Hero Point to establish at its base value. If the circumstances warrant it, then the Games Master can choose to waive the Hero Point cost.

Love and Hate Starting Percentages

Loving or Hating...	Starting Percentage
A person, in a romantic context	Character's POW+CHA, plus, Loved one's POW+CHA
A person in a platonic context (a friendship, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, plus, Loved one's CHA
A group of people	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10
A country	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10
An object (The Ruby Throne, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10
An Ideal (Tanelorn, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10

The starting value of the Love or Hate varies according to the type of Love or Hate being declared.

All the Starting Percentages may be modified by the Games Master to reflect deeper or lesser devotion; thus, Love (Tanelorn) might begin for an Adventurer at 35%, using the Starting Percentage calculation but, because the Adventurer is so devoted to finding Tanelorn, knowing that his long-lost father was also seeking the Eternal City, the Games Master decides to increase the Starting Percentage to 45%, taking into account the familial devotion.

Where a person or people are concerned, the love **does not need** to be reciprocated. It is up to the Games Master to decide if it is or not and the player must decide if unreciprocated love will strengthen his Adventurer's Love/Hate, or weaken it. If the decision is made to strengthen the depth of feeling (unrequited love often drives the heart to **deeper** fondness or infatuation), then the Love/Hate value can be increased (or decreased, if the depth of feeling is diminished) by 1D10%.

Farric, a Filkharian warrior, has fallen in love with the daughter of the local chieftain. Farric's POW and CHA total 22 and the chieftain's daughter, El'nassa, has POW and CHA totalling 32. Thus, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is at 54%. However, because Farric has to keep his love a secret from the over-protective chieftain, the Games Master decides to increase this by 5%, so Love (El'nassa) is now 59%. Pete, Farric's player, also decides that El'nassa has never declared her love for Farric and Farric knows that the sorcerer, Malagan, has also been courting her. Because Farric's love is unrequited, Pete reasons that Farric's infatuation for the Pikaraydian princess is deeper and so it is increased by a further 1D10% – resulting in 8%. Therefore, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is now at 67%.

Because Farric hates the sorcerer Malagan, who is his rival for El'nassa's affections, the Games Master gives Farric Hate (Malagan) at 52% (Farric's POW+CHA, plus Malagan's POW+CHA of 30). He also declares that, because Malagan has caused Farric's exile from Pikarayd, following the revelation of his feelings towards El'nassa, Hate (Malagan) increases by 20%, so it is now 72%. Farric loves El'nassa – but he hates Malagan more...

Increasing and Decreasing Love and Hate

Like any skill or Pact, Love and Hate can increase through Skill Improvement rolls, if the Player wishes to spend a roll on the relationship. However, if, during play, something happens that would deepen the Love/Hate, or diminish it, the Games Master can either impose an immediate increase or reduction of up to 20%, depending on the circumstances; or he can call for the Adventurer to roll for the increase (or diminishment) himself. If the Adventurer rolls, then:

1D10	For a minor deepening or diminishment (She says 'I love you!' unexpectedly)
1D10+5	For a substantial deepening or diminishment (Malagan slaps Farric in the face, following an argument over El'nassa's future, intensifying Farric's hatred for Malagan)
1D10+10	For a major deepening or diminishment (El'nassa stays by Farric's bedside, comforting him, after he has fought a duel, and been wounded, defending her honour)

Once a Love or Hate has been established, it can fall below its starting value but can never be reduced to zero or less. Once established, Love and Hate are permanent fixtures on the Adventurer sheet.

Love and Hate; Gifts and Compulsions

If an Adventurer has a Gift or Compulsion that concerns Love and Hate, then, depending on the nature of the Gift or Compulsion, a Love or Hate is either *increased* or *decreased*, depending on the context, by an amount equal to half the governing Pact. For example, Lady Sathril with a Pact (Eequor) at 64% has, as one of her Compulsions, a hatred of men. The depth of her Pact means that she will have Hate (Men) at a bonus of +22% to any starting or existing value for the Hatred.

Using Love and Hate

Love and Hate are used in several ways:

- As a *comparative value* to demonstrate strength of feeling (Farric, for example, hates Malagan *more* than he loves El'nassa). If the value of the Love or Hate exceeds 100%, then it is an all-consuming passion – at the kind of intense levels seen in Elric for his love for Cymoril, Theleb K'aarna in his love for Yishana – or his jealousy of Elric. An intense Love or Hate is likely to drive the Adventurer to extraordinary lengths in pursuit or defence of whatever he loves or loathes.
- As a *bonus* to any skill that might be used to help, defend or influence in the name of the object Loved or Hated. The bonus is equal to the Love or Hate's critical range. So, if Farric

was fighting a duel with Malagan, following a slight about El'nassa, Farric could gain a bonus to his combat skill of +6% for his Love (El'nassa) of 67%, *and* a bonus of +7% for his Hate (Malagan), for a total bonus of +13%. The Games Master is always the arbiter of when Love and Hate can be used as an augmentation in this way and to which skills any augmentation should apply.

- As the *skill in an opposed test* that concerns the object of the Love or Hate. For example, Lady Sathril's Hate (Tanelorn) 75% could be used in an opposed test (instead of Persistence, say) where Jurgen, an Agent of the Balance, is trying to use his Influence of 80% to persuade her to fight in Tanelorn's defence against Miggea's wolf army. Whether or not the Love or Hate is used as a skill outright in this way, or used as an augmentation to, for instance, Influence or Persistence, is dependent on the circumstances and the strength of feeling. If Sathril's Persistence was higher than her Hate (Tanelorn), then an augmentation would serve her better. If Persistence was lower, then Hate (Tanelorn) can be used as the active, resisting skill.
- *As a skill in its own right where the Adventurer is wrestling with his conscience over some matter concerning the object of his Love or Hate. For example, Farric and Malagan have fought a bitter duel over El'nassa. Malagan, through trickery and sorcery, has badly injured Farric and is about to deliver the killing blow: El'nassa begs Malagan to spare Farric's life. Malagan has Love (El'nassa) 66% and Hate (Farric) 75%. He is torn between his love for the chieftain's daughter and his hatred for his enemy but decides that he hates Farric enough to kill him anyway. The Games Master decides to make a test against Malagan's Hate (Farric) to see what happens. The roll is 86 – a failure. Despite his hatred for the Filkbarian, Malagan cannot, for some reason, bring himself to deliver the coup de grace. He spits on Farric's prone body and walks arrogantly away. Had the Hate (Farric) test succeeded, then Malagan would have killed him. Conversely, had Malagan tested against Love (El'nassa) and succeeded, he would have heeded her pleas and spared Farric – but would have killed him had the test failed.*

Whenever Love or Hate are used as game mechanics, it is worth remembering how love and hate are central themes in Michael Moorcock's writing: that, grand, operatic tragedy and all consuming passion. Love drives Elric to destroy his own kingdom, and Erekosë to destroy an entire world. Hatred drives Theleb K'aarna to kill Myshella and attempt to murder Elric but his love for Yishana also keeps him as a love-lorn lackey to her personal whim. The mechanics for Love and Hate should be used to drive grand intentions and gestures, fuel desperate battles for survival (and not just with weapons – the love for Tanelorn might be the clinching factor for a lost traveller to crawl across the Sighing Desert to reach the fabled city); and to inform future schemes and agendas. Theleb K'aarna's hatred for Elric drove him to extreme lengths but what if Elric had done something to reduce

that hatred? Might Theleb K'aarna's actions – and therefore the destiny of the Young Kingdoms – have radically altered?

Love and Hate are powerful emotions and should be exploited to the fullest in an authentic Eternal Champion campaign.

EXAMPLE YOUNG KINGDOMS ADVENTURER CREATION

Ken is going to create his first Young Kingdoms Adventurer for David's *Elric of Melniboné* campaign. Ken has read a couple of Elric stories and is intrigued by the idea of playing a Melnibonéan sorcerer – inspired, clearly, by Elric and Yyrkoon. David agrees to this as a concept but all things start with the dice rolls (David prefers random to points build). Ken's Characteristics are as follows:

Dice Rolls	Melnibonéan Adjustments	Final Characteristics
STR 9	+1	STR 10
CON 11	+1	CON 12
SIZ 12	+1	SIZ 13
INT 14	+2	INT 16
POW 11	+2	POW 13
DEX 15	+1	DEX 16
CHA 14	+1	CHA 15

The race Ken has chosen is Melnibonéan, so he gains the Melnibonéan adjustments to his Characteristics, giving him the final scores, as shown. Happy with the outcome he calculates the various attributes for his Adventurer using the standard rules from the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*:

Age	22
Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+0
Hit Points	(Legs = 5, Abdomen = 6, Chest = 7, Arms = 4, Head = 6)
Improvement Roll Modifier	+1
Magic Points	13
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	16

From his Characteristics he can calculate the base scores for his Common Skills. His Melnibonéan Culture applies some modifiers to these and he gains some Advanced Skills too. In his culture he has some options on Common Skills modifiers and these are noted here. His skills are in the table on the following page.

Next, Ken chooses his profession. As he has decided to be a sorcerer, this is clear-cut. He gains the following bonuses: Insight +5%, Language (High Speech), Persistence +5%, the choice of either three Rune Casting runes OR choose Command and Summon (specific summoning type).

He chooses Rune Casting – he has decided that his Adventurer will not be bargaining with demons – but decides to specify the Runes later. Ken's profession choices are factored into the list of skill values as shown.

Now Ken has some Free Skill Points to distribute. Melnibonéans have 200 points to put into their skills, or buy new ones: Ken's choices are – Combat Style (Noble House) 20%, Evaluate 20%, Influence 20%, Insight 20%, Language (High Speech) 10%, Lore (Million Spheres) 10%, Perception 20%, Persistence 20%, Resilience 20%, Rune Casting 1 20%, Rune Casting 2 10%, Rune Casting 3 10%. The final skill values are shown on the sample Adventurer sheet.

Ken now rolls for his Background Event. The result is 75, Raised by a Cult. As Ken is Melnibonéan this would suggest that his Adventurer was born into a cult of Chaos and it would explain his sorcerous knowledge so he goes with this. Dave tells Ken that his Adventurer's family were priests of the Cult of Eequor, the Blue Lady of Dismay. After a little discussion Ken decides that his Adventurer – and he is now gaining a sense of who this person is – is female, the daughter of the High Priestess of Eequor in Imrryr but a renegade from the cult: she wants to form her own path in the Young Kingdoms and this does not necessarily mean worshipping the old Chaos Gods. So now we know that Ken's Adventurer is Lady Senilla and on the run from her past.

Following Background Events it is necessary to roll for Community. The rolls are as follows: Parents 77 – Single Parent (Father); Siblings 50 – one sibling (a sister); Family Size 20 – self contained; Family Reputation 55 – Average; Family Connections 22 – none worth mentioning. From this Ken asks to change his Parent result to Mother (to better fit with the Eequor cult), which Dave readily agrees to. Ken also decides that Lady Senilla's mother and sister colluded in the death of her father – a man Senilla loved deeply. This is why she has fled the cult and Imrryr.

Finally Ken decides to select a Passion for Senilla: the Background and Community rolls make this an easy decision: Hate Mother and Sister. As this constitutes a group of people, Dave says that the Passion starts at Senilla's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10. The value of the Passion is therefore $28+10+4 = 42\%$.

Lady Senilla is almost complete. Ken still needs to decide her Runes, buy her equipment (although, given that she is a fugitive,

Common Skills	Basic Percentage	Ken's %	Cultural Modifier	Profession Modifier	Current Value
Athletics	STR+DEX	26%	+10%		36%
Brawn	STR+SIZ	23%			23%
Culture (Own)	INT x2	32%	+30%		62%
Dance	DEX+CHA	31%			31%
Drive	DEX+POW	29%			29%
Evade	DEX x2	32%			32%
Evaluate	INT+CHA	31%			31%
First Aid	INT+DEX	32%			32%
Influence	CHA x2	30%			30%
Insight	INT+POW	29%	+10%	+5%	44%
Lore (Regional)	INT x2	32%			32%
Perception	INT+POW	29%			29%
Persistence	POW x2	26%	+10%	+5	41%
Resilience	CON x2	24%			24%
Ride	DEX+POW	29%			29%
Sing	CHA+POW	28%			28%
Sleight	DEX+CHA	31%			31%
Stealth	DEX+INT	32%	+10%		42%
Swim	STR+CON	22%			22%
Unarmed	STR+DEX	26%			26%
Advanced Skills					
Art (Poetry)	POW+CHA	28%			28%
Combat Style (Noble House)	STR+DEX	26%	+10%		36%
Language (High Speech)	INT+CHA	31%			31%
Language (Low Speech)	INT+CHA	31%	+50%		81%
Lore (Million Spheres)	INT x2	32%			32%
Rune Casting 1	INT+POW	29%			29%
Rune Casting 2	INT+POW	29%			29%
Rune Casting 3	INT+POW	29%			29%
Seduction	INT+CHA	31%			31%

perhaps she has very little) and perhaps draft a little backstory for her. As the other players in Dave's group create their Adventurers Dave will encourage them to form a Connection, giving them a reason for adventuring and a bonus to a skill or two. Ken wonders aloud to the other players if, perhaps, Senilla fled Imrryr with the help of a group of traders, merchants or mercenaries and perhaps with the help of her trusted slave... Dave nods and the three other players in the group suddenly have ideas for their own Adventurers, liking the idea of the mercenary band; rag-tag

misfits from around the Young Kingdoms who were employed to extract Senilla from Imrryr on their last job.

'Let's roll with that,' Dave says. 'You don't all need to be warriors necessarily; you could be the Young Kingdoms version of the A Team. However a sorceress will be useful to you and Senilla's mother is vengeful; Senilla was being groomed to become a priestess. She has a reason to hunt you. Oh, your mercenary group? You go by the name of the *Straw Dogs*...'

EQUIPMENT AND ECONOMY



This short chapter discusses the equipment of Elric's world. By and large most of the items found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* Equipment chapter are available in the Young Kingdoms – but there are some exceptions that are discussed in the appropriate sections that follow. It concludes with a look at several Young Kingdoms Combat Styles.

CURRENCY AND TRADE

The silver piece (SP) – the standard *RuneQuest* monetary unit – is the common currency of the Young Kingdoms and beyond. Other coins are minted and used, as noted, and names for the silver piece vary from one place to another: the Coinage table shows names used in different kingdoms.

Bronze Piece: A low-value coin that replaces the Copper Piece from the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. The rate of exchange is 10 bronze to a silver and 10 silvers to a gold.

Gold pieces are known but reserved for high denominations and are rarely encountered in everyday transactions. Outside towns and cities, barter is the most common way of doing business with hard currency incurring outright distrust. Gems and jewels are also acceptable currency, again, for prestigious transactions. Melniboné deals exclusively in silver and gold, although the currency of the Dragon Isle is often mistrusted by simple traders.

Another coin, the Melnibonéan Gold Wheel, is also known in the Young Kingdoms but incredibly rare. Wheels are hand-crafted items the size of a human palm and of exquisite quality. One is minted for each emperor that has occupied the Ruby Throne of Imrryr and so it is very, very rare for such coins to leave the Dragon Isle. A Melnibonéan Gold Wheel has no calculable equivalent owing to their rarity, beauty and quality.

It was when this man produced a large, gold Melnibonéan wheel – a coin not minted, as most coins but carved by craftsmen to a design both ancient and intricate – that Elric's caution was fully conquered by his curiosity. Very few of those coins existed

in Melniboné and none, that Elric had heard of, outside; for the coins were not used for trade with the Young Kingdoms. They were prized, even by the nobility of Melniboné.

— *Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

It is very common for coins to be clipped, cut or altered to lower their value in some way. Quarter bronze are typically known as pennies whilst half coins are known as farthings.

Coinage in the Young Kingdoms

Most countries mint their own coins, stamped with the likeness of the current ruler or their seal or device. Whilst the silver piece is ubiquitous, names vary.

Merchant trade booms in the Young Kingdoms. Markets are vibrant places and the best attract traders from every continent. Sea traders run the gauntlet of pirates and privateers whilst land caravans brave the predations of bandits and hostile communities who somehow see the rise of the towns and cities as a threat. Because merchants run such risks, bodyguards and scouts are essential; lucrative work for adventurers and fortune seekers.

Renowned goods range from the finest spices and silks from distant Eshmir, Filkhar's superb fruits, grains and wines, Tarkesh ale and pork, Ilmioran leather, pottery and ceramics, Lormyrian ice wines and Jharkorian game (particularly its boar and venison from the royal hunting forests of King Dharmit). Vilmir, despite its austerity, is known for its sweetmeats and breads.

Barter

Expect coinage to be used in civilised cultures, such as the Isle of Purple Town but in Barbarian, Primitive and Nomad cultures, barter – the cross-trading of goods, services and favours – is far more common. Whilst civilised nations will trade in coin, bartering still remains an acceptable and expected form of exchange.

The success of bartering depends on tendering something that the other party wants or needs in exchange for what is on offer.

Nation	Coinage Name
Argimiliar	Shilling
Cesh	Ceshti
Dharijor	Tiger
Filkhar	Crown
Ilmiora	Royal (Although there is great rivalry between the city states. Depending on relations, different Royals may or may not be accepted in other cities.)
Island of the Purple Towns	Gilder
Jharkor	Dharmit (After King Dharmit, Jharkor's beloved ruler.)
Lormyr	Shilling
Melniboné	Dragon (silver), Imperial (gold) and Wheel (gold again). Melnibonéan gold wheels are incredibly rare and valuable with only one Wheel existing for each Emperor. These fabulous coins, the size of a man's palm, are intricately carved and more works of precious art than currency.
Oin and Yu	Yuro – Although this rather worthless currency (a vastly debased mixture of tin, copper and bronze) is found only in Dhoz-Kam. Elsewhere the standard units are the pebble, hen, cockerel, goat, pig, cow, bull and horse, in that order. None are of particularly high quality.
Pan Tang	Tiger – All Pan Tangian coins are octagonal and, like Melnibonéan coinage, often distrusted in the wider markets.
Quarzhasaat	Seventh – Named for the unnamed seventh member of the Quarzhasaat ruling council.
Séred Öma	Sovereign
Shazar	Crown
Tarkesh	Gilder
Unknown East Kingdoms	Rhand
Vilmir	Shilling – All Vilmirian coins are triangular, in veneration of Arkyn.

A civilised Adventurer in a barbarian stead may proffer coins in exchange for food but coins do not necessarily offer any immediate advantage to the provider. Therefore to barter successfully, the Adventurer must have something tangible that he can offer that can be put to (relatively) immediate use.

Like-for-like usually works well. An Adventurer who seeks some food and has some drink to offer in return is likely to be met favourably. Services may also suffice; offering to chop wood for a morning in exchange for a bowl of stew, for example. More complex or specialised goods or services are less likely to succeed – unless the Adventurer can convince the other party of the need and utility.

To abstract the barter process use the following rules:

- The Adventurer must make an offer of something: goods or service. If this is a common commodity or an essential service that is obviously going to be of benefit, then the barter succeeds.
- If the Adventurer is intending to offer something less common, of less obvious value or something esoteric, then he may make an Evaluate roll. If successful, he has spotted a way of selling-in what he offers that is not obvious to the other party. This grants a bonus to the following roll: either Influence or Commerce.

Bartering Evaluate

Evaluate Level of Success	Influence Bonus	Commerce Bonus
Critical	+20%	+40%
Success	+10%	+20%
Failure	0	0
Fumble	-20%	-10%

- Next the Adventurer makes an Opposed Influence or Commerce roll, whichever is higher. The other party resists with either his Persistence or Commerce, again, whichever is higher.
- If the Adventurer wins the Opposed roll, what he offers is accepted. If he fails, it is not. If the Adventurer fumbles the opposed roll, then there is a good chance that he has insulted the other party, meaning that relations will be soured: precisely how depends on the circumstances.

Haggling

Haggling is the art of reducing the asking price to a more agreeable amount. A skilled negotiator can achieve substantial discounts through careful haggling.

The process works in the same way as for Bartering: an Evaluate roll followed by an Opposed Influence/Commerce roll against

Persistence/Commerce. The outcome of the roll determines what the Adventurer, whether buying or selling, achieves:

Haggling Outcome

Haggling Level of Success	Negotiated Price
Critical	One quarter of the original price
Success	Half the original price
Failure	No reduction in price
Fumble	No Trade

ARMS AND ARMOUR

Many of the armour types and weapons found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* are found in the Young Kingdoms; indeed, several local variants exist in addition to the standard *RuneQuest* fare. However, crossbows are not found in the Young Kingdoms and are thus unavailable to Adventurers:

Speciality Close Quarters Arms

The following weapons are unique to the Young Kingdoms and available in the manner their descriptions suggest.

Eshmirian Falchion: A short, curve-bladed sword designed for parrying in two-weapon combat. The blade, whilst short, is wide and specially strengthened; the handgrip is shaped to help twist and turn the blade when countering incoming blows. These weapons are used by Eshmirian mercenaries and are not found extensively in the Young Kingdoms. The weapon has two Size ratings. In terms of mass and length it is a Medium weapon; but for the purposes of parrying larger weapons it is considered Large. It cannot, however, parry ranged attacks.

Filkharian Pike: Almost three metres in length, this long-bladed pike is typically used by the pike militia of Filkhar's army. Effective against charging opponents and mounted knights, it is far less effective at close quarters.

Ilmioran Spear: Take a quarterstaff and attach a narrow, flat, spearhead to it. Now craft a wooden cap that covers the spearhead and fits firmly and tightly on the shaft and you have a spear and quarterstaff in a single weapon. The Ilmioran Spear was developed in the days of the Il'm tribe, when spears and swords were deemed illegal by the Melnibonéan overlords who ruled over the region. Certain Ilmioran training schools teach the *Ilmar Style*, which covers both two-handed spear combat and quarterstaff combat in the same style.

Jharkorian Round Shield: A metre diameter round shield popular in Jharkor and the west. It is made from two planks of wood glued together with the outer surface being covered in canvas and calf skin. A layer of iron protects the rim and has a solid iron boss. It is lighter and slightly larger than the target shield used in other countries.

Lormyrian Axe: The precisely-weighted, counterbalanced, double-headed war axe of the Lormyrian Knights. Ideal for slicing at pikes and cleaving skulls.

Melnibonéan Lance: akin to a standard lance and designed to be used from horseback or dragon-saddle, the Melnibonéan lance has a finer, narrower point. Until the sacking of Imrryr these weapons are not available on the open market. It can be used one-handed in a jousting style from the back of a mount, or double-handed if used as a foot melee weapon.

Pan Tang Sabre: The long, slender sabre used by the Pan Tangian Devil Riders to slash at heads from their six-legged devil mounts.

Speciality Ranged Arms

With the exception of crossbows, which are never mentioned at all in the Elric saga, all of the ranged weapons found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* are available. There are two additions worthy of note:

Melnibonéan Bone Bow: A recurved composite bow made of wood, bone and sprung steel, this is an immensely powerful weapon in the hands of Melniboné's warriors and slave-archers. These bows find their way onto the Young Kingdoms market following the sack of Imrryr.

Weeping Waste Bow: A composite weapon of wood, antler and/or bone, the bow of the Weeping Waste barbarians is a short, deeply curved bow used primarily for hunting. Similar bows are found in Pikarayd and Dorel.

Speciality Armour

All of the armour types mentioned in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* are available in the Young Kingdoms, plus two additional specialities. In most societies the wearing of anything other than leather is considered impolite and warlike unless one is clearly preparing for battle. If some form of protection is considered necessary, the cultural trend is to wear a breastplate and a helmet but little else in order to avoid giving the impression of being ready for war.

Melnibonéan Plate: Ornate and finely carved, Melnibonéan plate is custom-built for its wearer and is not available off-the-peg or outside of Imrryr prior to the city's sacking. It is always bought as a suit with the helmet fashioned into the likeness of a dragon or sea serpent and intricate decoration across its other surfaces. A suit of this plate covers all seven Hit Locations. After the fall of Imrryr pieces of armour come onto the market but entire suits are very rare.

Weeping Waste Armour: The Weeping Waste barbarians and nomads have developed a form of wooden armour available for the abdomen, chest and arms, carved from the wood of the fal tree, which is native to the rain-swept plateau of the wastes. This armour is frequently carved into tribal designs and then treated with lacquer to protect it from the elements.

Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	Size	Reach	Combat Manoeuvres	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Eshmirian Falchion	1D6+1	8/9	L/M	S	Bleed	2	6/12	300 SP
Filkharian Pike	1D10	9/10	H	VL	Impale	2	3/12	150 SP
Ilmioran Spear	1D8+2 (Spear) 1D8 (Staff)	7/7	L	L	Impale, Stun Location	2	4/8	80 SP
Jharkorian Round Shield	1D4+1	8/-	L	S	Bash, Impale	2	4/10	140 SP
Lormyrian Axe	1D8+1 (1H) 1D8+2 (2H)	12/10 10/10	M	M	Bleed, Sunder (2H only)	2	4/10	120 SP
Melnibonéan Lance	1D10+4 (Mounted) 1D10+2 (2H, melee)	9/10	H	VL	Impale, Sunder	3	4/12	600 SP
Pan Tang Sabre	1D8+1	12/10	M	M	Bleed	1	5/8	200 SP

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Damage Modifier	Range	Load	STR/DEX	SIZ	Combat Manoeuvres	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Melnibonéan Bone Bow	1D8+2	Y	200m	1	13/12	L	Impale	1	4/10	800 SP
Weeping Waste Bow	1D6+2	Y	160m	1	13/10	L	Impale	1	3/6	200 SP

Speciality Armour

Armour	AP	Cost in Silver per Hit Location	ENC
Melnibonéan Plate	7	20,000 SP (full suit) Greaves/Vambraces 4,000 SP Breastplate: 6,000 SP Hauberk: 12,000 SP Helm: 6,000 – 9,000 SP depending on ornamentation	2
Weeping Waste Armour	3	200	2

YOUNG KINGDOMS COMBAT STYLES

The Young Kingdoms have a variety of fighting styles, as well as all those one would expect to find in *RuneQuest* (Sword and Shield, Spear and Shield and so on). There are also several unique styles, which are explored here. Each style describes its nature, its culture and the weapons involved; when designing a Young Kingdoms Adventurer, take a look through these fighting styles and choose one to fit the Adventurer's culture and profession.

Club and Cudgel (Twin Clubs or Cudgels)

Young Kingdoms street fighters, bandits, muggers and thieves have developed this style to use a pair of similar-sized clubs to deliver a decent battering to a target. The aim of the style is to

subdue rather than kill and it uses the Bash and Stun Location Manoeuvres to put a foe to the ground.

Dragon Lord (Spear/Lance and Shield)

The Dragon Lord style is another Melnibonéan style and teaches the use of the spear, or more commonly the Melnibonéan lance, used from a mount, with a shield to provide added protection. On foot the style includes two-handed spears and one-handed spears and shields.

Eshmirian Dual Weapon (Sword and parrying blade)

Moonglum, Elric's companion and friend, is a good example of this style. It utilises a sabre, longsword or broadsword in one hand, and

an Eshmirian Falchion, used for parrying, in the other. The style opts for Bleeds and Impales with a focus on the chest and abdomen, although, when space is tight, the head is the obvious target.

Filkharian Pike Style (Filkharian Pike and Short Sword)

Filkhar's pike warriors learn to use their immense pikes against mounted warriors, bracing the pike against their foot and using their body-weight to reinforce it. The aim is to strike the chest of the mounted foe and hopefully haul him off his horse, rather than intending to impale the weapon. The style also teaches the uses of the shortsword, which is employed to stab any downed-foe, taking advantage of the fact that the foe will not be able to utilise closing manoeuvres and is most likely prone and stunned from his fall. With the shortsword the aim is to impale it into the chest or head, bringing about a swift death.

Ilmar Style (Ilmiorian Spear)

This style teaches the disciplines of the long spear and the quarterstaff. The aim of the style is to disable quickly, although thrusting impales with the unsheathed tip of the spear form a part of it. The haft of the weapon is used to disarm and knock-out the legs, bringing the opponent to his knees; then the spear point is used to thrust home, if a kill is essential.

Melnibonean Warrior (Sword and Shield)

This Melnibonéan Combat Style teaches the use of the sword as a double-handed weapon and in combination with a shield. It is therefore applicable to two-handed swords and shorter swords used with a traditional shield.

Noble House (Twin Blades)

This Melnibonéan style involves using a pair of swords with the emphasis on attacking with swift, slashing strokes (aiming to cause a Bleed manoeuvre) rather than impaling with either of the weapons. It can involve any two weapons but usually focuses on a pair of daggers, dagger and shortsword, or a pair of shortswords. It traditionally does not include a full-length sword and shorter blade.

Pan Tangian Gladiatorial (Various)

Many of Pan Tang's warriors are trained as gladiators and many gladiators who win their freedom become Pan Tangian warriors. This style teaches the use of all the following weapons in *any* combination: *Battleaxe, Broadsword, Buckler, Dagger, Falchion, Hatchet, Mace, Morningstar, Net, Scimitar Target Shield and Trident.*

The style's focus is on pleasing the crowd, so Impales, Bleeds, Trips and Stun Locations are favoured over maximum damage and attacks to the most vulnerable areas. It is a vicious, relentless, fighting style.

Pan Tangian Warrior (Sword and Shield, Spear and Shield, Axe and Shield)

Pan Tang's warriors are brutal combatants. This style teaches the warrior to use a sword, spear and axe in combination with a shield. It emphasises maximising damage and disabling foes through slow and steady debilitation rather than a swift a merciful death.

LAW, CHAOS AND THE MULTIVERSE



This chapter examines the powers of Law and Chaos and their place in the Multiverse – the theme connecting most, if not all, of Michael Moorcock's work.

Elric's world is but one of millions; a plane of existence in a universe that is, itself, one of millions of universes. There may be hundreds of versions of the Young Kingdoms, each subtly different but still populated by the characters appearing in the saga and, naturally, the Adventurers. In one version of the Young Kingdoms Elric might have been born on Pan Tang and that island rules the world. In another Melniboné is allied with the Lords of Law and always has been, creating a very different feel to its Bright Empire. In still another, the Adventurers might be incarnations of the Eternal Champion...

With the Multiverse anything, and everything, is possible.

The Multiverse is the eternal battleground of the forces of Law and Chaos. These two primal forces seek to dominate but wherever one does destruction results. For the optimal conditions for life, happiness and progress to result, and peace to be the norm, a balance between the two forces is necessary. The Cosmic Balance is a third, somewhat nebulous, force that struggles to maintain equilibrium between Law and Chaos and prevent worlds and universes from being utterly destroyed.

'I seek in it the Truth,' Elric said guardedly.

'There is no Truth but that of Eternal struggle,' the scarlet-flamed giant said with conviction.

'What rules above the forces of Law and Chaos?' Elric asked. 'What controls your destinies as it controls mine?'

The giant frowned. 'That question, I cannot answer. I do not know, there is only the Balance.'

— *While the Gods Laugh*

LORDS OF THE HIGHER PLANES

These forces are represented by a cadre of powerful entities – intelligences and forces – that are god-like in nature and worshipped as such to greater and lesser degrees. These are the Lords of Law and Chaos. They represent their power and implement it, reshaping the worlds they conquer either through direct intervention or the help of mortal agents.

In some realms one of the forces dominates completely and, in such realms, life is secondary to the whims and natures of the Lord or Lords who rule. However, in worlds such as the Young Kingdoms, neither Law nor Chaos has the upper hand; and, in worlds such as the Young Kingdoms, where minds, souls and beliefs are malleable, the plane becomes a battleground – a cosmic chessboard – where the Lords of the Higher Powers joust for position, influence and control.

For the Eternal Struggle is little more than an Eternal Game. Mortals are playing pieces and the rules are both fixed and uncertain. For most, the game is removed and remote from their lives. Things happen and people accept it. Across the Young Kingdoms countless individuals are born, live and die, completely ignorant of the cosmic game that goes on about them. However those who seek to understand the nature of the board, the pieces and the rules of the game mark themselves out as willing pawns to be manipulated by the Higher Power they choose to favour. The Eternal Struggle is *never* to the advantage of the human condition. The Lords of Law and Chaos will argue passionately otherwise but they are lying (or merely playing the game). The Eternal Struggle serves only those supernatural entities that represent and personify the essential nature of the two forces. Human life – all life – is secondary, abstract and expendable.

The Chaos Perspective: Fighting, Not Winning

'I have been told that the knowledge contained in the Book could swing the balance on the side of the forces of Law. This disturbs me - but, it appears, there is another possibility which disturbs me even more.'

'What is that?' Elric said.

'It could create such a tremendous impact on the Multiverse that complete entropy would result. My Masters do not desire that, for it could mean the destruction of all matter in the end. We exist only to fight - not to win, but to preserve the eternal struggle.'

— *While the Gods Laugh*

Orunlu the Keeper, the Guardian of a book that, so Elric is led to believe, defines the nature of the cosmic struggle, encapsulates the philosophy and game-plan of Chaos perfectly. Its true intention is not to defeat Law completely but to continue the game and preserve the competition between the two forces. Chaos knows that for either side to win spells complete doom and its strategy is to perpetuate struggle and conflict, seeking its own advantage but never to advance to a stage where complete destruction is guaranteed.



Very, very few in the Young Kingdoms are party to such knowledge. For most followers of the Lords of Chaos – those in the rank and file – the express intention is to defeat Law. However, the few that reach the exalted levels of high priesthood learn, through grimoires and forbidden understanding that the real aim of Chaos is to simply perpetuate the fight. It is for this reason that most cults of Chaos are relatively low-key, relying on disparate agents and isolated priests to maintain the profile of Chaos, rather than engaging in outright warfare. Only one nation, Pan Tang, dares to go against this unwritten tenet and its actions inevitably cause the destruction Orunlu the Keeper warns Elric about. And, paradoxically, Pan Tang's goals in instigating the final battle are not, principally, to vanquish Law and institute a realm of supreme Chaos but to emulate Melniboné's Bright Empire. As Sepiriz tells Elric in Stormbringer: *'He [Jagreen Lern] still refuses to realise that he is a puppet of Chaos and thinks he can rule over such supernatural might as the Dukes represent. But it is a certainty that with these friends Jagreen Lern can defeat the Southlands with a minimum of expenditure in arms and men. Without them he could do it, but it would take more time and effort...'*

Thus, there are men, mostly in Pan Tang, who believe that the Lords of Chaos are guarantors of power and an elite weapon to be used in gaining it; a mistake the Bright Emperors of Melniboné never made. For its part, the Lords of Chaos are delighted to indulge those foolish mortals who believe that the Eternal Struggle is purely of one doctrine over another because it allows the struggle to be perpetuated.

Only when the Cosmic Balance veers so decisively towards the skein of Chaos do the Lords of Chaos sense that there is, perhaps, a case for achieving complete victory. Appearing with his brother duke of Hell, Arioch himself wryly notes: *'We have forgotten this [the Cosmic Balance] for good reason, mortal. The balance has tipped to such an extent in our favour that it is no longer adjustable. We triumph!'* But, even in this moment of insane posturing, Arioch is prepared to make Elric a Lord of Chaos, seeking to perpetuate the battle against Law, rather than declare an ultimate triumph.

In the years before Pan Tang's rise and Jagreen Lern's machinations, Chaos's influence in the Young Kingdoms is deliberately limited and inconspicuous. Only Pan Tang maintains insane temples, filled with howling, maddened priests; elsewhere Chaos goes about its work subtly and through a careful choice of agents. It does not preach outright warfare and nor does it seek to unleash the contents of the many hells to further its agenda. Instead, Chaos seeks to provoke, to thwart and to antagonise. Its human adherents, ignorant of its true agenda, may attempt to wreak havoc against the obstinate churches of Law, and some of the Chaos-aligned sorcerers do, indeed, manage to yank open the gates of some hell or other, but ultimately Chaos has no need for massed ranks of vociferous proselytisers. A few, well chosen agents, quite often oblivious to their manipulation, are what Chaos requires to maintain its struggle. Subtlety and imagination mean more to the plans of Chaos than raving insanity and the raising of demons.

The Perspective of Law: Unconditional Victory

'This was not unlike the dead world Miggea of Law had created. I asked Lobkowitz if anything had caused the withering of these worlds we crossed, and he smiled wryly. "Only the usual righteous wars," he said. "When all sides in the conflict claimed to represent Law! This is characteristically a land which has died of discipline. But that is Chaos's greatest trick, of course. It is how she weakens and confuses her rivals. Law will characteristically push forward in a predictable line and must always have a clear goal. Chaos knows how to circle and come from unexpected angles, take advantage of the moment, often avoiding direct confrontation altogether.'

— *The Skrayling Tree*

Chaos seeks to sustain the fight; Law seeks to win it. Law cannot operate without a clear, unassailable goal. Its path is forthright and linear, and all those who stand in its way are swept aside or crushed. It is Donblas, for instance, who tells Elric that the fate of the Young Kingdoms is to be destroyed when the Horn of Fate is blown for the third time. Such dissolution serves Law's ends – whereas, had Chaos prevailed in the final battle the Young Kingdoms, albeit damaged and warped, might still have continued to exist.

Naturally enough the Lords of Law do not reveal their ultimate intentions to their faithful. However they are overt in their desire: Chaos is to be crushed because it destroys sense and reason. Yet, whereas Chaos can contemplate some form of equilibrium between the two powers, Law is unable to do so. For all its tenets of progress, it is an intolerant, indivertible philosophy that is, ultimately, bent on achieving singular domination. If it cannot, then it destroys everything instead. As Lord Shoashooan remarks (in *The Skrayling Tree*): *'Mortals and immortals both, you face your end without dignity or grace. Accept the fact that the Balance is finished. Its central staff has been lost, its scales discarded. ... The regulator of the Multiverse has failed you. Law triumphs. The steady calm of complete stability awaits you. Time is abolished, and you can anticipate, as do I, a new order.'*

For Law, even the Cosmic Balance is unacceptable – an impediment to a singular way of being that cannot permit any diversion from a sole, immutable path. The goal of Law is to end Time itself; because Time can accommodate change – indeed is its instigator. Not the unfettered change and mutation of Chaos but the steady natural change of age, history and diverse thought.

The cults of Law, then, are far more strident and visible than their Chaotic counterparts. Adherents of Law in the Young Kingdoms, particularly within Vilmir, Lormyr and Argimiliar, enjoy grand gestures and demonstrations of superiority. Part of this is still a reaction to Melniboné's (now displaced) dominance

and the Dragon Lords' clear alliance with the Lords of Chaos but underlying the gloss is the unshakeable belief that a war is coming and it is a war Law *must* win. What remains veiled to the rank and file is the extremes to which Law is prepared to go to succeed. All but a miniscule few ever suspect that Law would tolerate or advocate the eradication of the Young Kingdoms to gain victory over Chaos. Symbols that clearly oppose Law – the Elemental Lords and, even, Tanelorn – are viewed as enemies. Noisy proselytisation is a legitimate and daily act in cities such as Vilmiro and Jadmar, Cadsandria and Dhakos, with eager zealots decrying anything that appears to reject Law's perfect symmetry. For Law, the battle is clearly being fought on the streets. Not simply for hearts and minds but also for souls. Damnation awaits any who dare to worship anything but the golden arrow of Law and many of Law's more forceful adherents take it upon themselves to administer to the damned – not through solace but through persecution, fear and spite. Chaos circles and plays the angles, as Lobkowitz observes; Law ploughs a straight, unremitting furrow, taking no prisoners and permitting no escape.

Those who adhere to Law's precepts believe that the Lords of Law work *through* them, which contrasts with the view of those adhering to Chaos who believe that their Lords are essentially aloof and grant power in lieu of a direct channelling. Lawful agents thus believe in a more direct relationship, even though the Lords of Law are far less likely or inclined to manifest upon the Young Kingdoms. Lawful adherents therefore view themselves as tools and weapons in the Eternal Struggle rather than as adjuncts or accoutrements supporting it. This view allows the more extreme Lords of Law, such as Miggea, the insane Duchess of Dolwic, to recruit and indoctrinate fanatical supporters because a personal relationship is part of the reward.

The next chapter: Cults, describes the various cults of Law, Chaos and other powers that seek to influence the Young Kingdoms through human agents.

THE YOUNG KINGDOMS IN THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

'The warriors of half a world fought in the sea battle – to decide the fate of the Multiverse. It is – or will be – one of the decisive battles to determine the fate of Mankind, to fix man's destiny for the coming Cycle.'

'Who were the participants? Asked Elric, asking the question in spite of his resolve. 'What were the issues as they understood them?'

'You will know in time, I think.' The Captain's head faced the sea again.

— *Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

Why are the Young Kingdoms so important to Law and Chaos in the Eternal Struggle? Why would the Lords of the Higher Worlds choose *this* plane to formulate the rules of the Eternal Struggle? It is, after all, just one in millions of parallel worlds yet it seems to be a focused battleground viewed with considerable importance by both sides. This is not an easy question to answer but clues to its strategic importance can be found in the world's turbulent history.

Cycles of Time

The Young Kingdoms is just the latest of several cycles of time that this particular plane has experienced. Before the Bright Empire and the Young Kingdoms, the world underwent climactic change at the hands of both the Elemental Lords and races such as the Doomed Folk and the Elder Ones. Each of these elder powers brought about fundamental change, either through a struggle for dominance, as with the Elements, or through experimentation and personal loathing for their existence, as in the case of the Doomed Folk. The earth, before the Young Kingdoms arose, has therefore been reshaped to some extent several times before and displays a resilience that is no doubt attractive to both Law and Chaos. Humans reflect this resilience but are also malleable. They seek answers to the kinds of questions the Lords of Law and Chaos can, to some extent, answer and are all-too ready to place their faith in the powers of higher beings to gain understanding.

Melniboné

The last of the elder races to hold sway over the world, Melniboné offers a curious paradox. Naturally skilled in sorcery of both Chaotic and non-Chaotic types, Melniboné came to the world as proponents of the Cosmic Balance and, had they maintained this allegiance as a race, might have kept the world free from the interference of both Law and Chaos. However, some weakness in their considerable racial character – arrogance, curiosity or a flawed mixture of the two – led to the questioning, and ultimate rejection, of the Cosmic Balance which, in its turn, weakened the natural protection of the world to interference by the Lords of the Higher Powers. Chaos gained an important foothold as a direct result of Melniboné's philosophical schism and thus gained an important strategic advantage over Law. For the Lords of Law this advantage must have been tantalisingly antagonistic although it took millennia, by human reckoning, for Law to decide to intervene. By that time Melniboné's empire was established and its powers of sorcery well-honed. Melniboné had the power to expand beyond its own plane which, quite obviously, posed a threat to Law and the planes where it held sway. It is unknown if Melniboné sought to expand its territories beyond the plane of the Bright Empire but its capability is clear enough and, at its height, the Bright Empire would have been all but unstoppable.

The Stuff of Chaos

At the edges of the world the raw stuff of Chaos seethes. The world is therefore not fully formed. Law is naturally attracted to such a state so that it can impose order and, in so doing, create and extend territories that will be sympathetic to it. Earl Aubec

of Malador was the most famous of these pioneers, working in conjunction with Myshella of Kaneloon to carve the boundaries of the Young Kingdoms and extend them. The Young Kingdoms is still, therefore, a Work in Progress, and attractive to both powers as a battle ground in the Eternal Struggle. That Law becomes peevish and all too prepared to completely destroy something it has partly created, because Chaos has inflicted its taint, is part of the Young Kingdoms' and humankind's tragedy.

The Malleability of Humans

Humans need answers. They do not easily accept their condition or the condition of the universe. In the quest for greater understanding they seek to change, manipulate and impose their own order on a state of existence that transcends their own, short span, on levels that ought to be inconceivable. Humans are restless, curious and meddlesome. Great good can be the result of the human condition but so can great evil. The Road to Hell is, indeed, paved with Good Intentions and the Lords of the Higher Worlds know this and exploit it.

Humans manifest in one body the essential natures of the Lords of the Higher Worlds. To have this essential nature demonstrated and then either channelled, or put at human disposal, makes humans malleable and ripe for exploitation. They become the perfect engines for the Eternal Struggle; compliant gaming pieces that struggle in some futile hope that they can prevail over powers that are infinitely more advanced than they are.

In the Young Kingdoms, a world newly freed from domination by a less malleable elder race, humans are asserting their natural curiosity and actively manipulating the world around them hurriedly. This quality intrigued Elric. His own people had spent 10,000 years working for what they finally achieved; mankind, on the other hand, sought to build empires and impose its will quickly and without due diligence. This rush to mould, rationalise, conquer and destroy can only be attractive to the Lords of Law and Chaos. Melniboné, whilst an excellent partner of Chaos, was able to easily dissolve the old partnership and slip into ennui, placing itself effectively beyond Chaos's control (and, naturally enough, Law's). It simply *ceased to care* about the Eternal Struggle.

Mankind, on the other hand, never satisfies its curiosity. Despite humankind's innate resistance to domination, its character is to be manipulated and dominated – the very characteristics of pieces in a grand and epic game. Both Chaos and Law know this fundamental truth and exploit it, albeit in different ways. And, when Elric grows curious about humans and seeks to understand their ways, he, too, opens himself for exploitation on a grander, more catastrophic scale. By embracing humanity's frailties; by asking the kinds of questions that his ancestors cared little about, Elric creates both his own doom and that of humanity.

Those humans who embrace one or other of the Higher Powers contribute to that doom. Even though they will be completely oblivious to it. As Elric realises when he seeks-out the truth, '*There is no salvation in this world – only malevolent doom!*'

A MILLION SPHERES AND MULTIVERSAL THREATS

'You appear to have considerable knowledge of the movements of many men,' said Elric. He held the wine untasted in his left hand.

'Many,' agreed the Captain, 'on many worlds. I understand that you are a person of culture, sir, so you will be aware of something of the nature of the sea upon which my ship sails.'

'I think so.'

'She sails between the worlds, for the most part between the planes of a variety of aspects of the same world, to be a little more exact.' The Captain hesitated, turning his blind face away from Elric. 'Please know that I do not deliberately mystify you. There are some things I do not understand and other things which I may not completely reveal. It is a trust I have and I hope you feel you can respect it.'

— *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

Elric, and other versions of the Eternal Champion, are forever finding themselves in different worlds or planes of existence. The barriers between separate realities are frail, it seems, and the mechanisms for breaking through them are never far away. The Black Ship that sails between the worlds with its blind captain and mute helmsman is the perfect example of a way to transport Young Kingdoms Adventurers to some other plane in peril, on the pretext that the Young Kingdoms will share a similar fate if they do not act. Different planes might be curiously similar to the Young Kingdoms, or harshly different. It is quite possible – and recommended, in fact – for Young Kingdoms Adventurers to find themselves in Hawkmoon's Tragic Millennium or Corum's Lwym-an-Esh, perhaps taking part in the stories of some of those planes' Eternal Champions.

The Moonbeam Roads and Other Pathways

There ahead was what seemed like an ocean, rising vertically to form a wall in front of me. Through the ocean ran a gleaming road of dappled light, like one ray of sunshine falling on water. So strange was the perspective that I felt almost ill. Yet the crooked little man continued to lead me until we had stepped onto that dappled road and were walking up its steep surface. I had the strong smell of ozone in my nostrils. The road then straightened and became a silver moonbeam in a complex lattice of moonbeams, like the roadways through the realms. My guide was gone.

— *The Dreamthief's Daughter*

There are many ways to reach another plane: gates leading from one to another; via dreams; via spells or technological devices;

via strange and wonderful vehicles, such as the Black Ship or Voilodion Ghagnasdiak's Vanishing Tower; or through the actions of gods or fate itself. Even individuals, such as Dreamthieves, possess the innate ability to shift from one plane to another.

The spheres are joined together by several mechanisms, which are a part of the fabric of the Multiverse. First, and perhaps the most accessible, is the Eternal Sea, a trans-planar ocean that sweeps through the Multiverse lapping against the planes of existence like waves against a beach. The sea is treacherous and gloomy, a largely silent ocean that displays, occasionally, peculiar traits unlike any mundane ocean. Its currents move with the time streams and its tides are governed by conjunctions rather than moons but it is an ocean nonetheless and can be navigated – given the right vessel and the right navigator.

And above, beyond and around the ocean, accessible through dreams and other, semi-conscious mechanisms, are the Moonbeam Roads. This immense latticework of pathways can be wandered like any road, arching above, through and beyond the fabric of the Multiverse. Walking it, one is conscious of the immensity of the Million Spheres, of their shifting, restless nature and one is aware of the incredible power that binds the whole together and permits those who have the talent, such as the Lords of Chaos, to create entire universes (or lose them).

The million realms of the Million Spheres are in a constant state of movement around a central point of the Multiverse, like planets around a star. Every now and then certain realms move into conjunction making passage between them extremely easy (relatively speaking) and allowing the conjoined spheres to influence each other in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. During such conjunctions momentous events are likely and can be felt, with activities in one sphere resonating throughout the conjoined spheres. It is at such junctures that heroes are needed, in order to protect one sphere, or several, from whatever it is threatening the stability of all those taking part in the conjunction.

Finding a way of moving between the Million Spheres is very much up to the Games Master to determine, depending on the requirements of a story or campaign. Long voyages to distant spheres almost always require a vessel such as the Black Ship and a reliable guide or navigator. Such vessels can reach anywhere in the Million Spheres given enough time (although time itself is a redundant concept when sailing between worlds) and the right routes. However, if a traveller relies on the Moonbeam Roads, as do Dreamthieves for instance, there are limits on how far one can travel with any certainty and without danger of becoming stranded – a soul lost on the myriad pathways.

A wanderer of the Moonbeam Roads can safely navigate a number of spheres from their original sphere (their home) equal to their POW. A skill such as Dreamthief, Lore (Million Spheres), or even Navigation, can be used to maintain orientation and direction but for each sphere of distance from one's home sphere the skill being relied upon is reduced by 5%. Thus, an Adventurer with a POW of 10 can wander up to 10 spheres from his home plane and be

able to use a skill to navigate his path. However, if he wanders the full 10 planes the skill he uses to navigate would reduce by 50% and if he wandered to an 11th plane and beyond, his skill would no longer be useful. It is here that a guide or vessel would be needed; otherwise the traveller would be adrift in the Multiverse, perhaps unable to find his way back to familiar realms.

Characteristics of Spheres

It is impossible to devise a complete system to define the precise characteristics of a new plane of existence; indeed, it would not be right to attempt the task, because there truly are an infinite number of worlds but the mechanisms provided here allow Games Masters to create some definition of different spheres, planes and realms for those who take it upon themselves to travel.

Every sphere is defined by certain characteristics. These are described here and can be determined randomly with a throw of 6D10. Note that randomly generating a plane of existence may well yield some contradictory results but these should be embraced rather than discarded or rigidly rationalised. Contradictions and unusual contrasts are a hallmark of Michael Moorcock's writing.

Difficulty to Reach – Some spheres are easier to reach than others. This list helps determine the difficulty of reaching a particular plane.

- 1 The sphere can be reached with little difficulty; literally by walking round the corner, in some instances.
- 2 The realm can be reached during specific times, such as during a full moon, during an equinox or when certain tides are right.
- 3 The sphere can be reached by consuming a specific drug or potion, which transfers the mind or spirit but leaves the physical body in situ.
- 4 The realm can be reached by chanting a specific, rhyme, song or spell.
- 5 The plane is reached by discovering a specific portal, such as a whirlpool, an enchanted mirror or some other gateway.
- 6 The sphere can only be reached when the Million Spheres form a particular alignment.
- 7 The plane can be reached only by the utilisation of rune magic or plane-shifting technology.
- 8 The realm can only be reached by, or with, a specific and unique artefact, such as the Black Ship.
- 9 The plane may only be reached with the aid of a Lord of the Higher Planes.
- 10 The realm can only be reached if the Cosmic Balance wills it.

Size – Now, determine the scale and scope of the realm. A sphere might be no bigger than a single building, or it might be an entire universe, complete with its own laws of physics.

- 1 A building however big or small one wishes to make it but the building is a self-contained plane.
- 2 A street long and winding, or a maze of interconnected streets but a street, nonetheless.

- 3 A city, walled, perhaps, such as Tanelorn but the city is the entire realm.
- 4 A country bounded by the Eternal Sea. Other countries nearby are planes in their own right. The country may or may not be inhabited and might exist in a blissful state of nature or heavy urbanisation.
- 5 An island adrift in the Eternal Sea and may be a paradise, a barren rock, a featureless plain or an entire city complex.
- 6 A continent bounded by the Eternal Sea. Other continents and islands nearby are planes in their own right.
- 7 A planet orbiting a sun but a solitary planet; and perhaps a variation on another world, such as the Young Kingdoms.
- 8 A solar system orbiting a sun and consisting of other planets at various orbital distances but adrift from any larger cosmos.
- 9 A galaxy; thousands of stars and solar systems, all in circulation around a galactic hub.
- 10 A universe; thousands and thousands of galaxies; but a universe with its own laws of time, space and physics.

Planes of size 7 and above are illuminated by the star they orbit. Planes of size 6 and below do not rely on a sun or star for light but are illuminated by some other force or energy. Indeed, some might be sheathed in complete darkness.

Dominant Ruler – Next determine the dominant power in the sphere or plane.

- 1 No dominant ruler, power or allegiance. The plane forges its own destiny, defined by its inhabitants.
- 2 Air is the dominant element and the plane is ruled by a major air elemental, such as Lassa or perhaps one of her siblings or children.
- 3 Earth dominates, with Lord Grome or some other earth deity being the ruling power.
- 4 Fire is dominant and destructive, with Lord Kakatal or other fire deity at its burning heart.
- 5 Water is dominant in the plane, with little room for land.
- 6 Beast Lords; the plane is the ancestral home of a specific type of creature – perhaps mundane or perhaps magical. The plane exhibits all the environmental characteristics preferred by the resident beast. Humans have little or no place in the realm.
- 7 The Lords of Law dominate and everything conforms to strict laws, paragons of beauty and virtue and little or no room for deviance from perfection.
- 8 Chaos is the dominant power, with rampant change and wild magic widely available.
- 9 Agent of the Balance; the plane is governed by some agent or manifestation of the Cosmic Balance, such as the Runestaff. The agent might be a person or an object of power but it keeps its own agenda and involves those who cleave to it in its plans.
- 10 The plane is ruled by a mortal (or group of mortals) who has somehow come by the powers that allow him to shape the plane's destiny. The ruler can develop his own forms of governance or cleave to a higher power, such as Law, Chaos, the Balance or even the Beast Lords or Elemental powers.

Magical Presence – The availability of magic is not dependent on the presence of the Lords of Chaos or the absence of the Lords of Law. All higher powers manipulate magic in some shape or form and the capacity for magic to work is dependent on the intrinsic nature of the sphere itself, as outlined here.

- 1 The plane is devoid of magic. Anything of a magical nature is rendered inert. Spells, runes and summonings do not work and enchanted items, even the likes of the mighty Stormbringer, are powerless.
- 2 Magic is present but relatively weak. Reduce all magical skills, abilities, spells and so forth to a quarter of their usual value.
- 3 As for previous but reduce all magical skills, abilities, spells and so forth to half their usual value.
- 4 As for previous but reduce all magical skills, abilities, spells and so forth to three quarters of their usual value.
- 5 Magic works normally.
- 6 This is a magic-rich plane. All magical skills, abilities, spells and so forth operate at their usual value plus half again.
- 7 Only magic that is relevant to the ruling power is possible. Thus, in a Lawful sphere only Lawful enchantments or runes will work. In an elemental sphere, only magic pertinent to that element will function and so forth.
- 8 Magic is present but its effects are reversed. Elemental runes affect their diametrically opposed opposite, for example; summoning a demon of defence yields a demon of combat and so forth.
- 9 The magic of the sphere is of no kind familiar to the Adventurers. It might be wielded directly through gods, take the form of psychic powers, or be locked in specific crystals, artefacts or other devices.
- 10 The sphere is intensely magical to the point where mortals have the power of pure creation, at little personal cost, usually activated by some form of small device, such as a ring, and can create whatever they desire. However, there are limits on creativity, defined by the dominant ruler. A Lawful plane, for example, might only permit the creation of works of art or devices complying with the laws of physics; a plane aligned with the Balance might only permit creation of things that maintain peace and harmony.

Scientific Development

- 1 The sphere is completely primitive, existing in a state of pure nature.
- 2 The inhabitants of the sphere have developed rudimentary tools and implements, such as hand-axes, spears and so forth.
- 3 The inhabitants have invented the wheel and built their own settlements. Crude items are created from tooled metals.
- 4 The progress of the sphere is equivalent to, roughly, the Bronze or Iron ages of the earth. Different metals are worked regularly and tools and weapons are of reasonable quality, if limited durability.
- 5 The scientific development is roughly equivalent to the Young Kingdoms or Europe's Dark Ages. Some scientific principles are understood and great feats of architecture and engineering are evident.
- 6 The scientific development is roughly equivalent to feudal or medieval Europe. There is growing and concerted interest in

the sciences and great feats of architecture and engineering are common place.

- 7 The sphere has mastered steam engines, clockwork and other ways of mechanically generating and storing power.
- 8 Industrialisation dominates. Electricity is generated on a wide scale and flying machines such as airships and dirigibles provide sky borne transport.
- 9 The sphere occupies an information age, with computers, miniaturised electronics, a certain degree of nanotechnology and the mastery nuclear power. Weapons of mass destruction are possible but not necessarily present, depending on the sphere's ruling power. Spaceflight is possible.
- 10 The sphere once enjoyed advanced scientific endeavour but some catastrophe has plunged it back into a Dark Age. Remnants of the old world can still be found and many items demonstrate considerable sophistication. But attitudes and learning are shrouded in ignorance, fear and superstition. Magic and science – and both may be present – are indistinguishable.

Eternal Champion – Does the plane have an incarnation of the Eternal Champion? Define it here.

- 1 There is no incarnation of the Eternal Champion. Perhaps one will emerge or be defined with the Adventurers' visit.
- 2 A Champion exists but has yet to be awakened. He or she leads a mundane, peaceful existence, oblivious to their true role.
- 3 The Champion has been killed by the plane's Eternal Enemy. A new Champion needs to be established – either awoken from the populace or defined from elsewhere.
- 4 The Champion is active in the plane, aware of his fate but tragic nonetheless. He needs Companions in his latest struggle against whatever version of the Eternal Enemy besets this sphere.
- 5 The Champion is a named hero: Corum, Elric, Erekosë, Hawkmoon or Ulrik Skarsol, wandering in this realm for some reason.
- 6 The Champion is a variation of one of the named heroes. An albino Hawkmoon, perhaps; or a one-handed, one-eyed Elric. The Champion is completely unaware that other versions of him exist.
- 7 As for previous but in this sphere the Eternal Champion *is the Eternal Enemy instead*. A Champion needs to be defined to oppose him.
- 8 The Champion has been captured and imprisoned by the Eternal Enemy. The plane is plunged into mayhem as a result and the key quest is to find and free the Champion.
- 9 The Champion is a female variation of an established version.
- 10 The Champion is one of the Adventurers. The Adventurer does not know it and it will only become evident as he interacts with the plane. If the selected Adventurer holds an allegiance to a particular deity, it is likely that his role as the Champion of this plane will be to somehow oppose that allegiance in some way. In visiting the plane the Adventurer will gain some tool or weapon (mindful of its power; resist the temptation to dispense Black Runeswords) that defines him as that plane's Champion although, when he returns to the Young Kingdoms, or leaves this plane, all memories of his Champion role will become hazy and indistinct and his weapon, if he has one, will become mundane.

MAGIC AND SORCERY



Magic comes in several forms in *Elric of Melniboné*, each of them different to those presented in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. These magical forms are:

- Dream Magic
- Rune Magic
- Sorcery
- Spirit Magic

Although Sorcery and Spirit Magic might appear, at first glance, to have similarities with other RuneQuest counterparts there are some differences, discussed in the respective sections of this chapter. Dream and Rune Magic are unique to *Elric of Melniboné*, although all four magical forms reflect the way magic and sorcery is depicted in the Elric saga.

Using RuneQuest Magic

Magic and sorcery is the province of those who have dedicated their lives to its study; it is rare in the Young Kingdoms and much feared. There is no equivalent of Common Magic or Divine Magic and for an authentic feel to an Elric campaign, they should not be used.

However some Games Masters may wish to make use of any of the *RuneQuest* core magical systems in Elric campaigns and are, of course, at liberty to do so. If so, here are some guidelines on how to introduce them.

Restrict Common Magic to those who have studied some magic through a cult, for instance, or who come from another plane of existence where Common Magic is more widely practiced. Adventurers who use Common Magic will need the relevant skill and must buy this from their Free Skill Points during Adventurer creation. They should also have a reason for how they came by it. No starting Adventurer can have more than 4 Magnitude in spells. Learning more Common Magic may prove to be difficult as teachers of it will be rare. Such practitioners of Common Magic will not be known as sorcerers or wizards; simply individuals lucky enough to have had some schooling in this level of magic.

Divine Magic should be restricted to those gods that do not belong to either Law or Chaos. The Multiverse is large and strange enough to host many different gods with many different powers and some, no doubt, will grant power to their worshippers in the shape of Divine Magic. Again, the skills for working Divine Magic – Lore (God) and Pact – will need to be established to allow it to work during Adventurer Creation. Also, a rationale for how an alien god's power works in the Young Kingdoms will need to be found.

Sorcery (of the core *RuneQuest* flavour) is a little easier to incorporate and explain. Elric himself notes that, in the Unknown East for example, Sorcery of a type unknown to him exists. This may well be true for other nations and other planes of existence. As Sorcery is Grimoire-based, the Adventurer will need the appropriate Grimoire skill plus Manipulation, both bought through Free Skill Points during Adventurer Creation.

DREAM MAGIC

And the dreamthief began to sing. She sang a lullaby. She sang of a sickly child and a grieving father. She sang of happiness found in simple things. And Elric slept. And as he slept the dreamthief performed her easy magic and took away just a few of the half-forgotten memories which had spoiled his nights in the past and might spoil those yet to come.

— *The Fortress of the Pearl*

Dream Magic has two strands: Dreamtheft and Dream Questing.

Dreamtheft is the magic practiced by Dreamthieves; it is nothing less than the stealing of, and selling to others, dreams. Dreams can bring many things: solace, gratification, insight, adventure and particular rewards.

Dream Questing is the magic of entering the myths and collective consciousness of a people and their culture to relive past events, participating in them, learning from them and, perhaps, reshaping them. The emperors of Melniboné, in preparation for rulership,

undergo several DreamQuests to develop the skill necessary for administering a diverse and magically astute empire – but others can DreamQuest too.

Whilst Dreamtheft and DreamQuesting have some similarities and a basis in dreams, they are mutually exclusive disciplines.

Dream Magic Skills

Three skills are needed to work Dream Magic: Dreamtheft, for Dreamthieves; Lore (Million Spheres) and Meditation for DreamQuesting.

Dreamthieves and Dreamtheft

Like all magic, Dream Magic is rare in the Young Kingdoms. It is practiced only on the Dragon Isle in the form of the dream couches and amongst the strange people called Dreamthieves, who wander the Million Spheres, occasionally pausing on this plane to acquire new dreams. Dreamtheft is recognised only in the Sighing Desert and Eshmir; it is barely known in the Young Kingdoms at large, although that might be due more to the absolute discretion of the practitioners – for they are thieves, after all.

Mastering Dream Magic is to become a wanderer of the Moonbeam Roads, the bright threads of the Multiverse that spin through the million spheres web-like, permitting their travellers to visit other realms and planes via their unconscious mind, experiencing these lands as though part of them and gaining from their experiences. Few have the faculties to do it and Dream Magic is not taught by any of the cults of Law or Chaos. Indeed, Dreamthieves fear Chaos and the dreams of those who bargain with it. Dreamtheft means imposing a kind of order on the chaotic nature of dreams and this is dangerous for a Dreamthief.

Dreamtheft occurs when the Dreamthief uses his skills to physically and psychically bind with the dreamer. He enters the dream-consciousness, identifies the *source* of the dream, and thus its strength and nature, and then binds it into a form that can be carried away from the dreamer, ridding them of that dream or nightmare forever. Dreams are highly valued in some realms; by those who either cannot dream, or desire dreams of a certain type. Dreamthieves sell the dreams they have captured, unbinding them so that the new dreamer, the purchaser, may experience them fully.

Playing a Dreamthief

Then suddenly the dreamwand was curling and writhing, moving with astonishing speed between the two, as if it had entered their very veins and was following the blood itself. Etric had the impression of a tangle of arteries and nerves, all touched by the strange light from the dreamwand, then Alnac gave a single cry and his breathing was no longer the steady movement it had been.

— *The Fortress of the Pearl*

Dreamthieves, rare as they are, can certainly appear as Non-Player Characters. Whilst their wanderings seem to be confined to the northern continent and the sand roads between the Sighing Desert and Eshmir, there is no reason why a Dreamthief should not find his way further south from time-to-time – although he usually maintains the utmost discretion about his presence and trade.

Dreamthieves as Adventurers are always at the Games Master's discretion. The vast majority do not hail from the Young Kingdoms and all are able to wander the Multiverse, moving from plane-to-plane along the Moonbeam Roads, pausing for long enough in new realms to steal dreams for trade at the twice-yearly markets where such things are bartered to those who desire, and can afford, them. Thus, Dreamthieves are transient characters who do not like to be confined to one place or realm for too long. Occasionally a Dreamthief might be searching for a specific type of dream and that might confine him to a particular plane, realm or city for a lengthy period; or he might have chosen to remain. The reasons for the Dreamthief's presence in the campaign must be agreed in advance of the Dreamthief Adventurer being created and it must satisfy both the Games Master's requirements and the general tenets as laid out here.

- The player must decide upon the Dreamthief's history – how he came to be a Dreamthief.
- He must determine what plane the Dreamthief comes from: if not the plane of the Young Kingdoms, he must describe something of that realm; its name, the name of, at least, the country where the Dreamthief was born and the city, town or village of birth
- He must decide what prompted the Adventurer to become a Dreamthief. Was it to save a loved-one plagued by torment? Was it a natural talent spotted and nurtured by another Dreamthief?
- How did the Dreamthief come by his crooked staff (which is like a shepherd's crook but only a metre or so in length)? What does it look like? Is it ornate, like Oone's, or relatively plain, like Alnac Kreb's?
- What other planes has the Dreamthief visited? Precise details are not necessary and it is completely acceptable, if not compulsory, to use any of the myriad worlds described in Michael Moorcock's books in whole or in part. Dreamthieves may have wandered Lwym-an-Esh, Granbretan or Garathorm. Anywhere is possible.
- He must detail at least two dreams, naming their realms and describing their content that he has stolen before adventuring. Here is an opportunity for the player to use his own dreams as the basis for the Dreamthief's.
- He must finally explain how the Dreamthief came to the Young Kingdoms and why. He must sketch a vague outline of how long he intends to remain and what kinds of dreams he is looking to steal and then sell. These plans may change, of course. Fate plays many tricks.

Dreamthieves can come from any country, cultural background or previous profession. However, as Dreamtheft is recognised only in the Sighing Desert and Eshmir, these are the principle countries where Young Kingdoms Dreamthieves are found. Experienced Dreamthieves are always searching for new thieves and anyone displaying the talent for dream theft might be approached secretly by a Dreamthief (and perhaps even via dreams) offering the opportunity to train. Dreamthieves appear to be more common beyond the plane of the Young Kingdoms and so it is quite plausible for a thief working in the Young Kingdoms to have come from a more exotic realm where dream theft is commonplace.

To successfully bind with the dreamer the Dreamthief matches his Dreamtheft skill against the dreamer's Persistence in an opposed test. Success allows the Dreamthief access to the dream state of the dreamer. A critical success allows the Dreamthief access but with a stronger mental fortification: increase the Dreamthief's available Magic Points by half (rounding up) to use in capturing the dream sought. A fumble of the Dreamtheft roll means the Dreamthief is repelled by the strength of the dream and also loses a number of Magic Points equal to the dream's intensity.

The Seven Dream Realms

Dreamthieves have named seven different dream realms, which roughly equate to the kinds of dreams most experience. By naming these realms, they can more easily identify and thus capture a dream.

1. Sadanor – The Land of Dreams in Common.
2. Marador – The Land of Old Desires.
3. Paranor – The Land of Lost Beliefs.
4. Celador – The Land of Forgotten Love.
5. Imador – The Land of New Ambition.
6. Falador – The Land of Madness.
7. The seventh realm is unnamed. Dreams from here are in the true province of Chaos.

Each realm produces dreams of a different intensity and depth. The dreams of Sadanor, which all of us share, are the fleeting dreams where the day's events are ordered and stored – as is common to every human. These are relatively weak dreams, and easily made tangible by the Dreamthief. As one progresses through the realms, the dream intensity strengthens and it becomes more difficult for the Dreamthief to mould and steal them. Each realm is stronger than the last and the seventh, unnamed, realm is the strongest of all. It contains and generates dreams that not only defeat Dreamthieves but consume them. This is the fate seemingly suffered by Alnac Krieb when he tried to heal Varadia, the holy daughter of Raik Na Seem of the Barrudim in *The Fortress of the Pearl*.

Dream Characteristics

Dreams have two characteristics: *Intensity* and *Persistence*. Intensity measures the strength of the dream and how much magical resource is needed to capture it. Persistence measures the resistance the dream offers to capture.

The dream realm's number (see 'The Seven Dream Realms') indicates the strength and type of the dream it produces. The number indicates the number of four sided dice rolled to determine the dream's Intensity. The name of the realm defines its content. Thus, dreams from Celador all have an Intensity of 4D4 and concern forgotten, old and unrequited love.

The dream's Intensity is the number of Magic Points the Dreamthief needs to expend to bind and steal it. A dream of Sadanor is relatively weak, requiring no more than four Magic Points. Those of Falador, Land of Madness, range from an intensity of 6 through to 24; quite simply, some dreams of madness are so powerful that even the most skilled Dreamthief cannot deal with them.

A dream's Persistence is its Intensity multiplied by five. Thus, a dream of Sadanor with an Intensity of 2 has a Persistence of 10%. When capturing a dream the Dreamthief matches his Dreamtheft against the dream's Persistence in an opposed roll. If successful, the dream is captured and it costs the Dreamthief Magic Points equal to the dream's Intensity. If the opposed test fails, the dream eludes capture and the Dreamthief loses one Magic Point. If the test is fumbled, the full Intensity in Magic Points is lost. If the test critically succeeds, the cost is half the dream's Intensity, rounded up.

Dream Benefits

Why do people want stolen dreams? In the main it is because they relish the state of dreaming vividly and crave it nightly but are either unable to experience vivid dreaming or cannot recall their dreams in the morning. Stolen dreams retain their vividness and the experience of a stolen dream is always intense and easily recalled.

However dreams can provide other benefits summarised here:

- Character Insight – into the original dreamer's character, personality, motivations, passions and so forth.
- Problem Insight – into a particular problem, challenge, puzzle or situation.
- Establish a Passion – deepen a love or hate of a thing, or establish it.
- Improvement – a skill the dreamer possesses is experienced in the stolen dream and he learns from it, increasing that skill.

The benefits available from a dream depend on the Dream Realm of its origin.

The 'Yes' entry in the Dream Benefits table indicates that the dream might offer that benefit; it does not guarantee it. The percentage chance of that benefit being present in the dream is dependent on a successful 1D100 roll against the dream's Persistence.

For example, a dream from Imador, Land of New Ambition, has an Intensity of 5D4. The Intensity rolled for the dream is 12 and

Dream Benefits by Realm

	Character Insight	Problem Insight	Passions	Improvement
Sadanor	Yes	Yes	—	—
Marador	—	Yes	Yes	—
Paranor	Yes	—	Yes	—
Celador	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Imador	Yes	Yes	—	Yes
Falador	Yes	—	Yes	Yes
Unnamed Realm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

so its Persistence is 60%. The Games Master rolls 1D100 against Character Insight, Problem Insight and Improvement with the following results: Character Insight 83 (failure, so none); Problem Insight (38, so yes); Improvement (18, so yes). The dreamer who experiences this stolen dream will be able to gain Problem Insight and Improvement.

Realising the available benefits in a dream is a question of succeeding in an Opposed Test of Insight against the dream's Persistence. Separate rolls are needed for each benefit. If the Opposed roll for the dreamer succeeds then he gains the benefit as described. If the roll fails, he gains nothing for that benefit.

Lady Senilla is attempting to gain insight into why her mother and sister killed her father. She has employed a Dreamthief to steal one of her sister's dreams. The dream the dreamthief has stolen comes from Imador and has a Persistence of 60%; as already determined, it will offer Problem Insight and Improvement but not Character Insight. Nevertheless Senilla intends to make use of it. She pits her Insight skill of 43% against the Persistence of 60% for both dream benefits. She succeeds in her first roll (a roll of 41 against the dream's 89) and fails in the second (a roll of 58 against the dream's 32). When she awakes Senilla has gained some Problem Insight: her father posed some kind of threat to her sister's schemes but the details of the scheme (which lie, presumably, in her sister's character) are not available.

The specific effects of a benefit are as follows:

Character Insight

The dreamer establishes facts about the original dreamer's thoughts, personality and motivation. When *dealing with the original dreamer* the recipient of the benefit gains a bonus to *any* skill being employed to deal with that person equal to the dream's Intensity.

Problem Insight

The dreamer establishes the facts pertaining to a particular problem or situation. When confronting a problem of the same kind he gains a bonus, equal to the dream's Intensity x2, to the following skills: Evaluate, Perception and any Lore that the problem might involve.

Senilla, for example, has gained insight from her stolen dream into some problems her father posed to her sister. Senilla, dealing with the cult of Eequor, would gain a +24% bonus to her Evaluate, Perception and Lore (Eequor) skills when trying to establish what danger her father posed to the cult's plans.

Establish a Passion

The dreamer establishes a Passion with one of the subjects in the dream – which may be the original dreamer – or, if an appropriate passion exists, deepens it. A new Passion's value is at the dreamer's POW+CHA plus the dream's Intensity x2. If an existing Passion is being deepened, then it increases by the dream's Intensity.

Improvement

The dreamer gains an Improvement in one skill. The Games Master should determine what skill benefits from the Improvement and, when it comes time to give Adventurers Improvement Rolls, the dreamer gains an additional Improvement Roll, to be used against the skill decided upon.

If the Improvement Roll succeeds then the skill in question increases by the dream's Intensity divided by two. If the Improvement Roll fails then the skill increases by the dream's Intensity divided by four.

For instance, let us say that Lady Senilla succeeded in gaining an improvement from her sister's stolen dream. The Games Master says that the Improvement Roll must be applied to Lore (Eequor) – a skill Senilla has. On making her Improvement Rolls Senilla gains an additional roll to be used against Lore (Eequor) and the roll is successful; she gains the dream's Intensity of 12, divided by 2, as an improvement – so her Lore (Eequor) increases by 6%. Had her Improvement Roll failed, it would have increased by 3%.

Dreamtheft Backlash

If, in the course of trying to capture a dream, the opposed test against the dream's Persistence is fumbled, *and the dream's Persistence roll succeeds critically*, backlash occurs. The Dreamthief loses twice the dream's Intensity in Magic Points and this manifests itself as a physical wasting of the Dreamthief's soul and body. The Dreamthief suffers a number of points of physical

damage to each Hit Location equal to every point of the dream's Intensity. The damage appears as a physical wasting away of the body, as though all energy has been sucked from every muscle, nerve and sinew. In extreme cases, as is the case with Alnac Krebs, the Dreamthief may end-up literally spluttering out their wasted internal organs before dying.

Dreams of Insanity

Dreamthieves can cure insanity. Anyone with either temporary or permanent insanity can be cured of it with a Dreamthief's help. The insanity manifests in the insane mind as a dream from the realm of Falador, with an Intensity of 6D4. Stealing this dream removes the insanity and restores the individual to zero Insanity points.

Dreams of the insane are always worth something at the Dream Bazaar. The crazed nightmares of one can be the craved-for pleasure of another and a good Dreamthief can always manipulate a dream to fit the market.

However, Compulsions derived from Pacts with Chaos behave differently. First, these manifest from the seventh, unnamed realm, which Dreamthieves have little or no experience with. Secondly, insane Compulsions are imposed by the deity and controlled by them. Dreamthieves are always reluctant to enter the dreams of those who have bargained with Chaos. To attempt to remove a Compulsion is to defy the Lords of Chaos themselves – and no Dreamthief will risk such a feat.

Dreamstuffs

At her belt was a sword, and cradled above her left shoulder was a hooked staff of gold and ebony, a more elaborate version of the one which lay on the carpet beside Alnac's corpse.

— *The Fortress of the Pearl*

A Dreamthief's staff is a symbol of their profession and skill and a conduit for the Dreamthief's natural abilities to enter and steal dreams. A typical staff is about a metre in length and curved like a shepherd's crook at one end. No Dreamthief can complete their work without the aid of their staff and they are fiercely protected. They may be as ornate as Oone's, inlaid with gems, wrought with precious metals, or more utilitarian in appearance. Ostentation typically denotes the expertise of the Dreamthief but this is not always so.

The staff contains the dreams that the Dreamthief steals. It can hold any number of stolen dreams, which are then sold at the Dream Bazaar; however, once stolen by the thief, and committed to the staff, the Dreamthief cannot access the inherent power of the dream; that is forbidden by the Dreamthief's code and no Dreamthief would ever attempt to use a captured dream to boost their own power or abilities.

The Dream Bazaar and the Guild of Dreamers

Dreamthieves sell their stolen dreams at the Dream Bazaar, which is held in a realm known only to Dreamthieves and those

who work on their behalf, the Dream Traders. Dream Traders are able to tread the Moonbeam roads with the same ease as a Dreamthief but they are not thieves themselves. Rather they act as brokers between the customer and supplier, negotiating the price, agreeing the terms and arranging the transfer of the dream. Dream Traders are sometimes retired Dreamthieves, or thieves who have discovered a higher aptitude for selling rather than stealing.

Twice a year Dreamthieves step through the planes to the Dream Bazaar – a magical place thronged with Dream Traders clad in garish styles and colours representing hundreds, if not thousands, of styles from across the Multiverse. They frequent the opulent taverns and cafes that line the immense marble-floored market square, interviewing Dreamthieves with wares for sale, negotiating prices and making payments. Dream Traders always take a percentage of the sale and the best command as much as 50% percent of the deal. Payment takes many forms: hard cash, gems, rare spices, silks or clothes from hard-to-reach planes. They know who wants a particular dream, who can get it or who wants rid of one.

Once a deal is agreed the Dream Trader provides the details of the customer and arranges the time for the dream to be transferred. The Dreamthief travels to the agreed location and transfers the dream in the reverse of the process used to capture it. Once transfer has been made, the Dream Trader pays the Dreamthief, less his percentage.

All Dreamthieves and Dream Traders are members of the Guild of Dreamers, which regulates and monitors all engaged in this enterprise. New Dreamthieves who have completed their apprenticeship, and Dream Traders, must swear an oath to the guild and agree to abide by its code. This requires no particular test although the guild elders, which consists of the best and most experienced Dreamthieves and Traders, can inherently sense if a potential applicant is unsuited to the business and deny membership. Likewise the network of thieves and traders is so extensive that the guild elders quickly become aware of any transgressions of the code and take action – including the breaking of a Dreamthief's staff and expelling them from the guild.

DreamQuests

It would be the second time I had undertaken the Dream of a Thousand Years. To a youth of my genesis it is integral training. It must be done several times. You go alone into the wilderness. You fast. You meditate and seek the path to the world of long dreams. These are the worlds which determine and reveal the future. They offer the secrets of your past. In such worlds one serves more than one rules. Certain knowledge is gained by extended experience as well as study. The Dream of a Thousand Years provides that experience. The memory of those lifetimes fades, leaving the instinctive wisdom, the occasional nightmare.

— *The Skrayling Tree*

DreamQuests are not experiencing individual dreams, conjured from one of the Dream Realms and channelled through a person's psyche; DreamQuests are interactive myths, histories and fables that one enters through a dreaming state. In the course of a single period of sleep a DreamQuester can experience many, many years of experiences, sharing in myths, ancient histories and even the experiences of other worlds. Elric, in his own DreamQuests, visits four separate ages in Melniboné's distant past where he re-enacts the deeds of his ancestors and gains wisdoms and experience as a result. In the Dream of a Thousand Years he inserts himself into the history of an entirely different world to his own – our own world – living there, seemingly as an immortal adventurer, for 1,000 years.

Melnibonéans DreamQuest regularly and frequently. Some DreamQuest permanently, never arising from their slumber and otherworld adventures. This is why Imrryr is known as the Dreaming City and its Dream Couches, the places where Melnibonéans lay down to DreamQuest, are fabled throughout the Young Kingdoms.

However anyone can DreamQuest – if one knows how and the destination of the DreamQuest is known and understood. Every DreamQuest has a purpose and can offer great rewards to those who undertake them.

Several things are necessary for a DreamQuest:

- A myth, history or story that has particular significance for the Quester. This is usually a myth, history or event associated with their culture or a cult they belong to. Cults offer the best access to potential DreamQuests through their myths and the Mythic Resonance each myth possesses.
- Support. DreamQuests are rarely undertaken without someone to watch over the Quester's inert body and protect it from harm. Whilst DreamQuesting the material body is left behind and vulnerable. Elric's body, for instance, is watched constantly by Cymoril and Tanglebones when he undertakes his four Elemental Quests (as told in the 'Making of a Sorcerer' comic book series). Without support a Quester might never wake, becoming lost in the DreamQuest for eternity – this is the fate of many unwary Melnibonéans.
- The skills for entry and progress within the DreamQuest. These skills are: Meditation, which is used to place oneself into the Dream Trance necessary to DreamQuest, and Lore (Million Spheres), which is used to navigate the DreamQuest's stages.

The process to DreamQuest is as follows:

1. Find a place that will permit the DreamQuest: somewhere quiet, safe and emotionally secure. The nature of the location where the DreamQuest will take place offers a bonus to entering the Quest.

- One's Home: +10
- Home of a Trusted Friend or Ally: +5
- Cult Temple: +10
- Sacred Place: +20

One may also gain a bonus from taking certain potions or herbs that assist the DreamQuest process:

- Melnibonéan Dream Elixir: +10
- Hallucinogenic herbs or drugs: +5

2. The DreamQuester takes into account all bonuses or penalties to his Meditation skills and makes an opposed roll of his adjusted skill against the Mythic Resonance of the myth or quest he is attempting to embark upon. Games Masters may provide bonuses to the Mythic Resonance, or additional penalties to the DreamQuester, depending on the myth, previous actions of the DreamQuester and so on. Some example penalties are:

- Not in a safe, secure place: -10
- Emotionally disturbed or agitated: -5
- Under severe mental duress (torture, for instance): -10
- Tied to the yard-arm of Jagreen Lern's flagship: -20

3. If the DreamQuester wins the Opposed roll then he, and any companions, is moved into the myth and the quest begins. If the Opposed roll is lost, then the requirements for DreamQuesting have not been successfully met and the opportunity for this particular day or time has been lost. The DreamQuester will need to take further steps in preparation for a further quest – such as gathering more community support, gaining deeper permissions and so on.

4. The DreamQuester spends a number of Magic Points equal to one twentieth of the myth or quest's Mythic Resonance. These Magic Points are placed beyond use whilst he is on the DreamQuest.

Companions can be taken into the same DreamQuest as the main quester. They do not need to make a Meditation roll; the lead Quester is responsible for that. They do, however, need to remain in physical contact with the lead Quester throughout the dream and each companion must spend the same Magic Points as the lead Quester. Whilst in the DreamQuest they may act just as the lead Quester acts when facing and resolving challenges and so forth.

Completing a DreamQuest

Every DreamQuest is framed in terms of Stages. Stages represent specific actions, challenges, problems or encounters within the myth or quest that occur in a specific order. Myths and quests can have many stages but as a rule of thumb, it has *up to* a number of stages equal to its Resonance divided by 10, rounded up. So, a myth with a Resonance of 72% would have up to 8 stages. The

Games Master should decide how many stages *must* be completed successfully for the Adventurer to emerge victorious; it might be all the stages or just a handful. Note, also, that success does not always mean winning. DreamQuests might have Questers learning valuable lessons from their defeats – so the objective of a particular stage might *not* be to win but to actively lose (although the Adventurer may not be aware of this).

The strength of the challenges and foes a Quester will encounter during each stage of the DreamQuest is also determined by the myth's Resonance. As a general rule, the opposing skills used by any challenges, be they magical, combative or otherwise, will be equal to the myth's Resonance but may be adjusted by the Games Master to suit circumstances. So, a myth with a 72% Resonance will have adversaries with skills of at least 72% themselves. The stronger the myth, the greater the challenge.

Using Magic on DreamQuests

Any magic an Adventurer possesses – Dream, Rune or Summoning – works within the DreamQuest, although one must remember that Magic Points used to enter the DreamQuest *cannot* be used to fuel the other forms of magic. Games Masters may also rule that laws of the world where the quest takes place either reduce magical skills or negate them. For instance, a DreamQuest that takes place within a plane, realm or myth governed by the Lords of Law might negate any magical capability completely. Similarly a DreamQuest in a myth of an Elemental Lord might only allow magic associated with that element to be used. Specifics will need to be determined by the circumstances.

Stage-by-Stage

Each stage of the DreamQuest must be completed in turn before advancing to the next stage. If the DreamQuester completes all the stages of the DreamQuest he gains the reward that that myth offers to those who quest through it. The nature of the reward will vary from quest-to-quest and sometimes the same DreamQuest can yield different rewards. The types of rewards most common to DreamQuests are as follows:

- Gaining one or more Improvement Rolls.
- Gaining specific mythic knowledge to help overcome a foe or obstacle.
- Gaining one-off, large-scale Divine Intervention or a Miracle to lift a curse, alleviate a famine, avert a war and so on.
- Gain the use of a mythic weapon, artefact or spell.
- Gain a Heroic Ability.
- Become closer to one's god.
- Understand a competing myth, or the nature of an enemy.

Before the DreamQuest begins, the lead DreamQuester must be certain of the goal he wants to achieve. Usually it will be obvious or dictated by others or necessity. Only one goal can be pursued at a time: multiple goals are not possible on a DreamQuest, even if there are several participants.

Moving between stages requires a successful Lore (Million Spheres) roll. This represents the Quester's ability to navigate the mystical pathways that are the essential fabric of a DreamQuest. If the Lore roll fails then the DreamQuest ends and the Quester (and any companions) awake. However, the Lore roll gains a modifier depending on whether or not the previous stage was successfully completed:

- *Previous Stage Completed: +25% to Lore (Million Spheres)*
- *Previous Stage Failed: -25% to Lore (Million Spheres)*

What reward or outcome the DreamQuester is hoping to achieve will vary considerably and so Games Masters must use their personal judgement in deciding how the outcome is affected. It may be that the subsequent stages of the DreamQuest simply become more difficult (the quester faces greater resistance) or the outcome itself might be weaker.

Ultimately Games Masters must decide what DreamQuesters can gain from a DreamQuest and how these gains can be applied. DreamQuests are truly mystical, heroic undertakings that bring the power of history and myth to the mundane world, and are not to be undertaken lightly.

Length of the DreamQuest

Time passed in the DreamQuest does not equate to real time. In real time, the DreamQuester is in a trance-like dream state for 1D6+6 hours. In the DreamQuest, the amount of time that passes is dependent wholly on the quest itself. In the Dream of a Thousand Years, for example, 1,000 years passes with the Quester spending many lifetimes adventuring and learning. In other quests hours, days, weeks or months might pass. Games Masters should decide how long each DreamQuest takes in the dream-state.

Random Challenges

The nature of the challenge to be faced at each stage of a DreamQuest is usually fixed in that quest's description; however, different questers may face different challenges whilst on the same DreamQuest or even if they perform the same DreamQuest again.

The table on the following page can be used as a way of randomly determining the type of challenge the quester must face, if the nature of the challenge for a particular stage is not clear-cut (a combat, for instance). It can also be used to quickly determine the challenges for improvised DreamQuests where the Games Master has not had the opportunity to fully detail each stage.

In all cases the skill will be opposed by a similar skill inherent in the stage, which is based on the Resonance of the myth. The strength of the opposing skill can be equal to the Resonance or adjusted (see page 77).

Abstraction versus Adventure

The process for DreamQuesting abstracts the nature of the activity so that it can be easily accommodated within a regular

Challenge Nature

1D10	Challenge	Skill to be Used by the DreamQuester
1	Artistic Performance	Art, Dance or Sing
2	Brawn or Physical Exertion	Brawn or Resilience
3	Combat	Combat Style
4	Display of Intellect or Wit	Courtesy, Influence or Lore
5	Magical	Magic Skill
6	Persuasion	Culture, Influence or Seduction
7	Purity or Virtue	Pact or Persistence
8	Puzzle or Riddle	Insight, Meditation or Persistence
9	Race or Physical Contest	Acrobatics, Athletics or Brawn
10	Social Interaction	Courtesy, Culture or Influence

Challenge Level

1D100	Challenge Level	Challenge %
01–05	Very Easy	Resonance x0.25
06–30	Easy	Resonance x0.5
31–70	Standard	Resonance x1
71–90	Hard	Resonance x1.25
91–98	Very Hard	Resonance x1.5
99–00	Mythically Difficult	Resonance x2

Elric of Melniboné campaign. A lone DreamQuester, for instance, embarking on a decade-long DreamQuest, would seriously disrupt the flow of the campaign if his lone experiences were played-out to the full.

However, if all of the Adventurers in the group undertake the DreamQuest together, then one need not use the abstraction process discussed above. Instead, each stage of the DreamQuest could represent a specific DreamQuest scenario that is played-out as a full session of play, with the level of the challenge *informed* by the Resonance of the DreamQuest but otherwise determined as per any standard scenario. The Adventurers would thus be undertaking a series of tangential adventures before returning to the main plot of their campaign. There are numerous precedents for this in the Elric stories: the entirety of *Sailor on the Seas of Fate*; the Dream Realms journey in *Fortress of the Pearl*; the Thousand Year Dream of *The Skrayling Tree*; the quest for Elric's father's soul in *Revenge of the Rose*... in fact many of Michael Moorcock's stories involve their heroes in many different forms of DreamQuest. For *Elric of Melniboné* Adventurers to partake in them too, either as abstractions or full adventures, is entirely in keeping with the saga of the Eternal Champion.

RUNE MAGIC

He worked swiftly over a small fire, using an alchemist's pestle and mortar, mixing the shredded leaf with a little water. As the brew bubbled on the fire, he drew peculiar runes on the ground, some of which were twisted into such alien forms that they seemed to disappear into a different dimension and reappear beyond it.

*'Bone and blood and flesh and sinew,
Spell and spirit bind anew;
Potent potion work the life charm,
Keep its takers safe from harm.'*

So Elric chanted as a small pink cloud formed in the air over the fire, wavered, reformed into a spiral shape which curled downwards into the bowl. The brew spluttered and then was still. The albino sorcerer said: 'An old boyhood spell, so simple that I'd near forgotten it. The leaf for the potion grows only in Troos and therefore it is rarely possible to perform.'

— The Bane of the Black Sword

Rune Magic is a magical, local manipulation of environment in some subtle (or not so subtle) way to achieve a specific effect. These effects are worked through runes: shadow topologies that project or represent a specific part of the Multiverse's nature. Learning a rune can take years of study to accomplish, or may be grasped easily by someone with the right outlook and affinity with the order of the Multiverse. Runes can also be mastered by followers of any of the powers at work in the Young Kingdoms, although some runes are clearly the province of certain powers, such as the elemental runes of the Elemental Lords.

There are an unknowable number of runes. Some are singularly powerful and some need to be combined to have an effect and are sometimes called spells. Runes are expressions of specific parts of the Multiverse's fabric meaning that someone who understands a rune, through the Rune Casting skill, can manipulate the fabric of the Multiverse locally and in a limited way.

A rune is a mixture of iconography, emotion, speech and state of mind. Speaking a known rune initiates its effect immediately around the sorcerer or what they touch. Inscribing a rune on an object localises the rune's power and effect to that object. Investing a rune casting attempt with more Magic Points increases the rune's effect or duration of influence. Whilst all runes are different, there are some common traits:

- Whilst runes can be learned outside of a cult, it is rare for this to happen. In the Young Kingdoms, runes are normally taught by cults, although they can occasionally be found in grimoires, hidden in works of art, or even engraved into the walls of ancient buildings.
- Once a rune is known, it cannot be forgotten. Its nature burns its way into the psyche and remains there, waiting to be used. Each known rune occupies one point of INT. The only exception to this is for Melnibonéans who possess the mental capacity to know many, many runes, even if they linger as distant memories.
- Incribed runes are permanent: no amount of washing, scrubbing, purging or hacking can remove a rune once it has been marked. The ink or pigment might wash away but the rune's shape is always visible, even when its power has been completely exhausted.
- All runes require Magic Points for activation. A sorcerer can invest a rune with as many Magic Points as he can afford. If several sorcerers, such as fellow cult members, wish to combine their abilities to invoke a rune, then they may pool their available Magic Points to augment the rune's power. However, each participating sorcerer must succeed in their Rune Casting skill or the rune fails.
- Although a rune's symbol is permanent, its effect wanes with time and neglect. However, some extremely powerful runes, such as those carved by the Lords of Law and Chaos are eternally active, beyond the intellect of anyone alive in the Young Kingdoms, even Melnibonéans, to comprehend, and are impossible to replicate.
- If activated verbally, the rune generally acts upon the caster although its effects can be directed to another person or creature if the sorcerer can make physical contact. Verbal runes last an hour, although the duration can be extended another hour for each additional Magic Point invested into them.
- If inscribed on a person or object, the rune affects the bearer directly. Incribed runes retain their power for as long as the caster wishes to dedicate the Magic Points invested in them. During this time the sorcerer's *maximum* number of Magic Points is reduced by the number dedicated to the rune. Once allowed to lapse, the rune's power rapidly ebbs away, although it still leaves a slight, invisible, magical emanation detectable only by Witch Sight. Someone who knows the rune can reactivate it with a successful Rune

Sennila's Saga

Lady Senilla is, as we know from the Young Kingdoms Adventurer chapter, a sorceress. When we last saw her, Ken, her player, had not chosen the runes that Senilla knows.

Senilla has three runes at 49%, 39% and 39%. Her first rune chosen is Rune of Silence 49%. Her second is Rune of Sleep 39% and finally Rune of Touch 39%. These are relatively peaceful runes but, if used with a little intelligence, Senilla can accomplish great things with them.

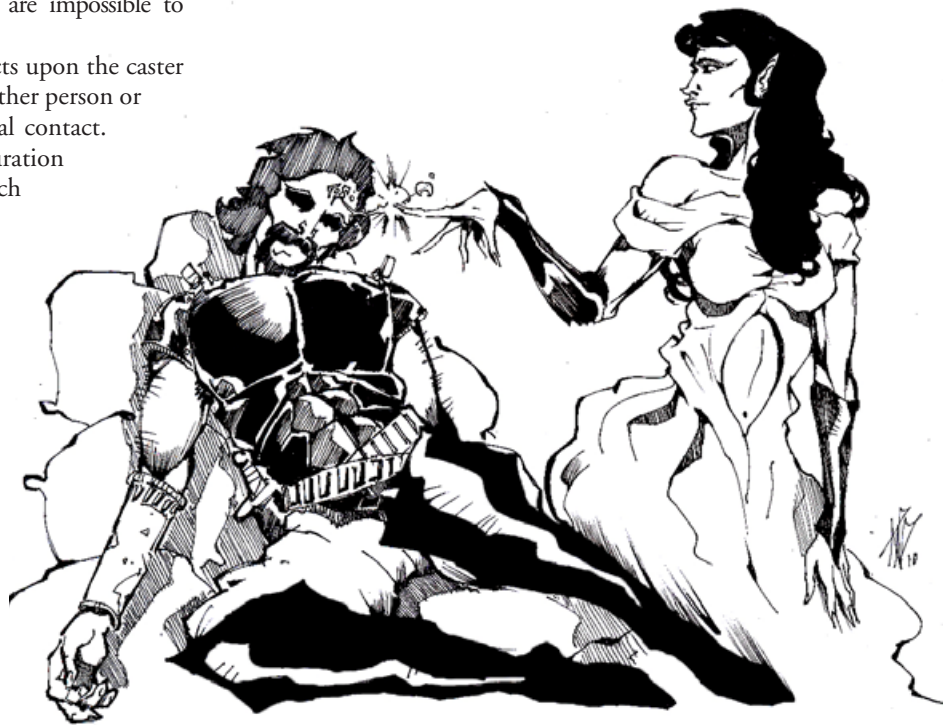
Casting Skill Test and making a new investment of Magic Points.

- To activate a rune verbally, the sorcerer must be in a position to vocalise the rune, forming words in High Speech and being able to mutter, at the very least. Inscribing a rune requires both vocalisation and the ability to mark the object in some way (ink or other pigment, scratching, branding and so forth).

Casting the Runes

The procedure and restrictions on Rune Casting are as follows.

- The Magic Point investment must be declared *before* the rune is cast.
- Vocalising a rune takes one Combat Action for each Magic Point being invested. The rune's power takes effect on the last Combat Action.
- Inscribing a rune takes 1D8 minutes for each Magic Point being invested.



- The sorcerer must concentrate totally on the rune. No other actions are permitted. If disturbed in anyway, the casting attempt is aborted but can be retried on the next Combat Action.
- A successful Rune Casting (Rune) test is made every time a sorcerer casts a rune, either via inscription or vocalisation.
- A critical success means the sorcerer has been able to control the flow of the rune particularly effectively. The Adventurer loses one Magic Point fewer than normal for casting the spell (so a Magnitude 2 spell costs one Magic Point and a Magnitude 1 spell is free) and any attempts to resist or counter the spell suffer a -10% penalty,
- If the Rune Casting test fails, one Magic Point is lost.
- If the test is fumbled, *all* the declared Magic Points are lost.
- As runes are not physical items. A sorcerer who knows a rune does not need to hold it in hand to activate its effects; subtle vocalisation is enough.
- All runes are vocalised in High Speech. The maximum chance of invoking a rune is limited by the value the caster has in High Speech. It is *not* necessary to make a High Speech roll to inscribe or vocalise a rune.
- The effects of a vocalised rune last for one hour. This duration can be extended by investing additional Magic Points over and above those already invested in powering the rune. Every additional Magic Point increases the duration of the rune's effect by a further hour. *For example, Lady Senilla vocally casts Rune of Sleep on a foe for a cost of one Magic Point. Her foe, Jadurus of Huamgaarl, will sleep for one hour. But, knowing that she requires more time to make as good a getaway as possible, Senilla boosts the Rune by a further three Magic Points to ensure that she has a four hour head start on the Pan Tangian assassin.*
- Inscribed Runes have an indefinite duration. However, the sorcerer's maximum number of Magic Points are *reduced* by the Rune's power (the Magic Points invested in it) until the sorcerer ceases to maintain it. Only once the inscribed Rune is allowed to lapse may the Magic Points dedicated to it be recuperated. *For example Lady Senilla has 13 Magic Points available for Rune Casting. She has a Rune of Silence inscribed upon her boots and decides to invest it with 10 MP. From that point forwards the Rune continuously negates all sound Senilla makes in a 10 metre radius when wearing them.*
- The effects of a rune *cannot* be dismissed. Only in some circumstances can a rune be *countered* by a rune of opposite power and only then if it equals or exceeds the number of Magic Points invested in it.
- Runes may only be opposed if they *directly* harm or control an Adventurer. *For example the Rune of Sleep may be opposed with Resilience, whereas the Rune of Barring, affecting an area, not the Adventurer, cannot. Likewise the Rune of Domination can be resisted with Persistence but the viewer of a Rune of Bewilderment cannot.*

Stacking Runes

Runes can be stacked. If a sorcerer knows several runes and he has the Magic Points, he can combine one or more together in a single effect, either vocally or through inscription. When vocalised the spoken runes flow into a High Speech mantra, which may be poetic in form or simply the rune's name chanted over and over. When inscribed, stacked runes form a complex pattern of characters that seem to flow out of this plane and into others, shifting visibly before the watcher's gaze.

- There is no limit to how many runes can be stacked, save for the sorcerer's reserve of Magic Points.
- Each Rune must have at least a single Magic Point applied to it.
- A Rune Casting roll is required for each stacked rune.
- The order of stacking is unimportant; all the runes take effect simultaneously when the spell is activated.
- The casting duration is cumulative. Casting a stack of runes that require eight Magic Points takes eight Combat Actions; thus it can often take *more* than a single round of combat to cast a complex spell.

Types of Runes and Their Powers

Air

Using the Air rune, the sorcerer can control the strength and direction of the wind, or even form a pocket of eternally fresh air surrounding him, even under water. He can influence one cubic metre of earth or rock for every Magic Point invested. A Magic Point allows one of the following influences:

- Increase or decrease the wind speed by five metres per second.
- Reduce the strength of poison gases by 20%.
- Lift an object of up to 3 points of SIZ.

Knowledge of the Air rune is also a pre-requisite for summoning and controlling Air elementals.

Alarm

When inscribed upon a person or thing, the sorcerer is *immediately* aware of the subject being moved, moving or being touched. The Alarm rune has no purely verbal activation.

Animate

In the phosphorescent Central Tomb, surrounded by the mummified corpses of his ancestors, Veerkad chanted the resurrection ritual before the great coffin of the Hill-King—a giant thing, half as tall again as Veerkad who was tall enough. Veerkad was forgetful for his own safety and thinking only of vengeance upon his brother Gutheran.

— *The Bane of the Black Sword*

A dangerous Rune used to return dead bodies to a semblance of life. The sorcerer can animate a body with one dice of Characteristic SIZ for every Magic Point invested in the rune. However, raising a creature from the dead requires a successful Command roll, else the creature runs amok. The rune only empowers the body and unlike the Rune of Raising it does not touch the soul. Creatures resurrected in this fashion use the physical skills they once possessed in life.

Barring

'ow he could take his vengeance, he thought, as he reached yet another door at the top of the stair and-drew back his sword to smite it. The blow fell, but the door held. 'Curse the thing, it is protected by charms!' he swore.

— *Stormbringer*

The Rune of Barring prevents egress into an area. It affects a number of cubic metres equal to the Magic Points invested. Those caught within the area of the rune may leave but not re-enter until the rune dissipates. In all other respects it is similar to a Rune of Confinement.

Beasts

Each beast, whether insect, fish, reptile, mammal or bird, has its own rune. Singularly, Beast runes do nothing but indicate the nature of the beast. But when other runes are combined with a Beast rune, their powers *only ever affect* the creature associated with the rune. Thus, combining Warding and the Insect Beast rune would create a warding only against insects.

Bewilderment

This rune causes confusion and uncertainty. When vocalised the caster's actions, appearance, words, clothing and so forth become confusing, indistinct or unmemorable. Each Magic Point invested allows one such attribute to become bewildering. When inscribed on an object, its appearance alters in a similar way. Note that the Bewilderment rune does not cause invisibility; it simply alters the perceptions of the viewer, masking the true nature of the subject. Witch Sight sees through a Bewilderment rune on a successful opposed roll against the rune caster's Bewilderment rune skill. Mundane onlookers need to succeed in a critical, unopposed Perception test to know that all is not as it appears but will not be able to see the truth behind the obfuscation.

Chaos

The Chaos rune, an eight-pointed star emanating from a central hub, has no intrinsic power singularly, save to mark the influence of Chaos or the caster's allegiance to it. However, when combined with another rune, it confines the effects of that rune only to those who worship Chaos in some capacity. Knowledge of the Rune of Chaos is also a pre-requisite for summoning and controlling chaotic creatures.

Weapons inscribed with a Rune of Chaos add the Magic Points invested in the rune to the weapon's damage, for the purpose of damaging demons or beings that have a Pact with Law.

Cold

The Rune of Cold makes the caster, or the object, cold to the touch. A single Magic Point investment merely renders the subject as cold as cold running water (or as cold as a corpse, perhaps). However, every subsequent Magic Point causes freezing damage to whoever touches the subject in the following progression: 2MP = 1D2; 3MP = 1D4; 4MP = 1D6; 5MP = 1D8; 6MP = 1D10. Every MP above 6 adds +1 to the rolled damage. The Cold rune does not damage the subject. To freeze water or food, the caster needs to vocalise the rune, invest 2MP and touch the object to be frozen. He can freeze a volume of liquid in litres, or food in kilos.

Concealment

This rune allows a sorcerer to temporarily transfer their soul from their body and place it somewhere else. A being subject to this rune suffers no ill effects from the soul transfer and is not visible to Witch Sight. Souls placed into a different creature remain alive if their original body is killed and can move to another host by exchanging some blood and using the rune again. If the soul is instead placed into an object and their body killed, the soul remains bound helpless to the item until freed by another; or the rune expires, whereupon they die.

Confinement

The Rune of Confinement cannot be vocalised and must be inscribed. The rune is normally used to define an area that can be entered, but not left, for the duration of its power. Similarly, the rune affects a number of cubic metres equal to the Magic Points invested. The sorcerer must always define the area under effect specifically. One may pass into the area of confinement but not out of it, until the rune dissipates. Anyone confined by the rune suffers no ill effects (save those caused by the environment). Neither does the prisoner suffer any ill-effects if they try to leave by the means of entry; they simply encounter an invisible, impassable barrier that feels slightly warm to the touch. Attempting to batter down walls, smash windows, tunnel out or otherwise break out is impossible during the rune's effect. Weapons and other attacks simply bounce off the surfaces within the rune's influence. The only way to negate the Rune of Confinement is with a Rune of Passing, which must be invested with an equal or greater number of Magic Points. The Rune of Confinement can also be inscribed upon bindings such as ropes or chains,

Contact

The Rune of Contact permits mental contact with another person over distance. The rune must be inscribed on something carried or worn by the person the sorcerer wishes to contact. The contact can include one of either speech, sound, taste, touch or emotion for each Magic Point invested. Additional recipients can be included for an extra Magic Point per extra participant. The range of the Transfer is limitless within that plane or world.

Darkness

The Darkness rune creates a pool of darkness around the caster (if vocalised) or object (if inscribed). Light sources within this area shed no illumination and normal sight ceases to function, even for the caster. Other senses, such as a bat's sonar, function normally. Witch Sight is unaffected by the Darkness rune and a sorcerer using Witch Sight can see normally. The rune affects a number of cubic metres equal to the Magic Points invested.

Deception

The sorcerer may create a *false* soul, which can be used to fool observers using Witch Sight that an object or dead creature has a soul. It can also be used to falsely indicate that a person's soul is greater than it really is. Each Magic Point invested in the rune gives the recipient 1 (extra) point of false POW.

Dissolution

The Dissolution rune dissolves, or disintegrates, a particular substance. This rune must be combined with a second to control specifically what should be affected. For instance, to disintegrate a foundation stone would require stacking the Rune of Dissolution with the Rune of Earth. The rune affects 1 SIZ of substance for each Magic Point invested within it. If used to affect living creatures, they may make an opposed Resilience test against the sorcerer's Rune Casting (Dissolution) skill to attempt to negate its effects.

When used to harm living creatures, each MP inflicts 1 HP of damage to every Hit Location simultaneously but *must* be cast with a rune appropriate to the opponent (Man, Woman, Plant or Beast).

Domination

Allows a sorcerer to command *absolute* obedience from that being the rune is cast upon. The rune must be combined with a second to control specifically what type of creature can be affected (Man, Woman, Beast). The number of Magic Points invested in the rune must equal the number of Characteristic dice rolled for the creature's SIZ. If used to affect sapient creatures, they may make an opposed Persistence test against the sorcerer's Rune Casting (Domination) skill to attempt to negate its effects.

Earth

Using the rune of Earth, the sorcerer can influence one cubic metre of earth or rock for every Magic Point invested. A Magic Point allows one the following influences:

- Push, pull or excavate by one metre for every MP.
- Soften or crack a rock, inflicting one point of damage for every MP (ignoring Armour Points).
- Strengthen or solidify rock or soil, increasing its Hit Points by one point for every MP.

Earth Elementals are unaffected by the Earth rune when it is used in this fashion. The rune can be either vocalised or inscribed, according to the circumstances and the caster's whim.

Knowledge of the Earth rune is also a pre-requisite for summoning and controlling Earth elementals.

Enhancement

The Enhancement rune increases a single Characteristic by one point for every Magic Point invested in the rune. POW *cannot* be enhanced. A separate Enhancement rune must be learned for each Characteristic that the sorcerer wishes to affect. All attributes and skills influenced by the Characteristic are adjusted accordingly for the rune's duration. The six enhancements are the Rune of Strength, the Rune of Endurance, the Rune of Agility, the Rune of Growth, the Rune of Sagacity and the Rune of Allurement.

Fire

The Fire rune allows the sorcerer to control, *but not create*, fire. The rune can be used to extinguish fires, or control their direction. For one Magic Point it can extinguish a Flame, two Magic Points a Small Fire, three Magic Points a Large Fire and four Magic Points or more will put out an Inferno (see page 58 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*).

Knowledge of the Fire rune is also a pre-requisite for summoning and controlling Fire elementals.

Hearing

The Hearing rune can be vocalised or inscribed. If vocalised the sorcerer's Perception skill, *for hearing purposes only*, is raised by 10% for each Magic Point invested in the rune. If inscribed into an object, the object can record any sounds within a one metre radius for each Magic Point invested and play the sounds back to the caster on a second successful casting of the Hearing Rune.

Heat

The Rune of Heat makes the caster or the object hot to the touch. A single Magic Point investment makes the subject comfortably warm (as though wrapped in blankets, perhaps) and the recipient of the rune suffers no penalties to Fatigue tests from a cold environment while the rune is active. However, every subsequent Magic Point causes heat damage to whoever touches the subject in the following progression: 2MP = 1D2; 3MP = 1D4; 4MP = 1D6; 5MP = 1D8; 6MP = 1D10. Every MP above 6 adds +1 to the rolled damage. The Heat rune does not damage the subject.

Law

'I can give you nothing so strong— or so evil— as Stormbringer,' Sepiriz said. 'But I have a charm for your sword, a slight one that my contact with the White Lords has enabled me to use. Give me your sword, Moonglum.' A trifle unwillingly, Moonglum unsheathed his curved steel blade and banded it to

the Nihrain who took a small engraving tool from his robe and, whispering a rune, scratched several symbols on the sword near its hilt. Then he gave it back to the Eastlander. 'There. Now the sword has the blessing of Law and you will find it more able to withstand Law's enemies.'

— Stormbringer

The Law rune, a single, upward-pointing arrow, has no intrinsic power singularly, save to mark the influence of Chaos or the caster's allegiance to it. However, when combined with another rune, it confines the effects of that rune only to those who worship Law in some capacity. A bandage, for example, inscribed with the Law rune, would only assist the healing of someone who is a lay-worshipper or better in a Lawful cult. Knowledge of the Rune of Law is also a pre-requisite for summoning and controlling Lawful creatures.

Weapons inscribed with a Rune of Law add the Magic Points invested in the rune to the weapon's damage, for the purpose of damaging demons or beings that have a Pact with Chaos.

Leeching

The Rune of Leeching steals power from other runes. When it drains a rune, it absorbs as many points of its magical effect as the Leeching rune was originally invested with. If the leeching rune contains more Magic Points than the rune being drained, then the targeted rune is completely devoured. If vocalised, the sorcerer manifests the absorbed rune. If inscribed, then it is the object that holds the Leeching Rune, which manifests the new power. The leeching rune's absorbed power lasts until the leeching rune expires, or the targeted rune elapses.

Light

The Light rune generates light about the caster (if vocalised) or object (if inscribed). The area is considered to be illuminated. Note that only the specified area is illuminated – everything outside of the area of effect is not. The Light rune creates raw light, not a flame, and affects an area of cubic metres equal to the Magic Points invested.

Man

On its own, the rune of Man simply indicates gender. However, when combined with another rune, it confines the effects of that rune only to males.

Melding

This rune, a relic of the Dharzi wars, allows two or more creatures to be melded into one. The number of Magic Points invested in the rune must equal the number of Characteristic dice rolled for SIZ of all the creatures being combined. The caster may select from which beast each separate Characteristic and body location comes. This rune must be cast with the appropriate beast runes for each creature involved. When the rune expires, the melded creature disintegrates into a nauseating pile of offal.

Passing

The Rune of Passing negates the Confinement or Barring runes. It also assists in opening any mundane locking mechanism such as a padlock or bolt on a touched item, even if the mechanism is not visible to the sorcerer (such as a bolt on the other side of a door). For every Magic Point invested, the sorcerer temporarily gains 20% in the Mechanisms skill. The rune can be vocalised or inscribed onto an object, as appropriate.

Plants

Each plant, whether tree, bush, flower or moss, has its own rune. Singularly, Plant runes do nothing but indicate the spirit of the plant. But when other runes are combined with a Plant rune, their powers only ever affect the vegetation associated with that rune.

Protection

For every Magic Point invested in this rune, one Armour Point is added to every Hit Location of the target. This stacks with any existing armour and is treated in the same way (so a Bypass Armour Combat Manoeuvre can bypass it normally). The rune can be vocalised or inscribed.

Purity

The Rune of Purity has several effects. First, for an investment of one Magic Point, it sterilises foods and liquids making them safe to imbibe. Secondly, each Magic Point invested reduces the potency of a poison (including magical venoms) by 20%. Thirdly, each Magic Point invested offers 20% resistance to disease.

Raising

The Rune of Raising temporarily restores life to a corpse, allowing the sorcerer to question it for a short time. The magic required to recover the soul of the creature from across the Multiverse means that the rune only lasts one minute for each Magic Point invested. The rune does not resurrect the deceased and the body cannot move; it can only answer questions but, even then, cannot answer questions directly. Answers might be in the form of riddles or deliberate obfuscations but they must be truthful.

If the body being raised is someone who has a Pact, using the Rune of Raising attracts the anger of their patron Lord, who reserves exclusive rights to their servants. The form of revenge taken against the sorcerer should be decided by the Games Master but options include sending cult or demon assassins against the sorcerer, foiling the sorcerer's plans in meddlesome or vicious ways, or engineering bad fortune through subtle means.

Reduction

The Reduction rune decreases a single Characteristic by a number of points equal to the Magic Points invested in the rune. POW *cannot* be reduced. A separate Reduction rune must be learned for each Characteristic the sorcerer wishes to affect. All attributes and skills influenced by the Characteristic are adjusted accordingly for the duration of the rune. No Characteristic can be reduced to a value of less than one. The six reductions are the Rune of

Weakness, the Rune of Decrepitude, the Rune of Ineptitude, the Rune of Dwindling, the Rune of Imbecility and the Rune of Repugnance.

Reflection

'A shower of arrows whistled towards them. Drinij Bara smiled, spoke a few words as he moved his hands almost carelessly. The arrows stopped in mid-flight, turned back and each uncannily found the throat of the man who had shot it. Terarn Gashtek gasped and wheeled back, pushing past his men and, as he retreated, shouted for them to attack the four.'

— *The Bane of the Black Sword*

The Rune of Reflection reflects any physical blow upon the sorcerer, so that the attacker effectively strikes at themselves. The number of attacks per *round* that can be rebounded is equal to the Magic Points invested in the rune. To use this rune successfully, the caster must be aware of any incoming attacks on their person.

Sight

The Sight rune can be vocalised or inscribed. If vocalised the sorcerer's Perception skill, *for observation/searching purposes only*, is raised by 10% for each Magic Point invested in the rune. If inscribed onto an object, it can record any action within a one metre radius for each Magic Point invested and play the images back to the caster as a mental image on a second successful casting of the Sight Rune.

Silence

The Rune of Silence can be whispered or inscribed. If whispered the sorcerer's Stealth skill is raised by 10% for each Magic Point invested in the rune. If inscribed into an object, all sound within a one metre radius is absorbed for each Magic Point invested.

Sleep

'She was lying upon a couch and she was naked. There were runes painted on her flesh and the runes were, in themselves, obscene. Her eyelids were heavy and she did not at first recognise them. Elric rushed to her side and cradled her body in his arms. The body was oddly cold. 'He—he makes me—sleep...' said Cymoril. 'A sorcerous sleep—from which—only he can wake me...' She gave a great yawn. 'I have stayed awake—this long—by an effort of—will—for Elric comes...'

— *Elric of Melniboné*

The Rune of Sleep induces a dreamless, restful slumber. The sleeper cannot be wakened for the duration of the rune. If the recipient of the rune's effect is unwilling, they may make an opposed Resilience test against the sorcerer's Rune Casting (Sleep) skill to attempt to negate its effects. The rune can be vocalised or inscribed. If vocalised, the sorcerer must touch the recipient for the rune to take effect and if inscribed the object must be touched. The Rune of Sleep also blocks Dreamthieves from entering the dreamscape of the sleeper.

Speed

The Speed rune increases the recipient's movement rate by one metre for every Magic Point invested. It also grants a +1 Strike Rank bonus for every Magic Point.

Taste

The Taste rune can be vocalised or inscribed. If vocalised the sorcerer's Perception skill, *for olfactory purposes only*, is raised by 10% for each Magic Point invested in the rune. If inscribed on an appropriate object, such as a bowl, plate or goblet, everything consumed from the item tastes like pure nectar, irrespective of its true taste or condition. Note that the Taste rune does not negate any form of poison or disease; it merely masks its taste or scent.

Touch

The Rune of Touch enables the sensation of touch without the physical need to come into contact with the object of study. It is usual to vocalise this rune. For each Magic Point invested, the sorcerer can touch and feel an object one metre away. Note that the Touch rune does not permit an object to be moved in anyway. If the object of study is living, an opposed Persistence test against the sorcerer's Rune Casting Touch skill is allowed. If successful, the subject can feel the rune as though the sorcerer's own hands were involved although, of course, the source might not be visible.

Transfer

I discovered traces of sorcerous runes on the walls and floor. He has transported himself somewhere and I could not discover where, in spite of deciphering most of the runes! Perhaps he went to Pan Tang.

— *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

This powerful rune is created in two parts, permitting the transfer of an object between the two when its halves are reunited. The first half may be inscribed upon a location, object or being, requiring a single Magic Point invested in it, to ensure its duration. The rune is triggered when its second half is inscribed or spoken. At this point the sorcerer may either transfer the recipient of the second half to the presence of the first, or vice versa. If one half of the rune is tied to a location, rather than an object or person, then recipients may only transfer to it. The sorcerer can move three points of SIZ for every Magic Point invested in the second part of the rune. If used to transport a hostile opponent, they may make an opposed Resilience test against the sorcerer's Rune Casting (Transfer) skill to attempt to negate its effects. The range of the Transfer is limitless within that plane or world.

Once the rune is reunited its invested power dissipates.

Truth

The Rune of Truth compels the recipient to answer a question absolutely truthfully. For each Magic Point invested, the sorcerer may ask one question. An opposed Persistence test against the sorcerer's skill in the rune can be made but it requires a critical success to successfully lie. The Truth rune is almost always

vocalised, although it can be enchanted into a potion and fed to an unwitting victim.

Warding

A Rune of Warding dissipates the magical energy of runes cast against a sorcerer. Each Magic Point negates one Magic Point of a rune that is directed upon them. Warding does not interfere with runes a recipient may cast upon themselves.

Water

The Water rune allows the sorcerer to control, *but not create*, water. The rune can be used to manipulate static bodies of water, or control the direction of flowing water. The sorcerer can control one cubic metre of water for every Magic Point invested.

Knowledge of the Water rune is also a pre-requisite for summoning and controlling Water elementals.

Woman

On its own, the rune of Woman simply indicates gender. However, when combined with another rune, it confines the effects of that rune only to females.

Discovering New Runes

There are an infinite number of runes. The ones detailed here are those known to the various cults and sorcerers of the Young Kingdoms but countless others exist, scribbled in ancient tomes or inscribed into the walls of forgotten Melnibonéan laboratories. Games Masters are encouraged to create their own runes, using the Elric saga as inspiration and those presented here as guidance.

Discovering a new rune requires the sorcerer to identify it with a High Speech test. If the sorcerer succeeds in the test, he can, after 1D8 hours of study and contemplation, figure-out the rune's likely nature, although he cannot counter, alter or replicate the rune. To truly know the rune and be able to manipulate its power, requires a *critical* success. It takes a further 1D8 hours of uninterrupted study to memorise the new Rune. At the end of this period the sorcerer knows the name of the rune and has a new Rune Casting skill for it at the base chance.

Runes and Potions, Pills and Salves

In the forest he had found a particular leaf which, when used with certain invocations (which were harmless in that the invoker was in little danger of being harmed by the spirits he marshalled) would invest that person, and anyone else to whom he gave the drug distilled from the leaf, with temporary invulnerability. The spell somehow reknitted the skin and flesh structure so that it could withstand any edge and almost any blow. Elric explained, in a rare garrulous mood, how the drug and spell combined to achieve the effect, but his archaisms and esoteric words meant little to the other two.

— *The Bane of the Black Sword*

Several times in the Saga, Elric uses magic to enchant herbal potions. A potion is a Rune, which has been placed into a consumable form be it a paste, fluid, tablet or powder. They have the advantage that a Rune can be cast upon an imbiber without the direct presence of the sorcerer. They also allow a sorcerer to *store* the power of his Runes for future occasions.

However, most potions require the use of rare and invariably toxic components, such as magical herbs, unusual minerals and exotic venoms. Although these ingredients often augment the duration of the enchantment, repeated consumption of potions can quickly cause incapacitation or even death. An example of such is the *Potion of Invulnerability* that Elric brews in the Forest of Troos, which is a Rune of Protection in tablet form, which must be taken in small quantities since it is inherently poisonous.

Concocting a potion requires a successful Skill Test against each Rune invested and the sorcerer's Lore (Plant) skill or Lore (Animal) skill depending on the nature of the ingredients. Failing any one of the rolls results in the potion possessing no virtue; and a fumble creates, unbeknown to the sorcerer, a deadly poison with a potency equal to the invested Magic Points x10%.

Once concocted the potion can be placed in an airtight container granting it a shelf life of up to a month for each Magic Point placed into the Rune(s). More stable forms such as salves or pills can last even longer. Yet once its container has been opened, a potion rapidly grows stale and only survives for a number of days equal to its Magic Points. A potion may be consumed piecemeal as separate doses, granting a fraction of its power equal to the ratio imbibed.

Swallowing or applying a potion triggers its effect within 1D8 minutes and its effects last for one hour per Magic Point contained in the dose.

The *toxicity* of a dose is equal to the number of Magic Points it contains. An Adventurer may safely ingest (or apply to themselves) a total potion toxicity of up to half their CON attribute. Exceeding this value exposes the consumer to a toxic *overdose*. They must succeed in an opposed test of their Resilience against the total accrued toxicity multiplied by 5%, else suffer some debilitating effect specific to the potion(s) involved.

The subtle poisons from exotic ingredients build up in an imbiber's body. Each successive potion consumed adds its toxicity to the running total. However, over time the body will slowly leech out the poisons, dropping the toxicity total by one each day.

The materials to produce potions are rarely found in any common marketplace, normally being found in dangerous regions; especially those which long past have suffered from magical disaster or the stuff of Chaos, such as Troos, Dorel and even Melniboné. Often they must be gathered by specially commissioned expeditions, or adventured for personally. Either way, the chance of recovering the specific component is by no means guaranteed and attempts

are usually expensive and dangerous. Hence the manufacture of potions is an unusual occurrence, normally undertaken in preparation for a special purpose.

The difficulty of manufacturing potions makes them valuable. However, since potions are prevalent in Elric's saga, they could be available for purchase from cosmopolitan merchants, or even offered as rewards by thankful churches or sorcerers.

Example Potions

Balm of Sleeplessness

Next night and for seven nights in all the Wild Dance of Melniboné would fill the streets. Potions and petty spells would ensure that no one slept, for sleep was forbidden to any Melnibonéan, old or young, while a dead emperor was mourned.

— *Elric of Melniboné*

This balm is a magically enhanced stimulant, which prevents the target from suffering sleep deprivation. Ensorcelled with the Rune of Insomnolence, the thick paste assumes a deep blue colour and is applied to the users' eyelids. It is mainly used upon Melniboné to extend pleasurable experiences but during the Wild Dance many Melnibonéans suffer madness from over application in the desperate festivities.

Each Magic Point in the dose reduces the wearer's daily need for sleep by a single hour. Thus a normal human could entirely negate the need for sleep in a 24 hour period with a 7 MP dose.

Overdosing with the balm leaves purple stains around the eye sockets and gives the user a nervous twitch. They must also make an Opposed Test of their Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the salve applied. If failed, the extended lack of sleep causes the mind of the user to crack, sending them into a waking nightmare in which they gain a number of Insanity Points equal to the last dose applied.

The balm is created from the lush, purplish blue fruit of the poisonous Noidel Bush, which grows in the interior of Melniboné. To the pulped fruit is added weathered bone dust and the mixture is thickened with the fat of wild boars. The mixture is then enchanted and is often stored in small silver boxes lined with black rose petals.

Cordial of Breath

Small yellowish-white pills that must be diluted with water or wine before being consumed, these tablets have been found both upon the Sorcerers Isle and in the Marshes of Mist. Crafted by native shamans, the tablets are enchanted with a Rune of Air, allowing the swallower to remain submerged under water or mud for extended periods of time, which is perfect for escapes or ambushes. Each Magic Point in the dose grants an hour's worth of air to the imbiber.

Overdosing on the tablets requires an opposed test of the drinker's Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the cordial swallowed. Failure causes the imbiber's lungs to rapidly expand due to excessive air production, inflicting an amount of damage equal to the Magic Points of the cordial consumed that day. A serious wound indicates that a lung has ruptured and collapsed. A major wound causes the chest of the imbiber to explode.

The tablets are manufactured from ground bones mixed with the bile of a freshly removed human gallbladder. This mixture is inserted into the carefully slit-open, black rotted stalks of Liret Reeds; whose fluffy seeds, if burned cause the inhaler of the smoke to achieve a state of egomania and imagined omnipotence. The reed is resealed by wrapping with fibrous grasses, enchanted with the Rune and then left for a week whilst the powder absorbs the noxious swamp water of its container. The resulting tablets are formed in a rod shaped, desiccated cake of swollen whitish crystals. As soon as the dried reed is opened to the air, the tablets begin to absorb ambient moisture and start to go stale.

Elixir of Enslavement

The sorcerer's face muscles tautened beneath his tanned skin and he scowled. 'Then why do you let me remain? I could make you my slave with a potion – you know that!'

— *Theleb K'aarna to Yishana – The Bane of the Black Sword*

An elixir of enslavement is a sweet tasting oil into which has been bound a Rune of Domination combined with a Rune of Man, Woman or sometimes even Beast! It is commonly used by sorcerers to temporarily influence the drinker with an unbreakable devotion to the first applicable person they see after the potion takes effect. The imbiber is permitted an Opposed Test of their Persistence versus the brewer's Rune of Domination skill to resist the compulsion. If the test is failed, they will do anything that the subject of their adoration commands, although they are permitted a further Opposed Test if commanded to do something self destructive.

Although rare, repeated consumption of the philtre to the point of overdose causes the imbiber to suffer a bout of psychopathic jealousy. Roll an opposed test of the drinker's Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the amount of philtre quaffed. Failure indicates that the imbiber will be driven to attempt to kill the object of their enslavement until the potion's effect dissipates.

The ingredients for the elixir require the finest leviathan oil as its base, rare spices from Jharkor and, most importantly, fresh aphrodisiac blooms from the Queshi Crocus – a subtly addictive flower that blooms in the jungle canopy of the nameless dark continent south of the Silent Lands. Unfortunately, the sweet nectar of these flowers is particularly enjoyed by the fierce Olabs, which inhabit the region.

Being absorbable via the skin, the elixir is also effectual when used as massage oil. However, using it in this way requires that the masseur wears gloves; else they too suffer its effects.

Formulation of Forgetfulness

'I believe that to be true. But I have a potion in my house which will deaden some of your memories, help you forget some of what has happened lately.'

'I would be grateful for such a potion. Though I doubt ...'

'It will work. I promise. Another would achieve complete forgetfulness from drinking this potion. But you may hope to forget a little.'

— Rackbir to Elric – The Vanishing Tower

This potion is the inert form of a Rune of Forgetfulness. It takes the appearance of a grey powder that can be dissolved into fluids; hot beverages or alcohol are the best to disguise its sharp, sour flavour. The formulation is often used by healers to treat those who are suffering from mental shock or insanity from some traumatic event. Sometimes, however, it is distilled for those with more nefarious purposes, in order to cover their guilt in a crime or frame another in their place.

The imbiber is permitted an opposed test of their Persistence versus the brewer's Rune of Forgetfulness skill to resist. Success means that the memory loss is temporary. Failure indicates the memory loss is permanent. Repeatedly consuming the potion requires an opposed test of the swallower's Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the formulation drunk. Failure causes the entire memory of the imbiber to be wiped clean, leaving them mindless and drooling, lacking all knowledge and skills...

To prepare the formulation the sorcerer requires an adult Dorel viper and a Poisonthorn apple tree from the Sorcerer's Isle. When the tree begins to fruit, the viper is forced to repeatedly bite the poisonthorn apples. Before they reach full ripeness they are enchanted with the Rune, before being picked, sun dried and powdered.

Grome's Doom

Combining both the Rune of Earth and the Rune of Passing, this complex potion takes the form of a thick brownish-red paste, which can be smeared upon an object or body. The combined power of the Runes ensures that whatever organic material the potion is applied to will pass through stone, earth, metal or sand as if there was nothing there. The sheer versatility of this potion means that its recipe is a closely guarded secret, known only to a select handful of sorcerers and shamans favoured by Lord Grome Himself. Its usual function is the salving of wooden weapons so that they pass through metal armour, a tactic beloved by the nomads of the Weeping Waste and the barbarians inhabiting Oin and Yu.

The paste has another, less well known and more sinister use. Those who transgress against Father Grome are sacrificed to

Him, by stripping the victim naked; covering their bodies with the sticky paste and holding them face down, spread-eagled across a huge rock. As the potion begins to work, the body of the victim sinks slowly down into the stone until the only parts remaining are the hands and feet where they are held in place. Within the rock the sacrifice soon dies from asphyxiation but the ceremony finishes only when the potion expires, forever sealing the victim's body within the stone monolith. These obelisks can often be found standing in isolated solitude, occasionally with the gruesome hint of a horrified human face caught within the surface of the up-righted rock.

To affect an inanimate object such as a wooden weapon requires a dose of at least a single Magic Point. To affect a living creature, the number of Magic Points invested in the dose must equal the number of Characteristic dice rolled for the creature's SIZ. Unwilling creatures applied with the potion may attempt an opposed test of their Resilience against the lower of either the brewer's Rune of Earth or Rune of Passing skill, to resist its effects. In the unlikely event of an overdose, the recipient requires an opposed test of their Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the paste applied. Failure indicates the condition is permanent.

The components of the potion are fine sand animated by an earth elemental, the blood of a human sized sentient creature and fresh clay, which has never seen the light of the sun. The elemental must be directed to mix the three ingredients together into a fine paste and the Runes are cast whilst it churns. At the completion of the enchantment the elemental is dismissed leaving the paste, which must be sealed in carved stone pots and left to mature underground for a year and a day.

Kakatal's Salve

A potion highly prized by the nomads of the Sighing Desert, the salve of Kakatal is a cream enchanted with the Rune of Heat combined with the Beast Rune of Insects. The coppery-red coloured salve is rubbed over the skin, protecting the wearer from being bitten or stung by any form of creepy-crawly. When an insect touches the salve it immediately combusts in a tiny bright flame, giving rise to quite pretty displays of scintillating sparks if the wearer happens to meet a swarm of sand flies. Its additional benefits are that of purging the user of all lice, ticks and fleas (a constant problem in areas where bathing is unavailable) and protecting against sicknesses transmitted by biting insects.

The salve is usually reserved for crossing deadly areas of the desert, infested with insect plagues, where repeated bites can send a riding beast (let alone its rider) insane with pain and irritation; or accessing oases normally forbidden due to disease.

Overusing the salve can bring the curse of Kakatal. The user must make an opposed test of their Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the salve applied. If failed, the wearer's skin suddenly bursts into flame and they suffer an amount of damage to every location equal to the Magic Points of the salve applied that day. Such spontaneous combustion is often fatal and those who have the misfortune to survive are left horrifically disfigured with scars.

The potion is made from the vivid red flowers of the thorny Urdu Bush, a rare desert plant, which is normally dug up if found near oases, due to its propensity to burst into flame in the summer months. Unfortunately the bush only flowers after it rains, which is to say, extremely rarely in the Sighing Desert. Fresh blossoms are mixed with mare's milk butter and crushed stingers of deadly scorpions. The mixture is cooked slowly for a day and a night whilst the Runes are enchanted into it and finally the translucent orange-red fluid is drained off and allowed to set in earthenware jars. The recipe is jealously guarded by nomadic shamans but evidence of the salve's use has been found in far off places such as the Marshes of Mist.

Pellets of Invulnerability

'The leaf for the potion grows only in Troos and therefore it is rarely possible to perform.' The brew, which had been liquid, had now solidified and Elric broke it into small pellets. 'Too much,' he warned, 'taken at one time is poison, and yet the effect can last for several hours.'

— The Bane of the Black Sword

The stabilised form of a Rune of Protection, this potion grants the imbiber a degree of immunity from physical harm by toughening their skin and flesh. Taking the appearance of a powdery cake, it is usually broken into small pellets for ease of swallowing.

Each Magic Point in the dose reduces any damage suffered by one. Overdosing exposes the consumer to a dangerous poison. They must make an opposed test of their Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the pellets swallowed. If the test is failed, the imbiber's flesh rapidly degenerates, old wounds and scars tear open, closely followed by an agonisingly painful death.

The ingredients for this potion are inherently simple. The leaf of a shrub, whose name is lost to history, shredded and seeped in boiling water whilst the Rune is cast. However, since the shrub only grows in the Forest of Troos, a warped and dangerous place where few dare to venture and fewer ever return from, the manufacture of this potion is extraordinarily rare despite its power.

Perfume of Distraction

The Perfume of Distraction is an insubstantial yet exotic scent that bemuses those in close proximity to the wearer. It encapsulates a Rune of Bewilderment, which makes the words spoken by the user become confusing, indistinct or unmemorable. Addled breathers of the scent are permitted an opposed test of their Persistence versus the brewer's Rune of Bewilderment skill to resist its effects. Failure means that the breather believes anything the wearer says, no matter how ridiculous it might sound. However, a victim of the scent cannot be forced into any self destructive act and the effects of the perfume dissipate a couple of minutes after they leave the wearer's immediate vicinity.

Over application of the perfume leads to a potion overdose, requiring an opposed test of the wearer's Resilience versus the

accumulated toxicity of the perfume worn. Failure causes the wearer's mind to become damaged from the poisons being continuously inhaled and they suffer a permanent loss of INT equal to the number of Magic Points of the perfume applied that day. Foolish abusers of this potion often end up as wild eyed beggars believing in the continuous drivel of lies that pass from their babbling mouths.

The scent is concocted from a number of components, access to which is somewhat limited. The musk glands of the Shazaarian Elk – a ferocious beast reputed to have been created by the Dharzi – which lives in the chaos wastes of the Silent Lands; water purified by an undine and perhaps most difficult of all, the seeds of blue Melnibonéan chrysanthemums (a mild narcotic), which flourish in the mist-shrouded Intangible Forests outside Imrryr. Since the seeds are tiny, literally thousands of flowers must be harvested for a single dose. The musk from the glands is distilled using steam from the purified water. To this is added the roughly ground chrysanthemum seeds and the mixture is allowed to steep for a week. Once the fluid becomes opaque the Rune is cast into the mixture, which then turns crystal clear.

Since this potion is normally only found in Imrryr where it is used as light entertainment, its Melnibonéan crafters often add other perfumes to the scent for variety, according to the customer's wishes.

Pills of Imperception

The Eastlander regarded the thing suspiciously. 'What's this?' 'A potion. I used it once before when I came to Nadsokor. It will kill your sense of smell completely – unfortunately your sense of taste as well. . . .'

Moonglum laughed. 'I did not plan to eat a gourmet meal while in the City of Beggars!' He swallowed the pill and Elric did likewise.

— The Vanishing Tower

A concoction to which has been bound the Rune of Blight, these pills completely kill the swallower's sense of taste and smell. This is of obvious benefit if forced to explore places afflicted with severe noxious fumes, or travelling with companions with cleanliness problems! The imbiber is completely immune to smells of any sort, and can even eat excruciatingly spicy or stomach turning substances with no ill effect.

Overdosing requires an opposed test of the swallower's Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the pills eaten. Failure causes the loss of sense of taste and smell to become permanent.

The powder of each pill is primarily comprised of pure chalk from Vilmir, foxglove blossoms and rock salt that has passed through the gullet of a mastodon. The difficulty of locating the latter, or surviving its collection, makes this substance rare outside the hands of a few Weeping Waste shamans.

Water of Dehydration

A formulation enchanted by the Runes of Barring and Water, this potion has the appearance of slightly effervescent, purple tinted water. Its original purpose is lost in the depths of time but the few sorcerers who retain the knowledge of its manufacture have utilised it for a myriad of different purposes.

A dose of a single Magic Point makes the body of the drinker waterproof, repelling rain, thrown beer, immersion and the like. Since the potion prevents fluids from touching the drinker's skin, they can even insert their hands into boiling water, spill acid on themselves or handle liquid poisons without harm. Increasing the Magic Points of the dose so that it equals *half* the imbiber's SIZ allows them to actually walk on water!

On the converse side, the imbiber of the potion can no longer drink and any food consumed becomes dry and shrivelled before it reaches the mouth. In hot climates, the extended durations of the potion can threaten serious dehydration and even death. Overdosing requires the consumer to make an Opposed Test of their Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity of the potion drunk. If the test is failed they become desiccated, permanently losing points of their CON Characteristic equal to the Magic Points of the doses consumed that day.

To brew this potion requires the summoning of an undine whose watery body must be mixed with the venomous ink of the Pang Tangian spiny sea urchin; as many as a dozen are needed per cubic metre of elemental. Once the water has become thoroughly stained, the undine must be killed – preferably by freezing it solid. Although a salamander can be used instead, the majority of the fluid is wasted as steam, leaving very little to enchant with the Runes. Repeated creation of this potion can draw the enmity of Straasha, the Elemental Lord of water.

Wine of Nihrain

Sepiriz shook his head. 'It has a strange quality, our Nibrain wine. It tastes pleasant and refreshes the weary, yet once his strength is regained the man who drinks it then is nauseated. That is why we still have some in our cellars. But our stocks are low—the vines from which it was made have long since passed from the Earth.' 'A magic potion,' Moonglum said, replacing his cup on the table.

— Stormbringer

This wine has the effect of restoring the Magic Points of the drinker and negates any fatigue they may be suffering. The magical liqueur has the additional benefit of not beginning to go stale until its bottle is opened. A single bottle can hold up to 100 Magic Points. However, consuming more wine than is required to restore the imbiber's magical strength, within the period of a day, causes a debilitating sickness that renders the drinker unable to perform any physical activity without vomiting. Roll an opposed test of the drinker's Resilience versus the accumulated toxicity

of the amount of wine quaffed, each time they attempt to do something.

The vines of Nihrain were a unique sorcerous creation; a plant that physically embodied the now lost Rune of Absorption. They were fed with the blood of sentient beings (whether voluntarily or not is forgotten) from which magical power was drained and amassed within the body of the plant. Once a year it fruited forth a mass of scarlet grapes that, when harvested, could be fermented to produce the wine. After which it required at least a year to mature to the point of drinking. The number of Magic Points produced as grapes equalled the amount of Hit Points of blood originally fed to the plant.

Although considered extinct, this need not be the case. Nihrainian vines could be rediscovered thriving on dormant volcanoes in other far flung regions of the Young Kingdoms, or new cuttings granted to a sorcerer by a grateful Plant Lord.

Due to the belief that the vine has died out, most bottles of Nihrainian wine are priceless treasures.

SUMMONING

'As you know, sorcerer, the Lords of Law and Chaos are usually in perfect balance, neither tampering directly with our Earth. Evidently the balance has tipped a little way to one side, as it sometimes does, favouring the Lords of Disorder—allowing them access to our realm. Normally it is possible for an earthly sorcerer to summon aid from Chaos or Law for a short time, but it is rare for either side to establish itself so firmly as our friend in the citadel evidently has.'

— The Weird of the White Wolf

Summoning is complex and dangerous. It has many dependencies and requires several different skills working in combination. If it goes wrong, the sorcerer's very soul is at risk, let alone his life; demons, in particular, are reluctant servants and slaves. They take their vengeance swiftly and brutally if the chance presents itself.

Summoning Procedure

The procedure depends on the creature being summoned.

- **Elementals.** To summon an elemental of any kind the sorcerer must be surrounded by the element in question; in a wide open space or atop a mountain for a sylph; underground or in a cave for gnomes; submerged in water for an undine; surrounded by burning braziers for a salamander. The appropriate elemental rune *must* be known.
- **Demons.** The sorcerer needs seclusion and privacy. Having decided on the nature and power of the demon he wishes to summon, he spends 1D8 hours preparing the area, inscribing the enchantments, protections and other glyphs necessary

to breakdown the fabric of reality, then casts his mind into the spheres and planes of the Multiverse, searching for an entity that meets his requirements. A sacrifice of some kind is usual. The Chaos or Law rune relevant to the summoned being *must* be known.

- **Beast Lords.** The beast lords are usually summoned via the Pact skill. Except to initially create a Pact, they cannot be called upon in any other way. The rune for the beast in question *must* be known.
- **Specific creatures.** Elric summons many distinct creatures in the saga, most of whom are clearly inhabitants of other planes that have established pacts with the Emperors of Melniboné: the Creatures of Matik and the Grahluks, from the 8th Plane, for instance. Such entities are summoned with a *specific* Summoning spell, which has a fixed cost in Magic Points and does not necessarily require the careful preparations necessary for demon summoning, as the spell is inherently bound to the nature and location of that being. Such conjurations can, if the sorcerer is desperate enough, take only 1D8 Combat Actions to invoke. However, failing such a rapid summoning can have dreadful consequences for the sorcerer since they lack the mental protections normally gained from the wards and glyphs inscribed during a full ritual.

In game terms, the summoning procedure is as follows:

- The sorcerer's Summoning Ritual skill is limited by the value of the High Speech skill (to correctly prepare and either speak or draw the complex wording necessary for the summoning) and the Rune appropriate to the summoning: an Elemental, Beast, Law or Chaos rune. When attempting a summoning, the sorcerer rolls once and the result *must be equal to or below the value of all three skills.*
- The sorcerer should already have decided what type of creature to summon. These are described in the Sorcerous Creatures section. He decides how many Magic Points will be invested in the summoning, limited only by how many he has available. The number of Magic Points invested defines the Characteristics and features of the demon or elemental being summoned. More Magic Points bring forth a stronger entity but these are harder to bargain with. The Summoning Ritual Skill Test is made, with applicable modifiers. If it succeeds, the desired entity forms in front of the sorcerer and must then be commanded using the Command skill.
- If the sorcerer can invest enough Magic Points, say from the addition of extra points from sacrifices, they may call forth multiple demons of the type required. Command of the demon horde is the same as control of a single individual of that type.
- If the summoning test fails, the sorcerer loses all the Magic Points invested in the ritual but may try again if he has sufficient Magic Points remaining. If the summoning test fails whilst using a *specific summoning spell* to call forth an entity without using a ritual, then the failure is treated as a fumble.

- If the summoning test is a fumble, there may be catastrophic results through psychic backlash. Consult the Summoning Backlash table.

Summoning Backlash

Result	Summoning Backlash
01-25	The summoning has failed normally with no further effects.
26-35	The sorcerer gains a temporary insanity.
36-45	The sorcerer is rendered unconscious for 1d8 hours.
46-55	The sorcerer loses <i>all</i> Magic Points for 1d8 days.
56-65	The sorcerer is reduced to a drooling, gibbering idiot for 1d8 weeks.
66-75	The sorcerer gains a permanent insanity.
76-80	The sorcerer loses 1d8 POW permanently.
81-85	The sorcerer loses 1d8 INT permanently.
86-90	The sorcerer loses 1d8 x 5% from their Persistence skill permanently.
91-95	The sorcerer's soul is ripped from their body and cast into the Multiverse.
96-00	The sorcerer's soul is consumed by the entity being summoned.

Sacrifices

The Magic Points available for a summoning can be boosted by making a sacrifice. As most creatures of the otherworld like souls as much as the Lords of Law and Chaos, it is usual to sacrifice a living creature. Sacrificing an animal, adds half the animal's POW in additional Magic Points. Sacrificing a sapient creature, or human, adds the full POW in additional Magic Points.

Every sacrifice of a human or similar, sapient creature, increases the sorcerer's Pact skill by 1%. Sacrificing animals does not influence Pact in this way.

It should also be stressed that human sacrifice is viewed very much with disdain and revulsion within the Young Kingdoms, even amongst some Chaotic cults. Constant sacrificing to boost temporal power will quickly bring about the day of reckoning with the patron deity.

Once Summoned

A successful summoning brings forth the creature, ready to be instructed using the Command skill. The form that the creature takes is defined either in its description or, where demons are concerned, in a form the sorcerer specifies as part of the Summoning Ritual. Demons take countless forms: drooling monsters; beautiful, iridescent humans; horrific mixtures of different, sometimes alien, animals and creatures; pillars of smoke; formless, writhing, constantly shifting globes of flesh and sinew. Let the imagination run riot. Upon their death demon bodies dissipate slowly in various vile manners, occasionally leaving exotic remnants, Nanorian stones for example.

Irrespective of physical form, all creatures are defined by the standard Characteristics. Elementals calculate their Characteristics using a D6. Demons use a D8. Certain modifiers are applied to these Characteristics according to type and some Characteristics may have fixed values. The number of dice rolled for each Characteristic is equal to the number of Magic Points allotted for Characteristics during the summoning; thus, more powerful spells bring forth more powerful creatures.

In the case of elementals, the Magic Points invested determine SIZ only. Other characteristics are determined in the method detailed in the elemental's description.

Attributes and skills are based on the creature's Characteristics as defined in that creature's description.

A summoned creature awaits the sorcerer's command and if none is forthcoming it returns to the sphere from which it was called. But, a summoning is not a permanent arrangement. After it has been commanded, the sorcerer retains the creature's service for but a single hour. The duration of the creature's stay can be extended by spending another Magic Point for each additional hour they desire to keep it in the Young Kingdoms. Once the sorcerer ceases to expend Magic Points the creature returns to whence it came.

SORCEROUS CREATURES

The creatures described here reside outside of the sphere of the Young Kingdoms and must be summoned forth via magical means. They fall into three categories: Elementals, Demons and Unique Creatures.

Elementals

The statistics for the different forms of elementals can be found in the Creatures section of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

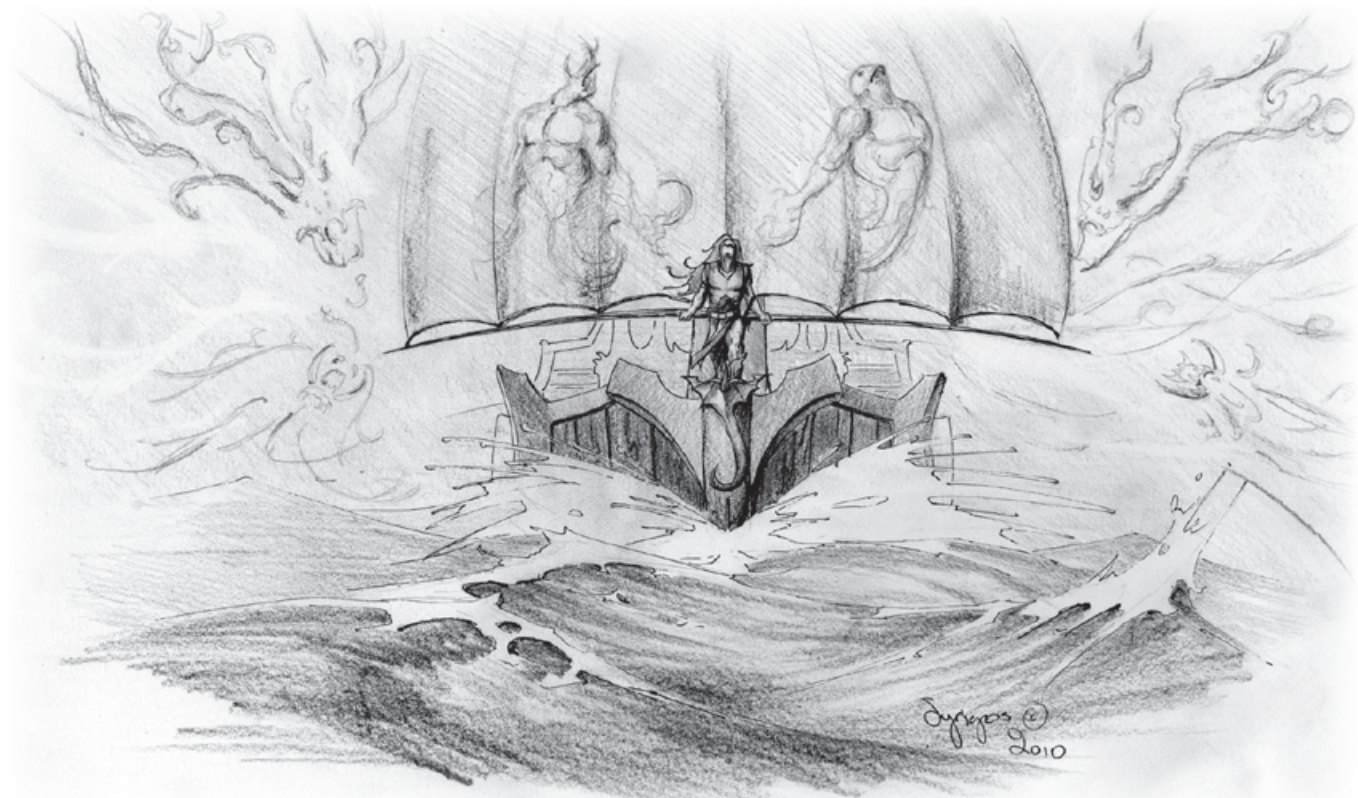
Air Elementals

Lesser elementals are known as sylphs, elements of the breeze. They assume hazy, indistinct forms but are also known to assume the form of delicate humans, adults or children according to size and whim. They are restless creatures, forever darting and whirling, creating eddies and sudden gusts as they writhe with the air. Sylphs are voluble, chattering in a hushed, whistling tongue that sounds almost like a distant echo.

Their cousins, the Sharnah (5 Magic Point elementals) and the h'Haar shanns (known as the Wind Brothers – 10 Magic Point summonings) are terrifying forces of nature; unruly, destructive and temperamental. It is the latter that Elric summons to cross the Oldest Ocean on his return trip to Melniboné before the Sea Lords sack Imrryr. These elementals are not controlled by Lassa, Empress of the air, but by her more fickle and destructive brothers, Graoll (who begets the Sharnah) and Misha (who begets the h'Haar'shann, sometimes known as Shoashoon).

Earth Elementals

Brutish, functional, taciturn and mud-caked, gnomes are as strong, tough and unyielding as the stuff they are born from. Human form is preferred, though it is rough-hewn, blocky and almost a parody of the human shape. Facial features are either absent or represented by cracks in the mud, soil or stone that



makes them; moss, twigs, gravel and sludge might serve as a rudimentary head decoration. Earthworms and other insects skitter about their craggy bodies, burrowing into and out of the many pits, holes and fissures each gnome is covered in. When a gnome speaks it is a combination of the sound of rocks scraping together and gravel crunching underfoot. The words are slow, ponderous and indelicately formed.

Gnomes are ancient enemies of the element of water, a relic of the times when Grome and Straasha fought to reshape the world. A gnome will never co-operate with an undine and the two, if brought together, fight without hesitation.

Fire Elementals

Salamanders are composed of living, writhing flame and can assume any shape they wish although they invariably opt for something warlike. They must be summoned from an existing flame large enough to accommodate the salamander's SIZ. Once formed, a salamander can only be extinguished by either an air elemental or a large amount of water or earth (typically an amount three times the salamander's SIZ in cubic metres). Salamanders make reluctant servants and easily take offence. They are also vindictive, taking great glee in destruction and mayhem.

They are ancient enemies of the air elementals and will not co-operate with them, always seeking their destruction.

A salamander ignites any flammable object it touches. It heats, and eventually melts, metal; it can bake stone, set fires and, naturally, burn people. The amount of burning damage a salamander causes is based on its SIZ, cross referenced on the following table.

Salamander Burn Potency

Salamander SIZ (cubic metres)	Burn Damage	Heat Radius (metres)
1	+1D4	4
2	+1D6	6
3	+1D8	8
4	+1D10	10
5	+1D12	12
6	+2D6	14
7	+2D8	16
8	+2D10	18
9	+2D12	20
10	+3D10	22
For every further Magic Point invested	As per progression on the Damage Modifier table	+2

The Heat Radius represents the maximum range at which a salamander can deliver a ranged burn attack (a gout of flame, a spat fireball, a wave of heat, for example).

Anyone protected by the Rune of Fire can reduce the Burn Damage a salamander inflicts by subtracting the Magic Points

invested in their protective rune from the salamander's effective SIZ (although this does not affect the salamander's overall potency). Thus, a sorcerer who has inscribed the Fire rune on his armour and invested it with 3 Magic Points, and is facing a SIZ 6 salamander, would take 1D8 damage from a Burn attack instead of 3d6.

A salamander can be used to absorb natural fires, so long as it has a cubic metre of SIZ equal to or greater than that of the fire. A salamander cannot douse other salamanders, nor can it extinguish magical flame.

Salamanders can float through the air at the same rate as they move on the ground. A salamander must touch an object to ignite it.

Salamanders can also eject gouts of fire or heat up to the maximum range and the burn damage listed for its SIZ in the Salamander Burn Table.

Though salamanders may have as many as two Combat Actions, any burning attack works only once per round.

Water Elementals

Servants of King Straasha, water elementals come in countless forms, from the undines, the lesser elementals, through to the mighty Soon'a'moon, the bringers of tidal waves. Lord Straasha seems to have a certain affection for mortals and his undines tend to be thoughtful and far less capricious than the elements of Air and Fire. They enjoy verbal engagement with long, convoluted debates in their watery, sibilant tongue.

Undines are held in reverence by the sailors of the Young Kingdoms, for King Straasha rules over the upper waters of the oceans, keeping at bay the Chaos Lord Pyaray who rules the deeper reaches. Water elementals share a kinship with the air elementals and it seems Straasha, Lassa and her brothers, Graoll and Misha, are in some way related.

All water elementals are composed of a formless mass of liquid. Undines often take on a human semblance when communicating with humans, typically forming a watery, female face. Greater elementals might throw-out the image of some great, wave-trapped sea beast but otherwise remain a fearsome, amorphous mass of brine. An undine may form in any liquid that is at least 95% water, such as beer, diluted milk or diluted wine. An undine moves overland like a huge, amorphous amoeba and moves through water like a rippling current. There is no difference between undines formed of fresh water and salt water; save for the powerful smell of brine that always accompanies salt water undines.

DEMONS

The word demon usually describes the Chaotic entities inhabiting planes of existence that are ruled solely by the Lords of Chaos. For want of a better term these planes are called hells, although some have other names, such as the Crimson Darks, for instance. Yet

it should be noted that the term *demon* does not automatically imply a creature of Chaos. Demons are more correctly creatures from other worlds and can instead be servants of Law, or indeed possess no allegiance at all. The predominance of chaotic demons in the saga is in part due to the Young Kingdoms becoming ever more heavily dominated by the Lords of Chaos.

As creatures of other worlds, *Chaotic* demons manifest in myriad forms, ranging from the eerily beautiful through to the nightmarish, grotesque and insane. Some revel in their ugliness whilst others maintain a certain, mortal-like dignity and strive to appear serene, attractive and highly cultured. Irrespective of their appearance, these demons have allegiance only to their Lords of Chaos. They might lend their services to mortals for a time and might even offer gifts and fabulous promises but they are ultimately untrustworthy. By their very natures they are restless, selfish and oblivious to the consequences of their actions. Demons always assume an animate form; they do not, and cannot, take the form of an inanimate object, for that is against the nature of Chaos.

For the purposes of *Elric of Melniboné* demons are gathered together into certain types. These are:

- Demons of Combat
- Demons of Desire
- Demons of Dreams
- Demons of Knowledge
- Demons of Protection
- Demons of Transportation

Whilst these categories might seem restrictive, given a demon's Chaotic nature, they indicate only a demon's primary area of expertise or interest. Demons of combat can still protect; demons of knowledge might be every bit as seductive as a demon of desire. The Lords of Chaos also control different categories of demon, as discussed in the Cults chapter, and can only teach the summoning of demon types within their control.

The demons described in this section are all lesser varieties, irrespective of their power. These are the foot-soldiers of Chaos, occupying the lowest ranks of the chaotic dukedoms. More powerful demons exist, the demon nobility, but unlike the Lords of the Higher Worlds who occasionally desire to be called, such creatures cannot be summoned by human sorcerers. Only the Melnibonéans mastered the rituals necessary to call the greater demons to earth and even the most powerful Melnibonéan sorcerers (most of whom are long-dead) were wary of engaging their services.

Defining a Demon

When a sorcerer decides to summon a demon, he must decide how many Magic Points he will invest into the ritual. These

Magic Points are then divided amongst the various aspects of the demon; that is to say, its Characteristics, its Abilities and its Chaotic Features.

Demon Characteristics

As things of Chaos, and because the number of Chaos is traditionally 8, Demons have their Characteristics rolled on XD8, where X represents the number of Magic Points assigned to Characteristics by the summoner. Certain Characteristics may also have a positive or negative modifier, depending on the demon's type. If the modifier would take the Characteristic below zero, give that Characteristic the minimum value of the dice roll. For example, a demon with a STR of 3D8-8 might have a roll of 7, meaning that the -8 modifier would reduce its STR to -1. Instead, its STR is simply rated as 3.

Demon Abilities

Each type of demon has certain abilities it excels at. For example, Demons of Combat are good at damaging foes and Demons of Transport are gifted at moving quickly. However, any Magic Points placed into these abilities must be taken from the total invested in the Summoning Ritual to initially conjure the demon. The abilities are explained under each demon type.

Chaotic Features

Demons may possess one or more Chaotic feature, as determined on the Chaotic Features table or according to the Games Master's preference (but use the effects from the table as a guide). A Chaotic feature costs one of the Magic Points invested in the Summoning Ritual that calls the demon into existence.

A Games Master may either choose the features a demon displays, adapting them to the demon's type, or roll randomly. Note that the Heart of Nanorion feature should only ever be a random feature; it is very rare even amongst demons.

Rolling the same Chaotic feature several times indicates that either the feature's ability stacks or its incidence is multiplied, according to the Game Master's desire.

Demon Attributes, Skills and Traits

Attributes are figured as for any *Elric of Melniboné* Adventurer. All demons have Hit Points, Magic Points, Strike Rank and Movement Rate.

Hit Points per location are calculated using the standard method. Hit Locations depend on the form that the demon takes.

Whilst demons can normally be injured by ordinary weapons, they only take half the weapon's damage, unless the weapon being used has been inscribed with a Rune of Law or Chaos.

Chaotic Features Table

D100	Feature	Description
01	Absorbing	All Runes it comes into contact with are drained by 1D8 MP each Combat Action and are added as temporary Characteristic or Attribute points; roll a D10, 1=STR, 2=CON, 3=DEX, 4=SIZ, 5=INT, 6=POW, 7=CHA, 8=MP, 9=HP or 10=roll twice.
02	Accursed	Temporarily weakens the soul of an opponent by 1D8 POW each successful hit.
03	Acidic	Possesses acidic ichor, which sprays whenever the skin is penetrated, causing damage to the attacker; roll a d4, 1=1D2, 2=1D4, 3=1D6 and 4=1D8 damage per wound.
04	Agile	+1D8 DEX.
05	Alluring	Produces pheromones that attract and seduce victims, who must succeed in an opposed test of Persistence against the Allurement's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid approaching defencelessly.
06	Antennae	Large antennae that sprout from a random location and grant a new primary sense; roll a d6, 1=Echolocation (sonar), 2=Thermoception (heat), 3=Insanoception (insanity), 4=Nociception (pain), 5=Ethoception (souls), 6=Runeception (sorcery).
07	Apathetic	-1D8 POW.
08	Armed	Uses weapons, has 1D4 different types. Choose from the weapons in the <i>RuneQuest Core Rulebook</i> .
09	Armoured	Wears extra armour, +1D8 Armour Points to every location.
10	Arms	Gain an extra pair of manipulation limbs from a random species (roll on Creature Type table). The arms have a Reach of Medium and Size of Medium.
11	Asymmetric	One half of the creature is larger, longer or taller than the other, double the Hit Points of locations in the larger side and halve the Hit Points of locations in the smaller. The Size and Reach of limbs on the smaller side are reduced by one step, in comparison to the other (so a Size of Medium moves down to Small).
12	Beaked	Gain a bite attack. Each additional incidence adds another toothed beak on a different location. Roll 1D4 to determine the attributes of the beak, 1=1D6 damage, Size Medium, Reach Touch; 2=1D8 damage, Size Large, Reach Touch, 3=1D10 damage, Size Large, Reach Short; 4=1D12 damage, Size Very Large, Reach Short.
13	Beautiful	+1D8 CHA.
14	Big	+1D8 SIZ.
15	Blind	No vision organs.
16	Boneless	Can squeeze through any gap.
17	Broadcaster	Any damage inflicted on the creature is felt by everybody within 5m, who suffer the psychological, but not physiological, effects as if they had been wounded too.
18	Burning	Glow with burning heat, injuring anyone within melee range; roll a d4, 1=1d2, 2=1D4, 3=1D6 and 4=1D8 damage per round.
19	Chameleon	+1D8x5% bonus to Stealth when hiding.
20	Clawed	Gain a claw attack. Each additional incidence adds another set of claws on a different location. Roll 1D4 to determine the attributes of the weapons: 1=1D6 damage, Size Small, Reach Short; 2=1D8 damage, Size Medium, Reach Short, 3=1D10 damage, Size Large, Reach Medium; 4=1D12 damage, Size Very Large, Reach Medium.
21	Clever	+1D8 INT.
22	Climbing	Has a spider or lizard like ability to scale surfaces, +1D8x10% bonus to Athletics when climbing.
23	Clumsy	-1D8 DEX.
24	Contagious	Inflicts a virulent disease with a delay of 1D8 hours and potency of 1D8x10%, which causes a penalty of 1D8 points to; roll a d6, 1=STR, 2=CON, 3=DEX, 4=INT, 5=POW or 6=CHA.
25	Corroding	Weapons take 1D8 damage each time they strike the creature.
26	Crystalline	Gain 1D10 Armour Points from a crystalline crust.
27	Deaf	No hearing organs. Suffer a -40% penalty to the Command skill when trying to control a demon with this feature.
28	Disturbing	Creature is covered with unsettling forms, such as baby arms, or multiple eyes or mouths; gain an extra 1D8 Insanity points.
29	Draining	Temporarily weakens the willpower of an opponent by 1D8 MP each successful hit.
30	Droning	Produces a buzzing noise that sedates listeners, who must succeed in an opposed test of Persistence against the Droning's potency of 1D8 x10% to avoid falling asleep for 1D8 minutes.
31	Entangle	Restricts the movements of those within melee range, reducing their combat and manoeuvre skills by 1D8x10%.

D100	Feature	Description
32	Feeble	-1D8 STR.
33	Fixated	Creature may only concentrate upon one thing at any one time. If in combat, all attacks are concentrated on one particular opponent.
34	Frail	-1D8 CON.
35	Haemophilic	Bleeds 1 HP per round from any wounded location.
36	Hated	Will be instantly attacked by any encountered members of a specific species.
37	Hatred	Creature possesses unreasoning hatred of a particular species and will attack on sight.
38	Head	Gain an extra head (roll on the Creature Type table), each one gets an independent Persistence test against mental effects and can control the entire body if one head is incapacitated.
39	Heart of Nanorion	The demon's heart is a Nanorion gem, which can heal as many HP as the demon had POW before it shatters.
40	Horned	Gain a gore attack. Each additional incidence adds another set of horns on a different location. Roll 1D4 to determine the attributes of the weapons: 1=1D6 damage, Size Small, Reach Touch; 2=1D8 damage, Size Medium, Reach Touch, 3=1D10 damage, Size Large, Reach Medium; 4=1D12 damage, Size Very Large, Reach Medium.
41	Icy	Radiates freezing coldness, injuring anyone within melee range; roll a D4, 1=1D2, 2=1D4, 3=1D6 and 4=1D8 damage per round.
42	Intangible	Cannot be harmed physically (roll again if Inviolate).
43	Inverted	All vital organs are external, thus all successful attacks upon it are automatic critical hits.
44	Inviolate	Cannot be harmed magically (roll again if Intangible).
45	Leaper	Has powerfully sprung legs, +1D8 x10% bonus to Athletics when jumping.
46	Legs	Gain an extra pair of motile limbs from a random species (roll on Creature Type table).
47	Levitating	Has the capability to move over any solid or liquid surface without sinking or leaving tracks.
48	Mimic	Changes into the shape of a creature it successfully touches, maintaining its own Characteristics but assuming the locations and a duplicate image of the being contacted.
49	Mournful	Appearance is so sad or pathetic, that observers must succeed in an opposed test of Persistence against the Mournfulness' potency of 1D8 x10% to be able to attack.
50	Mutated	Roll a random location, which no longer exists.
51	Nerveless	Cannot feel pain and does not suffer the ill-effects of serious wounds.
52	Numb	No sense of touch.
53	Obfuscating	Produces a cloud of mist that blinds observers, who must succeed in an opposed test of Perception against the Obfuscation's potency of 1D8x10% every Combat Action to observe the creature.
54	Observant	One of the creature's sensory organs either grows bigger (x1D4 in size) or multiplies (x1D4 in number), adding a +1D8x10% bonus to the Perception skill when using that sensory perception; roll a D6, 1=Sight, 2=Sound, 3=Smell, 4=Taste, 5=Touch and 6=Other (if possessed).
55	Oversized	One location is swollen to a very large size or length, doubling its Hit Points.
56	Paralysing	Temporarily weakens the dexterity of an opponent by 1D8 DEX each successful hit.
57	Patterned	Weird colouring and markings such as tiger stripes, spots, blotches and so on.
58	Phobic	Creature is scared of one thing; singing, light, cats and so forth.
59	Poisonous	One unarmed attack inflicts a venomous poison with a delay of 1D8 Combat Actions and a potency of 1D8x 10%, which causes an extra 1D8 damage to the location struck.
60	Polymorph	Changes form every round, maintaining its own Characteristics, but assuming the locations of the new shape and carrying over any damage already suffered (various forms should be prepared in advance by the Games Master).
61	Quick	Double Movement.
62	Reflecting	All Runes cast on the creature are reflected back upon the caster.
63	Regenerating	Recovers 1 Hit Point per round to every location, except for major wounds.
64	Resistant	Invulnerable to one type of damage or weapon type; fire, cold, poison, disease, swords, spears, cudgels and so forth (also known as a Wardpact). The demon must declare its resistance or Wardpact to anyone preparing to use that form of attack.
65	Roaring	Produces a thunderous sound that deafens listeners, who must succeed in an opposed test of Resilience against the Roaring's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid becoming temporally stunned for 1d8 Combat Actions.
66	Scaly	Gain 1D6 Armour Points for reptilian scales.

D100	Feature	Description
67	Scintillating	A shifting polychromatic appearance that confuses onlookers, who must succeed in an opposed test of Persistence against the Scintillation's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid becoming mesmerised.
68	Screaming	Horrible screams that terrify listeners, who must succeed in an opposed test of Persistence against the Screaming's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid gaining a temporary insanity.
69	Shadowy	Can control the ambient light in its immediate surroundings.
70	Shaggy	Gain 1D4 Armour Points from a thick, hairy pelt.
71	Shelled	Gain 1D8 Armour Points from an insectile or crustacean carapace.
72	Shrunken	One location is shrunken to a very small size or length, halving its Hit Points.
73	Skinless	The creature has no Armour Points and cannot wear armour.
74	Slimy	Leaves a sticky trail wherever it travels.
75	Slow	Halve Movement.
76	Small	-1D8 SIZ.
77	Spiny	Opponents in melee suffer half their own rolled damage if they successfully land an attack.
78	Spores	Produces clouds of spores. If inhaled the breather must win an opposed test of Resilience against the Spore's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid suffering 1D8 Hit Points to the chest every round until successful; as the spores gestate into worms, flowers, vines and so forth, that are coughed up, or grow out of their lungs
79	Stalker	+1D8x5% bonus to Stealth when sneaking.
80	Stench	Gives off nauseating odours that sicken inhalers, who must succeed in an opposed test of Resilience against the Stench's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid dropping prone and vomiting.
81	Sticky	Secretes a strong glue or mucus of potency 1D8x10%, which causes items to adhere to its skin, requiring a Brute Force Athletics test at a penalty of the potency to remove.
82	Sting	Gain a sting attack. Each additional incidence adds another stinger on a different location; Roll 1D4 to determine the attributes of the weapon: 1=1D6 damage, Size Small, Reach Short; 2=1D8 damage, Size Medium, Reach Short; 3=1D10 damage, Size Large, Reach Medium; 4=1D12 damage, Size Very Large, Reach Medium.
83	Strong	+1D8 STR.
84	Stupid	-1D8 INT.
85	Susceptibility	One form of substance causes double damage to the creature; alcohol, silver, fire and so forth.
86	Swimmer	Has webbed digits and gills, +1D8x10% bonus to Athletics when swimming.
87	Tailed	Gains extra unarmed attack, the damage is triple the creature's Damage Modifier but only for the purposes of calculating Knockback.
88	Tentacle	Gains a tentacle that can be used as a weapon. Each additional instance adds another tentacle that <i>replaces</i> a random location. Roll 1D4 to determine the attributes of the weapon: 1=1D6 damage, Size Medium, Reach Short; 2=1D8 damage, Size Large, Reach Medium; 3=1D10 damage, Size Large, Reach Long; 4=1D12 damage, Size Very Large, Reach Long.
89	Tongue	Gains a tongue that can be used as a weapon. Roll 1D4 to determine the attributes of the weapon: 1=1D6 damage, Size Small, Reach Short; 2=1D8 damage, Size Medium, Reach Medium; 3=1D10 damage, Size Medium, Reach Long; 4=1D12 damage, Size Large, Reach Long.
90	Toothed	Gain a bite attack. Each additional incidence adds another toothed maw on a different location. Each additional instance adds another maw to a random location. Roll 1D4 to determine the attributes of the weapon: 1=1D6 damage, Size Small, Reach Touch; 2=1D8 damage, Size Medium, Reach Short; 3=1D10 damage, Size Large, Reach Short; 4=1D12 damage, Size Very Large, Reach Medium.
91	Tough	+1D8 CON.
92	Transmuter	Changes the substance of whatever it touches into another material; living victims must succeed in an opposed test of Resilience against the Transmute's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid being changed into crystal, dust, plants, wine, bronze and so on.
93	Ugly	-1D8 CHA.
94	Vampiric	Temporarily weakens the health of an opponent by 1D8 CON each successful hit.
95	Vulnerable	Damage to one location slays the creature instantly.
96	Warded	Invulnerable to one form of material; steel, wood, stone, flesh and so forth.
97	Warped	One random location changes to that of a different species (roll on Creature Type table).
98	Weakening	Temporarily weakens the strength of an opponent by 1D8 STR each successful hit.
99	Wilful	+1D8 POW.
100	Wings	Gains bat, bird, butterfly or insect wings granting a Flying Movement equal to normal Movement.

If killed, only the demon's corporeal form remains, albeit briefly; its essence returns to its plane of origin.

When designing a new species of demon, the following table may be of use in deciding the demon's basic physique – or roll twice or more and combine the results, for a truly disturbing effect.

Demon Physique Type

01–04	Arachnine	Spider
05–08	Avian	Bird
09–12	Cancrine	Crab
13–16	Canine	Dog
17–20	Caprine	Goat
21–24	Cervine	Stag
25–28	Crocodylian	Crocodile
29–32	Equine	Horse
33–36	Feline	Cat
37–38	Glirine	Rodent
39–40	Hirudinal	Leech
41–44	Humaniform	Human
45–48	Insectile	Insect
49–52	Lupine	Wolf
53–56	Noctillionine	Bat
57–60	Octopine	Octopus
61–64	Piscine	Fish
65–68	Porcine	Boar
69–72	Pyridine	Butterfly
73–76	Ranine	Frog
77–80	Saurian	Lizard
81–84	Simian	Ape
85–88	Taurine	Bull
89–92	Ursine	Bear
93–96	Vermian	Worm
97–00	Vespine	Wasp

Skills are generally based on a multiple of a particular Characteristic and the skills most common to a demon type are listed in the description of each category. However, a demon has any unlisted basic skill calculated in the same way as an *Elric of Melniboné* Adventurer. Additionally a demon also has one

additional Advanced skill, for each Magic Point invested in its Characteristics. These default to the standard starting level, or may be exchanged to boost an existing Advanced skill by a further 10%.

Demon Natural Weapons

When summoned demons of combat and protection arrive naturally armed with either claws or teeth. These are used at the demon's Unarmed skill percentage. To determine the attributes of the weapon, refer to the following Demon Natural Weapons table, using the number of Magic Points invested in the demon's Characteristics (specifically SIZ) to determine the size, reach and damage of the claws or teeth.

If the summoner wishes, he may add a further natural weapon to the demon. This costs an additional number of Magic Points equal to the maximum value for that entry on the table but has the advantage of adding one extra Combat Action to the demon's existing Combat Actions based on its INT and DEX. This extra Combat Action must be used with the natural weapon that has just been added, otherwise it is wasted.

Thus, if a sorcerer wants to add a set of Large Teeth to a demon that already has claws, it would cost an *additional* six Magic Points as six is the maximum for that category. However the demon would have +1 Combat Action for its Claw attack.

Further natural weapons or augmented weapon damage may occur as random results on the Demon Features table.

Demons of Combat

The soldiers of Chaos, demons of combat relish battle and bloodshed and are the only demons that can be commanded to attack without provocation. They always ignore any command that does not involve physical violence in some way and, if they make a Persistence test successfully, break free from the sorcerer's control and run amok for the remainder of their summoned time. Attacks are only made against the summoner if no one else is in the immediate vicinity.

All demons of combat come equipped with natural weapons, be these fists, feet, claws, jaws or something else. If they have hands

Demon Natural Weapons

Number of D8 placed into SIZ	Claws			Teeth		
	Damage	Size	Reach	Damage	Size	Reach
1–2	1D3	Small	Touch	1D6	Medium	Touch
3–4	1D4	Medium	Short	1D8	Large	Touch
5–6	1D6	Large	Medium	1D10	Huge	Touch
7–8	1D8	Huge	Long	1D12	Enormous	Touch
9–10	1D10	Enormous	Very Long	2D8	Gargantuan	Touch
11+	1D12	Gargantuan	Very Long	2D10	Gargantuan	Touch

capable of grasping, they can wield any weapon they are given, although this is something the sorcerer must provide, along with any armour, suitably crafted to its form.

Characteristics

STR XD8+8
 CON XD8
 SIZ XD8
 INT XD8-8
 POW XD8
 DEX XD8+8
 CHA XD8

Special Ability

All demons of combat add any extra Magic Points beyond those invested in their Characteristics and Chaotic Features to their Damage Modifier.

Skills

Athletics DEX x3%, Evade DEX x3%, Persistence POW x3%, Resilience CON x3%, Unarmed STR x3%.

Weapons

Demons of combat wield any weapon given to them at DEX x3%. If the demon cannot wield weapons, it has one natural attack, at its Unarmed skill percentage, as discussed in Demon Weapons on page 96.

Sample Demon of Combat

A snarling mixture of tiger and human, with the legs of a stork.

7 Magic Point summoning; 3 for Characteristics, 3 for increasing the Damage Modifier and 1 for a Chaotic Feature.



	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	31	1-3	Right Leg	-7
CON	13	4-6	Left Leg	-7
SIZ	18	7-9	Abdomen	-8
INT	5	10-12	Chest	-9
POW	12	13-15	Right Arm	-6
DEX	27	16-18	Left Arm	-6
CHA	15	19-20	Head	-7

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D10+3
Magic Points	12
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+16

Typical Armour: None

Traits: Chaotic Feature (Nerveless – feels no pain)

Skills: Athletics 81%, Evade 81%, Persistence 36%, Resilience 39%, Survival 37%, Unarmed 93%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Combat Styles
Claw	L	M	1D6+1D10+3	As for Arm	Battleaxe 93% (2H), Unarmed 93%
Battleaxe	M	M	1D8+1+1D10+3	4/8	

Demons of Desire

These demons offer gratification and wish fulfilment. They tend to be obsequious and fawning, although they may equally be arrogant and aloof, depending on mood and personality. Demons of desire fetch, carry and indulge almost any decadent or perverted whim but they do not fight or protect their summoner. Demons of desire usually manifest in a human form of a gender desirable to the summoner but are not compelled to do so and can take whatever form (as long as it is an organic, animate thing) the sorcerer prefers.

Desire demons make excellent thieves, spies and eavesdroppers. Their skills are tailored to such tasks, every bit as much as the more obvious talents a demon of desire might be called upon to demonstrate.

Characteristics

STR XD8-8
 CON XD8
 SIZ XD8
 INT XD8
 POW XD8+8
 DEX XD8
 CHA XD8+8

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	11	1-3	Right Leg	-/6
CON	12	4-6	Left Leg	-/6
SIZ	17	7-9	Abdomen	-/7
INT	10	10-12	Chest	-/8
POW	22	13-15	Right Arm	-/5
DEX	11	16-18	Left Arm	-/5
CHA	24	19-20	Head	-/6

Combat Actions	2	Typical Armour: None
Damage Modifier	+1D2	
Magic Points	22	Traits: Chaotic Feature (Chameleon (skin can change colour and pattern; +40% to Stealth rolls))
Movement	8m	
Strike Rank	+11	Skills: Dance 31%, Evade 33%, Influence 72%, Perception 66%, Persistence 66%, Resilience 36%, Rune Casting (Fire) 32%, Rune Casting (Purity) 32%, Seduction 72%, Stealth 33%

Special Ability

A demon of desire knows one Rune for every extra Magic Point beyond those invested in their Characteristics and Chaotic Features. The demon's Rune Casting chance is equal to its INT+POW. It will use the runes it knows to fulfil a sorcerer's commands but will not teach the sorcerer the rune.

Skills

Evade DEX x3%, Influence CHA x3%, Perception POW x3%, Persistence POW x3%, Resilience CON x3%, Seduction CHA x3%, Stealth DEX x3%. Bonus Advanced skills are normally spent on artistic or performance skills.

Weapons

Demons of desire never enter into combat. They will defend themselves by dodging but take no other action.

Sample Demon of Desire

A beautiful, buxom, Melnibonéan noblewoman with hair that writhes, snakelike, of its own accord.

6 Magic Point summoning; 3 for Characteristics, 1 for a Chaotic Feature and 2 for Runes.

Demons of Dreams

Dream demons hail from the seventh Dream Realm. When summoned they assume a physical form and are thus defined in terms of physical Characteristics but have the disturbing ability to manipulate the dreams of mortals: granting them, enhancing them, turning them into nightmares or bringing a dream to life.

Characteristics

STR XD8-8
 CON XD8
 SIZ XD8
 INT XD8+8
 POW XD8+8
 DEX XD8
 CHA XD8

Special Ability

When in the presence of a target (within a number of metres equal to the demon's POW x10), specified as part of the Command or other bargain, Dream Demons pit their Persistence against that of the target in an Opposed roll. If successful the demon can see into the dream psyche of the target, sifting his dreams no matter how long ago they occurred and even if the dream has, for the dreamer, faded from memory.

All dream demons possess the Dreamthief skill at POW x3% and can steal a dream in the same manner as a Dreamthief. However, additional points from the summoning not attributed to Characteristics can be used to buy certain powers, see adjacent table.

Skills

Dreamthief POW x3%, Evade DEX x3%, Influence CHA x3%, Insight INT x3%, Perception POW x3%, Persistence POW x3%, Resilience CON x3%, Stealth DEX x3%. Bonus Advanced skills are normally spent on Lores.

Weapons

Dream demons do not fight and prefer a human form to all others, so that they can better merge with human society.

Sample Demon of Dreams

A gaunt child, clad as a beggar, its hair crimson and its eyes hollow and staring.

6 Magic Point summoning; 3 for Characteristics, 3 for Dream Powers.

Dream Demon Powers

Magic Point Investment	Powers
2	Dream Creation. The demon can create a dream that plays on the Passion of the target. It creates a persistent, recurring dream with a Persistence equal to the Passion the demon manipulates, that haunts and torments (or provides solace and comfort) to the target. The created dream can only be lifted by another Dream Demon or a Dreamthief.
3	Dream Corruption. The demon takes an existing dream and corrupts it with the stuff of Chaos. This creates a new Passion that grips the target with a value equal to the demon's own Persistence. The Passion can only be lifted by another Dream Demon or a Dreamthief.
4	Dream Removal. The demon completely eradicates the ability of the target to dream. This may seem like a blessing but without the ability to dream the target becomes tired, irritable, with these feelings deepening with time. Eventually the target will become suicidal. After each night's sleep the target must make a Resilience roll. If successful he feels no ill effects aside from irritability. For every failure his Persistence is reduced by 1D8%. This reduction is permanent although lost Persistence points can be regained through Improvement Rolls. When, or if, Persistence reaches zero, the target is suicidal and will attempt to kill himself out of sheer desperation. If the target relies on dreams supplied by a Dreamthief he can forgo the Resilience roll necessary after each night's sleep.
5+	Living Dreams. The demon takes a dream and makes it real. When the target awakes, he awakes into the dream the demon has created, experiencing it as a DreamQuest. This state leaves the Adventurer unable to interact with the real world, remaining slack-jawed and comatose whilst he inhabits the dream created for him. To save the Adventurer requires entering the living dream as a DreamQuest. The dream's resonance is equal to the Dream Demon's Persistence. Dreamthieves cannot alleviate Living Dreams.

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6	1–3	Right Leg	–/5
CON	14	4–6	Left Leg	–/5
SIZ	8	7–9	Abdomen	–/6
INT	22	10–12	Chest	–/7
POW	22	13–15	Right Arm	–/4
DEX	11	16–18	Left Arm	–/4
CHA	6	19–20	Head	–/5

Combat Actions	3	Typical Armour: None
Damage Modifier	–1D4	
Magic Points	22	Traits: None
Movement	8m	
Strike Rank	+16	Skills: Dreamthrift 66%, Evade 33%, Influence 18%, Perception 66%, Persistence 66%, Resilience 42%, Stealth 33%

Demons of Knowledge

These demons are the teachers of Chaos, spreaders of blasphemous knowledge, gatherers of information and disseminators of lies. Sorcerers call upon such demons when they need a certain fact, wish to broaden their knowledge in a particular area or to have knowledge stolen. Demons of knowledge are accomplished in all these areas but that does not make them reliable.

Knowledge demons do not fight and cannot be commanded to do so. However, acting as strategists and tacticians, they can command others to fight – demons or mortals – although success is never guaranteed.

The form taken by demons of knowledge is purely dependent on whim. The image of the shrewd scholar, hunched of back, wizened of feature, is a popular semblance but knowledge demons delight in taking animal forms, in which case they act rather like familiars.

Demons of knowledge are chiefly masters of ancient, arcane Lore but they are skilled in looking into both the future and the past, with some accuracy. As teachers they can communicate their knowledge to their summoner although this always involves a Command roll from the sorcerer.

Characteristics

STR	XD8–8
CON	XD8
SIZ	XD8
INT	XD8+8
POW	XD8+8
DEX	XD8
CHA	XD8

Special Ability

For every extra Magic Point beyond those invested in their Characteristics and Chaotic Features a demon of knowledge can look up to one day into the future or one year into the past, describing events relevant to a particular place or person. The accuracy of their knowledge (or what they communicate) is equal to INT x3. No roll is required; this is a measure of the demon's accuracy of observation. For example, a demon of knowledge with INT 17 with three points dedicated to its prophecy can look three days into the future and be 51% accurate in reporting what it sees. It might be able to report specific events but be hazy about participants, or might mix-up the chronology of events but get the participant's details precise. Games Masters should feel free to use this level of accuracy according to the scenario and requirements of their campaign.

When acting as teachers, demons of knowledge can school a student in one subject, acting as a teacher as described on page 51 in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

Skills

Evaluate INT x3%, Influence CHA x3%, Language (High Speech) INT x3%, Lore (choose one separate field of Lore for every Magic Point invested in its base Characteristics) INT x3%, Persistence POW x3%, Resilience CON x3%, Teaching INT x3%

Dream Powers: Dream Corruption

Sample Demon of Knowledge

A spindly, tentacle-armed, bald-headed, albino Dharijorian with the eyes and head-twisting ability of an owl.

6 Magic Point summoning; 3 in Characteristics, 1 in Prophecy and 2 in Chaotic Features.

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3	1–3	Right Leg	–/6
CON	14	4–6	Left Leg	–/6
SIZ	12	7–9	Abdomen	–/7
INT	25	10–12	Chest	–/8
POW	21	13–15	Right Arm	–/5
DEX	18	16–18	Left Arm	–/5
CHA	12	19–20	Head	–/6

Combat Actions	3	Typical Armour: None
Damage Modifier	–1D4	
Magic Points	21	Traits: Observant (eyes +50% to Perception), Warped (arms into tentacles)
Movement	8m	
Strike Rank	+22	Skills: Evaluate 75%, Influence 36%, Language (High Speech) 75%, Lore (Chaos) 75%, Lore (Million Spheres) 75%, Lore (Natural World) 75%, Persistence 63%, Resilience 42%, Teaching 75%

The demon can teach any of its Language or Lore skills for a maximum 25% increase to the student's existing knowledge (limited by the time available for the summoning). Able to look one year into the past or one day into the future with 75% accuracy.

Demons of Protection

Demons of protection guard whatever they have been commanded to protect and to the degree they have been instructed. Sorcerers need to be careful with how they phrase commands. 'Kill everyone trying to enter my laboratory' means the demon will do precisely that – including the summoner.

Protection demons can manifest in any animate form desired; huge, burly humans; vile monsters; softly spoken gatekeepers. They are taciturn and precise. They will fight for their summoner but only when this constitutes protection. No demon of protection can be ordered to fight unless there is a distinct and perceivable threat to what it is guarding.

All demons of protection come equipped with natural weapons, be these fists, feet, claws, jaws or something else. If they have hands capable of grasping, they can wield any weapon they are given, although this is something the sorcerer must provide, along with any armour, suitably crafted to its form. Demons of protection never wander more than two or three metres from what they protect. If acting as bodyguards for a sorcerer, they move when the sorcerer moves but never stray far away – certainly not beyond close combat distances.

If a ranged attack is perceived or launched, the demon intersperses itself between missile and object. They have no qualms in laying down their lives for a summoner; that is part of their contract.

Characteristics

STR	XD8
CON	XD8+8
SIZ	XD8+8
INT	XD8-8
POW	XD8
DEX	XD8
CHA	XD8

Special Ability

A demon of protection has natural Armour Points equal to every extra Magic Point beyond those invested in their Characteristics and Chaotic Features.

Skills: Evade DEX x3%, Perception POW x3%, Persistence POW x3%, Resilience CON x3%, Unarmed STR x3%

Weapons

Demons of protection wield any weapon given to them at DEX x3%. If the demon cannot wield weapons, it has one natural attack, based on its form, for every Magic Point invested in their Characteristics, at its Unarmed skill percentage.

Sample Demon of Protection

A huge, bright red spider with a human face.

9 Magic Point summoning; 3 in Characteristics, 4 in Armour Points and 2 in Chaotic Features.

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	13	1	Right Fourth Leg	4/6
CON	26	2	Left Fourth Leg	4/6
SIZ	21	3	Right Third Leg	4/6
INT	8	4	Left Third Leg	4/6
POW	16	5–11	Abdomen/Head	4/7
DEX	19	12	Right Second Leg	4/6
CHA	11	13	Left Second Leg	4/6
		14	Right First Leg	4/6
		15	Left First Leg	4/6
		16–20	Thorax	4/8

Combat Actions	3	Typical Armour: Chitin (no Armour Penalty)
Damage Modifier	+1D4	
Magic Points	16	Traits: Climbing (+60%), Poisonous
Movement	12m	
Strike Rank	+14	Skills: Engineering 28%, Evade 57%, Perception 48%, Persistence 48%, Resilience 78%, Unarmed 39%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	L	T	1D6+1D4	As for Head

Combat Styles

Unarmed (Bite) 39%. The demon's bite is poisonous. It injects venom with a Potency of 48%, an Onset Time of 1D3 Combat Rounds, Duration of 2D6 minutes, that induces Agony.

Demons of Transport

Demons of transport usually take the form of beasts used either for riding or drawing some other mode of transportation. Demon horses, cattle, or even more esoteric configurations, such as giant wolves or insects are common forms.

Transport demons will take the summoner anywhere they are commanded to, as long as the place can be reached within the time remaining for their summoning. If the destination exceeds the distance the demon can travel, it may not necessarily point this out and, instead, take the rider as far as it is able before leaving them stranded.

Demons of transport stop at nothing to reach their destination leaping walls, gates and battlements. They ignore injuries if wounded and ignore threats of danger but will not fight on behalf of the sorcerer. No demon of transport will ever try to bypass a demon of protection.

Demons that are equipped with wings can fly but note that flying is a strenuous activity, the demon can only fly while carrying a light load limited to its STR or less in ENC. Additionally, for a

flying demon to be used as a mount, it must have a SIZ double or more than that of its passenger or passengers.

Characteristics

STR	XD8+8
CON	XD8
SIZ	XD8+8
INT	XD8-8
POW	XD8
DEX	XD8
CHA	XD8

Special Ability

Demons of transport are preternaturally fast. Multiply the standard Movement Rate for the kind of creature it assumes by the extra Magic Points beyond those invested in their Characteristics and Chaotic Features. Demons of transport are tireless and suffer no fatigue effects while carrying out their duties. They can carry a maximum SIZ equal to their STR

Skills

Acrobatics DEX x3%, Athletics DEX x3%, Evade DEX x3%, Persistence POW x3%, Resilience CON x3%

Weapons

Although the demon may exhibit natural weapons due to its form, these are not used for combat purposes. However a demon

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	27	1-2	Tail	-/10
CON	20	3-4	Right Hind Leg	-/10
SIZ	28	5-6	Left Hind Leg	-/10
INT	3	7-8	Hindquarters	-/11
POW	11	9-10	Chest/Forequarters	-/12
DEX	16	11-12	Right Wing	-/9
CHA	15	13-14	Left Wing	-/9
		15-16	Right Front Leg	-/10
		17-18	Left Front Leg	-/10
		19-20	Head	-/10

Combat Actions	2	Typical Armour: None
Damage Modifier	+1D12	
Magic Points	11	Traits: Flying
Movement	32m	
Strike Rank	+10	Skills: Acrobatics 48%, Athletics 48%, Evade 48%, Persistence 33%, Resilience 60%, Tracking 23%

can be commanded to charge at, or through, assailants. If the opponent(s) cannot Evade the charge they suffer damage equal to the demon's Damage Bonus and Knockback effects.

Sample Demon of Transport

A demonic combination of horse and winged lizard. 5 Magic Point summoning; 3 in Characteristics and 2 in Movement.

UNIQUE CREATURES AND SUMMONINGS

In the course of the saga, various named creatures are summoned to thwart or destroy Elric; the Creatures of Matik, the Kyrenee, the Oonai. All these are unique summonings requiring a specific spell. Coming by such spells should never be easy and no sorcerer should ever begin the game with this knowledge (although it might be gained through adventuring, accidentally or deliberately, or be gifted by a generous patron deity).

The creatures listed here appear in the Elric saga. Other powerful, extra-dimensional entities doubtlessly exist and Games Masters are encouraged to create their own, with suitable summoning spells, using the following examples as guidance.

Summoning Spells

Each spell must be learned separately. As with the standard Summoning Ritual spell, it cannot exceed the sorcerer's High Speech percentage. All summoning spells begin at a base percentage equal to the caster's POW.

Each summoning spell has certain unique attributes.

Magic Point Cost: Deduct this from the sorcerer's Magic Point total once the spell is cast. If the spell fails, deduct one Magic Point. If the attempt fumbles, the full cost is deducted.

Requisites/Components: Any requisite conditions and/or components for the spell to succeed. All conditions must be fulfilled or the spell cannot be cast.

Casting a *specific* summoning spell can be done quickly, if the sorcerer is desperate enough to risk failure. Such conjurations only require 1D8 Combat Actions but if the summoning test fails the sorcerer must roll on the Psychic Backlash table. However, if the sorcerer has time to prepare properly, then the spells can be cast as a full ritual as per a normal summoning.

The summoning spell invokes one of the creatures described. See the description of the creature in the Creatures and Personalities chapter. If more creatures are wanted, more Magic Points need to be invested in the spell, although the casting time and duration are unaffected. The *Horde* gift offers a way of summoning multiple creatures in a more Magic Point efficient way.

Summon Boatmen of Xerlerenes

Magic Point Cost: 20 per boat

Requisites/Components: Rune of Air

The realm of Xerlerenes is dominated by Lassa and the boatmen are residents of that plane (characterised by a lake that floats above the mountains). The boatmen are strong and fierce but mortal nonetheless. These huge, bearded, black-skinned sailors fish the lakes of Xerlerenes with their wide nets from their airborne boats. It is the boats that are magical, blessed, perhaps, by Lassa's hand.

Summoning a boat and its crew requires great magical reserves and takes 15 minutes; five to perform the incantations and 10 for the boatmen to materialise, sailing into view through the air, heading towards the summoner. The Rune of Air needs to be known by the summoner but does not need to be cast.

One boat and its crew are summoned when the spell is cast. A boat carries 20+2D10 crewmen. Treat the boat as a Longship.

The boatmen fight on behalf of the summoner for one hour before returning to Xerlerenes. Their key tactic is to use their steel nets to scoop-up an enemy, haul them towards the boat and then attack the helpless prisoners with their barbed tridents, harpoons and curved, long-bladed swords. They relish battle and fight without mercy.

Summon Creatures of Matik

Magic Point Cost: 6 per creature of Matik

Requisites/Components: High Speech 50% or greater, Rune of Chaos

Created by Matik of Melniboné, these five metre tall hybrids of vulture and lion stalk the borders of the earth and Chaos. They are immense predators that can be commanded by their summoner. They seem to especially hate the Hunting Dogs of the Dharzi and may have been a chief weapon against them during Melniboné's war with the Beast Folk a millennia ago.

As specific creations of Melniboné the spell requires at least a 50% competency in High Speech to perform it correctly. For the same Magic Point cost, the spell can also be used to dispel summoned creatures.

Summon Elenoin

Magic Point Cost: 6 per Elenoin

Requisites/Components: Rune of Chaos, Rune of Woman

This spell summons the Elenoin from the 8th Plane. These fierce, female warriors like to eat their victims, pausing in battle to do so.

Summon Grahluk

Magic Point Cost: 4 per Grahluk

Requisites/Components: Rune of Chaos, Rune of Man

This spell summons the enemies of the elenoin; the grahluk – also from the 8th Plane. The summoning spell for the grahluk is rare, even by Melnibonéan standards and is contained in only one grimoire belonging to Emperor Sadric 86th, Elric's father.

Summon Hunting Dog of the Dharzi

Magic Point: 2 per hunting dog

Requisites/Components: Opish 60%, Rune of Beasts (Dog)

This spell summons forth the feared Dharzi Hunting Dogs, tenacious tracker-hunters that are part hound, part vulture.

Summon Kyrenee

Magic Point Cost: 28

Requisites/Components: Rune of Chaos (minimum 50%), Rune of Darkness

The kyrenee is a greater demon summoned by Narjhan, himself a minor noble of Chaos, in his attack upon Tanelorn. The kyrenee is as vast as a storm cloud, a festering, shapeless mass of seething Chaotic energy that drips poisonous dew from its substance and forms streams of coiling tentacles to seize and crush its foes.

The kyrenee is vulnerable to salamanders, sustaining double damage from their attacks.

Summon Oonai

Magic Point Cost: 9 per Oonai

Requisites/Components: Rune of Law (minimum 50%)



This spell summons the chimerical oonai – shape-shifting creatures that abhor their own form. In their native form oonai resemble bloated, black-skinned, pig-like creatures. Once they were servants of Chaos but Chaos deserted them leaving them stuck with their grotesque forms. So sickened by this betrayal the oonai have forsaken Chaos and now serve Law.

Summon Quaolnargn

Magic Point Cost: 19

Requisites/Components: Rune of Chaos

This hideous, blind monstrosity is an assassin that feeds on the souls of its contracts. Quaolnargn resembles a vast, green, toad-like thing with milky unseeing eyes that moans with the pain that being on earth causes it. Quaolnargn must be commanded using the Command skill and focuses on the soul of the victim specified by its summoner.

SPIRIT MAGIC

In certain cultures the spirits of nature, elements, ancestors and beasts are as revered as the Lords of Law and Chaos in others. The Weeping Waste, Dorel, Pikarayd, Nishvalni-Oss... each has its own shamanic tradition that manifests in the use of Spirit Magic amongst the natives of these kingdoms.

Spirit Magic and shamanism is little acknowledged in the civilised Young Kingdoms although Melniboné, as ever, cultivated a propensity for it and has a civilised form of spirit and ancestor worship practiced in the noble line and amongst certain individuals.

The Spirit Magic rules found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* can be used in *Elric of Melniboné* to represent the magic of these cultures. The traditions followed in the kingdoms where spirit worship prevails are as follows:

Young Kingdoms Spirit Traditions

Kingdom	Tradition
Dorel	Ancestors, Elementals
Melniboné	Ancestors, Beasts, Elementals, Nature
Nishvalni-Oss	Ancestors, Beasts, Nature
Oin/Yu	Ancestors, Nature
Org	Ancestors
Pikarayd	Ancestors
Silent Lands	Ancestors, Elementals
Weeping Waste	Ancestors, Beasts, Elementals, Nature

This section discusses the nuances of spirit veneration in these cultures and how they are applied in *Elric of Melniboné* adventures.

The Spirit Plane in the Young Kingdoms

The Spirit Plane is like any other parallel dimension of the Multiverse. It can be reached through the appropriate magic and obeys its own rules that roughly mirror the mundane world. The Spirit World is tied to the plane of the Young Kingdoms by laws that ensure those with the correct knowledge (Spirit Walkers) can move between the two. The Spirit Plane is free from the influence of the Lords of Law and Chaos, although certain shamans claim that the Spirit Plane has its own deities, sometimes called the Grey Lords, who watch over the domain but do not interfere in its workings. Each culture has its own name for the Spirit Plane although it is often referred to by the civilised nations as 'The Grey Fees', the 'Middle Kingdoms', or 'The Middle March' – all terms coined by Melniboné.

Spirits do not venture from the Spirit Plane unless summoned or compelled to do so by a shaman. Although malign spirits are found there – such as disease and curse spirits – such horrors do not infest the earth directly unless some shaman has bound them to the mundane plane for reasons of their own.

Ancestor Worship

To the Primitive and Barbarian cultures of the Young Kingdoms, ancestor worship is an important facet of life. The ancestors taught the tribes what they know, protected them from the ravages of the Melnibonéans, the Dharzi and other enemies, and protect the tribes still – as long as they are venerated. In return, the ancestors, working through the shaman of the tribes, offer personal power and magic.

The Ancestor Spirit rules on page 143 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* are used to determine the nature of ancestors.

Ancestor veneration serves to justify and maintain the existing culture, emphasising aspects of the culture that are deemed important. In the case of the Young Kingdoms the veneration of ancestors cultivates and promotes the value of kinship: because the ancestors are real and can help if they are honoured, even from beyond death, it is wise to honour one's kind whilst they are alive. This ancient practice teaches filial piety, family loyalty and lineage continuity. Through ancestor veneration, a tribe is bound together through generations almost without number. The veneration of ancestors also fulfils another basic human need: the need to believe in an afterlife – something lacking in many civilised cultures where the Lords of Law and Chaos are somewhat distant and uncaring deities. Ancestor veneration reinforces the belief that the soul goes on after death, so death is nothing to be feared, for the souls will be taken care of by descendants. History is also important to the tribes of the Young Kingdoms.

After all, they fight, live and die for causes and they do not want those struggles to be forgotten, so they, in turn, ensure that they remember their ancestors and their deeds so their own will be remembered by future generations.

Every tribe or clan has a small shrine to the ancestors of the community. The ancestors are usually represented by small clay figures wrapped in something that belonged to them in life, such as a piece of clothing or a length of hair; however they may take on a more macabre appearance with the bones or mummified cadaver being maintained in a ritualistic manner. In Melniboné the representations are more elaborate, such as finely carved jade likenesses or delicate, life-like busts or full-size replicas made from porcelain, marble, bone or terracotta.

Daily worship takes the form of gifts, usually wine and food, which are offered to the ancestors to show respect and to make the lives of the ancestors easier. Food, wine and precious objects offered to the ancestors feed and aid the ancestor spirits. Slaves sacrificed to the ancestors grant the ancestor spirit a slave in the afterworld. Not providing the gifts on a regular basis can bring about natural or personal disasters: ancestors are linked to the Source of All Things and if they are unhappy or neglected, then this reverberates through the ancestral chain and into the Source itself, causing bad luck, misfortune and physical disaster to strike.

Most primitive and barbarian cultures believe their ancestors continue to have a keen interest in the affairs of humanity –

especially in the affairs of their descendants. Thus, all are expected to inform their ancestors of any major decisions and seek their guidance, via the tribal or clan shaman.

Calculating an Ancestor's Intensity

All ancestor spirits are rated in terms of their Ancestral Intensity. The power is comparable to Spirit Intensity and is based on the time since the ancestor's mortal death. It is calculated as follows:

1 point for every 500 years since death (minimum of 1 point).

Thus, an ancestor who died 1,000 years ago would have an Intensity of 2.

The Characteristics of the ancestor are based on this Intensity:

Young Kingdoms ancestors do not have access to Common Magic but may have access to Dream Magic, Rune Magic or Sorcery, depending on the needs of the campaign. This can also be determined from Intensity:

The skills in any of these magical paths must form part of the skills chosen for that ancestor. If an ancestor possesses Dream Magic, it has the skill of Dreamthief and can steal dreams (and confer them) just as a Dreamthief would.

Seeking knowledge or assistance from an ancestor depends on the success of a mock Spirit Combat to see if the ancestor will aid the shaman or not. A bonus (or penalty) to the shaman's Spirit

Ancestor Characteristics

	Intensity			
	1–5	6–10	11–15	16–20
INT	As per mortal	As per mortal+ ½ Intensity	As per mortal+ ½ Intensity	As per mortal+Intensity
POW	1D10+5	1D10+ Intensity	3D6+ Intensity	4D6+ Intensity
CHA	As per mortal	As per mortal+ ½ Intensity	As per mortal+ ½ Intensity	As per mortal+Intensity
Heroic Abilities	0	1	1D3	1D3+2
Skills	1D3	1D3+1	1D4+1	1D6+1
Skill %	70+Intensity	80+Intensity	90+Intensity	100+Intensity
Persistence	POW x4	POW x4	POW x4	POW x4

Ancestor Magic

Intensity	Dream Magic	Rune Casting	Summonings
1–5	Chance equal to Intensity x5	1D3–1 Runes	Chance equal to Intensity x5
6–10		1D3 Runes	
11–15		1D3+1 Runes	
16–20		1D3+2 Runes	

Binding skill may be available depending on the quality of the sacrifice made to the ancestor.

Spirit Binding Modifiers

Offering	Spirit Binding Modifier
Sacrifice of poor quality food or drink	-20
Sacrifice of reasonable quality food or drink	0
Sacrifice of good quality food or drink	+10
Sacrifice of superior quality food or drink	+20
Offering of a Precious Object	+10
Offering an Animal Sacrifice (small animal – cat or dog, for example)	½ Creature's POW
Offering an Animal Sacrifice (medium animal – calf or pig for instance)	Creature's POW
Offering an Animal Sacrifice (large or huge animal – ox, horse, mammoth for example)	Creature's POW x2
Offering of a human sacrifice (slave or unwilling victim)	Sacrifice's POW
Offering a willing human sacrifice	Sacrifice's POW x2

Note that some ancestors may balk at a live sacrifice or a sapient one. If so, then the modifier is *automatically* a penalty to the Spirit Binding skill; not a bonus.

Beast Spirits

In some cultures, such as the primitive Valni of the Unknown East, beast spirits are the chief source of veneration. Where this is the case, the Intensity of the Beast Spirit is important as it will determine the level of magical assistance offered to shaman.

The Intensity of the Beast Spirit is determined randomly on a roll of 1D6+1. Beast Spirits follow the same rules as Nature Spirits as described in pages 144 to 145 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. However, the type of aid given by the spirit can be either chosen (according to the nature of the spirit or the tribe worshipping it) or rolled randomly:

Beast Spirit Aid

1D100	Aid
01–10	Armour Point Boost
11–20	Damage Bonus Boost
21–30	Hit Points Boost
31–40	Magic Points Boost
41–50	Movement Boost
51–60	Strike Rank Boost
61–70	Skill used by that species Boost
71–80	Manifest a Trait of that species
81–90	Combat Manoeuvre appropriate to the species
91–00	Summon a number of the mundane version of the creature equal to spirit's Intensity

Elemental Worship

Elemental worship is common. The Pukwadji and many Weeping Waste tribes worship Grome, for example, whilst in Pikarayd Lassa's violent wind-sons are venerated.

In these cultures elementals are summoned from their native elemental plane via the Spirit Plane, where the Elemental Lords have their own presence. The Intensity of the Elemental determines its size in cubic metres. It costs a shaman 2 Magic Points per point of Intensity to summon the appropriate element. Thus, an Intensity 4 (4 cubic metre) elemental would cost 8 Magic Points to summon.

Note that it is not necessary for elemental shaman to know the appropriate Rune for such a summoning. Their ancestral ties with the Elemental Lord suffice.

Nature Spirits

Nature spirits, those of plants and so forth, follow the same rules as for Beast Spirits.

Ghosts and Unquiet Spirits

Ghosts – the souls of those condemned to limbo between the mundane and spirit worlds – exist in the Young Kingdoms. These are the souls of those who have suffered a violent, senseless death and thirst for revenge; souls trapped by curses, unrequited feelings or burning hatred. Such beings hover between the earth and the Spirit Plane, unable to find rest or peace.

All ghosts retain the INT and CHA of their former life. Their POW is equal to 1D6 plus 6 for each point of Intensity. Ghost intensities are determined by rolling 1D3+1. Alternatively, if the ghost is driven by a Passion, then its Intensity is the value of the Passion divided by 20.

Ghosts have a 1D3+3 skills. One of these skills is Discorporate, the second a Spectral Combat skill and the third Persistence. Each is equal to the ghost's POW x4. If the ghost knew any magic during its mortal life, it retains it and can use it.

Ghosts will not usually attack unless there is good reason to do so. They will warn, frighten and harass perhaps but attacks are reserved for those who either disturb the resting place of the body or represent, somehow, that which condemned the ghost to limbo.

Laying a ghost to rest depends very much on the circumstances that created it. A decent burial might be enough, or revenge against whoever created the ghost might be an alternative. Ghosts can be magically laid to rest through the casting of the Man or Woman Runes in conjunction with the Rune of Reduction (INT), which is targeted against the INT of the ghost. This reduces the ghost's link with the mundane world and compels it to the Spirit Plane where it may then reside in (relative) peace.

AUTOMATA

The lawful cults, particularly Arkyn's, have their own versions of supernatural creatures: *automata*. Wrought from metal, wood, crystal or stone with internal gears, cranks, clockwork, springs and crude joints, these curious golems are given a rudimentary form of life through the inscription of runes upon the surface of the automaton. The most powerful versions, such as Myshell's bejewelled bird that carried Elric to Ashaneloon, may even have a certain level of sentience. The capabilities of these mechanical golems depend purely upon their shape and skills; automata cannot possess Chaotic Features, nor cast runes. Their main benefit is that unlike summoned demons, automata can exist permanently within the Young Kingdoms.

Automata can be built and activated by human, lawful, sorcerers. Given the amount of time and Magic Points required to create and activate automata, it is common for teams of engineers and scholars to be working on such projects. This is the procedure.

- It takes a number of weeks equal to the automata's total Characteristics and Armour Points to build and test the automata's armature. This requires both Engineering and Mechanisms tests each week during construction. Thus, the builder needs to decide how strong, big, dexterous, and so forth, the automata will be in advance. A 70 point automaton would thus have 70 points to be distributed across the Characteristics of STR, CON, SIZ, DEX, INT, CHA as well as its Armour Points and would take 70 weeks to build. Each Characteristic must always have one point allocated, so that the automaton can function fully. The amount invested in CHA determines the finish and attractiveness of the finished piece. Automaton's lack POW as they have no soul of their own. Divide the total build time by the number of people working on the automaton. However the minimum time to complete the automaton is always at least one tenth of the total build time (thus, 20 engineers working on the 70 point automaton would still take 7 weeks to complete the machine).
- All attributes are calculated from the Characteristics in the usual manner.
- Each point of INT allows the automaton to learn and perform one skill. Thus, an automaton with an INT of 1 could understand the command 'stack those crates into a

pile' and execute the task using an Athletics test. The actual intelligence of the golem depends upon the value of its INT. An automaton with an INT of 8 (minimum human range) is capable of speech, always in a voice determined by its activating rune. Below this value the automaton has the mental ability of an equivalent animal and may only learn basic skills. The rating of each skill the automaton can perform is always a minimum of 25% plus the sum of the Characteristics used to calculate the skill. Thus, an automaton with a STR of 10 and DEX of 10 would have an Athletics skill of 45%. Skills relying on POW are calculated using the INT characteristic instead.

- Once completed, the automaton needs to be animated. This requires the following runes:

Rune of Law, to gain the 'blessing' of Lord Arkyn and acts as the automaton's power source.

Rune of Man, Woman or Beast, to animate it in a semblance of 'life'. An automaton behaves as close to its form as it possibly can, depending on which one is inscribed.

Unlike normally inscribed runes, which trigger as soon as they are invested with Magic Points, an automaton only activates when the number of Magic Points invested in its runes, exceed its *combined Characteristics and Armour Points*. After this moment, it functions for a further number of hours equal to the Magic Points invested *beyond* the activation total. At the end of this period the runes are completely discharged. Although automata eventually run down, they can be reactivated once the sorcerer has recharged the runes, which usually requires multiple Magic Point investments over the course of several days. As soon as the reinvested Magic Points *exceed* the activation total, it begins to function again. Essentially the runes act as a battery.

Automata are tireless and not subject to any form of fatigue. They are immune to mental effects and therefore require no *Persistence* skill. Automata only obey the commands of the person who inscribed their runes, unless that command is handed to someone else. Their Hit Points are calculated according to CON and SIZ but Armour Points depend on how much effort is put into armouring the device and cannot exceed the automaton's SIZ. If an automaton ever runs down, it retains its skills and experience when it is next reanimated.

Example of an Automaton

Shashira, a sorcerer devoted to Lord Arkyn, decides to fashion herself a mechanical serpent. It is designed for subtle activities such as spying and gaining access to well guarded homes. Since Shashira is somewhat vain, she has it fashioned as an exquisitely jewelled bracelet to compliment her own appearance, as well as disguise the automaton. After a year of hard work, it is finally crafted. Shashira takes it to a dinner party in Menii, the capital of the Isle of the Purple Towns, where she has been commanded by her church to investigate rumours of demon summoning amongst the merchant classes. During dinner she invests three Magic Points into the snake. The automaton had already been charged to 45 MP, just below the amount where it would begin to function. The extra three points now activate it and it will remain functional for the next three hours. Shashira whispers her commands to the bracelet and casually lowers her arm under the table. The sentient mechanical snake drops

from her wrist and begins sneaking slowly to the private offices of the host. Much later that evening a serving girl presents the bracelet to the worried sorceress, explaining that it had been found lying on the floor of the main hallway. Obviously it had run out of Magic Points before it could report back. Covering its loss by claiming empty-headed stupidity, the sorceress leaves the party. The serpent now contains no Magic Points. Before Shashira can reanimate it to discover what it has learned, she must first recharge the automaton's Magic Points back to its activation total.

Sample automaton – 45 Magic Point activation

Appearance

A beautiful tiny clockwork snake made of brass and gold, which appears to be a piece of jewellery until activated.

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	1	1–5	Tail	1/1
CON	1	6–10	Hindbody	1/2
SIZ	1	11–15	Forebody	1/2
INT	8	16–20	Head	1/1
POW	—			
DEX	17			
CHA	16			

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	–1D8
Magic Points	—
Movement	4m
Strike Rank	+13

Typical Armour: None

Traits: None

Skills: Athletics 43%, Evade 51%, Lore (Spying) 33%, Perception 41%, Resilience 26%, Sleight 37%, Stealth 51%

Weapons

None

PAWNS OF FATE - CULTS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS



Three powers vie for control of the Young Kingdoms to one degree or another. These are the forces of Law and Chaos, battling each other, and the Elemental Lords, occupying the sidelines, concerned with their own agendas and squabbles but aloof from the greater game being played by the two major forces.

All the representatives of these forces are god-like beings of immense power over creation and mortal will. All of them seek dominion because it is in their essential natures to control that which is below them. Mortals and physical worlds – indeed entire universes – fall into this category. Thus, mortals, who are forever absorbed with the need for answers to fundamental questions such as ‘why are we here?’ and ‘what happens when we die?’ venerate these Lords of the Higher Planes as gods.

But the Lords of the Higher Planes are fickle and equally self-absorbed. They do not seek to answer the questions that mortals pose, only to secure their belief in order to maintain and perpetuate their own quests for dominion. The Lords of Law and Chaos are not sympathetic, caring gods; neither are the Elemental Lords. These are beings of a single purpose, with a singular focus, and not some wider consideration for assurance, deliverance and, ultimately, salvation. Promises might be made by the Lords of the Higher Planes through priests, prophets and favoured agents but these are often hollow and designed to secure continued worship and souls. There are no promises of a heavenly afterlife but plenty that are concerned with temporal power and perhaps an afterlife of some form, if the servant is dutiful and behaves as directed.

THE NATURE OF CULTS

Despite the distant, fickle nature of the Lords of the Higher Planes mortals still worship them. Worship is offered individually, in private ways and through private philosophies, as well as through organised groups known as cults. This chapter concerns how the cults of the people of the Young Kingdoms, Elric’s world, organise themselves.

This chapter does not offer an exhaustive list of cults: the companion volume to this book, *Cults of the Young Kingdoms*, fulfils that purpose. What this chapter does offer is as follows:

The general veneration of a particular higher power, Law, Chaos or Elemental, along with the requirements for veneration and the benefits conferred. These general cults are not dedicated to a single god but to the ideal the gods of that pantheon represent. When the people of the Young Kingdoms approach veneration, this is the way in which it is usually expressed.

Sample cults dedicated to a particular god or philosophy. These cults are the cults of the true disciples: those who seek specific power and follow a specific philosophy to gain it. Worshipers of these cults adopt a god as patron and dedicate their souls to his or her service. That dedication is irreversible; those who try to escape it usually incur the wrath of their patron.

Adventurers can choose to venerate one of the powers through general veneration, through a specific cult, or not at all. Indeed, most people in the Young Kingdoms are ignorant of the Cosmic Struggle and secular in nature, praying, when prayers are needed, to whatever force they think will aid them. But they do not dedicate their souls or service. They remain outside the Eternal Game and are rarely brought directly into the struggle unless it is as unwitting victims or collateral damage.

THE HIGHER POWERS

Each of the Higher Powers operates to an essentially selfish agenda. The Elemental Lords work to the benefit of their element, as do the Beast and Plant Lords. The Lords of Law and Chaos work to the benefit of their ideal. Each is discussed here.

The Elemental Lords

The elements rule over the four domains of the physical world: Air, Earth, Fire and Water. They control the beings that manifest as the winds, the soil and rocks, the seas and rivers, and the fires of the tribal hearth. The materials of air, earth, fire and water are elementals that lack spirit and intellect and so can be easily manipulated by mortals.

Lady Lassa, Ruler of the Air, Bringer of Storms, Mother of Breath.

Without her the earth would be devoid of life for it is her realm that brings air to the world. She controls the sylphs, spirits of the breeze; the sharnah, builders of gales; the h'haar shan, makers of whirlwinds. The birds and other flying creatures are her children and she abhors anything that would cause them harm. Lady Lassa has two unruly and destructive brothers; Misha of the West Winds, who creates the sharnah gales, and Graoll of the East Wind who raises the whirlwinds and tornadoes. From time-to-time they grow bored and release their creations upon the earth, until Lassa berates them and sends her calming breath to restore order. There is also her sister, Shaarnasaa, the life-giving and blessing queen of the South Winds. Certain tribes of Dorel, Pikarayd and the Weeping Waste venerate Misha and Graoll as gods in their own right and, flattered, the brothers send sharnahs and h'haar shans as displays of their gratitude, with no inkling of the damage caused.

Lady Lassa's enemy is Lord Kakatal. Kakatal is greedy and would starve the world of air so his flame-children, the salamanders, might burn hotter and brighter. But though they are enemies, they have maintained a respectful distance and have only rarely battled directly.

Lord Grome, Earth-Father, Mover and Shaker, the Binder.

Without Grome the world would fly apart in a storm of dust and rubble. Grome binds and makes solid. He gives form and meaning, expressing himself in the mountains and hills, great plains and calm valleys. His children are the gnomes, made from the stuff of the world, beings of immense strength that build and arrange, reshape and restructure as Grome desires. When the earth was young Grome was naked, so he called upon Lady Lassa and they made a daughter who lives with Grome as his consort; she is Ish'ish'a'maal, Lady of the Trees, and she clothes Lord Grome in the finery of the forests, giving homes to the animals and birds, which honours her mother.

Grome is fierce but fair-minded. When angered his bellows cause the earthquakes that rupture the ground and shake the snow from the mountains. When appeased the soils are nutritious and yield splendid harvests. He is more often appeased than angered.

Twenty thousand years ago Lord Grome went to war with Straasha, seeking dominance over which element should cover the surface of the earth. Their war reshaped the world, moving continents, raising and submerging islands, creating huge ranges



of mountains and flattening hills. Whilst they know peace during Elric's time, their enmity is as strong as ever; Grome builds and Straasha erodes the edges of what is built, either through the slow drip of the rains or the battering of the waves against coastlines.

Lord Kakatal, the Fire Heart, Giver of Warmth and the Hearth of the World.

Kakatal surrounds the earth and gazes upon it with his single brilliant eye, which is called the sun. He gave the world the gift of fire, so that mortals might worship him in their homes and make edible the things they caught or grew to eat. In his carelessness he neglected to restrict fire's power and so it is a force for destruction unless strictly controlled. His servants, the salamanders, lurk at the molten heart of the earth and can be called forth to channel Kakatal's powers. But they are unruly children, revelling in their power to consume and destroy, and Kakatal, neglectful still, refuses to admonish them.

Lord Kakatal seeks to dominate Lassa for she provides the stuff his fires and salamanders need to consume to live. She has an abundance of air and recognises fire's importance but refuses to feed his salamanders more than the merest scraps. Resentful, Kakatal challenges her now and then by inflicting forest fires upon her daughter, Ish'ish'a'maal, forcing her to call upon Lord Straasha to quench them with his tears, which angers jealous Lord Grome.

Lord Straasha, the Water Father, King of the Waves and Currents.

Straasha's domains are the upper waters of the world, the oceans, seas and rivers. His children, the undines, move the waters of the earth in tides and currents, causing seas to swell and retreat and rivers to flow. He cannot understand why the entire world cannot be flooded because his waters are filled with life and he constantly challenges Lord Grome's creations by gradually eroding them, reclaiming the world inch-by-inch.

His war with Grome, 20 millennia ago, created the oceans of the Young Kingdoms. But parts of his kingdom, the deepest reaches of the ocean, were stolen from him by Pyaray, a duke of Chaos who now rules a dread realm of undead sailors and sea monsters. Alone Straasha cannot challenge Pyaray and must cede this domain to the tentacled whisperer. Straasha is too proud to seek aid from any of the other elemental rulers and must therefore accept the presence of Chaos within his beloved oceans.

Straasha believes in life and respects all its mortal forms. He is sympathetic to the humans of the earth and would preserve them from the horrors of Pyaray's hellish depths. His love for life is recognised by the sailors of the Young Kingdoms, many of whom have been saved from a watery death (and being claimed by Pyaray for his undead fleet) by either Straasha's undines or the hand of the water father himself.

The Beast Lords

The beast lords rarely interfere in the affairs of the earth unless their subjects – the myriad animals, fish and insects – are threatened. They are not worshipped by humans, although there are hints that the Dharzi, described as 'beast-men', may have held them in some form of reverence.

The beast lords represent the natural creatures of the earth. They are the archetypes of the beasts of the world, the primal definition from which the natures of all animals emanate. Earthly cats behave in the way they do because Meerclar behaves that way. If his behaviour changed, the cats of the Young Kingdoms would naturally follow. This is true for all beast lords; they are creatures and the very essence of creatures, abstractions and natural forms at the same time. In this sense they are elements; indeed, Elric refers to them as such on several occasions. There may even be some relation between the Beast and Elemental lords; if there is, it is cryptic and known only to them.

For the most part the beast lords slumber in their individual realms allowing their subjects to go about their business. The

Melniboné and the Elemental Lords

Melniboné holds pacts with all the elemental rulers, established in the earliest days of the Bright Empire. Understanding their strengths and recognising the relationships that bind and separate them, Melniboné pledged worship and honour to each elemental lord and received their blessing. The lords of the elements taught the Melnibonéans their runes, the secret symbols that are the full, true names of each ruler and the way in which their children can be summoned and controlled.

In the early years of the Bright Empire the pacts with the elementals were called upon frequently but as time wore on they were forgotten as Melniboné's worship turned more towards the Lords of Chaos. But some emperors remembered these ancient pacts: Sadric the 86th, a wise Dragon Emperor, ensured his only son, Elric, understood the contracts made with the elemental rulers and mastered their runes. Elric re-enacted the founding of the elemental pacts in his four dream quests. As an elemental sorcerer, Elric has no equal and has called upon the elemental rulers on several occasions either consciously or unconsciously and each time they have answered, recalling the bargains they made and honouring Melniboné's last emperor.

earthly creatures represent their beast lords simply by being themselves; they have no other agendas or motives, save doing what their natures dictate. If those natures are threatened in some extreme way, and on a species-wide level, only then would a Beast lord be roused into action.

Melniboné holds ancient pacts with all of the beast lords, just as they do with the elementals. Each has aided the other over the millennia (although how and why is not understood) and as a result, Melniboné's emperors have the power to rouse a beast lord from its rest and seek its direct intervention in the mundane world. Elric summons Fileet, Lady of the Birds, to rescue him from the Oonai; he calls upon Haaashaastaak lord of lizards, to devour the chaotic winged creature sent against him, Yishana and Moonglum by Theleb K'aarna; and Nnuuurrrr'c'c, king of insects, is called to subdue the olab on his expedition to R'lin K'ren A'a. Other Beast lords mentioned by name in the saga are Meerclar, lord of cats, Roofdrak, lord of dogs, Muru'ah, lord of cattle and Ap-yss Alara, queen of swine.

Beast Lords of the Elric Saga

There are countless Beast Lords. Each represents the nature of the wider, earthly species and dwells in a plane close to the Earth that is the ideal set of conditions for the beast concerned. All earthly beasts are children and servants of the Beast Lord: they will obey its commands without question and above all others.

Though the Dharzi once possessed the knowledge to summon the Beast Lords, only Melnibonéans still retain the ability. No Beast Lord stirs without a pact and only then when the identity of the summoner can be established. Elric's command of the beast lords stems from his peoples' age-old relationship and his wearing of the Actorios, the ring of kings, identifying him as one with a right to call for aid.

At the Games Master's discretion human sorcerers may be permitted to attempt to form a Pact with a Beast lord. A sorcerer needs several things:

- High Speech.
- The beast lord's name.
- The Summoning Ritual skill (which, when summoning a beast lord is always at *half* the usual base percentage). A bonus can be gained from sacrificing enemies, or prey, relevant to the Lord being summoned. Nominally, each animal slaughtered adds 1% to the chance of success, up to a maximum of the sorcerer's original summoning skill.
- The readiness to *dedicate* Characteristic POW in return for the Beast lord's aid, thereby forming a Pact with it. The Compulsion imposed by such a bond is always that the sorcerer protects and nurtures the offspring of the Beast lord.

Since there are no formal cults that worship the beast lords, any help gained from their patronage is limited to that which can be brought when the sorcerer invokes the Pact established between them. Beast lords do not teach *Runes* or *Summonings* but sometimes grant *Gifts* to their most devoted followers.

Creating Other Beast lords

As there is a beast lord for every natural beast upon the earth, creating new additions is only a matter of imagination. Names for these beast-kings reflect the sound of the animal and their home realms reflect the conditions favoured by the creature. Their enemies and prey are the natural enemies and prey of their kind and no Beast lord will stir himself to deal with anything less.

Haaashaastaak, Lord of Lizards

'In the half worlds, where dwelt the master-types of all creatures other than Man, an entity stirred, hearing its name. The entity was called Haaashaastaak; and it was scaly and cold, with no true intellect, such as men and gods possessed, but an awareness, which served it as well if not better.

...It did not really hear words in the exact sense, but it heard rhythms which meant much to it, even though it did not know why...'

*'Haaashaastaak, Lord of Lizards,
Your children were fathers of men,
Haaashaastaak, Prince of Reptiles.
Come aid a grandchild now.
Haaashaastaak, Father of Scales,
Cold-blooded bringer of life...'*

— *The Weird of the White Wolf*

Meerclar, Lord of Cats

He spoke a new tongue, an alien tongue which normally he could not remember. It was a language taught to the Sorcerer Kings of Melniboné, Elric's ancestors, even before the building of Imrryr, the Dreaming City, over ten thousand years previously. "Meerclar of the Cats, it is I, your kinsman, Elric of Melniboné, last of the line that made vows of friendship with you and your people. Do you hear me, Lord of the Cats?"

Far beyond the Earth, dwelling within a world set apart from the physical laws of space and time which governed the planet, glowing in a deep warmth of blue and amber, a manlike creature stretched itself and yawned, displaying tiny, pointed teeth. It pressed its head languidly against its furry shoulder—and listened. The voice it heard was not that of one of its people, the kind he loved and protected. But he recognised the language.

He smiled to himself as remembrance came and he felt the pleasant sensation of fellowship. He remembered a race which, unlike other humans (whom he disdained) had shared his qualities—a race which, like him, loved pleasure, cruelty and sophistication for its own sake.

— *The Bane of the Black Sword*

Nnuuurrrr'c'c, Lord of Insects

In the past he had summoned help from various of these spirits, but never from the one he now sought to call. From his mouth began to issue the ancient, beautiful and convoluted words of Melniboné's High Speech.

'King with Wings! Lord of all that work and are not seen, upon whose labours all else depends! Nnuuurrrr'c'c of the Insect Folk, I summon thee!'

Save for the motion of the ship, Elric ceased to be aware of all else happening around him. The sounds of the fight dimmed and were heard no more as he sent his voice out beyond his plane of the Earth into another - the plane dominated by King Nnuuurrrr'c'c of the Insects, paramount lord of his people.

In his ears now Elric heard a buzzing and gradually the buzzing formed itself in words. 'Who are thou, mortal? What right has thou to summon me?'

— *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

Roofdrak, Lord of Dogs (and by extension wolves and foxes)

Elric does not summon Roofdrak during the saga but the ancient pacts, which bind Melniboné and Roofdrak together, will be known to him. From the incantations the albino uses for other Beast lords, one can surmise that Roofdrak's will be similar and

his ethereal home will be a place of rosy warmth, akin to the hearth-side, where languid Roofdrak dozes and dreams of chasing Meerclar through the Multiverse, or chewing on the marrowbones of the enemies of canine-kind.

Nuru'ah, Lord of Cattle (and all ungulates)

No summoning of Nuru'ah is mentioned in the saga, although Melniboné has long enjoyed a pact with the Cattle King, having used immense oxen in times past to draw the war chariots of the Bright Empire in their subjugation of the old human kingdoms.

One can imagine Nuru'ah's realm as a place of soft, verdant pastures, peaceful and vast, where the Cattle Lord grazes steadily, immense tail swishing away the motes and spirits of Nnuuuurrr'c's insect-kind.

Ap-yss-Alara Lady of Swine (pigs and boars)

'...and even Ap-yss-Alara, Queen of the Swine, who was said to refuse all mortal advances and would continue to do so while one of them still ate pork. Since pork was not eaten by any Melnibonéan of the higher castes, my folk had first made their accommodation with the queen.'

— *The Skrayling Tree*

Ap-yss-Alara is never summoned in the saga but it is obvious that such creatures were once useful to Melniboné, perhaps in the form of savage battle boars used to shatter the formations of armies who dared to defy them.

The home of the Lady of Swine is a dark, shady forest. Its dappled roof a tangle of ancient gnarled trees that drop acorns and nuts; its moist floor covered with flavoursome fungi. There she is attended by litters of her devoted children.

The Plant Lords

'They sang together, sending their song through all the dimensions of the Multiverse, to where a dreaming creature stirred and lifted up arms made of a million woven brambles and turned faces which too, were of knotted rosewood, in the direction of the song it had not heard for a hundred thousand years... the Tangled Woman shifted her brambly body, arm by arm and leg by leg, then head by head, and, with a rustling movement which made all her foliage shudder, she formed herself into a shape very like a human shape, though somewhat larger'

— *The Revenge of the Rose*

The plant lords represent the myriad plants of the world in the same way the beast lords represent the beasts. Each species of plant has its own guardian who defines what that plant is and how it behaves. The Tangled Woman, for example, represents brambles and thorns.

Even Melniboné has forgotten much of what it ever knew about the plant lords but they are clearly a powerful, if dormant, force.

Treat their summonings and pacts in precisely the same way as beast lords.

Chaos

Chaos represents infinite change, unbridled creativity, total mutability, the sanctity of nothing and the preservation of the self before the whole. It is neither good nor evil, although the acts committed by the Lords of Chaos, and those who worship them, are often considered evil by all but the most insane. Chaos is both dazzling beauty and unthinkable horror; it is the lust for life and the lust for death; and it is the absolute enemy of Law.

There are many Lords of Chaos, some of which are minor dukes of Hell acting on certain agendas, such as Narjhan and Balo. The most powerful, like Arioch and Xiombarg, are akin to gods and have complex agendas and motives concerning the overthrow of Law and the domination of earth. They seek to establish realms of Chaos throughout the Multiverse, creating an entropic empire where all life, save their own, is an unstable, constantly changing melange of the beautiful and the horrific.

Chaos has been prevented from manifesting directly on the earth for the past 500 years, due to the actions of the Lords of Law, who created a barrier around the earth's plane to limit the Chaos Lords' interference. Before that, battles between the Lords of Chaos and Law were played-out across the Young Kingdoms. The bay of Dhakos, for instance, is said to have been created when Lord Tovik of Law defeated Mabelode, King of the Swords, some 5,000 years ago. With Melniboné as their enthusiastic mortal servants the Lords of Chaos helped create the majesty and terror of the Bright Empire but with the Barrier of Law preventing further direct intervention, their influence declined and so did their direct worship by the Dragon Lords. Consequentially the empire fell.

The Lords of Chaos can still manifest upon the earth but their direct powers are limited. They can, and do, aid their mortal servants but as is the nature of Chaos, the type and level of aid is inconsistent. A mortal worshipper may be called beloved by a Chaos Lord one day, only to fall from favour the next. The Lords of Chaos do not truly care; all that matters is their own agenda and mortals are only useful if they can advance it in some way. If they cannot, they are an irrelevance. The pre-eminent Lords of Chaos are:

Arioch, Duke of the Crimson Hells, Knight of the Swords, Lord of the Seven Dark.

The patron deity of Melniboné and Elric in particular, whom he 'loves above all other mortals'. Arioch takes many forms, from swarms of insects, a jade statue through to beautiful, fair-skinned children but his favoured manifestation is as a Melnibonéan male of brilliant, blinding beauty. Lord Arioch is cruel, fickle and, on this plane, the most powerful of the Chaos Lords. Arioch guards the runeswords Stormbringer and Mournblade, which may only be wielded by the royal line of Imrryr.

Artigkern, Drinker of Oceans, Drainer of Worlds

The vast maw of Artigkern, brother to Arioch, can drain entire seas in a few days, as it sups voraciously. Artigkern exists solely to consume every last drop of water in the Multiverse and takes delight in rendering entire worlds parched and barren. When it is through, it spits what it has drunk at the sun, perhaps to spite or it, or perhaps to extinguish it.

Artigkern's last manifestation on the earth was during the very first decades of Melniboné's rule, before it truly became the Bright Empire. It stole Lord Straasha's sister, becoming infatuated with her but was defeated by the silver-skinned Mernii hero, White Crow.

Balaan, The Grim-Faced, Lord of Ecstatic Agony and Unbearable Pleasures

With his face hidden behind a mask of black iron, bolted to his skull, Balaan is the god of torturers, sadists and masochists. He is worshipped widely on Melniboné as both the torturer and the giver of pleasure through pain where his adherents include Doctor Jest, amongst others. Balaan's worshippers consider the inflicting of pain, and its receipt, as one of the highest art forms, as demonstrated in the altered eunuch choirs of Imrryr who sings Balaan's hymns of suffering. On Pan Tang, Balaan is god of torturers and the bringer of suffering, an implacable deity who seeks only to hear the screams of the unholy.

Chardros, The Reaper, Lord of the Graves

Taking many forms (a shrouded, skeletal figure; a gaunt-faced, emaciated Melnibonéan; a vast, vulture-headed human, to name but a few) but always with his immense iron scythe, Chardros is the Lord of death, undeath and the reaping of souls. Shunned in Melniboné but welcomed in Pan Tang and Dharijor, Chardros remains aloof from mortal affairs for the most part, awaiting his hour in the final battle where he will engage with Donblas the Justice Maker.

Demons of combat and war are Chardros's foot soldiers and those pledging their souls to his worship are taken to the Gates of Hell where he patrols, to be made into the demonic spawn he unleashes at the end of the world.

Equor, Blue Lady of Dismay, Goddess of Sorrowing Solitude

Equor dwells in a realm decorated solely in shades of blue. She is a self-pitying and jealous Lady of Entropy, forever scheming and seeking ways of improving her rule over the earth. Images of her are always carved from blue stone or sapphires and in each she is always depicted as a beautiful, melancholic countenance. Many female sorcerers are drawn to her worship, for she promises many gifts and secret knowledge that may be put to bitter ends. One of her worshippers is Sorana, the duplicitous lover of Rackhir the Red Archer; she has many other such acolytes.

Hionhurn, The Executioner, Lord of the Gallows

Another god of death, Hionhurn is the brutish executioner of Chaos, his huge axe sharpened and ready to sever heads and souls alike. He manifests as a giant, shaggy-haired axeman, his lime-green skin as gnarled and twisted as an ancient tree, his expression jovial. Hionhurn promises a pleasant death but eternal suffering and torment.

Mabelode, The Faceless, King of the Swords, Ruler of Shadows

Mabelode is worshipped across many planes of the Multiverse and, on some, his power exceeds that of Arioch and Xiombarg, his fellow Sword Rulers. Mabelode's face is always wreathed in shadow, however it is viewed, and this has led to the soubriquet of 'faceless'. A cunning and manipulative deity, he numbers Prince Yyrkoon amongst his devotees and his schemes are concerned with deception, stealth and the advancement of shadow. He bears an immense sword of dazzling gold that sings through the air and delights in securing the worship of powerful individuals whom can be easily twisted into acting as his followers.

Maluk, The Silent Watcher of the Single Eye, Lord of Treachery

A favoured god of Pan Tang, Maluk has but a single, staring eye gazing from his slender, androgynous face and his mouth stitched shut so that none of his secrets may escape his thin, bloodless lips. Adherents of Maluk are known to put-out an eye and stitch their mouths shut in homage to his ghastly visage.

Maluk adores treachery and betrayal for selfish gains. He grooms those who show such qualities and shows them tantalising glimpses of how much better their lives will become if they carry out their schemes to the full. As a guardian of secrets his province is knowledge and subversive power, seeking not to command directly but to control through others.

Pyaray, Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets, Lord of the Fleets of Chaos

Lord Pyaray lurks in the planes of the Hell that intersect with the deepest reaches of the ocean. He receives the souls of drowned sailors and adds their wrecked ships to his ever-growing fleet that, at the end of the world, arises from the depths and commands the seas of the Young Kingdoms. He is worshipped by pirates and other sea-borne reavers but he fears, and avoids, Lord Straasha, who does all in his power to prevent Pyaray's undead crews from growing.

When he manifests it is as a huge, blood-red octopus with many tentacles and several eyes of blue crystal. One, usually at the top of the head, is said to contain Pyaray's soul and a special weapon, such as Stormbringer or Mournblade, can destroy him. Indeed, this is the tactic used by Elric when he battles Pyaray aboard his flagship in his quest to rescue Zarozinia.

Slortar the Old

Eldest and most sweet-tongued of the Hell Dukes, Lord Slortar is favoured in Melniboné and enjoyed their primary worship before Arioch replaced him in their affections. He is a connoisseur of the debauched, depraved and decadent; a self-satisfied lord of indulgence who condones gluttony, greed and sloth in its myriad forms. Those who worship him tend towards the corpulent – a sharp contrast with Slortar's trim and beautiful frame.

Xiombarg, Queen of the Swords, Promiser of Eternal Life

On this earth, Queen Xiombarg is no more powerful than Arioch, her brother, or Mabelode but on other planes she is more powerful than Arioch and matched only by Mabelode the Faceless. Described as *she*, she can take the form of either sex but when choosing to manifest prefers the female form: that of the most beautiful woman possible to imagine, her hair dark gold and streaked with red and black. Her form can switch abruptly – as can all the Lords of Chaos – into that of a man or a creature with a leering skull-face.

As a Sword Ruler she is beloved of warriors and soldiers. It is said she can control time to an extent, though has never done so upon the plane of the Young Kingdoms, but she can, and does, promise eternal life to those who serve her. One such recipient is Prince Gaynor the Damned, doomed to wander the Multiverse as the Eternal Enemy, undying yet not invincible, force to experience every minute of every hour of every year without hope of rest.

Minor Nobles of Chaos

These are the lesser lords, vassals of the major dukes of Chaos. Some are worshipped in their own right whilst others are worshipped through a more pre-eminent deity.

Balo, Insane Jester and Minstrel, of neither Chaos nor Law

Balo belongs to neither Chaos nor Law and is the only supernatural entity permitted to cross the divide between them (although neither is he of the Balance). An insane prankster, he is most commonly attributed to Chaos but the guise of a simple fool with a love of vicious pranks, often at the expense of the Lords of Chaos, masks a complex and confused mind that has, perhaps, been driven mad by both the chaotic and lawful secrets he has been privy to.

As a result, Balo has few formal worshippers in the Young Kingdoms. Those that do offer him allegiance have been approached directly by him to aid in one of his 'jokes' or schemes. Becoming involved with him is to risk his infectious insanity.

Checkalakh the Burning God,

A minor Chaos Lord made entirely of fire; he was once summoned to Nadsokor to burn disease from the city but ran amok. He was imprisoned within a labyrinth in the city by Lord Donblas, sealed within it by a one-way membrane. His essence is fire and, like

his essence, he is constantly hungry. The beggars King Urish of Nadsokor offers to him are poor food and he constantly craves more. He has almost no influence in the Young Kingdoms, save to strike fear into the beggars who gaze upon the treasure hoard of Urish and is little stronger than a powerful salamander.

Haborym of the Fires That Destroy

Worshipped primarily in Melniboné but also with a small sect in Pan Tang, Haborym is the destructive breath of hell-fire. There is only one sect devoted to his worship: the Brothers of the Red Redemption, which exists somewhere in the Dead Hills of Dorel. Its members ritually burn the skin from their bodies and wear full plate armour, inscribed with Haborym's strange fire runes. Their reputation is sinister and they are said to have stolen many secrets from Lord Kakatal himself.

Count Mashabak

A pretender, on some planes, to Lord Arioch, Mashabak was a patron, of sorts, to Sadric 86th, Elric's father, and laid claim to Sadric's soul upon his death. Mashabak, commanding Prince Gaynor, has the temerity to challenge Lord Arioch for power in the Multiverse and, in some realms, can neutralise Arioch's potency. However, whilst he has all of Arioch's cruelty, Mashabak lacks his subtlety and is sublimely unaware of how the forces of Chaos are marshalling for the Great Struggle. For this reason, he will ever be a minor noble of Chaos and not the great and powerful Lord he yearns to be.

Narjhan, Lord of Beggars

Narjhan of Chaos is worshipped by the beggar-hordes of Nadsokor and he leads them against Tanelorn, manifesting as a suit of armour from which emanates a booming voice. He fosters and encourages the deceptions of beggars and blesses them with disease and suffering.

Teer, The Boar-Headed, Vassal of Mabelode

Duke Teer is little known in the Young Kingdoms, save for those who have achieved rank within the cults of Mabelode. His appearance is that of a bloated man with a porcine face and boar-like tusks. On one of his realms he is building a castle of blood that constantly requires his attention and further donations from the willing and unwilling alike. His obsession with his castle has cost him much of his power but those who worship him fetch him fresh supplies through making their own donations and seizing it from those who will not give it freely.

Vezhan

Assuming the shape of a huge, winged, man-shaped creature of smoky-yellow, little is known of Vezhan save that Rackhir was once loyal to him, indicating that he may be a more powerful noble of Chaos in the lands of distant Phum.

Law

Law represents the ultimate ordering of the Multiverse; a natural, straight-line progression with no deviation from the norm,

all things complying in the same precise ways. It is sterility; of imagination, of expression, of life. To embrace Law is to surrender to immutable rules, restrictive practices and absolute certainties. There is no room for personality or freewill, just simple, unbending compliance.

Law has dominance in the Young Kingdoms. Melniboné's decline and the imposition of the lawful barrier around the plane of the earth have allowed the worshippers of Law to move into the partial vacuum. The promise is of a freedom from the hellish practices of Chaos, from the tyranny of the all-changing and for a better world founded on the fundamental principles of nature, as described through the Lawful sciences of physics, mathematics, chemistry and biology. Deviation from these underlying principles is deemed heresy and this has been logically extended to include those unfortunates born with deformities and disabilities, or afflicted by diseases that cause the same. The exodus from the city of Nadsokor, fleeing the ravages of plague, was initiated by Lawful priests. Its subsequent colonisation by the beggars and wretches of the world was the result of those same priests expelling those from the Vilmirian cities who were, in some way, disfigured or considered abnormal – in other words, Chaos-tainted.

Law need not be this way. In some places, such as Ilmiora, Jharkor and Lormyr, lawful worship is of a liberal, accepting kind but that does not mean that lawful zealots and logic-obsessed proselytisers do not exist; they are simply outnumbered by those who have not yet immersed themselves in Law's true meaning and can maintain a healthy balance of belief in the human condition, accepting a certain degree of deviation as a perfectly natural state of being. Most priests of Law begin thus but those who study further and deeper begin to find patterns and recurring themes. They see, and embrace, the perfection absolute Law has to offer and its inherent power.

So begins the corruption of Law. Priests enthralled in this way can accept nothing less than perfection and compliance. Disagreement and dissent cannot be tolerated, even within their own kind. Enclaves of the like-minded form, consolidating power which they wield as far and wide as they can. The virtues of Law are lost; in its place is drab, miserable, conformity, a route march towards an unknowable destination along a featureless road that winds across a featureless plain, blistered feet stamping in unison for eternity.

The Lords of Law are not as numerous as the Lords of Chaos. In the novel *Stormbringer*, Elric encounters 'The White Lords' on their featureless, horizonless plane and converses only with Donblas whilst the others remain in the background, un-named. In other stories of the saga, a further two Lords of Law are discussed, Miggea and Tovik. Two others, Arkyn and Shalod, are referenced in the *Corum* saga but have no influence in the Young Kingdoms that can be determined from the *Elric* stories.

To slightly counter balance the prolific Chaos Lords, and given that a number of White Lords are preparing for battle when Elric travels to their plane, all five of these Lords of Law are treated

as being influential in the Young Kingdoms to greater or lesser degrees. Games Masters should feel free to either invent their own and/or draw upon other sources from the other Eternal Champion stories for inspiration.

The Lords of Law

When appearing before mortals, the White Lords of Law are perfection personified: more than simply beautiful, they are the absolute pinnacle of appearance and integrity. But, as Elric ruefully notes, such perfection must be at the price of progress. Their home realm is a featureless expanse, perfectly flat, representing the ultimately barren nature of complete uniformity.

Arkyn The Meticulous

Lord Arkyn governs the realm of scientific thought and endeavour, embodying the underlying symmetries of all things in the natural world, the application of logic, the development of theory and proof over superstition and supposition. His worship is strong amongst philosophers, mathematicians, inventors and logical theorists. His teachings propose the four-fold approach: *Method, Observations, Results and Conclusions*.

Arkyn manifests himself through his writings and theories. The priests of Law scour them intimately, attempting to find the one, true rule within the equations, logical arguments and complex geometries that illustrate these huge tomes of densely written script.

Donblas The White Lord, Justice Maker

Donblas represents the Rule of Law; doctrine, legislation, enforcement. His realm is that of codes and constitutions, the impartiality of rational systems against the inherently biased anarchy of Chaos. Great tracts of legal script and complex rules are his gift to his followers. The absolute certainty of the Law and its innate justice is theirs to administer.

Donblas manifests as a beautiful, glorious, human shimmering with a disturbing symmetry and perfection. Manifestations are rare but his voice sings out to his followers in dreams and meditations.

Miggea The Mad, Duchess of Dolwic

Considered senile but nevertheless powerful, Miggea reaches out from her realm of Dolwic to destroy those worlds she considers in any sense chaotically influenced – which is to say, most of them. Her myth has gone through several cycles in the earth's history and as a White Lord she can claim only a small influence at the time of the Young Kingdoms but she still attracts active worshippers, themselves unreasoning zealots who cannot contemplate deviation from the laws and philosophies of Donblas and Arkyn.

Miggea, alone amongst the White Lords, despises Tanelorn and gathers her best soldiers and champions from across the Multiverse to challenge the Eternal City. One such champion is Prince Gaynor the damned, once of Xiombarg and Mashabak, who now enjoys her patronage. She inspires utter loyalty in her



servants and commands a vast troop of knights prepared to fight to the death in her name. In times such as these she manifests as a knight of Law, riding a pure white she-wolf endowed with the power of speech. In human guise she has a radiant complexion and black, glaring eyes, with pale lips and pointed teeth.

More than any other Lord of Law, Miggea embodies its complete obliviousness to reason and tolerance. That is why she is Miggea the Mad.

Shalod The Book Binder

Lord Shalod serves Lord Arkyn, sometimes acting as his representative in mortal dealings. Dark haired and implacable, he recognises achievement through rational study and its application. Known as the Book Binder he carries with him Arkyn's finished and partially finished works, allowing access to their mysteries to the most diligent of students.

Tovik The Relentless

A lord of righteous revenge, he is foremost of those who challenge Chaos, fighting with a berserk and terrible rage. He challenged Mabelode for the dominance of the western continent, besting him in a battle that created the bay of Dhakos. Sometimes a general for Duchess Miggea and sometimes her opponent, depending on

circumstances, he is a god of knights and warriors, worshipped in Lormyr, Jharkor and Vilmir with fervency.

His priests are warrior-priests, battle-hardened doomsayers who pray and fight with equal vitriol.

GENERAL VENERATION OF A POWER

Worshipping or venerating one of the Higher Powers does not require an Adventurer to dedicate himself to a particular god; dedication to the cause is enough for one to benefit from what that power offers its disciples.

Unlike the more specific cults, discussed later, there is no rank hierarchy and therefore no rank specific requirements. One is a disciple of the Power or one is not. The only requirement is the creation of a Pact – an explicit dedication to the power which then, depending on how much POW is dedicated to it – determines what benefits are available. These benefits are discussed in the descriptions of each Power in the following pages.

Progress through general veneration is measured only in the percentage of the Pact and the amount of POW dedicated to it. For most, a simple, base level Pact and nominal POW dedication suffices and many disciples of Law, Chaos or any other POW will not progress any further or have any need to. However, individuals can dedicate as little or as much POW as they like although there will be a certain point where high dedications are simply not necessary.

The Gifts available to general disciples depend on how much POW has been dedicated and also the value of the Pact. This is a key difference between general veneration and specific veneration. Those who dedicate to a patron god usually have free-rein over what Gifts can be chosen with the amount of the POW dedication being the only governing factor on what Gifts are available.

General disciples are not attached to a church, temple, shrine or any other formal symbol of their chosen path. They follow privately, often intimately and usually informally. Theleb K'arna, for instance, the notorious Pan Tangian sorcerer and arch-enemy of Elric, is such an example. He is dedicated wholeheartedly to Chaos but is not a member of any specific cult. He venerates Chaos for the powers it grants him but has adopted no patron god. Jagreen Lern, on the other hand, Pan Tang's Theocrat, is dedicated to Chardhros the Reaper. Their respective powers are therefore very different.

Each general path is described in the following terms:

Dedication Requirements

What is needed to become a disciple, in terms of culture, POW dedication and so on.

Gifts

What Gifts are available and the requirements (usually the value of the Pact skill) for obtaining them.

Compulsions

Whenever a Gift is taken, a Compulsion is mandatory. The Compulsions are specific to the path being followed and may either be decided by the Games Master (to fit with a Passion, say) or chosen by the Adventurer.

Myths

General myths understood by all disciples of the Power. Every myth has a Mythic Resonance and this informs and enforces behaviour as described in the Cults chapter of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*. Myths may also be used as the basis for DreamQuests, if the Games Master so desires.

Magic

If a path offers magic – and not all of them do – then it will be detailed here.

Other Benefits

Any other benefits, and their requirements, as described here. This might be an increase in a particular skill, the development of a particular Passion or something unique to the Path.

ELEMENTAL, BEAST AND PLANT LORD VENERATION

This is the general, non-specific veneration of the natural forces of the earth found in many primitive and barbarian cultures. Individuals may also follow a specific god, such as Grome or Straasha, but for most veneration is practiced in a general form with all the forces of nature being acknowledged to some degree.

Those who choose this general path cannot call on any of the Lords for Divine Intervention, although, by forming a Pact, as discussed in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, they gain benefits in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Magic and sometimes enchantments.

This path is most prevalent in primitive, barbarian and nomadic cultures where superstition is high, as is closeness to the cycles of nature.

In some cultures, the Valni of the Unknown East for instance, the Beast Lords are pre-eminent. They are not worshipped directly

but through a great animal spirit that acts as an avatar for the Beast Lord. The powers of these Beast Spirits are discussed in the Magic and Sorcery chapter, beginning on page 70.

Dedication Requirements

Pact (Beast Lord), Pact (Elemental) or Pact (Plant Lord)

A minimum of one point of POW must be devoted to the Pact. There is no upper limit.

Gifts

All Gifts must be bought using points of Dedicated POW and the disciple must meet the requisite for the Gift. Gifts vary according to the kind of Lord followed:

Animal Familiar (Beast Lords)

The recipient receives the companionship of a *natural* animal (choose from the animals listed in either the Creatures of Law and Chaos chapter, or agree a creature from *RuneQuest Monsters*) with a SIZ in D6 no greater than the POW spent on this gift. The familiar obeys simple commands but will not go against its nature. If a further point of POW is invested, the creature can speak with its master.

Requirements: CHA of 13 or higher, and/or Lore (Regional) at 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW per D6 of SIZ; additional 1 POW for a talking creature.

Disciple Increase (All)

Raise a skill important to the path by 50%. No skill can increase beyond 100% with this Gift and the skill chosen must not be contrary to the nature of the Power the disciple serves.

Requirements: INT 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW the first skill, 2 POW for the second, 3 for a third skill and so forth.

Elemental Helper (Elementals and Plant Lords)

Gain an elemental helper that may be called once per adventure. The recipient of the Gift must make a successful Pact roll to summon forth the Elemental Helper. If the disciple follows the Plant Lords, then the Helper is a Plant Spirit with an Intensity of 1 for each point of POW dedicated to this gift (see the Spirit Magic chapter of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* for Nature Spirits).

Requirements: CHA or INT 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW per cubic metre of the Elemental's size, or per point of Nature Spirit Intensity.

Endurance (All)

Endure any pain. Never needs to test *Resilience* to prevent unconsciousness when wounded and immune to torture.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW

Increased Health (All)

The Adventurer's Hit Points are recalculated, based on the sum of CON, SIZ and POW.

Requirements: Resilience of 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Increased Reactions (All)

The Adventurer adds his critical score in a weapon to his Strike Rank (for example, an Adventurer with a weapon skill of 60% would add +6 his Strike Rank).

Requirements: INT 13 or higher or DEX 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW

Sense Enemies (Elementals and Beast Lords)

The Adventurer is immediately aware of any enemies and those who would directly harm him.

Requirements: INT 13 or higher or Insight 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: The number of points of POW spent on this Gift increases the range of the Gift's effectiveness. 1 POW gives a range equal to POW x2 in metres, 2 POW gives a range of POW x4 in metres, 3 POW gives a range of POW x8 in metres and so on.

Tireless (All)

Resistant to the effects of fatigue. The recipient must make a Resilience roll when Fatigue would normally demand it but only fails the roll if he rolls 99 or 00

Requirements: CON 13 or higher, or Resilience 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW.

Compulsions

Absolute Mercy: May not kill any enemy, no matter how hated.

Acute Hydrophobia: Develop fear of water (cannot approach large bodies of water; must make a Persistence test to avoid fleeing in fear or being rooted to the spot in terror).

Agoraphobia: Develop Agoraphobia. Cannot abide wide-open spaces where Lassa's spies can watch.

Armour Reduction: Never wear footwear or armour on the limbs.

Armour Rejection: Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.

Attention Deficit: Unable to concentrate for long periods. Tasks requiring periods of concentration take twice as long to complete.

Avian Veneration: Never eat the flesh of any bird or winged creature.

Chaste: Undertake a vow of chastity.

Claustrophobia: Develop claustrophobia. Cannot willingly enter any space of less than three times SIZ; stricken with panic if forced into such a space.

Close Combat Pacifism: Never enter into hand-to-hand combat.

Forgetful: Lose short-term memory (-1 INT).

Forgo Shield: Never use a shield.

Healing: Must always offer healing to those who need it – even enemies.

Merciful: Show mercy to any defeated enemy, no matter what their crime, status or degree of enmity towards you.

Phobia: Develop an irrational fear of three separate things: the dark, the cold, spiders, rats and so forth.

Ritual Scarring: Sacrifice one point of CHA (through ritual scarring).

Stalwart: Never dodge a blow.

Tic: Develop a nervous tic, mannerism or speech impediment.

Vegetarian: Eat only vegetables and fruit.

Vigil: Undergo a regular vigil lasting for three days and three nights.

Water Consumer: Drink only water.

Myths

The Creation Myth (Mythic Resonance 70%): How the world came into being. The importance of nature over all other forces.

Before the Doomed Folk was The Source of All Things, which was but a speck. The Source of All Things developed Thought and from Thought created Substance. Within Substance were four children: Grome, who was strong and resolute; Straasha, who was fast and flexible; Lassa, who was the Breath of Life and Kakatal, who became the Sun.

The Source of All Things nurtured his children and together they made a ball of mud from the Substance around them. This they called Earth and Grome was first to inhabit it. Straasha flowed over it and then Lassa surrounded it. Kakatal refused to enter it but watched over it as a protector.

From Earth things started to grow or be born. First were the Plant Lords who took their own domain. Next were the birds who were Lassa's children. Then came the Beasts who were beholden to no one and made homes for themselves. Kakatal watched over all.

Presently Straasha sought more of the Earth and Grome denied him. The two fought. Next, Kakatal demanded that Lassa give him her space and she denied him: the two fought. All elements fought each other and the world changed. This was known as the Great Cataclysm.

Eventually a creature came who was neither a bird, nor beast nor fish and he called himself Man. He brought the wars between the Elemental Lords to an end with reason. Now peace was created and Man made a home for himself on Earth and offered veneration to all of the different Lords. This promise was called Time and so Time and Existence began.

Magic

Disciples of the Elemental Lords may learn up to two Runes: either Earth and Air, Earth and Fire, Air and Water or Fire and Water. The disciple must find a teacher to learn these Runes from.

Other Benefits

Disciples gain Lore (Elemental/Beast/Plant Lord) at the starting percentage, or a +10% bonus if they already have this Lore.

Disciples of the general path may automatically become Initiates of a specific cult if they so choose but must make a separate Pact with the Lord chosen, as well as retaining their existing, general Pact.

CHAOS VENERATION

Disciples of Chaos create, through their Pact, a personal attenuation to the ideals and goals of Chaos: freedom, creativity, change for change's sake and the mutability of all things. Choosing this path makes the disciple aware of the influence of Chaos within the Young Kingdoms and the higher struggle taking place with Law. It does not confer a deep knowledge or expertise of Chaos's nature and deeper agendas.

Dedication Requirements

Pact (Chaos)

A POW dedication is essential. There is no upper limit to how much POW can be dedicated.

Gifts

All Gifts must be bought using points of Dedicated POW and the disciple must meet the requisite for the Gift.

Chaotic Blessing

Roll once on the Demonic Features table.

Requirements: None.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW for the first blessing, 2 POW for a second, 3 for a third and so forth.

Disciple Increase

Raise a skill important to the path by 50%. No skill can increase beyond 100% with this Gift and the skill chosen must not be contrary to the nature of the Power the disciple serves.

Requirements: INT 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW the first skill, 2 POW for the second, 3 for a third skill and so forth.

Endurance (All)

Endure any pain. Never needs to test *Resilience* to prevent unconsciousness when wounded and immune to torture.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Increased Damage Modifier

The agent's Damage Modifier is recalculated, based on the sum of STR, SIZ and POW.

Requirements: STR 13 and higher or SIZ 13 and higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Invulnerability

The Adventurer is invulnerable to damage from one, specified, sorcerously created or summoned creature.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher and/or Resilience 60% and higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW for the first named creature, 2 POW for the second, 3 for the third and so forth.

Magical Recovery

MPs regenerated at twice the usual rate.

Requirements: Persistence 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Sense Enemies

The Adventurer is immediately aware of any enemies and those who would directly harm him.

Requirements: INT 13 or higher or Insight 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: The number of points of POW spent on this Gift increases the range of the Gift's effectiveness. 1 POW gives a range equal to POW x2 in metres, 2 POW gives a range of POW x4 in metres, 3 POW gives a range of POW x8 in metres and so on.

Sense Million Spheres

Aware of weaknesses in the fabric of reality. Can spot gates and portals to other planes on a successful Perception test.

Requirements: Perception 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Tireless

Resistant to the effects of fatigue. The recipient must make a Resilience roll when Fatigue would normally demand it but only fails the roll if he rolls 99 or 00.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher, or Resilience 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW.

Witch Sight

Develop the Witch Sight ability.

Requirements: Insight 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Compulsions

Whenever a Gift is taken, a Compulsion is mandatory.

Acute Depression: Become increasingly morose. As the Pact skill increases, behaviour becomes more depressive until it reaches the suicidal at the 95% level or greater.

Acute Insomnia: Unable to sleep for fear of never waking. Become gaunt-eyed, cadaverously thin and intensely paranoid of even one's closest associates.

Armour Rejection: Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.

Attention Deficit: Unable to concentrate for long periods. Tasks requiring periods of concentration take twice as long to complete.

Chromophobia: Aversion to a particular colour in all its forms. Cannot wear that colour or stand to be in the company of any who does so.

Claustrophobia: Develop claustrophobia. Cannot willingly enter any space of less than three times SIZ; stricken with panic if forced into such a space.

Colour Obsessed: Wear nothing but a specific colour or hue. The skin must be dyed completely to a shade of that colour. Lose 1D4 CHA.

Demonic Fervour: Demonic fervour. You know that it is your destiny to become one of Chaos's half-breed demonic courtiers.

Dread: Visions of terrible carnage that disturb the sleep and leave the dreamer feeling worthless and drained.

Fear of Death: Increasing fear of death. As the Pact skill increases the fear of death grows stronger until the individual is unable to act for fear of accident, murder or assassination..

Forgetful: Lose short-term memory (-1 INT).

Jealousy: Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover, or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.

Merciless: Never surrender or accept the surrender of any foe.

Never Ending Search: Obsessed with finding the ultimate location for something lost to your cult.

Nightmares: Experience terrifying dreams and sleepless nights. Awake suffering from one level of fatigue.

Paranoia: Become increasingly paranoid. Friends and colleagues are inferior beings jealous of your impending god-hood. As your Pact skill grows, so does your jealousy, eventually becoming murderous.

Phobia: Develop an irrational fear of three separate things: the dark, the cold, spiders, rats and so forth.

Secretive: Become intensely secretive and jealous of information gained. Take unusual and risky measures to protect even the most trivial knowledge.

Violent Temper: Develop a vile, argumentative and violent temper threatening to destabilise all attempts to remain calm.

Myths

Beyond the Ends of the Earth (Mythic Resonance 70%): How Chaos Created the World. The History of the Lords of Chaos.

The world was created by Slortar the Old, first of the Lords of Chaos, who had vanquished the Dead Gods in a battle for the whole of the cosmos. The right to create Earth was his prize and he created it as a slab of ground floating in the firmament and surrounded it with the raw stuff of Chaos so that, when the whim took him, he could add to his lands.

War erupted amongst the Lords of Chaos. The younger, newer Lords did not like that Slortar kept Earth to himself. Within it was great power, great potential. The Lords of Law, hated enemies, saw that potential also and Slortar did nothing to prevent them from taking what they felt could be theirs. A new Lord of Chaos, Arioch, and his servant Mashabak, challenged Slortar and led a great rebellion against the senile god. Slortar was defeated and he agreed to relinquish his sole hold on Earth.

More lands were created by Arioch and others, so the world took the shape it now has. Arioch and others brought new races to the Earth, drawn from civilisations, old and young, from across the Multiverse. Some were slaves, some willing servants, some honoured and loved followers. The Mernii were slaves originally who had rebelled against Chaos and followed it no more. They believed these new lands were free from Chaos but this was Arioch's first trick.

When their true nature was revealed the Mernii, who had created a large and peaceful empire, fragmented. Some knew that their destiny lay with Chaos. Others claimed it lay with other powers. The Chaos followers, led by the hero named White Crow, who carried the Black Blade, vanquished these fools. Thus was Melniboné born.

Chaos rules still but must fight constantly against the force of Law, which would seek to end all things by carving new lands from the raw stuff of Chaos that still swims around the world's edges. Those who are loyal to Chaos are the soldiers of this fight and it is a fight that will continue forever, because it must and because it can.

Magic

If a disciple can find a teacher who is also a disciple of Chaos, he can learn whatever magic the teacher has to offer.

Other Benefits

All disciples gain Lore (Chaos) at its base value, or, if they already have the Lore, a +10% bonus.

Disciples of Chaos may become Initiates of a specific Chaos cult if they meet the cult's membership requirements. The existing Pact

(Chaos) is maintained but a Pact with the new cult must also be established.

Disciples of Chaos are naturally sceptical of Disciples of Law but are not compelled to hate them or have no dealings with them. Law can be made to aid the Eternal Struggle in favour of Chaos. It behoves disciples to remember this.

LAW VENERATION

Disciples of Law establish a personal awareness that Law is the force holding Chaos at bay. The evidence of Chaos is overt and entrenched: Melniboné and Pan Tang being two solid examples. The evidence of Law is more subtle and found in learning, logic, symmetry and the pursuit of excellence. Once, the whole world was under the sway of the Lords of Law: legends tell that Melniboné was, once, a place of peace and harmony. But Chaos has corrupted over time and now it is time for Law to reclaim the territory it has lost.

Dedication Requirements

Pact (Law)

A dedication of POW is mandatory *only* if one seeks to avail oneself of the Gifts Law can offer its faithful.

Gifts

All Gifts must be bought using points of Dedicated POW and the disciple must meet the requisite for the Gift.

Abstinence

Exist without one requirement, for example air, food, water, sleep.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher; Resilience 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Disciple Increase

Raise a skill important to the path by 50%. No skill can increase beyond 100% with this Gift and the skill chosen must not be contrary to the nature of the Power the disciple serves.

Requirements: INT 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW the first skill, 2 POW for the second, 3 for a third skill and so forth.

Endurance

Endure any pain. Never needs to test *Resilience* to prevent unconsciousness when wounded and immune to torture.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Enhanced Learning

Results of Improvement Rolls for a specific, named skill (disciple's choice) are doubled (thus, a failed Improvement roll means a skill advances by 2 points; successful Improvements improves skill by x2 1D4+1).

Requirements: INT 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW for the first skill, 2 POW for a second, 3 for a third and so on.

Healing.

The disciple regenerates Hit Points each Combat Round, to all locations, whilst he is still alive. He need not be conscious for the regeneration to work but if a wound is sufficient enough to kill him, the regeneration ability will not restore him to life.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher, or Resilience 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW for each Hit Point Regenerated, up to a maximum of 4 Hit Points.

Increased Damage Modifier.

The agent's Damage Modifier is recalculated, based on the sum of STR, SIZ and POW.

Requirements: STR 13 and higher or SIZ 13 and higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Increased Health (All)

The Adventurer's Hit Points are recalculated, based on the sum of CON, SIZ and POW.

Requirements: Resilience of 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Increased Reactions (All)

The Adventurer adds his critical score in a weapon to his Strike Rank (for example, an Adventurer with a weapon skill of 60% would add +6 his Strike Rank).

Requirements: INT 13 or higher or DEX 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW.

Perfection

One Characteristic is raised by 1D3 points but cannot exceed the species maximum.

Requirements: Insight 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW the first time, 4 for the second increase, 8 for the third and so on.

Natural Recovery

Natural Healing is treated as one step higher than that usual for the Resilience skill.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Sense Enemies

The Adventurer is immediately aware of any enemies and those who would directly harm him.

Requirements: INT 13 or higher or Insight 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: The number of points of POW spent on this Gift increases the range of the Gift's effectiveness. 1 POW gives a range equal to POW x2 in metres, 2 POW gives a range of POW x4 in metres, 3 POW gives a range of POW x8 in metres and so on.

Sense Million Spheres

Aware of weaknesses in the fabric of reality. Can spot gates and portals to other planes on a successful Perception test

Requirements: Perception 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Tireless

Resistant to the effects of fatigue. The recipient must make a Resilience roll when Fatigue would normally demand it but only fails the roll if he rolls 99 or 00.

Requirements: CON 13 or higher, or Resilience 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW.

Compulsions

Whenever a Gift is taken, a Compulsion is mandatory.

Absolute Mercy: May not kill any enemy, no matter how hated.

Acute Depression: Become increasingly morose. As the Pact skill increases, behaviour becomes more depressive until it reaches the suicidal at the 95% level or greater.

Acute Insomnia: Unable to sleep for fear of never waking. Become gaunt-eyed, cadaverously thin and intensely paranoid of even one's closest associates.

Armour Reduction: Never wear footwear or armour on the limbs.

Chaos Phobia: Become increasingly paranoid about the influence of Chaos, seeing it everywhere; in secret symbols, the way people talk; the things they do.

Chaotic Disdain: Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos, save your own patron.

Chaste: Undertake a vow of chastity.

Forgo Shield: Never use a shield.

Healing: Must always offer healing to those who need it – even enemies.

Jealousy: Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover, or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.

Law Triumphant: Never surrender to Chaos but always accept the surrender of an unarmed opponent.

Obsessive Compulsive: Develop Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Must check everything several times. Must complete simple, everyday tasks in a set order. Eat the same foods in the same places at the same times.

Pedantic: Obsessed with detail. Study every word and every letter without fail. Tasks involving study and concentration take twice as long to accomplish.

Secretive: Become intensely secretive and jealous of information gained. Take unusual and risky measures to protect even the most trivial knowledge.

Servant of Myshella: Become obsessed with becoming a Hero of Myshella, placing yourself completely at her service.

Tedious: Become an oppressive bore on one particular subject, imparting all knowledge about it in long, rambling, tedious eulogies.

Myths

How the World Was Stabilised (Mythic Resonance 90%): The Purity of Logic; the Treachery of Chaos.

The Earth was made as a result of the same, great explosion that made the Sun, the planets and the other stars of the universe. From that explosion were born the rules of logic; the Law. The Law manifested into those who came to be known by other names: Arkyn, Donblas, Miggea and so forth. Where Chaos destroyed, Law created stability through logic and order. In this way life could create itself from the physics of the worlds where Law brought itself to bear.

So the Lords of Law made the Earth stable and soon it filled with life. Chaos surged at the world's edges, always seeking to mutate and destroy, and so Law established the Guardians at the four edges of the world to protect it from destruction: in Kaneloon, Myshella was pre-eminent of these guardians and through the work of many heroes the world expanded, pushing Chaos further and further back. Myshella's work is never done. She seeks heroes still to protect her from Chaos and the world from Entropy.

The Lords of Law and Chaos made bitter war until the Lords of Law suggested a truce and a compromise. In the place called R'lin'kren'a'a the Lords of Law and Chaos talked and reasoned. The world would forge its own course. Gods would retreat and leave men to their own devices. A barrier around the Earth was made and this kept the influence of all gods away from the mortals of the lower world. Chaos still seethed at its edges and so the Four Guardians are still necessary but through the efforts of Law, mortals are free to pursue their own course.

This would have remained true for all time had the people of the Mernii not been seduced by Arioch of Chaos's treachery. He gave them the Black Swords, which have powers that even the Lords of Law do not understand, and he taught them sorcery. Arioch was forbidden to interfere directly in their affairs but through his subtle manipulations Chaos found a foothold through the hearts and souls of men. Thus the Eternal Struggle continues in the world and people perish. Although Melniboné's power wanes now and the influence of Chaos subsides, its dangers are there in Pan Tang and elsewhere.

Law must be vigilant. Law must be prepared. War is coming.

Magic

Law teaches little magic but does use Runes where they serve the purpose of logic, progress and stability. If a disciple can find a Lawful teacher, he may learn Runes but never summonings, never Spirit Magic and never Dream Magic.

Other Benefits

All disciples of Law gain Lore (Law) at its base value.

Disciples can automatically become Initiates of any cult devoted a specific Lord of Law without having to fulfil the membership requirements.

Disciples of Law are expected to oppose the agents of Chaos whatever form they take. Co-operation is never encouraged. The Elemental, Spirit and Nature Lords are also seen as aberrations that have little place in a stable, ordered world. They do not pose the same threats as Chaos but divert the purpose of Law through sorceries of their own.

THE BALANCE VENERATION

Between the forces of Law and Chaos is the Cosmic Balance. The Balance is as much an ideal and a force in its own right as the forces it seeks to place in equilibrium. The Balance manifests its own personifications and recruits agents to its cause. Its symbols are mighty, deep, potent and passionate. Servants of the Balance may not even know they serve it, until the Balance's agenda means their purpose must be revealed to them.

The *Elric* saga makes no reference to cults or direct worship of the Cosmic Balance but there are, clearly, those who follow its creed and pledge some form of allegiance to uphold its principles. The residents of Tanelorn are a good example and, if one looks to *Hawkmoon*, the agents of the Runestaff are others. Some folk of the Unknown East venerate the Balance too, as examined in the *Young Kingdoms* chapter.

The Cosmic Balance has no churches or temples *per se* but it does have symbols. The Runestaff and Tanelorn are the most potent symbols in the Multiverse but others exist. The Holy Grail, as found in Michael Moorcock's excellent *Von Bek* cycle, can be interpreted as a symbol of the Balance and other, perhaps mundane, perhaps fantastic, representations exist and might manifest in the Young Kingdoms as easily as in any other plane of existence.

Elric Adventurers can serve the Balance in one of two ways. First, they can serve it indirectly by simply cleaving to neither Chaos, Law nor the Elemental powers. Treading a middle ground between philosophies of existence maintains an open mind and allows free will to be exercised – a key concept of the Cosmic Balance's ethos. Serving the Balance in this way requires nothing of the Adventurer and, as a consequence, the Balance provides no direct aid in return.

The second way is more direct and involves becoming an agent of the Balance. This is not something any Adventurer can do wilfully. The Cosmic Balance selects those it deems as being worthy of becoming its agents – it chooses them, rather than the other way around. So, by serving the Cosmic Balance indirectly, an Adventurer might find himself in the position of serving it directly as an agent should particular circumstances arise.

Becoming an Agent of the Balance

No Adventurer can become an agent of the Balance unless he has come into direct contact with one of its symbols. This could be finding and residing in Tanelorn for a while; or it could be finding and perhaps protecting a smaller symbol, such as the Runestaff or one of its personifications, such as Jehamia Cohnahlias. The Balance can manifest its symbols in any form it chooses, so that innocuous looking shield, rescued from the Abyss of the Karasim, might be a far more potent symbol than is realised. No Adventurer will ever be sure what is or is not a symbol of the Balance until the

symbol chooses to reveal its true nature, usually through the form of a dream, or a visitation from an existing agent who will alert the Adventurer to what it is he possesses.

Once this awareness has been attained, the Adventurer can swear an oath of allegiance to the symbol of the Cosmic Balance. This is, to all intents and purposes, identical to making a Pact. However, there is one key differentiator; the Cosmic Balance does not require any dedication of the soul to seal the bargain but it does demand *total* service. Once sworn to the Balance, an Adventurer can form no other allegiances. For this reason those who have an active Pact with any other god cannot swear allegiance to the Balance. They may serve it indirectly of course but only those who are in complete control of their own soul can serve it directly.

Adventurers who follow one of the Paths generally, as described so far in this chapter, may forswear their allegiance to that Path and opt to follow the Balance instead. As they have not dedicated their soul to a specific god or patron lord, it is easier to break the Pact; but there are consequences:

- The Pact with Law, Chaos or another Power remains in force. The POW dedicated to it is lost to the Adventurer.
- Any Gifts taken are immediately lost. Compulsions, however, remain.
- The apostate Adventurer's treachery is known immediately to any active cultist of the same Power and the Power he once served who may take revenge for the betrayal.

Pacting With the Balance

The Pact (Cosmic Balance) value is based on the Adventurer's POW+CHA. It advances as does any other skill. The Games Master can also choose to increase the Pact (Cosmic Balance) score at the end of an adventure if the Adventurer has served the Cosmic Balance especially well in some way. A Games Master determined advance is always 1D4+1 points.

The Cosmic Balance rewards its direct servants and every agent gains a single Gift and a single Compulsion. This is the only time such things are meted out by the Cosmic Balance and the Compulsion is far more subtle (and fitted to the Cosmic Balance's agenda), than those of other higher powers. New agents of the Balance should roll on the appropriate tables – once for their Gift and then again for their Compulsion.

Dedication Requirements

Do not serve a god directly. Forswear any existing allegiance to a general Power.

Magic

If a path offers magic – and not all of them do – then it will be detailed here.

Other Benefits

Agents of the Balance can call upon the Cosmic Balance for aid in a form of Divine Intervention. A roll is made against the Pact skill and, if successful, the Balance may send aid.

The Cosmic Balance will not intervene directly. It can, however, send other agents in its place. In the *Hawkmoon* saga, for instance, the Warrior of Jet and Gold and Orland Fank both assist Hawkmoon at various times in his struggle against Granbretan. The same holds true for agents of the Balance in *Elric of Melniboné*.

Agents of the Balance make a test against their Pact value as normal and, if successful, the Cosmic Balance has heard their call and will send aid. How long that aid will take to reach the agent is dependent purely on the circumstances. The Cosmic Balance does not act with any particular haste and calling upon the Pact for assistance that is needed quickly is not making the best use of the relationship. The Games Master should judge the circumstances in which the call for help is being made and then adjudicate the amount of time help takes to arrive. If circumstances are such that allies or other agents cannot appear quickly enough, the Games Master needs to inform the Adventurer that this is the case.

Examples of agents of the Balance from the *Elric* saga, who might appear to aid Adventurers, are Jhary-a-Conel, Oone the Dreamthief or Rackhir the Red Archer: their details can be found in the *Creatures and Personalities of the Million Spheres* Chapter, beginning on page 147. Alternatively, Games Masters should create a selection of agents abroad in the Young Kingdoms or other, nearby planes of existence.

SPECIFIC CULTS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

So far this chapter has discussed general allegiance to the various Powers of the Higher Planes. There are, however, cults active in the Young Kingdoms that venerate a particular Lord or group of Lords directly, seeking patronage and power from them.

The bulk of these cults are described fully in the companion volume *Cults of the Young Kingdoms*. However, presented here are four cults representing different Powers and common enough for new *Elric* Adventurers to join if they so wish.

Joining a Cult

Any Adventurer may join a cult simply by stating their intention to do so. Adventurers may be members of any number of cults, as long as these do not conflict: no Lawful cultist would ever join a Chaotic cult, for instance; and no shaman of Grome would ever affiliate themselves with Straasha. There is no requirement to find a temple or church but such members are considered only as Lay

Members and do not derive any particular advantages or Gifts from their membership.

Initiation and Pacts

Every cult requires a Pact, as per the *RuneQuest* rules, found in the Cults chapter. A Pact establishes a commitment with the cult and a relationship with the Lord who is the patron of that cult. Those who form a Pact are Initiates and can then progress in the cult's ranks and benefit from what it has to offer. Most Young Kingdoms cultists who dedicate themselves to a god remain Initiates; but those who choose to progress stand to gain increasing levels of power. As they do so their Pact deepens and with it come certain consequences.

- Deepening of Pact generally signals the deepening and strengthening of the Compulsions that the cult imposes. For example, two cultists of Law with the Obsessive Compulsive Compulsion: one has Pact at 20% and the other Pact at 80%. The 20% cultist's Obsessive Compulsive behaviour will be mild compared with that of his more dedicated colleague (who may be all but paralysed by his Compulsion).
- Deepening of the Pact makes the cultist visible to his patron god but also his enemies. The deeper and stronger the Pact becomes, the more of an obvious representation of Law, Chaos or the Elements the Adventurer becomes.
- Deepening of the Pact signals a deepening of the relationship with the god. The stronger the Pact gets, the more like the god one becomes. Thus, a cultist with a Pact (Chardhros) 90% will be grim, morose, death-obsessed and ready to kill for his god without a second thought – in addition to any behaviours enforced by his Compulsions.

There are two additional benefits to a deepening Pact: Divine Intervention and Apotheosis.

Divine Intervention

Those dedicated a patron god or its cult can call for Divine Intervention. This works in more or less the way described on page 149 of the Cults chapter in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, with the Pact skill being the skill used for the intervention.

High Lords – Champions – of a cult do *not* automatically succeed in calling for Divine Intervention. The Lords of Law and Chaos are highly fickle and prevented from all but the most important of interventions. Even Elric, most beloved of Ariocho's disciples, often fails to summon his patron lord. The Lords of Chaos in particular, can be particularly perverse when dealing with their faithful and use such an opportunity to test a worshipper's faith. Alternatively the circumstances might be more favourable to the god's agenda than providing aid to the worshipper.

Gifts of the Balance

1D20	Gift
1	Gain a Weapon of the Balance. The weapon always strikes for double damage when used against <i>direct</i> enemies of the Balance.
2	Gain Armour of the Balance. This enchanted armour is generally a suit of full plate but it may be of any form. The agent suffers no Armour Penalty from wearing it. However, once donned, it cannot be removed.
3	Healing. The agent regenerates 1D3 Hit Points each Combat Round, whilst he is still alive. He need not be conscious for the regeneration to work but if a wound is sufficient enough to kill him, the regeneration ability will not restore him to life.
4	Increase any one skill to 100%.
5	Increase CHA to 21.
6	Increase CON to 21.
7	Increase DEX to 21.
8	Increase INT to 21.
9	Increase POW to 21.
10	Increase STR to 21.
11	Increased Damage Modifier. The agent's Damage Modifier is recalculated, based on the sum of STR, SIZ and POW.
12	Increased Health. The Adventurer's Hit Points are recalculated, based on the sum of CON, SIZ and POW.
13	Increased Reactions. The agent always acts first in any combat, regardless of the Strike Rank of the opponent and other combatants.
14	Innate Luck. When rolling for any Skill Test, the agent can choose which way to read the D100 result. For example, a roll of 90 could be read as 09. Note: if double digits, such as 00, 11, 22 and so forth, are rolled, the result <i>cannot</i> be reinterpreted.
15	Invulnerable to damage from <i>any</i> sorcerously created or summoned creature.
16	Invulnerable to damage from <i>one</i> type of weapon.
17	Heroic Ability. The agent gains one Heroic Ability (see <i>RuneQuest Core Rulebook</i>), chosen by the Games Master and suited to the Cosmic Balance's agenda. The agent does <i>not</i> need any of the usual pre-requisites to use the Ability.
18	Permanent residence in Tanelorn. The agent is given a permanent home in the Eternal City and he can find it no matter what its current location. Companions who serve the Balance indirectly who accompany the agent will always find a welcome there.
19	Resurrection. If killed, the Balance will restore the agent to life (placing all damaged Hit Locations at a value halfway between their normal value and the injured level). This Gift can only be used once.
20	Sixth Sense. The agent is immediately aware of the enemies of the Balance and those who would directly harm the agent.

Compulsions of the Balance

1D20	Gift
1	Never settle or lay-down any roots or emotional ties. If any have been formed, they must be sacrificed. <i>Note: if the Gift is Permanent Residence in Tanelorn, this Compulsion should be re-rolled.</i>
2	Amnesia. The agent loses his memory completely; unable to recall anything that happened to him until the point of swearing his oath of allegiance. Skills are unaffected.
3	Forego all material possessions. The agent must dispense with all possessions, save his weapons, clothes, armour and mount, if he has one. He may not accept anything offered to him, unless it is from a fellow agent of the Balance. He must rely on the charity of others for sustenance and/or hunt everything he eats.
4	Never use any magical or sorcerous item, unless it has been provided by a fellow agent of the Balance.
5	Never kill an agent of Law or Chaos but always imprison or free them.
6	Always fight for the underdog – no matter what their position or circumstances .
7	Never initiate combat.
8	Never kill in one-on-one combat.
9	Forswear combat with women, animals or some other minority group, so that one must surrender instead of fight.
10	Remain personally balanced. This means the agent must keep one scholarly or artistic skill within 10% of his highest Combat Skill.
11	Befriend one person every session, even if they are an enemy.
12	Never break an oath or a promise. Never allow yourself to be in anyone's debt, or they in yours.
13	Always remain cheerful no matter what the odds.
14	Become convinced that your true love is out in the world and that you need to go and find her.
15	Develop intense reoccurring nightmares about an impending apocalypse and the desire to prepare for it in some way.
16	A desire to turn people away from the worship of gods, as they only bring about destruction or stagnation.
17	Seek to banish all supernatural demonic entities and the means to summon them.
18	Never accept a position as a ruler and distrust all other rulers, no matter how benign they might be.
19	Develop a tendency towards martyrdom. It is the agent's purpose to suffer as long as other people benefit.
20	Never call upon the Balance for aid, even in the direst circumstances.

However, calling for a god's intervention can strain the Pact. Every time it is used to call for aid, successful or not, the rating decreases by 1D4 for Elemental cults, 1D6 for Lawful cults and Beast Lords and 1D8 for Chaotic cults.

A Pact may only be called upon *once* for any situation. It should be observed that actions performed during an intervention are ones which satisfy the deity's desires, not necessarily the worshipper's. The summoner merely requests their patron's aid; they cannot demand its form. Hence many interventions have serious consequences if the deity takes such opportunities to set in play their own machinations. When called upon to counter the supernatural powers of a conflicting entity, most Lords simply provide an equal force to oppose it.

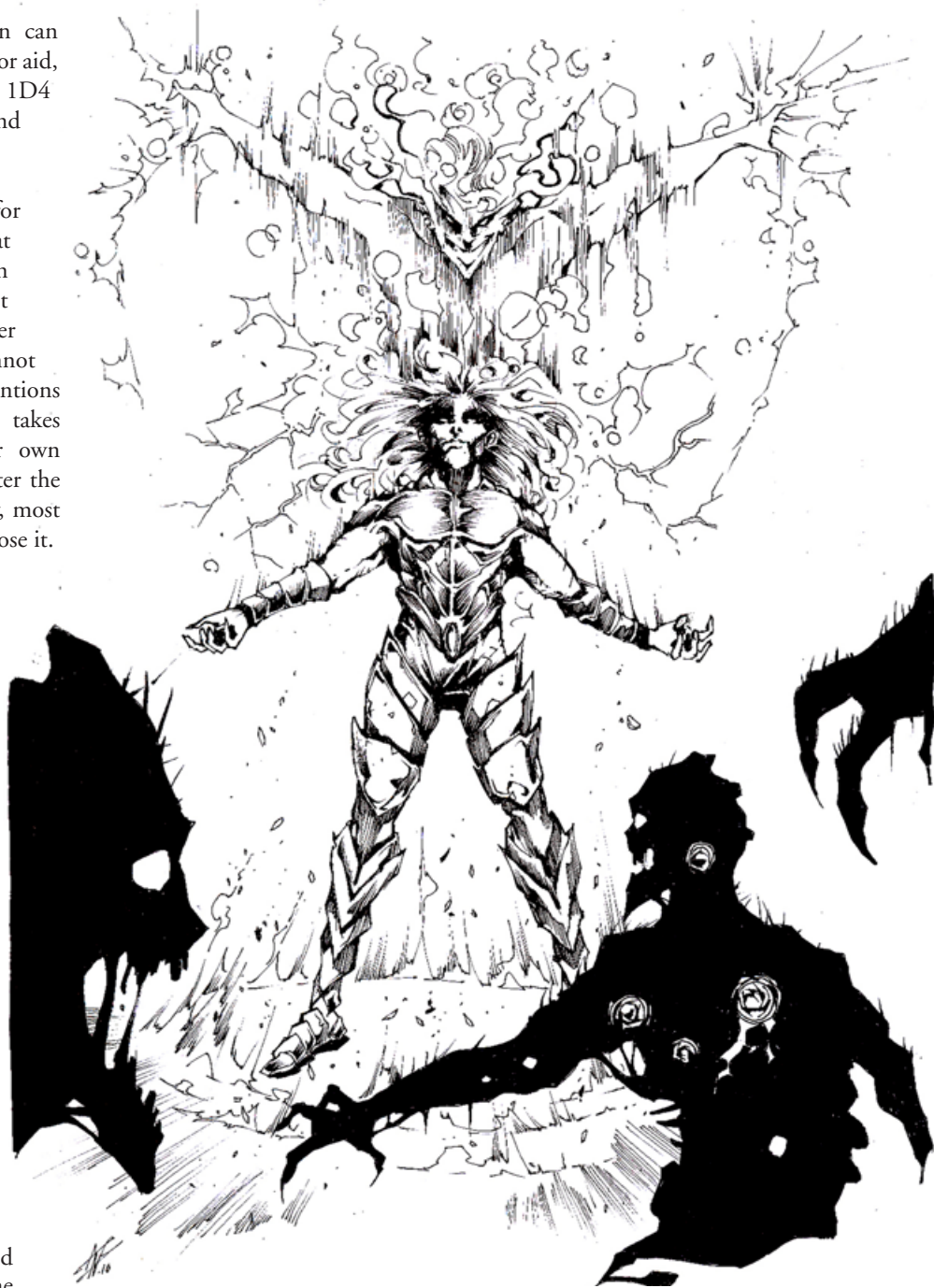
Note that one does not lose any Gifts or Compulsions developed as part of a Pact if the Pact rating declines. These stay with the Adventurer irrespective of how the relationship deteriorates.

Apotheosis

Although there is no upper level for a Pact skill, reaching 100% indicates the complete dedication of the worshipper to the god. At this stage, there is the likelihood that the worshipper will be called to the deity's service permanently – in which case they become a Non-Player Character under the control of the Games Master. This is called apotheosis and the chance of it occurring is equal to the *current* POW dedicated to that god multiplied by 5%. Rolling this value or less on D100 means that the Adventurer attains a state of apotheosis; his soul is claimed by the deity and whisked to the god's plane (or elsewhere in the Multiverse), either to reside with the god or do its bidding. The mortal body of the Adventurer may be left behind, with the soul being granted a new body to the patron's liking, or it may be taken completely: The choice is at the Games Master's discretion.

If the apotheosis test fails, it will be tested again precisely one game year after the first test and so on until the soul is finally claimed.

For example, Lady Senilla's sister, Mistress Celessa the Azure, had developed her Pact (Eequor) to 112%. Her POW dedicated to Eequor is 8. Thus, each year, there is a 40% chance of Eequor



herself claiming Celessa's soul. One fine, spring morning, as Celessa walks beside a babbling brook in Melniboné, a figure of staggering beauty, clad in blue, walks towards her. The woman smiles and Celessa returns it, forgetting everything around her. The blue-clad woman extends her hand and takes Celessa's. The women embrace and the two are enveloped in a shimmering azure light.

[In reality what has happened here is that Celessa's player rolled for apotheosis and score 32 out of 40%. Celessa has transcended and now serves Eequor directly. She may return on Eequor's direct business in the guise of a demon or whatever Eequor requires...]

Many days later Celessa's body is found by the brook by her mother, Lady Sathril. Sathril glances at the body and understands what has happened: her daughter, having devoted herself to Eequor wholly, has been taken into Divine Service and is now one of Eequor's blessed handmaidens. Sathril is cruelly disappointed; this was the fate she had planned for her other daughter, Senilla. She resolves to make Senilla pay dearly for her betrayal.

How apotheosis takes form is down to a Games Master's discretion and should fit the campaign. Celessa, in the previous example, leaves play. However a god may choose to keep an apotheosised disciple on earth as his direct entity, fully and totally beholden to the god's agenda. This can provide new challenges for an Adventurer but may require discussion with the Games Master on how the Adventurer should now be acting.

It might appear that apotheosis can be averted simply by calling upon the patron frequently through Divine Intervention, thereby eroding the strength of the Pact. This is not the case. Gods become irritated with frequent interruptions and calls for aid, which certainly weakens their sympathy for the worshipper. However, if an Adventurer makes constant and frequent requests for divine intervention (more than once per story, for example, or in each and every story), then it is quite possible, and even likely, that the patron will refuse any calls for aid, no matter how successful or persuasive and even, perhaps, aid the worshipper's foes directly instead. The only way to regain divine help in such cases would be for the worshipper to sacrifice more POW to strengthen the Pact and to refrain from constant impositions on the patron's time until it is *absolutely* necessary. This is the gods' way of ensuring that no promised soul escapes them. Clearly if the worshipper needs so much help he might be better employed in *permanent* service somewhere.

Stages of Cult Membership

Most cults follow the standard *RuneQuest* progression pattern (see page 148 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*). The Pact skill forms one of the cult's skills for the purposes of Rank Requirements and so those with stronger Pacts will have a greater chance of advancing in the hierarchy. Some cults have additional requirements for moving to another rank, such as an additional POW dedication and a cult's description will state what additional requirements, if any, are necessary.

The ranks follow the Divine Cult pattern: Lay Member, Initiate, Acolyte and Lord/Priest. The highest rank is not known as Rune Lord or Rune Priest but is known, instead, as either Warrior Priest or Sorcerer Priest, depending on the skills that the Adventurer has most developed. Sorcerer cultists will invariably be Sorcerer Priests whilst those with highly developed Combat Styles will be Warrior Priests.

There is one, additional rank: Champion. This is the highest level of cult attainment; Champions are the heroes of the cult and are considered masters of everything the cult stands for. Champions

are responsible for furthering the specific agendas of the gods themselves and have singled themselves out for special attention by the Lords of the Higher Worlds – and others who serve them

Champions

Requirements: Candidates must have been a Warrior-Priest or Sorcerer-Priest of the cult for at some years and know all of the cult's runes. The Pact skill must be 90% or greater. On promotion to champion they *automatically* gain one Compulsion and may, if they wish, receive a further Gift from their patron.

Duties: Champions are expected to donate all wealth and conquests to the cult and in return may call upon the cult's resources for their quests. Champions must accept every command or mission given to them, whether this is by a higher ranking Champion or the deity they serve. Failure to do so always incurs cult retribution.

Benefits: Champions can command Priests, Acolytes and Initiates, calling upon their support for any missions they must personally fulfil. Champions receive one Heroic Ability appropriate to their cult and may attain others through the normal process.

Training Costs

Most cults offer training in certain skills and an advantage of belonging to a cult is that a teacher in a skill the cult holds as important can usually be found. Cults charge for training and although there will always be differences between cults, sects, countries and cultures, the training costs found on page 53 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* form the basis for training. Usually, discounts on training costs are available as per the Benefits column, by rank, on page 148 of the *RuneQuest* Cults chapter.

ARKYN

Gods/Pantheon

Law. Arkyn, Shalod

Purpose and History

Lord Arkyn of Law has many guises, many aspects, but in the Young Kingdoms Arkyn the White, who actively opposes the Sword Rulers and the rise of the brutal Mabden, is pre-eminent.

Myths

Arkyn the White Lord (Mythic Resonance 75%)

Arkyn ruled 15 distant planes where he was a just and good Lord. The planes were ordered and cultured and several races, perfect in their beauty and symmetry, co-existed without the need for conquest or domination. Everyone had a place and understood what that was.

The Mabden came from some other plane and brought with them their gods of Chaos: Arioeh, Xiombarg and Mabelode. The

Mabden were ugly and barbaric, and did not want to learn or understand the principles of Arkyn's great realms and so set about destroying everything they could find. The Sword Rulers aided these battles and although Lord Arkyn and his disciples fought magnificently, all was reduced to ruin and Lord Arkyn, the White Lord, was forced into exile. The Mabden conquered all, and laid waste to everything.

Somehow the Mabden found a way to reach the Young Kingdoms and arrived here during the great war that eventually crippled the demon-worshipping Melnibonéans. The Mabden brought the Sword Rulers but Lord Arkyn the White arrived before them and fought a secret war that still continues, limiting the Sword Rulers' power. It grows more difficult for Arkyn to exist in the Young Kingdoms but his wisdom and strategy guides the minds and hands of the faithful. It is the duty of those who worship Arkyn the White to battle the Mabden and the Sword Rulers on his behalf, containing their presence to the blasphemous isle of Pan Tang, which is a reflection of the ruin they have engineered in Lord Arkyn's original realms.

Beliefs

Arkyn's cult holds several tenets at its core:

- Arkyn was deposed by the Sword Rulers.
- He created symmetry, mathematics and geometry.
- His worshippers must work to restore Arkyn to his realms, ending his exile.
- The Mabden are Arkyn's enemy and the enemy of humankind.
- The Sword Rulers must be destroyed. There can be no other outcome.
- Arkyn prepares for a great and final battle. When he is victorious, the lands of the Young Kingdoms will be absorbed into the realms taken from him by the Sword Rulers. The 15 planes shall become one and the Mabden will be eradicated. The new plane will be a plane of perfection.
- All worshippers of Arkyn must fight the war against Chaos. It must be fought with stealth and guile. The Sword Rulers are cunning; Arkyn's faithful must be more so.

Worshippers

The cult of Arkyn is found across the Young Kingdoms but predominantly in Vilmir, Jharkor and Lormyr. Larger temples include laboratories where priests experiment with their latest discoveries whilst smaller ones are dedicated to more bibliographic study. As Lord Arkyn embodies symmetry, his temples are built to strict symmetrical and geometric templates, wonders of engineering and architecture.

Arkyn's worshippers are mathematicians, scientists and philosophers but also include warriors whose goal is the Sword Rulers' defeat. The scholars seek to understand the underlying principles of the Multiverse and put them to practice in the every day. This cult embodies thinkers and doers, numbering scholars, philosophers, mathematicians and engineers amongst its ranks. It

offers a rational, considered approach based on conjecture being either proved or disproved.

The sect has specific titles for its ranks: members are Initiates, Acolytes, Priests and Champions.

Membership Requirements

Standard.

Initiates must enter into a Pact (Arkyn) but have no other requirements for entry.

Cult Ranks

White Pages (Initiates)

White Squires (Acolytes)

White Priests (Priests)

White Knights (Champions)

A monastic branch of the White Squires, the White Brothers, exists in Vilmir. These warrior-monks spend their days in contemplation and martial training, preparing for the final battle. Their studies concentrate on cracking Arkyn's Theorem of Strategic Battle.

Benefits

Benefits accrue in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills and Runes and Heroic Abilities.

Initiates

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at 50% of the usual rate.

Acolytes

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at 25% of the usual rate.
- May learn cult Runes.

Priests

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Free training in cult skills.
- May learn cult Runes.

Champions

- As for Priests, plus the Champion may take one Heroic Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions for the cult of Arkyn are chosen from the following:

Gifts

Automaton

Gain a self powered automaton as a servant.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW per 20 Characteristic/ Armour Points invested in the automaton's assembly.

Combat Acuity

Increase Combat Actions by +1.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW. This Gift may only be taken once.

Enhanced Learning

Result of the Improvement Roll for a specific, named skill (disciple's choice) are doubled (thus, a failed Improvement roll means a skill advances by 2 points; successful Improvements improves skill by x2 1D4+1).

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW for the first skill, 2 POW for a second skill, 3 POW for a third and so forth.

Eternal Life

The recipient will not die of natural causes during the lifetime of the Gift, although he is still vulnerable to death through violence.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Perfection

One Characteristic is raised by 1D4 points but cannot exceed the species maximum.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW for the first characteristic, 2 POW for a second, 3 POW for a third and so forth.

Sanctuary

Arkyn provides the recipient with a magical structure or plane as a residence. 1 POW buys a villa or manse; 2 POW buys a castle; 3 POW a city and so forth. The property always belongs to the deity and can be removed at any time if the deity so chooses. The residence may have further powers as desired.

The initial cost is variable, as described. Additional dedicated POW can be spent on the Sanctuary in the following ways:

- 1 POW for Hidden (residence itself cannot be perceived)
- 1 POW for Movement (flying, rolling, crawling and so on)
- 1 POW for Shifting (inter-dimensionally)
- 1 POW for Isolation (residents cannot be located magically)
- 1 POW for Impregnability (access cannot be forced, save at the deity level)
- 1 POW for Peacefulness (residents suffer no violence or insanity)

Sense Enemies (Elementals and Beast Lords)

The Adventurer is immediately aware of any enemies and those who would directly harm him.

Dedicated POW Cost: The number of points of POW spent on this Gift increases the range of the Gift's effectiveness. 1 POW gives a range equal to POW x2 in metres, 2 POW gives a range of POW x4 in metres, 3 POW gives a range of POW x8 in metres and so on.

Youth

The recipient returns to a young body (aged between 16 and 21 – recipient's choice), reversing all aging effects

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Compulsions

Collector

Collect and catalogue obscure objects constantly.

Maths Obsessed

Obsessed with numbers, formulae and equations. Fascinated by the numerical values of things, spending hours trying to work out how they fit into Arkyn's universal theorems.

Nervous Affliction

Develop nervous tics and mannerisms that grow steadily more pronounced with the increase of the Pact skill.

Pattern Obsessed

Becomes obsessed with the shapes and geometries of things, seeking to study and understand every nuance and every angle.

Perfectionist

Develop an uncontrollable anger and violent temper if things are not done perfectly – and they never are. No one can meet the cultist's impossibly high standards.

Tedious

Become an oppressive bore on one particular subject, imparting all knowledge about it in long, rambling, tedious eulogies.

Cult Skills

Craft, Engineering, Evaluate, First Aid, Healing, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (all basic Lores), Lore (Arkyn), Lore (Logic), Lore (Mathematics), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Philosophy), Lore (Physics), Mechanisms.

Cult Runes

All runes with the exceptions of Chaos, Darkness, Raising and Reduction.

Heroic Abilities Available

Arrow Cutting, Linguist, Loremaster, Tireless.

Retribution

The cult does not exact specific retribution from those who stray from Arkyn's path. However, all cult Gifts (but not Compulsions) cease if the adherent leaves the cult.

Politics and Relationships

The ultimate purpose of Arkyn's plans for the Young Kingdoms occasionally leads to schisms between different sects of the cult. The principal bone of contention is Arkyn's eventual wish to absorb the Young Kingdoms into a single realm; this is not always a popular theory and the White Brothers hold that the realms will remain separate but accessible by the White Gates that will allow all of Arkyn's faithful to roam the planes where he rules.

What is not in dispute is that the Sword Rulers are the enemy and the Mabden of Pan Tang their emissaries. The cult of Arkyn despises the King, Queen and Knight of the Swords vehemently and considers Pan Tang a canker on the world. Vilmirian privateers are financed by the cult of Arkyn to raid Pan Tangian vessels that stray from their home waters – taking piracy back to the pirates. Elsewhere, champions of the White Lord undertake dangerous quests to exterminate the agents of the Sword Rulers, thereby preventing the spread of the Mabden.

CULT OF GROME

And then, slowly, the heaving earth subsided and the ship was still and a huge, brown figure stood looking down at the ship. The figure was the colour of earth and looked like a vast, old oak. His hair and his beard were the colour of leaves and his eyes were the colour of gold ore and his teeth were the colour of granite and his feet were like roots and his skin seemed covered in tiny green shoots in place of hair and he smelled rich and musty and good and he was King Grome of the Earth Elementals. He sniffed and he frowned and he said in a soft, mighty voice that was yet coarse and grumpy: 'I want my ship.'

'Then you must kill us to obtain it,' Elric said.

'Kill? Grome does not kill mortals. He kills nothing. Grome builds. Grome brings to life.'

'You have already killed three of our company,' Elric pointed out. 'Three are dead, King Grome, because you made the land-storm.'

Grome's great brows drew together and he scratched his great head, causing an immense rustling noise to sound. 'Grome does not kill,' he said again.

'King Grome has killed,' said Elric reasonably. 'Three lives lost.'

'Grome grunted. 'But I want my ship...'

— Elric of Melniboné

Gods/Pantheon

Elemental. Grome of the Roots, Grome of the Land Below, Grome Earth Father.

Purpose and History

The land is Grome's kingdom: all above it and all beneath it. Grome guards his territory jealously, because he believes his brother, Straasha, would steal it and flood it if he had the opportunity.

By and large Grome is a benevolent, if sullen, god. He adores life and seeks its promotion. When provoked to wrath, Grome brings destruction in great quakes and upheavals of the earth but any death caused is regretted – an unfortunate tragedy the result of petulance and King Grome both sulks and mourns any loss of life he has caused.

The struggle between Grome and Straasha, whilst perpetuated by his mortal worshippers to some extent, has long since abated. Grome and his brother maintain a certain peace, secure in their own realms, although Grome occasionally manifests the odd tantrum over disputed territory, as he does concerning 'his ship' – the Ship That Sails Over Sea and Land. For the most part, Grome is happy with the shape of the world and has no cause to quarrel with the Lord of the Waves any longer.

One of Grome's duties in this cycle of Time has been as custodian of the Black Blades, Stormbringer and Mournblade. How he came to be their guardian, even Grome will not tell, because it would be to breach a trust of cosmic proportions but, ever-dutiful, Grome guarded the Black Swords diligently and levelled his furious temper when the Mernii obtained one of them and refused to return it. Later, Arioch himself tricked Grome from the possession of the Black Sword and, when Grome finally took charge of it again, the Earth King decided to remove it to another plane of existence altogether, where Arioch's deceptions would be to little avail.

As a current ruler Grome prefers to remain in his realm of roots and rock. His manifestations occur seldom and usually only if called upon by the emperors of Melniboné or the Pukwadji, the strange, ancient folk of the Silent Lands – although even they know better than to test Grome's patience too often. It takes a great effort of will for Grome to rise and only when his realm is under direct threat. Calls for his aid usually result in Grome sending a proxy – an elemental or a subtle demonstration of his power, such as an earth tremor or landslide.

Grome considers all life to be within his province although he does not take credit for the creation of human (or Elder Race) life; still, he has the utmost respect for it and treats all life with the same level of importance.

Myths

The Ship of Land and Sea (Mythic Resonance 65%)

After the war with Straasha ended, it was agreed that a symbol between the two Lords should be made. Straasha suggested a ship and Grome suggested that it should sail on the earth with the same ease that it sailed on the sea. Straasha agreed and so the Ship of Land and Sea was made.

The two Lords shared this vessel equally and all was good. Then, one day, a group of men with very dark skin came to Grome bringing with them a strange, black blade. They asked Grome if he would take care of the blade for them, as they were preparing for a long sleep. Knowing that many of his creatures also slept for a long time, when the world grew cold, Grome agreed. He took the sword into his keeping and had the Pukwadji make a cave in which it could be kept.

Straasha visited Grome and saw the sword. 'It is a fine blade,' Straasha said. 'I would be able to keep it far more safe, deep beneath the ocean where no one would find it.'

'Sepiriz and his priests gave the sword to me,' Grome pointed out. 'If they'd wanted the sword drowned, they would have come to you.'

'You will only lose it,' Straasha said.

'*You* will only lose it to Pyaray,' Grome countered. Angered at this line of reasoning, Straasha stormed from Grome's hall taking the Ship of Land and Sea with him.

'We share that ship!' Grome said, with equal anger.

'You will not share that fine sword,' Straasha replied, sailing from the hall. 'Why should I share the ship?'

And Lord Straasha, in his treachery and jealousy, stole what also belonged to Grome,

Beliefs

Those who worship Grome have simple, straightforward beliefs:

- Grome is the ruler of the earth and determines its shape.
- His enemy is Straasha.
- Grome protects all life and when life ends, it must be returned to him for renewal.

More specific beliefs according to culture are as follows:

Dorel

- Grome is the husband of Queen Lashaar and submits to her will.
- Grome requires regular sacrifice to keep him from displaying his wrath.

Melniboné

- Grome is the bedrock of all things; the foundation of all that grows or can be built.
- His munificence is exhibited in the pacts that only Melniboné enjoys.

Shazar

- Grome is a benevolent father and Giver of the Harvest. Thanks must be given to him at every harvest time.

Pikarayd and the Weeping Waste

- Grome still wars with Straasha. He is beset by enemies to the south and north (the stuff of Chaos and the Oceans).
- By burying the dead, the wisdom of the ancestors returns through Grome's continued worship.

Pukwadji

- Grome is the father of all things. His wrath is dreadful.
- The Pukwadji are the most beloved of his mortal children.
- Grome is the Guardian of the Swords. Those who wield them defy Grome's authority.

Worshippers

The worship of Grome is still found mainly in the barbarian regions of the Young Kingdoms and rarely in the cities and towns. Cult practices are standard across different cults: respect for the land, protection of Grome's interests and the disruption of Straasha's.

Dedicated cultists – Initiate and above – mark themselves with ritual scars and tattoos, wear their hair long and matted, often with twigs, pebbles or iron rings woven in, or daubed with mud to form imposing coxcombs and spikes.

Temples are little more than caves adapted to the purpose or simple shrines of heaped stones. In civilised areas temples are always in basements or constructed underground.

Membership Requirements

Standard.

Despite the rank names, Grome's cult, like all the Elemental cults, is not nearly so formalised or rigidly structured. Quite often there is little to differentiate between Initiates and Acolytes and the Priest rank is shamanic, occupied by a single individual in a clan or tribe who is responsible for the direct veneration of Grome.

Grome cultists can choose to follow the Spirit Path of Grome. The Spirit Path requires initiation and the Initiates become Spirit Worshippers and Shaman of the cult.

Dust-Son/Dust-Daughter (Lay Members)
Earth-Son/Earth-Daughter (Initiates/Spirit Worshippers)

Earth-Brother/Earth-Sister (Acolytes/Shaman)
Earth Father/Earth-Mother (Priest/High Shaman)
Earth Shaker (Champion/Clan or Tribal Chief)

Benefits

Cult benefits are in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Cult Runes, Summonings, Spirit Magic and Legendary Abilities.

Earth-Son/Earth-Daughter

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.

Earth-Brother/Earth-Sister

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- Earth Brothers may be taught cult magic if the Earth Father considers them worthy of the honour.

Earth Father/Earth-Mother

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- A new Shaman is always taught two cult Runes and the cult's summonings to the base percentage.

Earth Shaker

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- Earth Brothers may be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Earth Father considers them worthy of the honour.
- One Heroic Ability.

Gifts

Animal Familiar

The recipient receives the companionship of a *natural* animal (choose from the animals listed in either the *Creatures and Personalities of the Million Spheres* chapter or agree a creature from *RuneQuest Monster Coliseum*) with a SIZ in D6 no greater than the POW spent on this Gift. The familiar obeys simple commands but will not go against its nature. If a further point of POW is invested, the creature can speak with its master.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW per D6 of SIZ; additional 1 POW for a talking creature.

Divine Training

Raise a cult skill to 100.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW the first skill, 2 POW for the second, 3 for a third skill and so forth.

Elemental

Gain an elemental helper that may be called once per adventure.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW per cubic metre of the elemental's size.

Endurance (All)

Endure any pain. Never needs to test *Resilience* to prevent unconsciousness when wounded and immune to torture.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Healing

The disciple regenerates 1D3 Hit Points each Combat Round, to all locations, whilst he is still alive. He need not be conscious for the regeneration to work but if a wound is sufficient to kill him, the regeneration ability will not restore him to life.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Perfection

One Characteristic is raised by 1D4 points but cannot exceed the species maximum.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW for the first Characteristic, 2 POW for a second, 3 POW for a third and so forth.

Rune Mastery (Earth)

The cost to invoke the Rune of Earth is always 1 Magic Point, although the size of the effect is still limited by how many MPs they have remaining.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Sanctuary

Grome provides the recipient with a magical structure or plane as a residence. 1 POW buys a villa or manse; 2 POW buys a castle; 3 POW a city and so forth. The property always belongs to the deity and can be removed at any time if the deity so chooses. The residence may have further powers as desired.

Dedicated POW Cost: The initial cost is variable, as described previously. Additional dedicated POW can be spent on the Sanctuary in the following ways:

- 1 POW for Hidden (residence itself cannot be perceived)
- 1 POW for Movement (flying, rolling, crawling and so on)
- 1 POW for Shifting (inter-dimensionally)
- 1 POW for Isolation (residents cannot be located magically)
- 1 POW for Impregnability (access cannot be forced, save at the deity level)
- 1 POW for Peacefulness (residents suffer no violence or insanity)

Compulsions

Armour Rejection

Never wear armour.

Burial

Bury all foes alive, in sacrifice to Grome.

Freedom of Movement

Never wear footwear or armour on the limbs.

Hydrophobia

Develop fear of water (cannot approach large bodies of water; must make a Persistence test to avoid fleeing in fear or being rooted to the spot in terror).

Ritual Scarring

Sacrifice 1 point of CHA (through ritual scarring).

Special Diet

Never eat fish or other creature of the water.

Unwashed

Must never come into contact with water, save for drinking.

Vegetarian

Eat only vegetables.

Cult Skills

Engineering (civilised regions only), Language (High Speech*), Lore (Grome), Lore (Regional), Spear and Shield Combat Styles, Stealth, Survival, Track.

*Used for Rune Casting only. It confers no fluency as a language.

Cult Runes

Runes of Beast (choose a specific herd or hunting beast), Contact, Dissolution, Earth, Enhancement (CON and STR), Heat, Sight, Silence, Spirit Binding, Spirit Walking.

Cult Summonings

Command, Summoning Ritual (Gnome).

Spirit Magic

Shamans of Grome cults can contact the ancestors of the clan or tribe and can summon Earth and Nature spirits. See the Magic and Sorcery chapter for more details.

Heroic Abilities Available

Battle Fury, Decapitating Swing, Disease Immunity, Heroic Aura, Skin of the Bear.

Cult Secrets

King Grome was the custodian of the Black Blade, which he bartered with the Mernii people before the reign of the Bright Empire. When the Mernii refused to return the Black Blade Grome threatened to destroy their ships. The Mernii hero, White Crow, kept his oath to Grome Earth King and returned the Black Blade so that Grome could re-entomb it, keeping its evil isolated. For keeping the Mernii oath, Grome entered into the compact that remains with Melniboné to this day.

Retribution

Grome seeks no retribution against those who leave or betray his cult; he has little concern for mortal affairs. However, a vengeful shaman might arrange for a traitor be sacrificed to Grome as punishment for his transgression.

Politics and Relationships

Naturally enough the cult of Straasha is hated by the mortal worshippers of Grome. However the cult of Lassa is generally considered to be an ally and Kakatal's cult is viewed with ambivalence.

THE SWORD RULERS

Gods/Pantheon

Chaos, the Sword Rulers (or the Blade Triumvirate).

Purpose and History

The cult of the Sword Rulers came to the Young Kingdoms when the Mabden came to Pan Tang. The Mabden are not native to this plane of existence and in the realms where they proliferate, the Sword Rulers (who are believed to have created the Mabden for their own amusement) hold sway. Thus, the combination of Mabelode, Xiombarg and Arioch into a single, Chaotic pantheon, is relatively new. Moreover, it posits a very different power structure to that envisaged and understood by the Melnibonéans.

Within the Bright Empire's cosmology, Mabelode and Xiombarg are no more powerful than Arioch; within the Sword Rulers pantheon, Mabelode is the most powerful of the trio and a commander of dozens of dukes of hell, whilst Xiombarg and Arioch occupy places of lesser influence. Pan Tang, in promoting the Sword Rulers as a cult, maintains this relationship exists across the Multiverse. By relegating Arioch to a lesser role, the Mabden can still acknowledge Arioch's undoubted power but also offer a deliberate snub to Melniboné. According to Mabden lore, the Sword Rulers despise the Elder Races of the Multiverse because they are not creations of Chaos; the fact that Melniboné embraced Chaos makes no difference to the Mabden of Pan Tang: the Sword Rulers hate all Elder Races and would see them destroyed.

The purpose of the Sword Rulers is to expand their empire. They already control a myriad of planes beyond that of the Young Kingdoms (including those of Corum's world), which are treated as breeding grounds and fiefdoms for their Mabden. The Sword Rulers are warlike and brutal, taking pleasure in the anarchy their presence ensures and which they believe is the natural order of the Multiverse. They seek, through their worshippers, to impose a similar state of anarchy in the Young Kingdoms, replacing Melniboné's tired and waning empire with one of Mabden design. In this sense the Sword Rulers' agenda is not merely the perpetuation of the Eternal Struggle but complete victory, driving the forces of Law either as far away as possible or, preferably, to their doom and destruction, thereby paving the way for Chaos to reign supreme.

Despite sharing a common alliance, the three Sword Rulers are not in harmonious alliance. Each is selfish and each pursues its own agenda. They are deeply suspicious of each other and recognise a certain vulnerability – so much so that each Sword Ruler has opted to hide its heart in well-protected places. The Sword Rulers vie for power; Mabelode, despite his assumed superiority in the Blade Triumvirate, fears an alliance between Xiombarg and Arioch. Likewise, Xiombarg fears Arioch's ambition and Arioch resents Mabelode's overall rulership. Such divisions can be exploited although, when the overall interests of the Sword Rulers are threatened, they are prepared to ally to face a common foe.

Each Sword Ruler employs different tactics in their pursuit, and maintenance, of power. Mabelode prefers to employ many agents,

both human and demon in nature, to work his business. He is therefore keen to secure the services of those who pursue personal power and to reward them amply for their efforts. He favours strong warriors and expert sorcerers, finding many amongst the greedy Mabden, jealous magicians and those few who are so morally and spiritually bankrupt that they have no option but to pledge their souls in their entirety to Mabelode's service. The King of the Swords has employed some infamous names as part of this strategy – both Gaynor the Damned and Yyrkoon of Imrryr have entered Pacts with the King of the Swords and whilst their *personal* agendas may differ to Mabelode's, the rewards he offers are tantalising enough for them to pledge their allegiance.

Xiombarg also works through agents but prefers to make her influence felt through cruel and perverse jokes that exploit the essentially simple nature of the Mabden and humankind. In one of her realms, for example, she has effectively abolished time; in another, caused the sun to stop. All her jokes inflict pain and suffering in some shape or form but often in subtle ways that might take months or years to manifest their full effects. A perversion she inflicts might appear to be a blessing or gift but eventually its true nature becomes apparent, with suffering and anarchy following in its wake.

Arioch is the most suspicious and capricious of the Sword Rulers. He prefers guile and charm to act for him, engaging agents in innocuous ways that eventually lead to their own doom. Arioch prefers subterfuge, lies and misdirection to achieve his ends. He revels in concocting complex emotional situations that trap



mortals into bringing about their own downfall so that he, Arioch, can reject all blame. In the Young Kingdoms Arioch plainly has many aspects and the Knight of the Swords is simply one of those. Despite enjoying considerable influence as the patron of Melniboné it suits Arioch, sometimes, to play the foil to his sister, Xiombarg, and brother, Mabelode, masking the true extent of his power (or perhaps masking a real lack of influence).

Whatever their plans and stratagems, the Sword Rulers are undoubtedly a dangerous and unholy trio. Their combined influence in the Young Kingdoms is relatively weak but if Pan Tang has its own way, and never forget that it seeks to emulate and destroy the Bright Empire, the Sword Rulers' influence will be extended without regard for consequence.

Myths

The King, the Queen and the Knight of the Swords (Mythic Resonance 80%):

King Mabelode, Queen Xiombarg and Duke Arioch ruled 100 worlds between them as the Sword Rulers. They had many worshippers, many slaves, and gave their faithful many gifts in return for worship. The Hundred Planes grew strong and conquered more worlds. The Sword Empire was forged. Mabelode and Xiombarg each made a Black Blade that was their symbol and power. These were stolen away, perhaps by Duke Arioch, who was jealous of their power and could not forge his own Black Sword.

When the Black Blades were stolen, it allowed the Lords of Law – Arkyn and Miggea – to wage war against the Sword Empire. King Mabelode, Queen Xiombarg and Duke Arioch were driven back to their original planes and forced to remain there, almost as prisoners. Only the Mabden worshipped them, with other races turning to the worship of the Gods of Law and the idiotic Elemental Lords who promised much and gave nothing.

The Sword Rulers found a champion who broke free of the restrictions Law had placed on them and he travelled the Spheres until he found a new world for the faithful Mabden. This world worshipped many gods of Chaos who were different, yet similar, to the Sword Rulers. The empress of this world, a demon queen named Terhali, a *shefanhow*, worshipped Xiombarg and she took the champion of the Sword Rulers as her lover. From there, it was easy to bring the Mabden into the world and they settled the island that they named Pan Tang.

But Terhali tricked the champion: she turned the Mabden into slaves and stole their secrets. She became the new favourite of the Sword Rulers and bribed them with knowledge of their lost Black Blades, which she claimed to control.

In time Terhali fell and war ravaged her Bright Empire. The Chaos Lords they worshipped failed them and the Dragon People

fell back to their island home. The Mabden grew stronger and the worship of the Sword Rulers was reinstated.

Now is *their* time to rule the Young Kingdoms.

Beliefs

The beliefs of the Sword Rulers cult are straightforward:

- The natural state of the Multiverse is anarchy, not order.
- All races exist in a state of perpetual war.
- The Sword Rulers are the rightful rulers of the Multiverse.
- The Sword Rulers created humankind; the Mabden are pre-eminent amongst all human species.
- The time of the Elder Races – the *shefanhow* – is over: they must be destroyed.
- It is the duty of all who follow the Sword Rulers to destroy the *shefanhow*.
- Champions of the cult are the reincarnated agents of the Sword Rulers – elite warriors in the battle for the control of the Multiverse.

Worshippers

The cult has a strong and popular following in Pan Tang, since the people of that isle are of the Mabden. The cult also appeals to warriors who revel in the anarchy of battle and enjoy taking arms against anything that is ordered and secure. It also appeals to those who fear and loathe the Melnibonéans – either because they fear them as an Elder Race or because they seek revenge for Melniboné's 10,000 years of domination. This is a cult of war, rage and ethnic cleansing. It appeals strongly to Dharijorians, who, as vassals of Pan Tang, pursue an agenda of superiority in the west and see the veneration of the Sword Rulers as appropriate to their aims.

Devotees of the cult can choose to follow the Sword Rulers as a single pantheon, choosing no single Lord of Chaos as a patron. In this case, the Pact made is Pact (Sword Rulers) and any calls for Divine Intervention attract whichever of the three Sword Rulers seems most appropriate to the situation.

However, it is also common for adherents to choose either the King, Queen or Knight of the Swords as a specific allegiance. Adherents of Mabelode must be male; adherents of Xiombarg and Arioch may be either male or female. The beliefs are the same for whichever sect is chosen but with the additional belief that one's sect is naturally superior to the others.

Membership

Despite its love of anarchy, the cult maintains a loose hierarchy:

- Sword Son/Daughter (Lay Member)
- Sword Brother/Sister (Initiate)
- Sword Singer (Acolyte)
- Sword Blessor (Priest)
- Sword Master (Champion)

Where an adherent follows a particular sect, then their patron's name is used as a suffix to their rank (so a Sword Sister of Xiombarg is a female Initiate of the Xiombarg sect).

Sword Sons and Daughters

Lay Members of the cult need only adhere to the beliefs of the cult. They are not required to undertake any assigned duties or enter into a Pact but unless they are prepared to show such commitment, they can never progress to the Initiate rank.

Sword Brothers and Sisters

Initiates are expected to cleave wholly to the beliefs of the cult. They are the rank and file warriors serving the wider aims of the Sword Rulers. A Pact is essential but there is no minimum POW dedication required save for the mandatory one point of POW. However, Initiates who are prepared to dedicate more in their service of the Sword Rulers tend to be favoured by the higher ranks when it comes to matters of privilege and recognition.

Sword Singers

To rise from being a Sword Brother to a Sword Singer, the following conditions must be met:

- Minimum of three points of POW dedicated to the Pact.
- Pact of 50% or higher.
- Have completed two missions assigned by a Sword Blessor or Sword Master.

Sword Singers have proved their dedication to the cult and are actively engaged in furthering the Sword Rulers' agenda. Benefits include the learning of cult sorcery.

Sword Blessor

Priests are actively engaged in leading the worship rites of the Sword Rulers. Demonstrative veneration is important to the cult as it helps, it is believed, to strengthen the Sword Rulers' influence in the Young Kingdoms. Naturally enough the rituals concern the sacrificing of blood and souls but they also concern heartfelt prayers celebrating the gods' supremacy in the Multiverse and requesting that the Mabden, so far from their ancestral planes, are not forgotten or abandoned.

It is not necessary for Sword Singers to become Sword Blessors before moving to the Sword Master rank. Those that do intend to become Sword Blessors need to fulfil the following requirements:

- Know: Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Language (Mabden) at 50% or higher.
- Know Lore (Sword Rulers) at 70% or higher (or the Lore for a specific Sword Ruler sect).
- Sacrifice a further 1D4 POW to their Pact.
- Donate 50% of their wealth to the cult and 50% of all earnings.

To be accepted as a Sword Blessor, the adherent must succeed in a Lore (Sword Rulers) or Lore (Sect) test.

Sword Master

Sword Masters are the cult's champions. These are the most faithful who may be called upon by the Sword Rulers to act as their direct agents in whatever grand schemes they are hatching. Sword Masters believe that they are nothing less than the reincarnated champions of the cult from elsewhere in the Multiverse and act with grandiose self importance and arrogance accordingly.

To be considered as a Sword Master one must fulfil the following criteria:

- Know all the Cult Skills at a minimum of 50%.
- Know one sword-based Combat Style at a minimum of 90%.
- Have engaged on at least six cult-specific missions in the past.
- Sacrifice a further 1D4 POW to their Pact.
- Donate 90% of their wealth to the cult and 90% of all earnings.

To be accepted as a Sword Master, the adherent must succeed in a Lore (Sword Rulers) or Lore (Sect) test and must offer a blood sacrifice of a known enemy of the Mabden or Sword Rulers as part of the rite.

Duties

All Sword Ruler adherents must advance the interests of the Sword Rulers, the interests of the Mabden as a race (and all humans are Mabden), defeat the shefanhow and work to restore the natural state of anarchy that is the essential nature of the Multiverse.

Only the Sword Blessors have any specific duties and that is to lead the veneration of the Sword Rulers and offer prayers of defiance against those who would object to their rule. The remaining ranks in the cult are expected to spend time abroad in the world promulgating and enacting the beginnings of the greater Mabden empire.

Sword Singers and Sword Masters can also be expected to undertake specific tasks, quests and missions on behalf of the Sword Rulers and the cult at large. Sword Masters are empowered to interpret and carry-out cult policy, although, where specifically Mabden concerns are involved, the orders of Pan Tang's theocrat take precedence over any ad-hoc policy or goals.

Other general duties include:

- Die Bravely.
- Seek-out and kill agents and champions of Lord Tovik and Earl Aubec.
- Vanquish Law.
- Victory in battle.

Members of the cult are forbidden to use any weapons but swords. However, in the event of a sword being denied to the cultist, any weapon that advances the Sword Rulers' agenda is considered acceptable; there are no *direct* punishments for using other weapons.

Benefits

Benefits come in the form of Gifts and Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes and Summonings, Heroic Abilities and Cult Secrets. Benefits begin at the Sword Brother or Sister rank.

Sword Brothers and Sisters

- One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- Training in one Cult Skill, either establishing the skill at its base percentage or improving it by 1D4+1.

Sword Singers

- One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- Training in one Cult Skill, conferring an improvement roll of 1D6+1.

Sword Blessor

- One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- Training in one Cult Skill, either establishing the skill at its base percentage or improving it by 1D6+1.
- Training in one Rune or Summoning, either establishing it at its base percentage or improving it by 1D6+1.
- Given knowledge of one Cult or Sect secret.
- May command Sword Singers and Sword Brothers and Sisters.

Sword Master

- One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- Training in one Cult Skill, either establishing the skill at its base percentage or improving it by 1D8+1.
- Training in one Rune or Summoning, either establishing it at its base percentage or improving it by 1D8+1.
- Given knowledge of one Cult or Sect secret.
- Gain one Cult Heroic Ability.
- May command Sword Singers and Sword Brothers and Sisters.
- May be summoned by the Sword Rulers across the Multiverse to take part in whatever struggles concern them.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions are available according to whether or not the adherent follows the general cult of the Sword Rulers or has joined one of the cult's sects (see *Special Notes*, below). Members of a Sect can use both tables; those outside a sect use the General Table.

Gifts

Abstinence

Exist without the need for sleep.

Chaotic Blessing

Roll once on the demon features table.

Divine Training

Raise a cult skill to 100%.

Sanctuary

The recipient with a magical structure or plane as a residence. 1 POW buys a villa or manse; 2 POW buys a castle; 3 POW a city, and so forth. The property always belongs to the deity and can be removed at any time if the deity so chooses. The residence may have further powers as desired.

The initial cost is variable, as described above. Additional dedicated POW can be spent on the Sanctuary in the following ways:

- 1 POW for Hidden (residence itself cannot be perceived)
- 1 POW for Movement (flying, rolling, crawling, etc)
- 1 POW for Shifting (interdimensionally)
- 1 POW for Isolation (residents cannot be located magically)
- 1 POW for Impregnability (access cannot be forced, save at the deity level)
- 1 POW for Peacefulness (residents suffer no violence or insanity)

Slave

Gain a demonic servant (available to the cult) which may be summoned for one task per adventure

Ward (swords)

Gain total invulnerability to swords

Compulsions

Aggression

Never dodge a blow

Armour Abstinence

Never wear armour

Carnage

Visions of terrible carnage that disturb the sleep and leave the dreamer feeling worthless and drained

Fear of Death

A constant and gnawing fear of death – something no Sword cultist could ever admit, but one that drives the individual to distraction and growing anxiety

Invulnerability

Develop the overwhelming belief that one is invulnerable to mortal weapons

Irrational Jealousy

Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover, or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.

Nervous Tic

Develop a nervous tic, twitch, mannerism or other physical condition (constant blinking; a stammer, an inability to leave any door unlocked, for instance)

Shield Abstinence

Never use a shield

Violent Temper

Develop a vile, argumentative and violent temper threatening to destabilise all attempts to remain calm.

Cult Skills

All Sword Combat Styles, Athletics, Command, Evade, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Language (Mabden), Lore (Sword Rulers), Resilience, Rune Casting, Summoning, Throwing.

Training and instruction in the Cult skills can be obtained at the Hall of Many Ways in Hwamgaarl and at the Temple of the Swords in Nargesser (Dharijor).

Cult Runes

Runes of Chaos, Darkness, Enhancement (STR and DEX), Man, Protection, Woman.

Cult Summonings

Training and instruction in the Cult skills can be obtained at the Hall of Many Ways in Hwamgaarl and at the Temple of the Swords in Nargesser (Dharijor).

Demons of Combat, Protection and Transport.

Summon Hunting Dog of the Dharzi, Summon Elenoin.

Heroic Abilities

Battle Fury, Deflecting Parry, Duellist, Severing Slash.

Cult Secrets

- The Sword Rulers hold dominion over three planes close to this world, where Mabelode is undisputed king and Xiombarg his queen. A hero is emerging to challenge their power, guided by the Lords of Law and equipped with the dreadful weapons of The Hand and The Eye.
- Prince Yyrkoon of Imrryr serves Lord Mabelode from time to time – yet he is shefanhow and must be destroyed.
- Although Mabelode and Xiombarg are believed to be more powerful than Arioch, this is not the case in the Young

Kingdoms; the three gods are of equal power – a situation that cannot be allowed to endure.

- The race known as the Kelmain of the world known as Kelm'a are fierce allies of the Sword Rulers and seek to expand their territories as the Kelmain Empire. They are, however, shefanhow and whilst useful as temporary allies, should ultimately be treated as enemies of the Mabden.

Retribution

Leaving or betraying the cult or sect results in Sword Masters concentrating their hunt for the traitor or apostate. The victim's soul will be sacrificed to the Sword Ruler that the Sword Master most favours.

All Gifts are rescinded. All Runes and Summonings cease to be effective.

Politics

The Sword Rulers' cult is rife with internal tension. Whilst the status of the three Lords of Chaos is understood, it is not universally accepted. The Sect of Xiombarg holds that the Queen of the Swords is more powerful than Mabelode; the Sect of Mabelode holds that, in some planes where the Sword Rulers held sway, Xiombarg and Arioch are dead; and the Sect of Arioch holds that the Knight of the Swords is the rightful inheritor of the Sword Ruler empire in the Young Kingdoms. Each sect informs against the others and occasionally feuds between sect members break-out, particularly where small points of detail concerning status are involved.

Whilst it is also agreed that the Mabden are the creation of the Sword Rulers, some cult adherents find it difficult to accept that pure-strain Mabden (i.e., those of Pan Tangian blood) are superior to the indigenous humans of the Young Kingdoms. The belief amongst some, non-Mabden adherents is that Mabden is simply another word for human and that Pan Tang is mistaken in believing itself a superior version of humanity.

Relationships

The cult does not enjoy especially harmonious relations with any other cults.

CULT OF AUBEC

The Champion was traditionally her lover - and it was unthinkable to Earl Aubec that any other condition should exist. It was his place, as Champion of Klant, to obey and go forth from her palace to seek Castle Kaneloon alone and conquer it and declare it part of her Empire, so that it could be said Queen Eloarde's domain stretched from the Dragon Sea to World's Edge.

— *The Dream of Earl Aubec*

Gods/Pantheon

Personality cult. Earl Aubec of Malador, Champion of Klant.

Purpose and History

The cult venerates Earl Aubec of Malador, the champion and lover of Queen Eloarde of Klant who, in the very earliest days of the Young Kingdoms, when Lormyr governed a third of the world, commanded armies and ventured to the very edge of the world in order to extend Queen Eloarde's empire.

Myths

Aubec and Eloarde (Mythic Resonance 70%):

If Aubec had expanded Eloarde's kingdom just through military action, his fame would have been guaranteed. But he achieved more. In going to the edge of the world, at Eloarde's behest, Aubec came to Castle Kaneloon and its beautiful, enigmatic resident, Myshellia, Empress of the Dawn. Earl Aubec, beguiled by Myshellia, went forth into the miasma of Chaos at world's edge, to challenge the Lords of Chaos and create new lands of Order. In this respect he succeeded and the southern boundaries of the world were extended, Castle Kaneloon transferring itself to the new edge of the world.

But the lands Aubec forged, and claimed in Eloarde's name, were not lands populated with willing subjects. Aubec created a set of desolate, dust-blown wastes that merely extended the world's edge but did not bring them the spoils of an enlarged empire. Using Aubec as its pawn, Law took from Chaos and extended its territory. Aubec was duped and returned to Klant disillusioned and sceptical of Law's promise and patronage.

At that time, the Bright Empire was beginning to wane and Aubec's successes against its armies and in expanding the territories of the south, fascinated the Dragon Lords. Aubec, a mere human, had demonstrated qualities considered admirable in Melnibonéans. Law had duped him and, even though he had sought to increase Law's province by challenging Chaos, he had demonstrated the raw bravery and creativity that all true Melnibonéans hold in high regard. Aubec's capital in Imrryr increased and, although he was still viewed as an enemy of the Bright Empire, and still continued to wage war against the Dragon Lords of the southern lands, he was a noble and worthy enemy – a man to be respected and not disdained. This was not a unanimous view amongst the people of Melniboné but it was held in the Imperial Court and, most crucially, by the occupant of the Ruby Throne himself.

The cult of Aubec began in Imrryr. The emperor of the time, Amuric IV, also known as the Lonely Emperor, commanded that Aubec's history and deeds be researched and told as stories to the members of the Imperial Court. Eager to please the Lonely Emperor, the tales of Aubec's exploits were embellished and exaggerated to a degree but still his name was honoured amongst those who followed the Lonely Emperor's lead. People took to dressing in the barbarian style of Queen Eloarde and Earl Aubec. Their names became popular as names for Melnibonéan children. The cult around Aubec grew and, when the Bright Empire

retreated completely from the southern continent, some 400 or more years ago, it was hoped that Aubec and Eloarde would, perhaps, become allies of the dragon isle.

That was not to be. Aubec remained as Eloarde's champion for perhaps a decade, consolidating Lormyr's rule over the emerging nations of Argimiliar and Filkhar. Then, when Eloarde fell to a sickness and lay close to death, Aubec went forth once more in search of a cure for his queen and lover. He never returned. No one knows what happened to him – or to Eloarde. It is believed she died from her illness and, grief stricken, Aubec could not face returning to his homelands. But Eloarde was not buried or burned. Her brother took the throne and settled into the subjugation of the southern kingdoms without a champion.

Aubec and Eloarde's disappearance, far from bringing the cult to an end, strengthened it and now many myths and mysteries surround the Champion of Klant that have become beliefs held by those within the cult's ranks.

Beliefs

The cult has two sets of beliefs. The central beliefs – those common to all cultists and then those pertinent to a particular allegiance. The common beliefs are based on what is known of Aubec's life and character. The central beliefs are:

- The belief in righteous war and conquest.
- The belief in abiding love.
- The belief in singular purpose.
- The belief in duty and honour.
- The belief in personal regret.

On these all cultists are agreed and every cultist tries to emulate Aubec's devotion to each belief, usually taking one or two that are especially resonant and placing them at the forefront of their personal actions.

The next set of beliefs are founded in interpretation of Aubec's motives, disappearance and either continued life or absolute death.

Chaos Believes...

- Aubec was a pawn of Law and came to realise this. His faith in Law was so shaken that he renounced it and turned to Chaos instead.
- Aubec still lives but is in the service of a Lord of the Higher Planes. Chaos has promised to provide a cure for Eloarde's sickness, once Aubec has served Chaos adequately.
- Chaos tends to the sickened Eloarde. She resides in a palace of diamond, tended by sweet nurses who look after her until a cure can be found.

Law Believes...

- Aubec was slain by Melnibonéan assassins. His soul resides with the Lords Donblas and Tovik where he prepares to assist in the Final Battle with Chaos.
- Eloarde was poisoned by Melniboné, that master of unnatural sicknesses, as punishment for her crusades against them. Her body was hidden by those loyal to Aubec so that Melniboné could not make a repulsive slave of her.
- Aubec can be called upon, like any Lord of Law, if the conditions are right. He appears on a black charger, clad in armour of Jet and Gold, and bearing a mighty runesword capable of slaying gods.

The Non-Aligned Believe...

- Aubec is not dead. He roams the Moonbeam Roads in search of Eloarde. One day his search will bring him back to the Young Kingdoms where he will require the help of his faithful to find his Queen and Lover.
- Eloarde is held prisoner in a sorcerous slumber by either a Lord of Law or Chaos – no one can be sure. Aubec's questing will help him find a way to reach her but those loyal to her must also find ways of discovering where the good Queen of ancient Klant might be held and prepare for Aubec's return.
- Aubec wages righteous war on those who are unjust, cruel and selfish. He abhors these things and seeks redemption through destroying those who prey on the weak. Those faithful to him must follow the same example.

Worshippers

Such is Aubec's reputation and mystery, his cult appeals to those who support Law, Chaos and the unaligned. This is truly a hero cult and even Melniboné, so scornful of the human race, recognises that Aubec was a mighty and noble hero and deserved that honour. Naturally enough, Law claims Aubec as one of its own champions but as the Purpose, History and Belief sections, show, the truth is far more complex.

Thus, the cult of Aubec attracts those who see him as either a champion of Law or Chaos and those who, preferring to direct their faith away from the Higher Powers, seek to venerate someone embodying ideals close to their own.

As a hero cult, Aubec appeals to warriors, would-be-warriors and would-be-heroes. His veneration is strong in the old Lormyrian province of Klant (in the south east of the country, bordering Filkhar) and the earldom of Malador (a region of rolling fields and sleepy towns, in the north of Klant province).

His veneration extends across the southern continent and even reaches up to Jharkor and Tarkesh. On Melniboné his veneration is limited to a handful of nobles who have not succumbed to

Guiding Principle	Skill
The belief in righteous war and conquest	One sword skill
The belief in abiding love	Lore (Chivalry)*
The belief in singular purpose	Influence
The belief in duty and honour	Courtesy, Lore (Chivalry)*
The belief in personal regret	Insight

* *New Advanced skill. See boxed text*

New Skills for the Cult of Aubec

Lore (Chivalry) (INT+CHA)

Those who ascribe to the code of Chivalry understand the importance of love, honesty, honour, mercy, devotion to a cause, obligation and attaining personal nobility. The skill is used in two ways. First, as the skill develops, the Adventurer finds himself acting in a chivalrous way more and more unconsciously. Secondly, Lore (Chivalry) can be used in place of skills such as Courtesy and Influence where the skill is used to influence some form of social outcome or discourse.

the drug-induced comas enjoyed by much of the populace but is nevertheless a cult of influence in the court. Emperor Sadric maintained a shrine to Aubec and his son, Elric, was trained in certain DreamQuests linked to Aubec's exploits.

The structure of the cult lacks any form of priest rank; veneration of Aubec is unshrouded in ritual and not marked by holy days or ceremonies of worship. Lay membership requires nothing more than remembering Aubec and ascribing to the core beliefs of the faith. The formal ranks that do exist are as follows:

Membership

The cult has three ranks:

- Squires of Malador (Initiates)
- Earls of Klant (Acolytes)
- Knights of Eloarde (Champions)

Squires of Malador

A new Squire of Malador can only be accepted into the cult at a shrine to Aubec. The largest and most famous is Aubec's ruined castle in the Malador region of Klant province in Lormyr. However, other, simpler shrines are scattered around the Young Kingdoms, usually found as part of a temple or shrine to Lord Tovik of Law.

Squires (and all subsequent ranks) are required to form a Pact (Aubec) by dedicating themselves to following and upholding

the central beliefs of the cult and selecting one of the central beliefs as their personal Guiding Principle. Only a single point of POW needs to be dedicated to establishing the Pact although more can be dedicated if the new Squire wishes. At this stage the Squire gains a single Gift (see Benefits) and a single Compulsion. However, to progress within the cult he must dedicate time to studying and developing one skill related to the central belief he has chosen as his Guiding Principle:

If the Squire does not already possess the skill symbolising the Guiding Principle he has chosen, he learns it as part of his initiation into the cult at its base percentage.

Earls of Klant

To become an Earl of Klant, a Squire must have achieved the following:

- Developed the skill linked with his Guiding Principle to 50% or greater.
- Developed his Pact (Aubec) to 50% or greater.
- Must be able to recount a deed conducted whilst a Squire that demonstrates his pursuit of his Guiding Principle.

Again, the initiation into Earldom is conducted at a shrine to Aubec. Further POW can be dedicated to the Pact and, whilst this is not mandatory, it is traditional. A Compulsion is chosen irrespective of a POW dedication; a Gift is forthcoming only if additional POW is dedicated to the Pact.

Every Earl of Klant is expected to choose a quest, which must fulfil two objectives: first, it must embody the Earl's chosen Guiding Principle but it must also embody a second Guiding Principle selected from the central beliefs. Secondly, the quest must become a focal point for the cultist's subsequent career. The quest undertaken is decided by the new Earl but it is common for it to concern the general conundrums concerning Aubec and Eloarde's fate, or Aubec's personal endeavours during his active life in the Young Kingdoms.

Knights of Eloarde

The Knights of Eloarde are the cult's heroes. They are considered to embody Aubec's spirit and to become a knight the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- Develop two skills associated with the Guiding Principles to 80% or higher.
- Develop the Pact (Aubec) to 80% or higher.
- Dedicate at least an additional 1 POW to the Pact.
- Have evidence of the progress of their personal quest, begun as an Earl of Klant.

All Knights of Eloarde gain the benefits listed. They must also dedicate themselves fully to the cause of Aubec by making their personal quest the complete focus of their career, henceforth.

Duties

Followers of the cult are expected to evince Aubec's qualities in everything that they do, as described in the central beliefs and adopted by the Guiding Principle chosen as a Squire. Specific duties for each rank are as follows:

Squire

- Act in a chivalrous manner.
- Seek a cause to serve, be that a country, king, comrade or ideal.

Earl

- Engage upon a quest that embodies Aubec's qualities.
- Make the central beliefs his own.
- Continue to maintain the duties ascribed to as a Squire.

Knight

- Maintain and continue the qualities of Squires and Earls.
- Serve Aubec's memory through making the personal quest central to life.
- Prepare for Aubec's return and to serve at his side.

Benefits

Benefits of becoming a follower of the cult of Aubec come in the form of skills training, Gifts and Compulsions, revelations of secrets and certain entitlements according to rank.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts tend not to be of a sorcerous or magical nature. Aubec is not, after all, a god or demi-god. However the power of his memory and personality has a presence that infuses and enthuses his faithful.

Gifts

Combat Acuity

Increase Combat Actions by +1.

Dedicated POW Cost: 2 POW. This Gift may only be taken once.

Increased Damage Modifier

The agent's Damage Modifier is recalculated, based on the sum of STR, SIZ and POW.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Increased Health

The Adventurer's Hit Points are recalculated, based on the sum of CON, SIZ and POW.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Increased Reactions

The Adventurer adds his critical score in a weapon to his Strike Rank (for example, an Adventurer with a weapon skill of 60% would add +6 his Strike Rank).

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW.

Sense Enemies

The Adventurer is immediately aware of any enemies and those who would directly harm him.

Dedicated POW Cost: The number of points of POW spent on this Gift increases the range of the Gift's effectiveness. 1 POW gives a range equal to POW x2 in metres, 2 POW gives a range of POW x4 in metres, 3 POW gives a range of POW x8 in metres and so on.

Sense Million Spheres

Aware of weaknesses in the fabric of reality. Can spot gates and portals to other planes on a successful Perception test

Requirements: Perception 60% or higher.

Dedicated POW Cost: 1 POW

Compulsions

Aubec's Rules

Become obsessed with challenging an empire and replacing it with a regime that embodies Aubec's qualities.

Chivalrous

Refuse to act in any way that contradicts the laws of chivalry.

Empire Builder

Become broodingly obsessed with carving new lands from Chaos, just as Aubec did.

Hero of Myshella

Become obsessed with becoming a Hero of Myshella, placing yourself completely at her service.

Love Eloarde

Become obsessed with locating Queen Eloarde – in addition to the quest engaged upon. Eloarde's love and grace fills your dreams and daydreams. No other woman can possibly measure up to her. Gain the Passion Love Eloarde at Adventurer's POW+CHA, plus 21+1D10.

Love-Lorn

Fall hopelessly in love with one particular individual. Pledge heart and soul to serve her. Gain a Passion equal to Adventurer's POW+CHA, plus 10+1D10.

Merciful

Show mercy to any defeated enemy, no matter what their crime, status or degree of enmity towards you.

Cult Skills

The following skills are taught to cult members, usually free of charge, as long as the cultist dedicates the time to training and study to the exclusion of other activities.

Sword, Spear, Mace and Shield Combat Styles, Art (Poetry), Courtesy, Influence, Insight, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Chivalry), Lore (Law), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Regional), Ride, Survival.

Heroic Abilities

The cult teaches the following Heroic Abilities. Knights of Eloarde are taught one ability as a benefit of rank and do not need the ability's pre-requisites to learn it. Other ranks can learn an ability if they fulfil the criteria or DreamQuest to gain them.

Duellist

Empathic Wound

Heroic Aura

Benefits of Rank

Earls of Klant are allowed to call themselves Earl (insert name) of Klant. They are entitled to command Squires and Lay Members of the cult.

Knights of Eloarde are allowed the title of 'Sir' and may carry Eloarde's device (a single, white rose) on their shield, tabard, banner or elsewhere. They are also entitled to command Squires and Earls.

Knights of Eloarde may also come to the attention of Myshella, Empress of the Dawn. She is in constant need of heroes and those who exhibit Aubec's qualities attract her. If Myshella summons a Knight, usually via a dream or another servant, such as her jewelled bird, the Knight is honour-bound to serve her, regardless of his allegiances and regardless of the Hero of Myshella Compulsion.

Knights are also taught one cult secret and one Legendary Ability.

Cult Secrets

The following secrets represent the truths of Aubec's myth. They are revealed only to Knights of Eloarde and may fundamentally contradict any beliefs the follower of the cult currently holds about Aubec.

- Aubec serves neither Law nor Chaos. He is an incarnation of the Eternal Champion and destined to serve the Cosmic Balance. He currently wanders the Multiverse in search of a cure for Queen Eloarde's illness, which traps her in a sorcerous coma.

- Chaos punished Aubec by placing Eloarde in a magical coma. A sorcerer from the world known as Culoon-Aa, a plane disrupted by Aubec's forging of the stuff of Chaos into new, ordered lands, came into the Young Kingdoms and enchanted Queen Eloarde, posing as Aubec himself. This sorcerer has not been found, although Aubec searches for him. Meanwhile, Eloarde's inert body has been taken into the custody of three Knights of Eloarde who have been responsible for guarding her. Her body rests in a secret location known only to those knights who are tasked with guarding her but the location is not within the Young Kingdoms and is a place where time has no meaning.
- Aubec's sword and armour was taken by Melniboné and is revered there as part of the cult of Aubec. Only Imrryr's emperors are permitted to use these items but by rights they should be brought back to the Ruins of Malador so they can be held safe for Aubec's return.
- A great war between Law and Chaos looms and the Knights of Eloarde will command an army supporting one side. Only Aubec knows which side will be supported – but it is by no means a foregone conclusion that it will be Law.
- Emperor Elric and his cousin, Cymoril, may be incarnations of Aubec and Eloarde. Parallels exist between their relationships.
- Myshella used Aubec as a pawn of Law, as she has used many heroes and will continue to do so. Something binds the fates of Myshella and the cult of Aubec together meaning that no Knight can resist the Empress's summons. However her selfishness has cost the lives and sanity of many Knights and ultimately trust in her is misplaced.
- Two enemies seek to destroy Aubec and those faithful to him: on one side, the Sword Rulers of Chaos; on the other, Miggea of Law. Aubec refused to serve either of them directly and has thwarted their schemes in the past. Agents of either side are considered enemies and must be destroyed, before they wreck Aubec's legacy.

Retribution

Leaving the cult of Aubec is viewed with sadness by other followers but the cult does not enact any form of overt retribution. The follower does not lose any Compulsions developed as part of his membership and, if anything, they intensify.

However, if a follower betrays the cult to its enemies in any way, the Knights of Eloarde take it upon themselves to hunt for the traitor and kill him, irrespective of their own notions of chivalry. Betraying the cult is to betray Aubec himself and the cult's higher echelons know that there is too much at stake for that to happen.

Politics

Members of the cult of Aubec tend to be like-minded and relatively close-knit. There are, however, schisms of interpretation, clearly between those who cleave towards Law and those who cleave

towards Chaos. The honourable thing to do when such opinions meet is to avoid fractious debate and concentrate on the central beliefs. Only Aubec and Eloarde know the full truth of their allegiances and, until they are restored to the world, followers of the cult can only speculate. It is therefore considered polite for differing views and opinions to be withheld when followers of the cult meet or work together, although, being human, differences of views naturally surface and can cause tension.

The human members of the cult view Melnibonéan adherents with scepticism. If a Melnibonéan supporter of Aubec seeks to work with other cultists, he has to work doubly hard to win their confidence and trust – although the codes of honour and chivalry most followers of the cult adhere to make this task a little easier.

Relationships

The cults of Miggea and the Sword Rulers hate the cult of Aubec with a passion. Miggea hates it because the belief in chivalry and honour, plus the cult's acceptance of a Chaotic viewpoint, fundamentally opposes Miggea's insane quest for ultimate Law. The cult of Aubec is seen as a heresy that must be stamped out.

The Sword Rulers see the cult as a threat because Aubec has always been associated with Law. Their preference is for the cult of Aubec to be extinguished, although the Sword Rulers cult is not above manipulating Aubec cultists for their own ends, whenever the need or opportunity arises.

The Knights of Tovik view the Lawful aspects of the cult of Aubec with considerable favour. Indeed, the Tovik cult considers itself an ally with the cult of Aubec in general and some warriors allied with Law are members of both cults simultaneously.

Divine Intervention for the Cult of Aubec

As Aubec is not a god, calling to him for Divine Intervention, does not produce a manifestation or other form of supernatural intervention. However, followers of the cult may try to channel Aubec's wisdom and experience, which is known through the histories and myths surrounding his life. If a Divine Intervention test is successful (a successful test against the Pact), then the cultist either recalls how Aubec handled a similar situation, or receives some insight into what to do, in the form of a Games Master hint or suggestion. As with standard Divine Intervention, this can only happen once for any situation but the strength of the Pact does *not* decline if it is called upon in this way.

CREATURES AND PERSONALITIES



These creatures are all drawn from the Elric saga. Many are unique; some can be summoned using specific spells, such as the elenoin, as mentioned in the Magic and Sorcery chapter.

Creatures found in *Monster Coliseum* may be used in Elric games, or substituted for those here (or vice-versa). The Elric saga draws on many familiar beasts from myth and legend and the key is imagination. Monsters figure heavily in the saga, so the more the better!

The chapter concludes with descriptions and stats for some of the key figures in the saga, including Elric himself and his infamous sword, Stormbringer. It is not intended for these characters to be routinely met by Adventurers – and certainly not the purposes of seeing who would win in a fight, or if Stormbringer can be beaten (it cannot. Forget it); instead, they are presented as a matter of completeness and as an example of how *Elric of Melniboné* Adventurers might, one day, look.

AGAK AND GAGAK

The Captain smiled. 'A brother and a sister. Sorcerers from quite another universe than ours...

And possessing great power, they crave for more - for all the power that there is in our universe. These beings are amoral in a way in which the Lords of Law or Chaos are not. They do not fight for influence upon the Earth... their only wish is to convert the essential energy of our universe to their own uses. I believe they foster some ambition in their particular universe which would be furthered if they could achieve their wish.'

— *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

Sibling sorcerers from a universe that exists outside of the Million Spheres, Agak and Gagak seek the power to feed on entire planes of existence, absorbing its energy and assimilating it with their own, mutable form. In their own universe, Agak and Gagak are not especially powerful beings; but they are ambitious and seek to

rule their home universe completely, supplanting and dominating whatever unearthly powers rule there.

So it is that Agak and Gagak have quested into the Million Spheres, seeking the very heart of the Multiverse so that they might feast upon its energy and then return to their own universe as creatures of limitless power. Their quest has taken aeons in the reckoning of humankind and it has involved Agak and Gagak scouring whole worlds in search of the very centre of the Million Spheres. In each world they have visited, they have assumed very different forms, sometimes posing as gods, sometimes posing as mere mortals. But in each realm they have adopted a similar strategy: to identify those who have some inkling of the nature of the Multiverse, or who have access to such powers and to make them into agents, servants or slaves of their agenda. They make hollow promises in return; promises of power and blasphemous knowledge; promises of kingdoms and empires. Many have succumbed to the beguilement, for Agak and Gagak are arch manipulators, easily able to offer tangible demonstrations of their powers that ensnare the greedy and weak of mind but strong of ambition. The fate of those who serve Agak and Gagak is similar; to be used and then discarded, left poor, insane, unfulfilled or dead. Once they have a little more knowledge – enough to advance their search a little further – the sorcerers depart, leaving behind destruction and madness.

With each plane plundered thus, the sorcerers draw a little closer to the centre of the Multiverse. This realm is an island, afloat in the sea that laps at the shores of all planes in the Million Spheres and once it was home to a great empire and civilisation. The city at the heart of the Multiverse has had many names; Karadur, Spharain' and, some claim, Tanelorn. By the time Agak and Gagak find it, it is a ruin, abandoned by those who dwelt there, warned, perhaps, of the sorcerers' impending arrival and having both the good sense and means to flee. Once they have reached the ruins of the city, Agak and Gagak assume part of its form, shaping themselves into twin, semi-organic buildings, connected by wires, tubes and organic tendrils. Then they sleep and dream, all the while consolidating the power they have absorbed in their travels

through the Multiverse, preparing the final act that will suck every scrap of energy from it, dooming everything to oblivion.

But this lies in the future – or *a* future. For now, Agak and Gagak are at large in the Multiverse, travelling from one plane to another, furthering their knowledge and feeding on the fools who would help them. And they have visited the Young Kingdoms. They assisted the Dharzi and their influence spurred the Beast Men to make war on Melniboné. They sought the counsel of Cran Liret, the Spell Thief, and showed him how to build his Chaos Engines. Posing as humble merchants they visited Pan Tang and schooled a young, ambitious sorcerer known as Theleb K'aana in magics that even the Lords of Chaos do not comprehend. With every interaction they gained a little more knowledge and sowed the seeds of further evil and destruction in reward. They masqueraded as gods, demons and lovers and, if any Young Kingdoms scholar were to investigate all the myriad fragments of their passing, he would be able to decipher a little of their ultimate plan and goal.

In the future – or rather *a* future – when they have found Karadur's remains, it will take the Blind Captain and his mute steersman to assemble a group of heroes from across the Multiverse to face Agak and Gagak once and for all. Their battle with the sorcerers, shaped like cities, will go unnoticed in the Young Kingdoms. But those who have, perhaps, sold a little of their soul to Agak and Gagak, will feel their demise and be driven both insane and vengeful as a result. And through their actions the Cosmic Balance will tip a little further towards the powers of Chaos and disorder, bringing the end of the Young Kingdoms a little nearer...

Worshipping Agak and Gagak

Some have, and some will, recognise the sorcerers as gods and offer them worship. It is perfectly possible to do so and a Pact can be established with either, or both, in the usual way. Any POW dedicated to Agak and Gagak immediately adds to the sorcerers' POW Characteristic.

In a bid to emulate gods, Agak and Gagak offer Gifts in the form of knowledge of the Runes and the true nature of the Multiverse. The Compulsion a worshipper receives is always Insanity, which deepens with the strength of the Pact.

In the Million Spheres, Agak and Gagak have powers equivalent to gods and can assume any form they choose. *Elric of Melniboné* Characteristics are therefore largely redundant, as they are essentially immortal and can only be slain by the Four Who Are One. However, they are *not* gods and take physical shape so that they can interact with those who might serve their agenda somehow. If Characteristics are required for them, use the following. In their natural form – that assumed in their own universe – they are city-sized accretions of flesh and tendrils, each possessed of an immense, eight-sided, multicoloured eye.

	Agak	Gagak	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	21	18	1–3	Right Leg	–/8
CON	21	21	4–6	Left Leg	–/8
SIZ	18	18	7–9	Abdomen	–/9
INT	30	30	10–12	Chest	–/10
POW	90	90	13–15	Right Arm	–/7
DEX	21	21	16–18	Left Arm	–/7
CHA	18	21	19–20	Head	–/8

Combat Actions 5
Damage Modifier +1D6

Typical Armour: None.

Magic Points 90
Movement 8m

Traits: Planar Travel, Psychic Domination

Strike Rank +26

Skills: Evade 60%, Language (High Speech) 95%, Lore (Home Universe) 100%, Lore (Million Spheres) 60%, Perception 90%, Persistence 120%, Resilience 120%

Runes and Summonings:
Agak and Gagak know all Runes at 95%.

Combat Styles

Agak and Gagak do not rely on physical attacks but instead rely on psychic dominance to achieve their ends. Those who they wish to control, or who threaten them, must make an Opposed Persistence test against Agak or Gagak's Persistence. If either sorcerer succeeds critically, then the victim is completely enthralled and obeys every command or suggestion without question and cannot break free of the domination unless the sorcerer permits it. If the test is a simple success, then Agak or Gagak must spend one Magic Point each day to keep control of the victim. Once per day the victim is allowed to make a further Opposed Persistence test to break free of the control. Agak and Gagak can control as many victims simultaneously as they wish, as long as they have the Magic Points to do so. Once the sorcerers have relaxed their mental domination, the victim loses a point of INT for every Magic Point Agak or Gagak spent on controlling them. Note that the sorcerers only rely on psychic domination if someone they need refuses to help willingly or threatens them in some way.

Each sorcerer can step into another plane of existence simply by willing it but must make a successful Persistence test to complete the transition. They have no control over which plane they arrive in.

If changing into some different physical form, it takes a number of Combat Actions equal to the SIZ of whatever it is they are assuming to complete. They can take no other actions during this time and must drop any psychic domination they have operating.

Games Masters are encouraged to give Agak and Gagak whatever sorcerous powers are necessary for them to complete their agenda and locate the centre of the Multiverse.

BOATMEN OF XERLERENES

These huge, bearded, black-skinned sailors fish the lakes of Xerlerenes with their wide nets from their airborne boats. It is the boats that are magical, blessed, perhaps, by Lassa's hand. They may even be kin or enemies of the Karasim.

Their key tactic is to use their steel nets to scoop-up an enemy, haul them towards the boat and then attack the helpless prisoners with their barbed tridents, harpoons and curved, long-bladed swords. They relish battle and fight without mercy.

Boatmen wear a war harness; leather jerkins designed to strengthen the back and arms when manipulating their huge nets.

CHAOTIC BUTTERFLY

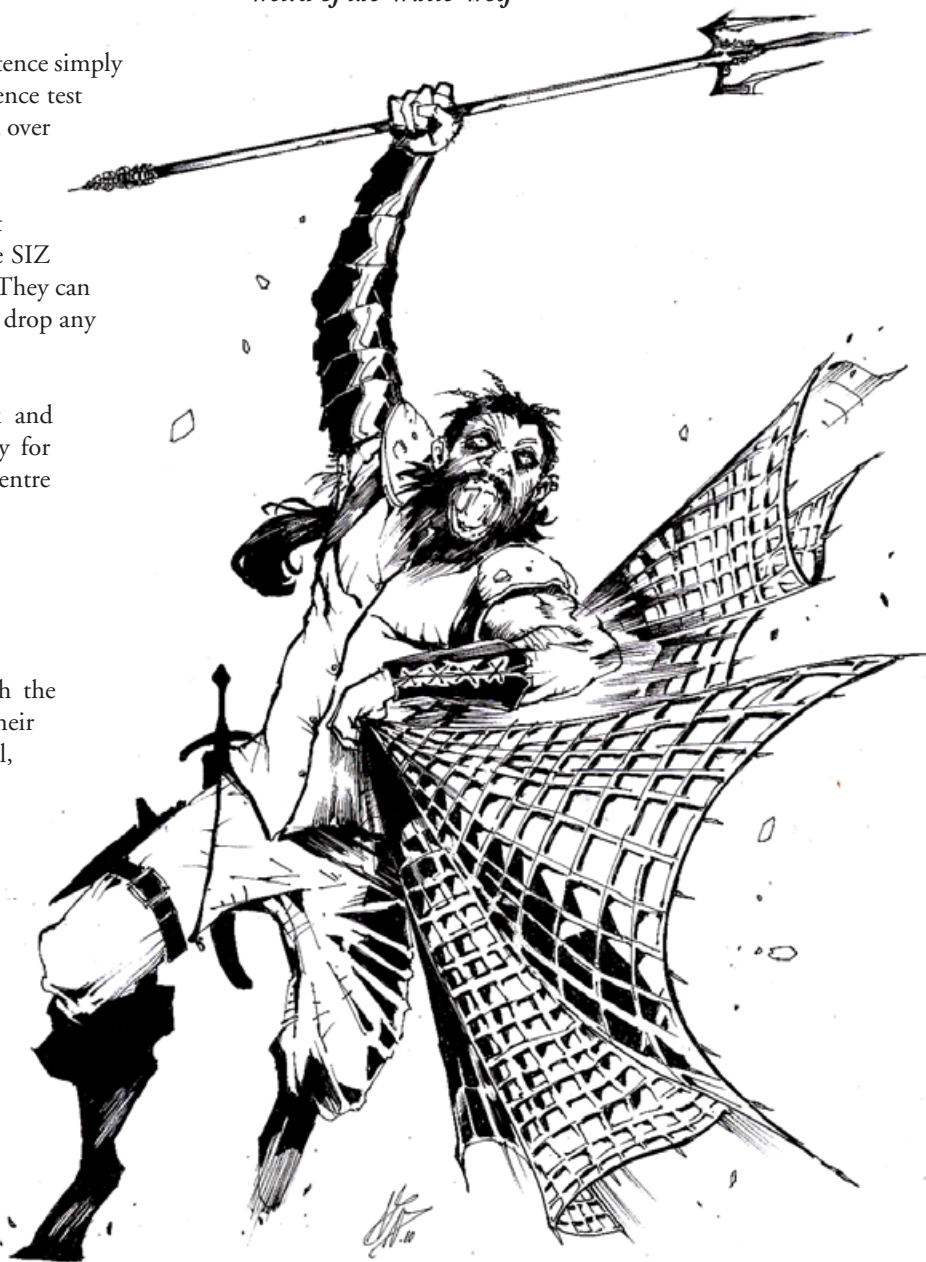
It had the appearance of a butterfly, but a butterfly with wings so huge they blotted out the sun. 'Can it be some creature of Balo's left behind?' she speculated.

'Hardly likely,' he replied. 'This has the appearance of a monster conjured by a human sorcerer.'

The air whistled as it descended, its fifty-foot wings dwarfing the seven feet of head and body. From its head grew two curling horns, and its arms terminated in long talons.

'We are doomed, Elric!' cried Yishana. She saw that the warriors were fleeing and she cried after them to come back. Elric stood there passively, knowing that alone he could not defeat the butterfly-creature.

— *Weird of the White Wolf*



Boatmen of Xerlerenes

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	4D6+6	20	1-3	Right Leg	-/6
CON	2D6+6	13	4-6	Left Leg	-/6
SIZ	3D6+6	17	7-9	Abdomen	1/7
INT	3D6	11	10-12	Chest	1/8
POW	3D6	11	13-15	Right Arm	1/5
DEX	2D6+6	13	16-18	Left Arm	1/5
CHA	2D6	7	19-20	Head	1/6

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D6
Magic Points	11
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+11 (+12)

Typical Armour: War Harness. -1 Armour Penalty.

Traits: None

Skills: Athletics 60%, Brawn 57%, Evade 40%, Perception 50%, Resilience 30%, Shiphandling 90%, Survival 40%, Track 25%, Unarmed 58%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Range
Trident	M	L	2D8+1D6	4/10	—
Xerlenes Sword	M	M	1D8+1D6	4/10	—
Net	L	L	1D4+Entangle	2/20	10m

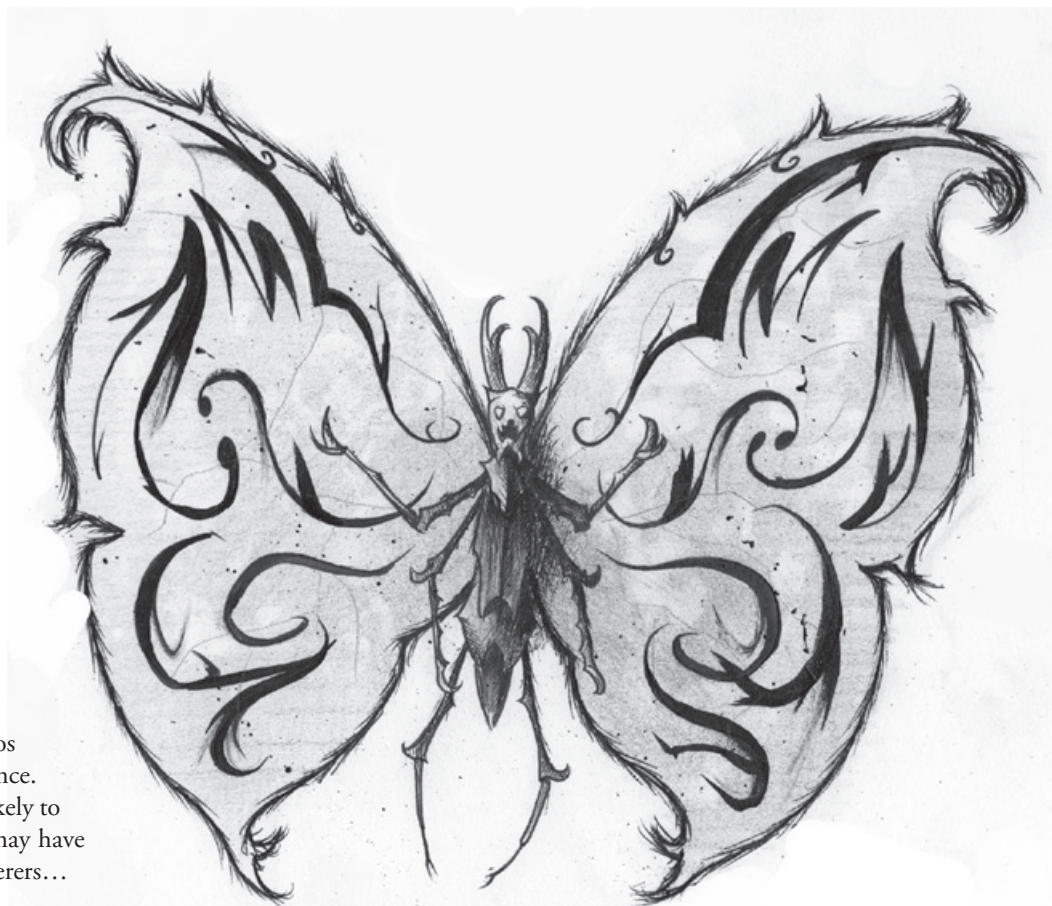
Combat Styles

Trident and Net.

This twisted malevolence is not a demon but a cruel experiment of Theleb K'aarna's. And if there is one such creature, then there are perhaps more, in K'aarna's laboratories, or in the dark places of Hwamgaarl, awaiting release.

It proves a tenacious foe for both Elric and Moonglum. Elric finally defeats it by summoning Haaashaastaak, Lord of Lizards, who treats it as all lizards treat insects.

Creatures like the Chaotic Butterfly are beyond the powers of most sorcerers; they are spawned only by those who enjoy the most dread Pacts with the Lords of Chaos and can call upon the mutating effects of Chaos itself to bring such things into existence. But that is not to say such foes are unlikely to be encountered by Adventurers who may have displeased Pan Tang, or one of its sorcerers...



Chaotic Butterfly

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	35	1-3	Right Leg	-/11
CON	35	4-6	Left Leg	-/11
SIZ	30	7-9	Abdomen	-/12
INT	5	10	Chest	-/13
POW	10	11-12	Right Wing	4/11
DEX	13	13-14	Left Wing	4/11
CHA	—	15-16	Right Arm	-/10
		17-18	Left Arm	-/10
		19-20	Head	-/11

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+2D6
Magic Points	10
Movement	8m/18m
Strike Rank	+12

Typical Armour: Magical Hide. No Armor Penalty.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons (Talons and Horns)

Skills: Evade 45%, Perception 70%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 50%, Tracking 40%, Unarmed 60%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Talons	M	L	1D8+2D6	As for Arm
Horns	M	S	2D6+2D6	As for Head
Wings	VL	L	Glue attack	As for Wing

Any weapons which strike or parry the wings (or locations struck by them) become glued fast to their surface, requiring a Brawn test opposed by the creature's original Combat Roll to break free.

Combat Styles

Unarmed 60% (Talons, Claws and Wing Buffet).

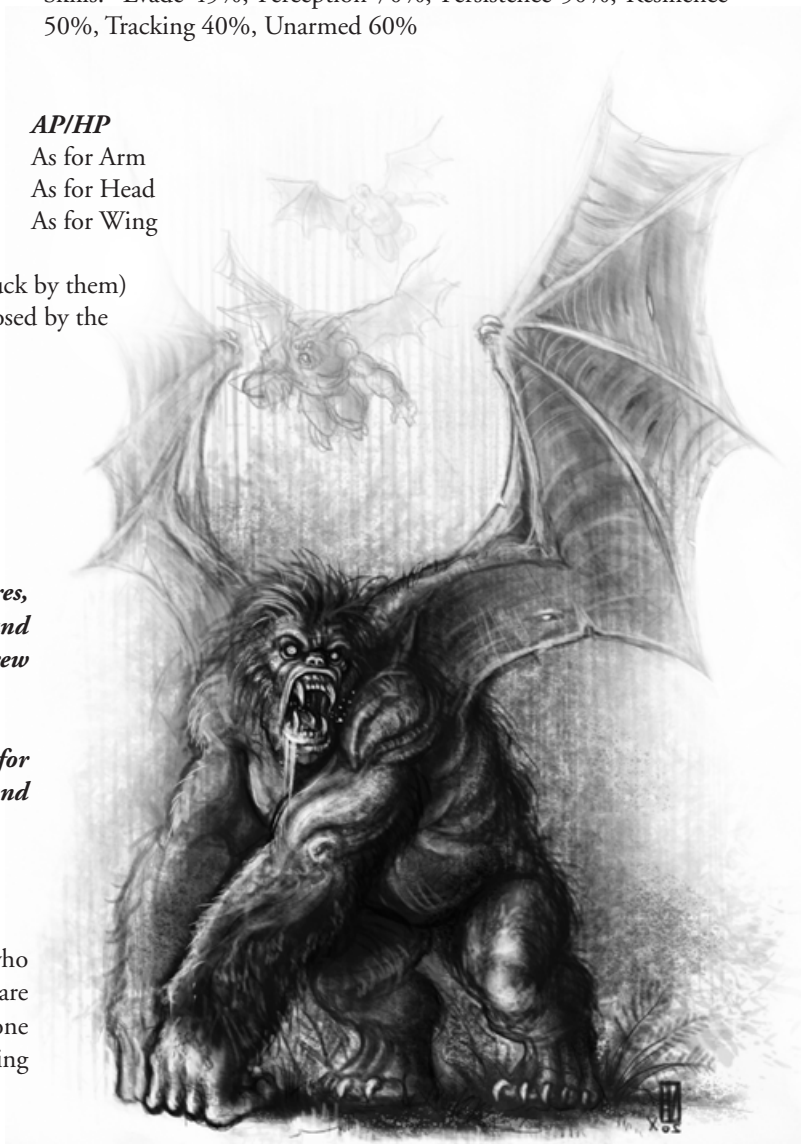
CLAKARS

Silently descending were three massive ape-like creatures, borne on great leathery wings. Shaarilla recognised them and gasped. 'Clakars!' Moonglum shrugged as he hurriedly drew his sword –

'A name only – what are they?' But he received no answer for the leading winged ape descended with a rush, mouthing and gibbering, showing long fangs in a slaving snout.

— The Bane of the Black Sword

Thought to be the primeval ancestors of the Myyrrhn (who themselves are considered the oldest race in the world), clakars are winged primates, akin to gorillas and aggressive, attacking anyone straying into their territory. They are rarely found singly, being most commonly encountered in groups of up to 15.



Clarks

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6+6	17	1-3	Right Leg	3/6
CON	3D6+6	17	4-6	Left Leg	3/6
SIZ	3D6+6	17	7-9	Abdomen	3/7
INT	2D6	7	10	Chest	3/8
POW	3D6	11	11-12	Right Wing	3/6
DEX	3D6+8	19	13-14	Left Wing	3/6
CHA	—	—	15-16	Right Arm	3/5
			17-18	Left Arm	3/5
			19-20	Head	3/6

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D4
Magic Points	11
Movement	6m/12m
Strike Rank	+13

Typical Armour: Fur and tough hide. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons (Teeth and Claws)

Skills: Evade 65%, Perception 45%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 60%, Unarmed 60%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1D8+1D4	As for Arm
Claws	M	S	1D6+1D4	As for Head

Combat Styles

Unarmed 60% (Teeth and Claws).

Creatures of Matik

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	5D8+16	39	1-2	Tail	4/16
CON	5D8+8	31	3-4	Right Hind Leg	4/16
SIZ	5D8+24	47	5-6	Left Hind Leg	4/16
INT	1D8	5	7-10	Hindquarters	4/17
POW	3D8	14	11-14	Forequarters	4/18
DEX	2D8+8	17	15-16	Right Front Leg	4/16
CHA	—	—	17-18	Left Front Leg	4/16
			19-20	Head/Neck	4/16

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+2D10
Magic Points	14
Movement	18m
Strike Rank	+10 (+11)

Typical Armour: War Harness. -1 Armour Penalty.

Traits: None

Skills: Evade 35%, Perception 30%, Resilience 50%, Track 35%, Unarmed 55%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Beak	L	T	1D8+2D10	As for Head
Claw	H	VL	1D6+2D10	As for Leg

Combat Styles

Beak and Claws 55%.

CREATURES OF MATIK

Created by Matik of Melniboné; these five metre tall hybrids of vulture and lion stalk the borders of the earth and Chaos. They are immense predators that can be commanded by their summoner. They seem to especially hate the Hunting Dogs of the Dharzi and may have been a chief weapon against them during Melniboné's war with the Beast Folk millennia ago.

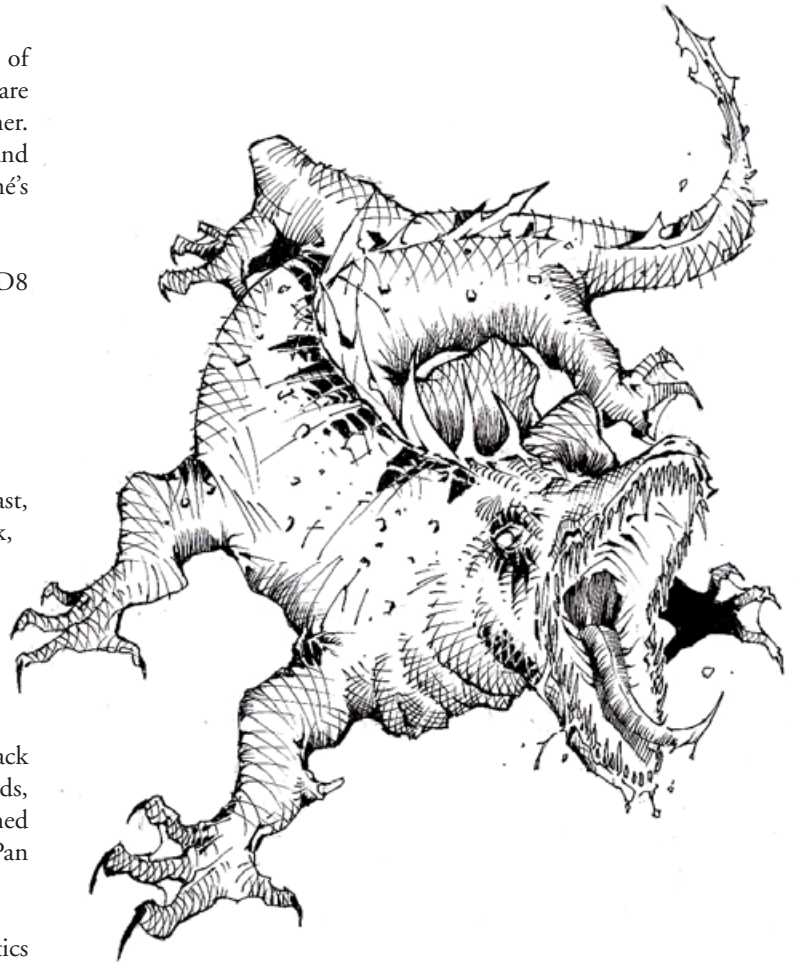
As creature of Chaos, their Characteristics are figured using D8 rather than D6.

DEVIL BEASTS OF PAN TANG

The six legged reptilian mounts of Pan Tang's cavalry are fast, strong and as vicious as their riders. Covered in a layer of thick, armoured scale and with narrow-snouted jaws filled with row upon row of razor-sharp teeth, these beasts are a hybrid of earth-born reptile and Chaotic sorcery.

They are bred with two purposes in mind: to obey their riders and kill without compunction. The six legs give them speed and stability but they are capable of rearing up to attack with the two front legs, to lash-out with the hind, to snap shields, swords and skulls with their maw and to whip with the spined tail. Riderless they enter a killing frenzy, even turning on Pan Tangians if needs-be.

As these creatures are of sorcerous breeding their Characteristics are figured using D8 rather than D6.



	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D8+20	34	1-3	Right Front Leg	8/12
CON	3D8+8	22	4-6	Left Front Leg	8/12
SIZ	3D8+20	34	7-10	Forequarters	8/14
INT	4	4	11-12	Hind Quarters	8/13
POW	3D8	14	13-14	Right Mid Leg	8/12
DEX	4D8+12	30	15-16	Left Mid Leg	8/12
CHA	—	—	17	Right Hind Leg	8/12
			18	Left Hind Leg	8/12
			19-20	Head	8/13

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+2D6
Magic Points	14
Movement	12m
Strike Rank	+19

Typical Armour: Thick scales. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons (Teeth and Claws)

Skills: Evade 35%, Perception 35%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 60%, Unarmed 70%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	M	T	1D10+2D6	As for Head
Claws	M	M	1D12+2D6	As for Leg

Combat Styles

Unarmed 60% (Teeth and Claws).

DHARZI

'Arioch!' swore Elric, suddenly recognising the riders. 'These are the Lords of Dharzi, dead these ten centuries. We're fighting dead men, Moonglum, and the too-tangible ghosts of their dogs. Unless I can think of a sorcerous means to defeat them, we're doomed!'

The zombie-men appeared to have no intention of taking part in the attack for the moment. They waited, their dead eyes eerily luminous...

— *While the Gods Laugh*

The foe that signalled the beginning of the Bright Empire's slow decline, the Dharzi were powerful sorcerers from a distant eastern land, possessed of fearful magic and engaged in pacts with the Beast Lords of both this world and others.



It is uncertain whether the Dharzi originated on the plane of the Young Kingdoms or came from another, nearby world; but they came to conquer, whatever their origin, and they came in the hundreds of thousands, immense, rapid-moving armies that fought with beasts and monsters at their side and took no prisoners.

The Dharzi were motivated by no reason other than expansion. Their attacks on Melniboné were not inspired by racial hatred or a need to prevent the Bright Empire's expansion; nor was there any case for revenge: the Dharzi and Bright Empire had never come into contact before. The Dharzi simply looked to the west, saw an opportunity and set out to seize it. It is possible, perhaps, that they believed the western realms would prove to be an easy conquest but their invasion force took no such chances. The vast armies of the Dharzi moved like a locust cloud over ripe croplands, barely pausing to survey the territories they fought across until, that is, they cleared the Ragged Pillars and moved over the Weeping Waste. As they bore down on the realms now occupied by Vilmir and Ilmiora they encountered the massed ranks of the Bright Empire and slave armies, complete with regiments of sorcerers and creatures summoned specifically to do battle.

The clash was horrendous. Hundreds of thousands died and the Dharzi armies dispersed spreading north, south and pushing further west, aiming to sweep behind the Bright Empire's battlelines. Dharzi sorcery met Melnibonéan sorcery and the fabric of the earth shuddered as the might of Chaos smashed against the mutated, magically enhanced monsters of the Dharzi Beast Regiments. Melniboné, for all of its prowess in battle, reeled and had no option but to allow the Dharzi to pass into the Young Kingdoms proper and, from there, choose its battles carefully.

Melniboné was, quite literally, fighting for its survival. The Dharzi numbers surpassed the Bright Empire's strengths and Imrryr had little option but to awaken its dragons and push them hard in pursuit of the winged monstrosities the Dharzi brought with them. On the seas, battlebarges met in bloody conflict with Dharzi living ships and the Oldest Ocean turned red with the carnage.

As the Dharzi reached the western continent they formed strongholds in the Silent Lands and southern Shazar. Here they built strongholds – factories where natural fauna could be taken and rendered into vicious beasts of destruction. Melniboné had never seen such machines and such creations. On the one hand they marvelled at the creativity but on the other were horrified at the ease with which the Dharzi created army after army of mutated, warped and melded monsters. Their Hunting Dogs, a combination of huge hound and eagle, are an excellent example but there were others far more terrifying. These were not demons, summoned to the Young Kingdoms and given material form; these were natural creatures combined into hideous,

rococo forms and then strengthened with frightening sorcery. Melniboné found itself battling wave after wave of monster, commanded and organised with superb precision. It took every reserve the Bright Empire could muster to battle the Dharzi and every ounce of magical aid they could call upon.

In the end the Dharzi were defeated in two ways. First, Melniboné sent its heroes of the time to the southern continent and to the very edge of the world where the seething stuff of raw Chaos could be channelled and used against the Beast Men and Dharzi lords. The sorcerers of the Bright Empire used the very stuff of Chaos to warp and destroy the Dharzi in the south and north, directing its incredible energies in ways that sent most of the Bright Empire sorcerers insane.

The second way took the calling of the Earth Kings, Lord Grome and his ancient brothers. The old pacts between Melniboné and

the elements of the Earth were invoked and, after yet more battles, the Earth Kings caused the very ground to swallow the Dharzi and their strongholds, claiming them as dead servants for eternity.

The Dharzi that Elric encounters in his search for the Dead God's Book are the semi-dead lords swallowed by Grome and his brothers. They dwell still, in their buried strongholds, deprived of true life but undying in their spirit. Returning to the surface requires a huge effort of will and the form they assume is that of dead-eyed, corpse-men, clad in black hooded robes to disguise their decaying features. They can still summon the beast-things wrought in their unholy factories, bringing them to the surface to partake in hunts and the occasional retributive strike against those who wander too deeply into the lands imprisoning them. But their full power has been long broken and their numbers are few.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6+6	17	1-3	Right Leg	-/7
CON	3D6+6	17	4-6	Left Leg	-/7
SIZ	3D6+3	14	7-9	Abdomen	-/8
INT	5D6	18	10-12	Chest	-/9
POW	5D6	18	13-15	Right Arm	-/6
DEX	2D6+6	13	16-18	Left Arm	-/6
CHA	1D6	4	19-20	Head	-/7

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D4
Magic Points	18
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+16

Typical Armour: None.

Traits: Semi Corporeal, Undead

Skills: Athletics 30%, Evade 30%, Perception 80%, Persistence 90%, Resilience 110%, Ride 80%, Unarmed 70%

Runes and Summonings: Hunting Dog 85%

Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Greatsword	H	L	2D8+1D4	6/12
Claw	S	T	1D6+1D4	As for Arm

Normal weapons inflict only half damage and Dharzi do not need to make any Resilience tests to avoid death.

Combat Styles

Sword 70%, Unarmed 45%.

A Dharzi Lord can summon a Hunting Dog for every Magic Point he chooses to expend. It takes 1D4 Combat Rounds for the creature to claw its way into existence but once it has been summoned, it obeys its master's commands without any question.

Hunting Dog of the Dharzi

A hybrid of dog and eagle, Dharzi hunting dogs are a relic of the Dharzi lords and were once used for hunting prey as sport and foes in war. Fast and tenacious, with vile breath and vicious claws, they are keen and tireless trackers.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	2D8+8	17	1–2	Tail	1/6
CON	2D8+8	17	3–4	Right Hind Leg	1/6
SIZ	1D8+8	13	5–6	Left Hind Leg	1/6
INT	1D8	5	7–10	Hindquarters	1/7
POW	3D8	14	11–14	Forequarters	1/8
DEX	2D8+8	17	15–16	Right Front Leg	1/6
CHA	—	—	17–18	Left Front Leg	1/6
			19–20	Head/Neck	1/6

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	14
Movement	12m
Strike Rank	+11

Typical Armour: Fur. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons

Skills: Evade 35%, Perception 30%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 40%, Track 95%, Unarmed 55%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	M	T	1D6+1D2	As for Head
Talons	M	M	1D6+1+1D2	As for Leg

Combat Styles

Bite and Talons 55%.

DRAGONS

Melnibonéans claimed direct kinship with the Phoorn dragons. In another age they had shared the same names, the same quarters, the same power. In ancient history, it was said dragons had ruled Melniboné as kings. Whatever the truth, Elric and his kind could drink dragon venom, which killed most other creatures. The venom was so powerful that it ignited in the air as soon as it spewed from the dragons' mouths.

Their names were simple, like most names given to them by men - Blacksnout and Whitesnout. Their names for themselves were long, complicated and utterly unpronounceable, detailing ancestry and where they had journeyed.

— The Dreamthief's Daughter

Nothing – simply *nothing* – more conveys the majesty of Melniboné than the dragons and Melniboné's ability to command them. Immense, serpentine, intelligent and utterly awe-inspiring, the dragons *are* Melniboné.

There are many breeds; two are mentioned in the *Elric* saga. The *Phoorn* are long-snouted and graceful, with black and white rings around the snout and tail that fade with maturity. The *Erkanian* are stockier and snub-snouted. Regardless of species, all dragons share similar Characteristics.

- Dragons enjoy indefinite lifespans. Dragons were already present on Melniboné when it was first colonised and were ancient then.
- Dragons do not breathe fire. Rather their venom is combustible when mixed with air. It has reserves to make up to three attacks when awake.
- Dragons need sleep to recharge both their energy and venom reserves. A mature dragon typically sleeps for 10 years for each full day of activity. Younger dragons and dragons of different species may require less sleep but sleep is essential to them and they cannot be roused unless they are ready.
- Dragons are highly intelligent and form a psychic and empathic bond with their riders. Flamefang and Elric, for example, share a deep and loving trust.



- Using the shoulder-located membrane known as the *skeffla'a*, dragons can travel between planes of existence, although this seems to be an infrequent occurrence. Perhaps travel of this kind requires far greater periods of regenerative sleep.
- Dragons are found only on Melniboné where they sleep in the vast dragon caves beneath the island's surface.

The body of a dragon is serpent-like with a graceful, slender, whip-like tail. The scales are iridescent and patterned with subtle and rich purples, scarlets, golds and dark greens. Their limbs are also graceful but still exceedingly powerful; there is nothing fragile about a dragon. The wing span of a Phoom is at least 10 metres and the natural indentations along the creature's spine allow up to three riders – although only one is common – and even then, an empathic bond is essential.

The Characteristics are for a Phoom dragon of reasonable maturity. Older dragons will be bigger, stronger and faster.

Riding a Dragon

Only Melnibonéans can ride a dragon. It requires an opposed Persistence test to gain the dragon's trust first and then a number of months of patient training, meditation and interaction with the dragon's dreams (using a dream couch) equal to the dragon's POW. Once this has been accomplished a Pact is formed between rider and dragon; treat this as a Pact skill equal to POW+CHA at its starting value. Attempting to awake a dragon from sleep requires an opposed roll between the Pact and the dragon's Persistence.

Riding a dragon is treated using the Pact skill. No test is needed for routine tasks but ordering a dragon to perform complex aerial manoeuvres always requires a Pact test.

Dragon riders who achieve a Pact skill of 70% or higher are allowed to bear the title 'Dyvim', meaning 'Dragon Lord' in Low Speech.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	8D6+40	68	1–2	Tail	12/27
CON	8D6+40	68	3–4	Right Hind Leg	12/27
SIZ	10D6+34	69	5–6	Left Hind Leg	12/27
INT	4D6+6	20	7–8	Hindquarters	12/28
POW	4D6+8	22	9–10	Forequarters	12/29
DEX	4D6+6	20	11–12	Right Wing	12/26
CHA	3D6+3	14	13–14	Left Wing	12/26
			15–16	Right Front Leg	12/27
			17–18	Left Front Leg	12/27
			19–20	Head	12/27

Combat Actions	4	Typical Armour: Thick scales. No Armour Penalty.
Damage Modifier	+3D12	
Magic Points	22	Traits: Breath Fire, Dark Sight, Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight
Movement	12m/20m	
Strike Rank	+20	Skills: Athletics 120%, Brawn 112%, Evaluate 100%, Influence 150%, Lore (Melniboné), Lore (Million Spheres) 80%, Persistence 100%, Resilience 120%, Tracking 110%, Unarmed 112%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	E	L	1D10+3D12	As for Head
Claws	E	VL	1D8+3D12	As for Leg
Tail	H	VL	1D6+3D12	As for Tail
Venom	—	VL	Special	—

Dragon venom combusts with air creating a stream of flame that causes 1D6+4 points of damage each round to every Hit Location of anything caught in the blast radius, equal to the dragon's CON in metres. A single burst of venom lasts for 10% of the dragon's CON in Combat Rounds. Fires caused by dragon venom cannot be extinguished with water.

Combat Styles

Unarmed 112%.

ELENOIN

A strange, shrill ululation reached their ears now. It came from the hillside where Theleb K'aarna's figure could again be seen. It came from the shapes which Moonglum was sure were women. Red-haired women whose tresses fell almost to their knees and covered their otherwise completely naked bodies. They danced down the hill towards the besieged caravan and they whirled swords about their heads which must have been over five feet long.

— The Vanishing Tower

These flame-haired, female-bodied warriors are beast-like in the ferocity and appetite for slaughter. Hailing from the 8th Plane they are cannibalistic and are known to pause in the intensity of battle to eat their slain. Elenoin adopt a particular Combat Style: first a

high-pitched keening song accompanied by a wild, dervish dance, followed by a rapid charge against their foe, greatswords whirling above their heads. Their hair falls to their knees and writhes with a life of its own, reaching out to snare opponents. There is a POW x3% chance for an elenoin to pause over a fallen opponent and start to eat, offering a potential opening for the quick-witted.

As creatures of Chaos, elenoin figure their Characteristics using D8.

The keening scream-song requires all who hear it to make an opposed Persistence roll versus its potency of 60% to avoid being paralysed for 1D4 Combat Actions. Once they start combat, elenoin cease using their scream-song ability.

The elenoin's semi-sentient hair provides an additional 2 Combat Actions. For two of its CA in any round the elenoin attacks with its hair, which can both Grip and Entangle.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	4D8+8	26	1-3	Right Leg	-/9
CON	4D8+8	26	4-6	Left Leg	-/9
SIZ	2D8+8	17	7-9	Abdomen	1/10
INT	2D8	9	10-12	Chest	1/11
POW	3D8	14	13-15	Right Arm	1/8
DEX	2D8+8	17	16-18	Left Arm	1/8
CHA	2D8	9	19-20	Head	1/9

Combat Actions 5

Damage Modifier +1D8

Magic Points 14

Movement 8m

Strike Rank +13

Typical Armour: The hair of the elenoin acts as 1 point of armour across the upper body. Like demons, they take only half damage from normal weapons.

Traits: Cannibals

Skills: Athletics 60%, Evade 60%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 60%, Unarmed 70%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Greatsword	H	L	2D8+1D8	6/12
Hair	H	L	1D2+Grip+Entangle	-/6
Bite	S	T	1D4+1D8	As for Head

Combat Styles

Bite 40%, Greatsword Battle Dance 70%,
Hair 30%, Keening Song 90%.



FIREBEETLES

He saw a shape moving out of the broken banks—a massive, flesh-coloured body on a dozen legs, its mandibles clattering as it chased the rats which were clearly its natural prey. They were called firebeetles. By some trick of biology the gigantic beetles secreted oily pools in their heavy carapaces. These pools, exposed to the sunlight and the flames already burning on other backs, would catch fire so that sometimes as many as twenty spots on the beetles' impervious backs would be burning at any one time and would only be extinguished when a beast dug its way deep underground during its breeding season.

— *The Fortress of the Pearl*

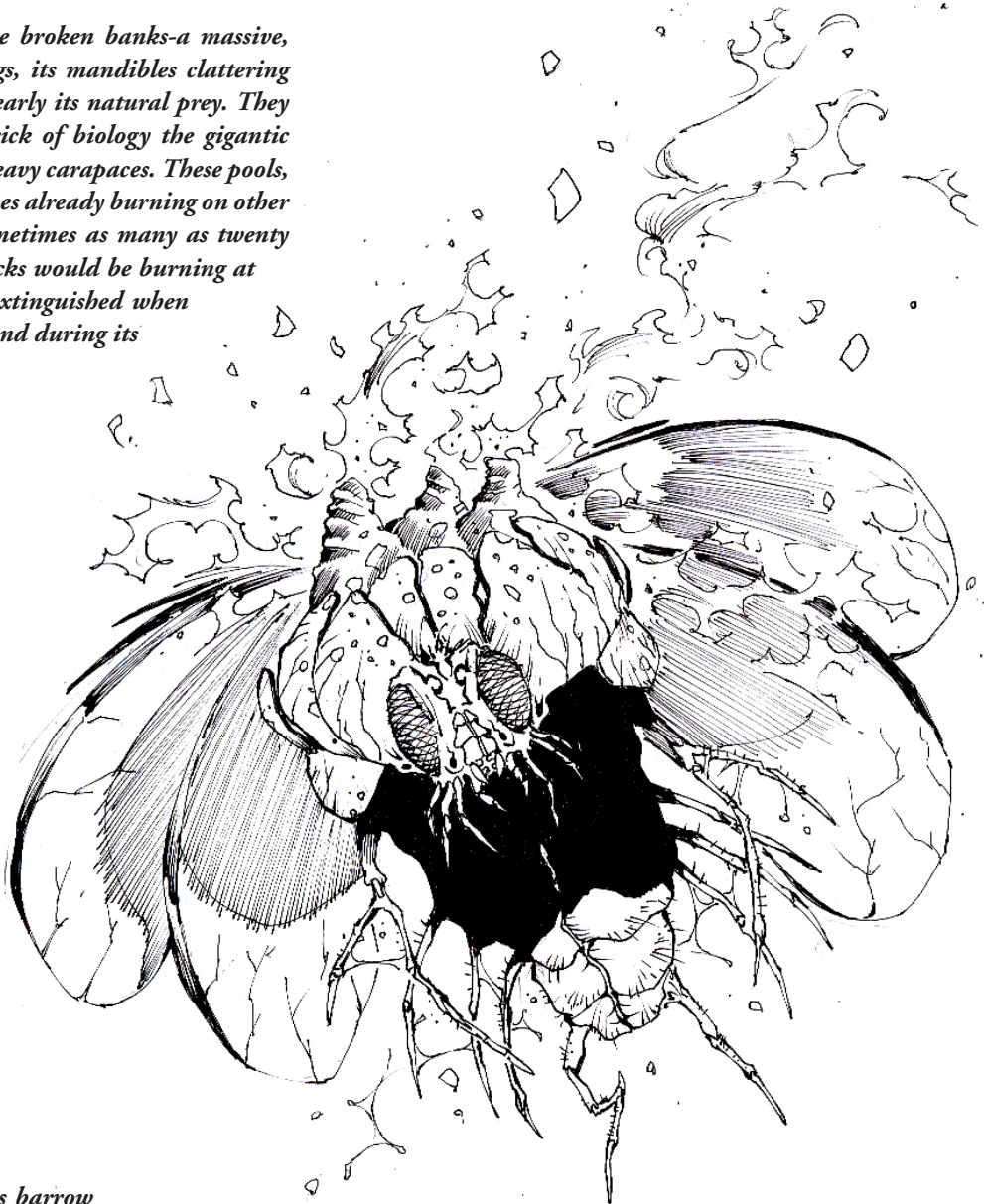
Immense beetles, their backs spouting flame, burrow deep beneath the Sighing Desert appearing only occasionally when compelled to do so in pursuit of food. The beetle's carapace is armoured so heavily that even Stormbringer cannot do very much damage, although Elric finds that the beetles are vulnerable on the underside of the body. Firebeetles are accompanied by choking swarms of flies and the burning of the oil on their carapace can be seen for miles.

GHOULS OF ORG (AND ELSEWHERE)

All about the foot of the monstrous barrow swarmed the leprous-white ghouls who sensed the presence of Elric, the folk of Org's sacrifice to them. Now Elric understood.

These were the things that Org feared more than the Gods. These were the living-dead ancestors of those who now revelled in the Great Hall. Perhaps these were actually the Doomed Folk. Was that their doom? Never to rest? Never to die? Just to degenerate into mindless ghouls?

— *The Bane of the Black Sword*



The ghouls of Org are cannibalistic and vampiric, draining the life-force of a victim to aid in its subdual. These were clearly once human, or human-like, and there is no explanation for how they degenerated to this state. A spell perhaps? A curse?

The Characteristics represent the ghouls of Org but larger, meaner types doubtless exist. Use these statistics to represent any degenerate, slow-witted monstrosity that creeps from ancient crypts and tombs.

Firebeetles

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D6+20	41	1	Right Leg 1	8/11
CON	4D6	14	2	Right Leg 2	8/11
SIZ	6D6+20	41	3	Right Leg 3	8/11
INT	4	4	4	Right Leg 4	8/11
POW	3D6	11	5	Right Leg 5	8/11
DEX	3D6+4	15	6	Right Leg 6	8/11
CHA	—	—	7	Left Leg 1	8/11
Combat Actions		2	8	Left Leg 2	8/11
Damage Modifier		+2D10	9	Left Leg 3	8/11
Magic Points		11	10	Left Leg 4	8/11
Movement		10m	11	Left Leg 5	8/11
Strike Rank		+12	12	Left Leg 6	8/11
			13–14	Forequarters Carapace	15/13
			15–16	Hindquarters Carapace	15/12
			17	Forequarters Underside	4/13
			18	Hindquarters Underside	4/12
			19–20	Head	15/13

Typical Armour: Thick scales. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons

Skills: Athletics 75%, Brawn 60%, Evade 40%, Perception 50%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 75%, Track 40%, Unarmed 35%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Mandibles	H	L	1D8+2D10	As for Head
Fire Spill	—	—	1D6+2	—

The beetles can spill pools of blazing oil onto opponents beneath. The sticky oil clings to any Hit Location that it splashes inflicting damage each round until extinguished. Armour Points are effective against fire spill damage.

Combat Styles

Fire Spill 25%, Unarmed 35% (Mandibles).

Ghouls of Org (and elsewhere)

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6+6	17	1-3	Right Leg	-16
CON	3D6+6	17	4-6	Left Leg	-16
SIZ	2D6+6	13	7-9	Abdomen	-17
INT	1D6	4	10-12	Chest	-18
POW	1D6	4	13-15	Right Arm	-15
DEX	2D6+2	9	16-18	Left Arm	-15
CHA	—	—	19-20	Head	-16

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	4
Movement	6m
Strike Rank	+9

Typical Armour: None.

Traits: Life Sense

Skills: Athletics 15%, Brawn 40%, Evade 20%, Perception 20%, Persistence 22%, Resilience 25%, Unarmed 35%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1D6+1D2	As for Head
Grasp	S	T	1D3+1D2	As for Arm

When a ghoul grasps an opponent it attempts to hold onto it. Each round it maintains the grasp, including the round in which the grasp strikes, it matches its Persistence against the opponent in an Opposed roll. If the ghoul is successful it drains 1D4 POW from the opponent. This POW is a permanent loss that can only be replenished through Improvement Rolls. Any POW dedicated to a Pact cannot be drained.

Combat Styles

Unarmed 35%. Ghouls attempt to grasp and hold their foes, so as to drain life essence.



GRAHLUK

The Grabluk had come. They were apelike creatures as bestial as the Elenoin. They carried nets and ropes and shields. Once, it was said, both Grabluk and Elenoin had had intelligence - had been part of the same species which had devolved and divided. They moved out of the purple mist in their scores and they stood looking at Elric who was still on his knees. Elric pointed at where the remaining warriors of Tanelorn were still fighting the Elenoin.

— *The Vanishing Tower*

Supposedly the kin of the elenoin and thus hailing from the 8th Plane also, the bestial, ape-like grahluk exist only to slaughter elenoin and can only be summoned to counter an elenoin attack. When that task is complete, they have no further reason for living and fall upon the discarded greatswords of their ancient foes.



	Dice	Average
STR	4D8+16	34
CON	4D8+16	34
SIZ	3D8+8	22
INT	1D8	5
POW	3D8	14
DEX	4D8	18
CHA	1D8	5

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/12
4-6	Left Leg	-/12
7-9	Abdomen	-/13
10-12	Chest	-/14
13-15	Right Arm	-/11
16-18	Left Arm	-/11
19-20	Head	-/12

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D12
Magic Points	14
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+12

Typical Armour: None. Like demons, grahluk take only half damage from normal weapons.

Traits: None

Skills: Athletics 60%, Evade 45%, Perception 30%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 50%, Unarmed 80%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Net	L	L	1D4+Entangle	2/20
Target Shield	L	S	1D6+1D12	4/12
Bite	S	T	1D6+1D12	As for Head

Combat Styles

Bite 80%, Net and Shield 75%.

KARASIM

'The Karasim have long hated our power and sought to challenge it. But what sorcery drives those ships?'

— *Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer*

The Green Men of the Karasim are an ancient and, perhaps, extinct foe of the Bright Empire. Their home is beyond the western edge of the world, further west than even Myrrhn and the Vale of Xanyaw. It is an immense chasm that plunges down, into the seething blackness of the Void and the city of the Karasim is carved into the very walls of the chasm – a city of deep caves, tortuous passageways and precarious stone bridges that span the yawning void below.

The Karasim are larger and stockier than humans and Melnibonéans, with jade-green skin and flat, brutish faces. They survive through raiding and also through forging pacts with whatever Higher Powers seek ruthless thieves, pirates and murderers. A chief pact is with the Lady Lassa and her blessings allow the war galleys of the Karasim to fly through the air as though sailing across the waters. In the past, they have forged alliances (and broken them) with the winged people of Myrrhn and other old species of the Bright Empire such as the Pukwadji.



	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6+2	13	1–3	Right Leg	2/7
CON	2D6+6	13	4–6	Left Leg	2/7
SIZ	2D6+9	16	7–9	Abdomen	4/8
INT	3D6	11	10–12	Chest	6/9
POW	3D6–1	10	13–15	Right Arm	2/6
DEX	3D6–1	10	16–18	Left Arm	2/6
CHA	3D6	11	19–20	Head	2/7

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	10
Movement	9m
Strike Rank	+7 (+11)

Typical Armour: Leather and Ringmail. –4 Armour Penalty.

Traits: None

Skills: Athletics 40%, Evade 60%, Perception 40%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 70%, Ride 30%, Shiphandling 70%, Unarmed 65%

Runes and Summonings: Command 50%, Lassa 50%, Rune of Air 50%, Summon Sylph 45%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D4	6/12
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4+1D4	4/18

Combat Styles

Sword and Shield 70%, Unarmed 65%.

In the early days of the Bright Empire the Karasim took prisoner the young Prince Silverskin, son of the Emperor Elric. Silverskin was rescued from doom by the Myrrhn but the Emperor raised an army and marched on the Karasim Abyss, only to be caught by the brutal green-skinned warriors. Prince Silverskin was also captured but with Arioch's help he escaped and, using the Black Sword for the first time, freed his father and the daughter of the King of the Myrrhn.

The Melnibonéans fled south, pursued by the Karasim army and eventually met them in battle in the Melmane Marsh. The small army of Melnibonéans seemed doomed to fall to the Karasim horde but the battle was turned with the arrival of the Myrrhn who turned on their former allies and helped slaughter the Karasim army.

Nothing has been heard of the Karasim since those early days of the Bright Empire. Silverskin burned their boats when fleeing their city and perhaps the Karasim have been driven into extinction. Equally possible is that they have simply laid dormant, regaining their numbers and their strength, forging new pacts with the Lords of Chaos, perhaps, or other Elemental Lords. It is possible the Karasim will rise again, seeking revenge against the fair people of Myrrhn or even the remnants of Melniboné – for they were a vengeful, uncompassionate race, bent on taking what others have strived to create for themselves.

KELMAIN

'So you are the mighty Kelmain,' Elric sneered. 'No wonder you needed sorcery to aid you if you are so cowardly. Have you not heard, beyond World's Edge, of Elric Kinslayer?' But the Kelmain plainly did not understand his speech, which was strange enough in itself, for he had spoken in the Common Tongue, known to all men.

These people had golden skins and eye-sockets that were almost square. Their faces, in all, seemed crudely carved from rock, all sharp angles and planes, and their armour was not rounded, but angular.'

— *The Vanishing Tower*

Summoned into the Young Kingdoms by Theleb K'aarna, and led by Prince Umbda, the Kelmain originate from a Chaos-worshipping plane accessible, with the right runes, from the edge of the world. The Kelmain are summoned to attack Kaneloon and intend to subjugate the whole southern continent; and whilst this attempt fails, there is no reason to suppose that other attempts have not been made in the past, or will not be in the future. It is quite possible that the plane of Kelmain intersects with

different points of the Young Kingdoms, so this curious, carved-looking race, might be found anywhere.

They are clearly warlike and mount massed assaults with peculiar war machines of a kind not seen in the Young Kingdoms. Their princes, such as Umbda, lead from the front, resplendent in outlandish plums attached to their angular helmets. They ride horses, so clearly their plane shares similarities with that of earth and their warlike nature suggests pacts with the Sword Rulers.

Kelmain can be used as Adventurers, if the Games Master is perverse enough. If so, then their Cultural Background is Civilised and the profession will usually be warrior.

As creatures of Chaos their Kelmain's Characteristics are figured using D8.



Kelmain

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	2D8+8	17	1–3	Right Leg	4/6
CON	2D8+8	17	4–6	Left Leg	4/6
SIZ	2D6+6	13	7–9	Abdomen	6/7
INT	2D8+2	11	10–12	Chest	6/8
POW	3D8	14	13–15	Right Arm	4/5
DEX	2D8+8	17	16–18	Left Arm	4/5
CHA	2D8	9	19–20	Head	4/6

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	14
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+7 (+14)

Typical Armour: Mixed Plate and Chain (–7 Armour Penalty).

Traits: None

Skills: Athletics 35%, Brawn 40%, Evade 40%, Pact (Sword Rulers) 30% – 1D8 Dedicated POW, Perception 40%, Persistence 65%, Resilience 40%, Riding 45%, Unarmed 60%

Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Long Sword	M	L	1D8+1D2	6/12
Target Shield	L	S	1D6+1D2	4/12

Combat Styles

Kelmain Warrior (65% – Long Sword and Shield typically but Kelmain are trained in any single-handed weapon and shield, or swords double-handed).

KRETTII

Certain spells had come into the keeping of the Krettii, a tribe of near-brutes who had migrated to the island from the region of The Silent Land less than fifty years before. Their shaman, one Grrodd Ybene Enr, had made unthinking use of devices buried by the dying sorcerer as the spells of his peers sucked life and sanity from them. Elric had dealt with more than one clever wizard, but never with so mindless a power.

— *Elric at the End of Time*

The current, sub-humans of Sorcerers' Isle are little better than barbarians. Migrants, it seems, from the Silent Lands, they may possibly be the descendants of the Pukwadji, the Grome-venerating dwarfs who occupied the Silent Lands in the earliest days of the Bright Empire.

The krettii, led by the shaman Grrodd Ybene Enr, have discovered the Chaos Machines of Cran Liret and foolishly experimented with them, unleashing dreadful powers. Elric is described as having had to combat 'sprite with sprite, devil with devil', indicating that the krettii have found – and released – many captive Chaotic entities from Cran Liret's laboratories.

The krettii are brutish humans. Short and stocky with flat, wide skulls and thick tangled hair. They speak a guttural version of Common and have a succession of vile, incestuous practices including cannibalism and human sacrifice to their 'god' (Cran Liret, or what remains of the Spell Thief's soul). It is also reasonable to assume that krettii shamans communicate with malign spirits and ancestors, allowing them magic of their own.



	Dice	Average
STR	3D6+2	13
CON	3D6	11
SIZ	2D6+4	11
INT	2D6	7
POW	3D6	11
DEX	3D6	11
CHA	1D6	4

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+0
Magic Points	11
Movement	6m
Strike Rank	+9

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	–/5
4–6	Left Leg	–/5
7–9	Abdomen	–/6
10–12	Chest	–/7
13–15	Right Arm	–/4
16–18	Left Arm	–/4
19–20	Head	–/5

Typical Armour: None.

Traits: None

Skills: Athletics 65%, Brawn 40%, Evade 40%, Perception 30%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 40%, Tracking 30%

Krettii Shaman: Spirit Binding 65%, Spirit Walking 60%.

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Club	M	L	1D6	4/4
Hide Shield	L	S	1D3	3/8
Shortspear	M	L	1D8+1	4/5
Sling	L	—	1D8	1/2

Combat Styles

Krettii 45% (Club, Spear, Shield and Sling).

KYRENEE

The kyrenee is a greater demon summoned by Narjhan, himself a minor noble of Chaos, in his attack upon Tanelorn. The kyrenee is as vast as a storm cloud, a festering, shapeless mass of seething Chaotic energy that drips poisonous dew from its substance and forms streams of coiling tentacles to seize and crush its foes.

The kyrenee is vulnerable to salamanders, sustaining double damage from their attacks.

The kyrenee constantly drips a poisonous dew. Each round opponents are allowed to make an Evade roll, if underneath the kyrenee, to avoid the falling droplets. The dew acts as a Strong (1D4) acid. See page 54 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.

MAGGOTS OF AGAK AND GAGAK

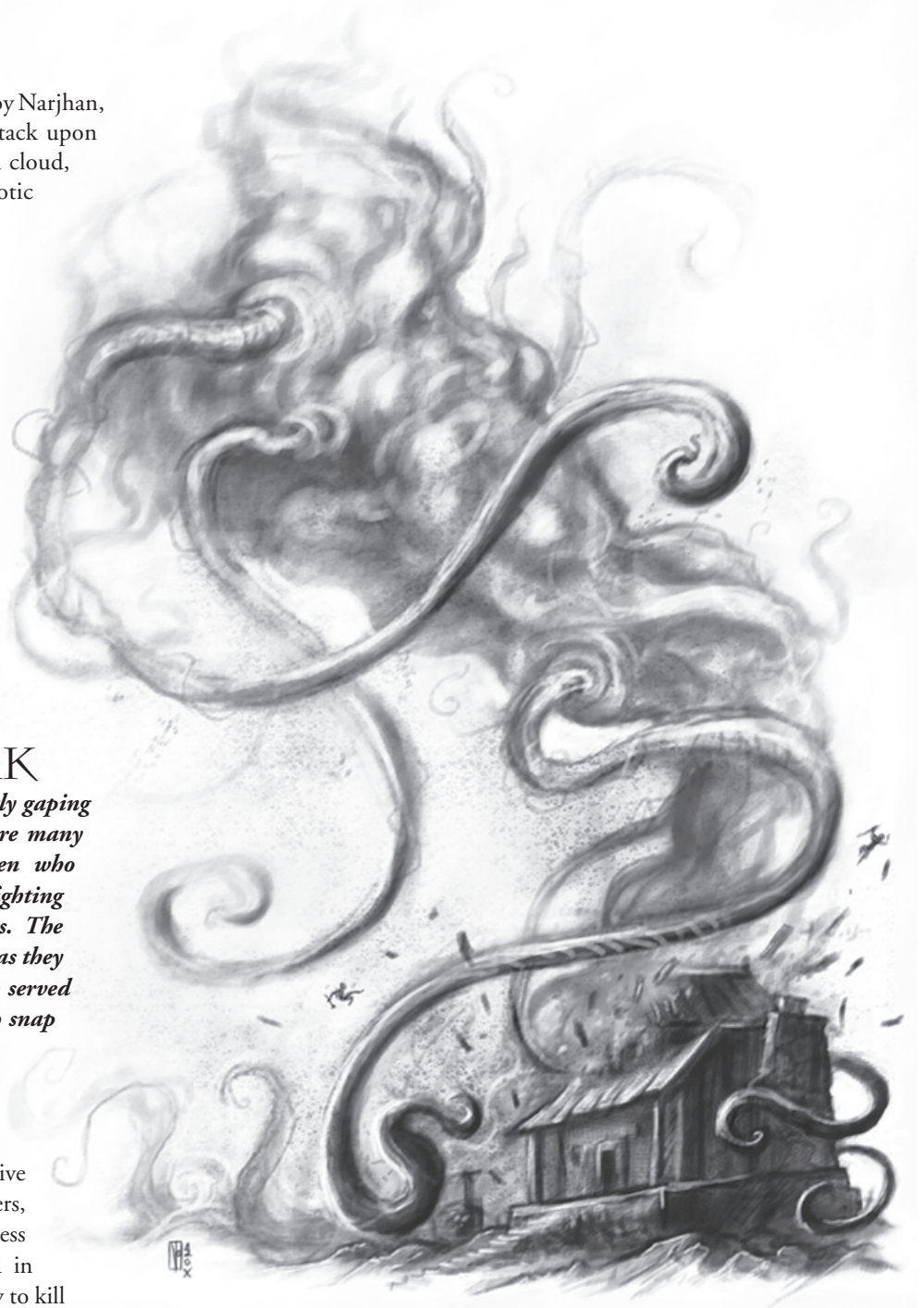
'The beasts were of a primitive sort, mostly gaping mouth and slithering body, but there were many of them oozing towards the twenty men who quickly formed themselves into the four fighting units and prepared to defend themselves. The creatures made a dreadful slushing sound as they approached and the ridges of bone which served them as teeth clashed as they reared up to snap at Elric and his companions.'

— *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

Large, oozing, leech-like creatures that live within the city-bodies of the twin sorcerers, Agak and Gagak, these simple, mindless monstrosities might conceivably be found in the service of other such entities. Whilst easy to kill they appear in numbers and, in a confined space, their carcasses soon restrict movement and the dreadful stench drains the air around the combat.

2D20 maggots are likely to be encountered at any one time. Use the same statistics for other, disgusting, Chaos-born maggots found in the ill-places of the world.

Each maggot killed releases a cloud of noxious stench that dissipates breathable air in a confined space. A Resilience test is required each round after the second maggot is killed and the Resilience test is reduced by 5% for each corpse. Failing a Resilience test causes the combatant to lose the next 1D3 Combat Actions as he struggles to breathe.



Kyrenee

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	80	1	Tentacle 1	-/40
CON	80	2	Tentacle 2	-/40
SIZ	120	3	Tentacle 3	-/40
INT	16	4	Tentacle 4	-/40
POW	30	5	Tentacle 5	-/40
DEX	12	6	Tentacle 6	-/40
CHA	—	7	Tentacle 7	-/40
Combat Actions	3	8	Tentacle 8	-/40
Damage Modifier	+4D12	9	Tentacle 9	-/40
Magic Points	30	10	Tentacle 10	-/40
Movement	12m	11	Tentacle 11	-/40
Strike Rank	+15	12	Tentacle 12	-/40
		13–20	Body	-/84

Typical Armour: None. As a creature of Chaos, the kyrenee sustains only half damage from normal weapons. Weapons inscribed with the Rune of Fire inflict normal damage.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons

Skills: Persistence 90%, Resilience 90%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Tentacles	H	VL	1D8+5D12	As for Tentacle
Drip Dew	—	—	Acid	—

Combat Styles

Drip Dew 35%, Tentacles 70%.

Maggots of Agak and Gagak

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	1D8	5	1–16	Body	1/5
CON	1D8	5	17–20	Mouth	1/4
SIZ	1D8	5			
INT	1D8	5			
POW	1D8	5			
DEX	1D8	5			
CHA	—	—			

Combat Actions	1
Damage Modifier	-1D6
Magic Points	5
Movement	5m
Strike Rank	+5

Typical Armour: Slime. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Life Sense

Skills: Athletics 10%, Brawn 15%, Perception 25%, Persistence 25%, Resilience 25%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1D8-1D6	As for Mouth

Combat Styles

Bite 40%.

MASTODON

Mastadons roam the Weeping Waste and were used by Melniboné in times past to pull their great war-chariots. A few Waste tribes breed and ride these immense beasts, believing them to be one of Lord Grome's most beloved creations.

Mastadons are fur-covered, like woolly mammoths and similar in height but their skulls are larger and flatter with a stockier and more robust build. The tusks of the mastodon can exceed five metres in length and are almost horizontal, unlike those of mammoth which tend to be curved.

Mastadons can Grip opponents with their trunk, effectively immobilising them and then attempting to throw them. A successful throw occurs if the victim cannot break free on the Combat Action following the Grip and if the mastodon succeeds in a Brawn roll. The victim is thrown 2D6 metres and may sustain falling damage.

The tusks are also vicious impaling weapons. If a foe is Impaled, the next Combat Action sees the mastodon aim to throw its victim with a toss of its head. If the impaled victim is conscious, he may pit either his Athletics or Acrobatics against the Brawn of the mastodon. If successful, he remains impaled. If unsuccessful, or if unconscious, the victim is thrown a number of metres equal to 25-Victim's SIZ, suffering both damage from the removal of the Impaling tusks, plus falling damage due to the severity of the fall.



	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D6+24	45	1-2	Right Hind Leg	3/17
CON	3D6+15	26	3-4	Left Hind Leg	3/17
SIZ	6D6+40	61	5-8	Hindquarters	3/18
INT	6	6	9-12	Forequarters	3/19
POW	2D6+6	13	13-14	Right Front Leg	3/17
DEX	3D6	11	15-16	Left Front Leg	3/17
CHA	—	—	17	Trunk	3/16
			18-20	Head	3/17

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+3D6
Magic Points	13
Movement	10m
Strike Rank	+12

Typical Armour: Hide. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Trample

Skills: Athletics 60%, Brawn 80%, Perception 65%, Persistence 49%, Resilience 88%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Trunk	H	VL	Special	As for Trunk
Trample	E	S	3D6	—
Gore	H	VL	1D10+3D6	As for Head

Combat Styles

Trunk 55%, Trample 50%, Gore 40%.

MERMEN

Mermen infest the waters known as the Straits of Chaos and all around Pan Tang. Why they display such an affinity for that island is unknown but an affinity clearly exists as the merman is Pan Tang's emblem. Once creatures of Straasha the mermen defected to Pyaray's service long ago. These are not innocents of the ocean; they are every bit as oppressive and aggressive as their land-based kinsmen of Pan Tang. They delight in dragging living souls to Pyaray's depths and go to great lengths to cause havoc on the surface waters.

Large and roughly humanoid but with ugly, barnacled faces and livid red gills in the sides of their necks, they have a serrated dorsal fin running the length of their spine and a long, shark-like tail in place of legs. Their teeth are small and sharp, their eyes slitted and malicious. Their hair is tangled with weed and writhing, dark green tendrils. They speak a version of Mabden and Pyaray's whispered, watery language reserved normally for the dead crews of his fleets.

The standard merman tactic is to grab the legs of a swimmer and swiftly drag it below the water to drown. If a foe is strong enough to resist this form of attack, the vicious barnacled spear is employed to impale the victim.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D6+6	27	1-6	Tail	1/7
CON	3D6+6	17	7-10	Abdomen	1/8
SIZ	3D6+6	17	11-12	Chest	1/9
INT	2D6+6	13	13-15	Right Arm	1/6
POW	3D6	11	16-18	Left Arm	1/6
DEX	3D6+6	17	19-20	Head	1/7
CHA	1D6	4			

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D8
Magic Points	11
Movement	10m
Strike Rank	+15

Typical Armour: Scales. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: None

Skills: Acrobatics 50%, Athletics 65%, Brawn 70%, Evade 70%, Pact (Pyaray) 80%, Perception 45%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 50%, Swim 150%, Unarmed 55%

Runes and Summonings:

Command 35%, Rune of Chaos 45%, Rune of Water 40%, Summon Sea Serpent 30%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Longspear	L	VL	1D10+1+1D8	4/10

Combat Styles

Merman Style (One or two handed spear and grappling) 55%.

MIST GIANT (BELLBANE)

Now he could make out some of its salencies. Two eyes, the colour of thin, yellow wine, were set high in the thing's body, though it had no separate head. A mouthing, obscene slit, filled with fangs, lay just beneath the eyes. It had no nose or ears that Elric could see. Four appendages sprang from its upper parts and its lower body slithered along the ground, unsupported by any limbs. Elric's eyes ached as he looked at it. It was incredibly disgusting to behold and its amorphous body gave off a stench of death and decay.

— *The Weird of the White Wolf*

Elric remarks that the hunting grounds of the Mist Giant, Bellbane, are far to the west of the Marshes of the Mist, indicating

that Bellbane (and possibly others of his kind) are not native to the marshes – although that is where Bellbane is encountered. The Mist Giant's origins are a mystery but it is clearly a creature of legend for it has a name – although whether it is a creature of Law or Chaos is unclear. Naturally, the latter is presumed because Elric invokes the name of several minor Chaos lords as he battles Bellbane and this has some kind of impact on the creature.

Mist Giants ignore the effects of major wounds as their bodies are only semi-corporeal. They can also regenerate lost Hit Points, making them formidable foes.

As a thing of Chaos, Mist Giant Characteristics are calculated using D8.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D8+8	35	1–8	Gaseous Body	–/13
CON	6D8+8	35	9–10	Right Lower Tendril	–/10
SIZ	2D8+12	21	11–12	Left Lower Tendril	–/10
INT	1D8	5	13–14	Right Upper Tendril	–/10
POW	4D8	18	15–16	Left Upper Tendril	–/10
DEX	2D8+4	13	17–20	Head	–/12
CHA	—	—			

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D12
Magic Points	18
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+9

Typical Armour: None.

Traits: Life Sense, Semi Corporeal, Regeneration (1 HP per location, per round).

Skills: Brawn 40%, Evade 20%, Perception 35%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 100%, Unarmed 50%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Tendrils	L	VL	See Below	As per Arm
Bite	M	T	1D6+1D12	As per Head

Mist Giants have four semi-corporeal tentacles that are used to grasp an opponent and move it towards the maw. The tendrils are capable of using the Entangle Combat Manoeuvre.

Combat Styles

Bite 60%, Tendrils 50%.

OLAB

The things were essentially reptilian but with feathery crests and neck wattles, though their faces were almost human. Their forelegs were like the arms and hands of men, but their hindlegs were incredibly long and stork-like. Balanced on these legs, their bodies towered over the water. They carried great clubs in which slits had been cut and doubtless these were what they used to hurl the crystalline discs. Staring at their faces, Elric was horrified. In some subtle way they reminded him of the characteristic faces of his own folk - the folk of Melniboné. Were these creatures his cousins? Or were they a species from which his people had evolved?

— *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

Tenacious and ferocious, the Olab are the guardians of the jungles leading to mythical R'lin K'ren A'a. They are cunning warriors,

attacking from ambush by hurling their razor sharp, crystalline discs from slotted clubs. They are extremely accurate with this method of attack and no less effective in hand-to-hand combat.

Olab do not retreat from small groups of intruders and attack in waves until all opponents retreat or are dead. They ignore the effects of major wounds, effectively fighting until they drop.

Clearly Elric sees something in the Olab that reminds him of his own people. How they came to be this way – or how Melnibonéans descended from their bizarre appearance – is unanswered. Perhaps the stragglers of the original inhabitants of R'lin K'ren A'a were punished by the Jade Man for not fleeing fast enough; or maybe they are a naturally occurring race that share some facial similarities with Melnibonéans. And whilst they protect R'lin K'ren A'a, do they have cities of their own, deep in the jungles of the forest?

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6+6	17	1–3	Right Leg	1/7
CON	4D6+6	20	4–6	Left Leg	1/7
SIZ	2D6+8	15	7–9	Abdomen	1/8
INT	2D6+2	9	10–12	Chest	1/9
POW	3D6	11	13–15	Right Arm	1/6
DEX	3D6+6	17	16–18	Left Arm	1/6
CHA	2D6	7	19–20	Head	1/7
Combat Actions		3	Typical Armour: Scaled bodies and feathered wattles. No Armor Penalty.		
Damage Modifier		+1D4	Traits: None		
Magic Points		11	Skills: Athletics 55%, Evade 60%, Perception 70%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 90%, Survival 40%, Track 80%, Unarmed 45%		
Movement		9m			
Strike Rank		+13			

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Range
Club	M	S	1D6+1D4	4/4	—
Discus	L	—	1D4+1+1D4	2/3	80m

Olab use slotted clubs and crystalline discus in combat. The discus can be slotted into the club and thrown with greater force than by hand. The discus can Sunder and Stun Location.

Combat Styles

Discus Club 65%, Unarmed 45%.

OONAI

For now, in mid-air, the shapes had changed. No longer did they have the appearance of dragons, but this time they seemed to be like multicoloured swans, whose gleaming feathers caught and diffracted the few remaining rays of light.

Moonglum gasped as they came nearer. 'They are huge!'

— The Vanishing Tower

In their native form Oonai resemble bloated, black-skinned, pig-like creatures. Once they were servants of Chaos but Chaos

deserted them leaving them stuck with their grotesque forms. So sickened by this betrayal the Oonai have forsaken Chaos and now serve Law (indeed Myshella, Empress of the Dawn, summons the Oonai to fetch Elric to Kaneloon). To escape their own disgusting appearance Oonai constantly shift their shape, adopting ever more grotesque combinations of beasts such as the dragon-shapes and multicoloured, fanged swans Elric and Moonglum witness in the wilds of Lormyr.

Oonai typically assume the forms of winged creatures, so the Hit Locations are based on such a configuration. When summoned they retain no one form for longer than one combat round before changing again.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	8D8	36	1-2	Tail	1D8/11
CON	8D8	36	3-4	Right Hind Leg	1D8/11
SIZ	4D8	18	5-6	Left Hind Leg	1D8/11
INT	2D8	9	7-8	Hindquarters	1D8/12
POW	3D8	14	9-10	Chest/Forequarters	1D8/13
DEX	3D8	14	11-12	Right Wing	1D8/10
CHA	—	—	13-14	Left Wing	1D8/10
			15-16	Right Front Leg	1D8/11
			17-18	Left Front Leg	1D8/11
			19-20	Head	1D8/11

Combat Actions 2

Damage Modifier +1D12

Magic Points 14

Movement 18m

Strike Rank +12

Typical Armour: The Armour Points of the Oonai change with each form they take. Assume a value of 1D8 for each random form. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons

Skills: Evade 35%, Perception 30%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 40%, Tracking 45%, Unarmed 65%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Tentacles	H	VL	1D8+1D12	As for Tentacle
Fangs	L	T	1D6+1+1D12	As for Head
Claws	L	L	1D8+1+1D12	As for Leg
Barbed Tail	H	VL	1D12+1D12	As for Tail

Combat Styles

Oonai employ a variety of natural weapons based upon the form they assume. Their Unarmed combat skill is always used but weapons types will vary.

QUAOLNARGN

In a smoking pit, somewhere beyond the limitations of space and time, a creature stirred. All around it, shadows moved... It was called Quaolnargn and would answer to this name if called... It did not eat flesh and it did not drink blood. It fed on the minds and the souls of adult men and women. Occasionally, as an appetizer, it enjoyed the morsels, the sweetmeats as it were, of the innocent life-force which it sucked from children. It ignored animals since there was not enough awareness in an animal to savour. The creature was, for all its alien stupidity, a gourmet and a connoisseur.

This hideous, blind monstrosity is an assassin that feeds on the souls of its contracts. Quaolnargn resembles a vast, green toad-like thing with milky unseeing eyes that moans with the pain being on earth causes it. Quaolnargn must be commanded using the Command skill and focuses on the soul of the victim specified by its summoner.

Quaolnargn is invulnerable to normal weapons although, if struck in the head by a critical hit, it is dispelled.

— The Stealer of Souls

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	60	1-2	Tail	-/32
CON	100	3-4	Right Hind Leg	-/32
SIZ	100	5-6	Left Hind Leg	-/32
INT	4	7-10	Hindquarters	-/33
POW	18	11-14	Forequarters	-/34
DEX	10	15-16	Right Front Leg	-/32
CHA	—	17-18	Left Front Leg	-/32
		19-20	Head/Neck	-/32

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+4D8
Magic Points	18
Movement	12m
Strike Rank	+9

Typical Armour: None.

Traits: Soul Drain

Skills: Brawn 120%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 40%, Track Soul 100%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Tongue	E	VL	1D4+4D8	As for Head

Combat Styles

Special. Quaolnargn uses its long, sticky tongue to grasp its victim, which is allowed a Brawn roll, opposed by the demon's own Brawn, to attempt to break free. Otherwise Quaolnargn begins to drain the victim's soul at the rate of 1D8 points of POW per round. Once POW is completely drained, Quaolnargn devours the soulless remains.

REPTILE MEN OF PIO

The riders galloped wildly towards the reptilian monsters of Pio, their swords and lances waving, their yells rising to where Elric drifted high above. The monsters roared and opened their huge jaws, their masters pointed their ornate weapons at the horsemen of Tanelorn. Flames burst from the muzzles, the riders shrieked as they were devoured by the dazzling heat.

— *The Vanishing Tower*

Brought from the plane of Pio by Theleb K'aana to assault Tanelorn, the warriors of Pio are monstrous, reptilian beings bearing little resemblance to humankind. Heavy, angular heads rest on short, thick, necks, with black, soulless eyes staring from above narrow, komodo-like jaws, filled with tiny, razor-sharp teeth. Their hands are webbed and attached to long, slender arms which, like most of their body, are covered in mottled and blemished scales of dull grey.

They do not speak any human tongue, communicating in a half-rasped, half-roared language but they are, nevertheless, intelligent. Their weapons are testament to this: wide muzzled implements that connect with the body of the owner with veins and wires that merge with the skin and emit beams of fiery heat, powered by the immense reserves of inner energy from the men of Pio themselves.

Their world, Pio, is a plane distant to Earth and dominated by these, creatures which were once bred as slaves by the Law-aligned sorcerers who lived there. The sorcerers were experts in taking the natural flora and fauna of Pio and changing it, using enormous transmutational machines and arcane, half-understood technologies from countless worlds more advanced than their own. Most of their experiments were profound failures, hideous, unintelligent mutants that were consigned to the disintegration vats. But the reptile men were successful. Unfeeling yet intelligent, enormously strong and thus useful as slave labour in constructing the baroque machinery the sorcerers plundered from countless unsuspecting worlds.

As is the way with slaves, the reptile men tired of their masters' commands and rebelled. They turned the weapons they had constructed against the sorcerers and fed the remains into the transmutation vats. The mounts the reptile men ride are the results of their efforts: the masters are now the slaves themselves; nightmarish creatures, huge, lumbering lizards that bear a vague resemblance to their former selves but warped into an agonised, saurian mess.



The reptile men of Pio are now on a vengeful quest to destroy all those who aided or abetted their former masters in some way. Using the planar machines the sorcerer scientists of Law created, the reptile men travel the Multiverse as mercenaries, happy to turn their weapons against any enemy that might once have had dealings with those who supplied knowledge or machinery to the sorcerers of Pio. This is how Theleb K'aana came across them and how he convinced them to attack Tanelorn, claiming that the Eternal City harboured escaped sorcerer-scientists and their allies.

The weapons the reptile men carry are advanced beam violators that draw upon the electrical energy of the body. Wires connect the handgun directly to the user's neurosystem and the weapons themselves are artificially intelligent, sensing immediately when

they are to be used and sending a mass of writhing needle-ended wires to dig deep into the skin and connect with the nerve clusters. The weapon and wielder effectively become one. Each use of the weapon drains the user's body of precious electrical energy. The reptile men, genetically enhanced, are capable of withstanding the weapon's vampiric nature but other users cannot. For every two

points of damage the weapon delivers, the user's CON is sapped by one point. Expended CON points are regenerated at the rate of one point per day, if the user can rest fully. If CON is reduced to zero through using the energy weapon, the user is fatally de-electrified, his entire nervous system imploding with the shock. There is no Resistance test allowed to cheat death.

Reptile Men of Pio

	Dice	Average
STR	4D6+6	20
CON	4D6+6	20
SIZ	4D6+6	20
INT	3D6	11
POW	6D6	21
DEX	2D6+6	13
CHA	1D6	4
Combat Actions		2
Damage Modifier		+1D6
Magic Points		21
Movement		12m
Strike Rank		+12

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/7
4-6	Left Leg	6/7
7-9	Abdomen	6/8
10-12	Chest	6/9
13-15	Right Arm	6/6
16-18	Left Arm	6/6
19-20	Head	6/7

Typical Armour: Natural reptilian hide. No Armour Penalty

Traits: Regenerate CON: 1D4 points per Combat Round

Skills: Athletics 30%, Evade 40%, Perception 60%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 70%, Ride 80%, Unarmed 60%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Range
Energy Weapon	M	—	3D6	4/12	50m

Combat Styles

Energy Weapon 70%

Pio Reptilian Mounts

	Dice	Average
STR	3D6+20	31
CON	5D6+10	28
SIZ	6D6+20	41
INT	4	4
POW	3D6	11
DEX	3D6	11
CHA	—	—
Combat Actions		2
Damage Modifier		+2D8
Magic Points		11
Movement		18m
Strike Rank		+10

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Front Leg	8/14
4-6	Left Front Leg	8/14
7-9	Forequarters	8/16
10-12	Hind Quarters	8/15
13-15	Right Hind Leg	8/14
16-18	Left Hind Leg	8/14
19-20	Head	8/14

Typical Armour: Natural reptilian hide. No Armour Penalty

Traits: Regenerate CON: 1D4 points per Combat Round

Skills: Evade 35%, Perception 35%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 60%, Unarmed 50%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Claws	H	L	1D6+2D8	As for Leg
Teeth	M	S	1D8+2D8	As for Head

Combat Styles

Claws and Teeth 50%.

PERSONALITIES OF THE ELRIC SAGA

Duke Avan Astran

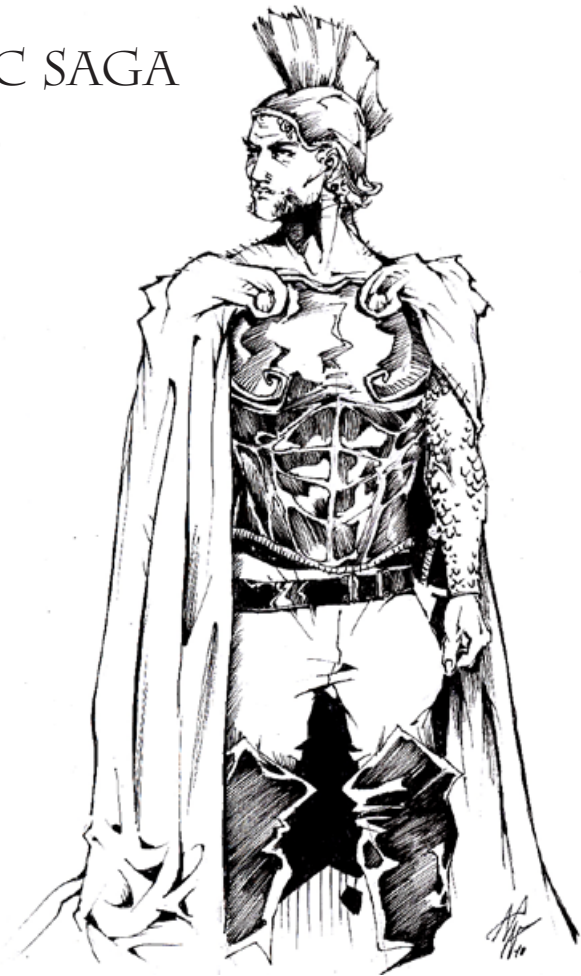
Duke Avan was a man about forty, with a square, handsome face. He was dressed in a gilded silver breastplate, over which was arranged a white cloak. His breeches, tucked into black, knee-length boots, were of cream-coloured doeskin. On a small sea-table at his elbow rested his helmet, crested with scarlet feathers...

...and 'He's Avan Astran of Old Hrolmar,' grunted Count Smiorgan from the other side of the huge ham-bone. 'He's well known as an adventurer-explorer-trader. His reputation's the best. We can trust him, Elric.'

— The Sailor on the Seas of Fate

A seasoned traveller, explorer and trader, with a reputation for being just and fair, Duke Avan Astran is respected throughout the Young Kingdoms. His city, Old Hrolmar, is the most liberal in Vilmir, partly due to his influence and his exploits across the Young Kingdoms and into the Unknown East have brought both it, and Astran, wealth and renown.

Astran meets his doom when he seeks R'lin K'ren A'a and he is slain by Stormbringer – one of the first of many trusted companions perishing by Elric's unwilling hand. But in campaigns set before or during Elric's year of wandering, prior to the sack of Imrry, Astran can be freely encountered, perhaps even acting as a patron for a group of worthy Adventurers.



	Value
STR	15
CON	16
SIZ	14
INT	14
POW	13 (1)
DEX	14
CHA	14

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	12
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+14 (+10)

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D2	6/12
Shortspear	M	L	1D8+1+1D2	4/5
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4++1D2	4/18

Combat Styles

Longsword, Spear and Shield 107%.

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/6
4-6	Left Leg	1/6
7-9	Abdomen	3/7
10-12	Chest	3/8
13-15	Right Arm	3/5
16-18	Left Arm	3/8
19-20	Head	5/6

Typical Armour: Ringmail and Leather (−4 Armour Penalty).

Passion: Love Adventure 75%

Skills: Athletics 75%, Brawn 55%, Evade 66%, Influence 80%, Insight 78%, Language (Common Tongue) 100%, Language (Low Speech) 40%, Lore (Regional) 75%, Perception 55%, Resilience 60%, Shiphandling 55%, Survival 63%, Unarmed 70%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Gift: Divine Training, Pact (Donblas) 55%

Princess Cymoril

They surround a young woman whose blue dress matches their uniforms and whose bare arms are encircled by five or six bracelets of diamonds, sapphires and gold. Strings of diamonds and sapphires are wound into her hair. Unlike most of the women of the court, her face has no designs painted upon the eyelids or cheekbones. Elric smiles. This is Cymoril. The soldiers are her personal ceremonial guard who, according to tradition, must escort her into the court.

— *Elric of Melniboné*

Cymoril is Elric's cousin and lover. She is sister to Yyrkoon and he has an incestuous infatuation with her, which turns to insane jealousy as her romance with Emperor Elric deepens. Cymoril is the one person who truly knows and understands Elric's heart and he holds her counsel above most others.

To punish both Elric and Cymoril, Yyrkoon places his sister under a sorcerous sleep whilst Elric spends a year wandering the Young Kingdoms. When Elric returns with the Sea Lords, to sack Imrry, she awakens and intervenes in the duel between the two emperors, meeting her death at Stormbringer's point. From then on, Elric is never the same again, plagued forever by what he has done and what he has lost.

Cymoril is unlikely to be encountered outside of Imrry and, even then, will be accompanied by her bodyguards at all times. As a Melnibonéan princess, she is curiously kind and displays few of the aloof tendencies of other Imrryian women.



	Value
STR	10
CON	13
SIZ	11
INT	20
POW	16 (1)
DEX	12
CHA	19

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	—
Magic Points	15
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+16

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

Combat Styles

Dagger 45%.

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

Typical Armour: None.

Passion: Love Elric 95%

Skills: Art 75%, Athletics 47%, Courtesy 100%, Evade 64%, Healing 55%, Influence 70%, Language (Common) 100%, Language (High Speech) 75%, Language (Low Speech) 110%, Lore (Imperial Court) 99%, Lore (Melniboné) 85%, Lore (Regional) 95%, Perception 95%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 44%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Pact (Lassa) 40%, Rune of Air 60%

Dyvim Slorm

'Our knowledge is ancient,' Dyvim Slorm agreed, 'yet, so old is it that it has little relation to present events, I think. Our logic and learning are suited to the past...'

— Stormbringer

The son of Dyvim Tvar, Slorm is Elric's final surviving kinsman at the final battle with Chaos and before that, leader of the Melnibonéan mercenaries as they wander the Young Kingdoms after the sacking of Imrryr. Even though he is a Dragon Lord, Slorm seems wise and pragmatic despite the fate of his people and he is loyal to Elric until the end.

Slorm is a good example of an expert Melnibonéan mercenary leader of the kind found abroad in the Young Kingdoms following the Sack of Imrryr.



	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	14	1-3	Right Leg	6/7
CON	16	4-6	Left Leg	6/7
SIZ	15	7-9	Abdomen	6/8
INT	13	10-12	Chest	6/9
POW	18 (1)	13-15	Right Arm	6/6
DEX	17	16-18	Left Arm	6/6
CHA	18	19-20	Head	6/7

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	17
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+15

Heroic Abilities:

Battle Fury
 Dead Eye
 Heroic Aura
 Loremaster
 Poison Immunity

Typical Armour: Melnibonéan Plate

Passion: Love Imrryr 60%

Skills: Athletics 75%, Brawn 45%, Courtesy 65%, Dodge 70%, Language (Common) 100%, Language (High Speech) 75%, Language (Low Speech) 110%, Lore (Dragon) 90%, Lore (Imperial Court) 99%, Lore (Melniboné) 75%, Lore (Regional) 85%, Perception 52%, Resilience 68%, Ride (Dragon) 90%, Ride (Horse) 100%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Pact (Dragon) 95%, Pact (Straasha) 10%, Rune of Water 50%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D2	4/10
Greatsword	H	L	2D8+1D2	6/12
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4+1D2	4/18
Lance	H	VL	1D10+2+1D2	4/12

Combat Styles

Dragon Lord 140% (Spear, Shield, Lance).

Prince Elric, 428th Emperor of the Ruby Throne

It is the colour of a bleached skull, his flesh; and the long hair which flows below his shoulders is milk-white. From the tapering, beautiful head stare two slanting eyes, crimson and moody, and from the loose sleeves of his yellow gown emerge two slender hands, also the colour of bone, resting on each arm of a seat which has been carved from a single, massive ruby. The crimson eyes are troubled and sometimes one hand will rise to finger the light helm which sits upon the white locks: a helm made from some dark, greenish alloy and exquisitely moulded into the likeness of a dragon about to take wing. And on the hand which absently caresses the crown there is a ring in which is set a single rare Actorios stone whose core sometimes shifts sluggishly and reshapes itself, as if it were sentient smoke and as restless in its jewelled prison as the young albino on his Ruby Throne.

— Elric of Melniboné

Proud prince of ruins, slayer of kin, a pirate, a reaver, a sorcerer, a murderer and the final champion of the Cosmic Balance. Elric, 428th emperor of the Dragon Isle, is an albino and deficient of iron, his blood lending him the ghostly pallor that is part of his legend. Considered unfit to rule by even his father, Sadric the 86th, Elric has had to fight for his position and is constantly under challenge from Prince Yyrkoon, who sees himself as the rightful heir to the Ruby Throne.

Despite being of pure Melnibonéan blood and thus cruel and vengeful by nature, Elric is capable of love and compassion, deep guilt and self-loathing. Whilst contemptuous of humans, he understands that Melniboné's future lies in understanding them, not oppressing them – heretical ideas in the eyes of such as Yyrkoon. When Elric decides to spend a year studying the Young Kingdoms, learning from them, Yyrkoon usurps him and helps trigger the fateful events leading to the world's destruction.

As a wanderer Elric is almost totally reliant on Stormbringer and the two form a symbiotic relationship that Elric loathes yet cannot break. Most of those whom Elric loves die because of this relationship and this drives Elric into a deep, sustained depression that is only occasionally lifted.

As a sorcerer, Elric is the most powerful in the Young Kingdoms, though most of his magic, taught to him by his father, is based on the ancient pacts with the elemental and beast lords. Despite serving Chaos, he is a reluctant champion and summoning Arioeh both disgusts and fascinates him. As his understanding of the nature of the struggle between Law and Chaos deepens, so does his distrust of his patron demon and, eventually, Elric turns to the service of Law, deserting Chaos as it threatens to engulf the world.



As a man, Elric is a loyal friend and caring lover. He is capable of developing considerable affection for those he adventures with, especially humans (more so than his kinsmen, it seems) and it is not in his nature to ignore such loyalties – again, a curious trait in a Melnibonéan emperor.

Elric can be encountered anywhere in the Young Kingdoms but his presence should be used sparingly, his appearances echoed in deeds, rumours and hearsay in the taverns and inns. Elric's doom is legendary and most choose to avoid the complications it brings.

The Characteristics show Elric as he is when not relying on Stormbringer for vitality and when sustained by Stormbringer. Note also the value of Elric's skills: these are the result of the DreamQuests he has undertaken in preparation for ruling the Bright Empire.

	Normal	Stormbringer	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	5	13	1-3	Right Leg	1/5 (6)
CON	6	13	4-6	Left Leg	1/5 (6)
SIZ	16	16	7-9	Abdomen	6/6 (7)
INT	24	24	10-12	Chest	6/7 (8)
POW	13 (8)	13 (8)	13-15	Right Arm	-/4 (5)
DEX	11	15	16-18	Left Arm	-/4 (5)
CHA	18	18	19-20	Head	6/5 (6)

Combat Actions 3 (4) Typical Armour: Half Melnibonéan Plate (-4 Armour Penalty).

Damage Modifier +0 (+1D2)

Magic Points 5 Passion: Hate Theleb K'aarna 80%, Love Cymoril 95%, Love Moonglum 80%, Love Zarozinia 90%

Movement 8m

Strike Rank +18 (+20) Skills: Athletics 62%, Command 100%, Courtesy 99%, Dreamtheft 30%, Evade 90%, Evaluate 90%, First Aid 90%, Healing 75%, Influence 120%, Language (Common) 110%, Language (High Speech) 110%, Language (Low Speech) 130%, Lore (Beast Lords) 102%, Lore (Chaos) 95%, Lore (Dragon) 106%, Lore (Elements) 110%, Lore (Imperial Court) 180%, Lore (Melniboné) 120%, Lore (Million Spheres) 75%, Lore (Regional) 90%, Perception 95%, Persistence 95%, Resilience 20% (60)%, Ride (Dragon) 130%, Ride (Horse) 110%, Shiphandling 70%, Sing 75%, Stealth 84%, Streetwise 75%, Survival 90%, Tracking 70%, Unarmed 65%, Witch Sight 80%

With Armour Penalty: +14 (+16)

Heroic Abilities

Battle Fury, Dead Eye, Heroic Aura, Immunity, Linguist, Loremaster, Poison

Elric has 8 POW dedicated to Arioch.

Due to his intensive sorcerous training, Elric could, in theory, summon any demon given time, space and concentration. However he is always reticent to do so. If required, during the course of a game, assume he has a Summoning Ritual skill for all demon types of 80%.

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Elric knows all Runes at 100%.

Summoning Rituals: Gnome 100%, Salamander 80%, Sylph 110%, Undine 100%, Creatures of Matik 75%, Grahluk 80%.

Elric's Pacts with the elementals and beasts are as a result of his wearing of the Actorios, Ring of Kings and thus he does not need to dedicate POW to them.

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D2	4/10
Greatsword	H	L	2D8+1D2	6/12
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4+1D2	4/18
Lance	H	VL	1D10+2+1D2	4/12

These weapons preclude Stormbringer, which has its own characteristics. See page 194 for Stormbringer's Characteristics.

Combat Styles

Dragon Lord 120%, Melnibonéan Warrior 140%, Noble House 110%.

Gifts and Compulsions

Doomed.

Prince Gaynor the Damned

The leader stepped forward out of the press. He wore a silvered mirror helm. I had seen it before. I knew him. And something in me, however terrified, knew the satisfaction of confirmed instinct. My instincts had been right. Gaynor the Damned was abroad again.

If I had not recognized him by his helm I would have known him by that low, sardonic laughter.

'Well, well, Cousin. I see our friend heard the sound of my horn. He seems to have inconvenienced you a little.' He held up the curling bull's horn, covered in ornate copper and bronze, which hung at his belt. 'That was the second blast. The third will bring the end of everything.'

— *The Skrayling Tree*

Just as there is an Eternal Champion, so is there an Eternal Enemy: Prince Gaynor is that enemy, taking on many guises and many allegiances. In many ways Gaynor is a pawn of fate in the same way as Elric but they differ in a crucial way. Prince Gaynor actively and consciously chases his power, believing that in doing so he will

be rewarded by whomever he serves. He is therefore a willing participant in the Cosmic Struggle, a reliable agent for the forces of Law and Chaos to use to serve their agendas. Gaynor has served both Law and Chaos and is a devout enemy of the Cosmic Balance. In various guises he has served Mabelode, Count Mashabak of Chaos and Miggea of Law. He has, in turn, been a sorcerer, a knight and a nobleman. His damnation comes from his conscious seeking of unattainable power, his soul utterly forfeit to whichever deity his current incarnation is allied with.

In the Young Kingdoms he is allied with Duchess Miggea and leads her armies against Tanelorn but he might equally be found serving Mabelode or Mashabak, or any of the Higher Powers. In most cases he always appears fully helmed, speaking in a sinister, sonorous tone. The helmet often hides a hideous, malformed countenance or even none whatsoever. Whatever form he takes, he is always allied closely with a much higher power and actively working on its behalf. His schemes are elaborate and cunning, conducted with relish and utter disregard for the consequences.

Prince Gaynor might thus be freely encountered anywhere in the Young Kingdoms and serving any of the major Lords of Law or Chaos. For this reason alone he makes an excellent major protagonist for a campaign, establishing many smaller schemes through others (such as Klosterheim, a favoured henchman) that slowly involve the Adventurers, leading, finally, to an encounter with the Eternal Enemy himself.



	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	15	1-3	Right Leg	6/6
CON	15	4-6	Left Leg	6/6
SIZ	14	7-9	Abdomen	6/7
INT	16	10-12	Chest	6/8
POW	1 (20)	13-15	Right Arm	6/5
DEX	18	16-18	Left Arm	6/5
CHA	10	19-20	Head	6/6

Combat Actions 3

Damage Modifier +1D2

Magic Points 1

Movement 8m

Strike Rank +17

Heroic Abilities

Battle Fury, Dead Eye,

Duellist, Heroic Aura

Typical Armour: Full Plate. Gaynor appears to suffer no Armour Penalty.

Passion: Hate Tanelorn 95%

Skills: Athletics 70% , Brawn 65%, Courtesy 90%, Evade 90%, Evaluate 90%, Influence 90%, Lore (Chaos or Law) 90%, Lore (Million Spheres) 70%, Lore (World) 70%, Mechanisms 65%, Perception 80%, Persistence 78%, Resilience 80%, Ride 100%, Sleight 60%, Stealth 60%, Survival 90%, Unarmed 60%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Pact (Lord of Law or Chaos) 100%

All Gaynor's POW is dedicated the service of Law or Chaos. Gaynor has no magic as such but he always has Gifts equalling 20 POW and at least 3 Compulsions, relevant to whomever he serves. One of his Gifts is always Eternal Life as Gaynor is, effectively, immortal although he remains vulnerable to sorcerous weapons.

His compulsions are: Seeks own obliteration, Insanely ambitious, Craves Stormbringer, Must betray own patron.

Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>	<i>Range</i>
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D2	4/10	—
Shortsword	M	S	1D6+1D2	6/8	—
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4+1D2	4/18	—
Longbow	H	—	1D8+1D2	4/7	150m

Combat Styles

Longbow 110%, Sword and Shield 110%.

Jagreen Lern

The leaders headed their army, banners of dark silk rustling above their helms. King Sarosto and his thin ally, aquiline Jagreen Lern in glowing scarlet armour that seemed to be red hot and may have been. On his helm was the Merman Crest of Pan Tang, for the claimed kinship with the sea-people.

— Stormbringer

Jagreen Lern is Pan Tang's latest theocrat – the head of both church and state – and is as close to true evil as it is possible to

get in the Young Kingdoms. Jagreen Lern is typical of Mabden humans; swarthy, with a stern complexion and jet-black, oiled hair. His thin face holds narrow, intense eyes filled with ambition, cunning, cruelty and hatred. Jagreen Lern rules through fear: fear of his own, dreadful nature and of the pacts he has forged with the major Dukes of Hell. He is totally a servant of Chaos and completely bent to its will. His naïve belief is that Pan Tang will emerge as the new imperial power administering the word of Chaos once Law has been vanquished. He is committed to achieving this goal irrespective of the consequences and quite prepared to use every imaginable atrocity as a result.

	Value
STR	13
CON	10
SIZ	14
INT	19
POW	11 (10)
DEX	13
CHA	12

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	1
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+7 (+16)

Jagreen Lern has 5 POW dedicated to Chardhros and 5 POW dedicated to Xiombarg.

Heroic Abilities

Loremaster

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	6/5
4–6	Left Leg	6/5
7–9	Abdomen	6/6
10–12	Chest	6/7
13–15	Right Arm	6/4
16–18	Left Arm	6/4
19–20	Head	6/5

Typical Armour: Full Plate inscribed with a Rune of Heat. –9 Armour Penalty

Passion: Hate Elric 80%, Hate Law 100%

Skills: Athletics 55%, Command 85%, Evade 77%, Influence 100%, Language (Common) 100%, Language (High Speech 75%), Language (Low Speech) 90%, Language (Mabden) 100%, Lore (Chaos) 100%, Lore (Million Spheres) 58%, Lore (Regional) 80%, Perception 84%, Resilience 84%, Survival 56%, Unarmed 50%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Pact (Chardros) 100%, Pact (Xiombarg) 100%

Runes: Alarm 75%, Chaos 75%, Cold 75%, Confinement 75%, Darkness 69%, Fire 56%, Heat 61%, Passing 75%, Protection 75%, Raising 32%, Silence 75%

Summoning Rituals: Demon of Combat 68%, Demon of Knowledge 75%, Demon of Protection 54%, Salamander 75%

Gifts and Compulsions:

Animal Familiar, Endurance, Horde, Poison Immunity, Slave

Morbid fascination with death. Paranoid. Jealous. Obsessed with creating a Chaotic empire.

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Great Axe	H	L	1D12+1D2	4/10*
Battle Axe	M	M	1D6+1+1D2	4/8*
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4+1D2	4/18

Combat Styles

Pan Tangian Axe Master 95%, Weapon and Shield.

Doctor Jest

The artist was tall and very thin, almost like a skeleton in his stained, white garments. His lips were thin, his eyes were slits, his fingers were thin, his hair was thin and the scalpel he held was thin, too, almost invisible save when it flashed in the light from the fire which erupted from a pit on the far side of the cavern. The artist was named Doctor Jest and the art he practiced was a performing art rather than a creative one (though he could argue otherwise with some conviction): the art of drawing secrets from those who kept them. Doctor Jest was the Chief Interrogator of Melniboné.

— *Elric of Melniboné*

A master torturer; a true artist of pain in all its forms, Doctor Jest is obliging, obsequious, methodical, practical and utterly oblivious to the screams and cries of his works in progress. Given time and tools (of which he has plenty), no secret stays hidden from Doctor Jest's inquiring scalpels and calm, quiet technique. He likes to share his art, describing what he is doing as he does it and, where possible, showing the subject the results. The lucky ones die quickly. The unlucky ones survive as permanent, insane exhibits of his work.

Moonglum

Lately, since Elric had near-permanent residence in his wife's city of Karlaak, Moonglum had continued to travel and had been in command of a small mercenary army patrolling the Southern marches of Pikarayd, driving back the barbarians inhabiting the hinterland of that country. He had immediately relinquished this command when Elric's news reached him and now, as the tiny ship bore them towards a hazy and peril-fraught destiny, savoured the familiar mixture of excitement and perturbation which he had felt a dozen times before when their escapades had led them into conflict with the unknown supernatural forces so closely linked with Elric's destiny. He had come to accept as a fact that his destiny was bound to Elric's and felt, in the deepest places of his being, that when the time came they would both die together in some mighty adventure.

— *Stormbringer*

Small, red-haired, ugly and blessed with courage, mischief and an innate good humour, Moonglum is the most loyal of all Elric's companions. He comes originally from Elwher, which he believes is the finest city in the world and was an experienced mercenary in his home lands where he fought in the battle of Eshmire Vale alongside Rackhir of

Phum. He is a pure adventurer at heart, forever restless, forever seeking good food, good wine and good entertainment. He is not above petty theft but neither is he villainous or selfish; merely adaptable and practical.

Moonglum frequently acts as Elric's conscience and, whilst it is not always acknowledged, Elric listens to, and accepts, the Eshmirian's worldly wisdom.

There is every chance of Moonglum being encountered before the sack of Imrryr as he is widely travelled in the Young Kingdoms. Following Elric's marriage to Zarozinia, Moonglum takes to wandering once more, eventually becoming a commander of the mercenaries in Pikarayd.

He is loyal to Elric until the very end of time, willingly offering his soul so give Elric enough energy to blow the Horn of Fate, the final act of ultimate friendship.



Doctor Jest

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	10	1-3	Right Leg	-/6
CON	18	4-6	Left Leg	-/6
SIZ	10	7-9	Abdomen	-/7
INT	19	10-12	Chest	-/8
POW	10 (9)	13-15	Right Arm	-/5
DEX	20	16-18	Left Arm	-/5
CHA	9	19-20	Head	-/6

Combat Actions	4
Damage Modifier	—
Magic Points	1
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+20

Typical Armour: None.

Passion: Love Inflicting Pain 100%

Heroic Abilities	
Loremaster,	Poison
Immunity	

Skills: Art (Mutilation) 175%, Command 50%, Courtesy 100%, Craft (Torture) 150%, Evade 64%, Healing 95%, Influence 99%, Insight 90%, Language (Common) 100%, Language (High Speech) 90%, Language (Low Speech) 110%, Lore (Imperial Court) 99%, Lore (Melniboné) 105%, Lore (Regional) 105%, Lore (Torture) 150%, Perception 95%, Persistence 90%, Resilience 84%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:
Pact (Balaan) 70%, 9 Dedicated POW

Rune of Purity 80%, Rune of Truth 90%, Rune of Man 80%, Rune of Woman 80%

Summoning Rituals: Demon of Knowledge 35%, Demon of Desire 40%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Scalpel	—	T	1D2	1/5
Pincers	S	T	1D3	2/6
Knives	S	S	1D3+1	2/6

Combat Styles

Torture 200%.

Moonlum

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	16	1-3	Right Leg	1/5
CON	16	4-6	Left Leg	1/5
SIZ	8	7-9	Abdomen	6/6
INT	13	10-12	Chest	6/7
POW	16	13-15	Right Arm	-/4
DEX	20	16-18	Left Arm	-/4
CHA	17	19-20	Head	-/5

Combat Actions 3 Typical Armour: Plate breastplate and leather treads (-3 Armour Penalty).

Damage Modifier —

Magic Points 16

Passion: Love Good Times 75%, Love Elric 90%

Movement 8m

Strike Rank +14 (+17)

Skills: Acrobatics 60%, Athletics 95%, Brawn 48%, Evade 98%, Evaluate 95%, First Aid 78%, Language (Common) 100%, Language (Low Speech) 15%, Language ('pande) 100%, Lore (Regional) 65%, Perception 90%, Resilience 89%, Ride 80%, Sing 75%, Sleight 90%, Stealth 90%, Streetwise 90%, Survival 90%, Unarmed 75%

Heroic Abilities

Heroic Aura, Duellist

Runes, Summonings, Magic:
None

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage A	P/HP
Longsword	M	L	1D8	6/12
Eshmirian Falchion	L/M	S	1D6+1	6/12
Shortsword	M	S	1D6	6/8
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

Combat Styles

Eshmirian Dual Weapons 120%.

Oone the Dreamthief

'Then I will tell you what I know and what I desire of you,' said Oone. She linked her free hand in his arm and led him further into the groves of palms and cypress. 'A dreamthief,' she began, 'does exactly what the title implies. We steal dreams. Originally our guild were true thieves. We learned the trick of entering the worlds of other peoples' dreams and stealing those which were most magnificent or exotic. Gradually, however, people began to call upon us to steal unwanted dreams-or rather the dreams which entrapped or plagued friends or relatives. So we

stole those. Frequently the dreams themselves were in no way harmful to another, only to the one who was in their power...'

— The Fortress of the Pearl

A master Dreamthief, Oone acts as Elric's tutor and guide in the ways of dreamtheft and into the dream realms in search of the Fortress of the Pearl. She is not a native of the Young Kingdoms but seems to visit the plane often enough.

She and Elric are lovers, briefly, and unbeknown to Elric, she bears his children: twins, a boy and a girl...

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	12	1-3	Right Leg	1/5
CON	14	4-6	Left Leg	1/5
SIZ	10	7-9	Abdomen	2/6
INT	18	10-12	Chest	2/7
POW	20	13-15	Right Arm	1/4
DEX	13	16-18	Left Arm	1/4
CHA	17	19-20	Head	-/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	—
Magic Points	20
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+14 (+16)

Heroic Abilities
Empathic Wound

Typical Armour: Leather (-2 Armour Penalty).

Passion: Love Elric 60%

Skills: Athletics 60%, Courtesy 80%, Dreamtheft 120%, Evade 75%, Insight 70%, Language (Common) 100%, Language ('pande) 75%, Lore (Dream Realms) 100%, Lore (Million Spheres) 70%, Perception 86%, Persistence 65%, Resilience 60%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:
Dreamtheft

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Rapier	M	L	1D8	5/8

Combat Styles

Rapier 75%.

Myshella, Empress of the Dawn

She was standing there, her black hair curling over her shoulders, her scarlet gown clinging to her body. Her lips curved in a smile of irony and her eyes regarded him steadily. She was the woman he had seen in the castle. The sleeping woman. Was this part of the dream?

'I am called Myshella. ...'

'Empress of the Dawn?'

She smiled again. 'Some have named me that. And others have called me the Dark Lady of Kaneloon.'



'Whom Aubec loved? Then you must have preserved your youth carefully, Lady Myshella.'

'No doing of mine. It is possible that I am immortal. I do not know. I know only one thing and that is that Time is a deception...'

— *The Vanishing Tower*

The last true Champion of Law, Myshella dwells far from humankind in the castles of Kaneloon and Ashaneloon, in the south of the Young Kingdoms. Immensely beautiful and courted by many over the millennia, she guards against the incursions of Chaos from the formless stuff that eddies at the edge of the world. Those who seek her are persuaded into her service by promises of their heart's desire, made real by Kaneloon's strange properties. Her lovers – heroes all – have been many and their devices and standards adorn the castle walls.

Myshella is doomed to be killed by Theleb K'aarna but before that time she may very likely reveal herself in dreams or other ways to attract potential agents to her service. As can be seen from the quotation, she can enter dreams almost like a Dreamthief, though she is not of their kind and is a most persuasive patron when the designs of Law are threatened.

Rackhir

'I am Rackhir,' said the man. 'Called the Red Archer for, as you see, I affect scarlet dress. It is a habit of the Warrior Priests of Phum to choose but a single colour to wear. It is the only loyalty to tradition I still possess.' He had on a scarlet jerkin, scarlet breeks, scarlet shoes and a scarlet cap with a scarlet feather in it. His bow was scarlet and the pommel of his sword glowed ruby-red. His face, which was aquiline and gaunt, as if carved from fleshless bone, was weather-beaten, and that was brown. He was tall and he was thin, but muscles rippled on his arms and torso. There was irony in his eyes and something of a smile upon his thin lips, though the face showed that it had been through much experience, little of it pleasant.

— *Elric of Melniboné*

A renegade from the Unknown East, Rackhir has turned his back on Chaos and seeks peace in Tanelorn – a city that he eventually finds and saves from the ravages of the beggar army raised by Narjhan. He is a past lover of scheming Sorana and a companion to Elric on several adventures, although he meets a tragic end by Stormbringer as he, Elric, Moonglum and Dyvim Storm, battle to reach Mordaga's hidden fortress.

As a Warrior Priest of Phum his patron Lord of Chaos was Vezhan, Lord of the Wings.

Myshella

	Value
STR	12
CON	20
SIZ	10
INT	21
POW	21
DEX	13
CHA	21

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	—
Magic Points	21
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+17

Heroic Abilities:
Empathic Wound, Heroic
Aura, Legendary Love
(Various Heroes), Tireless

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	–/6
4–6	Left Leg	–/6
7–9	Abdomen	–/7
10–12	Chest	–/8
13–15	Right Arm	–/5
16–18	Left Arm	–/5
19–20	Head	–/6

Typical Armour: None.

Passion: Love for Heroes 90%.

Skills: Command 95%, Evade 60%, Influence 100%, Insight 90%, Language (Common) 100%, Language (High Speech) 80%, Language (Low Speech) 100%, Lore (Law) 100%, Lore (Million Spheres) 90%, Perception 100%, Persistence 100%, Resilience 90%, Seduction 99%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Myshella has apotheosised and serves the White Lords directly.

Runes (all at 100%): Alarm, Confinement, Hearing, Law, Light, Man, Passing, Protection, Purity, Sight, Truth, Woman

Summon Oonai 90%

Gifts and Compulsions:

Automaton (Flying Bird, Golem), Eternal Life, Sanctuary (Castle Kaneloon), Youth

Chaste (save for those who can defeat the tests of Castle Kaneloon), Never surrender to Chaos, Guardian of Kaneloon, Always work to undermine the plans of Chaos, Remain in isolation, Strive to expand the edge of the world.

Combat Styles

None.

Rackhir

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	18	1–3	Right Leg	–/7
CON	18	4–6	Left Leg	–/7
SIZ	14	7–9	Abdomen	2/8
INT	15	10–12	Chest	2/9
POW	10 (7)	13–15	Right Arm	–/6
DEX	19	16–18	Left Arm	–/6
CHA	17	19–20	Head	1/7

Combat Actions 3

Damage Modifier +1D4

Magic Points 3

Movement 8m

Strike Rank +16 (+17)

Heroic Abilities

Arrow Cutting, Dead Eye,
Loremaster

Typical Armour: Leather jerkin and cap of deep scarlet (–1 Armour Penalty).

Passion: Hate Sorana 50%, Love Sorana 50%

Skills: Athletics 75%, Evade 90%, First Aid 92%, Language (Common) 90%, Language (High Speech) 73%, Language (Low Speech) 48%, Language (pande) 100%, Lore (Chaos) 80%, Lore (Million Spheres) 32%, Lore (Regional) 79%, Perception 87%, Persistence 92%, Resilience 80%, Tracking 64%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Pact (Vezhan) 79%: Rackhir has 7 POW dedicated to his Pact to Vazhan

Runes: Air 64%, Earth 61%, Fire 44%, Chaos 31%, Deception 42%

Gifts and Compulsion:

Endruance, Divine Training

Unable to find solace. Hunted by Chaos.

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Range
Longbow	H	—	1D8+1D4	4/7	175m
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D4	6/12	—

Combat Styles

Warrior Priest of Phum (Bows, Swords) 140%.

Count Smiorgan Baldhead

Meanwhile the man from the Purple Towns, unaided by sorcery, put axe and sword to good work and dealt with three more of his one-time comrades, exulting in work as if he had nursed a taste for it for some time. 'Yoi! But this is worthwhile slaughter!' cried the black bearded one.

— The Sailor on the Seas of Fate

Elric first meets Smiorgan Baldhead in the strange lands beyond the Crimson Gate. Betrayed by a crew of pirates, Smiorgan uses

cunning to win their confidence (and his survival) before assisting Elric in their slaughter. From then on, the two men are firm friends, up until Smiorgan's death in the aftermath of the sack of Imrryr.

Smiorgan is the owner of a fleet of merchant ships in Menii, the Purple Towns' capital. He has wandered the world and clams to have sailed to the Unknown East, navigating the feared Roaring Rocks. He accompanies Elric on several adventures, including the exploration of R'lin K'ren A'a and is presumably instrumental in gathering together the Sea Lords when Elric decides to take the ultimate revenge on Yyrkoon.

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	16	1–3	Right Leg	1/7
CON	16	4–6	Left Leg	1/7
SIZ	17	7–9	Abdomen	2/8
INT	14	10–12	Chest	2/9
POW	12	13–15	Right Arm	1/6
DEX	15	16–18	Left Arm	1/6
CHA	14	19–20	Head	2/7

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D4
Magic Points	12
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+13 (+15)

Heroic Abilities
Battle Fury

Typical Armour: Leather and a metal skullcap (–2 Armour Penalty).

Passion: Love Purple Towns 80%

Skills: Athletics 61%, Evade 86%, Influence 95%, Language (Common) 100%, Language ('pande) 15%, Lore (Regional) 77%, Lore (Sea) 115%, Perception 70%, Persistence 62%, Resilience 74%, Shiphandling 140%, Stealth 48%, Survival 65%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:
None

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Battle Axe	M	M	1D6+1+1D4	4/8
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D4	6/12

Combat Styles

Purple Towns Axe and Sword 95%.

Stormbringer and Mournblade

It was heavy, yet perfectly balanced, a two-handed broadsword of prodigious size, with its wide crosspiece and its blade smooth and broad, stretching for over five feet from the hilt. Near the hilt, mystic runes were engraved and even Elric did not know what they fully signified. 'Again I must make use of you, Stormbringer,' he said as he buckled the sheath about his waist, 'and I must conclude that we are too closely linked now for less than death to separate us.'

— Stormbringer

Stormbringer and Mournblade are more than just swords. They are more than just demon swords; they are, in fact, agents of fate in the same way the Cosmic Balance is an arbiter of it. Both swords, brother and sister, are certainly sentient and whilst forged to destroy a race of Gods, they are, perhaps, closer to being gods themselves.

These are unique weapons and only a Melnibonéan of the royal line can wield them. They are treacherous, vampiric and parasitic, draining the souls of those they kill and passing the power to the wielder who quickly grows dependent on the surging strength of the Black Blade. Sapient souls are preferred and the souls of loved ones and companions the sweetest tasting of all.

Both swords are capable of independent action. This is usually confined to stirrings and shiftings, low moans and rumbles. But in the midst of carnage, drunk on souls, they scream with an unearthly delight and guide the hand of the user to even greater carnage.

Standard *RuneQuest* weapon statistics are redundant for Stormbringer and Mournblade. Use these special rules instead – but note that only Melnibonéans can use these weapons. Normal mortals attempting to do so are likely to find themselves as the victims. For, as Stormbringer utters, *'I was a thousand times more evil than thou!'*

- The runeswords are not forged of earthly metals, although they have the appearance of black iron. Neither sword can be damaged or broken by any mortal force and are so hard that they automatically damage any weapon which tries to parry them.
- Although heavy, neither weapon adds to fatigue.
- Both swords increase the Combat Actions of the wielder by 3.

- Each sword adds 100% to the Combat Skill of the wielder.
- Every hit inflicts 3D8 points of damage.
- Every hit that penetrates armour drains 1D100 POW from *sapient* creatures.
- Every 10 points of POW drained raises the STR *and* CON of the wielder by one point.
- The blades flicker with a black radiance and shriek in battle. Witnessing this for the first time costs 1D8 Insanity points.
- The swords are capable of flight, manoeuvring of their own freewill at a speed of 4m per round.
- The swords do not normally fight on their own but can turn in the hand of the wielder and make a single attack of their own volition.
- At any time in a battle, Stormbringer and Mournblade will be aware of the wielder's companions and loved ones. At an opportune moment the blade will lunge at a companion, aiming to take their soul. The wielder must make an Athletics (Brute Force) test to stay the Black Blade's attempt.

Ultimately, neither Stormbringer nor Mournblade should ever fall into the hands of Adventurers. These are unique and immensely powerful weapons that would have an enormous impact on any campaign.

Theleb K'aarna

Theleb K'aarna tittered. It was an obscene sound, coming as it did from the throat of a sorcerer of no mean skill. It did not fit with his sombre, black-bearded countenance, his tall, scarlet-robbed frame. It was not a sound suited to one of his extreme wisdom.

— The Bane of the Black Sword

The love-sick and jealous sorcerer of Pan Tang is Elric's sworn enemy for many reasons. In the course of his career he tries to kill Elric and Moonglum numerous times, besieges Kaneloon, enchants Myshella, attacks Tanelorn and his actions result in the deaths of both the Empress of the Dawn and Elric's kinsman, Dyvim Tvar. Pushing the boundaries of his knowledge just too far, Theleb K'aarna eventually goes completely insane, having used the last of his power and sanity to fuel his spells.

Theleb K'aarna is truly evil. Vain, selfish and desperate for power at any cost, he is a highly skilled sorcerer – almost Elric's match – with numerous pacts and bargains made with all sorts of supernatural beings.

Theleb Kaarna

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	12	1-3	Right Leg	-/6
CON	11	4-6	Left Leg	-/6
SIZ	16	7-9	Abdomen	-/7
INT	21	10-12	Chest	-/8
POW	11 (10)	13-15	Right Arm	-/5
DEX	12	16-18	Left Arm	-/5
CHA	14	19-20	Head	-/6

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1D6
Magic Points	1
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+17

Typical Armour: None.

Passion: Hate Elric 100%, Love Yishana 110%

Skills: Culture (Pan Tang) 80%, Evade 44%, Influence 75%, Language (Common) 100%, Language (High Speech) 90%, Language (Low Speech 54%), Language (Mabden) 100%, Lore (Chaos) 99%, Lore (Million Spheres) 78%, Lore (Pan Tang) 100%, Lore (Regional) 63%, Perception 74%, Persistence 65%, Resilience 66%, Stealth 44%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Pact (Chaos) 80%. 10 POW is dedicated to this Pact.

Runes: Alarm, Chaos 90%, Cold 69%, Confinement 63%, Darkness 80%, Earth 73%, Enhancement (STR) 78%, Fire 46%, Leeching 66%, Man 90%, Passing 74%, Protection 81%, Raising 21%, Silence 68%, Sleep 90%, Transfer 57%, Woman 87%

Command 84%, Summoning Rituals: Demon of Combat 81%, Demon of Protection 89%, Salamander 75%; Summon Elenoin 76%, Summon Quaolnargn 77%

Gifts and Compulsions:

Enchantment (Scrying Mirror), Elemental, Eternal Life, Horde, Slave (Chaotic Butterfly)

Insanely jealous, Consumed by Revenge, Obsessed with Conquest, Egomaniac, Masochistic Lover

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

Combat Styles

Dagger 75%.

Queen Yishana

Her long hair was black and shone around her head. Her breasts were large and her hips broader than Elric remembered. 'Good morning, wolf,' said she with a half-smile that was at once sardonic and provocative. 'My scouts reported that you were riding with your countrymen. This is pleasant. Have you forsaken your new wife to return to subtler pleasures?'

'No,' he said. 'Good morning, Yishana. You do not change. I've half a suspicion that Theleb K'aarna gave you a draught of the waters of Eternal Life before I killed him.'

'Perhaps he did. How goes your marriage?'

— Stormbringer



Yishana is a capricious and scheming woman who enjoys the attentions of powerful men and their subsequent manipulation through her considerable charms. She is the lover to both Elric and Theleb K'aarna, and has doubtless taken many previous lovers only to discard them later when bored or their usefulness has expired.

Yishana fights alongside Elric at the final battle for the world, struggling against the advancing forces of Pan Tang, aided by the mercenaries of Melniboné and the Knights of Shazar. For all her scheming she is resourceful, brave and genuinely cares for her country.

Whether or not she is possessed of eternal youth is a rumour but certainly Theleb K'aarna had such things in his command, so there may be some truth in it.

Prince Yyrkoon

His dark features, at once handsome and saturnine, are framed by long black hair, waved and oiled, and his expression, as ever, is sardonic while his bearing is arrogant. The heavy brocade cloak swings this way and that, striking other dancers with some force. He wears it almost as if it is armour or, perhaps, a weapon. Amongst many of the courtiers there is more than a little respect for Prince Yyrkoon. Few resent his arrogance and those who do keep silent, for Yyrkoon is known to be a considerable sorcerer himself. Also his behaviour is what the court expects and welcomes in a Melnibonéan noble; it is what they would welcome in their emperor.

— Elric of Melniboné

Usurper prince of the Ruby Throne, Yyrkoon represents the Bright Empire's dark heart; its cruelty and desire to dominate. Maddened by Elric's rule and his love for Cymoril, Yyrkoon is driven to ever greater lengths to depose his cousin. He opposes him via the dream couches, attempting to manipulate the myths of Melniboné so Elric might die; he engineers Elric's betrayal in a battle against pirates. In later atrocities he robs men of their memories and contests Elric for the possession of the Black Blades, Stormbringer and Mournblade. His final evil is to seize the throne while Elric wanders the Young Kingdoms and imprison Cymoril in a sorcerous slumber – an act that provokes Elric to return with the Sea Lords and take the most dreadful revenge.

As a power-hungry schemer Yyrkoon might be encountered anywhere in the Young Kingdoms, although he never disguises his disdain for lesser mortals. For a while he hides in Dhoz-Kam, hatching plots and would no doubt seek mercenaries to assist in his vile plans.

In the end, Yyrkoon is driven mad by his incestuous desires, his pacts with Chaos and his inability to fully control Mournblade's power. Elric kills him while Imrryr burns but the price of Yyrkoon's death is the heaviest any man could ever pay.

Queen Yishana

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	11	1-3	Right Leg	-/5
CON	12	4-6	Left Leg	-/5
SIZ	11	7-9	Abdomen	-/6
INT	16	10-12	Chest	-/7
POW	14	13-15	Right Arm	-/4
DEX	14	16-18	Left Arm	-/4
CHA	17	19-20	Head	-/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	—
Magic Points	14
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+15

Typical Armour: None.

Passion: Despise Theleb K'aarna 80%, Love Elric 60%

Skills: Athletics 60%, Courtesy 75%, Culture (Jharkor) 100%, Evade 40%, Influence 100%, Language (Common) 100%, Lore (Law) 78%, Perception 100%, Persistence 64%, Resilience 60%, Seduction 92%

Runes, Summonings, Magic: None

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Rapier	M	L	1D8	5/8
Dagger	S	S	1D4+1	6/8

Combat Styles

Noble House (Twin Blades) 70%.

Prince Yyrkoon

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	17	1-3	Right Leg	7/7
CON	18	4-6	Left Leg	7/7
SIZ	16	7-9	Abdomen	7/8
INT	21	10-12	Chest	7/9
POW	8 (12)	13-15	Right Arm	7/6
DEX	16	16-18	Left Arm	7/6
CHA	17	19-20	Head	7/7

Combat Actions	4
Damage Modifier	+1D4
Magic Points	8
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+9 (+19)

Heroic Abilities
Battle Fury, Loremaster

Typical Armour: Melnibonéan Plate (-10 Armour Penalty).

Passion: Hate Elric 90%, Love Cymoril 90%

Skills: Athletics 72%, Command 100%, Courtesy 94%, Evade 101%, Evaluate 80%, Influence 110%, Language (Common) 110%, Language (High Speech) 110%, Language (Low Speech) 130%, Lore (Beast Lords) 95%, Lore (Chaos) 108%, Lore (Elements) 102%, Lore (Imperial Court) 150%, Lore (Melniboné) 110%, Lore (Regional) 103%, Perception 93%, Persistence 89%, Resilience 90% (60)%, Ride (Horse) 114%, Shiphandling 80%, Throwing 90%, Unarmed 75%, Witch Sight 80%

Runes, Summonings, Magic:

Yyrkoon has, like Elric, a variety of Pacts by dint of his station. His personal pact is Mabelode 90%, with 12 POW dedicated to it.

Yyrkoon knows all runes at 90%.

Summoning Rituals: all elementals and demon types at 95%.

Gifts and Compulsions:

Mournblade

Insanely jealous of Elric and Cymoril, Obsessive lust for power, Obsessive desire to re-conquer the Young Kingdoms

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	1D8+1D4	4/10
Greatsword	H	L	2D8+1D4	6/12
Kite Shield	H	S	1D4+1D4	4/18

These weapons preclude Mournblade, which has its own Characteristics.

Combat Styles

Noble House 100%, Dragon Lord 100%, Melnibonéan Warrior 110%.

GAMES MASTERS' CHAPTER



The Elric stories have a distinct atmosphere and style that sets them apart from much of other fantasy literature. Over the 40 or more years that Michael Moorcock has been telling Elric's story, that atmosphere and style has changed but at its core are certain themes and concepts that remain constant.

This chapter is intended to help Games Masters understand the unique style, atmosphere and themes found in the *Elric* saga and to bring them into *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns.

REVERSING TRADITIONAL FANTASY THEMES

Throughout the *Elric* saga, the traditional tropes of epic fantasy are challenged and reversed. Elric's world was not created by a benevolent god or gods, it was forged by Chaos as an act of creativity and has had to struggle to stave-off destruction ever since. The Young Kingdoms is not a sweeping world accurately mapped and described; its details sometimes change, contradict each other and merge together.

Elric himself reverses the traditional concept of a hero. He is not the saviour of his kingdom but its destroyer; he does not rescue his lover but causes her death; Elric's companions are doomed to be killed by his hand, not saved by it; he is not the simple hero who outwits the evil sorcerer but is a complex, tortured soul who *is* the mighty sorcerer. And, of course, no one in the *Elric* saga lives 'happily ever after'. All are doomed to death at Elric's hand in one way or another.

So, how might the traditional fantasy themes be reversed for *Elric of Melniboné* Adventurers? Here are some examples.

- ***The rejection of material wealth.*** Many characters appearing in the *Elric* saga are wanderers who care little for money, jewels, property or the material trappings of everyday life. They are engaged in personal quests of self-fulfilment or of an

ideological nature. Payment, treasure and vast rewards mean little; information and other ways of achieving these personal, ideological goals are far more important.

- ***Concepts of Good and Evil.*** Characters in the saga, especially Elric's companions, are not necessarily concerned with the prevalence of good over evil. More often than not, the barriers between the two are blurred to the point of irrelevance. Neither Law nor Chaos should be viewed in terms of good or evil; both powers have their merits and flaws. Adventurers seek to understand how they can avail themselves of the former whilst steering clear of the latter.
- ***Impermanence of Power.*** Power over others is a common theme in fantasy stories and Moorcock addresses it on many levels but at the heart of it all is the message that true power comes from self-belief and freewill. Those who struggle to exert power over others commonly find it being taken away from them – or challenged, at the very least. Adventurers who choose to make the pursuit of power, whatever form it takes, should find many obstacles to obtaining it but more importantly, keeping it. Adventurers who choose a path of self-realisation and belief should find their road easier to navigate and the rewards more fulfilling.
- ***Love of Life.*** The Young Kingdoms is a brutal world with deep passions and especially a love of life and all it has to offer. Death comes easily at the point of a sword or shaft of an arrow, therefore the celebration of life should form a core part of the tone of any *Elric* campaign, even though personal tragedy and violence often intercede.

MYTHIC RESONANCE

Despite overturning the clichés of traditional fantasy, Michael Moorcock is always conscious of the power of myth; the stories, legends, heroes and villains that help explain the world and make sense of seemingly irrational happenings. The Young Kingdoms is a mythic world, shaped by heroic actions, empires and wars of mythic proportions. Myths in the Young Kingdoms are often

recent events, such as Earl Aubec's creation of new lands out of Chaos. Elric himself is surrounded by myth: his own, as the last of a dead race; and his actions, sorcerer, murderer, kinslayer and a stealer of souls. At times he seems to relish his myth; at others to abhor it. As the Elric saga matures, myth plays an increasingly important role, shaping the outlook of its characters and the actions they undertake. The books *The Fortress of the Pearl* and *The Skrayling Tree* take place almost exclusively in mythic realms; *The Dreamthief's Daughter* combines familiar myths of our own (The Pied Piper, for example) with the events of the Second World War, to shape Elric's own myth and actions. And the four-issue comic series, *The Making of a Sorcerer*, takes place in four, separate, DreamQuest myths.

Young Kingdoms Adventurers should walk in Elric's footsteps, aware that they are makers of myth and shaped by them. Quests, heroism, betrayal, tragedy, the struggle of cosmic forces and supernatural intelligences – all these components can be used to create and sustain a mythic resonance in *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns.

THE ETERNAL CHAMPION

The concept of the Eternal Champion is consistent throughout most of Moorcock's writing. The Champion is characterised in several ways: he usually bears a black sword that is both a benefit and a curse; he is a pawn of higher powers that he cannot comprehend; his purpose, although it not always clear or evident, is to preserve the Cosmic Balance; he is plagued by visions and dreams of his other incarnations and, on occasion, comes face-to-face with them, although only one, Erekosë, truly understands the nature of all their fates. In several instances the Champion is the last of his race, as is almost the case with Elric.

Common people are constantly drawn into the Eternal Champion's schemes, for good or ill and quite often the Champion's agenda is defined to some extent by the allies he has or chooses. There is no reason why Young Kingdoms Adventurers should not meet and either aid or accompany Elric: he is at large in the world and travels much of it. However, any dealings with the Eternal Champion must be carefully managed by Games Masters if game balance and credibility is to be sustained.

And, just as there is an Eternal Champion, so too is there an Eternal Companion. The role of the Eternal Companion is to travel with the Champion and provide aid and advice at crucial times. Sometimes the Companion is a long-term friend, like Moonglum or Jhary-a-Conel and sometimes he is a fleeting presence; in all cases though, the Companion acts as a conscience, a brake and a counterpoint to the Champion's own struggle. The Companion provides alternative explanations, challenges the Champion's actions and offers the Champion a more human perspective on

the events he is engaged in. The Eternal Companion is a far easier tool for the Games Master to use to involve Adventurers in the stories of the Champion. Moonglum, for instance, spends a great deal of time wandering in the Young Kingdoms without Elric, adventuring in his own right, and Jhary-a-Conel, an incarnation of the Companion who is aware that he is adrift in the Multiverse, can be used to offer direct assistance to Adventurers, or perhaps act as their patron, engaging them in stories running parallel with Elric's, which may prove to be of vital importance to the Young Kingdoms' fate. The Eternal Companion should be used sparingly but his presence as a Non-Player Character in an *Elric of Melniboné* campaign is a much easier – and safer – way of engaging the Adventurers in the epic struggle without directly involving Elric.

Then, of course, there is the Eternal Enemy. Again the Enemy takes many, many forms. He is Yyrkoon and Theleb K'aarna; he is also Prince Gaynor the Damned, a constant torment for Elric in the later stories of the *Elric* saga. The role of the Enemy is to establish the circumstances that cause the Champion to act. The Enemy accomplishes this in many ways, not all of them directed at the Champion. The Eternal Enemy constantly threatens and challenges the work of the Cosmic Balance and may be aligned with any of the Higher Powers. He uses, abuses and discards others without a care and is, as a consequence, doomed to be alone. He desires great personal power and is prepared to commit *any* act to obtain it. Furthermore, his soul has been bargained *completely* in return for abilities that will enable him to realise his dream. Whilst he shares many characteristics with the Champion, the key difference between them is the power of free will. The Enemy's soul is always owned completely by another power and he is compelled to fulfil its agenda. The Enemy can know no redemption or salvation. Peace and contentment are denied to him. As a consequence he has no pity or compassion for any other living thing.

There is every reason to involve the Eternal Enemy in *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns. His schemes are far-reaching and involve many unwitting victims and wilful accomplices. They challenge the very nature of the Multiverse and assault the Cosmic Balance at every opportunity. All symbols of harmony and peace are challenged and reviled. The Adventurers may therefore find themselves party to the schemes of the Eternal Enemy, either as his unwitting agents or victims. They might never see the Eternal Enemy but they will no doubt come into contact with those who act on his behalf. The Eternal Enemy is, therefore, the Grand Arch Villain, with plans of conquest and destruction, hate and obsession. As a direct presence he should, again, be used sparingly; not all the ills of the Young Kingdoms are the result of the Eternal Enemy's actions. But when an epic, world-saving quest beckons, the chances are that, somewhere, deep behind the scenes, the Eternal Enemy in one of his many incarnations, lurks, scheming and plotting the downfall of reality or the symbols of the Cosmic Balance.

COSMIC STRUGGLE

'Know you not that two forces govern the world fighting an eternal battle?' Elric replied: 'Law and Chaos. The upholders of Chaos state that in such a world as they rule, all things are possible. Opponents of Chaos--those who ally themselves with the forces of Law--say that without Law nothing material is possible.'

'Some stand apart, believing that a balance between the two is the proper state of things, but we cannot. We have become embroiled in a dispute between the two forces. The Book is valuable to either faction, obviously, and I could guess that the minions of Entropy are worried what power we might release if we obtain this Book. Law and Chaos rarely interfere directly in Men's lives--that is why we have not been fully aware of their presence. Now perhaps, I will discover at last the answer to the one question which concerns me--does an ultimate force rule over the opposing factions of Law and Chaos?'

— *While the Gods Laugh*

At the heart of the *Elric* stories is the eternal struggle between Law and Chaos. Law represents absolute structure, discipline and control, whereas Chaos is unfettered creation, constant change and random, wilful, disorder. Singularly, and in dominance, neither is a force for good. The superiority of either leads to stagnation and destruction. The struggle is twofold: the dominance of Law over Chaos and vice-versa; and the struggle of the Multiverse and its agents to maintain equilibrium between the two – the Cosmic Balance. Where the forces are in equilibrium, life prospers and grows; the world is stable and the future, whilst always uncertain, is safeguarded. Where Law rules, society reaches a state of order so choking that growth is impossible and individuality meaningless. Where Chaos dominates, nothing remains stable, everything is mutable, individuals destroy each other with selfish abandon and eventually a seething, boiling state of perpetual war and mutation results – as happens towards the end of the Young Kingdoms.

The Cosmic Balance is less about harmony and more about realising each manifestation of Law and Chaos in its rightful place and to its rightful degree. Law and Chaos are not good or evil; they are simply expressions of states of existence. Good and evil is wrought by humans, who choose to employ one or both forces for selfish, violent ends.

PERSONAL TRAGEDY AND DOOM

Elric's story is one of tragedy and unavoidable doom. The albino seeks peace and meaning in his life but ultimately has no control over it because of his relationships with both Chaos and his sword, Stormbringer. Every attempt to find solace is doomed to be short lived at best. His intentions to save or salvage, always result in death and destruction. When, finally, he ushers-in our

own world by blowing the Horn of Fate, he only has strength to do so through Moonglum's sacrifice to Stormbringer, followed swiftly by Elric's own death at the hands of the runesword. When equilibrium is achieved, the Champion is forbidden to experience it and nowhere is this tragedy more poignant than in Elric's final minutes in the new world he has brought about and Stormbringer's absolute betrayal.

Bringing something of Elric's doom to Young Kingdoms Adventurers need not be seen as negative or pessimistic. Most of the characters encountered in the saga are driven by some, singular purpose, be it revenge, loss, love, money or simply the quest for peace. Good storytelling mixes both good fortune and tragedy and elements of both should form part of the Adventurers' personal stories and motivations. The characters in the saga are more than simple ciphers; they are, or become, fully-rounded individuals acting as a foil to Elric's central dilemma but each sharing a part of it in some way. Sweeping the Adventurers into the schemes of the Cosmic Balance, or Law and Chaos, is an excellent way to introduce tragedy and fate and echo the themes persistent in Moorcock's writing.

The Passions and Compulsions found in the rules are designed specifically to help drive these themes of Personal Tragedy and Doom for *Elric of Melniboné* Adventurers. Of course, no one wants to see every Adventurer burdened by an unbearable fate, so Passions, Compulsions and so forth should be used sparingly and at the most opportune moments, rather than as the absolute key-driver for each and every Adventurer. Even Elric is, in some stories, free of his own burdens and allowed to function on a more-or-less trouble-free level.

COMPANIONSHIP AND BETRAYAL

Elric rarely wanders alone. Despite the tendency for his companions to die, usually at Stormbringer's whim, he is, for the most part, accompanied by a wide variety of loyal friends who provide a foil to the albino's melancholia. Friendship is a constant, optimistic thread throughout the saga; whether in Moonglum's cockiness and good humour, Rackhir's pragmatism, Wheldrake's simple desire to return to Putney or Smiorgan's brash camaraderie. Elric continually forms groups of adventurers who assist him in whatever quest he is doomed to endure. The bonds shared are deep, even when the liaison is fleeting. It seems common in the Young Kingdoms for adventurers to group together in pursuit of either a shared goal or individual ones, each contributing to the good of the whole.

But betrayal is never far away. Often it is unwitting and unavoidable. Elric does not intend for the Sea Lords who trust him to lead them to Imrryr to come face-to-face with dragon venom but events conspire against them. The conspiracy of the fates and higher powers, and how this betrays even the strongest

friendships, is a common theme. This need not be betrayal within the group; quite often it is brought about by a recurring arch-enemy, such as Theleb K'aarna or Prince Gaynor the Damned. A good *Elric of Melniboné* campaign should include several strong, well-defined villains and a healthy dose of betrayal from time-to-time.

CRAFTING AN ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ CAMPAIGN

There is no reason why a campaign should follow the *Elric* saga's events. Having the Adventurers die along with the world does not have to be the ultimate fate of a campaign. Games Masters and players may not always enjoy such a conclusion.

Playing *Elric of Melniboné* allows the direction of the *Elric* saga to be reconfigured or even retold completely. For example, instead of Chaos destroying the world, the campaign might climax with Chaos defeated but only at great cost. A campaign could be set years before Elric comes to the throne, giving the Games Master plenty of time to build the campaign up to a vivid climax. In such a campaign the Adventurers may still die as the world does but only after a long life, be it happy or ruined, bitter, tragic or sorrowful. Or you could allow the Adventurers to flee to an alternate Young Kingdoms where Law or the Balance triumphs, for in the Multiverse there are endless worlds and endless possibilities. The best campaign, perhaps, would be to have the Adventurers discover Tanelorn after great tribulation and, retired from the campaign, ride out at the world's end with all its madness, to go forth into the brave new world Elric summons into existence with the Horn of Fate.

If the campaign is to end as the Young Kingdoms ends, with Chaos conquering and dissolving the world, it is going to be a long time coming, which means that the campaign might possibly last for years. Throughout that long story arc is the space for many long tales to be told, an individual, but intertwined, campaign for each of the Adventurers.

Adventurer-Driven Plots

In Adventurer-driven campaigns the Games Master develops plots out of the Adventurers' backgrounds and actions. Adventurer-based background stories can be played out over many years. Try not to rush the story. Hints and revelations for the Adventurer can be scattered out among a collection of adventures and only slowly merge into the main story or sequence of stories. Frequent or constant revelations mean their impact will be lessened. Plot ideas for Adventurer-driven scenarios often come when the player first generates his Adventurer and players should try to generate backgrounds allowing the Games Master plenty of leeway where plot ideas are concerned. Games Masters should ideally always participate in an Adventurer's creation in order to assist with, and take secret notes on, possible plot seeds.

An example of an Adventurer-driven plot is the lost or amnesiac Adventurer whose only possession, when first starting out, is a ring bearing a strange heraldic device or insignia. After many adventures they come across an ornate key bearing that very same sign. The key brings sporadic dreams of a curious door in an unknown city. One day, years later, the Adventurer sees that door. It is unlocked by the key. What lies behind it, (another world where the Adventurer is king? Stairs leading to a crypt and forgotten treasures?) What are its implications (plots within the alien court and invasion by another nation? a dread curse that slays all those dear to him?). Theft or loss of either key or ring could form additional adventures. Such side-plots can often be used to tie in with another Adventurer's background scenarios.

Epic Elric Sagas

Adventurers' stories should be epic in scope, just as the *Elric* Saga itself. Epic stories are ones in which:

- The Adventurers battle armies and win (or overturn) kingdoms.
- Overthrow tyranny, be it Law or Chaos; rule wisely and well, until their beloved consort, (who has been built up from the start of the campaign and is a trusted, and much-loved Non-Player Character) takes a secret lover, (perhaps with good reason, if the Adventurer were forever disappearing for months on end) plots to kill the Adventurer and he is forced to execute or exile her.
- The Adventurer comes from a humble background, travelling the world in his youth with a pack of rough and ready Adventurers; gradually develops an allegiance to one power or another; eventually rising to rule whatever church they are faithful to, only to discover, with the help of his old friends, that the church he so loved is riddled with corruption and treachery. Does he destroy the institution he once revered? Set up a rival church? Turn his back upon the church to live as a hermit?
- The Adventurer becomes a great and famous foe of Pan Tang. As a youth he defends his village from a pirate attack; goes on to take a Pan Tangian galley while fishing at sea; defeats a minor Demon Isle fleet and is immortalised in a popular ballad, only to face eventual capture and slavery upon Pan Tang; there discovering the only true love of the Adventurer's life and tragically loosing her to sharks or Pan Tangians in the final, dramatic escape from Hwamgaarl.
- The Adventurer gains love at bitter cost, perhaps the death of a close friend or family member (the King's soldiers discover that the Adventurer's old father sheltered the outlaw-princess he loved and kill her; a favourite brother is slain helping the Adventurer rescue a farming community plagued by raids from a gang of murderous bullies through some clumsiness of the Adventurer) or even the death of a whole tribe, village, city or nation.

Moorcock's works tend to grand scenes and the cataclysmic. *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns should follow in this tradition.

From Plot Threads to Tapestries

Interweaving the separate stories with the deeds of the *Elric* saga itself, can be a challenge. Adventurer-driven plots can be easily linked: the killer of one Adventurer's parents plays some despicable role in the betrayal of another to enemy forces; one Adventurer's sorcerous foe turns out to possess a grimoire giving clues to another Adventurer's amnesiac past. Take care to think such links through before introducing them. Often it can be wise to create a plot lynch-pin even before the Adventurers are created. Telling the players that they will all be family members, or from the same nation or city, can be the point on which the plots hang. It is better to have only a few, strong and believable plot-links, rather than too many that are too trite.

Events from the saga can be added to campaigns with little difficulty. This book notes pertinent historical details as they unfold through the campaign years. They are written in such a way that Game Masters can base scenarios and campaigns incorporating the *Elric* saga into play.

Alternatively, you may find brief references in the books inspiring whole campaigns. A Games Master could use the Sack of Imrryr, in which almost everybody dies save Elric and his adopted crew, as the devastating finale to a long chronicle involving pirates, Straasha and the sea as its theme. Another Games Master might want to set an entire campaign in the Weeping Waste, with the Adventurers superstitious, spiritually aware tribesmen. Virtually anything is possible in the Young Kingdoms.

What About Elric?

Elric's doom should cast its shadow across the Adventurers' lives from time-to-time but it is wise not to allow the Adventurers to become too close to the crimson-eyed albino, nor to allow Elric, as a character, to dominate the game. Remember that the Adventurers are the heroes, not Elric himself. Adventurers should be given plenty of opportunity to learn about Elric and develop their own opinions of him as a character in a game, as opposed to a character in a book which has entertained the player, before they meet him. Gossip concerning Elric constantly circulates through the Young Kingdoms and has since his coronation. The Adventurers will have heard ballads, rumours, and outrageous lies long before they finally encounter the proud Prince of Ruins himself.

Sooner or later however, the Games Master is sure to want to introduce Elric directly to the campaign. He is, after all, the character who this game is named after. When Elric finally appears ensure that you do not cheapen the air of menace and mystery that surrounds the tragic hero. A meeting with Elric will have more impact if it occurs, for example, as part of a pivotal or climactic moment in the campaign, rather than as a random

encounter. No matter when an encounter with Elric occurs, the event should always be dramatic and memorable. In some campaigns the Adventurers might only hear of Elric from other travellers, or they may experience second-hand the battles and tragedies which surround the albino. Passing through a city such as Bakshaan in Elric's wake is a good way of illustrating his effect upon the Young Kingdoms. It also allows the Adventurers to encounter Elric's destiny without the risk of having to meet him personally. Stormbringer, after all, is notoriously hungry for souls; even brief acquaintances of Elric tend to have regrettably short lives.

FROM PLANE TO SHINING PLANE

For heroes, travel between the planes of existence is commonplace and in countless ways. The devices used to move between planes need not – indeed should not – be explained: planar gates, mysterious rings, shared dreams, the Black Ship or even simply turning a corner and finding oneself in a completely different realm. The Adventurers are heroes and the higher powers, be they Law, Chaos or the Cosmic Balance, always finds a use for them elsewhere in the Multiverse. Some suggestions for plane-shifting mechanisms are offered in this chapter.

However, if Adventurers are to travel the Multiverse, the conceit should be controlled and used sparingly. Moving from plane-to-plane is usually only possible when the Cosmic Balance decrees it and frequent shifts to parallel realms will quickly pale. The Young Kingdoms has plenty of opportunities for adventure and has imminent perils of its own. Moving from one plane to another should be an occasional diversion and a treat; not a regular commute.

- **Dreams.** The Adventurers share a common dream in which they undertake a form of DreamQuest. This may be at the behest of a Dreamthief or directed by the higher powers. As discussed in the Magic and Sorcery chapter, DreamQuests need not obey the laws of logic dominating the worlds and there the Adventurers might find that they are more powerful, or even weaker, versions of themselves. Or perhaps, after the sacking of Imrryr, a dream couch comes onto the market. Dream couches seem to possess similar abilities to those of Dreamthieves, allowing the sleeper to project into a dream realm. Melniboné used them to train its emperors by making them re-enact the deeds and myths of their forefathers, so the types of dreams the couches produce are different to natural dream states than the dream realms frequented by Dreamthieves. Users of a dream couch should find themselves participating in the mythical and semi-mythical events of the world's past, such as assisting Earl Aubec to carve new worlds from Chaos or to assist the ancient heroes Bistrana, queen of the Shazaar, Thokor of the Jharks and Ralyn of the Dhars in their struggles against the emergent Bright Empire. Perhaps the

Adventurers' DreamQuests have waking-world outcomes, helping to shape the fate of the Young Kingdoms, or change it altogether.

- ***Ships.*** The Black Ship sails the Multiverse, piloted by its blind captain and mute helmsman, but is this the only form the ship takes? On some occasions it might be a wagon or carriage controlled by female versions of the captain and steersman. On others the same people might be posing as beggars of Nadsokor who, for a fee, claim to be able to guide Adventurers to a particular treasure or locale (once they have completed the otherworld task, of course).
- ***Innate Ability.*** Many individuals demonstrate the ability to move through the planes at will. Dreamthieves are one example but there are others and certain Adventurers might demonstrate this ability either as a Gift/Compulsion as part of a Pact, or as something they are simply born with. The ability might only allow the Adventurer to shift to one particular plane, or it might be involuntary. Quite often certain conditions within the Multiverse have to be right for plane shifts to occur but as the Multiverse is infinite, the configuration of various spheres and realms happens continually, so the right conditions need never be far away. How this innate ability manifests needs to be carefully considered by the Games Master; even Melnibonéans do not regularly display such talents. Furthermore, the ability to shift to another plane should never be demanded by a player. It is not a *right* and the Games Master is always the final word on such matters.
- ***The Will of the Gods.*** The gods have many agendas and quite often they are concerned with events beyond the Young Kingdoms. The Sword Rulers, for instance, occupy a very different hierarchy of power in the Fifteen Planes of Corum's world than they do in that of the Young Kingdoms. Faithful servants and cult members may be called upon – or even compelled – to act on the god's behalf in some other realm. This is a keen opportunity to reveal something of the true nature of the Cosmic Struggle that may lead to the Adventurers questioning their faith. Even the Lords of Law, who portray themselves in the Young Kingdoms as the White Lords, may prove to be clothed in shades of grey in other realms, where Chaos is actually the tempering and moderate force. Acting on the fiat of a god should be reserved for those who have attained at least Initiate status within the cult; gods seek faithful and capable people and lay worshippers are likely to be ignored completely.
- ***Wanderers of the Time Streams.*** Some individuals, such as Wheldrake, have no innate ability to wander from plane-to-plane but are simply swept into the invisible currents

of the time streams that flow between the million spheres, having no control over where they arrive or how long they remain there. This might be an occasional event for a group but is recommended more to introduce protagonists or temporary companions for Adventurers, rather than as a mechanism to move Adventurers to new realms. It is clearly an unpredictable force and requires a particular style and feel of campaign to support it.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELRIC SAGA

The *Elric* saga spans short stories, novels and comics. Michael Moorcock wrote the stories out of chronological sequence, filling-in more details on the albino's adventures on and off over the course of 40 years. Additional stories, written by fans of Moorcock's works, have appeared in numerous magazines and fanzines. And, of course, Elric has appeared in various guises in other novels about the Eternal Champion. Space simply does not permit an absolute bibliography of every Elric reference and appearance but the core elements of the saga, presented in a roughly chronological order, are presented here.

Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer (Graphic Novel)

This series of four graphic novels tells the story of the earliest days of the Bright Empire, before its fateful pacts with Chaos were established. Elric, in preparation for his role as Emperor, undergoes four separate DreamQuests using the dream couches of Melniboné, re-enacting the events that lead to the pacts formed with the four elemental lords, in the guise of 'White Crow'. In the process of these quests he encounters both Arioch and the Black Blade for the first time and inadvertently permits Chaos to enter the world. Throughout the DreamQuests he is opposed by his jealous cousin, Yyrkoon, who covets the Ruby Throne himself. Elric prevails and is named by his father, Sadric, as the true successor to the Bright Empire.

Elric of Melniboné (Novel)

This novel describes how Elric is betrayed by Yyrkoon and must go in search of Stormbringer to defeat him. In the process of his adventures he is cast into the sea and left to drown following a battle with Young Kingdoms pirates; gains the use of the Ship Which Sails on Sea and Land from Lord Grome; summons Arioch for the first time and eventually locates Stormbringer on the plane of Ameroon. At the story's conclusion Elric decides to spend a year exploring the Young Kingdoms so he might expand his knowledge of the outside world and become a more effective emperor.

The Sailor on the Seas of Fate (Short Story Collection)

Set during Elric's wanderings, this short story collection tells of the albino's adventures with three other versions of the Eternal Champion – Corum, Erekosë and Hawkmoon – in their bid to defeat the sentient city-entities Agak and Gagak. Later he confronts a Melnibonéan lord from his past, Earl Saxif D'aan, who mistakes a simple girl as his long-lost love. In the course of these adventures he meets Count Smiorgan Baldhead of the Purple Towns and journeys with Duke Avan Astran to R'lin K'ren A'a, where he discovers Stormbringer's preference for the souls of his friends above all others.

The Fortress of the Pearl (Novel)

Again set during his year of wandering, Elric is sick and close to death in Quarzhasaat. He is engaged by Lord Gho Faazi and a rival, Manag Iss, to retrieve the Pearl in exchange for his life, which has been threatened by Lord Gho. In the course of his quest he ventures to the Kasbeh Moulor Ka Riiz meeting Alnac Krebs, a Dreamthief, who dies trying to save Varadia, the daughter of Raik Na Seem, who holds the key to the Pearl's location. Shortly after he is joined by Oone, the Dreamthief, who teaches Elric some of her skill and guides him through the dream realms in search of the eponymous castle.

Elric at the End of Time (Short Story Collection)

This short story collection concerns Elric in only one story. Having defeated the krettii of Sorcerers' Isle, Elric is 'kidnapped', for want of a better word, by the Dancers at the End of time; Mistress Christia, Una Persson and Lord Jagged. This pastiche reflects on the thesis that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic and Elric at first believes that the Dancers – who are possessed of such technologies – are the Lords of Chaos themselves.

The Weird of the White Wolf (Short Story Collection)

This short story collection recounts the fateful sacking of Imrry, where Elric returns from his wanderings to find Yyrkoon has usurped the Ruby Throne and placed Cymoril in a sorcerous sleep. Elric leads the Sea Lords of the Young Kingdoms against Imrry and battles Yyrkoon who possesses Mournblade, Stormbringer's brother runesword. In the battle Cymoril awakens and is accidentally slain by Elric. The Sea Lords are purged by dragon fire as they flee Melniboné and Elric, wracked with guilt for the death of his cousin and the destruction of his homeland, attempts to rid himself of Stormbringer – only to find himself more reliant upon it than ever.

Later stories in the collection detail Elric's search for the Dead God's Book where he meets Moonglum for the first time and their long friendship is established. Elric learns more about the battle between Law and Chaos and his melancholy deepens. His first encounter with Theleb K'aarna occurs when he aids Queen Yishana of Jharkor against Balo's incursion into the world. Jealous that Yishana finds Elric preferable to himself, the sorcerer sends the chaotic butterfly to attack them, becoming Elric's sworn enemy thereafter.

The Vanishing Tower (Short Story Collection)

Elric encounters Myshella, Empress of the Dawn, whilst hunting for Theleb K'aarna in Lormyr. Having roused Myshella from one of K'aarna's spells, Elric faces the Kelmain Host and witnesses some of the dreadful power of Law when the hideous 'noose of flesh' is deployed against the Kelmain. Rejecting Myshella's entreaties, Elric and Moonglum head to the northern continent where he travels to Nadsokor, manipulated by Theleb K'aarna's wiles and assists in the defeat of King Urish. From there he seeks refuge in Tanelorn, which he finds, but cannot gain contentment. Whilst there he finds himself whisked to another plane where he joins with two further incarnations of the Champion, returning in time to save Tanelorn from an attack led by Theleb K'aarna. But, despite his best efforts, the Pan Tangian escapes once more and this time slays Myshella. With the last bastion of Law gone, Chaos increases its grip on the world.

The Revenge of the Rose (Novel)

Elric is entreated by the ghost of his father, Sadric, to find the rosewood box that contains his soul. Elric embarks on an adventure, accompanied by the poet Wheldrake, that takes him into other planes where he encounters the Gipsy Nation, a vast caravan of wheeled cities. He also meets Prince Gaynor the Damned for the first time and is forced to fight this new nemesis in spite of Arioch's inability to assist. In the course of this adventure Elric manages to save his own soul, to some extent, from his Melnibonéan heritage and learns more from a reluctant Arioch about the nature of the Cosmic Struggle.

The Bane of the Black Sword (Short Story Collection)

Another collection of short stories in which Elric is engaged to assassinate Nikorn of Ilmar, a prosperous Bakshaani merchant, by jealous rivals. Elric learns that Nikorn's bodyguard is none other than Theleb K'aarna, his old enemy, and in the course of the ensuing battle to take Nikorn's palace – aided by the mercenaries of Melniboné – Dyvim Tvar, Elric's cousin, is killed through K'aarna's sorcery. But the Pan Tangian's magic saps his mind and Elric's revenge is found in the gibbering, semi-human madman that was once a powerful magician. The collection also details

Elric's saving of Zarozinia Voashoon of Karlaak, whilst travelling through Org and she becomes the second love of his life. Elric returns with her to Karlaak and there finds peace for the final time.

Stormbringer (Novel)

Stormbringer chronicles the last of Elric's adventures and tells how Jagreen Lern brings Chaos to the world in the final battle between Law and Chaos. Kidnapping Zarozinia from Karlaak, Elric is forced to don Stormbringer once more and venture across the Young Kingdoms, Moonglum at his side, combating Chaos at every turn. In the course of this last, tragic adventure, Elric meets again with Queen Yishana of Jharkor, aiding her in the battle for the western continent. He is captured by Jagreen Lern and Lord Pyaray as he attempts the rescue of Zarozinia and discovers his beloved wife has been mutated into a dreadful form by the power of Chaos. Directed by the Lords of Law for the first time, he ventures into Mordaga, the Sad Giant's castle, in search of the Chaos Shield, one of the weapons designed to defeat Chaos, and thence to a plane where he confronts Roland, who protects the Horn of Fate, which, when blown, heralds the start of our own cycle of time.

One-by-one Elric's enemies and loved ones fall, including Rackhir and Dyvim Storm, Elric's kinsman, who helps awake the dragons of Melniboné for their last flight. Finally Elric kills Jagreen Lern, denying Stormbringer the theocrat's soul but finds that Moonglum must sacrifice his own to the Black Blade if Elric is to have the strength to blow the Horn of Fate. Stormbringer's final treachery is revealed as a new cycle of time is ushered in and the Cosmic Balance attains equilibrium; its final worlds, *'Farewell, friend. I was a thousand times more evil than thou!'* are some of the most famous and chilling in fantasy literature.

The final three novels of the *Elric* saga take the albino into new realms, engaging him closely with the Von Bek dynasty, introduced in *The Warhound and the World's Pain*, and chronicling the

members of this bizarre extended family through its adventures in the 20th Century. They are précised here as they are difficult (if not impossible) to place in the core saga's chronology.

The Dreamthief's Daughter (Novel)

Von Bek and Elric intertwine in this story that sees von Bek betrayed by his cousin, Prince Gaynor von Minct, who desires the family sword, Ravenbrand, to aid the schemes of the Nazis. Whilst tortured, von Bek starts to gain some sense of his kinship with Elric and the latter's personality comes to the fore. Escaping captivity von Bek/Elric travels into the mythical realm of Off-Moo and then back to the Young Kingdoms to act against the schemes of Miggea of Law and Prince Gaynor the damned as they prepare to assault Tanelorn.

The Skrayling Tree (Novel)

Further chronicles of the von Bek family, Ulrik von Bek, now living in Canada with Oona, is plagued by mysterious and disconcerting events: He is visited by a strange albino version of himself and, when Oona is abducted by a group of Native Americans, Ulrik trails them using The Skrayling Oak. His adventures take him across mythical landscapes, which include incarnations of White Crow and Hiawatha. The dual existence of von Bek/Elric re-emerges, with a section of the story concerning Elric's DreamQuesting whilst held captive by Jagreen Lern during the events described in *Stormbringer*. Finally the hero discovers that Gaynor the Damned, now ruling over a mob of outcasts, is behind Oona's abduction.

The White Wolf's Son (Novel)

Told chiefly through the eyes of Oonagh von Bek, Elric's great-granddaughter, Prince Gaynor once again threatens the Multiverse through trying to capture the Runestaff, the symbol of the Cosmic Balance. Elric, Oona and other versions of the Eternal Champion, travel the Multiverse to save Oonagh and the Runestaff, eventually reaching a resolution in the Granbretan of Hawkmoon's Tragic Millennium.

ALTERNATIVE ERAS



This chapter looks at some alternatives to a traditionally-based *Elric of Melniboné* campaign; that is, one not based in and around the time of the Elric stories or even following the path of the saga. There are, of course, countless possibilities and alternatives and the existence of the Multiverse, in which all alternatives are possible, means that accommodating one of these Eras, or one of your own devising, is entirely within keeping with Michael Moorcock's themes and writings.

Each of the following Alternative Eras is described as follows:

Overview

The Era of the setting, an overview of its history and themes.

Adventurers

Rules notes and amendments for creating Adventurers suitable to the Era.

Scenario Seeds

Suggestions and seeds for creating scenarios based in the era.

Each Era is given an approximate date based on the Timeline found on page 9. The timeline takes The Final Battle as the end-point and thus expresses the date of Era as the approximate number of years before this date.

THE TIME OF THE MERNII (-10,000)

Overview

Melniboné has not yet come into existence as a Chaos-allied conqueror; instead the Mernii, the peaceful, Balance-aligned Mernii, Melniboné's forerunners, are starting to forge a rudimentary empire based on trade and the cultivation of the

highly primitive peoples found across the world that will become known, in centuries to come, as the Young Kingdoms.

The Mernii occupy the island of Melniboné but cities have yet to be founded there. The Mernii live in extensive encampments close to the coast and have mastered ocean-going vessels. The dragons have not yet been discovered and still sleep in their caves below the island's surface. The Mernii have created key alliances with the Elemental Lords primarily through trading with the primitive tribes scattered across the world.

None of these primitive tribes have any form of national identity. Almost all of them venerate the Elemental Lords, nature spirits and ancestors but have no real level of society beyond the loose tribal formations that will, eventually, take on more concrete names. Many are cruel, barbaric societies, highly superstitious and focused on their own survival at the expense of their neighbours. The Mernii, through their sea-borne supremacy, have started trade with these primitive clans and tribes and have managed to make some meaningful alliances – most notably with the Gromeworshipping Pukwadji. However many of the human tribes view the Mernii with deep suspicion and often outright hostility. The Mernii tolerate this as peacefully as they can, attempting to understand local customs and religions, teaching them some of their own skills and beliefs, and defending themselves when necessary rather than attempting violent conquest.

King of the Mernii is Dvarim Kha, who rules from the tent city of Im'ry and co-ordinates the peaceful efforts of the fledgling Mernii Empire. Dvarim Kha's brother is the albino wanderer known as White Crow, a trickster who has an appetite for travel but is exiled from Im'ry owing to tricks and falsehoods that he is alleged to have perpetrated.

Dvarim Kha is in a dilemma. He knows that the destiny of the Mernii relies on the possession of two artefacts that none of his people really understand: the mysterious Black Sword, guarded by the Pukwadji, who have been allies of the Mernii, and the Actorios Stone that has a relationship with the movement of the

spheres – a little of which the Mernii understand. Dvarim Kha has managed to borrow the Black Blade from the Pukwadji but the dwarves of the west face Grome's wrath if it is not returned. Similarly the Actorios has been stolen from the Mernii by a giant that resides far to the north, occupying a fabulous ziggurat called The Long House.

The Mernii's ships have been taken hostage by the Pukwadji, held until the Black Sword is returned. Dvarim Kha agrees to White Crow's proposition of finding the Actorios within a year, so that the sword can be returned to the Pukwadji.

Meanwhile the trading empire of the Mernii is threatened by the holding of the ships by the Pukwadji. Mernii traders are stranded amongst various tribes – some hostile, some not – with little assurance of finding their way home. Some have ships but many have relied on the return of vessels that make circulating trade tours of the coasts and must fend for themselves until the ships return. So far, that return has not happened.

Adventurers

The Mernii are the key Adventurers for this era. Players are encouraged to create Mernii Adventurers along the following lines:

- Use the Melnibonéan Characteristic modifiers.
- Instead of using the Melnibonéan Culture option, Mernii Adventurers are of the Barbarian Culture, as found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.
- Professions for the Mernii are as for the Barbarian Culture.
- The Mernii worship the Elemental and Beast Lords. Amongst the Mernii in Im'ry ancestor worship is also practiced.
- The Mernii have very little in common with Melnibonéans and none of their descendents' sorcerous knowledge. The Mernii's magic is based completely on Spirit Magic and the use of Rune Casting. If desired, Mernii Adventurers could use Common Magic to reflect their knowledge of such things. Mernii Adventurers should be given the Common Magic skill as part of their Cultural Background, if Common Magic is to be used.
- Human Adventurers are entirely possible but will all be of the Primitive Culture and all venerate the ancestors and spirits. A few might venerate the Elemental Lords. Only shamans of a clan or tribe have any magic and this will be Spirit Magic, as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*.
- The Pukwadji are widespread across the western continent and venerate Grome exclusively. The Pukwadji are the most sophisticated of the primitive tribes but are nonetheless fearful of Grome's wrath. They are cunning and spirited though and have no qualms in opposing the Mernii who they see as having reneged on an oath of the utmost importance.
- Equipment choices should reflect primitive cultures: metal is used but scarce (and the Mernii are the ones developing techniques for exploiting it): others rely on flint, bone, antler and stone weapons.

- Chaos has not yet truly manifested in this era and is unknown amongst the Mernii and others. Perhaps a few suspect its presence but otherwise the ancestors, spirits and Elemental Lords are powerful and real.

Scenario Seeds

The Actorios

Dvarim Kha seeks the return of the Actorios Stone, stolen by the Northern Giants. He has sent a group of warrior-adventurers to find the Northern Giants' lair, penetrate it and bring back the Actorios.

The Northern Giants live in the far north of the western continent, in roughly the vicinity of contemporary Tarkesh. Their temple lair is known to local spirits and animal guides who fear and shun the place. It occupies an isolated valley and is surrounded by an uncrossable moat of lava and fire. The temple lair is a vast, many-stepped ziggurat. The stolen Actorios is kept at the very top of the ziggurat but reaching it requires cunning and skill.

The giants are primitives serving some unknown god that is neither of Law, Chaos or the Elements; perhaps a Dead God such as Darnizhan or another. Despite their size and ferocity, the Northern Giants are very superstitious and afraid of powerful magic – but will not prevent them from killing any who try to steal back the Actorios. The Northern Giants have the statistics detailed on the following page and there are seven of them:

Northern Giants

Huge, semi-bestial creatures with wide, flat faces, pupil-less eyes and a liking for helmet-like headdresses and thick, wide neck-collars. The giants are aggressive if their relationship with whatever god they worship is threatened but otherwise exist only to serve him. They occasionally raid the tribes in the vicinity – perhaps to use them as food – but otherwise remain in their ziggurat.

If the Adventurers manage to retrieve the Actorios they will need to transport it back to Im'ry safely. They can expect to be pursued by any giants that remain alive, who need the stone for their own plans. Also, as the Adventurers make their way home, a strange, supernatural figure tries to join with them. This beautiful, beguiling figure attempts to convince the Adventurers that the Mernii can keep both the Actorios and the Black Sword. This character is Arioch, making one his first forays into the world and attempting to pervert the Mernii to the path of Chaos. He will promise (and deliver) magical knowledge to the Adventurers if they agree but will ultimately betray them, causing the Black Sword to disappear and causing distress for King Dharvim, the Pukwadji, Grome and the Mernii.

Rise of the Falkryn

In the southern lands, where the Filk and Argim tribes rule, both co-operative with the Mernii, a new tribe has come from across the seas in ships that bear a startling similarity to Mernii design. These

Northern Giant

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	50	1-3	Right Leg	3/18
CON	39	4-6	Left Leg	3/18
SIZ	50	7-10	Abdomen	3/19
INT	11	11-12	Chest	5/20
POW	11	13-15	Right Arm	3/17
DEX	10	16-18	Left Arm	3/17
CHA	7	19-20	Head	6/18

Combat Actions 2

Damage Modifier +2D12

Magic Points 11

Movement 12m

Strike Rank +7 (+11)

Typical Armour: Tough Hide (AP 1), elaborate metal helmet and collar, thick clothing (-4 Strike Rank)

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons

Skills: Athletics 44%, Brawn 112%, Lore (Regional) 20%, Perception 40%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 99%, Survival 30%, Unarmed 60%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Huge Club	E	VL	2D6+2D12	3/12
Fists	E	VL	1D10+2D12	As for Arm

Combat Styles

Club 84%, Unarmed 60%

invaders, a warlike tribe calling themselves the Falkryn, are ravaging the coastal ports where the Mernii have settled and devastated many peaceful Filk and Argi settlements inland. The Falkryn worship a new god called Slortar and their shamans have learned a new magic that allows them to summon spirit-demons who are the perverted forms of ancestors. Many of the revered ancestors of the Filk and Argi have been used against their own tribes by the Falkryn shamans and the Falkryn are threatening to over-run the southern lands, slaughtering the natives and driving-out the Mernii.

King Dharvim sends the Adventurers, with two or three powerful shamans, to the lands of the Filk to help defend against the Falkryn, to enter the spirit world and restore the corrupted ancestors to their rightful roles and to kill the High Shaman of Slortar, Tanbors of the Falkryn. Tanbors is protected by Falkryn champions and demons gifted to him by Slortar. The Falkryn have made their base in the captured lands of the largest Filk clan. Filk warriors have been butchered and left on display as an example and the frightened clans are ready to pay tribute to Tanbors and his murderers in the hope that, perhaps, the Falkryn will show mercy.

The Adventurers will have to penetrate Falkryn-controlled Filk lands, evading murder-parties, meeting with the terrified and demoralised Filk clans and plan a way to rid the southern lands of the Falkryn menace. They will also need to enter the spirit world, with the Mernii shamans, to attempt to combat the demons

Tanbors has created from the old Filk and Argi ancestors, battling demon spirits Slortar has placed there as guardians.

Once the ancestors are restored to their rightful roles, the Filks and Argi will unite and help to drive out the Falkryn. Killing Tanbors will not be easy and will be dangerous; his patron is Slortar and his demon protectors are both physical and spirit-like. But, if killed, the Falkryn lose the heart to conquer the southern lands and retreat in their ships.

Any captured Falkryn will also reveal that a Mernii shaman of some standing ventured into the Falkryn lands (far to the east) and gave them the secret of boat-building for Mernii designs. It is clear that someone in King Dharvim's circle is a traitor - but who? White Crow might be suspected but few believe even he would betray the Mernii in such a fashion. The traitor must be found and punished.

THE RISE OF THE BRIGHT EMPIRE (-8,000)

Overview

Melniboné is the undisputed ruler of the world. Through its pacts with the Lords of Chaos and other lords, plus its kinship with

the dragons of Imrryr, the Bright Empire controls the whole of the known world. Its old enemies, the Mernii, have fled leaving Melniboné, as a vassal of Chaos, to rule.

Many emperors have been and gone but with each one, the people of Melniboné become more cruel and more distant from the earlier, Mernii roots. Melniboné seeks to conquer through force of arms and magic, although Emperor Sadric XIV understands that trade, not war, is better for all. Others before him have been cruel but Sadric, having more in common with the Mernii, seeks to avert the cruelty others would inflict.

The Bright Empire at this time consists of many small, barbarian kingdoms that are governed by Melnibonéan local rulers who control trade, commerce and local power. Some of these governors work in co-operation with the barbarian tribes but others seek to crush them, or are forced to fight against the angered and jealous barbarians. The tribes are:

Terkeshians (forerunners of Tarkesh) – Largely peaceful and co-operative sea-going clans that co-operate with the Melnibonéan governor in the Palace of Nio.

Rijorian Confederacy (forerunners of Dharijor and Jharkor) – A loose alliance of two tribes; the Dhars and the Jharks who have decided to stop fighting each other and fight against the Melnibonéan regime that seeks to exploit both peoples. The governor of this area, Duke Vhargim Klimt, is an avid disciple of Chaos and seeks to bring the Dhars and Jharks into the same mentality: he has already had some success with the violent barbarians on the large island east of the Rijorian coast. Tensions between the Dhars and Jharks run high but they are prepared to oppose Melniboné if it means freedom from Chaos and oppression.

Shakurians (forerunners of the Shazarians) – The Shakurians remain aloof from Melniboné and Melniboné has remained aloof from them. They venerate Grome and Grome gives strong protection. The Pukwadji, the diminutive species that inhabit the lands of the Shakurians, dislike the favours the Shakurians gain from their own patron lord and seek alliances with Melniboné in a bid to regain their own standing in Grome's favour.

Il'm Savages (forerunner of the Ilmiorans) – A brutal people who have slaughtered several Melnibonéan governors of late. Melniboné has deployed a large garrison in the port of B'kshan that has the intention of subduing the Il'm and taking revenge on them for the murder of Duke and Duchess Slerym – good Melnibonéans and favourites of Emperor Sadric.

Bilmirites (forerunners of the Vilmirians) – A superstitious, cowardly, but vengeful, tribe that have started propitiating new gods that claim to be the enemies of Chaos. Little is known of the Bilmirites but the savage Il'm do not trust them and neither do the barbarians of the Weeping Waste, which borders Bilm territories.

Filks (forerunners of Filkhar and Pikarayd) – The Filks have co-operated with the Mernii but not Melniboné. They fight against

the tyranny of the local governor, Duke Khalid Ghern, who took, raped and murdered a Filk princess as punishment for alleged disobedience. Ghern is a devoted servant of Lord Chardhros and his wife, Duchess Ganoo-Yer, a priestess of Xiombarg. Together they have forged a mini-empire of terror that spreads out across the whole of the southern coastal lands, subjugating the Argi and the Lorm tribes to the west of their capital, The Yellow Palace.

Also present during this era are the Karasim, violent raiders who use specialised magic to attack Melnibonéan and Myrrhn communities in the western lands. The Karasim are ugly, violent and seek to forge their own empire, driving Melniboné out of the west and claiming it for themselves.

Adventurers

There is great scope for adventuring in the time of the Bright Empire. Melniboné controls much of the world and Melnibonéans are far more prevalent. The cities that will, one day, be the capitals of the Young Kingdoms, are being built and the worship of the Lords of Chaos has begun in all seriousness although Melniboné has not been fully corrupted as yet.

This Era is a mixture of Imperials versus Barbarians, not unlike the rise of the Roman Empire. Adventurer options include:

- All human Adventurers are of the Barbarian and Nomad Cultures and should belong to one of the tribes described.
- Melnibonéan Adventurers fall into two camps: those who take their lead from Emperor Sadric and seek a more peaceful existence with the barbarians; and those who follow the crueller, more traditional Melnibonéan line, as represented by Prince Ederic, Sadric's brother, a sorcerer who bargains with several Lords of Chaos. Melnibonéan Adventurers may use either the Civilised Culture or the Melnibonéan Culture, depending on their principles.
- Only Melnibonéans use magic. Those of the more rational, lenient persuasion use Rune Magic. True Melnibonéans use Sorcery and Rune Casting.
- As the Karasim are active, Karasim Adventurers, as described in the *Young Kingdoms Adventurers* chapter, can also be used. Their magic is Spirit based around violent air spirits and elementals.

Scenario Seeds

The Treachery of Kolos

The new city of Dhakos is the bright and shining hub of Melnibonéan interest in the western continent but to the Rijorian Barbarians it is a symbol of oppression and tyranny. The governor, Duke Kolos Huuriyos, has taken sacred lands on which to build and openly worships the Lords of Chaos over the old, nature gods and ancestors of the Jharks. In Dhakos there is some sympathy for how the Jharks feel; Duke Kolos is a cruel ruler who despises Emperor Sadric and is a pretender to the Ruby Throne. He wants nothing more than the destruction of the Jharks and seeks to do

this by disrupting their fragile alliance with the Dhars. Kolos uses Adventurers – who could be loyal Melnibonéans or treacherous human barbarians – to infiltrate the Rijorian Confederacy tribes and plant evidence that the Jharks are plotting against the Dhars and war between them is the only course. The crux of the plan is the kidnap and murder of Princess Ajorahm, daughter of a local chieftain. Kolos has been ‘inspired’ by the way his cousin, Khalid Ghern, dealt with the Filks and intends to use similar tactics in his own lands.

The Adventurers may not know the extent of Kolos’s plan and, once they discover it, decide to aid the Rijorians against Kolos, perhaps even leading a revolt against the Melnibonéans in Dhakos.

To Avenge a Duke

Duke and Duchess Slerym were slaughtered by the Il’m tribe. Even though Emperor Sadric does not condone arbitrary vengeance, Slerym was a friend and good man: the Il’m must be punished.

An elite group of Melnibonéans is assembled to venture into the densely forested lands of the Il’m and find their hidden city, which is said to be dedicated to a local demon known as Troos. At least one skilled sorcerer accompanies the group or is an Adventurer. Here, in a country-sized forest, the group must negotiate many local savages – many of which are cannibals – monsters and wild creatures of all descriptions and eventually work their way into the very heart of the forest where it is clear that strange and powerful sorcery is at work.

The city of the Il’m is built on ruins that were once a city of the Doomed Folk – the race that preceded the current cycle of time. The Il’m are every bit as savage and murderous as they have been described but behind all this is the sinister figure known as Black Rook. Worshipped as a demi-god by the bestial Il’m, Black Rook is a renegade warrior-priest of Melniboné who was sent to conquer these lands decades before and disappeared, thought to have been slaughtered by the local savages. Black Rook survived and is completely insane. He controls the Il’m and worships the demon, Troos, who was released when the Doomed Folk triggered the magics that brought about their own destruction.

Troos is a shadowy, malevolent demon that is not beholden to the Lords of Chaos but is every bit as manipulative. It seeks only death and relishes the deaths of those who display intelligence and sophistication. Black Rook, utterly insane, has promised the destruction of Melniboné in return for eternal life and a kingdom of his own, with the Il’m as his army, which rules the eastern continent.

The Adventurers must kill Black Rook and somehow remove Troos from the world before this dreadful plan can come to pass.

THE REIGN OF TERHALI (–1,500 TO –1,300)

‘...Terhali, the Green Empress, who had ruled the Bright Empire from the year 8406 after its foundation until 9011. Her longevity and green-tinged skin and hair had marked her

out. She had been a powerful sorceress, even by Melnibonéan standards. She was also reputed the daughter of a union between Emperor Iuntric X and a demon.’

—*Stormbringer*

Overview

An empress of the Bright Empire for 605 years, Terhali is a notorious leader of her people, a devout worshipper of Xiombarg, and owes her remarkable lifespan to both the natural longevity of the Melnibonéans and her half demon ancestry.

She was born into the royal line as the only daughter of her father, Iuntric X, and the demon-queen Vah’ah’nessa. Terhali possessed the noble bearing and physique of her father but the green skin, phenomenal intellect and duplicitous personality of her mother. She was not destined to be empress; her three brothers stood before her in line for the Ruby Throne but one-by-one her siblings met with unfortunate fates leaving the way clear for her to ascend upon her father’s death (which was similarly unfortunate and untimely).

As empress, she has supplanted Arioch’s role as patron demon of Melniboné with that of Xiombarg, an action that has alienated many nobles and the Lord of the Seven Darks himself. Arioch became Terhali’s direct enemy but, as this meant going against one of his equals in the realms of the Higher Powers, and a fellow Sword Ruler, he has been forced to act in clandestine ways. For 300 years an internecine struggle between the cults of Arioch and Xiombarg has waged, with Terhali revelling in the infamy.

Terhali has decided that Imrryr is not grand enough for her rule and so she has built a new capital, Yagala, which overlooks the wide bay leading into the Meadows of Lassitude on Melniboné’s western coast. Yagala is built of solid gold by demon consorts and its streets glitter with jewels and slabs of silver. Terhali’s inner court is filled with demon lovers, lackeys and servants. The outer court populated by the obsequious sorcerers and flunkies who seek personal gain by pledging allegiance to Terhali’s rule. Only Xiombarg can be worshipped in Yagala’s golden streets and her image is everywhere. Those who oppose Terhali or deny Xiombarg find themselves in the gold and silver dungeons and torture chambers, the playthings and meals of her demonic and human followers. Melniboné, under Terhali’s six century rule, is a dark and terrible place. That terror spills across the Bright Empire and, during this period, Melniboné is undoubtedly at the height of its cruelty.

Terhali encourages the study of sorcery and is an accomplished sorceress herself. She seeks to establish the earth and all planes close to it as worlds loyal to the Sword Rulers and her crusades in the name of Xiombarg cross – and destroy – worlds.

By this time the barbarian tribes of the Bright Empire – the Il’m, the Jharks, the Dhars and so on – have been largely civilised and have built their own towns and cities, often with Melnibonéan help and always

under Melnibonéan control. The regional governors are forced to pay lip service to Terhali's demonic reign and the ubiquitous worship of the Sword Rulers; but some are appalled by it. Terhali's Jade Dragon Lords regularly descend on independent Melnibonéan city-states to reinforce Terhali's will and any – Melnibonéan or human – who are seen to deny Terhali's glory are publicly tortured and executed by the Jade Dragon Lords as an example to others.

So, in this era Melniboné still rules the world and has reached the utter height of its cruelty. All notions of mercy and tolerance have been dispensed with and the decadent, drug-fuelled culture that will eventually spell Melniboné's demise has begun in earnest in Yagala's fabled Pleasure Domes. Beyond Yagala, in the wider world, local Melnibonéan governors are forced to enact Terhali's insane whims and desires, whether they agree with them or not. Many do and gladly indulge the mad queen's tyranny. Many do not and plot to bring her rule to an end. The conspirators are led by the mysterious White Crow and a secret cadre of deposed Dragon Lords. The conspiracy includes humans from the towns and cities of Melniboné's provinces: Tarkesh, Rijor, Ilmior, Filkhar and Lormiria. It brings together heroes and champions, warriors and sorcerers – all of them intent on destroying Terhali. What is not known to them is that this conspiracy is being guided by Arioch who, treating the entire situation as yet another part of the Great Game the Lords of Chaos play amongst each other, is manipulating and corrupting the conspirators in the same way Xiombarg corrupts and manipulates Terhali.

Some notes on the atmosphere of Terhali's Jade Empire:

- Melniboné is at its cruellest. No one is safe from the whim of local nobles who openly practice vile tortures and experiments with no fear of sanction from anyone. Humans are treated as little better than slaves.
- Sorcery is rife. Demons and other creatures are frequently summoned. Many provincial nobles of Melniboné strike private Pacts with demons in order to please Terhali and secure personal power.
- Worship of the Sword Rulers – Mabelode and Xiombarg is foremost. Terhali seeks the two Black Swords, Stormbringer and Mournblade, which were wielded by her ancestors but have now disappeared. With these two blades, she would conquer the Multiverse.
- Everyone lives in fear to some degree; 600 years of fear, oppression and terror. This is perhaps the darkest time for the world but it is also the Bright Empire's height; after this, Melniboné begins a long, slow slide into ruin.

Adventurers

Adventurers can be from any race and culture described in the first chapter of this book. The important facet here is allegiance: either to Terhali and the Sword Rulers or White Crow and (secretly) Arioch. Of course, Adventurers may simply be those who try to remain neutral but Terhali's tyranny, lasting for six centuries, is such that few remain unscathed, undamaged or without a passionate view on the situation.

Each Adventurer should have the Passion of Love or Hate Terhali and this guides their allegiance. Adventurers are therefore likely to be working for Terhali, employed by one of her loyal governors, to further her agenda or oppose the conspiracy; or are members of the conspiracy, working to end Terhali's reign of terror.

Beyond this, this era is a time of powerful and dark magics being used by both sides. A covert war is fought between Terhali and her supporters and the members of the conspiracy. Many others are caught in the middle. Ultimately it will lead to civil war, the outcome of which will decide if Terhali continues to rule (and she is just about immortal) or if she is deposed and the Young Kingdoms' fate runs its normal course.

Scenario Seeds

Swords Against the Kelmain

The Kelmain, allies of Xiombarg from a plane close to the earth, are summoned to the Bright Empire by Terhali to supplement existing Melnibonéan troops. The Kelmain occupy various provinces and wreak havoc with their cruelty whilst local governors stand by and do nothing – or encourage the barbarity.

A Kelmain warband is raiding a small community of poor farmers on the edge of a remote province anywhere in the Young Kingdoms. The locals have had enough and want to buy weapons to defend themselves against the Kelmain raiders. They employ the Adventurers to help them get the weapons they need but they have little money and it is clear that the Adventurers need to offer their services – for little pay, perhaps – to drive-off the carved-face menace.

The Adventurers will need to fortify the village, teach the locals how to use the rudimentary weapons they have and then coordinate the stand against the next Kelmain assault. Complications arise in the following ways:

- The nearby Melnibonéan ruler treats this terrible situation as a spectator's sport and employs spies to report to his Kelmain allies. He also sends saboteurs to wreck the Adventurers' plans.
- The Kelmain have with them a sorcerer, or gain access to one, and summon the Sword Lord; a demonic champion of Xiombarg, to supplement their warband.
- Certain individuals in the settlement are cowardly and believe that resisting the Kelmain will make things worse. They try to sabotage the Adventurers' plans and discredit their helpers.

White Crow's Conspiracy

The Adventurers are part of the growing band of rebels who aid the mysterious and elusive White Crow to fight Terhali's monstrous regime. White Crow himself requires the Adventurers to perform several tasks for him:

- Assassinate a Melnibonéan governor who has betrayed the rebel conspiracy and is an ardent admirer of Terhali: a signal must be sent. His villa is well guarded so the Adventurers will

need to use cunning to gain entry. However he is holding a masked ball in celebration of his birthday and this decadent feast and orgy will provide good cover. Unfortunately some of the guests are Beast Masked Constables from Granbretan, brought across the Multiverse for some reason or another. Their presence means that there are plenty of Beast Masked troops in attendance, making life hard for the assassins.

- Steal information regarding Terhali's sorcery. The man who guards her grimoires is the infamous Doctor Vhalid Qua; an excellent sorcerer in his own right and a horder of knowledge. His tower in Imrryr, Aul'au'qua, is guarded by sorcerously-bred hunting slaves and his personal Combat Demon Nevestreen. Qua, however, is susceptible to the drug Shadowsoul, which extracts the soul for the body and makes it compliant: Qua enjoys such interludes with the beautiful and deadly Nevestreen. The Adventurers, armed with such knowledge might find a way to steal the grimoires that White Crow needs.

THE DHARZI WAR (-1,000 - -950)

Some 9,000 years into Melniboné's reign the shadowy beast masters, known as the Dharzi, sweep across the world in a direct challenge to the Bright Empire. Their armies consist of dreadful amalgams of men and animals, their intellects replaced with merciless blood-lust. The Dharzi themselves worship a strange god from a distant universe that has gifted them with the magics to create these chimeras.

The Dharzi strike at key provincial strongholds of the Bright Empire, moving east to west. Ilmiora falls first and a devastating battle unleashes the full might of Melnibonéan sorcery against the Horse-Wolves and Eagle-Warriors of the Dharzi expeditionary force. The forest of Troos is ravaged as a result and Melniboné is defeated. Ilmiora becomes annexed as part of the Dharzi Empire and its human population enslaved whilst Melnibonéans are slaughtered as offerings to the Unknown God.

With this stronghold established the Dharzi fully occupy Ilmiora and move outwards in a bid to conquer the whole of the Bright Empire. For the first time Melniboné is forced to seek the aid of its human subjects to help stem the Dharzi tide and Adventurers will find themselves fighting side-by-side with those who were once their masters. Pan Tang, as treacherous as it ever will be sides with the Dharzi, seeking to ally itself with the more powerful sorcerers in the hope of gaining an empire of its own. Pan Tang's sorcerers learn the Dharzi skills of Creature Stitching and forge their fearsome six-legged war lizards. Together with Pan Tang, the Dharzi conquer the western continent and then focus on Melniboné itself.

Melniboné calls upon its patron demons: Arioch, Chardhros, Slortar and Mabelode to help avert complete destruction. The answer the fickle Lords of Chaos offer lies in harnessing the very stuff of Chaos, found at the edges of the world and kept at bay by Myshella and three other guardians to the north, west

and east. Emissaries gain the guardians' reluctant help but the Lords of Law make clear that Melniboné brings about its own doom in one way or another. The stuff of Chaos is unleashed and the Dharzi, unprepared for such drastic action, are slaughtered wholesale – although some use their own Creature Stitching sorcery to transform their own natures, escaping the devastation at a dreadful cost to their physical presence on the earth.

Adventurers

All options are open to Adventurers in this era and, for the first time, humans are viewed almost as equals by the Melnibonéans. This will sow the seeds for the Young Kingdoms and human heroes will be born from the 50 year war against the Dharzi.

An alternative option is to allow the players to play the Dharzi or their allies: Pan Tangians or stitched creatures. The Eagle-Warriors are a possibility here and you are directed to the Iqari, found in *Monster Coliseum*, for more information.

Before the unleashing of the stuff of Chaos the Dharzi are human-like but with the senses and instincts of a particular animal: wolf, eagle and so on. Some have been voluntarily mutated into animal-men themselves and have the lower bodies of goats, gills of fish, wings of raptors and so forth. Base their Characteristics on the standard human options but adjust certain Characteristics to reflect the nature of the surgery. Dharzi sorcery could be based on the Sorcery rules found in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, thereby providing an interesting contrast to the magic of Melniboné.

Scenario Seeds

The Fall of Bakshaan

The Adventurers are in Ilmiora when the first Dharzi attacks strike. The cities of Bakshaan and Karlaak must be defended against Eagle-Warrior aerial attacks and then a concerted siege by the Horse-Wolves and their mutated Dharzi riders. The Dharzi are intent on destroying the palace of Duke Auhram Ezerra, the Melnibonéan ruler. The Adventurers must somehow get the duke and his family to safety through the war-torn streets of Bakshaan and head out to Imrryr where they will be given special status and patronage by the grateful Auhram.

Emissaries to Kaneloon

The Adventurers are sent to bargain with Myshella at Castle Kaneloon. They must convince her to allow them access to the stuff of Chaos at the edge of the world and not to stand in their way if the Dharzi are to be destroyed. Myshella requires a service: the Adventurers must DreamQuest into the nightmares Myshella has suffered that seem to foretell her own death. The DreamQuest takes place in the far future of the Young Kingdoms and involves an albino who loves her and the insane sorcerer who wants to use her to destroy Tanelorn. The DreamQuest must preserve Tanelorn ensuring it survives both the Dharzi onslaught and a further siege by the Lizard Men of Pio. Use the novel *The Vanishing Tower (aka The Sleeping Sorceress)* as a basis for this DreamQuest.

THE RISE OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS (-400)

In the wake of the Dharzi war, Melniboné's strength is vastly depleted. Its dragons sleep and will not arouse and steadily the provincial nobles drift back to Imrryr. In Lormyr a hero, Aubec, arises to challenge the last vestiges of Melnibonéan rule, co-ordinating a revolt that drives Melniboné out of the southlands and establishes Lormyr, Filkhar and Argimiliar as countries in their own right. Aubec ventures to Kaneloon and there falls under Myshella's spell, carving out new lands, that extend the edge of the world, from the stuff of Chaos.

Elsewhere, taking heed of Aubec's actions, the people of the old Bright Empire either revolt against Melniboné or quickly occupy the old Melnibonéan provincial strongholds vacated by their owners. The Young Kingdoms are being born!

Adventurers

Melnibonéans become rarer as they retreat to Imrryr. The new nations of the Young Kingdoms emerge in their own right and all Adventurer options are available. Law starts to become a dominant force in Vilmir, Lormyr and Jharkor. Pan Tang annexes Dharijor and Pikarayd, making them vassal states. Adventurers from any of these regions, and beyond, are naturally permissible.

Scenario Seeds

This is a true time for heroes. Melniboné, in some parts, tries to hold onto its territory with local nobles fighting against their one-time subjects to remain in power. In others, where Melnibonéan rule has not been so stringent, Melnibonéans seek a compromise and peaceful existence. The Adventurers will find ready work from many human nobles, all eager for power, seeking to exploit Melnibonéan frailties.

The Young Kingdoms also begin to explore the ruins of many old Bright Empire temples, palaces and cities, relics of the Dharzi war. Mercenaries are needed to delve into these ruins to discover wealth, sorcery and power, Pan Tang is a keen employer of such troubleshooters, especially in the lands of Pikarayd and Dharijor; but others – would-be sorcerers, curious kings and wily merchants – all want to plunder Melniboné's secrets.

And, as with any power vacuum, states go to war. Jharkor and Dharijor, once allies, fight each other for territory. Shazar's knights side with Jharkor and Pan Tang's Sword Ruler warriors, including Kelmain, side with Dharijor. In the south Argimiliar makes war against both Lormyr and Filkhar, leading to the dreadful Sad Hill Massacre where the infamous Straw Dogs, the Eternal Mercenaries, defeat a Filkharian and Lormyrian army of 10,000 with powerful Chaos allies.

This era is open-ended. It is recognisable as the Young Kingdoms of this book but is far enough distant for Games Masters to develop whatever flavour of campaign they wish, with the

Adventurers being the heroes of their nations or sides. Melniboné grows steadily impotent and few Melnibonéans wander abroad, although some may try to preserve their heritage in the face of growing human dominance.

EMPEROR YYRKOON (-15)

Prince Elric, the weak albino son of Sadric 86th, dies before his first birthday. The royal succession passes to Prince Yyrkoon, his cousin, who, it is rumoured, murders Emperor Sadric and forces his own sister, Cymoril, to become his incestuous Empress.

Yyrkoon has grand designs. For too long Melnibonéan has been somnambulant and Yyrkoon seeks to reinstate old glories.

His first quest is to gain the swords Stormbringer and Mournblade, the soul-drinking black blades lost to Melniboné's rulers for generations. His next is to wake the dragons, which have slept since battling the Dharzi. His third act is to build a new fleet of Battlebarges with which to command the seas.

Yyrkoon commands alliances with Mabelode and Slortar and, with these Lords of Chaos as his allies, he moves to re-conquer first the southern continent and then the Purple Towns and the northern continent. Pan Tang, fearing a new Bright Empire, subjugates the whole of the western continent and prepares demonic alliances of its own – with Xiombarg and Chardhros – and prepares for war.

In the south Myshella is threatened by Melniboné's armies and calls for the help of the Lords of Law. In the far, unknown east, Yyrkoon's warriors, riding dragons, seek to subdue the many states that once belonged to the Bright Empire. Yyrkoon moves swiftly and without mercy. Conquered lands come under the heel of brutal Melnibonéan governors once again and the Young Kingdoms are faced with a choice: fight or die.

Adventurers

All Adventurer options are open, with Melnibonéans very much in the role of aggressors. The command of sorcery is freely taught to these newly awakened conquerors and Yyrkoon's warrior-priests are keen to fulfil their emperor's desires.

Scenario Seeds

This alternative era explores the fate of the Young Kingdoms in the absence of Elric. It may very well be that it remains a doomed land as Chaos goes to war and the Lords of Law enter the fray. A new Eternal Champion – one of the Adventurers perhaps – may be needed by agents such as Myshella and Sepiriz, seer of Nihrain to try to prevent Yyrkoon's empire from spreading but, in the process, bring about the end of the world in a similar manner to Elric's own actions.

The Sea Lords

A conspiracy grows amongst the beleaguered kings of the Young Kingdoms. A fleet must be assembled and Yyrkoon challenged.

The Sea Lords seek alliances with the elemental lords: Grome, Straasha, Kakatal and Lassa. The old alliances Melniboné once commanded with the elements have been forgotten now that new Chaotic allies have been gained. The Adventurers must quest across the Young Kingdoms, DreamQuesting even (and the graphic novel series *Making of a Sorcerer* is a good reference) to gain the help of the petulant elemental rulers.

Return of the Karasim

The Myrrhn, fearful for their own safety, call upon the Karasim, ever Melniboné's enemy, to return from their chasm and fight the Battlebarges with their flying vessels: the Adventurers must descend into the Karasim Abyss to awaken these green-skinned giants.

Pan Tang's Battle

Pan Tang may even be cast in the role of the potential saviour. Jagreen Lern, who hates Yyrkoon (and covets Cymoril), fights valiantly to keep his western empire free from Melnibonéan incursions. Adventurers are needed to uncover Melnibonéan plans and thwart them, lent sorcerous aid by the theocracy of Hwamgaarl.

Myshella's Champions

Myshella awakens one of the Adventurers (or, perhaps, all of them) as the Eternal Champion, directing them against Yyrkoon's plans. The staples of the novel *Stormbringer*: Mordaga's Shield, the Horn of Fate and so on, must be assembled to bring Yyrkoon's tyranny to an end – but the new Eternal Champion is unaware that their actions will bring about the end of the world and herald a new cycle of time, free from Law and Chaos.

ELRIC'S PEACE (NOW)

The events described in *Stormbringer* do not come to pass: Elric settles in Karlaak with his wife, Zarozinia, and the sword, Stormbringer, mysteriously disappears. Jagreen Lern's attempts to conquer the world come to nothing as his alliances with the Lords of Chaos are disrupted by the Lords of Law and their agents.

Melniboné, of course, has been all but destroyed (or, perhaps it has not, in this timeline) but the world of the Young Kingdoms knows a kind of peace and they continue, slowly and steadily, on their own course, with the End of the World never occurring.

Adventure in such a time is still very much on the agenda. Multiversal threats are ever-present and, although Elric's destiny

is different (and he eventually becomes a legend, rarely seen or spoken of), all manner of threats assail the Young Kingdoms.

Granbretan

Baron Kalan of Vital breaks the dimensional barriers and Beast Mask warriors attack the Young Kingdoms, establishing the city of New Londra amongst the ruins of Imrryr. Flamelances and war machines are pitted against swords and half-forgotten sorceries as the Dark Empire of Granbretan attempts to annex the Young Kingdoms. A quest for the RuneStaff, rumoured to be in the keeping of the mysterious Beque family of Shazar, is necessary to fight Granbretan (which, naturally enough, either destroys or allies with Pan Tang) and the Adventurers, motivated by the enigmatic Warrior of Jet and Gold, must undertake this quest. Meanwhile the Beast Masks are welcomed in some places (Vilmir, Lormyr, Jharkor) and repelled in others (Ilmiora, Filkhar, Dharijor). Melniboné's mercenaries, led by Dyvim Storm, co-ordinate the rebellion and seek keen allies, such as the Adventurers, in repelling the Dark Empire.

The Return of Agak and Gagak

Did Elric and the Four-Who-Are-One really slay the twin sorcerers? Or did they, through some powerful magic, escape death? Agak and Gagak, as presented on page 147 of this book, enter the realm of the Young Kingdoms and attempt to establish a new regime to drain the world of its energies. They are subtle and cunning, using human slaves to gain more and more power. Finally they take on their true, city-like forms, on the Isle of Purple Towns and the Young Kingdoms find themselves threatened once again.

All Hail to the Thief

In amongst the ruins of Sorcerers' Isle, the Spell Thieves awaken Cran Liret and the Thief of Spells returns to the world. Buried across half of the Young Kingdoms are his Chaos Engines, dormant since the time of the Dharzi war, which Cran Liret, now almost the equal of the Lords of Chaos, seeks to reactivate. The Lords of Chaos, themselves dormant since Elric is not their pawn, beguile the Adventurers into working either for or against Cran Liret, depending on how the campaign is to unfold. Either way, the nations of the Young Kingdoms are threatened as the Chaos Engines are activated by the growing Spell Thieves cult and some of the machines render even the Lords of Law and Chaos impotent. If not stopped, Cran Liret will become a god, ushering-in a new and insane rule by the ultimate sorcerer in the Multiverse.

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