



## NOTES

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Skyfall uses Spirit of the Century as its reference point, and makes regular reference to it. If there's anything unclear, odds are good it's clarified in SOTC.

## CHARACTER CREATION

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Character creation takes place over 5 phases:

- Phase 1: Childhood/Background
- Phase 2: Youth
- Phase 3: Early adventuring
- Phase 4: The fall of Collingsgaard
- Phase 5: The occupation of Collingsgaard

During each phase, characters pick 1 aspect and receive 6 points, plus one additional point if their story that phase overlaps with another player (though they can't get a second point from the same player until they've tied into everyone). Points may be spent to:

- Increase a skill by one point (they begin at mediocre)
- Purchase a stunt
- Increase level of a style

The limit on the points spent are as follows:

- You may not have more skills at a given level than you have skills in the next level down (this is a "column" structure as contrasted to the usual "pyramid").
- No more than 5 points can be spent on any single style.

## LEVEL

Because this is based off console games, characters must have a level, so here's how it works. The character's level (which starts at 5) represents two things:

- How many Fate points the character gets on a refresh.
- The number of points that can be spent on styles.

## SKILLS

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The following skills are being used as is from Spirit of the Century.

*Academics*

Alertness

**Arcana**

Art

Athletics

Burglary

Contacting

*Deceit*

Empathy

Endurance

**Faith**

**Games**

Investigation

Leadership

Might

*Pilot*

**Presence**

**Provoke**

Rapport

Resources

**Ride**

Stealth

**Travel**

Skills in **bold** are not from Spirit of the Century, and skills in *italics* have been changed somewhat from how they are used in SOTC.

### ACADEMICS

Science is a stunt under Academics, as is medicine and any other knowledge speciality.

### ALERTNESS

As SOTC.

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**ARCANA**

Arcana is a practical day-to-day understanding of magic.

**ART**

As SOTC.

**ATHLETICS**

As SOTC.

**BURGLARY**

As SOTC.

**CONTACTING**

As SOTC.

**DECEIT**

Now includes Sleight of Hand as a stunt pick, but otherwise as SOTC.

**EMPATHY**

Social Perception (See SOTC.)

**ENDURANCE**

Physical Resistance (See SOTC)

**FAITH**

Spiritual Resistance and source of Mana  
Also Replaces resolve.

**GAMES**

Includes Chess and gambling

**INVESTIGATION**

As SOTC.

**LEADERSHIP**

Large scale interaction + Military leadership

**MIGHT**

Physical power. See SOTC

**PILOT**

Pilot is the ability to drive or fly most any arcanic vehicle.

**PRESENCE**

Replaces composure. Social Defense.

**PROVOKE**

Incorporates Intimidation – social skill for inspiring negative emotions (Mostly anger and fear).

**RAPPORT**

Social Manipulation

**RESOURCES**

Cashola, as SOTC.

**RIDE**

This is the ability to ride a horse, donkey, or other steed. It's role in play is very similar to Drive in SOTC, except that it also is very important to use in combat, where it's role as a restrictor is often offset by the benefits that fighting from horseback can provide.

**STEALTH**

Sneaky, neaky.

**TRAVEL**

Survival plus knowledge, basically measuring how well traveled the character is, and what knowledge they've taken from those travels.

**STUNTS**

Stunts server much the same role as they do in SOTC, though some are slightly broader in their scope. Stunts use a fast progression system, so each point invested in a stunt gives one stunt.

**STYLES**

Styles are rare skills which cover things like combat mastery and sorcery. Generally, each style comes as a set of stunts paired to a skill. The skill may be useful in and of itself, but it is only with the

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purchase of stunts that its power truly emerges.

As points are spent on the style, the skill and stunt level increases as follows.

Points	Skill	Stunt
Lvl		
1	Average	1
2	Fair	1
3	Good	2
4	Great	2
5	Superb	3
6	Superb	3
7	Fantastic	4
8	Fantastic	4
9	Epic	5

### SAMPLE STYLES

Sword Dancing  
Dervish  
Dragoon  
Prayer Fist  
Dark Blade  
Spellbreaking  
Undying

Styles are more fully broken out in the Appendix.

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### RULES CHANGES

#### SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

Certain aspect have specific mechanical meanings over and above their usual use.

#### ELEMENTS

When something is possesses of an elemental aspect, it is immune to damage from that element, and takes double damage from it's opposing element. The six elements are Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Light and Dark. Earth an Air are opposes, as are Fire and water as well as Light and Dark.

Sometimes a distinction will be made between "celestial" and "terrestrial"

elements. Earth, air, fire and water are the terrestrial elements, while light and dark are considered to be celestial.

#### FAITHLESS

Faithless are a rare phenomena in the setting. They do not interact with faith the way that others do, and as a result, a faithless character may not be helped or harmed by magic directly (though many combat magics can still affect them by virtue of their physicality). Faithless characters replace the faith skill with a faithless skill, and the mana that it generates is usable for sorceries specific to the faithless (Notably spellbreaking and undying).

#### HEALTH

Charaters have a numerical poolof health points, equal to 5 plus the points put Endurance.

#### MANA

Characters have a numerical pool of mana, equal to the number of points they put into their Faith skill.

#### WEAPONS & ARMOR

Weapons and armor are rated light, medium and heavy, and provide a +1, +2 or +3 modifier respectively. For weapons, that modifier is added to damage on a successful (MoS 1 or more) hit. For armor, it is subtracted from the damage for a successful hit.

The Weapon's modifier is also a penalty for certain types of maneuvers. Armor puts a penalty on acrobats, stealth and other actions requiring freedom of movement. Weapons apply a penalty to maneuvers calling for precision.

#### HEALING

Damage (which is to say, stress) and minor consequences are both cleared at the

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same time, when a scene ends and there is time for the character to take a breather.

## **RANGE**

Just for clarification, range is generally noted as Range and a number. This means the following:

Range 1: Within the same zone

Range 2: One zone out

Range 3: Two zones out

And so on

In short, the zone the character is in is counted for purposes of range. There may also be an effective range 0 (Which is to say, self, or possibly grappling) but that's TBD.

## **SPECIAL TERMS**

### **DRAIN**

If an attack has drain and a numeric value (like *Drain: 1*) if it inflicts stress or a consequence on the target, the attacker gains that much health back. The only limits is that the attacker cannot gain more health than damage dealt (or damage that would be dealt, if there were no consequence).

### **REGEN**

Regen is followed by a number (*Regen 2*) and it means the subject regains that number of points of health per exchange.

### **MOVEMENT**

Something with a numeric movement rating (*Movement 3*) can move that many zones, clear that many points in barrier, or add that much bonus to movement-related athletics checks. This is a total, so a character with movement three could move two zones and get a +1 to his jump, no move three zones and then get a +3 on his jump. This 'pool' refreshes every exchange.

## **STATUS**

Status provides the same benefit as armor in social situations. The differences in status between any two characters work as armor for the character with the greater status.

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## **APPENDIX: STYLES**

### **BLACK MAGIC**

Black Magic is the most common form of elemental magic, and despite it's ominous sounding name, it has a perfectly benign reputation. If one meets a wizard on their travels, odds are good they're a practitioner of Black magic.

Black Magic Skill: Prestidigitation

A black mage is a master of minor magics, and may use his skill to generate minor effects: light candles, chill drinks and so on. In combat, this means that Black Magic can be used to perform maneuvers by creating slicks of ice, showers of sparks and so on.

### **BLACK MAGIC STUNTS**

#### **ELEMENT**

The character makes an attack with a bolt of a terrestrial element (Earth, Air (in the form of lightning), Fire or Water). This costs one mana, and has a base damage, range, accuracy and effect based upon the element used:

**Quake** (Earth): 3 Damage, 2 range. With spin, the attack also knocks the target down, adding the "prone" aspect.

**Fire** (Fire): 5 Damage, 2 Range.

**Shock** (Lightning): 3 Damage, 3 Range, +1 Accuracy

**Water Whip** (Water): 2 Damage, 2 Range, Ignores armor.

These attacks are also considered to be aspected to the appropriate element.

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### **WARD**

The mage can create a defensive barrier with his magic, effectively granting himself armor. This costs one mana, and can generate one of three effects:

**Protect** – Grants 3 points of armor against physical attacks.

**Shell** – Grants 3 points of armor against magical attacks.

**Element Ward** - Grants 1 point of armor, but that armor is aspected to an element of the caster's choice, so attacks from that element do no harm to the caster. A character may not have up two opposing elements.

### Elementa

Rather than a bolt, the caster can target all enemies within a single zone with his attack, though it is less damaging than a bolt. Costs 2 mana.

Earthshaker (Earth): 2 Damage, 1 range. With spin, the attack also knocks the target down, adding the "prone" aspect.

Rain of Fire (Fire): 3 Damage, 2 Range.

Thunder: 1 Damage, 3 range, +1 Accuracy

Flash Freeze : 2 damage, 2 range. With spin, a target is trapped in ice, gaining the "Encased" aspect. Scene also acquires the "Icy" aspect.

### **DRAIN**

Enemies can be an excellent source of mana, and a skilled black mage can turn their power to his own ends. Drain is an attack (range 1) resisted by Faith or Presence, and any "damage" is translated into mana taken from the target and given to the black mage (so long as the target *has* the mana).

### **ELEMENTAGA**

The ultimate expression of the destructive power of black magic, the mage may now target all enemies in a zone (as

Elementa) with the effect of a single target attack (Element). Costs 3 Mana.

## **DARK KNIGHT**

Dark Knight's are sorcerer's of elemental darkness. Their reputation is a deeply tainted one, as Dark magics tempt dark actions, but the darkness was once viewed as a burden taken up by those who sought to best serve mankind.

A dark knight has a fearful presence, and may use his Dark Knight skill to provoke fear or as a social or magical defense against fear. He also may use it as a social skill when dealing with the creatures of darkness. Lastly, a Dark Knight suffers no vision penalty for non-magical darkness.

## **DARK KNIGHT STUNTS**

### **DARK AURA**

Add "Shadowed" aspect to a scene at no action cost. (Costs 1 Mana).

### **DARKBOLT**

Light weapon, range 2, drain 1, cost 1 Mana

### **DARK MASTERY**

The Dark Knight may command the minions of darkness. Creatures with the Dark aspect will not attack a Dark knight unless by spending a mana, the Dark Knight may make a leadership check against the dark creature. If successful, the creature is bound to serve the Knight for a time. Cost 1 mana for a scene, 2 for a day, 3 for a month, 4 until it is freed.

### **DARK CASCADE**

Light Weapon, AoE (1 zone), Range 3, Drain 1, Cost 3 Mana.

### **BRAND OF SHADOWS**

Each Dark Knight has a unique symbol which they may brand onto a being or creature with permanently change one of its aspects into "Dark". Doing so is a long,

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painful process, and turns the target into a monstrosity, subject to Dark Mastery. Cost 3 Mana +1 mana per aspect added to target.

### **DARK SWORD**

A lost style of Meridia, this brutal, style uses dark faith to deal deadly wounds and strengthen the user. While this is not a forbidden style, it is poorly considered in many quarters.

Faith(Dark) Style

Armor: Heavy

Weapon: Medium (Sword)

### **BLACK CUT**

The sword crackles with black energy, and the swordsman's next attack does +2 damage (effect must be invoked before attack is rolled). This attack is dark aspected. Cost: 1 mana.

### **VAMPIRE BLADE**

After the swordsman has damaged a target, he may recover one point of health per mana spent, to a maximum equal to damage dealt. (Cost: 1 mana per health)

### **DECAYING BLADE**

The dark aura surrounding the blade weakens anything it touches, allowing the blade to cleave through armor. This dark aspected attack is declared before the dice are rolled, and ignores normal armor. (Cost: 1 mana)

### **DARK AURA**

The darkness seeps from the blade and envelops the swordsman, protecting him from Dark forces and dealing grave damage to creatures of light. For the duration of the scene, the swordsman (and his attacks) are now Dark aspected.

### **RAZOR OF DEATH**

The swordsman draws great power from the damage he does. When he inflicts a consequence on, or takes out, an opponent, he drains some of their power.

**Minor Consequence** - gain 1 mana or health

**Moderate Consequence** - Gain 2 mana or health

**Severe Consequence** - Gain 3 mana or health

**Taken Out** - Fully refresh health or mana, but target is dead.

This ability is invoked before the attack is rolled, and makes the attack Dark aspected.

Cost: 1 mana

### **DERVISH**

Dervish style is a fast, brutal two weapon style, well suited to knives, though more advanced practitioners often move onto longer blades. It concentrates on efficiency and brutality, sacrificing defense in favor of getting in and quickly producing a strike.

Mundane Style

Armor: Light

Weapon: Light (dual)

### **DERVISH STUNTS**

#### **BRUTALITY – HIT THEM WHERE IT HURTS**

+1 damage, and +1 to any maneuver with a painful aspect (stunned, bleeding, racked and so on) so long as the character has a weapon in each hand.

#### **STEEL – EVERYTHING IS A WEAPON**

The dervish may now use medium bladed weapons, and also excels with improvised weapons. Anything with an edge, however small, may be used as a light weapon.

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***SLICE – ALWAYS TAKE THE SHOT***

Any time the Dervish receives spin on a maneuver, she damages the target as if with a MoS 0 hit.

***OPPORTUNIST – HIT THEM WHILE THEY'RE DOWN***

Whenever an aspect on an opponent allows a free tag, no matter \_who\_ performed the maneuver, you also receive a free tag of that aspect, if they are the target of your attack. If the aspect in question is fragile, it goes away after this extra tag.

***CHECKMATE – ALWAYS END THE FIGHT***

If a target has a consequence or appropriate aspect on him, you can tag it for effect (rather than for a bonus) to demand the target concede. They may pay FP not to, as with a compel.

**DRAGON**

The Dragon style is a surprisingly mobile style, considering its practitioners often operate in very heavy armor. The signature of this style is its incredibly high leaps, and the devastating damage that is dealt at the end of them

Mundane Style

Armor: Heavy

Weapon: Heavy (Spear)

**DRAGON STUNTS*****LEAP***

A Dragon can perform superhuman leaps with casual ease. Each point of Dragon, adds 10 feet to the normal height of a jump, and double that distance. Armor penalties do not apply to jumps.

***LUNGE***

The Dragon's mobility and reach are such that he is virtually everywhere at once. His ability to leap in and out means

spear attacks are effectively ranged (Range: 2) attacks.

***BLADE TORNADO***

The dragon seizes the spear by its shaft and spins it fast enough to transform the weapon into a blur. Used in conjunction with a full defense, it adds +1 to the Dragons defense against melee attacks, and +2 against ranged attacks.

***CASCADE OF THUNDER***

The dragon leaps into the air and comes down on his target over and over again. Take the dragon's attack bonus as a number, and make that many attacks (all targets must be within the same zone) , each with a +1 bonus. These are separate attacks and separate rolls, with the qualifier that no aspect may be used for more than one of these rolls, and its bonus applies only to one roll. This stunt may be performed only once per scene.

***DEATH FROM ABOVE***

The dragon declares his target and leaps up and out of sight. He is nowhere to be found until the next exchange, when he descends with force upon his target. While this attack is no more accurate than normal, it doubles the base damage of the Dragon's spear (+6).

**EARTH MAGIC**

The nomads of the south live close to nature, and have learned to take much of what they need from nature. Practitioners of earth magic are skilled herbalists, and may brew potions that can heal wounds, stave off infection and purge poisons. The difficulty and cost of doing so varies from potion to potion.

**EARTH STUNTS*****TRACKLESS PASSAGE***

The character and his companions and/or mount can travel overland without

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worrying about overgrowth, snow, mud or anything else they might normally have to push or slog through. Rivers must still be crossed, and large obstacles must still be climbed or gone around, but incidental obstacles are discounted. Additionally, the mage leaves no tracks, and blocks any attempt to track him (without magic) with his Earth magic skill. Costs 1 Mana per journey, +1 mana per 2 companions or mounts.

## **PRAYER FIST**

Prayer fist is an unarmed style that incorporates the four terrestrial elements and eventually all six elements into its style.

The origins of the Prayer Fist style are something of a mystery. As a truly balanced elemental style, there is no clear origin for such a sophisticated tradition. Currently, it's secrets are held by a secretive order of Andals, but they may not be the only ones.

Faith Style (All)

Armor: None

Weapon: None (Fist)

## **PRAYER FIST STUNTS**

### ***ELEMENTAL KATA***

The initiate learns the secret of constructing Prayer Wraps, the ceremonial gloves of the Prayer Fist style. These gloves are necessary for any Prayer Fist stunt which costs Mana.

Additionally, the initiate can imbue himself with terrestrial elemental power, and can give himself a terrestrial elemental aspect (Earth, Air, Fire or Water) for the duration of the scene which will also apply to his attacks. (Cost: 1 Mana).

### ***ELEMENTAL STRIKE***

The initiate can impose terrestrial elemental aspects as a result of a maneuver (Fragile with a success, sticky with spin). These aspects draw from the initiate's own essence, so he can only maintain one such aspect at a time: to place another causes an existing one to fade. For willing targets, the initiate can also attune their essence to gain an elemental aspect, but this remains subject to the same limit on the number of aspects in play. (Cost: 1 Mana)

### ***ELEMENTAL IMBUEMENT***

When the initiate imbues himself with an element with Elemental kata, the effect is much more visible, sheathing the initiate in the element, granting armor, damage and some special effect.

Air - Armor: +1, Defense +1, Movement, +3

Earth - Armor +3, Weapon +2

Fire - Armor +1, Weapon +4

Water - Armor +2, Weapon +2, Movement +4 in water

Cost: 2 Mana

### ***CELESTIAL ATTUNEMENT***

Initiate may now use celestial elements (Light and Dark) with the Prayer fist style. When imbuing:

Light - Armor +2, Weapon +1, Regen 1

Dark - Armor +1, Weapon +3, Drain 1

### ***AVATAR KATA***

The initiate combines the elements within himself, becoming a whirlwind of shifting elements. This effect is obvious and dramatic to behold. For the duration of the scene, the initiate may perform Elemental Kata at will, and elemental imbue



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once per exchange. Neither of these stunts have any mana cost. Cost: 5 Mana

## **SPELLBREAKING**

Spellbreaking is the style of anti-magic practiced by the faithless who extend their anti-magic capability to the study and destruction of magics.

Spellbreaking is a hybrid style – it's not actually a combat skill, but it supplements other styles, adding a magic-busting component to some attacks.

### **SPELLBREAKER STUNTS**

#### ***FAITHLESS BLADE***

The spellbreaker can perceive the flows of magic, and receive magical information about things studied with alertness and investigation. They may also strike magical beings, such as ghosts, which are usually immune to physical attack, at a cost of 1 mana per attack.

#### ***CURSE EATER***

The Spellbreaker may declare a block against any spell or curse. In doing so, this changes the target of the spell to the Spell Eater. If the spellbreaker's block is overcome, the spell affects the spellbreaker (though only so much as normal). Alternately, the spellbreaker may attempt to move an existing spell from its target onto himself. Cost: 1 Mana.

#### ***FAITHLESS BLOOD***

The Spellbreaker may craft wards with his own blood. By injuring himself he may mark a thing or area with his blood and extend his protection to it. For the duration of the effect, the target (or things within the target) are effectively faithless. This is a slow process, and if the wards are physically removed (such as being washed) the effect is removed. This effect lasts for a day per point of Mana used, and can affect an item for the cost of a minor

consequence, a zone for the cost of a moderate consequence or a building for the cost of a severe consequence.

#### ***ENTROPIC SHIELD***

The character's impact on magic is that it unravels even the intention of effects towards him. When dealing with combat magical effects that would normally not be impacted by faithlessness, the character's spellbreaking value replaces the usual armor value. Costs 2 mana, lasts for a scene.

#### ***FAITHLESS AURA***

The character may expand his aura to encompass a zone. So long as he is within that zone, everything within it is considered to be faithless. Costs 2 mana, lasts for a scene.

## **SWORD DANCING**

Sword dancing is a style that is less about the weapon used than the movements of the person using it. It begins with dancing steps and incorporates the signature cloak of the style for defense.

Armor: None

Weapon: Medium

#### ***ARMOR OF CLOTH***

The character's cloak qualifies as medium armor without a movement penalty. Additionally, the character may use their cloak as a light weapon

#### ***DANCER'S WHIRL***

The dancer's cloak twists and deceives opponents as to where exactly he stands. So long as the dancer is free to move, he receives a +1 to his defense

#### ***DANCER'S STEP***

The dancer's movements are uncannily graceful and his steps are inhumanly light. He may move along surfaces as narrow as an inch as if he weighed only a tenth of

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what he does. In combat, he may move one zone without penalty.

### ***DANCER'S REEL***

The dancer's mobility allows them to be everywhere at once. In an exchange, the dancer may take two actions, though the second action must be to create a block. One common use for this is to establish a defense for a target who can't protect themselves.

### ***DANCER'S WHIRLWIND***

Replaces dancer's reel - Dancer's second action may now be a move, attack, defense or maneuver.

## **UNDYING**

An undying character has severed their tie to the cycle of life, and death is no longer a natural outcome for them (though destruction can still occur). Certain faithless manage to achieve this state, though whether it is a blessing or a curse is subject to some debate. It is also said that some undying are not faithless, though how that could be possible is not known.

The Undying skill is rarely rolled. Instead, each rank of this skill means the character can take one more severe consequence.

Undying Stunts

### ***ETERNAL SUSTENANCE***

The character no longer needs food or drink to survive (though their absence is inconvenient as a certain amount of both are necessary to maintain a healthy appearance).

### ***THE VIPER'S LOVER***

The character is immune to poison and disease.

### ***AIRLESS BREATH***

While the undying's lungs still pump, it is more out of convenience than need. The character no longer needs to breathe.

### ***TIMELESS PASSAGE***

The undying no longer ages, and has no need to sleep.

### ***DEATHLESS***

The undying may secret his life away, and so long as the vessel in which it is kept is safe, he cannot be killed, no matter how thorough the means. The character will reconstitute from his very ashes within a week.

The ritual of creation of the vessel (which may be anything a person could carry) costs 5 mana.

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## APPENDIX II: SETTING

### OVERVIEW

**Gorash** - Occupying the high mountain peaks, with airship docks carved into the mountains. Strongly Russain in character. Possibly Giants, or otherwise big burly folks.

**Zarotia** - Land of 4 things: Big Prussian helmets, Theocracy, Faith Cannons and an elite submarine fleet. The terms "Believers from beneath the waves" got tossed around.

**Wanitaah** - In a fortuitous error, when the player read "Nomadic Tribesmen", a few of the listeners originally heard it as "Pneumatic Tribesmen" which spun us into the land of steampunk nomads, riding on mechanical chocobos because they'd hunted the real thing to near extinction.

**Dounder** - Human name for the Arthurian Merfolk.

**Meridia** - An Atlantis analog, whose survivors live in small cities or enclaves on the edge of the sea that sank meridia.

**Andalus** - Modeled after Moorish Spain, with intricate palaces, deep education, brutal politics, faiths in

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opposition, harsh justice, dirty peasantry and so on. The player hadn't necessarily intended it, but this really popped as a great visual signature for the game. Ornate architecture, flowing, colorful clothes and so much more.

**Skylands** - Islands rich in faith that float high above the ground. Some move, either predictably or randomly, others are fairly stationary. A few have been colonized, by nations or pirates, but most are too dangerous or unpredictable for such use.

**The High** - It is rumored that, above the skylands, perhaps among the courts of the stars, are lands that no man has seen. No proof exists, but the rumor has never died.

**Colinsgaard** - The formerly free city of Colinsgaard lies at the mouth of the Henn River, and is one of the largest ports of the Correa sea. It has recently fallen under Andal control, granting them a strategic foothold for further expansion to the north.

## ANDALUS

*crushing all who oppose them, for their own good*

Andalus is the biggest player on the block, able to deploy crushing numbers of troops and air superiority to any nation in the known world. They have conquered everything south of the Correa and north of the Meridian sea, and even now their eye scans the horizon for the next target.

Andalus is an empire, with a number of duchies owing fealty to the emperor or empress, and a hierarchy of alcaldes (land owners) beneath them. Andalus is reasonably equitable on matters of sex, as men and women may both fight and own property, though there is still some cultural bias in favor of the men.

The Andals are a passionate, dedicated people, for whom grace is the greatest virtue. Ignorant outsiders interpret that to mean that Andalusians are vain, obsessed

with appearances, and they are partly true, but they are seeing only the surface. To an Andal, grace comes from knowing and doing something so well and so fully that it speaks for itself. Every act, from the choice of a beverage to a passionate dance is an expression of the person acting, and for an act to have true grace, equal attention must be paid to the internal and external components. To be skilled but sloppy is as great a sin as to have a good appearance, but no depth - both represent a smallness of character that is to be corrected or disdained.

As a part of this, education is a passion for the Andals. While the great universities of Andalus are some of the finest in the world, they are reserved for true scholars. Outside of that, there is little in the way of formal education - instead a whole class of wandering tutors. These tutors make their living traveling from town to town or villa to villa, teaching impromptu classes in whatever the tutor excels at. Tutors of renown can make a rich living as they are enthusiastically sought by rich parents, but the bulk of tutors scrape by, often supplementing their incomes as musicians or messengers.

One curious element of this tutelage is that there is virtually no sense of a "private" education. To keep a teacher entirely to yourself would be the worst sort of greed, so when a tutor teaches, even if he is theoretically teaching only one student, it is usually done out in the open, where other may watch. How much attention the tutor gives to those he is not officially teaching is entirely up to the tutor, however, and when a tutor is paid, the client can expect to come first.

## ARTS

Music is the first of the arts in Andalus, though its primacy is challenged by the love of architecture, whose proponents claim it is the ultimate expression of grace

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to have a building be both sturdy and beautiful. Poetry, painting and other arts thrive as well, with the notable exception of theatre. An excellent actor is something of a paradox to the Andals - his grace comes from putting on a surface appearance with no depth, which is no grace at all. As such, Andal theatre tends towards the heavily stylized, either farces or costume rich dramas or other displays where there is no question of the actor's believability, only his entertainment value.

### **CHESS**

Andal claims (perhaps baselessly) to be the home of chess, and it appears throughout their folklore. Chess is considered the apex of grace, for on the board, the reality and the appearance are one and the same, and to be a Gentleman or Lady of Andalus and not be a skilled player is a great embarrassment indeed. In fact, the meritocratic nature of chess makes it popular among the peasantry as well, for a farmer's son who is a skilled hand with the game may find opportunities open up to him which his parents never had. Chess even serves as an entrance exam for many imperial positions.

The current age is referred to as the Andalusian Era in honor of the present Empire's glory. The rise to power of Andalus presaged the end of the Zarotian Empire that preceded it, driving the remnants of that scattered military force into the ocean depths.

### **INSPIRATIONS**

Modeled after Moorish Spain, with intricate palaces, deep education, brutal politics, faiths in opposition, harsh justice, dirty peasantry and so on. Ornate architecture, flowing, colorful clothes and so much more.

## **COLINSGAARD**

Colinsgaard, the crown jewel of the Correa, was a major seat of power during the height of the Meridian empire. When the empire collapsed, the cities defenses were maintained well enough to fend off a number of potential claimants, and it managed to maintain that independence until recently, when Andalus seized the city.

In addition to occupying the largest rivermouth on the Correa, the land around Colinsgaard has long been prized for its strategic value, forming the main overland conduit between north and south, as the western edge grows hilly and sprouts into the Gorashi mountains. For the Andals, this also represents a safe channel of transit for their airships, as the Gorashi winds are too hazardous and the skies over Correa are made dangerous by the Zarotian navy. While the Andals have not yet made any move to continue north, this development has cause quite a stir in the riverlands.

Culturally, Colinsgaard is a cosmopolitan hub, where Andal, Gorash, Zarotian and Riverland cultures have mingled for generations. There is some rivalry between Colinsgaard and Zarot regarding which city is the true jewel of the Correa, but it has been over a century since the two cities exchanged blows, and the rivalry has grown more friendly with time. Colinsgaard is generally considered a pit of sin by the Oligarchs of Zarotia, but the Zarotian expatriate population in Colinsgaard has ensured that the two cities have more cultural commonalities than the priests like to admit.

Meridia

A little over five hundred years ago, the empire of Meridia covered much of the continent, stretching from the Bladelands in the south the the edges of the Northern

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Sea in the north. The mountain fastness of Gorash and the island of Zarotia escaped their grasp, but it seemed like little could stop their expansion. Except themselves.

One night, a flash was seen across the continent and tremors literally shook the world, and where the capitol of the empire stood was only a crater, growing deeper and wider at an impossible rate. As the perimeter expanded to reach the sea, the water flowed in and drowned most of those who had survived the quake.

The fall of Meridia allowed the nations previously under their control to re-establish themselves, and the wars of opportunity that followed, often using Meridian war machines, magnified the devastation. In the end, these wars laid the foundation for the current political shape of the world. Meridian survivors established cities around the perimeter of this new sea, trying to shape a new existence both for the citizenry and for the handful of warlords clinging to old weapons and magics.

### **THE SONS OF BELIAL**

A group of Meridians who use old Meridian technology for personal gratification, satisfaction, and the pursuit of material things for the self. Without consideration for the effects of others around them. As it would be termed post Meridia, the Sons of Belial were without a standard of morality.

### **THE LAW OF ONE**

The Meridian belief in Faith that stems from a creation, regardless of who the creator(s) were. The Law of One believes that Faith is tied to one's soul and that the Creation endows a mental and spiritual projection of one's self through faith. The Standard of the Law of One is that the Soul is projected into a human during the

course of life, and that soul can be amplified and purified through the use of the Meridian sun crystals.

### **MERIDIAN SUN CRYSTALS**

In the center of important buildings in Meridia was an oval, or dome wherein the roof could be rolled back, so that the activity of Faith crystals could receive energy from the Sun or from the stars, depending on what sort of magic was being done. This was a method of mass production of items such as gears, machines, and weaponry that ran off faith. Runes would be etched from lines of fire emanating from the prisms, unique to each crystal, and the power of the crystal and of the sun or stars that it drew energy from would be imbued. Meridian airships, long since lost with the destruction of the continent, powered themselves from the vibrations caused by such crystals, limitless power drawn from the very sky that was traveled.

### **WARITAAH**

The plains are isolated from much of the rest of the world by high mountains, and are considered a wasteland by most other nations. Faith is rare, and the bladegrass that covers the plains has overwhelmed any attempts at converting it to agriculture.

### **BLADEGRASS**

Bladegrass grows in long, narrow blades, between two and four feet high. When young, it is green merely sharp, and its fat blades can be covered into something edible by those who know. As it ages, into the fall, it turns a vibrant red, giving the impressions that the plains are aflame (or perhaps drenched in blood). As it ages, it hardens and sharpens, and many of the nomads tools and weapons make use of it for its flint-hard edges.

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## **BLADECRAFT**

The nomads have also found even more uses for the bladegrass, using those small magics at their disposal which their wise men say come from the grass itself. Treated properly, the grass adapts a metal sheen and is even harder than natural. This process has allowed the nomads to become quite adept in constructing machinery, not through the forge, but by weaving the products they need, then letting them harden. How they managed to combine this with the secrets of steam is still a great mystery, but this is the basis of much of their craft, including the miraculous robochocos.

## **CHOCOBOS**

The plain was once home to mighty chocobo herds. Their iron-like legs withstood the bladegrass easily, making the plains a safe place for them to rule supreme. When the Wanitah first came to the plains, they hunted the chocobos for their meat and golden feathers, and in time, nearly drove the great birds to extinction. What happened next is subject to some debate - it is said that the plains grew angry, and prepared to smite the Wanitah from its surface, but a young warrior braved many dangers to face the Grass King, and plea for his people. The king was impressed, and offered a deal - if the Wanitah would become guardians of the Chocobos rather than hunters, he would share the secrets of the bladegrass with them. Since that day, the Chocobos have been sacred to the Wanitah, and their Robochocos are an homage to that.

In addition to the common yellow chocobos, a much rarer, red breed exists. From the days of hunting they were considered to be the most prestigious of kills on the plains. They are stronger, faster, and more aggressive than their

yellow counterparts. Now they are considered to need the most vigilant of protection. When one is spotted near a border or potentially dangerous area, often a warrior will be assigned to track it until it migrates to a safer area. Campfire childrens' tales speak of other colored birds and their magnificent powers. Depending on who's telling the story of the warrior and the Grass King, it is said that the chocobo he rode was either blue, purple, black, or white.

## **CHESS**

The Wanitah use chocobo figures as pawns, and use the Grass King and Queen instead of the 6 courts, a fact that is often held up as an illustration of their backwardness.

## **BEASTS**

The beast of the plains have never been fully cataloged, partly due to the sheer size of them, partly because the plain seems to breed oddity. One unifying factor is that the creatures of the plain have adapted in some way to the dangers of the bladegrass, either with thick armor, long legs or some other defense. This provides an extra challenge for Wanitah hunters, and has led to the development of pneumatic spears, purely to pierce the thick armor of these creatures.

The greatest danger of the plains are the Anan, the wicked weavers, tribes of intelligent spiderlike creatures whose war with the wanitah extends back as far as memory.

## **THE WANITAH PEOPLE**

While the wanitah seem to have many trappings of a stereotypical, close to the earth nomadic culture, if you scratch the surface you will find that those trappings are actually reflective of a practical, hard headed culture which simply has different

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priorities. Many of the "Superstitious trappings" of their people exist for the very practical purpose of dealing with the dangers of life in the plains. Their lack of Faith is often interpreted by others to mean that they're godless, or that they worship spirits like the King of Grass, but to most Wanitaah, the relationship with the King of Grass is pure business, and their matters of spirituality are much more private.

The Wanitaah are phenomenal weavers, limiting themselves not only to clothing, but using it in the construction of their homes, bridges and virtually anything else which must endure. This gives their workings a peculiar look, but it also means their construction tends to be lighter and more flexible than traditional means. This engineering is generally overlooked by visitors because, to their eyes, it looks crude, and they're usually far more interested in Wanitaah textiles and rope, bladegrass rope being highly valued for its strength and durability.

#### Appearance

Wanitaah clothing tends to be trim and practical, often bursing with pockets. This is not because they're incapable of producing other styles, but flowing fabrics and loose bags tend to get cut or snagged on the bladegrass. As such, thicker leathers and light armors are the order of the day.

#### ***SPRINGJACKS***

One other common piece of hardware among the wanitah are springjacks, waist-tall armored boots with tall, steam loaded feet which protect the wearer from the thickest of bladegrass, but also extend his stride drastically, allowing for fast overland travel. These are most common among those who have not earned the right to ride a robochoco, and the signature "giant feet" of the 'jacks have fueled many an odd story about the nomads.

In addition to their utility for travel, springjacks have a place in war. Wanitaah spear fighters use the great speed and titanic jumps the jack's offer to greatly improve their fighting capability.

#### Government

Government is a loose term given the nature of nomads. There are many tribes and each of these tribes generally has some leadership structure, most often peaking at an Elder or Chieftan figurehead. The head position is considered something sacred, and the position is usually inherited through blood. Some of the larger tribes have semi-permanent settlements to use as a central meeting point for various sub-groups. A territory may be occupied or considered under a tribe's rule, however there are rarely disputes over land or borders since it is recognized that the grass rules the plains in the end.

Once every 2 years, a council of elders makes a pilgrimage to a sacred plateau deep in the heart of the plains. This is said to be the place where the warrior pleaded his people's case to the Grass King. There they debate and discuss the issues current and pending which have potential impact on all of the tribes. Only the elders are allowed to climb the plateau, and this is one of the few places in the land where the grass does not grow.

#### ***FOREIGN RELATIONS***

With little central government it's often difficult for other nations to actually make any sort of formal arrangement with the Wanitaah. With no one specific leader, at best a few tribe heads have reached the occasional agreement. Additionally, most nations see little use in the plains at all and don't bother.



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## **TRADE**

The main export is bladegrass related goods. Often tribes will send a small group out to trade once a season or so, exchanging various crafted items for things not readily available in the plains. Exotic spices, faith related devices, and other items. In some cases where something of extreme expense is required, a robochoco may go to an outsider. It is extremely rare that anyone outside of the Wanitaah ever obtain one, and in the case that they do, it ends up as an elaborate statue before long for lack of someone to keep it in good repair.

There is some demand externally for chocobo related goods. The feathers are often sought by the wealthy to show off, and the meat is considered a rare delicacy. Some even claim healing power from various internal organs. Given the Wanitaah's charge to protect the remaining birds, the supply is very low and the cost extravagant. Most of the supply comes from foreign poachers willing to gamble on their abilities to avoid the protectors. Most Wanitaah families have some feathers which have been handed down through generations since before the reckoning of the Grass King.

## **THE ELEMENTAL COURTS**

The six elements are:

- \* Earth
- \* Air
- \* Fire
- \* Water
- \* Light
- \* Shadow

Each element has a "court" of mythical beings and places associated with it, notably knights, wizards, strongholds and a king and queen, correlating with the knight, bishop, rooks, king and queen

pieces of chess. While the kings and queens themselves are explicitly named, there are also legends and tales about some of the lesser members of the courts. As an example, The Knight of Fire, under various names, appears in many stories and the Stronghold of Eternal Ice is a stronghold of air said to appear in many tales.

<b>Element</b>	<b>King</b>	<b>Queen</b>
Earth	Titan	
Air	Tempest	Shu
Fire	Ifreet	Vesta
Water	Leviathan	Hydra
Light	Sol	Lun
Shadow	Nox	

## **THE ELEMENTS AND CHESS**

Chess is the greatest of games, it's origins shrouded in mystery, but it is a tool of kings and a tester of men, possessed of a long and storied history. Chess is the battle between the courts, and when players sit down, each must choose a court to represent, in the form of the king they select (though aficionados have been known to have entire sets carved for each court). Each king changes the game subtly, and the nuances of the differences between these games are the fodder for true masters.

Each player must also choose a queen, and the choice of queen is subtler still, for it alters the game as well, in ways which are not always obvious (and not always positive). A novice player will often choose a consort queen, which is to say a queen of the same court. This has the advantage of introducing no new complications, but it also allowing no benefit. A player who chooses a consort queen is showing themselves to be a novice, or very conservative.

More sophisticated players may choose an ally queen, one from another court.

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While this introduces some complications, it also offers new opportunities. A player who chooses an ally queen is announcing themselves to be an elite player, wise in the nuance of play.

Some players may opt to choose a hostage queen, a queen from the opposing court, which introduces the most complications but, at least it is said, creates the greatest opportunities. A player choosing the hostage queen is a genius or a fool, and it can be hard to tell which before the game is done.

## **FAITH**

Faith is the creator's gift to the world. It is the power of the Elements flowing freely into the world. In its natural form, it is a more essential form of one of the elements - purer air, deeper shadows, brighter sunlight and so on. In that raw form, it is full of energy and potential which can express itself in fantastic and unexpected ways.

### **FAITHCRAFT**

Gathering faith can be a tricky business. It appears in isolated places and can be difficult to transport. Faithcraft is the art of collecting and refining faith from its raw essence into something that can be used. Most commonly faith is worked into faith gems, crystalline stones of a color that clearly reflects their elemental origin.

The uses of refined faith are virtually limitless, but they tend to fall into one of two categories - power sources, or items with special qualities because they are made from faith.

### **FAITH ITEMS**

Faith may be worked into raw materials like wood, metal or cloth to alter and improve its characteristics. For example,

metal alloyed with air faith is far lighter than it would be without but is as strong as it would be. While there are a number of variations, the broad strokes are as follows.

<b>Faith Type</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
Light	Radiance
Dark	Shadowed/Drain
Air	Lighter
Fire	Heat
Water	Flexibility
Earth	Strength
Alchemy	

Alchemy is a specific sort of faithcrafting that imbues liquids with faith in various proportions for a variety of effects.

Faith Power

Faith Gems are also potent power sources, and many devices have been created which draw upon them as batteries. The most potent of devices require either gems of greater quality or prayer.

### **PRAYER**

Faith has power on its own, enough to be truly miraculous, but its true power comes in the hands of those who believe in the elemental courts and their message to mankind. Ritual and prayer can magnify the power of the faith gems to truly magnificent levels.

Faith Hunters

Faith is difficult enough to gather that there's an entire class of individuals who make their livings going into wild areas to try to harvest some. The bravest of these know that in areas rich in faith, the creatures of the area can become infused with faith, shaping them into something more primal and potent than their natural form. Such creatures, while dangerous, can be very lucrative to the hunter who brings one in, since the amount of faith that can

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be extracted from its body can prove more  
than worth the risk.