

# Symposium

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## Chapter One: Roleplaying

Talislanta is a detailed, colorful, and culturally-rich roleplaying setting, its feel and flavor a far cry from that of most other roleplaying games. Although this exotic nature and depth are among its greatest strengths, they are also the aspects of the game many new players can find overwhelming. Furthermore, the game's system is extremely flexible, and leaves a great deal to the players' and GM's judgment and creativity, especially as regards imaginative use of the Mode-based magic system. This chapter presents information that will help players and GMs new to Talislanta to get more out of their games. It includes:

- **Creative Characters:** a thorough selection of questions on Background, Personality, and Appearance designed to prompt thought and detail when creating a new Talislantan character.
- **Creative Combat:** helpful advice on how to make the most of Talislanta's fluid combat rules, and create exciting conflicts that are as much about roleplaying as roll-playing.
- **Creative Cantrips:** a step-by-step guide and example of how to create evocative and imaginative spells based on even the most seemingly mundane of ideas.
- **Creative Compendium:** useful hints and tips for players on creating and keeping a grimoire for their magically adept characters, and on using the grimoire as an involving prop as well as a record-keeping device.

### *Creative Characters*

Many players new to the Talislanta milieu feel constrained by the rich cultural details the game presents, and can find it difficult to portray their character as anything but a stereotypical member of its culture. However, the cultural details presented in the game are merely representative of the broad traits ascribed to those cultures, and just as people in the real world rarely fit a stereotype exactly, the same is true of Talislantans.

Even in cases where a character is fairly typical, many aspects of personality, not to mention background and appearance, are not mentioned in the cultural guides, such as sense of humor, personal quirks and preferences, and so on. These present any player with a wide number of ways in which to personalize the archetype they choose, without contradicting the broad cultural description if they don't wish to.

Three factors contribute to the overall quality and depth of any given character: Background, Personality, and Appearance. When creating a character it is not necessary to write chapter upon chapter, painstakingly detailing the character's life, outlook, and appearance, but by simply considering the questions put forward in this document, and writing a handful of short answers, a character can be given a life and personality beyond that of a simple archetype. Each of the three sections will present twenty appropriate questions, not all of which need be answered, and not all of which will necessarily be applicable. If possible, the player and GM should work together to create the character, ensuring it is playable and not overly disruptive to the game they wish to play.

## Background

Arguably the most important aspect of character creation, a character's background provides a sense of personal history, and existence, and it is often the character's upbringing and experiences in life that most define their personality and outlook. Remember: significant events, personages, and the like, need not necessarily be notable for good reasons; bad events can be just as memorable.

### Family

- What were the character's parent(s) or guardian like?
- Does the character have any siblings?
- Does the character have a family of their own, or did they?
- Do they ever intend to settle down if they don't?
- What about other relatives; were any memorable for any reasons?
- What is the current status of any of the character's relatives, i.e. alive, dead, missing, estranged, ill, enslaved, imprisoned, or divorced?
- Were there any skeletons in the family closet?

### Home

- Where was the character raised?
- What was the family's status in terms of wealth, social, and local standing?
- Did the family move at all?
- Does the character have a home of their own?

### Childhood/Adolescence

- What was the character like as a child/adolescent?
- Were any childhood/adolescent friends or enemies particularly memorable?
- Were any childhood/adolescence events particularly memorable?
- Did the character learn any skills as a child/adolescent?

### Professional History

- Why did the character enter the profession they did?
- How did the character receive their training?
- Did they find any of it particularly difficult or easy?
- Has the character done anything particularly notable since completing their training?
- What contacts, friends, enemies or mentors did the character make while training, or pursuing their career?

## Personality

The character's personality defines how they are roleplayed, and should be detailed bearing in mind the character's Background, as described above. Consider how the character's upbringing, family, past experiences, etc. affected their worldview, morality, and so on, and if they turned out the way they did because of, or in spite of, their Background. Consider how they fit their cultural stereotype, and how they differ from it.

### Attitudes

- What does the character like/love?
- What does the character dislike/hate?
- What is the character's attitude to sex?
- What is the character's attitude to religion?
- What is the character's attitude to magic?
- What is the character's attitude to illegal activities?
- What is the character's attitude to conflict, physical or otherwise?
- Does the character have any misconceptions/bigoted outlooks?

### Conceptions

- How does the character see themselves?
- How do other people see the character?
- If the character could be summed up in one word, what would that word be?
- What would the character change about themselves, if they could?

### Directives

- What is the character's greatest fear/worst nightmare?
- What is the character's greatest hope/dream/aspiration?
- What motivates the character?
- Is there anything the character will not do?

### Miscellaneous

- What is the character's sense of humor like?
- Does the character have any hobbies/pastimes?
- How does the character relax?
- Does the character have any mental or behavioral quirks, flaws, or aberrations?

## Appearance

The character's appearance is usually the first thing anyone notices about them, and can say a lot about their personality, profession, and background. Detailing what the character looks like gives the player a good mental

image of the character, vital in imagining scenes in the game. The character's appearance also helps other players visualize the character, and enables GMs to determine how NPCs might react to the character. However, the character's appearance need not necessarily reflect all of their qualities, although it will always reflect some; not every warrior looks grim and determined, and not every magician looks thin and bookish, for example. Also bear in mind the exotic and unusual possibilities that alchemical and magical enhancements can present when detailing a character's appearance; such enhancements can be eccentric to say the least.

### **Physicality**

- How tall is the character?
- What kind of build and proportions does the character have, and are they muscular, toned, scrawny, or overweight?
- How much does the character weigh?
- What kind of style, color, and texture is the character's head/facial/body hair, if indeed they have hair?
- What shape and color(s) are the character's eyes?
- What color is the character's skin?
- Does the character have any distinguishing marks such as birthmarks, scars, disfigurements, tattoos, or brands?
- What does the character's expression usually convey, i.e. disdain, friendliness, surliness, calm?
- What does the character's voice sound like?
- Does the character have any favorite sayings or catch phrases?
- How does the character move, walk, and carry themselves?
- What would the character like to change about their appearance?
- If the character's appearance could be summed up in one word, what would that word be?
- How would others generally describe the character's appearance?

### **Apparel**

- How does the character dress when relaxing?
- How does the character dress when they wish to make an impression?
- How does the character dress when traveling?
- How does the character dress when working?

### **Belongings**

- What item(s) is the character rarely without?
- Does the character have any particularly cherished possession(s), such as an heirloom, memento, gift, or childhood possession?

## **Creative Combat**

All too often, combat in the game consists of little more than "I hit him with my sword", "I do 13 damage", "I dodge", "I parry". With the dramatic opportunities combat presents in Talislanta, this monotonous approach fails to enliven the game, or fire the imagination. Role-playing need not stop when combat begins.

## **Description is Everything**

Combat is full of sensations. Describe the grunts and cries of combatants, the thud and clash of weapons, the expressions on individual faces, the moves opponents make, their actions and reactions, the smells and emotions.

No combatant is ever completely aware of everything going on around them in a fight. A good GM trick is to occasionally, secretly, tell one player that their character notices something another character doesn't, such as a pit their colleague may be about to step backwards into, a hidden sniper drawing a bead on their friend, an opponent blindsiding their unsuspecting compatriot, and so on, and give them a round or two to do something, even if only to quickly shout a warning. This trick can bolster the sense of camaraderie and teamwork among the players surprisingly well, and adds more dynamism to the conflict.

## **Consider the Consequences**

Only psychopaths and other miscreants enter combat at the drop of a hat. Use of force should be appropriate to the situation, and bear in mind the character's outlook on life. Like people in the real world, Talislantans are almost always aware of the possible consequences of their actions, and if their actions go counter to morality, local law, or common sense. Lethal force should only be used when faced with little recourse, unless the character is a deviant, or a native of a violent culture, such as Arim. For example, someone using a knife in a barroom brawl would be considered a sick thug, unless their assailants were also brandishing such lethal weapons. Characters who behave in violent fashion, or react with disproportionate force, should expect to be reviled, hunted, imprisoned, or executed, by local authorities, relatives and allies of their victims, and so on. Consequences are something every character should consider and expect.

## Think About the Environment

One of the most overlooked aspects of any combat, and the first that should be born in mind, is the actual location of the fight. Considering the characters' surroundings for a moment can add a whole new dimension to a conflict. Ask yourself such questions as:

- Are there potential obstacles or obstructions that can be ducked behind, jumped on, off, or over, interposed between the attack and target, or that might impede a combatant, such as boulders, tables, pillars, trees, balconies, etc.?
- Are there perils in the surroundings that might harm, kill, or otherwise inconvenience an incautious or unlucky combatant, such as a cliff-edge, open pit, lava flow, untriggered trap, or patch of ice?
- Does the environment in any way prohibit the use of certain weapons, or make their use more difficult? Some weapons, for example, require considerable space to be swung effectively, such as greatswords, so a fight in a short, narrow corridor would make their use very difficult. Similarly, fighting in close formation may make it hazardous to use some weapons, as the space needed to use them may be occupied by an ally.
- Weather conditions, such as powerful gales, thick fog, etc. can make the use of missile weapons problematic at best, and even melee combat can be effected if you can't see any opponent more than a yard away, or if a lot of flying debris, sand, etc. makes life difficult.

With a good grasp of the environment comes the ability to bring it into the conflict. Imagine how it can be used to the benefit or detriment of the combatants. Opponents can be forced towards perils, boulders can be used as cover, and so on. A Mishap on any roll during the combat may also involve the environment somehow, such as a trip or blunder into an object, suddenly finding oneself maneuvered to the brink of the lava flow, a missed attack resulting in the weapon getting stuck in a tree or pillar, etc.

Avoid getting caught up in precise details; keep the play fast and fluid. Accurate distances are not important; use vague terms such as "close", "a stone's throw away", or "right next to you", and if ranged combat or distance matters, simply make a rough judgement of how long (in rounds) it will take to cover the area, or if the attack is basically close, short, or long range. You don't even need to consult the ranges of the weapons to make such a call. Just keep things moving. Stopping to check

ranges, the amount of area someone with X SPD can cover in a single round just slows the action down.

## Beware of Bystanders

The presence of bystanders during a fight is also often overlooked. Crowds often gather to watch fights, and may goad the opponents on, and even place wagers on the outcome. Not only can bystanders get in the way, they can easily be hit by stray shots or blows, taken hostage or used as shields by nefarious individuals, or even enter the combat themselves on either side, or against both, the classic example of which is the local military or law enforcement attempting to stop the conflict and incarcerate the combatants.

Firing into any melee, whether bystanders or involved or not, is a very dangerous proposition, due to the continual movement of the combatants. Missed shots may easily hit an unintended target, such as an ally. Aside from intelligent bystanders there are always cases of animals becoming involved somehow. Herd animals may stampede, posing a threat to everyone, while a predator may leap unexpectedly into a melee, in the hopes of taking a wounded individual on the periphery of the fight. Certain motive plants can also provide an added element to a fight, especially if they are not recognized as such from the onset.

## Use Your Surroundings

The character should also exploit the environment of the fight. Many objects, such as chairs, rocks, ropes, nets, wall hangings, and pots of oil. may be used as impromptu clubs, missiles, entangling implements, incendiaries, and so on. Rugs may be pulled from under assailants, barrels of oil spilled to create slick patches, chandeliers shot down to fall on assailants below, and so on. Even an unskilled or unarmed combatant can be terribly effective if they make intelligent use of their surroundings.

## Wanton Destruction

A battle can take a serious toll on the surrounding environment, and the effects are worth thinking about. Use of fire in any form may ignite combustibles, and create a hazard. Attacks that miss their intended target may hit something else, thereby damaging it, and the use of items as cover, fighting platforms, etc. will almost certainly result in them being ruined in some way. A fight will practically always leave signs of its occurrence, even if only in the form of splashes of blood.

## Fight with Style

The majority of weapons can be used to perform a variety of strikes, in a variety of ways. Give some thought as to what form an attack takes. Is it a thrust, a lunge, a wild swing, an overhead blow, a feint, or a backhanded swipe? A weapon can even be used in unorthodox ways. A strike may be made with the flat of the blade, possibly subduing or intimidating an opponent. A staff may be used to thrust. A blow to knock out can be made with a weapon's handle or pommel. Many melee weapons can even be thrown if the situation is desperate enough.

The reach of a weapon (its comparative length) is also worth bearing in mind. A character with a notably longer weapon than their opponent (such as a halberd being used against an opponent with a sword), may not only keep their opponent at bay, and strike them first, but they may effectively prevent their opponent from attacking, if the opponent is unable to get inside the reach of their weapon. However, should the opponent with a shorter weapon manage to step inside the reach of the longer weapon, they may make its use next to impossible as well.

The sword the character bears is not their only weapon. Try and add the occasional unarmed strike into a combination of blows; it is more interesting, and can surprise an unexpecting opponent. A swift kick can force an opponent back, giving the character room to maneuver or flee, while a solid punch can stun, and a headbutt can bring you in so close that your opponent cannot bring any weapon larger than a dagger to bear.

Consider how a combatant can be taken out of the fight quickly without necessarily being gradually bludgeoned or sliced in a protracted melee. Opponents can be disarmed, tripped, pinned, grappled, thrown, knocked out, entangled, or knocked over, for instance.

Few combats should ever be to the death; only the most deeply unintelligent, insane, frenzied, or foolishly courageous combatants will continue fighting when badly wounded or outclassed. A hasty retreat is a key survival strategy for practically every living being. Particularly bloodthirsty or lethal maneuvers, such as attempts to slice an opponent's head off, pierce their eyes, or eviscerate them should be rare, and used only when dramatically appropriate. Should players continually attempt such maneuvers against every opponent, they should expect all of the NPCs they fight to respond in like fashion.

## Don't Just Stand There

The way some combats are conducted, it is hard to imagine the combatants doing much more than standing toe-to-toe trading blows. In truth, combat is continually in motion. Bear some thought as to how the characters move about, and how this can be used to advantage or disadvantage.

- Do they try and outflank an opponent, or move to a better attacking position?
- Do the combatants circle each other warily?
- Do they attempt to close in, or move away?
- How do they dodge: duck, sidestep, roll, or leap?
- Do they press an opponent, forcing them back, or yield and give ground?
- Do they charge or leap into a fight, weapon raised high, calmly walk forward, or wait for their opponent to come to them?

Once again, the environment is very important when considering the motion of the various characters. Chandeliers or ropes may be swung from, sails slid down with a dagger, pillars ran around, tables dived under, jumped on or over, and so on. Characters with the Acrobatics skill can make particularly impressive use of motion, such as cartwheeling, backflipping, somersaulting, and going into elaborate springs or rolls, although anyone can roll, leap, or dive.

Combatants who find themselves on the ground may be in peril if their opponent is still standing, and may be forced to roll or flail wildly in an attempt to avoid being struck, and provide themselves with the moment needed to regain their feet.

Motion in certain environments can add a whole new dimension, quite literally, to a fight. Airborne combats, for example, can feature attacks from above or below, diving attacks, swoops, and so on, while underwater combats also occur in three dimensions, but slow down motion, and make non-thrusting weapons far less effective.

## Keep Talking

Just because the action has started, doesn't mean the talking has ceased. Characters should engage in appropriate dialogue when fighting, hurling expletives, insults, and imprecations at opponents, shouting warnings and encouragement to colleagues, screaming battlecries, engaging in the cut and thrust of witty repartee with

like-minded antagonists, and so on. Just as players speak the words of their characters when roleplaying any other situation, they should do so in combat sections of the game.

## Combat is a Bloody Affair

The damage opponents suffer can be as detailed or vague as befits the gaming group's tastes, playing style, and campaign style.

Never simply state the amount of Damage inflicted by any blow -- describe it. Small amounts of damage comparative to the character's HPs might be cuts, nicks, grazes, or bruises, while heavy damage can be bone-crunching impacts, deep slices causing blood to flow, and so on. GMs of truly Grim campaigns may even inflict penalties on a character's actions if they are significantly hurt, and may interpret particularly damaging strikes as incapacitating or mutilating. Likewise, Heroic campaigns may seldom involve damage worse than bad cuts, or broken bones, all of which they recover from very quickly. At worst, a Heroic character might lose an eye or limb, giving them a dramatic reason to seek revenge.

Combat in a game can, and should, be as gripping and exciting as any fight scene in an action movie, and if given as much thought and effort as possible, will take its place alongside any other roleplaying scene for a sense of character and drama.

## CREATIVE CANTRIPS

Magic, in particular spellcasting, is one of the cornerstones of the Talislanta setting. The great masters of the past wove enchantments so potent that modern magicians can but marvel at their achievements. Even so, latter day magicians are still capable of producing wondrous magics, though these are but a pale shadow of the past. With magic being of such importance to the game, it is worth making it that bit more exotic, and enriching the roleplaying experience in the process. The Talislanta magic system actively permits and encourages players and GMs to create their own, unique, imaginative spells, and presents fantastic opportunities for the creative individual.

However, creating a spell, especially on the spot, can prove daunting for some players, and as a result, many spellcasting descriptions in-game can become seem dull or cliched. This need not be the case, for creating a

memorable spell requires but a little thought, and is easier than might at first be believed.

Here is a step-by-step guide:

## Intent

When creating a new spell, the first thing to do is decide precisely what you want it to achieve. This might be as simple as "Hurt my enemy at range", or as involved as "Steal the keys from the guard's belt and place them in my grasp".

## Basic Idea

Taking your Intent, and the restrictions of your Order into account, think for a moment of how it might be achieved. Take a moment to consider what the spell could possibly do. In the case of one designed to cause injury, think what things can hurt someone. For example: being cut, impaled, burnt, bludgeoned, frozen, crushed, or electrocuted.

## Describing the Spell

Suppose you decide that you want your enemy to burn in a ball of flame (in essence the classical "Fireball"). Well, now you have the idea, you can go on to describe the spell itself. Just by considering each of the following components of a spell's description, you can make it far more unique:

### Appearance

What exactly does the spell look like? What substance forms the physical aspect of the spell? A Fireball, for example, need not look like a simple ball of flame. It could look like a flaming winged skull, a fiery fist, incandescent heart, or glowing phoenix. It's still a fireball, but it need not look so basic. Also consider the color or colors of the spell; where magic is concerned you need not adhere to the expected. Why not make the fireball green, blue, purple or even pink? Giving the spell an unusual appearance is entirely permissible, providing it makes no change to the effect of the spell (in this case, burning someone).

Another part of the spell's appearance is its motion. If the spell has to cover a distance, how does it do so? Does it erupt, or does it travel? Following the fireball example, does it fly through the air, and if so, does it fly straight, spiral, or zigzag? Does it simply appear out of nowhere to engulf the target? Does it bounce or roll along the ground?

### Sound

What does the spell sound like? Sound accompanies the casting of many spells, and can range from the tinkling of bells to the rumble of thunder, from echoes of chilling laughter to the crackle and sizzle of energy. Once again, giving just a little thought to this aspect of a spell gives it much more depth, and the sound need not necessarily match the spell. Why not have your fireball sing as it flies through the air?

### Smell

The least important of the descriptive elements in most cases, describing the scent of the spell can make it seem far more real in the mind's eye. Once again, the scent of the spellcasting, if indeed there is any, can be unique or unexpected. For example, the fireball may well smell of brimstone, but it could just as easily smell of lavender, or anything else.

### Naming the Spell

Now you have decided what your spell does, and described it, it is time to give it its all-important name. Even the most mundane spell can be made exciting when given an impressive title.

Given the eccentricity and egotism of many magicians, it is hardly surprising that even the most banal of cantrips may often bear a flamboyant title. Precious few magicians, having spent weeks or months in toil creating a new spell, would then give their unique creation a humdrum name. Instead, they would make it grandiose, taking pride in their personal achievement.

Giving a newly created spell a good title is satisfying and easy. All spell-titles are composed of one or more of the following components, although two-three components is the optimum:

### Descriptor

The most vital part of any spell name informs of the spell's effects, appearance, or less commonly, results, and in many cases, a truly evocative Descriptor is often all that's needed to make a spell sound fantastical. When describing the spell, try to avoid the most mundane descriptions, and choose those less immediately obvious. For example, while "Fireball" does accurately describe the spell producing the ball of fire, it is hardly flamboyant. Take a second to think of alternate or related words that can be used to describe the same thing. In this case, such words as Flaming, Blazing, Incendiary, Conflagrating, Scorching, Burning, Searing, and Lambent, as well as Sphere, Orb, and Globe, are also appropriate substitutes for "Fire" and "Ball". "Searing Orb" sounds far more exotic than "Fireball".

### Creator's Name

A common spell-naming convention, especially as regards the more egotistical or famous creators of spells, is that of appending the individual's name to the front of the spell's title. For example, the infamous pyromancer Sassan may very well have created the Searing Orb spell, and named it "Sassan's Searing Orb".

Below is a brief list of magical luminaries responsible for creating many existing spells, along with their appropriate Orders, although one should not feel restricted to these names; there were a multitude of powerful and creative magicians, so making up a name is always a viable option.

### Wizardly Luminaries

- Archimandius - Wizardry
- Arkon - Wizardry
- Cascal - Cryptomancy, Wizardry (focus on the Illusion Mode)
- Cerene - Elemental Magic (Aquamancy - Ice)
- Drax - Necromancy
- Enchantress, the - Wizardry (focus on the Influence Mode)
- Hotan - Mysticism, Wizardry
- Ilse - Witchcraft
- Kabros - Cryptomancy
- Koraq - Cryptomancy, Wizardry
- Magian - Wizardry
- Malderon - Wizardry
- Miraja - Wizardry (Illusion specific)
- Mordante - Invocation (Demonology and Diabolism), Necromancy
- Narishna - Necromancy
- Nauticus - Elemental Magic (Aeromancy, Aquamancy)
- Rodinn - Wizardry
- Sassan - Elemental Magic (Pyromancy)
- Shaladin - Cryptomancy, Wizardry (focus on spells intended to deceive)
- thieves and protect valuables)
- Solimorrion I - Cryptomancy
- Sylan - Cryptomancy, Wizardry
- Thystram - Cryptomancy, Natural Magic
- Viridian - Natural Magic (flora based)
- Xanadas - Mysticism, Natural Magic
- Zanillo - Wizardry (focus on trickery, deception and entertainment)
- Zorion - Wizardry (focus on spells of a martial nature)

### **Embellishment**

Spell creators sometimes added certain extravagant descriptors to their spell titles, particularly if especially proud of a spell, or excessively egotistical. For example, if Sassan was particularly delighted with his Searing Orb spell, he might add such a word as Excellent, Magnificent, Superior, Superlative, Brilliant, or Triumphant, to the spell's title. It might have been named "Sassan's Triumphant Searing Orb" in this case.

### **Spell, Cantrip, or Dweomer**

Another common spell-naming convention is the actual referral to the spell as being a spell, placed before or after the main description. For example, Sassan might have named his Fireball spell, "Sassan's Searing Orb Spell" or "The Spell of Searing Orbs". Alternately, he could have chosen to use a different word, such as Cantrip, Dweomer, Enchantment, Charm, Glamour, Weird, or Incantation.

### **Mode Name**

Adding a direct referral to the type (i.e. Mode) of the spell is also a common spell-naming option. For example, Sassan might have named his Searing Orb spell, "Sassan's Searing Orb Attack", or might have substituted such words as Assault, or Strike. In the case of an Illusion spell, such words as Illusory, Phantasmal, Ephemeral, Deceptive, or False, can just as easily be used, and so on.

## **Signature Spells**

The ability to be truly individual when creating new spells means that it is quite possible for all of a magician's spells to bear some kind of personal trademark or signature, if desired, that makes all their spellcastings instantly recognizable as their work, for better or worse. For example, the spells of Moncarr the Mauve might always feature a particular red hue in some way, irrespective of the spell's appearance or effect. His "Crimson Fist of Justice" spell might resemble a clenched fist of cracking red energy, while his "Invocation of Carnelian Regeneration" might turn the skin of the individual he is healing temporarily red. A signature need not be a color, nor necessarily even a visual clue. A specific scent, sound, or other theme, is just as appropriate.

Making magic memorable does take imagination, and a little thought, but the result is always worth it, as it will entertain all concerned, enrich the game, and perhaps even garner an additional XP or two from an appreciative GM. Any semi-encephalon can say "I cast a Fireball! A ball of fire flies forth and strikes my target!",

but stating something like "I invoke Sassan's Searing Orb! A ball of vivid green flame spirals swiftly through the air, shrieking, the scent of brimstone in its wake!" makes the tired old fireball exciting, and magic as magical as it should be.

## **Creative Compendia**

Maintaining a spellbook is an integral part of playing any spellcasting character in Talislanta, and although the bookkeeping aspect can put some players off, it can be a very involving exercise.

## **Sample Spells**

Talislanta presents a variety of sample spells for each Order, and these can always be used when personal inspiration fails, or time is of the essence. Indeed, even though the sample spells have effective Levels, Ranges, etc. already worked out, it is entirely possible to ignore these factors, and simply use the description of the spell, allocating the mechanics as desired. Another way to get more use out of the sample spells is to slightly tweak the description, and give the spell a different name.

## **Preparing Spells**

Although the sample spells can prove their worth several times over, it is infinitely more rewarding to personally create spells. Creating spells in-game can be exciting, but does require some quick thinking and creativity, and can be cause for some players to panic. By spending a little non-gaming time preparing some spells, the entire spellcasting process can be speeded up significantly during play, and the pressure to create imaginative spells on the spur of the moment is notably alleviated.

It is not necessary to prepare a multitude of spells, nor is it necessary to decide on the mechanics of the spell before a game. All that is required is a description of the spell effect, and a name for the spell; the rules can be added in-game thereby ensuring the spell is appropriate to the situation at hand.

When deciding how many spell descriptions it is necessary to prepare, and what kind of spells will be needed, bear in mind the current campaign, the personality of the spellcaster, and the Modes they possess. For example, an action-packed military campaign will require more Attack Mode spell descriptions, while one based



on intrigue might require spells of the Reveal and Influence Modes. Similarly, a magician known as a practical joker will have several elaborate Illusion, Conjure, or Transform spells useful for such antics, while one famed for their attunement to nature will inevitably have a few peaceful, nature-based spells. One good guideline when preparing some sample spell descriptions is to look at the various Modes the character's Orders have bonuses or penalties for. Although it is impossible to take every game factor into account, it is advisable to prepare at least one spell description for each Mode the spellcaster possesses, or two to three descriptions for those Modes the character has Order bonuses to using, or will obviously be using a great deal in the current adventure.

After this initial investment of time and imagination, playing the spellcaster will be much easier, and far less daunting. The same spells can be used time and again by the same character, and as the character is played their repertoire of spells will be rapidly increased with the addition of spells created in-game. Merely creating a few extra spell descriptions between each session also makes life much easier for the player of a spellcasting character, and it is surprising just how large, and quickly, a character's grimoire can grow.

## **Creating and Maintaining the Grimoire**

As any experienced roleplayer knows, keeping notes can be vital to the success of a game, and scraps of paper, torn notes, and other hastily scribbled messages can be easily lost. When keeping a record of a character's spells, relying on scraps of paper to record the character's them can waste a lot of time if such pieces are misplaced.

It is worthwhile investing in an attractive notebook to act as the character's spellbook; one with an unusual cover, such as a mottled or marbled effect, or a fake leather binding, is especially appropriate. Such a notebook can even be used as a physical prop, embellished as desired with gold pen, transfers, or stickers, and need not be expensive. Treat the notebook as if it is the character's traveling spellbook, and record any prepared spell descriptions in it; use pencil when scribbling down spontaneous creations, or descriptions that lack spell mechanics, as these can easily be written in properly with ink later, and the pencil erased. Try and use the same color ink throughout the notebook to give the spellbook a more uniform look. Using a fountain pen or quill, while extremely authentic, is not necessary. Don't worry about ink blotches or errors either, as magician's

spellbooks are stereotypically replete with such marks. If possible, try and write as the character would, because doing so is a good roleplaying experience, and can provide the character with more depth.

The spellbook need not be restricted solely to the containment of the character's spells either. Magicians often scribble notes in their traveling grimoire, especially in the margins, and many also keep their journal, details of notable events, dates and times of meetings, important clues, personal theories, and so on, in them as well. Some even add sketches and diagrams of things they have seen, such as magical symbols they wish to investigate or research later. Few magicians are particularly artistic in nature, so it doesn't matter if these illustrations are rough. Physical clues, such as fragments of parchment, and letters used as props in a game can also be kept in the pages of the spellbook, or even glued in. Printing off pieces of text using the Talislan font (available on the Talislanta website) on a computer, or any number of arcane-looking fonts, can add even more realism to the grimoire, and the translated or legible text can even be printed off and glued onto the back of the page, so it can be easily read.

Just a little preparation and thought when playing a spellcaster can make the game more enjoyable for all concerned, and keeping and maintaining a notebook as if it is the character's eclectic traveling grimoire, can be one of the most enjoyable aspects of playing a spellcasting character.

## Chapter Two: New Cultures

### ***The Seven Kingdoms***

#### ***Astar***

### **The Dryad Bushes**

Dryad Bushes are among the least numerous, and most exotic, of Talislanta's multitudinous sentient beings. Attractive flowering shrubs during the hours when the twin suns caress the continent, Dryad Bushes undergo a remarkable metamorphosis when night falls, becoming nymphs of surpassing beauty.

As shrubs, they are slender and graceful, with glossy disk-like leaves and many richly scented blooms of singular hue, including lilac, crimson, sunburst yellow, soft orange, deep blue, and violet. In nymph form they are lithe and fluid of motion. Their skin is the lush green of new growth, their flowing hair akin to supple grass. Fresh leaves and blossoms are woven into their tresses, complementing large, expressive eyes, the color of their bush's flowers. Possessions mean nothing to these wild spirits, and clothing does not adorn their alluring bodies.

#### **Ancestry**

Elemental beings somewhat akin to the Woodwhisps, these nymphs spend the daylight hours in their native plane, the Green World, only venturing into the material world, and assuming humanoid form, during the hours of darkness. Their bush in the material world acts as the portal for their entry and the foundation of their physical form.

Given the female appearance of the Dryad Bushes, the lack of a male of the species, and the fact that there appears to be no logical reason for their display of female characteristics, it is widely accepted that the species was created by some unknown magician of eons past. Aeriad scholars contend that this unknown creator was the esteemed botanomancer, Viridian, who created the Dryad Bushes as a companion race suited to his rather particular tastes. For his part, Viridian only professed to have been married to such a being.

#### **Society**

Found almost exclusively in the sylvan glades and woodlands of Astar, Dryad Bushes have little in the way of organized society. They require neither food nor

sleep while in nymph form, remaining spirited and active as long as their bush is healthy. As only the most extreme weather conditions, such as damaging frost and storm-force winds, bother Dryad Bushes, they also have no need for clothing and consider the wearing of garments to be a puzzling affectation. Because their tough skin and command of natural magical forces provide them with ample means of survival, they see no need for weapons and other tools, the creation and use of which they view as wastes of time better spent in more enjoyable pursuits. Dryad Bushes learn their skills, as do other humanoids, primarily through observation, practice, and a little instruction; however, their magical proficiency is innate, rather than the result of arcane studies.

These spirits are not truly born, but multiply by means of their bush's pollination. As a result, they are generally found in small groups of around half a dozen to a dozen individuals. Dryad Bushes do not undergo their first metamorphosis until the bush has reached full maturity; there are no sapling nymphs. The mature bush seems to be an irresistible lure to the Dryad spirits of the Green World, and it is seldom any length of time before a Dryad claims the bush as its own and bonds with it.

As immortal entities, Dryads do not suffer the depredations of age, and they simply return to the Green World upon the death of their host plant. Because Dryad Bushes have been known to thrive for well over one hundred years, many of these nymphs can demonstrate an awesome command of natural magic, even if their outlook changes little over the years.

Active, energetic, and full of vitality, Dryad Bushes are social creatures and crave companionship, finding it among themselves, as well as any local Muses, Woodwhisps, or Mang. Typical Dryad Bush gatherings are festive celebrations of life, the nymphs dancing, frolicking, and clambering amid the boughs of nearby trees and otherwise luxuriating in physical existence.

Outsiders are objects of curiosity, and will be watched, teased, and flirted with according to the whimsy of these wildling spirits.

#### **Customs**

Dryad Bushes have few customs, although certain behaviors are typical of these entities.

They take an almost child-like delight in the simple pleasures of physical existence, much in the way a young Archaen adolescent might do. They throw themselves into play with vigor and abandon, chasing each other, dancing wildly, hiding and seeking, and climbing. Other times they relax and admire the beauty around them, soaking up sensations of sight, sound, smell, and touch. This innocent hedonism also expresses itself in an appreciation of sensuality, as Dryad Bushes freely dally with each other and those few outsiders that captivate their attention, such as Muses.

Despite the common view of these beings as somewhat flighty, it is unwise to underestimate them. They can be frighteningly stubborn and discerning, picking up on many of the subtle nuances that may escape the notice of others. Due to this, they are difficult to take advantage of, and they have few qualms about demonstrating their displeasure, should an individual be unwise enough to try to manipulate them. Dryad Bushes prize honesty, and the honest and open expression of feelings.

They are also possessed of all the fury of a tempest, and although they are slow to anger and more than willing to forgive minor infractions and the truly repentant, those who despoil nature will incur their ire. Enraged Dryad Bushes do not fall shy of using lethal force and every magical power at their disposal, as a few disrespectful and arrogant interlopers have discovered. Dryad Bushes that are wronged, or feel they have been wronged, display a remarkable capacity for spite.

Though curious and occasionally mischievous, these traits are far less pronounced among Dryad Bushes than they are among Woodwhisps. Similarly, Dryad Bushes also lack subtlety and any concept of selfishness or personal possession, but they are more respectful of outsiders and their bizarre customs than are Woodwhisps.

#### **Government**

While more experienced Dryad Bushes provide a little instruction to those younger than themselves, they have no social order and absolutely no concept of ranking and leadership among them. Each Dryad Bush does as she wishes, although given the fact that these entities share an almost identical outlook, they usually end up working to the same ends. In those few cases where a Dryad Bush feels she needs advice, she will most often seek the wisdom of the nearest Mang.

#### **Magic & Religion**

Dryad Bushes worship no gods but have a great deal of kinship and respect for their fellow natural spirits, in-

cluding Mang, Woodwhisps, wood elementals, and other Green World inhabitants. As wildling spirits, they have inborn powers of natural magic and utilize these instinctually. Death is incomprehensible to these immortal and ageless entities, who regard the physical form as nothing more than a shell.

#### **The Arts**

Wild dance and the creation of blossom garlands are the only art forms pursued by Dryad Bushes, though they demonstrate a deep appreciation of beauty and the natural world. They delight in the music of the Muses and have been known to stare in rapt wonder at those works of art they have encountered.

#### **Language**

Dryad Bushes speak the Sylvan tongue fluently, with a lilting or trilling voice and the carefree laugh of a young girl. Many also pick up a smattering of the High Talislan tongue following their encounters with Whisps and Muses. Dryad Bushes see little use for names, being content to accept whatever names their Muse or Whisp companions see fit to give them.

#### **Defenses**

Dryad Bushes possess ample means of defending themselves. Their natural coloration and grace enable them to hide in the woodlands with ease, while their resilient skin provides a degree of protection. However, their most potent defensive tool is their command of natural forces, and interlopers facing them have described how the woodland seems to come alive at the behest of these nymphs. Woodwhisps have also been known to fight alongside these nymphs, and their combined forces can see off even the most determined of assailants. Woodwhisps are even known to guard Dryad Bushes during the daylight hours, when these nymphs are otherwise defenseless.

#### **Commerce**

Trade and barter are alien to the Dryad Bushes, who produce nothing of value to others and have no requirements of their own. They share what little they have freely and are more than willing to aid others in genuine need.

#### **Worldview**

Dryad Bushes see the physical world as a place of experiences to be savored. The pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment fills their nightly endeavors, and anything new is investigated with fascination, tempered with but a little intelligent caution. Due to the obvious limitation presented by their metamorphosis into the form of a normal shrub during the day, with its requisite need for

soil into which to sink its roots, their ability to travel is severely curtailed, however much these gregarious beings might wish otherwise. As a result, few Dryad Bushes have ever experienced anything beyond the bounds of their woodland home.

## The Woodwhisps

Woodwhisps are tiny slender humanoids, four to six inches in height. Genderless creatures, they have large iridescent butterfly wings, a shock of vivid green hair, long sinuous tails, and only three digits on each hand and two toes on each foot. Their features are impish and expressive, with large sapphire or emerald eyes, wide mouths, and long pointed ears. Their skin is verdant green in Spring and Median, darkening to soft brown in the Fall. They eschew attire of any sort.

### Ancestry

Woodwhisps are a race of minor plant elementals from the Green World who are voluntarily born of trees into corporeal form in order to experience physical existence. They are related to the Waterwhisps, those born of aquatic plants, and Nightwhisps, those born of fungi and other plants preferring dark and shadowed areas.

### Society

As their name implies, Woodwhisps are native to forests and woodlands across the continent, most notably Astar and Silvanus, where they dwell in small tribal units amid the boughs of the trees.

The birth of a new Woodwhisp--a process called "budding"--is a communal affair, with the local tribe gathering on the branch of a tree and coaxing the minor elemental to grow forth. Over a period of several weeks, a fresh green bud will appear, gradually growing and unfurling until it reveals itself to be a newborn Whisp. While the bud is developing, the local Woodwhisps visit it continually, whispering their knowledge and secrets to it. As a result, the newly budded Whisp already possesses much of the knowledge it will need to survive.

Woodwhisps are foragers, with pollen, nuts, berries, herbs, and certain edible blooms and fungi forming their diet. They are also extremely fond of cakes, sweetmeats, and blossom nectar, all of which they will go to insane lengths to acquire.

Those Woodwhisps native to Astar have an almost symbiotic relationship with the Muses. Recognizing the semi-elemental nature of their tall, butterfly-winged

compatriots, Woodwhisps, being considerably more mature and practical than their larger cousins, have adopted the mantle of guardianship. They gather food, provide protection, and even raise and teach the Muse children. In return, the Muses provide the Whisps with stimulating telepathic visions, companionship, and aid on tasks that require someone of considerably larger stature to perform. So strong is this partnership that individual Woodwhisps will usually accompany Muses traveling beyond the bounds of Astar, acting as translators for them and doing their best to look after their often distracted charges.

Unaging, and technically immortal, Whisps do not spend more than a fraction of their existence in the physical realm, invariably returning to the Green World after mere decades, their need for experience sated. This return results in their corporeal body curling up into a bud again, which then turns brown and crumbles.

### Customs

Woodwhisps crave companionship and excitement, and although they are considered wiser and less mischievous than other Whisps, they are still possessed of boundless curiosity and a penchant for practical jokes. These traits can be somewhat hazardous to their health, given their complete lack of subtlety and disregard for such niceties as privacy and ownership.

If irritated or bored, Woodwhisps can be excruciatingly sarcastic and can even display great ferocity if threatened or cornered. Much like newborn children, Woodwhisps experience all of their emotions as overriding extremes.

The typical Talislantan both baffles and intrigues Woodwhisps, who cannot easily grasp the often seemingly pointless mores of alien cultures. The exuberance, curiosity, and optimism of Woodwhisps lead them to approach outsiders boldly, poking their noses into every matter, touching every object, and bombarding the outsiders with questions, a situation understandably annoying to many individuals so pestered. Unfortunately, snapping at a Woodwhisp angrily will almost always result in the offending individual being singled out for incessant teasing and pranks. Should an outsider be so foolish as to actually attack a Woodwhisp, any nearby Whisps will attack en masse and without restraint, lone Whisps fleeing to gather reinforcements. Only an apology that satisfies the offended Whisp's childlike ego will result in the halt of hostilities.

Given the swiftness and agility with which Woodwhisps fly, it is of no surprise that one of the primary

skills those in Astar teach the Muse children is how to fly properly. Somewhat secondary to this is the tutoring of effective foraging techniques.

### **Government**

Although whimsical in nature, Woodwhisps do pay some credence to the oldest and wisest among them. However, they have no formal system of governance or leadership, and disputes that are not resolved through reason and compromise can lead to insults, pranks, and competitive feuding.

### **Magic & Religion**

Although not religious, Woodwhisps are respectful of older, larger, elemental spirits and are innately magical themselves. Due to their bond with their native Green World, they all instinctively know a dint or two of natural magic, although these abilities may be improved with practice and experimentation.

The concept of death as a final state is alien to these immortal beings, as they believe that the spirit cannot be destroyed and that physical death is therefore not a tragedy in any way. They believe that Muses also live on in the Green World, although they do partake in Muse funeral rites in order to ease their companions' suffering.

### **The Arts**

Notorious for their off-key, high-pitched singing and their chaotic aerial dances, Woodwhisps nonetheless appreciate beauty, be it the natural splendor of a wild moonflower or the exquisite performance of a Bodorian Virtuoso. They themselves are skilled, if practical, craftsmen, making miniature bows from flexible stems and spider silk, tiny arrows and spears with thorn tips, and woven pouches of down, grass, and silk. Such materials are also used to construct defensive snares and traps that are placed around the tribal home to deter intruders. Their lore of flora also serves them in the creation of soporific toxins, medicinal purges, and all manner of useful concoctions.

### **Language**

Woodwhisps speak whatever language is most common to the area in which they dwell, but they also demonstrate a notable aptitude for interpreting the telepathic communications of Muses. Unlike their larger kin, Woodwhisps show no disdain for verbal communication; in fact, getting a Woodwhisp to shut up can actually prove something of a challenge. Whisp names consist of a single syllable, such as Migg, Glif, and Whir.

### **Defenses**

Despite their diminutive stature, Woodwhisps are more than capable of fending for themselves. They have waged sporadic war on the sniper bugs for untold years, for reasons neither side recalls, their often brutal clashes going unnoticed by other Talislantans.

The small size of the Woodwhisps often means that they have to ward off attacks by small predators and carnivorous flora. Fortunately, their many advantages--aerobic agility and speed, natural magical ability, propensity for stealth, miniature armaments, intimate knowledge of their surroundings, and cunning use of boundary traps and snares--make a Woodwhisp tribe a force to be reckoned with.

### **Commerce**

Although Whisps make no use of coin, they do occasionally barter with--or raid--caravan bugs in order to procure blossom nectar and other foodstuffs. The Woodwhisps of Astar, however, will look after their Muse companions' financial interests, although they are seldom wise in the application of funds.

### **Worldview**

Woodwhisps view the world as a vast and exciting place, full of beauty and danger. Despite this, few leave their beloved forest homes, save in the company of a traveling Muse. They love and respect Muses, but consider other races to be equal parts fascinating and silly; most other races, for their part, view Whisps as pests, and some even resort to whispbane, serpentvine or other means of deterrence. Woodwhisps have little to do with their Waterwhisp cousins, whom they consider too mercurial, and have a fierce rivalry with their Nightwhisp kin, whom they consider too cruel.

## **THE WESTERN LANDS**

### **Werewood**

#### **The Banes**

Sleek, muscular and strangely attractive, the Banes of Werewood have coal-black skin, wild and tangled black hair, and eyes like burning embers, a disconcerting sight when viewed at night. They are vampiric predators armed with a pair of long sharp ivory fangs and rending claws. Both genders wear loincloths, as well as armbands that serve both decorative and symbolic functions.

### **Ancestry**

Thought to be a bizarre and sinister Archaen-created hybrid of Darkling, night demon, the now-extinct babbling howler, and perhaps even Ariane, Banes are feared and little understood. Although speculation still continues as to the exact components of their biological ancestry, many scholars have agreed with the postulation that Banes are neomorphs created to serve as assassins, a task to which they are extremely well-suited, both in terms of prowess and psychology.

### **Society**

Predominantly solitary in nature, Banes lair in caves and old ruins during the hours of daylight. However, contrary to the questionable theories of several naturalists, Banes are not solitary because they cannot abide each other's feeding habits or because of any inclination to prey upon each other. Rather, Banes are solitary because they need large territories to support themselves, and more Banes means more competition for food. Despite this, Banes have been known to operate in small groups in the handful of areas in Werewood where prey is plentiful, much to the consternation of those unfortunate enough to encounter such "packs."

The thrill of the hunt and kill is what drives a Bane, beyond merely providing sustenance, it also hones the Bane's skills and provides entertainment. Banes will hunt sentient individuals, regarding them as a fitting challenge, especially when one considers the fact that most trespassers into Bane territory are slavers intent on capturing female Banes or are the employees of alchemists hoping to kill a Bane in order to harvest it for alchemical components. In the experience of nearly every Bane, outsiders are just as predatory as they are. However, there is a single exception to this belief that all outsiders are predators: the Dhuna. Banes hold the Dhuna somewhat in awe for their ability to thrive within the treacherous bounds of Werewood, especially when they are so lacking in the skills of a killer. Bane folklore also speaks of occasions when the mysterious witches have aided injured Banes, freed captive ones, or blighted foolish attackers with their dark powers. As a result, no Bane will attack the Dhuna or those under their care.

Banes rely primarily on cunning while hunting and make intelligent use of their uncanny mimicry skills to lure, unnerve, and misdirect their prey. They seldom stand and fight, preferring to use any advantage they can.

When a female Bane is in season, she fills the night air with a low, hissing cry, repeating it until any nearby

males arrive. Should more than one male approach, they will often initiate a vicious brawl, with only the winner being permitted to approach the female. After mating has occurred, the male invariably returns to his own territory, leaving the female to rear the children.

Bane children are born with fangs, but they are provided for by the mother until they are mature enough to hunt for themselves.

### **Customs**

Before approaching full physical maturity, many Banes will have hunted small prey, but until they single-handedly hunt and slay a significantly dangerous creature, such as a werebeast or slaver, they are not considered adults, and males will find it difficult to gain the acceptance of females as prospective mates. As a means of displaying their maturity, it is customary for Banes to carve decorative armbands from the bones of their most challenging prey, as well as rings, earrings, and torcs from other creatures that were difficult to hunt and overcome.

### **Government**

Banes have no government or laws. When conflicts between Banes do occur, such as territorial disputes, intimidation is the usual tactic employed; with vicious fights breaking out should one of the parties involved fail to back down.

### **Magic & Religion**

Despite possessing no magical lore, Banes have, on rare occasions, displayed the somewhat unnerving capability of mimicking a magician's spellcasting perfectly, casting the exact same spell themselves. Talislantan magicians are at a loss to explain this peculiar ability, which they consider theoretically impossible. Banes consider death part of the natural cycle and a necessity in ensuring the continuation of life.

### **The Arts**

Despite their reputation as baleful monsters, Banes are keenly intelligent and self-aware, possessed of their own culture, as alien as it seems to outsiders. Although they are largely nocturnal in habit, they do not spend all of the daylight hours asleep. One craft they do practice during the day is weaving, and they pad their lairs with woven mats for warmth and comfort. Such weaving skills also serve to create the loincloths they wear, and they use thin tendrils of vine, strips of hide, fur, and grasses to produce their rough fabric. They also show some basic artistic appreciation, as can be seen in the carved bone armbands and jewelry adult Banes wear, these serving to commemorate victories and impress

prospective mates, as well as being attractive.

### **Language**

All Banes speak their own language, which consists of a combination of low sibilant hisses and intricate hand and facial gestures that resemble Sign. Scholars have pointed to this variant of Sign as further proof that Banes were created as assassins, for a silent language would certainly be beneficial when conducting such a stealthy enterprise. Captive Banes have a remarkable aptitude for learning other languages, although this is hardly surprising given their intellect and their powers of mimicry.

Bane names are expressed as short but complicated series of interlocking hand gestures, which have no translatable equivalent in any existing Talislantan tongue.

### **Defenses**

Although Banes are efficient hunters, Werewood is a dangerous place that requires them to remain constantly vigilant. The fact that they do thrive is testament to their intellect, cunning, and superior natural skills.

### **Commerce**

Banes do not trade goods among themselves, nor do they have a desire for goods or currency. However, they are themselves something of a commodity, and heavily armed slavers frequently enter Werewood to capture female Banes for sale as slaves. Several Bane body parts are also coveted by alchemists, so other enterprising individuals hunt Banes to supply that demand. There has been an increasing demand for exotic gladiators for the arenas of such nations as Hadj, and fight organizers have found captive Banes to be especially popular with their customers.

### **Worldview**

The only sentient individuals the Banes encounter with any great regularity are the Dhuna, whom they fear. Beyond this, those few others they meet seldom have the welfare of the Banes in their interests. As a result, Banes regard outsiders as predators and potential threats. Those Banes taken as slaves or gladiators have demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt to their new situations, as one would expect from such intelligent beings. Despite this, they still despise being held captive and strive to escape at every opportunity.

## ***The Wilderlands***

### ***The Aberrant Forest***

### **The Arborin**

Tall and sturdy, Arborin have frames covered in rough bark-like skin, their faces akin to strange elongated masks from which small green eyes malignantly peer. Veins like thin green tendrils crisscross their wood-like flesh. Arborin wear no garments or ornamentation, save for vine tendrils wrapped around their wrists and ankles.

### **Ancestry**

Naturalists have postulated that the Arborin are related to the Verdir, or possibly even the Mandragore.

### **Society**

Arborin tribes make no dwellings of any kind, sleeping and resting amid the trees, where they are well camouflaged. Respecting little save individual strength, Arborin males constantly vie with each other for the rights to choose the best females with whom to mate, the best branches on which to sleep, and the best share of the stump water and humus on which they live.

Tool-making within Arborin society is primitive at best, focusing on the weaving of vines to create nets and ropes, as well as the creation of crude blowpipes and containers for soporific plant toxins and foodstuffs.

These plant-folk reproduce in a manner that combines humanoid and plant activity. The female is penetrated by the male's pollen-bearing stamen, permitting fertilization. A single young Arborin then gradually grows like a shoot from the mother's back, reaching two feet in length after two weeks and sprouting its arms and head at this juncture. At this point it is ripped off the female's back and planted in the ground, where it grows roots and feeds, maturing and developing for another three weeks, at the end of which it uproots itself, a fully formed Arborin sapling.

### **Customs**

Aggressive gatherers and raiders, Arborin tribes war with each other incessantly to increase the size of their territories. Raids on their peaceful Verdir neighbors are also frequent, female Verdir being born away for sport, along with the potent hallucinogen sashes, for which many Arborin have developed a taste.

Beyond gathering food, fighting other Arborin tribes, and raiding the Verdir, Arborin tribesmen spend the rest of their waking hours patrolling their territory and fighting among themselves.

#### **Government**

Such leadership as exists within Arborin tribes is based purely on strength, with the Arborin most able to bully and physically beat the other tribe members acting as the leader. Fights for dominance are common, although these seldom result in death or permanent injury. All Arborin disputes are settled through intimidation, conflict, and bickering.

#### **Magic & Religion**

Arborin have no belief in a higher divinity, nor do they practice any form of spiritualism. Indeed, they find such notions irritating, consider themselves superior to all other life forms, and believe the Kagan to be nothing more than a myth. Their dead are merely left where they fall, and the Arborin evince no sorrow over the loss of fellow tribe members.

#### **The Arts**

The Arborin have no time for, or appreciation of, the arts, and what crafts they do practice are crudely utilitarian and practical.

#### **Language**

Arborin speak the secret language of plants and have no use for names.

#### **Defenses**

Extremely territorial, all Arborin are able to use crude clubs, blowguns, and nets with some proficiency. Despite their hatred of intruders into their domain, they rarely kill opponents outright, preferring instead to surprise and overpower them, before hanging them from the trees surrounding their territory in nets of woven vines. Such unfortunate individuals are left to hang until they starve and rot, as a warning to others who would dare to trespass.

Arborin are masters of the ambush, following targets by moving stealthily through the forest canopy, using their natural camouflage and ability to remain motionless for hours to allay any suspicions. The Arborin then drop nets, before firing a volley of toxin-laden darts and dropping down to club the drugged and entangled interlopers. If faced with powerful opposition, the Arborin will flee, only to continually plague the intruders by sniping at them and disturbing them at every possible opportunity.

Given that they dwell amid the forest canopy, the Arborin themselves are beyond the reach of most predators, with the exception of other Arborin, although they still fear the horrific Ravant and consider fire a terrible bane.

#### **Commerce**

The Arborin make no use of currency or barter, relying on strength to take what they want.

#### **Worldview**

Disdainful of all outsiders, and even of rival tribes, the Arborin have no dealings with the outside world and prefer it that way. Outsiders and rival Arborin are vigilantly guarded against, and the tribe's territorial boundaries are vigorously watched. The only non-Arborin these plant-folk have any regular contact with are the Verdir, who are the victims of many Arborin raids.

## ***The Borderlands***

### **The Skanks**

Among the most peculiar of Talislanta's intelligent species, Skanks are small lizard-like quadrupeds, with green-brown skin, antennae, and bulbous gray-brown shells of marbled calcinate. Capable of adhering to practically any surface and burrowing through soil, they are otherwise slow and ineffectual beings.

#### **Ancestry**

Given the inherent intellect of the Skank species, as well as their command of Talislan, many naturalists believe these creatures were created to serve the Archaens as entertaining and exotic pets and familiars. Although several eccentric sages have remarked on a possible ancestral connection between the Skanks and the Snipes of the Sinking Land, these claims have been dismissed as tenuous at best.

#### **Society**

Skanks inhabit most of Talislanta's wilderness areas, demonstrating a surprising degree of adaptability. Omnivorous, they subsist on roots, grubs, mosses, fungi, and lichens--all foodstuffs that do not require any particular level of speed or dexterity to acquire.

Gregarious entities with fevered imaginations, Skanks gather to exchange gossip, weave tales, and flirt with potential mates. In all cases, Skanks are prone to embellishing their gossip and tales, and they can prove extremely flamboyant and inventive in this regard.



Skanks mate frequently and with great tenderness, primarily as a means of recreation, for the females may choose when they wish to conceive. Only when deep mutual respect and admiration is expressed by both partners, do Skanks enter a monogamous bond and raise hatchlings, both parents striving to tutor and provide for the hatchlings after they emerge following their two-month incubation period. The female typically lays one or two eggs, and Skanks take two years to reach full maturity, during which time they absorb their parents' teachings with astounding speed.

#### **Customs**

Considering their lives are somewhat dull and uninspiring, Skanks are driven by their inquisitiveness to seek out any news and information they can. Skanks will commonly approach any seemingly non-hostile travelers, politely offering their knowledge of the local area, plus whatever news and gossip they are privy to, in exchange for further news, gossip, and interesting or exciting tales. Although this exchange of information can benefit both parties, it is unwise to place any great faith in the veracity of a Skank's information.

#### **Government**

Content to live on their own, individual terms, Skanks seldom encounter anything that needs to be addressed by all of the local Skanks as a whole. In extremely rare cases, they will debate the matter at hand and vote on which course of action to take.

#### **Magic & Religion**

Skanks have no organized concept of religion nor common belief in any higher entity. Given that much of their private time is spent pondering many aspects of life, individual Skanks may express rather unique views on religion and existence, although even these viewpoints are seldom immutable.

Magic is considered extremely enticing--although Skanks possess no magical tradition to speak of--and they will investigate anything obviously magical with unbridled fascination and excitement. In a few rare instances, eccentric magicians have taken Skanks as familiars (Skanks prefer the term "aides"), and in such cases Skanks have even demonstrated some aptitude for the arcane arts themselves.

Many Skanks fear death and grieve deeply when a friend or loved one perishes. Such a bereaved Skank is likely to wail and weep for days over the loss, comforted only slightly by the happy tales other Skanks tell of the lost Skank's life.

#### **The Arts**

Beyond their love of storytelling, Skanks have no particular artistic inclinations, talents, or aspirations, although they have been known to sing--badly, in the opinion of most non-Skanks.

#### **Language**

All Skanks are fluent in Low Talislan, which their high, squeaky voices render almost comical. They also tend to acquire a dint or two of other tongues through their interactions with travelers from far-flung lands. Skank names have a peculiar "pipping" rhythm, such as Bibbiot, Sissipi, Tipoppin, and Ribbibo.

#### **Defenses**

The Skanks' uncanny ability to adhere to any surface enables them to exploit rock faces, trees, and the walls of ruins as safe havens. Indeed, they are even able to cling to the undersides of outcrops, ceilings, and tree limbs, without any apparent discomfort, making it difficult for all but a handful of predators to reach them effectively. Add to this their abilities to burrow into the soil and retract into their shells in the blink of an eye--the only swift movement, beyond speech, of which they seem capable--and Skanks have a notable capacity for survival, despite lacking swiftness and any natural weaponry.

#### **Commerce**

Skanks lack any use of currency or barter, as they are entirely self-sufficient on an individual level and freely share what knowledge they are privy to with other Skanks. The closest they come to "trade" is the exchange of information they engage in with travelers.

#### **Worldview**

With their sporadic contact with outsiders, as well as their propensity for inventing or embellishing news, tales, and other gossip, the Skank worldview is often far removed from reality.

## ***Continent Wide***

### **The Equs**

Prized as steeds by sentient races the continent over, Equs are distinct quadrupeds: bizarre hybrids of mammal and reptile. Equs are sleek and muscular, with scaly hide and a long tail and mane. There are four subspecies of Equs, each with its own distinct attributes. By far the most common are the sturdy and reliable Graymanes, with their dusty gray hide and widespread

distribution. The forest-dwelling Silvermanes, with their lustrous silver hides and superior speed, are the rarest and most prized of Equis, though they are somewhat lacking in durability. The alabaster-scaled Snowmanes have adapted to the frigid northern climes and are sure-footed on ice and snow, making them ideal mounts for the Mirin. Finally, there are the wasteland-dwelling Darkmanes, surly beasts with ebony scales, sharp hooves and fangs, and foul dispositions.

### **Ancestry**

Equis are natural, native inhabitants of Talislanta and have changed very little over the centuries. However, scholars have noted that very early textual references to Equis make no mention of their intellect or linguistic capabilities, leading to speculation that these traits are the result of Archaen experimentation, mutations spawned by the Great Disaster, or a rapid and inexplicable evolution.

### **Society**

Social creatures with strong herd instincts, Equis are considered to be barely intelligent by most Talislantans, who are largely ignorant of the fact that Equis are sentient, capable of speech, and possessed of their own culture and language.

This lack of knowledge concerning the intelligence of the Equis is largely the product of the Equis tendency to secrecy. Equis have little desire to end up as sideshow curiosities and prefer to keep to themselves anyway. Only the Ariane, and a few Sarista clans, have earned the trust and respect of the Equis to the extent that the creatures are openly conversational with them.

In the wild, Equis travel in herds of up to sixty individuals, with each sub-species of Equis inhabiting certain types of habitat. The Graymanes prefer open tracts of land, such as grassy plains and hills, while Silvermanes favor the shelter of woodlands, Snowmanes, the frigid tundra and snowfields of the north, and Darkmanes, the bleakest of wastelands.

They find shelter as best as they can in inclement weather and huddle for warmth when necessary. All Equis are grazing herbivores, with the exception of the Darkmanes, who take great delight in running down small rodents and other such prey.

Needless to say, most of those Equis herds "allied" with the "two-leggers"--as the Equis refer to most Talislantans--sleep in stables and are provided with fodder and water, although they are otherwise little different from their wild cousins.

Equis familial bonds are strong, even among the vindictive Darkmanes, although the latter think nothing of pursuing brutal feuds with other families in the same herd. Equis males must impress the females they wish to mate, displaying strength, skill and appropriate physical condition under intense female scrutiny. The personality of the Equis also plays a part in the attraction between prospective mates, save among the Darkmanes, whose females only respect physical power and aggression in their mates. Equis have no concept of privacy as pertaining to the act of love, which further marks them as common beasts in the eyes of most Talislantans.

Each herd is led by the strongest stallion who chose to come forward and compete for the honor of leading the herd. Once per year, at the onset of the Median season, each herd stages a competition to determine who will lead the herd for the year. The competing stallions undertake several races to determine speed and stamina, as well as tests designed to gauge their strength, such as tugs-of-war. The competition can be fierce, and fights do break out, especially among Darkmanes. The final two stallions then clash in a vicious fight, which usually results in the death of the loser. Although the weaker Equis of the two has been known to surrender, this is considered a disgrace, and the loser is banished from the herd, or torn apart in the case of the Darkmanes.

Herds allied with the two-leggers often find that the clash between stallions is prevented by well-meaning bipeds. In such cases, the Equis will attempt to hold the fight as surreptitiously as possible, or they will resort to a final test of strength if continually thwarted.

### **Customs**

Gossiping, storytelling, mating, and running are the main pastimes among the Equis, who spend the rest of the time eating and sleeping. Darkmanes also take sadistic pleasure in bullying weaker herd members, brawling, and tormenting the small animals they hunt.

The need for secrecy around two-leggers is instilled in young Equis from birth, and maintaining the illusion that they are mere animals is considered a source of pride and amusement.

Herds and individuals allied with the two-leggers take pride in the training they receive and the tasks they undertake, be they trained as war steeds, strengthened by labor, or simply required to ferry passengers. In exchange they receive food, stabling, and occasional grooming--worthy trades in the eyes of the Equis.

### **Government**

The most powerful stallion leads each herd, and his leadership is acknowledged without question in nearly every situation, although he will often heed the counsel of older, more experienced males, when necessary. In most cases, the lead stallion is expected to make his own decisions, demonstrating his capability and strength; among the Darkmanes, such demonstrations are often quite savage.

When traveling with two-leggers, Equis are generally content to play the part of "dumb animal," although they will not allow this charade to overrule their sense of self-preservation.

### **Magic & Religion**

The concepts of magic and religion are alien to the Equis, who consider such pursuits to be entirely too cryptic and time-consuming. Death is regarded as part of "the way of things" and is to be expected but not feared. When an Equis dies, its family and herd friends pause to grieve briefly in silence over the fallen corpse, before moving on. Darkmanes gloat or grieve over the fallen, depending on their loyalties, and fights break out between these rivals in such circumstances.

### **The Arts**

Lacking the manipulative abilities required to truly create anything artistic themselves, Equis nonetheless demonstrate a primitive appreciation of certain art forms. Those Equis who have had their manes and tails braided, tied in loops, dyed, or bejeweled or have had their hides painted with colorful designs by two-legger companions are considered somewhat exotic. Music is also considered to be fascinating, and no few "adventuring" Equis have quietly sung along to the songs they hear being played in the inns next to their stables.

### **Language**

The Equis language is characterized by whinnies, nickers, and head motions, and is called "Equan" by the few Talislantan scholars even aware it exists. Those Equis who can speak Talislantan, or any of the other humanoid tongues they might have learned through observing their two-legger companions, do so with remarkable clarity, as well as remarkable bluntness. Equis names reflect certain personality and physical traits of the Equis in question, such as Fleet Runner, Twisted Mane, and Stern Hoof.

### **Defenses**

Equis rely on two main factors for their defense: speed, and strength of numbers. There are few predators that an adult Equis cannot outpace, and even fewer that can

easily tackle a determined herd, although flight is always the first option in any dangerous situation. Only Darkmanes, and those other Equis trained for battle, readily stand and fight a threat.

### **Commerce**

Equis have no interest in or use for trade, barter, or currency, although their typical interactions with two-leggers are considered "trades," at least in the minds of most Equis, who trade their superior strength, speed, and ability to act as a mount or beast of burden for warm shelter, a ready supply of food, and the opportunity to see new things.

### **Worldview**

Wild Equis experience little beyond the limited scope of their life in the herd and have little desire to do so, but it is not entirely unusual for curious young Equis to grow bored and allow themselves to be "captured" by two-leggers, in order to experience life beyond the herd.

In the minds of those Equis from herds that serve as mounts or beasts of burden for two-leggers, they lead a life of luxury and excitement compared to the life they would live in the wild. In fact, these Equis erroneously believe that they have the better end of the deal than the two-leggers, which, if nothing else, demonstrates that although Equis are sentient, they are far from being as intelligent as they like to believe themselves to be.

## **The Satada**

Powerful reptilian bipeds, Satada possess sinuous necks and scaled leathery hide of a light sandy hue. Long forked tongues flicker between their fanged jaws, scenting the air, and baleful golden eyes glare out from beneath a thick ridge of scaled bone. Ivory claws adorn hand and foot, and a heavy muscular tail lashes the ground behind, as long as the Satada is tall. Only weapons and packs adorn their otherwise naked bodies.

### **Ancestry**

An ancient and malefic race, Satada are believed to be the progenitors of the Saurans and possibly the mutated descendants of the great Drakken, who once ruled the continent. The renowned naturalist, Thystram, claimed to have traced the origins of the species as far back as the Time Before Time, though this may be an exaggeration. For their part, the Satada have legends of a time when they were masters of the surface world, until they were usurped and cast down by the "Lightbearers" to dwell beneath the ground.

### **Society**

These reptilian predators are found in hot, arid regions from Kasmir and Sindar of the Seven Kingdoms to the Red Desert and the Graylands of the Kang Empire. The great range of these nomadic creatures is due to their utilization of the extensive maze of subterranean tunnels known as the Underground Highway.

Satada organize themselves in clans of between 25 and 100 individuals, including immature hatchlings, and a slave population of surface dwellers equal to approximately ten percent of the clan's numbers.

The clans wander the Underground Highway, surfacing briefly only to hunt, raid, and capture slaves before moving on again. Slaves are shackled and forced to serve the Satada as beasts of burden, menial laborers, and livestock.

Satada females come into season but once a year, at the onset of Median, and will mate only with the most powerful and cunning of males. There is no love or loyalty in these matings, just the drive to procreate. After mating, the clan makes its way swiftly to the nearest subterranean hot spring or lava flow, where the impregnated females lay their eggs, which are partially buried near the heat source. At this point, the clan camps down for two weeks to guard the hatchery until the juvenile Satada emerge. During this brief period, many unfortunate slaves may be butchered and consumed, as hunting is not undertaken while guarding the hatchery, and the newly emerged Satada must feed ravenously. The hatchlings are raised by the community as a whole and carried in the backpacks of the adults until they are old enough to walk, a month later.

Parties of Satada make regular sorties to the surface world, purposefully frequenting trade routes throughout the continent's arid regions, as these are recognized as rich sources of food, slaves, and useful goods. Satada prey on any given route for only a few days before moving on again, lest travelers become too wary to be easily ambushed. They are patient and opportunistic, and they will readily hunt any nearby animal they think they can tackle, preferring to strike with the element of surprise. Despite the claims of certain scholars, they recognize no other creatures as kin and bear an ancient hatred for all other intelligent life forms, feeding with equal relish on both warm and cold-blooded prey, including humanoids.

Prey is either eaten raw or cut into portions and smoked over a lava flow. Underground streams and lakes provide the Satada with adequate access to water.

Satada clans travel light, tying any bulkier possessions and provisions to their slaves to bear. Although the Underground Highway can present many obstacles, such as chasms, lakes, and sheer surfaces, Satada are more than capable of handling most such obstructions. Their talons, great strength, and superior coordination enable them to climb freely, and they are skilled swimmers, propelling themselves swiftly through the water using their powerful tails. Their cunning and intellect grant them the problem-solving skills necessary to overcome most other hindrances.

### **Customs**

Satada customarily settle most minor disputes with tests of strength, such as wrestling bouts. However, major disputes may result in a challenge being issued, usually in the form of a duel. Duels to the death are traditionally fought on a ring of boulders placed to encircle a pool of lava.

### **Government**

Satada make no discrimination on the basis of gender, and each clan is ruled by the most cruel, ruthless, and cunning of their number; although physical power and prowess are respected, Satada recognize the superior role of a calculating mind and the success it can garner. This chieftain usually appoints the most skilled warrior as their second, thereby cementing their position.

Although the chieftain's orders are followed without question for the most part, those leaders considered weak or foolish may find themselves constantly challenged, and those that displease their clan may be set upon en masse and torn apart.

### **Magic & Religion**

Satada consider themselves superior to all other life forms, and they regard belief in any higher being as indicative of personal weakness; humbling oneself to another is unthinkable in Satada culture. The arcane arts are roundly despised as the unnatural tools that the Lightbearers used to drive the Satada from the surface world.

The Satada spurn and mock death, believing that only the weak and misfortunate welcome it. As a result, death is regarded as a failure and as something to be inflicted upon others.

### **The Arts**

Satada appreciate but one art form: storytelling. It is customary for these reptilians to recount tales when at rest, including stories of notable deeds or failures, parables that highlight Satada virtues, and legends of the

past. Although they practice no visual art forms, they are reasonably skilled smiths and artificers, fashioning implements and weapons of fair quality from crude ore and the loot from raids. Lava pools are used as ready-made forges when need be.

### **Language**

Satada converse in an ancient variation of the Sauran tongue, and they may also speak a handful of words from common surface-dweller languages, the better to order the clan's slaves about. They also use a form of signaling, wherein they thump their muscular tails upon the ground in order to communicate over short distances.

Satada names are sibilant and harsh, reflecting their serpentine tongue. Male names begin with "Ss" (an extended hiss), such as Ssishtuk, Ssakir, and Ssertik. Female names begin with a short "S" and end with an longer "ss": Sashiss, Sarass, and Suultiss.

### **Defenses**

Satada are formidable opponents, being both coldly aggressive and physically powerful. They are also alarmingly swift and intelligent combatants, with an arsenal of natural weapons. Their patience and ambush skills can enable them to take down even superior targets, and their trademark capture-bow is a fearsome weapon. In melee, they utilize highly portable weapons that can easily be wielded in a confined tunnel, favoring daggers and short swords. They eschew armor as uncomfortable and unnecessary given their natural defenses, and their knowledge of the Underground Highway permits them to mislead or evade practically any pursuer.

### **Commerce**

Satada do not trade or barter, even among themselves. Clan members look out for each other and cooperate extensively.

### **Worldview**

In the Satada view of things, there are only Satada, prey, and those things best avoided--anything a Satada raiding party cannot overcome. They clash infrequently with Subterranooids, Gnomekin, Vajra, and Darklings, as well as rival Satada clans.

## Chapter Three: New Archetypes

### Seven Kingdoms

#### Dryad Bush Nymph (NPC)

You dwell within two worlds, resting securely in the warm embrace of the Green World while the fiery orbs of the twin suns race across Talislanta's skies, and bursting forth with unbridled joy and passion at night, when you assume the form of a winsome nymph under a dark sky lit with stars. You savor every drop of your existence, every breath, every pleasurable sensation--from the intake of pristine air to the cool kiss of dewdrops on your naked feet, from the thrill of physical motion to the rapture of physical intimacy. At your beckoning, plants sway and dance and flowers unfurl their scented petals to see the night. At your passing, Muses' eyes glitter with longing, and Mang grumble about the frivolity of passion. That you cannot see more of the world is a minor misfortune, but you are not dismayed, for there is enough to delight you for eternity in the idyllic surrounds of Astar.

**Appearance:** 5'-6', 60-120 lbs. Verdant green skin, hair like long soft grass, exquisite features, lissome physique, eyes the color of blossoms. A slender and graceful flowering shrub during the daylight hours.

**Attributes:** STR -2\*, DEX +2\*, CON +2, SPD +1\*, PER +2\*, CHA +7\*, WIL +3, INT +1\*, CR -3\*, MR +4\*, HP 14

\* Attributes in nymph form; otherwise, not applicable

**Special Abilities:** Metamorphose from plant to nymph form from dusk until dawn; although skin is smooth and supple, it has all the resilience of bark (PR 4).

**Skills:** *Natural Magic:* <3 Modes of choice> +3, Evade +2, Dance +4, Seduce +3, Herb Lore +3, Stealth +4, Climb +2, Sylvan – native, High Talislan – basic.

**Equipment:** No possessions; no wealth.

#### Woodwhisp Companion

"Aw, did the big silly hurt himself while chasing me? I'm so sorry."

The world is huge and full of things to enjoy. You recline in the branches of generous trees, supping the delicate nectar of their flowers and nibbling on their fruit. You practice the aerobatics of flight, admire the telepathic artistry of your Muse friends, and talk ceaselessly with everyone who'll listen. You delight in teasing, pranking, and infuriating the peculiar giants who inhabit this overlarge world; you know you will probably never understand them, but that doesn't mean you can't have fun trying. Even the Muses, whom you love dearly, are strange in their own way and obviously incapable of fending for themselves. This world is dangerous, too, and although it falls upon your tiny shoulders to look out for your giant cousins' interests, you are determined to protect them from harm. When angered, you unleash your full arsenal of tricks in the most malicious manner you can, and you muster the support of dozens of your fellow Whisps. Only a foolish giant would underestimate you, for you fight fiercely when need dictates it. You guard against other types of harm as well: you don't tolerate insults, and the giants are often surprised by the wit and sarcasm you can muster when annoyed by their carelessness. Most of all, you ward against boredom; you fear it above all else, as do your cousins. Luckily for you both, there is nothing you are better at fighting.

**Appearance:** 4"-6", 2-3 oz. Slender and diminutive build, green or brown skin, shock of green hair, genderless, large blue or green eyes, large pointed ears, wide expressive mouth, long sinuous tail, iridescent butterfly wings.

**Attributes:** STR -10, DEX +8, CON -1, SPD +8\*, PER +4, CHA +1, WIL -2, INT +1, CR +3, MR +3, HP 3.

**Special Abilities:** Flight; \*SPD -3 on the ground; Whisp-sized weapons inflict DR 1; Whisps count as "smaller than man-sized" targets for ranged attacks (-10 penalty to hit them).

**Skills:** *Natural Magic:* <3 Modes of choice> +3, Alchemy (Poison) +1, Aerial Combat +4, Bow +3, Evade +2, Spear +3, Dance or Song +1, Artificer +1, Weaponer +1, Guide +3, Herb Lore +3, Stealth +3, Survival +3, Traps +2, Low Talislan – native, Sylvan – native.

**Equipment:** Tiny thorn-tipped spear; tiny bow; quiver

of 20 thorn-tipped arrows; small woven pouch; material for traps; nutshell full of soporific plant toxin; no wealth (unless carrying it for a Muse companion).

## Cymrilian Stage Magician

"Prepare to be dazzled, ladies and gentlemen, as I, the Magnificent Mandrakus, perform the mystical arts of chicanery and display powers envied even by the most potent of sorcerers!"

It never ceases to amaze you how many people assume that simply because you are from Cymril, you must be a wizard, casting bolts of energy hither and yon, or spending countless days scabbling through musty old tomes. Foreigners so rarely understand that fewer than ten percent of your people possess any arcane skills whatsoever and that even fewer are capable spell-casters. As a child, you and your peers spent your hours at play pretending that you were great sorcerers. You would have given much to have become part of that elite, but as you grew older, you found that you possessed none of the requisite talent nor the wealth to bolster your chances with tutors. However, the idea of learning magic would not let you rest, and your opportunity came one day when you watched with awe as a magician entertained the crowd with seemingly impossible acts, without the use of the arts arcane. This, you decided, was a more subtle form of magic, a form you could master, and so you became an apprentice, and finally a master, of the art of producing magic without magic. It is somewhat irksome that few Cymrilians are themselves impressed by your tricks, but you have found more appreciative audiences among visitors to your city and you have found occasion to stage your performances in foreign locales.

**Appearance:** 6'-6'4", 120-160 lbs. Pale green skin and hair, golden eyes, slender build, handsome features, may alter appearance with magical enhancements (Koresians); lime green skin and hair dyed with bright iridescent colors, slender build (Pharesians).

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +2, CON 0, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA +1, WIL 0, INT +2, CR 0, MR +1, HP 19.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Weapon <choice> +2, Legerdemain +6, Oratory +3, Sideshow Talent (Contortion) +4, Sideshow Talent <choice> +3, Locks +3, Ride +4, Low Talisman – native, Archaen – basic.

**For Koresians, add:** Arcane Lore +1, Etiquette +4, Fashion +4, High Talisman – fluent.

**For Pharesians, add:** Streetwise +3.

**Equipment:** High-collared cloak and robes of spinifax in various colors with concealed pockets (Koresians); patchwork cloak and robes of bright colors with concealed pockets (Pharesians); dyed leather boots; choice of weapon; leather- and silver-bound book with hidden compartment; pouch; carved wand; quadrillion deck; embroidered sack; several chains, padlocks and keys; several small vials of smoke and sparkle powder; thieves' tools; two magical trinkets (Koresians); 30 gold lumens in gold pentacles or other assorted coins.

## Gnomekin Wayfarer

"Have seen many strange and wondrous sights within the veins of the Great Mother."

You were always among the most adventurous of your playmates, exploring new tunnels with excitement and continually winning games of "Hide-Hole." The labyrinthine tunnels became as familiar to you as Terra's all-encompassing love, and you undertook your training with eagerness tempered with responsibility. As a wayfarer, your role is of great importance to your homeland, for you strike out into the uncharted passages of the Underground Highway, mapping and exploring the depths and reporting any unusual findings to your superiors. Though you have received martial training, you are not truly a warrior, and such skills serve you as tools of defense rather than conflict. Indeed, you take pains to evade obstacles, sentient or otherwise, that could halt or slow you in your mission. Your exceptional knowledge of the tunnel network, skill in setting up tripwires and other protective snares, and talent for remaining unseen most often enable you to avoid trouble. When they fail, you are glad the crystalblade at your side is for more than mere decoration. Your life is full of uncertainty, for who knows what lies around the next twist of the tunnel? Caverns so vast as to be awesome? Caves of glittering crystals? Pools ancient and deep? An encampment of Satada? You would not trade the excitement and mystery of your profession for any other.

**Appearance:** 2'10"-3'6", 60-100 lbs. Nut-brown complexion, wide green eyes, childlike features, muscular physique, crest of soft black fur from center of forehead to small of back.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +4, CON +7, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA +2, WIL 0, INT +1, CR +3, MR 0, HP 18.

**Special Abilities:** Night vision; natural climbing ability (+5); poor vision in sunlight (PER -3) without amber cusps.

**Skills:** Crystalblade +2, Evade +4, Short Staff +2, Cartography +7, Geography +7, Guide (Underground Highway) +7, Scout +7, Stealth +4, Tracking +2, Traps +3, Climbing +5, Swim +3, Durnese – native, Low Talislan – fluent, Quan, Northron, or Sauran – basic

**Equipment:** Mossweave vest over rough linen tunic; cloak; crystalblade; short staff; amber cusps; flask of mushroom ale; backpack; scroll case; 20 sheets of parchment; pouch with vial of ink and three crystal writing quills; 50 feet of rope; grapnel; spy-tube; tools and material for making and disarming traps; 75 gold lumens in crystals and gold pentacles.

## Kasmiran Engineer

"Hmm, the structural integrity of this wall has been severely compromised, but I am certain I can reinforce it adequately enough to resist anything short of a rampaging land dragon. You speak of cost? What is cost compared to peace of mind?"

Given your culture's quite prudent preoccupation with security (or, as foreigners may say, your almost paranoid obsession with the subject), it is little surprise that Kasmir boasts some of the continent's foremost experts on fortification. You are once such expert. Just as your kin have nurtured their capital as moneylenders and trapmages, you have found it lucrative to use your skills in service to the confederation and to outsiders. Never one to turn your nose at hard work or to blanch at the thought of dirtying your hands with physical labor, you advise individuals and military bodies on the creation and repair of fortifications, both temporary and permanent, and oversee the construction of said structures. In times of peace, you design and build the fortress-like towers of your kin and similar buildings for other security-conscious individuals. In times of conflict, you work in the field, setting up temporary bases, bridges, and siege engines. Marketing and moneylending may create wealth, it is true, but you have found that your skills and hard work are like magnets to lumens. They are also sources of pride, for your creations are physical and enduring testaments to your capabilities.

**Appearance:** 4'6"-5', 70-110 lbs. Mahogany brown skin, shriveled features, hunched posture.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +1, CON 0, SPD 0, PER +1, CHA -1, WIL +1, INT +2, CR +1, MR +1, HP 19.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Spring-knife +4, Telescopic Staff +4, Engineer +6, Litigator +3, Locks +4, Traps +4, Merchant +6, Conveyance (Cart) +2, Low Talislan – native, Nomadic – native.

**Equipment:** Hooded cloak; breeches; leather tunic and apron; heavy boots; concealed coin purses; heavy brass key-ring affixed to belt via chain; telescopic staff; spring-knife; pouch of six blades; assorted engineering and locksmith's tools; locking iron-bound ledger; land lizard-drawn cart; assorted shovels, picks, and sledgehammers; four-strong Monad labor team; 1,000 gold lumens (hidden in vaults).

## Sindaran Mesa Sentinel

"Based on the calculations I have conducted utilizing the dust-settlement and erosion levels within the tracks of the twelve-strong Za party we are currently pursuing, I would estimate that they are two hours, six minutes in advance of us."

Given the immediately apparent security provided by dwelling atop such a towering edifice as a mesa, the intellectually impaired mono-encephalon might be forgiven for reaching the erroneous conclusion that your people have no further requirements in terms of defensive capabilities. Such a miscalculated judgment must be considered naive, for logic dictates that a substantial force of invaders could lay siege to a single mesa, and however slim the chances are of such an event occurring, the prudent and intelligent make allowances for such an eventuality. As a member of Sindar's Mesa Sentinel militia organization, you bolster the natural defenses provided by the geological and climatic features of your people's homeland. You reconnoiter the surrounding landscape, reporting substantial threats, observing and tracking potential hazards, and dissuading minor disturbances by means physical and persuasive. While your skills at piloting the aerial vessels known as windskiffs permit you to perform your designated duties in a reasonably secure manner, your work does on occasion necessitate more direct investigation and intervention. Consequently, it is advantageous that although you abhor physical violence as base, you pos-



sess the requisite skills and trappings to indulge in such, should circumstance require it.

**Appearance:** 7'-7¼", 180-220 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, emaciated build, row of horn-like nodules running from crown of head to back of neck, curved spur of cartilage protruding beneath chin.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX 0, CON +1, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA 0, WIL +4, INT +6, CR +3, MR -5, HP 18.

**Special Abilities:** Dual-Encephalon.

**Skills:** Alchemical Projector +5, Tactics +3, Weapon <choice> +3, Trivarian +1, Scholar Skill <choice> +3, Collector +2, Pilot (Windskiff) +4, Trade Skill <choice> +3, Guide +3, Scout +4, Survival +3, Tracking +4, Signal +3, High Talislan – native, Low Talislan – native.

**Equipment:** Cloak; loincloth (males) or caftan (females); sandals; silver earrings and necklace; wrist and ankle bracers; bandoleer pouches with ten amber-glass vials of various powders; alchemical projector (fires vials of powder); choice of weapon; Trivarian game; collection; flask of skoryx; assorted tomes; if based in Sindar, may have access to a windskiff; 1,000 gold lumens in assorted currencies and collectibles.

## Thrall Vanguard

Warfare has many complex facets, and victory comes from understanding all of them. Many outsiders think that Thralls lack subtlety, that they know only to engage their opponents face-on, but you stand as testament to your race's appreciation of all aspects of conflict, direct or otherwise. In times of war and battle, you operate as an effective advance scout for your regiment, gathering intelligence on enemy movements and numbers, serving with distinction in a cohort of archers, or engaging in bloody melee with your greatsword raised high. Tactical cunning and caution--natural parts of your engineered psyche--enable you to outflank your enemies in battle and bring them down with a swift, precise and effective assault. These same traits stand you in good stead in your homeland of Taz, for in times of peace, you hone your martial skills by hunting the fierce predators of jungle and swamp. You often emerge from the steaming jungle, bloodied but victorious, your latest conquest in tow, providing not only proof of your valor but food for your people. Scout, archer, combatant, provider: these are fitting tasks for a warrior-born.

**Appearance:** 6'8", 300 lbs. (males); 6'4", 200 lbs. (females); Hairless, devoid of pigmentation, muscular build, all members of each gender are identical in appearance, body covered with elaborate tattoos.

**Attributes:** STR +4, DEX +2, CON +4, SPD +1, PER 0, CHA 0, WIL +2, INT -3\*, CR +6, MR -5, HP 30.

**Special Abilities:** Immune to fear (magical and natural); INT +3 for tactical and combat matters and situations; unable to comprehend magic.

**Skills:** Dagger +2, Greatsword +3, Mounted Combat +3, Short Bow +4, Tactics +4, Tazian Combat +3, Weaponer +2, Scout +4, Stealth +2, Survival +3, Tracking +3, Ride +5, Low Talislan – native, Understand Tattoos – native.

**Equipment:** Loincloth; vest (females); sandals; garde (parrying armor/weapon); greatsword with shoulder sheath; short bow; quiver of 20 arrows; dagger; flask of Tazian fire-ale; marsh strider or graymane steed; 50 gold lumens in gold pentacles and assorted currencies.

## Blue Aeriad River Warrior

"The Axis River is like the trunk of the Tree of Life, and it's as vital to our people now as the Tree was to our ancestors."

Your clutch-siblings complained bitterly about your race's loss of flight, and you were no different, reveling in those times you'd glide among the great viridia trees, practicing your marksmanship and preparing to become a hunter. But something about the sparkle of the winding waters drew you to the river and away from the sky. Or maybe it was the excitement you felt when you first saw a barge fort: a majestic living vessel, vines intertwined and vivid with life, a tribute to the new world your race was forging. If the viridia trees are the heart of Vardune, then the river and its tributaries are its many veins. You travel those veins, carrying with you the wares produced by the greens and the peoples of the other six kingdoms. You bring back scintilla and gems from Jhangara, gold and amber from Mog, and iron from Arim. At other times, you patrol the Axis, wary of aggression by the Aamanians, whose ancestors drove yours from their homeland. Perching in the avir's nest atop a barge fort's tree-mast, surveying the world around you like an eager bird of prey, you know you are brother to the river, forest and sky. The devolution of your people both angers and saddens you, but you're proud of the life you've made in spite of it.

**Appearance:** 5'5"-6', 80-120 lbs. Blue skin and plumage with metallic sheen, slender stature, sharp bird-like features, crested coxcomb of feathers, vestigial wings.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +4, CON 0, SPD +2, PER +1, CHA 0, WIL 0, INT 0, CR +3, MR 0, HP 21.

**Special Abilities:** Gliding up to 50 yards, wind permitting.

**Skills:** Aerial Combat +1, Artillerist (Ballista) +3, Crescent Knife +4, Dart-thrower +4, Guard +4, Tactics +2, Tri-bow +4, Merchant +3, Pilot (Barge Fort) +5, Pilot (Viridia Barge) +4, Weaponer +1, Guide +3, Swim +3, Low Talislan – native.

**Equipment:** Short tunic, loincloth, and cloak of plain viridian linen; sandals; two crescent knives; dart-thrower; pouch of ten darts; tri-bow with five clips; belt pouch; gourd flask of vinesap; if based in Vardune, may have access to a barge fort or viridia barge; 50 gold lumens in gold pentacles and assorted currencies.

## Green Aeriad Scholar

"Our peoples both fell from our lives in the sky, but perhaps the soil upon which we landed suits us better."

Gliding among Vardune's trees, the flora and fauna on the ground below are mere shapes of color, difficult for you to appreciate. Perhaps if your people had the eyes of Gryphs it would have been different, but you only truly noticed the world below when you were forced to join it. In that way, the Great Change brought you closer not only to your friends of the plant world, but also to new friends, such as your fellow citizens of the Seven Kingdoms. It brought into your vision an unimagined beauty, and it sparked a curiosity that defines you. Just as thirst drives roots ever deeper, you are driven to delve into this world--its shapes and textures, its creatures and peoples, their histories and cultures. You could spend a lifetime among the vaults of Jalaad, studying the lore of past eras. Yet you wish also to see things with your own eyes, beyond what you have read in books. The blues are not always there to protect you, and you have learned to care for yourself and assert yourself, to speak less softly and to ask questions--too many, say some you meet. Only through questions can you come to understand the mysteries of this world you have joined and perhaps even uncover the meaning of your people's evolution.

**Appearance:** 4'10"-5'2", 70-90 lbs. Green skin and plumage with metallic sheen, slender stature, sharp bird-like features, crested coxcomb of feathers, vestigial wings.

**Attributes:** STR -3, DEX +2, CON -3, SPD 0, PER +1, CHA +1, WIL 0, INT +3, CR +1, MR +3, HP 17.

**Special Abilities:** Gliding up to fifty yards, wind permitting.

**Skills:** Crescent Knife +2, Alchemy (plant-based only) +2, Cultures +4, History +5, Horticulture +5, Naturalism +4, Scholar Skill <choice> +4, Trade or Wilderness Skills: <2 of choice> +3, Low Talislan – native, Phaedran – fluent, Language <choice> -- fluent.

**Equipment:** Short tunic, loincloth, and cloak of plain viridian linen; sandals; two crescent knives; scroll case for writings; pouches (reed pen, inkwell, five vials of plant-based concoctions); alchemical apparatus; assorted tomes; gourd flask of vinesap; 100 gold lumens in gold pentacles and assorted currencies.

## Western Lands

### Arimite Highborn

"On your knees, stinking peasant!"

You were born into a life of privilege, but it's one your family earned for you. Your forefathers staked their claim through hard work and force of arms, and your family has kept these holdings under a firm hand for generations. The peasants rent the land from your family, paying a tithe of half of all they produce. This has made your family comfortable, wealthy even, at least compared to the rest of Arim. And it has enabled you to hire knife-fighters to protect the peasants' paltry livelihoods from Druhk raiders, and your own life from the knives of Revenants. As one of the highborn, you consider most of your countrymen to be little more than riffraff, although prejudiced foreign fools, you suspect, see you as little more than an uncouth ruffian yourself. You were brought up well, given a proper education. You know about managing people and money. You've been taught the sport of knife-fighting, the noble art of swordplay, the strategy of the hunt from equus-back. You've even dabbled in the arcane arts and enjoyed the luxurious embraces of a concubine or two. Your clothes, your food, the way you speak are not those of the effete Zandir, and your manor may be too much like

a fortress for their tastes. But the whimsical idiots don't have to worry about keeping out assassins, do they? They don't know what it's like to have all that you do, and to always fear that you'll lose it.

**Appearance:** 5'2"-6'2", 90-170 lbs. Swarthy complexion, long black hair, dark eyes.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +3, CON +1, SPD +1, PER +1, CHA -1, WIL 0, INT +1, CR +3, MR +1, HP 21.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** *Wizardry or Witchcraft:* <2 Modes of choice> +1, Arimate Knife-fighting +2, Longsword +2, Mounted Combat +2, Short Bow +2, Stealth +1, Administrator +3, Money Lender +2, Etiquette +1, Ride +4, Low Talislan -, native, High Talislan - basic, Archaen or Elder Tongue - basic.

**Equipment:** Leather boots, leather gloves, leather breeches, linen shirt, and embroidered leather vest, all of fine quality; well-made longsword with tooled scabbard; two throwing knives with detailed handles; gold rings, earrings and armbands; short bow; quiver of 20 arrows; pouch; leather flask of fine wine; leather-bound spell book; fine graymane steed; 250 gold lumens in silver Exarchs.

## Arimite Hunter

"I've faced down a charging exomorph with nothing but a bow. Leave me in peace, before I demonstrate how I slew the beast with a single arrow and skinned its still twitching carcass."

Many generations of your family have roamed the rugged hills and steppes of Arim, pursuing the age-old profession of hunter and trapper. Unlike those of your people who dwell in the filth and squalor of the towns, or that paltry Exarch who believes he has some claim over you, you've remained true to the roots of your culture. The wilderness is as comfortable and familiar as your favorite bow and knife, and you face prey far more honest and easier to deal with than your urban cousins. You can move and act freely without causing offense and fearing that the Revenants will be set on you like the animals they are. The town-dwellers are happy to buy the hides you bring to market, but they don't conceal how they regard you as nothing more than a quaint throwback. Even the farmers think of you as an isolated and lonely individual. They're all fools. You possess a freedom they'll never experience: the liberty to control

your own life, free from the influence of the assassins and the so-called highborn, free of the petty bickering that often marks life in your country. You are content, for you know that your skills will always be of value and that the life of a hunter is the most honest in Arim.

**Appearance:** 5'2"-6'2", 90-170 lbs. Swarthy complexion, long black hair, dark eyes.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +3, CON +2, SPD +1, PER +2, CHA -1, WIL 0, INT 0, CR +3, MR 0, HP 24.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Arimate Knife-fighting +2, Short Bow +4, Guide +3, Stealth +3, Survival +3, Tracking +4, Traps +4, Climbing +3, Ride +3, Low Talislan - native.

**Equipment:** Fur vest; hide boots; leather breeches; armbands and earrings of animal teeth and claws; short bow; quiver of 20 arrows; two throwing knives; pouch; ball of twine; iron flask of chakos; graymane steed; 50 gold lumens in hides and silver Exarchs.

## Bane Pit Fighter

"Come, the crowds thirst for your blood, as do I."

Once you would thrill in the hunt, pitting your skills and cunning against those of your prey. You savored every delicious drop of blood you drained when finally you were triumphant. Not long after you had slain a Werebeast and carved yourself the armbands you proudly bear from its bones, your existence was shattered. The strange outsiders your mother had told you of entered your territory, crashing gracelessly through the tangles of undergrowth bearing their metal claws and nets. What followed was an intoxicating challenge where you were both predator and prey, but ultimately they were victorious, and you were bound and removed to alien lands. You found yourself a slave gladiator, forced to fight in the arenas of the outsiders, drawing blood with claws both natural and false. What little you have seen of the outsiders' lives has both puzzled and intrigued you, but you are a slave, and chains prevent you from sating your curiosity, as much as they prevent you from sating your thirst. Eager crowds gather to watch you fight these foreign creatures--Ahazu, Saurans, and many others--and they scream with delight when you feast on the blood of the vanquished. It often seems that the outsiders' need for blood is greater than your own, although perhaps not as great as your thirst for freedom.

**Appearance:** 5'10"-6'6", 130-220 lbs. Sleek and muscular physique, coal-black skin, wild black hair, eyes that glow like burning embers, fangs and claws.

**Attributes:** STR +2, DEX +2, CON +1, SPD +2, PER +5, CHA -1, WIL -3, INT +3, CR +5, MR +1, HP 20.

**Special Abilities:** Preternatural Mimicry; see clearly in even magical darkness; immunity to visual illusions; fangs (DR 4 per round from blood drain); claws (DR 8).

**Skills:** Preternatural Mimicry +1, Brawling +4, Evade +4, War Claw +4, Weapon <choice> +3, Artificer (Bone Carving) +2, Artificer (Weaving) +1, Guide +2, Stealth +5, Survival +4, Bane – native, Low Talisman – basic.

**Equipment:** Loincloth; carved bone armbands; war claw; melee weapon of choice; no wealth.

## Escaped Bane Concubine

"You call me 'savage'? What about the cruelties of your own so-called 'civilized' people?"

Being enslaved filled you with rage, but worse was to come. Not only did the outsiders take your freedom, but they tore away your claws and filed down your fangs, stripping from you the very tools of your survival. Your loathing for those who had ruined you in this manner was boundless, but you struggled to no avail. Still, your people are nothing if not cunning, and you knew that should any chance at escape present itself, you would seize it and turn chance into reality. The slavers sold you to a leering man bearing gold, who took you as an 'exotic' slave for his amusement and pleasure. It sickened you that he enjoyed it the more you fought, that he relished the pain you inflicted, nearly as much as he relished the torments he inflicted on you. You let your hate run cold and bided your time, plotting for your eventual escape, learning the tongues of your tormentors. Then, when at last the chance came, you grabbed a false claw of metal and made your escape, letting nothing get in your path. Now you are alone in a strange and hostile land, relying once again on your cunning. Though you despise the outsiders, you know you must seek allies to ensure your survival and freedom. You know you can never return to Werewood, but in many ways, this world is little different.

**Appearance:** 5'10"-6'6", 130-220 lbs. Sleek and muscular physique, coal-black skin, wild black hair, eyes that glow like burning embers.

**Attributes:** STR +2, DEX +2, CON +1, SPD +2, PER +5, CHA -1, WIL -3, INT +3, CR +5, MR +1, HP 20.

**Special Abilities:** Preternatural Mimicry; see clearly in even magical darkness; immunity to visual illusions; claws and fangs have been removed.

**Skills:** Preternatural Mimicry +2, Brawling +3, Evade +4, Weapon <choice> +2, Artificer (Bone Carving) +2, Artificer (Weaving) +1, Deception +2, Guide +2, Stealth +6, Survival +4, Bane – native, Language <choice> -- fluent.

**Equipment:** Loincloth; rough concealing hood and cloak; carved bone armbands and jewelry; weapon of choice; pouch; 20 gold lumens in stolen coins and goods.

## Wild Bane (NPC)

Stalking through shadows without a sound. Watching your prey as it continues unaware of your presence. Unnerving or lulling it with the mimicked sounds of its own kind. These things fill you with pleasure. When at last you attack--your prey stunned with shock and horror, or blissfully unknowing--you are filled with fierce exultation. You test your skill and cunning again and again, and nourishing blood is your reward. You bear the armbands of adulthood with pride and know you have earned them. You are a hunter, a shadow in the darkness. You are a Bane.

**Appearance:** 5'10"-6'6", 130-220 lbs. Sleek and muscular physique, coal-black skin, wild black hair, eyes that glow like burning embers, fangs and claws.

**Attributes:** STR +2, DEX +2, CON +1, SPD +2, PER +5, CHA -1, WIL -3, INT +3, CR +5, MR +1, HP 20.

**Special Abilities:** Preternatural Mimicry; see clearly in even magical darkness; immunity to visual illusions; fangs (DR 4 per round from blood drain); claws (DR 8).

**Skills:** Preternatural Mimicry +1, Brawling +3, Evade +2, Artificer (Bone Carving) +2, Artificer (Weaving) +1, Guide +2, Stealth +5, Survival +4, Bane – native.

**Equipment:** Loincloth; carved bone armbands; no wealth.

## Jaka Assassin

"I'm a predator; the fact that you pay me merely adds reward to the joy of the hunt."

The Jaka are often described as loners, as a people with mercenary tendencies and the ability to be cold-blooded and ruthless when it's necessary. You've known other Jaka who'd take offense at that description, but for you, it's a perfect fit. Attracted to the cities of "civilization" when you were a cub, you soon became enthralled with the urban wilderness. Here too, amid the forests of stone towers and herds of people, you quickly recognized the ancient dance of predator and prey. The strong will always feast on the weak, and you knew which role belonged to you. There were other ways to earn a living in the city, and you sometimes took on jobs as a bodyguard or bounty hunter. But as you walked the streets at night, you smelled the fear of those you passed and noticed the twitching of animals wanting to bolt. Your instincts took over, and you began to hunt, not for flesh, but for the glint of gold. Your natural aptitudes served you well, for few of your victims saw you coming, and none were ever left alive to see you leave. The spoils of the urban hunt, purses of coins and other valuables, were rewarding, but you craved greater wealth and challenges. You became a murderer for hire, and the jobs you take let you now hunt ever more dangerous prey.

**Appearance:** 5'10"-6'2", 120-180 lbs. Sleek black fur, silvery-gray mane, blazing green eyes, lithe musculature, features a cross between wolf and panther.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +3, CON +1, SPD +3, PER +4, CHA -2, WIL 0, INT -1, CR +4, MR 0, HP 24.

**Special Abilities:** Land on feet after falls of up to 30 feet; natural Stealth ability (+3); night vision; Sixth Sense; without their talismans, Jaka react to magic with INT -4.

**Skills:** Sixth Sense +5, Assassinate +4, Brawling +2, Dagger +3, Short Bow +3, Locks +2, Stealth +4, Traps +3, Underworld +3, Artificer +1, Weaponer +1, Survival +4, Tracking (by scent) +4, Ride +1, Sign - native, Low Talisman - native dialect.

**Equipment:** Vest, loincloth, leg and arm bracers (all of supple leather); talisman worn on thong around neck; short bow; quiver of 20 arrows; dagger; thieves' tools; 200 gold lumens in assorted currencies and other valuables.

## Zandir Bowman

"You want me to shoot an arrow into that target, while seated on my steed as he leaps over that fence at a gallop? For a moment there, I thought you were going to give me a challenge."

You are the bane of Zandu's enemies, galloping around the flanks of their forces, unleashing volleys of arrows as you do so, before wheeling back out of range of their retaliatory attacks. Against the overly regimented formations of your hated Orthodoxist neighbors, you are a force to be feared, beyond their ability to pin down and overwhelm. Patrolling the borders of your nation or scouting enemy encampments, your eyes are as sharp as your arrowheads. Skilled equestrians, you and your comrades are famed for your mounted archery prowess and like nothing better than to boast of your unerring accuracy over a few glasses of spiced wine. The bond you share with your sturdy graymane steed is one forged by countless hours of training and care, and together you are like the amber wasp of the Southern Rim, swift and light, but capable of delivering an incapacitating sting. Wild at work and raucous at play, you thunder through life, the wind in your hair, and your desires in your sights.

**Appearance:** 5'6"-6'2", 100-200 lbs. Copper or cinabar skin, dark hair, dark green eyes, skin enhanced with vividly colored pigments.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +2, CON +1, SPD +2, PER +1, CHA +1, WIL -2, INT 0, CR +4, MR +1, HP 20.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Brawling +1, Swordsmanship +1, Mounted Combat +5, Short Bow +5, Tactics +3, Oratory +3, Weaponer +1, Scout +3, Etiquette +2, Fashion +3, Ride +5, High Talisman - native, Low Talisman - native.

**Equipment:** Silk shirt; leather breeches; high boots; felt gloves; hair confined in silver bands; fine studded leather armor; short bow; quiver of 15 normal arrows, 1 whistler arrow, and 4 fire arrows; dueling sword; graymane steed; 75 gold lumens in Zandir crescents.

## Zandir Causidian

"Bear witness to the wretched sorrow of my client! The outrageous accusations thrust upon him are surely absurd, and it moves me to tears that we should besmirch his good name in this way!"

To live the life of a Causidian is a boon indeed, for you revel in the way you can sway your Sultan or his representatives with theatrical emotions and stirring, heartfelt speeches. It is true that justice is often overlooked in favor of the most dramatic and convincing performance, but no one ever said life was fair, and your purse and fame grow the richer for it. It was not all that long ago that you completed your apprenticeship, and after that prolonged, monotonous, and difficult period, you are only too glad to take, what you feel, are your just rewards. You are delighted to be part of the Causidian guild and fellowship, exchanging stories with your comrades and selling your services as a litigator, diplomat, investigator, and scribe. The life of a Causidian is not, unfortunately, without its perils, as the unscrupulous or disgruntled have been known to take issue with your investigations and representations, but such threats seldom dissuade you. Outsiders are often taken aback by your melodramatic manner, but they are sure to appreciate your performances when you move those standing in judgment, be they judges or the Sultan himself, to rule on their behalf or discover the all-important evidence needed to clear their names.

**Appearance:** 5'6"-6', 100-180 lbs. Copper or cinnabar skin, dark hair, dark green eyes, skin enhanced with vividly colored pigments.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX 0, CON 0, SPD 0, PER +1, CHA +2, WIL -1, INT +3, CR 0, MR +1, HP 18.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Weapon <choice> +2, Acting +4, Oratory +6, Analysis +5, Cultures +3, Diplomacy +5, Litigator +5, Interrogate +3, Streetwise +3, Merchant +3, Etiquette +5, High Talislan – native, Low Talislan – native, Language <choice> – fluent.

**Equipment:** Fine robes, cape, and boots of silk or velvet (all dyed a shade or combination of blues); hair confined in silver bands; leather-bound notebook; pouch with quills pens and crystal vial of sepia ink; choice of weapon; 150 gold lumens in Zandir crescents.

## Zandir Serparian

"Hail to you, esteemed and magnificent one! Spare a few coppers for this lowly wretch you see before you, and may the Ten Thousand bless you for your generosity!"

The streets of Zandu's cities are dangerous places, full of vermin of all varieties, where the unwary are viewed as potential targets for begging, scams, theft, and violence. You have lived your entire life on these streets, and you became one of the vermin in order to survive. Being a beggar, pickpocket, cheap prostitute, thug, or information gatherer may not be glamorous or esteemed work, but, at least in Zandu, you have some respect and the loose protection of the Serparian guild. You may well be rejects, even criminals, but you look out for each other; after all, no one else is going to. The Sultan of Beggars runs your guild, and you respect that great individual for helping to maintain the loose alliance; without it, you would have to compete with each other, making life more difficult than it is already. Those individuals in the know often trade for the information you find, and many people would be amazed at what you can uncover after rummaging through someone's litter or merely begging across the street from a building you are watching. If anything is going down on the streets, you are sure to know about it, and that is your greatest asset and means of protection. Yes, Zandu's streets are tough, but you are tougher.

**Appearance:** 5'6"-6', 100-180 lbs. Copper or cinnabar skin, dark hair, dark green eyes.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +2, CON +1, SPD +1, PER +1, CHA +1, WIL -1, INT +1, CR +1, MR +1, HP 19.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Brawling +2, Club or Knife +2, Evade +3, Oratory +2, Deception +5, Legerdemain +5, Stealth +3, Streetwise +6, Underworld +5, Thieving Skills: <3 of choice> +3, Guide (Zanth or other city) +3, High Talislan – native, Low Talislan – native.

**Equipment:** Tattered and dirty, but colorful, rags; concealed coin purse; begging bowl; small knife or walking stick "club"; 10 gold lumens in mixed coins (primarily copper and silver pieces, with maybe one or two Zandir crescents).

## Zandir Vermilion Thorn

"Come, let us love as if this night is our last."

Your life was one of struggle and hardship as a Serparian on the streets of Zandu, selling your body and stealing what you could to survive. Likely you would have died there, unknown and unwanted, your only friends your fellow beggars and prostitutes, had not a mysterious woman approached you in the quiet darkness of the eve, offering you the chance to rise above the filth to which you had become accustomed. Intrigued, you accepted her invitation and found yourself inducted into the small sisterhood of courtesan-assassins called the Vermilion Thorns. The training you found yourself facing was arduous, but it was rewarding, and you excelled at your studies. You soon found yourself inundated with clients who wished to have rivals or obstacles eliminated. As a courtesan-assassin, you beguile, entertain, seduce, and kill, concealing cold-blooded determination behind a mask of sultry gazes and honeyed smiles. The demand for your talents has led you to travel to nations the continent over. Even the Revenants grudgingly admire your talents, for while they approach their unsuspecting targets covertly, even the most well-defended of victims unwittingly invite you into their own homes, blissfully unaware of the consequences of their hospitality.

**Appearance:** 5'6"-6', 90-130 lbs. Copper or cinnabar skin, beautiful features, dark hair, dark green eyes, skin enhanced with vividly colored pigments.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +2, CON 0, SPD +1, PER +1, CHA +3, WIL -1, INT +1, CR +3, MR +1, HP 19.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Assassinate +5, Battle Fan +3, Butterfly Pin +3, Dance +4, Music +4, Oratory +2, Song +4, Locks +3, Seduce +5, Stealth +3, Etiquette +5, Fashion +5, High Talisman – native, Low Talisman – native.

**Equipment:** Fashionable, attractive, and tantalizing apparel of velvet, brocade, and silk; soft slippers; hair confined in silver bands; jewelry worth 100 gold lumens; beautiful and ornate battle fan; four lacquered butterfly pins (worn in hair); pouch; thieves' tools; 100 gold lumens in assorted currencies.

## Eastern Lands

### Kang Chirurgeon

"Stop screaming, weakling! I'm almost through the bone!"

The crimson blood of your people boils with a passion for conflict, and often that blood is spilled in the chaos of combat, leaving mighty warriors weak, unable to raise their weapons in Zoriah's name. When you were but a scrug, you quickly learned that there is no place for weakness in the Crimson Horde. To your shame, you were never quite as strong as your siblings, but at least you were not so weak as to be consigned to the Trackers. Instead, you were trained as a chirurgeon, learning to tend to the wounded in a ruthless, practical manner, sending them back out to battle as swiftly as possible. Broken bones are set with iron straps screwed into flesh and bone, lacerations crudely cleansed with arrack and stitched up with strider gut, damaged limbs amputated with a heavy saw and replaced with crude, iron prosthetics. Many of your patients scream, and they lose khir for their failing. The scars earned through battle and through your ministrations, however, may earn them enough to be cause for celebration, and many a warrior has passed around his new arm or leg amid the revelry. If a patient dies, it is due to their weakness, not to any incompetence on your part. Zoriah ensures that the weak are excised from the Crimson Horde; the body is but stronger when worthless flesh is removed.

**Appearance:** 6'-6'8", 120-220 lbs. Fiery red, leathery skin, white pupil-less eyes, brutal features, long black hair pulled back into a queue, kanjiko scars.

**Attributes:** STR +3, DEX +2, CON +2, SPD 0, PER 0, CHA -2, WIL 0, INT 0, CR +5, MR 0, HP 28.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Dagger +4, Falchion +3, Kanquan +3, Mounted Combat +3, Tactics +4, Chirurgery +3, Survival +3, Ride +4, Quan – native dialect.

**Equipment:** Black iron and strider hide partial plate armor, over quilted Mandalan silkcloth tunic; red cloak; iron queue rings; high boots; iron bracers; falchion sword; twin dragon-pommel daggers; strider hide medical pack (containing flask of arrack, roll of strider gut, iron needles, a dozen iron straps, box of iron screws, iron hammer, iron saw, and rough bandages); strider steed; 100 gold lumens.

## Quan Militiaman

"We were once a warrior race, and we can be so again."

Your people have fallen far, and you are ashamed of this ignoble failure, although looking back, you can see it was inevitable. Bloated, lazy, and arrogant, your people, the once mighty Quan, had become weak and ineffectual, a far cry from the proud, golden-skinned warriors they had formerly been. Perhaps the Silent Insurrection was in fact a blessing, for once again your people must learn to fend for themselves, rather than living off of the skill and labor of subordinates and slaves. You are driven to reclaim the fierce heritage of your ancestors, to become again warriors to be feared, and your impassioned pleas have driven several of your people to embrace that ethic. Those few of you possessing that fiery spark of anger and pride now serve to drive away the beasts that enter Tian and are even relearning the ways of the hunt. It is an arduous task you face, rebuilding yourselves in spirit and body, and at times you are dragged down by the weight of despair, but you realize it will take time to mend the crushed spirit of your people. No one ever said the path of a warrior was an easy one, but the hunger in your belly is not merely for food.

**Appearance:** 5'-6', 120-220 lbs. Sallow skin, physique lean from hunger.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX 0, CON -1, SPD 0, PER +1, CHA -2, WIL -1, INT +1, CR +1, MR -2, HP 18.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Dagger +3, Guard +1, Sling +2, Spear +3, Oratory +2, Administrator +4, Laborer +4, Survival +5, Quan – native, High Talislan – native.

**Equipment:** Makeshift spear (dagger lashed to a pole); rag sling; pouch of ten stones; dagger; tattered finery or makeshift garments; no wealth.

## Mandalan Cantor

"I ask not for payment, but simply that you open your spirit and listen with your soul."

When outsiders gaze upon you, they see nothing but a musician, a player of instruments and singer of songs. Your true calling is much deeper, and it is not your desire to simply entertain: You are instead a tool of serenity, and peace of mind begets a broader form of peace.

When you play a lilting and haunting melody on the madao or chant a soothing mantra, you do not strive to inflame the heart or rouse the senses, but to elevate the spirit and enable clarity of thought and insight. The rain-like rhythms of the mandola assist other Mandalans in their meditations and in their resolve to resist oppression. The pacifying lure of the silk harp's voice, especially when woven with the essences of mysticism, slowly cools the fiery blood within the Kang, and it pleases you to watch them gradually succumb. Even the Ispasians are susceptible, and as you perform for them, you watch the fine cracks form in their icy facades. They profess great appreciation for things of beauty, such as your music, and they are ever keen to add your services to their collection. As part of their entourage, you have traveled far and met outsiders of many nations. And thus the tranquillity you foster spreads across the Empire and the continent, with the same subtle strength that lies beneath your music.

**Appearance:** 5'6"-6', 90-170 lbs. Golden skin, almond-shaped eyes, placid features, slender build, shaven head; females wear a topknot of long black hair.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +1, CON 0, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA +2, WIL +3, INT +1, CR 0, MR +2, HP 18.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** *Mysticism:* <2 Modes of choice> +3, Mandaquan +3, Music +6, Oratory +5, Song +5, History +5, Meditation +4, Artificer (Mandalan Instruments) +5, Quan – native, High Talislan – fluent.

**Equipment:** Silkcloth robe; sandals; shoulder pouch; two musical instruments of choice; instrument-making tools; no wealth if enslaved; escaped Mandalans may have fled with up to 40 gold lumens.

## Sunra Physician

"Quickly! Apply pressure here, for his heart is forcing the venom through the canals in his body!"

The Sunra have always sought to understand the world around them, to comprehend why things work the way they do and to measure the causes and effects of actions subtle and profound. This simple curiosity and appreciation of knowledge led you to swim the currents of the physician, one of the rare Sunra to do so, and certainly one of the only sentients on the continent to pursue this scholarly path. The majority of Talislantans are ruled by superstition and fear when it comes to the in-



ner workings of the corporeal form. You, however, find the subject fascinating, and the secrets you have gleaned from respectfully examining first fish, and then the spiritless shells of your fellow Sunra, have a profound impact on the efficacious use of the healing arts. The effects of age, sickness, injury, and toxins can be discerned, and by understanding these effects, you can devise methods of overcoming them. Some patients are wary of your methods, and many Sunra are more comfortable turning to the Aquamancers for minor ailments. The truly afflicted know better than to reject your skills, however, and the need for your services draws you across the Empire. Yes, it is true you study corpses, but you do so not out of love of death, but out of love of life. You have acquired great knowledge, but you know that you have but turned the first pages of a book.

**Appearance:** 5'10"-6'4", 120-180 lbs. Skin covered with fine silvery scales, deep blue eyes.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +1, CON 0, SPD 0\*, PER +2, CHA 0, WIL 0, INT +3, CR 0, MR +1, HP 19.

**Special Abilities:** Semi-aquatic; can breathe underwater for up to 24 hours; can survive out of water for indefinite periods without discomfort; SPD +4 underwater.

**Skills:** Knife +1, Alchemy (Elixirs and Medicinal Mixtures) +4, Art (Anatomical Illustrations) +3, Song +3, Analysis (Medical Diagnosis only) +4, Anatomy +6, Astromancy +1, Cartography +1, Agriculture +1, Artisan or Artificer +1, Healer +6, Pilot (Dragon Barque) +1, Swim +9, Quan – native, High Talislan – fluent.

**Equipment:** Robes, tunic, and headband of Mandalan silkcloth; sandals; journal; pouch with quill pens and crystal vial of sepia ink; kra-hide case containing bandages, splints, small sharp knife (DR 2), gut, needles; two vials of medicinal mixture; two elixirs of choice; no wealth, if enslaved; escaped Sunra may have fled with up to 50 gold lumens in precious stones.

## **Southern Rim**

### **Mangar Look-Out**

"Haul the squirming fool up, lads! I could do with the target practice!"

Whether manning the ballista emplacements and watch-towers surrounding the hidden coves of your home port or scanning the horizon from the avir's nest of your car-

rack, your keen eyes are your greatest asset. Artillerist, archer, and look-out, you have a secure place in Mangar society, warning your crew of imminent storms and attacks, alerting them to opportunities for plunder, and providing cover as they board and capture other vessels. They trust you to search the clouds and waves for omens and stand with you when you advise your captain not to sail. You seldom wade into melee alongside your brethren, instead picking off those resisting an attack by means of well-aimed bolts, arrows, and daggers. Still, no man will call you a coward, for although you prefer the bow, you still enjoy the vicious cut-and-thrust of close combat, and many fools have died on the tips of your daggers, their faces inches from your own. Your position requires more attentiveness than that of the typical corsair, and it certainly requires you to work longer and harder, but you also realize your chances of living to enjoy your spoils are much greater. In the rare times when you do relax from your duties, you cut loose as wildly as any Mangar, reveling in drunken brawls, dangerous games of ska-wae, and the pleasures of the flesh. You may be the eyes of Mangar, but you all share the same heart.

**Appearance:** 5'8"-6'4", 130-230+ lbs. Dark brown skin, narrow eyes; shaved head and long mustache (males); long scalp-lock confined by metal ring (females); sea dragon tattoos on chest, back, or arms.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +1, CON +2, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA -2, WIL 0, INT 0, CR +5, MR -1, HP 24.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Artillerist +3, Bow or Crossbow <choice> +3, Brawling +3, Dagger +2, Guard +3, Astrology +2, Deception +3, Gambling +4, Torture +5, Appraiser (Treasure) +2, Pilot (Carrack) +3, Swim +5, Sea Nomad – native, Sign – native, Low Talislan – fluent.

**Equipment:** High boots; loose pantaloons; blouse (females only); brass armbands; earrings; belt-sash; two curved daggers; bow or crossbow of choice; quiver of 20 arrows or bolts; hide pouch for ska-wae dice; if based in the Mangar Isles, may have access to a carrack; 50 gold lumens in assorted coins and valuables.

### **Gao Troubadour**

"My music may not rival that of the Bodor, but they do not give voice to passion with song, nor can they weave such tales as to rend or elate the heart and transport the mind to vistas of wonder."

Music, song, and the spin of a tale all have their place in the heart when performed with passion, and your people have a deep appreciation of such arts. To move an audience to joy or tears, laughter or anger, is a divine feeling for all involved, and you seldom have trouble exchanging your talents for a room and a fine meal, in Gao-Din or abroad. Audience members often show their appreciation with a shower of coins; some press their charms upon you in a most pleasing manner, so you never want for a body to warm your bed. True, your purse is seldom weighty, and although you have fought off jealous spouses and taken part in pirate raids, your antics rarely rival the flair of your Sea Rogue brethren. Yet others would do well not to underestimate your standing, for your songs and tales can make the coward a hero, and the hero an immortal. It is through individuals such as you that the fame and romance of the Sea Rogues thrive or die.

**Appearance:** 5'4"-6'4", 80-240 lbs. Racially mixed; features vary according to ancestry.

**Note:** The physical characteristics and attributes listed reflect a Gao of indeterminate ancestry, the intermingled population of Gao-Din. Gao Troubadours may, instead, be of practically any specific racial background; for such a character, adjust the appearance and attributes to reflect those of a member of the selected race or species and add the appropriate native language (Sea Nomad and Low Talislan would then be "fluent").

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +2, CON 0, SPD +2, PER +1, CHA +4, WIL -1, INT +1, CR +1, MR +1, HP 19.

**Special Abilities:** Possible, according to ancestry.

**Skills:** Dueling Sword +2, Evade +2, Music +3, Oratory +4, Song +4, Deception +3, Seduce +2, Stealth +3, Underworld +3, Thieving Skill <choice> +3, Swim +3, Sea Nomad – native, Low Talislan – native, Thaecian – fluent.

**Equipment:** Diverse, flamboyant garments--including cloaks, sashes, tunics, pantaloons, bandannas, ear bangles, and high boots; dueling sword; choice of musical instrument; 25 gold lumens in assorted coins and valuables.

## Phantasian Astromancer

"If you will permit me to perform this trifling adjustment to the space-inertial nodule of the levitational, I

am certain you will find your vessel far steadier in flight, captain."

You spend your days watching the endless skies, striving to determine if the air-sailing conditions are favorable and continuing with what seems like an endless routine of repair on the aged windships of your people, vessels that should have been retired and replaced far too long ago. When you can, you scrounge together enough parts to create a new levitational, but such opportunities are becoming increasingly rare as the fortunes of your people crumble. Now, what little profits the dream merchants make are channeled directly into keeping the once majestic city of Cabal Magicus aloft, a task you perform out of pride and duty, but that you fear will one day be for naught. Though the thought pains you, you realize that your fortune, and the fortunes of your people, might now rest solely in foreign lands, for you know that your talents would be greatly acknowledged and rewarded in the nation of Cymril or perhaps, if you were less upright, in Faradun or even Rajanistan. Should you leave your beloved home, you fully intend to use the lumens you accrue to support Cabal Magicus, as many members of the Guardians Guild have done. You find it bitterly ironic that a people who sell dreams can do little but watch their own gradually die.

**Appearance:** 6'8"-7'2", 120-180 lbs. Pale skin, amber-colored hair, narrow build, delicate features.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX 0, CON 0, SPD 0, PER +3, CHA 0, WIL -1, INT +3, CR 0, MR +4, HP 20.

**Special Abilities:** Detect magic by sight at range of five feet; requires full concentration, roll at PER versus level of magic.

**Skills:** *Elemental Magic:* (Aeromancy) Enchantment, plus <3 Modes of choice> +4, Astromancy +5, Artisan (Levitationals, Windship) +5, Pilot (Windship) +2, Etiquette +5, High Talislan –native, Archaen – fluent.

**Equipment:** Long robe; conical cap; necklace of colored crystals; leather-bound spell book; metal scroll tube for sky charts; assorted tools; if based in Phantas, may have access to a windship; 20 gold lumens in assorted currencies.

## **Desert Kingdoms**

### **Dracartan Dune Trader**

"We must be as tough and enduring as the red iron runners under this great vessel, slicing through the hardships that face us with determination in the sight of Jamba."

The sands of the Red Desert are treacherous, forever shifting beneath the scorching winds, and you must be vigilant for the dangers they bring. As one of your nation's traders, you pilot the great duneships across the sands of the Red Desert and beyond, bearing your cargoes back and forth from lands as far afield as Astar. As a representative of your people, you sell goods of red iron, the wondrous product of Carantheum, using the wealth you gain to purchase water, timber and fine wares. Your job requires a steady heart and keen eye, for hazards such as sandstorms, the illusory tricks of sand demons, and the assaults of your hated foes, the Rajans, will be ever present, and unscrupulous foreign merchants present problems of their own. Complacency cannot be tolerated, for only Jamba knows what lies behind the next sand dune or merchant's smile. As one of Jamba's favored, you are acutely aware of the hardships arrayed against your people, but Jamba willing, you will not fail and let your blood stain the already crimson sands.

**Appearance:** 6'-7', 120-220 lbs. Jade-green skin, dark hair and eyes, chiseled features.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX 0, CON +2, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA 0, WIL +1, INT +2, CR +1, MR +1, HP 22.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Artillerist +2, Longsword +2, Cultures +2, Geography +2, Appraiser +5, Caravan Master +2, Guide +4, Merchant +5, Pilot (Duneship, Land Ark or Barge) +5, Survival +2, Low Talislan – native, Nomadic – native, Language <choice> – fluent

**Equipment:** White linen vest, headdress, and breeches; red iron torc and bracers; red iron longsword with shoulder sheath; red iron-bound ledger; pouch with quill pens and inks; if based in Dracarta, may have access to a duneship, land ark or land barge; 500 gold lumens in red iron trade goods and Dracartan pyramids.

### **Djaffir Stockman (NPC)**

Aht-ra are the true masters of the sands, resilient, tough, enduring, and strong, and it is upon their strong backs that your people have made their mark as merchants of skill. You too are a merchant, though you do not deal in the goods acquired by your brethren. You trade in the foundation of Djaffir existence: You trade in aht-ra. Your skills as a breeder and trainer are exemplary, and your herd is one of good breeding and stock, sturdy and valuable. Indeed, it is stockmen such as yourself who have successfully bred the remarkable winged aht-ra, though these beasts are reserved for those to whom a few thousand gold lumens is a reasonable price. Fellow Djaffir, as well as Dracartans, Yitek, and other foreigners, come to you for their beasts, recognizing the quality of the aht-ra you nurture. Tu-beshal, the Kashmirans and Farad, have attempted time and again to bribe you into selling them non-gelded stock, though to no avail. You are not so foolish as to give up the monopoly that bears your people's fortunes.

**Appearance:** 5'-6', 80-160 lbs. Dark brown skin, hair, and eyes, wiry build.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +1, CON +3, SPD 0, PER 0, CHA 0, WIL 0, INT +2, CR +3, MR +1, HP 21.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Dagger +1, Mounted Combat +2, Scimitar +2, Short Bow +2, Naturalism +8, Animal Handler +8, Appraiser +8, Caravan Master +4, Merchant +8, Survival +4, Ride +5, Nomadic – native, Low Talislan – fluent, High Talislan – fluent.

**Equipment:** Traditional leather fetish mask; cloak, robes, and headdress of linen; boots of aht-ra hide; curved dagger; scimitar; horn short bow; quiver of 20 arrows; belt and shoulder pouches; aht-ra steed with baggage; herd of aht-ra or breeding pair of winged aht-ra; 1,000 gold lumens in assorted coins.

## **Northern Reaches**

### **Mirin Huntsman**

"For all its dangers, the tundra is a place of breathtaking beauty, though I thank Borean that I am immune to the frigid air."

The frozen tundra is a harsh climate; the shifting drifts of snow are treacherous in and of themselves, capable of swallowing an incautious traveler, and the blizzards that travel in Borean's breath can obscure even the keenest vision. Ice can crack without warning, plunging the unfortunate into isolated caves or deep waters from which escape may be impossible, and fierce predators such as frostweres, tundra beasts, ice dragons, and the cursed ice giants, all claim the tundra as their hunting grounds. You are also a predator of the frozen expanse, tracking wooly ogriphants for their meat, hide, and ivory, or diving for ice-water fish and the blue pearls of the northern quaga. Borean's realm is unforgiving, but it is also a place of great beauty: You will always marvel at the sunlight glinting off surreal formations of ice and sweeping seas of snow, and feel at peace when watching the herds of snowmanes or ogriphants running across the glittering fields. The silence of the tundra is restive, and you always have companionship, for you know that Borean's presence fills the very air.

**Appearance:** 5'8"-6'6", 110-210 lbs. Bright blue skin, hair as fine and white as gossamer, statuesque figure.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +2, CON +2, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA 0, WIL 0, INT +1, CR +3, MR +1, HP 22.

**Special Abilities:** Immunity to cold (after several weeks in temperate regions, they lose this immunity and their skin fades to crystal white; the effects are reversible); Melding (see *Talislanta*, Fourth Edition, p. 294, Customs).

**Skills:** Dagger +2, Light Crossbow +4, Spear +3, Appraiser (Ivory, Quaga) +4, Fishing +4, Pilot (Sled) +3, Guide +3, Mimicry +3, Stealth +3, Survival +3, Tracking +4, Climbing +3, Ride +3, Swim +3, Elder Tongue – native, High Talislan – basic.

**Equipment:** Fur-trimmed soft leather garments and boots; cape of frostwre hide; snow shoes; light crossbow; quiver of 20 adamant bolts; ivory spear with adamant head; adamant dagger; shoulder and belt pouches; snowmane steed and sled; 100 gold lumens in L'Haan adamants, hides, ivory, and blue quaga pearls.

## Ariane Defender (NPC)

Though your people would gladly be at peace with the world, it is a truism that the world is not always at peace with the Ariane. It is for this reason that your present incarnation has adopted the mantle of defender, striving to protect the sanctity of Altan from those who

would despoil it, striving to protect your people in order that they may gather the fullest wisdom from their own incarnations. With your brothers and sisters, you maintain vigil, patrolling the bounds of the maze-city and its surrounds on the backs of your silvermane partners. You are loathe to send a life onto its next incarnation in any but the direst of circumstances, and you have focused your training on non-lethal means of incapacitation. When you cannot dissuade or drive off a threat by means of a well-placed fusillade of blunt arrows, you are more than capable of rendering such opponents temporarily powerless by means of your stunning mace or magics.

**Appearance:** 5'8"-6'2", 100-180 lbs. Onyx-black skin, snowy-white hair, silver-gray eyes, slender build, graceful and serene appearance.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX 0, CON +1, SPD 0, PER +2, CHA 0, WIL +3, INT +2, CR +3, MR +3, HP 24.

**Special Abilities:** Immunity to spells of influence or control; night vision; Commune with Nature (range of ten feet, requires meditative state; see *Talislanta*, Fourth Edition, p. 310).

**Skills:** *Mysticism:* <3 Modes of choice> +3, *Natural Magic:* <3 Modes of choice> +3, Ariane Bow +4, Ariane Mace +4, Evade +4, Mounted Combat +4, Shield +4, Doctrines (Transascendancy) +5, Meditation +5, Healer +2, Guide +3, Herb Lore +2, Tracking +3, Ride +4, Elder Tongue – native, Archaen – native, Low Talislan – fluent.

**Equipment:** Cloak, flowing garments, high boots and headband (all of spinifax); pouch (herbs); shoulder pack; Ariane mace; Ariane bow; quiver of 20 Ariane blunt arrows; wooden shield; tamar; spell book; silvermane steed; no wealth.

## Wilderlands

### Arborin Tribesman

The forest is your territory, and only fools do not recognize you as its master. You have fought for everything, making you strong and giving you the right to claim the woodland. You have quarreled with your brothers and beat them into submission to win the best shares of stump water and humus, and bested others in combat for the right to take your pleasure with any females.

Others have not done this, so they are weak and have no rights, allowing you to raid and attack them freely when they enter your realm, hanging them in nets as a sign to others that you are the master and this is your land. The Verdir are among the weakest of the outsiders, so you raid them regularly, stealing the drug that awakens the spirit and bearing away their females for sport. These rights you have earned.

**Appearance:** 6'6"-7', 160-180 lbs. Gnarled bark-like skin covered with green tendril-like veins, strange mask-like face and head, green eyes.

**Attributes:** STR +1, DEX +2, CON 0, SPD -1, PER +1, CHA -4, WIL 0, INT -1, CR +4, MR 0, HP 22.

**Special Abilities:** Speak with plants; blend into treetops (+10 to Stealth when immobile in woodlands); fibrous, bark-like skin provides PR 3.

**Skills:** Alchemy (Poison) +2, Blowgun +4, Club +4, Net +2, Artificer +1, Weaponer +2, Herb Lore +3, Stealth +4, Survival +4, Climbing +8, Language of Plants – native.

**Equipment:** Crude wooden club; wooden blowgun; woven vine pouch of 20 thorn darts; small wooden jar of soporific plant toxin; net of woven vines; no wealth: Arborin have no concept of barter or currency.

## Skank Gossip

When you were a hatchling, your parents filled your head with many great tales, and you marveled at the seemingly impossible adventures of which they spoke. Life as a Skank can be terribly dull, digging for shelter, grubs, or roots and gossiping with others of your kind, so you have taken to watching the ways upon which the tall beings travel, approaching them to hear of strange lands and trade stories and gossip. It is a constant irritant that some of them regard you as little more than a pest or, worse, a mindless pet. Of late, the tales you weave have begun to ring hollow to your antennae, and you hope you might convince some travelers to take you with them, so you may experience the wonders of which you have only heard.

## Skank Familiar

Most Skanks can imagine living a life of adventure, and, in truth, they do little else but imagine that life. Your homeland is dreary, empty, as dull as the grays

and browns of the rocks that cover it. It was oh so fortunate that you decided to help that odd, tall being find his way in all that sameness. He turned out to know many fascinating stories, as well as many arcane secrets. He was grateful, and he took you as his aide--you, an apprentice to a true magician! It has been exciting: learning bits of magic, exploring new places, meeting all manner of strangers. One day, your own children will grow up hearing of impossible tales that happen to be true.

**Appearance:** 1'-2' long, 2-4 lbs. Mottled green-brown skin, snout-like head, antennae, small black eyes, long neck, four thin limbs with prehensile paws, thick bulbous shell marbled gray-brown and covering body, slender tail.

**Attributes:** STR -6, DEX -6, CON 0, SPD -6, PER +5, CHA 0, WIL -1, INT +1, CR -3, MR +1\*, HP 6.

**Special Abilities:** Thick shell provides PR 6, may retract into it fully at SPD +6; adhere to almost any surface (cannot fail a climbing attempt except in truly unusual cases); burrow into soil at rate of 1" per second; Familiars have MR +2.

**Skills:** Oratory +4, Cultures +2, Deception +2, Guide +3, Stealth +3, Survival +3, Low Talisman – native, Languages <2 of choice> – basic.

**For Familiars, add:** *Magical Order* <choice>: <2 Modes of choice> +2, Arcane Lore +2.

**Equipment:** No possessions; no wealth. A Skank familiar will have a few pages of spells torn from a spell book and five gold lumens in pilfered coins.

## Danuvian Outrider

"I can shoot the legs off a chig at 100 paces. I can just as easily plant an arrow in that foolish mouth of yours."

As one of Danuvia's proud Outriders, you patrol the Wilderlands, gathering information on the movements of traders and of bandits both sentient and feral. When the caravans that cross Zaran are too ponderous to bear messages of urgency, you mount your steed and bear the requisite documents with speed and security. When war beckons, you serve alongside your sisters as an archer; although the bow is a weapon of distinction, the truest weapons are your calm hand, steady eye, and unwavering courage. Other Danuvians argue that the bow is a weak weapon, used to strike down opponents from

a safe distance. They should have learned by now that the Outriders are Danuvia's first line of defense, and were it not for you and your sisters, the Viragos would be quickly overrun by superior numbers. Many foolish opponents assume that Outriders fall shy of brutal melee. They are laughably incorrect: you are no mewling male who quails at the sight of blood, and enemies have found to their cost that you are no stranger to the blade. Now, your seven years of service are complete, but you still hold fast to the Outriders' unofficial motto: "work hard, play hard." Foreign lands offer excitement, adventure, and the possibility of men strong enough to be nearly your equal. You intend to live your life like an arrow in flight: fast and direct.

**Appearance:** 6'2"-6'6", 160-200 lbs. Bronze skin, black mane in lacquered crest or long and braided, strong features, face decorated with pigments.

**Attributes:** STR +2, DEX +3, CON +2, SPD +2, PER +1, CHA +1, WIL 0, INT 0, CR +6, MR 0, HP 26.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Brawling +3, Command +2, Dagger +2, Guard +3, Long Bow +5, Longsword +2, Mounted Combat +4, Parry Bracers +3, Tactics +6, Scout +3, Survival +3, Ride +5, Low Talislan – native.

**Equipment:** Black iron corselet, torc, and parrying bracers; padded uniform; hip-high leather boots; shoulder pouch; courier satchel; long bow; two quivers with 20 arrows each; longsword; dagger; earrings; ontra steed; 100 gold lumens.

## Danuvian Nurse

"Kindly return to your bed immediately, Lieutenant. You are much too sick to be wandering around, and I suggest you remove your hands this instance."

In a city-state ruled by warriors, conflicts are common, and victory often relies on the recovery of the wounded. Since you were a youngster in your mother's household, you knew you wanted to be more than a simple househusband like your father, and you realized that the sight of blood did not make you faint as it did most men. The urge to heal called strongly to you, balancing the warrior spirit of your sisters. When you were old enough, you asked your mother for permission to join Danuvia's nursing school, and recognizing the great service that the nurses performed for the warriors of the nation, she gladly granted you permission. You joined the brother-

hood of nurses, taking the vow of chastity and living quietly within the walls of the hospital itself, working hard to learn the medical skills that would earn you the right to wear the red robe of a qualified nurse. When at last you cast aside the white robes of the novitiate and could walk the halls clad in scarlet, tending the sick, you knew your dream had been realized and that you were something better than those who live their lives in service to their wife. You serve the nation as do the women, and they respect you for it.

**Appearance:** 4'8"-5'6", 90-150 lbs. Pale bronze skin, tightly bound black mane, delicate features.

**Attributes:** STR -2, DEX +2, CON -1, SPD 0, PER +1, CHA +2, WIL -1, INT +2, CR -3, MR 0, HP 18.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Alchemy (Medicinal Mixtures) +4, Art, Artificer, Music, or Song: <2 of choice> +2, Administrator +2, Healer +6, Cook +3, Etiquette +4, Laborer (Cleaning) +1, Ride +2, High Talislan – native.

**Equipment:** Red robes; sandals; belt pouch with clean bandages, splints, needles, thread, scissors, small sharp knife (DR 2), several leather straps, and small bottle of astringent; appropriate craft tools, art tools, or musical instrument for use during off-duty hours; stipend of 25 gold lumens.

## Marukan Salvager

"I risked my wretched life to acquire this so-called 'junk.' Are you certain you cannot spare a few more coppers for its purchase?"

You like to think you're a salvager, but you know that in truth you're little more than a scavenger, for there is little to salvage in Maruk anymore; everything of worth was stripped and sold a long time ago. Now, you hunt for anything that might be sold for even a few copper pieces, or used or recycled for some other purpose. To others, much of what you salvage is little more than junk, but occasionally you manage to unearth something of moderate worth, and that helps you through the lean times. You've even found a few ancient relics, but you know only a little about such things, and you probably bartered them to the Orgovians for less than they were worth. You dream of making that one big find that will allow you to raise yourself above the poverty and despair of your people, but you know it's a foolish dream, for your people are accursed, and such

luck long ago deserted them. You have increasingly thought of leaving the city-state and seeking richer salvage among the ruins of the Wilderlands, but the dangers there are far greater, and few adventurers will accept one of your misfortune into their midst. You can't blame them; you wouldn't want to be around someone like you, either.

**Physical Characteristics:** 5'4"-6'2", 80-120 lbs. Pale complexion, sunken eyes, limp brown hair.

**Attributes:** STR 0, DEX +1, CON +1, SPD 0, PER +1, CHA -2, WIL 0, INT 0, CR +2, MR 0, HP 21.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Brawling +2, Club +1, Pickaxe +1, Sledgehammer +1, Antiquarian +1, Traps +2, Appraiser +2, Laborer +4, Merchant +5, Salvager +3, Climbing +2, Conveyance (Cart) +2, Ride +3, Low Talislan – native, Archaen – basic,

**Equipment:** Sackcloth garments; crowbar; shoulder pouch; torch; pickaxe (treat as war axe); sledgehammer (treat as war hammer); 50 feet of rope; grapnel; block and tackle; makeshift tools for disarming traps; luck medallion; durge-drawn cart; 10 gold lumens in copper pieces and salvage.

## Continent Wide

### Wild Eqs

As a newly hatched foal, you took great delight in galloping around at break-neck speed, thrilling in the exertion. It thrills you still, as does all of your life. Wise old Eqs would often tell tales of the strange creatures that walked on two legs without falling over and of the many strange sights they saw when accompanying them. It made for nice stories, but they came back to the herd, didn't they? That kind of adventure doesn't seem worth all that you'd have to give up: the companionship of the herd, the easy pleasures of gossiping, storytelling, running, and mating, the freedom to roam where and do what you wish. You're too smart to trade in such a perfect life.

### Allied Eqs

You have carried several two-leggers upon your back, but you are still unsure what to make of them. They

strike you as terribly weak, easily fooled and seldom entirely trustworthy. Still, you are proud to live in their world and happy to trade your services for all you gain in exchange. Your two-legger companion pays for your food, the stables are usually warm and sheltered, and you have seen things beyond the imaginings of the Eqs stuck in the wilds. You have come to understand something of the various two-legger cultures, because many of your stable brethren have traveled far and wide, and the stable gossip is fascinating. You learn more and see more every day. Maybe one day you'll even encounter a two-legger trustworthy enough to talk to.

**Appearance:** 5'+ at the shoulder, 400-600 lbs. Reptile-mammal hybrid, quadruped, scaly hide, mane, long neck and tail. Coloring is gray, silver, white, or coal-black depending on breed.

**Attributes:** STR +3, DEX +3, CON +2\*, SPD +7\*, PER +3, CHA -3\*, WIL +4, INT -3, CR +3, MR 0, HP 33.

**Special Abilities:** CON +1 (Silvermanes); SPD +8 (Silvermanes); CHA -7 (Darkmanes); scaly hide provides PR 2; kick (DR 10); bite (DR 2, Darkmanes only); immune to cold (Snowmanes only).

**Skills:** Brawling +3, Guide +2, Stealth +1, Survival +5, Swim +1, Equan – native, Low Talislan (or appropriate language) – basic

**For Allied Eqs, add:** Cultures +3, Evade or Laborer +2.

**Equipment:** No possessions; no wealth.

### Satada Predator (NPC)

The Lands Above were your ancestors' home, and they ruled them unchallenged until the Lightbringers came, puny beasts bearing destructive powers. They fought your ancestors, casting them deep into the bowels of the earth and then claimed rulership of the Lands Above. For eons your people have struggled to survive in the dark depths and have rekindled your strength over the flames of your hatred for the surface dwellers. They have forgotten your people in their arrogance, and they rest their fragile bodies blissfully unaware. Now, your people know the many ways that lie beneath the feet of the hated ones, and you treat them with the contempt the usurpers deserve, feasting on their flesh and herding them like the unworthy beasts they are.

**Appearance:** 7'-7'6", 300+ lbs. Reptilian features, pale sand-colored scaly hide, powerful build, heavy tail, claws and fangs, forked tongue, golden eyes.

**Attributes:** STR +4, DEX +2, CON +5, SPD +2, PER +2, CHA -6, WIL +3, INT +1, CR +5, MR -3, HP 28.

**Special Abilities:** bite or claws (DR 2); tail (DR 4, may be used to simultaneously defend from rear assault); cold does double damage; scaly hide provides PR 2.

**Skills:** Brawling +3, Capture Bow +3, Dagger +2, Guard +2, Shortsword +3, Oratory +3, Artificer or Weaponer +3, Guide (Underground Highway) +5, Scout +3, Stealth +3, Tracking +3, Climbing +4, Signal +3, Swim +4, Sauran – native dialect, Language <choice> – basic.

**Equipment:** Capture-bow with spare harpoon bolt and whipcord; dagger; shortsword; backpack; coil of rope; assorted tools; no wealth.



## Chapter Four: Character Modificaton

Although players may personalize their characters in terms of personality, appearance, background, and by increasing/reducing Attributes by up to 2 points, some players prefer a greater level of choice in their ability to do so. This is especially true in those cases when a player would like to disadvantage his character by giving it a flaw or two but sees absolutely no return for making such a sacrifice.

The following optional system adds considerable depth to a player's ability to personalize his character, and replaces the existing modification of Attributes (see *Talislanta*, Fourth Edition, p. 11) if used.

The system operates on the principle of diminished returns: Hindrances typically garner fewer points than are cost by equally powerful Benefits. Not only does this reduce the advantages of "min-maxing" (playing with points simply to create a more powerful character), it also reinforces the notion that Benefits and Hindrances should only be chosen for role playing reasons and to fit a specific character concept.

This system covers only those races, both from *Talislanta*, Fourth Edition, and this supplement, currently detailed as archetypes. Future *Talislanta* products will include information on using this character modification system with any new races so detailed.

### Introduction

After an archetype has been chosen, it can be modified with a selection of Benefits and Hindrances, if desired. Up to 15 points worth of Hindrances can be taken and the points used to purchase Benefits.

#### Example:

*Calinthe of Cymril, a necromancer of questionable ethics, takes the One Eye (+3 pts.) and Decreased Attribute (+5 pts., in this case, STR) Hindrances, giving her a total of 8 points to spend on Benefits. Using these 8 points, she buys the Familiar (2 pts., a monitor imp), Wealthy (2 pts.), Attractive (3 pts.), and Concentration (1 pt.) Benefits. She may be weaker than most Cymrilian Magicians and blind in one eye, but she is attractive and does have a faithful servitor, some good savings, and the ability to block out most distractions.*

It is important that any modifications selected fit the

concept of the character in question, and it is also important to remember that the GM has the right to disallow any modification if she feels it is unsuitable or unbalancing.

GMs running Heroic campaigns may wish to increase the maximum number of points in Hindrances that can be taken, and therefore Benefits gained. A good rule of thumb in this case would be setting the maximum value of Hindrances at 20 points. Similarly, GMs running a Grim campaign may wish to reduce the maximum value of Hindrances to 10 points.

As the various modifications are somewhat generic, it should be established exactly what form they take; even characters bearing the same Benefit or Hindrance may have acquired it in radically different ways. The modification could be the result of birth or talent, experience or training, background or family environment, accident or injury, a magical event or simple fortune.

#### Example:

*Three characters have the One Eye Hindrance. Trayus One-Eye of Zanth was simply born blind in one eye. Fist the Thrall had one eye clawed out during combat with a Beastman. Calinthe of Cymril lost sight in one of her eyes when one of her spells went awry, turning her left eye into an eerie blue orb.*

If a modification can be given some historical background or description, or can be tied in with another modification, it can add extra depth to a character.

#### Example:

*Trayus wears an embroidered eye-patch over his blind eye and tells people he lost his sight in that eye while making love to the blindingly beautiful Saint Arah of the Ten Thousand, retaining sight in his other eye only by keeping it shut. Fist makes no attempt to cover his injury, and his blind eye is little more than a mass of scar tissue. Calinthe paints the area around her blind eye with a sweeping design of black dye, drawing attention to it.*

If a specific modification is implicit to an archetype, such as Outcast for a Jhangaran Outcast or Revenge (toward Torquarans) for a Xambrian, that modification cannot be taken. Additionally, conflicting modifications (such as Poor and Wealthy) cannot be taken, nor can modifications that are somehow already exceeded by

another modification. For example, it is impossible to take both Attractive and Stunning, as the latter surpasses the former. Hindrances and Benefits can only be taken once, unless otherwise noted, and some modifications are restricted to certain races for biological, psychological or cultural reasons.

Common sense should always be the guide when deciding if a specific modification is appropriate in any given situation. For example, the Sensual Voice Benefit may be fine for personal encounters and seductions, but it provides no benefit whatsoever when trying to make a rousing speech.

Modifications covering personality aspects that have anything less than a profound and overriding impact on a character, such as lazy, good-natured, or vindictive, have not been created; such personality traits are the domain of the player creating the character and should be reflected solely in role playing rather than mechanics.

#### *A Note on Parthenians:*

Parthenians may not purchase any modifications; they are identical automatons, operating under strict protocols, and repair themselves in short order.

## Gaining and Losing Modifications During Play

Benefits may not be purchased after play has begun, nor may Hindrances be "bought off" with Experience Points. Any changes to a character must come about through the game itself and do not garner (or cost) any points. It is entirely possible for a character to lose or gain some kind of modification during play, at the GM's discretion, but after character creation, the point system plays no further part in the game.

## Hindrances

### Attribute

#### **Decreased Attribute**

*Value:* +5 pts. per decrease.

Every time this Hindrance is taken, a single Attribute may be decreased by 1 point. For example, STR 0 would become -1, DEX +1 would become 0, INT -1 would become -2, and so on. This Hindrance may be taken twice and applied to the same Attribute or two different Attributes.

## Skill / Mode

#### **Decreased Skill/Mode**

*Value:* varies

Any of the character's existing Skills or Modes can be decreased in Level, or even removed entirely if reduced to Level 0. This grants a number of points equal to half the number of Levels the Skills or Modes are reduced by.

## Physical

#### **Albino**

*Value:* +2 pts. (+3 pts. for Ahazu and Darklings)

The character has a complete lack of pigmentation, making bright light uncomfortable (subtract 1 from all their visual PER rolls under such light conditions). Ahazu that take this Hindrance lose their striations and the associated Stealth bonus in their native habitat, while Darklings with this Hindrance lose their Stealth bonus in darkness. Restrictions: Arborin, Dryad Bushes, Green Men, Thralls, Verdir, and Woodwhisps may not take this Hindrance.

#### **Alcohol Intolerance**

*Value:* +1 pt.

The character gets drunk relatively easily. Subtract 2 from CON rolls to resist the effects of alcohol.

*Restrictions:* Thralls may not take this Hindrance.

#### **Declawed / Defanged**

*Value:* Beastman, Darkling, Equus (Darkmanes only), Ferran, Gryph, Imrian, Moorg-Wan, Satada, Stryx: +2 pts., Bane and Mondre Khan: +3 pts.

The character has lost the use of his natural weapons. Banes with this Hindrance also lose their ability to drain blood, and Mondre Khan with this Hindrance also lose their Climbing bonus.

*Restrictions:* This Hindrance is available to Banes, Beastmen, Equus (Darkmanes only), Darklings, Ferrans, Gryph, Imrians, Mondre Khan, Moorg-Wan, Satada, and Stryx only. Escaped Bane Concubines may not take this Hindrance.

#### **Deep Sleeper**

*Value:* +1 pt.

The character is all but oblivious to the world when she is asleep. Subtract 2 from PER when she must make a roll to notice something while asleep.

#### **Flightless**

*Value:* +5 pts.

The character cannot fly.

*Restrictions:* This Hindrance is available to Aeriad, Gryph, Muses, Stryx, and Woodwhisps only.

### **Frail**

*Value:* +3 pts.

The character is more susceptible to damage than most members of his race. Reduce HP by 20 percent (round up).

*Restrictions:* Thralls may not take this Hindrance.

### **Limp**

*Value:* +2 pts.

The character's locomotion is impaired. Subtract 2 from SPD when calculating rate of movement.

### **Missing Hand**

*Value:* +4 pts. (+3 pts. if using a prosthesis; Ahazu: +1 pt. only)

The character has lost the use of one hand and cannot perform tasks requiring the simultaneous use of both hands. Many tasks normally requiring two hands can still be performed (subtract 1-5 points from DEX if appropriate and increase time required). If the character uses a prosthesis (typically a hook or similar primitive appendage), these penalties are reduced, when appropriate.

*Restrictions:* Equus and Snipes may not take this Hindrance.

### **Mute**

*Value:* +5 pts.

The character is incapable of speech.

*Restrictions:* Black Savants and Monads may not take this Hindrance.

### **Obese**

*Value:* +3 pts.

The character is extremely overweight. Reduce SPD by 2 when calculating movement and halve her encumbrance limit. Finding new garments or armor that fits will be difficult and costly.

*Restrictions:* Aeriad, Ahazu, Araq, Arborin, Ariane, Black Savants, Dryad Bushes, Green Men, Gryphs, Monads, Snipes, Sunra, Sun-Ra-San, Thralls, Verdir, and Woodwhisps may not take this Hindrance.

### **One Leg**

*Value:* +4 pts. (+3 pts. if using a prosthesis)

The character has lost a leg. Subtract 3 from SPD for purposes of calculating movement and from DEX on any attempts to maintain balance, and subtract 2 from STR for purposes of calculating encumbrance and from CON for movement-related stamina. If not using some

type of prosthesis, the character must use a cane, crutch, etc. for movement and balance and may not use that arm for other actions. If the character uses a prosthesis (typically a wooden peg or similar primitive appendage), these penalties are reduced by 1 point each.

*Restrictions:* Moorg-Wan and Snipes may not take this Hindrance.

### **Poor Manual Dexterity**

*Value:* +2 pts. (Yassan: +3 pts.)

The character has poor coordination. Subtract 1 from DEX for purposes of manual tasks, such as picking pockets, engineering, or playing an instrument.

*Restrictions:* Equus and Snipes may not take this Hindrance.

### **Speech Impediment**

*Value:* +1 pt.

The character has a pronounced lisp or stammer, making her difficult to understand at times.

*Restrictions:* Aeriad, Black Savants, Monads, and Thralls may not take this Hindrance.

### **Tail-less**

*Value:* +3 pts.

The character has no tail and therefore cannot make any tail attacks or perform other tail actions.

*Restrictions:* This Hindrance available to Moorg-Wan, Na-Ku, Satada, and Saurans only.

### **Threatening Voice**

*Value:* +1 pt.

The character's voice is unnerving. Individuals hearing the character talk will consider him eerie or threatening. Subtract 2 from the character's CHA for the purposes of vocal attempts to charm, impress, or seduce, but add 1 to his CHA for vocal attempts to intimidate.

*Restrictions:* Black Savants, Monads, Skanks and Woodwhisps may not take this Hindrance.

### **Ugly**

*Value:* +3 pts.

The character is a decidedly repugnant member of her race. Subtract 2 from CHA for the purposes of rolls to charm, seduce, or determine initial reaction of individuals likely to find the character repellent.

### **Unattractive**

*Value:* +2 pts.

The character is less attractive than is normal for his race but is not truly ugly. Subtract 1 from CHA for the purposes of rolls to charm, seduce, or determine initial reaction of individuals likely to find the character unattractive.

## Sensory

### Anosmia

*Value:* +3 pts. (Stryx: +4 pts., Jaka: +5 pts.)

The character has no sense of smell or taste whatsoever. Jaka with this Hindrance also lose their ability to track by smell, and Stryx with this Hindrance lose their ability to detect carrion.

### Blind

*Value:* +10 pts.

The character cannot see at all. All actions involving vision are performed as if in total darkness (-10 action penalty), although the Blind Fighting skill can alleviate this penalty in some situations. PER rolls involving vision are impossible, as is ranged combat. Black Savants and Phantasians with this Hindrance lose the ability to see invisible/astral presences and magic, respectively. Banes lose their ability to see in any form of darkness, Nagra lose their ability to spirit-track, Gryphs lose their superior vision, and those races with night vision lose that ability also. On the positive side, both Darklings and Gnomekin are no longer effected by bright light.

### Deaf

*Value:* +6 pts.

The character cannot hear anything and must rely on Sign, Lip Reading, writing/reading, or some other means of communication. The character automatically fails any hearing-based PER rolls.

### One Eye

*Value:* +3 pts.

The character only has the use of one eye. Subtract 1 from PER when making vision-based rolls. A GM may also consider that the character has a potential blind side.

### Poor Sense

*Value:* +2 pts. per sense

One of the character's senses is less effective than usual. Subtract 1 from PER when making rolls using that sense only.

## Social

### Dependent

*Value:* +3 pts.

An individual relies on the character to look after him, occupying a great deal of the character's time and effort. *Restrictions:* Woodwhisps may not take this Hindrance in regards to their Muse companions.

### Enemy

*Value:* varies

An individual or organization is actively hostile to the character. An enemy of equal power is worth +2 points, while a more powerful enemy is worth +3 points or more, depending on just how much of a threat it is and if it is actively hunting the character.

### Indebted

*Value:* varies

The character owes a powerful individual or organization something significant. For example, owing 2,000 g. 1 might be worth +2 points, while owing someone a life might be worth +5 points.

### Outcast

*Value:* +2 pts.

The character has been outcast from the place or group she called home, never to return on pain of death or imprisonment.

*Restrictions:* Rahastrans and Xambrians may not take this Hindrance.

### Revenge

*Value:* varies

The character is seeking to avenge some wrong. The value of this Hindrance depends on just how powerful the target of the character's vengeance is. Someone of equal power is worth +2 points, while a more powerful or difficult to reach target is worth +3 points or more.

## Background

### Destitute

*Value:* +2 pts. (Farad, Hadjin, Ispasians, and Kasmirans: +5 pts.)

The character has no starting Wealth. In addition, most of her Equipment is of poor quality.

### Illiterate

*Value:* +2 pts.

The character never learned to read and write.

*Restrictions:* This Hindrance is available to characters from a normally literate background/profession/culture only. Callidians may not take this Hindrance.

### Poor

*Value:* +1 pt. (Farad, Hadjin, Ispasians, and Kasmirans: +3 pts.)

The character's starting Wealth is halved.

## Mental

### Compulsion

*Value:* +2 pts. (+4 pts. for Addiction)

The character has an overpowering drive to do or take something as often as possible. She must make a WIL roll to avoid following her drive when the opportunity arises. Characters who are totally addicted to their compulsion suffer a -3 penalty to their WIL roll to resist. In addition, they may be physically addicted and may suffer severe withdrawal symptoms if they avoid the addiction for any length of time.

### Derangement

*Value:* +3 pts.

The character is insane in some way. This insanity cannot be suppressed and must be role played, as it dominates the way the character thinks and acts. Those aware of the character's insanity will often be ill-at-ease around him.

*Restrictions:* Sindra may not take this Hindrance.

### Driving Goal

*Value:* +2 pts.

The character is obsessed with achieving a particular goal; everything else is a distraction at best. The goal should be far-reaching and extremely difficult, if not nigh-impossible.

*Restrictions:* Xambrians may not take the elimination of all Reincarnators as a Driving Goal, as they are assumed to be driven to do this anyway.

### Flashbacks

*Value:* +3 pts.

In moments of great stress, the character has a 1-in-20 chance of suffering flashbacks to some traumatic event of her past, lasting 1-10 rounds. A WIL roll may be made each round to escape the flashbacks. While experiencing flashbacks, the character is incapable of action.

### Nightmares

*Value:* +1 pt.

The character suffers from night terrors whenever he sleeps. He cries out and struggles, disturbs others, often wakes feeling exhausted, and often tries to avoid sleep.

*Restrictions:* Thralls may not take this Hindrance.

### Phobia

*Value:* varies

The character is afraid of something, beyond any fear it might be expected to provoke. A mild phobia has a value of +2 points, and the character suffers a -1 penalty on all her actions when faced with the subject of her

phobia. A severe phobia has a value of +4 points, and the character must make a WIL roll to even stay in the vicinity of whatever he is terrified of, let alone do anything nearby it, save panic. The focus of the phobia must be something the character has a reasonable chance of encountering, such as heights or darkness.

*Restrictions:* Thralls may not take this Hindrance.

## Behavioral

### Code

*Value:* +3 pts.

The character has a detailed and extensive code which dominates her behavior. The player must work with the GM to outline her character's particular code in detail and then adhere to it. Breaking the code for any but the most extreme of reasons means that the character receives no experience points for role playing that session.

## Miscellaneous

### Animal Antipathy

*Value:* +2 pts.

Reduce the character's CHA by 2 when determining how well animals react to him. This Benefit only affects those creatures with an INT between -11 and -6.

*Restrictions:* Black Savants may not take this Hindrance.

## Benefits

### Attribute

#### Increased Attribute

*Cost:* 5 pts. per increase.

Every time this Benefit is taken, a single Attribute may be increased by 1 point. For example, STR 0 would become +1, DEX +1 would become +2, INT -1 would become 0, and so on. This Benefit may be taken twice and applied to the same Attribute or two different Attributes.

### Skill / Mode

#### Increased Skill / Mode

*Cost:* varies

The Level of a single Skill or Mode (existing, or purchased with the New Skill/Mode Benefit) can be increased by 1 (Cost: 1 pt.) or 2 (Cost: 3 pts.). This Benefit may only be purchased once per Skill or Mode, but it may be taken for several Skills and/or Modes.

### **New Skill / Mode**

*Cost:* varies

A new Skill, Mode or Order may be purchased at a Level of +1. The Cost varies depending on the training period of the Skill being purchased: 5 weeks, 1 point; 10 weeks, 2 points; 20 or 30 weeks (including Modes), 3 points; 40 or 50 weeks, 4 points; 100 weeks (including Orders), 5 points. Special Abilities may not be purchased. This Benefit may be taken multiple times.

## **Physical**

### **Alcohol Tolerance**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

Add 2 to the character's CON for the purposes of resisting the effects of alcohol.

### **Ambidextrous**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character can use either hand with equal proficiency and does not suffer a penalty for attempting anything with her off-hand. This does not mean she can fight with two weapons without penalty.

*Restrictions:* Equus, Sindarans (with the exception of Sindra), and Snipes may not take this Benefit. Ahazu must purchase this Benefit twice, once for each pair of hands.

### **Attractive**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character is a good-looking member of his race. Add 1 to CHA when making a good first impression on those likely to find the character attractive, and add 1 to any attempts to charm or seduce such individuals.

*Restrictions:* Thralls may not take this Benefit.

### **Chameleon**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character may change the color of his skin at will and may receive a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls when appropriate, at the GM's discretion.

*Restrictions:* This Benefit available to Saurans only.

### **Commanding Voice**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character's voice is powerful and authoritative. Add

1 to CHA when making vocal attempts to command or inspire others.

*Restrictions:* Black Savants, Darklings, Ferrans, Green Men, Monads, Muses, Sawila, Skanks, Snipes, Verdir, and Woodwhips may not take this Benefit.

### **Disease Immunity**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character is resistant to one specific disease, such as Gange or Spinning Sickness. Add 2 to CON for all rolls to resist that disease.

*Restrictions:* Black Savants may not take this Benefit.

### **Good Balance**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

The character has an excellent sense of balance. Add 1 to DEX when making any roll to remain standing.

### **Graceful Fingers**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character has exceptionally nimble fingers. Add 1 to DEX for all tasks relying on manual dexterity, such as engineering, picking pockets, or playing musical instruments.

*Restrictions:* Equus and Snipes may not take this Benefit.

### **Light Sleeper**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

The character awakens with even the slightest disturbance. Add 2 to PER when making rolls to see if she notices anything in her sleep, and awakens as a result.

### **No Stutter**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

The character's vocal capabilities are more evolved than most Aeriad, enabling him to speak Talislan without stuttering.

*Restrictions:* This Benefit available to Aeriad only.

### **Poison Immunity**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

The character has acquired limited immunity to a single toxin, such as venomwood resin or Rajan scorpion venom. Add 2 to CON for all rolls to resist that poison, and treat doses of that toxin as only being half as effective.

### **Quick Reflexes**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character reacts to stimuli and unexpected situations far more quickly than usual. Add 1 to SPD when calculating reactions and Initiative.

### **Sensual Voice**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character has a sexy voice, affecting those attracted to the character's race and gender. Add 1 point to CHA on attempts to charm and seduce those who might be affected by the character's voice.

*Restrictions:* Black Savants, Monads and Woodwhisps may not take this Benefit.

### **Stunning**

*Cost:* 3 pts.

The character is a stunningly attractive member of his race. Add 2 to CHA when making a good first impression on those likely to find the character attractive, and add 2 to any attempts to charm or seduce such individuals. Note that what is considered attractive for one race or culture may be viewed entirely differently in another.

*Restrictions:* Batrean males and Thralls may not take this Benefit.

### **Swift**

*Cost:* 1 pt. per form of motion

The character is exceptionally fast. Add 1 to SPD when calculating how fast she can run, swim, or fly.

### **Tireless**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

The character may exert himself for protracted periods. Add 1 to CON when deciding how long he can remain active before tiring or succumbing to exhaustion.

### **Tough**

*Cost:* 3 pts.

The character is unusually resistant to damage. Increase HP by 20 percent (round up).

## **Sensory**

### **Acute Sense**

*Cost:* 2 pts. per sense

One of the character's senses is sharper than usual. Add 1 point to PER when making rolls using that sense only.

## **Social**

### **Benefactor**

*Cost:* 3 pts.

A powerful individual or notable organization has taken an interest in the character's continued well-being for some reason, and the benefactor often provides the character with aid, be it the provision of information,

equipment, rescue, or monetary funds. The character may not necessarily know who her benefactor is.

### **Fame**

*Cost:* varies

The character has achieved a measure of fame. For Fame applicable solely to a single population center, such as Cymril, the cost is 2 points. For an entire region, such as the Seven Kingdoms, the cost is 4 points. For continent-wide Fame, the cost is 6 points. The majority of individuals are far more willing to aid, employ, trust, or associate with famous characters. Famous characters may find it difficult to avoid attention, favorable or otherwise.

## **Background**

### **Highborn**

*Cost:* varies

The character is a member of an influential or powerful family or lineage, specific to a single area. She can command respect and wield influence when her standing is known. Minor noble ranking costs 2 points, major noble ranking costs 4 points, while starting as a prince or chief of a tribe costs 6 points. Being Highborn does not guarantee wealth; some Highborn families and individuals are actually poor.

*Restrictions:* Arimite Highborn, Farad Monopolists, and Hadjin Aristocrats all start with the equivalent of the lowest level of this Benefit, but they may spend extra points to increase their standing and rank.

### **Literate**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character can read and write one of the languages she can speak.

*Restrictions:* This Benefit available to characters from a non-literate background/profession/culture only.

### **Rich**

*Cost:* 4 pts.

The character starts with quadruple his normal starting funds.

### **Wealthy**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character starts with double her normal starting funds.

## **Mental**

### **Concentration**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

The character has the ability to ignore most distractions. Halve any penalties the character might suffer due to distractions.

#### **Fearless**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

Although not immune to fear like a Thrall is, the character is very stout-hearted. Add a +2 bonus to WIL when resisting the effects of fear, magical or otherwise.

*Restrictions:* Thralls may not take this Benefit.

#### **Pain Tolerance**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

The character can resist pain better than most. Add 2 to WIL when resisting pain and torture.

#### **Strong Willed**

*Cost:* 3 pts.

The character has an unusual amount of mental toughness. Add +2 to WIL when resisting mind-influencing magics, telepathy, and interrogation.

*Restrictions:* Ariane may not take this Benefit.

### **Magical**

#### **Beguile by Scent**

*Cost:* 5 pts.

The female character was born of the union between a Batrean female and a male of another race, and she possesses her mother's ability to beguile by scent.

*Restrictions:* This Benefit is available to female children of a Batrean female mating with another race, only.

#### **Different Order**

*Cost:* 4 pts.

The character has studied a different Order of magic than that typically learnt by a member of his profession. The character may choose his Order of magic, even if such an Order is not commonly available to his profession or culture.

#### **Dilute Telepathy**

*Cost:* varies

If the character was born of the union between a Muse and another race, such as a Cymrilian or Zandir, she may have dilute telepathy (Cost: 10 pts.). She has the Natural Telepathy Special Ability possessed by her Muse parent, with a Skill Level of +1 and half the usual effective range. A character who had a Muse grandparent, or great-grandparent, starts with very dilute telepathy (Cost: 3 pts.), only enabling her to detect strong emotions and living beings within a range of 10 feet.

*Restrictions:* This Benefit is available only to characters with a single Muse parent or with a very recent Muse ancestor.

#### **Familiar**

*Cost:* varies

The character starts with a personal, magical servitor. The character may choose from the following: monitor imp (Cost: 2 pts.), minor elemental (Cost: 2 pts.), or sardonicus (Cost: 4 pts.). The entity starts at its lowest possible Level.

*Restriction:* This Benefit available to spell-capable characters only.

#### **Magical Item**

*Cost:* varies

The character starts with a single magical item. The cost for this Benefit is 2 points for an item enchanted with an effective Level of 1, plus 1 point per two additional Levels of enchantment.

#### **Magical Trinket**

*Cost:* 1 pt.

The character starts with an additional magical trinket, of the sort that Cymrilian characters may start with. This Benefit may be purchased multiple times.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### **Animal Empathy**

*Cost:* 2 pts.

Add 2 to the character's CHA when determining how well animals react to him. This Benefit only affects those creatures with an INT between -11 and -6.

*Restrictions:* Black Savants may not take this Benefit.

#### **Pet**

*Cost:* varies

The character has a loyal and devoted pet. She may choose from the following: Catdrac (2 pts.), Death's Head Viper (2 pts.), L'latha (2 pts.), Quaal (1 pt.), Tarkus (3 pts.), or Nighthawk (2 pts.).



## Chapter Five: New Skills

### Common Skills

#### Signal

The ability to communicate over vast distances by means of smoke signals, drums, reflective crystals, and the like.

*Training Period:* two weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* INT

### Combat Skills

#### Blind Fighting

This rare skill enables a character to fight effectively in reduced visibility conditions, including complete darkness. The character's Blind Fighting skill rank acts to reduce any penalties that would apply because of poor visibility. Training in this skill is a lengthy process, and practitioners of this skill are exceptionally rare, save among certain masters of Mandaquan.

*Training Period:* 50 weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* PER

### Performing Skills

#### Mimicry

Ability to mimic sounds, other voices, and animal calls convincingly. Individuals who use this talent for entertainment often learn to mimic the voices and mannerisms of famous individuals; adopting the voice of an audience member or someone else just met is more difficult (-10 penalty), although every minute spent studying an individual's voice reduces that penalty. Mimicry is also described under Wilderness Skills.

*Training Period:* 20 weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* CHA

#### Sideshow Talent

This broad category allows the character to perform one of various entertainment skills, such as contortion, sword swallowing, fire breathing, and so on.

*Training Period:* 20 weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* DEX

### Scholar Skills

#### Anatomy

Knowledge of the structure and inner workings of living beings. The scholar will have dissected and studied the corpses of a variety of animals and, possibly, sentient beings and will have some familiarity with the function and purpose of specific organs, structures, and systems. This field is rarely studied in most Talislantan cultures; where it is studied, its scholars are limited in their knowledge. A scholar who is also proficient as a Healer receives a +1 bonus to that skill for every two points of Anatomy skill rating, but only in regards to a specific species of choice, such as Archaens or Sunra; the bonus may be split among multiple species.

*Training Period:* 30 weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* INT

#### Gamecraft

This skill governs the character's ability to play complex strategic board games such as pentadrille, but does not include Trivarian, which is a skill unto itself.

*Training Period:* ten weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* INT

#### Horticulture

The ability to identify and catalogue all species of plant life native to the continent. This skill is a scholarly version of the Wilderness Skill, Herb Lore, and may be used to the same effect: Scholars may identify useful or harmful plants and may use such materials to concoct simple medications (as per alchemy's Medical Mixtures, but double the time required).

*Training Period:* 30 weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* INT

### Trade Skills

#### Chirurgery

Skilled in the Kang manner of medical treatment, limited to addressing physical wounds and to taking such actions as setting broken bones, cleansing and closing lacerations, and amputating damaged limbs. Because they so commonly perform the latter action, Chirurgeons are also familiar with the design and fitting of simple prosthetics. As per the Healer skill, successful use of Chirurgery can stabilize an injured individual (and provide a +2 bonus to rolls against death) and pre-

vent infection. Further successful use aids a victim's natural recovery (+1 HP recovered per day and half the expected time recovering from a Critical Wound). Most importantly to the Kang, successful use allows the victim to return to battle. Chirurgery is brutal and crude to say the least, and scarring is extremely common. In fact, many Kang proudly bear such scars as indicators of courage. A Failure at a Chirurgery attempt means that the patient has suffered an additional two points of damage; a Mishap means that the patient has died, a clear sign to the Kang that the patient was weak and an event rarely blamed on the Chirurgeon.

*Training Period:* ten weeks.

*Attribute Modifier:* DEX

### **Fishing**

This skill grants the character the ability to identify the best locations to fish, select the most appropriate bait, and fish with a rod and line, net, basket, or spear, as appropriate to the situation and the character's culture. It also grants knowledge of which fish are edible or otherwise and how they should be prepared.

*Training Period:* ten weeks.

*Attribute Modifier:* INT

### **Healer (expanded)**

Skill in the arts of Talislantan folk medicine, a speculative field of study at best. Healers are able to identify and utilize plants and herbs with reputed medicinal properties (as per Herb Lore), provide aid and comfort to sick and wounded individuals, and serve as midwives. Successful use can stabilize an injured individual (and provide a +2 bonus to rolls against death) and prevent infection. Further successful use aids a victim's natural recovery (+1 HP recovered per day and half the expected time recovering from a Critical Wound).

When used to counter a disease or poison, access to proper medicinal substances and a successful roll versus the level of the disease or poison is required, and full recovery takes a number of days equal to the level of the disease or poison; during recovery, the patient is usually ill or weakened, but the disease or poison will not have its useful effects.

*Training Period:* ten weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* INT

### **Livestock**

This is the ability to farm, tend, and rear one or more varieties of domestic livestock, such as durge, erd, or even farmed fish.

*Training Period:* ten weeks.

*Attribute Modifier:* INT

## **Wilderness Skills**

### **Mimicry**

Ability to mimic sounds, other voices, and animal calls convincingly. While often used to entertain, members of certain tribes and military orders learn to imitate avir calls in order to communicate warnings undetected. Hunters and trappers may also use mimicry to attract prey. Mimicry is also described under Performance Skills.

*Training Period:* 20 weeks

*Attribute Modifier:* CHA

## **Special Abilities**

### **Preternatural Mimicry**

Only Banes possess this uncanny ability to perfectly reproduce any sound they hear. In order to mimic any given sound, the Bane must make a successful roll using this skill, with a Partial Success indicating a slight imperfection. Banes may attempt to mimic a spellcasting, but suffer a -10 penalty to do so. Needless to say, they must be able to hear the spellcaster perfectly and clearly and must listen to her intently, to the exclusion of all other actions. Should a spell be mimicked perfectly (a Partial Success can have reduced or unforeseen effects), the Bane can cast the mimicked spell immediately, although he may choose the target or targets. The spell is mimicked at the same level and effect as the original casting. Banes cannot memorize mimicked spells, although they can memorize simple mimicked sounds of a more mundane nature.

*Attribute Modifier:* PER

## Chapter Six: Equipment

### **Weapons**

#### **Adamant War Hammer, Mirin**

The Mirin Giant Slayers of L'Haan traditionally prefer these two-handed war hammers to battle Ice Giants in single combat. Made from the hardest of Talislantan metals, studded and backed by a wide pick, they can parry a Giant's massive club and shatter the animate ice of which the creature is composed (treat Ice Giants as unarmored targets). On a critical success, the wielder can choose to shatter one of the Giant's limbs. The weapons are effective against other types of armor as well (half normal Protection Rating).

#### **Alchemical Projector, Sindaran**

The alchemical projector was invented by the Sindarans to provide a chemical launcher with improved range and greater accuracy. Similar in many regards to the rod of alchemy, the alchemical projector is also a hollow rod with a pump-mechanism and internal magazine (it can hold five vials of alchemicals and can be reloaded once per round). It differs in that it is twice as long (as long as a staff), has an adjustable padded stock that is held to the shoulder when firing, and uses a Kasmiran spring mechanism to fire the vials themselves, rather than spraying their contents. Damage depends on the type of alchemical being used. Attempts to use the alchemical projector as a staff will damage it in some way.

#### **Bastard Sword**

Also known as a "hand-and-a-half" sword, the bastard sword resembles a longsword with a slightly longer, heavier blade and a longer hilt, allowing it to be easily gripped and used either one- (DR 8) or two-handed (DR 9).

#### **Battle Fan, Zandir**

Attributed to the famed Phaedran beauty and duelist Naemarra, the battle fan remains a rare weapon, save for its use among a handful of courtesans, Vermilion Thorn courtesan-assassins, and female duelists. While this weapon appears to be nothing more than an ornate, folding ribbed fan, it is a useful weapon for both parrying (+1 Parry bonus when fully fanned out) and attacking. The ribs of the fan are constructed of metal, and the fabric of the fan is commonly made of spangalor, albeit heavily decorated. The tip of each rib is sharpened, allowing it to be used as a slashing weapon. Characters

with the Swordsmanship skill may use a battle fan as one of their paired weapons.

#### **Battle Gauntlet, Cymrilian**

Invented by the Cymrilian swordmage Qualinray, the battle gauntlet fulfilled his desire for a defensive device that permitted him more maneuverability than a shield and also enabled him to cast spells freely with his off-hand. The battle gauntlet is a long, stout leather glove reaching to the wearer's elbow, the back of the hand and the entire forearm of which is encased in an oversized, red iron gauntlet-like construct, leaving the gloved fingers free. Heavy studs over the knuckles complete the gauntlet, which combined with its extra weight, imparts extra impact to the wearer's punches. The battle gauntlet uses the character's unarmed fighting skill (e.g., Brawling or Kanquan) and may be used to parry a weapon attack without the usual -5 "unarmed" penalty.

#### **Bolt-thrower, Dracartan**

These small, one-handed weapons are issued to the Dracartan Justices and are only rarely employed by others. They are similar in size to Aeriad dart-throwers and may, in fact, fire the same darts, but they do not use a crossbow mechanism; rather, the weapon uses a spring of Yassan design to propel darts or small hurlant bolts. The glassine capsules of such bolts contain only one-half ounce of elemental essence. Justices rely almost exclusively on the essence known as White Noise to incapacitate suspects, rather than the more deadly substances employed by the Dracartan military (which, when used, inflict DR 5). As with hurlant bolts, the capsules shatter on impact, producing a half-foot radius explosion of elemental force or, in the case of White Noise, a five-foot radius area of effect. Elemental essence ammunition is used exclusively by the Dracartan Justices and military and is not legally available to civilians. When firing standard darts, the bolt-thrower inflicts the same damage as a dart-thrower (DR 3).

#### **Butterfly Pin, Zandir**

These long, attractive iron pins are topped with heavy decorative knobs, usually in the form of beautiful butterflies with colored lacquer wings. In addition to being worn decoratively in the hair to keep elaborate coiffures in place, they can be used as stabbing or throwing knives. The courtesan-assassins of Zandu's Vermilion Thorns are said to be especially proficient with these weapons.

### **Club, Enim**

These gargantuan two-handed clubs are used by the giant Enim and are topped with great stone heads carved to resemble bestial or diabolical entities of dread aspect.

### **Club, One-handed**

The club listed in the Talislanta rule book is a two-handed war club. Any stout stone, bone, or wooden bludgeon wielded in one hand is considered a one-handed club. This is a common primitive or makeshift weapon.

### **Combat Hook**

An unusual and cruel weapon, the combat hook is a wickedly sharp, curved metal meat hook, attached to a sturdy handle.

### **Crimson Moon, Kang**

This bizarre weapon is traditional among certain more esoteric practitioners of Kanquan and consists of a flat, sharpened, red iron ring, affixed to a curved handle the two ends of which are capped with red iron spear points. The crimson moon is usually used in pairs and in skilled hands is extremely useful for trapping and disarming weapons (+1 bonus to such maneuvers).

### **Crystaldagger, Gnomekin**

The crystaldagger follows the same basic principles of construction as the larger crystalblade, with the same diamond-hard cutting edge (treat hide, non-magical metal armor, exoskeletal plates and scales as only having half their usual protection values).

### **Crystalmace, Gnomekin**

Widely used before the crystalblade was perfected, crystalmaces are simple, club-like weapons, consisting of little more than a large, rough cluster of crystals affixed to a stout handle wrapped in mossweave. Although the crystalblade has long since displaced the crystalmace as the weapon of choice among Gnomekin, crystalmaces are still crafted and used on account of their ease of construction.

### **Dart**

These short throwing weapons feature feathered wooden shafts and piercing heads. They are thrown like short spears, and they make effective hunting weapons against small prey. When held, they can be used as makeshift daggers but suffer a -1 attack penalty.

### **Dueling Cloak, Zandir**

This large, heavy, and often elaborate cloak is favored as an off-hand weapon by some of the more flamboyant Zandir duelists and is weighted along the bottom edge

with numerous small metal beads sewn into the seam. It is used to actively parry with, wound around the off-hand, but may also be swung to briefly entangle, distract, or momentarily obscure an opponent's vision. A Full Success is required to entangle, distract, or obscure, and this imparts a -2 penalty to the opponent's Combat die roll for their next action only. Characters with the Swordsmanship skill may use a dueling cloak as one of their paired weapons.

### **Executioner's Axe, Shadinn**

The ornate ritual axe used by the Shadinn Executioners of Rajanistan is wielded with two hands, and topped with a heavy, curved, chopping blade. These weapons are usually inlaid with precious stones and metals, and decorated with morbid motifs, such as skulls, bones, and tortured souls. It is considered blasphemous to use these sacred weapons in battle.

### **Flail**

The flail is a stout handle to which a length, or several lengths, of chain are attached, weighted with iron balls of variable size, spiked or otherwise. Untrained users must make a DEX roll to avoid striking themselves when using this weapon.

### **Fork Dagger, Zandir**

Created in 611 by the esteemed Kasmiran weaponsmith Ussir al Hadan, at the behest of Zandir Palaestra instructor Orini, the fork dagger has since become an uncommon but recognizable weapon within Zandu's dueling culture. On cursory inspection it appears to be an ordinary long-bladed dagger, such as those commonly used in the off-hand of most duelists. However, when a small button is pressed, the blade separates at the middle, each half springing out to form an V-shaped fork. The fork-like formation makes the blade less effective for attacking (-1 attack penalty, DR 2), but increases its parrying potential (+1 Parry bonus), especially against the light Zandir blades.

### **Hatraj, Rajan**

Copied from an ancient Torquaran design, the Hatraj (Rajanin for "Three Deaths") is a new weapon in the Rajan arsenal. This weapon is aptly named, for it is a three-bladed war axe, each blade being spaced at 120-degree intervals around the head of the weapon.

### **Mailed Fist**

Mailed fists include any weapon that reinforces a punch and protects the fist, including heavy rings, iron gauntlets, and studded gloves. Such weapons use the character's Brawling skill (or other unarmed fighting skill) and allow the character to inflict DR 2 + STR with a punch.

### **Repeating Crossbow, Aeriad**

A recent Aeriad innovation, this highly modified light crossbow features a top-mounted hopper of ten bolts, a small hatch preventing bolts from falling out in flight, and uses a wooden lever mechanism to rapidly re-cock and load the weapon between shots. As a result, the repeating crossbow can be fired up to twice per round but suffers from reduced range and power because its action requires a weaker pull. Reloading the hopper requires one round per two bolts.

### **Shield Studs and Spikes**

Numerous heavy metal studs or spikes can be added to any variety of shield or buckler, thereby increasing both the maximum damage the shield can withstand in a single attack without breaking (Max. DR) and the damage it inflicts when used to bash an opponent. Studs are more effective for resisting damage, while spikes are more effective for inflicting damage. For studded shields or bucklers, increase the Cost by one-half, the Max. DR by one-third and the Weight by one-quarter; add +1 to the STR rating, and increase the shield bash DR by 1. For spiked shields or bucklers, double the Cost and increase the Max. DR by one-sixth and the Weight by one-quarter; add +1 to the STR rating, and increase the shield bash DR by 3. A shield or buckler cannot have both studs and spikes. For metal shields, studs and spikes are forged of the same material as the rest of the shield. Hide or wood shields invariably use black iron studs and spikes. The Oceanians do not use studs or spikes on their zaratan shell shields.

### **Spiked Glove**

A common gladiatorial weapon, the spiked glove is a leather glove or gauntlet studded with thin iron spikes. This weapon uses the character's Brawling skill (or other unarmed fighting skill).

### **Staff, Short**

The short staff is half the length of a normal staff and may be used in one hand. It is commonly used as a walking aid, but it may also be used to parry or to club an opponent. Mandalan Mystic Warriors use short staves as parrying weapons and to trip or sweep opponents.

### **Sword Staff**

A relatively uncommon weapon, the typical sword staff consists of a short wooden staff with a sword blade attached to one end. The staff helps to counterbalance the weight of the blade, while also providing more leverage for strikes. Some varieties feature a shorter sword blade at each end of the wooden staff.

### **Telescopic Staff, Kasmiran**

Resembling nothing more than a short iron tube when retracted, the Kasmiran telescopic staff is a popular invention and is often disguised as a scroll tube. With the touch of a button, it instantly telescopes out at both ends to form a staff of tubular iron. Pressing the button a second time instantly retracts the staff.

### **Uwan, Moorg-Wan**

This weapon is a large thorn cut from the thornwood plant and is used by the Moorg-Wan as a dagger.

### **War Claw**

Seldom seen outside of arena combats, this weapon is a tough leather glove, reinforced with bands of iron, to which several dagger-length iron blades are attached, projecting beyond the wearer's knuckles. It is used to claw, slash, and stab.

## **Ammunition**

### **Barbed**

Barbed ammunition is most commonly used by the Za, although it is available in other cultures. Upon initial impact, barbed arrows and bolts inflict standard damage. However, barbed projectiles can be very difficult to remove (make a successful Dexterity, Healing skill, or healing spell roll, or the victim suffers an additional point of damage).

### **Blunt**

Blunt-tipped ammunition is primarily used when hunting avir and other small game, although it also has the benefit that the damage it causes (to anything but small prey) is subdual only. Gryphs often use blunt bolts for their heavy crossbows. Ariane arrows are always blunt, although they are more expensive due to the fact that whitewood and violet stone are used in their construction.

### **Fire**

The heads of fire arrows and bolts are tightly packed cloth balls filled with oil-soaked rag and pitch, making them extremely easy to ignite and difficult to extinguish. This ammunition is used to set fire to flammable targets. When fired with intent to harm with impact, this missile only does one point of subdual damage and cannot penetrate armor. When lit, such an arrow can make a useful signal flare, especially during the hours of darkness. These weapons are not the same as the alchemically-treated incendiary bolts used by the Mirin.

### **Grapnel**

Grapnel arrows and bolts feature a small iron grapnel instead of the usual arrow head. They are fired at a location the individual wishes to climb, propelling the grapnel with greater distance and accuracy. A thin but durable climbing cord is attached to the arrow or bolt. Use of this specialist ammunition reduces by half the effective range of the missile weapon used to fire it. Fired at a target with intent to harm, this arrow head only does half damage.

### **Rope Cutter**

This incredibly specialized projectile head is shaped like a crescent, the inside curve of which is sharpened, making it ideal for firing at, and slicing through, rope and cord. GMs should reduce by half any stunt penalties for cutting through rope or cord with such an arrow or bolt. This arrow does two points less damage when fired at a target with intent to harm (minimum DR 1).

### **Whistler**

These bulb-shaped arrow or bolt heads are pierced with whistle-like holes. When fired, they give off an extremely loud and shrill whistling noise, making them useful as signaling devices, as well as for scaring off some animals. When fired at a target with intent to harm, this ammunition only does subdual damage and cannot penetrate armor.

### **Restrictions**

The Aeriad do not produce barbed, grapnel, or fire ammunition for their dart throwers or tri-bows, considering barbs unnecessarily barbaric, grapnels pointless in light of their gliding abilities, and fire arrows/bolts too much of a risk to the natural habitat. Their repeating cross-bows are incapable of using specialist ammunition at all. Specialist ammunition for giant-sized bows is not produced at all, for there is no justifiable market.

## **Armor**

### **Alchemically Treated Cloak, Castabulanese**

This hooded garment is woven of specially treated shag and has been designed by the Castabulanese to afford protection against some forms of weather, aberrant and otherwise. It has been waterproofed and toughened against acid rain (PR 3); it affords lesser protection (PR 1) against icicle rain and more common forms of physical assault, such as weapons. It has also been dyed with a concoction that repels black lightning (a character wearing the cloak is only one-third as likely to be hit).

### **Chain Mesh**

Although rendered all but obsolete by the lighter, more

flexible and fashionable spangalor, chain mesh armor is still available in Cymril, albeit far less commonly than before, and at a reduced cost that reflects its dramatic fall in popularity.

### **Echinomorph Hide, Oceanian**

Formed from the pale, resilient, horn-encrusted hide of the echinomorph, this rare armor is highly prized among the warriors of Oceanus and is boiled and shaped, gaining rigidity, while remaining light.

### **Mossweave Vest, Gnomekin**

These vests are formed by spongy moss sandwiched between two light and flexible layers of woven moss fibers. This armor is issued to Durne's Wayfarers and offers minimal protection, but maximum comfort and mobility.

### **Strider Hide and Plate, Kang**

Consisting of supple blue or purple strider hide reinforced by numerous small black iron plates, this armor is worn by all Kang surgeons, and while similar in some regards to the crude leather and plate worn by the Mondre Khan, it is obviously of superior craftsmanship and fit.

### **Studded Leather**

Studded leather is a form of common armor consisting of standard leather armor reinforced with numerous metal studs or rings. While heavier, tougher, and more costly than standard leather, it is still relatively flexible and is highly favored by those warriors who cannot afford the heavier metal armors.

## **Shields**

### **Buckler**

The buckler is a very small hand-held shield, used in a character's off-hand to parry with. Due to its reduced size and weight, it is favored by weaker or faster warriors, especially Zandir duelists, and does not inflict a Dexterity-related penalty of any kind. Unfortunately, the smaller size means that bucklers provide no benefits of any kind unless used to actively parry, in which case they add +2 to the bearer's attempt. Bucklers may be used to bash an opponent at DR 2 + STR. Individuals using Swordsmanship can use a buckler as one of their paired weapons. Unskilled characters receive no benefit when trying to use a buckler.

### **Iron Shield, Kharakhan**

This is the huge, crude, black iron shield employed by Kharakhan warriors.

## Conveyances

### Land Barge

These wheeled sailing vessels are similar to land arks, save that they are notably lower and narrower. Like land arks, they also use sails and wind machines to provide propulsion, but feature three pairs of mid-sized ironclad wheels.

*Size:* Up to 75' in length

*Speed:* Cruise at -1 (10 mph); top speed +6 (25 mph)

*Cost:* 10,000 g.l.

### Land Rigger

The smallest wheeled sailing vessels available, land riggers are swifter and much more maneuverable than land arks or barges, and are also considerably less expensive.

*Size:* Up to 20' in length

*Speed:* Cruise at +3 (18 mph); top speed +10 (34 mph)

*Cost:* 4,000 g.l.

### Land Skiff

These small, wheeled sailing vessels are used as rapid land transport and patrol vessels. Like land arks and barges, they feature a sail and wind machine for propulsion, and have two pairs of ironclad wheels.

*Size:* Up to 40' in length

*Speed:* Cruise at +1 (14 mph); top speed +8 (29 mph)

*Cost:* 7,000 g.l.

## Specialized Equipment

### Astromantic Charts

The Castabulanese produce these charts, filled with sundry information about tides, weather, and wind currents that has been compiled in an attempt to trace and predict meteorological phenomena. They are in particular demand among sea captains who sail the Azure Ocean. Navigators using these charts are afforded a +5 bonus to their Pilot skills when traveling in the regions documented, although their efficacy is reduced with each passing month; more advanced and comprehensive charts, rarely produced for trade but sometimes provided to fellow scholars, contain even more valuable information to those trained in Astromancy. Castabulanese explorers produce their own charts detailing the varied regions they have visited, and these may also be more valuable, and expensive, because of their rarity. *Cost:* Standard charts of the Azure Ocean may be obtained in trade on the island of Castabulan for items valuing as little as 25 g.l.; in Zandu, where they are not uncommonly found available for purchase, they are typically valued at 100 g.l.

### Crystal Observation Lenses

This Castabulanese device consists of two lenses connected by a telescoping metal tube; the near lens can be twisted to adjust the device's focus. When fully extended and properly focused, it affords a +5 bonus to PER for observing distant phenomena, such as meteorological events. The Castabulanese have crafted and magically enhanced larger lenses for use at their observatory; however, these are not available for sale or trade.

*Cost:* 40 g.l.

### Prosthetics

Damage to limbs is a potential injury faced by many Talisnantans, especially those of a martial bent, and given the primitive nature of the continent's mundane, non-arcane healing arts, amputation is sometimes a necessity. Prosthetics are often crafted to replace missing limbs, hands, and feet, and vary considerably in quality and construction, from the crudest wooden peg leg, to the most polished and stylized of false iron hands. Of all Talisnantans, the Kang surgeons are the most skilled at crafting and affixing basic prosthetics, and the Kang, as well as other martial races, like the Thralls, are fond of affixing dagger, blades, spiked mace heads, and so on, to the stumps of damaged limbs. Such weapons are used at near normal skill (-1 to hit penalty), inflict normal damage, and cannot be easily disarmed, save by smashing the weapon or hacking the limb again, but obviously prohibit practically any normal use of that limb. The character must be strong, and large, enough to use the affixed weapon one-handed. False hands and feet resemble such extremities, but are static constructs. For penalties involved in missing a leg or hand, see the Benefits and Hindrances chapter.

## Magical Mechanisms

### Caduceus Minor

This device is a smaller, more limited thaumaturgic wand that may only be used for quantitative analysis. It is a rod-shaped device with two adjustable metal bands, in appearance much like a full-fledged caduceus. Unlike that more advanced instrument, it does not need to be kept in a container, for it is not created using quintessence and does not have such dangerous properties. Rather, it is a hollow, red iron tube lined with amber-glass and filled with a substance called analytical distillation. Only a character trained in Thaumaturgy can utilize its properties. They are rarely made for sale; the Thaumaturges of Carantheum craft them for that nation's Justices and for others with limited thaumaturgic training. The creation of the wand requires five ounces of amber-glass and one pound of red iron, as well as ac-

cess to a thaumaturgic workroom and two weeks of labor. Note that a caduceus minor is not "magical" and does not count against the limit of seven enchanted items.

## **Thaumaturgic Creations**

### **Analytical Distillation**

A thaumaturgic creation containing the mixed essences of taste, touch, and smell, analytical distillation is available only in Dracarta, where it empowers the caduceus minor to perform its quantitative analysis function. A single dram is adequate for 100 uses, after which the caduceus minor's reservoir must be refilled.

*Level:* 10

*Yield:* one dram

*Time required:* 30 hours

*Minimum value:* 60 g.l.

### **Elemental Essence: White Noise**

Like other elemental essences, White Noise is derived from an elemental force--in this case, thunder--which is collected and distilled by the use of an essence accumulator. The substance is transmuted into liquid form through the use of quintessence and contained in amberglass capsules. The sound released when a White Noise capsule shatters is so concentrated that only someone in the area of effect can hear it or is affected by it. The radius of effect is dependent on the size of the hurlant used: ten-foot radius for the one-ounce capsules of a hand-held hurlant and five-foot radius for the smaller, half-ounce capsules of a bolt-thrower. Individuals within the area of effect do not sustain physical damage; however, unless they succeed at a CON roll to resist (at -2, with an additional negative modifier equal to the character's PER for hearing), they are rendered unconscious for ten rounds. If successfully resisted, the victim is nevertheless disoriented for five rounds (-3 to all actions).

*Level:* 10

*Yield:* one pint

*Cost:* 10 g.l. worth of quintessence

*Time required:* seven days

*Minimum value:* 400 g.l.

## **Enchanted Items**

### **Mirin Bracers of Strength**

These enchanted adamant bracers are worn by the Mirin Giant Slayers to aid in their battles against the Ice Giants. The items enhance the wearer's strength (typically by +1) for combat and other purposes.

*Mode:* Alter

*Spell Level:* 5

*Type:* Continuous

*Time required:* 30 weeks

*Minimum value:* 2,720 g.l.

## **Poisons**

### **Soporific Plant Toxin**

Created from a variety of available plants, depending on location, these concoctions are fairly common among certain more primitive woodland- and jungle-dwelling Talislantans. A one-ounce dose is enough to coat three arrowheads or six blowgun darts. If the toxin enters a target's bloodstream, the victim must make a CON roll, with a Full Success or higher indicating no ill effects, a Partial Success indicating drowsiness (-1 penalty on all actions for two rounds), and a Failure indicating that the target falls asleep (for 20 - CON rounds for an arrowhead or 10 - CON rounds for a dart).

*Dose:* one ounce

*Level:* 2

*Ingredients:* Varies according to locality.

*Time required:* two hours

*Cost of materials:* 10 g.l.

*Minimum value:* 14 g.l.

## **Musical Instruments**

### **Chimes and Bells**

A variety of chimes and bells are used in Talislanta, such as zilo, the small silver chimes of the Zandir that are struck with rods of crystal. Others include the spring-chimes and tubals, metal pipe bells, of the Yassan, the wind chimes that the Sawila craft out of pierced and hollowed shells and stones or the Verdir craft out of wood, and the chimes that the Mirin craft from etched ice. The Mirin also craft ice bells in a similar manner, while the Bodor create lucid bells of glass, and the Verdir pluck harmonious wild bellflowers.

### **Cymbals and Gongs**

Rousing sounds are produced by the red iron Dracartan cymbals called tchan, the black iron cymbals of Rajanistan, and the resounding black iron gongs of the Za. The Sarista use small, brass finger cymbals in their provocative dances, while the similar red iron tsimbals of the Yitek are used to alleviate boredom whilst wandering. The Yassan use flexible saw blades, clangals, as cymbals, and iron hammer-gongs to mark a steady beat while working. Djaffir cymbals are well-produced and intricately decorated, while Darkling gongs, often hastily constructed from scrap iron, cannot easily be consid-



ered musical instruments by any but the most generous of listeners.

### **Drums**

Many Talislantan cultures have tribal or traditional drums, often made from the hide of their prey, such as dragon-hide for the Kang, or their domesticated beasts, such as aht-ra hide for the Djaffir. Other readily available materials, such as red iron, in the case of the traditional dracara of Dracarta, or clay and lizard-hide, in the case of the small Dracartan daro, are also utilized. Druk and Stryx drums, for instance, are made of flayed skin stretched over dried gourds; Gnomekin drums, in contrast, are made from the caps of large mushrooms. They come in a wide assortment of shapes and sizes, from the box-shaped drums of the Zandir to the tube-like drums of the Za. The instruments used to beat the drums may also be of some interest: the Rajans' iron drums are beaten with mallets carved from the bones of their enemies, while the Kang beat their drums with war hammers. The Druk wet their fingers with blood before playing before playing the uka, the "howling drum," a grisly instrument made of skin stretched across rib bones. Few traditional drums are as sophisticated as the tambour, which can be tuned to great effect by the Bodor.

### **Flutes**

Talislantan flutes, while similar in concept, vary widely in composition, appearance, and tone. Sarista favor flutes of finely carved wood, and the Druk play their dire "Song of Madness" on flutes of bone. The two-chambered wooden Mandalan madao is truly haunting, while the intricately-woven grass flutes of the Verdir are "reedy," and the glass flutes of the Bodor produce perfect tones. The single-reed ojo is immensely popular in Zandu, while the screeching tones of the Darkling skreedle-pipes are popular with few save the tone-deaf. The most bizarre flute on the continent is the rasa of the Sun-Ra-San, a bone flute carved from the tailbone of a sea dragon, which is fully ten feet in length and must be supported on a forked pole stuck in the ground.

### **Horns**

Although the complex harmonies of the Bodorian intricate spiralthorn spring to mind when civilized Talislantans hear the word "horn," the majority of Talislanta's horns are simple braying or resonating instruments. The Zandir use polished wood-horns, and the Kang find that iron battle-horns are quite rousing. Rajan temples always feature 20-foot long black iron temple horns, decorated with the images of leering skulls, and the Gnomekin are known to make use of tubular fungi. Darkling squawk-horns and tube-horns, invariably cre-

ated from discarded ends of iron tubing, are usually abysmal in quality and sound.

### **Magical Instruments**

Although many musical instruments have been enchanted at one time or another, only one known to the current age has been created entirely with magic at its core: the Silnarast-Lado. Only eight of these arcane instruments have been created by the Oedomancer Silnarast. It is a box-shaped instrument 18 inches long, 12 inches wide, and nine inches high, with several dials and buttons on the front and a silvery lens on the top. A foot pedal and two metal styluses complete the instrument. When activated, the silver lens creates a spherical arcane field above the box, in which 77 tonals, small color-coded spheres of energy, float. Each tonal creates one note when struck by a stylus. A tonal can also be spun, creating a constant tone, the volume of which is set by the foot pedal at the time of the spinning. To add yet another layer, the tonals can be moved around the arcane field and set into orbit around other tonals, creating oscillating tones. Up to seven tonals can be placed into an orbit.

### **Miscellaneous Instruments**

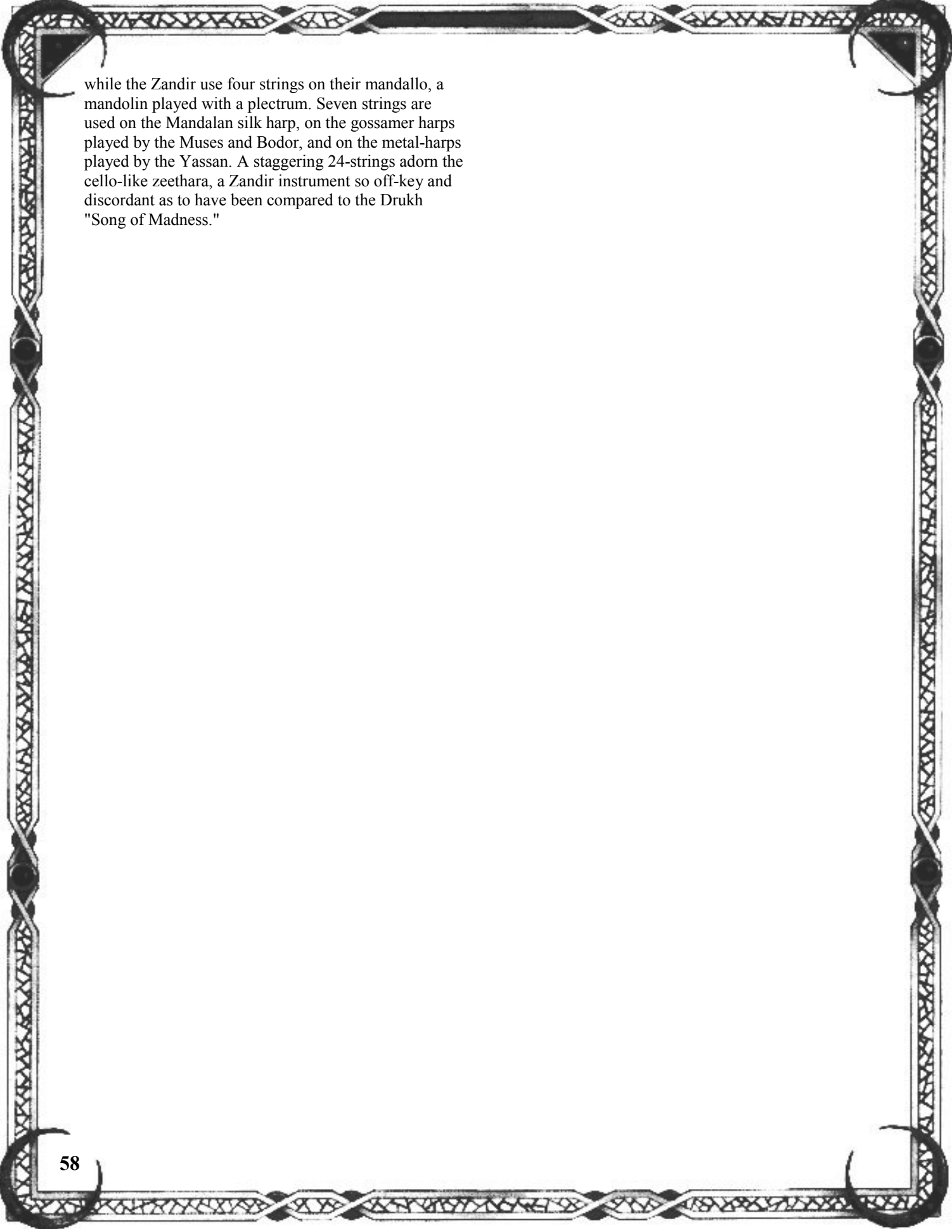
Beyond the broad categories of instruments outlined above, Talislanta's cultures are known to produce a variety of other instruments. The mandola, for example, is a Mandalan "rainmaker," a length of hollow bamboo, partially filled with small river pebbles and sealed at both ends. The Djaffir shaker is a maraca, formed from a dried gourd partially filled with dried seeds, while the anak is a five-tined ivory marimba struck with mallet, used by the Bodor.

### **Organs**

Few of Talislanta's cultures use organs, these being the Rajans, who use huge, bellows-driven pipe organs called uraj in their temples, each organ requiring 40 slaves to operate it; the Bodor, who make effective use of the four-man bellows-pipes; and the Mirin, who rely upon the caprice of Borean's winds to operate their ice pipe-organs.

### **Stringed Instruments**

A variety of stringed instruments are used by Talislanta's musicians, and they range in sound from the abysmal to the beatific. Lively jigs are played on the Sarista ahtal, a two-stringed fiddle, while Djaffir produce a distinctive "twanging" sound on the djarro, a small, taut short bow that can also be used to fire arrows but is played by striking it with a wooden rod. The Sarista also use the lutara, a three-stringed baritone lute, and the Yitek use a similar instrument called a yukas,



while the Zandir use four strings on their mandallo, a mandolin played with a plectrum. Seven strings are used on the Mandalan silk harp, on the gossamer harps played by the Muses and Bodor, and on the metal-harps played by the Yassan. A staggering 24-strings adorn the cello-like zeethara, a Zandir instrument so off-key and discordant as to have been compared to the Drukh "Song of Madness."

## Chapter Seven: NPC Generator

The following system can be used to quickly generate NPCs from a variety of races and professions. To create an NPC, take a Racial Package (the race's base Attributes and Skills; Appearance and Special Abilities can be found in the existing archetypes), select a Profession Package, add its Skills, modify the Racial Package's Attributes as noted, add two Common skills at +1, and assign any equipment you deem necessary.

The Profession Packages are generic in nature, and may reflect a variety of careers. For example, the Outdoorsman can be used for a hunter, guide, or scout, while the Sentinel can be used for guards, skilled bodyguards, militia, and watchmen.

The Skills presented in the Racial Packages are the most elementary skills that every child growing up as a member of that race or culture would learn, while the Attributes represent those of a mature adult without the influence of a given profession.

The characters generated with this system represent average members of those races and professions, and are, in most cases, less competent than similar fully-fledged archetypes. Although it is entirely possible to use this system to create PCs, it is recommended that these rules only serve as basic guidelines if used in such a manner.

### **Racial Packages**

**Aamanian:** WIL +1, MR +1, HP 19; Doctrines (Orthodoxy) +1, High Talisman (native)

**Aeriad, Blue:** STR -1, DEX +3, CON -1, SPD +1, PER +1, CR +1, HP 18; Aerial Combat +1, Crescent Knife +1, Low Talisman (native)

**Aeriad, Green:** STR -3, DEX +2, CON -3, CHA +1, HP 17; Agriculture +1, Herb Lore +1, Low Talisman (native)

**Ahazu:** STR +2, DEX +3, CON +1, SPD +4, INT -1, WIL +1, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -2, HP 25; Brawling +2, Survival +1, Tactics +1, Ahazu (native), Sign (native)

**Araq:** STR +1, DEX +1, CON +5, INT -2, WIL -1, CHA -3, CR +1, MR -3, HP 22; Dagger +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Low Talisman (native), Sauran (native)

**Ariane:** INT +1, PER +2, WIL +3, MR +2, HP 20; Doctrines (Transcendancy) +5, Healer +2, Herb Lore +2, Meditation +5, Mysticism <2 Modes of choice> +2, Natural Magic <2 Modes of choice> +2, Elder Tongue (native), Archaen (native), Low Talisman (fluent)

**Arimite:** DEX +1, CON +1, SPD +1, PER +1, CHA -1, CR +1, HP 21; Arimite Knife-fighting +1, Ride +1, Stealth +1, Low Talisman (native)

**Batrean, female:** STR -2, DEX +1, INT +1, WIL +2, CHA +5, HP 18; Dance +2, Seduce +2, Chanan (native), Low Talisman (fluent)

**Batrean, male:** STR +4, DEX -3, SPD -2, INT -4, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -4, HP 27; Survival +1, Chanan (native)

**Beastman:** STR +1, CON +1, SPD +1, INT -2, PER +2, WIL -2, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -3, HP 24; Brawling +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Sign (native), Low Talisman (native)

**Bodor:** STR -1, DEX +2, SPD -1, INT +1, PER +3, CHA +1, MR +1, HP 20; Cultures +1, Diplomacy +1, Music +3, Ride +1, Survival +1, Bodorian (native), Low Talisman (native), High Talisman (fluent), Thaecian (fluent)

**Callidian:** STR -1, DEX -1, CON -1, SPD -1, INT +2, PER +1, WIL +3, CR -2, MR +1, HP 20; Arcane Lore +1, Cryptography +1, Linguistics (Reading) +1, Scholar Skill <choice> +1

**Castabulanese:** CON +1, PER +1, MR +1, HP 20; Astromancy +1, Swim +1, High Talisman (native)

**Chana:** DEX +1, CHA -3, CR +1, HP 18; Dagger +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Chanan (native)

**Cymrilian/Tanasian:** MR +1, HP 19; Arcane Lore +1, Etiquette +1, Fashion +1 (not Tanasian), Ride +1, High Talisman/Low Talisman <one at native, one at basic>, Archaen (basic)

**Danelek:** STR +1, CON +2, INT -1, PER +1, WIL +1, CHA -1, CR +1, HP 22; Dagger +1, Miner (Salt Crystals) +2, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Low Talisman (native), Sign (native)

**Danuvian, female:** STR +2, DEX +2, CON +1, SPD +2, CHA +1, CR +2, HP 23; Brawling +1, Ride +1, Tactics +1, Low Talisman (native)

**Danuvian, male:** STR -2, DEX +1, CON -1, INT +1, PER +1, WIL -2, CHA +1, CR -3, HP 18; Etiquette +1, Fashion +1, Laborer (Cleaning) +1, High Talisman (native)

**Darkling:** STR -2, DEX +1, CON +1, SPD +1, INT -2, PER +3, WIL -4, CHA -2, MR -1, HP 11; Deception +3, Evade +1, Knife +1, Legerdemain +2, Stealth +2, Torture +1, Northron (native)

**Dhuna:** PER +1, CHA (+6 females, +1 males), MR +1, HP 18; Doctrines +1, Healer +1, Herb Lore +1, Ride +1, Seduce +1, Elder Tongue (native), Low Talisman (fluent)

**Djaffir:** DEX +1, CON +1, MR +1, HP 19; Merchant +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Nomadic (native), Low Talisman (fluent), High Talisman (fluent)

**Dracartan:** CON +1, PER +1, WIL +1, MR +1, HP 19; Low Talisman (native), Nomadic (native)

**Drukh:** DEX +1, CON +2, SPD +1, WIL +2, CHA -2, CR +1, HP 21; Climbing +1, Survival +1, Torture +1, Low Talisman (native), Sign (native)

**Farad:** STR -1, PER +1, WIL +2, MR +2, HP 19; Dagger +1, Deception +1, Merchant +1, Ride +1, High Talisman (native)

**Ferran:** STR -2, DEX +7, CON +1, SPD +4, INT +1, PER +2, WIL -2, CHA -2, MR -2, HP 9; Brawling +1, Deception +1, Evade +1, Legerdemain +1, Stealth +1.

**Gnomekin:** DEX +4, CON +6, CHA +2, HP 16; Climbing +1, Geography +1, Durnese (native), Low Talisman (fluent)

**Gnorl:** STR -2, WIL +2, CHA -1, HP 18; Antiquarian +2, Arcane Lore +2, Cryptography +4, Healer +1, Herb Lore +1, History +2, Linguistics +1, Low Talisman (native), Gnorl Secret Language (native)

**Green Man:** STR -4, DEX +3, SPD +3, INT +4, PER +1, CR -5, HP 10; Herb Lore +1, Influence Plants +2, Stealth +1, Language of Plants (native), Sign (basic)

**Gryph:** STR +1, DEX +1, CON +2, SPD +2, PER +3, WIL +2, CR +2, MR -2, HP 22; Aerial Combat +1, Brawling +1, Avian (native), Low Talisman (fluent)

**Hadjin/Hajan:** STR -1, CON -1, INT +1, CR -3, MR +1, HP 18; Administrator +1, Antiquarian +1, Appraiser +1, Arcane Lore +1, Etiquette +2, Fashion +2, High Talisman (native)

**Harakin:** STR +2, CON +3, WIL +2, CHA -2, CR +2, MR -2, HP 27; Brawling +1, Climbing +1, Jang or Khu <choice> +1, Ride +1, Survival +3, Tracking +1, Sign (native), Low Talisman (native)

**Imrian:** STR +3, DEX -4, CON +1, SPD -2, INT -1, CHA -3, CR +1, MR -3, HP 25; Stealth +1, Piscine (native)

**Ispasian:** STR -2, INT +1, WIL +1, CR -1, HP 19; Appraiser +2, Bribe +2, Diplomacy +2, Litigator +2, Merchant +2, Quan (native), High Talisman (native)

**Jhangaran:** DEX +1, CON +1, INT -1, PER +1, WIL -2, CHA -2, MR -4, HP 20; Brawling +1, Survival +1, Low Talisman (native), Sign (basic)

**Kang:** STR +3, DEX +2, CON +1, CHA -2, CR +2, HP 25; Dagger +1, Kanquan +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Tactics +1, Quan (native)

**Kasmiran:** STR -1, DEX +1, INT +1, PER +1, WIL +1, CHA -1, HP 19; Litigator +1, Locks +1, Merchant +1, Traps +1, Low Talisman (native), Nomadic (native)

**Kharakhan:** STR +6, DEX -4, CON +7, SPD -2, INT -3, PER +3, WIL +6, CHA -2, MR -3, HP 45; Brawling +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Low Talisman (native), Draken Glyphs (fluent)

**Mandalan:** PER +1, WIL +1, CHA +1, HP 18; Mandaquan +1, Meditation +1, Quan (native), High Talisman (fluent)

**Mangar:** STR +1, CON +1, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -1, HP 22; Brawling +1, Dagger +1, Deception +1, Gambling +1, Pilot (Carrack) +1, Swim +1, Torture +1, Sea Nomad (native), Sign (native), Low Talisman (fluent)

**Manra:** DEX +1, CON +3, PER +1, MR +1, HP 18; Healer +1, Herb Lore +1, Shapechange +1 <1 form of choice>, Stealth +1, Chanan (native)

**Marukan:** CHA -2, HP 20; Brawling +1, Ride +1, Low Talisman (native)

**Mirin:** INT +1, MR +1, HP 19; Elder Tongue (native)

**Mogroth:** STR +5, DEX +2, CON +5, SPD -4, INT -3, MR -4, HP 34; Brawling +1, Climbing +2, Dredging +1, Herb Lore +1, Laborer +1, Low Talislan (native)

**Mondre Khan:** STR +1, DEX +1, CON +1, SPD +1, INT -1, PER +1, WIL -1, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -2, HP 22; Brawling +1, Climbing +1, Oratory +1, Survival +1, Chanan (native), Sign (native)

**Moorg-Wan:** STR +3, DEX -3, CON +1, SPD -2, INT -3, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -1, HP 25; Brawling +1, Dredging +2, Moorg-Wan (native), Sign (fluent)

**Muse:** STR -3, DEX +2, CON -3, SPD -1, INT +2, PER +2, WIL -2, CHA +2, CR -5, MR +1, HP 17; Art +1, Artificer +1, Herb Lore +1, Limited Flight +2, Music +1, Telepathy +2, High Talislan (native), Sylvan (native)

**Nagra:** STR +1, DEX +1, CON +3, SPD +1, PER +3, CHA -2, CR +1, MR +2, HP 22; Spirit Tracking +2, Stealth +1, Sign (native), Chanan (native)

**Na-Ku:** CON +2, INT -2, WIL -1, CHA -4, CR +1, MR -3, HP 20; Survival +1, Chanan (native)

**Oceanian:** DEX +1, CON +1, WIL +2, HP 20; Agriculture +1, Dagger +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Swim +5, Sea Nomad (native), Low Talislan (basic)

**Orgovian:** DEX +3, CON +1, WIL +2, CHA -2, CR +1, HP 20; Merchant (Barter Only) +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Low Talislan (native), Sign (native)

**Phantasian:** PER +2, WIL -1, MR +1, HP 20; Etiquette +2, High Talislan (native), Archaen (fluent)

**Pharesian:** MR +1, HP 19; Streetwise +1, Low Talislan (native)

**Quan:** STR -1, DEX -1, CON -2, SPD -1, WIL -2, CHA -2, CR -2, MR -2, HP 16; Survival +1, Quan (native), High Talislan (native)

**Rahastran:** INT +1, PER +3, WIL -2, CHA -1, MR +1; Artificer (Zodar) +1, Brawling +1, Deception +1, Gambling +2, Legerdemain +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Low Talislan (native), Archaen (basic)

**Rajan:** PER +1, CHA -2, HP 20; Rajanin (native)

**Rasmirin:** CON +1, INT +1, CHA -1, MR +1, HP 19; Deception +1, Doctrines (Demonology) +1, Elder Tongue (native), Sign (native)

**Sarista:** DEX +1, SPD +1, CHA +1, MR +1, HP 19; Deception +1, Guide (Silvanus) +1, Performing Skill <choice> +1, Ride +1, Stealth +1, Streetwise +1, Thieving Skill <choice> +1, Low Talislan (native), Sarisa (native)

**Sauran:** STR +3, DEX -2, CON +2, SPD -2, INT -2, PER +1, WIL +1, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -2, HP 27; Brawling +1, Survival +1, Sauran (native)

**Sawila:** STR -2, CON -2, SPD +1, INT +1, PER +2, CHA +4, CR -2, MR +1, HP 18; Artificer +1, Dance +2, Song +1, Swim +2, Chanan (fluent), Sign (native)

**Shadinn:** STR +3, DEX -2, CON +3, SPD -1, INT -2, WIL +2, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -3, HP 25; Survival +1, Rajanin (native)

**Sindaran:** STR -1, INT +6, WIL +4, CR +2, MR -5\*, HP 18; Collector +2, Scholar Skills <three of choice> +3, Trade Skill <one of choice> +3, Trivarian +1, High Talislan (native), Low Talislan (native)

**Snipe:** STR -4, DEX -1, CON +3, SPD -6, INT +4, PER +3, WIL +2, CHA +1, CR -3, HP 16; Cultures +1, Oratory +1, Song +1, Stealth +2, Survival +1, Swim +8, Low Talislan (native), High Talislan (native)

**Stryx:** DEX -2, SPD -1, PER +3, CHA -3, CR +1, HP 18; Aerial Combat +1, Brawling +1, Coerce +1, Dagger +1, Survival +1, Northron (native)

**Sunra:** INT +1, PER +1, MR +1, HP 19; Agriculture +1, Cartography +1, Healer +1, Pilot (Dragon Barque) +1, Song +2, Swim +6, Quan (native)

**Sun-Ra-San:** STR +1, CON +1, INT +1, PER +2, CR +1, MR +1, HP 20; Song +2, Survival +1, Swim +6, Sun-Ra-San (native), Sign (fluent)

**Thaecian:** STR -1, DEX +1, CON -1, INT +1, PER +3, WIL -2, CHA +2, CR -1, MR +1, HP 18; Performing Skill <choice> +1, Seduce +1, Thaecian (native), High Talislan (fluent)

**Thiasian:** DEX +3, SPD +2, WIL -1, CHA +1, CR +1, MR +2, HP 20; Acrobatics +1, Dance +1, Swim +1, Low Talislan (native), High Talislan (fluent), Thaecian (fluent)

**Thrall\*:** STR +4, DEX +2, CON +4, SPD +1, INT -3, WIL +2, CR +6, MR -5, HP 30; Greatsword +2, Tactics +2, Tazian Combat +2, Low Talislan (native), Understand Tattoos (native)

**Ur:** STR +5, DEX -2, CON +5, SPD -2, INT -2, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -1, HP 31; Brawling +1, Coerce +1, Northron (native), Low Talislan (basic)

**Xambrian:** PER +1, WIL +1, CHA -1, CR +1, MR +1, HP 20; Arcane Lore +1, Brawling +1, Ride +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Low Talislan (native), Archaen (fluent), Xambrian (fluent)

**Vajra:** STR +2, CON +2, SPD -2, PER -1, WIL +2, CHA -1, CR +1, HP 26; Artificer or Artisan +1, Engineer +1, Geography +1, Miner +1, Quan (native)

**Verdir:** STR -1, DEX +1, CON -1, PER +1, WIL -1, CHA +1, CR -2, HP 18; Dance +2, Ride +1, Stealth +2, Language of Plants (native)

**Vird:** CON +1, INT -2, WIL +1, CHA -2, MR -3, HP 18; Climbing +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Rajanin (native)

**Yassan:** STR +1, SPD -1, PER +1, CR +1, MR +1, HP 20; Artificer or Artisan +1, Engineer +1, Technomancy +1, High Talislan (native), Nomadic (native), Technomantic Symbology (basic)

**Yitek:** DEX +1, CON +2, INT +1, PER +1, CHA -2, MR +1, HP 21; Locks +1, Ride +1, Salvager +1, Survival +1, Traps +1, Nomadic (native), Sign (native), Low Talislan (fluent)

**Yrmanian:** STR +1, DEX +2, CON +2, SPD +1, INT -6, PER -4, WIL +6, CHA -4, CR +1, HP 23; Brawling +1, Climbing +1, Survival +1, Sign (native)

**Za:** STR +1, CON +2, INT -1, WIL -1, CHA -2, CR +1, MR -2, HP 23; Brawling +1, Ride +2, Short Bow +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Low Talislan (native), Sign (native)

**Zandir:** DEX +2, SPD +1, WIL -2, CHA +1, MR +1, HP 18; Oratory +1, Low Talislan (native), High Talislan (native)

**Zann:** DEX +2, SPD +1, WIL +3, CHA -2, MR +1, HP 18; Guide +1, Pilot (row boat) +1, Ride +1, Survival +1, Swim +1, Low Talislan (native), High Talislan (native)

## **Profession Packages**

**Alchemist:** INT +2; Alchemy +4, Appraiser +2

**Assassin:** DEX +1, PER +1, CR +2; Assassinate +3, Deception +3, Stealth +3, Thieving Skill <choice> +3, Underworld +3, Weapon <choice> +2

**Bounty Hunter:** STR +1, CON +1, PER +1, CR +3, HP +10%; Brawling +2, Ride +3, Thieving Skill <choice> +2, Tracking +3, Weapon <choice> +3, Weapon <choice> +2

**Courtesan:** DEX +1, CHA +1; Etiquette +1, Fashion +1, Performing Skill <choice> +2, Seduce +4

**Craftsman:** DEX +1; Armorer/Artificer/Artisan/Weaponer <choose one> +4, Appraiser +2

**Engineer:** DEX +1, INT +1; Artificer/Artisan <choose one> +3, Engineer +4

**Entertainer:** DEX +1, PER +1, CHA +1; Etiquette +1, Fashion +1, Performing Skill <choice> +4, Performing Skill <choice> +3

**Farmer:** CON +1; Agriculture/Farming <choose one> +4, Conveyance <choice> +1, Laborer +1

**Fisherman:** CON +1; Conveyance (boat) +2, Fishing +4, Swim +1

**Healer:** INT +1, PER +1; Healer +4, Herb Lore +3

**Laborer:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +1, HP +10%; Brawling +1, Gambling +1, Laborer +4

**Magician:** INT +2, MR +4; Arcane Lore +3, Language (archaen) fluent, Scholar Skill <choice> +2, Magical Order <choice> plus 4 Modes <choice> +3

**Miner:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +1, HP +10%; Brawling +1, Gambling +1, Laborer +4, Mining +4, Weapon (pickaxe) +1

**Noble:** Etiquette +3, Fashion +2, Performing Skill <choice> +2, Ride +2, Weapon <choice> +2

**Official:** INT +1; Administrator +2, Etiquette +2, Oratory +1, Diplomacy/Litigator <choose one> +4

**Outdoorsman:** STR +1, CON +1, PER +1, CR +2, HP +10%; Guide +4, Ride +3, Scout/Traps <choose one> +3, Stealth +3, Survival +3, Tracking +3, Weapon

<choice> +3, Weapon <choice> +2

**Pilot:** CON +1, PER +1; Artillerist/Astromancy/  
Command <choose one> +3, Cultures +1, Pilot +4

**Priest:** INT +1, WIL +1, CHA +1, MR +2; Doctrines  
+4, Healer +1, Oratory +3, some have Invocation plus 4  
Modes of choice +3

**Rogue:** DEX +1, PER +1, CR +1; Evade +1, Streetwise  
+3, Thieving Skills <two of choice> +3, Underworld  
+3, Weapon (club or dagger) +1

**Scholar:** INT +2; Language <choice> fluent, Scholar  
Skill <choice> +4, Scholar Skill <choice> +2

**Sentinel:** STR +1, PER +1, CR +3, HP +10%; Brawling  
+1, Guard +3, Shield +3, Weapon <choice> +3

**Spy:** INT +2, PER +2, CR +1; Deception +4, Evade +3,  
Language <choice> native, Stealth +3, Thieving Skills  
<two of choice> +3, Weapon <choice> +2

**Thug:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +3, HP +10%; Brawling  
+3, Coerce +2, Gambling +1, Laborer +1, Underworld  
+1, Weapon <choice> +3

**Trader:** INT or PER +1; Appraiser +3, Barter or Hag-  
gle +3, Conveyance <choice> +1, Merchant +3

**Wanderer:** CON +1, PER +1, CR +1, HP +5%; Con-  
veyance/Ride <choose one> +4, Cultures +2, Guide +2,  
Language <choice> basic, Survival +3, Weapon  
<choice> +2

**Warrior:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +4, HP +10%; Artil-  
lerist/Command/Mounted Combat/Shield/Tactics  
<choose one> +3, Brawling +2, Weapon <choice> +4,  
Weapon <choice> +2

## Appendix: Tables

### Lifespan Chart

Race	Adolescent	Adult	Middle-Aged	Venerable
Arborin	1-16	17-30	31-45	46-60 (+d20)
Bane	1-10	11-35	36-50	51-60 (+d20)
Dryad Bush*	N/A	N/A	N/A	80 (+4d20)
Equs	1-5	6-15	16-20	21-31 (+d20)
Satada	1-5	6-24	25-39	40-60 (+d20)
Skank	1-2	3-30	31-55	56-76 (+d20)
Woodwhisp**	N/A	N/A	N/A	30 (+3d20)

\* Dryad Bushes do not age and are technically immortal. However, the Venerable entry reflects how long the host plant lives for.

\*\* Woodwhisps are unaging and immortal. However, the Venerable entry reflects how long they spend on the Material Plane before returning to the Green World.

**Note:** This chart shows the average lifespan (in Talislantan years) of the various races included in this chapter, divided into four basic stages of development. See Talislanta, Fourth Edition, p. 447, for descriptions of these four stages and for information on other races.

Type	DR	WT	STR	Cost	Range
Alchemical projector	#	*6	-1	100 g.l.	75'
Bastard sword (#)	8(9)	10	+1	20 g.l.	--
Battle fan	3	1	--	15 g.l.	--
Battle gauntlet	3	3	-1	30 g.l.	--
Blowgun (#)	1	2	--	5 s.p.	50'
Bolt-thrower	^	2	--	200 g.l.	50'
Butterfly pin	3	.25	--	5 g.l.	thrown
Club, Enim (#)	16	100+	+8	100 g.l.	--
Club, giant-sized (#)	10	20+	+4	5 s.p.	--
Club, one-handed	4	4	-2	5 c.p.	--
Combat hook	6	2	-1	3 g.l.	--
Crimson moon	6	3	-1	14 g.l.	--
Crossbow, repeat (#)	[5] 4	6	-3	75 g.l.	100'
Crystaldagger	4	1	--	12 g.l.	thrown
Crystalmace	6	4	-3	12 g.l.	--
Dagger, giant-sized	7	6+	+1	8 g.l.	thrown
Dart	4	1	--	2 g.l.	thrown
Djaro (#)	5	4	-1	5 g.l.	50'
Dueling cloak	--	2	-3	15 g.l.	--
Executioner's axe #	10	12	+2	40 g.l.	--
Flail	8	6	0	5 g.l.	--
Fork dagger	4 (2)	1	--	30 g.l.	thrown
Hatraj #	10	14	+2	12 g.l.	--

Type	DR	WT	STR	Cost	Range
Mailed fist	2	.5	--	2 s.p.	--
Spear, giant #	14	20+	+5	10 g.l.	thrown
Spear, short	6	3	-2	5 s.p.	thrown
Spiked glove	4	1	--	2 g.l.	--
Staff, short	5	2	-3	5 s.p.	--
Staff, sword #	9	6	0	15 g.l.	--
Staff, telescopic #	6	3	-3	50 g.l.	--
Uwan	4	1	--	1 c.p.	--
War claw	6	3	-1	4 g.l.	--
Warhammer, adamant #	10	30	+2	100 g.l.	--

#### Key

# This weapon requires two hands to use.

[x] The number in brackets is the number of rounds required to reload these missile weapons.

\* Damage varies depending on the alchemical mixture dispensed.

^ Damage varies depending on the ammunition used; see the weapon description for details.

All weapons in this section are rated according to Damage Rating (DR), weight in pounds (WT), the minimum Strength required to employ the weapon (STR), average cost, and Effective Range, when appropriate. Characters receive a -2 penalty to combat skill rating for each point by which their STR falls short of the weapon's minimum STR requirement; characters cannot use missile weapons at all without having the minimum required STR.



## Ammunition & Accessories for Missile Weapons

Type	WT	Cost
Pouch with 20 blowgun darts	1	4 s.p.
Quiver / 10 elemental essence bolts	5	2 s.p./125 g.l.

### Specialized Ammunition for Missile Weapons

All costs are for a single projectile of that type, for that weapon.

Weapon	Barbed	Blunt	Grapnel	Fire	Rope Cutter	Whistler
Dart-thrower	--	1 s.p.	--	--	6 s.p.	2 s.p.
Heavy crossbow	2 s.p.	1 s.p.	6 s.p.	1 s.p.	6 s.p.	2 s.p.
Light crossbow	1 s.p.	5 c.p.	3 s.p.	5 c.p.	3 s.p.	1 s.p.
Long bow	1 s.p.	5 c.p.	3 s.p.	5 c.p.	3 s.p.	1 s.p.
Short bow	5 c.p.	3 c.p.	2 s.p.	3 c.p.	2 s.p.	5 c.p.
Tri-bow	--	2 s.p.	--	--	6 s.p.	4 s.p.

## Armor

All armor is rated according to Protection Rating (PR), weight in pounds (WT), minimum strength required to employ the armor (STR), and average cost. Characters have a -1 penalty to all actions for each point their Strength Rating falls short of the armor's minimum STR requirement.

Type	PR	WT	STR	Cost
Alchemically Treated Cloak, Castabulanese	1	4	--	400 g.l.
Chain Mesh*	4	30	+1	150 g.l.
Echinomorph Hide, Oceanian	4	15	0	500 g.l.
Mossweave Vest, Gnomekin	1	5	--	5 g.l.
Strider Hide and Plate, Kang!	4	40	+2	350 g.l.
Studded Leather!!	3	20	0	15 g.l.

### Key

\* indicates that the armor is made from black iron.

! indicates that the armor is made using black iron plates.

!! indicates that the armor is made using black iron studs.

## Shields

Information on shields includes weight in pounds (WT), maximum damage the shield can withstand in a single attack without breaking (Max. DR), the minimum strength required to employ the shield (STR) and average cost.

Type	WT	Max. DR	STR	Cost
Buckler*	6	10	-1	10 g.l.
Shield, Kharakhan	100	45	+7	80 g.l.

\*indicates that the shield is made with black iron.

## Medical Supplies and Prosthetics

Type	WT	Cost
Astringent, small bottle	--	5 s.p.
Bandages, linen	--	2 c.p.
Bone saw, iron*	--	22 s.p.
False foot/hand, hardwood	--	15 s.p.
False foot/hand, iron*	--	25 g.p.
Knife, small sharp (DR 2)*	--	1 g.l.
Hammer, small iron*	1	15 s.p.
Needles, bone/wood (10)	--	1 c.p.
Needles, iron (5)*	--	3 c.p.
Peg leg, hardwood	2	1 s.p.
Peg leg, iron*	4	1 g.p.
Scissors, iron*	--	2 g.p.
Screws, iron (10)*	--	3 c.p.
Splint, hardwood	1	1 c.p.
Stitching gut/thread	--	1 s.p.
Strap, iron*	1	1 s.p.
Strap, leather	--	1 c.p.

\* Item made of black iron.

## Musical Instrument Chart

Type	Cost		
Bell, Brass	2 s.p.	Gong, Darkling	1 c.p.
Bell, Glass	5 g.l.	Gong, Hammer-gongs	5 g.l.
Bell, Ice	5 s.p.	Gong, Za	2 g.l.
Bell, Tubal	1 g.l.	Horn, Animal horn	5 s.p.
Bellflower	1 g.l.	Horn, Black iron	2 g.l.
Chime, Brass	1 s.p.	Horn, Brass	3 g.l.
Chime, Ice	3 s.p.	Horn, Darkling tube	5 c.p.
Chime, Sawila	3 s.p.	Horn, Fungi	3 g.l.
Chime, Spring-chimes	3 s.p.	Horn, Rajan temple	30+ g.l.
Chime, Verdir	1 s.p.	Horn, Spiralhorn	50+ g.l.
Chime, Water	5 g.l.	Horn, Squawk-horn	1 s.p.
Chime, Zilo	1 g.l.	Horn, Wood	1 g.l.
Cymbal, Brass	1 g.l.	Misc., Anak	5 g.l.
Cymbal, Clangals	2 g.l.	Misc., Mandola	2 s.p.
Cymbal, Djaffir	2 g.l.	Misc., Shaker	1 s.p.
Cymbal, Finger	2 g.l.	Misc., Tambourine	1 g.l.
Cymbal, Rajan	1 g.l.	Misc., Wood whistle	5 c.p.
Cymbal, Tchan	3 g.l.	Misc., Wood xylophone	2 g.l.
Cymbal, Tsimbals	2 g.l.	Organ, Four-man bellows-horn	200+ g.l.
Drum, Aht-ra hide	1 g.l.	Organ, Mirin	100+ g.l.
Drum, Daro	2 g.l.	Organ, Uraj	500+ g.l.
Drum, Dracara	15 g.l.	Silnarast-Lado	4,000+ g.l.
Drum, Dragon hide	4 g.l.	Stringed, Ahtal	15 g.l.
Drum, Druk/Stryx	5 g.l.	Stringed, Djaro	5 g.l.
Drum, Mushroom	1 g.l.	Stringed, Gossamer harp	500+ g.l.
Drum, Rajan	4 g.l.	Stringed, Lute	15 g.l.
Drum, Tambour	20+ g.l.	Stringed, Lutara	20 g.l.
Drum, Uka	10 g.l.	Stringed, Mandallo	15 g.l.
Drum, Za tube	1 g.l.	Stringed, Mandolin	10 g.l.
Drum, Zandir box	2 g.l.	Stringed, Metal harp	20 g.l.
Flute, Druk	5 g.l.	Stringed, Silk harp	25 g.l.
Flute, Glass	2 g.l.	Stringed, Yukas	25 g.l.
Flute, Grass	1 g.l.	Stringed, Zeethara	30 g.l.
Flute, Madao	1 g.l.		
Flute, Ojo	10 g.l.		
Flute, Rasa	10 g.l.		
Flute, Skreedle-pipe	5 c.p.		
Flute, Wood	5 s.p.		
Gong, Brass	1 g.l. per 1' diameter		