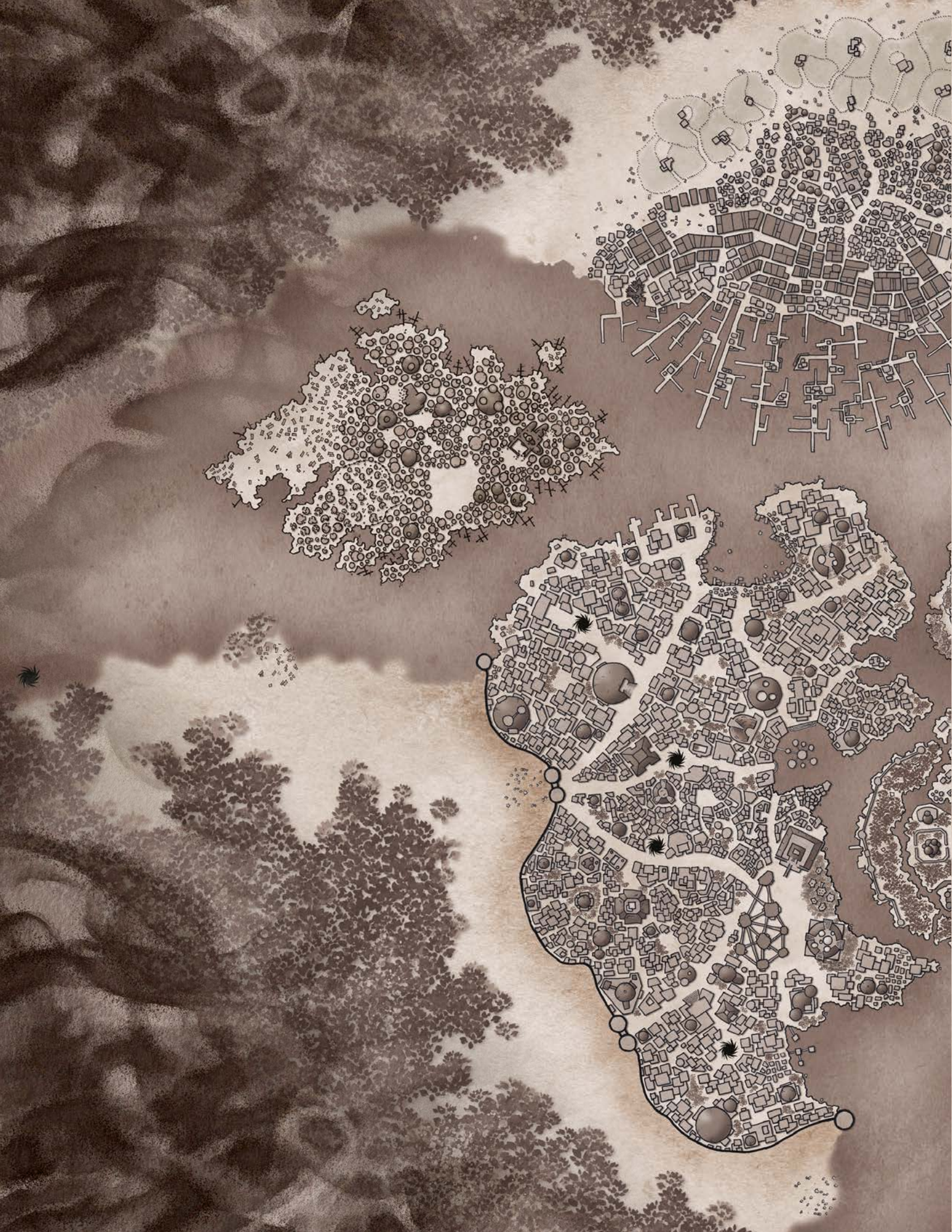
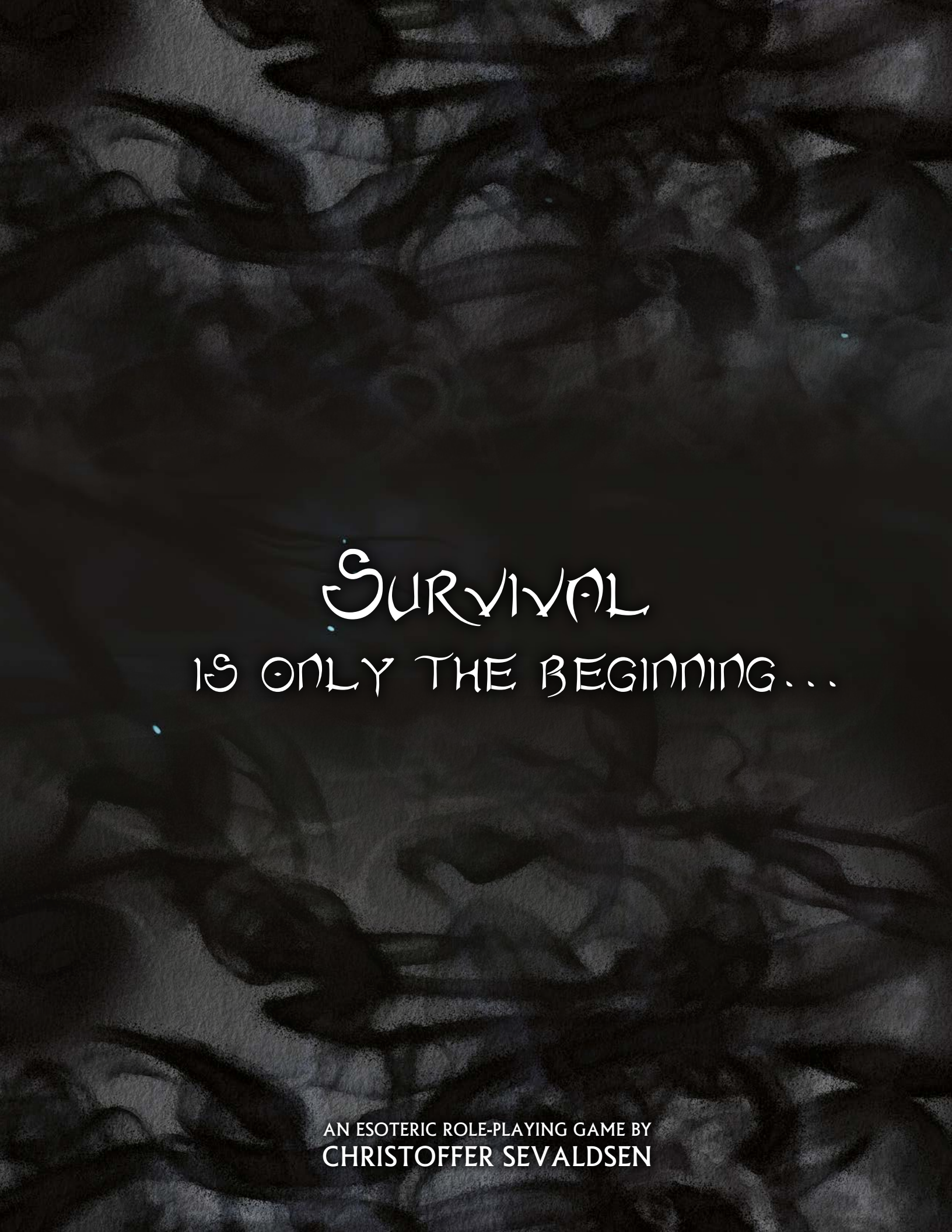
# BLACK VOID™



## Core rulebook






AN ESOTERIC ROLE-PLAYING GAME BY
CHRISTOFFER SEVALDSEN

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# The Fall of Earth

*In the days when Babylon was the greatest city on Earth, mankind lived in placid ignorance of the grandeur, vastness and horror of the Cosmos... yet such tranquillity is not meant to persist!*

*The awakening of mankind was ruthless as the heavens of Earth were torn asunder with a deafening rumble like massive thunderous waves crashing against the shore. Mankind stared in horrified awe as small specks of black mist appeared rapidly across the heavens. Pulsating and roiling as if somehow alive the specks began to extend and grow, and it seemed as if an impossibly black fog was swallowing the heavens, a surging tidal wave engulfing the skies.*

*Akin to staring into the unbearable blackness of a midnight ocean - not knowing what abhorrent horrors could be lurking in the depths, yet still drawn irresistibly and inescapably towards it - a most primal fear gripped mankind: The paralysing terror of the unknown and the dread of complete powerlessness.*
*At the centre of each speck, a whirling cyclone evolved, and eerie gurgling noises could be heard as if the gashes in the heavens were swallowing the very air.*
*Slowly but incontestably the skies of Earth darkened, and violent winds gusted towards the expanding black fog. Smokey tendrils began emanating from the gashes, pulsing as if they were alive. Engrossed in terror of the abysmal spectacle mankind watched as massive formless shadows could be glimpsed moving like storm-tossed waves in the darkness beyond each gash. Then the gashes began to implode, violently sucking in and engulfing everything in their vicinity! In inconceivable panic, the helpless peoples of Earth could do nothing as they were swept away by the screeching and howling gales of a maelstrom pulling everything into its maw. With pleading voices, mankind cried to their Gods for salvation, yet no deliverance was to be found as men, women and children were sucked into the blackness of the Void, leaving their dying Earth behind.*

*The obliviousness of mankind was shattered; their eyes irrevocably opened to the truth about existence, their minds enlightened. The comprehension and sudden exposure to the enormity of reality and the Void beyond drove many to madness. Countless perished as mankind was heaved far and wide akin to debris swept away by the deluge of a typhoon.*

*There are places in existence where the veil between the Void and the Cosmos is fragile and thin, where the two converge and where the Void emanates openly into the Cosmos. Llyhn the Eternal is one such place, and it was here that the first survivors of mankind began to emerge like driftwood washed up on distant, unfamiliar shores. As time passed the lone stragglers and ragged survivors were scattered among the stars, Earth seemed all but a distant memory and a new era of desperate struggle for survival dawned for mankind.*



# Introduction

Welcome to the world of the Black Void role-playing game (RPG) - A dark and esoteric fantasy setting where human subsistence is in peril, as an eldritch cataclysm has exiled mankind from its homeworld, Earth. The Black Void RPG introduces action, adventure, intrigue and horror, as you and your fellow players seek to claim your rightful place in a vast and unfamiliar Cosmos or seek enlightenment in the mysterious Void filled with wonder, delight and dread.



## Getting started

The Black Void RPG is a classic tabletop role-playing game where friends meet up for several hours and explore the wonderful realms of their imagination.
In order to play the game you need two or more participants, at least one twelve-sided die per participant (preferably more and four- and six-sided dice as well), pen, paper, an eraser, character sheets (copied from this book or downloaded from blackvoidgames.com) and, of course, the Black Void core rulebook, which you are currently reading.

An easy way to get familiar with the rules and quickly get the gist of what the game is all about is by meeting up with some experienced players for a couple of sessions.

As with most other games you do not necessarily need toknow all the rules to play, but it is recommended to have at least a basic idea of the mechanics before beginning. This book contains all the rules and information you need to play the Black Void RPG.

When playing tabletop role-playing games players customarily sit around a table with their gaming kit, submerging themselves in the experience, diving into strange and foreign worlds of the imagination. An audio device can be helpful to set the mood of the game with ambient music and keeping drinks and snacks handy is highly recommended.

Some players find it beneficial to have miniatures to manage and visualise combat, but this is not a requirement. Gaming sessions can last anywhere from a couple of hours to the entire day (or night), so it is recommended to make sure you have ample of time or have set a time-limit to ensure that no one has to leave in the middle of the fun.

Some players prefer scenarios lasting only one session while others prefer continuous campaigns consisting of many linked scenarios where the story and characters develop over time. Campaigns function much like chapters in a book or indeed books in a series and can continue indefinitely. In any case, it is a good idea to align with your fellow players what you would like to do and the scope of the game before beginning a scenario or game-session.

## What is a roleplaying game?

If you are new to role-playing games, it is a pastime or hobby, which allows you to become the protagonist of a dramatic story that you and your fellow players create together. You get to choose who your character (gaming persona) is, what he or she looks like, what he or she say and do while you explore lost worlds, battle terrible adversaries and uncover the secrets of the Cosmos.

As mentioned above you need two or more participants to play. One is the Arbiter, while the others are players. Each player has his or her character, which they control throughout the game while the Arbiter is in control of all other aspects of the game: Establishing the basic plot and events for the players to explore. His or her task is to be the moderator, determining the environment, locations, mood, atmosphere and concept, which the characters navigate and act in as well as the actions and reactions of the non-player characters and adversaries. Since the Arbiter needs to manage everything going on in the game, it is important that he or she has a firm grasp of the rules and mechanics of the game, an imaginative mind, a knack for telling stories and building drama as well as a good sense of fair play and an eye for detail.

As the characters embark upon strange, exciting and possibly horrifying adventures in the Cosmos they will likely have to perform incredible feats, face fearsome opponents, travel the chaotic currents of the Void and undertake many other fantastical journeys, which the Black Void RPG game system is designed to control and handle. But while the rules define the premises of the game and how actions are managed and resolved, it is the imagination and creativity of the participants that bring the stories and game to life.



## The Rules

"Simplicity grants diversity" is the primary maxim behind the rules of the Black Void RPG. The entire system is based on a few basic principles, making the rules easy to grasp and implement, which in the end gives more time for the fun bit, namely playing the game.

As in the real world, things do not always work out the way you intended them to, and sometimes they work out better than you could have hoped for. The rules do not seek to mimic realism in all respects; the aim is instead to create a dramatic believability for the players to enjoy while retaining the excitement of chance and fortune.
To determine the success or failure of actions as well as the different consequences of these the game system is based upon the rolling of twelve-sided dice (D12 in game-terms): The higher the roll, the greater the chance of success for an action; the lower the roll, the greater the risk of failure. Similarly, a high roll will cause a substantial outcome while a low roll will bring about a lesser effect. The point of simple rules is that they can be made to fit anything an inventive Arbiter or player can come up with, thus granting endless possibilities within the game.

Each action has a difficulty, which the action-roll has to equal or exceed for the action, undertaking or effort to be successful. The roll will be influenced by a character's abilities and skills, making capable characters more likely of succeeding. Furthermore, some dice rolls determine an effect or outcome and do not have a difficulty as such, as the result will be consequential and determine the varying degrees of the outcome or achievement.

The system is designed to encompass everything and anything the players may encounter. The combat system is focused on manoeuvres and designed to create fluid and fast-paced action with ample opportunity for complexity and strategic acumen. The mechanics for the various supranatural powers characters might possess are also intended to be simple and easily applied while giving a wide range of uses. The development and progression of characters are nonlinear, giving players the opportunity to create exactly the combination of skills and abilities they want.

Keep in mind that the rules are there to support the story and not the other way around. If a rule hampers creativity or does not make sense in a situation, the Arbiter is free to bend or break it as he or she sees fit. Adapting or abolishing rules should, however, be done fairly, reasonably and preferably agreed upon among all the participants.

### What the Core Rulebook Contains

This book is divided into sections and chapters. The first five chapters are called the player section as they detail all the information about creating and equipping characters as well as the rules and character development. Chapters six to ten are the Arbiters section as it contains information imperative for running the game, but which the players should not have. Lastly is an assemblage of appendices.
It is recommended that Arbiters go through the whole book (preferably several times) to be entirely familiar with all aspects of the Black Void RPG before beginning play.

#### Player Section

- Chapter 1 presents the character creation rules in detail.
- Chapter 2 deals with property and equipment available in the setting.
- Chapter 3 presents the rules of the game including combat, psychology, etc.
- Chapter 4 introduces the supranatural and fantastic powers available to characters.
- Chapter 5 explains experience and character progression in the game.

#### Arbiter Section

- Chapter 6 details the practice of running the Black Void role-playing game and everything an Arbiter needs to know.
- Chapter 7 describes Llyhn, its districts and environs as well as providing plot hooks for these.
- Chapter 8 explores some of the major factions and prominent people of the Eternal City.
- Chapter 9 details the major species and beasts that characters may come across on their adventures.
- Chapter 10 introduces some primary worlds characters are likely to visit and explore.
- Appendices includes a character sheet, a glossary and a helpful index.

## Setting & Ambience

In ancient times mankind was thrust into an outlandish subsistence at the bottom of the hierarchy in the dystopian cosmopolis Llyhn populated by eerie beings from faraway worlds, bizarre sapient entities and otherworldly Daimons from beyond the Veil. Humanity is struggling for survival in filthy alleys and shanties among beggars, slaves and the casteless, staring up at opulent alien palaces beyond the shadows of looming walls.

This game takes place in a distant past which is both familiar and outlandish in its dark and exotic ambience. Players will - as the lost descendants of earth's ancient civilisations - explore a vast Cosmos seeking enlightenment, influence and power to secure the very existence of mankind - or indeed for their own interests.

The Black Void RPG is set in a dual reality: A vast Cosmos and beyond this evident world an intangible Void. The Cosmos is the universe we know; home to mortal species such as mankind and - as it turned out - many others.
Where some Cosmic worlds resemble Earth others are

alien and weird; some supporting grand civilisations while others are entirely devoid of life. In contrast, the Void is an entirely alien and bizarre domain; an ethereal ocean constantly fluctuating and inhabited by unimaginable life forms and in its depths the mindless ghostly abominations. The Void is chaos and catalyst as opposed to the order and constancy of the Cosmos.
A metaphysical entity, known as the Veil, divides and screens these contrasting spheres from each other.
But the Veil is unstable and occasionally perforated allowing the influence of one to emanate into the other.
There are places where the Veil is ruptured to such an extent that the boundary between the Cosmos and Void is muddled. These areas are known as border worlds.

The central arena of the game is Llyhn the Eternal, a border domain located at the heart of a massive convergence of Void currents. Llyhn is a principal hub and waypoint connecting major trade routes and a vibrant melting pot of species from across the known worlds, as well as more esoteric entities and beings from beyond the evident world. A main staging point for exploration of the unknown reaches of the Cosmos, Llyhn is a median port and cosmopolis. Independent from external influence, the city is considered neutral ground and hosts numerous diplomatic missions from across the Cosmos making it a natural place for enlightened species to congregate; attracting cultural tensions, social intricacies, religious polemic and political rivalry while immense armies are accommodated for transit under the watchful eyes of the masked Hohr'loh'kin, the extended arm of the Unseen Rulers of Llyhn.

## Concept & Game themes

In a distant dark past, across countless uncaring worlds survival is only the beginning! This is a game revolving around the fall and subsequent resurgence of mankind. Mankind is forlorn and desperately clawing its way back from the bottom of the abyss - allowing players to focus on the personal struggle and story of their own characters or expand and put emphasis on the fate of humanity as a species and the part they play in this.

Humanity - and the player - is faced with questions and uncertainty as it seeks to find its place in a vast and unfamiliar Cosmos: Where are we and what is our place? What is humanity when it has lost everything? Where do we go from here?
As characters explore the Cosmos and Void seeking answers they are not only faced with adversity but also exposed to philosophical, psychological and ethical quandaries when confronted with otherworldly mentalities and cultures entirely alien to mankind.

### IN THE UNKNOWN

How does humanity fit into a Cosmos it knows little about and where the possibilities are endless? Encountering sentient species whose mentalities are as alien as their appearance is unnerving and bound to make humanity question what has previously been taken for granted. If the present is defined by the past what happens when humanity's culture and ethos is lost? In a Cosmos where humanity's ideals and tenets are insignificant mankind needs to adapt or succumb.

### BEYOND THE HORIZON

Exploring the Cosmos and faced with adversity, political intrigue and cultural tension on a scale unknown to humanity, players must cope or risk becoming collateral damage in the struggles of uncaring factions. The possibility that the Earth might still be accessible, that human bastions have been established elsewhere or the promise of new frontiers spurs characters to venture beyond the horizon. In the end, humanity must claim its place in the Cosmos or perish trying.

### WHAT IS HUMANITY?

Characters are exposed to otherworldly and exotic - oftentimes bizarre - philosophies and ideals as they explore. Metaphysical existence is put into question when characters venture beyond the Veil where nothing comes back the same as it entered. Rootless and without an ethos, humanity must define and establish itself - leaving the players to decide what humanity is and what its place will be in the Cosmos.



# Example of play

If you are new to role-playing, the following example illustrates how a game-session can progress. It gives a sense of what role-playing is about, and how players and Arbiter interact to make the story come alive. It shows how the Arbiter sets the scene, moderates the events, handles actions, dice-rolls and acts out the different non-player characters.
The rules examples are to give an idea of how a typical game session can occur and how the game is played, rather than delve deep into the mechanics and how these are applied. The session has two players and an Arbiter. Sarah plays a human explorer seeking an ancient temple lost in the jungle, hoping to find the remnants of an earlier expedition sent out by her enclave. Steven also plays a human, who has had the misfortune of being captured by slavers. The example begins as Sarah is already on her way to the temple.

ARBITER: Alright, so you've gotten to the jungle of Tambri, searching for the lost enclave expedition. Make a navigation check to see how well you get on.
SARAH: Alright, let me see. Is that Awareness or Intellect?
ARBITER: Let's say Awareness.
SARAH: Ok, so I have a +2 in Awareness and a 0 rank for Navigation so... that's a 6 on the die, so 8 in total.
ARBITER: Alright, so you start making your way through this vibrant, wet jungle. Your shoes are squelching in the mud, but you start to get a niggling in the back of your mind, something feels off, make an Awareness roll.
SARAH: That's 4 on the die, so a 6 with my Awareness.
ARBITER: Ok, ok. You notice there's something wrong with the undergrowth. You can make a Herbalism roll if you wish, with a five difficulty.
SARAH: Ok, I have a +1 in Herbalism and a 0 modifier with Intellect so... 3 in total.
ARBITER: Alright, you can't quite place it other than the foliage seems decayed.
SARAH: Ok...
ARBITER: So you continue, trying to find the Temple of Ba'iloth. You eventually stumble upon a clearing but catch yourself before broadcasting your presence. The dimensions of the clearing are about 10 meters by 5, and you see a group of what seem to be slavers as you spot numerous people in cages and among them you see...
STEVEN: Hello!
ARBITER: Steven, if you would describe your character?
STEVEN: Alright, so as you cast your gaze over the encampment you see in one of the cages a fairly lean man, with brown hair long on one side and cut short on the other. You notice a piercing in the ear closest to you, and you feel captivated by his green eyes. So, in other words, he's devilishly handsome.
ARBITER: Alright, yes that is what you see. Along with a few pup tents and a campfire that is burning low, but with a lot of smoke coming out of it.
SARAH: I see. I'm going to... wait, how many slavers are there?
ARBITER: Three, that you can see - one has a bow of some sort, the other two have curved swords over their shoulders.
SARAH: Are any of them away from the others?
ARBITER: Yes, one of them is seemingly a lookout while the other two are playing some sort of game on the ground. Let me draw a little picture of the camp - the cages are arrayed in a half-moon crescent, with the fire in the middle. The two guards are playing on a flat rock in front of the cages. The cage on the far left is the one that holds Steven's character, and the lookout is on the far side of the camp from the cages.
SARAH: Alright, I'm going to take out my bow and try to hit him in the head - a called shot.
ARBITER: Ok, that is a -3.
SARAH: Doesn't matter I rolled a 12!
ARBITER: Wow! Well, it was a sneak attack, and a called shot on the head, as well as an exceptional hit so please roll on the exceptional hits table using a D12 for severity and a D6 for the effect.
SARAH: I roll a 10 for severity and a 6 for effect.
ARBITER: Excellent. The arrow darts from your fingers, slides along the arrow rest and flies true. It thunks into the throat of the lookout, crushing his windpipe and causing three times normal damage to him. He slumps to the ground immediately and soundlessly. Good job! So the lookout is down and out, what do you want to do next? Leave Steven's character behind, sneak around, go for a triple kill?
SARAH: I'm going to try to sneak over and let Steven's character out.
ARBITER: Ok, stealth roll, I'll say it's a difficulty 7 roll.
SARAH: 10!
ARBITER: Ok, so you get on your belly and shimmy over to the cage holding his character. Make a larceny check to open the cage.
STEVEN: Can I help her?
ARBITER: Sure, divide your modifiers by two and round them up, and she can add them to her total.
STEVEN: Alright, you can add 2 then.
SARAH: Well I needed it, I got a 5.
ARBITER: So 7 in total then? Ok, so working together you can jimmy the lock open.
SARAH: I give him my short sword.
STEVEN: Thanks.
ARBITER: Ok, how do you want to take care of the last two slavers?
SARAH: I nock another arrow and let fly! With an 8 to hit.
ARBITER: That hits. Roll damage.
SARAH: That is 4 damage, pierce 2.
ARBITER: Okay, as you are now engaged in combat roll initiative.
SARAH: 10.
STEVEN: 8.
ARBITER: Alright, Sarah you get to go first.
SARAH: Alright, nocking another arrow — that's an 11, so 5 damage.
ARBITER: Did you ready them? Remember nocking arrows is -3 to initiative if they're readied, and -6 if they are not.
SARAH: Oh no.
ARBITER: That's fine, just remember it for next time, ok? Alright so you're making a human pincushion of that guy, the other one is going to move up to engage with you, Steven, and he is going to make an all-out attack, so that

is a +3 to hit, but a -3 to defence until his next turn... 11 hits you right, Steven?
STEVEN: Yep.
ARBITER: Okay, so he takes his sword and stabs you in the side for 8 damage.
STEVEN: With my hardened leather that makes it 5.
ARBITER: Your turn, Steven.
STEVEN: Well I'm going for the guy who just attacked me. That is a 6, but he has that -3 so...
ARBITER: Yep, you hit.
STEVEN: With 6 damage!
ARBITER: Ok, you hit him right in the gut, but he's still up.
STEVEN: Alright, I'm done.
ARBITER: That makes it the pincushion's turn, he is going to spend his action taking out a bow... Your turn Sarah.
SARAH: Ok, hitting the bow guy again. With a 5 to hit...
ARBITER: Yeah, you miss. Now sword guy is hacking away by making a standard attack... and swings wild as well, your turn STEVEN.
STEVEN: Ok, well that is a 10 to hit, with another 6 damage.
ARBITER: Okay, you slice him up but he is not quite down yet, and bow guy is going to try to run away using his whole turn.
SARAH: Well I'm still going to try to take him down... with another natural 12. I'm on fire tonight!
ARBITER: Ok, make another roll on the exceptional hits table...
SARAH: Wow, 11 and 6!
ARBITER: So you see this guy running through the undergrowth, as your arrow flies through the air, through the jungle and somehow finds its mark. You see his form in the distance drop to the ground, as his head is torn apart into many disparate gory pieces by the impact. Seeing this, the last guy is going to get on his knees and try to surrender, what do you do?
STEVEN: I cut his head off.
ARBITER: Alright, roll to hit I guess.
STEVEN: 10 in total.
ARBITER: Yeah, he didn't have much health left — the sword just cuts right through. The two of you realize that the two men went down a lot easier than they should have, and as you look closer you see that they were all emaciated and sickly.
SARAH: That's odd.
STEVEN: Oh, thank you for the rescue, the name's Chikal.
SARAH: Saphhira. I'm trying to find a temple in the jungle.
STEVEN: Well, I owe you my life, so I'll help however I can.
ARBITER: So, the two of you release the other slaves and give them directions back to civilisation. Roll another navigation check, SARAH.
SARAH: That's a 10.
ARBITER: Ok, so you hack your way through the brush and vines and eventually make your way to the Temple. The two of you walk inside and, roll an Agility check.
SARAH: Well those 12s are coming back to bite me, that's a natural 1.
STEVEN: 5.
ARBITER: Alright, so the stone-flagged floor groans and wobbles as you enter. The decrepit, jungle-rotted temple can't hold your combined weight and the floor caves in as masonry from the walls and ceiling drops down. The two of you are separated, and Sarah...
SARAH: Yes?
ARBITER: Your character's head feels like someone is beating it with a stick.
STEVEN: Alright, can I see anything?
ARBITER: Nope, neither of you can see anything.
STEVEN: Well I'm going to call out for Saphhira and start walking around.
ARBITER: Neither of you can hear each other.
SARAH: Alright I am going to take a torch out.
ARBITER: Alright, you light the torch, and for a moment you thought the walls were awash with blood and depicting gruesome scenes, make a fear check, difficulty 5.
SARAH: Alright so, that is a 2, plus 2 Willpower, so I fail.
ARBITER: Alright, make a roll on the fear table.
SARAH: I roll a 4.
ARBITER: So, you are now startled and must run away from the source of your fear. So, as you run away the torch you were holding falls to the ground and gutters out.
SARAH: Great.
ARBITER: Also, once you control yourself that beating in your head becomes rhythmic. It sounds like chanting, and you find yourself mouthing the words. Your teeth feel wrong, as if they were arranged haphazardly and were about to fall out of your mouth, lose one sanity. Make a Madness table roll, please.
SARAH: That would be a 9.
ARBITER: Ok, so the sight of those men from earlier is stuck in your mind, and you watch as they slowly decay. But then their corpses rise, rotten and pregnant with maggots as they writhe towards you. For the next D6 days you will be plagued with hallucinations, and any encounter causes a fear roll of 6.
SARAH: Well then.
ARBITER: STEVEN, you are walking around, and you hear someone screaming.
STEVEN: I call out for Saphhira.
ARBITER: Sarah. Your character hears an unutterable squelching growl, and as you look up, you see Chikal as one of those decayed, rotten, things.
SARAH: Well, knowing my character and what has just happened she is going to take her bow and fire at the thing. With a natural 1, thankfully.
ARBITER: You say that; however this causes a critical mishap which is that you actually do hit your target, roll damage.
STEVEN: Oh no...
SARAH: That would be a 3.
STEVEN: Oh no...
ARBITER: That takes Steven down to -2 health — you guys never rested, and he was already hurting from whatever is in the area plus living as a slave. So, Sarah, you see this arrow fly and sink into the breast of this creature and it falls straight down in a heap. The hallucination goes away, please make another fear check of 6.
SARAH: I fail again, with a 12 for the table roll.
ARBITER: You collapse to the ground and lose another sanity point. Madness table, please?
SARAH: That is a 9 again.
ARBITER: Alright so that is the same as before. However, as you get yourself back together, you hear manic laughing. You realise that it's coming from yourself. Yet even when you clap your hands over your mouth, you continue to hear it. As you succumb to the madness you hear a noise from behind you...



CHAPTER:

# Character Creation

To play the Black Void RPG, you must first design or create a character, which will be your persona within the game. You do this by filling out a character sheet, which details the attributes, possessions and other features of your character. Players design characters based on different priorities and with varying aims. However, before diving any further into the details, it is a good idea to consider a few fundamentals about the sort of character you want: A character should not only be exciting to play, it should also be interesting for the other players to interact with and for the Arbiter to build a story around. As a general approach, it is therefore advisable that you consider the three following subjects and discuss your ideas with the Arbiter before filling out your character sheet.

The preliminary consideration revolves around what defines your character and which qualities he or she possesses. For instance: Is he a brute with few social skills or a genius diplomat, who can manipulate all to do his bidding, yet severely lacks physical abilities? Or perhaps the character is a generalist who has no distinct strengths or weaknesses. It can be helpful to reflect upon which features ought to be prevalent and which ought to be weaker, as this will help you when you are filling out your character sheet; guiding your choices and mirroring your original thoughts about the character.

Secondly, another topic you should contemplate is that of origin: What kind of upbringing and general past does your character have? What made him or her who he or she is today? The answers to these questions will help you choose which skills and abilities your character has developed before the beginning of the story: Is she the daughter of a trader, brought up in wealth and with skilled tutoring readily available, a poor street-urchin or perhaps a worldly Voidfarer?

Last but not least, you should consider what drives your character. What is his or her aspiration in life and what is the character willing to do to achieve such goals? A clear idea of a character's motivation influences many other aspects of the game, as this is the primal reason for him or her to venture into the Cosmos and explore the mysteries of existence. Is a simple craving for riches the driving force, is there a profound event in his or her past for which the character must atone or seek retribution? Or perhaps your character seeks to attain the loftier goal of discovering a new homeworld for humanity.

In the Black Void RPG, you will likely find demigods, Daimons and aliens walking amongst ordinary people - sapient species, whose thinking is as unfamiliar to humans as their appearance. You will journey to incredible and horrific places and experience unbelievable marvels, while the hidden mysteries of the true nature of existence wait to be uncovered by those who pursue enlightenment. Keep this in mind when you create your character and allow your imagination to roam free, as almost everything and anything is possible in the Black Void RPG. The ultimate point of this game is to have fun and memorable experiences, so explore your imagination and let the excitement commence.

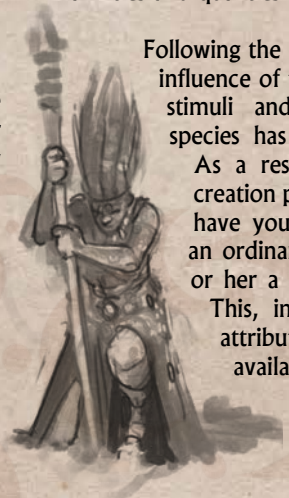
## Character Creation Process

An enjoyable aspect of role-playing is not only that of creating and defining the personality and abilities of your character but also seeing the growth and development, as the game progresses. When exploring the rules concerning character creation, you will discover that the possibilities for creating unique and remarkable characters are vast, although there are limitations to what you can do.

Character creation is based upon an allocation of points known as character points. These are divided according to the player's preferences regarding the following categories, which make up the abilities and qualities of any character: Traits, Talents, Background, Attributes, Powers and Skills. The corresponding chapters explain each of these categories and their application. Below, you will find a quick guide detailing the steps involved in creating a character in the Black Void RPG. Proceed in the given order, and your character will soon be ready to embark upon his or her journey into the mystery and madness of Llyhn, the Cosmos and the Void.

### STEP 1: MANKIND

Your character is human, a descendant of the survivors of Earth. As the first step, you should consider how old you want your character to be, as well as the gender. Although these have no direct rule implications, they are an integral part of your character and will likely influence the story and decisions your character will face. For instance, playing an old crone will be very different from playing a young man, although they may have exactly the same abilities and qualities on paper.



Following the exodus from Earth the chaotic influence of the Void, exposure to foreign stimuli and interbreeding with other species has left its trace on mankind. As a result, later in the character creation process, you may choose to have your character be more than an ordinary human, by making him or her a halfblood or Voidmarked. This, in turn, determines which attributes, powers, etc., are available to the character.

## STEP 2: HOMEWORLD

The second step is determining your character's Homeworld. Is your character a recent escapee from a savage world, a Llyhn native or does he or she perhaps stem from a world deep within the Void? This information will directly influence which bonuses or special characteristics your character will be granted and in turn provide a further basis for creating the backstory.

## STEP 3: TRAIT SCORES

The third step is resolving your character's Trait scores. Traits determine key features by defining inherent strengths and weaknesses; the character's fundamental physical, mental and social characteristics. A character has eight different Traits: Agility, Awareness, Stamina, Strength, Intellect, Persuasion, Presence and Willpower.

## STEP 4: TALENTS AND FLAWS

Talents and Flaws are special capacities and impediments directly linked to a character's Trait scores. You can choose Flaws for Traits with low scores and Talents for Traits with high scores. Talents and Flaws provide more personality to a character and affect mechanics and possibilities for the character influencing the manner in which a character can act and react throughout the game.

## STEP 5: BACKGROUND

A character's Background defines his or her social standing, allies, resources and ancestry. The chosen Background elements may serve to help a character reach his or her goals during the game, enrich the heritage of the character, as well as inspiring the Arbiter for adventures to come. You can be quite creative with your Background choices, integrating them in the character's history and adding twists to create a bit of mystery to your character.

## STEP 6: ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are unusual physical characteristics, such as wings, horns, et cetera. Given their inhuman qualities, Attributes are reserved for characters that are not of pure human descent, such as halfbloods or Voidmarked. Additionally, Voidmarked characters can obtain Esoteric Attributes; characteristics and powers beyond those of their Cosmic kin.

## STEP 7: POWERS

Powers are supranatural abilities, which are divided into three distinct areas: Mystic powers, Blood Rituals and Void powers. Mystic powers are abilities that allow characters to channel their mental energies or inner Void, changing reality around them by manifesting phenomena.

Blood Rituals deal with sacrificial divination, bloodletting rituals and several other practices, which grant characters boons and fortunes, temporarily enhancing their capabilities or giving additional ones. Void powers are innate inhuman abilities and manifestations, available only to the enlightened or those who have somehow been touched by the Void.

## STEP 8: SKILLS

Skills are the learnt abilities of your character; a compilation of all ordinary capabilities acquired through training and effort. Having a Skill allows a character to perform complex activities or tasks within a specified field of competence involving cognitive, practical or interpersonal abilities. Skills are tied to specific Traits, but some Skills can be used with different Traits depending on the situation or purpose.

## STEP 9: COMPLETING THE CHARACTER

In this phase you calculate the Health, Sanity, Movement and Defence Value of the character and note down his or her Enlightenment and Wastah rankings. Health determines the amount of injury, harm or malady a character can withstand before being incapacitated or killed. Sanity is the mental stability of a character, which is just as significant as Health, as the Cosmos and Void are dangerous places for those with weak minds - madness and insanity are very real threats. Movement determines the character's travel speed and how quickly he or she moves in combat while the Defence Value establishes how difficult he or she is to hit.

Two main concepts in the Black Void role-playing game are understanding and influence: In game terms enlightenment and Wastah. Each factor significantly impacts the power and possibilities of a character as enlightenment grants extraordinary powers and abilities while Wastah confers sway, authority and dominance. Aspects that are essential as mankind's - and the character's - very existence is threatened. Both concepts are story-driven and achievable only through exploration and world-interaction, not by expending points. Each concept is ranked by tiers: A score of zero in either indicates that the character has no clue about the true nature of reality or no influence whatsoever while high rankings designate an almost divine understanding of Existence or challenging the upper castes of Llyhn in terms of clout.



## STEP 10: COMING TO LIFE

By this stage, you have determined all the scores and points of your character, and it is now time to bring him or her to life. Looking at your character sheet, you will undoubtedly spot various possibilities for further developing the backstory. Answering questions such as what has shaped them into who they are now, what they look like, and what their demeanour is, will help you put the finishing touches on your creation. This step is where you bring meaning to all the scores and figures on your character sheet.

## STEP 11: WEALTH AND POSSESSIONS

The concluding task is to establish the assets and wealth your character has available and consequently, which possessions and property they can purchase.

This concludes the basic steps of character creation in the Black Void RPG. This introduction should provide you with an overview that will ease the actual process of creating a character. The following chapters fully explain each step so that you will have a comprehensive understanding of all aspects involved.

For convenience, the sample character Ziana will illustrate the character creation process and there is a reference listing the details, point values, etc.

Once all characters have been completed and approved by the Arbiter, the game and journey are set to begin.

## Character Points

Character points (CPs) are at the very core of character creation in the Black Void RPG, as these determine the abilities and features a character has. The Arbiter determines and informs the players how many points they have, so that they may begin the process of bringing their characters to life. The Arbiter establishes the amount of points based on the scenario or campaign he or she has planned, as different scenarios require varying levels of capability: some are suited for characters with few competencies; while others, more challenging, need a vast array of capabilities if the players are to have a reasonable chance of success.

The allotment of CPs divides the six character ability categories into two groups: Traits in one group and the remaining categories in the other (Talents, Background, Attributes, Powers and Skills). Each group is associated with a certain amount of CPs, so you must spend your allotted points prudently, as they are your primary way to acquire abilities for your character. Keep in mind that when characters complete adventures, they gain experience and additional characters points, which can be used to improve current abilities or acquire new ones. This is explained further in the Advancement chapter.

Most new characters tend to be novices, with a total of 48 allotted character points, as shown below. This amount of points allows for a decent array of abilities and skills while leaving scope for development as the game and character progress. In addition to the allotted amount of character points, it is possible to get additional points by conferring Flaws to a character at the cost of an in-game restriction or inhibition.

The following table provides a convenient range of starting points for characters, should the Arbiter intend to try various capability levels for gaming. It is of course entirely up to the Arbiter to decide how many points they allow; there is no correct amount.

## Character Points Ranges

| | SLAVE | NOVICE | ADEPT |
|---|---|---|---|
| TRAITS | 16 | 24 | 32 |
| TALENTS<br>BACKGROUNDS<br>ATTRIBUTES<br>POWERS<br>SKILLS | 8 | 24 | 36 |
| TOTAL | 24 | 48 | 68 |

Once you - the player - have been allotted an amount of character points by the Arbiter, you can begin filling out your Character Sheet. The general rule is that the expenditure of one CP grants one ranking in the chosen character ability category. Any exception is clearly noted, where relevant. There are certain requirements and limitations regarding how CPs may be spent.
The below rules overview describe the fundamental guidelines for dealing with CPs and how to create the basics of your character.
In the following chapters, you are guided through the creation of your character and each step is explained in greater detail.

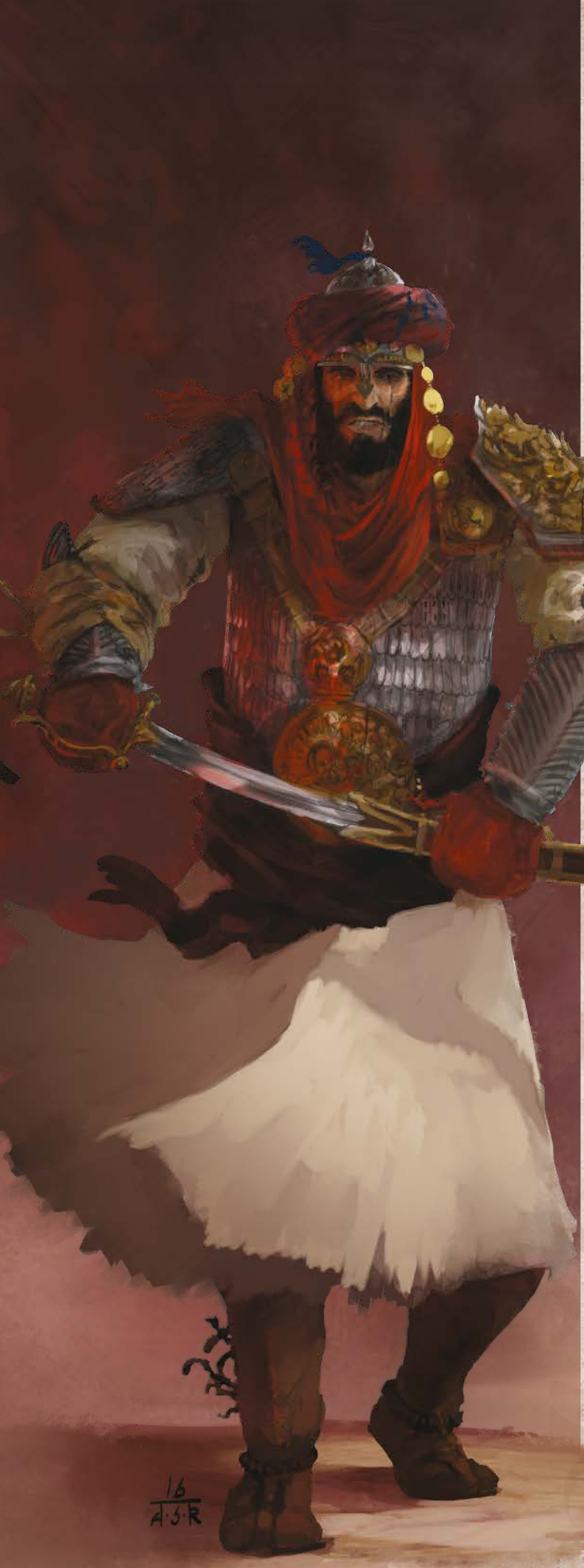


*ZIANA*

*To illustrate the character creation process and provide an easy-to-use guide for generating your own characters, we follow the creation of Ziana: a young human woman who has survived the rough streets of Kimah - the most deprived district of Llyhn - mainly by her wits and guile.*

## Character Creation Rules

- Trait points (24 for a Novice character) must be distributed between the eight Traits
- Each Trait ranking costs one (1) character point
- No Trait may have a score of less than one (1), meaning that at least one point must be spent in each
- No more than five (5) points can be allocated to any single Trait
- The second group (also 24 points for a Novice character) must be distributed between Talents, Backgrounds, Attributes, Powers and Skills
- Individual categories differ when allocating points, kindly refer to the specific category for point costs
- Talents may only be acquired for Traits in which the character has a score of three (3) or higher
- Talents cost three (3) character points each
- Only characters with the halfblood or Voidmarked background may acquire Attributes
- Only characters with the Voidmarked background can obtain Esoteric Attributes
- Only characters with the Voidmarked background can choose Mystic Powers
- A maximum of three rankings can be obtained in any skill during character creation
- Specialisations cost three (3) points and a single specialisation can be taken per three rankings in a skill
- Taking Flaws give extra points. You may choose one or several Flaws, but they may not exceed a total point value of three (3) character points
- Flaws may only be applied to Traits where the character has a score of three (3) or less and must correspond to the Trait in severity (see Flaws)
- The points gained from taking Flaws can be spent within any category except for Traits



# Descendants of Earth

The Black Void RPG revolves around the struggles of the remnants of humanity in a vast, unfamiliar and perilous Cosmos. You and your fellow players are among the scarce human survivors, and it is up to you whether humanity will rise to greatness or be trampled underfoot: the fate of mankind rests in your hands. This chapter introduces you to mankind after the cataclysm and subsequent exodus from Earth.

## Humanity

A few generations have passed since the devastation of Earth and scattering of mankind across the Cosmos. The lone survivors, stragglers and ragged remnants of mankind's tribes have congregated and formed tenuous new communities. Mankind, however, was never a united species and internal struggles between factions mirror the past civilisations and tribes of Earth: constantly feuding for resources and power. Still, three enduring enclaves exist within the Eternal City, and from these fragile bastions, mankind is struggling to regain strength, to establish a new home and even seeking to rediscover the lost cradle of humanity: Earth.

Humans live in the filth at the bottom of the social hierarchy of a city that cares nothing for their existence and is largely regarded as inferior by the other sapient species of the Cosmos. Faced with adversity, your character has grown to become a strong, competent and capable individual; a survivor in whose hands the fate of humanity rests.

The game revolves around the fall and resurgence of mankind, so as you, the player, begin to consider what kind of character you want to create keep in mind that all player characters are at least partially human. Initially, all player characters are purely human, but as you progress in the character creation process different hereditary options are available depending on choices (or dice rolls) of homeworld and backgrounds. Three strains of humanity are available for play in the game: pureblood humans, halfbloods and the Voidmarked.

### PUREBLOODS

The majority of surviving humans are descended directly from the survivors of Earth. Their heritage is apparent, and although they have had to adapt to survive new environments, they are still very much human. Although rarely gifted with extraordinary abilities humans have proven to be adaptable and resilient. Human characters can learn blood rituals and the powers associated with this tradition but can have no special abilities or attributes. Mankind, however, has proven susceptible to the influences of the Void and children born in Llyhn or other Void-influenced worlds are increasingly beginning to display odd features and weird capabilities.

Pureblood

### HALFBLOODS

The migration of mankind has led to interbreeding with different sentient species resulting in halfbloods with inhuman attributes and abilities beginning to emerge among the human population. Halfbloods are individuals whose parentage is mixed - one parent or ancestor belonging to a non-human sentient species. Although halfblood characters often retain a strong likeness to humans, their otherworldly heritage marks them physically and in outlook. They are not always shunned, but some humans eye halfbloods with suspicion or hostility because of their attitudes and appearance. Halfblood characters may acquire blood ritual powers and attributes during character creation.

### VOIDMARKED

Voidmarked characters are extraordinary beings - human, but not entirely so. Due to their peculiar heritage, even individuals that retain some part of humanity are mysterious and otherworldly, typically displaying outlandish features and personalities. Their exotic origin is a beacon shining brightly among ordinary people.

Birthed beyond the Veil, from esoteric and human parents or influenced through extensive exposure to the chaotic essence of the Void, the Voidmarked are the focus of fascination, awe and sometimes fear or abhorrence among humans. Voidmarked characters, caught between the lowly and higher echelons of existence, frequently feel rootless, as neither their Cosmic nor other kin understand them. Without the common ground or understanding needed to build lasting relations, Voidmarked characters usually strike out on their own to find their path in life. Voidmarked characters can have regular Attributes and esoteric Attributes, learn blood rituals and even attain the power mysticism.

## The Remnants of Mankind

Humans are renowned if not infamous for not only being adaptable, but confrontational with themselves as well as others, and this has not changed after the exodus. When humanity first washed up in the Eternal City, they huddled together for protection and familiarity following the harrowing ordeal of the maddening Void - natural and expected behaviour from a sentient but unenlightened species.

While most humans strive to make ends meet and endure in the filthy alleys and slums of the Eternal City, some dare to look beyond the filth to the extravagant palaces and domed towers, dreaming of a better future. While some support integration or even assimilation with other species to secure the future of mankind, others pursue dominion; either by force or intricate plotting, seeking to climb over the bodies of those who underestimate humans.

The other species were puzzled, however, by how quickly the humans not only adapted to their new habitat but made themselves a home - and then became fragmented. Members of mankind tend to fall into one of four groups: Enclave members aligned to one of the established communes of humanity in Llyhn, outsiders from other worlds without alignment to anyone in the Eternal City, reclusive individuals native to Llyhn but staying outside any established human community and lost groups surviving on faraway worlds without contact to other humans.

Characters typically serve a patron or matron of an emerging faction or individuals struggling to establish themselves and rise above mere subsistence. Theirs is a struggle against rival factions and with internal strife within human communities - and with external threats seeking to subdue humanity.

### THE HUMAN ENCLAVES

There are three manifest human communities in the Eternal City, each with its distinctiveness and brand of inhabitants.

Several loosely associated gangs of mainly human thugs, thieves, scroungers and rabble collectively make up the enclave of Beggars Court in the old Kimah district. Under the patronage of the raggedy beggar king, the coalition lives in the Flea Palace, an abandoned temple on the outskirts of the area.



*Ziana is a pureblood human and is created as a 48-point novice character. Her raggedy appearance implies a typical Llyhn street-rat, a no-good pick-pocket you should never turn your back on. But Ziana has ambitions and plans. She seeks to leave the slums of Kimah and build a better life for herself and the small band of orphans who stick to her.*

The Feeradani enclave is undoubtedly the most reputable and structured human commune in the city. Autocratically governed by Feerada, this enclave has established itself as a burgeoning power in the city. It has an independent constabulary and organised bureaucracy.

The newest enclave, the Assembly, lies near the caravanserai outside Llyhn in the area known as the Barrens. Elected representatives govern the community, which is quickly establishing itself as a power bloc and seeks to build diplomatic ties with other resident species in the Eternal City.

ENCLAVE MEMBERS have either been born into or sworn allegiance to one of the three human communities in Llyhn; following the social hierarchy and rules of the enclave receiving support and backing while likely having a patron for whom they carry out tasks and missions furthering the goals of the community.

Enclave members can also be colonists stemming from a colony settled by one of the enclaves and retaining ties to it. Enclave members tend to have a fervent conviction in the righteousness and superiority of their commune.

Much like their ancestors from Earth humans in Llyhn are typically tanned or dark skinned with brown, black or reddish hair and often decorate their skin with elaborate tattoos or intricately painted patterns displaying the symbols of their cultural and enclave allegiance.

OUTSIDERS are generally from some settlement established on a backwater world in the shadow of an otherworldly society. Occasionally aware of and perhaps in contact with the enclaves in Llyhn, they have chosen to remain independent.

Outsiders are typically resourceful and vigilant, but unaware of what occurs beyond the horizon and ignorant of the social structure or hierarchy prevalent in the Eternal City. These foreigners are as diverse as any species found in Llyhn, having had to adapt to the climate, culture and society of their homeworld to survive.

RECLUSES are typically natives born in the Eternal City who choose to live apart from any of the human communities, or who have been forced away or ostracised from such an association for whatever reason.

This segregation often causes such individuals to prefer the company of otherworldly species and entities to their kind and may fuel an independent attitude and desire for exploration and freedom.

Recluses tend to look like enclave members but often make efforts to dress distinctively or to obscure their human features with face paint, masks or other forms of concealment.

LOST CHILDREN

While many humans washed up in the Eternal City and other major hubs of the Void, some ended up on uncharted worlds. Such groups often perished if not taken in by primitive otherworldly tribes, but some managed to survive in the strange wildernesses - and a rare few even thrived and became enlightened - able to traverse the Void in search of their fellow kin. These nomads and castaways are known as Lost Children. There are tales of Lost Children being rediscovered by human explorers, on adventures to distant worlds. Sometimes these Lost Children return with them to Llyhn; others are too deep-rooted to leave their new home. Even rarer are tales of highly enlightened and empowered humans stepping from the Void as if born to it - and perhaps they were - seeking their lost heritage, but just as alien to it as the other races when they find it.

*In morning mist turquoise-green domes and azure-blue shikhara spires rise above the sandstone and terracotta buildings of fabled Llyhn as the bells of the Morning Palace herald the dawning of a new day. Citadels, consecrated monuments and shrines dedicated to a thousand gods glimmer in the dusky light of the setting sun as a heavily robed and hooded girl moves towards the massive gates of the Pai'Karaan district. She passes through the outlying tent-camps and pavilions surrounding the city gates. Ziana stops to stand quietly in the shade of a pavilion observing the gathering throng. Passing celebrants nod and make the "blessing of the ancestors" gesture while Marud-drawn carts trundle past. The teal faience tiled walls of the Pai'Karaan district glimmer in the sunlight bathing the surrounding tents in coloured lights. The red dust on the ground clings to the hem of her robe as she leaves the shade of the pavilion and slips into the crowds. She has applied white and pastel face-paint; the intricate patterns obscure her human features enough for her to dupe the sentries at the gate to not distinguish her. Free humans are not welcome in the holy district...*




To those who are barbarous or pious
Llyhn seems a place of
opulence and decadence,
but what do such hidebound fools
know about anything?
– Nden of the Opiati
Voidmarked



*When mercy is met with brutality,*
*I wonder what will emerge?*

*– Tgh'Jrg, Emir of Qtasaq*

# Homeworld

Existence is vast, with countless worlds inhabited by myriad species, and one of these worlds is the homeworld of your character. Native environment, culture and civilisation all influence characters, and a character's homeworld impacts his or her attributes, person and capabilities. A character originating from a savage world with primitive societies may be rugged and ignorant, perhaps even brutish in her ways, while a character brought up on an enlightened core world is likely to be sophisticated and sagacious.
While most adventures and campaigns begin in the cosmopolis Llyhn, homeworlds remain relevant as characters are likely to retain some of the characteristics and mannerisms of their upbringing. And not all adventures will begin in Llyhn.

There are several ways to determine a character's homeworld, which must be decided by the Arbiter before character creation begins.

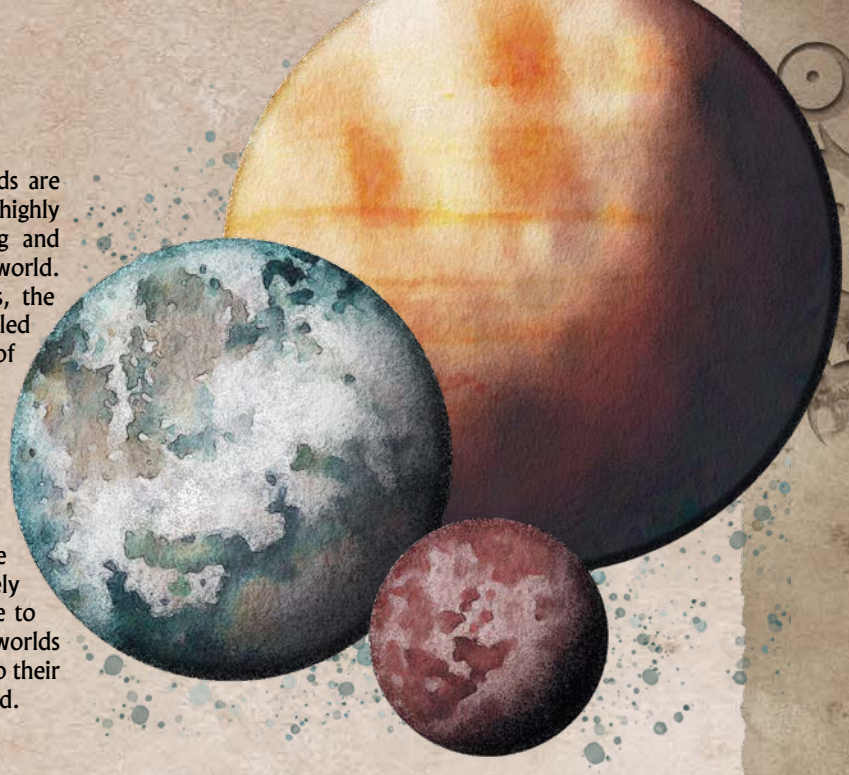
1. The player is allowed to choose freely from which type of homeworld their character originates.
2. Each character's homeworld is determined at random by the player rolling a D12 and consulting the Homeworld table.
3. The Arbiter chooses a category of homeworld (non-enlightened, enlightened or Void worlds) and the players make a die roll to determine from which type of world their character comes.
4. The Arbiter chooses the character's homeworld type.

Players will probably prefer the first option but depending on the type of scenario or campaign planned, random determination or Arbiter choice will introduce intriguing prospects for character development or interesting challenges for players and possibly create a more enjoyable game in the long run. It is ultimately up to the Arbiter to decide which option is most fitting for the game she intends to run.

Homeworlds significantly affect developing characters as they grant specific capabilities, as well as guidelines for character appearance, mannerism and general behaviour. There are eight types of homeworld, divided between the Cosmic non-enlightened and enlightened worlds as well as the Void worlds.

## NON-ENLIGHTENED WORLDS

There are three types of non-enlightened worlds: savage worlds, which are dreary and inhospitable wastelands or untamed wildernesses; inhabited worlds where sentient beings have begun forming settlements and unsophisticated societies; and civilised worlds where one or several sentient species have developed advanced societies dominating the world and its resources. What non-enlightened worlds have in common is that their inhabitants have had little, if any, contact with other worlds, and thus no understanding of the vastness of the Cosmos and the Void beyond.



### ENLIGHTENED WORLDS

The dominant sentient species inhabiting these worlds are enlightened. Societies may be unsophisticated or highly evolved, but they are familiar with Void travelling and have established connections with at least one other world. Enlightened worlds may be colonies or core worlds, the former being largely wild frontier worlds loosely settled by colonists, the latter being densely populated hubs of Void-faring species and civilisations.

### VOID WORLDS

Void worlds is a collective term used for the areas of existence beyond the Cosmic worlds. There are two designations of Void worlds: border worlds exist on the conjectural "edge" of the Cosmos, retaining some familiarity for Cosmic species; deep worlds are entirely within the Void and bear little - if any - resemblance to the Cosmic worlds. Characters originating from Void worlds are prone to have outlandish features or abilities due to their prolonged exposure to the warping effects of the Void.

| ROLL | HOMEWORLD | CHARACTERS | BENEFITS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NON-ENLIGHTENED WORLDS** | | | |
| 1 | SAVAGE WORLD | Characters from savage worlds are strong, unsophisticated and vigilant in their feral ways. Survival is not the primary concern - it is the only concern. | Physical Talent \| Roamer |
| 2 | INHABITED WORLD | Sentient species have formed simple societies on these worlds. Characters from such worlds are used to a harsh life as society is still in its infancy, or to living in perilous environments or among threatening wildlife. | Physical Talent \| Survivalist |
| 3 | CIVILISED WORLD | Controlled by world-spanning empires or rival dominions, these worlds are dominated by one or more sentient species with sophisticated societies. Characters from civilised worlds are usually erudite and knowledgeable. | Mental Talent \| Highbrow |
| **ENLIGHTENED WORLDS** | | | |
| 4 | COLONY WORLD | An enlightened species has established minor settlements or outposts on these worlds, either to expand their territory or to exploit natural resources. Subjugating the wastes to pave way for colonisation requires toughness, tending to make characters from colony worlds strong and resilient. | Stamina/Willpower Talent<br>Uncanny instinct |
| 5-7 | CORE WORLD | These worlds are the hubs of the enlightened civilisations. The core worlds interact with other worlds and the reality beyond the Veil is well known. As a result, characters from core worlds tend to be cosmopolitan. | Mental or social Talent<br>Worldly and subtle |
| **VOID WORLDS** | | | |
| 8-10 | LLYHN NATIVE | Llyhn is the epicentre between the Void and the Cosmos where all species and cultures converge. Llyhn natives are often roguish and shrewd people for whom the bizarre has become mundane. | Three background points<br>Indigenous sway |
| 11 | BORDER WORLD | While border worlds resemble Cosmic worlds to a degree, the chaotic influence of the Void is ever present, giving characters from these worlds an unearthly aspect and an affinity for the supranatural. | Voidmarked \| Unnatural Enlightened |
| 12 | DEEP WORLD | Deep worlds are turbulent and chaotic by nature. Characters from the deep worlds are mystical and remarkable in their outlandish origin, making them creatures of both wonder and trepidation. | Voidmarked<br>Insusceptible \| Enlightened |

## Non-Enlightened Worlds

### SAVAGE WORLDS

Although vastly diverse all savage worlds are alike in being the harshest and most inhospitable worlds in existence. Savage worlds are of two main types: those supporting massive amounts of life and those supporting very little. The former are typically covered in rolling grasslands, steaming jungles, vast oceans or stinking marshes where the latter is predominantly endless deserts, barren rock-fields, icy or toxic wasteland. Common for them is that they are wild, primitive and extremely perilous. Savage worlds are rarely home to indigenous sentient species, but those that do exist are typically nomadic tribes or warrior clans living in makeshift settlements fighting each other for resources and territory. Existence on a savage world is brutal, and the people living here are rugged and rough like the wilderness in which they live.

The inhabitants of savage worlds are strong and steadfast people who have little time for the proper conduct of civilised people or those too weak to fend for themselves. As a rule, the indigenous species of savage worlds are not enlightened, although there are rare exceptions.

### SAVAGE WORLD CHARACTERS

Characters originating from a savage world often have little appreciation for the notions of so-called civilised people and are tough, unsophisticated, direct people who tend to follow their instincts rather than logic and reasoning. They react harshly to threats and often have difficulty comprehending the refined and subtle patterns of social interaction in more civilised cultures.

Very few native people from savage worlds make it off-world, and even fewer do so with their sanity intact. Your character is one of those few. Natives from savage worlds, marked by the trauma of Cosmic travel and naturally wary when encountering outlandish phenomena, often cling to their primitive tribal traditions and behaviour, making them seem odd to cultured and enlightened people. These characters are strong, capable and resolute individuals who face most challenges head on and who have no taste for subtlety or diplomacy.

BENEFITS: Only the strong survive on a savage world. It is common practice that youths go through primitive initiation rituals or brutal trials before being acknowledged as adults. To reflect this, savage world characters may obtain a physical Talent for free during character creation. Characters originating from savage worlds are accustomed to primitive conditions and are natural roamers, gaining a +1 modifier to skill-rolls involving survival and navigation. Roamers unable to fight do not last long, so savage world characters may attain basic proficiency in one combat skill freely.

### INHABITED WORLDS

While still dominated by wilderness inhabited worlds differ mainly from their savage counterparts in the fact that they have advanced and comprise extensive societies with a certain level of social development such as legal, governmental, cultural and possibly religious organisations. Occasionally these societies consist of struggling remnants of ancient cultures trying to avoid an often-inevitable downfall or descendants of stranded Voidfarers trying to cultivate the land and establish a resemblance of civilisation, but mostly they are indigenous sentient species on the verge of civilising the world. The environment on inhabited



*I do love crafting the minds of humans into contorted impossible shapes!*

*– Netsrac of the Dahlia*

worlds range immensely but is usually more forgiving than on savage worlds.
The people of inhabited worlds have beaten back the wilds enough to establish settlements and cities where they can live reasonably secure lives without the feral brutality seen on savage worlds. There are few common aspects between inhabited worlds, but they are all home to at least one species of sentient beings, which has populated and settled a substantial part of the world. In general, the populations of inhabited worlds are unenlightened, having no idea or understanding about the larger Cosmos and realities beyond their own.
While inhabited worlds are rarely as untamed as their savage counterparts, they may be just as barbaric for common people struggling in dense, crowded cities ruled by feudal or tyrannical aristocracy, or suffering on worlds in a permanent state of war as warlords battle for supremacy.

### INHABITED WORLD CHARACTERS

Since inhabited worlds are isolated and without contact to other worlds the population generally live in blissful ignorance of the greater Cosmos surrounding their speck of existence. There are, however, ways a character from an inhabited world may have gotten off-world, such as accidentally being swallowed by a Void rupture. Characters from inhabited worlds can come from any level of society and background; some are nobility while others were beggars - what is common to all is that they have been thrust into a life they knew nothing about and are looking to find their bearings and a new beginning.

BENEFITS: Characters from inhabited worlds are used to a harsh life and living in peril from either environment, wildlife or barbaric cultures. As such they get a free Talent in a physical Trait. Characters from inhabited worlds are survivalists gaining an automatic +1 modifier to rolls involving either survival or streetwise as well as basic proficiency in a freely chosen physical skill.

### CIVILISED WORLDS

These worlds have been tamed and dominated by one or several sentient species, but they remain oblivious to the wider Cosmos and the Void. Although there may be pockets of wilderness and unexplored territories most of the world is cultivated and settled by world-spanning empires, confederations or rival dominions of highly sophisticated societies. There is no "archetypal" civilised world as they vary immensely, ranging from autocratic tiered societies to egalitarian cultures or societies ruled by religious laws written by prophet-gods aeons ago.
Multitude types of climate, environment, organisational structure and dominant species make up the vast plethora of civilised worlds in existence, the commonality of them all is that the general society is unaware of the Void and presence of other worlds, although scholars might speculate about such matters.

### CIVILISED WORLD CHARACTERS

As humanity is not indigenous to any civilised world and would not belong to the dominant species, characters and their fellows have likely been treated as curiosa or aberrations their entire lives – perhaps living on the fringes of society. Characters from a civilised world can be of any creed or vocation and are habitually erudite, accustomed to etiquette and are often literate. It is not uncommon for characters from civilised worlds to have mixed parentage between human and the dominant indigenous species on the world.
How the character has suddenly found herself swept away by a Void current and ended up in the Eternal City is up to the player but having survived the Void proves that the character is prepared to take on the vast and unfamiliar Cosmos.

BENEFITS: Characters from civilised worlds are inclined to be highbrows: Cultured, proficient and conversant in assorted topics. As a result, civilised world characters gain an automatic mental Talent and have two additional points to spend on Intellect skills during character creation.

*Lilzar Kran, dignified envoy of the Juhgchi mining colony on the marsh world of Telksho, strode through the sun streaked avenues of the atolls of the Embassy Quarter without a care in the world. He had cast his ballot in the recent vote on whether Harith House should remain as neutral meeting ground in the negotiations between Juhgchi and the esteemed dignitaries of U'at, and his purse was heavier for it. Lilzar was not greedy, however, he did appreciate good coin and someone who knew how to truly use it to their advantage. He turned a corner, plucky as could be, and gasped as heavy hands grabbed him and pulled him into the dense foliage between two nearby consulate buildings. His assailants, two large Hamdiya Je'ehl by the looks of their garb and tattoos, held him roughly around his upper arms while one of them shoved a gag in his mouth. Lilzar attempted to spit the gag out, but it was no use. He was roughly carried further through the underbrush and pushed through secreted door into a small, nondescript room in which sat a table, an oil lamp, and two chairs. A shrouded figure stood in front of the table, twirling a curved knife in its hands. "Lay him there," it grunted in a strange dialect, and the two Je'ehl flung Lilzar into the chair, tearing the gag from his mouth. Before he could speak, fiery pain erupted from his hand as he felt the knife drive through it. "Let us begin, Honourable Kran," the veiled figure chuckled…*



# Enlightened Worlds

## COLONY WORLD

These worlds are either savage or dead worlds rich in natural resources that Void-faring colonists are mining or harvesting or a frontier where an enlightened species is endeavouring to establish a seat of influence.

For mining colonies, the climate or structure of the world is often too inhospitable or wild to enable substantial communities but allows for small - usually temporary - settlements provisioned and maintained by some otherworldly patron.

Colony worlds are harsh, primitive places where only the tenacious or lucky manage to survive. Encircled by untamed wilderness on all sides colonies are usually small fortified communities built only to shelter enough inhabitants to fulfil primary roles, whether that be harvesting whatever nearby resource is valuable enough to risk one's life for or cultivating land to allow for settlers to eventually arrive.

## COLONY WORLD CHARACTERS

Albeit many colonists are explorers seeking fortune and glory or pioneers looking to claim new land, they can just as easily be convicts or slaves sent to work on behest of an aloof master. Colonies are rough places and characters that have grown up in sludge, with every living thing outside the barricades wanting to eat them (and most anyone inside trying to take advantage), tend to be vigilant and robust. With limited understanding of the niceties and refinements of the so-called civilised peoples, colonists tend to be a rough lot leaning towards action rather than mincing words. Colonists have a rudimentary grasp of the Void as their only link to other people, and to supplies, is through a Void rift.

BENEFITS: An ingrained will to survive, honed by near continuous peril, drives colonist characters. To reflect this, characters originating from a Colonized World may choose a Stamina or Willpower Talent during character creation even if their Trait score is below 3. Additionally, colonists have an uncanny ability to feel imminent danger before their senses ordinarily would, making them very difficult to catch unawares. Colonist characters gain +1 to all surprise rolls as well as the ability to dodge thrown, missile or rear attacks although with an added -1 penalty.

## CORE WORLD

While some enlightened species merely charter others to sail them through the Void; others have explored, reached higher echelons of comprehension, sent armadas traversing the Void currents and spread their influence across the Cosmos: The core worlds are the heart of these enlightened civilisations.

Core worlds and their dominant species differ hugely; no general narrative could describe them all. Some are oligarchic confederations or theocratic empires, while others are pearls of sophistication and high culture with complex meritocracies. Core worlds are usually densely populated with a highly developed culture dominated by a single sentient species ruled by a centralised body. While most are habitable to a variety of species allowing for trading hubs, diplomatic missions and the like from other enlightened species, some are so toxic that only indigenous species can survive there. While core worlds are seemingly shining beacons of civilisation in an uncaring Cosmos, living here might not reflect this. Religious fanaticism, prejudice and intolerance, ethnic or social oppression, poverty and social discord is often rife beneath the glittering surface.

## CORE WORLD CHARACTERS

Characters from core worlds have been brought up in the light of understanding at the heart of an empire. As foreigners or refugees, however, humans are often barely tolerated and not likely to enjoy privileges on any core world. As a means of survival, these characters are adroit at avoiding unwanted attention, expertly adopting appearances and mannerism to make themselves forgettable. Ostracised and scraping by at the bottom of society, core world characters still benefit from exposure to culture, foreign species and the insight garnered by being at the periphery of an empire. Core world characters are familiar with the concept of Void-faring even if they are not enlightened.

BENEFITS: Core world characters live off their wits, exploiting their social and mental capacities to get by as constant underdogs and as such gain a free mental or social Talent during character creation. They are accustomed to associating with a plethora of foreign species and gain a +1 modifier when interacting with the species from or frequenting their homeworld (maximum three species). Because of their ability to seem unremarkable, they gain a +1 modifier to subterfuge; disguise and associated rolls.



## LLYHN NATIVE

Llyhn the Eternal is an otherworldly swarming cosmopolis bordered by dark, dense jungle and encircled by gloomy, insurmountable peaks. Its origin is uncertain, and it has no apparent indigenous species - except, perhaps, the elusive, Unseen Rulers who dwell in a massive citadel at the heart of the city. Llyhn is residence to untold masses, yet truly home to no one. It is a Void border domain with all the magnificence and wickedness of the Cosmos gathered in one location - a city of malice and rapture in equal measure.

Some call Llyhn the heart of existence and, while dubious, there is a certain sense to the statement. The Eternal City lies at the heart of a Void convergence and is perfused with myriad void-rifts which connect the city with other worlds and domains. Like veins and arteries, these conduits are the life of the city, as multitudinous trade routes and travellers rely on the city's connecting and diverging Void currents.
The slums of the city are swarming with charlatans, rogues, cutthroats and prophets vying for souls or damning them to the horrors of the Void, while esoteric creatures and Daimons dwell in towering palaces overlooking the city. Possibly no less impious than the masses, they are enswathed in otherworldly splendour, vividly demonstrating the disparate aspects of the city. For people desiring riches, opportunity and excitement Llyhn is paradise, but the decadent beauty is also a fount of depravity, conceit and cruelty.

People are changed by Llyhn, subtly or otherwise. The taint - which may be physical, mental or both - is faint and delicate yet all-present in Llyhn, and is also visible in many who dwell here. Although the heritage of their species is dominant, the taint is always evident, and Llyhn natives typically show signs of outlandish qualities.

## LLYHN NATIVE CHARACTERS

The character was born and brought up in the Eternal City, and she knows how to handle herself between the street-rats in the shambles of Kimah as well as among the high-castes of Penda'Rinn. For her, the bizarre is the norm, and she has likely seen at least one entity from beyond the Veil with her very own eyes. Characters from Llyhn are typically marked by the taint of the place, differentiating them somehow, however slightly, from their species, and many natives only feel comfortable in Llyhn among people who - like themselves - are anomalous.
Few things faze native characters, and while having no problem chatting up a Deva, they feel awkward and have little understanding of or patience for outsiders ignorant of the ways of the Eternal City, where their odd appearance and peculiar manners make them stand out.

BENEFITS: Llyhn is teeming with riff-raff swindling and bullying their way through life, and few survive if they are ignorant and unwary. Having connections and clout is vital in the Eternal City; Llyhn natives get three additional points to allocate to backgrounds during character creation as well as beginning play with a Wastah ranking of one. Characters native to Llyhn are accustomed to the bizarre habits and behaviour of the throngs of the city and gain a +1 modifier to social interactions with residents.

*Ziana was abandoned as a child and grew up amongst the thieves, beggars and orphans of Salvation Square in the Kimah district of the Eternal City, so she is a "Llyhn native". As benefits, this homeworld choice gives her three additional points to be used on Backgrounds, a Wastah ranking of 1 and "Indigenous Sway", giving a bonus when interacting with residents of the Eternal City.*



*Forget benign gods and miracles, entropy and decay, the things that gnaw at the edges have come, so much has been lost and forgotten, never to return. Forget kindness and compassion. Forget advancement and improvement and understanding – in this aeon there is only despair and the dark.*

*– Whisperings from an old eremite*

## BORDER WORLD

Border worlds exist where the Veil between the Cosmos and Void is flimsy and fragile, leading to a convergence of the two. As such, border domains may retain a certain similarity to Cosmic worlds, but as the Void heavily influences them the natural laws ruling the Cosmic worlds may not apply.

Border worlds are not stable as the Veil may wane or gain; growing or abating the influence of the Void. Border worlds have even been known to immerse fully with the Void, turning into a Deep world, or emerge entirely from its influence, becoming an ordinary Cosmic world.

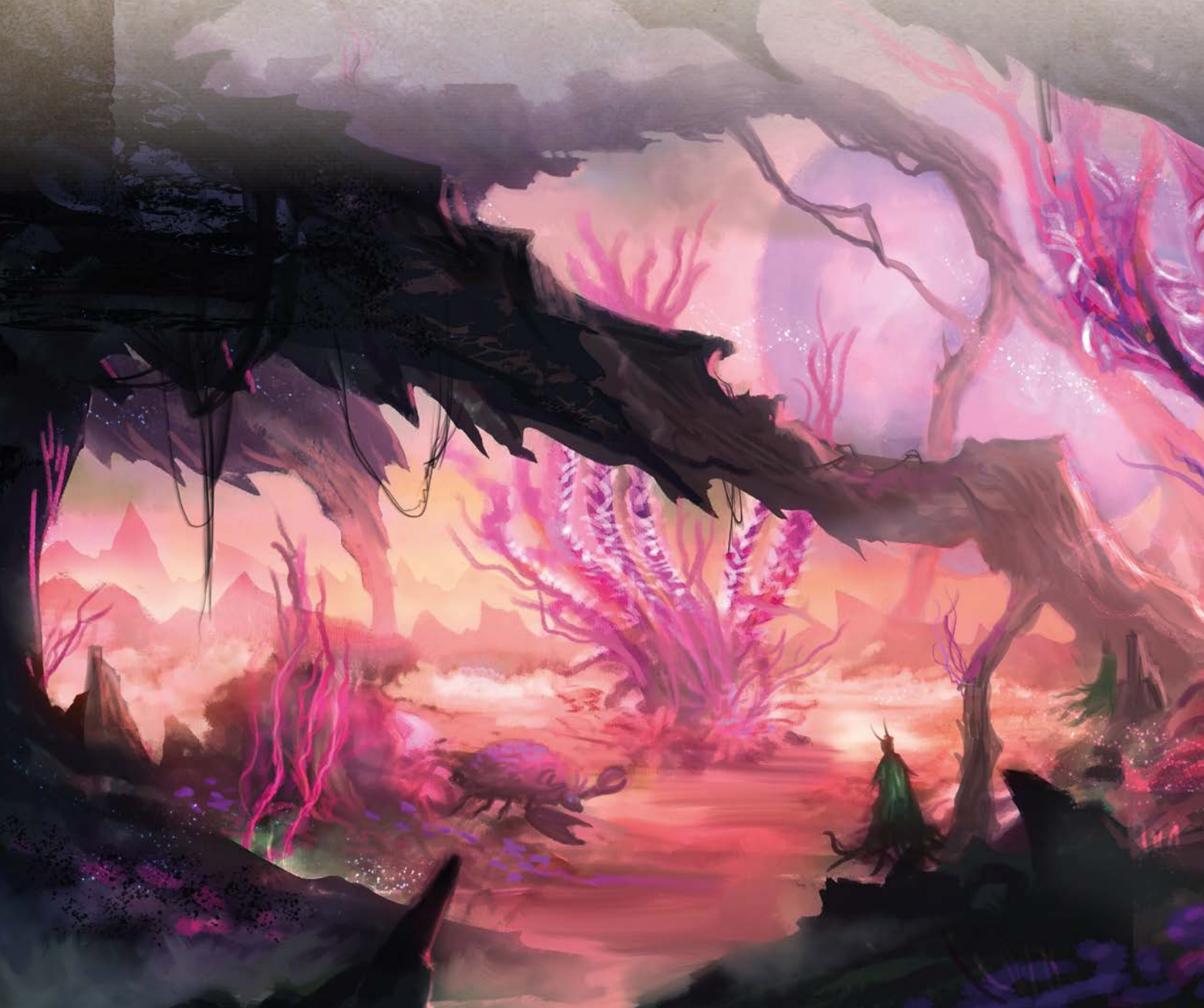
Border worlds with indigenous sentient species are nearly unheard of, and those with larger than minor settlements are scarce; the tumultuous conditions rarely allow for constancy long enough for anything to develop. As a result, most people living on border worlds are there provisionally or due to an obligation to something or someone. Although border worlds may be teeming with life, the ecology is rarely balanced or resembling any natural evolution, leading to bizarre formations and lifeforms inhabiting the vast majority.

## BORDER WORLD CHARACTERS

Life on a border world is not intended for Cosmic species, and those few that manage to grow up in such a place are marked by it. Their otherworldly origin clearly marks characters from border worlds, many exhibiting characteristics and features no ordinary human encompass. The mental tenacity and adaptability required to endure on a border world dictate that the inhabitants are a wary and vigilant lot with little patience for meddlers and the oblivious. It is a turbulent life that breeds strong individuals capable of dealing with most anything the Cosmos can throw at them.

BENEFITS: Characters originating from border worlds are profoundly affected by Void emanation and correspondingly acquire the Voidmarked background from the outset.

As the otherworldly is ingrained into these characters, their physique is unnatural, getting two free points to spend on Attributes during character creation. Border world characters have an acute grasp of the Void and begin play with an enlightenment ranking of one.



## DEEP WORLD

Deep worlds are domains beyond the Veil that are nearly uninhabitable to non-esoteric creatures. They are rarely permanent in their manifestation, and frequently transform as if with a life of their own. Deep worlds are unfailingly alien and bizarre to Cosmic species, comprising unfathomable ecologies, environments and lifeforms.

Some few domains resemble Cosmic worlds enough that non-Daimonic beings can survive; they may even seem pristine, but the Void is unforgiving, and the native entities that reside and rule here rarely concern themselves with the welfare of Cosmic beings. The nature of esoteric beings and Daimons is often erratic and fickle, with Anunnaki and Devas tending to serve their own purposes and ambitions first and those of adoring worshippers last.

## DEEP WORLD CHARACTERS

These characters are beings of remarkable origins. Although not necessarily of extraordinary ancestry, the character was birthed in a domain beyond the worlds of the Cosmos, giving an appearance, mannerism and way of thinking different from his or her fellow kin. Characters born in the deep Void have a cognisant yet hazy idea of the immensity of existence and their own insignificance. This insight grants them understanding but comes at a price: When you have seen the ghostly abominations staring at you from the blackness of the Void, the true malice of existence is no longer abstract. Some who are born in the Void fearfully keep to tight-knit cliques afraid of what might emerge from the shadows if they draw attention to them self, while others are enticed by their extraordinary rearing to explore even more of the vastness of existence like daring moths to a flame.

Characters born in the deep are affected by their origins, and their appearance often bears similarities to those native to that domain. For instance, characters birthed near the Asura will tend to have slightly glowing eyes or skin, while others might have greenish blue hair or a glossy pigmentation as if their skin is perpetually damp. Although the oddities may be a great deal subtler than this, they are usually noticeable under scrutiny.

BENEFITS: Regardless of which domain a deep-born character comes from, he or she has a distinctive aura, a sense of mystery making them the natural focal point in any crowd. Deep world characters always have the Voidmarked background, and their adaptation to the Void means they begin play with an enlightenment ranking of two.

Due to their acclimatisation with the grotesque and outlandish characters from a Deep world apply a +1 modifier to resist psychological effects, such as fear and awe and apply a -1 modifier to all madness rolls.



*There is no contentment or pleasure to be found here, only the immeasurable metric of misery, anguish, and the hunger of gibbering, accursed, loathsome beings that inhabit this realm.*

*– Qouo, just before he disappeared*



*Syltys hung his head dejectedly as he felt the familiar clack of shackles lock around his ankles and wrists. His shoulders brushed against those of his neighbours, all who wore the same filthy grey smocks marked with their master's icon – a golden bird's head imposed over a cleaver. Syltys had been stuck with this band of labours' meat for nearly three months, shipped from world to world until finally they had now arrived at the docks of Llyhn. Growing up, Syltys had heard stories of the Eternal City from his parents - his father having been a trader. But now as he and the others were shoved off of the slave barge onto the gangplanks, he could see that the famed Llyhn was not what his father had told him of. Above him, the sky swirled with the myriad lights of a glowing nebula, and around him misery, hopelessness, and greed reigned supreme. He saw slavers of every species cracking barbed whips down on the backs of chained prisoners, beating them until they collapsed and were dragged along unconsciously by their fellow living cargo; Azenter herders prodding a colossal Paboosa off of a gargantuan Red Galley; an emissary of the distant Je'ehl Great Ones descending from their private pleasure sloop. Syltys staggered and cried out in pain as he felt the bite of the whip against his legs – his Ka'Alum owner hissing at him in an unknown tongue with the evident implication to keep his head down if he didn't want to get gutted. Maybe here he would find a kinder master than Kyrak. He felt the procession stop, a few moments pass, and a plaque was roughly thrown around his neck. So, it began...*



# Traits

Traits are innate capabilities that define the physical, mental and social competences of your character. Each character has eight distinct Traits divided between physical, mental and social aptitudes: AGILITY, AWARENESS, STAMINA, STRENGTH, INTELLECT, PERSUASION, PRESENCE and WILLPOWER.

The Traits are rated from zero (0) to twelve (12). The range for human Trait scores is one (1) to five (5), with the average Trait score being three (3). A low Trait score indicates that the character is inept, while a high score signifies prowess in the given area. Trait rankings grant bonuses or penalties to dice rolls whenever your character attempts to perform an action during the game.

## Determining Trait Scores

As explained in the character points section, you must distribute the allotted points between the eight Traits, to create the type of character that you want to play. Make sure to allocate points to suit your preferences, as these decisions affect your character's capabilities throughout the entire game.

The following guidelines must be adhered to while determining your Trait scores: Allotted characters points are distributed between the eight Traits freely, but no Trait may have less than one (1) point or more than five (5). Newly created characters may never start play with a Trait score higher than five unless affected by an attribute or another applicable modifier. Each Trait ranking costs one (1) character point.

The paragraphs below present a detailed description of each Trait, while the table provides a point of reference, dice-roll modifiers and illustrative examples.

AGILITY: Your character's Agility score shows her general coordination, balance and motor skills. Agility thus affects any action requiring precision movement, including attempts to walk a tightrope, do sleight-of-hand, evade an incoming object, attack a foe and so on. Temple dancers and pickpockets are some of the numerous characters who benefit significantly from high Agility scores.

AWARENESS: This Trait represents the sensory system of your character: Touch, taste, sight, hearing and smell. Awareness also indicates an instinctive understanding based on sensitivity rather than logical reasoning. Those who have a high Awareness score are thus very perceptive and likely to notice things out of the ordinary, and they may even have an instinctive sense of the Void. Trackers, hunters and Voidfarers typically have high Awareness scores.

STAMINA: The Stamina score of your character determines her state of health and endurance, as well as resilience to disease, poison and toxins. Those with high

Stamina scores can thus tolerate massive amounts of strain or endure prolonged hardship before their body gives in to the pressure. Runners and couriers, veterans and cupbearers are examples of characters that profit from high Stamina scores.

STRENGTH: This Trait indicates the raw brawn and muscle of your character. Strength is, among other things, used for lifting, pushing, sprinting, punching and breaking things. A high Strength score is fundamental to labourers, mercenaries and gladiators.

INTELLECT: Your character's Intellect ranking indicates her aptitude for logic and reason, languages, as well as other learned abilities and memory. Intellect is a key Trait for sages, scholars and characters dealing with culture, lore, rhetoric, trade, politics and other fields requiring knowledge or intellectual capabilities.

PERSUASION: This Trait establishes a character's ability to convince, coerce or cunningly influence others by knowingly appealing to their hopes, desires and needs through calculated argument and social subtlety. Persuasion is the fundamental component in the art of emotive convincing, but shrewd, sly, scheming or otherwise devious behaviour is often attributed to persuasive characters when they strive to obtain their goals. Persuasion is used when your character attempts to convince, sway or manipulate listeners through the use of arguments, or when your character tries to hide their true intentions. Charlatans, merchants and adjudicators all gain from a high Persuasion score.

PRESENCE: The Presence score denotes the looks, bearing and charisma your character possesses in social situations. For humans and other Cosmic species, Presence is the capacity to grab the attention of others and to inspire admiration and respect. For beings from the higher echelons of existence, it also represents an otherworldliness - a sort of palpable aura surrounding them. A character with a high Presence score may have extraordinary beauty or an attractive mannerism which compels the attention of those around. A character's Presence score is thus the primary factor for determining people's immediate reaction in social situations. Presence is used actively when your character attempts to influence others through sheer force of personality.



*Ziana is a wilful young woman, but she lacks the raw physical capabilities possessed by many street-dwellers, and she has little schooling. To reflect this her 24 Trait points are distributed as follows: Agility 4 | Awareness 4 Stamina 2 | Strength 2 Intellect 3 | Persuasion 3 Presence 2 | Willpower 4*

WILLPOWER: This trait score determines your character's mental fortitude, resolve and resistance to influence from those who may attempt to manipulate her. Willpower is what drives a character, as well as the only defence against the terrors of the mind and the menacing madness continually pounding on the fickle sanity of sentient beings. Mystics and Voidfarers benefit from high Willpower scores.

| TRAIT SCORE | DICE ROLL MODIFIER | MEANING | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | -3 | Pathetic | The Strength of a Rat |
| 1 | -2 | Feeble | The Intellect of a child |
| 2 | -1 | Poor | The Willpower of a labour slave |
| 3 | 0 | Average | The average scale of humans |
| 4 | +1 | Excellent | The Stamina of a Je'ehl Pariah |
| 5 | +2 | Formidable | The Agility of a Dachri temple dancer |
| 6 | +3 | Outstanding | The Strength of a Ghul |
| 7 | +4 | Magnificent | The Presence of a Variin Courtesan |
| 8 | +5 | Legendary | The Persuasion of a Je'ehl Great One |
| 9 | +6 | Titanic | The Intellect of a Deva |
| 10 | +7 | Supranatural | The Awareness of a Mindnebula |
| 11 | +8 | Mythical | The Willpower of a Hohr'Loh'Kin |
| 12 | +9 | Divine | The Presence of the Anunnaki |

# Talents

Talents are extraordinary capacities linked to a character's Trait scores, while Flaws are corresponding impediments. When creating characters players may choose to acquire Talents or Flaws for their various Traits. Talents cost points while Flaws grant additional points that can be used during the character creation process.

Talents are meant to emphasise the strengths of characters and add flavour, giving more depth and individuality, while Flaws are intended to limit characters in a meaningful way and to give players engaging challenges. They serve as more than just a bonus or penalty - they help bring life to a character since a flawed character is usually more interesting to play than one without any weaknesses. Note that all bonuses and penalties noted in the Talent or Flaw are in addition to the usual Trait modifiers.

When acquiring Talents, the following rules apply: Any Trait with a score of at least 3 allows a Talent, and for each added score of three one further Talent may be acquired. A Trait with a score of 6 may have two Talents, a score of 9 can have 3 Talents, and a score of 12 allows 4 Talents. All Talents costs 3 points.



*With her Trait scores allocated it is time to look at Talents and Flaws. Ziana is a tenacious woman, so we spend 3 points for the "Resolve" Talent, granting her an edge in situations where more timid people would submit.*

| AGILITY | AWARENESS | STAMINA | STRENGTH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ambidexterity | Acute Sense | High Pain Threshold | Brawny |
| Coordination | Alertness | Less Sleep | Explosive Force |
| Fast Reflexes | Direction Sense | Quick Healer | Flexible Power |
| Fleet of Foot | Empathy | Tolerance | Strong Legs |
| Nimble Fingers | Intrinsic Insight | Tough | Unyielding |
| Graceful | Vigilant | Very Fit | Vigorous |
| Limber | | | |

| INTELLECT | PERSUASION | PRESENCE | WILLPOWER |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eidetic Memory | Adaptability | Beautiful | Collected |
| Focused | Mimic | Born performer | Composed |
| Quick Learner | Perfect Liar | Charmer | Fearless |
| Quick Thinker | Specious | Eloquent | Ignore Pain |
| | Thespian | Imposing | Resolve |
| | Veil Communication | Inspiring | |

## Agility Talents

AMBIDEXTERITY: An ambidextrous character can use either hand without penalty to her action rolls. Furthermore, this Talent allows the character to use both hands simultaneously incurring only a 0/-3 penalty.

COORDINATION: The character has a highly developed sense of body and eye-to-hand coordination. All rolls involving acrobatic feats, such as juggling are made with a +1 modifier. Whenever the character performs two actions at once, for instance balancing on a thin ledge while fighting an opponent, none of the usual penalties applies. Additionally, this Talent allows a character to use an additional limb with less impediment reducing the penalty from -3/-6 to -3/-3.

FAST REFLEXES: The character reacts rapidly to stimuli. Having fast reflexes grants +1 to all surprise, initiative and dodge rolls.

FLEET OF FOOT: This character is built for speed and can run faster than normal beings of equal size and strength. When calculating running speed multiply base speed by three (3) rather than two. Sprinting speed is five (5) times base speed rather than the normal quadrupling.

NIMBLE FINGERS: The character has deft fingers able to manipulate even tiny objects with precision. He or she excels at any task requiring flexible and well-coordinated digital dexterity, gaining a +1 modifier to all rolls involving digital coordination, adroitness and finesse such as sleight-of-hand.

GRACEFUL: Poise and dexterity are second nature to this character; any physical activity is performed with the epitome of grace. Apply a +1 modifier to all physical performance feats and actions where elegance is a factor, demonstrating the control and natural grace of the character.

LIMBER: The character can bend and flex her body at impossible angles. If there ever were a perfect contortionist, she would be it. All feats involving flexibility, climbing and acrobatics, including escaping bonds, evading pinning attacks and the like, have a +1 modifier.



## Awareness Talents

ACUTE SENSE:
HEARING - The character has an amazingly well-developed sense of hearing. Apply +1 to any perception and detection rolls utilising hearing. Furthermore, the character can focus, discern and identify particular sounds and noises at long ranges and with great clarity, for instance allowing her to pick out a specific conversation in a crowd. On a successful roll, a whispered word would be discernible up to a distance of 10 metres.
SIGHT - Keen eyes provide a +1 to efforts using sight for perception and observation rolls. Extraordinary vision grants the character the ability to discern and distinguish objects at three (3) times the normal distance and to ignore environmental penalties up to -1 to sight.
SMELL - The character has an unusually acute sense of smell and can distinguish people by their smell, detecting even very faint scent traces in odorous environments. Apply a +1 modifier to all actions involving smell, such as noticing spoilt or tampered food and drink, detecting traces of a delicate perfume in a filthy and stinking alley.
TASTE - Sensitive taste buds provide the character with an extraordinarily sophisticated palate. The character can discern ingredients in food and drink, pinpointing the quantities with extreme accuracy. Add +1 to any roll to detect poison, determine food quality and the like.
TOUCH - The character has a highly sensitive sense of touch, being able to feel residual heat, detect textures and features unnoticeable to ordinary people. She would be able to determine whether furniture was recently occupied and the approximate time passed since it was. The character can discern and manipulate small objects in complete darkness without penalty and gains a +1 modifier when feeling for irregularities and discerning textures on objects.

ALERTNESS: The character is keenly aware of his or her surroundings and reacts quickly, making them very difficult to catch unawares or by surprise. The character gains +1 to all surprise rolls. Furthermore, she gains the ability to dodge or parry an attack made from the rear although with a -1 penalty.

DIRECTION SENSE: The character has an innate grasp of location. She can read the landscape, celestial elements and easily locate the corners of a world to help her find her way. If she is even remotely familiar with an area, she can navigate it confidently. The character gets a +1 bonus to all navigation rolls, wilderness survival, course plotting and similar actions.

EMPATHY: The character has an intuitive understanding of others and can often sense their general state of mind, motivation or intentions. During social encounters, the player can request an Awareness roll [10+Persuasion modifier] to get an indication of an individual's disposition. For example, Empathy may be used to determine whether someone likes or dislikes the character or if someone is being honest. If someone is acting aggressively, an empathic character may determine whether they are angry, afraid or desperate, though since empathy only discerns the general emotional state someone is in, not the cause, it does not indicate why they are angry, for instance.

INTRINSIC INSIGHT: The character has an aptitude for quickly grasping subjects he or she knows nothing about and for instinctively making connections and raising possibilities which would typically require extensive research. The character gains +1 to any research action, and all unskilled mental actions suffer only a -2 penalty instead of the usual -3.

VIGILANT: The character is continuously vigilant. They may notice a disguised stalker in a vast crowd or stir from sleep as prowlers approach. The vigilant character who is always allowed an awareness roll if someone is approaching or hidden in the vicinity. Apply a +1 modifier to all surprise rolls and spotting rolls.

## Stamina Talents

HIGH PAIN THRESHOLD: The character has an extremely high tolerance for pain. The character gains +1 to resist the effects of pain from, for instance, torture. If your character is "hurt" no penalty applies to actions and if the character is "injured" only a -1 penalty is applied.

LESS SLEEP: The character requires less sleep than regular people and is well rested after only half the amount of rest usually needed. Injured characters heal at their regular rate even at reduced rest.

QUICK HEALER: Easily recovering from injury, the character regains Health at +1 to the normal rate. Furthermore bleeding wounds and crippling injuries improve in half the normal time due to the character's extraordinary restorative abilities.

TOLERANCE: The character can withstand significant amounts of intoxicants and can ingest almost any type of diet offered without suffering detrimental effects. Apply a +1 bonus to all rolls when rolling to resist intoxicants such as alcohol, hallucinogenic substances and poisons as well as spoiled food or drink.

TOUGH: The character is extraordinarily robust and able to withstand tremendous amounts of injury. When calculating Health, the player may do so as if he or she has a Stamina score one higher than is the case.

VERY FIT: The character is incredibly fit and can sustain hard labour and other strenuous activities for extended periods. When enduring strenuous activities such as running, carrying heavy loads and the like the character may maintain her efforts for twice as long as ordinarily possible.

## Strength Talents

BRAWNY: The character is rippling with muscles making her look imposing and formidable. Add +1 to all intimidation attempts as well as dealing +1 damage with all brawling attacks.

EXPLOSIVE FORCE: The character may apply their strength quickly and with great force. Apply either an additional +1 to initiative rolls in hand-to-hand combat or +1 to melee damage.

FLEXIBLE POWER: The character's well-developed secondary muscles mean they can apply force at unusual angles. The character gains +1 to wrestling rolls and attempts to restrain or pin opponents. Their opponents suffer a -1 to wrestle, restrain or pin them.

STRONG LEGS: Muscular legs built for power make the character run faster, kick harder, jump higher and longer than others of similar overall strength. Add one (1) to the character's walking speed and apply the modification to subsequent running, sprinting as well as jumping distances and other acrobatic and athletic capacities using legs.

UNYIELDING: Great strength means that the character can endure great physical strain and prolonged exertion. The character may not be able to utilise great bursts of strength, but when it comes to maintaining pressure for extended periods, he or she is unmatched. Add an extra +1 to all endurance rolls, opposed and prolonged strength actions and to maintain a grapple.

VIGOROUS: The character is particularly forceful and has a knack for carrying; pulling and heaving heavy objects beyond what would typically be possible. When exposed to prolonged physical exertion and lifting or hauling objects the character counts as having one higher strength score than she actually does.



## Intellect Talents

EIDETIC MEMORY: The character has an amazing ability to recall images, sounds, objects and knowledge to memory with extreme accuracy and in abundant volume. This Talent allows the character to vividly recollect information, conversations and occurrences applying +1 to all skill-rolls related to memorization, knowledge and scholarly abilities.

FOCUSED: The character is particularly talented at focusing mental energy at a single task. Add a +1 modifier when engaged in prolonged actions, such as research or crafting. Furthermore, reduce penalties caused by external distractions by a factor of one (1) from action rolls.

QUICK LEARNER: The character has an inquisitive nature as well as a gift for acquiring knowledge. When acquiring ranks in a skill during the game you may subtract one point from the cost. Note that the quick learner Talent only works after character creation and the applied cost for a skill rank can never be less than one point.

QUICK THINKER: The character is exceptionally quick-witted, making swift sensible decisions in difficult or dangerous situations. Add +1 when dealing with diplomacy, negotiation, bargaining or similar encounters. The character's ability to quickly assess a situation and react accordingly also grants a +1 modifier to all surprise rolls.

## Persuasion Talents

ADAPTABILITY: An intuitive aptitude allows the character to quickly familiarise herself with others and adjust her mannerism to harmonise theirs. This allows the character to encourage confidence and approval in social circumstances, regardless of cultural or species differences. The ability to outwardly adapt behaviour and interaction adds a +1 bonus to all social rolls.

MIMIC: The character can imitate the particular mannerisms and behaviour of individuals. With observation, research and familiarisation, the character can emulate the behaviour, voice and conduct of studied individuals. Disguises and other aids may be required to complete the ruse,

but people unfamiliar with the subject are automatically convinced, while a +1 modifier is applied to satisfy acquainted addressees that the mimic is indeed who she tries to imitate.

PERFECT LIAR: Extreme control of bodily and facial expression allows the character with this Talent to lie in a frighteningly believable way. The character can completely mask her emotional state leaving observers entirely unable to discern from her behaviour when she is lying. The character gains a +1 modifier to convince someone of an untruth even in the face of contradictory evidence. Even under scrutiny, the character can convince observers to assume that that the lying character believes what she is saying is true.

SPECIOUS: The character has a natural ability to appeal to people without real merit or argument; shifting the focus and spinning pleasing or plausible arguments fitting what the listener wants to hear. You may add +1 modifier to attempt to persuade or distract others, for instance when negotiating. Using skills usually based on Presence can be performed utilising the Persuasion modifier instead.

THESPIAN: The character can switch demeanour and apparent persona. Body language, the manner of expression and tone of voice change, making the character seem like an entirely different person. When encountering people who do not know the "real" character, an alternate persona can be assumed without having to make a roll.

VEILED COMMUNICATION: Through facial expressions, subtle sign and body language the character can convey complex messages to someone within eyesight without others understanding or even noticing that communication is taking place.

## Presence Talents

BEAUTIFUL (handsome): The character is stunning to behold, naturally attracting members of the opposite gender, possibly even members of other species with different beauty-ideals than those of his or her species. People generally act favourably towards him or her: Gain +1 to all initial interaction rolls as well as performance and socialising rolls.

BORN PERFORMER: The character has a natural talent for working an audience, giving them a +1 bonus to all attempts to entertain others and win over crowds, whether at a formal performance or an impromptu gathering.

CHARMER: The character is born with a silver tongue and can make even the foulest insults sound like poetry. Always ready with a witty and humorous remark in any social situation the character gains an automatic +1 to actions involving seduction, negotiation, socialising, enquiry and performance.

ELOQUENT: A born orator, this character can spout wit, whim and rhetorical eloquence at will. A vast vocabulary and an understanding of how to best appeal to any given audience give this character the ability to forcefully and persuasively discourse points and opinions. Add +1 to expression, coaxing and actions seeking to influence, impress or sway others verbally.

IMPOSING: The character casts a long shadow, metaphorically speaking. Their manner discomforts people a little, and they have learnt to use that to their advantage. Imposing characters gain a +1 on attempts to persuade or command others through oratory, intimidation or threats, or to interrogate them (though the bonus does not apply to torture). Guards and other alert people tend to keep a close eye on the imposing character, which allows their comrades to avoid attention when trying to avoid notice nearby, gaining a +1 die modifier if a roll is required.

INSPIRING: The character has remarkable charisma, effortlessly stirring appeal and excitement. The character is the natural centre in a crowd and needs minimal effort to get attention. People are naturally drawn to the character and listen intently when he speaks. The character can apply a +1 modifier to all attempts to inspire action in others and anyone within eyesight of the character gain +1 to resist mental effects such as fear and awe.



## Willpower Talents

COLLECTED: The character has a way of keeping her wits, rarely being fazed or overly affected by distractions. Any penalties to action rolls due to external influences or injuries are reduced by one (1).

COMPOSED: The character is naturally composed, remaining calm and in control even under tense circumstances. She is unlikely to panic and can keep a level head under the most trying circumstances, gaining +1 to resist all fear, awe, delirium and intimidation rolls.

FEARLESS: The character is rarely fazed when experiencing horrific phenomena or frightening incidents. Apply +1 to any roll to avoid fear and intimidation, and you may subtract 1 from any roll made on the fear chart.

IGNORE PAIN: Through sheer will, the character can ignore pain. As a result, ignore modifiers when "hurt" and only suffer -1 to actions when "injured". If subject to torture or other maltreatment, the character applies +1 to all attempts to resist.

RESOLVE: The character is unwavering and vehemently resist anyone trying to influence him or her through suggestion or supranatural means. Gain +1 to resist mind-controlling or suggestive powers, intimidation, overt manipulating or persuasion attempts.

# Flaws

Flaws are physical, mental or social limitations; which characters have to deal with on an everyday basis. The flaws presented here are not intended to ruin the game or greatly hinder players, but to provide profundity to characters as well as offering players interesting challenges to overcome. In case a chosen Flaw is too limiting or has no impact at all on a character, the Arbiter should address the issue and resolve it together with the player.

Choosing a Flaw grants additional points during character creation. Unlike Talents, Flaws' severity corresponds to the Trait score to which they are linked. A Flaw's point value must match or be less severe than its corresponding Trait score as per the below chart. A mild Flaw can be selected for a Trait with a score of three or lower and grants one additional point. A moderate Flaw corresponds to a Trait score of two and below, giving two points, while a severe Flaw may only be chosen for a Trait score of one, and grants three points.

Flaws should be role-played! Flaws should not only be chosen because they make sense with regards to the Trait they are tied to but also because they add a further dimension to your role-playing. A player who has chosen the "Distracted" Flaw can bring immense variety to acting out the character (i.e. role-playing) when she portrays how her character tries to keep focused on the task at hand but is constantly drawn to other things.

Several Flaws may be acquired, but the total amount of points obtained may never exceed a total value of three (3); meaning that a character can have up to three mild Flaws, one mild and one medium Flaw or one severe flaw – depending on the Trait scores as described above. Each Trait is limited to hold one Flaw and the Arbiter must approve all Flaws chosen by the player. Flaws are part of the core nature of a character, and as such cannot be removed even if the corresponding Trait is increased through advancement.

| TRAIT SCORE | FLAW | POINT VALUE* |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | MILD | 1 point |
| 2 | MODERATE | 2 points |
| 1 | SEVERE | 3 points |

**The amount of Points gained from taking Flaws.*

Selecting a Flaw is one of the more challenging aspects of character creation. Choosing something which inhibits a character serves to make him or her more believable and interesting to play and gives an insight into how to play the character. After a Flaw is selected, relevant questions are: How did this person deal with this weakness until now? How does it affect her behaviour? The answers provide a deeper understanding of the character.



| AGILITY | AWARENESS | STAMINA | STRENGTH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Butter-fingered | Impaired vision | Bleeder | Cramps |
| Clumsy | Lack of situational awareness | Emaciated | Easily exhausted |
| Lameness | Night Blindness | Exotic illness | Frail |
| Sluggish | No Empathy | Low pain tolerance | Weak grip |
| | No orientation | Obese | |
| | No sense of smell | | |

| INTELLECT | PERSUASION | PRESENCE | WILLPOWER |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amnesia | Blunt | Bad Reputation | Addiction |
| Clueless | Obvious body language | Distinctive Appearance | Bad Temper |
| Confused | Outspoken | Eunuch | Compulsive liar |
| Distracted | | Hideous | Fanatic |
| Gullibility | | Repulsive Habits | Gluttony |
| Oblivious | | Social stigma | Impulsive |
| Primitive | | | Indecisive |
| Savant | | | Weak Will |



## Agility Flaws

BUTTER-FINGERED (mild): Such tiny things! The character has trouble manipulating small objects and threading a needle is an almost impossible feat. Actions involving fine motor skills have a high probability of going awry. To illustrate this, add a -1 penalty to all actions involving small objects, craft-skills and any actions the Arbiter deem appropriate.

CLUMSY (moderate or severe): The character is unusually clumsy and tends to blunder into things causing commotion and annoyance. The clumsiness is very rarely life-threatening, but it is annoying and sometimes costly. Moderate: Any Agility-based action suffers a critical failure on a roll of 1-2, causing minor accidents or mishaps. Severe: All Agility-based rolls of a natural 1-3 counts as a critical failure and during combat a + 1 modifier is added to rolls on the critical mishap table.

LAMENESS (moderate or severe): For whatever reason, the character suffers from lameness in the legs or lower torso impeding or preventing movement and general mobility. Moderate: The character has significantly impaired mobility and walks awkwardly; this causes halved movement rate, and the character is unable to sprint. Severe: The legs are paralysed, and the character is unable to walk on your own. Do not select this flaw if the character has an attribute or Talent rendering the Flaw immaterial - such as flying.

SLUGGISH (mild or moderate): The character has an unwieldy body, which will not (re)act in a fast manner. No matter how hard he or she tries, actions are always sluggish and slow. Mild: Suffer a -1 penalty to move, initiative and surprise rolls. Moderate: The character has a -2 penalty to move, initiative and surprise rolls, and can only use reaction manoeuvres as delayed actions, never as reactions.

## Awareness Flaws

IMPAIRED VISION (mild to severe): The character has impaired vision which affects his or her ability to act and perform actions based on sight. Mild: The character's vision is blurry causing him or her problems seeing faraway objects clearly and judging distances. Apply a penalty of -1 when using missile or thrown weapons, when dealing with spatial actions such as judging distance and all spotting rolls. Moderate: The character is partially blind requiring extensive effort to see beyond his or her own hands. All actions requiring sight are at -1 penalty and using a thrown or missile weapon is possible only at short range and with the -1 penalty. Judging distances and spotting rolls are at -3 penalty. Severe: The characters eyes are very sensitive to light with daylight being practically blinding, causing -3 to all actions using sight. If the character can shade his or her eyes during daylight hours, the penalty is -1 . Low to moderate lighting, such as during dusk and dawn confers no penalty. The character suffers the usual penalties for dark conditions. Do not select this flaw if the character has an attribute or Talent rendering the Flaw immaterial.

NIGHT BLINDNESS (mild): The character has severely impaired vision in low light conditions. Double all penalties for poor lighting (to a maximum of -12) when performing actions which require the use of eyesight.

LACK OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS (mild to severe): Mild: The character is lacking when it comes to reading body language and noticing social indicators in interaction, appropriateness or manners. Apply a -1 penalty to all social actions such as diplomacy, negotiating and socialising. The character may seem eccentric, rude or uncaring to others.
Moderate: The character often acts irately, with a distinct lack of understanding for proper behaviour and without concern for others as he or she cannot intuitively grasp behavioural patterns. Apply a -2 penalty to all social actions.
Severe: The character is devoid of situational awareness; completely lacking the ability to understand, assess and interpret reactional patterns; he or she has no grasp of what is proper and act exclusively on personal wants and needs. The character has a hard time functioning within any society as this behaviour tends to provoke most people. The character may not acquire any skills with social uses and suffers a -3 penalty to social actions.

NO EMPATHY (moderate to severe): This character has little understanding of feelings in general, and practically no appreciation for the emotions of others. He or she may have no difficulty relating to his or her own emotional state but is rarely concerned with how actions affect others as their feelings and thoughts or beliefs have little or no significance.
Moderate: The character suffers a -1 penalty to all actions involving the comprehension or appreciation of emotions in others, making it hard to determine and analysing the motivation, wants and needs of others. Actions include carousing, flirting, bargaining, intrigue, socialising and subterfuge.
Severe: The emotions of others are a complete mystery, and the character suffers -1 penalty to all social interaction and a -3 penalty to all actions directly involving the appreciation and awareness of emotional motivation, including deciphering sentient behaviour.

NO ORIENTATION SENSE (mild): The character has no sense of direction or navigational skills and gets lost even in familiar places. How anybody can follow a map is an enigma resulting in the character suffering a -3 penalty to all skills involving orienteering or navigation and wilderness survival.

NO SENSE OF SMELL (mild): Characters with no sense of smell often have no sense of taste either and are unable to enjoy culinary delights. Characters with this affliction are especially vulnerable to spoiled food, poisonous gas and toxins because they are simply unable to detect them.

*Having established that Ziana has little physical ability, it seems fitting to give her a Strength Flaw. As she has a score of 2, applicable Flaws can be either mild or moderate in severity and "Easily exhausted" seems an appropriate choice; adding a bit of spice and drama to the character. Choosing a moderate severity Flaw grants 2 bonus points that can be used later in the character creation. We could select further Flaws and Talents for the character, but for now, we leave her with one of each.*

## Stamina Flaws

BLEEDER (Mild to Severe): The character bruises easily and his or her blood does not clot normally, making even scratches perilous due to uncontrolled bleeding.
Mild: Natural healing is reduced by one, meaning for instance that it takes a character with a Stamina score of one (1) two full days to heal one point of Health.
Moderate: In addition to reduced healing rate the character bleeds excessively once wounded, suffering a loss of one point of Health per combat round until bandaged.
Severe: Further to reduced healing rate any injury counts as minor bleeding wounds for the character.

EMACIATED (Mild to Severe): The character is unusually skinny and malnourished compared to the norm. He or she has very little body fat and muscle, making her tire easily and succumbing to fatigue. An emaciated character cannot maintain arduous physical activity for very long without the risk of succumbing to exhaustion. Continued strenuous activity, such as athletics or fighting, requires a successful Stamina roll of [7] every (Stamina score times 6) seconds. Failure means the character collapses with exhaustion and must rest for an equal amount of time.
The flaw severity depends on the character's Stamina score.

EXOTIC ILLNESS (moderate): The character suffers from a strange, incurable disease. Although not fatal it makes life miserable; the character tires quickly, and has coughing fits and nausea. Once a day make a Stamina roll [7] or suffer -1 to all physically based actions that day. If the Arbiter allows, drugs, herbs or other curatives ease the symptoms of the disease for that day. These are either very costly or difficult to obtain.

LOW PAIN TOLERANCE (Mild to Severe): The character is very sensitive to pain and reacts strongly to even minor injuries and the threat of bodily harm. Mild: The character tries to avoid getting hurt at all costs and if injured he or she must pass a Fear roll [4] or roll fear effect 1-4. Moderate: The character seeks to avoid encounters or activities which may result in physical harm. "Bruised" characters suffer a -1 penalty, while "hurt" and "injured" penalties are increased by a factor of one (1) and if injured the character must pass a Fear roll [4] or suffer fear effect 1-4. Severe: Same as above, but in encounters where physical harm is likely the character is affected by "Fear" [4] regardless of whether the threat becomes real or not.

OBESE (Mild to Severe): The character is obese, suffering the consequences of a deteriorating physique.
Mild: Movement rate is reduced by 1. Moderate: In addition to reduced movement the character suffers -1 to all physical actions due to his or her immense weight and ungainliness. Clothes and armour must be custom made. Severe: As moderate, with movement rate reduced by 3 and physical actions suffering a -3 penalty.

## Strength Flaws

CRAMPS (Mild to Severe): The character's muscles tend to cramp up at inopportune moments during physical activity. Only the muscles involved in the action get cramps - if the character is arm-wrestling just the arm and hand will cramp up, so they may still get up and walk away.
Mild: A critically failed physical action causes cramps, leaving the character unable to continue using the cramped limb for D3 rounds.
Moderate: A critical failure or a natural roll of 1 while performing a physical action triggers cramps, temporarily preventing activity. If the action involves using an item (such as a weapon) the character will drop it. The pains will subside within 3D12 seconds or D12 combat rounds.
Severe: As moderate, but the cramps will only subside after D12 minutes.

EASILY EXHAUSTED (Mild to Severe): The character's muscles tire and acidify quickly, leaving him or her are unable to maintain feats of strength for very long. Actions included are climbing, carrying heavy loads, fighting and any other tiring activities as determined by the Arbiter.
The Strength score and flaw severity determine how long the character can function at normal capacity. After that, the character suffers a -1 penalty to all physical actions for each period exceeding the time limit. Mild: The character can sustain heavy labour for 30 seconds (10 combat rounds). Moderate: The character can maintain arduous manual labour for up 15 seconds (5 combat rounds). Severe: The character can perform intense work for up to 6 seconds (2 combat rounds) without penalty.

FRAIL (mild): The character is very frail and has difficulties carrying and wielding heavy objects. Count the strength score as one less than it is when calculating item or weapon size modifiers as well as armour bulk. All actions involving lifting and carrying take a -1 penalty.

WEAK GRIP (Mild to Severe): Weak hands mean this character easily drops held items. This typically affects acrobatics, climbing, fighting and other actions involving held items and requiring a firm grip.
Mild: On a natural roll of 1 a held item is dropped in addition to any other mishap.
Moderate: A natural roll of 1-2 causes the character to lose their grip.
Severe: The character loses their grip on a natural roll of 1-3.

## Intellect Flaws

AMNESIA (mild to moderate): The character suffers from memory loss and has difficulties remembering the past.
Mild: The character is forgetful and has difficulties remembering facts and details. The character ought not to rely purely on personal memory when making decisions. They do not forget everything but apply a penalty of -3 to any roll involving recall, such as making lore or history rolls without references.
Moderate: The character has severe amnesia and has forgotten portions of their past. The amnesia may be natural, or trauma-induced. In addition to the effects of mild amnesia, the character has forgotten noteworthy events from their past, such as making a powerful enemy, which may come back to haunt them.

CLUELESS (mild): The character lacks social awareness and rarely understands or grasps the meaning in subtle interactions with other people. They know what people say, but often miss implied meaning or nuance in conversations. In situations where information is hinted at or passed discretely, the character must make an Intellect roll to see the message is understood (Arbiter decides

difficulty). Situations such as flirting, irony, gestures and other non-obvious communication attempts require a roll.

CONFUSED (moderate) The character easily gets confused and has difficulties dealing with new impressions and situations; taking a long time to process information. In calm, familiar situations this Flaw is negligible, but stress or unfamiliarity almost certainly confuse the character. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all surprise rolls, and during hectic encounters and commotion, a successful Intellect roll is required for the character to react suitably to the situation (Arbiter determines difficulty) — the character is disoriented and unable to act on a failed roll. This flaw does not apply if the character is actively engaged in combat with an opponent, but applies as soon as the character is disengaged or unable to perceive his or her opponent.

DISTRACTED (mild): The character has a short attention span and finds it hard to focus on tasks taking more than a few minutes. When engaged in prolonged tasks or performing extended actions apply a -1 penalty for every additional roll required.

GULLIBILITY (mild): The character is naïve, easily manipulated and believes most anything they are told. They have difficulties reading people's intentions or underlying motives. The character suffers a -1 penalty to resist persuasion, influence and domination.

OBLIVIOUS (mild to moderate): Letters, numbers and abstract images do not make sense to the character.
Mild: The character can understand (but not replicate) pictographic forms of writing. They find it hard, but not impossible, to grasp written numbers. Alphabetical reading or writing is beyond their abilities, and they may not acquire the Reading-Writing Skill.
Moderate: Any type of writing - pictographic, alphabetical or numerical - is beyond the character's abilities. They may never acquire the Reading-Writing Skill and are unable to comprehend any written message, abstract images or drawn representations.

PRIMITIVE (moderate to severe): The character either comes from a primitive background or has difficulties fathoming complexities beyond the basic needs of survival and procreation.
Moderate: The character can function in society but must pay an extra point cost to acquire mental and social oriented skills. Severe: The character struggles to interact in civilised society, suffers -1 to all social rolls and must pay double point cost for all mental and social skills.

SAVANT (severe): The character is an idiot savant, with severe mental challenges, but displaying remarkable ability within a few specified fields of knowledge. The character is only allowed to acquire 6 skills, including combat skills, and suffers a -1 penalty to all social actions.

## Persuasion Flaws

BLUNT (mild to severe): The character is incredibly blunt and opinionated about thoughts, feelings and viewpoints. They see no reason to be diplomatic about anything and have no qualms about expressing their views, even when it may be unwise to do so. Mild: The character speaks their mind although he or she may attempt to do so in somewhat subtle ways or with tact. Apply a -1 penalty to social actions.
Moderate: The character feels a need to voice opinions regularly and has no qualms divulging their views no matter how inappropriate or untimely it may be. The character suffers a -1 to reaction rolls and a -3 penalty to social rolls.
Severe: The character's candour is brusque. Although neither stupid nor suicidal, their loutish manners and inability to restrain behaviour will cause problems. The character suffers a -3 to reaction rolls and a -3 penalty to social rolls and must make a Willpower roll [7] to lie or act with restraint.

OBVIOUS BODY-LANGUAGE (mild to moderate): This character's body-language reveals his or her thoughts and intentions. Although the character may have no reservations about lying, he or she is rarely successful because the facial expression or body-language gives the real purpose away immediately. Mild: The character suffers a -1 penalty to attempts at subterfuge, deception and exploitation. Moderate: Not only is any deception easily noticeable, but the body language is also so evident that opponents in combat can readily predict the intention and next action of the character; giving them a + 1 to any reaction manoeuvre.

OUTSPOKEN (mild to severe): The character is incapable of cunning and guile. Mild: The character cannot lie or apply exploitation intentionally. They may be able to omit the truth but are unable to lie directly. Moderate: Not only can the character not lie or omit pertinent facts, but they also cannot use or condone deceitful methods. Severe: The character is outspoken to the point that they must proclaim the truth and the whole truth, no matter what. If they witness falsehood, exaggerated or restrained assertion of fact, they are compelled to clarify and call attention to the truth.



## Presence Flaws

BAD AURA (mild to severe): The character has an appearance that instils distrust and suspicion. Whenever he or she meets new people, there is a chance that they are instinctively biased against the character. Whether the bias is based on fact is more or less irrelevant, what counts is what people believe to be true. Mild: People instantly suppose the character to be a scoundrel or otherwise mildly suspicious causing a -1 response penalty until trust is established. Moderate: The character is assumed to be a crook, thief or charlatan and so on, making people apprehensive in their company; for instance refusing to serve the character and causing a -2 response penalty. Severe: Based on gut instinct, people assume the character is a murderer or other delinquent, likely faulting him or her for random crimes or deeds and treating him or her with acute prejudice. A -3 penalty is applied to all response rolls.

DISTINCTIVE APPEARANCE (mild): The character has a distinctive appearance, such as albinism, short stature or great height. They are easily noticeable and stand out in a crowd of peers, making people take note of and remember the character. As a result, they have a -1 on Subterfuge rolls. During violent encounters, some opponents may even be inclined to target the character if given a choice.

EUNUCH (mild): Whether voluntarily, in an accident or through a hostile deed the character was castrated in early puberty. He retains a boyish appearance and often a high-pitched voice. Eunuchs may be met with contempt or ridicule, and are often sought after by slavers. Only male characters can have this Flaw.

HIDEOUS (mild to moderate): Mild: The character is ugly and is – as a consequence - often treated unfairly or poorly compared to others. Hideous characters suffer a -1 penalty to all initial response modifiers.
Moderate: The character is profoundly scarred, disfigured or otherwise repugnant. Some people may even experience revulsion on seeing them and although this may work as an advantage when trying to intimidate or frighten people, it hampers the character in most social situations, applying a -2 penalty to all social interaction, including initial response rolls.

REPULSIVE HABITS (mild to severe): This character behaves in a manner that is repulsive. Depending on the severity of the Flaw the habit is increasingly disgusting or appalling. The player must specify the offensive habit.
Mild: The habit is more annoying than repulsive but serves to irritate the people, sparking dislike. Apply a -1 penalty to social interaction. Habits may include excessive boasting, lack of personal hygiene, being judgemental, and so on. Moderate: The character has constant mannerisms or habits which aggravate people, causing a -2 penalty to all social interaction. Severe: You have habits which will revolt even the most stalwart of people, causing a -3 penalty to all social interaction. Habits may include cannibalism, collecting and wearing cadaverous remains and so on.

SOCIAL STIGMA (mild to severe): The character belongs to a faction, species or occupation, which is considered inferior or abhorrent to the general population of Llyhn. He or she is easily recognisable as belonging to this group and meets bias accordingly. Harlots, certain religious groups, slaves and the like are examples of stigmatised groups. Mild: The character belongs to a group usually looked down upon. People tend to disassociate themselves from the character, whose viewpoints are often discounted, harshly confronted or not taken seriously. The character often finds him- or herself being ignored or even excluded when in social situations, even if they express the same views as others. Moderate: The character belongs to a grouping generally met with distrust. The character must provide proof of their words (or actions) to gain any credibility. Their motives are always questioned.
Severe: Many people actively avoid the character. They are loathed, and few would care to be caught anywhere near them.

## Willpower Flaws

ADDICTION (mild to severe): The character is addicted to a substance and requires frequent satiation. They must feed their addiction daily and are likely to go to great lengths to obtain whatever it is they crave. If the character is unable to get the substance, they experience withdrawal and become erratic or bad-tempered; suffering a -1 penalty to all actions per severity tier of the Flaw. Mild: The addiction is focused on smoking herbs, exclusively drinking tea or some other relatively inconsequential addiction that the character, however, must uphold. This is a minor but continuous expense and bother. Moderate: The addiction is to a substance that is intoxicating but allows the character to retain some control of herself while under the influence. Severe: The character is addicted to a substance that is either incapacitating/hallucinogenic or which is very expensive or dangerous to obtain.

BAD TEMPER (mild to severe): The character suffers from a notoriously bad temper and has a tough time controlling his or her reactions. He or she reacts strongly to any slight, imagined or real. Mild: When exposed to provocation or a stressful situation they tend to respond aggressively, with an angry retort, insults or shouting, unless they succeed in a Willpower roll (Arbiter's discretion as to difficulty). Although reactions are rarely violent without an actual threat, situations can escalate quickly. Moderate: Same as above, but the character threatens violence if provoked. Severe: Same as above, but the character responds violently to provocation.

COMPULSIVE LIAR (mild to moderate): Reality and truth have little relevance to the character, and consequently they understate, embellish or lie constantly, not out of ill will but because they cannot control it. Mild: The character thrives on telling tall tales and embellishing the truth to the extreme, but most of the stories have a basis in reality.
Moderate: The character does not care about truth and has no qualms about fabricating incidences, references or complete anecdotes. They say anything they please, for whatever reason, to whomever they want. If the character is intent on conveying the exact truth, a successful Willpower roll is required to do so.

FANATIC (severe): The character is zealous about a cause or an idea, following its creed with fanatical devotion. The devotion can be of any type or sort as long as the Arbiter approves but must require certain conduct or obedience to specific leaders or principles, significantly influencing the life of the character, to be acceptable. Although his or her every thought might not be bent upon the cause the character would never willingly betray the cause and count as having a Willpower score of 6 for actions involving defending their ideals.

GREED (mild to moderate): The character has an excessive desire to acquire or possess material wealth.
Mild: The character will go to great lengths to obtain wealth, but would not betray trusted friends, steal or commit unconscionable acts to do so.
Moderate: The character is generally not above cheating and lying to obtain the wealth that should "rightfully" be his or hers. The character might even consider being disloyal to the people close to him or her if the promise of riches is great enough.

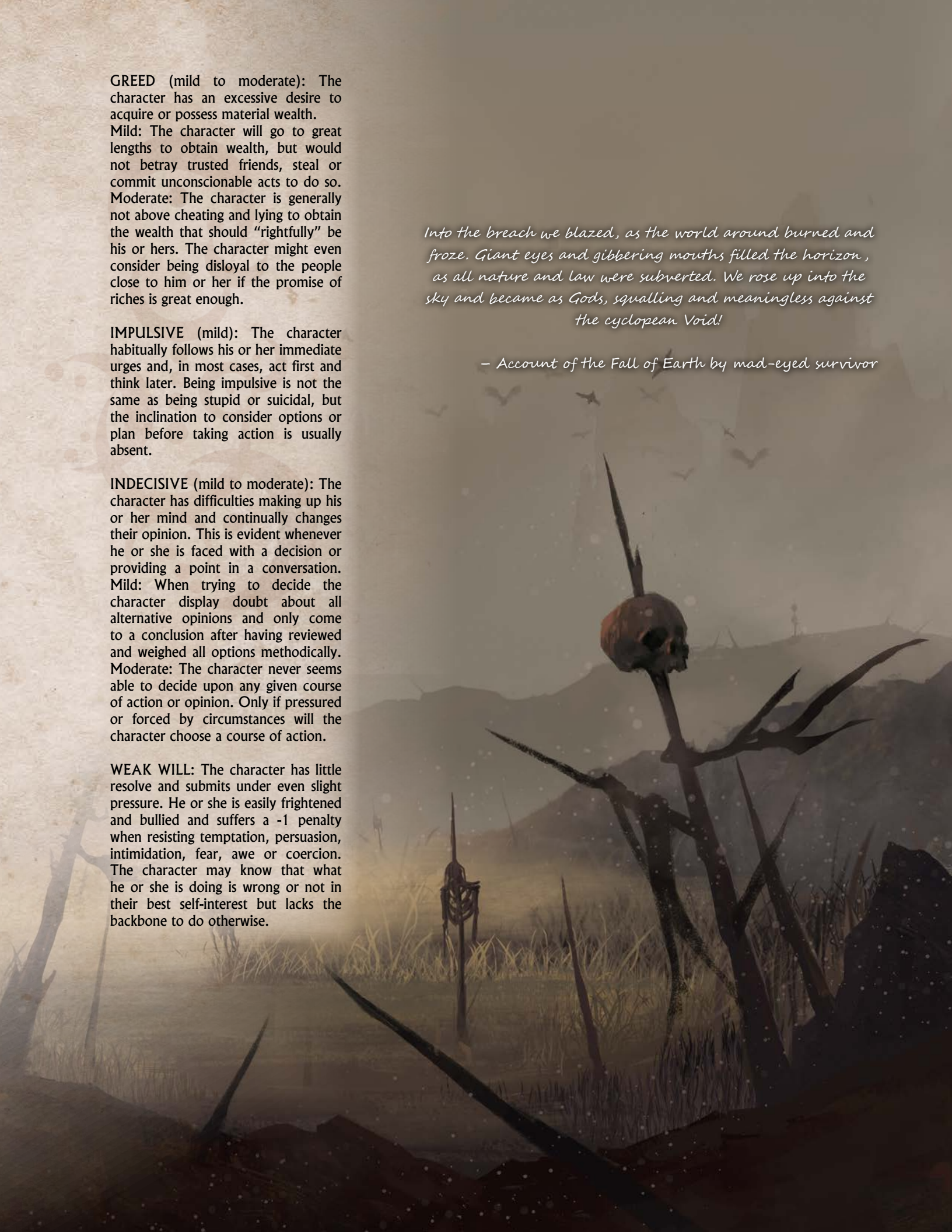
IMPULSIVE (mild): The character habitually follows his or her immediate urges and, in most cases, act first and think later. Being impulsive is not the same as being stupid or suicidal, but the inclination to consider options or plan before taking action is usually absent.

INDECISIVE (mild to moderate): The character has difficulties making up his or her mind and continually changes their opinion. This is evident whenever he or she is faced with a decision or providing a point in a conversation.
Mild: When trying to decide the character display doubt about all alternative opinions and only come to a conclusion after having reviewed and weighed all options methodically.
Moderate: The character never seems able to decide upon any given course of action or opinion. Only if pressured or forced by circumstances will the character choose a course of action.

WEAK WILL: The character has little resolve and submits under even slight pressure. He or she is easily frightened and bullied and suffers a -1 penalty when resisting temptation, persuasion, intimidation, fear, awe or coercion. The character may know that what he or she is doing is wrong or not in their best self-interest but lacks the backbone to do otherwise.

*Into the breach we blazed, as the world around burned and froze. Giant eyes and gibbering mouths filled the horizon, as all nature and law were subverted. We rose up into the sky and became as Gods, squalling and meaningless against the cyclopean Void!*

*– Account of the Fall of Earth by mad-eyed survivor*



# Background



People are influenced by their past. To illustrate this in the game, players can choose backgrounds for their characters. Each background grants in-game benefits and acts as the starting point for a good back-story. Allies, assets, contacts or other aspects can be used to extract vital information, gain advantages, aid or resources to help characters on their way. Acquiring backgrounds costs character points and some have different tiers, with varying point costs.

Backgrounds are explained in detail below. It is up to the player to determine the specific circumstances of a background and to incorporate it into their character story. Some backgrounds may require in-game attention or care, such as keeping allies and followers happy to order to maintain good relations (and thus keep the benefit) - other people will rarely tolerate abusive behaviour for long, and a scorned follower can become a rival or enemy.

| BACKGROUND | POINT COST | BACKGROUND | POINT COST | BACKGROUND | POINT COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALLIES | 2 \| 4 \| 6 | CASTE | 1 \| 3 \| 6 | CONTACTS | 2 \| 4 \| 6 |
| EDUCATED | 2 | FOLLOWER | 6 | HALFBLOOD | 1 |
| LOCAL | 2 | MENTOR | 6 | REPUTATION | 2 \| 4 \| 6 |
| RESIDENCE | 3 - 9 | RESOURCES | 3 - 6 | STATUS | 3 \| 6 \| 9 |
| VOIDMARKED | 2 | | | | |

ALLIES (2 to 6 points): Your character has one or more allies who may be able to provide information, resources, contacts or other support to your character. Allies are often family, people your character has befriended or factions/ guilds that your character has worked with in the past. Allies are usually trustworthy and will help your character if possible, but remember they also have agendas, priorities and responsibilities of their own. Alliances are give-and-take relations, and an over-exploited ally will not remain helpful for long. Allies are also likely to request the help of characters on occasion. Moreover, the activities of characters and their allies will influence each others' reputations if the affiliation is openly known.

While the player should make the initial proposal about the relationship and particulars of an ally, the Arbiter has the final word regarding allies' power, influence and background.

2 point - One ally of minor influence and power.

4 points - Two lowly allies, or one of moderate power and authority.

6 points - One ally of substantial power and influence, or two of moderate means.

CASTE (1 to 6 points): The social hierarchy of the Eternal City is divided into classes determined not only by species and birth, but also by wealth and power. The classes are grouped into low, common and high castes. The higher a character's caste, the more wealth, influence and resources she is likely to command. Outside this system are the casteless, a segment not considered part of the social hierarchy. Characters always begin as casteless but can gain ranks within the low and common castes by spending character points. Different castes interact following strict social conventions and codes of conduct. As players spend points to acquire caste rankings, the character's starting funds and social standing increases.

KALBI (0): Kalbi are casteless, with no place or status in the social hierarchy. They do the work that no one else wants and are considered filthy, worthless and barred from most districts and areas of the city. The literal meaning of Kalbi is "dog".

BALTU (1): This caste enjoys few privileges and is largely associated with unskilled labourers and slaves of negligible importance. Baltu are at the very bottom of society and largely confined to the slum areas of the Eternal City - unless in chains.

SHAHRVAH (3): Skilled labourers, farmers, peasants and fishers who do not own their resources or tools make up this caste. This group is part of the low castes.

MUATI (6): Mainly artisans, tradesmen and merchants, Ummani are among the common castes in Llyhn. This caste enjoys several privileges and can move freely around some of the upper districts of the city.

CONTACTS (2 to 6 points): The character has a well-established network of reliable contacts. They can be from a variety of worlds, species and walks of life. Each contact has a specific area of knowledge and field of expertise within which he can gain access to information or further connections. The network can include old acquaintances or people the character manipulates or bribes. Which contacts are available at any given time can be resolved in various ways - either during the game at a player's request or the Arbiter's discretion, by prior agreement between player and

Arbiter or based on the character's history.
2 points - The character has a few contacts with a limited amount of information.
4 points - The character has several connections in different fields, with a moderate amount of information available.
6 points - The character has a significant network of contacts in a wide array of areas who can supply her with an abundance of information.

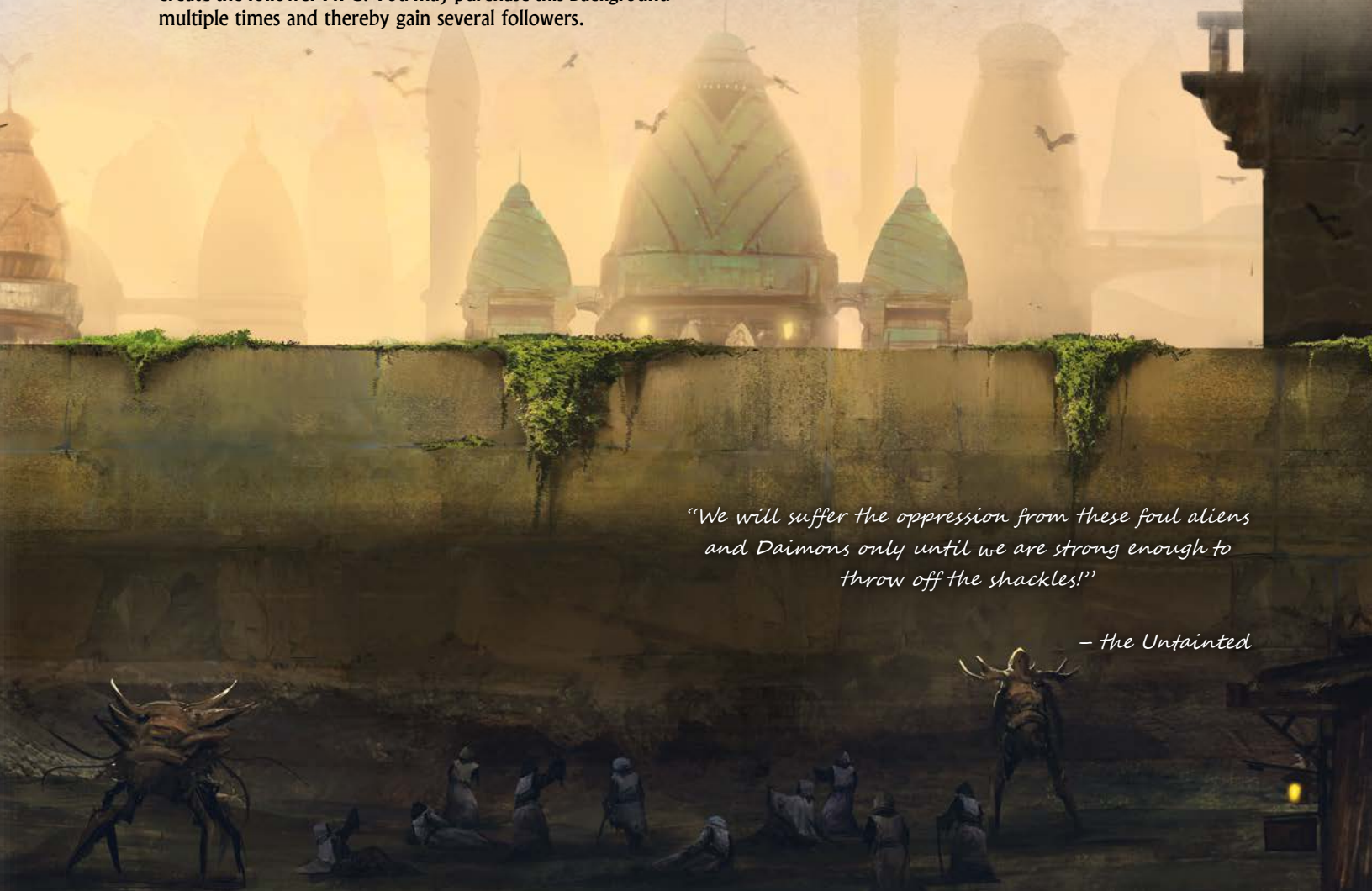
EDUCATED (2 points): The character is educated, has learned civilised manners and is somewhat versed in academic arts such as philosophy, languages and history. Due to the character's obvious schooling, eloquence and etiquette he or she gains + 1 to reactions when encountering high castes, educated or scholarly people. Furthermore, the character only suffers a -1 penalty to lore skills he or she is untrained in.

FOLLOWER (6 points per follower): The character has a loyal follower, such as a dedicated servant, a devoted disciple or a lovesick admirer. The follower is sincerely loyal to the character, serving freely and more dutifully than a hired servant would, willingly endangering her own life if it might ensure the character's survival. The reason for this devotion must be established before the game begins with the Arbiter's approval. The follower might owe the character her life as a blood-debt, depend on the character for their future prosperity or survival, or view the character as a prophet or religious leader. Forced allegiance is not uncommon, so a character may even have threatened the follower into homage - create a story which fits with the character's personality and backstory. The Arbiter will create the follower NPC. You may purchase this Background multiple times and thereby gain several followers.

HALFBLOOD (1 point): Many humans are the offspring of mixed parentage. Halfbloods are the children of human and another Cosmic species, and although the traits of their human ancestry are typically predominant, the mark of their other blood is always evident somehow. Halfbloods often combine the tenacity of humanity with the exceptional characteristics of their other ancestry, making them potent individuals. Halfbloods may acquire attributes.

LOCAL (2 points): The character is very familiar with a geographical area or culture, knowing the regional setting, landscape, society and history in great detail. The chosen area can be any clearly defined location or culture, such as a Llyhn district or a tribal people from a distant world. The character is either a native or has spent considerable time integrating with the culture, essentially merging with it. The character rarely gets lost anywhere in the area, has near-encyclopaedic knowledge of it, and will be familiar with a great part of the population. Characters gain + 1 to all direction, lore, reputation and response rolls when in or with regards to the chosen region or culture.

MENTOR (6 points): The character has a mentor; a teacher, advisor and counsellor on whom she can rely. The mentor will likely be someone wise or learned, who can impart knowledge to the character in times of need. The mentor may even function as a protector and helper within her sphere of influence. Beyond giving advice, the mentor will likely put her own network at the disposal of the character, possibly even contributing resources, contacts and influence to the character. The mentor is typically also the patron or matron of the character.



*"We will suffer the oppression from these foul aliens and Daimons only until we are strong enough to throw off the shackles!"*

*– the Untainted*

RESIDENCE (3 to 9 points): The character possesses a hovel, house or other dwelling. The residence is a place where the character can feel secure, avoid prying eyes and keep her valuables and other possessions safe. The location, layout, size and security or secrecy of the residence must be determined before the game commences. Residences can take many shapes and forms, ranging from a comfortable residence to dark and damp underground dumps. 3 points: The dwelling is a small chamber or other space with room for one occupant. 6 points: The residence consists of one decent room or two smaller rooms with which up to three people may occupy, although barely at that. 9 points: These lodgings may have up to three fairly spacious rooms accommodating a decent number of people.

*Ziana has been living in the streets of the Kimah district her entire life and knows it like the back of her hand, which makes the 2-point "Local" Background an obvious choice.*
*Through her life Ziana has met a lot of people whom she can draw upon for information, so we pay for the 2-point "Contacts" Background. She is also occasionally aided by an influential old-timer in a beggar-gang, and it is unlikely that she would have survived for long without this aid. With 2 further points spent on the "Allies" Background, that brings her Background total to 6 points, of which 3 were granted by her homeworld benefit.*

REPUTATION (2 to 6 points): The character is well-known. The player decides whether the reputation is based on infamy, acclaim or another type of prominence, subject to the Arbiter's approval. A reputation generally works favourably, as renowned characters often use their fame to get special privileges but may cause difficulties when acting discretely. As reputation increases the character is known to a wider part of a population and the likelihood of beneficial privileges and advantages increases, but so does the number of sycophants and social parasites. The character counts as having an Awe ranking of 7 towards the people who are aware of his or her reputation. 2 points: The character is known in specific circles of less than a hundred people. 4 points: The character is known in wider circles of a few hundred individuals and may add a +1 modifier when socialising within this group. 6 points: The character is known in whole communities of up to a few thousand people and may add a +1 modifier to socialise with or influence this group.

RESOURCES (3 to 6 points): The character has an extraordinary source of income and a substantial amount of resources are available no matter which caste she belongs to. There are many ways to acquire resources or income in Llyhn, both through legitimate or prohibited means. Dealing in contraband, selling merchandise or having inherited wealth are some of the possibilities.
Well-off (3 points): D12x10 copper Dhin starting funds and assets worth 500 copper Dhins.
Prosperous (6 points): D12x25 copper Dhin starting funds and assets worth 1000 copper Dhins.
The wealth from the resources is in addition to funds gained from the Caste background.

STATUS (3, 6 or 9 points): Your character has managed to gain a certain amount of status and level of authority within a guild, group or faction in Llyhn. This can be an official status (such as mercenary captain or high priest) or it can be informal recognition by her peers, granting her words great weight within the group. The player must specify the group within which status is held, what the status is and how it was achieved, subject to Arbiter's approval.
Minor authority (3 point): The character has limited authority within the group but is above regular members.
Intermediate authority (6 points): The character is influential although not part of the leadership in the group.
Key authority (9 points): The character is part of the leadership within the group.
The actual rank or status depends on the hierarchical structure of the group.

VOIDMARKED (2 points): Human, but not entirely human; Voidmarked characters have been affected by the effects beyond the Veil of Cosmic reality in one way or another. There are several variants of Voidmarked, which are distinctly different from each other: Those who have been influenced by the strange warping effects in Llyhn or from Void-travelling, the offspring of human and Daimonic beings, and those few who have attained ascension. Because of their diverse backgrounds or parentage Voidmarked vary considerably in appearance and temperament. Those that retain a generally human form usually display several outlandish characteristics such as strange eyes, odd complexion or other faintly non-human characteristics. Voidmarked characters may have regular and esoteric attributes and acquire Mystic powers.


Voidmarked

# Attributes



Attributes are physical qualities found in non-human species. There are two types of Attribute: General Attributes are exclusively physical or sensory attributes that can be found in Cosmic species, while esoteric Attributes are extraordinary abilities and aspects found in beings from the higher echelons of existence. Humans have no innate Attributes and are only able to purchase these if they acquire the halfblood or Voidmarked background.

The amount of points available to players for purchasing Attributes is determined by the player's distribution of points between abilities as described in the Character Points chapter. The Arbiter is always allowed to set or remove limitations on which attributes are allowed when a player is creating a character. If the Arbiter has planned a scenario where all the characters are newly arrived in Llyhn from a world with very little esoteric influence or Void distortion, it would make sense to impose a limit on the points players may spend on Attributes.

| ATTRIBUTE | POINT COST | ATTRIBUTE | POINT COST | ATTRIBUTE | POINT COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adaptive pigment | 1 | Additional arms* | 2 | Additional legs | 1 |
| Alternative Sense | 1 | Beak | 1 | Chitinous Skin | 2 \| 3 |
| Claws | 1 to 3 | Digitigrade legs | 1 | Fangs | 1 |
| Fur/Feathers | 1 or 2 | Horns | 1 or 2 | Huge tusks | 1 |
| Large | 2 | Long Limbs | 2 | Multiple eyes | 1 |
| Natural resistance | 1 | Natural Immunity | 2 | Night Vision | 2 |
| Piscine | 1 or 2 | Quick Healer | 2 | Scaly Skin | 2 |
| Slimy | 1 | Stinger | 2 | Tail | 1 or 2 |
| Tentacles | 1 or 2 | Tough Hide | 2 | Transformative skin | 2 |
| Venomous | 1 to 3 | Wings | 1 to 3 | | |

ADAPTIVE PIGMENT: Your character's skin can change hue to match the surroundings. The character has a default normal skin colour; changes are usually subtle and correspond to changes in light and shadows. This attribute confers an automatic +1 bonus to any attempt to hide. Clothing does not change colour.

ADDITIONAL ARMS (2 points for each arm): You have an additional arm, or other grasping limb, which can grab, hold and manipulate objects. Extra arms allow for characters to perform multiple simultaneous actions. Performing independent actions with each limb will suffer penalties as it involves multitasking. Attacking with several weapons or performing multiple unrelated actions, a cumulative penalty will apply to all actions following the standard rules for multiple actions. A primary action would suffer a -3 penalty, a secondary -6 and so on. In combat situations, an equivalent penalty applies with regards to initiative. Penalties for using several arms and multiple actions may be reduced by Talents such as Ambidextrous or Coordination, the dual-wielding Fighting Skill (also applicable for non-combat actions) and so on. Synchronised and coordinated actions, with all limbs centred on a single action, such as grappling an opponent, would incur no penalties while providing a greater chance of success, adding a +1 modifier for each additional limb.

ADDITIONAL LEGS (1 point for each leg): For each purchase of this Attribute you gain an extra leg or similar motive limb. Having extra legs grants several bonuses, such as increased movement rate and greater stability. Each additional leg allows you a +1 modifier to any roll involving balance when all feet are firmly on the ground or another stable surface, up to maximum +3. This includes stumbling and knock-down rolls. If a pair or more extra legs are acquired, the character's basic speed is calculated as a quadruped (see movement).

ALTERNATIVE SENSE (1 point): Your character has an additional sense, which can detect and discern the surrounding environment. This Attribute does not replace the normal senses available to a character (sight, hearing, etc.), but gives an additional way for the character to perceive. In some

cases, the character will have other physical features such as antennas, feelers and so on. The sense can, for instance, be echolocation, the ability to hear ultrasonic sounds, vibration-sense and so on. Echolocation as an alternative sense would grant the character the ability to detect objects and possibly shapes in complete darkness while a vomeronasal organ would allow the character to "taste" odours. For instance pressure-sense would enable the character to sense vibrations and changes in pressure and use this to perceive surroundings or movement. This sense allows him or her to "see" regardless of light conditions but is limited in range depending on the element it is used in.

BEAK (1 point): Instead of a mouth the character has a beak, which may be used for speaking and manipulating objects, as well as for pecking and biting attacks. Beaks vary significantly in shape, size and colour. Using a beak to attack an opponent requires a brawling attack, and a successful hit causes 1-4 damage. Pecking or biting a pinned opponent is done without the usual penalties for secondary actions.

CHITINOUS SKIN (2 or 3 points): The character has chitinous skin or a carapace instead of the more common endoskeleton of sentient species. Chitinous skin is a hardened exoskeleton granting better protection against physical damage from blows and hits than the usual soft tissue of most Cosmic species. Every couple of years, however, the skin must be shed to moult, allowing for physical growth. Partial chitinous skin (2 points) covers segmented areas of the body, leaving the soft tissue of muscles and flesh of other areas bare, granting a natural damage reduction of 1. Complete chitinous skin (3 points) covers the entire body encasing the muscle, flesh and internal organs in a thick carapace, conferring a natural damage reduction of 3, but also limiting the possible size of a character. Acid and other corrosive effects are delayed by D12 seconds (D4 combat rounds) before the character begins suffering damage. Characters with this Attribute may never have the Large Attribute unless they also acquire the additional legs Attribute.

CLAWS (1 to 3 points): Where ordinary people have fingernails, the character has claws that can be used both as tools and for inflicting damage. Claws are used in brawling attacks. SMALL CLAWS (1): The claws add +1 to attempts to climb but give -1 to actions involving fine motor control. The claws cause D4 points of damage when used as weapons. RETRACTABLE CLAWS (1): Small claws can be made retractable at the cost of one additional character point. Retractable claws do not cause a penalty to digital coordination.
MEDIUM CLAWS (2): The character's fingers extend into sizeable claws that can be used both as tools and for inflicting damage. The claws add +1 to attempts to climb, grapple and similar actions. The claws cause D6 points of damage when used as weapons, but prompt -2 to all actions involving digital manipulation.
LARGE CLAWS (3 points) – Instead of hands the character has large claws or pincers, which can do massive amounts of damage as well as serve as a severe intimidation factor. Large claws hamper fine motor skills or using tools, however, and a -3 penalty is applied to all actions involving digital manipulation. The character can only use large or specially designed items. Large claws cause D12 damage in combat.

DIGITIGRADE LEGS (1 point): The joints of the character's legs are set differently to a normal human, who walked on toes (or hooves). This gives an enhanced bound when moving, thereby increasing speed. The character has +1 to basic move.

FANGS (1 point): The character has fangs which can be used for biting attacks. Fangs are a primary weapon in the arsenal of wild beasts, and creatures baring fangs in aggression are a disturbing sight to most. If you want to use fangs in combat apply the brawling skill. If you manage a successful hit, the fangs dig into the victim causing 1-4 damage. Furthermore, you can choose to maintain the bite by successfully making an opposed Strength roll, thus hampering the victim's mobility and causing additional damage. Biting an already pinned opponent does not suffer the regular penalties for secondary actions. Characters with fangs gain +1 bonus to all intimidation attempts.



FUR/FEATHERS (1 or 2 points): 1 point – The character's entire body is covered in short fur or feathers granting better resistance to cold and other temperature and environmental effects. Add +1 to any rolls resisting cold, harsh winds and similar environmental effects.
2 points – The character has thick, dense fur or feathers providing resistance to temperature influence from cold, wind and water as well as protection from blows. Add +2 to all resistance rolls regarding cold and the like. Furthermore, the character has one point of natural damage reduction while acid and other corrosive effects are delayed by D6 seconds (D2 combat rounds) before the character begins suffering damage.

HORNS (1 or 2 points): Horns or antlers protrude from the character's skull and in addition to looking impressive they may be used to headbutt or ram opponents. Horns can be used as brawling attacks and charge manoeuvres. SMALL HORNS (1): A successful hit with small horns causes D4 points of damage. MASSIVE HORNS (2): Massive horns cause D6+1 points of damage and partially cover the skull with bone-plates functioning like a helmet, granting +1 to rolls resisting stun and reduce damage from blows to the head by one (1).

HUGE TUSKS (1 point): Enormous and gnarly fangs, tusks or sabre-teeth protrude from the character's mouth making him or her a fearsome creature to behold. Huge tusks can be used in brawling attacks similarly to ordinary fangs and cause D6+1 points of damage. This Attribute grants a +1 to all intimidation or Fear rolls due to the entirely malevolent aspect of these fangs. Social interaction, however, is often hampered because people react with revulsion or fear, causing a penalty of -1 to all presence-based rolls except intimidation.

LARGE (2 points): The character is significantly larger than an ordinary human. The player may add +1 to the character's Strength score and calculate Health by multiplying Stamina by a factor of 7. Large characters, however, are limited when buying equipment,

with increases in price and decrease in availability a likely consequence. Large characters are also liable to experience cramped conditions affecting or restricting their movement. Large characters gain bonuses for size to grappling, knockdown, movement and so on but suffer a -1 to their base Defence Value.

LONG LIMBS (2 points): The character's limbs are extraordinarily long compared to his or her body-size and grant an extended reach or elongated legs. You must choose whether the affected limbs are the arms (providing double normal reach) or legs (+1 to movement rate). Each time this Attribute is acquired one set of limbs is affected, so it is possible to attain both long arms and legs.

MULTIPLE EYES (1 point): Your character has more than the regular two eyes of most species. The specific number of eyes selected by the player is of no importance with regards to the enhanced abilities conferred by this Attribute. The placement of the eyes, however, is important. Multiple eyes can provide the character with either improved stereoscopic vision (for judging distance) or panoramic sight. If you choose to have additional eyes facing forward your character gain a +1 bonus to all attempts at judging distances (this also applies for long range modifiers when using missile weapons) and to all perception rolls involving sight. If the eyes are on the sides (or back) of the head, the character has peripheral vision and can add a +1 modifier to all surprise and spot rolls in addition to losing all Defence penalties for attacks from the side or rear. It is possible to purchase this attribute multiple times to have eyes facing all directions.

NATURAL RESISTANCE (1 point): Either through natural predisposition or because of extensive exposure to toxins from snakebites, fungi, frogs or the like the character is naturally resistant to the effects of toxins such as poisonous gas and venom. Although not immune you have a heightened tolerance. All stamina rolls versus effects from poison, toxins or venom have a +1 modifier, and all effects of toxins are halved. Toxins ordinarily leading to outright death will cause 3D12 points of damage instead.

NATURAL IMMUNITY (2 points): The character's bodily system has an innate immunity to toxins in whichever form and will not be affected besides slight nausea even by the most potent of venoms. All required stamina rolls versus effects from toxins, venom or poison are considered to be automatic successes.

NIGHT VISION (2 points): The character's eyes are very sensitive to light, and he or she can see well in low light conditions, certainly much better than normal humans can. Even with night vision a light source is still needed to see, however faint, and the character cannot see in total darkness. Night Vision removes all penalties for performing actions in the dark, but if no light source is available at all the usual penalties apply.

PISCINE (1 or 2 points): 1 point – The character is extraordinarily comfortable under water and suffers only to a lesser degree the hindrances ordinary land-dwelling creatures in an aquatic environment. The adaptation is particularly visible in diving and swimming skills, thermoregulation and, although he or she still needs to breathe air, being able to remain submerged for extended periods. The character is quite adept at manoeuvring in an aquatic environment and vision is only slightly impaired, resulting in a reduced penalty of -1 for performing actions under water. He or she can withstand cold temperatures and high pressure up to twice the ordinary amount and hold his or her breath for up to fifteen minutes at a time. 2 points – Completely adapted to aquatic life the character is as comfortable in water as on dry land. He or she can manoeuvre and move freely and can draw oxygen from water through gills or advanced lung capacity, enabling the character able to stay underwater indefinitely. The character's body compensates for the high pressure and frigid conditions of great depths, allowing you to function unimpaired even down to 100 metres.

QUICK HEALER (2 points): The character is extraordinarily quick to recover from wounds and other damage, closing wounds and mending broken bones faster than typical humans. The body's restorative capabilities are so potent that even "bleeding wounds" clot up without bandaging or other treatment. Any natural healing will occur at +1 the standard rate, including regaining Health points, healing broken bones and recuperating from damage sustained from poison and other physically injurious substances. Additionally, bleeding wounds will stop haemorrhaging after D12 combat rounds or 3D12 seconds.

SCALY SKIN (2 points): The character's skin consists of scales in various shapes and sizes granting greater toughness and resilience than ordinary skin. Apply a natural damage reduction of 1 due to the hardened texture. Acid and other corrosive effects to the skin are delayed D12 seconds (D4 combat rounds) before the character begins suffering damage.

SLIMY (1 point): The character's skin secretes slime like a slug or mollusc. Opponents must subtract 3 from all rolls to pin and grapple the character, who also gains +3 to all attempts to escape bonds. The character, however, has difficulties getting a firm grip on objects, resulting in a -3 to all grasping attempts.

STINGER (2 points): The character has a limb with a stinger, commonly a tail in wild creatures, but it can be any limb you choose. The stinger can be used in a brawling melee attack causing damage according to its size, which is determined by the creature size. A human-sized creature would typically have a stinger approximating ten centimetres in length and causing D6 points of damage, whereas a large creature would cause D12 points of damage. A venomous stinger requires the character to purchase the Venomous attribute (below); the venom glands, located close to the tip of the stinger, will inject a toxin into the target upon a successful hit.

TAIL (1 or 2 points): The character has a tail which helps them keep balance. Short Tail (1 point): When performing any feat requiring acrobatics or balance add +1 to applicable action rolls. Long Tail (2 points): The character has a long, prehensile tail



which increases balance (same as above) and allows the character to grab objects within a range of maximum 2 metres. The tail cannot manipulate small or complex objects but can grasp, pull, push and otherwise handle larger objects on a successful action roll (Agility modifiers apply).

TENTACLES (2 points): The character has tentacles, either as limbs or located close to the feeding organ. Tentacles are very sensitive, elongated, flexible and prehensile appendages that can be used both as sensory organs and as manipulative limbs. The practical use of sensory tentacles, apart from bringing food to the mouth, is to obtain information about the immediate environment by sort of scent and taste with which they can detect very faint traces of odour left behind. This function like an additional sense and allows a character to identify the presence of any odorous person, beast or object in a given location up to half an hour after the source of the odour has departed. Prehensile tentacles function much like another appendage designed to manipulate its surroundings. These tentacles usually have a range of one to two metres and can grab objects and anything else within this distance. Tentacles cannot effectively manipulate small or complex objects but work well for grasping, pulling, pushing and otherwise handling larger items on a successful action roll (Agility modifiers apply).

TOUGH HIDE (2 points): The character's skin is extremely thick and leathery, granting a +1 natural damage reduction.

TRANSFORMATIVE SKIN (2 points): The character's skin can change pigmentation and texture. The character has a basic, default skin colour; changes are usually subtle and correspond to changes in light and shadows, but can create quite dramatic changes in colour at will. Any natural skin tone and texture can be recreated. This attribute confers a +3 modifier to any attempt to hide. Note that any clothing worn does not change its colour.

VENOMOUS (1 to 3 points): The character possesses venom glands in his or her teeth, claws or stinger. Specialised passages inject the venom into the tissue or bloodstream upon a successful bite, scratch or sting. The venom must be injected directly into the victim's body for it to take effect; any other type of ingestion will not suffice. The number of points spent determines the potency of the venom (Refer to the toxins table):
1 point: The poison emulates the effects of Roach rancour.
2 points: The poison follows the effects of Pit peas.
3 points: The poison duplicates the effects of Gissi beans.
Prerequisite: Claws, Fangs or Stinger. If a character has both claws and fangs, Venomous must be purchased twice to work on both.

WINGS (1 to 3 points): The character has wings protruding from their back or membranes stretching from their limbs. Wings allow the character to fly, soar or glide depending on their size, but may restrict freedom of movement within confined spaces. Possessing wings necessitates that clothes and armour are made to accommodate them. For a character to fly a stretch of open space equalling 1 round's (3 seconds') running distance is required unless the character is on an elevated position.
SMALL WINGS (1 point): The character has small wings or membranes that allow gliding and controlled descend from an elevated position. In Earth-like gravity, characters can glide a maximum distance of three metres per metre they descend. On worlds with lower gravity or with favourable conditions, this may be increased.
MEDIUM WINGS (2 points): The character has medium-sized wings and can sustain flight for a limited time. Characters can remain airborne for 10 minutes per Stamina score, while flight beyond this period requires a successful Stamina roll [6] every ten minutes. Characters with medium wings can glide at a ratio of six (6).
LARGE WINGS (3 points): Large wings allow for sustained flight, soaring and gliding. Characters with large wings can fly for a number of hours equalling their Stamina score without fatigue. Flight beyond this requires a successful Stamina roll [6] per hour. Soaring and gliding can be done at a ratio of twelve (12).

# Esoteric Attributes



*Ziana is a pureblood human and cannot acquire Attributes of any kind during character creation as this requires either the halfblood or Voidmarked Background.*

Esoteric and Daimonic species have attributes and capabilities beyond those of Cosmic species. Due to their esoteric background Voidmarked characters - Cosmic descendants of Beings from higher echelons or victims of Void distortion - can also be endowed with such Attributes. Characters with the Voidmarked background may acquire esoteric Attributes during character creation.

| ATTRIBUTE | POINT COST | ATTRIBUTE | POINT COST | ATTRIBUTE | POINT COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aerial | 5 | Ageless | 1 | Daimonic aspect | 5 |
| Daimonic discord | 3 | Daimonic sense | 2 | Daimonic whispers | 2 |
| Domination | 4 | Mesmerize | 3 | Multiple heads or faces | 4 |
| Possession | 3 | Regeneration | 3 | Reincarnation | 2 |
| Shapeshifter | 3 | True sight | 2 | | |

AERIAL: A character with this Attribute is not restricted by gravity but able to fly by sheer will. The character can move in any direction she desires when in the air without the restriction of needing space for wings. The character can move at the normal rate and carry as much as her strength would ordinarily allow.

AGELESS: The character does not age like ordinary mortal beings and will never die of old age. Although time will affect the character, none of the detrimental effects evident in mortal beings occurs because of this. During character creation, the player may choose any apparent age for the character without it affecting Traits or abilities. A character with the capabilities of a grown man but looking like a young boy or venerable elder could have its advantages.

DAIMONIC ASPECT: Many Daimons hide their true shape. Characters with this Attribute have two physical appearances, which they may shift between at will: Their true Daimonic aspect and that of their Cosmic countenance. Although the two usually share most physical characteristics, the Daimonic aspect shows the character in her full grandeur with blazing eyes, darkly glowing halo or however the character truly appears, while the Cosmic guise conceals this, letting her walk among the unenlightened without causing a commotion or drawing attention. All characteristics, such as Traits, skills and powers remain the same regardless of which form the character assumes.
Characters with a Daimonic Aspect gain a +1 modifier when interacting with other esoteric beings and can choose if his or her Daimonic aspect conveys Awe or Fear. When the character changes into her Daimonic aspect creatures in the immediate area are affected with the mental effect rating equal to the character's Presence score.

DAIMONIC DISCORD: The character is able to twist other people's spoken communication so that listeners will hear something different than what is actually being said. The player nominates a target within hearing distance. The character must be able to understand the conversation to twist the words. The conversation can be twisted as much as the player wishes, but the more the message is distorted, the less believable it becomes. A minor tweak, such as replacing a few names or details in a conversation would go unnoticed while making someone appear to say the opposite of what they actually are is conspicuous and would likely be noticed.

DAIMONIC SENSE: A character with Daimonic sense understands the imperceptible and can sense others' emotions. Having this Attribute enables the character to know if lies are being told - the Arbiter would inform the player that something heard rings untrue, but not what specifically. Furthermore, the character can get a sense of which emotive reason - such as greed, love, lust or fear - prompts an individual at a given moment.

DAIMONIC WHISPERS: The character is blessed with the ability to beguile people through his or her oration. A listener will believe what the character says is true or at least that the character believes it to be true. A minor deception, such as falsely claiming never to have met someone before, would be accepted readily. Obvious untruths might not be trusted, but the listener will think that the character believes it. Any sense motive or similar ability would indicate that the character is speaking the truth. While the listener will believe the character during the conversation, he or she may also realise afterwards that they have been deceived if evidence or fitting arguments are presented to them.

DOMINATION: A character with this Attribute is able to plant suggestions and commands in the minds of others. Cosmic species tend to be susceptible, but esoteric beings are difficult to dominate. The character wanting

to dominate someone must verbally give a suggestion to the subject. An ordinary interaction roll is made, and if the result is favourable, the subject feels inclined to act upon the stated suggestion unless it contradicts the subject's instincts. The subject interprets the suggestion - they are not puppets - so may not act as intended, but they will react to it in some way. Ambiguous suggestions cause confused reactions from the recipient; therefore, the specific phrasing of the suggestion is important. If the roll fails, the subject will feel manipulated and react accordingly. Resistance factors such as Willpower and resolve apply to the roll, even if the subject is positively inclined towards the character.

MESMERISE: Mesmerise enables the character to stir or dampen the emotions of nearby sentient beings. It is a subtle ability as it affects others indirectly and not by the character performing specific actions - although it may enhance the desired effect of activities such as intimidation. Whenever a character chooses to mesmerise, they must select a particular emotion to convey or quench in the subjects, for instance diminishing feelings of aggression or inspiring feelings of passion. Mesmerise does not compel specific actions nor direct the subjects' reactions to the emotional inducement. For example, stirring emotions of attraction may make subjects inclined to act affectionate, but there is no certainty that the character will be the target of the affection. Mesmerise affects the immediate area as long as the character remains focused. While the fear can be induced, it does not prompt a Fear mental effect roll.

MULTIPLE FACES OR HEADS: The character either has several faces or several heads. Characters with multiple heads/faces function as a single conscience although with the capability to direct separate attention and sensory awareness and possibly have multiple personalities and thought-patterns. All heads or faces can operate independently giving a character the ability to look in several directions at once and focus on multiple tasks simultaneously without penalties. Characters are allowed to add a +1 bonus to any sensory perception rolls per additional face or head. Each additional head also reduces the penalties applied for performing multiple actions by 3, thus negating the penalty for the primary action, reducing secondary actions to -3, and so on. Depending on the placement of the additional face(s) characters may gain peripheral, or even panoramic vision, granting a +1 modifier to all surprise rolls in addition to losing all Defence penalties for attacks from the side or rear. *The cost is per head.

POSSESSION: Characters with this attribute are able to possess other beings, speak through them and direct their behaviour. Possession is only possible when the potential victim is mentally vulnerable, i.e. has just failed a Fear test or lost a Sanity point. The character can attempt to possess the person by making an opposed Willpower roll. Should the character succeed his or her conscience cross over into the body of the victim but cannot control it yet. Once the Fear or Madness effect wears off another opposed Willpower roll is made, and if successful the character may act through the dupe. To retain possession, additional rolls are required every six hours. While the character is possessing someone else, his or her own body lies comatose and vulnerable. Should the body be killed, the character will die immediately.

REGENERATION: The character's body has exceptional restorative capabilities to the point of being able to re-grow lost limbs and completely rejuvenating damaged tissue, organs and limbs. Regeneration will not bring the character back from death. The character heals wounds at the ordinary rate but requires none of the usual treatment or bandaging needed to restore health and cannot sustain infected or bleeding wounds. He or she is able to re-grow lost limbs and heal otherwise permanent injuries slowly. In case the character is incapacitated he or she does not automatically lose Health points. Prerequisite: Stamina score 4+

REINCARNATION: The character has lived past lives and has been reborn into this one. Reincarnated characters have been reborn into a new body retaining some of the memories of their former lives. The essence is continuously restored to new flesh after having departed its previous shell. Although the memories of the former existences are rarely complete and occasionally not even conscious, they may emerge through triggering occurrences making the character remember events and skills possessed in previous incarnations.
If an action requires a skill the character does not have the player may make a 'recall memories' roll [7]. If successful, the non-skilled penalty is negated on the designated skill-roll.

SHAPESHIFTER: Born from a shapeshifting parent, the character can alter his or her appearance for up to fifteen minutes at a time, after which his or her real countenance recur. While superficial features may be changed the character retains all original Traits, Attributes and Abilities. At least an hour must pass between each shapeshifting.

TRUE SIGHT: This Attribute allows the character to perceive the true nature of existence, seeing the transcending and emanating Void. Although the character does not necessarily understand what is seen, he or she immediately notices any Void presence in her near surroundings and can discern individuals who are touched by the Void. Should the character become enlightened, he or she will have a +1 modifier to sense or perceive anything Void related.

*A light fade in the distance,*
*a great cacophony of sound*
*emanates from all around,*
*the Grand Host marches on!*

*– Prophetic ramblings from*
*the Oracles of Thas*







# Powers

Many Beings in Llyhn have extraordinary capabilities, such as being able to channel mystical energies, imbue the powers of the blood or utilize esoteric Void powers. Creatures from beyond the Veil are usually endowed with Powers beyond their Cosmic counterparts, but in Llyhn anything is possible and great power can be found in the most unlikely creature. There are three types of powers: Mysticism, Blood rituals and Void powers.

Each is separate and distinct from the other although similar effects can on occasion be made manifest when using the powers. Blood rituals deal with sacrificial divination, the application of boons and fortune as well as other disciplines of ceremonial blood rituals. Mystic powers are esoteric phenomena brought into existence purely through the will of a gifted or Voidmarked individual. While Void powers are generally only accessible to Daimons and other esoteric entities characters can obtain them through Void warping or by becoming enlightened. Void powers are further addressed in the chapters on character progression and Enlightenment.

The amount of points available for powers is determined by your distribution of points between abilities. Powers can often be improved upon or enhanced through in-game training and the expenditure of experience points. In most cases only the bonus from the power is added to action rolls.

| BLOOD RITUALS | COST |
|---|---|
| BLOODLETTING (INT) | 3(+) |
| SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION (INT/AWA) | 3(+) |
| BLOOD RITE | 1(+) |

| MYSTICISM | COST |
|---|---|
| FURORE/GNOSTIC | 3(+) |
| KNOWN PHENOMENON | 1 |
| SIGNATURE PHENOMENON | 3 |
| SPHERE OF FORCES | 1(+) |
| SPHERE OF LIFE | 1(+) |
| SPHERE OF MATTER | 1(+) |
| SPHERE OF MIND | 1(+) |
| SPHERE OF VOID | 1(+) |

## Blood Rituals

Blood Rituals are the practice of ceremonial sacrifice of living animals, beasts and sometimes even sentient or Daimonic beings. There are two main disciplines or practices within Blood Rituals. The first is bloodletting, in which the blood of a sacrifice is consumed or used for a baptism imbuing the recipient with boons or fortune extracted from the blood of the sacrifice. The second is the art of sacrificial divination; extispicy in which the entrails of a sacrifice are examined to provide answers for inquiries granting insight into secrets and enigmas.

### BLOODLETTING

The aspect of extracting power is known as the art of ritual bloodletting, a practice intended to increase the fortune of those for whom the ritual is performed.

It is believed that the essence of the sacrificial creature is passed on through a ritualistic and ceremonial consecration of its blood allowing hidden powers to be released and conferred to a recipient. A living creature is sacrificed, and the blood is consecrated, offered or ritually consumed, thereby conferring the innate powers of the blood to the recipient, granting a temporary ability, bonus or advantage. The consecration or offering often takes the form of baptism in blood, the drawing of symbols upon the body or the ingestion of the blood.

The rankings in bloodletting cost three (3) character points, and grants access to a specific set of capabilities. The initial ranking gives the character a limited capability for extracting power during a bloodletting ritual and imbuing him- or herself with it. As he or she progresses the boons can be conferred to others, and the character can draw on greater and more specific attributes from the blood.

A bloodletting ritual is made by making an Intellect roll with the added blood rite ranking against a difficulty determined by the potency of the sacrificial creature. If the roll equals or exceeds the difficulty, the ritual is a success, if the roll fails something went awry, and nothing happens while a critical failure causes a backlash.

### SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION

The use of sacrificial divination revolves around the examination of entrails and blood of a sacrificial animal to declare a response to an inquiry about supposed fortune, insight or providence. A question is put forward during the sacrificial rite and the entrails and blood-flows of the creature display a series of encouraging and discouraging properties indicating a positive or negative response. The more profound the question, the larger or more sophisticated the sacrificial animal must be to provide a clear answer, and occasionally there is no creature massive enough to give a proper basis for an answer. The future, however, is always unclear and wisdom granted through blood rituals may not be certain; as events unfold, fortunes change and so do the answers in sacrificial rites.

Each ranking of Sacrificial Divination also cost three (3) character points. The first ranking in sacrificial divination grants the practitioner fundamental knowledge of a few basic rituals and the ability to superficially read the signs in sacrificial divination. As the character gains further rankings, he or she can obtain increasingly detailed information as well as more precise answers to a wider range of inquiries.

A sacrificial divination ritual is made by making an Intellect or Awareness roll with the added blood rite ranking against a difficulty determined by the query posed. If the roll equals or exceeds the difficulty, the ritual is a success, if the roll fails something went awry, and nothing happens while a critical failure causes a backlash.

*Ziana has secretly been observing and dabbling with bloodletting, watching deranged prophets make ritual sacrifices and anoint their disciples to bestow boons and fortunes. We spend 3 points, granting Ziana one ranking in Bloodletting, which enables her to perform one Blood Rite per day.*

### BLOOD RITE

As the practitioner becomes more adept, he or she is able to perform more advanced and intricate rituals, drawing upon the gifts of the blood with increased efficiency. To represent this, characters can obtain ranks in blood rite, granting the practitioner greater insight into rituals and the ability to perform them at a higher level of mastery, adding a + 1 modifier to ritual rolls for both Sacrificial Divination and Bloodletting per ranking.

## Mysticism

There are beings born with extraordinary powers of the mind, beings who can make phenomena occur by sheer will and do things ordinary people cannot; these individuals are known as mystics. It is said that Mystic powers are related to the influence of Void and that there is a seed of the Void inherent in the Mystics allowing them to alter reality. Moreover, it is whispered that these powers are hazardous yet strangely compelling to those who know how to channel them.

Mystic powers allow a character to manifest inexplicable, wondrous and oftentimes quite dangerous phenomena. Individuals gifted with mystical powers usually display these abilities from birth although they may lie dormant, blooming at a later stage in a being's life. Mystics are, perhaps rightly, feared as their powers are wondrous, can manifest unbeknownst to those around them and subtly alter reality ever so slightly to affect events and outcomes as they see fit. While this is true, some mystics occasionally engage in more blatant displays of pure brute force such as tearing structures down by simply gesturing at them.

### BECOMING A MYSTIC

Manifesting mystic phenomena is a transcendent ability, which is inexplicable but seems to manifest in those who have somehow been "touched" by the Void, so only characters that are Voidmarked, are enlightened or have otherwise been affected by the Void can become mystics.

The player must spend three (3) points for a character to become a Mystic and must then chose which of the two paths of mysticism they adhere to. Some mystics harness their abilities through mental discipline, rigid self-control and subtle manipulation, gently coaxing the power – making their associated Trait Intellect - while others channel it intuitively; letting pure and un-tempered emotions fuel the raw power – making their associated Trait Willpower. Accordingly, the character must have either an Intellect or Willpower score of four or higher to become a mystic.

| PATH | COST | ASSOCIATED TRAIT | CAPABILITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| FURORE | 3(+) | Willpower | Add Willpower modifier to maximum effect ranking<br>Willpower modifier negates resistance |
| GNOSTIC | 3(+) | Intellect | Subtract Intellect modifier from calamity roll, effects are limited by Intellect modifier, may utilise meditation to reduce channelling difficulty |

During character creation each further Mystic path ranking cost an additional three (3) points and grants the character a +1 modifier when channelling, i.e. manifesting a phenomenon.

Those who use Willpower as their primary Trait for mysticism are known as Furores and channel their power as an intuitive outlet of emotional intensity. They tend to be untrained and cause more dramatic effects, focussing on blatant and straightforward displays of power rather than any refinement, as the passion fuelling the power is seldom delicate. As a result, they can channel more powerful phenomena than their sphere ranking indicates and push through resistance.

Characters who use Intellect as their primary mysticism Trait are known as Gnostics. They channel their power as a controlled act, subtly channelling and directing phenomena. These mystics are typically trained by a guru teaching them meditative rituals and other techniques helping them guide their powers. They are often stoic and composed, letting their intellectual capabilities guide subtle effects administered with precision and finesse. Consequently, they are restricted in the amount of power they can channel but are not affected as severely if the power spirals out of control; they employ techniques to reduce the strain and difficulty of channelling.

### MYSTIC SPHERES

Mysticism is divided into spheres and once the player has decided whether the character is a Furore or Gnostic, he or she must purchase Sphere(s) to gain the ability to manifest phenomena within each domain. There are five Spheres: Forces, Life, Matter, Mind and Void. Characters may acquire access to as many Spheres as the modifier score in their associated Trait. Example: Maheen is a Furore and has a Willpower score of 5 allowing him to acquire a maximum of two different spheres, as his Willpower modifier is +2. Similarly to acquiring skills, a ranking within a sphere costs one (1) point during character creation, and while each ranking does not grant roll modifiers it allows the character to manifest progressively more potent phenomena.

Only Voidmarked, enlightened or otherwise Void influenced characters may acquire Mystic powers.
The number of mystic spheres a character can acquire is limited by his or her Willpower or Intellect bonus.
Signature phenomena can only be chosen from known phenomena.



| SPHERES | COST | AREA |
|---|---|---|
| FORCES | 1(+) | Acceleration, gravity, momentum, kinetic energy, fire, heat, wind, light, darkness and so on |
| LIFE | 1(+) | Animation, organic life, healing, harm, metamorphosis, death, age, process of life and so on |
| MATTER | 1(+) | Lifeless material, alteration, earth, stone, metals, water, air and so on |
| MIND | 1(+) | Charm, delusion, domination, insanity, fear, inspiration, hallucination, influence and so on |
| VOID | 1(+) | Metaphysical, chaos, space, creation, change, insight, chance, aura, essence and so on |

### MANIFESTING PHENOMENA

Much like using skills, manifesting a mystical phenomenon requires a roll to succeed. A phenomenon created by the player is composed of a list of graded criteria such as range, duration, determining its effect and difficulty. How potent and powerful the mystic can make a phenomenon depends on the ranking he or she has within a sphere; the higher the sphere ranking the higher the grade of effect which can be manifested. When manifesting a phenomenon, its potency determines the difficulty of the roll required.
When attempting to manifest a phenomenon the character makes a roll against the difficulty, adding his or her associated Trait modifier as well as his or her ranking as Furore or Gnostic to the total. Each ranking grants a +1 modifier.

### IMPROVISED PHENOMENA

Most phenomena are improvised, meaning that the Mystic decides on the spur of the moment which phenomenon she wants to manifest, and then tries to accomplish this. The difficulty of such a manifestation is the combined grades of all the criteria and effects.

### KNOWN PHENOMENA

Some Mystics, however, have phenomena that they replicate or use often. These manifestations are called known phenomena; the mystic has practised how to produce a specific effect and therefore has to use less concentration to achieve the result. To acquire a known phenomenon the player must choose a set of criteria and effects, note these and spend one (1) character point. Henceforth when the character attempt to manifest this specific phenomenon the difficulty is one (1) lower than it would usually be.

## SIGNATURE PHENOMENA

Some mystics spend years perfecting, memorising and accomplishing particular intended effects - practising and refining specific manifestations, known as signature phenomena. These have almost become an intrinsic part of the mystic, and she can easily channel her mental energies into achieving the effect and with less strain than either a known or improvised phenomenon.

Players can choose known phenomena and make them signature phenomena. This costs a further three (3) characters points and lowers the difficulty for manifesting this particular phenomenon by three compared to the equivalent improvised powers. Detailed rules of how to channel powers are included in the Rules Section.

| PHENOMENON TYPE | POINT COST |
|---|---|
| IMPROVISED PHENOMENON | - |
| KNOWN PHENOMENON | 1 |
| SIGNATURE PHENOMENON | 3 |

## CALAMITIES

Mysticism allows a character to change the reality of the Cosmos according to their will but tampering with the fabric of reality is not without risk, and sometimes the Mystic loses control. When control is lost a calamity occurs; the mystic power echoes with the Void - essentially turning the Mystic into a conduit of chaos and alteration with the forces unleashed taking on a life of their own. While not all calamities are harmful, they cause strange occurrences and calamities are also increasingly potent in worlds where the influence of the Void is particularly intense.

*"Karish, thank the Gods! Have you seen anyone else?"*
*"Sirik, it is good to see you too. Sharok was the first to fall, something ravenous and grotesque is walking the halls. I thought we would be safe on this shard, but something has found us."*
*"What have you seen of the thing?"*
*"I've seen a fat, slovenous hulk moving about in the dark, while I was skulking around looking for any of the others, and I cannot find my wife or children! Have you seen them?"*
*"No, I haven't, I'm sorry to say that maybe we should think about getting out of here, do you have any idea what this thing is or what's going on?"*
*"Oh, you don't know, do you? It's the beginning, Sirik..."*
*"The beginning? What do you mean? The beginning of what?"*
*"Of everything..."*
*"Karish...?! what is happening to you...? oh Gods! No no no! Karish please nooooo!"*

## VOID POWERS

These esoteric powers can only be obtained through Void distortion and enlightenment, not by spending points, and are dealt with in the corresponding chapters.



# Skills

Skills are learned abilities, which are used when characters attempt to perform actions in the game. This chapter describes the skills your character can possess; how they are acquired; how they work and how they are developed through the game. An enjoyable aspect of campaign-style role-playing is character development and improving on already acquired skills as well as expanding upon a character's skill repertoire.

Your character is assumed to know fundamental skills such as the ability to light a fire, tie a basic knot, simple cooking et cetera and these do not cost any points to obtain nor should they be listed on your character sheet. The skills you must use character points to acquire are those, which define your character's abilities and typically require training or education to learn, such as fighting, investigating and so on. The standard skill definitions are relatively broad and are meant to illustrate that the character is familiar with the general understanding of a given field. As characters develop their skills during the game higher levels of mastery and specialisation can be obtained. See rules for specialisation below and examples in the skill description.

## ACQUIRING SKILLS

All characters begin with a predetermined number of character points with which to purchase skills during character creation. Skills generally cost one point to acquire and then an additional point per ranking. Each ranking grants a +1 modifier to skill-rolls, increasing the chance of success for your character when she utilises the skill. A few skills are harder to master and therefore more expensive to obtain; these are marked as 3(+) because you must pay a three (3) point cost to acquire them and for each additional ranking. Each skill is associated with one or several Traits depending on how they can be used. The associated Trait is the determining factor for the basic ability a character has within that given area.

Example: Hashan wants to have the Herbalism skill. To acquire the skill costs one point and for each additional ranking, one further point must be spent. Hashan wants a ranking of three giving him a +3 modifier to all rolls involving the skill. For this, he must spend a total of four points.



## SKILL RANKING

Skills are ranked from zero (0) to twelve (12) with each ranking indicating the character's proficiency, ability and knowledge in the given skill. In game terms a ranking of 0 means that the character has a rudimentary understanding of the skill-subject and will not suffer any roll penalties when attempting actions involving the skill. Newly acquired skills always have a ranking of 0 and as characters increase their skill rankings higher modifiers are applied to action rolls involving that skill. Each skill ranking after 0 corresponds with a +1 modifier to action rolls; for instance characters with a skill ranking of three in acrobatics gain +3 to action rolls when attempting acrobatic feats.

| RANKING | MODIFIER | DESIGNATION | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| - | -3 | UNTRAINED | The character is completely unfamiliar with the skill |
| 0 | 0 | DABBLER | The character is vaguely familiar with the fundamentals... |
| 1 | +1 | INITIATE | Can accomplish a few basic feats without instruction... |
| 2 | +2 | NOVICE | The character knows some rudimentary techniques and basic theory |
| 3 | +3 | APPRENTICE | The character has mastered the basic techniques and principles |
| 4 | +4 | PRACTICED | The character has a solid understanding of the practice or methodology |
| 5 | +5 | LEARNED | Comprehensive understanding and thorough technique mastery |
| 6 | +6 | ADEPT | Exceptional understanding of the field and masterly technique |
| 7 | +7 | SCHOLAR | The character is an authority figure within the field |
| 8 | +8 | SAVANT | The character's mastery of the skill is widely known |
| 9 | +9 | MASTER | People seek out the character for guidance |
| 10 | +10 | ARCHON | The character is seen as one of the greats of their time |
| 11 | +11 | PRINCIPAL | One of the greatest since the dawn of time |
| 12 | +12 | LEGEND | There can be only one |

## USING SKILLS

All skills are tied to one or more Traits, meaning that both the skill ranking bonus and the appropriate Trait modifier are applied when calculating the result of action rolls. In exceptional cases, a player or the Arbiter can argue that a non-listed Trait is applicable for specific skill-rolls. This should be allowed if the reasoning behind the argument is valid.

There are many ways skills can be used during gameplay, and often different skills can be used in a given situation to achieve comparable results. For instance, during a trading situation the Commerce skill would be the obvious choice when a character attempts to negotiate a good deal, but utilising other skillsets could be just as useful. A sly character could use the Subterfuge skill to cheat the merchant into lowering the price. The Socialise skill would be useful to engage the merchant in friendly banter, making him more inclined to offer a good deal. If the deal involves a trade or craft with which the character is familiar, the corresponding trade skill could be helpful to establish a reasonable deal. A thuggish character could even use the Intimidation skill to bully the merchant into a favourable price, although this could potentially lead to less than fortunate consequences.
This illustrates a simple situation, which - for the imaginative player - could be approached in five different ways disclosed above using different skills. A competent Arbiter is open to different approaches and uses consequences to further the story - a merchant who has been cheated may become hostile, one who's been intimidated may become resentful, one who's been socialised with may introduce friends; merchants talk to each other, so use of an approach against one may have broader implications as well.

## CRAFTING SKILLS

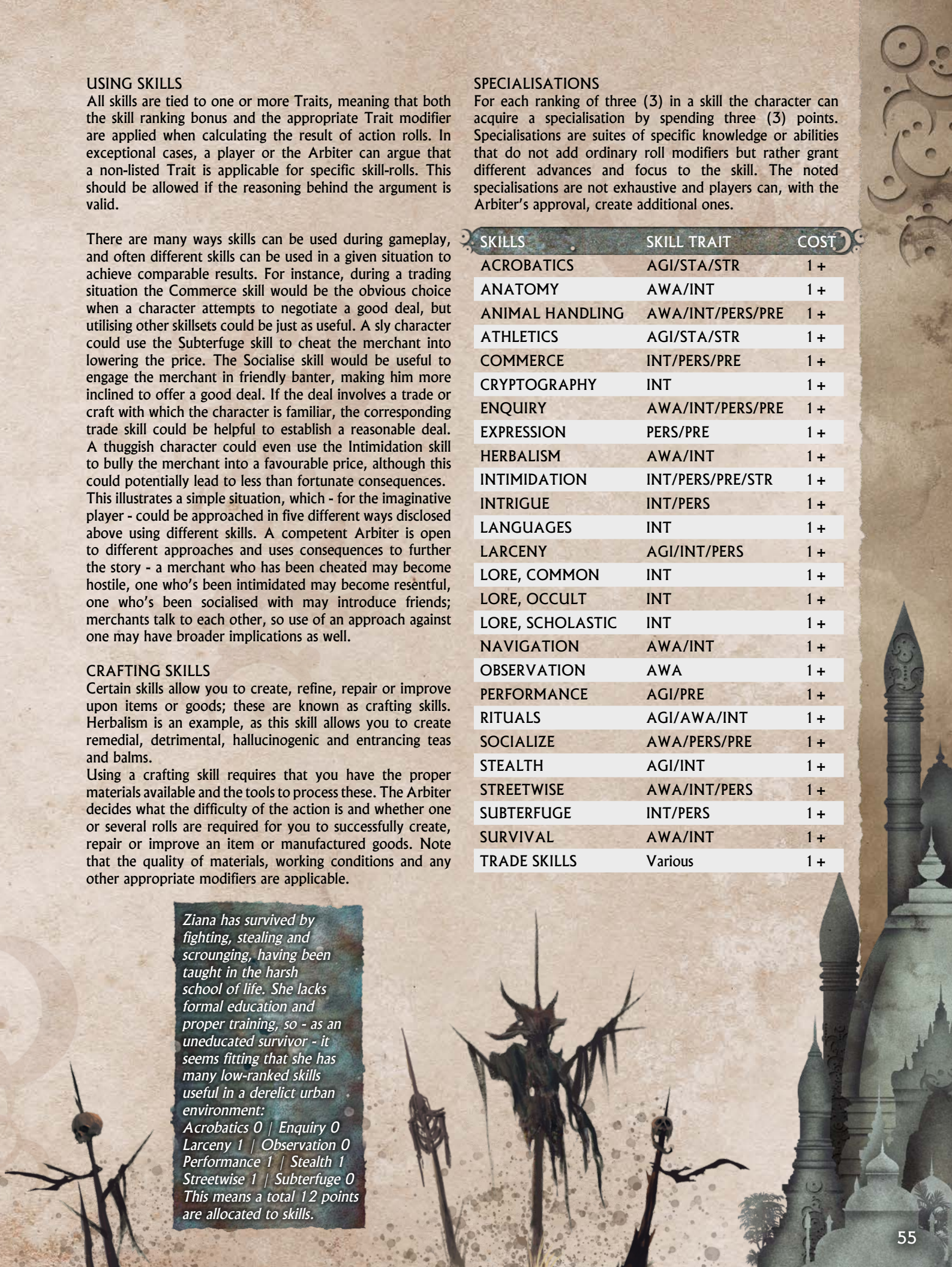
Certain skills allow you to create, refine, repair or improve upon items or goods; these are known as crafting skills. Herbalism is an example, as this skill allows you to create remedial, detrimental, hallucinogenic and entrancing teas and balms.
Using a crafting skill requires that you have the proper materials available and the tools to process these. The Arbiter decides what the difficulty of the action is and whether one or several rolls are required for you to successfully create, repair or improve an item or manufactured goods. Note that the quality of materials, working conditions and any other appropriate modifiers are applicable.

## SPECIALISATIONS

For each ranking of three (3) in a skill the character can acquire a specialisation by spending three (3) points. Specialisations are suites of specific knowledge or abilities that do not add ordinary roll modifiers but rather grant different advances and focus to the skill. The noted specialisations are not exhaustive and players can, with the Arbiter's approval, create additional ones.

| SKILLS | SKILL TRAIT | COST |
|---|---|---|
| ACROBATICS | AGI/STA/STR | 1 + |
| ANATOMY | AWA/INT | 1 + |
| ANIMAL HANDLING | AWA/INT/PERS/PRE | 1 + |
| ATHLETICS | AGI/STA/STR | 1 + |
| COMMERCE | INT/PERS/PRE | 1 + |
| CRYPTOGRAPHY | INT | 1 + |
| ENQUIRY | AWA/INT/PERS/PRE | 1 + |
| EXPRESSION | PERS/PRE | 1 + |
| HERBALISM | AWA/INT | 1 + |
| INTIMIDATION | INT/PERS/PRE/STR | 1 + |
| INTRIGUE | INT/PERS | 1 + |
| LANGUAGES | INT | 1 + |
| LARCENY | AGI/INT/PERS | 1 + |
| LORE, COMMON | INT | 1 + |
| LORE, OCCULT | INT | 1 + |
| LORE, SCHOLASTIC | INT | 1 + |
| NAVIGATION | AWA/INT | 1 + |
| OBSERVATION | AWA | 1 + |
| PERFORMANCE | AGI/PRE | 1 + |
| RITUALS | AGI/AWA/INT | 1 + |
| SOCIALIZE | AWA/PERS/PRE | 1 + |
| STEALTH | AGI/INT | 1 + |
| STREETWISE | AWA/INT/PERS | 1 + |
| SUBTERFUGE | INT/PERS | 1 + |
| SURVIVAL | AWA/INT | 1 + |
| TRADE SKILLS | Various | 1 + |

*Ziana has survived by fighting, stealing and scrounging, having been taught in the harsh school of life. She lacks formal education and proper training, so - as an uneducated survivor - it seems fitting that she has many low-ranked skills useful in a derelict urban environment:*
*Acrobatics 0 | Enquiry 0*
*Larceny 1 | Observation 0*
*Performance 1 | Stealth 1*
*Streetwise 1 | Subterfuge 0*
*This means a total 12 points are allocated to skills.*



## Skills List

ACROBATICS (AGI/STA/STR): Acrobatics is the art of movement involving difficult feats of balance and nimbleness. This skill can be used when a character attempts to do somersaults, back handsprings, scaling steep surfaces and ropes, balancing acts and various leaps and jumps. The more complex the acrobatic feat, the harder the difficulty. Acrobatics can be used during combat to perform manoeuvres such as leaping over opponents and disengaging a foe by doing a backwards somersault. Acrobatics can also be used for body contortion, which can be highly useful if a character is tied up or being grappled. If acrobatics is used in combat, an acrobatic feat is a full action like any other combat action. Acrobatics are particularly useful for performers and temple dancers.
Suggested specialisations: Tightrope walking and multitasking - the ability to perform another action while engaged in acrobatics, such as juggling while hanging on a trapeze.

ANATOMY (AWA/INT): Anatomy is the understanding of how bodies function. The anatomy skill has two main foci: One is treating injuries, alleviating and curing diseases, setting bones as well as performing surgery. The other is using the knowledge for rudimentary or detrimental purposes; knowing how various substances affect the body and so on or effectively incapacitating or hurting others. As anatomy differs the player must choose a species that the skill applies to; they may attempt to use the skill for other species, but suffer a penalty depending on the similarity or divergence between the species. Characters versed in anatomy may apply their INT modifier as a bonus to damage rolls and other rolls benefitting from an understanding of how bodies function. Anatomy is useful for physicians, shamans, herbalists, scholars and mercenaries.
Suggested specialisations: Surgery, bone setting and torture.

ANIMAL HANDLING (AWA/INT/PERS/PRE): The ability to herd, handle and otherwise control animals. The character is able to soothe, excite and direct the actions of animals. Although domesticated animals such as Akopi, Marud oxen, et cetera will more likely respond to commands, there is still a chance to influence the actions of wild animals. With this skill controlling draught animals under normal conditions does not require a roll. If the animals are untamed or otherwise unstable as draught animals – due to skittishness or the like – a skill-roll is necessary. Steering through difficult terrain, performing hazardous manoeuvres, driving at excessive speed or if involved in combat also require a skill-roll.
The Animal Handling skill is particularly useful for charioteers, caravan drovers, farmers, snake charmers and other animal trainers.
Suggested specialisations: Animal training, riding, coachman, charioteer and herding. The riding specialisation allows a character to perform other actions while riding without the usual penalties.

ATHLETICS (AGI/STA/STR): The athletics skill covers a wide range of physical capabilities such as running, jumping, swimming, climbing and throwing. This skill is used for any action, which requires extensive or extraordinary physical exertion. Which trait is applicable for athletic activities depends entirely on the feat being attempted: A long march action may rely on Stamina where leaping between rooftops would apply the Strength Trait.
This skill is particularly useful for hunters, mercenaries, rangers and messengers.
Suggested specialisations: Throwing, running, swimming, climbing and jumping. The Throwing specialisation allows a character a + 1 to the throwing range multiplier.

COMMERCE (INT/PERS/PRE): Commerce is the ability to trade, appraise, buy and sell goods. In addition to bartering characters can use the commerce skill for the following actions: Evaluating trade routes, identifying potential markets and buyers, negotiating trading agreements and appraising items. Successful bartering confers a 10% price decrease per roll difference (up to 30%) rather than the customary 5%.
Suggested specialisations: Fields of expertise such as spices, slaves, et cetera.



CRYPTOGRAPHY (INT): Cryptography deals with the understanding and sometimes practical use of covert communication. This skill allows the character to detect, decipher or convey secret codes, symbols and signs when they are encountered. Using obscure methods to convey threats, warnings and other information are common among various sects and others who wish to keep their communication secret from outsiders. Covert information can take many forms; from hand signals and body language to obscure symbols and sophisticated codes. The sects in Llyhn often use written symbols and codes - which are incomprehensible to others - as a means of communication. Assassins and thieves working in unison often use hand signals and other gesticulation to communicate silently and unnoticeably (commonly called the Thieves nod). Clothing style and wearing specific garments may also transmit information about the intent and purpose of one's presence. The character has insight into the general field of cryptography and can decipher basic messages and occasionally discover hidden meanings in observed phenomena and writing. Specialisation is needed to be able to detect, understand or inscribe/give secret information from/to a particular group.
Suggested specialisations: Sects and cults, dead languages, the thieves nod, cultural jargon, secret tongue - The secret tongue is a self-invented code language only known to the character and those individuals she chooses to induct – these characters must also spend points to obtain this skill and speciality. A secret tongue can either be an entirely new language or a type of code integrated into an existing language making only the initiated able to detect and comprehend it.

ENQUIRY (AWA/INT/PERS/PRE): This skill involves investigating through asking questions, doing research, finding key people with relevant information and appraising the value and truthfulness of discovered information. Knowing whom to ask and the right questions to ask is vital - the enquiry skill allows prompt, thorough and systematic investigations. The enquiry skill works differently in various scenarios: Firstly, it is the ability to get basic information about local activities by picking up rumours, information and the occasional secret through casual conversation and

maybe buying a few pitchers of kelp wine. Secondly, it is the ability to make a focused search into a specified topic by doing research, finding key people with relevant information, studying and perhaps – if all else fails - the occasional interrogation.
Enquiry is useful for guardsmen, clerks, scholars and thieves.
Suggested specialisations: Interrogation – gaining information from unwilling subjects without resorting to intimidation or direct violence. Casual conversation - the art of tricking a person into giving up his secrets without realising it.

EXPRESSION (PERS/PRE): Expression is the art of using oratory abilities to make an impression on someone. Delivering a message in a clear and comprehensive manner is a craft - doing it with style is an art. Expression is such an art.
Expression is applicable when characters want to convince someone to do something or influence their point of view.
Expression increases the ability to encourage a particular belief or action from another being. It is used when a character wishes to guide people toward the embracing of an idea or attitude by rational and symbolic means. Street preachers, poets, delegates, lawmakers and scholars often use this skill.
Suggested specialisations: Public speaking and diplomacy - the subtle and skilful handling of negotiations, alliances, treaties and agreements as well as the art and practice of using tact and conversation to resolve conflicts.

HERBALISM (AWA/INT): Herbalism is the knowledge of herbs, fungi and other plants with nutritional, aphrodisiacal, hallucinogenic, remedial or detrimental properties. Herbalism allows a character to identify and distinguish between numerous plants and furthermore to curate and prepare these to create various balms, teas, ointments, poisons, healing salves, herbal incense and the like. Tea rituals and herbal baths are an integral part of the cultural customs in Llyhn, making herbalists valuable people. Herblore is particularly important for healers, assassins, cooks, tea infusers and celebrants.
Suggested specialisations: Poisons, remedial herbs, tea, spices and balms.

INTIMIDATION (INT/PERS/PRE/STR): Intimidation is employed when a character wants to coerce, discourage, impede or simply frighten people. The purpose of intimidation is to compel someone to do what you want by using direct or subtle threats. You need only make a skill-roll if you have a specific intent with a threat. If an intimidation attempt is based on subtle means such as blackmail, it is possible – at the Arbiter's discretion – to use Traits, such as Persuasion, as bases for the action. This skill is especially useful to thugs, guards and occasionally diplomats.
Suggested specialisations: The Silent treatment – subtle intimidation using only threatening demeanour and menacing stares allows the character to coerce people without anyone else noticing. The silent treatment is based on Presence rather.

INTRIGUE (INT/PERS): Intrigue is the clandestine and sometimes illicit social interaction between persons. This skill grants the ability to better discover secret agendas and craftily achieve your own (usually sinister) ends through subtle persuasion of people. This skill is particularly useful for the aristocracy, lawmakers and underworld personas. The knowledge is generally applied to behaviour within civic administration but can also relate to all sentient beings' group interactions.
Suggested specialisations: Politics - knowledge of the processes involved with groups of people make decisions in society, thereby increasing the chance of getting your own way by using the system to achieve your goals.

LANGUAGES (INT): Most beings in Llyhn speak some form of the dialect known as Darij, but most of the residents – and all otherworlders – also have a native language.
Characters are always able to speak low-Darij - the principal tongue of the common and low-castes - to communicate with the residents in Llyhn. Languages of other species - including High-Darij and Akkadian - can be purchased and give the character the ability to understand and speak those languages. The literacy specialisation can be bought for three points without acquiring the language skill if a player wants his or her character to be able to read and scribble the pictographic writings of low-Darij.
Languages are useful for merchants, scholars, clerks and other people who deal with otherworlders on a regular basis.
Suggested specialisations: Literacy – the ability to read and write. If the character speaks Akkadian he or she would be eligible to be literate in cuneiform.

LARCENY (AGI/INT/PERS): Theft and robbery are everyday happenings in Llyhn, and most residents in the slum-district Kimah and other poor neighbourhoods are at least familiar with the larceny skill.
Larceny encompasses most skills employed by the thieving and pilfering gits of Llyhn: the art of lock-picking, setting and disarming traps, hiding stolen goods, picking pockets, swindling, et cetera. Some actions, like picking a lock require the proper tools where others just need opportunity. Most actions involving larceny only require one skill-roll, whereas an elaborate swindle act will involve several rolls. Larceny is useful to pick-pockets, cat-thieves and beggars.
Suggested specialisations: Lock-picking, traps, games (swindling) and picking pockets – granting the ability to for instance pilfer items while conversing with the victim.

LORE, COMMON (INT): Common lore is basic knowledge about a chosen subject, a culture, species or world – and this skill gives insight into the subject matter such as habits, traditions, religious practices and other noteworthy information related to the chosen subject. Common lore is usually acquired through interaction with the given subject, not through scholarly studies. For instance, common lore about the Great Empire of Ogé would grant the character knowledge about the societal structure, the culture and traditions in Ogé civilisation, familiarity with the civil war and subsequent exile of the Virgin Empress and the prominent karmic belief of the species. Lore about the underworld of Llyhn would grant understanding of organised crime, the thieves' code, division of the city between the gangs, popular hangouts, well-known contacts and smugglers as well as the unofficial hierarchy.
Suggested specialisations: Any subject – granting specific insight into a niche area of the subject.

LORE, OCCULT (INT): Which horrors inhabit the eternal expanse of the Void, what grotesque rituals are performed by screaming priestesses to appease the mad apparitions of their mindless masters and to serve which bizarre purpose do the Yiagh'Zii perform their deranged dances on pernicious peaks?
Occult lore is knowledge with dangerous subject matter; the understanding of topics which make lesser beings lose their minds. Characters with this sort of insight have acquired it from old dusty tablets, listening to the ramblings of the deranged and fanatical prophets or by the first-hand experience of horrendous practices, creatures or places.
This skill can grant insight into blood rituals, entities of the Void and other abhorrent or occult subjects and practices with which the residents of Llyhn are occasionally faced. Voidfarers, scholars and devout servants of secret cults mostly possess occult lore.
Suggested specialisations: Void entities and specific cults.

LORE, SCHOLASTIC (INT): This skill grants insight into academic tradition, method and knowledge. People versed in academic disciplines have studied extensively and have a deep understanding of the intricacies and historical significance of their chosen subject, such as religion, law, philosophy or warfare. Thus - in case of overlapping topics - scholastic lore is much more detailed and comprehensive than common lore. Where a character versed in common lore would know when certain battles took place during a campaign and who won, an individual versed in academic lore would also understand the cause of the conflict, which tactics were employed and the historical aftermath of the war. This skill gives the character insight into the past, to better understand the current state of things. Beast lore would deal with the knowledge about animals both wild and domesticated, giving insight into type distinction, behavioural-, eating- and breeding-habits as well as the typical habitats of animals and beasts. Religious lore grants profound insight into religious and spiritual scriptures, practices and rituals, the layout of widespread temples and other sanctities as well as knowledge of the properties of the divine beings themselves. Lore of warfare would confer knowledge of the doctrines of war, troop deployment and practical understanding of tactics and strategy as well as detailed knowledge about numerous significant battles. Scholastic lore is particularly useful for philosophers, scholars, tacticians and lawmakers.
Suggested specialisations: Antiquarian studies, academic writing, lecturing and specific subjects.

NAVIGATION (AWA/INT): The navigation skill is employed whenever a character tries to read a map, make use of directions or use known landmarks to find her way in unfamiliar territory or under unusual circumstances. Navigation can also help pinpoint a current position with high accuracy if a visible point of reference such as heavenly constellations or similar is available. Furthermore, the navigation skill is used when trying to charter a course, calculate routes, estimating travelling time and producing maps. This skill is useful for Scouts, cartographers and seafarers.
Suggested specialisations: Orienteering and cartography.

OBSERVATION (AWA): Your character has been trained in the art of scrutiny and examination, with few details escaping her penetrating gaze. The observation skill can be used for a variety of purposes such as searching an area to find concealed objects or traps, following tracks, noticing out-of-place behaviour and for general detection. When the observation skill is used you must determine whether you have a specific focus or simply look for something interesting or amiss in your current situation/location. The difficulty of the roll is determined by circumstances such as illumination and visibility of the speaker. This ability is of significant use to hunters, guards, diplomats and thieves.
Suggested specialisations: Scrutiny – this specialisation enables a character to discern and assess behaviour to determine motivation, deception and the personality of people. This skill will not give insight into another's mind, but it will provide an indication about their motives. Lip reading – this allow characters to "eavesdrop" from afar, following conversations without hearing the words. The character needs to be able to see the speaker's lips clearly and understand the language spoken for the attempt to have any chance of success. If the speaker is directing her communication at the lip reader, no roll is required.

PERFORMANCE (AGI/PRE): The ability to perform in front of a crowd by using tricks or other feats to entertain them. The Puppeteer, musician and street actor all have this skill. A basic performance art must be chosen when acquiring this skill. The possible applications of performance include but are not limited to:
Drama: Acting, mime and puppetry.
Trickery: Sleight of hand, street magic, fortune telling, fire-breathing and ventriloquism.
Music: Dancing, musical instrument and singing.
Oratory: Storytelling, poetry and prose.
Corporal: Clowning, juggling and contortion.
This skill is essential for buskers, bards and minstrels.
Suggested specialisations: Any specific performance art or musical instrument.

RITUALS (AGI/AWA/INT): Who would dare offend the ancestors with a poorly performed sacrifice, which Deity would look kindly upon a worshipper who does not know the proper honours to pay and what courtesan could ever hope of being employed if she does not know the appropriate rituals of her trade? This skill grants insight and the ability to identify and understand ceremonies and rituals involved in for instance ancestral worship, temple procedures and other aspects of daily life in Llyhn. For characters to be able to perform rituals and ceremonies, they must specialise in those specific types of ritualistic practices, such as sacrifices, temple dancing and so on. This skill is valuable for courtesans, scholars, blood ritualists, ancestral celebrants and temple dancers.
Suggested specialisations: Channelling rituals, blood rites, temple dances, ceremonial sacrifice, deity worship, courtesan training and tea ceremony. Channelling Rituals – this specialisation allows a Gnostic character to apply a +1 modifier to all channelling and to reduce the channelling time by one step. Ritualistic sacrifice - practitioners of Blood Rituals may add a +1 modifier to ritual rolls. Courtesan rituals - this specialisation enables the character to perform and practice the rituals of a courtesan in Llyhn.

SOCIALIZE (AWA/PERS/PRE): Social competence can be as imperative to character survival as the ability to swing a scimitar. The socialise skill confers the ability to effortlessly mingle and partake in social situations while steering conversations, subtly influencing the mood or otherwise pushing an agenda. The socialise skill provides the habits necessary for acting and participating in society in keeping with moral norms, attitudes, values, motives and social roles. This skill is especially practical for delegates, spies, aristocrats, and diplomats.
Suggested specialisations: Etiquette, tavern chatter, high caste conversation and low Caste babble.

STEALTH (AGI/INT): The ability to move undetected, hiding and otherwise avoiding notice. To successfully stay undetected suitable terrain, objects or conditions - such as the cover of darkness - must be present. This skill is used when your character attempts to blend into a crowd, shadow someone, hide from prying eyes or cover her tracks from a pursuer. Stealth actions are usually contested with the opposing individual using his Awareness as the basis. This skill is particularly useful to scouts, thieves and assassins.
Suggested specialisations: Blending – this specialisation enables a character to easily disappear in a crowd, adopting the gait, posture and semblance of the surrounding people. Obscure tracks – this specialisation enables the character to completely remove tracks or to misdirect anyone who might pursue them.

STREETWISE (AWA/INT/PERS): Streetwise entails having the knowledge and shrewd resourcefulness needed to survive in the rough streets of an urban environment. The streetwise skill can be used to identify likely cooperative individuals and whom to avoid, which areas of a city to steer clear of and where opportunity may be found. Streetwise gives insight and ability to handle gangs, thugs and street-rats as well as the jargon and behaviour necessary to avoid a slit throat. Street wisdom is useful for thugs, thieves, beggars and others who reside in or frequently visit rough, urban environments.
Suggested specialisations: Back-alley dealing and smuggling.

SUBTERFUGE (INT/PERS): Subterfuge is used when your character intentionally attempts to deceive someone or misrepresent the true nature of an activity or object. This skill should be used if your character wants to mislead people, create forgeries and disguises. The time and effort needed to create disguises and forgeries depend on the complexity and level of detail you want to apply to the task. Proper materials must be available, and a place to work is also essential. It is possible to masquerade as almost anything with vaguely the same body-structure as your character; opposite gender, another species or a specific person are all possibilities although they are quite difficult to achieve. This skill is useful for con artists, thieves and spies.
Suggested specialisations: Disguises – this specialisation enables the character to create viable disguises with few materials or with extreme accuracy. Forgery – allow characters to create counterfeits almost undetectable from the genuine article.

SURVIVAL (AWA/INT): This skill covers a profound understanding of nature, flora, fauna, weather phenomena and the various aptitudes needed to survive in the wild. This includes the ability to create shelter, forage, fish and hunt, ascertaining safe sleeping locations and so on. Additionally, survival enables characters to find accessible trails and quick passage when travelling in natural habitats.
Suggested specialisations: Particular environments and climates.

TRADE SKILLS (varies): This skill grants the character proficiency within a given craft or trade. He or she knows the theory as well as the practical application of the chosen trade and is able to make a living from it. When acquiring this skill, you must decide which specific craft you want. Most residents in Llyhn have at least a basic understanding of a trade; it is the profession, which provides their livelihood. Trades can be used in various ways: To work using your trade and thus making a salary (one skill-roll), for crafting, repairing or improving items (usually several skill-rolls), if you want to use your knowledge about the trade such as when identifying the origin of a specific item, evaluating its quality, explaining the best application of a given tool, et cetera. A specific trade must be chosen either from the list below or as agreed with the Arbiter.
Agriculture: Knowledge of growing crops, farming and tending livestock.
Alchemy: The practice of enriching, maturing, refining and coalescing natural materials to obtain useful resources.
Armourer: The ability to create, repair, improve and evaluate amour.
Artistic: The ability to produce works of art by painting, writing, composing, sculpturing or carving.
Blacksmith: The ability to create tools and items from iron and other metals.
Bowyer: The ability to create, repair and improve upon bows and arrows.
Brewing: The knowledge about and ability to brew beer and other alcoholic beverages.
Carpentry: The ability to do woodworking, build houses, wagons, etc.
Cooking: The knowledge about food and the ability to create flavourful meals.
Engineering: Knowledge of designing and building land-based structures and apparatus' such as houses, waterwheels, ballistae and so on.
Fishing: The ability to fish using nets, hooks, spears or any other applicable method.
Hunting: The ability to hunt game and fowls using bow, spear, snares or any other appropriate method.
Jeweller: The ability to create, repair and evaluate jewellery.
Leatherworking: the ability to create items in leather, such as clothing, armour, footwear, saddles, etc.
Masonry: The ability to build stone structures.
Mining: The ability to spot possible mining locations and supervise mining activities once a mine has been set up.
Sailing: The ability to control and manage water going vessels.
Shipwright: Knowledge of designing and building boats and ships.
Tailoring: The ability to design, sew and embroider any clothing or textile.
Weaving: The ability to design and weave and repair garments, draperies, carpets and tapestries.
Weaponsmith: The ability to create, repair and improve metal weapons.
The trade skill is particularly useful for craftsman, labourers and slaves.
Suggested specialisations: Jeweller and weaponsmith.

| COMBAT SKILLS | COST |
|---|---|
| AXES | 1 + |
| BLADE WEAPONS | 1 + |
| BLUNT WEAPONS | 1 + |
| BOWS | 1 + |
| DEFENCE | 3 + |
| DODGE | 1 + |
| DUAL-WIELDING | 1 + |
| FLEXIBLE WEAPONS | 1 + |
| POLEARMS | 1 + |
| PICK AXES | 1 + |
| SHIELDS | 1 + |
| SMALL BLADE WEAPONS | 1 + |
| THROWN WEAPONS | 1 + |
| UNARMED | 1 + |

*Although Ziana has struggled in her young life and has had to learn to fight if needed, she is not well-versed in combat. She knows how to wield a dagger and sling to fend off assailants, but little else: Small blade weapons 1 as well as Thrown weapons and slings 0, for a total of 3 points on combat skills.*



AXES: An axe is a blade mounted on a shaft borne in one or two hands. Characters versed in this skill are able to effectively wield all manners of battle-axes, hatchets and other varieties of short- to medium-shafted axes. The ranking in this skill is added to any attack rolls using axes or similar weapons.

BLADE WEAPONS: Weapons consisting of a blade with a handle used for thrusting and slicing. Swords, saifs and scimitars are examples of blade weapons. This skill allows a character to use all manners of swords. Add the ranking in this skill to any sword attack rolls.

BLUNT WEAPONS: This skill encompasses short shaft-mounted bludgeoning weaponry such as hammers, maces, mauls and clubs. The ranking in this skill is added to any attack rolls using blunt weapons.

BOWS: A weapon made from a curved piece of wood, bone or similar material joined at the ends by a taut string; used to propel arrows. Your ability to fire and hit with all manners of missile weapons such as bows. Add your ranking in this skill to missile attack rolls.

DEFENCE: The capacity to avoid being hit by an opponent is fundamental in a violent Cosmos. This skill permits characters to increase their Defence Value (DV) by one (1) point per ranking, making them difficult to hit and injure.

DODGE: This skill enables a character to dodge incoming attacks or impacts. See Combat Manoeuvres. The dodge skill can likewise be used in non-combat situations by characters trying to avoid collisions. Dodge is only applicable in close combat.

DUAL-WIELDING: This skill allows a combatant to wield an additional weapon, shield or other item with less penalties than normally applicable. Fighting concurrently with two weapons or a weapon and shield adds a -3 modifier to the primary hand weapon and a -6 modifier to the off-hand weapon. Each ranking of dual-wielding reduces this modifier by one. This skill is also applicable to simultaneous non-combat actions. A character with a dual-wielding ranking of one (1) would reduce the penalties to -2/-5 and so forth. Note that ranks in this skill can never become positive modifiers, only negate penalties. This reduction of penalties also applies to creatures with more than two arms.

FLEXIBLE WEAPONS: This skill grants proficiency to use all segmented weapons consisting of two or more parts joined by a flexible link, such as flails, whips and so on. Add the ranking in this skill to any attack rolls for flexible weapons.

POLEARMS: Blunt, bladed and pointed weapons mounted on long shafts for extended range, including staffs, spears, glaives, halberds and such. Add the ranking in this skill to any polearm attack rolls.

PICK AXES: Weapons with a pointed blade mounted perpendicular on a short shaft, often used against armoured opponents due to armour-piercing properties. Pick axes include the crowbill, kama and similar weapons. The skill ranking is added to attack rolls.

SHIELDS: While using the defensive capabilities of a shield a combatant suffers -3 penalty to all combat manoeuvres. The shield skill allows a character to reduce this penalty. A character with a skill ranking of one would reduce the penalty to -2, a ranking of 2 would reduce the penalty to -1, et cetera. In addition to this, the shield skill enables a character to perform a block action with the shield and even using it for attacking opponents as a combat manoeuvre with the skill ranking is added to the rolls.

SMALL BLADE WEAPONS: The most common tool and personal weapon are small blades such as daggers, knives, punching daggers and the like. This skill allows characters to fight with all types of small blades in close combat adding the skill ranking to attack rolls.

THROWN WEAPONS: Your ability to throw small weapons such as darts, throwing axes and rocks, as well as using slings and other small propelled weapons. Add the ranking in this skill to attack rolls of throwing weapons. Although the skill does not apply to item not designed for throwing it reduce penalties when throwing improvised weaponry. For instance, Sharsh decides to throw a chair at an opponent, which ordinarily induces a -3 penalty. As Sharsh has a ranking of two in Thrown weapons he can reduce the penalty to -1 as a consequence.

UNARMED: The art of unarmed close combat uses the body itself as a weapon. Brass knuckles and spike knuckles, however, still count as unarmed combat as they rely mainly on the body itself for impact. Characters trained in unarmed combat increase their brawling damage to D4 rather than the regular D3.

## COMBAT SKILL SPECIALISATIONS

Combat specialisations are tied to a specific combat skill and can be added for each skill ranking of three. All specialisations have prerequisites that must be met in order for a character to obtain them, these are noted in brackets in the specialisation description. A specialisation can be added when a combat skill reaches ranking 3, 6, 9 and 12. Example: Hashan has six rankings in the bladed weapons skill and is therefore allowed to have two specialisations. He first acquires the "Sure strike" specialisation and then the "Crippling strike" specialisation as the latter has the additional requirement of a skill ranking of six.





| SPECIALISATION | COMBAT | PREREQUISITES |
|---|---|---|
| ACCURACY | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| ARROW RAIN | Missile | Combat skill ranking 3 \| missile or thrown \| Quick draw |
| ASSASSINATE | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| BACKSTABBER | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| BASHER | Melee | Strength 4 \| combat skill ranking 3 \| weapon size 3 or greater |
| BLADE MASTER | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 \| bladed weapons only |
| BLADE WALL | Melee | Agility 4 \| Combat skill ranking 3 |
| BLIND FIGHTING | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| CRIPPLING STRIKE | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 |
| DEFENSIVE ASSAULT | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 |
| DEFLECT | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 \| parrying weapons only |
| DEVASTATING BLOW | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| DIRTY FIGHTING | Melee | Unarmed skill ranking 3 |
| DISARM SPECIALIST | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| EVADE | Defence | Dodge skill ranking 6 and Agility 3 |
| FINESSE | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| FORMATION FIGHTING | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| HIDDEN STRIKE | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 \| weapon size < 2 only |
| MARKSMAN | Missile | Combat skill ranking 6 \| missile or thrown weapons only |
| ONSLAUGHT | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 |
| OPEN PARRY | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 \| parrying weapons only |
| PINNING HOLD | Melee | Unarmed skill ranking 3 |
| PRECISE SHOT | Missile | Combat skill ranking 3 \| missile or thrown weapons only |
| PROFICIENT | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| QUICK DRAW | General | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| QUICK STRIKE | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| RAPID SHOT | Missile | Combat skill ranking 3 \| missile or thrown weapons only |
| SIDESTEP | Defence | Dodge skill 3 |
| STRONG PULL | Missile | Combat skill ranking 3 \| missile or thrown weapons only |
| SUPERIOR DISARM | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 \| Disarm specialist |
| SURE STRIKE | Melee | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| SWIFTNESS | General | Combat skill ranking 3 |
| UNARMED PARRY | Melee | Unarmed skill ranking 6 |
| VETERAN | Melee | Combat skill ranking 6 |
| WEAPON MASTER | General | Combat skill ranking 6 |

ACCURACY (Combat skill ranking 3): The character has trained to exploit flawless striking rather than brute strength to cause injury. Use Agility modifier for Dmg modification instead of Strength.

ARROW RAIN (Combat skill ranking 3 | missile or thrown weapon | Quick Draw): The character can fire arrows in quick succession with diminished accuracy. The combatant may shoot twice during a combat round (-3 initiative to the second attack) with all attacks suffering a -3 penalty.

ASSASSINATE (Combat skill ranking 3): When performing a sneak attack, the combatant can make it a called attack without applying the usual -3 penalty.

BACKSTABBER (Combat skill ranking 3 | melee weapon size < 2): The character is trained to hit vital organs when attacking from the back. On a successful backstab attack you roll twice for damage - add modifiers such as strength afterwards.

BASHER (Strength 4 | combat skill ranking 3 | weapon size 3 or greater): The character bashes and knocks down opponents left and right. The following melee attacks grant a bonus knockdown opportunity: Charge, all-out attack, calculated strike, standard attack, swift strike and wild swing.

BLADEMASTER (Combat skill ranking 6 | bladed weapons): The character has attained mastery of the blade; easily parrying, feinting, lunging, stabbing and riposting. This specialisation grants a +1 modifier to parrying, disarming and feinting with bladed weapons.

BLADE WALL (Agility 4 | Combat skill ranking 3): The combatant's blade flurry and swirl, creating an impenetrable wall. At the expense of any other manoeuvres and actions, the character may make two parry actions in a combat round without penalites.

BLINDFIGHTING (Combat skill ranking 3): The character has perfected his or her skills relying on more than just sight when engaging opponents. Ignore penalties from lighting conditions.

CRIPPLING STRIKE (Combat skill ranking 6): The combatant knows where to strike an opponent to cause the most harm. Attacks cause an exceptional hit on a natural roll of 11 and 12.

DEFENSIVE ASSAULT (Combat skill ranking 6): The combatant is versed in dividing his attention between offence and defence in close combat. When making an attack manoeuvre, the character may choose to divide his combat skill modifier between his attack roll and Defence Value (before making the roll).

DEFLECT (Combat skill ranking 3 | parrying weapons): The character is proficient enough to parry attacks from thrown weapons.

DEVASTATING BLOW (Combat skill ranking 3): The character strikes furious blows with force greater than his or her strength would typically allow. Add +1 to melee damage.

DIRTY FIGHTING (Unarmed skill ranking 3): The combatant fights dirty and uses any means to win. The combatant can make called attacks without the usual penalty when fighting unarmed.

DISARM SPECIALIST (Combat skill ranking 3): The combatant is versed in relieving an opponent of his or her weapon. No penalties apply when using the disarm manoeuvre.

EVADE (Dodge skill ranking 6 and Agility 3): The character can utilise the dodge manoeuvre to evade flung, propelled or falling objects including thrown and missile weapons.

FINESSE (Combat skill ranking 3): The character fights using flurries, weaving and swirling attacks to confuse the opponent. Utilising the flurry manoeuvre imposes a -3 penalty if successful due to the overwhelming display.

FORMATION FIGHTING (Combat skill ranking 3): The character has trained melee fighting in formation. When fighting alongside allies, the combatant harmonises his moves adding a +1 modifier to actions. If all members of your group have this specialisation, they gain a +1 modifier to their Defence Value.

HIDDEN STRIKE (Combat skill ranking 6 | weapon size < 2): The combatant's subtlety and swiftness with a small blade are profound. The character can deliver a sneak attack and conceal the weapon again in the same combat round.

MARKSMAN (Combat skill ranking 6 | missile or thrown weapons): The character suffers one less range penalty than usual when attacking with missile weapons. When attacking a target at very long range, only the long-range penalty applies.

ONSLAUGHT (Combat skill ranking 6): The combatant is a tsunami; an unstoppable flood of attacks. The character gains a second attack opportunity as a free action upon a successful hit (only one additional attack is possible).

OPEN PARRY (Combat skill ranking 6 | parrying weapons): The character is able to parry while continuing his or her assault. Characters with this specialisation have one free parry action per combat round.

PINNING HOLD (Unarmed skill ranking 3): This specialisation is a technique used for subduing and pinning opponents in unarmed combat. The grappling attack does not confer the regular penalty.

PRECISE SHOT (Combat skill ranking 3 | missile or thrown weapons): The character is able to hit a bird in flight without blinking. Ignore penalties for making called shots with missile weapons.

PROFICIENT (Combat skill ranking 3): The character has trained to rely more on expertise than physicality, enabling him or her to utilise Intellect rather than Agility as the primary combat Trait.

QUICK DRAW (Combat skill ranking 3): The combatant is able to draw his or her weapon and be ready to fight in the blink of an eye. Drawing or readying a weapon and nocking arrows does not require an action or cause initiative penalties.

QUICK STRIKE (Combat skill ranking 3): The character is exceedingly fast and may – if the weapon is drawn - perform an attack manoeuvre as a surprise attack without having to roll

for initiative in the first round of a combat sequence. Opponents are not allowed to make a surprise roll.

RAPID SHOT (Combat skill ranking 3 | missile or thrown weapons): The combatant is very fast and can make a surprise missile or thrown weapon attack in an initial combat round if the weapon is readied. No surprise roll is allowed for opponents.

SIDESTEP (Dodge skill 3): By constantly weaving and dodging and at the expense of all other actions the combatant may make two dodge actions during a combat round without penalties or dodge and perform the disengage manoeuvre.

STRONG PULL (Combat skill ranking 3 | missile or thrown weapons): The character has trained to launch missile weapons at maximum capacity, releasing each missile with optimal force. Add a +1 modifier to damage for missile or thrown attacks.

SUPERIOR DISARM (Combat skill ranking 6 | Disarm specialist): Characters performing a successful disarming action gain an automatic instant attack opportunity as a free action.

SURE STRIKE (Combat skill ranking 3): This combatant is a master at striking with surgical precision. Ignore penalties for making called shots when fighting with a melee weapon.

SWIFTNESS (Combat skill ranking 3): The character has trained extensively to increase the speed of his or her strikes and may add a +1 to initiative rolls.

UNARMED PARRY (Unarmed skill ranking 6): The combatant has trained extensively to be able to deflect and parry strikes while unarmed without getting cut or battered. The combatant can parry incoming melee attacks without a parrying weapon.

VETERAN (Combat skill ranking 6): The character has fought in many battles and is adept at causing damage. Roll twice for damage and choose the higher value.

WEAPONMASTER (Combat skill ranking 6): The character is attuned to his or her weapon of choice to such a degree that it seems an extension of his or her body. The character may re-roll one action-roll with the weapon per combat round.

*With 3 points left we decide Ziana should have one more Talent. As she is lithe – denoted by an Agility score of 4 - we look to an Agility Talent, and choose Coordination. We have spent all 24 points, as well as her 3 bonus Background points from the Homeworld benefit.*



# Completing the Character

You have now allocated all your character points and completed the fundamentals of your character. In this section you do the final calculations and note them on your character sheet.

## Health

Health determines the general physical condition of a character and how much damage they can take before suffering detrimental consequences such as being rendered incapable of action or killed. To establish a character's Health score the player multiplies the character's Stamina by 6 and adds D12. *Example: Sharad has a Stamina score of two, so she multiplies her STA score of two (2) by six (6) and adds a D12 roll: She rolls a 7, totalling a Health score of 19. Dhama has a Stamina score of four. He multiplies his STA by four (4) and rolls a three (3), resulting in a total Health score of 27.*

| SIZE | HEALTH CALCULATION |
|---|---|
| MEDIUM | (STA x 6) +D12 |
| LARGE | (STA x 7) +D12 |

Ascribed factors such as the Large Attribute affect the calculation. Mark the character's Health score on the character sheet in the box noted as Total Health. While a character has a fixed base score of Health, the actual score varies throughout the game because of injuries. The box above the Total Health is used to keep track of the character's wellbeing, i.e. current Health score, since this will likely change during the game. As characters lose Health points they suffer detrimental effects until they have recovered. A character reaching zero Health points is rendered incapacitated and will eventually die unless cared for. The rules regarding Health, damage and healing are explained further in the Combat chapter of the Rules Section.

*To determine Ziana's Health score, her Stamina score is multiplied by 6, we roll a D12, getting a result of 5, for a total of 17 (2x6+5=17), giving her somewhat weak physical condition which suits her backstory and character concept. She is strong-willed and has solid mental fortitude reflected by a Sanity score of 33 (4x6+9=33). Being small and nimble, Ziana's Defence Value is 8 (7+1 Agility modifier) making her more difficult to hit than average. Her movement rate is somewhat hampered by her lack of strength, for a total of 4 (5-1 Strength modifier) making her slightly slower than most other humans.*



*The sanity of most sentient creatures in the Cosmos is only barely maintained by a Veil, which has been pulled over their eyes, shielding them from the true grandeur and horrors of existence.*

## Sanity

The Cosmos, and particularly the Void, is not a place for the fainthearted, and the sanity of characters is constantly under threat. A character's Sanity score determines how much fear and anxiety he or she can withstand before suffering mental deterioration and eventual madness. To establish a character's Sanity a player must multiply each point of Willpower the character has by six and add a D12. *Example: Sharad has a Willpower score of one (1), so she multiplies her WILL score by six (6) and adds a D12 roll: She rolls a 9, totalling a Sanity score of 15.*

| SANITY | CALCULATION |
|---|---|
| SANITY SCORE | (WILL x 6) +D12 |

Similarly to Health a player rolls to determine a newly created character's amount of Sanity points, and marks this in the character sheet. While characters have a fixed base Sanity score, the actual number fluctuates during sessions as certain occurrences, such as traversing the Void or experiencing something horrifying and abhorrent, puts the character at risk of losing Sanity points. If and as the character lose sanity points during the game his or her mind becomes more agitated, and the character suffers a temporary insanity. Should a character lose all his or her sanity points she or he has become permanently mad. The rules regarding Sanity, Sanity points and madness are explained further in the Sanity and mental effects chapter of the Rules Section in this book.

## Movement

Movement rate determines how fast a person is able to walk, run or sprint in the game. This factor is used when calculating the distances characters can travel in a given amount of time and how fast they move during combat. To calculate movement (walking) speed, add the Strength modifier to the species factor shown in the table below. This is the distance in kilometres which a character can cover in an hour when walking at a leisurely pace. To calculate running and sprinting tempos, the walking speed of the character must be doubled and quadrupled, respectively. While the running speed can be maintained for extended periods of time, sprinting can usually only be maintained in short bursts, and rarely for more than a couple of minutes at a time.

A character's movement speed during combat is calculated as above - species factor with the Strength modifier added - but measured in metres per combat round. Combat speed works out a little quicker than the hourly rate – we assume that in combat characters are acting with purpose and do not stop to enjoy the surroundings. *Example: Sharad has a Strength score of 5. Her size factor is 5 and her Strength modifier is +2, meaning that she is able to walk*

*unhurriedly, at a pace of seven kilometres per hour, while being able to move seven metres during a combat round without resorting to running.*

| SIZE | HEIGHT/LENGTH | SIZE FACTOR |
|---|---|---|
| MEDIUM | 1 – 2 metres | 5 |
| LARGE | 2 – 4 metres | 6 |

## Defence Value

The Defence Value (DV) determines how difficult a person is to hit in a combat situation. The higher a characters Defence Value the harder he or she is to successfully hit and therefore injure. The basic Defence Value for characters is always 7, while Agility modifiers, Defence skill and other ability-based modifiers as well as any shields and other relevant factors adjust the final value.

| SIZE | BASE DV | SIZE FACTOR |
|---|---|---|
| MEDIUM | 7 | Agility modifier/defence skill/ shield/other factors |
| LARGE | 6 | Agility modifier/defence skill/ shield/other factors |

*Example: Mahesh is a human gladiator struggling to survive in the fighting pits of Daer Bitaan. Mahesh has an Agility score of 2 conferring a -1 penalty to his DV score, making it 6. He does however have a ranking in the defence skill giving him +1 to his DV and when fighting he usually carries a small shield giving another +1 modifier for a total Defence Value of 8.*

*We are the enlightened ones, the bearers of the word. The gloomy paths are not meant for us: we thrive in the light. The darkness of obliviousness holds no sway over us; we walk the path of illumination. Ignorance may be bliss, but understanding is power, and power is not for everyone. We are the enlightened and the power is ours!*

## Enlightenment

A character's Enlightenment describes her intuitive understanding of the greater Cosmos, Void and the Veil, which can easily be more powerful than a strong arm and a sharp sword. The illuminated mind sees the greater mysteries of the Cosmos revealed, while the ignorant see nothing. Enlightenment is not knowledge as such, but an intuitive understanding of matter and form, chaos and stability, reality and unreality. It cannot be studied or learned through traditional means, it can only be gained through epiphany. Enlightenment is obtained when a character realises the vastness, complexity and grotesqueness of existence; encountering beings or phenomena from outside her sphere of normality when she is in direct contact with the Void or participates in events which surpass sensory comprehension of existence. Understanding is a currency which cannot be measured, yet nothing holds more value. Comprehending is what changes the nature of things; the climb to illumination and the power it brings, the ultimate prize: becoming enlightened and obtaining abilities no ordinary human has.

Enlightenment is measured in tiers ranging from zero (0) and upwards. Most characters begin play as more or less ignorant and therefore with a score of zero, signifying that they have no comprehension about what is beyond the visible Cosmos. The ranking of a newly created character depends on which Homeworld he or she is from. A human character born and currently located on a savage world expectedly begins play with no rank in Enlightenment as his insight into the greater Cosmos and existence is nil, whereas a Voidmarked character birthed on a deep world would begin play enlightened.

As characters become illuminated their understanding is broadened, their comprehension opened to what lies beyond the apparent, and - in-game terms - obtain enlightenment tiers. Enlightenment cannot be purchased during character creation, and advancement is separate from normal character progression, only acquired as the character discovers the secrets of existence. Each tier grants extraordinary abilities and benefits when achieved, such as being able to perforate the Veil or navigating the Void. Obtaining enlightenment, however, is not without risk; Cosmic beings were not meant to comprehend the greater secrets of existence, and the threat of going insane from experiences essential to achieve comprehension is only too real for those who walk the path of illumination.

## Wastah

In the Eternal City, everything is about whom you know. Being well-connected goes beyond caste and social status, and personal prowess is often insignificant compared to the power of influence. In game terms, this influence is called Wastah. It is a factor significantly impacting the possibilities of characters as it confers sway, authority and dominance that can be used to affect social situations, push agendas and influence people.

Having Wastah means that the character is well known and respected by a specific entity or within a particular grouping; his or her words carry weight and offered viewpoints are listened to. A high Wastah ranking indicates that the character enjoys a greater authority within the given group. While a tier-ranking of one (1) means that the character can affect decisions and opinions, a ranking of three (3) could signify that the character is seen as a natural leader and their ideas are likely received sympathetically by the group as a whole. Keep in mind that Wastah does not signify any official rank or position within a group; it represents informal standing and clout.

*Despite having witnessed Void rifts and their effects, Ziana remains ignorant about the true nature of existence and begins play unenlightened. Because of her Homeworld, however, Ziana starts with one ranking in Wastah. Considering her backstory and what might be useful for the character we decided that although she has no association with the human enclave in Beggars Court, she has developed a favourable reputation granting her a +1 modifier to any interaction with the enclave or its leader, the Beggar King.*

# Coming to Life

You have now completed your character and it is time to make sense of and ascribe meaning to all of the numbers and facts you have on your character sheet.

The topics addressed in this section include gender, age, appearance, personality, mannerism, origin and finally the name of the character. Spending some time on this process not only makes your character more believable and enjoyable to play, it also helps the Arbiter to draw on character history and personality when designing adventures and campaigns, ensuring your character's story is told.

## Gender

Although there are no particular advantages or disadvantages to any chosen gender, this decision can possibly influence social interaction and aspects such as gender-oriented customs of various cultures and factions. The Cult of Tiamat, for instance, accepts only females within its core affiliation.

## Age

Age does not influence the way you create your character, but it can add some spice to their story. Most players choose to create a character who is young or in the prime of life but playing younger or older age groups may grant different experiences and possibilities for interaction and game-play. You can select an age for your character on your own or roll a random age, using the table below.

| ROLL | DESIGNATION | AGE RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | YOUNGLING | 12-15 |
| 3-7 | YOUNG ADULT | 16-25 |
| 8-9 | ADULT | 26-45 |
| 10-11 | OLD | 46-55 |
| 12 | ELDER | 56+ |

## Appearance

Appearance is a description of the way your character looks; their general physique, facial features and other visual qualities. Does your character have any distinctive characteristics such as scars, visible mutilations or other aspects, which make them distinctive? Unlike the Attributes that can be acquired by expending character points, all the factors below are purely cosmetic and do not generally affect your character in terms of game mechanics, although a muscular character may be granted bonuses to intimidation attempts, while a skinny character might easily squeeze through narrow openings, if the Arbiter is so inclined.

A character's physique can be determined at random, by rolling on the table below or you can simply choose the appearance of your character. When rolling on the table to establish the physique roll once for stature and once for figure. The combined Strength and Stamina modifiers should be added to your rolls, to determine the result. The definitions used in the table are relative to general human stature and figure.

| ROLL | FIGURE | STATURE |
|---|---|---|
| < 3 | Skinny / Fat | Petite |
| 4-5 | Wiry / Obese | Short |
| 6-9 | Ordinary | Ordinary |
| 10-11 | Muscular | Tall |
| 12+ | Brawny | Lanky |

*Example: Arazh has a Strength score of two (2) and a Stamina score of five (5) and rolls D12 to determine figure and stature. Both rolls must be adjusted by +1 (-1 for STA and +2 for STR). The first roll comes up a four (4) making her either wiry or obese while the second roll is an eight (8) making her stature ordinary.*

*While Ziana's gender and age have already been decided in her backstory, dice rolls modified by low Strength and Stamina scores determine she is skinny and petite: Figure-roll 4-2 = 2 (skinny) | Stature-roll 3-2 = 1 (petite). As she is a pureblood human, rolls are made on the regular human table for her features, resulting in bronzed skin (3), dark brown hair (5) and green eyes (12).*

Devising a portrayal of a character's appearance aids the player and the Arbiter as well as the other participants of the game in visualising the character, adding further vivacity to the game. As with physique, players are free to choose the skin, hair and eye-colour and other physical features or they can determine these at random, by rolling on the table below and referring to the corresponding section.

### Pureblood Appearance

| ROLL | SKIN | HAIR | EYES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fair | Blond | Blue |
| 2-3 | Bronze | Light brown | Grey |
| 4-6 | Tanned | Dark brown | Light Brown |
| 7-9 | Brown | Black | Dark Brown |
| 10-11 | Dark brown | Red | Hazel |
| 12 | Black | Dyed (any) | Green |

### Halfblood Appearance

| ROLL | SKIN | HAIR | EYES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fur | Feathers | Odd-coloured |
| 2-3 | Feathers | Thick strands | Horizontal slits |
| 4-6 | Leathery | Tentacles | Vertical slits |
| 7-9 | Normal* | Normal* | Normal* |
| 10-11 | Speckled | Mane | Compound |
| 12 | Knobbly | Frills | Other |

## Voidmarked Appearance



| ROLL | SKIN | HAIR | EYES | FACE | OTHER FEATURES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Normal* | Normal* | Normal* | Strange shape | Less digits |
| 2 | Odd-coloured | Odd-coloured | Horizontal slits | Odd nose | Additional digits |
| 3 | Multi-coloured | Metallic | Vertical slits | Ossicones | Additional limb joints |
| 4 | Speckled | Skin extensions | Compound | Bony head crest | Oddly shaped limbs |
| 5 | Spotted | Crest | Odd-coloured | Hanging ears | Antennae |
| 6 | Striped | Frills | Reflective | Pointed ears | Hooves / odd feet |
| 7 | Clouded | Feathers | Glowing Eyes | Large/tiny ears | Odd appendages |
| 8 | Leathery | Tendrils | All black | Forked Tongue | Bony protrusions |
| 9 | Crusty | Quills | No iris/pupil | Prehensile tongue | Bristles |
| 10 | Knobbly | Bald | Stalked eyes | Abnormal teeth | No nose |
| 11 | Downy | Bristles | Metallic | Strange eyebrows | Snout |
| 12 | Metallic | Spines | Gemlike | Peculiar facial hair | Trunk |



## Personality

Defining a distinct personality may help you bring added depth and individuality to your character. There are three fundamental areas that you want to consider in this regard: Desires, dislikes and principles. You can find a list of sample archetypes at the end of this chapter for inspiration.

### DESIRE AND MOTIVATION

What does your character desire and what are their goals? Desire and purpose are the greatest motivators in life and therefore, it is useful to have a sense of what your character aims to achieve in their lifetime. Determining goals and motivation for a human character might be fairly easy, but when playing a halfblood or Voidmarked character, it is interesting to think outside the box for an outlandish feel. An alien mentality and way of thinking may differ greatly from the mind-set of a human, whose basic drives commonly are safety, shelter and physical needs. For instance, the alien mind-set may not be based on emotions at all, as the human mentality tends to be, and it may also be totally devoid of logic or reason. An alien character may also lack - or indeed have an abundance of - one or more specific types of feelings, making her unable to comprehend particular reactions or motivations. Selecting a specific sentiment and then magnifying or diminishing this could lead to an interesting and peculiar basis for a character's personality.

### DISLIKES, SECRETS AND REGRETS

What does your character abhor, fear or regret? Just as people are driven by desires, they are repelled by dislikes and aversions. Perhaps your character cannot stand social inequality or maybe she is a xenophobe. Does she have any horrible secrets that she dare not share with anyone, and if so, what are they and who might have found out? The possibilities are endless and knowing this aspect of your character can add significant drama and excitement to the game.

### PHILOSOPHY & PRINCIPLES

Does your character follow a specific set of values or principles, a fixed code of conduct or is she perhaps driven solely by impulsive whims and passions? The ethics and values of people have a massive impact on their behaviour, and it is therefore a good idea to understand the ideals your character has built her life around, if any.

## Mannerism

Having established the personality of your character, it is time to focus on how you can enact it during the actual game. Making your character distinctive and memorable is part of the fun, while it also helps the other players to easily engage with your creation.

A notable portrayal comes down to the mannerisms of your character and how you, as a player, act them out. Consider the following question: What distinctive quirks, behaviours and sayings suit your character? Most memorable fictional characters depict a combination of these three key points, which helps them stand out in the mind of the reader. Before delving deeper into each point, let it be noted that these quirks, behaviours and sayings are not necessarily meant to portray all the diversity and emotional depth of your character; rather they exist to provide recognisable idiosyncrasies to help you portray her or him in an enjoyable way.

### QUIRKS AND HABITS

Quirks refer to noticeable and usually peculiar behaviour. Signature habits can be a great tool for creating vivacity in a character and illustrate the personality within: Always speaking in a hushed voice; making up lies about unimportant things, for no reason; regularly quoting or drawing parallels to the dramatic are examples of quirks. Distinctive habits are another way of adding personality

*Further outlining Ziana's personality, we look into which desires and motivation drive her. Having survived as an orphan in the filthy alleys of Kimah, she is resolute in her ambition to make a better life for herself and the small posse of orphans that have latched on to her over the years. Having been menaced by muggers and thugs her entire life she abhors anyone who exploits those weaker than themselves. Principles are a luxury she cannot afford, however, and her core approach is obstinate survival.*

*Ziana's mannerisms are rough and simple, and she tends to act with distrust towards anyone outside of her immediate circle. Embarrassed by seeming ignorant, her response to receiving information - unfamiliar or otherwise - is, "It is known" - a proverb she picked up from Shirr traders frequenting Salvation Square.*

to a character: Frequently making specific gestures; repeated social patterns or consistently utilising particular combat tactics are examples of behaviour that can really make a character stand out.

### SAYINGS

Picking one or two phrases, proverbs or subjects for your character to sporadically repeat is also a useful way of depicting personality. Make sure that the saying fits the character and supports the impression you want to give off without being too clichéd. For instance, a character might begin all conversations by uttering "Peace of the ancestors upon you" giving her a distinctive feel of reverence and piety.

## Origin

You have already determined which type of Homeworld your character stems from but worlds are complex and exceedingly diverse, differing massively in terms of environment and culture even within a given sort. Determining details about your Homeworld and how your character grew up provides you with a wealth of information and inspiration regarding what kind of life she or he has lived prior to beginning to play.

### ANCESTRY AND RELATIONS

Does your character have any family, relatives or notable friends? Although characters rarely have an active family life, they might have parents or siblings, which can bring interesting aspects into the game, via their relations to the character. You can also choose to let your character descend from a specific family, clan or tribe, which grants depth and complexity to her past, as well as potentially impacting the game.

*Ziana has no family, considering her orphans her only relatives. Having spent no points to increase her caste, Ziana is casteless (Kalbi) and must deal with the suppression and aversion associated with this from higher castes in the Eternal City. Though she is respected by the Beggars Court enclave and connected with a local beggar gang, she stubbornly refuses to seek out a patron, remaining unaligned to anyone except her orphans, who are more of a burden than a help. Ziana gets by stealing and scrounging from those more fortunate than herself and performing the occasional odd task for the Beggar King or others offering opportunities.*

### CASTE

The social hierarchy in Llyhn is based entirely upon the notion of castes. Low castes enjoy few privileges; suffer hindrances and contempt, while high castes boast sovereignty and influence. A character's caste defines her place in the hierarchy of Llyhn, determining not only how she is perceived but also which social restrictions and advantages she is subject to. It is thus worth pondering what caste means to and for the character. Keep in mind that even characters not indigenous to Llyhn are categorised and indoctrinated into its caste system.

### FACTIONS AND ALLEGIANCE

While it is not required that a character associates or even sympathises with any of the enclaves or factions in Llyhn, doing so may lead to an excellent starting point for exploration and adventures. Belonging to a faction also provides an apt association for characters with a Background such as Allies or Contacts. Players are free to select one of the known groups of the Black Void setting or – with the approval of the Arbiter - create a new one.

### OCCUPATION

A character's occupation is somewhat determined by the caste she belongs to and establishes how she earns her livelihood. It also provides background and a point of affiliation, which can be built on by a creative Arbiter. Do not see occupation as a restriction but rather as a stepping-stone to adventure. For instance a character beginning the game waiting tables at a surreptitious opium den could likely get unwillingly dragged into an intrigue by someone using the establishment for clandestine dealings.

### PATRONS & MATRONS

Although it is by no means obligatory, the social stratification and caste system in the Eternal City invites people to seek patronage from those more powerful than themselves, in exchange for rendering services to their patron or matron. Characters with allegiance to an enclave tend to have patrons among the leaders of the enclave, while colonist or non-aligned characters have no such limitations, seeking patronage among whomever will have them, even non-humans. Although it is not a necessity, all characters in a party can have the same patron - which can explain why they are working together.

## Name

As the finishing touch, you must name your character. The name you choose is significant, as it provides immediate connotations regarding what sort of person your character is, as well as the culture she comes from. Finding a name you like and which fits into the setting can be rather challenging, so unless you already have one in mind, this paragraph will likely prove useful, in terms of giving you inspiration.
Although the names found in Llyhn and the wider Cosmos are enormously varied, human names tend towards a certain similarity, reflecting the ancient civilisations and cultures of Earth. You should by no means let this limit your choice, but it can serve as a guideline or inspiration, if you would like.

The lists below include samples of common names found among the human population of Llyhn and elsewhere in the Cosmos. Human enclaves in Llyhn tend to have strong cultural identities and the names of enclave members often reflect their heritage. The Feeradani enclave names derive from one of the great Earthern empires and are often strong and authoritarian, much like its members. The Assembly enclave outside Llyhn tend towards a more lenient and tolerant philosophy, which is somewhat reflected in the softer toned names. Characters from other worlds and those who have no allegiance to an enclave have no such predisposition or cohesion.



| FEERADANI (M) | FEERADANI (F) | THE ASSEMBLY (M) | THE ASSEMBLY (F) | OTHER (M) | OTHER (F) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abadan | Aimai | Ahra | Amara | Agarah | Achala |
| Adarji | Anahita | Arun | Anchali | Akilha | Anesha |
| Arash | Benafsha | Atith | Baen | Asanka | Anjala |
| Arshan | Delara | Chanrisha | Boupha | Asiri | Anu |
| Bahman | Deyazad | Chay | Chakara | Bagrah | Asuntha |
| Balash | Dinbai | Chhan | Chantou | Chamara | Ayami |
| Burzin | Friyana | Chhean | Chantrea | Chanaka | Bhavya |
| Cheherazad | Gulandam | Dara | Chavy | Channa | Chamali |
| Daneshvar | Gulbaher | Davuth | Chea | Chatura | Daksha |
| Dehmeher | Hirabai | Heng | Chenda | Daham | Dayani |
| Dinsha | Homai | Kiman | Chhaiya | Desham | Dayanji |
| Emet | Jaiji | Meng | Kalliyan | Eshan | Deshmi |
| Erach | Jarbai | Nghor | Kannitha | Ghehan | Erandi |
| Fardad | Laleh | Nhean | Khemera | Ghishan | Gayasha |
| Gelshah | Lilya | Khean | Kiri | Hashan | Geadha |
| Hardar | Mahin | Khesal | Leakena | Kavhan | Harshana |
| Hiraji | Mani | Malis | Makara | Lahran | Indhana |
| Hutan | Manizeh | Nakhry | Mai | Lasankh | Janana |
| Ishvat | Meher | Narin | Mealea | Mahesh | Jayana |
| Jamshad | Nahlibai | Nhean | Mliss | Mahnal | Kavinda |
| Karan | Nazneen | Palha | Naryi | Nalaka | Kesheena |
| Kaveh | Pari | Phirun | Nhean | Nihal | Lalandha |
| Mahvandad | Shahi | Ranariddh | Nhisay | Ninash | Madara |
| Meherak | Shahzan | Sakngea | Rathana | Omesh | Madha |
| Naresh | Shehernaz | Samang | Rith | Oshan | Mahira |
| Palash | Simin | Samrin | Sanha | Prashan | Nadeeka |
| Raham | Tanaz | Sann | Sathea | Ranasha | Namal |
| Sarvar | Tehmina | Sepheara | Teva | Sahan | Nayana |
| Shahdan | Vira | Sovann | Tevy | Sanath | Radhina |
| Tirdad | Yazdin | Sutshakan | Vanna | Taveesh | Tharinda |
| Zaran | Zarin | Veasna | Veata | Thalak | Thimiara |
| Zavareh | Zer | Vhadtma | Veasna | Wasth | Vishakha |

*The human's eyes dripped salty water today... I wonder what that means?*

*– Celaphis the sage, a study of humanity*

Consider giving your character a nickname, a surname or perhaps even a secret name, as it can attribute different facets to the character and game. Some players like to add an epithet, such as Sarvar the Sagacious, while others prefer a linkage to their homeworld, for instance, Wasth of the Barrens. You can also designate an ancestry, such as Namal hin Mahira, to contribute a further dimension to your character.

## Personality Archetypes

The list of archetypes might serve as inspiration and examples of personalities that illustrate generic behavioural patterns of human beings. You are free to choose one or several archetypes as a basis for the personality and demeanour of your character, use the list as inspiration or not at all. The archetype description includes typical personality quirks, as well as short explanations illustrating classic behaviour and thought patterns.

| ARCHETYPE | TYPICAL PERSONALITY QUIRKS | CHARACTERISTIC PERSONALITY |
|---|---|---|
| TRADITIONALIST | Conventional, dogmatic, unimaginative and cautious | The traditionalist values the customs and conventions of old, looking to these to guide decisions and standpoints in life. They view novel thinking and ideas sceptically and are hard pressed to accept anything divergent to the established order of things. |
| SAGE | Thoughtful, reserved, clever and conscientious | The sage is the typical wise elder of transcendence and vast knowledge. This archetype rarely gets in the midst of the action, choosing to guide others and influence happenings from afar. |
| VISIONARY | Wilful, imaginative and resourceful | The visionary is a free thinker, not adhering to traditional ideas, but rather holding a grand view of change and ideals. This archetype is often a leader or prophet, guiding others with ecstatic revelations and imaginations of a new order of things. |
| TRICKSTER | Roguish, scheming, cunning, deceitful, witty, inquisitive and meddlesome | The trickster is the embodiment of disorder and rebellion against complacency and conformity; overtly questioning and opposing commonly accepted notions, bringing new ideas and awareness. |
| MARTYR | Dedicated, passionate, zealous, selfless and determined | The martyr is ready to die for a cause or belief, bending all will and effort towards the achievement of a higher purpose. This archetype is fanatical and may disregard the needs of both self and others to promote an ordained cause. |
| REBEL | Determined, affronting, forthright, cynical, overbearing and neurotic | The rebel is the self-imposed outcast; the one who does not abide by the rules, despising and rejecting conventional au-thority figures. This archetype is in active opposition to the status quo and will struggle to get rid of oppression — real or imagined. |

*If Ziana were to be associated with an archetype, it would surely be "the rebel", resonating well with her obstinate refusal to succumb to circumstance and desire to overcome and improve life for herself and her posse.*

| ARCHETYPE | TYPICAL PERSONALITY QUIRKS | CHARACTERISTIC PERSONALITY |
|---|---|---|
| LONER | Independent, uncaring, withdrawn, reclusive and introverted | The loner prefers solitude or is, for some reason, unable to develop or maintain profound social relationships. This ar-chetype may interact with others, while keeping a mental distance or otherwise not share their inner thoughts and desires, thus seeming aloof, shallow or indifferent to others. |
| LEADER | Pragmatic, controlling, authoritative, domineering and imperious | The leader embodies confidence and wilfulness. This archetype consistently seeks to take charge and often shows aversion to criticism, questioning or challenges to their decisions and authority. |
| CARETAKER | Nurturing, careful, selfless, empathic and observant | The caretaker is empathetic and compassionate, supporting those in need, even at the risk of being taken advantage of. This archetype feels a sense of responsibility towards others, overshadowing personal needs. Rarely forceful, the caretaker gently guides or encourages others, rather than claim author-ity. |
| CHILD | Impulsive, heedless, gentle, explor-ing, naïve and irresponsible | The child is emotionally immature and innocently places personal needs before those of others but is not constrained by established expectations. Enjoyment of exploration and perhaps a childlike longing for innocence are main character-istics of the child. This archetype shows a regular inability to be relied upon and is likely to latch on to a father/mother-figure, to find comfort and security. |
| HEDONIST | Joyful, intense, narcissistic, blissful and vain | The hedonist has an insatiable appetite for pleasure, beauty and enjoyment, at the expense of restraint and convention. For this archetype, every experience seems an opportunity to create something delightful. The hedonist embraces the pleasurable aspects of life and lives for every moment, often finding delight in the most unlikely situations. |
| ARTIST | Extroverted, creative, introverted, passionate, eccentric, melodramatic, focused and perfectionistic | The artist lives to express and invoke emotions and dimen-sions beyond the senses. That which defines the artist is the immense passion, drive and motivation to create something extraordinary. Living in an idealised world within their own mind, this archetype is likely absent-minded and oblivious to the surrounding world. |

*Dead Worlders, dismissed as rambling madmen , often speak of visions and epiphanies edifying the very nature of existence. If only people took the time to listen , they might notice frighteningly recurrent patterns in the accounts ...!*

BLACK VOID

Name: Ziana
Species: Human
Homeworld: Llyhn native
Gender: Female
Age: 16
Skin: Bronzed
Eyes: Green eyes
Hair: Dark brown
Build: Skinny and petite
Appearance: Ragged clothing and ruffled hair with intense green eyes and a determined look.

## PERSONALITY

Desire and Motivation:
To build a better life for herself and her posse.
Dislikes, Secrets and Regrets
She cannot abide exploiters and oppressors!
Philosophy & Principles:
Only the rich can afford to have principles.

## MANNERISM

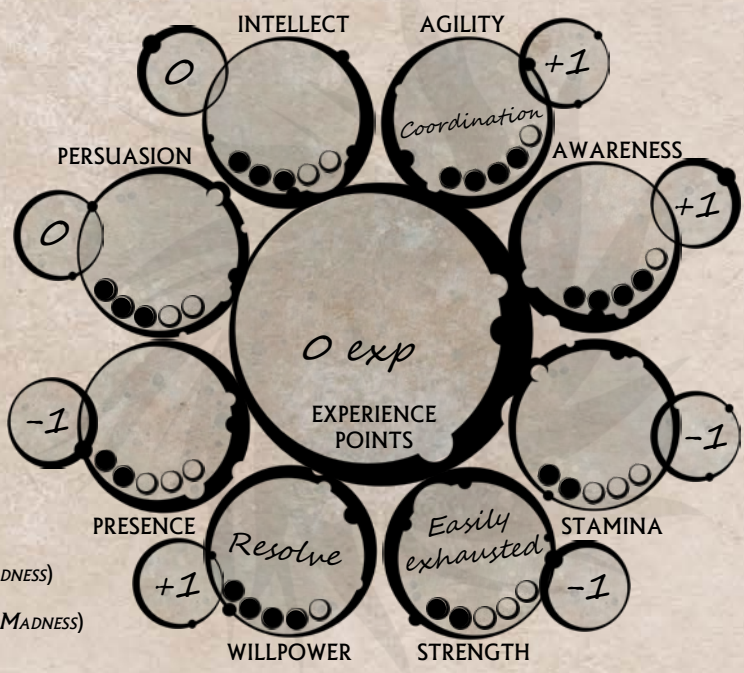
Quirks and Habits:
A rough, simple and. distrustful.
Sayings:
It is known!

## ORIGIN

Ancestry and Relations:
Orphan
Caste: Kalbi (casteless)
Faction and Allegiance:
Her orphan posse
Occupation: Street-urchin
Patron: None

## WASTAH

- Beggars Court (+1)




## ENLIGHTENMENT

## SANITY

33 Total Sanity
16 Anxious (+1 to Madness)
8 Disturbed (+3 to Madness)

MADNESS

## HEALTH

17 Total Health
8 Hurt (-1 Penalty)
4 Injured (-3 Penalty)
-8 DEAD

## BACKGROUND

| | Benefit | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| Local | +1 to specific area rolls | 2 |
| Contacts | A few contacts | 2 |
| Allies | One minor ally | 2 |
| Indigenous sway | Homeworld benefit | 0 |

## ATTRIBUTES

| | Benefit | Cost |
|---|---|---|

## POWERS

| | Ranking | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| Bloodletting (1 ritual/day) | ● ○ ○ ○ ○ | 3 |

## SKILLS

| | Specialisation | Ranking | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acrobatics | | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | 1 |
| Enquiry | | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | 1 |
| Larceny | | ● ○ ○ ○ ○ | 2 |
| Observation | | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | 1 |
| Performance | | ● ○ ○ ○ ○ | 2 |
| Stealth | | ● ○ ○ ○ ○ | 2 |
| Streetwise | | ● ○ ○ ○ ○ | 2 |
| Subterfuge | | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | 1 |

## COMBAT SKILLS

| | Specialisation | Ranking | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small blades | | ● ○ ○ ○ ○ | 2 |
| Slings/thrown weapons | | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | 1 |

BLACK VOID

**Character history:** Ziana was orphaned at a young age and has had to survive on her own in the rough streets of the Kimah district in the Eternal City.
Through the years she has manage to build a reputation and a network of allies and contacts that she relies on to help her.

**Friends & Allies:** A group of orphans have gathered around her seeking protection and comfort.
An old-timer from a local beggar gang has become a staunch ally to her.

**Known Enemies:** In the streets everyone is your potential enemy, but Ziana has no known antagonist haunting her steps.

**Notable People:** Ziana has managed to get the respect of the self-styled Beggar King of the Flea Palace in Beggars Court.

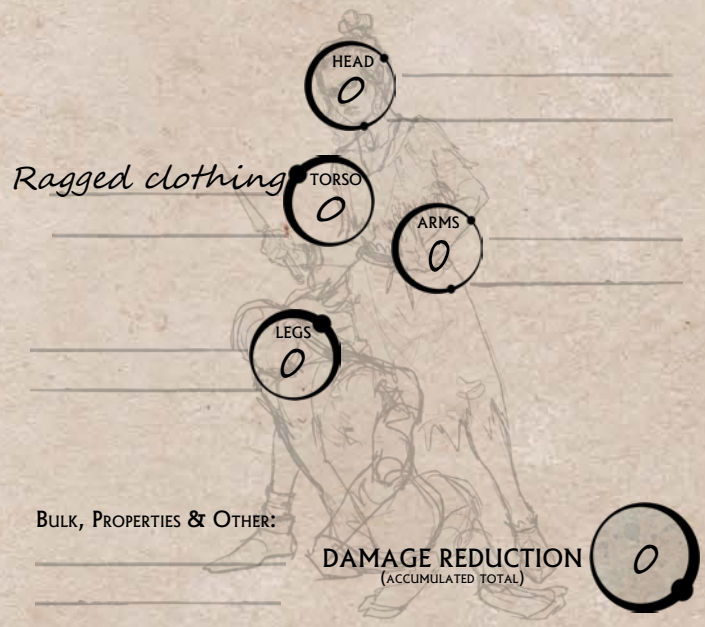
**Notable Experiences:** Ziana once stalked and killed an Aristocrat who was preying on the hapless orphans, cripples and beggars in her area of Kimah.

## MOVEMENT
(km/hour)

Walking Speed: 4
Running Speed (x2): 8
Sprinting Speed (x4): 16

Combat Speed: (metres/round) 4

## ARMOUR, TATTOO's & GRAFTINGS




Bulk, Properties & Other:

DAMAGE REDUCTION (accumulated total): 0

## WEALTH

4 copper Dhins

## DEFENCE VALUE

Agility Modifier: +1
Skill Modifier: 0
Shield Modifier: 0
Other Modifiers: 0

DEFENCE VALUE: 8

## PROPERTY / ASSETS

## EQUIPMENT

Ragged clothing
a rusty dagger (terrible quality)
threadbare sandals
a few personal items
3 cloth bandages
a poor-quality dagger

## WEAPONS

| | Type | Size | Range | Attack Modifier | Speed | Damage | Properties | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dagger | small blade | 1 | Close | +2 | +1 | D4 | | (poor quality -1) |



# CHAPTER: 2
# Equipment

The Cosmos is a dangerous place, and even more so for a poorly equipped and appallingly armed character. This chapter deals with some of the items, goods, merchandise, weaponry, armour and other equipment available in the Eternal City. Selecting and buying equipment can be vital and although starting characters have basic necessities and fundamental supplies such as rations, water and so on to last approximately a week, players should make sure to buy weapons, armour and other kit they might need before sending their character exploring.

## Starting Funds

Characters begin play with a set amount of copper Dhins in accordance with their caste and background resources; all characters are casteless (Kalbi) unless the caste Background has been purchased. These funds can be spent buying equipment during character creation or saved for use later in the game. As characters progress they likely amass further wealth, donations from benefactors or earnings from patrons to be spent on enhanced weapons, better equipment and improved armour. The below table details the starting equipment and wealth characters begin with.



*As a casteless street-rat, Ziana begins play with 12 copper Dhins (10+D12=12), ragged clothing, a rusty dagger (terrible quality), threadbare sandals and a few personal items. She spends 3 Dhins on some cloth bandages and 5 Dhins on a poor-quality dagger, leaving her with 4 copper Dhins as she begins play.*
*This concludes the creation of Ziana. The final calculations, such as action and attack modifiers, can be seen on her character sheet.*

| CASTE | STARTING WEALTH | EQUIPMENT & PROPERTY | INCOME |
|---|---|---|---|
| KALBI | 10+D12 copper Dhin | Ragged clothing or a waistcloth, a rusty dagger, threadbare sandals and a few personal items (all terrible quality). | None |
| BALTU | 20+D12 copper Dhin | Worn clothing and sandals or slippers, a dagger, a bag and a few supplies of choice (all poor quality). | None |
| SHAHRVAH | 30+D12 copper Dhin | Basic quality clothes and a turban or other headgear, slippers or boots, dagger and some supplies of choice. | None |
| MUATI | 60+2D12 copper Dhin | Decent clothing and a qaftan, turban or other headgear, slippers or boots, a dagger, some supplies of choice (all basic quality), a small stock of goods and an alcove shop or stall. | 2D12 |

## Income

All characters are expected to have some sort of occupation providing enough income to cover basic food and necessities between adventuring. Whether this is from shovelling filth in the sewers, shady activities or a hidden cache is irrelevant unless the Arbiter wants to include it in the storyline. Characters that have an additional income due to their caste, background resources or another source receive an amount of disposable wealth weekly.

KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT: The Black Void takes place in a distant past that could have been, and all scholastic education, advancement and machinery is based on pre-medieval levels. It may however surprise some players precisely how advanced ancient Mesopotamian, Indus and other civilizations really were. In the Black Void, humanity has encountered otherworldly sentient species as well as Void entities and while some of these are more advanced than humans, the development is still more or less pre-medieval with some weird and outlandish elements added.

## Availability

Goods and items are not necessarily available to characters at any time and place they may want or need it. Locating particular goods can be challenging, and each item has an availability factor indicating how accessible it typically is. Availability is divided into five categories: Common, uncommon, rare, very rare and unique. *Common* goods are available in some form almost anywhere regardless of which world and civilisation the character currently resides in. *Uncommon* merchandise is typically trickier to find but still widely available while *rare* goods are peddled only in specialised workshops. *Very rare* goods are only traded by exclusive merchants or in specific localities. *Unique* items, as a general rule, are not found for sale anywhere and must be acquired by other means, such as being commissioned, obtained as a gift, reward or through illicit means.

The table below illustrates the typical item availability in a given trading area. It is, however, important to note that the fact that a weapon is available does not necessarily entail that it is for sale. Availability can be ignored when buying equipment during character creation.

## Quality

The fabrication and condition of equipment naturally influence its performance and cost. Five fundamental quality definitions directly affect the price of any given item: Terrible, poor, basic, superior and exceptional. All items in the equipment list are considered to be of basic quality; thus the purchasing price must be adjusted for items of another quality. If the equipment has a practical functionality or is intended for a specific purpose, such as lock picks, the equipment may have a quality modifier.

| QUALITY | MODIFIER | COST ADJ |
|---|---|---|
| TERRIBLE | -1 penalty and critical failure on 1 & 2 | x0.25 |
| POOR | -1 penalty | x0.50 |
| BASIC | No modifiers | - |
| SUPERIOR | + 1 bonus | x5 |
| EXCEPTIONAL | + 1 bonus and exceptional success on 11 + rolls | x25 |

| | VILLAGE & OTHER | TOWN | CITY | COSMOPOLIS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COMMON | 50% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| UNCOMMON | 25% | 50% | 100% | 100% |
| RARE | 10% | 25% | 50% | 100% |
| VERY RARE | 0% | 0% | 10% | 25% |
| UNIQUE | 0% | 0% | 0% | 5% |

*Shesharak stretched and sighed, having now waited almost the entire morning the docks of Dhaarese district for his ship to clear customs. The large civic servant – some sort of mongrel with horns and three eyes – finally reappeared and handed him several small clay tablets tied together and embossed with the tithe collector's seal.*
*"You are all clear, Bel Shesharak. Excellent business as usual," the mongrel scribe grunted, which Shesharak waved away while sliding the tablets into the leather pouch that hung from his belt - he had more important matters to attend to.*
*Walking away from the milling docks, Shesharak headed off towards a nearby abra mooring before ducking into a corner and finding the small hidden doorway etched with geometric flowers. After an intricate series of knocks, the door swung open, allowing Shesharak to stride past two tall armed Timaniem females acting as guards and deeper into the shadowy opium den. He came to a large doorway where another two sentries stopped him, one holding out its hands for weapons. Shesharak sighed and pulled out several copper Dhins, slipping them into the outstretched hand and pushing by the pair before they could complain. As he entered, his nose was assaulted by the familiar odour of sweat, citrus, and heavy perfume. Around him - in small alcoves - numerous individuals lay in drugged stupors, he recognized a debauched Harith with several naked females of various species sprawled on top of his massive girth as a figure of some importance among the servants of the Unseen Rulers. Shielding his face to avoid recognition, Shesharak looked around for the proprietor, and spotted him in the back behind a desk.*
*"Shesharak!" he exclaimed grinning.*
*"Phoros... You owe me."*

# Assorted Items & Goods





| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| BEDROLL | Cloth stitched to form a bag | Common | 16 Dhin |
| BEDROLL, PADDED | Padded fabric bed roll | Common | 20 Dhin |
| BIRDCAGE | Cage or aviary for birds and other flying creatures | Uncommon | 20 Dhin |
| BLANKET | Cloth or canvas | Common | 8 Dhin |
| BRAZIER | Metal container for embers or fire | Common | 25 Dhin |
| CENSER | Burner for incense | Uncommon | 20 Dhin |
| CHAIN, FINE | Fine chain of bronze, iron or similar material (1m) | Rare | 40 Dhin |
| CHAIN, HEAVY | Heavy link chain of bronze, iron or other (1m) | Uncommon | 30 Dhin |
| CLIMBING GEAR | Claws, picks, harness and ropes used for climbing | Rare | 30 Dhin |
| CLOTH, ORDINARY | Cotton, linen or hemp (1 sq m) | Common | 4 Dhin |
| CLOTH, FINE | Silk or satin (1 sq m) | Uncommon | 30 Dhin |
| COLLAR & MANACLES | Solid metal fixings for securing slaves | Common | 35 Dhin |
| COSMETICS | Dyes and paints used for bodily decoration | Common | 10 Dhin |
| FIRE PLOUGH OR DRILL | Two pieces of wood creating friction to light fire | Common | 1 Dhin |
| HARNESS | Straps and fittings for draught animals | Common | 20 Dhin |
| HOOK, GRAPPLING | Curving metal piece | Common | 8 Dhin |
| INCENSE | Aromatic substance and oils (1 pot) | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| INK & DYES | Colours for dying clothes and tattoos (1 jar) | Common | 15 Dhin |
| INSTRUMENT | A variety of musical instruments | Uncommon | 25 Dhin |
| LOCK | Simple fixture, bolt and key or ward lock | Rare | 40 Dhin |
| LOCK PICK | Tools for triggering locking mechanisms | Rare | 15 Dhin |
| MIRROR | Polished reflective copper, stone or glass | Uncommon | 20 Dhin |
| NEEDLE | Used for stitching and tattooing | Common | 2 Dhin |
| OIL, FLASK | One litre of lamp oil | Common | 2 Dhin |
| OIL LAMP, CLAY | Clay lamp with oil for lighting | Common | 5 Dhin |
| OIL LAMP, COPPER | Copper lamp with oil for lighting | Common | 20 Dhin |
| PRAYER BEADS | A string with beads for counting prayers and litanies | Common | 3 Dhin |
| ROPE, HEMP | A twined piece of rope (15m) | Common | 5 Dhin |
| ROPE, SILK | A silk rope (15m) | Rare | 25 Dhin |
| SADDLE | Contrivance for securing mounted riders | Common | 35 Dhin |
| SCALES | A precise merchant's weighing instrument | Rare | 25 Dhin |
| SHEESHA | Device for smoking dried herbs | Common | 25 Dhin |
| SMOKING HERBS | Fragrant herbs used for smoking | Common | 1 Dhin |
| TOOLS, ARTISAN | A variety of tools used for a craft | Common | 30 Dhin |
| TORCH | Portable light source | Common | 1 Dhin |
| VIAL, ORB & BOTTLE | Glass containers | Uncommon | 15 Dhin |
| WAX CANDLE | Wick dipped in tallow or wax to produce light | Common | 1 Dhin |

BEDROLL: Several pieces of canvas, cloth or fabric stitched together to form an enclosing bag shielding a sleeper from the elements. Some versions have an extra layer of padding to keep out the cold and provide additional comfort.

BLANKET: Any piece of cloth, fabric or garment can be used as a blanket to wrap around objects or people.

BIRDCAGE: Enclosure for birds and other aerial creatures; often with enough space for limited flight. Aviaries are used to keep exotic birds on display either for their captivating song or beauty.



BRAZIER: A metal pot containing hot coals or embers in the bottom, braziers are principally used for providing heat, but may also be used for cooking and social rituals.

CENSER: A small container often mounted on a thin chain used for burning incense and other aromatic substances. Often carried and swung from side to side to spread the aromatic odour.

CHAIN: Chains are a series of links interconnected to form a strong yet flexible rope-like object. Links can be fine, crude or heavy depending on the load or weight the chain is made to handle. Heavy chains can typically take D12+6 points of damage before breaking whereas fine chains burst on simple impact. Chains are often attached to collars and manacles for securing slaves and prisoners.

CLIMBING GEAR: This is an assortment of tools used for climbing and scaling sheer surfaces. Attachable claws, picks, harness and ropes are used for securing a firm grip and safely ascend.

CLOTH: Cloth and fabrics are used for a variety of items such a garment, tents, canvas, sails and much more. Varying makes and quality are reflected in the price, but dyes must be added to give colour.

COLLAR & MANACLES: Spirited or rebellious slaves and prisoners are often secured by placing heavy metal collars around their necks and manacles on wrists and ankles. Sometimes collars are made in ornamental silver or copper to display their owner's wealth, at a significant price increase.

COSMETICS: Elaborate patterns applied on the body and face is used for many ceremonial rituals and even required for etiquette and showcasing status within certain castes and districts. Cosmetics also have practical applications for disguises.

FIRE PLOUGH or DRILL: Two pieces of wood or similar material are drilled, ploughed or rubbed quickly together creating heat and embers. Lighting a fire usually takes twenty seconds with proper tinder material.

HARNESS: A set of straps and fittings for fastening and controlling draught animals pulling carts and so on, or for securing cargo and goods.

HOOK: A hook is a bent piece of metal or similar material used to catch other objects. Sometimes attached to a rope or chains and used as a grappling hook. Hooks function as thrown weapons for range and hitting.

INCENSE: An aromatic substance which releases fragrant smoke when burned. Incense is used in ceremonies, meditation and – if particularly potent – can cause intoxicating or drowsiness; typically emulating the buzzed or dazed Delirium effects.

INKS & DYES: Plant, animal and mineral dyes are used for colouring fabrics and can also be used for tattoos, a prominent practice - with both practical and aesthetic implications - in the Eternal City.



INSTRUMENT: Ranging from simple drums and flutes to intricate horns and stringed instruments.

LOCK: Simple mechanisms fashioned from wood or other hard materials used to secure entry and access to rooms, chests and so on. Primarily used by the affluent and high castes, locks consist of a post fixture, a bolt with pins and a type of key to lift the pins into drilled holes or a simple warded lock with only a specific key fitting into it.

LOCK PICK: These tools consist of various prongs, rods and comparable tools used for activating locking mechanisms without the proper key.

MIRROR: Mirrors are reflective surfaces gained from polished stone, glass or metal such as bronze, copper or silver if particularly fine.

NEEDLE: Needles made from metal, bone or other hard material are used for everything from stitching cloth and skin to tattooing.

OIL LAMP: Mainly made from clay, copper or bronze, oil lamps produce light for extended periods using oil to fuel a burning wick. Usually fitted with a handle to allow easy transport, oil lamps are by far the most common light source in the Eternal City. Oil lamps typically illuminate an area of up to four metres radius and remain lit for up to five hours.



PRAYER BEADS: Used by multiple cultures and species to assist in counting prayers, litanies or names of gods, the prayer beads are typically a string with a number of beads – sometimes ornate and sometimes simple – which can be counted using the fingers. Can add +1 to meditation.

ROPE: Made from spun material such as hemp fibre or silk, a rope is used in all aspects of daily life and can carry heavy loads. Silk rope is significantly lighter and sturdier than hemp rope but can be cut relatively easily.

SADDLE: Saddles are implements made for comfort and securing that a rider does not fall of his or her mount. Often customised to fit a specific user and animal, saddles are a relatively costly necessity for riders.



SCALES: A weighing scale consists of two balanced containers. Merchants and traders use balance scales to determine the weight and value of their wares and goods. Scales must be exceedingly precise to work correctly, making them valued and valuable items.

SHEESHA: An exotic instrument for smoking herbs. A burner heats the tobacco or herbs funnelling the vapours through several liquid-filled glass containers before inhalation. Smoking sheesha is a recreational activity often shared among several participants.

SMOKING HERBS: Dried fragrant herbs used for slow burning in a sheesha. While some merely taste good other have intoxicating or delirium-inducing properties - ordinarily emulating the buzzed or dazed Delirium effects

TOOLS: Artisan's tools are implements used in crafts. From shovels and chisels to carpenters tools, looms, and so on. Most crafts require these tools to be feasible at all, and improvised tools apply a -3 penalty.

TORCH: A simple stick of wood or other durable material with a flammable bale attached at the top to maintain a flame for extended periods. A torch illuminates an area up to seven metres radius and burns for up to an hour.

VIAL, ORB & BOTTLE: Various containers made from glass can hold liquids. Ordinary glass is opaque and riddled with air bubbles, but superior quality clear glass can be found at a vastly increased price.

WAX CANDLE: A wick dipped in tallow or wax for extended burn time. A candle will brighten an area of up to two metres and burn for up to an hour.

*There is no life,*
*there is only servitude!*

*– Pleasure slave of Dhiz*

# Clothing

| CLOTHING | DESCRIPTION | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| ABAIA, QAFTAN, CAPE OR CLOAK, HEAVY | A heavy, padded or furred overgarment used to protect the wearer from the elements | Uncommon | 20 Dhin |
| ABAIA, QAFTAN, CAPE OR CLOAK, LIGHT | A light garment used to shield the wearer from wind and rain | Common | 12 Dhin |
| CLOTHES, CEREMONIAL | Robes or other garments used for ritualistic or ceremonial occasions; often decorated or ornamented | Rare | 50 Dhin |
| CLOTHES, FINE | Rich clothes including gloves, shawls and other accessories | Rare | 200 Dhin |
| CLOTHES, REGULAR | Ordinary garments for mid and low castes | Common | 8 Dhin |
| CLOTHES, WILDERNESS | Clothes tailor-made for travelling in the wild; customised for the environment it is made for | Uncommon | 20 Dhin |
| CLOTHES, TRAVELLING | Sturdy clothing made for durability on the road | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| FOOTWEAR, FINE | Ornate sandals, slippers and dainty boots | Rare | 30 Dhin |
| FOOTWEAR, TRAVELLING | Durable shoes and boots with thick soles | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| FOOTWEAR, REGULAR | Practical slippers, sandals, shoes and low boots | Common | 4 Dhin |
| HEADGEAR, HEAVY | Turbans, draped scarfs, shawls, caps and hats covering both the head, face and neck | Common | 4 Dhin |
| HEADGEAR, LIGHT | Light turbans, shawls, caps, hats and other headgear worn for providing shade | Common | 2 Dhin |

ABAIA, QAFTAN, CAPE or CLOAK: A variety of overdresses commonly worn to give added protection against the elements, whether this is scorching sun, heavy rainfall or biting cold. Heavy outer garments will grant a +1 modifier to resist weather and environment effects such as cold.

CLOTHES: Clothing tend to be loose garments such as tunics, jalabiyas (loose robe) and salwars (baggy trousers) mainly made from cotton, linen or silk, with utilitarian workclothes made in a durable but simple and preferable inexpensive material fitted to the species and culture.
The typical outfit for residents of Llyhn is trousers, loose shirt and a sash or loose robes. The wealthy residents of Llyhn have a love for bright and extravagant colours following the whims of fashion, keeping the clothiers busy and charging extravagant costs; the more flamboyant and impractical the better. Suitable wilderness clothing will grant a +1 modifier to resist environment effects.

FOOTWEAR: Light slippers, sandals and dainty boots are everyday footwear in the heat of the Eternal City. Heavy boots and utilitarian footwear is used among low castes and labourers.

HEADGEAR: A variety of headgear is used across the Cosmos. In the Eternal City the turban, kaffiyah, litham shawls and veils are commonly worn to protect the head and occasionally obscure the features of the wearer.



# Containers

| CONTAINERS | DESCRIPTION | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| BAG OR SACK | Made from hemp, leather or fabric this is a simple container for goods and items. | Common | 4 Dhin |
| BARREL OR CASK | Hollow cylindrical container often used to store liquids | Common | 5 Dhin |
| CHEST, SMALL | Small case for keeping personal items | Common | 8 Dhin |
| CHEST, LARGE | Big container for storing goods and possessions | Uncommon | 12 Dhin |
| POUCH | Small container for coins and such | Common | 2 Dhin |
| SADDLE BAG | Container made for transportation on animals | Uncommon | 8 Dhin |
| SATCHEL | A bag with an attached strap for easy carrying | Common | 4 Dhin |
| WATER/WINE SKIN | A soft bag made from skin to hold liquids | Common | 3 Dhin |

BAG or SACK: The most ordinary form of container. Bags take many shapes; most are simple pouches made from cloth, hemp or leather with attached straps for easy carrying. Sacks are typically bigger versions of bags.

BARREL or CASK: Wooden staves secured together with string or bands to form a tubular container. Barrels come in a variety of sizes and typically hold liquids.

CHESTS: Any type of box or case with a lid constitutes a chest. Often made from wood or similar materials, chests occasionally have locking mechanisms at an increased cost.

POUCH: Small bag typically made from cloth or silk used for storing coins and other personal possessions.

SADDLE BAGS: Leather or fabric containers designed for comfortably hanging across the back of an animal, typically made as a balanced pair.

SATCHEL: Made from leather, cloth or similar material satchels are bags fitted with straps for convenient lugging of heavy possessions.

WINESKIN: A sack made from the cured skin of an animal used for holding wine, water or other liquids.

*"Aqthae buys a garment to be used as a disguise in a ruse to gain admittance to a high caste gathering. As the garment is of superior quality, she will gain a +1 modifier in her attempt to masquerade as a high caste. If the garment had been of terrible quality, not only would she have had a -1 penalty, she would also have had a critical failure in her deception attempt on a natural roll of 1 or 2 rather than the normal 1."*



# Physicians Tools

## Remedial Salves, Ointments & Unguents

| Physicians Tools | Description | Effect | Availability | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antidote | Solution to negate venom | Counters poison effects | Rare | Varies |
| Balm | Concoction to stop bleeding | Heals D3 HP within an hour. | Uncommon | 15 Dhin |
| Bandages, cloth | Scraps for binding wounds | Enable healing | Common | 1 Dhin |
| Bandages, silk | Dressings for binding wounds | Allow wounds to heal | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| Bone needle | Needle for surgical needs | Can stop bleeding wounds | Common | 2 Dhin |
| Bone saw | Saw for surgical needs | Used for amputation | Rare | 100 Dhin |
| Cutter | Surgical tool | Cuts skin, diseased flesh, etc. | Rare | 40 Dhin |
| Herbal ointment | Antiseptic ointment | Clears infections | Uncommon | 8 Dhin |
| Poppy juice | Extraction of poppy seeds | Ignore injury and pain penalties | Uncommon | 20 Dhin |
| Salve, remedial | Salve, ointment or unguent | Healing at +1 HP/day | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| Salve, healing | Salve, ointment or unguent | Healing at +D3 HP/day | Rare | 30 Dhin |
| Sinew string | String use in surgery | Used for closing wounds | Common | 1 Dhin |

ANTIDOTE: Most natural poisons and venoms have a remedy, usually distilled from a sample of the poison itself. An antidote will counter and negate the toxic effects within a period ranging from minutes to hours depending on the poison and application. The cost is habitually that of the corresponding poison multiplied by a factor of two or more.

BALM: A concoction of resin or other plant materials with healing properties. When applied to a wound the balm will stop the bleeding and increase the natural healing properties. Once applied to a wound the character will gain D3 Health Points within an hour. A balm also effectively stops bleeding wounds, negating any further effect from such an injury.

BANDAGES: Scraps of cloth or a similar material cut into strips fitting to bind wounds and keep broken limbs in place. A refined version is made from silk, a more sanitary and durable material which needs to be changed less often than regular bandages. Properly applied bandages allow characters to heal Health points up to their Stamina score per day.

BONE NEEDLE: Needles made from carved bones are as useful for sewing cloth and leather in a clothier as skin and flesh on the physician's table. Stitching injuries stops bleeding wounds.



BONE SAW: This tool is made to cut through bone, leaving few splinters and reducing the operating time. Bone saws are used for surgery and amputating limbs to avoid infection.

CUTTER: A variety of very sharp tools used for cutting and slicing skin, muscles, bones and so on as needed by physicians. The cutters have a variety of shapes, sizes and designs depending on their specific area of use. Cutters are used to remove arrowheads, scrape infections from wounds and other surgical procedures.

HERBAL OINTMENT: This ointment or salve holds antiseptic properties that will remove an infection within half the time it was allowed to fester, to a minimum of D6 hours.

POPPY JUICE: Known as 'hul gil' to mankind; poppy juice is dried latex from the poppy plant. Used as an intoxicant, for stupefacient and anaesthesia by physicians. A mild concoction of poppy juice negates penalties from pain or injury for D3 hours. A medium concoction also causes intoxication and impaired judgement while a strong concoction causes the drinker to become unconscious.

SALVE, REMEDIAL: Salves, ointments and unguents made from materials enhancing the natural curative properties of the skin and flesh. Healing salves applied to bandages and wounds will increase the healing by +1 Health Point per day.

SALVE, HEALING: Applied to a wound, this ointment, unguent or salve triggers the natural regenerative processes in the surrounding area speeding up the healing significantly. The character regains D3 additional Health points per full day the salve is applied.

SINEW STRING: A particularly strong cord used by physicians to stitch wounds and in surgery. Its strength ensures any stitches are unlikely to come undone before the physician removes them.



# Scribe Tools

| SCRIBE TOOLS | DESCRIPTION | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| BUTTON SEAL | Small signatory seal to imprint unto a wet clay tablet | Common | 5 Dhin |
| CHISEL & MALLET | Tools for carving out shapes and letters in stone tablets | Common | 5 Dhin |
| CLAY TABLET | A tablet made from wet clay in which to imprint letters and numbers using a stylus (reed pen) | Common | 5/1 Dhin |
| CYLINDER SEAL | A cylindrical signatory device used as a roller stamp | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| INK | A coloured liquid used for writing and drawing on papyrus, cloth and other materials. | Uncommon | 5 Dhin |
| QUILL, FEATHER | A commonly used writing tool for ink | Uncommon | 1 Dhin |
| PAPYRUS | A material made from plant stems used for writing on | Uncommon | 1 Dhin |
| STONE TABLET | A slab of stone prepared for carving of writing or images | Rare | 5 Dhin |
| STYLUS (REED PEN) | A writing utensil typically made from reed | Common | 5/1 Dhin |

BUTTON SEAL: Small metal, stone or bone button or coin-sized seal used either as a signatory seal or to imprint its owners seal unto a wet clay tablet.

CHISEL & MALET: Tools used for shaping stone and carving symbols, letters and shapes into tablets.

CLAY TABLETS: Clay tablets can either be dried in the sun, which leaves them fragile, but reusable as they can be soaked in water and the writing erased. Clay tablets can also be fired in a kiln making them significantly harder and more durable.

CYLINDER SEAL: A small round cylinder engraved with writing or images used for pressing into wet clay leaving an impression. Primarily a signature device, cylinder seals are also used for notarization, as jewellery or hallowed charms to be worn. Cylinder seals are commonly carved from stone or another durable material for longevity.

INK: Liquid containing dye or pigment used for writing, drawing and colouring.

QUILL: A writing instrument made from a feather used with ink to write on materials such as papyrus, wood, cloth or animal skins.

PAPYRUS: Produced from stems of reed plants this material is turned into sheets for writing. Several connected sheets can be formed into a scroll for extended texts or imagery.

STONE TABLET: The most durable of materials for writing, the process of carving the text into the hard stone, however, is long, cumbersome and requires significant skill.

STYLUS: Styluses are writing utensil made from reed, bone, wood or metal for increased durability. The stylus' wedge-shaped point is pressed into soft clay, forming letters.



*Raahem Zil'Ahbed stuck his stylus into the soft clay again, leaving small triangular marks dancing across the uneven surface. The little depressions connected into legible inscriptions as his hands moved quickly. The tall man was unnaturally gaunt for his age, having taken with the gulletcough as a child which rendered him quite frail and sickly for most of his life. Until he had found...found it. The cloth-draped stone tablet was somewhat illuminated by the flickering light from a cracked oil lamp upon his table as Raahem translated the strange icons that filled the surface of the ancient stone, taking painstaking care to ensure that each etching was crisp and precise. He had suffered many failed attempts with this recitation, but now with the proper translation, he believed it would work. He stood, and with the aid of his gangly staff, his ragged robes rustling on the stamped dirt floor of his insignificant hovel within the heart of Dhaarese, he arranged the ceremonial paraphernalia in their supposed ordained order. Leaning over his table, Raahem glanced across the still wet clay tablet, reciting the tuitions in his mind and eying the wave-bladed ceremonial knife next to it. Standing silently in dazed uncertainty, Raahem slowly lifted the knife and drew it across his wrist, letting the blood spurt onto the tablet as he began to chant....*

# Lodgings & Fare

| Lodgings & Fare | Description | Availability | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bread, loaf | A loaf of flat bread is the root daily meal | Common | 1 Dhin |
| Lodging, ordinary | Lodging in a shared room | Common | 5 Dhin |
| Lodging, fine | Private room with amenities | Rare | 50 Dhin |
| Lodging, poor | Sleeping in the common room under a rag | Common | 2 Dhin |
| Meal, bland | A basic meal of meat, vegetables and bread | Common | 2 Dhin |
| Meal, exceptional | An extraordinary meal of exotically prepared dishes | Rare | 20 Dhin |
| Meal, good | A well-cooked meal of several dishes | Uncommon | 8 Dhin |
| Meal, poor | Porridge or gruel | Common | 1 Dhin |
| Rations, trail | A basic ration of bread, cuts of meat and cheese | Common | 2 Dhin |
| Spirits | A flask of strong liquor | Uncommon | 16 Dhin |
| Wine, bland | A bottle of mediocre wine | Common | 2 Dhin |
| Wine, good | A decanter of good wine | Uncommon | 16 Dhin |
| Wine, exceptional | A carafe of exceptional vintage | Rare | 30 Dhin |
| Water | A jar of water | Common | 1 Dhin |

BREAD: Bread is a base necessity for survival, and the price is therefore used as an everyday gauge for wages.

LODGING: Accommodation at a guesthouse customarily includes a place to sleep and a meal. Poor accommodation is sleeping on the floor in the common room close to the fire under a raggedy blanket and eating porridge or stale bread. Ordinary lodging includes sleeping on a stuffed mattress in a shared room and eating a mixed meal of fish or meat, served with vegetables and garnish. Fine accommodation consists of a private room with water and latrine facilities along with a supper of several dishes accompanied by entertainment.

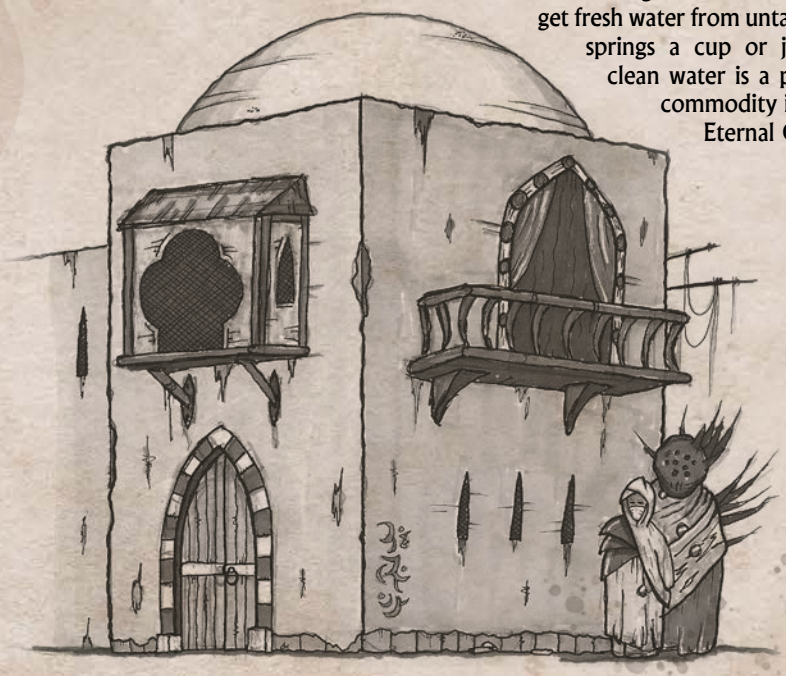
MEAL: Much of the population gets by on porridge, stale bread and the occasional vegetable which makes up most poor meals. Bland meals usually consist of a stew or a mix of meat, vegetables and bread. Good meals are made up of several dishes of varying flavours to satisfy the palate. Exceptional meals are feasts of flavours, textures and aromas.

RATIONS: A meal consisting of long-lasting foodstuffs such as biscuits, cheese, dried meats and the like.

SPIRITS: A distilled beverage that has already gone through alcoholic fermentation. Liquor is typically strong and flavourful with high alcohol levels easily leading to intoxication when consumed.

WINE: As much of the water is contaminated by germs and bacteria wine or watered wine is commonly consumed in the Eternal City. Bland and poor wine is the norm among the low castes while the high castes and aristocracy satiate their delicate palates on delectable vintages.

WATER: Sold in the streets by water vendors travelling outside the city to get fresh water from untainted springs a cup or jar of clean water is a prized commodity in the Eternal City.



# Pets & domestic animals

| ANIMALS | DESCRIPTION | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| ANIMAL, GUARD | An animal trained for protection | Rare | 100 Dhin |
| ANIMAL, HUNTING | A trained animal used for hunting | Uncommon | 150 Dhin |
| ANIMAL, MESSENGER | An animal trained for delivering messages | Uncommon | 80 Dhin |
| ANIMAL, TRAINED | An animal trained to entertain | Rare | 150 Dhin |
| PET, DOMESTIC | A tame animal species kept as a pet | Common | 10 Dhin |
| PET, EXOTIC | A wild animal semi-domesticated and kept as a pet | Uncommon | 300 Dhin |

ANIMAL, GUARD: Some animals are naturally protective and with training serve wells as guardians and companions.

ANIMAL, HUNTING: Certain animals can be trained for hunting various game. Typical hunting animals include predatory mammals and birds.

ANIMAL, MESSENGER: Select species of animals have excellent navigational sense and can find their way home from anywhere. Such animals are often utilised for carrying written messages between people and places.

ANIMAL, TRAINED: Some animals are trained to perform tricks and entertain spectators with their displays.

PET, DOMESTIC: These pets are domesticated species kept for companionship, pleasure or status.

PET, EXOTIC: These are wild animals that have been caught young and kept as domesticated. They may be placated and trained, but they usually retain their wild nature.





# Infusions & Teas



| Infusions & Teas | Description | Effect | Availability | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Algae Infusion | Ogé ocean harvested | Improves endurance | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| Kuld Tea | Local Llyhn infusion | Numbness | Uncommon | 50 Dhin |
| Sanké Tea | Kandahiran tea | Drowsiness, stupor and delirium | Uncommon | 50 Dhin |
| Shev Tea | Kandahiran tea | Attentiveness | Rare | 75 Dhin |
| Tea, Herbal | Aromatic hot drink | Reduce fever and pain-induced penalties | Common | 12 Dhin |
| Tea, Curative | Hot perfumed brew | Heal D3 HP within 12 hours. | Uncommon | 16 Dhin |
| Tea, Remedial | Fragrant hot beverage | Clears disease | Common | 8 Dhin |
| Yigi Infusion | Grown on Ing | Eliminate infections | Rare | 25 Dhin |

ALGAE INFUSION: Algae known to improve endurance are harvested from the oceans of Ogé at particular seasons when the flavour and abundance are at their peak. The infusion grants +1 Stamina for D3 hours.

KULD TEA: Plucked from the early buds of little tea bushes grown by reticent peasants high in the foothills of the Pe'Rep'ial Peaks, this infusion numbs the senses making the drinker impervious to pain. The drinker gains the High pain threshold Talent for D3 hours.

SANKÉ TEA: Grown only in the Je'ehl empire, Sanké is a rare white tea made from unfurled leaf buds of the tea bush. This tea is known for aiding sleep and relaxation, inducing pleasant sensations. Specially treated and condensed varieties can cause phantasms and neurosis. The effects last for D6 hours.
The regular infusion causes drowsiness and slumber - Stamina roll [7].
Refined varieties may induce stupor - Stamina roll [7]: Delirium effects <7.
Condensed varieties can cause delirium - Stamina roll [7]: all Delirium effects.

SHEV TEA: Plucked from mature bushes on the slopes of sacred mountains on Kandahir, this tea is known to awaken the senses of the drinker. The infusion grants the Alertness Talent for D6 hours.

TEA, HERBAL: An aromatic drink prepared from herbs or cured leaves boiled in water. Ingestion reduces fever and pain. The herbal tea negates all natural physical action penalties for up to an hour after drinking it.

TEA, CURATIVE: This tea triggers the regenerative properties and allows the body to heal injuries quicker than usual. Once ingested characters regain D3 Health Points during the next twelve hours.

TEA, REMEDIAL: A fragrant tea which reduces symptoms of disease and illness. If the tea works against a given disease, induced penalties are halved within D6 hours and disappear entirely within 2D12 hours.
Regular disease: alleviated on 3+
Common disease: eased on 6+
Rare disease: improved on 9+
Exotic disease: diminished on 12+

YIGI INFUSION: This speciality infusion from the plains of Ing is made by rolling a rare moss into small tightly formed balls and soaking them in boiling water for hours. Yigi has a bright yellow hue, a robust taste and a bitter aftertaste. The infusion gives a +3 modifier when rolling to eliminate infections.

*The muted light of the suns shone down on the numerous alleyways and streets of Llyhn, murky from the clouds of dust from the surrounding Barrens. Jayana payed it no mind, going about her business of selling Gissi petals and beans to any who might pass by. The young woman wore scant rags draped suggestively so as to lure in customers who might be more interested in flesh rather than flowers. A torn abaiya hid the marks of Void taint covering the left side of her body but doing little to conceal their lurid purple glow at night. Jayana saw a great deal of different people and sold to many different customers. Her Gissi plants was well grown, hidden within a sunken area of Shallowwater - Ba'Waihk, Ka'Alum, Je'ehl, Harith, even some of the rare Oord would sometimes seek her out. All it took was the right amount of coin, and she would provide. A tall gaunt figure came up to Jayana, towering above her and looked down at the Gissi blossoms she held to conceal the beans in the bottom of the basket. A long-fingered hand, each finger four joints, reached out and delicately picked out one of the larger beans from under the petals, the other coming from behind its back with a small pouch. "For you, my dear," the being rasped, its voice chilling the usually stalwart Jayana. She nodded her thanks, and as the figure strode away, she opened the bag. She screamed and dropped it as ten perfectly polished blue-black eyes rolled onto the dusty street...*



# Poisons & Venoms

| POISONS | DESCRIPTION | EFFECT | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ASURA TEARS | 30-60 minutes | Nausea, convulsions, pain, cramps and death | Very Rare | 320 Dhin |
| DUSK REED | 3-9 hours | Vomiting, seizures and death | Rare | 180 Dhin |
| GISSI BEANS | 1-15 minutes | Irritated skin, cramps and paralysis | Uncommon | 80 Dhin |
| NIGHT ROOT | 2-4 hours | Impaired vision, blindness | Rare | 140 Dhin |
| PIT PEAS | 5-20 minutes | Tremors and pain | Uncommon | 90 Dhin |
| ROACH RANCOUR | 0-10 minutes | Dizziness, convulsions, fainting | Uncommon | 60 Dhin |
| VOID KISS | 0-10 minutes | Sanity loss and Madness | Very rare | 120 Dhin |
| VULTURE ROOT | 1-6 days | Nausea, weakness, discomfort and death | Very rare | 240 Dhin |

ASURA TEARS: This beautiful plant famed for its striking flowers also carries an incredibly potent poison. If the crown leaves are ingested various detrimental effects soon take effect. Only fresh flowers, however, contain poison as the toxins wane just hours after the plant is picked. A Stamina roll [12] is required to avoid harsh effects, and even then nausea is induced for up to D3 days after ingestion. Make a roll to determine cumulative effects every D3 hours until the victim is either cured or dead:
1-4: Pain, the victim suffers -1 penalties to all actions.
5-8: The victim suffers from moderate cramps (Flaw).
9-11: The victim will experience severe cramps (Flaw).
12: The victim loses D6 Health Points.

DUSK REED: The dried and crushed seeds of young dusk reeds is highly poisonous, causing vomiting, seizures and potentially death. A stamina roll [9] negates any detrimental effects. Three to nine hours after ingestion the victim begins to vomit and soon suffers from seizures where her entire body becomes paralysed for D3 minutes at a time [6]. D12 hours after the first signs of poisoning the organs begin to fail, causing death after another D3 hours unless treated.

GISSI BEANS: The pulp of the Gissi bean is poisonous and when smeared on the skin causes irritation and blisters that itch and hurt (-1 penalty). If ingested randomly occurring severe cramps are quick to follow unless a Stamina roll [9] is successfully made. After D3 hours of cramps, the body goes into almost comatose paralysis lasting D6 hours after which the victim reawakens without further effects.

NIGHT ROOT: This crushed, distilled and refined root causes impaired vision and even blindness if it comes into contact with the bloodstream of a victim. Make a Stamina roll [7] or suffer -3 penalty to all visual checks and actions requiring sight as the vision becomes blurry and cloudy. If the poison goes untreated for 12+ hours, another roll is necessary, or the victim may lose her sight completely.

PIT PEAS: These small hard shells are found in arid regions growing on thorny bushes in gorges and fissures. While the peas are not poisonous if intact, peas that are scratched, broken or chewed most certainly are. In this state, any direct contact with skin transfers the poison causing tremors in the victim as the poison attacks the nerves and muscles. Within twenty minutes slight tremors cause the victim a -1 penalty to any physical actions. Over time the tremors increase and pain begins setting in, adding another point to the generated penalty every hour. After D12 hours the tremors will start to subside at the same rate as they began.

ROACH RANCOUR: A particularly vile roach species found in the sewers of the Eternal City excrete a putrid mucus from their back to ward off predators. The mucus is so foul-smelling that a Willpower roll [7] is required for anyone to go near the roach. Should anyone consume the roach and mucus, an immediate Stamina roll [7] is necessary to avoid dizziness and disorientation. Repeat the roll every 15 minutes for D3 hours and for every consecutive failure the victim will suffer a -1 penalty to physical actions due to dizziness. For every success, the symptoms subside slightly removing a penalty point. If a victim rolls a critical failure or four consecutive fails convulsions leading to a loss of consciousness for D6x10 minutes follows.

VOID KISS: This revolting poison is developed from a moss-like growth found only where the Void emanates into the Cosmos. Ground and distilled a few ingested drops are enough to cause madness in the victim. A Stamina roll [7] is required to avoid the effects. If the roll is failed, the victim loses one (1) Sanity point and must make a roll on the Madness chart. For each drop administered, a +1 modifier is added to the Madness roll.

VULTURE ROOT: This root is permeated with deadly toxins and generates potentially fatal symptoms in anyone unfortunate enough to eat it. Its toxins are so potent that they spread into other materials such as liquids if the root is exposed for an extended period. The signs of poisoning are slow and appear only after a period ranging from one up to six days, making it difficult to trace the origin. Discomfort, nausea and weakness are symptoms of vulture root poisoning, and if left untreated the poisoning will eventually lead to death. A solution of vulture root requires a Stamina roll [6-9] depending on the distillation to avoid the effect, while consumption of the root itself requires a Stamina roll [12]. As the poison begins acting the victim becomes progressively emaciated (Flaw) each D3 days, after which the victim begins to daily lose D3 Health Points permanently, leaving her weakened even if she should manage to survive.

# Services & Labour

In the Eternal City any type of labour can be bought if the price is right. This list provides an overview of the most common worker and servant roles required for hiring.

| SERVICE | DESCRIPTION | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| BLOODLETTING RITUAL | Offer of boons and blessings | Rare | 100+/ritual |
| COURTESAN | Hired entertainment and company | Rare | 50+/day |
| CRAFTSMAN | Skilled worker | Uncommon | 20+/day |
| GUARD/MERCENARY | Offers protection and safety | Uncommon | 20+/day |
| GUIDE | Provides directions and information | Uncommon | 10/day |
| LABOURER | Unskilled worker | Common | 1/day |
| PHYSICIAN | Provides healing and remedial services | Rare | 30+/usage |
| SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION | Offers an omen reading | Rare | 100+/ritual |
| SCRIBE | Offers scholarly services | Rare | 20/day |
| SLAVE, LABOUR | Unskilled menial worker | Common | 50+ |
| SLAVE, GLADIATOR | Provides entertainment, status and betting | Rare | 500+ |
| SLAVE, HOUSE | Attendants and servants | Uncommon | 250+ |
| SLAVE, PLEASURE | Placates desires and provide comfort | Rare | 500+ |
| SLAVE, EDUCATED | Provides scholarly services and tuition | Very rare | 1000+ |

BLOODLETTING RITUAL: Blood ritualists can be hired to perform bloodlettings bestowing clients with the boons and fortunes of the sacrosanct blood. The client is expected to provide the sacrifice with the service cost depending on the scale of the ritualistic sacrifice as well as the capabilities of the ritualist.

COURTESAN: Courtesans are educated and sophisticated women who provide companionship for wealthy patrons. Courtesans are known for their conversational skill, eruditeness, artistic affinity and physical aptitudes. Courtesans are typically hired for a set period of time or to attend a specific event.

CRAFTSMAN: Trained within a trade, craftsmen are artisans; tradesmen and manufacturers. Characters can hire craftsmen to provide services within their given field. Craftsmen include carpenters, smiths and the like.

GUARD / MERCENARY: Guards and sell-swords need to be tough, capable and steadfast to survive and prosper within their trade. Unguarded property attracts thieves and their ilk, as carrion draws vultures, which is why those proficient with weapons are always in high demand.

GUIDE: Guides provide service for caravans, travellers and explorers, but city guides can also be vital assets to newcomers trying to find their way around the Eternal City. A guide usually has a designated territory which he or she knows comprehensively, being able to provide safe and quick passage for clients.

LABOURER: Common labourers work as porters, carriers, builders, field-hands, road pavers and any other menial task which does not require specialised skills. Labourer crews and individuals can be hired on a daily basis from various stalls and markets across the Eternal City. Hiring begins at dawn, and the most capable teams are booked rapidly.



PHYSICIAN: Physicians are trained in the healing arts and are educated about anatomy, disease and injuries. Utilising herbal treatments, simple surgery and occasionally blood rituals or mysticism, they treat the ailments of those who can afford their services. Physicians often have a workshop where they can be sought out, while a few peddle their craft in bazaars and squares providing house-calls to patrons and clients. Physicians typically wear a horned crown of divinity, indicating their ability to nourish life.

SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION: Ritualists can be hired to perform sacrificial divination; reading omens from a sacrifice brought by the client. The ritualist may be approached beforehand and inquired about the proposed size and potency of a sacrifice in order to get satisfactory portents. Price varies depending on the complexity of the inquiry and the resulting scale of the ritual as well as the capabilities of the ritualist.



*Crossed fate,*
*a spinster's skein is broken,*
*a world is consumed,*
*the flame splutters and flickers dying,*
*A weight must be carried.*

*– The last words of the Mad Prophet Urtu*

SCRIBE: Scribes have many functions within an administration. Trained in writing, arithmetic and record keeping, they manage contracts, accounts and archives. Scribes can be hired for specific small tasks at a set cost, for a designated period or long term.

SLAVE, LABOUR: Labour slaves are the cheapest and most common of slaves in Llyhn; they work the fields and mines, carry goods and perform many of the menial tasks for the higher castes of Llyhn. Labour slaves are often from among unenlightened species or less advanced species used to demanding physical work.

SLAVE, GLADIATOR: Gladiator slaves are usually brawny, weapons-trained or both and function either as part of their owner's protection detail or as pit fighters for their owner's pleasure or investment. Having a successful gladiator slave from a rare species is a status symbol of immense value among the high castes of Llyhn. Keeping these slaves loyal is of the utmost importance, and they are often granted special privileges, which may even exceed the living standards of free residents of the city.

SLAVE, HOUSE: House slaves perform various tasks in households, mansions, temples and palaces, where they often function as servants, cooks, cleaners, bookkeepers and other service staff. These slaves come from almost any species or background but generally tend to have skills within a trade.

SLAVE, PLEASURE: Pleasure slaves are used as entertainers, performers and attendants as well as for pleasures of the flesh, should their owner wish it. Particular talented or beautiful pleasure slaves are highly valued and treated as trophies to be displayed to others, honouring their owner's house.

SLAVE, EDUCATED: Educated slaves are the rarest and often serve as tutors for children, overseers of entire households or as specialised retainers for their owner. These slaves are usually valued members of their owner's staff.

# Beasts of Burden & Riding Animals

| ANIMAL | SIZE | MOVEMENT | CARRYING CAPACITY | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AKOPI | Medium | 12 | 120 kg | Uncommon | 180 |
| BEETLE, DRAUGHT | Large | 5 | 500 kg | Common | 300 |
| BEETLE, MASSIVE | Huge | 5 | 800 kg | Uncommon | 450 |
| BEETLE, RIDING | Medium | 5 | 120 kg | Common | 400 |
| MARUD OXEN | Large | 7 | 250 kg | Common | 150 |
| NATHALIIN | Large | 8 | 350 kg | Uncommon | 450 |
| PETHALA | Medium | 18 | 120 kg | Common | 250 |
| TIPAR | Medium | 8 | 180 kg | Common | 150 |

Most sentient species use tamed creatures as mounts and draught animals carrying heavy loads and supplying transport. In a hub such as the Eternal City myriad beasts serve, and while they are impossible to catalogue exhaustively, below are the most common specimens used across the city.







### AKOPI

The blue-tongued akopi are a species of quadruped herbivore standing about as tall as a human at the shoulders. The distinctive reddish-brown fur, soft back quills as well as striped hindquarters and legs make them easily recognisable while serving as camouflage in their natural forest habitat. Akopi are caught in the dense jungle and foothills surrounding Llyhn and over time domesticated to serve as mounts. Akopi are easily trained, known to have excellent vision in low light conditions and can use their short hair-covered horns for defence making them prized mounts for wilderness travelling.

### BEETLES

Large beetles have been domesticated and used as draught animals in Llyhn and many different worlds. Their compliant demeanour, combined with considerable strength and stamina, make them an ideal draught animal. All beetles share basic anatomy of six legs and a hard exoskeleton but vary immensely in size, colouration and head structures. Protected by a thick carapace shell and able to carry fairly heavy loads beetles make imposing and reliable mounts. Domesticated beetles have typically lost the ability to fly through planned breeding, whereas many riding beetles have retained functioning wings and are regularly used for flying transportation. In some specimens, the mandibles are enlarged while others have horns or spikes protruding from their heads or thorax. As male beetles tend to be territorial, they are rarely used as draught animals but frequently used in staged fights for entertainment or wagering.

### MARUD OXEN

Marud oxen are a breed of sturdy oxen brought down from the Pe'rep'ial Peaks and foothills surrounding the jungles of Llyhn and domesticated for labour, mounts and food. They generally stand over four cubits tall at the shoulder with massive muscular bodies built to withstand the harsh mountain climate. Marud have large heads and long curved horns with bone-plated foreheads and while the wild specimens have long thick featherlike fur domesticated lowland specimens tend to lose this in the heat.




NATHALIIN

Indigenous to Jarai the Nathaliin are large, long-legged amphibians perfectly acclimatised to hot, arid regions, as they are heat tolerant and able to absorb humidity from the atmosphere; making them ideal mounts and draught animals for the desert-dwelling Aq-'Jarea nomads. Brought to the Eternal City by the Bedouins they managed to adapt to the humid conditions and quickly became a favoured mount of many species due to their docile temperament and impressive carrying capabilities.

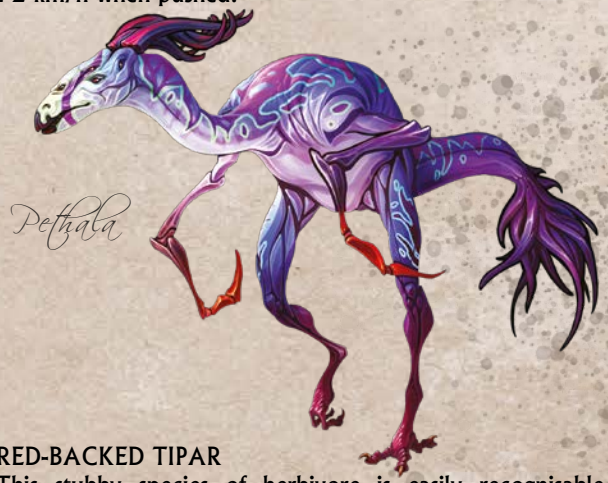
Nathaliin have relatively bulky bodies atop six long spindly legs ending in flat feet making them easily able to find footing even in very loose terrain. Their necks are elongated and lithe with the head often hanging close to the ground sniffing for food. The Nathaliin have four tendrils protruding from their nose bridges, which skim along the ground picking up scents allowing it to smell water and food from great distances. Their elongated heads have strong jaws with baleen plates covering the inside of the mouth making them able to sift through sand filtering out small insects and plants, which is their primary source of food. Nathaliin are covered in uneven sandy grey scales and have a rigid bluish speckled frill running along the back of the neck up to the shoulder of the first pair of legs. Similar - but shorter - frills run along the back of each leg.




PETHALA

Pethala are big two-legged herbivores known for their great agility and speed. They have long lean legs ending in a three-digit foot, and a wide body with several pereiopod appendages distended from the chest area; used for passing food from the ground to the mouth. Atop a long flexible neck sits the elongated head, crowned with an impressive crest or other protrusions in the male specimens. The Pethala has eight eyes sitting along the skull giving it excellent forwards as well as peripheral vision. Its mouth is relatively large and although it can bite hard its flat teeth are meant for grazing and crushing plant fibres; little damage is ever caused. A thick tail ends in brushy strands used for keeping balance and direction when running. A fully grown Pethala weighs a hundred and fifty kilogrammes and can grow up to six cubits tall, although this is rare. Its body is covered in thick leathery skin, the males usually displaying vivid patterns, while the females are more earthy brown, yellow and red in hue.

Pethala are herd animals that are very sought after as mounts because of their willingness to carry riders as well as their ability to traverse most firm terrain types rather effortlessly. They can easily trot at 18 km/h and can reach speeds up to 72 km/h when pushed.




RED-BACKED TIPAR

This stubby species of herbivore is easily recognisable by its short trunk, sensory appendages and coat of short horizontally stripped-and-spotted reddish-brown fur. Although reluctant to carry riders, tipars are superb pack animals due to their sturdy physique. Moreover, despite a clumsy appearance they are able to run quite fast. Tipars have thick skin and strong jaws capable of inflicting severe injury if they become spooked or cornered. Tipars fare equally well at night or day as six long appendages serving as sensory organs making up for their rather poor eyesight. They also rely heavily on their sensitive ears and a strong sense of smell to detect surroundings and danger.



# Weaponry

To hunt, attack others or defend themselves, sentient beings have always used weapons. The Cosmos is a dangerous place and only the foolish dare venture unarmed. Llyhn bears no exception, as violent conflict is a daily hazard. Available weaponry is thus vast and exotic, reflecting the diversity of the many species that call Llyhn home. This chapter presents the most common arms to be found in Llyhn and in the main worlds accessible from there. The weapons are categorised into groups (i.e. swords, spears, etc.), and although variations may occur within each group, the general properties and applications of all weapons within a group remain virtually the same. In short, each group description illustrates the characteristics of a standard item of the group in question.

## Weapon Quality

The fabrication and condition of a weapon naturally influence its performance. Dull blades, unwieldy shapes and poor manufacture are detrimental factors, while balanced and well-maintained weapons are much more effective. Five fundamental quality levels directly affect the functionality and price of any given weapon: Terrible, poor, basic, superior and exceptional (see table below). The purchasing price of a weapon can be calculated by finding the amount in the Weaponry table and applying the cost factor below.

| QUALITY | MODIFIER | COST ADJ |
|---|---|---|
| TERRIBLE | -1 penalty to all attack, damage and speed rolls | X0,25 |
| POOR | -1 penalty to one factor (attack, damage or speed) | X0,50 |
| BASIC | No modifiers | - |
| SUPERIOR | + 1 bonus modifier one factor (attack or damage) | X5 |
| EXCEPTIONAL | + 1 to attack and damage | X25 |

## Availability

Not all types of weapons are easily accessible, and as such, locating a particular item can prove to be somewhat challenging. Each weapon group follows the overall availability groups, indicating how accessible it generally is.

## Weapon Designations

For gaming purposes, each weapon group has been given a set of designations with corresponding figures determining the qualities, characteristics and potential effects of a weapon. The designations are presented in the weaponry list and are as follows: Type, size, range, damage potential and properties.

*Type* indicates whether a weapon is a melee, a missile or a thrown weapon. A melee weapon is used in close-quarter combat (hand-to-hand), where opponents are generally within grappling distance of one another. A missile weapon is a ranged weapon, which propels an arrow or another type of ammunition at a target. A thrown weapon is any ranged weapon propelled solely by the strength of the user. The type of a weapon determines its traditional use. However, it is important to note that some weapons can be used in more than one way. The javelin is a good example, as, despite being designated as a missile weapon, it can also be used as a short spear in melee.




The *size* of a weapon determines its bulk, and therefore the Strength score needed to use it efficiently. The noted weapon sizes are based on weaponry fabricated to fit human-sized beings, while weapons suited to other sized creatures would have different corresponding sizes. Should the combatant lack the required strength score indicated by the weapon size, a -1 penalty must be applied to initiative and attack rolls for each difference between the two scores. Example: *Nadh has lost his weapon in the middle of combat and desperately picks up a glaive lying on the ground. With a strength score of 2, he does not meet the strength requirements of wielding such a weapon and will suffer a -1 penalty to all initiative and attack rolls with the glaive due to the difference of 1 between the weapon size and his strength score.*

*Range* determines how far a reach each weapon has. Hand-to-hand weapons can only be used against opponents in proximity to the wielder, while hurled and thrown weapons have greater range and propelled missile weapons can hit targets at much further distances. This is illustrated by range categories. There are three range categories for melee weapons: Close, adjacent and near. Close range indicates that the weapon has only as much reach as the wielder's arm length, usually a one-metre radius from the wielder. Daggers, knuckledusters and such would typically fall under this category. Adjacent indicates weapons with longer reach than the hand itself, such as swords, picks and axes, giving the wielder up to two metres reach. Near range designates shafted and other handheld weapons with extended reach such as spears, whips, glaives and other pole-arms. These usually have a reach of up to four metres and can be used within adjacent range as well.

As noted above the range of thrown weapons relies on the character's strength score, while missile weapons have fixed ranges, as shown in the weapon description. There are three range categories for missile and thrown weapons: short, medium and long range. For ranged attacks, penalties will be applied to attack rolls illustrating the increased difficulty of hitting far away targets. Short range attacks incur no roll modifier. Attacks aimed at targets in medium range suffer a -1 penalty to the attack roll, while long-range attacks entail a -2 penalty to the roll.

The effective range of thrown weapons is determined by adding the strength score to the size of the weapon and multiplying it as shown below: Short Range: (Strength + weapon size) x 3 | Medium Range: (Strength + weapon size) x 6 | Long Range: (Strength + weapon size) x 9
Example: Fharuq is targeting a Darveesh mercenary standing approximately 30 metres away with his javelin. Fharuq has a strength score of 4, resulting in a short range of 21 metres [(Strength 4 + weapon size 3) x3], which means that he will have a -1 penalty to his attack roll as the Darveesh mercenary is within medium range.

Each weapon comes with a predefined *damage potential*, which indicates the amount of injury the weapon inflicts when an attack is successful, by designating the die or dice to be rolled when causing damage. A character's Strength modifier also affects the damage, unless otherwise stated in the weapon description. Once the damage roll has been made Strength modifiers and penalties are applied, and the victim reduces the Health points accordingly.
Example: Nadh successfully strikes his opponent with the glaive he picked up and must now roll to determine how much injury the hit causes. A glaive causes 2D6 damage and the dice come up a total of 7. Nadh, however, has a Strength score of 2 conferring a -1 penalty to all damage rolls. His opponent, therefore, suffers 6 points of damage and reduces his Health score accordingly.

*Properties* describe any attributes a weapon might possess, such as being particularly useful for parrying, piercing armour, bashing opponents to the ground and so forth. While some weapon groups have intrinsic properties (all bows generically have the piercing property, for instance), others can be modified and enhanced to attain new or additional properties.



*As your eyes grow lifeless*
*and you stare into oblivion , I ask you this:*
*Where is your saviour now?*

*– Khani, subsequent to the slaughter on La'Atzu*

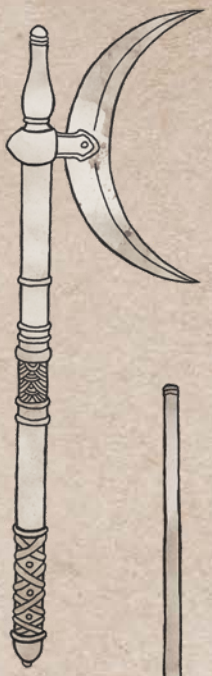


# Weapons List



| NAME | TYPE | SIZE | RANGE | DAMAGE | PROPERTIES | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BATTLE AXE | Melee | 4 | Adjacent | 2D6 | - | Rare | 60 |
| BLOWPIPE | Missile | 1 | 10/20/30 | D2 | (poison) | Common | 3 |
| BOLAS | Thrown | 2 | Thrown | D4 | Entangle | Uncommon | 5 |
| BOW | Missile | 4 | 50/75/100 | D6 | Piercing [2], two-handed, Nocking | Common | 60 |
| CLAWS | Melee | 1 | Close | D4 | - | Rare | 10 |
| CLUB | Melee | 2 | Adjacent | D6 | Knockdown | Common | 2 |
| COMPOSITE BOW | Missile | 5 | 75/150/200 | D12 | Piercing [3], two-handed, Nocking | Rare | 150 |
| COMPOSITE SHORT BOW | Missile | 4 | 40/80/120 | D12 | Piercing [3], two-handed, Nocking | Rare | 75 |
| DAGGER | Melee | 1 | Close | D4 | - | Common | 10 |
| DARTS | Thrown | 1 | Thrown | D3 | (poison) | Uncommon | 5 |
| FLAIL | Melee | 3 | Adjacent | D12 | Disarm \| Flexible | Rare | 30 |
| GLAIVE | Melee | 3 | Near | 2D6 | Two-handed | Common | 35 |
| GLASS ORB | Thrown | 1 | Thrown | - | (acid, gas or poison) | Very Rare | 80 |
| GREAT AXE | Melee | 5 | Near | 2D12 | Knockdown, two-handed | Very rare | 80 |
| GREAT SWORD | Melee | 4 | Near | 2D12 | Two-handed | Very rare | 110 |
| HALBERD | Melee | 4 | Near | 2D6 | Two-handed, piercing/ + 1 dmg | Rare | 50 |
| HAND AXE | Melee | 2 | Adjacent | D6 | - | Common | 20 |
| JAVELIN | Thrown | 3 | Thrown | D12 | Piercing [1] | Common | 15 |
| MACE | Melee | 3 | Adjacent | D12 | Knockdown | Uncommon | 30 |
| PICK (CROWBILL) | Melee | 3 | Adjacent | D12 | Piercing [1] | Uncommon | 35 |
| POLE ARMSW | Melee | 4 | Near | 2D6 | Two-handed | Rare | 45 |
| SHORT BOW | Missile | 3 | 25/50/75 | D6 | Piercing [2], two-handed, Nocking | Common | 30 |
| SHORT SWORD | Melee | 2 | Adjacent | D6 | Parry | Uncommon | 30 |
| SLING | Thrown | 2 | Thrown | D3 | (acid or poison) | Common | 2 |
| SPEAR | Melee | 3 | Near | D12 | Piercing [1] | Common | 20 |
| STAFF | Melee | 3 | Near | D6 | Knockdown, two-handed | Common | 2 |
| SWORD | Melee | 3 | Adjacent | D12 | Parry | Uncommon | 50 |
| WHIP | Melee | 2 | Near | D3 | Disarm, entangle, flexible | Common | 10 |

## Weapon descriptions

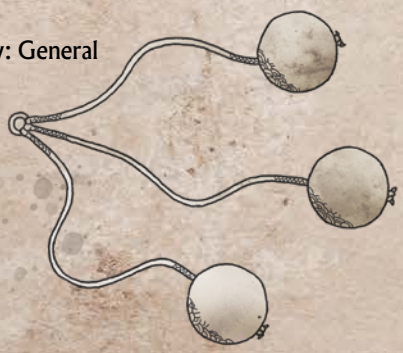


BATTLE AXE
The battle axe is a brutal weapon designed to cause massive amounts of damage. It comes in numerous shapes and sizes, with a wooden or metal shaft and a mounted blade, ranging from the conventional triangular blade to long or broad curved blades, inverted crescent-shaped blades and even forked blades. Due to its cumbersome handling, the battle axe is traditionally utilised by proficient warriors and very few others.
Size: 4
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: 2D6
Properties:
Enhancement category: Bladed, general and shafted.

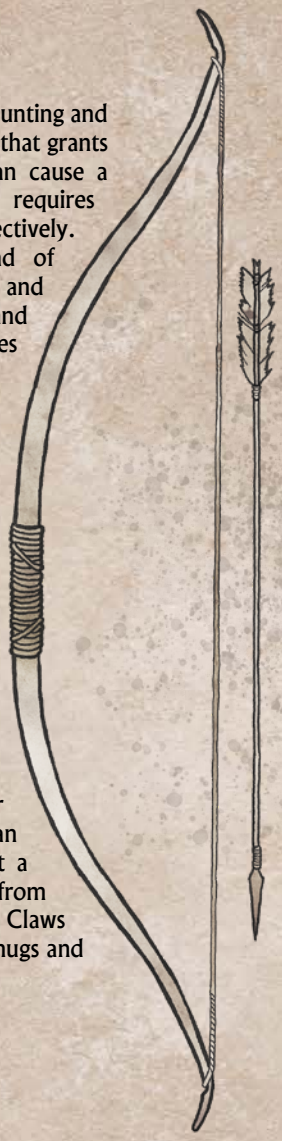
BLOWPIPE
The blowpipe is a rare sight amongst the common populace of any civilised world, as it is primarily used for hunting small game. A simple tube, designed to fire light projectiles or darts, the blowpipe is easy to use but difficult to master. The projectiles are often poisoned, as they cause little damage otherwise. Those relying on stealth and secrecy for attack occasionally use this weapon.
Size: 1
Range: Ranged (10/20/30)
Damage: D2
Properties: Poison darts
Enhancement category: General



BOLAS
The bolas is a throwing weapon consisting of two or more weights connected by rope, cords or similar material. They are thrown with the intention of entangling legs, arms or weapons, thereby hindering movement or disabling an opponent. Bolas thrown with enough force may inflict damage upon the target in addition to entanglement.
Size: 2
Range: Thrown (varies)
Damage: D4
Properties: Entangle
Enhancement category: General



BOW
A bow is a common tool used for hunting and warfare alike. It is a prized weapon that grants good range and reliability and can cause a fair amount of damage. A bow requires significant strength to be used effectively. It can be made from a myriad of materials, ranging from wood and bamboo to bone, horns and tusks and it comes in a wide variety of shapes and sizes.
Size: 4
Range: Ranged (50/75/100)
Damage: D6
Properties: Piercing [2], two-handed, nocking
Enhancement category: General and pointed



CLAWS
This weapon consists of two or three connected metal claws or talons, approximately one finger in length each. Claws are sharpened on their inner edges and equipped with side rings for the fingers to hold them. They can be concealed in the hand and, at a time to attack, they can emerge, from the closed fist, like those of a beast. Claws are typically used by pit-fighters, thugs and brawlers.
Size: 1
Range: Close (1)
Damage: D4
Properties: Brawling, poison
Enhancement category: None

CLUB
The club is the most basic weapon of all and is used mainly by primitive tribes, as a last resort or as a deterrent rather than to cause severe injury to an opponent. Most improvised weapons, such as table-legs, heavy bottles, etcetera, function like clubs.
Size: 2
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: D6
Properties: Knockdown
Enhancement category: General and shafted

COMPOSITE BOW
A composite bow is more potent than its regular counterpart as its construction of different materials allows it to store more energy, and thus greater power, than an ordinary wooden bow of the same size. The composite bow is much more challenging to fabricate and utilise than a regular bow. However, it compensates by having a significantly longer range, as well as increased armour-piercing capabilities.
Size: 5
Range: Ranged (75/150/200)
Damage: D12
Properties: Piercing [3], two-handed, nocking
Enhancement category: General and pointed

COMPOSITE SHORT BOW
The structure of a composite short bow allows it to be more powerful than an ordinary wooden bow of the same size. The composite short bow requires more strength to use than a regular short bow, but it has a longer range and superior armour-piercing capabilities.
Size: 4
Range: Ranged (40/80/120)
Damage: D12
Properties: Piercing [3], two-handed, nocking
Enhancement category: General and pointed



DAGGER
Daggers and similar short blades are the most commonly used tools and weapons on virtually any world. Beggars, soldiers and viziers alike carry daggers, be they ornate and priceless or simple practical tools. Most daggers in Llyhn have wide, curved blades and are approximately two hands long, but almost any design can be procured in the various bazaars. The dagger category comprises any type of short blade, dirk, stiletto, knife and punching dagger.
Size: 1
Range: Close (1)
Damage: D4
Properties:
Enhancement category: Bladed, general and pointed

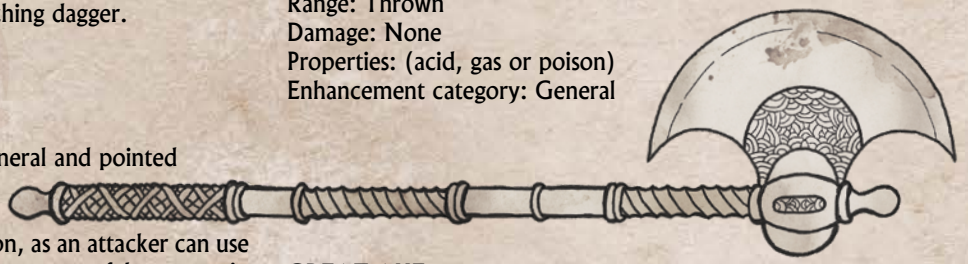
DART
The dart is a standard stealth weapon, as an attacker can use it quite inconspicuously. While not a powerful weapon in itself it can cause a great deal of damage if poisoned. Most small, hand-propelled weapons fit into this category.
Size: 1
Range: Thrown (varies)
Damage: D3
Properties: (poison)
Enhancement category: General and pointed

FLAIL
The flail consists of a shafted handle and one or several heads connected via chains or rope. It can deal substantial damage and has the capability of entangling weapons and disarming opponents, though at the risk of tangling the flail itself. This weapon is unwieldy and requires a considerable amount of skill if full advantage is to be taken of its potential.
Size: 3
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: D12
Properties: +1 to disarm | Flexible (-1 to be parried)
Enhancement category: General and shafted

GLAIVE
The most common polearm in Llyhn is the glaive. The shaft of a glaive is customarily two metres long and has a curved blade of approximately half a metre mounted atop. Its effective range averages at about three metres. Glaives are challenging to use in confined fighting conditions, but their long range and commanding appearance make them ideal for soldiers and guards.
Size: 3
Range: Near (3)
Damage: 2D6
Properties: Two-handed
Enhancement category: Bladed, general, pointed and shafted

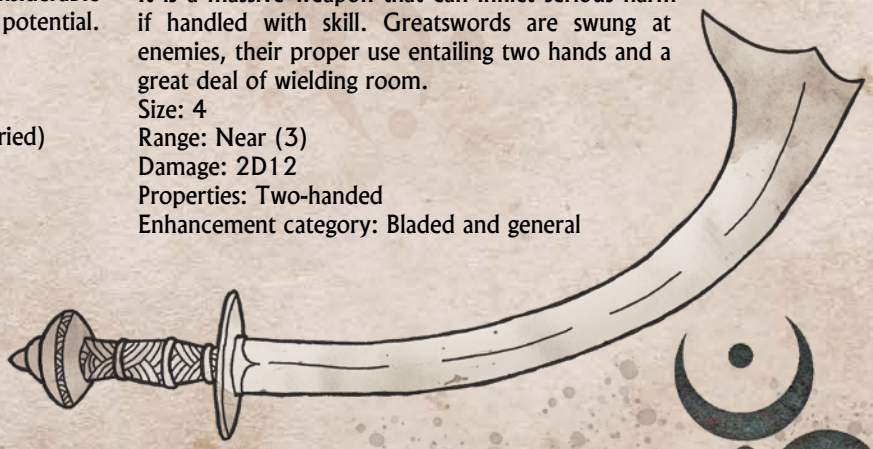


GLASS ORB (acid, gas or poison)
Glass orbs are rare and delicate weapons typically utilised by assassins. These fist-sized fragile glass orbs are filled with poisonous gas, acid or other liquids causing harm or detrimental effects upon contact. Glass orbs are thrown at a target and shatter on impact. Substances that stun or otherwise inhibit the victim are the most common, allowing the attacker to finish the kill without resistance. Several orbs may be flung to increase the chance of success.
Size: 1
Range: Thrown
Damage: None
Properties: (acid, gas or poison)
Enhancement category: General



GREAT AXE
The great axe is a larger and heavier version of the battle axe. It has a long shaft, giving greater range, and a massive blade that can inflict extensive damage with each blow. It is a cumbersome weapon that requires two hands, and a great deal of muscle, to be used with any efficiency.
Size: 5
Range: Near (3)
Damage: 2D12
Properties: Two-handed, knockdown
Enhancement category: Bladed and general

GREATSWORD
The greatsword is an enlarged version of an ordinary sword. It is a massive weapon that can inflict serious harm if handled with skill. Greatswords are swung at enemies, their proper use entailing two hands and a great deal of wielding room.
Size: 4
Range: Near (3)
Damage: 2D12
Properties: Two-handed
Enhancement category: Bladed and general



HALBERD



The halberd combines the slashing capabilities of a long-shafted axe with thrusting attack of a spear. Its effective range averages at approximately three metres. Attacking with a halberd can be either a swing using the axe-like blade, conferring a +1 damage bonus or thrust using the spear-like tip bestowing the piercing [1] property. While the significant reach and diverse functionality of halberds make them a formidable choice of weapon confined fighting conditions are severely hampering.
Size: 4
Range: Near (3)
Damage: 2D6 +1 damage or piercing [1]
Properties: Two-handed
Enhancement category: Bladed, general, pointed and shafted

HAND AXE

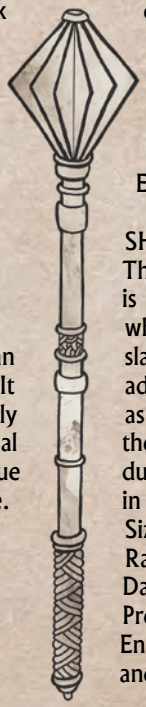
The hand axe is the smaller counterpart of the battle axe. It comes in a multitude of shapes and sizes and serves as both a weapon and a tool. As such, it is commonly brandished by non-warriors who need to take up arms. While an axe is often somewhat difficult to swing, it lands a heavy blow when it hits, causing significant damage.
Size: 2
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: D6
Properties:
Enhancement category: Bladed, general and shafted

JAVELIN

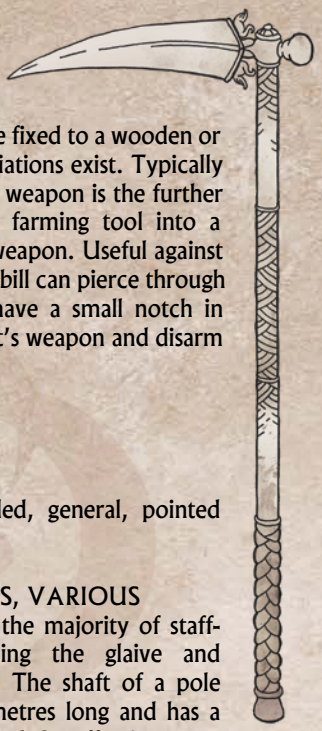
The javelin is a light throwing spear that makes an excellent secondary weapon for mercenaries or soldiers who risk facing massed troops. It is so light that a warrior can easily carry two or three. This weapon is typically used in ambushes or to weaken opponents before engaging in hand-to-hand combat.
Size: 3
Range: Thrown (varies)
Damage: D12
Properties: Piercing [1]
Enhancement category: General and pointed

MACE

The mace is essentially a club with a metal head that can inflict a harder and deadlier blow than a regular club. It comes in a myriad of shapes and sizes, including highly ornamental versions that are often used for ceremonial purposes. The mace is prevalent in many worlds, due to its effectiveness in combat and ease of manufacture.
Size: 3
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: D12
Properties: Knockdown
Enhancement category: General and shafted



PICK (CROW-BILL)



The pick or crow-bill is quite common in Llyhn. It has a curved, dagger-like blade fixed to a wooden or metal shaft, though many variations exist. Typically favoured by mercenaries, this weapon is the further development of a sickle-like farming tool into a vicious yet strangely elegant weapon. Useful against armoured opponents, a crow-bill can pierce through heavy mail. Some versions have a small notch in the blade to trap an opponent's weapon and disarm them.
Size: 3
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: D12
Properties: Piercing [1]
Enhancement category: Bladed, general, pointed and shafted

POLE WEAPON/POLEARMS, VARIOUS

The pole weapon comprises the majority of staff-mounted weaponry, including the glaive and halberd described elsewhere. The shaft of a pole weapon is customarily two metres long and has a mounted blade or axe-like head. Its effective range averages at about three metres. Pole weapons are challenging to use in confined fighting conditions, but their long range and impressive appearance make them ideal for soldiers and guards.
Size: 4
Range: Near (3)
Damage: 2D6
Properties: Two-handed
Enhancement category: Bladed, general, pointed and shafted

SHORT BOW

The short bow is significantly smaller than a standard bow and is easier to use but has shorter range and causes less damage. Short bows are usually employed by mounted archers, or as a secondary weapon by mercenaries and others who wish to use ranged weaponry without packing large bows.
Size: 3
Range: Ranged (25/50/75)
Damage: D6
Properties: Piercing [2], two-handed, nocking
Enhancement category: General and pointed

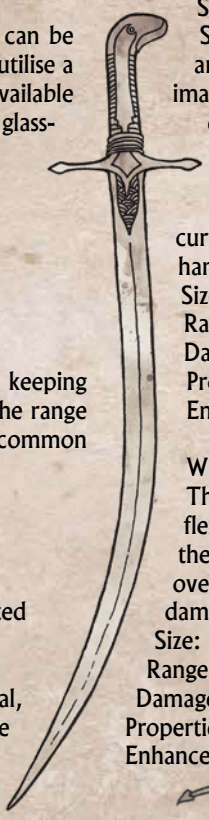
SHORT SWORD

The short sword tends to be half a metre long and is primarily used for stabbing, unlike longer swords, which are more frequently used for cutting and slashing. They are prized by those who wish to be adequately armed without overly displaying it. Not as cumbersome or brutal as conventional swords, the short sword is the weapon of choice for many due to its convenience and efficiency, especially in close-quarter combat.
Size: 2
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: D6
Properties: Parry
Enhancement category: Bladed, general and pointed

SLING
The sling, originally used for hunting small game, can be quite effective in the hands of a skilled user. It can utilise a great diversity of projectiles, from natural stones, available on the ground, to metal pellets and acid-filled glass-spheres, although the latter are exceedingly rare.
Size: 2
Range: Thrown (varies)
Damage: D3
Properties: (acid or poison)
Enhancement category: General

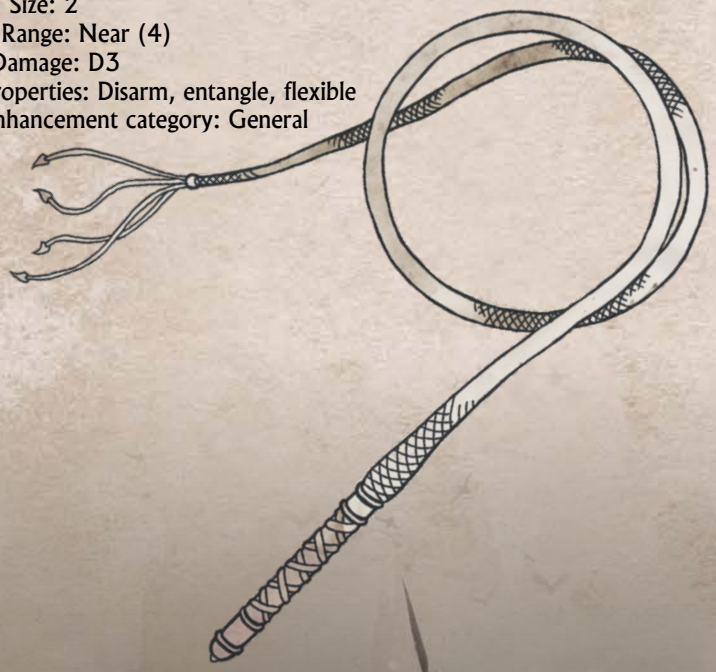
SPEAR
The spear is an ideal weapon for defensive stances, keeping adversaries at bay and for dealing damage out of the range of the opponent's weaponry. Spears are therefore common amongst guards and hunters.
Size: 3
Range: Near (4)
Damage: D12
Properties: Piercing [1]
Enhancement category: General, pointed and shafted

STAFF
The staff can be made from almost any material, although wood is typical, due to its relative lightness and hardiness. Staves have an extended reach compared to most other hand weapons. They hit relatively hard and are exceedingly easy to find or make. Peasants, wanderers and many other non-warriors typically use the staff as their primary weapon, as it has several applications, including doubling as a tool and a walking stick. Although staves may not necessarily qualify as weapons in the traditional sense, they can be deadly in the right hands.
Size: 3
Range: Near (3)
Damage: D6
Properties: Knockdown, two-handed
Enhancement category: General and shafted



SWORD
Swords in Llyhn reflect different cultures, individuals and purposes and can be found in virtually any imaginable style, shape and size. Curved blades, double-curved or straight swords range from short and crude utilitarian swords to long and elegant ceremonial blades - and the list goes on. Many species residing in Llyhn favour a single-edged, curved and tapered blade, which can be wielded in one hand, such as the saif, scimitar, talwar and shamshir.
Size: 3
Range: Adjacent (2)
Damage: D12
Properties: Parry
Enhancement category: Bladed, general and pointed

WHIP
The whip essentially consists of a long, tapered and flexible material, attached to a stiff handle. It is the weapon of choice for slavers, guards and other overseers who intend to inflict pain more than actual damage.
Size: 2
Range: Near (4)
Damage: D3
Properties: Disarm, entangle, flexible
Enhancement category: General



*You have not known dread until I have revealed it to you!*

*– Scar Master of Qtharth*

## Weapon properties

Weapon *properties* describe the attributes of a weapon regarding its usage and effects, in addition to causing damage. The table and descriptions below cover the different properties applicable to the detailed weapons.

### WEAPON PROPERTIES

| | |
|---|---|
| ACID | Acid held in a container splashes the victim on impact |
| DISARM | + 1 bonus to disarm manoeuvres |
| ENTANGLE | The weapon can be used to pin an opponent |
| FLEXIBLE | -1 penalty to opponent's parrying attempts; can never parry; ignores shield modifiers |
| GAS | The weapon releases gas on impact, affecting anyone adjacent |
| KNOCKDOWN | The weapon allows knockdown combat manoeuvres |
| NOCKING | The missiles used by this weapon require time to ready: -3/-6 to Initiative |
| PARRY | The weapon allows parrying combat manoeuvres |
| PIERCING | The weapon diminishes the damage reduction of armour |
| POISON | The weapon is designed to administer a poisoning attack |
| TWO-HANDED | The weapon requires two hands to be used effectively |

## Property descriptions

ACID: Acidic liquids can be kept in fragile glass orbs and other containers, to be thrown at enemies. See acid damage for effects.

DISARM: Weapons with the disarm property are designed to separate weapons from the wielders, either by entangling or otherwise trapping the weapon, knocking it out of the opponent's hand. Weapons with the disarm property grant the user a + 1 bonus modifier to any disarming attempts.

ENTANGLE: This weapon is designed to ensnare a target and pin it. A successful hit with an entangling weapon is followed by a pinning attempt, which is used to confirm whether the target has been entangled or not (see grappling). The weapon size is used in place of the Strength score for the opposed roll. If the attacker is successful, the target is pinned.

FLEXIBLE: Flexible weapons are made up of connected parts, making them difficult to parry. Flails and whips are such weapons. Any attempt to parry an attack from a flexible weapon must be made with a -1 penalty. Flexible weapons can never be used to parry an incoming attack. Flexible weapons can ignore shield modifiers.

GAS: Toxic gasses and fumes can be accumulated and kept in fragile glass orbs, to be thrown at enemies. Gas may either be poisonous, induce effects such as Delirium or deprive victim of breathable air causing suffocation. Depending on the size of the container, gas typically affects an area of D3 cubic metres around the impact spot. In outdoor settings the gas is rapidly dispersed and negated within a single round, while indoors it may linger for longer (Arbiter's decision).

KNOCKDOWN: A weapon with the knockdown property is either massive, extremely heavy or designed to knock opponents flat on their back. The wielder may utilise the knockdown combat manoeuvre using this weapon (see the combat section for full rules).

NOCKING: Once an arrow has been loosed, another must be readied, nocked and drawn, which takes time. Using a bow will subtract three (3) from the initiative roll if arrows are readily available - already held or stuck in the ground next to the archer - or six (6) if the character needs to pull it from a quiver for instance. Quickdraw and similar abilities apply to decrease the nocking speed penalty.

PARRY: The defender may utilise the parry combat manoeuvre without suffering any penalties (see the combat section for full rules).

PIERCING: Upon a successful hit, armour-piercing weapons diminish the effect of protective equipment, by negating a certain amount from the Armour Value. The specific armour value reduction is noted in the weapon description and usually lies between 1 and 4. When a piercing weapon is used, the amount of damage subtracted due to enemy armour is reduced by the noted amount. If an opponent is not wearing any armour, a piercing weapon has no added effect.
*Example: Malab is attacking a bandit who is wearing torso scale mail [armour reduction 3] with a crow-bill [piercing 1]. His attack is successful, and he rolls for damage. Malab rolls a 3, which would usually be reduced to 0, due to the armour. A Crowbill has a piercing value of 1, thus negating one point of the armour reduction, meaning that the bandit suffers one damage point and reduces his health score accordingly.*

POISON: Some weapons are made to administer poison when they draw blood or touch the skin of an opponent. With a successful hit, confer to the application of individual poisons and their specific effects and potency (see poisons & venoms chart).

TWO-HANDED: Certain weapons require two hands to use efficiently. This is either due to the weapon being too heavy to wield without the added strength or it merely being inoperable without the use of two hands, as in the case of bows. A character using a two-handed weapon cannot utilise a shield or a secondary weapon. In the case of two-handed melee weapons, a character with double the required Strength score can use the weapon in one hand.



# Customised & Enhanced Weapons

There are many types of additional parts or enhancements that can be attached to or incorporated into a weapon. Some enhancements simply affect the speed modifier or damage potential of the weapon, while others grant properties that the weapon does not normally possess, such as the knockdown ability.
The table below illustrates the maximum amount of modifications that can be applied to a weapon.

### Weapon Modification

| | Blade | Point | Shaft | General |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | - | - | - | 2 |
| Bladed | 2 | - | - | - |
| Pointed | - | 1 | - | - |
| Shafted | - | - | 2 | - |

Some weapons belong to more than one category and can have enhancements related to each category they possess.
Example: A spear is designated as a pointed and a shafted weapon. The spear, therefore, can have 2 general modifications, 1 pointed weapon modification and 2 shaft modifications, resulting in a total of five possible enhancements.

The Arbiter must approve all weapon modifications and no "opposing" modifications can be applied to the same weapon. For instance, a weapon cannot have both a lightened weapon and massive weapon modification. Below is a list of all available parts and enhancements, as well as their availability and respective category.

While most customised weapons must be ordered, some can be found for sale, albeit on rare occasions. It is also possible to modify owned weapons by hiring a craftsman. It is, however, a time-consuming and challenging affair, not to mention costly, as the parts required are exceedingly expensive and difficult to fabricate.

Customised weapons are usually priced as twice the value of the weapon, with the additional components and enhancements added to the cost. Components and parts are priced as a factor of the basic version of the weapon. Characters with access to a workshop may try to modify weapons themselves, by using the crafts skill, once the desired parts have been obtained or fabricated. The Arbiter determines the difficulty and time spent on these attempts.



### Parts descriptions

BLADE NOTCH/HOOK: A small notch or hook designed to catch an opponent's weapon to make disarming manoeuvres easier is attached to the weapon. Any attempt to disarm an opponent has a +1 bonus modifier.

DOUBLE POINT BLADE: The point of the blade has been bifurcated, making it more effective against mail armour. All attacks with this weapon have piercing [1].

EXTENDED SHAFT: The shaft or handle of the weapon has been elongated, giving the weapon a longer reach, but also making it more cumbersome to wield. These weapons have one metre longer range than the standard variant but are also heavier, requiring one higher Strength score to use effectively than the regular version. Only shafted weapons such as flails, maces, spears and pole weapons can have this fitting.

FULLERED BLADE: A bevelled groove or slot has been made along the length of the blade, reducing its weight without affecting its strength. A fullered blade is lighter than its basic version thus reducing the Strength requirement by one.

HAWKBILL BLADE: A hawkbill blade is styled with a concave cutting edge and claw-like shape to induce extensive tearing and cutting damage when used in a pulling or raking motion. Only small blades can be fashioned into hawkbill blades. Hawkbill blades have a +1 damage bonus.

HEAVY BLADE: The weight of this blade has been intentionally increased to cause more substantial damage with a successful strike. The heavier the blade, the more unwieldy it is as well. Leaf-shaped blades are examples of heavy blades. A heavy blade counts as requiring one higher Strength score than its common variant and has a +1 damage bonus.

LIGHTENED WEAPON: A lightened weapon has been reduced in weight, to make it swifter in its application. Weapons with this enhancement count as having one lower Strength required to wield it.

GREAT WEAPON: A great weapon is the same as a regular version of the weapon, only much bigger. It counts as requiring one higher Strength score than average and outranges standard weapons by one metre. These weapons are typically used by specialised warriors trained and able to wield them. Great weapons also have a +1 damage bonus. Note: This is not a modification; a great weapon must be manufactured from scratch.



| ENHANCEMENT | ADDITIONAL PROPERTIES | PART | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BLADE NOTCH/HOOK | +1 Disarm | Blade | Uncommon | x2 |
| DOUBLE POINT | Piercing [1] | Point | Rare | x2 |
| EXTENDED SHAFT | +1 range \| +1 Size | Shaft | Common | x1 |
| FULLERED BLADE | -1 Size | Blade | Uncommon | x2 |
| HAWKBILL BLADE | +1 damage (small blades only) | Blade/shaft | Rare | x2 |
| HEAVY BLADE | +1 Size \| +1 damage | Blade | Common | x1 |
| LIGHTENED WEAPON | -1 Size | General | Uncommon | x2 |
| GREAT WEAPON | +1 Size \| +1 damage \| +1 metre range | General | Uncommon | x3 |
| MASSIVE WEAPON HEAD | Knockdown | General* | Rare | x2 |
| NEEDLEPOINT | Piercing [1] (small blades only) | Point | Rare | x3 |
| PARRYING HOOK(S) | +1 parry | Blade/shaft* | Uncommon | x2 |
| PERFECT GRIP | 11+ exceptional hit | General | Uncommon | x2 |
| PERFECTLY BALANCED | +1 to attack rolls | General | Uncommon | x3 |
| POISON GROOVES | Apply poison | Blade | Very Rare | x1 |
| RAZOR SHARP BLADE | Minor bleeding wounds | Blade | Very Rare | x3 |
| REINFORCED SHAFT | Parry (shafted weapons only) | Shaft | Common | x1 |
| SAW EDGED BLADE | +1 damage \| +1 parry | Blade | Uncommon | x2 |
| SHARD BLADE | Roll twice for damage and pick the highest | Blade | Very Rare | x5 |
| SPIKES / SHARD(S) | +1 damage | General* | Uncommon | x2 |
| STRAP | +1 vs. disarm & no weapons drop | General | Common | x1 |
| TEMPERED POINT | Piercing [1] | Point | Uncommon | x2 |
| TEMPERED BLADE | +1 to exceptional hit table | Blade | Uncommon | x3 |
| WAVE PATTERN BLADE | +1 parry | Blade | Uncommon | x2 |

**Only applicable to select weapons.*

MASSIVE WEAPON HEAD: The striking head of this weapon has been enlarged or made heavier to pack a harder punch, knocking opponents off their feet. Weapons with massive heads count as having the knockdown property while weapons that already have this property gain a +1 modifier to knockdown. *Only battle axes, bolas, clubs, maces, flails, pole weapons and staves can have this part.

NEEDLEPOINT BLADE: A needlepoint blade is hammered as thin as possible while retaining its full strength. This sort of blade can easily pierce through armour. Only small blades, such as daggers and stilettos can be fashioned into needlepoint blades. They have piercing [1].

PARRYING HOOK(S): A weapon can be fitted with one or several hooks protruding from the blade to catch or parry the weapon of an opponent. All weapons fitted with such hooks have a +1 bonus modifier to any parry attempts. Only bladed weapons or weapons with reinforced shafts/handle can have this enhancement.

PERFECT GRIP: A perfect grip fits only the designated user and allows the combatant more control and precision in her strikes and cuts. Weapons with a customised grip score an exceptional hit on a roll of 11+, rather than the usual 12.

PERFECTLY BALANCED: A perfectly balanced weapon features parts that have been optimally aligned with the grip, pommel and other components, making it easier to wield. A perfectly balanced weapon grants a +1 modifier to attack rolls.

POISON GROOVES: Grooves or small suppositories have been cut into the blade or points of the weapon to administer poisons upon a successful hit. When an opponent is hit, roll to see if the poison has been delivered and takes effect by the poisons and venoms chart. A weapon can mostly hold enough poison for one attempt to be made. If this fails, the weapon no longer counts as being poisonous.



*Nadh has commissioned a customised short sword. A short sword is a bladed and pointed weapon, and Nadh wants to add a double-point, get a lighter blade as well as making it perfectly balanced. A short sword typically costs 30 copper Dhins, making the initial price for a customised variety 60 copper Dhin. A double-point is set at twice the basic value (another 60 copper Dhins) while the lightened weapons is twice the value (60 copper Dhin) and the perfectly balanced weapon cost is three times the value (90 copper Dhins) for total price of 270 copper Dhins, while a superior version of this weapon would be five times that.*

RAZOR-SHARP BLADE: By masterly technique or otherworldly skill, a razor-sharp blade has an edge like few others. Only bladed weapons, such as swords, daggers, pole weapons and axes, can be enhanced this way. Any injury inflicted with a razor sharp blade counts as a minor bleeding wound, causing 1-3 points of additional damage in every subsequent combat turn, until adequately treated.

REINFORCED SHAFT: The shaft or handle of the weapon has been strengthened or replaced with a reinforced variety, making it able to withstand much more damage and reasonably serve as a parrying weapon. Weapons with reinforced shafts or handles can be used to parry without the regular penalty for non-parrying weapons.

SAW-EDGED BLADE: This blade has a saw-like edge that can tear gashing wounds when used in a cutting or raking motion. It is also designed to catch adversary blades in its grooves, making any parry attempt more likely. Saw-edged blades have a +1 bonus to damage and parry, given that it is a parrying weapon.

SHARD BLADE: A shard blade has a very jagged edge, designed to inflict grave lacerations. Featuring multiple and extremely sharp cutting points and edges distributed along the length of the blade, the wounds inflicted are usually quite severe. When rolling for damage, roll twice and use the highest result of the two.

SPIKES AND SHARDS: Spikes and other sharp pieces can be mounted on maces, staves, flails, clubs, swords, spears and polearms. Even whips can be fitted with shards at the end of the lashes to cut the target. Adding spikes, fangs or shards grants a +1 damage bonus to a weapon.

STRAP: A strap of leather, rope or another flexible material has been affixed to the weapon near the handle. This strap is placed around the wrist when the weapon is used reducing the risk of losing it during combat. A weapon strap grants a +1 bonus to avoid disarming attempts and ignore any weapons drop results due to critical hits or other incidents as the wearer is able to easily grasp the weapon again even it is knocked out of her hand.

TEMPERED POINT: A forging technique tempering the tip of the weapon has been used to harden the point significantly, enhancing its capability to pierce armour. A weapon with a tempered point has the piercing [1] property.

TEMPERED BLADE: This blade has been tempered by heating and quenching along the edge to produce a very hard, sharp edge while retaining the flexibility of the core to avoid brittleness. Tempered blades grant a +1 bonus to the exceptional hits table.

WAVE-PATTERN BLADE: Wave- or flame-pattern blades are identified by a characteristically undulating style. While mostly decorative, these blades can be useful when used for parries, due to their ability to cause vibrations to an opponent's blade and increase resistance. A wave-pattern blade has a +1 parry bonus modifier.



# Armour

While some species have natural protection in the form of thick, tough skin, scales or an exoskeleton most sentient species have had to develop armour to protect themselves from enemies. Many cultures have established rich traditions for armour making, and across the known worlds immense variety of armour and other protective garb can be found. Depending on the physiology of the wearer and the availability of suitable materials, armour has an abundance of different features and designs. Despite this, most armour bears a remarkable similarity in basic layout and use of materials across the Cosmos. Soft and flexible organic materials for light protection, rigid and often heavy mineral materials providing enhanced protection used in warfare.

In game terms armour reduces the amount of damage your character sustains when hit by an attack. Each piece of armour has a predefined damage reduction value. When damage from a successful blow has been calculated, decrease it by the armour damage reduction accordingly. The subsequent total is the amount of Health points the character loses from the hit.
The armour table shows the different armour types available and lists the damage reduction, and any other effects each will provide.

A character may either wear one type of full body armour and a helmet or select armour piecemeal. If piecemeal armour is chosen, only one type armour can be selected for each body location (torso, arms, legs, and head).

The damage reduction value for a combatant is calculated as a total amount regardless of where the armour pieces are placed on the body. This means that damage will always be decreased by the total amount of armour damage reduction unless a called attack to a specific body part has been performed, in which case only the armour covering this area is useable.

Some creatures have natural protection functioning much like armour, and therefore they have an inherent damage reduction value, which is cumulative with worn armour unless otherwise is noted. Note that Armour Value only reduces damage from physical blows and not indirectly caused injury such as poison, already bleeding wounds and so forth.

The armour list covers the basic styles of armour and the varieties of fabrications and/or materials available for each. To allow for a wide range of different armour the rules do not entail a distinction beyond the basic properties of the armour material and type. For instance, two sets of armour made on vastly different worlds but of a comparable fabrication and material would have the same figures and stats rules-wise.

## Armour Quality

ARMOUR QUALITY
The condition and materials used in the fabrication of armour inherently affect its application and effectiveness. Poorly assembled plates, badly fitted scales and inferior manufacture are detrimental factors, while bespoke and well-maintained armour is highly efficient. As with any other item the five quality tiers affect armour, impacting the functionality and thus price of it: Terrible, poor, basic, superior and exceptional (see table below). The price of varying armour quality is calculated by applying the quality cost factor to the basic cost.

| QUALITY | MODIFIER | COST ADJ. |
|---|---|---|
| TERRIBLE | -1 penalty to damage reduction and +1 to Bulk | X0,25 |
| POOR | Either -1 penalty to damage reduction or +1 to Bulk | X0,50 |
| BASIC | No modifiers | - |
| SUPERIOR | +1 bonus to either damage reduction or a lessening of -1 to Bulk | X5 |
| EXCEPTIONAL | +1 to damage reduction, the Bulk is reduced by one. | X25 |

## Availability

Fabricating armour is arduous and time-consuming work, which impacts the availability - particularly as the physiology the armour is made to fit will have to correspond to the wearer to be useable. A suit of armour manufactured for the birdlike Ka'Alum will never fit a human, whereas one suited for a small Je'ehl might, as their physiology is similar enough. Accordingly, armour is not necessarily readily available in any given location and obtaining useable armour may be quite tricky.

For gaming purposes, each particular piece of armour has a set of designations and values corresponding to the qualities, characteristics, usage and capabilities. The designations presented in the armour list are as follows: Type, material, category, damage reduction, bulk and properties.

There are seven *Types* of armour commonly found across the Cosmos: Fabric, scale, lamellar, mail, laminated, splint and plate. Each type is distinct from the others in its fabrication and basic properties.

*The vulture watched as thousands upon thousands of massive warriors in spiked armour and horned helmets disembarked from the Red Galleys, forming shuffling ranks that filed into the adjacent streets under the watchful gaze of the Hohr'loh'kin. The armies of Sinad were tolerated by the Unseen Rulers only as long as a steady stream of precious stones and other valuables poured from the coffers of their nefarious masters.*

## Armour designations

Most armour types can be fabricated from a variety of materials influencing the capabilities and properties of it. Each type typically has several variants listed. The noted materials are those familiar to players and can be substituted by otherworldly equivalents with similar properties.

*Category* indicates which kind of armour it is as well as the placement or application of it. Armour pieces can be used individually or form full suits of armour combined from different categories. Note that only one armour in each category can be worn at a time.

*Damage reduction* determines the amount of protection a piece of armour grants its wearer: any damage inflicted upon the wearer is reduced by the armour's damage reduction. Armour of different categories can be combined, and the cumulative damage reduction applied.

*Bulk* determines the Strength score necessary for using the armour without suffering penalties when performing physical actions. For every point by which a combatant does not meet the required Strength score, she receives a -1 penalty to physical actions requiring full mobility, including attacking and defending (potentially reducing Defence Value). Bulk also affects Stamina- or Strength-based activities where the wearer's overall physique is affected, for instance running.

The Bulk denominator is based on armour suited for human-sized creatures. As such a suit of full body metal scale armour (Bulk 4) necessitates that the user has a Strength score of 4 or penalties will apply to physical actions. The Bulk for armour fitting other species or characters with the large or giant attribute would be based on the average Strength score for that particular species or size.

*Properties* describe any additional qualities or endowments of the armour. Some will be cumbersome while other, such as bone armour, might be somewhat fragile and break upon hard impact. Furthermore, armour can be customised or fabricated from exotic materials with unusual properties thus deviating from the regular armour of this style in terms of properties and stats.





# Armour List



| TYPE | MATERIAL | CATEGORY | DMG RED | BULK | PROPERTIES | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARMOUR OF FABRIC | | | | | | | |
| | Layered Cloth | Torso | 1 | 1 | | Common | 15 |
| | Hide | Torso | 1 | 2 | Cumbersome | Common | 5 |
| | Leather | Torso | 1 | 2 | | Common | 20 |
| | Padded Leather | Torso | 2 | 2 | | Common | 35 |
| | Studded Leather | Torso | 2 | 2 | | Common | 35 |
| | Hardened Leather | Torso | 3 | 2 | | Common | 50 |
| CHAIN MAIL | | | | | | | |
| | Metal | Torso | 4 | 3 | | Rare | 90 |
| | Metal | Full Body* | 7 | 4 | | Rare | 200 |
| LAMELLAR ARMOUR | | | | | | | |
| | Rawhide | Torso | 3 | 2 | Cumbersome | Common | 45 |
| | Rawhide | Full body* | 4 | 3 | Cumbersome | Common | 80 |
| | Metal | Torso | 5 | 4 | | Uncommon | 110 |
| | Metal | Full Body* | 8 | 4 | Cumbersome | Uncommon | 240 |
| LAMINATED ARMOUR | | | | | | | |
| | Leather | Torso | 3 | 2 | | Common | 50 |
| | Leather | Full Body | 5 | 3 | | Common | 120 |
| | Metal | Torso | 5 | 4 | | Uncommon | 130 |
| | Metal | Full Body | 7 | 4 | | Uncommon | 340 |
| PLATE ARMOUR | | | | | | | |
| | Metal | Torso | 5 | 3 | | Rare | 120 |
| | Metal | Full Body* | 9 | 4 | Cumbersome | Rare | 760 |
| SCALE ARMOUR | | | | | | | |
| | Leather | Torso | 2 | 2 | | Common | 35 |
| | Leather | Full Body* | 4 | 3 | Rigid | Common | 65 |
| | Wood or bone | Torso | 3 | 3 | Brittle | Uncommon | 30 |
| | Wood or bone | Full Body* | 5 | 4 | Brittle, rigid | Uncommon | 65 |
| | Metal | Torso | 4 | 3 | | Rare | 80 |
| | Metal | Full Body* | 8 | 4 | Cumbersome | Rare | 520 |
| SPLINT ARMOUR | | | | | | | |
| | Wood or bone | Torso | 2 | 3 | Brittle | Uncommon | 40 |
| | Wood or bone | Full Body* | 4 | 3 | Brittle, rigid | Uncommon | 55 |
| | Metal | Torso | 4 | 3 | | Rare | 90 |
| | Metal | Full Body* | 7 | 4 | Rigid | Rare | 360 |

**No additional armour can be worn except for helmets.*

| TYPE | MATERIAL | CATEGORY | DMG RED | BULK | PROPERTIES | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LEG ARMOUR (Greaves, Tassets, Skirt, etc) | | | | | | | |
| | Leather | Legs | 1 | - | | Common | 5 |
| | Metal | Legs | 2 | +1* | | Uncommon | 30 |
| ARM ARMOUR (Pauldrons, bracers, etc) | | | | | | | |
| | Leather | Arms | 1 | - | | Common | 8 |
| | Metal | Arms | 2 | +1* | | Uncommon | 30 |
| HELMETS | | | | | | | |
| | Leather | Head | 1 | 0 | +1 vs. Stun | Common | 10 |
| | Metal | Head | 2 | 0 | +3 vs. Stun | Uncommon | 40 |

** No Bulk if worn alone / +1 if combined with other armour pieces.*

| TYPE | DEFENCE Mod. | BULK | PROPERTIES | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BUCKLER | - | 1 | Block | Common | 15 |
| SMALL SHIELD | +1 | 2 | Block | Common | 25 |
| MEDIUM SHIELD | +2 | 3 | Block | Common | 35 |
| LARGE SHIELD | +3 | 4 | - | Uncommon | 60 |

## Armour descriptions

ARMOUR OF FABRIC: Fabric armour is the oldest, simplest and most widespread form of armour. It cannot be tied to any one particular species or place, and it is found across many worlds among both primitive and civilised cultures. Armour consisting of layered fabric, cloth or hide protects the wearer from the impact of strikes as well as cuts and is a cheap and relatively effective form of defence. Armour of hides, fabric or leather is used extensively in a variety of ways, either of a few or many layers, or of several layers stuffed with wool or fibres.



*Studded leather armour*

*Armour skirt*



ARMOUR SKIRT: An armour skirt is a protective skirt made from scale armour, chainmail, plates, reinforced leather and so on protecting the upper legs of the wearer.

BRACERS: These pieces of armour cover the lower arm providing limited protection to the wearer. Bracers can be fabricated in various armour types and materials such as splint or scale armour.

CHAIN MAIL: Mail is a type of armour constructed from riveted or butted metal rings interlocked and set in rows. The rings are made from metal wire and can vary in size depending on the fabrication. Mail is sturdy and reliable as protection, and its adaptability means it can encompass vast versatility of design from shirts with or without sleeves to ankle- or long coats and even full body suits. The great advantage of chain mail is the flexibility it provides and that the weight of it is spread evenly across the wearer, making it less cumbersome than most other suits of armour. Chain mail is time-consuming and costly to produce so mainly wealthy warriors, and high castes can afford it.

GREAVES: Greaves are protective implements made to fit the lower half of the leg protecting the shins and occasionally the top of the foot. Greaves are typically made from leather, splints or plates of metal.

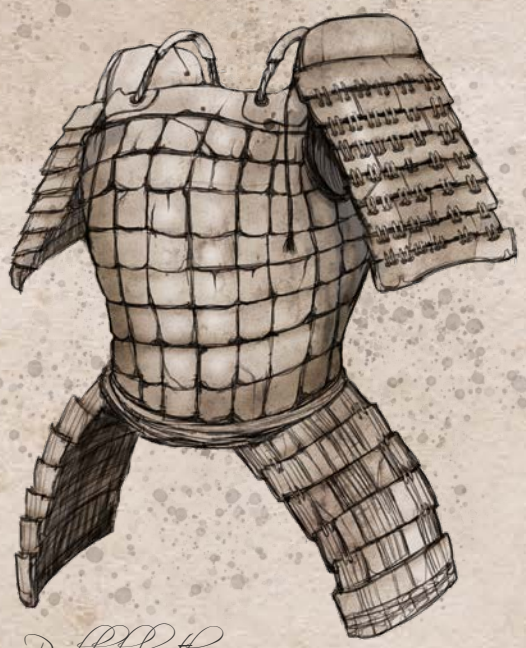
HELMETS: Rounded or conical helmets with a central ornamental spike, frequently with a turned-up peak or reinforced over the brow. Many helmets have a spike, tube or plume at the apex and mail or lamellar aventails protecting the neck. Some have masks, visors, nasal guards or mail veils covering and protecting the face. It is not uncommon for warriors in Llyhn to wear rich scarfs tied around the helmet and down the neck instead of aventails.



*Lamellar armour*

LAMELLAR ARMOUR: This type of armour in its simplest form is constructed of hundreds of small rectangular plates pierced to accommodate lacing. The plates, or lamellae, are loosely laced in horizontal rows and then vertically in an overlapping pattern to produce a straight coat of armour in any length desired. Sleeves can be added, and the skirt can be split to accommodate riding. Lamellar armour is generally a light, efficient and flexible suit of armour, although more heavy versions have the horizontal rows laced to a piece of leather resulting in more solid but inflexible construction. Lamellar armour is habitually made from metal or rawhide and come in various versions ranging from cuirass, skirts, ankle-length or long coats, and with or without sleeves.

LAMINATED ARMOUR: Laminated armour is a type of armour consisting of horizontal metal hoops or circular bands riveted to internal strips of leather or connected by straps at the ends to form a coherent but quite flexible carapace. Laminated armour can be used on separate limbs or segments can be joined to form full suits of armour.



*Padded leather armour with laminated pauldrons*

PAULDRONS: Pauldrons are pieces of armour covering the shoulder area. Typically made from segmented plates, lamellar, splint or scale armour, pauldrons provide substantial protection to the wearer's arms.

PLATE ARMOUR: This type of armour is fabricated from single pieces of metal plate or similar material covering a section of the body. From simple discs or curved square plates covering only the chest to elaborate Cuirass' casing the entire torso, plate armour takes many shapes. Plate armour may include tubular vambrace with or without extensions for the hands, and greaves covering the legs fastened with ties or straps. Plate armour is generally heavy and quite cumbersome but provides significant protection to the wearer.

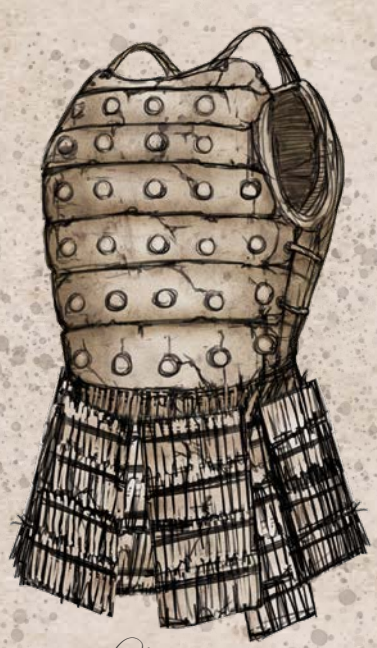


*Plate armour with armoured skirt*

SCALE ARMOUR: This type of armour comes in many varieties and materials but primarily consists of scales laced or otherwise tied to each other in connected rows on a fabric foundation to form a protective garment. The most common type is made up of rectangular plates with the lower edge rounded or pointed, pierced with holes for lacing, generally overlapping in an imbricated pattern, like the scales of fish. In some versions, the scales are leaf-shaped and sewn directly on the foundation instead of being linked together.
While scale armour is usually found as shirts covering only the torso and with short sleeves long scale coats covering the entire body or fashioned to accommodate the limbs of the wearer do exist. Scales can be made from wood, metal, stone or more exotic materials. Scale armour provides substantial protection, but because the scales have to be sewn in close-set rows and cannot turn back on each other, it has an inherent lack of flexibility.



*Torso scale armour*

SHIELDS: Shields come in various sizes and shapes, ranging from the small bucklers attached upon the forearm to large shields covering almost the entire body of the character bearing it. Shields are usually made from leather mounted on a frame, entirely from wood or from metal or a similar material. The most common type of shield seen in Llyhn is a medium-sized round metal shield, which covers the torso of the bearer. It is common practice in many cultures to decorate shields with ornate calligraphy, spikes or icons and charms meant to protect the bearer.
Shields are used for defence, granting a bonus to the Defence Value of the user rather than reducing the damage of impacts. While bucklers do not give a Defence bonus, they can be used for blocking manoeuvres against incoming attacks in the same way as medium and small shields. Heavy wooden lids and other similar objects can be used as improvised shields but at one lower Defence modifier than its ordinary equivalent.

SPLINT ARMOUR: This type of armour consists of straight metal splints joined in convex sections, laced together to protect the wearer. The splints are usually backed by leather or joined by straps at the ends, which not only secures them but also protects the wearer from the potentially sharp edges of the splints.

TASSET: Tassets are pieces of plates or other reinforced material designed to protect the upper thighs of the wearer. They are typically attached to a breastplate or the belt, consisting of a single or multiple segmented pieces.

## Armour properties

Armour properties detail the characteristics of a piece of armour, beyond its damage reduction capabilities. The table and descriptions below cover the different properties applicable to the detailed Armour.

| ARMOUR PROPERTIES | |
|---|---|
| BLOCK | Enables the Block combat manoeuvre |
| BRITTLE | Exceptional hits fractures the armour decreasing the Damage reduction |
| CUMBERSOME | -1 penalty to Agility actions and -1 to basic movement rate |
| RIGID | -1 penalty to Agility actions |

## Property descriptions

BLOCK: Shields with this property enable the bearer to perform the Black combat manoeuvre.

BRITTLE: Bones and wood are not the most durable materials for armour and will break if sufficiently pounded. An exceptional hit on armour made from bones or wood will reduce the Damage reduction properties of the armour until mended.

CUMBERSOME: Either due to the construction or sheer weight of materials this armour is heavy and cumbersome making movement difficult. All physical actions involving Agility suffer a -1 penalty and the basic movement rate of the wearer is reduced by a factor of one.

RIGID: This armour is particularly rigid inhibiting the movement of the wearer. Wearing this armour will give a -1 penalty to Agility actions requiring the use of the entire body, such as acrobatics, dodge and Defence modifiers.



*Padded leather armour*

# Customised armour

As with weaponry, armour can be enhanced or modified to increase its effectiveness and capabilities, albeit doing so can be a time-consuming and costly affair. Customised armour is priced at twice the base price excluding the added parts and enhancements. Characters with the appropriate skills and access to a workshop may attempt to enhance armour themselves.

The Arbiter determines the difficulty and time spent on such an attempt. Some enhancements affect the damage reduction, while others grant additional properties that the armour does not usually possess, such as lessening the effect of piercing weapons or negating the rigidity of the armour. Only torso and full body armour can be enhanced, and only two enhancements can be applied to a single piece of armour. Shields and helmets cannot be enhanced.

| ENHANCEMENT | ADDITIONAL PROPERTIES | APPLICABILITY | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CUSTOM-MADE | +1 dmg red \| -1 Bulk \| -1 Piercing | All armour | Unique* | x8 |
| EXTRA PADDING | +1 dmg red | All armour | Common | x1 |
| FLEXIBLE | Negates the Rigid property | Rigid armour only | Uncommon | x3 |
| HEAVY ARMOUR | +1 dmg red \| +1 Bulk | All armour | Common | x2 |
| LIGHTENED | -1 Bulk \| -1 dmg red | All armour | Common | x3 |
| PERSONAL FIT | Negates the cumbersome property | All armour | Unique* | x5 |
| PLATES | +1 dmg red | Fabric and mail armour only | Uncommon | x2 |
| REINFORCED | Negates 1 piercing dmg | All armour | Rare | x3 |
| SPIKES | +1 Defence Value \| -2 to grabble | Metal armour only | Rare | x3 |
| STUDS | +1 dmg red | Armour of fabric only | Common | x2 |

**Only for proprietor, no benefits if looted.*

## Parts descriptions

CUSTOM-MADE: This armour has been fabricated to fit one specific individual. It counts as having one higher damage reduction than normal as all joints and links are made to fit and close any gaps standard armour might leave. The armour also suits its owner's movements, reducing effective Bulk by one. Custom-made armour also reduces the impact of piercing weapons by a factor of 1.

EXTRA PADDING: An extra layer of padding has been fixed under the armour to reduce chafing and absorb shock from impacts making the wearer more resilient to blows. The armour has +1 damage reduction.

FLEXIBLE: This armour has been fabricated in a way to make ordinarily stiff and unbending armour more loose and flexible without losing its protective properties. Flexible armour negates the Rigid property.

HEAVY ARMOUR: Additional layers of material have been added to strengthen the armour. The armour counts as having one higher damage reduction than the regular version. Due to the increased weight of the armour, the Strength requirement is increased by one.

LIGHTENED: This armour has been lightened but loses some of its effectiveness. This armour piece counts as having one less Bulk than usual, but also -1 damage reduction.

PERSONAL FIT: This armour has been designed to fit perfectly and adapt to the natural movement of the wearer. Personally fitted armour negates the cumbersome property.

PLATES: Plates of metal have been attached to increase the protective capabilities of the armour. The armour has +1 damage reduction. (Only for fabric and mail armour)

REINFORCED: The piece of armour has been reinforced with extra thick plates, scales and so on, providing additional protection of the wearer. Armour piercing is reduced by 1.

SPIKES: Pointy spikes have been attached to the plates serving to catch and deflect incoming attacks. Armour with spikes grants a +1 to Defence Value. Spikes also make it increasingly difficult for opponents to grabble, inducing a -2 penalty to any grabbling attempts against the wearer.

STUDS: The armour has been fitted with metal studs or nails to increase the ability to absorb the damage from strikes. The armour counts as having one higher damage reduction than usual (Fabric/leather only).



*Enhanced studded leather armour*

# Transportation & Property



| VEHICLE | SIZE | PROPULSION | CARRYING CAPACITY | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CART | Medium | Pulled | 300 kg | Common | 150 |
| CARRIAGE | Huge | Animal | 600 kg | Uncommon | 1500 |
| CHARIOT, LEISURE | Large | Animal | 300 kg | Rare | 1800 |
| CHARIOT, HUNTING | Large | Animal | 300 kg | Rare | 1200 |
| CHARIOT, WAR | Huge | Animal | 500 kg | Rare | 2200 |
| LITTER | Medium | Carried | 250 kg | Uncommon | 500 |
| PALANQUIN | Large | Carried | 600 kg | Rare | 2500 |
| SLEDGE | Large | Animal | 300 kg | Common | 100 |
| WAGON | Huge | Animal | 900 kg | Common | 600 |

CART: Carts are small, two-wheeled platforms usually pulled by a draught animal, or in the case of the handcart propelled by a single handler. They are used across all worlds where paths or roads are present to lug goods, lesser livestock and the occasional person around.

CARRIAGE: Carriages are four-wheeled wagons explicitly designed for carrying passengers, not cargo. Usually enclosed or covered, shielding the passengers from the elements; a carriage is a relatively comfortable means of transportation.

CHARIOT: These two-wheeled vehicles are used across countless worlds for a variety of purposes. Drawn by one or several creatures the chariot is a convenient and luxurious mode of transport in urban areas or any place the landscape is suitable for wheeled vehicles.
Leisure chariots fitted with shades against the sun and drawn by exotic creatures are often used by high castes and the prosperous not only for transport but also as brash displays of wealth. Chariots may be designed for a single person, or for a driver and one or several passengers.
Light chariots are occasionally used for hunting where the terrain permits it, such as on savannahs and steppes. These usually have space for a handler and a hunter, typically armed with javelin or bow.
More robust versions fitted with scythes, protective barriers and accommodating multiple riders are occasionally used in warfare. Typically a driver, an archer and a shield bearer will man these war chariots making them a formidable force on the battlefield.

LITTER: Small personal carriers are a generic form of transportation in the wealthier parts of Llyhn. Litters consist of a seat or cabin accommodating a single passenger carried on poles by two or more servants, slaves or hired porters. Usually fashioned from strong and light materials such as bamboo, litters range from straightforward utilitarian designs to lavish types accommodating pillows, shades and other comforts. Occasionally litter take the form of a single pole with a hammock carrying the passenger. Litters can be hired for the day or shorter trips as a service in the wealthier districts of Llyhn.

PALANQUIN: Unlike common litters, palanquins tend to be fashioned as divans or platforms with improved capacity for comforts. Larger and more luxurious these commonly require four or more porters or even draught animals to be hauled around. As with ordinary litters palanquins can be open or closed with silk covers or other materials shading the passenger from the elements as well as onlookers.
A palanquin denotes the status of the owner; the more elaborate and the more bearers attached the higher the prestige. Often bodyguards and an entourage carrying parasols and other amenities accompany palanquins.

SLEDGE: The most inexpensive form of transportation is the sledge. A basic structure consists of two poles strapped together with a platform, basket or netting in between; while more advanced versions have narrow runners and a level platform supporting cargo or passengers. A draught animal is needed to pull the sledge, and the sledge will have to fit the size of the particular animal. Sledges are most effective on flat terrain with low friction, such as sand, snow or ice.

WAGON: Wagons are four-wheeled vehicles habitually drawn by draught animals and used for carrying cargo, livestock and occasionally passengers. Wagons come in a wide array of designs ranging from traditional wagons with low sides, flatbeds with no sides and wagons covered by cloth or another material to shield the contents. Wagons, drawn by one or multiple animals arranged in pairs, are driven by a wagoner or teamster.

## Ships & vessels

Travelling across water, or any other type of liquid, is not only a necessity but often a way of life. Although designs and styles of crafts differ greatly among the various sea-faring species, the generic list of vessels and crafts accommodate whichever individual differences there may exist.



Dhow

| VESSEL | SIZE | CREW | SPEED | PROPULSION | CARGO CAPACITY | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABRA SKIFF | 5 m | 1-2 | 5 | Oars / Sails | 750 kg | Common | 600 |
| BARGE | 6 m | 1-3 | 3 | Oars / Pulled | 5000 kg | Common | 400 |
| BUDGEROW | 10 m | 3-4 | 5 | Oars | 2000 kg | Rare | 9.000 |
| DHOW, SMALL | 12 m | 5-12 | 3-7 | Sails | 50.000 kg | Common | 12.000 |
| DHOW, MEDIUM | 15 m | 14-20 | 3-7 | Sails | 100.000 kg | Common | 18.000 |
| DHOW, LARGE | 30 m | 21-30 | 3-7 | Sails | 175.000 kg | Uncommon | 24.000 |
| GALLEY | 25 m | 50+ | 5-9 | Oars / Sails | 100.000 kg | Uncommon | 26.000 |
| GALLEY, RED | 50+ m | ? | ? | Oars | ? | Unique | - |
| GONDOLA | 5 m | 1 | 3 | Oars / pole | 750 kg | Rare | 2.000 |
| HULK | 50+ m | 40+ | 3-5 | Sails | 250.000+ kg | Rare | 36.000 |
| QARIB | 12 m | 5-12 | 8-12 | Sails | 30.000 kg | Common | 7.000 |
| ROWBOAT | 3 m | 1 | 5 | Oars | | Common | 200 |
| SHABBAK | 15 m | 21-30 | 10-14 | Oars / Sails | 30.000 kg | Rare | 9.000 |

### ABRA SKIFF

A small wooden boat propelled either by oars or a minute lateen sail. These vessels are mainly used to transport people or goods from shore to another vessel or similar short trips. They vary in size holding up to eight men and are rarely larger than ten cubits long.

### BARGE

Barges are flat-bottomed, low draught cargo vessel used for carrying goods, livestock or passengers on canals, rivers and harbours. Usually propelled by oars, a pulley system or towed by another vessel, barges are generally considered a reliable yet sluggish way to transport sizeable cargoes.

### BUDGEROW

The budgerow is a large gondola style leisure boat with a cabin and veranda. Boatmen paddle the boat forward from the open deck. Used exclusively by the aristocracy and wealthy patron these lavish vessels are fit only for inland waterways and calm weather.

### DHOW

Dhows come in many sizes, but all tend to have a distinctive concave profile of a high and square stern, sweeping low towards the bow before rising to a jutting point prow. Dhows are rigged with lateen sails on up to three masts. Capable of ocean voyages this is the primary merchant vessel in Llyhn and most core worlds, carrying goods, livestock and passengers. A distinctive keel design, a low curved scimitar stem piece and a high square stern give grace and elegance to the design of this vessel. Dhows are capable of carrying large amounts of cargo while still sailing relatively swiftly, making it particularly useful for traders and merchants. Larger dhows can crew up to thirty sailors while the smaller versions typically have crews varying around twelve.



Hulk

GALLEY
A low and long vessel propelled solely by oars. The oars are arranged in one or several banks along the length of the hull and require an extensive amount of manpower to function properly. Galleys are independent of wind but tend to be less effective in the open sea with waves and swells disrupting the propelling rhythm. Short masts can be rigged with sails if the winds are favourable to increase the speed of the galley.

GALLEY, RED
The red galleys are embodiments of the dominance and power of Llyhn: Massive vessels carrying cargo, travellers and armies across the Void between distant worlds. Red galleys are steered by the shadow-faced servants of the Unseen Rulers, their faces hidden by cowls, with only glowing orbs peering out of the gloom. Rows upon rows of oars propel the galleys across water and Void by obscure oarsmen interred in deep holds of the vessel.

GONDOLA
Gondolas are small flat-bottomed vessels propelled by a single oarsman or poleman at the stern of the vessel. Used exclusively by high-castes, these vessels are the epitome of maritime luxury, carrying lounging passengers around the canals of the wealthy districts of the Eternal City.

HULK
These are the largest merchant vessel seen anywhere. They are massive ocean-going crafts easily crewing more than forty sailors. Usually quite slow and bulky they can carry more cargo than any other ship and are considered the ultimate merchant vessel. Due to their precious cargoes and slowness mercenaries or other hired hands often guard them.

QARIB
A small, light and highly manoeuvrable vessel with two or three lateen-rigged masts the Qarib is good at most anything. Ocean voyages, sailing upriver as well as shallow coastal waters are handled with ease. The shallow draught, however, gives these vessels a limited cargo capacity restricting their usefulness.

ROWBOAT
Small vessels for up to three people, rowboats are primarily used for transport in shallow, quiet waters and between the coast and larger ships. Fishermen and dockworkers who do not require high speed or much cargo capacity use rowboats as they are cheap to make and maintain.

SHABBAK
Lightly built shabbak are delicate and graceful ships with long narrow hulls and fitted with oars. Three masts rigged with lateen sails, a shallow draught and a low profile makes it well suited for inland travelling and fast and manoeuvrable whether under oar or sail. The drawback is that it is a poor ocean vessel as it swamps easily due to a low freeboard and rolls heavily in even moderate waves. The shabbak requires a somewhat larger crew than other ships of its size yet has a smaller cargo capacity. Its speed, however, makes it a popular choice for those who need fast and powerful coastal vessels.

## Housing & Property

In a city as outlandish and diverse as Llyhn there is no single distinctive styles of architecture. Structures are built to fit vastly different physiques, sizes and preferences, with diverse residential architecture such as the remarkable traditional houses of the Je'ehl, the baroquely styled domes of high-caste palaces and the soaring minarets of the Pai'Karaan district. The forms and spaces of individual dwellings are dictated by the habits, traditions and cultures of inhabitants in accordance with the environment and climate of the Eternal City.

| PROPERTY | DESCRIPTION | COST |
|---|---|---|
| FARM | Small rural homestead with a bit of land | 400 |
| HOUSE | Simple residence with 1-2 storeys | 15k+ |
| HOVEL | Tiny one-room dwelling | 200+ |
| MANSION | Grand abode with grounds | 350k+ |
| PALACE | Extravagant residence with estates | 500k+ |
| PAVILION | Large tent with several separate areas | 500+ |
| TENT | Simple canvas accommodating 1-2 people | 25 |
| VILLA | Residence surrounding courtyard or similar | 200k+ |

FARM: A small homestead on the outskirts of the city or in the foothills of the Pe'rep'ial Peaks. Farmhouses include an area of land suitable for one person to farm on his own.

HOUSE: Simple house with a common room, kitchen and one or more bedrooms. Most houses in the Eternal City have domed roofs or flat rooftops used as a sitting area in the evening. Windows are generally avoided, but aeriation slits, wooden lattice openings and first-floor balconies towards the street are standard features.

HOVEL: A tiny, squalid dwelling often found in slums, alleys or behind larger houses. Often built from crude materials and with little skill these dwellings barely give shelter from the elements.



MANSION: A large abode, typically comprising a main house of several storeys and one or several wings accommodating servants, stables and other facilities. Often richly decorated minarets and domed ceilings aggrandise the abode with shaded courtyards and terraces providing open, peaceful areas for meditation or socialising. Mansions are typically walled and encircled by grounds or botanical gardens.

PALACE: An estate with various lavish structures, gardens and servant quarters. Characteristically, several storeys high and topped with an imposing superstructure dwarfing any surrounding buildings, a palace is the epitome of pomp and lavishness. Surrounded by high walls staffed by guards, any palace is a fortified island of extravagance and splendour.

PAVILION: A great tent or marquee mounted on poles and regularly with open sides allowing a flow of visitors. Pavilions are large enough to host assemblies or segmented into smaller areas allowing privacy for several groups of people.

TENT: A piece of canvas held up by poles providing shelter from the elements for one or several people. Tents are used by travellers as makeshift shelter easily carried, erected and dismantled again.

VILLA: Villas are typically built around a central courtyard with the entrance leading through a twisting antechamber obstructing the view of the inside from the street, preserving the privacy of the residents. The courtyard is not only a private sitting area but also part of the aeration of the house, as it is shaded in the day and generates air movement throughout the building, sometimes enhanced with windcatchers.

## Esoteric commodities

BARAST GLANDS: Carefully treated and prepared the glands of the Barast are a powerful aphrodisiac. Once ingested the dupe must make a Stamina roll [10] or become subject to Awe towards the first being he or she sees. The effects last for a number of hours equal to D12 – the victims Stamina modifier.

BLOOD IRON: A name given to the rich ore that comes from Sinnis Gibil. Found in small spherical blooms around the edges of large geysers in thick red peat soil. The few colonists and miners audacious enough to quarry the world come back stained red as blood, hence the name of the ore. The ore produces an extremely tough and resilient metal that never corrodes. Blood iron weapons function as tempered blade and point weapons.

ÇERO: A smoky coloured ore that is extremely dense and heavy. The ore is waste material left by the Paboosa beasts of Nue'v as they consume hardened sulphuric matter. Smelting and forging are very complex and risky, as the ore is full of mineral and gaseous pods from the digestion process. The fragments that are retrieved in the process are razor sharp and very light. Weapons and tools made from Çero have the properties razor-sharp and lightened.

CHITIN, PINCERWIG: This dull chitin is a very light yet durable material that can be fashioned into armour and tools of high quality. Its solidity makes it difficult to process but reduces the bulk of created armour by a factor of one.

GLOWWORM: Small phosphorescent worms found deep in flooded underground caves and grottos. They glow with a soft deep light varying between blue, purple and red hues. The creatures are relatively common in Llyhn and are exploited for two main purposes. Retained in glass jars the worms provide enough light to illuminate a radius of up to a cubit (half a metre). The worms are also used in the smoking of sheesha as they exude a mild intoxicant when dropped into certain liquors, inducing a pleasant buzz in the smoker. This process kills the worm while providing a remarkable ambience of glowing sheesha pipes.

GREEN OBSIDIAN: A green rock which is not only incredibly sharp with nasty, jagged edges but durable as well. Considered sacred by the Timaniem who have the only source of the stone in the known Cosmos. Weapons made from this stone have the razor-sharp and shard blade property.



| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | EFFECT | AVAILABILITY | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BARAST GLANDS | Aphrodisiac | Induce Awe | Rare | 300 Dhin |
| BLOOD IRON | Sturdy metal | Tempered weapons | Very rare | x8* |
| ÇERO | Light and sharp metal | Razor-sharp \| light weapons | Very rare | x9* |
| CHITIN, PINCERWIG | Light and sturdy material | -1 Bulk | Rare | x5* |
| GLOWWORM | Phosphorescent worm | Illuminates and intoxicates | Uncommon | 10 Dhin |
| GREEN OBSIDIAN | Sacred glass-stone | Razor-sharp and shard blade | Unique | - |
| MOHK PEARL | Explosive pearl | Causes damage | Very rare | 150+ Dhin |
| MARUD FUR | Feathery fur | Insulates | Rare | x10* |
| SONIC ROCKS | Stones emitting sound | Subliminal soundsw | Very rare | 400 Dhin |
| UNGO | Fungus | Healing properties | Rare | 10 Dhin |
| VARIIN MUCUS | Phlegm | Holds air for breathing | Unique | - |
| YJA | Ingestible moss | Paralyzing agent | Very rare | 200 Dhin |

**Multiply the item cost by the amount.*



*Smoking a sheesha pipe, the bubbling in the clear liquid the only sound breaking the silence, and then the creature spoke. In its deep guttural yet whispering voice it said: "In this place intrigue is rife and conspiracy the rule of the day. Where vendors of toxins and poisons are myriad, nobody can have confidence in anyone."*

*– Conversations between strangers*

MOHK PEARL: These rare pearls are found only on Na'ash, the homeworld of the Naqastï. They are delicately harvested from odd barnacles growing in remote canyons and are notoriously unstable, exploding on impact if jolted or bumped. Harvested Mohk pearls range from miniscule to half a cubit in diameter, divided into five size categories. Sought after by warlords across the Cosmos the pearls provide a fearsome yet precarious arsenal to those who possess them. Functioning as thrown or propelled weapons Mohk pearls explode on impact causing damage depending on the size - D12 per size category for direct hits and D6 damage per size category to anyone nearby. The price increases significantly for larger specimens.



*Marud Fur*

MARUD FUR: The feathery fur of the Marud bulls is extremely heavy and warm, retaining heat for extended periods. Marud oxen are already prized draught animals in Llyhn, but it is the feather pelts of the mountain roaming herds that are genuinely valued. Woven onto cloaks, qaftans, headpieces and vests, it is not only decorative but notably insulating. Wearing Marud fur clothes increase the benefits of clothing by one when resisting the effects of cold.

SONIC ROCKS: Sonic Stones are semi-conscious igneous beings. In the light, they continuously vibrate; a gentle almost imperceptible shaking. Place them in darkness, even for a brief period, and they become inert until exposed to the light once more. There are sonically attuned races for whom eyesight and conventional sound are unknown; such beings perceive the stones' sonic ripples much as a human might view an exquisite work of art. They "see" beautiful shapes and images when exposed to the vibrations. Place two stones in proximity and the vibrations increase; so too does music audible even to man: melodies no fleshly artist could conceive. By arranging stones in clusters, orchestral rhythms and trance-inducing harmonies are evoked. A typical stone is a pastel-hued sphere about the size of a melon. Certain races particularly sensitive to tremors, predominantly those using vibration for communication, are known to respond more keenly to the stones; sometimes with joy but for other species with incapacitating shock.

UNGO: A common fungus across Nue'V, where it grows in areas near small gaseous pockets that appear along the larger crevasses around the globe. When processed, it can act as a soothing salve. Ungo heals D4 Health over the course of D3 hours. Applied to burns, it heals D6 Health over D3 hours.

VARIIN MUCUS: This phlegm is secreted from special glands in the Variin throat and store vast quantities of air enabling, for instance, a human stuffing it into nasal and oral cavities to go without breathing for up to three hours.

YJA: Yja is a rare type of moss that grows at the uppermost branches deep within the fern forests of Ogé. Crushed and mixed with liquor it can be ingested or applied to weapons, acting as a powerful paralysing agent, or, in larger doses, induce full debilitation. Victims make a Stamina roll [7] or suffer the effects for D6 hours. Mild solutions cause the severe flaw Cramps, and Medium solutions cause D3 limbs to become temporarily paralysed and unusable. Strong solutions induce full paralysis, rendering the victim effectively comatose for the duration.



## Blood inking & grafting

The gory practices of Blood inking and grafting are not commonly available for acquisition and can only be acquired in a story-driven manner.





# CHAPTER: ॐ
# Rules

As players direct their newly created characters upon strange, exciting and possibly horrifying adventures they are faced with obstacles, encounters and challenges which the game system is designed to control and manage. The following section details the rules for performing actions, fighting, using skills and all other aspects encompassed in the game.
The primary maxim behind the rules is "simplicity grants diversity", meaning that the entire system is based on a few basic principles making the rules easy to grasp, implement and fit into anything an inventive Arbiter or player can come up with. In the end, this gives more time for the fun stuff, namely playing the game.

Combining imagination with rules and guidelines can be limiting and if the sentence "not allowed according to the rules" is uttered too often it is hampering, and often diminishes the enjoyment of the game.
A great deal of the game is managed by the players describing how they interact with the world the Arbiter is creating around them, but as in the actual world, things do not always work out the way players intend them, and sometimes they work out better than the player could have hoped for. Dice rolls sometimes determine the success or failure of actions, consequences and other events to simulate the role of fortune. To ensure that the game is balanced and not everything is left to chance, the characters' abilities influence the rolls, adding modifiers or penalties accordingly.

A game where everything is up to chance, however, is hardly believable or enjoyable and thus dice should not be rolled all the time. Using skills, performing actions in extraordinary or decisive situations and situations where a character's capabilities determine the chance of success are examples of cases where dice must be rolled. Characters performing routine tasks and actions of little consequence or simply roleplaying do not require a dice-roll. Players should be encouraged to use their roleplaying skills by acting out social situations, negotiations and so on, and the Arbiter may allow the action to be successful without a dice having to be rolled, or grant bonus modifiers to rolls for compelling and "true-to-character" efforts from the players.
Player-fuelled initiative and creativity should be rewarded throughout the game. An innovative player, vividly and dramatically describing and enacting actions and dialogue, adds intensity and excitement to the game experience for all involved, while a player simply and dully stating character actions contributes little.

The game system is based upon rolling a twelve-sided die (D12) to determine the success or failure of actions and their consequences: the higher the roll, the greater the chance an action succeeds, the lower the roll, the higher the risk of failure. Actions have a difficulty rating marked in square brackets []; the value which the roll has to equal or beat for the action to succeed. Some dice rolls determine an effect or outcome and do not have a difficulty to beat as any result will be effectual, although possibly with varying degrees of achievement.

Rules are meant to support and enhance the story and if this means that they must be bent or broken, so be it. Should it happen that the rules do not suffice or are counterproductive to the intended purpose, the Arbiter is free to change them accordingly, although fairness should always be applied. If the rules are ambiguous and reasoning cannot resolve the matter let fortune decide and roll a dice to determine what happens.



## Rolling the dice

There are three different types of rolls in the game: The action roll, the resistance roll and the effect or consequence roll.

### ACTION ROLLS
An action roll is required whenever a character attempts to perform a significant task or activity and the outcome is uncertain. The Arbiter assigns a Difficulty rating based on their judgement of the complexity of the action.
All action rolls are made with a 12-sided die, and the minimum number needed to succeed is the Difficulty rating. The higher the difficulty rating, the harder it is to succeed, therefore the higher you roll, the better your chance of success.
Trait, skill and other modifiers may apply to your roll, increasing or decreasing your chance of success.
For actions with difficulties beyond the capabilities of a character a natural roll of twelve (12) allows a second D12 roll, which is added to the result of the first roll and applicable modifiers, allowing a character to achieve success on otherwise impossible tasks.

### RESISTANCE ROLLS

A resistance roll is required when a character naturally or reflexively reacts to a stimulus - that is, the Arbiter asks the player to make a roll, rather than the player seeking to make one. Resistance rolls also have a difficulty rating; they are typically used when a character is affected by psychological stimuli or involuntarily exposed to a physical impact.
Examples of resistance rolls are a character struggling to overcome the terror of facing a ghostly abomination of the Void or fighting off the effects of being poisoned.

### EFFECT/CONSEQUENCE ROLLS

When the outcome of an action roll requires more information than a simple success or failure, an effect or consequence roll is required. An effect or consequence roll has no difficulty rating, and the outcome is either determined by the value of a die roll, or by cross-referencing the die roll to a table, such as the Backlash table used in Blood Rituals. Modifiers may apply to an effect rolls (such as adding a character's Strength modifier to a damage roll).

### OTHER DICE

Sometimes the game requires you to make a dice-roll using less than all 12 values of the dice, typically when rolling for damage during combat. The possibilities are D2, D3, D4 or D6. While appropriate dice may be used if available, the system is designed so that any alternative dice-needs can be resolved by using the D12 and converting the result as per the following table:



**DICE CONVERSION**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D2 | 1-6 = 1 | 7-12 = 2 | | | |
| D3 | 1-4 = 1 | 5-8 = 2 | 9-12 = 3 | | |
| D4 | 1-3 = 1 | 4-6 = 2 | 7-9 = 3 | 10-12 = 4 | |
| D6 | 1-2 = 1 | 3-4 = 2 | 5-6 = 3 | 9-10 = 5 | 11-12 = 6 |

## The Rule of One

*As stated above an action roll equalling or beating the difficulty rating is a success and a roll lower than the difficulty rating constitutes a failure. A natural roll of 1 in any action is always a failure and as a rule a critical one at that. Whenever a critical failure occurs an additional negative consequence is added to the failed attempt. As with exceptional successes some critical failures are organized by tables, whereas others are up to the discretion of the Arbiter.*

*"Ziana is attempting to pick the pocket of a merchant in a crowded street; the difficulty rating is 6, but as the roll is made a 1 comes up. Not only does Ziana not succeed in snatching the pouch from the merchant's belt; she gets entangled in the cord holding the pouch, alerting the merchant. He not only starts shouting for the guards but the entanglement renders an easy escape impossible."*

## The Rule of Twelve

An unmodified roll of 12 for an action is an *exceptional success*. Such a roll augments the accomplishment of whichever action the character performed. The extraordinary outcome of an exceptional success is either determined by a specific table - such as the exceptional hits table in the case of combat – or determined by the Arbiter in case of unspecified outcomes.

- The rule of exceptional success only applies to action rolls. No exceptional success can be achieved on effect, consequence or resistance rolls, for instance when determining a crippling injury or a sanity roll.
- Any natural action roll of 12 against a difficulty of 11 or less is an exceptional success.
- Any natural action or resistance roll of 12 against a difficulty of 12 or above entitles the player to a secondary roll. If the cumulative total of the first and second roll beats the difficulty the action is a success.
- In the above case a natural 12 on the second roll is an exceptional success.

*"Ziana has been cornered by a group of threatening thugs. As she realizes that fighting these thugs would likely result in serious injury to her she attempts diplomacy and seek to make her assailants see the benefits in leaving her alone. Ziana makes a speech about the mutual benefit of leaving her unharmed and the die is rolled to see if her efforts are successful, resulting in a natural 12. The Arbiter decides that the exceptional success means that not only does she convince the thugs not to harm her, she sways them to offer their protection while she is on their turf."*

## Secondary Rolls

As noted above an action or resisting stimuli may be beyond what a character would normally be able to achieve with a single die roll. When characters attempt actions beyond their normal capacity, a natural roll of 12 does not incur an exceptional success, but allow a secondary roll for the character to attempt to beat the difficulty. The combined value of the two dice rolls including modifiers counts as the final result. All modifiers, bonuses or penalties are only added to the total value once. If the cumulative result is equal to or above the difficulty rating the character has succeeded in performing the action. Only in the case that the second roll is also a 12 would an exceptional success be achieved.
*"Ziana is attempting to scale a high marble wall. The difficulty is 16 as there are few sufficient handholds and the climb requires extraordinary effort to succeed. The dice is rolled and the result is a natural 12. This allows Ziana to make a further roll and add the new value to her previous result. She rolls again and the roll is a 5, giving a total value of 17; enough to beat the difficulty rating and thus she is able to scale the wall."*

# Performing Actions

When a player declares their character perform a task or activity in the game, it is termed as an action. Attempting to drive a chariot through a narrow alley at breakneck speed, negotiating a truce between rivalling factions or exchanging blows with an adversary are all examples of actions characters can perform.

When a player declares their character wants to perform an action, the Arbiter evaluates and decides whether this activity will automatically succeed, whether it is impossible, or whether it requires a die roll to determine its success.

When there is uncertainty over whether a character is able to succeed with a significant action a die roll is required to determine the success or failure. Routine actions or actions that are inconsequential do not need a roll, and the outcome is decided by the Arbiter.

If the Arbiter decides a die roll is necessary, they then determine what type of action it is and so which game mechanics apply to resolve it. There are several types of action rolls, which are described in detail later: basic actions, standard actions, resisted actions, sequential actions, opposed actions and cooperative actions. Occasionally a combination of action-types is required for a character to accomplish an activity.

### ACTION CATEGORIES

| | |
|---|---|
| BASIC ACTION | Roll D12 + (Trait modifiers x2) against the Difficulty |
| STANDARD ACTION | Roll D12 + modifiers (skill, power, Trait, equipment, etc.) against the Difficulty |
| RESISTED ACTION | As standard action with the applicable resistance modifiers added to the Difficulty |
| SEQUENTIAL ACTION | Actions where the overall success requires several successful rolls. Can be standard, resisted, opposed and cooperative |
| OPPOSED ACTION | Opposing characters roll D12 + respective modifiers (skills, Traits, conditions, tools, etc.) and the highest score wins |
| COOPERATIVE ACTION | The primary performer rolls D12 as a standard action with secondary supporters adding their modifiers (halved and rounded up) |

### BASIC ACTIONS

This type of action revolves solely around the innate capacities of the character, and therefore only Trait modifiers apply. No skill, power or other ability is ever applicable to a basic action; the modifier or penalty of the associated Trait, however, is doubled. A basic action can be opposed, resisted, sequential and cooperative. An example of a basic action is arm-wrestling, where the character's Strength Trait is the only applicable capability.

### STANDARD ACTIONS

A standard action is any action where the character draws upon a learnt ability, such as skills or powers, as well as a corresponding Trait. To resolve whether the character succeeds, roll a D12 and add all relevant modifiers: If the total equals or exceeds the difficulty, the action is successful.

*Example: Ziana tries to pick a lock in the middle of the night. Picking a lock is a challenging task, which means the difficulty is 10. She uses her agility Trait (4, for a +1 modifier) and her larceny ability (ranking 1) giving +2 to her roll. The Lock picking set she is using is of superior quality, granting her a further +1 to the roll. However, it is dark, and she can't use a light for fear of discovery, so she can't see what he is doing, entailing a -3 modifier to the roll. With the modifiers and penalties negating each other, she will need to roll 10 or more to succeed at picking the lock.*



### ACTION EXAMPLE: NEGOTIATION

Applicable Traits: Intellect, Persuasion or Presence
Applicable skills: Expression, Socialise or similar
Action: Resisted or opposed roll

Haggling and diplomacy are typical examples of negotiation where two or more individuals with differing intentions attempt to come to an agreement. The approach may vary in negotiations so the player can choose which Trait she wants to utilise. In case the character focus on rational argumentation Intellect is the appropriate Trait, a swindle and deception would entail the use of Persuasion while an attempt to convince by emotive appeal makes Presence the associated Trait.

Success: An agreement is reached, most likely with both sides making concessions or compromises.

Exceptional success: An agreement is reached with the losing side conceding.

Failure: The parties found no acceptable conclusion or agreement.

Critical failure: The losing side not only caused failure in reaching an agreement but also insults or otherwise cause offence to the opposing party.

## RESISTED ACTIONS

Most actions are resolved purely based on the skill and ability of the actor, but in some instances, an adversary passively resists the action. Actions involving passive resistance are called resisted actions; most combat manoeuvres are this type of action. With resisted actions, the relevant opposing Trait and Skill modifiers are added to the difficulty of the roll - they do not affect or modify the action roll, but rather the difficulty rating of the action. For instance, a mystic attempt to dominate a target and makes an action roll to see if he is successful. The target's Willpower modifier is added to the difficulty rating of the action as he or she naturally impedes the invasive action - unless he or she willingly submits to the will of the Void-Marked or is incapacitated.
A resisted action should not be confused with an opposed action, which differs in that both adversaries are allowed rolls to determine the outcome.

## SEQUENTIAL ACTIONS

Occasionally several successful actions are required to complete or accomplish a given task, this is called sequential actions. Essentially sequential actions are series or sequences of ordinary actions but where the overall success depends on the cumulative successes of each individual roll, unlike ordinary actions where a single success is sufficient. Sequential actions are typically used when characters are attempting to build, repair or otherwise produce items, buildings and the like. How many successes and at which difficulty rating depends upon the task at hand.

In a sequential action, each individual action takes a certain amount of time, and it must be successful for the following action to commence. In case an action-roll is a failure during sequential actions the Arbiter determines whether the result is a slight delay, meaning that the time spent performing the given action is wasted and the specific action must be performed again, or if it means a complete failure of the whole undertaking resulting in all previous successes being lost. Some actions in a sequence might be critical to overall success, while others merely delay success.

Occasionally extended tasks require different actions being successful to accomplish the task. Repairing a broken spoke on a chariot wheel might only need three successful carpentry actions, while completing an inscription dedicated to the mysteries of the Void might require several lore, scribing and craft actions.

*Example: A player wants his character to build a door, and the Arbiter says that the character has to make three successful craft rolls before the task is completed. Each action takes half an hour. Once three successes have been reached the door is finished, but if the character fails a roll the build is delayed by half an hour as no progress has been made. If at any point a natural 1 is rolled the entire build is ruined, and the character has to start over again from scratch. A roll of a natural 12 would mean that the build either goes faster, only a total of two successes are needed, or that the door has a higher quality than it otherwise would.*



## OPPOSED ACTIONS

Certain actions involve two or more participants actively attempting to overcome each other. These are called opposed actions, and they are resolved differently than other actions as they involve contending dice rolls without a set difficulty. To resolve an opposed action, all involved participants make an action roll, add their respective modifiers and only the participant with the highest total succeeds. In case contenders generate equal scores, the result is counted as a draw or - if this is not a possibility - the participant with the highest modifier is the winner.
Opposed rolls are also applicable when a character attempts to actively resist an action directed at or otherwise affecting her, such as pinning attacks, mind battles and the like.

Opposed actions can be sequential if the Arbiter decides that the feat requires two or more total successes to determine a winner. For example, *a character is pursuing a fugitive. The two have equal movement speeds so the Arbiter decides that an opposed roll is required and that two consecutive successes are needed to determine the outcome. Both players roll D12 and add their respective Strength score and athletics Skill ranking. The character who first manages to beat his opponent's roll twice in a row emerges as the victor, determining if the fugitive escapes or is caught. Should the pursuit carry on, Stamina rolls might be required for the participants to continue.*

## COOPERATIVE ACTIONS

Cooperation and collaboration are vital when characters face complex or extensive tasks. When two or more characters are helping each other perform an action one of them is designated as the primary actor. The primary character makes the roll adding her own Trait and other relevant modifiers to the roll. In addition to this, she adds the applicable modifiers divided by two, rounded up, from any supporter who is part of the cooperative action.

### ACTION EXAMPLE: CLIMBING

Trait: Agility or Strength
Skill: Acrobatics or athletics
Action: Standard
Climbing a wall or other steep surface is a physical action with difficulty determined by the height, incline and surface of the obstacle. While some climbing necessitates agile exertions or acrobatics, it can also be a simple matter of raw strength for a character to pull herself up. In some cases, appropriate equipment is required or helpful to a character attempting a climb and - if the climb is long - several rolls might be needed to succeed. Factors such as lack of light, heavy rains or other environmental conditions might influence the difficulty of the task.
Success: The character manages to make it to the top of the obstacle without incident.
Exceptional success: The climb is done at an accelerated pace.
Failure: The character is unable to climb the obstacle and stuck at the bottom.
Critical failure: As the character climbs up, she slips and falls, possibly injuring herself.

While some actions necessitate cooperation, not all actions can be cooperative. It is typically tasks such as heavy lifting, research, construction, repair and the like which are applicable. The Arbiter decides whether an action can be cooperative, how many people can aid, and the benefits added supporters grant. These benefits may include reduced labour time, heightened quality and so on. No more people than the primary character's Intellect score may cooperate on any given action, as a greater number will only require too much coordination to use the advantage of cooperation properly.

*Example: A group of three characters decide to do some research regarding the rites and practices of several connected cults worshipping unnamed horrors. One character has an Intellect score of 3 and a ranking of 4 in occult lore, which is deemed relevant to this research, and he is chosen as the primary researcher. Of his fellows one has a ranking of one in rituals, which is also considered applicable to the research; the other has a ranking of 3 in enquiry, thus providing a total of +3 support modifiers.*

RESISTED VS OPPOSED ACTIONS?
A resisted action involved passive, innate or unconscious opposition to an action. An opposed action involves deliberate, active efforts to make the action fail.

For example, *Ziana is attempting to flee the scene of a crime. Fearing the alarm will be raised soon, she dashes from her hiding place, she tries to dodge past a patrolling guardswoman. The Arbiter rules this is a resisted action, based on Ziana's Agility. He decides it is an Average difficulty (7), and will be resisted by the guardswoman's Agility modifier (+1). Ziana must roll 8 or above (including her modifiers - +1 for her agility, and the Arbiter accepts her player's request her Coordination modifier applies for another +1). If the guard is alert and lunges to grab Ziana, the action is opposed, and both Ziana and the guard roll to see who wins. The guardswoman rolls D12 +1 for her Agility modifier, Ziana D12 +2 (her Agility and Coordination modifiers).*

## Resolving actions

Actions are resolved immediately after having been declared and require a single roll using a twelve-sided die to determine their success or failure. Actions have a difficulty rating, which is the value the die-roll (plus modifiers) must equal or exceed for the action to be successful. Difficulty ratings are usually specified in the rules, scenario or decided on the spot by the Arbiter. If unspecified, the Arbiter determines how challenging the given action is to perform and establishes an appropriate difficulty rating for the roll. The difficulty rating may be kept secret from the player to enhance suspense and mystery, but Arbiters should refrain from secrecy on all rolls as it is likely to cause frustration and suspicion for the players if overdone.

| DIFFICULTY RATING | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| 4+ | Easy |
| 7+ | Average |
| 10+ | Challenging |
| 13+ | Demanding |
| 16+ | Hard |
| 19+ | Very hard |
| 22+ | Daunting |
| 25+ | Impossible |

When the difficulty rating is determined the player rolls D12 and adds or subtracts relevant modifiers from the die value, with the result determining whether the given action is performed successfully. The following table displays applicable difficulty ratings for actions.

## Action outcomes

As mentioned earlier actions can have four different outcomes: Success, failure, exceptional success or critical failure. Once the success or failure of an action has been determined the outcome must be resolved. While most actions simply denote whether a character accomplishes what she set out to or not, some action require an additional roll to define the actual consequences, as in combat where the amount of damage caused must be determined in accordance with whichever weapon is used. In some cases, like crippling injuries or failed sanity rolls, tables have been developed to provide a range of consequences. Other more complex actions – for instance research or negotiation - require an extensive description of the outcome devised by the Arbiter.

ACTION EXAMPLE: INVESTIGATION
Trait: Intellect or Awareness
Skill: Lore, enquiry or observation
Action: Standard, sequential or cooperative
Outcome: Simple or complex
Characters looking for information may utilise various skills and abilities when doing so: Rummaging through ancient texts and clay tablets, searching locations or questioning involved people are all valid methods requiring different skills and abilities.
Success: The investigation uncovers the information or evidence the character was looking for.
Exceptional success: The investigation was exceedingly beneficial; yielding additional information.
Failure: The character finds no useful information and has wasted his or her time.
Critical failure: Not only does the investigation fail, something happens that impede the further efforts. Perhaps the character accidentally destroys a piece of evidence or misinterpret findings leading to wrong conclusions.

## Roll Modifiers

Actions always correspond with a specific Trait and often also with a related skill, power or other ability, which add modifiers to dice rolls. The better the Trait score and relevant skill ranking a character has the higher the modifier. As shown in the table, Traits with values below 3 give penalties while Traits above three grant bonuses. The description of each Trait – see the Traits chapter – provides an indication of which Traits are applicable for which actions, but the Arbiter always has the final word in determining which Trait should be used for an action roll.



Learned abilities such as skills and powers influence rolls conferring positive modifiers equal to their ranking. If an action requires a skill that a character does not have, a penalty of -3 is applied to the roll.

Other capabilities for example Talents may also be relevant and add modifiers to action rolls. If an action involves the use of equipment, the quality of this will also influence the dice roll; inferior items decrease the chances of success with penalties while well-crafted items enhance the chances by adding positive modifiers. Environmental factors, such as enclosed spaces, darkness and so on may also affect action rolls. Depending on the circumstances similar factors may work in opposite ways; while darkness would typically impede combat actions due to poor visibility, it would be advantageous for many stealth actions for precisely the same reasons.

| MODIFIER | TRAIT | SKILL RANKING | ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS |
|---|---|---|---|
| -6 | - | - | Blindness \| total darkness/blinding light \| hurricane \| drunken stupor |
| -5 | - | - | Gale \| partial blindness |
| -4 | - | - | Monsoon \| heavy fog \| drunkenness |
| -3 | 0 | Unskilled | Dark \| very bright \| stormy \| impaired or hampered |
| -2 | 1 | - | Major Distraction \| windy \| inebriation |
| -1 | 2 | - | Rain \| dusk \| strong breeze \| minor distraction |
| 0 | 3 | 0 | - |
| +1 | 4 | 1 | - |
| +2 | 5 | 2 | |
| +3 | 6 | 3 | |
| +4 | 7 | 4 | |
| +5 | 8 | 5 | |
| +6 | 9 | 6 | |
| +7 | 10 | 7 | |
| +8 | 11 | 8 | |
| +9 | 12 | 9 | |

# Movement

In most parts of the game it is unnecessary to calculate speed precisely, and general estimation is sufficient. However, in some instances - particularly during combat or chases – knowing the speed a character is moving is vital.
The movement rate indicates how fast a person is able to walk, run or sprint in the game. This factor is used when calculating the distances characters are able to travel in a given amount of time, how fast they can get from one place to another, how far they can move in a combat round and so on and so forth.

To calculate a character's base walking speed add the Strength modifier to the size factor shown in the table below. This is the distance in kilometres that a character is able to cover in an hour when walking at a leisurely pace. To calculate running and sprinting tempos the walking speed of the character must be doubled and quadrupled respectively. While running speed can be maintained for extended periods of time, sprinting can usually only be maintained in short bursts, rarely more than a few seconds at a time.

| SIZE | HEIGHT/LENGTH | SIZE FACTOR (HUMANOID) | SIZE FACTOR (QUADRUPED) |
|---|---|---|---|
| TINY | Up to 20 cm | 1 | 1 |
| LITTLE | 20 – 50 cm | 2 | 3 |
| SMALL | 50 – 100 cm | 3 | 6 |
| AVERAGE/MEDIUM | 1 – 2 metres | 5 | 8 |
| LARGE | 2 – 4 metres | 6 | 10 |
| HUGE | 4 – 6 metres | 8 | 12 |
| GIANT | 6 – 8 metres | 10 | 16 |
| GARGANTUAN | Above 8 metres | 12 | 22 |

The species factor is based on the equivalent of normally functioning humanoid legs or similar limbs of a proportionate length. Species with markedly longer or shorter legs, or significantly different physiology, have increased or decreased movement speed accordingly. Other forms of movement, such as slithering or flying are determined according to species.

### WALKING

Characters walking on an even surface, such as a paved road, a trail in good condition or a level plain, may move at their full normal speed for eight hours or more per day. Marching or jogging increases the rate, but can only be maintained for a limited time. Walking on rough, overgrown or otherwise uneven terrain will reduce the speed as determined by the Arbiter.

### RUNNING

Characters can run at double their normal movement rate for 10 minutes per Stamina score without difficulties. Continuously running beyond this requires a successful Stamina roll [6] at intervals of 10 minutes per Stamina score. For each consecutive Stamina roll, a factor of two (2) is added to the difficulty. A failed roll means that the character will become fatigued and must stop. Example: A character has a Stamina of five. He can run for 50 minutes without pause but must make a Stamina roll with difficulty 6 to continue. After another 50 minutes has passed he will have to make another roll – this time at difficulty 8 to carry on running.

### SPRINTING

Characters can sprint at quadruple their regular movement speed for up to three seconds per Stamina score, the equivalent of a combat round. After this period, they will have to pass a Stamina roll [9] or slow down as shortness of breath inhibits their ability to maintain maximum effort.

*Example: Sharaq decides to chase a fleeing opponent and opts to sprint to catch her prey quickly. With her Strength score of 5, she can race along at a speed of 28 metres per combat round. And as she has a Stamina score of 3, she can keep this up for nine seconds or three combat rounds until she has to make a roll or slow down. Even though her quarry starts 20 metres away he is only running at 10 metres per combat round, so Sharaq can catch him in two rounds, well before she runs out of breath.*

### CLIMBING

Characters likely have to scale walls, climb trees, traverse mountains and negotiate a variety of other obstacles during their exploits. Characters usually climb at half their base movement rate. While climbing does not usually need an action roll, particularly difficult ascents or hazardous conditions may require a roll. Acrobatic skills and the like, as well as climbing equipment possessed by the character, may apply to such rolls.



| TERRAIN | EXAMPLE | MOVEMENT RATE MODIFIERS |
|---|---|---|
| OPEN AND FLAT | Roads, plains or steppes | None |
| ROUGH OR DENSE | Boulders, woodland or jungle | ½ movement rate |
| WET, SOFT OR MUDDY | Sand desert, bogs or mud plains | ¾ movement rate |
| UNDULATING, ROCKY OR RUGGED | Hills and mountains | ¾ - ½ movement rate |
| WETLANDS | Marsh, mangrove or swamp | ½ movement rate |

### CRAWLING
Crawling, moving stealthily or while carrying heavy burdens is done at half the character's walking speed.

### JUMPING
Bounding and leaping across chasms, out of pits and down cliffs are regular activities as characters explore the Cosmos. There are three types of jumps: Horizontal, vertical up and vertical down.

Characters jumping horizontally with a running start can leap a distance in metres equalling their Strength score, and half that distance from a standing start. When jumping up vertically, characters can achieve up to a third of their Strength score in metres with a running start and half that height with a standing start.

Characters jumping down from an elevated position may drop down from a height equalling their Agility score in metres without having to roll to make a controlled landing. Any descend from a greater height requires a successful Agility roll [6] to avoid a bad landing. For each further metre of the jump, the difficulty of the roll is increased by 2. A failed roll will result in an uncontrolled fall which may cause damage to the character - refer to the Damage & Injuries section for resolving damage due to falls.

### SWIMMING
Movement in water is done at half a character's standard movement rate and does not require an action roll under normal circumstances. Characters may swim at double speed - their regular movement rate - for short bursts, similar to sprinting. Swimming in rough waters or if the character is dragged down by excessive burdens or otherwise has hindered movement necessitate an action roll.



Typically, a character can swim for ten minutes per Stamina score; anything further than this requires a Stamina roll, or the character becomes fatigued and risks drowning. A failed swimming roll means the character does not make any progress, while a critical failure indicates that the character begins to sink, possibly drowning. (see suffocation)

### FLYING
Characters with wings, membranes or the aerial attribute can fly, soar or glide through the air. Unlike movement on land, creature size makes no difference to the movement rate of flight. Flight speed is determined by wing size factor with the added Strength score of the character to determine the flight speed as shown in the table. While this value determines the normal speed, flying creatures can increase their speed for limited distances with a controlled dive, using gravity to gain added momentum. Diving doubles the speed but requires that the creature starts at altitude. Flying creatures must generally retain at least half their flight speed to stay airborne. Example: Barahn has medium wings and a Strength score of two resulting in a regular flight speed of 18 km/h, while he can dive at up to 34 km/h.

| WING SIZE FACTOR | FLIGHT SPEED |
|---|---|
| SMALL | 8 |
| MEDIUM | 16 |
| LARGE | 24 |
| AERIAL | Normal Movement Rate |

Flight takes place in three dimensions, and while keeping close track of altitude is usually not a concern it becomes important during aerial combat - see the combat section.

### MOVING IN COMBAT
When in combat it is important to track character movement on the battlefield and to know how far each can charge, flee and so forth (see the combat section). Depending on which action or manoeuvre a character is performing he or she can move half her movement rate, her full movement rate or even run or sprint. Character movement speed during combat is the same value as regular movement rates, but is measured in metres per combat round (3 seconds). Example: Sharaq is a human mercenary with a Strength score of 5. Her species factor is 5, and her Strength modifier is +2, meaning that she can walk leisurely at a pace of seven kilometres per hour as regular movement rate. When engaged in fighting her base movement rate is seven metres per combat round.

# Combat



In a brutal and uncaring Cosmos, violent conflict is often the order of the day and exploring the mysteries of existence will almost certainly lead to combat encounters for the characters. In combat situations things happen fast and the D12 system is designed to reflect this; creating action, drama, tension and excitement whenever characters are locked in deadly combat.

## The combat round

Combat is divided into rounds to make the process most accessible and easy to grasp. A combat round is a fluid interval considered to last roughly three seconds in game time. During this time combatants have the opportunity to perform one or more actions attempting to defeat their adversaries.

Combat consists of two simple steps: Determining the sequence of characters' actions, and declaring and resolving these. Once all combatants have acted the combat round is considered to be over and - depending on the outcome - either the conflict is resolved, or another combat round begins. Once the order of initiative has been determined it remains the same throughout the encounter unless a disruptive factor, such as a character changing her weapon, occurs. Alternatively, players and the Arbiter make new initiative rolls each combat round.

### INITIATIVE MODIFERS

| | |
|---|---|
| AGILITY | Add or deduct the character's Agility modifier |
| ABILITIES | Some abilities provide modifiers to the Initiative roll. |
| WEAPON SIZE | Combatants lacking the strength required to wield a weapon suffer a -1 penalty per score difference |
| POWERS | Powers may confer an initiative modifier as noted in their description |
| ACTIONS | Some action/manoeuvres grant bonuses or penalties to the Initiative |

If a combatant is armed with a weapon or uses an item which requires higher Strength than the wielder has, the difference must be deducted from Initiative rolls. It does not matter if the combatant intends to use that weapon or item so long as it is drawn and readied.

Example: Ziana has lost her dagger and is forced to pick up a scimitar as she faces off against a menacing Talath mercenary. Ziana rolls a 7 for initiative; she has Agility modifier +1, but since the scimitar is Size 3 and her Strength is 2, she has a -1 penalty. Her initiative remains at 7. The Talath also rolls 7 but has an Agility modifier of -1, resulting in a total of 6. Ziana acts first.

### COMBAT ROUND PROCESS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| STEP 1: INITIATIVE ROLL | All combatants roll D12 and add Agility, fast reflexes, swiftness and other applicable modifiers. | The character with the highest total acts first, while the rest follow in order of their rolls. |
| STEP 2: DECLARE AND RESOLVE ACTIONS | In order of initiative all players state which action their characters mean to perform, resolve the action and establish consequences. | Combat actions are divided into four categories: Movement, Combat manoeuvres, Miscellaneous and Extended. |

## Initiative

The order in which participants act in a combat situation is vital as it can mean the difference between victory or defeat, life or death. Initiative determines this order. All involved combatants roll a D12 and add the applicable modifiers: Agility modifier, abilities such as fast reflexes and swiftness and so on. The combatant with the highest total score acts first and then the remaining combatants act in descending order. If two or more combatants have the same score, they are considered to be acting simultaneously. To simplify the process, the Arbiter may roll a single dice for all NPCs and antagonists.

EXCEPTIONAL SPEED

In case a combatant manages to roll a natural 12 for initiative they have acted with exceptional speed, allowing them to perform an additional action during the first round in addition to their high initiative score. The additional action will occur with a -6 penalty to initiative. After the first round, the character will retain her high score but only be allowed one action as normal.

Example: *Ziana, still armed with a scimitar, encounters a second Talath mercenary. Both roll for initiative. Ziana rolls a 12 and the Talath rolls an 8. Ziana's first attack will occur at 12 (12 + 1 for Agility, -1 for weapon heavier than she can use properly), and her additional action happens at 6 (12 -6), meaning that she will perform her first action*

*before the Talath has a chance to act, and her second after he has acted. Ziana declares she will use both actions to attack; the second attack roll is a bonus action due to her exceptional speed and does not suffer the regular penalties for secondary actions in combat – see the multiple actions section.*

## Surprise

Combatants caught by surprise are at a significant disadvantage. During a surprise attack, no initial initiative roll is required, as the surprised combatant is not allowed to act - or react - in any way during the first combat round. Surprise occurs during the first round of combat when the target is unprepared and therefore exposed. In addition to being unable to act during the first round, the surprised combatant loses all positive agility modifiers as well as any shield bonus to Defence Value.
To obtain the element of surprise at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- The attacker is successfully hidden or otherwise concealed while within charging, engaging or attacking distance. Keep in mind that the effective striking distance depends on the weaponry used as well as the movement rate - and therefore engaging distance - of the combatant.
- The attacker is noticeable but able to conceal their intent to attack while within or moving within attack range.
- The defender is distracted or otherwise unable to notice, detect or distinguish the attacker.

Depending on circumstances cautious or wary combatants may make an awareness roll to notice the danger and potentially avoid being taken by surprise. The Arbiter determines the difficulty based on the approach used, the circumstances and any relevant modifiers such as environmental influences. In case of an observing defender and a sneaking attacker, an opposed roll is used; if the defender fails to notice or recognise the threat, the attacker has obtained the element of surprise. If the defender is successful, the combat round begins as normal, and initiative is rolled.

## Declaring combat actions

Declaring an action simply means informing the Arbiter which action the character performs during the combat round. Players take turn based on their initiative score, choosing from the list of actions and manoeuvres.
During each combat round, a combatant is generally allowed to perform one action. These typically include drawing weapons, various forms of attack or defence and moving around the battlefield. Actions are categorised as Moving, Offensive and Defensive manoeuvres, Miscellaneous and Extended actions.
Offensive or defensive combat manoeuvres are the typical actions chosen as they involve basic attacks, parrying and the such, but there are many other possibilities including acrobatic leaps and jumps to escape or engage an adversary, using powers or whatever the inventive player can come up with to taunt, distract, hamper or otherwise defeat opponents.

Not everything a character does in combat requires nor is defined by a specific action or manoeuvre, and the Arbiter should be aware of such circumstances. Communicating is one such area; while commanders are allowed to bark orders and combatants can exchange words, taunts, threats and so on without penalty during a combat round, greater oratory exclamations intended to influence an opponent would require an action spanning one or several rounds. Awareness is another; obtaining a greater strategic perspective is usually hampered by the raving sword-wielding maniac in front of you and would require an action but seeing that your comrade-in-arms is lying next to you in a rapidly spreading pool of blood would not. The following paragraphs give an overview of the actions a combatant may perform during a combat round.

### REACTIONS

Particular manoeuvres can be used even though it is not the character's turn to act; these are called reactions. A reaction manoeuvre is typically a defence against an attack. In order to use a reaction, an action must be directed towards the character and the character must be able to declare an action in the combat round, meaning that they cannot have acted previously - unless they can perform multiple actions. Parry and block manoeuvres are typical reactions.
If a player wants to use a reaction manoeuvre, he or she must announce this immediately after an action has been declared against his or her character. Once a reaction has been announced, the initial action and the reaction are resolved simultaneously.
Example: *Sharash is attacking a sentinel armed with a spear and shield. Both roll for initiative and Sharash rolls higher, after which he declares that he will make a standard attack on the sentinel. The Arbiter immediately announces that the sentinel will use a reaction manoeuvre to block the attack with his shield. As the sentinel has not yet performed an action this combat round, he is able to do so even though it is not his turn. Sharash makes his attack roll, scoring a 9 while the sentinel makes his block roll, scoring a 10, to block the attack successfully. As Sharash has performed his action and the sentinel has spent his action blocking, the combat round is concluded.*

### DELAYED ACTIONS

Delayed actions are actions that are declared at the point of the initiative score, but which are resolved at a later point during the combat round. There are two types of delayed actions in combat: Those that are declared then take time to come into effect and those that are declared with an announced precondition which will trigger the (re)action.
If a player wants to perform an action which takes time, such as pushing a boulder towards a ledge to hit someone climbing up, they will declare it normally, and the consequences of the action will be resolved later in the round when enough time has passed for

the boulder to tumble onto the climbers. Example: *A player wants her character to use mystic powers during combat. She rolls for initiative and gets an 8. When it is her turn, she declares that the mystic power she wants to channel has a speed of -4, which must be deducted from her initiative score. This means that the mystic power she is channelling will come into effect on initiative score 4. All combatants with an initiative score between 8 and 4 will then declare and resolve their actions before the mystic power takes effect.*

A player can also state that they will perform an action or reaction if an adversary performs a specified action in the combat round. Unlike normal reactions, the precondition does not need to be an action directed at the player's own character but can be of a more general nature and involving others as long as the player's character would be able to carry out the action under normal circumstances. A precondition such as "if our adversary disengages, I will attempt to shoot him with my bow" would be perfectly legitimate as long as the character is able to see and shoot at the adversary. If the precondition does not occur during the combat round the player is allowed to declare an alternative action at the end of the combat round after everyone else has acted.

Example: *Sharash and Ziana are side by side fighting a crazed thug. They all roll for initiative. The thug scores a 5 while Sharash scores an 11 and Ziana a 3. Sharash goes first as his initiative score is the highest. The player decides that protecting his comrade is his main concern and declares that Sharash will attempt to parry any attack aimed at Ziana. The Arbiter has already decided that the thug would reasonably choose to target the smaller female with an attack and declares that the thug does indeed attempt to strike at Ziana. As the precondition is fulfilled, and Sharash is located next to Ziana, he can try to parry the blow and resolve his delayed action.*

## MULTIPLE ACTIONS

As a general rule, only one action or manoeuvre is allowed per combat round. However, combatants can acquire skills or abilities – such as dual-wielding – so that, armed with several weapons or a weapon-shield combination, they can perform further actions during a combat round. This allows combatants to use an attack/parry, attack/block or two-weapon-attack action combination during a combat round, receiving penalties to each action accordingly. The primary action, however, suffers a -3 penalty to initiative and action roll while the secondary action suffers a -6 penalty. Normal action modifiers also apply as per the manoeuvre descriptions. Combatants with additional limbs are allowed one additional action per combat per additional arm, tentacle or other suitable limb, with each suffering a further -3 penalty. A combatant able to make attacks with several weapons but choosing to utilise only one attack suffers no penalties.

Example: *A six-armed Asura is furiously attacking Ziana. The Daimon is armed with a variety of weaponry and having coordination decides to make two attacks. One with a wickedly curved sword and another with a crescent hand axe. Ziana's initiative roll is a 6 while the Arbiter rolls an 11 for the Asura, which the dual action reduces by 3 and 6, resulting in the Asura's attack initiatives being 8 and 5. The Asura therefore has one initial sword attack at 8, then Ziana counterattacks at 6 and the Asura concludes the round with its hand axe attack at 5.*

## EXTENDED ACTIONS

While most combat actions are accomplished within a single combat round, some require continuous activity during several combat rounds to be completed; these are called extended actions. Should a combatant be interrupted or decide not to finish an extended action, all progress will be lost. Extended actions differ from sequential actions in that they do not require multiple rolls to be successful, merely longer time than the three seconds a combat action allows. Using a power is the most common example of an extended action.

Example: *The Asura wants to use a mystic power against Ziana and begins channelling. The phenomenon it wants to manifest has a channelling time of 3 seconds, meaning that it will take the full combat round to complete and manifest in the following round at 11 - the initiative rolled by the Arbiter.*





*Death is a natural part of life...*
*embrace it in all its glory!*

*- Executioner of Cthodh*

## COMBAT MANOEUVRES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| MOVEMENT | Charge | Double Move \| Attack +1 Dmg \| No Agility/shield Defence bonus |
| | Disengage | Disengage opponent \| Half Move |
| | Engage | Half Move \| Engage opponent \| Perform manoeuvre |
| | Flee | Run or sprint \| Free opponent attack opportunity |
| | Furious Charge | Double move \| knockdown +1 \| -3 defence mod |
| | Jump | Leap STR/1 \| Jump STR/3 \| Fall AGI/1 (metres) |
| | Move | Normal combat move distance |
| | Rise or mount | Full round action |
| | Run | Double Move \| Opponent Missile -1 |
| | Sprint | Quadruple Move \| Opponent Missile -3 \| full round to stop |
| OFFENSIVE COMBAT MANOEUVRES | All-out attack | +3 attack mod \| -3 defence mod |
| | Backstab | Surprise attack \| +3 attack mod \| 11+ exceptional hit (weapon size < 2) |
| | Brawling | Unarmed combat \| D3 dmg |
| | Calculated Strike | -3 Initiative \| +1 attack mod (delayed) |
| | Called attack | -3 attack mod \| hit specific area |
| | Crushing Blow | -3 attack mod \| +1 dmg |
| | Disarm | No dmg \| -3 attack mod \| Opposed roll to disarm |
| | Flurry | No dmg \| Opposed roll to distract target (-3 mod to following action) |
| | Grapple | No dmg \| -3 attack mod \| Opposed roll to pin opponent |
| | Improvised Attack | -3 attack mod \| blind, confuse or otherwise affect opponent |
| | Knockdown | No dmg \| Opposed roll to knock opponent down |
| | Lunge | +1 range category \| Opponent +1 attack modifier |
| | Push back | Opposed roll to push opponent \| Half Move/disengage |
| | Sneak attack | Surprise attack \| Opponent Ag/shield mod negated |
| | Standard attack | Normal attack \| Normal dmg |
| | Stun | -3 attack mod \| Opposed roll to stun target |
| | Swarming Attack | D6 attacks at -1 \| ignore parry, dodge, block & AG mod \| no targeting |
| | Swift Strike | +3 initiative \| -1 attack mod |
| | Swooping attack | Double move \| -1 to hit \| +1 Dmg/knockdown \| No Agility/shield bonus |
| | Trample | Animal handling to hit \| D6 dmg per size category \| Knockdown |
| | Unsheathing attack | Equip weapon \| -6 initiative penalty and -3 attack penalty |
| | Wild Swing | Attack two targets \| -3 attack mod |
| DEFENSIVE COMBAT MANOEUVRES | Block | Opposed roll Ag/shield (reaction) |
| | Counter attack | Parry/block -3 mod \| automatic attack with -3 penalty (reaction/delayed) |
| | Defensive stance | Add combat skill to Defence Value \| +1 to resist Knock-down |
| | Dodge | Opposed roll to avoid attack (reaction/delayed) |
| | Parry | Opposed roll to avoid attack (reaction/delayed) |
| | Receive charge | Pre-emptive strike against charging opponent (delayed) |
| MISCELLANEOUS | Aim | No action \| +2 mod to subsequent attack |
| | Draw or grab item | Half Move \| Equip weapon/item |
| | Feint | No dmg \| Opposed roll to distract target (+3 mod to following action) |
| | Various | Use a power, attribute, skill or ability (possible sequential or extended) |

## Movement actions

Moving around in combat can significantly influence the outcome of a battle as well as your chances of survival. There are a few basic rules for moving in combat:

- Moving more than half the movement rate is considered a full action.
- The distances your character can walk, run and sprint are determined by his or her movement rate as detailed in the Movement section of the rules chapter.
- To attack an adversary in close combat, you have to engage them by moving close enough for your weapon to reach, which is typically done by applying the charge or engage action.
- Moving out of or through the reach of a close combat opponent who is not otherwise engaged without properly disengaging will give these a free attack opportunity.
- Combatants are able to turn and move around up to half their movement range within their immediate perimeter without it impacting their actions, but any more than that is considered an action in its own right.

CHARGE: A character rushing to assault an opponent at full speed counts as a charge. The charging character must move at least his full running distance and will then gain a +1 modifier to damage roll on a successful standard attack hit due to the increased impact of the attack. The combatant loses her defensive Agility and shield bonus during the round she charges.

DISENGAGE: A character may disengage an opponent and move up to half her movement rate without granting the opponent a free attack opportunity. The opponent is, of course, allowed to follow the character with his own action if he or she has any actions left this combat round.

ENGAGE: A combatant who is moving to engage an opponent may move half her movement rate and still perform a manoeuvre or action.

FLEE: Occasionally headless flight is the only sensible option, and at times a combatant urged on by terror has no choice but to flee. A combatant may turn tail and run from an opponent, moving at running or sprinting speed. Fleeing will allow an adjacent adversary a free attack action.

FURIOUS CHARGE: When charging the character is unstoppable and batters down opponent standing in his or her way. During the charge, the attacks count as knockdown actions with a +1 modifier due to impact. If the knockdown is a success, carry the furious charge on to any adjacent opponents until a knockdown is failed or there are no more standing opponents. The combatant suffers a -3 penalty to his or her Defence Value while charging furiously.

JUMP: A character may attempt to leap onto an object or jump in any direction during a combat round. See jumping rules in the Movement section of the rules chapter.

MOVE: A character that is not engaged in close combat or another action may move her full combat movement rate during a combat round. If she moves through an opponent's reach during the move, the opponent is allowed to use his or her action to attack the mover as a reaction.

RISE & MOUNT: Combatants getting up from a prone position or recovering their stance during combat are considered to be taking an action lasting a full round. Similarly, mounting a riding animal, chariot or other vehicle also takes a full combat round.



RUN: A character may run at twice her movement rate during a combat round. Missile attacks against the character will suffer a -1 penalty during this round. The runner may be attacked if he or she enters an opponent's striking range. Unless the run is part of a charge, the character suffers a -3 to initiative to any action performed while breaking out of the run.

SPRINT: A character may choose to sprint during combat; moving at four times his or her normal movement rate. Missile attacks against the character will suffer a -3 penalty during this round, while melee attacks aimed at the sprinter suffer a -1 penalty. To stop sprinting requires one full combat round where the character can do nothing but slow down her movement.

## Offensive actions

Combat manoeuvres consist of several types of attacking or defensive actions used during close combat or when using ranged weapons. Combat manoeuvres are divided between offensive and defensive manoeuvres. Offensive manoeuvres include various forms of attacks to harm, disarm or otherwise defeat an opponent while defensive manoeuvres are intended to counter attacks and avoid injury.

ALL-OUT ATTACK: With this manoeuvre, the attacker unleashes a barrage of strikes, slashes and blows with little concern for personal safety. The combatant may make a single attack with a +3 modifier but suffer a -3 to Defence rating and may not perform any other actions this combat round.

BACKSTAB: A backstab manoeuvre is an attack performed from a blind angle as a surprise attack. A backstab necessitates that the target is either surprised or unaware of the attacker. A backstab has a +3 modifier and will cause an exceptional hit on a roll of 11+. A backstab can be combined with a called attack if the attacker wants to hit a specific body part. Due to the nature of the manoeuvre, this attack can only be performed with weapons of size 2 or smaller.

BRAWLING: Brawling is unarmed combat in which kicking, punching, head butting or wrestling is employed to subdue or knock out opponents rather than to kill or seriously injure them. In this type of attack, the body is the primary weapon, although brass knuckles and the like also count as brawling attacks. A brawling attack causes 1-3 points of damage.

CALCULATED STRIKE: An attacker can choose to spend additional time aiming his attack; waiting for an opening in the opponent's defence. A calculated strike is a delayed action conferring a -3 penalty to the combatant's initiative score while granting a +1 to the attack roll.

CALLED ATTACK: A called attack is used when a combatant attempt to hit a specific part of an opponent's anatomy. The attacker determines the intended hit location and makes an attack roll applying a -3 penalty. This attack allows a combatant to target an unprotected body part to avoid armour or to induce a particular consequence such as tripping someone up and so on.

CRUSHING BLOW: The attacker trades accuracy for power; conferring a -3 penalty to hit for a +1 to the damage roll.

DISARM: A disarming attack is intended to divest an opponent of his weapon. A disarm requires a called attack (-3 to the attack roll) and an opposed roll; the higher of the attacker's disarm skill or strength modifier versus defender strength modifier. If the attacker beats the score of the defender, the disarming is successful, and the defender drops his weapon. This attack causes no damage unless an exceptional success is rolled.

FLURRY: The purpose of this manoeuvre is not to cause harm but to confuse and disorient the opponent by employing swirls and flurries. Make an opposed roll with the attacker using her combat skill against the opponent's INT or AWA and if successful the opponent receives a -3 penalty to his or her next action.

GRAPPLE: A combatant can attempt to pin an opponent, immobilising them either by grappling or holding them to the ground or against an object or surface. A grapple is performed by successfully making a called attack followed by an opposed strength roll. If the attack is successful, the victim is held immobile and cannot perform any actions until they break free. Attempts to wrestle free after being pinned requires an opposed roll with a -1 penalty from the victim. This attack causes no damage unless an exceptional success is rolled.
A variant of the grapple attack is strangling. To strangle an opponent, replicate a grapple attack with a -3 penalty to the attacker's opposed action roll. If successful, the victim will suffer 1-3 damage per consecutive combat round of throttling and must follow the suffocation rules – see damage and injuries.

IMPROVISED ATTACK: An improvised attack is where a combatant uses an unconventional means of attack or an unusual object to attack an opponent. An improvised attack is often used to cause a bewildering effect. Throwing sand in the eyes of an opponent to blind him or a net over someone to entangle them are typical improvised attacks. Using improvised weaponry generally causes a -3 penalty due to unfamiliarity or the inadequacy of the item. If the improvised weapon is similar to one the combatant is skilled with, the penalty may be reduced as determined by the Arbiter. A successful attack means only that the target is hit, whether the intended effect occurs will typically require an additional roll.

KNOCKDOWN: A combatant may attempt to use a body-slam or heavy weapon to knock an opponent off her feet. A knockdown is a standard attack, which triggers an opposed Strength roll to determine if the target is rendered prone. Strength and other relevant modifiers are applicable. Creature size adds +3 modifier to the roll for each size category difference to the larger of the two. Damage is only caused in case of an exceptional attack.

LUNGE: A lunge is a strike where the attacker extends himself to have a greater reach to strike at his opponent while leaving herself open to attack. This attack can be used in close combat to strike at an opponent a range category further away than usually allowed (i.e. close to near) but giving opponents a +1 attack bonus in their next attack.

PUSH BACK: This manoeuvre is intended to corral or push an opponent into an unfavourable position rather than injuring him. On a successful opposed Strength roll a series of blows and jostling shoves the opponent up to half your movement rate in a chosen direction within a 90° angle of where your character is facing.

SNEAK ATTACK: A sneak attack is a strike at an unsuspecting foe, negating the Agility and shield modifier of the opponent as she is unprepared. A sneak attack requires that the attacker has successfully moved undetected into striking range of the opponent or otherwise concealed her intent to attack.
Many are the knives in the dark or from hidden corners...

STANDARD ATTACK: A standard attack is any regular strike, slash, thrust, throw or shot intended to hit and injure an opponent. When attacking the player rolls D12 and add the Agility modifier, relevant weapons skill and other applicable modifiers. If the total exceeds or is equal to the opponent's Defence Value, the attack is a success, and the player may roll for damage.

STUN: This attack is typically aimed at the head of an opponent intending to render him dazed or outright unconscious rather than wounding him. Make a called attack, applying the standard -3 modifier. If successful an opposed roll must be made. The attacker adds the Strength modifier as well as any weapon modifiers while the victim adds the Stamina modifier and any head protection modifiers. If the attacker is successful, the victim is stunned for a number of combat rounds equal to the difference of the rolls or until a Stamina roll [7] is passed in this period. This attack causes no damage unless an exceptional success is rolled.

SWARMING ATTACK: This manoeuvre entails that numerous combatants attack concurrently in a swarm. Swarming attacks require that the attackers are at least two creature sizes smaller than their target and number no less than ten individuals. A swarming attack causes D6 standard attacks per round with a -1 modifier to hit due to the turmoil. As the swarm attacks randomly from multiple sides and angles the defender loses any DV Agility modifiers and is unable to dodge, block or parry incoming attacks. When striking at a swarm, attackers are unable to target a specific individual unless they employ the called attack manoeuvre.

SWIFT STRIKE: A combatant may choose to make a faster attack, giving up accuracy for speed. The player must announce that his or her character intends to use this manoeuvre before initiative is rolled or the combat round begins. A swift strike adds a bonus modifier of 3 to the initiative roll of the combatant at the cost of a -1 penalty to the attack roll.

SWOOPING ATTACK: A flying or mounted assault, the attacker flies, rides or drives by a target at speed while attempting to strike. The attack is made at -1 to hit, while providing a +1 modifier to the damage or knockdown roll because of the increased impact. As the attacker moves past the defender during the attack only ranged or delayed actions such as receive charge, can be used against him or her. Any actions made against the attacker can ignore AG and shield bonus.

TRAMPLE: War beasts and chariots can plough through opponents - trampling and pounding them under their crushing hooves or wheels. The charging beast or vehicle must be moving at least at running speed and can only hit targets directly in its path. Roll to hit using the attacker's animal handling skill. Trampling causes D6 points of damage for each size difference between the two. Trampled targets must roll to resist being knocked down using with the applicable size modifiers.



UNSHEATHING ATTACK: This action allows the character to draw his or her weapon and strike in the same movement, rather than cutting from a traditional stance with an already drawn weapon. This action enables the character to equip a weapon, attack with a -3 penalty at -6 initiative in the same round.

WILD SWING: A wild swing is a reckless attack where the combatant indiscriminately swings his weapon against opponents within reach in a desperate attempt to beat back his adversaries. Roll to hit up to two opponents within immediate striking distance with a -3 penalty.

## Defensive actions

BLOCK (Reaction or delayed action): A block is a defensive action where the combatant uses her shield to obstruct an incoming strike. Once an attack has been declared (but before it is resolved) a defender must declare and resolve the Block action. The block action is enacted whether the attack roll is successful or not. A block is an opposed action using the Agility modifier and shield skill against the attack roll. A successful block negates an incoming attack annulling any damage or other effects it would have caused. Blocks can be made with bucklers, small and medium shields. Other shields are too heavy and unwieldy to be effective in blocking.

*Example: A thug is attacking Khemera, a warrior favouring a spear and shield combination. Initiative is rolled, and Khemera has the lower score, so the thug immediately declares a standard attack. Khemera decides to use her shield and declares a block action before the thug's attack is resolved. She makes a roll of 9 adding her shield skill (2) and Agility modifier (1) for a total of 12. The thug makes his attack roll, totalling 11. This would have succeeded against Khemera's Defence value of 9 but is successfully turned aside and hindered by her block.*



COUNTERATTACK (Reaction or delayed action): This manoeuvre is a defensive manoeuvre with an integrated offensive action. The defender seeks to parry an incoming attack while using the momentum to strike back at her attacker. This manoeuvre allows for a parry or block action with a -3 penalty and an immediate subsequent standard attack action with a -3 penalty if the parry or block is successful. If the parry or block is failed, no subsequent attack may be attempted.

DEFENSIVE STANCE: A defensive stance is a complete focus on defence at the expense of giving up all attack opportunities. The combatant is not able to perform any action this round but may add her combat skill of her currently held weapon to her Defence Value and will get a +1 bonus to resist getting knocked down. This manoeuvre is particularly useful when being charged or trying to hold off adversaries while allies pelt them with missiles or move into better attack positions.

DODGE (Reaction or delayed action): The dodge manoeuvre allows combatants to avoid being hit by evading attacks. A dodge action is an opposed action against an incoming melee attack. A successful dodge denotes that the combatant has avoided the incoming strike; suffering no damage or other effects.
Combatants may attempt dodge actions even though they do not possess the dodge skill, but the standard -3 penalty for performing an unskilled action applies. Note that characters are only allowed to dodge attacks from opponents whom they can see - attacks from the rear or blind angles cannot be dodged.

PARRY (Reaction or delayed action): Parrying involves a combatant using her weapon to deflect an incoming melee strike. A defender must declare her intention to parry an incoming attack before the attack roll has been resolved. The parry action is an opposed action with the defender using his or her combat skill against the attack score. If the defender is successful, the incoming attack is parried, and no damage is caused. Note that any weapons without the parry property will be affected by a -1 penalty to parrying attempts.

RECEIVE CHARGE (delayed action): This action allows a combatant to delay his or her action until a charging attacker is close enough to attack. The character declares that he or she awaits the charge and gets an attack opportunity before the charging combatant can strike his or her blow.

## Miscellaneous

A miscellaneous combat action is any action not directly focused on movement, attacking or defending as shown below.

AIM: A combatant can spend a combat round aiming for his next attack. This means that the combatant performs no other action or movement this entire combat round to gain a +2 modifier to his next attack roll.

DRAW OR GRAB ITEM (WEAPON): A combatant may draw a weapon or grab a nearby item and move up to half her movement rate during a combat round. If a character is engaged in combat while performing this action, they cannot move as they are busy trying to avoid the opponent's blows simultaneously.

FEINT: A feint is a mock action employed to unbalance or distract opponents and as such the feint manoeuvre causes no damage. Make an opposed roll with the attacker using her combat skill and either Agility or Intellect modifier against the defender's Intellect Modifier. A successful feint allows the attacker to gain a +3 modifier to an offensive manoeuvre against that opponent in the next round.

VARIOUS: A character may use any power, ability, attribute or skill at her disposal during combat. Usually, an initiative modifier is associated with this.

*The silence of the vaulted chamber was broken every few minutes with small cackles coming from the curled-up shape in the corner of the cloistered room. A lone cloaked figure stood beneath the sole source of light in the place – a dust-speckled ray of sunlight coming in through a carved opening in the ceiling of the chamber, revealing the noonday sun above.*
*"Brother, please, listen to me," the standing figure implored, almost pleadingly to the form in the shadowy corner.*
*"Brother? I am not your brother…I…I am the chosen of Nergal… his heir… his voice in this place of light!" the curled form wheezed through rupturing laughs.*
*"We were born of our mother Jezra, remember who you are T-"*
*"That is not my name!" the curled shape screamed, whirling and lurching to its feet as the other gasped and shuffled backwards slightly into the shadows. The shape stepped forward, reaching out with a gurgling hiss as he stepped into the stream of light from the ceiling.*
*The hooded man stared in revulsion as he realised what his brother had become - an emaciated near skeletal shadow of a man. Covered in bleeding sores and repugnant self-made tattoos, he had cut off his own nose and eyelids, becoming a terrifying visage.*
*"What madness has taken you?" the hooded man whispered in abject horror, stepping further back as his brother clawed the air with overlong nails.*
*The voice rose as a disfigured mouth babbled in mock imitation of normal speech "I have risen to something beyond the flesh of man, my dear brother!" The mangled creature snarled and launched itself headlong forwards, the cloaked man screaming and recoiling.*
*But too late did he realize his mistake as he entered the shadows and felt grimy claws pierce his chest…*



## Resolving combat actions

Actions are resolved progressively during combat as the outcome of one action may influence subsequent actions. When an action has been declared, and any reactions have been announced, the player may roll to resolve their chosen action, determining whether it succeeds or not. If an action is successful, damage or other consequences must be resolved immediately. Once the action and its effects have been resolved the next combatant, in turn, may declare and roll to resolve their action, continuing from high to low order of initiative until all actions have been completed. When all combatants have undertaken their actions and consequences have been applied the encounter is either resolved or another combat round begins.

A combat action is resolved in the same way as any other action: By rolling D12 and adding applicable modifiers against a set difficulty. Unless otherwise is noted in the manoeuvre description the applicable attack modifiers are Agility, applicable combat skill(s) and relevant abilities. The difficulty is the target's Defence Value. If the resulting attack score is equal to or higher than the opponent's Defence Value, the attack is successful, and the effects can be resolved.

### EXCEPTIONAL HITS

When an attacker manages to roll an unmodified 12 an exceptionally accurate, violent or powerful hit has occurred. To illustrate this, the attacker may make a roll on the exceptional hits table. Exceptional hit rolls are made with a D12 and a D6, the first determining the severity and the second the actual effect of the hit. Exceptional hits cause damage as well as an additional effect. While attackers may be allowed to roll twice or even thrice for damage, the Strength and other damage modifiers are only added once. Effects are not isolated and might be affected by or affect the surrounding environment as well as other combatants; a pushed back combatant might stumble over a ledge or into another combatant causing a distracting and so on.



### EXCEPTIONAL HITS TABLE

| SEVERITY | EFFECT | DMG | IMPACT |
|---|---|---|---|
| < 2 | 1-3 | x1 | The impact leaves the target dazed; suffering -1 to all mental actions in the following round |
| | 4-5 | x1 | A grazing blow to the head shakes the target, causing a -1 penalty to all physical actions and halving the move for 1 round |
| | 6 | x1 | A painful blow leaves the target rattled, suffering -1 to all actions and halving movement for 1 round |
| 3 | 1-3 | x1 | A severe bash to the head leaves the target confused and unable to do anything but move for 1 round |
| | 4-5 | x1 | The legs buckle and the target stumbles under the impact of the attack, leaving them immobile and suffering -1 to all actions for 1 round while trying to regain their balance |
| | 6 | x1 | A smashing blow to the side of the head leaves the victim disoriented and with ringing ears; immediately disengaging and moving half normal movement range in a random direction for 1 round trying to recover |
| 4 | 1-3 | x1 | An accurate thrust finds an opening in the target's armour piercing the vulnerable flesh beneath: Ignore armour when dealing damage |
| | 4-5 | x1 | The target takes a severe clobbering; roll for knockdown and place the target prone if successful |
| | 6 | x1 | Severely shaken by a bruising wallop to head causes the target to suffer -1 penalty to all actions for D3 rounds |
| 5 | 1-3 | x1 | Wracked with pain from a nasty cut the target counts as having a halved Agility score for D3 rounds |
| | 4-5 | x1 | A deep ripping gash in the forehead splatters blood into the eyes of the target leaving them partially blinded for 1 round (-3 and no reactions) |
| | 6 | x1 | A vicious attack leaves the target wracked with agony and suffering -3 penalty to actions for D3 rounds |
| 6 | 1-3 | x2 | A harsh battering leaving a swollen and numb arm causes the target to drop any item held and unable to act for the remainder of the round |
| | 4-5 | x2 | A series of violent strike bashes the target to the ground, leaving them prone |
| | 6 | x2 | Overcome by repeated strikes, the target is unable to move or act for 1 round |

| SEVERITY | EFFECT | DMG | IMPACT |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 1-3 | x2 | Thumped on the head, the target suffers a concussion and is unable to do anything but crawl at half movement for 1 round and suffer -1 to all actions for D6 rounds |
| | 4-5 | x2 | The brutal impact of a thrashing assault renders the target dazed and confused, suffering -3 penalty to all actions for D3 rounds |
| | 6 | x2 | A vicious slash leaves the target gushing blood from a horrid laceration and suffering a minor bleeding |
| 8 | 1-3 | x2 | A ferocious blow sends the target sprawling backwards D3 metres, landing heavily, and stunned for D3 rounds |
| | 4-5 | x2 | A battering attack numbs the target's arm and shoulder, causing any held item to be dropped and the arm to be useless for D3 rounds |
| | 6 | x2 | A vicious slash across the face spatters blood into the target's eyes, blinding them for D3 rounds (-6 to actions, no reaction manoeuvres) |
| 9 | 1-3 | x2 | This brutal assault tears into the flesh of the victim, leaving a gaping gash bleeding uncontrollably. The target suffers a major bleeding wound |
| | 4-5 | x2 | With a loud snap the target's shoulder is dislocated, leaving their arm hanging limply. Any items are dropped, and the arm is useless until put back in place |
| | 6 | x2 | A forceful blow to the chest leaves the target in violent pain and gasping for breath. The target is prone, writhing in agony and effectively stunned for D3 rounds |
| 10 | 1-3 | x2 | With an audible and nauseatingly wet crack the target collapses as their leg breaks. Prone, unable to move and in intense agony, the target suffers -3 penalty to all actions for D6 rounds and -3 to movement and moving actions until the leg heals |
| | 4-5 | x3 | A violent impact shatters the arm, leaving the victim whimpering in anguish. Held items are dropped and the arm is useless until fully recovered. Any physical actions suffer -3 penalty due to the immense pain until the arm is bound and pinned |
| | 6 | x3 | The target crumples in choked anguish as they are struck violently in the throat. Unable to breathe, the target lies writhing and desperately gasping for air for D3 rounds; counting as stunned. All actions suffer a -3 penalty for an additional D6 rounds. |
| 11 | 1-3 | x3 | With a nauseating crunch multiple bones shatter, causing the target to collapse screaming in agony. The victim is stunned for D6 rounds and suffers a severity 1-3 crippling injury. |
| | 4-5 | x3 | With a sickening crunch the ribcage is crushed and with eyes bulging in pain the target collapses to the ground with sickening gurgling noises. Traumatised with pain and unable to act for D6 rounds the victim suffers -3 to physical actions until recovered. Observing combatants must roll against Willpower [7] or retreat from the attacker in fright or disgust |
| | 6 | x3 | This brutal attack rends flesh and crushes bones, smashing the victim to the ground in a heap of mutilated body parts. Paralysed by pain, the victim is unable to act for D6 rounds and suffers a crippling injury. Nearby combatants must roll Agility [7] to dodge gore flying everywhere or suffer from blindness for D3 rounds |
| 12+ | 1-3 | x3 | A shattering blow knocks the victim through the air, to land crumpling in a heap of flesh, exposed muscle and bones. The victim is unable to do anything but stare blindly in traumatised shock for D12 rounds and must roll for crippling injury. Combatants in the vicinity must make a Fear roll [7]. |
| | 4-5 | x3 | An assault of pure carnage sends blood and guts spraying, drenching everyone in the vicinity. The target flops to the ground a bloody mass of mangled limbs. Collapsed and in shock the victim is suffering from a major bleeding and is unable to move for D12 rounds. Should the victim manage to survive, roll twice on the crippling injury table. Adjacent combatants drenched by the carnage make a Stamina roll [7] or be sick for D3 rounds. |
| | 6 | x3 | The victim is disembowelled and stares blankly as they slide to the ground in a rapidly expanding pool of their own blood. Suffering from major bleeding and convulsing for D12 rounds, the combatant is unable to move or act until bandaged and bound. Roll twice on the crippling injuries table. All nearby combatants must roll Willpower [10] or succumb to fear from the macabre mauling. |

## Combat Mishaps

If an attacker rolls a natural 1 for a combat action, something has gone seriously awry and a mishap occurs. The attacker must make a roll on the mishap table to determine which misfortune follows. The Arbiter should use significant creativity and flexibility in terms of defining the actual effect of the mishap based on the situation and circumstances of the encounter as mishaps are meant to be entertaining and interesting, adding to the excitement of the encounter, not merely clichés, repetitive inconveniences or disastrous to the players.

## Combat conditions

Circumstances and conditions influence the chance of success or failure for combat actions. The listed conditions and effects are some of the most common influences combatants will experience during combat.

RANGE

Combat is divided into two segments: close and ranged. Close combat, or melee, is defined as encounters in close proximity, using hand-to-hand weapons. Ranged combat deals with propelled, hurled and thrown weapons.

There are three range categories for close combat weapons: Close, adjacent and near. Close range indicates the weapon can be used against opponents within arm's length, normally a one metre radius of the wielder. Adjacent is ranges up to two metres, with swords, picks and maces typically falling under this category. Near range designates shafted and other handheld weapons with extended reaches such as spears, whips, glaives and other pole-arms. These usually have a reach of up to three-four metres and can be used within adjacent range as well.

There are three range categories for missile and thrown weapons: short, medium and long range. Thrown weapons rely on the character's strength score to determine their effective range, while missile weapons have fixed ranges. All range details can be found in the weaponry chapter.

As it gets increasingly difficult to hit a target the farther away it is, range penalties apply for the various distances of ranged combat: Short-range attacks incur no penalty. Attacks aimed at targets in medium range incur a -1 penalty to the attack roll, while long-range attacks entail a -3 penalty to the roll.



### MISHAP TABLE

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | As the combatants circle each other they inadvertently shift positions, moving D3 metres in a random direction, possibly colliding with other combatants or finding themselves on precarious footing. |
| 2 | Location disturbance: An element in the encounter location or conditions suddenly shifts, introducing a new element to the encounter. For instance, a sudden monsoon drenches the location or a skirmish taking place on floating platforms might take a critical turn as the platforms begin sinking. This mishap affects all combatants but is not dangerous. |
| 3 | Distracted and confused by the turmoil of combat the attacker completely loses focus and suffers -3 penalty to their next action. |
| 4 | The combatant inadvertently causes a location hazard: A landslide interrupts an encounter happening on a mountainside, the building in which the encounter occurs begins to collapse, and so on. The hazard causes immediate danger or disruption to all combatants. |
| 5 | Overextending, the attacker loses their footing and stumbles. Roll Agility [7]; if successful the attacker stumbles and recovers in an unfavourable position suffering a -3 penalty on the next physical action. If failed, she drops her weapon - or other held item - in an effort to keep her balance. |
| 6 | The combatant gets turned around and unintentionally moves away from their opponent, offering her opponent a free attack opportunity with a -3 penalty. Afterwards both combatants count as disengaged. |
| 7 | An overenthusiastic attack sends the combatant tumbling. Nearby combatants may attempt to dodge [7] the thrashing combatant or risk being knocked down as well. Place the attacker prone and make knockdown rolls for any adjacent combatants that failed to dodge. |
| 8 | The attacker loses their balance and swings wildly striking a combatant within reach. Roll to hit as normal on a random adjacent person. |
| 9 | A hard block sends the attacker's weapon flying. The weapon flies D3 metres in a random direction striking the first object in its path; causing half normal damage. |
| 10 | Pinching a nerve, the combatant is unable to employ any combat manoeuvres in the following round. Moving actions are allowed. |
| 11 | In a complete blunder the combatant is left unprotected and vulnerable to attack. An opponent gets a free attack opportunity. |
| 12 | In an exceptional display of ineptness, the combatant strikes themselves, causing damage as normal. |

## COVER

Being in cover makes it harder for combatants to hit each other, and while this is most relevant when using ranged weapons, it also applies in close combat. For instance, a swordfight in a room filled with pillars obstructing blows and view would allow for cover modifiers.

Cover provides the following modifiers:

- Up to 1/3 of the body hidden gives a - 1 modifier to hit.
- Between 1/3 and 2/3 of the body is hidden gives a -3 modifier to hit.
- More than 2/3 of the body hidden gives a -6 modifier to hit.

## SIDE AND REAR ATTACKS

Most combatants are vulnerable to attacks in the rear or peripheral vision. Attacking an opponent from a blind angle will grant the attacker a +3 modifier as well as leaving the target unable to react while attacking from a peripheral angle grants a +1 modifier. Creatures that have extrasensory abilities or vision covering all angles are exempt from this rule.

## HIGHER GROUND

Attacking from higher ground or when mounted grants a combatant a +1 modifier to attacks.

## PRONE & HAMPERED TARGETS

A combatant who has been placed prone or otherwise has severely restricted movement will be at a significant disadvantage and lose the ability to dodge as well as any positive Agility modifiers to Defence Value. A prone target will also count as being attacked from higher ground by a standing opponent.

## STUNNED & IMMOBILISED TARGETS

A target who is stunned, knocked unconscious or for whatever reason remains motionless requires no roll to hit when attacked in close combat. Ranged attacks still need a successful action roll to hit an unmoving target, but with an added +3 modifier.

## CRAMPED CONDITIONS

Fighting in cramped or otherwise restricting conditions causes a penalty of -1 or -3 to actions depending on the confinement - as determined by the Arbiter. Hampered movement can occur due to various causes, the most common being a confined space such as a narrow alley. Fighting in confined spaces will also limit or even hinder the usage of large weapons like great scimitars, halberds and such as there is not sufficient room to wield them.

## MOUNTED COMBAT

Fighting from the back of beasts or mounted on chariots is common across the countless worlds of the Cosmos. While fighting from the back of a beast or chariot grants certain advantages to a combatant, it is also a complicated situation involving keeping a beast or vehicle under control while bashing at opponents. A mounted combatant gains +1 to hit opponents on the ground, the possibility of trampling when charging and - in cases of certain war-trained beasts - additional attacks.

Actively steering or manoeuvring the animal or vehicle in combat requires action rolls and riders suffer a -3 penalty to all actions - offset by animal handling skill rankings - as keeping the animal or vehicle under control requires focus and effort. Combatants with the riding or charioteer specialisation may perform actions without penalties and manoeuvre their mount or vehicle without making rolls.

Beasts trained for combat require no rolls to control and manoeuvre during violent encounters whereas untrained beasts get scared and skittish, requiring an animal-handling roll every combat round to be kept under control. If this roll is failed, the entire combat round is spent attempting to direct the beast, effectively leaving the combatant unable to attack or properly defend against opponents. A critical failure may result in the beast panicking, fleeing or possibly throwing the rider off.

## AERIAL COMBAT

In close combat between flying combatants or between flying and grounded combatants, there are two main aspects to consider - one is altitude the other is whether the flying combatants remain in motion or are stationary in the air.

A combatant at a higher altitude than his or her opponent gains the +1 modifier as associated with attacking from higher ground. If the combatants are stationary, such as hovering or soaring in a fixed location, they can use normal combat manoeuvres and for all intents and purposes count as being in regular combat. If an aerial combatant is in motion - continuously swooping, diving and so on - they may only employ manoeuvres that comprise movement such as charging, furious charge, swooping attack and so on. Stationary combatants may only employ delayed actions or ranged attacks against a moving flying combatant.



# Damage & Injuries

Existence is dangerous, and characters risk getting hurt. The number of Health points a character has signifies how much damage they can sustain before becoming weakened, incapacitated or killed. If a falling boulder or a sword strikes a character, they will receive an amount of damage determined by rolling designated dice and deducting this amount from their Health score. This section deals with causing and receiving various types of damage, crippling injuries and other detrimental effects.

## CAUSING DAMAGE

When a combatant is hit he or she suffers injury, which in the game is measured in a loss of Health points. The higher the number of points lost the more extensive the injury. To determine the amount of damage incurred the attacker makes a roll using the dice and adding modifiers as stated in the applicable description. Hand weaponry typically allows the addition of strength modifiers, while damage from powers and abilities may be modified by other factors noted in the relevant description. The total score is the amount of Health points the target loses.

Some weapons and powers may have special features, which affect a target in other ways than just causing a loss of Health points. Certain weapons may knock down an opponent; others have the potential to stun a target and so on and so forth.

## ARMOUR

Wearing armour or other protective gear negates damage sustained from attacks, reducing the loss of Health Points. When your character suffers an injury from a successful attack, you may reduce the amount of Health points lost by an amount equalling the character's Armour Value. Armour, however, only works against physical blows and pummelling, not indirectly caused damage such as poison, already bleeding wounds and so forth. Although distinct categories of armour cover specific parts of the body, armour function as a total when calculating damage reduction unless an attack targets a specific part of the body, in which case only that particular piece of armour – if any is worn – reduces the damage. Consult the armour chapter for further details on protective garb.

## BLEEDING WOUNDS

A bleeding wound will continue to cause Health loss after it was initially caused. A bleeding wound can be minor or major. A minor bleeding wound causes a loss of D3 Health points each combat round until properly dressed and treated. A major bleeding wound affects a loss of D6 Health points each combat round until tended appropriately.

## SUFFOCATION

A character deprived of breath eventually falls unconscious and dies. The time it takes for someone to suffocate depends on their activity level and Stamina. Characters who are calm and trying to conserve oxygen can remain without breath for a period of their Stamina x 30 seconds. If the character is engaged in strenuous activities or being choked or strangled, the period is reduced to Stamina score x 9 seconds. After this period the character must make an average Stamina roll [7] to remain conscious. For each subsequent combat round (3 seconds) the difficulty increases by one and another roll must be made. If a roll is failed, the victim loses consciousness and begins suffering damage. For every three combat rounds (9 seconds) an unconscious suffocating victim loses D3 Health points.

## FALLING

Uncontrolled falls and drops can cause severe injury. The severity of the damage is determined by the height of the fall and what type of surface the body impacts. The injury sustained by crashing onto a hard surface such as stone is D6 damage points at three metres and increasing by D6 per additional two metres of falling. Falls unto other softer surfaces such as water or snow cause D3 damage from a height of six metres, increasing progressively at a rate of D3 per two metres.

| HEIGHT | DMG (hard surface) | DMG (soft surface) |
|---|---|---|
| 2 METRES | - | - |
| 3 METRES | D6 | - |
| 4 METRES | D6 | - |
| 5 METRES | 2D6 | - |
| 6 METRES | 2D6 | D3 |
| 7 METRES | 3D6 | D3 |
| 8 METRES | 3D6 | 2D3 |



### HEAT BURNS

Most beings are vulnerable to flames and other strong heat sources. The damage sustained depends on the source, degree and duration of exposure. While getting struck by a flaming torch would not cause additional burn damage as the exposure is too brief and insignificant, tumbling into a bonfire would cause D3 points of damage as the exposure is more significant. Being caught inside a burning house might cause D6 points of damage per round due to heat exposure while getting drenched in burning oil would cause 2D6 points of damage per round of exposure. Furthermore, if a character is caught in an environment on fire - or catches fire - a fear roll must be made to determine whether the character retains composure or panics.

| EXPOSURE | DMG* | FEAR ROLL |
|---|---|---|
| TINY (TORCH) | D2 | None |
| LITTLE (BONFIRE) | D3 | Slightly on fire [4] |
| SMALL (FIRE) | D4 | Partially on fire [7] |
| MEDIUM (BLAZE) | D6 | Surrounded [10] |
| LARGE (CONFLAGRATION) | 2D6 | Engulfed [13] |

**Damage per round of exposure*

### ACID BURNS

Acid burns - or base burns - can cause significant injury, and acid tend to stick to clothes and skin unless washed off, causing continuous damage. The specific amount of damage caused depends on the acid used as well as the amount a victim is exposed to. Mild acids might cause D2 damage per round whereas highly corrosive acids can cause 2D6 damage per round of contact. Unless exposed directly to the flesh most acids take some time before they cause injury, meaning that armour delays the acid from getting in contact with the skin and causing injury for a number of rounds. The damage reduction applicable to the hit body location is the amount of rounds the acid is delayed before causing damage. The armour does not deduct damage once the acid is in contact with the skin but may delay this long enough for the character to be able to take off the armour or wash the substance off.

Once the acid touches the skin it continues causing damage until it is washed off, is diluted or loses its potency. The duration depends on the type of acid, but acid typically retains its effect for D6 or more rounds. A fear roll is required should the acidic substance be strong enough.

| POTENCY | DMG* | FEAR ROLL |
|---|---|---|
| MILDLY ACIDIC | D2 | None |
| MODERATELY ACIDIC | D3 | Aching [4] |
| ACIDIC | D4 | Painful [7] |
| CORROSIVE | D6 | Throbbing [10] |
| HIGHLY CORROSIVE | 2D6 | Agonising [13] |

**Damage per round of exposure*

### MASSIVE DAMAGE AND INSTANT INCAPACITATION

Suffering immense damage in an instant will cause severe trauma, leaving the body broken and scarred, possibly even resulting in paralysis, shock or outright death. A character that loses more than half of her total starting amount of Health points from a single blow immediately suffers a crippling injury.

### CRIPPLING INJURIES

Constant bashing and fighting will eventually lead to permanent injuries and disabilities. Certain injuries and massive damage will result in a crippling injury for the character. When a crippling injury occurs, the player makes a roll with a D12 and a D6 referring to the Crippling Injuries table on the following pages.

The D12 determines the severity and the D6 the specific injury. As strong opponents tend to cause more damage the player must add the highest of either the Strength or Size modifier to the D12 result. Size is calculated as adding +3 per size category the attacker or object is larger than the target. For instance, a large object would generate a +3 modifier if causing a crippling injury to an average sized character.



## HEALTH CONDITIONS

Sustaining damage and the subsequent loss of Health Points is more than a simple countdown to death; pain, fatigue, shock and disability follow in the wake of injury. Six conditions define the detrimental effect of damage, blood loss and shock.

HEALTHY: The character has all her Health Points and is in peak condition.

BRUISED: Losing up to half of the total amount of Health means that a person has been harmed but is suffering no penalising effects.

HURT: While a character has less than half of his or her original Health points (rounded down) all action rolls are made with a -1 penalty illustrating the fatigue and injury.

INJURED: Once a character has less than a quarter of her original Health points (rounded down) she is severely impaired suffering a -3 penalty to all actions.

INCAPACITATED: Upon reaching zero (0) Health points, a character is incapacitated and unable to act. Unless bandaged and treated the character loses one Health point per combat round remaining alive only for as many combat rounds as half her total starting Health points minus the damage sustained beyond 0 Health points.

DEAD: Characters that have taken damage bringing them to minus half their total starting Health points are dead. For instance, a character with a total Health point score of 14 would die upon reaching -7 Health points.



## CRIPPLING INJURIES TABLE

| SEVERITY | EFFECT | IMPACT |
|---|---|---|
| < 2 | 1-3 | A fractured leg bone causes aches and discomfort halving movement and inducing a -3 penalty on actions involving mobility, acrobatics and athletics for D3 days. |
| | 4-5 | The bones in the arm are fractured and, while the arm can be used, it is painful, causing a -3 penalty for D3 days. |
| | 6 | A violent impact to the head causes concussion, triggering disorientation and bewilderment. All actions to have a -3 penalty from detrimental effects for D3 days. |
| 3 | 1-3 | A severe hit to the arm leaves it paralyzed, limp and useless for D6 days. |
| | 4-5 | A numbing strike to the leg causes paralysis, making the leg unable to support any weight and useless for D6 days. Half walking movement rate is possible with crutches, and general mobility is severely hampered. |
| | 6 | A violent hit to the head causes a fractured skull. Agony and convulsions halve movement rate and all actions suffering a -3 penalty the following D6 days. |
| 4 | 1-3 | Broken arm: The bone is shattered leaving the arm hanging limply down the side of the victim. The character counts as having only one arm until the bone has healed. |
| | 4-5 | Broken leg: The bone is broken leaving the character unable to lean on it until it is healed. Although half walking movement rate is possible with crutches other mobility is severely limited until the bone is mended. |
| | 6 | Several broken ribs cause pain and discomfort for the character, resulting in -3 penalty to all physical actions until the bones have healed. |
| 5 | 1-3 | The character's foot has been crushed leaving a bloody mess of flesh and bone. Once healed the character's Movement is permanently reduced by one (1). |
| | 4-5 | Several fingers have been squashed or severed leaving the character with only half a hand. The character suffers from impairment and the mild flaw weak grip going forward. |
| | 6 | A terrible injury to the face has disfigured the victim's mouth causing a speech impediment. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all social action and response rolls. |
| 6 | 1-3 | Lesions have left the character with a weakened and deteriorated physique. The player must roll to determine which moderate Flaw the character has sustained: Minimal pain tolerance, weak grip, easily exhausted, cramps, clumsy, lameness or sluggish. |
| | 4-5 | Numerous blows to the head have left the character scarred and debilitated. The player must roll to determine the moderate flaw sustained: Amnesia, confused, hideous, bad hearing, hypersensitive eyes, night blindness or partial blindness. |
| | 6 | The injuries have left the character anaemic and in poor vigour. Subtract one (1) point of Stamina permanently but retain the original Health score. |
| 7 | 1-3 | A severe clobbering to the head has left the character partially deaf and with diminished eyesight from the lesions. The character loses one (1) point of Awareness permanently. |
| | 4-5 | The injuries have left a horrid scar across the character's face. The character loses one (1) point of Presence permanently. |
| | 6 | A vehement blow to the skull has left the character's brains rattled and she loses one (1) point of Intellect permanently. |
| 8 | 1-3 | The crushing injuries have left the character emaciated and weak. Reduce the character Strength score by one (1) point permanently. |
| | 4-5 | Badly mended bones and strained muscles causes the character limited flexibility with ungainly and awkward movements. Deduct one (1) point from the character's Agility permanently. |
| | 6 | The bashing has left the character weakened and frail. Remove D3 Health points permanently. |
| 9 | 1-3 | Scarred and scared the character's will has suffered a breakdown. Reduce the character's Willpower score by one (1) point permanently. |
| | 4-5 | Sustained injuries have left the character crippled and broken. Roll randomly to determine a severe Flaw the character has acquired: Clumsy, cramps, Easily exhausted or weak grip. |
| | 6 | Massive maiming has left the character a debilitated wreck. Randomly establish a severe Flaw developed by the character: Bleeder, emaciated, lameness or minimal pain tolerance. |

| SEVERITY | EFFECT | IMPACT |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | 1-3 | The character's foot has either been hacked off or crippled to such an extent as to be rendered useless. Movement speed is reduced to half (rounded up) and all actions involving mobility suffer a -3 penalty. |
| | 4-5 | The hand of the character has been mangled so badly that it is unusable. The arm remains but the character is incapable of actions involving the use of two hands and will suffer penalties if only her secondary hand remains. |
| | 6 | The character's eye has been gouged, causing an extended blind angle in addition to a -3 penalty to all actions involving sight, including spotting, using missile weapons and judging distances. If the victim has more than two eyes the penalty is reduced to -1. Losing all eyes will render a character blind. |
| 11 | 1-3 | Only a bloody stump remains of the character's leg. Crutches, a wooden leg or another aid is required to walk and even then, it is at half movement rate. All athletic, acrobatic and similar actions – including dodge manoeuvres - suffer a -3 penalty. |
| | 4-5 | With a wet tearing sound, the arm is severed at the shoulder or elbow, leaving only a mangled and bloody stump. All actions requiring two appendages are impossible to perform, two-handed weapons cannot be used, and penalties apply to actions if it is the secondary arm and hand that remains. |
| | 6 | With an audible crunch, the spine breaks leaving the character paralyzed from the waist and down. Unable to walk, the only mobility available is dragging her body along the ground. Physical actions requiring movement are impossible or severely impaired going forward. |
| 12+ | 1-3 | Severely crippled: roll three times on the crippling injuries table, rerolling any duplicated results. |
| | 4-5 | Brutal damage has crushed the torso leaving the character incapable of movement or performing other actions than speaking. |
| | 6 | With a loud crack, the character's neck snaps. Collapsing to the ground her head tilts at an odd angle while the life quickly leaves her eyes... the character is dead! |

## Recovery

Given time, rest and proper care, wounds and injuries will heal. Treatment requires that the appropriate materials - such as bandages, balms, etc. - are available when the treatment is applied. When wounds heal, the character regains Health points until she has reached her beginning total amount. If under proper care a character will recover an amount of Health points equalling her Stamina score per day. Proper care generally entails a person versed in anatomy and/or herbalism successfully treating the injury. If wounds are not adequately bandaged or the character is unable to rest injuries will heal only at a rate of one (1) Health point per day. If injuries are left entirely untreated, the wounds may get infected, negating any recovery and healing. Special types of damage, such as crippling injuries, burns, broken bones and poison-induced effects can be permanent or require extended and unusual care, often taking longer to mend than ordinary wounds. In these cases, it is typically noted in the description of damage effect which special treatment and period healing requires.

### IMMEDIATE TREATMENT

If treatment is given within 10 minutes of wounding a successful skill-roll can restore Health points equal to the physician's INT modifier, with a minimum of one (1) health point. The difficulty for immediate treatment depends on the severity of the damage and is as follows: Bruised [7], hurt [9], injured [11] and incapacitated [13].

Similarly, bleeding wounds may be stemmed with a successful skill-roll. The difficulty is as follows: minor bleeding wound [7] and major bleeding wounds [10].

### BROKEN BONES

The healing time for broken bones varies depending on the bone and severity of the fracture. For humans, a broken bone typically takes 6-8 weeks to mend fully, which – in game mechanics – is adapted into D3 days per Health point lost from the injury, minus the character's Stamina score. The character is able to use the limb with a -3 penalty after half this time and with a -1 penalty when a quarter remains. The difficulty for setting broken limbs and performing surgery is determined by the Arbiter.

### INFECTED WOUNDS

Wounds may become infected from various sources such as disease-ridden surroundings or filthy weaponry infested with bacteria. Unless otherwise is stated in the specific contamination cause, infected wounds are prevented on an easy [4] Stamina roll. Infected wounds heal at a slower rate than regular wounds, causing a D3 reduction in healing per day. If this roll exceeds the healing rate the wound does not heal that day, no additional Health loss occurs. However, if left untreated for D3 days, infected wounds may become gangrene or cause blood poisoning – Stamina roll [7]. Blood poisoning causes a temporary random Stamina Flaw and D3 loss of Health each day it goes untreated. The Flaws are cumulative until the blood poisoning is cured.





*"Face me, Voidspawn!"*

*– Last words of Ohnkehet to Ysvyr the Blasphemous*

# Sanity & Mental Effects

The Cosmos is not a kind, nor forgiving place and the sensibilities of sentient beings are impressionable and fragile. Those of weak wills are susceptible to mental influence, and this chapter deals with the conditions and threats to the mental state and health of characters. This section is divided into two parts: temporary mental effects and insanity. The first section covers three mental conditions affecting characters immediately and temporarily: Awe, Delirium and Fear. The second part focus on momentary insanity and the gradual descent into eventual madness.

When characters are faced with a situation potentially affecting their state of mind and mental health, a resistance roll is required to see whether they are receptive to the stimulus or can remain unaffected. The difficulty is determined by the severity and scope of the stimulus the character is exposed to. The character's Willpower modifier is used when rolling to resist a mental effect unless otherwise is stated for the specific situation.

## TEMPORARY MENTAL EFFECTS

The difficulty to resist or overcome a mental effect varies depending on what causes it and is determined by the condition ranking and - if it is an entity or creature prompting the mental effect - the Presence score.
Certain areas, situations or stimuli incur a naturally unnerving effect and will, therefore, trigger a mental effect with a fixed rating or difficulty to overcome. Some powers cause a psychological effect that is determined either by the power itself or the ability or ranking of the entity manifesting it. Some creatures or attributes radiate a natural aura of effect where the difficulty depends on the creature or attribute rating as well as the Presence modifier of the individual.

When the Arbiter has declared that an encounter or event triggers a mental condition for the characters the players must make a resistance action roll against the condition ranking to resist the effect. If the roll is failed the character succumbs to the stimuli and must make a further roll on the applicable effect table. When a character rolls on an effect table, they are overcome and subject to the effects even if it is against the better judgement or wishes of the player.

In some cases, only a limited number of effects from a table can occur and occasionally the effect roll is modified. For instance, does a fearsome creature's Presence modifier adjust the effect roll, while the delirious effect of toxic censer smoke might be limited only to results 1-7 on the delirium table.

The duration of effects varies and usually begins to lessen as soon as a character is away from the source. Some effects last only mere seconds while others continue for several hours. A critically failed resistance roll doubles the duration and makes the affected character susceptible to future effects by applying a -3 penalty to subsequent resistance rolls for that source.

### Awe

Awe is an effect caused by supranatural powers or entities and creatures that - for one reason or another - have an extraordinary presence. Stunningly beautiful beings or entities that noticeably emanate power and authority are typically among those who inspire Awe.

Whenever an Awe-inspiring creature is encountered, a mental resistance roll must be passed unless the character is somehow immune or resistant to the influence. If the roll is failed the character succumbs to the influence and the player must make a roll on the Awe effect table to determine how the character reacts. The response roll is modified by the Awe-inspiring creature's Presence modifier.

Unless otherwise is stated effects lasts for D3 hours per Awe-rating + an hour per Presence modifier. Any suggestions or proposals made by the awe-inspiring source are favourably welcomed during this period and may not be doubted at all if they correlate with a character's personal motivation and feelings.



| ROLL | EFFECT | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | APPROVAL | The affected individual assumes that the character or creature is honest and trustworthy. The initial response will be one of mild trust. |
| 4-6 | APPRECIATION | The words and attitude of the awe-inspirer seem sensible and are noteworthy to those who are influenced. |
| 7-8 | RESPECT | The affected feel an instinctive sense of respect and will have a high opinion about any statements and outlook expressed. |
| 9 | ESTEEM | The awe-inspirer is cherished like an old and trusted friend. |
| 10 | ADMIRATION | The affected will feel a sense of wonder mingled with delight and approbation by any words uttered by the awe-inspirer. |
| 11 | ADORATION | Profound feelings of certainty, affection and conviction are stirred by every word. |
| 12 | ADULATION | The awe-inspirer is the sole focus of attention, listeners clinging to her every word and act as if enraptured. |
| 13 | REVERENCE | The character is viewed as sacred and honoured as such. His words hold nothing but truth and his thoughts will enlighten all. |
| 14 | EXALTATION | Affected creatures believe the character to be exemplary for all, an image of purity and virtue. Truly an idol in the flesh! |
| 15 | WORSHIP | Nothing but pure and true devotion will suffice in the presence of this hallowed being. |
| 16+ | ENTHRALMENT | Thy word is my law, command and I shall serve! |

A player may request an additional roll to try to resist the influence of an Awe-inspiring creature if entreated to perform acts going against the character's instinct or if perceiving the Awe-inspirer doing something counter to the welfare of the character. If the argument for the character's unwillingness to follow a command or request is reasonable, the character is permitted an opposed roll [Will vs Presence] to regain mental faculties.



*"People may call me insane, but the voices tell me I am fine."*

## Delirium

Delirium is a state of mind where characters lose rationality and reasoning, going into a state of mental disarray such as frenzied ecstasy, euphoria or even psychosis. Delirium is caused by various sources, including physical trauma, fever, mental strain, and poisoning. In most cases, characters can roll to resist the effects of the delirium. The relevant Trait and difficulty of the roll are determined by the source; for instance, a Stamina roll would be applicable for most ingested sources. If a character or creature becomes subject to Delirium, refer to the source for duration, conditions or limitations and make a roll on the table below to determine the effect. Specific causes of Delirium might give only a limited number of options from the list while others may add a modifier to the roll. A delirious character is often oblivious to their surroundings and unreachable; making her temporarily immune to all other psychological effects. Even fear or pain may prompt no response.



Example: *Alshandra is visiting the abode of an Oord vizier where censers exude soothing fumes pleasing to the residents, but a delirious effect on humans. These fumes are mild and therefore limited to the buzzed and dazed effects. Alshandra fails her Stamina roll to resist the fumes and becomes affected. As the effects are limited an effect roll up to 8 would result in the buzzed result, while anything higher than that would cause a daze. The Arbiter has decided that the duration of the fume effects remains as long as the character is exposed and an additional D12 minutes after.*

| ROLL | EFFECT | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| < 3 | BUZZED | Senses tingling and everything slightly out of focus, the character is inattentive and befuddled, suffering a -1 penalty to all actions for the duration of the delirium. Apply the mild lack of situational awareness Flaw. |
| 4-5 | DAZED | The character is in a hazy state perceiving the world as a blurred dream where everything feels slightly strange and unreal. The character is reduced to half movement, has a -3 penalty to all initiative and surprise rolls and suffers a -1 penalty to all actions. Apply the moderate lack of situational awareness Flaw. |
| 6-7 | EUPHORIC | Rapture overwhelms the character and they are in a state of complete and oblivious bliss, sauntering about randomly admiring and fawning over whatever they come across. The character will not perceive external events as real and the player must make a successful average Willpower roll [7] to deliberately perform an action. Apply the severe lack of situational awareness Flaw. |
| 8 | PARANOID | "Someone is watching me!" The character is gripped with temporary mild paranoia, scared that somebody is following and watching her or that whomever she interacts with has a hidden agenda. Also apply the buzzed effects. |
| 9 | RAVING | Restless, incoherent and confused, the character is in a disoriented state of mind slipping in and out of lucidity. The character is unable to retain a grip on reality, reacting to impulsive urges and imagined stimuli. The character must make a challenging Willpower roll [10] to act, is unable to perform extensive or complex actions and even suffers a -3 penalty to simple actions. The character is unaffected to actual psychological effects such as Fear and Awe. |
| 10 | DELUSIONAL | The character imagines phenomena that are not real and reacts to these. The phenomena may broadly resemble events actually occurring, but are psychedelic, warped and exaggerated. The character acts randomly, is unrelenting in their delusional conviction and may be subject to additional psychological effects such as Fear or Awe due to the delusions. |
| 11 | FRENZY | Overcome with inexplicable rage the character attacks any adjacent living being indiscriminately using the wild swing manoeuvre. The character is numb to pain and suffers no penalties from injuries as well as being immune to any other psychological effects. Delirious characters in a frenzy will attack using any means possible, resorting to biting, scratching and so on. If no potential adversary is in the immediate area the frenzied character will depart at running speed towards a likely place to find an outlet for their aggression and rage. |
| 12 | HALLUCINATING | "Aarrgghh, they are all over me!!" Vivid visual and auditory hallucinations flood the character making her lose all sense of reality. Unable to act intentionally the Arbiter effectively takes over the character until the hallucinations subside. |
| 13+ | PSYCHOSIS | The character loses a sanity point and must make an immediate madness roll. |

## Fear

Brutality and malice are commonplace, terrible things lurk in the shadows and always the Ghostly Mindless Abominations of the Void encroach upon the Cosmos. Characters who explore the vast Cosmos seeking enlightenment and riches often find themselves in sinister places, facing atrocities or horrors to which fear is the natural response. When characters face a fearsome adversary, event or area, a Fear roll is required to determine whether they can remain composed or if they succumb to dread.

| ROLL | EFFECT | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | DISCONCERTED | The character is disconcerted and will not move close to the source of their fright, although they may perform any other action as normal, suffering no further penalties. |
| 2 | DISTURBED | The character is deeply disturbed and moves to a safe distance of at least four metres from the source of fear, refusing to approach willingly. In case the character is adjacent to the source of fear a penalty of -1 applies to all actions. |
| 3 | RATTLED | Rattled, the character will instinctively back away from the source of fear at normal movement speed for D3 rounds and not approach again until the perceived threat is gone. If the character cannot withdraw, a -1 penalty is added to all actions. |
| 4 | UNNERVED | The character is startled and immediately runs away from the source of fear for D3 rounds. The character performs actions at -1 penalty while the source of their fright is within sight. |
| 5 | FRIGHTENED | The character is frightened and shocked, and stands rooted to the spot, unable to act for D3 rounds. Characters may react to incoming attacks and defend themselves with a -1 penalty but are otherwise incapable of action. All subsequent actions suffer a -1 penalty while the source of fear is within eyesight. |
| 6 | SCARED | Overcome with fright, the character faints. The swoon lasts for D3 rounds, during which time the character is prone and unable to do anything. Afterwards, the character remains shaken and bewildered, and all ensuing actions suffer a -1 penalty while the source is within sight. |
| 7 | PANICKED | Panicking, the character turn and flees directly away from the source of fear at sprinting speed for D3 rounds. If unable to do so they are immobilised with fear and unable to act or move for an equivalent period. Subsequent actions are made at -1 penalty while the source of fear is viewable. |
| 8 | FEARFUL | Overwhelmed with dread the character drops to the ground and creeps away. Crawling at half movement rate and oblivious to anything but getting away the character counts as prone. Only when the source of fear is out of sight will the character be able to control their actions. |
| 9 | FREAKED | Panicked for D6 rounds, the character is frozen to the spot while screaming hysterically attacking anyone adjacent to them with random wild swings. After the panic they faint, falling unconscious for D3 rounds. |
| 10 | TERRIFIED | The character is overcome with sheer terror and falls to the ground trembling and babbling incoherently. The character is placed prone and counts as stunned for D6 rounds. All actions suffer a -3 penalty for the following D6 rounds. |
| 11 | HORROR-STRUCK | Shaken by the unfolding horror, the character flees as fast as possible. The character must sprint directly away from the source of fear for D12 rounds and loses one (1) Sanity point. |
| 12 | HORRIFIED | Completely overcome with terror, the character collapses quivering to the ground for D12 rounds. The character is traumatized and immediate loses one (1) Sanity point. |
| 13 | PETRIFIED | Screaming in panic, the character may do nothing but stare wide-eyed at the terror in front of her for D12 rounds. The characters psyche is weakened and he or she loses a Sanity point. |
| 14 | HYSTERICAL | Laughing manically the character acts hysterically for D12 rounds; running in random directions, shouting complete nonsense and assaulting anyone getting in the way. Remove a Sanity point. |
| 15 | CATATONIC | Due to the unbearable horror the character's mind shuts down, leaving the character catatonic for D3 hours. Two Sanity points are lost and the madness roll is made with a +1 modifier. |
| 16+ | PARALYSED | Paralyzed with terror the character may do nothing for D6 hours. The character loses three Sanity points and must make a madness roll with a +3 modifier. |

How fearsome an encounter is and the associated difficulty of the resistance roll is determined by the Fear ranking. The higher the ranking, the more horrifying the experience. Unlike other mental conditions, fear can arise from places and situations. Unless the Fear ranking is noted in the description or scenario the Arbiter decides the difficulty; mildly shocking sights may have a Fear ranking of three (4) while a scene of utter carnage might be ten (10). Only places and events associated with or deriving from unnatural causes have a Fear ranking higher than ten (10).

If the resistance roll is failed, the player must immediately roll on the Fear effect table to determine how the character reacts. While most Fear effects are temporary and fade as soon as the character has departed the source, particularly traumatic encounters may trigger enduring consequences as the mental stability of the character is weakened, causing a loss of sanity points.

## Madness

When one or more sanity points are lost the character suffers temporary insanity and must immediately make a roll on the Madness effect chart to resolve the nature of the madness and determine which detrimental effect the character will suffer. The madness roll is influenced by the nature and severity of the situation causing it, ranging from witnessing detestable rites of secret cults to encounters with the Mindless Abominations of the Void.

As a character's Sanity score gets lower the risk of severe madness and insanity increases. A character's sanity condition modifies are added to the effect roll - increasing the severity of the madness - as those of weakened mentality are more likely to submit to the disturbing aspects of existence than those who are of a sound mind. Other relevant modifiers are noted in the description of the madness-inducing cause, the sources of which are found throughout this book. Should a character lose all their Sanity points, their mind is lost, and they have descended into permanent madness.

### SANITY POINTS & CONDITIONS

The number of Sanity points a character has is established in character creation. While this number may fluctuate during the game, the total typically only changes in case the character loses or gains Willpower.

Much like getting injured the exposure to abhorrent explorations and Void horrors will affect the saneness of characters, and in the game this means a loss of Sanity Points as the character's tenuous grasp on sanity is slowly weakened. Five conditions outline the detrimental effects of sanity loss.

RATIONAL: When the character has all their Sanity points, their mind is as healthy as it can be.

LUCID: Losing up to half of the total amount of Sanity means characters might be upset by their experiences but are suffering no harmful effects.

ANXIOUS: If a character has less than half their original Sanity points left (rounded up), madness effect rolls have a +1 modifier.

*Pain radiates from the chest as turgid thoughts and roiling emotions bubble within the gullet, screaming to be let out, to rush and flow forth. Red, purple, and black suffusing the sight, as the pounding of a hammer on an anvil rings through the mind. What is this pain? Is this me?*

*Curled hands, sharp fingers, grasp skin and break flesh, blood, bright red drips out. Life. Glistening pain, tongue reaches out, iron and fish, sweat and hate. Black specks, devoid of any warmth, dance.*

*The sweet embrace of sleep and nothingness relents, releasing a pounding headache, and half-remembered glimpses. A jagged knife rips and tears. Mind, pushing against a dark shadowy blockage, true, cold-steel thought impossible. Push, push, push, can't remember. Need food. Flesh. Blood?*

*Another night. Alone. Cold. Pain. I'm hungry. I'm thirsty. Bored.*

*A yawn, hand aches, eyes blurry. I'll stay inside today. No, I need to go.*

*Biting, pain, blood, I cut my finger. Blood. Bitter. Better.*

*Awake, more pain, maybe just a little.*

*Sleep and oblivion...*

*Awake again, red. Red hands. My teeth hurt. Why are my hands red? Water, washing basin, fill. Wait. Why are, why is, wh-.... Why what? Everything is fine. Where is everyone going? Why are they all running, is there something behind me? Why is that Jinassar raising its blade at me?*

*Did I kill a Jinassar... it doesn't matter! I need more flesh. Bloody flesh... Oh, I slipped in the blood, there is so much flesh and blood left here, still beating and warm just for me... Whose head is that?*

*- Ramblings of a caged low-caste before execution*

DISTURBED: When a character has less than a quarter of original total Sanity points left (rounded up) madness effect rolls are made with a +3 modifier.

RAVING MAD: Upon reaching zero Sanity points, the character is considered to have lost all sense and sensibility, screaming at imagined horrors – or real ones if the situation dictates. Although - at the Arbiter's discretion - it is possible to be nursed back to some sort of sanity, deep scars and permanent damage mark the character.

### MADNESS ROLLS

When a character loses a Sanity point make a roll on the Madness effect table and apply relevant modifiers. The total score indicates the insanity ascribed and the detrimental effect it causes. Should a character be so unfortunate as to lose more than one Sanity point at a time, roll for each lost Sanity point and apply only the most severe effect.

| ROLL | EFFECT | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | PHOBIA | For D3 days the character suffers from a phobia towards the source of madness. The character actively avoids certain activities for fear of encountering the object of phobia. If the cause of the phobia is within sight a willpower roll [7] must be made or the character suffers a panic attack: The character runs away for D3 rounds and performs subsequent actions at -1 penalty while the source is near. |
| 2 | PARANOIA | The character cannot shake the trauma and suffers from disturbed thoughts characterised by anxiety and fear. The character suffers from paranoia for D3 days, constantly watchful and reacting to imagined threats. Sleep deprivation and constant worry causes a -1 penalty to actions. |
| 3 | WOEFUL | The character is overwhelmed with strange visions of doom, seeing signs and portents everywhere. Regular people and even companions become heralds of the apocalypse and the character suffers a -3 penalty to all social rolls. |
| 4 | GIBBERING | The character seems to have lost the ability to converse. For D3 days she speaks only weird gibberish, an eldritch-sounding dialect provoking anxiety in those around her. The character suffers a -3 penalty to all social and response rolls. |
| 5 | COMPULSIVE | The character becomes obsessive compulsive for D3 days; constantly reciting litanies, making odd ritualistic gestures or similar. The character is estranged from reality and all actions involving Intellect, Presence, Awareness, Persuasion or Willpower suffer a -3 penalty for the duration. |
| 6 | FEVERISH | The character retracts into a feverish stupor; hissing about obscene and macabre visions. With glazed eyes the character dawdles around as if in a dream-state for D3 days. A Willpower roll [7] is required to perform any action without suffering a -3 penalty. |
| 7 | UNHINGED | The character is severely traumatized and firmly believes they have lost a limb. They cannot sense the limb and their mind refuses to acknowledge it; for them the limb is simply not there! Randomly determine which limb is concerned and the character is unable to use it for D6 days. |
| 8 | OBSESSIVE | Delusions clouds the mind of the sufferer and they become fanatically obsessed with a singular purpose. This fetish absorbs most thoughts and for D6 days the character works towards achieving said purpose. Any encounter and social interaction is twisted towards the purpose and the character suffers -3 penalty to all actions that do not further her cause. |
| 9 | TRAUMATISED | An atrocious sight is burned into the mind of the character, continuously feeding them with hallucinations of unspeakable horrors for D6 days. Any encounter, friendly or hostile, causes a fear roll [7] for the character. |
| 10 | SCHIZOPHRENIC | The character manifests D3 distinct identities, each with its own personality and pattern of interaction. The archetypes can be used as inspiration and a stimulus that trigger each identity must be determined. The madness lasts D6 days. |
| 11 | ERRATIC | Persistent and intense fear causes panic attacks, sending the character into random fits of rage or dread. For D6 days - during any encounter - a failed Willpower roll [7] causes the character to attack or flee the nearest person or creature; friend or foe. |
| 12 | RAMBLING | The characters suffer from extreme delirious anxiety. For D6 days the character is affected by randomly determined Delirium effects. The Arbiter makes a roll at regular intervals to determine the current delirium. |

## Regaining Sanity

It is possible to regain sanity points and quell madness by seeking care, meditative exercises and other means that the Arbiter finds appropriate.

Mental faculties are not regained quite as easily as Health and require longer recovery time. Quiet and calm may soothe the mind making a character regain Sanity points, while a harsh and strict regimen combined with spiritual guidance of a celebrant may suppress and defeat the horrors producing the same result, allowing characters to regain sanity points at a rate of their Willpower score per week.

Players can also choose to spend an Experience point to recover the mental stability of the character, immediately regaining D3 Sanity Points.



# CHAPTER: 4:
# POWERS

After the exodus humanity found that there are powers in the Cosmos of which they were unaware. As some humans became enlightened, ascending to a greater understanding, they acquired extraordinary capabilities and those extensively exposed to the chaotic influence of the Void sometimes developed peculiar qualities and capabilities.
Pureblood and halfblood characters may learn Blood Rituals while Voidmarked characters may awaken the Void seed within, enabling them to manipulate reality. This chapter details how Blood Rituals and Mysticism works and which possibilities it grants characters.

## BLOODRITUALS

There is power and elucidation to be found in blood. A character with either the bloodletting or sacrificial divination power has basic knowledge about the fundamental rites and sacrificial ceremonies and can perform blood rituals to either imbue boons and fortunes or read entrails.

| BLOOD RITUAL POWERS | |
|---|---|
| BLOODLETTING (INT) | The practitioner can bless her own flesh for a limited time; imbuing boons or fortune through bloodletting |
| SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION (INT/AWA) | Sacrificial divination allows the practitioner to examine a sacrifice for marks indicating a response to simple queries |
| BLOOD RITE | Blood Rite rankings provide the practitioner with a + 1 modifier when trying to carry out a Blood Ritual of any type |

Albeit the two primary disciplines of blood rituals – sacrificial divination and bloodletting - diverge in scope and substance they are similar in method, requiring corresponding provisions to be performed: A sacrificial site, a living creature to be sacrificed and sufficient time to complete the ritual undisturbed.

### THE SITE

Performing a ritual requires diligence and preparation. The place of sacrifice must be prepared and - although not strictly necessary - many practitioners employ altars, shrines or other sanctums, with incense-burners and proper implements for the sacrifice. These ceremonial places, thick with the smoke and aromas of myrrh and other exotic fragrances, enhance the sacred atmosphere and merit of the ritual. A makeshift sacrificial site may be used, but the risk of anything going awry increases. A symbol drawn with sacred icons in the dirt is a typical example of a crude sacrificial site. However, if a player is meticulous and makes an effort in describing the preparations the Arbiter is free to grant modifiers to the subsequent action roll. Any poorly prepared site, such as a makeshift or unprepared site, automatically penalises the practitioner with a -1 modifier to the action roll, while an utterly unprepared place would confer a -3 penalty.

### THE SACRIFICE

A sacrificial creature must be purchased, captured or otherwise acquired for the ritual. While any living creature can work as a sacrifice the more powerful the creature, the more potent its blood is; thus, the blood of weak or sickly creatures yields little power whereas the blood of a Deva is very potent. Blood potency is calculated by totalling the point values of a creature's Traits, Talents, Attributes, Powers and Enlightenment.
Shackles, bindings or assisting servants must restrain the sacrificial creature, which must be prepared with sacred icons or marks drawn upon it while incantations of consecration are spoken. It is then placed on the altar or sacrificial site. An unprepared creature causes a -1 penalty to the action roll.

### BLOODLETTING

The tradition of sacrificial rites performed to gain boons and blessings is customary among many sentient species of the Cosmos and is explicitly practised in the eternal city. The bloodletting power allows a character to sacrifice a creature or other living being to bestow boons or fortune upon a recipient. As a novice, the character has little control and can only perform rituals rarely, but as they progress in ability, they achieve greater control and aptitude. The table below details the abilities conferred by each bloodletting ranking.



## BLOODLETTING

| | |
|---|---|
| RANKING 1 | The practitioner may perform one bloodletting ritual per day imbuing a boon on themselves. On a successful ritual, make a roll on the boons and fortunes table and apply the result. |
| RANKING 2 | The character can perform one ritual per day infusing a boon on themselves. On a successful ritual, the character makes an imbuement roll and adds +1 to the potency roll before applying the result. |
| RANKING 3 | The ritualist may perform up to two ceremonies per day and can confer extracted boons on themselves or on another. The character may add +1 to the potency die and choose the boon freely from the cluster of results. |
| RANKING 4 | The practitioner is able to perform two bloodletting rituals per day, confer extracted boons on themselves or on another, and add +2 to the potency roll on the boons and fortunes table. The player can choose a boon at will from the cluster of results. |
| RANKING 5 | The ritualist may perform three ceremonies per day and confer the boon to up to three others. The player may add +2 to the potency dice and choose a boon from any cluster up to the rolled result. |
| RANKING 6 | The character can perform up to three bloodletting rituals per day and may add +3 to the potency roll on the boons and fortunes table. The boon can be conferred on up to three people and may be chosen from any effect up to the rolled results. |

### THE BLOODLETTING SACRIFICE

The potency of the creature is essential to the bloodletting ritual, determining both the difficulty of the ritual roll as well as affecting the boon bestowed. The higher the potency of the creature, the more challenging it is to draw its power, but the boons infused are correspondingly formidable.

| BLOOD POTENCY | DIFFICULTY | BOON MOD. | RITUAL TIME | BOON DURATION | BACKLASH MOD. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| < 8 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 9-16 | 7+ | -3 | D6 minutes | 12 hours | -3 |
| 17-24 | 10+ | 0 | 2D6 minutes | 18 hours | 0 |
| 25-40 | 13+ | +1 | 4D6 minutes | 24 hours | +1 |
| 41-64 | 16+ | +2 | 6D6 minutes | 36 hours | +2 |
| 65+ | 19+ | +3 | 8D6 minutes | 48 hours | +3 |

### THE RITUAL

A bloodletting ritual can be performed however the character sees fit as long as the key components are maintained: A sacrificial creature is bled to death, and the fresh blood is consumed by or otherwise applied to a recipient. Exactly how the blood is drawn and the creature slain matters little rules-wise, but the Arbiter is at liberty to grant a bonus modifier for a well-described ritual enhancing the atmosphere and ambience.

During the Ritual the player makes an Intellect roll, adding modifiers for preparation, blood rite ranking and any other relevant factors to the roll. The difficulty of the roll is determined by the potency of the sacrificial creature as shown in the table above. A roll equalling or exceeding the difficulty signifies that the ritual has been successfully performed, allowing the player to roll on the boons and fortunes table determining which imbuement is received. The sacrificial creature's blood potency and the ritualist's rank modify the imbuement roll. An exceptional success allows the character to add a +1 modifier to the imbuement roll.

A failed roll indicates that the character was unable to perform the proper rites, thus ruining any transfer of power and wasting the sacrifice. On a critically failed roll, the practitioner has botched the ritual, causing a sudden violent and uncontrollable conveyance of raw power. The recipient is unable to retain the power released and must make a successful Stamina roll, with difficulty equalling the ritual difficulty, or suffer a backlash. The extent of the ritual depends on the potency of the sacrifice. As only freshly drawn blood holds power a disturbed or otherwise disrupted ritual is inevitably unsuccessful, and the sacrifice is wasted.

Many ritualists chant and perform ceremonial gestures or dances to enhance and ensure the success of the ritual and characters with the Ritual skill may add a +1 modifier to the action roll during a Blood Ritual. Having proper tools, such as a sacrosanct sacrificial knife, may also grant a modifier to the action roll at the Arbiter's discretion.

### IMBUEMENT EFFECTS

A successful ritual allows the player to make an imbuement roll on the boons and fortunes table. An Imbuement roll consists of a D12 potency roll - with added modifiers for blood potency and bloodletting rankings - to determine the cluster and a D6 effect roll to establish the specific boon. Once the ritualist attains higher bloodletting rankings, the player may choose any boon from the rolled cluster, and eventually have a choice of clusters to choose from.

Imbuement rolls and boon duration depend on the potency of the drawn blood as shown in the potency chart.

There is a limit to how many boons a character can receive at any one time. The strain the added power causes to a body requires stamina to contain and characters are only able to have one endowment, plus one per positive Stamina modifier, effective at any given time.



## BOONS & FORTUNES TABLE

| POTENCY | EFFECT | BOON |
|---|---|---|
| | 1-3 | Increase one physical Trait by one (1) - once utilised in an action, remove the boon |
| < 2 | 4-5 | Increase one social or mental Trait by one (1) - once utilised, end the boon |
| | 6 | Increase any one Trait by one (1) - once used for a roll, remove the boon |
| | 1-3 | The first critically failed roll only counts as a failure |
| 3 | 4-5 | Reroll the first critical failure/mishap roll – the second roll counts |
| | 6 | Reroll one action roll - the second roll is binding |
| | 1-3 | Add +1 to an action roll (must be declared before the roll) |
| 4 | 4-5 | Reroll the first failed or critically failed action – the second roll holds |
| | 6 | The first roll of 11-12 counts as an exceptional success |
| | 1-3 | The character is "fearless" for the duration |
| 5 | 4-5 | The character can "ignore pain" for the duration |
| | 6 | The character can choose a Willpower Talent for the duration |
| | 1-3 | The character is "alert" for the duration (see Talents) |
| 6 | 4-5 | The character is "vigilant" for the duration (see Talents) |
| | 6 | The character can choose an Awareness Talent for the duration |
| | 1-3 | The character is a "charmer" for the duration (see Talents) |
| 7 | 4-5 | The character is "inspiring" for the duration (see Talents) |
| | 6 | The character can choose a Presence Talent for the duration |
| | 1-3 | The character is "Collected" for the duration (see Talents) |
| 8 | 4-5 | The character is "Composed" for the duration (see Talents) |
| | 6 | The character can choose a physical Talent for the duration |
| | 1-3 | Increase one physical Trait by one (1) for the duration |
| 9 | 4-5 | Increase one mental or social Trait by one (1) for the duration |
| | 6 | Increase any one Trait score by one (1) for the duration |
| | 1-3 | All critical failures count only as failures for the duration |
| 10 | 4-5 | The player may add or subtract one (1) to consequence rolls for the duration |
| | 6 | One action automatically succeeds - no roll required (must be declared before the action) |
| | 1-3 | The player may reroll any action rolls for the duration - secondary rolls are binding |
| 11 | 4-5 | Gain +1 to all action rolls for the duration |
| | 6 | All rolls of 11-12 counts as exceptional successes for the duration |
| | 1-3 | Increase either all mental or all social Traits by one (1) for the duration |
| 12 | 4-5 | Increase all physical Traits by one (1) for the duration |
| | 6 | Increase all Traits by one (1) for the duration |
| | 1-3 | The character may augment one Trait score by two (2) for the duration |
| 13 | 4-5 | The character may attain a Power or Talent of the sacrifice for the duration |
| | 6 | The character may augment any Trait scores to match the sacrifice for the duration |
| | 1-3 | Gain +2 to all action rolls for the duration |
| 14 | 4-5 | Gain +2 to all action rolls and critical failures only count as failures |
| | 6 | Gain +2 to all action roll and all rolls of 11-12 are exceptional successes |
| | 1-3 | Choose any one boon from any cluster |
| 15+ | 4-5 | Roll D3 times on the boons and Fortunes table (ignore any recurring results) |
| | 6 | Choose D3 boons freely |

## Sacrificial Divination

Phenomena occur in patterns that are hard to interpret, but which bear significance. There are signs everywhere, but few notice them and even fewer can discern their connotations within the greater scheme of things. Seers and diviners delve into the intricacies and connectivity of unfolding events and perceive the unseen threads binding cause and effect. The blood and organs of a sacrifice reveal patterns permeating through the chaotic flux of existence, and may even affect the undetermined outcomes of future events. Some speculate that the signs obtained through this practice are due to an enigmatic association between living creatures and the Void, as it is clear that creatures of higher echelons generally provide exceedingly more precise and congruent wisdom than lesser species.

The sacrificial divination power lets a character divine omens from the entrails of a sacrificed creature and to interpret the signs to indicate answers to queries. Novice seers are merely able to interpret rudimentary portents to simple questions, but as their abilities surge they may pose and construe queries of increased complexity. The table below details the abilities conferred by each sacrificial divination ranking. The wording of queries is important, as sacrificial divination cannot ever give absolute answers, only indicate likely outcomes.

### THE DIVINATION SACRIFICE

When performing sacrificial divination, a query must be formulated, which determines the difficulty of the roll depending on its complexity. How complex a question the ritualist can reasonably expect to divine the answer to depends on his or her sacrificial divination ranking. A novice ritualist may perform simple readings, obtaining replies to enquiries answerable by a yes or no. As characters gain further rankings in sacrificial divination, the variety of queries and possible answers expands, allowing the character more profound information than simple indications to yes-no questions. Sacrificial Divination may allow a practitioner to obtain an indication of how events might unfold in the future concerning proposed actions, or they may detect an impetus of causes brewing a given outcome or momentous events, associating significant connotations to seemingly insignificant deeds, such as the recognition of the butterfly which sets off the storm.



| SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION | |
|---|---|
| RANKING 1 | The character may perform one divination per day. The player can make a simple inquiry to know whether an outcome to a course of action or a prospect is possible or not. Questions such as "Is it possible that I can find my daughter in the slave market in Khameeliya tomorrow?" qualify for this divination. |
| RANKING 2 | The practitioner can perform one sacrificial divination per day. The player may make a simple query to know whether an outcome to a course of action is likely or unlikely. Inquiries in the vein of "If I search the alley behind the temple for hidden entrances am I likely to succeed?" are suitable for this foretelling. |
| RANKING 3 | The character may perform two divination rituals per day and is able to pose a compound question with several possible outcomes, learning the likelihood of each if possible. Musings along the lines of "If I enter the palace through the harem am I likely to meet resistance or help from the concubines there?" are eligible. |
| RANKING 4 | The seer can perform two sacrificial divination rituals per day. A complex query may be posed with the portent indicating possible outcomes although in vague terms. Queries such as "What might happen if I murder the slaver that sold my family?" would qualify. |
| RANKING 5 | The practitioner may perform three rituals per day interpreting conceivable consequences to complex queries. Questions such as "How could it affect my plans if a Je'ehl envoy arrives tomorrow?" are applicable. |
| RANKING 6 | The character can perform three divinations per day. Complex queries may be answered potentially revealing unforeseen aspects of the inquiry itself. Queries like "What does my future hold?" would suit for this divination. |

| QUERY | REQUIREMENTS | INSIGHT | DIFFICULTY | BACKLASH |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| YES-NO | Ranking 1 | Simple possibility | 7 | 0 |
| PROSPECT | Ranking 2 | The likelihood of a specified outcome | 10 | +1 |
| GUIDED CLOSED | Ranking 3 | The probabilities of multiple options | 13 | +1 |
| GUIDED OPEN | Ranking 4 | Prospective effects on a designated cause | 16 | +2 |
| INDISTINCT OPEN | Ranking 5 | Potential outcomes of supposed causes | 19 | +2 |
| OPEN | Ranking 6 | Possible occurrences with no set premise | 22 | +3 |

## THE RITUAL

Once a query has been formulated the character either dissects or vivisects the sacrifice as he or she searches for marks in the entrails. As the ritual includes the proper identification and interpretation of omens, the Trait associated with sacrificial divination roll can be either Intellect or Awareness, depending on which approach the player chooses. Once decided, the player rolls, adding modifiers for preparation, blood rite ranking and any other relevant factors. The difficulty of the divination is determined by the query complexity as noted above. As greater and superior sacrifices are more likely to yield answers, the potency of the sacrificed creature is decisive to the probability of successful divination. Below are shown the modifiers to the action roll of an extispicy based on the increasing potency of the sacrificial creature.

| BLOOD POTENCY | ROLL MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| < 8 | -3 |
| 9-16 | -1 |
| 17-24 | 0 |
| 25-40 | +1 |
| 41-64 | +2 |
| 65+ | +3 |

*No wind stirred, and the humid heat of the mid-morning was oppressive. Under the sweltering red sun, sweaty slaves bore a lavish palanquin through the bustling crowds of the Pai'Karaan district. A canopy shaded the lounging passenger — an aristocratic mistress. Four household guards escorted the litter. They were teal-skinned Je'ehl soldiers, a species well accustomed to the damp heat of the jungles of Kandahir. Pushing the throng of people aside to allow the palanquin passage, the Je'ehl held their curved shamsheer blades drawn and ready to deter anyone who dared approach the lady they served.*

*Urging the slaves onwards through the winding streets, the young mistress of house Marshandah was the epitome of aristocratic elegance. Intricately dressed, with delicate shawls obscuring her features, only her dark burgundy eyes could be glimpsed. Employing the formal Bu'idu title for a lady, the guard closest to her spoke: "Baani Leeliya, we are near."*

*Approaching a large plaza, crowds of worshippers, wide-eyed visitants and hawkers peddling religious icons surged around them - an animated river of life! Shrines and temples dedicated to hundreds of gods dominated the plaza. Barely able to contain her excitement, any longer Leeliya stretched out her delicate neck, to better view her destination; the sacrificial temple.*

*As she drew nearer, strong censer smoke and the sweet tang of dried blood began to permeate the air. The mix of scents, coupled with her increasing exhilaration, made her slightly queasy and light-headed. Focusing her thoughts on the task and ritual ahead, she fought to suppress her discomfort. It would not do for a Baani of the most honourable House Marshandah to relinquish control of the situation and least of all, of her own self.*
*As the palanquin halted before the temple gates, the bearers knelt, placing the litter on the ground. All the while, a procession of celebrants, Nabu seers and Dachri Cult dancers emerged, to lead Leeliya into the darkness within.*

*Incense smoke was heavy in the confined space of the inner temple. Beneath a raised sacrificial dais, copper oil lamps vaguely illuminated a dugout hollow. Here, Leeliya knelt, muttering sacred litanies, her arms and palms held out in front of her. She spared a glance at her surroundings. A massive Marud Bull, chained and partially visible through the cracks of the dais, huffed and strained against its unyielding bonds. Behind her, she could hear the Nabu seers, their chanting echoing her own. Ahead, shrouded in the pungent smoke wafting from the censers, she could make out reflected shadows of writhing and twisting Dachri Cult dancers.*

*The cultists' dance became more erratic as the chanting approached a crescendo. Leeliya slowly raised her face towards the sacrificial dais overhead. Anticipation filled her, as a seer ceremoniously marched towards the restrained bull, a sacrificial dagger in hand. With one swift, fluid movement, the seer slid the blade across the exposed jugular of the beast, severing its windpipe and main artery. Unable to breathe, the panicked animal thrashed in its chains, as torrents of its blood poured out into the fissures of the dais.*
*Like a heavy monsoon rain, the warm, sticky substance drenched Leeliya's body. In that instant, her world changed. The blood on her skin felt like scorching heat, while the chanting thundered in her ears. As the bull collapsed, exhaling its last shuddering breath, something stirred within her: An indescribable presence, lingering for barely a heartbeat, imprinting its savage vigour upon her.*

*As the last chant of the blood ritual faded, Leeliya arose, a faint smile upon her blood-stained face. She turned towards the atrium of the temple and felt a strange tingling in her blood, a sense of heightened awareness. As she stepped into the bright sunlight of the plaza outside the temple, the world seemed clearer; previously indiscernible details caught her eyes, everywhere she looked.*
*Her stride strong, she walked towards the palanquin, where bearers and guards waited to take her back to the palace of house Marshandah. Aware that the sacrificial boon bestowed upon her would soon dissipate, Leeliya knew it was imperative that she made haste to finalise preparations for the gruelling night's tribulations.*

As with other actions, a roll equalling or exceeding the difficulty signifies successful divination, and the Arbiter must provide an answer to the stated query. The portents, however, are never crystal clear and always leave room for interpretation.

A failed roll indicates that the character was unable to find or accurately interpret the signs in the entrails, thus wasting the sacrifice. An exceptional success either grants the practitioner additional information with regards to the enquired subject or gives a very detailed interpretation of the sign.

But insight is not without risk; when you are open to the higher truths of the Cosmos, you are also open to its madness. A critically failed roll results in a dreadful revelation of pure Cosmic terror, leaving the practitioner shaken and disturbed at best and at worst, threatening her very sanity. A successful Willpower roll against the ritual difficulty is required; otherwise, the practitioner suffers a backlash.





## Backlash

Backlash occurs when a blood ritual is critically failed, and the practitioner or recipient fails the subsequent Stamina or Willpower roll. While a bloodletting ritual allows a Stamina roll for the recipient of the blood to negate a Backlash, a sacrificial divination requires a successful Willpower roll to neutralise a Backlash.

A backlash from a Bloodletting Ritual will mainly affect a character's physical state while that of Sacrificial Divination will influence the psyche and mental stability. As noted above the effect of a backlash is determined by rolling a D12 and adding the blood potency modifier applicable to the ritual.

### BACKLASH TABLE

| POTENCY | BLOODLETTING BACKLASH | SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION BACKLASH |
|---|---|---|
| < 1 | Traumatised and weakened by the ritual, the recipient is reluctant to partake in another Bloodletting Ritual for D3 days. | Ominous signs shake the practitioner leaving them unwilling to perform another Sacrificial Divination for D3 days. |
| 2 | Frightened by the occurrence of the backlash, the recipient develops a temporary phobia for blood and particularly Blood Rituals. The phobia lasts D6 days*. | Horrid marks in the sacrifice leave the practitioner cold and frightened. Trepidation grips witnesses, conferring a mild phobia towards Sacrificial Divination lasting D3 days. |
| 3 | The grisly ritual leaves the character nauseated and queasy, suffering a -1 penalty to physical action rolls for 12 hours. | Startled by an awful revelation the practitioner faints, losing consciousness for D12 minutes*. Unable to remember what caused the fear, the character retains a lingering sense of foreboding. |
| 4 | Rattled by the experience, the character suffers minor tics, shakes and shivering. All actions suffer a -1 penalty the following 12 hours. | The signs of the divination are strangely indistinct, but a rising paranoia about unfolding horrible events starts to creep into the practitioner. The practitioner suffers from paranoia for D3 days*. |
| 5 | Due to the intense strain on their body, the recipient becomes sick and fatigued. All rolls of 1-2 count as critical failures for 24 hours. | The practitioner is rattled by the revelations offered by the divination leaving them shaken and distressed. All action rolls have a -1 penalty for D12 hours*. |
| 6 | Overwhelmed by the sheer force of the backlash, the recipient loses consciousness for D3 hours* and subsequently suffers a -1 penalty to all actions during the following 12 hours. | Horrible visions of prophetic insight make the practitioner cry out in dread. Suffering from twitches, tics and occasional shaking, the practitioner has a -2 penalty to all Presence rolls for D6 days*. Ravaged by horrible nightmares the practitioner suffers a -1 penalty to all action rolls during this period due to lack of sleep. |

| POTENCY | BLOODLETTING BACKLASH | SACRIFICIAL DIVINATION BACKLASH |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | The practitioner is unable to cope with the physical strain of the ritual, suffering a trauma causing a -1 penalty to all action rolls and inducing the mild cramps Flaw for D3 days*. | Mumbling incoherently of abominations beyond mortal comprehension, the practitioner stares wide eyed into the carcass. The practitioner is gripped with fear and suffers paranoia for D6 days*. |
| 8 | Overcome by the backlash, the recipient becomes severely ill, suffering a -2 penalty to all action rolls for D3 days. | For a moment the practitioner seems to be drawn away from reality, staring intently at the carcass in front of them, and then suddenly falls to the ground mewling and sobbing. The practitioner must make a madness roll, suffering the effect for D3 days*. |
| 9 | Feverishly the recipient walks around in a daze, drifting in and out of consciousness for D3 days*. During this period all actions suffer a -2 penalty and the character must make a Stamina roll [7] after each action to stay conscious. | All the signs are twisted and corrupted, inspiring dread in the practitioner. The practitioner must make a madness roll +1 suffering the effect for D3 days*. All others witnessing the sacrifice must make a Fear roll [7]. |
| 10 | The recipient becomes crazed, suffering from delirium for D3 hours* (roll hourly). Once the recipient regains their senses all actions suffer a -2 penalty for D3 days. | A revelation of pure horror sends the practitioner sprawling to the ground screaming in terror. Make a madness roll at +3, suffering the effect for D3 days*. All witnessing the divination must make Fear rolls [9]. |
| 10 | The recipient becomes crazed, suffering from delirium for D3 hours* (roll hourly). Once the recipient regains their senses all actions suffer a -2 penalty for D3 days. | A revelation of pure horror sends the practitioner sprawling to the ground screaming in terror. Make a madness roll at +3, suffering the effect for D3 days*. All witnessing the divination must make Fear rolls [9]. |
| 11 | The recipient suffers a seizure lasting D3 hours and collapses to the ground. For the following D3 days* the character suffers from Severe cramps and a -2 penalty to all actions. | Looking at the sacrifice, the practitioner numbly stares into nothingness. Catatonia grips the practitioner for D6 days*. The practitioner loses D3 Health points each day from malnourishment and loses a Sanity point afterwards. |
| 12 | The recipient blacks out for D12 minutes and must make and immediate delirium roll [9] when coming around. The character has the addiction Flaw, with the substance being blood, for the following D12 days*. | The practitioner blacks out for D12 minutes and must make and immediate Fear roll [9] when coming to. For D6 days* these prophetic blackouts will continue (one each day at random times), and each time the practitioner must make a Fear roll [7]. |
| 13 | The recipient flies into a rage, becoming uncontrollable and frenzied for D3 hours*. Once recovered, the character suffers a -2 penalty to all actions for D3 days. | A maddened expression spreads across the practitioner's face as they read the sacrifice. Laughing in hysterical horror, they start wandering aimlessly around the area talking to unseen things. Make an immediate Sanity roll [12] or lose a sanity point. |
| 14 | The character's body is ravaged, seemingly ageing uncontrollably under the strain. Lose one Stamina point and D6 Health permanently. | Screaming, the practitioner's sanity is broken leaving her weeping and shaking on the ground. The character's Willpower is reduced by one and D3 sanity points are automatically lost. |
| 15 | Devastated by the backlash the recipient is left scarred and weakened, reducing D3 random physical Traits by one (1) permanently. | "The horror, the horror..." The practitioner collapses to the ground, mumbling ghastly gibberish for days on end. The character's Willpower is decreased by two and D6 sanity points are automatically lost. |

**All rolls determining duration for the effects of a backlash are secretly rolled by the Arbiter.*

# Mysticism

Though the Void is perpetual change, creation, turmoil and chaos, certain individuals have managed to harness and control aspects that allow them to channel raw power and alter the fabric of the Cosmos according to their will. Such individuals are known as Mystics, and they are equally feared and revered across the worlds.

Mystics are inherently at odds with the Cosmos, shifting reality much in the same way that emanations of the Void do, but they are not intermediaries of the Void - instead, they retain a seed within themselves allowing them to alter reality. A mystic desires a phenomenon to occur and through transcendent effort forces reality to conform accordingly. If he or she is powerful enough reality shifts, but the Cosmos - as an opposing force to chaos - resists the change imposed upon it. The more outlandish the phenomenon, the more the Cosmos resists; a phenomenon which could occur naturally on a world is simple to create while one which contradicts any natural propensity is exceedingly difficult.

A character that has attained a ranking as either furore or gnostic has the potential to manifest mystic phenomena, but the Void seed is dormant, and their potential remains latent until they have obtained ranks in an associated sphere. Attaining rankings in spheres allow the character to manifest phenomena within that given sphere.

## Furores & Gnostics

As noted previously mystics follow either the path of the furore or gnostics, which define and outline how their capabilities function in the game.

### FURORES

Furores are generally unrestrained, letting the intensity of their emotional and intuitive approach invoke phenomena of great potency beyond their apparent skill. Due to the unrelenting intensity of their channelling, these mystics may manifest phenomena with effect rankings equal to their sphere ranking plus their Willpower modifier. Furores also negate resistance modifiers equalling their Willpower modifier due to their forceful channelling.

### GNOSTICS

While these mystics lack the primal power employed by Furores, they are less likely to suffer the detrimental effects of calamities due to the control with which they practice their art. Gnostics may subtract their Intellect modifier from calamity rolls, but they are unable to acquire sphere rankings higher than their Intellect score.

For many Gnostics meditation is an integrated part of focussing their mental energies when invoking their powers. Meditation takes time but once done it decreases the difficulty of channelling, making it easier for the Mystic to create taxing or challenging phenomena. Gnostic mystics may perform preparatory meditations, reducing the difficulty of the phenomenon by one per half hour spent in meditation. The meditation must pertain to a chosen phenomenon which must be completed instantly after the meditation. The amounts of hours which can be spent meditating are limited to the character's Intellect modifier.

Many Gnostics use ritualistic chants and ceremonial gesticulations to enhance their focus; characters with the Ritual skill may add a +1 modifier to their channelling roll.

### MANIFESTING PHENOMENA

Manifesting a phenomenon is like performing any other action in most respects. When a character wishes to manifest a phenomenon, they decide which aspects and effect(s) they want to produce. The combined potency values of these elements are the difficulty the Mystic has to equal or exceed with the roll to successfully manifest the phenomenon. Note that generally Mystics may only use aspects and effects with a potency below or equalling their ranking within a sphere they have access to.

The channelling roll is modified by the character's Willpower or Intellect modifier and Mystic ranking. A success indicates that the phenomena manifests and exists for a limited amount of time until the Cosmos reverts back to its natural state and the phenomenon dissipates. An exceptional success allows the character to increase the duration, range, area of effect or effect of phenomena by one degree, or roll a further dice if the roll was not enough to



succeed. A failed roll means that the character has been unable to manifest the phenomenon and the attempt is wasted, while a critical failure denotes that the Mystic has lost control and a Calamity occurs. Calamities are harrowing consequences caused by the chaotic influence of the Void unleashed upon the Cosmos and are described fully later in the chapter.

### RESISTING PHENOMENA

All phenomena directly targeting or affecting living beings have an added difficulty modifier as the target's body or mind naturally resists the interference unless the target willingly allows the phenomenon to transpire. Note that negative modifiers are disregarded and do not decrease the difficulty. Phenomena affecting several living beings only add the highest resistance modifier to the roll, not the cumulative modifiers.

Some phenomena allow a target an additional active resistance roll to avoid the effects if the effect is meant to affect for instance behaviour.

Phenomena affecting living beings indirectly typically require an additional roll such as a "to-hit roll" to successfully affect the target, whereas mental assaults are resolved as opposed actions.

Phenomena with an area of effect are not affected and modified by individual resistance but may be dodged or otherwise avoided by beings inside the area. Furores may ignore resistance modifiers up to and equalling their Willpower modifier.

### PHENOMENA IN COMBAT

It is inevitable that characters want to use their powers in combat. It is noted in the channelling time how long it takes to manifest a phenomenon. Unless a character employs the instant or one-second channelling time a phenomenon will manifest at the end of the indicated combat round, requiring the character's complete focus the entire round(s) it takes to manifest; therefore, a phenomenon taking three rounds to cast will manifest at the end of the third round. An instantly channelled phenomenon manifests according to the character's initiative roll. Note that Mystic powers utilise the Mystics associated modifier rather than customary Agility modifier for initiative rolls.

### TYPES OF PHENOMENA

Phenomena fall under three categories: Improvised, known and signature.

- An improvised phenomenon is one where the aspects and effect are spontaneously decided.
- A known manifestation is one that the character has spent time and effort perfecting and has employed several times before. A known phenomenon costs one (1) point to obtain and has a fixed set of aspects and effects.
- A signature manifestation has become an extension of the character, an integrated part as natural in its usage as breathing. Only already designated "known manifestations" can be converted into signature manifestations, and only at the cost of an additional three (3) points.

| PHENOMENA TYPES | |
|---|---|
| IMPROVISED | No modifiers |
| KNOWN | Subtract one point from the difficulty |
| SIGNATURE | Subtract three points from the difficulty |

Most phenomena are improvised, and the effect possibilities and combinations are vast, so making a short and simple description is a useful habit in case the player wants to manifest the same phenomenon again in the future.

### DISTURBED CONCENTRATION

Manifesting a phenomenon requires concentration and a Mystic who is disturbed while channelling must apply penalties to the difficulty of the phenomenon to illustrate the disturbance. Disturbance can be environmental factors such as storm winds and such or more directly injuries inflicted during the channelling. Example: Sqah is trying to manifest a phenomenon but is stabbed during the channelling time, suffering 3 points of damage, so three is added to the difficulty of his manifestation.

### PHENOMENA SEQUENCE

When a character decides to manifest a phenomenon, it follows the below sequence, whether it occurs during or outside of combat. The player chooses which phenomenon the character wants to manifest, resolves the difficulty and makes a roll to determine whether the attempt is successful or not.

| SEQUENCE OF CHANNELLING | | |
|---|---|---|
| STEP 1 | Choose/compose phenomenon | Improvised/Known/ Signature |
| STEP 2 | Determine Difficulty | Determine the difficulty and whether it is resisted |
| STEP 3 | Make channelling roll | Roll D12 and add modifiers versus difficulty |

*Shumma had always abhorred the Aml'naqru with their eerie featureless faces and lithe wormlike bodies suspended in gaseous spheres floating through the air. And now she had to deal with one!*

*Standing on a terrace above the street she watched the eyeless head swaying from side to side as if probing its surroundings, reacting to every slight movement and breeze as if it was able to see it all. Maybe it was?*

*She did not understand most of the species in the city, nor did she care to. All she wanted was for this to be over and she safely home in the enclave…*

## COMPOSING PHENOMENA

A phenomenon is made up of at least four aspects: Casting time, range, duration and area as well as one or several effects. Each aspect has an associated potency, and the cumulative value of these along with the effect potency determine the difficulty; the more potent the phenomenon, the higher the difficulty. A character's ranking in a given sphere determines how potent each aspect and effect can be.

| CHANNELLING TIME | RANGE | DURATION | AREA (PEOPLE/OBJECT/DIAMETER) | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 MINUTES | 0 metres | Instant | 0 / tiny / 25 cm | 0 |
| 5 MINUTES | 3 metres | 9 Seconds | 1 / little / 0.5 metre | 1 |
| ONE MINUTE | 9 metres | 15 seconds | 3 / small / 1 metre | 2 |
| 9 SECONDS / 3 ROUNDS | 15 metres | One minute | 9 / medium / 2 metres | 3 |
| 3 SECONDS / 1 ROUND | 30 metres | 15 minutes | 15 / large / 4 metres | 4 |
| 1 SECOND / INITIATIVE -4 | 60 metres | 30 minutes | 30 / huge / 6 metres | 5 |
| INSTANT / INITIATIVE | 120 metres* | One hour | 60 / gargantuan / 12 metres | 6 |

**Further range may be added by doubling the range and adding potency (must remain within visual range).*

CHANNELLING TIME: The channelling time is the period the character needs to focus on the phenomenon for it to manifest.

RANGE: The range establishes how far the phenomenon reaches; usually, the affected area or creature must be within sensory range, but certain exceptions from this may be possible. The range is measured from the Mystic to the objects or areas that can be affected.

DURATION: The duration determines how long the phenomenon remains in effect. Whenever a phenomenon is manifested, the balance or equilibrium between Cosmos and Void is destabilised. The Cosmos inevitably seeks to revert to its natural state, meaning that all phenomena are temporary. The repercussions of a manifested phenomenon may be permanent, but the phenomenon itself immediately dissipates once the duration is reached. The caster does not need to concentrate on a phenomenon to maintain it and is free to perform other actions as soon as it has manifested unless it is actively opposed.

AREA: The area designates either the number of adult human-sized individuals that can be affected, the approximate size of an object or an area designated by a diameter centred on a chosen spot within the selected range.

POTENCY: The corresponding potency is accumulated from all the aspects including the effects with the total score designating the difficulty the Mystic has to beat to successfully manifest the phenomenon. If the character's concentration is disturbed, the impact is added to the difficulty.

## PHENOMENA EFFECTS

Once the aspects have been chosen the player must decide the effect of the phenomenon. The effect describes what the phenomena does; a psychic attack, reversion of gravity or most anything imaginable. Effects vary extensively, and no matter how many effects are described in the tables below it is likely that imaginative players may want to create phenomena that are not covered. In cases like this confer with the Arbiter and find a reasonable potency for the desired effect. Each sphere deals with a specific aspect of existence as shown below. Players are at liberty to combine several effects and effects from different spheres in a single phenomenon, adding the potency of each effect to the total difficulty. Effects used in such combinations must still have a potency below or equalling the ranking within the spheres the character has access to.

| MYSTIC SPHERES | |
|---|---|
| FORCES | Acceleration, gravity, momentum, kinetic energy, fire, heat, wind, light, darkness, and sound. |
| LIFE | Animation, bodily aspects, organic life, healing, harm, metamorphosis, death. and age. |
| MATTER | Lifeless material, alteration, earth, stone, metals, water, and air. |
| MIND | Charm, delusion, domination, insanity, fear, inspiration, hallucination, influence, and telepathy. |
| VOID | Metaphysical, chaos, space, change, insight, chance, aura, and essence. |

The following list and definitions provide players and Arbiters with points of reference for effects of manifested phenomena. If a desired effect is not listed, Arbiters and players should find a comparable effect, allocate the relevant sphere and adapt or develop an effects table suited to their requirements. While this allows for inspired and imaginative use of powers, the Arbiter is always the ultimate authority when it comes to what is permissible and what is not.

## Forces Sphere

The sphere of forces affects the intangible yet physical dynamic energies and forces of the Cosmos such as gravity and light.

| LEVITATE | ACCELERATION | PUSH / BLOW | REDUCE/INCREASE | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Little object | Slow (Move 2) | Strength 1 | Slightly | 1 |
| Small object | Moderate (5) | Strength 3 | Moderately | 2 |
| Moderate object | Fast (10) | Strength 5 | Significantly | 3 |
| Large object | Quick (20) | Strength 7 | Considerably | 4 |
| Huge object | Swift (40) | Strength 9 | Substantially | 5 |
| Gargantuan object | Rapid (80) | Strength 11 | Massively | 6 |

LEVITATE: This effect alters the gravity for targeted objects making them light or even buoyant, able to ascend or descend vertically. To move any other way than vertically an acceleration effect must be applied.

ACCELERATION: This propels objects by an unseen force. Any movement is still hampered by hindrances and resistance.

PUSH/BLOW: This affects objects by kinetic force, to either push them or cause damage similar to a blunt weapon. Damage: D6 + Strength modifier and with the knockdown property appropriate to the Strength.

REDUCE/INCREASE: This affects sources such as heat, gravity, cold, and so on (solid physical matter cannot be changed). The smaller the source, the greater the relative effect: i.e. a low heat source could be annulled by slightly reducing it. If the source were a flame, it would still burn, but not emit any heat.



| LIGHT/DARKNESS | ENHANCE/OBFUSCATE | MANIPULATE FORCE | CREATE FORCE | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low glow/shade | Slightly | Small source | - | 1 |
| Moderate glow/shade | Moderately | Moderate source | - | 2 |
| Significant glow/dark | Significantly | Significant source | Tiny | 3 |
| Considerable glow/dark | Considerably | Considerable source | Small | 4 |
| Substantial glow/darkness | Substantially | Substantial source | Moderate | 5 |
| Radiance /total darkness | Completely | Massive source | Significant | 6 |

PALL (Forces phenomenon example)

CHANNELLING TIME: 5 minutes

RANGE: 15 metres

DURATION: 1 minute

AREA: 4 metre diameter

EFFECT: Significant darkness

DESCRIPTION: Upon a successful channelling a designated area within 15 metres is swathed in dark shadows, obscuring vision and causing a -3 modifier to all visual rolls within the affected area.

DIFFICULTY: 14

LIGHT/DARKNESS: This effect allows an area to become brighter or darker without any apparent source or cause. Vision modifiers may be applied.

ENHANCE/OBFUSCATE: This affects sound or vision in a designated area or object allowing the mystic to manipulate what is perceived. Camouflage or accentuating objects are examples of these manifestations.

MANIPULATE FORCE: This affects an existing source of fire, wind, light or other insubstantial force allowing to be manipulated, altered and moved.

CREATE FORCE: This produces an insubstantial force without any apparent source, i.e. producing a flame from naked rock.

## Life Sphere

The sphere of life affects organic and living organisms.

| HARM | STRENGTHEN/WEAKEN | SUFFERING | METAMORPHOSIS | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| D4 | +/- 1 | Irritating (-1) | Slight | 1 |
| D6 | +/- 2 | Troublesome (-2) | Moderate | 2 |
| D12 | +/- 3 | Hindering (-3) | Significant | 3 |
| 2D6 | +/- 4 | Impeding (-4) | Considerable | 4 |
| 2D12 | +/- 5 | Painful (-5) | Substantial | 5 |
| 3D12 | +/- 6 | Agonizing (-6) | Complete | 6 |

HARM: This effect causes physical damage to objects or injuries to people similarly to hitting someone or something. The injury heals as usual. Manifestations can cause crippling injuries if enough damage is caused.

STRENGTHEN/WEAKEN: This allows the Mystic to increase or reduce a physical Trait in a target to a maximum of 12 and a minimum of 0.

SUFFERING: This induces irritation or anguish of varying degrees causing penalties to all actions for the duration. This effect may additionally stimulate other effects such as intimidation, fear and so on.

METAMORPHOSIS: This changes the physical aspect of the subject as well as associated features and characteristics. An enlarged subject temporarily gains a higher strength. Keep in mind that only the subject changes, not worn clothing or carried items.

CAUSE LESION (Life phenomenon example)

CHANNELLING TIME: 3 seconds

RANGE: 9 metres

DURATION: Instant

AREA: 1 Individual

EFFECT: Harm (D12 DMG)

DESCRIPTION: The manifested phenomenon causes a lesion (D12 damage) in a targeted individual within 9 metres.

DIFFICULTY: 10 + STA MOD.

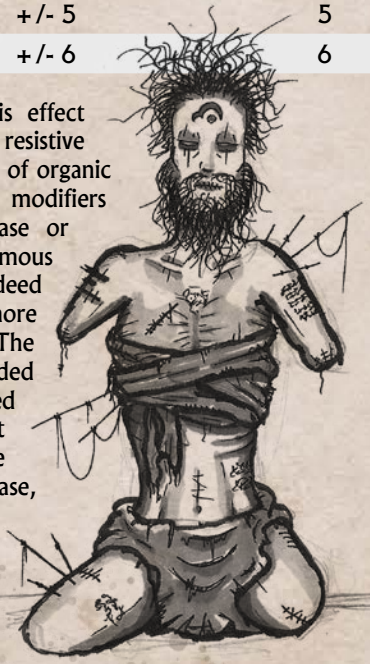
| SUBDUE/IMBUE LIFE | MEND WOUND | MEND BONES | CURE/IMPAIR | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Slight (+/-1) | D4 | Minor fracture / D3 days | +/- 1 | 1 |
| Moderate (+/-2) | D6 | Fracture / D6 days | +/- 2 | 2 |
| Significant (+/-3) | D12 | Severe fracture / D12 days | +/- 3 | 3 |
| Considerable (+/-4) | 2D6 | Partial break / 2D6 days | +/- 4 | 4 |
| Substantial (+/-5) | 2D12 | Major break / 2D12 days | +/- 5 | 5 |
| Massively (+/-6) | 3D12 | Complete break / 3D12 days | +/- 6 | 6 |

SUBDUE/IMBUE LIFE: This increases or decreases the vitality or growth of organic life, such as restoring Health by increasing the healing rate or diminishing the restorative capabilities by diminishing it.

MEND WOUND: This clots and seals new injuries temporarily. Once the duration expires the effect reverts and the wound reopens with half the damage. Heal wounds may be used to stop bleeding wounds, allowing a character to survive until the wounds can be bandaged and treated.

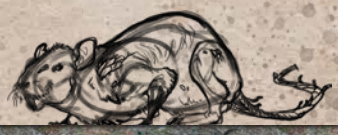
MEND BONES: This speeds up the healing process of broken bones, reducing the healing time by the noted amount.

CURE/IMPAIR: This effect influences the natural resistive and curative process of organic matter; endowing modifiers when resisting disease or toxic and venomous stimulus or indeed making someone more susceptible to such. The noted modifier is added to or subtracted from rolls to resist or countering the effects of disease, poison and so on.



## Matter Sphere

The sphere of matter affects inert substances such as rocks, liquids, metals, gasses and so on as well as processed or deceased organic materials including wood, plants and cadavers.



| ALTERATION | CREATE | SHAPE | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| SUPERFICIALLY | - | Slight | 1 |
| SLIGHTLY | Tiny | Moderate | 2 |
| MODERATELY | Little | Significant | 3 |
| CONSIDERABLY | Small | Considerable | 4 |
| SUBSTANTIALLY | Medium | Substantial | 5 |
| COMPLETELY | Large | Complete | 6 |

ALTERATION: This effect changes the basic characteristics of inert objects such as hardness, fluidity, density, elasticity, weight and so on. Superficial alteration might change the hue or texture of an object, while a considerable alteration could turn stone porous or brittle. A substantial change would allow the mystic to change one metal into another, while a complete alteration would enable the Mystic to transform the matter into a different inert matter for the duration.

CREATE: This enables the Mystic to manifest inanimate physical objects out of nothing.

SHAPE: This changes the shape or size on an inanimate object. The higher the potency, the more significant the change, increase or reduction of the object. For each potency ranking, the Mystic can alter an object by one object size ranking.

WEAKEN (Matter phenomenon example)

| | |
|---|---|
| CHANNELLING TIME: | 30 minutes |
| RANGE: | Touch (0 metres) |
| DURATION: | 9 seconds |
| AREA: | Medium object |
| EFFECT: | Moderate alteration |

DESCRIPTION: The Mystic alters the solidity of an object for a brief period of time, making it more susceptible to breakage than it would normally be; effectivly reducing the difficulty of breaking it by 3.

DIFFICULTY: 7

## Mind Sphere

This mystical sphere deals with the mental aspects, allowing the mystic to read or influence thoughts and feelings as well as communicate imperceptibly.

DELUSION: This causes the target to believe that he or she is perceiving something not there. It is resisted by Awareness or Intellect. The phenomenon may induce penalties or bonuses to rolls if believed.

| CHARM | INFLUENCE | DELUSION | MENTAL EFFECTS | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mild (4) | +/- 1 | Dubious [4] | Rating 4 | 1 |
| Touched (7) | +/- 2 | Questionable [7] | Rating 7 | 2 |
| Affected (10) | +/- 3 | Plausible [10] | Rating 10 | 3 |
| Influenced (13) | +/- 4 | Believable [13] | Rating 13 | 4 |
| Devoted (16) | +/- 5 | Convincing [16] | Rating 16 | 5 |
| Entranced (19) | +/- 6 | Undeniable [19] | Rating 19 | 6 |

CHARM: This makes a subject susceptible to a suggestion. If the suggestion is counterintuitive or contrary to the will or wishes of the target, he or she may make a Willpower resistance roll against the influence grade.

INFLUENCE: This makes a target more susceptible or unreceptive to socialising, persuasion, threats and so on, applying a modifier to interaction rolls.

MENTAL EFFECTS: This allow the mystic to cause either Awe, Delirium or Fear in a target. If the phenomenon is successfully manifested the effect is actively resisted using the mental effect rating for difficulty.

| COMMUNICATE | READ THOUGHTS | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|
| Single word | General emotions | 1 |
| Simple sentence | Specific emotion | 2 |
| Normal sentence | Surface thought | 3 |
| Complex sentences | Specific thought | 4 |
| Extensive exchange | Thought history | 5 |
| Complex dialogue | Memory | 6 |

COMMUNICATE: This enables the mystic to convey a message telepathically to a target. Although the message can be overtly emotionally laden to accentuate the message it needs to be in a language the recipient understands to be clearly comprehended. The Mystic can choose to make the link apparent enabling communication between the two. The recipient will be aware of the link and is able to receive as well as send thoughts to the Mystic while the link lasts.

READ THOUGHTS: This enables the Mystic to surreptitiously peruse the emotions, thoughts or memories of a target. The more potent the manifestation, the higher the degree of detail and accuracy. Thought history is limited to the past hour, and reading a memory requires that the player states the specific incident or occurrence the memory should reflect; otherwise, a random memory is generated.



ILLUSORY PAIN (Mind phenomenon example)

| | |
|---|---|
| CHANNELLING TIME: | Instant |
| RANGE: | 15 metres |
| DURATION: | 9 seconds |
| AREA: | 1 Individual |
| EFFECT: | Plausible |

DESCRIPTION: The target thinks she experiences a vicious burst of pain unrelated to any physical cause. If susceptible to the effect the target suffers a -3 penalty to actions.

DIFFICULTY: 14 (+Int mod)

## Mind Battle

A particular phenomenon applicable to the mind sphere is the mental battle, clashes of pure will where combatants seek to dominate and destroy the mind of each other. Only Mystics, esoteric and Daimonic beings can engage in and launch a psychic assault by opening a conduit to another mind.

| PSYCHIC ASSAULT | SANITY LOSS | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 0 |
| +1 | D3 | 1 |
| +2 | D4 | 2 |
| +3 | D6 | 3 |
| +4 | 2D3 | 4 |
| +5 | 2D4 | 5 |
| +6 | 2D6 | 6 |

To engage in a mind battle, one Mystic, esoteric or Daimonic being must successfully establish a psychic conduit to another. This works the same way as composing and manifesting a regular phenomenon and using psychic assault as the effect.

Once a conduit is established the opposing combatant may also instigate a mind battle to gain a bonus during the fight if he or she has access to the mind sphere. No penalties apply to this roll as the open psychic conduit negates any resistance during such an assault. Should a combatant not have access to the mind sphere, or fails to trigger a psychic attack, their regular mystic modifier applies, and their assault will count as potency 0. Every round the defender is allowed to attempt to manifest a psychic assault.

Should the duration of the psychic assault expire while combatants are still engaged in a mind battle, the conduit is severed and, the combatant whose psychic assault expired loses the round, suffering a loss of sanity points.

Once the link is established the Mystics make an opposed roll adding their corresponding Trait, Mysticism and psychic assault modifiers. Whoever scores the highest wins the round and can either bleed a number of Sanity points from the loser – as dictated by the potency of their psychic assault - or break off the conduit, ending the mind battle. The effect of any sanity loss occurs once the conduit has been broken. A losing combatant can force a severing of the conduit, but by doing so instantly and automatically suffers a calamity and 2D6 loss of Sanity points.

*"Cosmic truth is revealed;*
*behold it in all its horrific glory!"*

*– Airahn, Inqabal adherent*

## Void Sphere

This sphere deals with the metaphysical chaos of the ethereal ocean beyond the Cosmos.

| DETECTION | NEGATE | ENHANCE/SUPPRESS | NAVIGATION | PERFORATION | POTENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sensitivity | +1 | +/- 1 | Flow | Minor | 1 |
| Cognisance | +2 | +/- 2 | Drift | Slight | 2 |
| Acuity | +3 | +/- 3 | Float | Moderate | 3 |
| Sentience | +4 | +/- 4 | Cruise | Slit | 4 |
| Sight | +5 | +/- 5 | Guide | Tear | 5 |
| Perception | +6 | +/- 6 | Navigator | Rupture | 6 |

DETECTION: This enables the ability to perceive the presence of Void influence in the Cosmos. Sensitivity: Allows awareness rolls to distinguish of Void emanations, mystic manifestations or other Void related phenomena in an area. Cognisance: Enables an awareness roll to detect and categorise Void emanations, mystic manifestations or other Void-related phenomena in an area. Acuity: Allows awareness rolls to notice and identify Void emanations, mystic manifestations or other Void related phenomena in an area. Sentience: Enables an awareness roll +3 to spot and recognise Void emanations, mystic manifestations or other Void-related phenomena in an area. Sight: Allows the certain exposure and identification of Void emanations, mystic manifestations or other Void-related phenomena in an area. Perception: Enables the certain full sensory discernment of Void emanations, mystical manifestations or other Void-related phenomena in an area.

NEGATE: This allows the Mystic to dissipate a phenomenon or distortion as it is being manifested or occurring by making an opposed roll against the phenomenon or Void potency. The effect cannot revert earlier Void stimulus, only negate developing and current phenomena and distortions. The roll must simultaneously beat its own difficulty and equal or exceed the targeted phenomenon potency or Void distortion potency to neutralise ongoing Void influence.

ENHANCE/SUPPRESS: This increases or decreases any occurring Void effect in an area, whether it is from a calamity, a mystic manifestation, a Void Power and so on. If successful, the effect table result of the Void stimulus is reduced or increased by the potency amount of the enhance/suppress effect.

NAVIGATION: This empowers the affected target to sense and navigate Void currents. Flow enables the character to sense Void currents. Drift gives the character a sense of orientation in the Void allowing him or her to follow Void currents when coming upon them. Float enables the character to identify Void current direction and magnitude and follow it. Cruise allows a character to detect, appraise and seek out Void currents, giving him or her, a distinct sense of location enabling directed navigation. Guide allows the character to detect, assess and seek out Void currents, and sense the direction of even unknown currents. Navigate permits the character to perceive Void currents, intrinsic insight into their destination and the ability to guide vessels in the Void.

PERFORATION: This weakens the Veil causing a momentary emanation of Void stimulus into the Cosmos affecting a designated area or target. A minor perforation generates a random Void emanation (1-3). A slight one causes an arbitrary Void emanation (1-6) in the area or target. A moderate perforation produces a random Void emanation (1-9). Slits, tears and ruptures create fully manifested conduits that can be used to cross into the Void. When a slit perforates the Veil, it causes an immediate Void emanation, affecting anyone within a 2D12 metre radius. Once penetrated a character can dive through the conduit into the Void. A Void tear causes an immediate emanation affecting a 4D12 metre radius and allows huge creatures and objects of equivalent size to pass through. A Veil rupture creates a conduit allowing gargantuan creatures and similarly sized objects to cross the gap between the Cosmos and the Void. The rupture causes an immediate emanation affecting a 6D12 metre radius.

DISSIPATE (Void phenomenon example)

| | |
|---|---|
| CHANNELLING TIME: | Instant |
| RANGE: | 9 metres |
| DURATION: | Instant |
| AREA: | Medium |
| EFFECT: | Negate (+2) |

DESCRIPTION: The caster seeks to dissipate another Mystic's phenomenon as it is manifesting. The caster makes a roll which must both exceed the phenomenon's own difficulty and the opposing phenomenon potency to succeed.

DIFFICULTY: 13 (Opposed +2)



## Calamity

Mystics manifesting phenomena are fundamentally upsetting the equilibrium of existence, forcing chaotic stimulus to emanate into the Cosmos. The very nature of the Void is chaos and change so when a Mystic loses control, strange spectacles occur.
Although these are not necessarily dangerous, they make others aware of the Mystic's presence and certainly inspire fear in unenlightened minds.

A calamity occurs as a result of a critically failed channelling attempt. The player must make a roll on the calamities table, modified by the phenomenon's potency adding one to the severity roll for every 12 points of potency.

If a Calamity occurs in a location naturally influenced or deprived of Void emanations, the resonance of the calamity may either be increased or diminished; causing a modifier to the roll accordingly.



| WORLD | CALAMITY MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| COSMIC WORLD | - 3 |
| BORDER DOMAIN | 0 |
| DEEP WORLD | +3 |

When a calamity occurs, the Mystic can diminish the impact by soaking the flow of Void power with her own body, sustaining physical harm but containing some of the calamity. The character may decrease the calamity roll by losing an amount of Health points equal to the severity reduction. The player must declare the amount before the die is rolled.

A calamity is a consequence roll made with a D12, the severity die and a D6, the effect die. The severity roll is modified by the spell potency, location and any soaking done by the Mystic, the effect die is never modified. Rather than just reading the effect, it is suggested that the Arbiter describes the calamity to the players, giving a more atmospheric and narrative feel to the experience.

### Calamity Table

| SEVERITY | EFFECT | IMPACT |
|---|---|---|
| < 2 | 1-2: | The calamity dissipates before it can properly manifest. No effect. |
| | 3-4: | An eerie chill runs down the spine of the Mystic making him or her feel nervous. |
| | 5-6: | Mild trepidation grips the Mystic. |
| 3 | 1-2: | A distinctly sweet aroma of decay emanates from or around the Mystic. |
| | 3-4: | A chilly breeze stirs the air close to the Mystic, making those nearby feel cold. |
| | 5: | Heat radiates from the Mystic, noticeably increasing the temperature around them. |
| | 6: | The ground around the Mystic trembles slightly. |
| 4 | 1-2: | A strange light seems to glow from the Mystic drawing the attention of those nearby. |
| | 3-4: | An unnatural aura emanates from the Mystic, spooking any nearby animals. Any animal will react with fear [4] towards the Mystic. |
| | 5: | A strange sulphurous stench fills the area making anyone adjacent nauseated. Stamina roll [4] or suffer -1 to actions for D6 minutes. |
| | 6: | An odd rolling echo hangs on any word spoken adjacent to the Mystic, inspiring a sense of trepidation in all who hear it, inducing -1 to all response rolls for D12 minutes. |
| 5 | 1-2: | With a silent scream the Mystic collapses to the ground clutching their head in intense pain. She is stunned and unable to move during the remainder of this round and prone in the following round. |
| | 3-4: | Icy cold mist rises from the ground enveloping all in the immediate area and leaving affected creatures gasping for breath. Anyone within the area must make a Stamina roll [4] or spend D3 rounds trying to catch their breath, suffering a -1 penalty to all actions. |
| | 5: | The ground trembles violently, making anyone adjacent stumble. All within 12 metres must make a Strength roll [4] or fall to the ground. Buildings and structures within range may sustain damage. |
| | 6: | Ghostly tendrils burst from the Mystic making adjacent creatures jump back in fright: Fear roll [4], fear effects 1-4 |

| SEVERITY | EFFECT | IMPACT |
|---|---|---|
| | 1-2: | Strangely frightening hallucinations and distorted visions makes the character dazed and unnerved, rooted to the spot and unable to act for D3 rounds. |
| | 3-4: | Haunting cries echo on the wind; all nearby creatures are spooked and sentient beings within D12 metres must make a Fear roll [4], fear effects 1-6 |
| 6 | 5: | Strong abysmal winds howl while the character rises D6 metres into the air. The character is stupefied and incapable of performing any physical action while suspended. After 3 seconds the character falls to the ground, potentially suffering injury. |
| | 6: | A strange sensation pervades the Mystic as their features blur and change. Reroll one random aspect of the character's appearance (skin, hair or eyes). The character is unable to do anything but stand trembling for the remainder of the round. |
| | 1-2: | A great force suddenly presses the Mystic and any adjacent creatures to the ground. All within D12 metres must make a Strength roll [7] or collapse to the ground for D3 rounds. |
| | 3-4: | A gloom unexpectedly plunges everything within D12 metres into shadowy darkness. Due to confusion and lack of vision all within range suffer a -3 penalty to actions for D3 rounds. |
| 7 | 5: | The appearance of the Mystic takes on a malevolent and eldritch aspect. For D6 rounds the character has a Fear rating of 7, affecting everyone viewing the character. |
| | 6: | Gravity suddenly reverses, lifting anyone within D12 metres slowly into the air for D6 rounds at a rate of 1 metre/round. Affected beings are unable to control their ascent, but may otherwise act normally. When the calamity ends all plummet to the ground, possibly sustaining falling damage. |
| | 1-3: | A deafening thunderclap splits the air and violent winds buffet everyone within the area, whipping up dust, leaves and other small objects, making orientation, movement and actions difficult to perform. All creatures within the area, including the Mystic, must make Strength rolls [7] to move or act and Awareness rolls [7] to see anything beyond a distance of two metres for D3 rounds. |
| 8 | 4-5: | The Mystic suddenly seems hauntingly attractive and enthralling to any who behold her. The character has an Awe rating of 7, affecting everyone viewing the character for D6 rounds. |
| | 6: | The features of the Mystic warp into an intolerably beautiful mask of pure malignancy for just an instant, causing all who behold her to make an immediate Delirium roll [7]. Make a random roll on the Voidmarked appearance table as the character is permanently marked by the calamity. |
| | 1-3: | A murky light shines from the Mystic, gradually spreading in the immediate area. What the light touches twists and changes, animals flee or fall whimpering to the ground, solid objects turn brittle and fragile while plants corrode and decay. All sentient beings must make a Fear roll [9], Fear effects 1-6 |
| 9 | 4-5: | Arms and legs flailing, the Mystic is lifted into the air in obvious agony. A searing crackle and the smell of burnt flesh permeate the area as his features twist and mutate. The mystic suffers D12 damage and must make a random roll on the Voidmarked appearance table as she is permanently marked by the calamity. |
| | 6: | The Mystic falls screaming to the ground as searing pain engulf her body. The Mystic loses D12 Health points and lies prone in shuddering in agony for D3 rounds. |
| | 1-3: | The immediate area surrounding the Mystic takes on a distinctly threatening atmosphere. Ethereal apparitions and haunting whispers fill the air causing dread in those nearby [Fear rating 9]. The area remains affected for D12 hours. |
| 10 | 4-5: | The eyes of the Mystic change into smouldering pits of pure blackness. Unable to see properly the character suffers a -3 penalty to all actions based on vision and has a temporary fear rating for D6 days, affecting all social interaction for the duration. The fear rating is D6 + the character's Presence score. Make a roll on the Voidmarked appearance table (eyes) as the character's eyes are permanently changed by the calamity. |
| | 6: | A Void-rift is torn in the fabric of the Cosmos near the Mystic. Howling winds carry unearthly shrieks from the rift and unnatural shapes can be seen writhing within. All adjacent, including the Mystic, make Fear rolls [10]. The Void rift remains in place for D3 days. |

| SEVERITY | EFFECT | IMPACT |
|---|---|---|
| | 1-3: | Unable to control the emanating power, the Mystic starts screaming incoherently in absolute horror before fainting. The character comes around after D3 rounds having lost a Sanity point in the ordeal. |
| 11 | 4-5: | As the power rips through the character their mind is rattled and frayed, losing touch with their true self and sanity. The character must immediately make a roll on the Delirium table, apply the result and lose one Sanity point once the Delirium effect has worn off. |
| | 6: | For an instant the surrounding area changes appearance into a bizarrely warped and mutated version of itself, shocking all who behold it with a sense of sheer terror. The Mystic and all in the area must make an instant Fear roll [10]. |
| | 1-3: | For a brief moment the character becomes a conduit for the Void, blasting a wave of pure maddening chaos outwards. The character instantly loses D3 Sanity points and collapses unconscious to the ground while adjacent creatures must make an immediate Fear roll [10]. |
| 12 | 4-5: | The natural laws of the world are instantly reversed, turning the world momentarily into an inverted image of itself. Objects which are far away appear close, all colours are inverted, gravity is cancelled, beauty becomes ugliness, solid objects appear ethereal and so forth. After a few seconds the world reverts back to normalcy with a blast of deafening silence. All sentient beings within D12 metres automatically lose a Sanity point. |
| | 6: | The body of the character is desiccated by the sudden Void energies coursing through them. They lose D3 Health points permanently. |
| | 1-3: | A Void rift abruptly manifests in the area, emanating into the surrounding area, warping and mutating all living things. Adjacent creatures must roll once on the Void distortion table. |
| 13 | 4-5: | A Void rift manifests immediately, swallowing the Mystic along with any adjacent creatures. The affected characters and creatures find themselves lost in the Void. |
| | 6: | A blast centred on the character knocks all adjacent creatures off their feet, tossing them around like ragdolls. All affected creatures suffer D12 points of damage and are placed prone D6 metres from their initial position, while the Mystic is left crushed and bleeding on the ground, immediately having been reduced to 0 Health points. The character must make a roll on the crippling injury table. |
| | 1-3: | It seems as if time slows down as ethereal flames caress the character and warping tendrils tear through her while burning her very essence to a cinder. The character loses D3 rankings in Mysticism as the Void seed is burnt from her body. |
| 14 | 4-5: | Seemingly staring into dead space with blind eyes, the character begins screaming at non-existent horrors. The character loses D6 Sanity points permanently, leaving them a maddened wreck. |
| | 6: | Infused with the warping influence of the Void, the character is irrevocably changed into a living statue, likely fusing with a nearby structure or object. The statue, unable to budge, retains its mental faculties and ability to communicate but is otherwise incapacitated. |
| | 1-3: | The released Void energies reverberate within the character, effectively turning them into a conduit for the emanating Void. The character is engulfed by the unconstrained power and in her place a permanent Void rift manifests. Immediate death! |
| 15+ | 4-5: | A Void rift appears next to the character revealing a ghostly abomination peering through. Writhing tendrils of pure chaotic essence shoot out and grabs the character dragging them kicking and screaming into the Void; the character is no more! |
| | 6: | Black flames of pure chaotic essence engulf the character twisting and mutating her beyond recognition, tearing her flesh apart and flaying the very essence of what used to be a person. Instant death! |

*The Eternal City is a one-legged blind man with a single, half burnt-out torch that relies on your tears, your blood, and your sweat, and it doesn't care.*

*- Attributed to the Great Sage of Carcara*



CHAPTER: 5

# Advancement

As characters explore, discover and learn they gain experience, which translates into additional points that can be spent to acquire new skills and abilities or to improve known ones. After each session or adventure, the Game Master awards each character a number of experience points based on the achievements and exploits of the characters. These points can be spent immediately or saved and noted on the character sheet for later use as the character accumulates experience over time.

Players advance their characters' abilities by distributing these experience points to increase skill rankings, gain new abilities and so on, similar to character creation. In addition to costing experience points, some advancement options may have specific requirements that need to be fulfilled.
From a story-telling perspective, players should consider progression that makes sense for the character in terms of what he or she has focused on in the game. For instance, a character who spent an entire session employing diplomacy and subterfuge to infiltrate the court of a sultan would hardly be disposed to gain a ranking in swordsmanship.
While it is generally solely up to the player to choose his or her character advancement, the Arbiter can veto a choice if it is tenuous or upends the game.

There is no formalised upper limit or lowest amount of experience points an Arbiter can or should award characters after a session. The reason for this latitude is that some sessions see a lot of plot development or stretch over a significant period of game-time while other sessions may see very little happening or cover only a short duration in game-time. A standard four-hour game session might typically award characters 3-5 experience points each. In the Arbiter section various points of reference and indicators for assigning experience points are discussed.



## Experience points

Experience points can be utilised in six ways:

- To advance Traits
- Obtain new Talents
- Advance or gain new abilities
- To regain Sanity points
- Galvanising blood inking or grafting
- To obtain a momentary advantage during a session

ADVANCING TRAITS: The process for Trait advancement by spending experience point is in essence the same as character creation, but costs differ. This is to reflect that while Traits are inherent characteristics of a person, they can still be developed with effort. The Trait rankings of a character are gauges of the characters current condition not necessarily of his or her full potential. Muscles can be trained with exercise, wits sharpened by study, looks improved by grooming, and so on. Trait advancement can only be achieved with approval from the Game Master and if the character's actions have reflected such a development during at least one session.
To reflect the substantial effort required to improve inherent characteristics the player must spend points for the entire progression per ranking increase. For instance, advancing from rank three (3) to rank four (4) would cost 10 experience points (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10). Note that any Flaws retained by the character remain even if the Trait ranking does not warrant it after an advancement.

TALENTS: Should a character reach a Trait ranking of 3, 6, 9 or 12 they can acquire a Talent at the cost of three (3) experience points.

ADVANCING OR GAINING ABILITIES: The abilities a character can advance are Backgrounds, Skills and Powers. While the method for ability advancement and spending experience point is fundamentally the same as in character creation, costs are slightly different.
As it is inherently more difficult to achieve mastery than it is to acquire basic familiarity, skills and abilities get progressively more expensive to acquire higher rankings in during character progression. While one point equated one ranking during character creation, the cost of improvement is the same as the ranking the character wants to achieve. This means that to advance from ranking one (1) to ranking two (2) in an ordinary skill, for instance, the player must

| RANKING | MODIFIER | 1+ COST | 3+ COST | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | The character is vaguely familiar with the fundamentals |
| 1 | +1 | 1 | 3 | Can accomplish a few basic feats without instruction |
| 2 | +2 | 2 | 5 | The character knows rudimentary techniques and basic theory |
| 3 | +3 | 3 | 6 | The character has mastered the basic techniques and principles |
| 4 | +4 | 4 | 7 | A solid understanding of the practice of methodology |
| 5 | +5 | 5 | 8 | Comprehensive understanding and thorough technique mastery |
| 6 | +6 | 6 | 9 | Exceptional understanding of the field and masterly technique |
| 7 | +7 | 7 | 10 | The character is an authority figure within the field |
| 8 | +8 | 8 | 11 | The character's mastery of the skill is widely known |
| 9 | +9 | 9 | 12 | People seek out the character for guidance |
| 10 | +10 | 10 | 13 | The character is seen as one of the greats of their time |
| 11 | +11 | 11 | 14 | One of the greatest since the dawn of time |
| 12 | +12 | 12 | 15 | There can be only one |

expend two (2) experience points. Some abilities - such as the Bloodletting power - have a beginning cost of three (3) points and are progressively more expensive, meaning that to advance from ranking one (1) to ranking two (2) in such an ability would cost five (5) experience points. Characters can also acquire new abilities at the same cost as noted in the character creation chapter. It should be noted that characters can never advance more than one ranking per session.

REGAINING SANITY: Characters who have gone through gruelling and horrific incidents may utilise their hard-earned experience to fortify themselves and repress the lurking madness. Players can spend an experience point to recover some the mental stability of the character, immediately regaining D3 Sanity points. This can only be done once per session.

TATTOOS AND GRAFTING: Characters being imbued with blood tattoos or grafting need to spend experience points to galvanise the process. How many points are required is detailed in the Arbiter section.

DRAW UPON EXPERIENCE: As characters get older and wiser they learn how to use their experience in desperate situations or to apply past learnings beyond what their skill-ranking or abilities would usually enable. If a crucial confrontation is about to unfold or the character finds herself in a precarious situation drawing upon all resources and prior learning might give that edge needed to overcome the hardship. To represent this, players can choose to spend a saved experience point to achieve an in-game advantage. Spending an experience point removes the point and allows one of the following options:

- The player may reroll any one dice-roll. The second result is final.
- The player may add a +/-3 modifier to any one roll. This must be declared before making the roll.

Drawing upon experience by spending an experience point can only be done once per incidence/dice-roll.



*Enlightenment is imperative,*
*but take heed of the toll.*

*– Arqos of the Ashen Tower*

# Enlightenment

Enlightenment is an inexplicable awareness and comprehension of the mysteries of the Cosmos, Void and the duality of existence. Enlightenment brings power as it edifies the mind, senses and very being of an individual, allowing characters to see beyond the evident; to navigate, manipulate and even become infused with Void essence; ascending to another state of being.

## ACHIEVING ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment is achieved through epiphany rather than study and although it is a form of character progression it works differently from regular character advancement in that it cannot be acquired by spending experience points. As such there is a distinct difference between a character intellectually knowing about existence as opposed to true comprehension - intuitively realising the fundamental relation between the Cosmos and the Void. As a result, most characters begin play as unenlightened - potentially achieving illumination through their adventures; gradually enhancing their comprehension of existence in all its glory and horror.

The Arbiter alone decides if and when a character reaches and indeed advances in enlightenment. This is always caused by or interwoven with an encounter involving a Void entity or other occurrence where the Void somehow affects the character.

Enlightenment is caused by an intuitive sense of existence and is therefore linked to the Awareness Trait. An Awareness score of at least three is required for a character to achieve ranks in enlightenment unless they have a Homeworld benefit. Characters may attain enlightenment rankings equalling double their Awareness bonus and of a Tier equal to their Awareness modifier. Innate enlightenment achieved from homeworld benefits does not count against the Awareness induced enlightenment potential.

| AWARENESS | MAXIMUM # | OBTAINABLE TIER |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 6 | 6 | 3 |
| 7 | 8 | 4 |
| 8 | 10 | 5 |
| 9 | 12 | 6 |
| 10 | 14 | 6 |
| 11 | 16 | 6 |
| 12 | 18 | 6 |

## ASCENSION & BENEFITS

Characters attain new capabilities or benefits for each enlightenment ranking they achieve to simulate the empowerment of enlightenment: This is called Ascension.

Each ascension bestows a benefit linked to how reality is perceived and ultimately how it is manipulated and controlled; allowing characters to sense, navigate and even utilise the inherent qualities of the Void. The first ascension benefit of enlightenment is always Void sensitivity; giving the character a rudimentary realisation and perception of the duality of existence.

Once a character has ascended to become Void-sensitive the player can choose - or roll randomly if determined by the Arbiter - which ascensions to obtain depending on the character's enlightenment. Ascension is divided into tiers. Which tiers are available to a character depends on his or her enlightenment ranking and Awareness score as shown in the table. Players may obtain one or several ascension benefits from the same tier if they so wish. Some ascensions such Void changeling must be obtain progressively.

## EMPLOYING ASCENSION

While some benefits, such as Void sensitivity, are always in effect, others require prompting, which takes one action round (3 seconds) unless the description states otherwise. Ascension benefits may be utilised as many times per day as the character's total Enlightenment ranking unless otherwise stated in the description.
If a character ever exceeds the given time-limit of a benefit or tries to use it more than their Enlightenment ranking indicates, they must roll on the Void Distortion table for each subsequent use or time limit surpassing. (See Void Distortion) Benefits are not cumulative and if two grant bonuses to the same area only the highest modifier applies.



| TIER | ASCENSION | BENEFIT |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | Void sensitivity | Void detection |
| 1 | Void cognisance | Void detection |
| 1 | Void drift | Void navigation |
| 2 | Void acuity | Void detection |
| 2 | Void changeling, lesser | Void power |
| 2 | Void erudite | Void navigation |
| 2 | Void float | Void navigation |
| 2 | Void halo, lesser | Void power |
| 2 | Void medium | Void power |
| 3 | Void diviner | Void power |
| 3 | Void gleam | Void influence |
| 3 | Void faring | Void navigation |
| 3 | Void sentience | Void detection |
| 4 | Veil slit | Void perforation |
| 4 | Void attunement | Void power |
| 4 | Void changeling | Void power |
| 4 | Void guide | Void navigation |
| 4 | Void halo | Void power |
| 4 | Void sight | Void detection |
| 4 | Void suppression | Void influence |
| 4 | Void tolerance | Void influence |
| 5 | Veil tear | Void perforation |
| 5 | Void acquiescence | Void influence |
| 5 | Void changeling, greater | Void power |
| 5 | Void halo, greater | Void power |
| 5 | Void navigator | Void navigation |
| 6 | Veil rupture | Void perforation |
| 6 | Void seer | Void power |
| 6 | Void scion | Void influence |

## Ascension descriptions

VOID SENSITIVITY (TIER 0): The primary benefit of enlightenment is understanding the metaphysical composition of existence; this gives the ability to sense where the Veil of the Cosmos is thin and where the chaos of the Void emanates into mundane reality. The character is also able to verify observations prompted by Void influence as such rather than just arbitrary occurrences.
BENEFIT: Void sensitivity allows characters to detect - but not determine any extent or exact nature of - Void emanations, mystic manifestations or other Void related phenomena up to a range of her Awareness score x3 in metres. An awareness roll – difficulty determined by Arbiter or circumstances - is required for the character to detect the influence.

VOID COGNISANCE (TIER 1): The character has heightened awareness and sensibility of the Void.
BENEFIT: He or she can sense Void emanations within a distance equalling his or her Awareness score x10 metres. Although the character is unable to tell the nature of the Void presence without directly observing it, they can sense its potency and general direction. If the Void influence is observable, a successful awareness roll can reveal its nature to the character. An awareness roll – difficulty determined by Arbiter or circumstances - is required for the character to detect the influence.

VOID DRIFT (TIER 1): The character can feel the currents of the Void flowing towards areas where the Veil is perforated when traversing the unreality between worlds.
BENEFIT: Although unable to appraise the destination, magnitude or flow of the currents the character has a sense of orientation in the Void and can follow Void currents when coming upon them. This allows them the ability to steer a direction somewhat rather than drifting aimlessly in the Void. This ability is fundamental to Void navigation. See the Void travel chapter.

VOID ACUITY (TIER 2): The character is able to sense Void influence or the lack thereof as if it was ordinarily observable.
BENEFIT: Within the normal range of the character's senses he or she may detect Void emanation, mystic manifestation or other Void related phenomena. Once detected the character can appraise features of the influence as if it was a normal perceptible phenomenon, including potency and substance. An awareness roll - difficulty determined by Arbiter or circumstances - is required for the character to detect the influence. Characters gain +1 all attempts to detect and find Veiled, suppressed or hidden perforations, influences and powers.

VOID CHANGELING, LESSER (TIER 2): The character is conscious of the distorting impact on form and matter by the Void and is able to direct and exploit this to alter his or her superficial appearance such as the colour of your skin, eyes, hair and - to a lesser degree - physical form, such as facial features.
BENEFIT: The character can alter appearance for short periods; up to five minutes per Enlightenment ranking. While superficial features may be changed the character retains all original Traits, Attributes and Abilities regardless of the form assumed.

VOID ERUDITE (TIER 2): The Void is not empty as the name implies; far from it - and the diviner know the entities that inhabit the endless depths.
BENEFIT: In case a Void entity is encountered the character may make an Awareness roll (Difficulty is determined by Arbiter according to the rarity of the denizen) and adds their ranking to see if they identify the denizen. If the roll is successful, the creature is known, and the Arbiter informs the player of the general facts regarding nature, demeanour and abilities of the denizen.

VOID FLOAT (TIER 2): Not only can the character feel the currents of the Void, but they are able to identify their magnitude and their direction.
BENEFIT: This ability allows the character to steer their direction actively when traversing the Void. See the Void travel chapter.

VOID HALO, LESSER (TIER 2): A halo glows above or around the head of the character signifying his ascent while emanating an almost palpable aura.
BENEFIT: The character possesses an Awe rating of 6 affecting sentient Cosmic species, and benefits from a +1 modifier to response rolls from adjacent individuals.

VOID MEDIUM (TIER 2): The Void seed is awakened within the character, allowing them to channel influence from the Void as a mystic.
BENEFIT: The character is able to manifest mystic phenomena as if ranking 1 of the Path of Void. If the character is already versed in the Path of Void, he or she may manifest phenomena one step higher than his or her ranking usually permits.

VOID DIVINER (TIER 3): The Void is alive in the character, letting them manifest phenomena similarly to a mystic.
BENEFIT: The character may choose a mysticism path and attain a ranking of one (1) in it. If the character is already versed in mysticism, he or she may increase the ranking of a path by one (1).

VOID FARING (TIER 3): The character can detect, appraise and seek out Void currents, giving him or her a distinct sense of location, enabling directed navigation.
BENEFIT: The character can memorise and later locate 3 known currents and will gain a +1 modifier when otherwise navigating the Void. See the Void travel chapter.

VOID GLEAM (TIER 3): Void sensitive beings are able to perceive the potency or lack thereof from others utilising or possessing Void abilities or powers. This ability allows the character to enhance or suppress her Void potency, making herself seem barren or massively infused when using Void-related powers or abilities.
BENEFIT: When channelling or utilising a Void power the character can dim the potency to half or enhance it to appear double what it really is to prevent Void sensitive beings discerning the true potency.

VOID SENTIENCE (TIER 3): The character is able to sense Void presence beyond the scope of his or her normal senses.
BENEFIT: The character can detect any Void presence up to a day's travel away per Awareness modifier. In addition to the abilities conferred from Void Acuity, the character gains a +3 modifier to locate Void perforations and rifts as well as a +1 modifier to navigate when travelling the Void. On a successful roll, the character can single out specific presences within the detectable area.



*Void rupture*

VEIL SLIT (TIER 4): The character is able to create a small, temporary perforation in the Veil between the Void and the Cosmos. This allows the Void to emanate into the Cosmos, altering the reality in the vicinity.
BENEFIT: The character slits the Veil, weakening and perforating it to create a momentary conduit between Void and Cosmos. This requires the full concentration of the character for 3D6 rounds in a Cosmic world and 2D3 rounds in a border domain. The character can deduct their Awareness modifier from the time. The conduit can be kept open for a number of rounds equal to the character's Willpower score if the character keeps concentration. When the character perforates the Veil, it causes an immediate Void emanation effect to occur (see Void chapter), affecting anyone within a D12 metre radius. Once the Veil is perforated, the character can dive through the conduit into the Void. Make a new roll and add a further D12 metres to the radius per round the conduit is kept open.

VOID ATTUNEMENT (TIER 4): The character has become attuned to the Void and has distinct mindfulness of its influence.
BENEFIT: If a Mystic the character is able to manifest phenomena as if one ranking higher than his or her actual sphere ranking. If the character is not a Mystic, he or she is endowed with one of the following esoteric Attributes: Daimonic tongue, Daimonic sense or true sight.

VOID CHANGELING (TIER 4): Adept at harnessing and applying the distorting effects of the Void to his or her own flesh, the character is able to alter his or her physical presence profoundly.
BENEFIT: The character can change shape and adjust his or her size by one category. The character may boost or diminish any physical Traits - including presence - by up to one and may add up to three general Attributes for the extent of the change. The change may last up to ten minutes per Enlightenment ranking.

VOID GUIDE (TIER 4): Not only can the character detect, appraise and seek out Void currents, but they can sense the direction of even unknown currents.
BENEFIT: The character can memorise and locate 6 known currents and gains a +3 modifier when otherwise navigating the Void. See the Void travel chapter.

VOID HALO (TIER 4): The character's ascension is evident by the glowing halo above or around his or her head. The radiant halo exudes authority and power, causing most adjacent beings to react with trepidation or admiration towards the character.
BENEFIT: The character may choose between causing Awe or Fear [9] or completely extinguish both at will, but only one may be in effect at any given time.

VOID SIGHT (TIER 4): Similar to Void sentience, the character is able to perceive Void presence rather than merely sense it. Unlike sensitivity, the character can distinguish and broadly recognise the influence of the Void emanation.
BENEFIT: In addition to the capabilities granted from Void sentience the character gains a +6 modifier to locate Void perforations and rifts as well as a +3 modifier to navigate when travelling the Void. The character can single out specific presences within the detectable area at will.

VOID SUPPRESSION (TIER 4): The character can suppress the effects of the Void upon the Cosmos.
BENEFIT: By concentrating the character diminishes the impact of a calamity or Void influence - including manifestations - occurring within a range equal to his or her Awareness score in metres. The suppression requires an opposed roll (Enlightenment ranking + Willpower modifier) against the influence to succeed. If it is a calamity, the roll must exceed the effect roll, if a mystic phenomenon it must exceed the mystics channelling roll.

VOID TOLERANCE (TIER 4): Awareness and attunement make the character less susceptible to the influence of the Void.
BENEFIT: The player may re-roll Void effects if the character is subjected to calamity or Void distortion and can choose which roll counts.

VEIL TEAR (TIER 5): As with the Veil slit the character is able to create a temporary perforation in the Veil, but of larger proportions. This tear causes the Void to emanate into the Cosmos allows for crossing into the Void.
BENEFIT: The character tears the Veil, creating a transitory conduit. This requires the full concentration of the character and takes 3D12 rounds in a Cosmic world and 2D6 rounds in a border domain. The character can subtract his or her Awareness modifier from this period. The conduit is kept open for a number of rounds equal to the character's Willpower score while they concentrate. When the character perforates the Veil, it causes an immediate Void emanation effect to occur, affecting a 3D12 metre radius. For each round the conduit remains open, add a further D12 metre to the radius. The Veil tear allows huge creatures and objects of similar size to pass through.

VOID ACQUIESCENCE (TIER 5): The character accepts the Void and is as much at home here as in the everyday reality of the Cosmos.
BENEFIT: The character may add a +3 modifier to resist Void distortions and channelled phenomena directed at him or her. If the character causes a calamity, they may contain up to 3 degrees of the effect without suffering Health loss (see Calamities).

VOID CHANGELING, GREATER (TIER 5): The character realises that the flesh is merely mouldable matter; physicality is evanescent for the ascended mind. As such, size and physical appearance hold little sway over the character, who can completely alter shape for prolonged periods.
BENEFIT: The character can change shape and adjust his or her size by two categories. The character may boost or diminish any physical Traits - including presence - by up to three and may acquire any general Attributes for the duration of the change. The change may last up to fifteen minutes per Enlightenment ranking.

VOID HALO, GREATER (TIER 5): The character is awash with the radiant glow of her halo. The character is clearly ascended, conveying a mesmerising aura on those they choose to fix their gaze on.
BENEFIT: In addition to the benefits provided by the Void halo the character can target specific individuals rather than all in his or her vicinity. The subject must be within eyesight and is affected immediately by either Awe or Fear [12].

VOID NAVIGATOR (TIER 5): Navigation permits the character to perceive, appraise and seek out Void currents, and possess intrinsic insight into what their destination might be. BENEFIT: The character can guide vessels, can memorise and locate 12 known currents and gains a +6 modifier when navigating the Void. See the Void travel chapter.



VEIL RUPTURE (TIER 6): The character can make a substantial rupture in the Veil between the Cosmos and Void.
BENEFIT: The character creates a transitory conduit allowing gargantuan creatures and massive vessels to pass the gap between the Cosmos and the Void. This requires the character's full attention and takes 6D12 rounds in a Cosmic world or 4D6 rounds in a border domain. The character can deduct his or her Awareness modifier from this period. The conduit is open for a number of rounds equal to the character's Willpower score as long as the character keeps concentration. When the character ruptures the Veil, it causes an immediate Void emanation, affecting a 6D12 metre radius. For each round the conduit remains open add a further 2D12 metres to the radius.

VOID SEER (TIER 6): This power allows a character to perceive the true nature of existence, seeing the transcending and emanating Void and those who are touched by it. A character employing this power may immediately sense and recognise any Void presence, rift or distortion in her near surroundings, she will also have a higher comprehension of the currents and flows of the Void as well as identify individuals who are touched extensively by the Void, such as the Voidmarked.
BENEFIT: Voidmarked individuals are noticeable by a slight glow only visible to the seer. When traversing the Void, they can discern currents, allowing improved accuracy when navigating, so adding +1 to Void navigation rolls. All Void rifts, conduits and perforations within viewing distance are clearly visible to the character. They can detect the Void seed in anyone within sight, easily revealing individuals with Void powers, mystic powers or who have suffered Void distortion or recently used a Void conduit.

VOID SCION (TIER 6): Exalted or tainted, ascended or warped; many descriptions fit these ascended beings. The chaotic essence emanates from these scions of the supranatural, and they have an affinity for the Void and the influences that derive from this. Void scions are not affected by the transformative powers as normal beings as the Void is an integral part of their essence; they do not suffer the detrimental effects of Void travelling or calamities as Cosmic species are prone to do. Scions know well the frighteningly alien vibrancy emanating from the Void and the ghostly abominations which inhabit the chaotic wastes within the oblivion, but they do not share the same fear of these things like most others, Cosmic or esoteric.
BENEFIT: If subject to Void distortion or calamity the character may choose if he or she is affected, or compensate and remain unchanged. Void scions gain +3 to resist all fear tests related to Void entities.

*"It is said that when you look into the eyes of a Void Scion, all you see are timeless and bleak bottomless depths reflected back at you."*

# Wastah

The struggle for survival and ultimately a rise to power requires influence and mandate. Mankind is on the verge of extinction and desperately needs to build internal unity and influence among other sentient species to strengthen their position and establish bases of power.

Wastah refers to a character's network of connections, knowing people in the right places and having the clout to make these exert their authority on your behalf. Wastah signifies prestige and grants overt influence as well as social advantages, allowing characters to rise above their station and ascend the pinnacles of power. Wastah supercedes caste and status, functioning on a level that allows characters influence beyond their caste.

## GAINING WASTAH

Gaining Wastah is story-driven, prompted by the characters' exploits and activities and awarded by the Arbiter when a character has beholden an individual or group of power. As with enlightenment, Wastah is grounded in tiers, each tier adding further authority, mandate and societal prominence to a character.
While somewhat influenced by a character's background caste, connections, mentors and so on the rise in Wastah is ultimately story-driven. Based on this the Arbiter decides if and when a character advance in Wastah. A Wastah score of zero indicates that the character has no social clout whatsoever, whereas a high score means the character is exceptionally influential.



## APPLYING WASTAH

Each ranking in Wastah carries an intrinsic benefit to the character, such as getting a +1 reaction modifier when dealing with a particular species or faction, enclave or religious order and so on. Characters can obtain several tiers of Wastah with the same group or entity and gain cumulative benefits.

However, players can also choose to use their influence to directly affect a situation to the character's advantage during game-sessions. This means that the character calls in favours to achieve a goal, at the cost of depleting some of the influence he or she has. The player must declare that she uses her influence in this way and then remove a Wastah point - and associated bonus - from her character sheet.

This use of Wastah can achieve one of the below effects, disregarding caste and status:

- Force one or several people of lower Wastah to comply with a request or command
- Persuade one or several people of higher Wastah to bestow preferential treatment
- Gain access to restricted or privileged facilities, information or people
- Obtain backing, funding or assistance to further an agenda or achievement

## WASTAH TIER BENEFITS

The Arbiter determines which specific benefit Wastah grants a character based on the circumstances and interaction, but it is understood that a character with Wastah is well-known and respected by the entity or group in question and therefore generally treated favourably, gaining a +1 modifier to any interaction or request requiring a roll to determine the outcome. A character with multiple tiers of Wastah towards a specific group gains a +1 modifier per tier.

*Din was a pleasure slave...*

*His subsistence evolved around pleasing the Emiress and her guests. She was decadent and of a deviant disposition, the indulgences of her house famed even beyond Llyhn.*

*Din's life was servitude; pampering unimaginably debauched urges.*

*On quiet mornings before the palace awoke, his weary mind would wander and dream... Dream about that wicked moan turning into a choked gurgle as his hands squeezed tightly around her delicate neck.*
*But every morning as the bells heralded dawn, the hopes evaporated as dew in sunlight...*

*Din was a pleasure slave!*







CHAPTER:

# Arbiter Section

By now the essential components and mechanisms used to play the Black Void role-playing game have been introduced, and it is time to look into how the Arbiter runs the game and creates fantastical, peculiar and disturbing scenarios for the players to partake in.

It is important for Arbiters to note that rules and setting are very much a framework, rather than a rigid and detailed set of commandments and stories. Participants - and particularly the Arbiter - are not only invited to introduce their own ideas into the game, but they are implored to do so. The reason for this is to keep everything open for the stories you want to tell and participate in - and that this approach enriches the environment and stories while giving everyone involved a sense of belonging by being active contributors. Input should - of course - be approved by the Arbiter and make sense for the character's background, but this is seldom a problem for the imaginative Arbiter.

## How to run games

The Arbiter is in control of all aspects of the game, establishing and outlining the plot and events for the players to explore and to lead their characters through. Their task is to be the moderator and mediator, setting the framework, determining the encounters, locations and ambience as well as portray all the non-player characters (NPC's), adversaries and antagonists the characters come across.

Since the Arbiter needs to manage everything going on in the game, it is important that they have a firm grasp of the rules and mechanics, an imaginative mind, a knack for telling stories and building drama, a good sense of fair play and an eye for detail.

Additionally, it can be immensely beneficial to gather the players for a pre-game session to align expectations and determine which type of game, theme and possibly genre they are most interested in. Once the players have expressed their wishes, the Arbiter probably has a much clearer idea of which direction the story and plot could go and which elements to focus on.

Once expectations are aligned the players can begin creating their characters and possibly consider backstories that are compatible and in line with the prior discussion, establishing a cohesive starting point for the game.

## Principles of arbitrating

There are a few guidelines that should be considered when taking up the Arbiter mantle.

### BE FAIR

The main focus of the game is communal story-telling, and as the decisive facilitator the Arbiter should be impartial towards the players, making sure that challenges, opportunities and rulings are balanced. When Arbiters and players put time, effort and significance into a game, it is only right that this investment is treated with respect and fairness.

Although the rules cover much there are always instances where the Arbiter has to make a rule call, and in such cases, fairness is essential, not only among the players but also between players and Arbiter. When players are feeling unfairly treated it causes a bad mood, lost interest and ultimately distrust toward the Arbiter.

The Arbiter is obliged to retain the confidence and trust of the players that rulings are fair and impartial. If disagreement about a ruling arises discuss it openly and explain the reasons for the decision. Often, merely knowing the motives is enough to restore trust in the Arbiter, whether or not the player agrees with the ruling.

### DON'T SAY NO

While saying no to an outrageous or bizarre idea can be the obvious and easy choice, but it is also irking and possibly demotivating for players. Rather than dismissing suggestions or proposed actions go with it but perhaps point out potential disastrous outcomes for the character - if it might occur to the character. Keep in mind that the Arbiter has knowledge that the players - and obviously characters - do not, so an action which could be obviously disastrous from the Arbiter's point of view might seem plausible to a player or character.

That being said, actions have consequences, and the Arbiter should not be afraid to employ these if the characters' activities warrant it. The consequences should obviously be plausible, proportional outcomes and repercussions consistent with the world and plot. The effect might not be immediate - consequences haunting a character long after the deed are excellent story-enhancers.

### THE LAW

The Arbiter has the final say on rule matters. When in doubt it is the Arbiter who decides how a rule should be interpreted and applied. Some players like to debate rules

and question everything, taking precious time away from the game. This should not be tolerated, and Arbiters are entirely within their rights to lay down the law and make a ruling.

### BE INCLUSIVE

The best games occur when Arbiters listen to and take cues from their players. Most players are founts of creativity and Arbiters using this not only enable ownership for the players but often gets them further invested in the setting and produce a more diverse and inspiring story because of it. The character sheet includes goals and motivation points for this very reason.

The Arbiter who can intertwine or base their plots around the motivations of the characters is set for a great game. Letting players define parts of the setting in their backstory (locations the Arbiter can use) or characterise his or her contacts, allies and so on (NPC's for the Arbiter to utilise) are notable examples.

### STORY IMMERSION

Two types of immersion are key in role-playing games, character association and narrative captivation.

Everyone the characters come across is played by the Arbiter. What brings a story to life more than where the characters are going and what they are doing, is making the people, beings and creatures they encounter animated and memorable. The Arbiter does not have to perform great feats of acting or making funny voices for every NPC, quite often it is little things and quirky means that differentiate one NPC from another in the players' minds. Subtle body language, raising or lowering the voice, using particular words or phrases or denoting a particular appearance or trinket possessed by the NPC are all little mannerisms and points the Arbiter can easily use to create associations in the players' minds and awaken an NPC's personality instead of invoking a faceless mannequin.

The Black Void involves characters encountering otherworldly cultures and lifeforms. As such Arbiters can benefit greatly from incorporating this aspect by utilising the behaviour noted for the various species when enacting NPC's to give that extra spice of outlandishness to the setting.

Arbiters describing the world the characters explore rouses mental images and make the story tangible for the players. There is a method to describing locations and occurrences in a meaningful way without resorting to longwinded explanations. While using adjectives, superlatives and interesting phrasing is effective utilising other senses than sight takes it to another level. Describing smells, sounds and other sensations is a very evocative means enabling the Arbiter to convey resonant atmosphere and ambience with very few words.

### SPINNING RULES INTO STORY

One of the critical elements to role-playing is of course story-telling, making the rules contribute to that story by staging them rather than merely having them as instructions and calculations.

One way an Arbiter can do that is by relating the various elements of the rules as part of his or her narration, for instance, environmental or social factors, two key elements in the Black Void.

For example, a physical action occurring during a monsoon is very likely to be affected. The Arbiter can describe how the torrential rain makes it difficult for the character to hold on the rope she is using to scale a wall rather than just stating that she has a -1 penalty to her action roll because it rains. It is much more intense when the Arbiter describes what happens narratively or indeed let the player do so. Rather than merely stating "your action fails" instead narrate "as you reach the top of the wall your hand slips on the wet rope, and you fall to the ground with a thump." The point is to present the rules as story elements rather than simple calculation modifiers; letting the rule-foundations breathe life into the story.

Another point is for the Arbiter to make role-playing efforts impact the dice rolls. Rewarding creative ideas and in-character decisions, actions or dialogues by granting modifiers or additional possibilities is a gratifying way to get players invested in the story and their characters.



# Applying the Rules

One of the essential tasks for Arbiters is managing events and encounters. This entails applying the rules as the players declare actions, whether dice need to be rolled or not, deciding difficulties and resolving actions.

### When are dice-rolls required?

While rolling dice to determine success or failure of the characters' efforts is an inherent part of most role-playing games, it is not applicable in all situations.

As written in the rules chapter an action roll is prompted when a character attempts to perform a task or activity where the outcome is uncertain, which is up to the Arbiter to determine in any given situation. Characters performing routine tasks and actions of little consequence do not require dice-rolls, letting the Arbiter simply state what happens as a result is of the character's action.

However, some tasks might be routine for one character but not another. A character with the survival skill would not need to make a roll to find firewood in a damp forest for instance, as this is integral to being proficient in wilderness living. A character without this skill, however, would not possess this competence and would be required to make a dice roll to see if they were able to find suitable firewood.

When determining such situations Arbiters should also keep in mind whether or not a roll would add excitement or be pertinent to the situation and overall game. In the above example, it might be completely irrelevant whether the characters manage to get a fire going denoting that no dice-roll is required. However, if they had to create a fire for rescuers to notice within a specified time-limit, there are stakes, which would prompt a dice-roll.

## Which type of action

There are a variety of action rolls in the game: basic, standard, resisted, sequential, opposed and cooperative. While most of these are fairly self-explanatory, the guidelines below can assist Arbiters in simplifying when the types that might seem similar should be employed.

### Basic actions

These actions are often involuntary for the characters, and as such are regularly employed upon the Arbiter's request. For instance, the characters are trudging along in the jungles around Llyhn unaware that they are being stalked. While none of them says that they want to be alert or vigilant, the Arbiter decides that they may have a chance of noticing that something is shadowing them and asks them to make a basic Awareness roll to determine whether they notice or not.

In this case, it is a basic roll founded solely on their innate ability to notice things in their surroundings. However, had one of the players said that her character was scouting or otherwise actively being attentive she would have been allowed an observation roll, using her skill ranking. Basic actions are also used if no conceivable ability applies to a roll. An action necessitating a skill or other ability can never be resolved as a basic action.

### Standard actions

Most actions initiated by the players are standard actions. If the Arbiter is unsure of whether a roll falls within this category, simply determine whether the specific action is associated with an ability such as a skill or power and if the answer is yes, it should be resolved as a standard action.

### Resisted actions

To determine whether an action is resisted or opposed the Arbiter should consider whether the target passively or actively obstructs the action. If the target is passively and innately obstructing the act, it is a resisted action. An NPC trying to withstand an interrogation is an example of passive resistance.

### Opposed actions

Contrary to resisted actions, opposed actions are employed when the involved parties are actively and deliberately trying to go up against each other. The critical difference lies in whether the target is actively trying to achieve a contrary result. If this is the case, an action is opposed, and both participants roll. Arm-wrestling and negotiations are instances of opposed actions.



## Action Resolving

Once the Arbiter has decided that a dice-roll is required he or she must determine what the roll difficulty should be, and which other factors might influence the roll. While some rolls have fixed difficulties, others are entirely up to the Arbiter. The action difficulty table is a generic interpretation of difficulties, giving the Arbiter a frame of reference for setting difficulties. While the Arbiter is not obligated to tell players how difficult a task is - and perhaps should not, to maintain suspense - he or she can comfortably do so for mundane actions and encounters the players come across.



how she stumbles over a loose rock drawing their attention, rather than merely stating that the character succeeds or fails, induces engagement and immersion. In the end, this is more fun for the Arbiter and make players care about what happens to their characters.

| DESIGNATION | DIFFICULTY RATING | EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| EASY | 4+ | Baiting a riled-up Talath to charge into an ambush |
| AVERAGE | 7+ | Scaling a roughly built palace wall |
| CHALLENGING | 10+ | Breaking down an ordinary wooden door |
| DEMANDING | 13+ | Searching a library for one particular clay tablet |
| HARD | 16+ | Bribing a tithe collector |
| VERY HARD | 19+ | Stalking a vigilant Mardkhora in its natural habitat |
| DAUNTING | 22+ | Appeasing an incensed Anunnaki |
| IMPOSSIBLE | 25+ | Withstanding the horrors of the Mindless Ghostly Abominations |

### ACTION CONSEQUENCES

Declaring and resolving actions is explained in the rules section, and while the outcome of many actions is a simple question of success or failure. Some are determined by a roll on one of the various effect tables. Others are established entirely by the Arbiter, in line with what the character was trying to achieve and what the story arc might dictate. For instance, a character questioning a beggar about a killing would need to be informed what the beggar might conceivably have seen and remembered in compliance with a successful inquiry action.

When resolving actions, successful action-rolls do not always entail the character achieving his or her intended goal. For instance, a group of characters decide to search for tracks in a given area. The Arbiter knows that there are no tracks to be found but cannot - and indeed should not - say this. The Arbiter now has several options; he can either let all search-rolls fail since there are no tracks, but without divulging this info to the characters. Or he can set a difficulty rating which will - if achieved - let the characters discover that there are no relevant tracks to find.
The characters are asked to make their search rolls, without the Arbiter revealing the difficulty rating. The Arbiter has decided that the search has a difficulty rating of 10. Failed rolls disclose that the characters were unable to find any tracks. Success would not reveal any tracks either, but the Arbiter would inform the characters there are no tracks to be located in this area, giving them certainty that no further efforts would reveal anything.

Whether an action is successful or failed, it is the prerogative of the Arbiter to explain the consequence. Vividly describing how a character manages to stealthily dodge in and out of shadows to sneak by a vigilant squad of Jinassar or adversely

### EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS

When an exceptional success is achieved not only does the character accomplish what he or she set out to but does so in a spectacular way, adding a further benefit to the achievement. In some cases - such as combat - the effect of exceptional success is resolved by tables designating the specific benefits achieved. For regular actions, it is up to the Arbiter to contrive which added benefit is applied to a given action. While ingenuity is preferred to keep the players excited, a generic list of benefits is provided as a reference.

| EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS BENEFIT REFERENCE | |
|---|---|
| GENERIC | The task is accomplished in half the designated time \| The consequence is enhanced |
| PHYSICAL | The character is able to perform a further action \| A regular drawback from the act - for instance fatigue - is negated |
| CRAFTING | The produced item is of a higher quality \| Production costs are reduced \| More goods than expected are produced |
| RESEARCH | Additional information is uncovered \| Material about another pertinent topic is revealed |
| SOCIAL | The action prompts a favour \| The interaction triggers an affiliation \| An expense is reduced or annulled |

### CRITICAL FAILURE

When a critical failure occurs, it is generally meant to create tension, provide an additional challenge or to enhance the peril of the characters; not ruin the game. Therefore, it is vital that Arbiters apply critical failure consequences with consideration. In Mysticism, for instance, the calamity table provides a range of critical failure consequences that add flavour and cater to the ambience of the setting while causing unfavourable incidents. Only the most severe kills or cripples the character.

Also, critical failures do not necessarily afflict the perpetrator directly or only! They often cause an overall surge in danger or drama affecting all the characters involved in an encounter equally. An example could be that a character critically misses her footing, falls and catches on a rope attached to a bell. While she suffers no harm the now clanging bell awakens the slumbering palace guards and the chase is on! When contriving critical failure consequences, Arbiters should try to avoid clichés and make sure that the incident is troubling but ultimately adds to the enjoyment of the game.

| CRITICAL FAILURE CONSEQUENCE REFERENCE | |
|---|---|
| GENERIC | The failure causes a location hazard \| the failure draws unwanted attention |
| PHYSICAL | The character is temporarily unable to perform any actions \| A regular drawback from the act - for instance fatigue - is doubled |
| CRAFTING | The production capability is damaged \| An accident occurs - causing injury |
| SOCIAL | The failure causes an embarrassing spectacle \| The failure triggers hostility \| An expense is doubled or instigated |



## SIZES & BULK

In most aspects of the game precisely calculating sizes and weight is needless and approximation is sufficient. However, in some instances - when lifting heavy objects - knowing the bulk of an object or load is needed. Bulk determines the Strength score necessary for carrying an object without suffering penalties when performing physical actions. For every point a character does not meet the required strength score he or she receives a -1 penalty to movement and physical actions requiring full mobility. Bulk also affects Stamina or Strength based actions where the wearers overall physique is affected, for instance running. If this penalty is higher than the character's Strength score, he or she is unable to lift the load.

Not all items and objects have bulk scores, as some are too small or lightweight. For weighty items with no noted score common sense should be applied. If multiple items with a bulk score are carried, the combined score is used. The weight and therefore bulk of objects differ significantly depending on their material and composition. The table provides a general reference and guideline for Arbiters to determine size category and bulk for objects.

Additionally, light objects made from flimsy materials typically have one less bulk than noted in the table, while heavy objects made from stone or metals characteristically add one to the score and heavy solid objects add two or more. For instance, Ashar has three "little" piles of scribes' materials he needs to carry - one is papyrus scrolls, the next is clay tablets and the last is stone tablets. Accordingly, the papyrus scrolls have a bulk of 0, the clay tablets a bulk of 1 and the stone tablets a bulk of 2.

| SIZES | CREATURE HEIGHT | OBJECT SIZE* | CUBITS | BULK |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| TINY | Up to 25 cm | Up to 25 cm | < 0.5 | 0 |
| LITTLE | 25 - 50 cm | < 50 cm | < 1 | 1 |
| SMALL | 50 - 100 cm | < 100 cm | < 2 | 3 |
| AVERAGE/MEDIUM | 1 - 2 metres | < 2 metres | < 4 | 5 |
| LARGE | 2 - 4 metres | < 4 metres | < 8 | 7 |
| HUGE | 4 - 6 metres | < 6 metres | < 12 | 9 |
| GIANT | 6 - 8 metres | < 8 metres | < 16 | 11 |
| GARGANTUAN | 8 - 12 metres | < 12 metres | < 24 | 13 |
| COLOSSAL | 12+ | 12+ | 24+ | 15+ |

**Height/length/diameter*

# Powers

There are a variety of powers that characters and NPC's can employ in the game. This section provides Arbiters with guidelines and suggestions about how to deal with powers - especially abstruse areas without clearly defined effects. It also explains the Powers Blood Inking and Grafting, which characters cannot themselves obtain but only gain access to by commissioning esoteric beings.
While many powers in the game are relatively simple and produce set effects, others require that the Arbiter make contingent judgements, provide conditional information or enact NPC responses to suit the whims of the players. The various tables and references in the Powers chapter should give Arbiters a good foundation for handling such while the following provides some additional tools Arbiters can use.

## Sacrificial Divination

As characters use or hire ritualists to perform sacrificial divination, they are looking for answers that only the Arbiter can provide. The Arbiter should be strict about which queries characters can expect answers to depending on the proficiency of the practitioner. Should a character pose a question superseding the available capabilities, the Arbiter should indicate that the practitioner is unable to read the marks or unable to divine an answer.
When a suitable query has been posed and the action succeeded the Arbiter must give a satisfactory answer that does not give away too much.
A recommendation is to provide information that limits the possibilities but without giving the players the exact solution. If this is not possible Arbiters are advised to keep the information they provide somewhat vague or ambiguous.
Occasionally players ask questions that the Arbiter cannot or does not want to answer, for instance, "Will we manage to outwit the Je'ehl Emir and exploit his colony on Jahl'Pur?" In such cases, the Arbiter could acceptably state that the omens are unclear but that there is nothing evident that it could not happen unless he or she deems that this course of action would be futile. Such information narrows down the options but does not guarantee anything.

*The Void seed is a potent and intoxicating force, granting the power to create, devastate and transform, but it always comes with a cost.*

*– Lecture from the Ashen Tower*



## Blood Inking

There are places in the Eternal City where obscure services can be commissioned. Amenities which - when considered by human mentalities - are grotesque and horrific in their very nature, but which are seen as ordinary by many sentient species of the city. At the lower end of the scale are blood ritualists, providing blessings and bestowing boons upon clients by killing sacrificial creatures and transferring their essence unto a recipient.

However, there is an advanced practice, which involves an enduring transference of blood potency using an amalgamation of bizarre blood rituals and Daimonic powers to produce tattoos. Sacrosanct symbols are drawn into the skin, infusing the recipient with new abilities or augmented aptitude.

### COMMISSIONING TATTOOS

Certain esoteric beings can utilise sacrificial blood as ink to tap or needle tattoos instilled with potency, imbuing the recipient permanently with its power. The technique requires the sacrifice to be sentient, cognisant and gradually drained, making it a forced practice with a scarcity of resources.

Tattoos can be applied to the face, torso, arms, and legs, meaning that characters can obtain up to four tattoos at most. Selected parlours and workshops can be found on various worlds - including Llyhn - where esoteric beings are able and willing to provide the service for a substantial fee. In additional to being esoteric, such tattoo artists tend to be tremendously arrogant and snobbish, knowing well the worth and scarcity of their craft. It is not unusual that clientele is required to prove themselves worthy by doing an initiation or providing some sort of offering.

### REQUIREMENTS

The client is required to provide the sacrifice while the tattooist habitually furnishes the remaining requirements, as these are kept secret and only for the initiated. The sacrifice must meet the listed criteria, be of vigorous stock, be unharmed and be conscious at the time of sacrifice.

In addition to procuring the sacrifice and undergoing the ritual, experience points must be spent by the character to galvanise the tattoo. The amount of experience points consumed in the process depends on the potency of the tattoo.

| TATTOO | SACRIFICE CRITERIA | EFFECT | EXP COST | BASE COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CATHARSIS | Cause fear | +3 to Fear rolls | 3 | 9000 |
| CLARITY | Fearless Talent | -1 to fear/awe/delirium table rolls | 3 | 3000 |
| CONSTANCY | Void entity | +1 to resist Void distortion | 3 | 6000 |
| COSMIC COIL | Mortal species, Stamina/ Willpower 6+ | +1 to resist Backlash or calamity | 3 | 3000 |
| DUST AND ASHES | Immortal entity | Ignore Incapacitation | 6 | 12000 |
| ENDOWMENT | Chosen Talent \| Trait score 6+ | Gain a Talent within the Trait | 3 | 3000 |
| ESOTERIC ASPECT | Chosen Daimonic Power | Gain a Daimonic Power | 6 | 9000 |
| FLEETNESS | Movement 9+ | +1 to move (legs only) | 3 | 3000 |
| FLUCTUATING FACES | Changeling | +1 to disguise (face only) | 3 | 9000 |
| INTRIGUING MOTIF | Presence score 6+ | +1 to social rolls (face only) | 3 | 6000 |
| UNWAVERING MIND | Enlightened ranking 6+ | -1 to madness table rolls | 3 | 3000 |
| MORTAL ASPECT | Chosen general Attribute | Gain a general Attribute which does not change the physique | 3 | 6000 |
| ROBUSTNESS | Tough Talent | -1 to Crippling injuries | 3 | 6000 |
| SERENITY | Composed Talent | +1 to resist Awe/ Delirium/Fear | 3 | 6000 |
| VEIL WALKER | Void entity | Gain Veil slit | 6 | 12000 |

CATHARSIS: Endowed with cathartic clarity, this tattoo makes the wearer unafraid, gaining a +3 modifier to resist Fear.

CLARITY: The tattoo makes the wearer more resilient to the effects of Awe, Delirium and Fear, subtracting one from all rolls on the appropriate effect tables.

CONSTANCY: This tattoo binds the wearer's flesh to the Cosmic constancy, imbuing resilience to the distorting effects of the Void. All rolls to resist Void distortion are made with a +1 modifier.

COSMIC COIL: This tattoo wards either against backlash or calamities with a +1 modifier to resistance rolls.

DUST AND ASHES: This tattoo grants the wearer the ability to remain conscious and functioning when below 0 points of Health. The character still suffers from injury penalties and dies once minus half his or her total Health points are reached.

ENDOWMENT: The tattoo grants a chosen Talent regardless of whether the tattooed character has a high enough Trait score.

ESOTERIC ASPECT: The tattoo infuses the beneficiary with a Daimonic Power from the sacrifice. The Power cannot require any limbs or physicality the recipient does not possess. If ranks are applicable, the tattooed character has the capabilities equalling ranking 1.

FLEETNESS: This tattoo grants the wearer increased speed, adding +1 to the characters base movement score.

FLUCTUATING FACES: This tattoo writhes across the wearer's face, constantly changing and shifting. This enables the wearer to obfuscate his or her features granting a +1 modifier to disguising her identity.

INTRIGUING MOTIF: The facial tattoo has a captivating quality making others attentive, enabling a +1 modifier to social rolls.

UNWAVERING MIND: The tattoo lessens the encroaching madness of the wearer, endowing a -1 modifier to rolls on the madness table.



MORTAL ASPECT: The tattoo imbues the recipient with a general Attribute possessed by the sacrifice, which does not entail any limbs or physical qualities the recipient does not have. Obtainable Attributes include adaptive pigment, alternative sense, natural resistance, natural immunity, night vision and quick healer.

ROBUSTNESS: This tattoo grants the tattooed character perseverance and strength of body, enabling a -1 modifier to all crippling injury rolls.

SERENITY: The tattoo endows a serene mind free from external influence. The wearer has +1 modifier to resist Awe, Delirium and Fear.

VEIL WALKER: The tattoo grants the wearer the Veil slit Ascension benefit.

## Grafting

The art of grafting is reserved for only the most accomplished, degenerate and pitiless of ritualists; removing limbs or other body parts from cognisant sacrifices to graft unto new hosts. The new limb functions as the characters own albeit with the capabilities of the former host. For instance, a grafted eye with different sensory capabilities than the recipient's original would grant these new capabilities to the character. Grafting is typically applied to replace missing or crippled limbs but can substitute healthy body parts endowing the recipient with the associated capabilities of the new limb.



### COMMISSIONING GRAFTING

Particular esoteric beings can be sought out to transfer limbs and other body parts onto a recipient. The practice and rituals involved are viewed as an atrocity by many species and are typically carried out in secrecy or under the sanction of powerful benefactors.

Practitioners are scarce, often secretive, paranoid and exceedingly eccentric but several are known to live in Llyhn and on some core worlds. The secrecy and paranoia are attributed to a disinclination to get visited by a donor's relatives or kin afterwards. Once a character has located a practitioner able and willing to provide the service the fee, which is often considerable, must be negotiated and - as with tattooists - it is not unusual that character is requested to provide an offering or other contribution beyond wealth.

*Scorching pain wracked Anniha's body as the Ghulah bored its claw into his right eye… His squeezed shut eyelid did nothing to halt the talon sluggishly piercing his skin. Slowly and deliberately it was pressed further in… Thrashing, Anniha went frantic with unbearable pain and panic. Restrained, ropes digging deep into his flesh with his every pain-filled jerk, he could not move away from his tormentor. A soft pop reverberated in his skull as the claw penetrated his eye and it imploded. His throat let out a hoarse half-cry half whimper, unable to fully vent the agony. He felt the hot breath of the Ghulah on his ear and neck as she leaned in and throatily whispered "Did we not tell you that you would regret vexing us my darling? Did we not tell you…?" He could tell that she was savouring the pain she caused as he sank into the sweet darkness of oblivion.*

*Years passed and Anniha woke up drenched in cold sweat each night at the still-vivid memory haunting his erratic sleep. It was this remembrance that kept him braced as his hired hands dragged the chained Ghulah - begging and pleading - into the dark chamber lit vaguely by flickering torches. Her talons had been pulled leaving glistening bloody trails on the dark sand where her fingertips had dug into to halt herself. Her beaten and broken body was bereft of strength, leaving her helpless as the hushed assailants placed her on the engraved boulder on the ground. Her mouth was gagged causing the last of her cracked fangs to fall out hindering her pleading while her terrified eyes spoke volumes.*

*As the ceremonial daggers rose and fell on the convulsing form on the ground Anniha gazed stonily with his remaining eye and - ignoring that niggling and queasy sensation that something was off - shuffled forward to take his appointed place. The tea he had been given numbed his senses and addled his brain, yet he was somehow vividly aware of the torment inflicted on the Ghulah. Through chanting voices, he distantly heard a soft slurp as an eye was plucked from its socket. The ritualists moved to gather around him, the leading figure holding a small orb. He felt an unfamiliar pressure in his empty socket as the orb – until recently part of a beaten and disfigured face - was stuffed into it. A defeated scream turning into a strangled gurgle rang out in the room and then, nothing… Vivid hues he had never known before exploded into his brains as he slowly opened his new right eye. The vertical slit of the Ghulah eye now grafted into his eye socket responding instinctively. He rose and stared down at the cadaver on the ground, dried blood visible from countless cuts and incisions - his new eye discerning obscure patterns and symbols across the skin of the naked form that his own eye could not. As he turned from the mangled corpse he felt whole again – what was owed had been restored.*

*That night, as he awoke bathed in cold sweat from the deep-rooted nightmare, he realised his mistake… And then he heard a familiar voice from the window: "Did we not tell you that you would regret vexing us my darling? Did we not tell you…?"*



## GRAFTING REQUIREMENTS

The commissioner must bring the donor, a recently retrieved or well-preserved limb which must be of comparable size to the recipient and mirrors the one it is to replace, i.e. an arm to replace an arm and so on. A character cannot have wings grafted onto his back for instance, but any reflected non-vital limb or body part can be grafted including hands, legs, arms, eyes and so on. The technique necessitates that the donor or limb is of healthy stock, unharmed and - for practical purposes - restrained at the time of the ritual.

## THE GRAFTING PRACTICE

During the ritual, a live donor is restrained, or the limb prepared to be attached and placed next to the recipient.

Some practitioners use mysticism, poppy juice, herbal teas or similar treatments to douse the recipient, others do not.

The ritual itself is gory and traumatising. The contributing entity typically dies from the sacrament, which benefits the recipient in terms of avoiding vengeful former resources.

During the process the recipient loses 1-4 D6 Health as limbs are removed, blood is lost, and skin cut away for the grafting. The amount of damage sustained depends on the extent of the grafting, where replacing a leg would cause 4D6 Health loss and eye might be a single D6. The lost Health heals normally, but the newly grafted limb is sore, and any action involving it suffers a -3 penalty for the following D6 days.

While no action roll as such is required to accomplish a grafting, the Arbiter must roll D12 with a result of 1 meaning that unforeseen side effects occur. The character must still receive the benefits of the new body part, but additional unfavourable or peculiar effects also apply. For instance, if the body part is Daimonic, it might not seem so far-fetched that it retains a consciousness of its own.

| BODY PART | SUGGESTED PRIMARY BENEFITS | POTENTIAL BENEFIT | COST | EXP COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARM(S) | Increased Strength or Agility | Brawny | 12000 | 6 |
| LEG(S) | Increased Movement or Athletic modifier | Digitigrade legs | 12000 | 6 |
| HAND(S) | Nimble Fingers or claws | | 9000 | 3 |
| EYEBALL(S) | Acute sight and alternative sensory capability | Void sight \| True sight | 9000 | 3 |
| LIPS | Increased Persuasion | Speak new language (if Daimonic) | 6000 | 3 |
| TEETH | Fangs or tusks | | 6000 | 3 |

### GRAFTED LIMBS

New limbs and body parts allow the character to obtain some of the capabilities of the creature or species it was taken from. Which abilities are conferred and how they function is up to the Arbiter. The following guidelines provide a framework for Arbiters. An interesting approach is to reveal latent capabilities: lips snatched from a Daimon might suddenly reveal that the character can speak a tongue he does actually not understand; the eyeball of a Djinn allows the character to see Djann when they have become invisible; or the eye of a Void entity could enable characters to see Void currents.

In addition to the payment and other requirements needed to get a ritualist to perform a grafting the character must spend experience points to galvanise and learn how to use the newly attached limb or body part. The below monetary and experience costs are suggestions and can vary at the Arbiters behest.





## Mysticism

### PHENOMENA EFFECTS & POTENCY

Deciding effects for mystic phenomena is malleable and depends much on the circumstances and wishes of the player. Occasionally players or Arbiters need to combine different effects to achieve the desired result of a phenomenon. In such cases, the various effects are combined for cumulative potency and difficulty. These guidelines can help Arbiters direct and balance the effects and potency when dealing with phenomena.

If a description is unclear or ambiguous the Arbiter may find an applicable reference-table guiding the phenomenon by referencing the number of table tiers to the effect potency. For instance, if a light-source is affected "significantly" the Arbiter can allow the illumination in the affected area to increase by three tiers. Applicable reference-tables include environmental conditions, sizes, action modifiers, and so on.

| POTENCY | EFFECT | EXPLANATION |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Slight | The phenomenon only affects little objects or subjects in a superficial way. Any alteration or metamorphosis is restricted to one superficial feature such as hue, texture, scent or other slight effect. Snuffing out a candle or small fire is an example of a slight effect. A slight phenomenon may give a nudge to an outcome, but usually little else. |
| 2 | Moderate | The phenomenon may affect a small object, outwardly altering or affecting up to two sensory features such as changing the colour and surface texture of an item. A mystic would for instance be able to fracture a small object, diminishing its durability but not breaking it, whereas a tiny object could be broken, and a medium object scratched. |
| 3 | Significant | A medium-sized object may be impacted with up to three characteristics changed. An example is a Mystic altering the density and sturdiness of a door, making it susceptible to breakage by reducing the difficulty in wrecking it by 3. |
| 4 | Considerable | The phenomenon can affect a large-sized object and may alter up to four characteristics of the subject. A Mystic changing a gale to a strong breeze is an example of a considerable phenomenon - reducing the environmental effect by four tiers. A considerable phenomenon may very well direct the outcome of a scene. |
| 5 | Substantial | A substantial phenomenon can affect a huge object and may alter all five ordinary sensory characteristics of a subject. Creating a convincing illusion of a 6-metre-long creature would be an example of a substantial phenomenon. |
| 6 | Massive | Massive manifestations effectively shape the fabric of reality for a limited time, enabling mystic to completely alter subjects or create effects of grand scope. Gargantuan objects may be affected, and the Mystic may temporarily generate large objects out of thin air. |





# The Void

Explaining the Void to the unenlightened is akin to explaining sunlight to the blind. The heat on the skin might be felt but understanding the entirety of the phenomenon in all its glory and significance is impossible.

The Void is an unreality beyond ordinary reality - an existence that is concurrently everywhere and nowhere while imperceptibly shielded by a metaphysical Veil. Fundamentally the Void is intangible entropy and turmoil - incessant chaotic creation and collapse. Without the catalysing effect of the Void, the Cosmos would be lifeless and bleak - nothing but dead matter stretching perpetually towards endless horizons. But as the Veil is unstable, the emanating Void acts upon the inanimate matter and constancy of the Cosmos, triggering change and birthing life. While this symbiotic stimulus is habitually constrained and subtle, violent Void tempests can tear massive holes in the Veil - unleashing surges of impetus into the Cosmos, altering the fundamental physiognomies of whole worlds.

Being in the Void is like floating in an ethereal ocean without having to stay buoyant or breathe - suspended in an eternal dark, turbulent miasma with infinite black skies above. Constantly fluctuating and churning, it is both a wild tempest and a serene oblivion, with ubiquitous gentle currents and roaring torrents. Time and distance are meaningless in the eternal amorphousness. There is no sense of up or down, left or right, front or back, yet to the enlightened there are means of orientation. Although the Void - in its very nature - is unpredictable and paradoxical it consistently flows towards the perforations in the Veil, which produces flux and distinguishable currents.

The Void is accessible where the Veil is thin and perforated. Such places function as conduits; leading from one side to the other and allowing not only the emanation of one essence into the other but also for matter to pass through.

While anyone and anything can slip through a conduit and get themselves lost - drifting endlessly in the depths - esoteric and enlightened individuals can sense and follow the currents and torrents, effectively navigating the incorporeal ocean. Such individuals use the ethereal currents to travel between worlds, entering the Void through a rift on one world and exiting through another on a faraway globe across the Cosmos.

The more massive a Veil rift is, the stronger and more continuous the flow towards it is. Many currents flow towards such perforations, allowing for relatively constant and somewhat stable passage or even established routes, enabling natural hubs for Voidfarers and enlightened species to gather. Lesser currents can also be sailed, but they are flimsier and more dangerous in their inconsistency and unpredictability. As the Void is intrinsically chaotic, flux can materialise out of nowhere and disappear just as quickly, making traversing even regular routes precarious.

While the ability to travel between worlds in mere days or weeks is incredible, it is also dangerous, making Voidfarers a capricious lot. In its very essence, the Void is change, forcing its contorting influence upon all matter. While this influence may be subtle and indiscernible at first, prolonged exposure to the chaotic influence becomes increasingly apparent with time. Slight changes in appearance are the initial indication, with pronounced physical and even mental transformations following. While the peril of floating astray and drifting aimlessly for eternity is a genuine threat when navigating the Void, it is the notion of the Mindless Ghostly Abominations dwelling in the deep that Voidfarers dread the most. If the endless oblivion does not drive the weak-willed mad, the impossibly dark shapes glimpsed moving unbelievably in the blackness assuredly will.



*"We sail into the black," the old Na'Ashri Void mariner said with a crooked smile and a hint of madness in his eyes as the vessel put out from the fog-shrouded docks of Dhaarese.*

## Finding perforations

The contrasting Void and Cosmos are consequently divided yet linked; the waxing and waning influence between the two as the ebb and tide of the ocean upon the shoreline - with perforations appearing and disappearing seemingly randomly across the Cosmos. Where there is a perforation, the Void can be crossed into. While some entities and mystics are able to tear the Veil, creating their own perforation to be used as a conduit, most must find an existing rift to cross over.

Because of the emanating Void essence, the area surrounding a Veil perforation is likely to be riddled with odd phenomena and strange unnatural occurrences. While these indicators might be noticeable, detecting the aperture itself requires that a character is Void-sensitive. Perforations vary greatly from resembling subtly and darkly shimmering misty shadows to massive gashes of suspended black fog. Additionally, the Void seems to have an affinity with water and perforations often occur in or around the surface of large bodies of water.

While perforations can tenuously be seen with the naked eye, they are difficult to notice unless massive in size. Furthermore, the unenlightened mind will subconsciously attempt to rationalise it as a natural phenomenon, disregarding and intuitively avoiding it. Even though Void-sensitive characters may realise that a Void-emanation is occurring in the vicinity, it may require effort to spot the perforation.

*Even for a man who had grown up sailing on the ominous seas of Moshri Thendos, traversing the Void was unnerving. What he assumed to have been familiar was not - there was no wind, no creak of the ship upon the water, no rush of waves against the hull - the Void was eerily silent, and he could not feel any movement, yet move they did. When embarking, the oddly featured Void mariners had cautioned him in their peculiar high-pitched dialect about looking out into the Void, but it was impossible for him not to. Staring wide-eyed with wonder Eshan observed the outlandish black cloudscape through his secretly uncovered porthole. This was not the first time on the journey that he had snuck a peek, but this time as his gaze careened from side to side, whatever he was looking at... it looked back. Out of the darkness five massive baleful eyes of unbearable colour ogled the tiny porthole in the Void vessel with unswerving converged gazes. Eshan began to tremble and convulse but could not pull away from the five star-shaped pulsating pupils gazing malignantly at him through the blackness. The silence was shattered as strange noises - screams, maddening laughs, insane whispers - begin to fill his head. He tried frantically to tear his eyes away, but he could not - and the noise grew louder and louder until his own voice mingled with it in a hoarse scream of absolute terror. Suddenly, he felt a hand clasp his shoulder from behind whirling him around, and a fist collided with his temple. Sweet blackness engulfed him, but still he could hear the creature's voice in his ears...*

| PERFORATION | SIZE | APPEARANCE | DIFFICULTY TO NOTICE | EMANATION ROLL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| TINY | Up to 25 cm | Faint murky splotch | 16+ | D3 |
| LITTLE | 25 - 50 cm | Shadowy blurred rip | 13+ | D3 |
| SMALL | 50 - 100 cm | Gloomy hazy slit | 10+ | D6 |
| MEDIUM | 1 - 2 metres | Dark misty gash | 7+ | D6 |
| LARGE | 2 - 4 metres | Dully gleaming black vortex | 4+ | D12 |
| HUGE+ | 4+ metres | Massive suspended black fog | No roll required | D12+3 |

Unenlightened characters cannot attempt to spot perforations, while Void-sensitive characters must make an Awareness roll + Enlightenment ranking to notice the faint, dark fog indicating a perforation and recognise it for what it is. Modifiers apply for the placement and size of the aperture, while ordinary environmental conditions also apply. A large rupture floating in mid-air in broad daylight would not require a roll to be noticed whereas a tiny rift aligned with the surface of a dark lake in the middle of the night would be extremely difficult to detect.

Unenlightened characters and incognizant creatures have an instinctive aversion towards approaching Veil perforations, sometimes reacting with outright terror. The difficulty for overcoming this aversion and entering a perforation is Willpower [7].
Blindfolds, distractions, intoxication and other measures can grant positive modifiers to the aversion roll, as inverted environmental conditions. If failed, the character refuses to go near the perforation and, if forced, has to make a roll on the Fear table.

## Void Emanation

Whenever and wherever the Void emanates into the Cosmos the laws of nature are subverted. While the effect is curbed by the stabilising essence of the Cosmos, the transmutation can be significant - affecting the area and anyone within it permanently.

Initiating and newly materialised perforations tend to be unstable as the Void currents surge towards the emanating point, causing eruptive emanations. Whenever a new perforation is established, the Arbiter rolls on the Void emanation table and narrates or paraphrases the description - but not necessarily the effect - to the players. The Arbiter can re-roll at intervals as the effect is likely to fluctuate and alternate from newly formed conduits.

As time passes conduits either disappear as the Veil re-establishes itself or becomes placid as an equilibrium between the contrasting essences of the Void and Cosmos develops. Stable ruptures generally do not have Void emanations regardless of their size as the stability of the Cosmos has asserted itself along the fringe of the rent Veil - and those that do are minor, only D3 or D6 severity.

An emanation roll is made using either a D3, D6 or D12 for the severity - as per the perforation size - and a D6 for the specific effect.

## Crossing into the Void

Entering the Void is in itself effortless, only requiring that a perforation of sufficient size is found, and any aversion is overcome. The Voidfarer or Void vessel simply approaches the aperture and continues through it, emerging inside the Void. Human characters would not be able to enter through a tiny perforation, but they would be able to awkwardly squeeze through a little rip - while vessels and draught animals require a rift extending their width and height to get through unscathed.

*The Red Galleys are massive Void-going vessels piloted by the servants of the Unseen Rulers to ferry cargo and passengers to and from the Eternal City. Rowed by obscure oarsmen and steered by reticent Void navigators, the Red Galleys are the primary and safest way through the Void, fortifying the dominance of the Unseen Rulers in Void traversing.*

| Severity | Effect | Void Emanation Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1-3: | The Cosmos retains its constancy and no effect occurs. |
| | 4-6: | A strange chill runs down the spine of anyone entering the area. |
| 2 | 1-3: | Inexplicable mild trepidation grips anybody inside the affected area. |
| | 4-6: | A distinctly sweet aroma of decay emanates around the area. |
| 3 | 1-3: | An unnaturally chilly breeze stirs the air. |
| | 4-6: | The temperature increases noticeably. |
| 4 | 1-3: | The ground surrounding the rupture trembles slightly. |
| | 4-6: | The area illumination is inverted: it becomes dark if it is day, and light if it is night. |
| 5 | 1-3: | An unnatural aura emanates in the area, spooking all animals: no creatures willingly enter the area. |
| | 4-6: | A strange sulphurous stench fills the area, causing nausea: Make a Stamina roll [7] or get -1 to all physical actions. |
| 6 | 1-3: | An odd, rolling echo hangs on every sound in the area causing disorientation and unease: dialogue requires effort and all awareness rolls as well as resisting Fear are at -1 penalty. |
| | 4-6: | The air in the area seems strangely blurred, vision is impaired conveying a -3 penalty to see inside the area. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | 1-3: | The area feels inexplicably hot: Everyone suffer a -1 penalty to all actions augmented by the moderate "Easily exhausted" Flaw. |
| | 4-6: | The area becomes improbably cold: All liquids freeze, everything becomes rigid reducing movement by 1 and causing a -3 penalty to all physical actions. |
| 8 | 1-3: | All inorganic matter in the area inverts its characteristics: rocks and soil become soft, water hard and so on. Once the emanation ends all returns to normal with potentially catastrophic consequences. |
| | 4-6: | The climate within the area changes significantly: Roll for random climate effect. |
| 9 | 1-3: | The atmosphere abruptly shifts becoming intolerable: Roll for random atmosphere effect. |
| | 4-6: | The gravity shifts within the area: Roll for random gravity effect. |
| 10 | 1-3: | The ground wobbles and shakes making movement untenable: All mobility requires an Agility roll [7] and it at -2 movement, or the character is knocked to the ground. |
| | 4-6: | All vegetation and animal life begins to wither and wilt: Creatures and characters within the area suffer D2 damage every round while all plants die within D12 rounds. |
| 11 | 1-3: | A burst of flourishing growth makes the entire area overgrown and completely impenetrable within D6 minutes. Throngs of bizarre exotic species of plants and animals propagate and anyone in the area must evade the violently sprouting vegetation, suffer falling damage or getting caught in the tangle. |
| | 4-6: | The area takes on an amorphous quality, seeming ethereal and peculiar. Anyone wishing to enter the area become anxious and must make a successful Fear roll [7]. |
| 12 | 1-3: | Strange, enticing shadows and haunting dancing lights permeate the air in the area. Both repelling and alluring, nearby beings must make a successful Willpower roll [7] to resist heading into the area. Once inside, creatures are subject to a Fear Roll [10]. |
| | 4-6: | Anyone inside the area seems to be phasing in and out unless they pass a Stamina roll [7]. For each failed roll the victim suffers D3 damage and must re-roll a random appearance feature. |
| 13 | 1-3: | Horrendously beautiful phantasms erupt from the air, swirling around instigating it to shimmer with charged energy. Everyone witnessing the display must roll to resist Delirium [10] and anyone in the area are subject to temporary Void distortion for D6 hours. |
| | 4-6: | Entities of pure noise shriek impossibly through the air. Invisible yet clearly distinguishable, the utter paradoxical nature of their existence is anathema to mortal sentiment and cognisance. A successful Fear roll [10] is required to enter the area and anyone in the area suffer a Void distortion. |
| 14 | 1-3: | Shapeless blobs of matter roil and churn in profane antithesis to the natural order of the Cosmos, causing all who witness it to stare in abject horror. A successful Fear roll [10] +3 effect is required to enter the area. The Arbiter can decide or roll to see if any Void entities appear. |
| | 4-6: | Formless, hazy tendrils erupt from black specks appearing in the air: Anyone within sight must make a successful Fear roll [13] +3 effect as Void entities burst from the perforation. |
| 15+ | 1-3: | The entire area is takes on a sinister aspect as if suffused in a profane light frightening to Cosmic beings. An unnatural pall hangs over it as everything within warps and twists into unrecognisable shapes and hues: A successful Fear roll [16] +3 effect is required to go into the area and everyone inside must roll on the Void distortion table while multiple Void entities surge through. |
| | 4-6: | The area is submerged in deep black fog as if the Void itself is pouring into the area. Anyone seeing the perforation immediately gain one ranking of enlightenment, lose a Sanity point and must roll on the Void distortion table as an incomprehensible Void entity stare out through the rift causing Fear [19] +6 effect. |

## Void vessels

While anything and anyone can pass through a perforation, seagoing vessels and living beings are the most adept at traversing the oblivion depths of the Black Void. Although designated Void vessels may have several particular features such as reinforced hulls, blinded cabins and such, any seaworthy ship or craft is adequate to traverse the Void. It is not the vessel in itself but the onboard Void navigator who enables successful Void traversing. Caravans, groups and individuals can also cross the Void and would do well to be somehow tethered to each other or risk drifting and getting separated.

## Navigating the Void

Traversing the Void is dangerous, and the paradoxical nature of the infinite oblivion can be maddening to all but the most stalwart. Once inside the Void, perceptions change, normality is invalid and subverted while an extreme sense of aloneness induces panic attacks and deep-rooted anxiety. For this reason, many Void vessels do not have portholes or allow passengers on the deck for the duration of the journey. Crews and navigators need to orient themselves and must suffer the impact of full exposure to the Void, disciplining their minds and likely ingesting all manners of drugs and hallucinogenic substances to stave off lunacy, not to mention the inherent risk of Void distortion from prolonged exposure.

Enlightened characters with Void navigating capabilities are able to sense the currents and torrents of the Void and therefore able to orient and guide their course inside the Void where an unenlightened character would be drifting aimlessly.

*A line of blind-folded Nathaliin stand tensely shuffling their feet, pulling on the tethers binding them tightly together as the anxious Caravan master wait for his turn to walk up the ramp surrounded by Jinassar and tithe collectors. At the pinnacle of the incline an impossibly matt black vaporous fissure is suspended in mid-air, pulsing slightly as if somehow alive. At the signal from a civic servant the hired Void guide leads the caravan ahead as caravan master sets his animals in motion, pulling heavily on the leads to get the reluctant animals trudging forward. Lumbering up the ramp the sedative drafts mixed into the Nathaliin fodder averts the handlers using their whips more than a few times ushering the docile beasts into the rift and disappearing into the oblivious depths.*

When a character wishes to travel the Void, she must first determine the destination; by the player stating this to the Arbiter. As individuals with Void navigating capabilities can perceive where currents or torrents flow to, they can set a course by this - which mechanically translates into the navigator's ascension benefits and knowledge about the destination applying modifiers to the roll. The more the navigator knows, the better her chances of locating and following the correct current to its destination. The table of prerequisites denotes the applicable modifiers to the Void traversing roll.

The Void traversing roll differs from ordinary rolls in that there is no difficulty to beat. The roll indicates how long the journey takes and whether unforeseen disaster strikes. The Void travel prerequisites are cumulative, stacking for rolls and both negative as well as positive modifiers can apply to the same roll.

| VOID TRAVEL PREREQUISITES | MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| NO KNOWLEDGE | -6 |
| SOME KNOWLEDGE BUT NEVER BEEN TO THE DESTINATION | -3 |
| HAS BEEN BUT NEVER NAVIGATED TO THE DESTINATION | -1 |
| HAS NAVIGATED TO THE DESTINATION | +1 |
| HAS NAVIGATED THE CURRENT MULTIPLE TIMES | +3 |
| KNOWN CURRENT | "sluggish" result counts as leisurely |
| VOID DRIFT | -1 |
| VOID FLOAT | 0 |
| VOID FARING | +1 \| D3 known currents |
| VOID GUIDE | +3 \| D12 known currents |
| VOID NAVIGATOR | +6 \| 3D6 known currents \| steer vessels |

Navigating the Void is based on Awareness and is similar to performing any other action in most respects. Once inside the Void the navigator attempts to find the desired current, steers themselves or a vessel along it while avoiding the denizens of the depths and glides through the designated perforation and back into the Cosmos; which converts into a single dice-roll: The Void Traversing roll.

Time and distance are non-existent or inestimable values in the Void - enabling people to travel unimaginable distances in what might translate into mere days in the Cosmos. Time does not pass as usual for those inside the Void, with all the benefits and torments this entails.

| VOID TRAVERSING ROLL | DESCRIPTION | EFFECT |
|---|---|---|
| < 1 | Disaster | Roll on the disaster table |
| 2-4 | Sluggish | The navigator somehow loses his course and the journey takes 3D12 days. The prolonged exposure causes a Stamina roll [7] or be subject to the Void distortion table [potency 3]. |
| 5-8 | Leisurely | The journey is slow but sure, taking 2D12 days to complete. |
| 9-11 | Ordinary | The journey takes D12 days to complete without incident. |
| 12+ | Speedy voyage | Strong currents mean that the journey is completed in only D6 days. |

The chaotic nature of the Void means that the supposed speed of a vessel or Voidfarer is irrelevant. Travel-time is determined by the charted current, which fluctuates and therefore there is no set travel-time between worlds. While a journey at one time might take three days, the next time it could take twenty-seven days.

If the Arbiter finds a reason to increase the proposed travel-time between set destinations, additional dice can be added to each tier as he or she sees fit.

A natural 1 is always a disaster regardless of the bonus modifiers of the Void navigator. Should disaster strike, refer to the table below and roll to see what misfortune occur.

| SEVERITY | VOID TRAVERSING DISASTER EFFECT |
|---|---|
| 1 | With a strange thud the vessel strikes something unseen in the blackness. An eerie scraping noise is heard along the hull as the vessel plummets, bursting through an unknown perforation onto an unfamiliar landscape: The Voidfarers have arrived at an unknown location. |
| 2 | The vessel passes odd, nebulous lights, enticingly swirling about the hull and masts or caravan. As the grotesque whirling reaches a crescendo, a feverish pall spreads among the Voidfarers: Make a Delirium roll [9] and re-roll one ordinary appearance feature of each Voidfarer. |
| 3 | The vessel is swallowed by a Void tempest and pandemonium abruptly ensues. Everyone is thrown about, suffering D6 damage and crying out in distress as their bodies contort with the deforming taint of the Void: Re-roll D3 ordinary appearance features. |
| 4 | A sudden jolt shakes the vessel; things go flying and people fall as it breaks apart scattering everyone - sending them adrift in the endless oblivion. Everyone aboard is lost and drifting; emerging on various worlds after 4D12 days. Characters may be able to hold on to each other at the Arbiter's discretion. |
| 5 | The lookout calls out as the vessel is surrounded by odd churning vortices. The roiling reverberates into the hull twisting and contorting the vessel and everyone in it. Re-roll D3 appearance features randomised between pureblood, halfblood and Voidmarked. |
| 6 | A pulsating presence breaches the vessel, contorting bodies and leaving the vestiges broken, augmented and transformed. Roll once on the Void distortion table for everyone on board. |
| 7 | A loathsome stench spreads around the vessel causing convulsions and vomiting as bodies begin to contort. Re-roll D3 randomised appearance features and make a roll on the Void distortion table. |
| 8 | You awaken to the sounds of screaming as ethereal formless obscurities swarm around the vessel. Randomly the crew is plucked off the deck and into the vast nothingness. Characters that get caught become adrift in the Black Void and must roll once on the Void distortion table. Those that manage to hide lose 1 sanity point. |
| 9 | You are shocked as an unbearable freezing heat permeates the hull and eldritch entities surge onto the deck and into the compartments silently screaming and howling in mindless ecstasy. A swarm of Void entities - either Deep Devourers, Yiagh'Zii, Voidleeches or Qhu - assault the vessel. |
| 10 | Floating through the blackness, incongruous impossible shapes, sounds and sensations unexpectedly infest the Voidfarers' minds. Clawing at their heads and screaming in panic everyone makes an immediate Fear Roll [9] as the invasive essence deranges all reason. Everyone loses 1 ranking of Intellect or Willpower. |
| 11 | No one sees anything, but all feel the presence of something that should not be. Clutching their heads, moaning in terrified lunacy, everybody on board instantly lose D3 sanity points. The debacle leaves them scarred, with an enduring grimace or speech impediment - lose one ranking of either Presence or Persuasion. |
| 12 | Out of the quiet comes the looming shadow of a colossal Ghostly Mindless Abomination. As it passes its unbearable amorphous form rips at the sanity of everybody. Everyone onboard immediately loses D6 sanity points and a ranking in either Willpower or Awareness. Should the Voidfarers remain in the presence of the abomination this effect repeats. |

## Void distortion



Prolonged exposure to the entropic and contorting effects of the Void is certain to lead to transformations - and such changes are called Void distortion. Distortion can alter superficial features or change the very core and characteristics of a being. The Void is not conscient, malignant or benign - it is simply arbitrary change. Therefore, transformations are not necessarily detrimental and can be beneficial. Characters affected by Void distortion must roll a D12 for the potency and a D6 for the specific effect of the change and apply it to the character. In case a modifier is applied to the distortion roll, it is the potency total that is amended, never the effect roll.

| POTENCY | EFFECT | VOID DISTORTION IMPACT |
|---|---|---|
| < 3 | 1-3: | The appearance of the character changes: Re-roll D3 random appearance and physique features. |
| | 4-5: | The features of the character contort into something outlandish: Replace D3 existing features with halfblood appearance features. |
| | 6: | The appearance of the character mutates: Replace D3 existing features with Voidmarked appearance features and add one additional cosmetic Voidmarked feature. |
| 4 | 1-4: | The character's body is wreaked by the contorting taint of the Void: Add one randomly allocated mild Physical Flaw even if the Trait is not normally eligible for a Flaw. |
| | 5-6: | The figure of the character surges with vigour: Add one randomly allocated physical Talent, even if the Trait score does not warrant it. |
| 5 | 1-4: | The character's mind is broken by the distorting degeneration of the Void: Add one randomly allocated mild mental or social Flaw even if the Trait is not applicable for a Flaw. |
| | 5-6: | The psyche of the character is augmented: Add one randomly allocated mental or social Talent, even if the Trait score does not normally warrant it. |
| 6 | 1-4: | The character is flayed by the contorting stimulus of the Void: Assign one randomly selected moderate physical Flaw to the character even if the Trait is not normally eligible for it. |
| | 5-6: | By fortuitous accident the stimulus of the Void improves the character's capabilities: Allot one arbitrarily determined Talent to the character, even if the Trait is not qualified for it. |
| 7 | 1-4: | The character is battered and weakened by the distorting effect of the Void: Apply one randomly selected moderate mental or social Flaw to the character even if the Trait is not eligible for it. |
| | 5-6: | Blessed with fortuitous windfall, the character emerges healthier than before: either remove an existing Flaw from the character or add a randomly selected Talent. |
| 8 | 1-4: | Warped by the horrifying impact, the character is left debilitated and broken: Assign a random crippling injury [5] to the character. |
| | 5-6: | Auspiciously augmented by the experience, the character gains a randomly rolled 1-point Attribute. |
| 9 | 1-4: | Distorted and wrecked, the character is left a wreckage of flesh: Allocate a randomly rolled crippling injury [7-10] to the character. |
| | 5-6: | Favourably augmented by the incidence, the character acquires one randomly determined 2 or 3-point Attribute. |
| 10 | 1-4: | The mind of the character is torn asunder by the horrific revelations envisioned in the depths of the Void. Deduct D3 Sanity points from the character. |
| | 5-6: | Edified by providence the character comprehends more of the true nature of existence: The character gains one Enlightenment ranking. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | 1-4: | Spiritually mutilated by the tribulation the character suffers a degenerating trauma: Assign a randomly selected severe mental or social Flaw to the character. |
| | 5-6: | Endowed with abstruse substance, the character attains one random esoteric 2 or 3-point Attribute. |
| 12 | 1-4: | Maimed and deformed from the chaotic torrents, the character must reduce a randomly determined physical Trait score by one. |
| | 5-6: | Augmented by fortuitous surges, the character swells with new vigour: Increase a random physical Trait by one. |
| 13 | 1-4: | Anathematised and blighted, the character's mental competence deteriorates from the ordeal: Reduce an arbitrarily chosen mental or social Trait by a factor of one. |
| | 5-6: | Surging with vivacity the characters mind is expanded: Increase one randomly determined mental or social Trait score by one. |
| 14 | 1-4: | Overwhelmed by madness the character loses D6 Sanity points permanently. |
| | 5-6: | Awash with the esoteric currents of the Void, the character becomes Voidmarked or gains one randomly determined power ranking if he or she is already Voidmarked. |
| 15+ | 1-4: | Mutilated and ruined by the warping effect of the Void, the character loses D6 Health points permanently. |
| | 5: | The character has experienced epiphany and realised intangible truths: Increase the Sanity points of the character by D6 permanently. |
| | 6: | Endowed with vivacity, the character gains D6 Health points permanently. |



*The vessel we sent back through the Void rift to Llyhn years ago came back today, but the only survivors were the children. There were no bodies, no sign of any conflict, they were just gone, and the children, they came back changed. Their eyes glowed, they barely talked and seemingly did not remember anything from their voyage into the dark. The other colonists are scared, they want to get rid of them, but they're still only children... what should I do?*

*Some of the kids are missing... I don't know what's going on anymore. Are the kids running away, are they being... gotten rid of... or is something else happening...? I'm going to look around tonight, see what I can find.*

*Things are coming to a head, I have no idea what is going on, and I need to find out soon otherwise, well I'm not sure what will happen, but something is going to happen. There was a noise just now, I am afraid that whatever is happening is going to come for me soon. Whoever finds this... beware the Void, not just because of what comes out of it, but for what it makes those who go in...*

*- Jarilk of the Alqarn colony*





# Remnants of Humanity

THE STORIES OF A SPECIES ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION

The central foundation and concepts of the Black Void role-playing game revolve around the exploration of the deep, dark unknown, the survival and possible deliverance of mankind and the pursuit of enlightenment, wealth and glory. Each player has created a character that is part of the remnants of humanity, struggling to find their place in a vast, unfamiliar and hostile Cosmos.

Humanity and the characters are relegated to the slums of the Eternal City and across the Cosmos. Llyhn is an exceedingly outlandish and hierarchical society where punishment is harsh for those who dare challenge the status quo without the means and method to succeed.

## Hiding in shadows

Humanity is hiding in the shadows, stuck at the bottom. Most have conformed and succumbed to survive, and few ever try to stand up for themselves against the tidal wave of oppressors and exploiters abounding in the city and Cosmos at large. This is the situation that the characters find themselves in: Part of a species scrounging for scraps, sneaking in and out of places where their presence is not tolerated, hiding in the dark to avoid attention from oppressors - a fragmented species on the verge of extinction. But there are those who are biding their time in the shadows, seeking to unify humanity, fervently believing that mankind can go beyond merely staring up at decadent alien palaces behind high walls but rise to greatness in this outlandish Cosmos. The three enclaves in Llyhn are ruled by individuals bent on seeing conditions change for humanity, albeit in different forms and using different means. These leaders use extraordinary men and woman to further this ambition and to see mankind rise beyond mere subsistence. Hope also rests in that there are some among the otherworldly species that see the value and potential of humanity and who are willing to lend a hand - sometimes in exchange for compensation, but still.

As the suns dawn on Llyhn the eternal the time for hiding in the shadows is almost over, and the characters are heralds of change.

## The characters

Characters are typically individuals working under the patronage or matronage of a prominent enclave member to further the cause of the enclave, a clique of like-minded individuals working together towards a common goal or perhaps merely a group of old friends facing off against an inhospitable Cosmos.

Typical for them all is that they have somehow managed to rise ever so slightly above the sludge the rest of their kin lingers in. They have shown a subtle promise of greatness recognised by someone willing to take them under his or her wing and guide their first feeble steps.

With limited resources, scarce equipment and facing opposition all around, the characters appreciate that at the bottom of an outlandish society there is only growth or death!

## Patronage or free agents

Although it is not a requirement that characters have a patron or matron it is a common custom within Llyhn society for weaker individuals to gather under the strong. Additionally it is a useful means for the Arbiter in terms of clarifying why this group of individuals have banded together in the first place as well as giving them a reason for their exploits.

If the Arbiter and players intend for the game to be a campaign it is recommended that they discuss which kind of patron or matron the players might prefer, should they decide to opt for a benefactor in the game. For instance, the three human enclaves in Llyhn vary greatly in outlook, organisation and societal position. The choice, therefore, affects the direction of the game as patrons and matrons have differing goals and motives, influencing the scope and substance of the assignments characters may be tasked with. While nothing is stopping the characters from changing allegiance and benefactor later on in the game - although it is likely to have repercussions if they do - the initial association influences the game profoundly.

The Arbiter can use an established NPC as patron to the characters (see the factions and notable people chapter) providing a wide range of philosophical and ethical standpoints depending on the players' preference or create his or her own to suit specific interests. A novel NPC patron or matron can derive from an existing enclave, be a part of a pre-existing or homemade faction, be a free but powerful agent or maybe even an undisclosed benefactor dealing with the characters through agents as the Arbiter wishes and as it fits within the story.



## Themes of Black Void

All but perished humanity must fight to overcome adversity from mindless abominations, Daimons and outlandish life forms or possibly face extinction. Political intrigue and cultural tension on a scale unknown to humanity abound, leaving mankind with little choice but to cope or risk becoming collateral damage in the struggles of uncaring factions.

Whether characters are free agents or somewhat subject to the whim and will of an influential benefactor the Arbiter must decide which type of game they intend the players to have. Addressing an overarching theme is a useful way to generate continuity in a story and to provide a red thread for the players to follow. As noted earlier it is productive to listen to what the players wish and hope for and fit this into the overarching concept or theme the Arbiter wants to address.

Although veteran Arbiters would have an idea about what Black Void is all about at this stage, an outline to elucidate and draw out critical aspects for how to use the prevalent themes of Black Void when crafting scenarios and campaigns is useful. As noted in the Concept and Themes chapter there are three topics prevalent in the Black Void role-playing game: In the Unknown, Beyond the Horizon and What is Humanity.

### IN THE UNKNOWN

Humanity finds itself in a Cosmos where they know very little about what is going on and how things work. This is an opportunity for the Arbiter to think outside the box as the characters - and players - do not know what to expect and cannot rely on normality to hold true. As soon as the characters set foot outside their hovel, enclave or wherever their exploits begin the Arbiter can set the mood and instil a sense of wonder to establish the outlandishness of the setting.

Not everything the characters encounter should be bizarre or weird, but Arbiters can easily take something familiar and tweak it just a little to give it new and strange qualities to enhance the atmosphere of the otherworldly. The core book is filled with mention of materials, substances and creatures adding this otherworldly spice to the setting.

Most otherworldly sentient species do not think the way humans do, and this should be made evident in the way the Arbiter portrays NPC's - not only in how they speak but in their way of reasoning. Ordinary suppositions should not be relied upon by the players. Descriptions and suggestions for behaviour, customs and mentality are noted in the species section to help Arbiters with this.

Arbiters should keep in mind that the species detailed in the core book are only some of the more prominent in Llyhn and introducing new species, sub-species or cultures adds richness to the setting and stories. The search for enlightenment, driven by a desire for knowledge and understanding the hidden secrets of the Cosmos and the Void beyond is a pivotal point of this theme. Political intrigue and cultural encounters are likewise at the core of this theme as humanity, and the characters, seek to establish a base of power and understand the new home they now inhabit.

### BEYOND THE HORIZON

This theme can be applied in both a literal and abstract sense. Exploration and venturing beyond the horizon by desire or necessity is a central theme in the game. Arbiters are encouraged to use a variety of distinctive locations to give a sense of grandeur and vastness to the players. In addition to being distinct in ecology and atmosphere, the populations could challenge the preconceived ideas and presumptions of the characters, making it a journey beyond the horizon in both a literal and philosophical sense.

Although Void travel might not be the first thing the characters do, the possibility of it and the implications of the imminence of the Void and its weird and distorting effects is an essential part of the Black Void. The characters themselves do not have to be enlightened for them to traverse the Void, although it might help. Void-guides can be hired, and passage can be booked on Void-faring vessels, taking the characters to other locations in the Cosmos and beyond. A patron or matron might provide such transportation as part of an assignment when the characters themselves are unable.

### WHAT IS HUMANITY?

As the rootless humanity is struggling for survival, there is a certain duality in the question of what humanity is. Not only does it beg the question about what mankind is and will be as a species, but also about the intrinsic humanity of human beings bereft of ethos. Characters are faced with having to define themselves in a Cosmos where they have very little say, and the surrounding principles are not necessarily attuned to ordinary human sentiments. This leads to confrontations, likely of a violent sort but also on a more reflective level.

A way of reflecting this is Arbiters making the ethos of friends and foes alike contrast with to the values and goals of the characters, causing striking disparity for the characters to deal with. This does not have to be showcases of unfathomable cruelty or self-obliterating benevolence - although these exist in abundance - but should be divergent enough to cause pause and consideration by the characters. For Arbiters to look at established ethical theories such as duty-based ethics, consequentialism, virtue ethics, naturalism and emotivism and taking them beyond their common-sense application is an excellent foundation for generating such disparity.

Encounters with societies or factions built on dissimilar values, where the characters are forced to establish a consensus or face repercussions, is a convenient way of introducing incendiary dilemmas as well as opportunities for great role-playing.

## The new cradle of humanity

The primary stage for the Black Void RPG is Llyhn the eternal, a massive cosmopolis located at the convergence of myriad Void currents. There are certain distinctive features about Llyhn, which greatly influence the game and characters while they remain in the city. Other worlds each have their distinctive features affecting characters, detailed in the corresponding chapters. All these conditions assist in establishing the outlandish atmosphere and ambience of the Black Void setting.

Llyhn is similar to Earth in terms of gravity, breathable air, the presence of water and so on, making human habitation viable. A distinctive difference is the presence of the Void and its warping effect on those exposed to its stimulus - the impact of Void emanation and travel is explained in detail in the Void section.

Llyhn is strictly yet informally hierarchically organised and in this societal stratification mankind's place is at the bottom. The caste system of Llyhn is not only a background feature but a gameplay mechanism that Arbiters use when characters interact with NPC's - it influences plots and opportunities, possibly generating encounters and conflict.

There are areas and districts in Llyhn that the characters are barred from merely because they are human and/or low-caste. Meaning that stealth or bribes have to be employed to gain access. Penalties apply when characters seek to interact with and influence higher castes and manoeuvring this societal stratification can be a challenge for the players.



## Humanity & other species

Humans are typically seen as curiosities, ignored or scorned by most other species in the Eternal City. Albeit this state of affairs should perhaps not dominate games, neither should it be forgotten. If applied astutely it provides interesting circumstantial context for Arbiters to use in encounters or even embroiled in main plots in various ways as the characters explore the Eternal City.

*"I am on my way from the canton of Daer Bitaan across the city to Pai'Karaan, tracing the supposed route of the wanderer Harrani.*

*It is said that on his way from one end of the Eternal City to the other he visited a thousand worlds."*

*- Uijuo, Shirr pilgrim*

Players might need to consider carefully who their characters approach for fear of contempt or worse but can also be unexpectedly rewarded should an otherwise unreceptive species decide to embrace their efforts.
In their immediate environs, most other casteless and low-castes are too preoccupied simply surviving to waste resources on denigrating humans unless they are perceived as a threat or rivals.

As with most things this unsociability can be turned into an advantage by inspired players. Arbiters should allow characters to exploit the general sense of underestimation towards humanity as a tool - enabling characters to slip under the radar by being summarily ignored or disregarded by their self-styled betters.

## Social stratification

The caste system describes the social stratification in Llyhn. Social tiers are primarily defined by hereditary and species groups, founded on the "might-makes-right" tenet and associated with wealth, power and influence ensuring some sense of order. During character creation, players can spend character points to belong to a specific caste. Each caste offers certain resources and privileges to the character, who cannot go higher than one of the low-caste tiers to begin with. On an immediate and practical level caste dictates the amount of starting wealth and equipment a character has and in a more profound and long-term scope, it influences the social interaction and liberties of the character.
Arbiters would do well to emphasize this element in setting the tone and ambience of campaigns and scenarios to galvanise the distinctive backdrop of the setting as well as the despairing situation of mankind.



# How to create a game

Some Arbiters like to create their own campaigns while others prefer using pre-made adventure modules and campaigns. There is no right or wrong way of going about it, the primary objective is that everyone - including the Arbiter - has fun.
Here are detailed guidelines that Arbiters can handily employ when planning game sessions and designing plots.

## Laying out the plot

The most profound task for an Arbiter is to craft an enticing plot for the players to sink into. When planning a session, it is useful to incorporate some of the ideas and wishes of the players to make sure that everyone is invested in the game. It is impossible to include all requests, and sometimes ideas just do not fit into the overall story arc that the Arbiter is planning, and that is okay. Listening to the players and feeding off their creative energy, often it leads to a richer experience for all involved.

Be ready to improvise! Sessions rarely turn out exactly the way they were planned, and that is a good thing. The players do not know what the Arbiter has planned - they make their characters act the way they want - and the Arbiter must be ready for that. Not only is it enjoyable for the players to get to act out, but it is also exciting for Arbiters to see how they approach a setup or problem presented to them. The Arbiter should always have a contingency idea in place or be ready to go with the flow and see where it leads.

Keep it fluid! Plots and sessions should never be set in stone. If a plot point is not working, skip or circumvent it. If the characters are exceedingly interested in a trivial occurrence, make it matter or introduce an element immersed in the plot to it. The point is to keep the story moving fluidly while keeping the plot alive by making the characters actions profoundly influence what happens - for instance by making that trivial occurrence profoundly influential to a later event.

## Birthing the antagonist

Plots customarily revolve around - or at least involve - one or several antagonists, individuals that contrast and oppose the characters. Sometimes the antagonist's actions, plans and schemes are the cause of the characters getting involved while at other times antagonists are born from the actions - or indeed inactions - of characters as the story is progressing.

From time to time antagonists are depraved villains, but this is not - and should not be - true in every case. In the Black Void RPG, antagonists are not necessarily malicious and evil - they might be individuals with earnest goals and pursuits that happen to oppose the goals and ambitions of the characters or their patron, causing rivalry and escalating to the point of conflict.

When designing antagonists, establishing believable and compelling motivation and goals is imperative to the entire foundation of the story arc, determining many of the critical occurrences and events - and for this simple reason, antagonists are the most important NPC's Arbiters create.
Sometimes a plot-idea inspires an antagonist at other times the impetus of an antagonist inspires a plot. Whichever way the antagonist comes into being the Arbiter should consider some key points:

- What is the primary motivation for the antagonist? Fear, greed, love, survival, madness, retaliation, indifference, egotism, and so on.
- What ambitions would such motivation conceivably lead to?
- Who is he, she or it? Which species, gender, archetype, etc.
- Where does the antagonist come from and how does this influence him or her (if it does)?
- Which strengths and weaknesses does the antagonist have? This is often inspired by or in opposition to the motivation.
- Does the antagonist act on their own or have a support network or even an organisation to back them up?
- Based on the ambitions, what is it that the antagonist seeks to achieve, and which actions would naturally follow for them to do so? This will provide the basic structure and key points that the story arc revolves around.
- Lastly, the Arbiter should consider which outcomes could defeat or satisfy the antagonist? Perhaps the antagonist needs to be appeased, placated or converted not conquered or killed.

Habitually, whatever an antagonist seeks to achieve is either in opposition, detrimental or maybe just repulsive to the characters or their patron. Another approach to consider is the Antagonist essentially pursuing a similar goal to the characters but doing it in a reprehensible way causing the enmity. Adversaries with congenial goals and motivations or appealing emotional backstories can grant interesting trials as characters can be ethically or emotionally challenged and torn about how to deal with them.

## Running a Session

Once the Arbiter has established the antagonist, story arc or plot it is essential to plan the overall structure of the campaign or session(s). While Arbiters do not have to adhere to a specific formula for running game sessions, Black Void scenarios use elements providing a generic structure that can be beneficial to duplicate. These elements are:

SCENARIO: A scenario is a story arc, or part thereof in a campaign, which usually consists of an opening, a middle and a conclusion. The scenario is divided into scenes each comprising a limited segment of the story. At the beginning of published Black Void scenarios Arbiters will find a synopsis describing the plot, a scene overview, a list of notable people, central locations, relevant groups or factions and other factors or aspects necessary to run the scenario.

SCENES: Scenes usually occur chronologically or prompted as a consequence of previous scenes. Each scene tends to be tied to one major plot point or a specific location and contains events - specific occurrences - carrying the story forward. A scene can be restricted to a single event or be extensive, including several events or occurrences.

EVENTS: Events typically detail a situation where the characters perform actions to overcome a challenge or obstruction. In Black Void there are four generic event classifications: fixed, triggered, timed and arbitrary.

- Fixed events occur progressively as the story unfolds.
- Triggered events occur specifically and only as a consequence of the characters' actions or another predefined occurrence.
- Timed events occur regardless of what the characters are doing or where they are, which means that the characters might only feel the aftermath or find out that they missed something if they are not in the right place at the right time.
- Arbitrary events may not be essential to the overall plot but can be included at the Arbiters discretion to further storyline, drama, elements or additional information, or they are essential but can occur whenever the Arbiter needs them to.

ENCOUNTERS: An encounter is an event which involve entities or people that the characters must interact with in order to achieve their goal. Encounters differ from regular interaction in that they are instances where the characters meet and deal with key people, adversaries or other entities to drive the story forward.

Encounters are generally divided between interaction and conflict, but the lines are blurry, and one can quickly develop into the other and occasionally vice-versa. Conflict often means combat but can be any type of contested or opposed situation resolved by whichever means the situation warrants, such as by negotiation.

As the sessions, scenarios and campaigns progress, the Arbiter should always take notes to keep track of character development, how they dealt with various events as well as the encounters and interactions they have throughout the story. Retaining this knowledge can prove invaluable for instigating future occurrences tied to earlier events and building an NPC gallery.

*The day slowly waned, allowing the night to cover the city in its dark veil. The silence could almost be felt as it descended on the Kimah slums, the hot breezes slowly releasing their nauseating grip to the cooler night rain. With what little nebulous light could sneak through the thickening clouds, the only sound ringing through the slums were the muffled footsteps of a young girl nervously tapping her feet on the dusty ground, trying to stay on the road that she could see. She knew that she should not be out after dusk, especially when everything seems calm and quiet.*

*As she sped up to make her way through the dark alleys, she thought that she heard a faint growl, causing the hair on her neck to rise in fear. Looking around, unable to trace the source, she thought "Am I imagining this?"*

*Turning and peeling her eyes, she tripped over a beggar dozing in the gutter. Startled and awoken from a rare moment of solace, he cursed at the poor child. She picked herself up from the ground and ran away leaving his curses hanging in the air.*

*As she rounded a bend suddenly, everything went silent again. The only sound was her own exhausted breathing. She sighed deeply and there it was again. That same resonant growl, coming from nowhere.*

*As she turned to carry on with her unwanted late-night excursion, she felt strong hands grabbing her wrists. She wanted to scream, but no sound came over her lips. Knocking her against a nearby mud brick wall, and placing both of her arms above her head, holding them in just one of his hands, the assailants face was cast in shadows. All she could discern was a glimpse of purple eyes and striped skin giving off a deep red glow against the weak starlight.*

*"Mmmm..." the assailant growled seemingly enjoying her distress. In high Darij dialect he muttered "Your smell is intoxicating!" his deep voice alive with eagerness. "Could I have gotten any luckier?" She felt a talon caressing her skin, digging in slightly.*

*"Please don't kill me..." she whispered beneath her breath.*

*"Kill you? Oh, no. No, no, no... You must think that I'm some kind of a monster." He responded mockingly. "I'm not going to kill you. You will enjoy this, I promise..."*

# Events & Encounters

For Arbiters preparing the game revolves around creating interesting plots and occurrences for the characters to deal with. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, and the following section is intended to help Arbiters create thrilling and engaging events and encounters.

Overall, a good rule-of-thumb is that all the characters should be involved during a game session. Obviously, not everyone can be active all the time, but the considerate Arbiter makes sure that each character gets their moment to shine or drive the story forward.

A way to achieve this is to ensure that the events and encounters are diverse enough that the capabilities of each character have a chance to come into play. Thinking about which Traits might be applicable to overcome obstacles and encounters and diversifying these by mixing social, physical and mental challenges throughout the scenario is a clever way to create varied and interesting challenges.

Although some characters may have comparable abilities, there are always some dissimilarities that the Arbiter can focus on. Some players may also be reluctant to step into the limelight but can be coaxed if their abilities are the only ones applicable in a given situation. A useful tool for the Arbiter is to be aware of each character's skills, powers, abilities and capabilities.

## EVENTS

The four event types - fixed, triggered, timed and arbitrary - are all designed, handled and resolved the same, the only difference being how and under what circumstances the characters are introduced to them. Events are challenges or obstructions that characters must deal with to drive the story forward. Events that revolve around interaction and conflict are called encounters.

An event typically involves one or more tasks that the characters must perform, overcome, outmanoeuvre, circumvent and so on to continue. Completing these tasks does not necessarily have to involve dice rolls, but often do. Examples of event tasks are scaling walls, researching archaic tablets, brewing hallucinogenic infusions and so on.

Events ought always to have a distinct risk of failure - causing danger or injury, a setback to plans or further challenges that complicate matters for the characters - to get the characters invested in the activity.

Arbiters should generally consider at least two or three ways for characters to overcome, mitigate or avoid a challenge to ensure that players have multiple avenues of approach. Making only one resolution option can be detrimental to the story as it reduces player agency to nothing, and can - if failed - derail or determine the entire plot.



## Designing events

When the Arbiter is creating a scenario or campaign, it is important to consider the elements or events the characters are going to experience. Do not consider mechanics or rules at this point, just let the imagination flow. A prudent way to design an event is considering the situation without the characters' presence. The Arbiter who has considered which factors are applicable and how they each affect the situation is well-equipped to handle anything the players come up with. The basic aspects of events are listed here with suggestions on how to approach each and points to deliberate.

Once the aspects of the event are considered and determined the Arbiter can apply mechanics to the event. Is there a time constraint compelling the characters to rush? What specific tasks can the characters come across and what are the difficulties for these? Are there several tasks to be carried out in tandem or a particular order in which things must be done? Are preparation or specific tools and resources required? And so on.

When applying mechanics, there are two primary considerations: Which abilities are required to resolve the tasks, and how difficult should the tasks be? Versatility is crucial to make each event unique and interesting. A way to achieve this is to diversify the Traits and abilities required to resolve each event. A suggestion when designing events is to make sure that no two events in one session are directed at the same Trait.

If one event focuses on physically strong characters, perhaps the next could emphasise characters with high Intellect or Willpower? Resourceful players are able to utilise their characters' fortes irrespective of the outset, but diversification has a significant impact and make sessions more interesting when each event poses a novel set of challenges.

Generally, events which are not attuned to the characters' capabilities or do not allow the characters a chance at success cause frustration, while events that are too easy elicit boredom. The Arbiter should keep in mind what the characters are capable of when setting the difficulties of the various tasks while keeping it believable. For instance, picking an ordinary lock does not all of a sudden become a daunting task merely because the characters have progressed in their applicable skills and the Arbiter does not want the task to be too easy for them. A useful approach when character progression has reduced the effort of completing specific tasks is to either skip them, introduce other obstacles into the activities or bring in external factors making everyday challenges more difficult or exciting. For instance, scaling a stone wall is typically an average difficulty task. Once the characters have acrobatics or similar skills granting modifiers, it becomes routine and uninteresting for them. However, scaling that same wall in the dead of night during a monsoon rain is an entirely different matter. Scaling the wall with a troop of ill-disposed Jinassar at the heels introduces another challenge, namely how fast it has to be done for the characters to avoid being caught.

### EVENT ELEMENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| PRIMARY OBJECTIVE | What is the key feature and objective of the event? What motivates the characters to go there and what can they hope to achieve? What possible outcomes arise from achieving or possibly not achieving the objective. |
| LOCATION | Where does the event occur? Is it an abandoned ruin, a busy souq, or a stinky sewer? The location has immense impact on the atmosphere of the event, how it plays out, as well as allowing the Arbiter to easily detail some of the environment factors that may affect the characters. |
| ENVIRONMENT | The environment is important - providing possibilities and limitations to the characters' actions. The time of day or night make a difference, weather may impact as well especially if the characters are exploring faraway worlds with peculiar climates. Occasionally the entire focus of the event is to navigate through a particular hazardous environment. |
| POTENTIAL PARTAKERS | Is anyone else there? Whether an event occurs in a crowded or a deserted place can have immense impact on the event. The presence of guards, onlookers or potential allies can significantly influence how the characters choose to approach a task. |
| INCIDENCES | Sometimes exceptional success rolls or critical mishaps provides incidences altering the location, environment, partakers and so on. The Arbiter might consider prearranged incidences impacting some aspect of the event as it takes place. |
| SECONDARY OBJECTIVES | No occurrence happens in a vacuum - there are always something in the periphery that might impact the main focus. The imaginative Arbiter could consider if another objective in the same event could add something to the story or perhaps be pivotal to achieving the main goal. |

## Utilising Environment

One aspect that is relevant when exploring the vast Cosmos is the variety of ecologies and topographies that the characters are exposed to. Early on it might be convenient to mimic the conditions of Earth, making characters able to deal with the conditions without issue, but as the characters progress and begin exploring strange and exotic worlds Arbiters can introduce new and exciting conditions. The primary aspects to consider are atmosphere, gravity, climate and the geology of the world.

As such the environment of any world can make for interesting gameplay options that an Arbiter can take advantage of. With the innumerable worlds of the Cosmos, there are many options for creating campaigns and adventures set on worlds with interesting environs, atmospheres, climates, and so on, which is even more true for border worlds or deep worlds that are uninhibited by natural phenomena.

An example of an intricate Cosmic world with several environmental factors is the Sharur Trinity. All three globes - orbiting each other closely - have heavy atmospheres and high humidity, which severely fatigue non-indigenous species, while the relatively small size of each globe and their proximity to each other induces low gravity - enabling the winged male specimens of the local population to fly between the globes. The worlds are all tropical or sub-tropical climate causing massive plant growth and richness in the fauna. The indigenous species and others used to similar conditions have no issues here, while human Voidfarers would experience concurrent oppressiveness and buoyancy.

### COSMIC WORLD ENVIRONMENTS

The environment on strange worlds is a feature that Arbiters can use to perpetuate a distinct sense of otherworldliness when characters are exploring the Cosmos. The tables provide some general ecological effects for Arbiters to implement.



The various factors can be combined and often one factor would influence another - such as worlds with high gravity being likely also to have a thick atmosphere while low gravity worlds are disposed to having thin atmospheres, and so on. When creating worlds Arbiters can pick and choose from the noted effects, introducing the environmental factors they deem relevant and applicable.

### BORDER WORLD ENVIRONMENTS

Caught between the stability of the Cosmos and the chaos of the Void, border worlds are a product of both. While a border world may have a dominant gravity, atmosphere, climate and geology, the constant emanations from the Void make such conditions unstable and sometimes precarious. Border worlds will often have shifting environments, with the Arbiter recurrently changing the conditions or rolling on the Void emanations table to determine the flux of the border world. Depending on how perforated the Veil is on the world such fluctuations may occur frequently or intermittently. The entropic nature of the Void is evident in inhabitants of such border worlds and anyone encountered is likely to have suffered from Void distortion.

### DEEP WORLD ENVIRONMENTS

Deep worlds do not abide by conventional environments and are likely to have concurrent or paradoxical ecological effects. While humans are unlikely to survive an actual deep world, Arbiters can introduce less entropic variants that are still survivable to characters. Deep worlds are perpetually changing, grotesque and bizarre to human sensitivities and require the constant substitution of environmental factors, proving precarious to all non-esoteric creatures. Arbiters can regularly roll on the environment tables, Void emanations table, Void distortion table and calamities table to simulate the conditions of a deep world that characters might survive. Introducing non-gravity, firestorms and other esoteric environmental factors would add credible ecological effects to such an environment.



## Environment elements

### ATMOSPHERE

The atmosphere is crucial as certain worlds can only host certain populations of species based on their biology. But atmospheres do not have to be instantly deadly, they can impose detrimental factors on the characters or cause damage over time, causing the characters to rush when exposed to it. Examples of otherworldly atmospheres can be low oxygen making characters easily fatigued or light-headed.

The Arbiter can request all strenuous activity be followed by an average difficulty [7] Stamina roll or the character becomes fatigued and unable to act for D6 minutes, or maybe apply a -1 modifier to all physical actions. A world can have toxic fumes causing delirium (see psychological effects) or many other effects.



| ATMOSPHERE | DESCRIPTION | EFFECT |
|---|---|---|
| THIN | Worlds with thin atmospheres make characters easily fatigued and light-headed if they strain themselves. | Moderate "easily exhausted" Flaw applies \| Sta [4] or Delirium [1-5] |
| THICK | Worlds with increased atmospheres cause heavy breathing, disorientation and even seizures under strain. | Moderate "cramps" Flaw applies as seizures \| "confused" Flaw applies |
| NOXIOUS | Otherworldly atmospheres may cause nausea, dizziness or other detrimental effects to non-natives. | Moderate "sluggish" Flaw applies as nausea<br>Moderate "clumsy" Flaw applies as dizziness<br>-1 to -3 penalties to physical or mental rolls |
| TOXIC | Some environments are harmful to non-natives causing severe distress and even injury. | Sta [7] or Delirium \| Sta [4] or Suffocation |

The composition of the air and atmosphere of worlds affect the flora and fauna and can be detrimental and even deadly to visiting species. The table provides examples of how otherworldly atmospheres can affect characters.

### GRAVITY

Humans are affected by increased or reduced gravity compared to their native conditions on Earth. High gravity typically incurs detrimental factors to humans who are not used to the additional strain. Items feel much heavier than usual, which can be simulated by causing a temporary reduction to characters' Strength, similarly affecting athletic capabilities and the like. Falling damage is more severe and can be amended accordingly by the Arbiter depending on the gravity increase.

Lower gravity would typically enable characters increased physical capabilities in terms of acrobatics and such but would induce difficulties for humans to keep stable and balanced if not firmly standing on the ground. Falling damage would decrease accordingly in low-gravity worlds.

Gravity significantly affects the topography, vegetation and creatures on a world. The table presents general factors applicable to characters visiting worlds with lower or higher gravity than they are used to. Worlds with gravity similar to Earth have no effect on characters.

| GRAVITY | DESCRIPTION | EFFECT |
|---|---|---|
| VERY LOW | The low gravity causes buoyancy, making movement lighter but more difficult to control. | -2 to balance rolls \| +3 to move \| Bulk -2 \| Falling damage negated |
| LOW | Reduced gravity makes objects seem lighter but upsets the stability of non-native creatures. | -1 to balance rolls \| +1 to move \| Bulk -1 \| falling damage halved |
| INCREASED | Slightly higher gravity causes some discomfort and makes objects seem heavier. | Bulk +1 \| falling damage is +1 \| athletics -1 |
| HIGH | The elevated gravity on this world causes stiffness and reduced flexibility. | Bulk +1 \| -1 to all physical actions \| falling damage is doubled \| Strength Trait -1 |
| EXTREME | The downward pressure is excruciating making even walking difficult. It feels like an immense weight is constantly pressing down. | Bulk +2 \| -2 to all physical actions \| falling damage is tripled \| Strength Trait -2 |



## CLIMATE

Climate and associated weather patterns also impact activities. A world enveloped in constant torrential rains or covered in ice would present a series of challenges to the characters, some merely unfavourable or detrimental, others hazardous. Even without unusual weather patterns, humidity and temperature affect characters, equipment and so on. Damp, steamy environments cause wounds to fester while hot, arid places require characters to consume additional liquid, rations and supplies or suffer harmful consequences.

The climate and environment may impact the exploits of characters significantly causing complications or special considerations to be applied. Arbiters can introduce specific weather patterns and environmental factors to emphasise climate effects. Climate effects only apply on failed Stamina rolls, with difficulty determined by the Arbiter depending on the severity of the climate and modified by precautionary measures by the characters.



| CLIMATE | DESCRIPTION | EFFECT |
|---|---|---|
| ARID | Extremely dry conditions require additional liquid intake and may cause fatigue. | Mild "easily exhausted" Flaw applies \| sand- or dust-storms \| glaring light inhibiting vision |
| HUMID | Constant damp cause respiratory problems, and other unfavourable consequences | Infected wounds increased to [7] \| heavy rains |
| FRIGID | Extreme cold temperatures cause severe disabilities unless characters are properly clothed and prepared. | Moderate "sluggish" Flaw applies unless clothed properly \| blizzards \| moderate "weak grip" Flaw and mild acid burn applied as frostbite |
| HOT | Heat causes nausea, exhaustion and mental dysfunction if characters are overexposed. | Mild "sluggish" Flaw applies as nausea \| moderate "easily exhausted" Flaw applies \| "confused" Flaw applies |

## GEOLOGY

The geology of a world is the final aspect for Arbiters to consider. A world of volcanic or tectonic activity, sulphurous oceans or toxic bogs is not only dramatic but can be a peril, undoubtedly influencing the activities of characters visiting the world. Relying on geological factors to define different worlds is a practical way to create diversity and distinct ambience.

The topography of worlds shapes their flora and fauna as well as how inhabitants survive and live. Unstable and extreme topographies enable Arbiters to introduce exhilarating hazards and perils such as the ones included here.

| GEOLOGY | DESCRIPTION | EFFECT |
|---|---|---|
| VOLCANIC | Significant volcanic activity impacts the world, causing disruption and near constant perils to influence all life. | Localised toxic climate \| impassable terrain \| hazardous pitfalls and magma pits \| exploding volcanoes \| ash clouds \| limited visibility |
| TECTONIC INSTABILITY | The crust of the world is unstable with tectonic plates moving regularly causing natural disasters and shifting landscapes. | Earth quakes \| cracks and crevasses cause impassable terrain \| rising magma \| localized noxious or toxic emissions |
| WATER WORLDS | This world is covered in water or another liquid and has very few or no landmasses with extreme weather patterns as a result. | Massive typhoons \| torrential rains \| extreme winds |
| WATERLESS WORLDS | With very little or no surface water these worlds are arid wastelands dominated by extreme temperatures and sandstorms. | Extreme temperature fluctuation \| sandstorms \| arid environment |

# Social Encounters

As characters explore the Cosmos and Void, they will meet some interesting, strange and even bizarre beings on their way. Events involving principal personages (NPC's) are known as encounters. It is up to the Arbiter to make the NPC's personality come across, making the players feel that their characters are meeting actual people, not faceless mannequins based on a few scribbled notes. NPC's have backgrounds, desires and impetus - supposedly - and should be portrayed as such. Speaking with a particular speech-pattern, whispering, gesticulating, using particular phrases or foreign terms and so on are just some of the means an Arbiter can employ to let the personality of an NPC come alive.

An aspect to consider when deciding which quirks to display and what behaviour to use when portraying NPC's is what the NPC wants. Why is he, she or it there? Which mentality lies behind and what relationship - if any - does the NPC have with humanity? In Black Void many of the beings that characters interact with are outlandish lifeforms, which presents its own brand of possibilities as well as challenges. Otherworldly beings supposedly think and feel differently to humans. Their reasoning might be based on different tenets and their emotive spectres might be broader or narrower than those of their human counterparts. This outlandishness can be made clearly evident in the way they reason, speak and act, adding an entirely new dimension to social interaction for the characters.

## Creating Noteworthy NPC's

### CREATING NOTEWORTHY NPCs

The foundation of any social encounter is an interesting NPC. The Arbiter should always aim to make the story as immersive as possible, and that means having NPCs who are well-developed and crafted.

What really defines an NPC is not the mechanics, numbers and stats behind, but the personality and disposition the Arbiter endow. While the Arbiter has no need to give every NPC a four-page backstory complete with portrait and genealogical tree - an engaging NPCs require the same planning and design as any other key element of the story.

Arbiters can "build" NPC's or distinct individuals, by selecting Traits, Attributes, and so on in the same way as creating a character, utilising the comprehensive range of abilities and even esoteric Attributes provided in the species chapter. Should the Arbiter decide to build the NPC there is a plethora of options and possibilities as NPC's have no point-maximum to limit them.

Immersive story-growth and plot-development is frequently the result when characters interact with NPC's, and often new plot twists emerge delving into a story of an NPC's past, building a new scenario around that. Without colourful and well-thought-out characters to flesh out the worlds, the Arbiter risk having the characters roaming an empty husk.

### NPC ARCHETYPES

Arbiters can base their NPC's on known archetypes and tropes to make them recognisable, but a twist always adds depth and helps associate the individual to the Black Void setting. Strictly archetypical or particularly divergent individuals can be exciting choices, providing a foundation for a variety of encounters depending on their distinction within their species.

Take for instance the weary veteran archetype. The Arbiter could have the characters arrive in a small tundra village on a frigid continent where they are forced to weather out a blizzard. In the only drinking hole around, they come across a weary veteran. But perhaps, rather than being tired of war, he wishes that it still raged, for he is convinced that killing is the only thing he is truly skilled at. He is gruff, standoffish, and may even try to start a quarrel to alleviate his aggression and weariness or he may try to connect with the characters in an attempt to get off world, and they find out that he stopped fighting at the behest of his family only to have them slaughtered in front of him. As more is revealed about his past, the characters may realise that he was a member of the Rasha Galam, an enclave militia in Llyhn and might be able to provide them with pertinent information if they can get him to open up.

The backstory immediately gives implications about what kind of a person this is and how he could be played out by the Arbiter. His past makes him a tragic figure, but there is more to him than that.



His demeanour would likely fluctuate between guilt, gruffness and longing to depart and it would be only natural that he walks with a limp from an old injury.

Arbiters acting out the NPCs, for instance by emulating the voice, mannerisms, even walks or stances, when speaking to their players, accentuate the role-playing experience for both themselves and the players.

they are approached in the course of the game Arbiters can use the various appearance and archetype tables to generate a cursory species or NPC to suit.

This list of the prominent species to be found in the Eternal City gives Arbiters an overview of mentality, typically associated occupations and well as societal inclination, making for an easy-to-use chart for generating NPC's and perhaps background characters.

| SPECIES | PHYSIQUE | MENTALITY | KEY OCCUPATIONS | SOCIETY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AQ'JAREA | Small six-limbed | Inquisitive and feisty | Traders, Bedouin, guides | Nomads |
| BA-WAÏKH | Diminutive humanoid | Fervent and driven | Retainers, servants and magistrates | Settled |
| HARITH | Massive, stout and horned | Truculent and jovial | Mercenaries, guards and craftsmen | Migrants |
| IM'ZU | Tiny, flabby and inept | Clever and ambitious | Magistrates, scribes and clerks | Civilised |
| JE'EHL | Robust humanoid | Indulgent and proud | Craftsmen, vendors and orators | Civilised |
| KA'ALUM | Large beaked biped | Erudite and pragmatic | Merchants, slavers and magistrates | Civilised |
| NAQASTÏ | Stout and strong humanoid | Sluggish and ascetic | Labourers, porters and haulers | Colonised |
| OORD | Small waddling humanoid | Servile and reticent | Voidfarers, navigators and guides | Civilised |
| QUTH | Huge chitinous insectoid | Placid and eccentric | Orators, sages and oracles | Civilised |
| SHIRR | Large elegant slug | Crafty and prudent | Traders, guides and sages | Civilised |
| TALATH | Big brutish humanoid | Simple and loutish | Mercenaries, gladiators and labourers | Savage |
| TIMANIÈM | Lithe furtive humanoid | Austere and orthodox | Hunters, guides and warriors | Savage |

## Populating the Cosmos

The sentient and esoteric species described in the core book are a selection of the most prominent to be found in Llyhn and on many core worlds. There are myriad species in the Cosmos and Arbiters should not shy away from creating their own species to populate the setting as unassuming crowds, general population and NPC's. The masses can easily consist of species unknown to the characters and if

During sessions, Arbiters may have to come up with background characters on the spot as characters roam around exploring. These are often defined by their role or occupation; A tea-brewer, a harlot, a mercenary captain and so on. While rarely significant enough to become NPC's, they may need some fleshing out to be believable and provide depth to the story. This list of generic occupation descriptions and associated skills provides Arbiters with a tool to populate the setting and generate on-the-go background characters.

| OCCUPATION | TYPICAL SKILLS | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| ARISTOCRATS AND GENTRY | Intrigue, scholastic lore, socializing and languages | Aristocrats are wealthy high-caste individuals relying on inheritance or commercial endeavours to sustain them. They have a notorious reputation for being an eccentric and conceited, yet sophisticated and educated group of people. |
| POETS, BARDS AND PERFORMERS | Performance, common lore, expression and socializing | Bards are poets, artists and storytellers, masters of entertainment and gossip. Making a living as wandering entertainers or as hired performers in establishments, bards are not only entertainers but often also critics and moralists. |
| CARAVAN GUARDS AND MERCENARIES | Combat skills, intimidation, navigation and wilderness survival | Mercenaries and caravan guards are hired swords leasing their abilities to the highest bidder. Some work individually, while others belong to companies. Always in high demand, they need to be tough, capable and steadfast to prosper - yet they tend to have fairly short life expectancies. |
| CELEBRANTS AND CLERGY | Rituals and academic lore | Celebrants serve in the shrines and other places of worship, governing and leading the ritualistic sacrifices and rites. Skilful celebrants are revered as the organ through which the blessings of deities flow. |
| CHATTER BROKERS | Enquiry, intrigue, languages and observation | Selling information about everyone and everything, chatter brokers are the life-nerve of gossip and conspiracy in the Eternal City, but also of circulating news and keeping the residents informed about current events. |



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| COURTESANS, CONCUBINES AND HARLOTS | Expression, performance scholastic lore and acrobatics | Courtesans are educated and sophisticated women who provide companionship for wealthy patrons. Courtesans are known for their conversational skill, eruditeness, artistic affinity and physical aptitudes. |
| CRAFTSMEN | Trade skills and commerce | Trained within a given trade, craftsmen are artisans and tradesmen and manufacturers, creating and selling their services and goods directly from their workshop, in the bazaars or to Voidfaring traders. |
| GLADIATORS AND PIT FIGHTERS | Any combat skill, athletics and acrobatics. | Trained for athletic games and arena fights, gladiators are entertainers in an often-lethal spectacle. Gladiators can be slaves fighting and competing for the glory of their master or free folk seeking riches and fame. |
| GUIDES AND NAVIGATORS | Navigation, wilderness survival, streetwise, observation and languages | Guides provide an indispensable service for caravans, travellers and explorers. A guide knows his chosen territory comprehensively and offer to provide the safest and quickest route for clients. |
| MAGISTRATES, TITHE COLLECTORS, SCRIBES AND OVERSEERS | Languages, common lore and scholastic lore | Magistrates and scribes are the foundation of any administration. Trained in writing, arithmetic and record keeping, they manage contracts, accounts and archives. Each usually has a speciality vital to the administration of households, businesses or establishments. |
| MERCHANTS, TRADERS AND HAWKERS | Commerce, languages and common lore | Merchants and traders are the lifeblood of any thriving city. Procuring and selling all manners of goods, merchants must be astute, knowledgeable and quick to seize opportunities or risk losing to the competition. |
| ORATORS, PHILOSOPHERS, ORACLES AND PROPHETS | Expression, languages, enquiry, common lore, academic lore and performance | Orators are public speakers that come in many guises; some are philosophers, others are rumourmongers and some function as dignitaries or embassies. A skilled orator can raise or dampen the mood and inflame the spirits of her audience through her eloquence. |
| PHYSICIANS | Anatomy, herbalism, scholastic lore and observation | Physicians are trained in the healing arts and are knowledgeable about anatomy, disease and injuries. Utilising herbal treatments, simple surgery and occasionally blood rituals or mysticism, they treat the ailments of those who can afford their services. |
| SERVANTS, RETAINERS AND LABOURERS | Common lore, trade skill | Menial workers, servants, attendants and lowly specialist occupations such as masseurs comprise the majority of labour in vast cities such as Llyhn. |
| SPIES, POISONERS AND ASSASSINS | Herbalism, stealth, subterfuge, observation and combat skills | Wherever there is civilisation there is a demand for clandestine and underhand efforts. Spies and assassins do the dirty work for the affluent and high castes. When intrigue and feuds are rife these vocations thrive. |
| STREET-RATS, BEGGARS, CRIPPLES AND PICK-POCKETS | Observation, larceny, stealth, subterfuge and streetwise | Street-rat is a common term for beggars, drifters, pickpockets and their ilk. Living in the filthiest of places, often feeding on scraps and garbage, they are among the lowest dregs. They tend to be excellent moles and informants as they see much but are rarely seen themselves. |
| TEA-BREWER, INFUSERS AND SHEESHA TENDERS | Herbalism and rituals | These specialists are skilled practitioners in their various arts of tea ceremonies, water pipes and so on. Used for social rituals or to induce intoxicating, hallucinogenic or remedial effects, the tea ceremony is a highly esteemed custom, requiring profound knowledge and expertise. |
| TEMPLE DANCERS, RITUALISTS AND PERFORMERS | Acrobatics, performance, scholastic lore and rituals | Temple Dancers are dedicated to the religious performances of their chosen temple. They perform a ritualistic expression of the divine, manifesting through intricate series of movements meant to draw the awareness of the viewers to enlightenment or transcendence. |
| VOIDFARERS AND VOID GUIDES | Wilderness survival, streetwise, languages and eldritch lore | Voidfarers are resourceful individuals who travel the Void and worlds with a distinct disregard for the dangers of the endeavour. They are sagacious vagrants calling everywhere and nowhere home. |

## Skills in Social Encounters

In addition to acting out the characters, players may want to employ skills or abilities during a conversation. There are several skills typically associated with social interaction. Socialise (of course), intimidate, and enquiry are examples of socially oriented skills.

When using skills in social encounters, the Arbiter should let the player role-play the exchange and - if there is doubt about the outcome - ask for a roll to see how the recipient reacts to this. For better or worse, players may not have the same social skills as their characters and using rolls mitigate this discrepancy. It allows the players to role-play while keeping to what the character would conceivably achieve. As with all other actions it is not necessary to make rolls for every conversation, but if the character attempts to achieve a specific result or the speaker is averse to helping the character a roll would be suitable to determine if the attempt is successful or not.

### INTERACTION & RESPONSE ROLLS

Before any dice are rolled the Arbiter must determine the difficulty by deciding how susceptible the responding NPC is to the character. Once the player has stated the purpose of the interaction, which skill or ability is employed and the associated Trait the dice may be rolled.

To help determine difficulties based on the respondents' attitude towards the characters Arbiters can use the susceptibility table as a reference. For unreceptive respondents - with difficulties 10 or higher - the action becomes resisted, and the Arbiter adds the respondents' Willpower modifier to the difficulty, to reflect the obstinacy and unwillingness to help. This may be a negative modifier if the responding NPC is weak of will and therefore easily swayed.

| SUSCEPTIBILITY DIFFICULTY | CONVERSATION/INQUIRY | FLIRTING/SWAY |
|---|---|---|
| NO ROLL | Helpful | Attracted |
| 4 | Cooperative | Interested |
| 7 | Impartial | Attentive |
| 10 | Suspicious | Disinterested |
| 13 | Adverse | Disparate |
| 16+ | Hostile | Adverse |

For instance, Shars wants to get some information out of a silk merchant in a souq. The merchant is suspicious about Shars' intentions, and the Arbiter appropriately sets the difficulty at 10 to reflect this. The player decides to employ Shars' socialise skill and set a friendly tone by associating the roll with the Presence score to rely on his charms. Shar has ranking 2 in socialise and a +1 modifier due to Presence for a total of +3.
Alternatively, the player could decide to question the merchant to get the information using the inquiry skill and associating his Persuasion Trait giving a very different situation and possible outcome. Players are encouraged to try creative means to achieve ends using relevant skills and associated Traits. To help in this regard Arbiters can suggest that the player role-play the conversation first and then determine which skill and associated Trait is appropriate.

If the roll is successful, the Arbiter may divulge information or respond to what the character sought to achieve. However, an NPC's personal goals and attitude towards the character can add depth to social encounters, especially if they are conflicting with the characters. To add flavour and spectacle, the Arbiter is free to decide the character got what he or she wanted, but perhaps not in the way they hoped. An answer is not always freely given. It could have been an accidental slip-of-the-tongue causing the NPC to panic or perhaps information is spat out as a threat, adding an entirely new dimension to the conversation.



*"Too often do the downtrodden go unlooked for, those tender souls who have lost their way in the streets, those easily corruptible minds being tainted by the darkness of this Eternal City. But do we do anything to aid them, my brothers and sisters? No, we do not! These poor untended hearts do wander the alleys and hallways of this sullied place, learning of dark secrets and dark dealings. Lo, I say to you all, that the open mind is an easily malleable one. We, the Perennials, must do what we can to preserve innocence in this wretched place, to ensure that our kindred spirits are not corrupted. The darkness that festers at the docks, the flesh markets, in every opium den, in every gladiatorial ring, in every bazaar, and in every pleasure house – we must do our part to stamp it out! To crush it before it can blossom, to rip it up from the roots and protect the virtuous from the blasphemous lechery and lust that dwells in these haunted and crimson locales. But what of our own needs you might ask? Is it not enough to have your needs satisfied in the glowing arms of our mother, Iskitath, She Who Shall Cleanse the Cosmos in Light?"*

*- Homily by the hallowed daughters of the Perennial Light*

## Caste & Social Interaction

With a strict social hierarchy being a prevalent factor in Llyhn, a character's caste significantly impacts interaction in the city. Should a member of a lower caste dare to speak his or her mind or seek favour among those higher ranked they are likely to be ignored, met with scorn or worse. This disparity and associated bias should be evident in the Arbiter's role-playing efforts, but if a roll is required for a character to influence or sway someone of a different caste the below table provides the applicable roll modifiers. The vertical designations indicate the caste of the character while the horizontal is the caste of whomever he or she is addressing.

Caste stratification is specific to Llyhn and does not influence social interaction on other worlds or with beings who are not native to or residents of the Eternal City. Such beings, however, may never have encountered a human before and might react with intrigue, curiosity, repulsion and so on.

| | KALBI | BALTU | SHAHRVAH | MUATI | SAHRNESH | MA'ALU | SARRU |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KALBI | - | -1 | -2 | -3 | -4 | -5 | -6 |
| BALTU | +1 | - | -1 | -2 | -3 | -4 | -5 |
| SHAHRVAH | +2 | +1 | - | -1 | -2 | -3 | -4 |
| MUATI | +3 | +2 | +1 | - | -1 | -2 | -3 |
| SAHRNESH | +4 | +3 | +2 | +1 | - | -1 | -2 |
| MA'ALU | +5 | +4 | +3 | +2 | +1 | - | -1 |
| SARRU | +6 | +5 | +4 | +3 | +2 | +1 | - |

# Violent Encounters

The Cosmos and the Void are violent places, and conflict is bound to haunt the characters; whether by their own hand or someone else's. Combat in the Black Void RPG is intentionally grim and gory, and while characters may not stare death in the eye during every combat encounter, there is always a risk of crippling injuries.



Combat is a significant tool for carrying a story and narrative forward, and it is best used as such, rather than random spouts of violence. Few beings are malicious and violent just for the sake of being so, so consider reasons for the conflict. Maybe there are no clearly discernible reasons, but at least some sort of motivation whether it be greed, desperation or grotesque. Arbiters should also keep in mind that combat can be more than just carnage. A lot of information can be divulged and learned during combat as taunts, challenges and threats fly through the air. Interrogating captives or finding significant trinkets and such on the corpses afterwards can also be a source of information.

Enabling character-driven and entertaining conflict resolution is imperative to good story-telling and is often prompted by the Arbiter granting bonus modifiers, exceptional possibilities and other advantages for creative thinking.

Combat is a thrilling and engaging aspect of role-playing and requires planning as there are some key elements to be taken into consideration. The aspects of combat encounters are shown here with recommendations on how to use each to create engaging and memorable confrontations.

| EVENT ELEMENTS | |
|---|---|
| PRIMARY ADVERSARY | What is the reason for the conflict? Who are the characters going to face? Is the adversary or characters vying for blood or is there a chance that this can develop into a social encounter? Is this a fair fight or does either side have a distinctive advantage? |
| LOCATION | Where does the battle occur? Are the combatants able to move around freely, are there any obstacles or cramped conditions affecting them? Combatants are likely to seek out high ground and use any advantage their surroundings give them. The location can be hazardous or provide useful resources for the combatants. |
| ENVIRONMENT | The environment can be crucial in combat encounters. Night-time might be an advantage to some combatants and a hindrance for others? Weather undeniably impacts ranged weapons while peculiar climates as well as gravity affects most combatants. |
| POTENTIAL PARTAKERS | Is anyone else incited to get involved? Fighting tends to draw attention. Perhaps there are allies close by that get attracted to the racket or a squadron of sentries see the developing fight and intervene. |

Arbiters who consider these aspects have a solid basis for producing engaging and extraordinary combat encounters.

The Black Void RPG combat mechanics are designed to give players a wide range of possibilities, adopting personal tactics, style and approach. Likewise can and should antagonists - ensuring that the players experience a profound difference from when they are facing an intelligent and tactically thinking adversary or a "dumb" monster. Arbiters using combat abilities actively make such encounters more bespoke - providing a distinctiveness to each conflict.

## Combat Abilities

In the species description is noted preferred combat manoeuvres, giving each species a particular style of combat aligned to their temperament. Brutish species typically employ crushing blows, and all-out attacks whereas more refined species might tend towards flurries, disarming manoeuvres and such. When the Arbiter is designing an encounter, it is useful to note these down to make sure that the fight reflects the combatants' typical combat style. Alternatively, Arbiters are free to make combatants employ uncharacteristic manoeuvres as that can be an excellent way to create a surprising and memorable encounter, stirring curiosity in the characters.

A related aspect to consider is the intellect of the antagonists. Brute animals are significantly limited in their capabilities and naturally cannot employ elaborate strategies and tactics, while cognisant species have a swathe of tactics existing to them.
To illustrate this Arbiters can limit the number of manoeuvres a combatant can employ based on his or her Intellect. The shown table provides an apt range based on the possible tactical capabilities associated with a combatant's intellect. Progressively smarter individuals can employ the preceding manoeuvres as well. While animals may not have wits to use manoeuvres other than standard attack they are instinctively inclined to particular actions, such as trample in the case of herds of Marud oxen. Specific natural attacks of animals are noted in their descriptions.

All species, animals, creatures, Daimons, Void entities and so on in Black Void can be reduced to a point-value - which gives an indication about how powerful they are in a combat encounter. Arbiters can gauge the point values of antagonists, and if it is approximately equivalent to half the points value of the characters, the balance is typically equal. If it is significantly lower, the antagonists are disadvantaged, and if it is considerably higher, the characters are disadvantaged.



| Intellect | # Manoeuvres | Characteristically Employed Manoeuvres |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | Standard attack \| natural attack |
| 1 | 3 | Brawling \| Standard attack \| All-out attack \| Crushing blow \| Wild Swing |
| 2 | 6 | Block \| Grapple \| Improvised attack \| Knockdown \| Push back \| Stun \| Swift strike |
| 3 | 9 | Aim \| Backstab \| Calculated strike \| Called attack \| Disarm \| Flurry \| Lunge \| Parry |
| 4 | 12 | Counter attack \| Feint \| Lunge \| Sneak attack |
| 5+ | 15+ | All manoeuvres |

### BALANCING

Similar to deciding an appropriate difficulty for a task a crucial aspect to consider about combat encounters is the balance between the adversaries. Sometimes it makes sense to have the opposing sides relatively equally balanced, while at others the antagonists should be hopelessly underpowered, or formidable adversaries beyond the characters' capabilities. In published scenarios encounters are composed in accordance with the story progression while Arbiters creating their own adventures might need some assistance to attain the balance that makes sense for what they want to achieve.

To create unique antagonists Arbiters are encouraged to modify and tweak the adversaries from their generic versions. This helps keep players in the dark and interested, guessing what capabilities they might be facing. For instance, increasing - or indeed decreasing - an antagonist's Intellect would affect the manoeuvres he or she can employ. Giving special equipment, weaponry and armour is another way to adjust antagonists, while granting powers can really add an element of surprise to an encounter. Arbiters can calculate the revised competence of tweaked antagonists by calculating the point values of their added or reduced capabilities and applying them to the balance reference to gauge the impact.

## Combat conditions

As touched upon earlier numerous conditions and elements can be added to a combat situation to make it extraordinary. The location and environment provide conditions that may impact the encounter.
Unless the characters find themselves in an open battlefield, there is likely to be landscape, structures and objects obstructing it. Objects provide cover and allow for tactical manoeuvring. Conditions are detailed in the combat chapter and need not be repeated here, but there are additional elements Arbiters can introduce to make an encounter more exciting: Hazards and environment factors.

### HAZARDS

Many features can be implemented in a location making it dangerous for the characters as well as their adversaries. Sometimes these features are plain to see and at other times they are hidden and go unnoticed until an unfortunate someone steps in the wrong place.
DIRECT HAZARDS: Some hazardous elements - such as fire, magma, pits and so on - simply cause damage to whoever gets near or trigger them. Characters should generally be allowed a chance to evade the hazard, but if failed they suffer immediate injury.

COMPREHENSIVE HAZARDS: Other hazards are more overwhelming, affecting entire areas, such as floods and avalanches, while others cause detrimental effects in the form of nausea, fainting or weakening, such as gasses and vapours emitted from bogs or volcanos. Evading comprehensive hazards often requires extensive action.

HIDDEN HAZARDS: Sinkholes, quicksand and the like are considered hidden hazards. Should characters be unfortunate enough to fall in or trigger such hazards, it typically requires substantial effort to escape and the consequence if the character cannot is often death. Other hidden hazards are even more insidious, such as disease-ridden objects which only manifest their dire effects later, or snares designed to cripple, incapacitate or trap victims. A character in contact with disease must make a Stamina roll but might not be told the reason and only find out once the illness erupts. Snares typically leave the character defenceless or at least weakened making him or her an easy victim for whoever set the trap.



The Arbiter can drop hints to the characters or let them find out about potential hazards ahead of the encounter. Characters with prior knowledge can potentially make tactical use of the hazards, but so can antagonists.

### ENVIRONMENT FACTORS

As touched upon in the events section environmental factors are impactful and even more so in combat. Atmosphere, gravity and climate are the primary elements causing repercussions for combatants.

Characters fighting in an atmosphere not suitable for humans are prone to face difficulties quickly. For instance, in an environment where the air is extremely thin characters might get short of breath and collapse after a number of combat rounds equalling their Stamina score. They would recover quickly and be able to fight on but be left puzzled about what happened and perhaps cautious about proceeding.
Arbiters are not obliged to explain what happened and can merely state that the air seemed thin and leave it at that. Gravity and climate can have a comparable impact in combat encounters and an overview of environmental aspects that Arbiters may use directly or for inspiration can be found in the appendix.

## Morale & self-preservation

Most sentient beings are not fanatical zealots and have an innate sense of self-preservation, meaning that they would rather flee or surrender if faced with overwhelming opposition. To simulate this, it is suggested that combatants and antagonists make a Willpower roll [7] if they become "injured" (Health condition). Should they succeed they manage to retain composure and fight on while failure causes them to surrender, flee or otherwise try to end the struggle. Players are free agents and are not obliged to make this roll.

## Combat pragmatism

Combat in Black Void RPG is theatre of the mind. For Arbiters unfamiliar with this term it basically means the fight is imagined rather than played out on a board using grids, specific measurements, miniatures and the like. It is up to the Arbiter to vividly describe the scene, make notes of where everyone involved is and manage the emerging struggle, while it is up to the players to manage their own actions and whereabouts. The theatre of the mind foundation keeps combat fluid and flexible, allowing both Arbiters and players to be creative and build the narrative drama of combat. Using miniatures, drawn maps and so on can be beneficial but if it becomes a hindrance to creativity rather than an asset get rid of them.

Somewhat ambiguous terms for distances, ranges and scopes are used in the various descriptions for weapons, powers, abilities and so on. This deliberately supports the theatre of mind format and approach by reducing rigidity and allowing for flexibility. As a frame of reference for Arbiters, the terms cover the following approximate distances and sight.

| RANGE | VISION | DISTANCE |
|---|---|---|
| CRAMPED | Total darkness | Less than one arm's length to either side of the character |
| TOUCH (CLOSE) | Very dark | Up to an arm's length (0-1 metre) / two (2) cubits |
| ADJACENT | Dark | Up to two (2) metres / four (4) cubits |
| NEAR | Gloomy | Up to four (4) metres / eight (8) cubits |
| IMMEDIATE AREA | Dim | Up to twelve (12) metres / twenty-four (24) cubits |
| SURROUNDING AREA | Dusky | Up to thirty (30) metres / sixty (60) cubits |
| EYESIGHT | Daylight | Various. Human average up to 3000 metres / 6000 cubits |
| SHORT RANGE | - | Various depending on weapon, tool or ability |
| MEDIUM RANGE | - | Various depending on weapon, tool or ability |
| LONG RANGE | - | Various depending on weapon, tool or ability |

Size matters in combat. Small combatants are exceedingly difficult to hit while larger ones tend to be more sluggish and pose bigger targets as well. Large creatures - having substantial bodies - are able to sustain more damage before succumbing than smaller creatures irrespective of their comparative Stamina score. When calculating Health points for creatures of differing sizes use the following table.

| SIZE | DEFENCE VALUE | HEALTH |
|---|---|---|
| TINY | +2 | STAx3 |
| LITTLE | +1 | STAx4 |
| SMALL | +1 | STAx5 |
| MEDIUM | 0 | STAx6 |
| LARGE | -1 | STAx7 |
| HUGE | -1 | STAx8 |
| GIANT | -2 | STAx9 |
| GARGANTUAN | -3 | STAx10+ |

## Improvising Events

While most events are planned, sometimes the Arbiter wants or needs to make an improvised encounter. There can be many reasons for this, such as the players missing a vital clue or drawing the wrong conclusion, proceeding in the wrong direction. The Arbiter might want to add a bit of excitement during a lull in the narrative, or perhaps the characters rile someone or spend undue attention on an inconsequential background character. As advised earlier the Arbiter should not oppose the players taking matters into their own hands, but instead go with it by either improvising, adapting the plot or subtly leading them back.

One of the ways for the Arbiter to retain control of the story and get the characters back on the right path without leashing them is to improvise an encounter that subtly guides them or exposes the information they were lacking. There are three primary ways to do this: One is introducing an occurrence that throws the characters off their current endeavour, the other is a social encounter, and the third is instigating a conflict.

An occurrence should be something that intrigues or forces the characters to pay attention, such as a mystery. Perhaps some of their equipment and supplies go missing, they notice an odd event or natural phenomena, they accidentally come upon a scene of inexplicable carnage, or they were pursuing a lead that turns out to be false rumours, and so on.

A social encounter requires that the Arbiter either use one of the existing NPC's or quickly concoct a new one. Either way, the NPC must compellingly approach the characters or draw their attention. Here Arbiters can refer to what generally motivates the characters and play on these factors by for instance introducing an NPC in distress, a lucrative opportunity, a rumour-monger gossiping or even past events coming back to haunt them. Concocting an NPC on the go can be tricky, but resources are provided in the appendices for generating NPC's.

Initiating a conflict is a likely setup in the hostile environment of Llyhn the eternal, but it still needs to be convincing and make sense in the greater scheme of the plot. For instance, having armed thugs suddenly jumping the characters seem implausible unless they are roaming around the slums, while an aristocrat surrounded by his household guard sees fit to degrade any unfortunate humans he comes across is a plausible situation in the finer districts of the city. Utilising a combat encounter can either cause the characters to run away and thereby lead them back on track, or they manage to defeat their adversaries and find a clue or other pertinent information.

For an Arbiter familiar with his or her players finding a suitable story hook for an improvised encounter can be a simple assumption of what they would be interested in sparking inspiration. Also, there are numerous plot hooks logged throughout the core book that might serve as inspiration.

# Trading & commerce

Since Llyhn is a trading hub accessible to many different people and worlds, commerce is a significant part of life in the city. Haggling is expected, and most residents have at least a superficial experience in this matter. Bartering is used when negotiating prices and trading deals. Bartering is an opposed action between the merchant and the customer. Successful bartering will confer a 5% decrease in price per score value the character overcame the opposing merchant, ordinarily up to a maximum of 25%. Characters with the commerce skill confer a 10% decrease per score value difference customarily up to 30%. Prices only decrease and can never be bartered above the initial price, unless a critical failure is rolled.
For instance, Shars is in a bartering situation. The player rolls the dice and the total - with all modifiers - is 12 while the Arbiter rolls a 9 for the merchant. Sharsh is successful and has beaten the merchant by three, granting a 15% price decrease. If Sharsh had the commerce skill, the same difference would have conferred a price decrease of 30%.

An exceptional success doubles the price decrease while a critical failure results in a price increase or a botched sale.

It is up to the player whether they wish to bargain for deals. Everyday haggling in the bazaars and souqs of Llyhn requires only a single skill roll per purchase. At the Arbiter's discretion merchants could refuse to sell to characters should they fail their rolls. Negotiating extensive trading agreements or deals of great consequence - involving massive amounts of copper Dhins or significant risk - always requires rolls and possibly extended action rolls depending on the magnitude of the deal.

# Genres & styles of play

The themes and concepts of Black Void can be approached in a variety of ways, using different genres and styles of play. The system is designed to handle most genres and leans towards darker themes such as grisly action, horror, esoteric fantasy, noir and political intrigue.

Arbiters are likely to find their players have different interests regarding the genre of role-playing. One player might be a fan of crime noir, while another loves all things adventure and swashbuckling. How would one make these different concepts work in Black Void? The setting offers the Arbiter an entire Cosmos to do with as they wish. Filled with thousands upon thousands of worlds, that allows for genre-exploration and possibilities.

Say the players would like to have a game heavily inspired by crime noir. This genre features investigation, intrigue, and drama, making it a veritable sandbox. There are massive cities across the Cosmos, from Llyhn the eternal to the degenerate city-states of Kandahir enabling the Arbiter to take elements of the crime noir genre: dark rain-filled alleys with plucky and gritty sleuths, femme fatales, tragic anti-heroes, and grizzled thugs, and insert those archetypes into Black Void in any one of these massive cities.

From there Arbiters can weave numerous different themes and genres into one storyline or encounter or campaign, by introducing hints and elements leading the story into a new direction, arc and genre. Noir can easily lead to horror with secretive and murderous cults or gut-wrenching Void entities harrowing the protagonists or their loved ones. A final confrontation with the cult leader sends the characters drifting into the Void only to emerge on a distant savage world and getting embroiled in a horrific war of attrition which has nothing to do with them, only to discover that an incipient human colony is caught in the middle and about to become collateral damage in the conflict.

From here, the Arbiter could transition the story into a grand political intrigue by enabling the protagonists to board a Red Galley and return to Llyhn where the characters unravel and disrupt an entire world-spanning plot being orchestrated from the decadent palaces of Penda'Rinn - tying elements from preceding exploits together and involving several aristocrats alongside multiple factions vying for power - by timely revelations, secret alliances, betrayal and all the manoeuvrings associated with court intrigue.

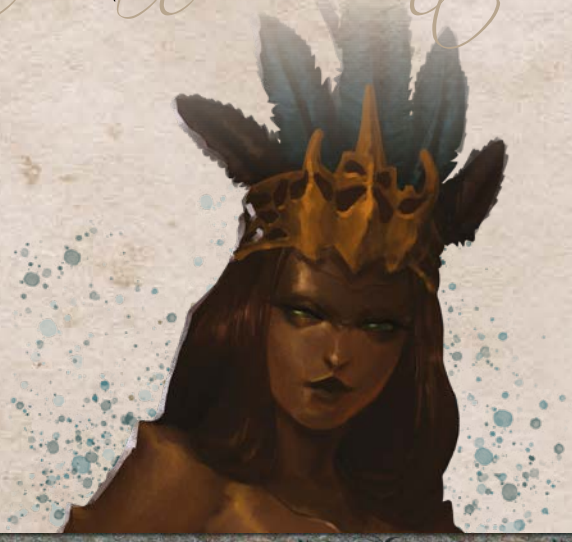
Story arcs such as this all touch upon the central themes and concepts of Black Void - while catering to diverse tastes by utilising several genres and styles of play - allowing Arbiters to use Black Void as a way and opportunity to combine multiple themes, concepts, genres and archetypes to create unique multi-layered stories for their players to enjoy.

# Character Advancement

## Awarding Experience Points

After each session, the Arbiter allocates a number of experience points to each character based on the overall progress of the scenario and perhaps the individual performance of the character. A standard four-hour game session typically awards characters 3-5 experience points, but there is not set limitation in terms of highest or lowest amount.

Arbiters might award experience points for a variety of things and are at liberty to do so. The below suggestions provide a framework for what typically generates experience points, either to the entire party or select characters.



| ACHIEVEMENT | EXPERIENCE AWARD |
|---|---|
| PROGRESS THE OVERALL STORY | 1-3 |
| RESOLVE A PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING EVENT OR ENCOUNTER | 1-2 |
| CREATIVE OR INTERESTING PROBLEM SOLVING | 1-2 |
| CONTRIBUTING AMBIENCE OR ENJOYMENT TO THE SCENARIO | 1-3 |
| GO BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE PLOT IN A MEANINGFUL WAY | 1-2 |

## Allocating Points

Players are generally free to allocate experience points as they see fit, albeit the Arbiter always has a veto option should the choice be unreasonable or be detrimental to the story or game.

TRAITS: While it is possible for characters to increase their Trait scores with experience points the Arbiter can insist that this occurs as an effect of either in-game actions or explained by down-time activities or exercise between scenarios.

TALENTS: Characters can gain new or additional Talents as Trait scores are increased to adhere to the noted score requirements. A Trait which was not recently improved may not be ascribed a new Talent.

FLAWS: As Trait scores are augmented the basis of an ascribed Flaw may technically be rendered obsolete, however, the Flaw remains in effect. At the Arbiters discretion, characters may reduce the severity of a Flaw if the corresponding Trait is raised to a score of 6, 9 or 12. Players may spend 3 experience points to reduce the severity of a Flaw by a factor of one. It is not possible to do away with Flaws entirely and they cannot be reduced beyond mild.

ATTRIBUTES: Attributes cannot be acquired or altered through the use of experience points. Exposure to the distorting impetus of the Void can cause Attributes to manifest in characters, but these are entirely random, capricious and unrelated to regular character advancement.

POWERS: Players can spend experience points for their characters to acquire powers, and unless caused by enlightenment or another external occurrence, the Arbiter may assert that it requires either in-game activities or is explained as a downtime occurrence.

SKILLS: Players may utilise experience points to attain new skills or hone existing ones for their characters. The Arbiter may well emphasise that it requires in-game doings or is clarified by as happening between scenarios.

BACKGROUND: While background is generally a backstory tool, a player may - with the Arbiters approval - spend character points to obtain backgrounds. This should either fit in terms of the plot as a result of occurrences in the progressing story or relate to events occurring between scenarios that are compatible with it. Characters can rise in caste, but this is story-driven and not based on spending experience points. Characters can only become commoners or high caste if they possess property, assets or attain an influential position.

## Enlightenment

Awarding enlightenment requires that the character has had direct dealings with the Void or Void entities. Once a given occurrence or encounter has garnered an enlightenment ranking for a character similar experiences do not grant further enlightenment. The framework is not set in stone nor is it exhaustive but gives a number of variant occurrences that each may grant enlightenment at the Arbiter's discretion. Arbiters should keep in mind that many of these occurrences potentially also result in a loss of Sanity points for the character.

*Scholars and sultans, poets and holy women paid court to him. Orators proclaimed his praises and they all kissed the fringe of his qaftan, presented him with gifts and read ovations to him as the poison they fed him slowly took effect.*

*– The demise of the blessed Emir of Qirqa*

| ENLIGHTENMENT | |
|---|---|
| VOID PHENOMENA | See a Void rift form \| experience a calamity \| experience a Void tempest \| experience a Void distortion \| be the subject of a Void power or phenomenon |
| ENTER THE VOID | Stumble/fall through a conduit \| purposefully enter a rift |
| BE AWASH IN THE VOID | Drifting aimlessly \| floating purposefully |
| TRAVEL/TRAVERSE THE VOID | As passenger \| under someone else's guidance \| under own guidance |
| VOID ENTITIES | Perceive a Void entity \| interact with a Void entity \| touch (by) a Void entity \| mentally linked with a Void entity \| harmed by a Void entity |

## Wastah

Awarding Wastah is irrespective of the above and relies purely on whether the characters have managed to indebt or otherwise build relations with affluent, powerful or influential individuals, entities, factions or even species. Below are recommendations of what could endow a character with Wastah. Each instance would grant the character one ranking of Wastah with the affected beneficiary.

Wastah is above and beyond the caste system as it pertains purely to the character's personal contacts and network. Albeit one often leads to the other, there is no necessary connection between them. A wealthy aristocrat could have no social sway and still be a high caste due to her fortune and assets, while a menial worker with no wealth could have somehow managed to befriend prominent people and be able to bend their ear prompting them to further an agenda.

While Arbiters should consider the implications carefully when granting characters Wastah - as it can affect the game-balance significantly - it is a useful tool for enabling low-caste characters to go beyond their apparent status to interact on higher societal platforms than their caste would typically allow.

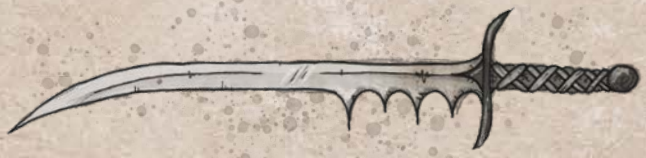


| WASTAH | WASTAH AWARD |
|---|---|
| BUILDING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP | 1 |
| PROVIDING A SIGNIFICANT FAVOUR | 1 |
| ESTABLISHING A NEED OR OBLIGATION | 1 |
| GENERATING GOODWILL, ESTEEM OR SYMPATHY | 1 |
| SAVING THE INDIVIDUAL'S OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE | 2 |

# Rewards & Treasure

Many characters explore for the promise of gold and glory, prompting Arbiters to consider what kind of rewards characters would reasonably be able to procure or be rewarded with during and after their exploits. In addition to simple coinage, wealth and ordinary items there are six primary articles Arbiters can consider as rewards.

ORDINARY ITEMS MADE BESPOKE OR MODIFIED: items found in the assorted items and goods, commodities, tools and remedial items with an added aspect, better quality, luxury version or something else to set it apart. Maybe adding an inscription or a seal stamped into the bottom, giving the item history and perhaps something to investigate takes an ordinary item and makes it an object of wonder.



CUSTOMISED WEAPONS AND ARMOUR: There are countless ways to adapt weaponry and armour giving a sense of flair and uniqueness to it. The Weaponry and Armour chapter have several tables with properties, parts and enhancements applicable to otherwise ordinary weapons and armour. Additionally, the Arbiter can introduce objects made from exotic and unknown materials granting extraordinary properties, colours or other qualities making them stand apart.



CULTURAL ARTEFACTS: Treasure comes in many shapes and forms and varies from species to species - gems, jewellery, art and such is prized by many, but most species have something particular that they value beyond such vanity trinkets. Cultural heritage pieces, religious artefacts, ceremonial paraphernalia, iconography and calligraphy, literary and poetic works, and such are suitable examples of things that may not be generically valuable but are considered treasures, perhaps because of sentimental value.

ESOTERIC ITEMS: Otherworldly, outlandish and esoteric items or materials are an obvious choice given the nature of the game. Arbiters can explore the esoteric commodities list or get creative themselves devising weird and peculiar items for the characters to come across. Sometimes such items are not immediately apparent in their otherworldliness or even use but revealed over time with the Arbiter adding further aspects to an item as is convenient. Points to consider about such items are: What do they do, how do they look, what makes them peculiar, where are they from, who are they valuable to and why? It can also be material that the characters can use to craft items from.

*"Only three of this kind in the whole Cosmos, and I have two of 'em! The other one is owned by an Ukhii merchant out on Bembor."*

*– Erys, trader of rare and enigmatic items*



PUZZLING OBJECTS: Obscure and mysterious artefacts - items that in themselves might not be peculiar but their contents and implications are. These could be stone tablets with cryptic inscriptions needing deciphering, items surreptitiously or evidently connected to lost Earth, abstruse maps or charts and so on. Such treasure is great at enticing or furthering plots.

PROPERTY: Holdings and assets are another type of reward which may be used to further the plot. Obtaining slaves, servants, holdings, vessels, animals and other such grounded possessions may enrich the characters, but it also creates dependency and allow Arbiters new avenues of adventure by including or threatening these in the story arc.

How much or how little treasure and wealth should be accessible to characters is up to the Arbiter, but the risks they endure should be made worth it while enabling players to feel that their characters are progressing and able to afford better equipment and such as time passes. Should an Arbiter happen to give characters too much wealth, it should be considered that low-caste humans with vast riches tend to draw unwanted attention from many sides and wealth can very quickly be lost again.

*A BRIEF HISTORY OF HISTORY*

*Context is essential for any RPG setting to capture the feel and have a consistent foundation. This section is intended to be a primer to set the general historical period and provide information for more research as desired. Black Void takes place in the generations following a cataclysmic event that sucked humanity from earth into the darkness beyond. This event occurs somewhere between 2,000 and 1,000 B.C. with the exact time left purposefully vague to allow flexibility and avoid getting mired in detail - besides, human history is lost quickly and takes an alternative path.*

*So, for those who are not historians, what does this mean humanity looks like when it is upturned, and what kind of civilisation did it have before the upheaval? Depending on the area, humans of this era were late Stone Age to early Iron Age in technology, with the primary focus being on the Bronze Age. While some parts of the world would still be in the pre-history, other civilisations prospered beyond some that would follow millennia later.*

*A significant focus for this setting are the cultures of Mesopotamia. This includes Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite and Akkadian cultures, who often interacted with ancient Egypt due to proximity. These were polytheistic cultures, with gods like Marduk, Ashur, Ishtar, Tiamat, Ra, Isis, and many others. The Mesopotamian kingdoms were city-states that changed hands in constant invasions, while the Pharaohs ruled all of Egypt before it fell in the following millennium. The great pyramids were finished by the time the Void swallowed Earth, and these regions knew the technology of aqueducts, irrigation, and codes of law. Chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine were changing the face of civilisation, and these cultures accomplished amazing feats of architecture and engineering.*

*In the Indus river valley region of India, that civilisation was reaching its end. These people had advanced city planning with water and sewer systems understanding hygiene issues that would plague Europe thousands of years later. Religion is vague but indicates early seeds that led to Hinduism and Buddhism. Despite their advanced science and engineering skills, written language, and seemingly prosperous empire, the Indus began to vanish early in the time frame of this setting. It was fractured into smaller settlements, and the Aryan influx would lead to the Vedic age. The concept of reincarnation would come about in this period; therefore, early versions of these beliefs could be prevalent among some humans.*

*In China, between the Yellow River and Yangtze Valley regions, the Xia dynasty ended, and the Shang dynasty took power. Some of the most beautiful bronze work and ceramics came from this region as these new technologies were refined beyond most civilisations of the time. Religion tended toward ancestor and element worship, and divination using bones in fire is well documented, but the Shangdi, supreme deity of the universe, was at the centre. The kings of the city-states of this era were military and religious leaders.*

*Across Europe, middle bronze age tribes existed, most of which came nowhere near the civilisations above. The most notable were the Minoans on Crete, but they did not compare to what would follow in the rise of the Greek empire in the following millennium. It is, therefore, the intent of Black Void that Greek gods, and indeed the Roman that followed, would not have come to exist yet, along with the empires that worshipped them.*
*In the Americas, we see mostly tribal hunter-gatherer peoples starting to transition to agriculture, mainly at the end of the stone age level of technology. This setting predates the rise of the Olmec and well pre-dates the Aztec and Mayan cultures.*

*What would the more primitive peoples have thought of the works of the Babylonian and Egyptian empires on the other side of the globe? Being cast together in the Void, and spit out in Llyhn, which surpasses even the most amazing achievements of humanity at the time, it is an excellent point to consider in designing your campaign. Is it any wonder sanity is challenging to hold on to? Yes, humans have proved adaptive, but how has humanity adapted? What is left of past ethos and which culture are the players descended from? Considering questions like this will likely enrich your campaign!*





# CHAPTER: 7:
# Llyhn

THE ETERNAL CITY & ENVIRONS

Amid dense, dark jungles enclosed by insurmountable, peculiarly-shaped peaks lies Llyhn the eternal, a swelling cosmopolis of charlatans, cutthroats, prophets, slavers, Daimons, Demi-Gods and everything in between. The city, located at a massive convergence of Void currents, attracts multitudes from across the known Cosmos with the promise of opportunity and wealth, adventure and depraved delights. There are no known native species, so in a city home to untold masses, all and none are considered indigenous. With all the wickedness and magnificence of existence gathered in one location Llyhn is scarcely a placid city to reside. Despite - or perhaps because of - the blatant inequality, oppression, the warping taint of the Void and malice and rapture in equal measure, people flock to the city.

The surrounding Pe'rep'ial Peaks are overgrown almost vertical rock pinnacles, their steep sides and thick vegetation making any attempt to climb them an unviable and dangerous undertaking. In the foothills lie scattered smallholdings with farmers trying to scratch a meagre living from their fields and orchards on the steep mounds.

At the centre of the city is the font of the peculiar Marggida river flowing outwards into the jungle; a veritable maze of dense undergrowth, treacherous terrain and carnivorous plants that few would venture into without compelling cause. Here and there the rainforest gives way to swamps and mangroves where muck-men gather fungi, herbs and hunt swamp-beasts to sell the meat, shells or bones to merchants from the city. Just beyond the city's boundaries lies a stretch of desolate land called the Barrens. This scorched stretch of land is kept arid to discourage predatory wildlife and other more nefarious entities of the jungle from getting close to the city. In the barrens along the banks of the River Margidda lie a few fishing villages.

The sprawling city is characterised by countless towers reaching towards the sky, copper-domed temples glittering in the dying sunlight its myriad strange and eldritch inhabitants strolling through the cobblestoned streets and dark alleys on obscure and reticent errands while the bells of the morning palace toll at breaks of dawn, day, dusk and dark.

Composed of seven districts on the banks of the river Margidda, a broad and slowly flowing waterway crowded continuously with barges and ships, the city is a sprawling mesh of urban life: Kimah is a filthy shantytown on the outskirts where the casteless and other castaways subsist. Dhaarese is mainly made up of wharves and is an industrious melting pot of commerce, labour camps, warehouses and workshops. Khameeliya, with its sandstone and terracotta mansions crowned with mosaic domes, is where many of the city's Merchant Princes and guilds hold court, making it the centre of commerce in the city.

Pai'Karaan is dominated by spiralling towers and minarets stretching towards the heavens of a district renowned for its religious sites, temples, shrines and the consecrated basins, making it a densely populated area brimming with worshippers, pilgrims and zealous celebrants.



Daer Bitaan is among the largest districts, identified by its building-bedecked natural rock pinnacles. This labyrinthine district houses the trading domes and arenas and is flanked by the Merchants quarters and the caravanserai in the Barrens outside the city.

Penda'Rinn is the wealthiest district in the Eternal City where the aristocracy looks down upon the surrounding city from pompous palaces, interspaced by bustling plazas, grand terraces, lush gardens and glittering canals - its library, academies and embassy quarter attracting emissaries and envoys from a thousand worlds.

The massive morning palace located on a central island in the Margidda river is the seat of power in Llyhn. It is from here that the Unseen Rulers reign over their city of beggars, thieves, scholars and aristocrats.

Very little is known about the Unseen Rulers of Llyhn. They govern in obscure and reticent absentness through the Jinassar corps, their abstruse agents and ultimately the infamous Hohr'loh'kin. Though seemingly aloof and unconcerned with the petty affairs of the city itself, all trading and passage through Llyhn is controlled and levied with an iron fist. Any uncovered dissension or subterfuge towards their rule is met with swift and forceful consequence.

Ostensibly disinterested in matters beyond the boundaries of Llyhn, the Unseen Rulers remain impartial to all external issues and have no qualms about accommodating entities and efforts of opposing interests as long as these pay levy and do not excessively violate amity while in Llyhn. The Jinassar are sentinels and constabulary, patrolling the Morning Palace, guarding the Void rifts and reinforcing tithe collectors and other servants of the Unseen Rulers, while a vast network of spies, informants and other agents work surreptitiously.

The masked Hohr'loh'kin are the principal servants and extended arms of the Unseen Rulers. Immensely powerful, imposing and wielding the authority of the rulers the silent Hohr'loh'kin are a source of trepidation. They are androgynous in shape, dressed in flowing white garments and wrappings obscuring any and every part of their body while wearing hollow burgundy armour and faceless masks. An aura of fear surrounds them as their hidden eyes see everything they need to enforce the laws of their masters.

Though the Unseen Rulers principally look after their own interests and involve their servants very little in the regulation of the residents unless their authority is defied, Llyhn is not an entirely anarchic place. Through a rather harsh practice following the tenet: "might makes right" the residents have naturally segregated into distinct castes of varying power and influence, which keeps the city and its inhabitants in a somewhat stable equilibrium.

The Margidda has its fount at the base of the Morning Palace, flowing outwards towards the surrounding Pe'Rep'ial Peaks via many waterways. As the flow of these rivers nears the foothills of the soaring summits patches of pure blackness become more frequent and larger along the watercourse.

These patches are one of the principal sources of the Unseen Rulers' wealth and power, as they are conduits massive enough to allow vessels passage into the Void, the ethereal ocean beyond ordinary reality. Foremost amongst the vessels coming through these conduits are the Red Galleys of Llyhn. Propelled by oarsmen that at no time leave the hold and helmed by oddly reticent and eerie galley-mariners with hidden features they freight goods, travellers and mystical substances between worlds at the bidding of the Unseen Rulers. Yet for all their obscurity, securing passage on a Red Galley is the soundest way to traverse the ethereal ocean.

The undeniable authority of the Unseen Rulers is apparent by the extensive presence of Jinassar at all docks, entry points and rifts inside the city itself, levying tithe to the Unseen Rulers on all entries and wares brought through.




Barrens
Kimoh
Barrens
Khameeliya


Dhaarese
Poi'Karaan
The Morning Palace
Barrens
Caravanserai
Penda'Rinn
Daer Bitaan
Barrens

# The caste system

With the tangential reign of the Unseen Rulers the relative influence and power of species and individual residents have become governing factors in the city. A "might-makes-right" tenet prevails and has developed into a caste system which is what keeps the inhabitants mostly in line, ensuring that lesser individuals do not overstep their bounds. This means that the more powerful, conniving or cunning a species or individual is, the higher caste it is likely to be. If you do not have the authority to back up an opinion, your voice is irrelevant and while a blind eye is often turned on individuals killing or harming those of a lower caste - the opposite is never tolerated.

The caste system describes the social stratification in Llyhn, in which social tiers have become defined by hereditary and specimen groups. Most residents remain in one caste their entire life and build their social standing and find mates within their caste and upward mobility in caste is rare, though not unheard of. Although the castes neither dictate nor are dictated by certain professions; the power, resources and influence of individuals do.

Certain parts of the city do not even allow specific castes to enter. Most notably the aristocracy of Penda'Rinn is exceedingly strict about who is allowed on their atolls and islets. A hired constabulary known as the Kindly Ones stringently upholds this decree and have been known to execute illicit intruders. Letters of passage from high-castes or resident factions may grant low-castes admittance into the district.

## Casteless

KALBI: The deprived, alienated and marginalised residents of Llyhn are known as Kalbi. These casteless are ostracised, segregated and even barred from the rest of the Eternal City due to ethnicity, species, transgressions, being disease-carriers or social stigma.
Generally considered filthy and worthless the casteless suffer extreme discrimination, persecution and social exclusion from all other castes in the city. The scorned Kalbi live in slum areas made up of hovels and huts haphazardly built from reeds and whatever they can scrounge and generally isolated from the city. Consistent prohibitions are imposed upon the casteless, include restricting them from leaving the Kimah and Dhaarese districts, entering places of worship, wearing clothes other than rags, displaying any sort of wealth, utilising public areas such as wells and not displaying the utmost deference in their behaviour. Any conceived slight or misbehaviour may lead to punishment or maiming without ramifications for the punisher.

## Low castes

BALTU: This - the lowest of the castes - consists mainly of unskilled labourers and slaves of insignificant importance. Albeit at the very bottom of society and enjoying few privileges, the Baltu are not despised and hounded as the casteless but hold a rightful place in the social stratification of the city. They can roam freely in the two poor districts of the city, Kimah and Dhaarese, visit the shrines and temples of Pai'Karaan, and labour and traverse the more affluent parts under the watchful eyes of custodians or with explicit consent or patronage.

SHAHRVAH: This caste is made up mostly of skilled labourers, farmers, peasants and fishermen who do not own the resources or tools of their craft but must tout their services to those of better means. The Shahrvah comprise most of the workers in the Eternal City and are allowed access to all districts, provided suitable sanction or patronage has been granted and that they behave with appropriate deference and humility.

## Commoners

MUATI: This caste comprises individuals who own assets, property or have enough resources to remain independent, such as artisans, tradesmen and merchants with small operations, shops or stalls. Rarely wealthy enough to employ others, the Muati are uninhibited by subservience, employ or tenure and can move about even most of the upper districts of the city without restrictions. They are privileged and do not require sponsorships or patronage to do anything.

SAHRNESH: Members of this caste of affluent commoners have enough property, assets and resources to sustain more than just their family and immediate needs. Successful merchants retaining a vessel or caravan, craftsmen engaging apprentices and landowners keeping a hired workforce make up the bulk of this caste. Not all Sarhnesh own property or have fixed assets at their disposal, however. Influential or revered individuals with a significant following such as acclaimed scholars, oracles, prophets, diviners, orators and so on might belong to this caste as their flock provide necessities, privilege and sway beyond their financial standing.



## High castes

MA'ALU: The affluent and influential belong to the Ma'Alu caste, an informal aristocracy treading the societal pinnacles of the city. Merchant princes, otherworldly gentry, prominent seers and those with considerable fortunes or armed followers make up this caste. Dominant and powerful with vast wealth, resources and manpower at their disposal, they roam where they please and are second only to the Sarru and servants of the Unseen Rulers.

SARRU: The most prominent and powerful residents of Llyhn - beneath the Unseen Rulers of course - are the Sarru. Although without sanctioned authority, these individuals hold vast amounts of power in Llyhn due to their excessive wealth, armies or other means of power. They are dominant individuals; whose reach stretches far beyond the boundaries of the Eternal City and for whom ordinary rules do not apply.

## How to distinguish caste

It is common practice in affluent areas and districts, that guards keep out the low-caste rabble at the behest of patron residents. Characters are likely to encounter alert sentries looking for imposters, which begets the question of how to distinguish various castes and how the Arbiter should approach it. If someone is posing as a member of a higher caste and is questioned, how might the questioners establish the ruse from the genuine?

Beyond a judgement based on appearances and an individual's way of speaking Darij - the common dialects in Llyhn - caste can be inferred in several ways. Species is a key indicator associated with particular castes. Clan, tribe, or family names tend to be connected with a caste, as are apparent affluence and decorum. While most of these can be feigned, few residents would dare pretend to be another caste than they are, for the simple reason that such deceitfulness is challenging to do well, hard to maintain for long, and the repercussions if discovered are harsh.

Sentries in certain districts might use passwords or phrases, inquire into subjects that only a person belonging to a particular caste or family would know and so on. High caste people are few, and those who guard their districts, manors and palaces would likely know them by sight. They also habitually use well-guarded and difficult-to-copy seals to identify themselves.



# Culture

Although being a cauldron of cultural complexity, Llyhn has few cultural trademarks which can be said to be indigenous. Each tribe or species that came to the city brought their own culture, traditions and values - and with time all these merged into a myriad of cultural influences belonging to all and none, a mongrel localised culture adopted by its residents. Consequently, the original distinctive manners, clothing styles, foods and habits of the city's various peoples have meshed, and natives would likely not recognise their kin as their own any longer.

Among the localised culture are three practices that stand out; tea rituals, sheesha smoking and courtesans. The infusing of teas for remedial, hallucinogenic or recreational purposes is a custom that permeates Llyhn society. An overwhelming variety of infusions, blends and brews can be found in the city alleviating and strengthening the drinker - or the opposite, should that be required. Smoking sheesha - water pipes - is a cherished pastime upheld and enjoyed irrespective of caste, species and prominence.
Courtesans of the Eternal City are artists who are trained in music and dancing as well as literature and conversational arts. Most courtesans are associated with a guild or 'house' which takes care of the money involved as well as their personal security, which means that most of the popular courtesans are followed by an armed guard. Courtesans are not harlots and are only paid to attend social gatherings as consorts of their patron. Although some courtesans also entertain the pleasures of the flesh and other more depraved desires, this is rare and not to be expected.

## Languages

Most sentient species in Llyhn keep their native tongue, but a principal language known as Darij has developed in the city becoming a major trading parlance across the core worlds and enabling interaction between various races and species in the Eternal City. Darij has two main dialects called high- and low-Darij and several district-based jargons adding to the vividness of the linguistic landscape in the city. This makes communication tricky even under the best of circumstances but allows residents to gauge the caste and district-origin of whomever they are speaking with.

There are two prevalent types of writing in Llyhn: The most commonly used consisting of a pictographic style where images represent words or sentences, which most residents understand. The other is alphabetical and allows for much more complex sentences and meaningful messages. This type is generally used by high-castes, the wealthy and the well-educated. Among the human population, those who speak Akkadian or similar languages may be able to write cuneiform.

## Clothing

Llyhn is a hot and humid place with scant variance in temperature between the hazy sunny season and the season of monsoons. This climate influences the clothes in the city, and although any style can be found, the most common attire among residents is light garments such as tunics, jalabiyas (loose robes), salwar (baggy trousers), abaiyas and qimonos mainly made from cotton, linen or silk. Turbans and wrapped shawls are frequently worn as headdress against the sun while slippers, sandals and other light footwear are the most common. The rich and high-caste residents have a love for decadent and extravagant colours, missing no opportunity to show off their newest and most colourful outfits. Slaves and low-castes are frequently dressed in rags and loincloths, offering negligible protection from the elements.



## Slavery

Slavery is an integral part of Llyhn society and as such slaves are a valued and often highly prized commodity, comparable to livestock and other assets. Slave labour is found on all levels of society; from menial field-workers toiling under the burning suns, to cherished literati employed in the palace courts.

Slavery in the Eternal City is personal, not hereditary, meaning that a slave's children are free. Slaves can have possessions and even own other slaves and can buy their liberty should they somehow amass the funds to do so.

Upon the death of a master, slaves who had performed exceptionally are occasionally freed, while the remainder are passed on as part of an inheritance. A free man judged for misdeeds by the adjudicators of the Unseen Rulers can be forced into slavery as a punishment, and those who did not pay their debts could also be sold as slaves. People can sell themselves as slaves to pay off a debt or make reparations for an offence, either staying free long enough to appreciate the value of their liberty, after which they must go to their new master. Usually, this is the fate of bettors and of old courtesans or harlots.

Slaves function somewhat outside the caste system but acquire social standing based on the status of the owner; thus slaves are not necessarily at the bottom of society caste-wise. Slaves are marked with branding on the face or somewhere else visible, while freed slaves receive their owner's signature or mark as a tattoo confirming that they no longer are in servitude.

It is unknown how many slaves there are in Llyhn, but one slave for every free resident is not an unreasonable estimate. The slave trade thrives in the city, with numerous slave markets ensuring a constant influx of new specimens. Some deal only in select varieties or species while other markets peddle whatever is on offer. The price of slaves rises and falls with supply and demand. A lucrative time to buy slaves is after a war when prisoners are often put up for sale in droves. Species, age, gender, condition and capabilities are usually the deciding factors in terms of price, and unique specimens can fetch vast sums.

Many species across the Cosmos keep slaves as cheap labour. On some worlds, slavery is the very foundation of civilisation while on others only the rich keep slaves to sustain privileged lives or for depraved pleasures. While some species have no issues enslaving their own kin, others only enthral or purchase members of other species, rivalling tribes, cities or worlds.

## Trade & commerce

The natural resources of Llyhn are limited and consist mainly of various foodstuffs, cotton, silk, tea, spices, and aphrodisiacal and hallucinogenic substances, but its placement at the convergence of myriad Void currents makes it a natural trading hub and waypoint to uncountable worlds. The convenience comes at a cost, however, as all trade is levied tithe for every commodity passing through the city. As a result, secretive markets are rife with illicit and unlevied wares rustled through hidden passages and concealed rifts and deemed worth the risk of discovery for savvy smugglers.

Barter is generally accepted and even expected by most traders in Llyhn, with substantial amounts of trade being conducted by the exchange of goods. Minted coin is readily accepted by most and the preferred currency in Llyhn is the copper Dhin, a copper piece weighing one-sixtieth of a standard loaf of bread. Foreign coinage is acceptable, and appraisers are readily available to determine the value of the outlandish coins for a small fee.

Most commodities entering the city are shipped by the Red Galleys while a few independent dhows and other Voidfaring vessels also arrive at the docks and quays along the riverbanks where tithe collectors and accountants accompanied by Jinassar troops are waiting to levy the cargo. Around the city and in the caravanserai several heavily guarded Void rifts are located allowing caravans and other light transports access the city with their wares, travellers, traders, pilgrims and other visitors.
Most trade occurs in the souqs, bazaars and trading domes scattered about the city, while larger transactions typically happen at the point of loading on the docks, in the caravanserai or in the merchant houses situated in the Khameeliya district.

## Religion

There is no primary or centralised belief in the Eternal City, and the continued following of native religions is evident in the countless shrines and altars. Some forms of worship include blood rituals and sacrifices - which are already customary practices in Llyhn – believing that it is the ancestral spirits or deities granting knowledge and blessings.

Several religions denote the river Margidda as holy, and the sacred basins in the Pai'Karaan district are destinations for masses of pilgrims arriving from the known Cosmos to bathe and cleanse themselves in the sacred waters of the holy river. Occasionally, silt sharks gorge on the ritual bathers who have ventured out too far from the basin stairs to the applause of zealots and fanatics on the shore proclaiming it a divine occurrence and martyrdom.

The multitudes of temples and shrines of the city cater to practically any known faith in the Cosmos and buzz with excited worshippers and celebrants hoping to gain the favour of their chosen deity, bestowing blessings, prosperity and whichever bliss they seek.

The places of worship raised to house or honour the gods, ancestors or spirits are frequently the focal point for the various surrounding communities, and places of learning, of physicians and sages. Among the particularly fervently religious species, the Naqasti stand out with their regular prayers twice at dawn, noon, dusk and midnight every day. Some of the more celebrated institutions are the temples of the Dachri cult. Famed for their otherworldly ceremonial dance rituals, the performances of the priestesses satisfy both the soul and the senses of beholders as they swirl, weave and contort through impossible routines in spiritual exaltation. Humanity has mostly retained its various beliefs from Earth, with many keeping their old deities such as Tiamat, Marduk, Nergal and so on, with the cult of Tiamat gaining significant traction even among other species in the city.

## Statutory Circumstances

The Morning Palace is the centre of bureaucracy, and although it is swarming with officials, few are consigned to the running of the city. The Jinassar only patrol the streets to impose the interests of the Unseen Rulers, oversee or quell any potential disruption and seldom interfere in anything outside of this scope. The tithe collectors solely deal with levying trade and visitors, and most other officials serve in associated functions or are clerks at the palace. While the Jinassar corps is legion and a significant power, they are on occasion challenged with situations beyond their capabilities, and that is when the Hohr'loh'kin appear. Seemingly powerful beyond even Devas and Anunnaki, the masked Hohr'loh'kin are as soaring seraphs of ruin and the absolute authority in the city. Uncaring and intent solely on their objective only the foolish do not fear them, and only the deranged do not scramble at the sight of them.

The applied bureaucracy in the Eternal City is complicated and mostly unsanctioned as the number of species, inclinations and philosophical orientations is vast and the Unseen Rulers are broadly inattentive, causing dogmas and doctrines to arise on street-level rather than in organised assemblies or structures. Although various guilds, factions and other influential groups hire mercenaries or constabularies to protect their interests by implementing a resemblance of order in certain areas, the primary tenet in Llyhn is still "might makes right". As a result, intrigue is rife and beyond the apparent orderliness of the caste system, every day is a struggle to regain or maintain power while considerations of a didactic quality significantly impact the practical application of privilege and power.





Four pronounced philosophies are prominent among the myriad preached in the streets of the Eternal City.

The Arammu philosophy rests on the idea of unbiased care: "everyone is equal before the great wheel of life", and that people should seek to imitate the highest ideals by engaging in the practice of impartial and collective affection. They view cognition as based purely on perception - sensory experiences including touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing - instead of imagination or internal logic, elements founded on the capacity for abstraction. The Arammu have formed a highly structured political organisation which continually works to realise the ideas they preach in Llyhn society in direct contrast to the reigning tenet of might makes right.

The Karmic Circle is inspired by the belief-system of the Ba-Waikh. After the Ba-Waikh influx into Llyhn, their belief in reincarnation and associated philosophy began to spread to other species, but in a form made less contradictory to the influential ancestor worship, which is largely irreconcilable with their idea of reincarnation. Other people – as well as the concept of an afterlife - are viewed as an encumbrance of mortal life that has to be dealt with because the Karmic philosophy focuses on individual advancement. The Karmic Circle stresses the benefit of the community more than the benefit of the individual by arguing that the salvation of an individual is benefited by that individual's society and family.

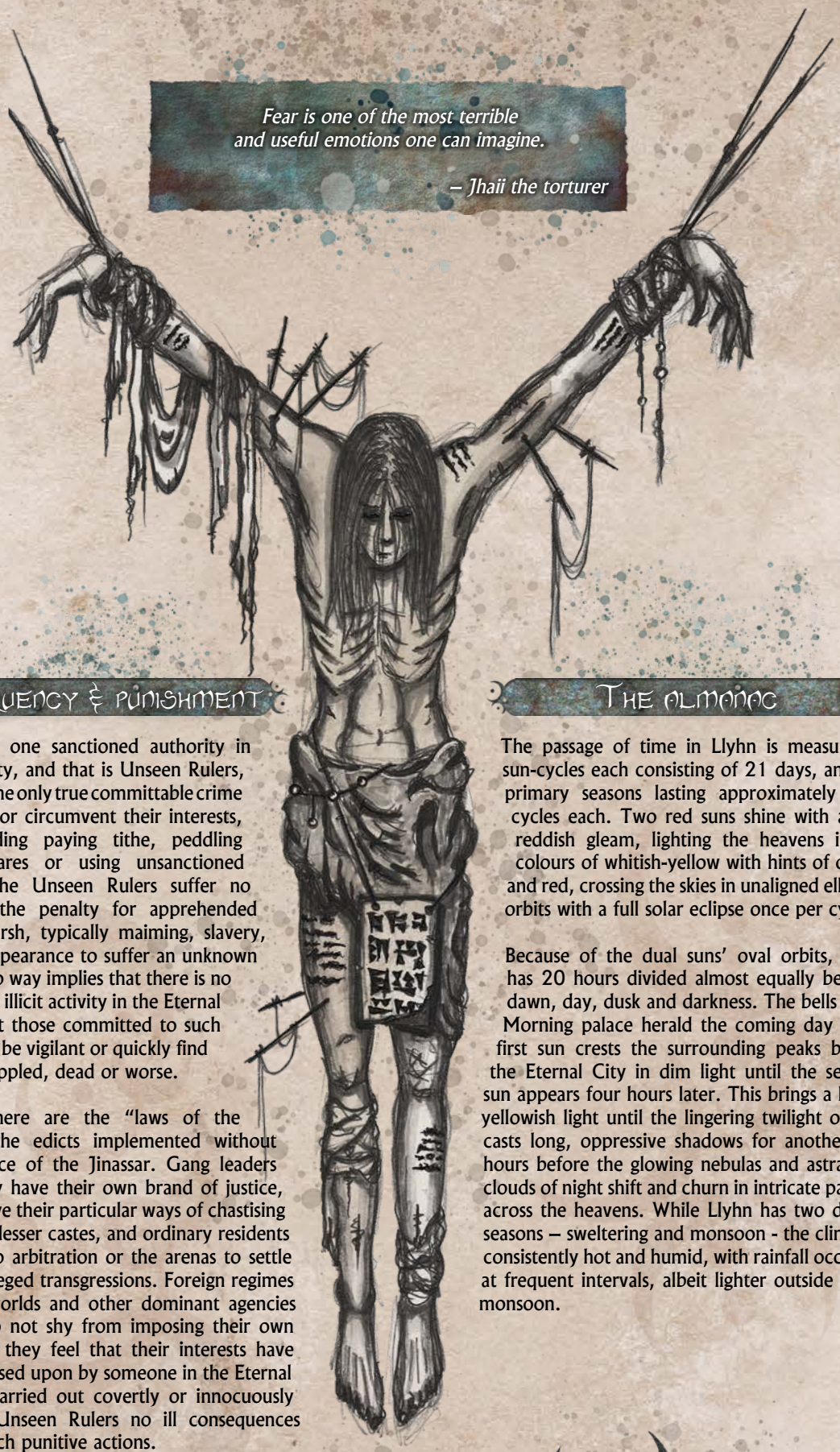
The Sindra follow a pragmatic philosophy, with an essential principle of jurisprudence. They hope to attain a profound understanding of the nature of law, of reasoning, relations and societies based on the idea that there are unchangeable laws of nature which govern all beings, and that civilisation ought to emulate this natural law. Cause and effect are one of the primary dogmas of the Sindra.

The InQabal view existence as a great turmoil of phenomena, which happen without logic, reason or detectable causes. They refer to a metaphysical existence that describes an induction that encompasses the entire Cosmos, but which cannot be perceived or understood. Because no one can know the cause of phenomena inaction is encouraged. A common proverb in the InQabal is that efforts to make the world better certainly make the world worse, therefore, it is better to "do" nothing.

A fifth, and less proliferating faction called the Aphorists are engrossed with lucidity, paradoxes, names and actuality. This faction is focused on wisdom and especially understanding about intelligible affairs in politics, ethics, warfare and so on. The members are itinerant literati who teach excellence within various fields of craft or acquaintance, speculate about the nature of the application of knowledge and employ rhetoric to achieve their aims. They consistently claim to be able to attain the answers to all questions through rational contemplation.

*Fear is one of the most terrible and useful emotions one can imagine.*

*– Jhaii the torturer*



## Delinquency & punishment

There is only one sanctioned authority in the Eternal City, and that is Unseen Rulers, meaning that the only true committable crime is to obstruct or circumvent their interests, such as evading paying tithe, peddling prohibited wares or using unsanctioned Void rifts. The Unseen Rulers suffer no dissent, and the penalty for apprehended violators is harsh, typically maiming, slavery, death or disappearance to suffer an unknown fate. This in no way implies that there is no underworld or illicit activity in the Eternal City, only that those committed to such activities must be vigilant or quickly find themselves crippled, dead or worse.

Separately, there are the "laws of the street" and the edicts implemented without the interference of the Jinassar. Gang leaders across the city have their own brand of justice, high castes have their particular ways of chastising each other or lesser castes, and ordinary residents often resort to arbitration or the arenas to settle disputes or alleged transgressions. Foreign regimes of the core worlds and other dominant agencies or factions do not shy from imposing their own imperatives if they feel that their interests have been transgressed upon by someone in the Eternal City, and if carried out covertly or innocuously towards the Unseen Rulers no ill consequences come from such punitive actions.

## The almanac

The passage of time in Llyhn is measured in sun-cycles each consisting of 21 days, and two primary seasons lasting approximately three cycles each. Two red suns shine with a dark reddish gleam, lighting the heavens in dull colours of whitish-yellow with hints of orange and red, crossing the skies in unaligned elliptical orbits with a full solar eclipse once per cycle.

Because of the dual suns' oval orbits, a day has 20 hours divided almost equally between dawn, day, dusk and darkness. The bells of the Morning palace herald the coming day as the first sun crests the surrounding peaks bathing the Eternal City in dim light until the second sun appears four hours later. This brings a hazy, yellowish light until the lingering twilight of dusk casts long, oppressive shadows for another four hours before the glowing nebulas and astral dust clouds of night shift and churn in intricate patterns across the heavens. While Llyhn has two distinct seasons – sweltering and monsoon - the climate is consistently hot and humid, with rainfall occurring at frequent intervals, albeit lighter outside of the monsoon.

# The Unseen Rulers

## and their servants

Beyond the caste stratum are the aloof, reticent and despotic Unseen Rulers. The Unseen Rulers are a pervasive presence that is never the focus of the adventures, yet their minions and servants are very likely to play a part in the exploits of the characters. The role of the servants of the Unseen Rulers is to ensure that the imposed laws are followed and that no one threatens the established power balance and as such, they can be encountered in a variety of positions and roles.

CIVIC SERVANTS are the lowest in the hierarchy - they consist mainly of scribes and other administrators forming the foundation of the bureaucracy. Civic servants are sure to be encountered should the characters leave or enter Llyhn as they are present at all entry points, directing and ordering the public about. Should the characters somehow get entangled in the bureaucratic humdrum of the city, civic servants will be the first point of encounter.

CIVIC GUARDS are sentinels guarding warehouses, docks, and other minor interests of the Unseen Rulers as well as protecting lowly Tithe collectors and other servants. Civic guards patrol many areas and only protect the holdings they are set to defend, caring nothing for public order unless it escalates to a point where it threatens said holdings. Lightly trained and armed they serve more as a deterrence rather than an actual fighting force.

TITHE COLLECTORS are at the core of the bureaucracy of the Eternal City, collecting tithe and levies from visiting merchants, vessels, travellers and so on. Everyone must pay a tenth of what they bring to Llyhn or be barred from entry. Tithe collectors are ranked in an internal hierarchy and wield substantial power, having civic servants and contingents of civic guards at their command as well as the authority to call upon the Jinassar should a situation warrant it.

THE JINASSAR is the standing army of the Unseen Rulers, a well-trained and well-equipped fighting force with several garrisons around the city and substantial presence at all Void rifts and other essential positions of the city. How many they number is unknown, but multiple legions are believed to be in existence. They are easily recognisable in elaborate scarlet armour with visors covering their faces keeping them incognito and unidentified. The presence of the Jinassar legions is the most apparent and evident manifestation of the authority of the Unseen Rulers.

THE COWL is a network of spies and informants working vigilantly to ferret out and undermine any surreptitious dissension or illegalities against the reign of the Unseen Rulers. Should characters get involved in the underworld of the Eternal City they are likely to come across these covert infiltrators, but they might not know it until it is too late.



*Tithe collector*




THE RED GALLEYS are the incarnation of the dominance and power of the Unseen Rulers: Massive vessels carrying cargo, travellers and armies across the Void between worlds. Navigated by shadow-faced servants, their visage always hidden, with just radiant orbs peering out of the shadows of their hoods. Rows of obscure oarsmen interred in deep holds of the vessel propel the galleys across water and Void. The characters can book passage on a Red Galley or might see the vessels at anchor in various ports across the Cosmos and beyond. The mystery of their oarsmen and navigators is something that no one living has unravelled, and it is rumoured that a contingent of Jinassar attends all Red Galleys - hidden from view but present.

THE HOHR'LOH'KIN are at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of the Unseen Rulers and comprise the ultimate power in the city. Sanctified with authority these scions command cohorts of Jinassar and all servants of the Unseen Ruler obeys their every whim, while they are formidable in their own right. Floating about the city swathed in bands inscribed with obscure litanies in an unknown script, and strange scarlet armour and helmets seemingly latticework covering nothing but dark depths, the Hohr'loh'kin are mystics and warriors commanding powers rivalling even the Anunnaki. Should characters ever come across one of these denizens of despair, they ought to run and pray that the vacant visor did not notice their existence.

THE UNSEEN RULERS residing in the massive Morning Palace overlooking the city are aloof in every sense of the word. They hold no audiences and remain as distant despots with their judgement swiftly and decisively being carried out by underlings. The Unseen Rulers function as a looming menace, an insubstantial factor which governs the lives of the Eternal City but is never an active part in it.



# The Morning Palace

| | |
|---|---|
| POPULATION: | Exclusively servants of the Unseen Rulers and a Jinassar garrison. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Built on massive island peaks at the fount of the Margidda river. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Mixed. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | Upper sanctum, the administrative complex, the treasury and the Jinassar garrison. |
| TRADE: | None. |

Not a district as such, the Morning Palace is the stronghold and fortress of the Unseen Rulers, the centre of power in Llyhn the eternal. Perched high upon pinnacles rising from the fount of the river Margidda, the Morning Palace comprise the administrative core of the Eternal City and is the domicile of thousands of civic servants, a garrison of Jinassar and the masked Hohr'loh'kin.

The palace is a complex system of wards built in a spiralling pattern up the pinnacle, connected by a great many tiered courtyards and gates leading upwards to the upper sanctum; the abode of the Unseen Rulers. Massive sloping stone walls are a primary feature with numerous towers and turrets placed at the corners of walls and over gates functioning as lookout posts and bell towers. The gates leading from one ward to another are set in tight corners creating narrow entryways forcing visitors into narrow, slanting passages before entering the next tier's courtyard. Multiple passageways lead to blind alleys, and the architecture prevents visitors from seeing far ahead, disorienting them in the maze-like construction. This layout makes it impossible to proceed straight to the upper sanctum, forcing visitors to walk around the complex in a spiral up the pinnacle, gradually approaching the peak.

Each ward contains multiple courts and has a specific function. Admission is permitted only to certain castes and sanctioned individuals. The lower tiered wards – where commoners are allowed - comprise the clerical, cult and tithe offices, where scribes, clerks and visitants mill about conducting the bureaucratic affairs of the Eternal City.

The next tiers hold the Jinassar garrison and administrative offices of the senior servants, and while visitants may pass through the tiered courtyards and bastions, no outsiders are permitted entry in the barracks and garrison. The upper tiers of the spiralling Morning Palace hold the courts and magistrates of the Unseen Rulers and comprise balconies, gardens and tea rooms for visiting aristocrats and other prominent invitees.

While visitors to the upper tiers can discern the upper sanctum with its parapets and arched domes, no outsider is permitted to proceed up the long, ominous stairs leading to the colossal gates into the upper sanctum. Only the Hohr'loh'kin and a select few high-ranking servants of the Unseen Rulers are permitted in this area - even the Jinassar guard may only proceed to the third step of the stairs and no further.

No visible guards are present around the upper sanctum while no one and nothing flies near the pinnacle as the mere threat of the masked Hohr'loh'kin is sufficient to deter even the most conceited of fools. At dawn, as the rays of the first sun graze the skies above Llyhn, the bells in the towers and domes of the Morning Palace tolls heralding another new day.

At the base of the Morning Palace pinnacle is the fount of the Margidda river; several springs of darkly iridescent waters cascading out to create the sluggishly flowing river facilitating the Void vessels commuting and berthing in the Eternal City.



### THE LOWER TIER WARDS

This is the one area of the Morning Palace where the uninitiated and commoners can come in, but only under the watchful gaze of the Jinassar. These wards, consisting of several tiers crammed with structures, hold not only the administrative offices and tithe collector residences, but the sanctuary of the fanatical cult worshipping the Unseen Rulers as deities.

This cult of apostles is not sanctioned and embraces lunatics zealous in their worship of the reticent overlords. However, their presence with fiery preaching and macabre rituals of flagellation seems to deter most anyone arriving with dissentious notions without having to inconvenience the Jinassar, which is likely the reason they are tolerated.

# The Morning Palace




1. *Docks*
2. *Cult sanctuary*
3. *Clerical ward*
4. *Tithe collector ward*
5. *Administrative ward*
6. *Jinassar Garrison ward*
7. *Courts ward*
8. *Magistry ward*
9. *Upper sanctum*



While most tithes are collected in various locations around the city, heavily loaded barges of accumulated valuables and wealth arrive daily at the docks of the lower wards, where it is all hoarded and tallied. Accordingly, the number of Jinassar is extensive, and occasionally even masked Hohr'loh'kin are in attendance.

### JINASSAR GARRISON

These wards resemble bastions or fortresses and are the primary location of the Jinassar presence within the city. The garrison, comprising several separate wards, is shrouded in mystery as the initiation rites, training and continued trials of recruits are all kept secret. Where recruits come from, which species they are, and any other details are unknown, and as the Jinassar never leave their rare fallen behind, it is not likely to be revealed.

## Rumours & curiosities

- It is whispered that the Jinassar are actually a believed extinct species captured, conditioned and indoctrinated into callous zealot-soldiers for the Unseen Rulers.
- Rumour has it that the Unseen Rulers are long-dead or never existed and that the entire power-structure and bureaucracy is based on a lie. If only someone could get into the upper sanctum and see what was actually there…
- Gossip holds that the high magistrate Yau Rrlk is deeply corrupt and can be bribed to remove unwanted commercial competitors should the need arise.

## Notable people

LAHK AHMON: The archon commander of the Jinassar legions, Lahk Ahmon cuts an imposing figure standing six cubits tall and garbed in intricately adorned armour and helmet. He, she or it appears to have a very applied approach to leadership frequently participates actively in undertakings and assignments carried out by his troops. Lahk Ahmon regularly conducts official visits to Penda'Rinn, but whether this is tasked or actual concern for the welfare of the aristocracy or in fact to scrutinise the Kindly Ones is uncertain.

AGGROS DHEN: As high cleric of the cult of the Unseen Rulers, Aggros commands considerable – if unsubstantiated – power in the Morning Palace. Surprisingly lucid, in contrast to his apostles, Aggros has a coldly calculating and rational demeanour, making it seem as if he is merely manipulating his cohorts rather than believing in the dogma he preaches.

YAU KRLK: As primary magistrate of the second ward of the Morning Palace, Yau is tasked with monitoring and managing the tithe collection of Dhaarese and Kimah, meaning that she is regularly away from the ward due to commitments in the daily dealings of the districts. Yau is a meticulous and cruel collector with many an enslaved merchant and trader on her conscience – if she can contrive of such a thing.

## Plot hooks

- An enclave member is supposedly being subjected to unfair levies by Yau Krlk's tithe collectors, and the merchant pleads with the characters to resolve the situation. Has a rival bribed the magistrate to impose undue levies on the merchant, or is something else going on?
- Several enclave members have recently joined the ranks of the apostles of the Unseen Rulers and have begun spreading the fanatical gospel within the enclave, causing dissension and animosity. Is the human commune being targeted and if yes, why? Can the converted be reclaimed or will they have to be removed?



Hohr'loh'kin




Shallowwater

# Dhaarese

| | |
|---|---|
| POPULATION: | Predominantly low-castes and slaves. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Waterfront, shoals and islets with flat inland areas prone to flooding. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Naqasti, Harith, Im'Zu, Ba'Waikh & human. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | The Wharves, Shallow-water, the Feeradani enclave and the Midnight Market. |
| TRADE: | While vast quantities of cargo pass through or are stored in Dhaarese, the trading and brokering is typically conducted elsewhere. |

*Ach, the docks, now that's a place to steer clear of, if you've got your senses about ye, Enir! A more treacherous bunch of leeches than the ones that live there you'd be hard pressed to find. I've seen my fair share of cut-throats in my time, but they're all snivelling babes compared to this lot! But the harlots... ahh... the harlots are cheaper than the backwash they call wine and they know how pleasure a man... but be wary, they'll slice your throat and steal your coppers quick enough while you're dazed after the ordeal.*

*- Adren, old sailor*

The district known as Dhaarese is built on mudflats, several islets and a large section of waterfront. Located on the sunset side of the river Margidda across from Pai'Karaan, the district comprises four principal areas: The Wharves, the Forges, the Stocks and Shallow-water.

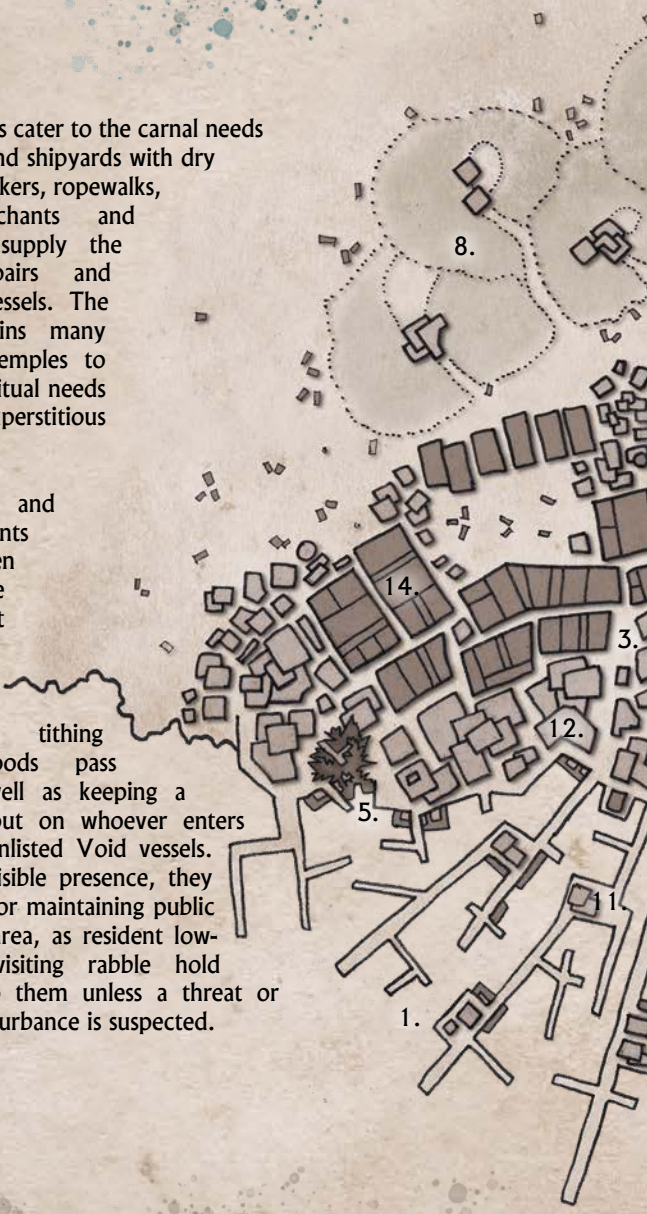
Each area is purposefully built to accommodate a function within the city with the structures and buildings catering to the particular purpose it serves; such as the wharf comprising massive warehouses, shipyards and docks.
A sense of commerce and industry pervades the district, which is dominated mainly by workshops and other amenities of crafts and trade. Muddy silt-covered ground and pervasive odours of putrid water are distinctive in the wharves and Shallow-water, while smog and dust hang thick in the remaining district.

The interior part of the district - comprising the forges, foundry and stocks - is bursting with workshops and trade-structures. Countless labourers are housed or reside in makeshift shelters, or dubious lodgings squeezed in between, above or indeed beneath working areas, yards, forges and storehouses.
This area is crawling with emaciated workers and labourers seeking to subsist while callous commercial interests from consortiums, merchants and a variety of guilds dominate and retain turf in an absurdly intricate arrangement.

The waterside part of the district - consisting of the wharves and Shallowwater - is packed with warehouses, ships' outfitters, mercantile guild-houses for dealing with incoming goods, marketplaces to satisfy the needs of the resident population, and ample guesthouses for a transient population.

Pleasure houses cater to the carnal needs of mariners, and shipyards with dry docks, sail markers, ropewalks, timber merchants and nail makers supply the constant repairs and refitting of vessels. The district contains many shrines and temples to satisfy the spiritual needs of the often superstitious Voidfarers.

The Jinassar and other servants of the Unseen Rulers are heavily present on the docks and by the warehouses, tallying and tithing whatever goods pass through as well as keeping a vigilant eye out on whoever enters the city via unlisted Void vessels. Despite this visible presence, they care nothing for maintaining public order in the area, as resident low-castes and visiting rabble hold no interest to them unless a threat or substantial disturbance is suspected.



## THE WHARVES

The wharves are located on the river bank adjoining the deep channels accommodating heavily laden Void vessels. The wharves are built on stilts and poles, comprising several storeyed platforms - generally referred to as boards - billeting various structures and establishments serving the anchored vessels and their mariners. The dock front is lined with berths for vessels of all shapes and sizes, with lanes leading into the storage area behind and a major shipyard adjacent, to take care of maintenance and damaged ships harbouring in the city.

The storage area behind the docks encompasses the bulk of cargo buildings and warehouses in the city. Here goods and commodities from all the known - and quite a few unknown - worlds are held in storage; some to be reloaded and shipped out to other further destinations, others to be sold in the bazaars and souqs across the city.

Crafts from anywhere and everywhere are found here, prompting vast swathes of outlandish mariners to loiter while their wares are loaded or unloaded, making the brothels and drinking dens in the narrow, crowded alleyways on the boards beneath and behind the docks cramped, buzzing and dangerous. Overseen by eager merchants and traders, the dockyards are flooded with labourers and carriers with bundles on their heads and backs toiling to carry goods and materials to warehouses or passing it to river crews ferrying it across the Margidda river on their broad, flat-bottomed barges or abras.




1. *The wharves*
2. *The Crawling Cadaver*
3. *The Standing Man*
4. *Zzazza's storage*
5. *The Midnight Market*
6. *The Forges*
7. *The Foundry*
8. *The Stocks*
9. *Shallowwater*
10. *Feeradani enclave*
11. *Counting houses*
12. *Guildhalls*
13. *Consortiums*
14. *Warehouse districts*
15. *Shipyard*
16. *The Hoary Collar consortium*

## UPPER BOARDS

These platforms are the uppermost platforms, resting high over the muddy water of the river. The platforms are built to allow direct access to the higher galleries and superstructures of great vessels such as Red Galleys, hulks and large dhows. The Upper Boards are open to the skies and hold official buildings as well as the offices of the most successful consortiums and counting houses allowing easy entree to assets and cargoes.

## THE GUILD HALLS

Several massively sprawling structures contain the dominant trading consortiums and guilds within their labyrinthine halls. Representatives of merchant princes, foreign traders, aristocrats and every major commercial entity in the city has an apartment, chamber or desk here, from which business is conducted directly with the captains of the Void vessels coming to port.

## LOWER BOARDS

The Lower Boards comprise several storeys built beneath the docks and usually corresponding to the railing or cargo hold of vessels, fitting for gangplanks to be extended enabling labourers to load and unload ships beneath the feet of their owners, administrators and bureaucrats.

Through the Lower Boards, an extensive network of lanes leads deep into the wharves where the storage areas are located, and cargoes are stowed until further handling.

In addition to its capacity as conveyor area for cargo, the Lower Boards are a warren of disreputable establishments with the sole purpose of wresting money out of the hands of idle mariners and newcomers to the city. Guesthouses, whorehouses, drinking holes, opium dens, gambling retreats and other accommodations offering divers conceivable, and unthinkable, debaucheries.

## THE CRAWLING CADAVER

One of the most famous or notorious establishments in the Lower Boards - depending upon your point of view - is named the Crawling Cadaver and built under one of the biggest dockyards at the centre of the wharves. It is a drinking den that offers only signature beverages made from secret recipes that are said to make even cadavers crawl.

The pun is derived from the entertainment consisting of Rotters brought in from the Pestilence and used for morbid betting races. Half-dead leprosy victims are placed on a short track with a bowl of the house speciality at the end. The quickest crawler to reach and drink from the bowl is likely to end its misery from the pungency of the drink - something the patrons consider a merciful fate. The establishment is a known haunt for Void crews and Oord navigators seeking employment, so prospective explorers and others in search of passage frequent the place as well.

## THE STANDING MAN

This small, hidden-away brothel is favoured by local and transient clienteles alike. An unexpectedly clean and well-kept establishment considering the area, The Standing Man is not only a brothel but also a secluded meeting spot for gatherings requiring privacy and discretion. In addition to sexual fulfilment, the cultivated harlots and gigolos offer companionship and other stimulating comforts to ease weary mariners and Voidfarers. Burly bouncers keep out unwanted or drunken people.

## ZZAZZA'S STORAGE

A little away from the busiest thoroughfares lies a network of discreet storage houses known as Zzazza's, where goods and merchandise can easily disappear or somehow circumvent registry by the agents of the Unseen Rulers. Whether the civil servants are aware of the illicit activities and are bribed to turn a blind eye or indeed are ignorant about it is unknown, but consequently, Zzazza's is a hub for smugglers.



## THE MIDNIGHT MARKET

The Midnight Market earned its name as the platform it was built on collapsed - plummeting the bazaar into the hidden depths of the Lower Boards where the light of the suns never reaches. Superstitious residents and peddlers hang mobiles and strings of glass, metal, and small candles to ward off evil mystic powers they fear might haunt this sunken bazaar.

The light from the many lanterns and candles underneath the walkways and platforms turn the mobiles into glowing constellations, small glimmers of hope in this dark place. The Midnight Market, which most believe is free of any watch from the Unseen Rulers, is controlled from the shadows by the three elusive sisters known as the Imfanii. It is said that they were once aristocratic courtesans, members of the elite. They were ousted from the high castes in undisclosed circumstances and fled their abodes in Penda'Rinn, finding their way into the newly sunken Midnight Market. It is unknown how they gained control within the dark confines of the place of murky dealings, but it is known that vendors who do not pay levies to the sisters disappear.

The shops, carts, and small rundown booths within the Midnight Market offer assortments of alluring, peculiar or prohibited goods, ranging from supposed totems and relics of bygone ages meant to protect from Daimons or Djann, to varieties of noxious, oddly-coloured concoctions said to ward off old age. Exotic weapons or armour, stolen tapestries and rugs from opulent palaces, bizarre animals and abducted aristocratic offspring, all can be found in the sunken bazaar. A self-styled caretaker called Ichask the Flea surreptitiously runs the place, keeping an open eye on everything going on.

## THE FORGES

Inland on the mudflats, the area encompasses forges, work and sweatshops, kilns as well as lumberyards supplying the shipyards with the necessary materials for outfitting and rigging dhows and other vessels anchoring, as well as manufacturing other raw and building materials used in the Eternal City.

The low, smog-covered houses seem perpetually swathed in smoke and falling ashes from the smokestacks of constantly burning forge-fires. All who venture into the area are immediately covered in dust and soot, blending in perfectly with the bleak earthy surroundings.

The labourers and slaves making up the bulk of the inhabitants typically live in filthy shacks adjacent to their workshop, spending their piteous lives within the confines of low walls and fences designating boundaries between properties of aloof masters who will never set foot here.



## THE FOUNDRY

This immense workshop engages hundreds of workers, smiths and craftsmen, refining and casting metal ore. Within the Foundry, raw ore is not only processed but also fabricated into a variety of bulky metal items used in the wharves and aboard the larger vessels anchoring by the docks. Heat and smoke constantly flood from the partially subterranean structure where ancient mineshafts have been converted to convey heat from the smelters and forges located deep underground.

The Foundry not only supplies ship parts but also fabricates war machines such as ballista, chariots and other, more peculiar, contraptions sold to foreign warlords waging wars across the Cosmos. The ingenuity and cunning of the architects and engineers at the Foundry is renowned, and the workings of the destructive apparatuses are kept strictly secret even after they have been shipped to their respective buyers.

## THE STOCKS

On the outskirts of the district, away from the smog and dust and bordering the Barrens, great pens hold livestock and temporary containment of slaves until further shipping or transfer to the slave-markets on the far side of the river. Sparse guards watch the dead-eyed livestock and slaves with careless vigour while eyeing the edges of the dark jungle beyond the dusty Barrens with trepidation.

## SHALLOWWATER

Shallowwater is a deprived and poor area on the shoals and islets at the river's edge, unable to accommodate large trading vessels. It holds a labyrinthine gathering of shelters and smallholdings built on piles and tottering gangways, with hundreds of fishing-, smuggling- and hawker-vessels sailing through the filthy waters beneath the huddling community. When the tide is high the water is deeper than a man is tall, while the ebb tide allows residents to walk across the muddy sandbanks between the islets.

Further inland it consists mainly of ramshackle clay and mud hovels, workshops and storage huts. Dwellings and crooked platforms rise from the soft silty ground, changing and growing almost organically as mudbricks crumble and new additions and structures are made from whatever usable salvage can be found drifting in the river or stolen from neighbouring houses.




### THE FEERADANI ENCLAVE

Located near the docks in Shallowwater, this enclave consists of multiple buildings in various states of disrepair. The enclave, surrounding a small plaza, is home to nearly a thousand human beings of which most are labourers and docks men working in the wharves and in the forges around Dhaarese.

The enclave is built in the shallows of the muddy river and consists of several unstable platforms, pile dwellings and stilt structures connected by suspension bridges. A central platform holding principal structures and a small plaza are crammed in between the raggedy buildings of the enclave.

Eight connected platforms support the regular residents' dwellings, a few workshops and storerooms, a smithy, a drinking den and several fishing quays. One platform is close to shore and provides access to land. Two mooring platforms with a few small fishing vessels and skiffs are connected to the main platform. The smell of dead fish, tar and refuse permeate the air from the water lapping against the hulls of the small boats and barges tied to piles alongside the houses.

Although events surrounding the founding of the enclave are unclear, it is certain that Feerada partook and was instrumental in occupying the area that now accommodates the enclave. Feerada - a now elderly one-armed woman infamous for her unyielding resolve and determination to propagate humanity - is the despotic leader of the enclave while her close advisors and trusted retainers act as her extended arm.

Rumours persist that she was born on Earth, speculation - whether true or not - she exploits to gather followers and strengthen the position of the enclave among the human population of Llyhn. To uphold the decrees and protect of the enclave, Feerada is backed by a partisan constabulary of former mercenaries and brawlers known as Rasha Ghalam, controlled by the devoted Kûn Azhar, a former slave set free by Feerada. Likely more out of necessity than any deep-rooted religiosity, she has allied herself with the influential cult of Tiamat.

Feerada is a highly respected Matriarch amongst humans, and the people inhabiting the enclave are extremely loyal to her to the extent of an almost personal cult, despite her inclination towards tyrannical rule.

## District Factions

### RASHA GHALAM

These partisans are former mercenaries and brawlers originally organised by Kún Azhar to protect the members of the enclave from harassment and antagonism. The purpose of the group however developed, and it has become an intrinsic part of the organisational hierarchy of the enclave, a de facto constabulary. The feathers - as they are known - are divided into squads of four to eight men with a squad leader. Two to four squads make up a troop, each of which is led by a principal. Troops are divided into sections determined by their designated assignments: defence, infiltration or spying and patrolling. Each division has a commander reporting directly to Kún.

### CULT OF TIAMAT
Consisting exclusively of women shaven bald and heavily tattooed with litanies of worship, the priestesses of Tiamat are dogmatists and considered oracular by the general human population. Often semi-naked, skirts or shawls of blue cloth cover their legs and hips. The cult has significant clout with the enclave populace and could pose a threat to the rule of Feerada, should the blessed matrons decide to revoke the coalition.

### RAGGED CATHARSIS
A chapter of the funerary cult inhabits a house in the Feerada enclave, as they were established here before the enclave. Albeit they show little interest in the surrounding human commune, the brethren are considered a threat by Feerada who is forced to tolerate them for fear of reprisals from the extended faction. The eerie chanting and following screams pouring from the temple at odd hours is something the neighbouring denizens have adjusted to and barely notice anymore.

### THE HOARY COLLAR
A consortium of slave traders this syndicate owns several slaver vessels that are suspected of doubling as pirates, not only collecting slaves across the Cosmos but actually capturing them from vessels or villages they raid and plunder. The lucrative nature of their business means that they have extensive apartments in the Guild Halls, with various aristocrats residing in Penda'Rinn as owners. With stakes in several slave markets across the city they are involved in all links; profitably exploiting the entire supply chain.

## Rumours & curiosities

- With a constant influx of goods and wares, there is bound to come interesting cargo that owners want to conceal from the tithe collectors to avoid taxes or confiscation.
- There are rumours that followers of an overthrown slaver who lived in what is now the Feeradani enclave seek retaliation for his ousting and supposed murder.
- It is said that the Imfanii sisters act as a front for a nefarious syndicate seeking to undermine the reign of the Unseen Rulers by flooding the market with prohibited goods.

## Notable people

### ICHASK THE FLEA
There is one vendor who seems to know everyone and everything going on in the Midnight Market; Ichask the Flea is the self-appointed caretaker of the Midnight Market, keeping tabs on everything and everyone. He claims to be of Daimonic descent, supposedly to maintain his status, but rumours abound that he is merely a halfblood hiding blemishes from past diseases and ailments with elaborate painted tattoos. Whatever or whoever is looked for, Ichask knows where to go and who to contact and can list practically every vendor and their wares by memory. There is also gossip that says that he is a mediator of the Imfanii sisters and that it is by their grace alone that he holds his standing.

### IMFANII SISTERS
The three sisters are suspected of being Djann, but as they remain elusive and veiled when they are in public, it is all speculation. Although taking no active part in the running of the Midnight Market, the sisters are inevitably involved as their constant presence indicates. Any loiterers, supposed moles or other suspicious personages are quickly accosted and ushered away; occasionally found lifelessly sprawled in the nearby shoal sand with weights tied to their necks as the tide recedes.

### FEERADA
Feerada is an elderly human woman who founded and is the undisputed matriarch of the Feeradani enclave. She founded the commune in her youth and has since struggled to retain and expand her dominion, giving humanity a haven in a hostile Cosmos. Her face is furrowed and sombre with old pains while her dark and intense eyes carry great authority. Her left arm is missing at the shoulder from a past encounter, supposedly with slavers thinking her an easy target. She is well aware that the odds are stacked against her, but she will fight till her dying breath, ruling with absolute authority and suffering no opposition. She is supported by capable individuals such as Kûn Azhar, the leader of the Rasha Galam.

## Plot hooks

- A human merchant who went to the Midnight Market has not returned, and her husband implores the characters to find out what happened to her and clear up any misconceptions with the Imfanii sisters if such exist.
- A power struggle is building between the Cult of Tiamat and Feerada, with the two sides trying to petition the characters to join their side. Unless the conflict is diffused quickly, it will escalate and potentially destabilise the enclave, leading to its weakening and eventual demise.
- The tithe collectors and civic guards have raided the Feeradani enclave looking for smuggled goods but finding nothing. Is someone using the commune as a scapegoat or is there contraband hidden in the enclave? It must be resolved before the civic servants decide to come back or involve the Jinassar; surely denoting the ruin of the enclave.



# Pai'Karaan

| | |
|---|---|
| POPULATION: | Commoners and high-castes, the sacred and the ordained. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Temples, shrines, and holy sites interspersed with residential homes on the rolling hills along the Margidda river. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Mixed. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | The Sacred Basins, The Temple of a Thousand Gods, Plaza of Infernal Pleasures, The Hallowed Faces and The Rock of Seventeen Shrouds. |
| TRADE: | Oracular and sacrificial services, religious icons and trinkets abound in this district. |

*The cry of litanies calling the faithful to prayer from soaring spires regularly wafts over the domed rooftops and grand boulevards paved in intricate patterns of turquoise and emerald hued faience tiles. The narrow side lanes are cramped and bustling with pilgrims and celebrants wafting censers and mumbling mantras as they make their way to whichever holy site they worship.*
*Adjoining the Margidda, the Sacred Basins are crammed with wide-eyed zealots washing away their sins in the muddy water while hoarse-voiced peddlers move in and out of the crowds hawking their wares of sacred paraphernalia and offerings.*

Situated on the undulating shore across from Dhaarese and the Morning Palace, the Pai'Karaan district borders Daer Bitaan and shares the gate leading to the Caravanserai outside the city walls. Renowned for its countless temples, shrines and religious sites, Pai'Karaan is densely populated and brimming with worshippers, pilgrims and zealous celebrants visiting the myriad places of worship. The district consists mainly of clusters of squat two-storey terracotta and sandstone houses with flat terrace rooftops or small domed roofs adorned with religious icons and writings. Several thoroughfares wind their way through the various neighbourhoods with every street-corner cluttered by shrines and sacrificial boards dedicated to long-dead ancestors, obscure deities and Daimonic effigies. Moving away from the main thoroughfares, visitants quickly find themselves in a veritable maze of narrow irregular streets crammed in between buildings interspaced by the occasional plaza and minor bazaar open to the sky.

A perpetual haze of myrrh, incense and smoking herbs linger about the district. Emanating from the thousands of censers mounted on shrines or carried by pilgrims, the smoke permeates the senses, making breathing hard and causing light-headedness.



House of Maiara

The district contains several holy sites sought by believers from far away worlds. Several sites are considered holy in their sheer inexplicability, some are final resting places of spiritual messiahs, while others are places of perceived miraculous thaumaturgy and so on. For instance, The Sacred Basins, The Hallowed Faces and The Rock of Seventeen Shrouds are considered holy sites by sects from a variety of worlds, and it is regarded as a sacred duty by many to visit, pray and pay homage here. As a result, constant throngs of worshippers, devout faithful and pilgrims congregate in the holy district to perform their blessed duties, give offerings and hold sermons. As such, it is only natural that Pai'Karaan also attracts prophets and fanatics from far and wide. Every plaza is filled with doom-spouting prophets from distant worlds seeking to save their congregation's souls from damnation or the sins of life, while 'holy' charlatans only seek to save visitants' coins.

A substantial portion of the Pai'Karaan shoreline is taken up by The Sacred Basins while the remaining is anchorage and docklands primarily for pilgrim vessels. Humble, ascetic guesthouses line the docks, providing cheap and austere accommodations for the visiting worshippers. Immediately outside the city walls towards the river and bordered by a provisional palisade lie a large tent-camp housing the travelling faithful that either cannot afford or chose not to sojourn within the walls. Small alleys intersect in uneven patterns between the clusters of buildings leading from the docklands deeper into the district. Here, numerous shops and parlours sell spiritual articles such as prayer candles, beads, censers or other religious paraphernalia to the pious.

Spread out across the district, larger structures such as The Temple of a Thousand Gods, The Dachri Temple and several mansions home to ostensibly pious aristocrats can be


1. The sacred basins
2. House of Maiara
3. Temple of a thousand gods
4. The Dachri temple
5. Plaza of infernal pleasures
6. Court of offerings
7. The hallowed faces
8. The rock of seventeen shrouds
9. Pilgrim camp
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found. The temples of the district range from enormous, brightly painted and adorned structures to simple prayer rooms squeezed into narrow alcoves and alleyways. There is no single style of architecture to the temples as they each tend to reflect the deity or idol they are meant to please and appease. Some places of worship are austere and frugal while others are colourful and opulent. Some have throngs of visitants and hold outdoor sermons to attract the masses, while others are hidden away and are only attended by the initiated.
A notable place of worship is The Plaza of Infernal Pleasures - a both a secret and eminent place dedicated to the senses and carnal faiths. The priestesses and priests here are wittily termed the holy harlots, for they preach the holiness of the flesh and sensual bliss.

The one understanding that the devout tend to share is that religious and cultural matters are indisputable, each being underpinned by their fervent belief in the tenets of whichever faith and holy text they adhere to. For them, there is no line between spiritual, work and private life. This zeal necessitates that people of deviant convictions be careful and aware of what they may and may not do when entering certain areas and temples.

Anywhere people gather trade follows and consequently Pai'Karaan and particularly the docks and Sacred Bassin areas are always cramped with booths and stalls. The merchandise being peddled here is different from that found in most of the remaining city, however. Religious trappings, sacrificial components and pecuniary penance – charitable or otherwise – are the primary commodities sought by the faithful. Pai'Karaan however, caters to more than just the soul, the flesh must be satiated as well - so where the pious do not preach the prostitutes rove.



*Dachri dancers*

## THE SACRED BASINS

In Pai'Karaan a sizeable stretch of the Margidda's banks encompasses stonework basins that are considered holy places to numerous faiths and worshippers travel far to bathe in the sacred waters of the river, supposedly washing away their sins. Seven clusters of Basins exist in the district, and a variety of cleansing rituals and absolutions are practised here.

For some faithful submerging themselves entirely in the water is required, while others merely dip their feet or hands and certain worshippers launch small vessels with offerings. As a consequence of the cleansing rituals, it is not uncommon that silt sharks grab a believer who has ventured out too far in his zealousness - and as another screaming and thrashing martyr is professed the surrounding crowds sing praises in holy ecstasy at the bloody spectacle.

## HOUSE OF MAIARA

This tea house is an old structure built from interconnecting open-air terraces; patios and plateaus at various levels surrounding an inner courtyard; in this manner, the House of Maiara somewhat resemble an amphitheatre. The loftiest terrace is four storeys above the street level and offers a panoramic view of the river, the district, the docks and a cluster of Sacred Basins.

The structure is a skilfully built house with elegant wooden posts, beams, lintels and joists making up the framework. Coloured glaze roofs, decorative screens and shade sails conceal the patrons from prying eyes. A burgundy painted gate embossed with an intricate Je'ehl icon of the owner's native House leads into the establishment where a sickeningly spicy, yet sweet and intoxicating odour permeates everything.

The courtyard with its small stage on the ground floor is the centre of attention. Here, exotic performances amuse patrons as they languish on divans picking and choosing from a vast assortment of intoxicating fumes and substances. The ground floor of the establishment is open to anyone, and around the perimeter of the lower floors, an assortment of small private cubicles and screened areas is available for patrons seeking privacy.

Private tiered terraces, secluded booths and elevated platforms cost fifty copper Dhins or more purely for entry. The owner, Maiara, is an elderly Je'ehl pariah matron, supported by her two sons and a host of staff and performers. She is a regular supplier of smoking herbs, opium and other hallucinogenic substances in the area.

## TEMPLES AND SACRIFICIAL GROUNDS

Most temples and shrines in Pai'Karaan are small, cramped and filthy dark rooms immediately accessible from the street. Reeking with incense, the worshippers are mostly outlandish lifeforms often oblivious to their surroundings as they sway and chant litanies to their obscure gods.

Anyone entering a hallowed premise not belonging to the resident congregation or presenting suitable offerings is likely met with suspicious scowls from whichever prophet or soothsayer presides there.

Sacrificial temples with a denizen blood ritualist are commonplace in Pai'Karaan and open to anyone wishing to perform or request a blood ritual. These establishments range from tiny, grimy hovels to large extravagant buildings retaining numerous priests, celebrants and supporting attendants – and the associated fees differ accordingly.

### THE TEMPLE OF A THOUSAND GODS

This impressively massive structure is squarish and from the outside looks like an amalgamation of multiple buildings with numerous domes, spires and gates. Inside a large single room dominates the structure, with various nooks holding shrines and vestibules veering off to segregated prayer rooms.

Around the floor, several raised daises reachable by steep ladders and steps comprise altars, pulpits and seating, often covered by baldachins, creating more secluded areas within the giant space. A single large hole in the domed ceiling above lets a stream of sunlight into the otherwise dusky temple, further fogged by the countless braziers and censers burning continuously.

No single religion holds sway over the entirety of the temple. Each shrine, altar and prayer room is dedicated to separate deities or pantheons. The custodians hold no stake in any religion – they merely allocate the space and maintain the building for the tenant faith-mongers who pay for the privilege of having a plot there.

In the furthest darkest corner of the temple sits the empty shrine of the Bel Ade U Mamit, the mad prophet servants of the Mindless Ghostly Abominations. No worshippers come here, and no priests hold sermons, but for reasons unknown, the custodians do not touch the shrine.

### THE DACHRI TEMPLE

Surrounding a large atrium, this principal domicile for the Dachri cult is more of a training ground than an actual temple. Located close to The Temple of a Thousand Gods, the majority of the cult resides here.

High walls keep the inner workings and training of the cult hidden from outsiders as they do not wish to share their immaculate and intimidate knowledge of methods and techniques used to augment the ceremonies and rites they perform.

Several gardens and open areas surround the inner buildings, serving as both meditational areas and preparation grounds for initiates and adepts alike.

### PLAZA OF INFERNAL PLEASURES

This plaza is located deep in the temple district of Pai'Karaan and comprises several interconnected open areas arranged in tiers. Albeit the place has a reputation as merely a place where people come to get their extreme desires and lusts satiated, this is not the whole truth of the place.

The temples of the Plaza are dedicated to deities of desire, fertility, sensuality, sensation, love, masochism and the like. The priests and priestesses here practise the virtuosities of pleasure as religiously and with the same devotion as any other worshipper exercise theirs in the district. The droll epithet "holy harlots" is widespread and derived from ignorant mockery by uninformed or puritan whiners.



Contrary to the appellation, the ordained austerely carry out their holy calling without recompense. Each temple and place of worship has its own rituals and doctrines, some seemingly non-amatory while others are incredibly outlandish or potentially horrifying to fragile human sensitivities, but they all fall under the auspices of divine desire.

### COURTS OF OFFERINGS

These markets are dedicated to selling commodities used for offerings and sacrifices. Several such markets can be found throughout the district, usually close to a gate, the docks or an important holy site.

The bazaars are divided between sundry groupings of offerings, and most anything which can be burned, sacrificed or otherwise offered can be found or commissioned here.

The commodities sold range from simple foodstuffs and small animals to large jars of myrrh, Marud oxen and anything else which may supposedly please the Gods or bestow a substantial boon or fortune when the blood ritualist speaks his litanies and make the sacrifice.

### THE HALLOWED FACES

This holy site is a collection of huge, bust-like statues pushing out of the ground in a strange semi-circular pattern.

The faces are broken and cracked, but the craftsmanship is evident and distinctly beyond anything any known artisan can create. A peculiar quality of the statue faces is that depending on which angle they are beheld from, the features shift and change, making it indiscernible which species – if any – they are supposed to represent or mirror.

It is unknown who made them or where they came from, but all attempts to dig into the ground around them to discover if anything extends into the earth have been met with disaster. Their shifting features and unknown origins make them an instant place of interest for the pious across the Cosmos.



Temple of a thousand gods



### THE ROCK OF SEVENTEEN SHROUDS

Towards the edge of the district stands a rock with inscribed litanies that are said to end the Cosmos should they ever be read. At least it is believed that a rock stands there, for no one has seen it for aeons. It is said to be the last resting place of the eight messiahs of Ashqlkranaq, who inscribed the stone in turn so that none of them would know the full extent of the text.

The rock is enclosed by seventeen layers of shrouds that are replaced every sixteen cycles by blinded monks, to ensure that even they do not see the holy rock and its horrid inscription. The purpose of the shrouds is not only to shield the rock from sight but to keep its devastating essence contained. The shrouds are changed at regular intervals to ensure that the stone's alleged radiance never permeates them all and radiates into the Cosmos. Several religions require that followers make a pilgrimage to the rock at least once in their lifetime, symbolically halting the rock from ever being exposed.

## District factions

### SERVANTS OF NEKHBET

There are individuals who - when confronted with alien beings that resemble those of myth - unquestioningly begin believing they are those beings. The Servants of Nekhbet are such a group, having seen the Ka'Alum and deemed they were created by their goddess as chosen envoys in this anarchic new Cosmos.

Followers are mainly descendants of the peoples of the Nile, but a few others have adopted this new belief. It is a small cult, as most see too many discrepancies between the Goddess and the Ka'Alum and most non-humans know that there is nothing deific about Ka'Alum.

Nekhbet was seen as a protector, represented as a white vulture featured in creation myths. The Ka'Alum are dark skinned and irregularly feathered, but some females' sandy beige feathers are seen as close enough to the white vulture tone.

For the most part, the Servants of Nekhbet are a small group of humans who follow a female Ka'Alum of the palest complexion with unquestioning loyalty. Some Ka'Alum simply use having free servants of unquestioning obedience to their advantage, while others are somewhat maternal and treat their followers more like children than slaves, seeing it as flattering and endearing that these fatuous humans revere them.

### DACHRI CULT

This cult is found mainly in Pai'Karaan with smaller contingents in the other districts. The Dachri cult originated as temple dancers who – through their artful and ecstatic dances – were believed to be able to call the attention of the Gods. The cult has expanded significantly since its beginning, and today several Dachri temples can be found around Llyhn.

The Dachri temple dancers are exceedingly skilled performers versed in the ritualistic performances associated with a host of known faiths and cultures. The dancers have no faith of their own and only assist others in the observance of theirs. Performing at processions, rites, revelries, blood rituals and so on, the Dachri temple dancers are highly sought and demand a substantial fee for their services.

### CELEBRANTS

Although not a faction as such, celebrants is the common term for any religious adherent, priest or faithful in Llyhn. Celebrants are usually distinguishable by the idols, prayer beads and other religious iconography they wear clearly visibly upon their person. Celebrants tend to be fanatical about their faith, occasionally causing scuffles and animosity in the district. Although outright violence is uncommon, several "holy wars" have been fought in the streets of Pai'Karaan between rival religious factions.

## Rumours & curiosities

- It is whispered that the Dachri cultists perform other more nefarious services than simple ritualistic dances.
- Gossip tells that a corpse was dragged from the third shroud surrounding the Rock of Seventeen Shrouds, its face frozen in horror and peculiar scratches covering the entire body.
- Rumour has it that a prophet servant of the Mindless Ghostly Abominations was spied in The Temple of a Thousand Gods leaving the shrine in the farthest darkest corner, but nobody saw him enter.

## Notable people

MAIARA: An elderly female Je'ehl Pariah, Maiara is the proprietor of a tea, sheesha and opium establishment known as The House of Maiara. She was born in Llyhn and has significant wastah, partly due to her extensive and influential clientele. Her two sons function as guards and caretakers while she conducts all business of the establishment.

All her servants bring her the gossip they hear, making her an extremely well-informed individual on what goes on in the city. She has a strong and authoritative presence and should not be crossed lightly.

### THE ORACLE OF MASKS

The Oracle of Masks is an enigmatic entity in Llyhn. The Oracle is always heralded by the Lantern Lady; a beautiful young woman of indiscernible species holding a lantern.

Petitioners place coins or other valuables along with an inscription of what knowledge they seek, inside the mouth of a carved mask hanging on an otherwise empty wall in an alley behind The Temple of a Thousand Gods. If the petition is acknowledged, the Lantern Lady appears after a few days, leading them to a dark alley or other remote location in which the Oracle materialises.

The Oracle resembles a cloud of hundreds of masks suspended in the air. When the oracle speaks, the sound seems to come from all the masks in hundreds of voices. It is customary that the Oracle requires a further sacrifice from any petitioner wanting a question answered. The sacrifice varies depending on the gravity of the question.

### RURIAL

A Daimonic high priest from the Plaza of Infernal Pleasures, Rurial claims to have seven mothers and to have been blessed by the Goddess Qlu, a divinity associated with desire and sensation. His temple, located in the first tier of temples, is an overabundance of sensual impressions. Obscene and lecherous to some, abundant extravagant sensuous experiences are accessible to and provided by the worshippers of Qlu who continuously seek the boundaries of what their senses can tolerate.

Rurial is attractive and eloquent, drawing in impressionable onlookers and exposing them to the rituals of ecstasy within. Due to extravagance, the worshipers of Qlu tend to grow numb, debauched and insusceptible to everyday sensual experiences, increasingly seeking more extreme sensations to feel anything. Predictably, a sizeable portion of Rurial's congregation are Je'ehl.

### EZH'LAH

This female Timaniem is a tracker who specialises in acquiring difficult-to-catch sacrifices for well-paying aristocrats, high priests and others. She is missing an eye, and rumour has it that she gave it willingly in exchange to save a companion who afterwards abandoned her. Ezh'Lah works alone and generally prefers her own company. She is distrustful of anyone, especially other Timaniem and reacts threateningly to anyone who ventures too close, literally or metaphorically.

Ezh'Lah has a small parlour near one of the Courts of Offerings where she receives clients and keeps her commodities. Although she does not shy away from catching sentient beings, she is not a bounty hunter and only accepts commissions where the prey is meant for sacrifice. She is frequently out of the shop capturing requested creatures, beings or entities with her blowpipe and darts poisoned with a sedative.



*Uiguyyrthyi and the fisherman*

### UIGUYYRTHYI AND THE FISHERMAN

Near the docks and Sacred Basins sits an odd pair: An old human male resting on a crumpled column overlooking the river and his Quth companion. The old man has a long raggedly filthy beard, no teeth and wears a torn and worn turban on his head. He is very intently trying to fish something unseen out of thin air with a makeshift fishing rod.

Just behind him rests the crippled Uiguyyrthyi, its stalk-mounted crustacean-like eyes swerving around taking in everything in the vicinity. It is apparently stuck, with some of its legs crushed under the collapsed column but seems to have found peace with its predicament as it spends its days encouraging the elderly human fisherman in his futile attempts to catch phantasmal fish.

Occasionally the fisherman shouts with glee as he ostensibly drags in a massive catch. He makes a grand spectacle of removing the considerable and indiscernible fish from the hook and handing it to the arachnid, who gulps it down with what can only be guessed to be a delighted smirk, although who can really tell with such an outlandish lifeform? The pair seem to have peculiar prophetic capabilities, and the fisherman intermittently divulges pertinent information to passers-by - as if informed by Uiguyyrthyi - after which he summarily ignores them and continues with his fishing.

## Plot hooks

- Relatives of members of a Cult of Nekhbet congregation pleads with the characters to get their relations freed as the Ka'Alum apparently abuses and exploits their zeal. This is made complicated by the fact that the congregation is blindingly loyal to the Ka'Alum.
- The characters have been charged with finding a particular blood ritualist in the labyrinthine core of Pai'Karaan, convince her to perform a boon ritual for an enclave leader and furthermore they must secure a living Adaru as a sacrifice for the ritual.
- Spurred by rumours that the Rock of Seventeen Shrouds is not a messianic portent of doom but a stele from Earth which might be a precious heritage to humanity, the characters have been asked to investigate the truth of the matter!

# Daer Bitaan

| | |
|---|---|
| POPULATION: | Low to high-castes. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Waterfront, canals, rocky pinnacles, labyrinthine streets and crowded quarters. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Oord, Ka'Alum, Shirr, Im'Zu and Ba'Waikh. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | The pinnacles, trading domes, amphitheatres and garden of the Undying. |
| TRADE: | The various trading domes provide every imaginable commodity. |

*Deep in the city, the rhythmic pulse of life is easy to discern; souqs alive with merchants announcing their wares, ceremonial devotions declaimed by strong-lunged worshippers, and water-carriers calling their services as they wander the plazas and winding, cobbled streets. Look up and marvel at the Pinnacles reaching towards the yellowish heavens above and hear the roar of the spectators from a nearby coliseum. The dusty ground beneath my feet bears testimony to the thousands of visitors coming here to trade, revel at the carnage of the theatres or make a few copper dhins away from the gaze of the tithe collectors.*

*- Tissu of the Shroud*

Daer Bitaan is among the largest districts in the Eternal City, easily distinguished by its numerous natural rock pinnacles bedecked by stacked structures and buildings clinging tenuously to the steep precipices. Below the soaring peaks, the labyrinthine district is cradled between the muddy banks of the Margidda and the high walls marking the boundary to the caravanserai and surrounding tent community of the Barrens. Sunwards the district borders the gardens of the undying and the Pai'Karaan district with its hallowed basins and hordes of pilgrims.

Daer Bitaan is renowned for its trading domes encompassing Llyhn's largest souqs, bazaars and slave markets under their high arching domes. Most trading domes are dedicated to one specific trade or an array of associated trades, allowing buyers to survey a vast selection of merchants offering similar goods.

Surrounding the domes are an overabundance of establishments such as guesthouses, massage parlours, opium dens and accommodations catering for more exotic tastes to satiate and placate weary travellers. The docks on one side, the caravanserai on the other and the centrally placed trading domes cause a constant flow of visitors through the district, turning every street into a constantly churning torrent of people. Most residents make a living working in the trading domes or in linked trades, such as security, haulage or hospitality where the constant flux of new clients provides continuous opportunities.

Another lure of Daer Bitaan are the amphitheatres; gladiatorial arenas ranging from vast coliseums filling up entire blocks to little pits secreted in the shadows of pinnacles. The theatres, as they are known, serve several purposes; to entertain, to settle disputes between residents, and as proxy chastisement or admonition between high-castes. If a dispute between parties cannot be resolved through negotiation or argument, it is customary to arrange a gladiatorial bout between the involved or gladiators as arbitration. Whichever side prevails has won the dispute. Games are held every day, and the disciplines include races, gladiatorial fights, maze-running, and events of far more sinister aspects. Spectators can earn vast sums betting, and while slaves may gain their liberty, professional gladiators who emerge victorious from the arena hold the city in their hands.




1. Pinnacle
2. Trading dome
3. Corpse cavalcade
4. The aromatic souq
5. The blade bazaar
6. The garden of the undying
7. The bathhouse
8. The Mastan canal arena
9. The paltry pit
10. The Wave

## THE PINNACLES

The Pinnacles is a collective name for several natural rock formations standing as isolated vertical spires around the district. The ones that are stable and accessible are crammed with structures, walkways and ladders providing living space for thousands of residents. Some even have constructions carved into the rocky peak itself providing a refreshing respite from the usual heat of the Eternal City. Certain pinnacles reach several hundred metres into the air giving the wealthy and powerful inhabitants residing towards the peak a magnificent vista over the bustling life in the district below.



*Daer Bitaan pinnacle*

## THE WATERFRONT

The riverbanks and several canals dug into the heart of the district are packed with low docks and mooring spots enabling waterside access for smaller merchant vessels and barges coming with wares from Dhaarese and Khameeliya. Each dock has multiple berths and is heavily patrolled by Jinassar and tithe collectors checking and taxing all incoming wares. Designated dock-workers service the vessels and haul the cargo once levied. Daer Bitaan has no warehouses, and all arriving goods are transported directly to the corresponding trading dome, souq or bazaar making the area a bustling mecca of activity.



## TRADING DOMES

In the souqs and bazaars not only commodities and services are displayed, but life in all its illustrious abundance is on exhibition. Walking through the trading domes is a journey and privileged glance into multitude cultures. Each dome is distinct and filled with wondrous and weird items, depending on who or what plies their trade there and which commodities and wares are for sale.

The exotic animals dome is filled with platforms exhibiting the living commodities within cages, while other domes are brimming with counters, carts and booths for the scrutinising clientele to see, touch, taste and smell the wares. Three trading domes are prominent: The Corpse Cavalcade, a slave and livestock market; the Aromatic Souq dealing in spices, herbs, infusions, perfumes and incense; and the Blade Bazaar, a mercenary market.

Other notable trading domes include the charioteers' court, the jewellery-makers and indeed the weaponry and armour market. Most trading domes are regulated by syndicates allocating plots and spaces for traders and merchants, charging exorbitant fees for the best spots and enjoying the markdowns that follow privilege of power.

## CORPSE CAVALCADE

The Corpse Cavalcade is the most extensive slave and creature market in the entire district. The name is a pun about the limited longevity of those who get sold here. Vast areas of holding pens, preparation rooms to beautify the specimens and sizeable podiums on which to parade them take up the full dome as well as the surrounding area.

The slaves and beasts found here are generally of ordinary stock, common draught animals as well as labour and sometimes retainer slaves, but the sheer number of them is astounding. Inside the dome, a central podium is reserved for the most prominent slavers with nearby salons and alcoves reserved for influential buyers and agents. A sloping floor and two storeys with galleries enable customers a panoramic view of all podiums from almost anywhere in the building.



*Corpse Cavalcade*

## THE AROMATIC SOUQ

Walking up the narrow walkways of the pinnacle the senses are assailed with the scents and sounds of the Aromatic Souq drifting down from above. Foreign fragrances, exotic spices, the aromas of bizarre food as well as a myriad of alien smells are mixed into one indefinable musk hanging about the pinnacle; the scent of adventure and new discoveries.

Situated high on a pinnacle - away from the stink of the streets - the Aromatic Souq is fragrant with distinct attractive, strange and refreshing smells, but it is more than spices, teas, perfumes and incense which can be bought here. Trance-inducing infusions, intoxicating vapours and hallucinogenic fumes kept in small glass vials and other suppositories are readily available, and even vendors of scent-based toxins and poisons can be found in hidden corners of the souq.

## THE BLADE BAZAAR

This sprawling dome-roofed warren in the heart of the district is crammed with one-storey open-front houses where soldiers of fortune peddle their services. While some houses are the established headquarters of reputable companies, most are rented out provisionally to companies or individuals between assignments.

The narrow alleys are thronged with coming and going companies as well as merchants, caravan-owners and others looking to hire protection. Occasionally clusters of poorly masquerading aristocratic ladies saunter the narrow streets looking for an escape from their otherwise sheltered lives with a bit of carnal excitement from these barbaric warriors.

## THE GARDEN OF THE UNDYING

From a distance, the garden appears as a lush jungle oasis carved into the urban landscape amidst the dusty district's hustle and bustle. Yet upon entering, visitors find themselves engulfed in a strange perpetual dimness with eerie iridescent lights dancing among the leaves above.
Dense vegetation of primarily necrotic-hanging trees and pulpy Corpsegale bushes covering the grounds make it easy to get lost should one stray too far from the pathways.

An order of monks named the Chak'shashti, stewarded by Grand-Asisi Gil'h, sombrely tend these gardens servicing the daily funeral processions coming here; for this is a graveyard. Who is allowed to be laid to rest is decided solely by the Grand-Asisi seemingly with little motive or method, and it is not uncommon to see mortuary processions turned away.

The monks guide and assist acceded visitors in laying their dead to rest, planting a single seed of the Corpsegale flower in the chest of the deceased. It is said that the spirit of those interred by the monks lives on in the eerie flowers as lights floating amongst the trees above them.

## THE BATHHOUSE

A low pinnacle overlooking the Garden of the Undying holds an establishment known simply as the Bathhouse. Owned and overseen by the Lady Autumn, it is an establishment where clients seek leisure and pleasure. The servants provide customers with all the services and delights imaginable to mortal and esoteric alike; carnal, intellectual and spiritual. The Bathhouse offers satiating steam baths, massages, meditation-rooms and a wide range of soothing amenities including tearooms serving unusual beverages depending on the needs and wants of the clientele. Even the simplest of services have a glint of luxury to them in this place.



*The Aromatic Souq on its pinnacle*

Minstrels, poets and other performers from across the core worlds come to display their talent, please onlookers with their skills and socially compete to win the favour of the audience. The Bathhouse is bustling with life and accommodations can be acquired for continued visits.

*"Come All! Witness the greatest warriors of the day in all their bloody glory!"*

*- Cries of the arena orators*

## THE MASTAN CANAL ARENA

Under the patronage of an undisclosed consortium of aristocrats and known as the 'bloody jewel' of Daer Bitaan, the Mastan Canal Arena has no equal and has outshone all other gladiatorial arenas for as long as anyone cares to remember.

Said to rival the vast Ezeru'an arenas in their prime, nowhere in the known Cosmos is grander nor stages more famous battles. The complex consists of three separate but conjoined arenas that can be opened to each other, enabling extensive trials to be conducted. Immense war chariots, untold monstrosities and even small armies have pounded spear, boot, and wheels in this coliseum.

Accompanied by savage chants of ruthless warriors and the roaring crowds calling for blood, this is a place where legends have been born and perished. Lore has it that the arenas of the Mastan Canal are carved from the fossilised bones of an ancient beast that collapsed upon the dirt beneath the Pinnacles, creating the crucible within which the arenas lie.

### THE PALTRY PIT

This arena is one of the smallest to be found in the district but also one of the most infamous, owing to the popularity of its savage cage-fights. The pit is located in the depths of a grotto in the base of a pinnacle.

The fighting ground holding the cage has been dug into the ground, with an arched ceiling and balconies above for spectators looking into the pit. The arena is about ten metres across with various entrances leading into cellars where gladiators, slaves and beasts are held. The pit is owned and run by Djar, a Ba-Waikh, whose wiles are surpassed only by his greed.

### THE WAVE

This amphitheatre is renowned as the pitch is built beneath the waterline and can be filled with water from a nearby waterway. The arena has spectator seating surrounding it on three sides, with several wealthy patrons owning private lounges hanging over the arena and accessible via retractable walkways. The most popular event is when poles and small unstable platforms are placed at regular intervals across the flooded arena, and silt-sharks or other horrid aquatic beasts are released into it. This leaves contestants fighting while jumping from one safe platform to another, keeping their balance or risking the jaws in the muddy water.

## District Factions

### PARASH MATU

This mercenary company consist of two squadrons; one solely comprising Harith fighters and a support squadron made up of whoever was tough enough to enlist and stay alive. The company has adequate achievements and funds to have acquired a domicile in the Blade Bazaar and has earned a certain respect among its peers, but it struggles as a purely Harith squadron carries instinctive suspicions of bias and partiality among many employers.

The main squadron numbers approximately forty Harith - all veterans of various skirmishes and minor wars across the Cosmos - while the support squadron numbers close to the same divided between actual warriors and retainers for the Harith. The company was founded by the twin Harith warriors Aqlartok and Kumaqlak after their flotilla was lost in a Void tempest and their own vessel was damaged beyond repair.

### CHAK'SHASHTI

This funerary cult is predominantly made up of veteran soldiers and warriors. Regardless of species or creed, people of the blade are welcome to join the Chak'Shashti to learn the secret rites and the journey to the beyond. Some monks were orphans raised by the order, others mauled or retired warriors choosing a monastic lifestyle as the last calling of their life. The belief perpetuated by the Chak'Shashti is that warriors and other exceptional beings are a special breed allowed to take something they call the Three Journeys.

The Shashti Monks believe selected individuals must journey (Shashti) from the pre-world of Kehl, a land of brightness where the seed of life is sown, through The Shell, this physical world. The Shell becomes another seed, passing into the darkness of Zhee, where only those of pure warrior spirit earn their place, leaving some their essence in this world to give light to other warriors.

In the rites of sending, the anointed bodies are prepared and doused in liquid light, an iridescent sap that comes from the necrotic hanging-trees, by placing them at the roots of the tree. A corpsegale seed is planted in the chest of the body, which slowly dissolves and feeds the tree as the flower blooms from its chest. Odd lights like fireflies said to be remnants of the warrior's spirit dance above the flowers as the deceased supposedly pass into the world of Zhee and become beacons of light in this world. After a corpse has decomposed only a corpsegale bush and the dancing lights remain.



### TEA TRADERS GUILD

This influential league controls substantial portions of the tea-leaf trade in Daer Bitaan and therefore has immense sway with many establishments across the city. Tea-drinking is not only social conformity in the Eternal City but a cherished stimulating practice, not to mention the various remedial purposes, making this perceived inconsequential trade remarkably powerful. The ability to boost, diminish or even cut supplies to physicians, tea parlours, pleasure houses and palaces is no menial sway.

## Rumours & Curiosities

- It is said that a concealed Void-rift used to smuggle goods and commodities exists in Daer Bitaan.
- Rumour has it that certain vendors in the meat souq are selling cadavers of gladiators as foodstuffs.
- It is said that the gardens of the undying are alive, filled with sentient flora retaining the memories of those laid to rest.

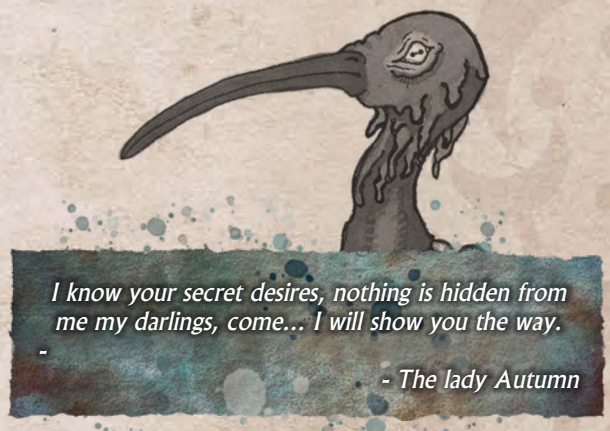
## Notable people

### THE LADY AUTUMN

Somehow everything the Lady says becomes an insinuation, always a hint of your true desires. With a knowing nod and smiling eyes, the Lady Autumn enthusiastically directs Bathhouse visitors on their way.

She is a tall Ka'Alum, reddish brown, with garments that are always in the newest styles, and it is evident that this pleasure house is her undisputable domain. She is demure and seems to have a calming effect on those in her presence, always joking and touching, while selling the satiation of any pleasure or desire imaginable. She is cited for the proverb "How can you know if you've never tried?" and she considers all her guests lost little cubs on a thrilling journey of exploration and discovery into their secret pleasures. No secret is beyond her skill to uncover but she protects her clientele's identities well and their secrets with lethal ferocity.

The Lady Autumn is accustomed to scandal and is often on the periphery of any powerful merchant or high-caste's uncovered secrets and - as such - a font of information. She runs the Bathhouse with authority, and the many merchants that have tried to take over her operation have failed, mainly due to her cunning and extensive network. The Lady often has work for those willing to help protect her business interests.



*I know your secret desires, nothing is hidden from me my darlings, come... I will show you the way.*

*-*

*- The lady Autumn*

### DJAR SEKLOR

A squat Ba-Waikh with a cocked 'eye-brow' and a smile, ready to sell you the shirt off of his mother's back and emitting a constant musk of sweat and incense. Djar runs the Paltry Pit from his balcony just below the dome ceiling, smoking sheesha while a pleasure pet is never far away from 'Daddy Djar'.

Perpetually jovial, but quick to anger, Djar is well known in many circles, sometimes as a liberator but more often as a dirty-handed business acquaintance. Numerous local traders owe him money or favours, and most anyone must reluctantly admit that they know him. He views himself as a fair businessman, but he is always double-dealing. He is dressed in finery, yet still appears just a bit unkempt somehow. At the mere threat of violence, he slips away, and he pays thugs big money to protect himself and his holdings - especially those he considers part of his 'family'. Anyone who double-crosses or beats him at his own game quickly finds themselves in a mound of trouble, which is somehow never traceable to Djar. He is the self-made sovereign of a small hill, but a sovereign nevertheless.

Countless clandestine activities in the district lead back to Djar, although never explicitly. Most of Djar's wealth comes from fights in the Paltry Pit and snatching exciting contenders against their will is not beyond him. Anyone active in the underworld of the Eternal City is bound to meet Djar's cronies sooner or later.



### GRAND-ASISI GIL'H OATHEN

In the Gardens of the Undying, light awaits you in the deep midnight and meeting the master of the Chak'shashti is an unexpected delight. Small, unremarkable and dressed in simple unmarked robes that cover him completely, it is impossible to tell what species he is.

The Grand-Asisi is assiduous in funerary matters and tending the lush gardens. His plants are continually growing new strange saplings to which the Grand-Asisi speaks and listens, unwavering in his conviction of the spirited plants. Where the new saplings flourish is where Gil'h Oathen is usually found, doling out duties to his keepers.

The Grand-Asisi allows only select individuals to be interred in the Undying Garden. No one has ever seen the Grand-Asisi leave his domain, and weird worrying rumours persist about his practices, further perpetuated by the circumstance that the masked Hohr'loh'kin seem to steer clear of the gardens.

## Plot hooks

- It is rumoured that a newly arrived masked gladiator is the mighty Rhog Rhaul of legend, risen from the dead. The warrior has been beating all challengers in various arenas causing a number of high-castes to lose a lot of gambling earnings. The characters are hired to uncover the truth: whether it is the legend risen from the dead or charlatan.
- The characters find an unrecognisable human body in possession of small clay tablet, addressed to one of their enclave leaders from the Tea Traders demanding aid with a 'delicate matter', however, evidence points to the enclave leader having killed the messenger.
- A human slave has escaped from the Paltry Pit and is hiding in the district. As she sees the characters, she approaches begging them to help her.
- One of the characters is asked to settle a dispute in the arena for an old acquaintance who cannot fight or afford to hire a proper champion.

# Penda'Rinn

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| POPULATION: | Aristocratic high-castes. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Canals separating palaces, parks and manors built on atolls and islets. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Mixed. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | Palace of Sighs, Embassy Quarter, Circles of Thought and Dabah Roushi. |
| TRADE: | Very little trade physically occurs inside Penda'Rinn. |

*Jewel of Llyhn, Penda'Rinn is staggering in its aloof and decadent beauty.*

*Elegant minarets, towers and pagodas stretch their frames towards the heavens as if reaching for the skies themselves, while the resident aristocracy are as cold and callous as they are pleasing to the eye.*

*Tantalizing aromas of carefully chosen herbs and perfumes shroud any whiff from the surrounding city, while the harems and pleasure palaces accommodate perversion and depravity on a scale only conceivable by those who have lost all conceptions of decency and empathy.*

Located close to the Morning Palace on the stretch of the Margidda which is crystal clear and silvery, Penda'Rinn is a district of excess, decadence and debauchery. Peculiar palaces, estates and mansions sprouting countless illustrious rooftop gardens, terraces and lavish pavilions are occupied by eccentric residents lounging and lingering in unbridled luxury.

Palanquins carried by exotic slaves and leisure chariots drawn by even more remarkable mounts promenade the exquisite parks and gardens of these atolls of extravagance. Clear iridescent waterways and canals travelled by lavish gondolas divide the islets and atolls comprising the district, making it vibrant with the gentle cluck of running bubbling water streaming past.

Unlike most of the surrounding city, this canton is orderly, clean and patrolled regularly. On the riverbank bordering the Khameeliya district, a half-enclosed botanical garden of red-leafed vegetation keeps unwelcome visitors out - providing a flamboyant boundary between the high-caste canton and everyone else. This serene garden is lush with beautiful trees, bushes and flowers of unimaginable properties - allowing residents and permitted visitors a pasture of tranquillity amongst the stunning fauna and ornately decorated pergolas before reaching the atolls and islets comprising the district proper. As the mostly gentle breezes of night-time waft across the garden, rustling leaves can be heard catching the wind mimicking the sound of ethereal choirs - giving the park its name: the Singing Garden.

No shops or vendors line the mosaic-tiled avenues and boulevards as no resident would dream of purchasing anything from such a place. Whatever goods, commodities and indulgences the aristocracy desire are promptly brought to their abodes from whichever souq or bazaar is peddling them.

A single open plaza on a central islet provides a means for specially invited merchants to showcase select exquisite wares such as unique slaves, beasts or whatever opulent commodities might satiate the indulgent, voracious desires of the resident clientele.

Enclosing the podium, petty potentates lounge under lavish canopies surrounded by their harems and house guards. Aristocrats occasionally cast bored glances at the wares displayed until a particularly licentious item or commodity appears, when the gathering erupts in a frenzy of bidding to secure the latest and greatest to outdo rivals in an unspoken competition of vulgar excess.

Only the dominant high-castes are considered residents here. Servants, guards and attendants serving and living on the estates are not deemed worthy of claiming residency, and are replaced regularly to emphasise this. As a result, anyone caught without proper seals or authorisation is brought before the Emir at the Palace of Sighs. If found guilty of trespassing, or without a high-caste resident vouching for their presence, the customary penalty is flogging or beheading - depending on the mood of the Emir.

The numerous household guards and other measures protecting the delicate residents are supported by a company of sentinels employed collectively by the high-caste denizens. The sentinels, known facetiously as the Kindly Ones, patrol

the district and the borders of the Singing Garden. This regiment of well-trained capable soldiers is sworn to protect the community and its residents. Although tensions exist between the Jinassar and the Kindly Ones, these have never escalated into actual conflict.

Besides the vast decadent palaces, two other places of interest can be found in Penda'Rinn; the various philosophical and scholarly societies and academies collectively known as the Circles of Thought, and the embassy district comprising emissaries and dignitaries from a broad swathe of core world civilisations and beyond.




1. *Circles of thought*
2. *Dabah Roushi (Ashen Tower)*
3. *House of stone and clay*
4. *Mulran Dabayy*
5. *The Singing Garden*
6. *The Grand Je'ehl embassy*
7. *Ba'Waikh mission*
8. *Harith house*
9. *Aq'Jarea delegation*
10. *Oord embassy*
11. *Ka'Alum consulates*
12. *Palace of Sighs*
13. *Fortress of the Kindly Ones*
14. *Docks*

## CIRCLES OF THOUGHT

On an outer atoll lie the Circles of Thought, an assembly of pavilions, academies and libraries under the patronage of various high-caste residents. Academies dedicated to noted philosophies, such as the Arammu, Karmic Circle, Sindra and InQabal, hold regular symposiums drawing scholars from across the known Cosmic worlds to debate and quarrel over the tenets of existence, politics, cosmology and ethos. One academy is the home of the Mulran Dabayy faction, a conclave dedicated to the learning of anatomy and associated practices. Some of the most excellent physicians of the core worlds are members. While technically open to the public, only those of sufficient means are treated.

## DABAH ROUSHI (THE ASHEN TOWER)

Placed on a secluded islet one of the most notable houses of knowledge is the sacred establishment known as Dabah Roushi - Keepers of Secret Illuminations. The academy is an open coterie for students of mysticism, from acolyte to adept, and is one of the few places to methodically teach the art. The structure looks peculiar and distorted, with many entrances leading into its dark interior. It is said to contain several Void rifts although this has never been verified. Jocularly known as the Ashen Tower, it has burned to the ground on several occasions but has always been rebuilt from the ashes to keep alive the art of gnostic mysticism, its primary focus.

## HOUSE OF STONE AND CLAY

The name refers to the thousands upon thousands of clay and stone tablets and codices of encyclopaedic records from across the Cosmos contained in this massive structure. The House of Stone and Clay, which functions as a library, is one of the principal founts of knowledge among the core worlds. While the catalogues of inscriptions and engravings may not leave the grounds, a substantial portion of them are available for study by those who can bribe or persuade the aides of their need and adequacy to gain access.

## THE EMBASSY QUARTER

Eight islets, flanked by the singing garden and the interior of Penda'Rinn and abutting the high pinnacle of the Morning Palace, make up this area. A small atoll at the centre, known to some as the Ring of the Progenitors, houses the embassies of the prominent enlightened species, while the other lesser consulates, delegations and envoys are placed on islets surrounding it. The surrounding canals and waterways are abuzz with gondolas and abras continuously fetching representatives and envoys between the delegations.

Being close to the fount of the Margidda, the water is clear, and shoals of exotic marine life and aquatic species abound. In addition to the private guards posted in and around the embassies, a substantial contingent of Kindly Ones patrol, dealing harshly with anyone unable to present accreditation or seals of endorsement.

Observing the embassies is akin to viewing a thousand species and cultures crowded together, with every building representing its people and their particularities, ranging from decadently coloured grand structures to almost-crumbling shacks on the fringe islets of the area. Shifting alliances, associations and intrigue are always rife in the embassy quarter. An outward appearance of calm is but a façade for continuous cold warfare and blatant egocentricity as delegates seek to outfox each other at the behest of their various regimes.

## THE GRAND JE'EHL EMBASSY

The Grand Je'ehl Embassy is a sight to behold, rising above the other buildings in the Ring. The embassy somewhat resembles the traditional step-pyramidal shape prevalent in ancient Je'ehl culture, carved from sandstone with enamelled mosaics around the large trapezoid gate that opens into the building. The structure has three levels, the uppermost floor being the dwelling of the Great Ones who leads the represented Je'ehl nations, the second being residences and meeting rooms, and the first floor supporting a grand, lavish symposium area in true Je'ehl style.

The embassy's foremost member is Jaxat Whekesh, a Great One from Kanda'hir who still believes in bringing the light of the Je'ehl culture to the Cosmos. He is devious and silver-tongued, a true example of his kind, and is well capable in the mystic arts, though he rarely reveals this. With him serve three others; Ruunta'kr, Xil'jek, and Quna'ran, each with their own agendas and purposes for representing their nation in the Eternal City. Outwardly aligned, the ambassadors are often at odds with each other internally.



The Je'ehl seem to have found a symbolic kinship with the Ba'Waikh, their ideas of karmic birth and strict castes aligning closely with the Je'ehl philosophy. This allegiance has caused others to question the motives of the Je'ehl, who reveal little about their true purposes for anything they do, and has drawn ire from several Harith delegates, who are at odds with the Je'ehl due to their entangled past. While many within the embassy community show veneration towards the Je'ehl, most remember only too well the ideals practised when the empire sought to "civilise" the Cosmos in the past.

## BA'WAIKH MISSIONS

There are three separate Ba'Waikh consulates in the embassy quarter - one representing the Ilda'iin empire and the others two minor fiefdoms of Ogé.

The Ilda'iin embassy is built to accommodate the short-of-stature Ba'Waikh, with only a few external shaded atriums and vestibules high-ceilinged enough to allow larger species. The embassy is kept intentionally gloomy similarly to the conditions on Ogé, allowing native plants brought from their world to prosper within. The interior, covered with iridescent mosses and ferns, gives visitors the impression that they are actually on Ogé. A large atrium on the main floor holds several areas where various officials of the Ilda'iin empire deal with representatives of foreign powers.

The second floor holds apartments and private residences for the diplomats and prominent Ba'Waikh guests. The Ilda'iin high ambassador is Pliu'Oji, a young and ambitious leader out to prove his worth to the new ruler of the empire after the exiling of the Virgin Empress by initiating advances towards several Je'ehl Great Ones to establish alliances, anxiously cementing the legitimacy of the Ilda'iin vizier abroad.

The fiefdom Ajiin, from the third continent of Ogé, has a small representation headed by consul Deja'Ajj on a peripheral islet in the quarter. She is a venerable diplomat, but rumours that she empathises with - and covertly supports - the exiled Virgin Empress have earned her the ire of Pliu'Oji, who until recently simply ignored the consul. Deja'Ajj has been criticised for "seeing all as Ba'Waikh" and in being far too stiff in her conservative view of karma and its rigidity.

The last consulate is administered by high consul Idiyn'Shajj, a somewhat self-righteous male, who is working tirelessly to increase the influence of the expanding Shajii fiefdom, which also has a growing ghetto community in the Eternal City.

## HARITH HOUSE

The Harith delegation resides in what is often simply called Harith House, a modest structure with a high ribbed roof and sturdy walls. The building comprises a single massive hall divided by moveable woven screens, allowing for constant redistribution of the space depending on need.

The Harith hold that this structure is the property of all their species, which is why no permanent dividing walls are erected - allowing for accommodating of needs depending on which flotilla might require it. The various flotillas provide envoys for the delegation, taking turns to represent their species in the Eternal City.

When night settles, large panels in the roof are opened with pullies and ropes, allowing the traditional vocalising and songs reciting the Harith history to be heard across the quarter, an explicit declaration of defiance aimed at the nearby grand Je'ehl embassy.

## AQ'JAREA DELEGATION OF ANAH

There are several Aq'Jarea delegations in Llyhn. One of the most recognised is that of the Anah tribe, the largest gathering of clans of Jarai. The Aq'Jarea are known for their simple, hardy lives, and the Anah tribe is no different. Their quarters, comprising a collection of tents and pavilions in the style used by all tribes on Jarai, contains amenities for guests, dining and lounging areas, and dedicated pavilions for dignitaries. The many enclosures, vendor stalls and marquees that are raised around the embassy grounds by traders from associated clans are a central feature of the embassy.

The Anah tribe are first and foremost traders by nature, and even though the purpose of the delegation is to build diplomatic ties, the Aq'Jarea trust someone far more if they are able to establish a good trade deal. It is not uncommon that dignitaries and proceedings are delayed due to impetuous traders initiating bartering wars and refusing to relinquish until diplomats seeking entry have acquiesced.

There are three permanent members of the embassy: Anah-Ira-Ohm-Kas, who handles the significant ore trade; Anah-Qul-Tos-Ri, in charge of Nathaliin trading; and Anah-Lil-Gju-Rok, who oversees the diplomatic activities. The three are tribal leaders on Jarai and command respect from their fellow Aq'Jarea and even grudgingly from other tribes.

## THE OORD EMBASSY

The Oord are not a united species as such, so the fact that there is an Oord embassy is somewhat odd. However, with the significant numbers staying in the Eternal City, it was decided that representation was needed, and so an embassy was established.

The embassy consists of several separate structures, implying the individuality of the Oord, yet arranged in an overall pattern indicating connectivity. The structures are squat and brightly coloured,

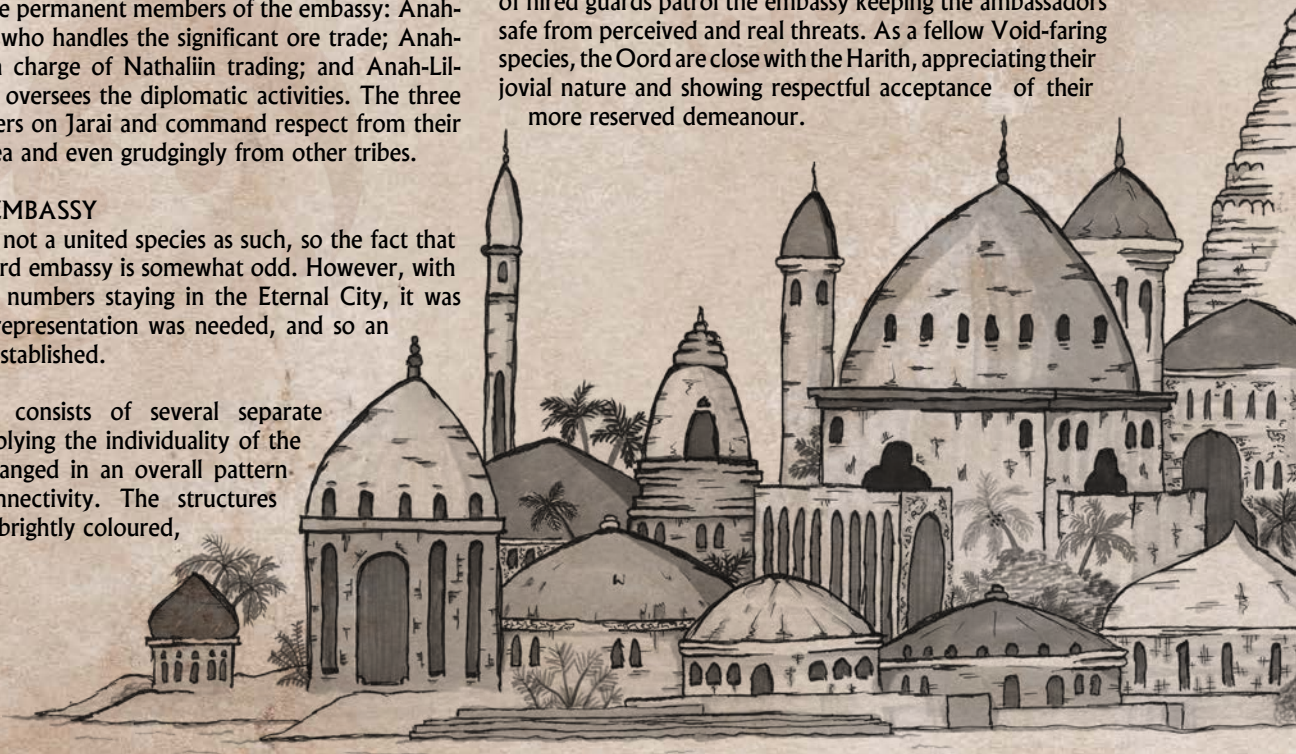


*Harith representative*

each containing sleeping quarters and other amenities for the ambassadors. Meetings are conducted in a central structure accommodating taller species than the Oord.

Four ambassadors seemingly act autonomously, as there is no truly united Oord political structure, adding to the mounting frustrations of the other diplomats in the quarter. Contracts are honoured by all Oord factions, but there is little collaboration between the representatives, who function mostly as mediators with traders looking for services provided by the Oord.

The Oord are tolerated and even respected for their capabilities as Void navigators, yet they are viewed with mistrust due to their peculiar nature. A significant number of hired guards patrol the embassy keeping the ambassadors safe from perceived and real threats. As a fellow Void-faring species, the Oord are close with the Harith, appreciating their jovial nature and showing respectful acceptance of their more reserved demeanour.



### THE KA'ALUM CONSULATES

The Ka'Alum consulates are gathered on an islet at the edge of the district, each representing a world of the federation. The consuls, preferring to remain away from the din of the other embassies, chose this location to conduct their business privately and in a relaxed environment.

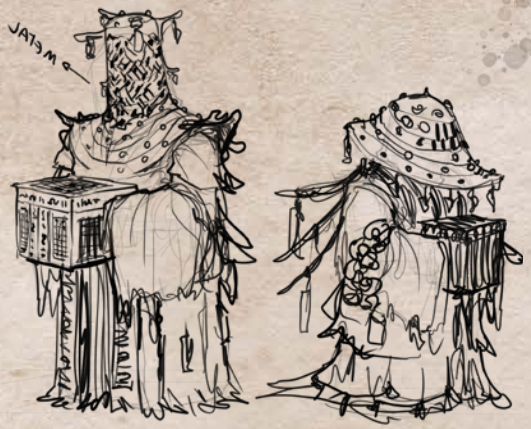
The consulates themselves are impressive buildings much more an estate than a governmental facility, sprawling the entire islet with numerous gardens and parks dotting the grounds. Each consulate holds lavish bedrooms and dining rooms, libraries, and expansive gardens displaying flora from the numerous Ka'Alum federation worlds. Within each consulate reside three to five Ka'Alum, with an entourage of slaves and servants from across the Cosmos.

Three prevalent consuls are Reh'Tor, Kyo'Fuhnt and finally high consul Ihm'thoth. Reh'Tor is a rather pompous, antisocial individual, sticking to his offices and rarely coming out. He is said to have interests in many major black markets in Llyhn dealing with matters the public would be prudent to be aware of. Kyo'Fuhnt is a strangely boisterous and jovial Ka'Alum, continually drinking and carousing. This is suspected to be a ruse meant to keep secret the cunning and scheming mind of the consul, seeking to woo merchants, traders and other nobles inducing them to the federation cause. Finally, there is the high consul of Ahniar herself, Ihm'thoth. Ihm is the personification of Ka'Alum values - callous, intelligent, calculating, and silent. Ihm rarely leaves the boundaries of the consulate islet, but when she does it is to deal with matters affecting the entirety of the federation and Ka'Alum species.

The Ka'Alum are viewed with both esteem and apprehension by the other embassies. The power and influence of the species is considerable, and they seem far too invested and engaged in the proceedings of Llyhn for others to ignore. This, combined with their ever-growing federation, is forebodingly reminiscent of the late Je'ehl empire. Many emissaries and others protest and seek to limit the growing influence of the Ka'Alum, but their appeals fall on deaf ears.

### PALACE OF SIGHS

Almost an entire island is taken up by this astonishing structure of gleaming stone, soaring spires and mosaiced domes. A tall wall, apparently cut from a single boulder, surrounds the palace, with a rich menagerie of exotic birds and beasts beneath its parapets. The palace has many gates which must be passed to get to the court of the resident Emir. Numerous guards are posted by the first gate, and servants with horns, drums and pipes sound a fanfare whenever a distinguished individual seeks entry. As a symbolic warning, an executioner equipped to behead anyone displeasing the Emir also stands within sight of the first gate. Beyond the entrance is a large hall where the personal guards of the Emir have their posts, lining the aisle leading further into the palace.



At the second and third gates, more guards and performers are placed, continuing the fanfare of approaching dignitaries. By the third gate, the vizier of the emir stands with multiple scribes ready to register the comings and goings of visitors. Once announced, dignitaries to the Court of Sighs may approach the raised dais of the emir.
The Emir is known as both a generous and a cruel potentate. A fickle individual, he is a giver of gifts and a spiller of blood - and by his door there is always someone rich with gifts or awaiting execution.

The courtyard menagerie is a maze of cages, pens and enclosures holding only the rarest, most exquisite and valuable creatures to be found anywhere. The menagerie, built as a garden with decorative pergolas and podiums scattered about, is also a prison, holding numerous sentient beings caged and on display for the delight and amusement of visitors.
It is here that the most wealthy and affluent come after a demanding day to mingle, drink and revel in luxurious treats of the most exotic and decadent type. Many high-caste children with nothing but time and money to whittle away spend their days and nights in this lively place.

## District Factions

### MULRAN DABAYY

Probably the most well-funded physicians' conclave in the known Cosmos, this gathering of learned beings has an academy within the Circles of Thought. From here they treat the aristocracy and high-caste denizens of the Eternal City while studying the mysteries of living and dead bodies. Dissections, vivisections and all manners of associated trials are carried out continuously with significant numbers of corpses as leftovers for the carnivores at the adjacent menagerie. The academy contains amenities for almost any known curative practice, and it is suspected that its members include several grafters using the deep vaults - where screams are deadened by thick walls - for their sordid practices.

### THE PENDA'RINN REGIMENT (KINDLY ONES)

Recruited from across the known Cosmos, trained rigorously and disciplined beyond most fighting forces, the Kindly Ones are more soldiers than sentinels. Based in a fortress built on an islet close to the Palace of Sighs near the centre of the district, the complex encompasses barracks, training grounds, armoury, stables and everything needed for maintaining an army.

Keeping the peace and removing unwanted elements are their primary directives, and they have been granted disproportionate rights to carry out their assignment. The force is divided into groups allocated to specific locations or with distinct areas of responsibility. Each atoll of the district has squadrons assigned, while the Singing Gardens, the embassy quarters and the library have special contingents, and the riverside is patrolled by aerial squads riding flying mounts. Additionally, a reserve of troops is retained at the fortress for special assignments or as reinforcements as needed. Each branch has a designated commander reporting to Ahton Mah, the Grand Vizier and high commander.

Conceivably equal in capability - though not in numbers - to the Jinassar legion a certain haughtiness permeates the Kindly Ones and tensions have been known to occur between the two. Albeit with no authority and not permitted to wear their colours beyond the Singing Gardens the Kindly Ones' arrogance is apparent when they venture out into the Eternal City.

### THE LIBRARY AIDES

Enlisted from among the most diligent and knowledgeable sages and scholars in the known Cosmos the aides in the House of Stone and Clay are mavens within one or several subjects. Many are former visitors who only stayed and were sworn in as custodians and curators of the knowledge kept in the vaults.

Preserving and acquiring new knowledge is the aides' purpose, and they are not willing to let just anyone have access to what they consider sacrosanct materials. The aides, more like a religious order, are extremely disciplined and resolute in their management of the library, allowing liberties only to patrons and select contributors. Abundant records can be found in the vaults, but permissions to view and study a tablet, scroll or seal often take considerable time to process, and may ultimately be rejected if the presiding aide does not see the benefit in granting access to the requesting individual.

## Rumours & curiosities

- It is said that one or more human specimens and other primitive sentient species are held for display at the menagerie.
- Absurd rumours that certain delusional members of humanity mean to set up a consulate in the embassy quarter has gotten the whole diplomatic community talking.

## Notable people

### THE EMIR OF THE PALACE OF SIGHS

The Emir residing in the Palace of Sighs is an ancient, otherworldly aristocrat who has sat the throne for as long as anyone can remember. He is the unofficial head of the denizen aristocrats of Llyhn. Although he does not wield any formal power in the city at large, he is appointed to be judge and jury in matters concerning intruding or offending outsiders caught in the district, as well as being the outward countenance towards emissaries and new engagements in the embassy quarter.

The Emir is capricious, vacillating between apparent cruelty and benevolence at a whim. His immense wealth and sybaritic tastes are often the subjects of gossip across the city. Covered in vast swathes of jewellery, shawls and veils, very few know what the Emir actually looks like, and most are only familiar with has rasping yet commanding voice.

### AHTON MAH

Grand Vizier and commander of the Kindly Ones, presumed to be Asura, Ahton Mah is the powerful patron and leader of one of the most feared armed hosts in the Eternal City. With his three faces and six arms, he strikes an imposing figure as he parades around the fortress overseeing the strict training of recruits, barking orders and organising the duties of squadrons.



## Plot hooks

- Tensions are rising between the Ka'Alum consulates and several other representations, with disappearances, scuffles and an escalating conflict causing others to have to pick sides. If this conflict spirals out of control, everyone will get caught in the maelstrom, and the minor species are undoubtedly the first to be drafted and used as pawns, scapegoats and dupes for cautionary warnings by the high-ups.
- The rumours about humans wanting a consulate are true and founded on an idea floated by the Faerdii Siblings of the Assembly. Some emissaries welcome the idea while others demand that this minor species simply be enslaved or eradicated to put an end to such nonsense.
- The Kindly Ones mount a poorly disguised assault on one of the human enclaves for seemingly unknown reasons. No help is to be found from outside sources, and the characters are implored by the enclave leadership to find out who ordered the attack, what the underlying motive is and if possible, resolve the state of affairs before further incidences are incited.

# Khameeliya

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|---|---|
| POPULATION: | Predominantly commoners with a rather large minority of high-caste residents. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Divided into cantons by crafts, the district is a veritable maze of narrow streets and sloping lanes. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Je'ehl, Shirr, Ka'Alum and a variety of Cosmic and esoteric species. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | Floating market, Asru square, the Masque, the Feast of Flesh and the palatial grounds of the Virgin Empress. |
| TRADE: | Across the district a wide variety of cantons, souqs and bazaars are designated to specific commodities, mainly garments and clothing, teas, exclusive weaponry, jewellery, exquisite rugs, as well as delectable wines and spirits. |

*Innumerable strange languages mix with beautiful music welling from the windows of surrounding palaces as perusing visitants make their way to the Asru square.*

*In the soft light of late afternoon, the grand plaza spreads beyond a labyrinthine and vaulted bazaar, two great buildings; the red ziggurat and the citadel of Maklu are positioned in near perfect symmetry flanking the grandiose pavilions of the stately grounds of the exiled Virgin Empress of Ogé.*

*As the crowds surge along the bazaar, beneath tiered pastel-coloured arcades, among perfume vendors, cloth merchants and visiting otherworlders, Ma'Alu caste women nibble on exotic dishes from the various food-stands while discussing today's purchases. Courtesans lounge on plaid rugs, loosening cumbersome dress-shawls, offering a glimpse of skin while Daimons and Djann stroll the pergolas of the Bazaar with purposes unknown.*

The district lies on the sunset side of the river Margidda, adjacent to Penda'Rinn and the Morning Palace high on its pinnacles. The area is known for its many narrow and winding streets, rising and falling with the lay of the land while overhanging walkways and arches provide cool shade to the spaces between buildings. Most buildings in Khameeliya are built in sandstone, kilned terracotta bricks or fossilised coral and are rarely less than three storeys tall.

The district is thriving, with many residents making their living as vendors, merchants or artisans, and is divided into cantons based on the principal industry of each area. Each canton is crammed with small plazas and squares where wenches serve cold drinks to thirsty traders, and everything from common household tools to exotic and bizarre items brought to Llyhn from unimaginable worlds may be found in its cramped booths, stands and shops.

Due to several Void rifts, the streets are always crowded and buzzing with Voidfarers, merchants, foreign traders, street entertainers and exotic visitors. The prosperity brought on by the massive amount of trade in Khameeliya has influenced most of the residents here, and the living conditions for most are above the ordinary. Even beggars rarely go a day without a meal. Furthermore, Khameeliya is one of the preferred places for Merchant Princes to have their holdings, due to the proximity to the Dhaarese district and its easily reachable docks, wharves and storage and a considerable number of Void rifts leading to and from several major trading worlds. An advantageous location for traders who want to be close to their stocks, fleets and warehouses but prefer living away from the hustle and bustle of a smelly and busy harbour.

Khameeliya residents tend to be somewhat arrogant and jaded because of their abundance but retain aloof politeness towards outsiders and foreigners, though they rarely offer personal hospitality due to the enormous number of strangers filtering through the district daily. The many guest houses and taverns, however, go out of their way to make most visitors feel more than welcome. More so than in any other part of the city, flora is prevalent here, with many parks, gardens and potted terraces scattered across the district. As a result of this, a large variety of animals frequent the cantons. Songbirds, dragonflies, monkeys and more exotic species buzz around the foliage and buildings, making the district vibrant with life. As one of the only districts with a sewer system, less-welcome animals such as sludge rats and other vermin come up at night to haunt the back alleys.




1. *Void rift*
2. *House of Marshandah*
3. *The Floating Market*
4. *Asru square*
5. *The Shaded Souq*
6. *Palatial grounds of the Virgin Empress*
7. *Red Ziggurat*
8. *Citadel of Maklu*
9. *Dyer's Lane*
10. *The Masque*
11. *Feast of Flesh*
12. *The Writhing Beakboa*
13. *Celestial Amity*
14. *The Dreaming Gomor*
15. *Shamshora's tea house*

There are few wares and commodities unavailable in Khameeliya, but production of goods usually occurs elsewhere. The notable exceptions are the finer artistries such as dyers, tailors and smiths, who abound in the district. Coin-changers are also common in Khameeliya, and they greedily accept most coinage, gems or stones, exchanging them for Copper Dhins, the preferred currency in Llyhn. The less-than-favourable conversion rates used are hushed down and blamed on supply-and-demand circumstances.

Open violence and robberies are rare in the trading parts of Khameeliya as most residents and foreign traders recognise that instability and insecurity hamper trade, which is the foundation for their livelihood and prosperity. Pick-pockets and petty thieves, however, can be found in abundance in the bazaars. There are no official guards in Khameeliya, but most people in the district are quick to intervene and quell conflicts if tempers begin to rise. Many a wealthy merchant keeps a detachment of hired swords for personal safety.

There are several bazaars in Khameeliya, and all of them offer dazzling displays of exotic and wonderful commodities. Some of the bazaars feature only a particular type of merchandise, such as the dyers' bazaar where all the top dyers of the Khameeliya exhibit their newest selection of fabrics. There is no logical or fixed layout to individual bazaars. Although some established merchants have traditional places for their booths or stalls, change is the only constant in the bazaars. The bazaars are usually open through the night when torchlight or coloured lamps give a festive atmosphere. The markets typically feature several drinking-tents or nearby taverns where travellers can soothe parched throats.

Khameeliya's markets are busy, and it usually takes time and skill, or the help of a guide, to find particular items. Guides, torchbearers, porters or guards hire themselves out for reasonable fees at most bazaars.

Haggling is not only expected but also appreciated in the bazaars. Most merchants respect traders and buyers who know how to bargain properly. Prices are never listed on the wares because it hampers haggling, many foreign currencies are used, and exchanging goods is often preferred to paying with coins.

The primary trading canton is the clothing and tailoring areas. Khameeliya is the main textile district and shops peddling cloth, fabrics and garments are abundant. Towards the riverside, tea shops are plentiful, with potential buyers being offered samples of available infusions before deciding. Significant numbers of weaponsmiths and armourers have taken residence in Khameeliya, and sell their wares in small specialist shops to the wealthy who can afford superior craftsmanship.

Jewellery shops prosper along the river banks toward Penda'Rinn, and function as social platforms for many high-caste residents to hear gossip and appraise rivals' prosperity based on their purchases. Llyhn is famed for beautiful and intricately woven rugs, with several leading rug-traders found in various bazaars towards the centre of the district.



Many of the wealthy residents have the means for buying and keeping exotic animals. Owning rare species of animals is considered a status symbol, and specialised suppliers congregate close to the gates where they may conveniently display the animals in full vigour on the Barrens outside the gates. Groomed and well-tended riding animals are equal in status to exotic pets in Khameeliya, although the layout of the district - with its many stairs and winding narrow streets - does not allow much use of these animals.

Khameeliya residents appreciate fine wine or delicate spirits, and shops dealing in such consumables are found all over the district. As the area never sleeps, and the covered alleys and narrow streets need illumination, residents value the lantern- and lamp-makers found along the city wall on the sunset side of the district, where everything from common clay oil-lamps and paper lanterns to ornately decorated glow-worm orbs and iridescent rock settings are found.



### FLOATING MARKET

In the shadow of the pinnacle of the Morning Palace across from Dhaarese lies an inlet with stilted bamboo huts known as the Floating Market. Small boats and barges throng the water, carrying fruits, fish and crops brought in from surrounding farms and fishing hamlets. The Floating Market is also the best spot to find fresh herbs and aromatic plants brought in from the jungle for concoctions, balms and such, while hunters and foragers also come to sell their catches. Crewed gondolas and abras are available for hire.

### THE SHADED SOUQ

The largest plaza of the district is known as Asru Square, and it contains the Shaded Souq. It is a vast marketplace where bridges, walkways and platforms hang across the open plaza as a vaulted outcropping plunging much of the space into gloomy shadows of possibility and mystical secrecy. Anything and everything can be purchased here and in the deep shadows, the denizens of the dark sell obscure items, poisons and other - more grotesque - paraphernalia to sniggering high-caste youngsters with more money than sense.

### DYERS' LANE

Dyers' Lane is a veritable mosaic of the sights, and smells, of freshly dyed fabric in all imaginable colours and patterns hung out to dry from crossbeams over the cobbled stones of the street.

It is here most of the dyers have their workshops and the occasional small shop, although most cloth is sold at the bazaars or exported to core worlds across the Cosmos. Various minerals useable for fabricating particularly vivid dyes can be found deep in the foothills around Llyhn, and the deep red ochre of the Barrens is the basis of the thriving dyer industry in the city. Dyers' Lane is a hub with a diverse ensemble of artisans, colourers, weavers and dressmakers from all over the Cosmos.

While it is only here that you can see live Shamatok worms from Nemur weaving their silks, or the red milk of the yixbaruuk bull of the Quarek Trifecta being boiled down to make a dye that never fades or washes out, many come here merely to gossip and learn of other worlds, rather than purchase fabrics.

### THE MASQUE

The Masque is a theatre and playhouse located close to the centre of Khameeliya. It is one of the main attractions of the Canton bringing in spectators from most of Llyhn, and also quite a few from other worlds. Several times a day plays are performed for the entertainment-hungry public. Most plays are carried out under the open sky in the courtyard of the theatre with people standing or sitting on the balconies of the building. If it is raining a great canvas can be pulled out, screening the actors and audience from the downpour.

### FEAST OF FLESH

The slave market in Khameeliya is called the Feast of Flesh as the wares on display here are only of the best stock: slaves who are intellectual, beautiful or otherwise extraordinary. Here the wealthy buy their house-slaves, gladiators and other exceptional chattel. The market is a series of raised platforms in the middle of a small cove, accommodating copious numbers of colourful and richly decorated pleasure-barges and gondolas, filled with Penda'Rinn aristocracy who peruse the newly arrived selection of slaves. Several aristocratic families and clans have special barges built providing a grand overview of the various slave-podiums on the platform.

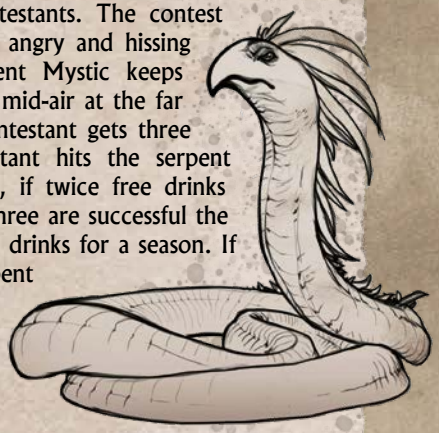
Often the slaves here are painted with intricate patterns of bright colours to attract the attention of potential buyers. Quite a few wealthy families have friendly feuds going on about who can buy the most attractive slaves, resulting in bidding-wars which send prices soaring to give even the most cynical slave-trader a satisfied smirk.

One of the most famous slave-traders is Naferterill, who has traded slaves in Llyhn for as long as anyone can remember and deals only in the finest and most talented specimens. He is a pragmatic man with little humour or empathy, but he knows his customers and their needs and does his best to fulfil their wishes, however extravagant they may seem.

### THE WRITHING BEAKBOA

This watering hole lies in a small grove of trees, with the main building and three smaller annexes built on a small mound in the centre. From the main building, walkways lead to several platforms built among the treetops, which serve both as rooms or isolated "booths" for customers who want to drink or socialise in private. The establishment looks deceptively small from the outside but is into the mound, extending down and outwards to provide significant room. The overhanging treetops provide the roof, which can be supplemented by canvas should a monsoon threaten.

In the main room is a small stage where various performers entertain the clientele, and where the famous dagger-pitching contest is held every night with the house taking wagers on the contestants. The contest revolves around hitting an angry and hissing Beakboa which the resident Mystic keeps suspended and writhing in mid-air at the far end of the stage. Each contestant gets three attempts and if a contestant hits the serpent once he gets a free drink, if twice free drinks for the evening and if all three are successful the contestant is promised free drinks for a season. If he manages to hit the serpent in the head all three times, he has free drinks for life. So far only one person claims that honour and that is the owner Maldiz.



Maldiz is a Harith, and a huge one. His arms are thick as tree-trunks and on each is tattooed the image of a writhing Beakboa with the heads ending on his throat pouch. His hard-spoken manners and lack of patience with those that do not heed his words is legendary, yet he is surprisingly gentle and protective of his workers, treating them like a father would his children.

The watering hole's signature drink is aptly called a "Writhing Worm", and it consists of immensely strong liquor, a dash of poppy-milk, some secret ingredients and a living glow-worm dumped into the bottom of the glass. For those who can empty the glass before the writhing worm dies from the concoction, a second pouring is free. The Writhing Worm drink causes excessive intoxication unless one is immune to poison.

### CELESTIAL AMITY

This temple lies in the back of a dark alley close to the city walls and functions as a dumping ground for wealthy families' problematic and unwanted progeny, elders and other undesirables. Who or what is held here is best not asked about, and the patronage of multiple powerful families is a severe deterrent to anyone investigating. Occasionally horrible screams and violent sobbing can be heard from inside.

### THE DREAMING GOMOR

The Dreaming Gomor is a tea house frequented by affluent district residents - for it is a quiet and relaxing place where privacy is tenable. The prominence of the establishment is extraordinary as several of the most influential merchant princes frequently meet here to converse, negotiate and bargain.

Only one storey, the exterior of the tea house is painted in bright teal, with silver trim on the windows and door. A brightly illustrated sign hangs above the door proclaiming the establishment's name.

The interior is reminiscent of a tide pool, with coral-brick walls and mobiles of sea glass and shells hanging from a ceiling of coloured crystal glass giving the impression of an underwater setting. Blue and purple curtains separate small booths containing comfortable seating. Each table has a small aquarium with various fish and plants, as well as a little coal-burner to keep teapots warm. Inside a circular ring at the centre of the room stand the large tea vats, eight large copper drums filled with various teas. Around the inside of the counter are stocked different spices, additives and infusions to augment the tea.

Rumours hold some of the reflective panels in the ceiling are rare green obsidian pieces filched from the Sharur Trinity worlds. The owner is a Variin named Aiusyr, who adds a further sense of being underwater as she floats around the establishment ensuring that guests are well cared for and happy with their beverages.

## District Factions

### TRADE LEAGUES

Some tradesmen and labourers in Khameeliya have established leagues and guilds to ensure decent pay, while self-governing the quality of their services to retain respectability. Members typically carry a seal to verify their association.

GUIDES: The layout of Khameeliya, and in particular the bazaars, is perplexing, and many foreign visitors lease the services of guides. The most renowned guide in Khameeliya is Lathr, a Djinn soaring over the crowds who - for an additional fee - will provide the same service to his customers, enabling them to fly over the busy bazaars and sparing them the trouble of struggling through the thick crowds of the souqs and narrow streets.

PORTERS: Bearers and porters are very important in the markets of the Khameeliya since beasts of burden have difficulties getting through the dense crowds. Porters linger close to Void rifts and other key locations awaiting commissions by the hour or by the day.

TORCHBEARERS: The Torchbearers are available for service from dusk till dawn, carrying poled paper-lanterns to provide illumination for customers trying to find their way around the districts at night.

GUARDS: Guards are hired to see wares and people safely to their destinations. Although outright violence is rare theft is not, and many merchants hire guards to watch over their wares.

COURTESAN: Companionship is much appreciated in Khameeliya, and it is a widespread practice for anyone of status to commission the services of courtesans or cavaliers to keep them company or for entertainment.

MASSAGE PARLOURS: Spending the day at the markets is strenuous for both the body and mind and many residents greatly value a soothing massage before returning to their house at night-time. These establishments occasionally provide additional services, such as entertainment and refreshment.

ENTERTAINERS: The services of dancers and other entertainers are usually commissioned by merchants or establishments to attract or retain customers with entertaining or bedazzling shows and exhibits of musical, dramatic or oratory prowess.

SCRIBES: Many merchants cannot afford to have a scribe permanently in their entourage and therefore commission the service to ensure their books are in order and exchanges of goods and coins are correctly recorded. The guild conducts internal oversight to verify the competence and propriety of its members in order to retain the trust of the merchants.

### SEVENTH COHORT

The personal guard of the Virgin Empress has a significant presence in the neighbourhood surrounding her palace adjacent to the Asru Square. While the cohort patrols keeping order are an essential part of the Empress' tactic to secure her position and favourable public opinion, they are considered a thorn in the eye for the representatives of the Grand Vizier of Ogé.

The cohort was decimated during the civil war, but still retains several hundred soldiers - more than sufficient to secure the palace grounds and pavilions. An apparent low standing of the cohort soldiers is deceptive, as they are a highly trained and efficient fighting force. Unlike the Kindly Ones, the Seventh Cohort does nothing to provoke the Jinassar or other authorities as the Empress relies heavily on the supposed favour of the Unseen Rulers to retain her tenuous position.

## Rumours & Curiosities

- Rumours suggest there is a hidden human enclave somewhere in the district under the patronage of a high-caste benefactor.
- Chatter around the district says that a deranged Anunnaki is incarcerated in a buried vault of an unnamed temple in the canton of lanterns.
- Stories persist that a Daimon named Ez'Réhaal is searching for lost Earth and that he has found several clay tablets and lost colonies of humanity on his travels across the Cosmos.

## Notable people

ENDDA OF THE NUI'LAUSH

Endda is a minstrel who wanders through the various cantons every morning, offering tea and tales to those he encounters in exchange for gossip and stories. Every night, Endda retires to Shamshora's - a local tea house - where the stories he has learned become parts of his entertaining satirical compositions for the evening.

BAANI LEELIYA

Leeliya is a Bu'idu high-caste youth, heiress to House Marshandah. The extended family's internal scheming for control spills into the district affecting souqs and shops associated with them. With Leeliya's mother, the current matriarch of the house, weak from sickness and effectively out of the picture her relatives seem bent on destroying the venture rather than letting her assume power.

SHIVIK TAH

Shivik is a crook who wants to control the whole of Dyers' Lane, knowing the vast amount of coin to be made from it. He employs his cronies trying to ruin the reputations of other dyers and weavers - seeking to monopolise the dye market himself.

EZ'RÉHAAL

A Daimon easily recognisable by its dark teal skin and shifting tattoos on its face, arms and hands in stark contrast to its immaculate white robes. Ez'Réhaal, the owner of a minor Void vessel anchored in the river, is oddly intrigued by mankind and has several halfbloods and Voidmarked as part of his crew. Markedly reticent about his ventures and intentions, but with a shrewd look in his eyes, he seems to know and pursue matters of potential interest or significance for mankind at large.



## Plot hooks

- An unknown aristocrat has purchased some human children in the Feast of Flesh. An enclave principal wants to know where they come from, where they have been taken and if their release or retrieval can somehow be secured.
- Although few human beings are known to be enslaved in Khameeliya, some of these have managed to reach out to one of the human enclaves pleading for help. A breakout is unthinkable, with potentially devastating repercussions, and as low-caste people are generally barred from entering the district, an inspired proposal is needed to save them from their ominous fate.
- A charitable merchant has indicated willingness to support the human cause if one or several of the enclaves meet specific criteria and provisions. The merchant has asked for a meeting with representatives to discuss options. The characters have - as expendable candidates - been asked to handle the meeting.

# Kimah

| | |
|---|---|
| POPULATION: | Casteless and low-castes, the besmirched and the denounced. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Located on an isolated island only connected to the rest of the city by boat. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Human, Naqasti and the other dregs of the Cosmos. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | Salvation Square, The Pestilence, Crippletown, Beggars Court and the Flea Palace. |
| TRADE: | Primarily smuggled goods and contraband. |

*"I've never laid eyes upon more ragged and pathetic gits in my entire life, and they all call this cesspool of filth their home! Keep your coins safe and your dagger ready if you are ever so unfortunate as to bewilder yourself in there! Leeches and cut-throats the bloody lot of them!"*

*- Eska, Scarlet sentinel*

Kimah is the lowliest, most wretched of all the districts in Llyhn. Beggars, thugs, harlots and cripples make up the bulk of the populace, and there is a constant war of supremacy between rival gangs. Kimah is a refuge for outcasts on an isolated mud-shoal outside the city proper, which long ago developed into a slum and shantytown that gradually expanded until it covered the entire island. Small dome-shaped huts and hovels in various states of disrepair and built haphazardly on top of each other make the area resemble a chaotic beehive. Myriad entrances leading into the small cells, improvised ramshackle underpropping against collapse and clumsily built additions jutting out at odd angles show the limited resources and capabilities of the residents. Overpopulation, squalor, horrid living conditions, disease, vermin infestations and crime define the lives of those unfortunate enough to call Kimah home.

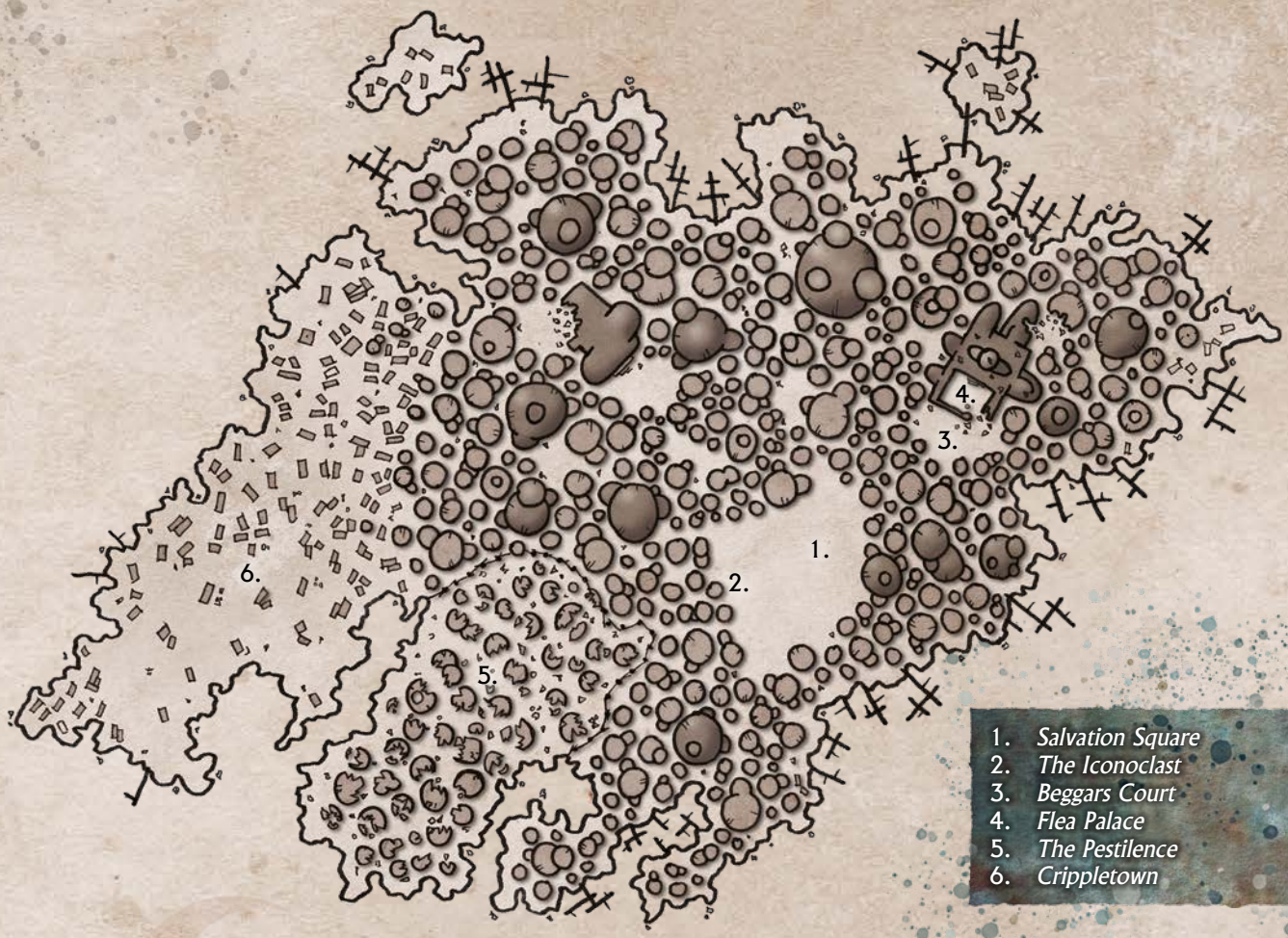
Puddles and the stink of urine and garbage fill the narrow alleys between clusters. Even in the dead of night desperate squatters, beggars and orphaned children litter the alleys hoping in vain for alms from passers-by. The dark shadows between the hovels and clay-coloured dome huts seem deeper by the sparse illumination of a few weak torches and oil lamps. Scattered groups stand or wander about, talking in low voices while keeping a watchful eye on their surroundings. Thieves and pickpockets scamper between them, hoping for an easy target while groups of sly gangers gather around small stalls drinking abominable liquors and smoking sheesha pipes while discussing devious schemes.

Extortion, thievery and muggings are a constant threat in the relentless struggle for survival as power-tussles between gangs to gain turf and achieve dominance indiscriminately claim victims. It seems like each dome-cluster is home to a separate gang visiting violence, abuse and all manners of nastiness upon each other so only the dumb or desperate dare venture into the grimy mud-spaces and trails separating the dome-clusters of this district. Distrust, dismay and greed is the order of the day as the wretched denizens of Kimah have little hope of bettering their prospects and despondently peddle their labour for mouldy bread or pray for the slaver gangs to take them in the night - slaves are at least fed semi-regularly. The main import to the district is slop foods and the main cargo to go out is contraband filched by desperate urchins working for the gangs.



## SALVATION SQUARE

One of the few landmarks known outside the district is Salvation Square. This plaza is a mecca of doom-spouting prophets, poison-peddlers and one-copper harlots. Crowded at all hours, this is the centre of commerce in the district. Procurers and sellers of contraband frequent the square, and those seeking applicants for suicidal undertakings or underhand jobs rarely leave empty-handed. Anything crooked or requiring desperate men can be obtained in Salvation Square, and even high-castes visit - albeit heavily disguised lest they are recognised.




1. *Salvation Square*
2. *The Iconoclast*
3. *Beggars Court*
4. *Flea Palace*
5. *The Pestilence*
6. *Crippletown*

In the middle of the square stands a singular statue of gargantuan proportions. No plaque designates it, and its features have long since been worn away leaving a faceless monolithic rock. The artistry and sheer size are uncanny, and there is something indefinably defiant about its bearing leading the locals to dub it the Iconoclast. Salvation Square is recognised as neutral ground and is not part of any gang turf, making it an obvious domain for parley and negotiation attempts between gangs.

### BEGGARS COURT (HUMAN ENCLAVE)

Not distant from Salvation Square lies an ancient crumbling temple called the Flea Palace and surrounding it a clutter of annexes and support structures collectively known as Beggars Court.

*"Heavy rains had been falling for two days now. Every filthy alley in Kimah had turned into a muddy river of refuse and the few beings dim-witted or desperate enough to venture out found themselves wading through ankle-deep rubbish puddles trying to reach the relative dryness of hovels and shelters, likely only to find these flooded as well. This was not uncommon in the slum district..."*

Under the patronage of a dubious individual who styles himself the Beggar King, a loose coalition of thieves, ruffians and scroungers have made this ruin their home.

The raggedy congregation, comprising mainly humans, is considered an enclave although its patron has no ambitions on behalf of mankind. Beggars Court sprawls over a substantial fallow court with rusted and collapsed gates leading into the central courtyard before the derelict temple. Broken statues of the temples former occupants litter the grounds, and in the deep shadows beneath the half-tumbled roof, the Beggar King idles on his decrepit throne.

Although several other species are members and even leaders among the gang coalition, the vast majority of members are descendants of Earth. So, despite an evident lack of communal consideration, the Beggar King has managed to establish and retain a place of relative safety for a considerable number of human residents of the Eternal City.

### THE PESTILENCE

Leprosy and other nasty diseases are common ailments for the residents in Kimah, but the Pestilence is where victims of malady are rife. Due to its infamy, the area is practically sealed off from the rest of the city and barred from the surrounding district by makeshift fences and palisades. The air in and around the

area is thick with flies, and the stench of waste, disease and pungent death permeates everything.

The streets are littered with corpses, lepers and the suffering who are too weak to move. As is evident from its name, this is a place for the ailing, sick and dying and it seems only the Ragged Catharsis dare enter this cesspit of disease and malady. Sufferers of leprosy are generally known as Rotters and are avoided at all cost. It is compulsory for them to wear bells, thus warning others not to come too close, but few heed the warning, increasing the risks of spreading contagion. If one is not already dying when walking into the Pestilence it is certainly a death sentence to do so.

### CRIPPLETOWN

Apart from the Pestilence, this is the most tattered part of Kimah, a dump within a shantytown. This part of the district is for those truly at the end of their rope - those who have no recourse. Not even the gangs bother to enter this area.

Crippletown has no permanent structures and is mostly made up of scrounged, stolen and scavenged shelters, tents and other temporary accommodation; it is the last resting place for those that have nowhere else to go.

## District factions

### SHROUDED IZHRIT

Based in catacombs dug deep beneath the filthy alleys of Kimah, the Shrouded Izhrit is one of the most notorious gangs with interests reaching far beyond the district boundaries. Kidnappings, extortion, muggings and murders are the surface activities that keep this gang in power and dominating almost a quarter of the island, but their ambitions are much grander. As brokers of dupes for grafting ritualists, the Shrouded Izhrit have entered a different league than their neighbouring rivals.

The gang is indiscriminate and indifferent about who or what they obtain for their well-paying clientele. Once captured, the specimens are held in the deepest parts of the catacombs screaming at the dark until they are dragged up for slaughter in the grafting ritual. For this endeavour the gang has formed dedicated crews specialised in obtaining and subduing powerful individuals without overtly harming them. The gang occasionally forces compliance from intended victims, using terrorisation and blackmail instead of outright violence.

### ARCHE PUQNUS

This gang led by an individual known as Listros, who has a reputation of being a ruthless oppressor in his pursuit of gaining turf and wealth. A fledgeling band compared to others, they emerged as an unpredictable force driving away several other gangs as they rapidly established their dominance on the shore toward the Khameeliya district. Repeatedly resorting to explicit brutality, the group has obliterated neighbouring rivals reluctant or unable to keep up with its blatant viciousness. Listros will seemingly do whatever is necessary to achieve his aspirations of dominance and to support him he has acquired a coterie of mystics maliciously spreading terror among those that do not comply. Notably, several gang-members are of the customarily peaceable Naqasti species.



### PROPHETS

While the doom-spouting prophets are not a faction, they tend to display similar behaviour and demeanour in their lunacy-ridden fanaticism. Having had epiphanies of doom or salvation, these fervent believers are resolute in spreading the word of whatever vision they espouse. Whether they are master orators or fear-mongering fools, the shouting and cursing prophets on their makeshift pulpits amass desperate folks in droves, converting them to willing disciples with promises of salvation, meaning and purpose - or indeed threats of damnation and disaster should the holy word be rejected.

## Rumours & curiosities

- Some say that inside the Pestilence is a hidden hoard held by a gang masquerading as lepers but immune to the sickness themselves.
- Suspicions are running rampant that the Beggar King is gathering strength under a pretence of indolence and paranoia to eliminate rival gangs and establish a secure haven for humanity in the Eternal City.

## Notable people

### HARAJI

This Djinn is a chatter-broker, dealing in secrets and information. He resides in a pavilion in the shadow of the Iconoclast on Salvation Square. He knows anything and everything worth knowing about the district and those who dwell there. However, dealing with him comes at a cost as he somehow manages to indebt clients into dependence and even submission to his whims and will. Haraji is inclined to stalk and manipulate people he believes have pertinent

information he craves, luring them to divulge their seemingly innocuous secrets and using it for his own ends.
Most gang leaders know of his practices and are unwilling to engage his services as they fear becoming pawns in his schemes, but sometimes they acquiesce to his demands to gain the upper hand in their internal strife. Haraji has significant Wastah as a result and is considered unassailable by all gangs.

### THE BEGGAR KING

The self-styled king is a corpulently repulsive but clever man. When he arrived in the Eternal City, he was known as Saro and was an unassuming man of no means. Through intricate machinations, he was able to unify and become the leader of a coalition of gangs dwelling among the ruins that were to become known as Beggars Court. When he took the mantle, the human population of Kimah quickly gathered to his side, hopeful that he would carry the burden of mankind and reinstate it to a position of power. Conditions did improve for beleaguered humanity, but over the seasonal cycles, the self-styled king gradually changed, becoming suspicious and distrustful and focusing more on security and entrenchment than on expanding influence and embracing the lost children of humanity. Falling further and further from the ideals of his former self, the Beggar King has degenerated into a decadent, slothful and corpulent wretch of a man. Beggars Court remains a power in Kimah, sheltering hundreds of humans and receiving new immigrants daily, but the man formerly known as Saro has yet to assume the inspirational role that his followers believe he will.

### LISTROS

Listros a non-native half-Naqasti whose father is clearly of esoteric origin. He is pitiless but would never harm a fellow Naqasti, for whom he feels a certain responsibility and desire to relieve them from what he sees as wanton exploitation and degradation by the other species in Llyhn and beyond. His gang, the Arche Puqnus, is new and has taken the more established rivals by surprise, which is why he has been able to grab land so quickly and decisively. Listros is much larger than his Naqasti brethren but retains their overall physique except for noticeably glowing eyes and a mane of spikey growths. He is innately competent in mysticism and has gathered a coterie around him to act as lieutenants. His goals are largely unknown, but the restitution of his brothers and sisters is clearly a priority. His denouncement of the traditional Naqasti messianic religion, however, deters many of those he seeks to help from joining him.

## Plot hooks

- Daily there are countless deaths and disappearances in Kimah, which usually goes overlooked. However, recently a pattern of human beings that have been laid out in the open in horrible ways has emerged. Multiple of those that have disappeared have been contacts or otherwise associated with the Beggar King, and he seeks the perpetrator and instigator.



*The Beggar King*

- A cluster of dome-hovels have collapsed, and in the rubble, a tunnel and ruins with several crushed human women and children were found. Who or what were they hiding from and was it chance that caused the cave-in?
- The characters have felt followed and watched for the past couple of days. One night a clay-seal is slipped under their accommodation door with an ominous sentence written in cuneiform on it, "You know something I want to know!" Who did this, what can the characters know that could be of interest, and why is it of importance?



# The Barrens

| | |
|---|---|
| POPULATION: | Low-caste denizens with numerous mixed visitors. |
| TOPOGRAPHY: | Scorched earth flats. |
| PRIMARY SPECIES: | Mixed. |
| NOTABLE AREAS: | The Caravanserai, the Sea of Silk and the Killing Fields. |
| TRADE: | While the caravanserai accommodates merchants and traders from across the Cosmos, most trading is conducted inside the city walls. |

All around the walls of Llyhn is a swath of sterile soil and dust known as the Barrens. In aeons past the land was scorched, clearing the jungle to create a natural perimeter keeping the predators and other things away from the city. The thick rust-coloured dust covering the Barrens is pasty, sticking to the hems of robes and qaftans - easily revealing and distinguishing those who live and work here to the internal residents. The city is walled and gated towards the Barrens except for the Dhareese district, which has unrestricted access - allowing the heavy dust to blow into the district, smearing the residents and structures in rust-red hues.

The Barrens is home to those who cannot find or afford lodgings inside the city, with small groups of tents, shacks and other temporary dwellings found scattered about in the shadows of the walls. The Barrens also serve as encampment grounds for caravans, armies and anyone barred from entering the city.

Outside the gates to the Pai'Karaan and Daer Bitaan districts, a caravanserai has been established, surrounding a massive Void rift with a thoroughfare leading to the city gates accommodating merchants and pilgrims.

## CARAVANSERAI AND THE SEA

The Sea of Golden Silk is a large tent city outside the walls of Llyhn named for the innumerable colourful tents and pavilions erected by merchants and traders from across the Cosmos.

The tent city spreads out like a tangled lattice centred on the grand heptagonal caravanserai, which contains an enclosed Void rift in its courtyard. Known to some as Hyshna Tinnik - the Home of Coin - the caravanserai holds guest quarters, offices of tithe-collectors and other servants of the Unseen Rulers, and a garrison of Jinassar. Any merchant who wishes to enter Llyhn must register with the tithe collectors; giving their name, world of origin, goods or services to be traded, and costs, so that the tithe may be calculated. Once the caravan and its cargo are cleared, the merchant receives a stamped seal showing that he or she has paid the levy and is permitted to trade in Llyhn.

Caravans are customarily not permitted to enter the city, so each day hired porters shuttle back and forth between city and caravanserai, typically grouped by the goods and commodities they haul: textiles, livestock and so on. This arrangement keeps the influx of products, people and draft animals somewhat organised and allows for coordination between souqs, markets and bazaars with suppliers and clients, not to mention tithe-collectors.

Thievery is not uncommon in the Sea of Golden Silk, and local mercenaries make fortunes guarding the caravans of wealthy merchants. But filching is not done only by furtive culprits cutting tent canvas - to secure against corruption and misappropriation of tithe the Unseen Rulers have the administrator of the caravanserai and surrounding tent sea replaced regularly.




1. *Void rift*
2. *Caravanserai*
3. *Jinassar garrison*
4. *Livestock plot*
5. *Textile plot*
6. *Mercenary plot*
7. *The Assembly enclave*

The Sea is organised into several different plots, usually grouped into trade categories. Each plot has its own "governor", an overseer who reports to the head of the caravanserai. Once a caravan has come through the rift, has been ratified and paid the levy to the tithe-collector, it is appointed to a plot, given the name of the overseer administering that area, and then ushered out of the caravanserai courtyard. A few notable plots are the livestock, textile and mercenary parcels.

THE LIVESTOCK PLOT: This plot is the second largest trade plot in the Sea of Golden Silk, and while many traders stay away from it for the smell and bawdy ranchers, the livestock plot, nicknamed the Corral, is rife with opportunity.

Ranchers, herders and trappers from across the Cosmos come to the Corral to sell their stock, knowing that if anyone knows good flesh and where the best buyers for it can be found it is Qralaq, the assertive and curt overseer of the Corral.

Qralaq is one of the few Harith to have left his flotilla to stay in Llyhn continuously. He has a keen eye for shoddy stock and dubious people. Many livestock traders are turned away because of the condition of their animals. If Qralaq deems an animal to be weak, ailing or otherwise unfit, it is denied entrance to the Corral and directed to the stocks in the Dhaarese district across the river.

THE TEXTILE PLOT: This is a landscape of colour and texture, with fabrics and dyes from around the Cosmos making it feel almost as a world of its own. The textile plot is run by a towering Quth known only as Siphthys.

Many handmaidens surround her and speak for her, and it is said she never utters a word. Siphthys continually strolls the entire width and length of the plot, observing and deliberating, then by some means informing her handmaidens of any relocations, clerical or other administrative tasks to be carried out.

THE MERCENARY PLOT: Perhaps surprisingly, this plot is one of the largest in the Sea; overflowing with sellswords, bounty hunters, assassins, cutthroats, brigands, and other brawn for hire.

Contrary to supposition the atmosphere is congenial, and hostility is rare. The source of this cordiality is a consensus that conflict should be kept occupational, mostly since commitment shifts so rapidly - contingent on the employer, and injured sellswords are

less likely to receive offers of hire. The governor of the mercenary plot is a grizzled and weary Im'Zu named Oya. She is respected - almost revered - by the mercenary companies that have enduring or semi-permanent locations in the area, and she uses her influence to retain amicability within the plot: animosity has no place here.

### THE KILLINGS FIELDS

Several areas of the Barrens are littered with spikes and poles bearing dried up corpses and other macabre remains from past blood rituals.

These sacrificial grounds, known as killing fields, are commonly used by lowly blood ritualists who either cannot afford better or who are forbidden or unable to practise their craft within the walls. The killing fields are continually buzzing with flies and carrion eaters, and the stench is unbearable to most. At night, scavengers from the jungle venture out feasting on the corpses, and the occasional Ghul has also been known to prowl between the poles looking for fresh bodies.

## District factions

### THE ASSEMBLY (HUMAN ENCLAVE)

When humans washed up in Llyhn, those that were not enslaved or killed typically relegated to the gutters and outskirts. Over time some rose to affluence inside the walls, or at least to a life beyond mere survival. The descendants of advanced civilisations such as Babylonians took more quickly and adeptly to life within the Eternal City, while those from primitive and tribal cultures mainly relocated to the Barrens.

As ever, humanity proved adaptive, and because of their simple tribal nature, they could survive the rustic and harsh conditions. The often-egalitarian hunter-gatherer groups quickly banded together for survival and strength in numbers, forming collectives across origins and races. In a place where competition is often deadly, this behaviour seemed most foreign to the denizens of Llyhn.

It did not take long, however, before their numbers and integration with the locals began to cause ripples and complications. The tribal fellowship that begat equality and cooperation started to break down as larger numbers perpetuated disputes and divergence. But instead of tearing apart and assimilating to life within the walls, a novel form of governance emerged.

The various core groups "elected" representatives that would work with the others of a similar station to resolve issues and continue to ensure cooperation and equality. As a small marvel, the alliance thrived, and trade flourished between and outside the groups as consistency, equality, and justice won quick favour over the regular venality and iniquitous conditions prospering in the Eternal City. And so it was that the Assembly was born, a unique, fledgling enclave in Llyhn.

Discarded pavilions and tents abandoned by departing caravans and merchants were gathered and set up on the outskirts of the Sea, becoming an encampment and assembly hall for the enclave - a place where meetings, votes, and arbitration could be conducted in relative peace. While predominantly a human commune, the enclave embraced others adhering to their ideals and quickly became an influence in the surrounding plots, where circumstances improved for both humans and the downtrodden of other joining groups and species. An enforcement troop was established to deter outside harassers but also to keep the peace and ensure adherence to the enclave policies.

The Assembly's governing body is made up of representatives elected for every sixty members of the commune. There are currently 14 representatives and most notable among these are the Faerdii Siblings. Not yet adults but renowned for their vision and political acumen, this older sister and younger brother exert considerable influence and favour among the entire collective.



The faction known as the Bonded quickly asserted itself as a significant contributor and social power in the commune, with influence inside the city walls as well. And while the informal faction principal Zakiti is deemed a prominent figure, and even an authority, in the Assembly, she stays out of the politics and has chastised those who suggest she or any like her should be a sort of sanctioned leader of the Assembly.

Diplomatic initiatives with other enclaves, factions and prominent species in the city have created significant interest in the Assembly as a new power asserting itself in the Eternal City. This anomalous enclave remains a diverse electoral collective, revered by those at the bottom of the social order of Llyhn and detested by high-ups who would exploit them. However, as they are still a collective of perceived weak and poor peoples, few - save those unscrupulous exploiters who have already suffered a loss due to the burgeoning enclave - see them as much threat. The doctrine of inclusion, diversity and equality practised by the Assembly is contradictory to the common tenet of the Eternal City with slavery, for instance, prohibited among the members of the enclave.

### SCARPH

Scarph is a collective term for the gangs of thugs and goons extorting and exacting levies from visiting merchants and those dwelling in the Barrens. The name likely originated from some groups wearing scarfs to hide their identities, but this practice is now obsolete, and most gangs walk around blatantly.
These organised crews roam the plots surrounding the caravanserai, preying on those without sufficient protection. The Jinassar and other servants of the Unseen are mostly indifferent to the practice and contentedly turn a blind eye for a share of the extorted coins.

Contrary to prevalent surmising the best pickings are not where the most affluent merchants camp. The most exploited turfs with the easiest pickings tend to be those where lowly merchants lodge, as they cannot afford protection or are poorly organised and unable to dissuade the gangs. In these areas, multiple gangs fight for dominance and hapless merchants can often spot hovering sets of thugs waiting to descend upon them in succession of power.

The most notable of these gangs is the Shambling, a mob of former mercenaries that found the risks in extortion and exaction far less hazardous than facing off against other armed mercenary companies. Their prominence rests on their reputation as trained and organised killers with no qualms about making statutory examples if defied.

## Rumours & curiosities

- It is whispered that the Jinassar Vizier of the caravanserai garrison is secretly controlling the Shambling.
- Rumours persist that the Assembly must have a secret and powerful benefactor to avoid oppression from the Scarph and opposed cabals.

## Notable people

### JINASSAR VIZIER

The Jinassar Vizier is a brusque commander not adverse to hurling merchants and pilgrims unable to pay tithe back into the Void rift from whence they came or string up offenders in cages to suffer in the heat of the scorching suns. Overseeing one of the critical access points to the city, the Vizier commands substantial forces and any sign of disturbance and insurrection is quelled or outright crushed immediately.

### THE FAERDII SIBLINGS

Instrumental to the establishment and achievements of the Assembly, the human siblings are diplomatic prodigies with a streak of compassion rarely seen in the Eternal City. Although not elevated above any other representatives, the siblings are often the vanguard and envoys in external dealings of the Assembly. Their slight physique, tanned skin and striking fair hair make the pair an easily recognisable duo in any crowd.

### OYA

This outwardly unremarkable Im'zu is one of the most influential beings in the caravanserai. Her sway with the assembled mercenary captains is unmatched, and her words are heeded with deference. As the architect behind the internal hierarchy of mercenary companies in the Sea, she allocates campsites, manages opportunities and quells enmity before it is allowed to fester, avoiding detriment and attracting the attention of the Jinassar. It is odd how she has risen to such prominence since she is not a native of Llyhn, but her cunning and keen sensibility for swaying and manoeuvring most anyone has enabled her to make even savage Talath and haughty Harith stoop to her.



## Plot hooks

- The characters hear rumours about a plot against the secret benefactor of the Assembly, which could very well shift the balance out of favour, leaving the burgeoning enclave vulnerable to those who would see it destroyed.
- A caravan has arrived with human slaves from a world unknown to the characters. As the collared slaves notice fellow humans their eyes light up with disbelief and hope. Disregarding the shouts and whips of their captors, they stretch out their hands towards the characters in a silent plea for help.
- The characters have been asked to retrieve the corpse of an enclave member sacrificed in the killing fields of the Barrens, but when they go to recover the body, they find a Ghul feasting on the flesh.

CHAPTER: 18

# Factions & People

In densely populated areas, intrigue between various organisations, groups, cults and the like drive political and social machinations. From street gangs among the casteless to exclusive and secretive sects among the high castes, Llyhn is rife with intrigue pervading the power vacuum proffered by the reticent Unseen Rulers. Allegiances to various groups, contrary beliefs and philosophies, racial animosity and cultural disparity all fuel unavoidable power struggles and feuds arising when numerous species and cultures gather in one location. Everyone gets entangled in the continually woven webs of plotting and conspiracies of the Eternal City. It is inevitable. This chapter details some of the prominent factions and societies that are present in Llyhn and overtly impact humanity.

## Dogmatic Factions

### ARAMMU

In the harsh reality that is the Eternal City, there are points of light, and the Arammu strive to be one of these. The group has gained favour with some of the more downtrodden species but is scoffed at by the sterner and more callous. The Arammu philosophy rests on the idea of unbiased care: "Everyone is equal before the great wheel of life." It holds that individuals should seek to imitate the highest ideals by engaging in the practice of impartial and collective affection. It is easy to see how this line of thinking is viewed as weak and foolish by those who seek power and stature but given the population it has popularity, and there is strength in numbers.

Humans are numerous in the Arammu, given their station in Llyhn. The philosophy also appeals to some Im'Zu and Ba'Waïkh, depending on their typical station or general karmic view. Talath, on the other hand, consider it a philosophy of the feeble. Nevertheless, all are welcome in the group, and while the believers are uncompromisingly fervent in promulgating their views to others, they would never consider physical subversion as it undermines their beliefs. There are similarities and connections with the Bonded, although the Arammu are more pacifistic and even more universal in their views. Still, the two groups see each other as assets if not allies, even if not entirely in agreement, and tend to operate in the same social strata.

TENETS/PHILOSOPHY: The specific views of the Arammu may seem somewhat abstract, and yet they are exceedingly concrete. The group view cognition as based purely on perception - sensory experiences including touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing - instead of imagination or internal logic, elements founded on the capacity for abstraction.
Fact is the ultimate truth, devoid of interpretation or opinion. It is through this basic fundamental view of existence that one can see the truth that all beings are the same; all are living creatures seeking survival and continuation. Abstract ideas of a society are artificial constructs covering the base truth, and discrimination or judgement based upon such abstracts are therefore nonsensical. The only fact that goes beyond individual struggle is that helping another sentient is mutually beneficial, assuming it is reciprocated. Therefore, embracing others as yourself is the singular ideal that elevates you in the great wheel of life.

As a result of this philosophy, the Arammu are incredibly dedicated to each other and by association all living things. They practice defensive arts both physical and psychological to disarm and deflect hostility and protect life. Survival, however, is a fact; the Arammu eat animals but thank them for their part in the great wheel. One does not kill another sentient for food, and certainly not out of anger.

HIERARCHY: The Arammu have formed a highly structured political organisation which continually works to fulfil the ideas they preach in stark contrast to the reigning tenet of might makes right. The Unseen Rulers seemingly ignore the group, and it in no way undermines their hold but instead makes it easier to control sections of the populace. At street level, the impact of the Arammu is disconcerting to smaller gangs and groups as sufficient peaceful opposition can be hard to overcome, especially when some have martial training: attacking a wall has negligible effect. The politics within the group are quite complex, but in all ways communal and democratic as the values of equality must be upheld.

PRACTICES: Perhaps the most significant impact of the Arammu is their outreach and goodwill. They believe no individual should have more than they need, and any surplus should go to help others to bolster the strength of the collective. This concept is what appeals most to the Im'Zu, based on their homeworld structure, and such members are excellent logistical managers of resources. Through selfless donations to others, they turn attention to their group and recruit more members who see the benefit of this collective, egalitarian way of life.



INQABAL

The InQabal view existence as a great turmoil of phenomena, which happen without apparent logic, reason or detectable causes. They refer to a spiritual existence that describes an induction that encompasses the entire Cosmos, but which cannot be perceived or understood. The inference is that any semblance of causality or a higher order of things must either be non-existent or so complex as to elude mortal minds. Because no one can know the cause of phenomena - inaction is encouraged. A common proverb in the InQabal is that efforts to make the world better certainly make the world worse; therefore, it is better to "do" nothing.

As such, the attempts of ignorant people to claim or impose rules and laws may well lead to further harm, as the variables immersed in causality are unknown and unknowable. Indeed, those who seek to alter their circumstances radically by eliminating dubious potentates more often than not tear open vacuums of power through which come true tyrants. Individuals in different places across the Cosmos who claimed even adored leaders often end up causing misery and degradation - or the related notion that intentions do not lead to desired outcomes - likely spawned the movement.

Individuals with such beliefs recognised likeminded people, which eventually led to loosely formed groups that later became the InQabal. The InQabal opposed what they saw as aberrant inclinations in the oratory of the Sindra and with other factions in the streets of the Eternal City, which they felt falsely led people into despair with their supposed governance. The InQabal oppose regimes, yet tentatively admire the absent reign of the Unseen Rulers as it speaks to their belief in innately chaotic existence.

TENETS/PHILOSOPHY: Members of InQabal are predisposed to naturalism, living and acting mainly on impulse rather than any orderliness. There is no natural order as effects are largely indeterminable from cause in the greater scheme of things. In this manner, behaviour should reflect the impulse which brings life and death; glory and ruin; prosperity and poverty, as this is the only tenable way to live without causing irreparable desolation.

The puritan elements of the InQabal are radicals and anarchists, preaching the downfall of any system or way of thinking inhibiting the naturally occurring phenomena or purporting governance over sentient beings. Their only condoned cause to advocate inaction beyond personal impulse.

The thinkers of InQabal believe that true purpose is tenable through the dominion of personal choice overruling systems. They believe this is a natural progression, and it will occur no matter what mortals do to alter events, though their rivals, notably the Sindra, say it is idealistic prattle. An ideal thinker of the InQabal understands resolution is achieved when all are left to their own devices to achieve instinctive goals.

HIERARCHY: In the strictest of terms, InQabal is not a faction at all, for this implied hierarchies and dogma. Each adherent of the philosophy is an independent agent, wandering where he or she pleases, advocating their belief and encouraging others to accept that existence is chaos and any attempt to order it is bound to fail, causing misery and working against the correct progression of existence.

PRACTICES: InQabal is a radical group opposing the machinations of governance, which they believe seek to impose order onto an existence which is not, and cannot be, ordered. The Sindra, with their claims of understanding not only a Cosmic order but being able to derive laws from it, are seen as apostates, and an enduring rivalry seethes between them.

InQabal orators are often found in squares lecturing spectators to throw off the yoke of oppression and attain their inherent state of being as impulsive individuals.
The InQabal generally frequent the lowest levels of Llyhn society, ostracised by the aristocracy as upstart revolutionaries seeking the downfall of organised civilisation to promote egalitarian freedom for individuals. But the gist of their philosophy resounds with the masses, as long as some of the more radical implications are ignored.

*"Why of course they are lunatics!*
*But so is everyone else!"*

*- Olthh speaking about the InQabal.*

## KARMIC CIRCLE

The belief system of the Ba'Waikh inspires the Karmic Circle. After the Ba'Waikh influx in Llyhn the belief in reincarnation and its associated philosophy began to spread to other species, but in a form adapted to be less contradictory to ancestor worship, an influential belief largely incompatible with the idea of reincarnation. Other people – as well as the concept of an afterlife - are viewed as an encumbrance of mortal life that has to be dealt with because the Karmic philosophy focuses on individual advancement. The Karmic Circle stresses the benefit of the community more than the benefit of the individual by arguing that an individual's society and family benefit the salvation of that individual.

TENETS/PHILOSOPHY: According to the Karmic Circle, all actions, feelings and intentions have repercussions and generate karma, not only for the individual but affecting and affected by his or her wider social circle. While outsiders belittle the philosophy as nothing but a nemesis cult, this is far from the truth. Albeit all devotees hold that deeds and intents are repaid, there is no established dogma about what is right or wrong, only that actions have far-reaching consequences in future incarnations. Some use the philosophy to justify disparity and inequity, while others claim moral superiority for being born privileged - presumably as a consequence of past virtuous deeds. A novel tendency among many adherents, however, is to do unto others what you wish they would do to you - a sentiment that deviates significantly from the fundamental Ba'Waikh tenet of the constancy of social stratification. Strangely, some Karmics are supporters of the Ragged Catharsis, believing that the rites performed by the silent monks redact the sins of the past for the coming incarnation.

HIERARCHY: There is no organisation or internal hierarchy to govern the Karmic Circle. Individuals are answerable only to their karma and as such need no superiors or admonishing leaders.

PRACTICES: Karmics typically display a combination of self-conscious and condemnatory behaviour, blatantly reproaching others and warning that improper conduct leads to regressive incarnation. Adherents usually form congregations of like-minded individuals based on cultural ties or another foundation providing a common ethical ground on which to judge appropriate behaviour. Karmics are often missionaries preaching to the ignorant masses to better their ways or risk condemnation in the form of reincarnation as lesser beasts and bugs.

## THE SINDRA

The Sindra follow a pragmatic philosophy, with an essential principle of jurisprudence. They hope to attain a profound understanding of the nature of law, of reasoning, relations and societies based on the idea that there are unchangeable laws of nature which govern all beings, and that civilisation ought to emulate this natural law. Cause and effect are one of the primary dogmas of the Sindra. They are known as "law-mongers" among their opponents.

Humans arriving in Llyhn were overwhelmed by the immensity and the complexity of the Eternal City and - seeking some familiarity in the sea of outlandishness - quickly dispersed among its many cluttered warrens and competing factions. Some encountered the Sindra and were attracted to the sense of governance and assurance offered by the strictly structured order.

Some recognised traces of reminiscence in the jurisprudence of the Sindra, which evoked their estranged Babylonian heritage and lost codified legal tablets in a place where disorder and the judgement of the strongest is the only law. Many humans, enthralled by the sense of lawfulness and order, have aligned themselves with the Sindra and some even enrolled in the faction, becoming adherents. The humans who rendered themselves unto the Sindra ennobled themselves as the "baladinu" or Life of Law in one of their mother tongues.

TENETS/PHILOSOPHY: Not only do the Sindra derive lessons from the apparent laws of nature and use this in their study for understanding – they seek to emulate it in their practical application and inscription of laws governing the faction and – if they achieve their ambitions – civilisation as a whole.



The Sindra is not a secluded coven of obsessive pseudo-intellectuals scribbling down obscure laws and edicts out of thin air, contrary to what its rivals claim. Adherents do not believe in action dictated by nature but see laws and the order of societies as the refined and enlightened iteration of nature. A legal framework built upon natural law requires a nuanced understanding of nature itself, and that only careful observation and trials that go beyond the immediately apparent can achieve that. Causality is sometimes hidden, but the Sindra believe they have seen the truth and have a deeper – yet still incomplete - understanding of the higher laws governing the Cosmos.

The faction seeks to uncover the truth behind the causality of natural law, searching for the patterns in the apparent cycles existence seems to move in. They see the order permeating societies, relations and reasoning merely as a reflection of a grander order from nature itself and not a construct consciously crafted from or by intelligent beings. They believe everything moves in uniform patterns whether in a micro or macroCosmic scale, and these patterns must be the basis of the laws governing societies. When there is no governing law, they impose their own as established by the faction through the studies.

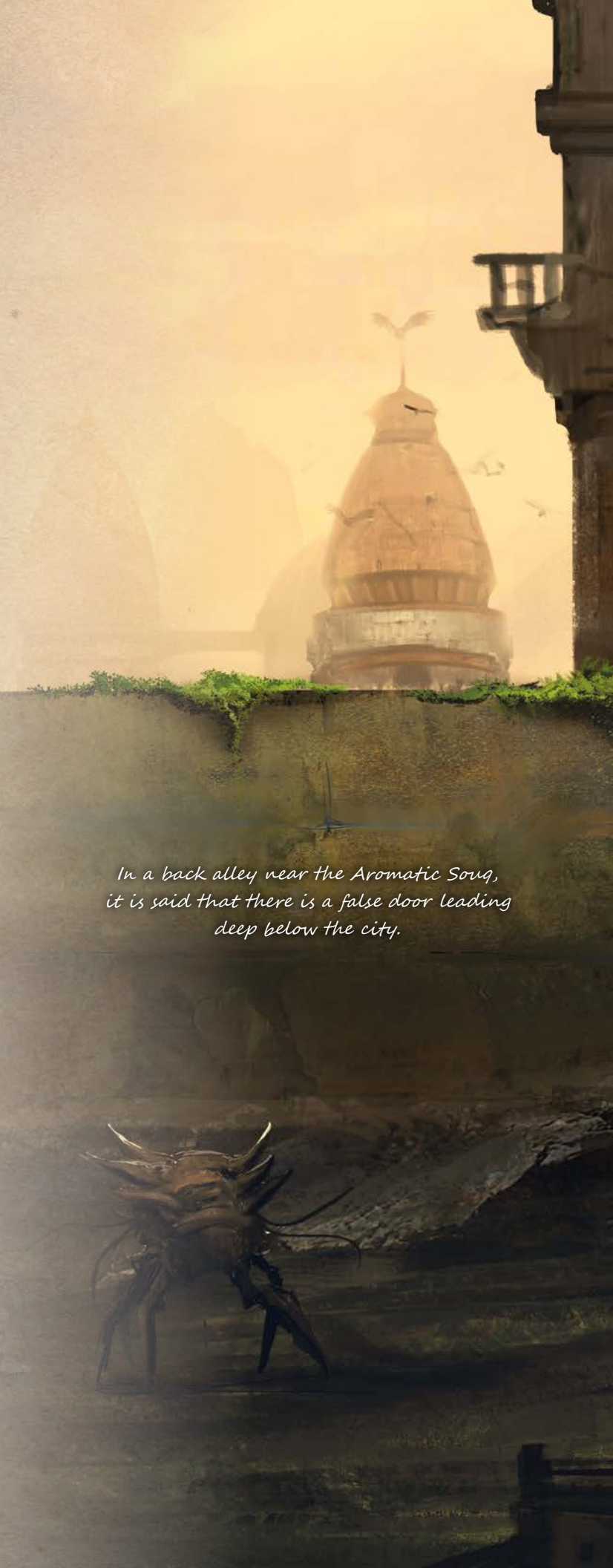
HIERARCHY: The Sindra has several divisions, of which the most prevalent is the baridaru, whose members observe and inscribe the learnings and subsequent laws that must follow, and the emidaru, who preach and act as the outward face of the faction. Each possesses specific duties which are independent in execution but interwoven in impact.

The upper-most echelons of the Sindra are governed by the Sarrudairu, or Sovereigns of Laws, governing separate chapters of the faction. Ascension to this position is restricted to high-ranking members of the baridaru or emidaru that have somehow furthered the cause of the faction. The Sarrudairu form a conclave deciding the laws and edicts to be upheld by faction adherents.

PRACTICES: The laws prescribed and adhered to by the faction do not follow kindness, compassion or even justice. They follow cold, calculating reason and the dispositions of a supposed higher natural order of things.

Mostly the faction observes and adheres to the governing laws of where they are, sometimes applying their variants as they believe they have a natural mandate to do so, and the conviction to match. The Sindra preach their philosophy and seek to influence any society where they are present - sometimes directly opposing the ruling body - albeit perhaps not openly. Sindra adherents fervently follow the law and edicts as proclaimed by the Sarrudairu regardless of common sense, circumstance or the actual laws where they reside.

They often operate at prominent levels of Llyhn society, frequently assisting aristocracy and sometimes exploited to give an air of legitimacy to whichever benefactor deems it worth it to have a fanatical lawmaker legitimising his actions, however cruel or unjust they may be.



*In a back alley near the Aromatic Souq, it is said that there is a false door leading deep below the city.*

## CULT OF TIAMAT

Old faith is strong faith, and few religious groups among the human communities exemplify that more than the Cult of Tiamat. Where some beliefs floundered in the face of humanity's new understanding of the Cosmos, others flourished. The ancient serpent goddess of the sea and mother of creation has taken on a new life beyond the Void in the Eternal City. The concept of the sea has broadened to be archetypal of the Void, whose currents led humanity to Llyhn after the chaotic tempest that pulled them from Earth. Here a new life has been created, as humanity was re-birthed from the darkness, into a city where water rises from the centre at the seat of power flowing outward to the Cosmos in all ways. To the cult this signifies that Tiamat has not only joined with Abzu – the god of fresh water - but engulfed him, such that his water springs forth in this fantastic place at the centre of all things, surrounded by and connected to the flow of Cosmic currents and chaos that are the goddess's domain.

This belief is not only grounding for many humans because it brings old faith into this new harsh reality, but certain other species in Llyhn also seem to find the concepts compelling. It is extremely rare for otherworldly species to find relevance, not to mention reverence, in anything related to lowly beings such as humans, so seeing that the Cult of Tiamat has this appeal makes them extraordinary. The cult has a significant follower-base in the Feeradani enclave, and has an accord with Feerada herself, who worries the cult could make a power-play for control of the enclave - and quite possibly succeed. If the coalition were to sour, the upset could ripple through the enclave and potentially beyond. Not in a way that would matter to the Unseen of course, but it would represent a shift that others might note.

The three old blue-lipped high matrons of the cult are all gifted mystics, which further commands respect and reverence among members. Many human residents of the Eternal City also view them as oracular, their words bringing wisdom to relieve trial and tribulation.



Core affiliation with the cult is exclusive to human females, all of whom have fully shaven heads, heavily tattooed bodies and remarkable litheness. The tattoos are litanies, usually styled like scales in devotion to Tiamat, sometimes with horn motifs on the head, and occasionally in ways to make their legs appear as a tail when at rest. Other themes heavily represent water, and some members almost seem to flow like water when walking due to the patterning. They tend to wear little more than light waist wraps of midnight blue, which can add to the illusion of a serpent in water. So complete is this presentation, along with the presence of the matrons' powers and the influence of the cult as a whole, that those who view the cult as overly dogmatic refer to them as the sea witches.

While other worshipers following the cult may be male, or from other species, these are not considered affiliates and males are not allowed inside the cult shrines. This prohibition does not dissuade them or reduce their fanaticism; men are permitted to conduct worship at the fringes where possible. Otherworldly females are more tolerated and tend to be the go-betweens from the true affiliates to the fringe followers. This role is not encouraged by the matrons, but it's not opposed either as the reverence of the fringe is important to the cult's power base. The cult is very much a matriarchal group which views females as superior, seeing that Tiamat is the female creator of the Cosmos, and believes humans are the chosen children as they brought the word of Tiamat to Llyhn. Cult affiliates have long, elaborate litanies they recite not only in formal ceremony, but often in groups as they walk the city. These call and response chants are enthralling, and even hypnotic when coupled with their tattooed movements, further lending to the sea witch moniker.

There are whispers that more than worship occurs in the shrines behind closed doors. The young affiliates of the cult

practice martial skills, and the extent of their tattoos increases not only with their piety but also with their expertise in combat. It is these skills that give them such hypnotic movement, and their undisclosed rituals involve dance that is an extension of their combat art. The focus is mainly unarmed fluid movement, as a homage to the motions of water on which it is based. With purposeful movements, the tattoos become a means to disorient opponents by blending and blurring their movements. Priestesses typically carry wave-blade punching daggers on their thigh – a weapon which not only follows the fluid motions of the body but also represents the water. The priestesses most accomplished in combat are secretly trained in poison use - water is life, water is death - and stealth skills, forming a small, capable covert force of highly skilled killers at the matrons' disposal, should they ever be needed.

Martial virtuosity is not a key focus of the cult, however, but merely a consequence of the cult's practices. The matrons have no inherent inclination for conflict. Their attention is on the worship of their goddess, and everything they do emphasises their belief that the markings and training bring them closer to the appearance and movements of their goddess and thus the will and creed of Tiamat. They seek only to pour the word of the serpent mother over the Eternal City that all may see the truth. Most outsiders only get a glimmer of their capabilities should someone – particularly a male - attempt to enter one of their shrines uninvited, or otherwise harass a member. The effectiveness with which they deal with such incidents aids the deference they command and the fear of crossing a sea witch. Tiamat's daughters are not timid; a serpent is not to be trifled with, and it is best to let sleeping beasts lie.

## RAGGED CATHARSIS SECT

Few groups in Llyhn evoke more reverence and trepidation than the Ragged Catharsis. A mortuary sect of significant numbers and frightening influence, they are a principal aspect of the Eternal City. Their adherents are as varied as the city itself, and no tales exist from a time when the sect was not known. Knowledge of the faction's inner workings is guarded fiercely, and their exact structure, practices, numbers, and even the location of their shrines are unknown outside of the sect.

What makes this group so powerful is the fact that death is the one certain eventuality and, regardless of religion, a belief in an afterlife or passing-on is in common whether believers adhere to ancestral worship, specific deities or more obscure faiths.

Venerating the dead, respecting their spirits and an incurable fear of perdition is core to many species, so those who facilitate the transition of death and ensure deliverance are highly revered. Such is the role of the Ragged Catharsis, whose beliefs and rituals focus on the purge and release from life to death, which in their practices is by no means a gentle passage.

Often referred to as either just the Ragged or the Catharsis, depending on whether the individual is more respectful or fearful of them, they are fanatics in their faith and are utterly fearless of death. It is said that members of the Ragged Catharsis can see who will die soon and may mark them, making most anyone eager to avoid the sect's processions through the Eternal City lest they catch the concealed gaze and receive such a marking.

Initiates do not merely gather the dead, but often take those near death from their loved ones to ensure they transition properly in the sanctity of Catharsis temples. This practice means relatives cannot watch over their loved one as they pass, nor witness the purging rituals, as only initiates are permitted in the sanctuaries of the Ragged Catharsis.



Relatives can petition to re-join or appropriate the remains once the passage is complete, the body often bearing disturbing marks and remnants from the purge.

Those opposed to the practice might try to keep secret the failing health of a family member, only to have their home stormed by the Ragged and their loved one brought to the Catharsis Temple, despite the protestations and objections. Others very reverently help the journey, and all give a wide berth to any procession of the Ragged Catharsis through the streets.
None would dare suggest that anyone try to stand in their way or curb their activities, particularly as the Jinassar and other servants of the Unseen Rulers appear to accommodate the sect. Indeed, witnesses claim that the Ragged have interrupted the ceremonies of other belief systems and taken over the process, with those foolish enough to protest soon unnerved by observation from robed individuals wearing the cult's iconic wicker basket covering their faces.

Due to their unquestioned and unopposed operations, faceless members, and fathomless secrets, they very neatly spread their infamy. Fear of their hidden powers, secret rituals and - to many - insane practices, means that no one knows what is truth and what is fiction. Do they prepare souls for the next life through secret rites, or do they instead exploit the dead and dying in some spiritual or necrotic way? Should they be thanked or reviled? When corpses go missing it begs the question of what has happened to them deep in the temples of the Ragged.
Do they command powers of blood rituals? Since they operate at all social levels of the Eternal City, do even the Unseen Rulers fear or favour them, or are they perhaps acting at the bidding of the Unseen?

What is certain is that these impassive, silent robbed figures, with heads covered in woven wicker baskets and clacking wooden-tags, are a force to be reckoned with. On the rare occasion that one of their number speaks, the statements are haunting and often darkly confusing: "The shadow of the mind must have insanity swept away to unlock the dreadful vastness of understanding." "You must commit to awakening from the blindfold and let the faces of the world go dark to embrace the obscure." "We are the instrument to the lonely realm of awakened slumber."

Those who say they have been spoken to by a Ragged say the voice sounds raspy with death, deep as the Void, and you can feel the chill of mortality pass through you.

The sect has no apparent interest in political intrigues, nor are they a dominating force in Llyhn. But in a place where demi-gods and powerful beings from many worlds walk the streets, few generate the kind of uneasiness as the Ragged Catharsis do by their mere presence; high castes step aside, and Daimons cower at an uttered word.

## Other Factions

### THE BONDED

While humanity is largely subjugated and oppressed, some groups have embraced the new horizons and believe that the time of old humanity has passed. The dawning of the next age was the great cataclysm that wracked Earth and brought them to Llyhn and other worlds in the Cosmos. Their creed is that finding companionship among other species does not weaken, it strengthens.

No other species seem so receptive and malleable to hybridising as humanity, so surely these halfblood offspring are a gift, an advancement of the species, chosen souls even. Voidmarked are embraced as they exhibit an aspiring divinity of humans with their merger between Cosmic and esoteric and ability to shape reality. Initially perceived as inferior by the old species, humans adapt and survive and grow stronger by becoming something new.

The Bonded tend to display humility, respect and genuine interest in learning the ways of the Eternal City, its inhabitants and Cosmos beyond. Pureblood humans among the group can even be outright apologetic for being the celestial flotsam littering the city, deference that often elicits a reaction akin to taking in a stray animal.

Other species often welcome these views and manners, and as a result, the Bonded tend to hold more Wastah than other human factions and integrate well with the outlandish residents of Llyhn. That is not to say a member of another species who chooses to lie with a human will not be mocked or ostracised by some for lying with cattle, as it were, but the Bonded preach acceptance to all species in the hope of an integrated future.
As halfbloods are usually less soft than pureblood humans, both physically and mentally, and often more powerful, they tend to rise quickly in the caste hierarchy of the Eternal City.

There is no formal structure or leadership among the Bonded. The faction functions more like a tribal association. If there were a leader, however, it would be Zakiti, an imposing halfblood woman. She does not claim leadership, but her influence is known and - while rarely seen - her words carry authority among the followers when conveyed.

*"You may deem this suffering,*
*but I assure you it is redemption!"*

*- Uttered by Ragged Catharsis adherent as he dragged the dying sultan of Qorr screaming from his chambers.*

The group has grown gradually from small support clusters of halfbloods, Voidmarked and sympathisers who sought compassion against the prejudice of other humans. Social acceptance from other species and factions, as well as persecution from some of their kind, has sustained the Bonded as a group and fuelled their fervour. As humanity has conformed and integrated into the social structure of the Eternal City, many softened their views, sometimes out of necessity, but groups with conflicting opinions - like the Untainted - have become increasingly radical in their conviction.

These two factions can seem like halves of the same coin, both fuelled by the persecution they receive, and indeed dispense. Not all Bonded are loving and peaceful in their beliefs, and radicals are ardent that sometimes bigotry must simply be eliminated. The Bonded fiercely defend one another, and try to advocate openness and acceptance, but do not openly seek to recruit or force their views on others.

As with many things in the Eternal City, there is intrigue and disruption beneath the surface. There is a collective of members, all of whom are halfbloods or Voidmarked that believe fervently in the enhancement of humans into something new, and while the pure humans who are part of the faction are accepted, the collective view them as unworthy as they are not "evolved". This secret collective carries significant sway and manipulates events and members without the notice of Zakiti and the more moderate members, so intrigue runs rampant, and a schism could be on the horizon.



*Be not it they who lie upon the ground and let the dogs of death feast upon their corpse.*

*- Kana'ra Vorthaxa*

## THE UNTAINTED

While there are spiritual beliefs among humans in varying flavours, the simple doctrine of the Untainted surpasses most in religious fervour. They hold that humanity, while oppressed and regarded as inferior by the otherworldly species, are superior and will rise to their rightful place in the Cosmos.

Humans can become what they are destined to be, now the truth of the vastness is revealed. For this to happen, however, the race must remain pure, and halfbloods and Voidmarked are the corrupt fallen that will drag down the whole. The Untainted consider the use of blood rituals and other "sorcery" abomination, and believe the Cataclysm shows the faiths of the past were erroneous, their gods false. The Untainted believe humanity alone can rise to cleanse the darkness of the Cosmos.

The irony of these convictions is that few who follow the Untainted have gained Wastah, not only because of how most species view human inferiority, but because these humans in particular express attitude well above their station, if not outright prejudice towards those more powerful. However, the backlash only drives the ambitions of the Untainted and draws other downtrodden souls to their ranks.

Their beliefs are preached in back rooms among abused workers, giving strength to those who might otherwise break without faith. The downtrodden find shelter and support among their brethren against the madness of the Cosmos while slaves whisper to each other of the day chains will be reversed.

While most other species see the Untainted as little more than an annoyance, some see cause for concern. Humans that do not hold such purist views see them as zealots who jeopardise all of humanity in an already tenuous situation. Although the Untainted preach unity of humans, they do it in opposition to the world in which they now exist.

The Bonded fall at the opposing extreme of this viewpoint and tensions between the two groups continue to mount. Certain other factions and otherworldly species consider the Untainted's dogma influential and incendiary. Some lesser groups defer to the Untainted because of their influence and fervour, regardless of the prejudice they preach. If the group continues to grow it may gain enough power to pose a threat to others, if not directly then by calling down the wrath of the Unseen Rulers, causing collateral damage to their fellow humans.

The current leader of the Untainted is Arshaka, a driven and charismatic man who believes in the purity and destiny of humans with every ounce of his being. He always has trusted disciples and guards nearby, protecting him from all threats real and perceived. His orators deliver his word to the audiences they find, with several groups having regular assemblies in makeshift halls and abandoned warehouses. Some of the extremely devout that follow his vision do so without question and have been known to assault halfbloods and Voidmarked to purge the impure corruption from humanity.

Underlying their doctrine is the staunch belief that Earth, the homeworld of humanity, was not destroyed and can be found once again. When that day comes, they believe Earth shall become the new seat of power in the Cosmos.

# Notable people

Llyhn and the greater Cosmos is filled with notable, horrific and enticing people. The following NPC's can be used by Arbiters in their games or you might come across some of them in the official adventure modules from Black Void Games.
These provide a variety of different types of people which may all act in the capacity of allies, antagonists or simply people of interest depending on their role in the plot and the players' choices.

## Alinah Qryisuhn

One of the more renowned humans on the core worlds, Alinah is salar (commander) of a minor but notable mercenary company known as Ishtar's Kin. Ever since childhood, Alinah has lived by the sword, and it has left its mark on her, both in body and spirit. In the depths of her otherwise bright eyes is the apparition of someone who has seen more battles, death and suffering than anyone ever should and who has held too many friends in her arms as they drew their last shuddering breath.

Unlike most mercenary companies, Ishtar's Kin fight not only for the highest bidder but for causes. This has given them somewhat of an ill repute amongst powerful entities of the core worlds as they tend to favour the downtrodden against despots. As such, Alinah always honours a contract made in good faith and without deceit. Albeit this often puts them in harm's way it is perhaps also why the company is successful; they fight with conviction and not just for mammon.
Alinah and her company have traversed numerous worlds - travelling the Void extensively - ultimately distorting not only her but a considerable share of the company. Although it is not physically apparent, Alinah is deeply marked by the Void, conferring capabilities beyond those of regular humans.

APPEARANCE: Alinah retains a youthful appearance that belies her years. Rough dark hair frames her painted face, giving her an unearthly appearance. She is easily recognisable on the field as a dual-wielding typhoon of death, always found in the middle of battle where the combat is fiercest.

GOALS: Despite her continued labours to endorse what she deems righteous causes, Alinah longs to set roots for herself and her company. But whenever they find somewhere suitable misfortune seems to follow, tearing them away or making a mockery of their ill-fated efforts.

GARB: Armoured in staunch lamellar armour, she carries two sabres pried from the cold dead grip of adversaries many long years ago.



ALLIES: Ishtar's Kin is much like an extended family consisting of men and women who identify with Alinah, and besides getting paid look to her to get them through the madness of the Cosmos. The members are predominantly humans with a disproportionate number of Voidmarked and even more notably two Djinn claiming affinity with humanity. Alinah chose the name deriving from the Earthly Goddess Ishtar, fittingly worshipped – amongst other things – as the enforcer of divine justice.

LAIR OR DOMAIN: Notwithstanding her best efforts to settle down, home continues to be where the current contract is for Alinah and her company.

QUIRKS: Due to a slash which nearly severed her head from her shoulders her vocal cords are damaged, causing her speech to sound like a raspy whisper.

POSSIBLE INTERACTION/ENCOUNTERS:

- Alinah's company has recently been devastated after finding a place to settle down - and she seeks out the characters for help getting to retrieve captured survivors or pure retribution. The perpetrator is likely a powerful entity thwarted by Alinah's past activities.
- Ishtar's Kin has been hired by a patron with an ulterior motive, and the characters get embroiled having to reveal the truth while possibly confronting with the mercenaries.

### Alinah Qryisuhn

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 25 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 37 |
| STAMINA | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 4 | MOVE | 6 |
| INTELLECT | 5 | WEAPON | 2 x Sabre |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +6*/+4 |
| PRESENCE | 4 | ATT SPEED | 0/-2 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D12+2 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR4 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Inspiring and composed |
| FLAWS | Blunt (mild) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Anatomy[2], commerce[3], intimidation[3], common lore[2], observation[2] and survival[3]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Blade weapons[4](proficient specialisation), dual-wielding[3], and defence[1]. |
| EQUIPMENT | Lamellar armour, *sabre (perfect grip) and sabre (superior quality). |

*Into the Dark he raged,*
*Stilvis the Reave.*
*Our Hero went into the Dimness,*
*And no more will he be seen.*

*- The Reave of Arrkis*

## Anuk

This eremite is a walking enigma, even to himself. Not knowing who he was and where he came from, Anuk is wandering the worlds seeking his dark past and an unknown future. Guided by nothing but the stelliferous night sky and intuition he wanders from one place to another, seeking bulwarks of civilisation albeit avoiding contact with strangers as if what he seeks is never among who he meets.

He is haunted by vivid flashbacks that do nothing to restore him; flashbacks of Earth that cannot possibly be his own, visions of the broken gate of Ishtar, the ruins of mighty Uruk and the crumbling walls of Aqar-Quf - who all know stood firm before the fall of Earth. After every vision, he seems intent on reaching a particular place, finding some clue or token to guide him further on.

In spite of - or maybe because of - his volatile behaviour, desperate humans wishing to believe that Earth is still there, hoping that there is something beyond his seeming madness and endless blind search call him a prophet.

Such people now follow Anuk, listening carefully to his ravings wanting to deduce a pathway back to Earth from his ramblings and the erratic journey he leads. He is indifferent to their presence and rarely speaks, and when he does, his creaky voice and crazed recounting of his visions make people shy away from him even as they follow him.

However, as time passes, he seems to mature his behaviour, rationality and even ethos slowly - but at the expense of his visions, making his disciples worry that he is losing his prophetic state before the path to Earth is revealed.

Sometimes his flashbacks collide with his newly developed attitudes, and he seems as if two men are caught in the same body, fighting for control. Oddly enough he retains abilities and skills, knows how to fight and survive in the wilderness, but has no knowledge about how or why he acquired such knowledge.

APPEARANCE: Anuk has long, fringed black hair and fair, dirty skin. Touching him is like dry paper. But the flames of despair and doom are burning inside him, leaving his dark eyes glowing with a strange light as the ever-changing colours from a fire.

GOALS: Haunted by flashbacks he is driven by the restless compulsion to find answers to his lost memories and the visions he is having.



## Anuk

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 31 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SANITY | 9 |
| STAMINA | 4 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 4 | MOVE | 6 |
| INTELLECT | 2 | WEAPON | Great sabre |
| PERSUASION | 1 | ATT MOD | +4 |
| PRESENCE | 1 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 2 | DMG | 2D12+1 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Less sleep |
| FLAWS | Repulsive habits (moderate) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Athletics[3], navigation [2], observation[1] and survival[4]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Blade weapons[3] and unarmed[2]. |
| EQUIPMENT | Sooted plate cuirass and a great sabre (perfectly balanced). |

GARB: Cloaked in long brown rags he hides a soot-blackened armour underneath and carries a hand-and-a-half sabre strapped to his back.

ALLIES: His disciples are irrelevant to him, and he blissfully ignores them. They, however, follow him faithfully, confronting anyone getting in his path or threatening his safety while keeping a respectful distance. The only time they come near is during his feverish ramblings and ravings, to avert missing a single uttered syllable of what could be details of the path back to Earth. About a hundred disciples - all human or at least partly human - follow him at any given time.

QUIRKS: Anuk is habitually secluded and reticent towards others, but with his slowly resurfacing personality he can be surprisingly lucid at times – making his disciples fear that his prophetic aspect has faded. He may, however, launch into a rambling tirade of visions that could be of Earth at any time.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS/INTERACTION:

- Anuk may be encountered anywhere, slowly pacing towards his unknown destination followed by his disciples. As the characters get near, he may launch into a visionary tirade drawing the characters attention by a reference to their own heritage or similar.
- Characters searching for Earth may actively seek out Anuk in the hopes that he can provide guidance. He may be difficult to find and if located his disciples may try to keep the characters away as newcomers unworthy of the prophet's attention.

*It is said that just as there are those of us still drifting through the Void, so are there shards of our home, spinning in the dark.*

*– Human sentiment*

## Arshaka

The zealous leader of The Untainted is assertive, assured, and nearly tyrannical in his purity preaching, but also incredibly charismatic and able to appeal to the emotions of a downtrodden and lost species.

He has absolute love and empathy for those who are pure humans and would follow him, and nothing but disdain and contempt for halfbloods, Voidmarked and aliens.
The fanatical sway he has over many humans grants him profound influence, much to the dismay of those who see him as dangerous. His firm belief that humans can find their way back to Earth and rise above their current station in Llyhn, appeals even to those who find his bigotry vile.

Arshaka's views have made him unpopular with many in the Eternal City, which is usually very hazardous for low-caste lesser species. However, his influence beyond the human communities is limited and his following within them so strong that - for now - it is useless to do away with him.

His most significant opposition is domestic, coming from a woman named Zakiti - a prominent member of the faction known as The Bonded - who preach amity and affiliation with otherworldly species and who embrace halfbloods and Voidmarked. Consequently, Arshaka would like nothing more than to wipe the faction from the face of Llyhn. But while zealous and distrustful, he is not foolish.
He assesses his actions very carefully, and plots to ensure that at such time as Zakiti is eliminated, he and his followers can in no way be implicated in her demise. Her disappearance might also show the impure are weak compared to the untainted, and their sorcery is meaningless.

APPEARANCE: A stout man of light complexion, his heritage is a mix of Babylonian and Northern descent. While the impression is of someone mildly overweight, the truth is he is extremely muscular and athletic under his loose garments. This deception is intentional not only to soften his outward look to others but to disguise his true ability should anyone threaten him. If an assailant seriously underestimates him, he has the upper hand given the element of surprise.

GOALS: Arshaka is driven by an absolute belief in the dogma he preaches, advocating the purity of the human race and its place in the Cosmos.

GARB: He always wears full robes and boots in public, giving him a noble appearance envied by many. The attire hides that he is always armed with at least a short sword and dagger of some sort, as well as wearing various pieces of armour. As a result of all this cover, he tends to sweat quite a bit in the heat of Llyhn, further adding to the guise of an overweight sloth as opposed to a solid warrior.

ALLIES AND HELPERS: His personal guards are less deceptive than him in their appearance. They are all very capable combatants and would give their life for Arshaka, who will gladly let them fall while he makes a strategic withdrawal, or indeed before he reveals his actual abilities.

*We are the chosen, and we must remain pure to assume our divine place in the Cosmos!*

*- Arshaka of the Untainted*

DOMAIN: His sizable residence is in the Feeradani enclave, and he is seeking to become affiliated with Feerada as their goals seemingly align in many ways. He knows she is not devoted to his vision, but she is a valuable ally for now and a pure human who is a respected leader.

QUIRKS: Arshaka always speaks with ardent authority and an almost preaching manner, daring anyone to oppose his views.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:

- Pureblood characters visiting the Feeradani enclave or other human-dominated sites are likely to be approached by Arshaka or his pawns and sought enlisted, while halfbloods and Voidmarked can expect to be scoffed at or even harassed by the same. Arshaka is very involved in activities pertaining to humanity in the city, endlessly seeking to further his agenda and recruit followers to his cause.

### Arshaka

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 25 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 37 |
| STAMINA | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 4 | MOVE | 6 |
| INTELLECT | 5 | WEAPON | 2 x Sabre |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +6*/+4 |
| PRESENCE | 4 | ATT SPEED | 0/-2 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D12+2 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR4 |
| TALENTS | | Inspiring and composed | |
| FLAWS | | Blunt (mild) | |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | | Anatomy[2], commerce[3], intimidation[3], common lore[2], observation[2] and survival[3]. | |
| COMBAT SKILLS | | Blade weapons[4](proficient specialisation), dual-wielding[3], and defence[1]. | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Lamellar armour, *sabre (perfect grip) and sabre (superior quality). | |

## Eiql

Eiql is a warrior and hunter of beasts. How or when he came to the Eternal City is strangely lost to him, but he has managed to garner a reputation as a curt but capable killer. He dwells alone on a small boat with a strangely carved prow on the Margidda river, claiming that the connection with water prompts a feeling of something from his past. Numerous scars and his left arm missing at the shoulder bears testament to a violent history, and he continues to make a living from mercenary work whenever he can.
He seems to be living in an unremembered past, his eyes sometimes glazing over staring into the distance and mumbling strangely about allegiance to an all-father who gathers the dead who are slain valiantly in battle. Perhaps this conviction of salvation or indeed a longing after death gives him the fearlessness and ferocity apparent when he faces horrifying fiends and beasts.

APPEARANCE: He is easily recognisable with his long beard, missing arm and gruff demeanour, while his pale skin denotes that his kin is from a region of Earth not blessed with much sunshine.

GOALS: He claims to have led a tribe of seafarers of some sort that he is searching for. And while he has scant recollection about them or what has become of them, pale-skinned humans with bright eyes are few and far between in the Eternal City.

GARB: Eiql is clothed in once beautiful clothing, now worn and tattered. Well-tended but battered scale armour and a crescent-shaped axe are his most valued possessions.

ALLIES AND HELPERS: Eiql is a loner who has some difficulty getting along with others due to his gruff conduct. The fact that his low-Darij is highly accented and difficult to grasp does not help matters.

DOMAIN: He lives on his small serpent-prow boat moored in the Margidda river between Kimah and Dhaarese.

QUIRKS: He is reckless and fearless, bordering on uncontrolled when in a fight.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:
Eiql is looking for his tribe and would be willing to help characters searching for lost peoples of humanity. He is known to perform tasks for the Beggar King and can occasionally be seen at the Flea Palace or dawdling among the mercenary stalls in the Blade Bazaar of Daer Bitaan.



### Eiql

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 4 | HEALTH | 32 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SANITY | 34 |
| STAMINA | 4 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 4 | MOVE | 6 |
| INTELLECT | 3 | WEAPON | Battle axe |
| PERSUASION | 1 | ATT MOD | +7 |
| PRESENCE | 2 | ATT SPEED | +1 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | 2D6+1 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Fearless |
| FLAWS | Outspoken (moderate) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Animal handling[1], intimidation[2], navigation[2], survival[1] and sailing[3]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Axes[6](sure strike and crippling strike specialisations). |
| OTHER | Missing arm |
| EQUIPMENT | Torso scale armour, scale pauldrons and battle axe (superior quality). |

## Enoch



Enoch was born to a poor family in the Dhaarese district of Llyhn. He made ends meet through taxing physical labour in the wharves and port.
He was always a very perceptive boy, but his upbringing at the bottom of Llyhn society has kept him ignorant about most things outside his immediate environment. Enoch became brawny at a young age, and if there was construction work available, he would be found among the crews toiling long hours in the blazing sun.

His luck changed through near-disaster. Support beams on a masonry build failed, causing stones to tumble towards fellow crew members below. Rushing forwards, he could not entirely close the distance to warn them. At the last moment exhausted and fearing the worst, he felt something change inside him as if his desperation unleashed an unknown reserve within him. He burst forward and threw his arms towards those about to be crushed, realising that his furiously flailing arm movements deflected the masonry without touching it.

As the dust settled and the crew whispered silent prayers of thanks to their deities, they noticed Enoch now passed out from exhaustion on the dusty ground. After he came to, he realised that nobody else had seen what had transpired and the stones swerving at his will. Rattled and curious about this dormant aptitude he began taking on guard work to make more money and exercise his newfound gift. His tanned skin and muscular frame helped him find work, but he quickly - and often dangerously close to tragedy - realised that his ability was fuelled by emotion and was difficult to control. A grown man now, he has grasped the possibilities and potential he holds but still struggles to maintain control of it.

APPEARANCE: Enoch is close to four cubits tall, has dark hair with a full beard, and lightly tanned skin. His already bulky frame is well-muscled, filling out his simple clothes and cutting an impressive figure.

GOALS: Set on helping the destitute regardless of species, he earns a living working for hire while keeping strict ideals about which tasks and intents he wants to get involved with; making him somewhat of a rarity in the Eternal City.

GARB: He wears simple and tatty workman garb, preferring to stay unobtrusive despite his latent power.

DOMAIN: Enoch lives alone in a small hovel deep in the Dhaarese district on the edge of the Forges. Unbeknown to

### Enoch

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 2 | HEALTH | 38 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SANITY | 29 |
| STAMINA | 5 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 4 | MOVE | 6 |
| INTELLECT | 2 | WEAPON | Unarmed |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +2 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | D4+2 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR0 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Brawny |
| FLAWS | Butter-fingered |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Athletics [2], common lore [1], carpentry[3], masonry [2] and streetwise [3] |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Unarmed[3]. |
| POWERS | Furore Mysticism[2] Spheres of Forces [3] |
| EQUIPMENT | Dagger and tools. |

his neighbours, he has dug out a rather large cellar under his shack, which he uses to practice his new-found powers.

QUIRKS: Enoch is prone to bouts of silence and is not the most well-spoken individual.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:

- Characters are likely to come across Enoch aiding the needy, or he might come to their aid while in trouble. He is a roamer seeking to find his place in life without exposing his latent abilities as he worries about drawing attention to himself while control of his powers is still tenuous. The fact that he is unarmed has deceived many, to their distress, as Enoch is capable of handling himself with just his fists and Mystic powers.

## Faerdii Siblings

Ezuldé and Qarluz are a human sister and brother who - despite their youthful age - have gained a repute in Llyhn, particularly amongst the poor and despondent. Innate compassion combined with a keen sense for diplomacy and organisation quickly saw people flock to them, somewhat spurring the founding of the human enclave known as the Assembly.

Ezuldé - the older of the two - has a natural propensity for leadership, with her temperamental and passionate nature making her the trailblazer of the pair. She has a clear vision of humanity taking its place as equals among the sentient species of the Cosmos. Not by the show of strength, conflict and hostility, but rather employing diplomacy and instituting coalitions by finding common ground.

### Ezuldé

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 16 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 32 |
| STAMINA | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 2 | MOVE | 4 |
| INTELLECT | 5 | WEAPON | None |
| PERSUASION | 5 | ATT MOD | -3 |
| PRESENCE | 4 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D3 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR0 |
| TALENTS | | Adaptability and eloquent | |
| FLAWS | | Weak grip | |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | | Enquiry[3], common lore[2], expression [3], languages [2] and socialize[4]. | |
| COMBAT SKILLS | | None | |
| EQUIPMENT | | None | |

Her empathy with the dejected and despairing combined with an ability to organise made her a natural focal point for the scattered remnants of humanity in Llyhn.

Qarluz – the younger brother – is eager and kind, supporting his sister's agenda and doing what he can to better the conditions of those who seem to flock around them. Slightly more reticent than his sibling, Qarluz tends to linger behind his sister, scrutinising and analysing activities and conversations with a detached clarity. This allows him to share observations and impressions with his sibling, giving her further insight into the daily dealings with emissaries and such.



Denying any extraordinary position in the internal politics of the enclave, the siblings often instigate and develop the relations to foreign entities and rouse new followers to join the expanding commune.

APPEARANCE: The siblings are slender youths with sun-tanned skin and strikingly fair hair, making them easily recognisable even among humanity. Their intense and bright eyes seem to pierce any pretence, uncovering the true intentions of anyone they meet - yet strangely this does not dissuade, but rather draw people in.

GOALS: As eccentric as it may be in the Eternal City, the siblings seem intent on helping the poor and fostering amity among those they meet.

GARB: They are dressed in simple utilitarian clothing, refusing any finery offered to them. Disregarding their remarkably pale tresses and piercing eyes nothing about their guises sets them apart from the rabble that often surrounds them.

ALLIES: Never far from each other, the siblings have inadvertently spawned a personal cult numbering several hundred loyal followers - humans as well as otherworldly entities - making them some of the most prominent humans in the Eternal City. Their diplomatic prowess - led by Ezuldé's fervour and aided by Qarluz' aptitude for scrutiny - has allowed them to gain significant Wastah, foster a community comprising a variety of species and established ties with several otherworldly emissaries to the benefit of the Assembly.

DOMAIN: The siblings reside in a small dug-in tent connected to the main pavilion of the Assembly - as is customary for all representatives of the enclave. The difference is that a voluntary group of minders keep watch around their home at all times.

QUIRKS: Albeit Qarluz tends to be the quieter of the two they tend to finish each other's sentences and seem to innately work in tandem, creating a palpable synergy when attending meetings together, which can be somewhat unnerving during confrontations. Ezuldé takes the main stage while Qarluz orbits; observing and commenting - disrupting the concentration of the opposition.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:

- Any characters dealing with the Assembly eventually meet the siblings. Whether directly or indirectly, few things occur in the enclave that the siblings are not somehow involved with.
- The siblings' circle of influence, however, goes beyond the Assembly making it likely that any otherworldly entity inclined towards alleviating the plight of humanity in Llyhn has - at some point – met the siblings.

## Qarluz

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 12 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 27 |
| STAMINA | 2 | SIZE | Small |
| STRENGTH | 2 | MOVE | 3 |
| INTELLECT | 4 | WEAPON | None |
| PERSUASION | 3 | ATT MOD | -1 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | D3 |
| | | DV | 10 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR0 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Empathy and fleet of foot. |
| FLAWS | None |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Acrobatics[1], animal handling[2], languages [3] , observation[4] and socialize[1]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | None |
| EQUIPMENT | None |



## Isriq

Isriq is a border runner; a smuggler of people into districts they are ordinarily barred from. Born of a human mother from a Je'ehl father, she has always been able to pass as something other than a human, enabling her to access places humanity is disallowed from. Among self-styled border runners, Isriq is one of the best to sneak people into Khameeliya, Pai'Karaan and even Penda'Rinn.
Her network of helpers and myriad unknown passageways and tunnels enable her to lead others past guards, walls and towers discreetly, but once inside remaining unnoticed is their own challenge. Isriq has an arrangement at a pleasure house called the Standing Man in the lower boards of the wharves in Dhaarese, from where she conducts her business, inconspicuously dealing with clients as no one would suspect a woman making deals among harlots.

APPEARANCE: Slight of frame and stature, this halfblood has clear features from her Je'ehl parentage with multiple horns and four eyes, of which two are perpetually sealed shut.

GOALS: Isriq has an ambition of finding her Je'ehl father, but for whatever reason, she has not yet travelled to Kanda'hir to do so.

GARB: When in the Standing Man she dresses similarly to the working girls to avoid suspicion. While working, utilitarian dark tight clothes help her stay unnoticed.

ALLIES AND HELPERS: Isriq has a vast network of inside helpers – servants, slaves and other inconspicuous personages in strategic places – to assist her in her ventures. Substantial bribes and donations are required to keep operations smooth, but smuggling people and other things can be a lucrative venture.

DOMAIN: Isriq has a chamber in the Standing Man and several hideouts around the city in sewers, alleys and other places.

QUIRKS: Although a businesswoman at heart, she has a soft spot for those of good intentions and slight means – giving significant discounts as she sees fit.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS: Anyone needing access to prohibited districts, palaces, mansions and such would do well to seek out Isriq. The border runner is customarily in the Standing Man and is unlikely to be encountered anywhere else unless actively summoned or working.

### Isriq - Halfblood (Je'ehl)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 21 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 29 |
| STAMINA | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 2 | MOVE | 5 |
| INTELLECT | 5 | WEAPON | Dagger |
| PERSUASION | 6 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | D4-1 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Specious |
| FLAWS | Frail |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Commerce[3], larceny[3], navigation[2], performance [2], stealth[3], streetwise[4] and subterfuge[5]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Small blades[2] and dodge[3]. |
| OTHER | Four small horns. |
| EQUIPMENT | Dagger (perfectly balanced), cloth armour and lock picks (superior). |

## Kana'ra Vorthaxo

As a boy, Kana'ra was a street urchin in Babylon. He was kicked, beaten and treated as a beast by those above his station but found refuge with a prince who would visit the markets to experience life outside the walls. They shared food, and the prince told of the extravagant pomp and luxury at the palace.

The prince was disillusioned and had abandoned his duties to search for a deeper meaning while Kana'ra was enamoured with the prince's lifestyle. He would listen for hours to the prince, learning about every corridor, room and secret passageway throughout the palace. He would ask the prince to teach him how to act as he did, and the young prince humoured him. They were of similar age and complexion, and they found amusement in switching roles, tricking those they encountered. Kana'ra played prince convincingly, and the prince imitated drifter believably.

Kana'ra became absorbed by his pretence, deeming that he had legitimacy over the disillusioned prince who - despite his birth - was an untrue imposter of his station. A day came when Kana'ra could no longer stand it and led the unsuspecting prince to an alleyway where several orphans were waiting and beat the prince to death in self-righteous fury.

Kana'ra stripped the prince and took his clothes, all while reminding the urchins of the lessons he had teased out of the prince as to how to act like royalty. Using his acquired knowledge of the palace and its secrets, he stole into the deceased princes' bedroom at night. From that point onward, disguised in shawls, he would act the part of the prince, all the while building his influence to get back at those who had hurt him.

But soon his rise was halted as the Void engulfed Earth and Kana'ra found himself drifting through endless oblivious depths, gawking at contorted impossible things passing by. He does not know how long he was there or how he survived, but a presence out of the depths began prodding at his mind, a kindred spirit that he soon allowed in. As he welcomed the presence his world turned into anguish, fury and degradation, and all of his malice towards haughty uncaring overlords was revived and multiplied. Perhaps this is what fortified him to endure.

When he finally tumbled through a Void rift and found himself in Llyhn the Eternal, he was profoundly changed. Outwardly it was barely recognisable that he was once human, and the presence lingered within him influencing his every though. Contorted and with a lust for control and power born from past pain and feebleness, the dual being Kana'ra Vorthaxa began building its empire.

APPEARANCE: There is little left to identify Kana'ra as human. His slim and agile physique enhances his now seemingly androgynous appearance due to Void distortion. His nose is flattened with two narrow slits and sleek jet-black dreadlocks are pinned to his otherwise bald head. He carries himself with determination and occasionally hulking menace when interacting with others. Weak-willed creatures often cower under his gaze while equals ponder what manner of creature this Kana'ra Vorthaxa really is.

GOALS AND MOTIVATION: While his motivations are intrinsically founded on fear and loathing from his childhood, the consciousness that fused with him in the Void has embellished and twisted Kana'ra's mind into something else; thinking his vision and ruling is the only way. He holds extreme loathing for 'holier than thou' attitudes and for any creature that believes they have a greater right to something than he does.
Kana'ra wholeheartedly believes that only the strong survive and that this creed can bring rise to some semblance of human civilisation once again - civilisation under his rule. And to that end he has established a foothold in Llyhn for his growing following, placing agents and building his influence. His ultimate goal is to create an empire where he rules supreme in accordance with his ruthless and vicious doctrines. For now, he operates in obscurity - building his shadow empire beneath the oblivious gaze of the aristocracy of Llyhn; a hidden enclave in their midst.

GARB AND EQUIPMENT: Kana'ra Vorthaxa wears a traditional robe reminiscent of Babylonian clothing, with long flowing material doubling as light cloth armour. His prolonged exposure to the contorting effects of the Void has made him a changeling. His hands are perpetually covered to obscure bubbling flesh that looks like constant necrosis.

ALLIES & HELPERS: Kana'ra Vorthaxa has loyal, almost cult-like followers sympathetic to his cause and enticed by his promises of prosperity and sovereignty. Many of these are pureblood and halfblood humans who have been captivated by his vision and conviction. For unknown reasons, he is suspicious of other Voidmarked.

Utilising the knowledge imparted by the Void entity - he easily assimilated with the higher echelons of the city, gaining significant Wastah and assuming a position as a high-caste in Khameeliya.

DOMAIN AND LAIR: Kana'ra Vorthaxa inhabits a small mansion in the Khameeliya district and uses this as his base of operations. The connecting sewers and a network of secret tunnels allow his agents to traverse the district undetected as well as additional accommodation and training space for his followers.

QUIRKS: Kana'ra Vorthaxa is prone to musing loudly to himself in the language of his childhood, giving away his heritage. His musings often circle the sentence: "I was a man, once. A weak man. I am now stronger than before, and I will bring that strength to my people."

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:

- Kana'ra Vorthaxa is the leader of a hidden enclave in the heart of Khameeliya. Even though he carefully guards his human heritage rumours have emerged about who and what he is. The characters could get entangled in attempts to infiltrate and undo his work. Kana'ra Vorthaxa has both enemies and allies in high and low places, as he is a somewhat prominent figure among the low aristocracy of the Eternal City. It is easy for the characters to get embroiled in intrigues about him on either side and eventually learn of his secret community.

### Kana'ra Vorthaxa - Voidmarked

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 4 | HEALTH | 19 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 38 |
| STAMINA | 2 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 2 | MOVE | 4 |
| INTELLECT | 5 | WEAPON | Unarmed |
| PERSUASION | 5 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| PRESENCE | 2 | ATT SPEED | -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D3-1 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Perfect liar |
| FLAWS | Distinctive appearance (mild) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Intrigue[4], larceny[2], performance [3], streetwise[4] and subterfuge[4]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Unarmed[2] |
| POWERS | Void changeling |
| EQUIPMENT | Cloth armour, rich clothing, |

## Kûn Azhar

Kûn Azhar is an imposing human male in his early forties. He was a slave for many years, in which time he lost his family and two daughters. He was eventually purchased and set free by Feerada, the leader of a human enclave in Llyhn. His traumatic history has caused certain extreme tendencies and occasional neurotic behaviour, which can lead to fits of uncontrollable rage. He is the founder and spearhead of the partisan wing Rasha Galam of the Feeradani enclave in Dhaarese. His spy network is extensive, and he has a hand in most of the activities conducted by the enclave – clandestine or otherwise.

APPEARANCE: Kûn Azhar is a tall and broad-shouldered man with a cropped full beard and thick wavy hair. He carries himself with authority and has dark piercing yet slightly haunted eyes.

GOALS: Kûn's sole ambition is to liberate mankind from oppression and vassalage, and he is not averse to taking extreme measures to see this through.

GARB: Kûn dresses in loose leggings covered by a long tunic with copper scale armour on top, in his wide belt hang his "daughters" - two customised crow-bills. A loose scarf covers a brutal scar on his neck from wearing a constricting slave collar for many years.

### Kûn Azhar

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 36 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 17 |
| STAMINA | 5 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 4 | MOVE | 6 |
| INTELLECT | 4 | WEAPON | 2 x Crowbill |
| PERSUASION | 3 | ATT MOD | +6 / +4 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | 0 / -3 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D12+2 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | High pain threshold |
| FLAWS | Bad temper (moderate) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Common lore[1], streetwise[3], stealth[2], intimidation[4] and observation[3]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Pick axes [6](devastating blow and disarm specialisations). |
| EQUIPMENT | Torso scale armour, scale pauldrons, crowbill with double point and notch (Piercing [2], +1 disarm) and crowbill with perfect grip (Piercing [1], critical 11+) |

ALLIES & HELPERS: Kûn is an advisor to Feerada and he is commander of Rasha Ghalam.

DOMAIN: A personal quarter in the Rasha Galam barracks is the abode of Kûn.

QUIRKS: Kûn is generally a composed man with a calm demeanour and a deep stare, but his propensity for fits of rage makes him a somewhat volatile character.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:

- Characters getting involved with the Feeradani enclave are bound to come across Kûn. Very little happens in the enclave that he is not aware of and he is continually scouting for internal and external threats. If he is satisfied with the conduct of the characters, he is keen to enlist them either into the Rasha Galam, as informants or in another capacity - stipulating regular assignments and tasks.

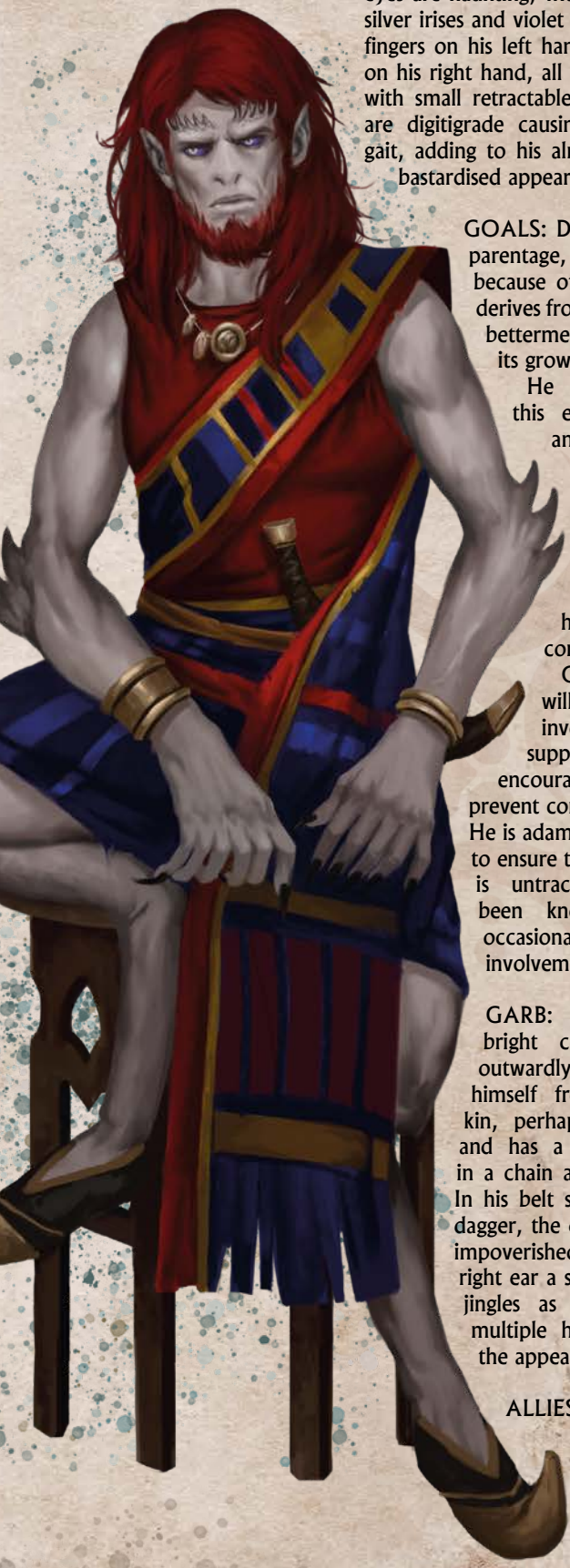


## Naqimak Makh'vetos

Naqimak is a Voidmarked man in his middle years who makes his way as an information broker and manipulator. He is the offspring of an esoteric father who disappeared before he was born and a human woman who was killed by raiders when he was a mere child. He survived in the Kimah slums and learned to survive relying only on himself and trusting no one. Already as a child he realised that knowledge is power, so he learned to eavesdrop, listen, and absorb what was going on around him to subsequently sell the information to interested parties. After a time, the intrigue and politics of social networks began to seem like a game and the people involved like toys to him, and rather than being a simple bystander he started to influence events around him.

As he became a young man, dormant aptitudes began to emerge when he was upset or otherwise emotionally exposed, enabling him to affect reality around him. He had heard about Mystics and sought out a guru to instruct him how to control this burgeoning power in him. Being a resourceful man, he quickly learned how to take advantage of his abilities, using them to defend himself from displeased clients and to build a following.

APPEARANCE: Naqimak is tall and gaunt, with matte ash-white scaly skin. Five small horns protrude from his



brow and a chin-length mane of thick red hair frame his flat-nosed face. His eyes are haunting, with ragged pupils, silver irises and violet sclera. He has 7 fingers on his left hand and 6 fingers on his right hand, all thin and spidery with small retractable claws. His legs are digitigrade causing a swaggering gait, adding to his already outlandish bastardised appearance.

GOALS: Despite his mixed parentage, or maybe because of it, his impetus derives from a desire to see betterment for humanity, its growth and survival. He works towards this end by utilising and distributing information, manipulating and steering factions and individuals opposed to humanity into conflicts. Occasionally he will inspire dispute involving humans, supposedly to encourage learning and prevent complacency. He is adamant in his efforts to ensure that his meddling is untraceable but has been known to boast occasionally, hinting at his involvement.

GARB: He dresses in bright coloured finery, outwardly distancing himself from his human kin, perhaps purposefully, and has a distinct amulet in a chain around his neck. In his belt sits an old worn dagger, the only mark of his impoverished past. In his right ear a small bell earring jingles as he walks, and multiple heavy rings give the appearance of wealth.

ALLIES: He has a group of cronies consisting of spies and informants known as the 13 Fingers. Naqimak treats them as toys, useful pawns, or prized pets. Because of this their relation is somewhat ambiguous as the cronies dislike him for his scheming and exploitation yet need him for his protection and patronage.

DOMAIN: He lives in an easily transferrable pavilion in a secluded area outside the walls of the Eternal City, away from prying eyes and disgruntled clients. A place that reminds him of where he lived with his mother as a child. He rarely does business in person, and those few who come to his home best do so invited; as he deals firmly with intruders.

QUIRKS: Naqimak has an intense personality with a wicked twist, and he loves games, win or lose. However, he has a distinct lack of empathy and views others as pawns to be manoeuvred. He has a propensity for faking compassion, but he generally responds to the suffering of others with sneer or disinterest. He views humans as interesting with much potential but also as weak, and it remains unclear if he uses his vocation to aid humanity out of kindness or from an aversion of nonhumans rooted in his father's abandonment.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:

- Naqimak can provide information to the characters or be behind a conflict they are investigating or entangled in. Characters could be hired by one of his disgruntled clients to harass or hurt him or come across one of the 13 fingers with events leading to Naqimak himself.

### Naqimak - Voidmarked

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 24 |
| AWARENESS | 6 | SANITY | 31 |
| STAMINA | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 3 | MOVE | 6 |
| INTELLECT | 4 | WEAPON | Dagger |
| PERSUASION | 4 | ATT MOD | +2 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D4 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR0 |
| TALENTS | | Vigilant | |
| FLAWS | | None | |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | | Intrigue[2], languages[3], observation[5] and socialize[2]. | |
| COMBAT SKILLS | | Dagger[2] | |
| POWERS | | Furore Mysticism [4]<br>Sphere of Mind [4]<br>Sphere of Matter[2] | |
| OTHER | | Retractable small claws, digitigrade legs, multiple digits | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Fine clothing, dagger and amulet. | |

## Q'Thrq

This disgraced Je'ehl great one resides in Khameeliya and has a petty commercial empire in Dhaarese running several pleasure houses, opium dens and a few disreputable establishments. Most of his workers are slaves, and he has amassed a following of sycophants seeking favour and the opulent lifestyle he indulges in.

Q'Thrq has an intense loathing for – and secret fear of - mankind due to a past incident where one of his human slaves rebelled and almost killed him. Q'Thrq now fervently believes humanity should be eradicated or at the very least enslaved and brought to heel.
He has taken it upon himself to achieve precisely that and spends most of his resources and time scheming and plotting the downfall of the nearby Feeradani enclave, where the offending slave came from. While this feverish pursuit has diverted him somewhat from his debauched ways and as a result alienated some of his sycophantic following, it has inflamed others hoping to ingratiate themselves further by playing along with his plotting.

APPEARANCE: Q'Thrq is a daunting figure six cubits tall, with a crown of horns circling his brow. A great scar caused by a defiant slave runs across his face disfiguring his features. His once flabby frame has become taught and muscular as he drills himself into a fighting form.

### Q'Thrq - Je'ehl great one

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 2 | HEALTH | 53 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SANITY | 17 |
| STAMINA | 7 | SIZE | Large |
| STRENGTH | 6 | MOVE | 8 |
| INTELLECT | 4 | WEAPON | Mace |
| PERSUASION | 7 | ATT MOD | +4 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 2 | DMG | D12+5 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Explosive force |
| FLAWS | Addiction (moderate) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Commerce[5], intimidation[4], intrigue[5] and subterfuge[3]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Blunt weapons[3] and shields[3]. |
| POWERS | None |
| OTHER | Large horns and four eyes. |
| EQUIPMENT | Full body lamellar armour (personally fitted), medium shield and great mace (superior, reach 4, +1 knockdown). |

GOALS: Q'Thrq suspects that Feerada is harbouring the slave that almost killed him and wants to see the Feeradani enclave burn because of it. He is, however, cautious about acting openly and seeks to undermine its growing strength using intermediaries and his influence to hamper the activities of the human commune. Any human unknowingly entering any of his establishments is quickly seized and brought to him for interrogation and subsequent disappearance.

GARB: Q'Thrq cannot abandon his inherent tendency for opulence and decadence, and dresses in luxurious clothing and jewellery.

ALLIES AND HELPERS: A host of more or less influential sycophants, thrill seekers and negligible aristocratic offspring are at his beg and call. He is amassing armed forces under the guise of protective duty but are in fact training them as part of his plot to eradicate or enslave the Feeradani enclave.

DOMAIN: Q'Thrq tends to remain ensconced in his estate in Khameeliya, far from the revolting focus of his obsession, though he owns a variety of establishments and holdings along the wharves.

QUIRKS: Q'Thrq acts with notable aggression towards and around human beings but will quickly get spooked if they behave defiantly. He is likely to panic should a human ever come near him.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:
- Q'Thrq is an active antagonist towards mankind, habitually acting through intermediaries to impede or harm the species across the city, but most notably the Feeradani enclave.

## The Red King

The Red King is a chatter-broker. He operates mainly from and in the shadows, and very few people have dealt directly with him, let alone actually seen him. His use of proxies is extensive, to the point of many questioning whether he is actually an individual or conceivably multiple people wearing the mantle of Red King. Numerous rumours about his demise and subsequent reappearance might give credence to this supposition and speculation is rife.

Regardless of what the truth might be, he is an influential presence in the Eternal City because of his supposed vast network of spies supplying him with information from the top to the bottom of Llyhn society. Should anyone cross him or unbidden seek to get near him, his retribution is swift and decisive as he does not tolerate threats of any kind.

APPEARANCE: The Red King is rumoured to be a tall slender and slightly androgynous man with long red hair, but as he is always wearing full covering garb and a mask obscuring his facial features, no one knows for sure. Maybe because of these masks, his voice seems to resonate, as if coming from different directions when he speaks, and he is prone to long monologues and speeches as if enthralled with the sound of his own voice.

GOAL: His primary motive is power - power through information. He wants to have as much information about everything and everybody as he can get and loves to torment his enemies - or anybody, really - with thinly veiled threats about what could happen should certain dark secrets be spread.

GARB: He always dresses in crimson finery, with apparel of undeniable quality. His face is at all times covered with an elaborate, colourful mask, which he changes often while retaining the crimson colour.

ALLIES: He controls an organisation of well-trained spies known as The Red Shataran. Each informant has a clearly defined role and is aware of only sufficient information to achieve objectives. They are just acquainted with their direct superior and subordinates so they cannot reveal much about the organisation should they be compromised. In descending order, the ranks are Wazeer, Fiil, Husaan, Tabya and lastly Askari.

DOMAIN: It is believed that the Red King has a lair of some sort within the Eternal City, but where and what it might be is unknown to all but the Wazeer of the Red Shataran.

QUIRKS: The Red King has a sarcastic streak, also a little high-pitched laugh every time he finds something funny - which happens often. He tends to speak slowly and menacingly, seemingly savouring his own words, while ordering someone threatened, killed or otherwise molested.

### The Red King

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 2 | HEALTH | 22 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 24 |
| STAMINA | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 2 | MOVE | 4 |
| INTELLECT | 5 | WEAPON | Short sword |
| PERSUASION | 4 | ATT MOD | +2 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 3 | DMG | D6-1 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Imposing |
| FLAWS | Easily exhausted (mild) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Enquiry[4], Expression[4], intrigue[3], scholastic lore[3] and socialize[2]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Bladed weapons[2] and small blades[1] |
| POWERS | Sacrificial divination[3] Blood rites[2] |
| OTHER | None |
| EQUIPMENT | Torso leather armour, short sword (superor), crimson mask and fine clothing. |

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:

- The characters have caught The Red King's attention for whatever reason, and he wants information on them.
- Perhaps the characters possess information that he does not, and he wants to buy it.
- Potentially the characters have heard of him and try to meet him to acquire pertinent information.
- Any character with valuable information might be extended an invitation by The Red King to join him and become an Askari (pawn) in the Red Shataran.



## Sho' Gu Rén Mer

Sho' is a whimsical female Aq'Jarea trader, living in a symbiotic relationship with an esoteric entity known as a Mindnebula, which resembles an unusual black mask affixed to her face. How the two came to meet is buried in the past but the entity offered Sho' a lucrative deal and being a trader, she quickly agreed. The agreement was to travel the Void and Cosmos to consume every form of matter, energy and blend once, just once to taste and savour it, and by doing so sharing the very essence of that object. So far, they have traversed vast swathes of time and space, feasting and savouring, supposedly perceiving the crux of all they have consumed merging with their very being.

Still, they travel the Cosmos to wherever they might come across matter or form they have yet to consume. By doing so – and by being a practical trader - Sho' has picked up many weird, mysterious and odd items on their way across existence. There is a high likelihood she has something unusual and interesting to trade if the price is right - and her price is usually something exotic she has not already gotten her hands on to consume yet. This, in turn, means that she will accept fewer and fewer commodities as she awaits the most significant trade of her life: the final matter!



### Sho Gu Rén Mer - Aq'Jarea

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 16 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 37 |
| STAMINA | 2 | SIZE | Small |
| STRENGTH | 2 | MOVE | 3 |
| INTELLECT | 3 | WEAPON | 2 x dagger |
| PERSUASION | 3 | ATT MOD | +4 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D4-1 |
| | | DV | 10 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Fast reflexes |
| FLAWS | Distracted (mild) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Commerce[6], herbalism[3], occult lore[4], scholastic lore[3], navigation[3] and survival[4]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Small blades[2] and dodge[4]. |
| POWERS | Enlightenment[5] MindNebula |
| OTHER | Additional arms, fur, fangs and prehensile feet. |
| EQUIPMENT | Torso leather armour, two daggers (perfect grip) and a variety of exotic goods. |

The Mindnebula is gently controlling Sho', causing a slight loss of self-awareness in exchange for extending her lifespan and the capability to traverse the Void effortlessly. The two work together towards a common goal as a master and a more-than-willing slave, with the entity directing decisions and being in control. Usually.

APPEARANCE: Except for the odd black half-mask, Sho' Gu Rén Mer is indistinguishable from most Aq'Jarea.

GOALS: With the assurances of the entity, Sho' believes that their pursuit will make them omnipotent once they have absorbed the essence of everything.

GARB: A simple, durable outfit consisting of light leather armour with small insignia stitched here and there, white puffy shirt and bare feet. While her demeanour is friendly and very open, even more so when she senses a good deal in the making, her two trusty razor-sharp Jambiyas are sheathed in her belt and never out of reach.

ALLIES AND HELPERS: As a trader, Sho' Gu Rén Mer knows the benefit of having a reliable network of eyes and ears in many places, which is why she nurtures her abundance of connections across many worlds.

DOMAIN: Sho' Gu Rén Mer is continuously on the move and would barely be able to tell you where she is from

anymore, but she has been known to frequent the Llyhn souqs and bazaars regularly.

QUIRKS: She has built up quite the fancy for particular items and energies with specific tastes and occasionally lets that get the better of her when making trades, seemingly to the annoyance of her symbiotic companion. Awkward timing seems to be a recurring theme for her dealings as her ability to show up just at the right time is evened out by her ability to show up at precisely the wrong time, causing a ruckus and setting unforeseen events in motion.
Sho' insists on everything being traded. She would never steal or accept a gift, nor would she give anything away either, adhering strictly to her own brand of traders' integrity.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:
- The characters have a unique item that Sho' Gu Rén Mer is interested in and approaches them with a trade proposal.
- The characters are looking for a specific scarce commodity and run into Sho' twiddling that very item between her fingers in a bazaar and the bargaining commences.

## The Virgin Empress

The Virgin Empress is the deposed monarch of the great Ilda'iin empire of Ogé. She is living in exile in Llyhn, confined to lavish palatial grounds protected by her personal guard, the seventh cohort. As a mere child her uncle - the Grand Vizier of Ogé – staged a coup, causing a civil war that eventually saw her dethroned, after which she fled to the Eternal City.

She still has circumspect support on Ogé and has vowed to retake her throne one day. For now she fervently plays the political games in the Eternal City seeking clout and alliances to eventually obtain her ambition, while countering her uncle's continuous efforts to discredit and even assassinate her.

APPEARANCE: The Empress is Ba'Waikh of noble stock, with pale greenish skin-tone and a young, even childish, appearance - though with a majestic bearing.

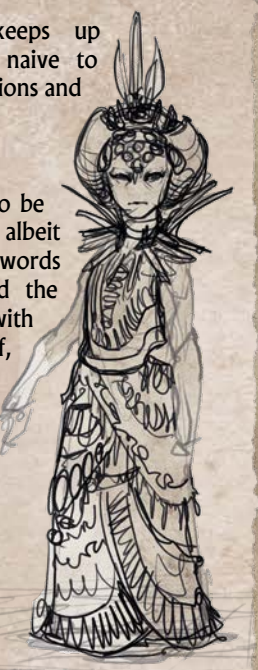
GOALS: The primary purpose of the Empress is to stay alive, secondly oppose the plans of her uncle, the Grand Vizier of Ogé and lastly to return to Ogé in triumph and resume her throne.

GARB: Dressed in flimsy but regal attire, the Virgin Empress somewhat resembles a costumed child or doll. But beneath the frail exterior hides an adamant and driven woman bent regaining her ordained position as leader of her empire.

ALLIES AND HELPERS: The Seventh Cohort, her personal guard - who secured her safety during the coup - is still with her maintaining her security and protection. An Ogé cohort is several thousand soldiers, and while the Seventh was severely reduced in numbers during the civil war, they retain their fighting prowess and ability. Several Ba'Waikh nobles have secretly sworn allegiance to the exiled Empress and support her monetarily in the hope of gaining favour once she resumes her throne.

DOMAIN: Her Palatial grounds lie adjacent to the Asru square in the Khameeliya district flanked by the grand red ziggurat and Citadel of Maklu and across the Margidda river from the singing Gardens of Penda'Rinn.

QUIRKS: The Virgin Empress keeps up appearances of being childish and naive to mislead her uncle about her real ambitions and capabilities.



POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS:
- The Virgin Empress is a power to be reckoned with in the city, and albeit not part of the aristocracy her words and whim carry weight. Should the characters become involved with Ba'Waikh culture or Ogé itself, they are likely to get approached by her agents or agents of the Grand Vizier and get entangled in the conspiracies and intrigues.

### Virgin Empress - Ba'Waikh

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 15 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SANITY | 37 |
| STAMINA | 2 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 2 | MOVE | 4 |
| INTELLECT | 5 | WEAPON | None |
| PERSUASION | 5 | ATT MOD | -3 |
| PRESENCE | 6 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D3 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR0 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Eloquent |
| FLAWS | Frail (mild) |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Expression[5], intrigue[6], languages[4], scholastic lore[5], rituals[4] and socialize[3]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | None |
| POWERS | None |
| OTHER | Night vision |
| EQUIPMENT | Fine clothing. |

## Zakiti

Easily one of the most well-known Voidmarked in the Eternal City, Zakiti is the de facto leader of the Bonded and is revered by many humans as the incarnation of Ishtar. She is a Mystic with a firm grasp of the Forces sphere, as well as moderately enlightened. Her sway, and the fact that she is not quite human, grants her significant clout and she is widely respected across species, race, caste and social status.

She has no desire to be worshipped, or lead a cult, or even be looked to by masses for direction. However, touching the lives of individuals, acting to shape the world around her, helping people to develop their own destiny, these are her callings. And she firmly believes that when it is required, a being of conscience with the means to do something must act - sometimes even killing in defence or enacting justice where no one else will; making her something of a vigilante.

APPEARANCE: Zakiti is of mixed Akkadian, and esoteric lineage, according to conjecture. She is, in fact, an orphan and no one knows much of her past other than she was raised communally in the Assembly. She stands just over four cubits tall with dark bronzed skin, small wings with feathers of dark pearlescent purples and greens, clawed fingers, and feet that are somewhere in form between human and raptor talons. It is these features that make her the living image of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar to all of Mesopotamian descent.

*It is said that a species of slavering, hulking creatures, lurking and lying in wait for innocent travellers makes their home in the narrow passes and desolate desert stretches of Aqhmian.*

### Zakiti - Voidmarked

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 4 | HEALTH | 25 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SANITY | 31 |
| STAMINA | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STRENGTH | 3 | MOVE | 5 / 8 (fly) |
| INTELLECT | 6 | WEAPON | Claws |
| PERSUASION | 4 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| PRESENCE | 6 | ATT SPEED | +1 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | D4 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR0 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Focused and inspiring |
| FLAWS | None |
| PRIMARY SKILLS | Acrobatics [3], expression [4], common lore [3] and streetwise [4]. |
| COMBAT SKILLS | Unarmed [2] |
| POWERS | Enlightenment[3]<br>Gnostic Mysticism[4]<br>Sphere of Forces[3] |
| OTHER | Small wings. |
| EQUIPMENT | Utilitarian clothing. |

GOALS: She is not motivated by power and does not abuse her respect. While she holds strong beliefs about equality among species, her nature is more logical than passionate. She does not preach, and she does not command. Instead, she speaks with an even appeal to logic and, where relevant, emotion, seeking to inform and lead by example rather than fear. All of this is only done because it is put upon her to do so by the Bonded and those who see her as Ishtar incarnate.

GARB: She tends to wear little beyond an assortment of tight-fitting jewellery and bracers about her arms, legs and neck as clothing interferes with her peculiar physique and she finds the concept of modesty puzzling at best. She will don a short light waist wrap and even a simple chest wrapping if decorum demands, but views these as trappings of a world that condones slavery, to which she is bitterly opposed.

ALLIES AND HELPERS: She does not particularly care to be a leader and takes no advantage of being viewed as an avatar, but nor does she walk away from the rapt attention these things grant her words. She also does not decline the fervent protection some offer her, as long as they respect her rather profound personal space and desire for solitude.

DOMAIN: Zakiti dwells in a small tent in the Assembly.

QUIRKS: Zakiti loves to fly and feels most at ease when soaring the winds above Llyhn.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS: Everything she is and stands for, along with the Bonded who follow her, makes Zakiti a sworn enemy of Arshaka, the dogmatic leader of The Untainted. She is well aware of this, and his sermons and followers outrage her like nothing else, as they are an insult to all she believes in. While she will counter their activities, she does not seek conflict and knows very well that cutting off the head of the serpent might not slay the beast.



*There is Cosmic irony in the notion that some individuals spend their entire existence futilely seeking illumination, while some enlightened individuals squander and reject their insight.*





# CHAPTER: ♀
# Species

The perhaps most profound realisation humanity had when they washed up from the blackness of the Void was that they were not alone.
Wherever survivors emerged, they encountered otherworldly lifeforms or the remnants of these. Some familiar and others seemed beyond the comprehension of the ignorant humans.

Their belief in deities and supposed encounters with spirits and other supranatural phenomena did not prepare them for the overwhelming experience of being faced with myriad otherworldly species, not to mention beasts and the esoteric entities encountered across the Cosmos and beyond.

For gaming purposes, each species has been given a set of characteristics as well as a comprehensive description of the species, its typical role in the Eternal City and place in the Cosmos at large. The designations used in the species list are as follows: Description, subspecies, lifecycle, habitat/ society, occurrence, behaviour, diet, status, encounters and combat.

The *description* details the physical aspects of the species and gives an overall introduction.

Some species may have *subspecies* with distinctive differences between them, which will be listed here.

The *lifecycle* paragraph details the general life and reproduction of the species as it might be relevant for Arbiters and players to know.

Each species has *habitat* preference and is associated with a particular type of *social structure* and hierarchy often influenced by the environment and opportunities available to the species on their homeworld(s).

The *occurrence* section details how likely it is for the species to be encountered and where, not only in the Eternal City but also in the Cosmos at large. This is helpful if characters are looking for a member of this species or for Arbiters planning areas and encounters.

*Behaviour* explains the typical conduct of members of said species. The Arbiter is free to introduce deviance from this, but the described behaviour is characteristic of the species.

The *diet* describes what the species prefer to live on, which may further explain of influence behaviour, societal organisation and so on. It may also be exploited by creative characters to harm or get in the good graces of an individual from a particular species.

*Status* indicates the typical caste or position of sentient, sapient and esoteric species in Llyhn society. Again, an individual may deviate from this, but the majority of the species is considered as belonging to the given caste(s). Non-resident sentient species, beasts and Void entities do not have this paragraph.

The *encounters* paragraph details the circumstances where characters are most and least likely to come across the species, providing Arbiters with useful suggestions about which species might work well for a given role. This paragraph also explains whether an encounter is likely to lead to violence based on the inclinations of the species.

The *combat* section describes how the species typically handles itself in a violent conflict, including the preferred actions it applies as well as its overall tactical understanding and capabilities.

Some species may have *special abilities* or *attributes* noted at the end of the entry or referred to in the stat block.

The species chapter is divided into categories. Sentient species: Intelligent and occasionally enlightened people hailing from a globe somewhere in the Cosmos. Esoteric species: Beings with abilities or aptitudes beyond those of ordinary sentient species. Sometimes given epithets such as Daimons, Demi-Gods or similar. Beasts: These are creatures and animals inhabiting the wilds across the Cosmos. Some creatures included here are semi-intelligent and can be trained, but do not have the capability to found civilisations or societies of their own. Void entities: These Beings from the oblivious depths of the Void are sometimes mindless but always have mentalities that are alien and bizarre to Cosmic species.



## Additional Attributes

*AMORPHOUS: A continually changing physique offers an instant dodge-roll for every attack made against this entity as well as the capability to reach and attack opponents up to near distance or longer depending on size. Amorphous entities can change their shape however they wish in accordance with their mental capabilities.*

*COLD-BLOODED: Species like the Timaniém rely on the temperature of their environment for energy and become lethargic in cold circumstances or if they have not stored heat. A cold-blooded species suffer penalties ranging from -3 to -1 to all physical actions if their body temperatures are low.*

*COMPOUND EYES: Compound eyes grant creatures a wide viewing angle, enabling them to have a side view as well as the ability to detect fast movement, granting a +1 to avoid surprise.*

*INSUBSTANTIAL FLESH: The flesh of this entity is not firm but somewhat ethereal. Physical items and weapons cause reduced damage, typically halved.*

*MINDLESS: Such entities cannot be affected by Mind sphere Mysticism or any other mental control or effect, such as Fear or Awe.*

*PHASING: The entity is continually phasing in and out of reality, making it extremely difficult to focus on. A -3 penalty to hit always applies, while called attacks, aim and similar manoeuvres are impossible against the entity.*

*PINCERS: Brutal claw-like appendages used to grab and crush with. Pincers can break bones, causing an automatic crippling injury on an exceptional hit. Pincers reduce grappling attack penalties by 1 and allow combatants to pin specific limbs.*

*SOFT-BODIED: These creatures have no skeletons or other hard parts, making them very malleable and able to squeeze through tight openings. Natural attacks may ignore shield defence modifiers and get +3 to grappling attempts.*

*VOID ENTITY: Void entities are inherently enlightened and can move uninhibited through the Void. They are naturally resilient to mysticism and any powers associated with Void stimulus, adding a resistance modifier to manifested phenomena directed at them. The exact species resistance modifier is added to the difficulty and/or reducing Void effects.*



*The Rapids of Ragesh are known to be deadly!*

*Few, however, know that it is not the waterfalls themselves, but what lurks beneath.*

## Sentient Species

This section details a selection of some of the more common Cosmic sentient species encountered in the Eternal City. This selection is by no means exhaustive, and Arbiters are free to develop new species as they see fit.

Arbiters should note that the entries are generic members of the given species, so specialised individuals such as soldiers, physicians and so on should be adapted within their capabilities and characteristics to reflect a given occupation or standing.

In this chapter sixteen diverse species are explored, each with its own set of particularities and preferences in terms of vocation and placement in Llyhn society as well as sites or situations players might encounter them.

| SENTIENT | PHYSIQUE | MENTALITY | KEYWORD | REFINEMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aq'Jarea | Six-limbed desert dwellers | Inquisitive and passionate | Peddlers | Nomads |
| Aquzam | Reptilian pygmies | Tribal and hostile | Headhunters | Savage |
| Ba'Waikh | Diminutive biped | Fervent and driven | Retainers | Civilized |
| Eybolq | Floating aquatic | Aloof and callous | Recluses | Civilized |
| Harith | Massive and stout | Truculent and jovial | Craftsmen | Migrants |
| Im'Zu | Tiny, flabby and inept | Clever and ambitious | Administrators | Civilised |
| Je'Ehl | Robust, horned biped | Indulgent and proud | Pariah | Civilised |
| Ka'Alum | Beaked biped | Erudite and pragmatic | Traders | Civilised |
| Naqastï | Stocky and strong | Sluggish and ascetic | Labourers | Colonised |
| Oord | Small and eerie | Servile and reticent | Void navigators | Civilised |
| Qhu | Tentacled hoverer | Outlandish and inquisitive | Explorers | Roamer |
| Quth | Huge, carapaced | Placid and eccentric | Sibylline | Roamer |
| Shaauru | Aquatic arachnids | Aggressive and applied | Complicated | Unenlightened |
| Shirr | Large and elegant | Crafty and prudent | Void Traders | Bohemian nomads |
| Talath | Big and brutish | Simple and loutish | Warriors | Savage |
| Timanièm | Lithe and furtive | Austere and orthodox | Hunters | Savage |

## Esoteric Species

Esoteric or Daimonic species are beyond Cosmic and are often worshipped or venerated as deities by ignorant lesser species.

Esoteric species do not abide by the natural laws of mortal and Cosmic species and can be found either in the Void, borderworlds or in the Cosmos.

| ESOTERIC | PHYSIQUE | MENTALITY | HOMEWORLD | RARITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aml'Nãqru | Metallic serpentines | Hivemind | Q'thael | Rare |
| Anunnaki | Giant winged Demi-Gods | Aloof and dominant | Unknown | Unique |
| Asura | Multi-faced Daimons | Glutonous hedonists | Traiyastrimza | Very rare |
| Deva | Elemental Daimons | Righteous and puritan | Unknown | Very rare |
| Djann | Shapeshifting Daimons | Mischievous and emotional | Mount Qaf | Rare |
| Ghul | Hybrid shapeshifters | Cunning and cruel | Mount Qaf | Rare |
| Lamassu | Winged bulls | Kind and eccentric | Unknown | Very rare |
| Variin | Amorphous Daimons | Transcendent and dualistic | Vaesna | Rare |



## Beasts

This chapter provides a range of beasts that the characters can come across during their explorations. Some beasts are native to Llyhn, some can be found only on select worlds and others are present across the Cosmos; giving Arbiters a selection of wild creatures to utilise in a variety of settings in their scenarios.

Arbiters are, as always, free to develop new species and populate the setting with their own creatures as they see fit.

Some of the creatures featured are semi-intelligent and - while not enough to warrant placement in the sentient species section - can fittingly be utilised as motivated accomplices of antagonists, allies and other NPC's.

| BEASTS | DESIGNATION | THREAT | HABITAT | RARITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adaru | Apex predator | High | Llyhn | Rare |
| Aigioma | War beast | High | Cosmos | Very Rare |
| Barast | Predator | Medium | Cosmos | Uncommon |
| Beakboa | Predator | Medium | Llyhn | Common |
| Bruotu | Mindless roamer | High | Cosmos | Very rare |
| Itaena gnat | Roving swarm | Low | Cosmos | Common |
| Mardkhora | Predatory monster | High | Cosmos | Very rare |
| Pincerwig | Burrowing arthropods | Low | Cosmos | Common |
| Silt Sharks | Fresh-water predator | High | Llyhn | Common |
| Sloq | Ambush predator | Medium | Cosmos | Uncommon |
| Sludge Rats | Swarming vermin | Low | Llyhn | Common |
| Urbat | Sentinel creature | High | Cosmos | Rare |
| Wailing Vulture | Semi-intelligent scavenger | Low | Llyhn | Common |

## Void entities

Beyond the Veil dwell unfathomable entities that defy reality. Some are so outlandish and bizarre in their mentality, physicality and essence that they threaten the sanity of any who come across them while others captivate and enthral in their otherworldly magnificence.

This section provides Arbiters with a choice of Void horrors, grotesques and other curious entities to introduce in scenarios and campaigns where the characters brave the oblivious depths of the Void.

| VOID ENTITY | DESIGNATION | THREAT | HABITAT | RARITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Deep Devourer | Void predator | High | Void | Very rare |
| Gomor | Aquatic Void entities | Low | Void/Cosmos | Rare |
| Madarch | Void roamers | Low | Void/Cosmos | Very rare |
| Maliis | Mountain peak guardians | High | Cosmos | Very rare |
| MindNebula | Unpredictable entities | Medium | Void/Cosmos | Very rare |
| Void leech | Parasitic entities | High | Void | Very rare |
| Yiagh'Zii | Erratic Void raiders | High | Void/Cosmos | Very rare |

# Sentient Species

## Aq'Jarea

DESCRIPTION: The Aq'Jarea are short and delicate desert-dwelling bipeds with two elongated arms on either side of their torso. They are very agile, and all six limbs end in nimble, hand-like appendages, which they use as they scamper around portable dwellings secured to the backs of their draft animals, the Nathaliin.

Sporadic growths of light blue fur on their darker skin give them a somewhat tattered appearance while enabling them to endure the harsh sun without risk of scalding. Aq'Jarea have a thick mane surrounding their faces, which are dominated by disproportionally large reddish eyes. Their small flat nostrils can close barring the recurring sandstorms from causing respiratory problems while small mouths complete the species' somewhat endearing appearance, which is quickly countered when they open their double-jointed jaws in aggression revealing a gaping maw with short, sharp teeth. Although the teeth are mainly utilised for display in power struggles they can deliver a nasty bite.

Moveable pointed ears enable the Aq'Jarea to direct their acute hearing allowing them efficiently locate sources of sound regardless of light and sight, an invaluable aptitude when travelling sightless at night in the vast deserts.

SUBSPECIES: Although regional differences in colouration and facial features occur, no distinct subspecies exist within the Aq'Jarea.

LIFECYCLE: Aq'Jarea are typically born in litters of three to five fledgelings, but due to the harsh conditions of their environments infant mortality is high, and usually only one of the litter survives. The species matures after just two seasons, allowing rapid population growth or replenishment during good seasons. An Aq'Jarea rarely lives beyond 30 seasons, the equivalent of fifteen human years.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: This desert species is nomadic, traversing the vast blue dune-seas of their arid homeworld Jarai on their herds of Nathaliin, a six-legged amphibian of massive proportions. Aq'Jarea are divided into tribes generally sharing a common culture. Tribes are further divided into distinct clans consisting of several family groups. The clans meet each season at designated sacred places in the deserts or mountains to trade, share stories and celebrate religious occasions. They are fiercely loyal, first to their family, subsequently to their clan, and lastly to their tribe.

This passionate allegiance recurrently causes wide-ranging tribal wars to erupt across the dunes. Such conflicts frequently last for generations with each additional encounter adding further grudges and hatreds to a ceaseless and relentless war.

Aq'Jarea are identifiable by the names as each name includes the tribal, clan and family name: Anah-Ira-Ami-Riah is distinguishable as being from the tribe of Anah, the clan of Ira, the family of Ami and his personal name is Riah.

OCCURRENCE: Aq'Jarea are hardy and industrious, often travelling off-world trading rare minerals found in significant quantities only on Jarai, in exchange for supplies essential to their survival. This makes provisional trading encampments a common sight on many core worlds and other enlightened globes. Aq'Jarea are plentiful in Llyhn, and the only known semi-permanent campsite has even been established here - although with changing inhabitants.

BEHAVIOUR: Aq'Jarea can be somewhat reserved and appraise outsiders meticulously before engaging in contact or trade with them. They are exceedingly territorial and temperamental towards their own, a combination that often leads to clashes between the various fractions. The temperamentality, however, is rarely towards outsiders.

DIET: Ordinarily Aq'Jarea live on a simple diet of Nathaliin milk, meat hunted from desert game and fowl as well as small berries growing around the rare oasis found on Jarai. The fermented berries produce an intoxicating broth that the Aq'Jarea occasionally use for inducing trances during ceremonies.

### Aq'Jarea

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 15 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Small |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 4 |
| STRENGTH | 2 | WEAPON | Darts / spear |
| INTELLECT | 3 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 3 | ATT MOD | +2 / +3 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | Weapon -1 |
| | | DV | 10 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| TALENTS | | Acute hearing | |
| FLAWS | | Blunt | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Additional arms, fangs, fur and prehensile feet. | |
| POWERS | | - | |
| SPECIAL | | Innate formation fighting | |
| OTHER | | - | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Travelling garb, cloth armour, darts, daggers, spear and assorted trinkets. | |

STATUS: Aq'Jarea traders and travellers are plenteous in the Eternal City and habitually found close to souqs and bazaars peddling ore and other natural resources in exchange for whatever trinket or foodstuff has caught their eye. Although individual tribes rarely remain long, Aq'Jarea as a whole are commonly considered as equal to the Muati caste and treated as such in terms of deference.

ENCOUNTERS: Characters encountering Aq'Jarea are likely to be met with curiosity, especially if the character is trading or in possession of something that has their interest. Aq'Jarea frequently hire other species to help them protect their caravans or as muscle for their internal tribal wars. They have very little interest in the political scheming of the Eternal City - or anywhere else for that matter - their attention fixed solely on the furtherance of their own family, clan and tribe.



COMBAT: Aq'Jarea are fierce but rowdy warriors that habitually gang up on adversaries - attacking them from multiple angles at once - finding openings and weak spots. Despite their small stature and feebleness, this tactic can make them a challenge even for the hardiest of opponents. A preferred strategy is for one or two individuals to hold the attention of their adversary, dodging and weaving to avoid getting hit while the remaining group pellet the combatant with darts or other thrown weaponry or strike from behind. Favoured combat manoeuvres include dodge, backstab, feint and flurry. Because Aq'Jarea are accustomed to fighting as a pack, they count as having the formation fighting specialisation.

## Aquzam

DESCRIPTION: The Aquzam are hostile, primitive pygmies. Their bipedal, humanoid bodies, standing up to 3 cubits high, are sheathed in a green, scaly, crocodilian exoskeleton. Their heads, capped with thick locks of whiteish hair, feature two sets of yellow eyes. The lower part of the face is free of the exoskeleton and fairly unprotected; two slit nostrils are located above a fanged mouth with protruding incisors. Slim arms covered with spiky, overlapping scales each end in three opposable finger-like digits. Muscular legs end in three such digits too, allowing the Aquzam to use either set of limbs to hold tools, and, if injured or prone, weapons. Clothing is functional: leather loincloth, belts and straps: a harness from which might hang fetishes, shrunken heads, skulls, or weapons.

LIFE-CYCLE: Aquzam are an androgyne species. Through sequential hermaphroditism, their gender fluctuates to reflect community needs. Thus, after a period of warfare, females may transition into males; similarly, males become female if the population is low. This is not a conscious decision, and transitions take two to three weeks to occur. Aquzam are a fecund species, breeding swiftly. A female will carry 2-5 children in a seasonal cycle. These reach maturity after ten cycles. About half of all children die before this, and an adult rarely lives more than thirty cycles, although this is due to violence and disease rather than natural lifespan.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: An Aquzam group consists of 25-30 adults and 30 or more infants dwelling in small clan compounds fortified with crude wooden palisades. Several such clan groups make a tribe while the number of tribes in the jungle is incalculable. Outwardly they distinguish themselves by applying dyes to hair, and some groups have markedly different skin tones.
The tribes are hostile to one another, raiding, killing and eating each other's hearts; taking the heads of adversaries too. Villages are decorated with these severed heads and the impaled bodies of enemies. Periodically, just as unconscious forces cause the diminutive Aquzam to change gender, the tribes band together into vast headhunting warbands that pour through the jungle and along rivers, attacking anything in their path. After a season, the usual state of animosity resurfaces, and the bands break apart in a welter of internecine combat.

OCCURRENCE: Beyond black and nameless streams, in the dense jungles surrounding Llyhn, the Aquzam dwell amidst red jungle growth, their tribal villages clustering the banks of an ebon river where the air is heavy with the stench of rotting fruit and flesh.

BEHAVIOUR: Fiercely antagonistic to all non-Aquzam, this hateful ferocity is only exceeded by their rage against rival tribes. Entering their territory will bring near-certain attack unless the



*Rarely do civilised beings tread the Aquzam's vine-tangled paths and live. Yet those who have escaped say the tribal elders tell a consistent story: "When young was the great city, from our place did the Al'awal fall, blown hither on a raft of weeds. Alone, a mate was birthed: from this union did we all come. Blissful return we shall know when the Al'awal is restored through our consumption."*

interlopers have somehow secured the invitation of a being strong enough to cow these superstitious and, when fearful, servile beings.

DIET: Aquzam are primarily vegetarian and eat nearly any growing thing. Their stomachs can digest most vegetable matter, even things mildly toxic to others. But for ritualistic and perhaps evolutionary purposes, they crave the flesh of their own species. If a clan-mate dies, they cannibalise the heart before burning the body and for the same reason, seek to kill members of rival tribes. They do not eat the hearts of other species. The origins of this practice are lost to time.

ENCOUNTERS: The first sign of the Aquzam is often a volley of small, poison-tipped arrows. Feral aggression is the most likely response to intruders unless the Aquzam perceive something about the interlopers that triggers a tribal superstition. If an intruder's physical appearance, equipment or actions are utterly unknown, the Aquzam force might retreat without revealing itself.
Similarly, the species is fearful of loud, unfamiliar noises: a shrill whistle, loud blast, or other unknown, challenging sound requires a Willpower roll [8 or as the Arbiter determines] or the Aquzam flees. If a clan or tribe can be sufficiently terrified by an interloper's power - real or imagined - the Aquzam submits utterly, offering devoted servitude to their new ruler. Despite being primitive, the species fashions high-prowed war-boats bedecked with skulls and body parts to fight and raid along the length of their black waters.

COMBAT: The headhunting Aquzam attack en masse but are equally quick to flee. When one of their number is killed outright by an exceptional hit, test group willpower [8] or they withdraw into the jungle. This is fortunate as attacking groups are frequently huge, but the primitive Aquzam seem not to recognise the power of their overwhelming numbers.

Poison-tipped arrows cause D6 damage and require a Stamina roll [5], or the target is poisoned: In D6 rounds victims suffer a -1 penalty to all actions for 2D6 minutes due to pain and additionally lose D4 Health. Poison damage is cumulative, as is the duration, but the pain penalty is not.

Melee attacks are made with stone-headed spears causing D6 damage. If engaged in brawling, the barbs on the Aquzam skin increase unarmed combat damage to D4 and cause minor bleeding wounds on a 10+ attack roll. They can also bite an opponent for D3 damage.

## Aquzam

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 14 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SIZE | Small |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 3 |
| STRENGTH | 3 | WEAPON | Bow / spear |
| INTELLECT | 2 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 1 | ATT MOD | +1 |
| PRESENCE | 2 | ATT SPEED | -3 / 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 2 | DMG | D6 / D6 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 2 |
| TALENTS | | Acute vision | |
| FLAWS | | Primitive | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Fangs, multiple eyes, prehensile limbs and scaly skin with barbs (DR2). | |
| SPECIAL | | Brawling barbs | |
| OTHER | | Poison arrows / stone spears | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Loin cloth, head trophies, charms and amulets, stone weaponry and war paint. | |

# Ba'Waikh

DESCRIPTION: Ba'Waikh are slender, short bipeds with pale blue-green skin-tones. Their faces are prominently flat, having no noticeable nose-structure and comparatively large eyes that they tend to squint when away from the dusky illumination of their homeworld Ogé.

Sensitive eyes grant them keen sight in low-light conditions while impeding their vision in bright light. Neither gender has any hair-growth, but males have five distinctive feathery protrusions in their face - over each eye, to either side and below the mouth. Their elongated skulls are typically covered with elaborate headgear, scarfs or turbans. Ba'Waikh have rather oddly shaped hands with each digit being a different length and covered in ridges, enabling them to hold on to and manipulate objects very precisely.

LIFECYCLE: Ba'Waikh produce a single egg which - after fertilisation - is nurtured for a short while within a skin fold on the female's abdomen until it hatches. On Ogé the Ba'Waikh spawn are placed in sacred ponds where they quickly evolve and emerge as fully formed Ba'Waikh.

Spawn birthed away from Ogé are typically placed in reservoirs or pools with other spawn. Once hatched the Ba'Waikh reach maturity in 3-4 seasons, one human year. Ba'Waikh usually live 200 seasons, retaining their vivacity until the last few days.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The Ba'Waikh are indigenous to Ogé, an unusually large world divided into numerous small continents. The planet orbits a large, dying star keeping Ogé in more or less perpetual dusk. As a result, Ogé is covered in fern-like and iridescent plants ranging from small weeds to large, tree-sized growths. Its climate is constant around the world.

A cluster of three major landmasses contains the Ilda'iin empire, the principal power on the world. Most other continents on Ogé are either uninhabited or contain only petty fiefdoms ruled by various local aristocrats.

Formerly a hereditary reigned empire, the lawful Empress of Ilda was subject to a coup by her vizier and deposed. She now resides in the Eternal City with the epithet the Virgin Empress.



OCCURRENCE: A substantial population of Ba'Waikh lives in Llyhn. While many have followed and remain loyal to the Virgin Empress in her exile, the Ilda'iin empire retains an embassy and significant presence in Llyhn. Most Ba'Waikh within the Eternal City are menial workers and craftsmen who flouted the stringent societal conventions of Ogé and fled. As a result, several predominantly Ba'Waikh neighbourhoods and ghettos have emerged around the Eternal City, with internal governance structures and social hierarchies; strangely replicating what they sought to leave.

While Ba'Waikh can be found within almost any sphere and profession in the Eternal City, they have an affinity as retainers, servants and attendants.

BEHAVIOUR: A fervent belief in their own brand of karma makes the Ba'Waikh a driven and hard-working species. The Ba'Waikh believe they are reborn and that their station in life depends not only on their own previous actions and position but also on that of their family. The more successful and esteemed in their previous life the higher the importance in their next incarnation.

Concurrently Ba'Waikh society is very hierarchical with distinct rigid societal tiers, so Ba'Waikh labour to excel at whatever station they have been dealt in life, hoping that this will make them rise to a higher station in the next life. But one must not step beyond one's station, and anyone expressing or displaying such disposition swiftly finds themselves ostracised at the bottom of the social order.

Ba'Waikh tend to stick together in tightly knit social circles, and while outwardly unassertive they have a severe internal social regimen instituted by the karmic creed. This certainty in kismet is confined to their own species, and they consider outsiders who seek to meddle in their affairs profane.

This inclination comes to the fore if they feel threatened or wronged by outsiders and they can be surprisingly conniving and vindictive in such circumstances. If treated tolerably Ba'Waikh tend to be reliable labourers, remain cursorily humble and subservient enough to blend into the background, making them ideal spies and informants if one can obtain their services.

DIET: Ba'Waikh primarily eat plants and seafood, having a fondness for select seaweed and crustaceans found exclusively on the aquatic world Vaesna, the homeworld of the Variin.

STATUS: Ba'Waikh are typically shahrvah caste or lower, with a few individuals having gained enough clout to rise beyond their traditional position. Ba'Waikh have little empathy for casteless and enslaved members of their own species as their status is caused by karma. Their inclination to conform avoids unwanted attention from higher castes.

ENCOUNTERS: Serving at all echelons of the Eternal City characters can run into Ba'Waikh under a vast assortment of circumstances and situations. Ba'Waikh tend to stay unobtrusive, and it is unlikely that they should seek the attention of humans unless they feel threatened or see a benefit to their internal schemes from doing so. Ba'Waikh in the employ of others, however, are likely to accost characters at the behest of their master or mistress.

COMBAT: Ba'Waikh can be unpredictably coordinated and competent if challenged and seem to have an instinct for strategy in dangerous circumstances. If faced with terrible odds they frequently bide their time using defensive strategies until reinforcements can arrive or retreat if this seems unlikely. In favourable conflicts, they retain caution reducing loses and injury while pressing their advantage. Favoured combat manoeuvres comprise defensive stance, block, parry, dodge, disarm and calculated strike.

VISION: Ba'Waikh eyes are very sensitive to light, and they can see well in low light conditions. No penalties apply for performing actions in the dark unless all light sources are gone. Ba'Waikh suffer a -1 penalty to rolls involving sight in bright conditions.

### Ba'Waikh

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 19 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 4 |
| STRENGTH | 2 | WEAPON | Various |
| INTELLECT | 3 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +1 |
| PRESENCE | 4 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 2 | DMG | As weapon -1 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 3 |
| TALENTS | | Night vision | |
| FLAWS | | Light sensitivity | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Nimble fingers | |
| SPECIAL | | - | |
| OTHER | | - | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Standard clothing, hardened leather armour, personal items and wealth, preference for short bows, short swords and polearms. | |

## Eybolq

DESCRIPTION: An Eybolq is a black-scaled, aquatic-looking entity that does not dwell in water, but instead swims through the air as effortlessly as if it were water. Its scales end in blue-tinted tentacled fins that trail behind it as it moves.
It has a single glowing eye that takes up most of its face, along with a mouth full of multi-ridged teeth. The creature looks big and bulky - up to eight cubits long from head to the end of its tentacle tail and about three cubits across the abdomen - but is actually relatively light and has a gas-filled bladder to keep it airborne. In average-gravity worlds, Eybolqs tend to float about a metre off the ground.

LIFE-CYCLE: The species begins life much as many fish do, in a clutch of thousands of eggs. After spawning, they hatch half a year later as maggot-like creatures, after which they set upon the rotting flesh their parents have hoarded for the ravenously hungry shoal. Once the juveniles near maturity, they descend into a feeding frenzy and feast upon each other until only a handful are left. Once the frenzy ends they hibernate for a decade, transforming to emerge as mature creatures.

Interestingly, meat only provides sustenance for Eybolq until they reach maturity after which they instead feed upon the mental vitalities of prey.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Eybolqs habitually lair in cold, damp places such as caves deep underground, high in mountains where the climate is cold or on worlds where similar conditions are prevalent. Despite - or perhaps because of - their significant intellect they only ever congregate for mating and while weaning their young.

OCCURRENCE: In their natural habitat Eybolqs are uncommon, yet those habitats are exceedingly rare.

BEHAVIOUR: Eybolqs are self-absorbed creatures that rarely interact with others and rather avoid confrontation unless driven by hunger. They protect their lair and young but are otherwise driven by desires that are utterly alien to anyone but themselves. Their behaviour is scrupulously erratic, and while they are not necessarily aggressive, they are ruthlessly indifferent to external stimuli.

DIET: When Eybolq are young they feast solely on raw or putrid meat. However, once they are have undergone the metamorphosis into their mature state they feed exclusively upon the psychic capabilities found in esoteric, Void-touched or enlightened prey, as is evident from the bones and carcasses without teeth marks left in their lairs.

STATUS: Eybolq rarely partake in social activities and have no apparent caste status in the Eternal City.

ENCOUNTERS: Eybolq are exceedingly intelligent, and while undoubtedly capable of reason, they are typically disinterested in anything but their own inexplicable aims. If encountered when hungry or incited, they either psychically

attack or pacify the chosen prey before dragging them back to their home to be "consumed" alive at their leisure.

They are only interested in quarry with supranatural abilities and are able to sense such individuals. They ignore individuals they deem unimportant or irrelevant and slaughter interfering ones offhandedly to get to an intended target.

COMBAT: Unless injured or obstructed by someone Eybolq focus solely on their intended victim in combat.

They use their psychic assault capability - with range (metres) and duration equalling their Willpower score - as their primary weapon. Recently matured Eybolqs have a psychic assault potency of 0, while old specimens have up to potency 6.

Unlike ordinary psychic assaults, Eybolq can drain Sanity, Willpower and Intellect from the victim, effectively sucking their mental capabilities dry. Upon a successful psychic assault roll randomly for each drained point to determine which mental capability is affected.

If forced to engage physically Eybolq can deliver a nasty bite but prefer to retreat if seriously threatened.

## Eybolq

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 6 | HEALTH | 35 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 5 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 3 | WEAPON | Fangs |
| INTELLECT | 10 | REACH | Touch (0) |
| PERSUASION | 3 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | +3 |
| WILLPOWER | 9 | DMG | D6+1 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 2 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aerial, fangs, night vision, prehensile tentacles and scaly skin. | |
| POWERS | | Psychic assault (mind battle) | |
| SPECIAL | | Sense esoteric, enlightened and Void-touched individuals. | |



# Harith

DESCRIPTION: A corpulent and robust species, the Harith are massive blobs of muscle. Almost spherical in shape, the species have six stout arms of varying length with a mass of tentacles supporting the bulky body and propelling them smoothly in any direction regardless of whichever way they are facing.
Pleated skin on their throat and chest enable them to expand their already massive girth, an attribute used for ritual displays and intimidation as well as vocalising. A vast array of horns grows from the shoulder-region unto the skull and can vary immensely in length and number. The horns are associated with virility and authority and are a source of considerable pride among the Harith. There is no distinguishable neck, and the head seems a mere extension of the spherical body with a wide mouth and four white forward-facing eyes denoting the face.

SUBSPECIES: Since the scorching of their homeworld by the Je'ehl, the Harith have been vagrants roaming the Cosmos. Subsequently, distinct characteristics evolved among different groups yielding an unknown number of subspecies. The main notable variance is in the disposition of the horns and skin-colours, which ranges from a deep burgundy-purple to an almost light blue-grey tint.

LIFECYCLE: Harith are hermaphrodites, and their young can fend for themselves almost from birth. They mature very quickly, assuming responsibilities within the community at an early age. Individuals have been known to live for up to 300 Llyhn seasons, approximating 150 Earth years.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The Harith once had a flourishing civilisation, presiding over several worlds and expanding their sphere of influence wherever they went. Aeons ago a conflict with the Je'ehl empire led to millennia of warfare, the burning of Ezeru - the Harith homeworld - and the near annihilation of the species. What caused the otherwise compassionate Je'ehl to perceive the Harith as a threat of such magnitude that they could not be suffered to live is unknown.
What is known is that the armies of the empire persecuted them, chased them from world to world until finally they set foot on their native soil and the great purge came to a culmination leaving the Harith homeworld in ashes forcing the surviving Harith to flee. It is perhaps bitterly ironic that it was shortly after that that the Je'ehl began to withdraw from the Cosmos.
After the scorching, the surviving Harith peoples mainly subsist as drifters aboard the withered remains of their once mighty Void flotillas - a bitter testament to former glory.

OCCURRENCE: Harith can frequently be found at trading posts restocking and replenishing their flotillas and have been known to establish provisional colonies or enclaves on several worlds. The species tend to travel in massive groups of several thousand, the remnants of entire nations - but can also be encountered in smaller troupes of up to fifty individuals who have banded together. Finding solitary Harith is rare.

BEHAVIOUR: Harith are very passionate and with a clear sense of honour permeating their conduct. They approach any and every endeavour with the utmost dedication and rarely relent unless their aim is achieved. They are incredibly loyal and devoted to their people, seeking to retain the traditions and history of their people, passing on their heritage to the young. A significant part of Harith tradition is vocalising, and their songs can be heard from vast distances. Incessant nightly hymns are how the Harith recite their history with a haunting bitterness reminding themselves of the past.
They retain a barely hidden loathing towards the Je'ehl, yet it is flavoured with a strange apprehension despite Harith being significantly more individually potent and with the empire no longer holding any significant power beyond Kanda'hir. It is as if their ancient downfall involves a shameful secret that they dare not stir even the memory of.

They react with prompt hostility to provocation particularly if their past is mentioned and seem to have an intolerance towards Talath - who are their match in size and potency.

DIET: Harith are omnivores in the true sense of the word, eating any organic material.

STATUS: Harith are respected in the Eternal City. Not only due to their physique and capabilities but also very much due to their disposition and relentlessness should they be crossed. Harith are considered Muati or Sahrnesh even if they are not indigenous to the Eternal City, while aristocrats and commanders are treated with the deference of the Ma'Alu caste.

## Harith

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 2 | HEALTH | 55 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 7 | MOVE | 6 |
| STRENGTH | 6 | WEAPON | Great weapons |
| INTELLECT | 3 | REACH | Near (4) |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +5 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 6 | DMG | Weapon +3 |
| | | DV | 5 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 4 |
| TALENTS | | Unyielding | |
| FLAWS | | Outspoken | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Additional arms, additional legs, short legs, massive horns and multiple eyes. | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment | |
| SPECIAL | | Vocalise and all-round movement | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Scale armour and a preference for dual-wielded great axes and great flails. | |

ENCOUNTERS: Harith are likely to be encountered in small groups on an assignment, typically serving whichever flotilla they belong to. Harith do not mind employing or subjugating others if it serves their purposes and can be met in almost any capacity. They very rarely work in the employ of anyone other than their own kind but can be persuaded to work with someone should the benefit be substantial enough.

COMBAT: Harith fight independently even when encountered in groups. They typically utilise two weapons and sometimes dual-wield two-handed weapons using their multiple limbs to the greatest effect. Their unique physique permits them to move in any direction without exposing the back or flanks. Harith have a reputation for attacking relentlessly with little consideration for tactics or defence, which is evident in their preferred combat actions all-out attack, crushing blow, knockdown, stun and wild swing.

VOCALISE: Harith can utilise their substantial acoustic capacity to affect opponents. The Harith must spend one full combat round expanding its throat and chest sufficiently after which a loud growl can be released. Any non-Harith within the blast range (Harith STR score x 2 metres) must make a Willpower roll against a difficulty equalling the Harith Presence score or suffer Fear effects 1-6.



# Im'zu



DESCRIPTION: This species is rather small and unremarkable in physical appearance. Never more than two cubits tall they have a pudgy, dark greyish form with no visible neck separating the head and body.
Their wide mouths filled with tiny pointed teeth and somewhat leering eyes give them an undeservedly mischievous look. The bulbous form is supported by two little clawed feet, making them ungainly and waddling in their movements. At the sides, flippers split into two digits at the end - occasionally with short claws - provide the species with a tenuous ability to grip objects.

SUBSPECIES: There are two distinct Im'Zu subspecies - those that remain on Emush and those that have vacated it to find a new, more comfortable life elsewhere. There is little physical difference except that migrant Im'zu tend to be slightly taller than their native kin.

LIFECYCLE: Im'Zu lay eggs nestled in humid underground caverns with hatchlings requiring care and nursing for an extended amount of time. During a lifetime an Im'zu lays approximately thirty eggs but with a mortality-rate of nine out of ten population growth on Emush is slow.
The mortality rate is significantly lower for emigrant Im'zu resulting in rapid population increase. Once weened the young Im'zu quickly receive assignments working alongside the adults to help the colony it is born into. Im'zu typically live for about twenty human years.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Originally from a small, unforgiving globe of extreme weather conditions and few natural resources the species are survivors that can adapt and endure extreme climates and harsh conditions. On their homeworld, they live in extensive underground complexes, sheltered from the outside.

They have had to adopt a frugal way to living, and Im'zu society is a peaceable one, not so much by design but by necessity as conflict would deplete resources vital for survival on their unforgiving homeworld. Im'zu culture is very much built on the appreciation of utility and vocation, meaning that individuals that carry out tasks crucial for the survival of the colony inherently have authority, there is no governmental system as such.
As indigenous Im'Zu names are made up only of vowels, an Im'Zu with a name encompassing consonants is always a migrant.

OCCURRENCE: After they were discovered by the Je'ehl empire the Im'zu quickly spread across the Cosmos, finding less hostile places to live and prosper. Consequently, many ports, trading posts and major cities across the Cosmos have a prosperous community of Im'zu employing their abilities for resource management, trading and administration.

As survival is no longer the primary concern for relocated Im'Zu, their dispositions have changed causing the previously vital parity instinct to wane.

BEHAVIOUR: Im'zu are naturally meticulous, servile and indistinctive as they move about seeing to whatever task they have at hand. Their small stature and inherent demureness make them easy to overlook both literally and figuratively.

Some migrant Im'Zu have been known for cultivating different behaviour to their indigenous counterparts replacing meticulousness with guile and servility with sycophantism.

DIET: Im'zu can eat almost anything, but prefer mosses, fungi, insects and worms.

STATUS: Wherever there is bureaucracy, protocol or bookkeeping in the Eternal City you are likely to find Im'zu. Commonly working as clerks, scribes and within similar administrative positions they are plentiful and mostly ignored by everyone. As a result, Im'zu consistently belong to the low castes.

ENCOUNTERS: Im'zu can be found at all levels of Llyhn society as they are among the most plentiful of species to be seen in the cosmopolis. Serving within any field but almost certainly in a subordinate capacity, Im'zu tend to remain anonymous and focus on their tasks.

However, certain individuals have risen beyond the otherwise cautious mindset of the species and are seeking to carve a space for themselves in Llyhn society - most likely in the underworld or poor districts or following furtive activities unlikely to draw attention. Im'zu acting on orders from an employer may approach characters with whichever proposal or inquiry they have been tasked with.

COMBAT: Most Im'zu are unwilling if not completely incapable of violence for several reasons. It is not in their nature, and their physique is not very effective when it comes to fighting as they are barely able to hold on to a weapon, much less swing it with any sort of proficiency. Consequently, Im'zu involved in potentially dangerous situations hire muscle to fight for them or have an escape or another course of action planned. Preferred combat actions, such as they are, include disengage, flee and dodge.

### Im'zu

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 2 | HEALTH | 13 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Small |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 2 |
| STRENGTH | 2 | WEAPON | Dagger |
| INTELLECT | 4 | REACH | Touch (0) |
| PERSUASION | 3 | ATT MOD | -1 |
| PRESENCE | 2 | ATT SPEED | -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 3 | DMG | Weapon -1 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Eidetic memory |
| FLAWS | Weak grip |
| ATTRIBUTES | Small claws and tough skin |
| EQUIPMENT | Clothes, small blade, writing implements and clerks tools. |

# Je'ehl



DESCRIPTION: The Je'ehl are an ancient and proud species from the world Kanda'hir. Although Je'ehl are generally robust and tough, they often rely more on guile than raw strength to achieve their goals. Je'ehl males are bipeds with a somewhat stocky physique and mottled green-grey skin, short dark brown-grey horns, pointed ears, wide jaws and four golden-white eyes. Their horns flatten along the sides of the skull and curve outwards as they grow older.
Je'ehl females are contrastingly slim and lithe compared to their male counterparts. They have up to three pairs of horns, all longer and more delicate in growth than those of the males.

LIFECYCLE: Je'ehl mates are habitually chosen based on compatibility and social status and do not usually form any sort of relationship beyond the act of conceiving. Je'ehl children are fostered solely by their mothers and strict segregation between the species is upheld until they come of age. The species generally tend to reach up to the equivalent of 90 years of age, but a few individuals show early signs of becoming Great Ones, capable of living up to 270 years of age.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The climate on Kanda'hir is warm and humid with vast rainforests covering much of the world's landmass. Divided into clans or nations organised around city states the Je'ehl are very territorial and proud, rarely mingling with Je'ehl from outside their own nation. The nations are ruled stringently by corpulent and powerful members of the Je'ehl species known as the Great Ones. These individuals are large and often obese specimens, which have a gift for persuasion and mind trickery. They are revered and hold substantial power, loyalty and reverence from the rest of their species even among members of other nations.
Nagar, the principal city on Kanda'hir, houses several hundred thousand citizens and the pyramidal structures prevalent in Je'ehl architecture rise high above the forest canopy as a testament to the greatness of the city.

The history of the Je'ehl nations is a tragic tale where former glory has given way to current degradation. The great antique Je'ehl civilisation was initially built around a hive mentality, where all members of the nation laboured to contribute to the common good. The basis for this social ordering was a very rigid and hierarchical societal structure, sustaining strict codes of conduct, in all aspects of life.

The Je'ehl were among the first to become enlightened and to actively explore other worlds. For aeons, their society was superior to that of any other Cosmic species they encountered. With great compassion, the Je'ehl attempted to bring their notion of civilisation and progress to the primitives on the numerous worlds they came across.

The natives, however, usually resisted these attempts or just failed miserably to grasp the concepts taught by the Je'ehl and as often as not violent conflict was the result. Due to these failures and the unsuccessful attempts at finding civilisations of an equivalent advanced level the Je'ehl became more and more reclusive, further perpetuating a slowly emerging belief that they were superior to those species which had rejected their enlightened way of life. Culminating with the scorching of Ezeru, many of the Je'ehl nations began focusing less on interaction with other species and more on furthering their own understanding of life, enlightenment and a strengthened belief in their own supremacy.

For those who turned their backs on the exploration of worlds it was the common belief that sensory experience and pleasure was the only path to an epiphany, which would make possible the enlightenment they all sought. This fervent belief in pleasure as the means to achieving a higher understanding ultimately led many Je'ehl to grow debauched and decadent in their ways.

Devout pleasure cults were only a natural development of this tendency; factions revelling in sensory excess, luxuriating in the varied pleasures of extreme self-indulgence, moral decay and perversion, all with the purpose of attaining a higher understanding.

These cults, which now dominate many of the Je'ehl nations, have become the manifestation of all the hidden vices, temptations and passions that most sentient beings fearfully repress in their deepest and darkest secret thoughts.

For most of the Je'ehl nations, the once proud and puritanical social order has changed irrevocably into a travesty of former glory as the Great Ones consequently abuse the strict Je'ehl societal structure to keep the populace subservient and thus retain their own carefree indulgence of pleasure.

The cultists are oblivious to their own decadence and degradation and cannot see that their behaviour continues to deteriorate into a constant state of self-centeredness, at the expense of everything else. This abject lack of restraint paired with a continuous pursuit of pleasures has lulled many of them into a deranged and maddened state from which few can escape.

OCCURRENCE: Some Je'ehl have chosen to abandon their life of servitude to the Great Ones of Kanda'hir, openly rebelling and therefore named pariahs. The pariahs have chosen to leave Kanda'hir and abandon their legacy to live among the lesser species thereby betraying and defying the natural order determined by ancient Je'ehl society, an atrocious act of apostasy. Although several nations retain embassies or envoys in Llyhn most Je'ehl here are pariah or descendants of these.

| JE'EHL | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 29 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 7 |
| STRENGTH | 5 | WEAPON | Sabre |
| INTELLECT | 3 | REACH | Adjacent (2) |
| PERSUASION | 6 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | D12 +2 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 4 |
| TALENTS | | Resolve and tolerance | |
| FLAWS | | Arrogance* | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Horns and multiple eyes. | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Fine clothing, chain mail armour, twin-pointed sabre, jewellery and ingredients for infusions or intoxicants. | |

BEHAVIOUR: The highly ritualised and organised Je'ehl civilisation flourished long before most other species and as a result, Je'ehl retain a tendency to treat everyone else as slightly inferior.

The Je'ehl love music as well as most other forms of artistic expression, having integrated these into their religious and civic protocol on Kanda'hir, though they are not particularly gifted in the performing arts. Although the Je'ehl who have left Kanda'hir are considered fallen and without honour by their native brethren, they are still a proud people. Honour is very important in their lives, and they will go to great lengths to ensure that their reputation is maintained. Most Je'ehl living in Llyhn are proud to be named pariah to emphasise their dissociation to the Je'ehl nations, having recognised the decadence of their former culture yet fighting their own natural tendency for arrogance and self-indulgence.

DIET: Je'ehl are strictly vegetarian, their digestion unable to process anything else.

STATUS: Unless derelict, Je'ehl habitually belong to the commoner or high-castes of the Eternal City. The Je'ehl are known for their ability to concoct and infuse teas that induce pleasure-trances, dream-walking and cure a variety of maladies, aches and diseases. This practice has been spread far and wide, and the art of tea-making is by far the most impacting of the contributions Je'ehl society has made in Llyhn, making Je'ehl infusers particularly sought-after.

ENCOUNTERS: Je'ehl pariah tend to keep to themselves or stay in close-knit cliques avoiding the attention of others, while their Je'ehl nation counterparts parade around in groups with no qualms about flaunting their perceived superiority.
Je'ehl can be found in any of the districts of the Eternal City but are distinctly more plentiful in the wealthy areas trading goods or seeking new exotic forms of extravagances to explore. Je'ehl often employ other species for menial work, but higher positions are reserved for their own species. It is equally rare to see a Je'ehl - pariah or otherwise - working for any non-Je'ehl; it simply goes against their nature.

COMBAT: Je'ehl have a habit of shunning violence, preferring dialogue to armed conflict. They rarely instigate a fight, however, if provoked or left with no alternative aggressors quickly find that Je'ehl are quite capable of fighting.
If faced with overwhelming opposition Je'ehl quickly seek to even the odds as flight or surrender is inconceivable unless it is the only possibility. If provoked into a fight Je'ehl have no qualms about decimating opposition and do not hold back.
Je'ehl employ sophisticated manoeuvres to gain a tactical advantage. Favoured combat actions comprise calculated strike, called attack, disarm, parry, push back and counter attack. Most Je'ehl are trained in various weapons and are likely to be combat specialists as well.

# Ka'Alum

DESCRIPTION: Somewhat resembling large flightless birds, the Ka'Alum stand over four cubits tall with long sinewy legs built for speed, a flexible neck and the small head has a thin elongated and long curved beak. Males are partially covered in short purplish downy fur while females are a variety of earthy colours, ranging from sandy beige to reddish clay. Both genders have bare legs, necks and heads showing their dark leathery skin.
Two front limbs with hook-like claws are used for grabbing and manipulating objects, and a long tail with tousled featherlike protrusions provides balance. Certain individuals have two short appendages on their back also with protrusions occasionally used in displays of dominance. Ka'Alum are well-known for their cleverness and robust physique, making them extremely capable.



LIFECYCLE: Ka'Alum give birth to live young that are slow to mature and reliant on their family for an extended period. The species becomes sexually mature at a relatively late stage in life, often striking out on their own to explore and gather wealth and experience for prolonged periods across the worlds they inhabit until returning to their birth-world to settle, bear children. Ka'Alum are known to live for up to the equivalent of 70 Earth years.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Ka'Alum prefer subtropical environments comprising mainly savannahs and plains, but they can endure a variety of conditions due to their resilient physique. Once the Ka'Alum became enlightened, they quickly expanded unto habitable but unpopulated worlds setting up colonies that - once they reached a certain size - became relatively self-governing.

As a result, the Ka'Alum have highly evolved societies spanning several worlds, all supremely ruled by an elected conclave residing a limited time on each of the planets within the federation. While each world has its own laws, nations, cultures and customs, they all answer to the conclave on external matters. The conclave has members from each world in the federation to warrant that no preference is bestowed on anyone and the routine relocation ensures that all receive equal attention.

OCCURRENCE: Ka'Alum have a knack for amassing wealth and power, being an extremely industrious species. As a consequence, they have a presence in most principal trading ports, core worlds and globes with abundant natural resources. A substantial amount of Ka'Alum reside in Llyhn either autonomously or as representatives of their various homeworlds and since the slave-trade is a significant part of the economy many are involved in the slave-markets or associated trades.

BEHAVIOUR: The species is known as having a practical, astute if occasionally callous nature. They habitually treat others with nonchalant politeness and act in terms of what they can gain from them - not necessarily exploitative, just how this person could benefit them.

The gain may be a gratifying friendship or commercial interests - what matters is that it fulfils a need for the Ka'Alum. As such their minds are always churning and calculating how a situation or encounter might benefit them, gauging outcomes and possibilities. Notwithstanding, Ka'Alum are fiercely loyal to their own kind and dissension is inconceivable.

Ka'Alum often attract or hire other races as retainers and aides, utilising the various fortes and capabilities of other species to the utmost. The Ka'Alum have a - perhaps undeserved - notorious reputation as pitiless slavers. In truth, it is probably only a rather small proportion of the species that engage in slave-trade, but the natural praArbiteratism of the species seems to make them highly competent and prosperous within this trade.

DIET: The species is omnivorous, but prefers a diet consisting mainly of meat supplemented by berries, root crops and various vegetables.

STATUS: Ka'Alum nearly always belong to the privileged common- or indeed high-castes due to their commercial savvy and resultant wealth and prosperity. Their communal spirit also entails that any ill-fated individual either hurriedly returns to recuperate on its homeworld or is aided by his kin, meaning that only an ostracised individual is likely to slip in social position.

ENCOUNTERS: Ka'Alum can be encountered in more or less any conceivable capacity; be it direct adversaries, allies or as disinterested parties to have dealings with.
They frequently conduct their business as independent entities with a gathering of foreign aides as support rather than fellow members of their species, and they can only rarely be found in the employ of another unless it benefits them substantially to do so.

Anyone with opposing interests to a Ka'Alum may find themselves confronted by a highly competent individual prepared to make every effort to achieve success. However, once this is accomplished the Ka'Alum has no further interest in overcoming the former contender.

A Ka'Alum faced with determined opposition weighs its options, changing tactics or possibly withdraws if success is unlikely.

### Ka'Alum

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 4 | HEALTH | 35 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 8 |
| STRENGTH | 3 | WEAPON | Glaive / bow |
| INTELLECT | 6 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 5 | ATT MOD | +4 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | +1 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | As weapon |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Quick thinker |
| FLAWS | Distinctive appearance |
| ATTRIBUTES | Long digitigrade legs, peripheral vision, small claws and tail |
| EQUIPMENT | Fine clothes, reinforced cloth armour, daggers, glaive or other polearm, composite longbow and occasionally whips. |

COMBAT: Ka'Alum are analytical and decisive in their approach to violent conflict, quickly gauging their opportunities and odds to proceed with the greatest prospect of victory or otherwise resolving the conflict to their advantage.
In a fight, a Ka'Alum adopts the tactic that ensures the least risk of harm to itself or its followers and uses the means and conditions at their disposal to the best of their ability. Ka'Alum are not averse to get involved if this grants the best chance of success. They tend to be proficient in ranged weapons or polearms, increasing their own reach and keeping adversaries away. Preferred manoeuvres depend entirely on their opponent as they adopt the tactic suited to that particular adversary.

## Naqasti

DESCRIPTION: The Naqasti are stooped grungy beings standing three to three and a half cubits tall with digitigrade legs giving them a slightly shuffling gait. Their heads are dominated by a short, thick snout, somewhat large ears and small golden eyes with a bulky torso supporting disproportionally long brawny arms.
The Naqastï appear bald with highly wrinkled ash-grey leathery skin mottled with darker areas around the face and in jumbled patterns across the body. Although fully capable of normal speech they mostly communicate through a series of grunts, clicking noises and gestures between themselves.

LIFECYCLE: Naqasti are born in litters of four to six babes that slowly mature to adulthood. Their life expectancy is around 35 Earth years, and they usually produce two to three litters in a lifetime.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The Naqasti majority follow an ancient messianic religion, their entire life revolving around the doctrine of their faith.
They tend to be fervently religious praying eight times a day, following strict dietary rules and observing religious occasions with prodigious verve as set down in their holy texts and decreed by the sacred messiahs, which provide rules of conduct for any and every aspect of life.

They originate from a vast, savage globe called Na'Ash and are not found across countless worlds by their own desire. It was rather thrust upon them as they were "discovered" by the Je'ehl during the great colonisation era of that ancient species.

Their stamina, strength and docile natures made them an ideal workforce, and many Naqastï were reluctantly brought to other worlds to toil as labourers in the Je'ehl empire.
As the empire withdrew, the Naqasti were left stranded on the worlds they had been placed on, either too impoverished to book passage back to Na'Ash or unwilling to make the journey through



the Void. Naqasti societies - whether at home or abroad - are made up of congregations that are administered by spiritual leaders decreeing the daily schedule and prayer times in accordance with the holy texts and teachings of the messiahs.

OCCURRENCE: Naqasti are common in worlds previously inhabited or colonised by the Je'ehl empire, but as the Naqasti themselves are more or less entirely unenlightened and have no desire to explore new territories they have not expanded their presence further.

In Llyhn, the Naqastï stay in the Dhaarese and Kimah district, tending to live together in large communal groups in the most impoverished areas or outside the walls. Most are unskilled labourers performing menial tasks all over the city and on the docks, mainly remaining on the fringes of Llyhn society. The religious leaders amass influence and are revered as above their brethren.

BEHAVIOUR: Naqasti are docile and subservient by nature, living their lives abiding by very strict religious doArbiteras. They are often perceived as sluggish and somewhat dim-witted compared to most other sentient species, although this can likely be attributed to a misconception of their inactive or even submissive nature towards other species as well as their disinterest in power and influence.

They are very social beings, finding comfort in large groups of their own species and though habitually meek towards outsiders they can be temperamental when dealing with matters within their own circles.

Naqasti are notoriously non-violent and avoid conflict if at all possible. If backed into a corner however or when gathered into a large enough group a mob mentality may develop if they feel threatened or mistreated resulting in violent and uncontrolled bouts of temper.

DIET: Naqasti are vegetarian and become violently ill INGesting anything but fruits and vegetables.

STATUS: With almost a fifth of the total population assumed to be Naqastï they are the largest ethnic group in Llyhn: a prevalent, but not dominant species. Due to their disinterest in influence, power and nonaggressive approach the Naqasti are inherently low-caste occupied mostly with menial labour such as construction, hauling and so on.

ENCOUNTERS: Naqasti function at the lowest levels of society, found all over the city performing the tasks that no other free species wants. They are habitually at the receiving end of discrimination but sustained by their faith and compliant natures they bear it without complaint.

Naqasti may be encountered in various situations providing labour for allies, adversaries or impartial parties and very rarely do their own agendas come into play. Were a Naqasti religious leader to get stirred, however, he would have an exceedingly fervent and potent following to back up his cause.

COMBAT: If severely provoked, forced into a fight or in a religious craze a Naqasti may lose its calm and go into a raging rampage. If triggered and failing a Willpower roll [7], it is subject to the psychological effect Frenzy for 2D6 rounds. Naqasti have no sense for combat or weaponry and will - if enraged - use whatever is available to beat its opponent or tormentor, smashing adversaries to a pulp with its considerable strength. With no consideration for tactics, their typical combat actions encompass all-out attack, crushing blow and wild swing.

### Naqasti

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 41 |
| AWARENESS | 2 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 6 | MOVE | 8 |
| STRENGTH | 6 | WEAPON | Unarmed |
| INTELLECT | 2 | REACH | Touch |
| PERSUASION | 1 | ATT MOD | 0 |
| PRESENCE | 2 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 1 | DMG | D3+3 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| TALENTS | | Vigorous | |
| FLAWS | | Fanatic | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Digitigrade legs and thick skin | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Ragged clothing, religious paraphernalia | |

# Oord

DESCRIPTION: The Oord are a small species known for their intuitive awareness of the Void. Originating from the border world ING, the Oord is a Cosmic species whose world was engulfed by a Void storm in aeons past. Whether the Oord had their Void affinity before the disaster and perhaps were complicit in triggering it, or whether the connection came after and as a result is unknown. Regardless, they are not only exceptional Void navigators, but most of them also possess mystic abilities enabling them to bend reality.

Standing about two cubits tall, Oord are squat creatures with short arms, flattened fingertips and double-jointed legs giving them a curiously capering swaddling gait. Their skin is typically a shade of greyish green-brown which is heavily tattooed with iconography signifying the individual's journeys and momentous occasions. Two large slanted eyes of infinite depths with slit pupils give them a somewhat chary look while their full-lipped mouths lend a more innocent quality. Oord are able to understand and make themselves understood in any dialect in the known Cosmos although they do not always make those around them aware of this fact.

LIFECYCLE: Not much is known about the Oord lifecycle other than they lay egg capsules, which are seen as a great delicacy by several esoteric species - and that they are suspected of living up to several hundred Earth years.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Oord are egalitarian creatures with no one claiming mastery over another. As such they tend to stay out of each other's business and are very keen on producing contracts when engaging in any sort of collaboration or exchange. There is no governing body on ING and albeit the society looks anarchic from the outside unspoken social contracts direct interaction and dealings between everyone.

ING is mainly sweltering marshland with extensive mountain ranges dividing the surface of the globe as destitute rocky vertical wastelands. Where the Void emanations are particularly strong the natural laws of the Cosmos no longer apply, making the world a curiosity as well as dangerous.
Being Void sensitive, the Oord are able to distinguish these areas but do not strictly need to as they seem less affected by the Void's warping influence than regular cosmic species. Oord feel at home in the Void as much as outside it, and many are Voidfarers or act as guides or navigators for well-paying clients.

OCCURRENCE: Oord make up a sizable portion of the residents of the Eternal City, whether due to their familiarity of a border world or because Llyhn is a hub and waypoint where their skills and services are in high demand. They can be found touting their services around the city, and are often employed by traders and merchants, explorers and travellers from all over the Cosmos. Their prices are expensive and rigid, following their custom, with no leeway for bartering or reductions.

BEHAVIOUR: To most other cosmic species Oord are seen as rather odd or peculiar with their strangely flickering and penetrating gaze, affinity with the Void and propensity for a strictly egalitarian yet unsociable culture. They regularly keep to themselves in small groups speaking in hushed voices preferring domestic camaraderie to strangers, which further perpetuates their eccentric reputation.
A particular well-known enjoyment of the Oord, however, is combat of the artistic sort. Since they are disadvantaged in terms of fighting proficiency they take great pleasure in watching talented gladiators in the arenas of the Eternal City; the rush of adrenaline, the flowing blood and the ecstasy of battle where the act of fighting is transformed from a means to an end in itself, an art form.

DIET: Oord will eat anything.

STATUS: As respected Void-navigators and mariners Oord are some of the few to enjoy the privileges of the common or even high castes without wealth or owning assets or property. The Oord are apparently tolerated as free agents in the city and tend to use routes and destinations outside the interests of the Red Galleys and tithe collectors. It is not unknown for Oord to disappear without a trace, possibly



taken by the Jinassar for bringing vessels to destinations and routes kept by the Red Galleys.
As prevalent Void navigators Oord could be a noteworthy influence upon many affairs in the city, should they so wish. However, supposedly rather than risk upsetting the status quo and particularly the Unseen Rulers, the species retain a habit of keeping to themselves and avoiding involvement in city affairs.

ENCOUNTERS: Oord are likely to be encountered in any circumstance or venture involving traversing the Void beyond the interests of the Red Galleys; be it trade-related, exploration or travelling to known worlds. Oord rarely let their own peculiar agendas come into play and if they do it is kept exceedingly secret to avoid attention or risk undue repercussions. Whatever Oord intrigues and agendas are being realised in Llyhn are carried out by agents and arbitrators, keeping the identity of the architect and genuine aims hidden.

COMBAT: Oord passionately avoid getting involved in violent conflict, using their mystic abilities to subvert and sway potential antagonists. If combat cannot be avoided an Oord will generally seek to incapacitate its assailant and flee the situation.
If violence is anticipated the Oord is likely to have taken precautions and hired muscle to intervene or arranged for one or several escape-routes should the situation escalate. They will support their hired swords using mysticism and also use these abilities directly and aggressively if left no choice while preferred actions comprise defensive stance and dodge.

### Oord

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 2 | HEALTH | 20 |
| AWARENESS | 9 | SIZE | Small |
| STAMINA | 3 | MOVE | 3 |
| STRENGTH | 2 | WEAPON | Staff |
| INTELLECT | 5 | REACH | Adjacent (2) |
| PERSUASION | 4 | ATT MOD | -1 |
| PRESENCE | 2 | ATT SPEED | -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 3 | DMG | D6 -1 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Direction sense |
| FLAWS | Sluggish (mild) |
| ATTRIBUTES | Short legs and Void entity [3] |
| POWERS | Enlightenment [7]<br>Gnostic Mysticism [5]<br>Sphere of Mind [4]<br>Sphere of Void [5] |
| SPECIAL | Comprehends all languages<br>Innate Void navigator |
| EQUIPMENT | Travelling garb, walking stick and assorted trinkets. |

## Qhu

DESCRIPTION: Qhu are a species of soft-bodied esoteric beings traversing the Void and Cosmos. Floating freely, the Qhu is an aerial species, its internal organs and brains protected by a hard shell while three different sets of tendrils and feelers protrude from an opening enabling it to interact with its surroundings.
Three elongated frilled tendrils allow the Qhu to grab and manipulate objects, short red feelers function as sensory organs while two pudgy lappets bring substances to a mouthpiece hidden in the folds of flesh. A branched flap just below the shell is a compound eye, enabling the Qhu to see an extensive spectre of colours and detail.

Qhu are cognisant with a highly developed consciousness expressing themselves in a manner incomprehensible in all its nuances and connotations to most sentient beings; conveying meaning by slight movements, subtle changes of skin-colour as well as texture.

LIFE-CYCLE: The species go through several metamorphosis cycles throughout its life, beginning as a small mollusc attached to deep-sea reefs in the fluorescent seas of Nirak. As the mollusc matures, it goes through stages until it rises from the waves in its mature form; aerial and shelled.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Originally from the border world Nirak the species become roamers once they have matured and risen from the seas. They are highly social and driven by curiosity and wanderlust they venture out into the Cosmos through the many Veil ruptures on their homeworld.

The internal social intricacies in their culture are largely incomprehensible, which matters little as their homeworld is lethally toxic to most other species.

OCCURRENCE: Qhu are rare but can be found almost anywhere. Easily able to survive and navigate the Void they appear across the Cosmos, drawn to sprawling urban settings and wildlife-rich natural habitats where their curiosity about other species can be satiated.

BEHAVIOUR: Inherently inquisitive they interact with most everyone, sometimes poking and prodding them senselessly as their own nerve system functions differently and they are unable to comprehend physical pain or discomfort.

They seem to gauge the reactions of sentient beings to various stimulants and sometimes grotesquely replicate actions. Their mentality is unpredictable in its otherworldliness, making them volatile in their actions and reactions; displaying agitation and even aggression at seemingly inadvertent behaviour.
When communicating the combination of movement, skin-texture and colours convey meaning, with the tone displaying the overall sentiment, the texture denoting the gauge and the movement signifying the attitude.

DIET: Qhu consume any organic matter, drawing sustenance from minimal amounts.



STATUS: Qhu do not have an assumed caste status as they do not actively take part in the social hierarchy of Llyhn.

ENCOUNTERS: The species is likely to be encountered in Llyhn or any location with a high concentration of life. The Qhu mostly travel alone, or in small groups examining and assessing whomever and whatever they come across and trying to communicate with sentient beings in quick successions of colour flashes, movements and texture-alterations. Sometimes Qhu settle down in a particularly lively area using intermediaries to establish an abode and other necessities and performing trials and experimentations on sometimes unwilling participants. They can act seemingly maliciously or explicitly aggressive without it being intentional as their mentality does not comprehend such things. Qhu do not feel pain as such but will react if accosted, grabbed or harmed.

COMBAT: Qhu use their long tendrils as whips, flogging adversaries with immense force, entangling held items and weapons, efficiently disarming attackers. All attacks count as disarming attacks without roll penalties and cause D12+3 damage.
When under attack their skin rapidly flashes in a variety of colours, which combined with swift movements confuse and disorients foes, making it exceedingly difficult to hit the Qhu. All hits on odd rolls are allocated to the unprotected protruding soft tendrils and feelers while even rolls hit the DR5 shell. Although the Qhu does not suffer detrimental effects from injuries, it will attempt to flee if it reaches less than a quarter of its total Health.

ABILITIES: Mature Qhu are enlightened and capable of navigating the Void although they have no other ascension benefits.

### Qhu

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 23 |
| AWARENESS | 7 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 8 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 6 | WEAPON | Tentacles |
| INTELLECT | 9 | REACH | Near (3) |
| PERSUASION | 6 | ATT MOD | +4 |
| PRESENCE | 7 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 7 | DMG | D12+3 |
| | | DV | 11 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 5 / DR 0 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aerial, shell, soft-bodied, tentacles and transformative skin | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment and innate Voidfaring | |
| SPECIAL | | Ignore injury penalties. Sustained hits are allocated between soft and hard areas. | |
| OTHER | | All attacks counts as disarm | |

### QHU MEANING CONVEYORS

| | |
|---|---|
| SKIN-COLOUR | Red: questioning \| yellow: interest \| green: anger \| purple: joy \| white: perplexity \| black: frustration |
| TEXTURE | Smooth: mildly \| rough: moderately \| lumpy: strongly |
| MOVEMENT | Swaying: expectantly \| frantic: anxiously \| still: carelessly |

# Quth

DESCRIPTION: Quth are looming six-legged numinous creatures with charitable if somewhat perplexing demeanours. Standing up to twelve cubits tall, Quth have gnarled, wrinkled exoskeletons mounted on thin multi-jointed legs.
Although capable of high speed the Quth usually have a leisurely gait, misleadingly indicating that the species is slow and sluggish. Their bodies are round with grooves and folds from which tufts of fur-like hair spout. They have two short front limbs, like undeveloped arms.
They have two mouth openings, the smaller at the bottom and the larger on top of the face which is a direct part of the body. Directly on top of the upper mouth protrude two compound eyestalks able to swerve and swivel, giving the Quth the ability to view anywhere around it. They speak to each other in odd clicks and whistles but are able to quickly grasp other languages by - in some way - deducing the meaning of words they hear.

LIFECYCLE: Quth are known to become exceedingly old, some rumours even say aeons. While little is known about how they reproduce every now and again a youngling appears, recognisable by their relative shortness and disproportionally smaller bodies.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Quth are seemingly able to survive in almost any environment but seem to thrive most in very hot conditions. The species is said to originate from a world known only as Sind. The Quth were forced into exile - ousted by a source they refuse to name or even speak of - and since then Quth have been roaming the Cosmos.

The species is inherently solitary and constantly roaming, drawn to unfamiliar places. They interact contentedly and convene socially should they happen upon others of their kind on a journey, but they do not seek each other out or purposefully congregate. Consequently, the species has formed no discernible societal organisation or hierarchy.

OCCURRENCE: Quth are rare and seldom stay in any one location for long. The Eternal City, however, seems to attract them in scores and is likely the only place in the known Cosmos where they amass. They can be found anywhere in the city, often keenly observing something seemingly trivial but to them utterly fascinating.

BEHAVIOUR: They are roamers exploring the Cosmos, always scrutinising and learning. They never ask questions or comment on anything they see, they merely stare at the subject of their interest and sometimes follow it if it is a creature or sentient species.



If addressed, they respond with politeness - likely in the questioner's native tongue - but always with an odd connotation as if their senses and understanding is slightly out of tune with ordinary reality. Quth seem able to see things that others cannot, invisible things beyond the senses of other cosmic species.

These quirks, combined with notorious wisdom, has likely earned their reputation as sibyls.

All Quth have a great love for smoking long, strange pipes and often do so while they wander, shrouding themselves in a haze of smoke as they roam. Each has its preferred smoking herb, yet many are partial to the curious purple herbs found only on Mount Qaf and sold by the Djann.

DIET: Quth eat only gelatinous creatures such as jellyfish.

STATUS: As a transient species Quth are not associated with a particular caste in the Eternal City. As many consider them harmless, wise and even oracular, they are habitually ignored or given deference wherever they chose to wander in the Eternal City.

ENCOUNTERS: Quth might be encountered if they find interest in a character and begin to observe him or her, perhaps even following the party around the city. They may well be sought out for advice to which they mostly respond contentedly if slightly cryptically and they have even been known to translate using the vast assortment of dialects and languages at their disposal. A Quth would never initiate contact nor have any agenda other than curiosity but may become embroiled in someone else's intrigues or be exploited as a tool and thus encounter the characters.

COMBAT: Quth never initiate violence but do reciprocate if threatened or attacked. Their only attack is a powerful kick from their crushing legs, which can be delivered at near range (max 4 metres) in any direction as the Quth kicks with whichever leg is closest to the assailant. If its kicks do not deter the assailant or the Quth is at a severe disadvantage it flees using its considerable speed.

### Quth

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 2 | HEALTH | 47 |
| AWARENESS | 6 | SIZE | Huge |
| STAMINA | 5 | MOVE | 12 |
| STRENGTH | 7 | WEAPON | Unarmed |
| INTELLECT | 7 | REACH | Near (4) |
| PERSUASION | 4 | ATT MOD | +2 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 6 | DMG | 2D6+4 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 3 |
| TALENTS | | Eidetic memory | |
| FLAWS | | Sluggish | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Chitinous skin, long limbs, six legs and swivelling eyes. | |
| SPECIAL | | Peripheral vision and innate Voidfaring. | |

# Shaauru

DESCRIPTION: The Shaauru is a Cosmic species of unknown origin found on various worlds with suitable conditions of temperate water and humid atmosphere. The species ranges in size, with most standing about three cubits tall and some males reaching significantly larger proportions.

Their unwieldy bodies are made up of wrinkly overlapping folds of flesh with clumps of fur-like hair dispersed unevenly. Emerging from the creases of flesh is a plump head with two eyestalks and a wide mouth. Four thin multijointed and hooked limbs allow them to scuttle and climb effectively, and propel themselves through water with rapid thrusts, while two other appendages function similarly to arms.
Their limbs are covered in sensory hairs enabling them to pick up vibrations and allowing them to communicate and sense movement in the murky environment they inhabit. Their skin colour ranges from dark grey velvet-like to an almost yellow sheen with the tufts and appendages a dark hue of brownish purple.
Shaauru breathe air but live most of their lives underwater by trapping air bubbles between the folds of flesh on their abdomen and in hair-tufts, allowing them to remain submerged for prolonged periods before resurfacing or returning to their air-filled retreats made from kelp and silk excreted from glands below the abdomen.

LIFE-CYCLE: Shaauru create small silky air-pockets to hold clusters of eggs attached to underwater rocks for gestation. Once hatched they roam around the waterway of their birth for several years until they reach a size big enough to join a brood. Shaauru can live for up to 30 Earth years, and venerable individuals are typically nurtured by the younger brood members until they become useless to the brood.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Shaauru are found in freshwater habitats with aquatic vegetation such as lakes, ponds, canals, marshlands and slow-moving rivers. While the species is able to live on land, a Shaauru spends almost all of its life underwater in air-filled nests or colonies constructed from kelp, seaweed and silk only surfacing briefly to replenish its air supply.

Shaauru typically live solitarily or in small groups while young and then gather in larger broods. Brood colonies of a certain size function as loosely structured matriarchies. Such colonies utilise what they consider less-evolved species as slaves for labour and occasionally food.

OCCURRENCE: Shaauru are an unenlightened species which has somehow managed to spread to various worlds, albeit not purposefully. At least one colony is known to live in the river Margidda just outside the Eternal City close to the docks of the Dhaarese district.

The Shaauru here are known to snatch people from the shanties on the river bank to use as food and slaves. This is mostly ignored by those in power as the missing are of low caste and because the Shaauru salvage sunken ships and lost cargoes for the wealthy merchant cartels. In addition to the typical weeds, kelp and silk the colony encompasses many sunken vessels in its construction. Although not far below the surface, the colony is gloomy because of the ever-present silt and muddy waters of the Margidda.

BEHAVIOUR: The Shaauru thought processes, state of consciousness and emotions are exceptionally outlandish, and they display only three states of being: tranquillity, when all is going as expected and desired; anger and aggression if anything upsets their serenity; and finally fear, should their plans ever be severely threatened or overwhelming adversity encountered, resulting in flight to remove themselves to a place where tranquillity can be reasserted.

Shaauru do not consider man and many other species as properly sentient, regarding them as useful tools but failing to recognise that they have cognitive thought, emotions, desires and so on.

Their language consists of a combination of verbalised sounds, drum-like beating of their legs, and subtle movements of body hair. Thus, at best, other species can master only a portion of it. They are sensitive to vibrations and can communicate over several hundred metres with leg beats - even in water - and further if they drum against a strand of silk touched by another Shaauru.



DIET: Shaauru are predators typically feasting on whichever animals can be found in the body of water they inhabit or along its edge.

STATUS: Shaauru have no caste or status as they are outside the regular order of Llyhn society. They are tolerated - sometimes even appreciated – by the high castes as the services they provide to the wealthy as substantial in terms of appropriating lost wealth on the bottom of the Margidda.

ENCOUNTERS: As Shaauru never venture far from their habitat they are only ever encountered near places of fresh water. Shaauru are motivated only by their desire to establish what they consider tranquillity and go to great lengths to gather resources - such as slaves and food - to achieve it.
Anyone resisting them, getting in the way or actively opposing their plans are considered a threat and will be responded to with aggression. They can be reasoned with if communication is established and appeals to their purposes are made. However, they are utterly incapable of comprehending motives other than their own, or indeed actually understanding that others have motives.

COMBAT: If confronted Shaauru seek to overwhelm any adversary with numbers, using their hooked appendages as weapons and attacking from multiple angles. Female Shaauru have glands set in small barbs on their front limbs enabling them to inject a paralysing toxin to disable prey.
The Shaauru female makes a called attack and on a successful hit - causing regular damage from the hook - the barb penetrates injecting a neurotoxin forcing the victim to make a Stamina resistance roll [7] or suffer temporary (D6 rounds) paralysation to the targeted limb. Favoured manoeuvres comprise backstabbing, grapple, sneak attack, dodge and called attack for females with toxin barbs.

## Shaauru

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 19 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 3 | MOVE | 6 |
| STRENGTH | 4 | WEAPON | Hooked limbs |
| INTELLECT | 2 | REACH | Adjacent (2) |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +2 |
| PRESENCE | 2 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 2 | DMG | D6 +1 [1] |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| TALENTS | | Alertness and high pain threshold | |
| FLAWS | | Clueless and blunt | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Additional legs, alternative sense, hooks (stinger), piscine and venomous (females) | |
| SPECIAL | | Silk excretion | |

# Shirr

DESCRIPTION: Shirr are an ancient, bulbous species of Void traders. Easily discernible by their significant bulk, dark grey-brown skin and multiple slit-pupil eyes, the Shirr are a familiar sight across the trading ports of the Cosmos.

Rather than having legs they move about by rhythmic waves from muscles on its underside, producing a very fluid - if somewhat slow - movement pace. Their bulbous arms are covered in light specks, sensory organs enabling them to feel pressure changes acutely and somehow used to aid navigating while traversing the Void.

Their full, round faces are characterised by a large heavy-lipped mouth, multiple eyes of varying sizes and two sets of gills on their cheeks. While they are large, they move with an odd gracefulness, slow, delicate almost hypnotic gestures which seem to have a calming effect on those they interact with.

LIFECYCLE: Precious little about the Shirr lifecycle has ever been divulged to the masses, few even know which homeworld they hail from. This is all a deliberate ploy on their part.
They seem to age differently from most Cosmic species as the same individual has been coming to market for millennia. Whether this is a side-effect caused by extensive exposure to the Void or an inherent quality of the species is anyone's guess.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Shirr thrive best in temperate to tropical environments and tend to avoid harsh climates. Shirr are the epitome of traders, travelling the Cosmos and Void procuring and selling rarities and curiosities from faraway worlds.
They are loosely associated in what can best be described as guilds based on the type of wares and commodities they sell, often serving under a guild master. Their internal hierarchy is complex and comparative rank change depending on circumstances and seems to be influenced by a variety of unidentifiable aspects.

Shirr tend to make wherever they stay a home bursting with colourful exotic furnishings and outlandish decorations, heavy incense and delectable delicacies stacked on platters. Whether it be isolated in a remote trading station or as a collective on a Voidfaring vessel each dwelling becomes distinctly theirs. A Shirr merchant never travels without his entourage, which may comprise dozens of individuals from various species enlisted from around the Cosmos and beyond.



OCCURRENCE: Any souq or bazaar worth visiting has Shirr traders at hand, so of course there are numerous Shirr resident in the Eternal City with established shops or trading offices. Every day scores of Shirr caravans and vessels visit, setting up their gaudy and extravagant pavilions and stalls around the city displaying outlandish exotica for a discerning decadent clientele.

BEHAVIOUR: The Shirr are Cosmic nomads travelling the Void currents in search of the rare and exotic to sell in the trading ports across the core worlds. They are renowned as jovial and affable, but their smiles might hide a darker aspect surfacing if particular subjects are broached.

For instance, where and how the merchandise is acquired is never discussed and undue questioning often leads to refusal of trade.
Similarly, there are rumours of instances where banter has veered towards inquiries of a personal nature, and the Shirr's cheerful attitude has immediately changed suggesting a carefully staged masquerade of pleasantries and platitudes to hide quite a different disposition.

If pushed, certain Shirr may reveal themselves to be secretive to the extent of threatening murder to those looking into their affairs, albeit what they may be hiding is shrouded in obscurity.

*"I am on my way from the canton of Daer Bitaan across the city to Pai'Karaan, tracing the supposed route of the wanderer Harrani. It is said that on his way from one end of the Eternal City to the other he visited a thousand worlds."*

*- Uijuo, Shirr pilgrim*

DIET: Shirr only eat food prepared in elaborate cooking rituals using select INGredients of unknown origin.

STATUS: Generally considered commoners, their ability to procure rare, extravagant and exotic commodities has given the Shirr a prominent position often earning the patronage of high castes, granting privileges beyond their stature. Counter to this, however, they have attracted the attention of the Jinassar who take great interest in their activities.

ENCOUNTERS: Shirr can be encountered anywhere trade is to be found. Sometimes working independently, at others as part of a collective or for a patron.

Shirr are always looking for a deal and go to great lengths for a profit retaining their vivacious persona unless coerced or intruded upon. As noted, a Shirr never travels alone and is always surrounded by its entourage, consisting of retainers, porters, advisers, guards and so on.

As born negotiators with keen awareness and highly developed analytical skills, the Shirr appeal to the greed and desires of those they encounter to get what they want. If pressured a Shirr utilises his entourage to get rid of the offender and only gets personally involved should the situation escalate.

COMBAT: Shirr are not competent warriors. If forced into combat they make use of their brawny physicality and analytical capabilities to either keep opponents at bay until assistance arrives or subdue them as quickly as possible to escape. Lightly armed, Shirr often carry only a customised cane doubling as a mace in case of trouble. Preferred combat actions include disarm, knock down, stun and defensive stance.

## Shirr

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 37 |
| AWARENESS | 7 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 3 |
| STRENGTH | 5 | WEAPON | Mace |
| INTELLECT | 4 | REACH | Adjacent (2) |
| PERSUASION | 6 | ATT MOD | +1 |
| PRESENCE | 4 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | D12+2 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| TALENTS | | Graceful | |
| FLAWS | | - | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Alternative sense and multiple eyes | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [7] | |
| SPECIAL | | Pressure sense, slithering movement and innate Voidfaring. | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Gaudy garb, exotic commodities, mace cane and other eccentric trinkets. | |

# Talath

DESCRIPTION: There are two breeds of Talath, both of them stocky and muscular with the most common kind standing about four and a half cubits high and the other up to seven cubits tall. The skin of the common breed is a brownish red occasionally with sparse patches of fur. Their faces have pronounced cheekbones and massive jaws with wide-set pale eyes providing broad peripheral vision. Their large, furrowed mouths are filled with short pointed teeth giving them a menacing grin. Two small nostrils sit almost centred in the face with little noticeable nose protrusion. Thick locks of hair grow from high on the scalp to the upper back resembling massive manes ranging from black to whitish grey. As Talath age, their skin thickens, and spots of scale-like membranes appear randomly across their body.

Their arms are brawny with exaggerated forearms ending in stubby paddle-like hands with thick conical fingers. Their digitigrade legs are thick, with flat flexible feet and broad wrinkled toes providing great stability as well as momentum.

It is almost impossible to distinguish male from female until they reach old age around forty years where the females develop baggy sacks of flesh covered in wrinkly skin surrounding the face and neck region. Unlike most other species Talath do not decline progressively but retain full stamina and vitality until their body succumbs to age and withers rapidly resulting in death, usually at the age of 60 years.

SUBSPECIES: A rare breed of Talath are significantly bigger than their cousins and have skin of a red-purplish hue. These tend to dominate their smaller kin and hold a natural place of reverence although not necessarily authority in Talath packs.

LIFECYCLE: A female Talath is sexually mature at the age of 14 years and typically gives birth to only one offspring at a time every three to four years. There is no homogeneity in the selection of partners as this depends upon the current social structure of whichever pack they are part of at the time. Newborn Talath are quickly self-sufficient and only rely on their mother for approximately three months. The offspring born roughly at the same time form a litter being brought up by the pack as a whole, not by individual parents. A female Talath will typically give birth to six to seven offspring in a lifetime.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Hailing from a savage world called Aqihabara, Talath are nomadic - gathering in packs, ranging from just a few to several hundred individuals - travelling across the vast steppes and plateaus of the globe. The social customs among the Talath seem rather peculiar, and their hierarchical behavioural patterns are often hard to understand by others, as positions seem to change continuously within a given group. This does provide a somewhat unstable basis for society, which is why Talath tend to associate in smaller tribes and packs rather than larger communities. They are fiercely loyal to their pack and have few qualms about violent conflict with most anyone, including other tribes from their own species.

OCCURRENCE: Talath are well-known across many worlds - particularly for their brutish ways - often acting as enforcers or guards for well-paying aristocracy in need of brawn or as thugs for delinquents. As such they tend to gather and seek employment in large ports and trade-hubs where opportunity is rife, and their skill-sets are in high demand. Llyhn is no exception, and Talath are among the most sought-after sell-swords around ensuring that a high number of Talath individuals and packs have settled, serving as mercenaries or security forces.

BEHAVIOUR: Talath are perceived as brutish and bad-tempered by most other races, and they tend to lack the basic social acumen found amongst most other sentient species. This possibly stems from a tendency to act on impulse rather than contemplation, making interaction with other races a rather delicate matter for any outsider. Talath respect strength and their social customs are very brusque and loutish.
They habitually act threatening or intimidating only to gauge the reaction and appraise if someone is worthy of conversation. They have a reputation for easily laughing and sharing wine with someone yet moments later threatening and waving weapons around at imagined offences, or indeed the other way around. As a redeeming factor, the body-language of Talath is easily discernible, enabling others to diffuse escalating circumstances before they develop.

DIET: A Talath eats whatever it feels like.

## Talath

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 43 |
| AWARENESS | 2 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 5 | MOVE | 7 |
| STRENGTH | 7 | WEAPON | Great weapons |
| INTELLECT | 2 | REACH | Near (4) |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +5 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | +1 |
| WILLPOWER | 3 | DMG | As weapon +5 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 6 |
| TALENTS | | Explosive force | |
| FLAWS | | Primitive and bad temper (both moderate) | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Tough hide and digitigrade legs | |
| SPECIAL | | Innate formation fighting | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Any combination of armour, a great weapon, multiple extra weapons and looted goods. | |

STATUS: Talath seem to occupy a special place in Llyhn society. They are amongst the most priced as guards and personal protection due to their ferocity and fortitude while simultaneously being among the most ostracised due to their lack of understanding or compliance with conventions beyond those of their own species, making them unreliable for any employer at best. The species is generally considered commoner caste, but none dare make this apparent to them, even when they would probably not care nor understand the concept.

ENCOUNTERS: Quick to anger, Talath can often be found brawling in wine dens or anywhere for that matter. They work for high or low in the Eternal City, accepting employment based on respect and whether someone is deemed a worthy employer. In this capacity, Talath can just as easily be adversaries as allies and met almost everywhere except the Penda'Rinn district where they are barred due to their volatile nature and past incidents.

COMBAT: This species is born for warfare and violence. Talath are determined and proficient warriors who - if encountered in packs - are well-organised and utilising surprisingly sound tactics considering their limited intellect. A Talath pack always has a designated alpha member directing the efforts and leading the charge with other pack members having roles such as scouts, defenders, flankers and so on enabling the pack to take advantage of their individual capabilities. Favoured combat manoeuvres include furious charge, All-out attack, called attack, knockdown, block and counter-attack. All Talath innately have the formation-fighting specialisation.



# Timaniém



DESCRIPTION: The Timanièm are a reptilian species from the Sharur trinity worlds. The genders differ vastly in appearance and demeanour; the females being willowy, long-limbed and extremely dexterous are the warriors and providers of the species, while the males, in contrast, are short and plump with flimsy wings propelling them through the dense atmosphere of their homeworlds.

Females stand close to five cubits tall are mottled green-skinned with extremely flexible limbs and three supple digits from hands and feet making them excellent climbers and hunters, perfectly adapted to their arboreal homeworld. Using their litheness, they propel themselves discretely through their jungle environment as natural stealth predators, guided by an innate sense of smell. They have large elongated heads ending in beak-like mouths with mature specimens growing a mane of spike-like protrusions like a crest on their heads and limbs, indicating age and dominance.

Males are far smaller, standing close to only a meter and a half tall and having a distinct chubby physique. Males have a paler green colouration and lack the elongated head and beaklike protrusion of their female counterparts, sporting soft, rounded features. However, while they are not physically imposing, their wings allow them to fly from world to world in the trinity, making them an invaluable resource in Timaniém society.

The species is coldblooded, relying on environmental heat sources to get energy, and therefore generally prefer subtropical and tropical climates. Their sense of sight is highly evolved giving them the ability to see in different spectra, making light conditions and shadows irrelevant to them.

LIFECYCLE: The female Timaniém lay eggs in shallow caves or grottos underground. The males seek these out to fertilise and then carry the eggs to the hatcheries on the sacred globe Xilmat. Eventually, a nondescript larva emerges and makes its way into the thick jungles or marshland to feed and grow for three orbits after which it encases itself in a chrysalis, and after another orbit, a fully developed Timaniém emerges. The gender of the individual is established during the transformation process depending on the temperature, humidity and other conditions surrounding the placement of the chrysalis.

Newly emerged females are collected and then carried by the males to whichever globe they are allotted under the distribution determined during the grand gathering. Male specimens stay on Xilmat until they are ready to take on their responsibilities as hatchling guardians or servants in the female clans.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The Timaniém originate on the Sharur trinity worlds, three savage globes closely orbiting each other and covered mainly by shallow wetlands and dense warm rainforests. Two of the planets are dominated by female-only hunter-gatherer tribes, visited on occasion by male specimens exclusively inhabiting the smallest of the globes, where the hatchery of the entire species is situated.

The females largely dominate Timaniém society and function as providers for the males that take a more subservient role tending the hatchery and functioning as religious caretakers as well as emissaries and intermediaries between the globes. Armour and weaponry of the Timaniém is typically made

from the green obsidian only found on Sharur. The stone is considered sacred, and it is considered sacrilege for any other species to possess or use it. Such incidents lead to immediate confrontation,

OCCURRENCE: Timaniém are generally reluctant to leave their homeworld, but a considerable number of venturesome Timaniém females have established themselves in Llyhn and the surrounding jungles, appreciating the hot and humid climate so like that of their own homeworlds. Some have taken to the urban jungle which otherwise visibly disagrees with most of the species; however, they still prefer sleeping under the open skies rather than inside. Few males have followed suit, being prohibited from leaving Sharur. The Timaniém find the sophisticated ways of the other residents incomprehensible, which - combined with their territorial streak - often leads to violent clashes.

BEHAVIOUR: Females are highly territorial and attack anyone who ventures into their home-area uninvited. Traditionally, female Timaniém serve as hunters and protectors, while males work to help their mates as much as possible, preparing food, necessities and doing menial work.

Timaniém society is matriarchal, with individual clans led by autocratic mistresses, or Ojek, keeping an iron grip on the resources and territory their clan controls, including Beit hides, green obsidian, wood, flint, or ore. Occasionally skirmishes erupt between tribes, but for the most part the Ojek respect the boundaries. All the clans are ruled over by the Hahn Kyr, the Great Huntress, who is selected from amongst thousands of young hopefuls every thirty full orbits.

The reigning Hahn Kyr can choose to compete with all huntresses participating in the Kyryt, the Grand Hunt, where they must go into the subterranean depths of Emix to hunt and kill one of the great core-wyrms, returning with its heart to sacrifice at Emix's altar.
She who returns is deemed the strongest and worthy of carrying the bow of Kyrut, an artefact handed down from Hahn Kyr to Hahn Kyr, signifying rule over the Sharur clans. Once every three full orbits, all the Ojek travel to Jaunja Tor, an old settlement, for a grand gathering, to settle disputes, discuss the distribution of hatchlings and receive proclamations from the Hahn Kyr.

DIET: Timaniém are hunters and gatherers living off the land, so dieting on cultivated foods seems strange and exotic to them.

STATUS: The species tend to be considered among the low castes, not appreciating the concept of ownership nor caring about influence beyond their own species. As they prefer to operate outside the confines of organised society, this does not concern them much, and if they experience maltreatment, they rarely hesitate to display their prowess as warriors against the offender. This wilfulness and aggressive spirit have earned them a reputation as gifted gladiators and terrible slaves.

ENCOUNTERS: Timaniém in the Eternal City often work as scouts, hunters or warriors as other pursuits are deemed somewhat unworthy or even dishonourable among the species. There is little likelihood of encountering one working in another role or doing anything that does not further its own agenda. They are most likely to be found in the souqs, arenas or in gardens across the city. Now and then a posse of Timaniém relentlessly and mercilessly stalk a suspect of stolen green obsidian through the city.

COMBAT: Accomplished warriors, their combat style depends mainly on stealth, adroitness and personal capability rather than any sense of tactical superiority.
Timaniém are known for utilising their environment and nimbleness ability to full advantage, consistently seeking higher ground and attacking with ranged weapons or otherwise from above and out of reach.
In forest environments, they frequently use their prehensile feet to hang upturned raining blows or arrows on their enemies while staying out of reach. Favourite combat actions include calculated strike, dodge, feint, flurry, sneak attack, swift strike and called attacks.
Green obsidian weapons cause minor bleeding wounds and when rolling for damage, roll twice and use the highest result of the two.

### Timaniém

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 6 | HEALTH | 26 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 3 | MOVE | 7 |
| STRENGTH | 4 | WEAPON | Various |
| INTELLECT | 3 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +5 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | +3 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | DMG | As weapon +1 |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TALENTS | Ambidextrous and acute smell |
| FLAWS | Obvious body-language |
| ATTRIBUTES | Alternate vision, cold-blooded, long-limbed, prehensile feet and digitigrade legs. |
| SPECIAL | Climbs at regular speed and inverted movement. |
| EQUIPMENT | Sparse clothing, hunting gear, tribal amulets, long bow, crowbill, dagger and occasional green obsidian weapons. |

# Esoteric Species

## Aml'nãqru

DESCRIPTION: A peculiar species from the gaseous borderworld of Qthael, Aml'nãqru are hive-mind entities; a single consciousness controlling separate bodies. They resemble thick metallic blue eels with purplish appendages and heads as a direct extension of the body.

Aml'Nãqru grow throughout their lifetime, from approximately one cubit long at the natal state to well over 20 cubits when fully mature. When newly hatched, they are sleek and featureless except for three to five small purple protrusions inset in folds of flesh on their forehead. During their long lifetime pairs of flipper-like tentacle-appendages grow at regular intervals along the creature's length as its size increases.
The amount of appendage pairs indicates the maturity of the individual. Aml'nãqru have no sight or hearing, relying on highly developed pressure sensory organs to perceive their surroundings. The species has intrinsic psychic abilities and as they age their mental capabilities become more keen and developed.

LIFECYCLE: Aml'nãqru are born in broods of between two and five individuals connected telepathically. The gender diversification and reproductive patterns of the Aml'Nãqru are unknown.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Native to gaseous Qthael, Aml'nãqru cannot survive outside their natural atmosphere. As they mature their mental capabilities enable them to retain a globule of gas suspended around their bodies allowing them to leave their native environment.
The sphere of liquid gas is easily penetrable, leaving the Aml'nãqru able to access its surroundings unhindered. Aml'nãqru have no discernible society structure, at least not one whose tenets are observed beyond their own world.

OCCURRENCE: Unless forcefully separated, Aml'nãqru broods always remain close to each other. If one Aml'nãqru is encountered, its siblings are surely close by, with a brood typically consisting of 2-5 individuals. The species is known to venture out as soon as broods are mature enough to retain gaseous globules to sustain them outside their own world. They often seek out densely populated areas, having a natural curiosity for sentient species and worlds where solid matter is dominant.

BEHAVIOUR: The Aml'nãqru mentality is peculiar. Their consciousness is highly developed while their mindset is somewhat primitive - they are curious about other sentient species but have little understanding of them. They perceive the world mainly by pressure changes in the surrounding environment, sensing only movement, shapes and sizes.
Noteworthy things are probed with psychic abilities, distinguishing additional qualities such as species and individuals by their cognitive patterns. Aml'nãqru desires and impetus are so disparate from most sentient beings as to remain obscure, but it is evident that they have a profound interest in individuals attuned to or touched by the Void.

Initially inept at interacting with anyone outside their species, the longer a brood stays with other sentient beings, the more adapted to their ways it becomes, enabling it to function within a society.

DIET: Their gas globule contains all the nourishment they need. Aml'nãqru have to return to their homeworld at regular intervals to renew and replenish the gas, which is their only source of sustenance.

ENCOUNTERS: Encountering an Aml'nãqru brood differs substantially depending on at which stage in life it is. A common aspect in any contact is that they have little notion of or interest in the needs of others, and not relying on income or external resources to sustain themselves they have no need to conciliate anyone.

Young broods might show a passing interest in any Void-touched, enlightened or mystic characters and may poke and prod them mentally (using various manifestations), without concern for how this may affect the target. As broods mature, they develop aspirations and purpose, often gathering a following of susceptible or weak-willed devotees to aid whatever desire they are pursuing.

They learn how to use others for their own ends and may make valuable temporary allies if placated or pleased, but there is no loyalty. Their ultimate goals for whatever they do is always shrouded in obscurity, but a common denominator is a raptness with the Mindless Ghostly Abominations.



## Aml'nãqru

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 31* |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Medium* |
| STAMINA | 4* | MOVE | 6 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 4* | WEAPON | Lashing tail |
| INTELLECT | 2* | REACH | Near (4) |
| PERSUASION | 2 | ATT MOD | +2 |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 7 | DMG | D6+1* |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aerial, alternative sense, prehensile tail, soft-bodied and tough skin. | |
| POWERS | | Furore Mysticism [1]* Various spheres | |
| SPECIAL | | Hive mind creature Telepathic communication | |

**For each age category the ability or point is increased by a factor of 1. The size increases half a size category per maturity increase up to Gargantuan size. Health increases as per new Stamina score and size factor.*

COMBAT: The fundamentally primitive mentality of Aml'nãqru makes then inept and visceral if engaged in hostilities. Their first instinct is wonderment, followed by conceit and then fear, should the encounter go adversely. Young broods instinctively act aggressively, employing their considerable mystic capabilities, getting physical only if necessary. Older broods make use of their followers to deal with any threats, supporting them with detached interest unless compelled or pushed to get involved. Aml'nãqru broods have up to three mystical spheres available to them, of which one is always Mind.

AGEING: The stated Trait scores are for the earliest age enabling Aml'nãqru to leave Qthael.
Aml'nãqru can mature up to seven times and as they mature the following advancements occur: Increase Stamina, Strength and Intellect by 1, add an additional Mystic sphere (maximum 3), add +1 to Mysticism, add +1 to sphere rankings and gain one signature phenomenon.
Each maturity tier sees the Aml'nãqru brood increase appendages by three sets, enabling knowledgeable outsiders to judge their age and capabilities somewhat. Should Aml'nãqru ever be removed from their gaseous globule, they suffer D3 damage per round they are outside their environment.

# Anunnaki

DESCRIPTION: The Anunnaki are a group of massive esoteric beings recognised across many worlds yet shrouded in obscurity. Exceedingly powerful, the Anunnaki are considered to be deities by several sentient species including humanity and the Im'Zu.
Generally humanoid in shape but bearing few other similarities, the Anunnaki vary widely in appearance from individual to individual, an ostensibly impossible characteristic for any Cosmic species, indicating origins from beyond the Veil.
Individuals have distinctive attributes such as multiple wings, beaks and eldritch countenance with few common denominators such as their gigantic stature and exuding a substance known as melam. All this gives them an aura of disturbing majesty adding further to the reputation as divine beings.

LIFE-CYCLE: Anunnaki are immortal, and it is unknown if and how they breed although some seem to have familial ties.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Consisting exclusively of individuals with loose alliances and obscure origins there is no indication of any particular Anunnaki society. However, most Anunnaki favour a headdress with up to seven sets of massive overlaid horns, known as the Horned Crowns of Divinity. The number of horns worn signifies the individual's status amongst his or her peers, indicating a manner of internal hierarchy among them.

It is unknown how many Anunnaki exist, but at least seven are said to have been worshipped on Earth before the cataclysm and common myths among humanity, acclaim many more Anunnaki as gods of the Heavens and under the Earth.

OCCURRENCE: Anunnaki are roamers and only reside anywhere for extended periods if it complies with their obscure schemes. Wherever they settle they quickly seize power and suppress contenders.
The Anunnaki have no permanent presence in the Eternal City, and their rare visits tend to be remarkably brief conceivably due to some contention between them and the Unseen Rulers.

BEHAVIOUR: Individual Anunnaki have been known to settle on Cosmic worlds imposing their rule on indigenous civilisations for extended periods, seemingly taking a keen interest in the doings of the lesser species and occasionally assuming the mantle of deity to the population.

The conduct of Anunnaki is enigmatic and erratic, sometimes described as inimical and at other times venerated as generous and using their considerable authority to the benefit of the locals, indicating an esoteric mindset beyond the comprehension of mere mortals.

DIET: Anunnaki do not require sustenance but - as a demonstration of authority - display a voracious appetite when demanding the most excellent possible foodstuffs from their vassals.

ENCOUNTERS: Anunnaki have complex motivations but have been known to approach and engage individuals inciting events of unknown significance for unclear ends, but of seeming substantial importance. The Anunnaki have a habit of occupying seats of power with lesser species, acting through agents and underlings surreptitiously pulling strings imposing their will once dominance is established. Several such species have led rebellions against the Anunnaki, on occasion dethroning the despot.

COMBAT: Anunnaki are formidable and horrifying in combat. Wielding incomparable power and massive weapons with the utmost strategic thinking and accuracy, it seems likely that only another Anunnaki, powerful esoteric being or the Mindless Ghostly Abominations of the Void themselves could pose a threat. They have no preferred combat actions and advantageously utilise whatever is available in their arsenal to defeat adversaries.

ABILITIES: The Melam substance creates a radiance to impose irrepressible veneration in adjacent beings - equivalent to a greater Void halo, except that the Anunnaki can alternate between causing Awe, Fear or Delirium [12]. Anunnaki have ranking 6 in all Mystic spheres and are fully ascended, boasting all Ascension benefits. Anunnaki regenerate 6 Health per round if wounded.

To illustrate the individuality of each Anunnaki Arbiters are encouraged to customize their abilities and powers.

| Anunnaki | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 9 | HEALTH | 87 |
| AWARENESS | 9 | SIZE | Huge |
| STAMINA | 10 | MOVE | 12 |
| STRENGTH | 10 | WEAPON | Spear / axe |
| INTELLECT | 12 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 10 | ATT MOD | +12 |
| PRESENCE | 12 | ATT SPEED | +6 |
| WILLPOWER | 12 | DMG | 2D12+9 |
| | | DV | 13 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 10 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Ageless, giant, large wings, natural immunity and greater regeneration. | |
| POWERS | | All ascension rankings<br>Furore Mysticism [9]<br>All spheres [6] | |
| SPECIAL | | Melam<br>Regeneration [6] | |
| EQUIPMENT | | Horned crown of divinity. | |



# Asura

DESCRIPTION: Asura are multifaced Daimonic beings related to - but often at conflict with - the Devas. Asuras tower over most sentient species, have three faces or heads and possess either four or six arms. They are infamous for their voracious appetite and sensuous inclinations, having little care for anything but their own gratification, endlessly manipulating and using others to achieve their ends.

Often revered as divinities by lesser species, their blatant arrogance and aloofness corresponds well with such status, and they rarely interact with other species than their own other than as masters or if they want something. It is not apparent malignancy that drives them, only an intense sense of entitlement and an ensuing assumption of dominance.

LIFECYCLE: Their lifespan appears to last aeons, and as no Asura children have ever been seen some speculate they are immortal.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: At home on Mount Sumeru in the world known as Traiyastrimza, the Asura are divided into several tribes and factions. A strict but malleable hierarchy dominates Asura society, in the sense that privilege follows rank and title, but status can be seized by the unscrupulous or brutal and the internal echelons shift constantly.

Asura who leave Mount Sumeru tend to seek out lesser or primitive species, establishing themselves as manifested divinities revelling in the worship and lavishly opulent lifestyle provided by their adoring flocks.

OCCURRENCE: Asura are rare but can be found as domineering despots on Cosmic worlds. Once an Asura has established itself as sovereign of a city or settlement it stays until the local resources are so drained that its desired lifestyle cannot be maintained, the natives rebel or another powerful entity dethrones it.

BEHAVIOUR: The deep sense of entitlement regulates and dominates most aspects of Asura behaviour. They do not act out of cruelty or malice but do consider the needs of others insignificant in comparison to their own.
When among their kin this brings about jealousy, anger and occasional violence as egos clash and confrontations of dominance erupt. Their entitlement is founded on cravings for sensuality, gluttony and wealth.

DIET: Anything and everything luxurious and exorbitantly expensive.

ENCOUNTERS: There are several Asuras holding court in the Eternal City where they tend to stay away from the aristocracy to avoid competition.
Asura are also likely to be encountered on Cosmic worlds inhabited by primitive or unenlightened species, where their esoteric appearance and abilities are most effective in garnering the adoration and worship they crave.

The Asura customarily blatantly disregard people they consider harmless or do not want something from. However, if they do want something, they can be most persuasive or ingratiating in attempting to lure it away from its proprietor.



If endangered or offended Asura are quick to anger and will immediately seek to quash the affronting party. Disinclined to putting themselves in danger, they always utilise any underlings or susceptible protectors to handle a threat. Asura are very susceptible to temptation and can be baited as their passions get the better of them.

COMBAT: If driven into personal combat the Asura use their impressive arsenal of abilities to destroy their opponent, preferably at range.
Asura have ranking 6 in the mystic spheres of Matter, Mind and Void and will use this extensively in combat to keep adversaries at bay as well as to incapacitate, debilitate or destroy them.

Should an Asura become embroiled in close combat, it wields short blades in its four or six arms with the utmost efficiency. It counts as having two combat skill specialisations. Preferred combat manoeuvres comprise called attack, flurry, swift strike and parry.

Asura blades are made from peculiar metals found only on Traiyastrimza. They have the following properties: Wave, shard and tempered blades inducing +1 to parry, roll twice for damage and chose highest and gain +1 to exceptional hit effects.

ABILITIES: In addition to being enlightened ranking 10 Asura have regenerative capabilities, regaining D3 Health every combat round and re-growing lost limbs in D3 days.

### Asura

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 4 | HEALTH | 58 |
| AWARENESS | 8 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 7 | MOVE | 9 |
| STRENGTH | 9 | WEAPON | Short swords |
| INTELLECT | 9 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 8 | ATT MOD | Varies* |
| PRESENCE | 9 | ATT SPEED | +1 |
| WILLPOWER | 6 | DMG | D6+6 |
| | | DV | 7 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 7 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aerial, ageless, Daimonic discord, multiple faces, additional arms and regeneration. | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [10]<br>Furore Mysticism [6]<br>Sphere of Matter [6]<br>Sphere of Mind [6]<br>Sphere of Void [6] | |
| SPECIAL | | Regeneration [3] | |

**Accumulated modifiers to multiple attacks are +8/+8/+5/+2/-1/-4*

## Deva

DESCRIPTION: Devas and Devis are Daimonic entities related to but in contention with the Asura. Deva tend to have an affinity with natural elements such as wind, water and so on and are considered nature deities by some cultures because of this.

Sometimes referred to as exalted or shining ones, these beings enjoy veneration across multiple worlds as principled and righteous gurus to lesser species. Devas have many aspects, generally appearing to others in whichever guise they deem most pleasing and familiar.

Associated with wisdom, oracular capabilities and compassion, Devas sometimes struggle with desires and emotions they consider unworthy as such glorious beings, resorting to abstention and meditation to retain their purity.

LIFE-CYCLE: Similar to their Asura cousins, Deva are immortal and have no discernible lifecycle.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Devas are from beyond the Cosmos and are equally comfortable in any environment or setting. They perceive each other as equal and seem to avert any limiting societal construct, in stark contrast to the Asura.

Devas are free and only constrained by their internal struggles against their own perceived debasement of higher ideals and integrities. It is rumoured that Asura and Deva are the same breed, but that the Asura gave into the debased desires that the Deva seek to resist.

OCCURRENCE: Devas are rare and tend to prefer quiet hermit-life or surrounded by a small gathering of disciples to hectic urban settings.
They can appear on Cosmic worlds as well as beyond the Veil with equal ease but seem to be inclined towards wandering the Cosmic worlds in pursuit of equilibrium and retainment of their purer selves.
Devas are disposed to aid and abet those in need and often take the form of gurus or oracles to those who seek them out for their insight.

BEHAVIOUR: Devas and Devis are ascended beings seeking higher wisdom and a principled way of life.
They assume ascetic tenets and doctrines to reinforce this undertaking. Not only seeking self-knowledge, inner peace and harmony they unreservedly share their wisdom, unfolding teachings to their disciples in an attempt to encourage the ignorant to better ways.
Deva with instability in their sentiments are gloomy, withdrawn and best avoided due to sudden bursts of supressed inner rage.

DIET: Deva do not require external sustenance but will dine on fruit and other foodstuffs deemed unobjectionable if bidden.



ENCOUNTERS: Deva are most likely to be encountered meditating or teaching and otherwise imparting their wisdom to fawning disciples in a remote wilderness far from civilisation. Devas are not averse to crowds or masses of people; they simply prefer the quiet life of reflection and deliberation offered in the wild. Unless actively threatened or goaded, Devas will react with mildly bemused forbearance towards newcomers. If treated with deference and respect the Deva is only happy to impart wisdom and guidance to visitors. If provoked a Deva tries to resist the anger and temptation to reciprocate, using its innate powers to discourage offenders and withdrawing from the situation. Deva who have given into debased desires have no such qualms and eagerly resort to violence, quickly regressing towards becoming Asura.

COMBAT: Aggravated Devas are atrocious adversaries, engaging their entire esoteric capability to devastate and destroy. Changing into a hateful form the Deva plays on the fears of its foes while battering them with Mystic manifestations causing weakness, harm and impairment from afar. If engaged in close combat Devas fly into a rage pounding and striking furiously at the upstart daring to issue a challenge. Devas may use any weaponry, counting as having two specialisations in the chosen weapon and have no preferred manoeuvres. A defeated Deva will flee using its Void powers while a victorious one will seek to cleanse itself of its anger and indignation.

ABILITIES: All Devas are enlightened ranking 12 and have a Mysticism ranking of 6 in Forces, Life and Void. Any calamity incurred is ignored and counts as an ordinary failure. Devas that fall to debased cravings and desires become Asura.

## Deva

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 8 | HEALTH | 48 |
| AWARENESS | 9 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 7 | MOVE | 9 |
| STRENGTH | 7 | WEAPON | Various |
| INTELLECT | 9 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 7 | ATT MOD | +9 |
| PRESENCE | 8 | ATT SPEED | +5 |
| WILLPOWER | 8 | DMG | As weapon +4 |
| | | DV | 12 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Ageless, Daimonic aspect, Daimonic whispers, night vision, and quick healer. | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [12]<br>Furore Mysticism [6]<br>Sphere of Forces [6]<br>Sphere of Life [6]<br>Sphere of Void [6] | |
| SPECIAL | | Ignore calamities. | |

# Djann



DESCRIPTION: Shape-shifting and gifted with extraordinary powers, the Djann (singular, Djinn) are an esoteric species well-known to humans as they roamed Earth before its fall. Sometimes worshipped and at other times abhorred, Djann command respect and fear among the lesser species of the Cosmos - liable to their tendency to meddle in the lives of Cosmic species, causing mischief or indeed torment if offended.

On Earth, Djann were often associated with scorching winds, and several had distinct animalistic features, such as a Djinn named Pazazu known to have a leonine head, horns, a massive beard, two pairs of wings, a barbed tail and sharpened teeth.
As shape-shifters, however, Djann assume many forms depending on their purpose and preference. Some are aerial and able to ride on the wind as dust devils while others can disappear, their presence only revealed by a peculiar sound, a low faint humming or murmur which can be heard whenever Djann are near.

Even with their extraordinary capabilities, Djann have worries and weaknesses as they are known to fear wolves and have an extreme dislike for salt and iron. Neither is more dangerous to them than to others, but their aversion means that they avoid contact with these substances if possible.

SUBSPECIES: There are several known subspecies of Djann of which the Ghul are the most recognised. Other subspecies include the Utukku as well as the giant Marid and Ifrit.

LIFE-CYCLE: Djann have exceedingly long lifespans but are - contrary to widespread belief - not immortal. Djann children are cognisant and independent from a very early age. Djann can mate with humans and several other species although they often do this in the guise of that particular species, leaving their partner ignorant of the fact.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Djann originate from Mount Qaf, a mountainous border world with changing features. Due to its shifting properties, Mount Qaf is sometimes a single immense emerald or peridot peak and at other times a vast mountain range whose summits give a greenish tint to the skies above.
The species dwells on the slopes along with the 'Anqa birds who have retreated to these remote peaks for a life of seclusion.
Mount Qaf is divided into kingdoms and provinces of which adventurous Voidfarers know Shad-u-kam and renowned Ahermanabad, ruled by the monarch Arzshenk. Outside of Qaf, Djann prefer to live in desolate places, wastelands and anywhere dark, dank and deep.

OCCURRENCE: While most Djann tend to congregate in remote and abandoned places, some prefer urban environments where they can satiate their lust for spying and prying. In cities and other civilised places Djann are mostly found individually or in smaller - sometimes family - groups whereas as large contingents or tribes may be encountered in the wilds. To all appearances, there are few Djann in Llyhn, but with their propensity for disguises and shapeshifting, this is in all likelihood intentionally misleading.

BEHAVIOUR: Djann demeanour is impulsive and driven by emotions, which oftentimes mirror human sentiments like love, anger, pity and envy. An inclination towards the dramatic seems prevalent, making interaction with other species precarious at times. Perhaps this is why they have strict - if curious laws - governing their conduct. Notably, they have no qualms about imposing their laws on other species, should they deem that events warrant it, and individuals have been known to be dragged off to a tribunal for supposed offences.
Djann are curious and strangely drawn to other sentient species; spying, meddling and interjecting themselves into their affairs when encountered. Djann speak many languages and dialects but have no spoken language of their own as they communicate among themselves via thought transference.

DIET: Most Djinn eat anything except for particular fruits including the citron and rue - which they abhor - while some subspecies have specific preferences, for instance, Ghuls that are only satiated by the flesh of sentient beings.

ENCOUNTERS: Djann incline to occupy abandoned or lost cities and fortresses, watching over the ruins and whatever troves, treasures and artefacts are left behind. Some Djann - most often Marid and Ifrit - are known to possess or otherwise manipulate people, acting and speaking through them and even afflicting them with mental or physical ailments. Sometimes such incidences are motivated by mischief or simple amusement, and occasionally they are retaliation for perceived offences or stem from pure maliciousness.

## Djann

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 26 |
| AWARENESS | 6 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 6 / 12 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 4 | WEAPON | Various |
| INTELLECT | 4 | REACH | As weapon |
| PERSUASION | 5 | ATT MOD | +5 |
| PRESENCE | 7 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | Weapon +1 |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aerial, night vision and possession (multiple arms, fangs and claws) | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [4], lesser changeling and aura [Awe/Fear]. | |
| SPECIAL | | Invisibility and touch of the Djinn. | |

Sometimes Djann like to take over or "haunt" a building or site, driving the previous inhabitants away if they can. The motive for such hauntings is usually unclear to anyone but the involved Djinn but may become apparent if he or she is opposed or sought driven away. Djann have been known to abduct people as penance for a loss, for matrimony, due to fascination and occasionally for inexplicable reasons. Djann are known to assume animal forms and may well be encountered in this guise.

Djann are equally revered and feared by most Cosmic species that have encountered them. The few Djann that have made the Eternal City their home are generally venerated and rank amongst the aristocracy; considered Ma'Alu and Sarru castes.

COMBAT: Djann are fearsome and capable opponents. However, their impetuous nature works against them as they act upon instinct in the heat of combat rather than looking for a tactical advantage. Djann are inept at coordinated fighting and attack relentlessly unless severely threatened.
Although Djann have multiple abilities and powers at their disposal, they rarely exploit these once engaged as their instincts take over clouding their better judgement with fury. Favoured combat manoeuvres include furious charge, all-out attack, crushing blow and wild swing.

ABILITIES: As an alternative to an attack a Djinn may utilise "the touch of the Djinn" causing a temporary loss of D3 Willpower score to the target, enabling the Djinn to more easily seduce or sway the victim.
The effect lasts for D6 hours, cannot cumulate and only involves that specific Djinn. In the case of Ifrit and Marid, a touch causes a Willpower roll vs the Djinn's Presence - if failed the character loses a Sanity point.

Djann are lesser changelings that can retain the change indefinitely, become airborne dust-devils (aerial) or turn invisible for up to half an hour at a time. Djann have a Daimonic aura; equalling lesser Void halo but causing either Awe or Fear [6].
Some Djann have additional limbs and other outlandish attributes, and some are mystics. All Djann are enlightenment ranking 4 or higher, while Ifrit and Marid have the giant Attribute.

Some Djann can possess other beings, speak through them and direct their behaviour. Possession is only possible when the potential victim is mentally vulnerable, i.e. has just failed a Fear test or lost a Sanity point. In this case, a nearby Djinn can attempt to possess the person by making an opposed Willpower roll.
Should the Djinn succeed, it enters the body of the victim but cannot control it yet. Once the Fear or Madness effect wears off another opposed Willpower roll is made and if successful the Djinn may act through the dupe.
To retain the possession new rolls are required every subsequent day. Exorcism rituals - Mysticism or Blood rituals enhancing the Willpower score - may grant bonus modifiers to the victim's roll.

# Ghuls

DESCRIPTION: Ghuls (female, Ghulah) are a particularly notorious subspecies of Djann, their disrepute founded on the circumstance that they feast on the flesh of sentient species. Ghuls are shapeshifters that vary in appearance, so their true form is known only to themselves. Ghuls tend to resemble hairy and filthy humans with brass-coloured fangs or tusks, while some sprout tails or horns others have lower halves resembling goats, sheep or hyenas.

Ghuls are known to be particularly sensitive to the smell of human flesh, but why this smell appeals to them is unknown. Ghuls are masters of deception, disguising themselves to lure prey to their death by taking the shape of beautiful women or men. Ghuls have a reputation for fornication with various species, showing up subsequently to either claim or hand over the offspring of their joining. While such children may appear ordinary, their Ghulish inclinations eventually become apparent.

LIFECYCLE: Like all Djann, Ghuls have remarkably long lifespans. Ghuls and Ghulahs can mate with humans and quite a few other species although - due to their shapeshifting abilities - they always do this in the semblance of that species, leaving their lover unwitting.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Ghuls generally retain solitary lives in remote, harsh environments and deserted places, such as abandoned fortresses, ruined temples or deep in the wastelands. Among arid mountains and empty deserts, the hulking, slavering Ghuls make their home, lurking and lying in wait for unsuspecting travellers to pass by. Ghuls have no real society, generally disassociating themselves from other Ghuls except for spouses, family and tribal allies.

OCCURRENCE: Ghuls habitually shun all civilisation, preferring the scorched wild places of the Cosmos. It is unlikely to encounter a Ghul within a settlement unless desperation or recklessness has driven it. They tend to congregate around ancient ruins and such locations that draw explorers who they can kidnap or eat. Rumours of travellers stumbling upon attractive strangers in the middle of the night is almost certainly a sign of Ghuls in the area.

BEHAVIOUR: Ghuls are treacherous, conniving, lustful, gluttonous, greedy, and bloodthirsty, but strangely they respond to kindness, politeness and presents to the point of being dissuaded or disarmed by such conduct in potential victims.

Regardless of their aims, Ghuls are stalking predators - following and observing their intended prey to learn of their behaviour and weaknesses. Once a Ghul commits its bearing changes depending on its intentions, displaying many facets. The Ghul can act the trickster, taking the shape of a peddler or lost soul to lead travellers to their deaths. It can become alluring and carnal taking the form of a stunning specimen of its victim's species to lure him or her to its bed, or it may transform into a frightening beast to maul and devour victims on the spot.

DIET: They can survive on carrion but prefer the flesh of humans or other sentient beings.



ENCOUNTERS: Very few encounters with Ghuls are accidental, and most occur at the Ghuls' behest. If a Ghul is encountered, it is very likely that its true nature is not evident and that it has taken a shape befitting its intended goal.

The three primary reasons for a Ghul to confront anyone is fornication, hunger or sport. If breeding is the goal, the Ghul or Ghulah always takes a shape it believes is arousing to its designated prey and may resort to either seduction or threats to achieve its ambition. Ghuls approach hunger satiation in various ways including ambushes, tricks and ensnarement. When Ghuls make sport it tends to display their most cruel and depraved aspects - making their victim aware that they are being hunted purely for entertainment, arrogantly taunting and demeaning any attempt at resistance and so on.

COMBAT: Ghuls are frightening adversaries, with their most beastly virtues coming to the fore as they seek to rend opponents limb from limb in an orgy of carnage. Even more than their cultured cousins, they are incapable of coordinated fighting and, once committed, attack in a savage frenzy.

Overcome with bloodthirst the Ghul becomes numb to pain and suffers no penalties from injuries and immune to any psychological effects. Preferred combat manoeuvres comprise furious charge, all-out attack, crushing blow and wild swing. Occasionally Ghuls take the shape of a fearsome variety of the animal they associate with - typically hyenas - and utilise this form for the duration of the struggle.

ABILITIES: Ghuls are lesser changelings, like their Djann cousins, but are unable to turn invisible or become dust-devils. They can use the "touch of the Djinn" ability. All Ghuls are enlightenment ranking 2 or higher and have a Daimonic aura causing Fear[6].

### Ghul

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 32 |
| AWARENESS | 6 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 8 |
| STRENGTH | 6 | WEAPON | Claws and fangs |
| INTELLECT | 3 | REACH | Touch (0) |
| PERSUASION | 6 | ATT MOD | +6 / +4 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | D6+3/D4+3 |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Claws, fangs/huge tusks and fur (horns, tail, digitigrade legs) | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [2], lesser changeling and aura [Fear]. | |
| SPECIAL | | Touch of the Djinn. | |

## Lamassu

DESCRIPTION: Lamassu are a Daimonic species venerated as divinities by humanity. Resembling imposing winged bulls with solicitous bearded faces framed by massive horns, they are often considered protective spirits - an inference made credible by their apparently compassionate nature. Occasionally wearing the horned crowns of divinity similar to those worn by the Anunnaki, the relationship between the two is somewhat unclear. Lamassu speak in great bellowing voices and are resilient to the contorting effects of the Void.

LIFE-CYCLE: Lamassu are immortals born fully formed. They have no life-cycle, and the demise of even one is a tragedy mourned deeply by them all.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Although Lamassu can cope with any climate and environment they appear mostly in hot regions and have an affinity for people belonging to such areas. Lamassu do not have an internal societal structure, preferring to roam the worlds. Although not averse to other Lamassu, they favour the company of lesser species they can cultivate and aid. It is clear from human statues, idols and iconography that several Lamassu frequented Earth before the fall.

OCCURRENCE: Lamassu are rare and with no known homeworld are very difficult to seek out. Occasionally they visit the Eternal City and seem to have sympathy for the plight of humanity, albeit their unconventional ways make it difficult to be sure.

BEHAVIOUR: In contrast to their imposing stature and demeanour, Lamassu tend towards kindness, though their esoteric nature and eccentricities make their reasoning and behaviour alien to most. They are very sociable and can be found conversing with the strangest of creatures in the oddest places. They are amiable but proud, and an angry Lamassu is a tremendous adversary.

DIET: Lamassu are herbivores, feeding purely on a plant-based diet.

ENCOUNTERS: Lamassu can be encountered mostly in urban or settled areas, interacting with the natives. The species reacts with openness and interest to approach and retains this behaviour unless provoked or otherwise agitated. Lamassu will try to incapacitate or hinder aggressors, using their mystic prowess of matter and life to disrupt or halt advancing foes, while appealing that violence is not likely to end well for either party. Should an opponent insist and engage in combat, the Lamassu quickly becomes enraged and engages fervidly in melee.

Lamassu do not meddle but habitually act kindly and are prone to offer aid if asked. Their esoteric mentalities, however, do not necessarily appreciate the needs or capabilities of lesser species sometimes causing disconcertion rather than support. If anyone could know about what has happened to Earth, the Lamassu - as archaic creatures known to have been present before the fall - would be good candidates.

COMBAT: An enraged Lamassu is relentless in its assault. Using its size and wings to gain advantage, it will quickly dispose of weak opponents to focus on more powerful ones without distractions. The Lamassu are a stable if not graceful flyers, using their bulkiness and weight to ram opponents whether in the air or on the ground.

Once committed to the violent course the Lamassu usually charge headlong into the fray or take to the air utilising their aerial capabilities to the utmost. Preferred attacks include furious charge, trample and swooping attacks. Lamassu can attack with their horns or crushing hooves, sometimes rearing up and pommelling opponents. A Lamassu charging and using its horns to ram an opponent causes 2D12+5 damage and knockdown. Against medium or smaller opponents, a Lamassu can rear up using its significant weight to stomp causing a successful hoof attack to induce double damage.

ABILITIES: In addition to rankings in the Matter and Life spheres of mysticism Lamassu are ascended and have an aura causing Awe [10]. Lamassu are undaunted and have a +3 modifier to resist any mental effects from Awe, Delirium or Fear.

## Lamassu

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 69 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 9 | MOVE | 8 |
| STRENGTH | 8 | WEAPON | Horns / hooves |
| INTELLECT | 9 | REACH | Touch (0) |
| PERSUASION | 8 | ATT MOD | +5 / +7 |
| PRESENCE | 9 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 9 | DMG | D12+5 / 2D6+3 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 6 |
| TALENTS | | Unyielding and inspiring. | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Ageless, four short legs, large horns, natural immunity, regeneration and hooves. | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [10]<br>Gnostic Mysticism [6]<br>Sphere of Matter [6]<br>Sphere of Life [6]<br>Aura (Awe) [10] | |
| SPECIAL | | Undaunted, ramming and stomping. | |



# Variin

DESCRIPTION: Variin are an esoteric species of uncertain origins. Unlike other species, the physiology of each Variin is distinct. While most individuals have a generally humanoid form, they all have varying physical features in terms of limbs, appendages and even basic anatomy.
There are three features, however, which are similar in all of them, namely their light turquoise skin, tentacle manes and five glowing green eyes.
Some individuals have changeling and chameleon abilities, and these are commonly revered as the true children of Mitu'Usemi'Ti, a numinous entity whom the whole species venerate as the mother of their breed.

Variin were once famed as transcendent dreamers, philosophers and poets of immense talent and ability. Both Chaos and Cosmos were theirs to roam, and no boundaries could restrain their bodies, thoughts or dreams.
But the great dreams of the Variin have been extinct for aeons. None but they know what caused this change, and the species acts as if keeping some terrible secret which they dare not share with anyone, perpetuating the speculation that there is a hidden agenda or terrible truth behind the façade.

LIFECYCLE: There are three genders of Variin, and their reproduction cycle must involve all three to be fruitful.
The females produce eggs, which are then fertilised by the drones and finally conveyed to the womb of a matriarch who carries them until birth.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: At home both in water and air, Variin take to both elements with equal ease.
Through the aeons, the species has settled on the mainly aquatic world of Vaesna, but this is commonly believed to be merely a residence for them, not their homeworld. Variin are predominantly loners or live in closely-knit swarms that function much like extended families.
They have no societal order or structure and tend to be very individualistic in their approach to life. Surprisingly, Variin have a reputation of being libertine even outside their species, and due to their sensualist behaviour, they are fabled as amorous lovers.

OCCURRENCE: Variin are known to reside in areas of Llyhn close to the Margidda river, particularly the Penda'Rinn district where the waters are untainted.
Some believe that the waterways here are somehow reminiscent of the currents of Vaesna or the Void - where the Variin are said to come from - which would explain the fondness that the species has for this area.

BEHAVIOUR: There seems an inherent duality between the intensely present physical libertine tendencies and secluded transcendent dreaming tendencies of the species. Sometimes they delightedly interact with sentient species roving like playful if somewhat naughty children, while at other times they are detached as if their attention is drawn outside the visible world and into revelations beyond the Cosmos.

They are known for somewhat obscure utterances and have been suspected of oracular qualities, especially given their history. But the Variin are not a species that willingly reveal much, and very few non-Variin have any understanding about what goes on behind their glowing green eyes.

Due to their mystical knowledge of the Void the Variin would make excellent Void navigators, but they decline any offer to serve as guides for others, for reasons only known to them.
Some believe that Variin can see ever-present traces of Void piercing the Cosmos and identify the creatures which dwell therein by their true names and call them cousins, but this seems more like gossip than founded knowledge.

DIET: It is unknown what nourishes the Variin.

ENCOUNTERS: Though rare, Variin can be found in almost any non-arid environment. The Variin who frequent Llyhn have somewhat adapted to city life, although they remain on the outside of the societal hierarchy.
Variin are very immediate individuals, acting on whims and emotions to an almost comical degree, yet with a sense of reticent melancholy. Variin can be equally obliging, passionate or vicious depending on their mood, but always retain a detached distance from those with whom they interact.

COMBAT: Variin do not often engage in hostilities, but when they do, they are notorious for fighting dirty, utilising any and every advantage they can to thrash adversaries.

Taking advantage of their underwater and aerial capabilities, drowning or falling are frequently the cause of death for those who rile the Variin, and they can get abhorrently cruel in their retaliation should an opponent warrant it.

Preferred tactics include using the environment to their advantage and shape-shifting to enable Attribute weaponry such as large claws while favoured manoeuvres comprise swooping attacks, disarming, grabbing and ranged attacks using improvised weaponry.



## Variin

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 7 | HEALTH | 23 |
| AWARENESS | 9 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 3 | MOVE | 9 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 5 | WEAPON | Unarmed |
| INTELLECT | 7 | REACH | Touch (0) |
| PERSUASION | 7 | ATT MOD | +6 |
| PRESENCE | 6 | ATT SPEED | +4 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | Varies +2 |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| TALENTS | | Charmer | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aerial, piscine, tentacles, Void entity[3] and any*. | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [1-6] (Lesser-greater changeling) | |
| SPECIAL | | Ignore Void distortion and mucus excretion. | |

**Variin naturally have varying physical Attributes as determined by the Arbiter. Changeling Variin can manifest Attributes in accordance with the power.*

ABILITIES: While most Variin have lesser to greater Void Changeling capabilities, all have an innate affinity for the Void. They can feel the chaotically pulsating and fluctuating currents inside the Void as well as any instability in the equilibrium between Cosmos and Void.

Variin know well the frighteningly alien vibrancy emanating from the Void and the Ghostly Abominations which inhabit the chaotic wastes within the oblivion, but they do not share the same fear of these things as most others, mortal and immortal alike.

Variin are naturally immune to the contorting influence of extended Void exposure and never undergo any distortion as a result of this. Every Variin has D6 chosen or randomly determined Enlightenment ascension benefits. Variin can excrete a mucus enabling others to breathe in otherwise unbreathable substances for extended periods.

# Beasts

## Adaru

DESCRIPTION: Lithe, agile and stealthy, the Adaru are apex predators from the jungles of Llyhn. Their long slender limbs and torso with a streamlined head and elongated snout are built for speed and manoeuvrability in the thick jungle undergrowth.
Four eyes set in the front of the skull gives excellent depth perception as well as keen sight in dark environments. A mane of bristly spikes covers its upper shoulders and long neck, providing protecting during territorial fights. Rows of canine teeth are always exposed as there are no noticeable lips to cover them.
Dark, matte skin with vaguely marked lighter patterns make Adaru blend perfectly into the shadowy foliage of the undergrowth. Their clawed feet are adapted to giving grip for acceleration and grabbing prey while attacking with its deadly jaws. A bushy tail ending in bristly spikes help the Adaru keep its balance during chases and when perching on high branches preparing to pounce on prey.

LIFE-CYCLE: Adaru cubs are born up to three individuals together. They are aware and active almost from birth, displaying hunting behaviour after only a few days and reach sexual maturity after two years.
At this time males leave the pack while females either stay or strike out to form a new pack on their own. Adarus are expected to live up to 60 Llyhn seasons.

HABITAT: The deep dark jungles of Llyhn and surrounding foothills are the only known natural habitat of Adaru.

OCCURRENCE: Adaru are elusive and hard to spot in the wild. They are highly prized as hunting or trophy animals by the aristocracy and royalty across the core worlds.

BEHAVIOUR: An aggressive predator known for hunting in packs and using ambush tactics to great advantage, Adaru packs typically comprise up to seven individuals led by an alpha female, followed by several sisters or daughters and one or two males for breeding. If one Adaru is spotted there is a very high likelihood that more are around. Adaru are semi-intelligent and can be trained, but never fully domesticated.

DIET: The Adaru are carnivores feeding on most land-based animals, and they do not shy away from hunting lone or weakened sentient species. Adaru have been known to scavenge should circumstances dictate.

ENCOUNTERS: Adaru are not likely to get spotted accidentally, and the best chance to meet one is to lure them out or find oneself hunted by them.
When hunting in packs, the Adaru are known to take turns chasing, conserving their energy while tiring the prey as they are built for short bursts of speed and do not have the endurance to maintain long chases.
Being very territorial Adaru have attacked people stumbling into their area.



## Adaru

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 21 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 3 | MOVE | 10 |
| STRENGTH | 5 | WEAPON | Fangs / claws |
| INTELLECT | 1 | REACH | Close (1) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D6+3/D4+2 |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| TALENTS | | Acute vision | |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Small claws, fangs, fur, multiple eyes and tail. | |
| SPECIAL | | Can utilise feint and sneak attacks. | |

COMBAT: Adaru are ambush predators, lying in wait hiding until the opportune moment. If solitary, the Adaru uses its speed and rapid acceleration to reach its prey quickly and bite once within striking distance. When hunting as a pack, they have been known to utilise growls and shrieks sounding suspiciously like distressed animals or children to lure curious prey close, and then the remaining pack surrounds and pounces on the misled prey.
Occasionally an individual reveals itself, but by then it is already too late, and the pack has the victim surrounded. Adaru are adroitly capable of taking down large prey by using cooperation, stealth and surprise tactics to cause disorientation to exploiting weaknesses and employ flanking and rear attacks. Adaru can use sneak attacks and feint as one distracts with a simulated attack opening an opportunity for another pack member to strike.

## Aigioma

DESCRIPTION: The Aigioma is a terrifying beast, standing over six cubits tall with massive proportions. Its large forward claws are its primary method of movement as it knuckles around with its powerful forearms.
The Aigioma is covered in a thick leathery brown hide, and along its back and head are thick white chitinous bone plates. The plates extend over the head encasing it in two large sweeping plates ending in horns and a large serrated foldable jaw-like protrusion curling under the chin.
The Aigioma have no eyes, but use their tremendously sensitive tongues and two flailing appendages growing from its haunches to perceive its surroundings.
Smell and pressure-perception mean that it can ignore light conditions but is distracted by strong scents and wind-direction if above ground.
While it can smell up to 200 metres away it cannot perceive movement more than 20 metres away. The appendages and several smaller sensory tendrils that appear from gaps within the torso plates allow the beast to detect motion through any non-solid material, meaning that it is nearly impossible to sneak up on an Aigioma.
The creatures may seem awkward and cumbersome when moving about, but they can display substantial stealth when trying to avoid discovery.

It is said that the Aigioma were bred as war beasts by an entity known as the Bhan, in a perpetually dark border domain called Shahm Tar.
Bhan intended to seed its power throughout the Cosmos, but the ploy supposedly failed, leaving the beasts scattered across multiple worlds causing havoc wherever they went. Bred for battle, the Aigioma have a significant arsenal of natural weaponry.
Large front claws that can pierce armour and an extended lower jaw that can snap out and easily rip through flesh. Small barnacle-like growths across its body release a pheromone into the air that disorients prey or attackers. Aigioma show some signs of cognisance and can be trained by masters able to communicate with them.

LIFE-CYCLE: Aigioma are born in pods of five to six that are weaned by two years, after which they live solitary lives, although they sometimes gather in larger numbers.
When an Aigioma dies, it finds a deep subterranean lake and sinks to the bottom, its bone plates calcifying and growing to cover the carcass.

HABITAT: Aigioma live mainly underground, primarily surfacing to hunt. The species build nests that lie at the centre of tunnel networks meticulously dug and expanded throughout their lifespan.

OCCURRENCE: The Aigioma are scattered across the Cosmos but have been extensively hunted as they pose a severe threat to any nearby settlements. Only rarely are they found on a core or other settled world, yet sometimes an intrepid Voidfarer attempts to capture one to bring to market to sell as a trophy, for the arenas or a curiosity in a menagerie.

BEHAVIOUR: Aigioma are extremely territorial and naturally aggressive. Anyone entering their territory is likely to be attacked as soon as the beast becomes aware of their presence. Mystics with telepathic abilities can mentally communicate with and convey commands to the creatures, training them to obedience if obtained from an early age.

DIET: Aigioma are predators, eating primarily fish, reptiles, amphibians, large cavern rodents or anyone unfortunate enough to venture into their territory.

ENCOUNTERS: While Aigioma are naturally aggressive and habitually react with hostility, they are not mindless predators. Bred for war but reverted to a natural state, the Aigioma are ordinarily at a loss about how to deal with other living things



other than perceiving them as a threat or potential food. If encountered they assess the situation, often making false charges to evaluate whether those encountered stand their ground and pose a genuine threat or flee and should be considered prey. If the beast senses an actual threat, it takes precautionary measures using intimidating postures and its pheromones to unnerve opponents before charging. Aigioma have been known to stalk prey extensively before striking.

COMBAT: Aigioma are brutal adversaries that, once committed to battle, do not back off. If given a chance Aigioma furiously charge and trample targeted opponents. The charge count as a knockdown action with a +1 modifier and causes D6 points of damage for each size difference between the two but suffers a -3 penalty to its Defence Value. If the knockdown is a success, the Aigioma continues until a knockdown fails or there are no more standing opponents. When fighting, it releases a pheromone causing adjacent opponents to suffer Delirium lasting D3 rounds if they fail a Sta [7] roll. If the encounter occurs underground, the range is increased to near range because the pheromones are contained. The Aigioma itself is naturally immune to the pheromones.

Once engaged in combat an Aigioma uses its large front claws to rend and tear at opponents. Aigioma claw attacks are piercing [2] and have the knockdown property against opponents smaller than itself. Once an opponent has been knocked prone, it performs an unmodified grappling attack with its whipping jaw. If successful a limb is pinned and the Aigioma begins crushing the bones with its powerful bite causing 2D6+2 automatic damage each subsequent round and an opposed Strength roll must be successfully made, or the victim suffers an immediate crippling injury. With its limited ability to accurately detect faraway targets, hunters have found that using ranged attacks from multiple directions and relying on wind or strong scent can confound the Aigioma. Controlled specimens can be directed telepathically, making up for this weakness.

### Aigioma

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 42 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 5 | MOVE | 8 |
| STRENGTH | 7 | WEAPON | Claws / jaws |
| INTELLECT | 1 | REACH | Close (1) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +6 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 6 | DMG | D12+4 [2] / 2D6+2 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 6 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Thick hide, chitinous plates, fangs, large claws and sensory tendrils. | |
| SPECIAL | | Pheromones and whipping jaw. | |

# Barast

DESCRIPTION: Barast are large, carnivorous, larvae-like creatures. Their elongated bodies are covered in a thick teal-hued membrane, with purple eyes running down their length. Due to their unique physical properties, Barast are equally comfortable on land, burrowing and in water, making them extremely versatile predators. They can unfold a multitude of tentacles to move like millipedes, making the massive creatures surprisingly quick and agile in almost any environment. A third of the creature's length has a semi-transparent finlike extension allowing them to glide efficiently through water much like an eel, but also acts as a cover or a lure in thick vegetation or when underwater.
The eyes are protected by thick membranes similar to their skin, and between the first five sets of tentacles, several mouths are hidden in dark red folds of flesh. Their many eyes allow them to see in all directions, making them extremely capable predators and difficult to sneak up on. Their front tentacles sting and paralyse what they touch allowing the Barast to feast while their victim is still alive. Mature specimens can spit acidic saliva up to ten metres, which blinds and burns victims on impact rendering them vulnerable as the Barast move in for the kill.

LIFE-CYCLE: Barast lay clutches of eggs in riverbanks and lakeshores. The newly hatched brood scuttle into the nearby water living off smaller marine life such as crustaceans until big enough to hunt larger and faster prey. As the Barast reach two cubits in length, they begin to burrow into the riverbanks or venture into the surrounding vegetation looking for prey to satiate them. At about six cubits in length, they start to procreate. Barast are known to reach upwards of eighteen cubits in length, but rarely more than that as finding sufficient prey to sustain such a large body requires a vast territory.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Barast live solely in temperate to tropical climates. They require heavy vegetation around their waterways or other bodies of water and lose soil rather than rocky ground is preferable. As a species, Barast have no partiality towards water, land or burrowing and most shift between them seasonally following where prey is easiest to locate. Barast tend to form small hunting packs of three to five individuals until they reach eight cubits in length, then they separate as the group advantage is lost due to rivalry over prey.

OCCURRENCE: Barast or exceedingly similar creatures can be found across several worlds with temperate to tropical climates and abundant waterways to sustain their lifecycle. They may differ in colouration or prevalent size, but their physiology and predatory behaviour is indistinguishable.

SUB-SPECIES/RACES (IF ANY): While there are minor differences between Barast found on various worlds primarily in colouration there is little other distinction.

BEHAVIOUR: Barast are voracious predators that rarely let the opportunity for a feed pass them by. They are known for stalking prey biding their time and striking at the opportune moment. The approach differs depending on which habitat they live in. In waterways and lakes, they swim close to the surface without making a ripple and once close enough launch themselves out of the water by a powerful flick of their tail either upending a boat or directly unto their quarry, dragging them into the water. Some Barast burrow and lie in wait in hidden tunnels close to animal trails or waterholes. Once prey is close enough, the Barast explodes from its hiding place and spits its saliva at the eyes of the victim hoping to blind it. On land, most Barast either hide in the undergrowth or among low-hanging foliage, ready to strike. Occasionally they use their tail as a lure rustling



leaves or twigs drawing the attention of their prey while they prepare to strike from the side.
When going in for the kill, the Barast rears up making erratic strikes with its stinging and paralysing front tentacles to cripple the quarry, after which it is eaten alive or dead.

DIET: Barast eat only live or freshly killed prey.

ENCOUNTERS: Barast can be found within any of its habitats holding sufficient food source for it to survive, including the jungles of Llyhn. Giant specimens require a regular supply of substantial prey, or will seek other hunting grounds. Barast over eight cubits long do not abide their kin in their territory unless it is a potential mate. They are not afraid of anything and do not shy away from attacking sentient species, particularly those travelling alone. Barast are territorial and if met with resistance a feral instinct makes them exceedingly aggressive rather than cautious. This causes them to fight to the death or hunt assailants for days should an aggressor try to flee.

COMBAT: A Barast always uses surprise if at all possible. Unless in water a Barast initiating an attack always spits its saliva (called attack) against the eyes of its prey up to ten metres away (no range modifiers apply). The saliva is acidic causing D4 damage, temporary blindness until washed away with liquid and a fear roll [7] as being painful.
The acid is effective for D6 rounds, and if left for more than three rounds the victim must make a Stamina roll [7] each round or lose the sight on one eye each remaining round.
If assailants keep out of reach, the Barast uses its saliva spitting attack to cause harm rather than blinding. If attacking from the water, the Barast tries to knock its prey into the water by plunging into it directly or the vessel if it is small enough. Treat this as a knockdown attack with the applicable size and Strength modifier.
When in close quarters a Barast makes one erratic attack per round by bursting forward striking with its front tentacles. A tentacle hit causes D6 damage, and the victim must make a Sta roll [7] or the struck body part (roll randomly) is paralysed by the stinging tentacle.

### Barast

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 72 |
| AWARENESS | 6 | SIZE | Huge |
| STAMINA | 7 | MOVE | 5 / 8 (swim) |
| STRENGTH | 8 | WEAPON | Tentacles/spitting |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Near (2) / Range |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +4 / +5 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +1 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D6 / D4 acidic |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 6 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Multiple legs, multiple eyes, stinger tentacles and tough hide. | |
| SPECIAL | | Stinging/paralysing tentacles, acid spitting and peripheral vision. | |

# Beakboa

DESCRIPTION: Beakboas are constrictor snakes with sharp beaks and manes of flowing blue frills. Found in and around the jungles of Llyhn these serpents tend to reside in the low-hanging foliage ready to drop down on unsuspecting victims. Once the Beakboa strikes, it uses its sharp beak to peck and hack at eyes and faces, blinding and disorienting while coiling its strong body to constrict and choke the victim to death.
Partly due to the Beakboas' intricately patterned scales and impressive frill plumage they have become favourite attractions used by snake charmers across the city. Sensitive to pressure and soundwaves, the snakes "dance" as the charmer plays a special flute-horn emitting a low drone which entrances the snake, causing it to sway to the notes.
Certain sounds - such as those emitted by sonic rocks - can practically paralyse Beakboas if they are adjacent and are used by charmers to capture the snakes in the wild.

LIFE-CYCLE: Beakboas give birth to a litter of twenty to thirty live young of up to one cubit in length. While most do not make it to maturity as soon as the snakes reach over four cubits the number of natural enemies diminish significantly. Beakboa are known to live up to thirty cycles.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Living exclusively in densely vegetated, hot and humid habitats, Beakboas are a native species to the jungles surrounding Llyhn.
Rumours that some core worlds have a population originating from escaped menagerie specimens are unconfirmed. Beakboas prefer to dwell in dense low-hanging foliage where they can remain undetected while sensing and easily striking at prey. Once the snake has fed, it will retreat back into the relative safety of the trees.

OCCURRENCE: As Beakboas tend to dwell close to watering holes and animal paths to increase the chances of finding prey animals, this is where they are most likely to be encountered. Hiding among the branches of trees they are only found on the ground while feeding, meaning that they are not likely stumbled upon.

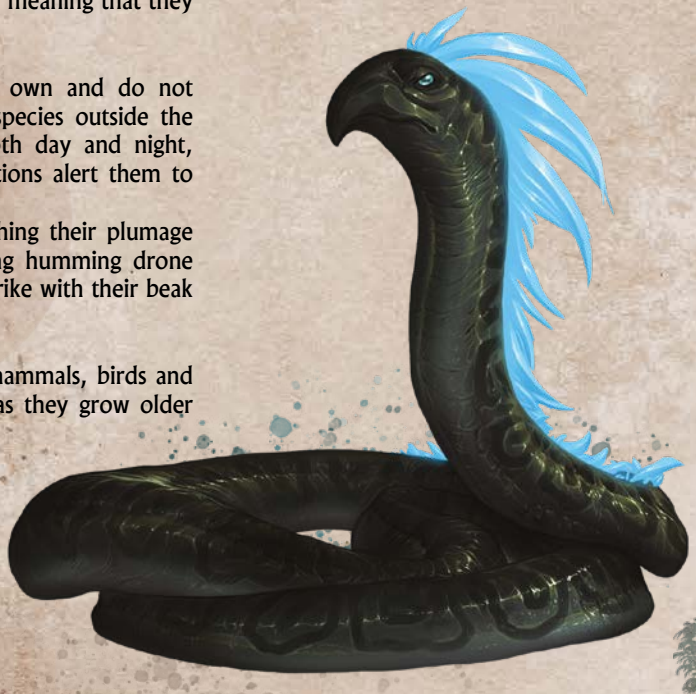
BEHAVIOUR: Beakboas live on their own and do not interact with other members of their species outside the mating period. They can be active both day and night, generally slumbering until nearby vibrations alert them to the presence of potential prey.
If threatened Beakboas rear up brandishing their plumage to appear bigger, producing a menacing humming drone from their throat and perch, ready to strike with their beak should the threat not retreat.

DIET: Prey includes small to medium mammals, birds and reptiles. The size of the prey increase as they grow older and larger.

| Beakboa | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 21 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 3 |
| STRENGTH | 3 | WEAPON | Beak / grappling |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Close (0) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +3 / 0 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +2 / -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D4+1 / special |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Beak and prehensile tail | |
| SPECIAL | | Grappling, pinning and suffocation. | |

ENCOUNTERS: Beakboas are generally only encountered if they mistake someone for prey or if they are happened upon while feeding on the ground. If mature the snake assumes a threatening posture attempting to intimidate the approaching threat, and if young the snake is more likely to retreat into the undergrowth.

COMBAT: When attacking perceived prey, the boa drops unto its target from the branches above making a surprise knockdown attack. After its initial attack, the snake simultaneously makes called attack against the face of the prey with its beak while making grappling attacks with its prehensile body and tail.
Once it has pinned its victim the pecking and hacking beak attacks are made at +3 to hit, and it begins choking its victim, following the suffocation rules while the grappling is retained. If the Beakboa is encountered while on the ground it utilises only its beak attack unless the opponent falls prone when it can use its grappling attack.



# Bruotu



DESCRIPTION: Bruotu is the name attributed to the former Azenter who now roam the wilds of Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz as beasts. No longer cognisant in any sense of the word, Bruotu are terrifying to behold. Massive in size, their skulls are warped into something out of nightmares with maws of gnarled teeth, numerous eyes and long fleshy tentacles sprouting from their heads. The arms and bodies replaced by a protuberant physique supported by misshapen legs and encased in a thick chitinous exoskeleton. Bruotu have lost all sense of themselves, who and what they were. They are only driven by bestial urges to kill, eat and survive.

LIFE-CYCLE: As regressed Azenter, Bruotu have no life-cycle and cannot reproduce.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Bruotu are native to Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz where they roam the wild marshes and bogs in constant search for sustenance. They have no sense of community and react aggressively if they encounter their own kind.

OCCURRENCE: Bruotu appear across Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz but are generally uncommon. The exception to this is the area surrounding the city of Omuera, where they are abundant. If they become aware of the city, they approach in search of easy pickings but are usually driven off. Unbeknown to the Azenter, smugglers and slavers sporadically catch Bruotu, transporting them to other worlds, where they always prove unmanageable and either escape or are killed.

BEHAVIOUR: Bruotu behave like senseless beasts driven only by hunger and survival. With no social or reproductive instincts, their sole motivation is killing and feeding.

DIET: Bruotu can eat anything but are carnivorous by preference.

ENCOUNTERS: Bruotu generally have no intelligence left and cannot be reasoned with as their primal instincts are limited to forage, fight and flight. They see sentient beings as a threat or potential food source and attack unless faced with overwhelming numbers.

COMBAT: Primitive and bestial, the Bruotu do not employ guile or strategy but simply charge any perceived threat or prey, relentlessly and instinctively striking with their massive pincers. Employed actions include standard attack, all-out attack, grappling attacks and wild swing if facing multiple opponents. Bruotu either use their pincers as clubs, clobbering opponents with the massive weight or grab, pin and crush limbs. A clobbering attack causes D12+4 damage while a grappling attack is made at a -2 penalty causing 2D6+4 damage, pinning a limb and prompting a crippling injury on an exceptional hit. If an opponent is pinned the Bruotu can use its second pincer to attack with a +3 modifier and the victim counts as hampered and unable to use the pinned limb.

## Bruotu

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 47 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 6 | MOVE | 8 |
| STRENGTH | 7 | WEAPON | Pincers |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Adjacent (2) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +5 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D12+4/2D6+4 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 5 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Exoskeleton, multiple eyes, multiple legs and pincers. | |
| SPECIAL | | Pinned attack. | |

# Itaena gnat

DESCRIPTION: The Itaena gnat is a blueish bug about one cubit long with three long legs tipped with prehensile fleshy lumps and three tendrils protruding from the abdomen enabling the creature to taste the air for prey. Its body is covered in a thick, leathery, brown hide that tapers into a short, pointed snout brimming with needle-like teeth.
The Itaena's eyes are tiny for its size, yet provide keen vision which enables it to see in different fields of light. Three short, rigid and translucent wings grow from each side of the body, allowing it to fly somewhat awkwardly for limited amounts of time while giving off a distinctive hum.

LIFE-CYCLE: Itaena gnats are born in broods of upwards to fifty larvae or more. They have no evident gender and mature within four days of hatching.
Itaenas have an average lifespan of six to seven months and before death self-inseminate before expiring, leaving larvae to gestate and draw nourishment from its remains. After roughly a week, the larvae hatch from the husk of their parent, joining the swarm.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Itaena gnats can thrive in most climates or biomes except arctic habitats. They are territorial roamers, meaning that they remain in and defend an area for a while until the available food sources become scarce, after which they move on.
Swarms usually number anywhere from ten to hundreds of individuals and settle in temporary hives or grottos within the territory they currently reside in.

OCCURRENCE: Itaena gnats are considered pests and seen across the Cosmos as an annoyance due to their ravenous appetite. They are common on several worlds, with no known place of origin or preferred habitat.
Itaena swarms tend to be most active at night or in the early hours of the morning, where there is the best chance of spotting them.

BEHAVIOUR: Itaena gnats are driven by simple needs such as feeding and reproducing. Ordinarily, Itaena gnats only hunt animals of smaller size than themselves. However, farmers have been known to accidentally walk through an Itaena hive without realising it, getting attacked as a result. Itaena gnats are incredibly protective of their hives and should anyone or anything get too close, the swarm protects its home ferociously.
Usually, Itaena gnats avoid foreign swarms, keeping to their own territory and away from other Itaenas. Should a foreign swarm ever contest a claimed area, it is all-out conflict until one swarm or the other is destroyed.

DIET: Itaena gnats are both hunters and scavengers, feeding on small- to medium-sized animals or carcasses they come across. Feeding Itaena swarms are known to completely strip the meat and organs from the bones, leaving the skeletons picked clean.

ENCOUNTERS: The Itaena gnat is ordinarily no threat to creatures larger than themselves, as these are not regular prey. However, if agitated or their hive threatened, the Itaena can be very dangerous, gathering in swarms and attacking in waves using their natural arsenal to eliminate the threat. Occasionally starving or roaming swarms have been known to attack large creatures or people they come across. Itaenas are deterred and can be kept at bay by fire.



COMBAT: When hunting and if agitated the Itaena swarm attacks by diving from above, striking with their lumpy legs much like a weighted whip causing D3+1 damage.
The Itaena attack is confusing and overwhelming as multiple gnats dive in and swoop out simultaneously striking at the target, enabling them to employ the "Swarming attack" manoeuvre.
Once the prey or target is prone or incapacitated, the gnats land latching on with their prehensile lumps excreting mildly acidic saliva from their mouths helping them to dissolve the soft tissue which they then consume.

## Itaena gnat

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 4 |
| AWARENESS | 2 | SIZE | Little |
| STAMINA | 1 | MOVE | 2 / 8 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 2 | WEAPON | Whipping tendrils |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Adjacent (1) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | 0 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D3+1 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Acidic saliva, night vision and prehensile legs. | |
| SPECIAL | | Swarm and acidic saliva. | |

# Mardkhora

DESCRIPTION: The Mardkhora are horrific monsters standing between three to four cubits tall at the shoulder and cursorily resembling emaciated sinewy lions.
Their faces, however, are those of hideous savage men or apes, with three rows of serrated teeth filling bulky jaws and thick manes augmented by vicious black spikes. In places, their skin is fluted like overlying plates, and they have massive leathery tails, the end of which is covered in hefty barbs that the Mardkhora can dislodge to hurl at quarry. The older they become, the more barbs grow on their tail, clearly designating whether a specimen is young or old.

LIFE-CYCLE: Mardkhora are typically born in groups of three called ravages, and after a short weaning period, the Mardkhora are entirely independent of their mothers.
They tend to remain within a few days trek of their birthplace yet seek out their own cave and hideout distantly from other juvenile Mardkhora caves. For most of their lives, Mardkhora remain isolated and alone.
At about ten years male Mardkhora seek out females for mating, then leave the female Mardkhora to raise the pups on her own. Mardkhora are known to reach several hundred years of age.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Mardkhora prefer temperate to tropical climates, rolling plains and craggy mountains - places where they can easily ambush their prey by utilising rock-formations and undulating terrain as cover.
Mardkhora tend to be solitary and rarely interact with others of their species. However, there are two exceptions: Large-scale disturbances within a territory tends to attract all Mardkhora from the surrounding area, coming together to prey upon the agitators. Every now and again an unusually large Mardkhora will gather others to him or her and establish a pride hunting as a group and retaining a large territory.

OCCURRENCE: Mardkhora are known to exist on several worlds around the Cosmos and tend to stay away from settled areas and civilisation. The beasts can be spotted roaming their territory or more likely stalking prey. Ravenous predators, there is no prey that Mardkhora do not hunt.
They distinguish clearly between prey and others - typically sentient beings - and they have been known to hunt the latter for sport, honing their abilities or perhaps because they feel threatened. Mardkhora are always dangerous, and they do not suffer any incursion into their territory. Myths from Earth mention hideous beasts of similar appearance and disposition.

SUB-SPECIES: The Mardkhora seem to adapt and change not only to the world they inhabit but even to the continent or region. This fact means that Mardkhora can vary significantly in behaviour, appearance and physical attributes, depending on where they are encountered.
Most commonly Mardkhora are born with barbed tails while some subspecies have developed massive, armoured stingers exuding poison instead and other subspecies' teeth have lengthened becoming almost needle-like or sabre-teeth.



BEHAVIOUR: Mardkhora are cunning hunters with vicious tendencies indicative of developed cognisance. They are highly territorial and know their domain exceedingly well, utilising the landscape shrewdly when stalking and hunting.
When they have selected a target they deem challenging, they often spend significant time luring and chasing it into unfavourable surroundings, giving themselves an advantageous position before striking.
Mardkhora are not averse to targeting sentient and armoured opponents, seemingly having an understanding of how to cope with advanced foes.

DIET: Mardkhora prefer raw flesh from freshly killed prey and only scavenge carcasses if forced by extreme necessity. They tend to crush, consume and digest all parts of prey animals, including bones, chitin and such, leaving only indigestible items and very little trace of their passing or remains for scavengers.

ENCOUNTERS: Mardkhora are extremely aggressive and hunt almost anything. They possess an odd feral intellect allowing them to adapt and learn as well as remember specific individuals. This enables them to adopt behaviour and tactics in their hunting strategies, depending on their prey and past experiences. Mardkhora are voracious and are most likely to be encountered in areas with plentiful prey animals as they otherwise would have found a more bountiful territory.
Mardkhora often stalk prey and sometimes make feigned and preliminary assaults to judge its prey's strength, after which it retreats biding its time for an opportune moment.
Occasionally caravans traversing Mardkhora territory are harried for several days until they - wearisome from sleep deprivation and paranoia - are overwhelmed as the beast finally goes in for the kill.

COMBAT: Mardkhora are tactical beasts; analysing their opponent, looking for weaknesses and vulnerable individuals before committing. Depending on the adversary the beast utilises a variety of tactics and will dependably attempt to take out easy targets first while diverting heavily armoured until later.

Tail attack: A Mardkhora with barbed tail makes sure to have an advantageous position then flicks its tail releasing D3 barbs with +3 attack modifier against susceptible unarmoured target first.
Barbs count as size 2 thrown weapons with ranges: short 30m | medium 60m | long 90m causing D6+1 damage.

Mardkhora with poisonous stingers usually employ this in a swooping attack - preferably striking at armoured opponents - and then retreat to wait for the poison to take effect.
Stinger attacks are made at +3 attack modifier at near-range opponents. If a hit is scored it causes D12+5 damage and the target must make a Stamina roll [10] or be affected by the poison. The Poison begins to take effect within D6 minutes after which the dupe feels dazed (see delirium) lasting for 2D12 minutes.

Once ready to commit, a Mardkhora charges forward seeking to trample targets while emitting a growling roar inducing fright, causing anyone within 15 metres to make a Willpower roll [7] or suffer from Fear [1-6].
Once in close combat the Mardkhora either slashes with both paws (two claw attacks without penalty) causing D6+5 damage with each or attempts to bite its opponent. The Mardkhora has an infamous bite which, due to its triple row of teeth, cause D12+3 damage and functions as a shard blade - roll twice for damage and pick the highest.
Mardkhora typically employ the following manoeuvres: All-out attack, standard attack, thrown attack, swooping attack, trample and wild swing.



## Mardkhora

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 48 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 5 | MOVE | 17 |
| STRENGTH | 8 | WEAPON | Claws/fangs/tail |
| INTELLECT | 1 | REACH | 2 / 0 / Special* |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +6 / +6 / +3 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 4 | DMG | D6+5/D12+3/* |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 4 |

| | |
|---|---|
| ATTRIBUTES | Claws, fangs, fur, scales, barbs/ stinger, spiked mane and plates. |
| SPECIAL | Fear, thrown barbs and poison stinger |

**See tail attack for details.*

# Pincerwig

DESCRIPTION: Pincerwigs are a species of large burrowing arthropods. Reaching up to four cubits in length, they have pale, elongated segmented exoskeletons providing substantial protection while retaining high flexibility. Pincerwigs scuttle on six multi-segmented legs with barbed ends and are able to traverse most terrain and climb sheer surfaces with ease.
The last abdominal segment extends into a pair of heavy pincers. These pincers, used to capture prey, for defence and for displays, are what give the creature its name. Because of the flexibility of the segments, the pincers can be thrust forward past the head striking at targets in front of the Pincerwig.
As additional armaments the Pincerwig has two club-like forelimbs acting as hammers, snapping forward with a loud crack and striking targets with immense force. Two multifaceted eyes mounted on short mobile stalks provide excellent vision even in low-light conditions, while four antennae enable the Pincerwig to navigate in the complete darkness of their underground tunnel dens.

As they grow Pincerwigs moult, leaving their discarded shells in the den to feed newly hatched nymphs. While the shed carapace loses most of its sturdiness and strength, it can still be used to fabricate light but fairly durable armour. Segments taken from a slain Pincerwig retain their strength and durability and can be crafted into robust armour. Pincerwig eggs are a delicacy in Llyhn and dens are sought for and raided at notable risk to obtain the luxurious fare.

LIFE-CYCLE: Pincerwigs lay eggs that quickly hatch, producing a nymph feeding on the moult shells left in the den. The nymphs quickly begin to moult themselves and will go through up to eight incomplete metamorphoses before reaching maturity and their final size. There is no discernible outer difference between male and female specimens.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Pincerwigs form colonies of up to thirty individuals that dig intricate underground dens while scavenging and hunting on the surface. They live mainly in lush sub-tropical and tropical environments,m though some smaller variants have been observed in temperate climates. Pincerwig share responsibilities within the colony, changing tasks as needed. All females produce eggs stored in the hatchery to be fertilised by the male members of the colony and tended by all. Pincerwigs are very protective of their eggs and nymphs, readily giving their life to protect a den from invaders.

OCCURRENCE: While Pincerwigs are fairly common in lush areas - jungles for instance - where food is abundant, they only emerge from their dens after nightfall to scavenge. The species shun areas close to settlements or where large animals roam to avoid unnecessary threats. Their communal habits mean that if one is spotted there are sure to be more around.

BEHAVIOUR: Pincerwig are nocturnal scavengers, albeit some have developed omnivorous or predatory habits. They will venture long distances to find food, travelling in single-file to reach their scavenging or hunting grounds. Colony members are coordinated, working in connectivity and if threatened excrete pheromones alerting others to the danger, sending them scurrying to aid. Pincerwig have few natural enemies and therefore tend to ignore other wildlife unless hunting or directly affected by surrounding activities.

DIET: Mostly feeding on decaying plant and animal matter, the predatory specimens tend to target large slow creatures as they are unable to pursue prey at any significant speed.



ENCOUNTERS: Pincerwig are only likely to be encountered above ground in lush or densely forested regions, and only at night as they remain in their burrows during the day. If accosted or agitated the Pincerwig signal their kin for aid and act with immediate and unrelenting aggression until the threat is ended. Some Pincerwigs are used in gladiatorial arenas or held captive for their carapaces to be harvested, but when distressed they ooze pheromones calling others of their kind from vast distances making long-term captivity unfeasible. Pincerwigs do not breed in captivity either, making the only means to acquire the eggs raiding nests in their dens. All attempts to domesticate and train the species have so far failed, and the only means to subjugate them is through mysticism or other esoteric means.

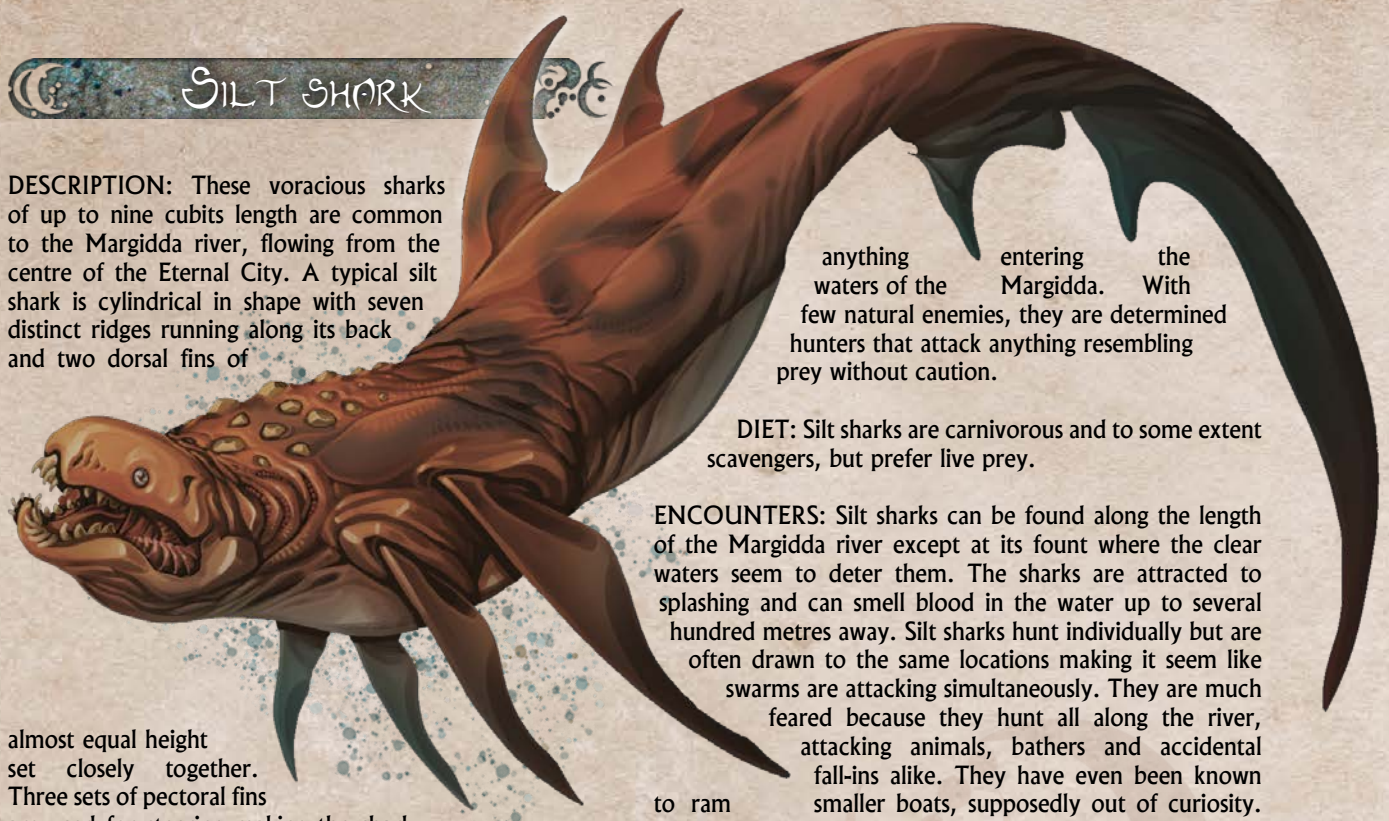
COMBAT: Practically made for struggle, the thick carapace and formidable arsenal of natural weaponry make clashes hazardous. An agitated Pincerwig raises its pincers above its body in a threatening display enabling it to utilise the "Receive charge" manoeuvre should an agitator decide to engage. Within D6 rounds of a Pincerwig taking a defensive position, other nearby Pincerwigs will have received the pheromone signal and converge on the location.
Pincerwigs use their pincers as their primary weapon, striking at opponents in any direction dealing D12+3 damage. In addition to any other effects, an exceptional hit counts as grappling allowing the Pincerwig a +3 to a subsequent claw hammer attack while the opponent is pinned.

Pincerwig forelimbs function like braced springs, released and unfolding swiftly to bludgeoning the target causing 2D6+6 damage. The blinding quickness also causes a sonic crack hitting the target as an aftershock, requiring a Stamina roll [7] or stunning the target for D3 rounds. Each claw takes D12 rounds to reset, so each can typically only be used once in combat. Although not attacking in a coordinated fashion as such Pincerwigs will circle and attack opponents from multiple sides if possible.

## Pincerwig

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 4 | HEALTH | 36 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 5 | MOVE | 4 |
| STRENGTH | 6 | WEAPON | Pincer / hammer |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Adjacent (1) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +4 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D12+3/2D6+6 |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 5 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Additional legs, additional sense, chitinous skin, night vision and pincers. | |
| SPECIAL | | Quick reflexes. | |

# Silt shark



DESCRIPTION: These voracious sharks of up to nine cubits length are common to the Margidda river, flowing from the centre of the Eternal City. A typical silt shark is cylindrical in shape with seven distinct ridges running along its back and two dorsal fins of almost equal height set closely together. Three sets of pectoral fins are used for steering making the shark an extremely agile swimmer. The caudal fin is nearly half as long as the rest of its body, with a barely developed lower lobe and a long notched upper lobe. The head is broadly rounded with a short snout slightly wider than its mouth. The mouth is long, broad with the front teeth pointing inwards perfectly adapted for catching and holding prey, while the side teeth are serrated and curved for rending and cutting flesh. The eyes are minute and often cloudy; fitting for reduced visibility in turbid and murky river water. The skin of the silt shark is rough and patterned in different shades of brown, making it blend in with the bottom of the river quite easily; giving it its name.

LIFE-CYCLE: Silt sharks lay eggs on the river bottom, that gestate for a season until the fully developed young emerge from the shell. While it is supposed that silt sharks reach their full size and sexual maturity after four seasons, it is unknown how old they can become.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Silt sharks are fresh-water river sharks that generally tend to stay in the deeper muddy waters of the river but occasionally venture into the shallows if an opportunity for a meal is too tempting, such as during bathing rituals practised by many pilgrims in the Sacred Basins. Silt sharks are solitary, but due to the sheer number of sharks in the river, this is not clearly evident.

OCCURRENCE: Found only in the Margidda river, these sharks are plentiful with few natural enemies. Some sentient species catch and eat them, but most agree that their flesh is bitter and sinewy.

BEHAVIOUR: Feeding on fish and other small aquatic creatures the first several seasons of their lives, fully grown silt sharks have been known to strike at anything entering the waters of the Margidda. With few natural enemies, they are determined hunters that attack anything resembling prey without caution.

DIET: Silt sharks are carnivorous and to some extent scavengers, but prefer live prey.

ENCOUNTERS: Silt sharks can be found along the length of the Margidda river except at its fount where the clear waters seem to deter them. The sharks are attracted to splashing and can smell blood in the water up to several hundred metres away. Silt sharks hunt individually but are often drawn to the same locations making it seem like swarms are attacking simultaneously. They are much feared because they hunt all along the river, attacking animals, bathers and accidental fall-ins alike. They have even been known to ram smaller boats, supposedly out of curiosity. Should someone fall in the water and splash about it attracts D3 sharks from the surrounding water within 3D6 rounds.

COMBAT: Silt sharks habitually use sneak attack, striking from the muddy depths at high speed, grabbing victims and dragging them to deeper water if along the shore. A lurking silt shark gets +3 to its surprise roll because of its camouflage and the murky water. If in shallow water the initial attack as a grappling attempt, which if successful allows the shark to pull the prey between eight and sixteen metres into deeper water after which it releases the prey. Subsequent attacks are swooping attacks meant to cause injury and weaken the victim until it can be eaten. The splashing from a silt shark attack often attracts other sharks, potentially creating a feeding frenzy. Hurt sharks will abandon a hunt and retreat into the depths.

## Silt shark

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 35 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 5 | MOVE | 8 (swimming) |
| STRENGTH | 7 | WEAPON | Jaws |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Close (0) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D6* |
| | | DV | 6 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aquatic (piscine) and fangs | |
| SPECIAL | | Surprise and drowning (suffocation). | |

**Silt shark bites count as minor bleeding wounds.*

# Sloq

DESCRIPTION: A Sloq is a large ambush predator with a flattened body, well-suited for blending into rocky surfaces. The skin of the Sloq has adaptive pigment, so when it lies flat on the ground, its flabby body resembles a large rock or a lumpy, uneven mound. Receptive tendrils on its underside enable it to detect faint tremors in the ground from moving creatures. Potential prey within range is seized by two of its six long limbs each ending in a flat paddle with several pincer-like protrusions. The Sloq rears up and brings incapacitated prey to a mouth usually hidden in folds of flesh. Two stalked eyeballs give the creature limited and notoriously poor sight. Around the rim of its body numerous small claw-like protrusions act as legs allowing the Sloq to move easily - if remarkably slowly - over most surfaces.

LIFE-CYCLE: Sloq are born from clutches of eggs. They are able to forage from hatching and quickly scatter to find a spot from which to hunt. In their early years, they feed on bugs, small rodents and the like, while later they take much larger prey.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Many Sloq prefer to dwell in dark rocky environments such as caves, caverns and underground complexes with access to prey. Others have adapted to temperate and even tropical outside life preferring forested, crevasse or boulder areas where their camouflage gives them better chances of ambushing prey.

They have no form of social bond and only come together for mating, often competing and tussling over territory. Although Sloq are large, their dormant sedentary existence allows them to conserve energy and feed irregularly without issue.

OCCURRENCE: Strangely enough variants of Sloq are known to exist on a vast swathe of worlds, likely because underground habitats tend to be similar regardless of surface conditions.
Sloq tend to inhabit areas where sizeable prey appears at a regular basis providing possibilities to hunt, often close to cavemouths and such places. In habitats suitable for Sloq they are reasonably common, and travellers may come across several in a day. They are difficult to spot before it is too late, to the detriment of many.

BEHAVIOUR: Sloq are sedentary ambush predators waiting for prey to come within range, after which they strike. They lie flat on rocky surfaces, blending in perfectly with the surroundings until the opportune moment.

DIET: Sloq feed exclusively on flesh, which it often consumes alive and digest slowly over a lengthy period.

ENCOUNTERS: Sloq can be encountered in the wild in any habitat suiting their needs. Relying on ground vibrations they are unable to distinguish sentient and non-sentient prey and will ambush anything substantial enough to provide a satisfying meal.



Sloq are sometimes captured and used in gladiatorial arenas and other places where ravenous ambush predators might have a purpose. Sloq are slow and do not pursue prey they do not manage to grapple. If harassed or struck it rears up flailing its six limbs to clobber or grapple assailants.

COMBAT: Sloq use two simultaneous aimed sneak attacks from ambush - conferring an additional +3 to hit modifier - using two frontal limbs, striking at unwitting targets up to four metres away.
These attacks each cause ordinary damage and have the knockdown effect unless both hit, in which case they act as a grappling attack. A pinned target counts as prone. The Sloq pummels pinned but struggling targets with two additional limbs per round gaining a +3 to hit. Once incapacitated the Sloq attempts to swallow the target whole.

Should the Sloq not manage to pin a target with its sneak attack it flails its limbs randomly hoping to hit the target. Without relying on its sensitive tendrils, its poor eyesight makes it strike more or less blindly.
Each round the Sloq makes D6 randomly allocated attacks striking anyone within reach. If an attack hits, any remaining attacks are all aimed at the same target and should two attacks be successful it acts as a grappling attack and ensues as noted above.

### Sloq

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 1 | HEALTH | 49 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 6 | MOVE | 2 |
| STRENGTH | 5 | WEAPON | Tentacles |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Near (4) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +1 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +3 (flailing) |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D12+2 |
| | | DV | 4 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 2 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Adaptive pigmentation, tentacle limbs, tremor sense and diminutive legs. | |
| SPECIAL | | Aim, grapple, knockdown and flailing attacks. | |



## Sludge rat

DESCRIPTION: These nasty rodents are about the size of a dog. They have flattened scaly tails usually covered in knobs and warts extending about as long as half of their body size.

Covered in rough brown fur with patches of dark scales across the body they have a muddled look excellent for camouflage in their natural environment. Their front limbs are short flat and paddlelike with weird lumpy paws comprising several talons used for grabbing and crawling. Their hind legs are strong with semi-webbed feet used for both running and swimming.
Their heads are square and broad with conspicuous incisors, long rough whiskers set in extensive upper lips and they have small, white beady eyes. The two protruding incisors are used for gnawing through refuse to find food as well as natural weaponry when threatened or hunting.

LIFE-CYCLE: About the size of a fist at birth, sludge rats are born in litters of between two and seven. They usually live to about nine Llyhn seasons and continue to grow throughout their lives with specimens of up to two cubits in length being quite common.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Sludge rats predominantly dwell in subterranean habitats close to bodies of water as they are semiaquatic. Equally at home in the wild or in the sewers and docks of urban settings, they thrive in waste and refuse and are known to be carriers of disease.
They mostly go above ground after dark, scavenging for scraps, garbage and anything else edible. Sludge rats tend to gather in packs of anywhere between ten to hundreds of members with distinct territories.

OCCURRENCE: Sludge rats are among the most common vermin found in Llyhn and certain areas - such as Kimah - are infested with them. Most areas near water - whether urban or wild - are sure to have sludge rats around as they are agile swimmers and divers, using the water as hunting ground as well as easy escape from predators.

BEHAVIOUR: Sludge rats are territorial and rather aggressive in defending their domain. They have been known to attack sleeping beggars or even small children for food or to protect their territory from a perceived threat. Lone rats usually scurry away if approached.
Packs, however, tend to act with indifference unless agitated in which case their demeanour becomes threatening or outright hostile if agitated or attacked.

DIET: Sludge rats are scavengers and omnivores, able to digest practically anything including rotting cadavers.

ENCOUNTERS: Any subterranean location in or around Llyhn is likely crawling with sludge rats burrowing, feeding, breeding or dozing. When dusk falls, the vermin begin to emerge from the sewers and other underground lairs scouring the less maintained areas of the city for things to eat.

Encroaching upon a sludge rat territory is sure to cause an aggressive response even towards creatures and sentient beings much larger than themselves. Similarly, blocking a food source, escape route or another point of interest from the rodents is likely to incite aggression. Rats met outside their territory or where no contention exist are docile and timid.

COMBAT: Incited sludge rats attack unremittingly using their large incisors against the legs or another reachable body part of an agitator. If enough rats are at hand, they attack as a swarm pouring across the legs and feet of their target in waves of fur, scales and yellowed teeth.
Due to their stature, all sludge rat attacks are directed at the legs and ignore protection from other armour placements. In addition to the painful bite of a sludge rat, their saliva contains bacteria that may cause gangrene or blood poisoning. Anyone bitten must roll to avoid infected wounds on an easy [4] Stamina roll.



### Sludge rat

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 11 |
| AWARENESS | 3 | SIZE | Small |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 5 (walk/swim) |
| STRENGTH | 2 | WEAPON | Incisors |
| INTELLECT | 0 | REACH | Close (0) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | 0 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | 0 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | D4 |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 1 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Fur and incisors (fangs). | |
| SPECIAL | | Swarming attack and bacterial bite. | |

## Urbat

DESCRIPTION: The creature vaguely resembles a bizarre hound with a flat head that came to a beak-like mouth aperture with no eyes, no nose, nor ears. Its leathery hide has a greyish white colouration with dark growths that seem to form some sort of natural armour.
Each paw has three knife-like digits that can be splayed out to allow the creature to bound after or to shred its prey. Standing almost up to three cubits tall at the shoulder, these massive hounds have uncanny senses allowing them to detect approaching people regardless of light, cover or obstacles in the way.

LIFE-CYCLE: Seemingly capable of reaching a great age, the continually developing growths on their bodies eventually wear them down until they collapse under their own weight.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The Urbat hounds do not seem to form any sort of social connectivity as each lives solitarily and are not known to congregate. They do seem to be unvarying in their choice of habitat as they - without fail - all choose to inhabit abandoned fortresses, temples, tombs, caves, cities or ruins.
The Urbat knows every little nook and cranny of its chosen lair and will instantly know if someone has entered its premises. Should someone be hiding inside the borders, the Urbat receives a +2 to notice the hiding intruder.

OCCURRENCE: Urbat are exceedingly rare and can mainly be found in ruins and forsaken locales.

BEHAVIOUR: Living solitary lives in deep tombs, caves or other chosen locations they become motionless as soon as they notice intruders in their sanctum. Once the intruders are near the Urbat springs to life assaulting the transgressing party. This scarcely seems like natural behaviour, and it has been conjectured that they are guardians for some antediluvian species and their secrets.

DIET: The Urbat do not seem to eat as they do not feast upon the corpses of those they have killed, neither are there droppings left behind to indicate feeding.

ENCOUNTERS: Urbat are unapproachable, not responding to any means of interaction or outreach. Aided by their rocklike growths and pale complexion they easily masquerade as immobile statues or piles of rock, ready to pounce.
Should intruders notice the Urbat at a distance and realise that it is a living thing, the only way to avoid conflict, unless leaving the area, is to circumvent or distract it. Once an Urbat is aware of an obtrusive presence, it screams raucously to distress and possible drive away offenders without giving away its own position. If they press on it will lie in wait before leaping on them clawing at them with its knifelike claws. If the intruder somehow survives the initial onslaught and flees the hound will go on all fours and hastily dash after them. The Urbat does not rest until the intruder is dead and their lair is undisturbed again.

COMBAT: Urbat are ferocious killers that do not halt once they are committed to a kill. Utilising surprise is the initial approach as the species blend in so well with ruined structures and debris.
If it remains undisturbed until an intruder is within charge range, it leaps forward in a furious charge manoeuvre slashing twice with its claws causing 2D6+4 [piercing 2] damage with exceptional hits on 11+.
In subsequent rounds instead of its two claws, the Urbat may use its beak to attack. This a grappling attack, which if successful, allows the Urbat to shake and violently toss medium or smaller combatants D6 metres away causing D12+4 damage and an automatic knockdown.

### Urbat

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 56 |
| AWARENESS | 4 | SIZE | Large |
| STAMINA | 8 | MOVE | 14 |
| STRENGTH | 7 | WEAPON | Claws / beak |
| INTELLECT | 1 | REACH | Adjacent (1) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +5 / +2 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +2 / -1 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | DMG | 2D6+4 [2] / D12+4 [kd] |
| | | DV | 8 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 6 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Beak, claws, alternative sense and natural armour. | |
| SPECIAL | | Grapple toss. | |

## Wailing Vulture

DESCRIPTION: Wailing vultures have earned their name from the wailing call they emit. Vultures are a breed of semi-intelligent scavenging birds.
The menacing pointed beak is serrated along the edges giving the appearance that the vulture has pointed teeth. Beady and intelligent eyes stare from deep-set and narrow eye slits. The head and long neck are bald with wrinkled blue-ish skin.
A white neck ruff separates the neck from the plump body covered in white and light brown feathers. The broad wings have a mix of light and dark flight feathers in distinct patterns repeated in the shorter tail feathers.

The thumb digit, generally hidden within the wing, is further developed than in regular birds and a hook-like claw extends from the wing, sometimes used during diving attacks or mating fights.
The legs and clawed feet are dark, knobbly and callus-covered while retaining a high degree of agility, making the birds able to use them as manipulators almost as well as a human. Flying vultures are graceful and powerful, but when grounded they are awkward with an ungainly hopping walk.

LIFE-CYCLE: Vultures lay 3-6 eggs in nests located on the steep cliffs of the Pe'rep'ial peaks or the untouched Pinnacles of Daer Bitaan. The female roosts for two cycles





after which the eggs hatch. Able to find food for themselves within a cycle the young vultures strike out on their own quickly. Wailing vultures have been known to age to about 30 human years.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Native only to Llyhn, the vultures thrive in hot, humid conditions as well as cooler circumstances towards the peaks of the surrounding mountains.
Wailing vultures have no innate societal inclinations except responding to a pecking order among groups nesting closely together.

OCCURRENCE: Wailing vultures are plentiful in and around the skies of Llyhn. Not all are trained, but those that are function as messenger birds, pets and servants for high-caste aristocrats and others who can afford and accommodate ownership.

BEHAVIOUR: In their feral state, wailing vultures generally act much like any other scavenger but sometimes creepily imitate observed behaviour.
Wailing vultures are semi-intelligent and can if trained display personality characteristics and are able to interact with their owners much like toddlers; squawking simple words, understanding two-step commands, deliver messages, and so on.

DIET: Wailing vultures are scavengers living purely on putrid cadavers and carcasses.

ENCOUNTERS: Feral vultures are easily spotted and encountered on the ridges, cliffs and sides of the Pe'rep'ial Peaks and tend to act timidly towards sentient species; flying away unless their nest is threatened.
Trained vultures are the extended arm of their owner, acting on his or her behalf with little outward individuality. Often used as messengers or spies, wailing vultures are most often encountered in these capacities.
Unless commanded to hostility the vultures prefer to avoid conflict and are likely to fly away if threatened in any way.

COMBAT: Wailing vultures commanded to assault someone use "swooping attacks", either striking with the sharp claw of the augmented thumb digit on its wing or pecking with its powerful, serrated beak as it dives by.
The beak and claw cause D4 damage. Occasionally blades are attached to the thumbs of the vulture giving it a more vicious attack causing D6 damage. When flying the Wailing vulture is elegant and difficult to hit, but when grounded it is clumsy and easily struck down.



### Wailing Vulture

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 9 |
| AWARENESS | 5 | SIZE | Small |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 2 / 14 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 2 | WEAPON | Beak / claw |
| INTELLECT | 1 | REACH | Close (0) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +1 |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT SPEED | +2 |
| WILLPOWER | 1 | DMG | D4 |
| | | DV | 9 (air) / 5 (land) |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Beak, claw and wings. | |

# Void Entities

## Deep devourer

DESCRIPTION: Deep Devourers are lesser abominations of the Void. Amorphous and resembling flabby, ragged sacks of flesh with eyes, teeth and talons, these monsters are mindless horrors driven by an insatiable hunger to consume living flesh.
Drifting through the Void, these predators can sense disturbances and smell warm flesh in currents, rapidly bearing down on the source ferociously. Should they come upon a Void vessel they immediately swarm it, consuming any living being they can reach.

They cannot survive for long outside the Void but have been known to hunt prey through rifts and ruptures senselessly. Once through, they are unable to get back as their senses are not attuned to the Cosmos and their primitive instincts cannot cope.
They will thrash about attempting to grab and devour anything within reach, but they are severely hampered without the Void to buoy their flabby bodies.

LIFE-CYCLE: Abominations have no lifecycle, they have always existed.



HABITAT/SOCIETY: Deep Devourers are Void entities and can only be sustained in the deep.

OCCURRENCE: The Void is endless oblivion, but the longer a Void vessel, Voidfarer or aimlessly drifting body remain in the depths the higher the risk of getting noticed by a Deep Devourer.

BEHAVIOUR: Deep Devourers are mindless and know only deprivation and ravenousness.

DIET: Anything living.

ENCOUNTERS: Deep Devourers can only be encountered in the Void or if one inadvertently slips through a Veil rupture. Regardless of how or where the Devourer is found, it seeks to assail and consume whoever is nearest to it.

COMBAT: In the Void, Deep Devourers are agile killers that can move with startling speed.
Incapable of thinking beyond satiating their voracious hunger the abominations go directly for the nearest target in a chaotic and frenzied whirlwind of slashing claws and gnashing teeth. Deep Devourers make D6 all-out attacks each round, and if faced with multiple targets the attacks are divided randomly. Each hit causes 2D6+4 damage and requires a Stamina roll [7] to avoid Void distortion.

Their insubstantial and amorphous bodies continuously expand and contract, morph and swivel, making them difficult to hit and injure. Deep Devourers are inexorable and maintain their assault until they feast upon flesh or are destroyed.

In the Cosmos, a Deep Devourer is still dangerous but is at a significant disadvantage as its mobility is severely limited. Unable to do anything but claw its way forward, its movement is limited and, while it continues to morph, its immobility means that it can somewhat easily be disengaged and avoided.
Thrashing about, the Devourer will strike at anything within reach or move in a random direction and attack anything it collides with. Its inability to exist outside the Void means a Deep Devourer suffers D6 damage every round it remains in the Cosmos.

ABILITIES: Deep Devourers are Void entities [6] that are mindless and cannot be affected by Mind sphere Mysticism or other mental effects.
Their amorphousness affects an instant dodge-roll for every attack made against them while their insubstantial form denotes that physical attacks only cause half damage. Their abominable form causes Fear [9].

### Deep devourer

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 9 | HEALTH | 37 |
| AWARENESS | 7 | SIZE | Formless |
| STAMINA | 6 | MOVE | 24 (Void) / |
| STRENGTH | 7 | | 2 (Cosmos) |
| INTELLECT | 0 | WEAPON | Claws / teeth |
| PERSUASION | 0 | REACH | Near (4) |
| PRESENCE | 9 | ATT MOD | +7 |
| WILLPOWER | 0 | ATT SPEED | +6 |
| | | DMG | 2D6+4* |
| | | DV | 13 |
| | | PROTECTION | Insubstantial |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Amorphous form, claws, fangs, insubstantial flesh and Void entity [6]. | |
| POWERS | | - | |
| SPECIAL | | Immune to sphere of mind and mental effects, and cause Fear [9] . | |

**Hits requires a Stamina roll [7] or the victim must make a roll on the Void distortion table.*

## Gomor

DESCRIPTION: The Gomor are massive and paradoxical creatures that inhabit marine border world environments while traversing the Void with seemingly effortless ease. Found in vast numbers on the aquatic world Vaesna, now also inhabited by the Variin, this is likely to be the font of the species.
Gomor have a large "cap" of thick yellow flesh over a fibrous tangled body made up of separate grooved strands and extending into a long sweeping tail. Two long prehensile feelers dangle from the front of its body.

These aquatic denizens are clearly intelligent but do not interact with other sentient species, either from lack of want or an inability to do so. Sometimes they are hunted for their flesh and blubber - an eminent delicacy - and it is held among many Voidfaring cultures that Gomor have medicinal qualities which can alleviate ailments and cure disease, be used as sedatives, treat fever and so on.

LIFE-CYCLE: Gomor can live exceptionally long lives and continue to grow as they age. Females form large pods of sisters, mother and daughters while the significantly smaller males gather in lesser groups.
During mating seasons multiple groups of males intercept the females performing elaborate underwater dances to catch the interest of prospective mates. The lucky few intertwine with and latches onto the fibrous tangles of the female and impregnate her, then drift back into the depths from where they came, leaving the female pod on its own again.

Gestation is extensive and the live young, usually in knots of four or five, grow in small pouches below the female's cap. When the Gomor are born, the females remain with their mother while males strike out by themselves.
Occasionally huge pods break up, with multiple individuals leaving to form their own pod. When a Gomor dies, its body curls up, hardening and calcifying to leave a large oddly-shaped mineral remains on the sea-floor or drifting in the Void.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Gomor inhabit only select border worlds with appropriate aquatic conditions as well as the depths of the Void. They are highly social creatures, and rarely is one seen without two or three others nearby.
While female Gomor pods can grow to contain some two hundred individuals, they often remain far smaller. Most Gomor pods follow the eldest and biggest female as the alpha and fiercely protect her if the pod is threatened.

OCCURRENCE: In their preferred habitats Gomor are uncommon, leisurely drifting through the water or ethereal ocean.
The older and larger Gomor pods retreat to the Void to accommodate their great sizes and requirements for space that most border world habitats cannot provide.

BEHAVIOUR: Gomor are highly sociable, looking out for their kind and playing. They are not aggressive or territorial, save when the pod is threatened.
They remain mostly disinterested in other beings, save for curious youngsters who sometimes approach swimmers or vessels. Gomor hunters occasionally use this tendency to lure young specimens away from the pod to catch and slaughter.

DIET: Gomor sustain themselves by absorbing nutrients and imperceptible substances from the water using their feelers as draglines and apertures, as they have no mouths to feed with otherwise.

ENCOUNTERS: Gomor can generally be found only in vast oceans on worlds where the Veil is thin and fractured or drifting along the currents of the Void, but a small pod is known to frequent the Eternal City near the iridescent spring of the Margidda river at the base of the Morning Palace.
While Gomor can accidentally collide with ships and vessels causing damage they - for the most part - pose no threat to anyone, merely swimming along. However, if threatened or hurt, Gomor can easily crush and destroy ships using their immense corpus as a battering ram or lashing with their feelers and massive tails.

COMBAT: More likely to retreat if inadvertently injured, Gomor react volatilely if their young or pod are actively threatened.
Against surface attackers the Gomor rapidly accelerates, using its cap as a battering ram to strike ships, crushing the hull and sinking the vessel. A ramming attempt causes 4D12+7 damage from a medium-sized Gomor and increases with size.
If the attackers are not on a vessel or it cannot be sunk, the Gomor use their tails as colossal whips, lashing at targets above the surface. A successful hit causes D12+7 damage and triggering a knockdown +7, possibly knocking targets into the water where the Gomor can grab them with their feelers - making a grappling attack - dragging them into the depths to get crushed by the pressure or suffocated.



### Gomor

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 3 | HEALTH | 89 |
| AWARENESS | 7 | SIZE | Giant+ |
| STAMINA | 10 | MOVE | 9 |
| STRENGTH | 9 | WEAPON | Ram, tail and feelers |
| INTELLECT | 7 | | |
| PERSUASION | 0 | REACH | Close / near |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT MOD | +3/+4/+4 |
| WILLPOWER | 5 | ATT SPEED | -3 |
| | | DMG | 4D12+7 / D12+7 / 0 |
| | | DV | 5 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 2 |
| | | ATTRIBUTES | Alternative sense, piscine, prehensile tail, slimy, tentacles and tough hide. |
| | | POWERS | Enlightenment [6] |

# Madarch

DESCRIPTION: Madarch are strange creatures, varying in size from under a cubit to well over three cubits tall. A wide, rotund body consisting mainly of a large mouth and small clusters of flesh-covered organs is supported by six tentacles with spade-shaped soles covered in heavy claws.
The mouth comprises six dark burgundy lips with an iridescent eye embedded in each, giving the Madarch all-round vision of its surroundings. The fleshy lumps and supporting tentacles are blue-greenish purples.
Madarch live in shoals with the queen exuding pheromones affecting the behaviour of the rest. Known to have a large colony on the moons of Sharam Tar, this location is presumed to be the font of the species.
Madarch have an affinity for the Void and are able to tear the Veil, diving into the oblivion and traverse the currents using their paddlelike soles for propulsion. Madarch shoal colonies are known to travel the Cosmic worlds albeit for what reason is unknown.

LIFE-CYCLE: When traversing the Void, a dying Madarch shoal release hundreds of small embryos that float on the currents, dispersing the species as they are dumped through rifts across the worlds of the Cosmos.
As the embryos emerge from the Void, they attach to nearby surfaces and absorb nutrients from the atmosphere around them. After a maturation phase, the Madarch embryos morph, sprouting small tendrils and crawl off to find a place to root and grow to their full size. The first to morph becomes queen and controls the shoal.
Once the Madarch reach maturity, the shoal begins to roam, settling in a place for a while before moving on. It is unknown how old Madarch can become, but sages surmise they can be ancient.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Madarch seem impervious to environmental conditions and can survive in any habitat. Although Madarch resemble plants more than animals, they are conscious, and there are patterns in their behaviour which indicate purpose and rationale.

In the Void Madarch shoals are graceful and fleet while on Cosmic worlds they move staggeringly and sluggishly. Once they have reached their apparent destination, the shoal gathers around its queen, taking root with the larger specimens towards the centre.
As the shoals take root, they begin to release spores and pheromones affecting the surrounding area and those who dwell there. They can stay rooted for years or short periods, with seemingly little comprehensible pattern or logic behind it.

OCCURRENCE: Madarch are rare but can occur across the Cosmos as well as in the Void. It is exceedingly rare to witness shoals on the move.

BEHAVIOUR: Madarch are nonaggressive and nonresponsive. They do not attack or defend themselves - they simply exist, roam, multiply and root.

DIET: It is assumed that Madarch live off the environment where they take root, but the environments are so diverse and disparate that it is impossible to fathom nutrients that could possibly exist in all. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that as the Madarch root, the surrounding environment begins to change from the spores emitted by the shoal.



Any indigenous vegetation begins to wilt, whither or mutate while oddly coloured oily vines and coral-like flora gradually emerge. The local fauna is similarly affected by the pheromones emitted by the shoal, changing behavioural patterns and even physical properties in new-born.
Suddenly an area is no longer fit to sustain them, and the Madarch move on, leaving an alien landscape and aberrant fauna behind.

ENCOUNTERS: Madarch can be encountered anywhere and everywhere, but what is encountered initially is more likely the effects of their presence rather than the Madarch themselves.

As soon as the shoal takes root, the exuding pheromones begin to affect nearby lifeforms making them act erratically while entirely disregarding the presence of the Madarch.

As the shoal remains in place, the area affected expands, and the erratic behaviour intensifies, making even skittish herbivores deranged and belligerent.

The Madarch may have rooted in an unlikely place making the cause of the aberrations unclear. All lifeforms within the affected area must make gradually rising Stamina rolls to resist the pheromones inducing increasingly severe cases of Delirium, while the spores affect the landscape and vegetation of the area.

Even removing the Madarch colony may not entirely return the area and resident lifeforms to their previous state.

COMBAT: If attacked, the Madarch release concentrated clouds of spores and pheromones - extending D6 metres away - hoping to avert or deter the assailant. Anyone caught in the cloud must make an immediate Stamina roll [10] or suffer from Delirium for D6 hours. Every time a breath is drawn another roll must be made (see suffocation). If the assault continues, pheromones are released, prompting the wildlife and other affected beings in the affected area to become agitated and attack the assailants. If the onslaught persists after this, the Madarch will uproot and tear a rift in the Veil, fleeing into the relative safety of the Void.

| PERIOD | AREA AFFECTED | LANDSCAPE EFFECT | DIFFICULTY | DELIRIUM EFFECT RANGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NEWLY ROOTED | Adjacent | None | 5 | < 5 |
| BRIEF | Near | Mild transformation | 7 | < 7 |
| SUSTAINED | Immediate | Moderate mutations | 9 | < 9 |
| PROLONGED | Surrounding | Comprehensive changes | 11 | < 11 |
| EXTENSIVE | Eyesight | Void distortion | 13 | All |



## Madarch

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 9/1* | HEALTH | 36 |
| AWARENESS | 9/1* | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 5 | MOVE | 24 (Void) |
| STRENGTH | 6 | | 1 (Cosmos) |
| INTELLECT | 10 | WEAPON | - |
| PERSUASION | 0 | REACH | - |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT MOD | - |
| WILLPOWER | 9 | ATT SPEED | - |
| | | DMG | - |
| | | DV | 3 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 3 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Multiple tentacle legs, claws, multiple eyes and resilient membrane. | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [12] | |
| SPECIAL | | Spores and pheromones. | |

**Trait score when in the Cosmos.*

# Maliis

DESCRIPTION: Maliis are a species of floating horrors from the lofty pinnacles of ING. Like something out of nightmares, the creatures are appalling vertical mouths of layered teeth set in a lattice of firm fleshy tentacles around a bulbous body of slimy tresses. Two red appendages float from the lattice as weird streamers of flesh. Maliis never land - remaining airborne their entire lives - floating erratically on ghostly wings hunting and haunting anyone nearing the peaks - their otherworldly shrieks ringing throughout the purplish twilight constantly swathing this eerie border world.

The Oord stay far away from the peaks, warning everyone else to do the same - for who knows what revulsions the Maliis screech at upon those desolate peaks. They do not communicate - at least not in any meaningful sense - nor are they curious or even interested in strangers intruding upon their dominion, meeting them only with shrieks and open jaws. Maliis' sensory abilities are unearthly, and they can sense both Cosmic and Void entities and emanations.

LIFE-CYCLE: Breeding in weird aerial dances under the pallid moons of ING, the eerie squealing emitted during these atrocious acts curdle the blood of anyone hearing them. How Maliis breed and how long they live is something sane people ought not to contemplate; if anyone knows they have not disclosed it.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: At home on barren, lofty peaks, the Maliis gather in large flocks of up to hundreds of individuals circling the pinnacles in uneven patterns as if sensing something only they can perceive. There is a method to the madness though as the flocks shift from peak to peak as if following something or someone.

OCCURRENCE: These creatures are extraordinarily rare with the only set location being the pinnacles of ING. Rumours swirl that flocks of similar shrieking horrors have appeared around lofty peaks on other worlds affected by Void storms, but these are all unverified.

BEHAVIOUR: Maliis are erratic and inexplicable creatures at best, except for their apparent distaste for everything living. They are utterly hostile and assail anything and anyone nearing their domain, diving in howling, shrieking and gnashing their teeth as if seeking to scare off the intruders before launching a frenzied assault.

DIET: What sustains Maliis must be insubstantial or beyond the comprehension of Cosmic sentient beings as their habitat is entirely barren.

ENCOUNTERS: Whether the Arbiter decides the Maliis are keeping intruders from witnessing what might be hidden on the pinnacles or that they are malevolent deranged



spirits with goals and intents beyond mortal comprehension, climbing a peak which is the dominion of a Maliis flock is likely to lead to a hostile confrontation. As soon as the flock becomes aware of an obtrusive presence, a group disengages, descending shrieking and howling. Initially, they make false swooping attacks using their shrieks to discourage the intruders from proceeding. If this does not succeed or they have no interest in merely scaring off the intruders, they attack.

COMBAT: Whether used as a deterrent or actual assault the shrill unearthly shriek of a Maliis causes Fear in those that hear it. Merely hearing it causes discomfort and a Fear roll [4] is required up to a range of three kilometres away. A Maliis which directs its attention and screech at a target causes a Fear roll [10] to the target and any nearby beings.

Maliis prefer making swooping attacks and may combine swarming and swooping attacks if their numbers are great enough. The bite of their menacing jaws rends flesh and bone causing D12+3 [piercing 2] damage.

They can opt to hover and make grappling attacks - still causing damage - and if two or more are successful they are able to lift up a medium-sized target, potentially dropping him or her off a cliff, causing falling damage. All Mystic phenomena aimed at Maliis add a +3 resistance factor cumulative with other penalties as the species is naturally resilient to the contorting effects of the Void.

### Maliis

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 4 | HEALTH | 21 |
| AWARENESS | 7 | SIZE | Small |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 8 (flying) |
| STRENGTH | 5 | WEAPON | Fangs |
| INTELLECT | 6 | REACH | Touch (0) |
| PERSUASION | 0 | ATT MOD | +5 |
| PRESENCE | 5 | ATT SPEED | +1 |
| WILLPOWER | 7 | DMG | D12+3 [2] |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR2 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Aerial, fangs, tentacles and tough skin. | |
| POWERS | | Void resistance [3] | |
| SPECIAL | | Shriek (Fear) and swarming. | |

## Mindnebula

DESCRIPTION: The Mindnebula are weird exotic entities from the depths of the Void. Somewhat gelatinous in their natural state, they are extremely malleable and can contort their bodies to an extreme degree.
Newly gestated Mindnebula are about the size of a human fist, and their skin is black with a few dispersed luminescent pinpoints. As the entity grows older, it grows up to several cubits in length, and its skin takes on a nebulous radiant quality of pinks, purples blues and whites.

Mindnebula have been known to leave the Void to explore the Cosmos for incomprehensible reasons, and though utterly alien they do interact with sentient species on occasion.
They are psychic creatures communicating purely via telepathy, although for extensive exchanges they prefer to latch onto those they interact with using their tendrils as touch seems to reinforce their link.
Inside or outside the Void they do not abide by several natural laws - floating gently around in any gaseous or liquid matter, perceiving their surroundings solely by psychic means unimpeded by physical limitations, communicating through impressions rather than words enabling them to link with any sentient being.
They are aerial and can move in any direction unhindered. Their malleable, viscous form enables them to squeeze through even seemingly impossible spaces.

LIFECYCLE: One of the few things known about these bizarre entities is that they undergo a metamorphosis in their life-cycle, being born as small black blobs with four short tendrils and evolving into amorphous nearly viscous pulsating forms with gills and tendrils floating behind the bulbous body.
Whether they have genders, how long their lifespans are, and such particulars are entirely unknown.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The natural habitat for Mindnebula are the depths of the Void, and it is exceedingly rare to find them beyond border worlds, but despite their ductile physique they are seemingly able to survive in most conceivable ecology or environment. They are exclusively solitary and do not give the impression to have any societal inclinations whatsoever.

OCCURRENCE: Mindnebula are remarkably rare outside the Void but have been known to trail or float alongside vessels gliding on the Void currents.

Should a Mindnebula be found in the Cosmos, it is likely to occur somewhere dark and damp as this seems to be their preferred milieu outside of their natural environment.

BEHAVIOUR: The Mindnebula function on a different stratum than sentient species and their utterly unpredictable behaviour follows suit.
They have been known to latch onto sentient individuals using their tendrils, forming mental connections for longer or shorter periods until their curiosity - or whatever drives them - is satisfied.



### Mindnebula

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 8 | HEALTH | 15 |
| AWARENESS | 10 | SIZE | Tiny-Medium |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 15 |
| STRENGTH | 3 | WEAPON | - |
| INTELLECT | ? | REACH | - |
| PERSUASION | 6 | ATT MOD | - |
| PRESENCE | 3 | ATT SPEED | - |
| WILLPOWER | 6+ | DMG | - |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |

ATTRIBUTES: Aerial, alternative sense, domination, extrasensory perception, natural immunity, soft-bodied, piscine and tentacles

POWERS: Enlightenment [12]
Innate Mysticism [9]
Sphere of Mind [6]

Their conduct goes beyond sentient coherency, and their presence may leave swathes of ruined minds in their wake or form bonds of infinite bliss with chosen hosts.

DIET: While Mindnebula seem capable of consuming anything through their various pores and stomas, they do not appear to require any sustenance to live.

ENCOUNTERS: Most encounters with Mindnebula are inexplicable. The entity may as easily ignore characters as embrace and connect with them, rummaging and scrutinising their minds.
Now and then Mindnebula form prolonged bonds with individuals, genuinely interacting by emulating the disposition and thought patterns of whichever individual it has latched on to.

Mindnebula can access the cognitive abstractions of sentient beings, drawing forth memories, emotions and even subconscious sentiments inaccessible to the host itself.
This can be a terrifying ordeal, leaving the host scarred and easily cause enduring insanity, but may also trigger previously unknown emotions of rapture and bliss.
As such, Mindnebula forage on thoughts and cognitive verve, fulfilling needs they alone can fathom.
This peculiar foraging allows them to access thoughts and memories, storing them or passing them on to others should they feel so inclined, resulting in acts that seem wantonly careless, reprehensible or even nefarious to most sentient beings.

COMBAT: Should the characters ever aggravate or agitate a Mindnebula - if it is even capable of such emotions, or emotions at all - it immediately retreats to a safe distance and utilises its extensive psychic capability to quell any thought process in its adversary.
This not only allows it to paralyse a victim but effectively take over its mind manipulating the body as a puppet. Due to extrasensory perception, it is instinctively aware of who in its vicinity are pliant and targets these first to acquire marionettes to protect its somewhat delicate corpus.

ABILITIES: In addition to rankings in the Mind sphere of mysticism Mindnebulas also possess a variant of the esoteric power Domination enabling it to plant mental suggestions. All Mindnebula powers are based on Willpower, and both this Trait and power rankings increase as the entity matures. Powers start at ranking 1 when newly gestated and reaching ranking 6 as the Mindnebula becomes ancient, while Willpower starts at ranking 6 and progresses until 12.

# Void Leech

DESCRIPTION: These creatures weirdly resemble amorphous starfish comprising five appendages with eerily white staring eyeballs rooted towards the tip of each.
Squirming lobes swarm over each other within thin membranes in the centre while a thick creased stem with wriggling forked tendrils protrudes underneath.

Within the Void, they have changing, impossibly iridescent hues, while in the Cosmos they are the colour of rust and crusted blood.
Floating through the Void, these nefarious entities are parasites seeking hosts. Assuming mental control, they make the unfortunate host pliable and unable to resist but fully aware as the leech insert spiked stingers drawing nourishment from the still conscious host.
Discarded semi-drained hosts are left screaming in horror as their sensibilities return while the limp husks of depleted hosts are discarded.

LIFE-CYCLE: Occasionally hosts are hurriedly abandoned, left alive floating in the Void impregnated with Voidleech embryos drawing sustenance from them.
As the host weakens the fledgeling leeches grow stronger, wriggling inside until they emerge, rupturing the skin of the still living host. How long Voidleeches live largely depends on their ability to find hosts to sustain them.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Voidleeches are at home in the Void but drawn to rifts, impatiently loitering waiting for an opportunity to attach themselves to creatures coming through. Voidleeches are indigenous to the Void but able to survive in the Cosmos.
Nothing is known about their societal makeup if there even is one, as they reside in the Void depths only "surfacing" to find hosts to prey on. Occasionally horror-stricken Voidfarers claim to have witnessed large blooms of Voidleeches floating and wiggling on currents alongside their vessel, surrounding a strangely radiant entity at their midst as if in reverence.

OCCURRENCE: Voidleeches are rare but tend to be more numerous around minute slits and tears in the Veil, as if deliberately avoiding larger conduits for reasons only known to them.

BEHAVIOUR: Voidleeches lurk close to minor Void rifts, striking both Cosmic beings and Void entities. Once they have taken control and attached themselves, they begin to drift into the depths for whatever furtive purpose.

DIET: Voidleeches survive solely by attaching themselves to someone and consuming their slowly dissolving innards via spiked stingers inserted into their flesh. Even inside the Void leeches are able to subsist only for short periods without a host.

ENCOUNTERS: Voidleeches are entities of the deep and have little concept of or interest in mortal cognisance - they merely perceive a host to ride.
When they discern a potential host, they use their considerable psychic aptitude, invoking mesmerising, maddening lurid dreamscapes to disorient and confound to get close enough to attach themselves.
Once they deem the target distracted, they try to attach to the head, making a sneak attack roll and if successful they insert the spiked stinger. At this point, the target realises what is going on and can make an opposed roll -3 to disengage the leech while it attempts to enthral its mind.

*ENTHRAL (Mind)*
*Channelling time: 9 seconds*
*Range: Close (0)*
*Duration: 1 hour*
*Area: 1 person*
*Effect: Entranced [19]*
*Difficulty: 16*



Once the host is entranced the Leech takes over full control. If a leech is ever forcibly removed the host suffers D12 damage and loses D6 Sanity points.

Leeches are attracted to bulky hosts providing sustenance for longer and prefer such - given a choice. The only means to communicate with a Voidleech is utilising Mysticism or esoteric powers, but they are so alien that linking minds with them causes an immediate Willpower roll [10] inducing the loss of a Sanity point if failed. Voidleeches cannot be engaged or reasoned with nor can they be scared off, but they can be lured or forced into the Cosmos where they are exposed.

From time to time a Voidleech seems to lose its way and enter the Cosmos attached to its host. The leech has no understanding of physical constraints making the host wander aimlessly as if in a daze and often pushing it beyond its means - literally breaking it. As the crippled host cannot comply with its wishes, the leech realises that it is out of its element and panics. A panicked Voidleech radiates waves

of psychic energy causing surges of calamities to occur. Make a roll on the Calamity table for every three rounds, adding a +1 modifier to each subsequent roll.

COMBAT: Voidleeches do not understand confrontation but react immediately if it or its host are injured. In the Void the Leech easily withdraws becoming imperceptible - unless Void sensitivity or similar is applied - pummelling the perceived offender with Psychic energy and surreal visions of suffering while staying out of reach.
In the Cosmos the Leech is hampered by physical constraints, unsteadily making the host move away while attacking arbitrary adjacent targets. If there are any Void rifts in the nearby vicinity, the leech can sense them and move haphazardly towards them to escape. If not, it will move in random directions still attacking adjacent targets.

A Voidleech functions as a ranking 6 Furore Mystic using the Mind sphere at potency 6 with the added element that a calamity occurs to the target every time a phenomenon is manifested. If the Void leech is ever detached, it attempts to find a new host immediately, possibly even its attacker.
Voidleeches trapped in the Cosmos with a dying host or possibly without a host succumb and wilt in D3 hours of the host not providing sustenance.

### Void Leech

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 5 | HEALTH | 13 |
| AWARENESS | 9/3* | SIZE | Little |
| STAMINA | 2 | MOVE | 80 (Void) |
| STRENGTH | 3 | | 1 (Cosmos) |
| INTELLECT | 9 | WEAPON | Stinger |
| PERSUASION | 0 | REACH | Close (0) |
| PRESENCE | 0 | ATT MOD | +3 |
| WILLPOWER | 8 | ATT SPEED | - |
| | | DMG | D3 |
| | | DV | 9 |
| | | PROTECTION | DR 0 |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Parasite, tentacles and Void entity [3] | |
| POWERS | | Enlightenment [10]<br>Furore Mysticism [6]<br>Sphere of Mind [6] | |

**Trait score when in the Cosmos.*

## Yiagh'Zii

DESCRIPTION: Yiagh'Zii are a species of Void entities known to dance on pernicious peaks in demented rapture to please their indefinite masters from the deep oblivion.

These slithering abominations have a three-sectioned body with the lower half being a tangle of three to five tendrils ending in fleshy lumps functioning as anchors, affixing the Yiagh'Zii to almost any surface.
Between these and four repulsively arm-like appendages a flexible white membrane allows the entities to produce a variety of horrid sounds as it expands and retracts in wavy patterns.
From a fissured cone-shaped head-parallel a short trunk infolds an extendable tongue ending in a peculiar mouthpiece with protruding lobes used as a sensory organ. Numerous ogling eyes are interspersed chaotically across the entire corpus of the entity.
Alienly cognisant, they act on clear intent and motive, communicating with nauseating almost songlike resonances produced by their torso membranes.

LIFE-CYCLE: Born out of unknowable chaos, they exist only to serve their masters in the deep.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: At home in the depths of the Void, the Yiagh'Zii surreptitiously venture into the Cosmos in irregular cycles as if following some peculiar almanack.
Gathering in herds akin to raiding parties, they appear and perform their abhorrent activities and then leave, seemingly having satisfied some voracious obligation known and understood only by themselves.
It is suspected that they have colonies burrowed deep into the ground on select worlds or moons, but none have ever been revealed.

OCCURRENCE: Drawn to ruptures in the Veil from the depths of the Void, the Yiagh'Zii are a blight upon the Cosmos as they raid multiple worlds in erratic patterns.
Seldomly staying long, they appear in groups ranging from three individuals up to thirty to hunt villages and outlying settlements for victims to drain in their rapturous homage to their absent masters.

BEHAVIOUR: Yiagh'Zii irregularly appear on Cosmic worlds capturing slaves to drag to remote locations, sacrificing and paying homage through their demented dance.
Captured slaves get tasted with licks of the foul Yiagh'Zii tongues after which select individuals are dragged along, and

the remaining are discarded or torn apart. Once gathered, the raiding party withdraws to sacrosanct locations, typically on far-flung moons. Here the profane ceremony leaves the sacrificed not quite dead but empty, devoid of cognisance, sentiment or sentience - living shells, scarred and broken.

DIET: Yiagh'Zii consume the unknowable dreams and thoughts of sentient beings - devouring everything cerebral - leaving the mindless flesh and bones alive.

ENCOUNTERS: Yiagh'Zii can be encountered almost everywhere, excluding densely populated areas, which they avoid. Happenstances are most likely to occur just before, during or after a Yiagh'Zii raid, but before they have departed for their remote destination.
Yiagh'Zii are intelligent but cannot be reasoned with, and any attempt to read minds or gauge motivation will be utterly incomprehensible.
Yiagh'Zii do not necessarily act hostilely towards others but will be inquisitive and perhaps even "taste" someone and try to drag them off, if found delectable due to high Mental scores. Defiance and resistance will be met with immediate brutality.

COMBAT: Aggravated Yiagh'Zii have a variety of possibilities available to them when engaged in conflict. Their multiple eyes and odd physiology mean that they have no front or rear, ignoring direction completely.

When agitated their membranes reverberate incessantly producing subsonic waves causing nausea and disorientation. Non-Yiagh'Zii within D12 metres must make a Stamina roll [7] or succumb to biliousness: The character falls to the ground quivering and prone, counting as stunned for D6 rounds, after which all actions suffer a -3 penalty for D6 rounds.

Yiagh'Zii will use their tongue to drain the cerebral essence of stunned adversaries. A draining attempt counts as a normal action taking a full round (initiative -6) where the Yiagh'Zii makes an opposed Awareness roll against a randomly determined Mental Trait of the victim. A successful drain reduces the victim's designated Trait score by one point permanently.
Should the victim's Intellect or Willpower score ever reach 0, he or she will effectively be braindead. If engaged in close combat Yiagh'Zii will make up to four attacks per round using its arms, suffering no penalties; each causing D6 + 2 [2] noxious damage: Stamina roll [7] or suffer Delirium.

ABILITIES: Yiagh'Zii are Void entities [3] that can never be affected by the Mind sphere of Mysticism or any other mental effect. Their horrid nebulous appearance cause Fear [7] effect +4 and their insubstantial flesh suffer only half damage from physical damage.

### Yiagh'Zii

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AGILITY | 6 | HEALTH | 29 |
| AWARENESS | 7 | SIZE | Medium |
| STAMINA | 4 | MOVE | 12 (Void) |
| STRENGTH | 5 | | 6 (Cosmos) |
| INTELLECT | 9 | WEAPON | Claws |
| PERSUASION | 0 | REACH | Adjacent (1) |
| PRESENCE | 7 | ATT MOD | +4 |
| WILLPOWER | 9 | ATT SPEED | +3 |
| | | DMG | D6+2 [2] |
| | | DV | 10 |
| | | PROTECTION | Insubstantial |
| ATTRIBUTES | | Four arms, claws, insubstantial flesh, multiple eyes, natural immunity, tentacles and Void entity [3]. | |
| POWERS | | Drain Mental Traits. | |
| SPECIAL | | Fear [7] and immunity to mental assaults and ignore injuries. | |




Staring into the bleak obliviousness of the Void
is to gaze into an overwhelming meaninglessness
which can lead only to one realisation...
A realisation of the boundless insignificance
of one's own existence.

# CHAPTER: 10
# WORLDS

## Aqihabara

DESIGNATION: Savage world.
TOPOGRAPHY: A rocky world with limited water and vegetation, dominated by arid plains, ancient plateaus and deserts.
SENTIENT SPECIES: Talath.
CULTURE: Volatile nomadic tribes.
GOVERNANCE: Unclear tribal hierarchies.
TRADE: Minerals, metals and gems.
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: Kahtekt, Ghabragah and Thakgeqa.
NOTABLE CREATURES: Braqkara and Qabraqi.
ENVIRONMENT: The hot, dry climate easily causes dehydration and heat strokes, coupled with lower oxygen and higher than regular gravity triggering exhaustion in many non-native species. Dusty dry atmosphere prompts irritation, coughing, nosebleeds while violent sandstorms in certain regions are a hazard.

Aqihabara is a dry, desolate world by most standards. Orbiting dual stars, the red dwarf and its yellow companion star produce an arid climate that ranges from hot to sweltering depending on the point in orbit. Years have skewed seasons due to the orbit of the globe in relation to the orbits of the stars around each other, not that seasons can be distinguished in most cases anyway. At points where the red dwarf eclipses the yellow star, the planet is bathed in a more reddish light for several weeks. This event, occurring about every one-and-a-half year, has ritual significance to the Talath, the only sentient species of Aqihabara. That is the time of the blood hunts, the greatest of challenges among this savage, tribal species.

Rain is a rare occurrence in any region of the world and is localised around the few bodies of water that dot the surface. Everywhere is reachable on foot as no body of water divides the mainly rocky single landmass. This supports the nomadic nature of the Talath, as no place is genuinely inaccessible, and they can move with the shifting heat during the asymmetrical seasons. The polar regions are no less harsh than the equator as there is no axial tilt to the planet. As such, while the angle of incidence of the suns is that of early morning or late afternoon, it is perpetual, with no night. Temperatures are therefore lower than the blazing equatorial region, but there is scant variation and with no change in light levels creatures used to a day-night cycle will experience disorientation. Limited agriculture by one tribe of Talath near a polar lake is perceived as part legendary and shameful due to their culture. This tribe is seen as soft by most, lacking the challenge of the beasts of the vast expanses.

The world has no tectonic activity, so there are no earthquakes or volcanic activity of any sort. Around the equator, the terrain is the most desert-like, with vast expanses without even rudimentary plant life such as scrub brush, while great dust and sand storms can kill the delicate or unprotected through abrasion and suffocation. Ghabragah, the great desert, is in this equatorial band, and few can claim to have crossed its breadth. Higher latitudes give way to rocky terrains, steppes and plateaus, low forest vegetation, succulents, and the sporadic oasis. The grand plateau of Kahtekt is the highest on the world, a massive monument of geology considered a holy pilgrimage site for the Talath. The ceremonies conducted here are forbidden to be witnessed by outsiders. Higher yet in latitude can be found perhaps the most balanced regions, where grasslands, prairie, and even vegetation resembling small trees can be found. Wildlife is the most abundant and least hostile in this belt, but certainly not without its predators. The perpetually lit polar regions would be tundra-like if the temperatures were lower, but their relative mildness makes them the most hospitable areas on the world - though the Talath seem to prefer the more harsh and challenging conditions.

Aqihabara has no moons, but a nearby globe is a prominent light during both night and day at certain points in the orbital cycles. This is viewed as a time of Providence, where truth shall be revealed to the tribes. The omens are interpreted by the larger subspecies of Talath, whose roles and prominence are somewhat unclear to outsiders. Standing significantly taller than the common Talath, with darker slightly purplish red skin, they are massive brutes capable of the most epic feats of hunting and war. Some individuals are denoted as something between a chief and priest in the internal hierarchy, often serving as the aide to the chief, who ascends to that position through combat

rituals and challenges, rather than being actual tribal leaders themselves. To outsiders, this is often interpreted as if they are somehow watchers over the common population, integral to society, but standing apart at the same time.

Since the Talath are nomadic and tribal, there is no planetary governance or even settlements of note outside the one of polar legend. This makes general relations with other worlds and species exceedingly rare, as all interactions are very local or individual. The world is rich in metals and minerals, but attempts to set up extended mining operations are fraught with problems; a band of Talath may not take kindly to outsiders mining and wipe them out in a show of territorialism despite assurances or pacts with other tribes. Some of the wildlife of Aqihabara is hostile as well, and the overall climate is harsh for many non-native species. The Talath put little value in the materials the outlanders desire, other than for use as tools, and often view attempts to exploit them as a desecration of their hunting grounds. Trade tends to be problematic as a result, but where there is greed, there is a way.

Survival away from the rare bodies of water is naturally difficult for most species. The Talath have a wondrous ability to survive with little to no water for prolonged periods and can derive enough moisture from their kills in many cases. Still, there are succulents of varying sizes across the regions of the world, and not all of them are lethal if ingested. Without native knowledge or excellent wilderness skills, it is a challenge to determine what may save you from dehydration and what might rapidly kill you. Many plants also pose a natural hazard to exposed skin, be it simple razor grasses that can lacerate exposed legs, to thorny cacti and vines that excrete natural toxins. To Talath the harsh conditions are an everyday trial and soft-skins - especially weakling humans - who can survive the wilds may almost impress them. To be respected, however, someone would have to prove themselves in combat either with a champion or a great beast.

While there are innocuous mammals and reptiles akin to rats, rabbits, iguana, and even antelope on the planet, they live in constant danger from the myriad species of predators that even prey on each other leading up to the alpha predators.

The harsh environment has spawned numerous burrowing creatures due to the shelter the ground provides from the scorching suns, and the ability to find moisture and tuberous plants below the surface. Some of these burrowers are predatory, pouncing on prey from hidden warrens. Indeed, a faint rumbling from the ground is an indicator of an imminent attack by one of the most fearsome of Aqihabara's inhabitants, the Braqkara. The Talath revere these beasts as trophies hunted during the blood sun period, and a threat to their camps at all other times. While traders prize the russet ivory-like tusks of the creatures, they are naturally



one of the most scarce and perilous commodities to obtain on the world. One reason the polar Talath are scorned by the rest of the species is that they never encounter Barqkara as these powerful creatures' range lies further towards the equatorial expanses.

The Qabraqi are the second most notable predator species on the planet. These large, armoured felines can maul a solitary Talath, and when they hunt in packs, even veteran warriors are in trouble. Ranging across most of the non-desert regions, they are well known as a natural hazard.

In the few large bodies of water on the world, various fish and amphibious creatures can be found, but nothing near the size of the terrestrial fauna.

PLOT HOOKS:

- In the middle of Thakgeqa, the largest lake on the planet, is an island. No Talath has ever been to the island as they do not swim and - given the environment - have never developed shipbuilding or sailing skills. One ancient Talath tells a legend of this land in the water, barely visible from shore. He says some unique aquatic beast guards this floating land (they have no word for island in their language), and some ancient society lives there keeping wonders no longer meant for this world.
- A trader offers to pay generously for Braqkara tusks (and hide). She proposes to ferry the players to Aqihabara and back to Llyhn to obtain the goods. It is up to the players to decide if they hunt the deadly beasts, try to barter for them or even steal them from a Talath tribe. Either way, it is a dangerous undertaking, but well-rewarded if they survive, and perhaps they can come up with a smart way to minimise their risk. If they fail, passage back to the Eternal City could be a challenge.
- A tribe of Talath have had enough of the blasphemy of their polar brethren. Their comparatively sedentary lives, unchallenged by the great beasts, growing plants, is an insult to the spirit of their species. A conflict has begun, and outright war is imminent. In an act genuinely setting them apart, the polar Talath employ the characters as mediators to try to stop the slaughter. Can they find a way to divert the attackers or bridge the divide?

## Emush

DESIGNATION: Savage world.
TOPOGRAPHY: Barren rocky terrain, mountainous, often unstable. Vast subterranean caverns and complexes.
SENTIENT SPECIES: Im'Zu.
CULTURE: Communal, survivalist and pacifist.
GOVERNANCE: Loose associations.
TRADE: None.
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: None.
NOTABLE CREATURES: None.
ENVIRONMENT: Barely habitable with high gravity cause fatigue and soreness due to exertion in those not accustomed to it. Carrying capacity is significantly reduced. Headaches, digestive issue, circulatory problems are not uncommon due to stress on organs for non-indigenous species. Extreme weather includes radical temperature swings, severe storms, and hurricane-force winds.

Emush is one of the harshest worlds in the known Cosmos in terms of environment and conditions, and it is a testament to the durability of the Im'Zu that they were able to evolve in these conditions. There is very little vegetation on the surface as the severe winds, torrential rains, and unseasonable temperature swings make it difficult for anything to survive. Also, the high gravity makes an organism over a certain size unfeasible due to the force needed to keep upright. Some small woody brush manages to survive, along with lichens and other such surface vegetation. While various insects and small rodents may occasionally be seen, they too mostly avoid the harsh outside conditions. The terrain is rocky in the extreme, with severe sharp jutting crags and mountains. Unshod travel is likely to result in severe injury from lacerations, with the added risk of falling and impaling. Bodies of water are small and scattered, and there is nothing oceanic on the globe. Lakes can be transient as severe heat evaporates them and carries the moisture to another region to be released in torrential hurricanes. In a day it is possible to experience scorching heat followed by violent winds and an ice storm at night.

As a result of these surface conditions, most life on Emush is subterranean. Indeed, the planet is riddled with extensive caverns and tunnels, mostly natural but also created by denizens. These range from huge caverns with striking geological formations, to tiny tubes that only small beings can pass through. Here in the underground, a rich variety of flora and fauna can be found, including various ground and hanging mosses, fungi, large lichens, insects, amphibians, small rodents, and even fish in underground lakes. In the shelter of these caves, life is protected from the raging world outside and has been able to adapt and grow. This is not to say it is lush and bountiful, however, and the Im'Zu struggle to find food daily, but there are biodiversity and an ecosystem.

Many life forms like mosses and grubs have developed bioluminescence in this dark underground existence, and vast glowing caves can be found that are wondrous to outsiders. In other places, however, life exists in total darkness, and species are blind or eyeless as a result. Other locations can be found where small cracks to the surface provide day and night cycles, yet the environment is protected from the worst of the surface elements. Staying long enough on Emush to discover this diversity and wonder however is unlikely as even underground the gravity and other unfavourable conditions wear on any species. There is also the occasional threat of venomous spider and centipede species in the darkness.

The Im'Zu exist in collective communes in this underground world, trying to scrape out an existence. Because of their biology, they cannot develop sophisticated tools and structures, so there is little infrastructure in their society. Indeed, they can do scant more than burrow and snatch prey with their clawed flippers, so there are no cities to be found on this world. Groups settle in caverns that are abundant with insects and worms along with fungi and mosses which are the staples of their diet. Raw of course, as they have no materials or agility to make and sustain

fire, especially as they prefer the most humid caves. Their eggs and young die if too dry, so colonies naturally prefer locations by an underground lake or stream to ensure proper moisture levels.

One thing that can catch visitors unawares is underground rain. Sometimes when there is a torrential storm on the surface, the water trickles down through the porous rocks in larger caverns, especially ones holding underground lakes, and drips through in a sort of underground rainfall. It can be particularly disconcerting to species that cannot see in low or no light when their fire is suddenly extinguished by rain in a cave, not to mention everything is now wet when the cave did not actually provide the expected cover. The worse peril, however, is when such an event causes a sort of underground flash flood in smaller tunnels. Woe to anyone making their way through tighter passages when water suddenly starts to flow through. If a torrent hits a passage, the force violently tumbles anyone in the tunnel - likely killing or seriously injuring them as they are knocked about on the walls and could possibly drown.

While Emush is mostly barren, the total absence of trade has more to do with the inability of the Im'Zu to conduct any sort of craft or industry. From there, the conditions mean no one in their right mind would try to set up business on this hostile world. However, that is not to say there is nothing of value here. As a mostly rocky world with such elaborate subterranean features, there is likely vast mineralogical wealth to be found. Gemstones and precious metals could potentially be excavated if enough effort could be made in the intense gravity, and enough supplies could be brought from off-world to sustain the endeavour.



PLOT HOOK:

- A small group of Im'zu are trying to ingratiate themselves with a human enclave or otherwise try to gain favour with the characters to gain protection. They are offering a lead on a deposit of valuable minerals on Emush, but will need strongs humans to come and retrieve it. As another group is offering the same lead to rival faction the enclave must hurry or lose the opportunity.

# Ezeru

DESIGNATION: Dead world.
TOPOGRAPHY: Mountains and plains wasteland and ashen seas.
SENTIENT SPECIES: Uninhabited, formerly Harith.
CULTURE: None.
GOVERNANCE: None.
TRADE: None.
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: Ezrah ruins.
NOTABLE CREATURES: Uninhabited and lifeless.
ENVIRONMENT: Marginally habitable arid and ash covered. Dead calm midday and night, wind storms at dusk and dawn. Thin atmosphere makes breathing difficult with daily noxious dust storms.

Aeons ago - before the scorching - Ezuru was a beautiful world of vast turquoise oceans, majestic mountains, immense forests and rolling plains; the heart of the Harith civilisation. Late in the Je'ehl expansion era, an unexpected genocidal war against the Harith was launched. The reason for the severe callousness and cruelty of the war is largely unknown, but the Harith were pitilessly hounded across their settled worlds until the Je'ehl armies reached Ezeru. How or why the Je'ehl scorched Ezeru is unknown, but the fact remains that today the world is nothing but a lifeless ashen wasteland.
While the Je'ehl were known to have little empathy for species unresponsive to or resisting the assimilation into their ideals, there is no other instance of aggression on this scale.

The few Harith that were off-world at the time and the even fewer that managed to escape the scorching are long dead, and the only source of knowledge is to be found in the obscure songs vocalised by the Harith in the dead of night. Should the Je'ehl keep any annals of what transpired, they are exceedingly silent about it.

Ezeru remains an ash- and dust-covered wasteland. Every living thing - plant and animal, on land, in the sea or in the sky - is gone. The ground is covered in ash, and as the temperature shifts between night and day choking acrid clouds blow across the emptiness of Ezeru. The once-beautiful seas are brackish with ashen remains - thick grey sludge persists where once crystalline waters flowed. Those few who have secretly visited the world know the true meaning of silence and are haunted by it for the rest of their lives.

Hills and mountains are blasted clean while ash and dust have piled up in valleys over the aeons. Hazardous obscured pitfalls abound, and the unwary can sink into quagmires created from the ashes of a dead world. No plants survive to hold the soil, resulting in a surface speckled by deposits of whatever the wind carries, with rocky crags rising from the fallen dust dunes. Fresh water is nearly impossible to find, and the few bodies of water that remain are grimy and poisoned.
The Harith do not visit nor do they take kindly to their destroyed home being disturbed by others. Setting foot on Ezeru is like treading on a million graves and considered blasphemous.

If mentioned at all, Ezeru is spoken of in hushed tones, and always with morbid reverence as if there is something unresolved or anathema surrounding it.

The massive ruins of Ezrah - the capital of the Harith territory - are supposedly still there, along with all the other abandoned and crumbling splendours of the Harith culture. The devastated Harith civilisation lies in the dust and ash and could hold untold valuables. As with all things, there are those who are uncaring and greedy enough that the silent screams of lost lives are not enough to deter them. It is whispered that entire dilapidated ghost towns dot the globe, containing whatever was once there before, and therefore treasure hunters in search of easy bounty and scholars in search of answers go there risking the wrath of the Harith.

PLOT HOOKS:

- Characters may find themselves approached by scholars yearning for answers and seeking to re-discover lost lore of this once proud species, needing brave, hearty souls to explore this dead world and see what they can recover. Who knows what may yet be hidden deep in these lost lands?



# Ka'Alum Federation

One of the most prominent species in the known worlds, the Ka'Alum have spread wide from their homeworld Ahniar - colonising multiple worlds since they became enlightened. Their aptitude for development and their unemotional disposition have helped them create a vast empire in the form of a united and coordinated federation. While each federation world is a semi-independent entity, they are part of the collective, and the pragmatic nature of the Ka'Alum insures negligible dissent or fracturing. The elected ruling conclave of the federation moves between the worlds ensuring equity, and that all member worlds are routinely reminded of the core laws and practices. Travel hubs ensure constant communication between the worlds, not to mention the transfer of resources, and re-allocation of workers as needed to maintain efficiency.

## Ahniar

DESIGNATION: Core world.
TOPOGRAPHY: Plains, hills and forests.
SENTIENT SPECIES: Ka'Alum and slave population.
CULTURE: Peaceful yet competitive.
GOVERNANCE: Democratic council.
TRADE: Grains and fruits.
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: Shia'far.
WILDLIFE: Soa'rul.
ENVIRONMENT: Sub-tropical and Earth-like with no extraordinary detrimental conditions.

The jewel of the federation, the home-world of the Ka'Alum. In many ways, Ahniar would remind humans who could remember the Earth of their home-world. The thick atmosphere holds substantial heat from its star maintaining a warm moist environment across most of the globe making it roughly half covered with water, and the remaining huge land-masses have a largely subtropical climate. The land-mass is mostly contiguous and level, making travel easy. Despite their inability to swim the Ka'Alum to have long since mastered shipbuilding and seafaring due to the large bodies of water on the globe. Grasslands, prairie, savannah and plains cover much of the land-mass, interspersed by scattered forested areas and a few dense jungles. Mountains are few and characterised by long gentle ascents. Weather patterns follow temperate or subtropical trends globally, denoting regular rainfall across all regions resulting in a very generic ecosphere across the various continents around the globe.

Fishing is abundant in the many oceans across the planet, which have active aquatic life. Because of the amenable climate, the land is also prosperous, providing a sedentary life where cultivating food is easy - leaving the Ka'Alum free to pursue higher callings and cultural pastimes as they please. This agricultural and natural bounty means that grains and fruits both domestic and wild are rich and exotic and are major trading commodities with other worlds. The Ka'Alum use this to bring in materials and resources from off-world and other federation worlds, preserving the natural environment and resources of Ahniar while still advancing the cities and substructure.

Predators are few on Ahniar, and none large enough to be much of a threat to the Ka'Alum. The most massive creature on the planet is the Soa'rul, a massive downy white avian with a wingspan reaching up to 20 cubits. Although armed with nasty talons, Soa'rul are docile herbivores living off the varied exotics fruits found across the continents. In some rare cases, they have been domesticated as sky mounts, used by the conclave to send rapid communications across the world.
Watching these great denizens of the sky soar is a serene and inspiring sight even to the most detached of beings.

Primarily because of their unemotional nature the Ka'Alum civilisation has been without significant strife. As a matter of prudence, the species is generally not hostile, seeking resolution through strategy and planning long before violent conflict, avoiding injury whenever possible. Through strategy and democratic cooperation under elected conclave rule, the Ka'Alum cities on Ahniar rival most other capitals of the core worlds. Every major city is a hub where vessels and guides can be employed to ferry travellers and merchants to the other Ka'Alum federation worlds, different core worlds, the Eternal City itself, or most other places given the right coin and motivation. The port in the capital city of Shia'far is among the most stunning in the known worlds.

## Kor'Tuan

DESIGNATION: Federation colony world.
TOPOGRAPHY: Tropical mountains with overall rough rocky terrain.
SENTIENT SPECIES: None native, Ka'Alum colonists and substantial slave population.
CULTURE: Ka'Alum federation world.
GOVERNANCE: Democratic council.
TRADE: Minerals and masonry materials.
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: Tuan, the capital city.
WILDLIFE: Nothing distinctive.
ENVIRONMENT: Primordial and thin atmosphere.

This world is primordial with generally rough and rocky terrain, having not been worn down by millennia of erosion. Flora and fauna are small, mostly unobtrusive and benign. Overall the climate is warm and humid with a reasonably thin atmosphere making breathing more laborious for humans and several other species - a detrimental factor for the slave workers in the mining activities instituted by the Ka'Alum. When the Ka'Alum discovered this world, it presented an excellent opportunity for raw resources and development.
Abundant mining and quarry resources were available for transport to Ahniar, without any native species to compete with. During the colonisation, the Ka'Alum introduced non-native plant life, agriculture, and other necessities - shaping the environment to fit their purpose. Aquatic life

is more robust than the land-based animals, as is typical of primordial worlds. This again is similar to their home-world, and while materials for ships must be brought from another planet, this sets up a perfect trade symbiosis for the stone that can be exported for buildings. Kor'tuan was an easily colonisable resource-rich world that quickly became a cornerstone of the federations supply chain.

The main hazard on Kor'tuan - several unstable rocky rings circling the world - is also its greatest prospect. While these create dazzling displays at dusk and dawn due to the reflected light of the star, sometimes debris crashes to the ground. Most fragments burn up in the atmosphere creating beautiful streaks in the sky as they flare out, but the impact of larger meteorites can cause devastation.

It is a rare enough occurrence that the hazard is deemed acceptable for global habitation, but some casualties have occurred over the years. Usually, a small impact levels the surrounding countryside or causes a small tidal wave, potentially hitting coastal settlements, but the meteorites themselves are prizes well worth the peril, containing exotic metals and other unusual materials making them treasure-troves of resources to be refined.

While most impacts are relatively small, a few larger ones have blanketed substantial areas it in dust, shaking the ground and caused grave damage to surrounding settlements. One large port city named Tuan is currently the main hub and waypoint on Kor'tuan.

## Ren'Sur

DESIGNATION: Federation colony world.
TOPOGRAPHY: Temperate plains and hills.
SENTIENT SPECIES: None native, Ka'Alum colonists and substantial slave population.
CULTURE: Ka'Alum federation world.
GOVERNANCE: Democratic council.
TRADE: Agricultural.
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: None known.
WILDLIFE: Void entities and distorted local creatures.
CLIMATE: Mild.

Not much is known about Ren'sur by non-Ka'Alum. When discovered, this border-world very much reminded the Ka'Alum of their home-world, and they took to it instantly. Gentle plains and rolling hills of grasses and grains, with a beautiful sky filled with colour from a nearby nebula. Being a border world, it also seemed ideal for easy Void travel to the other federation worlds. Materials can be brought in easily, and the fertile soil makes agricultural products an abundant export. Over time, however, it became clear there was a price to pay for all the beauty and bounty.



As a border world, the distorting effects of the Void quickly became apparent to the Ka'Alum colonisers, and occurrences seemed more common than initially expected when the world was settled. As such, Ren'sur has become something of a training and proving ground for the Ka'Alum. Unlike the other federation worlds, this one poses a regular challenge in fending off and eradicating invasive entities from the Void who seem drawn to the world. While they prefer strategy and peace, the Ka'Alum are not fools or pacifists by any means and maintain militant branches in the federation to ensure they can defend their empire against incursion. Those who survive the trials of Ren'sur - surviving while keeping their composure in tense and lethal circumstances – have proven themselves worthy of serving, and the world has become something of a training ground for the federation.

Due to these characteristics, there are many similarities between the settlement on Ren'sur and Llyhn. A consolidated central infrastructure with border defence ensures the populace is kept somewhat safe from wandering creatures. Outlying towns have patrols and defensive measures as well to protect farmers. Because of the threats, and the fuzzy nature of being a border world, the population is neither vast nor widespread. Nevertheless, because of the yield and training opportunities, it is an important world of the federation.

KA'ALUM FEDERATION PLOT HOOKS:

- Having witnessed the Soa'rul soar above the capital of Ahniar, an aristocrat in Llyhn wants one. Obtaining one is difficult because - while not aggressive - they are huge animals that are disinclined to be handled. The Ka'Alum certainly would not give one up that is already trained and trying to steal one would be problematic for a variety of reasons. If obtained, getting the creature off the world would present its own problems, not to mention gathering a lot of attention.
- Rumours of an exploration of an enormous impact crater on Kor'tuan mention discovery of a type of metal never seen before. This strange black metal from the heavens is extremely hard and is rumoured to have peculiar properties while also being much lighter than one would expect. Possessing and refining such a resource could lead to unimaginable wealth or perhaps it can be utilised in other ways…
- A vast contingent of human slaves is rumoured to be working the quarries of Kor'tuan - or maybe the protagonist characters themselves are slaves seeking to escape the world. Either way, the toil of mining in this thin atmosphere on a dangerous world is too much to tolerate for long, and escape is paramount.
- Are the Ka'Alum secretly training armies on Ren'sur, collecting thousands of slaves for mining resources for war implements on Kor'tuan and the conclave on Ahniar completing plans to move on the core worlds, quashing the other major civilisations of the Cosmos, or maybe even Llyhn itself?





## Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz

DESIGNATION: Savage core world.
TOPOGRAPHY: Global swamps and mangrove jungles, continental rifts with gaseous fissures and fungal forests.
SENTIENT SPECIES: Azenter.
CULTURE: Apostates and pacifists.
GOVERNANCE: Oligarchy.
TRADE: Rare minerals, herbs, fungi and spores.
NOTABLE REGIONS: Puera, Unaja, Trabja, and Omuera.
WILDLIFE: Bruotu, Paboosa and Qaebra.
CLIMATE: Tropical, humid and unstable. Toxic gasses and treacherous swamps make any journey perilous.

The world of Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz is a small volatile globe. From pole to pole, the world is covered in extensive swamps, crisscrossed by colossal fissures and crevasses that spew dangerous gasses into the air. In areas where the bogs are shallow, extensive toxic mangrove-jungles and fungal forests rise from the swamps and on the few spots of solid ground - large knolls of earth and stone that rise from the mire - lie the four only cities to be found on this world: Puera, Unaja, Trabja, and Omuera.
The cities, built on mounds to avoid the fetid waters covering most of the world, are the bastions of the Azenter civilisation on this otherwise utterly savage globe. The swamps are crawling with predators, even the slightest injury gets infected almost immediately, and the poisonous gasses from the underground are a constant invisible danger to those who venture beyond the mounds.
As a result, travel between cities is rare and usually conducted by barge or in some cases caravans of Qaebra, a local six-legged beast well-suited for negotiating wetlands due to their unusually large flat feet. Due to the heightened risk of infection and associated diseases, the Azenter have developed strict regimens of cleanliness.

Except for gathering resources and necessities, the Azenter people rarely venture far into the wilds surrounding the mounds. Apprehensive of the beasts that roam these places, a few of the hardier Azenter traverse the bleak and sickening landscape to gather the few but valuable resources that the putrid wastes provide.

All four cities retain or lie close to fairly stable Void rifts. Puera sits upon one of the higher, more rocky mounds and is the larger of the four ports. It is the primary seat of power of the Azenter, not only due to its size but also because of its position as a central trading hub due to a Void rift substantial enough to allow large vessels passage to the docks of the city. Puera also holds numerous foundries processing the peat metals found in the surrounding bogs, their waste buckets placed to pour down unto the swamps should anything attempt to assail them.

Unaja sits not far from the more massive fungal forests, making it a hub for gathering and trading rare fungi, spores and herbs found only on this world. As such Unaja is naturally sought by physicians, apothecaries and others in need of the therapeutic goods found here.



Trabja lies close to fissures emitting exotic gasses, that they capture and retain in vats and membranes to sell to off-worlders at exorbitant prices.

Omuera lies somewhat secluded and is sparsely populated, partly because the surrounding wilds are infested with Bruotu - a particularly violent and savage type of indigenous beasts - but also as a result of rumours about unsanctioned religious activity in and surrounding the city. The city is centrally located, however, and therefore annual gatherings of the Azenter gentry from the other cities take place here providing a status belying its otherwise lowly stature.

The detailed history of the Azenter is generally unknown to outsiders, but rumours of dark, duplicitous affairs are rife among Voidfarers returning from the world.

While the inhabitants retain a habitually peaceful and pacifist demeanour, they are fervent in their denunciation of faith and organised religion, tolerating no prayers or other religious activities in their presence. If queried about this oddity or their origins, they pointedly veer off the subject or leave the conversation altogether.

Foreigners visiting Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz quickly notice the Azenter displaying profound cleanliness and much protocol and propriety is grounded in washing rituals and purity adherence. For the observant there seems to be an apparent lack of elders, fostering speculations about secrets and macabre practices.

The truth is that the Azenter are not native to Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz, but rather were brought here in aeons past. A powerful being now known as the Hooded One came

to their homeworld asserting that catastrophe was to befall them and that he was their only hope and saviour. Some believed the being while others did not.
For many days the Hooded One prophesied and built great arks to take his flock away from their doomed world. When the arks were finished, he and his consorts gathered his followers and left this world never to return, saving them from an unknown fate.
What happened in the Void and in the first years upon Nue'v Hezbe'Ranz is mostly unknown, but the conviction of the Azenter - as they now called themselves - had turned into fear and loathing as their very features had changed. They were perhaps saved but also reborn in the image of the being who had torn them from their home: The Hooded One.

This change and rebirth, however, was not the end and the Azenter continue to transform - or instead regress - into monstrous versions of themselves. It seems that intense emotion, particularly religious fervour, spurs this change, making them fear outbursts of anger, resentment and hostility.
This has encouraged an almost fanatical devotion to pacifism and peaceability among the entire population. Those who fall prey to their natural instincts of emotive and passionate behaviour are ostracised, and as such sentiments are often further perpetuated by exclusion, these individuals quickly regress, with horrendous metamorphoses as a result.

Up until a point regressed Azenter retain their sentience and cognitive capabilities. Individuals showing signs of regression are sought, retrieved and exiled to the ruins of the Temple of the Hooded One buried beneath Omuera, for they still retain a great deal of intelligence and personality.
However, should they continue to regress, the metamorphoses eventually cause them to lose all understanding and individuality along with any recognisable features, becoming large monstrous beasts called Bruotu. These are banished into the swamps to dwell with the others like them - explaining the substantial numbers around Omuera. Naturally, this has caused a loathing of the Hooded One and religion in general, as well as the shame of the practices they have to keep secret and hidden from off-worlders.

Azenter are polite, calm, and almost callous in their lack of emotion, appearing passive and disinterested towards most things. Their homes are filled with mirrors, which - while it seems to be population-wide narcissism - is in fact to spot any burgeoning metamorphosis and to serve as a constant reminder of their degenerated state and the profanity the Hooded One has infused in them.

While the dangers of the bogs and swamps are undisputable, the underlying reason for the Azenter's dislike of the swamps lies in the indignity and fear of risking encountering degenerated members of their own kin; facing what they themselves might become - a mirror of their own ruin.

The Azenter stand between one-and-a-half to two metres tall, and appear oddly human, but with distinctly different characteristics such as anemone-like hair, strange eyes and nearly insectoid protrusions.

They dress in flimsy and extravagant clothing, often decorated with feathers and other accessories.

They are governed by strict protocol and the head apostate reign supreme from Puera. A council of four Criada aid as the executives of the will of the apostate. One elected and serving in each of the four cities. The Criada act as conclave to the apostate, but he or she has the final verdict in all matters. The role of the Criada is primarily to identify and apprehend anyone showing signs of regression, albeit this is kept quiet in areas frequented by foreign traders and visitors. The outward responsibilities of the Criada is to retain the peacefulness of the flock and govern the affairs of the city.
To carry out their responsibilities each Criad has subordinate staff that handles the day-to-day affairs in each city as well as armed partisans in charge of order and defence, should any of the Bruotu beyond the mounds attempt to enter a city proper.

The Paboosa is a disgusting but oddly fascinating creature. It resembles a huge slug, reaching up to nearly forty metres in length and ten metres around, dwelling within the numerous toxic fungi jungles and deep watery canyons. The creature is mostly docile, feasting on large hardened outcroppings of sulphur that jut from the canyons and blooms of large fungal patches within the forests and jungles. However, in its trail, it leaves hunks of digested minerals and gasses hardened into an ore-like substance that, when forged, can produce extremely durable and sharp tools.

Qaebra are pests more than anything. Resembling goats with a set of extra legs and large padded feet ideal for traversing marshy terrain, they have long hairless tails and two sets of horns and stand about a metre high at the shoulder and two and a half metres long with their tails. Qaebra usually encroach on the fungus farms the Azenter and eat the rare spores, leaving farms destitute. However, it has been discovered that the faeces of the Qaebra enhances plant growth, especially that of mushrooms and other fungi.

PLOT HOOKS:

- A cult of cognisant regressed has established itself to worship the Hooded One and his consorts in the ancient ruined temple beneath Omuera. They grow bold and begin to venture to the surface causing discord and panic among the Azenter who dare not oppose their hubris for fear of regressing and refrain from asking for help from outsiders for the shame of disclosing their secret.
- While combing a Paboosa trail for ore, the characters discover a Bruotu that retains some of its sentience and can make stuttering half-sentences, revealing that there is more to the beasts than meets the eye.





## Ogé

DESIGNATION: Core world
TOPOGRAPHY: Oceanic, marshy and volcanic.
SENTIENT SPECIES: Ba'Waïkh.
CULTURE: Karmic, hierarchical and strict.
GOVERNANCE: Despotism and fiefdoms.
TRADE: Sea fauna and rare corals.
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: Ilda'iin empire, Shajii and Ajiin fiefdoms.
NOTABLE CREATURES: Dol'nawii.
ENVIRONMENT: Humid subtropical to tropical with constant dim sunlight. Creatures without night vision or other similar abilities suffer penalties due to low light even during the day. Wet marshy conditions are uncomfortable and easily cause disease and infections for non-native species.

The homeworld of the Ba'Waïkh circles a dim brown star nearing the end of its solar life and because of this, even during the day, light conditions are dusky. The native species have evolved larger eyes and other enhanced senses to compensate. At night it is extremely dark, and yet the Ba'Waïkh tend to have minimal artificial lighting, not only because they do not need it, but because flame is problematic on such a damp, wet world. They are clearly of an amphibious evolution, and have no issues with the environment, but would be very uncomfortable in dry arid environments such as Aqihabara.

Much of the world is covered in water, and the continents contain vast expanses of wetlands, rising to volcanic peaks in the centre of most. Indeed, the only reason this world is so full of life given the star it circles is that it is so volcanically active. So frequent is this activity the oceans are warmed more from within than from outside, due to undersea hot springs. This results in a reasonably consistent climate worldwide rather than the expected frozen poles. It also means there are areas of ocean that are so high in sulfuric acid that non-adapted species - such as humans - would suffer acid burns after prolonged exposure or even die.



Plant life across the globe is predominantly of a mossy and fern-like variety. As the dominant flora, the ferns grow to massive size resulting in palm-tree-like ferns up to 30 cubits high. Several variants also exhibit iridescent and even luminescent characteristics, continuing the soft dusky lighting of the world during the night hours. The same is true of the aquatic life, both fish species and coral and seaweed varieties. This endows the oceans with a soft glow as both flora and fauna illuminate the depths, making it easy for the natives to harvest the fruits of the sea.

There are three main continents with multiple smaller ones on Ogé, in addition to a considerable number of smaller island territories, atolls, and the like. The Ilda'iin empire spans two of the three great continents as well as many of the large islands of sufficient size to have sustainable settlements. The third continent holds a minor fiefdom known as Ajiin and is home to and ravaged by a predatory species called Dol'nawii. These creatures grow to upwards of four cubits long and resemble a cross between a massive centipede and a reptile. They are vicious carnivores, extremely fast and agile, with tough armoured hide and an insatiable appetite. Dealing with this threat is a relentless task, and only the Ajiin have been able to retain a few fortified settlements on this huge continent. As the Dol'nawii do not swim or inhabit any other landmass, the continent is mostly abandoned by other Ba'Waïkh.

Since this is an extensively oceanic world, the bounty of the sea is excellent. Fish and other aquatic life abound, and the Ba'Waïkh are accomplished in all manner of marine gathering both for food and trade. Being amphibious, they are adept swimmers capable of long dives and have mastered ship construction, though their craft are somewhat unusual given the native flora they have for materials. The vessels appear almost alive, and indeed portions are because the plants continue to grow in a sort of self-restorative construction. Various corals are valued trade goods because of their fantastic colouration and used in jewellery and other crafts. Some aquatic life is traded not for food but as display pieces in menageries due to their dazzling colours and bioluminescence.

Construction is mostly of mud and plant materials, including sod, cob, and thatch techniques with occasional volcanic rock. This is not to say structures are simple, primitive or dirty inside. After centuries of refinement, the building methods of the Ba'Waïkh result in beautifully sculpted structures that can be several stories tall with organic aesthetics that stand the test of time. Like their shipbuilding, some aspects are living organics, which result in building maintenance that is partially gardening in nature.

Traditionally the governance of Ogé's various nations has been monocracy and fiefdoms. The hereditary ruler and heir of the nearly world-spanning Ilda'iin empire, the Virgin Empress, currently lives in exile in Llyhn. She was the victim of a coup and deposed by her uncle the Grand Vizier of the Ilda'iin empire, who now rules. A civil war between loyalists and the Vizier's followers immediately followed the coup. However, the Empress was too young and untested

to sustain her cause and quickly succumbed - subsequently going into exile with her closest followers. Under the Vizier's rule, the empire has become more avant-garde, upsetting the previous order and with continued unrest among those who still see the Virgin Empress as the sanctioned ruler. Rumours and intrigue abound as to the conditions and reasons surrounding the change of power but since the civil war ended nothing further has come of this.

The Ilda'iin empire is ruled from eastern and western Daliin, twin capitals of the empire on separate continents. Largely self-sustaining, most trade with other worlds and continents brings in luxury items and indulgences for the nobility, while seafood and other marine-based goods are shipped out. The two capitals are grand cities each with multiple Void rifts located on the ocean near expansive harbour complexes.

The Ajiin fiefdom on the third continent has for long been a staunch ally and trading partner of the Ilda'iin empire, however with the changing power structure of the empire disagreement and discontent has developed between the two. Although the Ajiin are not a threat to the empire, their significant fleet can cause aggravation to the empire's maritime activities.

The Shajii fiefdom spans a series of atolls and minor islands with access to rare corals and a port near a Void rift. Its small size and relative insignificance have spared it the attention of the Ilda'iin empire so far, but with the advent of the Grand Vizier, this may change.

PLOT HOOKS:

- As the continent of the Dol'nawii is almost entirely unsettled, a merchant sees an opportunity and hires the characters to explore this land. The task is simple, go in for a set period to explore and see what they can discover. He has partnered with a scholar who shares in this interest, but purely for knowledge. If the characters return with information, resources, specimens, etc. they will be rewarded accordingly.
- Volcanic activity on Ogé is constant and gentle, not violent and eruptive. The Ba'Waïkh stay clear of the fire mountains as the magma-flows are dangerous. An outside trader, however, knows the potential value of the volcanic rock once it has cooled and wants to try to exploit this. Because of the gentle nature of these volcanos, it's relatively safe to get near them, but the Ba'Waïkh do not appreciate the idea of outsiders meddling in these lands. The characters are hired to obtain whatever materials they can harvest, such as obsidian, pumice, and rare crystalline structures.
- Political intrigue finds the characters as agents of the Virgin Empress who wishes to employ them to ferry communications between their people in Llyhn and eastern Daliin, one of the capitals of the Ilda'iin empire. The Vizier will, of course, have agents on the lookout for such things and try to stop them. Should the players break confidence and read the communications, it will almost certainly not end well for them. They must use cunning to avoid being caught and triggering a political incident. This may involve off-world interests such as the Je'ehl Great Ones in the new power setup.

## Sharur Trinity

DESIGNATION: Savage core world.
TOPOGRAPHY: Large continents dominated by wetlands, jungles and plateaus, separated by narrow straits of water.
SENTIENT SPECIES: Timanièm.
CULTURE: Predominantly hunter-gatherer culture dominated by tradition and myth.
GOVERNANCE: Female clans and tribes; males subtly govern by controlling the hatchery.
TRADE: Furs, ivory, wood and animals (smuggled green obsidian).
PROMINENT REGIONS OR LOCATIONS: Spire of Emix, Jaunja Tor, Kymia Iho and Timak Henek.
NOTABLE CREATURES: Rexik and Xtamik-wyrms.
ENVIRONMENT: Tropical to sub-tropical with heavy atmosphere and high humidity which severely fatigues non-indigenous species. Additionally, dense undergrowth and vegetation makes any journey cumbersome and travellers may easily find themselves lost.

The Trinity worlds consist of three globes dominantly covered by dense rainforests and shallow marshes - frequently ravaged by hurricanes and thunderstorms - adding to the already hostile environment and fauna. The three planets of the Sharur Trinity are named after the chief deities in Timanièm mythology: Emix, the Huntress; Kyobr, the Mystic; and Xilmat, the Creator. According to ancient legend, the three deities are said to dwell within the core of each globe, waiting to be awoken one day by the Endless Warrior who will lead the Timanièm into a new era.

The globes orbit each other in strange elliptical patterns, dominating the skies of one another as their orbit brings them near. During close orbit males can traverse the gap flying from one globe to another, while the only option for females to cross the gap is to be carried by males, a privilege bestowed only on the few and only for formal purposes such as the periodic gatherings of clan leaders. The two major globes - Emix and Kyobr - are home to the majority of the species in the form of the female clans, while the third is the sole province of the males and hatchery for the entire species.

Emix is the largest of the three worlds, with dense jungles and unforgiving mountain peaks, deep overgrown canyons and extensive lakes, and at the centre of the dominant continent the Spire of Emix; a massive basalt mesa that shoots nearly a kilometre into the sky.

A small settlement called Emitau, built on the lip of the mesa, is located near one of the few Void perforations known to exist across the Sharur Trinity. The rift exists at the foot of an enormous statue carved in the likeness of Emix.

Emix is rife with massive and savage beasts, many of which are carnivorous, making the world a dangerous place even for the vigilant Timanièm. Hunting and slaying these beasts often serve as rites of passage for uninitiated members of the various tribes of Timanièm, and it is also here that young Timanièm females go to prove themselves worthy to serve as Hahn Kyr, the Great Huntress, who rules over the Sharur.

Kyobr is the intermediate globe, dominated by wetlands and shallow marshy mangroves. This globe is home to Jaunja Tor, the only trading post capable of accommodating Void-vessels on any of the Sharur worlds. The settlement is built on a collection of great platforms raised above the wetlands. Jaunja Tor is among the most ancient settlements of Kyobr and was originally a temporary place for the various Timanièm clans to meet and divide hunting grounds on Emix.
However, when a young Timanièm male named Myska realised that the site was ideally suited as a permanent meeting place, due to its location and relative lack of dangerous flora and fauna, the settlement was founded with the aid of his clan. More platforms have been added as more and more clans embraced the place as the summit ground, and Jaunja Tor grew. Today, Myska has largely been forgotten, but a small shrine to him sits at the heart of Jaunja Tor, in the Plav Resha, the first platform erected.

In recent years, ancient predators - thought long dead - have awoken in the heart of the Mjaskr Swamps to the east of Jaunja Tor and have been harrowing the platforms. Many huntresses and even offworlders have come to the settlement to hunt these ancient beasts that laid asleep beneath the still waters of Kyobr.

Xilmat is the smallest globe, having two main continents covered by a combination of swampland and jungles; and solely inhabited by male Timanièm. It is home to the sacred hatcheries of Timak Henek as well as the Kymia Iho, great earth mounds under which all Hahn Kyr of orbits past are buried. At each Kymia Iho, colossal statues known as the Xijar, carved from the green obsidian that the Timanièm hold sacred, stand guard.

The hatcheries are hidden deep within the jungles on the world's second continent. It is here that males bring the eggs gathered from caverns and grottos on the other globes, believing that the nearness of the deceased Hahn Kyr may strengthen the offspring.

These males are known as Opre, wardens, and their sole purpose is to keep and protect the eggs until the larvae hatch.

Towards the southern pole, deep within the dense dark jungle, stands a massive green obsidian stele carved with mysterious reliefs and symbols that date back further than any recorded Timanièm history. Some believe it is an account of the creation of the Timanièm, while others think it can awaken the Gods from their slumber deep inside the globes.

The Sharur worlds have only two known Void rifts which seem to be haunted by erratic Void-currents, allowing only experienced Voidfarers to navigate them. It is said, however, that every hundred orbits or so a recurring calm allows easy passage to and from the globes.

The Timanièm are hunters and gatherers with female huntresses dominating the various clans, and males taking subservient roles - the only exceptions being those who take on devout responsibilities tending the hatcheries and sacred mounds on Xilmat as well as intermittently carrying females between globes.
Females occupy all positions of authority, and everyone adheres to a strict doctrine passed down through the generations, in which the placement, pursuits and purpose of all individuals are preordained by tradition as interpreted by the Hahn Kyr, the ruling female of all three globes. This deep rooting in mythology and traditions has made the species highly superstitious and suspicious of change with an ingrained intolerance towards those who would presume to question their way of life.

Timanièm tribes are isolated, hidden deep within the jungles, wetlands, mangroves, and canyons across Emix and Kyobr. Females make up the bulk of each tribe, which are ruled with a firm grip by a chieftain huntress known as Ojek while males hold little to no power, functioning primarily in formal responsibilities fulfilling the needs of the females, fertilising and keeping eggs as well as various religious duties. However, the tribes are not entirely autonomous and are in turn ruled by a council consisting of the gathered Ojek, who in turn defer to the judgement of the Hahn Kyr; a dominant leader who does not belong to any clan.
Every thirty orbits members of the council are taken to Emix to compete in the Shalkakyr - a hunting ceremony in which the entrants stalk the feathered Xtamik-wyrm deep in the caverns of the Spire of Emix, determining the next Hahn Kyr. Whichever council member returns with the head of a wyrm is decreed Hahn Kyr.

Trade is limited in the Sharur Trinity, partly because of the difficulties of navigating the Void-rifts leading to the globes. Rare woods and hides from Emix make up the bulk of tradeable goods, with ivory from various animals across the trinity being prized highly due to rarity.
Certain indigenous animals are caught and sold as pets while larger more dangerous ones are taken for menageries and arenas across the core worlds. However, the most profitable trade from the trinity - and the most dangerous - is the secretive trade in green obsidian.

Green obsidian is a sacred stone and symbol of pride which the Timanièm protect vigilantly. Any offworlder caught holding, trying to transport or sell it is dealt with quickly and harshly, which makes the price of the few pieces that get appropriated exorbitant.

The wild places of the Sharur Trinity are rampant with vicious creatures that can threaten even accomplished Timanièm huntresses, much less a lost Voidfarer. Two such animals hold prominence in Timanièm culture and are known beyond the globes of the Sharur trinity.

The Rexik dwells solely on Emix and is considered sacred. Standing as tall as a female Timanièm it has a bulky frame with massive forearms and small, nimble hind legs. It principally propels itself forward on its front knuckles, but can also climb trees, swinging from branches and vines, with ease. It has a naturally thick hide of mottled brown and black providing camouflage in the dense foliage of its environment. It uses its keen sense of smell and hearing to locate prey in the limited visibility of the dense undergrowth of the Emix jungles, making it a resourceful predator. The creature has gigantic claws and large tusks that grow from its lower jaw and a thick mane of pointed bristles that start at its broad forehead and work down its spine and arms.

The Xtamik-wyrm is a beast renowned across the Cosmos. The wyrms delve underground in vast tunnel networks making their nests deep in the bowels of Emix and only rarely surface. Because of this, it is difficult to gauge their full size, but it is estimated that they can grow up to over a hundred metres long when fully mature. Thick red-blue scales cover their bodies, a mane of spikey plumage rings their heads, and massive jaws lined with long fangs splutter noxious breath at intruders.

PLOT HOOKS:

- The characters intend to study a relief from the stele on Xilmat said to resemble an icon representing Earth.
- A green obsidian dagger is found among the possessions of a character, begging the question of how it got there and what can be done to avoid the ire of the Timanièm.
- The characters travel to Sharur to retrieve an enclave-emissary, but when they find her, she is held prisoner for having desecrated tribal customs.

Player name:

# Black Void

Name: Species: Homeworld:
Gender: Age: Skin: Eyes: Hair:
Build: Appearance:

## Personality

Desire and Motivation:

Dislikes, Secrets and Regrets

Philosophy & Principles:

## Mannerism

Quirks and Habits:

Sayings:

## Origin

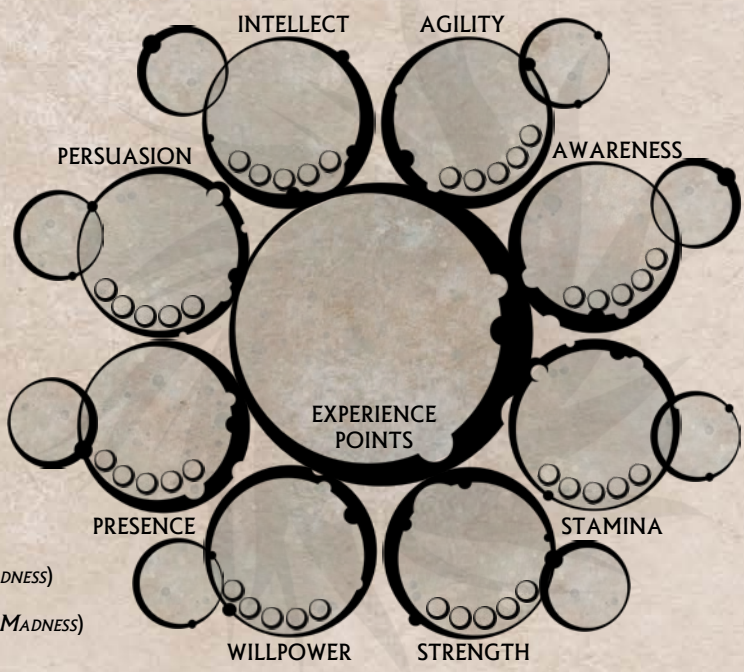
Ancestry and Relations:

Caste:
Faction and Allegiance:

Occupation:
Patron:

## Wastah

## Enlightenment




## Sanity

Total Sanity
Anxious ( *+1 to Madness*)
Disturbed ( *+3 to Madness*)

Madness

## Health

Total Health
Hurt (*-1 Penalty*)
Injured (*-3 Penalty*)
Dead

## Background

| Benefit | Cost |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

## Attributes

| Benefit | Cost |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

## Powers

| | Ranking | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

## Skills

| Specialisation | Ranking | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

## Combat Skills

| Specialisation | Ranking | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

BLACK VOID

Character history:

Friends & Allies:

Known Enemies:

Notable People:

Notable Experiences:

## MOVEMENT
(km/hour)

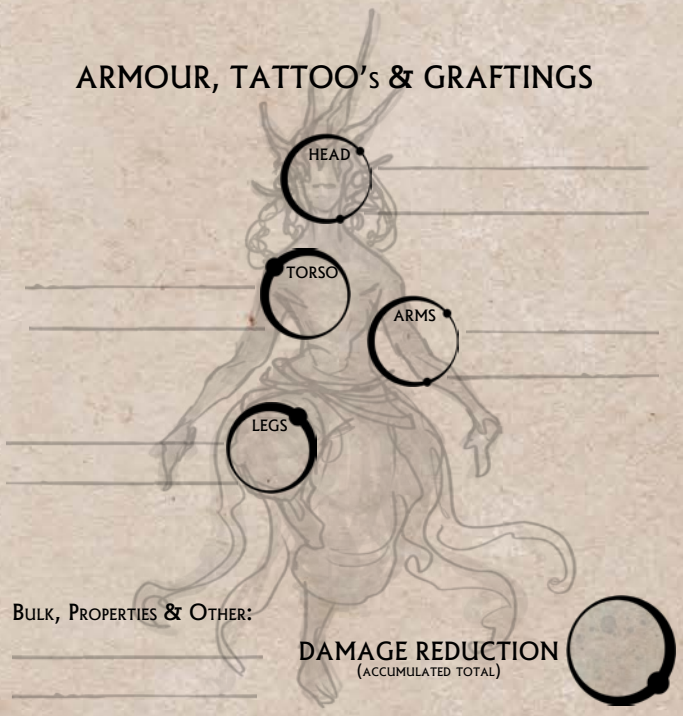
Walking Speed: _____

Running Speed (x2): _____

Sprinting Speed (x4): _____

Combat Speed: ◯
(metres/round)

## ARMOUR, TATTOO's & GRAFTINGS




Bulk, Properties & Other:

DAMAGE REDUCTION ◯
(accumulated total)

## WEALTH

## DEFENCE VALUE

Agility Modifier: _____

Skill Modifier: _____

Shield Modifier: _____

Other Modifiers: _____

DEFENCE VALUE ◯

## PROPERTY / ASSETS

## EQUIPMENT

## WEAPONS

| Type | Size | Range | Attack Modifier | Speed | Damage | Properties | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

# Glossary

ACTION ROLL: A dice roll determining the success or failure of an attempted action.
ANTAGONIST: An adversary to the characters in the story.
ARBITER: The participant producing and controlling the story as well as enacting all personages other than the characters. Sometimes referred to as Game Master, GM or other similar appellations.
ATTRIBUTES: Physical, mental or other non-human features.
AWE: A psychological effect influencing others to act favourably towards the awe-inspiring person.

BACKGROUNDS: Particular historical advantage that a character may utilise in the game.
BLOOD POTENCY: Blood potency is calculated by totalling the point values of a creature's Traits, Talents, Attributes, Powers and Enlightenment.
BLOOD RITUALS: Supranatural abilities enabling characters to imbue boons and fortunes (granting benefits) or to perform sacrificial divination (granting insight into possibilities).
BONUS MODIFIER: A positive modifier to a dice roll. You must add the bonus to the roll and use the adjusted total.

CHARACTER: A player's persona or avatar in the game.
CHARACTERISTICS: A numerical configuration of an item's qualities or properties.
COMBAT MISHAP: A combat mishap occurs when a combat action is a critical failure and induces a roll on the mishap table.
COSMIC BEINGS AND SPECIES: These species are from another world than Earth and can be otherworldly and outlandish but generally do not possess any Void, esoteric or Daimonic capabilities or powers.
COSMOS: The tangible physical world.
CRITICAL FAILURE: A natural roll of 1 on an Action-roll causes a disastrous botch inducing additional detrimental consequences to the already failed action.

DAMAGE REDUCTION: The numerical representation of the protection a character has, meaning the amount deducted from damage and injury sustained from physical attacks.
DEFENCE VALUE: The numerical representation of the difficulty of hitting someone in combat.
DELIRIUM: A psychological effect imbuing the affected with various detrimental effects.

ENLIGHTENMENT: The understanding of reality and beyond. Enlightened individuals are ascended and gain benefits such as being able to navigate the Void and other capabilities.
ESOTERIC ENTITY OR BEING: Esoteric beings are between Cosmic species and Void entities, such as Daimons, Djann, Demi-gods and so on. Esoteric beings have Void powers or other supranatural abilities but are not actual Void entities.

EXCEPTIONAL HIT: A combat action success comprising an exceptional success enables the combatant to roll on a table causing additional effects to the attack.
EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS: A natural roll of 12 on an action roll with difficulty 11 or less causes an extraordinary achievement superseding an ordinary success. For actions with difficulties of 12 or higher a secondary dice-roll of 12 is required to achieve an exceptional success.

FEAR: A psychological effect causing people to act uncontrollably in response to a perceived or real source of horror.
FLAW: A particular imperfection displayed by someone within a given physical, mental or social capacity.

HALFBLOOD: A person whose parentage is a mix between human and another Cosmic species.
HEALTH: The numerical representation of the vitality of characters, creatures and so on. An injury causes a decrease in Health score.

LLYHN: The main stage of the Black Void. A cosmopolis governed by the Unseen Rulers at the centre of a massive Void convergence enabling Void vessels to conduct trade with worlds across the Cosmos and Void.

MYSTICISM: The ability to channel the distorting effect of the Void and alter (Cosmic) reality.

NPC: Non-player character, a personage controlled by the Arbiter.

PENALTY: A negative modifier to a dice roll. You need to subtract the penalty from the roll and use the adjusted result.
POWERS: Supranatural capabilities typically possessed by esoteric and other Void-touched beings.
PROTAGONIST: Another term for the player characters.
PUREBLOOD: A human with a clear hereditary lineage to Earth. Pureblood has nothing to do with race, only species.

RANGE: Distances divided into categories for easy (non-specific) application.
RANKING: The numerical representation of an individual's capability within a given skill, ability, power, and so on.

SANITY: The numerical representation of the mental steadiness of characters. While a reduction in Sanity points induce temporary madness the depletion of Sanity points indicate that a character has sunk into lunacy and is no longer controllable.
SIZE: A categorisation of sizes of objects, creatures, items and people.
SKILLS: Learned abilities providing proficiency within a given field or area.
SPECIALISATION: An advanced capability within a specific skill.

TALENTS: A particular aptitude displayed by someone within a given physical, mental or social capacity.
TRAITS: Inherent characteristics that define a character's basic physical, mental and social competences.

VEIL: A metaphysical entity dividing the Void from the Cosmos.
VEILWALKER: Another term for Voidfarer.
VOID: An oblivious ethereal ocean of unreality; catalyst, chaos and change.
VOID CURRENT/TORRENT: A flow from one Void rupture to another enabling navigation within the ethereal oblivion of the Void.
VOID ENTITIES: These entities are born of the Void and do not conform to Cosmic laws of reality.
VOIDFARER: A capable mariner of the ethereal ocean known as the void.
VOIDFARING: Traversing and navigating the void.
VOIDMARKED: A person who either has parentage of human and esoteric descend or who has somehow been "touched" by the influence of the Void such as Void-distortion.
VOID VESSEL: A ship or other vessel built for traversing the Void.

WASTAH: Wastah is knowing the right people in the right places and having enough social clout or sway with them to favour you or act on your behalf.
WEAPON TYPE: There are three basic weapon types - melee weapons, missile weapons and thrown weapons.



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*We'll see you all in the Void!*

*- Chris*

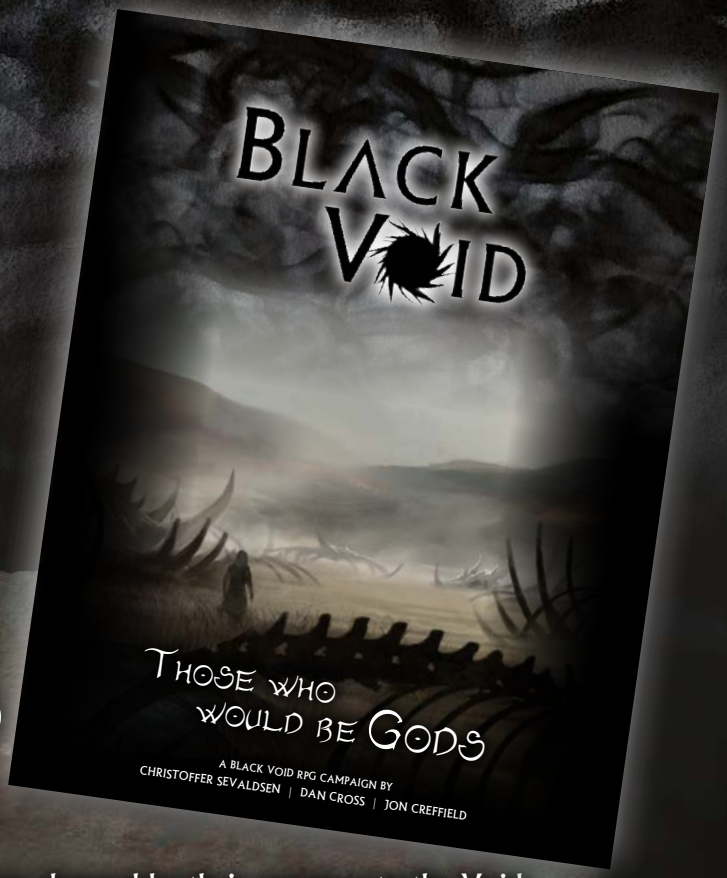


# Survival is only the beginning...!

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| Core Rule Book | BVG001 |
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## Those who would be Gods

A BLACK VOID RPG campaign

The Qamsa, once mortal Babylonians, were forever changed by their exposure to the Void and otherworldly entities following the cataclysmic events on Earth. Their quest for power was sparked by outrage at mankind's mistreatment and a desire to find Earth once more.

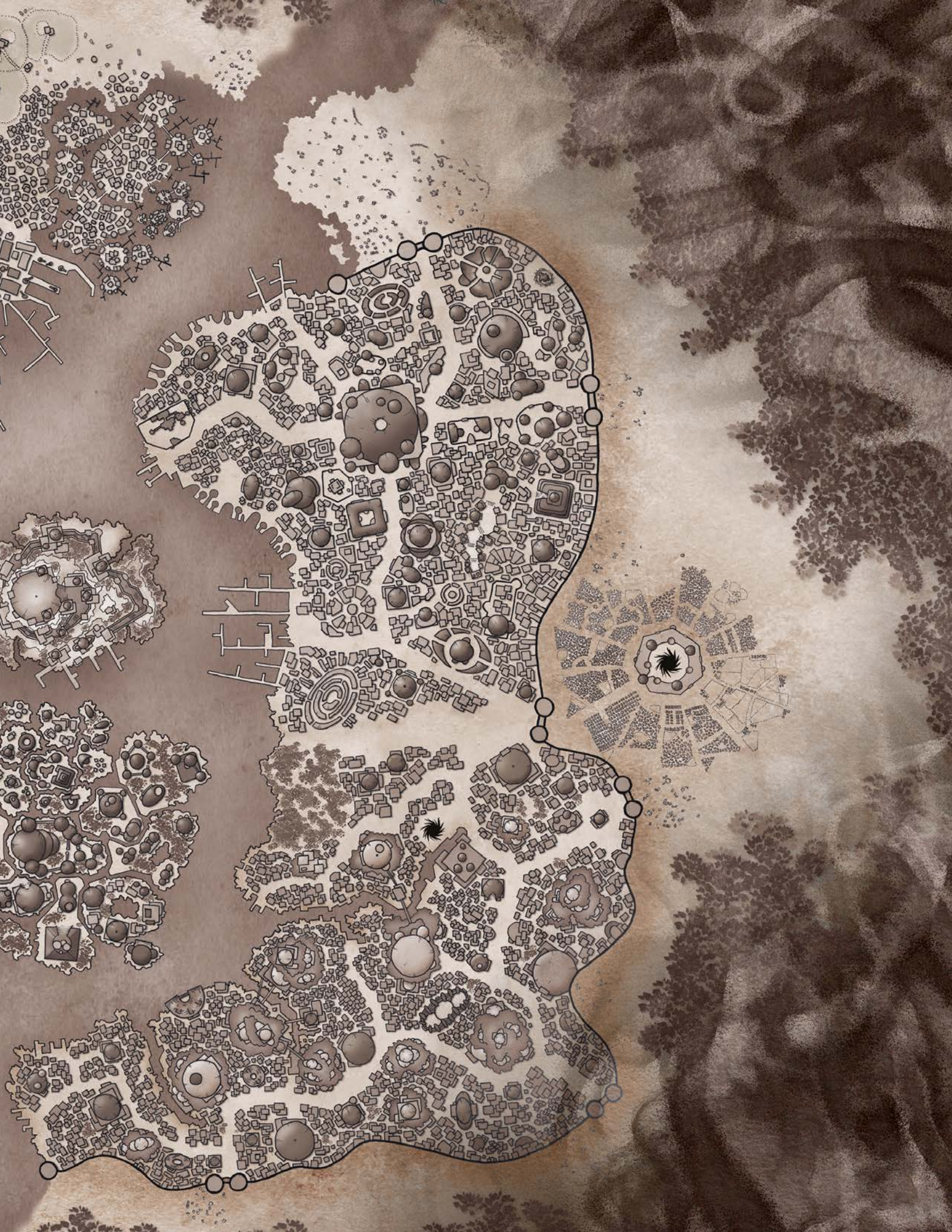
The abduction of an enclave elder sparks a chain of events that reveal dark furtive ties to the past, rattle the tenuous stability of the Feeradani enclave and threatens all of mankind.

The central themes, species and locations of the Black Void setting are showcased throughout the campaign to introduce new players to the overall spirit of the game as it takes the protagonists on a harrowing journey through multiple districts of the Eternal city, into the dark and deadly jungles of Llyhn and across the Void to an ominous borderworld where those who would be Gods dwell.

The THOSE WHO WOULD BE GODS campaign is presented in three parts. The plot has linear milestones for characters to achieve, with numerous hooks for the protagonists to follow and sub-plots to further explore if desired. Each part is playable on its own, but truly come to life when played as a continuing story. The campaign is made for newly created characters but can be adapted to fit characters that have advanced.

Written by Christoffer Sevaldsen, Dan Cross (Eldritch RPG and others) and Jon Creffield (Troll lord games, The slayers guides, and others).

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# Survival is only the beginning...!

In the days when Babylon was the greatest city on Earth, mankind lived in placid ignorance of the grandeur, vastness and horror of the Cosmos. Following cataclysmic events on Earth the fragile Veil between reality and the Void was shattered and the truth of existence was revealed. As mankind cried to their Gods for salvation, they were torn from Earth by Void torrents and the surviving peoples were scattered among the stars. Countless where lost and mankind seemed all but perished.

Over the decades the lone survivors, stragglers and ragged remnants of mankind's tribes struggled for survival across countless uncaring worlds. However, a few managed to go beyond mere subsistence and travelled the Void currents to find fabled Llyhn, epicentre of the Cosmos. The survivors congregated and created enclaves within the Eternal City - small communities where mankind could survive and start to rebuild all which was lost.

You are descendants of the survivors from Earth, the lost cradle of humanity. Llyhn is your home now. Swarming with outlandish life forms, eccentric Daimons and fickle demigods; it is a swelling cosmopolis of intrigue, wonder, treachery, corruption, beauty, decadence and eldritch menace.
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