On The Shoulders Of Heroes



Volume I Bellög

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On the Shoulders of Heroes

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FOREWORD

On a lovely summer afternoon in 2011 we decided to start work on our own campaign setting. On the Shoulders of Heroes was born and, over the course of the years, developed from a personal project to a full-time job. In spring 2017 we were ready to show the world what we'd been working on for all these years - we had beautiful artwork and we had many pages full of stories, backgrounds and rules. We started posting preview material, articles and artwork on our Facebook page, which allowed us to connect to fans and the community.

The next step was to get the product printed, shipped and into your hands. For the first official printing run we decided to go to Kickstarter. For us this was a natural choice. It would allow us to print on demand, reducing our production costs and the environmental impact. We wanted to work with people we know so we could guarantee a high-quality product that will be delivered on time. Because of your support we managed to produce the book that you are now holding in your hands! We can't thank you enough for that and hope that it will meet your every expectation.

This book contains all you need to know to set your adventure on the continent of Bellög, the main continent in the world of On the Shoulders of Heroes. If you are a long-time enthusiast of fantasy and role-playing games, you will find many familiar creatures and premises in this book. Through the decades many iconic and wonderful worlds and stories have been created for players to enjoy, but the goal of this book is not as much as to do something radically different but to allow you and yours to return to a simpler time – a world where dwarves and humans fight orcs and goblins. In some way the goal of this campaign is to go back to the basics. We certainly hope that these established fantasy icons, revived gods and traditional alliances will make both veteran and new players feel welcome in this campaign world.

Despite the intentional nostalgia and old school feeling this setting wishes to convey, many novelties await you within these pages. For players the On the Shoulders of Heroes setting offers a wide variety of redesigned races to choose during character creation, many new feats and new items and materials to aid them during their adventures:

Chapter 1 features an introduction: things you'll need to know before you set foot on the continent.

Chapter 2 introduces players to new races, including the tough half-giants, mystical gnolls, burly bugbears and brooding trow. It offers redesigned rules for almost all traditional races and some new traits that can be chosen at character creation.

Chapter 3 details character classes. It's designed to help players figure out their character's place in society.

Chapter 4 offers new, language rules to fit the campaign's themes of wilderness and isolation. There are some house rules on existing skills and feats. You can find a wellspring of new feats, as well as backgrounds and optional rules.

Chapter 5 details the countries on the continent, their history, politics and lay-out.

Chapter 6 gives details on gods and religions, as well as more information about the cosmos and afterlife.

Chapter 7 provides rules for new special materials, such as arcane iron and dragonwood, and new weapons such as the hooked spear and the trollhammer.

Chapter 8 focuses on redesigned and new monsters to combat your party and gives so background on existing monster.

Chapter 9 shows some example heroes and how they can influence your campaign.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overcome by a terrible sense of fear for the first time in his life, Vuun the Fiery raised his heavy steel shield in a vain attempt to ward off the shambling horde of the undead. Fueled by rage and rising desperation, his war axe struck time after time, hacking at his attackers. But for every zombie he felled, another took its place. On his right hand Brül, servant of Ilmarinen, struggled to stem the tide as well. The dwarves' thick arms glistened with sweat and gore, and meaty thuds followed the strokes of his maul. Exploring an abandoned moat house seemed like a great opportunity for adventure for the brothers, but not all members of their motley crew were as comfortable in the stony confines of the earth. Sparrow, a hulking bugbear, covered in black dye and matted fur, cowered behind the shoulders of his dwarf bodyguards, whispering prayers of healing and making complicated gestures intended to summon the creatures of the earth. He did not carry arms, nor did he seem comfortable surrounded by so much death. Guarding the rear all by himself was Ghan, a gnoll warrior hailing from the western parts of Bellög. Although known for bravado on the surface, it was clear he struggled to maintain his composure in the cramped, moss-choked hallways. Of course, two had kept the rear at the beginning; the half-elf mage Kaari had fallen halfway through the stone corridor, and although the brothers had struggled to pull him into the embrace of Sparrow, the ravenous dead proved unwilling to part with their morsel. His wand shed a haunting spotlight as it was slowly sputtering out, distorted by dragging feet, grasping claws and splattering chunks of flesh. As Vuun pushed hard into the wall of undead, he swore he could see a doorway at the end of the tunnel. Only sixty more feet to the arch. As he struggled, for the lives of his friends and his own, their first meeting flashed before his eyes.

"We will not take less than equal share." repeated the slim blonde half-elf, starting to lose his patience with the greedy dwarves. Behind them, the rest of the group was playing dice and trying their best not to get involved in the negotiations. Vuun snorted, stroked his red braided beard, pondering. "But I will get first choice of enchanted weapons." he offered, offering a beefy fist and a sly smile at the same time. The half-elf sighed and shook his hand. "You will not regret trusting us, half-elf," offered Brül, "in Bakkesat they say that each dwarf of the Ironhide clan is worth ten of another." He laughed at his own boast and slapped his brother's shoulder. Kaari turned to the table, where their other allies feigned disinterest. Placing a silver on the table with a slender hand he smiled at his long-time companions. "Let's go get that gold my friends, this round is on me!" Ghan patted the giant hand of his bugbear friend and rose from his seat, barking with excitement "To the moat house!".



Your first on the Shoulders of Heroes campaign

Greetings traveler! This part of the book is designed to guide you on your first trip to the continent. Whether you are running the game or playing, it will give you an idea of what to expect.

Welcome to Bellög

Meet your allies in the tavern, bond over a jug of ale and forge friendship through peril. Wise old crones, shrouded oracles and gold-toothed merchants await to send your party on the adventure of a life-time – be it for their own gain, the world's, or yours. On your journeys you might encounter stubborn dwarves, whimsical elves and drunk halflings, as well as other folk of fantasy. Explore the endless forests, towering mountains, frothing seas and forgotten tombs. Prepare to don you armor and descent into the dungeons! Monsters await those that would invade their realm to steal their treasure, from dragons to giants, to goblins and orcs. Gain wealth and reputation, forge your alliances carefully and take your place among those that they call heroes.

Environment
Seas of pines, surrounded by beige moors, resting in the valleys between mountains: the continent is a beautiful and desolate place. Many of its countries see cold winters and temperate summers. It's a time when people have not spread to every corner of the world, nor have most of them conglomerated in towns. Several races still live a nomadic lifestyle, wandering the plains and forests, following the herds they hunt, or earning their income through odd jobs. Most common folk live with their family on remote farmsteads or in small hamlets (with maybe up to three other families). There are a towns and villages out there, but they are few and far between. Room for expansion and exploration a plenty for the budding adventurer.

Clash of cultures
Many sentient races call the continent home. They have their own values when it comes to personal behavior, laws, inter-species contact and prefer vastly different ways of life. It's not that people commonly hate one-another, but they often have trouble understanding each other's point of view. This misunderstanding is enhanced by their isolated ways of life, the language barrier, great variations in tradition and their vastly different lifespans. People in towns live in clusters of their own kind, but trade and interact in public places. Superstition and miscommunication form wedges between peoples.

Adventurers, in general, are exceptional individuals who have seen more of the world, have received extensive training, and are in frequent contact with people of other cultures. They work together freely with others, building bridges and overcoming foes and adversity together. Adventurers are the heroes of this world, shaping its future with their actions – for better or for worse.

A simpler time
People know their land, their family and their neighbors well, but few have received any formal education. Commoners can't read or write, or speak foreign languages, but hunt, fight, forage and craft their own goods. Specialists, such as smiths, bowyers and sages, are rare and sought-after. People learn from their parents, from folk stories and ballads sang by traveling bards.

Many of the houses on the continent are simple, wooden structures. They lack modern conveniences, such as sewers, which are a costly modern invention. Only in towns and fortresses can such structures sometimes be found. Outhouses are the norm. People draw water from streams and rivers, or wells. Villages are surrounded by earthen walls or wooden palisades. Stone fortifications are a dwarven invention, and rare in human lands.

Roads are simple, wagon worn paths between larger villages, towns and mines. Hardened roads are extremely rare, as they are costly to lay and maintain. Travelers prefer to cluster together in caravans or use waterways for safety. Trade routes are indicated on the large color map of the continent.

Countries on the continents have borders and governments, but these do not actually exert active control on their inhabitants. In practicality they lack resources to govern their own lands, delegating everyday tasks to village elders, warlords and minor rulers. Few countries have fund to maintain standing armies and few towns have the budget to maintain a professional town guard. People are expected to protect what is theirs and are fiercely proud of their home, family and land. They help their neighbors in time of need. Only in rare cases will rulers gather and dispatch professional soldiers to handle problems and disputes.

Vaguely familiar
On the Shoulders of Heroes is a world full of magic and monsters - and full of common people that are trying to find their way in such a wondrous place. We hope that you will find familiarities that will make you feel welcome. We've tried to shed light on some aspects of life in a fantasy world that you might have never considered, and we hope that re-thinking them will be an interesting experience for you and your players. Many of the rules and ideas presented in this book might not be for you, or your table. Take from it what you will and what you like. If you prefer to focus on cool heroes doing cool things, feel free to build your campaign around that.

Timeline

This timeline focusses its perspective on events that shaped dwarven and human culture.

Age of Gods and Legends

< -6000 c. – Unknown civilizations build alien structures under what will one day be Nyphvile.

~ -6000 c. – The Dragon Kings build their first cities and rule the primitive folk with an iron fist.

~ -5200 c. – Several of the giant tribes unite in a war effort against their dragon overlords.

~ -5000 c. – The Giant Kingdoms form after a great gathering of tribes.

~ -4000 c. – Hobgoblins found Sukkō and their first dynasty.

Age of Giants

-3200 c. – King Siegfrir the Wild, ruler of the Twin cities, first king of dwarvenkind is born.

-3101 c. – Heraldir the Wise, heir of Siegfrir, is born.

-3000 c. – Dwarves build Ambolt and found Bakkesat.

-2854 c. – Armirir the Brave, Destroyer of Kobolds, heir of Armir, is born.

-2823 c. – King Siegfrir dies of unknown illness. His son, Heraldir, inherits the throne.

-2781 c. – Armirir leads his people in a campaign against the Dragon Kingdoms.

-2776 c. – The Dragon Kingdoms fall. The last kobolds retreat into their tunnels and never return.

-2616 c. – Alomir, Founder of the Fist, heir of Armirir, is born.

-2400 c. – King Armirir dies of disease. His son Alomir, inherits the throne.

-2251 c. – King Alomir is killed by unknown assassin.

-2200 c. – The Empire of Smaragdus falls. The Last Dragon Lord escapes to the continent of Solath and curses the land that is now Kuoros.

-2100 c. – The Guardians of Lore found the city of Nyphvile.

-2000 c. – Escaped human slaves bring word of their oppression to the dwarves, although the dwarves do not see the need to act.

-1850 c. – The first human clans free themselves from the giants, south of Lake Atho.

-1099 c. – Bormir the Friendly, heir to Ragmir is born.

-719 c. – King Ragmir dies of old age, his son Bormir inherits the throne.

-616 c. – Bormir, king of dwarves, gathers a group of heroes in an attempt to defeat the giants. The heroes receive the mask of the Vulgaris Magistralis from the gods to unite mankind behind a single leader.

-615 c. – King Bormir dies at the hands of unknown assassin, his son Frolir inherits the throne.

-500 c. – Humans and dwarves unite to defeat their giant oppressors.

Age of Man

0 – Vainamoinen names himself the first jarl.

2 – Different tribes come together to form Kesma. Vainamoinen beats the Vulgaris Magistralis to a push in armed combat. The Magistralis, aware of the support Vainamoinen has gathered, gathers his wisdom and grands him a nation of his own.

2 – Koti is founded in Kesma, marking the capitol of their independent nation.

3 – The first half-orcs appear.

9 – The name Gamleland becomes commonly used for the lands in the north.

290 – Merma is founded by pioneers. Men first ally with halflings.

382 – Tuuli Verisi is founded by an alliance of pirates and trow.

783 – Vuorilas is founded by Ürtis, The Mountain King.

788 – Vainamoinen distances himself from his throne. He feels it is time for a new generation to rule.

1001 – Vainomir the Noble, Prince of Dwarvenkind is born.

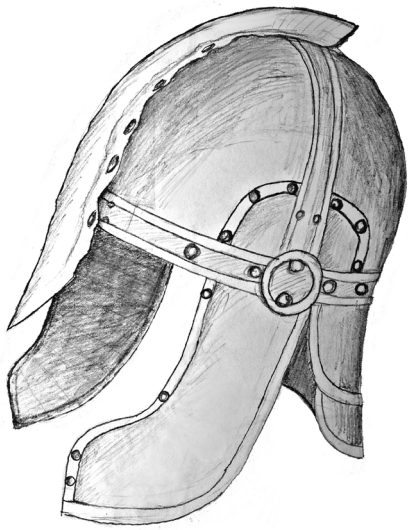
1192 – The first pirates, led by captain Kuoros, found Narina, it does not take long before it becomes a separate territory.

1260 – Adaltram is born.

1278 – Adaltram kills Kin Tooth, Kuohammas, the green dragon of the forest and loots his lair. Forty horses are used to haul the loot.

1284 – Adaltram, becomes jarl of Kesma.

The current year is 1293.



Chapter 2: Races

The fire was toasty, the tavern filled to capacity. The party had made their way to a city called Aalolaar and were resting up before their big journey. "I have never trusted trow, they are too quiet." Brül scuffed and waved at their helmsman Xox dismissively. "Maybe dwarves are too loud." interrupted Kaari, dancing a coin between his fingers. The dwarf grunted. "I think elves are too quiet as well. Problem with folk too nimble for their own good, is that they eventually start to believe that nobody notices them pocketing gold from their pouch." Surprisingly quick for a dwarf his hand grabbed the elbow of the tiny arm that had worked its way into his pocket. The shabbily dressed halfling pulled his hand back and dashed under the table.

Bugbears

Bugbears are gentle giants who once lived in the lands where hobgoblins rule now. The foul hobgoblins tricked the bugbears with word and fire. They imprisoned the bugbears, forcing them into slavery. Now they are the lowest class, the untouchables, and are used in war as shock troops.

A bugbear is undeniably an impressive sight to behold. Males grow over seven feet tall, with females staying slightly shorter. They have large, clawed hands, furry faces with flat noses and a body covered in matted fur. Bugbears are commonly broad, with well-developed shoulders and arms. They tend to wear practical clothing that doesn't restrict their movement, which they adorn with crude ornaments.

History

For many centuries the bugbears lived an isolated existence in the warm forests in the east. They believe they had become one with nature and worshiped the guardian spirits of the woods. Tribes were semi-nomadic and often counted but a dozen heads. War was a rarity, disputes were settled with traditional games, or with non-lethal combat among champions. Although their lives were all but simple, as there was danger aplenty in the great forest, the bugbears lived together in peace and prosperity.

Eventually, the hobgoblins, godless and defeated, came to the east. They saw easy prey in the simple, goodhearted bugbears and hunted them or made them into slaves. Unknown to warfare and tactics the bugbears were no match for their armies. The brunt of the conflicts were short and bloody. Bugbears were conscripted into the hobgoblin armies and were forced to do heavy menial labor. They were threatened, tortured or killed if they refused to appease their self-styled overlords. This is the way it remained for countless generations.

Today

Up to this day the bugbears are still slaves. Hobgoblins treat them as less than filth and threaten or hurt them for fun. They force bugbears to fight to the death for their entertainment and make them toil for days on end.

Not all bugbears accept their fate, however, and some manage to free themselves from the yoke of slavery. Some bugbears manage to escape hobgoblin lands, by either overpowering their masters or by fleeing at an opportune moment. These bugbears find work in harbors, in construction, or as mercenaries. Sometimes they try to earn their keep as adventurers. Their slavish past tends to make them valued workers that are willing to work hard for a tiny wage - although few of them accept straight-up cruelty from their employers.

Some bugbears develop such hatred against their oppressors that they seek to actively oppose them. These bugbears seem in over their heads, locked in conflict with a cruel enemy, which has both tactical and numerical superiority. Still the resistance grows slowly in the wilds of Sukkō and it is not unheard of that bugbears seek support in their struggle from adventurers of other races.

Culture

Traditionally, bugbears live in a close family structure, in which an elder leads the tribe. Men and women each have distinct tasks related to hunting and gathering, but all treat each other as equals. Packs roam through the forest, often following the same route each year. They respect the sanctity of life and kill only what is necessary for their survival. This way of life has mostly vanished under the hobgoblin rule, however. Many bugbears have been broken and have taken on the values and ways of their masters. They live like animals in hobgoblin towns and in farmsteads, where many of them are weighed

down by heavy slave collars and chains.

Free bugbears still respect life and nature, but those in Sukkō have to be willing to fight for their freedom. Their leaders are the physically, and often spiritually, strongest members of the tribes. In the last couple of hundred years they have been forced to develop their ferocious, animal side to survive. Bugbears tend to bottle their anger and sadness, only to unleash it in a thunderous explosion in battle. Freeborn bugbears, in western countries, often feel closely connected to elven culture and sometimes live among them as equals.



Religion
Bugbear slaves in hobgoblin lands are forced to worship the San. Those who refuse are maimed or even killed.

Free bugbears often worship nature. They believe everything has a soul and a heart. Some even relate to the teachings of the Mother, Gaea or Mielikki. Druids often lead bugbear tribes and are common representatives of their kind.

Naming conventions
Bugbears are named and nicknamed by the tribe elder at birth. Birth names have little value in bugbear culture. They do not acknowledge the concepts of ownership and heritage, so names only find practical use in everyday life and during official milestone celebrations. When they reach adulthood they receive an adult name, which they often translate into a nickname used in the common language. Birth names are based on the tribe's history, the child's parents or the environment, while adult names are based on the personality and accomplishments of the individual.

Sample birth names:
♂ Abey, Chansomps, Flo, Hassun, Kele, Mato, Mayka, Takoda.
♀ Ailen, Dyani, Doli, Isi, Maka, Naira, Posola, Saqui.

Sample nicknames:
Blue eyes, Donkey, Dusksong, Grassdance, Monkey, Sparrow, Treeheart, Wind.

Sample full names:
♂ Ahmik Stronghand.
♀ Sayen Redbird.

Racial Rules

- **Ability Score Increase** - Your Strength score increases by 2 and your Wisdom score increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium, but you count as a large creature for the purpose of determining your encumbrance and the amount of weight you may push, drag and lift.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Bulky** – Versatile weapons deal damage as though you wield them in two hands. If you use Two-Handed weapons you deal additional damage equal to 1/2 your Strength modifier.
- **Keen Senses** – You have proficiency in the Perception skill.
- **Natural Attack** – You have claws that you can use to attack. Your unarmed strike deals slashing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier in place of the normal damage.
- **Languages** - You can speak Buggan and a simple language that enables you to communicate on a very basic level with forest animals (this functions like a *speak with animals* spell).

Dwarves

According to the Wegge, the book of dwarven laws, the first dwarf was created when the mountains collided with the sea to shape the land. Whether this is true or not, the fact is that dwarves have been living on Bellög long before humans arrived and, so far, their society shows no signs of decline. City dwarves form a core of craftsmen and smiths. Rural dwarves live in small, underground villages. Though these seem like fortresses to outsiders, they depend on trade, hunting and agriculture like any village does.

Dwarves grow about three-quarters the size of adult humans and almost as broad. Men sport long, often decorated beards, females shave. Showing off is frowned upon and simple, durable clothing in earthen tones is customary. Dwarves tend to have broad faces with flat noses.

History

As long as the stone slabs date back dwarves have kept strictly to their traditions. For an equally impressive period they have fought bloody wars against goblins and orcs, who competed for shelter in the same stone tunnels. They have also warred with the giants who tried to plunder their mountain homes. Fighting enemies on endless fronts the dwarves were on the back foot, driven back into the corners of the continent. They were in desperate need of an ally and found one in humans, who suffered under the yoke of giant slavery. Dwarven weapons, armor and expertise were traded for manpower and the two peoples soon became blood brothers. With their combined strength human and dwarf were able to break their enemies. Traditional dwarves kept to their mountain homes, while the more entrepreneurial types ventured into human lands. Many humans were drawn to the dwarven fortresses to become apprentices to the master smiths and to fulfill other key roles in these households.

Today

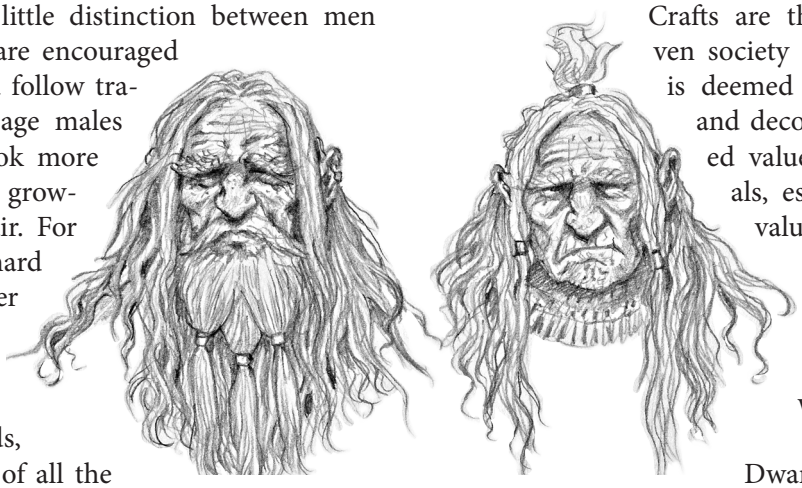
Dwarves still govern a strong, prosperous empire in the eastern reaches of the continent. Although most of their enemies no longer pose the threat they once did, dwarves still live in their traditional fortress cities. They have also spread amongst human society where they take on the role of capable craftsmen, dockworkers, guards and miners. Although dwarves have always been slightly xenophobic and careful around other races, sometimes even outright hostile, their combined war effort with humans



was just the push they needed to open their society to new influences. Dwarven beer is among the finest in the world. Their music receives highly dubious reviews from non-dwarves and it is said one never forgets a dwarven drinking song.

Culture

The trust of a dwarf is difficult to earn, but once won, it is granted for life. They are a notoriously stern and conservative people. They praise productivity over creativity, tradition over development. Honor is held in very high regard. Dwarves make little distinction between men and women, and both are encouraged to obey their elders and follow tradition. When dwarves age males and females tend to look more and more alike, often growing impressive facial hair. For non-dwarves it is very hard to determine the gender of elderly dwarves at first glance. Dwarven youths are taught to respect their elders, gods, environment and, most of all the Wegge. This ancient text, transcribed on the walls of wisdom in every dwarven fortress city, contains fifty-five dwarven laws. If these are broken they blemish a dwarf's honor, denying him all heritage right and positions of leadership.



Dwarves tell the story of Ruric, a great dwarven scholar, who invented the runic script. During his lifetime he studied dwarven culture and sayings intently. Before he died of old age he took it upon himself to inscribe the most important values on the wall of his community. It is commonly believed that he died when he hammered the last rune into the wall, which is why text of The Wegge always ends with an unfinished rune. As Ruric was greatly respected during his lifetime, weeks of mourning his death were followed by the official declaration of The Wegge as the sacred text of dwarvenkind. Dwarves live up to it to this day, never dismissing the wisdom of their ancestors. The text consists of three parts: the becoming of the first dwarf, the rules and sayings of dwarvenkind and praise to Ilmarinen, father of all dwarves. Dwarven law is strict and entwined with religious beliefs. A cleric of Ilmarinen typically judges over the community. The worst punishment for a dwarf is banishment, which marks the exclusion from one's family.

Children receive guard training and all adults are expected to serve and protect their people when the need arises. Dwarves live in a clan-structured society, led by small counsels of wise ones. Clans cooperate in a large fellowship and share military command. This army, the Stone Fist, is used for border protection and law enforcement. The general that receives the honor of being supreme commander, or Obsidian Axe, receives his own personal regiment of bodyguards, led by the former Axe. Obsidian Axe is considered a very prestigious title. A new Axe is appointed every twelve years by the king.

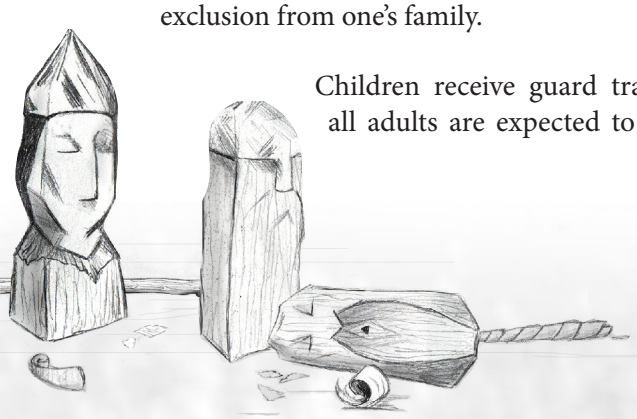
Crafts are the cornerstone of dwarven society and the crafting of tools is deemed very important. Jewelry and decorations are only of limited value while practical materials, especially arcane iron, are valued more highly than gold and other less durable precious metals. Smiths who specialize in working these materials are always in high demand.

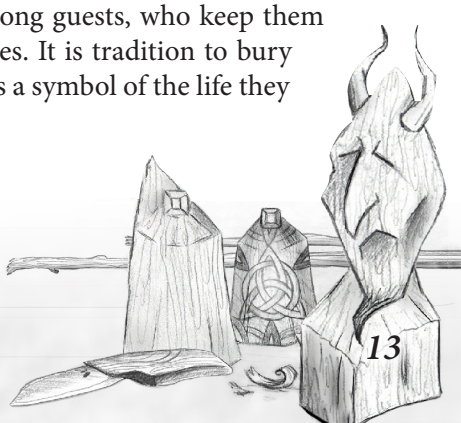
Dwarven villages are often located near rich veins of metal as the dwarves believe these places to be blessed by their god Ilmarinen. When mined and processed, these ores are traded with the other common peoples. Every few generations a mine is depleted, and the most enterprising members of the clan go on a quest to find a new home while most of the clan tends to stay put. Especially the older towns have been depleted for hundreds of years but they still serve as important trade hubs today.

Religion

Dwarves tend to do good and fight evil. The chief deity of the dwarven people is Ilmarinen, god of metal and creation. He teaches dwarves about hard work and happiness. Despite being a god of smiths he instructs his followers to never believe welfare is a product of possession alone. He is believed to be the builder of the dome of heaven and the pillars of the earth. He also worked his way into the human pantheon, by whom he is regarded a hero smith.

The symbol of Ilmarinen is the hammer and the mountain or a broken coin. These coins are worn as talismans on necklaces by his followers. On traditional holidays and weddings hot coins are shattered on an anvil and the shards are distributed among guests, who keep them in small decorated pouches. It is tradition to bury these with their owners, as a symbol of the life they lived.





Naming conventions
The celebration of their culture and heritage are foundations of dwarven society. Naming conventions were introduced during the reign of Heraldir the Wise, placing them among the oldest traditions on the continent. Dwarves have a given name, which is determined at birth by one or either of their parents. This name is followed by a patronymic surname, which ends with the suffix -sen, which means -son of. They have a clan name, which may change depending on alliances and marriages. Lastly dwarves include their birthplace as a title.

Common given names
♂ Aksel, Eluf, Holger, Nicolas, Morten, Ottar, Poul, Rik, Sighni, Thormar.
♀ Asa, Birthe, Christa, Dagmar, Jette, Kaja, Lone, Pia, Wibeke, Zonda.

Common clan names
Deepsight, Firekiss, Giantbane, Goblinfoe, Orefriend, Smiteforge, Treesplitter.

Sample full name
♂ Walderik Loksen Spikepeak of Ambolt.
♀ Merete Thorsen Hammerheft of Amskea.

An exception to this naming convention are dwarven kings and their children. Their given names traditionally end in -ir, a sign of their noble lineage, and they do not receive clan names. The names of their fathers are stated only on official occasions, as they are considered to be common knowledge. Princes use 'Prince of Dwarvenkind' as their title and do not refer to their birthplace. Kings use 'King of Dwarvenkind' as their title and do not refer to their birthplace.

Racial Rules
- **Ability Score Increase** - Your Constitution score increases by 2, your Wisdom score increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 25 feet. Your speed is not reduced by heavy armor.
- **Darkvision** - You are accustomed to life underground and have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Magic Resistance** – You have advantage on saving throws against spells, but may not take levels in the sorcerer, warlock or wizard class, nor in other classes that utilize arcane magic.
- **Stonecunning** – Whenever you make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, you are considered proficient in the History skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check instead of your normal proficiency bonus.
- **Juggernaut** – You are proficient with armor one category heavier than other members of your class. If your class grants proficiency with heavy armor you are proficient with dwarvenforge armor as well.
- **Militant** – You gain proficiency with the Weapon Group: Hammers (Light hammer, Flail, Maul, Warhammer).
- **Languages** - You can speak Dwarven.

elves

Elves generally live on the edge of civilization, in small villages which other races rarely visit. Their long lives make elves a mystery to the other common folk. Children in the north or south can grow old without ever meeting one. In larger towns, however, communities of city elves are becoming more common. Elves are protected by Mielikki, goddess of the forest. Her high priestess is an elf.

Common folk generally refer to elves as the fair-folk, for they are beautiful, slender and short. Males and females share the same androgynous figure, with little body hair. From a distance, they may seem like slim teenage humans. Closer inspection reveals long, droopy ears and huge almond shaped eyes. They wear their hair long and braided and adorn it with wooden beads. Most elves wear traditional tan and green clothing and cloaks of woven leaves. They typically dislike thick footwear, as they feel it severs their connection to the earth.

History
Even before the rise of dwarves and humans the elves lived in the woods of Bellög in a tight tribal structure. Their complicated traditions go back thousands of years, sometimes making it hard for them to see younger cultures as being equal to their own. Other races have a hard time grasping the elven nature and cannot fathom how they manage to pursue individuality and freedom while honoring the culture of their ancestors. Before the Green Age, the age of peace, elf society fell apart due to internal strife. Driven apart by vendettas, their tribes traveled to the edge of the world to hide from conflict. The elders think this struggle was fueled by religious misunderstanding, young ones believe it was a matter of pride. Elves learn of

these wars from their grandfathers who tell vivid stories in hope that such loss would never have to be felt again. About ten generations ago all conflict ended in an immense celebration during the longest day of summer: The Day of Friendship. Tribes flocked together into communities and started the healing process. What ended the conflict remains a mystery, but the druid covens so important to elven culture surely played a large role. Elves reproduce slowly and there are relatively few of them left. Most of them have forgiven each other, however, and they have sworn never to forget how war ravaged their kind.

Today

All elf tribes deal with the outer world in their own fashion, but only rarely resort to violence. If anything, many elves are pacifists. The complexities and subtleties of elven culture mean that many elves prefer being around their own kind, shunning the company of outsiders. It is rare, but not unheard of, for elves to abandon the ways of their ancestors as they are notoriously free-spirited. These elves are sometimes drawn into cities and mingle with the other common folk, whom they find exotic and fascinating.

Culture

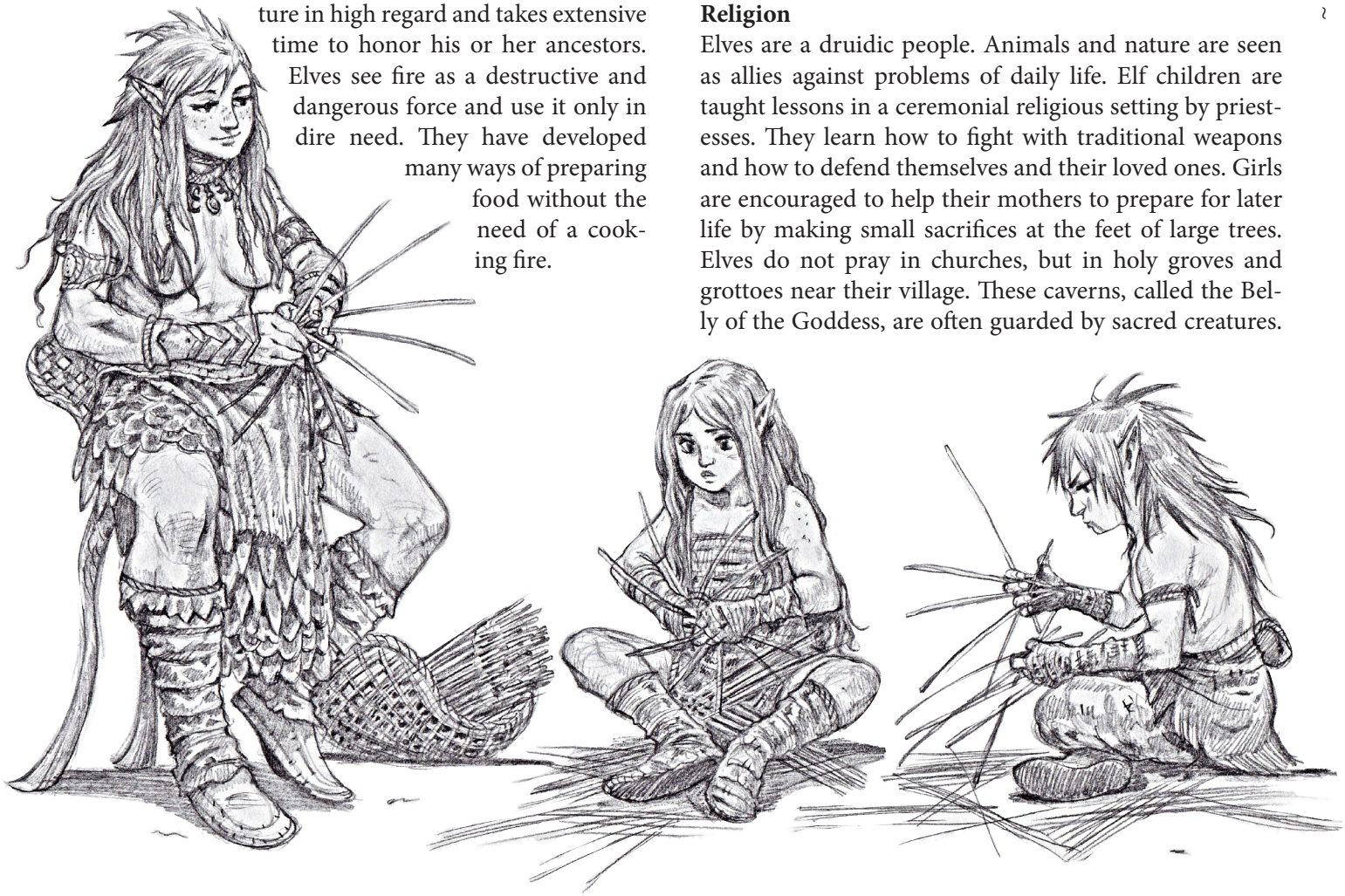
Unlike most of the common folk, traditional elven culture sees the female as the center of life. Women are caring and protecting. They are not only the creators, but also the nurturers of life. This is the greatest cause of misunderstanding between elf, human and dwarf. Although their religion shows many comparisons to the beliefs of the other common folk, they praise Mielikki as the sole creator of all life. Almost every elf holds nature in high regard and takes extensive time to honor his or her ancestors. Elves see fire as a destructive and dangerous force and use it only in dire need. They have developed many ways of preparing food without the need of a cooking fire.

Although women often lead elven tribes, men play an important role in protecting them. When they are attacked by their enemies it is usually the men who take up wooden shields and ceremonial bows to protect their women and children from harm. The position of a guard, or Shield, is reserved for a limited few only and being a bodyguard is considered a great honor. These brave ones are chosen by priestesses in a ceremony during the longest day of summer. Shields are even initiated in the basics of the druidic faith. It is believed that a warrior's greatest responsibility is not to fight, but keep the peace. Guards live in well maintained homes, eat at the best tables and they are rewarded with luscious gifts. In all roles in society men and women are treated equally, except in religion, as only women can become priestesses to Mielikki.

Elves usually live among their kin in tiny villages. Their long lives give elves time a plenty to specialize in specific fields of knowledge, especially nature or arcana, meaning that they are often sought after for advice. Many of them are excellent craftsmen and artists, with decades of experience. Elves live of the land, although they often despise hunting. In the last few hundreds of years trade has become an important part of their culture, as their wine, clothing, wickerwork and bows fetch high prices. They seldom use metal objects in their daily lives and only a handful of elves choose the path of the smith. Those that do can be found in larger villages where they craft durable weapons, armor, jewelry and tools. Open-minded, charismatic and adventurous, these individuals often choose human partners.

Religion

Elves are a druidic people. Animals and nature are seen as allies against problems of daily life. Elf children are taught lessons in a ceremonial religious setting by priestesses. They learn how to fight with traditional weapons and how to defend themselves and their loved ones. Girls are encouraged to help their mothers to prepare for later life by making small sacrifices at the feet of large trees. Elves do not pray in churches, but in holy groves and grottoes near their village. These caverns, called the Belly of the Goddess, are often guarded by sacred creatures.



Mielikki, goddess of the woods, is the protector of elven kind. She has a special place in many seasonal celebrations and her image can be found in many wood carvings.

Naming conventions
Traditionally matriarchal, elves are often named after their mother or grandmother, with slight variation for boys. It is common for elves to receive another given name from the midwife that assisted their mother during childbirth. This can be a name dedicated to a family member, or a nickname that relates to tribal-history, nature or individual accomplishment. Young elves value family loyalty over tribal association, which has caused the tradition of tribal naming to have become unpopular among the last generations.

Common given names
♂ Aidan, Bricrui, Eoghan, Cronan, Eamon, Glenn, Neil, Ronan, Toinan,Vaughn.
♀ Aideen, Burgess, Enda, Crustinnin, Emrys, Gwri, Nessa, Niamh, Roina, Vahnna.

Sample full names
♂ Alroy Cormac of tribe Shadowreed.
♀ Iona Kyna of tribe Rosebriar.

Racial Rules
- **Ability Score Increase** – Your Dexterity score increases by 2, your Intelligence score increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium.
- Speed - Your base walking speed is 35 feet.
- **Darkvision** – Your eyes and senses are sharp. You have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Elven Grace** – You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic can't put you to sleep.
- **Keen Senses** – You have proficiency in the Perception skill.
- **Trance** – Elves don't sleep. Instead they meditate deeply, remaining semiconscious, for 4 hours a day. After meditation you gain the same benefit that another creature does after 8 hours of sleep. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.
- **Elven Magic** – You know the *druidcraft* cantrip and you may cast speak with animals once with this trait and regain the ability after a long rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.
- **Languages** - You can speak one of the Common languages and Elven.



Gnolls

Gnolls are a spiritual race of nomads who mainly inhabit the hills of Vuorilas and the White Mountains. Small groups can also be found in larger towns, where they have a reputation for their seemingly boundless wisdom and creativity. Their wanderlust makes gnolls common drifters and hirelings. They serve no specific god, but worship the flow of magic and the light of the stars that guides their path. Gnolls are commonly known for their fiery temperaments, outspoken opinions and love of freedom.

Most gnolls are about as tall as dwarves, but lean and slender. Their sinewy body is covered with brown, gray, or black fur and their head resembles that of a dog or wolf hound. To the common races the male and female gnolls look identical, but gnolls themselves are able to spot the difference right away. They clothe themselves in homemade, exuberant cloth, or highly decorated leathers. Most gnolls adore earrings and other jewelry as it helps them express their individualism.

History
Gnolls have never drifted towards either good or evil. It is said the first gnolls came from the mountains, where men bred with hounds. The gnolls themselves believe that the first of their race were born from dandelions in the light of the north star. Naturally this flower is special and sacred to their people and they often braid the flowers into elaborate decorations on holidays. Their

distinctive looks have often lead to racism and distrust, despite gnolls having proven themselves as talented artists and performers. Being wanderers under the stars, the gnolls have a long history of reading the skies for possible glimpses of the future and past.

Today

Small family groups or packs of gnolls can be found in almost all large towns. Caravans of gnolls also travel between cities with trade goods or to perform song, story or acrobatics. Their knowledge of the stars makes them sought after as fortune tellers, as the common folk believe they can sometimes see the future or influence the flow of arcane magic. Gnoll packs have alternate leaders, based on who-ever is best at the task at hand. Some of the common folk are ill at ease around gnolls because of their extraordinary gifts. Their mystical powers tend to shun away those that mean harm to them, which only enforces their reputation as witches.



Culture

Family, faith and freedom are the important foundations of the gnoll culture. Family packs can travel together for years, searching the lands looking for audiences and doing odd jobs here and there. From early on gnoll children are encouraged to develop their inner artist in any way they choose. They are also taught to form an opinion on anything concerning them or their relatives, which is practically everything. Gnolls have an easygoing, helpful nature, which often leads them into careers as performers or mercenaries. Unlike other races gnolls are polygamous and generally do not marry. It is common for males to have relations with multiple female members of their pack. Children are raised by the pack in its entirety although they are often claimed as one's child at birth.



Religion

Gnolls grow up with stories of their ancestors, who gazed at the stars. They believe that starlight guides the people who walk on the earth, revealing them their path. According to their beliefs this light is also the source of magic on earth and the elements themselves. Young gnolls sometimes pick up other religions they find interesting. A fair number of them choose the path of a cleric as they have an exceptional insight in what deities demand of their followers.

Naming conventions

A free, family-centered society, gnolls believe a thing such as a naming convention would inhibit individual freedom and creativity. They are named upon birth by their mother and do not receive additional names but the nicknames they give themselves over the course of their life. Gnolls pick up smithereens of all types of cultures and languages and keep the parts they feel comfortable with. Names range from titles and words borrowed from other languages to the names of heroes of stories and of favored places. Old gnollish names are often short and harsh, like barks, and generally not very popular among younger generations.

Sample old gnoll names

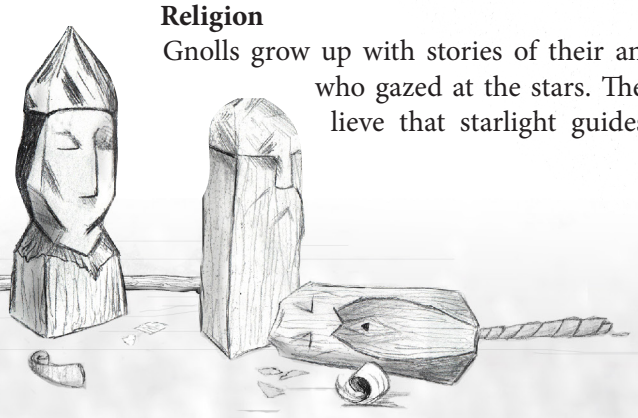
♂ Batar, Chech, Dorn, Gan, Nasar, Karn, Sükh.

♀ Ara, Enkh, Kniri, Kushi, Narantu, Tuul, Uranchimeg.

Sample full names

♂ Erk of the Southern Marshlands.

♀ Laar "Strongpaw".





Racial Rules

- **Ability Score Increase** - Your Charisma score increases by 2 and your Intelligence score increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision** - Accustomed to wandering the plains and gazing at the night sky, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Direction Sense** - Gnolls learn to navigate and study the stars from a young age. They can never be lost under a clear sky and when under that sky can always discern north.
- **Mystical** - You have proficiency in the Arcana and Religion skill.
- **Prophetic Dreams** - You have advantage on the first saving throw you make after you take a long rest.
- **Star Sign** - At first level you may select one gnoll star sign trait and gain the appropriate bonus.
- **Languages** - You can speak one of the Common languages and Gnoll.



Sidebar 1
Gnoll racial traits (and months of the year)

English	*Finnish*	*Gnoll*
January	tammikuu	The Seer
February	helmikuu	The Wolverine
March	maaliskuu	The Cloven Tree
April	huhtikuu	The Liar
May	tuokokuu	The Mother
June	kesäkuu	The Dwarf
July	heinäkuu	The Barbarian
August	elokuu	The Salmon
September	syyskuu	The Tome
October	lokakuu	The Trader
November	marraskuu	The Spirit
December	joulukuu	The Eyes

The Bellög year is, for all purposes, identical to a year on our western calendar. Although you could easily opt to use the English names for months, we have also included the Finnish equivalent, if you prefer to use these for flavor reasons. Note that the Finnish language does not capitalize their months.

Gnoll racial star sign traits

Gnolls, who have a reputation for being expert astrologers, use a special sign for each month. They believe that an individual born in this month has certain powers that tie them to it. To represent this belief a gnoll character can choose one of the following racial traits tied to the month of their birth. These traits may be selected only at first level.



The Seer: *You are always in a hurry. At best you are enthusiastic and eager, at worst jittery and impatient. You have a +1 bonus on initiative checks, but may not ready actions, nor delay your turn in combat.*

The Wolverine: *You have a ferocious digestive system. This means that you can eat whatever you want and stay skinny. Although this is often a boon, you have little body fat and a weak immune system. You have a -1 penalty on Strength-based skill checks but a +1 bonus on Constitution saving throws to resist disease and poison.*

The Cloven Tree: *You are a child of the storm. You enjoy heavy wind and rainfall and feel better soaked than huddled near the fire. You are comfortable in conditions that would restrict others. Characters born under The Cloven Tree are immune to the effects of severe or weaker winds. Heat and smoke make you feel uncomfortable and restricted and you have a -1 penalty on saving throws to resist the negative effects of smoke and heat, but not on saving throws against fire spells.*

The Liar: *You are unreliable as can be. You enjoy fooling people or can be are easily distracted. People have a hard time trusting you and you have a -1 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks except Deception. You have a +1 bonus on Charisma (Deception checks).*

The Mother: *You have a nurturing instinct and care deeply for friends and family. You may work together on any skill attempt in which your trained, even if the task can normally only be attempted alone. This is accomplished by the mental and moral support you provide to the ally. You are not comfortable leading in combat and with hogging the spotlight, so you may never act before an ally in combat. If your initiative score is higher, you must delay until one of your allies acts. If you are alone you may act on your initiative count as normal.*

The Dwarf: *The gnolls of yore thought the stars were the eyes of gods, twinkling in the sky, watching over them. No wonder that they felt alone and left out during the longest day of the year. The tribes used to travel south as far as they could and gather near a sacred monument to celebrate under the sky. During this track they traditionally lived on the kindness of others, forsaking foraging and hunting to make better time. Dwarves were not always happy with this yearly gnoll invasion. Gnolls needed all their kindness and cunning to convince the dwarves to aid them and it remains a well-respected skill to this day. You have a +1 bonus on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks against dwarves and a -1 penalty on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks against orcs and goblins.*

The Barbarian: *The heat of the summer brings forth your explosive temper. You are hot-headed, quick to anger and enjoy the thrill of heedlessly plunging into the fray. You have a +1 bonus on melee damage, but you also suffer a -1 penalty on your melee attack rolls.*

The Salmon: *In the heat of the summer the gnolls camp near rich rivers and lakes and scoop the salmon out of the streams. You are a talented swimmer and have a +1 bonus on Strength (Athletics) skill checks made to swim. Because you are used to food being plentiful you have a -1 penalty on Wisdom (Survival) skill checks to forage.*

The Tome: *September is a month in which gnolls generally have peace of mind. Their supplies are stocked with salmon and they have gathered a rich bounty of fruits and nuts. September is reserved for calm contemplation. You have a +1 bonus on Wisdom (Insight) skill checks and a -1 penalty on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks.*

The Trader: *In October gnolls pool and trade their excesses for the winter to come. Those born under The Trader have an inborn knack for trading. You have a +1 bonus on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks and a -1 penalty on Charisma (Intimidation) skill checks.*

The Spirit: *November is a dark and misty month, during which the hills become very dangerous from dusk until dawn. Gnolls believe the mist to be negative energy from restless spirits and they light fires to hold the dead at bay. The gnolls start and finish the month with a great feast, lit by many fires, and the burning of effigies to scare the evil spirits away. During the closing feast, the Day of the Dead, November 30th, they send the roaming spirits of the dead to the great hunting grounds of the afterlife. You have a +1 bonus on saving throws against necromancy spells and a -1 penalty on saving throws against attacks and special abilities of incorporeal undead.*

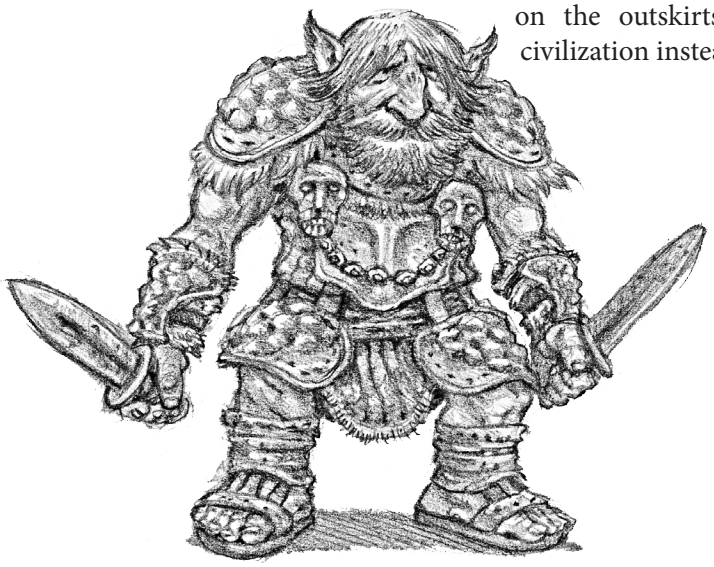
The Eyes: *In December the people look back on what has happened over the course of the year. It is also the time when the night is darkest, so those born in December tend to have better night vision than others. You have a +1 bonus on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks in shadowy circumstances, but you have a -1 penalty on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks in bright daylight.*

GNOMES

Legends tell of protective spirits of home and hearth. History gives them many names: spirits, fey or gnomes. They are small creatures with squat, powerful bodies. Their heads tend to be small and round, with scruffy hair and short necks. Gnomes have beady eyes and pronounced flat noses. Compared to the rest of their bodies, they have big, bushy ears and well-developed fingers and hands. They stand on short, stubby legs. Females tend to have a slenderer build, with shorter ears. Gnomes live in burrows and often keep badgers or dire badgers as pets.

History
Sages believe that the origin of the gnomes lies in the caverns and inhospitable mountains of Vuorilas. Here desolation and exclusion brought primitive dwarves and halflings closer together. Eventually they intermarried, producing curious looking offspring that would eventually breed true. How the distinct racial behavior and appearance of the gnomes developed remains a mystery. Their stone tunnels offered protection against surface dwellers, but life underground brought new dangers and new enemies. Goblins and kobolds, at home in the shadows of the earth, became hated foes. Although gnomes have always had good relations with the dwarves of Bakkesat, they refuse to acknowledge them as brethren. They care little for the lifestyle of the larger peoples, although they do see the benefits of trading with them from time to time. Gnomes, although a simple people, have an extensive knowledge of mining. Gems and diamonds are valued especially by gnomes as they have great respect for natural beauty.

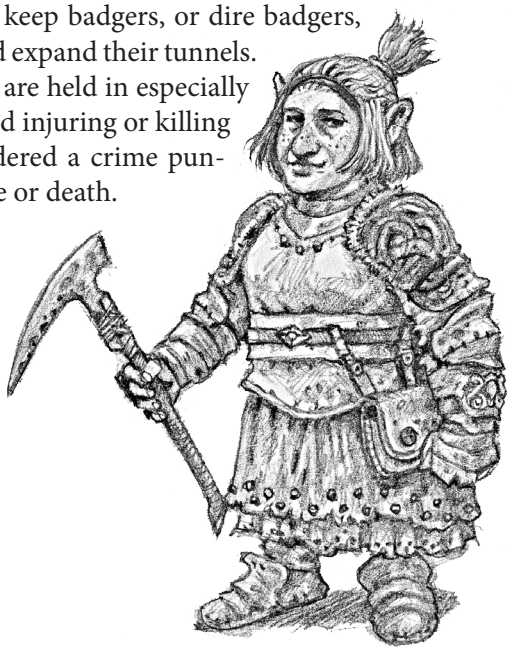
Today
Gnomes have a hard time trusting all common races but the dwarves. They tend to keep to themselves mostly and keep an air of mystery surrounding their burrows. Those that have visited them speak of immense tunnel systems, underground villages with storage homes, mushroom farms and even stables. It is a rarity when gnomes are seen in the big cities above ground; often they seek to trade their goods at small markets on the outskirts of civilization instead.



Many city folks have a hard time believing that gnomes exist at all. They tell their children bedtime stories of the guardians in the ground. Gnomish jewelry is highly praised, although often thought to be crafted by halflings instead.

Culture
Like the dwarves, gnomes have a great affinity towards the earth. Unlike dwarves they also especially care a great deal about all creatures of the earth, and have a deeply rooted connection with many of them. Many older creatures call gnomes "Earth friends". Gnomes typically live in large groups of multiple families, led by an elder, or Pake. This wise one takes on the role of a parent to all tribe members and usually busies him-, or herself, with the all the tribe's problems. These individuals are often druids or clerics. Males are tasked with protecting their homes and mining, while females do household chores and tend to the mushroom farms. In matters of law and religion males and females are treated as equals. Babies are born with a layer of fur, which makes them look like exotic animals. Children are considered infants until they lose this hair, which usually happens around the age of six. In their early years a matron raises them while they play and learn. When they reach adulthood, they are assigned a mentor to guide them. This ensures that burrows grow steadily, and that each profession is practiced.

Gnomish culture is about independence: each individual member of a tribe is expected to do their part to ensure the prosperity of the others. Each member of a burrow plays a very specific part in the collective. Only in the direst of circumstances would gnomes ask for help, as they believe it would demonstrate their inability to perform the task required of them. Of course, their mentors are a big exception to this rule, as they are confided with all of a young gnome's problems. Their independence makes gnomes seem unfriendly and awkward to other common people, who often prefer to work together and do not understand this mindset. If any burrow is in dire need they use small animals to carry messages to their closest neighbors. Gnomes keep badgers, or dire badgers, to excavate and expand their tunnels. These animals are held in especially high regard and injuring or killing them is considered a crime punishable by exile or death.



When a gnome or badger dies they are buried in specially excavated tunnels, hewed high in the mountainside.

Gnomes have a fondness for shiny, beautiful things like gems and diamonds. Having a strongly developed sense of taste and smell, they appreciate nuanced, bland food. They take pride in decorating their clothing and homes, making them as comfortable and welcoming as possible. Like dwarves, the gnomes are a proud, militant people. All members of a burrow share a great sense of responsibility for their own safety and that of their animals and property. From an early age on all gnomes receive basic combat training and learn the intricacies of effectively defending their burrow. Gnomes rely on maze-like tunnel systems and traps as well as soldiers to defend their home. Scents from roots, flowers and fungi mark routes and central areas, allowing the gnomes to find their way even in the pitch dark. Their smiths craft wonderfully adorned but highly effective weapons and armor.

Religion

Although some gnomes worship the deities of the common races, especially those living on the surface, most of them pray to Gaea, the goddess of the earth. They have a great respect for their deity, who they believe protects all who embrace the earth. The gnomes themselves protect what is theirs and fight the evil that threatens their burrows and their way of life.

When a gnome leaves the burrow he typically takes a small pouch of earth along with him. Gnomes do not wed like most peoples, but they do mate for life. They appease their goddess with carvings, decorated with precious stones, and by the sacrifice of food and drink. A traditional form of art is the carving and adoration of tree roots that protrude from ceilings and walls of burrows.

Naming conventions

Their burrow is especially important to gnomes and they value its safety over their own life or that of their relatives. A gnome is born with a given name which is chosen by the tribe's Pake and a tribe name which all gnomes born in their burrow share. In meaning the tribe name is akin to the dwarven birth names, which indicate their place of birth.

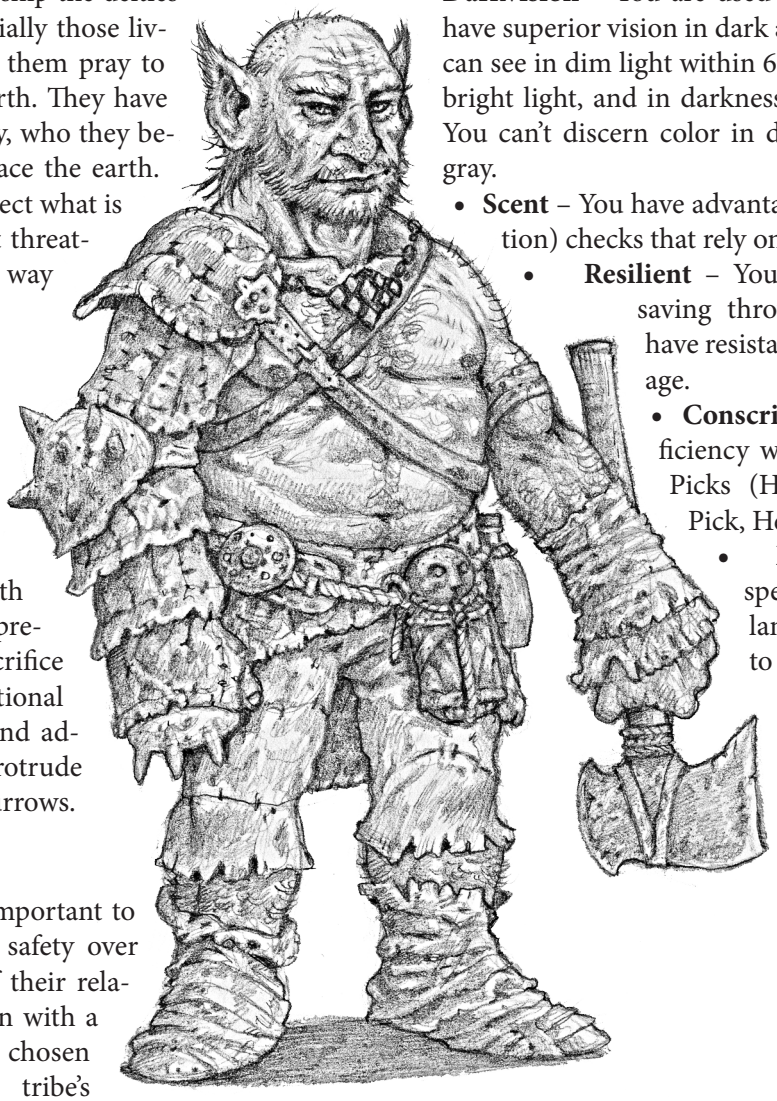
Common gnome names
♂ Barak, Cael, Deimos, Gad, Heber, Nomiki, Sang.
♀ Agda, Calla, Deri, Galene, Ophelia, Sachi, Tresa.

Common tribe names
Bitterroot, Blackseed, Goldfall, Orefriend, Redrock, Sandwall, Stoutcap, Treefall.

Sample full names
♂ Cars Lumberdrift.
♀ Nadi Deepdelf.

Racial Rules

- **Ability Score Increase** – Your Wisdom score increases by 2, your Constitution score increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Small.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 25 feet.
- **Darkvision** – You are used to life in darkness. You have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Scent** – You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.
- **Resilient** – You have an advantage on saving throws against poison and have resistance against poison damage.
- **Conscription** – You gain proficiency with the Weapon Group: Picks (Hooked Hammer, Light Pick, Heavy Pick, War pick).
- **Languages** - You can speak Terran and a simple language that enables you to communicate on a very basic level with burrowing animals (this functions like a *speak with animals* spell).



halflings

The small folk live under the hills and in tiny wooden huts. Halflings are shrewd merchants that tend to get along well with most folk in Bellög. Their, at first glance, child-like appearance makes it that they are often perceived as harmless. A great common goal among halflings is finding one's luck, so luck and luckiness are often attributed to them.

Halflings have broad faces and slightly enlarged, almond-shaped eyes. Their feet and legs grow bristly fur, which explains their dislike for footwear. Most halflings relate more to the elves than to humans or dwarves because females tend to be dominant in both of their cultures.

History
Halflings have been inhabitants of Bellög for countless generations, although it remains unclear for how long exactly, or where they hail from originally. Halfling origins, as the halflings themselves, are still a complete mystery. The halflings care little about such trivialities as the past. They shrug, take a sip of nice wine, smoke some pipe, and take a nap. Some people say that halflings are lazy, halflings prefer to think that they are "living in the present".

Today
Halflings can be found living among all the common folk, but they prefer human villages above others because humans are so darn gullible. Their culture seems to be a mishmash of human, dwarven and elven culture, with strange, seemingly contradictory elements from each tradition. Thanks to their easygoing nature the halfling culture has cleverly adapted to living around the larger common folk. They get along fine with all of their larger brethren for this reason and they are quick to take advantage. Because of their modest size they can do specialized craft work and can get into places that are impossible to reach for medium creatures. In return the halflings enjoy the relative safety and appreciation of the larger people. They are especially famous for their dashing leather work, sewing and cooking skills, as well as their silver tongues.

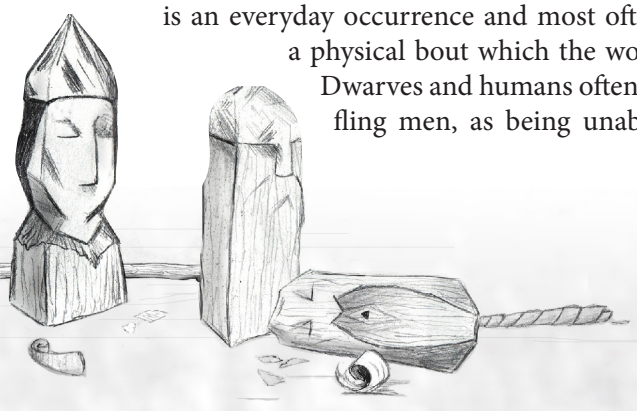
Culture
In halfling culture males are the dominant sex... in theory. The females tend to be stronger and bigger and boss their husbands around in the house. Marital dispute is an everyday occurrence and most often ends in a physical bout which the woman wins. Dwarves and humans often mock halfling men, as being unable to hold their own against their women. Elves however, respect halfling men for their humble acceptance of femininity (which the halfling men claim to do when convenient). Halfling men often become somewhat apathetic after they get married and finally accept their fate (or drown it in alcohol). It is no surprise halflings are frequent visitors of their local taverns. This tavern is the place where disputes are resolved under the eye of friends and family and where couples are reunited. It's a rare halfling that is not on first name basis with his local barkeep.

Because halflings are physically weak creatures their culture is subject to constant adaptation from those of larger folk around them. That being said, halflings know like no other how to manipulate people into seeing things their way. Their frequent tavern visits make them masters of social interaction. From a halfling's point of view they have little chance of becoming best friends with strangers, but they might have a chance aiming for second place, or at least befriend them long enough to win their trust and rip them off.

Halflings tend to be a playful, mischievous people and they play a great number of games involving the throwing of coins or small rocks. They enjoy making music and dancing, and feast regularly.

Religion
Halflings believe in making their own luck. They worship Smiling Matias, a poor halfling who got rich when he found a giant's treasure. Depending on who is telling the story Matias either ham-stringed the giant or conned him, but the story always ends with him basking in riches until his dying day. His adventures are recounted often and with many variations.

Matias no longer lives, not in physical form anyway, but his great-great-grandchildren own a tavern in the Sapporti village center in Merma, which is named after him. It attracts pilgrims that come to offer tribute every year. Each of them tosses coins into the Smiling Well and wish for good fortune. Every month the halfling people throw a feast to celebrate the existence of their god and their prosperity. These parties are wild, with plenty of wind instruments, songs and dance. As is expected of such an adaptable people, a large number of halflings has turned to the religion of the other common folk as well. It is common for halflings to worship many gods, and even pantheons, simultaneously. While most religions condemn other ones, the halflings see worshiping multiple powerful beings as a wise choice: sort of like hedging your bets.



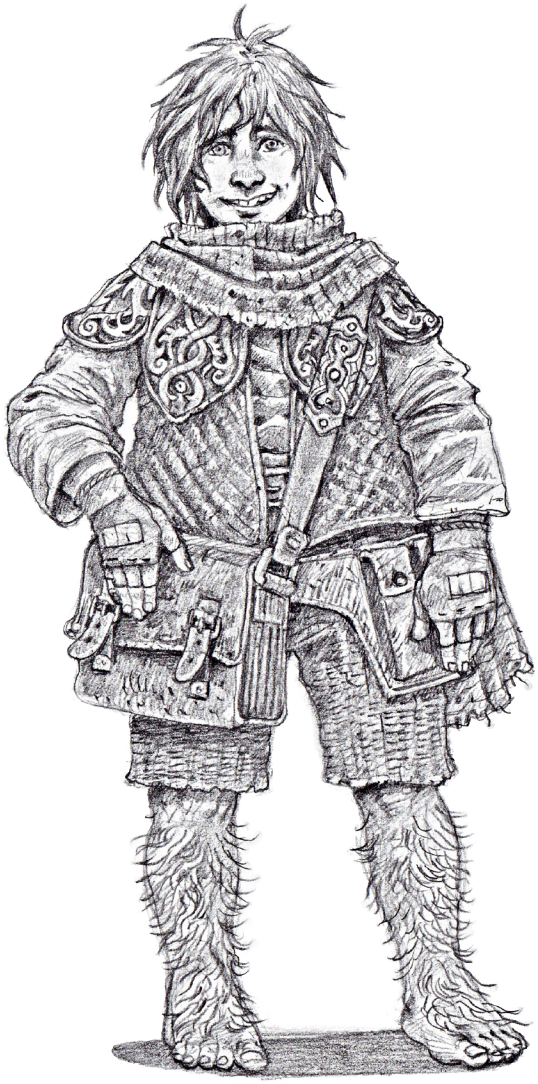


Naming conventions
Halflings receive a given name from either of their parents at birth. They do not adopt clan or family names, although they often receive nicknames from friends and family. Feeling uncomfortable when standing out, many halflings often adopt the naming conventions of the cultures in their home region.

Common halfling names
♂ Alton, Colin, Edwin, Guy, Hayes, Todd, Rodney.
♀ Beatrix, Dinah, Eda, Ivy, Lea, Marian, Perine.

Sample full names
♂ Toby of Beatrix.
♀ Coby Cobbs.

Racial Rules
- **Ability Score Increase** – Your Dexterity score increases by 2 and your Charisma score increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Small.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 25 feet.
- **Lucky Charm** – When you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll.
- **Silver Tongued** – You have proficiency in the Deception skill. You have advantage on Charisma checks to gather rumors, gossip or to gather information on local goings-on.
- **Halfling Nimbleness** - You can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than yours.
- **Languages** - You can speak one of the Common languages and Halfling.





Half-dwarves

In Bellög man and dwarf are firm allies. Dwarves from Bakkesat regularly make the journey to Kesma and Vuorilas and mingle with humans. Although the chance is small, sometimes half-dwarves come forth out of these relations. They are a somewhat uncommon race that does not draw much attention because of their human-like appearance.

Half-dwarves do not grow to be as tall as their human kin and they share their dwarven ancestor's broad build. Men often have thick beards, women do not. Half-dwarves have no culture of their own and tend to adopt the fashion of the community around them.

History
Dwarf and man are blood brothers and they have fought evil together for generations. Deep rooted respect and appreciation of each other's abilities have ensured a long and prosperous relationship between them. Their cultures and worlds are both adventurous enough to ensure contact in many ways. The last thousand years or so half-dwarves have become a more prominent race that is well accepted in both dwarven and human lands. Both races sometimes call half-dwarves 'nugs', because of their stubby postures and gruff appearance.

Today
Half-dwarves generally inhabit human lands, where they tend to work physical jobs in which they excel. Their dwarven parent is often an adventurer that got along well with the more liberated humans. Some half-dwarves inherit an adventurous spirit and travel to dwarven lands. These individuals are valued highly as they tend to get along well with both dwarves and visiting humans. It is common that they perform public roles, such as merchant or priest.

Culture
Human culture tends to be more flexible than dwarven culture, which explains why half-dwarves often feel more at home among humans. Dwarves recognize the importance of keeping close ties to human visitors, who are often generous traders, especially in harbor cities. They hire half-dwarves because they seem a bit closer to their own kin and they often get along better socially with the other common races than full-blood dwarves do. Other common races have difficulty spotting the difference between the half-dwarves and humans, although their broad frames ensure half-dwarves steady physical employment wherever they go.

Human and dwarven parents raise half-dwarves as they would their other children. Compared to their human kin the half-dwarves tend to be broad, strong and mature rapidly. Because of this, combined with a child's playfulness, accidental injuries to their human siblings or friends are common. Conversely those half-dwarves raised by dwarven parents usually learn they are not as sturdy as their dwarven peers the hard way.







Like humans and dwarves, mature half-dwarves often develop a great sense of community and responsibility. Bodyguard or mercenary work often appeals to them. They seldom see the need to start communities of their own as they tend to feel protective over the one in which they grew up.

Religion
Half-dwarves often worship the traditional gods of their communities, although some turn to Ilmarinen later in their lives. The god of dwarves has a special attraction to those of dwarven blood.

Naming conventions
Half-dwarves do not have a culture that is distinctly their own, so they adopt the naming conventions of the culture in which they grow up. The brunt of them have either human or dwarf names.

Racial Rules
- **Ability Score Increase** - Your Constitution score increases by 2 and two other ability scores of your choice increase by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet. Your speed is not reduced by heavy armor.
- **Darkvision** - You are accustomed to life underground and have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Magic defense** – You may add your twice proficiency bonus when saving against spells or spell-like effects.
- **Versatile** – You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice or with one instrument or set of tools.
- **Languages** - You can speak one of the Common languages and Dwarven.

half-elves

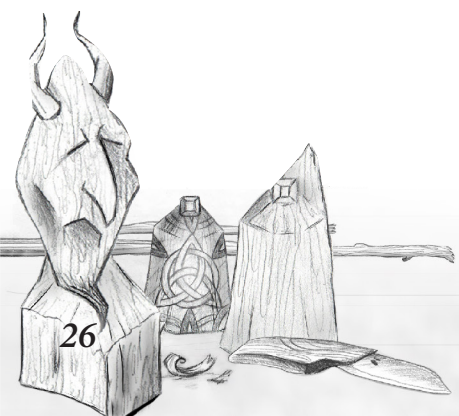
Most half-elves are born from human mothers and elven fathers. Often male elves go through an adventurous period and some of them leave their native villages to explore the human world. In general, half-elves combine the talents of elves and humans and mix well with both races socially. Many half-elves live in human towns and villages, although it is not uncommon for them to explore their elven roots.

Half-elves are smaller than humans and taller than elves. Many races consider half-elves attractive, as they have fair skin, androgynous faces, pointy ears and straight hair. They are often slim, with little facial- or body hair.

History
The first elves were impressed by the size of human and dwarven towns. When more elves heard the stories about stone houses they had to see it with their own eyes. These first explorers set an example for other elves to visit the world of the younger races.

Today
Often half-elves have trouble finding their place in society; they feel like they should explore all the possibilities before settling. They tend to inherit elven patience and listen to many different people, developing great social skills. Elves, halflings and most other humans praise half-elves for this, while humans of the same sex are sometimes jealous of their good looks and social aptitude. Many half-elves struggle to see the point in having many laws and rules. They tend towards a chaotic, individualistic disposition and value freedom highly. It is not uncommon for older half-elves to return to elven villages, to live with their elven parent or relatives. Elves tend to see their half-kin as humans as they live much shorter lives and, to elves, stand out in appearance. This does not mean that elves do not accept half-elves in their midst; patient half-elves can reach any position in a tribe.

Culture
Half-elves that grow up among humans have the same habits as humans around them, the half-elves in elven villages take on elven customs, including a greater appreciation for women. Half-elves that grow up with an elven father often pick up these cultural values from him. In general, half-elves tend towards creative, social or adventurous professions. As they often possess the patience of an elf and the studiousness of humans many half-elf adventurers become excellent wizards or clerics.





Religion
Half-elves often adopt the religion of either of their parents. Many of them worship the Mother, Ilmatar, and the Father, Ukko, or Mielikki. Some of them embrace the druidic tradition and become talented druids.

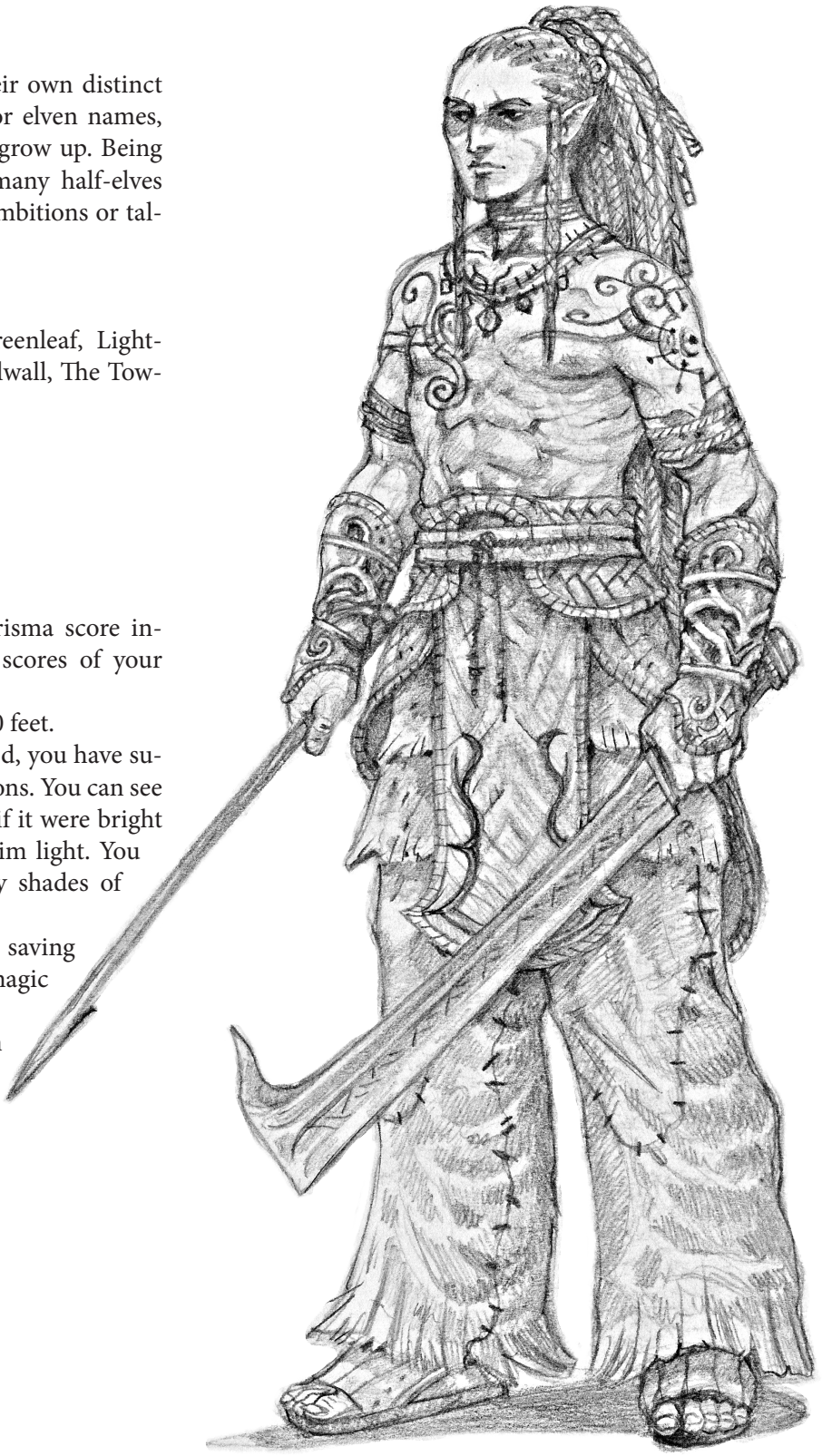
Naming conventions
Like half-dwarves, the half-elves lack their own distinct culture. Their names are either human or elven names, depending on the culture in which they grow up. Being known for their charm and creativity many half-elves choose a nickname which reflects their ambitions or talents later in life.

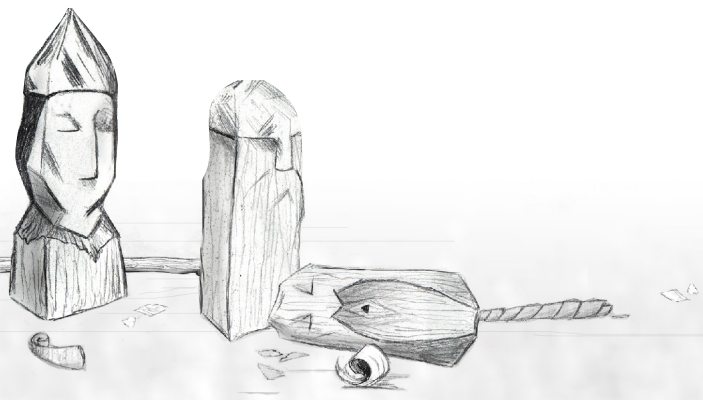
Sample half-elf nicknames
The Arcane, Eagle-eye, Godspeaker, Greenleaf, Lightmane, Moon Child, Nimble, Stalker, Steelwall, The Towering.

Sample full names
♂ Micah "the Sharp".
♀ Liana "Leafweaver".

Racial Rules

- **Ability Score Increase** – Your Charisma score increases by 2 and two other ability scores of your choice increase by 1.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision** – Thanks to your elf blood, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Elven Grace**–You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.
- **Versatile** – You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice.
- **Languages** - You can speak one of the Common languages or Elven.







half-giants

Born with the blood of giants in their veins, many half-giants grow taller and stronger than humans. Although giant ancestry is hard to see at first glance in some cases, in many others it is clear as day. These people have legendary stamina and seem to be largely unaffected by the winter cold. Tall as small trees, strong and bull-headed, such are the half-giants.

Adult male half-giants typically grow a pair of horns, which are regarded as prized possessions. Female half-giants may never have horns: those that do grow them are sacrificed to their totem animal or left in the woods to die. Giants of different clans often have different types of horns, ranging from long and curly to short and stubby. When a male giant hasn't grown a pair as he reaches puberty he is often treated with dismay, ridiculed by the tribe and must work extra hard to show his peers his worth. These individuals are mockingly called 'skam'. Most half-giants grow long, shaggy manes and beards, which offer protection from the harsh environment. They wear practical clothing made of, and adorned by, the animals they hunt. As they have a nomadic culture it is uncommon for them to work metals.



History

Half-giants are a young race that first appeared during the great war between the common folk and giants. Giants saw the half-bloods as a good way to track and control humans, and they treated them as favored slaves. It didn't take the half-giants long to rebel against their forefathers, however, and many of them fled into the wilderness. Half-giants turned out to be too headstrong and stubborn to accept the yoke of slavery. Their resistance against the cold allowed them to move to more desolate, inhospitable locations, where they developed their own culture; a cross between that of the nomadic people of the north and the wild giants.

Today

In the area north and west of Gamleland the half-giant clans roam the tundra and frozen forests. Sometimes they stop to trade in Mjerhemmen, where younglings who must still prove their worth are left to explore the world on their own. A number of tribes live in the mountains and hills of Vuorilas, but not in such high numbers as on the tundra. Half-giants are viewed with suspicion by most common folk, especially elves. To those who can look past their shady origins, however, the half-giants are valuable laborers, guides and mercenaries.

Culture

Males are dominant in half-giant culture. They are the fathers, hunters and leaders of the clans. Proudly they display their long, braided beards and decorated horns. Females are expected to be submissive and obey the wishes of their families. At eligible age they are gifted to a male member of the tribe. The two are then bound by blood forever. Especially strong men may have many women bound to them at the same time.

Like their giant ancestors the half-giants have a harsh culture. When a tribe member has no further value they are slain or left behind. Disputes are settled in man on man skirmishes, often unarmed, or with simple weapons, to display strength and skill. If they do not die in the bout, the losers are cast out. Young men must prove themselves many times over before they are seen as adults. Traditionally this is accomplished through a long adventure, after which they must bring their trophies back to the tribe. Animals have an honored place in half-gi-

ant society, although they do not hesitate to respectfully kill and eat them when necessary. When they do kill an animal, however, its entire body is used.

Religion
Half-giants worship nature and totem animals, which shamans appoint to newborns based on ancient rituals of blood and fire. The shamans carve totems from trees, in the shape of guardian beasts, and dance around them on cold, moonlit nights while chanting wildly. Every member of the tribe is expected to take part in these ceremonies. It is commonly accepted that defeating a powerful foe, whether man or beast, brings luck and prosperity.

Naming conventions
The half-giants inhabit especially inhospitable lands and their mortality-rate is high. It is considered bad luck for a named child to perish, so many children remain unnamed until they reach adulthood. Until they receive their name their totem animal is used as a nickname by family and friends. Boys are considered adults after they survive their first hunt, girls when they have their first period. The given name depends on the circumstances. If their father or mother is alive, or has perished honorably, they are named after them. If the parent of their gender has been banished or has died a dishonorable death they are given a new name by the tribe's shaman. Half-giants show off their clan affiliation through clothing, tattoos and adornments but include their clan names when they interact with outsiders.

Sample half-giant names
♂ Aato, Alvar, Iivari, Jalo, Nehe, Mauno, Pekko.
♀ Aida, Gael, Gia, Iida, Marjo, Sini, Venla, Zelma.

Sample clan names
Blackeye, Bonehill, Deathscale, Stone-eye, Ravenbeak, Yellowmoon.

Sample full names
♂ Laar of the Bearslayer tribe.
♀ Viki of clan Pinevale.

Racial Rules
- **Ability Score Increase** - Your Strength score increases by 2 and your Constitution increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Bull-headed** – You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and against fear effects.
- **Hardy** – You are naturally adapted to cold climates and have an advantage on other cold-related Constitution saves.
- **Nomad** – You have proficiency in the Survival skill and Animal Handling skill.
- **Languages** - You can speak Gamli.

half-orcs

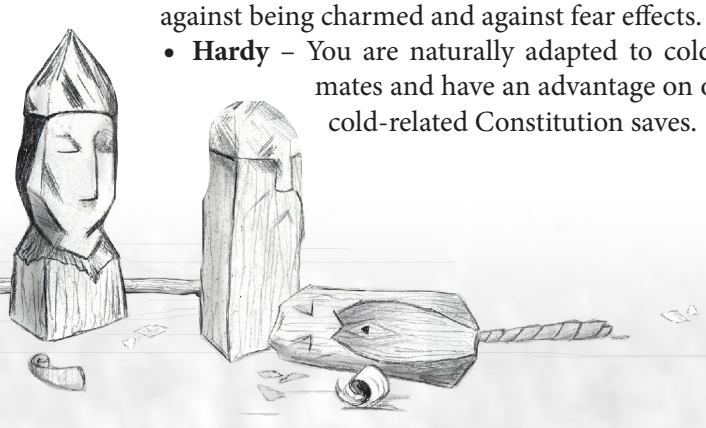
The cruel, brute orcs are notorious for their ferociousness and for raping the women of their enemies. Half-orcs are a by-product of this intercourse. Most civilized races on Bellög despise half-orcs because they remind them of the danger that still lurks in the crevices of the earth.

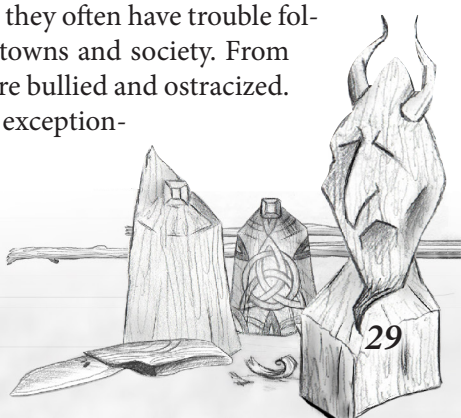
Half-orcs are ugly, hunched, muscular humanoids with coarse hair and beady eyes. Their skin tends to be gray or greenish. Their jaws are often broader than those of humans and they sometimes grow short tusks. It is immediately apparent to humans when someone has orc blood, as these traits are dominant.

History
When the first common folk arrived on Bellög they had to fight off the aggressive orc clans, who seemed to attack them for nothing but the thrill. These cruel creatures pillaged family farms, killed men and raped women. Their half-blood children appeared to be crudely deformed and were often killed or left in the forest. Some women, however, could not bear to abandon their children and raised them despite of their inhuman appearance. These children grew up among human families and sometimes they were even accepted by their kin. Half-orcs are sterile, they cannot reproduce, so they have never developed a culture of their own.

Today
It is not uncommon for half-orcs to leave their family at young age to find their fortune in the wide world. Dwarves sometimes hire half-orc miners and guards, valuing them for their increased strength and keen eyes. Most humans and elves, however, view half-orcs with suspicion. As long as half-orcs can pass for full human they can find work in the cities as a smith, guard or construction worker.

Culture
Half-orcs can be free spirited and aggressive, or misunderstood simpletons. Their poorly developed vocal cords make them sound more like animals than humans and their instinct lets them communicate with orcs in a language of growls and grunts. Speaking in complex languages is difficult for them and they often have trouble following the strict rules of towns and society. From an early age on half-orcs are bullied and ostracized. Only the individuals with exception-





Sidebar 2: Half-Giant Tribal Traits

Most half-giants grow up in a single clan, which shapes important aspects of their identity. Many tribes share basic believes and moral principles, but there are important cultural differences that affect their members as they ascend to adulthood. Although there are hundreds of clans in the north, too many to describe here, we listed a few examples of large and widespread tribes and tribal traits. A male half-giant may choose only a single tribal trait, and only at first level. Females are generally not trained in tribal specialties, although exceptions may exist in your campaign.

The Longhorn-Clan

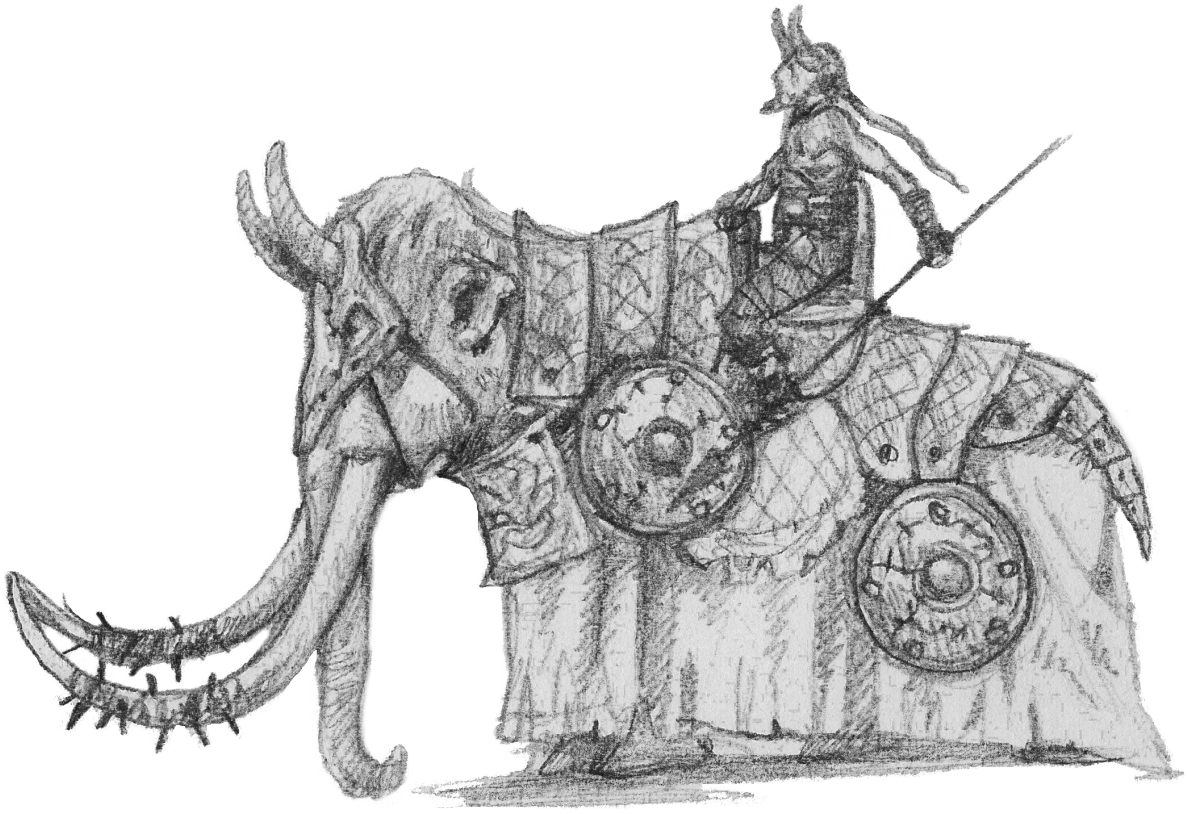
Hailing from the western forests, members of the Longhorn Clan pride themselves on pronounced, sturdy horns. They often decorate their armors with the tusks of the woolly mammoth, to further enhance their bulky, spiky appearance. Warriors of the clan often duel unarmed, using only their horns to injure their opponents. Male half-giants of the clan that do not grow sufficiently impressive horns are ridiculed and often cast out.

The Tribe of Arrowfeathers

The Arrowfeathers call the central plains of Gamleland home. They are renowned for their hunting prowess and unlike most clans they are more of a hunter- than a gatherer society. Women play an even smaller role as they are to remain in the camp and craft while men learn to track prey at a very young age. It is not uncommon that these youngsters become overconfident with their abilities and abandon their family to become hunt masters elsewhere.

Clan of the Hungry Hammer

The Hungry Hammer clan is well-known for producing capable mercenaries. They worship Yggdal, the war-spirit, an ancient entity which has a single forgotten shrine in a frozen cave on the northern plateau. Yggdal is an angry god, who demands constant sacrifice in the form of deadly duals. Members grow up with a lust for battle and glory. When their tribe is not selling its great mauls to the highest bidders it is involved in some conflict of conviction. They paint their faces bright blue and tattoo crushed skulls between their shoulder blades.



al self-control discover how their physical superiority can help them overcome their difficulties to obtain power and riches. It is therefore not unusual for them to end up as outlaws. In the process of proofing themselves some end up joining, or leading, orc clans. Although remembering specific rules and traditions may not be easy for half-orcs they have a strongly developed mob-mentality and both giving and following orders from powerful leaders comes natural to them.



Religion

Usually half-orcs have at least one crisis of faith during their life. They sometimes turn to the goddess of pain, Loviathar. Most half-orcs cannot bother too much with the complexity or implications of religions and simply adopt the faith of their community.

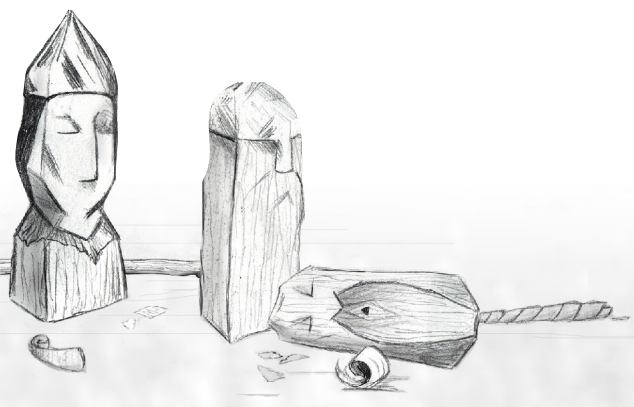
Naming conventions

Like many other half-bloods, the half-orcs adopt the culture of those around them - in many cases either humans or orcs. As they go through life half-orc warriors pick up intimidating nicknames to strike fear into their enemies.

Sample half-orc nicknames
Bloodaxe, the Brave, Dwarfstomper, Firebrand, Frontrunner, Hearteater, Steelchewer, Widowmaker.
Sample full names
Male: Olle "Foe-cleaver".
Female: Lina "Neckbiter".

Racial Rules

- **Ability Score Increase** - Your Constitution score increases by 2 and your Strength increases by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision** - Thanks to your orc blood, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
- **Menacing** - You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill.
- **Relentless Endurance** - When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.
- **Savage Attacks** – When you score a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, you can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.
- **Languages** - You can speak one of the Common languages or Orcish.





humans

Humans are the most widely spread race on Bellög. Most towns and cities are inhabited by a high percentage of humans. Their bravery, physical strength, resourcefulness, curiosity and strong sense of community are keys to their success.

As humans live all over the continent their appearance, clothing style, coloration and traditions vary widely. Natives from Gamleland tend to be the tallest among men, broad-shouldered and blue-eyed. They grow their blonde hair and beards long and dress in hides and pelts. People from Kesma tend to be only slightly shorter, but slimmer, with braided hair and green eyes. They dress in fine linens and wools. Merman families dress similarly, but are known to be relatively short with straight red hair. Humans from Vuorilas are short but stocky, with brown eyes, coarse faces, thick beards and dark hair. Seldom are they seen without at least a sturdy shirt of chain around their barrel chests. Almost all humans are social beings and even the most reclusive farmers go out to meet their neighbors at least a few times a month to barter and banter.

History
Humans came by boat and foot from the south and found shelter under the pines of the northern woods. They quickly adapted to the land and found ways to collaborate. They started living together in small, makeshift villages, which expanded to larger communities under the guidance of the priests of Ukko. With the aid of their dwarven brethren man moved from wooden to stone structures wherever practical.

Today
Humans live everywhere on the continent, except in the eastern reaches, and are still expanding rapidly as families form new communities. Human settlements quickly became commonplace in an otherwise sparsely populated world. Their tendency to seek out allies and opportunities helped them thrive in a mostly hostile environment.

Culture
Men are dominant in human culture. Their kings, called jarls, are always male. Human influence is widespread, meaning the jarls are unable to keep control by themselves. Village elders, who are men also, represent their families and report to their leaders from time to time. Larger communities have multiple representatives that come together in counsel. Disputes are solved in debate or non-lethal combat. Every year adult men travel to the capitol of their country to pay homage to the jarl and to vote about law and action. While men provide safety and take care of the heavy work on the land, women are mistress around the house; they care for food and children. Trade and community are both recognized as the cornerstones of society. Many humans live in small families in rural villages. In autumn and summer women forage nuts and men hunt on the side. Copper, silver and gold coins are used for trade.

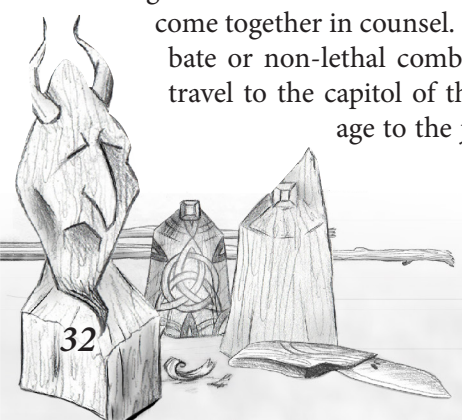
Only few humans have the luxury of specializing in professions other than farmer or hunter, and these can be found only in the cities. Specialists travel the countryside, freelancing, trading and seeking apprentices.

Religion
Most humans pray to Bellög's common gods, although Ukko and Ilmatar are favored over others. Elements and animals are worshiped as well. Although few men have the time to devote a large part of their day to matters of religion, worship does play an integral part in their daily routines: humans love to tell stories about their gods, they pray around the fire and every household provides small sacrifices at dusk and dawn. During feasts and special occasions larger sacrifices, such as livestock, commemorate important events. Around holidays and birthdays special services are dedicated to the gods in shrines and small churches.

Naming conventions
Human culture on the continent finds its roots in the far north of Gamleland and has moved back south with the settlers. Through the generations variations on culture and changes in dialect have lead to distinct but connected naming conventions in human lands. A rough distinction can be made for families hailing from Gamleland, Kesma, Merma and Vuorilas.

Gamleland
After the original settlers escaped the bonds of giant slavery they had adopted many of the customs of their captors. Furthermore, their culture and conventions find strong connections to dwarven tradition. Humans from Gamleland are named at birth by either of their parents. The names of humans from Gamleland resemble half-giant names. Like half-giants, the humans of Gamleland are often named after a parent or grandparent, without taking honor into consideration. Names are often complimented by including the name of one's clan.

Sample clan names
Arrowhead, Briarnet, Longbow, Mammothbreaker, Moonglory, Outlast, Stoutspear, Whiterider





Sample full names
♂ Paulo of clan Moortracker
♀ Margit of clan Shimmerplain

Kesma
The people of Kesma value family and friends over clan alliance and they do not include their clan in their name. Instead they adopt the name or nickname of the greatest hero in their bloodline, ending in -son, as a surname. If they do not have any particularly heroic family members Vainamoinenson is often chosen as a replacement.

Common given names
♂ Aldar, Bent, Gýmir, Mír, Muggur, Rolle, Tjörvi, Valberg
♀ Apríl, Borg, Dröfn, Freyja, Karma, Linde, Mathilde, Tirsa

Sample full names
♂ Olle Vainamoinenson
♀ Igrid Ragnarson

Merma
People in Merma follow the naming conventions of their ancestors in the Kesma, although many refrain from using surnames unless on formal occasions.

Vuorilas
Although by most considered human territory, Vuorilas has close ties to both Bakkesat and Kesma. Only those who can directly trace their bloodlines to the house of Ürthis are deemed worthy to lead a clan. This has led to an almost obsessive tracing of lineage. Given names can be either human names, dwarven names, or a combination of the two. They traditionally end their father's name with the suffix -zon or -zoon, instead of the dwarfish -sen, as it sounds more natural in Vuori. Clans are commonly named after their founder instead of having symbolic meaning. Few of the mountain homes in Vuorilas would be considered as hamlets or villages, so people seldom refer to the names of their homes.

Common clan names
Arthen, Aksel, Björn, Dolf, Olaf, Tjalk, Persen, Ürthis

Sample full name
♂ Ragnar Taldirzoon of clan Ürthis
♀ Lise Ollezon of clan Jannes

Racial Rules
- **Ability Score Increase** – Two different ability scores of your choice increase by 1.
- **Size** - Your size is Medium.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Versatile** – You gain proficiency in 2 skills, instruments or tools of your choice.
- **Fast learner** – You gain one feat of your choice.
- **Languages** - You can speak one of the Common languages.
- ***Special*** – If your campaign does not allow the optional feat rules, use the basic human traits instead.







Trow

The trow are a scaly race of amphibious fishmen who inhabit the rivers and seas of Bellög. They generally prefer to live in brackish or salt water. Warm-bloods, as they call the common folk, usually have little meaning to them. They tend to be shy, misunderstood and unpredictable.

Trow grow to be a little below 5 feet, as tall as dwarves, with the males being slightly taller than the females. They have a slender build, with a short, slim tail that ends in a fin. Webbed hands and feet allow them to maneuver in the water, but limit their speed on land. They dress in their own crafted clothing, often decorated with shells. Being amphibious, the trow have no hair at all, although some choose to decorate their fins instead. They have bulbous, fish-like eyes that glisten like dark pools.

History

The trow hail from within the ocean depths, where they existed peacefully for countless generations before they permanently emerged and started building on land. Shamans tell of a mighty red eyed shark with fins of a hundred leagues that tried to devour all trow. In fear of the monstrous beast the sea-dwellers had no choice but to move to land. Lead by Nogloth the Great, the fish folk left their watery home and took up residence on the shores of the continent. Although the trow became somewhat afraid to venture into the depths, the waves and their goddess were not forgotten, and a great temple was constructed in her honor. Unaccustomed to the daylight the trow first came ashore only at night, which made the common folk suspicious of their intentions. The trow did not know of the ways of the common folk, nor saw the need to trade or even engage with these strangers. For many years the common folk and the trow lived side-by-side, respectfully ignoring the other, until a new threat presented itself.

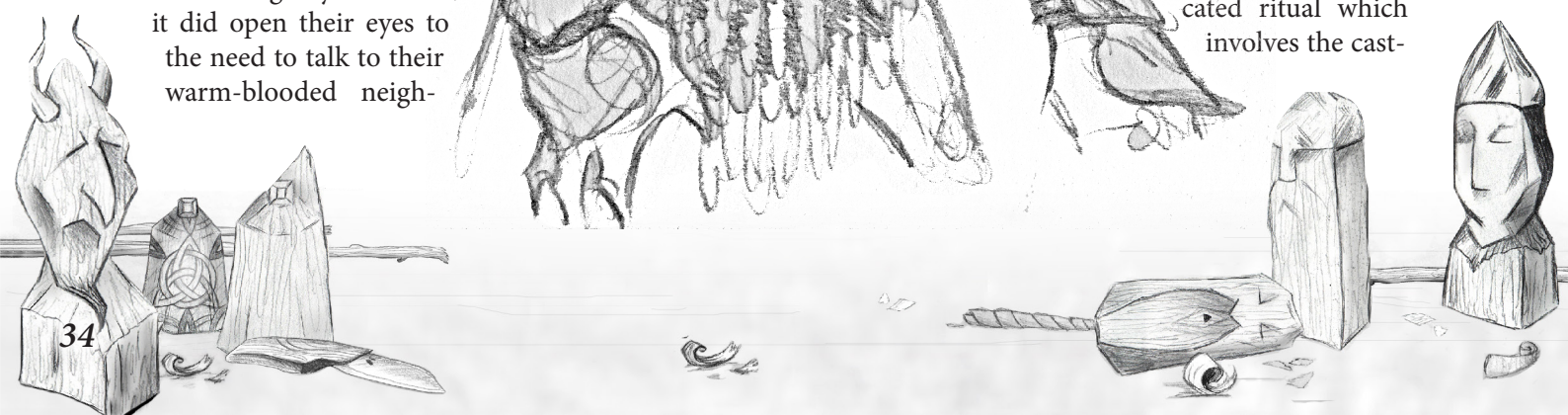
Pirates saw a worthwhile target in the fishmen and started raiding and pillaging their villages. Although usually the trow were able to escape underwater easily, and managed to avoid taking any casualties, it did open their eyes to the need to talk to their warm-blooded neighbors. Brave trow visited the leaders of the common folk, explaining their plea and to request assistance and compensation. Although the elders were hesitant, the trow knowledge of the sea and currents proved a valuable resource in their own battle against the cut-throats. Thanks to the help of the trow the jarls managed to force the pirates into a truce.

Today

Unaccustomed to life on land, the trow often remain close to seas, lakes and waterways. Many of the common folk still view them with unease and mistrust, despite their reputation for being unparalleled navigators at sea. Trow sailors and scouts can be found in port towns along all major trade routes. Some trow take to scavenging and sell objects they find on the bottom of their watery domains in shore-side markets.

Culture

Trow are a suspicious, skittish people with very few laws. Most of their society depends on common sense and it never even occurred to them it might be prudent to write down rules. Instead they think written agreements are rude - as if anyone would ever forget, or break, an honorable agreement. Although especially the older trow look at the common races with suspicion, younger hatchlings feel valued among them because of the appreciation of their skills. Trow had some trouble with the notion of using precious metals and stones as a payment method, but quickly adapted to it when they found out that the baubles on the sea floor could be used to feed and clothe oneself. They live in a highly hierarchical tribal structure, where the lowest class lives to the edge of the village and the higher-class citizens inhabit the center. Gender has no influence on one's position in society, although birth does. Political decisions are voted on by the inner circle, or decided by a complicated ritual which involves the cast-



ing of shells in a sacred bowl of water called a Yulagh.

Like fish, the trow lay eggs. A female can spawn up to twenty of these, although generally only a handful actually hatch. Trow generally display no interest in sexuality, although some are fascinated by the sexual behavior of the common folk and react to it in a way that some may find awkward. Children are raised by matrons in the village center and their lives are generally determined by elders from the moment they hatch. Those unable to accustom themselves to their fate often leave their tribe and become adventurers.

Religion
The god of the trow is the Seamother. She is an alien being of vaguely humanoid shape with an agenda that is impossible to grasp for warm bloods. Trow only speak about their goddess when pressed and speak of her immense beauty and treacherous nature: she is the sea incarnate. Despite their inability to understand the true purpose and intention of their deity the trow venerate her intensely. Trow clerics often become alienated from their people as they see bits and pieces of prophecy, starting to grasp the intentions of their deity. Some of them appear to be, or eventually become, quite mad.

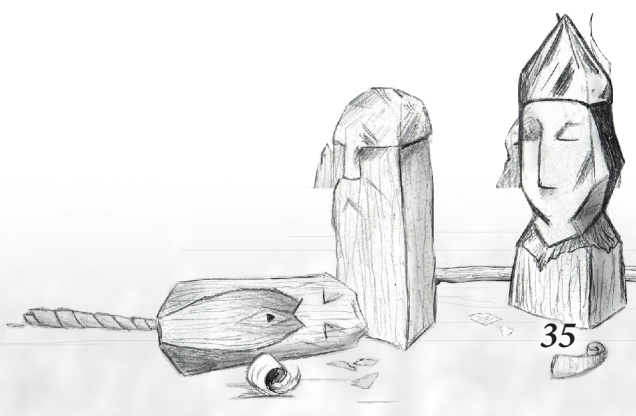
To appease the goddess many trow display symbols of her creatures on their armor and weapons.

Naming conventions
Trow speak Aquan, a language that is awkward to pronounce for the other common folk. They developed their own customs in very different circumstances, which is why it is unlike many of the other cultures on the continent. Before they made first contact with the common folk they did not have concepts of either heritage nor ownership so individual names had little importance in their culture. An individual is still appointed a given name by the tribe shaman at birth for practical use. Unlike other common folk the trow do not use distinct names for males and females, instead all of their names can be used for an individual of either gender. Surnames and tribal names are alien concepts for trow. It is common for young trow to misunderstand longer names, causing them to pick any one part of those to call their companion instead of their given name.

Sample trow names:
Alala, Bugg-Shash, Gur'la-Ya, K'nar, Rhogog, Sho-Gath, Swarog, X'Otli

Racial Rules
- **Ability Score Increase** – Your Dexterity score increases by 2 and your Constitution increases by 1.
- **Speed** - Your base walking speed is 30 feet and your swimming speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision** – You are used to life in the darkness of the night and the embrace of the sea. You have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern any colors.
- **Amphibious** –You can breathe either air or water.
- **Seafarer** – You gain proficiency in Navigator's Tools. Whenever you make an Intelligence (Nature) check related to the sea, you are considered proficient in the Nature skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.
- **Sure-footed** – Trow have a short tail and webbed feet which help them balance. You have proficiency in Dexterity (Acrobatics) and double your proficiency on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks in water.
- **Slippery** – You have an advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to escape a grapple in combat or to wriggle free of bonds. After you use this ability you cannot use it again until you complete a long or short rest.
- **Languages** - You can speak Aquan.







Sidebar 3
Roleplaying Tips

In this sidebar we present tips that will help you get into the mindset of your favorite race.

Bugbear

It is not always easy being a seven-foot mass of fur and muscle. Often you stand out in crowds, drawing attention from commoners and their children, especially in smaller communities. Some bugbears enjoy this attention and puff their chest, while trying their best to make a lasting impression by showing kindness and gentleness, but this approach does not work for all. How do you handle being born into slavery and now having your freedom?

Do you retreat into a world of your own, are you shy and reserved? Some people may think that you are mentally challenged and unable to speak.

And what about the hard side - the animal side? Are you able to keep it hidden away, or is your character prone to fits of anger? Buggan is a very quiet language and bugbear vocal cords tend to be poorly adapted to constant conversation. Perhaps your character whispers and never raises his voice in everyday situations, but unleashes his fury with a booming roar in battle. How do you treat those that would oppose others for entertainment or financial gain? Do you have a highly developed sense of righteousness and do you feel compelled to help others break their chains? Or are you a simple-minded creature with the desire to serve a master worthy of your attention? A last interesting opinion to form is the one about your own people. Do you view slaves as weak cowards, unwilling to break their chains, or as challenged victims unable to escape the yoke without the help of another?

Dwarf

Is your character bound by honor, a stern follower of the dwarven traditions, or perhaps an outcast with a very different outlook on life? Perhaps your character was raised among another people, or in a human city.

Did your community praise your determination and ability, fueling a form of racial pride? Choosing the life of an adventurer is not an easy choice for many of your race, as it means leaving behind one's family and community. Why does this life appeal to you? Is it the fame, the wealth, or the chance to make the world a safer place? How do you see others of your race? Do you respect their lifestyle, or do you think of them as slaves to tradition?

Did you grow up among dwarves? If so, how do you see other races, as alien usurpers, or as friends you may have not yet met?



Gold and gems have a great financial value, but do you value them over a magical sword or shield? Do you believe that your heritage entitles you to these practical treasures? Lastly, there is the matter of arcane magic. As a dwarf your body makes it impossible for you to channel arcane powers, but it also makes you highly resistant to their effect. Are you fascinated by these spellcasters, or perhaps a bit jealous of their abilities?

Elf

Playing an elf can present you with a number of interesting dilemmas in life. You are among the oldest people that walk the earth, as even a young elf has many more years under their belt than a venerable human. How do you view these younger races? Do you think that they are interesting and exotic, or do you see them as simpletons, unable to grasp the elven way of life? Perhaps you consider it your duty to teach others about the errors of their ways, scoffing at how they treat women and how they lust for violence and war. Were you born in a city, among those of other races, or did you grow up around your own kin? If you grew up around humans and halflings you have seen friends from your youth wither and die before you came into adulthood. How has this influenced the way your character thinks about life and death? Does your character feel privileged for her long

lifespan, or perhaps cursed by it? Nature is important to your people; how does it influence the life of your character? Do you have a loyal pet, or are you an avid vegetarian? How do you treat others that do not view nature the same way?

Gnoll

Other people may think of you as somewhat of a peacock. They do not understand that in order to be successful you have to dress the part. All gnolls have their own distinct look, of which they are very proud, but which may change over the years. Do you go through great lengths to craft your own clothing, or do you have a fondness for elven cloaks, gnomish jewelry or half-giant leathers? Your people consider it important to be aware of ongoing events and to form an opinion about them. Just how vocal is your character about this to others? Does her big mouth sometimes get her into trouble? Most gnolls just love to travel and explore. When your character meets new people, does she use her strong personality to intimidate, or to befriend strangers? Many of the common folk believe in gnoll curses. Does your character use this legend to get her way? Does she believe that she can see the future, or is she skeptical of her racial powers? Perhaps she sees important signs in everyday occurrences, such as the formation of a flock of birds, the way the grass dances in the wind, or perhaps she is always analyzing the dreams of those around her. Always remember that your people think it is most important to discover your own distinct personality and to honor your elders and ancestors.



Gnome

As a gnome, your character is likely a friend of all earth creatures, but does his friendship extend to surface dwellers as well? Were you raised in a burrow far from society, sheltered by your own kind, or did your tribe trade with elves or dwarves? You may feel responsible for others in some way, believing it to be your destiny to protect them, or you may be a true survivalist, looking out only for close friends. Nature will probably be very important to you, and you may be drawn to its call. Is your character fascinated by villages, or cities, or does he feel oppressed by them? Unlike other common folk you have a very strong sense of smell, which may cause you to experience your surroundings very differently. While your friends marvel at a golden statue of a forgotten deity, you cannot get your head around the strange smell of cinnamon originating from a nearby hallway. Your home has a deeply rooted meaning to you, and so may the environment in which your adventures take place. Feeling compelled to hold on to these places your character may bring all sorts of mementos, such as tiny bags of earth, strongly scented herbs which you later dry, or prettily shaped stones found near the entrance of a dungeon.

Halfling

Do you feel lucky? Halflings are well-known for their inherent luckiness, but how has it influenced the life of your character? Are you very careful and conservative, or are you so confident that you are willing to take almost any risk? At what station in their life is your character? The lives of wedded and single halflings tend to be very different. How did your culture influence your choice to become an adventurer? Have you chosen a life on the road, or were you forced into leaving home and hearth? Do you know the other members of your party well, do they trust you? Do you see yourself as a leader, or as a follower? When the party halts at night, and you crawl into your sleeping bag, do you pray to a god, or to all gods? Some halflings get very excited about religion and some dwarves say that a halfling collects deities like coins in their pouch. Does religion play a role in your life in name only, or do you consider yourself a devout follower of multiple religions?

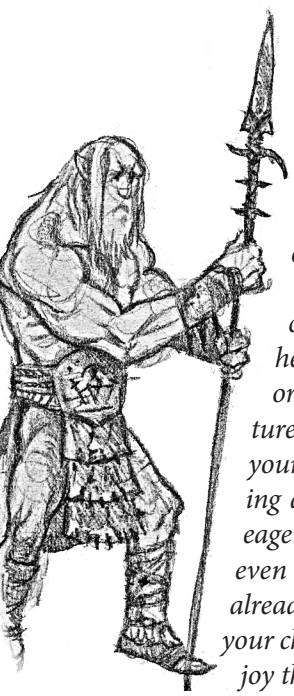
Half-dwarf

The most important decision when creating a half-dwarf character is to decide whether they were raised among humans or among dwarves. Half-dwarves tend to be sturdy and powerful compared to humans, and this is often a cause for misunderstandings. Your character may have been able to out drink his peers, and even the village drunk, easily. Seeing in the dark comes naturally to your character, and he may have the habit of becoming active around dusk, while other humans have trouble finding their way. Your sturdy frame may have caused jealously from much older and more developed children. If your character was raised among dwarves he was probably among the tallest in his village. At a young age he may have discovered that he was nimbler than his dwarven brethren, but unable to keep up with them in rough games and physical labor. Was he bullied, or did he manage to use his talents to his advantage? Many half-dwarves inherit the pious nature of their dwarven parent. How does religion influence your life? Do you follow a specific god, the pantheon, or do you believe strongly in certain values?

Half-elf

To which culture does your character feel the stronger connection, elf, human, or perhaps both equally? Maybe your character is still trying to figure it all out, and he asks a lot of questions. No matter in which community your character has grown up, they have always at some point either outgrown their peers, or seen their peers outgrow them. Elves tend to become masters in their craft, but the life of a half-elf is much shorter. What distinct talents does your character have, and how does he develop them? Does your

character embrace a specific talent, or does he choose to stay a generalist? Many half-elves are adept speakers, how about your character? Do you value diplomacy over violence, and if so, do you let this affect your daily life? Are you preachy to those that fail to see things your way, or do you allow others freedom in their own ways?



Half-giant

You were brought up in a harsh, sometimes cruel, environment of unforgiving cold, endless wilderness and countless other dangers. How has this influenced your character and his morality? Does your heart flutter when you think of the North, or were you happy to leave for greener pastures? If your character is not yet middle-aged, your first adventure might be about becoming an adult, meaning that you may be very eager to prove yourself. Adults may have an even more interesting story to tell, as they have already passed the trials of the world. Why is your character still on an adventure? Do you enjoy the freedom, the action, the lifestyle? What totem animal guards your character, and how much does it mean to him? Some half-giants go as far as to choose their totem animal's name as a nickname, and dress in their hides. Many half-giants lack the intelligence of the other common folk. Some feel intimidated by this, others do not care or understand. How does this affect your character specifically?

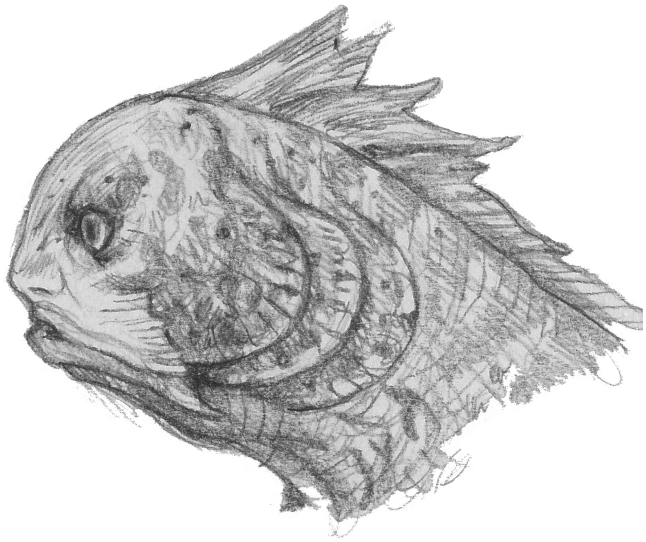


Half-orc

When they look into your eyes many people are reminded of a harsh reality, and a very real danger. Are you ashamed of your heritage? How does your character cope with this? Did he grow up in a loving family, or was he bullied or ignored by those around him? Do you have a bond with one, or either, of your parents? The way a person is treated from an early age will affect them for the rest of their lives. Does your character feel resentment against his former bully, or does he turn the other cheek? Like so many others, half-orcs seek comfort in religion or in their society. Many of them struggle with the fact that they have no culture of their own, that they belong to a dying race. How does your character deal with the reality that they will never be able to reproduce? Some half-orcs are especially fond of children and adopt other half-orcs to raise as their own, while others develop a grudge against the children of other races.

Human

Humans are everywhere on the continent. Being the most dominant race, you can expect that the most other people your character has met in their life, were human as well. As cultural differences among humans are especially broad we advise you to choose carefully where your character has grown up. Cultural differences between humans are further detailed in chapter 5.



Trow

The waves hold no secrets to you! How does being an aquatic creature affect your character? Does she feel more at home at sea, or in the river? Does your character try to impress others with her knowledge and experience of the sea? Why did you leave the water to become an adventurer? Is it because you love exploring? Or do you have a weakness for gold and fame, things that many of your kind would not understand? It may be hard for your character to grasp the rules and religions of the common folk, which may lead to comical misunderstandings. Many do not see life in the same way, and would have difficulty with the harshness and habits of your people. Does your character feel that she has to prove herself to others, or does she feel that the trow ways are superior? Did you leave your old culture behind purposefully, or do you take it with you on your adventures?

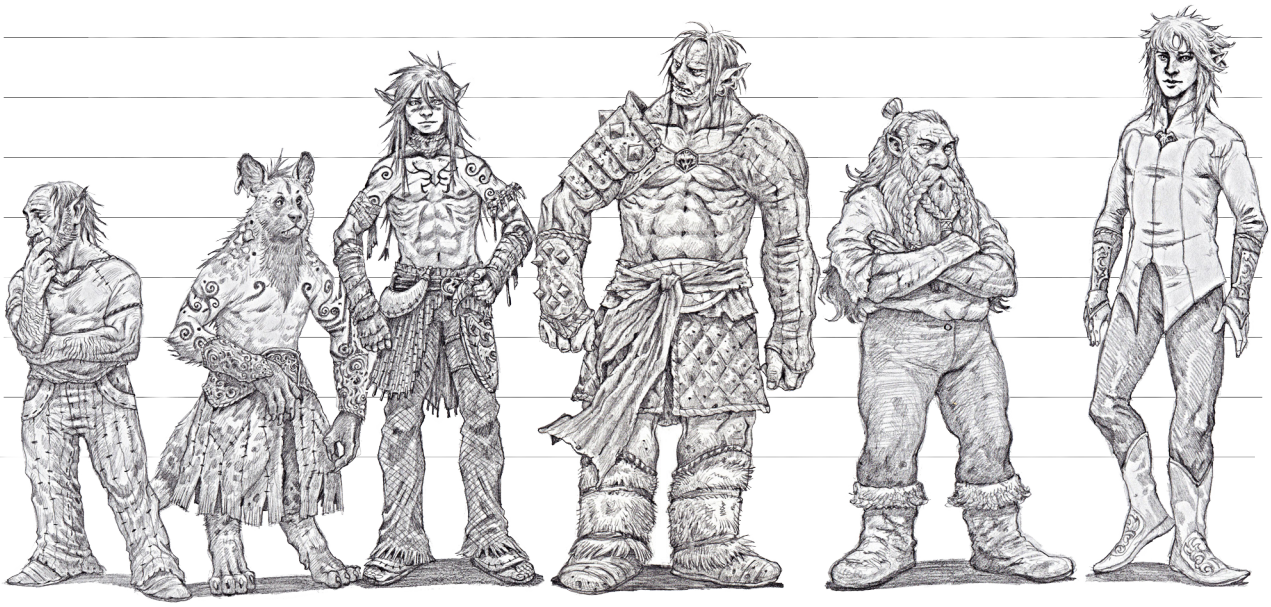


TABLE: RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT FEMALES

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Bugbear	5'5"	+2d12	170 lb.	x(2d8) lb.
Dwarf	3'7"	+2d4	100 lb.	x(2d6) lb.
Elf	4'5"	+2d6	80 lb.	x(1d6) lb.
Gnoll	3'5"	+2d6	60 lb.	x(1d4) lb.
Gnome	2'10"	+2d4	40 lb.	x1 lb.
Halfling	2'8"	+2d4	30 lb.	x1 lb.
Half-dwarf	4'0"	+2d6	90 lb.	x(2d6) lb.
Half-elf	4'5"	+2d8	80 lb.	x(2d4) lb.
Half-giant	4'10"	+2d10	130 lb.	x(2d10) lb.
Half-orc	4'2"	+2d8	90 lb.	x(2d8) lb.
Human	4'5"	+2d10	85 lb.	x(2d4) lb.
Trow	3'5"	+2d6	50 lb.	x(1d4) lb.



TABLE: RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT MALES

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Bugbear	5'5"	+2d12	210 lb.	x(2d8) lb.
Dwarf	3'9"	+2d4	130 lb.	x(2d6) lb.
Elf	4'5"	+2d6	85 lb.	x(1d6) lb.
Gnoll	3'5"	+2d6	60 lb.	x(1d4) lb.
Gnome	3'0"	+2d4	40 lb.	x1 lb.
Halfling	2'6"	+2d4	25 lb.	x1 lb.
Half-dwarf	4'5"	+2d6	110 lb.	x(2d6) lb.
Half-elf	4'7"	+2d8	100 lb.	x(2d4) lb.
Half-giant	5'2"	+2d10	150 lb.	x(2d10) lb.
Half-orc	4'5"	+2d8	120 lb.	x(2d8) lb.
Human	4'10"	+2d10	120 lb.	x(2d4) lb.
Trow	3'5"	+2d6	50 lb.	x(1d4) lb.

TABLE: RANDOM STARTING AGES

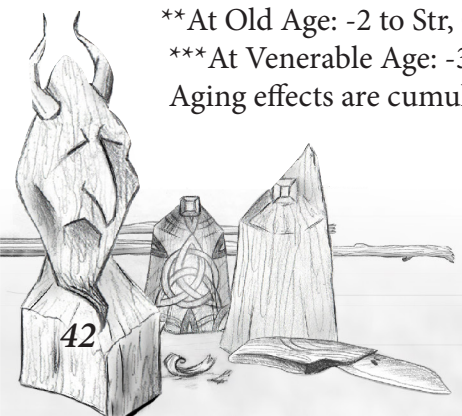
Race	Starting age	Simple Class*	Advanced Class**	Complex Class***
Bugbear	10 years	+1d4 years	+3d4 years	+3d6 years
Dwarf	40 years	+2d6 years	+4d6 years	+10d6 years
Elf	110 years	+4d8 years	+6d8 years	+10d8 years
Gnoll	10 years	+1d4 years	+2d4 years	+3d4 years
Gnome	12 years	+2d6 years	+4d6 years	+8d6 years
Halfling	20 years	+1d6 years	+2d6 years	+3d6 years
Half-dwarf	30 years	+2d6 years	+4d6 years	+6d6 years
Half-elf	35 years	+2d6 years	+4d6 years	+6d6 years
Half-giant	45 years	+2d8 years	+4d8 years	+6d8 years
Half-orc	12 years	+1d4 years	+2d4 years	+3d4 years
Human	15 years	+1d6 years	+2d6 years	+3d6 years
Trow	8 years	+1d4 years	+2d4 years	+3d4 years

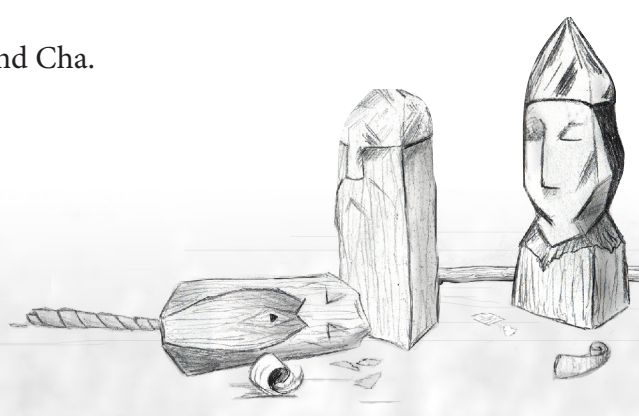
*Simple classes include: Barbarian, Rogue, Sorcerer.
**Advanced classes include: Bard, Fighter, Paladin, Ranger.
***Complex classes include: Cleric, Druid, Monk, Wizard.

TABLE: AVERAGE LIFESPANS

Race	Middle Age*	Old**	Venerable***	Maximum Age
Bugbear	30 years	45 years	60 years	+2d20 years
Dwarf	155 years	260 years	310 years	+5d% years
Elf	200 years	350 years	420 years	+6d% years
Gnoll	45 years	55 years	60 years	+1d20 years
Gnome	80 years	120 years	160 years	+1d% years
Halfling	50 years	75 years	100 years	+2d20 years
Half-dwarf	60 years	90 years	120 years	+3d20 years
Half-elf	65 years	95 years	160 years	+1d% years
Half-giant	115 years	170 years	220 years	+1d% years
Half-orc	30 years	45 years	60 years	+2d10 years
Human	35 years	55 years	70 years	+2d20 years
Trow	25 years	35 years	50 years	+1d10 years

*At Middle Age: -1 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.
**At Old Age: -2 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.
***At Venerable Age: -3 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.
Aging effects are cumulative.





Chapter 3: Classes

Shadows thick as syrup pushed against the light spell. The tomb of the warrior wizard Zuel was anything but welcoming to these intruders. Beads of sweat rolled between Kaari's eyebrows while he muttered the final words of the ward breaking spell. Now it was up to their new comrade, Xox, to finish the job. Seemingly unfazed by the sound of orcs trying to barge in and the grunts of their dwarf companions straining against the door, his nimble fingers danced through his leather tool-sleeve. He selected two metal pins and slid them from their supple restraints into the ancient lock. As the metal extensions prodded into the safeguard, his brain was working overtime, making a mental representation of the inner workings. For an instant his eyes shifted between the dwarves, the half-elf and back to his fingers. A well-oiled machine indeed. The lock snapped open.

Barbarian

Barbarians are savage warriors that tap into their rage to empower themselves in battle. Many barbarians decorate themselves with tribal tattoos or ritual scarring. Battle wounds are shown off as trophies. To add to their fierce visage many barbarians dress in battle-worn leathers or the hides of the animals they have slaughtered during their travels. They are often drawn to the lifestyle of a mercenary, explorer or soldier of fortune. Barbarians seek out dangerous situations and the thrill of battle to constantly prove their courage and strength.

Origins

Giants, being strong of body and stubborn of mind, were among the first warrior people to harness their rage as a weapon. Shamans gazed in the flames of their great fires and saw the seed of victory blooming in the earth. They instructed their warriors to fast for weeks, while sipping on concoctions brewed from the roots of the mighty oak and mushrooms. When the ritual would end, they would be scarred by sacred fire and reinvigorated with broth of deer blood. A great strength was awoken from deep within them and they now possessed the skill to unshackle it effortlessly, charging into battle with legendary vigor. The giants taught the half-giants born of their blood and they in turn have been teaching humans.

Races

Half-giants of Gamleland still proudly follow their ancient traditions, causing many of them to choose the path of the barbarian. After completing their rituals of becoming, young barbarians are sent away from the tribe to learn the ways of the world.

Dwarves may seem like an unlikely race to pursue the role of barbarian, but the opposite is true. The southern reaches of Bakkesat are home to many tribes that have followed their own barbaric traditions for generations. They chew the root of the plant they call the Red Root, which enables them to enter a deep state of trance. It also permanently dyes their teeth and tongues red. They wear heavier armor than northern barbarians and mar and mark it instead of their flesh. Many dwarf barbarians choose to funnel their rage in a controlled manner, seeming perfectly calm at first glance. This calm demeanor hides a rage as deep as the tunnels that their people call home.

Gnolls, despite being small in stature, are known to allow their rage to empower them in battle. Due to their nomadic culture they often come into contact with many different people, including barbaric tribes. Impressed by the fire that burns within them they offer gnolls the opportunity to learn their ways. Despite their determination not many of the gnolls complete or survive these trials but those that do become legends among their own people.
us on saving throws against ingested poison.

Religion

Although barbarians are not inherently religious, many of them find comfort in the thought of a deity watching over them. Many good barbarians pray to Mielikki, goddess of the forest, to guide them in their travels and to provide them with wisdom and strength. Half-giant


"BARBARIAN"
Jacek Szymański 09.10.2013

barbarians often worship the spirits of their homeland. Dwarf barbarians follow Ilmarinen, respecting him as a fiery warrior. Surma, the god of death, is also a common religion among barbarians who slaughter their enemies in his name. Some evil barbarians worship Hiisi, feeling drawn to his fickleness and selfishness. These barbarians are dangerous, unpredictable foes.

Training
Barbarians all have in common that they were created in a tribal environment. Becoming a barbarian is a long exhausting journey that takes great emotional and physical commitment. Depending on the race and time these trials may include armed combat, wrestling, exploration or other physical tests, often combined with ritual scarring or burning, fasting, or the consumption of poisonous foods. Although most barbarians have a somewhat similar view on life, they are unlikely to view each other as comrades. Barbarians are often proud and individualistic. If anything, many barbarians see each other as rivals or enemies.

BARD

Bards are wanderers and explorers, court advisers, researchers and entertainers. In a world where many people cannot read or write, the bard is an invaluable source of news. They are jacks-of-all-trades, flexible and creative. Whether they are researching the stuff of legends while they are exploring an ancient tomb, or are entertaining a local lord in his hall, the life of a bard is never dull. Bards have accompanied some of the greatest heroes on their journeys and as a result have become great heroes themselves.

Origins
Stories are as old as the world itself, so in a way, performers have always been around. The bardic tradition is rooted deeply into many of the cultures on the continent. The ability to tell stories and sing songs of great heroes, thereby helping to preserve these legacies for future generations, is deemed very important. People have passed down their own legends and myths about the first songs and stories.

Halfling bards were among the first heralds, spreading news from village to village and within their community. They often used witty rhymes to help people remember them and their message. A halfling bard could always expect to find kindness and shelter wherever they went.

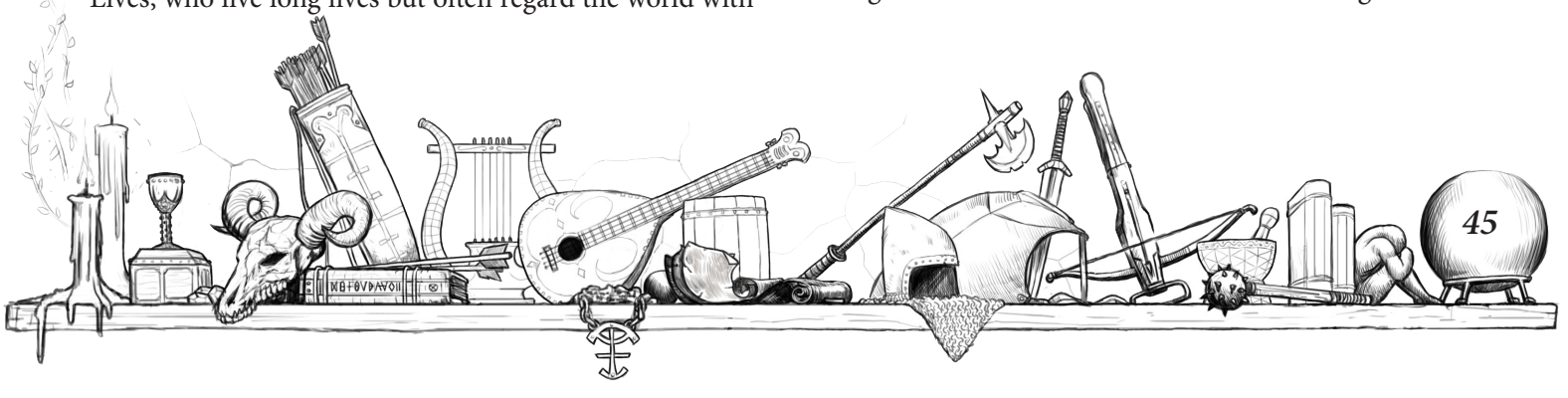
Elves, who live long lives but often regard the world with child-like wonder, are by many believed to be the first people to experiment with the magic of music. They believe that when a young elf mother could not let go of her lost infant, the goddess Mielikki visited her hut. She showed her the forms of instruments hidden in wood and taught her how to play them. The young woman found great comfort in music and taught her skills to all five children that she would bear. Her bittersweet songs have not been forgotten and are still being played to mourn the loss of a loved one. Elves found many ways in which music could entertain, inform and inspire.

Races
Halflings, being both social and adaptable, embrace these aspects of the bardic tradition. They are an easily distracted, curious folk so they tend not to specialize in playing one instrument but instead learn to play many. Storytelling and a deft tongue are considered to be a bard's most important skills.

Elves are considered to be the most talented musicians among bards. Their long lives allow them to pursue their interests and to master their talents beyond those of others. The elven culture values gentle, melodic music and tradition over innovation. Many elf bards know by heart the many dirges, poems and legends remembered by their people.
Humans and their half-blooded kin tend to focus more on the practical role a bard serves in their community. Their songs and stories are meant to entertain, but more so to teach and inform their audience. With the intention to draw attention they play on loud or rhythmic instruments. Many of these bards choose to follow or serve great people and to represent them to the best of their abilities, preserving their legacy.

Religion
Often bards turn to a god to keep them safe on their journeys. Elven bards traditionally follow the teachings of Mielikki and handcraft their own instruments. Matias, the halfling patron deity, is a bard and a trickster himself. Some bards find a kindred spirit in Ilmatar and are drawn to her teachings of love and support. Evil bards turn to Hiisi, the trickster god, or Loviathar for her cold beauty. These bards might use their musical influence to corrupt the hearts of their victims, seducing them into worshiping false, or evil deities.

Training
Being chosen to become a bard is considered a great hon-

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or. Master bards travel the land looking for apprentices who might be up to the task. They tend to pick them out at festivals or at clan gatherings. Depending on their master the training and requirements can differ wildly. Elf bards, for example, are notorious in the level of perfection they demand from their apprentice and teach them to craft their own instruments. Halflings are the only folk to gather up to six bards in bard schools owned by a single master. These schools are called Gatherings and there is at least one of them in every large village and town. Self-taught bards are rare as it requires great finesse and skill at performance and magic.

Cleric

A cleric embodies the very power of the god he serves and ranks among his favored servants. Clerics have access to a vast and flexible array of magic powers which they can use to shelter the meek, heal the wounded or smite the evil. They seek out enemies of their god and non-believers to convert, or to test the strength of their faith in the fires of battle. Good clerics fill the hearts of people with kindness and hope, while evil clerics seek to pervert the world and spread disease, death, chaos and destruction.



Origins

In times when the common folk were still young the gods whispered to their favored children, teaching them their ways through dream and vision. These were the shamans and they taught their offspring and tribe the will of their deities around the fire. They blessed their people with strength and wisdom. As their interest in religion grew, the people sculpted statues and obelisks, shrines and monuments which they dedicated to their deities. These eventually evolved into churches and larger temples. The stronger their followers believed, the more powerful their gods became.

Races

Clerics exist among all common folk and many people embrace at least one god as their patron deity or creator. Dwarves, with their patient, lawful nature, spend many hours of their lives studying the ways of Ilmarinen. Once their training has been completed these dwarves take to the road, embracing the life of traveling Samaritans. They store their knowledge in runes which they carve in their armor, weapons and on the very walls of their cities.

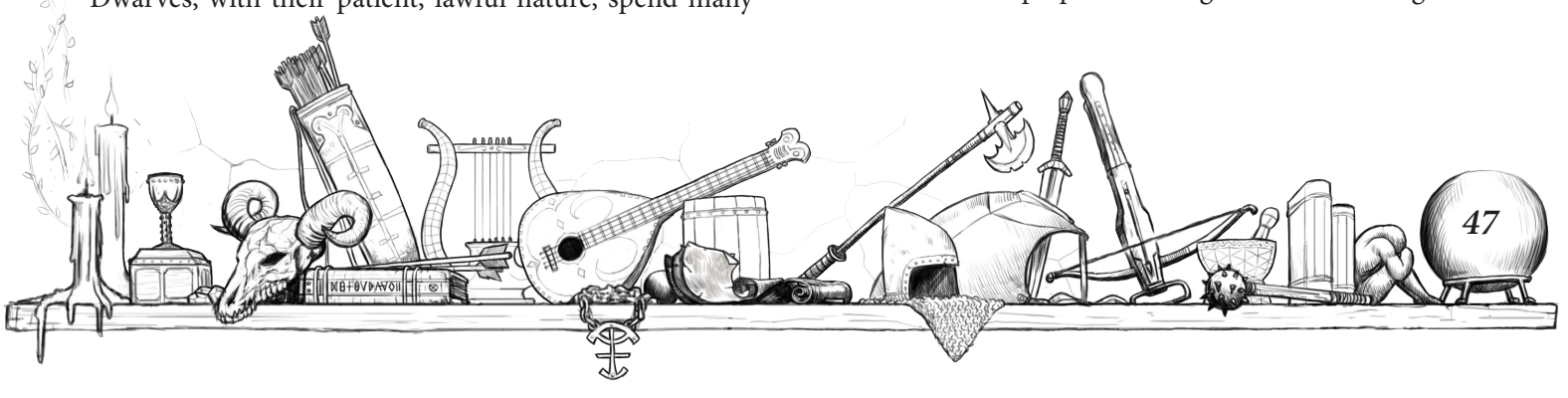
Trow clerics follow the way of their patroness, the demanding and erratic Seamother. They go out of their way to record and try to make sense of her complicated wishes. It is not uncommon for her followers to completely lose their mind in the pursuit of knowledge and power. Half-giant and bugbear clerics often follow spiritual beliefs that out-date the connection between the other common folk and their gods, opting to worship the spirits of the land instead. These spirits can be anything, from powerful elemental beings, to animal totems, to mighty landmarks. Their resolve and power often manifests itself in one or two ideals they value over others.

Religion

Religion plays a vital role in the life of a cleric. Gods provide clerics with the ability to perform magic; the stronger a cleric's connection to his deity, the more powerful his spell casting ability becomes. Some clerics follow religions that have no deity, such as the Shining Path, these godless clerics draw power from an unknown source. There are only very few clerics that instead opt to follow certain ideals. Those that do may pick two domains as the central pillars of their beliefs.

Training

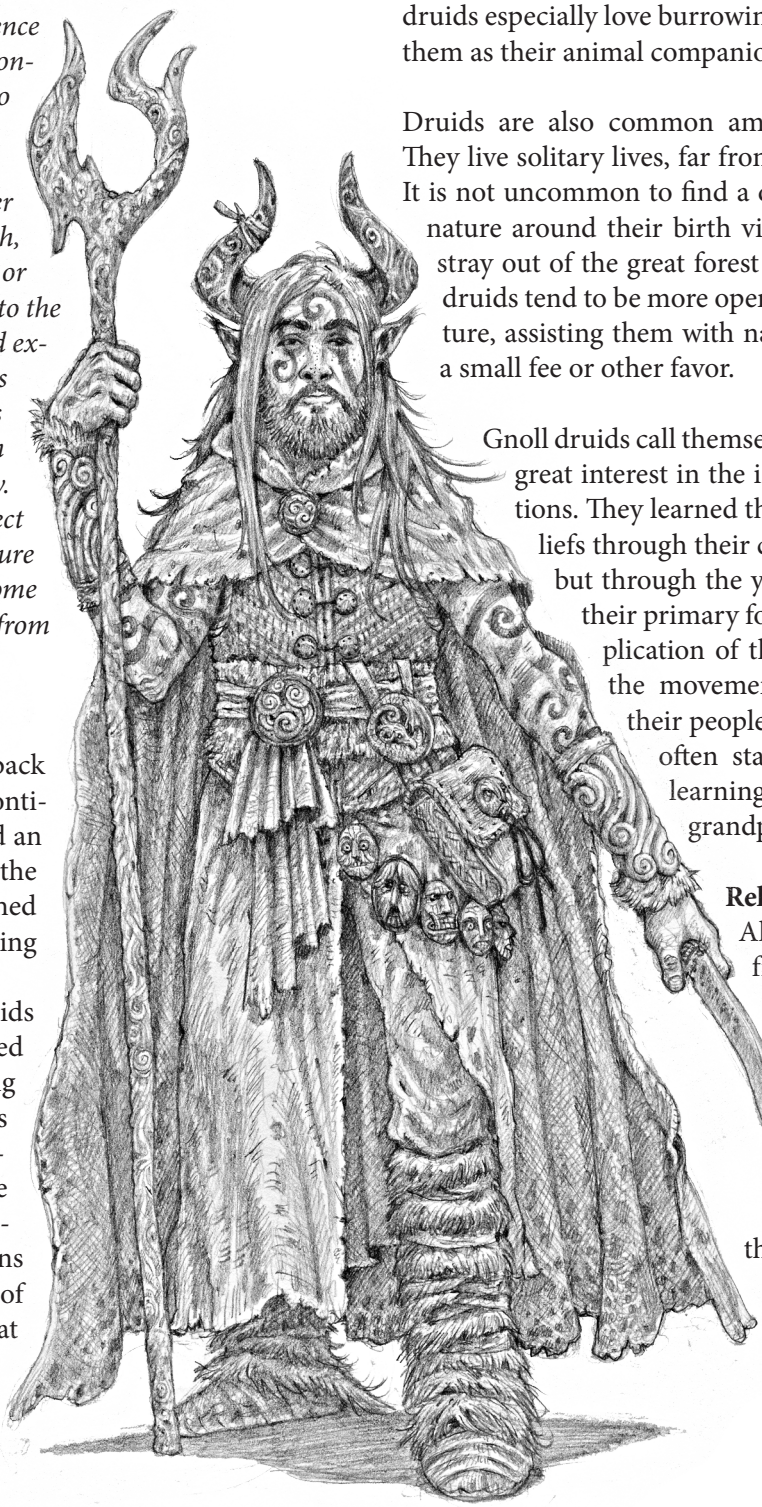
The ability to channel the power of a god is inborn, although it is strengthened through study and experience. Children with this special link are recognized by clerics when they meet each other during religious ceremonies. The child is then prepared through home schooling and



regular visits. If their interest persists they are sent to be trained as full clerics, if it wanes they typically become adepts. A large number of clerics take official schooling at the High Temples of their deity. This typically takes several years and involves an intense study in scripture, combat and magic. A much smaller percentage of clerics takes on an apprenticeship with a local master or is self-taught.

Druid

Nature has an ancient influence over all living things. No wonder some of them decide to embrace and serve nature as a druid. These powerful spell casters draw their power from the goddess of the earth, Gaea. Each druid finds his or her own reason to venture into the world. Some enjoy seeing and exploring new grounds, others go in search of the despoilers of their realms or are sent on special missions by their deity. All druids share great respect for the circle of life. But nature has a dark side as well and some druids draw their power from death and decay.



Origins

The druidic tradition goes back to the first people on the continent. Gnomes and elves had an intimate relationship with the world around them and wished to gain a deeper understanding of it.

They became the first druids and meditated and prayed together, all while studying constellations, the properties of animals, plants and minerals. Remote places were their favorite places to gather, as far from the distractions presented by the daily lives of their tribes. In the ages that followed the druidic believes have withstood the test of time, changing very little. They have become more open to outsiders and more inclusive in some ways, but they still guard their order's secrets closely.

Races

Gnomes still hold on to their druidic traditions. Their tribes are usually lead by Pakes, parent figures to the druid coven and their tribe. Being born of the earth, they focus their studies on roots and mineral properties. Gnome druids especially love burrowing animals and often adopt them as their animal companions.

Druids are also common among elves and half-elves. They live solitary lives, far from busy villages and towns. It is not uncommon to find a druid returning to tend to nature around their birth village, but seldom do they stray out of the great forest of Mielikki's Arms. These druids tend to be more open to others that respect nature, assisting them with nature-related problems for a small fee or other favor.

Gnoll druids call themselves astrologers and have a great interest in the interpretation of constellations. They learned the basics of the druidic beliefs through their close ties with elven tribes, but through the years have innovated. Now their primary focus is on the practical implication of their knowledge and using the movements of the stars to guide their people. Unlike other druids they often stay close to their families, learning the trade from parents or grandparents.

Religion

All druids draw power from nature and the great goddess of nature, Gaea, although some worship other deities as well. Although not technically clerics, these followers do draw some of their power from Ilmatar or Mielikki. Evil druids often pray to the Mother of Decay, Kiputytto.

Training
Elves are taught by powerful master druids, who are traditionally females. These masters often surround themselves by students in tree-house enclaves hidden deep in the forests. Gnomish master druids can be either male or female and typically live in tunnels. Students must often pass a test before being allowed into a circle of druids. This test can be anything, from finding the hidden enclave and begging for the opportunity, to fasting for seven days and nights. When a student is initiated into the circle, they are often granted a young animal companion which they must raise. Learning the skills to become a druid takes up to ten years of intensive prayer and study. Hermit druids, sometimes called Recluse druids, are not uncommon but, being mostly self-taught and often xenophobic, are much less likely to accept a student.

Fighter

Some struggle to find purpose in their lives. They do not know what their day is going to look like when they get up in the morning. Fighters, on the other hand, have a very clear purpose in mind. These hardened men and women are among the most highly trained warriors in the world. The continent is a dangerous place where evil lurks in every shadow. Most adventures come with a fair share of danger and, more often than not, combat. Fighters feel right at home amidst the danger and many find roles in adventuring parties as bodyguards or soldiers.



Origins
Throughout history, many different techniques and philosophies regarding fighting have emerged. Fighters that share a school, or instructor, tend to see each other as brothers, while fighters with different backgrounds often see each other as rivals. Fighters were, and are, the elite warriors of armies, specialist mercenaries and mythical heroes. The brunt of them take on a title related to their training. A fighter may call himself an Archer, a Two-hander, a Hammer-shield or an Executioner.

Races
Dwarves have an extensive history in the art of war. They take their defense seriously and build statues in honor of their great generals. This attitude becomes apparent when dwarf fighters take to the battlefield: a dwarf is nowhere without his heavy armor and shield. Exceptions to this stereotype exist, but they are few and far between.

Half-orcs, often being born of conflict, are suited for the life of a fighter. Many of them do not have a strong connection to their homeland or family, so they throw themselves into the fray relentlessly. This does not mean that they do not use tactics, but they generally scoff at the caution with which dwarves engage their foes on the battlefield.

Elves, being pacifist at heart, may seem like unlikely candidates for a fighting career, yet they recognize the need for protecting their own. Their villages are defended not only by secrecy and forest creatures but also by their ceremonial guards, called Shields. As their name suggests these fighters focus on defense as well, fighting from behind tall wooden shields while their allies pepper opponents with arrows.

Religion
Fighters are not necessarily religious, but those that are tend to worship to either Ilmarinen, Ukko or Surma. Hobgoblin fighters often worship Hachiman. Many fighters invent their own rituals and creeds, which they follow passionately.

Training
A fighter is made into the combat-machine he is by years of grueling training. Many fighters learn from masters or schools. Some are trained to be part of a guard, or army, while others seek the mentor-ship of veterans to hone their dueling skills. Trials tend to be as hard as the fighters should be, often involving dangerous fights against

multiple lesser opponents, or duels in weighed-down armor.

Monk

Monks are powerful warriors that seek enlightenment by tapping into mind and magic. They wander the lands looking for ways to prove themselves and to bring balance to the world. Adventures are a way for monks to hone their skills and learn lessons. Monks see it as their sacred duty to balance out the powers of good and evil, siding with both and none depending on the situation.



Origins

The first monks appeared among a cult of hobgoblins which were called Kumo Senshi, or Cloud Warriors, because they raised temples high up in the mountains. From their culture of fasting and meditation arose the first monastic order. It is generally believed that their total isolation fostered their unconventional view of the world. Over hundreds of years the order branched into the multiple orders known today, each with a separate, but like-minded agenda. If the stories are true, some of the founders of the order live to this day.

Races

Many monks are hobgoblins that hail from the White Mountains. They were the first to embrace the monastic traditions and are still considered to be the most dedicated. Training is especially harsh and involves bathing in ice cold waters, running up mountain slopes carrying buckets, and days of fasting and meditation.

Humans, being especially flexible in disposition, sometimes become monks as well. Monasteries built by humans are rare, but exist in secluded vales and caves in the Kesman forests and Gamleland. Master monk founders are often trained by hobgoblins and seek ways to spread the wealth of the wisdom closer to their own lands.

Of the children left in the care of monastic orders only few rise to become true monks.

Religion

Monks are not inherently religious although they generally have great respect for the gods. If monks do serve a deity they are encouraged to do so in moderation and to not let it affect their search of enlightenment. All monks are part of one of the three orders, the order of magic, mind and body, which have different philosophies on life.

Training

Master monks travel the countryside in search of very young apprentices. In general, the only participants deemed suitable are infants, older candidates are extremely rare and must be immensely talented to even be considered. Monks are trained and indoctrinated for many years before they are deemed ready to venture into the world. In monasteries they are separated from the world to fast, exercise and meditate. Apprentices are allowed their freedom once they have passed a specific trial, after which they are allowed to come and go as they please. Monks must serve the order for at least a decade and pass a grueling trial before earning the right of calling themselves a Master. Part of the monk training is learning to accept certain values as one's own. These are all geared towards preserving the balance between good and evil. The monastic orders believe in karma; that every evil deed should be balanced out with a good deed. This means all monks are of neutral disposition.

Paladin

There are those that heed the call of good and take up their swords for this cause. Highly trained and devoted, these warriors call themselves paladins. They form a small order of elite warriors that have devoted their lives to fighting crime and the forces of evil. Most paladins consider their positions in the order a sacred honor and many of them would not hesitate to give their lives to

protect the innocent. This does not mean that paladins are foolish and rash, quite the opposite; to become a paladin a candidate must display great honor, skill, passion, but also restraint and wisdom. Adventures provide paladins with a chance to prove their valor, rescue the innocent from evil and make the world a better place to live in.

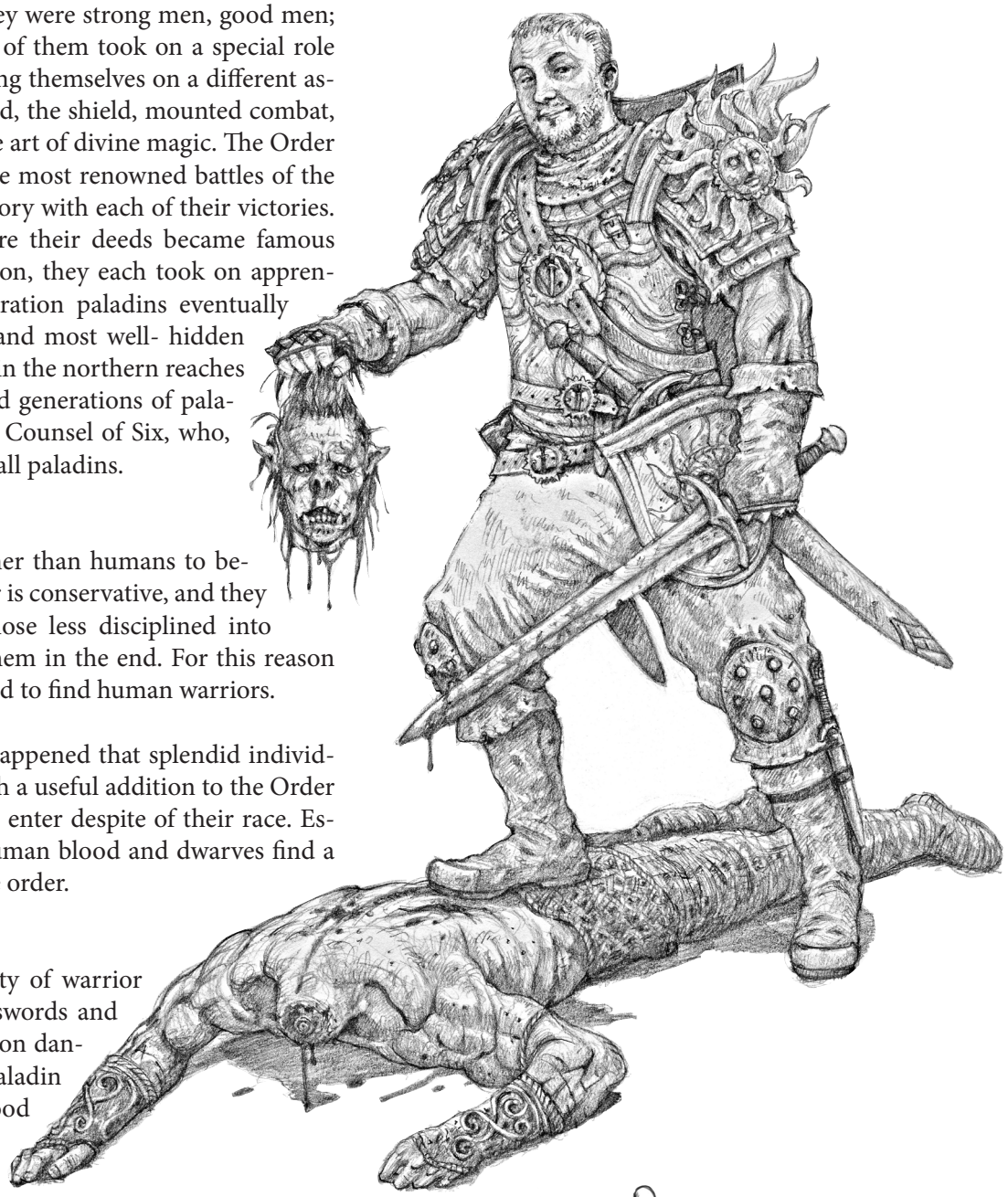
Origins
The order of paladins was founded late during the Giant Wars by a group of six northmen, mentored by the dwarf hero Frolir. These warriors saw their world being torn apart by the forces of evil and the indifference of good men. Vowing to make the world a better place they set aside their religion and swore a blood oath. Calling their order The Pact of Six Peaks, they set out into the world to change it for good. They were strong men, good men; heroes of their era. Each of them took on a special role within their order, focusing themselves on a different aspect of chivalry: the sword, the shield, mounted combat, diplomacy, tactics and the art of divine magic. The Order took a part in some of the most renowned battles of the era, claiming fame and glory with each of their victories. It was not for long before their deeds became famous and, as the war dragged on, they each took on apprentices. These second-generation paladins eventually built The Order's oldest and most well- hidden stronghold: Borun Hold, in the northern reaches of Gamleland. The second generations of paladins also established The Counsel of Six, who, in theory at least, govern all paladins.

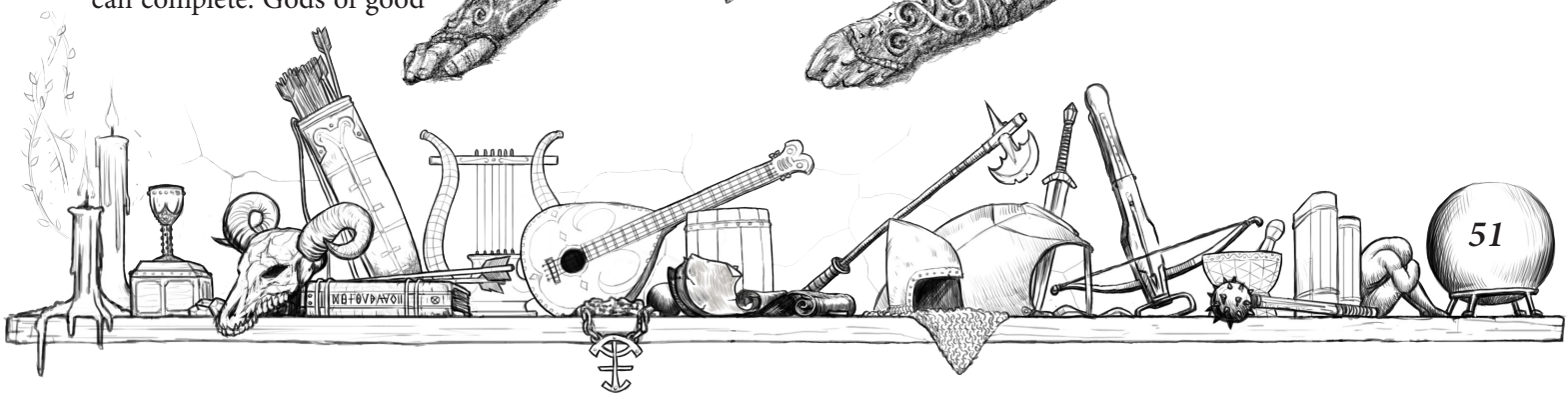
Races
It is a rarity for races other than humans to become paladins. The Order is conservative, and they are afraid that letting those less disciplined into their midst might ruin them in the end. For this reason all recruiters are instructed to find human warriors.

Throughout time it has happened that splendid individuals were found to be such a useful addition to the Order that they were allowed to enter despite of their race. Especially apprentices of human blood and dwarves find a welcome place among the order.

Religion
Paladins worship a variety of warrior gods. These guide their swords and often send their servants on dangerous quests only a paladin can complete. Gods of good often count the paladins among their favorite servants.

Training
Paladins travel the countryside seeking apprentices and take them to Borun Hold for an extensive training that takes up to fifteen years. Before an apprentice is considered he must excel in at least one of the six sacred disciplines so most of them already are young adults before they start their journey. A paladin is trained in diplomacy, chivalry and the art of war before he is allowed back into the world. Paladins are able to recognize their brothers with uncanny ability, using methods that are well kept secrets.



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RANGER

The wilderness is a harsh and unforgiving place. Endless pines, rough hills and steep mountains litter the continent of Bellög. Dangers lurk in the crevices and woods, caves and lakes. Many men content themselves with the lands close around their homesteads. Only few dare to explore the wild, untamed lands. Rangers are strong, resourceful and resilient warriors that roam the places where few other sane men dare go. A ranger combines a great knowledge of nature and wilderness survival with a steady hand in combat. More often than not, rangers relish the thrills of adventuring and exploring. Some have a desire to do what is right, to protect the weak while others simply lust for gold. Whatever their motives are, adventures play a central role in the life of a ranger. It is common for rangers to have an animal protector, a lucky charm, that guides them through the wilds or serves them as a companion. They often decorate themselves with the animal's fur or feathers, and tattoo images of them across their back or arms.

Origins

The rangers believe to have emerged from a brotherhood of trappers, guides, druids and warriors with a shared love for nature. Pieces of their wisdom have been preserved through the centuries, by stories told from father to son and teacher to student. The Brotherhood has always been a loose organization, held together by ideals, but without central leadership, meeting places or creeds. To this day rangers all know snippets of these old stories and of the wisdom hidden within them. Much of this original history has been deluded or forgotten, but some believe that a handful of rangers still live according to the old ways, in Mielikki's Arms.

Races

Elves, with their respect and love for nature, often choose the path of the ranger, favoring archery over melee combat. They often care deeply for animals, treating their animal companion as their best friend and hunt for meat only when they are in dire need.

Half-giants, who wander the plains and forests of the treacherous north, train hardy rangers that favor two-weapon fighting techniques. They often take levels of the barbarian class and find fierce, powerful animals to guide them. Many of them ride powerful steeds, such as giant horses or immense mammoths.

Dwarves may seem like unlikely rangers, but they have a long history of methodical warfare, which requires disciplined scouts. The forests in the south are home to many schools that train these rangers in teams. Unlike other rangers these dwarves see each other as brothers.

Religion

All rangers have a strong connection to Gaea, the goddess of the earth, who fuels their magical ability. Mielikki, goddess of the woods, is patron to many rangers. Dwarven rangers from the mountains often worship Ilmarinen. Rangers in coastal regions, such as Kuoros and Merma, sometimes worship Atho.

Training

Part of a ranger's skills are often self-taught over the course of a life in the wilderness, but true rangers require specialist training as well. These wisdoms are often imparted by parents or teachers. Older, experienced rangers often become mentors for a new generation, either teaching their own children, or protegees. Teaching methods vary wildly, but seldom do rangers learn their trade through books and lecture, on the contrary – many rangers have learned through experience.

ROGUE

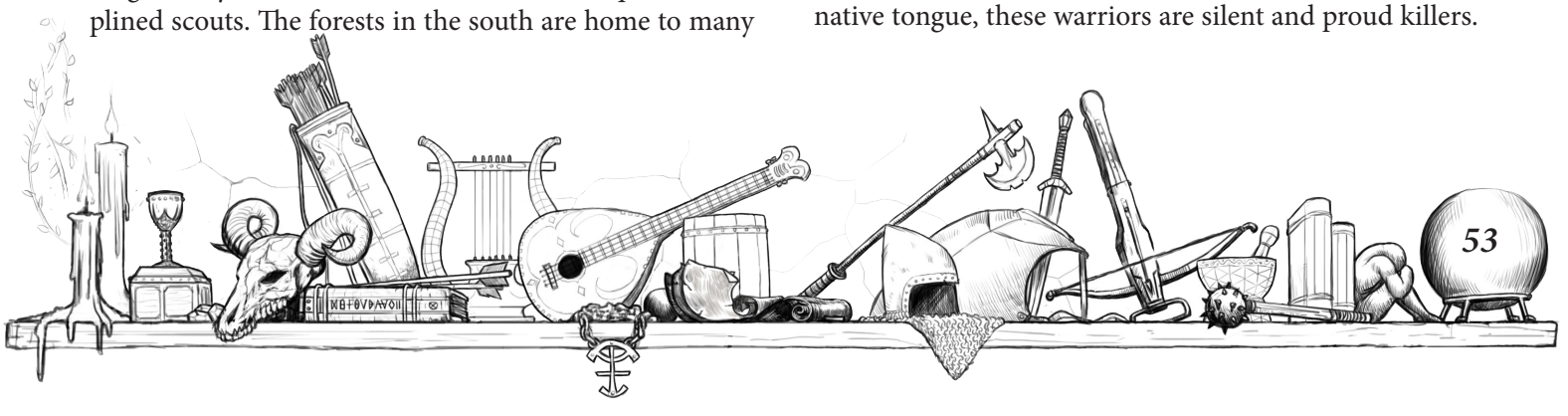
Thieves can be found in every time, in every city on every plane of existence. Rogues are scoundrels that specialize in taking advantage of their foes' weaknesses. They come in many forms, from rather elegant tricksters in larger towns to rough thugs that roam the wilds in gangs. What all rogues have in common is their ability to sneak attack and their extended skills needed to con, survive or escape, as well as their professional slipperiness. As rogues come in countless shapes and sizes, their reasons to go on adventures are diverse. Some have an insatiable hunger for material possessions, be it gold or magic items, others enjoy honing their skills, feel responsible for those that grew up in a poor neighborhood or town, or actively oppose their oppressive leaders.

Origins

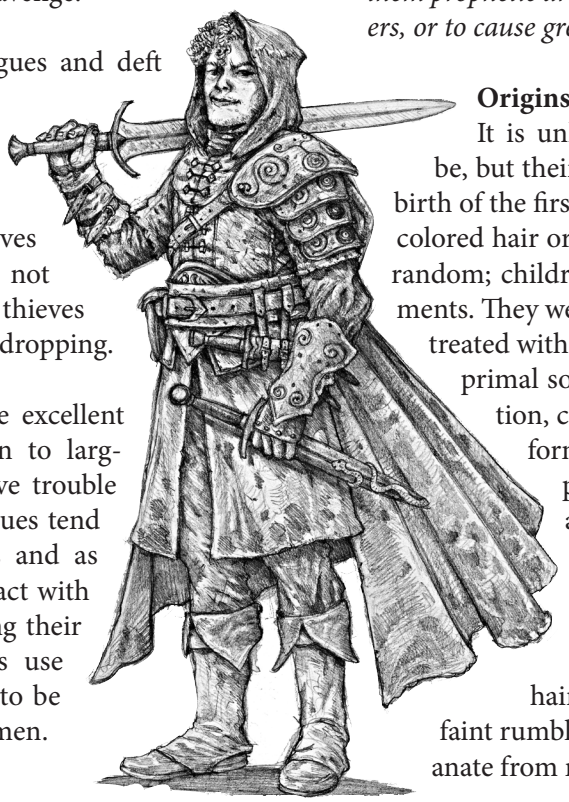
Like many of the oldest professions the rogues seem to have simply always been. They do not have ancient texts that detail their abilities and skills, these have developed in different places and over time.

Races

Rogues come from all layers of society and from all races. The trow have a long-lasting tradition of rogues, and their tribes produce highly trained individuals that protect them from the shadows. Called Sea Shadows in their native tongue, these warriors are silent and proud killers.



Although they are opportunist, they seldom make active efforts to steal, preferring to scavenge.



Halflings, with their glib tongues and deft hands, make especially formidable rogues. Their small size makes them excellent spies who can often hide in the shadows or pass themselves off as a child. Halflings do not seldom sell their services to thieves guilds, seeing no harm in eavesdropping.

Like halflings, half-elves make excellent rogues. They are often drawn to larger towns and villages and have trouble finding a place in society. Rogues tend to be the restless individuals and as such, they often come in contact with the lower tiers of society. Using their inborn social skills as others use weapons, half-elf rogues tend to be con-artists and snake-oil salesmen.

Training

Rogues come from many different backgrounds. Some are self-taught, others learn from either a mentor, or join a guild as an apprentice, learning from a number of different mentors in the process. Rogues do not tend to see each other as comrades, even those taught under the same master often have a degree of professional rivalry, although not often to the point of open hostility. Gangs of rogues, united under strong leaders, are often fiercely loyal to their cause, as betrayers are dealt with in the harshest possible manners.

SORCERER

Sorcerers are those born with the power to control the fifth and most powerful element, magic, instinctively. Each sorcerer is born with a spiritual connection to the Allfather, the primal god of life. They are connected by several tethers that determine the nature of their magical talent. This also influences their powers, personalities and goals. Despite their reliance on this ancient being, many sorcerers aren't truly aware of their bond: the Allfather visits them in cryptic dreams, but they are often quick to dismiss these visions as imagination. Because they are able to wield great power with little practice, sorcerers are envied or feared by most of the common people. Sometimes shunned from their families or clans at a very vulnerable age, many sorcerers are drawn to the life of an adventurer. Their ties to the Allfather grant them prophetic dreams, sometimes urging them to help others, or to cause great suffering.

Origins

It is unknown how the first sorcerer came to be, but their existence dates back to the time of the birth of the first common folk. Children with strangely colored hair or eyes came into the world, seemingly at random; children with the ability to summon the elements. They were seen as those chosen by the gods and treated with great respect. As the time went by these primal sorcerers mixed with the general population, causing their formidable powers to wane. These days the powers of most sorcerers emerge during a late stage of infancy. Most of them appear to be a regular member of their race at first glance, although the spark of magic may manifest itself in the form of an unusual eye-color, a bright lock of hair, the smell of rain in their clothing or a faint rumbling sound that sometimes seems to emanate from nowhere in particular.

Races

Sorcerers can be found among all common folk. They are highly individualistic and seldom feel connected to each other. Although they often have enough conviction and opinion to go around, sorcerers from the same race or area do not often share their points of view. Instead, sorcerers often feel a strong connection to those that are tethered to the same element. Especially among gnolls and elves, sorcerers are treated with utmost respect. Their tribes and clans often have a mentor accompanying them, one that takes responsibility for all young spellcasters. Most other common folk tend to distrust young sorcerers and fear their inability to control their new-found powers.

Optional rule – Sorcerers may add the find familiar spell to their spell list.

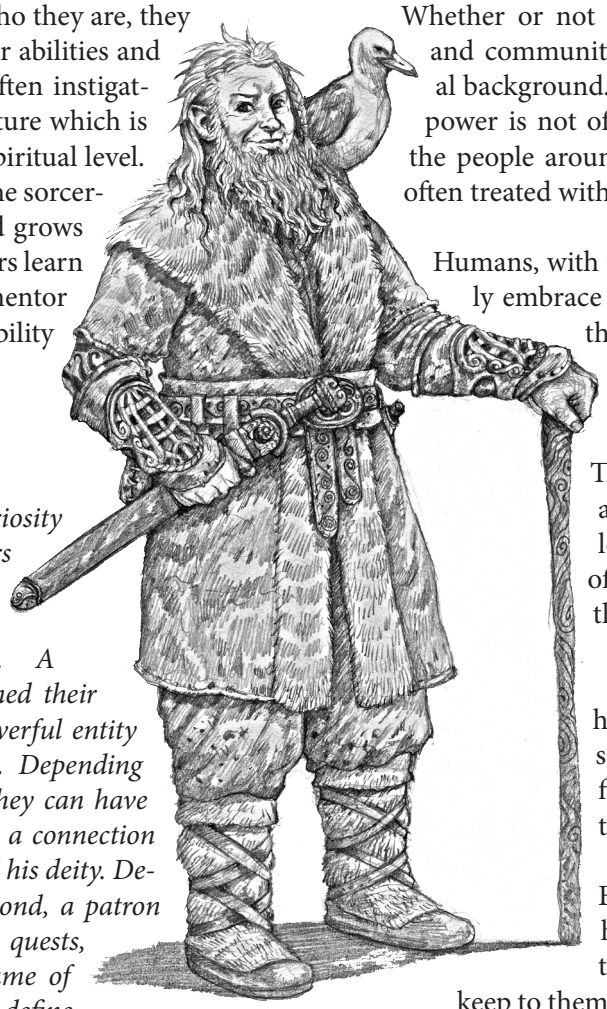
Religion

Although the spellcasting ability of sorcerers is the product of their direct link to the Allfather, only few of them know of, and acknowledge, his existence. Because most sorcerers do not have anything in common but their abil-

ities they believe in different ideals and worship a wide variety of gods.

Training

Sorcerers are born with the talent to use magic innately and via practice and experience learn to utilize their full potential. As they find out who they are, they go on a quest to learn about their abilities and see the world. This journey is often instigated by a familiar - a magical creature which is connected to the sorcerer on a spiritual level. Familiars often become among the sorcerer's closest friends, as their bond grows stronger over time. Some sorcerers learn to master their abilities from a mentor or grandparent, as magical ability tends to skip a generation.



Warlock

There are those that would let curiosity lead their lives, that seek answers in forbidden places. Warlocks crave power more than anything, over wealth, friendship or love. A warlock is a spellcaster that gained their power through a pact with a powerful entity of questionable moral or intent. Depending on the warlock and the patron they can have a student-teacher relationship, or a connection closer to that between a cleric and his deity. Depending on the nature of their bond, a patron may actively send the warlock on quests, or the warlock may quest in name of their patron. No matter how they define this connection, all warlocks learn powerful abilities, spells and secrets from their patron, either through rituals, dreams or visions.

Origins

Louhi, the witch, was a powerful and wise creature, so wise in fact that gods often visited her for advice. She briefly ascended to godhood through a pact with two evil gods but was unable to hold on to her divinity permanently. Losing godhood was a bitter experience that haunts her to this day. She scoured the hidden paths, looking for ways to regain her divinity, but was confronted by her limitations time and time again. Louhi did what the only thing that made sense to her and sought out likeminded individuals that were hungry for power and offered them a fraction of her knowledge in exchange for their loyalty. Following Louhi's example, many other powerful entities have used warlocks in the same manner, as agents, heralds, spies and soldiers.

Races

Whether or not a warlock is accepted by his kin and community depends strongly on his cultural background. The quest for potential dangerous power is not often understood or appreciated by the people around them and in turn warlocks are often treated with suspicion.

Humans, with their inquisitive nature, may keenly embrace the path of the warlock, believing themselves able to fool their patron into parting with their secrets. They always believe themselves to be the exception to the rule. Their hubris has led to many dead and insane warlocks. Human warlocks often live within a day's travel of a village, as to not be disturbed in their research often. Depending on their alignment they can act as a fortuneteller, sage or healer whose help the community typically only seeks out in dire circumstances. The fiery power of the fiend is alluring to humans.

Elves live long lives away from the hustle and bustle of city lives. They tend to be hermit warlocks that keep to themselves. Elven culture relies strongly on their ties to nature and druids, so many of them see warlocks as something fickle and unnatural. When seeking forbidden knowledge, they often turn to fey and the forgotten spirits of nature. Elven warlocks live secluded lives and are often regarded as oddballs.

In ages past, the trow worshipped the alien horrors that lurked in the deep. Asleep, but not dead, these creatures still reach out to their fishfolk servants from time to time, granting them knowledge and power in exchange for total obedience. Trow warlocks play a roll in their community that is similar to that of a priest. They are feared and respected in equal amounts. It is not uncommon for them to become great leaders among their people. Unlike other warlocks, the trow seldom have mentors.

Religion
The patron of a warlock is not a deity, but it is not seldom treated as such. Part of their pact is the warlock's promise to do its bidding, acting as its agent, much like a cleric. It is uncommon for warlocks to worship any deities other than their patron, but those that do often seek the wisdom of Untamo.

Training
During the warlock's formative years, they are often prepared for their destiny through exercises and stories by their mentor, who is always a parent or grandparent. Behind the scenes a patron will play a major role in their upbringing, watching and judging them from afar. Warlocks are finally introduced to their patron in their early teens, after which they perform a rite of initiation and become an official member of the class. As soon as the ritual is complete they let go of the guiding hand of their mentor and fully dedicate themselves to the service of their patron. Self-taught warlocks exist as well, although they tend to be unstable, strange and isolated individuals. They might have picked up the required knowledge through vigorous study or were approached by a patron or one of its agents directly.



Warlock Patrons
Warlock abilities depend strongly on the nature of their patron. If your GM agrees feel free to separate these mechanics from the identity of the patron; if you feel that your demon would drive you insane, use the Great Old One mechanics instead. We also encourage players to creatively adapt the warlock abilities to fit their background in conclave and with permission of the GM. Example: Aulo, a half-giant warlock who has a pact with an ancient spirit encased in a lake of ice, choses the Fiend-pact to represent the connection to his patron. The Fiend's expanded spell-list has some fire spells, which he chooses to turn into cold spells with otherwise identical effects. Burning hands becomes frozen mist and deals cold damage instead of fire damage.

The Archfey
Warlocks that choose this pact can follow Louhi directly or may worship an ancient fey creature or spirit. Examples: The Black Lady of the Woods, Father Bear, The Mother of Mists, The Spirit of the White Stag, The Great Crow.

The Fiend
The concepts of heaven and hell do not exist in On the Shoulders of Heroes (more on this in chapter 6). We'd advise you to change the wording of some abilities as to no longer hold references to them, but otherwise they can remain unchanged. Examples: The Burning Giant, The Demoness, Yggdal, The Unchained Beast.

The Great Old One
Warlocks that worship the Great Old One have a link to the Allfather and try to make sense of its dreams and cryptic messages. These warlocks often have weak grip on reality. Example: Yo-Wok'Wel-Chi-Tua, The Allfather, Father of Krakens, The Leviathan, The Queen with A Thousand Eyes.

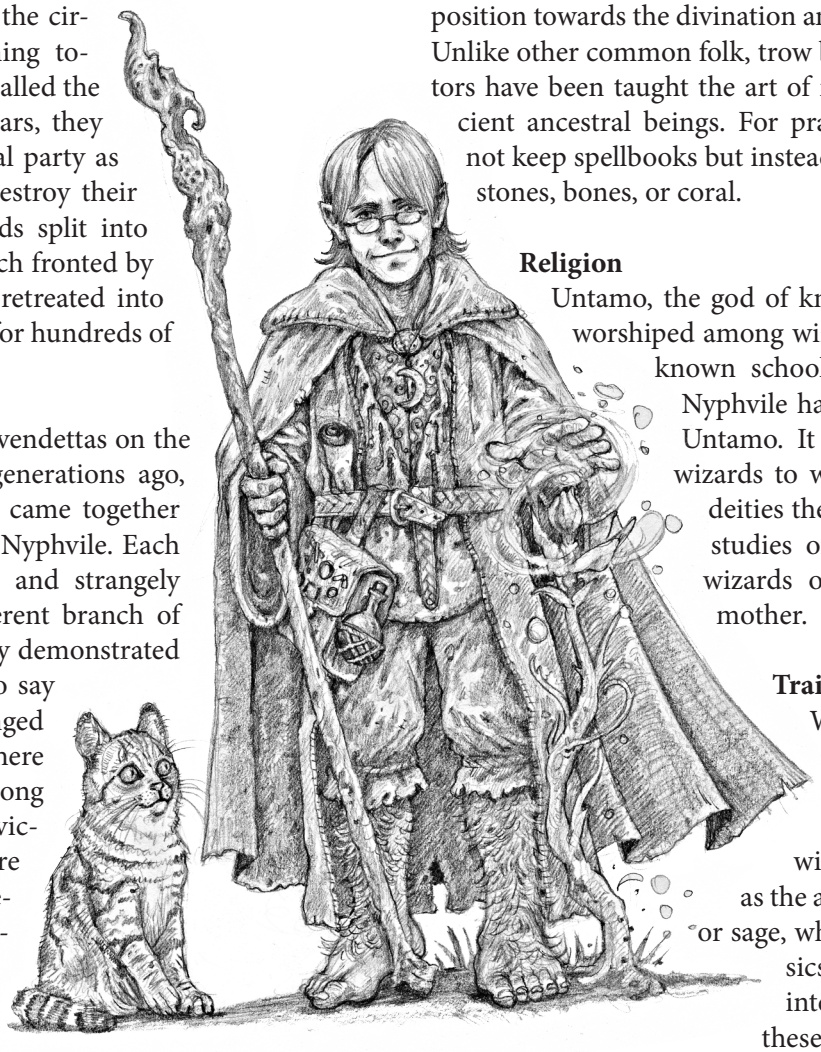
Wizard

Wizards are intellectuals drawn to the wonders of arcane magic. With the aid of a spellbook and intensive study wizards eventually tie themselves to the Allfather, forging a powerful arcane bond. As the great ritual of bonding is completed they obtain a familiar, a magical guide into the realm of arcana. Wizards are respected and revered as sages, fortunetellers and prophets by most of the common people. They spend their lives unraveling mysteries out of curiosity or for personal gain. They go on adventures to uncover forgotten knowledge, unearth hidden artifacts or to study magical monsters.

Origins
The common folk have always been drawn to the power and wonders of arcane magic. The first wizards were self-

taught; they learned magic by studying sorcerers and other spellcasters. Sages flocked together to exchange secrets and stories. The elves were the first to categorize magic in five groups, one school for each of the elements, including magic itself.

As strife and civil war tore at the elven clans, their leaders begged the wizards for help. What started with protective spells soon escalated in full-scale magical warfare, driving the circle of magi apart. Coming together in a last meeting, called the Night of the Weeping Stars, they swore to remain a neutral party as long as conflict would destroy their communities. The wizards split into eight different groups, each fronted by a powerful leader. They retreated into the wilds, not to be seen for hundreds of years.



As the clans ended their vendettas on the Day of Friendship ten generations ago, the wizards of the circle came together once again in the city of Nyphvile. Each of them had seemingly, and strangely enough, explored a different branch of magic, which they eagerly demonstrated to each other. It is not to say the years had not changed the wizards, however; there was some mistrust among those with different convictions. Harsh words were spoken, but all were carefully wiped under the table in the guise of common decency. The eight schools built conclaves in the city center, close to the source of the arcane power hidden underneath the mountains.

Up to this day, wizards with different specializations are as likely to see each other as allies, colleagues or rivals, depending on the politics of their specific school.

Races

Elves still make up the brunt of the students at the wizard colleges, their patience and diligence makes them suited for the life of a researcher. Like many of their other activities, elf wizards see magic as a form of art. They can he haughty or condescending to other wizards, especially to those that have chosen to follow the same path. Elf wizards are also perfectionists and often spend many of their hours examining and mastering complicated tomes.

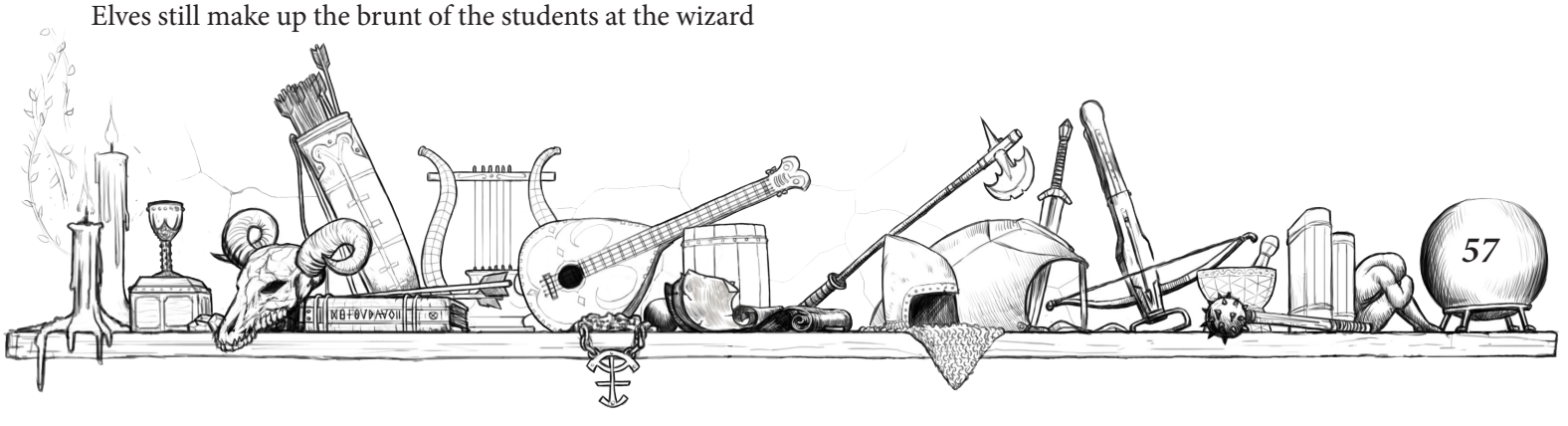
The Trow also have a history of witchcraft, with a predisposition towards the divination and necromancy schools. Unlike other common folk, trow believe that their ancestors have been taught the art of magic by powerful, ancient ancestral beings. For practical reasons they do not keep spellbooks but instead whittle spells into soft stones, bones, or coral.

Religion

Untamo, the god of knowledge, is commonly worshiped among wizards. Each of the eight known schools of magic located in Nyphvile has a shrine dedicated to Untamo. It is not uncommon for wizards to worship alien, forgotten deities they discover during their studies of forbidden lore. Trow wizards often worship the Sea-mother.

Training

Wizardry is something that can be taught to anyone with patience and intellect. Many wizards start their career as the apprentice of a local seer or sage, who teaches them the basics. If they prove talented, intelligent and respectful these apprentices are sent to learn in a wizard college. The most commonly known colleges are located in Nyphvile, but smaller ones can be found throughout the continent. Wizard training can take up to a decade, after which the bond of the student to the source of arcane magic, the Allfather, is enforced by a ritual. After the completion of the ritual the student are granted a familiar and is expected to continue their studies for the rest of their life.



Chapter 4: Feats, Skills & House Rules

A true example of valor become flesh, Vuun thrust himself shield first between the two giants. The ogre, enraged and unsteady because of a smashed kneecap swung his club wildly, testing the battered surface of the steel shield. Grinding his teeth, the dwarf was determined to protect the party healer from this reckless assault. As an even harder blow knocked the air out his lungs, he staggered and coughed, suddenly encumbered by the plates of his armor. Then the magic came, like an answered prayer. As Sparrow's huge hand touched his arm, he felt his strength returning to him, new wind filling his lungs. Then suddenly the giant toppled over like a rag doll, Ghan flailing his maces at it, kicking, screaming - blind with rage.

Language in Bellög

Although this book provides a detailed new language system, we in no way want to force anyone to use it. Therefore, if you feel that this part of the book is not for your group you can easily refer to the standard language list at the end of this section and not think too much about it.

Optional rule: Languages on the Continent
Not all languages are created equal and some of them are generally accepted as common languages because they are spoken by a majority of Bellög's inhabitants. Metsä, Vesi and Vuori are the common language of Kesma, Merma and Vuorilas respectively. Unlike in other settings, where communication seldom forms an obstacle in adventures, not everyone on Bellög automatically speaks a common language. An average commoner will only speak their own language, not the languages of other races, nor will they be able to read or write. The starting languages of each of the common races are stated in their descriptions. The table on the next page contains corresponding information.

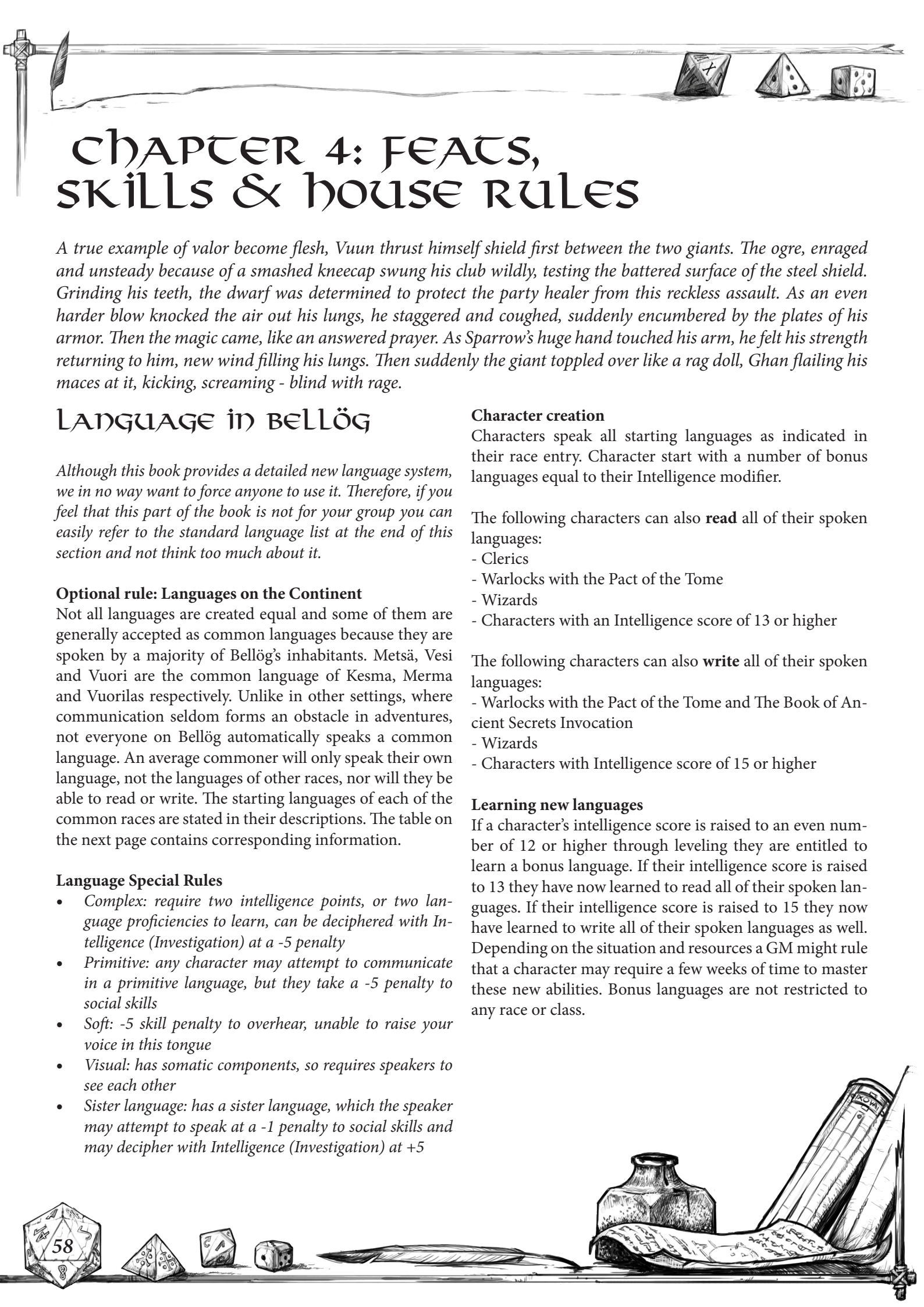
Language Special Rules
- *Complex: require two intelligence points, or two language proficiencies to learn, can be deciphered with Intelligence (Investigation) at a -5 penalty*
- *Primitive: any character may attempt to communicate in a primitive language, but they take a -5 penalty to social skills*
- *Soft: -5 skill penalty to overhear, unable to raise your voice in this tongue*
- *Visual: has somatic components, so requires speakers to see each other*
- *Sister language: has a sister language, which the speaker may attempt to speak at a -1 penalty to social skills and may decipher with Intelligence (Investigation) at +5*

Character creation
Characters speak all starting languages as indicated in their race entry. Character start with a number of bonus languages equal to their Intelligence modifier.

The following characters can also **read** all of their spoken languages:
- Clerics
- Warlocks with the Pact of the Tome
- Wizards
- Characters with an Intelligence score of 13 or higher

The following characters can also **write** all of their spoken languages:
- Warlocks with the Pact of the Tome and The Book of Ancient Secrets Invocation
- Wizards
- Characters with Intelligence score of 15 or higher

Learning new languages
If a character's intelligence score is raised to an even number of 12 or higher through leveling they are entitled to learn a bonus language. If their intelligence score is raised to 13 they have now learned to read all of their spoken languages. If their intelligence score is raised to 15 they now have learned to write all of their spoken languages as well. Depending on the situation and resources a GM might rule that a character may require a few weeks of time to master these new abilities. Bonus languages are not restricted to any race or class.



Character Options

New and Redesigned Feats

Armed Veteran
You have a weapon of choice and wield it like it is an extension of your body. Choose a weapon or weapon group when you select this feat. While wielding your chosen weapon you may re-roll a natural one once, but the second result stands. When you score a critical hit with the weapon you can roll the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Clever Fighter
Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20. You strike the opponents where they are weakest. Use intelligence instead of strength to determine your to-hit and damage modifier with melee finesse weapons.

Clever Speaker
Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20. You use your superior intellect to impress those with whom you converse. You may use your intelligence bonus instead of Charisma on Deception, Intimidation, Performance and Persuasion checks. You gain proficiency in one of these skills when you select this feat.

Dwarf armor master
Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20. You gain proficiency with dwarfenforge armor.

Eidetic memory
Prerequisite: Intelligence 15+
Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20. You may ask the GM for the names of NPC's, places, locations of landmarks and any other details of in-game occurrences that you have encountered. The answers you receive have a 95% chance of being accurate.

Languages of Bellög

Name	*Common Speakers*	*Alphabet*	*Script*	*Special*
Abyssal	Evil outsiders	Abyssal	Yes	Complex
Aquan	Trow, water creatures	Aquan	Yes	Complex
Auran	Air creatures	Celestial	Yes	Complex
Buggan	Bugbears	None	No	Soft, Visual
Celestial	Good outsiders	Celestial	Yes	Complex
Draconian	Dragons, lizardfolk	Draconian	Yes	Sister language: Ignan
Druidic	Druids	Druidic	Yes	See druid class description
Dwarven	Dwarves, humans	Terran	Yes	-
Elven	Elves	Draconian	Yes	Sister lanuage: Gnoll
Gamli	Giants	None	No	Primitive
Gnoll	Gnolls	Draconian	Yes	Sister language: Elven
Goblish	Goblins	None	No	Primitive
Halfling	Halflings, assassins	None	Yes	Visual
Hob	Hobgoblins	Hob	Yes	Visual
Ignan	Fire creatures	Abyssal	Yes	Complex, Sister language Draconian
Metsä	Humans of Kesma	Terran	Yes	Sister language: Vesi, Vuori
Old Gamli	Giants of yore	Old Gamli	Yes	-
Orcish	Orcs	None	No	Primitive
Solaran	Humans of Solath	Celestial	Yes	Sister language: Soloth
Soloth	Undead and aberrations	Celestial	Yes	Sister language: Solaran
Sylvan	Fey, forest creatures	None	No	-
Terran	Earth creatures	Terran	Yes	Complex
Vesi	Humans of Merma	Terran	Yes	Sister language: Metsä
Vuori	Humans of Vuorilas	Terran	Yes	Sister language: Metsä

Linguist
Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20. Select an additional language when you take this feat. You know how to read and write all of your languages.
Special: This replaces the Linguist feat presented in the core rules.

Racial Feats

Bulky (Half-giant)
Prerequisite: Half-giant
Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20. Versatile weapons deal damage as though you wield them in two hands. If you use two-handed weapons you deal additional damage equal to 1/2 your Strength modifier.

Butcher (Half-orc)
Prerequisite: Half-orc
You have proficiency with butcher's tools. You receive a +2 morale bonus on damage rolls with axes.

Earthbond (Dwarf/Gnome)
Prerequisite: Dwarf or gnome
You feel a strong connection to the earth itself. You have tremor sense (20ft radius) and you have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Strength (Athletics) checks while on a stone or earthen surface.

The Forest is Our Teacher (Elf)
Prerequisite: Elf
Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20. You understand the forest as if it was part of you. You learn the *speak with plants* spell and can cast it once without expending a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast it in this way when you finish a long rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Harpooner (Trow)
Prerequisites: Trow, proficiency with spears and lances
Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20. Spears and lances in your grasp double their normal range when thrown. If they do not have a natural range increment they gain one of 20 feet.

Extraordinary Luck (Halfling)
Prerequisite: Halfling
Matias smiles on you and those around you. You, or an ally within line of sight, may re-roll any d20 and take the higher result. Once you use this feat you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

Relentless (Dwarf)
Prerequisites: Dwarf, Constitution 13 or higher
Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20. You may gain resistance to damage inflicted to you. Choose to gain resistance before the GM determines the damage, but after the hit was confirmed or you have rolled your saving throw. Once you use this feat you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Star Gazer (Gnoll)
Prerequisites: Gnoll, ability to cast spells
Increase your Intelligence score or Charisma by 1, to a maximum of 20. You heed the way of your ancestors and draw special power from the skies and the universe. Each morning you may pray for an hour to change the bonus of the star sign you were born under to any other star sign bonus. This does not change your birthday, it only enables you to channel a different power. To receive the benefit of this feat, you may pray while you are preparing spells.

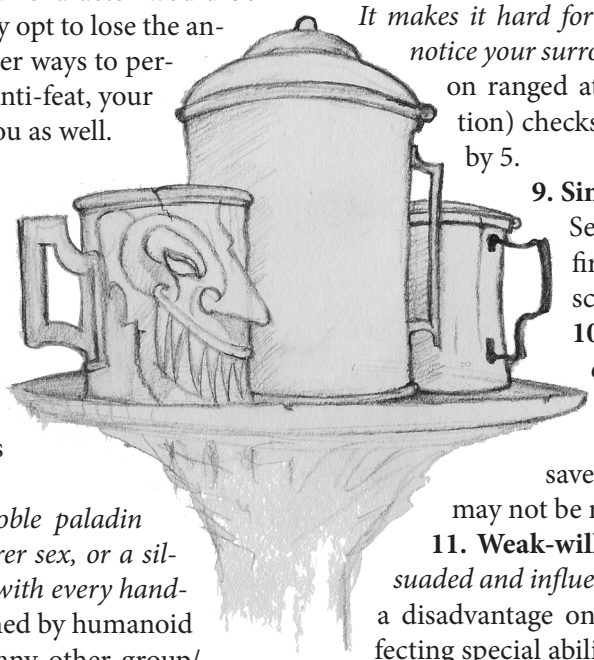
Tower of Muscle and Fur (Bugbear)
Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20. You embrace your animal side. You grow out your fur, which protects you from attacks and the elements. While you aren't wearing armor, you can calculate your AC as 12 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit. You become acclimated to cold environments and gain an advantage on Perception (Wisdom) checks.

Troll Blooded (Human)
Prerequisites: Human, Constitution 13 or higher
Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20. Blood of trolls flows through your veins, you are broad-shouldered and heal quickly. At the end of a long rest you regain all spent hit dice.

Optional Rule: Anti-Feats

As a new option a player can start the game with a feat. Feats are powerful and can heavily influence how your character will play, so choosing one at first level should come with a price. This is where anti-feats come in.

At first level a character may, with the GM's consent, start with a feat and an anti-feat. If your character would be allowed to select a new feat you may opt to lose the anti-feat instead. Should you find other ways to permanently negate the effects of the anti-feat, your GM may take the feat away from you as well.



1d12 Anti-feats

1. Apathic – *You are prone to daydreaming or your mind keeps wandering off in some way. This may be alcohol or drug related.* You take a -6 penalty on initiative checks. In the first round of combat, creatures have advantage on attack rolls against you.

2. Chivalrous – *You can be a noble paladin that has sworn not to harm the fairer sex, or a silver-tongued rogue that falls in love with every handsome man she meets.* You are charmed by humanoid members of the opposite sex (or any other group/gender that's equally impactful and agreed upon by the GM). The charm fades the moment they attack you or one of your party members.

3. Clumsy – W*hen others zig you tend to zag. Your hands are covered in tiny scars and you may walk with an awkward gait.* You have disadvantage on Dexterity-based skill checks. Reduce your Dexterity score by 2.

4. Cowardly – *You are afraid of your own shadow. This fear might stem from a tortured youth, or horrible nightmares that haunt you every full moon. You might be jittery, have a stutter, or often complain about how you would rather stay home.* You have disadvantage on saving throws against fear effects. You have a disadvantage on attack rolls in the first round of combat. Reduce your Charisma score by 2.

5. Crippled – *You have a peg leg or miss a foot.* You have a disadvantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks that require the use of your legs. Reduce your movement by 10 feet.

6. Obese – *You are grossly overweight.* Reduce your movement by 5 feet and double your starting weight. Reduce your Dexterity score by 2.

7. Obnoxious – *You might speak loudly and when you are not supposed to. You can be a joker that makes jokes at the expense of others. You make people around you uncomfortable in some way.* You have a disadvantage on Charisma-based skill checks. Creatures often develop a quick disliking to your character. Civilized creatures will not attack you outright, but monsters might. Creatures might prefer attacking you over other targets.

8. Reduced sight – *You miss an eye or may have cateract. It makes it hard for you to estimate distances and to notice your surroundings.* You have a disadvantage on ranged attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks. Reduce your passive Perception by 5.

9. Simple – *You are mentally impaired.* Select one fewer skill proficiency at first level. Reduce your Intelligence score by 4.

10. Unlucky – *Things seldom turn out the way you hope.* Once per short rest the GM may opt to have you re-roll a successful save, skill-check or attack. The result may not be re-rolled again.

11. Weak-willed – *You are gullible, easily persuaded and influenced by word and magic.* You have a disadvantage on saving throws against mind-affecting special abilities and spells. Reduce your Wisdom score by 2.

12. Wimpy – *You are physically weak and do not have the constitution to fight. You might also be sickly, or a pacifist.* You have a disadvantage on attack rolls. Reduce your Strength and Constitution score by 1.

Optional Rule: Weapon Groups

Weapon groups offer a more realistic take on handling weapons in the game. This direction handicaps the players to some degree. On the other hand, it gives a character a lot more personality, as their weapon says a lot about their preferred fighting style and background. A character starts with a number of weapon groups depending on their class at first level. Retraining a weapon group takes a month of in game time and, depending on your GM, may require a trainer that might charge a fee. Mandatory weapon groups may not be retrained.

Presented in this book are 16 different weapon groups to choose from, all with 3 to 5 weapons. After first level a character may obtain another weapon group when they would gain a new proficiency in a skill or tool.

Groups per class

Barbarian - 3 (May choose three basic or martial weapon groups. May also take the Gladiator special weapon group)
Bard - 3 (May choose three basic weapon groups. May also take the Assassin special weapon group)
Cleric - 3 (May choose three basic weapon groups. Clerics with the War Domain may choose Martial weapon groups as well)
Druid - 2 (May choose two basic weapon groups. May also take the Druid special weapon group)
Fighter - 5 (May choose five basic or martial weapon groups. May also take the Gladiator special weapon group)
Monk - 2 (May choose two basic weapon group)
Paladin - 4 (May choose four basic or martial weapon groups)
Ranger - 3 (May choose three basic or martial weapon groups)
Rogue - 2 (Assassin weapons, and one basic weapon group of your choice)
Sorcerer - 1 (May choose one basic weapon group)
Warlock - 2 (May choose two basic weapon group)
Wizard - 1 (May choose one basic weapon group)

Basic Weapon Groups (5)

Crossbows – Light crossbow, Heavy crossbow
Maces and Clubs – Club, Mace, Greatclub, Quarterstaff
Simple Blades – Sickle, Dagger, Dart
Spears – Javelin, Spear, Trident
Thrown weapons – Dart, Javelin, Light hammer, Sling

Martials Weapon Groups (8)

Axes – Handaxe, Battleaxe, Greataxe, Trollhammer*
Light Blades – Dagger, Rapier, Sickle, Shortsword
Hammers – Light hammer, Flail, Maul, Warhammer
Heavy Blades – Greatsword, Longsword, Sickle, Scimitar
Hunting weapons – Shortbow, Longbow, Blowgun
Picks – Hooked hammer*, Light pick*, War pick*, Heavy pick*
Polearms – Glaive*, Halberd, Hewing spear*, Pike
Spears and lances – Heavy spear*, Hewing spear*, Lance

Specialty Weapon Groups (3)

Assassin Weapons – Dagger, Hand crossbow, Rapier, Shortsword
Druid Weapons – Scimitar, Sickle, Quarterstaff
Gladiator Weapons – Morningstar, Whip, Net, Trident*
**Weapon has been redesigned or is first featured in this book*

About Backgrounds

Some of the backgrounds described in the core rules do not reflect a world as primitive and rugged as that of the On the Shoulders of Heroes setting. Feel free to work with your GM and make your own versions. For example, in backgrounds that provide more than one language you could swap out one of the language proficiencies for a tool, weapon, game or instrument proficiency.

New Backgrounds

Elven Shield

Deep within the forests of Bellög live the mysterious elves. Protecting these small tribes are the elven guardians, known as Shields. You are among those fortunate enough to call themselves as their kin. Trained in the finest arts of battle to defend all that is dear to your race.

You were taught how to fight, how to shield others from harm and in the ways of Mielikki. You learned how to scout for danger and predict enemy movements, how to read the signs of nature herself and when to give your very life for the survival of the elven race.

When selecting this background, work with your GM to determine where in Bellög your elven tribe lives. Now that you are out in the world as an adventurer, how does that effect your relationship with your people. Did you leave on good terms? Are you still considered an active member of the Shields? Is the tribe you were part of safe or has tragedy visited your home?

Skill proficiencies: Nature, Survival.
Tool proficiencies: Herbalism kit, one type of musical instrument.
Equipment: A set of common clothes, a herbalism kit, a token of your devotion to Mielikki, a woven basket and a pouch containing 10 gp.

Personality traits (1d8)

1. Serving others is the highest form of nobility.
2. I believe the elven way of life is superior to those of lesser races.
3. I try to comfort my friends, supporting them both on the battlefield and off.
4. I feel that the art of war should always be in the service of peace.
5. I enjoy being strong and to show others that not all elves are so-called pacifists.

6. I like to share the wisdom that my martial upbringing has giving me.
7. I remain optimistic in every situation, refusing to yield to despair or fear.
8. I am hesitant to bond with people of short lived races, for fear of seeing them wither away.

Ideal (1d6)
1. ***Freedom.*** I fight for the right to be free. (Chaotic)
2. ***Power.*** The only way to make people respect the elven ways, is to force them to. (Evil)
3. ***Nature.*** We must respect nature, or it will surely be the end of us. (Neutral)
4. ***Faith.*** A Shield does not only serve the elves, but their very deity as well. (Good)
5. ***Respect.*** We can teach the world that everyone should be treated equal. (Good)
6. ***Survival.*** Like the ancient oaks around us, our race will endure. (Lawful)

Bond (1d6)
1. I would lay down my life to protect the priestesses of Mielikki.
2. My old mentor taught me everything I know, that person means a lot to me.
3. I feel a strong connection to other Shields, where ever they are.
4. As a warrior, I understand and sympathize with soldiers all over.
5. I feel more empathy for the plants and trees then the sentient races.
6. I love someone who was under my charge.

Flaw (1d6)
1. I feel the need to point out all the ways in which elven culture is better than others.
2. I never expect people to come through on their promises.
3. I am insecure about my abilities and need encouragement from my friends.
4. Underneath my reserved persona lies an anger that I cannot control.
5. I have a hard time taking the initiative, preferring to stay on the defense.
6. I am afraid of fire and refuse to use it in any situation.

Feature: Elven friendship
As an important part of elven society, you are always welcome in the wild woods. You are knowledgeable about the secret locations of the elven tribes around Bellög and know how to make contact with them if you are close by. The elves look favorably upon you and you can use these contacts to gain information about the surrounding areas, advice on a course of action or some other form of council.

Fugitive Slave
You were born into slavery or were enslaved at a very young age. Now you are free. Even though you may not have accepted it as your own, you have intimate knowledge of the culture of your slavers – something that you can use to your advantage. You know how to act around both fellow slaves as well as their masters. Do you have a strong desire to save others held against their will? Do you have hatred or understanding for your former master?

Skill proficiencies: Deception, Insight.
Tool proficiencies: Choose one tool proficiency.
Languages: You speak the language of your master.
Equipment: A worn set of common clothes, a set of artisan's tools of your choice, a pair of manacles, a token to remember your past and 5 gp.

Slaver Origin (1d6)
1. ***Hobgoblin*** – Hobgoblins are known to keep bugbear slaves.
2. ***Orc*** – Orcs keep half-orcs and half-giants as slaves.
3. ***Pirates*** – Pirates often keep trow and human slaves.
4. ***Goblins*** – Goblins often keep female slaves.
5. ***Kobushi*** – Kobushi prefers slaves with magical abilities.
6. ***Giants*** – Require sturdy slaves, such as half-giants and dwarves.

Personality traits (1d8)
1. I refuse to let others tell me what to do.
2. Now that I'm free I long to see the world.
3. I still have nightmares of my years in captivity.
4. I can't stand to see the innocent suffer.
5. I have an intimate bond with my belongings and never let food go to waste.
6. I use crude jokes to diffuse a tense situation as a coping mechanism.
7. I keep my personal feelings close to my chest.
8. I have a hard time making decisions on my own.

Ideal (1d6)
1. ***Freedom***. I never take prisoners. I try to free those in who are in chains. (Chaotic)
2. ***Greed***. I lust for the security and independence that wealth provides. (Evil)



3. ***Strength***. I must stay strong so I will never have to depend on anyone again. (Any)
4. ***Faith***. My trust in my deity will always get me through hard times. (Any)
5. ***Charity***. Sharing is caring. (Good)
6. ***Neutrality***. Everyone must walk their own path. I walk mine, you walk yours. (Lawful)

Bond (1d6)
1. I left my family behind in captivity. One day, I hope to free them.
2. Someone helped me escape. I owe them a life debt.
3. My former slaver is still out there hunting me down.
4. I seek my former mentor. He was released years before me and I hope he's still alive.
5. My slaver has something that belongs to me.
6. I feel protective and responsible over other slaves.

Flaw (1d6)
1. Sometimes I doubt my own abilities.
2. I always expect the worst of people.
3. I strongly depend on my friends.
4. I allow fear to guide my decisions.
5. I harbor a deep hatred against the culture that enslaved me.
6. I don't see slaves as real people.

Feature: Dark Secret
You have learned a dark secret of your former masters. It might be some large military scheme, a political connection or their worship of a strange deity. Work with your GM to determine the details of your discovery and its impact on the campaign.

Variant: Gladiator
You grew up fighting for the amusement of your masters. Instead of a tool set you carry a weapon from the Gladiator weapon group. Instead of the Deception skill proficiency you have proficiency with Athletics.



Guardian of Lore
In the great city of Nyphvile, amongst the 8 schools of magic, lies the Hall of Guardians. Sworn to safeguard the city their ancestors built and to keep the balance of magic intact. You are a member of these Guardians of Lore, a proud dwarf or half-dwarf for only they are allowed membership. It is your duty to make sure the city is safe from dangers both from without as well as within. For the magic schools are a competitive lot, and rivalries between schools are abundant. It is your responsibility, together with the rest of the council, to keep such indiscretions in check and out of the public eye.

When selecting this background, keep in mind that dwarfs, and as such Guardians of Lore, cannot take levels in classes that utilize arcane magic. If you were to take one of these options, you become an ex-guardian (see variant). As Guardians of Lore are primarily concerned with the well-being of Nyphvile, work with your GM to decide why you are out in the world adventuring. Have you been given a special assignment? Taken a leave of absence? Or have you left the Hall of Guardians to pursue a different life?

Skill proficiencies: Arcana, Investigation.
Tool proficiencies: Any one artisan's tool.
Languages: You know how to read and write your spoken languages.
Equipment: A set of common clothes, a set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a Guardians of Lore membership token and a pouch containing 15 gp.

Personality traits (1d8)
1. I keep detailed notes about the 8 schools of magic and their council members.
2. I enjoy solving puzzles and mysteries.
3. I want to hear all sides of a story before I form my own opinion.
4. I believe that arcane magic, though useful, should be kept strictly regulated.
5. I use etiquette and big words to impress people.
6. I keep my composure at all times, showing weakness means giving in to it.
7. I believe no magic can ever match the raw power of strength and vigor.
8. I keep my enemies close, but my friends closer.

Ideal (1d6)
1. ***Fairness***. Like the 8 schools of magic, everyone should be treated equally. (Lawful)
2. ***Sincerity***. Being true to myself is most important to me. (Neutral)
3. ***Power***. People only keep in line through their fear of our might. (Evil)
4. ***City***. My city of Nyphvile and the Hall of Guardians matter most to me. (Any)
5. ***Respect***. If I treat others with respect, they in turn will grant it back. (Good)
6. ***Responsibility***. It is my duty to safeguard the people who depend on me. (Lawful)

Bond (1d6)
1. The council of nine must be protected at all costs.
2. I have a beloved who is a member of one of the schools of magic.
3. I feel a strong connection to all the schools of magic, even though I can't join them.
4. I envy those who can utilize arcane magic.
5. I enjoy going to the harbor and socializing with the sailors and traders.
6. I look up to sitting members of the council.

Flaw (1d6)
1. I always assume people have ulterior motives.
2. I have developed a professional grudge against the practitioners of arcane magic.
3. I have become as hard as a rock, and have trouble expressing my emotions.
4. I always think in hierarchical structures and do not respect people I deem of lower rank.
5. I am a stickler for rules, even if that could get me or someone else in trouble.
6. I have trouble seeing my own worth.

Feature: Guardian privilege
As a Guardian of Lore you have access to the vast wealth of knowledge inside the Hall of Guardians. You can use this to look up ancient lore and trivia. Your GM might decide that the answers to your inquiries lie outside the Hall, out in the dangerous wild. Some information must be uncovered with an adventure of their own.

Variant: Ex-guardians
Half-dwarfs are not restricted from arcane magic, but as a Guardian of Lore it is still forbidden. As such a half-dwarf who takes levels in an arcane spell user is no longer allowed entrance into the Hall of Guardians. This removes the Guardian privilege feature and replaces it with a new one called Old contacts.

Feature: Old contacts
Though you are no longer a member of the Guardians of Lore, you still have friends and contacts there. They might be willing to help you if you are in need. You may call in a favor from your old acquittances, your GM can rule if and how fast that person can help you. Depending on the matter, it may take days, weeks or even longer to gather the information. And the value and price of that answer is up to the GM.

Trader
On the Shoulders of Heroes has no official guilds (except for a few thieves' guilds), so traders are often on their own.

You know a good deal when you see it. You roam the lands peddling wares to hamlets and farmsteads or organize larger expeditions in the form of caravans or sea trade. During your journeys you have

made at least as many friends as you did allies. How much value does your character attribute to material wealth? Do you view other traders as colleagues or rivals?

Skill proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion.
Tool proficiencies: Land or water vehicles.
Language proficiencies: One common language.
Equipment: Traveler's clothes, a worn walking stick, a merchant's scale and a leather pouch containing 15 gp.

Personality traits (1d8)
1. I always keep track of who owes me and whom I owe.
2. I see possibilities everywhere.
3. I can judge the quality of any item I touch.
4. I don't trust people that refuse to look me in the eye.
5. I am constantly on the look-out for escape routes.
6. I know how to find a decent bar in every village and town.
7. I speak a few words of every language and love showing it off.
8. I believe that strangers are friends that I haven't met yet.

Ideal (1d6)
1. ***Friendship***. I want every customer to be my friend. (Good)
2. ***Greed***. I can never have enough gold and silver. (Evil)
3. ***Independence***. I like being my own boss. (Any)
4. ***Freedom***. The world is my oyster and I peddle my wares throughout the lands. (Chaos)
5. ***Generosity***. I give some of my earnings to the poor and give chances to the less fortunate. (Good)
6. ***Family***. Everything I do is for the good of my family (and children). (Lawful)

Bond (1d6)
1. In secret I am looking for an old enemy that I wish to destroy.
2. I inherited this cart from my father and he means the world to me.
3. Once I have earned enough I will retire and settle down with my betrothed.
4. My mentor left me a binder full of mysterious writings. I want to learn their meaning.
5. A strange woman has stolen something valuable from me.
6. I will not rest until I've seen what lies behind the horizon.

Flaw (1d6)
1. I get greedy.
2. I take things for granted.
3. I badmouth people that fail to meet my expectations.
4. From my point of view my companions do not work hard enough.
5. Sometimes I push myself too hard.
6. I can get paranoid or scared in tense situations.

Feature: Well-Traveled
You always know the place of nice establishment to stay for the night in hamlets, villages and towns that border trade routes. In these towns you have scattered contacts and connections that may help you procure rare or expensive materials that would otherwise be unavailable in such places. In addition, you know how to talk to caravan guards and other caravan masters and these will generally take a liking to you.

Variant: Shop Owner
You own, or used to own, a small shop in a village or town. While in your village or town you have a comfortable place to sleep and to run your business from. The store has an upkeep cost of 2 gold per month. Failure to pay this cost will cause you to lose the shop until you can pay the fees again. This replaces the Well-Traveled feature.

Gnoll Variant: Gypsy
Gnolls are well-known for their wanderlust. They travel the lands in family packs that perform, do odd jobs and trade to make a living. Optionally a gnoll gypsy may replace their starting equipment with the following instead:

Equipment: Traveler's clothes, bones of divination in a silk pouch, robes, a deck of playing cards and a leather wallet containing 15 gp.

Tribal

You grew up in the wilds among either a tribe or clan. Life wasn't always easy for your people and you've learned to survive in the wilderness and its many dangers. How did your people think about outsiders? Do you still proudly follow the traditions of your people?

Skill proficiencies: Intimidation, Survival.
Tool proficiencies: Leatherworker's tools or Woodcarver's tools and one type of musical instrument.
Equipment: A set of traveler's clothes, a set of artisan's tools of your choice, a musical instrument of your choice, some scarification or a tattoo to mark you as a member of your tribe, and a pouch with 10 gp.

Personality traits (1d8)
1. I will take what I think belongs to me.
2. Towns and large crowds make me feel uncomfortable.
3. Only beasts are above deceit.
4. I keep my friends close to me.
5. I sleep so close to the fire that it sometimes singes me.
6. I leave the mark of my tribe in every forest I set foot in.
7. I have a tough time speaking other languages.
8. I come up with nicknames for my friends and family.

Ideal (1d6)
1. ***Freedom***. I refuse to take orders and I do not take kindly to bullies. (Chaos)
2. ***Tradition***. I never forget the ways of my people. (Law)
3. ***Exploration***. I am always on the look-out for exotic beasts and peoples. (Any)
4. ***Possession***. Only with plenty of weapons one be safe from one's enemies. (Evil)
5. Kindness. I'll go out of my way to help a stranger in need. (Good)
6. ***Family***. You are never alone as long as you have your family around you. (Any)

Bond (1d6)
1. I maintain a good friendship with an old trader that we ran into often.
2. I look up to my aunt, who is also my best friend.
3. I was cast out of my tribe by a jealous elder.
4. My sisters were taken by slavers and I hope to find them one day.
5. The jarl has sent a group of adventurers to steal our sacred stone.
6. An opposing tribe slaughtered many of my people.

Flaw (1d6)
1. I anger quickly and will resort to physical violence.
2. I trust people too easily.
3. I tend to act without thinking it through.
4. I squirrel away food.
5. I am mistrusting of outsiders.
6. My people are racist towards some of the common folk.

Feature: Hunter Gatherer
On your travels you gather enough food to sustain yourself and your mount. If the environment allows, your campsites provide shelter from the elements and are located near important features such as water and food.



Chapter 5: The Continent of Bellög

"Jahleera," the half-elf girl repeated her name slowly. "You are not from around here, are you?" The painted bugbear shook his shaggy head. The cart slowly rumbled along the road to Nyphvile, the pair of half-elves on the buck, the bugbear between the caskets in the back. Their journey to the market had nearly been ruined, were it not for the bugbear and his wood-mending magic. Jahleera and Eoghan had then offered the friendly giant a lift. It was the least they could do. This had been a few hours ago, and a bright day was slowly turning into a starry night, purple clinging like a veil to the horizon. A tiny bird landed on her shoulder, and it chirped at the small group eagerly. "What name?" the bugbear asked the elves, pointing at the tiny creature gingerly. As it hopped on his outstretched finger Jahleera giggled. "It's a sparrow, silly! Don't they have sparrows in the east?" The bugbear studied the tiny bird intently. He smiled. "I like Sparrow."

Birdseye view of Bellog

Some general rules apply for those living on and wishing to explore the continent. This chapter will teach you all you need to know in general and will take a more detailed approach for each country.

Climate

For the most part, the continent has a moderate climate. The central areas of Kesma and Vuorilas have predictable wind- and rainfall patterns, with short, mild winters, long, chilly springs, moderate summers and rainy autumns. Areas in the north, including the whole of Gamleland, have a sub-arctic, tundra climate. Weather is cold and harsh in general, and especially the southern winds howl with the chill of the northern mountains. Winters are especially strict and dark, summers short, sunny and especially dry.

The eastern lands are more hospitable, as they are hotbeds of volcanic activity, which shrouds whole forests in warm, moist mists, lending them the appearance of a jungle. In general, temperatures are much higher in the far east, and slightly warmer along the forests and coast to the south. The southern shores of the country share a moderate climate but are known for their fickle nature: weather is unpredictable and can change at a whim. Rain storms hit hard and pummel the land for hours at a time, and sudden fogs and winds can surprise even the most experienced sailor. The monsoon season lasts throughout the autumn months.

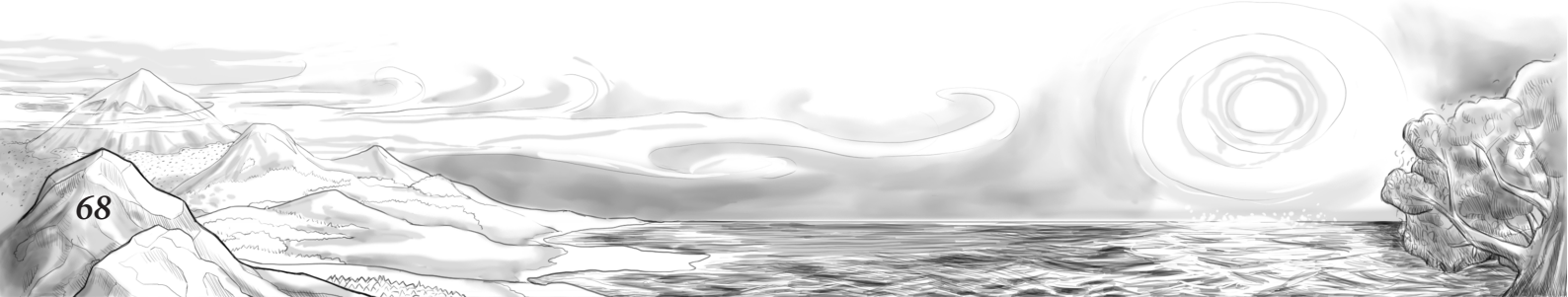
Western lands have a moderate continental climate, with a sub-arctic and tundra climate more to the north. Both Merma's seas and fields yield rich bounties. The islands of Tuuli Virisi are especially barren and inhospitable, with tiny villages and towns huddled in frozen bays with pebble beaches.

Calendar

Like our earth, most of Bellog's cultures divide the year in twelve months and each month in four weeks of seven days. A full moon presents itself for about 3 days at the end of each month. The general calendar starts with the naming of the first ruler of men, but both dwarves and hobgoblins keep records that go back much further.

Settlements in Bellög

Category	*Inhabitant numbers*	*Magic item availability*
Metropolis	30.000-49.000	Age of Giants and newer
City	15.000-29.999	Age of Giants and newer
Town	10.000-14.999	Age of Humans
Village	5.000-9.999	Potions and low-level scrolls
Hamlet	100-4.999	-



Inhabitants
The continent is inhabited by a variety of races and monsters. For players a selection of 13 races is available. Bellog is composed of wild and untamed lands. Although its people might mean well, few have enjoyed formal education and communication with other races proves difficult. Misunderstanding and superstition rule the lives of many people. Depending on their composition and behavior, armed groups of strangers might provoke reactions of fear, hostility or in some cases, hope.

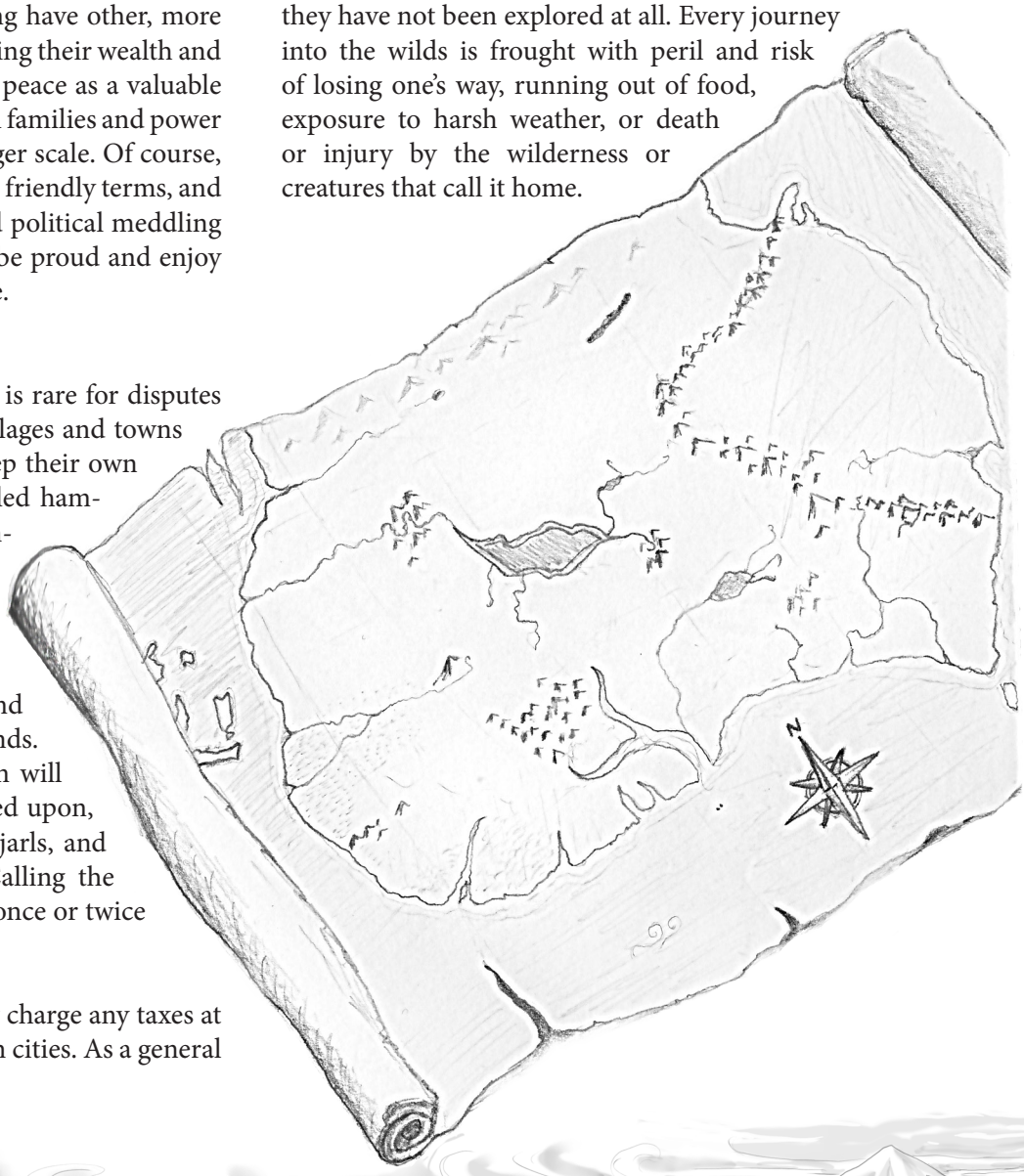
How a race is generally regarded is described in more detail in their entry in chapter 2.

Countries and politics
People of the continent are not quick to take up arms unless to protect their freedom. Too long have other, more powerful entities ruled over them, taking their wealth and freedom – they have learned to view peace as a valuable commodity. Feuds between individual families and power groups are common, but not on a larger scale. Of course, that doesn't mean that all rulers are on friendly terms, and behind the screens assassinations and political meddling do occur. Many rulers are known to be proud and enjoy to display their ability and dominance.

Borders and laws
With so much space to go around, it is rare for disputes to arise over land. Apart from the villages and towns stated on the map, many families keep their own farmsteads, too small to even be called hamlets. They are isolated and self-sustaining. Landowners often know that they live within the boundaries of a ruler, but few have a sense of patriotism over that country. They do take their duties to their jarl seriously and feel responsible for their ancestral lands. Many people belief that part of them will live on their land forever. When called upon, many people do go to war for their jarls, and show great pride when doing so. Calling the banners, as it is called, only happens once or twice every generation.

Jarls rule their people loosely and few charge any taxes at all, unless on traders and merchants in cities. As a general rule they allow their subjects to manage their own lands and towns, as long as they do so with diplomacy and reason. Other races and cultures have laws of their own, which are specified to their own ways of life. In general, laws tend to be strict but fair – strict to discourage further offense, fair to not disgruntle or lose working hands. Death by hanging is reserved for the worst offenders, with exile and branding being more common.

Borders, although indicated on the map, are loosely difined. Indeed, they end at natural borders, such as mountain ranges and rivers. Areas within several miles of borders are considered no-man's land, which no ruler patrols or takes responsibility for unless they have some kind of financial motive. Bandits, hermits and exiles inhabit those lands. Huge stretches of the continent are so isolated that they have not been explored at all. Every journey into the wilds is frought with peril and risk of losing one's way, running out of food, exposure to harsh weather, or death or injury by the wilderness or creatures that call it home.

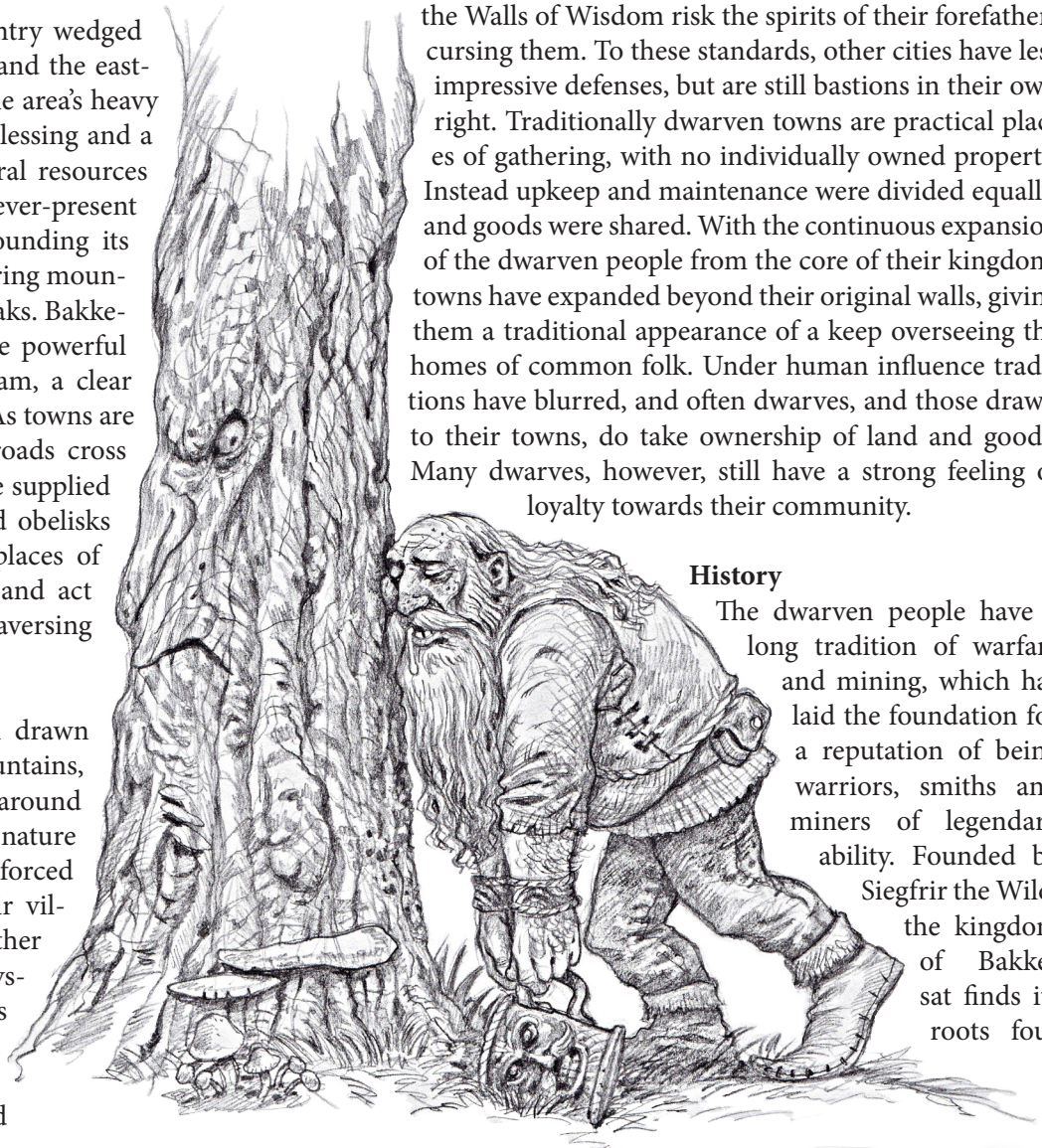


Bakkesat

Metropolis: Ambolt
Towns: Amskea, Port Haedin, Port Kamprad, Port Waldström
Village: Guldflöd
Population: Dwarves (65%), half-dwarves (10%), humans (15%), trow (5%), others (5%)
Exports: Alcoholic beverages, precious metals, tools, weapons and armor
Languages: Dwarven
Government: Monarchy. The dwarf king Dürir governs his people from his fortress in Ambolt
Symbol/flag: A coin and anvil on a checkered flag

Appearance
Bakkesat is a compact country wedged between the southern seas and the eastern realm of hobgoblins. The area's heavy volcanic activity is both a blessing and a curse; providing rich mineral resources on the one hand, and an ever-present danger on the other. Surrounding its jungle-choked hills lie towering mountains, crowned by snowy peaks. Bakkesat is sliced in twain by the powerful river named the Woodstream, a clear vein of ice cold melt water. As towns are few and far between few roads cross Bakkesat, so most towns are supplied by waterways. Rune-marred obelisks and marking stones near places of interest dot the landscape and act as ageless guides to those traversing the wilds.

Dwarves have always been drawn to the presence of the mountains, building settlements in and around them. The inhospitable nature of their surroundings has forced the dwarves to supply their villages creatively, using either waterways or a tunnel system that stretches for miles which they call The Path of Long Night. The Stone Fist patrols the tunnels and keeps a close eye on those that go there. Entrance can be purchased for a fee, but it is by law forbidden for all but dwarves and gnomes to enter. Although they are home to many dangerous creatures, choke points and fortifications make mountain homes easy to defend. Because of their increased need for protection dwarven cities seem more like fortresses than anything else. Families cohabit these fortified towns and share responsibility for general safety. The first true fortress towns, the twin cities of Ambolt and Amskea were founded thousands of years ago, long before humans had built their first permanent settlement. The rules of the Wegge, recorded by Ruric under the rule of Heraldir the Wise, are carved in the massive stone walls surrounding these cities. Runic script and decorations cover every inch of these barriers, which are forty feet high and half as wide. It is said that those who disobey the Walls of Wisdom risk the spirits of their forefathers cursing them. To these standards, other cities have less impressive defenses, but are still bastions in their own right. Traditionally dwarven towns are practical places of gathering, with no individually owned property. Instead upkeep and maintenance were divided equally, and goods were shared. With the continuous expansion of the dwarven people from the core of their kingdom, towns have expanded beyond their original walls, giving them a traditional appearance of a keep overseeing the homes of common folk. Under human influence traditions have blurred, and often dwarves, and those drawn to their towns, do take ownership of land and goods. Many dwarves, however, still have a strong feeling of loyalty towards their community.



History
The dwarven people have a long tradition of warfare and mining, which has laid the foundation for a reputation of being warriors, smiths and miners of legendary ability. Founded by Siegfrir the Wild, the kingdom of Bakkesat finds its roots four



millennia ago in the mountains which today are known as the Mountains of Zorn. Uniting four great families under a single leader, in a harrowing effort called The Great Gathering, Siegfrir slayed each of the heads of the three other clans in unarmed combat. With this act of domination, he crowned himself king and founded the great fortress city of Ambolt. Within the next four hundred years his son Heraldir, not so much the fighter but more the scholar and philosopher, created Amskea to supply the kingdom with much needed farm land. As the empire of Sukko matured, the hobgoblins became an increasing threat to the safety of Bakkesat and the dwarves had to become more imperialistic to counter hobgoblin expansion. The dwarves expansion eventually halted around the inhospitable and razor sharp expanse of Ruric's wall during the reign of Baldamir the Young. It was only six hundred years ago, under the reign of Bormir the Friendly, when a true expansion boom took place. Dwarves and men founded trade posts around the northern borders of both Bakkesat and Kesma and small harbor towns sprouted on the southern coasts. These settlements welcome other races and generally have a diverse population.

Rulers and Politics

Although dwarves have always cared deeply for their own families, and later their people, they have avoided contact with the other common folk for centuries. Siegfrir had a notorious hatred for all creatures not dwarven. This hatred was fueled both by a cannibalistic elven tribe that once lived north of the Thundering Gorge, and orcs that hid in the shadows of the Mountains of Zorn. This xenophobia waned through the decades, but was abandoned officially almost six hundred years ago, when the reign of Ragmir the Stonefaced ended. His son Bormir saw the need to end the giant threat before it would consume Bakkesat. He had befriended many human and elf during his adventures and he had noticed how resourceful humans were. He trusted that dwarves and humans could easily defeat their oppressors if they would only stop bickering among themselves. He urged his son Frolir the Valiant, as well as the Stone Fist, to rally the human tribes in an attempt to break the giants. The gods themselves rewarded their crusade by crowning the first human leader, a ranger named Stygg Strongbow, Vulgaris Magistralis. Since this combined effort human and dwarf have been close friends. Although the human separation from the old ways of the Vulgaris Magistralis many generations ago did at first hurt relations, it eventually brought their people closer together when Rhomir the Loyal decreed that it was not 'the dwarven way' to force obedience on to another people, unless they would become like the giants themselves. The current king of dwarves, Dürir the Goldfather, is an old dwarf with a long, braided white beard that reaches down to his knees. His eyebrows meet in the middle of his face, above a square button nose. His eyes are a warm brown and he is known to be friend to all that would visit his hall. This gentleness melts away when he thinks of goblins, whom he hates wholeheartedly, as their king was directly responsible for the death of many of his forefathers. Dürir is a famed smith who specializes in armor, although he is not as active in crafting as he used to be. A great professional interest in metals has him often sending his people to explore new depths. He loves his people with his entire heart and will go out of his way to ensure their safety and prosperity. His first born and only son Vainomir is his greatest pride. Named after the hero Vainomoinen, close friend to both Dürir and his father, his son is an extravagant dwarf, with a taste for jewelry and decoration. While traditionally dwarf princes earn a nickname before their time comes to rule, by their action and intend, Vainomir leads a fairly uneventful life under his father's wing. He currently runs a large mining operation in the Mountains of Zorn from Ambolt.

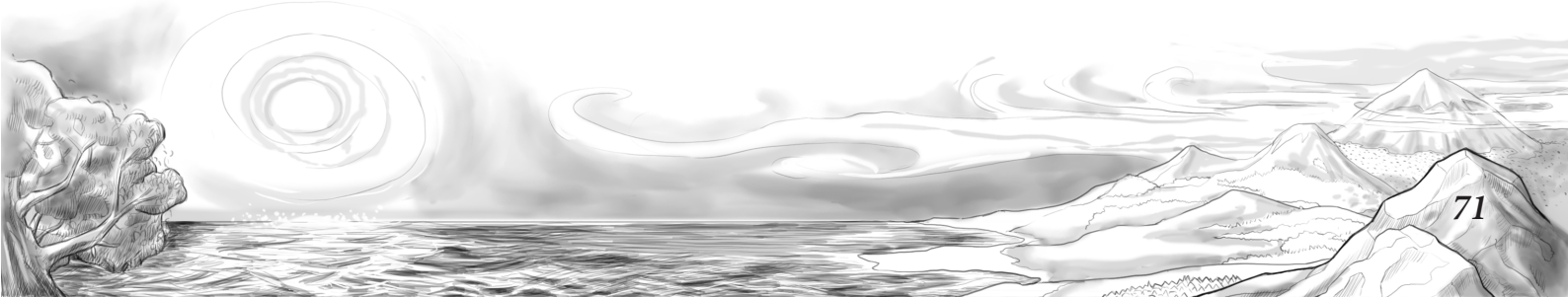
Clans and tribes

The terms clan and tribe are both used to indicate kinship between a people, often indiscriminately, but in which way do they actually differ? Clans are extended family units and all members of a clan believe they share a common ancestor. Both human and dwarf clans are protective of their family honor and often intermarry in leu of bringing outsiders into their midst. Members of a tribe share this feeling of connection and share culture and language but are not necessarily related. Indeed, several clans may together form a tribe. Certain clans might hold positions of power within a tribe, or several clans that are part of the same tribe can feud over land and political power.

Places of Interest

Brackish Heath

Located in the far south point peninsula of Bakkesat, this swampy area is dotted by trow hamlets. Drawn to the awe-striking presence of the Temple of the Seamother, these faithful servants take great pride in living in its shadow. In their stories Pripp the prophet saw the Moth-





er herself and she commanded him to build a settlement where the ocean meets the trees. The area is considered sacred ground by Trow and they are usually very hostile to trespassers.

Brewing Forest
The Brewing Forest is named after the Brewery which, for countless generations, has brewed the most coveted beer in Bellög. Rumor has it that some of the key ingredients of Bakkebrew can be found only here. According the old wives' tales the forest infuses its visitors with healing power, and even prolongs life. The forest is remarkably peaceful, as if its presence deters evil.

Fort Ash
Fort Ash is constructed on the last accessible outcropping of the Giant Mountains. Its name comes from the volcano Asmond, which bellows sulfurous fumes into the skies above the fortress at regular intervals. It was built to serve as a first line of defense against the persistent threat of evil that lingered in the dark cracks of the mountains. Only a handful of troops are garrisoned in the fort these days, as attacks from the mountains have become a rare occurrence.

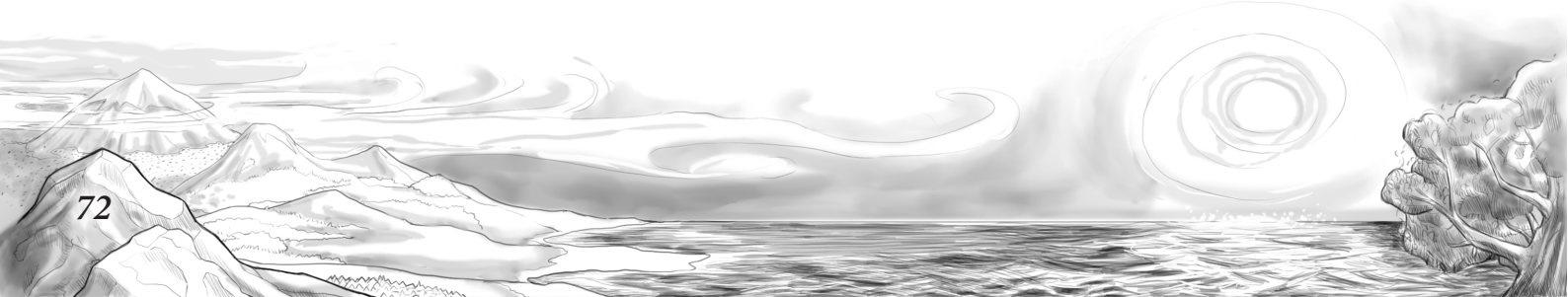
Fort Bakke
Fort Bakke is historically an important dwarven stronghold, constructed by goblin slave laborers under the rule of Thulmir the Just. It closely monitors the sea and its garrisoned soldiers make sure no one enters hobgoblin-controlled waters without permission. Serving here is still considered an honor, as many of the great names in dwarven military history have done so in the wars against the hobgoblins. Although taking prisoners of war is a rarity in dwarven culture it is rumored that the dungeons of the fortress still host a small army of goblin slave workers. Legends tell of extended tunnels deep below, dug by slaves, that house entire warrens of goblins and more dangerous monsters.

Fort Carfax
The Woodstream river has always provided a convenient route to sea for the dwarven empire, Carfax was built as a both stopover and a patrolling station. Although traditionally all dwarven fortresses are built out of granite, the location of Carfax has forced its builders to deviate from that; hauling granite proved to be too expensive and time consuming. Part wood and part packed earth, it has a distinct look, unlike that of any other fortress. Because of its unusual location and appearance, it is one of the least respected places a soldier of the Stone Fist can be stationed. When men do end up here it is usually a punishment for disobeying orders and the presence of many corrupt individuals has turned it into something of a smugglers den.

Fort Hamar (Or Aramir)
After Bakke, Hamar is the largest fortress of Bakkesat. Situated next to the gorge to the west, it is responsible for shielding the country from all possible invasions from that direction, despite there not being attempts at attack for thousands of years. It still has its purpose, however, as it guards the access to the legendary mines of Hamar, which are accessible only by royal decree. With the magical iron and adamantine from the mines some of the best armors in the world have been manufactured.

Fort Mole (Or Baldir)
Fort Mole was a stout dwarven bulwark until a goblin shaman by the name of Khali the Bloodhungry performed a bloody ritual and the great fortress was gobbled up by the earth. Originally named after its builder Baldir, both dwarves and their allies now refer to the structure as Fort Mole. It has long since been abandoned, although it is said many goblins still wander its empty halls. Legends of great wealth left in the ruins by the retreating dwarves still attract treasure hunters. It is whispered that the spirits of some of these fool hardy glory seekers still wander the halls.

The High Temple of Ilmarinen
Made by the skilled hands of the priesthood of Ilmarinen, his temple is a homage both to his creativity and strength. The domed structure is carved from the rock of the outcroppings of the mountains and sanded over its entire surface, giving it a smooth red look. Great pillars form a forest of stone surrounding the temple, each inscribed with a rule from the Wegge. Hidden beneath the place of worship, in the ground and mountains, lies a complex of workshops and smithies that is used exclusively to craft items for the Stone Fist and the priesthood.





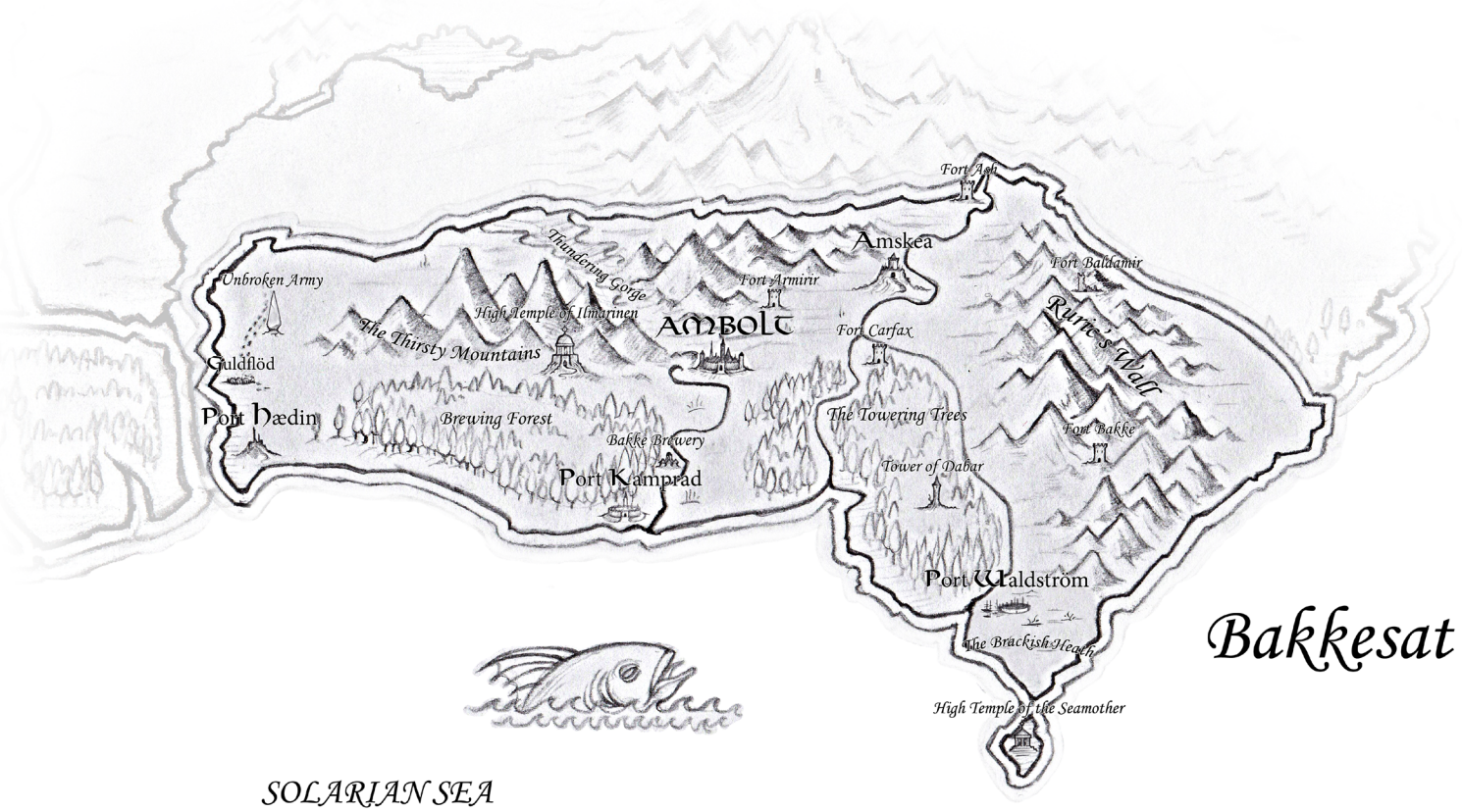
The High Temple of the Seamother
Where the frothing currents of the Solarian- and the Storm Sea meet, rises from the briny waters a monolithic structure of black stone. Built by unknown hands to honor the Seamother, the Trow chief deity, it has been part of the landscape for untold millennia. It extends all the way to the rubble choked bottom of the sea where the sun never shines. Only creatures of the sea can enter it, as its entrance gate lies many feet below, where the waves lap at the rock, giving it the appearance of a featureless column of dark marble. Although Trow venerate the structure, and often make ritualistic sacrifices at its feet, only their priests may enter the inner sanctum - an honor they use sparingly, as even they fear the monsters that lurk within. Those that do not return are believed to have been chosen by the goddess to accompany her in her restless sleep. Powerful creatures of the sea are drawn to the temple and guard it fervently. It is believed the goddess herself slumbers somewhere in the deepest levels, beneath the crashing waves, still tired after the creation of the sea and its creatures.

Ruric's Wall
These unforgiving mountains form a natural barrier between the hobgoblin empire and the dwarven kingdom. After having lost several experienced mountaineers in the process of establishing outposts on top of the peaks the dwarves gave up the project and retreated inland. Named after the famed hero Ruric, the natural barrier has kept their kingdom safe for hundreds of years.

The Thirtsy Mountains
These barren red peaks take their name after Zorn, the Beardless, whom was rumored to live his last days in a great cave somewhere on the central plateau. For most part the mountains are extremely hostile terrain, riddled with sulfurous springs and dressed in no vegetation but razor-sharp brambles. Luckily for the dwarves, precious metals have so far only been found in the eastern reaches of the mountains, although that does not stop tenacious explorers from searching up to this day. Vainomir, 6th prince of dwarvenkind, often sends explorers into the far reaches in search of veins of precious metal.

The Thundering Gorge
Frequent earthquakes make this gorge treacherous to pass, as great boulders crash down on careless passer-throughs. Once the area was a haven for bandits that used those boulders to ambush patrols.

The Tower of Dabar
This towering, smooth structure seems to be poured out of smokey glass. Situated in the southern reaches of the Bakke Forest, it oversees the wasteland that stretches miles from it. Legends say Dabar was once a powerful wizard, who had his mind set on becoming a deity. A devout follower of the witch Louhi, he retreated into the wilderness to conduct vile experiments. It is believed he shaped the





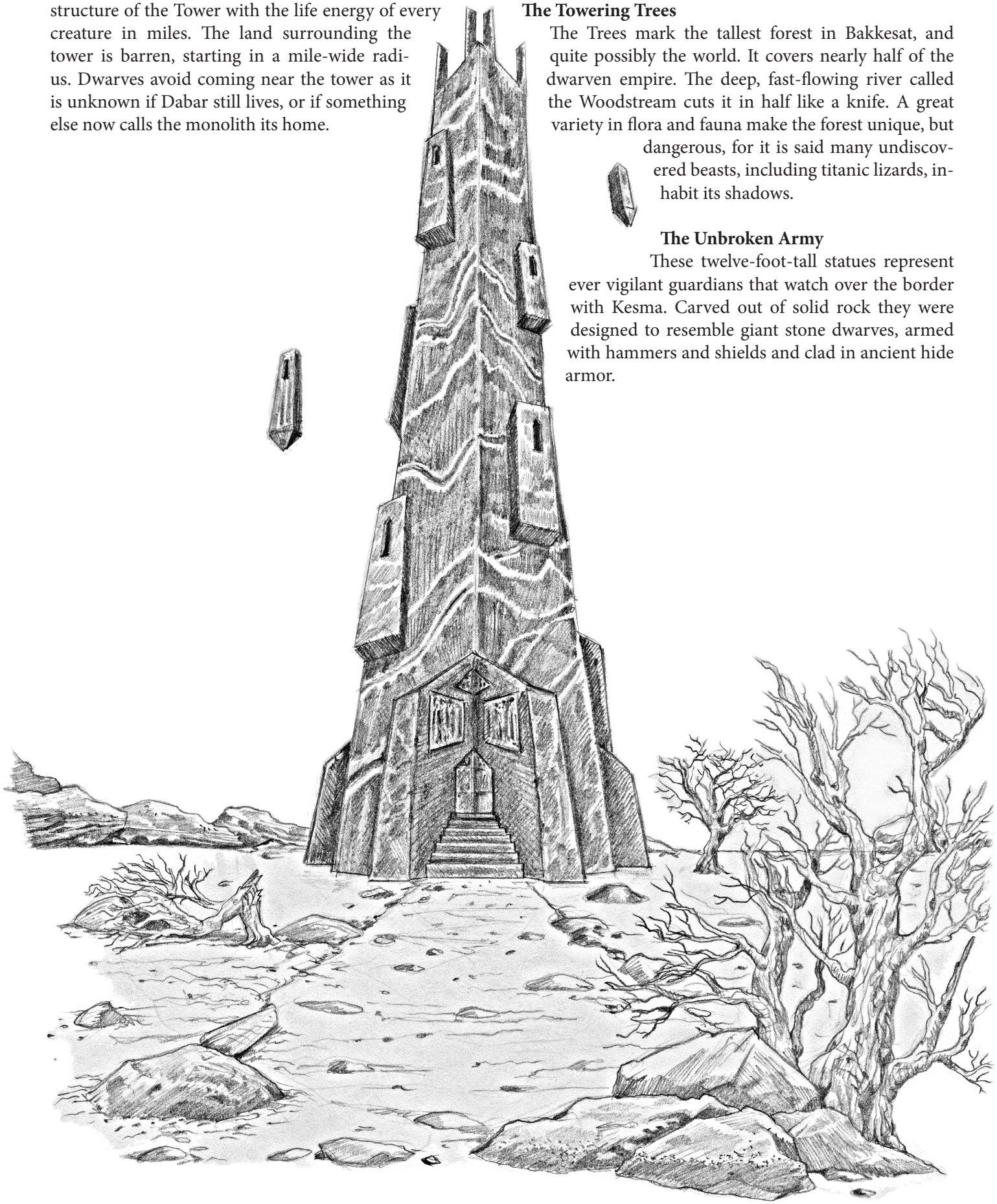
structure of the Tower with the life energy of every creature in miles. The land surrounding the tower is barren, starting in a mile-wide radius. Dwarves avoid coming near the tower as it is unknown if Dabar still lives, or if something else now calls the monolith its home.

The Towering Trees

The Trees mark the tallest forest in Bakkesat, and quite possibly the world. It covers nearly half of the dwarven empire. The deep, fast-flowing river called the Woodstream cuts it in half like a knife. A great variety in flora and fauna make the forest unique, but dangerous, for it is said many undiscovered beasts, including titanic lizards, inhabit its shadows.

The Unbroken Army

These twelve-foot-tall statues represent ever vigilant guardians that watch over the border with Kesma. Carved out of solid rock they were designed to resemble giant stone dwarves, armed with hammers and shields and clad in ancient hide armor.

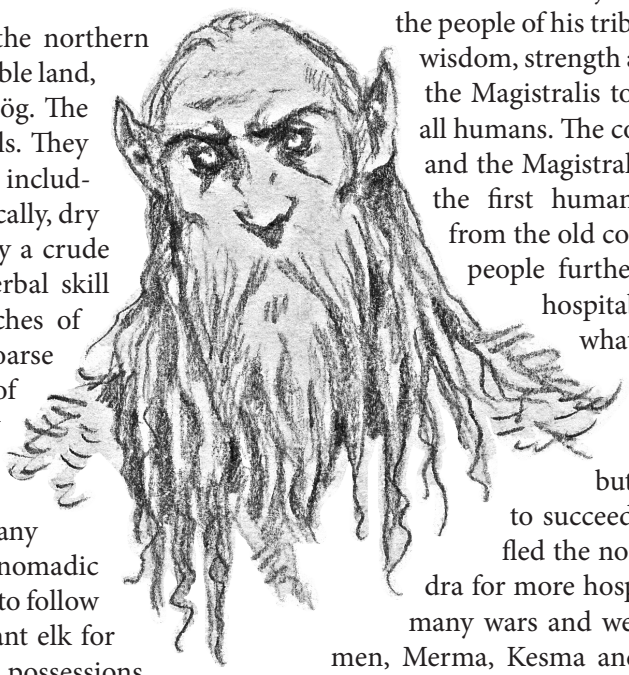


Gamleland

City: Waalderstal
Hamlets: Mjerhemmen, Stroome
Population: Half-giants (50%), humans (40%), others (10%)
Exports: Pelts, cattle
Languages: Gamli
Government: Vulgaris Magistralis. A leader of men who is chosen by the gods and by tradition untouchable and immortal
Symbol/flag: A circle surrounding a square

Appearance

Gamleland, the old country, covers the northern reaches of the continent. It is inhospitable land, even more so than other parts of Bellög. The people of Gamleland are tough as nails. They live in abominable weather conditions, including cold snaps, snow storms and, ironically, dry spells are common. They are generally a crude people, with harsh habits, limited verbal skill and ancient convictions. Great stretches of tundra, studded with boulders and coarse with heath are separated by clusters of thick pines. The north is very sparsely inhabited, and monstrous creatures, such as white dragons, frost wyrms and dire animals, roam unchecked. Many of the people that live here still live a nomadic lifestyle, wandering the tundra, forced to follow the great herds of mammoths and giant elk for sustenance, unhampered by material possessions, like their ancestors did. Towns and villages are rare as it is impossible to sustain large settled populations in these barren plains.



History

For the first men, Gamleland was a place where they could find freedom away from the tyranny of giants. Although they were not yet truly united, most humans lived in relative peace. Sometimes slaves fled to the old country, bringing stories of terrible oppression. Eventually this goaded humans to fight the giant oppressors, in an attempt to reclaim the southern forests for the common folk. The dwarves, unsettled by the lack of human leadership, gathered a group of heroes to find them a king. Aided by the gods themselves, the ranger Stygg Strongbow claimed the King's Mask, becoming the first in a long line of Vulgaris Magistrali. To this day the people from the north respectfully call the owner of the mask the Vulgaris Magistralis, ruler of common men. Now united under a strong leader, mankind made a formidable ally against the giants. After the war, man flocked to the forests of the south, happy to explore a new, milder climate. As the times went by, however, some people craved for their freedom and forgot the Magistralis. Humans came in contact with the open-minded gnolls and the separated elves and some wanted to choose their own leaders. This lead to the rise of the first jarl, Vainamoinen. Chosen by the people of his tribe because of his unfaltering wisdom, strength and charisma he challenged the Magistralis to a duel for the freedom of all humans. The competition ended in a draw and the Magistralis then grudgingly allowed the first humans to separate themselves from the old country. Vainamoinen led his people further south, to warmer, more hospitable lands and founded what is now known as Kesma. Many warlords attempted the same feat, to face the Magistralis in a duel, but none ever came as close to succeeding. There were those that fled the north and left the frozen tundra for more hospitable environments. Over many wars and weddings, the new realms of men, Merma, Kesma and Vuorilas were born. For many people Gamleland is a place they would sooner forget, something that reminds them of oppressive ages past. To some on the other hand the frozen heaths and towering pines are their only home, the land of their forefathers.

Rulers and Politics

The undisputed leader of Gamleland is the Vulgaris Magistralis. He has been granted the power to rule humankind by the gods and is seen as the immortal, untouchable, incarnation of their presence on Bellög. As soon as a man puts on the King's Mask he becomes this mythical hero and his previous life is forfeit. The mask is passed on from man to man and the role of the Magistralis has been



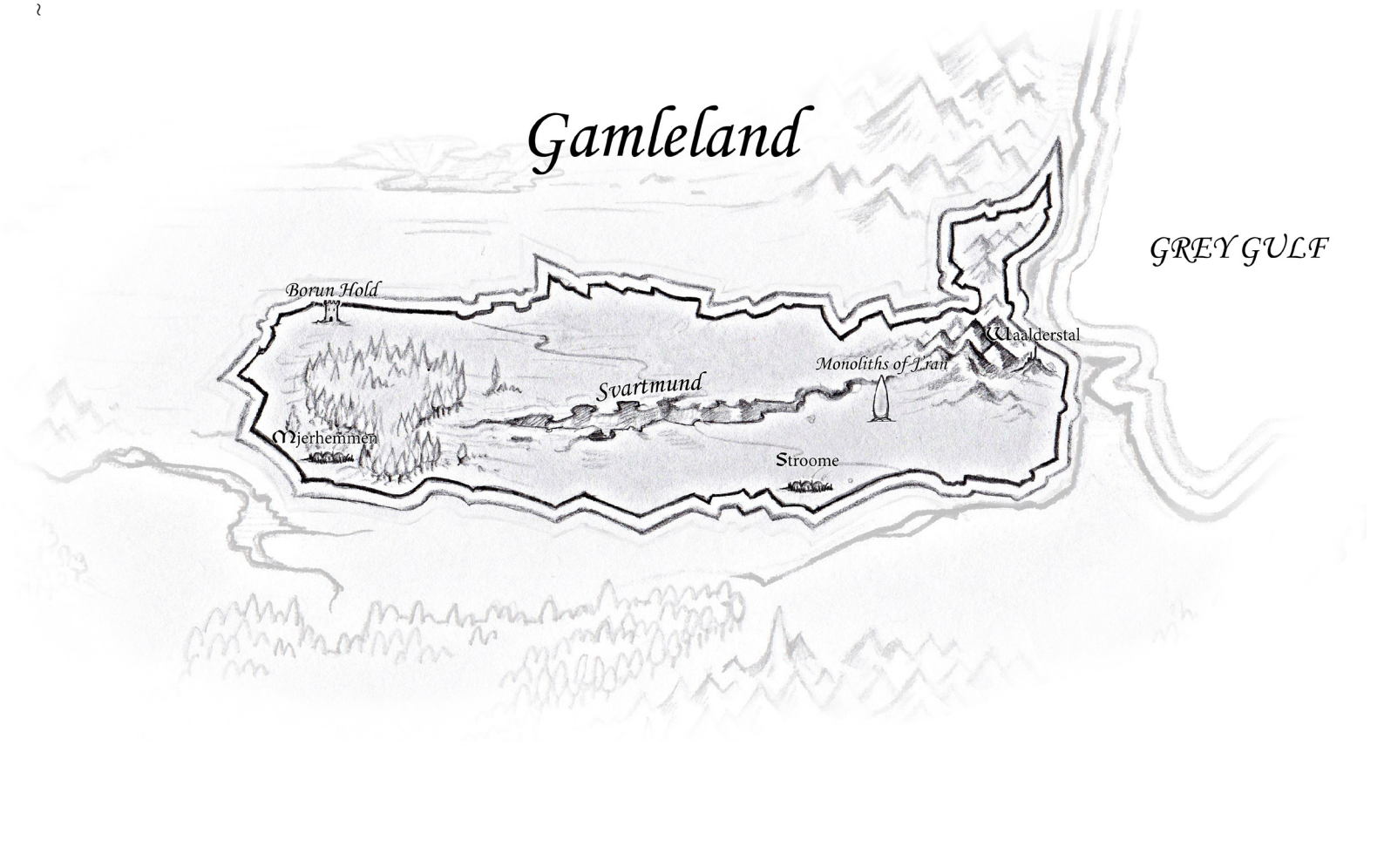
taken on by many heroes. Since the great divide of humankind and the dawn of the jarls the people of the north have generally kept to themselves. They are proud and stubborn, unlikely to change, and neither is their leader. Although it may differ for each tribe, many half-bloods see themselves as humans in regard to their fierce loyalty to their leader.

Places of Interest

Borun Hold
Built by the order of paladins to serve as their base of operations, this massive stone fortress on the northern cliffs is an impressive sight. It functions as a dwarven fortress city in many ways

Svartmund
Nira was an immense trading post which drew in traders from far and wide. At its center square stood a slave market known for its stock of goblins and orcs. Goblins were treated especially poorly by the slavers, as they were considered to be of limited financial value. They were chained together in ragged tents and fed only spoiled scraps. During one particularly fierce winter many of them froze to death. Appalled by this blasphemy against his chosen people, the god Hiisi destroyed the village with immense tremors, allowing the earth to gobble it up. A black gorge is all that remains. They say Nira's foundations still rest at the bottom, in the depths of the earth. Half-giant clans are terrified of what lies in the darkness. Many of them believe the place to be cursed, or that it houses a portal to Hiisi's realm, guarded by fierce goblin soldiers.

Monoliths of J'ran
These crude stone monoliths jut out of the tundra like jagged primeval teeth. They were built long before humans came to the north but still thrum with magical power. Who or why they were constructed remains a well-kept secret, although they are sacred to many different peoples. The clans of the Bonebreaker tribe return here each year in a ritual which involves breaking one's nose with a piece of obsidian.





Kesma

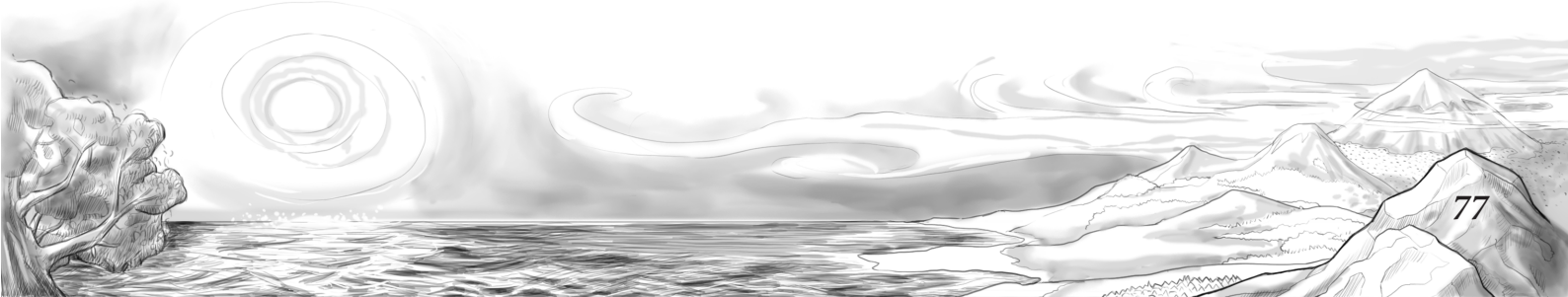
Metropolis: Koti
City: Nyphvile
Villages: Drøk, Naytalis, Svarta
Hamlets: Hengytis, Naytalinn, Sjørd
Population: Humans (50%), dwarves (30%), halflings (10%), others (10%)
Export: Weapons, wool, pelts, silver, hirelings
Languages: Vesi (Merma), Metsä (Kesma), Vuori (Vuorilas), Dwarven
Government: Meritocracy. Jarl Adatram rules Kesma officially, but many chosen village elders rule parts of the country, as communities are too remote to be overseen by a single government
Symbol/flag: A tree on a cloud with a green and yellow background

Appearance
Because its endless forests and hills Kesma remains too isolated and large to oversee and travelers are best to take care. Many dangerous creatures lurk in the shadows, waiting for a chance to ambush careless travelers. The hills of Kesma are rich in silver, making them attractive to miners and merchants, as well as bandits. Kesma is shaped like a huge valley, with the immense lake Atho accumulating at its center. Great mountains rim it, some capped with eternal snow. Most of Kesma's inhabitants are humans, which has led to houses generally being constructed out of wood. Larger towns are surrounded by wooden palisades, as are most family farms. Homes are long, wooden structures where the entire family lives together, with roofs often made of straw and a central fireplace. The larger farms especially often resemble small villages. They are self-sustainable with fields for farming, grazing livestock and a well or river for fresh water. It is not uncommon for larger dwellings to have a small workshop and a smithy. Many elves live in the forest of Mielikki's Arms, where they build traditional tree villages. The common races often work together, lending each other their strength and expertise. It is common for human families to hire a dwarf smith to craft them masterwork gear and weapons, or an elf druid to bless their crops.

History
After their separation from Gamleland the free humans moved into the woods of the south. The dwarves and elves eventually welcomed them as allies in their battle against the creatures that burned and pillaged their homes. Dwarf and human locked hands and collaborated to make Kesma a prosperous country. Kesma was the first country ruled by a jarl. Koti, its capitol, was founded by Vainamoinen himself almost 1300 years ago. The official connection to Bakkesat became complicated, as the dwarves had difficulty coming to terms with the human 'betrayal' of the Vulgaris Magistralis. While this was the cause for friction at times, fortunately no king ever resorted to violence. If anything the divide between humans eventually helped the dwarves to better understand the complicated nature of their close allies.

The hero Vainamoinen is to this day a great inspiration to the people of Kesma, even though he does not sit on the throne anymore. It remains to this day unclear why he passed on the torch almost five hundred years ago, but Vainamoinen himself insists that he felt the time had come for a new jarl to rule. After him many chieftains have governed Kesma, but few managed to for more than a year or three. Only Adatram the Dragonslayer, the current jarl of Kesma, has so far managed to win over the people with his wealth, strength and charisma. He became jarl almost ten years ago after having slain the great dragon Kin Tooth and riding into Koti with forty treasure-laden mules. The common folk worship their jarl as if he is a hero of legend and enjoy his show of power.

Rulers and Politics
As they live in a dangerous environment, the people of Kesma have to be on their guard constantly. Friends and family are valued highly. Jarls have had different political priorities and interests, unfortunately the one most commonly shared was increasing their personal wealth. Adatram ranks among the most popular and wealthy leaders on the continent. His previous successes have, however, fed his arrogance and a lack of understanding for those in less fortunate positions. This results in strict regulations around the capitol and a looser law enforcement throughout the country. Adatram organizes lavish banquets in honor of the gods and his wealthy friends. At all times the jarl keeps a force of about 150 guards around Koti, to guard his fortress. He has trained a private army, his Hammers, an elite force of 30 law enforcers on horseback, who are considered above the law and are tasked with finding and punishing criminals. Inhabitants





of Kesma tend towards good, although their respect towards authority depends on each individual. Each family has a family symbol and prays to a holy animal. Mielikki, goddess of the woods, is, next to the Father and Mother, seen as the most important figure in the pantheon. People decorate the woodwork on their houses in the honor of the gods. Weapons and armor are often highly decorated with silver as people from Kesma believe that a warrior needs all the luck and blessings he can get.

Places of Interest

Athovale
Daily the monks of Athovale descend to pray on the shores of the lake and to net the most delicious fish. They brew a light, blonde ale from the mountain springs that is famous for its fresh, playful flavor. As a tribute to his work a few casks of the ale are presented to the jarl each year, while other barrels are reserved for the monks and special visitors, making it a rare commodity indeed.

The Dark Mountains
These jagged black rocks are feared and avoided by the local populace. Between its dark spires still live numerous orc tribes as well as other even more dangerous creatures. According to legends, the haunting presence of these mountains inspired the goddess Loviathar when she birthed the first orcs.

The Dragon Woods
These dark, fruitless trees with serrated leaves are known for their black wood, that becomes hard as stone when prepared in the proper way. Legend says the trees were blackened by the fiery breath of the dragons that once called it home. Here lived the dragon Kin Tooth, until jarl Adatram defeated the monster single-handedly some years ago. Dragonwood is rare and expensive, a valued material for crafting weapons and wooden homes.

Fort Matar
Fort Matar is a square structure of stone and dragonwood, shielded by trenched walls and the steep cliffs of the Hydra Fjord. It shields Kesma from the pirates of Kuoros, or so its people believe. Although the garrisoned soldiers have to be on constant guard against orc raiding parties and occasional undead attacks from the Pillage Woods, pirate attacks are almost unheard of.

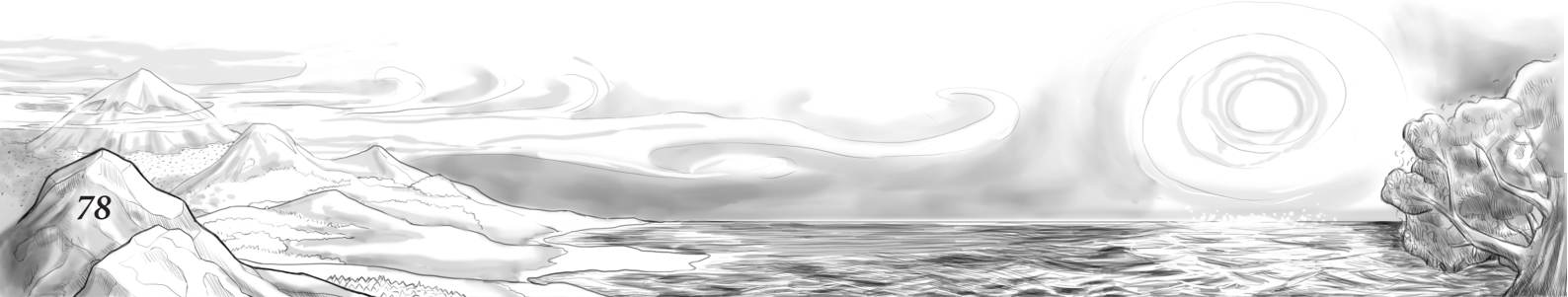
The Broken Dam
The Dam fortress was constructed by dwarf priests of Ilmarinen during the reign of Thalmir the unbreakable, as a base of operations for their expeditions into the Pillage Woods. It soon proved that the cliffs were unstable and one night an earthquake toppled half of the fortress into the dark water. In their hurry to abandon the unstable structure the soldiers left many supplies, which are to this day coveted by fortune-seekers and pirates. Strange howls can be heard during moonlit nights by soldiers patrolling the area, some speak of destrier-sized wolves that move at unnatural speed roaming the plains.

The Molten Woods
For as long as memory dates back, man and dwarf have believed this land to be cursed by Farn, the elemental titan of fire. The stench of death and sulfur lingers here as the tar fields bubble and vomit poisonous gasses. Both the poorest members of society and researchers have been known to wander here. For generations humans have sent those accused of the most terrible crimes into the swamps to be judged by the gods. These lost souls are forced into the bleak landscape, where most drown in tar or burn alive in gas pockets.

High Temple of Atho
The temple of the water god is built between the lakes of Atho and Athodal. It is a beautiful structure completely carved from the rock of the mountain, and rustles with the flow of fresh water. One can hear it course through the walls like blood through a living being. It is highly decorated with fountains and statues. Priests from Athodal maintain the temple and people from Hengytis travel there once each year to place a sacrifice of incense. The building is guarded by holy water spirits that inhabit the radiant pools.

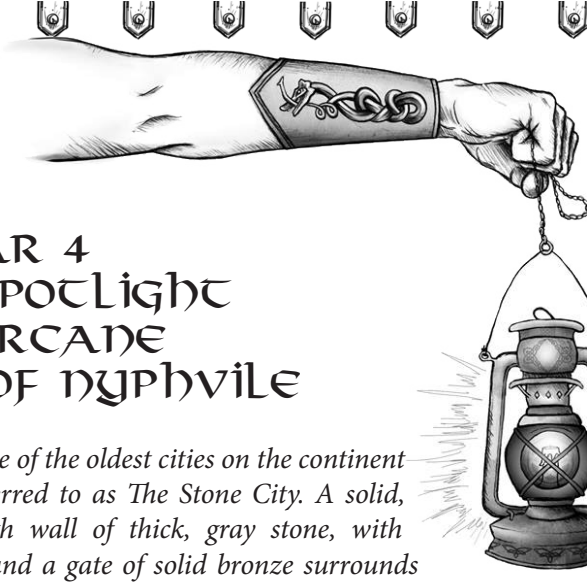
High Temple of Ilmatar
Although most temples of Ilmatar stand close to the heart of their communities, her high temple is the exception. Built by the militant wing of the faith, this fortress offers a safe haven for those that fight for the goddess. Even The Mother sadly understands that some irredeemable evil can be repelled only by violence.

From the outside the temple looks like a bastion of hope. High stone walls, with banners of all recognized






Athoxale
High Temple of Atho
The World Pillar
Swords of Strife
Hengytis
Mielikki's Arms
High Temple of Ilmatar
High Temple of Mielikki
KOTI
Naytalinna
High Temple of Ukko
Nyphvile
Naytalis
LAKE ATHO
Port Adatram
The Dragon Woods
Svarta
Gravel Coast
Surma's Embrace
Hissi's Gate
The Dark Mountains
The Molten Woods
The Searing Rock
Tursas
Sjørd
Ørøk
Fort Matar
The Broken Dam
Kesma
THE HYDRA FJORD



SIDEBAR 4
CITY SPOTLIGHT
THE ARCANE POLIS OF NYPHVILE

Nyphvile is one of the oldest cities on the continent and often referred to as The Stone City. A solid, thirty-foot-high wall of thick, gray stone, with watchtowers and a gate of solid bronze surrounds most of the city. The only exception is the part resting against the mountains. Day and night sentries patrol these walls, vigilantly scanning for intruders. Two great white piers rise out of the blue, clear waters of lake Atho and lead to a broad main street which is home to many buildings of wood and stone; taverns, bars and brothels. At the city center one can find a huge cobbled square, dominated by a statue of Untamo sleeping in a throne, which by day is crowded with cheerful marked stalls and people of all origins. Up against the mountains east of the city, behind a wall of rune-marred stone dotted with animated gargoyles, lies the jewel of Kesma: The Magic District.

History

Through the ages many people have been drawn to the arcane power that lies hidden in the mountains at the center of the continent. Few beings still alive today know exactly how Nyphvile came to be, but what is clear is that the city was built on a place of great arcane significance and that even its first inhabitants were aware of this fact. An ancient people called the extensive cave-system, which to this day crisscrosses the mountain, its home long before man or dwarf lived under roofs.

These were alien folk with strange laws and customs. Some say they were cannibals, others accuse them of using foul, forbidden magic. According to legend they could not stand the light of day and felt at home in the damp darkness of the earth. Using arcane magic, they built great temples to forgotten deities under the mountain. Whether of natural courses, curses or conflict, these creatures eventually disappeared altogether. But the power of the mountains drew in new inhabitants. Ancient elves were the first of the common folk to inhabit the mountains of Nyphvile, and the first to erect a small village at the coast. They were a young people then, ambitious, proud, and aggressive. Their tribes fought endless bloody battles over the village, until it was deemed cursed and was abandoned by most. Those with the time and patience to study the tunnels spread legends of hidden riches. It is believed some elves still live in the depths somewhere.

After rumors of a massive vein of arcane iron, Nyph in the dwarven language, spread in Bakkesat, a cult of dwarves calling themselves the Guardians of Lore mounted a great expedition to the lake. Resistant to magic, but unable to harness its power, they founded a town against the mountain, first calling it Nyphvile. They were the ones who, over time, erected the stone walls, the halls and the great library. The Guardians of Lore opened the city to all schooled in the art of arcane magic, welcoming their expertise in the research. Over the years the city became the center of arcane research.

During the giant wars the city saw an even greater rise in the number of inhabitants, as spellcasters and their families from all over the continent flocked to its walls for protection. Divided over the fate of the city and its role in the war to come the magi united together in eight guilds, each one devoted to a different school of magic. After two of the cities' elders died in a period of a month it was decided that until the end of the war it would be ruled by a council of eight magi and a guardian. With the power of magic so prominent and easily accessible the people of Nyphvile never knew hunger, even when the city came under siege for months until it was eventually freed by a joint force of men, elves and dwarves.

After the war Nyphvile has known nothing but prosperity. Many non-spellcasters were drawn to the city, allowing it to grow to unprecedented proportions. Up to this day the council sits in the great library, from where it rules over the city and its people.

Authority

Nyphvile is the only independent city in Kesma, which means that its inhabitants do not pay fealty to the jarl. Its current rulers, a council of eight wizards and a dwarf guardian, keep the city under strict magical surveillance. The schools, and the guardians, each are power groups in their own right, with leaders, agendas and even an armed force. Each of the wizard schools charges a steep tuition for students, which they use to fund their own guard, as well as to maintain their impressive campus. High taxes are presented to all merchants and business owners. Many people are still drawn to the bustling city of Nyphvile, however, as it is clean and safe.

Nyphvile has its own symbol, a rising star on a field of blue, which shines on the broach of every city guard. Each platoon counts at least a single mage among its ranks, as many incidents that happen are magic related. Laws in Nyphvile

are loosely based on the Wegge. A stone pillar, sometimes referred to as the Arm of Shame, is situated on the western edge of the town square. Thieves and con-artists are locked in tiny cages and dangled from the tower for hours or days after which they are magically branded and expelled from the city. Rapists or murderers are sold to the magic schools as test subjects.

Impression
The streets of Nyphvile are always buzzing with activity. Although many of its inhabitants dress in the robes of mages, a great number commoners have also found their way into the city. Many different banners decorate buildings and stalls and a different language can be heard on every corner. The Magic District attracts strange creatures and people from all over the world. A strong aroma of herbs always hangs in its streets, even in the deep of night, and strange motes of light drift through the alleyways.

Inhabitants
People of all shapes and sizes can be found in Nyphville, although the brunt of its inhabitants are either human, elf or dwarf. The Magic District is home to many gnolls.

Places of Interest

The Arm of Shame
This great stone pillar is situated next to the central market. Those charged with minor crimes are hung from the Arm in tiny cages, displayed for the world to see. It is a popular place among older children, who taunt and laugh, as well as with necromancers that seek to buy the fresh corpses of those that succumb from the punishment.

The Hall of Guardians
Actually, a stone fortress that delves deep into the mountain, the Hall of Guardians expands on the original fortress town, dug by dwarven settlers centuries ago. Only members can enter this inner sanctum, and becoming a member without dwarven blood in your veins is an impossibility. The guardians stock high quality weapons, magic items and have unmatched expertise when it comes to the mountains behind, and passages underneath, the city.

The Library Untamo
Built into the walls of the mountain, this great marble structure is a popular research center to many of the town's magic users. It is widely believed that pronouncing the names of all the tomes it houses would take a man a lifetime and a



~ Sidebar 4: City Spotlight. The arcane polis of Nyphvile ~

half. The upper floor of the library, which houses the council of nine, is forbidden to the public, although the central floors are openly accessible for all those able to pay the entrance fee. The building has many hidden chambers and tunnels, some of which not even the curators have found.

The Schools of Magic

The mage guilds all have their own campus, outfitted with barracks, dormitories and homes of prominent members. Each guild is a powerhouse; a small independent state in its own right. Each school is led by an archmage, who holds a seat on the counsel of nine. Those in positions of leadership are under constant scrutiny, as wizards are generally highly educated and critical individuals. Only the most powerful and respected mages hold their seat for longer than a few years.

All of the schools offer basic services, such as training (for starter, advanced and expert wizards), divination (or non-magical research), enhancement, or personal assistants that can accompany heroes on an adventure. The schools earn something on the side by sponsoring magic item shops around town, who in turn carry their logo and supply them with mundane items. As each school supports only one store at the same time, and their sales increase as they are visited by students and alumni, these honors are coveted.

Although none of the schools will openly admit it, the level of competitiveness is high. Being widely known for their expertise, the arcane has become a cutthroat business, although disputes are usually resolved behind closed doors, in the council chamber or in the back streets of the city. Those seeking a sage's advice, a mercenary mage or any form of magical aid must be aware that their actions are being monitored.

Almost anyone can join a school of magic, but staying in one requires both dedication and compensation. Every member pays a yearly fee equal to their character level for the priviledge of their membership. An inability to pay the fee may lead to dismissal.

Mage schools use their own processes of selection, but all divide their members into tiers called rings. Higher tier members are adored and revered by members of lower tiers. A wizard character that joins a school of magic gains the following boons and responsibilities, depending on their magical prowess and time as a member:

5th Ring: Anyone can join a wizard school and become a 5th Ring member, as long as they are not a member of another school. They are the lowest tier members and have limited access to the novice section of the library wing of their school. 5th ring members are not granted any favors unless they first offer a favor in return. In turn they are expected to attend classes regularly.

4th Ring: First level casters and members with limited formal eductation can become 4th ring. They have full access to the novice section of their library. Not only are they expected to participate in regular classes, also are they encouraged to publish research. They are granted small favors only in return.

3rd Ring: Casters with access to 3rd level spells can become 3rd ring members. They gain access to most of the library, with an exception to rare and dangerous volumes. Small favors will be granted to the member without question, and large favors when a return favor is offered. Not seldom are they sent on school-funded expeditions or offered teaching positions.

2nd Ring: Only wizards with access to 6th level spells or higher and ten years of membership can become 2nd ring members. Members of the 2nd ring are expected to teach and mentor, to publish research and to develop new spells. They are expected to show a keen interest in the politics of the city and to be actively involved. They have access to the entire library and are granted any favor, although at some point compensation will be requested - and other members might come to request favors from them.

1st Ring: Only a handful of wizards become 1st ring members as it requires access to 9th level spells and at least 50 years of membership. They are the political voices of the school and of the city, often taking turns representing their school in the council. A long and arduous testing process is required before a member can become 1st, or 'inner-circle'. They have access to all research materials, even destructive and dangerous ones and they are under constant protection of the school. 1st ring members live in a protected area on the campus grounds. No more than five inner-circle members are active at any time.

countries, radiate fierce deviance. Priests dress in impeccable whites, studded with gold crosses. Within the walls stand stone barracks with tall, wide windows. In the center of the fortress stands the spire; a church of colored glass. Corners, pedestals and doors are all decorated with holy scripture and depictions of Ilmatar.

The high priest of Ilmatar, Ylva the Virtuous, is a slim half-elf with long blonde hair and blue eyes. She served for years in the city watch of Koti, where she made a name for herself as a generous friend of the people. When she married, thirty years ago, she decided to devote all her time to religion and she quickly rose in the militant wing of the church. They saw in her a smart, promising young woman.

Ylva is friendly and reliable but also ambitious. She is always willing to help her fellow man as long it furthers the influence of her goddess. Since her appointment, twenty-five years ago, she raised a new temple temple with aid of the jarl. She lives within the structure with a garrison of soldiers, as well as with her husband and three teenage sons. The old temple still stands at the Koti city center and is by many still considered more important to the faith.

High Temple of Mielikki
This wooden palace that is not constructed from planks, but shaped out of living wood, is the central place of worship for Mielikki, goddess of the woodlands. A group of faithful elf druids maintains the structure and lives in tree homes around it. Powerful forest dwellers, such as treants, fey and unicorns often travel to the outskirts of the village to pay the goddess homage. Surrounding the village are fertile farmlands where they use druidic magic to grow sweet grapes from which elfin wine is distilled, a precious liquor as sweet as honey.

Nilana, the high priestess of Mielikki, is but a hundred years old, very young for an elf. She inherited her position from her mother, who died while protecting the village against a corrupted fire elemental. Nilana very rarely rests and can often be found sleeplessly prowling the forest surrounding the village, pondering the meaning of life.

High Temple of Ukko
The temple of The Father is a hard to reach place, it stands at the center of a remote plateau, yet it still attracts a large following of pilgrims. The main building is carved out of a rocky outcropping, other parts of masonry. A small group of fiercely loyal followers guard the complex and perform services in the wooden heart at its center. Sand from the hills is commonly used to shape high, stained glass windows in most buildings and mosaics on the floors. Pilgrims and monks are harbored within the walls of the sanctum, so in some seasons the temple resembles a small city in its own right, with commerce and government. Outside the walls, in wooden barracks, the temple houses sinners: mourning criminals that regret their deeds and seek penance working in the mines and workshops.

The high priest of Ukko, Pake Mari, is a strict, middle-aged, greyish man with bushy eyebrows, short cropped hair and a smooth cheek. Although he often claims to be a pacifist he encourages his followers to oppose evil by any means necessary. For many years he has put great pressure on those seeking penance at the temple. Pake hopes to turn all evil creatures to the ways of The Father.

Koti
Nicknamed the First Village, Kesma's capitol is believed to be the first true human town. Koti's center is cobbled and built closely together, but the further one walks away from it the broader and more spacious the town gets. It is home to a bustling merchant district bordering the harbor, which attracts buyers and sellers from all over Kesma. Although most of the town's inhabitants are either humans, dwarves, elves or half-bloods, members of other races can earn a handsome wage selling specialist foods.

Mielikki's Arms
These dense woods are the largest on the continent, covering almost the entire country. Elves live here in small families, far from the relative bustle of villages. Great parts of the forest have never even been explored or visited, stories are told of strange plant creatures living in dusty groves.
The Searing Rock Stories told around camp fires at night tell of a great city of dragons was once built on the Searing Rock. Still smoke is seen rising from the mountain, but dragons have not been seen on the dusty treacherous slopes for a long time. The World Pillar This mountain reaches sharp and high, up into the mountains. The top has never been trod on by a living soul and according to legends the last piece of the scale of the world egg rests on it.



Kuoros

City: Narina
Population: Humans (40%), dwarves (30%), halflings (20%), others (10%)
Exports: None
Languages: Vesi (Merma), Metsä (Kesma), Vuori (Vuorilas), Dwarven
Government: The Red King rules Kuoros
Symbol/flag: A skull and a kraken

Appearance
Evil haunts this boggy landscape, dotted by chalky hillocks, brambles and dead trees. Soupy fogs rise from the streams at dusk, lingering over the moors like specters. In the south the sea laps the shore, although the fresh salty never travels inland. The rest of Kuoros has a strange, earthen smell to it, some have compared it to the stink of a wet grave. Mosses and reeds make up most of its natural vegetation, giving it the appearance of a wasteland.

Narina, Kuoros' only settlement, is a strange contradiction to the barrenness of the rest of the country. Five large, well maintained piers stretch from the coast like fingers on a stone hand, offering shelter to those that dare cross the seas. Paved streets, lit by lanterns, a bustling trade district and crenelated stone walls give it the appearance of a modern town. All sorts of common folk flee to this safe harbor, spending the night in the guarded stone taverns. Narina's ruler silently tolerates almost all creatures to shelter in its embrace, lending the town a cosmopolitan feel. Peddlers line the streets, sweet music emanates from the inns, and guards stand on every corner. Only during the cold, moonlit nights, when the musky mists creep from the sea, one is reminded of the dead things that stir just behind the walls, and dead fingers that grasp beneath the babbling waves.

History
The foundations of a pirate town with mercantile interests were laid by the half-dwarf pirate Kuoros in 1192, just over one hundred years ago. Kuoros had been making use of the cover of the mists for years to hide from the jarls and he knew the coast well. When a well-armed merchant vessel offered him a large sum to grand them free passage, the idea dawned on him that he may use his knowledge to gain even greater wealth at lesser risk. He gathered a number of like-minded individuals to further finance the project and ordered fine walls to be constructed by dwarven hirelings. Within years they had turned the rickety outpost into a bastion of civilization. Any trader that declined to moor in Narina became fair game, while those that did were offered protection and hospitality. The concept proved very profitable and the town flourished, even after the demise of Kuoros himself at the blade of the Red King, almost fifty years ago.

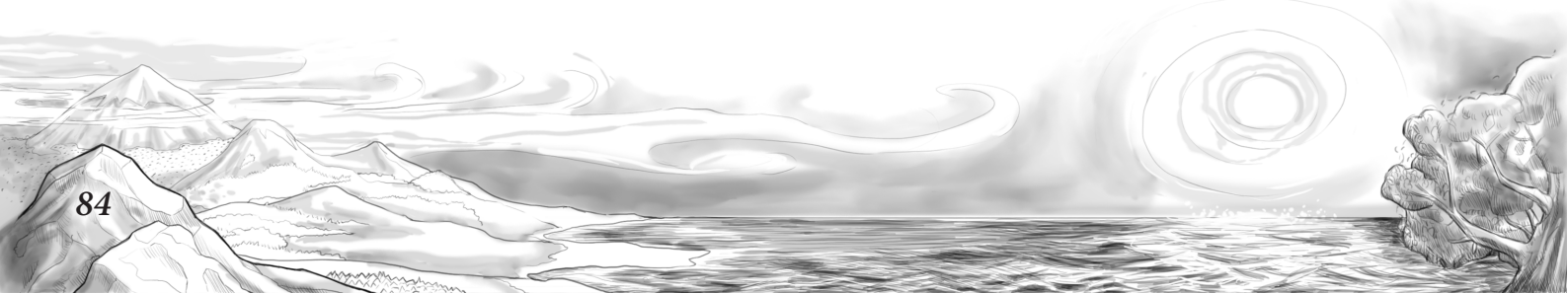
Rulers and Politics
The Red King demands steep tribute from all who use his harbor, which he takes in goods if the merchant is unable to pay in gold or diamonds. He offers additional protection to those with especially valuable goods, as long as they are willing to share some of the loot. Unfortunately, this by no means guarantees the safety of any ship, as rogue pirates, undead attacks and mysterious disappearances are still common. As it takes a lot of man-power to guard the town, only limited resources can be spent on investigating these outside problems. So far, the Red King has not yet shown interest in expanding his operations elsewhere, keeping the brunt of his force in and around the town. He is an elusive character, surrounded by mystery and, if stories are to be believed, in constant war with the Sea King of Tuuli Virisi, who is intend on claiming Narina for himself.

Many monstrous races live within the walls of Narina. People are welcome as long as they do not cause trouble. The Red King does not impose any restricting rules concerning the sale of poison or stolen goods. This makes Narina a haven for smugglers, thieves and others with a general disposition towards the chaotic side of moral.

Places of Interest

The Coast of Claws
Jutting out of the coast of claws are strange, sharp stones, which by all accounts seem to resemble the claws of giant crustaceans. Several caves are home to large, lobster-like creatures, that, according to sailors, attack ships to sacrifice the crew to bizarre effigies hidden deep in their lairs.

The Grizzled Moor
This ancient swamp was once the scene of a large battle between human and orc, a battle history refers to as the







Battle of the Wetlands. Sages believe it announced the end of the dominant presence of man in the south. The blood of warriors still stains the gnarled trees and mossy rocks that rest between the cloudy, weed-infested pools. At night the dead from both sides shamble between the ruins of the human settlements.

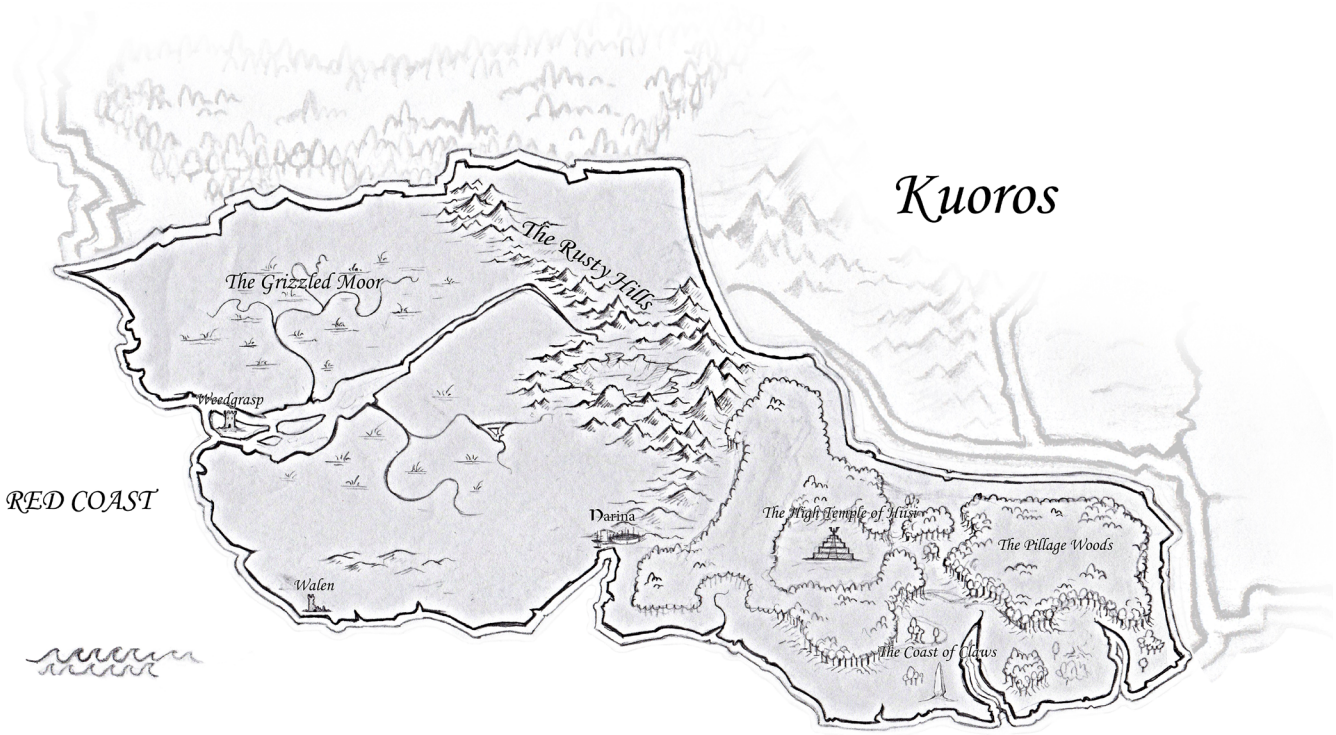
The High Temple of Hiisi
Hidden deep in the impenetrable forest lies a place of great evil; the High Temple to the traitor god himself. Although many great heroes have attempted to destroy the temple once and for all, in a matter of years another wicked soul emerges to rebuild it greater than ever. Hidden deep underground, in a system of caves, the tunnels of the temple rustle strangely, as if they carry the lifeblood of some strange creature.

The Rusty Hills
Iron deposits in these hills make the water that seeps between the stones resemble blood. Inhabitants of Kesma believe the area to be cursed ground. It is widely believed that the commanders of the armies that fought in the Battle of the Wetlands clashed on top of the hills. The humans were crushed by Grim the Black, the orc's dark champion and subsequently defeated. Orc troops drove stakes into the foothills and impaled surviving human soldiers alive. On dark nights sounds of death and terror are carried on the moist breeze.

Walen
An ancient, lost harbor built by an ancient forgotten race of explorers. A ghostly, fog shrouded ruin is all that is left of a once prosperous city. Featureless walls of black marble jut from the coast and a headless statue of immense proportions rises out of the fog. Megaliths covered in strange writing have been found in a semi-circle miles away from the city limits. Mysterious mists travel out to sea for several miles and many ships have disappeared in their embrace. Today people try their best to avoid the area all together, in fear of what dwells there. On moonlit nights the sounds of strange horns announce the presence of something that still calls the city its home.

Weedgrasp
As the swamp was a notorious cesspool of despair a group of valor-driven paladins from the north made a valiant attempt to purge it from evil. The mission was led by Dan the Wightslayer, a paladin of Ilmatar wielding the legendary shield of Life, who ordered a stronghold to be built as a base for their crusade. Many noble warriors and healers joined his effort, but their efforts seemed in vain.

One by one the darkness claimed their souls and they turned to worship death itself. The majority of the paladins decreed Kuoros to be a lost cause and one by one they turned away. All but Dan himself, who unwavering lead the mercenaries and priests in his attempts to claim the lands for goodness. One moonlit night a group of





mercenaries turned on Dan and his few remaining loyal companions. They burned the inner sanctum and claimed the fortress. To this day the haunted ruins remain a haven for smugglers and thieves that refuse to accept the Red King as their leader. An order of evil knights obsessed with death and undeath, who call themselves Surma's Servants, have made part of the ruins their base of command. Occasionally their members venture into the world to find relics sacred to their god or to preach their insane religion.

MERMA

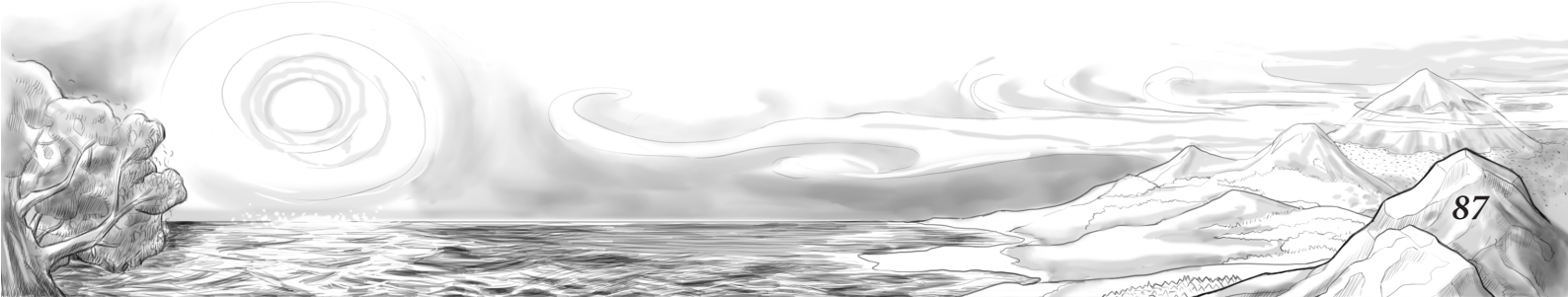
Cities: Suolaar, Aalolaar
Towns: Pupolku, Majavat, Silta, Suisto
Hamlets: Atholaar, Böran, Etelaar, Finvalas, Pholaar, Saporrti, Solmu, Urzo
Population: Humans (60%), halflings (25%), dwarves (10%), others (5%)
Export: Ships, fish, cattle, salt
Languages: Vesi (Merma), Metsä (Kesma), Vuori (Vuorilas), Dwarven
Government: Traditionally two jarls rule Merma, one governs the northern parts and one the southern parts
Symbol/flag: Two waves on a blue background

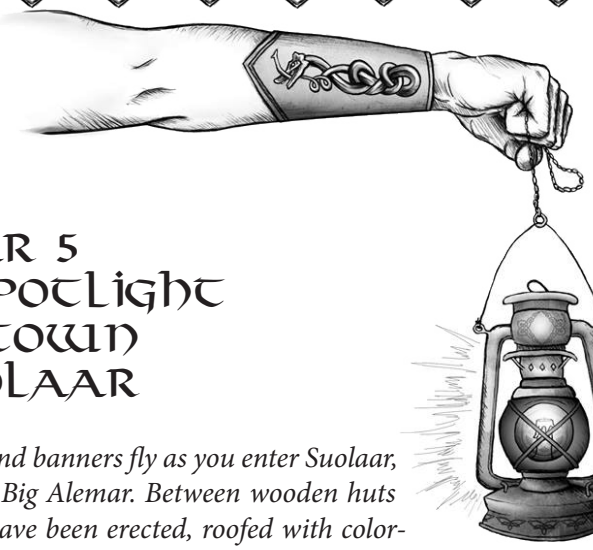
Appearance
Merma, the coastal country, covers the entire western part of Bellög. Its coastal inhabitants live in small fisherman villages by the fjords and the two capitols. A fair number of people live on family farms in the inland as well, where they keep cattle or grow crops to trade. Merma's location, which is relatively far from the inland mountains, makes it a relatively safe country to live. The land is sparsely inhabited, although in no way as rugged as the frontier lands to the north and east. It is a haven for farmers, especially those who keep livestock. Ever since their ancestors came to the shore the people of Merma have lived in a, sometimes uneasy, cooperation with the sea: while its bounty is rich, its dangers are plentiful. Mermans both love and fear the ocean, viewing it as their most powerful ally and worst enemy.

History
Not all men felt equally comfortable surrounded by mountains and woodlands. The call of the sea drew some of them to the coast. Unable to govern such large areas, Vainamoinen gave control over the new country to two brothers, Suuko and Aalo. They again divided the country in twain and since that day twin jarls have ruled Merma. From the coastal towns a lively trade encompassing the entire shore blossomed, starting an age of prosperity for the Mermans which has continued to this very day. Goods from the entire world are bought and sold here, from giant horses of the north, to hobgoblin weaponry of the east. As most travel by boat, there are but few, well maintained, trade routes to the inland.

Rulers and Politics
Hospitality is seen as the most important trait of Mermans: travelers are received with open arms. As a whole the people of Merma have known nothing but prosperity for centuries. The country has a strong economy which is known for quality goods and of impeccable reputation. Their prosperity has lead the people of Merma towards a laissez faire disposition towards tax and law. When a man trades and acts fair, no complicated laws or use of force are deemed necessary. All Merma inhabitants are forced to pay a small tribute at the yearly gatherings, during springtime in the capitols, to honor their jarls. With these proceeds the jarls fund a modest navy to protect traders from pirates, and regiments of personal soldiers who are charged with keeping the peace.

Although there are not enough professional guards to protect every part of the realm all the time, civilians may request support from either of their jarls at any time. For the most part life in Merma is safe and prosperous. Families typically live with their close kin on family farms, on lands called fiefdoms. Fiefdoms are generally separated by natural borders, such as rivers, ravines or rugged hills. Small families are led by elders, which are usually men, while larger families may have small counsels. These men take care of the daily problems of their kinfolk and take responsibility for travelers on their lands. Some take these tasks more seriously than others, however. Leaders of fiefdoms sometimes work together to resolve a shared problem. Each fiefdom is allowed its own set of laws and rules, which tend to vary wildly, and many keep their own gods and protective spirits. This makes Merma a haven for those with extreme or uncommon religious beliefs: anything goes as long as one keeps to himself and respects the peace of the jarls. Atho, the god of the sea, is worshiped by many folks in Merma, although many serve





SIDEBAR 5
CITY SPOTLIGHT
PORT TOWN OF SUOLAAR

Gulls screech and banners fly as you enter Suolaar, city of the jarl Big Alemar. Between wooden huts crude shacks have been erected, roofed with colorful cloth. From these simple stalls the people trade in freshly netted fish, shiny weapons, ceramics and duffel bags full of salt and spices. Between the homes of citizens, the magnificence of the fort stands out: The squat, stone building towers over the city and proudly displays the blue banners of Alemar.

Authority

Alemar is a giant of a man, with red cheeks and long curly hair over a long blonde beard. Commoners whisper that the blood of the giants flows through his veins. More than some, and less than others, he enjoys his power. He proudly displays concern for the prosperity of his people and country. He has a wife, a daughter and two young sons. Although Merma has no standing army Ale makes sure all that stay in his city are safe. A loyal guard of about fifty men patrols the city on a regular basis. They keep a close eye on strangers and tax them heavily for docking permits. A wide range of people can be found in the town, generally anyone who respects the safety of others is welcomed. Ale himself is the highest judge, strict but fair. Typically, he sentences troublemakers to hard labor - he makes them row in his fleet for a few months. He manages to keep the castle dungeons mostly empty. Together with Ulrik of Aalolaar, Alemar maintains a fleet of twenty battleships that patrol the water between the towns. Impression Suolaar is busy from sunrise to nightfall. Children play between the shacks, horses pull carts with trade wares and boats are loaded and unloaded, gulls fight for fish scraps and the banners fly vigorously. Because of its convenient location people from all over the continent come here to sell their goods. Suolaar's traders are a colorful bunch from all walks of life. In the larger streets patrols of two men in leather, with waving blue capes and heavy axes ensure the safety of the public. Alemar's men, called The Corsairs, are well paid and fiercely loyal to their master. Inhabitants The most common inhabitants of Suolaar are humans and halflings. The heavy labor in the harbor attracts dwarves and half-orcs that enjoy the smell of the sea.



Places of Interest

The Dune Fortress
Alemar and his family have lived here for two generations. It is a square, stone fortress with a high tower and blue banners. Fortified stone barracks and stables cover most of its courtyard. Dürir, the king of dwarves, erected it as tribute to Great Alemar's father, Alemar the Blue. The fortress claims one of the continent's largest storage rooms, as well as an immense smithy. In times of trouble the great horns resound from the central tower and Ale's soldiers pour out to defend the city. The storage rooms serve as temporary shelters in these times, which has saved Suolaar's inhabitants from many dangers through the years.

Broadtooth's Shore
This inn is run by a fat little half-orc known as Broadtooth. It may seem a little run down from the outside, but the food is good and the service excellent. The upper hall is divided in three separate sleeping wards, each with hammocks and room for twenty guests. Broadtooth has attracted a loyal group of half-blood guards and halfling servants. The common room is filled with music and laughter during all hours of the day. The owner sleeps on the ground level, while a huge basement is reserved for supplies. Despite the high number of visitors, the town attracts no other establishments seem to last very long, meeting unfortunately accidents such as fires, tainted storage rooms, structural collapses and even one or two nasty cases of death. This has caused many people to question the honesty of Broadtooth, but hard evidence of his guilt has yet to be found. Even if challenged to personal duals to prove his innocence he manages to come out on top every time. Broadtooth's personal bodyguard, a scarred, muscular half-orc named Urgrosh, has received the favor of the gods time and time again, smiting his foes with a strike or two of his poleaxe.

The Chamber of Doors
In some places the boundaries between realities are thin, in some instances so thin that it allows different worlds to shine through. Believed by sages to be an anchor to the Astral plane, this sea-cave just outside the city is a sanctuary for trow priests, who spend their lives trying to make sense of what they see in the briny pools. Obviously very unique and valuable, the only creatures allowed into the cavern are trow - the priests deny access to all other creatures. The Guardian, a powerful entity shaped out of water, attacks all that would defy the word of the clergy. Although the link between the planes is thinnest in the cavern and its surrounding chambers, people throughout the area have been known to experience prophetic dreams and visions from time to time, which makes the town a popular place for gnoll tribes to visit during spring.

The Maze
Suolaar rests in the stony embrace of a great fjord that The Slither has ground out of the stone bedding over the course of millennia. Further south the stone cliffs climb hundreds of feet, before descending into pebble beaches further along the coast. These cliffs are a haven for all kinds of aquatic birds but they also harbor a secret: A network of waterworn tunnels intertwine across all levels of the fjord, from underwater tubes below the frothing surface, to almost vertical shafts that exit at various heights along the cliffside. Man-eating harpies live in the higher tunnels and sirens near the shore lure sailors to their death. The cliffs are also used by pirates to stash treasure and contraband.



the Father and Mother equally well. Every summer a large festival for the sea god is held in one of the capitols which attracts athletes from all nations. Recently the cult of the Seamother seems to have gained popularity among coastal communities as well. Special Rules There are no special rules for adventuring in Merma.

Places of Interest

Martyr's Moat
This ancient, stone fortress was the base for the cruel armies of Loviathar and Hiisi during their war on the common folk. Many prisoners were slain and turned to provisions for their monstrous allies. The souls of the dead still linger here as shadows, as do some of the cunning followers of darkness. Its surrounding lands are avoided by the populace, as most that dare to venture near the fortress tend to disappear forever. Mount Earthfang These ominous spires are dotted with the remains of a once great draconic civilization. Collapsed obsidian structures litter the landscape, like the skeletal corpses of great beasts. Tall pillars, decorated by expert hands lie scattered in shadows, colossal temples rest in the great calderas filled with sour water. Cracked marble walls announce the borders of ruined villages.

The Witch Abbey
The abbey was founded generations ago by a deranged priest of Mielikki, with an insatiable lust for the female sex. He solemnly believed he was the chosen prophet of his goddess, who, he claimed, sent him lustful dreams.

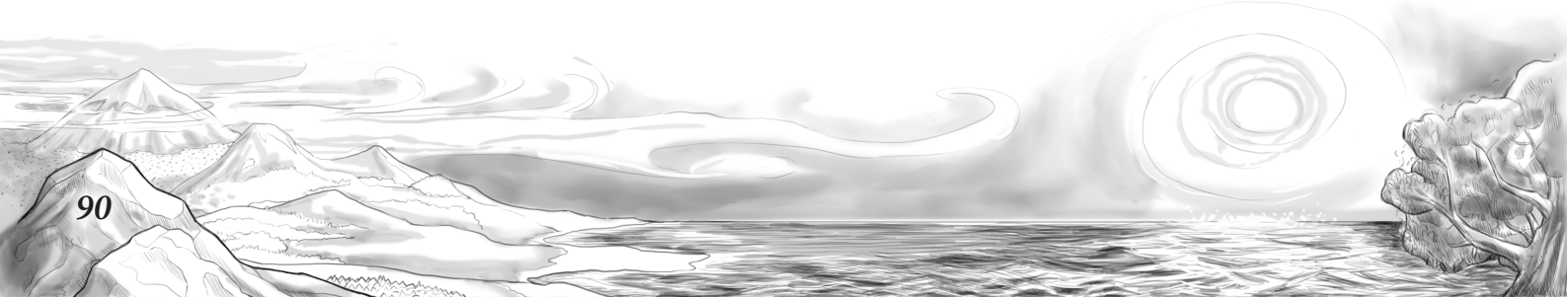
The priest used his family's riches to hire an army of half-orcs to pillage the surrounding countryside, slaying all sinners and taking young women to be purified. The women brought to his domain were tortured and brainwashed into submission as he forced them to serve his goddess. The priest came to be known as Father Folter, and, over the years, his wealth and power increased. Unknown to Father Folter, Mielikki had nothing to do with his evil practices. He was actually fooled by the whispers of Kiputytto, the crone, who had nothing but disgust for his feeble mind. After a reign of several years, she sent a powerful demon to slay and replace the father and rule the monastery on her behalf. To this day Kiputytto is worshiped here by black priestesses, who have a reputation for brewing the most poisonous of substances and a bitter, black moonshine.

The Scale Mountains
The water of the Slither seeps deep through the foothills of this wooded mountain range. According to stories of the people that inhabit the wilderness it was once inhabited by kobolds and dragons, who worshiped a long-forgotten dragon goddess. Whether this is true or not, the mountains remain an obstacle to be reckoned with as steep slopes and treacherous scree make it all but hospitable to travelers.

The Temple of Evil Elements
Two hundred years ago a half-orc priest named Angar founded a temple for the Allfather, the sleeping god of elements. The priest found allies in wicked monsters and thieves who sought refuge within his sanctum. His notoriety and insanity grew with the years as he increased his sacrifices to his distant deity. The new allies he found in the wilderness goaded him into increasingly violent and cruel behavior. In a final attempt to gain the favor of his god he ordered evil dwarves and kobolds to build a massive temple, partly above and partly below ground. It became home to thieves, monsters and other undesirables.

Ten years after the construction of the temple an army of good laid siege on it. A heated battle ensued, but eventually good prevailed and evil was forced to retreat to the underground tunnels beneath the structure. Their army vanished into the darkness of wood and earth. The priest, however, was never found and until now none have dared venture deeper into the dark, afraid of what they might find there.

The Forest of Tears
The clouds that rise from the ocean gather against the tops of the mountains and form a gray veil above the Scale Mountains and the World Pillar. Rains are prevalent here, resulting in the nickname the locals give to it: Forest of Tears. Its slick, moist slopes make for treacherous ground, which is home to all sorts of aberrations. Mountain people keep their doors locked at night and tell stories of people wandering off by themselves in the dead of night, seemingly in a dream state.





The Lost Tower
For some unexplained reason this 500-foot-high black tower howls softly - even on windless days. It is a fossil from before the war between giants and common folk, built by hands unknown. According to the locals it is cursed with dark magic. The source of the enchantment is unknown and likely hidden somewhere inside or below the structure. Adventurers claim they have seen allies go mad after seeing their reflection in its smooth surface. Climbing the walls is nearly impossible, but required to access a small balcony close to the jagged top.




Tuuli Virisi
Merma
Kuoros


Gamleland
Kesma
Sukkō
Vuorilas
Bakkesat



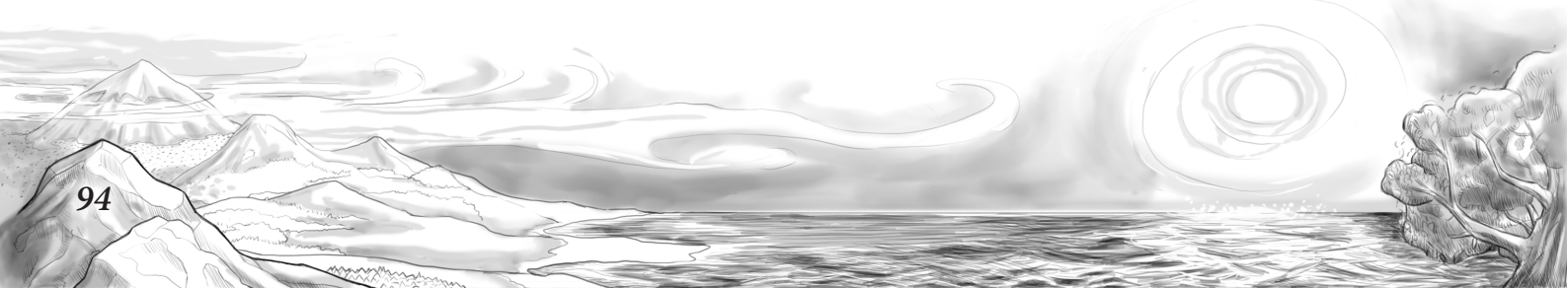
Sukkō

Metropolis: Hōkekkan
City: Meiyan
Towns: Hyōshō, Jiyu, Kuso, Marikiri
Villages: Chi Banku, Bōn Banku, Ricku Banku
Population: Hobgoblins (60%), bugbears (20%), goblins (10%), others (10%)
Exports: Sugar, rice, silver, diamonds
Languages: Bug, Hob, Vuori
Government: The emperor, who rules by the grace of the San, and the shogun, who rules by the grace of the emperor
Symbol/flag: A unity of white, blue and red

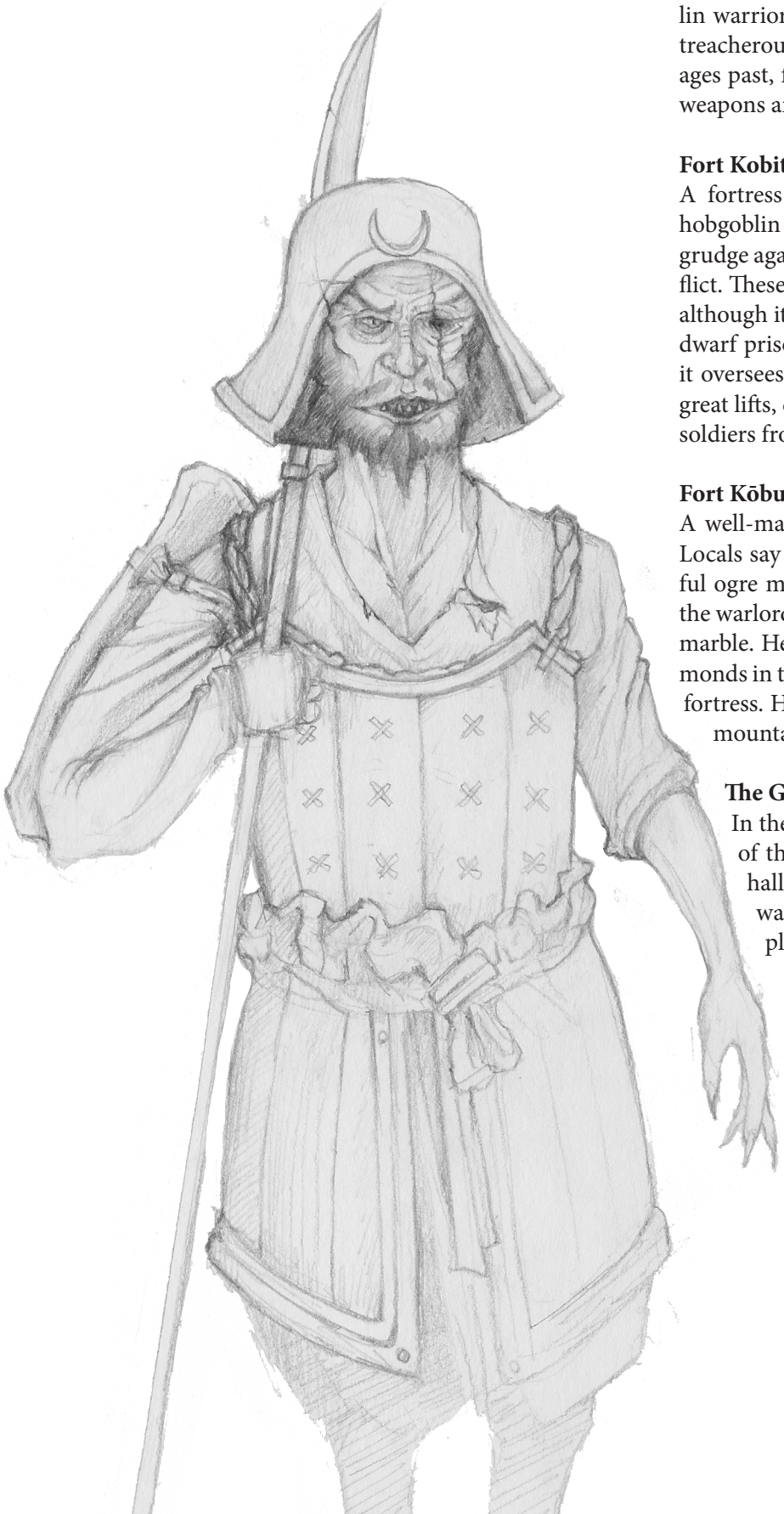
Appearance
Sukkō is situated on the eastern half of the continent, between the Grey Gulf and the Storm Sea. A warmer climate, as well as an abundance of exotic plants, trees and fruits, make hobgoblin lands resemble a lush paradise. It has the added advantage of having access to a number of materials that are hard, or impossible, to find on other parts of the continent. Great forests cover most of the land, apart from the Withered Vein; a barren barrier that slices the land in twain at the center. Although walled off from the rest of the continent by treacherous mountains around the edges, the rest of the Sukkō is mostly covered in glowing hills. Great geysers form the mouths of hot springs that shroud the central forests in a constant mist.

History
Sukkō counts itself among the oldest countries of Bellög. After being rejected by their old gods during the Giant wars, the hobgoblins migrated over the great mountains into the jungles, free of the prejudices of the common folk. Here they found their paradise. After peaceful initial contact the original inhabitants of the great forests, the pacifistic bugbears, were forced into slavery. It quickly became a well-accepted custom and power symbol in hobgoblin society to own bugbear slaves. Villages were plundered, families torn apart, and those that dared to resist were slain in the most inhuman ways, while first being forced to watch their family undergo the same brutality. Not all bugbears have accepted their fate however, and until this day groups of freedom fighters continue to fight their oppressors. Sometimes these bugbears are helped by powerful creatures of good, or by the common people.

Rulers and Politics
Hobgoblin society is founded on honor. They believe that when a fighter dies without honor his soul will never find rest. Intelligence, strength and the ability to think outside the box can make the difference between and successful man or an emperor. Although they historically have a war-like and aggressive culture, the hobgoblins also have a reputation of being honorable but shrewd traders. Hobgoblins pride themselves on making deals that benefit only themselves and their next of kin. They often seem selfish to other races, which explains their reluctance of dealing with them. Many customs, such as the keeping of slaves, the assassination of rivals and the consumption of intelligent creatures are alien to the common folk and often contradict what they believe is right or kind. Inhabitants of Sukkō traditionally have been governed by the emperor. Their current leader is Tjung-Gi, a wise but firm ruler, with little patience for foolishness. From his palace in the capitol he oversees his people while living a life of immeasurable wealth. Although the position of emperor is hereditary, coups are common practice and the family on the throne changes regularly. Betrayal, murder and court intrigue dominate the daily life of an emperor. To ensure the safety of the empire and its inhabitants it is tradition for emperors to appoint a shogun. These powerful warriors are high lords and military commanders who have demonstrated unquestionable loyalty to their liege. It is their duty to control Sukkō's vast army, as well as safeguard the emperor's life. Under this commander are numerous warlords, who support the empire with troops, gold and goods as payment for their family's safety. Warlords may lead a single, or sometimes up to a handful of families. It is considered duty to protect the life of one's servants and all hobgoblin males are expected to train in the art of war. Some male hobgoblins, usually second sons who shall not inherit their father's land, become professional warriors in service of their feudal lords. These are the samurai, fierce fighters who never disobey orders. Only those too poor to own weapons and armor are forced to labor day and night in the streets of towns and villages in the empire. Hobgoblins believe in the San, the holy trinity of gods: Ebisu, Hachiman and Susanowa. Each of these gods has specific dogmas which guide hobgoblin morality and society. They are depicted on numerous statues in each city of note. Apart from their trinity, hobgoblins believe in spirits, wandering souls that hide in all things. This belief finds it roots in bugbear religion.







Places of Interest

Asmond
A dormant volcano that is believed by the common folk to be the lair of a colossal red dragon. Young hobgoblin warriors test their bravery and skill by hiking up the treacherous slopes and by urinating into the caldera. In ages past, fire giants descended into the volcano to forge weapons and armor in its potent fires.

Fort Kobito Kiru
A fortress that stems from the time when dwarf and hobgoblin were at war, although these races still hold a grudge against one another, for now there is no open conflict. These days it is still in use as a border patrol station, although it is whispered that the dark dungeons still hold dwarf prisoners. From its position high atop of the cliffs it oversees all ships that make for hobgoblin lands. Two great lifts, carved to resemble dragon heads lift cargo and soldiers from the harbor to the fortress proper.

Fort Kōbushi
A well-maintained fortress at the border of the empire. Locals say that its warlord is no hobgoblin, but a powerful ogre mage. The mystery is enhanced by the fact that the warlord is never seen without wearing his mask of red marble. He is apparently very wealthy, as the largest diamonds in the world are harvested in the mines around the fortress. His guards are well trained and some ride giant mountain goats.

The Giant Mountains
In the distant past these mountains formed the core of the giant empire and they were dotted by great halls and mighty fortresses ruled by cloud giant warlords. With the fall of their society these great places have crumbled into ramshackle husks. Still the lesser giants wander the mountains in family groups, foraging their meals, sometimes using these ruins as shelters. Half-giants, hill giants and ogres are common in the foothills, but it is said that a few cloud giant communities maintain settlements higher up in the mountains.


Błażej Sygmański 04.10.2013
"Hobgoblin Butcher"





The High Temple of the San
When the first hobgoblin pilgrims conquered the great mountains, the San revealed themselves to their prophet Fusajiro. They ordered the hobgoblins to follow the holy river, and to build their capitol where it entwines with the brine.

During their journey the hobgoblin people faced three trials, one to test their faith in each of their gods. Ibisu taught his people that the strong have the right to rule the weak. Many brave hobgoblins lost their lives as they attacked a bugbear village to imprison women and children as slaves. Yet the bugbears were not spared the yoke. Their expertise and strength made the pilgrimage more bearable. Hachiman tried to divide the people, as some of them had the foolish notion that the bugbears deserved freedom. A second bloody battle ensued, but the true believers, still lead by Fusajiro, came out on top. Many lives were lost that day, but the strong survived. Their last challenge came in the form of a great flood of the river bank, with rains and winds sent by Susanowa. It is generally believed that the last of the wavering unfaithful were washed away into the sea by the tide and that only the truest servants of the San were allowed to make Hōkekkan their permanent home.

The Kingdom of the Dead
It was here the lich lord Joranash who dreamed of a world where there would be no room for death, hatred and misunderstanding. He believed that through the power of necromancy no one would ever have to experience loneliness or loss again. Deep in the inhospitable mountains he experimented, raised the dead and constructed a kingdom of cold stone and darkness. Powerful disciples flocked to his side and they called themselves The Black Kings. Not even Joranash knows when his noble intentions warped into a desire to bring undeath to the people of the world, but The Black Kings have been working tirelessly to overthrow the leaders of Bellög and to end life and society as it is known. The jarl and the emperor believe only rock lies under the mountains, and dismiss Joranash as a children bedtime story, but nothing is further from the truth.

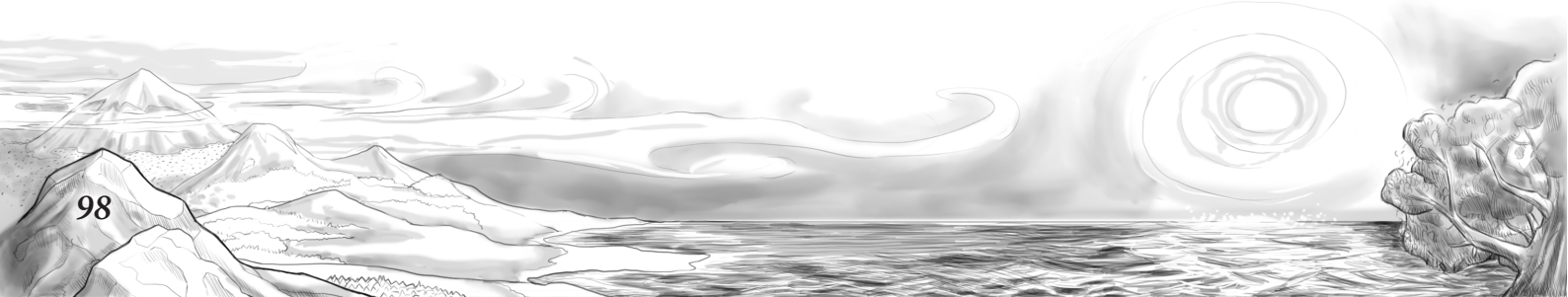
The Ronin Forest
When a samurai warrior disobeys his master, he loses his honor and becomes a Ronin. These warriors no longer have a place in society and are hunted for obvious reasons. With no place to go some seek refuge in these dangerous woods to find the legendary Temple of Wisdom, reclaim their honor and purify themselves of past transgressions.

The Shattered City
A once mighty city of clay that has dried up and broken under the beating heat of the sun. Its streets have long been abandoned, and stories tell of blazing specters haunting them, wailing in the night. The remaining buildings are fragile and prone to explode into rains of razor shards at the slightest touch.

The Spirit Woods
This rain forest takes its name from large numbers of geysers that bellow a constant shroud of mist under the tree lines. It is sacred ground to the bugbear people, many of whom still hide here. These groups of guerrilla warriors resist the hobgoblin rule, effectively using the mists to cover their tracks. They are friendly to outsiders, offering them hospitality and guidance in exchange for weapons or help in their struggle. A shaft in the center of the woods is rumored to lead to the center of the earth. None know for certain, as it is guarded by an aggressive tribe of intelligent apes.

Temple of Wisdom Besides
power, wisdom is a key property of a great warrior. Sometimes a warrior loses his way and disobeys his master, becoming a Ronin. Traditionally these warriors are then shunned by society and doomed to wander the lands as outlaws. Instructed by the god Ibisu a group of monks founded a temple deep in the woods, to be the only sanctuary for these outcasts. Here the fallen warriors pray to find the path to honor. After passing dangerous trials they must finally pray to the San for forgiveness. The ritual of redemption is said to be extremely painful and but few have survived. The ancient stone building is maintained by an order of monks who have taken a vow of silence.

The Withered Vein
Stories about this long dry river bed tell of a primitive, but prosperous, society that once lived there. They are believed to have disobeyed the teaching of great Susanowa, who did not forgive. It is dry, barren land that has not seen water for centuries. Bleached bones are found throughout



the gorge, next to the ruins of clay huts. The molded skins of snake-like humanoids are sometimes found floating in the sea by sailors on a coarse for Kuso.

The Woods of Anashi
The samurai Anashi disappeared centuries ago in the woods to kill a troublesome marauding dragon. The dragon was never seen again, but neither was the samurai. Legend says he still wanders through the trees, looking for a worthy adversary.





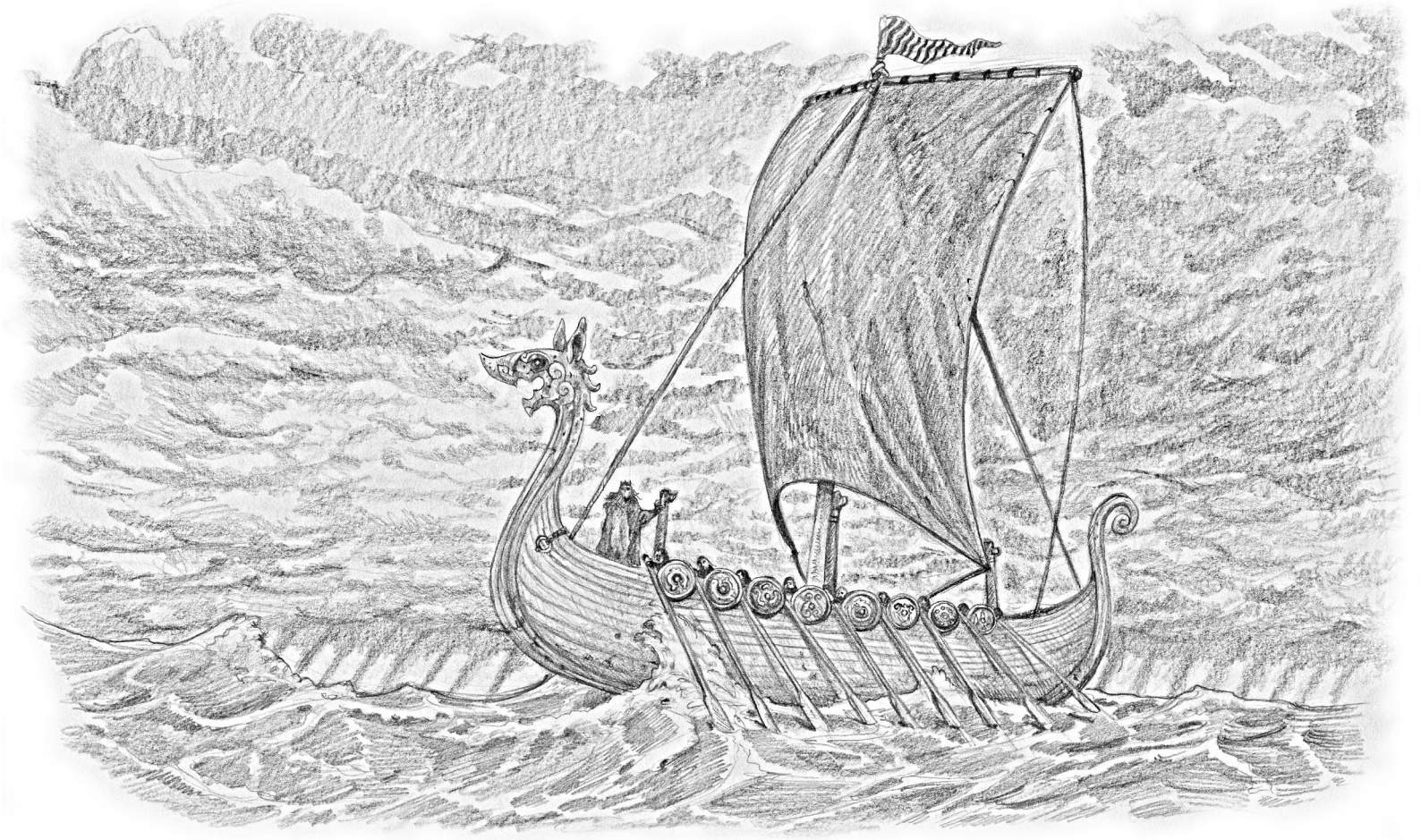
Tuuli Virisi

Town: Uusi Ilmavirta
Hamlets: Murk, Valashaar
Population: Trow (40%), humans (20%), others (40%)
Export: None
Languages: Vesi and many others
Government: Monarchy. The Sea King, a wealthy pirate who hides his face behind a golden mask, rules from a flying ship
Symbol/flag: A wheel on diagonal white and blue waves

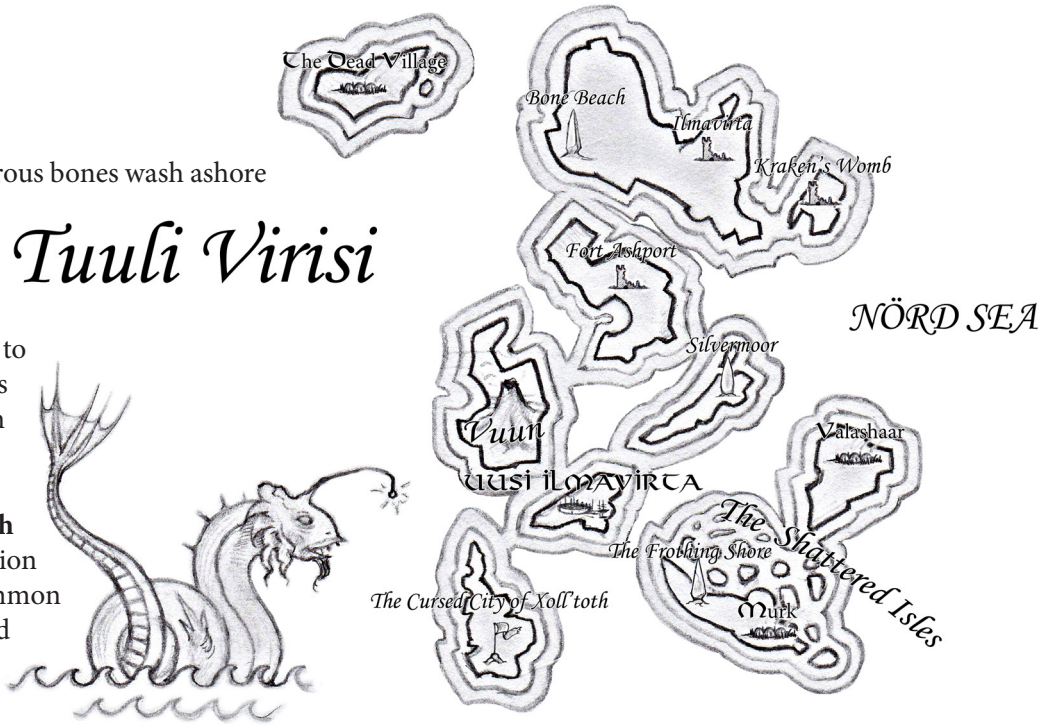
Appearance
Reefs and sudden storms make the sea around the islands of Tuuli Virisi unpredictable and only the most seasoned captains can bring a voyage between the islands to a safe end. Most islands are barren hunks of rock, weathered and sculpted by time and tide. Some of them sport long, yellow grass, and even trees, while others are covered in hills and stacked with huge boulders.

History
For the most part the common folk never bothered to colonize the dangerous, barren shores of the islands. Tuuli Virisi has always been known for being cursed. Only trow had some small colonies hidden between the islands, many of which have long since scattered. Most sensible people turned back when the rocky shores doomed on the horizon, however, this changed when trade between the countries, and the influence of the jarls, increased. Cutthroats flocked to the islands, using the treacherous waters to escape the authorities.

Rulers and Politics
The islands were unofficially claimed as a country by the Sea King, who rules it loosely, but demands tribute from all who sail his waters. The race of the Sea king, as well as his agenda, remain a secret well hidden behind his golden mask. His ship, the Flying Fish, is a legendary vessel that, according to some accounts, floats above the waves instead of on them. As long as the thievery confines itself mostly to this area it is unlikely the jarls will see the need to hunt the pirates down and despite their lack of control over the situation all rulers on the mainland recognize the twin jarls of Merma masters of Tuuli Virisi.



Places of Interest



Bone Beach
During the full moon numerous bones wash ashore on this deserted stretch of beach. The size and shape of the bones seems different during every season. Some alien cults come here to praise their forgotten deities and to build horrid effigies in their honor.

The Cursed City of Xoll'toth
Some believe that a civilization very different from the common folk once ruled Bellög and the existence of this ruined city has often been put forward by sages as evidence for this theory. The ruined city is a strange, deserted place, with seemingly endless streets of black obsidian, decorated with glowing alien runes. It lies part above and part below ground and part of it rests in the murky depths of a lake, although it remains unclear whether or not it was once intended that way. Few explorers have dared to enter the cursed city as none have ever returned from its silent waters.

The Dead Village
These strange ruins lie on a shore choked with seaweed. Although more primitive, some of its structures bare a clear resemblance to those of Xoll'toth. Crooked, ruined huts of wood and bone litter the coast haphazardly, separated by rubble walls, decorated with skulls. Sailors tell stories of the people that lived here, claiming that they used to practice powerful, forbidden magics that eventually became their undoing. The waves still crash on the stones tirelessly, pounding against the foundations of something that could be more evil, and alive, than it at first glance appears to be.

Fort Ashport
Fort Ashport was an attempt by the jarls of ages past to patrol and control the isles - an attempt that ended in terrible bloodshed. A particularly violent eruption of the volcano Vuun showered the castle in smoldering ashes and all soldiers that did not escape in time were burned alive or smothered in a blanket of smoke. It is said that among the ruins the ghosts of those that fell on that night still dwell. None have dared to go back to the ruins since.

The Frothing Shore
Named for the viciousness of the waves that crash on the land, the Frothing Shore is home to many scavengers that feed on the crews of the ships that wash up here. Monstrous crabs and ghouls are but few of the horrid creatures survivors scream about in incoherent ravings.

Ilmavirta
The first great pirate port was attacked and sacked by a fleet of the twin jarls, years ago. Although the town has been searched and pillaged countless times, a great tome of magic, the Book of the Sea Witch, is rumored to remain hidden in the ruins somewhere. Its pebble beach is home to a pride of sea cats, led by an alpha male that is uncommonly large.



Kraken's Womb
Krakens are mythical octopi-like sea monsters that are believed to drag ships to the ocean floor. Their motivation behind this behavior is unknown, although they are still studied vigorously by clerics of Atho. These creatures are born in this giant cavern, half-emerged from the brine. They have an inexplicable compulsion to return to this cave in various stages of their life. During the late autumn, the water of the cave sloshes and foams with the movement of dozens of krakens that return here to mate and lay their eggs. As the young krakens hatch several months later they feed of the carcasses of the krakens that return here to die. The creatures roam the waters around the cave for several years, until they reach maturity and venture into the world to find a place for themselves.

Silvermoor
The Silvermoor is a deserted stretch of land completely covered in tall grass. On rare sunny mornings the dewdrops on the grass in the distance sparkle like coins. At what seems to be the island's exact center, stand four large megalithic stones that are rumored to be a planar gate left behind by an ancient race of travelers.

Vuun
Vuun is an active volcano named after a hot-headed dwarven captain that, according to legend, was the first that dared to look into it. Some claim to have seen long-tailed fire creatures that emerge from it and dance around the volcano to rile it up. Stories of iron ships manned by dwarves with flaming beards that patrol the surrounding seas are disregarded as the ravings of drunk old sailors.

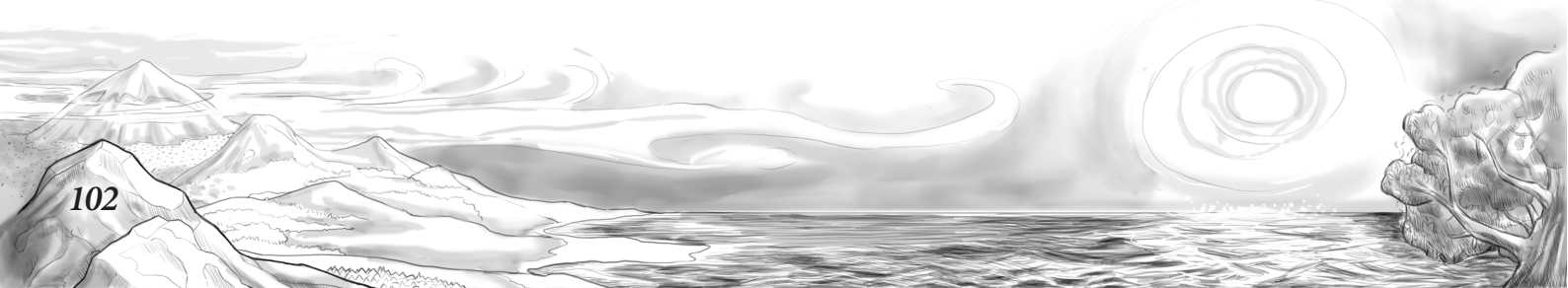
Vuorilas

Town: Taivalinna
Villages: Timtala, Vuorihum
Hamlets: -
Population: Dwarves (40%), humans (40%), gnolls (10%), others (10%)
Exports: (Precious) metals, marble
Languages: Metsä (Kesma), Vuori (Vuorilas), Dwarven
Government: Monarchy. Snorri Ürtiszoon is the current King of the Mountains
Symbol/flag: A snowy mountain on red and white background

Appearance
The mountains of Vuorilas are rough and impenetrable. Avalanches plague travelers and icy winds shred the leaves of the trees. Forested dales are circled by snowy peaks, connected by zigzagging, steep ridges and overgrown chasms and tunnels.

History
For many generations human pioneers felt intimidated by the danger of the peaks and they did not even attempt to explore them. This changed over four hundred years ago, when the family of Ürtis decided to make the climb after a shared prophetic dream. In this dream Vainamoinen and Ilmarinen dueled on the rocky edge of a burning mountain. Swords clashed and the rasps of metal were deafening. At many points it seemed like the duel could go either way, but Ilmarinen finally managed to defeat the hero, smiting him into the fiery depths. After this dream the family gathered and went to see their jarl to discuss their interpretation of the dream: that they should claim the mountain before great harm would come to the realm. The jarl, uninterested in further expanding his people to treacherous territory, agreed on the condition that Ürtis would guard his own land and aid Kesma when needed. The inhabitants of Vuorilas have found immense riches in the mountains, but the earth does not give up its wealth willingly. When pioneers and dwarves came to Kesma in ages past, the orcs and goblins were forced to move to safety of the mountain passes where they mingled with the creatures that lived there. This means that all sorts of half-breeds and monsters hide in the desolation of the Giant Mountains. Attacks of both giants and trolls unfortunately are still common. The White Mountains remain largely unexplored and only very sparsely inhabited by common folk. It is said a blue mage warrior by the name of Kobushi rules a small orc kingdom with an iron fist.

Rulers and Politics
Unlike the other jarls, the King of the Mountains hardly ever makes appearances at meetings, instead he relies on his sons to represent his interests. All clans currently inhabiting Vuorilas can trace their heritage back to Ürtis and his kin, although many lines have become even more muddled with dwarf and orc blood. Only the sons of Ürtis are allowed to lead clans, so many keep detailed records of their heritage. Many of the mountain folk follow a mix of the rules of old Gamle and the Wegge. Currently a sin-





gle heir of Ürtis calls himself the King of the Mountains, while a hand full of kin pay fealty and lead clans of their own.

A large population of orcs and goblins still live in the caverns under the peaks, as well as ferocious bands of giants and trolls. Vuorilas knows no traditional farms, the area is too hostile to support them. Instead families inhabit traditional dwarven fortress homes, close to, and in the mountains. From their fortresses, that also serve as homes and workshops, man and dwarf mine the granite walls together. People only leave their home for good reasons and never without protection. Every home is dependent on itself for protection. Caravans to, and from, Kesma have to be well guarded as traders make appealing targets for bandits and slavers. In Vuorilas a man is judged on physical strength and cunning. Because of their inside knowledge into the mind of orcs and their famous battle prowess half-orc mercenaries are in high demand. Heritage is somewhat of an obsession to most clan chiefs though and one can only get so high up the food chain without being kin.

In Vuorilas man worships The Father, Ukko, and The Mother, Ilmatar, as guardians of home and hearth. It is traditional for each house to have a stone chapel and having a household priest, especially one with powerful divine powers, is a symbol of wealth. Ilmarinen plays a special role in the history of the family of Ürtis as something of a guardian saint.

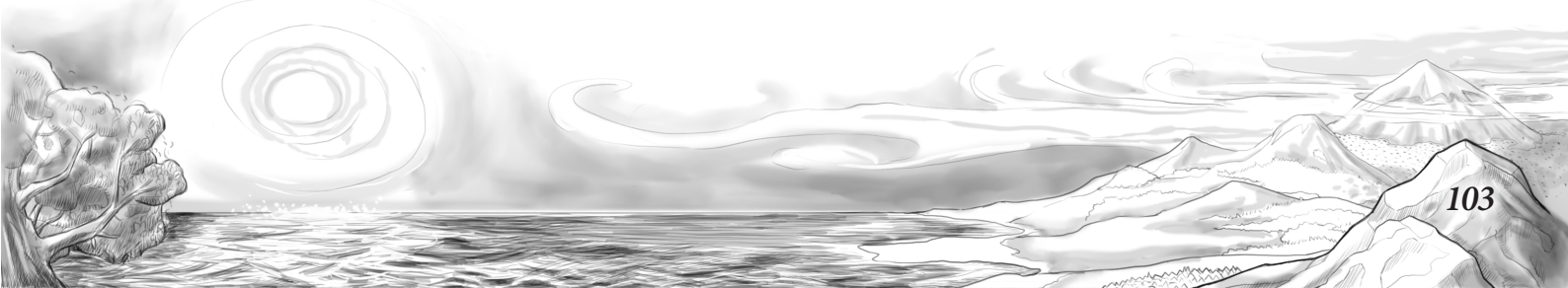
Places of Interest

Debouchment of Honor
At the very end of the treacherous mountain pass called the Gaping Gully lies a fortress founded by dwarf settlers in the Age of Giants. The structure was maintained by Bakkesat's army, called the Stone Fist, and heavily fortified with all manner of siege weapons. As the only readily accessible path between the hobgoblin empire and the lands to the west it has been attacked numerous times, although it managed to withstand every intrusion with the patience and honor only a dwarf can muster. In the end it was nature itself that became the downfall of the great fortress, as a heavy earthquake collapsed part of its outside walls. After the earthquake its defenders abandoned the structure and it has stood quietly, weathering wind, sand and water ever since.

Fort Cørn
After ongoing problems with hobgoblin pirate attacks between Waalderstal and Vuorihum the king decided to build this clifftop fortress. One of his sons, Kris, is its lord and protector. The young prince performs his duty with the fanaticism of the young and is quick to accept anyone that will swear fealty into his army. It is whispered that prisoners are kept in flooded tunnels beneath the fort and forced by guards to fight each other for food and drinking water. The same sources speak of a vicious creature of nightmare and shadow has made the network of caves its home.

The Gaping Gully
A notorious passing between the hobgoblin empire and the realms of men. In ages past the gorge was often used by hobgoblin raiders to attack Kesma, until the jarls built an outpost at the entrance. Through the years the attacks ceased, and the fortress was eventually abandoned. The ground here is strangely barren and the terrain hostile. The rusted ruins howl on stormy nights and only ghosts remain here.

Griffincliff
Long before the family of Ürtis founded the country of Vuorilas, dwarf pioneers roamed the White Peaks looking for promising places to expand their young empire. A young dwarf, named Haakon Haakonsen of Sternroot, spent many years exploring the area from the back of a griffin that he had raised from infancy. He found the mountain winds particularly favorable and decided to raise an outpost on a tall cliff overlooking the splendorous moors and verdant vistas of Mielikki's arms below. He named it named Griffincliff after his faithful beast. The outpost prospered and eventually a tall, slender fortress was constructed with help of elven artists. Adult griffins are an impressive sight to behold but they struggled carry the weight of barding and a heavy armored dwarf warrior. Haakon started a breeding program and successfully raised powerful war griffins. The fortress was destroyed by a white dragon centuries later and subsequently abandoned, but distant cries of wild griffins can be heard by those passing through the mountains.





The King's Wall
A steep cliff that separated the Giant Mountains and Kesma. The family of Ürtis have named it the King's Wall, in their own honor, and to celebrate their role as protectors of the realms of men. These days the wall remains mostly unguarded, however, as the family lacks the proper resources to patrol it.

The White Fort
This fortress of stone and white marble is the military pride of Vuorilas. It has been constructed over the course of almost two hundred years by generations of the Ürtis family. It is commonly believed to be one of the costliest and most time-consuming projects man has ever undertaken. The King and his relatives often stay here during the summer months and sometimes sail the Knife to Waalderstal.

The White Peaks
The tops of these great peaks are capped with eternal snow. The area is vast and treacherous, with steep slopes and avalanches are common. It is rumored that strange creatures inhabit the mountains and that the king pays them a yearly tribute to guarantee the safety of his people. Some link these stories to legends of a kingdom governed by a white dragon queen.





Chapter 6: The Gods and the Universe

Ghan pointed at the constellation right above them, his many bracelets jingling. "Must be a sign. We call her the dwarf." The group had set their camp next to the ruins of a watchtower and Kaari was cooking the rabbits Jahleera had caught earlier while the rest of the group lay on their backs and studied the skies. "We believe that our ancestors are up there. Watching over us. The future is also there, written in the stars." he finished his story with a wide grin and he drank deeply from his flask. Jahleera and Sparrow nodded, both of them looking at the sky in a new way. "My parents told me that the Mother watches over us." the young half-elf explained, while she nibbled on her foraged berries. "She makes and protects life, so she is the most important goddess."

Before we go into detail

Religion plays an important role in the daily lives of the people of the continent. Rituals, sacrifice and prayer accompany both celebration and mourning in an equal amount. The gods in Bellög are as real as any person – a very influential person - and they are known to send their heralds to the material plane to support their followers, or foil the plans of their adversaries. Gods have their home on a number of individual planes, each linked together by the body of the primal god, known as the Allfather, a place sages call the elemental plane or Tuonela. High level characters and gods travel between these planes as easily as a farmer travels to a neighboring village. As players get to know the world of On The Shoulders of Heroes they may wish to take exploration a step further and wander through the multi-verse in a search for new adventures, challenges, foes and allies. This chapter provides all the information the GM needs to present the planes to players and what happens to a mortal when their life on the material plane ends.

Described first in this chapter are the most commonly worshiped deities in Bellög, the pantheon, which consists of gods important the common folk. The handful of neutral deities, the coven of evil gods, and the hobgoblin pantheon, the San, are described later.

Each entry starts with the name of a god, followed by their power, alignment, domains, symbol(s) and weapon of choice. Below this quick reference, the god's physical appearance, personality, common offerings and followers are described in more detail. Sometimes a short prayer or flavor story is included to illustrate either what is important to the deity and its followers.





The Pantheon
Gods of the Common Folk

Atho
Greater god
Alignment: Neutral Good
Portfolio: Air, Travel, Water
Symbols: A ripple in the water, a gull
Favored weapon: Trident
Title of cleric: Skipper
Common greeting: Ahoy!
Common farewell: Safe Sails
Common blessing: May wind and wave guide you and yours

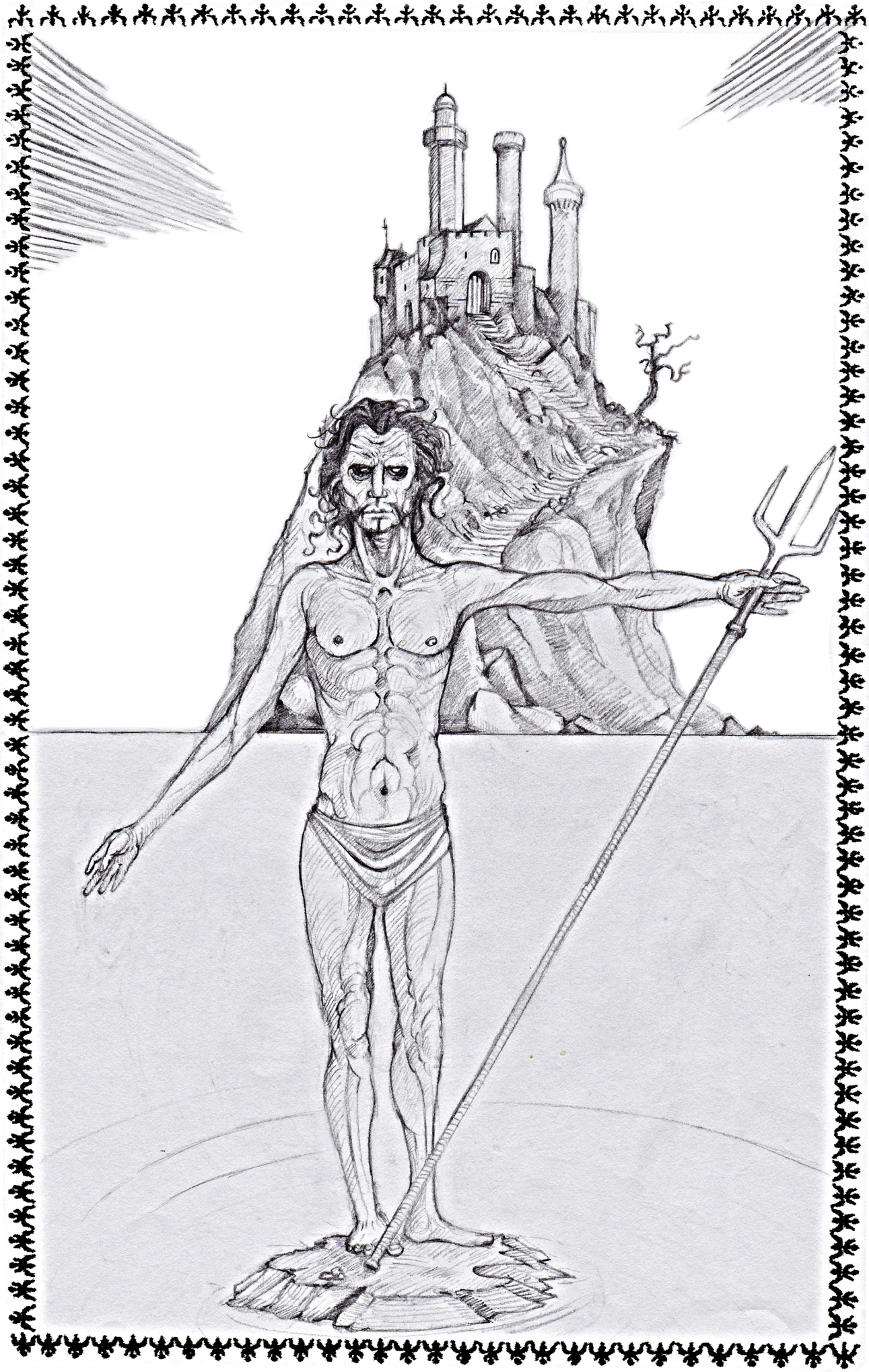
Appearance
Often Atho is depicted as a giant of a man up to his middle in the waves. He has smooth, elegant features and a calm face which betrays nothing. His armament of choice is a glowing trident which he always holds in his hand. Atho's eyes are blue like the sea, his eyebrows like dark clouds on the horizon.

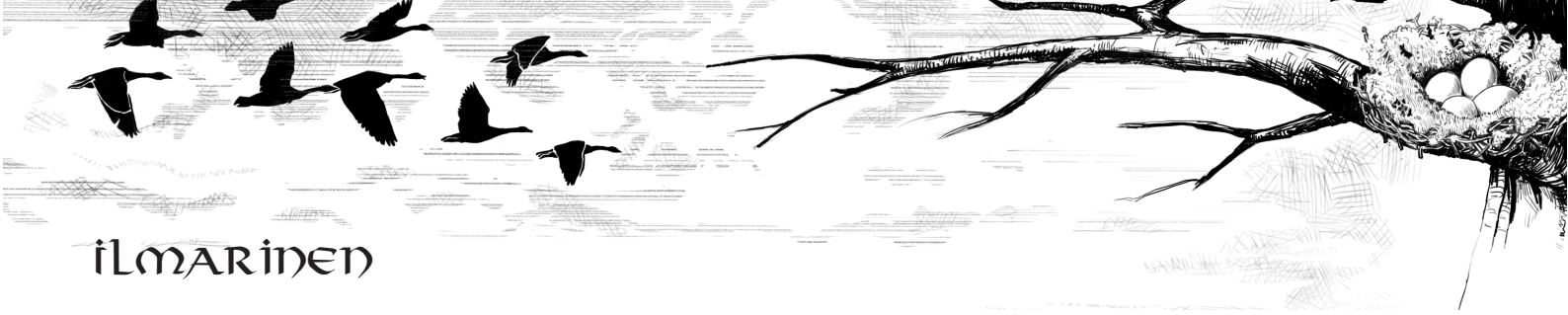
Personality
Although Atho has a good heart he is a distant god. He cares for his followers but also enjoys spending a great deal of his time in solitude. He fully trusts the abilities of his worshipers and only assists them when they seem to be in dire need. Even in those cases he rather sends his herald, the water dwarf, to do his bidding. Not every drowning sailor has Atho's favor, but those that do might find themselves washed up on the shore after a storm, or they might find their sail holding against hurricane winds. Although his clergy follows some rules and regulations common sense is considered to be more important than creeds. Atho has a deep hatred for the corrupting powers of Kiputytto and will never willingly appear in filthy or brackish water, which he considers to be impure.

Offerings
Temples to Atho are always near an underground spring or body of water. These places of worship are elegant, often marble, structures that contain a multitude of pools and basins. Sacred water animals are kept as protectors and the priests take care of them as though they were children. Offerings to Atho are made by pouring small gifts of wine in lakes, or in the surf. Ceremonies are always centered around clean, pure water. When servants of Atho place offerings in water that is not deemed pure enough he will likely punish them.

Followers
Those dependent on either river or sea for their livelihood pray to the sea god for calm waters and a rich bounty. Inhabitants of Merma are usually devoted followers of Atho and so are many sailors and pirates from other lands. Not all of Atho's worshipers live near the sea, however, many of them also live inland, near lakes and rivers. His image can be found on many of the long ships that sail lake Atho, in central Kesma.







Ilmarinen

Greater god
Alignment: Neutral Good
Portfolio: Earth, Fire, Strength
Symbols: A hammer and anvil, a snowy mountain
Favored weapon: Warhammer
Title of cleric: Smith
Common greeting: Warm Welcome
Common farewell: May your blade never dull and your shield never crack
Common blessing: May you find the beauty in strength and the strength in beauty

Appearance
Long and wild as flames glow the long, red hairs of Ilmarinen. He is never seen without his glistening, adamantine full plate and a huge glowing hammer. Usually he appears in the form of a broad dwarf, although he sometimes takes the form of a human as well.

Personality
Ilmarinen is always looking to help his followers in one way or another and expects his clerics to do the same. He is quick to anger, but also quick to forgive and is known for his deep boisterous laugh. Known for a deft hand, he takes great pride in the treasures that he forges. In some ways quite opposite to Atho, the two gods often test their strength against each other in friendly competition. He travels through dwarven lands to test the hearts and courage of his people, granting great gifts of knowledge to those that exceed his expectations.

Offerings
Ilmarinen has no churches but his High Temple in Bakkesat. Many of his clerics are wandering Samaritans. Ilmarinen feels offerings are irrelevant, he would rather see his followers spending their time helping others and spreading his word. The god feels emboldened and proud when his symbol adorns a shield that protects a loyal follower or a weapon that is used to smite a being of great evil.

Followers
Dwarves praise Ilmarinen as their chief deity and creator. When they find themselves in need he sometimes sends them prophetic dreams or visions about the places of sacred weapons that may aid them. He is seen as both god and hero by them and stands next to Ukko at the head of the pantheon. His followers proudly display the hammer and anvil on armor and shields and live by his wisdom. Many bards, smiths and craftsmen worship Ilmarinen for his creativity.

Swing the hammer, heat the blade,
Fold the iron, keep the faith,
Father a song of noble deed,
Sing it to a friend in need,
Let the smithy warm your toes,
Let the fires singe your foes,
Pound the iron while it's hot,
Blow the bellows if it's not,
Swing the hammer, heat the blade,
Fold the iron, keep the faith.
– Traditional Song of the Smithy





Ilmatar, the Mother

Greater goddess
Alignment: Neutral Good
Portfolio: Good, Healing, Protection
Symbols: A naked woman, a cross with rounded ends
Favored weapon: Sap
Title of cleric: Shepherd
Common greeting: Clerics of Ilmatar smile and hold your hands while looking you into the eye
Common farewell: May the gods smile on you
Common blessing: May the Mother keep yours safe and dear

Appearance
Although she is almost as old as the universe itself, Ilmatar does not look a day over thirty. She wears a long dress, woven from sunlight and a diadem in which eight stars shine, one for each of her children.

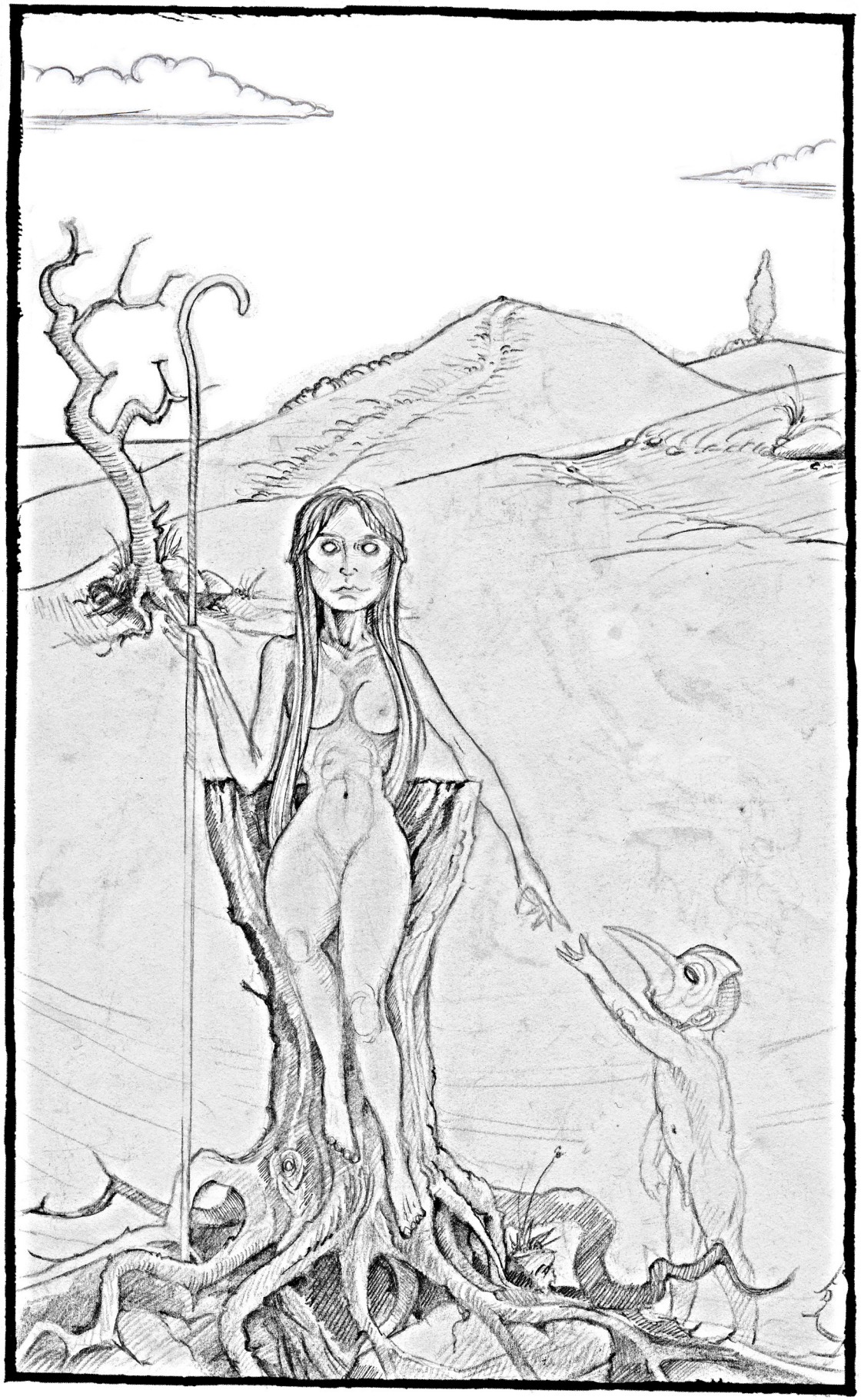
Personality
Ilmatar is the mother of gods and common folk. She is caring, friendly and reliable. The Mother always sees the actions of man and god in the best possible way and sees past mistakes. Her ideology teaches about forgiveness and about treating others the way you wish to be treated. She goes out of her way to ensure the safety of her children and instructs her followers to show kindness to those less fortunate. The church of The Mother leans heavily on tradition and law as means to protect the peace. Although she cares deeply about men and gods alike, she especially loves Ukko, her husband, and Vainamoinen, whom she regards as her favored child.

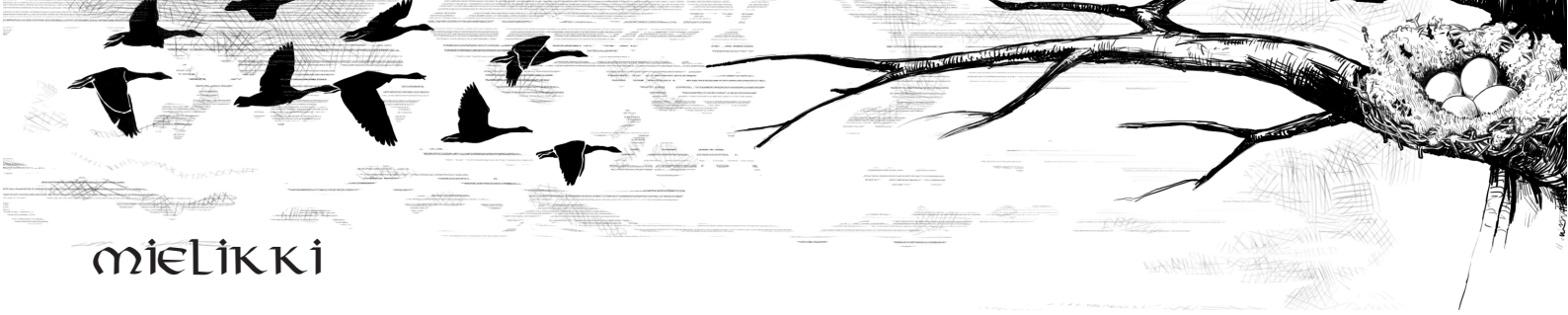
Offerings
Ilmatar asks no offerings from her clerics, only gentleness, mercy and kindness to others. Countless prayers and lullabies are sung in her honor. Young singles pray to the mother to guide them, women pray to The Mother when they are with child and mothers plea for her to bless their children in life and love. It is common for her worshipers to leave tokens of their appreciation, such as some fragrant herbs or a flower, in their windowsill.

Followers
Good humans worship Ilmatar and she has a special place in the heart of all other good creatures. A militant branch of her church has attracted the blades of many noble knights and paladins. Her likeness is often displayed on ornate brooches, arm-guards and cooking utensils.

And the Mother spoke to the woman, in the gentlest of voices, "Hold this child to your bosom, for it is the seed of your womb. Love it with all your heart, care for it, nurture it, and it will repay your work a thousand times over." Then she smiled the gentlest of smiles and kissed the mother's forehead ever so softly. - **Birth of the first child, as told by clerics of The Mother**







Mielikki

Lesser goddess
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Portfolio: Animal, Plant, Sun
Symbols: A tree, a dryad with a curved bow
Favored weapon: Long bow
Title of cleric: Hunt master/mistress
Common greeting: Good day
Common farewell: May nature guide you
Common blessing: May the goddess bless your crops and bounty / May the Huntress guide your arrows

Appearance
Mielikki never appears the same. With the seasons her hair and eyes shift in color, from blue in spring, to green in summer, beige in autumn and pure white in winter. She often appears as a slender young female elf, with braided hair, bare feet and dressed in an armor of woven leaves. On her back she carries a tall, ornate dragonwood bow. Her voice can sound like a warm, gentle breeze in summer or a stern, cold whisper in winter.

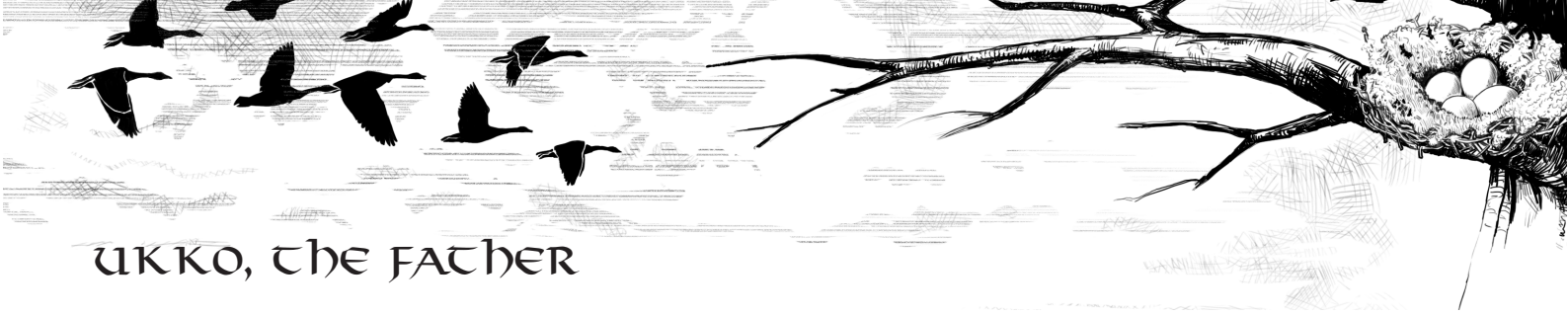
Personality
Mielikki's personality shifts along with her appearance. In summer it is almost impossible to anger her, but in winter her behavior cools, revealing the fickleness, and sometimes harshness, of nature. She cares most for elvenkind, with their deeply rooted love for nature, and adores all other forest creatures with equal passion. She does the right thing when it comes to it, protecting animals and guiding lost children back home, but cares not for the laws of man. Woe those that dare defile her realms. To appease the goddess lumberjacks plant a seed for every tree they fell. Defilers of the forests often find themselves at the mercy of one of Mielikki's heralds: dryads, unicorns and treants.

Offerings
The goddess of the trees despises the sacrifice of living creatures. Seeds are planted and crops watered in her honor. Carving her likeness in wood is customary in the lands around Mielikki's Arms. As people believe that it will appease her, many bows and shields carved in the forest depict her likeness. Men recite prayers and limericks for Mielikki under the cover of the canopy before leaving their farms. Elves perform plays to celebrate the change of seasons, which they dedicate to their goddess.

Followers
All inhabitants of the forest worship Mielikki but elves are especially font of her. Her worshipers typically lean towards a good alignment. They are often druids and rangers or others drawn to the ancient power of nature. She finds faithful servants in those that live at the edge of the wilderness, including guides, trappers and woodsmen.







Ukko, the Father

Greater god
Alignment: Lawful Good
Portfolio: Good, Law, War
Symbols: A burning sword
Favored weapon: Long sword
Title of cleric: Priest
Common greeting: Greet the gods
Common farewell: May our paths cross in faith and friendship
Common blessing: May the Father give you the strength to shield the ones you love

Appearance
The god Ukko is often depicted as a grizzled old man, a powerful warrior, leader and protector. He wears his long, gray hair in braids and sports a trimmed beard. He is clad in a robe woven from night and in battle bears a breastplate that glistens like the stars in the heavens. His ink black cape coils like a living thing and dangles from his neck with a clasp made from moonlight. Liekki, the Flame, a weapon hammered from the first light of the sun by Ilmarinen, shines in his hand.

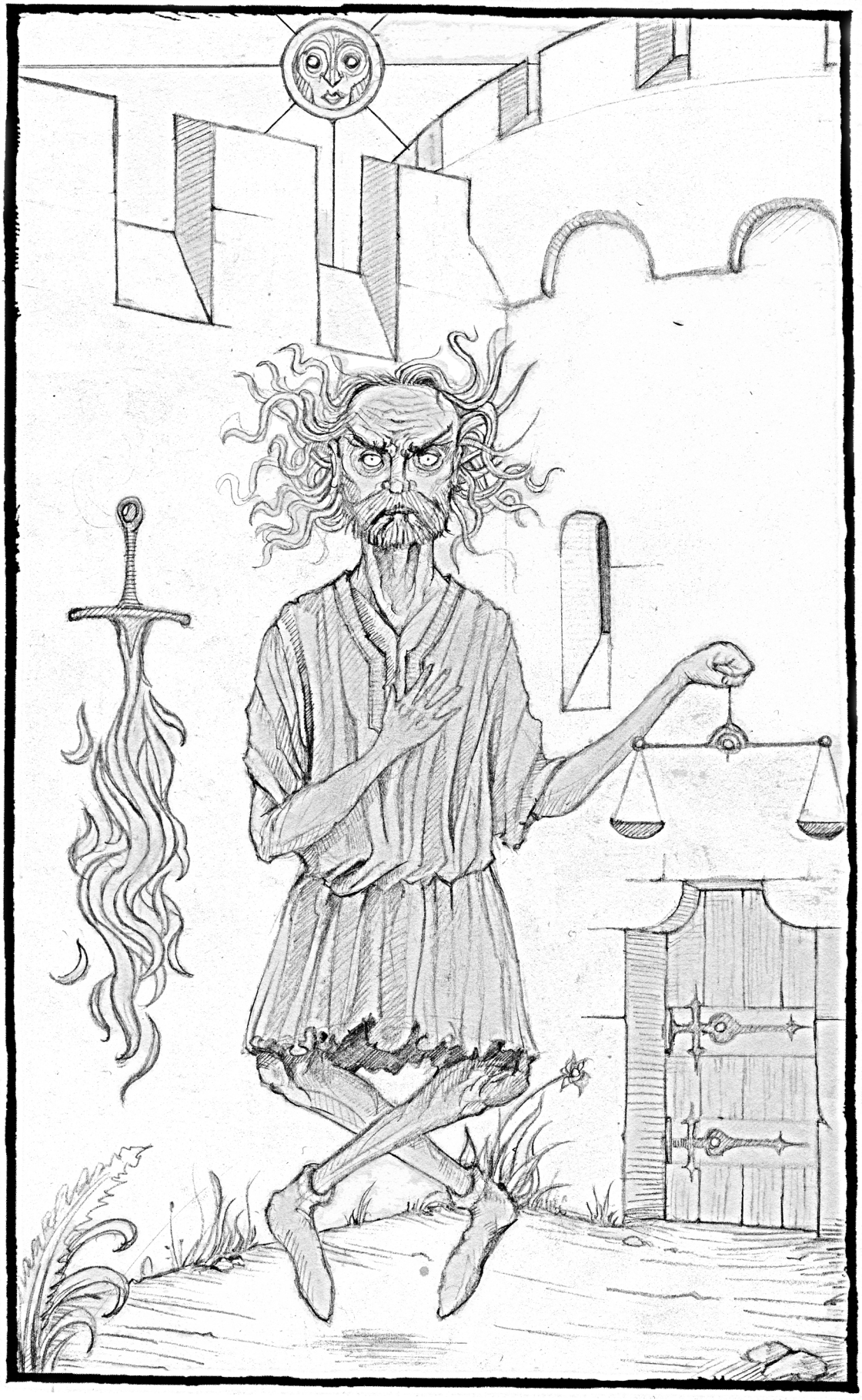
Personality
Ukko is a stern god with a love for all followers of goodness and, to a lesser degree, of law as well. He is convicted that the strong should shelter the weak and that all should abide by his laws. His clerics write his creed in gold on leather scrolls, which they decorate lavishly with symbols of peace and justice. These artifacts are often kept on their person in a gilded, or gem-studded scroll case. Unlike Ilmatar, Ukko is strict and unforgiving. He seldom tires himself with the problems of his followers, trusting his clerics to take responsibility instead. Clerics of the father are trained to excel both in physical combat and diplomacy and many of them take an interest in local law. When a loyal worshiper calls for his aid Ukko may send a walkure to help them, but he seldom appears in person.

Offerings
Offerings to Ukko are set ablaze in pyres. Villages regularly slaughter animals in ceremonies as a tribute to Ukko. Liquor and fine food are common household sacrifices. These gifts are offered at least once each month. Blades are fashioned to resemble his own legendary sword and garments fashioned to imitate his legendary combat attire.

Followers
Ukko is the god of all good creatures, but he is worshiped especially by humans. Half-blood humans also find wisdom and kindness in the teachings of the father. Honorable warriors, such as fighters and paladins, often choose Ukko as their patron.

Work hard, pray daily, forget not your duties and the law. Raise not your voice unless it is to sing my glory. Raise not your arm to your family, unless it is to shield them from harm. Raise your weapon to the foes of the innocent and hate none but the defilers of life. - **Creed of Ukko**







The Coven
The Defilers of Life

Hiisi

Greater god
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Portfolio: Chaos, Evil, Trickery
Symbols: Lightning flashing, the face of a goblin
Favored weapon: Morningstar

Appearance
Who sees Hiisi may see a gray, bald man with a cruel smile, clad in a dark suit of leather armor, covered by a robe woven of spider webs. In his hands he holds a bone staff or a curved sacrificial dagger. He is a trickster more than a warrior and often takes a form that best suits his dark agenda. He crafts intricate disguises and hides his features behind paints and masks, sometimes even living flesh. A master of mind-bending illusion, no facade seems to elaborate for the god of deceit.

Personality
Hiisi is a double-dealing, malicious god who does not bother himself with mortal concerns. The agenda he follows he keeps a secret to all but his most loyal priests and even they are only allowed to learn shreds of the truth. As he has proven over time his goals seem mostly centered around self-enrichment, revenge on the other gods and the corruption of the world. He despises Ukko and Ilmatar as he believes them responsible for his loneliness and misery.

Offerings
Hiisi welcomes all sacrifice; the more the better. Among his favorites are the lives of good, intelligent creatures and children. Treasures for Hiisi are burned in furnaces or pyres. The worship of Hiisi is frowned upon, if not treated with outright hostility by the common folk. Clerics that praise the dark god often pose as followers of a different religion and they hide their places of worship in secret chambers underground, or far into the wilderness. His temples are dank and windowless, with soot stained walls.

Followers
Goblins view Hiisi as their patron god, despite the fact that he more often than not treats his followers like filth. The clergy of Hiisi is often instructed to do his bidding and the god rewards them with the riches of others. Orcs, giants and other malicious creatures also worship Hiisi. Giants owe their existence to Hiisi's evil blood, although only few tribes directly follow his ways. Anyone whose life is driven by hatred and greed finds an understanding patron in the evil god. Hiisi is seldom worshiped by creatures other than evil monsters.





Kiputytto

Lesser goddess
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Portfolio: Death, Plant, Water
Symbols: A black willow
Favored weapon: Sickle

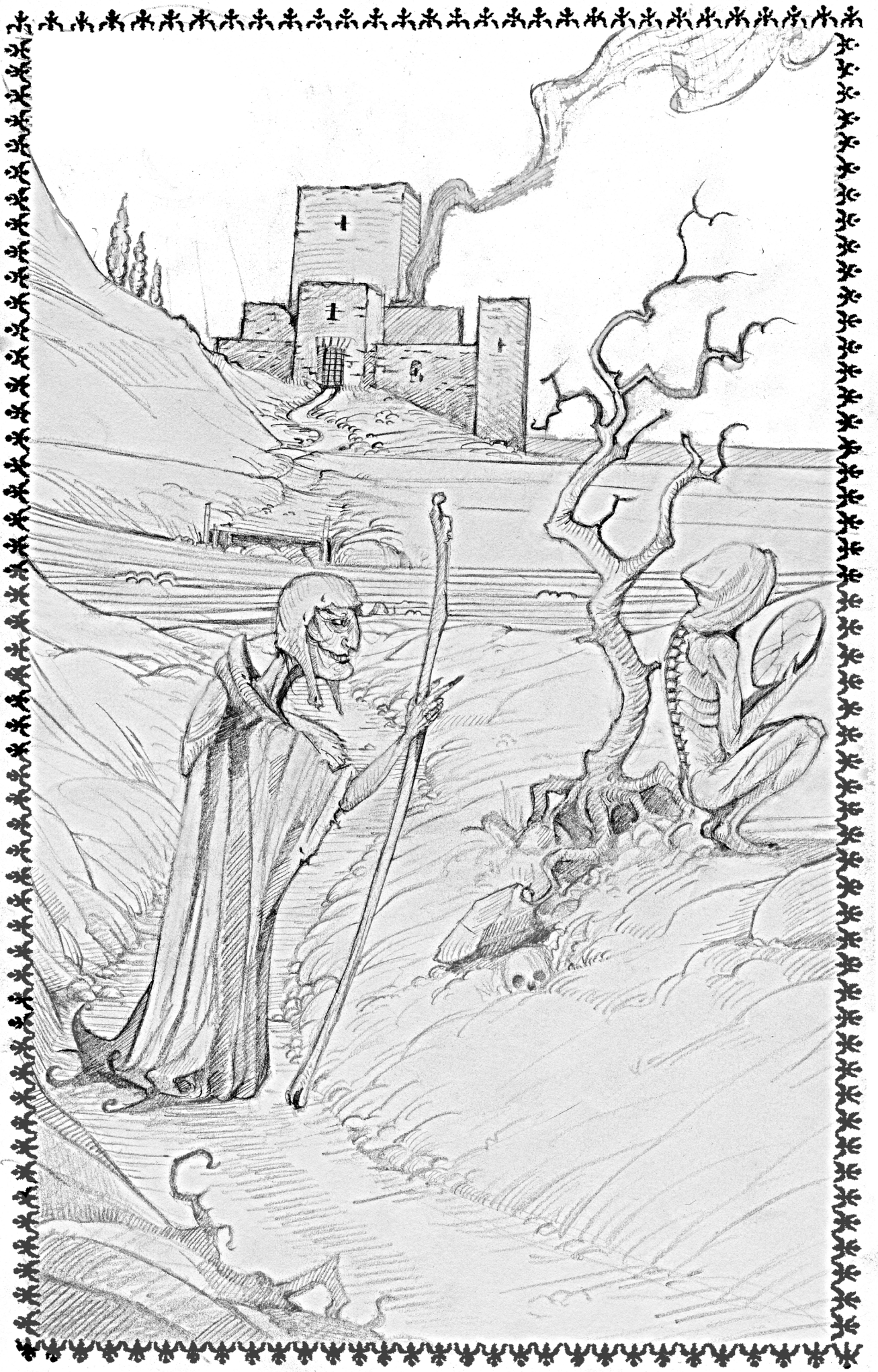
Appearance
Obsidian are the nails and eyes of Kiputytto, the Mother of Decay. She is a stick-thin woman with bony limbs and dead hair, shrouded in a black robe. On her black belt rot the ears and fingers of her enemies and in her right claw-like hand she carries a rusted, razor sharp sickle. Her left hand is nothing but a ragged shard of bone, the remains of what was severed in a battle with Mielikki long ago.

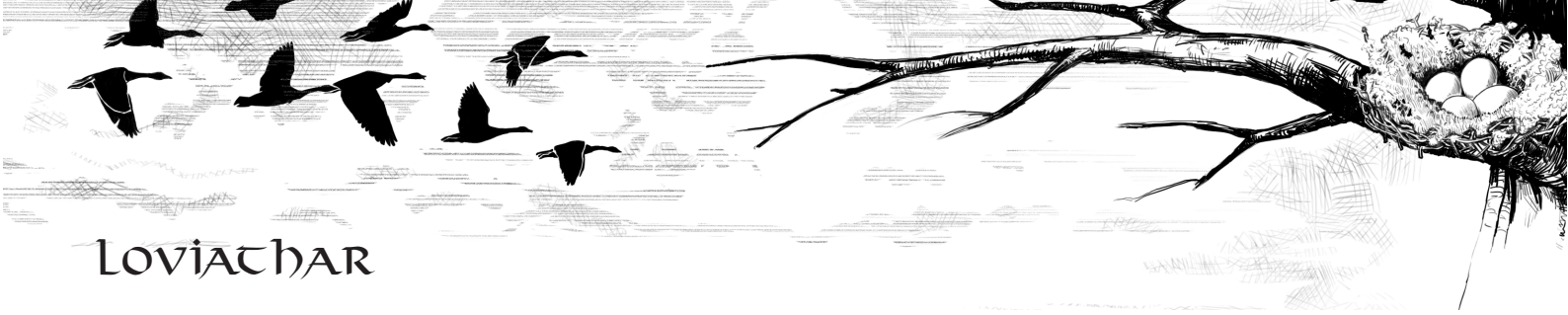
Personality
The heart of the Mother of Decay knows no such things as goodness or love. She is a jealous, paranoid creature whose touch drains away all life. She desperately clings to her own existence and harbors a deep fear that one of the gods will come to destroy her. She has a deep hatred for all things beautiful and blossoming. She despises even her own followers and will never willingly help anyone.

Offerings
Offerings to Kiputytto are always grisly affairs. Intelligent people or animals are trapped in a well until the meat literally starts to fall off their bones. Their rotting corpses are hauled up and the fetid meat is devoured raw by her clerics and monstrous guardians. Followers of Kiputytto without access to such elaborate sacrificial pits paralyze their victims with poisons before dissecting them while they are still alive.

Followers
Witches and poisoners worship the Mother of Decay, as do evil elves. Her followers are few and far between, but cults flock around powerful witches in putrid swamps, stinking sea caves and desecrated flood groves. She has an especially loyal following among monstrous creatures known as hags, who lure young men into their lairs and perform dark sacrificial rituals in attempt to earn her favor.







Loviathar

Greater goddess
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Portfolio: Evil, Law, Strength
Symbols: A white dagger in a slender hand
Favored weapon: Dagger

Appearance
At first glance Loviathar appears to be a beautiful, slim young woman with porcelain skin and long blond hair. On a closer look it becomes apparent that her hands are wrinkled and claw-like, with sharp red nails. Her eyes glow with a seething hatred for everything that lives. She arms herself only with a razor-sharp dagger that dangles from a belt of human skin. Her body is covered by long, elegant white robes, that billow in the arctic wind.

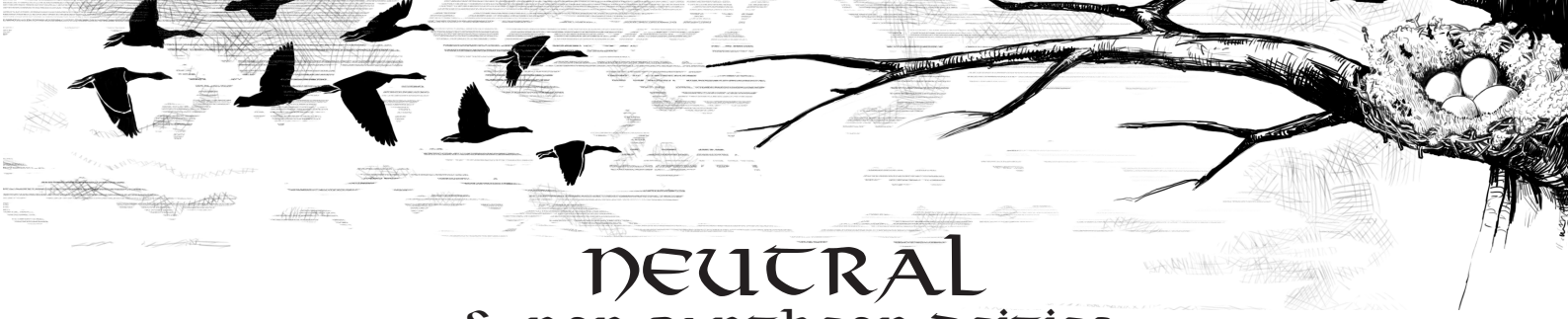
Personality
Loviathar is cold and calculating. She cares for none but herself and those that swear their undying loyalty to her cause. Her children, the cruel orcs, are her essence in flesh. She would never trouble herself to help another out of kindness, but is not too proud to cooperate if it is in her best interest. Loviathar always follows up on her word, although she goes out of her way to formulate agreements in a fashion that stands open to multiple interpretations.

Offerings
Only the cruelest orcs make offerings to Loviathar. Shamans and clerics blood-let and torture intelligent creatures and wait for their blood to freeze on stone altars. Sometimes the face of the goddess appears in the gore to witness the death throes of her victims. Her less dedicated, more civilized, followers slay their dying enemies in her name but these followers are seen by Loviathar as weaklings. Although all sacrifices are accepted, only the bloodiest, cruelest sacrifices will be rewarded. Temples to Loviathar are hidden in icy caves and underground labyrinths.

Followers
Orcs worship Loviathar, but so do evil cults and half-orcs. Her priests dress in impeccable whites and cover their faces in smooth masks. These hide their grins while victims beg for death to take them.







Neutral & non-pantheon deities

The Allfather

Primal god
Alignment: True Neutral
Portfolio: Air, Earth, Fire, Magic, Water
Symbols: Five elements in a ring
Favored weapon: Magic

Appearance
The Allfather is as large as the cosmos itself. A being so gigantic and powerful it cannot be understood by the minds of lesser beings, such as mortals or even gods. A philosopher once described it as all there was, is, and will be at the same time.

Personality
Once, most sages agree, the Allfather was living being, but it has been in a state of torpor for millennia. The essence of the elder god is still active, its primordial mind seeing and hearing everything and nothing at the same time; an awareness that would drive any other being to madness.

Offerings
Although the Allfather is an obscure deity both good and evil, god and mortal, pay homage to it. From the Allfather were born five primeval titans, one for each element, named Eo, Farn, Qrom, Losh and Mayist. These titans formed the seeds for the elements and eventually all life. Often worshipers of the Allfather choose a single element and allow it to devour their sacrifice.

Followers
Only few mortal cults know of the Allfather's existence. It is a mystery why some mortals are able to read the dreams of the Allfather, but most who do are able to channel this power into arcane magic. All creatures with innate magical abilities are believed to have a close connection to the Allfather in one way or another. Its clerics, although exceedingly rare, often pick a single element to symbolize the nature of their link to their deity and a different domain that symbolizes their view of life or goals. These clerics often refer to as one primeval titan as their deity. Sorcerers are sensitive to the Allfather's dreams and catch glimpses of its endless perception. Those driven by their lust for knowledge and attempt to pierce the mind of the god find their mortal minds shattered by sensory overload and are often changed permanently by the experience.



Smiley Matias

Lesser god
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Portfolio: Luck, Travel, Trickery
Symbols: A smile, a clover, a shiny coin
Favored weapon: Short sword
Title of cleric: The clergy of Matias is not organized, so clerics have no conform title
Common greeting: Merry Meet!
Common farewell: May fortune smile on you
Common blessing: Clerics often play a coin trick, or accept a coin as a donation, while uttering this prayer: "A coin for you, a coin for yours and a coin for a Smile"

Appearance
Smiley Matias is a jolly halfling with dark eyes and thick brown hair. He walks barefoot and generally wears a mithral chain shirt as hard as steel but light as a feather. A large coin purse dangles on his belt and in his hand he often holds a honey roasted chicken thigh.

Personality
Matias is a joker that never takes anything too seriously. If he is not resting or eating he often practices his singing or pranks his chosen people, the halflings. There is an equal chance of him helping a hungry family in need or a gambler on a winning streak. Matias does what feels right to him, favoring the bold over the timid. He has a weakness for bards, as he once was one himself. Unlike what many halflings believe Matias does not feel any specific responsibility for their safety or concerns.

Offerings
Halflings offer Matias coins with the hopes of finding wealth and happiness. These are tossed into ponds or wishing wells, especially in the one next to Laughing Matias' own tavern. This large, rickety wooden structure is open every day of the year and always packed with halfling pilgrims. It is run by the great-great grandchildren of Matias and it is located in the village center of Saporrti, in Merma. Every year halflings feast on the last day of winter and children re-enact the story of their brave god. The specifics of this story can be found in chapter 9.

Followers
The halfling people show great adoration for Matias. He is also a patron saint of gamblers, bards and rogues. Some tricksters, especially illusionists, adopt Matias as their favored deity as well.

SURMA

Greater god
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Portfolio: Death, Destruction, Law
Symbols: A shackled, bloody spear
Favored weapon: Long spear
Title of cleric: Elder
Common greeting and farewell: Blood, strength and honor
Common blessing: May your spear strike true

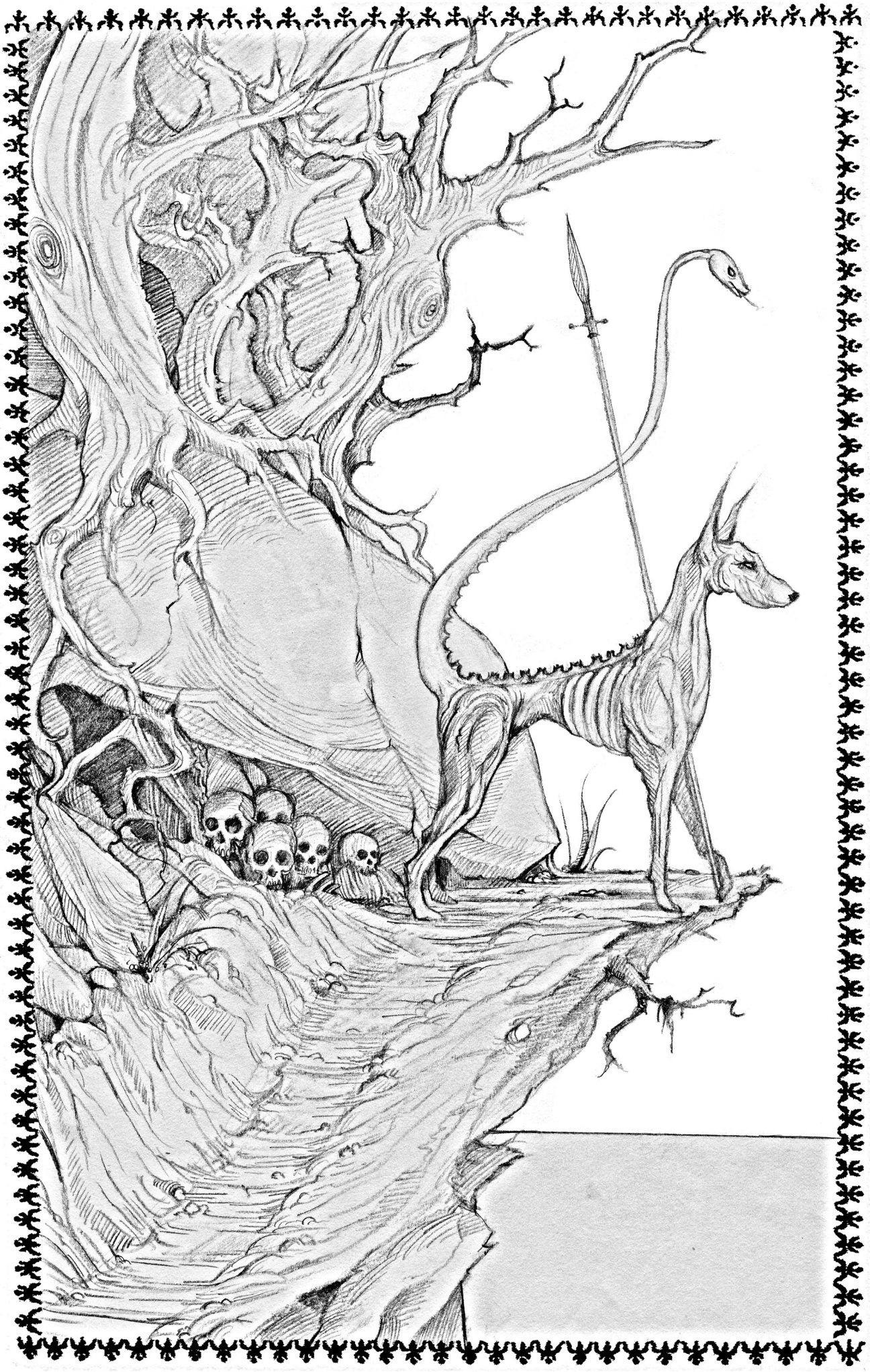
Appearance
Surma often appears in the form of a horrid hound that devours the dead whole on the sites of great battles. His back bulges with sharp spines and his tail ends in the head of a horrid snake. When resting he, curiously enough, often appears as an orc, or half-orc clad in chain.

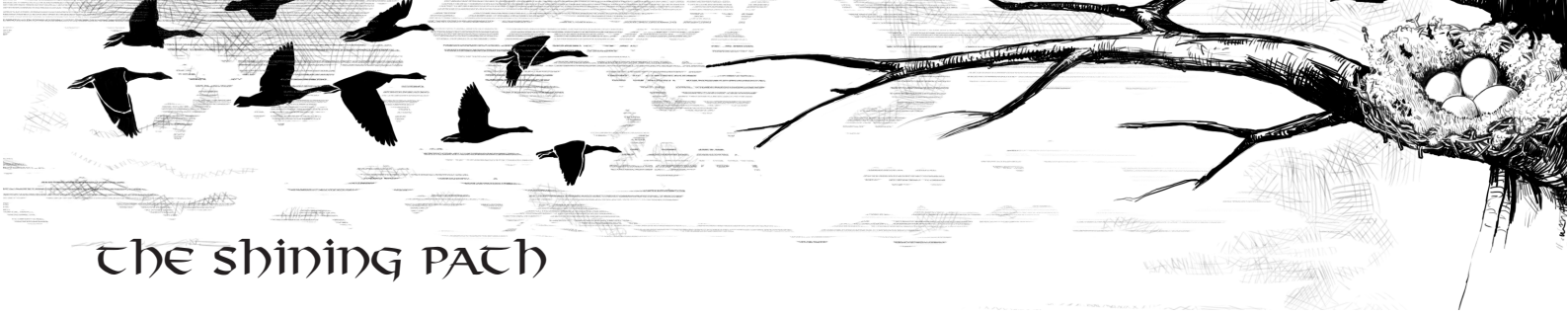
Personality
Unlike some would like to believe, Surma is an apathetic, quiet god, who never interferes in matters of life and death. It's his duty to accept the outcome of conflict. He has no conception of morality and does not side with either good or evil, as long as both sides adhere to his rules. He stalks the steaming battlefields, severing the connection of the soul for those whose time has come. A pragmatic deity, Surma realizes generations must come and go and that the old must make room for the new. He has seen cities rise and fall, conquering armies vanquished, plagues sweeping away villages. Death is a natural conclusion of life. Devouring the dead is a chore to the god and he takes no pleasure in it, neither does it please him to guide their souls to the elemental plane.

Offerings
Animals are slaughtered on the eve of war, their blood used to draw intricate symbols on armor, weapons and on the faces of the warriors. Followers of Surma chant his name while taking the lives of their foes. His wisest clerics speak his name quietly and draw a line through two connected circles to acknowledge the importance of their deity.

Followers
Typically, warmongering clerics, fighters and barbarians tend to worship Surma. These followers are looked down upon by his more dedicated, wise clerics, who have no love for death, but who never go out of their way to avoid conflict. Some monks choose to follow Surma, as they feel a strong connection to his teachings. Temples dedicated to Surma are often but decorated stone altars.







The Shining Path

Lesser deity
Alignment: True Neutral
Portfolio: Knowledge, Luck, Magic
Symbols: A starry sky, the horizon
Favored weapon: Javelin
Title of cleric: Seer
Common greeting: A blessing for every star (in the sky)!
Common farewell: May your steps be sure and fleet
Common blessing: May your path be clear and bountiful

Appearance
The cosmos has no physical, humanoid form. All the stars in the sky, as seen from the world, embody it. Gnolls say it sometimes manifests as an immense gnoll, shaped out of light and darkness, with luminous eyes and a body clad in nebulae.

Personality
The Shining Path is a completely detached deity. Whether it is not aware of the world and its followers, or simply does not care is unknown by even its most dedicated followers. It is unlikely it influences reality in one way or another, although that doesn't stop those that worship it from attributing their actions to their deity.

Offerings
Gnolls whisper the name of the Shining path before they go to sleep and offer prayers and songs to their deity. Holy poems and song are recited at dusk, and well as complicated dances and gestures are performed at feasts. They often stud their dark robes with pieces of bone or gems to make them resemble a moonless night.

Followers
Some wise men and sages are familiar with the Shining Path and study the stars for signs. Gnolls, however, form the lion's share of its followers. They have worshiped the deity for thousands of years, all the way back to when the first nomads viewed the sky from the hilly plains of the north. Gnolls claim can feel its presence and experience the world through it, granting them prophetic powers. Clerics that follow the Shining Path are often wanderers and fortunetellers.





Untamo

Lesser god
Alignment: True Neutral
Portfolio: Air, Knowledge, Magic
Symbols: A feather, a U-symbol, a crescent moon
Favored weapon: Quarterstaff
Title of cleric: (Wise) Teacher
Common greeting: God smiles on you
Common farewell: May we meet again older and wiser
Common blessing: May your dreams bring you wisdom and insight

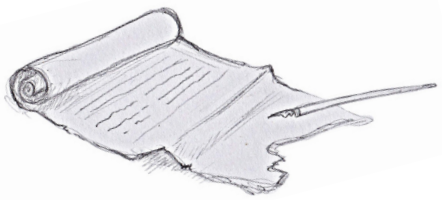
Appearance
The large head of the god of dreams and knowledge is bald and wizened. His wrinkled, relaxed face sometimes bears a thick white mustache. He is often seen wearing loose fitting, blue or purple robes and worn sandals. He is usually depicted as a halfling, elf or human.

Personality
Untamo is a drowsy, apathetic god. He only awakes briefly each decade or so to read from his endless library. In his dreams the god sees and feels almost everything at the same time, although he never uses these omnipotent visions to intervene in the lives of his followers. Untamo's creed regards knowledge as the highest commodity, taking no active stance in matters of good and evil.

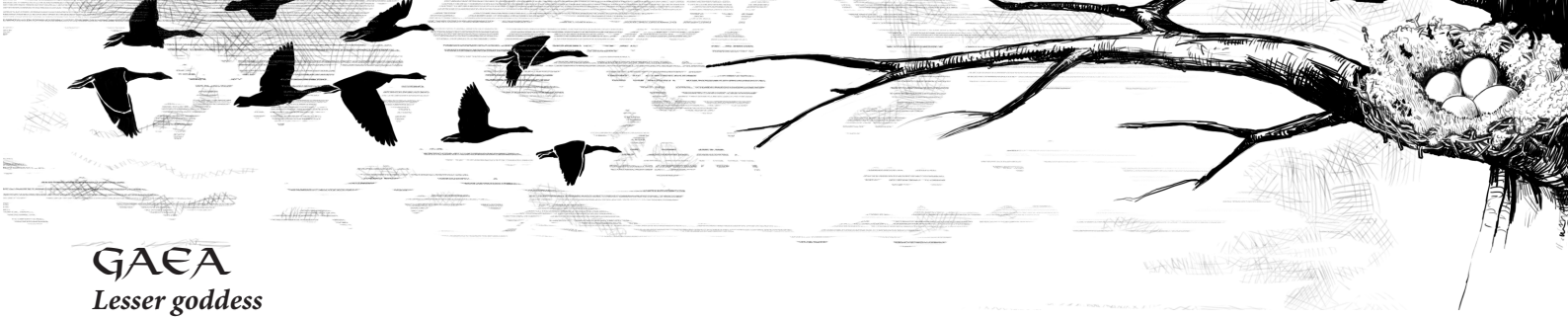
Offerings
Texts are written and audiences lectured in the name and honor of Untamo. His most faithful servants sacrifice cattle to Untamo before they embark on an endeavor of intellectual importance.

Followers
Wizards and those seeking knowledge worship Untamo, which includes sages, fortune-tellers and some monks. Nyphvile regards Untamo as their first official religion. It is also believed that gnolls have a strange connection to the god, although its complicated nature remains a mystery. Every library has a room dedicated to the worship of the god and temples of the clergy of Untamo often resemble libraries in their own right.









Gaea

Lesser goddess
Alignment: True Neutral
Portfolio: Earth, Plant, Sun
Symbols: A snake devouring its own tail
Favored weapon: Spear
Title of cleric: Sprout
Common greeting: Clerics of Gaea stretch out their hands touching all fingers at the same time
Common farewell: We only part to meet again
Common blessing: May the earth keep you safe

Appearance
Gaea is the manifestation of the material plane, her body consists of the very mountains, seas, forests and hills. Those that have seen her in visions and dreams describe a shy, quiet young woman, wrapped in a dress of moss and vines.

Personality
The world does not seem to have an agenda as such. It does seem to care about the well-being of the ecosystem. Some believe earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and other natural disasters are signs of Gaea pushing back civilization. Followers of Gaea typically concern themselves with the preservation of nature and its children, refusing to abide by any set of man-made rules.

Offerings
Offerings to Gaea consist of prayers, the symbolic kissing of earth and a deep respect for all things natural. Her oldest druids sing long, complex prayer-songs, which take whole covens to perform properly. Depending on the rules and beliefs of specific covens the ritual sacrifice of willing creatures might also be involved.

Followers
Gaea is worshiped by druids, who draw power from her spirit. It is rare for characters of other classes to worship her: most are drawn to Mielikki instead as she is a much more widely known goddess with a more comprehensible agenda. Gaea also finds followers among the races that stand closest to nature: bugbears, elves and gnomes.

Louhi

Fallen goddess
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Portfolio: Evil, Knowledge, Magic
Symbols: A black, broken stick or twig
Favored weapon: Quarterstaff

Appearance
Often Louhi appears as a kindly old lady dressed in long dark robes. She has long, gray hair, a bulbous nose and a round stomach. When walking she leans heavily on a gnarled staff.

Personality
Louhi, the witch, is a treacherous and powerful mortal, a fallen deity, to whom even the gods come to for advice. During the Giant wars she taught the secret of creation to Hiisi and Loviathar in exchange for part of their divinity. What





she forgot to include in the deal was the duration of the great gift bestowed upon her. For centuries she used these powers to rule over the other gods, but then the powers suddenly started to wane. She was forced to step down and retreat into relative obscurity. To this day she remains an immortal, evil wizard with an unimaginable knowledge of the universe. Louhi is greedy for knowledge and power and hopes to someday ascend to godhood again. She keeps a close eye on events around the world, hoping to step in and regain some of her precious power.

Offerings
Some evil creatures, unaware of the fall of the witch, make little puppets out of twigs which they burn in her name. Aware that she will need to gather many new followers before her power will return to her, Louhi actively sends emissaries to sway the hearts of cult leaders. She rewards those that follow her with power and wisdom.

Followers
Some giants, evil undead, devils and elementals still pray for Louhi's return. Lately, due to the efforts of Louhi herself, a number of cults have sprouted among the common people as well.

The Seamother

Lesser goddess
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Portfolio: Chaos, Destruction, Water
Symbols: Fish bones, a wiggling tentacle
Favored weapon: Short spear
Title of cleric: Witch
Common greeting: The tide rises
Common farewell: The tide ebbs
Common blessing: May the waves bring you wisdom / May your feet always be wet

Appearance
The Seamother takes the physical form of a strange, alien being, with the slender, beautiful body of a young woman and the head of a horrible lobster. Her left hand is a razor-sharp pincer, the right ends in a tentacle.

Personality
Utterly unpredictable, the actions of the Seamother seem random to mortals. The first day she may order her followers into the water and reward them with a rich bounty, while the second day they are devoured by the waves. When her followers try to make sense of her erratic behavior most of it is explained as her divine wrath.

Offerings
By many the sacrifice of living, intelligent creatures is considered an act of evil, but the Seamother has an unquenchable thirst for blood. Her followers gladly sacrifice each other in attempts to appease the alien deity. In the past trow tribes used to sacrifice prisoners as well as their own, although this practice has been abandoned by the more ' civilized' tribes as it put a strain on diplomatic efforts.

Followers
Alien creatures from the briny depths worship the Seamother. Sages believe the civilizations of the past worshiped and feared her as the head of a pantheon. These days the Trow are her most commonly encountered followers.





The San
Hobgoblin Trinity

Ebisu

Greater god
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Portfolio: Law, Luck, Death
Symbols: A (barbed) whip, a crown of bones
Favored weapon: Whip

Appearance
Ebisu, often revered as Honorable Ebisu, resembles a fat ogre mage, with a spiky black beard and a crown of bones, in ornate robe. The symbol of pain is depicted on his left shoulder and in his right hand he carries a slender whip. Ebisu is often depicted sitting on a massive throne in the clouds.

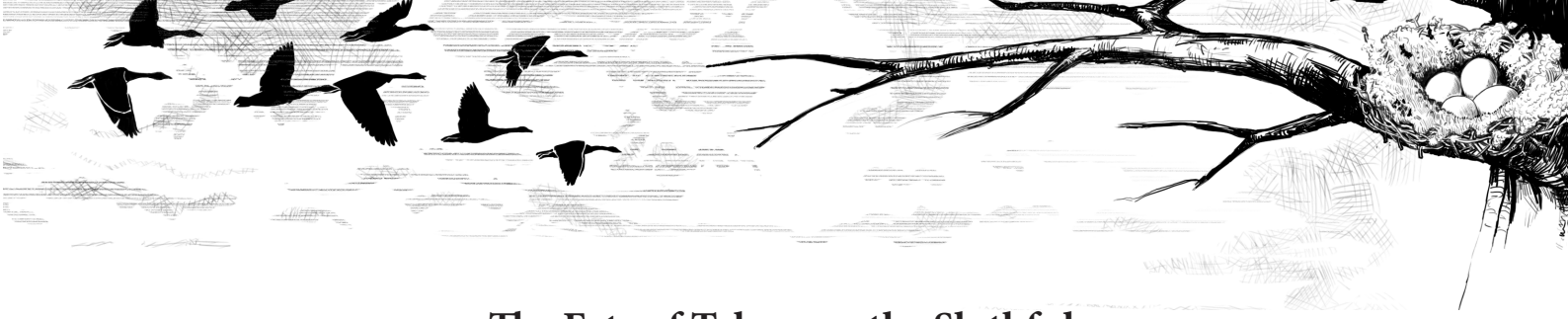
Personality
The ogre god believes there is no other purpose to life other than work. Ebisu believes in slavery, as he thinks the weak should serve the strong. It is said he will reward those that work hard by blessing their endeavors. He is on the other hand a cruel master that does not allow any form of disobedience.

Offerings
A demanding master, Ebisu requires hefty sacrifices from his followers; meager offerings are seen as insults. Being an ogre, Honorable Ebisu revels in the sacrifice of life. Intelligent, weak creatures are among his favorites. Slaves that disobey are disemboweled and their blood burned as the life slowly ebbs out of them. Although Ebisu cares little for them, offerings of livestock are acceptable for those that rather not take intelligent life.

Followers
All hobgoblins are expected to revere the Honorable Ebisu and most do. He is exceptionally popular with the wealthy and slave owners, as they believe Ebisu is the embodiment of all they wish: power and wealth. Clerics of Ebisu must work very hard to appease their god, not working for at least twelve hours a day is considered a sin. He rules over the body and soul of hobgoblins.




"EBISU" - HOBGOBLIN GOD
Tazej Szymański 2013



The Fate of Takenosu the Slothful

A long time ago Honorable Ebisu sat on his fiery throne in the clouds, resting his feet on the great volcano that touches the sky.

From his throne he saw all that happened in the world, and he was less than pleased.

Honorable Ebisu cracked his mighty whip and sent the lazy that lingered back to work.

When Takenosu, a cobbler from Hōkekkan, saw the mighty god sitting there in the sky he became very angry.

"Why is it that you sit and tell me what to do, while I must bend my back to feed my family?" he asked Honorable Ebisu.

And the great god looked at his servant and a great rage befell him and he did not see fit to reply.

The sun went down in the streets of Hōkekkan.

As Takenosu went home after a day's work that night he found his door cracked ajar.

In the house he found his children hacked to pieces, his wife dishonored and strangled.

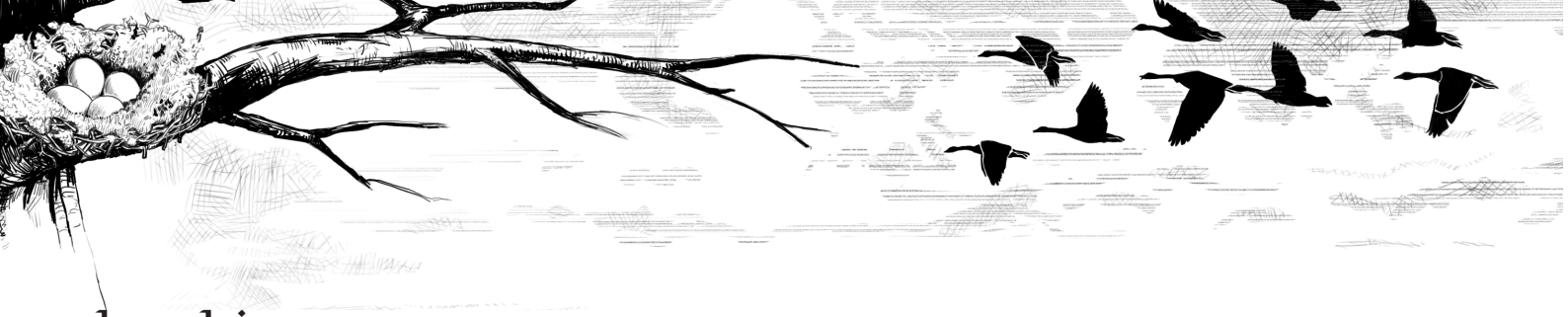
He fell to his knees and prayed.

He screamed to Honorable Ebisu: "Why have you taken my family Lord? I cannot live without them."

And Honorable Ebisu replied: "First you complain that you are tired of caring for your family, so I help you by removing your burden. Now you complain that you cannot live? If you had accepted your fate to begin with, all would be well now."

Takenosu bowed his head and lived in shame for the rest of his long, long life.





hachiman

Greater god
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Portfolio: War, Trickery, Chaos
Symbols: Crossed swords, a spiked helmet
Favored weapon: Katana and wakizashi

Appearance
Hachiman the Shrewd is a gaunt, but muscular, figure, with powerful arm and a demonic hobgoblin face. His eyes resemble fiery pits, his mouth is full of razor sharp teeth. He is clad in a traditional spiked ornate mail armor. In combat he lashes out at his foes with his swords.

Personality
The warrior god despises rules and chains. For this he hates Ebisu and will attack him on sight. Only the thrill of battle can hold his attention. Hachiman believes that both strength of body and keenness of mind are needed to be a great warrior. Always ahead of his enemies, he is a fierce, bloodthirsty god that cares not for the weak.

Offerings
Like all members of the San, Shrewd Hachiman demands sacrifice from his followers. These sacrifices come in the form of traditional combat or in the form of taking the life of a foe.

Followers
All hobgoblins pay homage to the god of war, but fighters and rogues especially are drawn to his teachings. His clerics travel the countryside blessing and joining war bands. Hachiman rules over the heart of hobgoblins.




"HACHIMAN" - Hobgoblin Warlord
Maciej Szymański 2013



The Bloody Satisfaction of Victory

Once lived a mighty dwarf warrior who roamed the Mountains of the Giants who called himself Aleksander the Unkillable.

Every day of his life he took the life of an enemy.

Aleksander had wife, nor children, nor clan, as he had become separated from them at a very young age.

He came to believe he was a daemon that could not be defeated by the hands of mortals.

Every morning he caught and wrung out a goat for milk and meat and every evening he drank the blood of his foes and feasted on their flesh.

His story reached the ears of warriors from Marikiri to Hōkekkan and they traveled to the mountains to challenge Aleksander.

Every duel went the same. Aleksander would draw his ax and then prayed to his false god: "Great Father of the Mountains, Father of dwarves, guide my ax and bring me victory." And every time he prayed, his enemies fell.

Even Shrewd Hachiman heard the tale of this daemon dwarf and he went to the mountains to challenge him himself.

When Hachiman came to mountains, the dwarf was just fighting a challenger, an ogre of formidable bulk, armed with a tree trunk of a weapon.

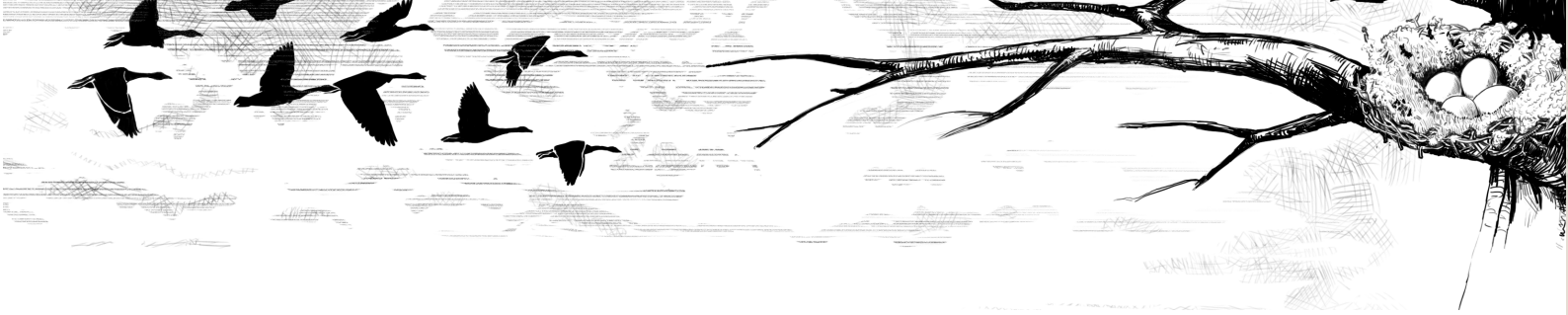
But against the dwarf size mattered not.

As soon as Aleksander finished his prayer his foe fell to his ax.

Hachiman then challenged the dwarf to combat.

As the dwarf started his prayer, Shrewd Hachiman drew his blade and cleaved the dwarf in half with one powerful hew.





SUSANOWA

Greater god
Alignment: True Neutral
Portfolio: Air, Sun, Water
Symbols: A fist in metal gauntlet
Favored weapon: Quarterstaff

Appearance
Susanowa, or Great Susanowa as he is often revered as, resembles a muscular hobgoblin, always surrounded by a shroud of gray storm clouds. His braided hair dances around him in the wind. He hides his face behind a dark, demonic mask. Great Susanowa wields a hooked decorated wooden staff.

Personality
The storm god is sometimes called the Heart of the San. He stands between Ebisu and Hachiman and keeps the balance. He adheres to strict rules, but his different reactions to violations make him unpredictable.

Offerings
Unlike the other members of the San, Great Susanowa accepts offerings great and small. His followers leave food on the edge of the forest, or on the windowsill, or slaughter small animals in attempts to earn his favor. Traditionally coins are tossed in the sea or in lakes in his honor.

Followers
All wise hobgoblins pay homage to Great Susanowa. Especially farmers or those about to travel. Susanowa is a mighty god who created and rules the world.





"SUSANOWA -
HOBGOBLIN STORMGOD



Foolish Emperor Yoshiko and the Fog

When the foolish emperor Yoshiko took his troops to war in the year of dusk, he refused to make a sacrifice for Great Susanowa. His priests came to his throne room and begged him to change his mind.

But the emperor was adamant and said "Why would I sacrifice to Susanowa? The skies are blue and the winds are favorable. Dwarven blood shall be spilled."

And he led his army away into the waters of Knives Bay. For many days the great fleet sailed, until they had nearly crossed the Storm Sea.

Suddenly the sky became dead and windless and the ships came to a halt. The emperor laughed "The wind is but a trifle." and he ordered his slaves to take up the oars and row.

Strange dark clouds gathered over the sea that day, blotting out the light of the sun. The clouds burst and water rained on the emperor's fleet, but he ordered his soldiers to paddle faster.

Hail pummeled his rowers, but he ordered shields to be held over their heads. Lightning flashed through the skies and struck their boats, but the emperor ordered the fires to be doused.

"Is that all you can throw at me?" the foolish emperor asked Great Susanowa.

Later that night a thick blanket of fog gathered around the fleet making it impossible to see. "Ignore the fog," the foolish emperor Yoshiko said "on the morrow we shall feast on the blood of our enemies."

But when the morrow came, only the ship of the emperor had reached the coast, of all other ships there was no sign for they had become lost in the mist.

The foolish emperor would not surrender, to man nor god, and he lead his troops into battle. The dwarves were weak but much greater in number and that day they carried the heads of the foolish emperor and his soldier back to their caves.





Gods of Bellög

Pantheon (Gods commonly worshipped by the common folk)

Name (Alignment)	*Portfolio*	*Description*
Atho (NG)	Air, Travel, Water	God of the seas
Ilmarinen (NG)	Earth, Fire, Strength	God of smiths and dwarves
Ilmatar (NG)	Good, Healing, Protection	Goddess of humans and love
Mielikki (CG)	Animal, Plant, Sun	Goddess of the hunt
Ukko (LG)	Good, Law, War	Father of gods and good creatures

Coven (Evil deities that oppose the common folk and their pantheon)

Hiisi (CE)	Chaos, Evil, Trickery	God of lies and goblins
Kiputytto (NE)	Death, Plant, Water	Goddess of decay
Loviathar (LE)	Evil, Law, Strength	Goddess of orcs and cold

The San (Deities venerated by the hobgoblins and others that inhabit their lands)

Ebisu (LN)	Law, Luck, Death	God of power and wealth
Hachiman (CN)	Chaos, Trickery, War	God of war and mischief
Susanowa (N)	Air, Sun, Water	God of balance, sun and storm

Unaligned (Gods that do not often align themselves with either good or evil)

The Allfather (N)	All elements and Magic	Primal god and creator of the cosmos
Smiley Matias (CG)	Luck, Travel, Trickery	God of luck and halflings
Surma (LN)	Death, Destruction, Law	God of death and battle
The Shining Path (N)	Knowledge, Luck, Magic	Incarnation of the sky, god of gnolls
Untamo (N)	Air, Knowledge, Magic	God of dreams, knowledge and wisdom
Gaea (N)	Earth, Plant, Sun	Incarnation of the earth, goddess of druids
Louhi (NE)	Evil, Knowledge, Magic	Goddess of forbidden knowledge
The Seamother (CN)	Chaos, Destruction, Water	Goddess of the sea and trow





Death and the Afterlife

On Bellög it is traditionally believed that the afterlife starts with a journey of the spirit, or soul. The soul is made up of two parts: Henki and Itse. These entities are opposites in alignment and intention. Henki brings warmth and life. Itse is but a semblance of life - it is thoroughly evil and insane. Yet these two parts exist on different planes are tethered together by a single thread. Henki is native to the material plane, and Itse is bound to the plane of shadow. Because these parts of a being are intertwined they are able to sense each other effortlessly.

When life on the material plane ends the Henki is freed and appears in the elemental plane (Tuonela). From here the soul must find the way to the gate of the afterlife. At the same time the Itse is freed and sometimes journeys to another plane to cause mischief. Every god controls a realm that connects to the elemental plane. When a follower of a god dies he is instinctively drawn to the realm of his god and must travel there by himself, overcoming great obstacles. Priests are often aided by powerful servants of their gods, while less devote individuals might be tricked into eternal servitude by powerful outsiders or evil deities.

Elemental plane (Tuonela)

A universe shaped from the body and soul of The Allfather where swirling vortexes, maelstroms of flame and jets of earth and water crisscross and carry islands formed of different elements. This is where the Henki part of the souls of the dead go when their life on the material plane ends.

Optional Rule: Elemental Resonance

Every floating landmass is connected to one of the elements. Whilst in contact with a floating island, creatures with the associated elemental subtype gain an advantage on attack rolls. Spells of the associated element type increase their damage dice by one category to a maximum of 1d12 (a spell that would deal 2d6 points of damage deals 2d8 points of damage instead).

Suggested Encounters

Elemental creatures of all types exist on this plane, and so do outsiders of all types. Such creatures might believe the party to be deceased and will either offer to guide them to the realm of their deity, or be determined to keep their spirit for themselves or their master.

Some islands might be blanketed with snow, while others are ablaze with roaring fire. Gravity seems confusing and out of place, with water flowing in strange directions: a waterfall flowing around the island and back into itself, for example. A landmass will generally be between a mile and 10 miles in diameter. Use the table below to quickly determine the nature of a specific island:

1d20	Type	Encounter ideas
1-3	Air	Maze of windwalls guarded by a flying monster
4-6	Earth	Globe with acid lake center is home to blind albino creatures
7-9	Fire	Stone island with lake of magma next to a bronze fortress red with heat
10-12	Water	Gently floating mountain of pure ice with a tunnel system hewn into it
13-15	Magic	Pieces of reality shrouded in purple mist that transforms the surroundings
16	Evil	Black, gothic castle that floats on an island shaped like a skull
17	Good	Tube-shaped fortress of white marble. Balconies jut out from its sides
18	Neutral	Large chunk of earth and rock covered in a forest that seems very natural
19	Chaos	Something that is shaped out of warping flesh with mouths that laugh and cry
20	Law	A perfectly square island covered in square tiles, that seems out of place here





Shadow plane

The shadow plane is a warped, dark version of the material plane. Places where the two planes intersect are cold and empty. Things that survive there mutate, bend and shed all goodness eventually. Sunlight during the day is feeble as the sun is always shrouded in thick, gray clouds. Nights are completely black and evil things emerge from the deep to feed on the wretches that dwell on the surface. Structures are crooked and overgrown, crops withered. It is said that one that enters the plane of shadow leaves some of their innocence behind forever.

Optional rule: Death and Despair
Creatures entering the plane of shadow must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures leaving the plane must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or reduce their Charisma score by 1 permanently. Their ability can be restored by spending a year away from the plane, or through powerful magic, such as that of a wish spell. Creatures that die on the plane rot and transform into zombies over the course of seven days. Any creature that is native to the plane is immune to its detrimental effects.

Suggested Encounters
Undead creatures find the plane of a shadow a welcoming place, something that reflects the darkness and emptiness of their existence. Other creatures encountered on the plane seem like washed-out, empty shells, mockeries of their former shape.

Ethereal plane

The ethereal plane is coexistent with the material plane and is closely linked to the plane of shadow and elements as well. Reality in the plane is warped, indistinct and blurred. Colors seem more distinct, shapes alien. Looking at an object in the ethereal plane is like gazing through a broken kaleidoscope.

Optional rule: Sight without Sight
Attacks and checks that rely on regular perception are made with disadvantage.

Suggested encounters
Hags, ghosts, nightmares, succubi and magic users cross over into, or use the ethereal plane to their advantage in some way. Such creatures will consider any creature they encounter to be an intruder. Few beings are native to the ethereal plane and those that are might not be considered to be living creatures according to our standards. Small motes of light, with rainbow-like patterns gently float in huge, harmless colonies.

Astral plane

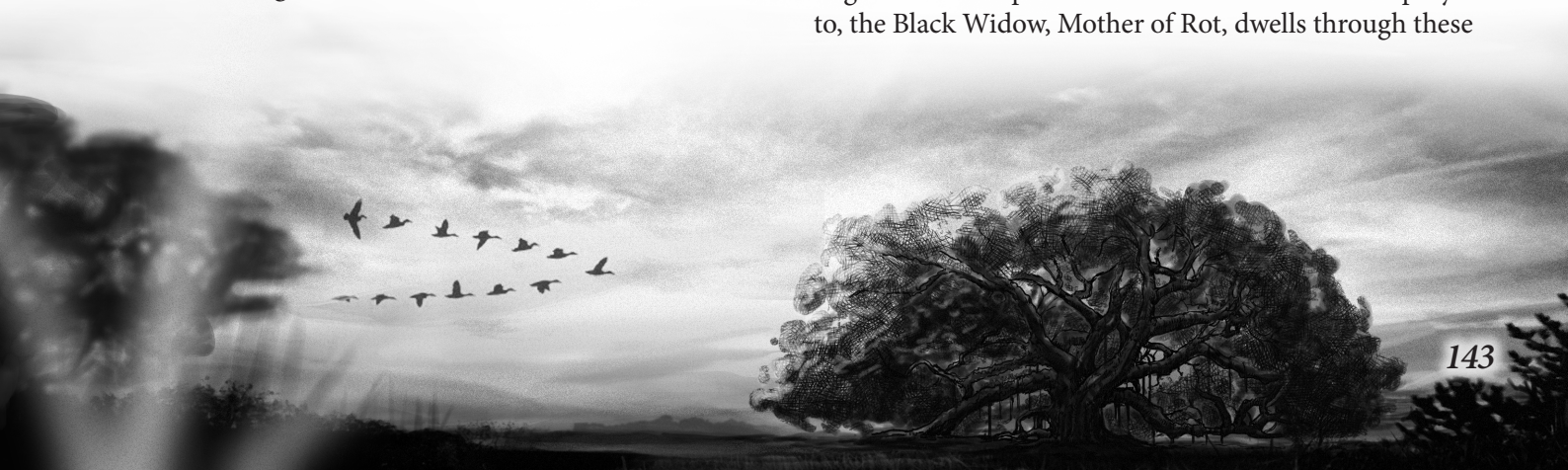
Between the planes lies a great void, that may seem endlessly large or deceivingly small at different intervals. The astral plane is what separates all other planes - a sea of vast white nothingness. As a central hub between realities the magic that allows the user to see time and space is enhanced here.

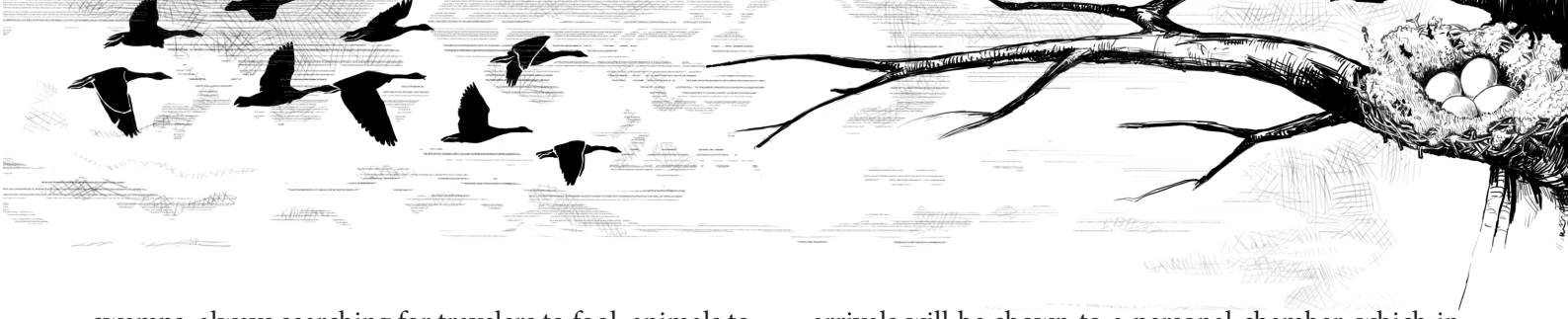
Optional rule: The Future and Present
A creature that takes a long rest on the astral plane has a 10% chance to have a prophetic dream.

Suggested encounters
The astral plane is a vast sea of nothingness and should be treated as such. Travelers will not encounter anything while they travel the plane, forcing them to interact with their companions and themselves. The plane seems to lack any conventional dimensions: visitors float gently, in a single line, and they are unable to move in any direction, not even through magic. Objects fired into the void simply disappear.

The Abysmal Swamps

A stench so thick it seems tangible lingers in these endless, festering swamps. A carpet of rotten leaves and mulch covers the muck, making travel a treacherous business. Dead, leafless trees, brambles and poisonous weeds make up the only vegetation. A shroud of brown and gray mist masks the sun. The creatures that dwell here are miserable scavengers that feast upon the rotten treasures of the bogs and the corpses of those that drown here. Kiputytto, the Black Widow, Mother of Rot, dwells through these





swamps, always searching for travelers to fool, animals to devour and plants to corrupt.

Optional rule: Death and Decay
Spells cast by druids and clerics that worship Gaea or Mielikki have their effects and damage reduced to the minimal while on this plane. Their spells are also altered aesthetically, producing sinister shadows, squishy sounds and foul scents.

Suggested Encounters
Horrific parodies of nature and monsters drawn to rot can be found on this plane. Examples include: Ettercaps, giant vermin, gibbering mouthers and otyugh.

Plot hook
Hags live in crooked huts of rotten wood, decorated with bones and arcane symbols. A particularly insane old hag sees the party as her key to ruling her part of the swamp. She pampers them like a grandmother before sending them on quests to destroy her rivals and collect rare plants. Every time the party returns they find more obvious clues that the witch eventually intends to cook and eat them.

The Cloud Reaches

Imagine a palace, suspended in the sky, built on the very clouds. Seven slender, ivory towers peek from the silky-smooth marble, cradled in arms of stone. The Reaches are a scholar's paradise; a castle with an endless library that rests on the cloud cover and drifts slowly over an endless sea, lit by the moon. Those that dwell there spend their time reading, sleeping and meditating. The god of knowledge, Untamo, calls the plane home and inhabits the castle's tallest tower.

Suggested encounters Many creatures that can either fly or swim call the plane home. These creatures are generally fairly intelligent and gentle, unless provoked.

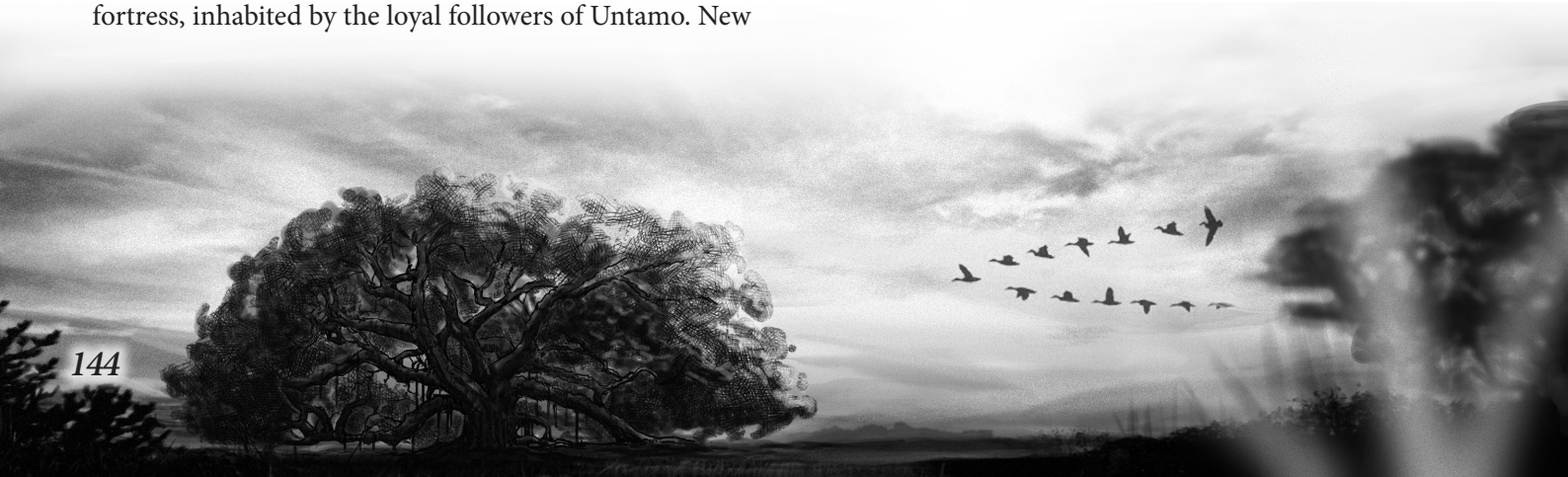
The castle at the center of the plane is a well-protected fortress, inhabited by the loyal followers of Untamo. New arrivals will be shown to a personal chamber, which includes a laboratory and a richly decorated wooden desk. Honored guests, even uninvited guests, may find temporary lodgings in a separate wing of the structure. The secrets of the castle are closely guarded by magical traps and construct guardians.

The Frozen Wastes

Sages speak of a terrible place, frozen to the very core, littered with remains of the dead. Hurricane winds howl through the valleys and dust devils of ice and sleet are ever present. This land is as cold as its mistress, the cruel Loviathar. All that end up here are soon reduced to shambling husks. At the center of the plane stands a mountain with jagged peaks, which bears the White Hold, a fortress of ice and bones, where the goddess herself can be found when she is visiting her domain.

Optional rule: A Bone-chilling Cold
The plane is permanently covered in snow and ice accompanied by an unnatural cold. Creatures exposed to the outside environment must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with a resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, but cold weather gear or being naturally adapted to cold climates does not suffice.

Suggested encounters
Not only monsters, but the environment itself makes this plane a formidable adversary. Jagged mountain ranges, howling ravines and icy wastelands cover its entirety. As travelers struggle to traverse the dangerous terrain they are plagued by the snow storms, strong winds and whole areas covered in slippery ice. The few nooks and crannies that offer respite from the weather are home to the horrid beasts that call the plane home, such as the monstrous remorhaz. Several powerful fiends rule tiny kingdoms in the tunnels and cave systems beneath the ice and they send their minions to the surface to scavenge and capture slaves.



The Green Hills of the Small Folk

The green hills are an endless sea of gently waving, lush grass covering glowing hills. No matter how far one walks, they always end up back home. It is dotted with small hal-fling steads and taverns that offer free drinks. The sky is always clear and the time always early around supper. The green hills have often enchanted travelers, who refused to leave this earthly paradise. Matias, god of halflings, cre-ated this plane and lives in a stately house flanked by two taverns.

Optional rule: Home Sweet Home

Any creature that takes a short rest on this plane benefits as if they had taken a long rest instead. Travelers quickly grow fond of the green hills. Anyone attempting to leave the plane must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw to do so. Failure indicates that they decide to stay for another day.

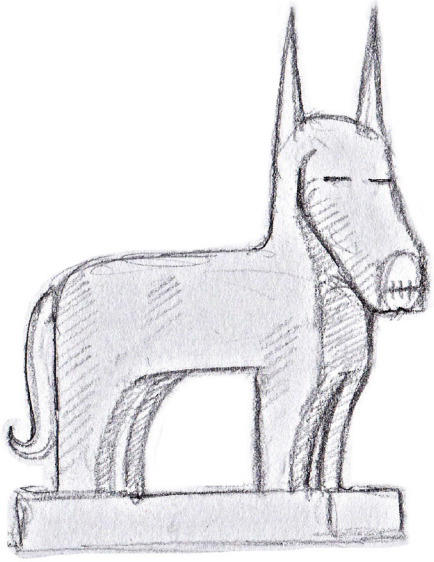
Suggested encounters

The Green Hills of the Small Folk are a very safe place to visit. Only rarely are monsters or evil-doers encountered here. The halfling people love to feast, gamble and play games, the table below will help you set up the special drink and activities in a random tavern that your players decide to visit.

1d8	*Game*	*Specialty drink*
1	Toad in the Hole	Bakkebrew
2	Darts	Lucky Pint
3	Bowls	Troll Tears
4	Dominoes	Athovale Ale
5	Liar's Dice	Father's Delight
6	Pitch Penny	Elvinbrew Wine
7	Skittles	Slippery Goblin
8	Arm wrestling	Nyphvile Bitter

The Gray Wastes

Home to the god of death, Surma, the wastes offer no sol-ace to travelers. The Wastes are a small plane, filled to the brim with soldiers, locked in eternal warfare. Creatures on the plane move so slowly they seem to stand still. To further add to their discomfort, colors other than gray do not exist here. Those that die just reappear there, in the midst of chaos, surrounded by enemies and all they can do is defend themselves, or die over and over again. Surma himself has a cave lair on top of a cliff and he looks upon the spectacle from his ledge.

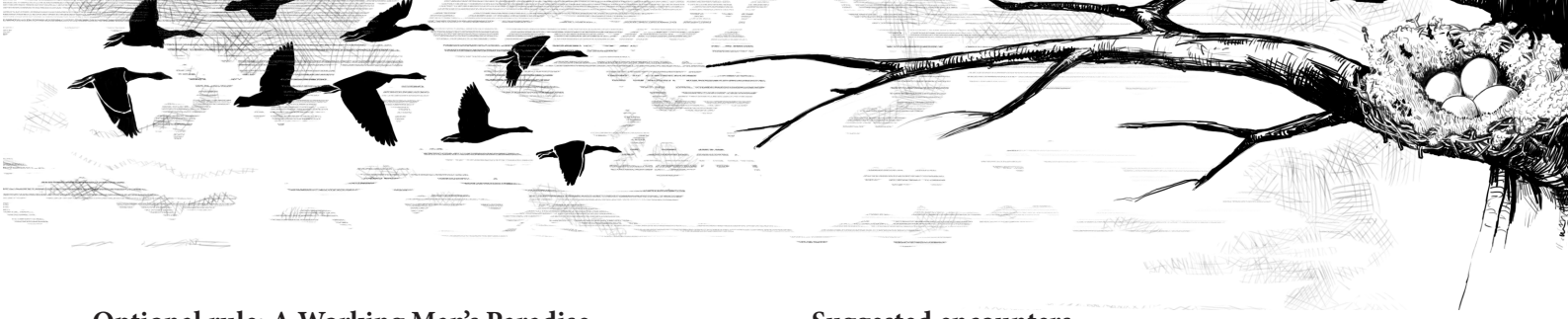


Optional Rule: Eternal Warfare

One day spent on this plane equals a month on the material plane. Any creature that dies is returned back to life at their full hit points at the start of the next round.

Guldgard

The incredible metropolis of Guldgard is a plane all by it-self, inhabited and created by the god of the forge Ilmari-nen. Servants of Ilmarinen roam the streets day and night to craft and discuss crafts, while their families inhabit warm, comfortable homes. The city is centered in a great golden globe suspended above a lake of molten rock. It consists of layer upon layer of homes and shops, decorat-ed in runes and with lively statues of warriors. A bright red and orange light flickers from a large vent in the ceil-ing. It is said that Ilmarinen forged the huge golden ceil-ing himself and built the walls out of brass and stone.



Optional rule: A Working Man's Paradise
Any item crafted on the plane only requires half the usual time to built. In addition, all good aligned creatures on the plane are protected from the heat of the lava below and are actually very comfortable.

Suggested encounters
Industry on the scale it is presented here is unprecedented on the continent. Even the productivity of dwarves pales compared to the crafts of the great city. Players visiting will be amazed and dazzled by the constant rings of hammering and huffing of forges. Despite the high productivity, the craftsmen and women of the plane know the value and excellent quality of their products and they are not likely to part with them cheaply.

Fire elementals and salamanders inhabit the magma lake that heats the city and casts it in a perpetual orange glow. On a series of ridges overlooking the lake, far below the city streets, lives a whole community of azers that have dedicated their life to Ilmarinen.

The Howling Maze

The Maze consist of a series of interlinked passages, dug in deep, wet earth. The only plants that appear to be there are fungi, and thick, gnarled roots that sweat beads of poisonous sap. Winds howl through the halls, enhancing the eerie atmosphere of the entire plane. Goblins and other creatures of the night roam this underground world, always looking to scavenge their next meal. Somewhere in the immense cavern system stands a temple built out of the bones of giants. In these ever-changing tunnels roams the wicked god of goblins, Hiisi.

Optional rule: Cries in the Dark
Constant noises that emanate from the darkness make it hard to hear anything clearly. Wisdom (Perception) checks made to listen are at a disadvantage in the maze.

Suggested encounters
Many different tribes of goblinoids inhabit the tunnels, as do ghouls that scavenge on their corpses. Fungi and oozes can be found in every nook and cranny. Creatures exposed to the plane must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw every hour or take 1d10 points of poison damage. Failure indicates that a type of fungus has rooted to the creature, either on their skin, or in their lungs or other orifices. Infected creatures act as if they are poisoned. The condition can be removed by a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, or with restorative magic, but the hit point damage must be healed separately. Creatures native to the plane are immune to the effect but almost all (90% chance) carry the fungi. Killing a creature native to the plane in melee combat prompts an immediate saving throw to fight the infection.

The Infinite Sea

Stormy oceans, capped with foam, tossed by waves as high as mountains lie at the heart of this world. A constant gale force wind tears and rips at the water, where no creatures can live but horrid predators. Those that end up here must paddle constantly while they struggle for their life. Many of them drown, or are devoured, only to find themselves drowning all over again. Legends speak of a single, volcanic island somewhere at the center of the plane, where a hand full of warriors manage to stay relatively dry. Susanowa, the great god, threads on the clouds themselves and whips the winds into a fierce frenzy.

Optional rule: Tempest Tossed
Weather conditions on this plane are consistently inhospitable and a constant wind and rain storm rages across it.

Seagard

Home to the sea god Atho, Seagard consists mostly of water. He resides in an immense palace at the bottom of the sea. The plane is a disc, which overflows with fresh seawa-





ter. At its center stands an island, shores surrounded by a pebbled beach. Right in the middle of the island stands a huge, rocky outcropping which touches the clouds. The floor of the sea is rich in plant- and sea life and a huge variety of fish and sea monsters inhabit the water. Legends tell of immense stretches of shipwrecks littering the bottom. All servants of Atho that find the gate to his domain wash up on the shore. Servants of the god live on the bottom of the sea, or in simple houses built from the bones of whales.

Optional rule: The Skipper Provides
All creatures that choose to follow Atho as their chief deity can breathe underwater while on the plane. They may act and move underwater virtually without restrictions, as if being on land and as if they are under the effects of a fly spell.

Encounter suggestions
Many of Atho's humanoid followers tend to inhabit the few stretches of dry land above the waves, as being under water constantly makes them uncomfortable. Cities under the surface are mostly inhabited by clans of aquatic elves, that use giant sea horses as mounts, and by merfolk. They clad themselves in armor weaved from weeds and seashells and carve intricate patterns into their flesh to honor their ancestors. These peoples generally respect each other's boundaries and peace, making interspecies contact a rarity.

Skygard

Beautiful floating stone islands, interconnected by marble bridges, make up the plane of Skygard. The central island, Mara, even has a small sea, surrounded by great pines and pebbled beaches. Ilmatar and her husband Ukko inhabit this peaceful plane of prosperity, where it rains just enough for the crops to grow strong and where most people spend afternoons lazing in the sun or playing games. No one ever grows hungry here and no one ever suffers.

Optional rule: Peace and Prosperity
Creatures on this plane do not require nourishment from food or drink to sustain them. A creature that starts its turn on the plane heals back to their full original hit points at the end of that turn. The plane is gentle and welcoming, all saving throws against fear or any form of pain are made with advantage.

The Slopes of Honor

Great mountains, tops powered with snow, make up most of the Slopes. Here, slaves constantly toil in honor of the great god Ebisu, erecting statues and palaces out of the coarse stone. There is no rest for those that come here, and many eventually go insane from exhaustion. Those that do sometimes throw themselves off the rocks, into the abyss that surrounds them, only to find themselves chiseling away at another immense statue of their patron. Ebisu himself gladly walks among his subjects, lashing those that he believes to be lazy, which is usually all of them. Disobedience is met by cruelties unimaginable, and many men have gauged out their eyes after being forced to hew their own children into the bloody likeness of their overlord.

Optional rule: Death and Beyond
Any character that dies on this plane is returned back to life at the dawn of the next day. To them it will not seem as if any time has passed, but the trauma leaves a scar on their soul. Any creature that dies on the plane permanently loses a point of Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma. If either score reaches 0 the creature becomes a shell of their former selves, with labor as their only desire, at which point they will no longer object to their horrible treatment.

Suggested encounters
Anyone visiting the plane will encounter scenes of unimaginable madness. Horrible, voluntary mutilations and suicides are not at all uncommon. Many of its inhabitants have turned into husks that work tirelessly, until thirst and fatigue push them over the edge. Of course, death only provides a temporary relief. To represent husks, use the



statistics for zombies, except that they retain their original creature type. Heroes may also encounter overseers, large stone and metal golems crafted in the form of Honorable Ebisu.

The Valley of Blood

Razor sharp peeks seem to pierce a sky red with blood and a bright moon is the only source of light in this dreary landscape. Bands of warriors roam freely here, feasting on each other's blood, their only joy the satisfaction of slaughter. Volcanoes spew molten lava into the valleys and erratic super-heated air catches the warbands by surprise, incinerating them in the midst of their brawls. Shrewd Hachiman, god of battle, feels right at home amidst the chaos and can often be found ambushing and slaying entire bands of warriors single-handedly.

Optional rule: Slaughter and Brimstone
The red light of the plane instills a great bloodlust in whomever wanders here. Creatures exposed to the plane must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw at the end of every hour or shift their alignment one step towards either chaos or evil (determined randomly).

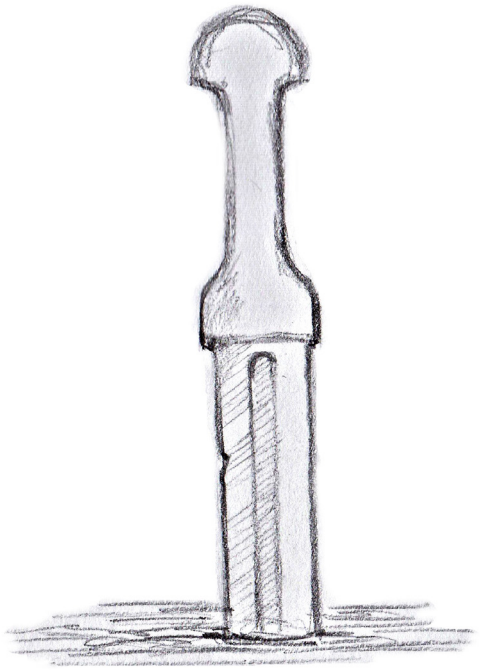
Suggested encounters
Not only do bands of warriors hunting each other roam the plane, the environment itself can pose a dangerous obstacle here. Localized gusts of hot air make breathing impossible and obscure sight, except to creatures with fire resistance or immunity. Groups of fiends, able to withstand these inhospitable conditions, sometimes travel to the plane to test their strength.

The Wilds of Evergreen

A seemingly endless primal forest lays resting on the slopes of many a hill and mountain. Time seems to have stood still in this place. A wild variety of exotic creatures live in and above the trees and drink from lakes clear as diamonds. There is no room for civilization in the wilds and only few humanoids call the great forest home. Those that do live in primitive shelters, caves, or sleep nature's embrace. Mielikki, goddess of elves, created this plane for herself and can be found stalking its groves.

Optional rule: Dead Magic
Magic on the plane is dead. Neither magic spells, nor items of a magical nature are functional.

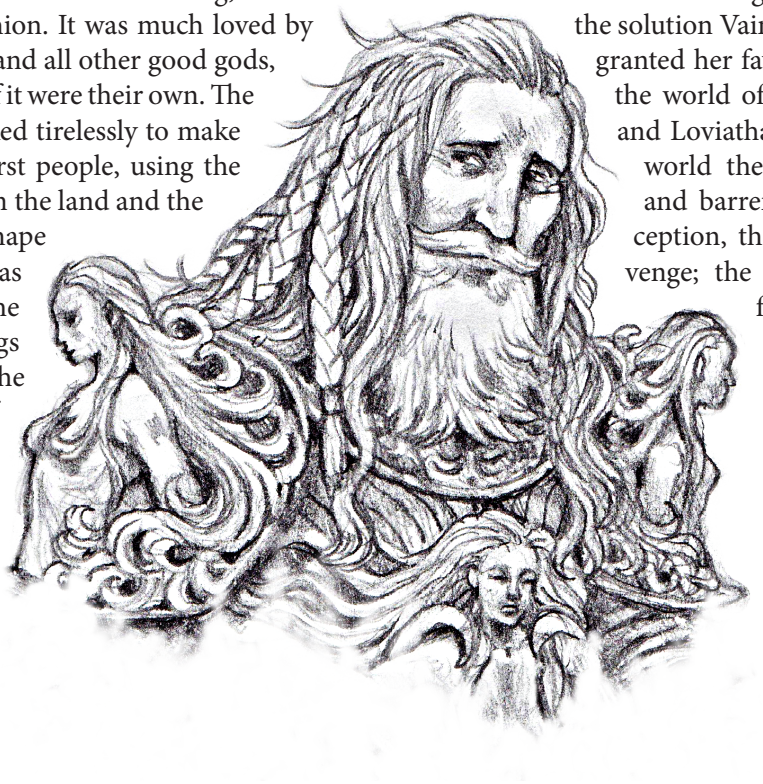
Suggested encounters
Dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures roam freely on this plane. When designing encounters, keep in mind that the dead magic will pose an obstacle to most heroes, depending on their class and gear their fighting ability will be reduced. The only way to escape the confines of the plane would be through divine intervention, or through the ancient stone travel gates, that connect the plane to both the material plane and the Tuonela.



Sidebar 6
Origin Stories Part 1 – The Age of Gods

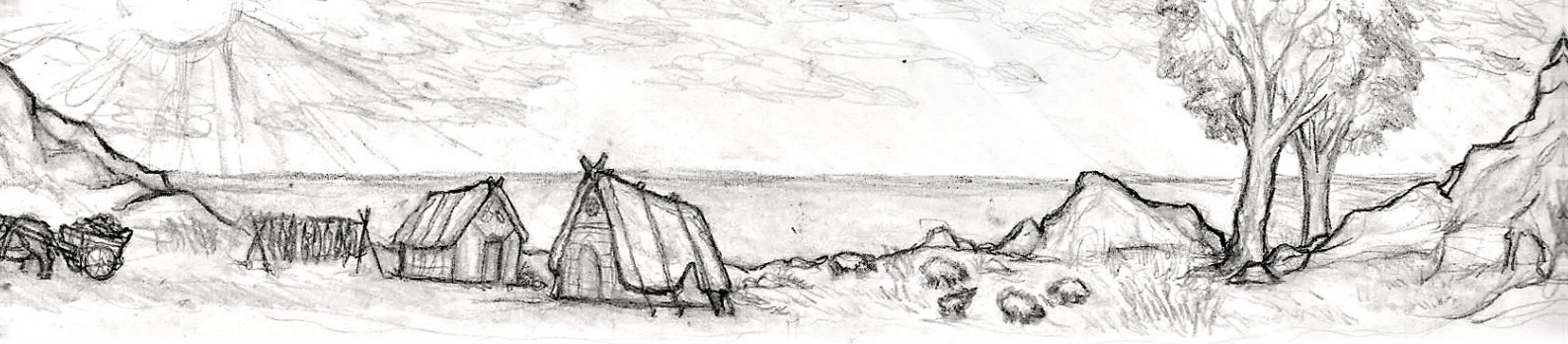
It was a day not unlike the days before, the day that Ukko, The Father, found the nest of a waterfowl during his hike through the forest. Apparently abandoned for some time, it contained a pair of smallish eggs, each extraordinary in their own fashion. One of the eggs seemed to shine with the light of life, white and pure. The other egg, smaller and gray, did not radiate the same energy, but felt cold to the touch. Delighted and slightly dumbfounded by his discovery, he took the nest to Ilmatar, The Mother.

She explained to him that both of the eggs were magical, containing a whole world of their own. The white egg, good and bright, contained the world of Bellög, which was shaped in the same fashion. It was much loved by The Father and The Mother and all other good gods, and they adopted the egg as if it were their own. The gods were jubilant and worked tirelessly to make the world a home for the first people, using the mirth in their hearts to warm the land and the goodness in their souls to shape the common folk. Man was loved dear, and coddled by the gods, and on clear evenings man would gather around the fire to listen to the story of the egg. But the small, gray egg, was not loved and forgotten.



But not all was well in the realm of gods, for the evil deities, Hiisi and Loviathar, felt ever growing jealously of the gods and their creation. They resented their exclusion from this world and watched it unfold with burning resentment which eventually lead them to confront The Father and The Mother. Vainamoinen, cleverest of men and first of bards, came to their aid.

Remembering stories about the gray egg and its abandonment, he advised The Mother to make a gift of it to Hiisi. Appeased by this offering, the evil gods retreated into a world of their own, seemingly having lost all interest in the world of Bellög. Ilmatar, impressed with the solution Vainamoinen had concocted, granted her favorite son eternal life. As the world of Bellög blossomed, Hiisi and Loviathar became aware that the world they were given was bleak and barren. Angry with man's deception, they prepared for their revenge; the culling of the common folk.



Chapter 7: Trade & Items

"Trollhammers, buy your trollhammers here!" The burly smith called out to the people crowding the market district at the top of his lungs. "Spears, shields, swords, I've got it all for a fair price!" Many people paid him no specific notice, as weapons were not an everyday purchase. A group of dwarf youngsters loitered at one end of the cart, to the merchants chagrin, and he had sent them away more often than he could count. One of them, a chubby boy with thick red eyebrows, was about to become a man. He had spent many afternoons standing around the cart, observing the brave warriors negotiating with the merchant. Now his time had come. He was trying to decide which of the weapons would be best for him to start with. In the end, Vuun decided on something heavy but traditional: a dwarven war axe which he could barely lift over his head.

The common folk inhabit most of the continent, which stretches hundreds of miles. In a dark, primitive world, such as the one in this campaign, trade routes are few and far apart, making exotic goods expensive and difficult to obtain. Traditionally, in medieval times, trade in kind was more common than trade by use of currency. This presents the roleplayers with a difficulty, however, as currency is so much more convenient and every player loves finding a nice hoard of coins. In this aspect we leave the choice up to you to be as realistic as you please: if you prefer a gritty, realistic game, by all means make coins a rarity. If you prefer a more practical approach make coins a generally accepted form of payment. To present exact rules for a barter driven payment system falls outside of the scope of this book, however, we will present some rules of thumb to determine the price of local goods in other countries.

Prices

A number of factors in unison determine the value of any good, whether it be Elvinbrew wine, a Dwarven waraxe or a barrel of herring. Firstly there is the matter of supply and demand, making an object more valuable as interest rises, and more expensive if it is scarcely available. Items crafted by the hands of a master may fetch high prices because they outshine similar items of more humble origin. Similarly, items that can be crafted quickly tend to be less expensive than elaborate items. Because of transportation fees the price of an object increases the further it has to travel to reach the buyer. Most countries in Bellög have a very small governing body, usually consisting of a jarl and a few dozen enforcers. As costs to maintain this form of government are low, and few jarls actually have the manpower to actively collect taxes, few of them do so. This means that taxes do not really influence the prices of goods. Only in the capitol towns fees are levied for merchants and visitors. Many countries feature special rules, which sometimes influence the prices of goods. These are described at the end of their entry in the World chapter (Chapter 5).

For the exotic goods mentioned on the next page you can use the following rule of thumb to determine their price in a country other than the country of origin:

Standard transportation fee: +10% price increase for each border the goods pass.
Danger fee: +20% price increase if the goods must cross dangerous areas such as mountains, swamps, etc.
Neighboring Ally Fee: Allied countries next to their neighbor sell goods for an identical price but do not export those goods.

Coins

Almost all coins in current circulation were minted in Bakkesat. They are stamped with the official symbol of the country: the hammer and the anvil. Gold and platinum pieces will have a different mark, designed to symbolize the current ruler, on the back. Hobgoblins mint triangular coins, shaped to represent the power of the San. The Dragon Kings of old used to have a great lust for coins and they minted square copper, silver, electrum, gold and platinum marked with symbols





of their own design, but these are rarely encountered except in ancient troves. The value of the dwarven coins (Heralds, after their inventor Heraldir), hobgoblin coins (Triads, after their triangular shape) and antique dragon coins is roughly the same.

Unique Goods

Bakkebrew - A light dwarven beer brewed only in Bakkesat. A gallon of the golden delight can fetch up to five hundred gold pieces and holds ten drinks. Drinking a mug of Bakkebrew cools the tongue, warms the belly and strengthens the spirit. You gain an advantage on saving throws against fear for one hour.

Dwarvenforge armor – Dwarves are widely known for their talent at armoring. They are experts at tempering and working metal, forging the purest steel on the continent. Armor designed by dwarves is sturdy, but restrictive. Any medium or heavy set of armor can be made as dwarvenforge armor instead for the added cost of 200 gold pieces. Dwarvenforge armor counts as armor one category heavier for the purpose of proficiency. Only dwarves and characters with the appropriate feat are proficient with heavy dwarvenforge armor. It will provide an additional +1 bonus to your armor class, but reduces your movement to 25 feet. Dwarves and half-dwarves are immune to this penalty. Dwarvenforge armor is not magical in nature, but is found rarely outside of dwarven lands. In Bakkesat it is uncommon. Contrary to popular belief, it can be crafted by creatures other than dwarves.

Giant Horse – Rare, powerful beasts of burden, favored by half-giants for their strong bodies and wills. A light load for a giant horse is up to 1836 pounds; a medium load, 1837-3678; a heavy load, 3679-5520. A foal costs 200 gold pieces, a combat trained adult animal up to 800 gold pieces.

Elvinbrew wine – Mielikki's Arms, the largest forest in Kesma, is home to many tribes of elves. Their lives are built around nature - specifically agriculture. A favorite crop among the tribes in the southern parts of the forest is the black grape. When squeezed, rested, and combined with proper ingredients and a hint of magic, Elvinbrew wine is produced. This is a rare drink, as the special vines that bear the grapes only do so once in every seven years. The brewing process is considered sacred among the elves and requires extensive knowledge on top of the ability to cast both arcane and divine spells. A bottle of Elvinbrew can fetch 200 gold pieces, and serves four mugs. When imbibed, Elvinbrew lends some of the elven magical properties to the drinker. You gain an advantage on saving throws against being charmed and against magical sleep effects for one hour.

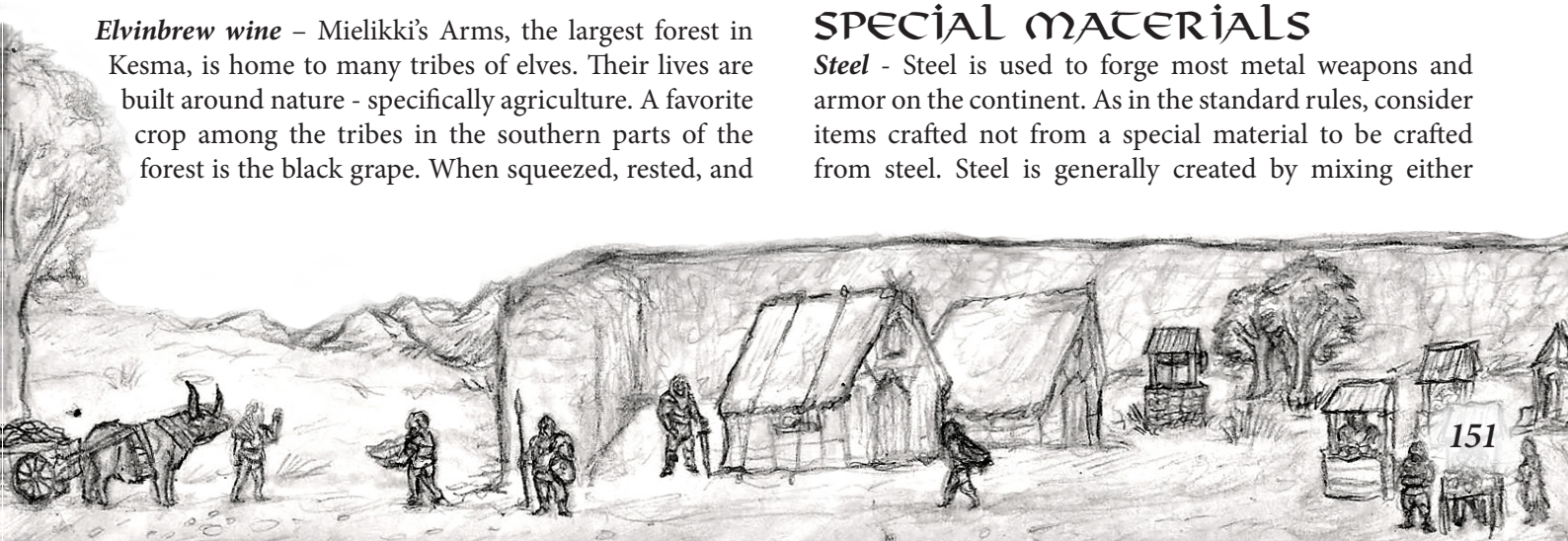
Diviner's Tools (Basic) - Often used by gnolls and sages to predict the future. They range from old chicken bones carved into tubes (5 copper) to runed cow bones (up to 2 silver). Often they are bound together with a piece of string, or come in a woolen pouch.

Diviner's Tools (Masterwork) - Every tube in this set is decorated with small gemstones and blessed by a priest. Crafted to have a unique look and feel, no two sets are alike. When purchased they often come in a delicate velvet wallet, or in a supple leather belt pouch. Sticks of divination are sacred to the gnoll people, and each respected fortune teller carries a pouch. The set also contains a few amber beads, a nice velvet cloth with a small pillow and a fancy robe. It costs 25 gold pieces and can be used as the focus for divination spells.

Wild horse - Wild horses are native to the hills of northern Vuorilas. They are well adjusted to the cold environment and are favored mounts of human nomads. Wild horses have the stats of riding horses, but their slender frames give them a +2 bonus on dexterity, and a -2 penalty on strength. In addition, their shaggy coats make them naturally adapted to cold climates. They fetch the same market price as regular horses.

Special Materials

Steel - Steel is used to forge most metal weapons and armor on the continent. As in the standard rules, consider items crafted not from a special material to be crafted from steel. Steel is generally created by mixing either



charcoal, or the bones of a totem animal, with molten iron. Glass and sand are added into the mixture to absorb impure particles, known as slag. Many people believe that by adding the bones of an animal, the weapon absorbs the spirit of the creature, and strengthens the wielder. People are often buried with their swords, as usurpers fear vengeance of the spirit of the blade striking at their new owner. Intelligent items crafted this way always in some way hint at their origin – maybe through sound or vision. Almost all blacksmiths on the continent are able to work and forge basic steel, but only a handful of them have complete mastery over the process and a furnace hot enough to make the purest steel. If you prefer to play a more realistic game, consider giving non-masterwork metal items a -2 penalty to hardness to represent the lower quality material. If you want to go further in this, feel free to experiment with it - especially in low-magic campaigns do not be afraid to make a solid steel sword something your players will treasure.

Arcane iron – Arcane iron, called Nyph by dwarves, is enhanced by natural magic and rare indeed. Most commonly found deep in dwarven mines, it is coveted and expensive. Any metal armor can be crafted from arcane iron instead. It sheds a blueish light like a candle and enhances and amplifies magic energies. Any beneficial spell cast on you has its duration increased by a number of rounds equal to the unmodified armor bonus. Once used, this ability can't be used again until the next dawn. Arcane iron items are **rare**.



Dragonwood – An exceptional wood with a legendary fire resisting property that grows only in the eastern part of Kesma. It's stronger than typical wood, but also heavier. Dragonwood has a smokey, earthen smell and a typical black coloring. It weighs twice as much as regular wooden items, but does not burn nor does it melt like metal, it slowly smolders away.

Any wooden items can be made of Dragonwood instead. Dragonwood items are **uncommon**.

Spell steel – A well-hidden secret kept by a cult of blacksmiths, spell steel is created by using the ashes of an arcane spellcaster in the process of forging steel. Any metal armor can be crafted from spell steel instead. It sheds a reddish light like a candle and enhances and amplifies magic energies. Any beneficial spell cast on you has its duration increased by a number of rounds equal to the unmodified armor bonus. Once used, this ability can't be used again until the next dusk.

Spell steel is considered to be much more dangerous than its natural counterpart, as it is believed the spellcaster will likely curse the owner of the item. How this curse manifests itself it up the GM, but once it manifests it cannot do so again until the next dusk. For example: the armor might decrease the duration of a beneficial spell cast on you with a number of rounds equal to the armor bonus, or flare up at inopportune moments, giving you disadvantage on a stealth check.

In rare cases a spellcaster willingly accepts their spirit to be bound to the item. In these cases the item is always intelligent, and only curses bearers that oppose their will. These items often poses at least a rudimentary intelligence. Items craft from spell steel are **rare**.

New & Redesigned Weapons

Glaive – A long blade mounted on a shaft, the glaive can be used for slashing or stabbing.

Heavy Pick – The heavy pick is used in times of war and peace. The pointed end inflicts staggering injuries.



Weapon name	*Damage/type*	*Weight*	*Cost*	*Special*
Glaive	1d10 slashing	6 lb.	20 gp	Heavy, two-handed, adaptable (piercing)
Heavy Pick	1d10/piercing	6 lb.	8gp	Heavy, sharp, two-handed
Heavy Spear	1d8/piercing	5 lb.	5 gp	Heavy, versatile (1d10)
Hewing Spear	2d4/slashing	15 lb.	22 gp	Reach, two-handed, adaptable (piercing)
Hooked Hammer	1d8/piercing	3 lb.	20 gp	Adaptable (bludgeoning), two-handed
Light Pick	1d4/piercing	3 lb.	4 gp	Light, sharp
Trident	1d6/piercing	4 lb.	5 gp	Thrown (range 20/60), sharp
Trollhammer	1d8/slashing	5 lb.	18 gp	Adaptable (bludgeoning)
War Pick	1d6 piercing	2 lb.	5 gp	Sharp, versatile (1d8)

Heavy Spear – A heavier version of the spear, this weapon can be used one-handed to pierce, or two-handed to skewer foes. It is favored by the nomadic half-giants.

Hewing Spear – Hewing spears have a vicious, serrated edge. Their long shafts allow them to be used as reach weapons. They are common tools in the frozen north, where they are used as impromptu icebreakers.

Hooked Hammer – Favored by both gnomes and dwarves, the hooked hammer is a tool adapted for war. One side ends in a slender pick, the other in a hammer.

Light Pick – Used in mines for more delicate cutting, light picks are favored by gnomes but seldom used in battle.

Trollhammer – A weapon forged first by the giants, the trollhammer is practical and ferocious. It features a sharp axe-blade, balanced by a shorter, blunt hammerhead. They are used as weapons and foraging tools by nomadic warriors.

War Pick – A smaller, more aerodynamic version of the heavy pick, commonly used by both dwarves and gnomes.

This book introduces two new weapon traits design to versify existing weapons and to allow a better translation between editions.

Adaptable weapons may be used to inflict one of two types of damage. Choose the type before rolling the attack. The alternate type of damage that can be inflicted with the weapon is stated in brackets.

Sharp weapons inflict crippling critical hits. When you score a critical hit with this weapon you can roll its damage die one additional time and add it to the damage of the critical hit.

About Magic Items

Although there should always be room for exceptions, the presence of magic generally seems to wane with the passing of time in Bellög. During the first age the most powerful artifacts were created by the gods themselves, and each age the strength of magic items seems to fade. Described below is a rule of thumb for determining the age and availability of a magic item or artifact:

Age of the Gods – In the old time most magic items were crafted by the gods themselves, some by powerful spirits and elementals. Items from this period are not for sale in cities but are considered to be lost artifacts, relics and legacies, hidden in the depths of the earth, in the possession of gods or on the altars of high temples. Many items from this period are **legendary** items or **artifacts**.

Age of Giants – During the Age of Giants, and with the destruction of the Dragon Kingdoms, magic started to seep from the world. This reduced the potential for creating items of magical nature. The maximum enhancement level of armors and weapons was five. Only



wonderful items of medium and low power could be created. In small cities these items are not for sale and only rarely in capitols. These items are typically very expensive and their owners will not part with them easily. Items from this period are often either **very rare** or **minor artifacts**.

Age of Humans – During the age of humans the ability to create power items of great magic is forgotten by many. Items of up to **rare** quality are still created with some consistency. These items can be purchased in any of the larger cities, but all but common items can be difficult to find.

Artifacts are rare items of great power. They can be the centerpiece of an ancient dragon's hoard, hidden deep in the vault of a lich lord's keep, or displayed proudly in a mighty temple guarded by a god's most devout followers. Artifacts can never be bought or sold, only obtained through adventures. All artifacts require attunement before their full power can utilized and some can only be fully utilized by those of a certain race.

Minor artifacts are magic items that can, for whatever reason, no longer be created by mortal means - either their secrets are lost, or the material of which they were made is no longer available. They can be destroyed like regular items, but doing so will cause the item to disingrate and forever be lost. Multiple copies exist.

Major artifacts are the stuff of legends. They were created ages ago by gods and titans, or during events of great historical significance. These items cannot be destroyed unless by a specific event specified by its creator. They are unique.

New Magic Items and Artifacts

Blades of Dead Slaying - Inscribed in elven with the words Discord and Malice, the pommels of these enchanted daggers are inlaid with the skulls of imps.

Discord is a weapon that radiates powerful chaotic energy and provides a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage. It lashes out of its own accord, shielding the holder from harm and gives you a +2 AC bonus against ranged attacks while being held.

Malice radiates strong evil energy. It provides a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage.

If these blades are dual wielded, they allow you to ignore the damage resistances of undead creatures.

Both blades are **very rare**.

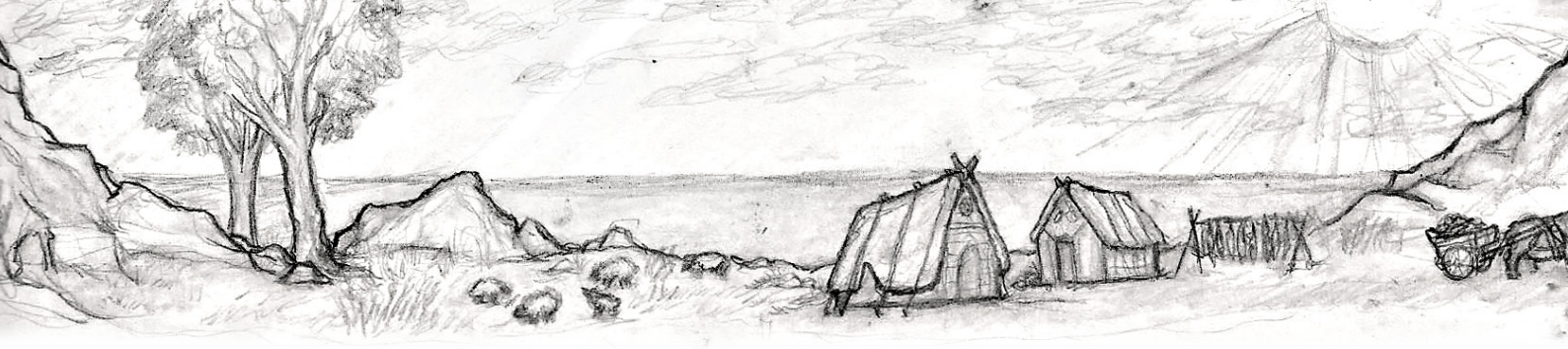
The Demon Mask - Crafted from the skin of a demonic creature and stretched over petrified bones this crude mask gives the bearer incredible power over the minds of others. These foul items radiate an aura of evil and magic and smell of brimstone. Their origin remains unknown.

Add 1 to the spell save DC of enchantment spells you cast. In addition, you may double the duration of any enchantment spell you cast. Using this ability consumes one of the item's three charges and a single charge refreshes every day at dusk.

Demon masks are **rare**.

Dragon-scale Sabre – A legendary dwarf smith named Runedane became obsessed with dragons after his family's hold was destroyed by one. He roamed the continent and, in the flames of dragon fire, forged dragon-scale sabres for fighting each different type of dragon. Quenched in the blood of their nemesis, these blades are rumored to guide their owner in combat. With a desire to do good he gifted them to the greatest heroes of the era. Most of these blades have become lost, although they occasionally reappear when there seems to be a great need for them.

These weapons all function as +1 scimitars, that give you immunity to a dragon's frightful presence. Any dragon creature hit with the weapon takes an additional 3d6 damage of the weapon's type.



Each hilt is set with a stone of different color, indicating the nemesis of the blade. You have resistance against the breath weapon of the weapon's nemesis. You can transfer the resistance of one blade to another blade within 30 feet as an action. This effect lasts ten turns, or until dismissed as another action. Dragon-scale sabres may only grant one type of resistance at a time.

They are items of **very rare** quality.

Choker of Shadow Walking – This choker allows you to cast *misty step* as a bonus action. This ability can't be used again until the next dusk and the item only works in shadowy illumination. Chokers such as these are **uncommon**.

Cloak of the Giant Feller – This cloak is a mishmash of different rodent furs stitched together with gold thread and held around the neck by a silver chain. First crafted late during the Giant Wars by a tribe of gnoll gypsies, these cloaks provide their wearer with an increasing bonus to AC, based on the size of their attacker. You receive a +2 bonus to AC against attackers that are a single size category larger, and another +2 for each category after the first. For example, a medium creature would receive a +2 bonus to AC against a large creature, and a +4 bonus to AC against a huge creature. In addition, you may move freely through the space of any giant or giant-blood creature of at least two size categories larger without provoking attacks of opportunity.

These items are **very rare**.

Ring of the Howling Peaks - This evil artifact whispers softly to its owner when held to their ear.
On command, which is a bonus action that expands a charge, the ring shrouds you in a cocoon of wind like the *wind wall* spell. Any melee attack striking you while this mode is active unleashes a blast of wind, which affects them as a *thunderwave* spell (Constitution DC 12 + your proficiency bonus + Charisma modifier). This effect ends the wind wall until it is reactivated. The Ring of the Howling Peaks has five charges that refresh at the dusk of each day.

These rings are **rare**.

Ring of the Earth Serpent - A wooden ring shaped like a coiled viper, carved from the black roots of a willow by a follower of Kiputytto.

When you wear this ring on your left hand you become immune to poison. If you ever put the ring on your right hand instead, the hoop will coil and squeeze the finger right off (inflicting 1d10 points of damage in the process). The finger will melt away into a translucent goo in moments.

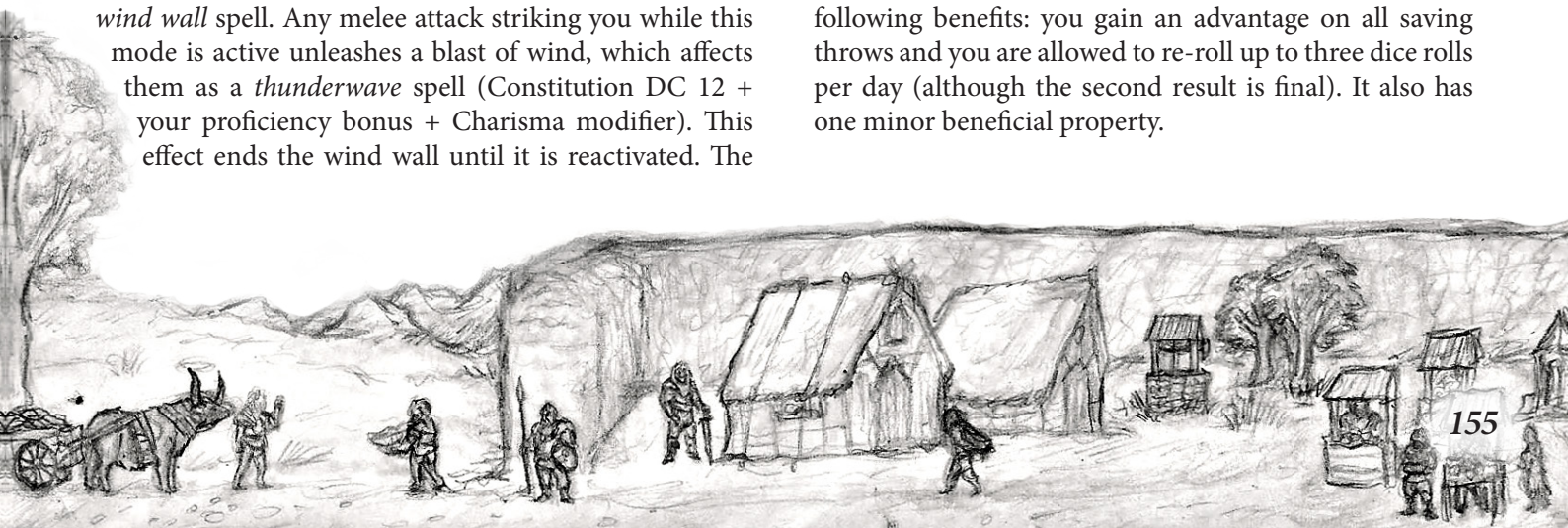
In addition, and only if you are of a non-good alignment, you gain the ability to deliver a poisonous touch. The touched creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned and suffer 1d10 points of poison damage at the start of their turns. After taking damage from the effect they are allowed a new save at the same DC to shrug off the effect for that turn. Two consecutive successful saves dismisses the effect. A creature that dies from this effect melts into goo and returns as a Black pudding. They cannot be raised by any means less than a wish spell. Once used, the ability cannot be used again until the next dusk.

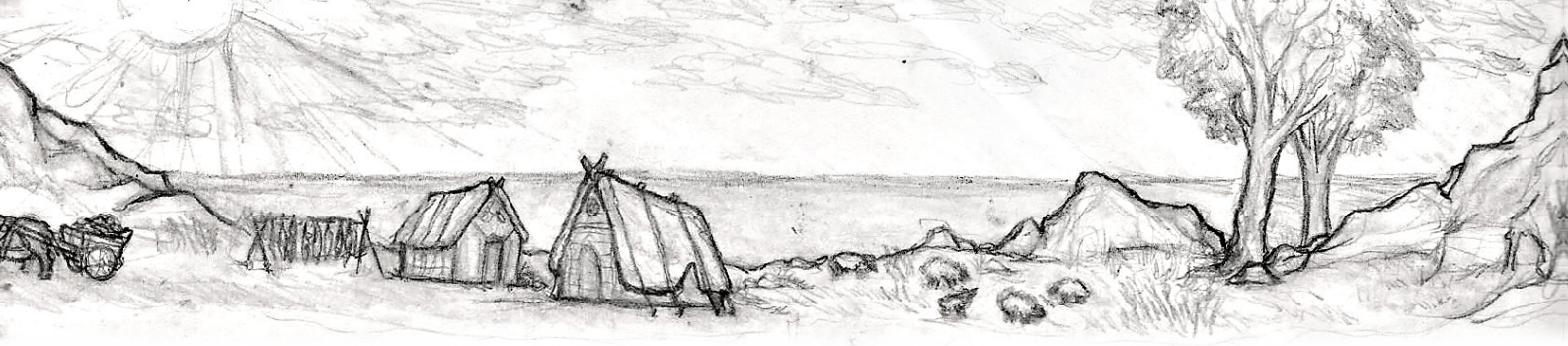
These rings are **legendary**.

New Minor Artifact Descriptions

Clover Coin of Luck - Found by the young halfling Matias when he was still a mortal, this seemingly ordinary bit of metal brings its owner extraordinary luck.

If you are a halfling attuned to the coin you receive the following benefits: you gain an advantage on all saving throws and you are allowed to re-roll up to three dice rolls per day (although the second result is final). It also has one minor beneficial property.





For non-halflings the coin functions as a regular gold piece.

The Crown of Lost Kings – A withered, dark thing with razor sharp spikes, found long ago by the Black Kings and at least one copy is currently in possession of their leader Joranash.

While you are attuned to the crown you have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature that has a language. In addition, the crown has a minor and a major beneficial property, and a minor and a major detrimental property.

An evil creature attuned to the crown gains the following benefits as well: You increase your Charisma score by 2, to a maximum of 24. You may cast the following spells once as an action (with a Wisdom saving throw DC of 13 + your proficiency bonus + Charisma modifier): *hypnotic pattern, geas* and *mass suggestion*. The ability to cast the spells refreshes daily at dusk. While the crown is on your head you have an advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks against undead.

The crown is linked magically to the **Headband of Dark Sight** and allows the wearer to command the creature wearing it. Issuing this command is a bonus action. If a particular command is resisted it may not be uttered again for 24 hours.

Giant Slayer – It is believed that the dwarf god Ilmarinen forged these axes in the fire of the Ashmouth as a gift to his most loyal followers, such as the great dwarf warrior Aleksander.

Any creature can use the axe as if it were a +1 battleaxe. Any giant creature hit with the weapon takes an additional 3d6 damage of the weapon's type. The axe also has a major beneficial and a major detrimental ability.

It provides an additional bonus in the hands of a dwarf that has chosen Ilmarinen as his chief deity and that is attuned to the weapon. The enhancement bonus of the axe increases to +3, and it deals additional damage against all creatures with a size bigger than medium. You also increase your Strength score by 2, to a maximum of 24. The item has a minor beneficial and a minor detrimental property.

Harp of Pike – Said to be crafted by the deft hands of the legendary hero Vainamoinen, from the hair of a horse and the bones of a great pike, this artifact is believed to produce the sweetest music that ears will ever hear.

If you have proficiency in Charisma (Performance) you can use the harp to cast the following spells (Wisdom save DC 12 + your proficiency bonus + Charisma modifier): *haste* (1 charge), *hypnotic pattern* (1 charge) and *mass suggestion* (2 charges). The harp has 3 charges that refresh daily at dawn.

Once per day, you can make up to three listeners cry two tears that turn into pearls with a value of 50 gp each when they hit any surface. In addition, the harp allows you to double your proficiency bonus on perform checks. In addition, the harp has two minor and beneficial properties, and a minor detrimental property.

Headband of Dark Sight – Found close to the Crown of Lost Kings, this leather headband pulses with the same evil light when placed on one's head.

It gives you the ability to see in perfect darkness for up to 60 feet, this includes magical darkness. In addition, it makes you immune to all illusion spells.

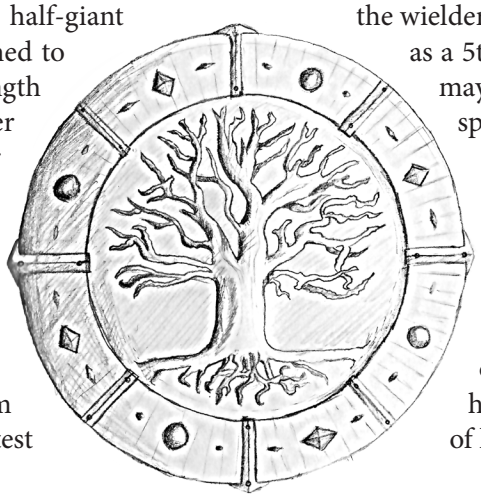
Any non-blind creature that dons the headband permanently loses their sight. To benefit at all from the item's powers you must be permanently blind. In addition, you are mentally forced to obey all orders from the owner of the **Crown of Lost Kings**. You may attempt to resist an order if you succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw (+1 for each disobeyed order). This DC resets to 15 at the dawn of each day. In addition, the headband has a minor beneficial property, and a major detrimental property.



Holy Armor of Ilmatar – Shaped out of Ilmatar's love for mankind, you are immune to critical hits while you are wearing this +3 breastplate. The armor is glamered to distract foes, as in combat the fair maidens on the armor wink, smile and gesture towards the foes of the wearer. Creatures locked in melee combat must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 12 + your proficiency + your Charisma modifier) at the start of each of their turns, or act as if under the effects of a *confusion* spell. In addition, if you are a good human attuned to the item, you gain resistance against all types of elemental damage. It also has a minor beneficial property, and a minor detrimental property.

Megingjord – This thick, mammoth hide belt once belonged to, and was crafted by, the giant king Gromshar the Stone Eye, to aide his most powerful warriors in the upcoming battle against Hiisi. One was stolen by the hero Kullervo who lost it to an unknown half-giant chieftain in a bet. When you are attuned to the item you double your base Strength score, to no maximum (although other Strength enhancing items in your possession might be a limiting factor).

Shield of Mielikki – Carved by the hands of the great treant king Deeproot, in honor of the 111th birthday of the great priestess, the Shield of Mielikki is passed on from generation to generation of her greatest defenders.



If you are of any good alignment, this +2 dragonwood shield allows you to use an action to cast any of the following spells: *barkskin*, *cure wounds* (as a 2nd level spell) and *protection from poison*. You can cast these spells a total of three times every day, they refresh at dawn. You may also spend an action to cast: *freedom of movement*, *cure wounds* (as a 4th level spell) and *stoneskin* (once per day). Once you use the shield to cast any of these spells you cannot cast that spell again from it until the next dawn. In addition, the shield has a minor and a major beneficial property, and a minor detrimental property.

New Major Artifact Descriptions

Aurin - Currently owned by the great Hero Vainamoinen, this magical great maul sings only the truth. A gift from the dwarven god Ilmarinen, it contains the bound spirit of a great dwarf bard.

Aurin functions as a +3 spell steel warhammer. Any evil creature hit by it takes an additional 2d10 damage and it allows its wielder to make an additional attack when using the attack action. It is an intelligent magic item (NG, Intelligence 14, Wisdom 10, Charisma 16) with a desire to further the cause of good and vanquish evil. It speaks dwarven, elven and celestial equally well but it cannot read or write. It has darkvision out to 120 feet and may cast the following spells up to three times per day on the wielder's request: *cure wounds* on wielder (cast as a 5th level spell), *daylight* and *holy aura*. It may cast one such spell per round and the spells refresh every day at dawn.

Only good creatures may wield Aurin. If a creature of another alignment attempts to attune to the item it will vanish and reappear by the side of its creator. The weapon can only be destroyed by the hands of Ilmarinen himself in the sacred forge at the center of his plane.

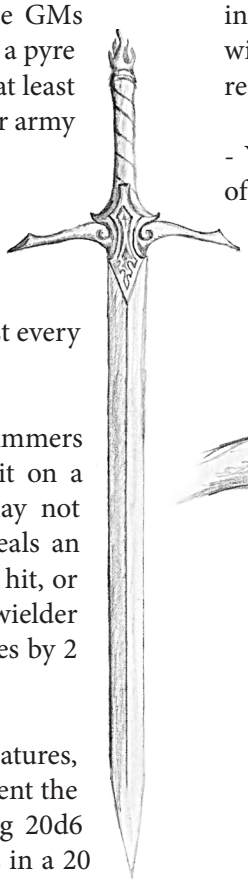
Cloak of Seething Hatred – Crafted from goblin skin and stitched to pauldrons of orc skulls, this cloak was worn by the great dwarf king Siegfrir and was never seen again after his disappearance.

You cause a *fear* in the hearts of all but the most determined orc and goblin. Any such creature laying eye on you must succeed on a wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or flee from you to the best of their ability for one hour. The item also has a minor beneficial and a minor detrimental

property.

If you are a dwarf attuned to the cloak you gain the following benefits: You increase your Charisma score by 4, to a maximum of 24. You may re-roll all missed melee attacks when fighting against orcs and goblins (although the second result is final).

The cloak is *cursed*, in that it instills an unquenchable thirst for battle in the wearer. If at the end of the day the owner has not been in battle, they permanently lose a point of Wisdom. This penalty cannot be reduced as long as they are attuned to the item. When their Wisdom is 1 they become a raging lunatic under the GMs control. The cloak can only be destroyed in a pyre which contains the smoldering remains of at least 1.000 orcs and goblins slain by the wearer or army under their control.



Liekki, Fire's Kiss - Ukko's flaming blade, fabled to be the sharpest ever forged. It has accompanied the god on many of his longest journeys and has been key in almost every one of his victories.

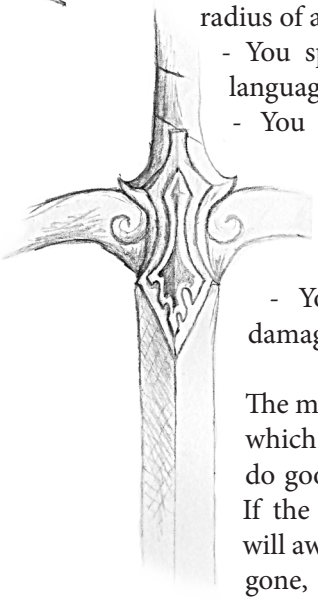
Liekki is a +3 longsword that always shimmers with immense heat. It scores a critical hit on a roll of 16-20. This critical hit chance may not be increased through mortal means. It deals an additional 2d6 fire damage on a successful hit, or double that on a successful critical hit. The wielder of the sword increases all their ability scores by 2 with no maximum.

It may only be wielded by lawful good creatures, if drawn by a creature of a different alignment the sword explodes in a ball of flame, dealing 20d6 holy fire damage to all non-good creatures in a 20 foot radius, after which it is *teleported* 500 miles into a random direction. The sword can only be destroyed when it is fully immersed in the blood of a lawful good deity.

The King Mask – Crafted by the god Ilmarinen at the request of Ukko, this artifact was given to humans in hope of uniting them under a strong leader. The people of the north respectfully call the owner of the mask Vulgaris Magistralis. He is the immortal, untouchable, incarnation of the gods on earth.

As soon as a man puts on the mask he becomes this mythical being and his previous live is forfeit. The person he was is no longer. What most people don't know is that the mask doesn't grant the bearer immortality, instead the mask is passed on from man to man and the role of the Magistralis has been taken on by many separate individuals through the ages. A mighty artifact indeed, with the power to inspire awe and strength, the wearer receives the following advantages:

- You increase your Strength score by 6, to a maximum of 24
- Your voice is audible to all creatures within the radius of a mile, if you so desire
- You speak and understand all spoken languages
- You are immune to mind affecting spells and abilities, including enchantment and illusion spells
- You are is immune to cold and fire
- You gain resistance to all other damage types



The mask has a rudimentary intelligence which it uses to encourage the owner to do good and support the cause of men. If the owner abuses these powers they will awake one morning to find the mask gone, it will vanish and find an owner more to its liking. The mask can only be destroyed by a hammer made from the bones of a giant king in the fires in the heart of a volcano.

The Plate of the Unburned - Forged from the finest adamantine in the fire at the center of the earth, Ilmarinen's full plate functions as a dwarvenforged,



+5 full fortification adamantine full plate that provides its wearer with immunity to fire.

Sampo - The Sampo is a legendary grinder that stands in the home of Ilmatar and Ukko.

It has the amazing power to create one of three substances when the correct command words are spoken: flour, salt or gold powder, a pound of each may be produced with one action. The gold, when melted down and minted, adds up to about 50 gp. After producing the same material ten times, the Sampo becomes inactive until dawn. It can only be destroyed by the act of a woman who acts out of love for a man or child.

Cursed Items

These items provide little to no benefit to the owner - although the owner might think otherwise. They can rarely be found and cannot be sold or purchased in a conventional manner.

The Belt of the Werewolf – These belts of coarse wolf fur are granted to the desperate by dark entities. A belt of the werewolf radiates a weak aura of transmutation at all times, but only functions during moonlit nights.

On moonlit nights you may don the belt as an action. You subsequently start the transformation into a werewolf over the course of 2d4 rounds, during which you foam at the mouth and writhe in agony – helpless as your flesh warps and sprouts bristly fur. As part of the transformation your alignment shifts to chaotic evil unless you succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 15 + 1 per previous use of the item). The belt cannot be removed until you revert to your original form at dawn.

After the transformation you take on a hybrid form. Items of clothing and armor worn by you bend and break – becoming useless. You may switch between animal and hybrid form freely, but may not revert back to your original form.

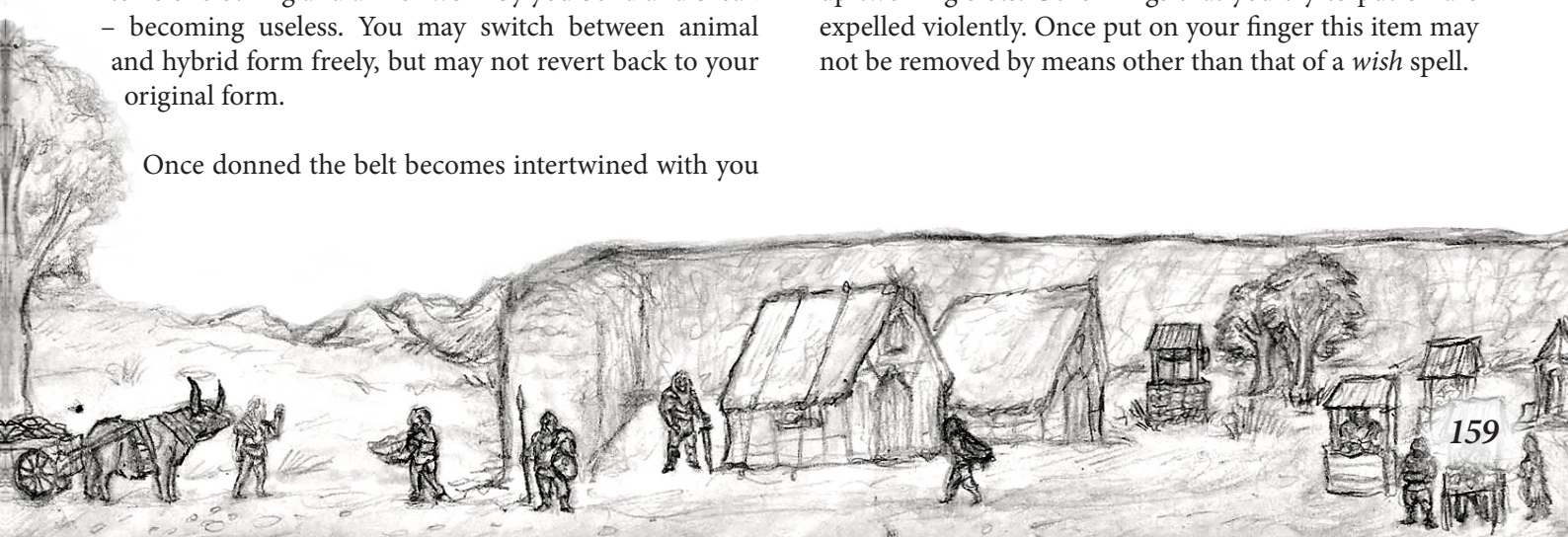
Once donned the belt becomes intertwined with you on a spiritual level, and a *remove curse* spell is required to break the bond. From the moment the item is received you will feel a strong love for it - and a powerful impulse to keep it hidden and safe. On moonlit nights you will feel the urge to don the belt (and must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw every hour of the night to resist - looking at the moon causes automatic failure). You are powerless to destroy the item or break the bond, not even through divine intervention.

A belt of the werewolf can be destroyed by burning it, but doing so causes 1d6 points of fire damage to the creature connected to it for each class level they have. They must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become insane (permanently reducing their wisdom to 1). Their sanity can only be restored by a remove curse spell.

When a cursed one dies their Henki, or the good part of their spirit, is destroyed forever and the belt magically disappears - snatched away by the dark spirit that has created it.

Dainsleif - Forged by the traitor god Hiisi and quenched in his own black blood, this formidable +2 dagger causes wounds that may not be healed by magical means. It causes a critical hit that inflicts triple damage on a roll of 17 to 20. The item is intelligent (CE Intelligence 10, Wisdom 12, Charisma 12) and has darkvision out to 60 feet. It cannot be sheathed until it has taken a life, and it urges its wielder to finish off the dying – friend or ally, it matters not. When it senses a dying creature nearby it may cast *misty step* on itself and its wielder to move closer to it.

Draupnir – Crafted by an insane wizard with a deep hatred for magic items, this ring appears to be a **Ring of Three Wishes**, however, its only ability is that it takes up two ring slots. Other rings that you try to put on are expelled violently. Once put on your finger this item may not be removed by means other than that of a *wish* spell.



SIDEBAR 7
ORIGIN STORIES PART 2 - TIME OF CONFLICT

The sun did not shine upon the gray Netherworld now ruled by Hiisi and Loviathar. The creatures that wandered there were pale, misshapen and as cruel and treacherous as their gods. Fueling their mistrust and jealously the gods were preparing the creatures of the Netherworld for a war. When the day came that the goblins attacked nobody was prepared. Slaughtering indiscriminately they rampaged through the realms of the common folk.

The future would be bleak indeed, if not for a rallying cry. Once again Vainamoinen did god and man a favor as the common folk flocked to his banners. All was well again, as the invaders were driven back into their holes. Hobgoblins, with the blood of human and goblin in their veins, were shunned by good and evil alike. Alone, homeless and rejected, they left for the east. The lives of many were lost, but peace finally returned to Bellög. But the wicked never rest, and the evil gods brooded a new plan for dominion. They made a blood pact with the witch Louhi, the hoarder of all forbidden knowledge, trading some of the power of their blood for the incantations to summon a formidable army.

The mountains moaned and the hills heaved as their roots drank deeply from Hiisi's blood. Stones sprouted horns and hair and hooves and fists and knew no longer their brothers. Violent and cruel was the birth of the giants, as violent and cruel as their master. Hiisi cracked a sly smile, as the very rock rose to do his bidding, and once again the common folk were on the losing side. Many generations would suffer under the rule of the giants and it would take millennia before the yoke of slavery would be broken once again.





Chapter 8: Monsters

Drums thumped and flutes blared, as the fires of night cast the monstrous dancers in ghastly shadows. Jahleera was forced to witness the grim spectacle through thick bars of bone and she had never felt more alone. The fat, sweaty goblin guard laughed loudly, encouraging his kin while blood colored drink sloshed over the rim of a skull he used as a mug. Grimgrowl, their war chief and part-time torturer, kept looking at her from his throne on the other side of the clearing, licking his thick lips with a slimy tongue. She feared that if her friends would not find her soon, she would end up becoming the main course. The goblins sang loudly, in high pitched voices, while their shaman blew ground bones into the bonfire, releasing white smoke and a horrid smell. Then with two much deeper shouts, Vuun and Brül broke through the foliage at the edge of the camp, maul and war axe whirring over their heads. Grimgrowl seemed panicked and afraid, as his screams of help seemed muffled and empty, negated by the effects of Kaari's magic.

Ajatar

Medium monstrosity, usually chaotic evil

A snakelike creature lies tangled between the fallen leaves and dying roots of the great willow. The soft hissing of the snakes drawn to it fills your ears and sends a shiver down your spine. Stale air carries the smell of death and you realize that you are witnessing something that is the root of a great evil.

Armor Class: 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points: 12d8+12 (75 hp)
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft. (6 squares)
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 15
Damage Immunities: Poison
Skills: Stealth +5
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages: Speaks Goblish and Sylvan
Challenge: 3
Organization: Solitary, or accompanied by 1-3 snake swarms

Poison Immunity. The ajatar is immune to the effects of poison and to poison damage.

Woodland Predator. The ajatar has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks in wooded areas.

Snake handling. The ajatar can verbally control the action of reptiles. Although it cannot automatically control intelligent reptilian beasts or dragons, the ajatar does have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks to charm these creatures.

Touch of decay. Plants around the ajatar's lair blacken and die, and eventually even trees bend and whither. All plant-life in an area of 60 feet around the lair die over the course of three agonizing days during which the plant rots and releases a foul odor (creatures in the area other than the ajatar must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for ten minutes). Trees with an age greater than the ajatar's are immune to this effect, although they will still warp and appear diseased. Warm-blooded creatures bitten by the ajatar must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. Those that fail contact a disease that acts like a curse. The creature's skin will start to flake and their flesh will become gelatinous and runny. The target can't regain hit points, and it's hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit points to 0 the creature collapses into a puddle of gray slime. The skeletal structure and gear of the creature remain intact. The curse lasts until removed by remove curse or similar magic.





Actions

Multiattack. The ajatar may attack with its claws and bite every turn. If it hits a target with its claws, the ajatar may grapple it. The DC to escape the ajatar's grip is 13. At the start of its turn the ajatar may bite a grappled victim with advantage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4+3) slashing damage. The target must make on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

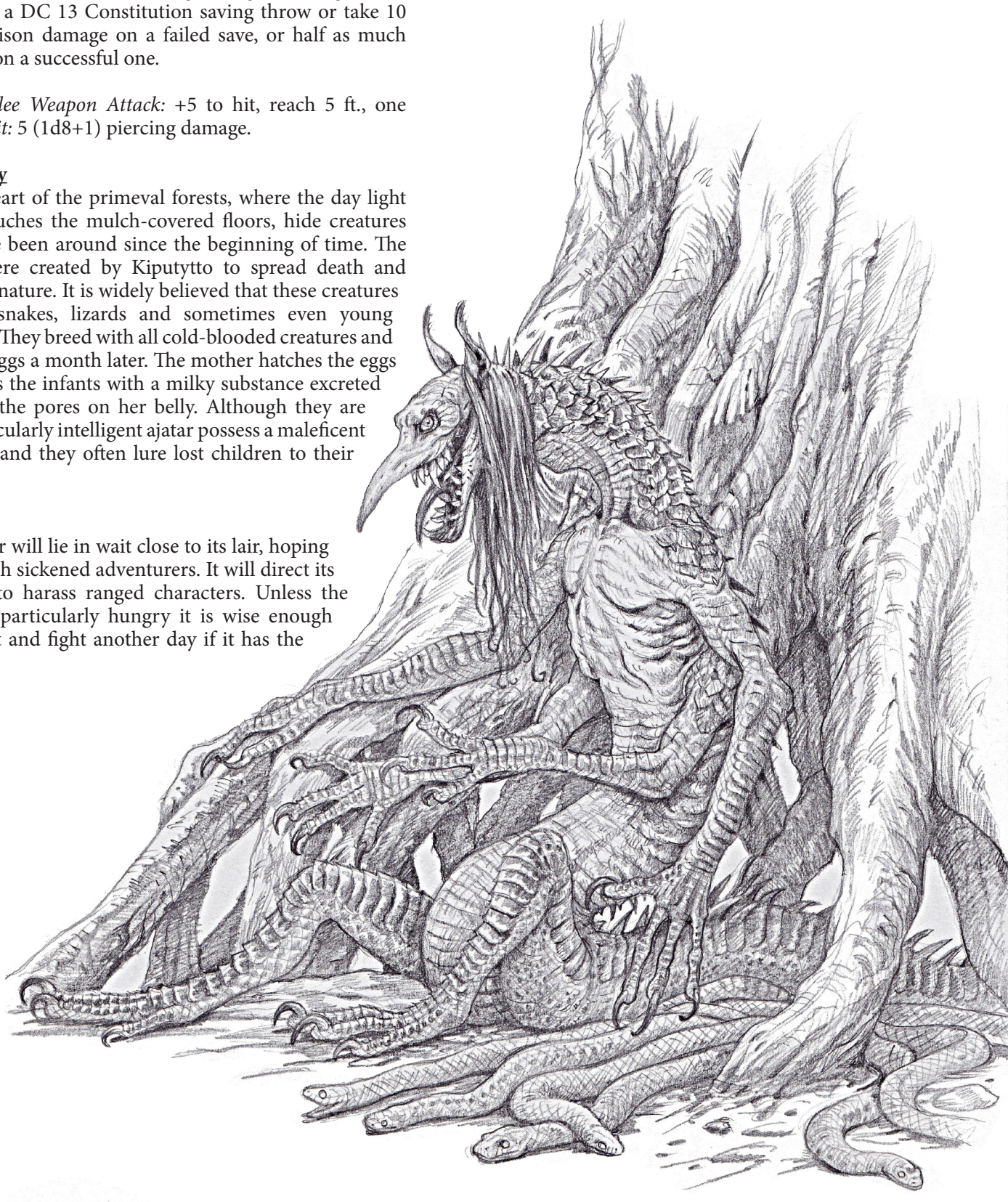
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

The Story

In the heart of the primeval forests, where the day light never touches the mulch-covered floors, hide creatures that have been around since the beginning of time. The ajatar were created by Kiputytto to spread death and decay in nature. It is widely believed that these creatures mother snakes, lizards and sometimes even young dragons. They breed with all cold-blooded creatures and lay 1d3 eggs a month later. The mother hatches the eggs and feeds the infants with a milky substance excreted through the pores on her belly. Although they are not particularly intelligent ajatar possess a maleficent cunning and they often lure lost children to their lairs.

Tactics

The ajatar will lie in wait close to its lair, hoping to ambush sickened adventurers. It will direct its swarms to harass ranged characters. Unless the ajatar is particularly hungry it is wise enough to retreat and fight another day if it has the option.





BUCKRIDER

Medium fiend, always chaotic evil

The night becomes alive with the distant braying of goats and the angry shouts of men. A group of ghostly riders emerges over the hill, the hooves of their giant goats beating at thin air. Their mounts have furs black as night with eyes kindled by flame. You count eight men clad in billowing cloaks and black leather, faces hidden behind dark bandanas.

Armor Class: 13 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points: 8d8+16 (59 hp) Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10
Damage Resistances: Fire (while mounted)
Skills: Animal handling +3
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages: Speaks one of the common languages and Abyssal
Challenge: 1/2 (1 when mounted)
Organization: Solitary, or party (2-8) led by Black Captain



Blazing Saddle. While mounted on their bucks any melee weapons a buckrider wields become magical and deal and extra fire damage. They are immune to fear while mounted and gain resistance to fire.

Night Haunt. A buckrider, including their mount and up to fifty pounds of gear, can shift from the plane of Shadow to the Material Plane as an action, and shift back again as an action. They can only use each of these abilities on moonless nights and only once per month.

Vanish into the Night. When a buckrider is killed on the material plane he reappears with his mount on the plane of Shadow a month later. If a buckrider is killed while not in the saddle he is destroyed forever.

Actions

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+2) slashing damage. If mounted the rider deals an extra 3 (1d6) points of fire damage.



Buckrider Black Captain

Medium fiend, always chaotic evil
Armor Class: 14 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points: 16d8+32 (115 hp) Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10
Damage Resistances: Fire (while mounted)
Skills: Animal handling +3, Deception +2, Perception +3
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages: Speaks and reads one of the common languages, Goblish and Abyssal
Challenge: 4 (5 when mounted)
Organization: Solitary, or party (2-8) led by Black Captain

Black captain are fearless leaders of the buckriders. They follow all rules of their lesser kin but strike with much greater fury. Captains emerge once every hundred years when a noble hero strays from the righteous path and turns to evil.

Actions
Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks with its axe.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+3) slashing damage. If mounted the captain deals an extra 3 (1d6) points of fire damage on each hit.

The Story
Many people on the continent live of the land and depend mostly on the generosity of nature to provide for their families. In times of hardship, during long winters and cold springs, they will resort to desperate measures to put food on the table. Hiisi, the wicked deity of lies seduces these individuals, convincing them to sell their soul in order to protect their families. Some do succumb, to promises of riches and power. These men become buckriders and they appear mostly in southern parts of Kesma and Merma. The Buckriders roam the countryside on moonless nights and attack all they find indiscriminately. Their arrival is generally announced by the braying of goats and the thunder of hooves. Farms are burned and livestock released. Victims are tortured, and their riches taken or destroyed. Buckriders look like regular humans with a pale complexion and a dead, emotionless look in their eyes. They usually hide their face behind a mask or cover it in soot. Their goats are as large as warhorses, with coarse black fur and glowing red eyes.

Becoming a Buckrider
Any human or half-human creature can become a buckrider. To do so they must travel to abandoned crossroads on a moonless night, fully undress and cover themselves in soot. To complete the ritual, they sacrifice a young black goat to Hiisi by slitting its throat. If the sacrifice and person are deemed worthy the dark god himself will appear to initiate them into the ranks of the buckriders. Once the ritual of initiation is complete the character ironically loses all memories they had of their previous life. The dark god will leave a black robe for them to wear and will summon a buck to serve as their mount. After the ritual is complete their business is concluded, although many buckriders continue make sacrifices to honor Hiisi.

Tactics
Buckriders will only attack on moonless nights, making full use of their ability to see in the dark. They will prioritize attacks on enemies that carry light sources, hoping to gain advantage. When they become dismounted or when their bucks die, buckriders will flee in blind panic unless they are commanded to do otherwise by a black captain.

Buckrider Buck

Medium beast, always neutral evil
Armor Class: 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points: 3d10+3 (25 hp) Speed: 60 ft. (12 squares)
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 6
Saving Throws: Wisdom
Damage Resistance: Fire
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages: Understand Abyssal
Challenge: 1/2
Organization: One plus rider

Carrier of Evil. While a buckrider is mounted on a buck, the buck gains a flying speed of 60 feet. If the buckrider would fall from the buck, or dismounts purposefully, it plummets to the ground.

Actions
Headbutt. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4+3) bludgeoning damage.



Dragon (and Kobolds)

The tiny lizard creatures hiss menacingly while they fling rocks down from their perch above the gorge. The traders scream in panic as they dive for cover. Alarm bells ring. A tall but spindly kobold wrapped in red cloth and strings of teeth appears behind its comrades. It whines a strange song and when it hits the last note the air resonates with the beating of monstrous wings. The dust cloud above the battlefield ignites and from it emerges a ten-ton mass of red scales and flame.

Among the oldest rulers of the continent were the ancient dragons, who loosely cooperated in a network of kingdoms each ruled by a great wyrm. These creatures were considered living gods, with a direct spiritual connection to the elements. Their people feared and loved them in equal amounts, but their neighbors hated the dragons for their power and avarice. For centuries the reign of the dragons was unchallenged, until alliances between giant chieftains caused them to become more and more aggressive. As the strength of the giants increased they grew bolder and encroached upon the territory of the dragon kingdoms, sparking a long conflict. One by one their great kingdoms fell victim to the hordes from the north. Dwarves from the south noticed and moved in on other fronts, drawn by the lust for gold and treasure. Unable to fight off the enemies on two sides one by one the dragon kings either fell or fled. Eventually Smaragdus, the last of the ancient dragon kings, retreated across the Solarian Sea from his hold in Mount Earthfang and cursed the land that passed under his wings. He blamed the dragons in his court for his defeat and took away their wings as a punishment. The few that escape his wrath spread across the continent. Some of them found new servants, others pledged their strength to new masters.

The dragon kings also left behind many of their favored servants; thousands of small, stick-thin lizard creatures commonly called kobolds.

Kobolds are about the size of halflings, but weigh even less. They have large heads and short snouts with sneering mouths full of short but razor-sharp teeth. A short tail helps kobolds to balance their bent frames. The scales of kobolds range from black to reddish brown, but they often use natural dyes to add coloration to their bodies, emulating the dragon they worship, and their narrow eyes range from yellow to green. Female kobolds tend to grow larger than males and grow bony ridges on their back and skull.

The culture prominent among kobolds to this day resembles that of their dragon ancestors. Material possessions are important above anything else and they determine the measure of one's worth. Shamans, sorcerers with elemental powers, often lead tribes and extort their followers through fear mongering and social control. A





kobold colony functions like an insect hive, with a kobold matriarch at its center. The matriarch and the shaman are often mates and produce all of the tribe's offspring. Kobold religion is primitive, with a focus on song and the sacrifice of living creatures. They have often not seen true dragons for generations, but venerate bones, scales, statues and paintings. Some tribes have also taken to the worship of the element linked to their dragon ancestor. Kobolds speak a dialect of draconian, but they do not write. Instead they rely on shamans that preserve their oral history through story and song.

Few kobolds see reason to abandon their tunnels and in fact many of them grow up unaware of the world outside. They are extremely cowardly, xenophobic and keep to themselves. Kobolds can be encountered while exploring ancient cave- and tunnel systems. They maintain large colonies in a cave system at the top of mount Earthfang and on the Searing Rock. Warrens are protected by miles of dark, featureless maze-like tunnels and simple but effective traps.

Dragons follow the rules for dragons as stated in the general rules.
Kobolds follow the rules for kobolds as stated in the general rules.

Elemental

Like the prow of a ship through the gentle sea, the earthen giant waded through the hillside. Without any effort at all it cleared the trees and the rubble away from the mouth of the tomb. Ghan yawned loudly while his companion Kaari directed the summoned creature. When the entrance was free, Kaari nodded to the earth elemental and whispered thanks in a strange tongue, before it vanished back into the earth from whence it came.

Creatures born of the elements can be found across the continent and on all planes. They originate on the Tuonela, which is a swirling chaos of all types of elements. The first elements have sprung from the entity that forms the core of the plane, the mysterious being known as the Allfather. True Elementals are rare and powerful beings, seldom encountered by mortals. The Primordial Giants themselves are a prime example of such entities. Over the course of millennia these creatures have birthed and manifested countless kin and children of various levels of intellect and ability. These common elemental creatures still have a connection to the primordial giants but only have a fraction of their strength of purity. Although the story is as ancient as time itself, and many sages debate its accuracy, we've decided to include the legend of the birth of the primordial giants in sidebar 8.

Some ancient tribes and cults believe elementals to be the key to divinity. They often worship one element over others, but rare instances of groups that worship a combination of elements exist. To learn ancient secrets they chant and sacrifice, often by letting an element devour their gift. Some sorcerers share a powerful connection to the children of the Allfather and are known to lead some of these cults with fanatical devotion. Clerics that worship one or more of the elements receive spells from the primordial giant connected to that element.

Elementals follow the rules for elementals as stated in the general rules.







Giant horse

Huge beast, always neutral

Gentle neighing awoke the party from a sound sleep. Jahleera smiled and let out a controlled cheer. A cold breeze brushed past her as she separated the flaps of her tent and peeked out into the morning light. She saw several wild horses grazing close to the camp, their manes rustling in the wind. Then her jaw dropped. Accompanying the herd was a towering grey mare, which dwarfed the largest horse she'd ever seen. It looked back at her with an intelligent glimmer in its eyes.

Armor Class: 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points: 12d12+36 (125 hp) **Speed:** 50 ft. (10 squares)
Abilities: Str 22, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 8
Saving Throw: Wisdom
Senses: Passive Perception 10
Languages: -
Challenge: 5
Organization: Domesticated or herd (6-18 +1d4 young)

Of the North. Giant horses are acclimated to the frigid conditions of the northern plains.

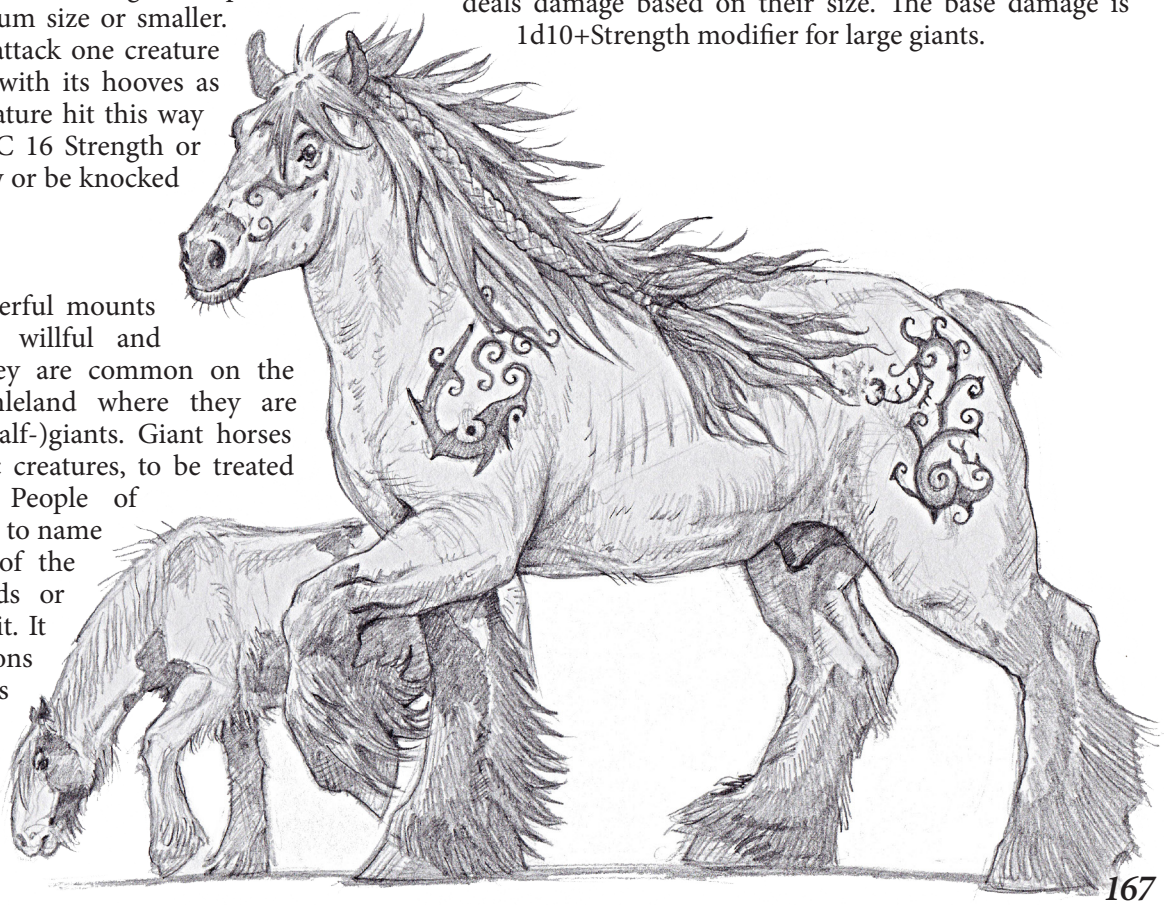
Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 28 (4d10+6) bludgeoning damage.

Trample. If it spends its turn moving in a straight line, the giant horse may move through the spaces of any creatures of medium size or smaller. The giant horse may attack one creature or object it tramples with its hooves as a bonus action. A creature hit this way must succeed on a DC 16 Strength or Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

The Story

These horses are powerful mounts that are notoriously willful and difficult to tame. They are common on the great plains of Gamleland where they are favored mounts of (half-)giants. Giant horses are powerful, majestic creatures, to be treated with great respect. People of Gamleland go as far as to name the dominant horse of the herd and send druids or adepts to parley with it. It is only in rare occasions that giant horses show unprovoked aggression. Despite their size and speed they prefer to avoid combat, as they are gentle creatures. If their young are threatened they become tornadoes of destruction, trampling entire villages in their rage.



Giant

Cheer for the giant kingdom of old, hail our ancestors and the Dark One. As the blood of the infidels dries on their throats the black night turns red. Woo, Children of the Father, Woo, Children of the Mother, as the moon eclipses and the howling of the wolves drowns their screams.

It is common belief that the giants were created by the evil god Hiisi in an attempt to turn the tide in the war against the common folk. The power of the giants proved to be formidable, however - they were stubborn and eventually rejected the blood pact that had given them life. Most giants look like muscular humanoids, save for their powerful horns. These vary from individual to individual and from tribe to tribe. Hornless half-giants are rare and mockingly called 'skam' by their kin. A majority of giants speak Gamli, or Old Gamli if they have an intelligence score of ten or higher. Many of them learn the languages of other evil creatures or a common language as well.

The following additional rules apply to all creatures with the giant-subtype:

Attack Almost all giants have a natural gore attack, which deals damage based on their size. The base damage is 1d10+Strength modifier for large giants.



Hatred. Giants have a fierce hatred of followers of the Father and Mother. When attacking an individual identified as a follower of Ukko or Ilmatar they may make a special attack with an attack bonus equal to their Charisma modifier (if any) and bonus damage equal to their hit dice. They may use this ability once per long rest per five hit dice.

Detect Followers of Ukko and Ilmatar. Giants can detect followers of Ukko and Ilmatar within 30 feet by smell.

Tactics

Giants are generally aggressive and unpleasant. They enjoy the thrill of battle and often initiative ranged combat by peppering opponents with various rocks before charging. If possible, they will prioritize attacking followers of Ukko and Ilmatar.



Goblins

Several short black arrows sailed past the party. With gasps they turned around, drawing shields, bows and wands. On the edge of the forest, on an earthen wall of refuse and mulch, stood three small bent, ugly creatures with short bows, and three equally ugly creatures with hooked spears. One of them squeaked an insult broken common: "Die you ugly long legs!"

Goblins are wicked slave drivers with a great hatred for the common folk: dwarves and gnomes. Many goblins have an average intelligence, a cunning nature and a natural affinity towards maliciousness.

A goblin is a deformed creature that does not grow taller than a human child. They have broken white, greyish yellow or dark skin and their beady eyes are black, red or milky yellow. Despite their unseemly shape goblins are quick and nimble creatures. Evil creatures favor goblin slaves as they are easy to bully into obedience - but will not think twice about betraying even their own kin. Goblins dress in stolen armor or filthy leather rags in earthen colors, or in whatever armor or clothing their slavers dress them. They favor ranged weapons and spears over weapons that force them into the reach of taller, stronger foes.

History

It is generally accepted that goblins once ruled a mighty empire that spanned over the entire continent of Bellög. Deep tunnels and gloomy forests were used by tribes to travel great distances during both day and night. A fearsome goblin king, Gik the Great, bullied the tribes into submission from his immense palace in the mountains of Vuorilas. The goblins raided lesser races and traded the slaves and spoils with a forgotten ally in the bowels of the earth. How the goblin empire came to fall is the stuff of legends but according to the dwarves, goblins brought their demise upon themselves by disrespecting their chief deity: the trickster-god Hiisi. His lies turned the chieftains against each other in a conflict that lasted many generations. One by one the tribes rebelled against their king and, eventually, their empire fell apart. In the end many of the tribes were expelled from the safety of the deep darkness and were forced to find new caves and tunnels closer to the surface. The dwarves believe that to this day Gik awaits a chance to reclaim his empire once again, but the secret goblin tunnels have never been found.



Today
Goblins have no empire or place of their own on the continent. Their lairs are only temporary homes, which allow them to stay mobile. By day, goblins hide in caves and crevices close to dwarven, gnomish or human settlements. When night starts to fall they abandon their lairs to ambush caravans and, in desperate times, villages. Being both cowardly and physically weak creatures, goblins use their natural cunning to pick their prey carefully, often attacking weakened travelers with overwhelming numbers. They kill adult men without remorse and force defenseless women into slavery. Children are usually eaten, sacrificed or a combination thereof. According to ancient tradition a lively slave-trade still takes place in underground complexes ran by more powerful tribes.

Stronger monsters, such as giants and orcs, often bully goblin tribes into submission, taking a large share of their loot. Although simple-minded overlords simply order goblins around, using them as a first line of defense, smarter creatures may train goblins for specific purposes, such as tracking or trap making.

Culture
Goblins are cruel bullies. They tend to leave their filth where they go and have very little respect for the possessions of others. Goblin lairs are no more than disgusting holes in the ground. The strongest goblin rules the tribe through force and extortion. Personal treasures are often stolen by stronger tribesmen, who squirrel it away from their chief. Despite their intelligence goblins seldom produce anything but garbage and simple weapons, although they can be pushed into manual labor by slavers. They favor the use of stolen weapons and armor over their goblin-craft counterparts. Goblins are notoriously greedy and will band together with any evil creatures to attack villages in exchange for gold or other rewards. Given the opportunity the goblins may turn on their former allies because of their treacherous, selfish nature and disrespect towards anything but themselves.

Goblin art takes the form of primitive dancing, bone carvings and tattoos. They do not write, but pass on legends and stories through their shamans. The shaman is an important figure in the tribe and his support can make a goblin chief a foe to be reckoned with. Goblins hold a deep racial grudge against gnomes and dwarves, hating them for living in the earth like they do. They attack them on sight and consider their tough flesh a delicacy. Other races, even other goblins, are regarded as enemies. Locations of goblin lairs are kept hidden even for allies in fear of an inevitable incursion.

Religion
Hiisi, lord of lies, is the chief deity of goblins. He demands that his followers lie and cheat. In his honor the goblins stack and decorate the bones of their tortured victims. A true servant of Hiisi should only think of himself and his master. Sacrifices are prepared by starving and scaring them before they are burned on altars or dissected. The goblins dance wildly and sing snatches of long forgotten chants. It is a rarity for goblins to perform other religious ceremonies. Their shamans oversee their sacrifices and often rule tribes together with a physically strong warchief.

Naming conventions
Goblins are named by their tribe shaman, who has a long list of names in his head at any given time (goblins are born in litters). It helps that goblin names are often simplistic and consist of a single syllable. These names are kept for the rest of their lives but are sometimes augmented with additional titles or fearsome nicknames.
Sample names:
Male: Gil, Gnarl, Shriek, Tik, Urk.
Female: Edi, Inke, Ine, Rish, Ziki.





Goblin Tribesman
Small humanoid (goblinoid), usually chaotic evil
Armor Class: 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points: 2d6 (7 hp) Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10
Skills: Stealth +3
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages: Speaks Goblish
Challenge: 1/8
Organization: Solitary, Tribe (4-40)
Possessions: Worn leather armor, stolen dagger, sling, pouch containing 10 bullets, pouch containing various trinkets and a few copper pieces.

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Actions
Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range (30/120) ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

Goblin Chief
Small humanoid (goblinoid), usually chaotic evil
Armor Class: 17 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points: 3d8+3 (21 hp) Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11
Skills: Deception +2, Intimidation +2, Sleight of hand +4, Stealth +4
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages: Speaks Goblish
Challenge: 1
Organization: Solitary, Tribe of Goblins (10-20) lead by Goblin Chief
Possessions: Chain shirt, wooden shield, shortsword, 2 daggers, thieves' tools, potion of invisibility, pouch containing various trinkets: some bird feathers, a broken lock, shiny rocks, a tiny golden skull (20 gp), a platinum piece and an odd collection of other coins.

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn the goblin can deal an extra 2d6 points of damage to one creature it hit with an attack if it has advantage on the roll. It doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and it doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions
Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

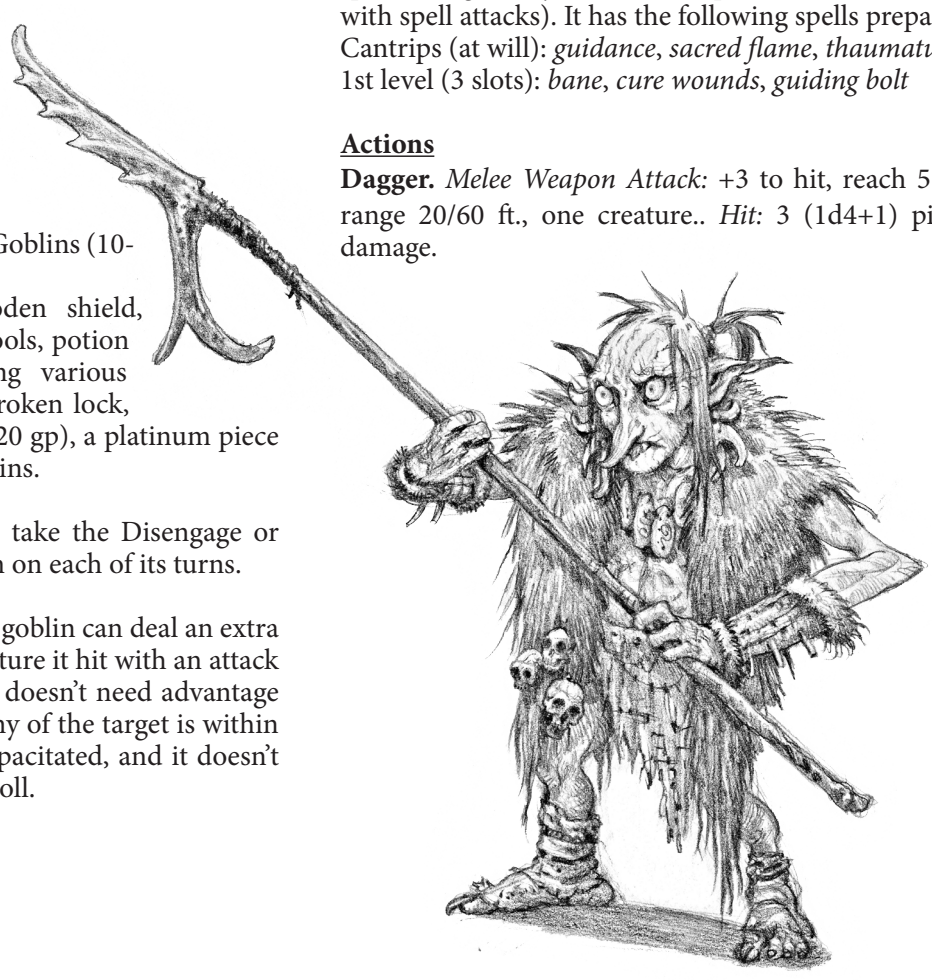
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range (30/120) ft., or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Goblin Shaman
Small humanoid (goblinoid), usually chaotic evil
Armor Class: 11 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points: 2d6 (7 hp) Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10
Skills: Deception +2, Medicine +4, Religion +3, Stealth +3
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages: Speaks Goblish and one of the common languages or Orcish
Challenge: 1/4
Organization: Solitary or as part of Goblin Tribe
Possessions: Filthy rags, bracelets made of various bones, sacrificial dagger, spell component pouch, holy symbol (Hiisi), pouch containing various trinkets and a few silver and gold pieces.

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Spellcasting. The shaman is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (3 slots): *bane*, *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*

Actions
Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one creature.. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.





Hobgoblins

"I think it's in my best interest to walk away, Master Dwarf." The hobgoblin trader, muscular frame perfectly accentuated by smooth leather armor and a robe of green silk, already started to turn away from Vuun and to another patron admiring his stall. "Okay, okay.." the dwarf sighed. The hobgoblin could not hide a sly grin, which bared one of his fangs. With one hand, adored by three studded silver rings, he slowly placed the curved dagger back on the counter. "That's 2500 gold coins please."

In the east the hobgoblins rule. They are a rough, warlike people of cannibalistic savages with a strict culture based on racial pride and honor. Hobgoblins are slightly shorter than humans, with sharp features and yellow or beige skin. Males have reddish or blueish noses. Many file their teeth to resemble fangs.

History

Although formidable warriors and talented tacticians, the hobgoblins could not live up to the expectations of their evil creators. When the gods had no more use for them they were simply discarded. Broken and alone, they left for the lands in the east, over the mountains, and found their own gods during this pilgrimage. Instructed by their new overlords, the San, they erected a mighty temple in the mountains and followed a path along the holy river which they decorated with impressive statues of their new pantheon. They called their new land Sukkō and their capitol Hōkekkan.

The hobgoblin dynasty dates back thousands of years, finding its origins when the first hobgoblins crossed the mountains. The other peoples had difficulties trusting the warmongering hobgoblins and it took many years to form feeble alliances out of necessity. The bugbears, who had lived in Sukkō before the hobgoblins, feared their fire and strange masks. They were broken and forced into slavery.

Today

Most hobgoblins live in their own country. Under the tyrannical reign of Emperor Tjung-Gi they are kept under tight control and relations with the common races have improved. However, hobgoblins only need the slightest reason for provocation to start skirmishes. This makes them unreliable allies to the common folk. Many of them hate and fear the hobgoblins, treating them with disrespect at best, or outright hostility at worst. Yet they trade, although not always fairly, with the common folk in most larger cities. The greatest enemies of their dynasty remain the bugbears, who wage guerrilla war on their masters. Hobgoblins have a grudging respect for the common folk, which is often clouded by their dismay for all creatures different from themselves. It is without question that if it were not for the firm rule of their emperor, the warlords would surely wage war on the common folk.

Culture

Family honor is extremely important to hobgoblins. They are a proud and vain people that are quick to feel disadvantaged by others. Every hobgoblin serves a local lord, or leads a group of warriors himself. They live of agriculture, cattle farming and slavery. As hobgoblins wage constant war, men who cannot wield a weapon are sold as slaves or meat by their own family. Each warlord has a regiment of elite warriors called samurai. These killing machines are equipped with the highest quality weapons, receiving long training and are extensively brainwashed to ensure their utter devotion. Many of them are eunuchs.

Although hobgoblins are often evil by nature they excel in following orders from their superiors. Despite this trait they are by no means trustworthy. Hobgoblins cheat, rob, or even kill anyone they can get away with. Their cultural focus on honor strictly forbids accusing anyone of a crime they are not surely guilty of with the punishment of death. For rich hobgoblins this means that they can often get rid of political opponents by means of bribe or threat. They are often intelligent and have a reputation for being sly merchants. Although hobgoblins have trouble expressing emotions verbally, they are famous for expressing themselves in sculptures and art. It not uncommon for rich hobgoblin



males to have several wives, which they tend to treat like servants.

Religion
Hobgoblins worship their own pantheon of gods, the San. They believe that everything has a soul, and a protective spirit, that deserve their prayers. In the center of every city and village stands a stone temple with an access to the east, or north, where offers are placed.

Naming conventions
Hobgoblins are named by the patriarch of their family, often after one of their kin. When they reach the age of three they will add the name of their clan. They abhor the use of aliases and view them as both a sign of weakness and dishonor.

Sample birth names:
Male: Haru, Kin, Nobu, Orochi, Shin
Female: Arisu, Eri, Hiro, Mana, Suzu

Sample clan names:
-Ando, -Gi, -Ishi, -Kondo, -Ota

Sample full names:
Male: Nori-Kudo
Female: Mana-Arai

Hobgoblin Low-Born Soldier
Medium humanoid (goblinoid), usually lawful evil
Armor Class: 13 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points: 2d8+2 (11 hp)
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages: Speaks Hob
Challenge: 1/4
Organization: Regiment (4-6) lead by Captain
Possessions: Studded leather armor, heavy spear, 4 javelins, uniform, pouch containing several coins, signet ring with sigil, necklace of teeth.

Actions
Heavy spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 +1) piercing damage, or 7 (1d10+1) piercing damage if used with 2 hands.

Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range (30/120) ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Lycanthrope

The naked man frothed at the mouth as the strange belt squeezed around his stomach. Black hair, first thin, then thicker, spread along his convulsing body. Then he collapsed in pain and his pained scream transformed into a piercing howl halfway through.

The curse of lycanthropy has a long history on the continent. The first natural lycanthropes are believed to be a creation of the nature goddess Mielikki and have appeared among the common folk since the dawn of time. Lycanthropy can be spread naturally, passing on from parent to child, or a victim can become afflicted through the bite of a natural lycanthrope. Some folk that are desperate enough may become lycanthropes through dark deals with evil entities. These lycanthropes can only change shape through magic granted by a cursed belt of animal fur.

Although lycanthropes are feared by the common folk they are also pitied and, in some cases, revered. Depending on the source of their affliction their family might see it as either a curse or a disease. A young man that is afflicted by the curse while protecting his home and family will often continue to live among his family but will be chained up in a secure place when the moon is full. If his mind starts to wander he is kept in this safe place and fed regularly.

Power is a treacherous thing and some folk are never content with what they have, turning to ancient spirits for guidance. Sometimes their pleas are answered in the form of a cursed item called The Belt of the Werewolf (see chapter 7). Those that become afflicted in this manner are ostracized and shamed. Depending on how they learn the truth, loved ones may try various remedies to rid them of the curse, but the only true way is to destroy their belt by burning it. Cursed ones keep the belt hidden somewhere safe, often deep in forests or caves, and many of them rather die than reveal the location to their would-be savior.

Lycanthropes are common in the wooded hills surrounding Kesma but may appear anywhere.



Mongrel Gnolls

Pleasant music came from inside the alehouse, but there was still one obstruction that kept our heroes from entering. Ghan squinted his eyes at the hulking brute that blocked their path. Although the head of the creature seemed like that of a gnoll, it was attached to a much more lanky and muscular frame. The mongrel folded its ape-like arms across its barrel chest and snarled at the smaller gnoll. "Get lost shorty."

During the period known as the Giant Wars the gnolls roamed the lands as freely as they do in the current age. Many of their tribes were hesitant to involve themselves in the great war, opting to stay neutral in the conflict when possible. Slavery, widely practiced among the giants, was something that many gnolls rejected instinctively, as it was in stark contrast to the freedom they value so greatly. But exceptions did exist. In the far north, tribes that roamed the plains sometimes joined sides with the giants for reasons of greed or different personal convictions. As the Giant Kingdoms expanded they followed eagerly, managing supply trains and acting as soldiers of fortune. These gnolls mixed freely among human slaves and giant kin, becoming a true breeding folk of mongrels. Unlike their common cousins, mongrels are aggressive, lanky, muscular and do not follow the Shining Path. In many ways they behave like giants and value strength over wisdom.

Mongrels follow the rules for gnolls as stated in the general rules.

Tactics

Mongrels follow orders well and often follow the commands of a leader of some sorts. When undirected they charge and try to swarm strong looking foes.





Old Red Eyes

A large, black hound with bristling fur and foaming muzzle darts from the shadows. An aura of blackness surrounds the heaving creature, but perhaps its most unsettling feature are its burning blood red eyes. It lunges at you with a howl and fear casts itself over you like a hunter's net.

Armor Class: 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points: 12d10+76 (132 hp)
Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 14
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages: Speaks one of the common languages
Challenge: 4
Organization: Solitary

Alternate Form. If its not in direct light old red eyes can use its action to polymorph into a medium shadowy humanoid. In this form it is no longer able to assert physical influence over its environment. It is weightless and has a flying speed of 30 feet, it can hover and enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, old red eyes can do so without squeezing, and it can pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and it is immune to all nonmagical damage. If old red eyes comes in direct contact with light it materializes in the nearest available open space as a bonus action.

Scent. Old red eyes has an advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Shadow Blend. While it is in dim illumination, attacks against old red eyes have a 25% miss chance. It has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks in the dark.

Gaze of Tangible Fear. When a creature that can see old red eyes' eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of it, old red eyes can force it to make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw if it is not incapacitated and it can see the creature. Creatures that fail the saving throw move at half speed and have a disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks for 8 turns. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is stunned for one turn and it suffers the other penalties for the remaining 7 turns. Creatures that save against the ability are immune to the effect for the next 24 hours. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it cannot see old red eyes until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at old red eyes in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

Actions
Multiattack. Old red eyes may bite twice on each of its turn.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d6 +8) piercing damage.





The Story
Old Red Eyes stands about 6 feet high at the shoulders while in hound form, and about 7 feet while in humanoid form, in which it resembles a featureless shadowy figure with eyes of red flame.

It can speak one of the common languages - but poorly, in a smoky, raspy manner. Sometimes, when a murderer or rapist dies after being burned or flayed, and the stars are right the evil part his soul (the Itse) returns to the world as a shadowy creature some call old red eyes. Luckily for the common folk these instances are so rare that most people believe that old red eyes is but a single entity. Old red eyes appear in populated areas where a great act of evil has sown despair among the people. They use their mastery of shadows to stay hidden and come out at night to steal young children and feast on their flesh.

Old red eyes originate on the Shadow plane and cross over to the Material plane where the borders between realities are thinnest. As they lack the abilities to transport between the planes themselves they often stay on the material plane until they meet their demise at the blade of a hero. Some evil wizards or thieves' guilds make pacts with old red eyes, as when properly rewarded with flesh and fear the creatures make effective assassins or guards.

ORC

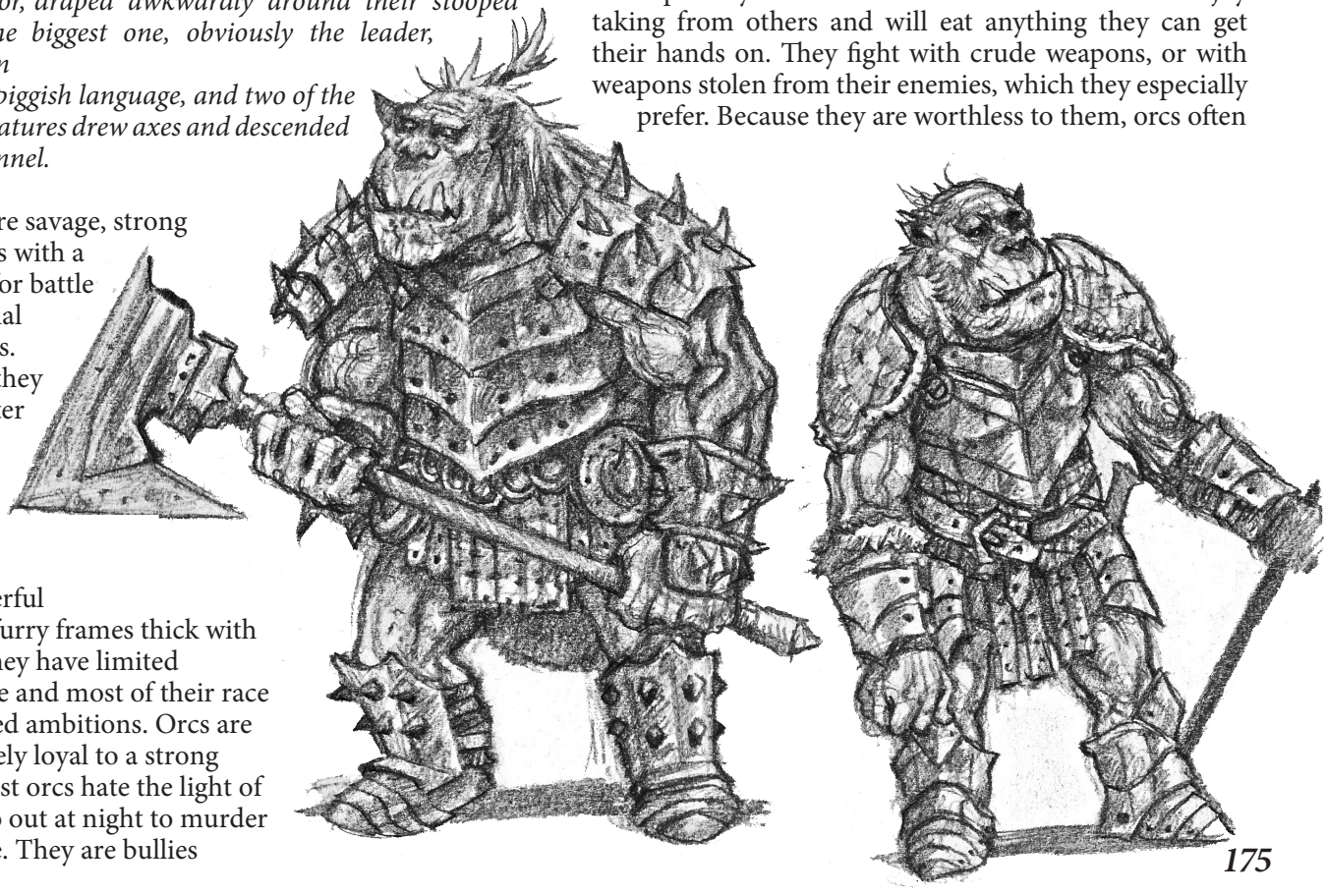
Four broad shouldered, ape-like humanoids stood clustered around the cave entrance. They were clad in heavy armor, draped awkwardly around their stooped frames. The biggest one, obviously the leader, grunted an order in a piggish language, and two of the smaller creatures drew axes and descended into the tunnel.

The orcs are savage, strong humanoids with a great lust for battle and material possessions. Although they grow shorter than an average human they develop long, powerful arms and furry frames thick with muscle. They have limited intelligence and most of their race have limited ambitions. Orcs are often fiercely loyal to a strong leader. Most orcs hate the light of day and go out at night to murder and pillage. They are bullies and threaten and maim weaker creatures for sheer enjoyment. They often arm themselves with looted armor and weapons, favoring them over items from their own crude forges.

History
The history of orcs remains a well-kept secret. According to legend they were created by their goddess Loviathar to cause pain and suffering to others. For years they have built fortresses and makeshift villages on the mountainsides, underground and in the deep woods. They keep the location of their lairs secret, even to other tribes, as orcs enjoy slaying their kin if they can get away with it.

Today
Orcs are still common in the mountains of Vuorilas, although they roam the other lands of the common people as well. In Sukkō wild orcs are rare, as many orcs dislike the moist, warm climate and hobgoblins have little patience for them. They live of the hunt and supply themselves with plunder. As they rely solely on other creatures to take from, their villages can only be found near other populations. They live together in groups, where the strongest orc rules. In their eyes might makes right.

Culture
A hateful race, the orcs despise all living creatures, but dwarves and elves more than others. They are cannibals, but especially savor the taste of elven flesh. Orcs enjoy taking from others and will eat anything they can get their hands on. They fight with crude weapons, or with weapons stolen from their enemies, which they especially prefer. Because they are worthless to them, orcs often





treat women and non-combatants like garbage, and mutilate and eat them at their leisure. Only the strongest orc women live to bear children. The strongest of the group uses excessive violence to ensure his gang's loyalty. Orc clans without leaders fight amongst each other to establish a pecking order.

Because orcs hate the light of day, most of their remaining villages are underground, or sheltered. They often choose to further excavate natural caves, which they alter to their liking. Their lairs are decorated with grisly trophies, such as corpses of racial enemies, especially elf skulls are seen as prized possessions, and plunder.

Religion
The orcs have a single, cold mistress: Loviathar, Queen of Pain. She often takes the shape of a beautiful face in a pool of blood that flowed from the veins of a freshly butchered intelligent creature. Shamans bring her sacrifices by mutilating themselves and by butchering intelligent creatures on altars of rock or ice.

Naming conventions
Orcs love nicknames but are not very creative when it comes to making them up. At birth orc children are given a nickname by their parents and they come up with a nickname of their own when they reach adulthood.

Orc Priest
Medium humanoid (orc), usually neutral evil
Armor Class: 18 (chain mail armor)
Hit Points: 5d8+5 (27 hp)
Speed: 25 ft. (5 squares)
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 16, Cha 12
Skills: Intimidation +3, Medicine +5, Religion +1
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages: Speaks and reads Orcish
Challenge: 2
Organization: Solitary, or accompanying a party of orcs
Possessions: Blood-stained cleric's vestment, bracelets made of various bones, +1 heavy mace shaped like a skull, chain mail armor, steel shield, spell component pouch, pouch containing a small gem and a few coins, silver holy symbol to Loviathar, polished porcelain mask.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the priest can move up to its speed towards a hostile creature that it can see.

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level of higher, the extra damage increases by 3 (1d6) for each level above 1st.
Spellcasting. The priest is a 5st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *resistance*, *sacred flame*, *spare the dying*
1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *healing word*, inflict wounds
2nd level (3 slots): *aid*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*

Actions
Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

White Wief

Medium undead, always any lawful
As the last words of the ritual die away the fog thickens until the wet grass has vanished completely. A wisp of wind is followed by a long yawn-like moan as tendrils of smoke rise and take the form of a withered crone. She is dressed in a long, frayed robe of white leather and leans heavily on a gnarled staff.

Armor Class: 11
Hit Points: 45 (10d8)
Speed: fly 40 ft. (hover, 8 squares)
Abilities: Str 7, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 14
Skills: History +5, Medicine +6, Nature +5, Religion +5
Damage Resistances: Acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities: Cold, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities: Charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages: Speaks one of the common languages, Dwarven and Elven
Challenge: 4
Organization: Solitary

Ethereal Sight. The wief can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The wief can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sage. The wief has an advantage on all Intelligence (Nature) and Intelligence (Religion) checks.

Actions
When summoned, the wief remains on the material plane for one hour. It has a total of 10 Summoning Points, which it can expend at the behest of the summoner. Once



its Summoning Points are used up, the wief returns to the Tuonela.

God's Favored. Although they no longer have access to their daily allotment of cleric spells, the wief has the power to invoke some cleric spells as special abilities. Although they are generally aloof, some wiefes can be persuaded to assist needy adventurers with healing or restoration spells as long as the summoner provides any casting components. Wiefes do have an insatiable curiosity and will gladly cast any divination spell at the behest of their summoner.

Casting spells in this way drains the wief quickly. Every spell drains a number of Summoning Points equal to the spell level.

Emissary of the Afterlife. A white wief can channel the spirits of those resting in the Tuonela. These spirits will answer any question as accurately as they can as with the *speak with dead* spell. Generally, they can answer one question per round. This process is confusing for the spirits, however, and especially those that have been dead for more than a year can answer in a cryptic or unclear fashion. Every question expands one Summoning Point. The question can be directed at a specific spirit (example: a fallen comrade) which has to identified by full name, a group of spirits (example: all elves) or all spirits on the Tuonela. As understandable, the answer often becomes more cryptic the more individuals are involved. Please note that this ability cannot channel the spirits of creatures that have moved on beyond this plane.

The Story

White wiefes often appear as they did in life, although they are slightly translucent and shrouded in mist. They speak, read and write the languages they did in life. When clerics of Untamo die they sometimes decide to linger in the Tuonela on a quest for knowledge and wisdom. These individuals tend to be wise, powerful clerics deeply devoted to the ideals of the god of knowledge. Only his most faithful servants may call upon the services of these creatures, and only every so often in a time of great need.

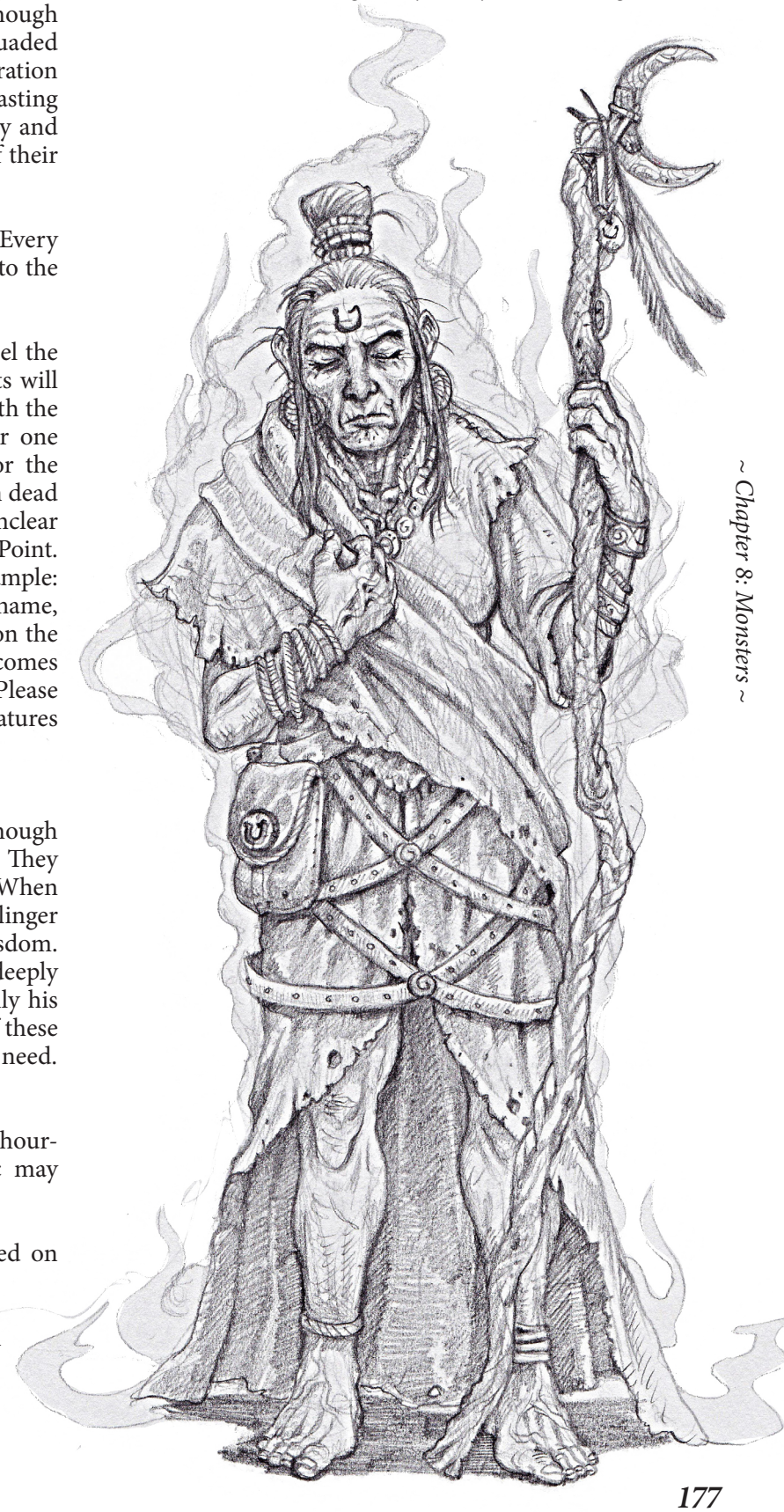
Summoning a White Wief

Only clerics of Untamo may summon wiefes in an hour-long ritual called a Dawn Summoning. A cleric may summon a wief once per week in this fashion.

Time and Location. The ritual must be performed on grass still wet with dew, on a foggy morning.

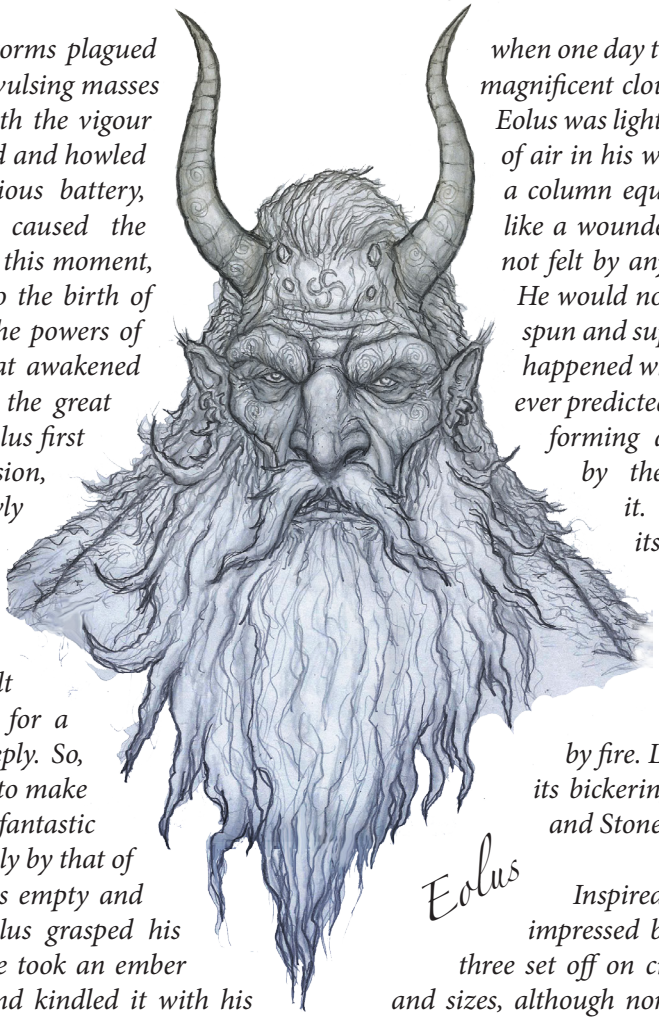
Action. A long, complicated chant that takes an hour to complete. The chant is paired with intricate movement and the user must start all over again if the chant is interrupted.

Components. Wiefes take a payment in gold for their services. They must be appeased with an offering of goods with a value of at least 1.000 gold pieces. If no reward is presented the wief may return later to haunt the cleric or their loves ones, although they rarely attack outright.



Sidebar 8: Birth of the Primordial Giants

At the beginning of time great storms plagued the young universe. Immense convulsing masses of star stuff, scratching reality with the vigour of a million suns. Reality stretched and howled as it was subjected to this furious battery, but eventually massive forces caused the crumbling of time itself. It was as this moment, that conditions lent themselves to the birth of The First of Titans. This entity, the powers of velocity and storm incarnate, that awakened in the vast darkness was Eolus, the great titan of air and Lord of winds. Eolus first experienced anger and confusion, lashing out at reality with a newly sentient fury.



Eolus

When his rage had subsided, he looked over the ribbons of reality that were left and he felt very alone. He asked his father for a brother, but his father did not reply. So, he gathered enough wisps of mist to make a titan to his own image. It was a fantastic work of craftsmanship, rivalled only by that of his own father, but this titan was empty and hollow, a mere simulacrum. Eolus grasped his own heart and plucked it out. He took an ember of his rage that was still alive and kindled it with his breath before he blew it into his creation. The new titan shuddered with power and its form ignited taking after the fire that fed it. The titan combusted and roared with a raw, disembodied voice that sputtered as a dying flame. Through fire filled eyes it observed its creator, who was taken aback by the sudden explosion. It then spoke in its thick, smoky voice and exclaimed: From now I shall be known as Farn, the First Flame, Lord of Fire. And Eolus smiled, for he knew he was no longer alone.

No longer by himself, the incarnation of wind felt elated. Together with his new friend he sat and spoke for a long time, until they both started to feel more and more restless. It was Eolus who suggested a friendly race but Farn was eager to oblige. So the two beings sped through space, goading each other into feats of velocity that had never been achieved before. Although their races were close every time, in the end it was always Eolus who claimed victory. This did not go down well with proud and wrathful Farn. Their competitions grew fiercer and fiercer when one day they chased each other around a magnificent cloud and either refused to relent. Eolus was light as a feather, whipping currents of air in his wake, compacting the cloud into a column equal to his height. Farn growled like a wounded animal, puffing with a heat not felt by anything since the dawn of time. He would not fold this time. As the column spun and super heated, however, something happened which neither of them could have ever predicted; the vapour cluttered together, forming a third titan, who awakened by the latent energy surrounding it. With tired eyes it witnessed its creators making off into the nothingness and accompanied by an orchestra of cracks and creaks it started to shape tiny balls of star stuff, ready to be carried by wind and cooked by fire. Later it would introduce itself to its bickering kin as Qrom, Born of Earth and Stone.

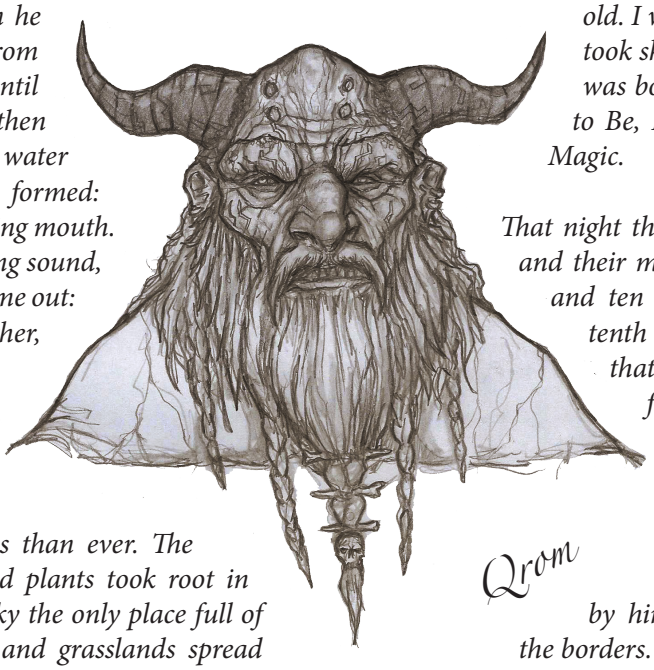


Farn

Inspired by their mutual creation and impressed by Qrom's instinct to build the three set off on creating matter in more shapes and sizes, although none of it seemed at all sentient. Often Qrom would be the centre of their work, while the others circled around him as quickly as they used to when they were just two. Although they were initially thankful to Qrom they often teased him, for his mass made it impossible for him to match for their agile strides. So, it happened that at the end of the day Qrom often felt very alone and misunderstood. He slept alone while his brothers decorated the skies.

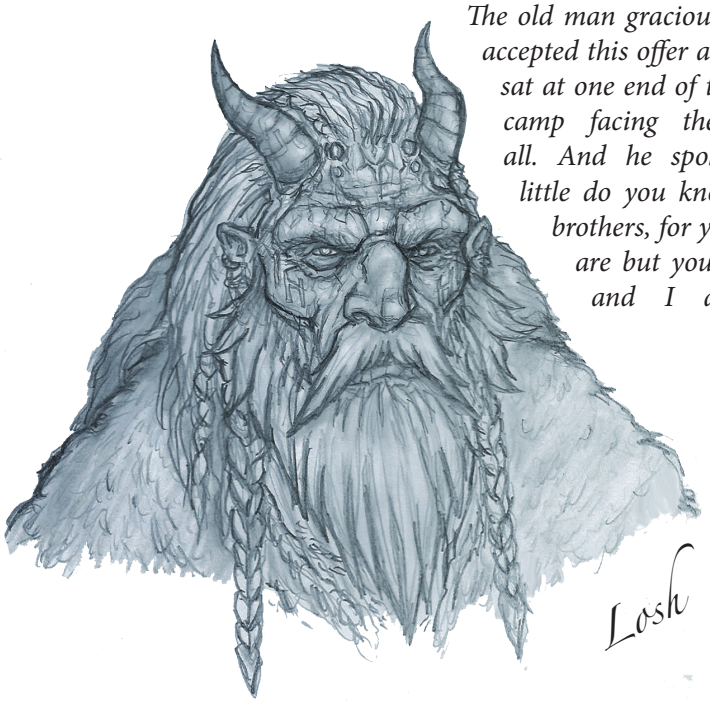
One evening as he strolled the endless desert under star filled skies he felt particularly alone. His journey had tired him more than usual and he decided to rest in the sand. There he laid on his back, gazing at the night sky and wishing that he could find a companion of his own. Sleep took him, and he dozed into a dreamless slumber. As the dawn came upon him and the first light touched his skin he found himself gently roused and refreshed, but not even the warmth of the sun could fill the emptiness in his heart. He rose from the sand and noticed that his mighty frame had left behind an imprint, identical to his own form. Qrom smiled and felt one tear, heavy and cool, dropped from his

cheek. Astonished by this sensation he watched in awe as water sprang from the earth and filled his imprint until it was completely submerged. It then raised itself from its mould and as water ran from its brow simple features formed: two eyes, one nose and a wide, smiling mouth. When it opened it to speak a gurgling sound, like that of a churning whirlpool, came out: My thanks to you are great, my brother, for your wishes have awakened me.



Qrom

With the birth of Losh, Father of Rivers an equilibrium was reached between the titans and the universe became more luscious than ever. The land now glistened with water and plants took root in the fertile soil. No longer was the sky the only place full of wonder, as great forests, marches and grasslands spread and multiplied like a verdant tapestry. Qrom and Losh walked the land while Eolus and Farn graced the skies. Every night at the setting of the sun the titans would gather and speak about the world and their ideas. More often than not these meetings turned to boasting of their importance to creation and all beauty that surrounded them. All titans realized within that this paradise could not be without any one of them, but they all loathed to say this, as they were all very different but All equally proud. As eons passed the titans became more hostile to each other until their lonely days of old had become distant shadows of memories. Indeed, these once pleasant gatherings had turned into negotiations during which was brawled and bickered. It was when the titans felt no more love for each other when a traveller came from nowhere. He was an old man, with a beard and hair of white nebulae and a long, flowing cloak of star stuff. After their initial surprise the titans set aside their differences to offer the traveller a place around their fire. The old man graciously accepted this offer and sat at one end of the camp facing them all. And he spoke: little do you know brothers, for you are but young and I am old. I was there when the first of you took shape and when the last of you was born. My name is Mayist, First to Be, Last to Wane, the Essence of Magic.



Losh

That night the titans had much to discuss and their meeting went on for nine days and ten nights. On the dawn of the tenth day they decided on the rules that were to be followed for ever, for their own benefit and that of their creations. Each of them would say their farewell and travel as far as possible into opposite directions. Mayist would stay by himself in the centre to guard the borders. They would make their home and they should not meet again, not until they were ready to accept each other for their flaws and differences. With the separation of the Primordial giants and their pact to leave each other be ended a fast period of time.



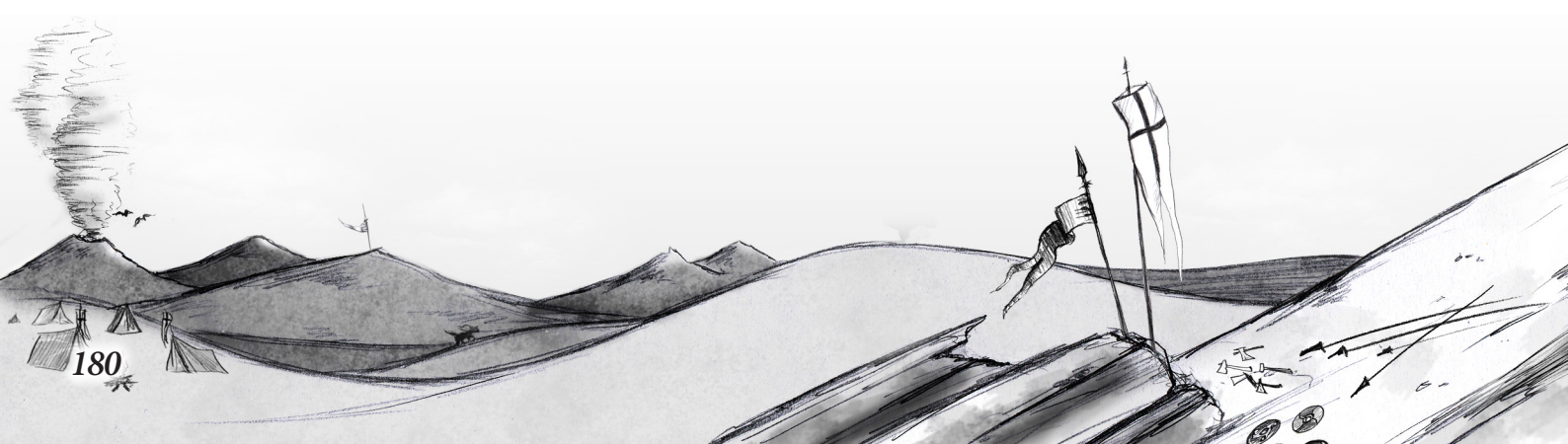
Mayist



Chapter 9: Heroes & Villains – 9 Heroes, 9 Alignments, 9 Fates Intertwined

A veil of mist shrouded the floors of the desolate hallways of black marble. Ceilings hidden in the gloom, carried by arches hugged by stone figures of gargoyles and skeletons. The only light was that of a sputtering torch, held in the bony claws of the attendant. Every step sounded hollow, every sigh or swallow was devoured by the dark. The skeleton lackey and grave guards made no sound but the thumps of their boots and the subtle jingle of their chain shirts. Each of them moved like a phantom, as each of them was long dead. Our heroes, gravely wounded and surrounded on all sides by their macabre escort, clung closely together, their breath a warm cloud in a stronghold that had forgotten the warm glow of life. The undead procession moved steadily, with grim urgency to their destination. As they arrived in the immense dark throne room, there were no words of welcome, no trumpets to herald their approach. A single red crystal, softly pulsating in center of the domed chamber was the only other source of illumination. Dressed in a sickly glow of red and shadow, the lord of darkness sat motionless on a monstrosity of a throne at the back of the hall, an armor-clad servant on each side. Luxurious, thick and expensive robes, relics from a bygone age, shrouded his spindly frame. As the party approached the lord of the dead they felt a tangible chill creeping up their spines. His crown seemed made of razor sharp metal, yet it left no mark on his brow. Hesitantly, one by one, they kneeled as if pushed down by an unseen force. Silence hung over the room like a specter. No one was sure what would happen. As his black eyes lingered over the party, his brow furrowed. When Joranash, the last of the Lich lords, finally spoke his voice strong and deep, voiceless and timeless and powerful: "We meet at last. You have been a thorn in my side for far too long… heroes."

This chapter is what On the Shoulders of Heroes boils down to: the great people that have made the world as it is today. It introduces a group of 9 heroes, each with contrasting personalities, abilities and goals. Mind that the term 'hero' is used loosely here, as heroes and villains may have equal influence on the state of the world and they are all heroes in the eyes of the right people. Each of these individuals is connected in a special way, which shows how an agent of great evil can be the eventual catalyst of something good, and the other way around. Each entry starts with a name and description, followed by a background story, goals, alignment and adventure ideas.



Vainamoinen, First Among Bards

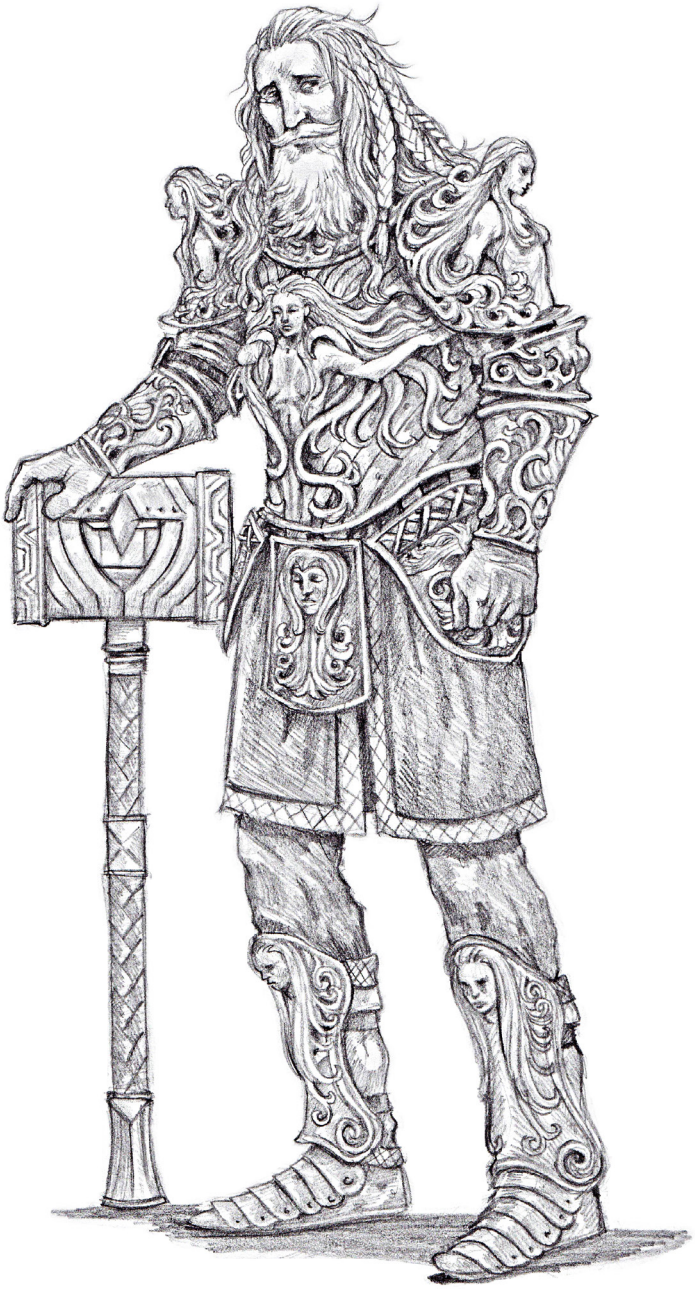
Background

The story of Vainamoinen is favored among the storytellers of mankind, as he was the first bard and the first hero to rise among humans. When the world was young and fragile and the culture of men was in its infancy, the gods bickered among one another in an attempt to establish power structures and to find their destiny. Many of them saw the common folk as simple creatures to be educated or ignored, however, the Mother saw endless potential in humankind. As the bonds between the pantheon started to unravel, and a great war seemed inevitable, she donned her cloak and ventured to earth to seek a young man with a tongue of silver; the diplomat Vainamoinen.

Vainamoinen was born from a strong father with long hair of gold, named Styrr, and a caring mother with gentle eyes, named Anna. His clan was wealthy and prospered, as they journeyed across the plains of Gamleland year after year, trading with their allies, and fighting their few foes. As Vainamoinen grew older, so grew his kindness, and his strength. His mother had always taught him that a man can be sound in body only if he is also sound in mind and she showed him many things about their people and about nature. Perhaps softened by her friendly spirit, Vainamoinen never cared much for the call of battle, instead focusing on parley and caring for the wounded, soothing their pains with the songs of his ancestors.

One day, while foraging through the mountains, Vainamoinen's attention was drawn by the gentlest song. As he daringly climbed the crags and slid down the slopes his eyes fell on a beautiful woman, singing in the valley, washing her feet in a stream, who was naked but for a cloak of white fur. Like a squirrel, he vaulted down, breathless and enchanted. Tripping over his feet, staggering to the rushing shallows, he fell to her feet, grabbing her pale hand with both of his fur-clad hands and for the first time in his life looked into the pale eyes of a goddess. Warmth and love washed over Vainamoinen, like the cold water now soaking his breeches, as he struggled to find the right words. The woman just smiled and helped him up, with an ease unnatural for such a frail being, and while smiling she lead him to a boulder, on which she requested him to sit. In a trance the young man listened to her plea, the story of good and evil, of the eggs and the Father, and immediately agreed to lend his strength to her cause. Impressed by his kindness she taught him the first divine song, marking him a bard and her messenger.

The Mother granted her favorite son immortality, and as the years rushed by, the role of Vainamoinen changed, from a loyal son and representative of his clan, to a leader among men. His legendary reputation and ability to sway even the blackest of hearts lead him deep into the mountains of the primitive dwarf tribes, that still struggled





with goblin and orc. Using his influence, Vainamoinen gathered allies and eventually helped to unite a dozen clans under a single leader: Siegfrir the Wild. Some say the stories and songs he brought to the dwarves even inspired their great love for the warrior hero Ilmarinen, who later adopted dwarvenkind as his favorite people. In his life Vainamoinen would do many great things. He would help the gods many times and guide mankind to a dominant position among the common folk.

Goals

A paragon of helpfulness and good, Vainamoinen's goal is to vanquish all evil. A philosopher of sorts, Vainamoinen has met many people in his long, long life, and firmly believes that the weed of evil can sprout from the hearts of the gentlest of souls. He also believes that the same philosophy applies to goodness, however, and he has taken it upon himself to spread the seed of good. Although he has become somewhat of a father figure to the bardic community and the common folk, he is especially loved by humans and dwarves. Furthering the cause of humankind and protecting them from their enemies is still the most important concern for Vainamoinen. Although he no longer sees it as his duty to actively lead, he gladly offers his advice to any jarl who will listen, making him a welcome guest in their halls.

Alignment

Vainamoinen's alignment is Neutral Good, making him a helper at heart. He does what he can to further the cause of good, allying himself with political and religious leaders alike, but he does not bend his knee to them. Creatures of evil appall the kindhearted hero, but he never loses his patience nor fails to give mercy to those who deserve it. Although he does not feel strongly towards obeying the laws of nations, feeling that laws are a product of time and society and may intervene with what he considers to be truth and justice, neither does he actively oppose them, understanding fully that chaos is not a desirable alternative.

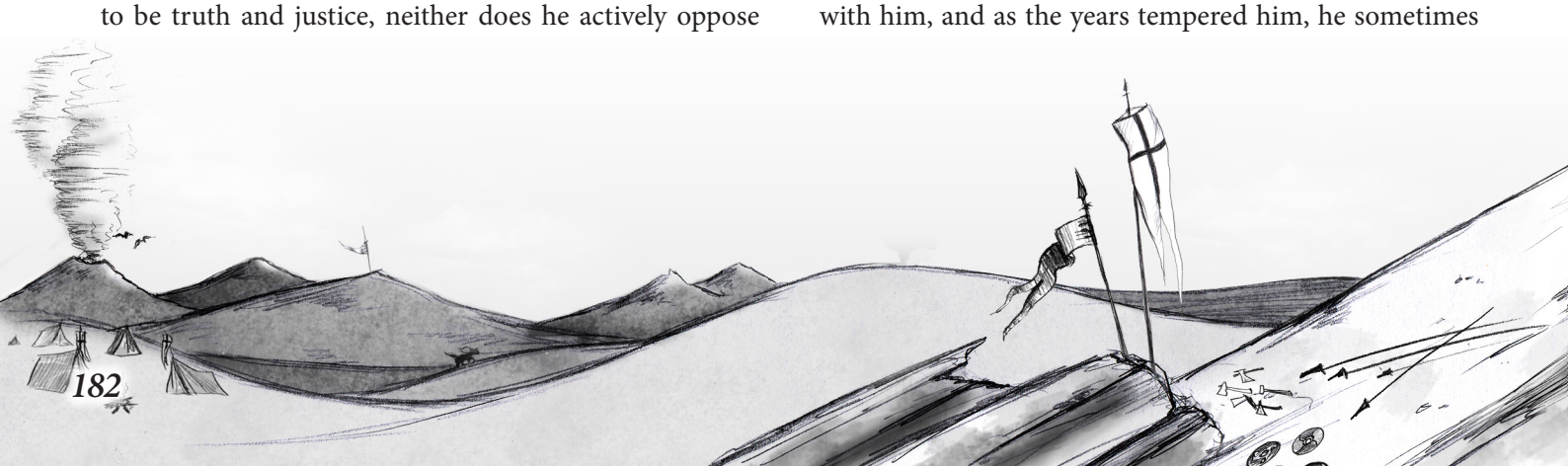
Adventure ideas

- The party finds a powerful artifact, hidden in a forgotten tomb, and soon a letter with the crest of Vainamoinen finds their way to them. He has invited them to travel to the court of the nearest jarl, to deliver the item into his hands.
- A cloaked traveler in dusty robes takes his seat next to the fire of the party, asking to share their stories and food. When they show true kindness to him, Vainamoinen reveals his identity and asks them to speak to a local tribe of half-giants in his name.
- During the great feast of spring, Adatram, the jarl of Kesma turns out to be an imposter. The country is in deep shock, and a nationwide search to find their beloved hero and adviser starts. But where can Vainamoinen be?
- When they are exploring an alien temple in the heart of the Nyphvile mountains the party finds a talking hammer the strangely resembles Vainamoinen's. Is this truly his hammer, or a copy? If it is the original, what has happened to Vainamoinen?

Siegfrir the Wild, Ruler of the Twin Cities

Background

Long ago, Siegfrir was not only a dwarf, he was THE dwarf. Strong as a bull and built like a mountain, armed with a hefty maul of granite and clad in the skin of his sworn foes, he struck terror into the hearts of his enemies. Unlike contemporary dwarves, his nature was volatile, his thirst for battle even greater than his lust for women and ale. His rage drove him through the mountains and jungles of Bakkesat, crushing all in his path. Despite being such a wild warrior, eventually his age started to catch up with him, and as the years tempered him, he sometimes



stopped raging long enough to listen to reason. The times he did, the hero Vainamoinen was waiting for him. Although orcs and goblins were fearsome in their own way, the mountains had become even more dangerous because giants proved to be too dangerous to face out in the open.



It was easy to convince Siegfrir to mobilize his people and to settle in two fortress cities. Siegfrir the Wild, Slayer of Orcs, Ruler of the Twin Cities was the first dwarf to name himself king of their kind. In an ancient time marred by war and strife he rose from his clan and did what it took to bring the primitive dwarf tribes together. Aside from laying the foundations of the dwarven kingdom of Bakkesat, by founding Ambolt and Amskea, he won countless battles against orc and goblin and single-handedly felled a storm giant. His great strength, endless confidence and willpower brought the tribes together - although the wisdom, patience and piousness of his son would be the determining factors in making them prosperous.

A warrior to the bitter end, Siegfrir continued to lead his troops to the battlefield when he passed the two-hundred-year-mark, which is an accomplishment for any warlord. He was believed to have finally lost his life in a duel with the storm giant Fellmane, who, after crushing Siegfrir with his maul, tossed his lifeless body into a ravine. Siegfrir was given a hero's funeral, which dwarves from all over the continent attended. His tomb, however, remained empty but for the ceremonial robes - for his body was never found. Driven mad by his defeat, and the waning strength of his aging body, a broken Siegfrir wandered the wild for many years. In his documented lifetime he had performed many incredible feats, but his greatest feat he managed while everyone thought him dead - carving the 150 men of Zorn from the cold stone, with nothing but his hammer. After this strange act of artistry, inspired perhaps by Ilmarinen, the will to live truly escaped Siegfrir and he journeyed into the underworld to finally die. He was never seen or heard from again. The people that know his story believe that part of his Henki has been stored in his creations.

Goals

Siegfrir always saw battle as a goal in his life, not as a means to truly accomplish any other goal. It made him unpredictable, restless and extremely dangerous adversary to have. The ultimate survivalist, Siegfrir never cared much for anybody but himself. At some level he even saw his wives and children as burdens. His goals were simple; to fight whom he pleased, and meanwhile gathering as much wealth and political power as a nice bonus. Vainamoinen hoped he could sculpt the rough gem he saw in Siegfrir into a strong, stable father figure for dwarvenkind. The king that rose from his ashes, his son Heraldir, proved to be a more competent leader, compassing all stability, intelligence and wisdom that his father lacked.

Alignment

Siegfrir is a true rebel, being Chaotic Neutral at heart. He revels in chaos, challenges opposing power structures and is as likely to order a tactical retreat as a head on charge.





Good or evil are meaningless concepts to Siegfrir, who arguably was born in a time long before most men had the luxury of placing morality before survival. Battle is the ultimate rush for him, and although he claims only fights to represent his kin, he has no real objection of fighting other clans that oppose him. Siegfrir seems to emit some sort of violent energy, the power of a man who doesn't see it as a means, but as a goal.

Adventure ideas

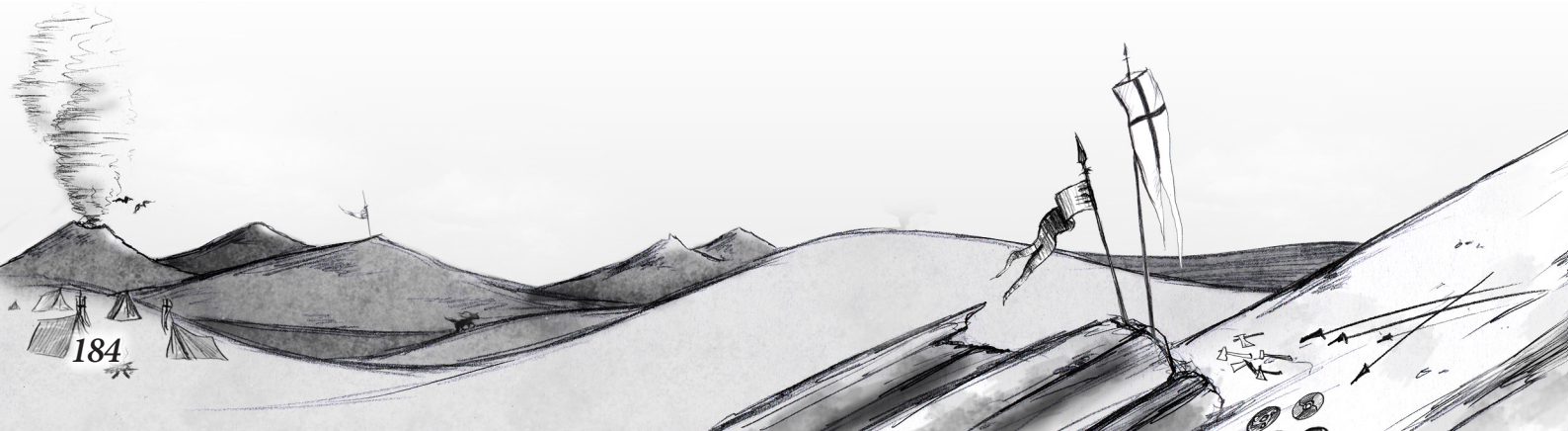
- Traveling the mountains of Bakkesat, the group comes across the men of Zorn. A confused graybeard hermit sits on the edge of the plateau overlooking the forests in the west. He claims to be Siegfrir the Wild, who has come out of the underworld to end the temple of Hiisi once and for all.
- A young dwarf champion rises to power in the northern mountains of Vuorilas, claiming to be Siegfrir's true heir. If this turns out to be true it may shake the dwarven empire to its core.
- A storm giant sorcerer, who claims to be a descendant of Fellmane, is raising an army of orcs and goblins to overthrow Bakkesat to avenge his great-grandfather.
- On a full mooned night, a dark sorcerer goads the dead of Barbossa into an all-out assault on the dwarven kingdom. The king summons the party, pleading them to travel to the lost tomb of Siegfrir and claim a scroll that it believed to be able to animate the men of Zorn.

Joranash the Lich Lord, Master Necromancer

Background

War is never without victims. During the long, destructive struggles between the armies of good and evil during the Giant Wars this proved especially true. Eventually, most of the inhabitants of Mielikki's Arms ended up seeking protection in Nyphvile's stony embrace. As wave after wave of refugees flooded its gates, the city was presented with new problems: how to feed the many mouths, how to keep the peace within the walls? Housing quickly became expensive, damning refugees to ramshackle huts erected against walls of existing stone buildings. Joranash was born in such a crooked structure, which stood central in the magic district ghetto. His father Undo had been a talented wood witch, who, still innocent to the ways of city life, soon took to the bottle and gambled with the little income he had, condemning his family to go to bed hungry more often than not. His mother Neela was a sweet, caring woman, who never dared argue against his father and kept the house the best she could. Even when he was a child, Joranash studied magic independently knowing his family would never be able to pay for the tuition of the great colleges of the city. He ran errands for a small magic shop that specialized in the body parts of great beasts. Many necromancers visited the shop and the boy feared and admired the sullen, dark wizards. He hung around the Black Campus whenever he was not needed by his father and even befriended some of the students and teachers.

Finally fed up with the irresponsible behavior of her husband, Neela chose the worst night to confront him about his vices. Joranash was not home to witness the heated argument but came home to discover his father had slain his mother in a drunken rage. His father always denied his wrongdoing and was never tried for the crime. After that night Undo's behavior became more and more erratic. Joranash, convinced of the power of necromancy, attempted to revive his mother, only to destroy her body beyond recognition in a failed experiment. This was the last nail in the coffin, as his father blamed Joranash, and forced his son out of their home. Broken and alone, he wandered the streets of the city, seeking shelter in storefronts. Convinced of his father's guild and angry



beyond words, he eventually broke into his old house with two friends, killed his father and divided the riches. Now able to afford college tuition, Joranash swore to master the art of necromancy and bring his slain mother back from the Tuonela.

As the years sped by, Joranash reached a point where he surpassed most fellow students and some teachers, and he grew more and more arrogant and disappointed by the apparent limitations of the art to which had decided to devote his life. Still convinced that necromancy did hold the power of life as well as death, he started gathering like-minded individuals, who might be interested in taking the studies to the next level. His gathering would eventually become the greatest coven of dark mages and monsters on the continent. They named themselves the Black Kings and bundling their power they forged a magical crown, which they placed on the willing head of Joranash, who became their leader. Eventually shunned by other schools of magic, and eventually even by the other necromancers, they found refuge in the mountains, where they started the excavations of a great city of the dead. Fueled by his hatred against the unknowing and uncaring, Joranash lead his coven onward, but even with his zeal their mission proved impossible to accomplish in one lifetime. The inner circle saw but one possibility: harnessing the power of a long-forgotten ritual, they died and were raised as liches, ensuring that age would never stop them from achieving their goal.

Joranash still is a feared and powerful to this day. Some children in Nyphvile grow up hearing his sad tale as a bedtime story, although it is far from a legend. He has become more detached and apathetic as part of his soul, the Henki, warmth and goodness, has forever been lost. Thirsting for knowledge, he has spent many hours studying artifacts and tomes in the depths of the dark libraries of the city. He still leads the Kings and is praised within the organization for his intellect, force of will, and his talent to discover and thwart any plans that would oppose the Black Kings. He is rarely seen without his hulking bodyguard Dent, the animated corpse of a mighty paladin hero that once attempted to foil his excavation of a sacred mountain tomb. Once named Eric the Pure, a giant of a man with a blade both feared and revered, he is now but a shell of his formed self, nearly mindless and utterly devoted to his master.

Goals

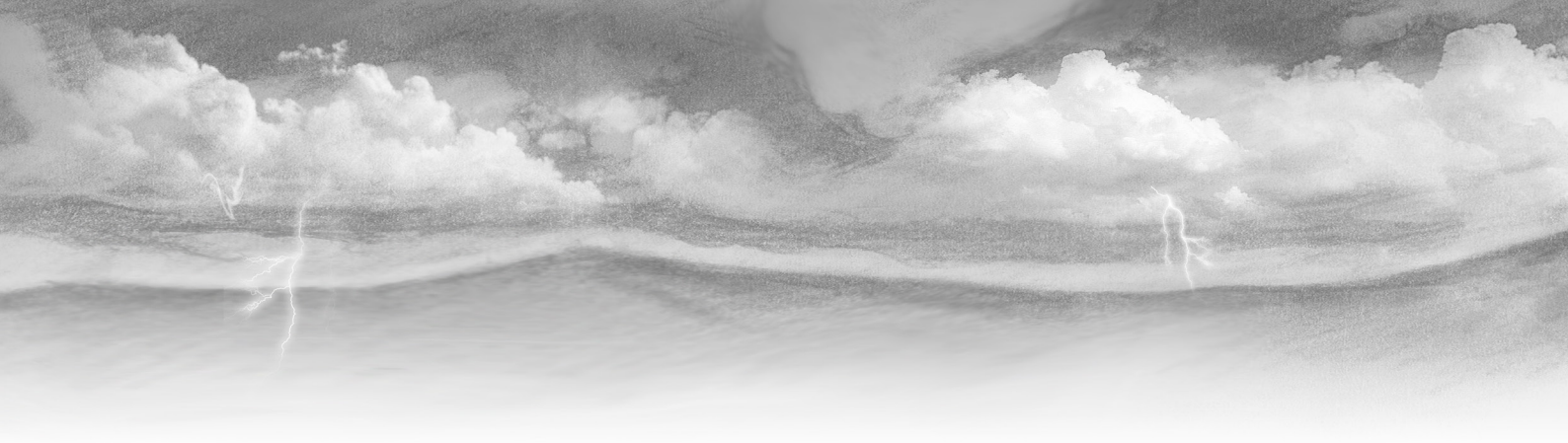
The main objective in Joranash's life is the complete mastery of necromancy, harnessing its power to bring life back to a creature, instead of allowing it an existence without it. He has experimented to on many different beings, has excavated ancient tombs and studied numerous texts in search of this knowledge. While his work has allowed him to consolidate his nefarious power, the spark of life still eludes him. He enjoys the respect his research and leadership brings him and he is aware that without the Black Kings his plans might be difficult to achieve. For this reason he is willing to do whatever is necessary to stay in command, going as far as to send his favored assassin to eliminate rivals. He is now thought to be the last of the inner circle of liches known to be remaining. Being interested in the power of life over the power of death, Joranash has a complicated relationship with the undead surrounding them and the negative energy fueling his own existence. Intelligent undead he grudgingly respects, while he despises the mindless husks that rise in the wake of lower forms of necromancy.

Alignment

A typical mastermind villain, Joranash is of Lawful Evil alignment. He follows procedure to the letter, although over the years he has used his influence to make amends to the rules in his favor. To some point his actions are reasonable and he is said to even maintain ties to







the great College of Magic in Nyphvile. He dislikes the jarls, although he respects their authority, and he unenthusiastically urges his followers to act according to their laws, and avoid attention, if possible. Although he wouldn't call him friend, he has a grudging respect for the hero Vainamoinen and the power of life that he represents. The two have crossed swords many times, but the lich has always been reluctant to injure him, believing his flesh holds the secret to immortality. Despite the hardness of his heart, Joranash prefers to have underlings do his killing and torturing. Yet he does not mourn for the innocent lives that his plans demand, nor shed tears for souls he corrupts.

Adventure ideas

- The party comes in contact with a representative of the Black Kings after they find a map to a mysterious temple. If he means to take the map by force or wants to hire the party to do their dirty work, is up to you.
- The party is summoned by the Counsel of Nyphvile and begged for their help: the school has been trading with the Black Kings for hundreds of years in total secrecy. Now the lich lord has decreed an end to this alliance and in fact rumors circulate that he is amassing an army to attack the city for reasons unknown.
- While studying a fist-thick tome in the necromancy department of the library in Nyphvile, the party wizard absorbs part of the life-force (Henki) that once sustained Joranash. He is suddenly overcome with the desire to destroy what remains of the evil lich lord.

Wisp, the silent assassin

Background

Most men only bear the burden of being born once, but not Wisp. He is now well within what he considers to be his second life, which has given him a new opportunity to reach for greatness. Like many elves he was born in the shadows of Mielikki's Arms, the sacred forest of elvenkind. Son of his father, more than of his mother, he had difficulties in accepting the cultural values of his kind, looking up to a shaggy human ranger that lived near their village instead of worshiping the goddess. As he grew up, he was regarded as an oddity among his people, accepted only because of his unparalleled skill at the hunt. Wisp was a quiet young man, who hardly ever spoke and had few friends. His tracks often took him into the wilds for weeks and months of solitude eventually turned his independence into alienation, his determination into cruelty. When one day he returned to his clan, he found them gone. That's when he decided to leave for Nyphvile, where he became a sell sword. His talent at stealth, deception and knowledge of the forest made Wisp a sought-after man. He quickly gained a notorious reputation. After successfully guiding several different benefactors into dangerous situations (often only to save himself – although he made sure that this truth remained a secret) he got the attention of some high-ranking members of the Black Kings. Although the Kings were hesitant to include the arrogant young elf into their midst, they hired him for some simple jobs first, each of which Wisp performed admirably. They promoted him to an official agent, which was when he first met Joranash, who insisted on seeing the young man for himself. His first life ended that night when Joranash caught him lying to his face and decided to remake the elf into something even more deadly - and utterly devoted to their cause. To ensure his loyalty, the Kings took both Wisps eyes and mouth, making him rely utterly on his magic items for sight and communication. Although he is technically unable to speak, his magical headband allows him to communicate telepathically with his masters at all time although with other creatures the magic is limited to a short-range whisper. Through the years he has seen many uses, as a spy, explorer and of course assassin. Being undead, Wisp does not need nutrition or rest, neither is





he considered to be capable of betrayal because of his mental link with Joranash, which makes him the ultimate agent. His master sends him to do the jobs that no others dare or can, and Wisp is happy to oblige. Other members in the organization fear his presence, something he seems to enjoy more than he should. He is believed to be the deadliest assassin, and most skillful rogue on the continent and he has been the mastermind behind a number of high profile killings, the most important of which the assassination of the dwarven king Bormir in the year -661, because the king expressed readiness investigate the activity of the Black Kings in Nyphvile. The death of his father forced his eldest son Frolir to take up his crown, who turned out to be a benevolent and influential ruler that helped shape the politics of the continent to how they are today.

Goals

In his current form, Wisp is more like a tool than a man –the extension of Joranash's will. Yet the Black Kings have not actually taken his free will or power of reasoning, as they believe that having a mind of his own makes Wisp a more formidable adversary. He still takes great pride in his prowess and cunning. On the outside it appears as if his agenda is to appease his masters, while he makes sure to hide his actual goals behind a shadowy veil of composure. Inside the head of Wisp his free spirit struggles against its bonds, terrified to serve the Kings for all eternity. This constant clash of interests has pushed the poor elf to the brink of insanity. Those exceptional times when his masters have no need of his blades he spends seeking, listening, spying - anything in attempt to free himself from his cage; the husk that is his undead body.

Alignment

Wisp is torn asunder by his dependence on the Black Kings on the one hand, and his desire for freedom on the other hand. In life he was uncaring at best, volatile at worst, but hardly ever balanced. The removal of the living aspect of his soul, his Henki, has removed the last shred of goodness from him. Being shackled in a prison of sensory deprivation, and being held together by black magic, has stoked the fires of his hatred, making Wisp dangerous and unpredictable. Although his master now guides his blades, whenever he has to make his own decisions they are cruel, selfish and destructive. Wisp revels in this destruction and in his power to cause harm in others. Especially the mutilation of his foes is something that brings a macabre smile to his stitched lips. As an undead Wisp's alignment has warped to Chaotic Evil; all that remains is his desire to escape, maim, corrupt and destroy in a spiraling frenzy devoid of law or logic.

Adventure ideas

- After retrieving a strange pendant from a lost dungeon, a dark figure crosses the path of the party, presenting them with a scroll in a leather case. Will Wisp try to take the item from them, or does he offer the loyalty of the Kings?
- In one of his moments of clarity Wisp reaches out to the party in the form of a letter, begging them to free his soul from bondage.
- A large guild of assassins offers a handsome reward and positions of leadership to anyone who can produce the head of the killer of their previous leader.

Frolir, the Fourth Prince of Dwarvenkind, the Valiant, Father of Heroes

Background

Born as the eldest son of the legendary ruler Bormir, Frolir had large shoes to fill. As a prince he had access to the best instructors and wisest teachers, which helped to shape him into a strong, kind ruler. The years before his coronation

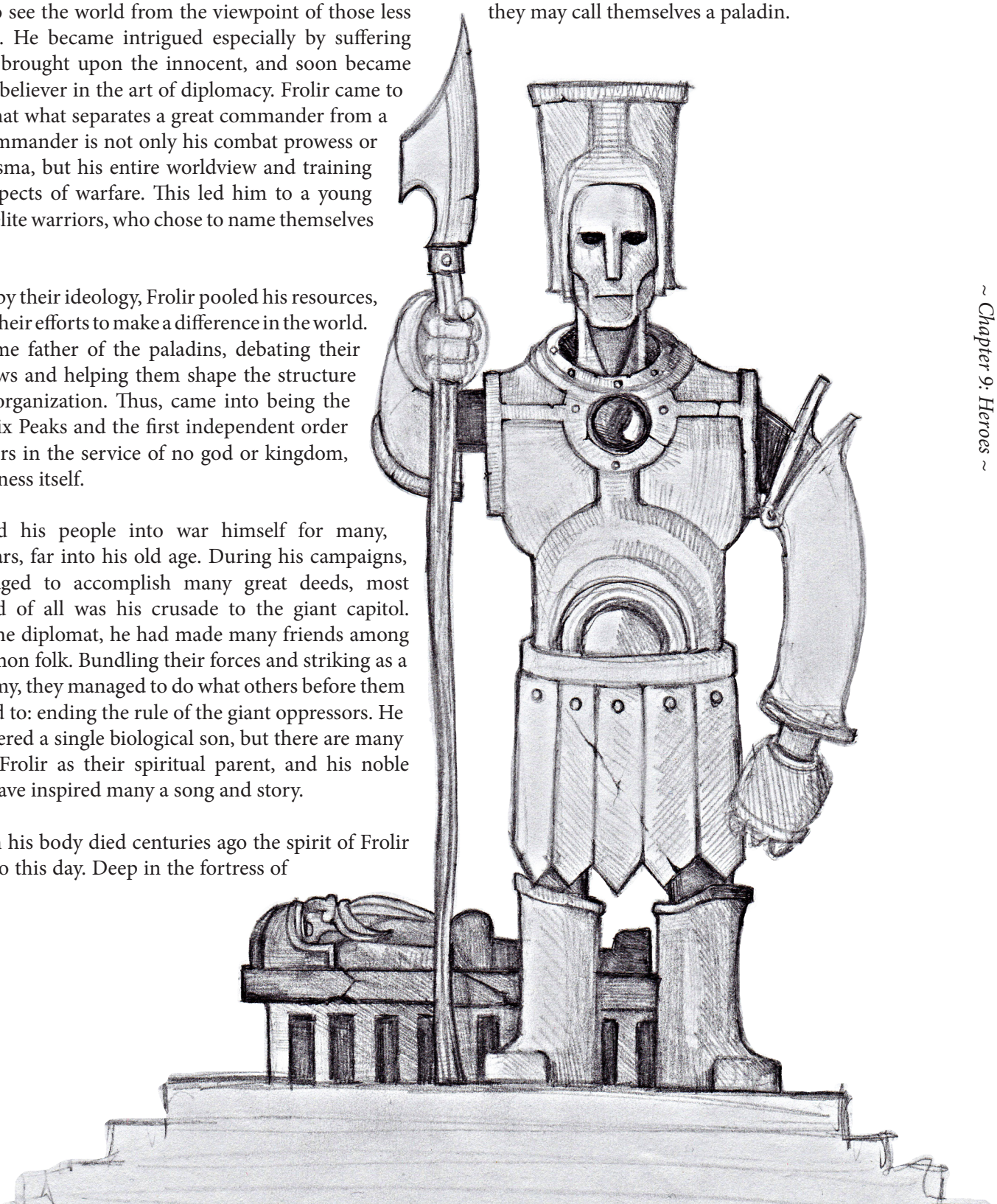


he spent like many dwarf princes, commanding their forces and learning the art of war in the field among his people. Unlike other princes he spent nearly a decade in the guise of a common warrior, traveling the lands of man and elf to see the world from the viewpoint of those less fortunate. He became intrigued especially by suffering that war brought upon the innocent, and soon became a devout believer in the art of diplomacy. Frolir came to believe that what separates a great commander from a lesser commander is not only his combat prowess or his charisma, but his entire worldview and training in the aspects of warfare. This led him to a young order of elite warriors, who chose to name themselves paladins.

Inspired by their ideology, Frolir pooled his resources, funding their efforts to make a difference in the world. He became father of the paladins, debating their worldviews and helping them shape the structure of their organization. Thus, came into being the Pact of Six Peaks and the first independent order of warriors in the service of no god or kingdom, but goodness itself.

Frolir led his people into war himself for many, many years, far into his old age. During his campaigns, he managed to accomplish many great deeds, most renowned of all was his crusade to the giant capitol. Always the diplomat, he had made many friends among the common folk. Bundling their forces and striking as a single army, they managed to do what others before them had failed to: ending the rule of the giant oppressors. He only fathered a single biological son, but there are many that see Frolir as their spiritual parent, and his noble actions have inspired many a song and story.

Although his body died centuries ago the spirit of Frolir lives on to this day. Deep in the fortress of Borün hold, powerful prayers have bound his spirit into an iron golem. He dutifully guards the catacombs where the dead of the order of paladins rest, and each new member must be approved by him personally before they may call themselves a paladin.





Goals
In life, Frolir took it upon himself to convince the world that war and wisdom may go hand in hand. He tried to help the innocent, vanquish the evil and spread law and order in a time of chaos. Frolir always believed in feeding the poor and shielding them from the monsters that lurk in the shadows. To accomplish this he has always relied on tradition, law and structure to guide the stray pebble back to the mountain. In death he is utterly devoted to the paladins and his job as a protector of the vaults of the order.

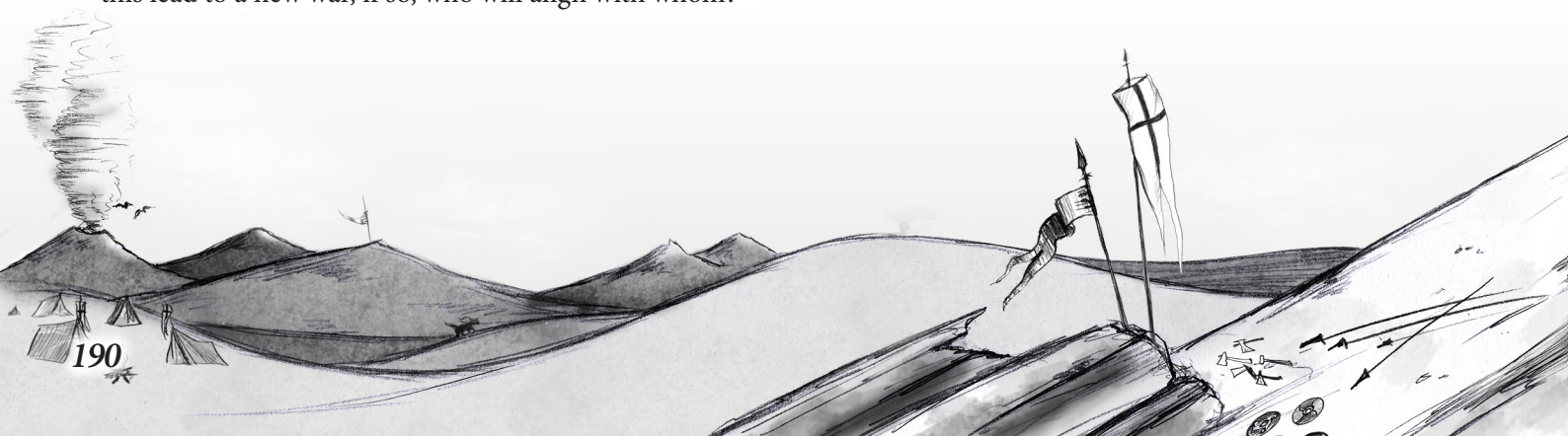
Alignment
Frolir is a typical paladin, believing in the virtues of law and goodness above everything else. His firm devotion allows him to walk the path of the righteous; his left hand shields the innocent, while his right smites the evil. Although he has a respect for rules and laws, he does not respect laws that are used to oppress the weak. Instead he sees law as a means to protect the powerful from abusing their position and to protect the property and well-being of common folk from villains. He respects the authority of rulers and follows the mantra of his order to the letter.

Adventure ideas
- The group finds a wounded young man on one of their journeys. He claims to be paladin, ambushed on his way to the secret fortress of his order. If the adventurers can help him reclaim his shield and escort him there, he pleads, a great reward will await them.
- If the party's paladin wants to take a level in a specific prestige class, he must first travel to Borün hold and request permission from the spirit of Frolir. A test, or dual might be involved.
- The prince of the dwarves wishes to visit the catacombs of Borün hold to ask his forefather for advice, however, the paladins refuse him access. How will this influence the relationship between the order and the dwarves? Might this lead to a new war, if so, who will align with whom?

Smiley Matias

Background
In his youth Matias spent many hours around the village well as he loved to hear the sound of pebbles plopping into the darkness below. As he prepared to drop an especially round and heavy stone into the water he lost his balance and he fell into the depths. He lost consciousness and it is unknown how long he lay in the icy water. When villagers tried to pull up the bucket later that day, they found it simply stuck. All heaving together they finally managed to pull Matias up. He was cold, wet and asleep but otherwise seemed to be just fine. In his hand they found the strangest coin, a gold disk with the symbol of a clover. After that day nothing went awry for Matias ever again. He became a minstrel, wandering not too far from his hometown earning his keep by spreading joy and stories. He was not bad at his job, in fact he was fairly popular among his people, yet he was hardly extraordinary. For some reason, everything always seemed to work out in his favor. He did not work hard, yet people respected him, he did not go far, yet he always seemed to be in the right place. The lucky coin accompanied him on all his journeys, and so did his already legendary good fortune. Fate can be whimsical, and Matias is the living proof of that, eventually becoming a hero in life and a god in death.

One day, when he had setup his camp, Matias met a fellow traveler. In the tradition of his people he offered the cloaked dwarf a piece of his fish and to share the warmth of his fire. Being a good host, and in a jolly mood, he sang for his guest the entire night, until sleep came over him like a warm blanket. When he awoke the next morning, he was surprised to find that his guest had left without a farewell. Angry at first, at this insult to his hospitality, he stomped through the camp until he found a strange leather sack. Being as curious as he was polite, Matias made sure that the dwarf was nowhere to be found before



opening it, and he was surprised to find out that the pouch contained a fortune in platinum coins. His guest had indeed been Frolir, at that time a dwarven prince. Now some would hold their silence about their new-found fortune, but not Matias. The first day he spent concocting an unbelievable tale, of him making off with a troll's treasure, after defeating the beast itself single-handed by a combination of skill, smarts and luck. The second day he proudly continued his journey, he stayed in the finest establishments, drank the most expensive wines and slept in the softest beds, all while sharing his wealth with those less fortunate. And so the tale of Silver-tongued Matias spread through the world.



Despite his newly gained fortune he refused to retire from his music, but he never had to sleep under the stars again. In his younger years he walked, in his later years he rode, but everywhere he went his stories spread and disciples followed. He caused a surge in racial pride among his people and the belief that halflings bring good luck to the other common folk. In the twilight of his life he purchased a tavern in Saporrti and settled down with a wife. Even after his death, the belief in what he represented became stronger than ever, raising the halfling bard to an unlikely deity.

Goals

A simple individual, Matias cares the most about spreading his message of making your own luck and happiness. He likes to sing and tell stories and cares deeply for the well-being of his people. Eventually, a world without suffering and oppression would be his ideal.

Alignment

Matias is a free spirit, who believes that doing what is right sometimes requires deviating from the law. Of course, rules can be used to make society a better, safer place, but they should be considered guidelines, not absolute truths. He has little respect for existing power structures, instead he teaches his followers to treat all people as equals. A disciple to the principles of sharing, good and equality, Matias is of chaotic good alignment.

Adventure ideas

- As the party enters town after a long day of adventuring, they find their local tavern crowded with halflings. Apparently today is a halfling celebration, during which bards are encouraged to show their skill at the trade.
- Dropping coins into wells is considered to bring good luck in halfling culture. In a small village on the outskirts of Barbossa, however, halflings keep disappearing after their well-intended offerings. The village elder sends word for adventurers with a keen interest of investigating this matter.
- A group of heroes finds what they claim to be is the bag of coins Matias found that night after camping with Frolir. Being a pious group, they decide to donate the bag to the church, unknowing what their find has triggered among the dwarven people. The kingdom of Bakkesat splits into two parties: the ones that believe Frolir gave the coins willingly, and those that think the halfling stole the money. It is not sure how far the dwarves are willing to go to retrieve what some believe is their heritage.





Grush the Free

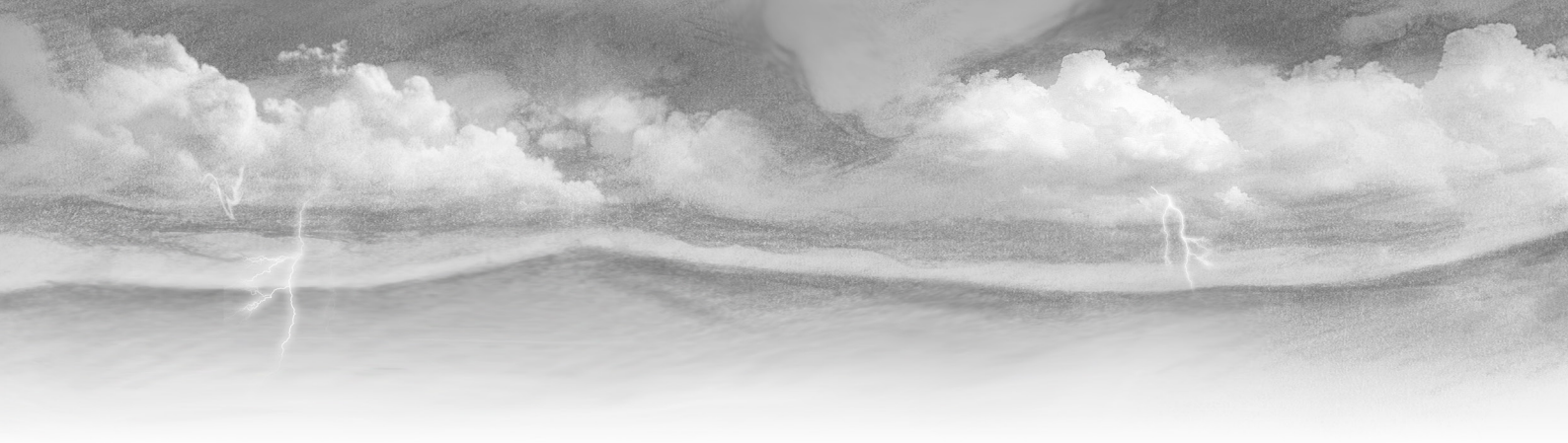
Background

Down to earth, humble and calm, Grush seems like an unlikely convert to Matias, the halfling god of luck. Born into slavery among hobgoblins, his childhood was harsh and cruel, and the young bugbear sought desperately for a means to escape his torturous life. From the moment he was able to walk, he was forced to watch his parents fight in the pit day after grueling day. During these times he often drifted off, dreaming of distant lands and times of peace. It was during an especially hot afternoon when the word of Matias reached his ears. Although the bugbear was hardly intelligent or eloquent enough to pick up the nuances of the story, it made a lasting impact on his young mind. One aspect of it haunted his dreams especially; that of making one's own luck.

Deviation from the ways of the San was a crime punishable by death, and every time he asked his parents about his newly acquired wisdom they made sure to remind him. It was a long time ago, but Grush is still sure that his faith made his escape possible that fateful day. The arena was packed with hobgoblins that came to watch the battle between slaves and a pride of lions. Like always, young Grush was forced to watch the grim spectacle from the sidelines. As the sands colored red with the blood of feline and bugbear, Grush prayed hard for the safety of his family. It was then when he saw the singing halfling in the corner of his eye. Mesmerized he followed the bard out of the arena and to safety and nobody attempted to stop him. He never saw his family again. Instead of taking him on as an apprentice the halfling brought the boy to a monastery to be raised there in safety. Grush being a bugbear raised some doubt among the monks, but the silver-tongued bard managed to convince the order.



His new life was never easy, but the monks were not as cruel as his owner used to be. Many hours of the day were spent training his physique, which came easily, while the evenings were reserved for philosophy, with which he struggled intensely. Grush exceeded the expectations of the order by an incomprehensible amount: showing a strength of body and spirit considered to be impossible to achieve for one so young. In fact, he managed to set new standards for their trials of body and spirit - although he only managed to pass the 'mind-trial', which includes performing a complex set of memorized tactical moves in a game of Shogi, by the skin of his teeth. The body trial includes carrying two stone globes the size of melons to the top of the longest stairway in the monastery without dropping them. Grush carried four stone globes and a sick fellow student to the top, and smiled while doing it. Although his fellow student was ordered to do the task again, Grush was forgiven for showing kindness to a friend in need.



The trial of spirit is considered to be the hardest of the three, it is designed to test dexterity and will power. Every night as darkness falls, for seven nights in a row, the student must swim through the icy waters to the middle of the Spirit pond, climb one of the arm-thick wooden poles in the center, and balance on it until the morning sun touches their brow. During this period students are forbidden to eat or speak. Lost in an advanced state of meditation, Grush managed to balance for seven days and nights, all while resting on his left leg. After this feat of endurance, he drank half his weight in water and ate half his weight in veal. Many years have gone by since he left the monastery in order to bring balance to the world. Unlike most of his brethren he has shown no interest at all in taking on a position of leadership.

Goals
Monks are bound to very specific moral rules and Grush is no exception. He strives to better himself, physically and mentally, while bringing a perfect balance to the universe. Deep within he still hopes to ever be able to do a halfling a great kindness, to repay what the bard has once done for him.

Alignment
Grush will try to balance out each selfish deed with a philanthropic one, each bullying with a kindness. Although he has more difficulty than his fellow monks when it comes to remembering the many laws of the lands and order, he does his utmost to live by the ones he does recall. This makes him, like most true members of his order, Lawful Neutral.

Adventure ideas
- While crossing a mountain pass the party encounters Grush as he is meditating on an abandoned mountain slope. He challenges the strongest looking character to a wrestling match.
- An outraged wine merchant orders the party to find the savior of his caravan, as the bugbear has brought back the carts and horses but has decided to keep their precious load to himself.
- The party returns after collecting a long-forgotten treasure in the depths of Svartmund, only to find their path blocked by the monk Grush. Believing that the strange tome will bring a great unbalance to the world he demands the group to hand it over to his custody.

Kobushi the Cruel, the Immortal Storm Sorcerer

Background
Saamar was a bastard; the product of hatred and contempt. His mother had no love of the horned child with the cold eyes, leaving it in the forest to die, which he might have, hadn't a wandering monk found him. Enchanted by the small, magical creature, he took it to the monastery with him and renamed it Kobushi. Although Kobushi showed a keen interest in the monastic way of life, he lacked the discipline and physical strength needed to excel at it. He was the first of such children to ever have the honor of being adopted by monks; a tradition that has continued to this day.

One day a traveler arrived at the monastery; a bent puppeteer, dressed in striped robes with a face hidden behind a grinning demon mask. He stayed with the monks for 152 days, gaining their trust and building a strong mentor student relationship with Kobushi. The old man, who called himself Wei, was what he called a Storm caster, a sorcerer with a powerful connection to the elements of water and air, and he had identified Kobushi to be one as well. At age six he was taken from his new home to start a new life on the road.

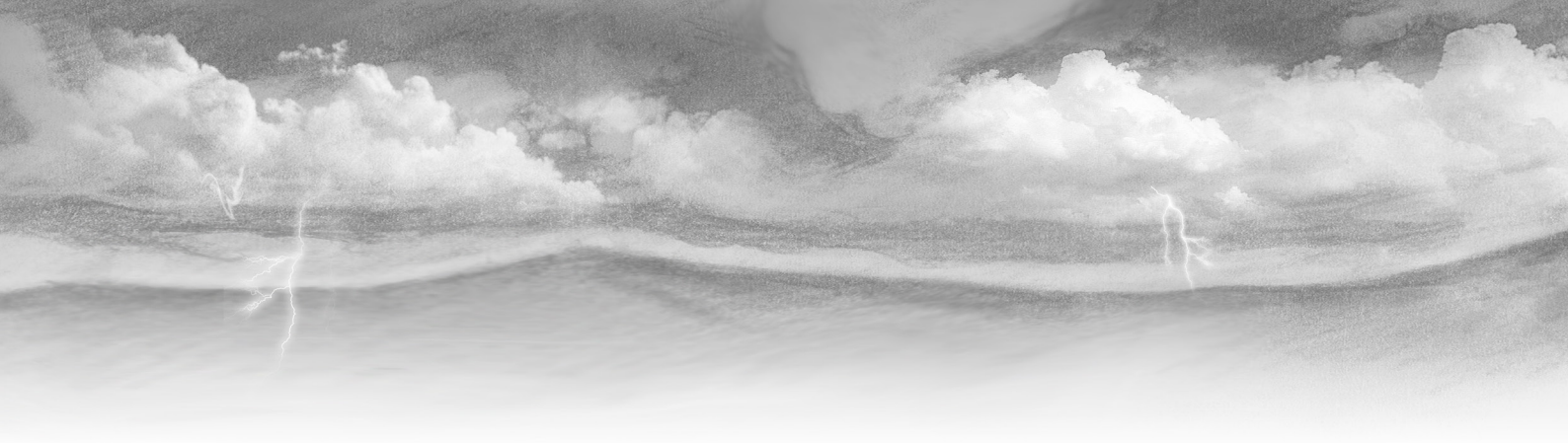




Wei turned out to be a demanding master, up to the point of cruelty, and his intense training quickly hardened Kobushi's spirit. The two survived on the kindness of others, or by stealing, as they made their way back deeper into hobgoblin lands. Also, Kobushi learned a horrible secret: his master turned out to be nearly three centuries old, elongating his lifespan by bathing in the blood of those with arcane talent. The two often struggled to stay ahead of the heinous crimes they committed in order to endure. Being an empathic and emotional child, his master's personality started to rub off on his apprentice, and it started to corrupt his heart.

Like so many homeless travelers, Kobushi eventually became an adventurer, abandoning his master after a heated argument in his early teens. He had to work with whom he could and scrape the bottom of the barrel to get by, but he managed. Often, he was betrayed and treated like a mongrel. He decided to invest his earnings into a proper business and he became a slaver, using the powers of sorcery to keep his workers in check. He had grown strong and cruel from his struggle to endure and quickly gained power and notoriety. Of course, as his reputation grew, rumors started to go around about the young man's heritage and not long after that he left town and took his empire into the mountains. Surrounded by the cold mountain air his magical talents developed into something truly monstrous. He lured his former master over to his fortress with the false promise of forgiveness, slew him, and took and donned the grinning demon mask.

Often, he sent out his envoys to purchase mages, so he could study them. Believing that a great power rests in the blood of those with magical ability, he came up with more controversial ways to attempt to harness it. As the years bent his spine and withered his hands, Kobushi searched for a way to retain his youth. He walked many different paths, but all dead ends. In the end it turned out that he had no choice but to follow in the footsteps of his master, sacrificing the life of other spell casters to sustain his own. He has managed to keep this grim truth hidden beneath a facade of attempting to breed the ultimate race of arcane warriors. Many sorcerers live and die on the grounds of his mountain palace.



Goals
To live forever. Also, Kobushi has a great hatred for adventurers other than spellcasters, believing them to be weak and stupid. He sends his emissaries and slavers all over the world, looking for powerful mages and artifacts to add to his collection. Slavers are reluctant to deal with him directly, but grudgingly respect him for training powerful servants adept at sorcery or at resisting it.

Alignment
Kobushi is greedy, cruel and selfish up to the point of insanity, yet he is seldom rash or impulsive, concealing his true nature behind his mask of serenity. Neutral Evil at heart, he has no respect for life or law, doing what he needs to consolidate his own sorcerous power.

Adventure ideas
- After their last adventurer, the party sorcerer has drawn the attention of Kobushi, who sends his soldiers to take him.
- The nemesis of the party decides to ally with Kobushi. Suddenly the party must face a force of powerful sorcerers in addition to their usual adversaries.
- An elder of a local village hires the party to find his missing daughter. Her trail leads them to Fort Kobushi.

Starpelt of the Knife, Aspect of the Starry Sky

Background
Near the Knife river, on an especially clear night, was a tiny gnoll pup. With eyes bright as the moon, and a fur dotted with tiny specs of white, she immediately earned the name Starpelt and she was adopted by the tribe's prophet as an apprentice. The tribe had the highest hope for such a beautiful child born under the most favorable circumstances. As she matured, the dots in her fur started to fade, but the light in her eyes never dimmed, instead it brightened with every year. It became clear that Starpelt had a great hidden power, fueled by the whims of prophecy and fate. Her childhood was, for most parts, typical of that of a gnoll, and she learned this and that from the members of her tribe while seeing every village north of Gamleland and west of the White Mountains. Especially Nyphvile made a lasting impression on the pup and she felt right at home among stone and spell. As she reached the end of her apprenticeship she decided to leave the tribe and become a teacher there.

The years were kind to Starpelt, and she was at the point to settle with a partner when she had the strangest vision. A cloaked figure, shrouded in a mist of stars and nebulae of red and yellow urged her to leave her life behind and take up that of an adventurer, taking along a young bugbear she'd never seen before as her apprentice. The next morning, she found a starved bugbear orphan at her doorstep. The child was more skin and hair than flesh, and barely able to move. As she nursed the helpless creature back to health, his sinister past became apparent. He had been raised in a small mountain village that was sacked and burned while cruel men searched for someone, a special child. It turned out the men where in search of a talented young sorcerer, born under the light of a red star: the boy.

With the child in tow Starpelt ventured into the world, looking for those wronged in the name of slavery, hoping to one day bring an end to the terrible reign of the slave driver Kobushi. Many years have passed since the day that Starpelt met Bright Eyes, who is a young adult now, but the two have allied with numerous adventurers and freed countless slaves in the progress. They shun no means to accomplish their goals, sword nor sorcery, and keep their eyes pointed at the stars for guidance. Fueled by her utter devotion to her deity, the light behind her eyes has become





ever brighter, and many believe a star to burn within her. This story is supported by the existence of a glowing scar on her back, which pulses with red light when she weaves spells.



Goals

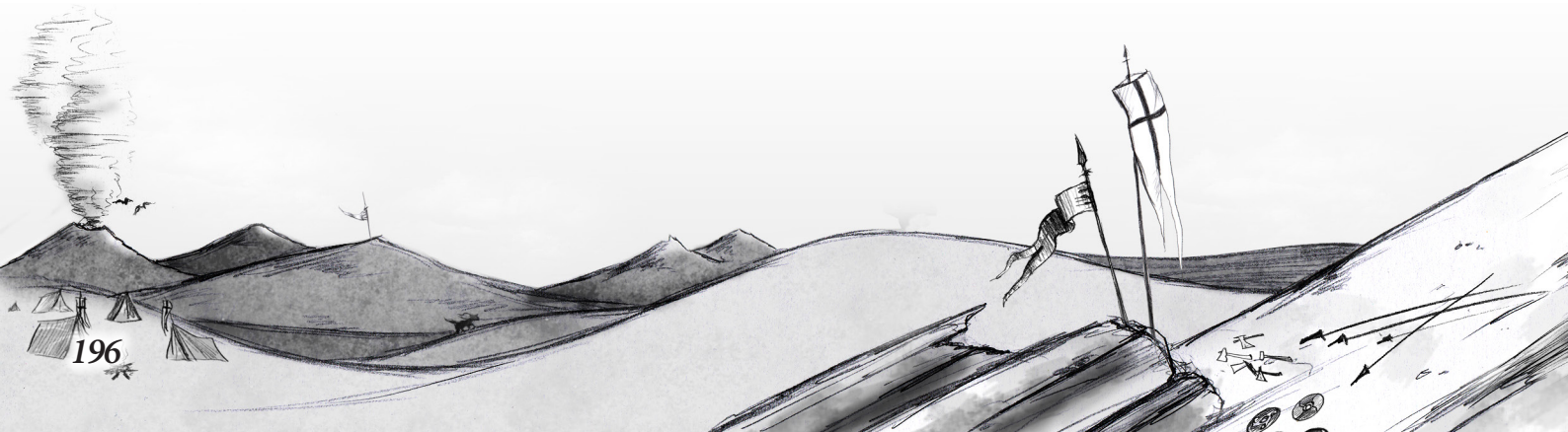
Starpelt has a deeply rooted desire to follow the whims of her deity: the Starry Sky. She will do so not because she agrees with its decisions, or even begins to understand them, but because she believes them to be truth. Dreams will guide her and visions will prepare her. At this time her goal is to protect her young apprentice and to put an end to slavery on the continent, but the agenda of her god is whimsical, and she may well change her ways overnight.

Alignment

Starpelt is True Neutral of alignment. Although many may find it hard to understand that a creature on such a noble quest is not good at heart, she acts in this way not because of her own convictions, but because of her obedience to the Starry Sky. If it were up to Starpelt herself, she would not get involved with the problems of the world, yet she believes she has no choice in the matter. She will do anything she deems necessary to further her goal, including stealing, killing some to save many, lying and many other immoral deeds. A servant of a higher being, she neither lets mortal law hinder her, not dictate her actions.

Adventure ideas

- Clouds part and reveal a red moon in the sky. Starpelt howls in the night and a red light devours her. When she awakens at dawn a desire to destroy Vainamoinen is overpowering. How will this red moon influence the other people on the continent?
- A local village has burned to the ground, but no trace of the culprits can be found. Could this have anything to do with the newborn child in the village that is rumored to have eyes of flame? The party receives a message from Starpelt. She wants to hire them to pose as slavers and to smuggle her into the fortress of Kobushi to save the young one.
- Something strange is going on in the hometown of the party. First a cobbler announced himself the incarnate spirit of Ilmarinen. Now numerous townsfolk are under the impression that they are chosen aspects of various deities. Is this really the case, or is something more sinister afoot?



Critical Miss Table

Sometimes it's more fun to roll on a table when you miss! These tables have been designed to make fumbling interesting. After a critical miss, roll on the table with the appropriate attack and damage type and add your *Fumble Modifier* to the roll, which determines how clumsy the fail actually is. These rules are designed with a level, regular battlefield in mind. For drama's sake we would encourage the GM to involve the surroundings in a critical miss if possible. For example: a character fighting on a cliff could lose his footing and slide down unless they make a Dexterity saving throw equal to the AC of the enemy.

A *Fumble Modifier* is determined by several factors. To save time it is recommended to write it down for your character. Add the following modifiers to the roll:
- The Proficiency bonus of the character.
- The Dexterity modifier of the character.
- The GM may grand an additional bonus, or penalty, depending on the situation.

A character has **disadvantage** on the roll if:
- They do not have the proper weapon proficiency.
- They had disadvantage on their attack roll.

If the players are using this optional rule, the GM should do so as well.

To keep things simple, the GM can roll for random monsters and simple NPCs on the NPC table without modifiers. This table has more impactful results. They are designed with the idea to give agency to the players: the monster does not just miss, but the attack is foiled because of a cool block or counter from one of the characters.

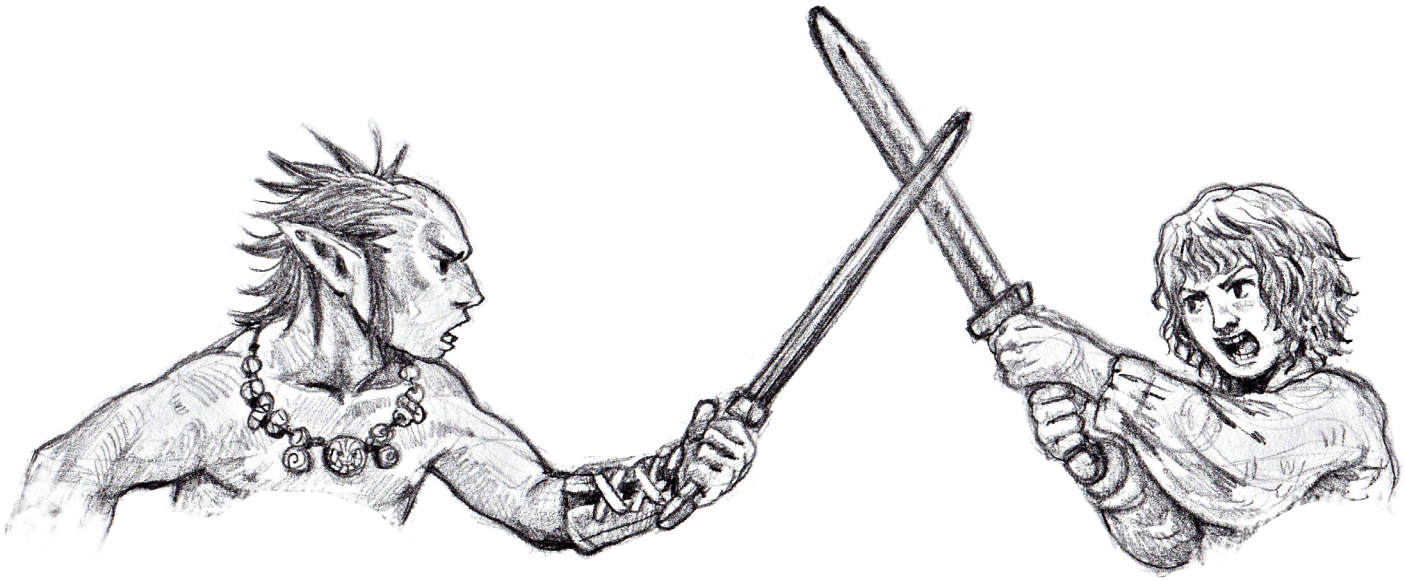
Blunt melee
> 21 – A glancing blow. No ill effect.
18 to 20 – You stumble clumsily, stepping 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. End your turn immediately.
15 to 17 – You stumble clumsily, stepping 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. Your first attack on your next turn has disadvantage. End your turn immediately.
12 to 14 – The momentum forces you to end the turn with your back towards the opponent. The opponent has advantage on their next attack roll against you.
8 to 11 – Trip and fall prone. Unless your weapon is somehow attached to you it scatters 1d3x5 feet in a random direction.
5 to 7 – Crush your own foot. For the rest of the encounter, or until healed by magic or a DC15 Medicine check as a full round action, your movement speed is halved.
2 to 4 – Bump your head. Until the end of your next turn you are Stunned.
≤ 1 – You make a fatal error. Crush your knee, elbow or skull (1-4/5-8/9-10). Characters with a crushed knee fall prone and may not stand unaided. Characters with a crushed elbow attack and grapple with disadvantage and drop anything held in their offhand. A character with a crushed skull are Stunned for 1d4 rounds and has a disadvantage on intelligence and wisdom-based ability and skill checks. These penalties last until healed by magic or a DC20 Medicine check is made as a full round action.

Magic - melee
> 21 – Your touch misses the target.
18 to 20 – You stumble clumsily, stepping 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. End your turn immediately.
15 to 17 – You stumble clumsily, stepping 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. Your next attack has disadvantage. End your turn immediately.
12 to 14 – Your attack misses and your opponent may make an immediate trip attempt against you.
9 to 11 – Trip and fall prone. End your turn immediately.
6 to 8 – Trip and lose control of your spell. The spell has the opposite effect: a fire spell will deal cold damage, a spell that would slow instead hastes, etc.
2 to 5 – Trip and lose control of your spell.

The magic dissipates, inflicting minimum damage on you, but saving throws are allowed as usual. End your turn immediately.
≤ 1 – Trip and lose control of your spell. The magic dissipates, inflicting regular damage on you, but saving throws are allowed as usual. End your turn immediately.

Magic - ranged
> 21 – The spell misses the target.
18 to 20 – The spell misses the target. It has an equal chance of being a complete miss or to hit another random enemy within 5 feet of the target.
15 to 17 – The spell misses the target. It has an equal chance of being a complete miss or to hit another random ally within 5 feet of the target.

Piercing melee
> 21 – The stab wings the target, failing to inflict any damage.
18 to 20 – You stumble clumsily, stepping 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. End your turn immediately.
15 to 17 – You drop your weapon from your grasp.
12 to 14 – You drop your weapon from your grasp. Pulling it free from the floor requires a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.
8 to 11 - You trip and fall prone. End your turn immediately.
5 to 7 – You trip and fall prone on the pointy end of your own weapon. For the rest of the encounter, or until healed by magic or a DC15 Medicine check as a full round action, your movement speed is halved.



12 to 14 – The spell misses the target. Your next attack has disadvantage. End your turn immediately.
9 to 11 – The spell has the opposite effect: a fire spell will deal cold damage, a spell that would slow instead hastes, etc.
6 to 8 – The flow of magic is disrupted. You are unable to use magic for the rest of the encounter or until you realign yourself by making a DC15 ability check (using your casting ability) as a full round action.
2 to 5 – The spell hits you instead, inflicting minimum damage, but saving throws are allowed as usual. End your turn immediately.
≤ 1 – The power of the spell surprises you and knocks you over. The spell hits a random target within range, inflicting regular damage, but saving throws are allowed as usual. End your turn immediately.

2 to 4 – Your opponent manages to disarm you. You drop your weapon from your grasp and the opponent may immediately make an attack of opportunity. If this attack hits you fall prone.
≤ 1 – You pierce your own leg. Characters with a pierced leg may not walk or stand unaided until healed by magic or a DC15 Medicine check as a full round action. Until healed in this manner you lose one hit point per level per round due to blood loss.

Ranged
> 21 – Your arrow narrowly misses the target.
18 to 20 – Your bow string becomes unattached and slaps your fingers. Any attacks you make during your next turn have disadvantage.
15 to 17 – You drop your weapon from your grasp.
12 to 14 – You drop your weapon from your grasp, it scatters 1d3x5 feet into a random direction.

8 to 11 - You shoot an item out of the hands of a random ally. Allies with two-handed are immune.
5 to 7 – You hit a random ally. Allies hit this way do not suffer any damage, but have disadvantage on their first attack, skills check or saving throw they make before your next turn.
2 to 4 – You shoot yourself in the foot. For the rest of the encounter, or until healed by magic or a DC15 Medicine check as a full round action, you move at half speed.
≤ 1 – You fall prone and hit a random ally. Allies hit this way do not suffer damage, but are Stunned during their next turn.

Slashing melee
> 21 – You strike a glancing blow that fails to inflict any real damage.
18 to 20 - The momentum forces you to step 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. End your turn immediately.
15 to 17 – You drop your weapon from your grasp, it scatters 1d3x5 feet into a random direction.
12 to 14 – You drop your weapon from your grasp. Pulling it free from the floor requires a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.
8 to 11 – You trip and fall prone. End your turn immediately.
5 to 7 – Your opponent manages to disarm you. You drop your weapon from your grasp and the opponent may immediately make an attack of opportunity. If this attack hits you fall prone.
2 to 4 – You cut yourself. Characters injured in this way may not use their ability bonus on attacks and damage until healed by magic or a DC15 Medicine check as a full round action.
≤ 1 – You drop your weapon and cut your hand in the process. You may no longer use this hand until it is healed by magic or a DC15 Medicine check as a full round action. Until healed you have a disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks that involve the use of your hands.

Thrown
> 21 – Your weapon sails past the opponent.
18 to 20 – You drop your weapon from your grasp.
15 to 17 – You drop your weapon from your grasp, it scatters 1d3x5 feet into a random direction.
12 to 14 – You trip and fall prone. End your turn.
8 to 11 – You hit a random ally. Allies hit this way do not suffer damage but fall prone.
5 to 7 – You hit a random ally. Allies hit this way do not suffer any damage, but have disadvantage on their first attack, skills check or saving throw they make before your next turn.
2 to 4 – You injure your foot. For the rest of the encounter, or until healed by magic or a DC15 Medicine check as a full round action, you move at half speed.
≤ 1 – You fall prone and hit a random ally. Allies hit this way do not suffer damage, but have disadvantage on attacks, skills checks and saving throws they make before your next turn.

Unarmed
> 21 – The attack falls short.
18 to 20 – The momentum forces you to step 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. End your turn immediately.
15 to 17 – The momentum forces you to step 5 feet in a random direction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. The opponent has advantage on their next attack roll against you. End your turn immediately.
12 to 14 – Your attack misses and your opponent may make an immediate free trip attack against you.
8 to 11 – Trip and fall prone. End your turn immediately.
5 to 7 – Bump your head. On your next turn you are Stunned.
2 to 4 – You trip and fall prone. End your turn. You are Stunned until the end of your next turn.
≤ 1 – You trip and fall flat on your back. Gain one level of exhaustion.

NPC Table (GM's minions only)
20 – The attack simply misses the target.
17 to 19 – You thrash and swing around wildly. On your next turn opponents have resistance against your attacks.
12 to 16 – A PC manages to disarm you as your strike. If you fight without a weapon you are tripped instead.
8 to 11 – A PC kicks you in a vital area while parrying your blow. Attacks against you have advantage until you start your next turn.
2 to 7 – You stumble clumsily, moving 5 feet in the direction of the player's choice. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity from characters in melee combat.
1 – A PC manages to trip you. You are Stunned until the end of your next turn. End your turn immediately.

Calendar & Feasts

Winter

December

21 – ***Winter Solstice:*** **Gnolls** celebrate the longest night of the year by dancing around bonfires and by reciting long poems and songs. Spellcasters provide entertainment by lighting the night with their magic.

21-22 – ***Midwinter Feast:*** **Humans** celebrate the Mother, Father and family by lighting candles/fires and eating. Elders tell stories and everybody gives each other a present. Often an animal is slaughtered a week in advance and eaten to celebrate abundance.

January

1 – ***First Day Feast:*** The first day feasts are celebrated by the **humans** of Kesma, Merma and Vuorilas to celebrate the beginning of the year and their independence from the Vulgaris Magistralis. Villages gather to express thankfulness, discuss important moments of the year and plans for the coming year.

21 – ***Tuft Root:*** Like the roots of plants that grow together, so grows a **gnome** burrow. Tuft Root is a day on which the gnomes celebrate the importance of each other's work. Young gnomes go to work with their parents and old gnomes try performing different tasks in the burrow.

February

2 – ***Spring Feast:*** Druids celebrate the beginning of spring with the burning of wooden effigies and the sacrifice of livestock to appease the gods. Elven druids instead decorate their groves and sing through the night.

Spring

March

3 – ***Heroes Day:*** This day is sacred for the **dwarven** people, who celebrate their chief deity and protector **Ilmarinen** with poetry and by gifting each other small, homemade items. The working day ends slightly earlier and at night people families gather to feast. **Humans** celebrate their heroic ancestors on this day and instead of working they meet in the village longhouse to discuss laws and history.

22 – ***Spring Equinox:*** During the day the **gnolls** celebrate the coming of spring by singing, dancing and by reciting poetry. After the feasts they allow the fires to go out so that they can more clearly look at the night sky.

April

22 – ***Day of the Goddess:*** For **elves** and followers of the goddess **Mielikki**, this day is about the appreciation of the world around them. They stay outside for most of the day, working together on communal land or doing various other tasks. Elven children are taken on long hikes by a ranger or druid. The day ends with an immense feast for the whole village to which every participant brings food or drink. Those that do not have anything to give are expected to provide entertainment.

May

1-3 – ***Feast of Fertility:*** For followers of ***Ilmatar***, and **humans** specifically, May is a month of growth and virility. They sing songs and perform rites to protect their crops and cattle, dance around Maypoles and light sacred bonfires. These celebrations are held in a different village every year and people from far and wide travel to the festival grounds. During the evening young people are encouraged to drink and feast. The May Feasts are a common place to find a life partner.

15 – ***Freedom Days:*** **Humans** celebrate the founding of Kesma by gathering at central points, usually the same villages as the ones on May Feasts. The people face off in all manner of sports events, like running, swimming, (arm)wrestling, and rock throwing. Traditionally, the first day is played without deciding winners. The second day the true competitions start and the next two days are for celebration.

Calendar & Feasts

Summer

June

21 - ***Summer Equinox:*** **Gnolls** go on their Star Journey on this day. They travel to sacred places hidden in mountains and hills where they can very clearly see the night sky. Some tribes build huge traditional fires called God's Eyes to shows their devotion to their god. In times of yore, gnolls traveled for weeks, but recent generations stay closer to their regular path. **Elves** celebrate the Day of Friendship, the day when they buried their ancient vendetta's. They usually do so by fasting and storytelling.

July

3 – ***Day of Brotherhood:*** On this day **dwarves** and **humans** celebrate their bond by participating in friendly competitions and by drinking and feasting. In the evening minstrels and performers honor the great deeds of warriors and re-enact legendary stories from The Giant War.

7 – ***Coin Evening:*** **Halflings** celebrate Matias by organizing games and barbeques with friends and family. They also collect donations for the poorest families.

August

1st – ***Harvest Feasts:*** To celebrate the coming harvests, followers of **Mielikki** pray, sing songs and decorate their houses with fruits and vegetables. Children make necklaces of nuts and parade through their village.

Fall

September

21 – ***Autumn Equinox:*** September is a time of plenty, the crops have been harvested and **humans** give thanks. They usually fatten and slaughter a pig or cow and dry its meat for the long winter to come. They sing songs to honor their ancestors and drink traditional cider. **Gnolls** flock into towns to trade and make allegiances for the winter to come.

October

31 – ***Samhain:*** It is believed that the borders between this world and other worlds is thinnest on this day. People leave gifts of food for the creatures of other worlds.

November

11 – ***Day of Ancestors:*** Followers of **Ukko** honor their fallen heroes and relatives on this day. They burn special herb-infused-candles and tell stories around the fire. In the evening they re-enact events important to their family's history.

30 – ***Day of the Dead:*** **Gnolls** believe mist to be negative energy from restless spirits and they light fires to hold the dead at bay. The gnolls start and end the month with a great feast, lit by many fires, and the burning of effigies to scare the evil spirits away. During the closing feast, the Day of the Dead, November 30th, they send the roaming spirits of the dead to the great hunting grounds of the afterlife.

Laws of the Lands

Part of living in a world is knowing and understanding its laws. This appendix is designed to teach you. A detailed description of all the laws of all people and cultures falls outside of the scope of this article, but it will give you a broad idea of what you can expect from some of the most prominent and common cultures on Bellög. Few people will know the details of these laws, but they are aware of the cultural foundation around which they are designed. For example: a peasant will not know the punishment for impersonating the village elder, but he does understand that violating a man's honor is a serious offence.

Humans and Half-giants: Gamlelaw

When the first men united under the power of the Vulgaris Magistralis it became evident certain rules and agreements were necessary to guide the people through problems encountered in their daily lives. Priests, elders and wise men, including the Vulgaris Magistralis himself, came together Heroes Day on the plains of Gamleland determined to find the best solution. They debated and discussed for seven days, until they came to an agreement on what would be best for their people. These laws, now called the Gamle laws, are the basis for every law system used by humans. They may seem harsh compared to the laws of modern society, but that is because in a time of relative lawlessness, they serve the purpose of discouraging those that may be tempted to offend again. In old times there were no such things as prisons, so a man was expected to compensate, or prove his innocence immediately. These laws are still practiced in Gamleland and in most of Vuorilas.

Trias politica

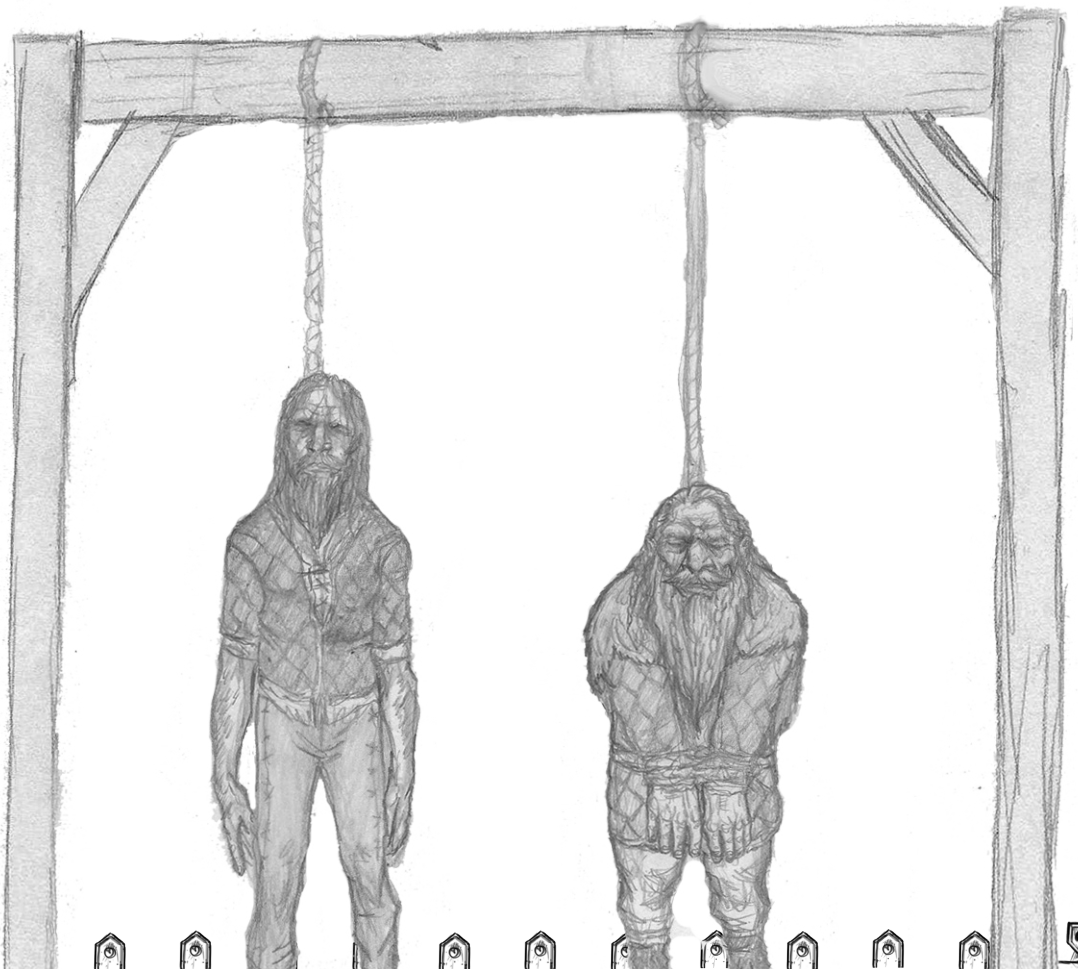
Our Western political system is based on the Trias Politica: legislative, executive and judicial power. These powers are divided amongst different judicial systems to protect the system against corruption. One branch makes the law, another judges based on the law while the third enforces the law. Gamle law has a determined set of laws and has rules for judgment but it generally lacks the party to enforce them. This is possible because it is intended for a much smaller, family-based society. Most tribes consist of only a single family, larger ones of two or three, the biggest ones maybe five or six. These people live and work together their entire lives, forging a powerful bond of responsibility between them. Men see it as in their general interest that they protect the members of their tribe and the law depends on the valor of these individuals to enforce it.

Who enforces the law?

Human men are expected to care for their own kin, as well as other members of the community. Larger hamlets and villages sometimes have a small garrison of professional guards, who are paid from communal donations or taxes.

Who knows these laws?

The Gamle Laws are carved in the rock wall of the great mountain Laki near Waalderstal. Every citizen is expected to know the basics of the law, but most laws are fairly straightforward. An entire order of sages is devoted to memorizing and reciting the law. These men are called lawspeakers and now their order is represented in every village in Gamleland, as well as in Vuorilas, who have taken up the old faith in laws. A lawspeaker is typically a low-level magic-user with knowledge pertaining to history, local affairs and nobility. Before they end their apprenticeship, they are expected to be able to recite every law from memory, even though many of them are able to read and write. Lawspeakers are also responsible for keeping track of land ownership around their village. They take a small percentage of sales when mediating between parties as a handling fee, as well as a percentage of all fines. Many people have great respect for lawspeakers and offer them



great hospitality. They tend to be upper-class citizens from influential families and they often procure the permanent services of one or several bodyguards who may serve as enforcers during difficult times.

Who judges over the guilty?
Although it is commonly believed the gods will punish the guilty, three men are tasked with interpreting their will: the mage, the priest and the warrior. Every hamlet large enough to be marked on a map appoints three judges, who are usually chosen among valued members of society. Unlike lawspeakers they do not receive formal training and are expected to act out of experience instead. They typically stay judges for life, although they are free to resign at any time. Mages may be any arcane spellcaster, priests can be of any faith and warriors any battle-hardened individual. They are officially considered to be giving their advice to the Vulgaris Magistralis, who always delivers the final verdict. Because he typically is not able to appear at the trial, the Three are allowed to deliver a verdict in his name. Although a mage, priest and warrior are chosen in every village, they are still revered to as if they are the only three: their verdict never questioned and for the law the mage, priest and warrior are entities by themselves, like the Vulgaris Magistralis is. While judging the mage and priest are expected to wear traditional garbs and the warrior should dress in full armor. They traditionally sit in the hall of the village longhouse one afternoon of every week and on special occasions.

Some Legal Terms
Adult: A boy is considered adult from the point that they complete the right of manhood, usually at the age of eleven. A girl is considered adult after her first period. All laws presented here are aimed at adult offenders, children are exempt from any punishment but flogging, while their father is responsible for any fine that has to be paid.

Branding: Branding is the mutilation of a criminal to remind him of his crime as well as warn others of his deviant behavior. Depending on the tribe and region it can be done in many ways: with cutting tools, with fire, or magically. Typical places to brand include back, chest and forehead.

Champion right: This is the right for one to be represented by a champion in a challenge. Champions are usually richly compensated for their trouble. Some men even become professional champions for monetary gain, or honor. It is highly unusual for women to be chosen as champions, although it is not explicitly forbidden by law.

Compensation: Typically fines and compensation are paid in gold or silver, although paying in kind, by providing labor or goods, is also allowed. If the fees become higher than ten times a man's worth he loses all rights and becomes a slave to those he owes. Should there be multiple victims the man serves each of them a year in rotating shifts until the dept is paid.

Dueling: Duels are common in the North and not illegal. If two adult men consent a duel they forfeit any legal help if they are injured during the bout. It is common for the duel to take place in a predefined circle of twenty feet or less in width. Combatants leaving the circle are considered to forfeit the fight. Duels to the death take place in thirty feet deep pits, so none of the combatants may escape until the other one is dead. The challenger is generally allowed to choose the weapons to be used, which are traditionally great swords, sword and shield, or dual axes. Using magic to enhance oneself in combat, to summon allies, or to injure the opponent is forbidden unless its usage is agreed upon in advance.

Duty to appear: Any criminal that does not appear before the Three at the specified time for their trial is declared an outlaw. The same goes for any criminal failing to appear to carry out the sentence.

Ownership of property: Only adult men are allowed to own and inherit property. A husband is expected to control his wife's spending's. Traditionally women and children are not allowed to make purchases of a single gold piece or greater without the consent of their father or husband, although this tradition is not commonly practiced anymore today.

Price of an individual: Traditionally an adult man has a worth equal to the total value of his property. A woman or a girl is worth her weight in silver. A boy is worth his weight in gold, while an heir is worth up to twice his weight in gold as is judged by the Three. No distinction is made between slaves and freemen when it comes to individual value.

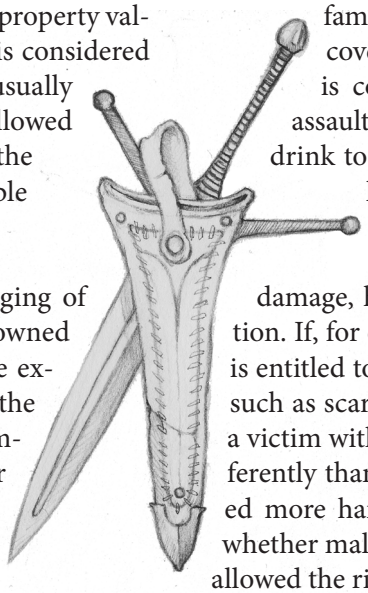
Multiple offenses: If a criminal commits multiple offenses the punishments stack. The harshest punishment is always executed last.

Trials: One is considered innocent until proven guilty. A trial typically starts by questioning those involved. The research is typically led by the village elder, or the Vulgaris Magistralis himself. A minimum of three witnesses are necessary to prove a man guilty. In some cases, an offender may forfeit a trial to be judged by the gods instead. This comes in the form of a trial by combat, faith or magic. Trial by combat is a duel, for which a defendant is allowed to choose a champion, while the Three choose a champion of their own. These fights are never to the death, they are conducted with blunted weapons. A trial by faith depends on the religion of the priest of the Three: an offender may be choked, seared, stabbed, or hurt in another way. If his wounds heal well after a day or two he had proven to be free of guilt. If the wounds fester, the subject dies,

or has not recovered from his injuries he is proven to be guilty. Trials by magic are sometimes the most painful, as the defendant must withstand the full power of the mage, while staying on his feet the entire time.

Crime & Punishment

Deception – Deception is knowingly lying to or betraying of an official of the law, or swindling or slandering a member of your community, the forging of documents, smuggling or lying about one's identity. Swindling, as long as it concerns minor financial gain, is punishable by full compensation of those duped, including a minor fine of about 1 percent of the value of one's property value. Major swindling can be penalized with a fine of up to 50 percent of the value of one's property value. Alternatively, the fee can be paid in kind, with labor or goods. The punishment of use of a false identity depends entirely on the nature of the crime, it has the possibility to be harmful to one's honor and, as such, is taken very seriously. Claiming to be an important person, such as a village elder, is punishable by branding. Using magic to do so may increase the penalty to death. Obscuring one's identity is punishable by a minor fine of about 5 percent of the value of one's property value. Smuggling is punishable by branding and fines of up to 50 percent of the value of one's property value. Lying to officials, as well as slandering, is considered a major offense. A minor lie or slander is usually punished with a hefty fine, or branding, followed by banishment, depending on the status of the victim. Major lies and slander are punishable by with death by fire.



Property damage – The intentionally damaging of goods or stealing of slaves, animals or land owned by another member of your community are examples of property damage. It punishes the offender for denying a member of the community the use of their property, whether or not on a temporary basis. The destruction of one's homestead carries the penalty of rebuilding it, while meanwhile offering a replacement home to the duped party. In addition, depending on the nature of intent, one might be penalized further as is judged by the Three. Destroying the goods, killing the animals or slaves, or burning the crops of a member of your community is punished by a hefty fine, of up to 50 percent of one's property value, including a full compensation to the duped party, which usually means returning the stolen goods. Repeated offenders may be branded and exiled. The severity of the punishment for stealing depends on the value of the items involved. Stealing goods worth less than a gold piece is usually punished with a public flogging, although repeated offenders may face a harsher punishment. Stealing of goods worth more than a gold piece is punished harshly: the penalty is the removal of a finger. Repeated offenders are liable to receive a much harsher punishment, such as branding or hanging. Stealing livestock of any kind is always treated in this harsh manner, as livestock is vital to the survival of most families.

Oath-breaking – As most people are unable to read or write they usually take oaths in front of the Three instead of signing official documents. These typically concern ownership of property or land or weddings, but any oath may be drafted and recorded by the Three. Any man, woman or child that breaks such an oath is liable to severe punishment: ranging from branding to death by hanging, as is judged by the Three. Living oath-breakers are generally considered to be outcasts.

Assault – Assault includes attacking a member of your community unarmed, or armed, and sexual assault. Assaulting a member of your community, depending on the outcome for the victim, is usually a severe crime. Firstly, anyone attacking an individual in self-defense is not liable to persecution. This is determined in a trial or may be determined if at least three eye-witnesses present themselves to swear before the Three. Beating one's own child or wife, as long as he or she does not sustain permanent injury, is never illegal. Attacking another member of one's family, or permanently injuring one's family, is covered in the betrayal of kin. Beating slaves is covered under property damage. Unarmed assault is common among warriors who tend to drink too much and it is usually not punished, unless the victim is either female or sustains permanent damage, such as a broken hand or leg. If the victim sustains permanent damage, he has the right to demand full compensation. If, for example, he is unable to work for a week he is entitled to a week's wage. Visible permanent damage, such as scarring, is discussed under mutilation. Killing a victim with the use of unarmed force is treated no differently than any other murder. Armed assault is treated more harshly than unarmed assault: If the victim, whether male or female, sustains any damage at all, he is allowed the right to restore his honor in an armed duel to the death, only the victim is allowed the right to a champion. If the victim is killed by the offender or dies from his wounds up to two nights after the attack, the punishment for the offender is death by fire, as with murder. Sexual assault of a woman gives her family the right to a dowry compensation of up to twice her weight in silver. If the woman loses her virginity from the assault, or is blessed with a child, the family may, in addition, demand an official union of man and wife. If the offender or family refuses the union, the family may have the offender branded, castrated and exiled.

Murder – Taking the life of a member of your community, either by hand, weapon, poison, or magic, is punishable with death by fire. Additionally, the offender's property goes to the family of the deceased.

Betrayal of kin – Betraying a kinsman is a crime which never stands by itself: it is a crime in which the victim is tied to the offender by blood. In case of the betrayal of kin the offender is always punished in the harshest way possible for any said crime, although it is not uncommon for family to plea for a reduction of punishment.

Mutilation – If the victim of any crime sustains any visible scars from the offense, whether or not intentionally, the offender is always repaid in kind and obliged to compensate with an individual's full price.

Using foul magic – Using evil magic is a crime all itself. As it is traditionally used to harm others it is commonly tied to assault charges. Additionally, practitioners of foul magic are, as judged by the Three, always branded as witches.

Humans - Common Law

Laws based of the Gamle Law are practiced in Kesma and Merma. Influenced by dwarven values of gender equality, and to a lesser degree elven and halfling matriarchy, the common laws are more inclusive to women. Females can be judges and are judged like men. Communities are expected to govern themselves and, especially in Merma, law and custom vary wildly. Listed below are some common themes often found in common law, as well as ways in which the laws are recorded, rules are enforced and the guilty are punished.

All community laws have a strong focus on individual honor and respect for people and their property. Slavery is outlawed, but adults can enter indentured servitude of their own volition or when they are over their heads in debts. Injuring one's servants or family is a crime punishable by flogging. Punishments are often less severe than those of Gamle law, with a strong focus on getting the culprit back to work as soon as possible.

Who enforces the law?

Communities are expected to enforce their own rules and laws. Able adult men have a duty to help when problems arise, either in the community, or in the country as a whole. Men that prove themselves unwilling or unable to do so will eventually be shunned or expelled from the community. Jarls stand above village elders like elders stand over common men and they often retain a regiment of private enforcers that travel around their lands. In hamlets and villages, a Húskarl will be in charge of security. He advises the elder, or council, and is in direct contact with the jarl. The Húskarl is appointed for life and often a retired adventurer or enforcer. The Húskarl often serves as the executioner as well.

Who knows these laws?

As communities follow their own laws it is up to them to keep track of them. Often village elders or councils keep a thick tome that contains rulings and law of their ancestors. Important rules are carved in walls or on pillars of the town house, often accompanied by visual representations.

Who judges over the guilty?

The jarl has a final word when it comes to the punishment of criminals, but villages seldom go through the trouble of reaching out to him. Instead, the fate of criminals is determined by the community as a whole. Every adult gathers in the village longhouse and votes by invitation of the elder or Húskarl. Adults, both men and women, have an equal vote in these matters. Children and outsiders may not attend.

Dwarves - The Wegge

Dwarves tell the story of Ruric, a great dwarven scholar, who invented the runic script. During his lifetime he studied dwarven culture and sayings intently. Before he died of old age he took it upon him self to inscribe the most important dwarven values on the wall of his community. It is commonly believed that he died there and then, as he hammered the last rune into the wall. As Ruric was greatly respected during his lifetime, weeks of mourning his death were followed by the official declaration of The Wegge as the sacred text of dwarvenkind. Dwarves live up to it to this day, never dismissing the wisdom of their ancestors. The text consists of three parts: the becoming of the first dwarf, the rules and sayings of dwarvenkind and praise to Ilmarinen, father of all dwarves. Key dwarf values are modesty and honor, when a man strays from The Wegge and loses his honor he forfeits all rights. Dwarven law is strict and entwined with religious ideas. A cleric of Ilmarinen typically judges over issues within the communi-ty. Dwarven villages always have regiments of trained guards that enforce the law.

Like Gamle law, The Wegge has a strong focus on discouraging repeat offenders by offering a way to atone for one's wrong-doings through financial compensation. Banishment is considered to be the worst punishment, reserved for murderers and those that dare conspire against the crown. Oath breaking is punishable with death by hanging. Other punishments include the paying of fines and compensation to the duped parties. Dwarven do not keep slaves, nor do they have laws concerning the financial value of any given individual. Those that lose their honor are sometimes allowed to regain it by forfeiting their old life and becoming a priest of Ilmarinen.

FORTUNE DOMAIN

The Fortune domain is strongly associated with the halfling people and their deity Matias. It is not only about luck in a direct, personal sense, but about fortuitous outcomes for you and those around you. It is lucky that the ogre misses a sure strike because it slips, or that your arrow hits its mark because the orc decided to jump, but it is also a sign of luck to see a friendly face when you are in dire need. Clerics of the fortune domain can be go-lucky vagabonds, or fortunetellers, but whatever they identify themselves as they always seem to be in the right place, at the right time.

Domain spells:

1st	*bless, shield*
3rd	*bestow curse, blink*
5th	*creation, death ward*
7th	*death ward, regenerate*
9th	*raise dead, wish*

1. Proficiency. As a cleric of the Fortune domain you gain proficiency with Diviner's Tools or a Gaming Kit.

1. Fortune Smiles. At first level you gain advantage on attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws. You may use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). Your expended advantage returns after a long rest. Advantage can negate disadvantage but you can only expend one use of this ability per roll.

2. Channel Divinity: Lucky Token. You create or appoint a lucky token. This can be anything, from a specific playing card, to a die, a figurine or a bead. The owner of the token may re-roll their first failed saving throw. Once the token is used in this way, the magic becomes inert. In addition, you may use your Fortune Smiles ability on the owner of the token as long as they are in your line of sight. Using the token in this way does not render its magic inert.

The token retains its magic for 24 hours, or until it is used.

6. Fortunate Circumstance. Beginning at 6th level things always work out for you. Once per week you may exert influence over events, NPCs or the world around you. This should always be a minor change, or the fleshing-out of an unspecified detail. Examples include, but are not restricuted to, the following:

- Although the outpost is heavily guarded, the goblin soldiers seem especially tired and hungover. Apparently, they stayed up until morning, feasting to celebrate an ancient goblin holiday that occurs once every 200 years.
- The Elder that refused to help your party find a lost tomb suddenly recognizes one of your comrades: he used to know her mother.
- All the doors in the complex open outward, but this one has undergone repairs in the past, so it opens inward instead.
- The reclusive Sage has hired your old friend Piney to be his bodyguard. Piney is happy to see you and arrange an audience with his new employer.

8. Fortunate Find. Beginning at 8th level you always find what you need. Whenever your group obtains treasure or receives payment in the form of specific items you may use this ability to change the nature of one of these items. This does not allow you to change the value of the item, just its type. For example: your party loots an ancient chest and finds a fine silver long sword and a +1 chain mail armor. You could use this ability to change the armor to a +1 studded leather armor instead, if that item would be more suitable for you, or to change the silver sword to a silver dagger. This ability can be used once per week.

17. Fortune Favors the Bold. Starting at 17th level, if you damage a creature with a melee or ranged (spell) attack, the creature has a disadvantage on attack rolls against you until the start of its next turn and you have advantage on saving throws against its spells and effects until the start of your next turn.



About this book

'On The Shoulders of Heroes Vol 1: Bellög' was created by Joran Heimering and Daan den Boer. It was conceptualized as an homage to the glory days of role playing and classic fantasy, with some modern day tweaks. The setting is based on Germanic history and takes inspiration from old school RPGs, Scandinavian and Japanese tradition – things we feel should be reintroduced to the game we love. You will immediately feel at home in a world that feels very familiar and traditional but also features plenty of interesting variations and oddities for you to explore. We wanted to write a deep, detailed setting that allows you to lose yourself in its many unique races, places and cultures. In addition to providing a look at the continent and its inhabitants, a small part of the book is dedicated to suggest some of the house-rules that we have adopted over the years.

We made this book because we wanted to contribute to a rich library of existing works, as a tribute to this amazing game, as a centerpiece of our game-design portfolio and for the sheer fun of it. We aim to be exclusive and to open this world to everyone – within the limits of what we are allowed legally. We plan to offer rule conversions to any and all beloved versions of roleplaying games and offer them, free of charge, on our website. After this project we will start work on our first Monster Compendium and a number of add-on books designed to offer you even more ways to play your favorite races.

About the Creators

Joran Heimering is a writer and game designer located in Castricum, the Netherlands. After purchasing a classic RPG book in 2002 he has been an avid GM and player. He has a deeply rooted love for all things game and geek, especially role playing- and trading card games. After completing his BA studies in culture, language and film at Utrecht University in 2013 he has been working to realize his most ambitious project to date: On The Shoulders of Heroes. In 2017 he decided to stray from the beaten path to pursue these ambitions full time and he founded Windmill Slam Games together with his best friend, Daan. Joran lives in an elven tree house with his supporting wife Marieke and their pets.

Daan den Boer lives in Amsterdam where he achieved a Masters degree in Chemistry in 2016 and now works as a software developer at BALR. In his youth he developed a passion for field hockey, sailing, skiing and computer games and these have been a continuous presence in his life. He discovered his interest for roleplaying games when he met Joran in high school and they still roll together. Daan sees the On The Shoulders of Heroes campaign setting as a great way to combine his love for fantasy, spending time with friends, and his talent for graphic design and layout editing. In late 2017 he decided to become the second half of Windmill Slam Games and considers it a passion project. Daan shares his apartment with his lovely girlfriend Hilde.

Want to stay informed about our new projects? Want to tell us about your On the Shoulders of Heroes adventures? Do you have other questions or requests?

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Follow in the footsteps of heroes and forge the destiny of the world...

An almost endless wilderness with infinite possibilities awaits you! Uncover the history of the great stone city of Nyphvile or climb The White Peaks. Explore the dark continent of Bellög with your friends and meet savage monsters and loyal allies. Step into the footsteps of familiar fantasy races like dwarves or elves, or become a brawny bugbear, heroic half-giant, mystical gnoll or sly trow. Discover how their unique cultures, customs and languages influence their daily lives and relationships. Face fantastical foes, from genre staples to creatures based on European legends. With its cosmos inspired by Scandinavian and Japanese mythology and religion based on Paganism you will feel rig ht at home. The philosophy behind On the Shoulders of Heroes is that the world was shaped by the actions of great individuals. Do you have what it takes to pick up the Trollhammer and follow in their footsteps?

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Joran Heimering *Daan den Boer*

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