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*A game about fashion, travel and everyday magic.*



*In a loom, three things are crucial:*

*The vertical threads of the warp that provide rigidity and structure.*

*The flexible weft that is passed between the threads of the warp.*

*The weave that arises from these acting together.*

*So it is with people.*

*There is the warp: the things about them you can see and touch.*

*There is the weft: their thoughts, emotions, and context.*

*And together they make the weave.*

*So it is with the world.*

*Each community is its own thread of the warp, separate and rigid.*

*We are the weft, flowing between them as we travel.*

*Together we reshape the weave of the world.*

-Extract from the first tapestry of the Vellavna.

# What is this?

It's a story game about novices in a magical tradition that draws power from fabric, garments and the symbolic power people invest in them. As a coming of age rite you're travelling through the world's different societies, finding what they value and what their fashion signifies, and crafting garments and glyphs that express their magic.

You'll make your own novice, defined by their outfit and their outlook. Each session, you'll arrive at a new location, get to know the local culture, and deal as much as you wish to with the community's problems. To help you out, you can channel threads of power through your garments to achieve miracles and awaken the glyphs embroidered on your robes.

Once you understand the place well enough, you can try to give the cultural tradition a physical form (or *Egregore*) and earn power from it. Be careful: carelessness here will create a *Tangle* or *Echo* instead. These malevolent spirits cause trouble, demand sacrifices, and risk causing permanent harm to the cultural tradition.

It's meant to prompt discussion about tourism and cultural appropriation. Do you take the things that you find cool heedless of the damage you may be causing, learn context from locals and only take what is shared with you, or appreciate from a distance and only take memories with you when you leave?

## How To Play

To play Weave, you'll need:

- At least two friends. One of you will be the Weaver - their role is to build the places you visit, describe the things you see, and decide the effects of your magic on the world. The rest of you will play novices.
- Some character sheets (see p. 12).
- Some coloured pens or crayons.

## Making a Character

To make your novice:

- Pick the tradition you were raised in (p. 5).
- Rank your power in the 4 magical threads (p. 7).
- Reveal your first glyph of power (p. 9).
- Bring it all together, describe your outfit and appearance, and reveal how you know the other characters (p. 11).



# Who are the Vellavna?

*Also known as The People (internal), Threadfolk, Spiders (derogatory).*

The history of the Vellavna is not written, but embroidered. The lovingly-tended banner at the heart of each community holds thousands of glyphs forming a sequence back through time, picked out in a patchwork of fabrics and threads. In some places, the banner may be scorched or torn; in other places, it may be worked in silk and gold. Sit, run the banner through your hands, and you may learn their story.

The Vellavna follow the mysteries of the Weave. This search for meaning in the fabrics and garments of the world has made them incredible artisans, and given them access to strange magic.

For all that, they keep to themselves. Spending your life scrutinising people's lives for mystical truth tends to create a certain level of distance.

*Pick your home tradition from the options below – this gives your favoured materials:*

## A travelling company

Nomadic caravans that wend their way through towns and kingdoms, making ends meet with repairs, commissions from local elites and spectacular fashion shows. Their fabric source must travel with them, so they favour *Animal* textiles: wool, silk, fur, leather, calfskin, ivory, etc.

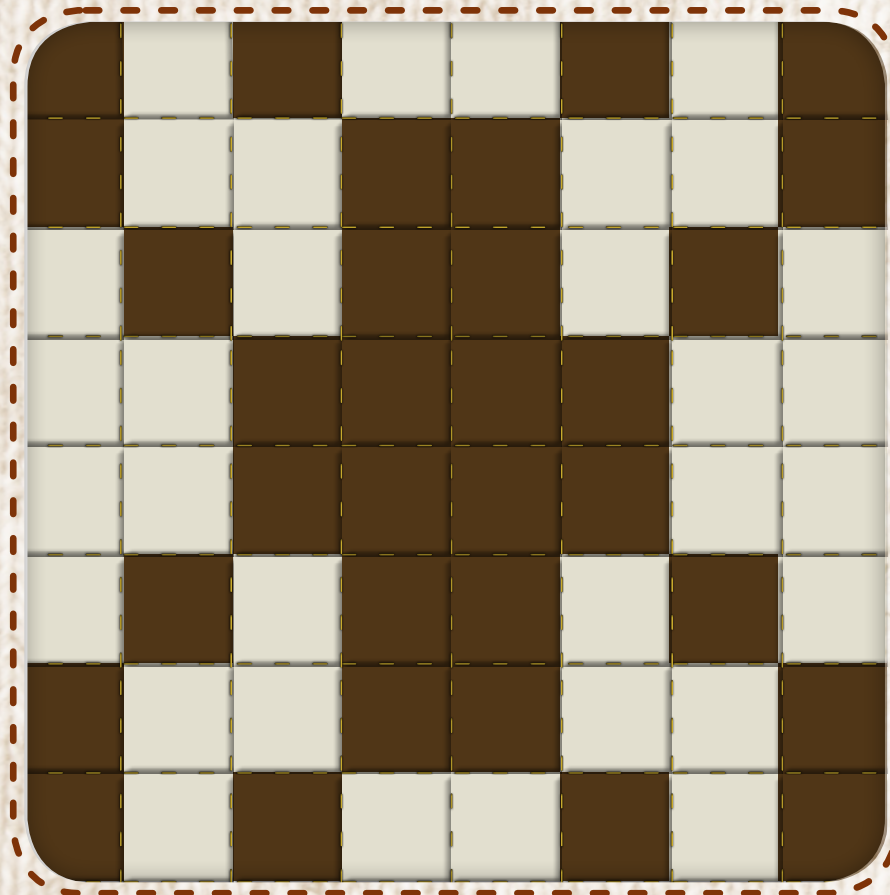
## A loom-monastery

In remote mountains, small groups of Threadfolk maintain self-sufficient monasteries. These colourful but quiet compounds are covered in tapestries delving into the more abstract enigmas of the Weave. These Vellavna are pacifist and vegetarian, focusing on *Plant* fabrics: cotton, wooden bead chains, linen, jute, hessian, etc.

## A fabricator guild

The fabricators live in high-walled compounds in settlements across the world, although the walls aren't there to keep the city out; these Vellavna are dedicated to the creation of artificial threads, and their boiling vats can be intemperate at the best of times. Fabricators tend to be the most innovative and impulsive of the Vellavna, and focus on *Forged* fabrics: vinyl, nylon, acrylic, metal chains, kevlar, etc.

# The Spider



Some say the Vellavna worship spiders, and even steal children to sacrifice to their half-spider goddess deep beneath the earth. It's not true, of course - they just hold spiders in the same high esteem they do all of nature's spinners. Fabricators respect spider's ingenuity, and travelling companies often keep silk farms in one of their caravans.



# The Four Threads

The mysteries of the Weave are a four-part creed that sees the magic and meaning in all fabric and clothing as an interaction between four fundamental threads.

*Rank the threads from 4 (primary thread) to 1 (least favoured).*

*These ratings give you a pool of points each session to channel minor miracles through your garments:*

## The Thread that Protects

Found in garments that protect from the environment and attacks. Where a warrior puts on layers of linen, a blacksmith pulls on heavy gloves to reach into the forge, or a traveller pulls a warm coat tight, we see the Thread that Protects.

*Garments:* Armour, aprons, raincoats.

*Materials:* Leather, denim, fur, waxed cotton, chain mail, kevlar.

*Spend a point to shield yourself or others from harm.*

## The Thread that Conceals

Found in garments that hide the wearer and protect secrets. Where two brides wear veils as they walk down the aisle, a fugitive pulls up their hood to avoid guards, or a performer uses strategically-placed ribbons to tantalise, we see the Thread that Conceals.

*Garments:* Veils, masks, shawls, disguises.

*Materials:* Lace, wool, ivory, false hair.

*Spend a point to hide your identity, evade detection or present a false facade.*

## The Thread that Reveals

Found in garments that're used to send a message. Where a courtier puts on rings that signify their station, an actor puts on a mask with a scowling face, or a new flag unfurls from a captured keep, we see the Thread that Reveals.

*Garments:* Flags, costumes, finery, jewellery.

*Materials:* Cloth of gold, snakeskin, velvet, silk, bead chains, daisy chains.

*Spend a point to captivate, enthrall or impress others.*

## The Thread that Suffices

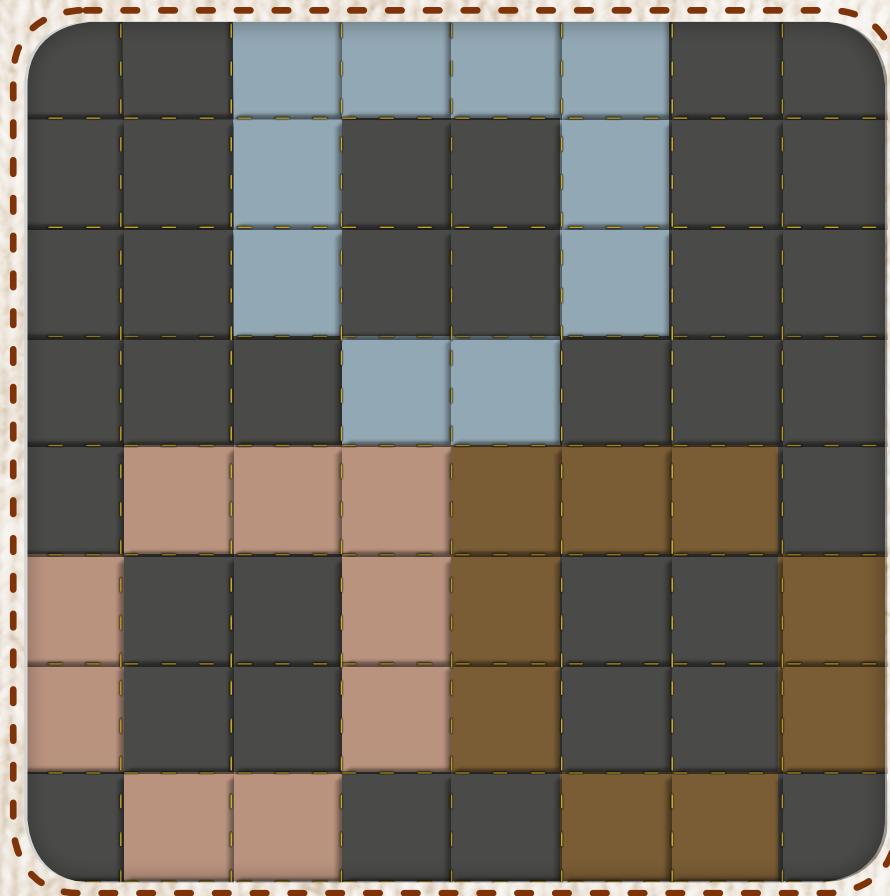
Found in clothing and fabric not chosen but still cherished. Where a rope lifting a weight refuses to break, a woman by the river carefully washes stains out of an old shift, or a clerk pulls on cheap stockings before heading to work, we see the Thread that Suffices.

*Garments:* Sacks, tunics, blankets, ropes.

*Materials:* Hemp, nylon, wool, polyester, chains.

*Spend a point to help you endure, resist fatigue and ease other's burdens.*

# The Criskelon



It's said the Threads flow into the world from the three fates: the spinner, the weaver and the cutter. Some mystics spend their lives searching for the fates' hiding place, and the mysteries of the Thread of Destiny.



# Glyphs

When the four threads are used to embroider a garment, it's filled with power. These embroidered Glyphs are the focus of the Vellavna's magic, and let them perform minor miracles.

The three branches of Threadfolk society favour different motifs for their glyphs:

- *Travelling Companies* favour glyphs of living creatures, in whole or in part: sheep, eyes, spiders and so on.
- *Loom-Monasteries* favour abstract patterns and symbols: swirls, grids, mandalas and so on.
- *Fabricator Guilds* glyphs show the forces of nature and civilisation: stars, waves, wheels, roads and so on.

*You've recently made your first glyph*, marking you as ready for the next step of initiation. Decide what it looks like, and draw it. Use your primary *Thread* and *Tradition* to work out what it lets you do:

## Animal

### Adaptation

Your garments shift to protect you in your current situation, growing hide, fur, spines etc as appropriate.

### Vigour of the Ox

The enchanted garment will not fray, tear or break, no matter what.

### Prowess

Pick a particular physical activity - dancing, duelling etc. The garment wearer can display impressive skill at that activity.

### Animal Mask

Pick an animal. Whoever wears the garment gains one of its traits: keen senses, climbing, burrowing, flight etc.

## Plant

### Diffusion

Something that might harm you is spread over a wide area, diluting its effects between the people present.

### Reweaving

The garment can transform into whatever is most desperately needed by you at the moment.

### Natural Beauty

The garment reveals an magnifies an aspect of the wearer: their compassion, their bravery, their grace etc.

### Wood for the Trees

So long as the wearer stays still they'll blend into their environment and be overlooked by anyone.

## Forged

### Reflection

Something that might harm you bounces harmlessly off, in the direction of your choosing.

### Strength of Iron

So long as you wear the garment you will not need food, water, air or rest.

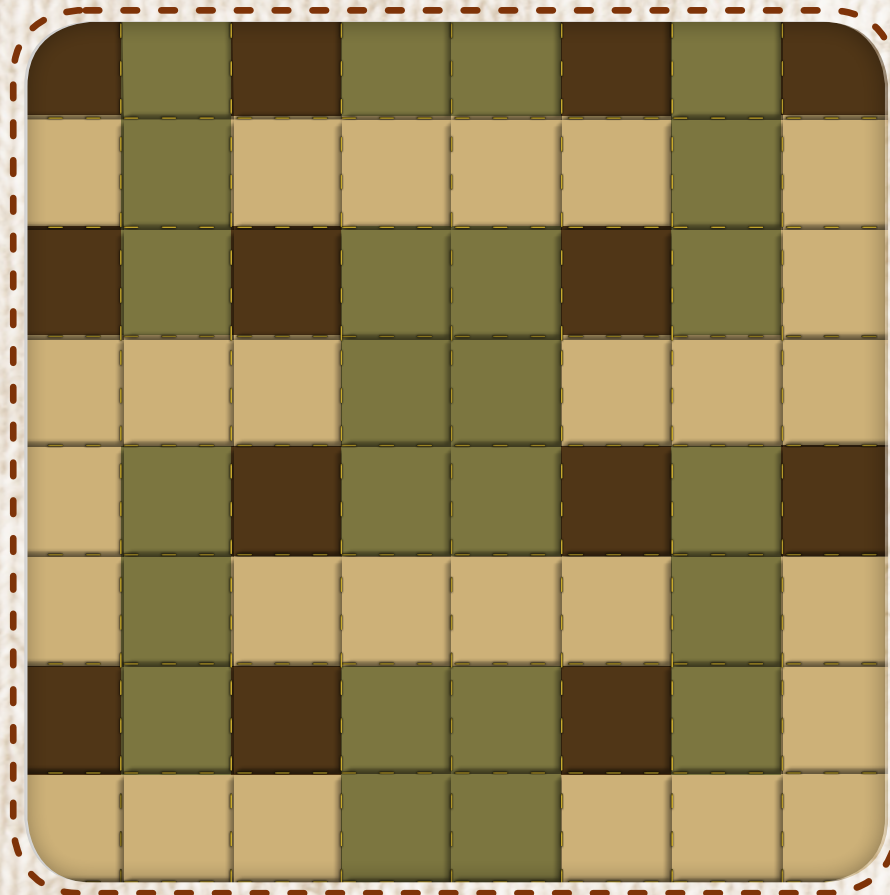
### Crown of the Regent

The garment subtly shifts into whatever denotes authority in the local area - sashes, crowns, badges etc.

### Fool's Gold

Anything the garment is wrapped around or placed underneath looks far more valuable than it actually is.

# The Zoom



One of the most common glyphs used by the Vellam.  
Often used to channel miracles of community, creation  
and binding.



# Your Character

Your first glyph showed you were ready for the next step in your initiation. You were grouped with the other novices and sent out into the world. Your mission is to find the traces of the Four Threads out there and return with at least seven glyphs representing the memories you've made.

In the Vellavna this is like a Rumspringa or a gap year. It's your chance to go out into the world, have some fun, understand other cultures and grow your power until you can take your place among the Threads' masters.

*Record your tradition, rankings in the four threads and first glyph on the character sheet overleaf.*

*Also decide:*

## Their Outfit

Threadfolk don't pay much attention to physical features: the *outfit* is the window to the soul. Say what yours looks like, based on your favoured material and prominent threads; a Fabricator who focused on the Thread that Protects might wear gleaming metal armour, for example.

## Connections

You were brought together thanks to creating your 1st glyph around the same time, but that doesn't mean you're strangers. Pick a character you're distantly related to, and another who's helped you before on a crafting project.

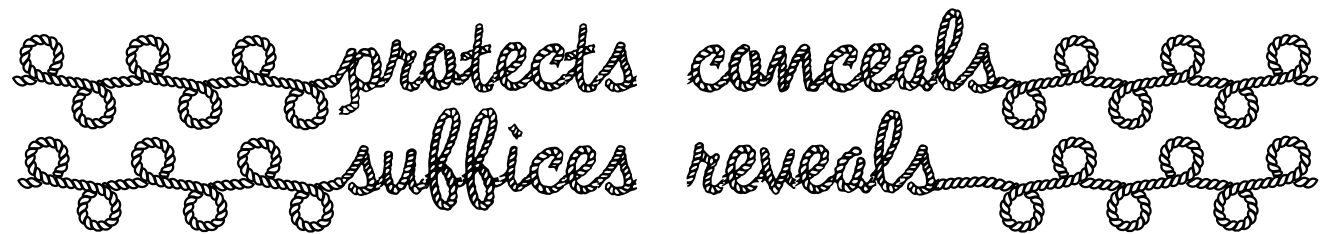
## Other Details

Pick a name - something simple, something showy, a textile or garment. Pick gender expression, race, and physical appearance if those are important to you, or you want them to come up.

Name:

Outfit:

Threads:



Tradition:

☐ Travelling Company

*You're skilled with Animal materials. You can animate your garments. They will move about and follow your orders.*

☐ Loom-Monastery

*You're skilled with Plant materials. Your garments fix themselves in sunlight, becoming as good as new within a few hours.*

☐ Fabricator Guild

*You're skilled with Forged materials. Your clothes can absorb a chunk of elemental energy and radiate it back out at your command.*

Glyphs:



# Hitting the Road

Each session begins with you arriving in a new place. The Weaver will describe it to you, and pick out one garment that catches your eye - some clothing or gear that's become important to the culture.

**You have four days in each location**, before tradition mandates you move on again. Each day, every novice is free to do one activity of their choice together or separately. Here's some suggestions.

- **Find what the locals do for fun:** visit a bar, find a dance, watch people gambling or playing sports.
- **Investigate the history:** visit places of worship, museums, public art installations.
- **Take in the scenery:** go to the beach, walk through the meadows, climb the hills.
- **Make some money:** do repairs, sell your original creations, perform for an audience.
- **Get involved in local issues:** use your magic to help people in need, lobby the powerful, directly intervene to stop things that offend you.

## Doing things

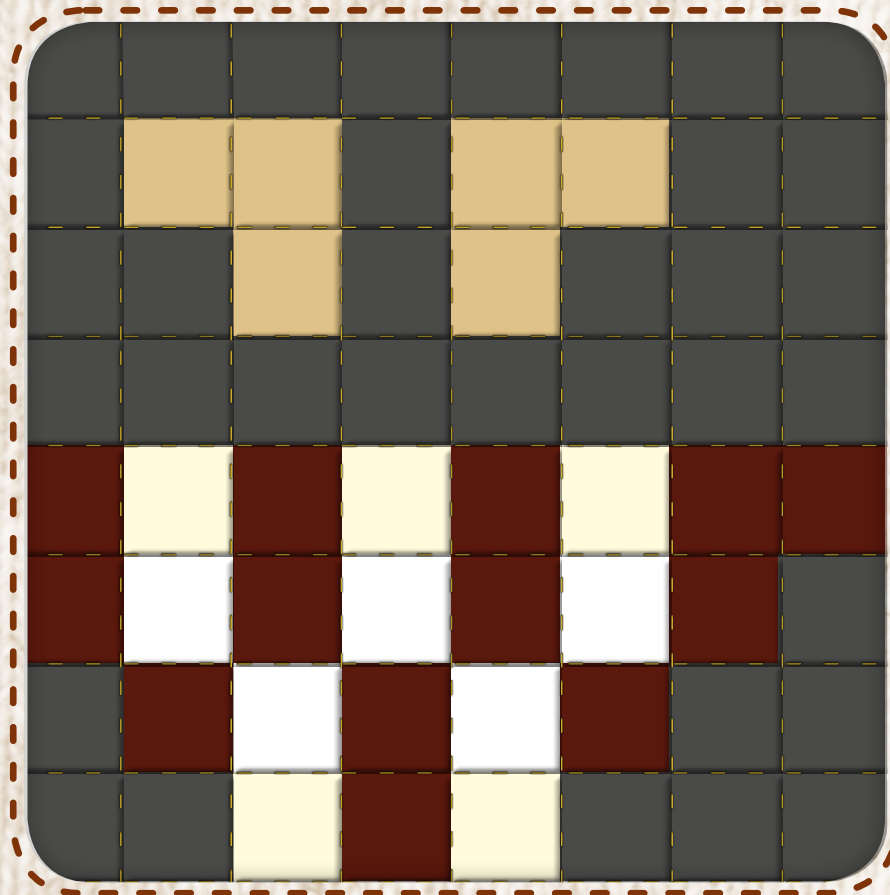
Your characters are weird tailor-wizards, so any action they attempt other than tailoring will have results that are humdrum at best. If you do something important - unaided by magic - the Weaver picks one:

- You fall short in one crucial way.
- You succeed with unintended consequences.
- You do it well enough to satisfy yourself but without lasting impact.

Tailoring's an exception. So's magic, which just works. It comes in three forms: one from your tradition, momentary miracles you get from calling on Threads, and the powers of your Glyphs. Tradition powers and Glyphs are available to you at no cost. They'll do whatever their description says, adjudicated by the group as needed to make its results fit with the current situation.

Threads are more complex. You start each session with points in each equal to their rating. When you spend a thread point, your garments shift to achieve your goal - spending the Thread that Protects can temporarily turn a lacy scarf to gleaming steel, while spending the Thread that Reveals can cause a hood to subtly suggest a regal crown. The transformation lasts for a single action: your cloak will protect you for as long as you shelter from a hail of arrows, and your ribbons will swirl around you for as long as you perform, but as soon as that's done they'll revert back to normal.

# The Beast



The Beast is used to evoke intimidating fangs - maybe to make the wearer seem more threatening or give them fabric fangs that are razor-sharp.



# Following the Threads

As you spend time in the community you should be trying to learn more about the locals and working out why they value that garment. You do this by following two strands.

**The warp** is the facts of the garment - its materials, its physical properties, and the particular steps its creators take to make it.

**The weft** is the cultural resonance of the garment. It's how it's used in society, the role it's played in their history, and the cultural weight that creating or wearing it holds.

As you learn details of the garment the novices accumulate strands of Warp and Weft, spinning them out of the world's tapestry into gleaming threads of potential.

## Get a warp strand the first time anyone...

- Sees the garment from up close.
- Wears the garment.
- Secures the specific materials needed to make it.
- Watches someone making it.
- Makes a facsimile of it.
- Compares one they've made to a 'real' one.

## Get a weft strand the first time anyone...

- Sees the garment in active use.
- Gets a local to tell them about the garment.
- Spends a day with someone wearing it.
- Is taught how to wear the garment.
- Is freely given their won copy of the garment.
- Is taught how to make it by an artisan.

If you think you've hit one of these triggers, say so. The Weaver has final say on whether you did but should agree unless you're really pushing it.



# Building the Egregore

On the dawn of the fifth day, the novices work together to build an *Egregore*: a yarn mannequin animated by the garment of interest's power.

The number of warp and weft strands required is kept secret by the Weaver, only revealed once you've finished construction. A simple and basic garment might only need 1 warp strand, while something extremely precise and delicate that needs special tools and techniques might need 5.

Similarly, a garment freely shared with outsiders with an easily-understood cultural role might only need 1 weft strand, while a garment that signifies a prized and complex cultural role and whose construction is a closely-guarded secret might need 5 weft.

*After construction the Weaver will describe the results based on the strands invested:*

**If the group has enough warp and weft**, the *Egregore* forms and teaches them a mystery of the Weave. Everyone gets a new glyph: players draw their own, and give it one of the powers from the table (p. 9) or work as a group to make a new one that's appropriate to the garment.

**Too little weft** and the *Egregore* is snarled up by clashing cultural expectations and becomes a *Tangle* - a blasphemous monster that must be subdued before it rampages through the area.

Once it's down, you have a choice: cut its strands from the world's tapestry to gain its glyph, but rob the garment of any cultural meaning. Or carefully unpick its threads, returning it to the tapestry.

**Too little warp** and the *Egregore's* body falls apart, revealing only an *Echo*. This insubstantial creature demands a novice sacrifice their flesh in exchange for the glyph; the sacrificed part is replaced by the garment's material. As the Echo fades it takes with it the secrets of the garment's manufacture - the culture's artisans lose knowledge of how to make it, though they may rediscover the process in time.

*Alternatively*, if you have an example of its garment to hand you can sacrifice it to the Echo to give it form and return it to the tapestry, but lose your chance for power.

**Not enough warp and not enough weft:** the *Egregore* never manifests, leaving the group with just a threadbare and shapeless mannequin.

**If the group doesn't want to take the risk** they can decide to simply move on instead of building an Egregore. All they take with them is memories and experience: each member of the party can raise by one the rating of a Thread of their choice.

# Running Weave

This section gives the Weaver procedures to help build the world and run the game. You build the world on a town-by-town basis - the game is built to be episodic, and the only thing players should take from town to town is the memories and the glyphs they learned.

What to do with souvenirs? Cosmetic items are great additions to a character's outfit, but other gear is lost or traded away between settlements. The players arrive at each location tired from the road, in need of some quality food and drink, and with not quite enough money to last them their stay.

*To build your settlements, roll or pick from each list:*

## Size

How big is the settlement?

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | <b>Hamlet</b>  | A dozen to a hundred people.             |
| 2 | <b>Town</b>    | Hundreds to a thousand people.           |
| 3 | <b>City</b>    | Thousands to ten-thousand.               |
| 4 | <b>Capital</b> | Tens of thousands, to a quarter million. |

## Current events

What's happening as you arrive?

- |   |                 |  |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 1 | <b>Festival</b> | The streets are packed with revellers. |
| 2 | <b>Mourning</b> | A prominent figure has passed away.    |
| 3 | <b>Harvest</b>  | Everyone's reaping or giving thanks.   |
| 4 | <b>Taxes</b>    | Purses are light and mood is glum.     |

## Industry

What's the settlement's biggest industry, and how can the players use it?

|    |             | Benefit  | Problem   |
|----|-------------|--|---|
| 1  | Mining      | Metals are easier to find.                     | Health issues plague the miners.  |
| 2  | Forestry    | Animal skins and wood are easier to find.      | A dangerous animal is attacking hunters in the forest.                      |
| 3  | Farming     | Plant fibres are easier to get a hold of.      | An infection's spreading through the farms, threatening famine.             |
| 4  | Textiles    | All tailoring supplies are easier to find.     | Hostile clothing cartels resent the competition.                            |
| 5  | Bureaucracy | Patterns and designs are easier to get.        | Characters don't have the right paperwork.                                  |
| 6  | Arcana      | Exotic and magical materials are available.    | Magical overflow causes aberrations.  |
| 7  | Military    | High demand for armour.                        | Boisterous soldiers are shaking down the locals.                            |
| 8  | Crossroads  | Locals are friendly to travellers.             | Room and board is at a premium.   |
| 9  | Religion    | Locals enjoy sharing their history and values. | Other faiths are taboo.   |
| 10 | Docks       | High demand for repairs and rope making.       | Sailors crowd the establishments, pushing authentic culture to the fringes. |

# The Garment

Next up, you define whatever garment it is that the characters are trying to draw power from.

## Presence

- 1, 2 Everyone has...
- 3, 4 A certain demographic has...
- 5, 6 A handful of people have...

## Garment

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1 Accessory | 1 Hats         |
|             | 2 Masks        |
|             | 3 Cloaks       |
|             | 4 Scarves      |
|             | 5 Gloves       |
|             | 6 Hair Ribbons |
| 2 Clothing  | 1 Shirts       |
|             | 2 Jackets      |
|             | 3 Skirts       |
|             | 4 Dresses      |
|             | 5 Tunics       |
|             | 6 Belts        |

## Quality

- 1 Patched and repaired...
- 2 Pristine and flawless...
- 3 Embroidered and decorated...
- 4 Garish and characterful...

- |                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 3 Professional Gear | 1 Aprons        |
|                     | 2 Breastplates  |
|                     | 3 Helmets       |
|                     | 4 Uniforms      |
|                     | 5 Robes         |
|                     | 6 Eyeglasses    |
| 4 Useful Things     | 1 Blankets      |
|                     | 2 Boots         |
|                     | 3 Bags          |
|                     | 4 Socks         |
|                     | 5 Bridles/Reins |
|                     | 6 Ropes         |

## That Signify...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 High economic status                   | Wealthy nobles, smartly-dressed financiers, ostentatious nouveau riche, etc. |
| 2 Low economic status                    | Penniless vagrants, working-class slum dwellers, labouring peasants, etc.    |
| 3 Membership of a revered group          | Veterans, the dominant ethnic group, parliamentarians, doctors etc.          |
| 4 Membership of an ostracised group      | An oppressed minority, scapegoats, tax collectors, sewer cleaners etc.       |
| 5 Religious or cultural role (temporary) | The prom king, the master of revels, the representative of winter, etc.      |
| 6 Religious or cultural role (permanent) | A priest, a charity worker, an oracle, a bard, a matchmaker, etc.            |

*Flesh out the garment, and assign it a material class and dominant thread.*



# Weaving it together

Take the details you've generated together and work out what place they suggest to you.

Remember that the players will want to investigate the garment, and the people who wear it. Make sure you have ways in mind for them to do that, and be open to their own ideas.

Your key responsibility is to bring this place to life. When you're describing things, see them through the eyes of the Vellavna. Always describe someone's outfit first: what it's made of, what it looks like it's useful for, what's curious or mysterious about it. Then, like an incidental detail, mention things like build, complexion, gender, voice and mannerisms. Name every character the players interact with, and consider their relationship with the garment. Show how this cultural tradition has impacted their life, for better or worse. Maybe the social obligation to keep up appearances is draining their resources. Maybe they worked hard to earn the right to wear it, and that achievement fills them with pride. Maybe they fell short, and resent its wearers.

Another responsibility is deciding quite how many *warp* and *weft* threads the group needs to successfully build the Egregore. The players have general guidelines (see p. 16) but you should set specific values as you flesh out the garment. They both start at 1 thread required:

## Raise required warp by 1 if:

- The garment uses rare materials.
- The garment's materials aren't obvious.
- It needs particular and rare crafting techniques.
- It's delicate and fragile.

## Raise required weft by 1 if:

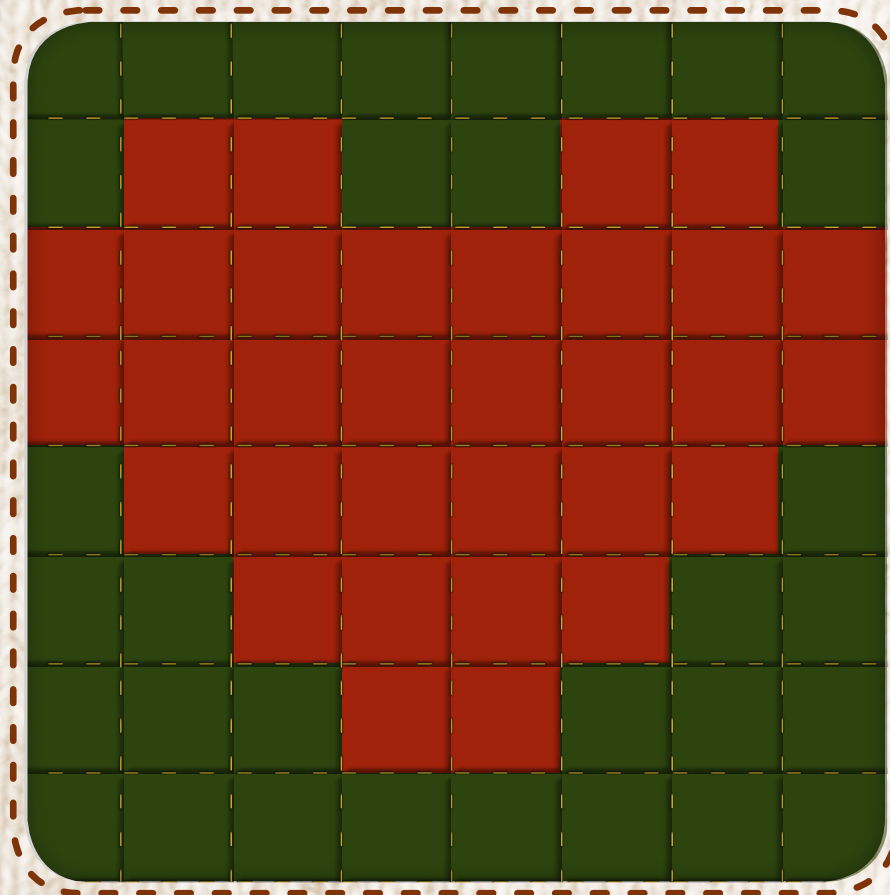
- There's a taboo on outsiders wearing it.
- Locals must earn the right to wear it.
- Locals must earn the right to make it.
- It plays a key role in the culture's self-identity.

**Example:** *It's currently fashionable among the merchant class to wear silk scarves dyed with expensive dyes. Locals must earn the right to wear it, so it'll need 2 weft. It uses rare materials, so: 2 warp.*

Don't tell the players the exact value until they've attempted their summoning, but be honest in your descriptions. A careful and observant group should be pretty confident about what it'd take to get the best outcome, and groups risking creating a *tangle* or an *echo* should be worried they're pushing it.

Remember that a character's glyphs are a permanent record of the things they've done for power. If they took a glyph from a *tangle* or *echo* make sure to remind them of that later. Part of a coming-of-age story is building your own moral code; make sure the question of whether the characters have a right to the power they seek doesn't fade into the background.

Life



Though it seems innocuous, the glyph of life has a dark reputation. Vellavna heretics allegedly use the materials of Life - human hair, living fungus etc - to work dark magic.