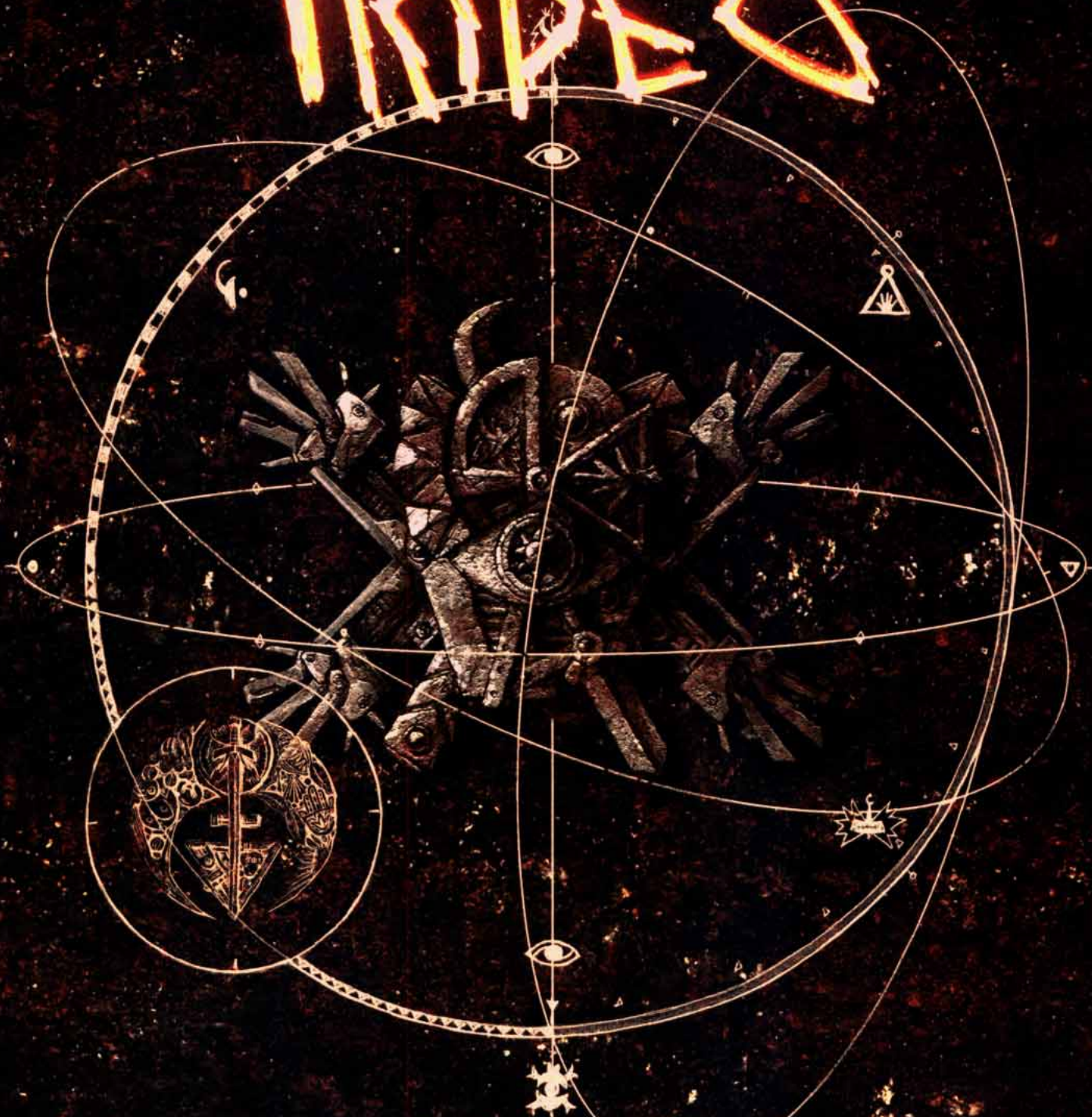


TRIBE8



The Past is Dead
Your Future Begins Now



Dream Pod 9

TRIBE 8

We are the dispossessed, the Children of Hon, the Fallen, we are the Eighth Tribe and we stand alone. We are those who walk away, those who turn our backs on the Seven Sisters, on our mothers and fathers, and venture into the wastelands around us to find our destiny, to find our calling. Some of us are rebels on outlaw, others malcontents and lunatics, victims and terrorists, but we are one; we are the Children of the Fall. Listen to me, my brothers and sisters, we must no longer stand idle and silent; our time has come. The ashes are vanishing and in their wake a new world is dawning, a world that is our destiny to discover and to reclaim. The past, the canon, the Zbri, they are all just that — the past. The future is dark and unknown; the future belongs to us.

— Altara Van, "The Manifesto of the Fallen"

Tribe 8 is a roleplaying game set in a tribal future where Player Characters are blessed with mystical insight and marked by destiny. They must struggle to build a new society from the ashes of the old, fighting against alien horrors and the Futimar, avatars of the Goddess Herself. The Tribe 8 Rulebook contains everything needed to start a campaign, including world background, full character creation and interaction rules, and a new and dynamic system for Synthesis, the magic of Tribe 8.

DP9-801

**The Past is Dead
Your Future Begins Now**



Dream Pod 9

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Credits

Written and Created by:

Philippe R. Boule, Stéphane Brochu
Joshua Mosqueira Asheim

Copy Editing

Jean Carrières

Editorial Direction

Jean Carrières, Senior Editor
Philippe R. Boule, Line Developer
Marc-Alexandre Vézina, Silhouette System
Developer

Silhouette Design

Gene Marcil, Stéphane I. Matis

Additional Silhouette Design

Philippe R. Boule, Joshua Mosqueira Asheim,
Marc-Alexandre Vézina

Cover & Interior Art

Ghislain Barbe, Charles-Emmanuel Ouellette,
Normand Bilodeau

Layout

Jean-François Fortier, Pierre Ouellette

Art Direction

Pierre Ouellette

Marketing

Stéphane Brochu, Robert Dubois

Playtesting

Harold L. Alger, Marion Anderson, Phil
Anderson, Justin Bacon, Robert A. Beck, Pamela
Berlow, Michael Butler, Robert Chaney, John
Chapman, Alan Cherr, Kelly Davenport, Jean-
Sébastien Dubé, B. Scott Eggers, Bridget M. Elm,
David M. Elm, Angela N. Fisk, Ryan Fisk, Alistair
Gillies, Chris Hartford, Chris Hind, Mark
Hofmann, Chris Hussey, Ross A. Isaacs, Lloyd D.
Jessee, Stéphane Jutras, Aaron Klein, Christian
Lemaire, Andrew J. Lucas, Benjamin A. Ludwis,
Ryan Allyn Lyberger, R. Scott Maxwell, Nancy
Megelas, Tyler Millson-Taylor, Michael G.
Montemayor, Pat Paulsen, Marion Poliquin, Jason
P. Prince, Anthony Pryor-Brown, Sean Riesch,
Kevin Rockel, Pierre-Claude Roy, Alex Seliger,
Scott Shafer, Lucien Soulban, Ben Teague, Guy-
Francis Vella, Christopher L. Weeks, Sean Michael
Wipkey, Christopher Voigt and anyone else we
may have forgotten (oops).

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The Prophecy of Joshua

As recounted by Veruka the Wraith, Outcast and Fallen

Listen to the words the Ravager, Joshua, spoke as He bled into the soil of Vimary. Wounded and dying, His mighty heart growing cold, He was granted a clarity that comes only with death. His words speak of our future, our destiny and our folly. They will come to pass.

At first, Joshua's voice was still strong. He saw images of vengeance and exclaimed: "My killers will be brought to task! Decapitated, sacrificed, transformed and destroyed!"

Then His mighty voice faltered as He saw the future. He whispered: "My vengeance and salvation will come from the wretches. My tribe, the Eighth, will come from the outcasts. They will be dirty, alone and powerful, tied to the Goddess as only they can be. They will be spat upon and tricked, tried and killed. But they shall be the future.

"They will be sorely tested. By their enemies and allies. They will free the dagger that killed me and guide it to cut through the land like fire. Blood will cover their homes and they will emerge strong and feared. In the second city, they will find failure in success, hubris in pride, and distraction in victory.

"They will be blind until I come to tell them truth. They will fear the wrath of wisdom and learn the wisdom of wrath. They will see the young grow and know their destiny.

"They will live in dreams and see ghosts die. They will find the barrier to truth and heal it with a wound.

"In the third city, they will battle what is foretold and forge what must be. They will create freedom for all, but it will be born of blood and sacrifice."

In His last gasp, he saw pain and cried: "Blood and sacrifice!"

Memories A Testament to the Fallen

I write these words as an exercise in hope. I pray that someday, somewhere there will be someone interested in this tale. Today we are the Fallen, outcasts from the Seven Tribes who rule this land, but maybe — if our struggle is worthwhile — you who are reading this live in a free land. If not, then my quest has failed and the people are still in bondage. But I remain hopeful.

The story I will now tell you is true. The events may be incorrect or in improper sequence, and the details may be askew, but these are the world of the Eighth Tribe and they ring with a truth born of rebirth and revolution.

Our Past

The enigmatic Keepers speak of a World Before. They guide us to look beyond the thick branches and deep woods that coat our land and see the concrete and iron monoliths that rise to the skies. They point to the dead cables and labyrinthine tunnels that run under the soil, to the stretches of cracked stone that serve as paths, to the skeletal bridges that now reach halfway across the river, and see evidence of a great civilization.

Some time before I was born, and before my parents were born, this island we now call Vimary and the lands across the river that surrounds it were home to countless people. Some say it was a prosperous time of richness and health, others that it was a nightmare of belching mechanisms and slaves worked to death. I don't know where the truth lies, but it was across this land that disaster struck.

Some call them demons, monsters or horrors, but their proper name is Z'bri. No human tongue can quite pronounce the word correctly, but if your breath is rasp and stuck in the space between agony and pleasure, you're close.

The Z'bri came from elsewhere and descended upon the World Before like a plague. They were powerful, mad and magical lords drunk on pleasures so inhuman that they caused civilization to collapse. Endless tombs dotted the lands and the survivors were herded into camps to dance, scream and die for the pleasure of the mad Z'bri lords. This bondage was seemingly endless, blasting away the memories of the World Before.

There were those who kept freedom alive, however. They prayed to the Goddess who guides us all and whispered forbidden memories to one another. When even their hope was on the verge of being washed away forever, the Goddess chose to manifest Herself.

The Goddess sent eight strangers — known to us as Nomads — to the camps of Vimary. They taught the prisoners how to summon avatars of the Goddess and sacrificed themselves in these very same rituals. Thus were born the Fatimas and they were glorious indeed, imbued with holy power and divine righteousness.

First came Baba Yaga the Crone, wizened and old even at the instant of Her birth, who rose with the specter of death about Her. She knew the ways of spirit and spread the word of freedom to the other camps. Next came Eva the Mother, gentle and caring, who brought life and energy back to a dead land. Then came Magdalen the Lover, erotic and mysterious, who empowered those who had been victims.

Next came Tera Sheba the Wise. Stern and cold, She brought order and law to the downtrodden. Almost simultaneously, Dahlia the Trickster brought hope and wonder. Mary the Forgiver brought the promise of peace and care after a dire struggle.

Finally came Joan the Warrior and Joshua the Ravager. Iron and fire were they, and as they raised their swords, the struggle for liberation began in earnest. We would have our freedom at a terrible price.

The victory against the monsters was neither easy nor complete. In the end, Joshua and His tribe were slaughtered in a final conflict with the Z'bri overlord. The horrors were pushed back to the north of Vimary, but they were not destroyed. Even the giddy days right after Liberation were bittersweet as Mary, most gentle of the Fatimas, was struck down by a mysterious ailment, only to be reborn as Agnes the Child. The seven surviving Fatimas together formed the Seven Tribes — the new nation of humanity.

We were liberated, but not yet free.



Our Present

When Joshua was struck down, he uttered a prophecy. He said that His death would be avenged, that His killers would be destroyed by a reborn Eighth Tribe. It would lead humanity to true and lasting freedom. The other Fatimas call this blasphemy. After all, they and their priests exclaim, haven't the Seven Sisters created true liberation?

No.

The Seven Tribes provide protection and prosperity, but only for those who toe the line. Those who dare challenge the Fatimas' will are cast out like so much living trash. Those who have the temerity to be born outside the tribes are less than nothing. Those who have the misfortune of offending a powerful priest or a capricious chieftain become exiled wretches. All the while the Z'bri still control the north of Vimary and plot their vengeance. The Fatimas bicker among themselves and toy with their followers while uncounted thousands live in bondage to the Z'bri and the world remains in ruins.

The Fatimas' lackeys look out and see a world they will shape for their avatars' will. I look out and I see uncounted Squats who have never known the tribes or their ways. I see Z'bri Serfs, poor humans who have become slaves to the horrors out of desperation. I see Keepers, strange technopriests who cling to the World Before. I see a world that must be healed.

But there is hope, because Joshua's legacy is coming true. In the growing legion of the outcasts, there are those of us who refuse to fade away. Just as Joshua predicted, the Goddess Herself has not abandoned us even if Her avatars have. We are still young, gathered only in scattered cells of like minded exiles. We call ourselves the Fallen, but we will soon rise as the Eighth Tribe and finally crack the chains that bind us.

Already we have created the settlement of Hom as an embryo of our new nation. Right now it's a rough-hewn home, regrouping various cells of outcasts and a few leaders. But it is our first step on the road to freedom.

Characters and Game Mechanics

The Tribe 8 Rulebook is divided into two distinct parts: the world section (Chapters 1 to 6) and the rules section (Chapter 7 to 12). The world chapters explore the setting and concepts of Tribe 8 through the words of its inhabitants, almost without recourse to game mechanics.

The rules section gives you all the game mechanics and advice needed to play Tribe 8 as a roleplaying game.

You will meet many characters in the world chapters, and information and background on some of these are presented in sidebars alongside the narrated text. This information will help you use these characters in your own Tribe 8 games and give you additional information about the world. These sidebars also give basic game statistics for these characters, which are explained in Chapter 8: Characters and Traits, pp. 114-143.

You may wish to familiarize yourself with the basics of roleplaying and the game rules used in Tribe 8 (see Chapter 7: The Basics, pp. 110-113), but this is not necessary to read and understand the world section.

Our Gifts

When they appeared, the Fatimas brought with them the Goddess' greatest gift: Synthesis. Under their tutelage we learned to tap into the River of Dream that flows through all things and accomplish great feats. Even the lowliest tribal has natural aptitudes that reflect her Fatima's nature and participates in great rituals that shape the world around her. The priests and elders of the tribes, close to the Fatimas, wield far greater power. They are able to cloud minds and transform souls. When the priests lead the tribe in grand rituals, legendary feats are possible.

From childhood we are taught that this power comes from the Fatimas, that without their love we would be helpless. That's a lie. We Fallen not only retain our power of Synthesis, but find it augmented and transformed when we are banished. It's as if the Fatimas were stifling rather than empowering us.

I say this is proof positive that the Goddess is with us. Some others claim it's a sign that Joshua watches over us. Either way, we are the Eighth Tribe He spoke of.

We are the Fallen and we will be free.

Our Future

The days to come will determine whether my hope is misplaced. We will face many challenges. What of the Z'bri who still plague the lands? What will happen when the Fatimas finally turn their fury upon us? Will we ever recover the remains of Joshua, our spiritual Father?

Will we ever be able to forge a nation from a band of outcasts?

We must.

— Altara Ven, member of the Eighth Tribe



History

We live now in ruins, the Seven Mothers — the Fatimas — darkening the world around us with their lies, but things weren't always so.

I've heard tales, whispered by the Keepers before they were tortured and killed as heretics, of the World Before. They called it a wondrous place of cities and roads, of tall buildings and lights that kept the shadows at bay, of music boxes and freedom. If you look around, at our homes hewn in rock and rubble, you can see what is left of this magnificent time before the Z'bri.

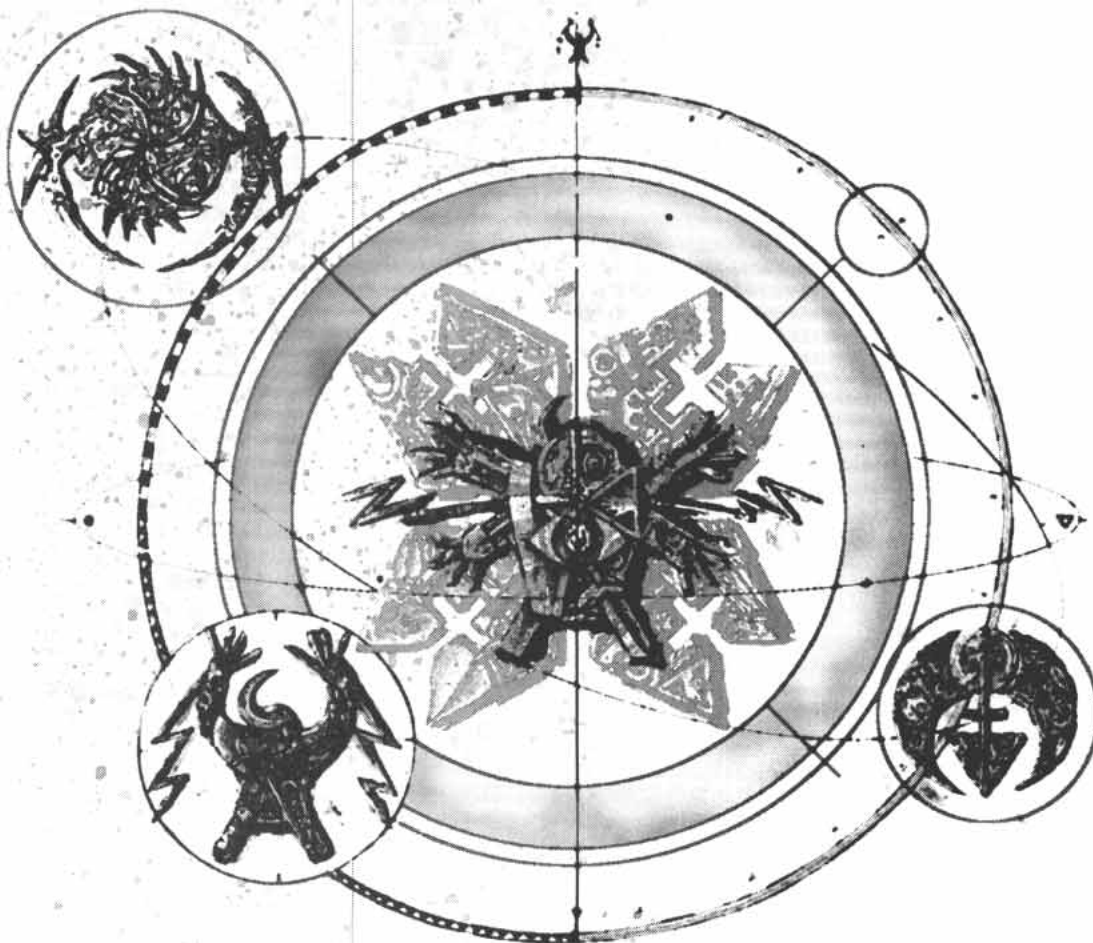
The Beasts, Takers or Outsiders — whatever you call them — destroyed everything, killed our ancestors with their claws and took what they wanted. The Fatimas preach that the Z'bri were sent to punish us, to bring about the End, and that's what they did. Like animals they herded us, bound us in prisons of death and torture to extinguish us all. It was a tragic time, but also one of miracles, because it was there, in the camps, that the Fatimas were born.

They came when we had nothing, each a fragment of the Goddess, mistress of reality, and shed our shackles off. They not only gave us hope and leadership, but blessed us with Synthesis, a chance to unlock the wonders of Dream. Above all they gave us liberation. The revolts lasted days, but by the end the Beasts retreated behind their fortresses walls and Joshua the Ravager lay dead, His tribe scattered to the winds. The Z'bri were defeated, or so the tribes like to believe as they turn an ignorant eye to what roams in the night.

Thus the Seven Tribes were born, each under the auspices of one of the Fatimas, and slowly we began exploring the ruins that were our homes. That was two generations ago. Now we still live in ruins, hiding from the Beasts at night, cowering at the Fatima's heels.

Have things changed much? You be the judge...

— Lyian Yeth, Oucast, speaking to one newly Fallen



A Tale of Ashes

Book I, Chapter I

And in the fires of the end, humanity turned against itself, drowning the lands in blood and death. Madmen ruled, lost souls preached with empty prayers of salvation and everywhere the innocent hung bleeding on crosses. It was a time of misery. It was a time of Endings.

The years burnt on and the darkness spread, a malefic force that began taking a life of its own. Aside from silent prophets and angels, few knew that this storm was just a pale harbinger of the evil that lay ahead — the terror of the Coming. The time had come to face one's sins. A time of reckoning was at hand.

And yet, none would listen to the screams.

The Ending times had arrived.

— Baba Yaga, The Ashen Tale

It Wasn't Always Ruins...

From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux, Keeper and Chronicler of the Second Times:

The wastes you see stretching out towards the end of darkness were not always so. It was once a place of mechanical marvels where the streets flowed with life and hummed with progress. Here, all about us, stood a city; tall buildings rose into the sky, illuminated not by the reddish anger of the sun, but by electrical lights that glittered like stars. Food was bountiful, harvested and sold in gigantic cooled bazaars; small light-boxes glowed with life, and mechanical chariots called "autos" traveled the black-tops. And there were books. Every subject had its book, and there, yes there, lies the real history of humanity. Now, nothing exists except echoes, fading words spoken by monstrosities that claim to love their followers, "their children," and the howls of beasts that roam the ruins. We live in an endless winter of ignorance, but things were not always so.

How the End happened, nobody knows. Was it some sort of biblical apocalypse, a natural calamity, who knows? And yet, things fell apart. Some say that one morning humanity awoke and thought it was alone: no vengeful god to punish us, no divine judgment day; just the weight of reality and the banality of existence. Alone in an endless universe, the hubris of it all!

In truth, I think humanity died long before that fateful morning, like some rough beast forever slouching towards its death, carried by the inertia and momentum of pride and folly. The only sin we committed was thinking that all this, all the machines and lights were going to last forever. In our foolishness we forgot that the darkness in our hearts would never be extinguished. So when the clocks stopped that morning, and the lights flickered and then vanished forever, humanity lashed out against itself and gave birth to an evil that made our ancestors worst fears come to life.

Rising

Look around you, at the rubble and
dust,

And see, not an end, but a beginning.

That which is born dies, and that
which dies is born;

So the dance of the Fire-Bird goes.

Trust not what you see, for in the
shadows the past devours.

Look around you, My Children, and
know

That things are illusions, and must be
torn apart

Or be forever consumed by them.

— Dahlia's Psalm

The Beasts

From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux:

I've heard the Ancients argue about the genus of the Z'bri, arguing their alleged origins from chaos and entropy, from deep within the ether of space, or from heaven or hell. Theories, bah! Conjecture and hope, really, the Z'bri just are. Not everything can be defined or should be explained. The Z'bri arrived one night and the world was never the same. Maybe they are the darkness within us all, that side of humanity that should never surface. Possibly they are just imaginary constructs concocted to explain the End that have somehow taken shape. It doesn't really matter. They are real. Their claws, their evils are real. Maybe humanity was never alone, maybe from deepest shadows our own worst fears lived and watched us with envy...

The Coming

Book II, Chapter XXXVI

They came from the deepest shadows, from the darkest hearts; the Z'bri poured fourth unleashed by the atrocities and despair of the

Ending times. Long forgotten by humanity, the Z'bri had once lived alongside us; but in a time-before-time, they were banished forever beyond the River of Dream, to the land of the Beyond. But their bondage could not last.

Like spirits of cruel vengeance, the

Takers ravaged and fed on the survivors. These sanguine creatures of hate and flesh promised enlightenment to the children of the End, assured them of salvation and eternal rewards.

And like sheep, your ancestors followed and were slaughtered.

With perversion, tooth and nail, the Z'bri raped and culled the innocent, gorging on sensations denied to them for countless millennia. Their revenge on humanity was neither swift nor painless, but a torturous feast that threatened to devour all of creation. For such is the weight of punishment.

— Baba Yaga, The Ashen Tale

The Coming of the Adversary

Vol. 1 of the One Hundred Books:

There is a war raging across the night sky, terrible demons pouring forth from the abyss of darkness. What and who are these creatures, none dare say, but one thing is for certain: no prophesy, no dogma, nothing prepared us for their arrival. They came when we had lost it all: our cities in ruins, our churches burning, hundreds of generations of humanity consumed in a matter of years. In the end it did not matter what God you prayed to, it was too late for that. So I write, in hopes that this record shall somehow outlast the Beasts' scourge, and so that a chronicle of their horrors survives if we don't.

They came from nowhere, at first only a few — the Nomads is what we called them. It was they who came to aid us, to show us the true way, to finally piece together the fragments of our existence and show us the true mosaic of the cosmos. Messiahs of spirit and flesh, some called them angels, some say our Lost Twins or visitors from Beyond. And like the mythical Prometheus, they laid bare secrets that we were never meant to know. In their wake, however, the Takers came. Beasts and carrion, they saw our weakness and devoured us. The Nomads, weak and frail, vanished and slowly the Beasts came to rule over us. The Z'bri, for this is their name, spoken in their tongue, claimed to be gods, and we followed.

Now we stand in rags and ruins at the edge of oblivion. Cacophonies of moans and screams fill the night, a night I fear will never see the light of dawn

So I write and offer a prayer to a God who no longer is, and hope that this is not the end.

The Closing

Book III, Chapter VIII

And yet, some still dared to hope, some Z'bri — Nomads — saw in the physical the potential that was forever denied to them as creatures of inhuman spirit. Outcasts, these Nomads rebelled against their lecherous brethren. For one brief moment the battered remnants of humanity knew peace as Z'bri fought Z'bri, Nomad fought Taker. Eventually, though, the Takers and their followers devoured all but twelve of the Nomads, who concealed themselves in the wastelands of humanity. Hiding within the crumbling foundations of the past, these Nomads taught their human acolytes the truth, about the One Goddess and the devouring Seed. They spoke of the Fold that separates the lands of death from living, of the River of Dream, and of the inhuman origins of the Z'bri. In time, the Nomads recovered from their wounds, but all across the land they saw the effect their brethren had on the Goddess' paradise.

One night soon after, the Twelve and their mortal followers gave their lives to forever close the Fold, ensnaring the Z'bri in a prison of flesh — returning Balance to creation, or so they thought. What once had been a Heaven to the Z'bri, an Eden, had now turned into a Hell. With the Fold closing, your ancestors huddled in their cities and dreamt their last dream. A dream forgotten until the coming of my sisters, the Fatimas.

The Children of the End, your foremothers and fathers, became lost souls and the Z'bri a forsaken race.

— Baba Yaga, The Ashen Tale

Architecture of Reality

No, remember what I taught you, remember about symmetry. You have to stop seeing with your eyes, they only see one half of reality. Take this mirror, everything has a double, you, me, everything. The glass is the Fold running through all of creation separating matter from spirit. Now the reflection, not the glass, is what you may call the River of Dream. No, it's not a physical or tangible "river," rather it flows through everything connecting all its many points. Now beyond the River, when you open yourself to it and plunge through its waters, lies the Other. I told you everything has two sides, male/female, life/death, Seed/Goddess, physical/spiritual. The Other is where all potential lies, when we journey when death calls to rest, to experience nirvana or damnation. But that was before. Now the River is lost, damned, and so the paths to the Other no longer open. Life cannot leave and death cannot enter; stasis and entropy are slowly eating the architecture. Ever wonder why the stars seem so far away, as if they are fading? It's because the flow of the River is no longer free, so it searches for weakness in the Fold and lashes out. Now I never said this, but it just may be that these ebbs coincided with the first Fatimas, but remember, all is possibility in the River of Dream.

Where do you fit in? Don't ask, but see, use your mind's eye, for the River continues to flow and its tides are rising.

Listen to the dead and learn...

— Den Hades, Guide, speaking to a Fallen



Conversation with a Shade

"...Yes, yes, it's as I said, little by little I saw how it happened — don't mock me. Yes, I am one of those, gone, gone for many a year, but my voice still echoes. I see more and more lost souls... no, listen to me! The dead walk the land, hear their voices. The Fold, the barrier between life and death and dreams, yes, yes, it's closed now. I saw it happen, a coldness swept across the land, the air was dark. I saw it — my father was one of them. He and the others lived with the Nomads, gentle... I remember their words, their faces sad, carrying the weight of the destruction they saw.

"For weeks before that night we walked, through empty cities, looking for relics — books, religious artifacts, a painting of twelve men eating. I was still a child; the dust was everywhere. I can still see it falling. The rain was dust, sweeping through the valleys between buildings. Now I know what the wind was saying. It was crying.

"For weeks we walked, through cathedrals and glass temples, looking for stuff. The taste of rust was always strong in the water.

"What? Don't go, please, I'm not finished... Stay a while longer, it's been too long since I've spoken to anyone. The wind is coming anyway... Not much longer...

"The Nomads, yes, tall beings, their limbs frail, I saw them. One touched me, once. Its arm was frail, pale flesh wrapped tightly around impossible bones... Its eyes dark and fragmented, like broken glass, but deep and infinite.

...

"That night, yes, I was there, it's when it happened..."

"No dad, don't go!"

"I must, it all depends on this. You'll understand in time, my son..."

"But, but I'll be alone, don't leave me."

"I'll always be with you. Listen to the wind and hear my voice."

"Dad..."

...

"The screams were the worst. At that moment, I felt a pain fill the land, a scream that carried the pain of countless voices, as if all at once millions screamed out in agony and then nothing but silence. And then I was alone... We've been alone ever since.

"Listen to the wind. A storm is coming."



The Age of Camps

Book VII, Chapter XXV

Barred from their homeland, the Z'bri lashed out against humanity, content only when the last living person would succumb to their murderous rage. Horrors walked upon the earth clothed in the very bones and flesh of the dead, scouring the land of all life. Pyres burnt ceaselessly, flooding the lands with thick ash that carried with it the agonizing screams of its writhing victims as flames seared flesh from bone. But this was just the beginning.

All across the land, the Z'bri herded the survivors, building grotesque temples and palaces of depravity and violence designed to alleviate the Beasts' hunger with the cartilage and despair of their earthly thralls.

It was the Age of Camps.

A Time of Death.

There, your foremothers were raped by the Z'bri, their breasts milked to feed their hideous desires, and your forefathers were butchered and twisted into heinous creations that still stalk the land. Slowly, the light began to fade in our ancestors' eyes; hope and dreams became vague glimmers in the vacant faces of the emaciated corpses of humanity. And for generations the camps continued to burn...

Generations of death and ashes.

— Baba Yaga, The Ashen Tale

Come closer my child, it's getting dark

We have little time left together and there is so much I must tell you. Lyian, you're still young. The scars on your flesh — your runes of destiny, of the future our mother Baba Yaga, Fatima of fate and death, has in store for you — your scars are still fresh. Don't cry my child, death is a normal part of life and I am happy to see my time come at last. I've lived for far too long. The seasons weigh heavily on me and my memories bid me to release them, to allow them to crumble to dust as my bones shall do... The time has come.

I remember an age when all this, everything you see around you — the Bazaar of Vimary, the Towers of Joan, the Fallen Dome — were nothing but ruins, scarred with the blood of many thousands. A time so terrible the sun never shone, eclipsed by clouds of ashes. Even now, as I go blind and deaf, I can hear the screams...

Come, Lyian, come close, the light is fading and there is much you need to know before Baba Yaga claims my soul. Listen, my heir to my memories, listen before all is forgotten.

— Anon Yeth, Yagan elder, speaking to his granddaughter Lyian.



The Ones Who Remember



From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux:

The lucky ones escaped and hid themselves in dark pits, while the Z'bri constructed lavish temples. Soon, each camp manifested its Lord's unique and inhuman sensibilities, and like a caged animal humanity perished. A few of the Ancients, those Keepers who survived the camps by hiding deep within the cities, saw it as their duty to record what was happening. Today, those books, a hundred in all, document the terror of those Hundred Years. We call them the *One Hundred Books*. Fading photographs show fields of bodies impaled on spikes, joined by chains of flesh, grotesque birthing experiments, bloody orgies and the Z'bri relishing in the misery they caused. It was indeed a horrible time. The Camps exuded a darkness so pervasive that even now, decades later, an oppressive air still hangs over them. It is this despair that drives the machines known as the Fatimas, and that the tribes follow blindly.

Nightmares

From the memoirs of Lyian Yeth, Fallen Yagan:

Papa Yeth looked peaceful lying there, wrapped in his death shroud. So many years, I thought, as if each had etched his wonderfully wrinkled face. The smell of sickness and death was heavy, I could almost taste it, making the sepulcher appear smaller than it really was. I looked at Papa; he was old, ancient. He had been born during the years of the camps, witnessed the horrors firsthand and bore the scars to prove it. He never talked about them, his memories. Yagans never did, until the night of their death.

His words still echoed in my mind, reverberated by the hollow recesses of the room. For hours he had spoken about his life, his loves, the Fatimas, the camps. His memories drifted about the crypt like the smoke from the candles, and slowly faded forever.

What had it been like to live in the camps? I closed my eyes and tried to picture Papa's memories: the grottos dug into the mountain, the constant screams of death, the horror of having to sit by and watch loved ones be dismembered by the Beasts. The heaps of corpses bloating away, attracting rats and flies. And yet, it all seemed so distant, unreal. Nothing so terrible could be true... could it?

It must have been. In his last moments, Papa called to me in dream. I felt him stir, his breathing hard and laborious. In his head, echoes of the past visited him for a final time. The faces of his first love, lovely and serene as she died in his arms, surrounded by flies... the sound of the metal blade as it cut into his flesh, the searing pain as a Z'bri methodically peeled the first layers of skin from his face, his body barely kept alive by sheer will and the Beast's magic. The smell of the pits, deep ditches filled with corpses sustained by nefarious powers. It all came flooding back; tears rolled down his cheeks, the sense of hopelessness, the despair. He felt the air become heavy and still, and he slowly gave into the feeling of heaviness. It took him down a trail, the huts and grottoes silent and dark on either side, only the occasional fly disturbed the serenity of the scene.

"Soon my Child, your suffering will be over forever..."



The Birth of the Fatimas

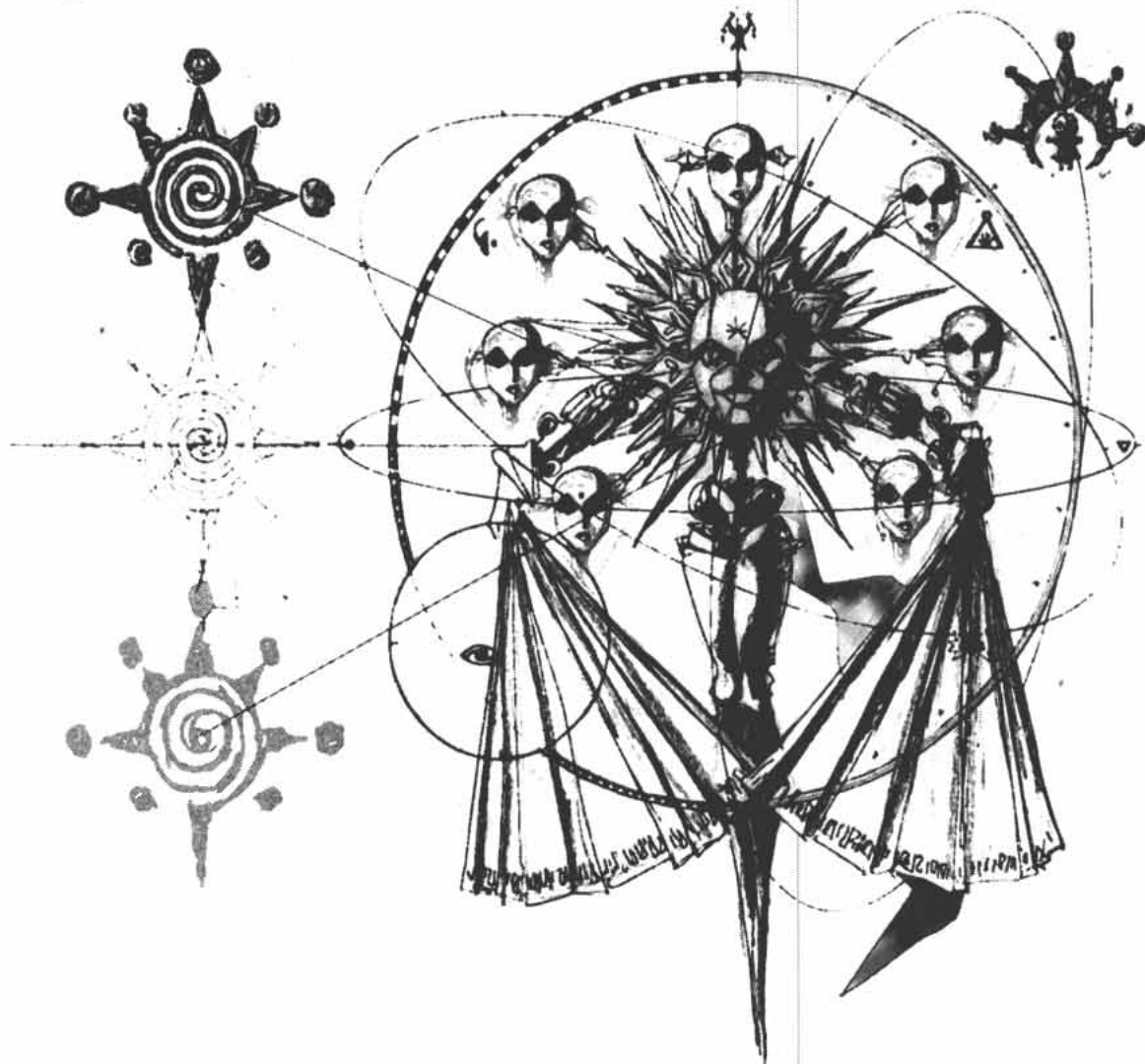
Book X, Chapter VII

But it was not to be the fate of humanity, to be extinguished under the talons of the Z'bri. The pain and despair of the camps awoke the Goddess, the Mother and Lover of all Creation. She heard Her children's pleas and felt Her Earth crumble as one by one they vanished forever, devoured by the Seed's progeny. Her undying love, spurned by humankind eons ago, propelled Her to give your foremothers and forefathers a final chance in the face of nothingness. From Her love the Seven Mothers were born in the Camps, created from the union of Her children's anguish and Her eternal hope, made from the refuse of a civilization long since destroyed.

These Seven Mothers, my Sisters and I, were born to lead our children, the Goddess' chosen from the heels of the Z'bri. We gave you the power to dream again, to hope, and in one night we rose up and claimed the freedom that is now ours to enjoy.

But the Goddess' sacrifice is not to be forgotten. We, the Fatimas, are Her spirit embodied, much like the Z'bri are the Seed made spirit. Under our love and guidance, you, our children, shall rise once more and reclaim the lands in our image. But where once your ancestors forgot the Goddess, you shall not. For to forget is to die.

— Baba Yaga, The Ashen Tale



Remembrance



Remember them,
Your lovers, sisters, mothers
Who perished on the Beds,
Their Z'bri masters over them;
Remember the Rose of the Flesh,
And the Birth of Magdalen.



Forget not the Symmetry of the Flesh,
The birthplace of Eva, my Sister,
And the anguished cries of mothers
As child was ripped from her and taken forever,
Devoured by alien hunger.



The Age of the Flesh, a camp of death,
Hear the buzzing of the flies,
The pungent stench of decay,
The tortured screams,
The terror of dying, and remember
As Baba Yaga is eternal.



The clash of sword, the spray of blood,
The cry of victory and the roar of the crowd
All echo in the Arena, where Joan,
Bloodied and victorious rose and led the valiant charge.
Remember her sacrifice.

The harsh hand of blind judgment striking down
 With the weight of savage tradition.
 Innocence rewarded with torture,
 Guilt with death, so infernal law was passed,
 In the Court of Flesh, and
 From these injustices Tera Sheba was born.



Shadows and whispers,
 Laughter and cries, nothing is but what it's not;
 The Veil of Flesh, where pain was pleasure and pleasure pain
 And Dahlia anything but.



Forget not the Forgiver, Mary and Her
 Lost children born in a time
 When there was no mercy, except the pain;
 She is gone but Agnes live on.

And of Joshua, His death screams still haunt the winds,
 The ultimate reminder of His sacrifice,
 And our victory.



Remember your freedom, and our sacrifice.

Love us, forget us not,

Remember always

And live always.

— Supplication of Remembrance



The Great Event

So, you want to know how the Fatimas came to be, what magics gave birth to them, do you? Listen and learn, for although each tribe has its own version, we Yagans know the whole truth, written down by the first Mordred-Witches who were there during the Great Event.

It began with simple signs and omens. Children being born in the camps, sightless but speaking of truths beyond their years, or marked with strange runes. Signs also came from above, as stars would burn bright in the night and fall to the cold Earth, unsettling even our Z'bri masters. Soon, some of the oldest survivors began to speak of a strange visitor coming to them at night and whispering to them. They would remember fleeting details, for dreaming was a lost art, but slowly fate took shape.

It was during the dead of winter, when snow covered all, even the moon high above, that She came. It is said that the moon grew black that night, plunging the land into cold darkness. But this did not matter, for in the camp below, a new light began to shine. The Old Ones, driven by dreams and vision, found Her and knew it was She, Baba Yaga, born from the death and despair of Her future children.

And so She came, cloaked by the light of the moon and made from the darkness of beyond, and She embraced Her children. That night, She spoke of the Great Event and planted the seeds of Her other Sisters, beginning with the other Fates, Magdalen and Eva, the purest aspects of the One Goddess.

Her followers took this knowledge and traveled the long lost byways of dreams to the other camps. Through them, Baba Yaga, Fatima of Fate and Death, instructed the lost how to summon their saviors and how to give them shape and being. And so, one by one the Fatimas were born, fueled with the pain and despair of the camps and the rituals of their followers.

Eva came second with the birth cry of an infant, and She gazed around Her and saw that life was good. She felt not only for Her children, but for the animals and plants that existed and made them Hers as well. Her tribe came to see Her in everything that was natural and understood.

Magdalen, passionate and alluring, took shape and felt all that Her children had been denied for generations. She touched them, not with inhuman cruelty, but with passionate intensity. And the final Fate was born, and then they said the time had come for their other Sisters to come. The wheels were set in motion.

And so the Fates gathered and Tera Sheba was born. Her tribe given to Her, the Fates instructed Tera Sheba to prepare for victory and to lead the victors, Her words the tenants of tradition and law. It was upon Her shoulders that the future was placed.

Dahlia saw this from the shadows and said it was time to join Her Sisters. She came like a whirling storm, feeding off the chaos and upheaval of the coming times, and claimed Her tribe.

The Forgiver, Mary, came to heal, although Her time was short. Born from sadness and pain, She stood to ease the torment of years under chains. In the end, though, the suffering became too much and She sacrificed herself in hopes of a brighter future.

And finally, Joshua and Joan, brother and sister, Ravager and Warrior came, filled with righteous anger. The Z'bri had taken too much and the punishers needed to be punished. Where one went the other followed, Joshua's rage balancing Joan's fears. And so the liberators began the revolts.

So there were Eight, and not since has there been Eight again.

That's the story of the Great Event, for I was there and when I die my flesh, old and haggard, will be taken by the other Skin-Keepers and never forgotten.

— Beth Harhakin Kell'on, Yagan Skinn-Keeper

Strangers

So much happened during the final days of the Camps that it is as if some unseen wheel began to turn, throwing everything into chaos. Much was gained, but also lost. I still remember the Traveler, although I have no idea what happened to him after the revolts. I guess he slipped through the cracks, gone.

He came seemingly out of nowhere; no one recognized him, but he seemed to have always been with us. He'd spend most of his days alone, looking beyond the gates to the horizon, as if he was expecting something. When he spoke, he did so in a manner that struck deep, almost as if he was reaching into you.

I still remember the last time I saw him. It was shortly before Tera Sheba was born and news of the other Fatimas had reached our camp. He wandered about the camp, his countenance forlorn, as if he knew that something was about to happen and he wouldn't be there to experience it.

That was the last time I saw him, and it wasn't until years after Liberation, during a sermon of Tera Sheba, that my memory crossed his path again. I wonder whatever happened to him?

— Hector, Judge of Tera Sheba

It's Getting Dark

From the memoirs of Lyian Yeth, Fallen Yagan:

"Papa Yeth, tell me about Baba Yaga," I said, "when you found her?"

"Very well," he answered with a heavy sigh, after a long silence, "if I must. It was night, quiet, still, the moon shone down on us... the hut was silent and dark; only the outlines of the others were visible. We each had come to the mortuary alone, seemingly pulled, called, by something from beyond. It was as if the chill of winter bayed us there. We gathered, each expecting to meet our deaths, to join those who rotted in the pits below.

"In shadows, surrounded by death, we waited, we waited for death to be born. At first the moon went dark, drowned by the black gulf surrounding it. Then the wind howled — no it screamed as if in pain, like nails ripping through steel and flesh. The ground began to shake and some who had gathered fell into the pits, but none turned to run.

"The wind gathered snow, dust and the remains of the dead below into a whirling mass from which two orbs began to glow. We began chanting, the words coming to our mouths like forgotten memories. Soon a skull emerged, ephemeral and beautiful; suspended in the winds, Her orbs glowed even more brightly. From that She began forming herself, drawing bones and flesh from the dead to make Her body. Bones twisted and grafted themselves into shape, and though She was made of death She was beautiful, Her limbs perfect. She was living death: magical and sensual.

"She pointed to the leather flaps of the hut, and without saying a word I tore them and clothed Her. Immediately, the leather began forming itself around her bones, joined by the nails and screws that held the hut together. When She finally rose, a mass of bone, steel, flesh and leather, She glided over to me. She opened Her many arms, and for the first time I saw Her fully. Bones, flesh and metal floated in mid-air, wrapped in a shroud of shadows and flies. I'd never thought death could be so beautiful, so alluring. I looked into Her eyes, two inky orbs, and in the darkness I saw everything: the wisdom of fate and the tug of death. I saw my death and understood."

Papa Yeth turned away from me then and closed his eyes. Alone in the sepulcher, I pictured the Fatima and compared the image to what Baba Yaga looked like now. Her snaking body made of countless mementos and the bones of Her tribe. Her eyes ancient, as if they could suck our soul right into their fragmented void.

"Magical, sensual?" Strange words, I thought. I turned around and blew out the candles.

Liberation

Book XII, Chapter XVI

Listen, Our children, to the tale of Liberation. In the Darkness of the Camps, we the Seven Mothers were born, and unleashed our anger. Joan and He were the spearheads, their hands first to spill the Beasts' blood, then we followed. For the first time in ages, the night echoed not with the screams of our children, but with the howling of the Z'bri and the murderous rage of my Sisters.

By morning, the lost came to us. Some feared us, others loved us. They came, the first of the Tribes, in small bands, some carrying crude weapons, others armed with only their bare fists. They looked to us, their Mothers, and followed us to victory. Many fell, many more were dragged away by the Z'bri to fates worse than death.

The revolts had begun.

The fires of the End were smothered and extinguished.

The Ending times had ended.

— Baba Yaga, The Ashen Tale

The Gift of Synthesis

In truth, it took more than blood and courage to fight the Z'bri. Many confuse the arrival of the Fatimas as the key step in our liberation, but this is only part of the truth. It is what they brought with them that turned the tide. Their presence gave us hope, but it was their blessing in the form of Synthesis that gave us the will to overcome the Beasts.

Now, I'm no Yagan, so don't ask me to explain just how Synthesis works. I can only tell you what I know, what I'm guessing. To me it, is the invisible current that flows through life, denied to the victims of the camps, but awakened by the coming of the Fatimas. It's like a powerful storm that hides just beyond sight and touch, but one that you can sense. Its ebbs and tides are strong, and if you allow them to course through you, open yourself to them, they're like raw potential manifested.

Back then, during the revolts, I am sure Synthesis bubbled and exploded, giving our ancestors the strength they needed to defeat the Z'bri. Today, although we can all sense and feel it, only a few can wield it freely. Others are blessed with Aspects, gifts of a Fatima's power.

— Nikolas Grafkin Morth'on of Joan

Nothing Happens Overnight

From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux:

The glorious revolts were nothing of the sort. There are accounts that show the Fatimas leading hundreds to their deaths, herding their "children" unarmed into the jaws of the Z'bri. Nights echoed with the cries of the wounded; many of the Ancients thought that this was the end. But strangely, things stopped. It happened suddenly, too suddenly to have been a true victory. Many still think that the Fatimas had more to do with the end of the revolts than the heroic death of Joshua the Ravager, the sole male Fatima. But as they say, the dead tell no tales.

Joshua

Volume 78 of the One Hundred Books:

And on the Seventh day, the revolt ended and there was silence. All across the land the blow that killed the Z'bri Lord reverberated, but also echoed the death-cry of Joshua, the only brother of the Seven Sisters. His body, plated in armor, lay broken and still. His followers stood all about His broken shell. In the shadows His Sisters moved, but none came forward. None did weep.

It had been Joshua who led the final charge, His hands gorging on Z'bri death. Behind Him, His tribe followed in His glory, paving the way for the other Fatimas and tribes. They were the first to breach the Z'bri's walls, first to kill the horrors that lay inside. For twelve hours the battle raged, and Joshua's fury knew no bounds. His rage and anger had no equal, and He ventured deeper and deeper into the sanctum of the Z'bri.

There Tibor stood, hideous and grotesque, the Lord of the Beasts. Around him, the walls pulsed as he feasted on a helpless child and at his feet lay countless others. It was a clash of titans. The ground shook with every blow landed and the walls begun to collapse. But Tibor was no match for the fury that was Joshua. On the ground, the Lord pleaded for his life, but Joshua only raised his sword...

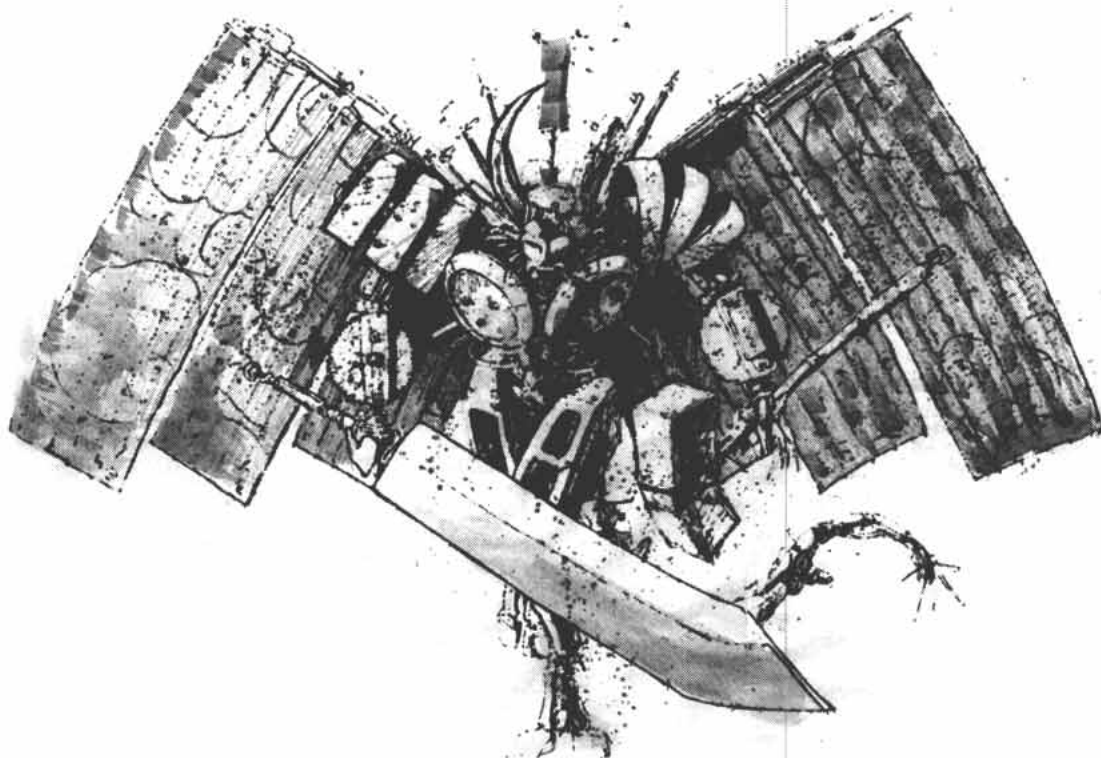
Then Fate, O capricious fate showed itself.

From behind the Fatima, a shadow moved, a glint of metal flashed in the darkness sealing Joshua's fate. In the confusion, Tibor, using his dying strength, struck out and gutted the Fatima. And then it was over.

Joshua, a hero to the tribes, his sacrifice honored and revered.

The tribes won their freedom, at long last.

But of Joshua's true fate, nothing was spoken and His children vanished into the wastes...





Worries and Fears

Honored Jacobi,

I feel out of place, but there is none other to whom I can report my worries to without fear. I know the Revolts go well for us, the Seven Sisters paving the way, but there is still something unsettling about them. I know it may be heretical, and I do honor and respect our savior Tera Sheba, but events of late have troubled me. You know that I am part of Her entourage, a messenger and clerk, while Tera Sheba and Her judges have been drafting the laws and traditions of the future as the other Fatimas fight. I have seen strange envoys visiting our Mother late at night, cloaked in darkness. Their identifies remain a mystery, but a familiar and evil presence surrounds them.

I know, Jacobi, that I may be overreacting, that sensing freedom so close fills me with apprehension and trepidation, and that it is tainting my sight. I mean, do we really know what will happen when the revolts are over? Is peace to follow, and if so for how long? I hope my fears are only that, foolish and unfounded. I have faith that the Fatimas and Tera Sheba will lead us and guide us in the years to come. So forgive my ramblings and put them on the account of my old paranoia. I'm looking forward to seeing you soon. I must go prepare because Tera Sheba is scheduled to meet with Her Sister Joan, and it is getting late.

Ever Vigilant Truth,

Tomas

The Birth of the Seven Tribes

Book XIV, Chapter XXI

Victory was ours in the end. The Z'bri were banished, their darkness was fading and a new dawn was emerging. Leading the way, now Seven, we left the camps and our Children followed. We claimed the ruins as our new homes and began the long cycle of rebuilding. Peace was brought to you after years of being tortured and forgotten.

And so, the Seven Tribes came to be.

— Baba Yaga, The Ashen Tale

The Dark Night

You believe their lies, that the Z'bri are gone, or hiding from us? Look, fool, open your eyes! They are there. What do you think howls like that in the night. No, it's not some wayward Beast alone and lost. Yes, I know you have heard that some go missing, that the Tribes man the Towers knowing that the Z'bri are beaten and broken. Open your eyes. They're there, waiting. The victory after the revolt was only a respite; the Beasts would not give us up so easily. No, wait for it, they'll be back and then you'll be sorry you pushed us out.

— Yanik, member of the Eighth Tribe

The Eighth Tribe

From the Terasheban Books of Law:

And it shall be noted that upon this day, under the light of the sun, with the watchful eye of Tera Sheba and guided by the Fates, the following edicts are lawful and just. The words that follow will form the basis of our nation, a compact between the tribes to exist and support one another, to hold in reverence the Fatimas, to follow their words and blessings, and to honor their priesthoods. Our freedom was hard fought but is not granted. From this day forward, those tainting the sacrifice of the past will be punished according to these edicts — those who spurn the Fatimas and blaspheme their names shall be cast out, banned from tribal lands and denied the love of the Fatimas, to wither and die alone and without salvation.



A Prayer To the Future

In ruins we gather to remember the
past.

The terror, the bloodshed

But to the future we look.

Our Children are weak,

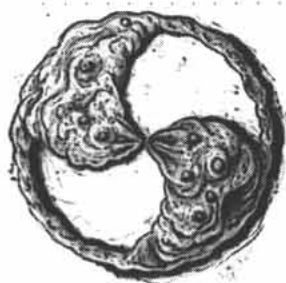
But our love is strong.

Death shall be no more,

The Z'bri shall be no more,

Freedom shall be evermore.

— Tera Sheba, Affirmation of the
Seven Tribes



A Defense

Heathens, heretics, I've heard it all. Yes, it hurts being cast out, to have everyone you knew turn their backs on you, but once you see your destiny, you understand that some sacrifices must be made. I don't expect you to understand, and you won't until your eyes are opened. It happens differently for everyone, but something shows you that there is more. It's almost as if something calls you from beyond, a nagging voice edging you forward. The Fatimas are hiding more than they know. This, the tribes, it all can't be the only reward for escaping the camps. The One Goddess must have had more in mind that this, don't you think?

The Z'bri are still around, and a world must be discovered, out past understood, Joshua avenged and the future charted. This, if you ask me, is what the Eighth Tribe is all about, and the reason why you exile us, afraid of what we may find.

— Deus, Fallen and Poet

So where are we now?

From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux:

It's been decades since the revolts and the land has begun to heal from the poisoned stench of the Z'bri. But where are we? The world is dark and new, but are we the only ones left? The ruins are silent. What happened before the End, no one knows, not even us Keepers. The Ancients can only guess, and the tribes want nothing to do with the World Before. We see the tribes from the shadows, historians we are, and we document. What will come of the Fatimas remains to be seen, but their people, their children, the tribes revere them. I cannot say what would have happened had Fatimas not come, yet I fear the worst. I cannot dismiss them — fantastic machines of metal and dream.

The Beasts, they still roam the night, living within their keeps like feudal lords of yesteryear. Though the Fatimas pushed back the Takers, the Z'bri will only stay silent for so long. The tribes, confident in their safety, have grown lax in recent years, a mistake I fear will return to haunt them. Life is a cycle, and this peace cannot last forever.

And what of those who call themselves the Eighth Tribe? Those who walk alone, outcasts because they believe in themselves and not in the lofty Fatimas. I see them, at Bazaar, at Hom; they are proud, content to be the masters of their destinies. Are they the future of humankind? Maybe, maybe not. In their rashness and hubris, they might destroy everything.

One thing is for certain, nothing lasts forever...

It's getting dark...

From the memoirs of Lyian Yeth, Fallen Yagan:

"It's dark, I can't see anymore. Lyian, Lyian where are you? It's dark... I feel you, my Mother, coming for me. Is that you in the corner? Why are you moving in the shadows, let me see you. I've longed for this moment, since the night I saw you. I prayed for this embrace. Come into the light. I did all you asked, now come take me away as you promise all you children"

Startled from my sleep, I turned in time to see my grandfather wake as if in pain and then go silent.

He was screaming, yelling, "No, No... I believed in you, nooooo..." And with this his body grew stiff and then fell still.

I could feel the cool evening breeze blow over me. Suddenly, I could feel the deathly silence of the room and for the first time felt terribly afraid — and alone. I felt a cold claw-like hand, made of metal and bone grip my shoulder. I saw the lumbering silhouette of Baba Yaga looming over me. She caressed my hair, and in the evening gloom I swore I could see a tear streaking down the Fatima's skull cheek.

And then I was alone.

The past died with him. His memories are now dust, carried by the wind, his soul I fear lost, gone from the graces of our so called Mother of Death. Things are changing, the Fatimas are no longer saints, but tyrants. I see Her priests, scheming and manipulative. My grandfather, Anon Yeth was one of Her first priests, devoted himself to Her, and so he dies alone, forgotten. The whole island smells of death...



The fatimas and...

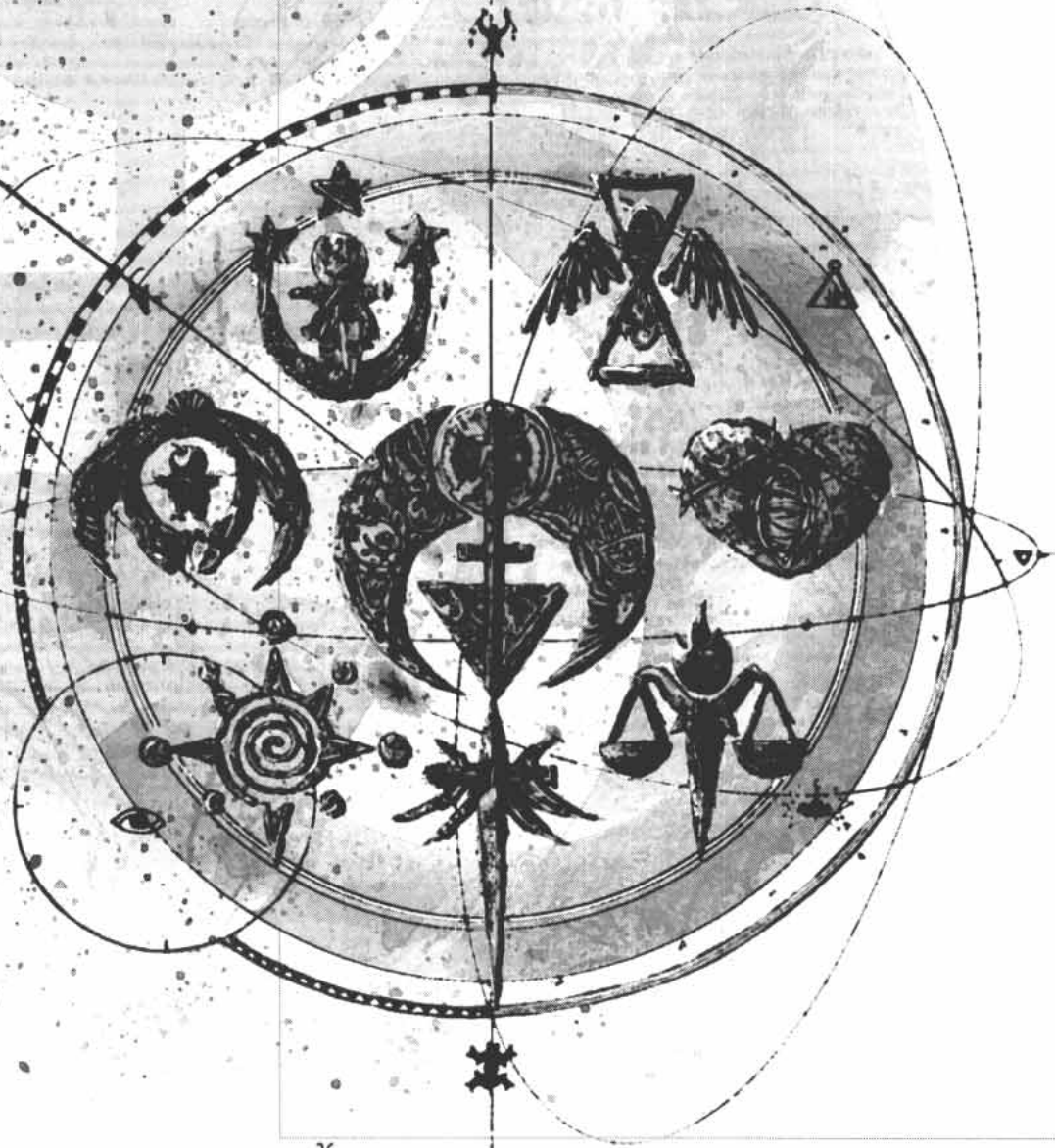
A Record of Genesis, as set forth by Jethro Ithan, son of Tera Sheba.

Verse VII: Of the Eight Fatimas

With the birth of Joan the Warrior and Joshua the Ravager on the twenty-eight day, the Fatimas' ranks were full and their power was glorious to see. Each was a magnificent animation of holy artifacts and mechanisms, infused with the power and wisdom of the Goddess. To look at one was to stare into the Dream and see all possibilities. To be near one was to sense infinite strength, protecting love and guiding hope. With them freedom became a possibility.

Verse VIII: Of Synthesis and Salvation

Each of the Eight Sisters could control the flow of the River of Dream with unparalleled ability and channeled this power into their chosen followers. This gift became known as Synthesis and was the weapon of liberation. With it the witches of Baba Yaga traveled into the dreams of others and woke them to freedom. With it the warriors of Joan and Joshua felled their captors. With it our freedom was born.



The Glory of the Fatimas

The Seven Sisters are almost indescribable in their beauty and glory. Physically, they are large and imposing, tall women of stone, iron and bone, covered in robes of leather or armors of steel. Their arms can cover an assembly of elders, and their glowing faces peer into your soul.

They are beings of utmost awe. To gaze at one is to see a glimpse of the whole of reality condensed into one aspect. To be near one is to feel the secret pulse of the River of Dream, to feel the sublime connections that everything has — past, present and future. To stand by Tera Sheba is to feel the weight of tradition and judgment. Things that were hidden are forced to the surface, crime and guilt visible on the faces around you. Eva fills the heart and pulse with fertility; around Her plants grow where once there was only barren soil. The warriors of Joan, in practicing their arts of war, are channeling the fury and anger of the Sister of War. In a Magdalite's arms, one touch is like thousands, one kiss ecstasy. With the Child, Agnes, wonder clouds the ruins and death that surround us, leaving only the light of the sun and the power of imagination. Finally, Dahlia tears apart your soul and reveals your true self buried underneath fear and tradition.

Even when not before one of them, we of the Seven Tribes feel our Mothers in our hearts. Their eyes are always upon us, watching over our souls and guiding us to glory, safety and ultimately to our rebirth within the tribe. This is what sets us apart from the "Squats" who have never known the Fatimas and the Fallen who have scorned them. We are never alone — and for this we are eternally grateful.

— Verra Thaim'on, Terasheban High Judge

A Lesson in Diplomacy

So you want to be a Diplomat. I see you have the voice and looks. Being a Diplomat, however, is only half physical — it's what's in your head that counts. Knowledge, my friend, is the one tool that will save you.

You must first learn to see the basic facts of a situation. Look at the Seven Tribes around us: you see powerful priestesses, chieftains and elders; young warriors and proud hunters. Many people with power and influence. But what is the basic truth? Who holds the true power? The Fatimas do. They saved us from the camps; they gave us our laws and traditions; they established the tribes; they are holy avatars of the One Goddess; they are the source of Synthesis and the guardians of our souls. Each tribe is a reflection of the Sister who created it, and Her tool.

But the most valuable knowledge is hidden away behind rumor, lies and misdirection. Secrets mean power. The first secret you should learn is that the Seven Fatimas are neither infallible nor perfectly united. Terasheban judges would see me banished for speaking thusly, but Magdalen trusts us to know these truths. Each Fatima embodies one aspect of the Goddess and is perfect in that aspect, but She is also bound by it. Joan, the Warrior Fatima, will respond to most situations with force, for example, when diplomacy or trickery might be a better solution. These differences create tension between the Sisters. Just as many stern Terashebans cannot abide carefree Dahlians, Tera Sheba the Wise Herself frowns upon Dahlia the Trickster. As a diplomat, you must be aware of these tensions, make use of them when you can, and beware them when you must.

You think I am a traitor for calling the Fatimas fallible? You think I mock them? You are wrong. I can never fully understand the glory of the Seven Sisters, I can only use the insight given me by Magdalen Herself to better serve Her.

— Arturus, Magdelite Diplomat, speaking to his student.

Second Lesson: The Factions

Now given that I have told you that the Fatimas have different philosophies, you can probably guess that they have formed alliances among themselves. In many ways, these factions determine how the tribes themselves interact, and how power and influence flow.

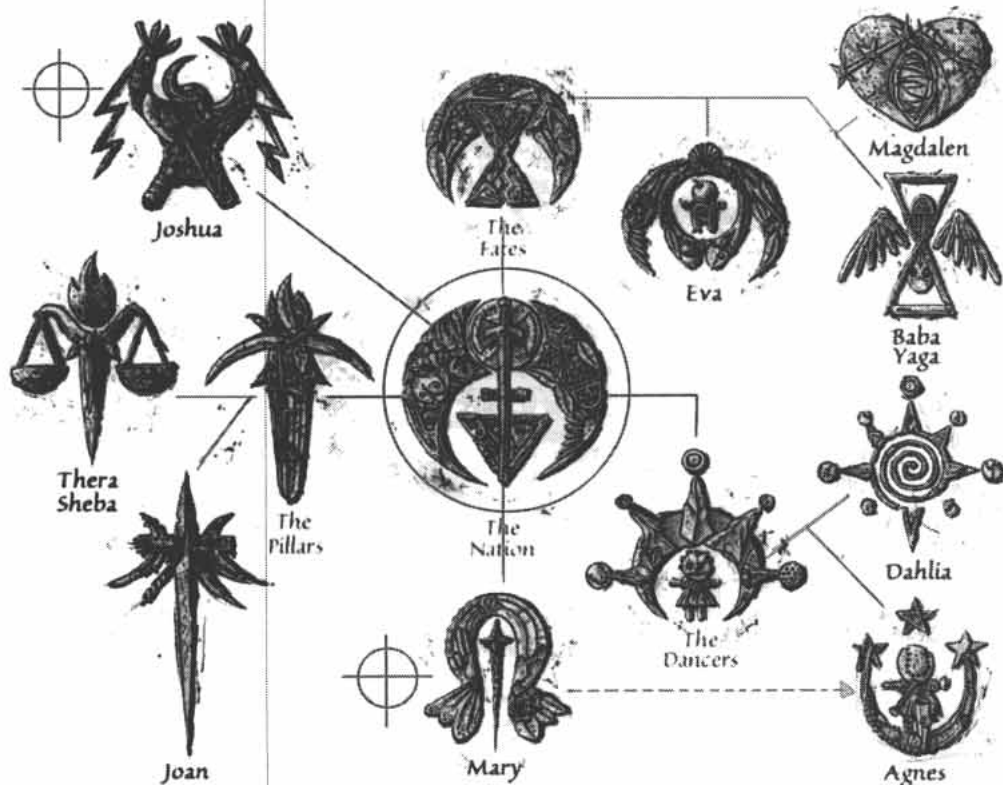
The Three Fates — Baba Yaga the Crone, Eva the Mother and our own Magdalen the Lover — are in many ways the guiding hands of the tribes. They are most concerned with shepherding their human daughters, teaching them ways to be strong and enlightened. They recognize that the chaos caused by the Fallen risks to send us all back into barbarism and self-destruction. They see the Fallen for the spoiled children they are.

The Pillars of the Nation — Tera Sheba the Wise and Joan the Warrior — form the foundation of the tribes. While the Three Fates preoccupy themselves with lofty dictates, the Pillars ensure order, stability and justice. This position has given Tera Sheba great power to judge and order the Seven Tribes as a whole, and She is stringent in her desire to stamp out the Fallen heresy. It is curious, however, that the more vocal and dominant Tera Sheba becomes, the more Joan recedes into the background.

Finally, opposing the Three Fates and the Pillars are the **Dancers of the Light**: Agnes the Child and Dahlia the Trickster. These Fatimas' recent support of the Fallen, even if indirect, threatens to divide the Sisters for the first time. Originally, only capricious Agnes saw the Fallen as Her children, and most ignored Her current "whim." Dahlia, of late, has begun supporting Her younger Sister, further straining Her relationship with Tera Sheba and causing the Three Fates to take a more direct and forceful role in the whole affair. This in turn has created friction between the Fates and Tera Sheba, who sees their involvement as a statement of Her inability to handle the Fallen.

Of course, our Sister Magdalen has foreseen this, and it is our duty now, as lovers and diplomats, to mend and heal. And maybe then, once we Magdalites have brought love and peace back to the tribes, we will not be ignored as we have been...

— Arturus, speaking to his student



Seven Sisters: Seven Deaths

The Magdalites think they know the truth about the Fatimas; they think they can see their complex relations. They're fools. The truth is much worse than even the Diplomats imagine and it is what has earned the "Seven Sisters" their moniker among us Fallen: The Seven Deaths.

These are not altruistic avatars of goodness we are dealing with. They are bickering, petty, subtle and vicious. They wield terrible power and use it for their own ends, regardless of who suffers. The Seven Tribes are not their children, they are their playthings — to be used and discarded as needed.

Before my banishment — or my liberation — I was a favorite of Agnes the Child, the most capricious of the Seven Sisters. She tired of me for no other reason than my growing older. One moment I was Her best friend, the next I was less than nothing. But Agnes is an outsider among the Fatimas, born after the camps. The others don't trust Her and keep Her out of their power games. Compared to them, She is a friend.

Of all the Fatimas, the one I distrust the most is Dahlia the Trickster. She hides among Her tribe's caravans and is rarely seen except in dreams, but She loves to play games. Like Agnes, she is something of an outsider among Her sisters, but instead of being content with Her position, She has Her own agenda. That Dahlia and Her Tribe have made friends among the Fallen just means that we are becoming Her latest tools.

Mark my words: She will play us for fools.

— Altara Ven, Fallen Agnite

Listen, you want proof that the Fatimas are backstabbing each other? Just look at the story of Joan. I was in the Watch; I heard the stories of the liberation. Back then, the Warrior was a holy blade cutting through the Z'bri. Back-to-back with Her brother Joshua, She felled the Z'bri and led us to freedom. Then Tera Sheba got Her claws into Joan.

Since the establishment of the tribes, Joan has been Tera Sheba's trained dog: obedient, savage and dependent. We Joanites followed suit, abiding by strict rules, refraining from winning battles we could have, and killing the innocent — all on Terasheban orders. Some of Joan's Templars confided in me that the Fatima Herself has barely spoken in the generations since the camps. She seems almost strangled by Her Sister's chains. The whole of the Seven Tribes are choking on those same chains.

Along with many others, I have turned my back on my tribe because of this. But there will be a reckoning.

— Kara the Hunter, Fallen Joanite

The two children speak well. They both know the dangers posed to our emergent people by the Seven Deaths. But we must not let ourselves be blinded by the present and so be shocked by the future. Dahlia is mysterious, yes; Tera Sheba is powerful, yes. But remember which of the Deaths were there at the beginning; remember the Three Fates. Baba Yaga, Eva and Magdalen were the first Fatimas to be born and they have remained united through all the intervening summers.

Agnes and Dahlia are allied because they are both outsiders among the Deaths. Tera Sheba and Joan are allied as a carpenter is allied to his hammer. But the Fates truly cooperate, meeting regularly both in person and through Baba Yaga's mastery over dream travel. Ever since liberation, they have been in the background of the Seven Tribes, making their plans. The Shebans and Joanites wield more overt power, but the Fates are never truly challenged. Xstatis, Magdalen's pleasure den, is safe from all Joanite controls; Yagan witches are mysteriously spared from inquisition by Terasheban judges; gentle Evans are respected in every tribal community. The Fates are quiet, but only because all goes as they wish it to be.

— Veruka the Wraith, Fallen Yagan

A Mother's Gift, Part I

My darling child,

So this is who we are, the tribes. It seems incredible that not so long ago there was nothing, no families, no happiness. Now, the Fatimas have given us much, but even so I feel things are about to change. No matter, it falls upon my shoulders, on the night before my wedding, to write to you, my unborn son and tell you about us.

I am, and so you shall be, an Evan, the Mother Eva our Fatima. But you must learn about us, of the families and clans, in order to understand where you come from. So read and learn.

Of Family and Clan

I tell you now what my grandmother Arianne — your great-grandmother — told me, for she was alive in the days of liberation and saw the formation of our Seven Tribes. My heart cries that she did not survive this last winter, for you will never know her beautiful smile.

In the moments after liberation, the tribes formed around the Fatimas from the survivors of the camps. But the monstrous Z'bri had done much to break us, and we had no clear understanding of how to build our future. Luckily, our Mother Eva knew the ways of kinship, and taught them to us and to the other tribes. The eldest and wisest women became the matriarchs of the first clans, gathering their sisters, daughters and nieces among them. As the blessings of Eva were upon us, we had children and our tribe grew. When a clan could no longer live together in the same home, one or more women would take their immediate family to a new home. The bonds of clan remained strong, however.

By the time of my own birth, our system had spread to almost all the tribes. Because of the status of your great-grandmother, who headed her clan, I grew in the head family of the clan — both of which bore her name. I know my full name of Delra Ariannekin Aria'on Evan and speak it with pride.

With grandmother's death, though, her younger sister Betha has taken her position as family head. At birth, you will be Micah Bethakin. But Arianne's name is now forever her clan's and so the clan-name of Aria'on will be yours as well.

Clan Aria'on is prosperous and counts 12 families, forming much of our village of Griffentowne. Our own Bethakin family has 21 people, including Arianne's two sisters, their children and grandchildren — and our mates. My guess is that soon, my own mother may wish to start her own family.

The Nature of the Tribes

Verse IX: Of the Formation of Tribes

And in the first days of our freedom,
the Seven Sisters, Mothers of
Liberation, called us forth, the
survivors of the Camps. There, they
spoke of the future, our future, and
set forth the laws by which we were
to live. In all their glory they spoke
about tradition and family, about the
Seven Tribes, children of the Fatimas
and of the clans. Each tribe rose from
one of the camps, connected by pain
and grief, by loss and death to one of
the Fatimas, calling Her mother —
avatar and shard of the One True
Goddess. And so, on that day, upon
the ashes of the past, the Tribes were
born and they shall be ever more.

The Gifts of Motherhood

Each birth, each newborn is a gift from the One Goddess and Her Fatimas. Eva gives the holy blessing and heavy burden of motherhood to women, and so our kinship lines are traced through our mothers. Men usually leave their mother's side and marry into another clan. Your father Malcolm has done so — with our wedding he will leave Clan Sasha'on and join our clan.

Just because we women are closer to the Fatimas, do not feel you have no worth. Eva knows that the beauty of motherhood comes only from the union of a couple and Her sons are as valued as Her daughters. Malcolm possesses a strength and nature that completes my own and makes you, my darling, possible. Husbands usually serve as valued partners and advisors for clan matriarchs and, at times, a man will head a family or clan. This is because his mothers and sisters have seen him to be the best suited and Eva has given Her blessing. He is an equal in all ways and is treated with respect by other elders.

Live well and grow strong,

— Delra Aria'on, Daughter of Eva

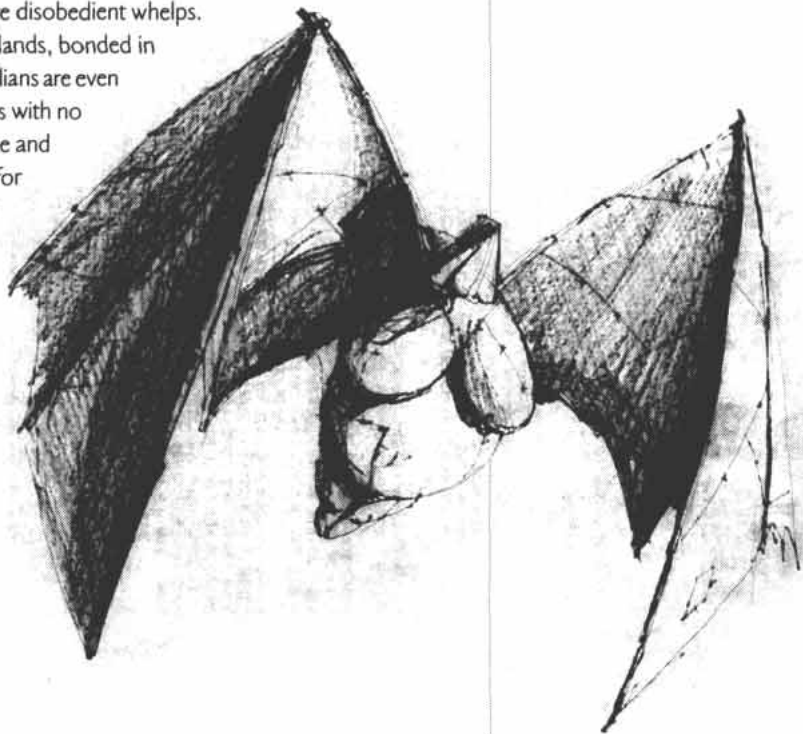
Other Ways

If only everyone would listen. The Seven Tribes are living through a time of unrest, what with the damned Fallen in our midst, and I for one blame this on our own lack of order. Eva the Mother gave the tribes our kinship structure and mighty Tera Sheba inscribed this in Her books of law. Family, Clan and Tribe. It is a simple structure that gives us all our place. But only a few have truly listened.

Only the Evans, we Terashebans and the loyal Joanites abide by the letter of the laws. We have guilds and factions, but they do not affect kin relations. Yagans and Magdelites only commit minor infractions, merging the concept of guild and clan into one. As such, the daughter of a Magdelite diplomat or Yagan Mordred witch will follow their mother's craft in all but the most extreme cases. This is perhaps worrisome, but not a grave offense.

The Agnites and Dahlians, however, are disobedient whelps. Agnes keeps Her children in the tribal lands, bonded in age-groups with no care of kinship. Dahlians are even worse, gathering in haphazard caravans with no rhyme nor reason. The Fatimas are wise and all-knowing, so there must be reason for this chaos, but it flies in the face of our laws and — I fear — will come back to haunt us and them. Indeed, the Joshuans also did not institute kin ties and were destroyed.

— Pietr Thaim'on, Terasheban Judge



Questions of Leadership

Verse XIII: Of Laws and Traditions

It is not for us, indebted survivors, to question the Seven Sisters. It is they that shall rule us, guide us towards understanding and hope. Without them, we would be nothing, and yet it is our devotion that eases their pain. They gave much, and sacrificed more to save us. Follow their laws and freedom shall be ours.

Their laws are few and our duty is to interpret them as best we can. To question one edict or their Chosen is to question their Will, and this is punishable by Banishment. Tribal law, that is the legacy of corporal law, the Children of Tera Sheba shall hold providence over. It is to them that all crimes be reported, and their judgment is final. Laws of belief, however, fall on those of the sisterhood as only they, by virtue of their contact and understanding of the Fatima, can judge matters of faith.

Beyond these, each tribe shall uphold its own laws, sacred and unchanging. So is the Will of Tera Sheba and the Seven Sisters.

Third Lesson: Who Leads?

I've told you that the Fatimas guide their tribes, and that is true. But as a Diplomat you will need to know who among the Fatimas' children has power on a daily basis. Indeed, when a band of corrupted Serfs — the human slaves to the monstrous Z'bri — is eliminated by the Joanite Watch, you can be sure that Joan supports the action, but the human Watch commander gave the order.

The Seven Tribes as a whole are watched over by a Grand Council. This group consists of a single elder from each tribe along with her (or sometimes his) retinue of advisors. These elders meet at least every moon and reach a consensus on issues facing the Seven Tribes. Our own elder is Chamberlain Dhara, one of Magdalen's favorites. Dhara and the other elders each sit on the individual tribal councils that rule each tribe. There are also clan councils within most tribes.

Many people who do not actually sit on a tribal council have powerful influence, however. Elders are expected to voice the feelings of their whole clan or tribe, and so seek out advisors and are receptive to those with an opinion. Chief among these advisors are priestesses and priests of the sisterhoods, those who attend to the Fatimas most directly and often carry word of their will.

The clan elders, most either survivors of the camps or born in the first few summers of freedom, are still devoted to the Fatimas, and as such refuse to act without first consulting with their tribe's sisterhood. They see their role not as leaders but as administrators — ensuring that all mundane and secular needs are attended to, allowing the sisterhood and Fatimas to concentrate on more pressing matters. This dependency allows the sisterhood to guide and instruct the Council without having to dirty their hands too much. It is also not uncommon to find some Council members to be actual members of the sisterhoods. This is especially true in certain tribes such as the Yagans, Magdalites and Terashebans.

— Arturus, Magdelite Diplomat, to his student

The Mandate of Judges

My fellow High Judges,

I must reaffirm my conviction that for the good of our nation, the vigilance of Tera Sheba must be extended over the other six tribes as it protects our own. As it stands, we Terasheban are recognized as the authority in matters of tribal law. When a conflict occurs between members of two or more tribes, we adjudicate the dispute. This is as it should be. When a dispute within a single tribe cannot be resolved internally, the elders of that tribe can call upon our judges to resolve the situation. This is as it should be.

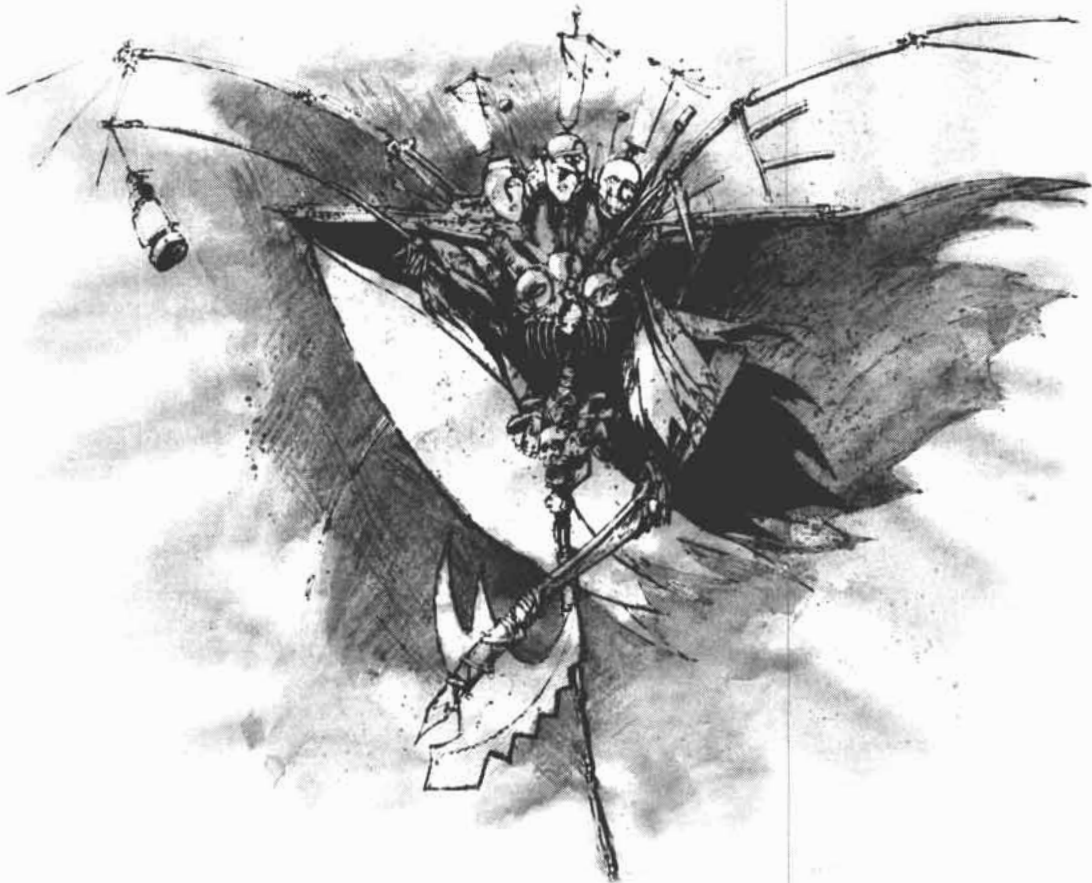
What is troubling, however, is that we have not been allowed to make our own decisions as to when we are needed. Many a time, one of my junior judges has reported news of a Dahlian caravan aiding Fallen or Yagan witches venturing into Z'bri lands for hidden reasons. And yet we cannot launch investigations without being invited in. This is wrong.

Tera Sheba demands that justice be universal. I propose that we no longer wait to be invited in. When we see crime and deviance, we have a duty to launch an investigation and impose the will of the Seven Sisters.

The loyal Joanites have already organized their Watch to patrol Bazaar and other communities, and enforce our laws. They will readily support an extension of their role. Only those with something to hide will oppose us, and their objections are meaningless.

It is the will of Tera Sheba. Let it be done.

— High Judge Verra Thaim'on addressing the assembled High Judges of Tera Sheba



Priestesses and Rituals

Verse XX: Of the Sisterhoods

It had been a bitter fight, but time heals all wounds. We gathered into the Seven Tribes and began rebuilding. Weak and weary we were, but the guidance of the Fatimas lead us through that dark period. They chose from their flocks and the first of the sisterhoods were born. Chosen for insight and devotion, they became echoes of the Seven Sisters. Upon their shoulders the Fatimas placed the duty to spread their word and orders, to ensure all remained faithful and to never allow one to forget their sacrifice.

Verse XXII: Of the Sisterhoods and Elders

The blessed were chosen to serve in the sisterhood, but as with the Seven Tribes, each Fatima had unique demands for Her chosen. Those closest to one of the Seven Sisters were given more authority and respect, and they, as the Fatima's blessed, helped to guide the tribes. At times they advised the elders and matriarchs, becoming a link between the Fatimas and their children. It is to them that the tribes come to ask for miracles and guidance. In turn, the tribes sustain the sisterhoods, allowing the chosen to be closer to the Fatimas.

Fourth Lesson: Priests and Power

If you are going to succeed as a Diplomat, you must understand the power of priestesses, the members of the seven sisterhoods. As the Fatimas guide us, their words and thoughts our scripture, it is the task of the sisterhoods to ensure the tribes are living within the grace of the Seven Sisters. Each sisterhood forms a small, separate caste in its tribe, sometimes linked to the tribal council, sometimes not. In all cases, however, they speak with the authority of the Fatimas and so wield great power. Of course, they all wield Synthesis with a great ability and are powerful in that way as well. You will need to be familiar with all seven of these sisterhoods, know their names and functions.

Magdalen is attended by Her **Sirens**, creatures of extreme beauty and sophistication. They are said to be able to enchant the most stoic of Joanites with but a glance. Eva's **Shamans**, on the other hand, are respected for their knowledge. They are the best healers and midwives of the tribe and the whole nation. The Yagan **Old Ones** are ancient, withered and feared. They rarely leave the side of Baba Yaga Herself, but travel through dreams. Their curses are deadly.

Among Terasheban, the **High Judges** are the true leaders. Many sit on the tribal council and the others send down edicts. Some claim — with a certain amount of reason — that the High Judges are the true leaders of the Seven Tribes. The **Templars** of Joan are stoic warriors who guard Her temples and once went on crusade with Her. Few know what their plans, if any, really are.

Only Agnes and Dahlia don't have true sisterhoods; another reason why they are outsiders among the Fatimas. Agnes does have a few **Favorites**, however, who have Her ear and attention, but She can tire of them in an instant. Each Dahlian caravan is led by a **Little Trickster** who communes with Dahlia.

They are all different, but they are all influential. They do not cooperate in any organized fashion, but I have seen Sirens and High Judges in conversation, and I doubt this is an aberration. If you succeed in knowing even a fraction of their secrets, perhaps Magdalen will make you a Siren as well. Oh yes, you can become one if you catch Her eye. We call these groups sisterhoods, but they are open to both the sons and daughters of the Fatimas — as each is blessed in different manners by the Goddess.

— Arturus, Diplomat of Magdalen

The Truth

I was a Siren before my Fall. I know what I'm talking about when I tell you to beware the sisterhoods. They are the Eighth Tribe's greatest enemies. Priests, shamans, whatever you call them, most become fanatical about their Fatima, and more importantly their position. If we threaten that position, you can bet we will hear from them.

The sisterhoods hold the real power in the tribes — it is to them that most come to for guidance and advice, because through them they approach the mighty Fatimas. While most are devoted, others have been tainted by the Fatimas' own righteousness and narrow-mindedness. They search their flocks like hawks looking for any sign of deviance, real or imagined. Other times they act on their own, blind to their own transgressions. If you asked me, the real heretics are the priestesses.

I know from experience that members of the various sisterhoods cooperate to guide the nation. They have alliances mimicking those of the Fatimas, but they also act independently. There was a Little Trickster, a Dahlian priestess, named Sabine who used to visit the Magdalite home of Xstatis all the time, despite cool relations between the two Fatimas, for example.

While each sisterhood is the voice of a Fatima, their interests at times collide with the Seven Deaths. If you pay attention and look closely, you can see the subtle struggle for power between the sisterhood and the tribal council over the interpretation of the Fatima's wishes. It seems, now more than ever, that the Fatimas and the sisterhood are moving away from their followers.

— Deus, Fallen Magdelite

A Mother's Gift, Part II

My son,

Although each tribe is governed by its own set of rites and rituals, some are sacred to one and all. Many of these ceremonies see members of various tribes come together. Through them we establish a link to the past, to our Fatima and to our nation.

Birth

Upon the arrival of a newborn, a feast is thrown by the family, celebrating the joy of a new life born in freedom and peace. An Evan is always present — it is our duty to be midwives to expecting mothers, as birth opens one to the glory of Eva. On the first new moon after the birth, the newborn is taken to the see her tribe's Fatima to undergo the naming ceremony. There, the Fatima opens the child's eyes to the glory of the River of Dream and establishes her connection to it.

Coming of Age

The Coming of Age ceremony is different for each tribe, and often occurs at different ages. Joanites, warriors and hunters, undergo theirs upon their fourteenth summer, while Yagans are tried any time after their sixteenth and Dahlians are tested whenever they are deemed ready. For us, the Evans, Coming of Age comes when Eva opens us to the Seed, allowing us to be mothers or fathers. The ceremonies mark the moment when a tribal member becomes responsible for her actions and usually undergoes a Seeing rite, a vision quest showing her future — that's when I first saw you my son, and knew that you'd be a son.

Matrimony

Matrimony ceremonies are usually overseen by Magdalites, and those being joined are taught beforehand in the arts of pleasure. Matrimony is a pledge of love and duty between two or more souls. Although most marriages bond only a single couple, some women are married multiple times, enlarging their families even more. Only Tera Sheba frowns upon these unions.

Most marriages occur within the same tribe, but to a man from another clan. This bonds the clans together and the elders must approve the union. On rarer occasions marriage occurs between tribes, upon the approval of the priests of both factions. The husband lives with his wife and their children belong to her tribe, but he remains a son of his Fatima.

Death

Death is the most sacred and solemn rite for the tribes. It marks the end of our suffering and, thanks to the grace of the Fatimas, allows us to venture into the Heavens themselves. As peaceful as this may be, death is nonetheless a reminder of the pain of the past, and that before the Fatimas not all were so lucky. Death rites are overseen by Yagans, who help prepare the body and shepherd the soul into the spirit world.

Runes and Markings

We are a young people, the past alive but fading with each winter, and yet we proudly remember our history. The survivors of the camps, having no other possession than their own skin, chose to carve their stories in their flesh. Soon, tattoos and markings, often in homage to the Fatimas, became commonplace — scars, piercing, runes and tattoos mark tribals for who we are. Those of Baba Yaga expose parts of their bones in homage to their Fatima. Magdalites believe in piercing themselves, enjoying the addicting pleasure of pain. Joanites believe in scarification, while Terashebans inscribe their deeds and laws upon their flesh.

— Delra Aria'on, daughter of Eva

A Fate Worse Than Death

Verse XXXII: Of Banishment

But some were not content with the gifts of the Seven Sisters. In the summers after freedom, some grew lazy or petty, and went against their wills. The first was a Marian who refused to take her place among the children of Eva. For her a great convocation was called. The judges told this criminal that her pride was an insult to the Seven Sisters, but she refused to comply with their orders. She was bound and the Fatimas themselves appeared together. One by one they pulled their love from her soul, and she cried as she was stripped of all that made her special. She was banished to the cold wilderness, alone and without love. She would die and her soul would be consumed like that of any other lowly Squat. Such is the fate reserved for the gravest of blasphemers.

Final Warning

This is your last warning, stripling. You have offended your elders and your Goddess. You will be punished, of course, but you still have hope. You can still redeem yourself. One more offense and you will be banished. Do you know what that means?

Firstly, Joanites from the Watch would rouse you in the middle of the night. A judge like myself would be there to watch, along with a priestess from your own tribe. We would watch as the Joanites shackle you and bring you to a cell in one of their holding towers near the council grounds. There you would wait.

At the next new moon, when the sky is dark, you would be dragged to the council grounds, where the tribunal of the tribes will be waiting. You might be alone, or other heretics might be with you. A High Judge of Tera Sheba will preside, and other Judges will be in attendance. One elder and one priestess from each of the Seven Tribes will also be there. Others will watch on from the sidelines, ready to participate if needed.

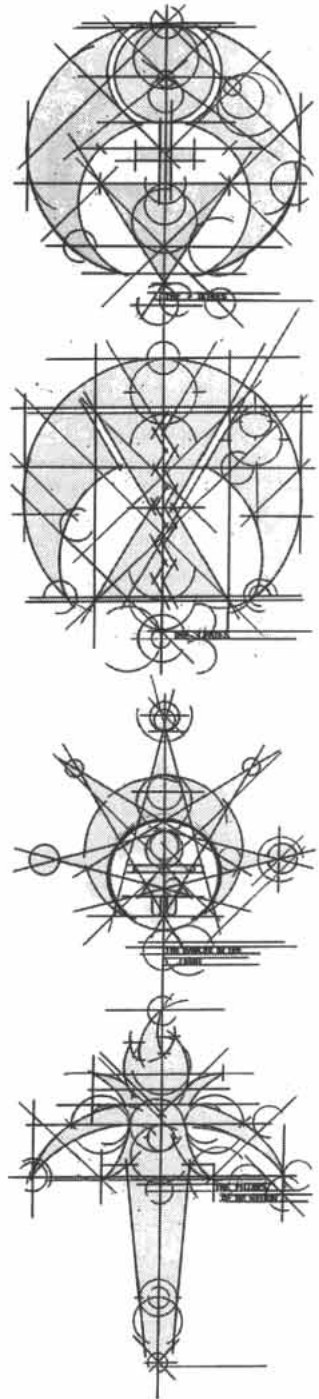
One of the Judges — perhaps even me — will read out the litany of your crimes. The High Judge will ask if you have anything to say in your defense and you will be given a few moments to speak. When you have failed to account for your actions, and fail you will, the High Judge will ask the assembled elders if they have anything to add. Then she will read the sentence: banishment. Then it will be carried out.

Your mother, aunt or grandmother will step forward. She will look at you and announce that your family rejects you. She may scream it or mumble it or sob it or whisper it, but the effect is the same. Then an elder from your clan will do the same, stripping you of heritage and history. Then the tribunal speaks. The elder from your tribe will announce that the tribe as a whole casts you out. The elders of the other tribes will tell you that their tribes will offer you no shelter — the nation has utterly rejected you.

Then comes the final stage, the one that will scar you for the rest of your miserable life. The priestess of your tribe will speak, telling you that your Fatima has rejected you, that Her love is no longer yours. As you assimilate this, the crowd will part and the Fatima Herself will approach you. Yes, that's right, She appears physically, often flanked by Her Sisters. She will lay her hand on your chest and you will feel her fingers grasp your very soul. There She will tear Her love from your heart. This will be very painful.

With this done She will turn Her back on you forever. Gone will be any hope you have of wielding Synthesis, of dreaming safely, of being reincarnated in Her grace. You are a lost soul, weak and bound for oblivion. You hear stories of the "Fallen" retaining their abilities, don't you? They are lies. When you Fall, you will never get up again.

— Pietr Thaim'on, Terasheban Judge





Agnes the Child

Like you, of a Mother I was born.

For you, I rose from Her ashes.

You call me but a child but I am more, much more.

The world is mine to discover.

Won't you join me?

— From the Word of Agnes

Childlike Ways

From the conversations of Billie Wick, Agnite traveler:

I left the Playground, our home, with one of Dahlia's caravans about two summers ago, and that was the last time that I saw Agnes, the sweet Child. I miss Her. She was so present in my life back then, sharing Her sense of wonder and fun. She taught me to be curious and to explore, that there's a whole world out there, beyond the boundaries of Vimary. That's why I left Her side, but still I miss Her. Even far away, I know She's still with me, though, and I follow Her ways.

Like Her, I love children. She is the only One that will accept any child that is taken to Her. I suspect that there are many Squats and Serfs who bring us their children when they feel that they cannot take of them, knowing full well that they will be under Her protection. She even protects those who've Fallen from Her grace! Isn't that amazing?

We love Agnes just like She loves us, of course. We give Her what She wants and keep Her happy. Sometimes, someone will get stubborn and get in Her way. That's wrong. That makes Her mad and you don't want to be around when that happens. I mean, She's not going to banish or hurt anyone, but She might go away. We know that She likes to go and explore on Her own, but we worry to no ends when She does that. She refuses to let a party of our strongest youths accompany Her, claiming that She must be able to commune with the land on Her own. She also laughs at us when we tell Her that someone might hurt Her.

From the recollections of Fran Walker, Fallen traveler:

Agnites are so innocent and brainwashed. They claim that no one ever gets cast out or exiled from Playground, but if you ask one what happened to her friend, she'll simply say that he went away. There are fewer Fallen Agnites than Terashebans, that's true, but to say that no one is ever banished is ridiculous. Some of the Fallen Agnites even speak openly about some of their loved ones or people they knew who crossed Agnes in one way or another. They say that they simply disappeared one day.

Outsiders don't realize is that nothing is really taboo in Playground. Laws depend on Agnes' mood. Doing something against Her wishes is a sure way to become Barren or be shifted out of Her favors. And the moment you lose the status of favorite playmate, you are in trouble. Agnites talk about freedom, but they know a lot about slavery.

Where Children Rule

From the recollections of Fran Walker, Fallen traveler:

You have to remember that Agnes was born after the camps, from the ashes of Mary the Forgiver. Her tribe was not shaped by the camps and so doesn't follow the Evan kin system, or even the guilds of some other tribes. There's not even a real Agnite priesthood. Instead, the Fatima apparently has Her "favorites," individuals who get empowered and become leaders. But I've met at least one former favorite who was cast aside just because Agnes got bored with her. Apparently this happens a lot — I guess Agnes like to be in control Herself.

Maybe that's why She keeps Her tribe small. There's about 700 of them and apart from those who roam the land with the Dahlians, they all live in the Playground. That's a big settlement, but it isn't broken up into families and clans, rather by caste. Membership is determined by age group; blood relations have nothing to do with it.

The first caste is the **Young Ones**, the children who are still in the Crèche. They are taken care of by the Children, with the help of some of the Barren and the Breeders. They pretty much play all day and do nothing else.

The second caste and maybe the most powerful is the **Children**. These are the tribe members who have yet to reach adulthood, which is usually set at 17 summers, and who are older than 7 summers old. Along with Agnes, they rule the tribe. They are the ones who run the farms that feed Playground. Some are also warriors and defend the Playground. They are quite vicious in battle, although their might is nothing compared to that of the Joanites. The strangest thing about the Children, especially the older ones, is that none of them become pregnant. One would expect that as soon as they come of child-bearing age, some of the girls would have babies, but this doesn't seem to happen. Agnes somehow manages to keep them childless until they become either Breeders or Barrens.

The third caste is the **Barren**, those who cannot bear children for Agnes. They are probably the lowest of the low, and usually are not tolerated to live past the age of 30. They are used mainly as slave labor and get very little in return for their trouble. Many of the Barren choose instead to go with a Dahlian Caravan, where they can actually live longer lives and still serve Agnes.

The last cast is that of the **Breeders**. Pretty much as their name indicates, their main function is to make children for Agnes. They usually produce at least 3 offspring in the space of 5 summers. Once born, the children go to the Crèche, where they are cared for by the entire tribe. Breeders are incredibly fertile, at least compared to all the other tribes.

Now all these castes have leaders, but the Children rule the tribe. As far as I can tell, all of Agnes' favorites are Children. She just doesn't like any-one older.



Childhood Toys

From the conversations of Billie Wick, Agnite traveler:

Agnes is so good to us. Thanks to Her we have the wonderful gifts of capriciousness and inspiration. We travel the world and discover wonderful things because Her gifts protect us. We are capricious, so wild animals won't hurt us and even the ugly Z'bri will overlook us. We are inspired, so we know how to deal with new places and what to do when we get there. They say that traveling with an Agnite is good luck — that's because Agnes is always with us.

In Playground, I've seen Agnes and Her favorites do some amazing things as well. With just a glance, they can flush away all the baggage of adulthood and make someone return to the innocent amazement of a babe. That's what's called Naïveté and even stern Joanites will play with you if you use it. With Wonder, Agnes can make things into playmates — hammers will hammer alone and shadows will dance with you.



Puck (Agnite Fool)

Mischievous and petty, Puck (a name he took after a Keeper read him a portion of a play from the World Before) best exemplifies the dual nature of the Agnites. Wildly popular with the young from other tribes, Puck has begun to notice a change in himself. Fearful that Agnes will no longer find him useful, Puck has secretly convinced a dozen or so children from other tribes to join him on a little adventure. Puck hopes that they will all be banished, so that he'll always have a loyal and appreciating audience for his antics, unaware of the true consequences in store for him or the children.

Highlights: Popular, playful, capricious

Attributes: AGI +1, APP +1, BLD -1, CRE +1, PSY +1

Skills: Acrobatics 2/+1, Dance 2/+1, Disguise 1/+1, Music 2/+1, Seduction 1/+1, Streetwise 2/+0, Theatrics 2/+1

Playing With Strangers

From the conversations of Billie Wick, Agnite traveler:

Look, I know we're the youngest tribe. I know we never saw the camps or Joshua or whatever. I know the others miss Mary. But why do they have to treat us like we don't know what we're doing. Agnes is a Fatima, right? We're a tribe, right?

I mean look at the Evans. The mother figures, I call them. Always trying to make you think before you act or sit down or stand still. They lack energy, they have no spunk. The Yagans are even worse — I mean, they're so *old*. How can someone live so long and still find the joy in discovering new things? The Shebans and Joanites are no fun at all. Sometimes I wonder if they've closed their eyes to the world out there. Didn't Mary and Joshua die to be free? What can't they leave us be?

Now Magdelites are people after my own heart. Like us, they like to explore beyond the boundaries, but in a different way. While we seek the great outdoors and what lies out there, they look inside and explore their own bodies. Whenever I visit them, I make sure to ask them what new game they have come up with. And I love Dahlians. It's quite simple. They are perhaps the only ones who understand us or at least accept us and our ways. I mean, if we didn't get along with them, I wouldn't be here, would I?

Agnes likes the Fallen and I see why. They're so full of energy and excitement. They might be misguided, but Agnes keeps an eye on them, so that's okay. Keepers are even better. They always have neat gadgets to show me and the others, and they have such great stories of the Days Before. I love it!

Now the Squats are just plain gross. I remember when they attacked the Caravan. They fought us like a bunch of wild animals.

I guess you won't understand, but the Z'bri don't really scare me. I never knew the camps, so all I see are these twisted, lost monsters. Sure they're scary, but they're not really *scary*... know what I mean? They just seem more pathetic than anything else, like a dying wolf or something.

The Child Reborn

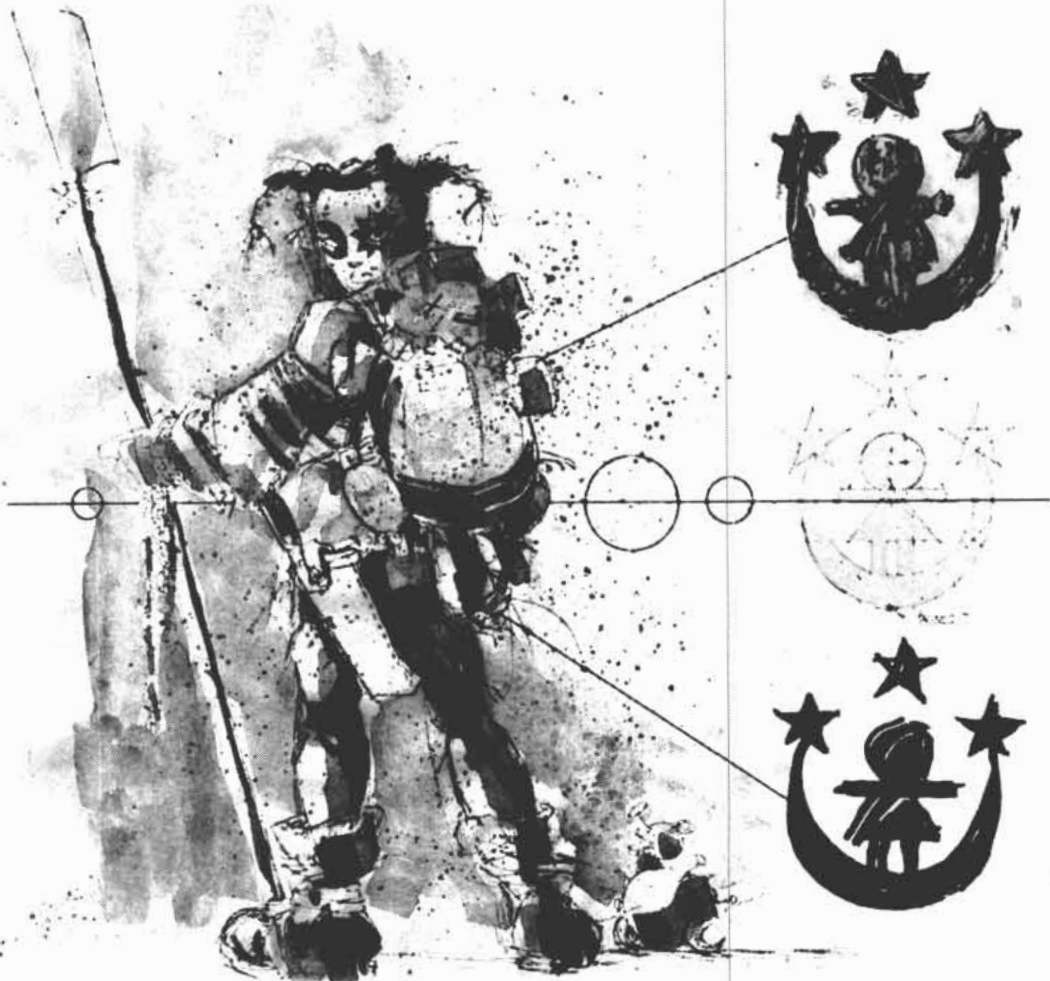
From the conversations of Billie Wick, Agnite traveler:

I hope I'll back to the Playground for this year's Festival of Rebirth. It's a reminder of the birth of our Fatima, Agnes. We also see in it the cyclical nature of life, of its constant ends which are only beginnings to other ways.

We usually celebrate the festival in the dead of winter, during the solstice, just before the days get long again. Twelve Barrens are chosen by Children as Forgivers, reminding us of our ties to Mary. Usually, the honor goes to the oldest of the caste and those who have distinguished themselves with exemplary devotion. Outside, other Barrens, with the help of some of the Breeders, get busy building the great wicker Lady. It is placed in the middle of the Playground and its construction takes exactly seven days. In the meantime, the Children and the Young Ones keep themselves busy purifying their bodies with fasting and ritual songs.

On the seventh day, all of the tribe is out to participate in the event. We start the retelling of the birth of Agnes with songs and then the Forgivers come out, two at a time. They climb into the wicker Lady until all of the Forgivers have taken their place, forming our icon to Mary. Then the bundles of branches are placed at her feet and she is set aflame.

The simple fact that the Forgivers don't cry out in agony is a sign of the rightfulness of the celebration. Once their bodies have been completely consumed in flames, Agnes makes Her entrance, out of the ashes of the wicker Lady. Still outside, we celebrate Her coming with food and drinks, songs and dance. And we know that She is the one for us since we cannot feel the bitter cold of the outside air.





Baba Yaga the Crone

I am the keeper at the gate, the one who knows the secrets that you can only guess at.

I am here to help you through and tell you when your time has come.

I am the one who walks with death; the one who is death.

My children walk in shadow and know my secrets.

Fear me only if you cannot understand me.

— From the Word of Baba Yaga

The Ways of Fate

From the sermons of Veruka the Wraith, Fallen Yagan:

I was raised to believe that of all the tribes, only we knew what this life was all about. For a Yagan, life and death are completely linked and to know one fully is to know both. After all, how can you live without knowing what it is not to live?

No matter what anyone tells you, Death, the final journey, is the most frightening thing there is. No matter what a brave Joanite tells you, when she faces the blade that will kill her, deep down inside she is terrified. That very fear is the basis of the Yagan power over the other tribes. Not even the stern Terashebans can lord anything over us. We walk with death every night and it hangs around us like a veil. The other tribes fear us because we can sense their own perishing and even control it. There is also a certain smugness that comes with the belief that you know everything about death. And this both scares and angers people, especially the young ones.

We understand this, but to disrespect an elder is a sure way of getting on the wrong side of Baba Yaga. Those from other tribes who do so will be reprimanded; Yagans are harshly punished. Only my own sin is graver among Yagans and that was to deny the Crone's mastery over death. You know, I've told you the story before: Baba Yaga told me that it was my time to die and I just refused to in the end. For that, I'll never be able to see my family again, since for them, I am already dead.

Elders and Witches

When Eva handed down the tradition of family and clan, Yagans adapted it to suit their beliefs. In my former tribe, only the eldest female may lead a family of clan and she is called a Little Crone. This sometimes causes problems during winter gatherings — because the frail travel poorly — but age is always valued over mobility. But real influence comes from the various guilds that have existed since the camps.

The most potent Yagans are the priestesses known as **Old Ones**. The first Old Ones actually constructed Baba Yaga's physical body in the Age of Flesh camp and their descendants remain closest to the Crone Herself.

The **Pellis Artisans**, or the skin-keepers, are the loremasters of the tribe and of the nation. They are the ones who take care of the skins of the great heroes and leaders who have died. In their temples, you can see the tanned hides hanging on the wall, with their body runes telling the story of the hero and of the nation.

The **Mordreds**, or witch-kin, were my guild and they are the keepers of the hidden secrets. They know the most potent curses and the most dangerous rituals. They know the Z'bri and their lore like few others. Even among the Yagans, few completely trust a witch-kin.

The **Fleshers** know the rituals of Death and how to inflict it. They are our prime animal handlers, those who deal with all the meat-producing animals. The meat of their animals is sweeter and more tender than anything that comes from the Evans. The Fleshers lead death rites and the best are sought out by families from across the Seven Tribes. Some claim that the Fleshers are so well versed in the way of death that they know of many ways to kill someone without leaving any traces or how to prolong someone's death in order to inflict as much pain as possible.





Sarah Verkin
(Yagan mystic)

Although not high in the Yagan hierarchy, Sarah Verkin is a well-known and respected Flesher. Driven by the desire to learn, she prizes knowledge above everything, even the cost of acquiring it. Ever since her aunt Veruka's flight from the tribe, she has been seeking new — and dangerous — sources of knowledge, hoping to understand what drove this rebellion. She has established a corrupt relationship with the Z'bri T'phalus, who shares her thirst, and both meet regularly to discuss the finer points of life and death. Sarah has so far avoided being tainted by the Z'bri, but some Old Ones have begun wondering about her sanity.

Highlights: Inquisitive, aloof,
withered

Attributes: AGI -1, BLD -2, FIT -1,
KNO +2, INF +1

Skills: Dreaming 3/0, Herbalism 1/
+2, Law 1/+2, Lore (Fatimas) 2/+2,
Mythology 3/+2, Ritual 3/+2,
Teaching 2/+1, Synthesis (Dream
Travel) 1

The Gifts of Baba Yaga

The Crone gives Her children a great many gifts. From Her — or at least I thought it was from Her at the time — I learned to see the flows of Fate and Death. If a Yagan sets her mind to it, and if it's the Fatima's will, she can see how and when someone will die, or what her future will be. The Old Ones are very skilled at this, but others still can read omens and premonitions.

As a Mordred, I learned the dreaded aspect of Dream Cursing. With the aid of some of my kin, I could make a heart skip a few beats, make skin turn red or hair fall out. I could make someone be haunted by nightmares or even make blood freeze.

The most potent Yagan gift, though is Dream Travel. Fleshers and Old Ones can leave their bodies and travel about the country side as a ghost. They can enter the River of Dream and even the dreams of others. They can even possess animals and other creatures for a brief period of time. So beware, there could always be a Yagan behind you, unseen.

Outsiders and Others

Yagans cannot tell people everything we know about death. We — I mean they — see this simply as a necessity, since they believe that the majority of people would not be able to handle the truth of what lays beyond life. We cope with the fact that we will never be fully accepted by the other Tribes, knowing that we subtly *direct* them.

Evans are Yagan allies, but they are mother to us all, even those who are older than them. They pretend that they are even handed towards everyone, but show favoritism towards their own, unlike the Shebans and their cronies, the Joanites. I used to think that the Joanites could not or would not think for themselves. Now I know better. It's just in their nature.

The Magdalites are too busy staring at their bellybuttons to notice what is going on in the world out there. Dahlians are disliked by Yagans because of their support for the Fallen and their mandate to challenge tradition. Agnites are snotty little brats. I still have a hard time dealing with them.

The Fallen are my people now and we are despised by the Yagans, seen as nothing more than unruly children who do not know their place. If the Yagans had their ways with us, we'd be no more.

The Serfs and their masters, the Z'bri, are despicable and dirty. Yagans understand that they are the dead who have risen up out of their place.

Ask a Yagan about the Squats, and the phrases "empty vessel" or "soulless being" will come up a few times, and that's if the person who you're talking to is being nice. Yagans hate them, not as fiercely as they hate the Fallen, but they still hate them.

Keepers live in the past. True, they sometimes come up with handy devices, but they have sold their souls for the very toys they play with. They do not understand that the only path to salvation and to getting rid once and for all of the Z'bri is through the unification of body and soul. Just don't try and tell them that, they'd laugh in your face.

One Death Too Many

She came to me in a dream to tell me that it was time to go to the other side of the Fold. I believed Her, whatever the voices in the back of my mind told me. I called my family to me. Little Misha cried, her mother trying to comfort her as best as she could.

The next day, I prepared myself with prayers and fasting. My body was (and still is) frail and the fast drained away most of my meager store of energy. Lying on my bed at the end of the night, my skin exposed for all to see, the younger children of the family came into my room. They washed my body with cold water in order to make my skin cold to the touch, while my niece Sarah, a skilled Flesher, prepared the paints and brushes. She then laid down the Death Mask on my face, gently, stroke by stroke, evoking the face of Baba Yaga Herself. I could feel the paint running into the grooves of my skin, which drunk it as a parchment drinks the ink from a quill. The voices in the back of my mind grew louder, more rebellious, trying to convince me that my time hadn't come yet.

My body was wrapped in a shroud, my family came in. Each kissed me good-bye and then the younger men bore me away on their shoulders. I knew from experience that they were bringing me to my funeral pyre, my final resting place. Once there, Sarah came to me once again and placing her hands gently on my lower jaw, parted my lips. She poured the Blood of Baba Yaga into my mouth, the overpowering sweetness of the liquid making me want to gag. I knew that I would be falling asleep soon, under the influence of the Blood, but I did not want to drink it all. I kept it in my cheeks, not swallowing. Sarah must have thought that I had drunk it, because I could no longer feel her hand on my jaw.

I heard Her voice in my head once more, telling me to swallow Her blood, to give in and lay myself down. I could smell the smoke of the torches, could hear some of the branches crackling in the fire already. The voices in the back of my mind screamed out at me and I listened, truly listened for the first time.

I sat bolt upright and spat out Her blood. She was standing there, in the middle of the circle, looking at me. Her eyes, deep in the sockets of Her Death Mask, stared at me. The face that I once saw as beautiful finally appeared to me as it truly is: all-knowing but uncaring, cruel and dead. Everything about Her screamed death at me: Her many hands, made from gnarly wood; Her worm-like body, crawling with detritus and flies. She lifted Her arm and pointed at me and I knew, I knew at that moment that the voices had been right all along. I tore the shroud from my body and ran into the forest. No one made a move to stop me.



Dahlia the Trickster

Some call me The Lady of the Dance because of my predilection for playing

Other say that I lead the Dance of Life with tricks and double-dealing

To those I say For shame!

Is it my fault my tongue is golden?

That fools would gladly give me all that they have?

— From the Word of Dahlia

The Trickster's Path

From the conversations of Fanny Clint, Dahlian trickster:

Dahlia led us, laughing and dancing, out of the horrors of the camps. She showed us hope in despair and light in darkness. Now we do the same for the rest of the tribes, playing games with their minds, bringing them news of the world, and pointing out their own foolish ways. Our games make us friends; our lessons make us enemies.

It's no wonder people don't really know how to treat us. On one hand, they see us as a happy-go-lucky people, always jumping around, singing and dancing, telling our tales around a campfire and generally celebrating the gift of life. On the other hand, they also know us as shrewd traders, able to make a deal with the best of them. No wonder they have a saying: "to out-dahlia a Dahlian!"

They call us thieves and swindlers, but if we can talk you out of something, it's simply because you didn't really want it in the first place. If we want it more than you, we deserve it. Besides, to trick some feeb out of a trinket or some food is our way. When's the last time you questioned the high and mighty attitude of some Terasheban? We do what we do because of who we are, right?

Others look to priests and leaders to interpret the ways of their Fatima. We all know Dahlia personally. She often comes to us, but always in a different guise. It's so easy for Her to change Her appearance that we can never be sure that it is not Her coming down the road or claiming to be another Fatima. Many times she's come to us in disguise, only to teach us another valuable lesson. What She does to us, we do to others. So the next time we trick you, ask yourself what you've learned.

You think we don't have any laws, right? That we just live to make ourselves happy, right? Well, you've almost got it down. Our laws are that we must be happy, all of us. Dahlia doesn't like gloomy people and can't stand it when we fight among ourselves. There are enough people out there who would see us dead or in chains. We have to remember that life is fun. Fortunately, there's not many people who can't remember that in our little tribe. Nope, at least when they become depressed or harassing, they just seem to leave in the middle of the night.

She is the Lady of the Dance and how I love to dance with Her. Dahlia is my Fatima and I will do anything for Her.

The Caravans

Other tribes are ridiculous with their strict orders and leaders and whatnots. When something important comes up for us Dahlians, we simply call a Gathering and those who show up discuss what must be done. If there are some caravans that don't think the matter is important, then they simply don't show up.

We don't really have villages and settlements, except maybe for Westholm. We move around in caravans, going where it suits us — or suits Dahlia. Each caravan is a family in its own right. Each does things the way they want to do it. If Dahlia sees it fit to intervene, She tells us what to do. Sure, it might seem ragtag, but look around. Are wolves organized? Only a little. They gather around in packs and deal with nature the way each sees fit. Sure, they are all wolves, but it doesn't mean that they listen to some old bag telling them what to do. It is the same with us. If someone disagrees with the Little Trickster — the leader of the caravan — she can leave and start up her own caravan if she wishes.

Becoming a Little Trickster, a caravan leader, is a privilege. Dahlia picks these people for their insight and joy. That doesn't make them absolute leaders, but they understand the Lady better than most.

The Lady's Many Tricks

Like I said, we all know Dahlia personally. She tricks us and plays with us, but always leaves us with gifts in exchange. Synthesis is the greatest of these gifts. The other tribes try to hide this because they misunderstand Dahlia, but She was the one who first taught humans the ways of Synthesis. She showed the trick to Her Sisters and allowed us all to be free. But She didn't show them everything; we Dahlians are still the best at wielding Dream.

Our greatest gifts are illusion and motion. Why do you think our caravans appear out of nowhere or seemingly travel across Vimary in an instant? It's because of Dahlia. We can see through disguises and find an opening into locked rooms. One minute we're behind you, the next at the horizon.

When we work together in grand shows, or when Dahlia is with us, we can wield Metamorphosis and create Puppet Shows. We can transform our very features and shape the world itself. No one but a Dahlian can see through Metamorphosis. Puppet Shows allow us to tell our tales and play our games. The very shadows become our actors and the audience is ours to play with.



Fools and Friends



Anastasia Aaron
(Dahlian actress)

Anastasia is a great Dahlian actress and was the star of the last Liberation Festival. She is also nothing more than a puppet for Dahlia, a fact she knows and can do nothing to prevent. If she were ever to reveal the reason for her actions and her role in them, Anastasia would face certain death, not banishment. Through her illusions and trickery, several tribal members have found themselves framed for crimes they did not commit. In more extreme cases Anastasia has been responsible for the deaths of those who stand in Dahlia's way.

Highlights: Devious, beautiful,
enchanted

Attributes: APP +1, CRE +1, INF +2

Skills: Dance 2/0, Disguise 2/+1,
Grooming 2/+1, Human Perception
2/0, Seduction 2/+1, Theatrics 3/
+1, Synthesis (Metamorphosis) 2

Dahlia may have given the tribes Her greatest gift, but we're still outsiders among them. We do have some allies, though. For one, there's no better audience than Agnites. Quick to smile when you talk to them, always ready to listen to tales or songs, they are just so much fun. The sensual Magdelites are similar to us, but I just can't understand why they stay trapped inside their citadel. They should see the world for all the other pleasures that it might bring. Getting a little bit of sun wouldn't hurt either.

The rest of the tribes don't like us much, mostly because our tricks hit a little too close to home. Take the Yagans. It must be depressing to spend so much time around Death. I mean, imagine what it takes to make one of them laugh. Shebans take themselves way too seriously, with their laws and traditions. It's like if you took their sacred books from them, they wouldn't know what to do with themselves. They make great patsies for jokes, though. Evans are almost the same, always trying to tell everyone that their ways are wrong.

The Joanites sometimes harass us, but I like them and — don't tell anyone — respect them. Just like we understand our lady and our mission without recourse to laws and leaders, they know Joan and their duty instinctively. They're the strong core that allows us to question the Seven Tribes without tearing them down.

Because we travel, we know the outsiders better than most. So don't scoff at me when I say that the Fallen are fascinating. They're pushing for change and Dahlia likes that. But they lack focus and confidence. They still have a few lessons to learn.

The Keepers are okay if they have gimmicks to trade, but they just don't understand what's happening in the world today. They sure have cool stuff, though. What about the Squats? They smell bad and they have nothing to trade, but they're basically harmless.

The Z'bri, on the other hand, scare me. They are vile and monstrous, and bring us only bondage and pain. I can't understand how the Fatimas can tolerate them living so close to the Seven Tribes. I *know* Dahlia wants them out.

A Grand Show

Every day's a celebration of life and Dahlia to us. Any excuse we can get we use to have fun and bring pleasure to those around us. But there's one day of the year that is more special to us and that is the Festival of Liberation. This is perhaps the most important pageant to our people as well as all the other tribes. It is one of the only festival were all tribes are present in the same location and it is up to us Dahlians to organize it. It lasts seven days, one for each of the Fatimas. It's around this time that we Dahlians are the most popular with the other tribes. We try to enjoy that, because it's a very fleeting feeling.

I remember last year's Festival. It was my first time as a participant, unlike the previous years when I could watch but not be part of it because I wasn't seventeen summers yet. Even when you're only looking from the outside, the Festival is pretty impressive, with all the masks worn by the participants and the plays, but to be a part of it, well, my senses are still reeling.

The most impressive part of the Festival are the Liberation Plays, where we use our gifts to reenact the birth of all the Fatimas. Priests and elders from the tribes help us get things right, but we bring these miracles to life. The people really get into these Plays and the Fatimas themselves sometimes appear to show their approval.

Only the Agnites don't have a Liberation Play, instead they have a Passion Play, where we re-enact the birth of Agnes from the ashes of Mary. To me, it is the best of all the plays because the Agnites cooperate with us completely. The players really make you feel the desperation, hope and joy of the tribe as they lose their Fatima, only to be blessed with Her rebirth. It always makes me cry.

There's all kinds of people at the Liberation Festival. Some Fallen sneak in and try to pass themselves off as tribals, but we always recognize them. Mother says that we should always help them disguise themselves, because if they see the Plays, they might realize the mistake they made by leaving their tribes. The few times I actually helped a Fallen into the Festival, I looked closely at his face for signs of regret. I couldn't help but smile when he shed a tear at the birth of Joan. When I asked him if he regretted leaving his tribe, he just clammed up and turned away. Once a Joanite...

Of course, the Plays are not the only part of the Festival. Every night after the Play, we hold a huge celebration where everyone drinks, dances and has a good time. It is perhaps the only time of the year where all of the tribes mingle. Some of the elders take advantage of this time to meet others and discuss politics. That's were I met Jan. I knew the moment I saw him that he was the one. If the elders approve, we'll be married next summer.





Eva the Mother

In the Times of Pain I was born.

Of your need for relief I grew out.

With my Sisters I came to free you, my children,

of the Beasts that call themselves Z'bri.

You are safe with me.

— From the Word of Eva

The Ways of Motherhood

From the lessons of Marigold Wild'on, Evan Teacher:

We are of the Mother. We are the caretakers, the nurturers, those who care for those who cannot or would not care for themselves. We are the ones who protect those who do not know better. We are the ones who keep the moths from the flame, the children from the dangerous toys.

We care for nature and for all our neighbors as only a loving mother can. Life, in all of its ways and forms, must be nurtured. To deprive any living thing of the chance to develop and live its life is a sin against the Mother, for all that lives comes from Her and is Her. At the same time, to allow a life to go on when it is wrong to do so is also a sin, for all that lives must die one day, to allow the others to live also. We look to Eva and Her Shamans to teach us the distinction between the two.

We are also children to Eva. Despite being made of leather and furs, of wood and bones of long dead people, Eva is more beautiful than anyone or anything I've ever seen. And when Her aura washes over us during ceremonies, we know what it means to love without conditions, to care for without asking for anything in return, to forgive without hope of being forgiven. We understand what it is to love as only a mother can, and that She is mother to us all, more than our birth-mothers could hope to be. As such, She knows what is good for us. We will obey Her in all of Her decisions, because we know that it is for our own good. Like the child who listens to her mother, we do the same. Never question, always follow.

Mothers and Daughters

Eva knew that blood and marriage were the bonds that build a nation, and She gave the first tribes the system of family and clan. We follow this way to this day, but others have been foolish and forgotten the way.

Listen, it is simple. Like the circle that is life, with its birth, life and death, we are lead by the Circle which, with Eva and her Shamans, takes decisions about the important aspect of our lives. There are nine elders in the Circle, one per clan. The decisions taken by the Circle are passed down to each of the clans and families, through each of the clan councils. Each council is made up of elders from the families, this time two per family in addition to the clan elder.

Only the **Shamans**, who serve Eva in Her groves and interpret Her wishes, have as much authority as the Circle and councils, and they serve as advisors to clan elders. Other Evans, like you and I, serve the Mother in different ways as we grow.

When we are young, we are called the **Seeds**, those who toil the very land, making plants grow which we use to feed our own or our animals, or which we use to heal or bind wounds. We celebrate our love of the Mother by sacrifice: sacrificing a part of the crops in order to express our love, sacrificing our own to express our loyalty. We also show our love through marriage: in wedlock we let the tribe grow through our union and our children.

When our backs are not so strong anymore, we become **Nurses**, like me, while our children become Seeds. We care for the children and teach them the ways of the Seven Tribes, the way of the Mother. We are in charge of discipline, of showing the true path to those who cannot see it. You might sometimes call me cold and harsh, but it is always for your good, children.

When our eyesight fails us, when we are at the twilight of our life, we finally become the **Matrons** to them all. We advise our clans and families, and make sure all Eva has given us is passed on. We dote on our granddaughters and look out for their potential husbands. Finally, we wait for Baba Yaga's call to lay down and return to the Mother.



Our Mother's Milk

From Eva's breasts we drink a milk of love and Synthesis. She empowers all Her children with Her blessings. You all have within you an understanding of life and empathy, the tools of maternity. You can feel the flow of life through the trees and fields; you can sense the pain of the wounded horse and the joy of the newborn child. When you are older, you will learn rituals to help the crops grow and heal the wounded.

The Shamans and the greatest Matrons are especially blessed by Eva, and can greatly affect the flow of life around them. The Mother teaches them the Aspects of Anima and Smothering, Aspects that allow them to augment or stifle a life-force. They can bring life to those near death, heal the fatally wounded, and raise a harvest from a field of stones. Similarly, they can stop plagues in their tracks and end the misery of one who clings to life improperly.

Daughters and Outsiders

Other tribes do not always understand our ways, thinking that we stifle them, keep them away from what they really want to do. We know better. We know that the daughter who is left to her own devices will not live to see the day where she will be truly able to take her own decisions. We know that the Seven Tribes are young, far too young to see the folly in their ways.

Of all the tribes, we owe the respect of age only to the Yagans, who came before us. This respect is always tinged with a little fear, though. Their understanding of death and their celebration of it could be dangerous if not matched with our own love of life. I, for one, never know where to look when I meet a Yagan.

As Evans, we do feel a special bond towards Magdelites and Agnites, as we feel they are our children, in a way. Magdalen is our Mother's young sister and Eva looks kindly upon the Lover's tribe... and so do we, I suppose. But they are like strong-headed youngsters, always looking for love and all of its rewards. As far as the Agnites go, well, they are so young and naïve in their ways that they must always be watched, but I guess that is because of Agnes herself, the Eternal Child.

Shebans like power too much. As with the mother who does not truly love her children, they are given to punish too harshly those who would fail and distrust the others. Do they really believe that they never commit crimes? And as far as their sidekicks are concerned, they are no better. You would think that Joanites would learn how to think for themselves as well as fight. Psha! All muscles and no brains, they are.

Dahlia and Her people make me laugh and forget my age with their tricks and pleasant music. More than anyone else, I believe that they represent the true soul of the Seven Tribes. I sometimes think that we Evans are their only friends, though.

Those outside the Fatimas' love are lost children. I wish we could reach out to them, but they are beyond help. Best to let them fade away and be replaced by our verdant tribe.

The Z'bri are Beasts and do not know compassion. They believe in taking without giving back, exploiting the masses for all they are worth. We must live with them for now, but one day, the Fatimas will lead us against them.

Poor Fallen, they believe themselves to be a tribe, yet there is no Fatima to lead them. Like a child without proper rearing, they set out against the world, not knowing how to care for their own, for their families.

You know, every chance I get I try to educate the poor Squats and Keepers in our ways. Not that they ever have a chance of joining us, but at least if they believe in the ways of the Fatimas, their souls might be saved one day. And besides, the Keepers should really give up their hope in the Old Ways. Their "tekno-logi" — whatever that is — will never work again.

The Cycle of Rebirth

Every summer, each of our nine clans is reborn in a ceremony that brings young girls into the world of womanhood. It is a beautiful celebration which begins a week before the summer solstice and culminates the night of the solstice. The air is filled with a tension born of expectation, of hope, while the young ones who have come of child-bearing age are sequestered. Alone, they remain pure and prepare for the rite to come. The next time they will see us, their family, will be when the cowl is lifted from their faces during the rebirth ceremony.

During that week, they are initiated to the arts of child-bearing by a Shaman. Everything about birth is taught to them, from the proper impregnation techniques to the birth proper and the care of the newborn. The homes of the clan families are also prepared, cleaned up and made up, to be reborn as well. The youngest child in the clan is taken in hand by the elders. She represents our closest bond to the Mother, since she has so recently come out of the womb. She will be sacrificed during the celebration, her blood mixed with the milk that is used to anoint those who will be reborn.

The night of the celebration, the young maidens are all gathered together. They shave each other's hair, leaving not a single strand. They then anoint each other of the mixture of milk and blood, and the cowls are drawn upon their faces. Only then are they ready to leave the room and go outside, where the family waits for them.

The clan is gathered in a circle around the only source of light. A brazier burns brightly, guiding the maidens towards the circle, where they will be reborn. Once inside the circle, the maidens are turned around to look outward, towards their families. The people of the clan are all dressed in white gowns, much like midwives readying themselves to welcome the newborn into the world. A Shaman then passes the ceremonial blood of the Mother around and each maiden drinks deeply of it.

Visions flood their minds while Eva comes to them, both in shape and in thoughts. It is when they discover their true calling, what life has in store for them. Some will cry at the sight of the hardship to come, other will weep tears of joy at all of the beauty that will cross their paths. Either way, they will be ready for the summers to come.



The fatimas and...



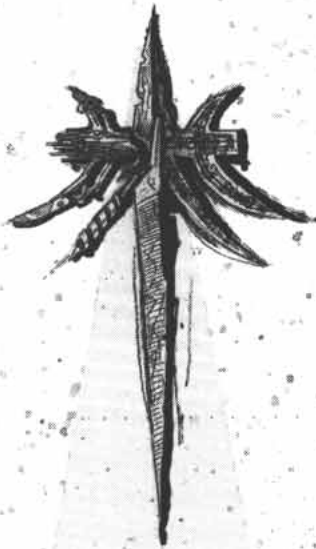
Benjamin Aria'on

The de facto leader of Griffentowne, the Evan township west of Bazaar, Benjamin has been blessed since early childhood with a natural talent for healing, and a good hand at diplomacy. As a Nurse, he rose in status and sat on the Grand Council to represent Eva, until intrigue and the Mother Herself recently forced him to retire. Today, he is partially responsible for guiding Griffentowne, but his views on the Fallen have made him unpopular in Bazaar. As more young are banished, he sees the vitality of the tribes vanishing, but none are willing to listen to him. Instead, Eva has put him under house arrest and is contemplating what to do with him. Banishing him seems the only answer, but this might turn Griffentowne against Her. Granting him freedom might only win the Fallen more converts.

Highlights: Noble, wise, contemplative

Attributes: APP+1, FIT -1, KNO +1, PSY +2

Skills: Agriculture 2/+1, Animal Handling 2/0, Craft (woodwork) 2/0, Healing 3/+1, Herbalism 3/+1, Human Perception 2/+2, Leadership 2/0, Synthesis (Anima) 3



Joan the Warrior

I am the Sword that punishes

I am the righter of wrongs

I am strength incarnate

I am a tool to be used by my betters.

I am alone.

— From The Word of Joan

The Warrior's Path

From the journals of the Joanite Erik Uhan'on:

As I write these words in my journal, I can see my sister Miranda sleeping in the corner of our hut. We are Joanites, both my sister and I, and we know fully what that means. We know that a warrior leads a life of hardships, not as a leader but as a follower, not as the master of our own destiny but as a tool for good of the tribes. We know what it means to have honor, enough honor to know that we do not know everything, that we are but pawns in the hands of Joan and Her Sisters. We act for the greater good.

All of our lives, we sharpen our reflexes and skills like the Weaponshaper sharpens the sword. All of our lives are dedicated towards the dual pursuit of law and its upholding, of protection and safekeeping. It is not our place to understand or even apply the law, but rather we are its instrument made flesh, we are but the threat of punishment. It is not our place to know the law or make it or to know why an enemy must be struck down. It is our place to make sure that law is feared, obeyed and that we as a nation are feared by our enemy, hated by them. We keep the tribes safe from the criminal and the invader. We must never falter. Those who do must be punished.

Our laws have been codified by the Terashebans, but as my cousin Shera says they can be summed up in two easy laws: Act With Honor and Stay Pure. Joanites do not lie, do not cheat, do not betray. Our word is our bond and it always will be. In battle, we give no quarters, but we treat the enemy with respect. We prefer close combat to ranged weapons when dealing with solitary enemies, although we will use anything we can when at war. The Z'bri are our vile counterparts — corrupt and evil — and to consort with them is our gravest crime. We must be strong and pure, and even minor contact with the monstrosities is not acceptable. We hunt them, we keep their Serfs in line. To talk to a Serf is to invite criticism, to aid one is to invite banishment.

In Service to Joan

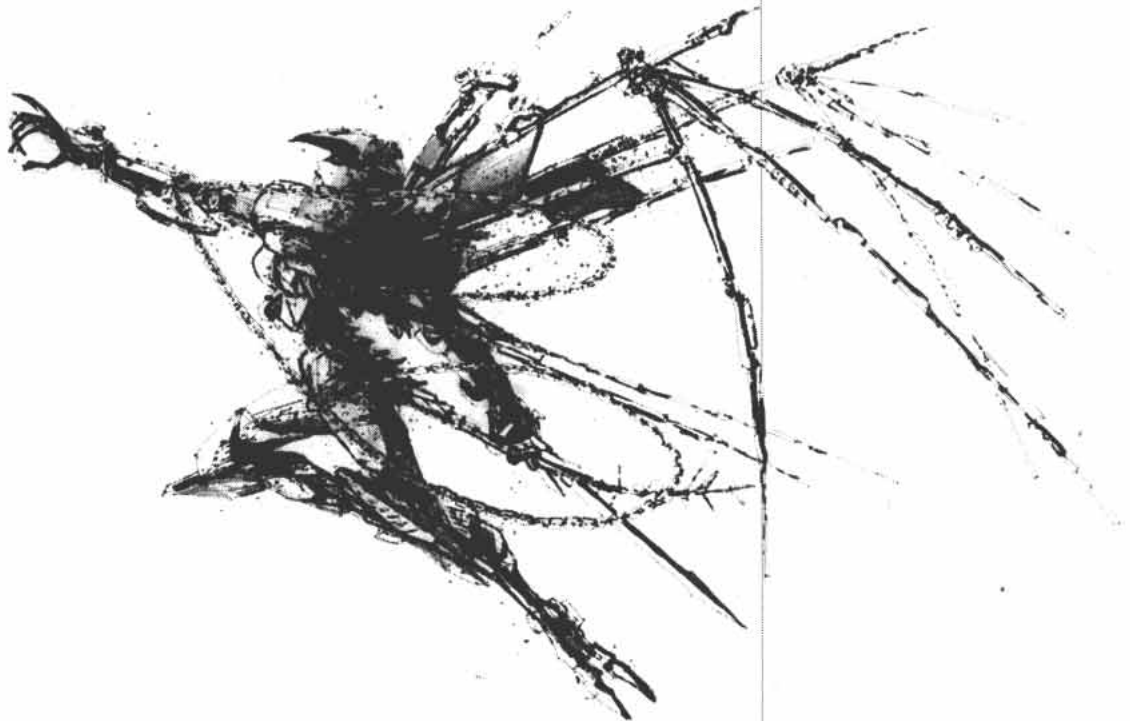
When Miranda was born, I was not yet part of the **Weaponshaper** guild, those who make the sacred weapons of the warriors. I was still one of the **Blades of Joan**, part of the warrior caste which faces down our enemies in battle. I was not at homestead for the happy occasion, but away, again, in the middle of winter, hunting the Z'bri and guarding the border between us and them.

My father was still alive at that time and so was my mother. To the honor of our whole family, she was a **Templar**, one of those who attend Joan in her temple and hunt with Her on crusade. Those crusades are rare, these days, but in Mother's youth the Warrior would come out frequently. By then, my father, once a **Blade**, was a **Teacher**, one who showed the many ways of Joan to the young ones. He proved his skills every season, when he would go out with the rest of the tribe to hunt for meat.

When I came back from my patrol, Miranda had been alive for two moons already. At first, I did not know what to make of this young one, so fragile yet seemingly containing all the energy of the world. My father had drawn back into himself, unable to cope with the death of my mother during childbirth. After a few days, he announced to me that he had asked the clan elders to become a **Hermit Blade**. I knew that meant that I would have to take care of my sister alone, since due to his new vows, he would have to completely cut himself from his family. He explained to me that only as a Hermit Blade, hunting Z'bri alone in the wilderness, would he be able to come to understand why my mother had died. In a sense, he was trying to relive her sacrifice through a new life in his own way.

I have not heard from my father in nearly 16 summers. Every once in a while, I hear some tales about a solitary figure and his exploits, striking at the enemy inside of the Ziggurat. I like to believe that he is still alive, and that the tales are about him. I should know better, but I cannot help it.

When the elders of our clan, under the advisement of my cousin Shera who, like Mother, was a Templar, accepted my father's proposal, they made me a Weaponshaper and I began my education in the ways of crafting metal for arms. Like most of us, I still serve in the Watch. Blades, Weaponshapers and Templars all have to put in a period of service manning the Watchtowers that guard Bazaar and other tribal lands, or spend time keeping the peace in Bazaar. Some of the Watch also get to serve directly under a Terasheban judge, but that hasn't been my honor so far.





Shera Uhan'on (Joanite Templar)

Although many Joanites have forgotten their tribe's true mission, those of the Templars have taken notice and are slowly conducting an internal inquisition — unknown even to Joan herself. The Templars, proud and noble guardians of Joan's many relics, are using their many contacts and subtle power to bring down those Joanites who have strayed from the path. Knowing that threats of banishment would only divide the Joanites even further, they have resorted more discreet methods of dealing with these "traitors." Shera Uhan'on is one of the leading advocates of the current inquisition. A young and passionate Joanite, she sees it as her duty to cull the traitors that are tarnishing Joan. Powerfully charismatic, she has many followers and some Terasheban allies.

Highlights: Deadly, charismatic

Attributes: AGI +1, FIT +1, INF +1

Skills: Acrobatics 1/+1, Archery 2/+1, Combat Sense 3/0, Dodge 2/+1, Hand-to-Hand 2/+1, Investigation 2/0, Melee 3/+1, Notice 2/0, Ritual 2/0, Synthesis (Battle & Sacrifice) 2.

The Warrior's Gifts

Joan is with us, always. When we sleep, we feel Her wings protecting us; when we love, we feel Her power fueling us; when we hunt, we feel Her eyes guiding us. Most of all, when we fight, we feel Her sword beside us. Joan has mastery over devotion and fury, and this double prowess empowers us all. When I learned to forge fine weapons, it was Joan who unlocked the ability. Swords I make for my people are stronger than any I could ever make for strangers.

The Templars, closest to Joan, are gifted with more potent abilities. By calling on the Fatima's might, they can make themselves invincible in battle. I have seen my cousin fell a stone-skinned Z'bri horror with a single blow. The monstrosity fell in two separate pieces. This gift of Battle can also be called upon by some Blades and Hermits; I know my father once did. Joan also teaches Her servants about Sacrifice, and Templars can take the wounds of others onto themselves. I have heard some whisper that this is how Mother died, saving Miranda's life from some deformity at birth.

The Templars also lead us in ceremonies, sharing their abilities with us in part. I still bear a scar from the battle that followed Shera leading our hunting party in a Sacrificial rite. When the Z'bri we were stalking bit into Garret, his wounds were distributed among us all. Instead of him dying, we all were cut. The monster was killed soon thereafter.

Those Beyond the Tribe

We stand with the whole of the Seven Tribes. That is our duty and our honor.

The Terashebans are the true leaders of our tribes. They are stern, but they guide us well. With them we shall find the courage to take on our greatest foe, the Z'bri. We leave the Yagans, Evans and Magdalites alone and they return the favor. If they really need us, they'll let us know. They serve their function and we serve ours. Dahlians and Agnites are more troubling. They mock us at times and seem to flaunt the laws of the Terashebans. But they are also our charges and we will defend them to the death.

Those outside the Seven Tribes are not under our protection. The Fallen and the Keepers are troubling because they do not obey the Fatimas. Some of them are organized and so could be dangerous. But they do not attack us, so we let them be for now.

The Z'bri and their Serfs, on the other hand, deserve our fury. We have pushed them back and when we have the strength, we will hunt and kill them and be free at last. For now, we guard our lands and watch the night for their horrors.

The Challenge of Joan

Joan betrayed me yesterday, I will never forgive that.

It is spring and the time for the Challenge, when young Blades prove their worth before Joan and others can compete for station and pride. This was Miranda's day, when she would finally prove herself in the eyes of Fatima and tribe. Our whole family was there to watch her.

I was so proud when my younger sister stepped out onto the Killing Floor, wielding the sword I had made for her. The whole Tribe of Joan must have been present, there were so many people. I noticed a few who were obviously not Joanites in the crowd, who must have been interested in the fighting more than what it meant. Some even wagered on the outcomes.

Miranda's sword was blessed — I had been allowed to incorporate a part of Joan Herself into the blade. My eyes at that point were drawn towards Her, in all of Her splendor, as She stepped closed to my sister and her opponent, to bless them before the combat started. I could see a slight smile curving Miranda's lips as she looked up at me, then back at Joan. The Fatima, Her black steel frame heavy and powerful, didn't speak a word — Joan rarely does — but lifted Her mighty blade to let the Challenge begin.

Only in the gravest of cases is the Challenge to the death, so I wasn't afraid for Miranda. Even though I knew the weapons were sharp and there was a risk, I never expected what happened next. Miranda's opponent struck first and she raised her weapon in a perfect parry. But instead of catching her opponent's weapon, her sword shattered like dry wood. I was stunned. This was an artifact of Joan — unbreakable by any means, unless... That was it! Joan had withdrawn Her love from Miranda. I watched in horror as my sister, a trained fighter, was stripped of her skills and stood defenseless before her attacker. He kicked her to the ground and raised his sword. He looked at Joan then — we all did — and with a nod of Her mighty head She condemned Miranda. A swift blow ended her life. A second later, I was screaming.

Cousin Shera has spent the night trying to justify what happened. She says the Templars, with help from those bloodsucking Terasheban judges, determined that Miranda was born ill and deformed, that Mother used the blessings of Joan to take those wounds onto herself. She sacrificed herself so Miranda might live and be strong. But Shera says that was wrong, that it meant she loved Miranda more than Joan, that she had cost the tribe a wise and strong Templar in exchange for a mere child. Miranda was not meant to live and so was not allowed to. After a while, I stopped arguing and feigned agreement.

By dawn, I will be gone into the night. But someday I'll be back and they will pay — Joan, the judges and especially my dear cousin.





Magdalen the Lover

I have no skin but I can still feel your eyes upon my body.

They tickle me like the fingers you wish you could trail upon me.

I am the Lover, the inward explorer.

Through my tribe, I feel, I know, I am.

— From the Word of Magdalen

The Way of the Lover

From the lessons of Delom, Magdalite Concubine, to her apprentice:

Look at the children run in the fields around Xstasis, our tribal home. They don't really question what's around them, do they? They just absorb the wonders that the Goddess has given us. They marvel at the most insignificant details yet they do not see the truest of all wonders: themselves, their very own bodies.

Like the ingrate children that we are, we take our bodies for granted. More than the outside world, they are the greatest gift given to us by the One True Goddess. As Magdalites, we learn to treasure our bodies and explore them to their fullest, along with the bodies of others. Everything we do celebrates the gift that was bestowed upon us by the One True Goddess. That is what Magdalen has taught us.

Others may see us as frivolous and lazy, but in truth, with every action that we take, with every potion that we ingest, with every caress that we give, we thank Her by bringing Her the ecstasies She cannot experience directly. We know that Magdalen is with us all of the time, so that when we lay with someone from another tribe, or even amongst ourselves and we take pleasure in the flesh, She enjoys it as much as we do. When we drink or smoke potions that make us laugh, make us sleepy, make us happy, She is laughing, sleeping, and happy along with us. We are Her nervous system, we are Her emotions made flesh.

It goes beyond that. It also includes the pleasure that we get when we see another smile, because we have pleased their flesh well. She feels every emotions that we do. She is always with us, as long as we live. That's why we are so careful not to offend Her. She is passionate and if we scorn Her, Her vengeance is painful indeed. She calls to us in the night and we obey.

No, Her appetite is not without limits. I shouldn't have to tell you how She feels about touching those who are too young or those who don't want to be touched. You know? Sometimes, some people give you the creeps and the last thing you want is to be with them. You probably don't know, since no one has ever touched you. At least I hope that's true.

Lovers and Diplomats

From the recollections of Fran Walker, Fallen traveler:

All the tribes have different factions in their midst. The Magdalites formalize these into guilds that act like clans in other tribes. Magdalites are born into their guilds and crossovers are almost unheard of except through marriage. **Concubines** give the tribe its reputation for sexual extremes and are trained in the finer arts of bodily pleasure. They are always the prettiest things you've ever seen, the kind that make you want them just by being there. And they all know what to do with their bodies. Other tribals pay for the privilege in service and in trade items.

The **Diplomat Guild** is more powerful. Its members are perfect liars and great at earning someone's trust. They shepherd relations between the Seven Tribes, always making sure that Magdalen's children are privileged. Some of the Diplomats are in constant contact with the Serfs, while others deal with the Squats and the like. There are even some Diplomats that forsake all for the love of Magdalen and, like the Jo'hans in their Skyrealms, live among the Z'bri. Magdalen hates the Beasts like few others, but She has always kept Her eyes on them. The Diplomats who are dispatched to the Hl'Kar know that they will never come back to Xstasis, at least not physically. It is a noble sacrifice to do this, much like the Joanites' Hermit Blades.

Smaller guilds include the **Ecstatics** and **Guild of Masks**. Ecstatics make potions and elixirs that enhance pleasure and are useful in entering trances. Maskers are artists and sensualists who create pieces of art and performance work almost like Dahlians. These are meant to please Magdalen.

The smallest and most powerful guild is the Magdalite priesthood, the **Sirens**. They attend Magdalen directly and carry out Her will. They are chosen as they come of age, called to the Lover from their birth-guild.

All the guilds comprise several families and are led by a Master. The Master's Council is the closest thing to a Magdalite ruling council. The Sirens stand apart from this structure, a power in their own right. I never saw the Masters themselves, but I've heard that there were seven of them, leading me to believe that there are three more secret guilds.



The Lover's Kiss

From the lessons of Delorn:

Magdalen endows us with many gifts. We are all creatures of beauty and as a Concubine, you will among the most beautiful. You will be understand the ways of sensual pleasure like few others, for this is our Lover's greatest endowment. You will also understand the passions that lead to hatred, to conflict and disagreement. Jealousy and pride can be read, fostered or suppressed by those in the Lover's favor. Our Synthesis is tinged with sex and conflict, as is our tribe.

The Sirens and the best of the other Guilds can use the aspects of Passion and Betrayal. With Passion they can stoke the embers of lust and make their touch into fire. With Betrayal, they can sense the weaknesses of an enemy or companion, and use these to serve Magdalen. The Sirens gained their name by luring monstrous Z'bri to their destruction during Liberation. This is how they did it.

Diplomacy and Desire

From the lessons of Delorn:

Our relations with the other tribes can be tricky. Unlike them, we do not till the soil or raise beasts. Rather, we obtain food and other services in exchange for our pleasures. Do you understand now why it is so important that no one be able to refuse a Concubine?

Some don't like this arrangement. Even the Evans, supposedly our close allies, think it allows them to mother us. They try to keep us on the sidelines because they know better. They're a lot more like Shebans that they'd like to admit. Both of them claim to know what is good for us, but at least the Shebans are a little more open as to what they are doing. The Yagans sometime criticize us as well, but I for one take them more seriously. They know a great deal about what is hidden — just like us.

You know, everyone sells the Joanites short. They all see them as stiff, unthinking beasts of war, puppets to the Shebans. Well, I've known my share of Joanites in my time, and there is much more behind their cold gaze than meets the eye; there is a tenderness and an understanding of the sacrifices that have to be made for the greater good.

I'll be honest, Agnites worry me. They look cute and all, but Agnes does strange things to them. They ignore their own sexuality, exploring the world but not themselves. When they become mature, they become almost untouchable. I think the tribes were better off with Mary the Forgiver; something is wrong with Agnes.

Dahlans are the jesters in the Goddess' court. Always busy pointing out where other people are wrong, they should take some time and see what they are doing themselves.

Outside the Seven Tribes, most are lost. The Squats are smelly and violent. They will take what they want from you, whether you want to give it to them or not. The Keepers aren't much better, hiding their barbarism under relics from the World Before. At least the Fallen are simply misguided, and like children who have not learned their lessons well, they need some discipline. This is maybe the only fact upon which Magdalen agrees with both Joan and Tera Sheba. She may not preach as harsh a treatment as Her two Sisters, but She agrees that they must be dealt with, and quickly.

The Serfs and their masters, the Z'bri, are aberrations. The Z'bri hate the bodies that they never had before they came. They take any and all chances to abuse them, imposing pain and calling it pleasure. Magdalen hates the Z'bri so much that any diplomat that is sent on a mission to the Ziggurat is considered to be a martyr, never again able to commune with our Lover again. It is a sacrifice that they make willingly, but not an easy one.

The Festival of Magdalen

From the lessons of Delorn:

The Festival is a culmination of our love for Magdalen. It is a celebration of all that we are and more. It is a celebration of what it is to be human, to feel. Walking about Xstasis during the festival, one can discover many new pleasures as well as indulge in old ones. Anything and everything that has to do with sensuality is yours to take, as long as you can find someone to provide it. And there is always someone who wants to be found.

Typically, the Festival begins at sundown, on the eve of the Summer Solstice. Xstasis at this point has been closed to outsiders for a week and no Magdalite has indulged in anything. There is a stiff price to pay if you get caught! Once the home re-opens its door, you can be sure that all inside are more than eager to re-discover the pleasures of the flesh and of the mind!

This lusty behavior goes on for many days. Celebrations and parties run into each other and don't really end. The last day of the Festival is simply incredible. All of the celebrants get together in the middle of Xstasis. You can see fatigue in the faces of those around you, but you can also see joy, a happiness to be alive. There are many people who are not Magdalites, but they still come, they still come and see what they are missing by not being one of us.

We gather the strength for one last, glorious outpour of sex, because we know that if we really enjoy ourselves, She will come, that She will not be able to resist our calling. Amidst our collective climax, when the rhythm of the bodies in heat reaches its crescendo, when we are but one sweating body, She appears to us in all of Her glory. Of gauze and loose cloth She is covered, the material barely covering Her slender, shining body. Her eyes look approvingly from Her radiant visage, exposed for all to see. Her hands grasp slowly at the flesh of those near Her, letting Her energy flow through Her and in the chain of human flesh at Her feet. And even though we thought that we had reached our last climax together, that we had reached a height that we believed was the highest, She pushes our bodies even higher. So high, in fact, that those of us that are too old sometimes die, but die happy.



The fatimas and...



Dhara Ibenkin (Chamberlain of Magdalen)

The chore of organizing the many events at Xstasis falls on the capable shoulders of the Siren Dhara Ibenkin, who also sits on the Grand Council. Still in her prime, Dhara is one of the most stunning women in Xstasis, a fact contrasted by her calculating nature and venomous anger. A perfectionist at heart, she demands a great deal from those around her, and most respect her out of fear. She has the ear of Magdalen herself and her body is decorated in tribute to her Fatima. Like all Magdalites, Dhara has a darker side that few know about. Propelled by deeply buried feelings of insecurity and unworthiness, she often forces her lovers to subject her to extreme violence and sadomasochism, something she rewards with their deaths or banishment.

Highlights: Beautiful, perfectionist, disturbed, erotic

Attributes: APP +3, BLD -1, CRE +1, INF +2

Skills: Dance 2/0, Dreaming 2/0, Etiquette 3/0, Grooming 3/+3, Interrogation 2/+1, Ritual 2/0, Seduction 3/+3, Synthesis (Passion and Treason) 3.



Tera Sheba the Wise

I am the word of your Goddess made flesh.

I am Law born of tradition, of what has come before.

Through Me, you have rebuilt.

With Me, fairness you have found.

There is no compromise, only justice.

— From the Word of Tera Sheba the Wise

The Way of the Wise

From the proceedings of Judge Pietr Thaim'on:

We cannot be wrong.

We, as Terasheban, cannot afford to ever be wrong when we pass down judgment. So to assume, even for a moment, that one of ours passed judgment in haste is not only disrespectful but blasphemous. It is to insult Tera Sheba the Wise; to spit on Her name and Her love. After all, are we not Her instruments in wisdom? Are not the words that come forth from our mouths Her own? Are the laws that we dispense not Her laws? And since She is an extension of our One True Goddess, isn't the word we carry the truth, by its very definition?

By accusing a Terasheban of wrongdoing or — even worse — a High Judge as you have done, you are our Goddess of wrongdoing. Who are you to judge our Goddess? How can you lay claim to such a judgment, you who do not have the training, who do not have the education, who do not have the connection to divine law. We alone are instruments of this very divine law. Our judgment cannot, will not be questioned.

We can get you imprisoned or exiled from your tribe for this. What? No one has power over other tribes? HA! Surely you jest. We have jurisdiction over all, and we can do what we see fit. Anyone who questions our laws is liable to be judged, and judged harshly. You don't like the sound of that? You should have thought of that before.

You think we have too much power, don't you? Well, we are held to even higher standards than yours. Minor infractions might be forgiven for one such as you, but for a Judge like me, it would mean grave punishment. My power is not my own. To quote the laws, "Anyone found guilty of abuse of power, be it due to her position on any given council, due to her profession or due to her ability in the use of Synthesis granted by the One True Goddess through a Fatima, shall be put to exile for her crime." My power is Tera Sheba's and I cannot use it for my own gain. Ever.

So take your petition back to your people and let us be judges. Go back to taking care of the soil so that we can all eat and let us do our duty as well. Do not point your finger at us without being sure in the first place that your own soul is clean.

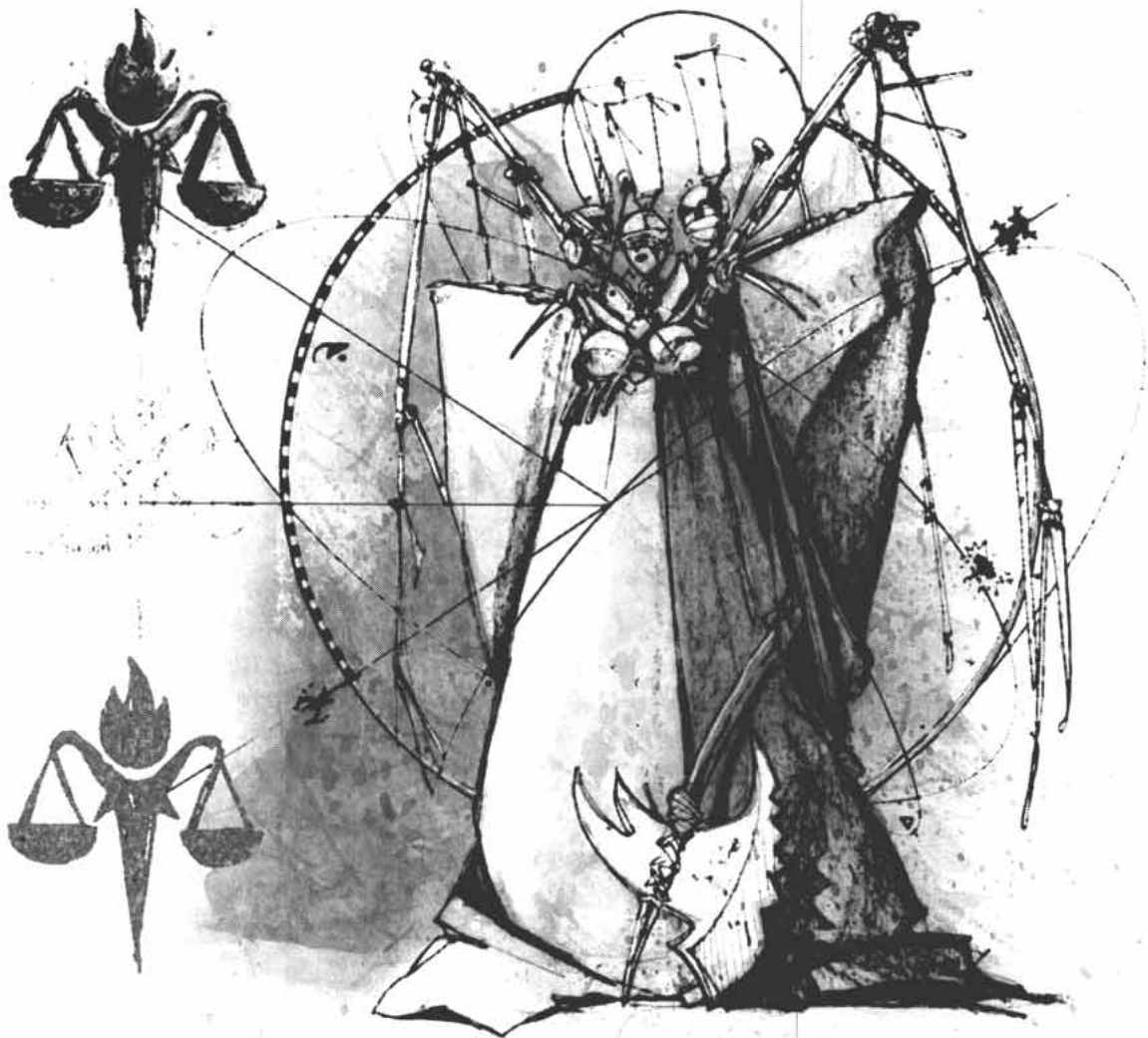
I will be doing so.

Those Who Judge

You are still here. Are you holding me in contempt? You have in front of you a **Judge** of Tera Sheba, a man who has more power than you ever will. Did you know that I have ten — yes ten! — **Advocates** under me? They look up to me as their teacher and rely on my judgment to learn the laws of our nation. If I need any information, on any topic, they will do anything they believe is necessary to get me said information. And my duties do not end with judging people. I also give council to the Court of Tera Sheba, where the **High Judges** sit and see that the laws are just and fair. These wise ones consult daily with the Fatima Herself and wield Her greatest gifts. Of course, as one of the leading judges of my Clan, I also sit on its Minor Court, where appeals can be made to pass judgment and decisions are taken regarding our Clan.

Due to my position, I have frequent contacts with the **Lorekeepers** Guild. They might stand separate from us, especially since they deal to a greater degree with the Yagans, but we still have a very strong ties with them. After all, we are of the same tribe and they do keep records of all judgments and traditions of our nation. As you might know, they are not allowed, however, to pass judgment. That right is reserved to us, the Judges. Like us, they have some councils, but mostly they are led by a head Lorekeeper who seems to be as old as some of the Yagans. She controls all of their efforts at recordkeeping.

I should also tell you that my wife mother's is Verra Thaim'on, the High Judge you have so callously slandered. Justice works in mysterious ways.





Verra Thaim'on (High Judge of Tera Sheba)

One of the youngest High Judges, Verra is said to have been groomed from youth by Tera Sheba Herself.

Even now, Verra and the Fatima spend much time cloistered away in Tera Sheba's temple — much to the envy of other High Judges. Verra sees

her role as the enforcer of Tera Sheba's will, a role that has caused her much personal pain. Fifteen summers ago, she was forced to banish her youngest daughter Stella at the tender age of 11. The incident severely marked Verra, and for many years she persecuted the Fallen with

great zeal. Now, older, Verra has begun regretting her actions, and has used her status to secretly keep and eye on her daughter. Torn between

her deeply buried love for her daughter and her loyalty to Tera Sheba, Verra has been oblivious to the many plots forming against her.

Highlights: Conflicted, righteous

Attributes: BLD -1, CRE +1, INF +1,

PER +1

*Skills: Interrogation 2/+1,
Investigation 2/+1, Law 3/0,
Leadership 2/+1, Ritual 3/0,
Synthesis (Tradition) 3*

The Gifts of Tera Sheba

I see you're awake now. Good. We can begin. Why are you in this cell, you ask? That's simply because I could smell the lies on you. Tera Sheba opens all Her tribe's eyes, you know. We can see people hiding secrets a mile away, especially guilty secrets like yours. She also teaches us how to best deal with the truth. Truth and wisdom are our Eminences. So now we will begin. You might as well answer my questions now.

Fine. My Advocates an I will call down Truthsaying on you, then. Do you know what that is? It's a gift for the favorites of Tera Sheba and it will rip the truth — any truth — from your lips. We will perform a ritual and then you will speak. Please avoid screaming. Remember that you have earned this treatment.

You know, you Evans are much weaker than you let on. And I always thought that working the land would make one much more resistant to pain. Oh well. Now, tell me where you got this text. It's a copy of the so-called prophecy of Joshua — it's blasphemy. You don't want to say? If you don't speak, I'll pass this on to High Judge Verra herself. Tera Sheba has blessed her with the ability of Tradition. She'll peel back the days and nights, and see who gave this document to you. Cooperating here could be the first step toward redemption, you know.

Judgment on Others

You Evans are weaklings and bend too easily to your emotions. Like the Magdalites, you lack the clarity of vision to take care of our Seven Tribes as you should. You should look to the Joanites; they are the only ones who truly understand their place. Proud and honor bound, they do their duty and never question it. Or at least consider the Yagans, who understand the importance of tradition and law, and bear the wisdom of age.

At least you know more than Dahlians or Agnites. The Tricksters see themselves as clever traders, but do not realize that the goods that they buy are tainted by the Z'bri and others who do not have a soul. They are in many ways traitors to the nation. The Agnites can be forgiven some indiscretions because they are children, but they need to grow up quickly before we become too tired with them. We will need them in the coming days.

But despite all your failings, you live in the grace of the Fatimas and so I would die for you. Don't take that for granted.

The Fallen, in their rebellion, mock us and our role in the grand scheme of things. They are heretics and deserve to be treated that way. The Keepers are no better, worshipping the foul World Before and its arcane machines. Instead of trying to redeem themselves in the eyes of the Goddess, they worship the very machines that caused the people of the World Before to remove themselves from Her eyes.

The lowest of the low, however, are the Z'bri's Serfs, who deserve destruction even more than their Z'bri masters. They worship the darkest, foulest beings that have ever walked the Earth. Do they not realize that their masters were the ones to punish us for the sins of the World Before, and that they punish us even today?

That these menaces and heresies still plague us is due to blasphemers like you. Do you even understand the magnitude of your crimes?

The Final Judgment

I've just gotten word from High Judge Verra that you are to be released. Yes, that's right, you're free to go home. But we will be watching. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow or next week, but one day, you might wake up and see on your front door the Hand. Wake up and see that red handprint, the paint still wet.

You know what I'm talking about. You'll probably panic, hoping that the Watch wasn't on its way to pick you and your family up, knowing full well that I or maybe some other Terasheban was around that night to leave that sign on your door. Eventually, the Joanites would find you.

Picture yourself, strapped to the chair, with a Judge in front of you. Beside you, there is an Advocate who tells you that you have nothing to fear, that the Judge will hand down a judgment that is fair. Another Advocate will be working on the other side, trying to prove you guilty. And maybe, if you are extremely lucky, there She will stand, beside the Judge, to hear your case firsthand. That's right, Tera Sheba might be there, if only to make sure that your case is handled correctly. You know, She stands taller than three men, Her death-masks three calm and collected visages, each one an aspect of judgment. She wields a long lantern that illuminates truth and a mighty ax to punish the guilty. Before the light She carries, your lies will be revealed; by the blade She carries, your crimes will be punished.

After hours of deliberation, the Bowl will be brought to the table where you sit. No, of course you won't be allowed to talk during the deliberations. We will already know everything we need to know about you. You'll notice that there is a small amount of a clear liquid in the small rock Bowl. A Joanite guard will grab your hand, place it over the Bowl and cut your finger with a small knife. Of course, if you resist at this point, we know that you are guilty. It is probably best to just go along with it. The guard will then wait and look into the Bowl. If the water stays red, then you are guilty and the Judge will give you your sentence. If the water stays clear, you are evidently innocent, and you can go home again.

Why would the water stay clear? Tera Sheba and the Goddess protect the innocent and the just. They will allow this minor miracle to give us a sign of your worth. You trust in the One Goddess now, don't you? You know that She would intervene in your favor, don't you?

But the water won't stay clear for you, because you haven't learned. You will face banishment, imprisonment, indenture or amputation, depending on your crime. If you are judged a dangerous influence, we might take your family away as well, or even burn you at the stake if we discover that you've been associating with Z'bri and the like.

So return home and obey the laws. I'll be watching. We all will.



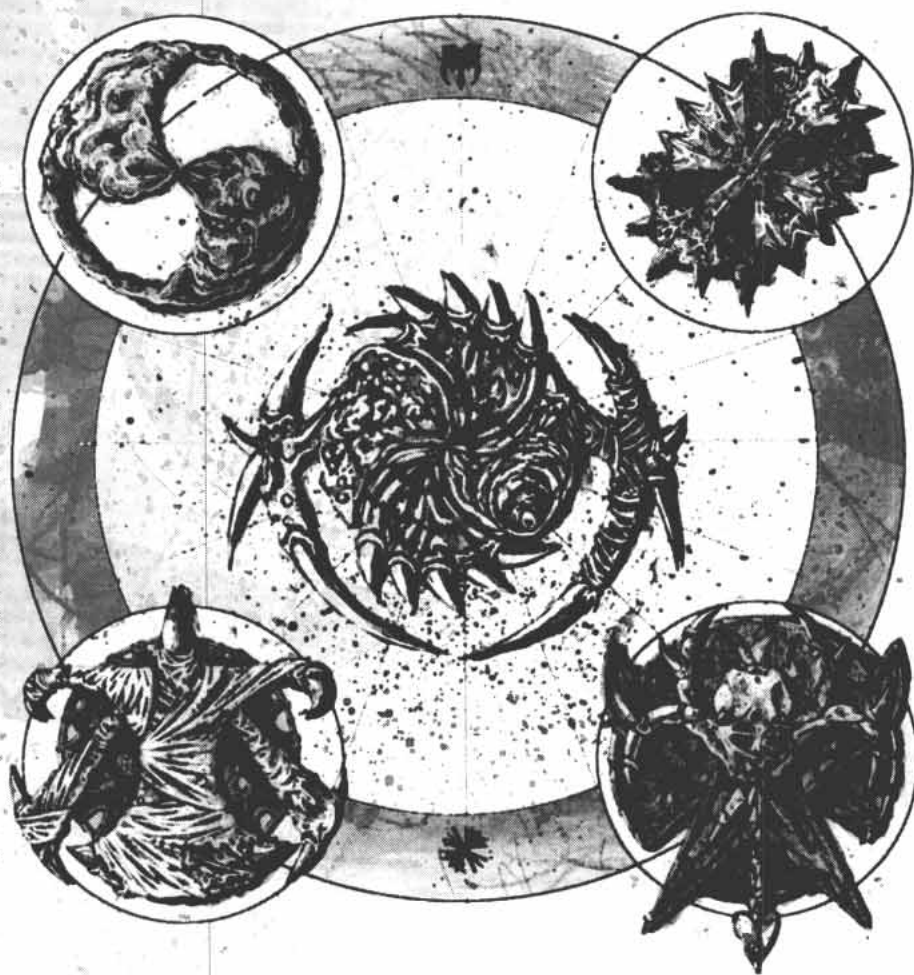
The Z'bri

The Beasts and Takers, the Z'bri live in darkness. They are the bane of life; in their presence trees wither and rot, flesh crawls with maggots and memories become ash. They walk upon this land as envoys of death, not the sweet sleep promised by Baba Yaga, but the pain of non-existence, of being consumed into nothingness by a murderous prurience. To die at the heels of the Beasts is to never discover the paradise of the One Goddess, but to be lost to the darkness of evil itself.

The Z'bri came from the other side; creatures from beyond death who descended to our world to dominate us, to torture us. They came to punish the sins of our ancestors and to make ruins of their cities. They are everything we are not, but they were not always so. In their eyes, if you can bear gazing at their ghastly shapes, you can see the grandeur that was once theirs. So they came, rained death upon the land, and shackled the survivors. Cults and churches gave way to death camps, and for a century they ruled over everything, meting out death and torture until the Fatimas arrived.

Now the Z'bri are hiding, biding their time. They sulk in the shadows, terrorizing Vimary, where it is not uncommon to find eviscerated, half-consumed corpses on the roads...

— Deus, Fallen poet



The Enemy Within

For all their hideousness, they do make great adversaries. Besting one in battle is a task only the bravest can accomplish. Even so, if one survives a Hunting Party, there is no guarantee that she will be the same afterwards — or even sane for that matter. The beasts have powers, abilities that even the Fatimas cannot heal. Whatever the Z'bri are, they are the antithesis of life and the bane of the Fatimas, and for that reason we battle them. Without us, without the warriors of Joan, the Tribes would be nothing. It is our towers that keep the Z'bri at bay, our sacrifices that keep them in the shadows.

So, I pray to you, Mother of the Sword, mighty Joan, give me the strength to face them and the will to overcome my nightmares and terror of them. Give me the faith to look into their eyes and remember the evil they are. Joan, fill my soul with the silent anger of those who died in the camps, alone and without your love. Drive fear away from my heart and fill it with righteous rage; for they are the beasts, the takers, murderers and rapists. They are Z'bri, abominations and horrors all.

— Zola Heka'on, Blade of Joan

They say that to look at a Z'bri is to witness evil, to gaze at the face of death, but this is not so. Yes, the Z'bri are our enemies, but we Fallen do not blindly hate them as the tribes or the Fatimas do. The tribes' hatred of the Beasts have tainted and warped them. I do not know what is worse; the twisted hulks of the Z'bri or the hidden fanaticism within the Fatimas, fanned by their loathing of the Takers. They say it is always the enemy within that proves the deadliest.

We know, those who claim the mantle of the Eighth Tribe, that the Z'bri's days are numbered. Joshua the Ravager began the crusade to destroy them and we will finish it; for to defeat the Seven Deaths the Z'bri must first fall. Without the fear the beasts stir in the hearts of the tribes, the Fatima's power will wane and then will we know true freedom.

— Deus, Fallen poet

Walking Death

A dance of death they dance,

A permeating darkness,

Consuming the light.

Remember them, for they killed you
once.

The Fatimas gave you rebirth,

But the Z'bri can take it away.

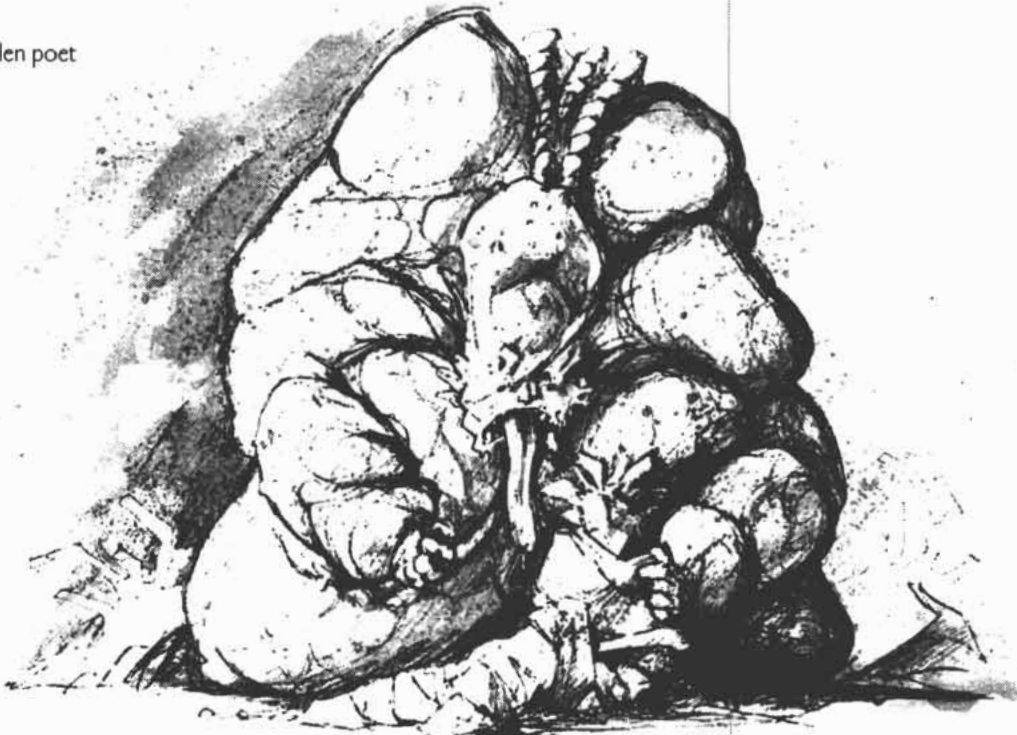
They are the darkness in the night,

The shadow in the day,

The fear of the past

And the horror of the present.

— Warning to the Wayward Child





Ra'Ham the Z'bri Slayer

From the Legend of Ra'Ham, a collection of accounts of the great hunter of Z'bri:

The time of this tale, in its origins — in our time — occurred long ago, in a summer known for its frequent storms and endless clouds; a season when winter's grip would not relinquish the land. Our tale of Ra'Ham begins then.

The victory over the Beasts was still fresh, but the passage of the seasons lessened the painful memories as the Z'bri skulked only in the shadows and in our nightmares. That summer, cold and gray, saw the coming of age of Ra'Ham, a Sheban, learned in the ways of honor and judgment; but his path was not to lead him to Tera Sheba, but away from Her. It is only when the stars fall that they shine the brightest.

That summer, Ra'Ham knew love as well; a young Dahlian, sweet in her voice and gentle in her ways, became his mate. She taught Ra'Ham the folly of assumption, the dangers of pride and the joys of fatherhood. But happiness, as a stranger once told him, was not to be his. His destiny lay not in the Old Ways but in the pain of the future. Tera Sheba, however, did not approve of their union, seeing Dahlia as an agitator and Her children as rebels. Ra'Ham ignored Tera Sheba's warning, insisting that his love was pure and strong. Knowing so, he agreed to have the High Judges judge his wife and their union.

It is whispered that Ra'Ham's destiny was not his for the choosing. Some murmur that the Fates had chosen his path for him, knowing the danger his future daughter would pose if she was born into the Tribes. They say she was to be first of the Eighth Tribe. So, as the priests called forth judgment, after hearing Ra'Ham's case, the only verdict that came was guilty — there union was not to be. That night, the priests bound Ra'Ham and took his wife away from him. She was to die, two weeks later, giving birth to Ariel.

On the day of his daughter's birth, Ra'Ham denounced the *Fatimas* and was banished that very night, sent with his daughter to the Clearing of the Chosen and bound to be sacrificed along with Ariel. As darkness came, anger and the cries of his daughter gave him the strength to break free, and then the Beasts came.

The clearing was dark; at first he could only see their outlines, their leering shapes, but he could feel their presence more than anything else. Their terror touched him, sweat and blood beaded on his skin, it was as if his fears had donned masks of flesh and bone, and now taunted him from the edges of his vision. He felt his bones crack, and his flesh crawled with the sensation of countless ants, each biting into him, tainting the ground red. He collapsed, wounded and broken, and prayed his daughter's end would be swift.

There are those who claim that as Ra'Ham lay on the ground, his body twisted by the Z'bri, Tera Sheba came. She appeared from the darkness, snatched the little girl and handed her to one of the Beasts, a tall and ephemeral one, dressed in flowing garments of flesh. With this, Tera Sheba, the Mother of Tradition and Laws, turned to Ra'Ham and said: "It is not for you to understand their ways, nor to question My actions. Life, even hers, is precious to me, but there are others and because of her sacrifice they will wake tomorrow. The beasts, foul beings, are our dark twins. From their darkness our light can shine; without them we would be nothing and all you dead. Mourn not for your daughter, but for the darkness in your heart that allows the Z'bri to be strong and hideous."

Ra'Ham awoke near dawn, the cries of his daughter nothing more than a memory, and hatred welled within his soul. That day, Ra'Ham returned to his home, now empty, and took a few of his belongings. Most of his fellow tribespeople averted their eyes from his, and with that Ra'Ham ventured out into the wastes, swearing to bring the Z'bri to their deaths, and the Seven Sisters in their wake.

Evidence Without a Finding

From the Legend of Ra'Ham:

And for seasons no one mentioned Ra'Ham, his name and fate almost forgotten by all, even the Fatimas, until rumors began to surface about him. Fantastic feats that none believed. Rumors of a lone warrior roaming the wastes, hunting the Z'bri and killing them with his bare hands. Some whispered the beasts would retaliate, but nothing happened. Occasionally, some wayward voyager would see him, around his neck dangled many small gems, trophies of his kills. Tales of his valor, like rumors of his fate, were countless. Everyone had a tale of the famed Z'bri slayer.

I remember the day, before autumn, the leaves had turned red and everywhere the sounds of harvest echoed. I had stopped by a drinking hole when a man walked in, Densom if I remember correctly. He sat next to me, his face ragged, as most who come near death look, and then he whispered:

"I've seen the abyss of death, and a man who defies its pull..."

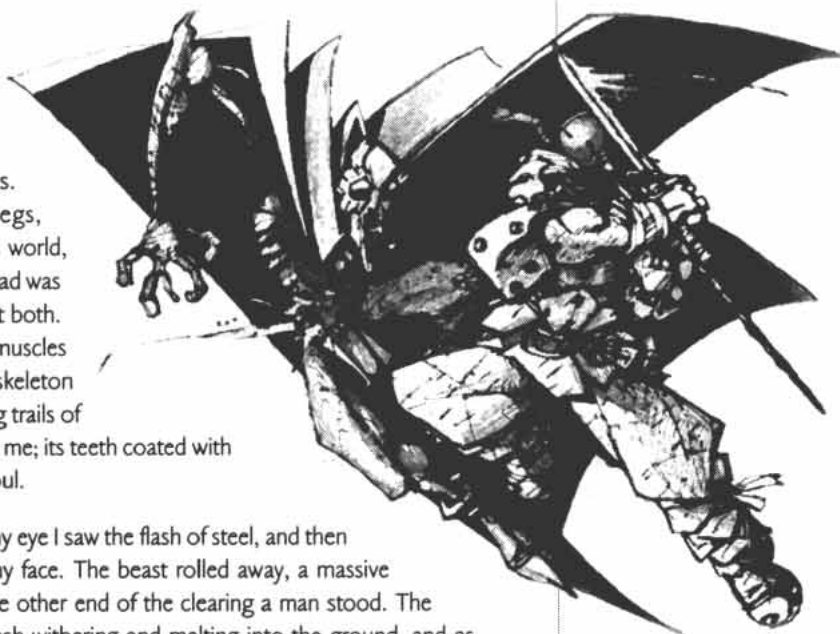
And that's how I came to know about the man they called Ra'Ham.

Ra'Ham had forsaken the tribes and the Fatimas, and condemned the Z'bri. For summers on end, he traveled off the island, journeying to where the days were born. He searched for the beast that had taken his daughter, but never found her. I guess his quest would only end with his death. This man, as Densom claimed, found other Z'bri and without hesitation slaughtered them. His body bore the scars of countless conflicts; his face marked by the weather and horrors he had endured.

"Ra'Ham," Densom muttered, "is a man not easily forgotten. I had been traveling for days, searching the ruins for whatever goods the Squats or Keepers had ignored. The sun was setting, my lantern's feeble light waning as darkness grew. That's when I heard the beast. At first it was a distant howl that sounded like someone crushing glass with bone and flesh. Quickly I turned and made my way to the road, stumbling across heaps of rubble, smashing my lantern on a stone. Alone and in darkness, I prayed, but Eva was silent.

"I heard the beast approach, its breath foul and tainted by the smell of rotting flesh. From the rubble it pounced into the clearing, landing next to me. I swear, it was hideous. Four powerfully deformed legs, coated with flesh not from this world, held its massive body, and its head was neither human or canine — but both. It was one of the Chained. Its muscles stretched over its monstrous skeleton that protruded in places, leaving trails of blood behind it. It stood before me; its teeth coated with saliva and drove fear into my soul.

"Just then, from the corner of my eye I saw the flash of steel, and then felt a spray of hot blood on my face. The beast rolled away, a massive wound near its neck, and at the other end of the clearing a man stood. The beast was already fading, its flesh withering and melting into the ground, and as quickly as he had arrived my savior vanished, leaving only his rune carved into a nearby stone. It read Ra'Ham."





Anatomy of a Beast

From the journals of Keeper Ulysses Ventoux:

Whether the Z'bri are chaos incarnate or not, they too seek a means of ordering themselves. If it were not for this, if the Z'bri were just mindless beasts, I am confident that there would be no life left on Earth. All of it would be destroyed or consumed by the uncontrollable instinct of a virus. No, the Z'bri, even if the tribes in their fear fail to recognize this, do follow a pattern, even if it is an alien and undesirable one.

From what I can gather, the Z'bri are a highly sophisticated race, probably due to their connection with the Other Realm. Their language is ephemeral and articulate (whereas ours is concrete and stable), driven by emotions and not symbols. Their physiology is likewise complex, but my findings are scarce since I have only been able to observe them from afar. Their bodies seem to be amalgamations of various organic materials, including bones, cartilage, and various bodily fluids, confirming their use of Sundering, as the tribes call it. Where Synthesis is the power of dreams, Sundering appears to have more material and ghastly implications. I do detect some correlation between their Earthly manifestation and the power of emotion. It is as if the horror, despair or fear they cause in onlookers somehow anchors them. So aside from serving an aesthetic function, their physical manifestations serve a practical function as well.

Sociologically speaking, the Z'bri seem to have adopted a feudal system; a logical choice given their hierarchical divisions and aggressive natures. At the bottom are what we call the Serfs; humans (though the term is used in the loosest of meanings, given the corrupting influence of the Z'bri) who live lives of fear-inspired devotion and slavery. Serfs inhabit small hamlets, numbering no more than 20 or so family groups. Each hamlet is ruled by a Z'bri Lord, who in return for the Serfs' devotion protects them according to some strange arrangement. Above these Lords, the Z'bri distinctions are nebulous, but there is a definite well-hidden hierarchy at work. It is an entity called the Baron, though I believe the term is merely a humanized version of its true meaning, that rules over the Z'bri. Hidden away from sight, the Baron appears to rule over a court of rival Z'bri lords; although even this is pure conjecture.

If the Z'bri are indeed chaos draped in flesh, then I fear they are a most dangerous kind of chaos.



Hearsay

From the Legend of Ra'Ham:

And so the legend grew, and Ra'Ham's name was echoed even by the mighty winds. He floated at the edges of tribal society, and many chose to emulate him and took to the wastes in search of glory and fame. Few returned alive; many more found death.

I saw this man, the so-called Ra'Ham in my youth. I was then, as I am now, a Serf, a slave, lover and servant of the Z'bri. I write, now in my cell awaiting my death, to tell of the man they call Ra'Ham and of my Masters.

The tribes, my executioners, call them "beasts" but they are nothing of the sort. Not all Z'bri are tied, or Chained to animals. Those are just the worthless ones, the ones that have failed or gone mad in their prison of flesh. For all their outward appearance, my masters are not hideous, but rather sensual in their true forms. They are not misshapen monsters, or piles of junk like the Fatimas, but pure and sublime divinity. Their robes of flesh only our fractured reflections of their true potential.

Yet their light burns fast, which is why they need The Flesh. The Flesh and all that comes with it, is what sustains them, tethers their essence, preventing them from being leeches by the dreams of the living. It is they that let us humans dream, not the Fatimas. It was their sacrifice, to abandon the physical and be exiled to the spirit, that allowed our ancestors eons ago to dream the first dreams, and to remember them as gods. And how did we repay them? By forgetting their sacrifice. It was our ignorance and forgetfulness that angered them, and that is why they came to avenge themselves in our blood.

Not all my masters are beasts, but rather most live within walled paradises away from the ignorance of the tribes. The Chained or Gek'roh are nothing but beasts of war and burden, pets and curiosities. Most Chained are those whose sanity is frayed by the constant lure of The Flesh, or tortured by their longing for a return across the River of Dream. Some are not so lucky, simply reduced to their state at the whims of our Lords and masters. The Chained are leashed with animals or other living creatures, such as plants and trees. The union shatters the Gek'roh's frail psyche and reduces it to a dangerous and savage fiend. They are fear and horror made flesh.

Above the Chained stand the Bonded Ones (vassals, or Iv'chets), the warriors and attendants of the Lords and Old Ones. Young and lustful, they seek to wrap themselves in The Flesh, elevating their need for survival to artistic and depraved levels. These Bondsones, as they are also called, weave their husks into wonderfully beautiful or terrifying shapes that are both deadly and decadent. The Bondsones are terror and decadence made flesh.

It is the Freeones and Lords, however, that represent the Z'bri in their full glory. Their age and power, many being the original exiles and avengers, allow them to exist as creatures of pure spirit. Even so, their longing for The Flesh often drives them to consume and mold themselves in extravagant frocks stitched from our very bodies, us their Serfs. There is no greater honor or joy than to give oneself to them, as they are passion and darkness made flesh incarnate.

From their walled paradises, the **Four Houses** of the Z'bri rule with providence, awaiting the Return. For mark my words, they will come back and take us all, as is their duty. They will devour us all for being forgotten. The faceless masses of the **Flemis** are a sight to behold. To them, emotion and sentiment are enough to distinguish themselves from each other. They exist to feel nothing but the sheer joy of hopelessness and despair. Dour and huge, the Flemis are creatures of patience, willing to wait years to torture someone, or to kill her.

The **Koleris** are rage and fury incarnate; they hate the tribes and the Fatimas, and frequently hunt in tribal lands for no other reason than that they enjoy the fear they cause. Warriors one and all, the Koleris house represents the anger and hatred that lurks within everyone's soul, ready to consume everything.

In counterpoint to the twisting rage of the Koleris are the **Sangis**, the Z'bri ideal made flesh. They are the original dreamers, the ones whom The Flesh first called to return. Sensuous sirens, their call is impossible to ignore; to spend a night with one and be consumed is to know nirvana. And yet, for all their beauty, they are cruelty personified. Even their Serfs, of whom I am one, fear them. Within their thin and tall bodies lies an appetite that knows no limits.

The **Melanis** are the shunned, even by the other houses. Brooding psychopaths, they search for knowledge even when there is none. They simply sit back and watch, their eyes belying the troubled soul that lies beneath. In their search for knowledge — some say a way back to their homeland — the Melanis are willing to sacrifice even their brethren's flesh.



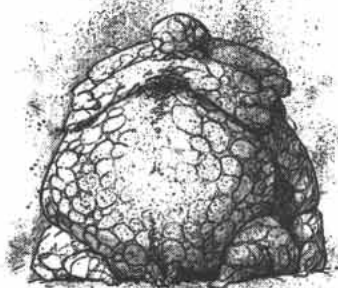
Druze the Raging (Chained Z'bri)

One of the many Chained that hunt the H'l Kar, Druze is different than most of his kind. Chained to a large mastiff dog, Druze relishes in the freedom and raw power of his new form. The leader of a wild pack, Druze hunts both mortals and Z'bri, and his haunting howl can be heard for many miles on clear nights. It is rumored that Druze has some ties with those of the Eighth Tribe, and that Veruka the Wraith (see p. 104) has even tried to soothe his raging heart.

Highlights: Savage, unparalleled hunter, fearsome

Attributes: AGI +1, BLD +2, FIT +2,
PER +3, WIL +2

Skills: Athletics 2/+2, Combat Sense
3/+3, Hand-to-Hand 3/+1,
Intimidate 2/+2, Navigation (land)
2/0, Notice 3/+3, Sneak 2/+1



Ult'maht (Flemis Ambassador)

Although contact between the tribes and the Z'bri is infrequent, covert encounters do happen every few seasons. Ult'maht is one of these ambassadors. A simple being by Z'bri standards, his form is not so much hideous as it is disturbing. Standing at over two meters, with a huge and bloated body, Ult'maht has no facial features to speak of except for two eerie eyes. He (his gender is unknown but assumed to be male) speaks only through telepathy and betrays no emotions. None have seen him angered, or even pleased, and his very presence seems to chill the air about him.

Highlights: Alien, disturbing, inscrutable

Attributes: BLD +3, KNO +2, WIL +2

Skills: Etiquette 1/+2, Intimidation 3/+3, Lore (Z'bri) 3/+2, Ritual 3/+2, Sundering (One Thought, Flesh Assimilation) 4

And what of this hero, Ra'Ham. Well, I know this; he was once young and mortally wounded. One of my masters, a Bonded One, lay dead next to him. Ra'Ham looked at me, at my hamlet, when he regained consciousness, healed from the brink of death by the powers of The Flesh, and saw the Z'bri for what they really are. With pride, I brought the fabled Z'bri slayer to my lord, presented him as a trophy. The following day, we both journeyed to the Ziggurat, to the home of the Baron and Lord of All.

During this time he asked me about my masters, about us the Serfs and I told him the truth. We walked by other hamlets; huts made from flesh and beautifully misshapen bodies busily attending the fields. Ra'Ham saw the folly of his ways and the glory of the Z'bri. He was the first tribeperson allowed into the Ziggurat, to meet the Baron. Whether he came back out alive, only my master knows.

The Skyrealms

Honored Elan,

My friend, I am beginning to fear that we will no longer be able to hide knowledge of the Z'bri Skyrealms from the others. The Lorekeepers have always contended that these Z'bri lairs, housed high above the streets in the tallest buildings of the World Before, were abandoned after the revolts. Although this has been mostly true, lately some have returned to their old homes. Although these Z'bri seem to be exiles of some sort, and apparently pose no threat, I doubt the other tribes will stand idle at news of their arrival. Tera Sheba has dictated they're to be left alone, but I fear the other tribes will not understand and upset the balance. It may be time for a distraction.

Ever Vigilant Truth,

Judge Gebriel

Conversation with a Devil

From the Legend of Ra'Ham:

"So, you come to hunt us, to slay us with your sword of steel and your soul filled with vengeance. You may try, of course, but in the end there is little you can do to us, for we are That Which Should Never Have Been. It was our duty that brought us here, but it was our pride that transformed this paradise into a prison of flesh and passion.

"Before then, we, the Z'bri were just that, the silence of spirit. We existed not knowing the pleasure of touch, the sensation of flesh, or the power over life and death. We just were. But you, our ancestors and kin, have taught us much, nay, corrupted us and we become what you see before you — pain and horror personified.

"Beasts, yes, you call us beasts, and that is what we are. Unfathomable to you, we were angels and devils. We came from the great beyond and saw your ancestors as worthless inheritors of the greatest gift of all. I still remember how they looked upon us, in our ethereal glory, as saviors; but your kind did not have the conviction to follow us, to be consumed by us. Instead, they wallowed in their misery and in pain. They sentenced themselves to death, and, like the good shepherds we are, we gave death to them — the greatest gift.

"But I digress. You, the one called Ra'Ham, the slayer of beasts, came not to be preached to — the Fatimas, your loving zombies, do that well enough — but to exact your vengeance. Strange how you fight to prevent death, and yet blindly follow them. You've come all this way to best me in battle, and yet you stand there, chained like an animal, your fate in my hands, sweet as your daughter's flesh.

"Would you like to see her? She has grown in the meantime; her body young but vital... It is going to be a pleasure to absorb her. But before that, there are a few facts you should understand, about us.

"Beasts and horrors, yes we are, cruel, even evil, but this is our place now, our realm. We are not savages, though, but we have certain needs, desires that make this earthly prison bearable. Your tribes live because we allow them to. The camps, for their wonderful excesses, were dull. Where is the sense of pleasure if your playthings are nothing but animals, their spirits broken? No, it is the very fact that we can swoop down and take what we want that rekindled our appetites. The Old Ones, the first to come forth, had forgotten that; they were content to merely wither away, drowning their pain in decadence and torture.

"If I were to give you what you want, your daughter, what would you do? Hug her, relish her, and then what? Would you be able to stand by as she grow older, slowly forgetting you; see her leave you to start her own family. See her fall in love with another man. Would you be able to stand by and simply watch? What if I could bring back your wife — yes I know about her as well; your mind, your fears and hopes are mine to plunder — what then? Would happiness be yours? I doubt it. Instead, you'd be fanatical about them, locking them up, making sure they'd never leave you again, and your greatest joy would be their greatest fear. So the Great Wheel spins.

"Everything longs to be destroyed, to be consumed, even us. We long for nothing but a return to our homelands, to the veil of spirit, but we can venture there no more. We are forever locked in this hellish purgatory and for that your kind will continue to pay.

"So now, feared slayer, I am afraid your time has come. Welcome to the nightmare..."

Renegade

From the Legend of Ra'Ham:

And what of Ra'Ham's fate? Well, no one knows except myself, for I was there when he was presented to the Baron. I witnessed it all; for I am one of the Z'bri. But that night, everything changed. I realized what a travesty we had become, a mockery of our true potential. That night, before the Baron finished reveling in its power before Ra'Ham, I silently slipped out into the night and vanished into the wilds, and became one of the Hunters. There are few of us. We search for means to atone for our kind's crimes. Some, like the brave Ra'Ham, hunt the Old Ones; others search for the fabled Nomads. Myself, I just wander, knowing that in time a war will rage across the land, and the heavens will be opened once more and all will be set right. Until then, I tell my tale to those I meet, both Z'bri and mortal, so that as my claws rip through them, they understand that I am freeing them from their earthly prison.



T'phalus: (Z'bri Joh'an)

T'phalus is a Joh'an — one who lives in the Skyrealms. He has come to appreciate the delicate nature of humans. He appreciates their short life spans and relishes their ephemeral quality. He keeps a dozen or so "companions," whom he subjects to powerful Sundering magic to age and experience a full life in a few short hours — all for T'phalus' enjoyment.

He is, after all a Z'bri. T'phalus, originally a Sangis, still takes great pride in his appearance. Standing over 12 feet tall, and possessing three sets of arms and two delicate wings, T'phalus is a sight to behold. He can sometimes be glimpsed high above Bazaar, peering down at the tribes. T'phalus sees the tribes as his, enjoying watching them live their short lives before him. Of late, he has grown attached to the Fallen, seeing in them the same burning desire and intensity of the first Z'bri before the Coming.

Highlights: Beautiful, aloof, disturbing

Attributes: AGI +1, APP +2, CRE +1, INF +1, KNO +2, PSY -2

Skills: Etiquette 3/+1, Lore (Z'bri) 4/+2, Mythology 2/+2, Sundering (Flesh Appeasement and Soul Stealing) 4.

The Fallen

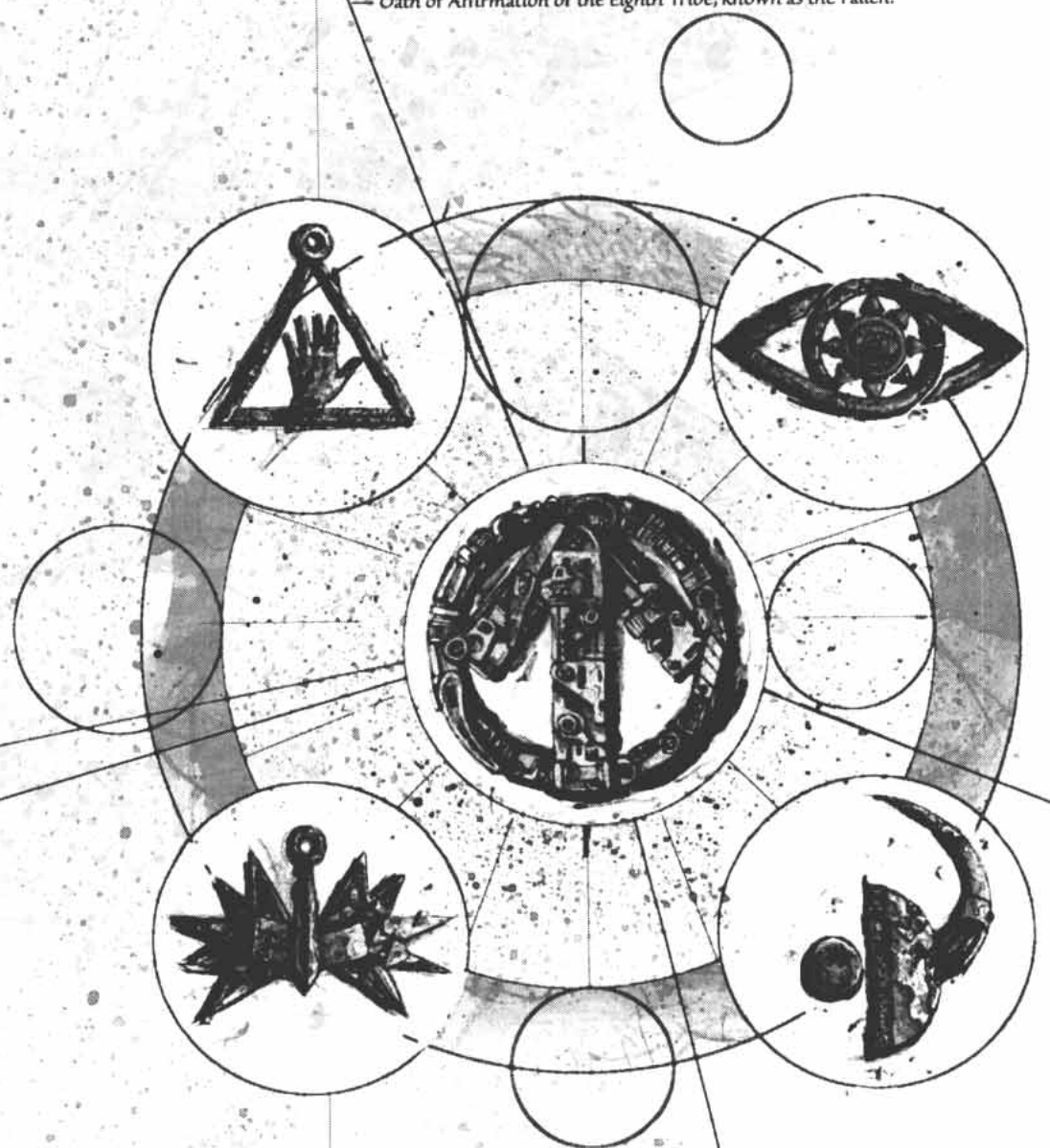
Deny us the future
and we'll take it anyway.

Deny us our secrets
and we'll steal them from you.

We are your future uncertain,
your fears uncovered,
your knowledge unbeknownst.

We are the Fallen.

— Oath of Affirmation of the Eighth Tribe, known as the Fallen.



This is Who We Are

Where to begin? I mean, it's not easy summing up what it is we stand for, much less *who* we are. It might be better to begin with how we came to be. Whether you believe in the Prophecy of Joshua or not, the fact still remains that back then, after the Liberation, somebody knew we were coming — you could almost say they were expecting us. I've heard too many tales of our origins and it's hard to say where the truth lies, but I guess each story has a fragment of truth, a piece of the puzzle.

One such piece is that in the aftermath of the revolts, the other tribes adopted the survivors of Joshua's tribe and slowly they began to forget about Joshua. Then, it is said, after years of forgetfulness, we began remembering, waking as if from a long slumber, wanting to reclaim our rightful place, but the tribes — and the Fatimas — wanted nothing to do with us. Afraid, they turned their back on us and called us heretics.

I've heard Veruka, a fallen Yagan witch, speak of us as fragments. She says that when Joshua was killed, His essence shattered and became lost in the River of Dream. There, these shards remained, fragments of divinity until the birth of the first exile. During the birthing ceremony, when Eva reached into the River for that child's soul, one of these fragments became interwoven with the infant's being. Ever since then, according to Veruka, some have been born with a shard of the former Fatima marking them as one of the Eighth Tribe.

Yet there are those who frown upon us taking the moniker of a tribe, or claiming that our creator is Joshua, insisting that these are compromises — a throwback to the Seven Tribes. They insist that we're not born from a Fatima, that our souls are strong and free without the need of a Fatima. We represent the next stage in our liberation from the Ending times.

Which theory you believe matters little when you're undergoing your banishment ceremony — the pain of the torture and the confrontation with the Fatima eliminates any concern except the present. Most can remember the events that led to their banishment; some saw a truth they could not ignore, others raged against apparent injustice, yet still others committed crimes, or were driven by pride, despair or envy.

During the ceremony, all ties to your former tribe are cut, your name erased and never spoken again. The Fatima, some say, reaches in and removes Her blessing, leaving the exile forever changed, awakened to her inner self. It is as if a great weight is lifted, unlocking pure potential. The final shackles are shed; destiny comes calling.

So armed with nothing more than the clothes on our backs and our destinies, we head out to meet the world head on, and, in the end, *this* is who we are.

— Deus, Fallen Poet



First Report

My Mistress Magdalen,

I write to you to inform you of my observations. It's been more than a moon since I arrived, one of the newly Fallen, but in truth a spy. Those of the Eighth Tribe are growing; in my short time here their number has swollen. Every day more and more dispossessed walk through the gates of Hom, their faces and bodies covered in rags, anger boiling under their skin. I fear, my Mistress, that our problems are just beginning.

I've never seen so many. Most of the them are young, the scars of their banishment still fresh, but their eyes carry a burning weight. When I was young, the dispossessed, those who through crime and heresy blasphemed against You or Your Sisters met with dire consequences. Banished, they'd fade into the wastes and never return, but these, the members of the so-called Eighth Tribe (forgive me, Magdalen, for uttering their name), are not lost souls. They are strong and proud.

Fortunately, their ranks know no organization; gang squabbles with gang, cell with cell. Their settlement, the hive known as Hom, is a filthy shit-town. Squats sleep on the streets covered in their own excrement and the Fallen revel in their debauched freedom. The huts and shacks, made of salvaged iron and wood, rattle in the wind. It is nothing more than a shanty town where dust and flies cover everything. Indoors, all manner of cutthroats live. Hom is in indeed a place of degenerates. And yet, the Fallen gather and talk, they share the same hopes and dreams. It is incredible. They are a group of individuals and yet the one thing that brings them together is their status as exiles. As long as they remain divided and weak, however, the Tribes have little to fear.

I must stop now, my love is with you...

— Antoine Theokin, Magdalite Siren and Spy

Those Who Walk Alone

Listen to me, my Sisters, they are strong. Those Who Walk Alone, and they are our children. Spur them not. They are pure, the first to be born free, and it is their destiny to turn away from us; for children at one point all leave their homes and their time has come. Be not blinded by pride, we have done our duty. All our children must leave, and they are the first, they are the ones who will leave footsteps for others to follow.

Hate them not for this, for it is their destiny; the Goddess has chosen them, and only them to guide the way. In time they may forget us, as they did once before. We will turn to rust and be buried, but if this is to be, then so be it. The All Mother has spoken. This is their world and they must discover it — alone.

Fear them not for this, for it is their fate to challenge us; by testing us they shall discover their strengths and weaknesses. For only the strong have any hope of reclaiming their broken world.

Forgive them and love them.

— Last Words of Mary the Forgiver

A Manifesto

We are the dispossessed, the Children of Hom, the Fallen, we are the Eighth Tribe and we are alone. We are those who walk away, turn our backs on the Seven Sisters, on our mothers and fathers, and venture into the wastelands around us to find our destiny, to find our calling. Some of us are rebels or outlaws, others malcontents and lunatics, victims and terrorists, but we are one; we are the Children of the Fall. Listen to me, my brothers and sisters, we must no longer stand idle and silent; our time has come. The ashes are vanishing and in their wake a new world is dawning, a world that is our destiny to discover and to reclaim. The past, the camps, the Z'bri, are just that — the past. The future is dark and unknown; the future belongs to us.

— Altara Ven, "The Manifesto of the Fallen"

Motivations

We do not believe, nor do we belong. We are banished. Cast out from our families and our loved ones for not following, for not having faith — for not believing the lies. We have all lost, and the pain runs deep. We pass our mothers and fathers on the streets and they turn their eyes from us, spit at us or chase us with violence. We do not belong, but we have each other, we are a tribe and destiny awaits.

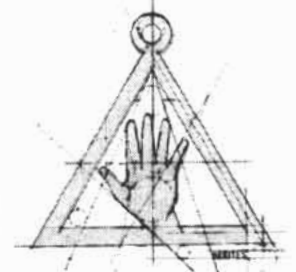
Dreams and visions guide us. We have seen what lies within us all, that which the Fatimas have hidden from us, and we will stop at nothing until we attain it. We can see the invisible power of fate, the silent whispers that call us forward to embark on our journey. Some of us hear the call at an early age. We see the shadows of our future selves following, showing and teaching us. Others hear the call later, past their prime, when the Fatima's vigilance wanes and one's true potential awakens, as if from a timeless slumber.

It is these hints, these echoes that push us forward. The Fatimas, no longer cloaked by illusions, stand for what they really are — monsters. Monsters who bought our people's freedom with the blood of the innocent. The Fatimas are, in truth, not much better than the Beasts.

Our destiny lies beyond them, past their lies and deceptions, in the dark ruins that surround our homes. There, the truth is hidden, the keys of the past and the whispers of the future. One day soon, we of the Eighth Tribe shall forever leave Vimary, our home, and venture forward into the light of day. We will bury the Z'bri and the Fatimas, erase them from our memories and discover our own place in the world.

But that is future, now we have much work ahead. We are still young, divided and distrusted by the tribes. I write to unite us, to call us one, to make us a tribe.

— Altara Ven, "The Manifesto of the Fallen"



Judgment

Thomas: Must it really be so? Is there no other way, Keller?

Keller: I am afraid not. Jethro has gone too far this time. The other Shamans feel this is the only alternative before things get out of hand. His speeches are beginning to sway the other homesteads. Too many questions are being asked. Jethro is a danger to us and to Our Mother, Eva.

Thomas: All he has done is stand up for them, for the Fallen. After all, they are still our children. For all sakes, Anariel's daughter Yana was just banished...

Keller: I know, I know, this so-called "Eighth Tribe" is becoming too strong. With each banishment the Sisters feel their betrayal bite deeper and eventually their rage will overtake them. Remember, it was the Fatimas who saved us. You've heard the Elder Shamans speak. You've visited the camps.

Thomas: But, this, I mean, Jethro is still faithful, he leads the prayers, he is one of the best healers. Just because he preaches understanding and compassion towards the Fallen, two virtues of Eva herself, is banishment the only answer? This isn't right, Keller.

Keller: There is no other choice; the others agree. The Sheban judges are here to tell us their opinions and Baba Yaga has voiced Her concern to Our Mother Eva. No, Thomas, it must be done. Banishing is the only solution, even though Jethro still believes.

Thomas: And then what, Keller, who's next? Are we to watch our words now, be careful whom we heal because we might be the next ones banished? What happens if we disagree with the council? This is not right. Never in all of creation would the Fatimas agree to this. This is pure folly...

— Transcript penned by Mordecai, Terasheban Judge, shortly before his Banishment.

A Godless People?

My Mistress Magdalen,

I apologize for the long delay in my letters, for I have been beyond the island. What a marvelous journey, the river was wild and the forests dark. I am pleased to announce that others live beyond Vimary — lost people waiting for Your Love to find them. Mostly small villages isolated in the wastes, but there are rumors of a greater settlement further east to rival Vimary. The Eighth Tribe continues to grow, and I have been able to distinguish some sort of chaotic organization.

The Eighth Tribe is really nothing more than a collection of small groups or what they term cells. Each has no more than eight members; many coming from different tribes tied together for protection, friendship and similar interests. Although the majority of Fallen are individualists, some have begun to band into larger groups, but are fragmented and divided like the rest of their society. The Bringers of the Light, the Herites, the Doomsayers and the Jackers form the most prominent outlooks, but there are many others each believing that they are the one true Eighth Tribe.

My Mistress, I will continue my observations at a future time.

Love,

— Antoine Theokin

Four Outlooks

I won't lie to you, we Fallen are not united, nor do all share the same beliefs of who we are. There are four major factions among us, but these represent ideologies more than social groups. While people who share the same outlook often flock together, there are many cells that regroup people from several factions. Some, like myself, share much with various factions, taking what I like and forming my own views. Many factors go into forming one's opinions, the banishment being among the strongest, but it's also a matter of fashion and acceptance.

The **Jackers** are, without a doubt, the most violent and reactionary of us. Driven by vengeance and rage, they lash out against everyone and everything. This anger, without putting words into their mouths, comes from feeling betrayed, which is why all Jackers live by a strict code of honor. They know what it feels like to be abandoned, and when one gives you her word, she'll die before betraying you. Many were once Joanites, and continue the fight against the Z'bri night and day. Their ranks are small because of the power of their prey.

The **Herites**, well, if there any among us that prize their privacy, it is them. And yet, they lurk around listening and spying, almost as if there is something keeping them in the shadows. Of all of us, even though they'll claim otherwise, the Herites are the most fascinated by the Fatimas. They want us to stand free of the "Seven Deaths," but they almost seem to still lust after them — or their power.

The **Doomsayers** are our poets and preachers. They seem to understand the bigger picture, but one tainted and shrouded in shadows and death. They are also among the most gifted with Synthesis. They are the most concerned with the Prophecy of Joshua.

Finally, the **Lightbringers** stand to unite us, to guide us. All in all, some call us fastidious and arrogant, but I'd say we're driven by a need to bring order to chaos. I can understand why the others think we're pompous and haughty, but it's that we are haunted every day by the potential we all have, and feel compelled to unlock this potential in others.

— Deus, Fallen Poet

Synthesis

Be patient, child, and concentrate! How do you expect to learn the Flow if your mind is busy wandering off... And you say I ramble on? Ha! You should count yourself as blessed, banished and all, to still be able to wield the power of the Goddess. Blessed indeed, young one. But foolish, too. Synthesis is not a toy, it isn't. It is the very power of the River of Dream, that's what it is. It flows through your flesh, strong and free, oh yes.

Many a time, I thought you and your Eighth Tribe were nothing but spoiled kids given the power of adults, and it probably is so, but this is the way thing are. Listen to me. Your power, your ability to wield Synthesis is a potent gift. Use it wisely.

The Fallen



Discovery

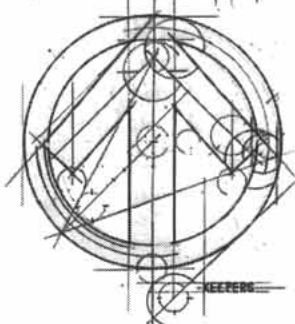
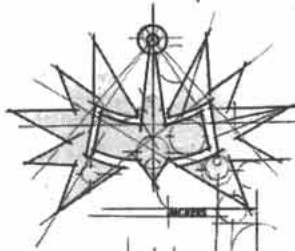
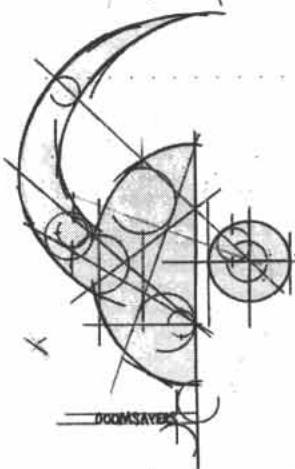
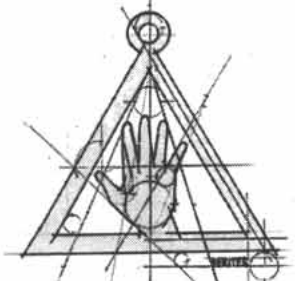
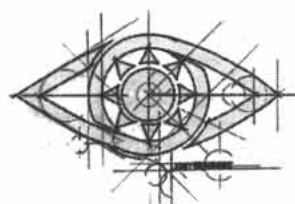
My Mistress,

I write in haste, time is short and I fear that they're on to me. The Eighth Tribe poses a greater risk than I ever thought.

How is this possible? I feel You have betrayed me, my Lover. The Fallen are powerful. Somehow, even after their banishment, many have access to Your gifts. These are only granted by You to your highest priest — how can it be that these heretics still bear the mark of Your love? They can weave the threads of Synthesis in new ways, no longer subtle patterns, but strong and defiant.

They're at the door. I fear now for my soul. They are not Fallen, but...

— Letter fragment, found on the body of Antoine Theokin



It's only been a few years since you all started gathering here in Hom, and already Synthesis flows like milk. Some wield it like the most powerful of priests, they do, and others have defined new Eminences. These are miracles, child, do not mock them with your indifference!

Through you, the currents of the River erupt like through floodgates. Your being, your soul if you will, is strong, stronger than most because of this. It is through you, not the Fatimas, that dreams and hope will return to the tarnished land. It is not a gift but a responsibility, and it must be used with caution.

Expose yourself too long to the River and its tides might just suck you into the Sea of the Lost, or worse, leave you insane. To live fast and die young is not an option, for when the light fades from your eyes, all your power will be funneled back into the River and lost forever. You no longer have the Fatimas to protect you in death, and there is only so much a Guide like me can do.

— Den-Hades, speaking to a young Fallen

Prophecy

Our Fatima lies broken and still.

His glory staining the ground with His blood, His wounds still fresh. Only the wind and the fates know the dark clouds that cover the celebrations, the passing of the first Fatima.

Our Fatima lies broken and still, Joshua the Ravager, slowly forgotten.

We, His children — orphans — leave with the coming night, but we shall return and vengeance shall be ours. Our inhuman enemies smashed by our righteous anger.

In time, Joshua will be remembered as a hero and not a martyr, His children lost and gone.

But we will return.

And there shall be Eight Tribes once more.

True freedom shall then reign and fate be scattered into the four winds.

— The Joshuan Refrain (alternate expression of the Prophecy of Joshua)

Other Outsiders

The priests would like you to believe that everyone belongs to a tribe, that none live outside the protective arms of the Seven Sisters, but this is not so. Look around you, this is Hom, haven for the Fallen. No, not everyone belongs to the tribes.

But we are not the only ones here, not at all. Over there, see that small hut with the bones and strange charms hanging by the door? That's Halos' place. He's a freak, but he knows more about the world than anyone else I know. He calls himself a Guide. His right arm is nothing but a stump, born that way. He says he can feel it, even pleasure himself with it — like I said, he's a freak. At least, Halos is there for us, looking after us — no wonder the tribes want him dead. I've met another freak named Den-Hades. She claims to be a Guide too. I wonder if there are more of them out there.

The Keepers, now there is an interesting bunch of misfits. Although they can spin a good yarn about the World Before, most are just fading echoes of the past. Relics, really. They spend their days scavenging the wastes for bits and pieces. Mind you, they can create some nifty tools, and their knowledge of the past does come in handy from time to time.

Now mind me, don't be foolish and venture outside of Hom, or the island. That's the home of the Squats, murderous barbarians. Occasionally, they raid Vimary or Hom, but mostly they just keep to themselves...

— Deus, poet of the Eighth Tribe



The Fallen



Of Freaks and Guides

There are those who walk
Beyond the veil of dreams,
Speak with the voices of the past,
Witness the birth of the future,
But are lost to the rest of us,
Echoes and shades is all they are.

— To a Guide



Halos (Guide)

A deeply introverted Guide, Halos came to Hom before even the first Fallen. Born Simon Perdue, a son of Tera Sheba, he became haunted as a young man by the voices of the dead. He still hears the call of one ghost in particular: Joshua the Ravager. Simon spoke of prophecy and was banished to Hom, where he took the mantle of

Guide and the name of Halos, as instructed by the voices. He claims to know every Fallen, both present, past and future, and can see the mark of Joshua upon them. He has become an important mentor to many outcasts.

Halos has been driven to deep despair by the loss of Eclipse, a Squat woman who heard the same voices he did and who became his spiritual sister. Killed by the Watch when she spat at a Terasheban High Judge in Bazaar, her voice has now joined the chorus in Halos' head.

Highlights: Haunted, wise, despairing

Attributes: KNO +1, WIL +2, PSY +1

Eminences: Recognition, Truth

Skills: Dreaming 3/+1, Lore (Joshua) 3/+1, Lore (prophecy) 3/+1, Ritual 3/+1, Survival 2/0, Synthesis 3

Guides in a Waking Nightmare

I am a Guide, an oracle or warlock, all depending on what you wish to call me. We are few now. Only myself and Den-Hades call Vimary our home, our huts and lodges hidden from view like a dirty secret which the tribes would rather not face. We exist, and even though most would prefer to forget us, many still come to us asking for favors and predictions. It is not our fault that we are born this way, our bodies misshapen, our minds touched by the invisible currents that flow through life. Perchance what they say is true, perhaps Den-Hades and I are just insane after all? Maybe everyone is insane, and this all a nightmare.

I feel the flow of dream and Synthesis in my warped bones. I know it swells in you Fallen, and that is why I seek you out, but not all is as it should be. Long ago, the Nomads stopped the Z'bri and birthed the Fatimas. Yes, I knew those holy strangers. They saved us then, but their actions are strangling us now. Dreams trickle through the world when they should cascade. I hope you will be part of the solution — because otherwise you are part of the problem.

Now go away, I'm tired of your condescending smirks.

— Halos, to an audience of Fallen

Those Beyond

When I was a child I heard stories of bogeymen called Guides, crazy people who would steal your soul if you looked at them funny. Even now I'm a little freaked by them, but like so many other things, the tribes have lied about the Guides as well. I would not go as far as to say they're gifted or insane, but touched. Den-Hades and Halos seem to know a lot about stuff, usually strange nonsense, but they occasionally tell you something that makes sense. Also, for true outsiders living most of their life outside the tribes they know a little too much about the Fatimas. I don't believe everything I hear, but some whisper that they are spies of the Seven Sisters — then again the tribes don't trust the Guides either!

Den and Halos, for all their eccentricities, seem drawn to us, as if they knew we were coming. They walk around Hom, teaching us about the River of Dream, and though many laugh at them, they have helped us out a number of times, especially as messengers with the tribes. Only lately have they run into trouble. Eclipse, Halos' sister, was killed by the tribes last winter. So we protect them.

— Altara Ven

The Guides and the Fallen

My Lady Verra Thiam'on,

I have just come across an unsettling piece of information, lost within the bowels of our Archives. It is a transcript from the trial of a Terasheban heretic named Simon Perdue, which took place a few summers after the death of Mary the Forgiver. It bares some chilling insight into the so-called Fallen, given the trial's date. I have enclosed portion of it along with this message. I should note, also, that the transcript is incomplete. Perdue's fate is unknown.

In Faith and Honor,

— Sidha Lal'on, Terasheban Advocate.

The Trial of Simon Perdue

Simon Perdue: I stand accused of being a heretic, of fouling the name and faith of the Fatimas, but I only recount what the winds have told me, what the future holds in store.

Judge: Simon Perdue, that's enough! This court has heard enough of your blasphemy and will listen no more!

SP: Whether you listen or not, it matters not. A time will come, summers from now, when some will turn their backs on you and the Fatimas, and nothing will stop them. They will fear nothing. They will claim to be many things, but the truth will be unbearable to you. You judge me now, your court, the noose and gallows pole waiting for me. Soon, it will be your daughters and sons that you will judge, that you'll banish because you'll not be able to bear their truth.

Judge: Silence, insolent cur!!

SP: Numbered are the days of the Seven Tribes, and when they come, the Joshuans are your only hope, but they will be cast out instead of welcomed. Alone and isolated, they will fade and our final hope will be squandered, for the fate of Creation depends on them. They are the final linchpins that can prevent the Great Architecture from collapsing; for they are the last souls in the Guff.

Judge: Our final hope, as you put it, are the Fatimas, the Seven Mothers, who through their love and benevolence freed us from the Camps and pushed back the Z'bri.

SP: No, for the Fallen — as you will call them — will see the Fatimas for what they really are — death incarnate. They will feel the call of the future, and alone they will perish, cut off from the River of Dream. They will not be alone. Not as long as there are those of us to teach them, to guide them on their journey...





Those Who Remember

Relics of the past litter the world. Everywhere one looks, they are there, silent, rusting away and fading into obscurity, their tales forgotten by all except the Keepers. They roam the ruins, tools and gadgets from the World Before dangling from their cloaks and habits, their faces covered in masks and hoods, and they watch. That's all they do. They spend their days scavenging the wastes, piecing together whatever they find, worshipping the ashes of the past. By night they record living history so that the future may never forget the horrors of the present.

Who they are, or where they come from no one knows. The Keepers have been around since before the camps, living deep within the ruins and tunnels of the World Before. There are rumors that they have built whole settlements within the bowels of abandoned factories and refineries, coming out only when they need to. Occasionally, one will walk right up to you, stop you right in your tracks and tell you some haunting tale from the past. It is as if through the very action of telling you the past, they are saving you from damnation. Not all, however, are fanatical, though all revere anything that hails from the time before the Z'bri.



The Keepers

At the end of time,
Only a few remember the past,
Of the world before the Darkness
Of a world long forgotten.

— Keeper's Call

Why have the tribes always despised them? I do not have an answer, I guess partially it's motivated by fear. Fear of those who can live and survive without the love of the Fatimas. Others are jealous of them, driven by resentment because the Keepers escaped the horrors of the camps or because they are seen as traitors for not doing anything to stop the Z'bri. It could also be their contact with the World Before, something the tribes see as a taboo. Whatever the reasons, a Keeper must be careful when trading with the tribes. Just one wrong word or look and the Keeper might find herself lynched.

Recognizing a Keeper is not hard — they tend to dress strangely. They often wear a heavy coat or cloak, usually from the World Before. Countless devices and relics hang all over them.

— don't ask me what they are for. Some of them beep and some have mysterious lights; others shoot metal balls that can take down the largest animal. Their faces are haggard, often hidden underneath masks with huge round glass eyes. No matter where they go, dust and rust follows, coating everything they touch.

— Deus, Fallen Poet



Felix Iago (Keeper Explorer)

Felix remembers little of his birth, and those he has spoken to among the Keepers refuse to tell him anything except that he came from a city beyond Vimary. Nonetheless,

Felix is one of the greatest technosmiths the Keepers have ever known. Driven by a desire to explore the world around him and to discover the place of his birth, Felix has been busily constructing a huge dirigible that he hopes will allow him to explore the ruins of other cities around Vimary. Old and frail, Felix has been looking for a group of Fallen to join him on his journey.

Highlights: Frail, rambling, driven

Attributes: BLD -1, CRE +1, FIT -2,
KNO +2, PER +1, WIL +1

Skills: Aircraft Pilot 2/0, Combat Sense
1/+1, Drive 2/0, Firearms 2/0,
Techlore (Mechanics) 2/+2, Tinker 3/
+2, Technosmithing (all formulas) 3

Organization

From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux, Keeper of Knowledge:

We are Keepers, chroniclers of time and history, our duty is to keep the past alive. Why cower at the feet of the so-called Fatimas when the power of liberation lies not in blind devotion but in knowledge? All the answers we need rest in the past. Everything is there, broken, fragmented, fading; but if one looks carefully the clues are apparent.

Yes, some of our brethren are not so enlightened as myself. The Derelicts would rather spend their days looting and terrorizing the tribes with our machines, but who am I to judge? The tribes have done more harm to us. I still bear the wounds of countless floggings at their ignorant hands.

Yet, this is not the point. We have seen too much violence, and I am afraid more is sure to come, but now is a time to teach and chronicle. The world is dark, the time has come to shed light upon it, and in this we have strong allies with those of the so-called Eighth Tribe. Instead of fearing us, they welcome us with open arms, glad to have us as teachers and mentors. Even so, some still utter whispers about our darker brethren, the Machine-Monks, those who see the ideal in the cold machine. They are the most fanatical of us and their knowledge of the old technologies is unrivaled. The Machine-Monks, for all their knowledge, prefer to sacrifice flesh, which they see as flawed and imperfect, to the Machine. These Monks are missing limbs or bear scars showing their fanatical devotion to the Machine. Whatever camp one belongs to, we are all Keepers, and hence it is the Ancients, those who are the oldest and wisest, who lead us.

The Ancient One

I have heard tales that somewhere within their enclaves of ancient trash and pipes known as the Rust Wastes, the Keepers are led by someone simply called the Ancient One. Whether this is true or not I do not know, but the Keepers, surprisingly, are quiet on the subject. From what I hear, the Ancient One is simply that — ancient. Some whisper he's been here for centuries, kept alive by technology and vile knowledge. Others fear that the Keepers made a pact with the Z'bri, and it's the foul powers of the Beasts that are keeping the Ancient alive.

— Deus

Technosmithing

From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux:

Perhaps our greatest asset is not our knowledge of the World Before and its relics, but our skills as technosmiths. There are few, even Joanites, who can rival us in crafting weapons and tools, which is why we are tolerated. Our skill goes further than mere crafting, however, bordering on the miraculous. I myself have repaired mirror-boxes and machines allowing me to use them to store and archive my findings. I have heard tales of some Machine-Monks constructing floating balloons used for travel. In a world where the dead walk about the land and where the Fatimas rule, our abilities are feared and misunderstood. In truth, there is nothing magical in knowledge after all.

The Squats

Some people think of Squats, those countless people born outside the grace of the Fatimas, as weak and withered. They're wrong. They are strong and vicious, almost like animals. I know this from my own experience. Three summers ago, I was part of a caravan. We were in tribal land; we thought all was safe. We were wrong.

They were waiting for us, hidden in the dark woods that surrounded the trail from Xstasis to Bazaar. Without warning, the Squats were on top of us, their barbaric war cries spreading fear throughout our caravan. There must have been over twenty of them, they came out of the woods wielding clubs and other primitive weapons. From the center, a towering shape of a man appeared, whom I learned later was Luther Boarhead himself.

I must have been knocked off my wagon and thrown into the bushes because when I regained consciousness, I was the only survivor. Maria, my wife, lay on the road, her clothes ripped off her; her body bloodied and still. All around, bodies lay in various states of dismemberment, and that's when I noticed all the girls were missing. Every last one of them, gone. I dread to imagine their fate.

— Janus Feliz, Dahlian trader

The Dregs

Filthy barbarians, that's all the Squats are. While some live within the rubbish of the tribes and Hom, the majority live beyond the island, in small communities of marauders and scavengers. They have no skill for farming, and hence they live like carrion, stealing what they need and eating other people's garbage. Generally, the Squats are of no concern, and we let them live their pathetic lives. There are times, however, when hunger or the sheer lust for blood sends them charging into tribal settlements. These raids have grown in frequency over the last few summers, and are usually at their worst during the harsh winter months.

Most Squats do not have long life spans, and most die of hunger or at the hands of other Squats. Although the Squat settlements can be rather large, especially off the island, incest is rather common. Some of them are nothing more than roving nomadic bands while others have begun to develop their own societies.

— Deus

Conflict

They call us dregs, filthy vermin, savages! Well except for the last one, they are right. Try living outside the tribes, born out of chance beyond Vimary in the cold and barren Outlands. There's nothing to eat, no warmth — only the strong survive by taking what they want. The tribes, I hold nothing against them, but they must understand that I speak now for my people, and we'll starve no longer...

— Warlord Luther Boarhead



Vimary

It is here, on the island of Vimary, that we have built our settlements with sweat and blood, from the rubble of the past. A bastion, some call it. I say it is our final stand against the Z'bri and their kind. This is a fallen nation, isolated from the darkness beyond by the waters of the Great River, cowering in fear of what the future may hold. But you know this already. Let me now tell you about the place we call home — about the island called Vimary.

Whatever city existed here in the times before the End, only fragments of it remain; most of the ancient buildings that once rose above the Great River are no longer standing, some only skeletal husks, silent and vacant. Raw, savage nature has replaced concrete and steel, and dark forests now engulf the island. Places like Duskfall in the west have cracked the foundations of ancient homes and filled the rooms with shrubs and other vegetation. Outside, the blackened roads lie broken and unused, lost under a canopy of green. To the east, beyond Bazaar, the Rust Wastes and their occasional dust storms stretch for leagues. Lost within this hellish place are enormous steel structures of pipes and huge drums, a graveyard for machines and structures now forgotten.

And yet, it is on this island that we have made our home. It is the first step in reclaiming our place in the world around us — where once nothing stood but death and ruins, now stands the tribal homesteads. Under the shadow of the Great Hill, the Council Ruins and Bazaar can be seen for miles around, the center of tribal life. During the summer months, Bazaar bustles with activity, and even in the frigid winters can the tribes be seen scurrying for warmth and worshipping the Seven Deaths while horrors lurk in the shadows.

To the north, beyond the Great Hill, looms the Z'bri Ziggurat, its presence twisting the northern shore of the island into a labyrinth of death and fear. One thing is sure, of the city that once stood here, the homeland of our ancestors, only vague echoes remain, silent and still, slowly fading away forever.

Welcome to my home...

— Deets, Fallen poet

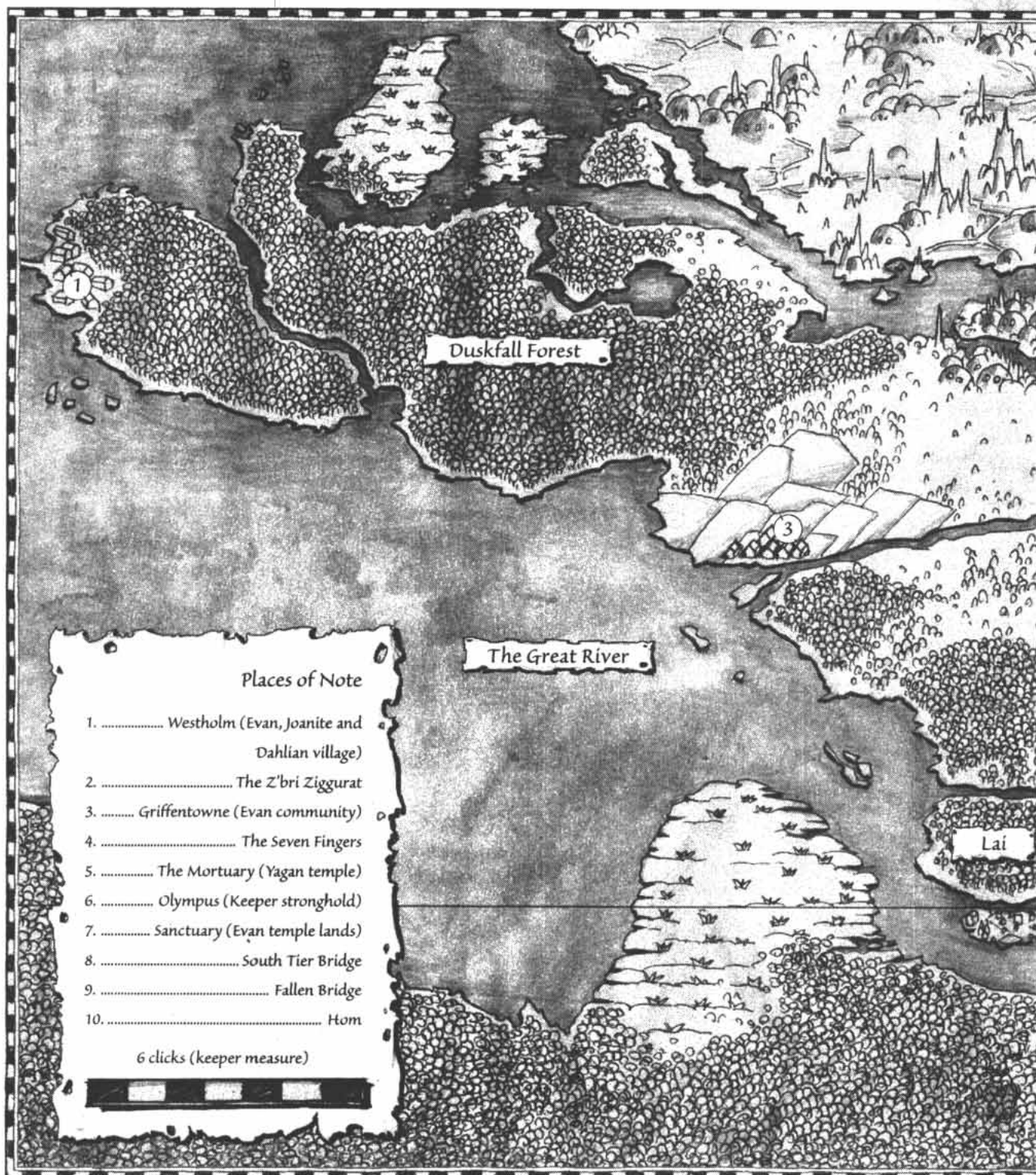


Overall Geography

From the travelogue of Alta Vorh, Keeper and archeologist:

According to records from before The End, the city that once stood on the island now called Vimary was home to millions of people. Unfortunately, very little of the city remains intact: age, weather, the Z'bri and even the careless tribes have done much to destroy what little precious clues we have about its origins or even its name. Adding to the difficulties of any archeological attempts to date or name the city is the fact that most of the ruins are hidden within verdant forests and impregnable wastelands or flooded by the river.







The Great Hill

The Great Hill marks the last real line of defense between the Z'bri lands to the north and the tribal lands to the south. At its very summit a chain of Joanite towers keeps vigil over the surrounding lands. Characterized by thick woods and narrow trails, the Hill is one of the primary hunting grounds for the tribes, though rumors of Z'bri monstrosities make hunting here a dangerous proposition. Within the southwestern, western and northwestern slopes of the Hill one can find a number of tribal settlements, including the homestead of Magdalen herself, Xstasis and the dark Mortuary and ancient graveyards of Baba Yaga. Bazaar, the main tribal homeland, lies to the south, while a large forest strewn with ruins runs north and east from the Hill.

The Hunting Paths

Although the tribes rely mostly on subsistence farming and some scavenging, they are also well skilled in the art of hunting. Portions of the Hill and Duskfall are hunting grounds; these are specially blessed areas where Eva herself allegedly commanded the animals living there to surrender their lives for the tribes. These grounds, known as the Hunting Paths, are extremely sacred for the tribes for obvious reasons, and are maintained by both the Evans and Joanites. The tribes condemn to death any Squat, Keeper or Fallen caught near a Hunting Path for corrupting the grounds.

The Seven Fingers

The northernmost outposts of the tribes are seven towers known as the Seven Fingers. These towers are manned by the hardiest and most experienced Joanites. Found along an elevated black-top, these towers offer an ideal vantage point into the Z'bri lands and are extremely defensible. Each Finger is equipped with a bell that is sounded in case of Z'bri attack.

Duskfall

The far western portion of the island, known simply as Duskfall to the tribes, is the largest forested area on Vimary. Duskfall is an imposing forest; though not as dangerous as those from the Z'bri lands, both natural and unnatural predators roam its shadowy trails and paths. At root level, it is possible to find ruins of homes and other pre-End dwellings. The darkness and dampness of Duskfall has caused a great deal of damage, however, destroying foundations and roads.

At its westernmost tip stands the West Bridge, one of only two bridges that span the chilling waters of the Great River. Protected by warriors of Joan, the bridge has recently spawned a small community, made of mostly Dahlians and Evans, called Westholm.

Large fields and groves, all tended by Evans, dominate the easternmost boundary of Duskfall. At their center, near the Evan settlement of Griffentowne, rests an immense network of black-tops and huge wrecks of flying machines used as greenhouses and granaries by the tribes.

For reasons of distance and travel time, Griffentowne is the westernmost tribal settlement that has frequent contact with Bazaar. Of late, however, Z'bri and Squat raids have made the trip dangerous.

Westholm and Griffentowne

Although both these settlements are relatively young and small, they have grown rapidly. It is my contention that within a few seasons they will stand, at best, as satellites of Bazaar, at worst as rivals. I have already noted, especially in the case of Westholm, a strong sense of community arising from their isolation from the center of tribal activity. The question remains to see how the Grand Council of the Seven Tribes will deal with these fledging communities.

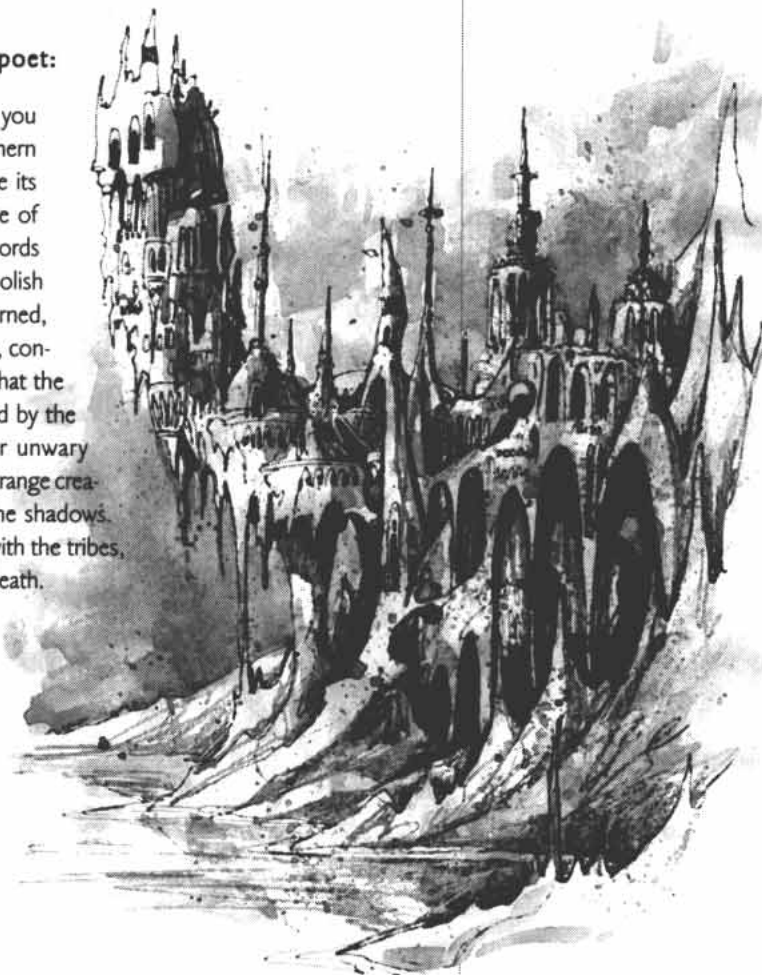
The Northern Shore — The H'I Kar

The northern shore of the island, including the smaller island of Ya'sue, is home to the Z'bri and their presence has warped the area beyond recognition. Originally, these sections housed much of the pre-End population of the island, of which only demolished homes and twisted hamlets remain, home to the Z'bri Serfs. During the camps, this area was the location for hundreds of mass graves. Even now, when walking through here, one can see the half-buried remains of thousands — providing the Z'bri with ample building material for their structures and monsters. The Z'bri themselves call this land the H'I Kar.

The Ziggurat

From the journals of Deus, Fallen poet:

No matter where you stand on the Hill, you can see the Ziggurat rising from the Northern Shore. Even from a distance you can see its twisted form, pillars and buttresses made of bone, tiles made of flesh — there are few words to describe it. A few Jackers have been foolish enough to venture near it. None have returned, but there are tales that the walls are alive, constantly fed by the Z'bri Serfs. Some tell that the trees near it are alive, twisted and gnarled by the black magic of the Z'bri, ready to tear unwary passers-by to bits. They also whisper that strange creatures and aberrations of nature lurk in the shadows. There is only one thing in which I agree with the tribes, and that's that the Ziggurat is a place of death.



A Z'bri Hamlet

From the travelogue of Alta Vorh, Keeper and archeologist:

From afar, a Serf hamlet looks much like a tribal homestead, made of a dozen or so structures surrounded by fields, but appearances can be deceptive. Here, the animals are sick or twisted by the Z'bri into indescribable shapes. Day and night the Serfs toil in the fields, though only a small portion of the land is cultivated. Most Serfs are merely uncovering the mass graves that dot the northern portion of the island. Although the Z'bri burnt or consumed many of the bodies, their sheer number meant that most were buried in mass graves. As a solution, the northern homes and warehouses became huge warehouses for the dead, their rotting bodies leading to disease and sickness. Today, the Serfs, wanting to appease their masters, harvest the bones and other remains unearthed from the many graves. The Serfs must slave to uncover the ghastly horrors, surrounded constantly by the stench of death.

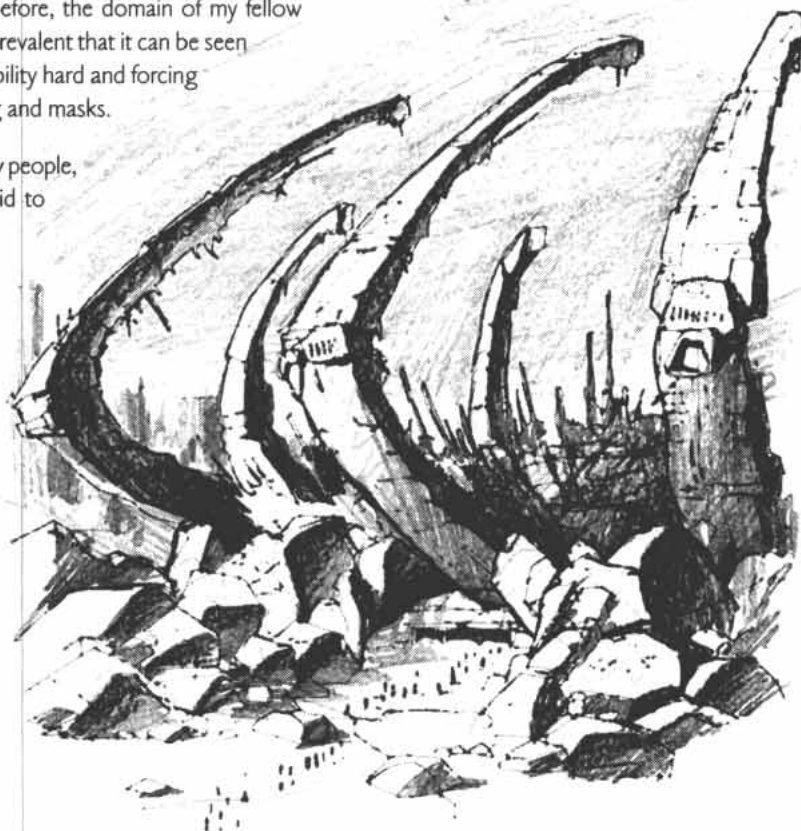
Other Serfs are not so lucky. Some live in huge breeding farms, where it is they that are bred for their inhuman masters. Those who are too old to breed are killed and skinned by their fellow Serfs. If the tribes need any excuse to wage war upon the Z'bri, they should open their eyes and see for themselves the horrors they allow despite their supposed victory.

The Rust Wastes

A relative bastion from the tribes, the Rust Wastes is an area dominated by lumbering structures of steel and machinery. Nothing grows here; a fine layer of rust coats everything for kilometers around, occasionally blown into the air by strong winds giving rise to fierce Rust or Blood Storms (when the rain mixes in with the rust) that can blot out whole sections for days.

The core of the Rusts Wastes is a labyrinth of corroded buildings and complexes from the World Before, the domain of my fellow Keepers. Here, the rust is so prevalent that it can be seen floating in the air, making visibility hard and forcing us to wear protective clothing and masks.

The Wastes are the home of my people, the Keepers, if we can be said to have a home at all.



The Port

The vacant structures of a port dominate the southern shores of Vimary. The Rust Wastes have claimed some of the port, especially those structures found farther east, while those just south of Bazaar are home to some of the oldest sections of the city that once stood here. The one thing these areas have in common is that they have been flooded since the Ending Times. Here, beneath the waters of the Great River, lie what must be the most ancient of ruins. On a clear day, when the Great River's current is not too strong, one can still see the ancient stone buildings, cobble streets and bronze statues beneath the waters. Here too, one can see the hulks of derelict and sunken ships rising from the waters of the ancient port like sentinels of a forgotten age.

In the more habitable areas of the Port, the tribes have moved in, living on the roofs and upper floors of the sunken buildings. Of note, Tera Sheba's tribe lives here in what they call the Sunken City, surrounded by the somber and dour facade of the past.

A Kingdom of Shadows

From the journals of Deus, Fallen poet:

So what lies beneath the waters of the port? Treasures, relics, who knows? Its quiet and serene canals, the flooded interior of refineries and the lure of derelict ships draw people there. Some come when they want to be alone, when they want to steal a glimpse of how things were in the past, to roam the silent warehouses, or swim through old offices and homes. Though there are many treasures down in the depths, most leave them — they belong to the ghosts of the Sunken City. It's a hallowing experience to see the vacant skull of one's ancestors, its eyes dark but speaking silent volumes of what may have happened. Some say that if you stay down there long enough you will hear their haunting voices, like sirens of old luring you deeper and deeper until you drown.

There are always those greedy enough to steal from the dead.

The South Tier Bridge

From the travelogue of Alta Vorh, Keeper and archeologist:

Located within the flooded streets of the Sunken City lie the ramps that lead to the colossal ruin of the South Tier Bridge. This immense steel bridge spans the length of the Great River and connects Vimary to the Outlands beyond. Although heavily rusted and missing a few sections, the South Tier bridge is in relatively good shape. At its apex rests a small market where the tribes trade with those Squats that live off the island. A Joanite tower protects the bridge and keeps an eye on the settlement of Hom found on a small island directly below the bridge. Even so, the outcasts of Hom have built a series of pulleys and elevators that allow them to use the under section of the bridge, unbeknownst to the tribes.



Mek

A Jacker of some repute — some even call him their leader — Mek hangs around Junks (see p.107). He is always looking for more brave fools to join him on hunting parties into the northern lands. He is a strong individual, both mentally and physically, and there is far more to him than mere bloodlust. He has enemies among the Joanites and the Watch has arrested him twice, and tortured him both times. Just what Mek's crime was remains hidden from others. Earning his respect is hard, but once someone does, she has a friend for life, even if philosophy separates them.

Highlights: Determined, stoic, honorable

Attributes: APP -1, BLD +1, FIT +1, WIL +1

Eminences: Fury and Bravery

Skills: Archery 1/0, Athletics 2/+1, Combat Sense 2/0, Dodge 2/0, Hand-to-Hand 2/0, Intimidate 2/+1, Leadership 2/0, Melee 3/0, Navigation (land) 1/0, Notice 1/0, Riding 1/0, Sneak 1/0, Survival 2/0, Tactics 1/0, Throwing 1/0



Troy Fenys

Herites can be terrifying, and none more than the silent Fenys. She wears the marks of a Herite crusader and carries on her a number of tribal trinkets, things she's found, according to her. In truth she's a brutal assassin and her trinkets are trophies, belonging to those she's killed. Most are priests and lackeys of the Seven Deaths. Both before and after she seeks out a kill, Fenys spends her time at Ile Perdue, using sado-masochistic pleasures to literally whip herself into a frenzy of hatred. She has forgotten the Herite mandate of freedom and seeks only the death of the tribes.

Highlights: Sexual, fearsome, deadly, silent

Attributes: APP+1, AGI +1, PER +1, PSY -1

Eminences: Sensuality, Recognition

Skills: Acrobatics 1/+1, Camouflage 2/0, Combat Sense 2/+1, Disguise 1/0, Dodge 2/+1, Hand-to-Hand 2/+1, Herbalism (poisons) 1/0, Melee 2/+1, Notice 2/+1, Seduction 2/+1, Sleight-of-Hand 1/+1, Sneak 2/+1, Throwing 2/+1

The Tribes

Although the tribes call Vimary their home, in truth it is the settlement of Bazaar that is the hub of tribal activity. The majority of the tribal population lives within this settlement, located in the ruins of the ancient city's core, nestled in abandoned buildings, makeshift grottos and villages. The tribes have essentially built a new settlement on top of the ruins of the pre-End city. It is from here that the other tribal settlements span like spokes from a wheel, slowly spreading across the southern and western portions of the island of Vimary.

In the last few years, a number of tribal outcasts — those known as the Fallen — have begun to make their homes on two small islands just a few hundred meters from the Sunken City under the looming South Tier Bridge. Originally barren islands, the Eighth Tribe has transformed them into a thriving settlement known as Horn.



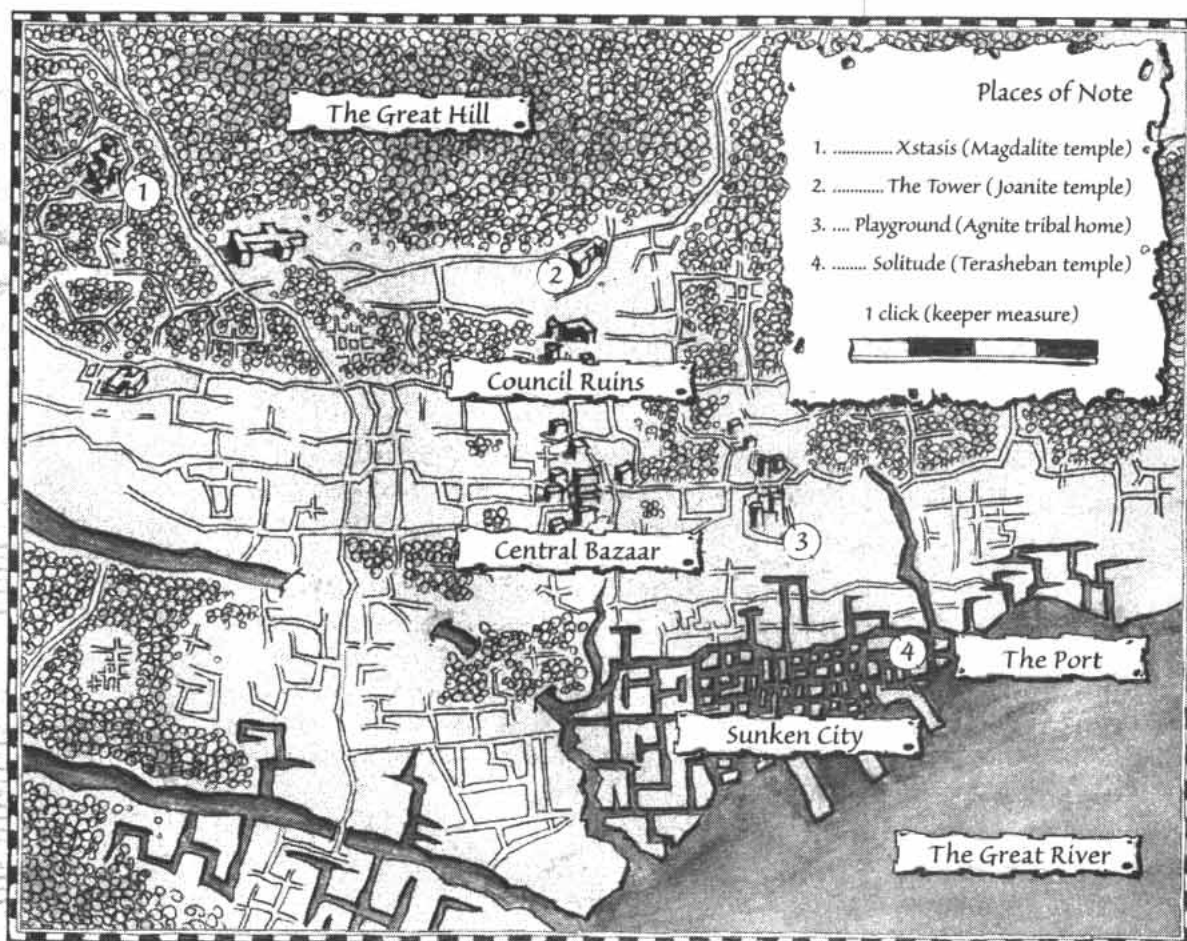
Bazaar

Anna Sera, Fallen Dahlian, speaks to Ural, a newly banished Yagan:

So, Ural, I can tell that you've spent most of your days near Mortuary, home of the Yagans. It's written all over your pale skin. Toiling day in and out in murky graves and crypts, it's time to see the light of day! Don't be insulted, it's just that you are one of us now, one of the Eighth Tribe, and there is much to learn. Now, come with me, there are a few places I want to show you before we leave for Hom. Let's start with Bazaar.

What you already know is that Bazaar is the largest market and gathering place for the Seven Tribes: its many stalls, tents, shrines and homes practically define tribal life. Yet Bazaar is really nothing more than a ghost town. True, the tribes have given it a facelift, but underneath you can still see the skeletal frames of the ancient buildings, the wind howling through their vacant rooms. Architecturally, it is a mishmash of scavenged parts and rubble. Buildings from before the End — those still standing that is — have been cannibalized, their interiors gutted into small markets or temples while their exteriors are decorated with a few scavenged lights, leather tarps and runes.

Wood and steel bridges span the chasms between buildings on the lower levels. These, combined with the chaotic shacks and stalls of the market, have turned the street level into a maze. During the winter, huge leather, rubber and canvas tarps are draped over central areas of Bazaar, shielding it from the snow, but most of the business during the cold months is done indoors in the Emporiums.





Yasmin Luther'on (Watch Commander)

Once one of Joan's mightiest warriors, Yasmin was born in the first decade after liberation and the weariness of age is beginning to take its toll. She has served as a Blade of Joan for all her life and risen to prominence in her clan and tribe, but has never been approached to join the Templars, the priestesses of Joan. She feels slighted by this and distrusts the Templars who serve in the Watch. Bitterness makes a her a stern commander and she is directly responsible for the Watch's brutal methods with outsiders. Verra Thaim'on, a Terasheban High Judge (see p. 64), has taken advantage of Yasmin's resentment to make the Joanite her lackey. She gives Yasmin the validation Joan will not, and in return gets unfaltering loyalty and zeal.

Highlights: Bitter, stern, powerful

Attributes: FIT +1, PER +1, PSY -1,
WIL +2

Skills: Archery 2/0, Athletics 2/0,
Combat Sense 3/+1, Dodge 2/0,
Hand-to-Hand 3/0, Intimidation 3/
0, Investigation 1/+1, Leadership 3/
0, Melee (sword) 3/0, Notice 2/0,
Tactics 2/0

Theren's Den

They are other places of interest around Bazaar for us Fallen, like Theren's Den, just east of the main market. Now Theren himself is a Dahlian, as I once was, but he is fairly open minded about the Eighth Tribe. Being more of a business man, he knows that banishment would hurt his profits, and besides, he always lets us in if we agree to pay. I guess if there was ever any sort of neutral ground between us and the tribes, it would have to be Theren's Den; most are willing to accept you as long as you keep your distance.

Now, what is interesting about Theren is what he's done to the place. Theren's Den is many things: it is a tavern, a brothel, an inn. However, it is the working image machine that Khronos owns — he's a Keeper — that lures people in. With this relic, he continually plays clips he has salvaged. Most are silent and fragmented, not to mention scratchy, but they still hold a bit of magic. It always get me a bit depressed; I mean, some of the images are so beautiful they make me long for the way life used to be. And then there are the violent ones. Sometimes I wonder if our ancestors did not deserve what happened to them.

The Emporiums

The Emporiums are essentially indoor markets, built within huge multilevel amphitheaters from the World Before. The ground levels are essentially extensions of the outdoor market while the upper levels serve more social purposes, housing taverns and inns. The subterranean levels, however, are connected to the other emporiums by a treacherous and dimly lit network of tunnels. These passages are home to a number of 'domesticated' Squats and a few Keepers. Here, if you don't mind the smell, you can find things the tribes would rather you didn't, including Keeper stuff and the occasional secret. Rumors persist that some tunnels lead Below, into the bowels of the island, but only the Keepers know for sure.

The Council Ruins

Just to the north of Bazaar, in a secluded lot, lies the largest puppet house ever created. Don't look so forlorn, Ural; the Grand Council of the Seven Tribes, though they surely mean well, are nothing put pawns to the Fatimas. Surrounded by crumbling walls and weather-beaten columns, the Council Ruins are the remnants of some ancient building. Their interior is full of dimly lit hallways and small rooms, all covered with ivy. The ceiling is a patchwork of canvas and leather that fails to keep the rain out. As you can guess, its atmosphere is utterly suffocating; everyone walks about silently, softly whispering and plotting without being aware of the manipulations of the Fatimas. A place to avoid, more out of boredom than anything else, though Joan and her lackeys make a point of keeping a visible presence.

The Watch

Most Joanites are fanatical, but the Watch is an interesting case, where they are more like Shebans than pure Joanites. You can see them patrolling the streets of Bazaar and the Council Ruins ready to judge, try and punish those they see committing crimes. Understanding what they define as crime, now that's not so easy. I have seen a Watch patrol stand idly by while some tribals beat a Keeper to death, or seen them publicly sever a shoplifter's hand for stealing. Their leader, Yasmin Luther'on, has no patience for us of the Eighth Tribe. This is a sentiment she shares with a majority of the Watch, and a reason they have been given such leeway by Tera Sheba and Joan.

Tribal Lands

I would be lying to you if I just told you the tribes lived only in Bazaar, but you already know this, as most tribals spread their time equally among Bazaar, their tribe's homelands and their homesteads. Follow me, don't be worried, this building looks like it will collapse any minute, but the view from the roof is unbelievable. There I will show you what I mean, and tell you a thing or two about the tribes which you did not know, including secrets about the Yagans.

The Sunken City and Solitude

Look to the south, past Bazaar, all the way to the shore of the Great River, where you can see the Sunken City, home to Tera Sheba and her cronies. There, see that tall cold stone building, the tallest rising from the waters of the Great River that have tuned cobbled streets into canals, that's Tera Sheba's temple, Solitude. Most members of her tribe have made their home on the roofs of the ancient stone buildings and warehouses of the Sunken City, well above the waters of the Great River and the flooded streets. It's fitting that the Fatima of traditions and laws has made Her home amidst the oldest ruins of the World Before. Of all the tribes, the Shebans are most reliant on other tribes for their survival. Although they have transformed a few rooftops into gardens and plots, the Shebans have to trade with the Evans for most of their food.

The many Sheban homesteads that surround Solitude all abide by strict curfew laws, and are permeated by an atmosphere of paranoia as neighbors continually spy on each other trying to root out dissidents and deviants.





Den-Hades

Den-Hades, like Halos, calls herself a Guide. She lives in Hom, spending most of her time in the Temple among Doomsayers. When not there, she roams the settlement, speaking prophecy to those who would listen. It is her habit to seek out those newly Fallen and take them in hand, teaching them the ways of Dream. She is very rough on her students and berates them constantly, her voice tinged with anger. Halos, her lover, says that she bears great guilt and teaches as retribution — but he will not say what her crime was; it is possible that even he does not know. Despite her difficult ways, she has made allies among the Fallen, including Deus and Kymber.

Highlights: Deformed, haunted, nasty

Attributes: AGI -1, APP -2, BLD -1, INF +1, KNO +2, PSY +2

Eminences: Fate, Mystery

Skills: Craft (jewels) 2/0, Dreaming 3/+2, Herbalism 2/+2, Human Perception 2/+2, Lore (River of Dream) 2/+2, Lore (Synthesis) 3/+2, Mythology 2/+2, Ritual 3/+2, Teaching 2/0, Synthesis 3

Xstasis

Just North of Sanctuary on the western slopes of the Great Hill, lost in a maze of crumbling walls, mansions and large willow trees, lies Xstasis, temple of desire, secrets and deadly passions. Magdalen's temple and tribal lands are both welcoming and unsettling. Walking into a Magdalite homestead or Her temple is an experience not quickly forgotten. There, nothing is sacred or safe — including your body and your deepest secrets. Magdalen Herself has a thing for roses. Everywhere you go you can see them, silent, tempting, beckoning you to touch their velvety petals, only to have your finger pricked by their thorns. To Her, pain is just as enjoyable as pleasure.

Magdalite homesteads are luxurious homes and pleasure palaces; complete with winding hallways, secret passages, secluded gardens and opulent rooms for Her whores to ply their trade. Never — and I mean never — trust a Magdalite. You just never know what they really want from you...

Sanctuary

To the West of Solitude and the Sunken City, within the rich fields and irrigation ditches of Lai, you can find the home of the Evans. Of all the tribes, Eva's tribal lands are the largest, with many small farming hamlets dotting the Lain canal. One can get to Griffentowne with little difficulty by raft, either using the canals or the river. Most of these farming hamlets are usually far apart from each other, each home to one family, though larger ones could house as many as two or three. It is this sense of isolation, both from other Evans and the other tribes, that have made the Evans fairly open minded, and most would be willing to put up Fallen for the night. A word of advice though: some are very protective of their privacy, so don't go poking around where you shouldn't.

It's fitting that the Evans call their land Sanctuary since they've done much to reclaim it from the rubble that marks most of Vimary. Gone are the many ruins from the World Before, much to the chagrin of the Keepers. They've been replaced by large fields and small wooded glades. Eva's temple is unique. A huge flowering plant, it spreads across a large glade in Lai. The petals open with each morning, often revealing the sacred form of Eva Herself for the tribe to worship.



Mortuary

You could probably tell me more of the Yagan home than I know, but there are a few things these eyes have seen that will turn your head. Remember, they are the ones who cast you out; you did nothing but believe something they did not want to hear. They're the lost ones, not you. Mortuary gives me the creeps. I am sure that at one point Mortuary was the tallest structure on the island; a huge monolithic monument crowned by a golden dome built on the slopes of the Great Hill, looming over the city. Now the dome no longer rests on top, its weight has long since brought it crashing down into the interior of a tremendous monastery. The thick stone walls are dotted with grottos and crypts, not to mention the thousands of birds that make their home here as well. How do you live with all those birds? Even on a rainy day, flocks of ravens surround the Mortuary. The "eyes of Baba Yaga," you call them; carrion and pests would be better names.

Nonetheless, the Yagans have done their best to provide for themselves, because few tribes trade with them. They tend to their fields within the cemeteries that line Mortuary. Given the abundance of bones, most Yagans harden them with special resins and use them as building materials. They use the bones to build furniture and even whole structures. Yagan bone-carving is rather beautiful, but unsettling.

The Towers

Past Mortuary and along the crest of the Great Hill, you can see the towers of Joan. These towers form the first border between the tribes and the Z'bri — the greatest lie the Seven Deaths have ever spun. The Z'bri could walk into Bazaar whenever they wanted to, it's just the occasional sacrifice the Fatimas give them that keeps them quiet. Ever wondered why some out-of-the-way homestead is suddenly massacred, and the tribes blame the Squats? It's because the Fatimas allow the Z'bri to take what they want; what do the Deaths care? Everyone believes them.

Each Tower is the Joanite equivalent of a homestead, supported by those warriors either too old or too wounded to fight. Though referred to as towers, not every one is a tower by strict definition. Some can be lookouts, others fortresses, but it's what they call them.

Joan's temple, the Watchtower, looms over the Council Ruins. At its base and in the few fields around the southern slopes of the Great Hill, Her mighty tribe practices their art of war. Granted, seeing their formations is impressive, but they are fighting a losing battle. They are nothing but glorified watchdogs kept on a tight leash by Joan, and an even tighter one by Tera Sheba.



Hal Ninva

A Terasheban is always a Terasheban. There are exceptions, like Mordecai of the Seeds of Eden cell, who spends his time minding his own business.

Hal, on the other hand — he's a recent exile — has done his best to keep everyone at each other's throats. He has made promises to the Herites and Jackers while saying something different to everyone else. He is fueled by a vision of the future: he sees the Eighth Tribe rising under his leadership and gaining a seat at the Grand Council, or even pushing aside the Seven Tribes. As far as he is concerned, it is time for the Fallen to get behind a leader and claim their place in destiny. If not, he claims, they will stay in Hom forever. His methods are dangerous, but he is attracting many more followers.

Highlights: Charismatic, deceptive, iron will

Attributes: INF +2, KNO +1, WIL +1

Eminences: Conviction and Truth

Skills: Dreaming 1/0, Etiquette 2/+2, Hagglng 1/+2, Human Perception 2/0, Interrogation 2/0, Investigation 2/0, Law 2/+1, Leadership 3/+2, Read/Write (tribal) 2/+2

Playground

Ah, the home of the Child, Agnes Herself. The other Fatimas seem to have a method to their madness, but Agnes, now there is a twisted one. On the outside, Playground is innocent enough. Found in and around one of the largest Emporiums, it is nothing more than that — a playground. Here, kids of all ages rule; the adults do all the work while the Agnites have fun. You can see some of the influence of Dahlia as the whole place has a carnival atmosphere, but some of the games are just downright cruel. Playground is a place where your wishes might come true, but at the same time so can your worst nightmares. If you are young, then you have nothing to fear from Playground, but once you are older, then you have to be careful.

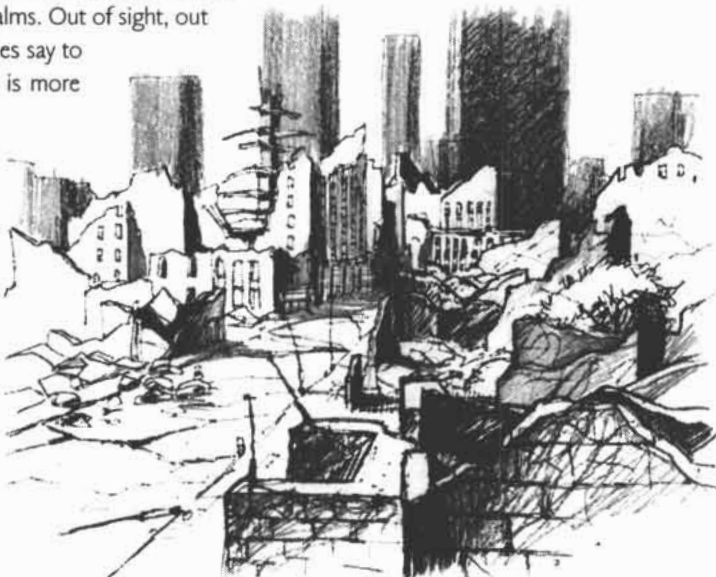
The Caravan

So where are Dahlia's lands? Well, my dear Ural, the answer, I guess, would have to be wherever you found yourself today. Yes, Dahlia has a temple, and it's anywhere She wants it to be, and within the hearts and minds of Her tribe. Most Caravans are traveling carnivals and markets, each housing a number of diversions, from plays to "fun houses." One thing is for certain, however: if you ever enters a Caravan, you may never find your way out. That's just the nature of the Trickster. Some are lucky and find their way out after undergoing a harrowing journey of self-discovery, others become enamored with Dahlia's illusions and never leave.

Given Dahlia's power of illusion, Her temple does not have a fixed location. Rather, in the deepest part of a Caravan, surrounded by concentric circles of other tents and shows, pathways to Dahlia's temple lie hidden. They say that only those who are ready or expected can ever find their way there or back. Equal parts haunted house, hall of mirrors and freak show, Her temple is a place where nothing is what it seems.

The Skyrealms

Well, it's getting late now, best not be up here once the sun goes down, one just never knows what lives in the forgotten upper floors of these buildings, especially in the Skyrealms. Out of sight, out of mind, I am sure that is what the tribes say to themselves, but a Z'bri you can't see is more deadly than the one you can. Why some Beasts leave the Ziggurat and come to Bazaar I don't know, nor do I care. Maybe it's a form of punishment, exile, or maybe they just crave fresh victims. So they come, settle into the abandoned roofs of the tallest buildings, and make their nests there. Occasionally, you can see a shape slither in or out, but the Z'bri themselves are seldom seen.



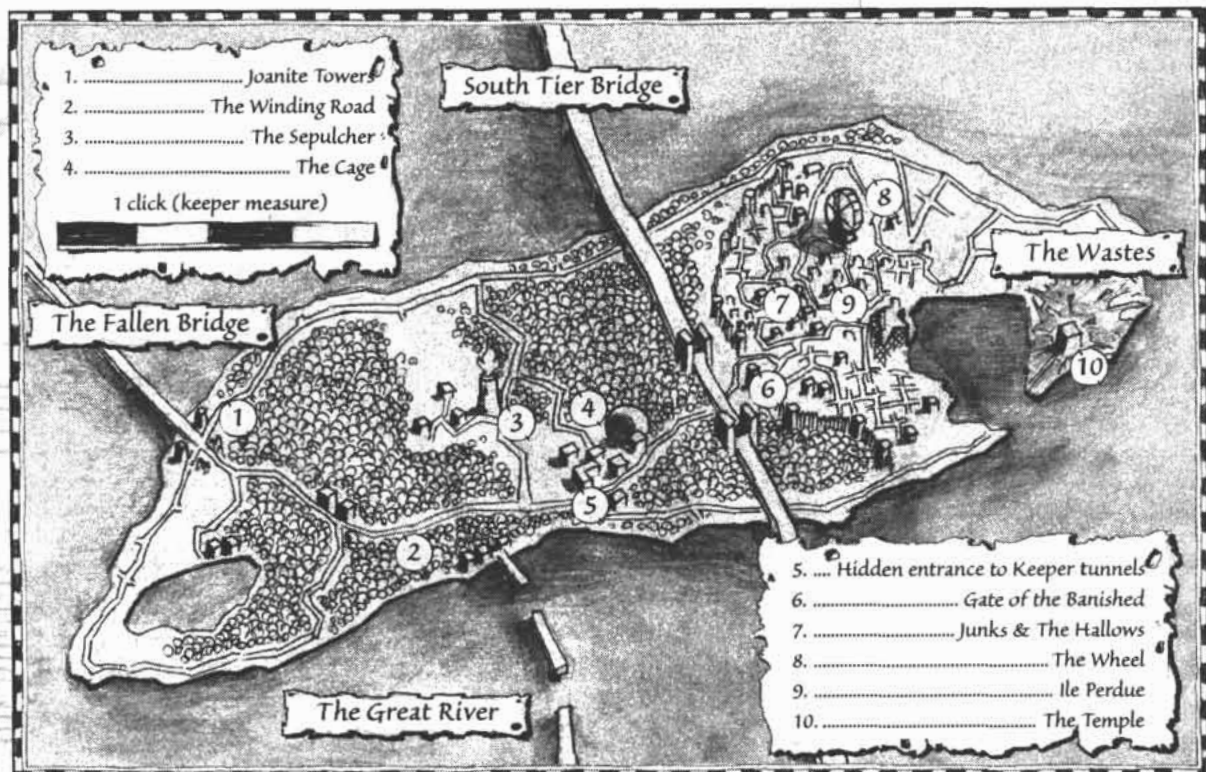
Hom

Anna Sera, Fallen Dahlian, speaks to Ural, a newly banished Yagan:

You can see Hom as you cross the Fallen Bridge, a small settlement under the looming shadow of the South Tier bridge. From afar it looks like nothing, a motley collection of shacks, patched-up buildings, tents and dives — a home for those who no longer belong. The area that surrounds Hom itself we call the Barrens. Nothing grows there, except ruins and dust. Some have made their homes there, mainly the Doomsayers. There's something about the swirling dust and rubble that attracts them. Some Squats live there as well, though they prefer the shanty towns that dot the island of Hom instead. Really depressing places, some of them, you can smell the death and excrement as you pass by. Occasionally, tribals come here in packs and kill as many of the Squats as they can, beating any Fallen who gets in their way.

This was originally a place of death — a no-man's land, a place that the tribes said was cursed. Many summers ago, the small hollow island of Hom — hollow because the Keepers believe it was man-made, and that it has tunnels running under it — was nothing but a barren rock. A place where criminals, Squats and the occasional Z'bri were sent in exile, isolated from the island by the turbulent rapids of the Great River. But that was then. Over the years, the few who survived (and the many more who were cast out) transformed the island from a desolate place into what you see now. Small fields cover the small island, though we still need to trade because we are not fully self-reliant. It makes the times when the tribes close the Fallen Bridge more bearable.

When compared to its surroundings, Hom is more lively; there are few places in Vimary that are as dynamic and vibrant. See, we have nothing except what we make for ourselves, and we see Hom as our chance to remind the tribes of who they cast out. The tribes would love to see us wallow in our misery, so instead we revel in our freedom and use every opportunity to show how lucky we are. Remember this, Ural, Hom is our Eden and bastion, a place to call home. A place to belong. Now come, it's getting late and it's not safe to be caught outside Hom after nightfall. We're almost there, just over the Fallen Bridge...





Veruka the Wraith

Once Fallen get past her looks, her skeletal face and vacant eyes, and get to know the Wraith, they see why she is so important to the Eighth Tribe. She has the ear of Kymber, Hal and a few of the other influential cells. When she speaks, a silence fills the air, and everyone listens intently. She knows everyone by name and has the uncanny knack of showing up when she is most needed. A Doomsayer, she constantly brings the Fallen back on the path of prophecy. She quotes from Joshua and his tribe, and drives her new people towards their future. Unfortunately, she is very old and frail. Many fear she won't survive another winter.

Highlights: Wise, frail, haunting

Attributes: AGI -2, APP -2, BLD -1,
CRE +1, FIT -1, KNO +1, PSY +2,
WIL +1

Eminences: Mystery and Fate

Skills: Dreaming 2/+2, Healing 1/+1,
Herbalism 1/+1, Human Perception
1/+2, Intimidate 2/-1, Lore (Death)
3/+1, Lore (Joshua) 2/+1, Mythology
2/+1, Read/Write (secret Yagan
tongue) 2/+1, Ritual 2/+2, Synthesis
(Dream Travel, Cirse of Dream) 3

The Fallen Bridge

Even now we are still at the mercy of the tribes, so to speak. There is only one bridge that connects Hom to Vimary. Even though the South Tier bridge looms overhead, it is impossible to get to unless you don't mind climbing or riding in a basket. The Fallen bridge is in very poor condition. Large sections of it collapsed long ago and only our makeshift efforts keep it from falling into the river below.

Two Towers of Joan constantly guard the access to and from Hom. Usually, the guards leave the bridge open, letting one pass if she pays their toll (whatever you have that they want), but violence is not unheard of. Even so, every so often, Tera Sheba gets it in Her mind that She's had enough of us and orders the bridge closed, meaning hard times for us. The bridge can stay closed for hours, days or weeks in an attempt to starve us, but it only makes us stronger.

And besides, it's not the only way off Hom. During the winter, ice floes make travel across possible but hazardous, and in the summer some of us with sailboats can ferry you back to Vimary for a small price.

In a pinch, the Keepers are also willing to ferry us to and from Vimary in their tunnels. Though far from safe, it is a better alternative than being stranded. How they get you to the tunnel, that's their secret. They usually blindfold you, that's the only price they charge. Once in the partially flooded tunnels, small rafts guided by the Keepers make the long journey to Vimary. Once there, the Keepers lead you through a maze of tunnels (I guess to purposefully get you lost) and leave you in one of the lower Emporiums. It's all a matter of trust. The Keepers like their secrets to be kept secret, and besides I've heard chilling tales of what they are capable of when dealing with those who've betrayed them. There's nobody to hear you scream in their tunnels.



The Den of the Banished

Hom is many things, part fortress and part shanty town, but it's a place we can call our own. The original ruins of Hom, of which only a few stand, are nothing but twisted metal skeletons and strange structures, one of which is an enormous wheel that remains intact and serves as a watch tower. Ulysses, a Keeper, says that he's read about places like this, places where people went to ride fantastic machines in the World Before. Even now, it seems you can hear the laughter of our ancestors, laughing not knowing the horrors that waited for them.

Today, Hom is a winding collection of huts and buildings, all of them found near the Gallows. Most of them have been built from the ground up, giving it a unique atmosphere. Hom is the first step for us and something we take pride in. Unlike the tribal lands, Hom is a bit of this and a bit of that; we borrow from everywhere, from the Keepers, from the tribes. It is not uncommon to see effigies of Joshua made from colored-glass or banners commemorating a cell's accomplishment. Although Hom is rather cramped, there is still room for its few hundred inhabitants, but some are starting to move back into Vimary, or into the shanties surrounding Hom. I fear that as more Fallen arrive and we're forced to share the little space we have, tensions between us will rise to dangerous levels.

Aside from the Keepers, Halos and Den-Hades, a couple of Squats make their home here as well. Though we all respect each other, there are some sections that are more dangerous than others. Our dependence on trade means that we must occasionally deal with Squats, and every so often they come in their barges. Trading with them is difficult; we send only the best negotiators.

This does not mean that Hom is safe from Squat raids, on the contrary. During the winters, Squats often try to storm the island in small bands, driven by hunger and envy. Most attacks are acts of desperation, and usually end in their destruction. It's the Squats that live on Vimary itself that are more dangerous. Those that attack Hom are just insane.

Enough with the history lesson, let me show you around.

The Gate of the Banished

The looming Gate of the Banished is the threshold all banished cross when first entering Hom. It's nothing more than an immense freestanding arch, of the walls that once must have surrounded it only rubble remain. Etched on its intricate iron frame and wooden beams are the names of the banished. Some of the names are old and faded, others fresh and bitter, scrawled with rage and anguish. Each is unique, a testament to the pain and anger we feel when we first arrive to our new home. Even so, some cannot bear their new status as exiles. Those unlucky few spend a few days hovering around the gate, never entering and eventually head off into the unknown. For some, the mantle of the Eighth Tribe is too much to bear.



Kymber Reva

Kymber was the first to organize the rants, and in many ways settles whatever disputes she can. As a former Evan, she's been instrumental in organizing the Eighth Tribe, moving the Fallen along the way to self-reliance. She still has contacts with the Evans, and many suspect, with her children. Some chide her for this, and others are resentful that she has taken steps in trying to organize the outcasts. She is not interested in material power, however, and usually complies with the requests of Hal Ninva (see p. 101). Her gentle ways might be her undoing. She is rarely willing to take direct action against the tribes, even after one of the Fallen is beaten or killed. She is even hesitant with the Z'bri. In the end, she might not have what it takes to lead the Eighth Tribe.

Highlights: Motherly, gentle, intelligent

Attributes: APP +1, BLD -1, INF +1, PSY +1

Eminences: Unity and Empathy

Skills: Agriculture 2/0, Animal Handling 2/0, Hagglng 3/+1, Healing 3/0, Herbalism 2/0, Leadership 2/+1, Synthesis 1



Deus (Lightbringer Poet)

Deus is another one of Hom's "leaders," though he is more interested in writing and exploring than trying to bring Fallen together. He is a Magdalite outcast and people claim that he was Magdalen's lover — something he neither denies or affirms. Finding Deus is never a problem, his flamboyant nature and dress give him away every time. He does have his dark side, however. For days he will enjoy himself at Junks, and then, without warning, he will leave to roam the ruins of Vimary looking for any hint of the past. He has flirted with the idea of joining the Keepers, but he knows they would not take him. So he spends his days writing of the past, and of the future to come. He writes his poems all over the walls of Hom and Vimary, in a futile attempt to reclaim the ruins about him.

Highlights: Poetic, talkative, beautiful

Attributes: APP +2, BLD -1, PER +1, PSY +1

Eminences: Sensuality and Conviction

Skills: Lore (Vimary) 2/0, Notice 2/+1, Read/Write 2/0, Seduction 3/+2, Synthesis (Passion) 2

Sinead Baal

See that name up there? Look closely, it's nearly faded, the one that says Sinead Baal. I hear she was the first, the one that took the first steps into this place, the first of the Eighth Tribe. Nobody I've talk to remembers her, but she left her imprint everywhere in Hom in the form of murals and effigies. Veruka says that when she was young (a rather long time ago), she remembered seeing a lonely shape traveling around Hom, fixing things. I guess Sinead knew we were coming.

The Winding Road

Just past the Gate, the Winding Road opens up, leading travelers into the heart of Hom. Calling the Winding Road a road, or even a path is a misnomer. In some places it is fairly wide, flanked on both sides by stalls, inns and bars, but rounding a corner, one will find cramped, narrow passages that weave through small cul-de-sacs and dingy walkways. Along the many alleyways of the Winding Road, one can find our homes, our dives and our temples, us of the Fallen. Each block or shanty town has its flavor, the cells living there taking great pride in decorating their homes. Over there, see that home there, that's Kymber's place. Kymber, no matter what people say, is as much our leader as is Veruka. Herites, Doomsayers and Jackers mill around, while Keepers hover about in the periphery. Some sections are cleaner than others. To some, the freedom of Hom means they care little for other people's comfort, but luckily they're a minority. Eventually, though, either by following the Winding Road or one of its many alleyways or tributaries, one will arrive at the center of Hom — the Hallows.

The Hallows

One would never guess that the most vibrant and festive section of Hom is really one of its most sacred and hallowed areas. Most do not remember the tales that surround the central hub of Hom, but occasionally you get your overzealous Doomsayer preaching about Joshua's return, or about the many executions that took place here. See, before Hom, before the Fallen claimed this area as our domain, the Hallows were a place of death. It was here that the tribes executed their worst traitors and heretics, whose crimes were so heinous or whose words so blasphemous that even banishment was not an option. I've heard Den-Hades say that it is the souls of those who died here that guide us along our paths, the early visionaries of the Eighth Tribe.

Today, nothing except the silent gallows poles and crosses stand as reminders of the horrors of the past. Nowadays, the Hallows is where the Eighth Tribe gathers; call it a meeting ground for us. Surrounding the Hallows are countless shops, inns and dives (what we call bars) where we flock. Some, like Junks, appeal to us all, while there are some that only the most macabre Sayer would sanely volunteer to go to.

Exodus

It is easy, Ural, to forget that even with all that is happening, all the gatherings and festive atmosphere, that all is not well in Hom. Not that long ago, right here, the Exodus occurred. A few seasons ago, a Doomsayer named Yefette claimed to have seen a vision, and many — including myself — believed him. You should have seen his face and heard his words, they sounded so true...

He gathered his followers and in one night four dozen of us died. Yefette claimed that Joshua called from beyond, that it was time to return. So he gathered his followers and they all took their lives. All except me, I didn't have the courage. Now I'll never know if I did the right thing or not...

Having Fun

Didn't mean to sour things, it's just important to remember that we still have far to go and that some will get lost along the way. I thought Dahlians knew how to party, but we have them beat by a long shot. Like it or not, we're a community; yes, a bit scattered and fragmented, but we're all exiles. We all have a story to tell. Most of the time, you'll see us gathering and talking, enjoying the company of others. During the day, we roam and explore Vimary, learn and teach, but at night, when Dahlia covers the Earth in shadows, we play. Some dance and put on plays, others enjoy a cool honey drink, some open themselves to the Great River of Dream and enjoy its potential. Yeah, Ural, we know how to have good time...

Junks

Just off the Hallows, near the Winding Road, through that weather-beaten door, lies Junk. Even from the outside its name describes it best, it is nothing more than a sprawling junk heap. Crossing the door, you enter into a meandering collection of small rooms and corridors, each decorated with knickknacks, relics and of course junk. Music fills the air, played by the Sound of Destruction, a cell of Fallen who play every night. Clouds of smoke drift through the rooms, filled with the dim light of candles. Most have mismatched chairs and tables that people use to play games on, or just share tales.

Here, at any time, day or night, you can see the myriad faces of the Eighth Tribe. Though often crowded, there is always just enough room for more. The drinks are cheap and the atmosphere is energetic. Though lately tensions have been high, some cells like the Herite Raven's Shadow and Jacker Torrents have used Junk as a place to air their grievances — and exchange blows.

Barber, Junk's owner, employs those newly exiled who have not yet found a cell to join, happy to give them a home and chance to meet their new family. His patronage does come with a slight price, however: he can call in a favor at any time. He is not vindictive about this, and most "favors" are just requests for information really. Like Veruka and Kymber are mother figures to us, Barber is a father figure. Though not as old as the Wraith, Barber — a Dahlian like myself — is always ready with a quick tale and if there's anything you need to know, he's the best place to start asking.



Altara Ven

Altara Ven is Deus' lover and companion, and she's the one responsible for turning his energies towards more concrete goals. Altara has been long at work trying to unite the Fallen, but the former Agnite's youth means that few take her seriously. Her vibrant determination often intimidates others, who see her and her lover as rivals. On two occasions, unknown assailants attacked her, blinding her in her right eye. Now, more somber, she's learnt that the greatest foe the Eighth Tribe faces is not the tribes or the Z'bri but itself.

Highlights: Vibrant, captivating

Attributes: BLD -1, CRE +1, INF +1,
PER -1, PSY +1

Eminences: Unity and Inspiration

Skills: Craft (leatherwork) 2/+1,
Dreaming 2/+1, Human Perception
2/+1, Leadership 1/+1, Lore
(Joshua) 1/0, Mythology 2/0, Read/
Write (tribal) 2/0, Streetwise 1/+1

Ile Perdue

Lost along one of the many alleyways of the Winding Road, the dive of Ile Perdue is a dark place. Attracting those bitter and resentful towards the tribes, Ile Perdue allows them to vent their anger and wallow in their misery. Here, body piecing, extreme scarification and violent sex are daily occurrences. In the dimly lit rooms, filled with smoke and soft hypnotic music, anything can happen. Some chain themselves to steel bed frames and are flogged by masked individuals, while others lose themselves in flesh-pits.

I'd say only the most embittered go to Ile Perdue, but that's not entirely true. There are times when the pain of banishment is too much to bear, even for those of us who've been exiled for seasons. The torture of seeing loved ones spit at you; the humiliation of being beaten for not believing, all this eventually becomes unbearable.

Don't look so proud, you'll feel it soon as well, and in anger and confusion you'll find yourself at Ile Perdue's doors and you'll do what you have to...

The Temple

You ask what that structure is, that strange building of steel and stone. If you have to know, that is the Temple, home to a great many Doomsayers who call it The Haunt. Day and night they hold mass there, recounting to those willing to listen tales of the coming War, and the path we'll take. They speak of the paradise that awaits, that the time has come to shed light back into the world. Even though their message might be extreme at times, they are the spiritual hearts of the Eighth Tribe. That freak Den-Hades spends her time there, too. She knows a lot about the ways of Synthesis, but she leaves me with a chill.

The Cage

Whereas the Hallows is where we hang out, the Cage is where we gather to discuss important matters or hold our rants. Rants are essentially large gatherings of the Eighth Tribe. Lately, things have been more chaotic, as more and more exiles arrive and some like Hal Ninva seem to purposefully keep us bickering amongst ourselves.

The Cage is a few hundred meters east of the Hallows and is a huge steel dome enclosure. At its center is a concrete platform from where members can address the assembled Eighth Tribe gathered at the foot of the platform, or suspended along the steel framework of the dome.

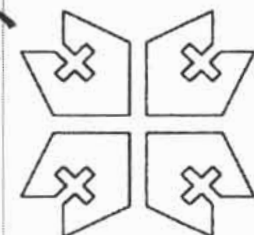
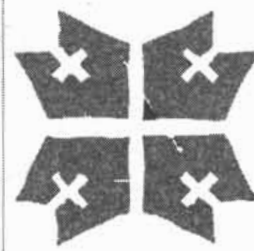
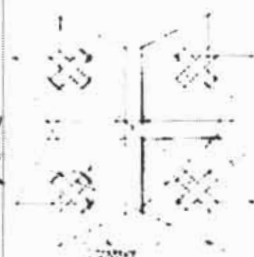
The Cage is also where judgment falls on those who betray our laws. We're very open minded here, everyone is free to do as she pleases, but there are times when some of us go too far. Anyone accused of committing a crime is judged by everyone, judged by her brothers and sisters. Punishment varies; sometimes it is scarring, but in most extreme circumstances the guilty member is placed in the mercy of the assembled crowd — though this has only happened once and those present still have nightmares of that night.

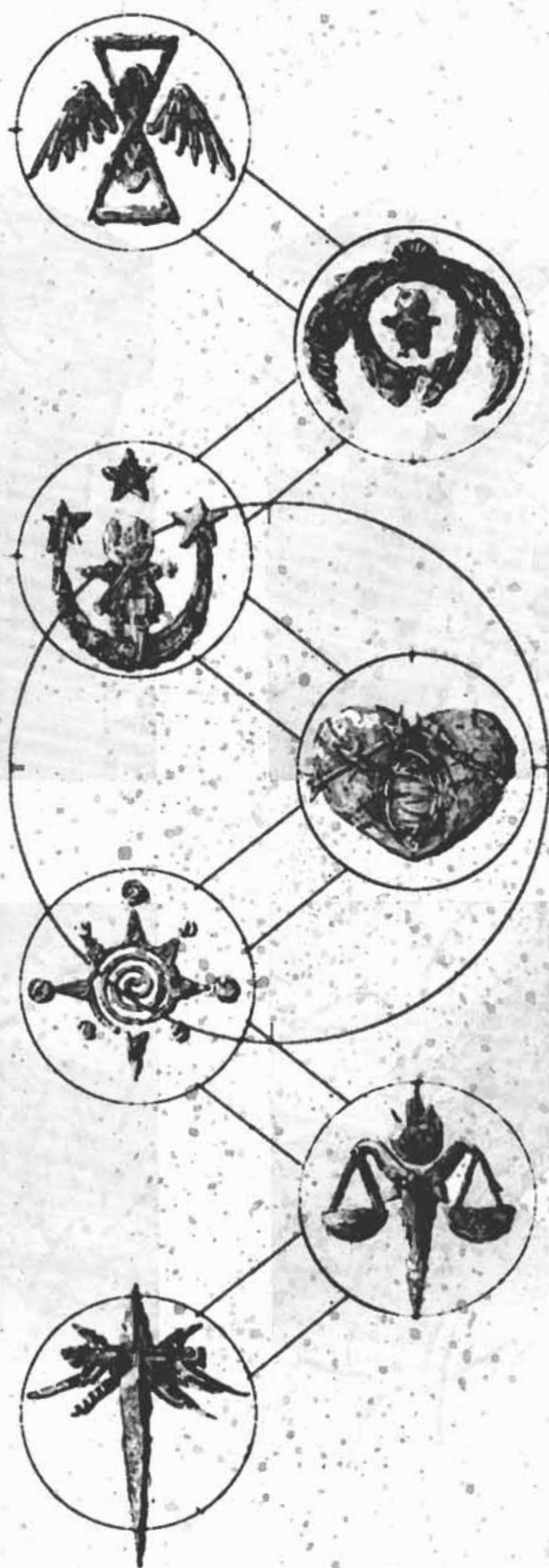
The Sepulcher

The last place I have to show you is the Sepulcher, home to Veruka. The Wraith, as she calls herself, lives in an old tower; at the top of which burns a flame so powerful that it is visible even during the day. I've heard it said that when we finally leave Vimary and venture out, we must bring the flame with us to light our path. And when we do, when we take the flame, darkness will engulf Vimary, and we'll forget the place where we were born. We'll forget the Z'bri and eventually the Fatimas as well. It's sad. I mean, I see the Seven Deaths for who they are, but for them to fade from memory; it just makes me wonder if all of this is worth it in the end, are we all going to be forgotten as well...

Calling it a Night...

As you can see, Horn is a vibrant place. It never sleeps; even in the coldest winter night, you can hear the sounds of the Eighth Tribe gathering. Though we all claim the inheritance of Joshua's Prophecy, reality is much, much different. We are divided and disparate. Each cell has its own version of what it means to be the Eighth Tribe. Though we call each other brothers and sisters, rivals would better describe the way some cells view each other. For all our strength and purpose, we still have much to learn.





WHAT IS ROLEPLAYING?

If you already know what a roleplaying game is, feel free to skip ahead to the next section. If you are unfamiliar with roleplaying games, read on.

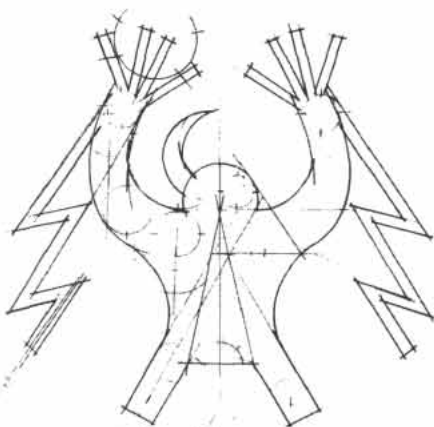
In simple terms, a roleplaying game (or RPG) consists of a group of people — called a **Player Circle** — creating an interactive story. Like an actor in a movie, each Player takes the role of a character. These characters are called, not surprisingly, **Player Characters** or **PCs**. A group of Player Characters in *Tribe 8* is referred to as a **cell**.

One Player does not have a character. Instead, this person, called the **Weaver**, serves in a role that is analogous to a movie's director. It's the Weaver who sets the stage for the game's events. In addition to designing the setting of an adventure, the Weaver is responsible for stocking the setting with an interesting cast of villains, allies and extras. These additional characters are called **Non-Player Characters** or **NPCs**. During a game, one of the Weaver's primary tasks is to slip into the role of any NPC who interacts with the Player Characters. The Weaver's final tasks are to guide the game's progress and arbitrate any conflicts.

Roleplaying games are not divided into specific matches. Instead, RPGs consist of **sessions**, **quests** (often called adventures or scenarios), and **cycles**. A session is simply a period of time, often around two to four hours, that is allotted for play. The length of a session is determined by the schedules of a Player Circle.

A quest is analogous to an episode of a television show. During a quest, the primary plot of the story unfolds. The numerous subplots of a story often advance, but they are not the focus of the quest. Character development should occur, but major changes are infrequent. A quest consists of as many sessions as required to resolve its main plot line (usually one to three sessions for a scenario of moderate complexity).

A cycle is a series of quests that are linked together to shape a larger story. Cycles are similar to television or movie series. As the series progresses, the main characters develop and form strong relationships. As a cycle progresses, Player Characters tend to take on a life of their own. The subplots of previous scenarios often return to haunt the Players and the cycle as a whole moves towards a conclusive goal.



JOSHUA'S

WHAT MAKES IT A GAME?

So what makes roleplaying games any different from improvisational acting? The key difference is that roleplaying games are just that, games. Acting is done with the purpose of entertaining others. Games are played for the purpose of entertaining oneself. Games also have rules and involve an element of chance, and roleplaying games are no exceptions. The abilities of characters are described using various statistics and labels. This information, along with plain-English descriptions of the character's possessions and background, is recorded on a **character sheet** (included at the end of this book). Dice are used to add a random element to the game and keep everyone — including the Weaver — guessing about the outcome of the quest.

Players should never forget that the purpose of a game is to have fun. While they should act out their character's part as much as possible, no one should be forced to perform in any way that makes them uncomfortable. Most roleplayers prefer to sit around a table and use facial expressions, tones of voice and arm movements to convey their characters' actions and emotions. Enthusiastic or dramatic Players often enjoy fully acting out their parts. Shy Players may prefer to describe what their character does. What really matters is that all participants enjoy themselves.

Unlike other games, **roleplaying games are not competitions between the Players**. Roleplayers are expected to work together towards a common cause. The Weaver is responsible for supplying the obstacles and challenges, but he or she is not the Players' enemy. While some rivalry between Player Characters is acceptable, and in some cases even desirable, true conflict between Players is not. Enmities between PCs may lead to disputes between the Players themselves. The classic dispute goes something like, "My character is better than your character!" Such childish idiocy should be nipped in the bud by the group's Weaver. Constantly disruptive Players should be dealt with harshly since they ruin the game for everyone else.

WHAT DO YOU PLAY?

If you have read through Chapters 1 through 6 of this book, you know that **Tribe 8** is a rich fictional world. A group of outcasts, known as the Fallen, is challenging the status quo of the Seven Tribes. In the game, you (the Players) will portray a cell of Fallen who legitimately claim the mantle of the Eighth Tribe. Every cell (and every character, even) will have its own goals, but the overarching story of **Tribe 8** is about establishing the Eighth Tribe and fulfilling the Prophecy of Joshua. This is what you will be doing.

Just how you go about this is completely up to you (and the Weaver, of course). This rulebook and other supplements will provide guidelines, source material and full-fledged scenarios to help guide you, but each cycle should be unique. Some Player Circles will tell stories of action and war, taking battle to the Z'bri and other enemies over and over again; others will tell stories of intrigue, moving about unseen in the halls of tribal power. These (and countless other) options are all viable; it all depends on what story you wish to tell.

You can portray other characters in the world of **Tribe 8**, however. Keepers, Squats and members of the Seven Tribes can be interesting Player Characters. These options will require a little more work from the Weaver for now, but future supplements will provide support of these types of cycles.

GAME SYSTEMS

Tribe 8 uses a set of game rules to quantify elements of the setting and the abilities of characters. It also allows Weavers and Players to easily resolve conflicts and challenges, and to shape the development of a character's skills. **Tribe 8** uses the **Silhouette** rules system, which is detailed in the following chapters. At its core, however, Silhouette is a simple and extremely flexible game engine. Regardless of the permutations introduced later on, the following notions will always remain at the base of every Silhouette game session.

DICE AND DIE ROLLING

The Silhouette system uses everyday six-sided dice (sometimes referred to as "d6") to add a random element to the game. When two or more dice are rolled simultaneously, their results are not added together. Instead, the highest value rolled is considered to be the outcome of the die roll. If more than one "6" is rolled, each extra "6" adds one (1) to the total. If every die rolled turns up "1," the die roll is a Fumble and counts as an overall result of zero. Unless mentioned otherwise, all die rolls are rolled in this way.

The totals of die rolls are often influenced by modifiers. Modifiers are added to the total of a die roll. If negative modifiers lower the total below zero, the final result is zero. Modifiers are not applied to the die roll on Fumbles.

DIE ROLLING EXAMPLES

Example 1:



Player A rolls two dice. The dice read 3 and 2. The total of the die roll is 5 (the highest individual die result).

Example 2:



Player B rolls five dice. The dice read 1, 6, 4, 6, and 6. The total of this die roll is 8 (the highest roll + 2 for the two extra 6's).

Example 3:



Player C rolls three dice. All three dice read 1. She has fumbled the die roll. The result is 0.

Example 4:



Player D rolls two dice and has a +2 modifier. The dice read 1 and 6. The total of the die roll is 7 (highest roll + 2).

FUMBLES

A Fumble is a mistake or mishap that often spells disaster for a Player. It is not necessarily caused by the incompetence of the character, and may be the result of environmental factors. No matter what caused the Fumble, the total die roll is zero. The effects of each separate Fumble must be decided and described by the Weaver. In general, a Fumble should not be fatal. Killing a character because of a bad roll of the dice is a quick way to spoil everyone's fun. Rather, Fumbles should create complications for the character, such as a bow-string snapping or a horse getting spooked.



ACTION TESTS

Many actions involve an element of chance. Did the arrow hit? Did you climb the tree in time to avoid the wolves? In such situations, an **Action Test** is called for. Action tests consist of a die roll whose result is compared to a fixed value called a **Threshold**. Threshold values reflect the difficulty of the task. Higher Thresholds indicate more difficult situations.

Because of the peculiar probability curve of the six-sided die system used by Silhouette, the difficulty level of the Thresholds increases dramatically after 7 — i.e. the progression between Threshold levels is not linear. The Typical Threshold chart (see below) should help to determine the difficulty level of any given test.

If the die roll — with any situation modifier added — surpasses the chosen Threshold, the test succeeds. The degree of success is defined by the **Margin of Success (MoS)**: a value equal to the die roll (plus modifiers) minus the Threshold. The magnitude of the Margin of Success reflects the success of the action test. For example, a MoS of 1 is a marginal success, while a MoS of 6 would be a spectacular success.

If the die roll, again with modifiers added, is less than the Threshold, the test fails. The degree of failure is defined by the **Margin of Failure (MoF)**: a value equal to the Threshold minus the die roll (plus modifiers). A high Margin of Failure indicates a miserably failed action test. For example, a MoF of 1 would be a close call, while a MoF of 6 would be a definite (and potentially dangerous) failure.

If the total die roll and the Threshold are equal, a draw occurs. Draws are often interpreted as marginal successes or ambiguous results. In combat, draws tend to favor the defender.

TYPICAL THRESHOLDS

1	Moronic
2	Routine
3	Easy
4	Moderate
5	Challenging
6	Difficult
7	Very Difficult
8	Extremely Difficult
10	Near Impossible
12+	Pray for Divine Intervention!

RATINGS, SKILLS, AND SKILL TESTS

Characters in Silhouette are rated in terms of their Skills. A Skill is a learned talent or ability that is often improved with practical experience. Skills are used in determining the outcome of Skill tests, a common form of action test. In a **Skill test**, the number of dice rolled is equal to the Skill level of the person involved.

SKILL LEVEL VALUES

Skill Level	Training Quality	Description
0	Untrained	Little or no Skill.
1	Rookie	Basic training. Common Skill level for amateurs.
2	Qualified	Standard skill level for anyone who earns her living using the Skill.
3	Veteran	The truly gifted and old professionals. Represents years of experience.
4	Elite	The best of the best. Individuals whose Skill commands fear, respect, or envy from all in their occupation. Most people never achieve this Skill level, even at their peak. Characters with this Skill level are very, very rare — those with more than one Skill at this level are almost unknown.
5+	Legendary	The best of the best. Living legends and heroes from the great sagas.

RATINGS

Items or individuals are often assigned ratings to indicate how effective they are at a certain task. Both a person's Build Attribute and her Stamina Trait are ratings, as is a vehicle's speed. Many ratings, most notably an individual's Attributes are **Zero-Average Ratings**. They are the ones presented in the plus/minus format (for example +1, 0, -2).

This type of rating assumes that the rating will be used as a modifier for die rolls. An average score is unexceptional, and is therefore rated as a zero. Any below average scores are rated as negative numbers and any above average scores are rated as positive numbers.

Other ratings, such as a person's Stamina or the level of a Skill, are not zero-average. They are always positive and used in different ways. These ratings are explained on a case by case basis in *Chapter 9: Silhouette Systems*.

OPPOSED ACTION TESTS

Often, two people use Skills or other abilities in direct opposition to one another (e.g. one person trying to hit another, who is trying to avoid being hit). In this case, an **Opposed Action Test** occurs: both parties roll dice as if they were performing a standard Action Test and simply compare their results. The highest result wins. A character's Margin of Success or Failure is calculated by subtracting her opponent's result from her own; a positive result is an MoS, a negative one an MoF.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Steph is Weaving a game of **Tribe 8** with two Players: Mark and Jen. They are portraying two Fallen looking to hook up with other Fallen. Their characters are Kross (Mark) and Jezebel (Jen). They expect to meet a contact in Bazaar, but the local authorities are waiting for them.

"Okay," Steph begins, "you've all made it into Bazaar. The spaces between the buildings are filled with people, merchant stalls and pack animals. The sun is starting to set, so bars and taverns are opening for business. You can see a few Joanites knocking back a nasty brew in one of them..."

"Are there other Joanites around?" Mark cuts in.

"A few," Steph answers offhandedly. He knows that members of the Joanite Watch are looking for the PCs, but he doesn't want to give away too much. On the other hand, Kross and Jezebel might be able to pick up that something is wrong. Steph decides a Skill test in order, although it won't be easy. "Roll your Streetwise Skill, Mark. Your Threshold is 5."

Mark rolls the dice. He has the Streetwise Skill at level 2 so he rolls two dice, getting a 4 and a 6. He has no other bonuses, so his final result is 6 and his MoS is (6 - 5 =) 1, a marginal success. "I made it by one," he announces.

Steph quickly interprets the results. "You notice that one of the Joanites at the bar is looking right at you. Her buddy is talking to her, but she's paying attention to you."

"I think we should move," Mark says, slipping into character. "Those warriors are a little too interested, I think."

"Okay, we try to slip away," Jen says.

"Both of you roll your Sneak Skill and tell me your results." The Joanites are actively trying to keep an eye on the PCs, so this calls for an Opposed Roll — the PCs roll Sneak Skill, while the Joanite rolls Notice. Steph rolls Notice (level 2) and gets 2 and 3; the final result is 3. The Players report their results: Mark (Skill level 2) got 5, but Jen (Skill level 1) got 2.

"Jezebel," Steph says, addressing Jen by her character's name because he's describing what happens to her, "you follow Kross, but bump into an old Evan man. He jumps back a bit, mumbling about 'damned youngsters' and draws the Joanites' attention. You see both of them get up and start moving toward you."

Jen looks at Mark and then announces: "We run."

"Okay, you take off through the crowd, with two Joanites hot on your trail. You're both going to have to make Athletics rolls to outrun them."

This is another Opposed Roll. The Joanites both have Athletics level 2, so Mark rolls two dice for them. He gets a result of 3. Then Jen reports her result of 4 and Mark...

"Oh no," he says, looking down at the two dice he just rolled. They both show ones. "I fumbled."

"Jezebel, you glance back to see how far back the Joanites are and you see Kross taking up the rear. He tries to jump over a small stall, but doesn't quite make it. With a crash, he falls to the ground. Before you can react the Joanites are right on top to him. He won't be getting away without help."

"Oh great," Jen says. "I reach for my knife..."

Characters and traits

CHARACTERS AND TRAITS

This chapter details the process of creating Player Characters for **Tribe 8**. It also includes lists of all the basic Attributes, Skills and other traits that define characters, as well as common equipment that Players may wish their characters to use. Players will generally only need to refer to this chapter, although they may wish to refer to the listing of abilities relating to the dream magic of Synthesis, found in *Chapter 10: Synthesis and Spirit*, pp. 160-175. The Weaver should be familiar with it and the rest of the game rules.

CHARACTER CREATION

The Player Characters will be the heroes of your **Tribe 8** cycle, and the more effort that goes into creating and defining them (including personalities, outlooks, relationships and abilities), the more rewarding they will be to play. Each Player is responsible for designing her own character, but this can be a daunting task. This section breaks the process down into a series of simple steps to make it more manageable. You should also remember that there's nothing wrong with simple answers — the point of a game is to have fun, so if you want to play a character who is easily defined, so much the better. The Weaver should be very much involved in character design, providing helpful advice and explaining concepts that might be unclear. She should also try to ensure that the various Player Characters will work well together and fit into the basic concept of her cycle. Fallen Joanites with death wishes may not be appropriate for a hopeful cycle about exploration, for example.

STEP ONE: THE TRIBAL CELL

Tribe 8 is a game about community as much as individualism. The Fallen, while seeking freedom from the Seven Tribes, are also trying to build a new nation and fulfill the Prophecy of Joshua. The Player Circle will portray a cell of Fallen, a group of like-minded outcasts working toward some common goals and aiding each other. They will be sisters, brothers and lovers. To help forge this sense of community, the first step in character creation is to make some decisions about the tribal cell itself. This will allow Players, when they make their individual characters, to design PCs that work well as a group.

The amount of detail put into the cell at this point is very much up to the Player Circle. If you want to just jot down some quick notes, that's fine — as is creating a long and detailed history. The important thing is to create a sense of what binds the PCs together and where they are going. To help do this, you should answer the following questions:

What brought the cell together? The most common answer would be common banishment. The Seven Tribes cast out "criminals" at the New Moon, so all the PCs could have been tried at once. This experience can bring them together, as they turn to those in the same boat. Other possibilities include the PCs having known each other before their banishment, having a common enemy who forces them to cooperate, or knowing

some spiritual or actual mentor who guided them together.

What are your common goals and beliefs? Cells of Fallen are bonded together not only by experience, but by beliefs. Some want to see the Seven Tribes destroyed, others seek justice for themselves or vengeance on an enemy. Many seek to fulfill the Prophecy of Joshua. You should try to define briefly just what the cell as a whole wants. Keep in mind that the answer can be very simple and somewhat vague ("safety from our enemies" is just as valid as "to seek out the remains of Joshua to bring about the downfall of Tera Sheba and Her judges"). As you create characters and then play the game, your goals will evolve and become better defined. This decision should just serve as a starting point.

Where do you live? Hom, the Fallen community detailed on pp. 103-109, is the easiest answer to this question. It provides a home with many contacts and some resources. But the Players should think about what their specific home looks like. Is it a bar, a fortified dwelling, a communal gathering place? There are options outside Hom as well. The cell could live in a forest village, travel in a caravan, or even live in hiding in Bazaar.

Who are your allies and enemies? Although outcasts, few Fallen are truly alone. Most at least know other outcasts or still have enemies among the tribes. Is there anyone out there who is still hunting you as a group? Anyone who is helping you? The Weaver should have final say here, but the more input from Players the better.

What is your cell's name? This is a small detail (feel free to come back to it later), but it helps create a sense of identity for the cell.

STEP TWO: CHARACTER CONCEPT

The first and perhaps most important step in creating individual Player Characters is defining the character concept. This step allows the Players to decide what type of character they want without worrying about game statistics or other external considerations. The only real limits on the character at this stage are that she (or he) must fit in with the concept for the tribal cell the Player Circle has just defined and be able to work with the other characters. Although some conflict between characters can be very rewarding, there needs to be a common bond that will keep them together.

The initial character concept can be as detailed as a written background printed on several pages or as vague as a basic idea

like "a tough guy." Something between these two extremes is usually best because it helps make decisions in the other steps of character creation while still leaving enough flexibility to change to suit the group and new ideas as they pop up. To further help spark some ideas, we present a series of questions about the character. You do not need to answer all of these immediately, and some of them are even picked up further along in the creation process, but thinking about them now should help you define the person you want to portray. We've included in brackets some possible answers.

DEFINING A CHARACTER

- What is the character's gender?
- What is the character's physical appearance? (tall, thin, muscular, sickly, etc.)
- Does the character have a distinctive physical trait? (a limp, bald, etc.)
- Does the character have any personality quirks? (quick-witted, hot-tempered, etc.)
- Does the character have any good habits? (honesty, loyalty, etc.)
- Does the character have any bad habits? (selfishness, guile, etc.)
- How old is the character?
- Where is the character from? (Bazaar, Griffintowne, a small homestead, etc.)
- What was the character's family like? (dominating, loving, an orphan, etc.)
- What relationship did the character have with her family? (loving, resentment, estrangement, etc.)
- Does the character have any current personal relationships? (a lover, a close friend, etc.)
- What are the character's abilities? (a good hunter, a diplomat, etc.)
- Why does the character do what she does? (tradition, duty, excitement, etc.)
- What are the character's personal goals?
- Does the character have any secrets?
- Who are the character's friends and rivals?
- What is the character's name and/or nickname?

STEP THREE: TRIBAL ORIGINS AND FIRST EMINENCE

With very rare exceptions, all the Fallen are outcasts, people expelled from one of the Seven Tribes for an offense ranging from a depraved crime to happening to be in the wrong political faction during a leadership struggle. Player Characters are special in that they retain a connection to the Goddess when they are cast out. Nevertheless, your character will have been raised within a tribe and still carries many of the tribe's traditions with her.

Each of the Seven Tribes implies different things in terms of character creation. Most obviously, each tribe has two Eminences (areas of natural proficiency) attached to it. You must choose **one** of these two for your character. Some of your character's personality may reflect her former tribe's outlook, which is summarized below. Each tribe also has typical reasons for banishing its members. Eminences and their use are explained in *Chapter 10: Synthesis and Spirit*, pp. 164-170.

Characters and traits



SUMMARY OF FIRST EMINENCES

Eminence	Tribe	Description (page)
Capriciousness	Agnites	166
Conflict	Magdalites	168
Death	Yagans	167
Devotion	Joanites	168
Empathy	Evans	167
Fate	Yagans	167
Fury	Joanites	168
Illusion	Dahlans	167
Inspiration	Agnites	166
Life	Evans	167
Motion	Dahlans	167
Sensuality	Magdalites	168
Truth	Terashebens	168
Wisdom	Terashebens	168



AGNITES

Capricious and curious, the followers of Agnes the Child are disturbing to many of the other tribes. Children and teenagers reign supreme in the tribe, and many of their most fanciful whims become law. Some of these desires are beautiful, but others are dark wishes. Agnites are also explorers, sating their endless curiosity by pushing out the boundaries of the known world. Agnites hold Eminence over Capriciousness and Inspiration.

Agnites are often banished out of their Fatima' caprice — She becomes moody and decides She doesn't want to "play" anymore. Others who have become morose or melancholy can be banished because they are "no fun."



DAHLIANS

Devious, beautiful and entertaining, the followers of Dahlia the Trickster travel about in large caravans, bringing shows and wonders to all the tribal settlements. Many are entertainers, thieves and explorers, taking their caravans into uncharted territories. Dahlians hold Eminence over Illusion and Motion.

Dahlians are typically banished because they "ruin the game" of the tribe. Those who refuse to partake in amusements and have a morose attitude can offend the Fatima gravely. Tribal unity is also important and many are cast out for causing dissent within the caravans.



EVANS

The followers of Eva the Mother are known as farmers, midwives and healers. Eva treats Her tribe as children and watches their every move; many Evans relate to others in the same way. Their powerful contact with nature allows them to survive in the wilds, but their maternal natures can be grating. Evans hold Eminence over Life and Empathy.

Failure to nurture and cherish life is perhaps the greatest crime for an Evan. Killing without reason and torture are both grounds for banishment, as is letting unhealthy life grow out of control. Eva also demands obedience from her "children" and rebellion is frowned upon severely.



JOANITES

Warriors without parallel, the followers of Joan the Warrior are steadfast guardians of the Seven Tribes. Constantly prepared for battle, they are taught to follow orders and many other tribes see them as lackeys to the Terashebans. Joanites hold Eminence over Devotion and Fury.

Honor, especially in combat, is critical to Joanites. Showing cowardice or using guile and trickery to kill an opponent are grounds for banishment. Joan has a special hatred for the Z'bri and consorting with them is a great crime in Her tribe.



MAGDALITES

Magdalites are renowned as seductive, beautiful and self-absorbed. Mistresses of pleasure, they are dedicated to the exploration of the physical self and the discovery of enlightenment through that quest. Magdelites are concubines and lovers, but also diplomats and experts of the body. Magdalites hold Eminence over Sensuality and Conflict.

Indulging in pleasures with the young or those who are not willing (pedophilia and rape, in other words) are the gravest of crimes for Magdalites and often result in banishment or death. Love with those thought to be inappropriate can also be grounds for exile, especially if Magdalen feels your love for Her is not as great.



TERASHEBANS

Stern judges, the followers of Tera Sheba the Wise are the guardians of the laws and traditions of the Seven Tribes. They are respected for their ability to ferret out the truth, but scorned for their inability to compromise. Terashebans hold Eminence over Truth and Wisdom.

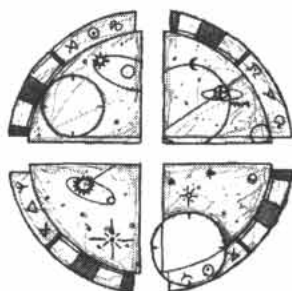
Disobeying the laws and traditions of the tribe is the greatest Terasheban sin. Many of these rules are obscure, but all must be obeyed. Especially bad are criminals who abuse the power they have been given — Judges who are unfair or favor their friends, for example.



YAGANS

Mistresses of death and spirit, the followers of Baba Yaga are dark crones who govern the final rites for all the tribes. The other tribes respect them for their wisdom, but try to keep them at a distance because of their unsettling aura. Yagans hold Eminence over Fate and Death.

Respect for elders is critical to Yagans and many are banished for insolence. The gravest crime a Yagan can commit, however, is to refuse death when the Fatima says it is time to pass on.



STEP FOUR: OUTLOOK AND SECOND EMINENCE

The Fallen are a young people, but four general factions have formed among them. These are not so much political units that gather for power, but loose groupings based on general outlook. Although there are cells composed of a members of a single outlook, most cells have members from several. Players should feel free to choose any of these outlooks. The Fallen have a special relationship to Synthesis and have developed new Eminences. Each outlook holds two, just like a tribe. Players should choose one of these for their characters.

SUMMARY OF SECOND EMINENCES

Eminence	Outlook	Description (page)
Bravery	Jackers	169
Conviction	Lightbringers	169
Freedom	Herites	170
Mystery	Doomsayers	169
Recognition	Herites	170
Shadow	Doomsayers	169
Unity	Lightbringers	169
Vengeance	Jackers	169

Characters and traits



LIGHTBRINGERS

The most "friendly" of the Eighth Tribe, Lightbringers are dedicated to building the Fallen into a true tribe. They believe that the outcasts must cooperate in order to fulfill their potential and create a new social system. Lightbringers are often preoccupied with reaching compromise within the Eighth Tribe. Hom is their greatest achievement. Lightbringers hold Eminence over Conviction and Unity.



HERITES

Herites believe in theological freedom, thinking that humans must interact with the Goddess directly. They despise the Fatimas (whom they call the Seven Deaths) and believe these avatars must be destroyed. Herites frown upon alliances with the tribes unless it is to undermine the Fatimas' hold upon them. Herites hold Eminence over Freedom and Recognition.



JACKERS

Jackers are the most aggressive Fallen; they think the outcasts must act against their enemies as soon as possible. Generally, they see the Z'bri as the gravest threat to humanity and do their best to carry the battle to the Beasts. Those who survive are among the most cunning warriors in Vimary. Jackers hold Eminence over Bravery and Vengeance.

Characters and traits



DOOMSAYERS

Doomsayers are heavily preoccupied with prophecy and the future, and believe that the Fallen must live by the words of Joshua. Their moniker comes from the dark omens they see all around them. Doomsayers feel that the Eighth Tribe is on a dangerous course and needs to pay more attention to the spirit world. Doomsayers hold Eminence over Mystery and Shadow.

STEP FIVE: TRIBAL LIFE & BANISHMENT

Your character's past will help define her future, so you should have some idea of what her life was like when she was still in the good graces of the Fatimas. There is no requirement to go into every last detail of her life, but you should give some thought to her immediate family, her position in the tribe, and her relationship with the Fatima. The actual circumstances of a character's banishment are also very important. You should give some thought to the specific events that resulted in the Fatima and tribe casting your character out. Possible reasons for banishment include:

Crisis of Faith: Many outcasts came to question their faith in Tribe and Fatima long before they were exiled. The infallibility of the Fatima or the righteousness of the tribe may be revealed as fallacies. This type of outcast will often feel betrayed by her elders and Fatima and may become bitter and confused, or may be highly motivated, determined to create something free of the "corruption" they witnessed in their original tribe.

Fall from Grace: Many outcasts have committed crimes or lost their sense of purpose and are banished because they really no longer have a healthy place within the community. Those who have committed grave crimes (like betraying the tribe to its enemies) may be seeking redemption or a fresh start. Other could be seeking to justify their actions.

False Accusations: Rivals within a tribe often try to frame each other, and a successful cycle of innuendo and lies can lead to banishment. Terasheban Judges may also use a convenient scapegoat to resolve a thorny issue or be swayed by false evidence. These outcasts may wish to mete out vengeance on those who framed them or to prove their innocence.

Kidnapping: Z'bri lords and Squat warlords sometimes raid tribal lands and take prisoners. The tribes routinely banish these poor souls *in absentia* because they are considered tainted by their captors and (some whisper) to protect the Fatima from magics used by their enemies. Some of these prisoners escape, however. These outcasts usually feel a great sense of loss and frustration at a banishment that was not their own fault.

Political Coup: When a leadership struggle occurs among the elders of a tribe, the new elite usually banishes (or even executes) those rivals it can, as well as their families. Those cast out for no other reason than being on the wrong side of the political fence tend to place a great deal of importance on intrigue and politics. They often seek vengeance against the rivals who pushed them out.

Runaway: Some outcasts banished themselves. Bitter over the corruption they see or following visions of something greater, they leave their families behind and seek out their destinies elsewhere. Like kidnapping victims, these runaways are banished *in absentia*. Runaways tend to be the least concerned with the affairs of their old tribe; instead, they focus on finding a new home and building a new tribe.

STEP SIX: VISION QUEST/GOAL

The transition from a child of the Fatimas to a free agent of destiny is long and complex, but it is epitomized in the revelatory vision that members of the Eighth Tribe experience when they are banished. During the ceremony (sometimes undertaken *in absentia*), the Fatima withdraws all the love and power She had granted the outcast, theoretically leaving their souls to wither and die. The true Fallen, however, are strong enough to survive and even thrive without their Fatima. Their powerful souls flare in the direct contact with the Goddess. During this traumatic and wonderful time, the outcast experiences a powerful vision that guides her toward her destiny. The banishment ceremony is described on p. 37. Ideally, this vision should set the stage for your character's whole development. Of course, it is impossible to predict exactly where your character's story will go as play progresses, but the vision can be used as a device to set up some short and long term goals for her. Decide what your own goals for your character are, then incorporate them into a symbolic dream. Because visions are highly subjective, you can decide on a few rough ideas or images, and let the Weaver translate them into story elements at a later date. Visions often include the following elements:

Allies and Guides: Powerful visions often find the Dreamer in the company of others. These can be friends remembered or foreseen from the real world (such as the other Player Characters) or enigmatic spirit guides. These people generally provide assistance during a quest, give the Dreamer directions or must be aided by the Dreamer.

Bogeyman: Many visions are highly traumatic and involve an opponent of some sort. This bogeyman (who may appear as a storm, a fierce warrior, a monstrosity, etc.) may represent an actual physical enemy like a Z'bri lord or a tribal enemy, or a great challenge to overcome.

Metamorphosis: Visions are about change and many see the Dreamer herself transforming into another form. These changes are usually either indications of a transformation that is necessary or warnings of one that must be avoided. The Dreamer will often see herself becoming an animal of some sort, but she could also turn to smoke, glass or another form.

The Otherworld: The locale of a visions can be critical. They often occur in a bizarre, spiritual wonderworld — the River of Dream itself. The shape this world takes can give important clues as to the visions' meaning, hinting as to where the Dreamer must go and what is affecting her life.

Things to Come: Visions often provide glimpses of the future. These can be highly symbolic (a flock of birds representing the Eighth Tribe), but they can also be very realistic. The dreamer might see herself on her deathbed, with children yet to be born gathered around her.

STEP SEVEN: CHOOSE

ATTRIBUTES

With the character concept worked out, you can now define her abilities precisely enough for game purposes. The first part of this process is to choose Attributes. Attributes are zero-average ratings (a rating of zero representing a "normal" person) used to describe the character's innate mental, physical and social strengths and weaknesses. Attributes are summarized below and fully detailed in *Attributes*, p. 123.

Attributes are purchased with Character Points (CPs). Beginning characters start with 30 CPs that are used to purchase a level in all ten Attributes (normal people have only 10). The cost in CPs of an Attribute rating is listed in the *Attribute Costs* table. Purchasing very low stats "gives back" some CPs. Although the points can be spent in any way a Player wishes, 30 CPs typically allows a character to be very good in one area (+2) and quite good in four others (+1). Any left over CPs become Emergency Dice. See p. 155 for information on Emergency Dice.

Player Characters begin with 30 Character Points.

ATTRIBUTE DESCRIPTIONS

Name	Abbreviation	Description
Agility	AGI	Physical prowess and coordination
Appearance	APP	Physical beauty
Build	BLD	Physical size and mass
Creativity	CRE	Mental innovation and quick thinking
Fitness	FIT	Physical conditioning
Influence	INF	Charisma and persuasiveness
Knowledge	KNO	Education and logical thinking
Perception	PER	Alertness and ability to discern details
Psyche	PSY	Mental health and empathy
Willpower	WIL	Mental endurance and conviction

ATTRIBUTE COSTS

Attribute Rating	Character Point Cost
+4	25
+3	16
+2	9
+1	4
0	1
-1	0
-2	+1*
-3	+4*
-4	+9*

* These values are added to available CPs instead of being subtracted.

STEP EIGHT: CHOOSE SKILLS

Skills represent a character's learned abilities, and are gained over a lifetime through experience, study and observation. They are purchased with Skill Points (SPs) much in the same way Attributes are with CPs. Unlike Attributes, however, Skills are not zero-average. Each Skill is also tied to an Attribute and cannot be purchased during character creation at a level higher than that Attribute plus 2, so if your Agility is +1, you cannot buy the Dodge Skill higher than level 3. If the governing attribute is -2 or lower, the skill can be purchased at level 1 for double the normal cost. The cost of the a Skill level is determined by the Skill's complexity. This is a measure of how difficult it is to learn. The *Skill Costs* table lists the Skill Point costs for simple and complex Skills, and the minimum value required in the governing Attribute.

Player Characters start with 40 Skill Points, allowing characters to get a wide (though not limitless) variety of skills. As a guideline, a Character should probably have level 3 in only one or two Skills she is exceptional at, level 2 in a few Skills she is very good at, and level 1 in any incidental Skills.

Note that these Skills Points are also used to purchase Synthesis abilities (see next section). Players wanting these abilities should save some SPs and not hesitate to come back to this step to adjust SP totals.

Player Characters start with 40 SPs.

SKILL SPECIALIZATIONS

A character may obtain a Skill specialization at a cost of 5 SPs, regardless of whether it is a simple or complex skill. A specialization allows the character a +1 modifier to her Skill test totals under certain conditions. For example, a hunter could have a Notice specialization in tracking. A character may purchase multiple different specializations in a Skill, but no more than one specialization (i.e. +1 bonus) can be applied on a single roll.

Characters and traits

KEEPER SKILLS

Several Skills in the *Master Skill List* are listed as Keeper Skills. These are Skills directly related to the technology and science from the World Before that only the Keepers and a few others have any real knowledge of or ability with. If you want your character to have some of these Skills, there should be an explanation in her background and the Weaver and Player Circle should agree to it.

SKILL COSTS

Skill Level	Simple Skill Cost	Complex Skill Cost	Minimum Attribute
1	1	2	-1*
2	4	8	0
3	9	18	+1
4	16	32	+2
5	25	50	+3
6	36	72	+4
7	49	98	+5
Specialization	5	5	n/a

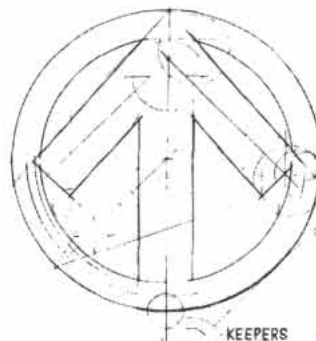
* If Attr. is less than -1, level 1 can be purchased at double cost.

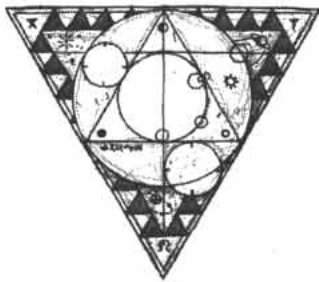
MASTER SKILL LIST

The *Master Skill List* lists the available Skills along with their Attributes and the page on which the Skill is explained. The Skills are listed in alphabetical order for easy reference.

Name	Att.	Complexity	Page
Acrobatics	AGI	Simple	126
Agriculture	KNO	Complex	130
Animal Care	KNO	Complex	130
Animal Handling	CRE	Simple	128
Archery	AGI	Simple	126
Athletics	FIT	Simple	129
Boating	PER	Complex	133
Camouflage	CRE	Simple	128
Combat Sense	PER	Simple	133
Cooking	CRE	Simple	128
Craft (specific)	CRE	Simple	128
Dance	AGI	Simple	126
Disguise	CRE	Simple	128
Dodge	AGI	Simple	126
Dreaming	PSY	Complex	134
Etiquette	INF	Simple	129
Forgery	CRE	Complex	128
Gambling	PER	Simple	133
Grooming	APP	Simple	127
Haggling	INF	Simple	130
Hand-to-Hand	AGI	Simple	126
Healing	KNO	Simple	131
Herbalism	KNO	Complex	131

Name	Att.	Complexity	Page
Human Perception	PSY	Complex	134
Interrogation	CRE	Simple	128
Intimidate	BLD	Simple	127
Investigation	PER	Complex	133
Law	KNO	Complex	131
Leadership	INF	Simple	130
Lore (specific)	KNO	Complex	131
Melee	AGI	Simple	127
Music	CRE	Simple	128
Mythology	KNO	Complex	131
Navigation (specific)	KNO	Complex	131
Notice	PER	Simple	133
Read/Write (specific)	KNO	Complex	131
Riding	PSY	Simple	134
Ritual	KNO	Complex	132
Seduction	APP	Simple	127
Sleight-of-Hand	AGI	Simple	127
Sneak	AGI	Complex	127
Speak (specific)	KNO	Simple	132
Streetwise	INF	Simple	130
Survival	CRE	Simple	129
Swimming	FIT	Simple	129
Tactics	CRE	Simple	129
Teaching	CRE	Simple	129
Theatrics	INF	Simple	130
Throwing	AGI	Simple	127
Trade	KNO	Complex	133
Keeper Skills	Att.	Complexity	Page
Aircraft Pilot	AGI	Complex	126
Demolition	KNO	Complex	130
Drive	AGI	Simple	126
Firearms	AGI	Simple	126
Gunnery (specific)	PER	Complex	133
Techlore (Computer)	KNO	Complex	132
Techlore (Earth Sciences)	KNO	Complex	132
Techlore (Electronics)	KNO	Complex	132
Techlore (Life Sciences)	KNO	Complex	132
Techlore (Mechanics)	KNO	Simple	132
Techlore (Medicine)	KNO	Complex	132
Techlore (Physical Sciences)	KNO	Complex	133
Tinker	CRE	Complex	129





STEP NINE: SYNTHESIS

All Fallen have an affinity for Synthesis reflected by their use of Eminences (see *The Power of Eminence*, p. 164), but some achieve a special ability and enlightenment that allows them to tap more directly into the River of Dream. This is reflected in the Synthesis Skill. Players wishing to can spend Skill Points to buy one or more levels in Synthesis. Those who achieve Synthesis Level 2 can also purchase an Aspect — a special ability — associated with their birth tribe for an additional 7 SPs. Synthesis and Aspects is explained in *Chapter 10: Spirit and Synthesis*. Note that Synthesis is a powerful hence expensive Skill. PCs who wield it will have few SPs left for other Skills.

SUMMARY OF ASPECTS

Aspect	Tribe	Description (page)
Anima	Evans	171
Battle	Joanites	171
Curse of Dream	Yagans	171
Dream Travel	Yagans	171
Metamorphosis	Dahlans	171
Naïveté	Agnites	170
Passion	Magdalites	172
Puppet Show	Dahlans	171
Sacrifice	Joanites	171
Smothering	Evans	171
Tradition	Terashebens	172
Treason	Magdalites	172
Truthsaying	Terashebens	172
Wonder	Agnites	170

SYNTHESIS TRAIT COST

Synthesis Level	Cost in SPs
1	3
2	10
3	23
4	40
5	63
6	90
7	123
Aspect	7

STEP TEN: CALCULATE SECONDARY AND OTHER DERIVED TRAITS

The Secondary Traits are a group of five ratings that are neither Attributes nor Skills but are derived from them. All Secondary Traits are computed from Attribute and Skill ratings. Secondary Traits are detailed on pp. 124-125 and are summarized below. Other derived ratings are also calculated at this time: Wounding Scores (which provide Thresholds for various Injury types) and System Shock (which measures when a character goes into a coma). Wounding Scores and System Shock are explained on p. 125 and in *Combat*, p. 147. Note that some of these Traits have minimum scores.

SECONDARY TRAITS

Name:	Strength
Abbreviation:	STR
Description:	Raw physical strength
Formula:	(Build + Fitness) + 2 (round towards zero)
Name:	Health
Abbreviation:	HEA
Description:	Physical well-being
Formula:	(Fitness + Psyche + Willpower) + 3 (round off)
Name:	Stamina
Abbreviation:	STA
Description:	Physical endurance
Formula:	25 + 5 x (Build + Health) (minimum 10)
Name:	Unarmed Damage
Abbreviation:	UD
Description:	Damage inflicted in hand-to-hand combat
Formula:	3 + HTH skill + Strength + Build (min 1)
Name:	Armed Damage
Abbreviation:	AD
Description:	Base damage in melee combat
Formula:	3 + Melee skill + Strength + Build (min 1)
Name:	Flesh Wounding Score
Abbreviation:	-
Description:	Threshold to receive a Flesh Wound
Formula:	Stamina + 2 (round up)
Name:	Deep Wounding Score
Abbreviation:	-
Description:	Threshold to receive a Deep Wound
Formula:	Stamina
Name:	Instant Death Score
Abbreviation:	-
Description:	Threshold for Instant Kill
Formula:	Stamina x 2
Name:	System Shock
Abbreviation:	-
Description:	Ability to withstand shock and trauma
Formula:	5 + Health (min 1)

STEP ELEVEN: FINAL DETAILS

With your character concept complete and your game-statistic established, all that is left is for you to add a few finishing details. These will include naming your character, describing her physically and any other details you wish to add. You should also choose your character's equipment at this stage. While some Weavers and Player Circles will insist on keeping an accurate record of all equipment, it may be easier to simply choose a few key pieces and take notes on the types of possessions a character has. You should choose specific weapons and armor because of the precise game statistics involved, but marking ritual implements, survival rations, and other more general terms can work just as well as listing every piece of inventory. The Weaver should verify all pieces of equipment just to make sure they fit with the character and tribe concept — a pacifistic former Yagan spiritualist is unlikely to walk around with a large sword, for example. Typical equipment is listed on pp. 134-141.

It can be rewarding to take the background and vision notes you took during character creation and write out a longer history and a full vision quest for your character, but this is not strictly necessary. Even if you wish to do so, we suggest waiting to play a session or two with the character first. This will allow you to get a feel for your character "in action" and see if there are any little changes you would like to do to the concept or even the Skills and Attributes. Any changes should be undertaken with the approval of the Weaver and Player Circle.

TRIBAL & FALLEN NAMES

Full names among the Seven Tribes include a given name (usually something that sounds just slightly archaic to modern ears, like Luther or Abigail) a family name, a clan name, and a tribal affiliation. Family names are the given name of the family head with the "kin" ending (e.g. Marakin). Clan names are the name of the clan founder with the "on" ending (e.g. Aria'on). A full name would hence be Abigail Marakin Aria'on of Eva, for example. Note that full names are rarely used; most people use family names only within their clan and clan names only within their tribe.

The Fallen forego the full family, clan and tribe names that they were given before their exile. They often maintain their given name and add an honorific given either by their companions or that they choose themselves. This honorific can be an occupation (e.g. Mordecai the Judge), a totemic animal (e.g. Lea the Hawk), a descriptive adjective (e.g. Hannah the Stern) or any other fitting term. These honorifics can change through a character's life as her reputation and demeanor do. Fallen also typically take on a new clan name based on their new tribal cell, sometimes using the "(name)'on" form inherited from the Seven Tribes, other times creating their own structure. Those who were banished along with their entire family or clan often maintain these names to indicate continued solidarity with their fellow outcasts.

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER CREATION

Cynthia sits down to create her **Tribe 8** character with her Weaver Steph. Playing in a cycle featuring equal parts exploration and tribal intrigue, Cynthia begins by choosing a character concept that will mesh with Steph's plans and the other characters. In Step One, Cynthia, Steph and the rest of the Player Circle, decided they would play a cell of Fallen very concerned with the affairs in Bazaar.

Step Two: Flipping through the rulebook, Cynthia decides that playing a Magdalite would be fun, but does not want to create a typical one. Instead she decides that her character was never to good at dealing with people. An outsider to begin with, Pandora (the character's name) would rather spend her days hunting and exploring than courting lovers. This might have been the reason for her banishment.

Step Three: Cynthia has already picked the Magdalites as her original tribe. Not being a traditional Magdalite, however, she chooses Conflict (rather than Sensuality) as her first Eminence.

Step Four: Thinking about her character some more, Cynthia determines that Pandora's banishment has made her bitter and picks the Jacker Eminence of Vengeance.

Step Five: Cynthia decides that Pandora's banishment was for refusing to take a lover. She soon finds herself alone in Horn in need of the one thing she never wanted — company.

Step Six: Cynthia thinks about a vision for Pandora and what her goals should be. Certainly, she wants vengeance on Magdalen and the Seven Tribes, but she also wants to explore the world. Cynthia says Pandora sees herself as a bird in a cage of barbed wire, finally breaking free but at the price of painful gashes.

Step Seven: Cynthia sets down to choose Pandora's stats and chooses a balance between physical and mental Attributes to reflect Pandora's character: AGI +1, APP +1, BLD 0, CRE 0, FIT +1, INF -1, KNO +1, PER +1, PSY +1, WIL +1. She spends all 30 of her Character Points.

Step Eight: For Skills, Cynthia chooses ones that Magdalites would know, plus a couple extra to show Pandora's rebellious nature: Athletics 1, Combat Sense 1, Dance 1, Disguise 1, Dreaming 1, Etiquette 2, Grooming 1, Hand-to-Hand 2, Human Perception 2, Melee 1, Notice 2, Seduction 1, Read/Write 1. She spends 30 of her 40 Skill Points on Skills.

Step Nine: For Synthesis, Cynthia decides she wants Pandora to be potent, capable of impressive effects. She spends her remaining 10 Skill Points to get Synthesis level 2.

Step Ten: Cynthia now calculates her Secondary Attributes. They are STR 0, HEA 1, STA 30, UD 5, AD 4, Wounding Scores 15/30/60, System Shock 6.

Step Eleven: Having the basics of Pandora down, Cynthia spends some time answering a few questions about her character and sets down some roleplaying notes.

ATTRIBUTE AND TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

The basic abilities, knowledge and weaknesses of a **Tribe 8** character are defined by their Attributes and Traits. These largely represent the characteristics a person was born with or acquired in her formative years. These range from physical Attributes such as Agility and Strength to mental proficiencies such as Willpower and Knowledge.

Most of these are zero-average traits (where a normal person has a Rating of 0). The *Attribute/Trait Equivalencies* table gives a brief description of what each level represents in terms of abilities. Extremely low Attribute and Secondary Trait levels (below -3) are generally encountered only in children or cripples; ratings above +3 are similarly only found in exceptional cases, animals and Z'bri monstrosities; they are included as a reference. The Build Attribute represents physical size of a character and thus has its own column giving weight equivalence for each level.

ZERO-AVERAGE ATTRIBUTE/TRAIT EQUIVALENCIES

Rating	Description	Weight Equiv.	Rating	Description	Weight Equiv.
+5	Superhuman	180-250 kg	-1	Poor	60-70 kg
+4	One in a million	140-180 kg	-2	Weak	50-60 kg
+3	Exceptional	115-140 kg	-3	Pathetic	40-50 kg
+2	Superb	95-115 kg	-4	Hopeless	25-40 kg
+1	Good	80-95 kg	-5	Tragic	10-25 kg
0	Average	70-80 kg	-6	Dead	10 kg or less

ATTRIBUTES

The ten basic Attributes represent a character's natural proficiencies and potential. They are costly to improve, so they often vary little throughout much of a cycle (see *Character Evolution*, pp. 154-155).



AGILITY (AGI)

Agility is the character's hand-eye coordination, nimbleness, and reflexes. Action-oriented characters such as hunters and warriors often have high Agility ratings.

APPEARANCE (APP)

Appearance rates the physical attractiveness of the character. This can modify how other people react to her. Many heroic characters and most Magdelites have high Appearance scores.



BUILD (BLD)

Build is a rating of the character's size and body frame. It does not represent the character's physical strength — that's what's Strength is for — only the actual body size and mass. Note that Players should feel free to modify the suggested weight (see table, above) by +/- 20 kg according to their character's planned appearance.



CREATIVITY (CRE)

Creativity is a measure of the character's ability to use her knowledge in innovative and expressive ways. It is also a measure of the character's ability to think on her feet. Dahlians and those used to thinking on the run often have a good Creativity.



FITNESS (FIT)

Fitness rates the character's cardiovascular endurance and muscle tone. While Build measures raw size, Fitness measures how well-maintained a character's body is. Illness can temporarily reduce this Attribute.

Characters and traits



INFLUENCE (INF)

Influence measures the character's charm, wit, and persuasiveness. A high Influence rating is a must for any charismatic leader or slick trickster.



KNOWLEDGE (KNO)

Knowledge is the character's ability to learn, to recall information and also measures how much the character has learned over time. Elders and scholars typically have high Knowledge ratings.



PERCEPTION (PER)

Perception is a measure of the character's attentiveness to detail and overall alertness. Like Agility, Perception is very important for action-oriented characters.



PSYCHE (PSY)

Psyche is an abstract measure of the character's karma, empathy, psychic sensitivity and mental balance. Psyche is very important because it quantifies the character's openness to the River of Dream and Synthesis. It also measures innate luck.



WILLPOWER (WIL)

Willpower is a rating of the character's self-discipline, determination, and pain threshold. Unlike Psyche, Willpower does not imply a certain love of life; it does however reflect the character's ability to deny death using sheer strength of will.

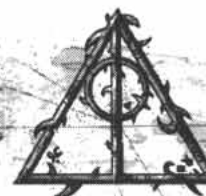
SECONDARY TRAITS

Secondary Traits are calculated based upon Attributes and certain Skills (see formulas on page 121) and help round out the definition of a character. The Trait descriptions follow the same pattern as Attribute descriptions.



STRENGTH (STR)

Strength is a measure of a character's raw physical power and brute strength. It is a zero-average rating, much like Attributes. Strength is the average of Build and Fitness, rounded towards zero. Cross-indexing with the Build weight table shows the maximum weight that can be dead lifted and carried a few paces (the lowest weight value is used).



HEALTH (HEA)

Health rates a character's resistance to illness, toxins, and physiological shock. It too is a zero-average rating like Attributes and strength. Health is the average of Fitness, Psyche and Willpower, rounded off.



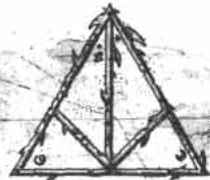
STAMINA (STA)

Stamina is a rating of how much sheer physical punishment a character's body can tolerate. Stamina is **not** a zero-average rating. Stamina is equal to five times the total of Build and Health, plus 25. No character may have a Stamina lower than 10.



UNARMED DAMAGE (UD)

Unarmed damage is the Damage Multiplier of any unarmed (Hand-to-Hand Skill) attacks performed by the character. Unarmed Damage is equal to 3 plus the total of Hand-to-Hand Skill level, Strength and Build. The minimum Unarmed Damage rating is 1.



ARMED DAMAGE (AD)

Armed Damage is the base damage rating of any of the character's armed attacks (Melee Skill). Armed Damage is equal to 3 plus the total of Melee Skill level, Strength and Build. The minimum Armed Damage rating is 1. The Damage Multiplier of a melee weapon is equal to the character's Armed Damage rating plus the weapon's own base DM.

WOUNDING SCORES

The three Wounding Scores represents a character's resistance to physical wounds. There are three types of injuries. **Flesh Wounds** are nasty but not crippling wounds. **Deep Wounds** are immediately life-threatening injuries. **Instant Death** is the third type of "injury" and requires little explanation.

Each level of injury has a wounding score. Wounding scores are the amount of damage an attack must cause to produce a certain type of wound. An attack produces only the most severe of the possible results. For example, if an attack does 40 points of damage to an average individual (whose wounding scores are Flesh Wound = 13, Deep Wound = 25, Instant Death = 50), the attack victim suffers a Deep Wound (40 is greater than the Deep Wound score "25" but is less than the Instant Death score "50").

The wounding score of Flesh Wounds is equal to half of the character's Stamina (round up). The wounding score of Deep Wounds is equal to the character's Stamina. The wounding score of instant death is twice the character's Stamina. Personal armor adds its armor points to **each** wounding score when the character is under physical attack. The modified wounding score should be noted in parentheses after the original wounding score.

Action penalties are negative modifiers to all actions that reflect the pain and distraction induced by wounds. A character is penalized -1 to **all** actions per Flesh Wound and -2 to **all** actions per Deep Wound.

The final column of the injury list is used to note how many of each type of injury a character has sustained, and possibly what they are.

SYSTEM SHOCK RATING

The System Shock rating is a measure of how many injuries a character can take before going into shock and dying. If the total of System Shock and a character's wound-induced action penalties equals zero or less, the character goes into shock (see *Treating Injuries*, page 150). System shock is equal to 5 plus the character's Health. System Shock cannot be lower than 1.

System Shock is shown on the character sheet as a row of boxes — unused boxes are simply crossed out. As wounds are taken, boxes can be crossed out according to action penalties, representing the mounting trauma.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

While a character's Attributes define her potential, her Skills define her actual abilities. This section details all the "standard" Skills. Weavers should feel free to invent new Skills if they are required in their cycle. A new Skill should not be too general nor too specific.

Besides a plain English description of the Skill and its uses, the entry for each Skill lists the following elements: the complexity (either Simple or Complex), any necessary prerequisites (including whether the Skill is reserved for Keepers), possible specializations, and suggestions of who might possess the Skill. For more information on Keeper Skills and Specializations, see *Step Eight: Choose Skills*, p. 119. Skills are listed under their governing Attribute. For an alphabetical list, see the *Master Skill List*, p. 120.

Characters and traits

AGILITY-BASED SKILLS



ACROBATICS

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Leaps and Jumps, Tumbling, Tightrope, Trapeze, Diving
Often Possessed By:	Athletes, Tumblers

The Acrobatics Skill is the ability to perform activities requiring tumbling, balancing, or gymnastics.

AIRCRAFT PILOT

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Hot Air Balloon, Prop, Helicopter
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

The Aircraft Pilot Skill is required in order to be able to fly various aircraft, including planes, vectored thrust vehicles, and helicopters. Only a few Keepers use these machines, however.

ARCHERY

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Longbow, Compound Bow, Crossbow, Sling
Often Possessed By:	Hunters, Warriors

The Archery Skill allows the character to effectively use such missile weapons as longbows, slings or crossbows.

DANCE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Ceremonial, Specific Tribal Style
Often Possessed By:	Entertainers, Dahlians, Shamans, Tribespeople

The Dance Skill is a measure of how proficient the character is in performing the prescribed steps of a dance. Dance is an important part of ritual and ceremony, and so is common in Tribe 8.

DODGE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Unarmed Attacks, Melee Attacks, Ranged Attacks
Often Possessed By:	Warriors

The Dodge Skill is a measure of how able the character is in avoiding incoming attacks. It is used as a general "defense" Skill.

DRIVE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Racing, Trucks, Combat Vehicles, Motorcycles
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

The Drive Skill is the ability to control the movements of powered vehicles from the World Before, such as jeeps or motorcycles. It is common among Keepers, but otherwise very rare.

FIREARMS

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Pistols, Rifles, SMCs
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

The Firearms Skill is a measure of the character's proficiency with weapons from the World Before, such as pistols, rifles, and submachineguns. The Skill includes basic knowledge of the maintenance procedures.

HAND-TO-HAND

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Striking, Grappling, Tripping, Throwing
Often Possessed By:	Warriors

The Hand-to-Hand Skill measures the proficiency of a character in close combat using unarmed fighting techniques. A high level in Hand-to-Hand implies that the character is using some form of martial art.

MELEE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Knives, Clubs, Swords, Impressive Moves
Often Possessed By:	Warriors, Tanners, Cooks

The Melee Skill reflects how good a character is at attacking and/or defending with close-combat weapons, such as knives, cudgels or swords.

SLEIGHT-OF-HAND

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Pickpocket, "Magic" Tricks
Often Possessed By:	Criminals, Entertainers, Spies

The Sleight-of-Hand Skill is a measure of how good the character is at the subtle hand movements required by activities like pickpocketing or stage magic. Abilities such as palming and concealing small objects upon one's person are covered by this Skill.

SNEAK

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Indoors, Woodlands, Nighttime
Often Possessed By:	Thieves, Spies, Soldiers, Hunters

The Sneak Skill is the character's ability to move about undetected, be it by human observers or by animals. It is often used in opposition to the Notice Skill.

THROWING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Knives, Javelins, Balls, Grenades, Darts
Often Possessed By:	Warriors, Athletes

The Throwing Skill is the ability to accurately throw an object at a target. It is the Skill used when throwing spears and other offensive weapons.

APPEARANCE-BASED SKILLS



GROOMING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Clothing, Makeup
Often Possessed By:	Con Artists, Entertainers, Concubines, Magdalites

Grooming measures the ability to improve physical appearance by a judicious use of clothing and other tools. The Margin of Success of a Grooming Skill roll vs. (5 + APP) is added to the character's Appearance Attribute for a single scene.

SEDUCTION

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Sex, Eye Contact, Specific Seduction Style
Often Possessed By:	Con Artists, Concubines, Magdalites

Seduction measures a character's ability to sway others by a judicious use of her looks and sex-appeal. The Skill includes an understanding of what people find attractive and the ability to adapt to different preferences. Although Seduction is best used as a guide for roleplaying, Weavers can use an opposed roll (either against Seduction or WIL) to determine success.

BUILD-BASED SKILLS



INTIMIDATE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Coercion, Terrify, Enforce
Often Possessed By:	Bullies, Brigands, Barbarians, Warriors

Intimidate is the ability to appear menacing and scare another person into doing what you desire. More subtle methods of coercion are covered by the Etiquette and Streetwise Skills. An opposed Skill roll (against Intimidate or WIL) may be in order.

Characters and traits

CREATIVITY-BASED SKILLS



ANIMAL HANDLING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Animal, Herding, Performing Tricks
Often Possessed By:	Farmers, Ranchers, Circus Performers

Animal Handling measures the ability to care for and train various animal species. The Skill includes knowledge of food and habits, reproductive cycle and the basic signs of disease. Animal Care is needed to treat diseased or seriously wounded animals.

CAMOUFLAGE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Forest, Urban, Winter
Often Possessed By:	Warriors, Hunters

Camouflage represents a character's proficiency at using make-up, special clothing, and accessories to conceal herself or other objects by matching the texture and color scheme of the surrounding terrain.

COOKING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Vegetarian, Meats, Baking
Often Possessed By:	Tribespeople, Cooks

Possessing the Cooking Skill allows the character to concoct appetizing dishes. Anyone who lacks Cooking Skill can only prepare simple meals with any competence.

CRAFT (SPECIFIC)

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Commercial, Specific sub-category of the Craft
Often Possessed By:	Artisans, Metalsmiths, Weaponshapers

The Craft Skill covers the ability to produce useful and artistic creations with one's hands. A specific craft must be chosen: it can include such things as jewelry, metalwork, woodcraft, weaving, body runes, calligraphy and many other categories.

DISGUISE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Disguise, Theatrical Special Effects
Often Possessed By:	Entertainers, Spies

The Disguise Skill covers the physical aspects of changing one's appearance, including proper use of make-up, masks and clothing. Imitation and mimicry are covered by the Theatrics Skill.

FORGERY

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Written, Art, Body Runes
Often Possessed By:	Criminals, Spies

The Forgery Skill is the character's ability to accurately duplicate a variety of objects, such as official documents, works of art and handwriting. It is especially useful for duplicating tribal body runes for disguise or other purposes.

INTERROGATION

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Casual Questioning, Torture, Specific Type of Informant
Often Possessed By:	Judges, Guards, Elders

Interrogation measures a character's ability to extract information from an unwilling informant. Although such exchange can be roleplayed, Weavers can use opposed rolls with informants rolling WIL or Interrogation, whichever is higher. A MoS of 4 or more indicates that the informant may not even realize she has revealed something of note.

MUSIC

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Instrument, Singing, Specific Tribe
Often Possessed By:	Entertainers, Shamans, Tribespeople

The Music Skill encompasses the ability to remember traditional musical compositions, to perform music and to critically evaluate performances. Music is an important part of daily and ceremonial life among the tribes, and as such is highly prized.

SURVIVAL

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Winter, Urban, Foraging, Shelter
Often Possessed By:	Hunters, Nomads, Outcasts

The Survival Skill allows the character to survive in hostile environments such as the deep woods or the dead of winter. Survival includes the ability to find appropriate hunting grounds, forage for food, find water holes and build shelters.

TACTICS

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Mass Combat, Security
Often Possessed By:	Warriors, Guards, Chieftains

The Tactics Skill represents the character's expertise in combat strategies, for example positioning troops while they are engaged with enemy forces or securing a village against attack.

TEACHING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Any other Skill
Often Possessed By:	Elders, Combat Instructors

Teaching is the Skill of transmitting knowledge and expertise to others in a clear and coherent fashion. Teaching allows tutors to reduce the Experience Point cost of Skills for their students (see p. 155).

TINKER

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Vehicles, Weapons, Electronics
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

The Tinker Skill is used in the modification and improvement of equipment and machinery from the World Before, often without the use of specialized tools. It is a common Keeper Skill.

FITNESS-BASED SKILLS



ATHLETICS

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Running, Specific Sport, Climbing, Break Fall
Often Possessed By:	Athletes, Hunters, Messengers, Warriors

The Athletics Skill represents the character's ability to engage in sporting activities of all kinds. It includes the necessary skills and knowledge of the rules and regulations along with the physical training required by athletic activities.

SWIMMING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Endurance, Speed, Diving
Often Possessed By:	Fishermen, Boaters, Tribespeople

Swimming is the ability to move effectively and efficiently in an aquatic environment. This Skill further encompasses the ability to perform other aquatic activities, such as diving.

INFLUENCE-BASED SKILLS



ETIQUETTE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Trade or Tribe
Often Possessed By:	Traders, Elders, Terashebens

Etiquette reflects the character's familiarity with proper methods of social interaction within formalized settings, such as everyday tribal ceremonies and council meetings.

Characters and traits

HAGGLING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Commodity, Specific Culture, Barter
Often Possessed By:	Traders, Smugglers, Con-Artists

Haggling measures a character's ability to influence the final barter price in a transaction. Haggling is an opposed roll; the object's effective Value is reduced by one level for every 2 points of MoS (or part thereof). A Player's roleplaying should always matter as much as the Skill roll, and the specific circumstances of the deal should be kept in mind. See p. 134 for an explanation of Value.

LEADERSHIP

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Military, Tribal, Religious, Business
Often Possessed By:	Elders, Judges, Warrior Chieftains

Leadership is the capacity to lead others, either by example or through inspiration.

STREETWISE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Outcasts, Specific Settlement, Rumors, Traders
Often Possessed By:	Bazaar Residents, Spies, Thieves, Outcasts

Streetwise is a catch-all Skill for interacting with the "shadier" elements of society and includes basic knowledge of the activities not acknowledged by the tribal hierarchy. In Bazaar, this includes such things as trade with outcasts, dealings with the Keepers and criminal activities. Streetwise also covers the ability to pick up rumors and obtain information from non-traditional sources.

THEATRICALS

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Drama, Con Game, Comedy, Directing, Media Editing, Guile
Often Possessed By:	Entertainers, Con Artists, Spies

The Theatrics Skill covers all aspects of drama. This includes the ability to produce, direct or act in formal productions, but also covers such things as impersonation and outright lying.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED SKILLS



AGRICULTURE

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Crop
Often Possessed By:	Farmers, Herbalists

Agriculture covers the ability to raise and maintain food and other crops. This includes methods ranging from crop-rotation to slash-and-burn farming. This Skill includes knowledge of the basic needs of a crop and ways to deal with drought, disease and other threats.

ANIMAL CARE

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Animal Handling 2 or Healing 2; Herbalism 1 needed for Skill Level 3
Specializations:	Specific Animal, Specific Ailment
Often Possessed By:	Herders, Elders, Hunters

Animal Care is the ability to diagnose and treat a variety of ailments that plague animals. These can include diseases, parasites, nutritional problems and injuries. Animal Care also includes basic ability to prepare remedies, although Herbalism is required for more sophisticated balms and potions.

DEMOLITION

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Mining, Construction, Bombing
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

Demolition is the Skill involved in setting and detonating explosive charges, and encompasses the ability to deactivate these same charges. It also includes the ability to produce various types of explosives.

HEALING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	Skill Level 3 requires Herbalism 1
Specializations:	Type of Wound, Type of Disease
Often Possessed By:	Healers, Hunters, Warriors

Healing is the ability to effectively treat injuries and ailments ranging from combat wounds to contagious diseases. The Skill includes diagnosis and treatment abilities, although dealing with most problems requires many herbs, potions and preparations. Advanced surgical procedures (transplants, bypasses, etc.) are impossible.

HERBALISM

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific species, Medicines, Elixirs
Often Possessed By:	Healers, Cooks, Farmers, Priests

Herbalism is the ability to recognize, collect, prepare and use a variety of plants and natural products for medicinal or other purposes. This includes preparing pain-killing solutions, deadly poisons and mind-altering drugs. Herbalists often maintain small spice-gardens where they raise difficult species in controlled conditions, but large-scale crops require the Agriculture Skill.

LAW

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Level 3 requires Read/Write 2.
Specializations:	Specific Tribe, Specific Trade
Often Possessed By:	Elders, Judges

Law is the knowledge of the legal customs of a society, and their application in a formal setting.

LORE (SPECIFIC)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Sub-Section of Knowledge
Often Possessed By:	Elders, Scholars, Shamans, Priests

Lore is a catch-all Skill that covers specialized areas of knowledge. These can be highly practical and include intimate knowledge of a geographical location, or be highly esoteric such as a knowledge of dreams and visions. A specific Lore must be chosen and characters can have multiple Lore Skills. Typical areas of knowledge include dreams, religion, the Z'bri, the Keepers, Bazaar, a specific tribe and the World Before.

MYTHOLOGY

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Legends, Specific Tribe
Often Possessed By:	Elders, Judges, Priests

The Mythology Skill covers knowledge of the history, legends and mythology of the tribal world. In tribal life, supernatural legends and mundane events are intimately intertwined, so no distinction is made between them in terms of Skills. Mythology includes the ability to recall facts and to recount famous tales.

NAVIGATION (SPECIFIC)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None (Air Navigation is a Keeper Skill)
Specializations:	Nighttime Star Position, Terrain Subtype
Often Possessed By:	Explorers, Boaters, Hunters

Navigation represents the character's proficiency in various techniques used to track one's positions and movements. Note that there are three distinct Navigation Skills, each of which must be purchased separately. These Skills are Air, Land and Sea Navigation. Skill rolls in an unfamiliar terrain type suffer a -2 penalty.

READ/WRITE (SPECIFIC)

Complexity:	Special (see below)
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Dialect, Specific Type of Text
Often Possessed By:	Scholars, Judges, Elders

Read/Write represents literacy in a specific language, including knowledge of proper grammar, dialects and other specialized forms. Read/Write must be purchased separately for each language, but it is not necessary to purchase both Speak (see p. 132) and Read/Write. Read/Write counts as a Simple Skill for a language the character can speak (up to her level of Speak). At higher levels or for other languages, it counts as a Complex Skill.

Common literate languages in **Tribe 8** include: Tribal, the common language of the Seven Tribes; Gaelish and Fanzay, two ancient arcane languages from the World Before; Keepspeak, the language of the Keepers; and specific tribal languages used by elders and initiates for secret communication.

Characters and traits

RITUAL

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Skill level 3 requires Dance 1 or Music 1
Specializations:	Specific Tribe, Specific Ceremony
Often Possessed By:	Elders, Priests, Scholars

Ritual is the knowledge of the religious ceremonies and ritual that are so important in daily tribal life. Those who lead ceremonies must have the Ritual Skill, but they can guide unskilled participants. The Skill includes knowledge of how to perform rituals, of their proper use and of their accepted origins. The Ritual Skill is often used to wield Synthesis in a controlled and limited manner (see *Ritual Synthesis*, p. 174).

SPEAK (SPECIFIC)

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Dialect, Specific Jargon
Often Possessed By:	Travelers, Diplomats, Scholars

This is the ability to communicate verbally in a language other than the character's native tongue. Each foreign language must be learned as an individual Skill. All characters are assumed to have level 2 (standard) or 3 (if they have KNO +2 or more) in their native tongue at no cost. Literate languages are listed under Read/Write (p. 131); other non-literate languages include various barbarian Squat tongues.

TECHLORE (COMPUTER)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Techlore (Electronics) 2; Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Programming, Systems Administration
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

The Computer Skill covers both the use and maintenance of diverse computer systems from the World Before. This Skill is extremely rare, even among Keepers.

TECHLORE (EARTH SCIENCES)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Geology, Geography, Mineral Survey
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

Earth Sciences is a catch-all Skill that includes geology, geography, seismology and meteorology. It is used for predicting weather patterns, conducting petroleum surveys and prospecting. A specialization *must* be chosen past level 2.

TECHLORE (ELECTRONICS)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Vehicle, Industrial, Robotics, Military, Security Systems
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

The Electronics Skill covers the use and repair of any electronic equipment not covered elsewhere in the Skill descriptions. This includes devices such as security systems and sensors.

TECHLORE (LIFE SCIENCES)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Zoology, Botany, Microbiology, Physiology
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

Life Sciences is the study life in its many forms. This includes all biological disciplines, with the exception of applied medicine. A specialization *must* be chosen past level 2.

TECHLORE (MECHANICS)

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Automotive, Industrial, Locks, Military
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

The Mechanics Skill covers all complex mechanical and structural repair and design. This includes fields as diverse as automotive mechanics and robotics. Simpler mechanical devices such as locks can be covered by an appropriate Craft Skill.

TECHLORE (MEDICINE)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Healing 2 and Techlore (Life Sciences) 2; Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Neurology, Forensics, Surgery, Toxicology
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

Medicine is the ability to diagnose and treat various pathological conditions such as traumas, diseases and infections, using advanced medical techniques from the World Before. The Medicine Skill is required for any sophisticated surgery or treatment involving technological implements (although Healing is used in emergencies).

TECHLORE (PHYSICAL SC.)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Nuclear Physics, Organic Chemistry, Astronomy
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

Physical Sciences includes the "classical" sciences such as physics and chemistry. It is a purely theoretical Skill. A specialization *must* be chosen past level 2.

TRADE

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Product, Market Trends, Marketing
Often Possessed By:	Traders

Trade is the ability to manage the affairs of commerce involved in selling trade items. It includes the ability to recognize a need in the market, to determine an object's worth in barter products, and management skills.

PERCEPTION-BASED SKILLS



BOATING

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Rafts, Fishing Vessels, Sailboats
Often Possessed By:	Sailors, Submarine Crews, Hobbyists

Boating allows the character to pilot water-based vessels of all types. This includes rowboats, barges and sailboats.

COMBAT SENSE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Urban, Forest, Marsh, Nighttime, Ambushes
Often Possessed By:	Warriors, Criminals

A character with Combat Sense has trained herself to be aware of potentially dangerous situations. Combat Sense is used primarily to detect ambushes and for initiative purposes (see p. 145).

GAMBLING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Game, Cheating
Often Possessed By:	Gamblers, Entertainers, Con Artists

Gambling represents the character's ability to play at most games of chance. It further allows the character to estimate odds, cheat at most games and place bets on events.

GUNNERY (SPECIFIC)

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Keeper Skill
Specializations:	Vehicle Model, Projectile Weapons, Missiles
Often Possessed By:	Keepers

Gunnery Skill is required to fire any non-portable weapons, such as those mounted on vehicles from the World Before. There are three different Gunnery Skills that must be purchased separately: Air, Land, Sea.

INVESTIGATION

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Searching, Surveillance, Forensics
Often Possessed By:	Spies, Guards, Judges

The Investigation Skill allows the character to collect information on people, places and events. This information can be gathered by any means not covered by the Streetwise Skill.

NOTICE

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Sense, Nighttime, Tracking
Often Possessed By:	Hunters, Warriors, Judges, Guards

Notice is the ability to perceive details that may be otherwise overlooked in haste. The Skill is used both to detect someone trying to stay hidden (usually an Opposed Roll against Sneak) and to spot small details like tracks or clues to a crime.

Characters and traits

PSYCHE-BASED SKILLS



DREAMING

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	Level 3 requires Ritual 1
Specializations:	dream shield, dream attack, spirit call
Often Possessed By:	Elders, Priests, Witches

The Dreaming Skill is a character's ability to control her interaction with the River of Dream. Although it does not allow travel through the River, it allows the character to shape her own dreamscape to a limited extent. The character can call out to spirits as well as defend herself against them, if need be. For full details on interacting with spirits, see pp. 160-164.

HUMAN PERCEPTION

Complexity:	Complex
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Body Language, Tone of Voice, Eye Contact
Often Possessed By:	Hostess, Judge

Human Perception is the Skill of understanding the state of mind of another person, mainly in regard to the emotions. It allows one to see through lies by reading body language and attitude. This can be represented by an opposed roll against Theatrics.

RIDING

Complexity:	Simple
Pre-Requisites:	None
Specializations:	Specific Animal, Racing, Dressage
Often Possessed By:	Warriors, Ranchers, Travelers

The Riding Skill measures the character's ability to control a riding animal (it is used in lieu of a Piloting or Drive Skills when astride such a creature or in a vehicle drawn by one). The Skill also includes a basic ability to care for the animal. Riding is Psyche based because of the critical importance of the relationship between rider and steed.

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Tribal society is generally low-tech, relying less on sophisticated machinery and complex systems than on simple equipment. Ownership of any large item (say a plow, a home, livestock) is also generally communal, with families and clans sharing resources. Personal equipment is generally on a small scale, including tools, weapons, ritual paraphernalia and perhaps a favorite animal. This section provides descriptions and game statistics (where appropriate) of common pieces of equipment in Vimary as well as some more esoteric items (such as the technological wonders of the Keepers). The emphasis is largely on portable items that will be owned by Player Characters or others, rather than the larger props that may crop up in stories. Note that game statistics on animals are provided in *Appendix: Animals and Creatures*.

Because Vimary is a barter society, it is impossible to provide a precise measure of how much an item "costs." Rather, we present a **Value** rating that ranges from Very Low, through Low, Average, High and Very High. These are only approximate representations of the rarity and usefulness of the item. An item with a Very Low Value (like a simple club) will be widely available and a character can obtain it simply by trading another available item (say some grain) or by doing a bit of work herself. An item with a High or Very High value (like a trained war horse) will be rare and valuable, and could only be obtained in exchange for other valuable items, large quantities of less valuable items, or a period of service. The Value is followed by a number in brackets that indicates a suggested Threshold for Streetwise, Haggling, Trade or Lore tests to obtain the item. Remember that different people place a different value on items, however, and these ratings are only approximations. A tribal farmer won't care for an old carburetor, but a Keeper certainly will, for example.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Generally speaking, people around Vimary are not pack rats. Family and clans own most property communally and many people live semi-nomadic lifestyles. As such, people keep their personal property to a minimum, usually to what they can carry with ease. Merchants and Keepers are notable exceptions to this policy, with the former keeping shops and tents full of trade items, while the latter are legendary hoarders of relics of the World Before.

Outcasts like the Fallen often put a premium on mobility. Because they may be fleeing from enemies, they travel light most of the time. Those living in Hom have a little more security, and cells sometimes cooperate to guard each other's possessions.

CLOTHES

Clothing in Vimary is a mishmash of artisanal terms and remnants from the World Before. The millions who once lived across Vimary left behind a staggering amount of clothing — although much of it is damaged and worn. It is quite common for outcasts, tribals and others to patch together old clothing into new forms. Old leathers and jeans are combined with newly tanned hides, along with old fleece and flannel to form warm clothes, for example.

Vimary suffers from biting cold winters and hot summers, so clothing is very seasonal. Winter dress usually consists of multiple layers of clothing covering as much of the skin as possible, using fur, wool or scavenged items, often worn under a waterproof trench coat or hooded cloak. Summer clothing is far more sparse, either loose and airy, or small and functional. Men and women often go bare-chested or wear only enough to support and protect their bosoms and genitals. Most people adorn their bodies with tattoos and body paints, and so try to expose their flesh to be seen. Decorative items like jewelry, piercings and pendants are also common, indicating mostly personal style, but also heritage and rank.

The various tribes and factions tend to dress in representative styles, as well. **Joanites** tend toward leathers and other clothing that provides both protection and mobility in combat. **Terashebans** and **Yagans** often wear robes, sometimes woven with arcane or legal symbols. **Magdalites** wear provocative and revealing clothing, emphasizing their sexual assets. **Evans** tend toward simpler clothing, practical for tilling the soil, and are less prone to wear relic clothes. **Agnites** and **Dahlions** wear no standard clothes, although they both tend toward flamboyance. **Keepers** wear robes and clothes from the World Before, adorned with gadgets and relics. The **Fallen** generally wear clothes that reflect their tribal heritage, but combined with a rebellious flair that is both shocking and alluring.

TOOLS

Small tools are also commonly private property. These can range from a hunter's weapons (see *Tribal Weapons*, p. 139) to the ax used to cut firewood, the needle used to sew and the pick used to crack the soil. Large tools (a plow, a weaponsmith's smithy, etc.) are generally communally owned by a family, clan or cell. Even small tools like an ax or carving implements will be lent to a brother or sister with little hesitation. Most basic tools are either scavenged or made by tribal blacksmiths.

Scavenged tools are relics of the World Before and can carry a heavy price due to their sturdy construction and prestige. Shovels, picks, crowbars are all commonly found items in the ruins in and around Vimary. Scavenged tools find their way into tribal hands through trading with the Keepers.

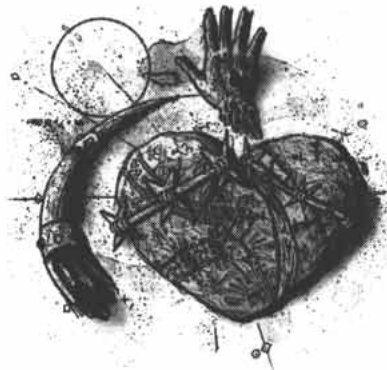
Handcrafted tools, though not as reliable, are far more common. Here, tribal craftsmen and blacksmiths fashion tools from raw and scavenged materials. Anything from a metal beam to a street sign is cannibalized into a working tool.

CEREMONIAL AND RITUAL IMPLEMENTS

Priest, outcasts and healers often have a wide variety of ritual implements that are critical to their tasks. Those who wield Synthesis use a variety of special rituals or techniques to achieve trances, and these often depend on implements such as drugs, body paints, drums or weapons. Healers collect huge varieties of herbs, plants and toxins that they refine into balms and drugs. They also carry bandages and equipment for splints.

Priestesses use many different tools in their rituals. Knuckle bones, old bolts, relics of images and various cards are all commonly used for precognitive visions. Even scavenged relics of the World Before such as CDs, mirrored sunglasses or lava lamps are all possible ceremonial tools, especially for the Fallen.

Tribal priests, however, prefer Fatimal artifacts, pieces and fragments of the Seven Sisters. Some of these artifacts have a pragmatic purpose — a sliver of Joan could be used as a dagger — but most are ornamental, serving as a connection between the dreamer and the Fatima. Fatimal artifacts are usually only available to the priesthood, but some among the tribes are blessed by having an artifact or two as family heirlooms.



DRUGS

The tribes live on the edge of spiritual reality, taunted by the possibilities of the River of Dream. To some, such as the Fallen and the sisterhoods, the connection comes easily and effortlessly; not so to others. Drugs open unreceptive dreamers to the currents of the River, allowing them to access it with far greater ease. To the tribes, drug use is not seen as a crime, but as a sacred activity. Even the Fallen understand the critical role drugs play in Synthesis and respect them.

Most tribal drugs come in the form of elixirs and potions created by the Dahlions, Magdalites, or in some cases the Evans. Some of these are reincarnations of drugs found today, while others are fresh inventions.

Characters and traits



KEEPER

Keepers are a highly eclectic bunch. They wear a mix of tribal and relic clothes, often adorned with a dazzling array of recycled objects. They also carry dangerous weapons — firearms from the World Before. Keepers are often willing to trade some of their bizzare possessions, but usually at a dear price. Fallen who deal with Keepers have learned to identify those pieces of junk that will most interest them and hence fetch a good trade price.

- | | |
|----|----------------------|
| 1. | Relic CDs |
| 2. | Jury-rigged rifle |
| 3. | Relic electronics |
| 4. | Heavy leather jacket |
| 5. | Relic sneakers |

WINTER CLOTHES

Tribals, Fallen and Squats all have to deal with the harsh winter that buries Vimary in snow every year. Keeping warm is always a challenge, but the best solution is usually fur clothing. Layers of lighter clothes are also often worn under fur cloaks. These can be removed under the cloak to avoid overheating, a serious danger when undertaking strenuous activities. Furs are also often symbols of status because they speak of a hunter's prowess. Those who wear bear and wolf-skins are respected as powerful hunters — or their relatives.



- | | |
|----|----------------------------|
| 1. | Bear-skin cloak |
| 2. | Relic goggles |
| 3. | Satchel for supplies |
| 4. | Layered undergarment |
| 5. | Walking stick/quarterstaff |

JOANITE WATCH

The Watch polices Bazaar and guards the core of tribal lands. They are among the most feared of warriors, but also have a reputation for a certain corruption. They are usually heavily armed, wearing armor forged from recovered materials from the World Before. Their helms, often hiding their faces, add to their stern image. Watch members wear the characteristic symbols of both their Fatima Joan and of the Seven Tribes as a whole. They represent the authority of the Grand Council, and they know it.

1.	Helm
2.	Scale armor w/ plates
3.	Poleax
4.	Sword
5.	Cloak



TRIBAL HUNTER

Hunters travel through the Hunting Paths, Duskfall and even the dangerous Outlands in the pursuit of game — valued for meat, fur and other supplies. Even in summer, hunters wear layers of clothes to protect themselves from the dangers of the woods, including animal attack, rain and sharp branches. Their main weapons and tools are bows used to bring down heavy game at a distance or traps and snares used to catch game unawares. Some also use spear, although bows are generally more effective.

1.	Short Bow
2.	Quiver with arrows
3.	Animal traps (for bears and large game)
4.	Satchel with supplies
5.	Layered boots



Characters and traits

HAZERS

Hazers are basic hallucinogenic drugs, blurring the distinction between physical and spiritual, allowing the dreamer to reach into the River of Dream. While the effects vary from person to person, they include: euphoria, heightened sensations (visual and auditory). Extremely potent Hazers are said to allow the user glimpses of the future, or the ability to revisit the past. Common side effects include dizziness, and sleepiness after the effects wear down. Persistent users claim that their visions while in a Haze become darker and more menacing the more they use them; some are plagued by vision of their own deaths. The Action Penalties for Hazers (see *Drugs and Toxins*, p. 152) become *bonuses* for Synthesis or Dreaming tests.

Potency:	7 to 9 (depends on quality)
Effects:	Hallucinogen
Onset:	10 minutes if smoked, 30 minutes if ingested
Value:	High (5)

LIBS

Libs are not used to access the River of Dream, but to relax the dreamer to a state that allows her to tune out the world around her and focus on Synthesis. Some Libs act as passion inhibitors while others induce sleep or a trace-like states. Libs are very common in bars, dives and other social gathering places. Most are taken as drinks or potions.

Potency:	5 to 9 (depending on quality)
Effects:	Sedative/Euphoric/Analgesic
Onset Time:	25 minutes
Value:	Low (3) or Average (3) (depending on quality)

HEALERS

This commonly available analgesic — a specialty of Evan healers — helps reduce the pain from wounds, diseases or chronic conditions. It is applied locally through various means, from lotions and incense, to potions and elixirs.

Potency:	7 to 9 (depending on quality)
Effects:	Analgesic
Onset Time:	10 minutes
Value:	Average (4)

SURVIVAL GEAR

The tribes live in an unforgiving environment; harsh winters, blistering summers, freak storms, and dark savage forests are just some of the hardships they face, not to mention the Z'bri. The tribes, however, are resourceful and resilient, having had enough time to adapt to these conditions. As with all things, they have used equal parts innovation and scavenging, and the items in the *Personal Equipment* table below are only a sampling of the items available to intrepid travelers.

KEEPER EQUIPMENT

Whereas the tribes are pragmatic and practical, keeping only the bare essentials, the Keepers are the consummate hoarders. They keep every little scrap of junk, and usually put it to good use — there is nothing a Keeper will throw away. Keepers are also excellent jury-riggers, capable of creating any sort of device from the detritus they find in the ruins around Vimary. Keepers commonly carry relatively simple pieces of technology from the World Before, like gas masks, flashlights and binoculars. Those with better resources may carry more sophisticated electronics, like a portable CD player, nightvision goggles or even a jury-rigged laptop. Note that most of these will require Technosmithing (see p. 174) to operate. Larger items, like televisions, desktop computers, generators, arc welders, etc., are kept in secret hideouts Below or in the Rust Wastes.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Weight (kg)	Value
CLOTHES		
Boots, heavy (relic)	1.5	Average (5)
Boots, standard	1	Low (3)
Goggles (relic)	1	Low (6)
Latex wear (relic)	2	Average (6)
Summer clothes	1	Low (3)
Trench coat (relic)	3	Average (6)
Winter cloak, fur	3	High (4)
Winter cloak, light	3	Average (3)
TOOLS		
Electric tools (relic)	4	Average (6)
Farming tools	5	Average (3)
Mechanic's toolbox (relic)	4	High (5)
Pick ax	4	Average (3)
RITUAL IMPLEMENTS		
Divinatory bones	1	High (4)
Divinatory cards (relic)	0.5	High (6)
Fatima Artifact (minor)	var.	High (7)
Fatima Artifact (major)	var.	Very High (8)
Incense	0.5	Low (4)
Relics (CDs, etc.)	var.	Average (6)
DRUGS		
Hazers	-	High (5)
Healers	-	Average (4)
Libs, low potency	-	Low (3)
Libs, high potency	-	Average (3)
SURVIVAL GEAR		
Backpack	1	Low (3)
Canteen/Gourd	1	Low (3)
Compass (relic)	0.5	High (5)
Fishing line (10 m)	0.5	Average (3)
Fishing net (personal)	2	High (3)
Hammock	3	Low (4)
Lantern	3	Average (3)
Rope (50m)	4	Average (5)

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT (CONT.)

Equipment	Weight (kg)	Value
Sack	1	Very Low (2)
Sleeping Bag (relic)	1	High (5)
Sleeping Roll	1	Low (3)
Tents	20	High (3)
KEEPER EQUIPMENT		
Binoculars (relic)	2	Very High* (5)
CD Player (relic)	2	Very High* (7)
Digital watch (relic)	-	High* (6)
Flashlight (relic)	2	High* (5)
Gas mask (relic)	2	High* (5)
Jury-rigged laptop (relic)	5	Very High* (10)
Metal detector (relic)	5	Very High* (7)
Nightvision goggles (relic)	3	Very High* (7)
Portable Generator (relic)	15	Very High* (6)
Walkie-talkie (relic)	1	Very High* (7)

*These Values are among Keepers. Among tribals, they are two levels less.

WEAPONS & ARMOR

Vimary is a dangerous place. The Z'bri and the Seven Tribes spill each other's blood with frightening regularity, while Squat warlords raid towns and Keepers defend the Rust Wastes. The Fallen are rarely afraid of a little bloodshed, either. Most people carry some form of weaponry, be it a simple staff or a well-crafted sword.

KEEPER FIREARMS

Although finding a relic firearm is not impossible, finding one that works, or even more importantly finding the ammunition needed, is far more difficult. Many Keepers possess at least one firearm, but usually save it for dire situations because they are prized items. Jury-rigged firearms are more readily available, but they're far from safe or reliable, and often more dangerous to the user than the target. Most firearms in **Tribe 8** tend to be simple; there are few assault rifles, but shotguns and pistols are more prolific since they are simple to repair and maintain.

Ammunition is another matter. Most Keepers have taken to making their own rounds, such as flechette rounds using nails and stones, to splintering rounds made of hardened bones.

TRIBAL WEAPONS

Most Fallen and tribals use weapons that have been with humanity for centuries. These weapons are used with the Melee, Throwing or Archery Skills. Each category of Melee weapons can use a corresponding Melee skill specialization.

Sticks and Clubs: The club is a catch-all category for any kind of short-to-medium length crushing weapon, whether it is a tree branch, a baseball bat or a metal pipe. The quarterstaff is another catch-all term for any kind of long wooden or metallic pole, usually used with both hands. Staffs also serve a practical purpose as walking sticks, and many tribal priests use them as part of their ceremonial rituals.

Blades and Knives: Blades and knives are found nearly everywhere in tribal society, from practical hunting knives to expertly crafted ceremonial daggers, and are used both for practical and violent needs. Anything from a sharpened shard of metal, to polished steel, to long rusted nails are used in their construction, yielding varying results.

Swords and Axes: As common weapon among the tribes as with the Z'bri, swords are easy to manufacture and maintain. All manner of configurations abound, but the most trusted and respected are those crafted by Joanite Weaponsmiths. Axes, on the other hand, serve a dual purpose being used as both tools and weapons.

Spears: Spears and polearms are usually identified with the Watch, who utilize these weapons to great effect in patrolling the streets of Bazaar. Short spears are pointed shafts whose length does not exceed two meters. Their tips can be made of wood, stone or metal. Long spears are pointed shafts whose length exceeds two meters. In all other aspects they are similar to short spears. Polearms are a combination between an ax and spear, allowing the wielder to hack at her opponent without fear of normally being struck back.

Ranged Weapons: There is not a large variety of ranged weapons in **Tribe 8**. Tribal bows are made from treated wood and are generally lightweight in construction. The Yagans craft bows from bones, known for their accuracy, and design special arrowheads for a variety of uses — from hunting to Z'bri slaying. Crossbow are likewise popular and vary in size from small ones that attach to one's forearm, to larger crossbows manned by a crew of two. Relic bows are easier to come about than firearms, even for the tribes, and a few Joanites possess composite bows.



Characters and traits

WEAPON STATISTICS

Weapon	ACC	Parry	DM	Range	ROF	Ammo	Value	Wt.
STICKS AND CLUBS								
Club	0	-1	AD+5	close combat	-	-	Very Low (2)	1
Mace	0	0	AD+9	close combat	-	-	Low (3)	2
Fighting Stick	0	+1	AD+6	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	1
Quarterstaff, wood	0	+1	AD+7	close combat	-	-	Low (3)	2.5
Quarterstaff, metal	0	+1	AD+11	close combat	-	-	Average (5)	4
Leather Bullwhip	0	-2	AD+5	close combat	-	-	Average (4)	3
BLADES AND KNIVES								
Dagger	0	-1	AD+3	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	0.25
Throwing Knife/Spike	0	-1	AD+3	Throw (STR+4)	-	-	Average (5)	0.25
Hunting Knife	0	-1	AD+5	Throw (STR+3)	-	-	Low (4)	0.5
Arm Blade	0	0	AD+4	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	1
Machete	0	0	AD+8	close combat	-	-	average (4)	1
SWORDS AND AXES								
Short Sword	0	+1	AD+8	close combat	-	-	Average (5)	1
Long Sword	0	-1	AD+11	close combat	-	-	High (6)	1
Katana (relic)	0	+1	AD+13	close combat	-	-	Very High (7)	1.5
Hatchet	0	0	AD+7	Throw (STR+3)	-	-	Low (3)	1.5
Ax, Large	0	0	AD+11	close combat	-	-	Average (3)	2
Ax, Pole	-1	+1	AD+12	close combat	-	-	Average (4)	2.5
SPEARS								
Spear, short	0		AD+8	Throw	-	-	Average (4)	1.5
Spear, long	-1		AD+12	Throw	-	-	High (4)	3
Weapon	ACC	Fumble	DM	Range	ROF	Ammo	Value	Wt.
RANGED WEAPONS, TRIBAL								
Short Bow	0	Low	7	5/10/20/40	0/1	1	Average (3)	0.5
Long Bow	0	Low	10	9/18/36/72	0/2	1	High (4)	1
Composite Bow (relic)	0	Medium	15	7/14/28/56	0/2	1	Very High (5)	3
Hand-Crossbow	0	Medium	6	4/8/16/32	0/1	1	Average (5)	1
Crossbow	+1	Low	17	6/12/24/48	0/3	1	High (4)	2
Repeating Crossbow	0	Medium	7	7/14/28/56	0	6	High (5)	2
Yagan Bone Bow	+1	Low	9	8/16/32/64	0	1	Very High (6)	1
Sling	+1	Low	5	4/8/16/32	0	1	Low (2)	0.5
Bola	0	Low	7	6/12/24/48	0	1	Low (2)	1
RANGED WEAPONS, KEEPERS								
Zip Gun	-2	High	8	4/8/16/32	0/2	1	Average (6)	0.5
Jury-rigged Pistol	-1	High	14	4/8/16/32	0	6	High (6)	1
Jury-rigged Rifle	-1	High	20	7/14/28/56	0	1	High (6)	3
Black Powder Pistol	-1	High	15	6/12/24/48	0	1	High (4)	1
Musket	0	High	24	10/20/40/80	0	1	Very High (5)	4
Shotgun	0	High	28	7/14/28/56	0	8	Very High (5)	3
Rifle	0	High	25	25/50/100/200	0	10	Very High (6)	4
Weapon	Acc	Fumble	Damage	Range	Radius (m)	Ammo	Value	Wt.
EXPLOSIVES								
Concussion grenade (relic)	0	High	30	Throw (STR+3)	9	-	Very High (6)	1
Dynamite stick (relic)	-1	High	30	Throw (STR+3)	10	-	Very High (5)	1
Pitch smoke bomb	-1	High	5/smoke	Throw (STR+3)	2/20	-	Average (4)	1.5

WEAPON CHARACTERISTICS

ACC is the weapon's accuracy.

Parry is the weapon's parry modifier (melee weapons only).

Fumble is used for ranged weapons only; it represents the weapon's reliability and comes into effect after a Fumble is rolled. Low means that a standard fumble has occurred: the attack fails and the weapon may malfunction, but nothing untoward happens. Medium means that the weapon is no longer operable until repaired (Threshold of 5). High Fumble is very dangerous: the weapon explodes in the attacker's hands. Use the DM with an effective MoS of 1. The weapon (except explosives) may later be repaired, but the Threshold is 7.

DM is the weapon's Damage Multiplier, which is multiplied by the attacker's Margin of Success. **AD** is the character's Armed Damage rating.

Range indicates the short/medium/long/extreme ranges (in meters) of a weapon, respectively. "Close combat" means the weapon can only be used in melee; "Throw" means the melee weapon can be thrown using the Throw Skill, while the formula in brackets indicates the Short Range.

ROF shows the weapon's burst fire bonus. Single shot weapons have a ROF of 0; a ROF of 0/x means the weapon can only be fired once every x rounds.

Ammo is the number of bullets and/or charges found in the weapon's magazine.

Value is the weapon's value and the Threshold needed to find it.

Wt. is the weapon's weight, in kilograms.

ARMOR

The Seven Tribes use armor, not only for protection but as a fashion accessory as well. All manner of items and materials are used, from chains and steel scales to layers of rubber and relic sporting equipment (such as hockey pads and masks). Only a few, mostly Joanites, make use of heavy armor. The typical tribal or outcast warrior wears a combination of layered leather or studded rubber, allowing for mobility and style.

Armor exists in various types in Vimary:

Soft Armor is generally composed of the daily clothes one wears. The use of animal hides and scavenged canvas by the tribes affords minimal protection, usually against the elements or from scrapes and bruises.

Leather Armor normally appears in its most common form — leather jackets. A favorite among outcasts, the basic leather armor can be slightly enhanced by adding small metal studs and other decorations

Characters and traits

Chain and Scale Armor is made from small metal links or scales. It offers more protection but does restrict the wearer. Reminiscent of medieval armor, tribal chain mail or scales mesh is a combination of old and new. Wiremesh might cover the midsection while shoulder pads protect the neck and upper chest. As with all things tribal, chain and scale armor is adorned with tribal markings and inscription.

Relic Armor is common among the Keepers, and includes items such as flak jackets and riot gear. It offers substantial protection.

PERSONAL ARMOR

Armor	Armor Rating	Encumbrance	Concealable	Mass	Value
Soft armor	3	0	yes	2	Low (3)
Leather armor	5	0	somewhat	4	High (4)
Studd. leather	8	0	somewhat	6	High (5)
L. scale/chain arm.	10	-1	somewhat	7	Very High (5)
H. scale/chain arm.	14	-2	no	10	Very High (6)
Flak jacket	16	0	yes	2.5	Very High (7)

Armor Rating is the protective value of the armor, to be added to the character's wound thresholds when resisting an attack.

Encumbrance indicates if wearing a particular armor incurs a penalty to "physical" skills, i.e. skills that involve the AGI or FIT stats (but not BUI).

Concealable gives an arbitrary measure of how discrete a particular suit of armor is. The GM should decide, depending on circumstances and the Player's dress, whether the armor is visible or not.

Mass is the mass of a full suit of armor in kilograms. For torso armor, divide by 2.

Value is the barter value of a full suit of armor; for torso armor only reduce by one level.

VEHICLES

The Seven Tribes and the other inhabitants of Vimary do not use a wide variety of vehicles. The most common way to get around is by foot, followed by horses and other beasts of burden. Simple carts and wagons are also found on most farms. These vehicles are simple utilities, made for carrying goods rather than speed or maneuverability. Some Joanites use small chariots for warfare, but, more commonly, they will simply ride a well-trained war horse. Only the enigmatic Keepers regularly use sophisticated vehicles — generally cobbled-together bikes and buggies from the World Before.

Note that riding animals are covered in *Animals & Creatures*, p. 190, along with other animals.

Characters and traits

SMALL CART

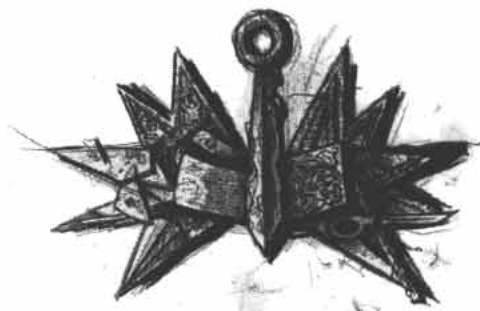
The most common vehicle in Vimary, this category of cart is a simple flat surface with two wheels, pulled along by a single beast of burden — either a horse, mule or ox. The driver sits at the front of the cart, with merchandise piled behind her. The design is simple and is used primarily to move produce from the fields to storage silos or to market. Hay, wood, furs, meats and other goods are commonly carried on these carts. They are generally not suited for any form of combat or fancy maneuvers.

Size:	+6
Crew:	1
Speed:	Horse drawn: 5 meters/round; 3 km/hour (land)
Maneuver:	-4
Range:	200 km
Damage Ratings:	30/60/90
Special Characteristics:	Load 500 kg, exposed cargo and driver. If oxen are used, speed is halved but load is doubled.

WAGON

A larger version of the cart, the wagon can hold more cargo, or can be used as a mobile home. As opposed to carts, wagons are more often covered, either with a canvas or leather tarp to shield its cargo or inhabitants from the elements. Due to their size, wagons are pulled along by multiple beasts of burden, anywhere from two to eight.

Size:	+7
Crew:	1 or 2
Speed:	5/10/20 meters/round (for 2, 4 or 8 animals respectively); 3/6/12 km/hour (land)
Maneuver:	-4
Range:	200/400/600 km
Damage Ratings:	40/80/160
Special Characteristics:	Load: 1000 kg, protection against weather, can house 4 people with limited cargo. If oxen are used speed is halved, but load is doubled.



CHARIOT

A war machine used by the Joanites, the chariot's small size and speed allow it to patrol a large area in a short amount of time. The chariot itself is constructed from scavenged auto parts, surrounded by metal sheets and spikes for protection, and pulled by two war horses. Chariots are normally crewed by two to three Joanites, one acting as the driver, the other two using bows or melee weapons.

Size:	+6
Crew:	2 or 3
Speed:	20 meters/round, 12 kph (land)
Maneuver:	0
Range:	400 km
Damage Ratings:	50/100/220
Special Characteristics:	Protection from ranged weapons from the front, spiked hubs (DM x13)

ROWBOAT/RAFT

Made from a number of materials, from wood to plastics, the rowboat or raft allows relatively safe travel over water. It can be used for fishing or limited transport of goods, but mostly for transportation. It provides little protection from weather or against attacks.

Size:	+2
Crew:	1 min, 4 max.
Speed:	8 meters/round, 5 kph (sea)
Maneuver:	0
Range:	unlimited
Damage Ratings:	20/40/80
Special Characteristics:	If going upriver divide speed by 2; if traveling downstream, multiply speed by 2. Load 50 kg.

RIVER BOAT

Usually barges, river boats are mainly used by the Keepers or by a few mobile Squat warlords. They are built wide to remain stable on shallow rivers, but their size makes maneuvering around obstacles a hassle. Propulsion systems include sails, oars or tow cables.

Size:	+7
Crew:	4 min. / 8 max.
Speed:	17 meters/round, 10 kph (sea)
Maneuver:	-2
Range:	unlimited
Damage Ratings:	100/200/400
Special Characteristics:	If going upriver divide speed by 2, if traveling downstream, multiply speed by 2. Load 5000 kg.

KEEPER DIRTBIKE

Cannibalized from several sources, Keeper dirtbikes are some of the most common (albeit rare) vehicles from the World Before.

Size:	+5
Crew:	1
Speed:	92 meters/round, 55 kph (land)
Maneuver:	+2
Range:	250 km
Damage Ratings:	20/40/60
Special Characteristics:	Depends on gasoline. In case of Drive fumbles roll one d6. If a "6" is rolled, the engine explodes (causing 1d6 x 25 damage). Can carry 1 passenger in sidcar.

KEEPER BUGGY

Rare even among the Keepers, buggies are little more than an automotive frame with an engine, and enclosed (if even) by metal sheets or tanned leathers. Known for their high mobility and decent cargo capacity, buggies provide the Keepers with an efficient (though dangerous) means of transportation.

Size:	+8
Crew:	2 (2 passengers if no cargo)
Speed:	83 meters/round, 50 kph (land)
Maneuver:	+1
Range:	250 km
Damage Ratings:	25/50/100
Special Characteristics:	Some buggies are equipped with a weapon, usually a heavy rifle (Dam x30, Range 25/50/100/200). Depends on gasoline. In case of Drive fumbles roll one d6. If a "6" is rolled, the engine explodes (causing 1d6 x 40 damage).

BELCHER

Essentially a trailer cab, only one is known to exist in Vimary. A patched-up hunk of junk in reality, the Belcher is extremely loud and spews thick acid smoke whenever used by the Keepers.

Size:	+11
Crew:	2
Speed:	87 meter/round, 40 kph (land)
Maneuver:	0
Range:	1000 km
Damage Ratings:	60/120/240
Special Characteristics:	Depends on gasoline. In case of Drive fumbles, roll one d6. If a "6" is rolled, the engine explodes (causing 1d6 x 60 damage). The Belcher is equipped with a ram plate, doubling its size for rams.

TUNNEL BOMBARDIER

The specialty of a particularly nasty band of Keepers, tunnel bombardiers are essentially the watercraft equivalent of dirtbikes. The pilot sits astride the floating craft and uses handlebars to accelerate and steer. Keepers use bombardiers to rocket through the flooded tunnels of Below, their powerful engines spewing out smoke and causing a deafening noise. They sometimes emerge on the River and dart through the Sunken City, but only when raiding for technology in Bazaar. Bombardiers can be equipped with ramming spikes and are piloted with the Drive Skill.

Size:	+5
Crew:	1
Speed:	75 meters/round, 45 kph (sea)
Maneuver:	+2
Range:	100 km
Damage Ratings:	21/42/63
Special Characteristics:	Can carry one passenger behind driver. Depends on gasoline. In case of Drive fumbles, roll 1d6 against a Threshold of 2 plus the pilot's Agility Attribute (minimum Threshold of 0). The pilot and the vehicle take damage equal to MoS x 15. Spiked sides (DM x13).

THE OLDYEAR

The Oldyear is a unique dirigible airship built by the Keeper Felix Iago (see p. 85). Iago plans to use his craft to explore the lands away from Vimary, in hopes of finding treasures from the World Before and other hidden communities. The Oldyear consists of a massive canopy filled with arcane gasses Iago has spent years collecting and producing. Although not very fast and quite sluggish, the Oldyear can stay aloft indefinitely and Iago sees himself sailing off with a crew of Fallen.

Size:	+12
Crew:	4
Speed:	50 meters/round, 30 kph (air)
Maneuver:	-5
Range:	unlimited
Damage Ratings:	25/50/75
Special Characteristics:	Can carry 2 extra passengers. Gas bag is vulnerable to attack (no penalty to target; armor of 10/20/30; Light Damage results in forced landing, Heavy Damage in crash). Depends on gasoline for propulsion.



ACTIONS

There are three standard types of actions a character can attempt in a roleplaying game: automatic actions, possible actions and impossible actions. Automatic actions (e.g. opening a door, walking on a sidewalk) will automatically succeed unless something complicates them, in which case they become possible actions. Possible actions are actions that could either fail or succeed (e.g. forcing open a locked door, walking on a tightrope). Impossible actions are those acts that are doomed to fail, often because they are logically impossible or just incredibly challenging (e.g. flying by flapping one's arms, finding a needle in a large haystack in one minute). It is the Weaver who must decide whether an action is automatic, possible, or impossible.

Automatic actions do not require Skill rolls. Possible actions require an action test: these consist of a modified die roll which is compared to either a Threshold value or an opponent's die roll. An impossible action fails automatically.

RUNNING ACTION TESTS

There are four different ways to run action tests. The first way is to tell the Players what the action's Threshold is and have them report their Margins of Success or Failure (respectively MoS or MoF). This method is the easiest, but lends itself to "roll"-playing instead of roleplaying since it focuses much of the Players' attention on dice and bookkeeping tasks. It also takes control away from the Weaver since the Players will expect her to abide by the die results, even if it messes up the story.

The second way is to announce what Skill, Attribute, or Secondary Trait is being tested, and have the Players report their die totals. It is then up to the Weaver to compare the number to her chosen Threshold and describe the results to the Players. This method is a good compromise and allows the Weaver to have control over the game while giving Players the satisfaction of being the ones who control (i.e. rolled the results of) their characters' actions. It also saves the Weaver from doing all the work.

The third alternative is to tell the Players nothing of the game mechanics and have the Weaver perform the roll behind a screen. This method is generally inconvenient for most Weavers, but it is very useful for performing Perception tests, such as Notice or Combat Sense tests. Besides, rolling dice every now and then while wearing a fiendish grin keeps Players on their toes.

The fourth alternative is for Players who prefer to dispense with dice altogether in favor of drama and plot development. The Weaver must simply make a judgment call based upon the task complexity and the character's competence. No dice are ever rolled. This method is excellent for very simple and incredibly difficult situations. It involves a great deal of trust between the Weaver and the rest of the Player Circle — it can be very rewarding because it helps maintain the illusion that Players are their characters, but it can also take away some of the gaming fun of rolling dice.

SKILL TESTS

The Silhouette system relies on Skill tests to determine the outcome of most character actions. The number of possible actions and Skills required to perform them is virtually unlimited. The *Skill Descriptions* section of *Chapter 8: Characters and Traits* lists the official Skills. These are by no means the only possible Skills; they are just a list of suggested Skills. If a Player comes up with a reasonable new Skill and the Weaver agrees, the new Skill can be used in the game without any problems.

Remember that in Skill tests, a Player rolls a number of dice equal to her character's Skill level, adding the Attribute bonus and any other appropriate bonuses or penalties to the result of the die roll.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE THAT SKILL?

Often, characters will need to accomplish a task in which they have no Skill. In these cases, two dice are rolled. The result is equal to the **lowest** of the two individual die rolls. If **either** of the two dice rolled a 1, a fumble occurs. If no fumble occurred, add the appropriate modifiers to obtain the final total roll.

If Emergency Dice are purchased using Experience Points (XPs; see *Character Evolution*, page 154), spending one XP will reduce the number of dice rolled to one. Spending two XPs will keep the number of dice rolled at two, but the roll is normal (i.e. the highest die result counts, two 6's = 7, both dice must roll 1 to fumble). Spending additional XPs will have no further effect.

OPPOSED ACTION TESTS

Sometimes two individuals will oppose each other's actions. Attacks can be dodged. Guards may notice people sneaking past them. Negotiations obviously require more than one participant. When two or more individuals oppose each other's actions, an **Opposed Action Test** is called for.

Each opponent makes a die roll using the appropriate Attribute or Skill. The highest result wins the test. The Margin of Success (MoS) of an Opposed Action Test is equal to the winner's roll minus the loser's roll. If more than two participants are involved, separate Margins of Success are worked out between each of the participants as needed or the Weaver can roll once for the entire group facing a Player Character if their Skill levels are identical or very close. Tied rolls result in draws. In general, draws favor the resisting person.

ATTRIBUTE, STRENGTH AND HEALTH TESTS

Some situations require innate rather than learned abilities. In such cases, the Weaver should request that a Player roll an Attribute, Strength or Health test. Attribute tests are fairly rare since many actions that involve an Attribute are really learned abilities. Attribute tests are used when a truly broad reflection of a character's abilities is required. For example, a Knowledge Attribute test is appropriate for recalling an obscure bit of trivia. An Appearance Attribute test could determine just how stunning a character looks on a particular day. Resisting torture might require a Willpower test. To perform an Attribute test, roll two dice and add the Attribute in question to the total.

Strength and Health tests are rolled in exactly the same manner as Attribute tests (roll two dice and add the secondary trait). These two types of action tests are much more common than Attribute tests. Strength tests are required for acts requiring sheer brute strength (e.g. lifting heavy objects) while Health tests are required to resist drugs, illness, and shock (e.g. surviving a drug overdose or venomous snake bite).

CHANCE TESTS

Chance tests are required when the results of an action are completely random. Simply roll two dice and add the character's Psyche Attribute. High results are favorable, low results are unfavorable — the Weaver decides upon the exact effect. As with all dice rolls, emergency dice can be added to improve a character's odds.

COMBAT

Drama centers around conflict. In heroic quests, this conflict often manifests itself as open combat. Deplorable as it may be in real life, combat is one of the key elements of adventure. This is not to say that combat equals adventure: a game session that consists of little else than combat is simply an exercise in mindless slaughter. A well-placed fight can, however, spice up an adventurer's life by adding an element of risk.

Note that the following combat rules assume a wary opponent, such as a warrior who faces you in open combat. For rules on attacking people who do not know they are in danger, see *Surprise Attacks*, p. 148.

Time is divided into 6-second rounds during combat. This can be slightly altered by the Weaver for dramatic purposes.

INITIATIVE

Initiative determines who acts first in a combat round. All combatants roll a Combat Sense opposed Skill test. The Margin of Success is irrelevant in this case. The combatant with the highest result will act first. The next highest is second and so on. Those with tied results act simultaneously.

Any character who fumbles the test is confused for a moment by the panic and chaos of combat, and cannot begin to perform any action except duck — but she may continue any action that began in a previous round and requires more than a round (e.g. treating a wounded buddy).

The roll for initiative is repeated at the beginning of every combat round.

ACTIONS

During a round, a character may perform one action (e.g. hit with a sword, fire a bow) at no penalty. If the character chooses to perform additional actions (e.g. ride a horse while firing a bow), all her actions are penalized by -1 per extra action.

An action is defined as anything initiated by the Player which requires a Skill or Attribute roll. In short, that includes anything that normally requires the character's full attention. The Weaver has final say as to what counts as an action.

MOVEMENT

Many Weavers prefer to abstract movement for dramatic purposes, but some like to have precise numbers on hand. These individuals should assume that under normal circumstances, a character can sprint up to 25 meters per combat round plus 5 meters times the total her Fitness Attribute and Athletics Skill level. A character's running, jogging, and walking speeds are equal to 2/3, 1/2, and 1/3 of her sprinting speed, respectively. No action may be taken while sprinting.

AVERAGE MOVEMENT RATES

•	Sprinting Move (m/round) = $25 + 5 \times (\text{Fitness} + \text{Athletics Skill})$
•	Running Speed = 2/3 Sprinting Speed
•	Jogging Speed = 1/2 Sprinting Speed
•	Walking Speed = 1/3 Sprinting Speed

CLOSE COMBAT

In the low-tech world of **Tribe 8**, most combat is up close and personal. Warriors fight it out with swords, clubs and axes, while citizens occasionally come to blows and throw punches and kicks. Armed close combat attacks use the Melee Skill, while unarmed attacks use the Hand-to-Hand Skill.

To attack a wary opponent in close combat, the attacker must defeat the defender in an opposed Skill test. The attacker rolls his Skill in the attack form being used. The defender either rolls his Dodge Skill (to avoid being hit), Melee Skill (to parry with a weapon) or Hand-to-Hand Skill (for unarmed blocks). If the attacker wins, the attack hits the defender. If the defender wins or the result is a tie, the defender avoids the blow. If the attacker fumbles, the attack fails. If the defender fumbles, the attack succeeds unless the attacker also fumbled.

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Close combat attack and defense rolls are subject to the standard combat modifiers, listed under *Offensive Modifiers* and *Defensive Modifiers*, below. In the case of armed attacks, additional modifiers come into play. Each melee weapon has both an **Accuracy (Acc)** and **Parry** rating that modify the Melee Skill roll to attack or defend, respectively. These modifiers are listed with the individual weapons, see *Weapon Statistics*, p. 140.

RANGED COMBAT

To attack a wary target at range, the attacker must defeat the defender in an opposed Skill test. Ranged attacks are done using the Archery Skill (for bows, slings and other tribal ballistic weapons), Throwing (for spears, knives and other thrown weapons) or Firearms (for small arms from the World Before). The attacker rolls her Skill in the attack form being used. The defender rolls her Dodge Skill. If the attacker succeeds, the attack hits. If the defender wins or the result is a tie, the attack misses. If the attacker fumbles, the attack fails. If the defender fumbles, the attack succeeds unless the attacker also fumbled.

Attack and Defense rolls are subject to the standard modifiers in ranged combat (see *Offensive Modifiers* and *Defensive Modifiers*, below). Like close-combat attacks, ranged attacks are also affected by the Accuracy (Acc) of the weapon (listed with that weapon's statistics) and by range. Modifiers for range are listed in the *Defensive Modifiers* table, while individual weapon ranges are listed with each weapon. Note that ballistic weapon and firearm ranges are listed in the format: Short/Medium/Long/Extreme range, while thrown weapons are listed with a formula for determining Short range. Medium, Long and Extreme ranges are always 2, 4 and 8 times Short range, respectively.

OFFENSIVE MODIFIERS

Attacker Movement	
Stationary	+0
Walking	-1
Jogging	-2
Running	-3
Intoxication*	
Mildly intoxicated	-1
Moderately intoxicated	-2
Heavily intoxicated	-3
Lighting	
Area is poorly lit (e.g. dim lighting, moonlight)	-1
Area is very poorly lit (e.g. candlelight, starlight, fog)	-2
Area is barely light (e.g. light of a single candle, heavy fog)	-3
Area is completely dark	-4
Aiming	
Per round of aiming (max. bonus is equal to attacker's Skill level)	+1
Aiming at specific location, except head	-2
Aiming at head	-3
Weapon Accuracy Modifier	Varies by weapon. Refer to <i>Equipment</i> (p. 140)

Range Modifiers (Ranged attacks only)

Point blank range (closer than 3 m)	+1
Short range	+0
Medium range	-1
Long range	-2
Extreme range	-3

*Alternately, the Weaver may wish to apply the full rules for drug effects (see *Drugs and Toxins*, page 152).

DEFENSIVE MODIFIERS

Defender Movement	
Stationary	-1
Walking	+0
Jogging	-1
Running or sprinting	+2
Dodging (cumulative with movement)	+2
Cover	
Under light cover (shrubs, tall grass, thin walls)	+1
Completely hidden by light cover	+2
Under heavy cover (strong walls, rocks)	+3
Completely hidden by heavy cover	Automatic Success
Intoxication*	
Mildly intoxicated	-1
Moderately intoxicated	-2
Heavily intoxicated	-3
Other	
Parry Modifier (armed parries)	Varies by weapon. Refer to <i>Equipment</i> (p. 140)
Unarmed block of Melee attacks	-2

*Alternately, the Weaver may wish to apply the full rules for drug effects (see *Drugs and Toxins*, page 152).

INJURIES

If an attacker hits an opponent, she does an amount of damage equal to her weapon's Damage Multiplier times her Margin of Success.

Damage = Weapon Damage Multiplier x Margin of Success

This damage total is compared with the wounding scores of the victim. If the damage equals or surpasses any of the three scores, the effect of the highest score passed affects the victim. If an injury does damage less than the target's Flesh Wound Threshold, the target suffers a minor injury that is somewhat painful but has no game effects.

ARMOR

Warriors, hunters and many others in high risk occupations wear body armor ranging from tough leather clothes to plated armor. In game terms, personal armor is rated by its Armor Rating. That rating is added to all three of the character's wounding scores. For example, a character with wounding scores of 13/25/50 wearing leather armor (Armor Rating 5) would have effective wounding scores of 18/30/55.

Shots aimed at locations that are not covered by a character's body armor are not affected by the Armor Rating. If a specific location is not declared, the Armor Rating of the victim's torso is used. (For aimed shots, see *Aiming*, below).

Statistics for armor are listed under *Personal Armor*, p. 141.

WOUNDS AND ACTION PENALTIES

Severe injuries are very painful and crippling. These effects are simulated by an action penalty associated with injuries. Each injury applies a penalty to all Attribute, Secondary Trait, and Skill tests due to pain and trauma. This includes tests to resist degeneration of wounds and avoid unconsciousness. These action penalties also affect the Healing rolls of anyone who attempts to treat the character. Action penalties result from Flesh or Deep Wounds. Instant Death results obviously do not impose action penalties.

Flesh Wounds represent painful but generally non-life-threatening injuries such as deep cuts, minor concussions and other severe flesh wounds. Multiple Flesh Wounds can induce shock and are thus potentially life-threatening. Each Flesh Wound applies a -1 action penalty. Characters with Flesh Wounds can maintain a steady if painful jogging pace.

Deep Wounds are more severe injuries than Flesh Wounds. Compound fractures of major bones, punctured or crushed organs, damage to major blood vessels, and severe concussions are all classified as Deep Wounds. Deep Wounds can be immediately life-threatening and are often fatal if left untreated. Deep Wounds apply a -2 action penalty. Characters with a single Deep Wound can go no faster than a slow walk. Characters with more than one can only crawl and cannot stand unassisted.

KNOCKOUTS

Anytime a character suffers a Wound (Flesh or Deep), she may be knocked unconscious from pain or cranial trauma. The character must pass a Health test versus a Threshold of 1 (remember those action penalties) to avoid unconsciousness. If the character fails the test, she will remain unconscious for 1d6 minutes per Flesh Wound plus 1d6 hours per Deep Wound. If the character fumbles the unconsciousness test, she slips into a coma. The Weaver should decide how long the coma will be based upon the character's injuries. Most comas are unpredictable in duration and severity and make excellent plot devices.

MULTIPLE WOUNDS

Characters engaged in prolonged combat can easily suffer multiple wounds. Each of these injuries should be dealt with separately, although action penalties are always cumulative. Note that injuries do not get worse by the mere fact that another injury is inflicted. In other words a character who suffers two Flesh Wounds is **not** considered to have a Deep Wound. This distinction is important for movement, coma and healing purposes. Wounds can get worse if left untreated, however (see *Treating Injuries*, p. 150), but this is simulated by additional Flesh or Deep Wounds rather than by "upgrading" an existing wound.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

The combat rules above cover most standard battle situations. There are, however, countless permutations that can come into play and the following special rules are designed to cover some of the most common. **Tribe 8**, however, is not a game of combat alone and you should always be aware that the more complex you make combat, the longer it will take to resolve. Nevertheless, these special rules should make adjudicating a combat easier.

AIMING

A character can spend a few combat rounds aiming at a target to improve her odds to hit with a ranged attack. Add one to the attacker's roll per combat round spent aiming, up to a maximum equal to her Skill level. The character may not move while aiming in this way, making it impractical for close combat.

A character can aim at a specific body part (e.g. chest, leg, abdomen) of a target. A minus two (-2) modifier applies to all such attacks except head shots, which are penalized by minus three (-3). The victim's normal injury Thresholds are halved (but armor protecting that location is at full value) for all shots aimed at vital locations, such as the chest and head. Shots aimed at specific limbs are useful as non-fatal attacks. Burst fire attacks (see *Automatic Weapons*, p. 148) cannot be aimed at specific body locations. Characters may move while aiming at body parts, making it possible in close and ranged combat.

IMPROVISED WEAPONS

When in dire situations, combatants will often use whatever is at hand as a weapon. This can include rocks, branches, metal rods, shards of glass, anything hard or sharp enough to do damage. For close-combat attack, use the weapon profile for the armament which the object most resembles (e.g. a spear for a sharpened tent pole, a club for a hammer). When in doubt use a short club for blunt objects and a small knife for sharp ones. Unwieldy weapons such as large, heavy rocks or a chair can suffer from a -1 or -2 Accuracy penalty at the Weaver's discretion. Similarly, small weapons can have a smaller Damage Multiplier (e.g. AD+1 for a simple rock held in one's hand). Attackers roll their Melee Skill.

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Improvised weapons can also be thrown. The base throwing range (in meters) is equal to the character's Strength +3 for objects weighing 1 kg or less. Each additional range band is twice the previous one, as for any other weapon. Heavier objects divide their Range by their weight in kilograms (rounded off). If Short Range drops below 1 meter, consider all attacks to be at Short Range.

When an object is thrown, the attacker makes a Throwing Skill roll modified as normal for range and movement. If the modified die roll is higher than the defense roll, the object thrown lands right on target. If the dice roll fails, the shot will deviate in a random direction from its intended destination by a number of meters equal to the Margin of Failure. If the attack roll was fumbled, the shot deviates as normal, but toward the attacker.

A blunt thrown item will have a Damage Multiplier equal to its weight in kilograms, plus the thrower's AD. Add +2 for sharp or pointed objects.

SURPRISE ATTACKS/AMBUSHES

Attacking unwary targets requires the attacker to pass a standard (not opposed) Skill test with a Threshold number of 1 + defender's modifiers (like movement and cover). Unlike a normal attack, however, the attacker must roll the lower of two Skills: either her chosen attack Skill or her Sneak Skill. Untrained individuals tend to be noisy or otherwise mess up surprise attacks by alerting the victim at the last moment. The Margin of Success of this roll is multiplied by the weapon's damage multiplier as usual to determine damage.

ALL-OUT DODGING

The game system assumes that characters always attempt to avoid injuries in combat. Sometimes, however, an all-out attempt to dodge is required. To dodge, a character must declare a dodge at the beginning of the round (before the first character acts, even if this is out of her initiative sequence). The character cannot perform any actions other than move (up to her Running speed) and dodge.

A dodging character adds +2 to her defense rolls against all attacks that round, plus her movement modifiers. In addition, a dodging character gets a full defense against all attacks, including surprise attacks (it is effectively impossible to properly ambush a person who is dodging). Surprise attacks against a dodging individual are rolled like normal attacks.

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

Some Keeper firearms are capable of spewing out a great amount of ammunition in a short amount of time, a capacity indicated by a **Rate of Fire (ROF)** bonus of +1 or greater. These weapons are called burst fire (or fully automatic) weapons. Burst fire weapons are assumed to be able to fire at any ROF bonus equal to or lower than their listed rating. Thus, a +3 ROF

weapon could fire as a +3, +2, +1, or 0 ROF weapon. Burst attacks usually consist of firing a tight burst towards a single opponent. If the attack succeeds, the ROF bonus of the weapon is added to the attack's Margin of Success, making them extremely deadly.

Burst fire consumes a great deal of ammunition, however. A weapon expends five shots per +1 of ROF in each attack. ROF 0 weapons expend one shot per attack.

Weapons capable of burst fire can be used to attack multiple targets in a single action by walking the burst across the targets. A Player must declare that she is walking fire before any attacks are made. The Player then chooses the targets of her attack. A number of targets equal to the weapon's ROF plus one may be attacked. For each extra target, the weapon's ROF is reduced by one for damage purposes (but not for ammo expenditure). All targets must be within the weapon's firing arc. Each separate attack is rolled separately. Each individual target may not be attacked more than once per round by the same weapon (no extra attacks against one target).

GRENADES AND EXPLOSIVES

Some Keepers also have access to explosives that can be thrown or launched at targets, ranging from military-type grenades to sticks of dynamite. Others — including tribesfolk — sometimes use low-tech equivalents, such as simple smoke bombs, Molotov cocktails or even beehives. All these weapons are considered grenades for rules purposes, with any special characteristics listed in *Weapon Statistics*, p. 140.

Attacking with a grenade differs slightly than with other weapons; the grenade is thrown or shot near its target, and it detonates either on impact, after a short delay, or in the air (in the case of gas grenades). The Margin of Success of the original attack determines how much time there is between landing and detonation for the target to take cover or flee the grenade. Hand grenades are used with the Throwing Skill, while grenade launchers are used with the Firearms Skill. Grenades launched using a sling are fired with the Archery Skill.

When attacking, a large Margin of Success signifies that the throw was dead on, and that detonation quickly followed impact; inversely, a low Margin of Success (or a failure) will mean that the throw was off mark, or that the grenade was thrown too soon after arming it, leaving enough time for the target to get out of harm's way.

Grenades usually have wide area of effect; anyone deemed by the Weaver to be in this area must also defend against this attack or take damage from the grenade. Targets in the grenade's Secondary area of effect get a +1 to their defense roll. The damage and areas of effect for specific types of grenades are listed with *Weapon Statistics* on p. 140.

COMBAT EXAMPLE

Picking up where they left off in Chapter 7, Mark and Jen try to settle the problem their characters (Kross and Jezebel) are having with the Watch in Bazaar. Steph, the Weaver, gets ready to run a combat scene with the following characters:

Joanite Guards (x2): AGI 0, PER 0, STA 30, UD 6, AD 7, Wounding 20/35/65 (with armor); Combat Sense 2/0, Dodge 1/0, Hand-to-Hand 1/0, Melee 2/0; short swords (Acc. 0, Parry +1, Dam AD+8), leather armor (Armor Rating 5).

Kross: AGI 0, PER +1, STA 35, UD 8, AD 9, Wounding Scores 22/40/75 (with armor); Combat Sense 2/+1, Dodge 2/0, Hand-to-Hand 2/0, Melee 3/0; mace (Acc. 0, Parry+1, Dam AD+9), leather armor (Armor Rating 5).

Jezebel: AGI +2, PER +2, STA 25, UD 5, AD 5, Wounding Scores 16/28/53 (with armor); Combat Sense 2/+2, Dodge 3/+2, Hand-to-Hand 2/+2, Melee 2/+2, Throwing 3/+2; throwing knives (x3) (Acc. 0, Parry -1, Dam AD+3, Range 3/6/12/24), soft armor (Armor Rating 3).

Round One

"Okay," Steph begin, "the two Joanites are right near you, Kross, and you're still on the ground. They look like they want to capture you; their swords are drawn. Jezebel, you're about ten meters down the street. Jen, roll Combat Sense for initiative. Mark, Kross will be busy getting up or in position this round, so all you can do is defend."

To accelerate play, Steph will roll just once for both guards — they will act simultaneously. Steph rolls their two Combat Sense dice and gets 1 and 4, for a total of 4. Jen rolls her two dice and gets 1 and 5; with her bonus of +2 that gives her a total of 7. She gets to go first.

"I'm going to throw my knife at the one closest to Kross. Maybe that'll get them to back off so we can get away."

"Great, roll your Throwing Skill and we'll see what happens." Jen rolls her three dice and gets 2, 4 and 5 for a total of 7 (with her AGI +2 bonus).

Steph goes down the Offensive Modifiers table, "You're not moving or drunk and the lighting is just fine, so there are no modifiers there. You didn't aim for anything specific, so nothing there either. The Accuracy of your weapon is zero so that doesn't change anything. What about range? Ten meters is more than your medium range of 6, so you're at long range. That's a -2, so the final total is 5."

Now Steph rolls the Joanite's Dodge Skill to get his defensive total. He rolls a 2 and checks the Defensive Modifiers. "The guard wasn't moving, so that's a -1. My final total is a measly 1."

"All right," Jen says, finishing off the calculations. "That means I get a Margin of Success of 4! Let's see, I've got a damage multiplier of AD+3. My Armed Damage is 5 so that means a multiplier of 8. Multiply that by a MoS of 4 and you get 32 points of damage. That's got to hurt."

Steph looks at the Joanite's Wounding Scores. 32 is above his Flesh Wound score of 20 but less than his Deep Wound score of 35 (thanks to his armor). The first Joanite suffers a Flesh Wound "Your knife plants itself in the guard's thigh and he screams. His partner charges after you."

It is the guards' turn to act. Steph decides the wounded guard will just hang back, surprised by Jezebel's attack. The other one, however, charges at Jezebel with her sword. Steph rolls the Joanite's Melee dice and gets 1 and 6. The Joanite suffers a -3 penalty because she is running, however, so the final total is 3.

Jen rolls her Dodge dice to avoid being hit and gets 1, 3 and 6. She gets a +2 for her AGI and a -1 for having been stationary, for a total of 7. That's well above the Joanite's roll.

"Jezebel, you easily step away from the brutish Joanite, who screams her frustration as her sword chops into fruit at a nearby stand. The other Joanite doesn't do anything except raise his sword to hold you off. Kross, you get up and draw your mace."

Round Two

Everybody rolls Combat Sense for initiative again. Steph rolls a total of 4 for the Joanites, but this will count as 3 for the wounded one because of the -1 action penalty from his Flesh Wound. Jezebel rolls 8 and Kross 5. Jezebel goes first.

"I kick the Joanite into the fruit stand."

Jen rolls her two Hand-to-Hand dice and gets a total of 6, so that's an 8 with her +2 AGI. No other modifiers come into play so the result stands. Steph rolls the Joanite's Dodge Skill and gets 3. With a -1 for not having moved, that's a total of 2.

"That's an MoS of 6, Jen. What's that give us for damage?"

"My Unarmed Damage is 5 so that's a total of 30. Ouch!"

"You catch her right in the back with a solid kick. Not only do you send her sprawling into the fruit stand, but you're pretty sure you hear a sharp 'crack' when you connect." The Joanite has just suffered a Flesh Wound. "Okay, Kross your move."

"I want to disarm this guy. I try to hit his hand with my mace."

"That's fine. He'll try to parry your blow, so we both roll Melee."

Mark rolls his three Melee dice for a total of 6. He suffers a -2 penalty for trying to hit a specific body part, however, so his final total is 4. Steph rolls for the Joanite, getting a total of 3. The Action Penalty from the guard's Flesh Wound gives him a -1, as does the fact that he wasn't moving, but his sword has a Parry bonus of +1, making for a total of 2. The MoS is hence 2. Kross' mace does (AD+9-) 18 damage, for a final total of 36.

"Smash! You hit him right on the hand, sending the sword flying and breaking most of his fingers." The guard just suffered a Deep Wound. "You can continue the fight if you want to, but these two aren't in any condition to. If you want to slip away, now's the time to do it."

They do.

TREATING INJURIES

Any wound that is severe enough to cause an action penalty is also severe enough that it must be treated for it to get better. Healers and priests are often valued for their ability to soothe pain, stave off festering and mend wounds. The following rules provide guidelines for healing through standard, "natural" means such as bandaging, herbal balms and minor surgery to extract foreign objects. Magical healing is also possible in **Tribe 8** and is covered under *Anima* on p. 172.

UNTREATED INJURIES

Any major wound that is left untreated will, after a while, begin to fester and become infected. Untreated wounds (not stabilized by a healer) also cause additional blood loss and trauma. The effects of leaving wounds untreated is simulated by wound degeneration.

Degeneration is tested daily for Flesh Wounds and hourly for Deep Wounds, independently of each other. Multiple injuries of one type cause the time between the degeneration tests to be divided by the number of injuries of the appropriate type. For example, three untreated Flesh Wounds will cause a test once every 8 hours (1 day = 24 hours; $24 \div 3 = 8$).

Degeneration tests are Health tests with a Threshold of 1. If the test is passed, the character's wounds do not worsen. If the test is failed, the character adds a new Flesh Wound to her injury list. If the test is fumbled, the character adds a new Deep Wound to her injury list (nasty bleeding or infection). These additional injuries can lead to the character's death and must be treated (see below).

STABILIZING INJURIES

To stabilize an injury, a healer must pass a Healing Skill test with a Threshold of one. This test is modified by the victim's Health trait and the victim's action penalty due to injuries. Therefore, any healer attempting to stabilize his own injuries is penalized by her action penalty twice (once as a person in pain and once as the healer dealing with messy injuries). A successful roll stabilizes one injury (Deep Wounds are usually stabilized before Flesh Wounds). A failed roll accomplishes little and wastes five minutes. A fumbled roll wastes five minutes and aggravates the victim's injuries, creating an additional Flesh Wound. One attempt to stabilize a single injury (one Flesh Wound or Deep Wound) may be made per 5 minutes.

Stabilized injuries do not degenerate, but they can be destabilized. Flesh Wounds are destabilized by any heavy activity (including combat). Deep Wounds become destabilized by anything greater than minimal activity (bed rest, feeding, and little else). Destabilized wounds once again begin degenerating until they are stabilized anew.

DEATH

There are two ways a character can die in combat: instant kill or trauma. If a character receives damage that surpasses her Instant Death score, she is instantly dead. These injuries are those that are beyond the help of healing (e.g. decapitation, skull utterly crushed, cut in half). Note that the Synthesis aspect *Anima* can be used to save characters who receive an instantly fatal wound (see *Anima*, p. 172). The character cannot otherwise be saved.

TRAUMA AND RESUSCITATION

The other method of death is by trauma. A character begins to die of trauma as soon as her injury action penalty is greater than or equal to her System Shock rating (Health +5, minimum of 1). The character can be resuscitated by some healing techniques if she is reached soon after collapse. The time between apparent death and irrevocable death (when resuscitation is impossible) is equal to twice the character's System Shock rating plus her action penalty (a negative value) in minutes. If a character's action penalty plus twice her System Shock rating is less than or equal to zero, the trauma is too severe to save the character and she dies immediately.

A resuscitation roll is conducted in the same manner as a stabilizing roll for injuries. Due to the large action penalty, it is very difficult to resuscitate a dying person unless your character is a very skilled healer or has access to *Anima*. If the roll succeeds, the victim is resuscitated and the healer gets one chance to stabilize one of the victim's injuries (most often a Deep Wound). If the roll is failed, the victim will die after the time limit expires. If it is fumbled, the victim dies immediately.

If, after resuscitation and injury stabilization, the action penalty from the victim's non-stabilized wounds is below the victim's System Shock rating, the victim will live so long as she receives constant attention from a trained healer and her wounds do not reopen (destabilize). If the action penalty from the victim's non-stabilized wounds is still greater than her System Shock rating, she once again begins to go into shock and "die." The time until death is reset and the healer must once again resuscitate the victim and attempt to stabilize an injury. This process continues until the victim dies of her injuries or enough of her injuries are stabilized to allow her to live.

RECOVERY FROM INJURIES

Medical care can be very hard to come by in *Vimary* and its availability will greatly influence how quickly a character recovers from her injuries — or whether she does at all. For simplicity's sake, levels of care are divided into three categories: No Care, Marginal Care and Dedicated Care.

In all cases, only one wound heals at a time. Flesh Wounds heal before Deep Wounds do. The resuscitation resting period occurs before Flesh Wounds begin to heal. Comatose individuals heal normally.

NO CARE

Recovering without any care at all is a long and difficult process. The only precautions taken at this level are very basic treatments such as bandaging a wound to stop bleeding. Flesh Wounds take two weeks to heal and Deep Wounds take two months. Resuscitated individuals and those in long comas (over a week) will die without care.

MARGINAL CARE

Marginal Care is given by a skilled healer (minimum of Healing Level 2), but who has no access to the most precious of healing drugs and balms or to Synthesis (Anima). Flesh Wounds take one week to heal and Deep Wounds take one month. Resuscitated individuals must spend one week recovering before their injuries begin to heal, but those in long comas (over a week) will die without better care.

DEDICATED CARE

Dedicated Care is provided by a superior healer (minimum of Healing Level 3) who has access to precious balms and drugs as well as Synthesis (Anima). Dedicated Care can also be provided by a Keeper with access to advanced medical equipment and skills from the World Before (Medicine Level 2). Flesh Wounds take three days to heal. Deep Wounds take two weeks to heal. Resuscitated individuals must spend one week recovering before their injuries begin to heal. Comatose individuals can survive on life support (provided by Keeper technology or repeated use of Anima) until they die of old age. Note that this care does not require Action Tests for use of Anima. Successful Anima tests can greatly accelerate healing times (see *Anima*, p. 172).

PERMANENT INJURIES

Grave injuries often leave their victims with permanent and debilitating scars. Tribal healers can do a surprising amount of good with their arcane techniques, but there is little they can do to fully repair a damaged lung or a shattered limb. In game terms, every Deep Wound carries with it the chance of a permanent and debilitating injury.

Once a character begins to recover from her wounds, she must make a roll using a number of dice equal to the number of Deep Wounds she suffered. She may subtract her Health from this total (so a -1 HEA would actually add one to the roll). If the character recovered from her injuries without the attention of a healer or under only marginal care, she must also add one to the roll. If the final total of this roll is above six, then one or more permanent injuries have occurred — usually causing a reduction in an Attribute. For every point above six, roll once on the Permanent Injury Table (Subtable A) below. Remember to recalculate Secondary Traits whenever necessary.

If a permanent injury occurs, both the Weaver and the Player should take a moment to determine what exactly happened. Was the character's arm broken and reset incorrectly? Were her lungs damaged? Did she receive a near-fatal head wound? Among other things, these injuries are likely to leave visible scars.

PERMANENT INJURY TABLES

Die Roll	A: Physical Injuries	B: Brain Damage
1	Agility reduced by 1	Creativity reduced by 1
2	Appearance reduced by 1	Influence reduced by 1
3	Fitness reduced by 1	Knowledge reduced by 1
4	Fitness reduced by 1	Perception reduced by 1
5	Limb maimed beyond use	Willpower reduced by 1
6	Brain damage (roll on table B) Complete (1-2) or partial (3-6) paralysis	

HAZARDS

Combat is far from being the only threat facing characters. This section examines some of the more common hazards of life in and around Vimary. These rules are intended to spice up the game. Weavers should feel free to disregard them, however, if they feel their use would slow down play too much, or if detailed effects are simply not needed.

DISEASE

Modern immunology and disease-theory are things of the shattered past in **Tribe 8**. Although basics are understood by skilled healers — who have rediscovered much through practical experience — disease is a very serious problem for all of Vimary's inhabitants. Bazaar and Hom, where people live and work in close quarters and share common water supplies, are especially vulnerable to outbreaks of contagious disease. Legends of the World Before claim that devastating plagues swept through the old cities as vanguards of the Z'bri and these afflictions may not have completely disappeared.

In game terms, diseases and illnesses are rated by Contagiousness, Onset Time, Virulence and Effect. The Contagiousness of an illness is the Threshold of a Health test that must be rolled when a character comes into contact with the illness. This roll can be modified by the Weaver to represent good or poor hygienic conditions (usually between -3 and +3). A successful roll means that the character does not contract the illness. A failed roll indicates that the character contracts the illness. The Margin of Failure of the contagion roll is added to the illness' Virulence for the character. A fumbled contagion roll means the character contracts the illness at double the normal Virulence.

The Onset Time of an illness represents its longest incubation period. The actual time until the effect of the illness occurs is equal to the Onset Time divided by the Margin of Failure of the contagion Health test. Fumbled contagion tests produce an Onset Time equal to one tenth the normal value.

Silhouette Systems

Once a character contracts an illness and the Onset Time has expired, she must make a second standard Health test against a target number equal to the illness' Virulence rating. Keep in mind that the Virulence rating is augmented by the Margin of Failure of the contagion (double for fumbles). A successful Health test indicates that the character rides out the illness with minimal effects. A failed Health test indicates dangerous complications. A fumbled Health test is often fatal (Weaver's discretion). Each illness' description should document the effects of all three results.

HUNTER'S FEVER (SAMPLE DISEASE)

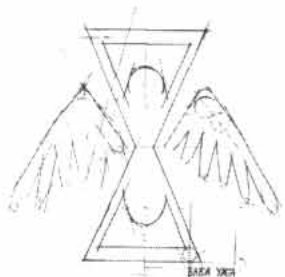
Hunter's Fever is a common and minor disease often contracted by those spending much time in the cold of winter. It is a nuisance more than anything, but the sick should avoid other dangers.

Contagion:	4 (airborne)
Onset Time:	1 week
Virulence:	5
Effects:	
Success or MoF 0:	sniffles and mild fever
Failed Roll:	fever and aches (-1 Action Penalty for MoF days)
Fumble:	High fever and delirium (incapacitated for MoF days)

BLOOD MITES (SAMPLE DISEASE)

Actually a parasitic infestation, blood mites are small bugs that burrow under the skin, causing the victim to scratch incessantly and even draw blood. Mites can be deadly in the case of a large infestation. Mites are common in the spring and summer, and affect both humans and animals.

Contagion:	4 (mites burrow into skin)
Onset Time:	5 days
Virulence:	7
Effects:	
Success or MoF 0:	minor itching for a day
Failed Roll:	severe itching and bleeding (-1 Action Penalty until treated., Healing Threshold - MoF)
Fumble:	deadly infestation (one Flesh Wound added per day until treated, Healing Threshold - MoF + 2)



KOLA'S PLAGUE (SAMPLE DISEASE)

Kola's Plague is a deadly, highly contagious disease that, legend has it, was created by the first Z'bri to invade the World Before. It strikes roughly once a decade and can kill hundreds before it vanishes. Its origins are not well known, but most healers associate it with festering bodies. It is one reason why Yagan death ceremonies are so important among the Seven Tribes. The specter of Kola's Plague is raised every time a mass grave from the World Before is uncovered.

Contagion:	9 (airborne)
Onset Time:	2 days
Virulence:	13
Effects:	
Success or MoF 0:	mild cough for 3 days
MoF 1-4:	Sweats, fever and diarrhea for MoF days (Action Penalty -2)
MoF 5+	Incapacitating, life-threatening fever, hallucinations and diarrhea (roll HEA vs. 5 once a day to avoid taking a Flesh Wound). Symptoms continue for MoF days, then treat as MoF 4.
Fumble:	Deadly fever (roll HEA vs. 6 to avoid death). If passed, treat as MoF 9.

DRUGS AND TOXINS

While only the Keepers have anything like regular access to the panoply of synthetic drugs created in the World Before, herbalism and agriculture are very well developed crafts among the tribes, who produce a bewildering variety of natural toxins. These include mind-expanding hallucinogens used in ceremonies, painkillers and healing balms, recreational sedatives and euphorics. Fatal poisons are also produced for warriors, assassins and hunters.

Drugs and toxins are rated with three Attributes: their Potency, their Effect and their Onset Time. The Potency is the Threshold for the victim's Health test to resist the drug's effects entirely. The Effect is the symptoms that a character who fails to resist the toxin will exhibit. The Onset Time is the longest period the toxin will require to take effect. The actual time until the effect occurs is equal to the Onset Time divided by the Margin of Failure of the Health test. Fumbled Health tests produce an Onset Time equal to one-tenth the normal value.

There are six standard drug Effects: **Fatal Toxins** cause tissue damage; **Sedatives** cause drowsiness or sleep; **Hallucinogens** shift perceptions; **Euphorics** create sensations of joy; **Stimulants** augment awareness; **Analgesics** deaden pain. The specific effects of each drug depends on the result of a HEA roll made against the drug's Potency. A *failed* roll means the drug takes effect. Effect are summarized in the table on the next page.

DRUG EFFECTS

Effect Type	Fatal Toxin	Sedative	Hallucinogen
MoF 1-4	dam = Pot. x MoF	AP = -MoF	AP = -MoF
MoF 5-9	dam = Pot. x MoF	knockout	incapacitated
MoF 10-14	dam = Pot. x MoF	Toxic (Potency -5)	incapacitated
MoF 15+	dam = Pot. x MoF	Toxic (Potency -5)	Toxic (Potency -10)
Fumble	Death	MoF = Potency	MoF = Potency

Effect Type	Euphoric	Stimulant	Analgesic
MoF 1-4	AP = -MoF	Initiative + MoF	AP = +MoF
MoF 5-9	incapacitated	Initiative + (10 - MoF)	AP = +MoF
MoF 10-14	incapacitated	Toxic (Potency -5)	AP = +MoF
MoF 15+	Toxic (Potency -10)	Toxic (Potency -5)	AP = +MoF
Fumble	MoF = Potency	MoF = Potency	No effect

AP: Sedatives, hallucinogens, euphorics and analgesics can cause Action Penalties just like injuries (see *Injuries*, p. 150). Analgesics can reduce an existing (negative) Action Penalty, but they never create a positive one. Note that the effective MoF of the drug decreases by one per hour until it is gone.

Knockout/Incapacitated: The drug user is either unconscious or incapacitated for a number of minutes equal to the Potency times the Margin of Failure.

Toxic: Due to an overdose, the drug acts as a Toxin with the specified Potency.

Initiative: The stimulant provides a bonus to Combat Sense rolls for initiative purpose. The effective MoF is reduced by one per hour until it is gone. As such, if the MoF is between 5 and 9, the bonus will actually increase before it decreases.

MULTIPLE EFFECTS OR DOSES

Many drugs have multiple effects. Such drugs have a single Potency rating and Onset Time, and only one Health test is made when they are used on an individual. The effects of each drug type are applied to the user according the Margin of Failure of the Health test.

The rules above assume that the victim was given a single dose of toxin. For each extra dose, add 10% to the Potency of the toxin (round off). Divide the Onset Time by the number of doses administered.

FALLS

Whenever a character falls from a great height, she is likely to suffer severe wounds or even die. A number of dice equal to the number of meters fallen (maximum of 10 dice) are rolled and the result is multiplied by the number of meters fallen (up to a maximum of x30). This is the damage taken by the individual. If the falling person was purposefully dropped in a manner that would cause her to impact head first, add ten to the die roll.

SOFTENING IMPACT

A conscious person who is falling may attempt to soften the impact by making an Athletics Skill roll. The number rolled is subtracted from the number of meters fallen for the purpose of all damage calculations. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than the actual number of meters fallen, the person lands unharmed. If the roll fumbles, the person falls head first and takes the extra damage associated (+10 to the die roll). Emergency Dice can be spent on the Athletics Roll or to reduce the number of dice rolled for damage (on a one-to-one basis).

IMPACT SURFACES

Unusually hard surfaces such as concrete and asphalt can double the effective number of meters fallen for damage purposes. Soft surfaces such as sand and water halve the effective number of meters fallen for damage purposes. Especially soft surfaces such as hay stacks may further reduce the effective number of meters up to one quarter the actual distance.

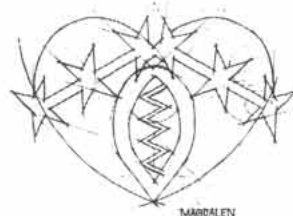
FIRE AND ELECTRICITY

Fire is one of the most powerful and destructive tools of humanity, and a dangerous natural phenomenon. Electric shocks are less frequent in **Tribe 8**, but they can be just as deadly. Both fire and electricity are rated by an Intensity rating which combines both size and temperature. The Fire and Electricity Intensity table provides sample intensities.

If a character is exposed to a fire or electric discharge for a full combat round, she will receive damage equal to the Intensity rating multiplied by the highest of two dice (for fire) or one die (for electricity). If the time of exposure is less than one combat round, the Intensity rating is halved unless the fire is from a weapon. A fumbled roll does damage equal to half the Intensity.

If a character receives a Deep Wound from a flame-based attack, she is incapacitated due to searing pain for a number of rounds equal to the roll of one die. During this time, she can do little more than run about randomly or thrash in agony.

In an electrical attack, a Flesh Wound causes paralysis. The character will twitch and be unable to let go of the source of the discharge until it stops or she is forcibly moved. Deep Wounds cause paralysis and can be deadly; roll HEA vs. Intensity: MoF 1-4 causes a knockout, MoF 5+ causes a coma.



FIRE AND ELECTRICITY INTENSITY

Intensity	Fire	Electricity
1	candle, lighter, or match	a small battery, very large static charge
2	gas light, oil lamp, kindling	medium battery
3	torch, gas range	car battery
5	campfire, flare	old domestic current
7	bonfire, napalm	old industrial battery or accumulator
10	inferno, chemical fire	old power lines
20	ancient, large-scale military explosives	old power mains
25	n/a	minor lightning strike
50	n/a	large lightning discharge

IGNITING FIRES

Fire tends to ignite things, including clothes and hair. Every item can be assigned a Flammability rating. To see if a flame ignites an object, roll two dice and add the fire's Intensity rating (halve Intensity if exposure is less than a round). If this value equals or surpasses the object's Flammability rating, it will ignite. Fumbled rolls never result in ignition. Check for ignition for every round of exposure. Electrical discharge ignite objects as if they were fires of one-fifth (1/5) their Intensity.

The Weaver should assign Intensities to the newly created fires. Light clothes burn at Intensity 4, medium clothes at Intensity 5, heavy clothes at Intensity 6, human hair at Intensity 5, and animal fur at Intensity 6. These items have burn durations equal to their Intensity times the roll of one die if no attempts are made to extinguish the flames.

If attempts are made to extinguish the flames (e.g. rolling on the ground) the flames will be extinguished in a number of rounds equal to the roll of one die. Certain strong attempts to extinguish the flames (e.g. jumping in water) will immediately extinguish the flames.

SAMPLE FLAMMABILITY RATINGS

Flammability	Object Type
1	propane, natural gas, hydrogen gas, methane
3	gasoline
4	paper, pitch, crude oil
6	normal clothing, rugs
7	dry firewood
8	hair, fur
9	freshly cut or treated wood, most plastics, leather
12	magnesium flakes
15	fire retarding clothing
50-200	most "non-flammable" objects like steel and concrete

CHARACTER EVOLUTION

One of the more blatant rewards of roleplaying is character improvement. Experienced adventurers are simply better than greenhorns. Experience is recorded in the form of Experience Points (XPs). The Weaver (or the whole Player Circle) awards XPs at the end of every game session and at the end of a major scenario.

EARNING XPs

Experience Points are given out by the Weaver at the end of every game session and her decision is final. Characters should gain points individually, based not on defeating the enemy, but on how well the Player roleplayed and whether she contributed to everyone's enjoyment. Standard XP awards are summarized below (note that no session can end with less than 0 XPs or more than 6). In general it is best to award all Players about the same number of points (within 2 points).

AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Base Experience Points

Player showed little interest in the game and didn't get involved	0
Player gave a good effort, but did nothing exceptional	1
Player always stayed in character and showed enthusiasm	2

Technical Bonuses (Max. +2)

Performed critical action that moved the story forward	+1
Discovered vital information or plot element	+1
Made a clever and unexpected use of character abilities	+1

Roleplaying Bonuses (Min./Max. +/-3)

Dramatic acts of self-sacrifice	+1 to +5
Selflessly provided scenes for other Player Characters	+1
Acted wildly out of character, even if successful	-1 to -3

Quest Bonuses (Min./Max. +/-3)

Players worked as a team	+1
Players defeated an important enemy	+1 to +3
Players outwitted the opposition	+1
Minor setback or failure in a multi-session quest	-1
Major setback or failure in a multi-session quest	-3

Session Length Multipliers

Short Session (2 hours or less)	x0.5
Typical Session (3 to 4 hours)	x1
Long Session (5 to 10 hours)	x2
Marathon Session (10 hours or more)	Normal XPs per 4 hours

SPENDING XPs

A character can stockpile XPs if desired, but many Players will wish to spend theirs, either to improve their characters or to press their luck. There are several ways to spend XPs: buying Emergency Dice, improving Attributes, Skills or Synthesis.

Skill improvement happens relatively slowly in the Silhouette System, especially when one is dealing with Skills already at Level 2. Attribute improvement is even slower. This system reflects the fact that Skills above Level 3 are very powerful, representing nearly legendary accomplishment.

EMERGENCY DICE

Everyone gets a certain number of lucky breaks in life. To represent these lucky breaks, some XPs can be spent to boost crucial die rolls. Each XP spent adds one extra die to the roll. The exception is when rolling for permanent injuries — there, each XP removes a die from the roll. Unless the Weaver disagrees, up to five Emergency Dice may be spent on a roll.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENT

Improving one Attribute by one point costs 20 XPs. The exception to this rule is the Build (BLD) Attribute, which costs 40 XPs per point of improvement. An Attribute cannot be increased more than three times in this manner, although multiple Attributes can be increased up to three times each.

SKILL & SYNTHESIS

IMPROVEMENT

The base cost to improve a simple Skill by one level is the next level squared in XPs. New simple Skills cost one XP to gain level one. Complex Skills cost twice the XPs of simple Skills. Skills are improved one level at a time (no skipping levels to save XPs). New Skills must be purchased at level one first.

Synthesis is improved in the same way, although it is more expensive. Purchasing a new Aspect costs 10 XPs. Experience Points are not the only requirement for improving in Synthesis, however. Synthesis represents a certain enlightenment and connection to the River of Dream. The completion of a quest that imparts new understanding is often required in order to gain a new level of proficiency or a new Aspect of Synthesis. Weavers can either wait until Players have accumulated enough XPs, or can set these quests earlier and then have the new enlightenment manifest once XPs are gained and spent. Of course, such an arduous quest will surely grant XPs in and of itself.

SKILL IMPROVEMENT COSTS

Level	Simple	Complex	Synthesis
1	1	2	3
2	4	8	10
3	9	18	23
4	16	36	40
5	25	50	63
6	36	72	90
7	49	98	123

TUTORS

Tutors can be of great assistance to characters wishing to improve their abilities. Anyone who has a Skill level greater than the Skill level of the character wishing to improve can serve as a tutor. Only those possessing the Teaching Skill or a high level of Skill will really make a difference, however.

A tutor can reduce the XP cost of learning or improving a Skill. A character can attempt to find a tutor and spend a period of time learning under her guidance. The period of time is a number of moons (months) equal to the XP cost of learning the Skill minus either the level of the tutor's Teaching Skill or half the taught Skill (whichever is highest). A minimum of one week is required for the student to gain any benefits from the tutor.

The moons (months) referred to above are 150-hour learning periods (about 40 hours per week) that are typical to apprenticeships. A relentless taskmaster can squeeze two of these 150-hour "months" into one real month. This sort of environment is highly oppressive — a Willpower or Psyche (whichever is highest) check against the Skill level being taught should be rolled every moon to prevent nervous breakdown. Few individuals willingly choose to undergo training of such intensity. Alternatively, the learning period could be spread over multiple moons or even years. A minimum of one hour per week must be maintained to gain any benefit to the character.

Once the period of tutelage is finished, the tutor makes a Skill roll. This Skill roll uses either the Teaching Skill or the Skill being taught, whichever is highest. This is modified by the Creativity Attribute of the tutor and the Skill-related Attribute of the student. Half of the final modified die roll is the number of XP points that are subtracted from the cost of learning the Skill. If the roll is fumbled, the cost of learning the Skill is doubled due to the confusion induced by the tutor's poor guidance. The cost of learning the Skill cannot be reduced below a minimal XP cost which is equal to the new level of the Skill. One exception to this rule exists: if the original cost of learning the Skill was only one XP (a level one, simple Skill) and the tutor rolled a six or more on his roll, the student receives the first level Skill at no XP cost.

The effects of a tutor's teaching stay with a student until a) the student gains a new level in the taught Skill or b) a new tutor attempts to teach the student. If the student gets a new tutor, this tutor will have an effect under only two conditions. If he obtains a more beneficial reduction than the previous tutor, apply the new reduction in its place. If the new tutor fumbles, the student's previously reduced cost of improvement is doubled and no further attempts at tutoring will have effect until the student gains a level in the Skill through experience.

Unless the tutor is another Player Character, the student and teacher will have to reach some sort of agreement. In tribal society, most teaching occurs through apprenticeship when a student is relatively young. Apprenticeships are generally counted in years. Adult characters can reach agreements to exchange skills or to enter shorter periods of study. Teachers may require other services or payment in barter from students. During apprenticeships, time not spent learning is generally spent undertaking tasks for the tutor as payment for her time.

Silhouette Systems

Note that tutors can be of aid for learning and improving Synthesis, Sundering or other arcane Skills. They will reduce XP cost as normal, although they do not remove the requirement for a quest of some sort to raise this special Skill.

CREATURES

The following rules are used for all kinds of non-sentient animals, such as pets, livestock and wild animals. Even though a sharp distinction is made between creatures and intelligent species, the two are similar in actual game statistics: creatures have primary and secondary Attributes, as well as Skills, natural weapons and armor. In addition to these characteristics, a creature's description will often give clues as to its usual reactions in stressful situations, as well as other important facts.

ATTRIBUTES

Non-sentient creatures have six Attributes: Agility (AGI), Build (BLD), Fitness (FIT), Instinct (INS), Perception (PER) and Willpower (WIL). All Attributes save for Instinct are practically identical to those used for humans. Build varies more widely than with humans; the table below gives mass equivalencies for very low or very high BLD stats. Most other stats fall within the normal range (from -3 to +3) with a few exceptional animals going higher or lower.

Instinct (INS) is used to describe the creature's natural ability to get itself out of danger, to find ways to get enough food, and other logistical efforts related to the survival of the individual and its species. It gives an indication of how "smart" the creature is, and how easily it can adapt to new environments. Creatures with high Instinct scores (the greater majority falls in the -3 to +2 range) are hard to catch, and will be able to figure out clever ways of escaping predators, as well as catching or finding food. Resourceful animals, such as rats, have very high Instinct scores. Whenever an animal faces a situation where it must use its wits, have it make an Instinct score against a Threshold related to the difficulty of the task. Most simple tasks have difficulty ratings of 3 to 5. Tasks which involve the use of a tool — such as using a stick to make out-of-reach fruits fall from a tree — have difficulties of at least 7 (if not 8 or 9), and require the creature to have hand-like limbs or other ways of manipulating the tool.

BUILD/MASS EQUIVALENCIES

Build	Mass	Build	Mass	Build	Mass
-10	less than 0.01 kg	-2	50-59.9 kg	+6	250-399.9 kg
-9	0.01 to 0.1 kg	-1	60-69.9 kg	+7	400-599.9 kg
-8	0.1 to 1 kg	0	70-79.9 kg	+8	600-999.9 kg
-7	1-4.9 kg	+1	80-94.9 kg	+9	1 to 2.9 tons
-6	5-9.9 kg	+2	95-114.9 kg	+10	3 to 4.9 tons
-5	10-24.9 kg	+3	115-139.9 kg	+11	5 to 9.9 tons
-4	25-39.9 kg	+4	140-179.9 kg	+12	10 to 19.9 tons
-3	40-49.9 kg	+5	180-249.9 kg	+13	20 to 34.9 tons

SECONDARY TRAITS

Creatures have almost exactly the same Secondary Traits as PCs and NPCs: Strength (STR), Health (HEA), Stamina (STA), Unarmed Damage (UD). Since by definition non-sentient creatures practically never use tools (certainly not as weapons), they have no Armed Damage (AD) rating.

The Secondary Traits are calculated in the same ways as for characters, except for Health and Unarmed Damage. Health is obtained by adding together Fitness, Willpower and Instinct (instead of FIT, WIL and PSY) and dividing the total by three, rounding to the closest whole number. Unarmed Damage is the sum of STR, BLD, HTH Skill Level and has a minimum rating of 1. The damage ratings of the creature's natural weapons (if any) are added to this rating. Stamina still has a minimum value of 10. Damage thresholds and the System Shock rating are determined in the same way as for humans.

SKILLS

While acquiring specific Skills is something closely associated with intelligent species, most creatures possess natural abilities (for combat, or survival) that closely resemble Silhouette character Skills. Many creatures — predators in particular — have the Combat Sense and HTH Skills, as well as a few other useful ones (such as Sneak).

Combat Sense: All animals but the dumbest of domesticated herbivores will have at least one level of Combat Sense, if only to flee from potential enemies.

Hand-to-Hand: This Skill, which can alternatively be called "Claw and Tooth" when dealing with animals, is possessed by nearly all creatures, save perhaps for the shyest of farm animals — but even then, any cornered, wounded animal represents a potential (if minimal) danger to others. Note that practically no non-sentient creature will use the HTH Skill to parry an attack, even those with high Skill levels; they use the Dodge Skill instead.

Dodge: Animals use this Skill, not HTH, to defend against attacks. Predators commonly have Skill levels of one; they don't need to defend against attacks very often. Prey animals, on the other hand, fall into two broad categories: those who flee and those who freeze. Creatures who flee have Dodge Skill levels of 2 or (rarely) 3. Animals who freeze (usually creatures with high rates of reproduction) have Skill levels of 0. Creatures with very low BLD scores get a +1 bonus to their Dodge for every point of BLD under -5. Large creatures get a -1 to their Dodge for every point of BLD over +6.

Other Skills: Particular animals have other Skills relevant to their nature. Cats and rats, for example, might get a level or two in Acrobatics; many predators will have the Sneak or Notice (tracking) Skills. Water creatures swim naturally, but a few land animals are excellent swimmers and get a level or two in Swimming. Athletics (especially jumping and climbing), Survival and Camouflage (for animals that hide their lair or their young) are also common animal Skills. Instinct replaces KNO or CRE whenever Skills call for these attributes.

MOVEMENT RATINGS

This refers to the creature's main means of movement. It can be calculated using the following formula: $25 + (5 \times (\text{FIT} + \text{AGI} + \text{BLD} + \text{Athletics Skill, if any}))$; minimum of 1. This gives the Running speed; for walking, divide by 3. Special movement, such as flying, can modify this by any chosen factor. Some animals may have special abilities that allow them to sprint even faster.

NATURAL WEAPONS AND ARMOR

The most common of all natural weapon is the bite. Other attack forms include claws, tusks and hooves. Trample attacks are calculated with a damage multiplier equal to twice the animal's BLD attribute.

Most animals have no natural armor. Tougher or plated animals have "armor" ratings which are used just like normal armor (added to wound thresholds).

SWARMS

Very small animals, such as insects and miniature species of reptiles and mammals, cannot be adequately described using the same system as other animals: they are simply too small. It would be useless (and a bit ridiculous) to fill out a record sheet for every mosquito or mouse the characters meet. Still, while these animals are relatively harmless when encountered alone, some can be very deadly when gathered in swarms or colonies. The following rules are used whenever the characters are confronted by swarms of colonial creatures.

The rules uses the two terms "swarm" and "horde", which are not synonymous. A swarm represents the basic unit out of which hordes are made. For example, a large horde could be made out of a dozen swarms. For the characters, the distinction is rather meaningless: all they need to know is that a very large number of critters are heading their way.

SWARM CHARACTERISTICS

Swarms of small creatures have the following statistics: Aggressiveness, Damage/Turn, Damage Threshold, Random Horde Size and Basic Swarm Size. These determine how much damage the swarm will do each turn, as well as how much damage it will take to disperse the swarm.

A swarm's Aggressiveness is a measure of how aggressive each little insect is, and therefore how combative the swarm is as a whole. The Attribute gives the number of dice rolled — the usual way — for the swarm(s)' attack, every combat round. Multiply the result of the roll by the Damage/Turn rating to obtain total damage. Divide the total damage evenly among all those that are inside the swarm, and check for wounds or death the usual way. The attack cannot be dodged or parried; non-sealed armor protects with only half of its value for three rounds; it is useless after that.

Sometimes a swarm of creatures is particularly big, and is called a horde. If the Weaver opts for a horde instead of a simple swarm, he must roll as many dice as specified by the Random Horde Size rating, adding the results together. The total is the number of swarms in the horde. No more than three swarms can attack any given human-size target during the same round; their damages are added, then divided up among the victims. The Basic Swarm Size gives the average number of individual insects in each swarm.

FIGHTING SWARMS

Although swarms are by definition very hard to kill, they can be driven off by specific amounts of damage, depending on the type: fire and smoke is the best ways to disperse most swarms; count full damage against them. Hand-to-Hand and Melee attacks do only half their normal damage, and firearms and other ranged attacks do only one quarter. To disperse a swarm, you must do more than the swarm's Damage Threshold in one single attack. A horde needs to be dispersed swarm by swarm, except if a single attack does more damage (using the restrictions above) than the Damage Threshold multiplied by the number of swarms. In such cases, the whole horde will disperse.

BLOOD ANT (SAMPLE SWARM)

Aggressiveness	2	Damage/turn	2	Damage Threshold	15
Random Horde Size	6d6	Basic Swarm Size	500		

HORNET (SAMPLE SWARM)

Aggressiveness	3	Damage/turn	4	Damage Threshold	25
Random Horde Size	2d6	Basic Swarm Size	15		

VEHICLES

Vehicles in **Tribe 8** tend to be quite simple, and are generally limited to carts and other horse-drawn carriages. Only the Keepers regularly use more sophisticated vehicles, such as patched-together dune buggies or dirt bikes. Because of the rarity of vehicles, the rules for their use are quite simple and emphasize ease of play over detailed realism.

In most situations, details regarding the performance of a vehicle are unnecessary. The farm cart is just used to carry goods into town, the Weaver need not know just how fast the horse can go at a gallop or how much damage it can sustain. In combat situations, however, more information is necessary. Because of this, vehicles are listed with six basic characteristics. They are as follows:

Size represents both the bulk and mass of the vehicle, and is expressed on the same scale as the Build of humans and creatures (see *Build/Mass Equivalencies*, p. 156). Size is used when ramming with a vehicle and to determine carrying capacity.

Silhouette Systems

Crew is the number of people required to operate the vehicle. Vehicles can still operate with less crew, but all actions suffer a -2 penalty. Vehicles with less than half their crew cannot operate.

Speed determines how fast a vehicle can travel, and is listed in meters per round and kilometers per hour. Note that the speed listed is the "cruising speed" at which a vehicle can operate without penalty. Vehicles have a top speed equal to twice their cruising speed, but traveling at top speed makes actions onboard more difficult. Speed also lists the types of movement available, be it ground, air or sea.

Maneuver is the nimbleness of the vehicle and serves the same function as the Agility Attribute. All Action Tests involving moving the vehicle are modified by Maneuver.

Range is the distance in kilometers that the vehicle can travel without either being refueled or the animals changed or rested. Some vehicles (like sailing ships) have a range limited only by onboard consumables.

Damage Ratings are the equivalents of a character's Wound Thresholds. Light Damage corresponds to Flesh Wound, Heavy Damage to Deep Wound and Overkill to Instant Death. Vehicles suffer Action Penalties just like characters and are utterly destroyed by an Overkill result.

Some vehicles also have **Special Characteristics**. These are unique abilities that alter basic abilities. These can be sophisticated sensors on Keeper vehicles, increased towing abilities, or any other unique characteristic.

MANEUVERS AND STUNTS

When the driver of a vehicle attempts a maneuver more complex than taking gentle turns, an Action Test is called for. The relevant Skill is Riding (for a horse or horse-drawn cart), Drive (for a Keeper vehicle), Boating (for a ship) or Aircraft Pilot (for a Keeper aircraft) and it is always modified both by the pilot's Attribute and the vehicle's Maneuver rating. If the vehicle is moving over cruising speed, all driving Tests suffer a -3 penalty.

The Threshold for these tests are up to the Weaver, but she can use the following table as a guideline. If the Action Tests is successful, the stunt or maneuver goes off as planned. If not, the vehicle goes out of control. Consult the Loss of Control table, below. Note that even a mild loss of control can be deadly when trying to avoid an obstacle or jump a gap.

MANEUVER THRESHOLDS

Threshold	Situation
2	Simple 45° turn
3	Traveling over broken ground; 90° turn
4	Hairpin (180°) turn
5	Jump (up to cruising speed, in meters)
6	Long jump (up to top speed, in meters); running through woods
9	Spectacular stunts (jumping a gorge).

LOSS OF CONTROL

Margin of Failure	Result
1	Mild loss of control: vehicle skids forward for one round, then roll again, if appropriate.
2-4	Serious loss of control: vehicle skids forward and to a random side for 1d6 rounds. Then roll again at -1, if appropriate.
5+	Crash: the vehicle turns over or slams into an obstacle, doing MoF x Size damage.

VEHICULAR COMBAT

Combat between vehicles or between mounted and dismounted enemies happens quite frequently in **Tribe 8**. In general, combat works the same way as in other situations, with only a few other modifiers.

If a vehicle-mounted attacker is also driving the vehicle, she must spend an action each round to control the vehicle (or even guide it toward her target) and suffers appropriate penalties for multiple actions (see *Actions*, p. 145). The only exception is Ramming, in which the maneuver and attack are one and the same.

RAMMING

Ramming into another vehicle is the simplest way to do vehicular damage, although both Attacker and Defender are likely to be hurt. Ramming is a standard Opposed Action Test (using Riding, Drive, etc.) and the base damage multiplier is the vehicle's Size (i.e. each vehicle suffers damage based on the other's Size). This Damage Multiplier is modified by a bonus or penalty determined by the impact speed. The modifier is determined by the following two tables.

DETERMINING IMPACT SPEED

Ramming Direction	Impact Speed
Head On	Attacker Speed + Defender Speed
Side	Attacker Speed
Rear	Attacker Speed - Defender Speed

DETERMINING DAMAGE MODIFIER

Impact Speed (meters/round)	Damage Modifier
1-25	-20
26-45	-10
46-65	+0
66-95	+10
96-195	+20
196 and above	+30

ATTACKS ON AND FROM VEHICLES

Determining whether an attack aimed at or made from a moving vehicle hits uses the same rules as for character to character combat. A vehicle moving a cruising speed counts as a Running character for the purposes of Offensive and Defensive Modifiers (giving +2 to the appropriate roll). This modifier goes to +3 for a vehicle at top speed. The Weaver can modify these bonuses to reflect especially slow or fast vehicles. The defender's roll is also modified by the vehicle's Maneuver rating (unless the vehicle is not moving, of course).

Some rare vehicles have special mounted weapons. These are fired using the Gunnery Skill and suffer a -2 penalty when used against human-sized targets. Some "anti-infantry" weapons are specially balanced to fire against humans and do not suffer this penalty. A vehicle's weapons and its characteristics are noted in its description under Special Characteristics.

DAMAGING VEHICLES

Attacks that hit a vehicle have a chance of damaging it (and reducing its performances) or even destroying it. All vehicles have Armor Thresholds; final damage ($\text{MoS} \times \text{Damage Multiplier}$) is compared to these Thresholds to determine what happens. Action penalties work just like with characters and affect all actions involving the vehicle (usually maneuvers or firing weapons from the vehicle). This reflects a general decrease in performance.

Optionally, an attacker can target a specific part of the vehicle (such as the tires on a buggy). These attacks suffer a -2 penalty but, if successful, reduce the Armor Thresholds by half (rounded up). Resulting action penalties are applied only when that system is employed, however (a damaged tire does not affect the Keeper's radio, for example). An Overkill result destroys **that part only** and not the entire vehicle.

In the case of aiming at the horse drawing a cart, the Action Penalty to hit is only -1. Damage should be applied directly to the horse, using the Creature rules (see *Creatures*, p. 156).

WOUNDING CREW

When a vehicle is damaged, there is a strong chance that anyone riding in it will get hurt. This system is intended for use with Player Characters only because it slows down play, but it can be employed in other situation at the Weaver's discretion.

When a vehicle suffers damage in excess to its Damage Ratings, there is a one in three chance that those aboard will get hurt (1-2 on a six-sided die). In that case, everyone aboard should roll a Health Test. The threshold is 4 for Light Damage and 6 for Heavy Damage. A failed roll indicates a Flesh Wound for Margin of Failure 1 or 2, and a Deep Wound for a MoF 3 or above.

If a vehicle suffers an Overkill result, it crashes or sinks and the crew suffers the consequences. In the case of ground vehicles, the crew suffer damage as if they were falling from a distance (in meters) equal to twice the vehicle's current speed (in meters per round) (see *Falls*, p. 153). In the case of boats, the crew must abandon ship. Their fate depends on the conditions of the waters they are traveling upon (and their Swimming Skill, of course). In the rare instance of aircraft, damage is calculated as for a ground vehicle except that the ship's current altitude is added to the effective height for damage purposes. Note that some Keeper vehicles suffer from catastrophic explosions when they are destroyed — these are noted in the vehicle's Special Characteristics.

Aiming at people aboard is perfectly possible, but imposes added penalties. In a flat-top vehicle (simple raft, simple cart, riding animal), the penalty is -1; in an open-topped vehicle (most boats, larger carts), it is -2; and in enclosed vehicles (Keeper buggies), it is -3. The Weaver can always judge, however, that hitting a crewmember is impossible if she is completely behind cover. If successful, these attacks do no damage to the vehicle and affect only the targeted individual.

RIDING ANIMALS

In fact, the most common "vehicles" in **Tribe 8** are animals like horses, mules or donkeys. In general, these can be used the same way as any other vehicle, replacing the vehicular characteristic with the appropriate Attributes (see table below). If a riding animal is hit by an attack, use the Creature rules to resolve damage.

CHARACTERISTIC/ATTRIBUTE EQUIVALENCIES

Characteristic	Attribute*
Size	Build
Crew	n/a (usually one)
Speed	Animal's Running Speed (Top Speed), Cruising Speed is half.
Maneuver	Agility
Range	STA x 10 km
Damage Ratings	Wound Thresholds

* Note that an animal's Special Characteristics could modify these values.



SPIRIT AND DREAM

Spirit and magic are alive and real for the citizens of Vimary. They live with a constant and complete awareness that the physical world that surrounds them is just one half — if that — of reality. For every cold slab of stone, there is a spirit of the ages crying for freedom. For every quiet forest clearing, there is a night of visions and omens. For everything there is a spirit. Whether magic is "real" or whether dreams have meaning are non-issues in Vimary. The mere presence of the Fatimas and Z'bri puts the issue to rest.

Spiritual truth is not just a passive reality in Vimary, however; it is an active part of personal and social existence. Everyone in the region knows that priests and shamans, Fatimas and Z'bri horrors can wield spiritual power to create spectacular and terrifying effects. Everyone knows that dreams are a direct connection to the spirit world and that they must be taken seriously. Everyone knows that strange events can be omens of things to come. They do not believe these things because they are simple or misguided people; they believe them because they are **true**.

THE NATURE OF REALITY

The specifics of reality are — as always — a matter of great debate among mystics, priests and scholars in Vimary. Exactly what occurs after death, how the universe was created and countless other questions have no completely firm answers. Nevertheless, with a few exceptions, people accept a central paradigm based around a universal symmetry between spirit and matter.

The universe is commonly perceived as two equal spheres that almost touch. One sphere is the spiritual world and the other is the physical world. Each is essentially a reflection of the other, although they both have unique properties. The spiritual world is ephemeral, a world of emotion and ever-changing landscapes. The physical world is carnal, a world of blood and pain. The space between these two worlds is known as the **River of Dream**, and it forms both a barrier and an interface between these two worlds. It is in this interface that power and vitality spring from. All that lives interacts with the River in one way or another, and some people can learn to tap into it with greater skill. This wellspring of power is dangerous and chaotic, however, and souls can get lost when plunging into it (during vision quests, for example). At the very center of the River lies the **Fold** that separates the material and spiritual worlds. Crossing the Fold is thought to be possible only for the spirits of the dead.

When a physical creature dies, its soul separates permanently from its physical form and travels into the River toward the spirit world. This crossing is supremely dangerous and those who do so without guidance are lost forever, to be consumed by vile horrors. The Seven Tribes claim that only the Fatimas — most especially Baba Yaga — have the power to guide souls to the other side. Thus, only members of the tribes can reach the afterlife; all others are doomed to ultimate destruction. The Fallen deny this, claiming they have the power to guide themselves across — but no one has returned to tell the tale.

MANIFESTATIONS

The powerful interface between spirit and matter manifests itself in many ways. The most common are dreams. Every living creature dreams, and in doing so opens itself to the River. Plants seem to be in a constant state of dream, connected to the River at all times. Even Shamans claim that plants form a communal consciousness — a blade of grass has no self-awareness, but it is possible to interact with the spirit of an entire forest. These spirits are very hard to use, however, and usually pay no heed to small-scale disturbances — like humanity.

Animals interact with Dream both individually and collectively. Each creature will dream when asleep, and so opens itself up to the River. They seem unable, however, to manipulate Dream to create effects or travel about the River as individuals. There exists, however, totemic spirits that are manifestations of whole species of animals, and these spirits are active and powerful. They are generally more concerned with humanity and will visit people's dreams and attack interlopers. They are also closer to the great plant spirits and can communicate with them more easily than humans.

Humans enter Dream naturally when they sleep and they let go of the physical concerns of survival. Most people, however, cannot control their interaction with the River and dream passively, receiving visions as they come. Occasionally, animal totems or other spirits will visit dreams to carry messages and warn of dangers. These dreams are considered vital clues and will often be interpreted by a priest or shaman. These omens are used to guide one's existence; ignoring them is a sure way to end up in trouble. Weavers can use this tool to their heart's content: PCs who ignore dreams are asking for trouble.

Some people can learn to better control their dreams, not so much traveling through the River, but at least controlling its flow through them. This is a use of the **Dreaming Skill** and is further explained below. Powerful entities like the Fatimas, and rare individuals like priests and Fallen can more directly wield the power of Dream. They can, in effect, channel spirit into matter and create spectacular effects. This process is known as **Synthesis** and is explained later in this chapter.

INTERACTING WITH DREAM AND SPIRITS

When a human seeks out a spirit in the River of Dream, is visited by one, or experiences an omen vision, she can have a limited impact on events. A Weaver can narrate large parts of the dreaming experience — just telling the Player what transpires — but she should make sure the Player does not feel completely powerless. The following systems allow dreamers to affect their experiences and interact (both violently and non-violently) with spirits. Weavers should use these systems to help run dramatic sequences between narrated scenes.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

The diagram on this page was designed by Moriah Morikin, one of the most revered of Yagan Old Ones, and penned by the great Dahlian artisan Talia Namiz. A survivor of the camps, Moriah was present at the creation of Baba Yaga and was granted unparalleled understanding of spirit travel by the Crone. He died many summers ago and his skin is now a treasured possession of the Yagan tribe. This tattoo, which once adorned his back, is now displayed on the walls of Mortuary at the shrine dedicated to the Raven totem.

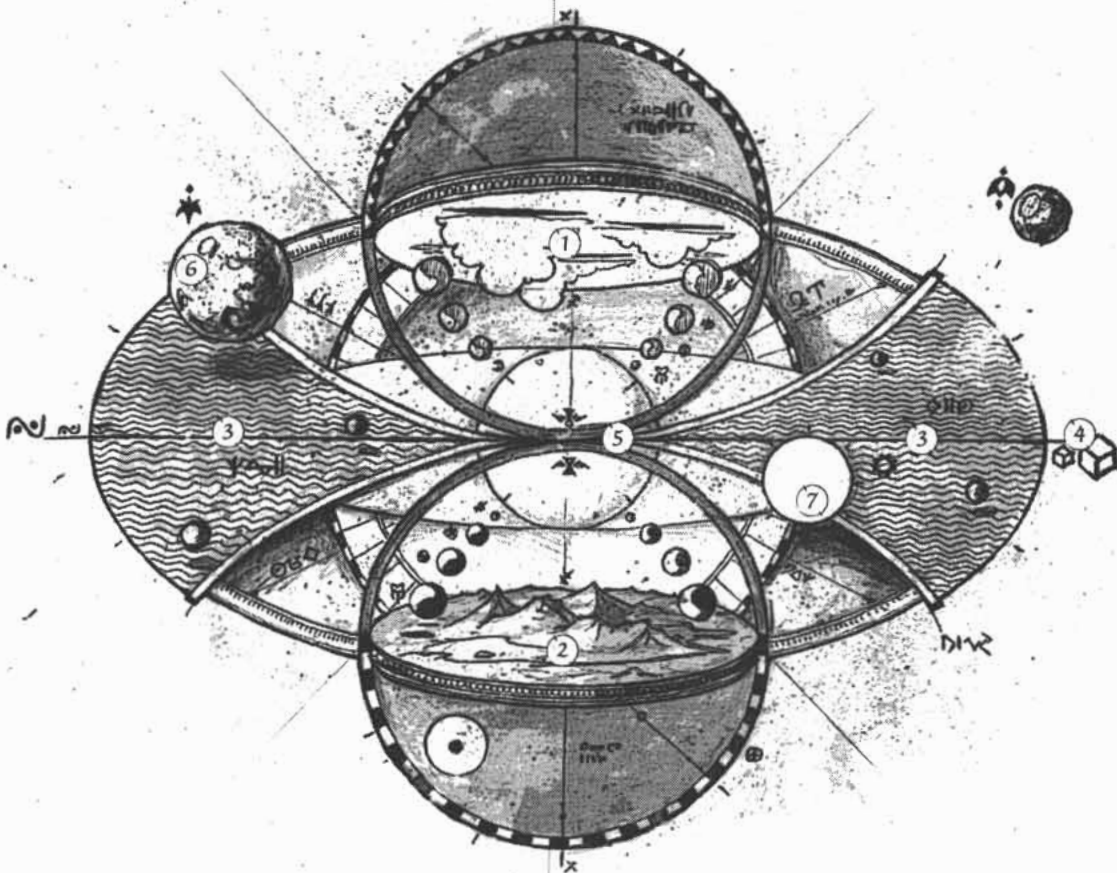
The diagram encapsulates the Yagan understanding of the universe, one accepted by the Seven Tribes and most Fallen. It shows the mirrored physical and spiritual worlds, separated by the thin line of the Fold and the buffer of the River of Dream. As the River widens it becomes the Sea of the Lost, a nigh infinite dream expanse haunted by ghosts. These specters can and do try to return to the central orbs of material or spiritual existence and can become allies, guides or dangerous enemies to those awake to the River's flow. Moriah himself was said to be plagued by many ghosts, including Old Mack (see p. 163).

SECONDARY ORBS, HIDDEN WORLDS

Moriah's map reveals the presence of secondary orbs within the Sea of the Lost, away from the physical and spiritual worlds. Many of these are associated with specific Fatimas or celestial objects, but their true nature is only partially understood. Evans and Yagans both report that they are home to some of the most powerful totemic spirits, who are often very defensive about their personal worlds. Some Fallen believe that portions of Joshua's true essence may be hidden in such an orb.

ELEMENTS OF NOTE

1.	The Spiritual Orb
2.	The Physical Orb
3.	The Sea of the Lost
4.	The Fold
5.	The River of Dream
6.	The Lunar Sphere
7.	The Solar Sphere



SPIRITUAL TRAITS

Spirits in the River of Dream have no physical form; in game terms, that means no physical Attributes. Human dreamers perceive the River as somewhat material, however, so spirits will appear to do things that are physical in nature — running, jumping, lashing out with claws, etc. Mental Attributes translate into physical ones for the purposes of these actions (see table, below). Human dreamers are mostly liberated from their bodies during dreams and trances, but trauma suffered in visions will have an (attenuated) effect on the physical form. This imposes some maximums for Attributes and Traits while dreaming.

Note that various spirits may have special abilities such as dangerous attacks, spiritual armor, etc. Also, some spirits (generally less powerful animal spirits) have Instinct (INS) instead of CRE, INF, PSY or KNO. More powerful animal totem spirits have human Attributes.

SPIRITUAL ATTRIBUTES AND TRAITS

Physical Attribute	Spiritual Equivalent	Human Max.*
AGI	CRE**	none
APP	INF**	none
BLD	WIL	BLD + 2
FIT	PSY**	FIT + 2
STR	WIL	none
HEA	(WIL+PSY**)/2	HEA +2
STA	(5 x (WIL+PSY**)) + 25	STA + 15
UD/AD	3 + (2 x WIL)	none

* Attributes in the Human Max. column refer to the character's actual physical Attributes.

** "Animal" spirits use INS instead of CRE, INF or PSY.

DREAMING HUMANS

Humans largely interact instinctually with the River of Dream. Because of this, the Weaver should use Attribute rolls to cover most "physical" actions. A dreamer scaling a high-infinite cliff would roll two dice and add her CRE (the spiritual equivalent of AGI), for example. Physical Skills learnt in the material world (Athletics, Dodge, etc.) are not directly useful in dream, but mental ones (Lore, Theatrics, etc.) are.

The most important Skill for a human interacting with the River is Dreaming (see p. 134). It allows the dreamer a certain amount of control over herself when interacting with spirits. The Skill conveys several combat abilities (see *Spirit Combat*, below) and allows the character to call spirits from the River of Dream into her dreamscape so they can interact. The Threshold to call spirits is 5 plus the spirit's WIL. The dreamer must know what spirit (or at least what type of spirit) she is calling, unless she wants to make a general call for aid. This has a Threshold of 4, and can attract either helpful or dangerous spirits (Weaver's discretion). A Fumble attracts the desired spirit, but makes it very angry.

SPIRIT COMBAT

Untrained humans make exceptionally poor spiritual combatants. They must rely on their instincts to guide them, and these may constantly fail them. While spirits often have spiritual weapons, armor and combat Skills, none of these are available to normal humans. All combat rolls are hence considered *unskilled* (roll two dice and take the lowest). As a result, a human trying to hit a spirit wolf would roll the equivalent of an unskilled Hand-to-Hand roll: two dice, take the lowest and add CRE (the "spiritual AGI").

Humans with the Dreaming Skill, however, are much better at defending themselves. Those with any level of Dreaming can make Attribute tests instead of unskilled tests in combat (any number of dice plus the Attribute). They may also use Dreaming to create weapons or armor for themselves (and themselves only). Creating either one takes an action and involves a simple Dreaming roll: for weapons, the final roll becomes the Damage Multiplier (added to AD); for armor, double the final roll to get the Armor Rating. The Dreamer can only attempt to create a single weapon and a single armor per combat, but they remain until combat ends or the Dreamer suffers an Instant Kill result (see below). Dream weapons usually appear as blades (they are always close combat), while spiritual armor is neither concealable nor encumbering.

Damage is resolved normally in spirit combat (Action Penalties are imposed, etc.), except that there is no System Shock or spiritual trauma, and that spiritual wounds may cause physical counterparts. Note that Action Penalties for physical wounds suffered as side-effects do not come into play during the dream and that penalties from spiritual wounds vanish when the character wakes up. Spirits themselves take wounds the same way, although there are no side effects and an Instant Kill simply dissipates the spirit for the time being. It is effectively impossible to "kill" a spirit in combat.

SPIRITUAL WOUND SIDE EFFECTS

Spiritual Wound	Physical Side Effect	Other Effects
Light Wound	None	None
Deep Wound	Light Wound	None
Instant Kill	Deep Wound	Dreamer awakens

RITUAL SUPPORT

Lone humans are often outclassed by even the most mundane of spirits. Even skilled dreamers may have a hard time resisting an attack or calling a spirit of any power. Humans, however, are not without tools to help them on their journeys. Individuals can prepare for the tests to come and rituals can give additional support.

Hallucinogenic drugs provide an easy way to boost dreaming potential. These drugs open the spirit to the River of Dream, making a sleeper more receptive to its flows and better able to navigate them. An Action Penalty from a hallucinogen (see p. 152) becomes a *bonus* to Dreaming rolls and is ignored for all other rolls in the River. A character who becomes incapacitated by a hallucinogen, however, is overloaded with dream images and cannot control them at all (all Dreaming rolls fail automatically, -2 to all other rolls). These drugs are usually imbibed or smoked just before entering a trance or sleep.

Waking individuals can lend support to a dreamer through various arcane rituals. Although the specifics of these rituals change from one practitioner to another, the effects are basically the same. The head ritualist rolls her Ritual Skill against a Threshold of 5. She gains a +1 bonus if she is aided in the ritual by 1-4 people and a bonus of +2 is aided by 5 or more. These aides need not have the Ritual skill; they just follow the head ritualist's instructions. The MoS become a bonus applied to all the dreamer's Attribute rolls (so essentially all "physical" actions). This bonus lasts the duration of the ritual (usually the same as the dream).

A dreamer can benefit from both hallucinogenic and ritual aids.

OLD MACK (GHOST)

Old Mack is a lost spirit, one of the countless millions killed in the Z'bri camps. His soul has somehow not yet faded away, and he sometimes appears to the living in their dreams. Mack looks immensely ancient, his gray skin flaking like dust. He is an angry spirit and calls for vengeance from beyond the grave. He wants the living to destroy the Z'bri outright and tries to push whoever he has dealings with to follow his agenda. Nevertheless, he has learned a great deal about his hated enemies and can be a valuable source of information.

Highlights: Vengeful, doddering, ancient

Attributes: CRE -2, INF -1, KNO +1, PER +1, WIL +3, PSY +1, STR +3, HEA +2, STA 45, UD 8

Skills & Abilities: Human Perception 2/+1, Intimidate 2/+3, Lore (Z'bri) 4/+1, Mythology 3/+1, Notice 3/+1, Touch of Terror (by making an Opposed WIL roll against a victim's PSY, Mack can make her experience her worst fear).

TRAILRUNNER (WOLF SPIRIT)

Trailrunner is a moderately powerful wolf spirit. It may be the ghost of a once-great wolf, the spiritual amalgam of an entire pack or a minor totemic spirit. It behaves in almost every way like a true wolf, hunting prey as it needs it. It is a solitary creature, however, and seems to be seeking companions.

Highlights: Beautiful, predatory

Attributes: INS +3, PER +3, WIL +5, STR +5, HEA +4, STA 65, UD 13

Skills & Abilities: Athletics 2/+3, Combat Sense 3/+3, Dodge 2/+3, Hand-to-Hand 4/+3, Notice (tracking) 4/+3, Claws (UD +12 damage), Maw (UD +17 damage), Hide (Armor Rating 15), Eyes of the Wild (by making and opposed INS roll against an opponent's WIL, it can freeze a victim in place for MoS rounds).

THE GREAT OWL (TOTEM SPIRIT)

The Great Owl is a mighty animal totem closely associated with the Fatima Tera Sheba. It flies through the River of Dream on huge wings, its eyes picking out the guilty and the weak. It is noble, inscrutable and terrifying. Some whisper that it considers Tera Sheba to be its pet, and not the reverse.

Highlights: Silent, supremely powerful, nocturnal

Attributes: CRE +3, INF +5, KNO +6, PER +5, PSY +5, WIL +10, STR +10, HEA +7, STA 100, UD 32

Skills & Abilities: Combat Sense 3/+5, Dodge 3/+3, Hand-to-Hand 4/+3, Law 3/+6, Lore (spirit) 4/+6, Mythology 4/+6, Notice 5/+5, Talons (UD +25 damage), Spirit Flight (can carry up to 12 passengers across the River of Dream), Owl's Hoot (freeze opponents in place for MoS rounds on opposed WIL roll), Owl's Gaze (learn guilty secrets on opposed PSY roll).



SYNTHESIS

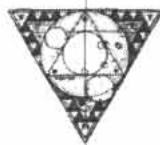
When spirit and material interact, amazing effects may result. Dreams literally become reality. This process is known among tribal arcanists as Synthesis, an old term that includes the connotation of merging both halves of reality. Synthesis is also sometimes called "dream magic" and hence those who wield it consciously are referred to as "dreamers." Wielding Synthesis usually requires ritual implements and processes through which a dreamer enters a trance state. This trance allows the dreamer to interact with the River of Dream — essentially she is forcing herself to plunge directly into sleep and dreams while still maintaining some awareness of the physical world. This is a risky process and inexperienced dreamers can suffer dangerous consequences (see *Equilibrium*, p. 166).

According to the Seven Tribes, Synthesis is the purview of the Fatimas, who are spirit made flesh. The Seven Sisters are immensely powerful and constantly warp physical reality around them; when they actively wield Synthesis, miracles occur. Their personal power is immense. That priestesses, wise-women and tribal elders can wield Synthesis in various ways is seen as a gift from the Fatimas. That Fallen can still wield Synthesis and still subconsciously tap into its power despite the Seven Sisters' scorn is very vexing to the tribal outlook. Many Fallen use this fact to back their claim to the mantle of the Eighth Tribe and say that Joshua is with them. Others feel the Fallen have discovered a direct connection to the Goddess.

THE POWER OF EMINENCE

Every tribal and Fallen has a special relationship with the River of Dream that allows her to unconsciously affect her surroundings with a mild form of Synthesis. This ability is linked to one or more **Eminences**, areas of expertise and understanding linked to either a Fatima (and Her tribe) or a Fallen outlook. Even those without any conscious ability to wield Synthesis (the Synthesis Skill, see below) are blessed in the area for which they have Eminence. These Eminences are listed and explained under *The Eminences*, pp. 166-170.

This unconscious manipulation of spirit manifests itself as uncanny luck. In game terms, once per game session, a character can either reroll a Fumble or gain a +2 bonus to a single roll that falls within one of her Eminences. Obviously, the Player must announce she is taking the +2 bonus before rolling the dice. Despite the fact that Player Characters have two Eminences, they can only take one bonus (or reroll one Fumble) per session. The Weaver must judge whether a roll falls within a certain Eminence, but should be relatively generous. Note that an Eminence does **not** allow a character to reroll a Fumbled Synthesis roll (see *Equilibrium*, p. 166).



WIELDING SYNTHESIS

There are individuals who have trained themselves to wield dream power with deliberation. In tribal society, these people are usually members of the Fatimal sisterhoods (priestesses), elders or skilled members of some of the more arcane guilds like the Yagan Mordreds. Fallen members of these orders and some especially enlightened outcasts manage to keep these powers. Their abilities are represented by the Synthesis Skill, listed separately from other Skills on the character sheet. This Skill represents the ability first to enter a dream-like trance (often in very short order) and then wield the power of the River of Dream to create a wide variety of effects.

The Synthesis Skill is also special because it is not linked to a single Attribute. Rather, an Attribute bonus is applied to a Synthesis roll depending on what the dreamer wishes to accomplish. Hence, people who wield Synthesis usually concentrate on their inherent strengths and may try to be well rounded. The use for each Attribute is listed in the *Synthesis Attributes* table, below.

SYNTHESIS ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	Typical Application
Agility	Movement and displacement effects (e.g. leap the impossible distance between two buildings)
Appearance	Seduction or effects centered on desires (e.g. altering one's features to suit someone's fantasy)
Build	Defensive effects (e.g. shielding oneself from flames)
Creativity	Illusions and creation effects (e.g. melding into the shadows)
Fitness	Endurance and physical feats (e.g. running the distance between settlements at full tilt without tiring)
Influence	Manipulation or subterfuge effects (e.g. swaying those around you)
Knowledge	Making connections, tapping into subconscious ancestral memories (e.g. remembering how a gun works)
Perception	Heightened senses and awareness (e.g. sensing if any Z'brai are nearby)
Psyche	Insights and premonitions (e.g. feeling that a you are walking into a trap)
Willpower	Mental domination and mind control (e.g. implanting a suggestion)

CONJUNCTIONAL SYNTHESIS

Conjunctural Synthesis is the standard way in which a trained dreamer can weave the flow of the River of Dream into fantastic and spontaneous patterns. It is the most common use of the Synthesis Skill, and anyone who has it can do it. In essence, the dreamer is tapping into the raw power of dreams, into her own potential, and for a brief instance creates a funnel between the spiritual and the physical worlds. The effects produced through Conjunctural Synthesis are nearly endless, but all have dream-like qualities representing the essence of dream made real. Many have to do with altered perceptions and small scale changes to the environment or the dreamer herself. A dreamer can only wield Conjunctural Synthesis within her own Eminences, a limit that often governs both what can be done and when. For example, a Joante Templar with Eminence over Fury could break an enemy's bones with a touch, but not heal such a wound. Also, she might be able to leap a chasm to chase a fleeing enemy, but not to escape a raging fire.

Using Conjunctural Synthesis requires a Synthesis Skill roll. The Attribute that modifies the roll depends on what effect is desired (see above), while the threshold is determined by how potent that effect is (see *Synthesis Thresholds* table, below). This Threshold can be modified by a variety of factors (see *Synthesis Modifiers* table, below). The Margin of Success helps determine the result, including the duration of the effect.

Although the methods for entering a trance vary greatly from one dreamer to another, the basic Thresholds below assume a short 30-second ritual (five combat rounds) undertaken by a single dreamer.

When Conjunctural Synthesis is used to affect another person's mind or body directly, the dreamer must pass an Opposed Roll against the target's PER (for illusions), WIL (for mind-control) or FIT (for physical changes), or against the appropriate Threshold in the *Conjunctural Synthesis Thresholds* table below, whichever is higher. The Thresholds provided below represent the minimal roll which the Synthesis wielder must surpass in order to have even a chance to succeed.

When Conjunctural Synthesis is used to augment a person, the Margin of Success is added to the desired Attribute or Secondary Trait (3 x MoS in the case of STA, UD or AD). The augmentation lasts for a length of time determined by the MoS (see *Basic Margin of Success Equivalencies*, below). A character can benefit from several augmentations in a scene (simultaneous or not) only if they fall within very different domains (i.e. physical, spiritual, or sensory). Cumulative or permanent effects are never possible.

When used to cause damage, Conjunctural Synthesis acts as weapon with a Damage Multiplier equal to (10 + Synthesis Skill Rating).

CONJUNCTIONAL SYNTHESIS THRESHOLDS

Threshold	Effect
4	Augmenting one's senses (see in the dark; sense a trap)
5	Augmenting one's body or mind (run faster, remember an obscure fact); affecting another person's senses (create an illusion)
6	Changes to the immediate environment (fan a fire); affect another's mind (cloud a memory)
7	Drastic altering of self (change physical appearance, grow claws); augment another person
8	Drastic changes to another's mind (erase a memory)
9	Drastic changes to another (cause a disease)
10	Drastic changes to the environment (destroy a ruined building, wither a glade)

MODIFIERS TO SYNTHESIS ROLLS

Dreamer Modifiers (Conjunctural Synthesis only)	
Use of a lengthy ritual	+1 per each hour (Max. +3)
Group Ceremony (2-5 dreamers)	+1
Group Ceremony (6+ dreamers)	+2
Use of ceremonial tools (music, ashes, votive drawings etc.)	+1
Use of a Fatimal Artifact	+1 (minor) / +2 (major)
Micro-Trance (1 round)	-2
Fast Trance (2-4 rounds)	-1
Situation Modifiers (Conjunctural Synthesis and Aspects)	
Unable to concentrate (being tortured, unfamiliar surroundings etc.)	-1
A person's life is at risk (only applies if the dreamer is trying to help)	+1
The presence of a Fatima	+1
Going against the will of a Fatima while in Her presence	-2
Outnumbered by Z'bri, or in Z'bri lands	-1
Using Synthesis on a Z'bri or a Serf	-1
Using Synthesis on a Squat	+1
Roleplaying (optional)	±

BASIC MARGIN OF SUCCESS EQUIVALENCIES

MoS	Description	Information Gained	Duration
0	Draw (+1 Situation Modifier on the same effect the following round).		
1	Marginal Success	vague information	1 round
2	Moderate Success	basic information	3 rounds
3	Complete Success	detailed information	1 scene
4	Fantastic Success	repressed memories	1 day
5	Incredible Success	no secrets	1 week

Spirit and Synthesis

FATIMAL ASPECTS

The Seven Fatimas bless their most loyal followers with special gifts known as Aspects. These are potent applications of Synthesis that have to do directly with the character of a Fatima. They are much less flexible than Conjunctional Synthesis, but are more reliable. The Fatimas grant these gifts to their most loyal and enlightened followers, usually priestesses, elders or other tribal heroes. Fallen who once held this status maintain these gifts despite the Fatima's disfavor and can even teach the abilities to some others. Aspects are listed and explained under *The Aspects*, pp. 170-173.

Dreamers must have the Synthesis Skill to use Aspects, but unlike Conjunctional Synthesis, the Attributes and Thresholds for Aspects are set. Only situational modifiers (see table, above) apply to Aspects. When wielding an Aspect, Equilibrium (see below) can only be lost by Fumbling.

EQUILIBRIUM

Wielding Synthesis can be a dangerous proposition. The dreamer is exposing herself to the flow of the River of Dream like few others can and may become lost. The distinctions between concrete reality and spiritual symbolism can break down to such an extent that even basic survival skills are forgotten. The necessary sense of balance is known as **Equilibrium** and it is lost whenever a dreamer Fumbles or has a Margin of Failure of 5 or more in a Conjunctional Synthesis roll. Equilibrium is also lost when Fumbling an Aspect roll. Whenever this occurs, the dreamer must immediately make a Psyche test and check the result on the *Lost Equilibrium* table below. Synthesis Fumbles cannot be rerolled with Eminence.

Distortion indicates that spiritual and material images become superimposed, and the dreamer has a difficult time distinguishing between them. Although she can still function, everything becomes more difficult. *Disconnection* means the dreamer loses track of physical matters entirely. She seems to be in a trance and must be force-fed. She may experience visions during this time. *Separation* is a dangerous form of disconnection in which the dreamer's spirit leaves her body and is swept up in the River of Dream without any real ability to control its travel. Using the *Dreaming Skill* or the *Dream Travel Aspect*, other ritualists must retrieve her spirit. Her body can be force-fed indefinitely.

LOST EQUILIBRIUM

PSY Roll	Result
0	Separation (special)
1	Major disconnection; incapacitated for 1d6 days
2	Minor disconnection; incapacitated for 1d6 hours
3	Great distortion; -2 action penalty (1d6 hours)
4	Major distortion; -1 action penalty (2d6 rounds)
5	Minor distortion; -1 action penalty (1d6 rounds)
6+	Mild distortion; action fails

THE EMINENCES

The blessings of the Seven Fatimas and the new power of the four Fallen outlooks are expressed in the following twenty-two Eminences. Each Eminence description includes a real-world description of what it governs and several examples of how it can be used in Conjunctional Synthesis. The tribe or outlook the Eminence is associated with is indicated between brackets.



CAPRICIOUSNESS (AGNITES)

Although young and childlike, Agnites are not always innocent or sweet. They are fickle and highly unpredictable. This Eminence can force others to change like them or help Agnites go through sudden changes. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Make someone act contrary to her nature (INF, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 6).
- Suddenly appear big and intimidating (INF, Threshold 5)
- Disappear from sight, only to reappear behind an enemy (AGI, Threshold 6)



INSPIRATION (AGNITES)

Inspiration is a powerful Eminence, allowing others to gain a momentary glimpse of the bigger picture. Most Agnites seem to evoke this Eminence by accident; something in their actions or creations unlocks some deeply buried insight in the viewer. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Solving a puzzle in seconds. (PSY, Threshold 5)
- Granting someone an epiphany. (PSY, Threshold 6)
- Convince others to follow you (INF, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 5)



FATE (YAGANS)

Yagans are legendary wise-women who understand the flows of destiny like few others. This Eminence allows them to glimpse into the future in a variety of ways. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Seeing someone's — or something's — immediate future. (PER, Threshold 4)
- Finding a lost artifact. (KNO, Threshold 5)
- Sensing if a situation is dangerous (PSY, Threshold 4)



DEATH (YAGANS)

The followers of Baba Yaga are responsible for tribal final rites and live with death on a daily basis. This Eminence allows them to sense mortality and affect its flow in limited ways. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Communicating with ghosts (KNO, Threshold 5)
- Causing an object to decay (WIL, Threshold 6)
- Placing someone in suspended animation (WIL, opposed by FIT, minimum Threshold 7)



ILLUSION (DAHLIANS)

Like their Fatima, Dahlians are all tricksters and entertainers, and make their audiences believe in things that are not there. The Eminence of Illusion allows them to cloud the senses of others in a wide variety of ways. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Altering one's facial features to appear like someone else. (CRE, Threshold 5)
- Make someone remember a false memory (WIL, opposed by KNO, minimum Threshold 6)
- Subtly augment one's beauty (APP, Threshold 5, MoS added to APP)



MOTION (DAHLIANS)

Motion allows for simple effects from sleight-of-hand tricks to more complicated tricks such as being in two places at once. By using Motion, Dahlians always seem to take the most interesting of routes. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Finding the quickest route between two points. (CRE, Threshold 4)
- Traveling from shadow to shadow instantly (AGI, Threshold 6)
- Diverting an arrow coming toward you (AGI, Threshold 6)



LIFE (EVANS)

Life is a powerful force. It flows through everything and the Evans can sense and alter its course. They can support its flow or staunch it. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Cause a plant to grow rapidly (PSY, Threshold 6)
- Kill without causing any pain (PSY, Threshold 7, the victim must be willing)
- Sense the health of another (PER, Threshold 4)



EMPATHY (EVANS)

Evans can sense the invisible undercurrents that tie all living beings, and are able to discern moods and emotions at a distance, or even sense others' thoughts. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Telepathic communication (PSY, Threshold 5, range of MoS x 150 meters)
- Limited communication with nearby animals (PSY, Threshold 5)
- Sensing the fears or hopes of others (PSY, Threshold 4)



DEVOTION (JOANITES)

Devotion enables a Joanite to sacrifice herself (whether physically or mentally) for the greater good. Deeds of tenacity and faith are all aspects of Devotion. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Being able to cast aside one's fears momentarily (WIL, Threshold 5)
- Resisting someone's influence or manipulations (PSY, Threshold 4, MoS become bonus in opposed roll)
- Endure torture without giving in (BLD, Threshold 5)



FURY (JOANITES)

Fury is an Eminence of savage energy; when invoked for conjunctional effects, failed rolls cause the user to enter a berserker rage and attack anyone near her, unless she rolls WIL against a Threshold of 5. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Sending an opponent flying with a single touch (AGI, Threshold 5, MoS x 2 meters)
- Using one's own bare hands as weapons (AGI, Threshold 5, UD increased by MoS x 3)
- Ignoring pain (BLD, Threshold 5, temporarily reduce total Action Penalties by MoS)



CONFLICT (MAGDALITES)

Conflict is a subtle and subversive Eminence. It encompasses effects from subterfuge to manipulating emotions in the dreamer's target. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Tell a lie that will be believed (INF, opposed by PSY, minimum Threshold 5)
- Make someone say something against her will (WIL, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 6)
- Cause two persons to distrust each other, or to become overly paranoid (WIL, Threshold 6)



SENSUALITY (MAGDALITES)

Sensuality is a subtle Eminence, as elusive as it is alluring. Its effects are addictive to most Magdalites, to the point where some will remain in trance for days on end just to experience the rush it gives them. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Sense what person among a crowd is the most charismatic and "interesting" (PER, Threshold 4)
- Make someone else feel whatever emotions the dreamer is presently feeling (INF, Threshold 6)
- Lock someone in a trance (unable to move) just by looking at her (WIL, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 6)



TRUTH (TERASHEBANS)

Truth is a potent force, but one that is ultimately elusive. Lies and deceptions often obscure even the most obvious truth. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Inflict on the guilty the same pain that they inflicted on their victim (WIL, Threshold 9)
- Control flames to illuminate a hidden place (PER, Threshold 6)
- Intimidate others with a glance (INF, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 5)



WISDOM (TERASHEBANS)

Wisdom is the great strength of Terashebans. It allows them to access information and knowledge thought lost by the other tribes. It does require time and patience to evoke (no fast trance allowed). Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Deduce the location of an object or person (PER, Threshold 5)
- Recall any memory or experience (the dreamer's or someone else's) as if it had just happened (KNO, Threshold 4 for self, 6 for others)
- Guess an enemy's next move (PSY, Threshold 5, 7 for an unfamiliar enemy)



BRAVERY (JACKERS)

Jackers are fearless warriors and they perform best when they confront the monsters that terrify others. This is one of the things that allows them to venture into Z'bri lands and survive. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Sensing fear in another (PSY, Threshold 4)
- Scaling a wall into a Z'bri stronghold (AGI, Threshold 5, MoS added to AGI)
- Forcing another to back down from a confrontation by intimidating her (INF, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 5)



VENGEANCE (JACKERS)

Jackers are driven by the conviction that they have been wronged and that they must seek justice. This Eminence comes into play whenever a character seeks to punish someone who has wronged her. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Sensing guilt in another (PER, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 4)
- Leaping a gorge in pursuit of an enemy (AGI, Threshold 5)
- Branding one who has wronged the dreamer (WIL, Threshold 7, detected by this Eminence against Threshold 3)



CONVICTION (LIGHTBRINGERS)

Lightbringers are natural leaders. This Eminence comes into play whenever they try to convince another of their beliefs, or when they serve to bolster them against enemies. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Swaying a crowd to the dreamer's point of view (INF, Threshold 6)
- Resist torture for MoS hours (BLD, Threshold 5, usable once per day)
- Intimidate an attacker with a glance (INF, Threshold 5)



UNITY (LIGHTBRINGERS)

Lightbringers are always trying to bring Fallen factions together and they ultimately want to see humanity united. Whenever they are working for the unity of a group, their Eminence comes into play. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Getting a crowd to coordinate actions effortlessly (INF, Threshold 6)
- Picking out a potential ally in a group of enemies (PER, Threshold 4)
- Telepathic communication between willing targets (WIL, Threshold 5)



SHADOWS (DOOMSAYERS)

Doomsayers move in hidden areas and have an intimate knowledge of the darker regions (both literally and metaphorically). Their Eminence comes into play when using darkness to hide and when dealing with nastier instincts. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Invisibility in shadows (AGI, Threshold 5, no unaided Notice rolls can detect the dreamer)
- Fanning jealousy and resentment in another (WIL, opposed by PSY, minimum Threshold 5)
- Extinguishing all lights in a room (WIL, Threshold 6)



MYSTERY (DOOMSAYERS)

Doomsayers look to prophecies and enigmas for the answers that will guide the Eighth Tribe. They also shroud themselves in secrets as protection from their enemies. This Eminence comes into play both when creating and solving a mystery. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Deciphering an ancient code (CRE, Threshold 5)
- Hiding something so it will never be found (AGI, Threshold 5)
- Vanishing from sight (AGI, Threshold 5)



FREEDOM (HERITES)

Herites are the Fallen who are most concerned with freeing themselves from the Seven Fatimas and they have become very skilled at all things that concern their liberation. This Eminence comes into play whenever overcoming obstacles that block physical or spiritual freedom. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Slipping out of chains (AGI, Threshold 5)
- Leaping over a prison wall (AGI, Threshold 5)
- Undermining another's sense of devotion to a cause (INF, opposed by WIL, minimum Threshold 6)



RECOGNITION (HERITES)

Truth is a serious issue for Herites. They seek to affirm their independence from the Fatimas and expose the slavery of the tribes. This Eminence comes into play both when recognizing something for what it is and when compelling others to recognize one's power and place. Possible conjunctional effects include:

- Seeing through an illusion (PER, Threshold 4)
- Identifying an artifact's origin (KNO, Threshold 5)
- Augmenting one's stature before a hostile crowd (INF, Threshold 5)

THE ASPECTS

The potent gifts of the Fatimas to their most loyal followers, the Aspects are specific powers of Synthesis. Some Fallen still possess these blessings despite their banishment. The description of each of the fourteen Aspects outlines the game mechanics associated with its effects. The Aspect's tribe and the basic roll are indicated between brackets.



NAÏVETÉ (AGNITES; WIL, OPPOSED BY WIL)

Naïveté allows the dreamer to tap into the target's memory of youth and make her gullible and susceptible. The dreamer makes an opposed roll against the target's WIL; the MoS serves as a penalty against all complex mental abilities (including PER rolls). The MoS also determines duration. While in this state the target will not necessarily behave in a stupid manner and will not harm herself directly, but is easily influenced and may be coerced into ignoring certain events or repressing memories about them.



WONDER (AGNITES; CRE, VARIABLE THRESHOLD)

Wonder is the power to infuse inanimate objects with the very essence of the River of Dream giving them a "life" of their own. The effects vary (see table below), but the Agnites use Wonder to create playmates from shadows, toys from junk and bogeymen from nothing more than strange noises and dark places. The MoS determines how "lifelike" the object becomes.

WONDER THRESHOLDS

Threshold	Creation
3	Shadow Puppets
4	Animate a tool to do its function (a hammer will hammer)
5	Animate a simple weapon
6	Create a playmate from junk
7	Create a monster of shadows with teeth of jagged metal

MoS INDICATORS

MoS	Effect
0	The object moves
1	The object has one property (one Attribute at +1)
2	Two properties (one Attribute at +2 or two at +1) and one Skill (level 1)
3	Three properties, two points of Skills (one at level 2 or two at level 1)
4	Four properties, three points of Skills
5	Five properties, four points of Skills



DREAM TRAVEL (YAGANS; CRE, VARIABLE THRESHOLD)

Dream Travel allows the dreamer to leave her body and travel as a specter, observing the world and entering the dreams of others. Yagans use Dream Travel to guide souls into the grace of Baba Yaga. If used to enter the dreams of others, Dream Travel requires a successful opposed roll against the target's PSY (no modifiers). Once there, the Yagan can manipulate the dreams by rolling CRE opposed by the target's WIL. While in someone's dreamscape, the Yagan can try to glean information from the sleeper. The Yagan can also dominate an animal, temporarily possessing its body. While traveling, the Yagan's body is utterly vulnerable to attacks. MoS determines the duration of travel.

DREAM TRAVEL THRESHOLDS

Threshold	Effect
4	travel about immediate area
5	enter a dreamscape; possess an animal
6	enter the River of Dream
7	travel to the Fold



CURSE OF DREAM (YAGANS; WIL, VARIABLE THRESHOLD)

The Yagans are renowned for their ability to curse those who wrong them. Most often, these curses are minor, such as turning hair green or causing flatulence, but more extreme curses can even lead to death. When using Synthesis to place a curse on someone, use the *Curse Thresholds* table below to determine the difficulty level of a curse. Failing a Curse roll leaves the dreamer with bad luck (for one day, extra 6's do not count on die rolls). A fumble means the Curse affects the dreamer. Curses last until lifted or MoS weeks.

CURSE THRESHOLDS

Threshold	Curse
3	Minor curse (cosmetic change, annoying and inconvenient)
5	Standard Curse (bad luck, +1 to all Thresholds, haunted by ghosts)
7	Deadly Curse (x17 damage)



METAMORPHOSIS (DAHLIANS; WIL, THRESHOLD 5)

Metamorphosis allows the dreamer to transform an object or others' perception of it. The MoS indicates the number of senses affected by the illusion. Observers will believe these stable illusions until they are given a real reason to disbelieve it — hearing the sound of an invisible cart, being hurt by an illusory dagger, etc. In these cases the observer rolls WIL against a Threshold equal to 3 + the MoS of the illusion. The Weaver is the final arbiter as to when such a test is appropriate. Illusory damage vanishes as soon as it is disbelieved.

Illusory attacks have a Damage Multiplier equal to the *lowest* of either the imitated weapon's DM or the dreamer's Synthesis Skill +10. If a character is hurt by an illusory attack and does not successfully disbelieve it, treat the damage as normal. Those who "die" from such an attack actually suffer Disconnection as if they had lost Equilibrium (see p. 166). Note that illusory weapons do not create illusory wounds unless the dreamer creates them with another Metamorphosis use.

METAMORPHOSIS PENALTIES

Penalty	Size	Complexity
0	a dagger	change color, add design (e.g. make an object glow)
-1	a sack of grain	radically change its aspect (e.g. turn a tree into a stone wall)
-2	a person	radically alter its size (e.g. make a dagger a broadsword)
-3	a horse	alter its function completely (e.g. turn a cloak into a staff or bow)
-4	a building	completely unrecognizable (e.g. make a house into a flock of birds)



PUPPET SHOW (DAHLIANS; CRE, OPPOSED BY WIL)

Puppet Show gives the dreamer access to the inner fears and doubts of a person, and the ability to make them "real." Dahlians use this Aspect while performing Liberation Plays, giving them an extra level of realism. While used outside of Liberation Plays, Puppet Show subjects the target to a living nightmare (if she fails the opposed roll) where she relives her worst fear. Consult the table below for duration and intensity. A fumbled roll exposes the dreamer to nightmares for MoF number of days (-1 to all actions until the nightmares are over).

PUPPET SHOW DURATION & INTENSITY

MoS	Duration	Intensity
0	n/a	Shadows move about the dreamer or target
1	1 action	A quick boo (loses Initiative)
2	1 round	A startle (-1 to actions)
3	1 minute	Real fear (-2 to actions)
4	10 minutes	A living nightmare (at this point any damage from the dream is real)
5	1 hour	Living Hell



ANIMA (EVANS; CRE, VARIABLE THRESHOLD)

Anima allows the acceleration of the flow of life. If used to heal, the Threshold is 4 plus the **highest** penalty from the victim's wounds (+1 if she only has Flesh Wounds, +2 if she has any Deep Wounds, +3 if she is near death). Heavier wounds get healed first and "cost" a specific number of MoS points: 3 for Fatal Wounds, 2 for Deep Wounds, 1 for Flesh Wounds. A wound can also be downgraded (one level per MoS). Anima can be used on an individual only once per day. Note that Anima is also part of normal healing with Dedicated Care (see *Recovery from Injuries*, pp. 150-151). Assuming a target had one Deep Wound and multiple Flesh Wounds, a MoS of 3 would heal the Deep Wound and one Flesh Wound, a MoS of 2 would heal the Deep Wound, and a MoS of 1 would downgrade the Deep Wound to a Flesh Wound. The Threshold would be 6.



SMOTHERING (EVANS; PSY, OPPOSED BY WIL, MINIMUM THRESHOLD 4)

Smothering is the opposite of Anima, allowing the dreamer to block the flow of life. Physical contact must first be established, then the dreamer and victim roll an opposed action test (PSY versus WIL). The MoS determines the level of damage: MoS of 1-2 results cause a Flesh Wound; MoS of 3-5 cause a Deep wound; and MoS of 6+ cause a Fatal Wound. A fumble results in a Deep Wound for the caster.



BATTLE (JOANITES; WIL, THRESHOLD 3)

Battle grants tremendous benefits to Joanite warriors. Before entering a fight, the dreamer spends five rounds focusing her energies through a series of prayers and katas, attuning herself with the invisible energies to be released by the conflict. If the roll fails (MoF 1+), the dreamer suffers a -1 penalty to all her actions for the next MoF rounds. The roll's MoS becomes a pool that can be spent at any time during the combat; each MoS point can be used as a +1 bonus to a combat-related roll (these must be declared before rolling) or as an instantaneous 5 points of armor (these can be spent after taking a hit). Joanites can call upon Battle several times during a conflict but each attempt immediately empties the current MoS pool, then requires another five rounds be spent focusing before the new roll can be made.



SACRIFICE (JOANITES; PSY, THRESHOLD 5)

A dreamer who is aware that a companion is danger of being injured can take the victim's wounds upon herself, sparing her companion from any injury. This requires only one action, done at the moment of injury, and the dreamer must be able to see the victim. The damage is then resolved as if the wound hit the dreamer, who receives an armor bonus equal to (MoS x 5). Sacrifice can also be used to transfer existing wounds onto the dreamer, in which case they simply move from one person to another. They are automatically considered stabilized for Healing purposes, but can become destabilized; see *Treating Injuries*, p. 150. If the dreamer suffers a Deep Wound as a result of using Sacrifice, her companions (up to 10) each receive +1 to all their actions the following round, inspired by her sacrifice.



PASSION (MAGDALITES; INF, OPPOSED BY WIL)

Passion is the Magdalites' greatest tool. Simple uses of this Aspect can augment any pleasure or sensation, or can be fanned into dangerous and uncontrollable emotions. The MoS reduces the target's WIL, making her more susceptible to following commands or suggestions, or to divulging information. A victim whose WIL is reduced to -4 effectively becomes incapacitated, lost in throes of ecstasy.



TREASON (MAGDALITES; PER, THRESHOLD 5)

Treason is a highly guarded secret. It essentially allows the dreamer to glean any secrets and perceive any weaknesses in the target. These frailties could be physical (e.g. a bad hip) or psychological (fears of being exiled, etc.). Treason also allows a dreamer to know exactly what it will take to get the target to do what she wants. The knowledge may be used to coerce or influence the target, but does not bestow any special abilities upon the user. The MoS determines the degree of information gleaned (including any secrets, known enemies, or current plans). A MoS of 1 will only provide a few hints, whereas a MoS of 5 or better will provide the dreamer with the target's deepest secrets or fears, how they can be triggered and what effects they have on the target.



TRADITION (TERASHEBANS; PER, OPPOSED BY WIL, THRESHOLD 4 OR 6)

Tradition enables the dreamer to understand the past and truth about an object, place or person. By entering a trance (against a Threshold of 4), the dreamer attunes herself with the target and is able to learn much about that person, including any secrets, events witnessed, or even weaknesses and failings. If used against an unwilling person it becomes an opposed roll using the target's WIL (minimum Threshold 4).

Tradition allows the dreamer a limited form of post-cognition. In this case, the Threshold is 6 and the MoS determines how far back and how clearly the dreamer can see. The dreamer may split her MoS between Time and Clarity as she chooses.

POST-COGNITION GUIDELINES

MoS	Time	Clarity
0	Up to one hour back	Blurred vision, muffled sounds
1	Up to one week back	Shapes and actions are recognizable
2	Up to one month	Speech is recognizable, voices aren't
3	Up to one year	Most visual clues and voice tones are recognizable
4	Up to ten years	Detailed, lifelike rendition



TRUTHSAYING (TERASHEBANS; INF, OPPOSED BY WIL)

Using this Aspect, the dreamer can force someone else to tell the truth. If the roll fails, the dreamer becomes unable to confront the individual for an hour per point of MoF. If the roll succeeds, the target will answer truthfully one question per point of MoS. A MoS between 2 and 4 sends the target into a painful convulsions where she tells the truth (or suffers one Flesh Wound per lie), no matter how deeply buried or painful. A MoS of 5 or 6 has the same effect, but causes a Deep Wound for every lie. A MoS of 7 or better forces the truth out of the target and kills her if she lies or even thinks of duplicity.

RITUAL SYNTHESIS

Conjunctural Synthesis is not the only way to access the power of the River of Dream, just the most effective. Skilled ritualists can use dedication and study to tap into Synthesis in a more limited way, using so-called Ritual Synthesis.

Ritual Synthesis eschews the intuitive leaps and fluid abilities of Conjunctural Synthesis, relying instead on a more laborious, almost formulaic method. One or more ritualists enact arcane and well-proven practices to affect reality in limited ways. Wise-women, elders and others within tribal society — but not only people expressly blessed by the Fatimas — use this technique because it is the only one available to them. Most often, these rituals involve many people and whole families have been known to participate together. The effects they achieve are rarely spectacular or instantaneous; rather, these rituals help crops grow, protect a family member embarking on an arduous journey, or bring good fortune onto a newly married couple.

In terms of game mechanics, Ritual Synthesis is handled much the same as Conjunctural Synthesis. Like Conjunctural Synthesis, Ritual Synthesis functions only within a person's Eminences (those of the tribe in the case of tribals) and it uses the same basic Thresholds and modifiers (see p. 165) except for ritual time (see below). There are some important differences between Conjunction and Ritual Synthesis, however.

First and foremost, Ritual Synthesis is a Skill Test using the Ritual Skill (not the Synthesis Skill) and so is **always** modified by KNO, regardless of the effect. Ritual Synthesis is also inherently less potent than Conjunctural Synthesis, and so suffers an automatic -2 modifier to the Skill roll. Ritual Synthesis is also inherently slower than Conjunctural Synthesis. The base time for a ritual is two hours, with each doubling of the time granting a +1 bonus and each halving (rounded up) a -1 penalty. The maximum modifier for time is +1/-5.

Also, unlike Conjunctural Synthesis, rituals are set invocations and enchantments. There can be several rituals for each possible effect; the knowledge of these various invocations is reflected in the level of the Ritual Skill. Players and Weavers need not keep track of all the rituals a character knows, however. Instead, a ritualist is assumed to know an invocation whose basic Threshold (as determined on the *Synthesis Threshold* table, p. 165) is equal to no more than her Skill rating plus 3. Characters who possess a Skill directly relevant to the ritual being performed (e.g. Agriculture in a ritual to promote crop growth) can add one half that Skill's Rating (rounding up) to the maximum possible Threshold. Only one such Skill can be used per Ritual. Thus, a qualified ritualist (Skill level 2) knows rituals that augment her sense (Threshold 4), her mind or body (Threshold 5) or affect another person's senses (Threshold 5). She would only know more potent rituals in areas where she has other knowledge.

Despite its drawbacks, Ritual Synthesis has one major advantage: it cannot cause a loss of Equilibrium. Although a fumbled roll might mean that the ritual goes terribly awry, it will not plunge the ritualist into any additional distortion.

SQUAT RITUALS

Squat bands can and do make use of Ritual Synthesis — generally the only form of supernatural power available to them. The Weaver should assign a single Eminence for ritual purposes to a Squat ritualist. Just choose the one best suited to the character concept (e.g. Fury for a vicious war shaman, Fate for a seer, etc.). The Squat gains no other benefit from this Eminence (no +2 bonus, no rerolled fumbles).



TECHNOSMITHING

Despite tribal claims to the contrary, the Fatimas' children are not the only ones who can tap into the River of Dream. Not only do Fallen retain their abilities at Synthesis (Eminences and/or Aspects), but some Keepers have managed to develop a special form of Synthesis known as Technosmithing. By tinkering with the machines of the past, by memorizing old texts and schematics, the Keepers are weaving Synthesis, but in a different manner. Technosmithing is a catch-all term. Through its use, Keepers can jury rig working devices from spare-parts, power objects without an actual power source, or just have a knack about all things of the past.

Technosmithing is less prevalent among Keepers than Synthesis is among tribals and Fallen. There is no Keeper Eminence (although their intimate knowledge of lost technology and science can be seen as equivalent) and there is no loose "conjunctural Technosmithing." Instead, this ability is wielded in well-established formulaic ways that function largely like Aspects. Although new formulas are sometimes developed, the three most widespread are Jury Rig, Remembrance and Ignite (detailed on the next page).

Each formula has its own Thresholds and requirements, but there are general Skill roll modifiers that apply to all of them. These relate to the condition of the object being worked upon and are listed in the table below. The formulaic forms of Technosmithing also make it somewhat less dangerous: Equilibrium cannot be lost through its use. Some formulas can have dangerous side-effects, however.

MODIFIERS TO TECHNOSMITHING ROLLS

Device Condition	Modifier
Device only lacks power	+2
Device only needs some electronic work	+1
Device needs major repairs	0
Device is a complete wreck	-1
Device Complexity/Size	Modifier*
Simple/small device (watch, etc.)	+1
Average device (pistol, simple engine, etc.)	+/-0
Complex/large device (computer, projector)	-1
Huge device (car, etc.)	-2

* These refer to the desired end-product

JURY RIG (CRE. THRESHOLD 5)

Jury Rig is probably the most widely used formula of Technosmithing. It allows the Keeper to repair a ruined device or create new devices from the millions of spare parts littered about Vimary. Technosmithing attempts take a minimum of three hours, although Keepers can take extra time to improve their odds of success. Jury Rig rolls are modified by Device Size/Complexity modifiers (see table above), and by special modifiers based on what the device is built from (see table, below).

The Margin of Success determines how long the object will remain in good working order before collapsing again (use standard Synthesis MoS duration equivalencies; see p. 165). A MoS of 4 or more means the object remains permanently in working condition (unless damaged externally). An object that is Jury Rugged and which then collapses can be more easily Jury Rugged. As a result, Keepers often repeat the process until they get the design "just right" (MoS 4+).

A Fumbled Jury Rig roll utterly destroys the object, making it impossible to repair.

JURY RIG ROLL MODIFIERS

Starting Material (choose one)	Modifier
Object is built from parts	-3
Object needs major repair (corroded heap)	-2
Object needs electronic repairs (fused circuits, etc.)	-1
Object needs mechanical repair (bent parts, rusted gears, etc.)	0
Object needs only minor repairs (blown fuses, etc.)	+1
Other Conditions	Modifier
No access to plentiful spare parts	-1
Additional step (6 hours/day/week/month) spent working	+1/step (max. +4)
Access to ancient schematics	+1
Previous successful Jury Rig attempt	+1/attempt

REMEMBRANCE (KNO, THRESHOLD 4)

Remembrance is knowledge of the past. Not knowledge gleaned from old texts, but an instinctual understanding of how things work. To a tribesperson, a broken TV set is a box, maybe used to store tools or even a lantern, but a Keeper immediately understands what it was, and what its potential is. The MoS indicates how detailed the understanding is. Remembrance also allows Keepers to gauge how salvageable an object can be. If the MoS is 3 or greater, Remembrance also grants a one-time +1 bonus to Jury Rig or Ignite efforts on that object.

IGNITE (WIL. THRESHOLD 6)

Ignite is used to fuel objects of the past without the need for electricity, gasoline or any other power source. Keepers generally prefer to use actual fuel supplies, because Ignite can be unreliable and never lasts terribly long (use standard Synthesis MoS duration equivalencies; see p. 165). Ignite works best with small objects, even if complex. Those lighter than a kilogram give a +1 bonus to the die roll.

Note that Ignite actually does more than provide power, it can temporarily bring to life devices that are in a state of disrepair. The Device Condition Modifiers listed in the Modifiers to Technosmithing Rolls table above apply.

A Fumbled Ignite roll is very dangerous. The object explodes, causing 45 points of damage (20 if the object weighs less than a kilogram).



SYSTEMS

In most **Tribe 8** cycles, the Z'bri will be recurring antagonists for the Player Circle, whether openly or by operating in the background. Hence, it is important that you as Weaver know how to integrate the Z'bri into your cycle, both thematically and in terms of mechanics and systems. This chapter serves as a guideline on how to translate the Z'bri into the game's mechanics, and offers suggestions and brief explanations of their powers. Remember, no stats or powers will ever convey the Z'bri better than an imaginative description, so don't let the numbers control you — they are there only to help and speed up play.



ATTRIBUTES

Like tribal characters, the Z'bri are described by the same ten basic Attributes. There are, however, certain key differences reflecting their inhuman and spiritual natures. The first of these is that the Z'bri are in essence creatures of spirit, hence their physical Attributes represent their earthly manifestations and can change from one encounter to another. The Attributes of Creativity, Influence, Knowledge, Psyche and Willpower essentially form the core of a Z'bri character. What follows is a brief description of each Attribute and their implications for the Z'bri.

AGILITY

Like the human equivalent, Agility reflects the Z'bri's coordination and reflexes. Given their ability to alter their physical form (extra limbs etc.) Z'bri tend to have above average Agility scores.

APPEARANCE

Not so much a reflection of a Z'bri's physical beauty (by human standards, most tend to be hideous) but their captivating effects on onlookers. The higher the score, the more alluring the Z'bri becomes to others, tribal or Z'bri (both out of desire and morbid fascination).

BUILD

A Z'bri's Build rating gauges its current physical size and mass. It varies wildly from one Z'bri to another, but they almost always have a fixed value. In the case of Z'bri Lords, that Attribute may fluctuate whimsically.

CREATIVITY

In addition to the traditional definition, Creativity in Z'bris also describes how passionate and cruel it can be.

FITNESS

Like Build, Fitness mirrors the Z'bri's current physical husk's endurance and resistance. It also varies periodically in the case of Z'bri Lords.

INFLUENCE

Z'bri Influence measures what effects its presence has before others, not in terms of charisma or wit, but rather in its sheer otherness and fearsome aspect. Some Z'bri are so disturbing that their mere presence is enough to sway those around them.

KNOWLEDGE/INSTINCT

As creatures of passions and spirit, not all Z'bri possess the Attribute of Knowledge. Some (mostly Chained) are driven by baser needs manifested by Instinct (see *Creatures*, p. 156). Knowledge is the Z'bri's intellect, like its human counterpart.

PERCEPTION

Perception possessed by Z'bri also extends into the unseen realm of dream, allowing them to see in conditions others would have trouble by detecting subtle currents in the River of Dream.

PSYCHE

Much like the tribal Attribute of Psyche, it measures the Z'bri's association to the River of Dream and their general disposition. To reflect the opposing nature between human and Z'bri, both Psyche ratings are treated (thematically) as inverse for purpose of comparison. The tribes would perceive a Z'bri with PSY +2 as twisted, not enlightened.

WILLPOWER

The core of a Z'bri, Willpower is the fount from which they all draw their power. Without Willpower, the Z'bri could not exist in the earthly prison they now find themselves in.

SECONDARY TRAITS

Z'bri Secondary Traits (Strength, Health, Stamina, Unarmed and Armed Damage) are treated in the same manner as tribal characters.

WORKING WITH NUMBERS

When creating Z'bri antagonists, from lowly Chained to mighty Lords, it is best not to limit yourself to Character and Skill Points. Instead, let your imagination guide you. You want an ephemeral Sangis lord, give him what Attributes and Skills you think would reflect him. Later, if you really feel it is necessary, you can calculate points only to gauge how powerful it is. It stands to reason that a main antagonist would be more potent than a Vassal attendant.

Never reduce your Z'bri into a collection of numbers. Use their Attributes and Skills as benchmarks, there only to give a rough estimate of what they are capable of, not a limit on what they can do.

GUIDELINES FOR GAME STATISTICS

The following examples of Z'bri are included so you can use them as inspirations or as on-the-fly antagonists for your cycle.

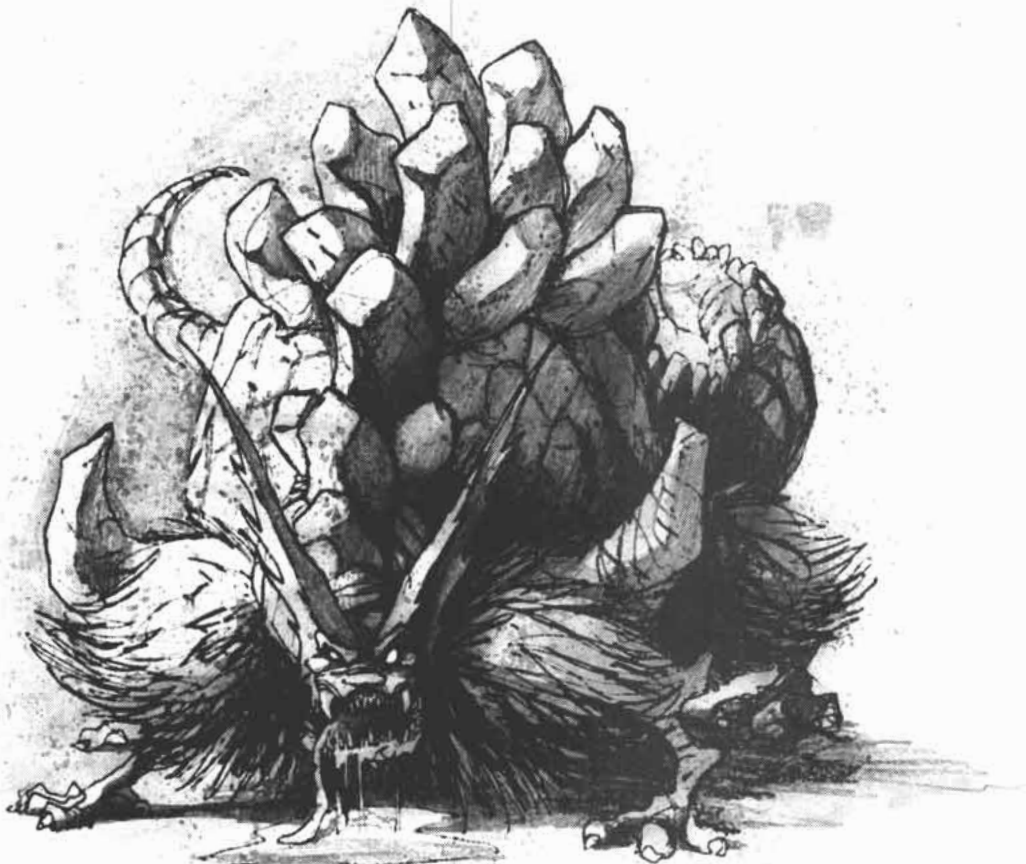
GEK'ROH (CHAINED Z'BRI)

The Chained are Z'bri criminals who have been locked into an animal form and whose minds have been stunted as punishment. They generally serve as beasts of burden and war among the Lords and Iv'chet, but many have escaped and roam the wilds in deadly packs. They look like large, terribly transformed animals — sometimes with some humanoid characteristics (vestigial fingers, a vaguely human posture, etc.). Most have animalistic minds and are concerned with survival and hunting, but some have maintained their self-awareness and are terrifying creatures indeed.

Attributes: Most have INS (from +1 to +3) instead of most mental Attributes. Physical Attributes tend to be high, even for the animal they are chained to (+1 to +4, BLD can be even higher).

Skills: Those with INS have only animal Skills (Hand-to-Hand, Dodge, Notice, etc.) usually at Level 2 or 3. Those who have maintained self-awareness have other Skills, such as Lore or Speak.

Equipment/Abilities: Few Chained have equipment, but most have claws, maws or tusks for attack (UD +8 to UD +15 damage) and a toughened hide (AR 5 to 15).



IV'CHET (VASSALS)

Iv'chet are the average Z'bri. They serve as vassals to lords, as soldiers, courtesans and plenty of other functions. They are powerful, but their spirits are permanently bonded to one physical form. This once-human body is generally horribly mutated by the Z'bri essence. They can be transferred into another body by a Lord during a long ritual, however. Iv'chet vary quite widely in abilities based on House, occupation and inclination. Flemis Iv'chet are bloated and huge, with few individualistic features, while Koleris have constantly changing forms because their skin literally crawls with spines and other marks. Sangis have emaciated, artistically modified bodies, while Melanis are draped in black robes that hide twisted forms.

Attributes: WIL tends to be from +1 to +3. Other Attributes depend on function — warriors will have physical Attributes from +1 to +3, courtesans will have similar INF or APP, scholars will have high KNO and PSY.

Skills: Skills reflect function and profession. Most have their main Skills at Level 3 and others at Levels 1 or 2.

Equipment/Abilities: Most have Sundering 1 or 2 and know one (or sometimes both) of their House's Aspects. Warriors usually have a tough hide (AR 5 to 10) and could have claws (damage UD + 8). Chained pets are also possible.



LORDS

Z'bri Lords are the most powerful of the Beasts. The lowest in status hold lands among the Serf territories, while the highest lead their Houses from the Ziggurat. They are actually free spirits, able to survive for many hours without a physical form. They easily take over human bodies and most maintain whole "wardrobes" of human Serfs prepared for this function. The most potent Lords are said to hold their own against Fatimas.

Attributes: WIL tends to be +3 or more. Other mental Attributes are often +2 or more. Physical Attributes reflect the current body (if specialized for one function, it may have +3 or more).

Skills: Most Lords have a wide variety of Skills at high levels. A few Skills at Level 4 are possible, with many others at level 2 or 3.

Equipment/Abilities: Most have Sundering at level 3 or 4, know both their House's Aspects and at least one more. They may have tough hides or living armor (AR +15), be attended by Iv'chet, serfs and Chained, and carry terrifying living weapons.

SERFS

Once humans, now bonded to the Z'bri out of worship and fear, Serfs are human only in the vaguest of terms.

Attributes: Few have above average Attributes. WIL is often -1.

Skills: Agricultural Skills are common, usually at level 1 or 2. Few combat Skills. Most have Lore (Z'bri) at level 1 or 2.

Equipment/Abilities: Few have anything special, save for "religious" artifacts praising their Z'bri masters.



SUNDERING

Sundering is the antithesis of Synthesis. Whereas Synthesis opens the dreamer to the River of Dream, Sundering accesses the primordial Seed, nature red in tooth and claw. It is doubtful that the Z'bri knew Sundering before the Opening, but most, having crossed over, forgot the Old Arts and gave into Sundering. To the Z'bri, Sundering brings intense pleasure; each time they extend their perceptions into the realm of the Seed is akin to an intense sensual experience. Before the Closing, Sundering was not as much a power, but a state — the opposite of their ephemeral and fleeting natures. After the Closing, trapped beyond their homelands of Spirit, Sundering became tainted — corrupted — the pleasure derived from it lessened, forcing the Z'bri to discover new and more visceral applications for it. Sundering stopped being an escape, and became a painful reminder of what they lost.

Sundering is the personification of the Z'bri's rage, twisting their inherent potential into a dark and heinous power. Sundering radiates an aura, tainting and affecting all near it — the ultimate manifestation of fear, anger, hatred and death made physical.

THE SUNDERING SYSTEM

Sundering works in much the same manner as Synthesis, although its abilities are more straightforward. Z'bri are the primary antagonists in **Tribe 8**, so Weaver's will want to be able to use their abilities easily. Feel free to alter their abilities' side effects to create an atmosphere, however. To the Player Circle, Sundering should be a mystery and remain unknown, an element of terror in your games.

Sundering has two main manifestations: **Atmosphere** and **Aspects**. Atmosphere is a subconscious use of Sundering that affects those within the Z'bri's close proximity and reflects the Z'bri House affiliation. It is intended as a quick and simple way to evoke the horrific face of the Beasts. Aspects function just like tribal Aspects (see *Fatimal Aspects*, p. 166), although these are more akin to arts learned by the Z'bri than gifts from godheads. Each House specializes in two Aspects, but powerful Z'bri can and do learn Aspects affiliated with Houses other than their own.

Z'bri using Aspects can lose Equilibrium just like humans wielding Synthesis (see *Equilibrium*, p. 166) when they Fumble a Sundering roll or get a Margin of Failure of 5 or more. Z'bri use WIL rather than PSY for their Equilibrium table. The game results are mostly the same, but lost Equilibrium means for Z'bri that they become too attached to physical delights. *Intoxication* indicates that the Z'bri gets drunk on the pleasures of the flesh, thus reducing its concentration. *Overload* means the Z'bri is overwhelmed with physical sensations and can do little but writhe in masochistic pleasure. *Chaining* indicates that the Z'bri involuntarily locks itself into its physical form and loses track of its own personality; until released using the Aspect of Chaining, it behaves like a bestial Chained with an INS equal to the average of CRE and KNO.

LOST EQUILIBRIUM (Z'BRI)

WIL Roll	Result
0	Chaining (special)
1	Major overload; incapacitated for 1d6 days
2	Minor overload; incapacitated for 1d6 hours
3	Great intoxication; -2 action penalty (1d6 hours)
4	Major intoxication; -1 action penalty (2d6 rounds)
5	Minor intoxication; -1 action penalty (1d6 rounds)
6+	Mild intoxication; action fails

SUNDERING MODIFIERS

Sundering Aspects use set Thresholds, ranges and invocation times, so do not use the various modifiers associated with Conjunctural Synthesis or Fatimal Aspects. Z'bri can increase their effectiveness when tapping into Sundering, however, by using strong sensations of pain, pleasure and fear — either in hapless victims or in themselves.

Under normal circumstances, Z'bri use mild forms of these sensations to tap into the Seed, such as cutting or fondling their own flesh (not enough to cause a Wound) or relying on the anxiety they cause among observers. If a Z'bri is somehow derived of these possibilities, its Sundering rolls suffer a -2 modifier. More extreme use of these sensations can garner real bonuses (see table, below) although not without risks.

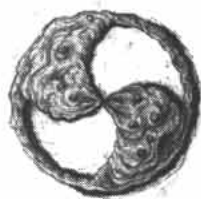
Z'bri subjecting themselves to extreme forms of pain or pleasure risk becoming lost in the sensation. They must pass a WIL test with a Threshold of 4 in order to act (this does not count as an action). Those who rely on fear in others may be lost when faced with staunch opponents. Humans can suppress their fear by passing an opposed test of their WIL against the Z'bri's INF. Weavers should use this option only for PCs and major NPCs.

The need for sensations leads many Z'bri to travel with Serfs, whom they torture or titillate (or both) to tap into Sundering.

SUNDERING MODIFIERS

Pain	Modifier
The Z'bri is inflicting pain on someone	+1/Deep Wound
The Z'bri is subjecting itself to pain*	+2/Flesh Wound
Pleasure	Modifier
The Z'bri is subjecting another to extreme pleasure	+1
The Z'bri is experiencing throes of pleasure*	+2
Fear	Modifier
The Z'bri is causing fear in a few observers (1-5)	+1
The Z'bri is causing fear in a crowd (6+)	+2
The Z'bri is experiencing fear itself	+2
Other	Modifier
Mild forms of pain/pleasure/fear	+/- 0
No sensations	-2

*The Z'bri must pass a WIL test vs. a Threshold of 4 to act at all.



THE FLEMIS

The faceless Flemis follow a series of intricate and highly ritualized ceremonies that celebrate their hive-like mentality which frowns upon Individualism — and their use of Sundering reflects this. They can send out distress signals immediately to call out any nearby Flemis. Most Flemis prefer to communicate telepathically. They are among the few who still remember the Ancient Z' bri "languages."

ATMOSPHERE

In the presence of the Flemis, one is almost overtaken by their insect-like existence, where the individual becomes lost in the masses — a cog in the machine. Those encountering the Flemis have described their eerie ability to drain the will of those nearby, even to the extent of suppressing their self-preservation instinct. Anyone attempting to act against a Flemis must first roll an opposed WIL test against it. The MoF becomes a negative action modifier to that action — the character is frozen in place by the hypnotic presence of the Flemis. Once the character passes the WIL test, however, she may act normally for the duration of the scene.



THE ONE THOUGHT (INF, OPPOSED BY WIL, MINIMUM THRESHOLD 6)

The One Thought stems from the Flemis' ability to communicate telepathically. To the Flemis, the minds of others are like islands in the River of Dream, islands that can alter and affect the currents around them. Not only can they communicate with the target, but they can envelop and torment them, plundering their victims' minds in an experience best described as mental rape. To use the One Thought, the Flemis rolls an opposed test against the target's WIL (modified by any penalty from failed WIL rolls). If the roll succeeds, the Flemis can either cause the victim to collapse, wracked by horrific images and sensations (DM x13), or sever the target's connection to the River of Dream for MoS turns. While severed from the River of Dream, the victim cannot wield Synthesis and remains in a perpetual daze (-1 to all actions). The One Thought can affect any one person in line of sight.

ASSIMILATION (CRE, VARIABLE THRESHOLD)

The Flemis believe in a merging of individuals into a communal whole, and this manifests itself in their bodies as well. Flemis bodies lose signs of individuality and become plastic, almost liquid. Assimilation allows a Flemis to absorb biological material into its own form, replacing limbs that have melted away and adding bulk. Flemis often use this to become huge and to create many legs to support their weight. Assimilation usually requires half an hour of concentration and touching the object. The Threshold depends on the desired effect. The benefits are slowly erased by the tendency of Flemis flesh to degrade — they last for MoS months. Thresholds are increased by 1 if Assimilation is used to incorporate a creature into another Flemis.

Assimilation can also be used in combat, making the Flemis' touch very painful. In this case, an attack takes a single action, is opposed by AGI (minimum Threshold 4) and causes x10 damage, but has no permanent effects except for injuries.

ASSIMILATION EFFECTS

Threshold	Effect
5	Added bulk (BLD +1)
6	Added function (new limbs, tougher hide granting AR +5, etc.)
8	Increased capabilities (augmented senses from an animal, etc.)

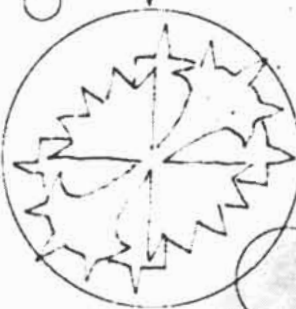


THE KOLERIS

The incarnation of rage and anger, the fury of the Z'bri, Koleris are violent and aggressive. Bursting boils and countless wounds cover their bodies, illustrating their temperament and their love for fighting. Of all the Z'bri Houses, the Koleris have the most burning hatred for the tribes and delight in causing them as much agony as possible.

ATMOSPHERE

The Koleris exude anger and rage to a point where it becomes infectious. In the presence of a Koleris, restraint and serenity are impossible, and even the slightest insult is enough to warrant a bloodbath. When a character first comes into contact with a Koleris, she must roll PSY against a Threshold of 4 or give into rage. If the roll fails, then the character will automatically act out on impulse and any non-violent action incurs a -1 penalty. If the roll fumbles, the character is overtaken and immediately attacks the closest target with savage fury.

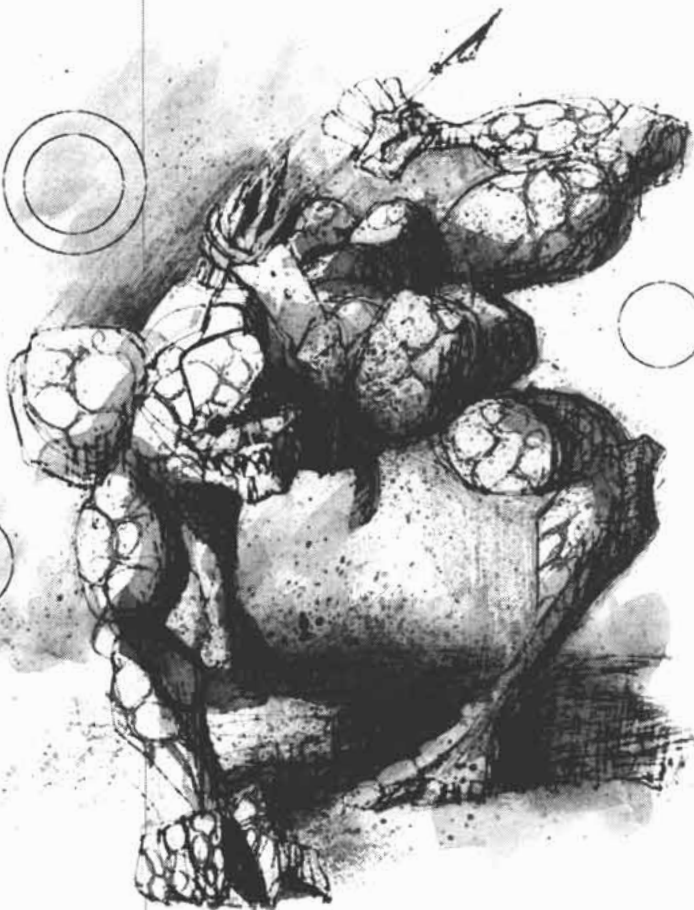


THE SHATTERING (STR, MIN. THRESHOLD 5)

With this Aspect, the Z'bri can shatter or brake any object by merely touching it. If used against inanimate objects, they splinter or crack as if subjected to some great force. Against living targets (using an opposed roll with the target's BLD), bones shatter and internal organs burst. The Shattering does x25 damage.

EXSANGUINATION (WIL, OPPOSED BY FIT, MINIMUM THRESHOLD 5)

By concentrating (1 round) the Z'bri can violently purge the target's internal fluids (blood, excrement, urine, mucus, etc.) in a painful and bloody torrent. Exsanguination can affect any one target within line of sight and does x13 damage.





THE MELANIS

Fascinated by knowledge, the brooding Melanis are secretive and enigmatic. They spend their time dissecting flesh in an attempt to uncover its power, and relish in the pain they cause at the same time.

ATMOSPHERE

Knowledge and memories are the staples of the Melanis, and some still use the Old Arts to reap knowledge from the minds of others. For every encounter with a Melanis, the player must roll KNO against a Threshold of 3. If the roll fails, the character loses one memory or piece of information per MoF. These memories are lost for a few days, or completely lost if the roll fumbles. The lost memories are at the Weaver's discretion. As a rule of thumb, the higher the MoF, the older and more precious the memory.



CHAINING

(WIL. THRESHOLD 6)

This Aspect is the reason most other Z'bri distrust the Melanis, for it is used to fuse a Z'bri to any object as punishment. The process — which is painful for a Z'bri and deadly for a human — makes the target insane, stripping it of most memories and thoughts. It is rumored that the Melanis actually steal these memories, but no one is sure of just what happens during Chaining. The whole process takes as many hours as the target's BLD minus the roll's MoS. If applied to a human, Chaining does x15 damage. A Z'bri must touch the target to Chain it.

Melanis can also use Chaining to graft objects to themselves. The process is not only painful but also mentally damaging. If the Melanis fails a PSY roll (Threshold 3), it is driven mad by the experience.

ANIMATION

(CRE. THRESHOLD 5)

Animation allows the Melanis to create tools and artifacts from biological material. Living books, breathing walls, doors that open by themselves are only a few of the effects possible. Animation can also be used on living targets, thereby controlling their limbs and actions. To do so the Melanis must roll an opposed action test against the target's BLD; the MoS equals the number of turns the target's limb is in the Melanis' control. A Z'bri must touch an object to Animate it.



THE SANGIS

Ephemeral and entrancing, the Sangis retain some of the sublime essence that the Z'bri possessed before the Closing. Impossibly beautiful, the Sangis are likewise impossibly cruel, feasting on the torment and pain of humanity like some sweet nectar.

ATMOSPHERE

The Sangis symbolize all that is perverse and taboo to humankind. Their shapes, while alluring, are travesties of nature. Around the Sangis, one cannot help feeling attracted to all that is perverse and forbidden. The seed of corruption lies within all, most of the time deeply buried, but no taboo is safe from the Sangis. Those in the presence of the Sangis must roll PSY against a Threshold of 3. If the roll succeeds then the player is unaffected. If the roll fails, the character must choose one desire that she must fulfill within the next day. The bigger the MoF, the more perverse and twisted the desire must be. If the desire is not sated after the first day, the victim suffers a -1 action penalty that will not go away until the desire is satisfied. This penalty is cumulative with other penalties acquired as a result of this Atmosphere.



APPEASEMENT

(CRE. THRESHOLD 4)

Appeasement allows the Z'bri to alter its appearance (or that of a target) by changing its bone structure and flesh as if it were clay. Most Sangis use this Aspect to mold their physical bodies into their emaciated forms that are both beautiful and repulsive. If used on another target, the Sangis can twist their limbs, erase eyes or even the target's whole face. If used in a violent manner, the roll is opposed by the target's WIL (minimum Threshold 4) and the damage multiplier is x9, plus whatever the effects of the mutation. A Z'bri must touch flesh in order to Appease it.

SOUL STEALING (INF, OPPOSED BY WIL, MINIMUM THRESHOLD 6)

Soul Stealing allows a Sangis to control a human body like a puppet. If done quickly (in combat, for instance), the Aspect requires only one action (locking gazes), can affect any one target in line of sight and the control lasts for MoS actions. Longer control is possible by enacting an hour-long ritual and touching the target; control will then last for MoS hours. The victim remains aware but powerless, carrying out orders from her bestial master. If the victim is ordered to endanger herself directly (jumping into a fire, etc.) she may make a WIL roll against a Threshold of 5 to break free. Sangis may control several victims simultaneously.



THE WEAVER'S ART

At its base, the Weaver's role is to tell a good story. This is simultaneously a joy, a duty and a challenge. A joy, because telling a good tale and acting out vibrant characters is loads of fun; a duty because if the Weaver doesn't give the Players something interesting to do, they will rapidly tire of a game; a challenge because telling a captivating tale can seem daunting at first glance. The best way to learn how to tell a good story in **Tribe 8** is experience. Each Weaver has her own way to convey excitement and direct the development of a story arc, and no text can cover all the tricks and steps they use. Our best advice is to give it a try and to watch other Weavers at work (be they telling **Tribe 8** stories or running other roleplaying games). See what works for them and what works for you, and stick with those techniques. Nevertheless, there is some advice that can be useful to all **Tribe 8** Weavers, regardless of their experience level.

SOME BASIC ADVICE

Running a story during a play session can be both rewarding and nerve-wracking, especially if you haven't done it before. While nothing replaces actual experience, there are some basic tips that you should keep in mind when weaving a tale with your Player Circle. Although not foolproof, these steps will help you avoid many of the worst pitfalls until you get comfortable as Weaver.

BE PREPARED

Try not to go into a session blind. Stories always work better when the Weaver knows where she is going and has a variety of resources to call on to help tell the tale. The degree of preparation you need depends very much on your own tastes, but at the very least you should know what basic events you foresee for the quest and have sketched out the most prominent Non-Player Characters you will be using. You can go to the extent of writing a full scene-by-scene breakdown of the story, do complete game statistics and backgrounds for NPCs, draw maps of locations and prepare a variety of handouts for the Players. This is a great deal of work, however, and is often not entirely necessary. At the other extreme, you could simply make a few mental notes about what you want to do, but that requires significant skills at improvisation.

A good middle ground involves putting down on paper (or on disk) a few pages of notes that you can easily refer to during play. These notes can include a brief synopsis of the quest along with a few possible outcomes, notes on some prominent NPCs (along with a few relevant game statistics) including both potential allies and antagonists, and some notes and rough maps of locations the Player Characters might visit. It's also a good idea to plan out a few contingencies that you can use if things go off track — these can include other antagonists, hooks for other plots, or new locations. These can be kept for other quests as well, when they might become useful.

BE FLEXIBLE

Player Characters are notorious for doing things the Weaver had never anticipated (they try to befriend the Chained monstrosity, for example) and you need to be open and receptive to these unusual ideas. If the Player Circle decides to take an unexpected route, do not react by forcing them back onto the path you had planned out. If necessary, take a moment to consider the implications of their actions and go along with it. This doesn't mean you should immediately abandon your story, however. You can slowly guide them back toward its key points, but you may need to adjust their order or specifics. You can use the contingencies you planned out (as suggested above) to help you do this.

The Player Characters simply not answering the call to adventure that begins a quest (see *Call to Adventure*, p. 186) is a particularly vexing possibility. If this happens, don't panic. Consider the results and see if there is a way to have the call repeated as events occur in the background. If, for example, the Player Circle refuses to answer a call for help from an Evan elder who has remained sympathetic to them but is facing internal enemies, she may end up banished because they would not interfere. She may then show up at their home because she has no other place to go. Another possibility is to confront the characters with the dire consequences of their actions. In the above example, the Evan may have been killed by her enemies — conceivably, her daughter could blame the PCs for not having helped their friend in need and try to exact vengeance. Either way, you should remember why they didn't answer the call and plan further quests accordingly.

BE DESCRIPTIVE

As the Weaver, you are the Player Circle's only window on the world of **Tribe 8**. You need to give them a vivid and clear image of what their characters are facing, where they are, and what they perceive. Visuals are the most obvious subject of narration and many Weavers spend a lot of time telling Players what they see, but characters in **Tribe 8** have five sense (or even more). Use sound, smell, odors, touch and taste whenever possible. As their characters enter Bazaar, tell the Players about the cacophony of human voices, the smell of sin and fruit for sale, the hot wind between the ruined skyscrapers and the hint of spice in the air.

Spirituality is commonplace in **Tribe 8** and this opens up a wide variety of other descriptive tools. Player Characters can easily have premonitions, the hair on their neck standing erect as danger approaches. They can also have visions, hear voices and experience phantom smells. In the presence of a Z'bri vassal, for example, perceptive characters might catch a faint whiff of rot, hinting at the corruption of the flesh. Emotions can also be used effectively in descriptions. Although you should leave most emotional choices up to the Players, there is nothing wrong with telling them that their heart skips a beat when a Fatima appears or that a Magdalite Concubine gets their blood boiling. Concentrate on the physical symptoms of emotions and the Players will usually happily participate in the roleplaying, as long as the emotions you assign are consistent with their characters.

BE FAIR

It's all too easy to focus a whole series of quests on a Player Character that you like more than the others, or to spend whole sessions roleplaying with a single Player with whom you get along best. There is no quicker way, however, to shatter the Player Circle than playing favorites. Roleplaying is a social activity, and the whole group should feel involved and treated fairly. As Weaver, you should ensure that all the Players have their time in the limelight and are rewarded for their efforts. Also keep in mind that all Players want to see their characters develop. For this, most will want to get Experience Points (XPs) to get new Skills, gain new contacts and resources, and participate in subplots that highlight their PCs. You should reward those who roleplay well and make an effort to participate, but do not punish the others. Rather, try to understand why they aren't getting as involved as they could — you may find that they are put off by another Player's outgoing style of play or they feel their characters are being overlooked. Do your best to draw them out and talk to them out of character to get their perspective.

KEEP FOCUSED

The world of **Tribe 8** is quite large and filled with a variety of interesting elements. It's easy for a Weaver to want to deal with them all, but this is rarely a winning solution. If you tell a story about the Keepers, and then one about the Z'bri and then one about the Yagans, and so on, you may find yourself with a series of quests that have little to do with each other and without any sense of continuity. Your cycle will not be very memorable because the Players will never know what it is about.

When you introduce a new element into your setting, make sure it serves a purpose in your overall story. That way, it will build upon other elements and not seem to come out of left field. Keeping focused also helps you keep track of all the elements in your stories — remembering dozens of unrelated antagonists and quests can be a real headache.

QUESTS: TELLING A STORY

So you have a Player Circle together and you have all made a bunch of great characters, everyone trying to build a new life as part of the prophesied Eighth Tribe. Now what? From this simple question will come endless hours of enjoyment, but great stories don't just happen, they are created. Although the long term goals of the characters will drive them, it is the small steps along this journey that will make it a memorable one. These small steps are the many quests and stories that your Player Circle will embark on. Some will place them in great danger, others will have them confronting the tribes or the Z'bri — the possibilities are endless. In the end, these quests are what will form your Players' experience of **Tribe 8**.

WHAT IS A QUEST?

The most basic type of **Tribe 8** story is a quest. At its most fundamental level, this sort of tale involves the tribal cell (or at least some of its members) going out in search of something. They face challenges and dangers in order to find the object of their desire, and (hopefully) overcome them, returning to their homes stronger and wiser for the effort. Stripped of all trappings, a quest may seem very clichéd and contrived, but almost all great stories involve some form of search or quest. The quest for the Holy Grail in Arthurian Legend and the search for the Ark of the Covenant in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* are two well-known and clear examples of heroic quests, but a medical researcher's search for a cure for cancer or a religious person's pursuit for grace are also good examples. The important factors in establishing a quest are for characters to be willing to take risks to achieve a goal, be it finding enlightenment or recovering a lost artifact.

Finally, the quest should teach the characters something about themselves. It can be argued that this knowledge is the true subject of the quest. When scripting your quests, try and tailor them for the characters involved. Don't just throw monster after monster at your Players; instead, try to make every challenge meaningful, a mirror into which the characters can look at themselves. A character who has nothing but burning hatred for the Z'bri might be forced to save one, forcing her to overcome her hate, for example.

You can think of quests as intermediary steps the cell of Fallen will take toward their ultimate goal and destiny. The Player Circle will have given you some idea of where they want to go in the long term — quests are the steps they have to take to get there. Not all quests have to be intimately and obviously linked to the cell's goal, but they should result in some form of evolution for the cell. They could provide new insights, allies or enemies, who in turn will affect how they go about achieving their goals.

Creating a quest for your Player Circle requires that you establish just what the object of desire will be and set out the challenges that will be needed to overcome. Also give some thought as to how the characters will get involved and what the possible ramifications of the quest will be. Following are some basic quest types to help you create your own.

Artifacts and Objects: The staple quest, it requires that the Player Circle venture into the great unknown and recover an item of value (be it monetary, mythical, etc.). Along this journey, the cell will face a number of challenges, both physical (antagonists) and mental (enigmatic puzzles) that they will have to overcome. There is more to this type of quest than beating the monster and getting the treasure. A simple quest for an object or artifact requires a symbolic backdrop. The cell is not venturing into danger for the sake of a powerful sword or gold cup, but the search will provide insights about the various parties involved.

Weaving Tribe 8

Hunting Party: A hunt or chase makes for some exciting roleplaying. Hunting a great beast is the stuff that many myths are made of (such as *Moby Dick*, tales of Saint George and the Dragon, or even modern day examples such as *Aliens*) and these have a special place in **Tribe 8**. The tribes live in a world where monsters abound and only a few are brave enough to confront these beings. Even the Fatimas are apprehensive about doing so, leaving the Player Circle to make heroes of their characters. At the same time, a hunt need not focus on a towering beast, the target could be a far more insidious evil such as a corrupted priest.

Rescue: A quest centered around a rescue motif is all about sacrifice, and no matter how successful the cell is, a feeling of loss should prevail. The cell is essentially placing itself in danger and peril for the well-being of another. While the subject of a rescue quest will normally be someone (or something) close to the characters, others could involve them rescuing an enemy or villain for the greater good. For example, a Terasheban judge who was taken by a band of Z'bri Chained might need to be rescued to clear the characters' name from a false accusation.

Search for Knowledge: **Tribe 8** is a world of mystery and uncertainty, and the only way to achieve one's destiny is to search for knowledge — to understand the subtle ebb and flow of reality. Once more there are many different levels of knowledge that might be the subject of the quest: from uncovering a Z'bri hideout or plot, to the secrets of a tribal priest, to the origins of the Fatimas. The challenges involved in a search for knowledge quest tend to be more personal; after all, the characters must prove their worth to be privy to the knowledge they'll soon possess. Finally, upon returning to their homes and sharing their newfound knowledge might place them in further danger from jealous or fearful parties.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Quests can be essentially broken up into the following archetypal series of steps, one that forms the basis of many stories, from *Blade Runner* to Homer's *Odyssey*.

- **Out of Place:** The characters somehow do not fit in at home. In **Tribe 8**, this can be due to their exiled nature, but something else should set the characters apart.
- **The Chaos Principle:** The characters become agents of change, either by venturing outside the confines of their daily lives (figuratively or literally) or by challenging the status quo. At this point, the characters may be motivated by a number of reasons (necessity, fear, greed, etc.) but ultimately accept the quest out of a sense of destiny, whether consciously or not.
- **The Ordeals:** The characters are challenged, each ordeal a test of their worth, for if their quest is successful they will be rewarded not materially (although this could be a motivation) but by entering into the realm of myth. People will see them as being more than human, and while this will frighten most, the characters are discoverers and conquerors, and their experiences will eventually lead them to their rightful place in society.

- **The Cave of Fear:** All characters will ultimately have to face their worst enemy — themselves. All great heroes have weaknesses that must be overcome, not so that they become perfect, but to understand their limitations.

- **The Return:** The characters, whether successful or not, will be changed greatly by their experiences and return home, to where it all started, with a new perspective. It is this outlook that will set them apart, and what they do with it is ultimately up to them.

CALL TO ADVENTURE

Heroes, no matter how ambitious, rarely embark on a quest without some form of external stimulus. As the Weaver, it is your job to provide this stimulus while still keeping the Players in the driver's seat of the action. The call itself can come in almost any form that carries news or the need to act. A friend or relative in trouble is a common (though often overused) call to adventure, often leading characters to great lengths to defend or rescue them. An attack by an enemy (or even rumors that such an attack is planned) can also effectively get Player Characters embarked on a quest to deal with their antagonist. Visions, the advice of a mentor, or the opinion of the community can also be used to motivate action.

You have to be careful not to take away the Players' freedom of choice, however. One of the key elements in roleplaying is that Players decide how their characters react to challenges and they will rapidly become frustrated if you force them into one choice. The best way to avoid this phenomenon (commonly called "railroading") is to tailor your calls to adventure to the Player Characters. Use their motivations and supporting cast to convey the call, and be ready to have them react in many different ways.

For example, imagine that you want to create a story in which the Player Characters venture into the Keeper tunnels to find a Joshuan artifact. From there, you should try to set out ways in which the Player Characters will want to get involved. If none of them are interested in Joshua the Ravager, then just telling them about a Joshuan artifact will be useless. If a character is interested in the Keepers, then telling her about a new access to their tunnels could start the quest. If the Keepers have been recurring antagonists in past stories, then maybe they could kidnap a friend of the characters. This would surely send them on a rescue mission during which they could find the lost artifact.

CONFLICT

Conflict is the most important prerequisite for telling an interesting story. The tribal cell needs to be challenged and to overcome dangers if it is to grow and evolve. Without conflict, the tribal cell will achieve all its goals without any effort and the Player Circle will get bored and disperse. The conflict in a story can be very obvious, such as a physical battle against a Z'bri monstrosity, or more subtle, such as divided loyalty between friends and family. These create very different stories, but are both very interesting.

In a quest, you need to think of two levels of conflict: motivating and immediate. The *motivating conflict* is the larger struggle that will inspire Player Characters to undertake a dangerous quest in the first place. Just why are the outcasts looking for a lost piece of Joshua? Usually this conflict will relate to the overall goal of the tribal cell. The *immediate conflict* is the struggle to achieve the quest itself. What roadblocks exist to stop the cell from fulfilling the quest? These obstacles can be physical opponents, such as Joanite fanatics, or more subtle problems, like a cell's own distrust of valuable allies.

Following are some of the basic conflicts in **Tribe 8** and suggestions for creating stories based around them:

Fallen vs. Fallen: The Eighth Tribe is young and growing; most of its members have only recently been exiled and as a whole they lack direction. Whatever common ground the various cells share is tenuous at best, and few see eye to eye. It is these growing pains that will forge the Eighth Tribe and they are unavoidable. Quests based on this conflict should force the characters' cell to fight for its beliefs, all the while reminding them how damaging internal struggle is to the cause.

Fallen vs. Tribes: Reenacting the classic generational conflict, the Fallen and the Seven Tribes exist in opposition. Both camps are unwilling to heed the other, and for good reason. The tribes see the Fallen as potentially dangerous, a force threatening to plunge everything into chaos, while the Eighth Tribe knows that a brighter future awaits. It is important to portray this conflict as being two-sided. The Player Circle should see the effects their characters have on the tribes, while at the same time learning how to cope with the injustices and stigma of being outcasts. Often, the worst enemies are one's family, and there is nothing more terrible than fighting with the those who raised you. Stories centered around this conflict could take many shapes, including forbidden love, betrayal and a search for understanding. The key is to make the antagonists not only believable but also understandable.

Fallen vs. Z'bri: While the tribes are the Fallen's closest and most visible foes, the Z'bri are its most dangerous. Part of accepting the mantle of the Eighth Tribe is knowing that the Z'bri will have to confronted, a factor that should never be forgotten. At the same time, the Z'bri hold the key to some of the mysteries of **Tribe 8**, a fact the Fallen fail to realize. The Z'bri epitomize everything that is evil in the world, their forms are twisted with depravity and corruption. As long as the Z'bri are around, a dark and sinister clouds hangs over the future of humanity.

Individual vs. Tribe: The Fallen are each marked by a strong sense of destiny and individuality; they are the lightbringers venturing into the darkness, but they are not alone. Their fellow outcasts share the same drive and sooner or later the two will have to collide. When is it good to stand alone, and when should one give in to the collective are questions that all Fallen should ponder. When to follow and when to lead?

ANTAGONISTS

The most memorable way in which conflict expresses itself from the Players' perspective is in the form of antagonists. The "bad guys" of a story are often the most memorable elements and you should invest some time in sketching out these important characters. Not all of them should be "bad guys" that the Player Circle will have to defeat in a bloody confrontation, however. Rather, it is best if you have varying levels of antagonists, giving your Player Characters a spectrum of opposition. Not all antagonists want to take down your characters; some will present minor obstacles while others will dog the characters even after they're dead. Minor villains include guards, Squat raiders or other Fallen who are there to make the characters sweat, but are ultimately harmless.

Generally, each cycle should have a single major antagonist, one who through her (or its) actions not only disrupts the cell's daily life, but threatens it. This antagonist should be well developed. Whereas most antagonists could be summarized by a few stats or notes, the major villain should have her own character sheet, including motivations, resources, strengths and weaknesses. If you want several major antagonists, make sure they are only a handful and that they interact — either as allies or by sweeping the Players into their disputes.

The most crucial element in creating your cycle's antagonists is to make them believable. Everybody has their motivations, reasons for being the way they are, and it is important that even villains have them. While the minor villains might be more two-dimensional, those crucial to the plot of the cycle should have believable motives, emotions and reactions, whether they're a Fatima, a Z'bri lord or a tribal priest. One way to do this is by giving them quirks and minor idiosyncrasies.

Finally, you should take care to roleplay the antagonists as best you can; the more energy you put into the performance, the more emotional impact it will have on your Players, making every encounter a memorable one. This way, when the cycle ends and the cell is victorious, they'll all feel a sense of accomplishment in this victory, and even feel a little saddened to see their antagonist defeated.

VISIONS AND DREAMS

The spiritually rich setting of **Tribe 8** gives you a very powerful storytelling tool in the form of visions and dreams. Tribal characters will be open to omens, portents, premonitions and revelations brought to them in trances and dreams. Those who use Synthesis in fact use the power of dreams on a regular basis, so they will be even more open to information and impressions conveyed in this manner. In order to use dreams and visions effectively, you should remind Players of these facts by including them in the setting. A wise mentor consulted by the Player Characters can speak of her visions and Player Characters experience such visions during ceremonies, for example. This way, when you describe a vision to a Player, she will most likely take it seriously.

Describing a dream or vision can be a great deal of fun. There are three basic ways to do so: handouts, narration, or roleplaying. With handouts, you write out a descriptive narrative of the dream or vision that the Player then reads. This has the advantage that you can hand this to the dreaming Player and she can choose what parts of it she conveys to the rest of the Circle. When doing handouts, strive to be evocative and poetic in your text — think about your own dreams and their ethereal qualities. Narration is essentially the same thing as a handout except that you describe the vision to the Player in person. You can often convey more in person than on paper, but unless you set aside time with the Player, you will have to do this with the rest of the Circle looking on. Finally, you can roleplay a dream just as you would the character's waking life, with the Player's decisions affecting events and even rolling dice whenever appropriate. This style is best used only for hyper-realistic dreams, since it tends to take away from the ethereal mood of visions. It's also possible to use a style somewhere in-between narration and roleplaying, in which you describe long scenes but leave key decisions up to the Player.

Visions and dreams have huge potential for storytelling and you should use them in whatever way works best for your stories. Following are some examples of ways to do so.

Glimpses of the Future: Predicting what the Player Circle will do is impossible, but giving hints through dreams about what may happen will help you direct things without being intrusive. Having a Player Character dream that her lover is cheating on her (a vision of the future) does not mean that he is, but it will definitely have an effect on the PC. She may not trust her lover, or question his actions, thereby shaping the story in a subtle manner. This can work for other situations as well, but not all dreams have to be true. Some could be used to mislead the character, becoming extensions of their own doubts and fears.

New Insights: Dreams are microcosms of reality; in them, everything that is remotely possible can occur. Dreams are thus an excellent tool to impart new knowledge to the dreamer, from a horrific sojourn in a Skyrealm, to dreaming of a long dead companion. No dream, however, should be clear cut, no answer readily apparent. Making the dream subjective and open to many readings will allow the Player to form his own interpretation of it, and therefore be more believable.

Messages from Beyond: Dreams can serve as a means to guide the Players if they seem to be heading in the wrong direction. Spirits can appear as guides, sending omens of warning. Characters with the Dreaming Skill (see p. 134) or Dream Travel Aspect (see p. 171) have greater control over their visions and dreams than most others. They can more fully interact with the visions they experience and can even enter the dreamscapes of others, sending them visions. You should use the guidelines on pp. 160-163 for using these abilities, but do not let them ruin the mystery and power of revelatory visions. The River of Dream is still a powerful, enigmatic and uncontrollable force that can constantly surprise.

WEAVER SECRETS: FATIMAL AGENDAS

The Seven Fatimas are mysterious, powerful and dynamic figures in Tribe 8. Tribals feel that they are in their lives on a daily basis, but only elder priestesses and a choice few others have any real idea of their specific agendas. Nevertheless, these same agendas have a direct and powerful impact across Vimary. The tribes follow their Mothers' will; the Z'bri know they must deal with the Fatimas; the Fallen try their best to either avoid or undermine the Fatimas. And in all this, the truth about Joshua, His prophecy and His death remain hidden.

As Weaver, it is important that you understand what the Fatimas are planning and what their personal outlooks are. The following section will not reveal everything about them, but it will allow you to use them in your quests and cycles in a consistent manner. As Tribe 8 develops and events change the face of Vimary, you will be able to follow the intrigues of the Seven Sisters.

THE THREE FATES

The Three Fates (Baba Yaga, Eva and Magdalen) are the oldest Fatimas and see themselves as the true Mothers of humanity. Humanity was saved from extinction by their appearance and needs their guidance if it is to survive or thrive. In some ways, the Fates are well-meaning; they honestly believe that only the Seven Fatimas can shepherd humanity and only they can lead the Seven Sisters in the long run. On the other hand, they have become so convinced of their own necessity that they see those who challenge them as foolish ingrates. The Fallen are spoiled brats, sometimes interesting or attractive, but nevertheless dangerous.

The Fates, however, are not directly concerned with immediate "political" issues. They understand that spiritual matters are of a greater concern and that the long term is more critical than the immediate. They are satisfied to allow Tera Sheba to exert overt leadership, confident they can guide her from the shadows.

BABA YAGA THE CRONE

Baba Yaga is the most powerful of the Fates and leads them with a mixture of affection and iron will. She sees all the other Fatimas as Her children to some extent or another, and believes that they should listen to Her in all things. Her plans, for the time being, coincide with Tera Sheba's governance of the Seven Tribes. Difficult decisions have to be made to strengthen humanity before it is tested anew and the Wise Fatima is just the stern Judge to do it. The Crone is concerned, however, that Tera Sheba will go too far and try to grab real and lasting power, so She is very interested in gathering secrets against the Pillars. She is willing to work with Fallen to gain these secrets.

EVA THE MOTHER

Eva is the Fatima closest to nature and Her concerns are often focused on the whole of reality rather than simply humanity. Her priority for the time being is to give humanity and nature in Vimary time to heal. She sees the Z'bri lands as a blight of sorts, but understands that the Beasts themselves are afflicted by problems of their own. She sees Tera Sheba's rule as a necessary evil, but responds by shepherding Evan communities away from Sheban eyes — such as Griffentowne. The Fallen are dangerous because they are unpredictable, but they are not inherently evil in Eva's eyes.

MAGDALEN THE LOVER

Magdalen is the most political of the Fates. Her diplomats and spies traffic in many of the secrets of the Seven Tribes, and She maintains Her hand on the pulse of the nation. It is thanks to Her that the Fates have maintained their position in the face of Tera Sheba's rise to power. Magdalen is very concerned that Her two sisters' long term views will cost them dearly. She sees Tera Sheba becoming increasingly power mad, and fears that Dahlia and Agnes have dangerous agendas the Fates are ignoring. Magdalen's greatest hope is Joan, whom She knows to have differences with Tera Sheba. She hopes to bring the Warrior out of Her shell, but may not be ready to deal with the consequences.

In the midst of all this, Magdalen knows the Z'bri are still a threat and wants them eliminated. The Fallen are dangerous, but could be real allies.

THE PILLARS

The Pillars of the Nation are the overt leaders of the Seven Tribes and, from a Fallen perspective, the most immediate antagonists among the Fatimas. They are above all concerned with order and power, and have the most extreme views of all the Fatimas. Tera Sheba and Joan, however, are very different avatars, and have very different views on the world.

TERA SHEBA THE WISE

Tera Sheba is currently the most powerful of the Fatimas. She and Her tribe essentially direct the Seven Tribes, and Her power seems to be growing daily. The Wise sees that hard decisions need to be made and is the only one unafraid to make them. She sees the other Fatimas as either weak or dangerous, and knows Her iron will is needed to keep the tribes together and strong. She firmly believes in the status quo and is ready to kill for it. Her current agenda is to eliminate the Fallen heresy. She sees these outcasts as dangerous and vile, and is trying to gather enough support among Her sisters to hunt them down. The Dancers — who support the Fallen — are rapidly becoming Tera Sheba's most hated sisters.

JOAN THE WARRIOR

Joan is a complex figure. Embodying duty and honor, She carries around a growing amount of guilt over the acts She has carried out in Tera Sheba's name. Every Fallen banished or criminal executed adds to the blood on Her hands. For a full generation, She has barely spoken and been unable to do anything save serve as Tera Sheba's tool. Magdalen has played on Her doubts, encouraging Her to stand up to Tera Sheba. As it stands, Joan is unable to break away from the Fatima She recognizes as the leader of the Sisters. A few Templars, however, have felt Joan's doubts and made some secret contacts with the Fallen; unfortunately, others in the tribe see this as treason and are carrying out a secret inquisition.

THE DANCERS

Agnes and Dahlia are the outsiders of the Seven Sisters, distrusted because they often do not concern themselves with the guidance of the nation. They have some allies among the Fates, but Tera Sheba dislikes them intensely. The Dancers are far from fools, however. Both see the guidance of humanity as very important — it is after all the Fatimas' function — but they eschew political issues. They are the most open to the Fallen, but like all Fatimas, they have great difficulty believing humans can live without them.

DAHLIA THE TRICKSTER

Dahlia is an element of chaos and change, always seeking to enlighten through show and trickery. Most of the other Fatimas distrust Her and with reason; She always has a plan up Her sleeves. In recent years, She has become supportive of the Fallen and this has many tribals worried. Dahlia has real affection for the outcasts, whom She sees leading humanity further than Her sisters can. But they are too prideful, She thinks, and need to be taught a few lessons. She has agents in place within Hom and is readying to test them strongly. She is less concerned with Tera Sheba than others might think — Terasheban linear thinking is not a threat to Her.

AGNES THE CHILD

Agnes is constantly underestimated by Her Sisters. She was not around during the camps and this marks Her as unimportant as far as many are concerned. She is also surrounded by the aura of Mary's death, something the Fatimas do not necessarily understand and fear. Agnes, however, is no fool. She wants the place that is Her right and, in Her childlike innocence, is afraid of nothing. She currently fancies the Fallen, who seem full of energy and life, and the Keepers, who have such wonderful toys. Her anger at being marginalized is growing, however, and She may well take Her toys and go away. She also very much wants to know just what happened to Mary and has started asking questions about Her and Joshua that the other Fatimas do not want answered.

ANIMALS & CREATURES



WAR HORSE

Bred exclusively by the Joanites for their mounted warriors, the war horse is a towering and intimidating animal. Each rider trains since childhood with one horse and a close bond develops between the two, reinforced through Synthesis. It is not uncommon for either horse or rider to enter a berserk rage when the other is killed. Combined, they make a dangerous foe.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+1	BLD	+7	FIT	+1	INS	+2	PER	+1
WIL	+1	STR	+4	HEA	+1	STA	65	UD	14*

* + natural weapons

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Athletics	2	1	Combat Sense	2	1	Dodge	2	1
Hand-to-Hand	2	1						

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stomp (x10 damage), Kick (x12 damage), Leather Armor (+10)

BEASTS OF BURDEN

Beasts of burden include horses, mules or oxen. They are used for hard labor such as plowing, pulling carts or powering mills, or to produce food. Even though the tribes have domesticated animals for years, the excesses of the Z'bri and the ravages of the End seriously depleted their numbers. Where once they were protected by fences and farmers, many found themselves at the mercy of their natural predators after society collapsed. Owning a beast of burden has become a small mark of prestige.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	0	BLD	8	FIT	+1	INS	+1	PER	0
WIL	0	STR	4	HEA	+1	STA	70	UD	13*

* + natural weapons

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	1	0						

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Kick (x9 damage)



WOLF/DOG

Inhabiting areas of the Great Hill and Duskfall, the wolf is one of the most numerous natural predators known to the tribes. Dogs, cousins to the wolves, are still popular work animals and pets in Vimary. Toughened by hard living, they have similar statistics to wild wolves (numbers after the slash). The Rust Wastes are home to the Rust Wolf, a smaller reddish black wolf that nests not below ground but in the substructures of abandoned factories. Its howl is a portent of bad news.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+2	BLD	0/-3	FIT	+2	INS	+2	PER	+2
WIL	+1/0	STR	+1/0	HEA	+2/+1	STA	35/15	UD	4/1*

* + natural weapons

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	2	3	Dodge	2	2	Hand-to-Hand	3/2	2
Notice (tracking)	2	2	Sneak	2/1	2			

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bite (x8 damage), Claws (x7 damage)

GRAY BEAR

Reclusive and solitary, bears are the silent lords of the forests of Vimary. They often wander the western sections of the island, but also roam the ruins of Bazaar. A new breed, the smaller gray bear is well fitted to exist in the narrow ruins where it makes its home. Its pelt is coveted by merchants for its color and warmth.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+1	BLD	+8	FIT	+2	INS	+2	PER	+2
WIL	+1	STR	+5	HEA	+2	STA	75	UD	15*

* + natural weapons

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	2	2	Dodge	2	1	Hand-to-Hand	2	1
Notice (tracking)	1	2						

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bite (x6 damage), Bear Hug (x15), Claws (x9)





SKULLERS

Skullers are animals such as wolves or bears transformed into skinless monstrosities, but no one knows for sure why they exist. Most skullers begin as normal specimens of their species, but their flesh slowly begins to dissolve, driving the animal insane in the process. Skullers make their lairs in damp, dank places characterized by the rotting remains of their prey. Their scavenging ways and continually rotting husks also mean that skullers are transmitters of diseases and plagues.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+2	BLD	-3	FIT	+3	INS	0	PER	+2
WIL	0	STR	0	HEA	+1	STA	15	UD	2

* + natural weapons

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	2	2	Dodge	2	2	Hand-to-Hand	2	2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bite (x6 damage), Infectious Toxin (2 hour onset, potency 12)

GREAT RAVEN

The great raven is a regal bird with a wingspan of over 2 meters. It is a scavenger, stripping a carcass clean to the bone. The Yagans use the great ravens during death ceremonies, when the deceased is laid out on a slab high above Vimary, surrounded with offering and gifts to the ravens. It is said that whenever a great raven caws, it is a portent of a coming death.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+1	BLD	-2	FIT	0	INS	0	PER	+3
WIL	0	STR	-1	HEA	0	STA	15	UD	1*

* + natural weapons

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	2	2	Dodge	2	1	Hand-to-Hand	3	1
Notice (tracking)	2	2						

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Talons (x8 damage), Bite (x6 damage), Flight



ZOMS

Few things other than the Z'bri themselves can cause more fear in the tribes than zoms. Some say they are the remnants of those who died during the camps; the truth is that nobody knows where they really come from. Zoms appear to be reanimated corpses in various states of decomposition. Zoms vary in appearance; some are mummified and desiccated, with their leathery skin stretched over their bones; others are putrid and nauseating, their flesh literally rotting on their bones until only the skeleton remains. Although they may appear large and clumsy, Zoms are actually fairly agile and quick — especially the mummified ones — but their frames are fragile.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+1	BLD	+1	FIT	0	INS	+2	PER	0
WIL	0	STR	+1	HEA	0	STA	30	UD	4*

*+ natural weapons

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	2	0	Dodge	2	1	Hand-to-Hand	2	1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Claws (x6 damage), Hand Weapon (x10 damage)

SCRAY SWARM

The first sign of a scray swarm is the subtle metallic drone as it approaches, and slowly grows in crescendo until it reaches a deafening pitch — by which time it is usually too late to do anything. Scrays are large insects (6 to 10 cm), though when examined seem to be made of metal with jagged, razor sharp teeth and a thick oily substance covering their bodies and wings. They swarm in the summer months, devouring anything of flesh in their paths. Cows and other large animals have been reduced to skeletons in minutes and few humans have survived a swarm attack. Fortunately, scrays are short lived, many dying hours (or, occasionally, days) after the swarms start, littering the ground with their carcasses which the tribe keep as ornaments and wards. Scrays appear to possess a sort of communal memory; swarms seem able to learn from the experiences of past swarms. Some Keepers claim that scrays are able to learn, suggesting the possibility of a larger specimens that have yet to be seen.

ATTRIBUTES

Aggressiveness	4	Damage/turn	6	Damage Threshold	30
Random Horde Size	2d6	Basic Swarm Size	50		



OPTIONAL PERKS AND FLAWS SYSTEM

In order to keep the dice rolling and the bookkeeping to a minimum, the Silhouette system uses a fairly small range of numbers to describe the capabilities and skills of an individual. This can lead to characters that are fairly similar, especially if they have similar basic concepts. To help Players create unique characters with unique capabilities, we provide the option of acquiring Character Perks and Flaws. These are special quirks, advantages and drawbacks that affect a character's background and capabilities. Note that many such characteristics are already covered by the basic Attributes. For example, a popular singer will have a high INF rather than the Perk "Charisma." An obese person would have a very high BLD and a low FIT rather than the Flaw "Obese."

The use of Perks and Flaws is optional. Weavers should not hesitate to disregard them — they do introduce added complexity to the game and they tend to encourage point-counting among Players. Perks and Flaws should help Players to better define their characters — if they do not, ignore them. Similarly, Weavers can decide that certain Perks or Flaws are inappropriate or they may restrict their numbers.

NPCs presented in this rulebook and in future products do not have Perks and Flaws. Weavers may add some if they feel it necessary to do so.

PERKS, FLAWS AND CHARACTER CREATION

Perks and Flaws are usually chosen during the character creation process, most often just before choosing Skills. Each Perk costs a certain amount of Skill Points (SPs) and each Flaw "gives back" a certain number of SPs. These are the same Skill Points that are given to purchase Skills and Synthesis abilities, so a character with more Flaws than Perks can gain additional Skills or Skill Levels, while a character with more Perks will start with fewer Skills. Perks and Flaws can be either Innate or Acquired; this determines whether it can be gained during play or only at character creation (see *Gaining and Losing Perks and Flaws*, p. 195).

There is no strict limit to the number of Perks and Flaws a character can have. In order to prevent excesses, we recommend not exceeding 12 points of Flaws. The Weaver should be the final arbiter as to whether a character has too many Perks or Flaws, and may choose to exclude some entirely.

The available Perks and Flaws are listed below, and explained in *Perk and Flaw Descriptions*, pp. 195-204.

PERK AND FLAW LIST

Name	Type	SP Cost	Page
PERKS			
Accelerated Healing	innate	4	195
Acute Sense	innate	2	195
Ambidextrous	acquired	1	196
Animal Companion	acquired	1 to 4	196
Animal Kinship	innate	2	196
Authority	acquired	3	196
Connections	acquired	1 to 7	196
Fake Identity	acquired	3	196
Famous	acquired	2 to 5	197
Favor	acquired	1 to 5	197
Green Thumb	innate	5	197
Light Sleeper	acquired	2	197
Luck	innate	4	197
Machine-Touch	innate	4 to 5	197
Night Vision	innate	3	197
Perfect Memory	innate	3 per point	197
Prestige	acquired	2 to 4	197
Property/Wealth	acquired	3 to 7	198
Quick Learner	innate	2	198
Sense of Direction	innate	2	198
Spiritual Balance	innate	3	198
Spiritual Siren	innate	3	198
Strong Immune System	innate	3	198
Subordinates	acquired	2 to 5	198
Thick-Skinned	innate	4	199
FLAWS			
Addiction	acquired	-(Rating+3)	199
Age	special	-4 or -2	199
Allergy	innate	-1 or -3	199
Amnesia	acquired	-2	199
Animal Antipathy	innate	-1	199
Bad Luck	innate	-5	199
Beliefs	acquired	-1 to -3	200
Blind	acquired	-5	200
Bloodlust	acquired	-3	200
Code of Honor	acquired	-1 to -4	200
Curse	acquired	-2 to -5	200
Deaf	acquired	-4	200
Debt	acquired	-1 to -5	200
Dedicated	acquired	-1 to -3	201
Dependent	acquired	-1 to -4	201
Destitute	acquired	-2	201
Fear	acquired	-2 or -4	201
Flashbacks	acquired	-2	201
Heavy Sleeper	innate	-1	201
Inept with Plants	innate	-1	201
Infamous	acquired	-1 to -4	202
Insomnia	acquired	-1	202
Lame	acquired	-4	202
Liar	acquired	-1 or -3	202

Name	Type	SP Cost	Page
Mechanical Inaptitude	innate	-1 or -3	202
Nemesis	acquired	-2 to -5	202
Obligation	acquired	-1 to -3	202
One-Armed	acquired	-4	202
Paranoid	acquired	-1	203
Poor Sense	acquired	-2 per sense	203
Quirk	acquired	-1 per Quirk	203
Secret	acquired	-2 to -3	203
Sick	acquired	-1 to -4	203
Slow Healing	innate	-4	203
Slow Learner	innate	-2	203
Social Stigma	innate	-1 to -3	203
Spiritual Unbalance	Innate	-3	204
Split Personality	acquired	-1 to -4	204
Thin-Skinned	innate	-4	204
Wanted	acquired	-1 to -5	204
Weak Immune System	acquired	-3	204

GAINING AND LOSING PERKS AND FLAWS

Characters often evolve substantially during the course of a cycle, going (for instance) from untested outcasts to recognized heroes. Changing character Perks and Flaws can reflect this evolution. Only Perks and Flaws listed as Acquired can be gained over the course of a campaign, however.

In general, the Weaver should be the sole arbiter of Perks and Flaws once play begins. Experience Points need not be spent every time the Player Characters pick up a few new contacts; they also gain no points when an enemy starts hunting them—these are just part of character evolution. Weavers should try to roughly balance new Flaws with new Perks, however, or else the PCs' lives will become no fun at all. Be especially careful when doling out highly debilitating Flaws, especially if that significantly alters the character concept (like Flashbacks or Blind).

PURCHASING NEW PERKS

Optionally, Weavers can allow Players to purchase new Perks by investing Experience Points. Treat these as Simple Skills, with the level equal to the lowest cost of the Perk. The Perks can then be improved like any Skill. For example, a character buying a new Subordinate would pay 4 Experience Points for a "level 2" Subordinate and could then improve it up to level 5 (one step at a time) as any Skill (see *Skill Improvement Costs* table, p. 155). Property/Wealth is commonly purchased in this manner.

LOSING FLAWS

There are two conditions to getting rid of a Flaw. First, the Player must spend an amount of Experience Points equal to three times the number of points that the Flaw gives. Second, the Flaw must be eliminated through roleplaying (e.g. a Wanted character must defeat or otherwise dissuade her hunters). If a Flaw is resolved through roleplaying but XPs are not spent, the Weaver can replace the Flaw with another one of equal cost or by another occurrence of the same one. In the previous example, the character who has defeated her pursuers might be hunted by another group or end up picking up a Nemesis.

PERK AND FLAW DESCRIPTIONS

The following pages list all the basic Perks and Flaws in *Tribe 8*. The description consists of a small tale indicating the type of the Perk or Flaw and its cost, followed by an explanation of its meaning and game effects. Like Skills, it is possible to add new Perks and Flaws, although Weavers should be very careful when deciding on their cost.

CHARACTER PERKS

Perks are natural characteristics, aptitudes or social benefits that often prove useful to the character. Not all Perks are universally beneficial, however. Some (usually social Perks) have potential downsides. Weavers and Players should keep these downsides in mind, but they should not outweigh the benefits of the Perk.

ACCELERATED HEALING

Innate

Cost = 4

Thanks to some natural vigor, the character heals faster than other people (though she is not tougher because of it). The normal healing rules are used (see *Treating Injuries*, p. 150), but the character needs only 75% of the required time. Accelerated Healing has no downside and is incompatible with the Slow Healing Flaw.

ACUTE SENSE

Innate

Cost = 2 per sense (choose one)

The character has one above-average sense, such as vision or hearing, and tends to notice fainter signals than other people. She gets a +1 modifier for Notice checks based on that particular sense. Acute Sense has no downside, though over-stimulation would be more painful than usual. Obviously, a character with the Blind or Deaf Flaws may not have Acute Vision or Acute Hearing.

AMBIDEXTROUS

Acquired

Cost = 1

The character can use either hand for tasks requiring manual dexterity, though she may not attack twice per action without incurring the normal penalties for additional actions (see Actions, p. 145). Ambidextrous has no downside. Kindly note that a One-Armed character cannot be Ambidextrous at the same time.

ANIMAL COMPANION

Acquired

Cost = 1-4 depending on the usefulness of the animal

The character has a faithful pet, steed or other animal companion. This animal is both well trained and emotionally bonded to the character, which means that it will mostly stay by her side, except for the occasional romp through the neighborhood. The downside of an Animal Companion is responsibility: pets must be fed, walked, housed and otherwise cared for.

ANIMAL KINSHIP

Innate

Cost = 2

The character has a "touch" with animals, both wild and domestic. Domesticated animals will respond well to training and instructions, granting the character a +1 when dealing with them. Wild animals are less likely to attack the character and may even respond to some very basic commands (specifics are left to the Weaver). Animal Kinship has no downside, although many people with this Perk become vegetarians out of empathy.

AUTHORITY

Acquired

Cost = 3

The character represents the authorities. She could be a Terasheban judge, a Joanite warrior, a Z'bri war chief or some other person empowered by the Fatimas or another higher authority. The effect of this Perk depends largely on the circumstances — Judges have no extra authority outside their jurisdiction. The potential downside of Authority is responsibility: the character will likely have to follow a strict code of conduct, report for duty and follow orders. Note that most members of the Eighth Tribe will not have the Perk.

CONNECTIONS

Acquired

Cost = 3 to 7 points per ally, 1 and 5 points per contact

The character has one or more useful connections. These can be close allies who would be willing to help the character no matter what, or more casual acquaintances with special skills or connections of their own. The cost of the connection should vary according to such factors as loyalty, influence, accessibility, resources, etc. This Perk does not cover casual, personal relationships (such as a lover, friends and neighbors) unless they are particularly useful or dedicated.

Allies are connections who are willing and able to help the character, even in dire circumstances, without asking for much in return (at least not immediately). Examples include a brother who is also a tribal elder.

Contacts are connections who will not necessarily go out of their way to help the character without promise of recompense. They generally provide useful information or equipment, but will not come to the rescue at their own risk. Typical contacts include a snitch within a warlord's band, a smuggler or a forger.

The potential downside of Connections is reciprocity. Contacts will expect either to be paid in cash or by being owed favors. Allies are less demanding, but are likely to call for help when they need it. Turning down an ally's call for help is a sure way to lose that ally.

GREEN THUMB

Innate

Cost = 5

The character has a natural understanding and aptitude with plants and herbs. She can purchase Agriculture and Herbalism as simple Skills. Green Thumb has no downside.

FAKE IDENTITY

Acquired

Cost = 3 per Fake Identity

The character has more than one identity. She has a complete, fully detailed life on the side, with separate dwelling, occupation and reputation. People attempting to track the cover identity back to the character will find it very difficult to do. The potential downside of Fake Identity is maintenance. The character needs to spend time upkeeping her alter ego, even making appearances as that person.

FAMOUS

Acquired Cost = between 2 and 5 points depending on the degree of fame

The character is famous. She can be a well-known storyteller or a hero of some sort. In certain situations, fame will work for the character — people will readily help her or provide access to restricted areas. Fame's potential downside is lack of anonymity. The character may be recognized wherever she goes and may be watched by interested parties. This can make subtlety or stealth very difficult. Simply adopting a pseudonym may be enough in the case of minor fame, however.

FAVOR

Acquired Cost = 1 to 5

Someone important or a powerful group owes the character one or more favors. This debt is real and known by both the character and the indebted party, and is likely to be honored, all things being equal. The character may call in this favor when convenient, although story elements may limit her opportunity to do so. The downside of a Favor is resentment: if the character is not careful, the indebted party may feel she is being taken advantage of.

FAVOR COST

Point Cost	Description
1	Key favor: The person will do the character an important favor, such as allowing her into see a tribal elder or granting shelter when in need.
2	Multiple favors: The person will grant key favors repeatedly or grant a larger favor such as providing long term shelter or giving a valuable piece of property (such as a rare sword).
3	Major boon: The person will grant a very critical favor, such as pardoning a crime or sheltering a relative indefinitely.
4	Multiple boons: The person will grant major boons repeatedly.
5	Life boon: The person owes her life to the character and will do almost anything for her.

LIGHT SLEEPER

Acquired Cost = 2

The character sleeps lightly and awakens at the slightest noise. She cannot be surprised when sleeping and gets a normal defense roll. Light Sleeper has no downside other than that it may be difficult to get a good night's sleep in a noisy environment.

LUCK

Innate Cost = 4

The character is exceptionally lucky. Once per session, the Player may elect to reroll a Fumble. Alternatively, she can choose to switch the modifier of a single die roll before making the roll — for example, turning a -3 into a +3. That last option may not exceed +5, however. Lucky has no downside and is incompatible with Bad Luck.

MACHINE-TOUCH

Innate Cost = 4 (5 for Keepers)

The character is exceptionally gifted with machines and seems to understand them better than her peers. She can purchase the Tinker Skill as a Simple Skill. Machine-Touch has no downside. This perk is very rare outside of the Keepers.

NIGHT VISION

Innate Cost = 3

The character's eyes need very little light to see. As long as there is at least a small amount of light present, she can ignore the penalties for poor lighting (Offensive Modifiers, p. 146). This Perk is of no help in total darkness, however. The downside is that the character's eyes are sensitive to bright lights.

PERFECT MEMORY

Innate Cost = 3 per point

The character has an excellent memory. Whenever a Knowledge roll is made to remember any information, the rating of the Perk is added to the dice roll. If the character has three or more points of Perfect Memory, any Knowledge-related Skills are considered Simple for learning cost. The downside is that it's extremely difficult to blank out traumatic events. Weavers can give PCs with this Perk some recurring nightmares.

PRESTIGE

Acquired Cost = 2 to 4 depending on the scope and power of the influence

The character is either a recognized authority or carries significant prestige in a certain social, political or professional sphere. Although this is not a guarantee that the character will get her way all the time, her opinion will be listened to and she can find others to support her if need be. Typical areas of influence include: a tribe, a clan, an occupation, and a specific settlement. Prestige's downside is notoriety: others in the same field may seek the character out or target her. Additionally, Prestige must be maintained — repeated failure or ridicule may reduce or even eliminate that Perk.

PROPERTY/WEALTH

Acquired Cost = 3 to 7 depending on size and power of the property

The character owns a substantial and useful piece of property. This could include a club, a large riverboat, a rare and precious sword or a significant amount of gems. This Perk should only be used for key story props and settings — the owner of a pirate ship should have this Perk, but a farmer with a small home does not need it — or for characters with a goodly amount of disposable income. The downside of Property is maintenance: the Player must spend resources and time taking care of her lands or possessions. The greater the point cost, the more demanding the maintenance. Lack of maintenance may result in the loss of this Perk.

Because Vimary functions on a barter economy it is difficult to put a specific value on Property. Weavers and Players should use the following examples as a guide.

SAMPLE PROPERTY COST

Point Cost	Property
2	One critical piece of equipment, such as a rare sword.
3	A small establishment like club or riverboat.
4	A large establishment like a prosperous farmstead.
5	An important settlement.

QUICK LEARNER

Innate Cost = 2

The character learns quite rapidly and can gain extra benefit from tutors who try to impart their knowledge upon them. Quick Learners subtract one from the number of months of tutelage required to learn a Skill from a tutor, although the minimum remains one week. Those teaching a Quick Learner also get a +1 bonus to their Teaching Skill test to reduce XP cost of a Skill increase. For more information, see Tutors, p. 155. Quick Learner has no downside except the envy of fellow students, who must work harder to learn the same thing.

SENSE OF DIRECTION

Innate Cost = 2

The character seems to have a natural compass in her head. She always knows where she is and never gets lost. Sense of Direction gives a +1 bonus to Navigation tests. This Perk has no downside.

SPIRITUAL BALANCE

Innate Cost = 3

The character has an unusually strong ability to remain spiritually grounded when exposed to the River of Dream and Synthesis. She adds a +2 bonus to her PSY roll when testing for lost Equilibrium. Spiritual Balance has no downside, although the character may be less open to visions and omens than others. This Perk is incompatible with the Spiritual Unbalance Flaw.

SPIRITUAL SIREN

Innate Cost = 3

The character has a natural understanding of spirits and what it takes to get their attention. When using the Dreaming Skill to call spirits, the character gets a +2 bonus. This Perk has no downside, although the character may find herself subject to many unexpected spiritual visits.

STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM

Innate Cost = 3

Characters with a Strong Immune System are especially resistant to disease and the effects of drugs. These characters get a +1 to Health tests made against the Contagiousness and Virulence of diseases, as well as the Potency of a drug or toxin. See *Disease*, p. 151, and *Drugs* p. 152, for more details on these topics. A Strong Immune System has no inherent downside other than the fact that the character will also resist beneficial drugs. This Perk is incompatible with Weak Immune System Flaw.

SUBORDINATES

Acquired Cost = 2-5 per subordinate

The character has one or more faithful underlings. These Subordinates are professionally bound to serve the character in a well-defined way, but do so above and beyond the call of duty. The Player and Weaver should develop the conditions of service as well as the identities of all subordinates. These characters can become excellent supporting characters in a campaign. Typical subordinates include: apprentices, bodyguards and guides. The downside of Subordinates is responsibility: they must often be paid and they may legitimately ask for assistance from time to time.

THICK-SKINNED

Innate

Cost = 4

The character has a high pain threshold and better resists to injuries. Thick-skinned characters add 5 points to their basic Stamina and recalculate their damage thresholds accordingly. This Perk is normally innate, but anyone with expert martial training (Hand-to-Hand Skill equal to 3 or better) could acquire this Perk at character creation or during the campaign. Thick-Skinned has no downside.

CHARACTER FLAWS

Flaws are hindrances that get in the way of the character's life. Some of them are little more than quirks that complicate social interactions. Flaws can be removed later on during the campaign through good roleplaying and a liberal amount of Experience Points. Like the downside of Perks, some Flaws have potential upsides, small benefits that come with a hindrance. These upsides should never outweigh the penalties of the Flaw, however.

ADDICTION

Acquired

Cost = Addiction Rating + 3 (as appropriate, round up).

The character is psychologically or physically addicted to something. It might be drugs, it might be adrenaline, it might even be sex; she just needs regular doses of it. If the character goes for 6 hours without a dose, she must make a WIL check against the rating of her addiction (chosen when the Flaw is taken) or suffer a general -1 penalty, cumulative with all previous addiction penalties. The Threshold for each additional check is at +1. When the character gets her "fix," the penalties are lifted and she can go another 6 hours without the drug. Addiction has no upside.

AGE

Special

Cost = -4 (young), -2 (old)

The character is either unusually young or old, which may impose limits on her freedom of movement and on how seriously others take her opinions. Young characters are considered to be young teenagers (13-16 years), often not yet having come of age, and will have a great deal of trouble being taken seriously by adults. Old characters are considered elderly (45+), may also have problems with respect and may have health problems. The potential upside of Age is attitudes: juvenile misbehavior may be forgiven and older characters may benefit from some respect from the young.

Optionally, the Weaver can impose Attribute and Skill caps to reflect the effects of age. Young characters may have a maximum BLD and KNO of 0 and may not have any Skills at Level 3. Old characters may have a maximum AGI and FIT of 0.

ALLERGY

Innate

Cost = -1 for a mild allergy, -3 for a severe one

The character is allergic to certain food, items or chemical compounds. This can range from a mere inconvenience to a deadly danger. When the character is exposed to the allergic agent, a Health test is made against a Threshold of 5. If failed or fumbled, a mild Allergy causes constant itching and scratching, giving an action penalty equal of -1. A severe Allergy is much more dangerous: if the test is failed, the victim receives a Flesh Wound; if fumbled, a Deep Wound. These must be stabilized according to the usual wound rules.

AMNESIA

Acquired

Cost = -2

The character has no recollection of her life up to a few days or weeks ago. This Flaw should be severely monitored by the Weaver because it can easily play havoc with a cycle. The potential upside of Amnesia is unknown allies. Some friends from the character's past life may be willing to help her, although some enemies may well be close behind.

ANIMAL ANTIPATHY

Innate

Cost = -1

Something about the character is disturbing to animals, both domestic and wild. Domesticated animals are less likely to respond to commands or stay calm in her presence, and she suffers a -1 penalty to Animal Handling and Riding tests. Wild animals are more likely to attack the character and, even if they don't attack, will respond aggressively to her presence. Animal Antipathy has no upside and is incompatible with the Animal Kinship and Animal Companion Perks.

BAD LUCK

Innate

Cost = -5

The character is constantly plagued by bad luck. Once per game, an opponent may reroll a Fumble. Alternatively, the Weaver can choose to switch the result of a die roll — for example, turning a MoS of 3 into a MoF of 3. That last option may not exceed +5, however. The Weaver should not use this to kill the character outright, only to make her life miserable. Bad Luck has no upside and is incompatible with the Luck Perk.

Appendix

BELIEFS

Acquired Cost - -1 to -3 depending on the nature of the belief

The character strongly believe something that is generally not accepted and can expose her to ridicule in the mainstream: Keepers control the Fatimas with radio waves, the Z'bri are actually friends of humanity, etc. This belief could even be dangerous, leading the character to take huge risks, such as heading out for Z'bri lands seeking shelter.

BLIND

Acquired Cost - -5

The character cannot see. The character suffers a -2 modifier to her Notice checks and a -4 to all combat actions. A blind person cannot perform activities which require vision. Blindness has no upside.

BLOODLUST

Acquired Cost - -3

The character is either inherently mean and vicious, or suffers from a lack of control in combat due to desensitization or dehumanizing training. When in battle, she will attempt to kill her opponent by any means possible. She'll never accept a surrender, nor will she surrender or retreat permanently herself. When prisoners must be taken, they live only as long as they are useful to the character. Characters suffering from Bloodlust who wish to overcome their deadly instincts must pass a PSY test against a Threshold of 5. Bloodlust has no upside.

CODE OF HONOR

Acquired Cost - -1 to -4 depending on depth of the code

The character lives by a code of honor. The Player and Weaver should define this code in terms of how stringent it is and how seriously the character takes it. Note that "honor" can mean many things to many people, so it may take some time to decide exactly what this code entails. A Code of Honor's potential upside is respect: characters who behave in a consistently honorable manner — especially when it puts them at a disadvantage — may gain the trust and admiration of other honorable people.

CURSE

Acquired Cost - -2 to -5, depending on the severity.

Yagan priestesses, Z'bri lords and many others have the ability to curse those they dislike. Most Curses are relatively minor in nature, but some can be deadly. The severity of the Curse determines the cost (see examples below). To get rid of a Curse, the Player must both pay the appropriate XPs and resolve the reason she was cursed.

CURSE COST

Point Costs	Description
-2	Persistent annoyance: cosmetic deformity, bad odor, clumsy.
-3	Cursed life area: love life, reputation, or some other area refuses to "work out."
-4	Affliction: -1 action penalty in a defined circumstance (in combat, when addressing a crowd, etc.)
-5	Deadly Affliction: -2 action penalty in a defined circumstance.

DEAF

Acquired Cost - -4

The character cannot hear. The character suffers a -1 modifier to her Notice checks and cannot perform activities which require hearing. Deafness has no upside.

DEBT

Acquired Cost - -1 to -5

The character owes someone a substantial debt of honor or patronage. The person to whom the character is indebted may be tolerant or demanding, but either way the debt is a recurrent drain on the character's time or resources. The potential upside of a debt is a contact: the creditor may be able to be of some help occasionally, although it means ending up further in debt.

DEBT COST

Point Cost	Description
1	Key favor: You owe the character an important favor, such as allowing her into see a tribal elder or granting shelter when in need.
2	Multiple favors: You must grant key favors repeatedly or grant a larger favor, such as providing long term shelter or giving a valuable piece of property (say a rare sword).
3	Major boon: You must grant a very critical favor, such as pardoning a crime or sheltering a relative indefinitely.
4	Multiple boons: You must grant major boons repeatedly.
5	Life boon: You owe your life to the character and will do almost anything for her.

DEDICATED

Acquired Cost = -1 to -3 depending on the demands of the dedication

The character is dedicated to a certain cause or a powerful, all-consuming goal. In the case of ideals, the character will follow them whenever possible. The more extreme form of this characteristic is fanaticism. If the dedication is to a specific goal, the Player and the Weaver should determine it together and ensure it is largely unattainable, giving the character a strong motivation throughout the cycle. Dedication's potential upsides are contacts and respect. Others dedicated to the same cause (or who seek the same goal) may be willing to help a truly dedicated character, although they may also expect such help themselves.

DEPENDENT

Acquired Cost = -1 to -4

The character must take care of someone: an adopted child, a relative, etc. This responsibility includes care, protection and friendship, and should be quite demanding on the character's schedule. In addition, enemies might attempt to use the dependent against the character. A Dependent's potential upside is aid: the other character may be helpful in certain situations.

DEPENDENT COST

CP/SP total	Cost	CP/SP total	Cost
5/10	-4	10/30	-2
10/20	-3	20/30	-1

DESTITUTE

Acquired Cost = -2

The character has almost no resources of her own and no way to raise them easily. Characters who obtain such a source during play will find forgotten debts catching up with them until they pay off this Flaw in XPs. Poor characters cannot afford anything above the basics without making arrangements through roleplaying. The upside of Destitute is anonymity: most people look away or at least ignore beggars, who can go about their business mostly undisturbed (unless they are Wanted).

FEAR

Acquired Cost = -2 for mild fear, -4 for severe fear

The character has an unreasonable fear of something. It might be a certain item, a situation, a color, or an animal. A Mild Fear means that the character suffers a -1 action penalty when in the presence of the object of her Fear due to nervousness and distraction. A Severe Fear means that the character must pass a WIL roll against a Threshold of 4 to function at all in the presence of the object and even then suffers a -1 action penalty. Fears have no upside.

Note that Weavers can reduce the cost to -1/-3 for uncommon objects of Phobia.

FLASHBACKS

Acquired Cost = -2

The character has sudden flashbacks of her past, especially in stressful situations. The Player and Weaver should define just what these flashbacks are and what trauma they stem from. Specific triggers for the flashbacks can also be chosen. Characters experiencing flashbacks must make a WIL or PSY roll (Player's choice) against a Threshold of 4 to act. Flashbacks have no upside.

HEAVY SLEEPER

Innate Cost = -1

The character sleeps like a brick and is very hard to awaken. Heavy Sleepers must make PER or Notice tests with a -3 penalty to see if they wake in a dangerous situation. Heavy Sleeper has no upside and is incompatible with the Light Sleeper Perk.

INEPT WITH PLANTS

Innate Cost = -1 (-3 for Evans)

The character has a "brown thumb;" plants in her care die off at a prestigious rate. She suffers a -1 penalty to all Skill rolls involving caring for plant life. This Flaw has no upside and may be considered a curse among Evans.

Appendix

INFAMOUS

Acquired Cost = -1 to -4 depending on the severity and expanse of the infamy

The character has a bad reputation. This reputation may or may not be deserved, but it sticks to the character like the proverbial bad penny. Infamy can denote unpleasant reputations (e.g. a notorious cheat) or something more terrifying (e.g. a blood-thirsty killer). Infamy's potential upside is fear: those with terrible reputations may be intimidating (+1 to Intimidation rolls if the reason for Infamy is clearly demonstrated).

INSOMNIA

Acquired Cost = -1

The character has difficulty sleeping or is plagued by constant nightmares. She is constantly tired. Optionally, the Weaver may impose a -1 penalty for actions that require endurance and prolonged concentration. Insomnia has no real upside except for sentries stuck with the night shift.

LAME

Acquired Cost = -4

The character has a medical problem in one or both legs. She suffers a -1 modifier to movement-related Skill checks, and cannot perform activities which require jogging or faster movement. Being Lame has no upside.

LIAR

Acquired Cost = -1, -3 if mythomaniac

The character generally does not tell the truth. Whenever she speaks, she will lie if it is practical or gets her off the hook. A more serious version of this is the full-blown mythomaniac, who cannot tell the truth and keeps inventing stories about herself and the people around her. Being a Liar has no upside.

MECHANICAL INAPTITUDE

Innate Cost = -1 (-3 for Keepers)

The character is all thumbs when it comes to mechanical or electronic devices. Any Skill test involving the use of a complex machine suffers a -1 penalty. Mechanical Inaptitude has no upside. It is also incompatible with the Machine-Touch Perk.

NEMESIS

Acquired Cost = -2 to -5 depending on power, intentions and frequency of appearance of the enemy.

The character has a long-time enemy or rival. Whenever they meet, they engage in contests of wit or plain combat. If the character gets rid of her Nemesis, another one will pop up (a vengeful lover or younger sibling, for example) to replace the first Nemesis until the point cost is paid. The Player and the Weaver should cooperate to create the Nemesis and determine how the rivalry began. Nemesis' potential upside is allies: the enemy of your enemy may be your friend.

Although a Nemesis will undoubtedly cause a Player Character no end of trouble, this Flaw can be among the best in terms of campaign development. This Flaw gives a Weaver all the justification she needs to create a dogged master villain who pops up at the most inopportune times. Weavers should put a great deal of effort into Nemesis, both because they are a lot of fun and because they will undoubtedly be very important to the character they are hunting. Nothing is quite as memorable as a good villain. An interesting variation can be noble Nemesis, who hunts the Player Character to right a wrong or because it is her duty. This is especially vexing to many Players because they cannot be disposed of without a second thought — they're good guys too, after all.

OBLIGATION

Acquired Cost = -1 to -3 depending on severity and frequency of the Obligation.

The character is under some kind of obligation. She may have regular duties at home and be required to show up on schedule, or she can have to obey certain people. The Player and the Weaver should cooperate to define the scope of the obligations and the reasons why the character is under orders. Note that characters who have the Authority Perk cannot purchase Obligation tied to the same position that confers that benefit — the obligations are just part of the Authority Perk. They can, however, have other Obligations. Obligations has a potential upside in contacts: superiors and colleagues can occasionally be of assistance.

ONE-ARMED

Acquired Cost = -4

The character is missing an arm. This condition may be temporary, the result of an accident for example, or it may be permanent, if the character cannot have it healed. The character suffers a -1 modifier to any manipulation-related Skill checks, and cannot perform activities which require both hands. One-Armed has no upside. It is incompatible with the Ambidextrous Perk.

PARANOID

Acquired

Cost -1

The character believes that some people are in league to cause her harm. Anything bad that comes to her is automatically the result of this conspiracy. Anyone refusing to believe in said conspiracy is automatically part of it and probably out to get the character — or so she thinks. Paranoia has no upside.

POOR SENSE

Acquired

Cost -2 per sense (choose one)

The character has one or more especially poor sense. She has trouble noticing and distinguishing stimuli that are faint, muffled or blurred. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all Notice tests related to the affected sense. Poor Sense has no upside.

QUIRK

Acquired

Cost -1 per Quirk (max. -2)

A quirk is a small personality flaw or habit that poses only minor limitations on actions. Quirks are intended as roleplaying aids to reward Players for giving their characters some life. This should not be abused, however, so Players receive extra Skill Points only for their first two Quirks. Common Quirks are listed below, but Weavers and Players should feel free to add others as long as they are not severely limiting on the character. Note that Quirks can include good habits (such as taking in strangers) as long as they are mildly limiting on the character. At the Weaver's discretion, characters who wish to suppress their Quirk temporarily (e.g. cowards who must run into danger) may have to pass a WIL test against a Threshold of 3. Quirks have no upsidess.

Common Quirks include: cowardice, cruelty, curiosity, gluttony, greed, intolerance, lacking a sense of humor, laziness, miserly compulsion, overconfidence, pacifism, pride, selfishness, squeamishness, stubbornness, vengeance fixations, and miscellaneous good or bad habits.

SECRET

Acquired

Cost -2 to -3 depending on the gravity of the secret

The character has a dark secret in her past. The Player and Weaver should decide on the nature of the secret, but there should always be a good reason why this elements must be kept hidden. It could be a past indiscretion, a current illicit affair, or any number of other damaging information. If the secret is revealed and the Player does not pay the XPs to remove it, then another level to the secret, or a different secret altogether must be chosen. Secrets have no upsidess.

SICK

Acquired

Cost -1 to -4 depending on how severe, fatal and debilitating the disease is

The character has a serious ailment that impairs her in some way. The Player and Weaver should define the illness and its symptoms. An important (if medically inaccurate) distinction is between degenerative and chronic diseases. Degenerative diseases (such as cancer) will only get worse if untreated, while chronic disease are stable but debilitating. There is no upside to Sick.

The Weaver and Player should agree on the specifics of the disease the Player Character suffers from. Game statistics can be generated using the Disease Rules (see *Diseases*, p. 151). Only masochistic Players and Weavers should give their characters highly contagious airborne diseases because they will surely end up with entire parties of infected and sick NPCs. Easily controlled contagious diseases (or non-contagious ones) are much better choices.

SLOW HEALING

Innate

Cost -4

The character heals more slowly than other people. The normal healing rules are used (see p. 150), but the character needs 50% more time to heal. Slow Healing has no upside.

SLOW LEARNER

Innate

Cost -2

The character has a hard time learning in a structured environment. She still benefits from teachers, but less than most. A Slow Learner must add one to the number of months required to learn a Skill with a tutor; the time can still be reduced to one week by skilled teachers, however. Those teaching Slow Learners also suffer a -1 penalty to their Teaching Skill test to reduce XP cost (see *Tutors*, p. 155). Slow Learner has no upside, and is incompatible with the Quick Learner Perk.

SOCIAL STIGMA

Innate

Cost -1 to -3 depending on the severity of the stigma.

The character is part of a social group that has a bad reputation. People will shun her and, in the more extreme case, try to harm her. The Weaver and Player should cooperate to define the stigmatized group and the nature of the stigma. To eliminate this Flaw, the character must spend appropriate Experience Points, but also either prove she is no longer a part of the group or somehow end the stigma toward the group — something that could take the length of a cycle. Stigma's potential upside is contacts: other members of the stigmatized group may be willing to cooperate for mutual benefit.

Appendix

Note that almost all starting characters should technically have the Social Stigma (tribal outcast) Flaw. Because this is so universal, however, there is no need to have Players take the Flaw unless there is a non-traditional mix of characters.

SPIRITUAL UNBALANCE

Innate

Cost - 3

The character is especially vulnerable to becoming unhinged from concrete reality when she is confronted with Synthesis and the River of Dream. The character suffers a -2 penalty when rolling for lost Equilibrium. This Flaw has no upside and is incompatible with the Spiritual balance Perk.

SPLIT PERSONALITY

Acquired

Cost - 1 to -4 (Weaver's discretion)

The character has two or more personalities. They are usually different aspects of the same person, though only one is in control at any time. What triggers the switch from one personality to the other is highly variable and depends on the individual. In general, stress is the most common trigger. Each personality has its own set of mental Attributes (CRE, INF, KNO, WIL, PSY) and its own Perks and Flaws. Ideally, all personalities should have the same point cost, but the Weaver may diverge from this in specific cases. Player and Weaver should cooperate to create all the identities.

The Weaver should be in control of personality-switching unless the Player proves herself willing to roleplay the switches spontaneously without looking to maximize her advantage. The cost of the Flaw should be used as a guideline as to how useful the personalities will be. A -1 version could see personality switches happening at useful times about 50% of the time and switches rarely endangering the Character. The -4 version, however, should see personality switches coming at the most embarrassing or downright dangerous times. The tough-as-nails killer suddenly becomes a wallflower when she's about to interrogate a witness, for example.

THIN-SKINNED

Innate

Cost - 4

The character has a low pain threshold, putting her out of commission on even the lightest injuries. Thin-skinned characters subtract 5 points from their Stamina and recalculate their Damage Thresholds accordingly. Thin-Skinned has no upside.

WANTED

Acquired

Cost - 1 to -5

Somebody is currently chasing the character. Whether or not this is justified, the character will have to face relentless, often-armed pursuers that appear at the worst time (Weaver's choice). The Player and the Weaver should cooperate to define the hunters and the reason for the hunt. Wanted usually indicates a group hunting the character or an individual doing so for professional reasons — a personal enemy is covered by the Nemesis Flaw. Masochistic Players can combine Wanted and Nemesis. The cost of the Flaw should be based on the power of the hunter, her intentions and the frequency of her appearances. Wanted's potential upside is allies: others hunted by the same group may be helpful while on the run.

WEAK IMMUNE SYSTEM

Acquired

Cost - 3

Characters with a Weak Immune System are especially vulnerable to disease and the effects of drugs. These characters get a -1 penalty to Health tests made against the Contagiousness and Virulence of diseases, as well as the Potency of a drug or toxin. See *Disease*, p. 151 for more details on disease and drugs. Weak Immune System is often an innate character element, but is listed as an Acquired Flaw because it can result from severe disease. A Weak Immune System has no inherent upside, though the character will also be less resistant to beneficial drugs such as analgesics.

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Name: _____

Birth Tribe: _____

Fallen Outlook: _____

Player: _____
Cell: _____
Cycle: _____

AGI	APP	BLD	CRE	FIT
INF	KNO	PER	PSY	WIL

STR	HEA	STA	UD	AD

Injury	Score	Armor	Penalty	#
Flesh Wound			-1	
Deep Wound			-2	
Instant Death			dead	

Synthesis Skill Rating:
Eminences:
Aspects:

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