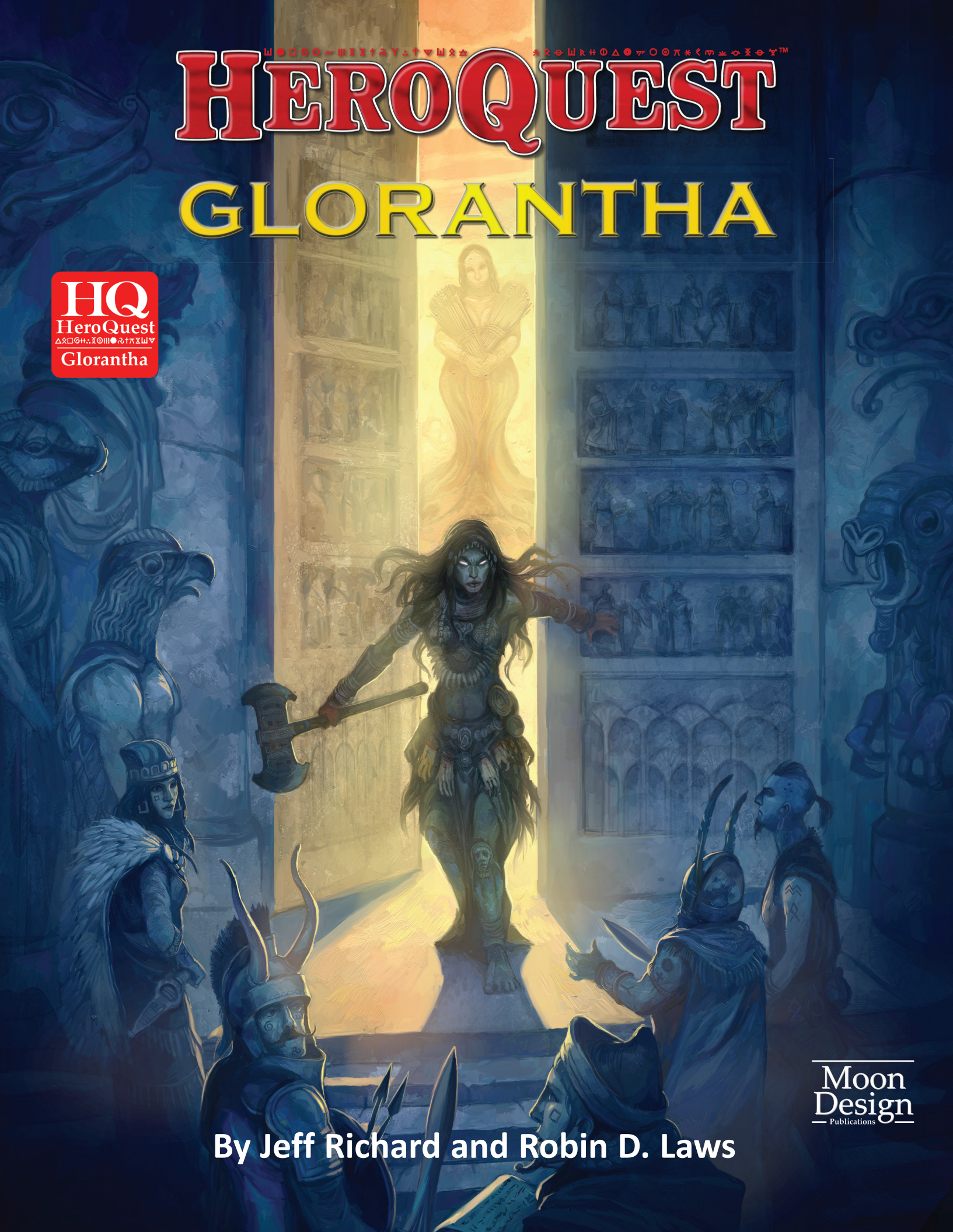
# HeroQuest

# Glorantha



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HeroQuest
Glorantha

Moon Design Publications

By Jeff Richard and Robin D. Laws

# HeroQuest:
## Glorantha

Glorantha

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Would you like to know more about Glorantha? See our extensive website at www.glorantha.com

*This book is protected by the terrible swift blade of the Avenging Daughter. Her wrath shall be upon any who misuse its secrets!*

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# Introduction

*HeroQuest Glorantha is a roleplaying rules engine designed for play in the world of Glorantha. The game presents a simple and flexible system allowing Game Masters to make decisions the way that epic stories and myths do. HeroQuest Glorantha encourages creative input from both Game Master and players, resulting in an exciting, unpredictable narrative created through group collaboration. Its abstract resolution methods and scalable character levels allow you to fully experience the magical world of Glorantha from the mundane to the heroic.*

**Version History**

*HeroQuest Glorantha began its life in 2000, under a slightly different title, Hero Wars. The game was reissued, in a revised edition, as Heroquest, in 2009. Now in 2015, it is being revised again to focus fully on Glorantha. The book you hold in your hands is the game's reappearance for the setting of Greg Stafford's classic fantasy world of Glorantha, first glimpsed in 1975 through Chaosium's boardgames White Bear and Red Moon and Nomad Gods and now fully detailed in Moon Design Publications' Guide to Glorantha.*

## Glorantha

*HeroQuest Glorantha* is set in the fictional world of Glorantha, one of the oldest and best-defined fantasy roleplaying settings. Glorantha is a Bronze Age world, and people hold allegiance to tribe, city, and cult, not to abstract alignments or ideologies. Although humanity is the dominant species, their dominance is due only to the quarrelling of the Elder Races who still rule large parts of the world.

Glorantha's main theme is religion and the magical relation of man to god. In Glorantha, the gods and goddesses are real, and play an active and important part in most major events through their followers and cults. The Sun, the Earth, the Air, the Water, the Darkness, and the Moon all have powerful deities associated with them, as do powers such as Death, Life, Change, Stasis, Illusion, Truth, Disorder, and Harmony. There are lesser deities to things as diverse as cats, cows, boats, vengeance, and volcanoes.

Glorantha is a complete universe. It is self-contained, and from its myths to its molecules it must be taken on its own terms. You will find no worshipers of Zeus or Allah here. There are no Romans, Vikings, or Huns; although there are certainly empires, pirates, and nomads. Many creatures rightfully rooted in other fantasy settings have no representatives here.

The world of Glorantha is fully described in Moon Design Publications' *Guide to Glorantha*, but a brief summary is presented in this book.

## Tools, Not Rules

Think of *HeroQuest Glorantha* not as a set of inviolable rules that you must adhere to in order to be running the game properly, but as a toolkit containing a variety of ways of resolving dramatic situations as they arise in play. It is meant to facilitate your creativity and then to get out of your way. It offers multiple ways of resolving conflicts, and relies on you to choose the best one for the current moment based on your storytelling instincts.

Every *HeroQuest Glorantha* Game Master can, and should, use the toolkit the game provides to run in her own way. You may run it differently from one campaign to the next, or to suit your players. It does not make specific decisions for you, but instead helps to shape and guide your own decision-making process. It is well suited to a collaborative, friendly group with a high degree of trust in each other's creativity.

If the members of your group are often at odds and rely on their chosen rules kit as an arbiter between competing visions of how the game ought to develop, *HeroQuest Glorantha* is not the rules set you need. Stick with your more structured system of choice, but feel free to borrow and use any concepts from this book you find useful.

*HeroQuest Glorantha* becomes your game as soon as you start to use it. This principle is known as YGWV: Your Game Will Vary. For those concerned about canonical Glorantha, it also stands for Your Glorantha Will Vary.

## Roleplaying in a Nutshell

Roleplaying is a hybrid experience, combining elements of game play and collective storytelling. A group gathers together to talk its way through a spontaneously created story, like a sort of improvisational radio theater. All but one of the participants, called players, create fictional characters (called heroes) defined by various abilities written down on paper called character sheets. Using these abilities, the heroes pursue various goals in the mythic world of Glorantha portrayed by a participant called the Game Master.

The Game Master controls various other people and creatures in Glorantha. The players describe how their heroes pursue their goals; the Game Master challenges them by putting obstacles in their path. Sometimes these barriers to success come in the form of non-player characters who oppose them; at other times, they're impersonal physical or mental challenges, like a lock that must be picked or a cliff the heroes have to climb. Whenever the heroes try to overcome a difficult obstacle, the Game Master decides how difficult it will be. Using numbers attached to their abilities, the players roll dice to see if they prevail. The Game Master rolls dice to represent the difficulty posed by whatever challenge they face. Their success or failure, as determined by the die rolls, changes the direction of the story, in either a big or small way.

Although some games last for only an evening, it is typical for one group to play a series of stories (usually called "adventures") involving the same heroes and setting over a period of time. We refer to them collectively as a campaign. (The latter term derives from the origins of the roleplaying form in historical war games).

## Thinking in Story Terms

Although there's no right or wrong way to play the game, a certain story-based logic does underlie the entire system. Where traditional roleplaying games use tactical simulation to navigate an imaginary reality, *HeroQuest Glorantha* emulates the techniques of fictional and mythic storytelling so that it can describe the story and myths of Glorantha.

Understanding this distinction will help you to run the game in a natural, seamless manner. One of this book's objectives is to get under the hood of narrative technique and show you how it works. This will either help you to run the game in its native emulative style, or, if you prefer a more tactical approach, to understand how you'll need to modify it to suit your own preferences.

For example, say that you're running a game set in the ruins of the Big Rubble of Pavis. A hero is running along the top of ruined buildings, pacing a zebra ridden by the main bad guy. The player wants his hero, Vargast the Thunderer, to jump onto the zebra and cut the villain down. You must decide how hard it is for him to do this.

In most roleplaying games (particularly those often described as "simulative"), you'd determine how hard this is based on the physical constraints you've already described. In doing so, you come up with imaginary numbers and measurements. You'd work out the distance between the ruined buildings and the zebra. Depending on the rules set, you might take into account the relative speeds of the running hero and the zebra. You determine the difficulty of the attempt based on these factors, and then use whatever resolution mechanic the rules provide you with to see if the hero Vargast succeeds or fails. If he blows it, you'll probably consult the falling rules to see how badly he injures himself.

In *HeroQuest Glorantha*, you start not with the physical details, but with the proposed action's position in the storyline. You consider a range of narrative factors, from whether it would be Maximum Game Fun for him to succeed, how much failure would slow the pacing of the current sequence, and how long it has been since Vargast last scored a thrilling victory. If, after this, you need further reference points, you draw inspiration more from the tropes of heroic fiction than the physics of real-life jumps from buildings onto zebras. Having decided how difficult the task ought to be dramatically, you then supply the physical details as color, to justify your choice and lend it verisimilitude—the illusion of authenticity that makes us accept fictional incidents as credible on their own terms. If you want Vargast to have a high chance of success, you describe the distance between ruin and the zebra as impressive (so it feels exciting if he makes it) but not insurmountable (so it seems believable if he makes it).

**Need More Help?**

*Have any questions about the rules of about Glorantha that this book doesn't answer? Please head on over to www.glorantha.com and join the friendly and supportive Gloranthan Tribe. We have articles, forums, a mailing list, a full set of detailed products, and many other resources. And better yet, ask the community itself.*

### Maximum Game Fun

When writing, thinking, and gaming about Glorantha, always ask yourself, "Now, in this situation what will be the most fun?" and then go with it. That's Maximum Game Fun (MGF). Keep this principle in mind whenever you apply the rules of HeroQuest Glorantha to any situation.

**Note on Pronouns**

*It should go without saying that we want both women and men to enjoy playing our game. Pronouns present an odd challenge in roleplaying game writing, because one often has to refer to a hypothetical single person doing something in the future. To clarify sentences, we will generally refer to our hypothetical Game Master as "she" and the equally hypothetical player as "he." This should not be taken as an implicit statement that only women can run games, and only men can be players.*

In other words, *HeroQuest Glorantha* starts with story considerations first, deciding the difficulty and then working backward to describe physical details in accordance with them. This is the way that storytellers make decisions. If this were a movie, the writers and director would first of all decide whether the Vargast succeeds or fails. This is a structural decision; it determines if the scene continues with a thrilling combat on a moving zebra, or concludes with a frustrated hero sputtering in the acrid dust of the Big Rubble. After making this choice, they then construct the sequence to be suitably sensational, however it plays out.

Just as fundamental differences separate literature and film, roleplaying is its own narrative form with its own distinct dynamics. *HeroQuest Glorantha* emulates the decision-making of older narrative forms but adapts it to the requirements of roleplaying. Chief among these is the need for uncertainty to surround all noteworthy conflicts.

Storytellers, screenwriters, and poets create for an audience. In roleplaying, the Game Master and players are their own audience. They must be as surprised by the outcome of events in a story as we are when we read a book or watch a movie. When Vargast jumps off the ruined building in a game session, everybody should be collectively holding their breath, anxious to see if he gets to duke it out with the bad guy. The result must not be predictable. So instead of deciding if he succeeds or fails, you decide roughly how likely it is that he'll succeed, and let the die rolls make the final determination.

As Game Master you then describe either result so that it seems compelling. Then you and the players, through the heroes you control, continue to move the story forward until the next point of conflict.

The contrasts between the way obstacles are created and described in fictional storytelling, *HeroQuest Glorantha* adventures, and traditional roleplaying games, are shown in the diagram below to the left:

**THE LOGIC OF STORY OBSTACLES**

**Fictional Storytelling**

*What does dramatic Rhythm require?*

| Create complicating factors to make success seem hard-fought, exciting and credible. | Create complicating factors to make failure credible and emotionally potent. |
|---|---|

**HeroQuest**

*What does dramatic Rhythm require?*

| Assign a low resistance. Over-complicating the story slows the action down. | Assign a high resistance. Create tough complicating factors to foster narrative credibility. |
|---|---|

**Traditional Roleplaying**

*What complicating factors are present?*

| Assign a low resistance. | Assign a high resistance. |
|---|---|

## To sum up:

Pick the difficulty based on the needs of dramatic pacing, *then* justify and explain it.

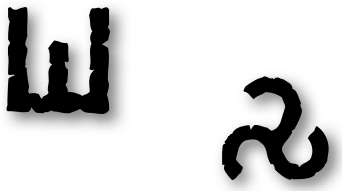
If you're trying to get *HeroQuest Glorantha* to work more like a tactical simulation, you are not "playing wrong." Be prepared, though, to face a frustration or two along the way, as you bend the game in a way it may not be able to fully support.

## What You Need

To play *HeroQuest Glorantha*, you need paper, pencils, and one twenty-sided die for each participant.

You might also want to use miniature figures, handouts, or maps. With the wider use of electronic gaming publications and a wealth of information only a Wi-Fi connection away, many Game Masters find a laptop an increasingly indispensable resource at the gaming table. A set of poker chips (or glass beads), preferably including green and red chips, is a handy optional item to have on hand.

There are several excellent gaming supplements that detail Glorantha and provide campaign arcs. You can find them in the appendix or at the www.glorantha.com website.



# The World of Glorantha

*Glorantha is not a planet, as is ours, but instead is a slightly bulging, squarish lozenge, like the Earth Rune's shape. Glorantha floats upon Sramak's River, the Primal Ocean that encircles the world. The Sky overhead is an off center bowl rotating about the Pole Star which marks the center of the Sky, and is the only stable point in the celestial dome. Between the Earth and Sky is the turbulent realm of the Air gods. Underneath both Earth and Water is the dark, silent Underworld.*

## Overview

Glorantha is not a planet, as is ours, but instead is a slightly bulging, squarish lozenge, like the Earth Rune's shape.

Glorantha floats upon Sramak's River, the Primal Ocean that encircles the world. The Sky overhead is an off center bowl rotating about the Pole Star which marks the center of the Sky, and is the only stable point in the celestial dome. Between the Earth and Sky is the turbulent realm of the Air gods. Underneath both Earth and Water is the dark, silent Underworld.

Beneath the Sky and the Air, and sitting on top of the Earth is the Middle World – the realm of mortals. It has a northern and southern continent, and many islands.

Beyond the Middle World, there are lands of immensely powerful supernatural races, such as Altinela, Vithela or Luathela. These beings occasionally come to the world of men, but few men ever travel to them. Some are areas of myth, like the Sea of Fire where the sky fell to earth and set everything burning, or the Lands of Dawn and Dusk where the Sun rises and sets each day. Only Heroes can travel to such realms and survive, and from there they can find their way to the very worlds of the gods.

Genertela is the name of the northern continent. It is colder than the southern continent, and the northern-most regions are uninhabited except by ice demons and snow trolls. The White Sea separates the permanent winter from the northlands of men. The continent is temperate in climate, and in the south the seasons are moderate.

The great central oceans of Glorantha are mild and almost balmy, though seasons affect them. The many islands are pleasant places, semitropical in nature. Magasta's Pool, at the center of the world, is a gigantic whirlpool which draws all the waters of the world to it and drops them to the dark primordial sea below.

The inhabited lands of the southern continent developed independently from the north, though both cultures came into violent conflict during the Second Age. The northern coastal regions are extremely pleasant, but the temperature increases the further south one travels. Beyond the lands that men know are dense jungles and, finally, the arid and unlivable Burning Wastes.

## History

Glorantha was created by its deities from the Primal Void of Chaos. At first, there was no history, for the initial creation formed the period of magic and timeless simultaneity called God Time. During this time, the entire world was populated with the beings and races of the Golden Age.

**Gloranthan Climate**

*Gloranthan climates are of mythic origin, and the gods determine the patterns of the inner world. Glorantha is cold in the north and hot in the south. This reflects the presence of two powers at the northern and southern edges of the inner world: Valind, God of Winter, to the north, and Pamalt, god of the south. As a result, the climates of Glorantha's continents vary; the southern continents are tropical, usually moist, and the northern regions are cold, and usually dry.*

Hudaro Sea
Genertela
Sea of Brithos
Neliomi Sea
Rozgali Sea
Solkathi Sea
Banthe Ocean
Sedlazam Ocean
Teleos
Homeward
Magasta's Pool
(Benaran) Ocean
Teleos Sea
Denestlazam Ocean
Kerenth Sea (Brown Sea)
Jrustela
Serelaza
Rikas Sea
Loral Sea
Jorkar's Sea
Dashomo Sea
Dinisso Sea
Marthino Sea
Swermela Sea
Pamaltela

# The World of Glorantha

Genertela is the northern continent of Glorantha. It is largely temperate in climate; its winds generally blow west to east, and often from the north during Dark Season. The continent is 3,125 miles long and 1,100 miles wide.

Genertela is the land most heavily inhabited by humans and many regions are urbanized and politically organized. Here the Elder Races have largely been reduced to powerful pockets of resistance surrounding their ancient holy places. A variety of human cultures dominate the better lands.

The continent was badly damaged in the Great Darkness, most seriously when its ruling god, Genert, was destroyed by Chaos. The Wastes astride the continent testify to the physical losses suffered. The magical damage was comparable. Genert embodied important powers of unity and harmony never recovered by the residents of the land.

Pamaltela is the southern continent of Glorantha. The continent is 4200 miles long and 2000 miles wide. Winds generally blow east to west, and occasionally from the hot south. Most of Pamaltela is tropical in climate. Although the Sun comes closer to Pamaltela in the winter and is further away in the summer, that does not mean the southern continent's seasons are reversed from those in Genertela, as the summer days are still longer and hotter, winter days cooler and shorter.

This continent also was ravaged by Chaos, but recovered better than Genertela because Pamalt, the ruling god of the Southern Continent, survived. Relative peace and plenty continue in the land, so that even many humans live a lush, pastoral life. Several Elder Races are still powerful here – dwarves, innumerable elves, trolls, and a variety of isolated and obscure creatures. Human cities dot the northern coasts.

There are countless islands in the oceans of Glorantha. The East Isles are the largest archipelago in Glorantha, once unified as the continent of Vithela. Humans are populous here, organized into numerous polities, including a militaristic empire and several powerful commonwealths, as well as an untold number of autonomous islands.

**Scale in Miles**

**Gbaji and Arkat**

*Gbaji's nemesis was the demigod Arkat, who led the epic struggle to destroy Gbaji that ended the Dawn Age. Arkat discovered the means of deliberate heroquesting, and spread his knowledge among others. During his war with Gbaji, Arkat underwent unusual transformations that alienated his followers. After destroying Gbaji, Arkat retired to Ralios and founded a widespread, peaceful empire.*

The birth into this world of Umath, the Primal Air, shattered the period of peace with crowding, confusion and fear. This escalated into the Gods War, resulting in the death of the Sun, the Great Darkness, and Chaos let loose upon the world. Total Destruction seemed near.

But Glorantha was not destroyed. Spurred on by Hope and Chance, the Seven Lightbringers traveled through the Chaos-ridden Cosmos and, after harrowing adventures, liberated the life-giving Sun God. The joyful god leapt to his rightful place in the sky and the Dark was banished.

To keep entropic Chaos from coming to their realm again, the gods swore great oaths and compacts resulting in the Great Compromise. Men call this Time. By altering the world, the gods saved it, and history began.

There followed the Dawn Ages. This was a time of peace and growing, as the survivors rebuilt and taught themselves the way of the world inside Time. The ancient races, elves, dragonewts, dwarves, and trolls, were as healthy and proud as humans. In Dragon Pass, on the continent of Genertela, the First Council was a balanced organization including humans and non-humans, men and women, mortals and divinities.

This age of innocence could not last. Ancient feuds were remembered and conflicts grew with peoples outside the council. Inside dissension and outside enemies forced the formation of the Second Council, a warlike empire, which grew in arrogance and power until they dreamed of bringing back the God Time. The experiment ended in the birth of Gbaji the Chaos God, whose reign of terror kept Glorantha at war with itself for 75 years. This was the death knell of the inhuman races, which have never had the same stature in the world since then. This was the end of the Dawn Ages.

Out of this shattered world grew new political entities. Among the most powerful was the state called the Empire of the Wyrms Friends. This empire, centered in Dragon Pass, lasted for 500 years, proud of and famous for their friendship with the dragons and wyrms of the pass. The peoples and places thrived, made contact with two other continents, and delved deep into spiritual byways.

After several hundred years the traditional rulers were replaced by a ruling body of men and gods called the Third Council. Legends relate that there was no telling the men from the gods in the council chambers.

But the magic of the council could not counter the miseries of its worshippers, or control the swords of the rebels who did not sacrifice to them. Foreign gods gained power and prestige as the provinces of the Third Council revolted or were overrun by invaders.

At last the council turned its energies to defending its worshippers. Epic battles raged across the land. Finally, the dragonewts, dormant for centuries, rose against the council and slew them all.

Some 78 years later the human allies aiding the destruction of the empire turned against the dragonewts. With few allies, they seemed helpless before the destroying might of the Invincible Golden Horde. Dragonewt nests were scoured with wildfire, planted with seeds laid by Chaotic parasites, sealed by diseases unnamable, and cursed by fear and loathing for any that would mourn them.

Heartless and relentless, the humans crushed and plundered, but when they closed in upon Dragon Pass the assembled human armies met those who would mourn the loss of dragonewts. The dragons from all across Time and Space assembled in their ancestral home to preserve the purity of their birthplace. The Dragonkill War got its name from what the dragons did, not what they suffered. Humans have feared the dragons since that time, despite draconic indifference, and none now seek to smash the eggs of the dragonewts, even though they might plunder a nest city.

Dragon Pass was abandoned by humanity. Elsewhere, old empires shook and the seas were utterly closed to human crossing. New kingdoms rose to fill the power vacuums and new magics and deities broke free from ancient shackles.

1220 years after the Dawn the Red Moon Goddess rose in the region called Peloria, to the north of Dragon Pass. In her were balanced Constancy and Change, Life and Death, Love and Indifference, and all the dichotomies of the Universe, including a touch of Chaos. Her arrival changed the face of the land.

After living in Glorantha a short time she ascended to the heavens where she remains in her cyclical beauty, viewing the land, which she left to her family below. The ever-reincarnating Red Emperor of the Lunar Empire is her son and her pride.

The Lunar Empire expanded from its founding. When defeated it rebounded stronger than ever. They went north to the icy wastes, east to the bounds of the horse barbarian lands, and west until they were halted by the magical Syndics Ban. But in the south the empire continued to grow and grow.

When they reached Dragon Pass they found it populated again. Moreover, it was dominated by the Kingdom of Sartar, ruled by a wise dynasty cautious to maintain the great and magical laws that gave it its strength.

## The Cosmology of Glorantha

**Above:** The Sky Dome, supported by the Four Directions. At the top of the Sky Dome is the Pole Star; above that Star is Dayzatar, the Lord of the Heavens. The Middle Air is contested by the Red Moon and the seven-starred constellation of Orlanth's Ring.

**Middle:** The flat Middle World with the Earth "lozenge" is surrounded by and floating atop Sramak's River. The northern continent ends with huge glaciers, the southern continent with deserts of fire. In between is Magasta's Pool, a whirlpool that drains into the Underworld.

**Below:** Beneath the Earth and the deepest waters is the Underworld. Six Hells are shown, including those of Annara Gor and Deshlotralas, Netta, Yelm, Natha, and Deskorgos the Monster Man.

**Sun Path:** The Sun's path from the Gates of Dawn to the Gates of Dusk and then to the Underworld.

Despite initial defeats, the Red Emperor eventually marched almost unhindered into the Sartar capital of Boldhome in 1602. He defiled the Temple of Sartar and ravaged the city. So far, it was the typical Lunar conquest.

But the remnants of the Household of Sartar incited the natives to rebel against the empire. The bravery and glory of Sartar's fight for independence attracted thousands of volunteers, and people from all about Glorantha became adventurers in order to take their places in the ranks.

## The Hero Wars

After the latest rebellion was ruthlessly put down, the Lunar College of Magic has begun to construct a Temple of the Reaching Moon on sacred Wind Top to extend the Glowline. This will serve to put an end to the uprisings and also the rebellious Storm God, winning the Middle Air as the uncontested domain of the Red Goddess.

In 1625 the Sartarites summon a True Dragon under the temple foundations, devouring the assembled priests and priestesses performing the dedication ceremony and half of the attendant armies. This catastrophic event, called the **Dragonrise**, awakens ancient draconic powers and thoughts quiescent since the Empire of the Wyrms Friends. People and beings all across the world panicked at these terrifying phenomena and many set in motion their ancient curses, cosmic defenses, secret plans, and doomsday rituals. About the same time, rebellion in the outpost city of Pavis will spell Lunar defeat, and a victorious barbarian warlord will lead his army towards Dragon Pass.

The warlord is Argrath Dragontooth, a distant member of the Sartar royal household and refugee from Lunar justice. He has grown famous amongst the tribes of Prax and seeks to claim the throne of Sartar. Argrath, the Liberator long foretold, aspires to relight the fire in Sartar's Temple and defeat the Lunar army in battle.

This begins the period long prophesized and known as the Hero Wars, for the fighting around Dragon Pass will draw the greatest collection of Heroes the world had ever seen in one place.

This is the game of that period. In these pages you start the path of a Hero, to take one's place in the Hero Wars.

## Technological Base

Glorantha is a Bronze Age world. This general statement is meant to illustrate the social development and cultural level of most of the people of the world. Bronze is common, and can be mined directly from the bones of the gods who died in the Gods War. These bones provide a ready source of the metal. Bronze is used throughout the rules to refer to the terrestrial metal to which it is most similar, but it also has some properties that are dissimilar from our earthly metal.

Unalloyed, or pure, metals, such as iron, lead, tin, and copper, prevent a person from using magic unless they are "sealed" to the Rune connected with that metal. Note that all coins are alloyed, as are gold and silver ornaments.

## Sociological Base

Glorantha is a Bronze Age and early Iron Age world. It has far more to do with Mesopotamia, ancient China, Homer's Greece, Howard's Hyboria, and the Shahnameh than it does with medieval Europe, Le Mort D'Arthur, or the Carolingian Cycle. Its heroes are the like of Conan, Gilgamesh, Heracles, and Rustum, not Lancelot, Percival, and Roland.

Unlike some fantasy settings, there is no alignment, as such. People have allegiances to nations, cities, religions, and tribes, not to abstract concepts. It is also possible for people within the game to survive quite well with no allegiances whatever except to themselves.

In Glorantha, the gods, in the forms of their followers and cults, play an active and important part in most major events. However, most gods are complementary, and rarely oppose each other directly. Only the gods of Power are actively antagonistic; and even then only within their own spheres of interest.

## Monetary Base

The coinage of Glorantha is based on silver. While both gold and copper are used as coins, silver is by far the most common monetary metal. The Middle Sea Empire first introduced Silver coinage into Glorantha. The basic currency in Dragon Pass and Prax is a silver coin that weighs a little more than 1/8 ounce (4 grams). Called "Lunars" because most of the coins in circulation were minted by the Lunar Empire and stamped with the symbols of the Red Goddess. Before the Lunar Conquest, silver coins called "Guilders" were minted by the various city guilds in Sartar and Pavis. All of these coins are roughly equivalent in value. One cow is worth about 20 Lunars.

Gold was the first coinage of the world, brought to the people by the enigmatic Gold Wheel Dancers. In their honor, gold coins are still called Wheels. Gold, however, is scarce and very valuable. One golden Wheel equals 20 Lunars of silver. Gold is still mainly used as a means of settling debts between rulers rather than individuals.

The dwarves invented copper coins. As is usual with any innovation brought out by that most inventive race, humans shrink from acknowledging the contribution. The copper coin is called a Clack, or often just a Copper. It takes ten Clacks to equal one Lunar.

Bolgs are a troll unit of exchange. Argan Argar invented the bolg and it is the sole coinage used by that cult in paying trollkin mercenaries. The bolg is unique as a unit of money, for it is designed for use as a sling stone as well as handy cash.

1 Wheel = 20 Lunars
1 Lunar = 10 Clacks
1 Clack = 10 Bolgs

## Coins of Glorantha

These coins are common throughout the greater Dragon Pass area.

**DARA HAPPAN WHEEL**
*A perfectly round gold coin weighing approximately 0.36 troy oz.*
*Front:* The Sun with ten spokes arranged to resemble a wheel.
*Back:* An idealized portrait of the Emperor of Dara Happa.

**LUNAR IMPERIAL**
*A round, silver coin weighing approximately 0.2 troy oz.*
*Front:* Seven stars within a diadem, with the Moon Rune in the center. The seventh star is below the moon. This symbol is always the same for any Lunar Imperial.
*Back:* Commemoration of Fazzur Wideread's appointment as Governor-General of Dragon Pass. This coin was likely minted at Mirin's Cross or Furthest.

**ESROLIAN CLACK**
*A square copper coin, weighing about 0.2 troy oz.*
*Front:* Depiction of Ernalda the Earth Goddess and her child (specific identity unknown). Ernalda is bare breasted, wearing a necklace, and holding a sheaf of grain in one hand.
*Back:* Idealized portrait of Queen Hendira of Nochet.

**SARTARITE GUILDER**
*A round, silver coin weighing approximately 0.2 troy oz.*
*Front:* Depiction of Sartar's apotheosis assisted by the gods Orlanth and Ernalda.
*Back:* Depiction of High King Tarkalor and the Feathered Horse Queen. This guilder was likely minted prior to 1582.

# The Runes

The Runes are the building blocks of Glorantha. They are symbols, archetypes, embodiments, and the actual matter and energy of the world. Runes originated with the very creation of Glorantha. The Runes are more than just written symbols. When a Rune is written or inscribed, the real power of the magical image is present within it. Repetition of a rune does not weaken it, but strengthens its presence and firm reality in creation. Their precise origin is unknown, and followers of particular runes always insist that theirs was first-made. Tales link the gods of the Celestial Court with the Runes, each god embodying a Rune. Their interactions led to the births of the Young Gods; these newer deities are often associated with one or more parental runes as a result.

Each Rune has myths associated with it. Some have elaborate cycles woven around their stories. All begin with a member of the Celestial Court who owned the Rune, and end with the Great God who currently owns it. In these stories the runes are sometimes treated as things, or beings, or abstract powers, or even all three.

## Owners of Runes

Each of the Core Runes originally belonged to a member of the Celestial Court, the assembly of Old Gods who ruled the universe between its creation and the Gods War. Two types of deities were recognized within this assembly; the Powers and the Elemental Rulers. The Celestial Court was destroyed with the coming of Chaos and the Core Runes are now owned by the Great Gods.

The owner of a Rune can do anything within the ambit of that Rune. Consider Orlanth, the owner of the Air Rune; Orlanth and his worshippers can use the Air Rune to fly, control all aspects of their breath, shatter stone with a loud shout, call down thunder against a foe, throw lightning, summon a hurricane, make the sky clear of clouds, and so on. Orlanth and his worshippers can potentially do anything with air, storm, or violence.

Other entities have a more limited access to the potentiality of the Rune. Urox has the Air Rune, but is only the master of the Desert Wind. Humakt possesses the Truth Rune, but can only use it for oaths and honor – not for general knowledge.

A few gods (or their specialized subcults) can use a Rune to command a few limited powers of another Rune. For example, the subcult of Barntar can use the Air Rune to plow their fields (something normally associated with the Earth Rune). That power is exceptional and a result of the mythology of that god or subcult; it is outside the conventional ambit of the Rune.

The powers of the Core Runes are universally acknowledged. The deities who command those runes are the Greater Gods. Those deities cannot be changed without altering the very fabric of the universe. Such alteration is against the Cosmic Compromise which begat Time, and cannot occur. There are also lesser runes, and many signs and symbols as well.

## Rune Classifications

The Runes can be divided into several types. Minaryth the Purple, the great Jonstown Librarian, stated at one time that there were four types of Runes in the Hero Wars period, and we have accepted that as definitive in this book.

According to his division, the Runes fall into the following four categories: Powers, Elements, Forms, and Conditions. Each god has one or more specialties within the forces described by the Runes. These are the areas in which the particular god, and therefore his or her priests, are most effective and versatile. To say that a god is a Fire Rune god, an Illusion god, or whatever, is to say that priests of that god specialize in that area. The specific Runes are described below, by class.

## Elemental Runes

Glorantha is made of the Elemental Runes. They are raw and lifeless essence, unintelligent and inert except for their primal urges. They are what form the ground you walk on, the air you breathe, and the warmth that you feel. During the Hero Wars period in Dragon Pass, five elements were recognized. Elemental Runes cannot normally be combined, however some cults know secrets whereby one Elemental Rune has some limited powers over another.

### Darkness

**Meaning:** Darkness, cold, Underworld

The most ancient Rune, the First Born, the Waker from the Void, from whom all other Elements were born or descended. Darkness was the first Element to arise out of the Primal Chaos. Darkness is traditionally most potent against Chaos. The mace and the rock are the weapons of Darkness and lead is its metal.

*Personality Traits*: cruel, cold, secretive

## Water

**Meaning:** Water, fluidity, seas, rivers

Water is the second Element, born of Darkness. As an Element, it is called Son of Darkness, Pathway to the Underworld, and Supporter of the Earth. The waters of the world endlessly flow towards Magasta's Whirlpool where they return to their origins in the Darkness, only to return to the world through the endless river that surrounds the world. The whip, the flail, the net and the trident are the weapons of Water and quicksilver is its metal.

*Personality Traits*: mercurial, capricious

## Earth

**Meaning:** Earth, physical things, agriculture, solidity

Earth is the third Element, Queen of Life, Mother of Many, Supporter of All. She fills the central portion of the world, both physically and spiritually, and because of this, her surface is the primary manifestation of the physical plane.With her son-lover, the Primal Earth created an earthful of deities, including the earth goddesses that give their name to the regions of the world. At least half the cults in Glorantha include the Earth in some manifestation or other, as Life-Giver, Mother, Stone-Father, Shaker, or Primal Ancestress. The axe is the weapon of the Earth Rune and copper is its metal. Ernalda rules the Earth Rune.

*Personality Traits*: pragmatic, prudent, worldly

## Fire

**Meaning:** Fire, sky, purity, light, stars, the Sky Dome

Fire is the fourth Element, and usually the last one accepted in the common world. He is the Crown of the World, the Purity of Station, the Distant One, and the Emperor of the Sky Dome. The Sky is different from Air, for Air separates Earth and Sky. After his defeat by his son, the Sky has been aloof from mankind, although his children remain close. The spear and the bow are the weapons of Fire and gold is its metal.

*Personality Traits*: loyal, honest, purity

## Air

**Meaning:** Air, breath, violence, weather, storm, wind, Middle Air

Air is the Fifth Born, the Son of Earth and Sky, whom he tore apart to make room for himself in the world. He is the Breaker of Laws, Destroyer of Heaven, Father of Fury, Fighter Against Darkness, and Lightbringer. The sword is the weapon of Air and bronze is its metal.

*Personality Traits*: passionate, proud, unpredictable, violent

## Moon

**Meaning:** Illusion, cycles, balance

The placement of the Moon Rune amongst the Elemental Runes is not without controversy. The Lunars claim that the Moon is the sixth Element, but this is rarely accepted outside the Lunar Empire. This Rune reappeared in the Third Age, its obvious presence and the power of the Rune in its locale proves its importance. The Moon Rune embraces and includes Chaos and wages a brutal war with Orlanth over control of the Middle Air.

*Note:* The Moon Rune has special rules governing its use. See *Lunar Magic*, page 179.

## Power Runes

These Runes symbolize the members of the Celestial Court; the Power Runes are unique in that they are formed in mutually antagonistic pairs. There are several other theories about the Power Runes besides this dualistic one, but we know that this theory was popular during the Hero Wars period. Some other philosophers claimed that there was a gradual step-building pattern among the deities, which follows the established Creative Devolution theories.

Regardless of the truth, it is important to remember that most people, including the magicians of the time, knew very little about these Powers except the rudest beginnings of their spiritual potential. Expressions and experiences dealing with their inner natures are tasks for the greater deities, and not the races of men. Still, no one would deny that every person knows something of each of these Powers, and may tap them in varying degrees.

## Harmony

**Meaning:** harmony, cooperation, healing

This Rune is said to represent the Divine Harp with which Order was separated from Chaos. It is quite ancient and revered throughout the world. She is the power of Healing and Community.

*Personality Traits*: forgiving, merciful, peaceful

*Incompatible with*: Disorder

**Glorantha**

*The goddess Glorantha was the daughter of the Twins, the Firstborn. She is the Source of Creation and the Soul of the Cosmos. Her first thoughts were the words "I Am," and from that all of subsequent reality began. With Ouroboros, she was the Mother of the Powers, and the Empress of the Celestial Court atop the Spike. During the Great Darkness, she was shattered and broken as terror and hate overtook her children. It is widely believed that Arachne Solara is the incarnation of Glorantha in Time.*

## Disorder

**Meaning:** disorder, trickery, trouble

Some say that Disorder is the First Born of the Powers, and so is the foundation of the universe. The symbol itself is of unknown origin.

*Personality Traits*: destructive, reckless, selfish

*Incompatible with*: Harmony

## Life

**Meaning:** love, plenty, sex

This Rune symbolizes the Ancient Cup from which the whole world was poured at the dawn of creation. It is the symbol of growth and life.

*Personality Traits*: generous, lustful

*Incompatible with*: Death

## Death

**Meaning:** death, separation, conflict, endings

Known to be the First Sword, the immortal and cursed weapon used to bring Death to the world. Death is the unyielding fate of all living creatures, both mortal and divine. Death is a frightening but necessary agent of eternal change who can be used in a courageous and noble way to preserve the world.

*Personality Traits*: relentless, ruthless, unemotional

*Incompatible with*: Life

## Stasis

Meaning: Stasis, immobility, permanence, unchanging

The various names for this Rune illustrate the ideas behind it. It is clearly connected with the art of alchemy and the dwarves. They claim that this is the First Rune, for it provided the foundation from which everything else was created, or else provided the foundation of hard laws that were used to overcome the forces of Chaos.

*Personality Traits*: stubborn, inflexible, exacting

*Incompatible with*: Movement

## Movement

**Meaning:** change, conflict, mobility

This Rune denotes the ancient wheel of the Mover. As usual, there are claims for it to be the First Rune, for without it there would have been no growth from Chaos. Change introduced Conflict and Violence into the world, and it is considered to be the sire of Air.

*Personality Traits*: adventurous, dynamic, impulsive, reckless

*Incompatible with*: Stasis

## Truth

**Meaning:** Truth, knowledge, writing

This is a Rune of the ancient, all-seeing sky gods, and is said to represent the torch that the Grey Ones used to escape from Chaos. Thus, its constancy and order set creation apart from random, unsettled Chaos, and so it is yet another candidate for the First Rune.

*Personality Traits*: truthful, observant

*Incompatible with*: Illusion

### The Spike

In the Gods Age, the Celestial Court lived upon, within, and beneath the Spike, that extended from the Underworld to the top of the Sky Dome. The Spike was destroyed by Chaos in the Great Darkness.

## Illusion

**Meaning:** falsehood, concealment, tricks

The Father of Lies always claimed that this was the First Rune, for without it there would be none of us to think we ever were. He refused to explain further.

*Personality Traits*: deceitful, cowardly

*Incompatible with*: Truth

# Form Runes

The Form Runes can be understood as the basic molds that were used by the greatest gods to populate the many niches of the physical plane. A god is often described as being of a particular Power or Element, and the Form determines how this force is expressed.

Everything has a Form Rune but they are rarely a source of magic powers other than the form itself. For example, all of mankind has the Man Rune ( ) but it simply means that they are men (and not gods, discorporate beings, animals, or plants).

The following Runes depict the most basic of their respective forms.

## Plant

**Meaning:** Plant Life

This Rune is the Father of Vegetation. During his lifetime, there was an intense period of vegetable growth and dominance upon the Surface World, called the Green Age. Thus, this Rune is the symbol of the first life upon Glorantha.

## Beast

**Meaning**: Animal Life

This Rune is also called the Dragon's Eye, and is supposed to represent the armor plate over a dragon's eye. Dragons are thought to be the progenitors of all beasts (at least those with four or more legs), though no one has asked a dragon about it. All beasts have the Beast Rune. When a non-beast has this Rune, it often means that they can take the form of a beast.

*Note:* Many animals are also associated with other Runes. For example alynxes, sheep and bulls are associated with the Air Rune, cows, geese, and snakes are associated with the Earth Rune, horses and most birds are associated with the Fire Rune, and so on.

## Man

**Meaning:** Mortal humanoids

This Rune represents the humanoid shape, and is common among all intelligent humanoid races. Some other races interpret it as "slave" or "food". It is said to represent Grandfather Mortal, about whom there are numerous folktales; he is also sometimes called simply Old Man, Progenitor of Races. He fathered many races, built some more, and provided the form for others that were created during the Gods Age.

## Dragonewt

**Meaning:** Dragonewts

As exotic as the race it represents, it is found only in Dragon Pass, Kralorela, and a few other regions with a Dragonewt nest. Unlike most other Form Runes, it cannot be used with an Elemental Rune, though there are several Dragonewt Power cults, all modified by the Dragonewt Rune.

## Spirit

**Meaning:** Discorporate beings

This Rune describes the spirit aspect of the universe. Shamans are always tied to the Spirit Rune, since it is by dealing with the entities of this Form that they gain their power.

*Note:* People with this rune are predisposed towards spirit magic, even if they are from a theist or wizard culture.

**Other Runes**

*Several other runes were known in Dragon Pass in the Hero Wars period, and other runes are known throughout Glorantha, sometimes on a regional or cultural basis. These runes include specializations of the Element Runes, sometimes called sub-elements, such as Shadow, Cold, Heat, and Light. Runes linked to specific gods, Heroes, creatures, races, cultures, or lands are also known.*

## Chaos

**Meaning:** Entropy, evil, corruption

This Rune is descriptive of those who are descended from the Forces of Entropy. Such creatures are usually bound to some Form, since even Chaos must obey the Laws of Time, but it might be combined with any other Rune, even opposed Powers. Nothing is totally safe from the taint of Chaos.

*Note*: This Rune is taboo for the Orlanthi, Praxians, and Esrolians. If awakened during adult initiation rites, it usually results in you being killed.

# Condition Runes

There are three main Condition Runes: Mastery, Magic, and Infinity, and many minor ones. They often modify another Rune by showing which aspect of an Element, Power, or Form is served by a deity.

## Luck

**Meaning:** Fortuity, fate, destiny

Many legends and tales teach the futility of trying to outmaneuver an inexorable fate that has been foreordained. The rune is little used, except in the Holy Country, where the Masters of Luck and Death proudly display the symbol of the chance they take with every breath.

*Personality Traits:* reckless, fatalistic

## Mastery

**Meaning:** Leadership, authority, sovereignty

The all-purpose Rune, it can be used as a symbol of Mastery of Men, Magic, or the Elements. As Master of Men, it describes a Hero. For Magic, it symbolizes any deity or cult of reasonable power. For Elements it denotes a sort of innate intelligence among the physical stuff of the world. The exact origins of the Rune are lost, but it is connected with the Dead Gods whose gigantic crowns are still sometimes found among the abandoned peaks of the world.

*Personality Traits*: proud, just, authoritative

## Magic

**Meaning:** Communication between worlds

This Rune indicates a connection between men and gods. Almost redundant in this magic-rich world, this Rune describes how a deity or individual deals with the power of another Rune. Since it is impossible to deal with the Runes without magic, it means much more. The symbol also has a much deeper meaning, denoting an individual's "personal power".

*Note*: the Magic Rune is a rare rune and has few divine cults specifically associated with it.

## Infinity

**Meaning:** All, eternity, everything, divine, True Dragons, Illumination

The mark of the eternal. Those who possess the Infinity Rune have transcended mortal perspective and understanding. It is a characteristic of gods, True Dragons, and those whose consciousness knows no limitations.

## Trade

**Meaning:** Communication, trade, exchange

The Trade Rune is a unique composite of the Movement and Harmony Runes. It symbolizes language and speech, passage and transit, travel, trade and roads. The God Learners widely popularized this Rune as the symbol of trade, but it is more than just that.

*Personality Traits*: fair dealing, open minded

## Eternal Battle

**Meaning:** Anti-Chaos

The Eternal Battle is a unique rune where all Four Worlds fight Chaos. The Eternal Battle still rages in the Wastelands locked forever in combat with Chaos.

*Personality Traits*: hate Chaos, frenzy, rage, violence

# Dragon Pass and Environs

## General Description

Dragon Pass, along with the adjacent borderlands of Prax and the Holy Country, is the default setting for the *HeroQuest Glorantha* book. All of Glorantha is described in great detail in the *Guide to Glorantha* and this chapter provides only a brief overview of Dragon Pass and the neighboring lands of the Holy Country and Prax.

Dragon Pass is probably the most important place in Glorantha, sitting at the crossroads of the continent of Genertela. The actual Dragon Pass is a narrow valley near Mount Kero Fin that crosses the continental divide, but over the centuries the name has come to be applied to the whole 140-mile gap in the Rockwood Mountains and to the region around this gap. The Dragon Pass region is large, perhaps 40,000 square miles in total area, even bigger if its boundaries are determined liberally.

Dragon Pass is one of the most militarily significant regions in Genertela. It offers the only passage suitable for large, heavily encumbered armies through the Rockwood Mountains, which extend unbroken for roughly a thousand miles to the west and about 625 miles to the northeast. The region contains much easily defended terrain, such as forests, hills, and mountains. Most importantly, its warlike population and many magical entities make it a daunting region for any army to pacify or conquer. For more than a century, two Orlanthi kingdoms have divided Dragon Pass: Tarsh in the north and Sartar in the south.

Much of Dragon Pass is hills and mountains, but its many valleys are fertile and rich. The area is well-watered, warm in summer and cold in winter. Most of Dragon Pass is over 2,000 feet above sea level, and notorious for its destructive storms and violent winds. Mixed forests and rough grasslands cover most valleys and foothills, except where people have cleared them for farming.

To the south of Dragon Pass lies a magical land called the Holy Country, or Kethaela, long united by its God-King, who swam ashore from the forbidden oceans. Many nations exist in harmony in this land, drawing on the ancient knowledge of the west, the east, and the north, and from far beneath the earth. The ancestors of the Sartarites came from the Holy Country, and the region is dominated by Esrolia, one of the richest and most densely populated areas in Glorantha.

To the north of Dragon Pass is Peloria, dominated by the Lunar Empire, the most powerful state in Glorantha. A son of the Red Goddess called the Red Emperor rules the empire as a demigod. The Orlanth hill tribes of south Peloria, including Tarsh, have all been conquered by the Lunar Empire and are ruled by puppet-kings.

To the east of Dragon Pass are the plains of Prax, an arid chaparral land inhabited by the Praxian Animal Nomads. In the Golden Age, the land was fertile and pleasant, but was so badly wounded during the Chaos Wars that now little will grow there, even though great amounts of rain may fall during Dark, Storm, and Sea seasons. Little rain falls the rest of the year. The surface of the land is hard clay and sand, and the water runs off or goes underground and is lost to the inhabitants. Travelers frequently will see river-courses, but only a trickle of water will be in them. By Fire season, the number of streams flowing in Prax can be counted on one hand.

# Significant Places

*Alda-Chur (small city)*: The second-largest city in Sartar, Alda-Chur is a bustling, crowded, wealthy trade center of some 3,500 inhabitants. It dominates a key part of the main trade route linking the Lunar Empire with Sartar, Prax, and the cities and seaports of the Holy Country. In 1611, Harvar Ironfist of the Vantaros tribe established himself as the ruler of Alda-Chur with the aid of his Yelmalio cult. He ruled until 1625, when he was killed in the Dragonrise. Argrath liberated the city in 1627 and it became a part of his kingdom.

*Bagnot (small city)*: The former capital of Tarsh, Bagnot fell to the Lunar kings in 1582. The city remains the sacred center of the kingdom, and sacrifices are still made at Arim's Temple of the Secret Kingdom.

*Beast Valley*: One part of the land is set aside and protected by ancient magic whose perpetrators, the Empire of the Wyrms Friends, are long dead. The origins of its residents are unknown, some claiming divine parentage and others perverse surgery and sorcery. Collectively, they are the Beast Men, and all seem to be part man and part animal. They live peaceful lives here, untroubled save when they choose to be. They meet once each year to dance amid the standing stones of Wild Temple in a bloody and spectacular affair.

*The Block*: This enormous chunk of magic rock is a remnant of the Spike. It fell to earth during the Gods War, and crushed the Devil beneath it. The rock, now called the Block, still sits in Prax, a half-mile on each side and a mile tall, flanked by hills of dirt. Beneath are the Devil's remains, eroding under the ministrations of the Good River. A community of Storm Bull berserks fanatically guards the Block.

*Boldhome (large city)*: The capital of Sartar, this city is built high above the plains in a split valley amid peaks sacred to Orlanth and his pantheon. The founder, Sartar, built it to fulfill an ancient challenge and prophecy. For a century, the Flame of Sartar burned bright in Boldhome and the city served as the political and religious center of the kingdom and an important center of trade and learning.

In 1602, Boldhome was occupied by Lunar troops, and the Flame of Sartar extinguished. In 1625, Kallyr Starbrow liberated Boldhome. In 1627, Argrath came to Boldhome and relit the Flame of Sartar. He was acclaimed Prince of Sartar and made the city his capital. See *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* for additional information.

*Building Wall*: This structure erected itself by magic during the Building Wall Battle in 1605 and thwarted a large-scale Lunar invasion into Esrolia. Its appearance varies along its length, sometimes like a coral with pointed spikes (rumored to be venomous to the touch), sometimes like an earthen rampart topped by Esrolian square shields. Belintar ordered several units of militia to stand where the wall would rise, and incorporated them and their spirits into the wall.

*Cliffhome (troll city):* A graceful complex of towers tops the tallest peak of the Black Dragon Mountains, a dramatic spur of the eastern Rockwood range near Skyfall Lake. Within Cliffhome's towers and tunnels lives Cragspider the Firewitch, the demigod troll sorceress.

*Creek-Stream River*: This is the great river of the god Engizi which begins at Skyfall Lake and flows some 420 miles until it reaches the sea at Nochet. Two great tributaries – the Creek and the Stream – flow through the hills of Sartar, meeting the River in the haunted Upland Marsh.

*Dragon's Eye*: This large "city" of inhuman architecture rises amid a wide flat plain, wherein live thousands of dragonewts, one of the largest colonies in all of Glorantha. It is one of the few ancient strongholds of dragonkind to survive from before

## Cities

This book uses the following city size classifications:

**Small City**: A small city contains 500 to 6,000 residents. By definition, a city has a marketplace where its wares can be purchased daily. Goods are manufactured here, such as weapons, armor, fine clothing, ships (if on a coast), etc. Holy places in a small city usually include one or more small temples and several shrines to local gods and spirits.

**Large City**: A city of 6,000-25,000 permanent residents is very large for pre-industrial times. A large city is a major importing center of food and other goods, and a major manufacturing center of luxuries. Temples to each of the important gods of the local pantheon are often found in large cities, as are temples for foreign gods worshiped by immigrants or visitors, and many small shrines dedicated to obscure local demigods, Heroes, and spirits.

**Metropolis**: A metropolis numbers over 25,000 or so permanent residents. A city of 50,000 residents is extraordinary. A metropolis requires good transport (usually by water) and a strong central administration to acquire and distribute food to the residents. A metropolis usually has multiple great temples and numerous smaller temples and shrines.

the Darkness. Here lives the Inhuman King, a True Dragon incarnated in a lesser body, and who rules the dragonewts of Dragon Pass. Magical dragonewt roads connect Dragon's Eye to the other dragonewt cities of Dragon Pass.

*Duck Point (small city)*: This small city was built by King Sartar to forge stronger bonds with the beasts and the other strange peoples along the River. The wood and stone buildings familiar to other Sartarite cities intermingle with the woven wattle-and-daub buildings of the ducks, often in surprising combinations. Duck Point is the way-station between the ducks and the rest of Sartar and an important transit point for all river traffic between Sartar and the Holy Country.

*Dunstop (small city)*: This fortified trade city on Kordros Island has a reputation as a rough and martial city whose people are pragmatic and forceful. It remained independent of the Lunar kings until King Phargentes took it by force. Dunstop is ruled by Fazzur Wideread and his kin.

*Dwarf Mine (dwarf city)*: One of the friendliest dwarf leaders in the world lives here, a practitioner of Openhandism and Individualism. He has been known to give out gifts or offer rentals for unusual prices, and some of his rentals are for extraordinary mercenaries, like the Cannon Cult.

*Esrolia*: Esrolia is a densely populated nation which occupies the northwestern portion of the Holy Country between Mirrorsea Bay and the Old Woods, where Aldryami still dwell. It consists of several rich valleys, and the rolling lands between them, broken only by two significant rises: the Delainan Hills and Harasarl Hills. It is a teeming land of rivers subdivided by numerous irrigation ditches. The land is verdant with some large forests and many small woods of semi-tropical trees and brush. Agriculture is easy in these well-watered, fertile lands. The Lyksos River carries the outflow of the Creek-Stream River, while the Malthin and Gorphin rivers drain the Arstola Forest and the Skyreach Mountains.

Although Esrolia is primarily rural and agricultural, it has a large urban population. Nearly 200,000 people live in Esrolian cities, almost 10% of the total population. Cities are ruled by queens, who are selected from among the resident clans. The queen is not an absolute ruler, but presides over the city council in a manner analogous to a tribal king.

*Far Place*: The Far Place is part of a large uplift between the Indigo Mountains and the eastern Rockwood Mountains. Most of the Far Place is over 3,000 feet above sea level. Many hills rise over 4,500 feet, and the highest peaks top 10,000 feet. Thanks to the magical storm above Skyfall Lake, all of the Far Place receives heavy rain; more than 100 inches a year in some areas. In winter, the area receives very heavy snowfalls. As a result, much of the Far Place is covered in wet woodlands.

The Far Place is inhabited by seven tribes, all of Tarshite origin but long politically associated with Sartar. Most are Orlanthi, although important minorities follow Yelmalio and the Seven Mothers. Between 1582 and 1602, the area was part of the Kingdom of Sartar, and it rejoined that kingdom in 1627.

*Furthest (large city)*: The center of Lunar civilization in Tarsh, this city was named when it was thought to be the furthest that the Lunar Empire would ever go. Furthest is the home of the Tarshite king and his family, along with the ranking Seven Mothers priesthood. It is relatively new, with straight streets laid out in a grid pattern, fountained squares, Sylilan architecture, and formidable walls. As is typical in Lunar cities, there are more temples than government buildings.

*Grazelands*: A hilly area inhabited by Sun-worshiping horse nomads, and their multitude of enslaved farmers. The Grazelands are astride the main trade route between the Lunar Empire and the Holy Country; the Grazelanders escort and guide caravans traveling through their lands (and ambush those foolish enough to ignore their services), collecting storage fees and tolls. As a result, several small market cities have grown up around the warehouses, lodgings, and temples that the foreigners need.

*Hendrikiland:* This rugged land between the Storm Mountains and the Shadow Plateau is the ancient homeland of the Hendriking tribe. Whitewall is its capital. It is populated largely by herders and their livestock of cattle and sheep. The Hendrikings were famed as fierce bandits and magicians, and that reputation continues with their Volsaxing heirs. Ancient tombs of kings and Heroes litter the landscape. King Broyan is the king of the Hendriking tribe.

*Heortland*: This is a high plateau occupying most of the eastern part of the land around the Mirrorsea Bay. There is a narrow coastal strip which quickly gives way to thousand foot high cliffs ending at the plateau. Five rivers have cut gouges from the plateau top to the sea and these form the only access from shore to the upland farms. Only in the northern part, around the Marzeel River, does

**Overleaf:**
*Map of Dragon Pass and Prax*

*This map shows Dragon Pass, Prax and the northern half of the Holy Country.*

Talfort
Furthest
Oslir River
Black Eel River
Slavewall
Ivory Plinth
Troll Ruins
Stinking Forest
Temple of the Reaching Moon
Goldedge
Skyfall Lake
TARSH
Kordos Island
Sun Wheel Ruins
Marof's House
Duelfield
Heruvernalda
Snake Pipe Hollow
Grizzly Peak
Hydra Mountains
Stone over Souls
Dunstop
Dwarf Mine
Alda-Chur
Bagnot
Falling Ruin
Herongreen
Red Dragon Vale
Shaker Temple
The River Dragonewt Wilds
Skull Ruins
North Post
Dragon's Eye
Donalf Flats
Kero-Fin
The Creek
Two Ridge
Dryad Woods
Oslir River
Wintertop
Jonstown
Queen's Post
Upland Marsh
Runegate
Ghost-Around
SARTAR
Muse Roost
The Forest of Wondrous Beasts
Smoking Ruin
Highwyrm
GRAZELANDS
Duck Point
Clearwine
The Stream
Wild Temple
Dragonspine Ridge
Green Dragon Vale
Wilmskirk
Sun Dome
Rich Post
BEAST VALLEY
Creek-Stream River
Arrowmound Mt.
Skyreach Mountains
Wasps Nest
Doktados Mt.
Whitewall
Troll Woods
Blackwell
New Crystal
Arkat's Hold
Lead Hills
Lyksos River
Styx Grotto
Old Woods
HENDRIKILAND
SHADOW PLATEAU
Smithstone
Larnste's Footprint
Helerdon
Tarpit
Kosh
Sylthi
Valadon
Jansholm
Axe Hall
Brol
Ezel
Karse
Sklar
Backford
ESROLIA
Monros
Lylket
Nochet
Mylagos
Necropolis
Durengard
Malthin River
Pennel
Pedestal
Donbry
Mirrorsea Bay
Leskos
Rhigos
Vizel

Rockwood Mountains
Roundlake Mountains
Desolation Hills
DAGORI INKARTH
Vale of Flowers
Crabtown
The Throne
Boathouse Ruins
Stump
Grand Mine
Torch
Castle of Lead
Shadows Dance
Where the Rock Speaks
Adari
Nine Good Giants
Contemplative Rest
Bison Plains
Indigo Mountains
The Better Place
Tada's High Tumulus
Pairing Stone
Indagos
Wolfsland
Obscure Plinth
PAVIS COUNTY
Jaldon's Rest
The Good Place
New Pavis
Big Rubble
Garhound
Hill of Orlanth Victorious
Moonbroth
Copper Caves
Sun Dome Temple
Swenstown
Winter Ruins
PRAX
The Long Dry
SUN COUNTY
Pimper's Block
Dead Place
Eiskolli
Helmbold
VULTURES COUNTRY
Sacred Ground
Dragonrise
Hender's Ruins
Caravan Alley
The Paps
Eirtha Hills
Zola Fel River
Day's Rest
Tourney Altar
Old Wind
The Block
Good Canal
Devil's Marsh
Horn Gate
Biggle Stone
Exile Stead
Stormwalk Mt.
Agape
Monkey Ruins
Cam's Well
Sog's Ruins
Orani's Mistake
Corflu
10 miles
30 miles
50 miles
0
20 miles
40 miles
60 miles

**Ivory Plinth**

*Blood runs in streams from tortured victims at this ancient Temple of the Bloody Tusk. It is a tall, ivory-colored tower some 400 feet tall and 25 yards around at the base, made from a single tusk of a gigantic boar and mounted atop stone buildings.*

the land sink into Volsaxiland. Little remains of the once great woodlands that covered most of this plateau in the First and Second Ages.

The people here are mostly farmers who follow the customs and laws established by Heort the Founder. They worship Orlanth as king of the gods, and Ernalda as his wife. Their culture is Orlanthi and follows the typical pattern of hill folk who worship the Lightbringers. They are indistinguishable from the Sartarites (indeed, this is the ancestral home of the Sartarites), speaking the same language and sharing the same customs.

*Holy Country*: Also called Kethaela, this confederation of five ancient kingdoms (Caladraland, Esrolia, God Forgot, Heortland, and the Shadow Plateau) enjoyed three centuries of prosperous rule by the God-King Belintar. However, that peace was shattered in 1616 when Western Barbarians invaded Esrolia, Wolf Pirates destroyed the Holy Country navy, and the mortal host of Belintar died and could not be replaced. The Holy Country was invaded by the Lunar Empire in 1619, and is wracked by civil war and ravaged by Wolf Pirates.

*Jaldon's Rest*: This stone cairn is the grave of the Praxian Hero Jaldon Goldentooth and his magical steed. It is a place of power for the Praxian Animal Nomads.

*Jonstown (small city)*: This small city is an important marketplace for the tribes of Sartar. The city boasts the famed Jonstown Library, founded by King Sartar's son Eonistaran the Sage. Only slightly less famous is the House of Peace, a temple of Chalana Arroy.

See *Sartar Companion* for additional information.

*Karse (small city):* Karse is the most important port for offloading goods destined for Sartar, or through Sartar to Prax and Tarsh. The locals are expert boat makers. Temples to Diros, Pelaskos, Poverri, and Choralinthor stand near the harbor. Despite its strong fortifications, the city fell to the Lunars in 1619 after a dramatic assault by land and sea. After the defeat of the Lunars in 1624, Karse allied with Nochet.

*Kero Fin*: This incredible peak towers 7.5 miles into the air and is visible from hundreds of miles around. It appears like a needle rising upward, out of sight into the Sky. The most important of the Great Sacred Peaks of the Orlanthi, Kero Fin is usually cloaked in thick clouds, as befits the mother of Orlanth. A sacred cave high on the mountain marks the site where Orlanth and his brother Yinkin were born. About its base live the Tarsh Exiles, rebels resisting the Lunar occupation of Tarsh, where they control the local temple of Maran Gor, the Earth Shaker.

*Lunar Empire*: This Empire is the political manifestation of the Red Moon, created by the Red Goddess in 1220 by seven renegade magicians from other cults. The Red Goddess left behind her empire and ascended to the heavens 27 years later, bringing the first moon to the skies of Glorantha since the God Time. The Empire has used its ties with Chaos to control it and put it to work. This attitude has made them many enemies throughout Glorantha, but it has also made them very powerful.

At its greatest extent in 1621, the Empire ruled all Peloria and extended south to Dragon Pass and the Kingdom of Sartar, marched into Prax seeking a sea port at Corflu, and conquered all of Heortland. By 1627, the Empire had lost all of Dragon Pass and Prax except for the Kingdom of Tarsh.

*Lyksos River*: The Lyksos River drains northern Esrolia and empties out with its mouth at Nochet. The river gained tremendously in prestige and power after Belintar cut the New River to divert the Creek-Stream River to flow into the Lyksos. It is the main arterial for waterborne traffic between Dragon Pass and the Holy Country.

*Nochet (metropolis)*: The capital of rich Esrolia, Nochet is the biggest and most important city in the world, with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The city is bright and vivid with color; all walls are painted with bright colors and many are covered with murals depicting mythological or historical scenes. The birthplace of the Opening of the Seas, Nochet harbors the affection of all sailors and it is the greatest port city in Glorantha. As a result, Nochet is extremely cosmopolitan and at least a third of its residents are foreigners.

Many gods and goddesses live in Nochet and it is famed for its Sacred City where its queen resides amongst temples and sanctuaries. Great temples abound in Nochet: the main temple to Ernalda is tended by hundreds of priestesses; Chalana Arroy resides at the Great Hospital where she is served by the Sisters of Mercy; and the Great Library of Nochet is the largest library in Glorantha, Lhankor Mhy having lived there since the earliest times. The Harbor Market of Nochet is the location of the most important Issaries temple in Glorantha, famed for its massive statute of Goldentongue and his two sons; goods and merchants from all over Glorantha can be found there. Nearby is the Dormal temple, beautifully decorated and lavishly adorned. Countless other temples can be found in Nochet, including the dangerous Storm Temple, where Orlanth lives.

In 1621, several blocks of tenements were demolished to lay the foundations for a full Lunar temple in the city. The following year, a coup

removed the pro-Lunar queen of Nochet, and the city faced Lunar siege and war.

*The Paps (small city)*: The Deep Womb of the Goddess. This is the most sacred place of Eiritha and her son, Waha, as it was here that Eiritha hid herself from Death by going underneath the earth. The Paps are an enormous underground Earth temple, a vestige of the Golden Age. A thousand priestesses dwell here, many of whom tend gods and spirits found in no other place. All these priestesses maintain a luxurious existence, quite removed from the toils of nomadic life. Eiritha reigns supreme here and, except for certain permanent priests, men may not enter the sacred precincts of the Paps unless invited by the priestesses. The countryside around the Paps for many miles is excellent grassland.

*Pavis (small city)*: This is the only true city anywhere in Prax. It is divided into two sections: New Pavis, and the Big Rubble. The Rubble is a vast expanse of ruins haunted by trolls. New Pavis is a human city founded by a member of the House of Sartar and settled by colonists from Dragon Pass. From 1610 to 1624, Pavis and civilized Prax were ruled by the Lunar Empire.

See *Pavis: Gateway to Adventure* for additional information.

*Pimper's Block (oasis)*: Pimper's Block is a thriving slave market on the border between Dragon Pass and Prax. Once a simple altar shared by the Orlanthi and Praxians, it has long been used as a place to ransom back captured kin. Now buyers from Dragon Pass come to purchase whatever their masters require or desire. By tradition, Morokanth are not allowed here.

*Prax:* Prax is the relatively flat region between the River of Cradles in the east and the hills and mountains that separate it from Dragon Pass and the Holy Country in the west, and between the mountains of Shadows Dance in the north and the coastal zone and the sea in the south. This semi-arid grassland is holy to all Praxian nomads because it is the home of their ancestors. Little besides grass and chaparral grows there, even though great amounts of rain may fall during winter and spring. Little rain falls the rest of the year.

*River of Cradles*: Also called the Zola Fel, this is the only major river of the Wastelands and marks the boundary between Prax and the Wastes proper. In the First and Second Ages, giant cradles holding equally giant babies were seen floating down it, but no longer. From 1610 to 1624, the River of Cradles was ruled by the Lunar Empire.

See *Pavis: Gateway to Adventure* for additional information on the River of Cradles.

*Rockwood Mountains*: The Rockwood Mountains are a sheer range thrust upward in God Time to serve as an impassable wall separating the warring races of men. They are inhabited by wind children and a race of giants who devour human flesh and often reach a height of 50 feet or more. The eastern range is ruled by dwarves who have vast cities tunneled deep into the rocks.

Dragon Pass is the only easy way through the Rockwoods, although several more dangerous passes are known and occasionally used for travel. Many peaks of the Rockwoods are so high that they are permanently snow-capped, and in winter, snow demons spread their realm lower on the slopes and invade the lands of men.

*Sacred Ground:* The Paps and the Sacred Ground are sacred territory to all Praxians. It is the birthplace of their protector, Waha the Butcher, as well as performing the important function of providing neutral territory for hostile peoples to meet. The priestess of the Paps forbid combat within 20 miles of the Paps, forming the Sacred Ground around the temple.

*Sartar*: The Kingdom of Sartar is made up of twenty-four Orlanthi tribes, descendants of settlers who moved from the south to seek old-time Orlanthi worship. The tribes were united in 1492 by the great Hero Sartar. The royal house of Sartar coordinated the tribes for a century, resisting Lunar expansion the entire time. In 1602, the capital, Boldhome, fell to assault. Until 1625, the kingdom was under Lunar Occupation.

In 1625, in the event called the Dragonrise, a True Dragon destroyed the Lunar Provincial Army and Sartar was freed.

See *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, *King of Sartar*, and the *Guide to Glorantha* for more background about Sartar.

*Shadows Dance*: The region known as Shadows Dance extends from Dragon Pass to the Wastelands. The western part of this land is called Dagori Inkarth and is dominated by trolls. It is centered on the Castle of Lead where Kyger Litor lives. The trolls are well-suited to the land and they worship the shadows which lurk about. The eastern part is primarily hilly and dry, though some regions maintain tough pines and scrub. A small Aldryami community survives in the Redwood Forest in the east.

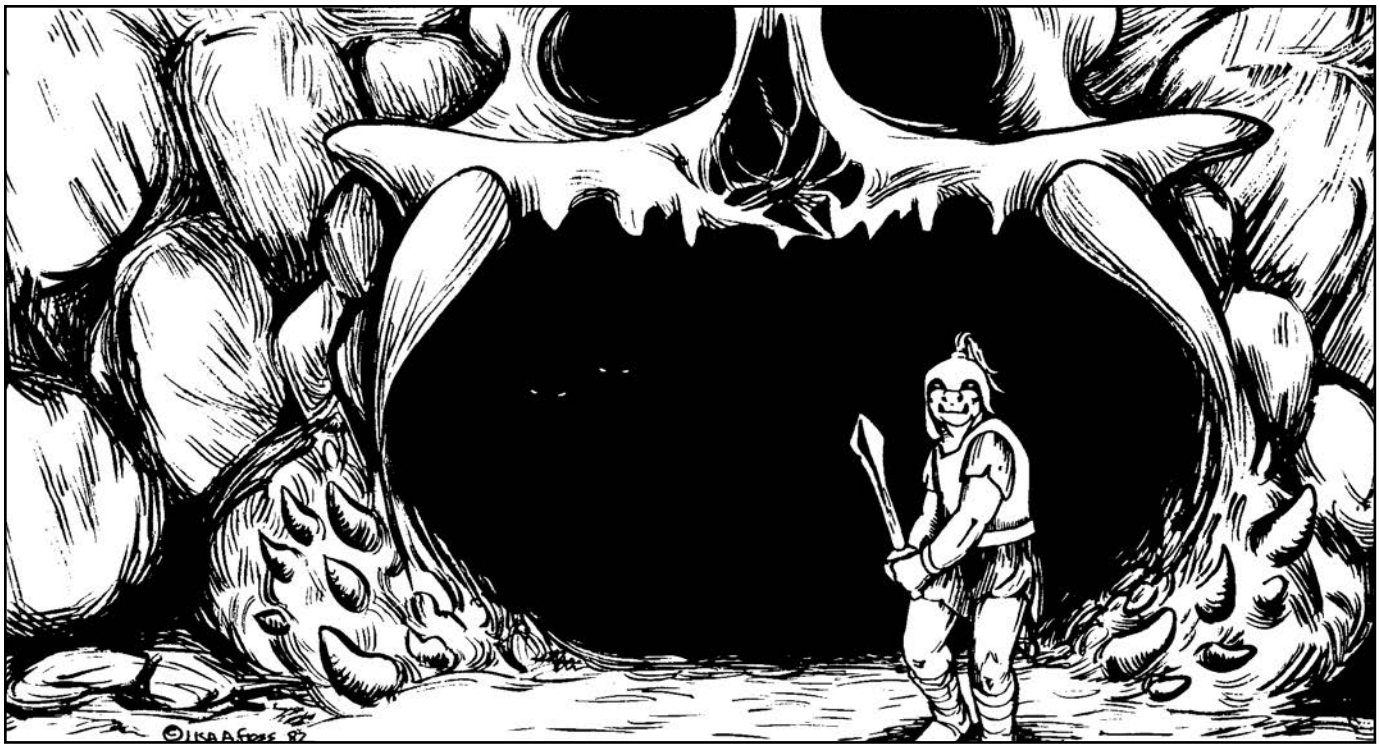
*Shadow Plateau*: A tabletop plateau rises here. Trollkin dwell atop it, and dark trolls within. Some pessimistic humans think as many as 40,000 trolls exist within this ancient complex.

*Shaker's Temple*: This is the largest Earth temple complex in Dragon Pass, with strong ties to the

**Royal Roads**

*The princes of Sartar were great builders and tied together that kingdom with great roads. Trade increased steadily along the routes established by the Sartar princes and other rulers joined the Sartar road network. The Hendriki Road begins in the Holy Country in the city of Karse and traveled north to Sartar's lands, reaching Wilmskirk. There Sartar's royal road went east to Boldhome, and then further east to Swenstown or north to Jonstown. Later roads extended the network, enabling caravans to go north to Tarsh, either via Alda-Chur or across Dragon Pass from Wilmskirk to Duck Point and then on to Bagnot.*

*Each Sartarite royal road is an architectural wonder, about twelve to fifteen feet wide and paved with slabs of stone. The roads run in straight sections, with no curves, traversing their way up steep slopes. At intervals, they widen to allow for shrines and wayside rest stops. Watchtowers and guardposts are spaced along the roads.*



**Entrance to the Castle of Lead**

*This magical fortress in Dagori Inkarth is the home of Kyger Litor, the Mother of Trolls. It reaches down deep into the Underworld. The ruling elite of Dagori Inkarth, a circle of Mistress Race trolls called the Eldest Kin, live deep beneath the Castle of Lead. Many of the Eldest Kin remember the exodus from Wonderhome, and have not seen the Surface World since the God Time. Even the air and sky around Dagori Inkarth seem infected by Darkness. Though often invaded, it has never been conquered.*

Tarsh Exiles of Wintertop Fort. It is home to Maran Gor, Goddess of Earthquakes and Destruction, and sister of Ernalda. It was built where the blood of Grandfather Mortal was spilled. The temple was founded by King Arim the Pauper, of Tarsh, though the cult claims to have been present at the holy place throughout the Inhuman Occupation of Dragon Pass. The High Priestess of the Shaker's Temple is so ponderous she has to be pulled about in an oak cart drawn by six oxen. She is attended by forty-seven male and female cannibal virgins.

*Skyfall Lake:* At the headwaters of the Creek-Stream River is an eternal thunderstorm that dumps rain in torrents continually upon this turbulent lake. The natives claim there is a hole in the Sky there. Sometimes creatures and items from the Celestial River also fall down.

*Snakepipe Hollow*: In ancient wars against Chaos, deep in the Darkness time, the earth collapsed to trap foul Chaos here, so a conquering army could charge down from one end and destroy all they met. It worked… almost. Some evil burrowed away, and although the conquerors pursued it deep into the tunnels, some still escaped. That Chaos is there still, it sometimes erupts, and always poses a menace to any nearby. Snakepipe Hollow is called Ginijji in ancient sources, and at least one tunnel leads directly into the Underworld. The "snakepipe" for which the hollow is named was a wondrous artifact owned by a mighty Earth temple located here in the God Time.

*Storm Mountains*: These formidable crags rise abruptly from the Heortland Plateau, separating it from Prax. Forests cover their upper slopes. Several clans of elusive wind children live in aeries which cluster about the steep peaks and cliff faces of these mountains.

*Sun Dome County*: This small state is a theocracy controlled by the Yelmalio cult since receiving the land from King Tarkalor in 1579. The Yelmalio cult survives in hostile Dragon Pass through its drilled pikemen – the famous Sun Dome Templars. It fiercely defends its independence, until the right price comes along, at which point the inhabitants of military age become dedicated mercenaries.

*Swenstown (small city)*: This small city serves as a regional market and as a point of trade with the tribes of Prax.

*Tarsh*: The Kingdom of Tarsh, in the north, is the largest country in Dragon Pass. It is the richest of the Lunar Provinces and has reclaimed the northern part of Sartar as its own. The King of Tarsh is tributary to the Lunar Empire, paying money, goods, slaves, and obedience to the empire in the person of the Provincial Governor, whose main residence is in Mirin's Cross, far down the Oslir River.

The lifestyle, language, and customs of the common Tarshite are Orlanthi in manner. The clan chiefs owe allegiance to regional leaders who used to be tribally elected, but are now appointed by the

king. Taxes are paid in livestock, mined goods, or other kind.

The city of Furthest is the center of Tarsh culture, built over the previous settlement as a Lunar colony in Dragon Pass. It is the home of the king and his family, as well as a major Seven Mothers temple. Its residents, and the farmers who thickly populate the river valley, are thoroughly Lunarized in attitudes.

*Temple of the Reaching Moon*: One of the powerful temple complexes built by the Lunar Empire to hold and extend the Glowline. Criminals and rebels are sacrificed to feed Yara Aranis and power the Glowline. The temple is defended by a regiment of Lunar magicians and their guards.

*Tourney Altar (oasis)*: This natural stone amphitheatre is the center of the Humakt cult in Prax, and has served as the site of sacred combat since at least the time of Tada.

*Troll Woods*: The Darkness worshiping Kitori tribe occupies these woods. They once collected tribute from everyone between here and the Shadow Plateau, until Tarkalor defeated them. The tribe includes dark trolls and humans.

*Whitewall (small city)*: Capital city of the Volsaxi and ancient religious center for the Heortlings. An impregnable fortress built atop solid rock, it is surrounded by high gleaming white stone walls some 50 feet high and 30 feet thick, and the city is well-provided with granaries and wells. Within the walls are temples to Orlanth and Ernalda, and their pantheon. A star god has defended the city since the Darkness.

Whitewall, also called Ililbervor and Seriasdova, was the last refuge of the Orlanthi against the Lunar Empire and was under siege by the Lunar Army for three years. King Broyan, assisted by many Orlanthi Heroes from Sartar and beyond, led the defense of the sacred temple-fortress until it finally fell in 1621, triggering the magical event called the Windstop. King Broyan reclaimed Whitewall in 1622 and the city remains an important religious center for the Heortlings.

*Wilmskirk (small city)*: This small city has a surprising number of temples and is the main market for southern Sartar. It is famed for its artists and craftspeople.

*Wintertop Fort (small city)*: Wintertop Fort is the highest settlement upon the steep approaches to Kero Fin. It is a small town ready to provide porters, climbers, and haulers to anyone who pays. The inhabitants call themselves the Tarsh Exiles, are openly anti-Lunar Orlanthi, and have allied themselves with the bloodthirsty priestesses of the Shaker Goddess.

# Significant People

*Argrath White Bull, (after 1624) King of Pavis, (after 1627) Prince of Sartar, Warlord of the Hendrikings*: The name Argrath is a Sartarite corruption of "Arkat" and means "Liberator." Argrath was born in 1596, the heir to Sartar through his mother Yanioth Two-Sight; he is a member of the Colymar Tribe through his father Maniski. Argrath was forced to flee his home on Starfire Ridge when he was 14 years old and fled into the Wastelands. While a slave of the Bison Tribe, he freed the White Bull spirit and received gifts from the dragons. In 1621, Argrath organized the defense of the baby giant and accompanied the Cradle to the sea. There he met Harrek the Berserk and together they circumnavigated the Homeward Ocean. During his adventures, Argrath gathered companions from many lands and gained remarkable insight into the nature of Gloranthan magic and mythology.

Argrath is extremely unconventional in his approach to heroquesting, combining Arkati insights, God Learner philosophy, and draconic mysticism with traditional cult secrets. He even possesses an uncanny knowledge of Lunar strengths and weaknesses. Despite this, he wields the magic of Orlanth like no hero before him.

*Broyan, the Last Rebel King:* Broyan of Whitewall was the last sacred king of the Hendriki and between 1619 and 1625 he was the leader of the Orlanthi rebels against the Lunar Empire. He received the sacred Sword and Helm of King Vingkot from Great Orlanth himself and was marked by the gods as belonging to Vingkot's own divine bloodline.

For three years, Broyan led the defense of Whitewall against the Lunar Empire. Although he defeated the Crimson Bat and countless assaults, Whitewall fell in 1621. The next year, Broyan defeated the Lunar Army at the Battle of Auroch Hills, and then went on to aid Nochet and was instrumental in putting together the alliance that defeated the Empire at the Battle of Pennel. Broyan was acclaimed King of Kethaela in 1624, but was killed by Lunar magic in 1625 before he could liberate Dragon Pass.

*Cragspider the Firewitch:* This demigoddess is the best known and perhaps most powerful of all trolls. She began as a dark troll in the spider cult of Aranea and worked her way to godhood. At her beck and call are all the powers of Fire and Darkness. In the Second Age, she created the first great trolls in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to overcome the Curse of Kin, and she commands an immense black dragon. Beyond politics, beyond mortality, she is a demigoddess with designs that come to fruition in other worlds.

**Argrath Relights the Flame of Sartar**

*In Fire Season 1627, Argrath went to Boldhome, accompanied by his companions. Three times figures hurled themselves at Argrath, seeking to kill him. Once Argrath's own blade cut down an assassin. Argrath cut off his assailant's head, saying "This is how to deal with assassins with no respect for life." He then mounted the disused brazier where the Flame of Sartar had burned.*

*Argrath stood tall, holding aloft his sacred sword, and prayed aloud to Orlanth for help and aid, and to witness his worthiness to be king. Clouds gathered quickly overhead, though elsewhere the sky was clear, until the whole city was dark, and a hard wind blew like a cyclone upon the man. Then the silent place, at the center, widened quickly and left them all clear, with the air green. And lightning struck, as big as a dragon's neck, striking the brazier so bright that no one could see except in afterimages, and so loud that no one could hear except what the immortals said. And the Flame of Sartar that leapt forth was twenty feet high, and as white hot as iron from Gustbran's magical forge.*

*Delecti the Necromancer:* Delecti is a powerful sorcerer of the Empire of the Wyrms Friends who broke the barriers between life and death. By his arts, Delecti achieved a gruesome sort of immortality: he can transfer his spirit into a freshly slain corpse and live through it until the rotting flesh can no longer sustain him, at which time he seeks out another corpse. When the Golden Horde invaded the land, Delecti used his magic to create the Upland Marsh, where he has endured as one of the Unliving, protected by his army of Walking Corpses, ever since.

*Ethilrist, Lord of the Black Horse Troop:* Although burdened with many other titles, Ethilrist usually settles for that of Lord of the Black Horse Troop. Ethilrist is an ageless mercenary who rents out his supernatural cavalry which ride upon demonic steeds. He was a famous Heroquester originally from distant Ralios and claims descent from the Hero Arkat. Ethilrist is most renowned for his invasion of the Underworld. Among the treasures he plundered from Hell were the Doom Hound, the Cloak of Darkness, and a herd of demonic Black Horses.

*Fazzur Wideread, Governor-General of Dragon Pass (until 1621)*: Fazzur was the Governor-General of Dragon Pass from 1613 to late 1621, and one of the greatest military captains in Gloranthan history.

**Halcyon var Enkorth**
*This venal, deceitful, and arrogant man was appointed Governor of Prax after Sor-eel's recall in 1621. He reports directly to Tatius the Bright and seeks primarily to enrich himself as much as possible during his tenure as governor.*

Chief of the Orindori clan and ruler of Kordros Island, Fazzur is a Rune Master of Yanafal Tarnils and initiated into the mysteries of the Red Goddess. He is the uncle of King Pharandros of Tarsh, immensely rich and owns vast estates in Tarsh, Sartar, and Sylila.

A skilled fighter and a military captain of genius, Fazzur has never been defeated in battle, earning fame first at Grizzly Peak, and later as the architect of the Imperial victories in Sartar, Prax, and Heortland. After his retirement in 1621, Fazzur became the bitter enemy of his nephew and retired to his estates outside of Dunstop, raising horses and writing an account of his campaigns.

*Feathered Horse Queen:* Ruler of the Grazeland Pony Breeders, the Feathered Horse Queen is a powerful Earth priestess who incarnates imposing powers for her worshipers and is the embodiment of sovereignty for all Dragon Pass. During the 1621 to 1627 period, there have been three successive Feathered Horse Queens:

The first Bearer of the Head took the name "Single Matron Woman" and vowed to take no husbands. She loved war and aided Fazzur Wideread in his campaigns against Sartar and Kethaela. She was killed in Esrolia in 1623.

The second Bearer of the Head ruled from 1623 to 1625, and took the name "With Bitter Heart." She aided both the Empire and the Rebels, but was killed when the True Dragon ate its way out of her womb during the Dragonrise.

The third took the name "Reaches All" because of her ambitions. She was quite young when she became the Bearer of the Head in 1625. She seeks to end the wars in Dragon Pass and unite all the peoples of the lands around Kero Fin.

*Gunda the Guilty*: Gunda is the daughter of a Jonating warrior woman who was conquered and raped by a cruel Brithini philosopher. Her youth was spent in flight and exile, and she quickly learned her mother's skills and was favored by her mother's grim Death God.

Gunda was but twelve winters old when she claimed by combat her first pack of Wolf Pirates. She is most famous for her stay with the notorious Queen of the Kiss, whose infamous buss seduced man, woman, and monster alike into sworn obedience. Of those so trapped, only Gunda broke the spell, her oath, and the Queen's back - but at the cost of never knowing love. Shortly thereafter she met Harrek, and their friendship has grown. She is Harrek's chief lieutenant and fiercely loyal to the White Bear.

*Inhuman King:* The ruler of the dragonewts is a dangerous and capricious being, motivated by things that no human being wants to understand. Within his

## Harrek the Berserk and Jar-eel the Razoress

*The Heroes of Glorantha are the embodiments of the needs and dreams of their people, perfected beyond mundane reality and realized fully in the mythical and magical world to act as permanent and deathless aspirations. They are the avatars of mythical archetypes, with the massed power of countless unconscious minds.*

*Two of the mightiest Heroes of Glorantha are Harrek the Berserk and Jar-eel the Razoress. These Heroes are more than a match for entire regiments of soldiers and even the gods quake with their passage. They are harbingers of the doom of Glorantha and are destined to violently clash in the coming Hero Wars in Dragon Pass.*

**Harrek the Berserk (left):** The White Bear is mentioned in nearly every history and tale of the Hero Wars. Chroniclers across the world wrote of the misfortunes he visited upon their lands. Harrek is a savage, half-mad killing demigod. He was originally a Skin-Changer from the forests of Rathorela, and became a Hero when he killed and bound his people's god, the White Bear, to serve him (or perhaps he serves it).

Harrek gained fame as a Dart Warrior, a warlord, the king of the Wolf Pirates, a mercenary for the gods, and an iron-fisted tyrant of his own realm. He never forgot his common origins and never lets a poor man starve. Harrek will desert his realm to come to the aid of his friend Argrath and fight the Lunar Empire that he always hated.

**Jar-eel the Razoress (right):** The Fourth Inspiration of Moonson and the current incarnation of the Red Goddess in human form, Jar-eel is the greatest Hero of the Lunar Empire. She is the great-granddaughter of the demigoddess Hon-eel the Artess and the defender of Lunar civilization and enlightenment. Blessed with grace, intelligence, and beauty, she has already become an immortal. She is personally favored by the Red Emperor and is worshiped as a living goddess of Love and War by a regiment of elite soldiers who are sworn to her.

Born with all seven souls fully awakened, Jar-eel has proven herself as a peerless fighter, magician, poet, musician, and Heroquester. She has stormed impregnable citadels, transformed rebels into followers, dismembered an enemy demigod, debated gods in contests where her soul was at stake, given rightful order to Chaos, and emerged triumphant from the Pit of Sorrows as the Balancer and Turner.

**Argrath's Companions**

*Argrath is served by several companions, each an extension of the hero, like trained weapons in his hands. They all contributed insights into the creation of the Sartar Magical Union.*

*As of 1627, his companions are:*
*Mularik Ironeye - Arkati Illumination*
*Orlaront Dragonfriend - draconic consciousness*
*Elusu the Trickster - trickster magic*
*Tosti Runefriend - God Learnerism*
*Annstad of Dunstop - Lunar Illumination, Red Goddess and Thunderous*
*Tarkala the Lover - Esrolian secrets of Life and Death*
*Rurik Runespear - Many Suns*

own "city" his will was reality, and all the dragonewts of Dragon Pass obeyed him infallibly. He could be approached and negotiated with, but when bothered for trivial reasons he routinely devoured the petitioners.

*Hendira, Queen of Nochet:* A noble from House Norinel, Queen Hendira ruled great Nochet city until 1622. She allied with Lunar General Fazzur Wideread to defend Nochet from the Western Barbarians and to prevent the return of the Evil King to Esrolia; as a result, her supporters were known as the Red Earth Alliance. Hendira was forced out of Nochet in 1622 and was killed at the Battle of Pennel in 1625.

*Ironhoof, Lord of Beast Valley:* The demigod ruler of the Beast Men has reincarnated several times throughout - and even before - history, most recently in 1615. He created the Grazeland Pony Breeders and was the first sacred King of Dragon Pass. Ironhoof is a centaur and lord of all horses.

*Isidilian the Wise*: The Dwarf of Dwarf Mine is one of the friendliest Mostali leaders of the world. Isidilian is ancient, having been forged in the God Time, and it is said that he was a member of the Unity Council in the First Age. The Dwarf was an ally of King Sartar and supported the House of Sartar until Saronil misused the secrets Isidilian had given his father.

*Jarkanita Ab*: A Mistress Race troll and a direct descendant of Kyger Litor. She lives beneath the Castle of Lead, where she secretly researches how to break the Trollkin Curse. Jarkanita Ab rarely shows herself outside of the Castle of Lead, preferring to leave most matters to her dark troll descendants.

*Jaldon Goldentooth*: This immortal Hero is destined to reappear each time all the tribes of Prax assembled at his grave before leaving Prax for war. In the Second Age, he sacked the city of Pavis and cleansed Prax of the horse riders. He has been slain in battle many times before, but has always reappeared astride the lanky steed he calls Home, to lead the nomads against whomever they fought in Dragon Pass.

In 1624, Argrath summoned Jaldon Goldentooth and together they cleansed Prax of the Lunar Empire. Jaldon then accompanied Argrath to fight alongside him in Dragon Pass.

*Jarsandron Tenherds*: The Luminous Stallion King of the Grazeland Pony Breeders, Jarsandron was loyal to the Feathered Horse Queen called Single Matron Woman and a friend of King Pharandros. He was killed at the Dragonrise of 1625.

*Kallyr Starbrow, Prince of Sartar (1625 to 1626):* This Sartar Heroquester was famous for her continued fight against the Lunar invaders. Queen of the Kheldon tribe and a member of the royal house of Sartar, Kallyr warred against the Lunars her entire life. She liberated Boldhome after the Dragonrise and was acclaimed Prince of Sartar. She tried to repeat the Lightbringers' Quest, but failed, and died at the Battle of Queens in 1626

*Pharandros, King of Tarsh:* This king was educated in Sylila and Glamour and was steeped in the subtleties of Lunar Magic and imperial intrigue. The peace inside his kingdom was not wasted, and the king spends regally on both frivolities and the military.

*Rikard the Tiger-Hearted:* This redoubtable adventurer, freebooter, and heretical Malkioni exile from Tanisor briefly became King of Malkonwal by conquering the various Orlanthi tribes of southern Heortland, taking advantage of their terrible disorder after the loss of both Belintar and the governor of Heortland. Few of the Orlanthi favored the foreign conqueror, and in 1620, he was defeated and captured in battle by the Lunar Provincial Army. Fazzur Wideread offered Rikard the kingship, but rather than accept Rikard destroyed his crown and went into hiding. His current whereabouts are unknown.

*Sor-eel the Short*: Sor-eel is a member of the powerful Eel-ariash clan that rules the imperial Oronin Satrapy and a kinsman of the Lunar Hero Jar-eel the Razoress. He was appointed Lunar Governor of Prax in 1610, when the Empire invaded and seized Pavis. He was recalled from Prax in 1621 and replaced with a new governor.

*Tatius the Bright*: Dean of the Lunar Field School of Magic, chief sorcerer of the Lunar Army, and the most feared man in all of Dragon Pass. Tatius was the head of the mighty imperial Assiday family. A lineal descendant of the god Yelm, Tatius was one of the most powerful men in the Empire, reporting directly to the Red Emperor, bypassing both Fazzur and Appius Luxius, the Provincial Overseer. Revered by the Dara Happan aristocracy as the Guardian of the Flame of Virtue, Tatius was intensely pious, innately magically powerful, and extremely ambitious. It was his burning drive to become a New Lunar God and to govern the Empire as the Great Advisor to Moonson.

Tatius was appointed Lunar-Governor General of Dragon Pass after he successfully took Whitewall. Tatius was killed in the Dragonrise of 1625.

*Temertain, Prince of Sartar:* Although of the royal bloodline, Temertain's ancestors left Sartar generations before. Temertain was an old man who has spent his life as a scholar of obscure statuary. Dazzled by adventurers, he was entranced by visions of becoming the Philosopher King which enticed him to travel to Sartar. At first a bolster to Sartar resistance, he quickly proved to be a Lunar puppet ruler. Temertain was assassinated in 1624 by Humakt cultists.

*Xarjang Vash*: This dark troll is from Shadows Dance and is a High Priest of Zorak Zoran. He made serious gestures of friendship to humans before Lunar perfidy turned him against all not of his kind. Xarjang Vash always hated elves, who call him Tree Chopper. He is noted as a poet among his kind as well.

# Dragon Pass Timeline

**1120** Dragonkill War wipes out all human inhabitants in Dragon Pass, leaving it to the other humanoid races.
**1220** Red Goddess born in Peloria.
**1230** Dragonewts and elves unite to destroy warring troll factions.
**1242** Carmanian Empire conquered by Red Goddess.
**1247** Red Goddess attains immortality and ascends to the sky.
**1250** Defeated in battle, the forces of the Pure Horse tribe of Prax hide in haunted Dragon Pass. They find peace instead of demons, and are accepted by the local residents. They change their name to Grazelanders and settle.
**1288** Lunar Empire conquers the last stronghold of Dara Happa, securing all of Lowland Peloria for the Red Goddess.
**1330** Refugee Pelorians discover the Temple of the Shaking Earth and found the Twins dynasty and the Kingdom of Tarsh.
**1340** Hill tribes move north from Hendriki and Esrolia and settle in the southern hills of Dragon Pass.
**1347** The Conquering Daughter defeats many tribes of Southern Peloria and adds the provinces to the Empire.
**1374** Great horse barbarian invasions from Pent devastate and overrun most of Peloria. Sheng Seleris begins his epic campaign against the Red Emperor.
**1380** War between hill peoples of Dragon Pass and the Beast People.
**1397** Yara Aranis is born, a demonic barbarian-killing daughter of the Red Emperor. The barbarians no longer grow in strength.
**1402** War between Grazelanders and Kingdom of Tarsh ends with a defeat for the Grazelanders, who are forced into the hills.
**1420** Pol-Joni tribe, including many disgruntled ex-Grazelanders, is founded and established in Prax despite efforts to stop them by the Animal Nomads.
**1448** Tarsh King Orios dies without heir; civil war begins.
**1455** Illaro dynasty founded in Tarsh; kingdom is quickly re-established.
**1460** Sheng Seleris and Red Emperor meet in personal combat; after many great magics only the Emperor emerges.
**1470** Sartar makes his early appearances among the hill tribes of Dragon Pass.
**1480** Sartar makes peace with the Telmori, and they settle near Prax.
**1490** Hon-eel the Artess comes to Tarsh and woos the king. After he disappears, her son becomes the first Lunar Tarsh king, called the founder of the Governor King dynasty.
**1492** Boldhome founded by Sartar, who is named king and the land is named after him.
**1495** Sartar marries the Feathered Horse Queen and becomes King of Dragon Pass.
**1520** Sartar lights the Flame of Sartar and is apotheosized, leaving the mortal realm. His dynasty begins ruling the Kingdom of Sartar.
**1538** Palashee Longaxe leads a Tarsh confederation against the Governor Kings and drives the Lunars out of Tarsh.
**1550** Dragonewts Dream begins, lasting for five years. No human has any idea of what this was about.
**1555** Palashee Longaxe is killed in battle, and the Lunar Governor Kings retake Tarsh.
**1575** Pavis Outside the Walls is settled by Sartarite colonists; King Tarkalor of Sartar marries the Feathered Horse Queen and becomes King of Dragon Pass.
**1582** Tarsh rebels and Sartar forces are smashed at the battle of Grizzly Peak, and all unified Tarsh rebel activity is halted forever as part of that force joins Sartar. This is the region of the Far Point.
**1602** Boldhome is sacked by the Lunar army, and the last known heirs of Sartar are slain or driven away.
**1605** Lunar Empire defeated in Holy Country at Building Wall Battle.
**1610** Pavis falls, as do the Animal Nomads as the Lunar Empire searches for a route to the sea.
**1613** Kallyr Starbrow leads Sartarite rebellion, quickly crushed by the Empire. Pretender Prince Temertain placed on throne of Sartar.
**1616** Harrek the Berserk destroys the navy of the Holy Country and Western Barbarians defeat the army of the Holy Country. Later that year, the God-King of the Holy Country dies and the Tournament

of the Masters of Luck and Death fails to bring forth his new incarnation.

**1618** Western Barbarians devastate Esrolia.

**1619** Lunar Empire invades Holy Country; only the temple-fortress of Whitewall holds out against invasion. Grazelanders led by the Feathered Horse Queen raid Esrolia.

**1620** Lunar Empire conquers Heortland. Rebels at Whitewall defeat the Crimson Bat; Lunar siege tightens. Grazelanders led by the Feathered Horse Queen raid deep into Esrolia.

**1621** Lunars prepare for their final assault on Whitewall; Whitewall falls and Orlanth and Ernalda "die". Fazzur replaced by Tatius the Bright as Governor-General of Dragon Pass.

**1622** The Great Winter; Hendriki rebels defeat Lunar Army at the Battle of the Auroch Hills, partially freeing Orlanth and Ernalda. Nochet overthrows Lunar queen.

**1623** Grazelander invasion of Esrolia defeated and Feathered Horse Queen killed. Nochet besieged by Lunar Army.

**1624** Boat Planet rises. Lunars lift siege of Nochet. Army of Esrolians, Hendriki, and Wolf Pirates defeat Lunars at Battle of Pennel. Orlanth liberated. Argrath returns to Pavis with a nomad army and is acclaimed King of Pavis. Pentans revolt in the Redlands. Prince Temertain assassinated. City of Wonders destroyed by Harrek the Berserk.

**1625** Broyan killed by Lunar magic; Praxian army led by Argrath defeated by Lunar College of Magic. True Dragon rises beneath New Lunar Temple with the Dragonrise, devouring the Provincial Army and most of the Lunar leadership in the Provinces. Sartar freed; Kallyr Starbrow acclaimed Prince of Sartar. Pentans conquer Oraya satrapy. Seapolis destroyed by Harrek the Berserk.

**1626** Kallyr attempts Lightbringers' Quest with support across Sartar; quest is a disastrous failure. Attempted Lunar reconquest of Sartar thwarted at the Battle of Queens; Kallyr is killed in battle. Lunars retreat to Alda-Chur and Sartar is in disarray.

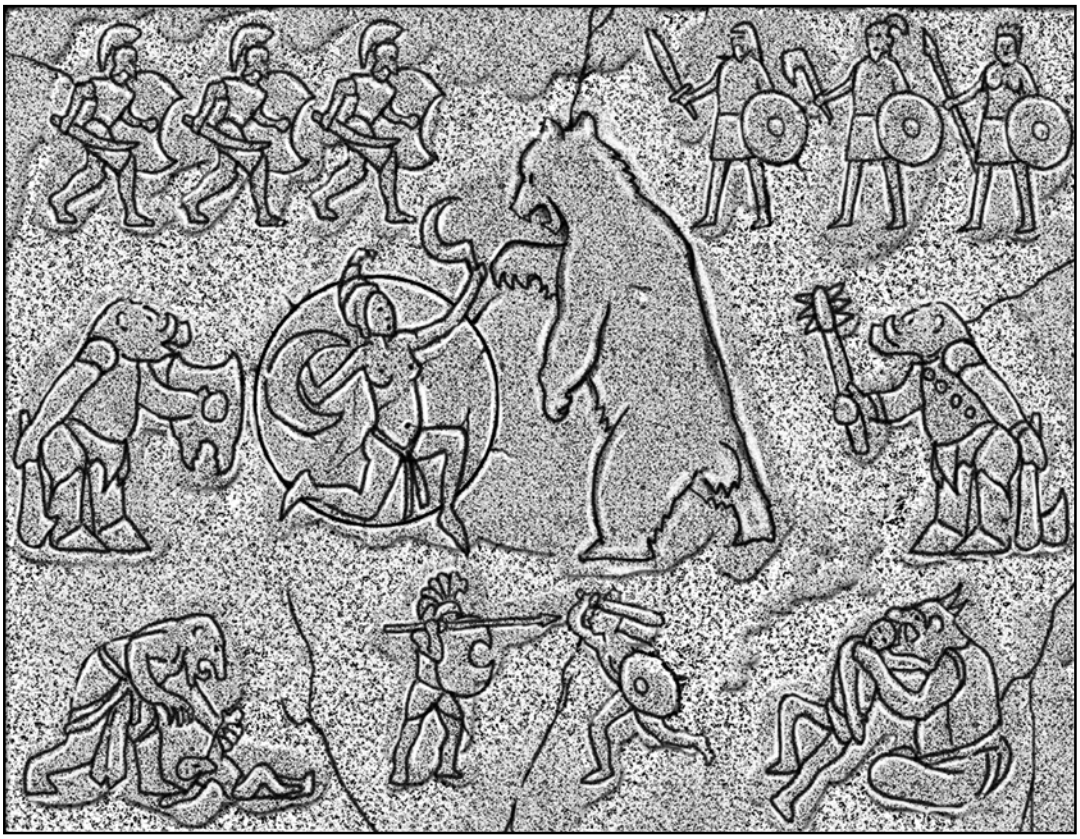
**1627** Argrath defeats Lunars and liberates Alda-Chur. Argrath lights Flame of Sartar and is acclaimed Prince of Sartar and the Far Place. Feathered Horse Queen issues the Marriage Contest.

**1628** The Battle of Heroes.

**Black Dragon Mountain Pictoglyphs**

*The Black Dragon Mountain has some twelve miles of pictoglyphs etched a foot deep into the stone, the work of Cragspider the Firewitch. They provide an Elder Race perspective on the history of Glorantha and the Hero Wars.*

*This glyph is described by the trolls as follows: The Men of the Red Moon fight against the Men of the Storm. The White Bear fights against the Red Moon. Uz̈ko fight on both sides but always against Men.*



# Creating your Hero

*The following chapter shows you how to create a HeroQuest Glorantha hero.*

## Some Vocabulary

It is helpful to introduce a few special terms that are used in the *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules. These terms are more fully defined later in the book.

### What are Abilities?

An ability is **anything** a hero can use to solve problems or overcome obstacles in an adventure.

### What is a Keyword?

A keyword is a broad umbrella of abilities associated with an area of expertise (such as an occupation), a culture (such as a Heortling or an Esrolian), or a Rune. A hero can use the keyword for any ability, relationship, or possession that is reasonably encompassed by the keyword.

### What is a Breakout Ability?

A breakout ability is a specialized ability within the keyword that has been specifically identified and improved. Breakout abilities provide an advantage when used against broader abilities like keywords.

### What is a Mastery?

*HeroQuest Glorantha* abilities are scored on a range of 1–20, but are scalable. When you raise a rating of 20 by one point, it increases not to 21, but to 1. The  signifies a game abstraction called a mastery. Mathematically, it signifies a value of 20. You have now reached a new order of excellence in that ability. The  symbol is a Mastery Rune, with strong significance in the world of Glorantha.

If you're engaged in a contest against an opponent, and you have an ability of 10 versus his opposing ability of 10, you enjoy an enormous advantage over him, and can expect to win most of the time.

As you progress, you may gain multiple masteries. Multiple masteries are marked with a number to the right of the  symbol. If you have 10 2, you have two masteries. 10 3 means that you have three masteries, and so on.

Opposed masteries cancel out, with each contestant reducing their rating by the same number of masteries until only one or neither of them has masteries.

A hero with two masteries enjoys the same great advantage over one with a single mastery as a hero with one mastery has over an opponent with no masteries.

If you have an advantage of two or more masteries over an opponent, you can pretty much count on pounding him into the dust.

Where masteries aren't cancelled out, they confer advantages in contest results.

### How Good are Masteries?

A hero with the same ability rating as an opponent will win about half the contests they engage in:

- One mastery will beat anyone who is a full mastery lower about 75% of the time.
- If the hero is two full masteries higher, the chance of victory is about 95%.
- At three levels, he is all but certain to win.
- At four, he will always be victorious, although opponents might survive to tell the tale…

**High Level Campaigns**

*HeroQuest Glorantha can easily handle a campaign where the heroes are full-blown heroes without needing elevated difficulty ratings. With an epic campaign, the usual ability ratings work just fine. If you were playing Harrek the Berserk, a virtual demigod, you don't need to roll a contest of strength against an ordinary person - Harrek simply succeeds. Instead, drama comes from him trying to fight Jar-eel, a Lunar Hero, and it's simpler to keep this a contest of 17 vs. 14 than 17 3 vs. 14 3. The latter may seem more impressive, but the masteries cancel out.*

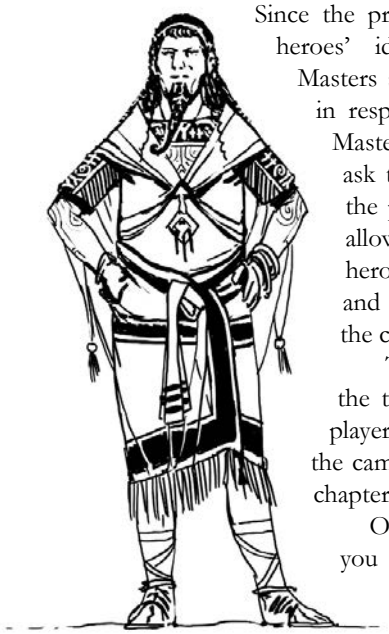
# Campaign Premise & Theme

Glorantha is capable of supporting many different types of campaigns, each with their own premise and themes. The premise tells you what the heroes have in common, and either explains or implies a collective goal. It can be summed up in a formulaic sentence: *The heroes are X who do Y*. For example:

- The heroes are members of a clan in Dragon Pass struggling against the oppressive magical might of the Lunar Empire.
- The heroes are members of a powerful noble house in the Lunar Empire seeking advancement, magical secrets, and new sources of wealth.
- The heroes are bandits, treasure hunters, and mercenaries looking for plunder in the ruins of the Big Rubble.
- The heroes are a band of Praxian nomads, fighting against Chaos monsters, Lunar invaders, and other Praxian tribes while seeking the legendary White Bull that will unify Prax.
- The heroes are Wolf Pirates, plundering and fighting their way across the seas of Glorantha.
- The heroes are epic heroes fighting a dangerous magico-mythological war that threatens to end the Third Age and destroy Glorantha itself.

**Esrolian scribe or merchant**
*This figure is a male Esrolian from the city of Nochet, a scribe or a wealthy merchant. His meticulously groomed beard is plaited into a long narrow shape. He wears kohl to rim his eyes.*

*He wears an embroidered and patterned tunic, and an ornate fringed skirt that goes down no further than his knees.*



Since the premise impinges the most on the heroes' identities and objectives, Game Masters should be very ready to modify it in response to player input. The Game Master may suggest a setting and then ask the group to collaboratively create the premise themselves. Or she might allow you to create a disparate team of heroes, place you in an environment, and let you create your own agenda in the course of the story.

The premise may also reference the themes the Game Master and the players are interested in exploring in the campaign (see the *Gaming in Glorantha* chapter, page 221).

Once the premise is determined, you can then create your heroes. The campaign premise implicitly sets boundaries on what is believable in the campaign, so you won't need different character generation rules even if one campaign plays beggars and another campaign plays the Red Emperor and his advisors.

## Setting Periods

Your Gloranthan campaign can be set at any time since the Dawn of Time. However, this book assumes two default setting periods to start your campaign. Your campaign may start in the first and continue through the second, or go beyond this period into the later Hero Wars described in the *Guide to Glorantha* and in *King of Sartar*. The two default periods are:

**1618 to 1623 - Sartar Rising**: This period is the high-water mark of the Lunar Empire. The Empire occupies Sartar, Prax, and even Heortland (from 1618 to 1622). Esrolia is ruled by a Lunar ally (at least until 1622). This period is marked by the seemingly complete victory of the Lunars in 1621, which quickly begins to collapse into rebellion. The default starting year for campaigns set in this period is 1621.

**1624 to 1628 - The Rise of Argrath**: This period is marked by the rise of Argrath White Bull to prominence. It starts with the defeat of the Lunar Army in Esrolia, followed by the liberation of Pavis and the Dragonrise in 1625. After that, Sartar is free of Lunar occupation; first under the leadership of Kallyr Starbrow (until her death in 1626), and then under the leadership of Argrath White Bull (who becomes Prince of Sartar in 1627). The default starting year for campaigns set in this period is 1627.

# Create a Hero As-You-Go

With *HeroQuest Glorantha* we want you to start playing right away. We use an as-you-go method to let you create your basic hero, and then continue to develop it during play.

1. Choose a character **concept**. Your concept will usually include a **distinguishing characteristic** and an **occupational keyword** as described in this chapter.

2. Choose a **cultural keyword**. It starts at 13.

3. Choose the **community** you have a relationship with. It starts at 13.

4. Choose an **occupational keyword**. This is usually part of your **character concept**. It starts at 17.

5. Choose your three **Runes**. Assign one at 1ᚳ, one at 17, and the third at 13.

6. Add your **distinguishing characteristic** as an ability. It starts at 17 (unless it is a breakout from another keyword).

7. Pick 5 additional **abilities** that can include specialized "breakout" abilities from a keyword or Rune, describing them as you want. New abilities start at 13; however, a breakout ability starts at +1 from the keyword or Rune and is shown as a modifier of the base keyword. You do not have to decide all your additional abilities at the start of play; undecided abilities can be added at any time during play.

8. Spend up to 12 **additional points** on **keywords**, **Runes**, additional **abilities**, or **supporting characters**. Keep track of any unspent points. You cannot spend more than 10 points on any one ability.

9. Describe up to 3 **flaws**. One can be a **distinguishing characteristic** if you want.

10. Give your hero a name.

That gives you the basic hero; you will update the rest during play. When events in the story put you in a situation where you want to do something, you make up an applicable ability on the spot. The first time you use a new ability assign an ability rating to it. (The process of assigning ratings is explained on page 46). You have 12 additional points to boost these new abilities. If you have a solid character concept, you add some of these additional abilities during creation. You cannot spend over 10 points on a single ability. Once you have added 5 new abilities you're done creating your hero.

Each step is described in greater detail below.

## Character Concept

Now that you know enough about your Game Master's premise to create a hero to fit into it well, it's time to create a strong central concept for your hero. Your concept is a brief phrase, often just a couple of words that tells the Game Master and other players what your hero does and how he or she acts.

## Samastina's Saga: Introduction

*In this book you'll frequently find rules examples starring Samastina of Delaeos, Vargast the Thunderer, Karganvale the Vengeful, Herrox the Energetic, Orensulva the Scribe, and Magatheus the Sinister, in an epic campaign run by Claudia the Game Master. These heroes illustrate the way that the rules are used, and give a feel for an epic Gloranthan campaign. Use these examples to learn how to portray a situation in a HeroQuest Glorantha game, or how to react as a player, to the situations the Game Master presents.*

*These examples often include rules that appear later in the text but concentrate on the material presented previously.*

Claudia, the Game Master, decides that the premise for her epic campaign is that the heroes will be significant players in the Hero Wars. She wants to start the campaign in 1621 and set it in Esrolia, but makes it clear that the campaign setting includes Dragon Pass and Prax. After giving the players a brief introduction, they set down to create their heroes knowing they can come from anywhere in the three regions.

Kris picks the civilized Esrolian from Nochet. Neil and Franziska decide to play Heortlings from the same clan in Sartar. David chooses a Praxian from the High Llama Tribe. Christine wants to play a Esrolian from the city of Nochet. Rick wants to play a Lunar from Furthest who has been outlawed by the Lunar Empire.

Both Kris and Neil decide to play nobles. Franziska wants to play a warrior and selects a heavy infantry mercenary. David plays a Spirit-talker, and Christine wants play a scribe. Rick, ever the contrarian, decides to play a sorcerer.

**So our party of heroes becomes:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Kris:** | *Samastina of House Delaeos, an ambitious Esrolian noble from Nochet* |
| **Neil:** | *Vargast the Thunderer, a proud Sartarite Thane from the Orlmarthing clan* |
| **Franziska:** | *Karganvale, a vengeful mercenary from the Orlmarthing clan* |
| **David:** | *Herrox, a High Llama Spirit-talker from the Blue Llama clan* |
| **Christine:** | *Orensulva, a curious scribe from Nochet* |
| **Rick:** | *Magatheus, a sinister sorcerer from Furthest* |

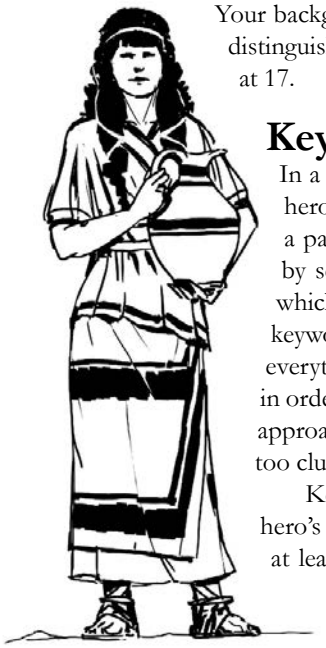
When in doubt, start with a noun or phrase indicating the hero's occupation or area of expertise, and modify it with an adjective suggesting a distinguishing characteristic. The distinguishing characteristic is used to distinguish your hero from others with the same keyword. Even the minor difference between a vengeful warrior and a proud warrior can really impact how others think of your hero and how they will interact with Glorantha. Here are some examples of heroes we have seen in play:

**Heortling free woman**
*She wears a short-sleeved tunic and a wrap-around skirt.*

**Heortling free man**
*He wears a skirt and a stout, broad-brimmed hat.*

- Hard-working Farmer
- Loyal Mercenary
- Wise Lawspeaker
- Cynical Apprentice Shaman
- Compassionate Healer
- Absent-Minded Sage
- Treacherous Nomad Warrior
- Haughty Priestess
- Adventurous Sheep Herder
- Outlawed Noble
- Vengeful Warrior

Your background occupation is a keyword and your distinguishing characteristic is an ability. Both start at 17.



## Keywords

In a *HeroQuest Glorantha* game, you build your hero around **keywords**. A keyword gives you a package deal: you get a number of abilities by selecting a pre-existing character concept, which you then modify. A well-written keyword comes with a description telling you everything you need to know about the world in order to start playing a hero of that type. This approach keeps the character sheet from getting too cluttered but encourages specialization.

Keywords are best suited for use as the hero's core area of expertise. Your hero will have at least two keywords: a cultural keyword and at least one background occupational keyword. Each hero will also start with three Runes. Each Rune is a special keyword that describes your hero's magical affinities.

Since keywords are both raisable abilities and a collection of more specific abilities, players write specialized abilities under the keyword, along with how much they've improved them. These specialized abilities provide an advantage when used against broader abilities. An ability may be listed in more than one of a hero's keywords. Choose only one to detail it under.

### Samastina's Saga - Keywords

Kris decides to do some breakouts for Samastina's noble keyword. She documents two specific abilities below:

*Noble 17*
*Read and write +1*
*Regal demeanor +2*

## Your Cultural Keyword

As a member of a culture you can do all the things a normal adult member of your culture can. Four example cultures are given for *HeroQuest Glorantha:* Esrolian, Heortling, Praxian [Tribe], and Tarshite. Regardless of which culture you choose, your cultural keyword will begin with a base of 13.

### Esrolian

The Esrolians are a civilized Orlanthi culture centered in the ancient land of Esrolia. Like the Heortlings, they are organized along clan lines; unlike the Heortlings, their clans are matrilineal and are ruled by matriarchs. Each city has its own queen; the queen of Nochet is queen of all Esrolia.

The Esrolians appear physically identical to the Heortlings. They are olive-skinned, with brown, black, or reddish hair. Their eyes are typically green, brown, grey, or orange. They wear clothes and hairstyles that mark their status and occupation.

The Esrolians are a civilized people, and even rural farmers come to the cities to trade and worship. Nochet, the capital of Esrolia, is the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the world, and the center of seafaring and trade. Esrolians are better known for their quick wits and pragmatism than for their martial skills.

The residents here are mostly farmers worshiping the Ten Thousand Goddesses of Esrolia, a pantheon of Earth Goddesses headed by Great Ernalda and her family. Esrolia is the home of Ernalda and many other goddesses. Ernalda's great temple at Ezel is one of the most important holy places in all of Glorantha and home to the Ten Thousand Goddesses. The Esrolians revere their

ancestors; each year, their dead leave their necropolis and travel the Sacred Road from Ezel to Nochet. The gods of the Orlanthi pantheon are worshiped here as well, along with Argan Argar and his son the Only Old One. Barntar is the most popular men's god. Although Ernalda has many lovers, Orlanth is her husband and her favorite. They tattoo themselves with the markings of their gods, clan, and other symbols. Many Esrolians practice some form of sorcery.

The Esrolians speak a language related to Heortling. Many Esrolians can read; the cult of Lhankor Mhy has spread literacy beyond just scribes and officials.

*Sample Female Esrolian Names*: Aranda, Davorela, Derandla, Erinalartha, Hendira, Mirava, Nerestina, Oraneva, Samastina, Serenalda, Serzeen, Varanis.

*Sample Male Esrolian Names*: Barntaros, Dormal, Dovaropos, Esrolakar, Haradurev, Hendrestos, Irillo, Jarstakos, Kesten, Orstanor, Sestar.

## Heortling

The Heortlings are the majority of the inhabitants of Sartar and Heortland, as well as Pavis County in Prax. They are an Orlanthi culture with the clan, led by a chief, the basic unit of social organization. Clans group together into tribes; tribes, in turn, may form confederations such as the Kingdom of Sartar or the Volsaxi Confederation.

Heortlings are a largely rural and pastoral people; even city folk are familiar with farming and herding. They are independent and proud. Honor is vital to them, and they are notoriously violent when provoked. All Heortlings, male and female, know how to fight with weapons and with fists. All men and many women know how to fight in a shield wall as part of the local militia.

Heortlings are olive-skinned, with brown, black, or reddish hair. Their eyes are typically green, brown, grey, or orange. Men and women typically grow their hair long; men usually grow beards and mustaches, and women often have elaborately braided hair.

The Heortlings worship Orlanth and Ernalda, and initiate themselves into adulthood with rites founded by King Heort before Time began. They tattoo themselves with the markings of their gods, clan, and other symbols.

The Heortlings speak a language related to Esrolian. Few Heortlings can read; the cult of Lhankor Mhy holds a monopoly over professional scholars.

*Sample Female Heortling Names*: Beneva, Berra, Dorasa, Esrolvula, Ivarne, Jareen, Kallyr, Leika, Onelisen, Yanioth.

*Sample Male Heortling Names*: Andrin, Argrath, Broyan, Farnan, Garandangian, Harmast, Jarang, Saronil, Tarkalor, Venharl.

**Tarshite free woman**
*She wears a long skirt and shawl.*

**Tarshite free man**
*He wears a long tunic, cloak, and felt hat.*

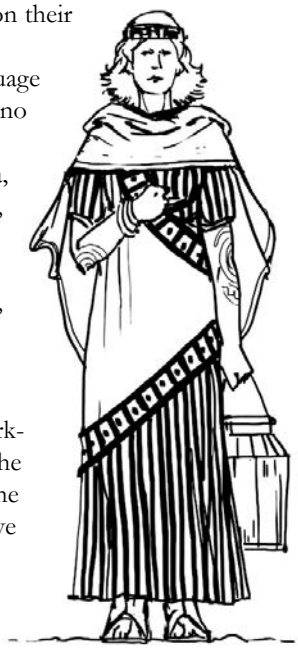
## Praxian Tribes

The Praxians are a nomadic culture who ride and herd Praxian beasts. Their most important gods are Waha, Eiritha, and the Storm Bull, although spirit worship is most prevalent. Of the five Great Tribes of Prax, four are named for their beast: Bison, High Llama, Impala, and Sable. The fifth tribe consists of the four-legged Morokanth who herd bestial herdmen. Praxians are a proud people and distrustful of outsiders. All the tribes are dependent upon their animals for their livelihood.

The Praxians speak Praxian, a language unrelated to other tongues. They have no written script.

*Sample Female Praxian Names*: Delenda, Durinda, Egajia, Ernyne, Lalira, Lomeena, Norayeep, Saberak, Varaema, Varaneena.

*Sample Male Praxian Names*: Harjoon, Nameed, Maharo, Orgdaka, Roneer, Surrak, Talkil, Toras, Vishi, Wahagrim.



**Bison Tribe**

Bison Riders are brown-skinned and dark-haired; most men wear beards, even in the hot Praxian summer. Like their beasts, the Bison Riders are big and thick, slow to move but terrible on impact.

Their clans are large, up to a thousand members or more, and travel in huge

### Clan Keywords

Many occupations specialize in abilities that all normal clan members have some knowledge of. For example, all Sartarite clan members know how to fight with spear and shield, but thanes and mercenaries specialize in it. Abilities derived from the clan keyword should always be considered broader than abilities derived from a background or occupational keyword.

**Sable Rider**
*This mercenary has black hair and dark eyes. He wears trousers, and a short cloak over front and back. He wears a helmet made of leather and sinew decorated with antelope horns. He wears a corselet of leather and beads.*

**Bison Rider priestess**
*This female bison rider is brown-skinned and dark-haired. She wears leather leggings and a short wraparound cloak made out of bison hide. She wears nothing underneath the cloak, and her arms are tattooed. At her waist are elaborately decorated leather bags that hold magical medicine bundles with which she appeases the goddess of the herds. She carries a stone-headed axe.*

herds. Khans have multiple wives, and other men may as well, based on their deeds.

Bison Riders prefer to charge into almost any enemy, relying on the force of their beasts to break any line standing against them. They scorn the bow as unmanly, and dress in the thick cured hides of their brethren beasts. Heavy lances and trusty blades make up their armament.

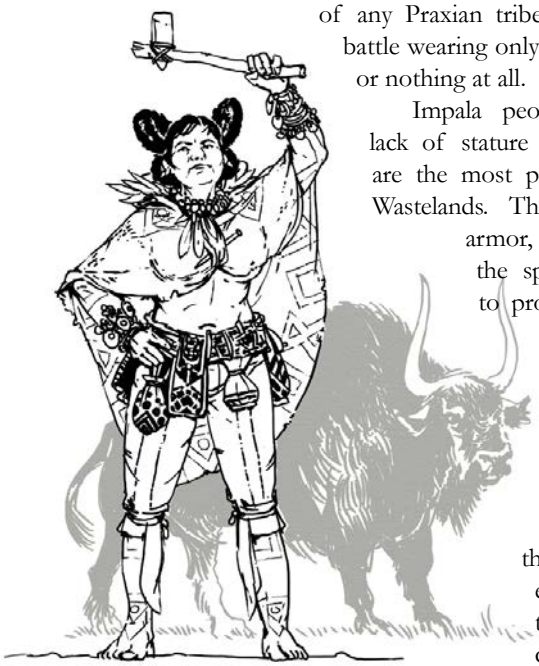
### High Llama Tribe

High Llama people are tall, with olive-colored skin and black hair and eyes. Men and women often shave their heads except for a ponytail at the back, with the women's longer and more decorated than those of the men. They dress lightly, sometimes wearing only leather straps and loincloth. They travel in small groups of 20 to 40 people, gathering in larger groups only for reasons of religion and war.

The High Llama people are the smallest Great Tribe, but can be counted as the most individually powerful. Their beasts tower over other Praxian steeds and are able to run down even the swiftest skirmishers. The men are armed with long spears and long-handled axes to reach the earth, clothe themselves in leather, and are said to fear no one on the plains.

### Impala Tribe

Impala people are pygmies. Adult men are typically less than 4 feet 11 inches tall and women no more than 4 feet 8 inches. They are dark-skinned and sinewy; men, women, and children normally shave their heads completely. They wear the least clothes of any Praxian tribe, and often go into battle wearing only a belt or a loincloth, or nothing at all.



Impala people make up their lack of stature with numbers. They are the most populous tribe in the Wastelands. They scorn protective armor, preferring to trust in the speed of their beasts to protect them. They are a clever and wily people, never closing with a foe if possible, but standing back and filling the sky and their enemies with their arrows. Although experts with the bow, they are quite weak in close combat.

## Morokanth Tribe

The inhuman Morokanth are the strangest people of Prax. Intelligent, tapir-like creatures with short prehensile snouts, Morokanth herd bestial humans not beasts, and do not ride them. Like the Sable tribe, their Herd Queens are more important than their Khans.

The Chaos Wars destroyed Prax and there was little food, Waha made the tribes wager who would live off who. In all cases but one the two-legs won, to live off their animals. The four-legged Morokanth were the exception, and now live off their bestial human herds. The two-legs all claim that the Morokanth cheated, and they in turn claim that the two-legs cheated. The Morokanth are vegetarians and do not eat any herd beasts including their own.

Like bears, Morokanth are able to stand or walk on their hind legs for a time, to slash with their claws or use tools, but they prefer to walk on four legs when traveling any distance. A Morokanth's forepaws are well suited for fighting and walking, but lacking thumbs they are too clumsy for fine manipulation. Fortunately their snouts make up for some of this.

**Sable Tribe ⊕**

Sable people have black hair and dark eyes. They wear trousers and often a short cloak over the front and back. Wealthy Sable people frequently wear fancy headdresses decorated with Sable horns or feathers. Their Herd Queens are more important than their Khans. Whenever a decision which affects the clan is made, the Queen has as equal a say as the Khan, even in matters of war. Some Sable people are polygamous, although the women choose the shared husband, rather than the man picking his wives. The Sable Tribe are currently dominant in Prax due to their alliance with the Lunar Empire.

Sable people ride giant antelope with curving horns. Because of the crescent shape of these horns, they are sometimes called Lunar Deer. Each clan has men of a different troop type mixed together. Some are lightly armed skirmishers, while others are prepared for close combat.

## Tarshite

The lifestyle, language, and customs of the common Tarshite are similar to those of the Heortlings and other Orlanthi peoples. The clan chiefs owe allegiance to regional leaders who used to be tribally elected, but are now appointed by the king. Taxes are paid in coin, livestock, goods, or slaves.

Most Tarshites worship Ernalda the Earth Mother, Barntar the Plowman, and a multitude of other gods and goddesses, including the Lightbringers. They are farmers and herders, and tattoo themselves with the markings of their gods, clan, and other symbols.

The Lunar religion is prevalent among the rulers and urban population of Tarsh. They ape the customs and religion of the Lunar Heartlands. The Lunar Tarshites are civilized and centered on the city of Furthest, the main Lunar colony in Dragon Pass. The Lunars worship the Seven Mothers and Hon-eel the Artess (who is the patron demigoddess of the royal family of Tarsh). A small number of Illuminates worship the Red Goddess directly.

The Tarshites speak a language distantly related to Heortling and Esrolian, but heavily influenced by Pelorian languages. Most Lunar Tarshites speak New Pelorian.

*Sample Female Tarshite Names*: Durlindia, Erantha, Ernaldali, Harsta, Inkarne, Jorendona, Kerentha, Oriane, Sandene, Yaranbora, Yenesting.

*Sample Male Tarshite Names*: Annstad, Arim, Barterim, Danbal, Halifijeem, Jornkalor, Maroftoor, Ovardul, Phoronestes, Pyjeemstoor, Vostor.

## Your Community

Glorantha is a world of communities, big and small. Your hero is part of one or more communities such as a bloodline, a clan, a tribe, a city, a warband, or temple. Even the most devout Humakti is never completely alone. These are all groups of people to whom you owe an obligation of protection, formal or otherwise, and in return receive moral and material support.

You start with an ability that details your relationship to a community. This relationship starts at 13. You can have more as one of your five additional abilities (or acquire them in play by spending a Hero Point). Mark a community ability as such by preceding it with the word Community: for example, **Community Black Spear Clan.**

**High Llama spirit-talker**

*This High Llama spirit-talker is a tall woman, with olive-colored skin and black hair and eyes. She shaves her heads except for a ponytail at the back. She dresses lightly, wearing little more than a loincloth. Around her waist are many medicine bundles and she has a long and wicked bronze dagger at her side. She wears a leather vest with a bronze chest plate. She carries a very long-handled bronze axe.*

**Impala warrior**

*This impala warrior is short, dark-skinned, and sinewy. He has shaved his head completely, and painted the lower half of his face. He wears nothing more than a loincloth and a belt that carries his essential tools. He is armed with a composite bow.*

**Grazelander Heavy Cavalry**
*This Pure Horse People aristocrat wears a long coat made of bronze scales. Under that he wears riding trousers. He wears a bronze helmet that was likely made by Pelorians.*

*He is armed with a long bronze slashing sword (probably made by the Sartarites), which is slung on his back, a thrusting spear, and a composite bow. He has a small round shield faced with bronze.*

Like any ability, you use a community relationship to overcome plot obstacles. Communities are useful abilities because the possible aid they can grant you, either through contests or augments, is very broad. They can provide you with goods, information, advice, and contacts. Communities can boost your morale, offer healing, and provide safe haven while you recuperate. Your ability reflects not the size, power, or influence of your community, but the degree to which you can leverage it to solve problems. Thus it is possible to have a very high rating measuring your relationship to a small community, or a beginning-level rating in your relationship to a large and mighty one.

You may be able to argue that connection to a community is implicit in another ability, but it is still a stretch (see page 103).

Also like any other ability, you can draw on a community ability to augment another ability.

Like relationships to individuals, your bond to a community is a two-way obligation. You must aid its people and further its aims. If you refuse to render aid when needed, break with community traditions, or otherwise set yourself apart from your people, you suffer a consequence of defeat in regard to it. This can happen not only as a consequence of defeat, but through roleplaying choices alone.

As the above example attests, many dramatic stories can arise from a conflict between competing community obligations.

You should work with your Game Master to define your community. See the *Gloranthan Communities* chapter for more information.

## Your Occupational Keyword

Here are the basic occupations common to Dragon Pass, Esrolia and Prax. Pick one as part of your concept. The keyword can be used for any ability, relationship, or possession that is reasonably encompassed by the keyword.

Each occupation has a standard of living associated with that occupation: Prosperous, Common, or Poor.

Each occupation has a patron deity (or deities) associated with it where appropriate. Not all patron deities have cults described in this book.

These keywords are meant as examples and do not constitute a definitive list of occupational keywords. You do not have to use the generic name of the occupation and are at liberty to create a Tribal Thane, Spice Merchant, Trireme Crewman, and so on. Your Game Master may also give you a specific ability bonus if your descriptive keyword is more appropriate to the contest. Of course, you could pick something else entirely as your keyword. You might want to be a Treasure Hunter or Intrepid Explorer. Talk to your Game Master about your occupational keyword concept.

### Standard of Living

Each occupation has a standard of living associated with it. An occupational keyword can be used as a broad ability to overcome obstacles involving wealth. The standard of living determines the credibility of using that ability against a particular obstacle (see the section on Credibility, page 113). It is not credible for a Thief to use her occupational keyword to try to acquire enough farmland to support a free farmer and his household! She would have to have some other ability (like a Chest of Coins).

**Poor:** This occupation provides just enough to survive. It is a desperate and meager existence. Using Poor occupations to overcome obstacles involving wealth is usually not credible.

**Common:** This occupation provides the standard of living to be a full member of the community. Such people usually have their own dwelling place, clothes for both everyday and special occasions, and enough land and livestock to support them and their family or its equivalent in goods. Common occupations can be credibly used to overcome obstacles that might have a value of 50 Lunars or less.

**Prosperous:** This occupation provides substantial surplus wealth. Such people own land they do not have to work, animals they do not have to herd, fine clothes and jewelry, riding animals, and more. Prosperous occupations can credibly be used to overcome most wealth-related obstacles.

### Bandit

Bandits are found on the outskirts of many communities, preying on them like a wolf would prey on a herd. Some are there by choice; many were outlawed and are unable to return without severe repercussions.

**Standard of Living:** Poor.

**Patron Deity:** None.

### Crafter

Crafters make items or offer services for barter and sale. They generally specialize in a single area of technique, such as bronze working or carpentry. Crafters tend to be found in more urban areas that can support their specialized work.

**Standard of Living:** Common.

**Patron Deity:** Gustbran (bronze smith).

### Farmer

Farmers till or work specific local plots of land to raise crops and animals. They plow using a simple oxen-drawn scratch plow; furrows will be shallow. They raise a mixture of animals, grains, and roots, and are mostly self-supporting. Farmers are free and normally own their land and clear more land when they can.

**Standard of Living:** Common.

**Patron Deities:** Orlanth, Ernalda, Barntar.

### Fisher

Anyone who principally lives by gathering food from the waters is a fisher: for example, lake dwellers who cast for fish with ring nets, spearmen who live beside river rapids rich with leaping salmon, or small fleets of sailing craft depending on their culture.

**Standard of Living:** Common.

**Patron Deity:** Pelaskos, God of Fishermen, and various river and Water Gods, such as Choralinthor, Engizi (god of the Creek-Stream River), and Zola Fel.

### Healer

Healers minister to the sick and afflicted, binding wounds, treating disease, and aid in childbirth. They are often valued as peacemakers between feuding groups. Healers typically use a combination of magic with chirugery and herbalism, and are often literate.

**Standard of Living:** Common.

**Patron Deity:** Chalana Arroy.

### Herder

Herders live by tending animals, whether on foot or mounted. Herders may or may not own the animals they tend: most of a community's horses, cattle, sheep, and Praxian beasts (bison, high llamas, impalas, and sable antelope) will be marked and gathered into a single herd that is managed full-time by a herder.

## Orlanthi Clans

The clan is the basic community in any Orlanthi society. Individuals are expected to go to their clan for most help they might need. People refer to themselves first as members of their clan, saying something like *"I am Kothard, free man of the High Stag Hearth clan."*

A clan ranges in size between 500 and 2000 people. A typical Heortling clan has about 1200 member, half being adults, the other half children. In times of war, a typical clan can muster about 250 militia members, 25 thanes, and 10 mercenaries, all led by one warrior-chief.

The clan is organized by extended families, with decisionmaking centered in the **Clan Ring**, a council of 20-30 members, seven of whom serve as officers, or the **Inner Ring**. The council has a permanent structure, and its positions are filled by members as the need arises. The precise structure of any clan council varies in the number of members, precise function and duties of members, and its own history. Nonetheless, great similarities exist.

The clan council is responsible for maintaining justice among its members. It is also responsible for negotiating with people who are outside of the clan in such matters as justice, trade, war, and obtaining wives for marriage.

The leader of a Heortling or Tarshite clan is a chieftain. He has the responsibility of being spokesperson and decisionmaker for all clan members, especially in times of emergency. His success as community leader depends upon the support of the council and the folk, both of whom have separate methods of removing him from office, should the need arise. In Esrolia, a matriarch exercises clan leadership.

Clans' contact with all outsiders is dominated by the clan chieftain, but most internal workings are determined by a general council of all the clan's concerned adults. Common sense is respected, so that in a military situation the counsel of experienced warriors carries great weight, but in matters of sowing or harvest the grandmothers have the upper hand.

The clan is a social unit, not a geographic boundary. Lands belonging to one clan overlap those of another, more than one clan resides in a small city, and members of different clans interact on a daily basis. Disputes between clans occupy much of the business of the local tribal or city assembly. However, every clan controls sacred places called the tula that belong exclusively to the clan.

**Sartarite Noble**
*This chieftain or petty king wears a long tunic that goes down to his knees over riding leggings. Over this he wears a long fringed cloak that goes down to near his ankles.*

**Warrior**
*This professional warrior is equipped by a clan chieftain and serves as one of his bodyguards. She wears a bronze helmet with cheek pieces and a nose guard. She wears bronze greaves, short cuirass of boiled-leather, and short trousers of leather or wool beneath her skirt. Like many warriors in Dragon Pass, she rides a Praxian beast (a sable antelope).*

**Standard of Living:** Common.
**Patron Deity:** Orlanth, Waha, or Eiritha (depending on culture).

## Hunter

Hunters kill wild animals for meat, sinew, horn, and hide. Hunters are experienced stalkers of mountain, wood, and plain, culling bison herds, systemically killing local predators, operating lines of traps for furs, and so on.

**Standard of Living:** Common.
**Patron Deity:** Foundchild, Odayla, Yinkin (depending on culture).

## Merchant

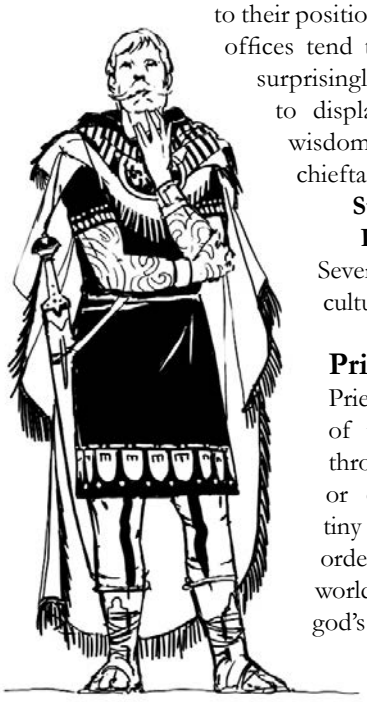
Merchants ply the trade routes connecting the Lunar Empire and the Holy Country. They can plan and trade seasons or even years in advance, and take advantage of financing and bills of exchange. They might use loans to Nobles to lever special favors and laws, or might find themselves being unbearably extorted by Nobles. A few will actually be traders who physically transport goods from city to city; most merchants are located only in one city or have trustworthy family branches in all cities where they trade.

**Standard of Living:** Prosperous.
**Patron Deity:** Issaries.

## Noble

Nobles live by the work of others. In return, nobles coordinate, speak for, and protect their clans, tribes, and cities. Rulers and leaders often come to their positions through merit, but many noble offices tend to be hereditary. Nobles can be surprisingly accessible, welcoming chances to display their courage, prowess, and wisdom. Their titles include petty king, chieftain, khan, and thane.

**Standard of Living:** Prosperous.
**Patron Deity:** Ernalda, Orlanth, Seven Mothers, Waha (depending on culture).



## Priest

Priests work for the spiritual needs of themselves and their community through worship of a particular deity or cluster of deities, manipulating tiny portions of the god's powers in order to affect changes in the mundane world favorable to the god and the god's followers. Priests are dependent on their cult and temple for financial and social support.

**Standard of Living:** Prosperous.
**Patron Deity:** Whatever god is worshiped by the priest.

## Sailor

Sailors have the skill and knowledge to cross distances and move cargoes daunting to Fishers, Sailors can fish rich banks far at sea, man spice-laden merchant ships, captain mighty triremes, etc.

**Standard of Living:** Poor.
**Patron Deity:** Dormal.

## Scribe

Scribes are the equivalent of common civil professions – lawspeaker, teacher, bureaucrat, accountant, engineer, scholar, and so on. Throughout most of Dragon Pass and the Holy Country, scribes are firmly bound to the cult of Lhankor Mhy.

**Standard of Living:** Prosperous.
**Patron Deity:** Lhankor Mhy.

## Skald

Musicians, storytellers, and entertainers, Skalds are found everywhere, but tend to congregate where there is enough wealth that a patron can sponsor them. Some travel from court to court and perform for food, lodging, and hospitality. They are a great source of news and gossip.

**Standard of Living:** Common.
**Patron Deity:** Donandar, Orlanth.

### Sorcerer

Sorcerers directly manipulate the Runes through their will and learning. They are literate and study arts and knowledge generally forbidden to other members of their community. Some are feared, others respected.

Sorcerers begin with a grimoire with five spells. You do not have to select them all at start of play.

**Standard of Living:** Common.

**Patron Deity:** None.

### Spirit-talker

Spirit-talkers aid Shamans in performing their duties to the community, and are, in return, instructed in the deeper knowledge of shamanism. They aid as spiritual leaders, spirit-chasers, and healers.

**Standard of Living:** Poor.

**Patron Deity:** Depends on spirit tradition.

### Thief

Professional thieves are common to every city. They include the following sub-crafts: burglar, cutpurse, forger, gambler, henchman, pimp, and pitchman.

**Standard of Living:** Poor.

**Patron Deity:** Lanbril.

### Warlock

The magicians of the Sartar Magical Union are popularly called "warlocks" after a derisive comment by the Lunar general who opposed them in 1627. They include men and women in roughly equal measures, as well as a substantial minority not so easily classified - far more than usual in the population. They have been taught techniques to wield great magical power through meditation, austerities, chants, ecstatic dance, and even sex, to achieve a higher consciousness and unshakeable focus. This technique is sometimes called "egg hatching" or "hatching and birth" and is analogized with the labor every mother puts in delivering her baby. While performing their collective rites, the magicians are physically defenseless and must be defended by bodyguards.

Many warlocks have been Illuminated by Argrath or his Companions (see Illumination, page 202). The warlocks are widely feared, and their cryptic and often transgressive words and deeds do not endear them to the superstitious. They are nonetheless under the direct protection of the Prince, who favors them greatly.

**Standard of Living:** Prosperous.

**Patron Deity:** Any.

**Note:** The first "true" warlocks arrive in Dragon Pass with Argrath in 1624. Prior to that, warlocks are despised and feared.

### Warrior

These fighters form the guards for and personal retinue of the nobles. Others are mercenaries who hire themselves out to various employers throughout Glorantha. They are the sum of a community's flexible fighting strength, for they do not need to till fields or tend animals. Warriors fight as either infantry or cavalry, which in turn can be divided into Heavy and Light, as determined by weapons and armament.

**Standard of Living:** Common.

**Patron Deity:** Humakt, Orlanth, Storm Bull, Babeester Gor, Waha, Seven Mothers.

**Heavy Infantry:** These warriors are typically armored with bronze or leather armor and armed with spear and sword. Heavy Infantry most typically fights in a phalanx or shield wall.

**Light Infantry:** Skirmishers and missile users are common to every society, even the most primitive. In many societies, light infantry is used as a skirmishing screen ahead of the main body of infantry.

**Heavy Cavalry:** These mounted warriors engage in direct contact with the foe, usually with lances (spears), sometimes with swords, maces, or axes.

**Light Cavalry:** These mounted warriors are armed with missile weapons, typically bows or throwing javelins. They skirmish with the foe, withdrawing from any offensive only to turn around and counterattack once the offensive is spent.

**Warlock**

*This warlock is a member of one of the magical warrior societies that serves Prince Argrath. Like the thane, she is trained to fight from horseback, and is heavily tattooed. This warlock wears a hauberk of bronze scales with shoulder-pieces. The ornately decorated helmet has a crest and side feathers, and even bronze wings.*

**Thane**

*This noble warrior is the companion of a petty king. He wears a bronze bell cuirass and a decorated bronze helmet with cheek pieces and feathered crest. His exposed throat is covered by a crescent shaped silver-plated gorget, decorated with bands of relief ornamentation.*

## Your Runes

Your Runes are your main source of magical power. They are awakened at your initiation to adulthood. The Runes you choose define you – they define your soul, your temperament, your personality and your magical connections and enmities. Your choice of Runes may well determine your fate! Keep in mind: **not all Rune combinations have a matching cult**!

### Selecting Runes

Runes are magical keywords. To select your Runes, follow the three steps below. Don't worry about which is the most important yet.

**1. Your Soul: Choose an Elemental Rune**

Your elemental Rune reflects the *dominant aspect of your soul*. Choose one elemental Rune:

- Air
- Earth
- Fire
- Darkness
- Water
- Moon *(Note: Review the Lunar Magic chapter if you select this Rune. A hero with the Moon Rune must choose a specific phase of the Moon)*

**2. Your Temperament: Choose a Power Rune**

Next, choose a single Power Rune. Although you can also choose a Power Rune for your third Rune as well, this one defines your *dominant* temperament. The opposing Power Rune pairs are: Stability or Movement, Life or Death, Truth or Illusion, Harmony or Disorder.

**3. Choose a third Rune**

You can choose a second Power Rune, a Condition Rune, a Form Rune, or some other Special Rune for your hero's third affinity. You cannot choose a Power Rune that is opposed to your second Rune. This third Rune completes your magical temperament. These Runes include:

- Beast (must specify what type)
- Communication
- Magic
- Mastery
- Law
- Spirit
- Eternal Battle (Anti-Chaos)
- Moon *(Note: Review the Lunar Magic chapter if you select this Rune. A hero with the Moon Rune must choose a specific phase of the Moon)*

Many other unique Runes exist; Game Masters and players should feel free to create additional specialized runes that describe abilities not covered by the common runes.

**Dragon Pass militia**

*In Dragon Pass, all free men (and women members of martial cults) are expected to follow their chief into war. This typical militia member wears an open helmet made of leather or bronze and a leather or quilted-wool jerkin to defend his torso.*

## When Do I Get My Runes?

Your Runes are a part of you, but you are awakened to them with your adulthood rites that make you a full member of your community. At adulthood, your three most significant Runes are chosen. A child cannot do Rune magic.

In Dragon Pass, Heortland and Esrolia, most men are strongly associated with the Air Rune and most women are strongly associated with the Earth Rune; these runes are almost always one of your three most significant Runes. Normally, you can only have one elemental Rune. The Tarshites are largely the same, although the Lunarized cities have a significant minority of people associated with the Moon Rune.

In Prax, each tribe is associated with a Rune. The Bison Tribe is associated with the Air Rune. The Impala Tribe is associated with the Fire Rune. The High Llama Tribe is associated with the Water Rune. The Sable Tribe is associated with the Moon Rune. Lastly, the Morokanth are associated with the Darkness Rune.

## Runes and Personality

Your Runes have a distinct impact on your personality. A person strong with the ☋ Air Rune tends to be violent and passionate. A person strong with the ☊ Movement Rune will tend to be adventurous and unpredictable. Someone strong with the ⧗ Life Rune tends to be lusty and desirable, and so on. Each Rune is associated with personality traits; you should familiarize yourself with the Personality Traits of your Runes.

At times, the Game Master will treat your Runes as a Flaw to be overcome if you want to act in a manner contrary to the Rune. Successfully overcoming the Rune means you can act in the desired way but at the cost of temporarily weakening your connection with that Rune as a Consequence of Defeat. Failure means that you must act in accordance with the Rune.

On the other hand, the Game Master can also give you a Situational Bonus or even a Plot Augment to the use of a Rune if you have been consistently roleplaying the personality traits of that Rune.

## How Do I Get New Runes?

You can gain new Runes through a special ritual or heroquest to the Other Side. Most people do this at initiation. However, the priests and other holy people know of other heroquests you can do if you have outgrown those. For an Orlanthi leader to become a king, he must have the ⊔ Mastery Rune. If he does not, then he can perform a heroquest to earn this Rune.

## Spirit Magicians and Sorcerers

Heroes with the ☧ Spirit Rune or the △ Law Rune can specialize in Spirit Magic or Sorcery as appropriate. They receive additional free breakout abilities from those Runes: five charms using the Spirit Rune or a grimoire with five spells using the Law Rune. You do not need to determine all of these free abilities at character creation; undetermined abilities can be added in play.

You should review the Spirit Magic and Sorcery chapters when making a hero with these Runes.

## Runes and Time

At the Dawn, Time came with his 294 sons and daughters and told the king of the Theyalans how to chronicle Time. Time introduced his sons and daughters to the king one after the other. Each backed into the room, bowed to the king, and told him how to speak their name in Runes. Each day is associated with three Runes: two Elemental Runes (denoting day and season) and one Power Rune (denoting week). The Theyalan Calendar is further described in the Calendar Appendix.

A Game Master may impose situational modifiers when you use a Rune associated with the appropriate season (e.g., using the Air Rune during Storm Season). It would be appropriate to increase the situational modifier if the Rune is being used not only in the right season, but on the right day (e.g., using the Air Rune on Windsday of Storm Season). Such days are holy to the gods of those Runes. When all three Runes of a day match that of a god, that god's magic will be extremely powerful (such as an Orlanth cultist using his god's magic on Windsday of Movement Week of Storm Season). Such days are typically the high holy day of the god.

Similarly, a Game Master may impose a situational penalty when you try to overcome an obstacle associated with a specific day. For example, it would certainly be appropriate for a Game Master to impose a situational penalty when trying to overcome Darkness magic in Darkness Season or to use Movement magic in Stasis Week.

**Tarsh Exile**

*This Tarsh Exile is an archer; light infantry feared for their ambushes in the rugged terrain around Kero Fin Mountain. The archer wears a patterned wool tunic, and a heavy wool cloak. He wears fur-lined boots, laced up the front, for warmth.*

*He has a composite bow similar to the Grazelanders, although the Exiles are largely infantry. The Exile has an ornamented quiver, and carries a bronze-headed. He has a square, leather covered wooden shield.*

## Choosing Abilities

Now that you know who your hero is, what he does, and why, it's time to better define exactly how he does things, by picking his abilities.

Pick 5 additional **abilities** that can include specialized "breakout" abilities from a keyword or Rune, describing them however you want. New abilities start at 13; however, a breakout ability starts at +1 from the keyword or Rune and is shown as a modifier of the base keyword. You do not have to decide upon all your additional abilities at the start of play; undecided abilities can be added at any time during play.

Anything that your hero can use to solve problems or overcome obstacles in a story can be an ability. You decide how to describe your abilities. Some abilities, such as your central area of expertise, can be very broad, entailing a wide variety of related

capabilities. Others might be very colorful and specific, granting you advantages when you enter into a conflict with an opponent using a less directly applicable ability. The more creative your description of these oddball abilities, the more likely it is that you'll be able to take advantage of this dynamic.

Abilities often include a mix of the following:

- Magical abilities: see the magic section.
- Physical qualities, like strength, endurance, or keen eyesight.
- Mental talents, like quick-wittedness, strong memory.
- Personality traits, like good humor, vengefulness, or determination.
- Training in physical pursuits, like rock climbing, swimming, or fighting.
- Fields of knowledge, like astronomy, or herbalism.
- Occupations: weapons thane, trader, hunter.
- Possessions: a magic sword, a brilliant helm.
- Broader resources: a mercantile company or a chest of silver coins.
- Cultural background: Sartarite, Praxian, Lunar hoplite.
- Inhuman anatomy: troll
- Biographical facts, like born in on a sacred day or descended from a demigoddess.
- Relationships: other people you can call on to help you solve your problems. These are categorized, depending on their degree of commitment to you, as retainers, companions, allies, contacts, and patrons. Your Game Master can help you categorize them, based on your verbal description, or you can consult page 49 for more detail.

To repeat: if you can solve a problem with it, it's an ability.

Because you can make up your own abilities, we don't try to group them into strict categories. The best abilities overlap multiple categories. In play, *HeroQuest Glorantha* encourages you to find novel ways to use your abilities to solve problems.

Instead we encourage you to personalize your character sheet to group your abilities in a way that fits your sense of logic, or evokes something about the hero's history and personality.

Describe each ability however you want. Some sound better as nouns, other as adjectives. A colorful phrase is often more fun than a single word.

When choosing abilities, don't bother to specify how good you are at them. That will be determined later, when you assign numerical ratings to each ability.

When you pick names that suggest how good you are, these are not taken literally, but instead reflect a subjective, and possibly incorrect, perception of your capabilities. You can't make your hero better than others by taking an ability like *Best Swordfighter In Dragon Pass*, *Never Loses At Gambling*, or *Indestructible*. You will lose sword fights, at gambling and be proven only to some extent indestructible, when you suffer defeats in contests of those abilities. Better to just take the abilities *Swordfighter*, *Gambler*, and *Hard to Hurt*, and not suffer the embarrassment when your actual capabilities fail to live up to the hype.

### Magical Abilities

Players can give their heroes magical abilities. These can be described as spirit magic, Rune magic, sorcery, an allied spirit or magical being, a unique magical talent, or a magical item. Magical abilities can be breakout abilities from a Rune (such as a charm using the Spirit Rune, a grimoire using the Law Rune, or a Lunar glamour using the Moon Rune) or they can be a standalone ability that starts at 13 (such as charms taken by a hero without the Spirit Rune or a grimoire taken by a hero without the Law Rune).

## Assigning Ability Ratings

Through one of the character creation methods, you've now defined your abilities. These tell you *what* you can do.

Now you assign numbers to each ability, called ratings, which determine how *well* they do these things.

Your occupational keyword and distinguishing characteristic have a starting rating of 17. Your three runes have ratings of 21 (or 1 – see later), 17, and 13. All of your other abilities start at a rating of 13.

Now you may spend up to 12 points to boost any of your various ability ratings. You don't have to do it during initial creation, and you can add them as you develop your hero. Each point spent increases a rating by 1 point. You can't spend more than 10 points on any one ability.

When you first create your hero, you can increase your Runes and keywords by spending one additional point, but once play begins it will cost 2 points to raise these very broad abilities.

## Equipment

The *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules treat possessions and equipment like it does everything else: as abilities used to solve problems, or to augment other abilities, which are then used to solve problems. If you have an item as an ability, it implies you have the skill to use it. It is never necessary to split the item and the ability into two separate abilities.

For example, Vargast takes the ability *Iron Sword named Foebiter*. He does not have to have *Sword Fighting* ability in order to use it. However, since he can fight with his thane keyword, he can use that to augment Foebiter, or vice versa. Alternatively, Vargast could take the ability as a breakout from his thane keyword.

Equipment important enough to be an ability will likely carry social or magical associations useful in solving other problems. Choose possessions not only for their utility, but also to illuminate your hero's personality.

It can be assumed that your hero will have equipment and possessions appropriate to his or her occupation and background. For example, a free farmer will have his plow and livestock, a crafter will possess the tools of his or her craft, a mercenary will own his weapons, and so on. In the appendix, we do list some common equipment to help give players a better feel for the setting.

## Magic Items

Magic is everywhere in Glorantha and almost any object can conceivably be described as an ability granting magical powers under the *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules. A magic item can be as prosaic as an enchanted Sword of Sharpness, or as enigmatic as the Crystal Lotus Blossom of Draconic Consciousness. It might just add color to the character, or it might be a primary source of her power. Likewise, magic items may provide specific narrative effects: for

## Flaws

Many great fictional characters are defined as much by their humanizing flaws as by their positive qualities. You may assign up to three flaws to your hero. Common flaws include:

Personality traits: *surly, petty, compulsive.*
Physical challenges: *blindness, lameness.*
Social hurdles: *outcast, ill mannered.*

Most flaws are assigned a rating equivalent to your abilities. Your first flaw is rated at your highest ability, your second shares the same rating as your second-highest ability, and your third equals your lowest ability.

Certain keywords include flaws. Flaws gained through keywords do not count against your limit of three chosen flaws. All flaws after the third are given the same rating as your third ability. You may designate flaws from keywords as your first or second-ranked flaw.

When flaws manifest during play, the Game Master places you in a contest against them, and uses the flaw as the difficulty of your efforts to overcome the flaw.

This method applies to flaws that primarily present the hero with additional obstacles to overcome.

Game Masters may decide during play that certain flaws are better expressed as penalties to your attempts to overcome other obstacles. Divide the value by 5 and round down (a flaw of 19 imposes a –3 penalty). This is appropriate where you specify that your ability to solve problems drops under certain specific conditions. Examples might include:

*Hated by trolls*
*Always insulting to Lunars*
*Marked for death by Black Fang assassins*
*Can't stand dogs*
*Cursed by a god.*

When assigning numeric values to flaws, you can mix the two types.

Some groups find flaws enormously useful in humanizing their heroes. Another train school of thought considers them unnecessary at best, and more often actively troublesome. Often, heroes' dominant flaws do not appear on their character sheets; they arise more or less unconsciously from the player's style, in the course of the story. The heroes may be played as, to name a few common examples, cowardly, dominating, or reflexively dishonest. Heroes with both imposed and spontaneously occurring flaws are generally too unlikable to support the dramatic weight of an ongoing story.

A worse problem with flaws occurs when a spotlight-hogging player uses them to exert control over the rest of the group. Many so-called flaws are in fact fun to play, in a very selfish sense. They exert more of a disadvantage on the other players, who have to work around them to get to their goals, than on the hero they're supposed to harm. Players who use flaws to stop the story and focus attention on themselves shouldn't find active encouragement for their disruptions in the game rules.

Many so-called flaws are in fact abilities in disguise, and should be treated as such. If being, say, vengeful or an outcast can ever work to your advantage in a conflict, it's not a flaw, and can't be had for free.

However, you might not realize that a flaw can be useful. If during play what seemed only detrimental could be of use, with Game Master approval you can spend a Hero Point (see page 105) and convert it to a regular ability for your character.

**Esrolian Priestess**
*This priestess wears a tight green bodice that is opened to below her navel to reveal her breasts. She wears a flounced and pleated bell-shaped skirt. Around her neck, she wears a necklace of emeralds. She is barefoot, so that she might have direct physical contact with the Earth. Earth temples throughout the Orlanthi lands (and even beyond) have adopted the Esrolian style.*

example, iron is poisonous to elves and trolls and, if unenchanted, dampens magic; or the item's reputation (as expressed as the item's Ability Rating) may impress or persuade others.

There are many famous magical weapons associated with a wide variety of Gloranthan heroes: the Snake Pipe; Tada's Grisly Portions; the EWF Battle Banner; the Black Spear of the Colymar; the Vanak Spear of Rastalulf and his heirs; the Unbreakable Sword of Arkat; the Helmet of Perides; Jar-eel's sword Mooncutter; Argrath's Ormsword; and many more.

## Enchanted items

Probably the most common magical item is an object that has been enchanted with some discrete power of a single Rune or (more rarely) multiple Runes. A Bag of Winds, a Cauldron of Plenty, Sandals of Mobility, Cloak of Darkness, an Orb of Mastery, or a Loincloth of Purity are all examples of Gloranthan magical enchanted items.

## Bones of the Gods

All metal is from the bones of gods, some dead and some (like the Earth Mother) still living. These metals can be enchanted, giving them special magical properties. All exceptional metals are called Rune Metals, to distinguish them from ordinary bronze. Some enchanted rune metals - specifically silver, bronze, and iron -weapons work against magical creatures, and thus can be used to harm physical things otherwise immune to normal metals (such as werewolves). Enchanted rune metals have various properties depending on the metal:

**Lead**: The rune metal of Darkness, in its enchanted form it neither clanks nor reflects light.

**Quicksilver**: The rune metal of Water, in its enchanted form this metal does not sink in water.

**Copper**: The rune metal of Earth, in its enchanted form it is durable and solid. It is the most commonly found rune metal, and with tin it can be used to make bronze.

**Tin**: The rune metal of Sky, it is rarely enchanted but usually alloyed with copper to make bronze. In its enchanted form it is blue and surprisingly light.

**Bronze**: The rune metal of Air makes perfectly serviceable weapons, tools, and armor even in its unenchanted form. As a result, bronze is the most important metal of Glorantha. When enchanted, it can be used to harm things normally immune to physical harm. Bronze can be found as raw gods' bones, but in much of Glorantha it is typically made by alloying copper and tin.

**Silver**: The rune metal of Moon, in its unenchanted form it can be used to harm things which are normally immune to physical harm, but it is too soft and pliable to be used as a weapon. Enchanted silver is charmed into hardness and makes serviceable weapons and armor.

**Gold**: The rune metal of Fire, when enchanted it is as hard as bronze and glows softly in the dark.

**Iron**: The rune metal of the Mostali, iron has supernatural properties even when it is unenchanted, as it burns elves and trolls, and can be used to harm things otherwise immune to physical harm. However, unenchanted iron functions as a Flaw against the use of Runes, spirits, spells, or other magic by its wielder. Enchanted iron has no such Flaw.

## God's Blood Crystals

Just as the bones of dead gods provide Glorantha with metals, the petrified blood of dead and wounded gods provide magic crystals. These crystals provide magic from a Rune that might differ from the hero's own Runes. The players or GM should give the crystal a colorful, but enigmatic name, like Arroin's Tears, Esrolian Ruby, Smoke Rock, Snake Crystal, Barnablood, Ernalda Tears, Gata Save, Grandpa's Aid, Second Wind, Star Tip, etc., and assign it a Rune. The player and GM can then work out in game what the crystal does.

## Samastina's Saga

Kris decides that Samastina should have an enchanted gold dagger. She uses one of her five additional abilities to add a breakout ability from her noblewoman keyword. Not only can she use it as a weapon, but she can also use its glow as an ability when appropriate.

Franziska has given Karganvale an enchanted iron sword as a breakout of her Death Rune. The sword not only is a deadly weapon, but it should be especially effective against trolls and elves; merely presenting it may terrify them!

Later in the campaign, Neil decides that Vargast wants to enchant a piece of flint to hold some of his Air Rune. He spends a Hero Point and adds Enchanted Thunderstone as a breakout ability of his Air Rune.

### Magical Items as a Companion

A particularly powerful magical item should be created as a companion as per the Companion rules. Such magical items always possess a powerful personal spirit and are usually sentient with goals and interests of their own.

## Relationships

*HeroQuest Glorantha* allows you to play out social conflicts with as much suspense and drama as other games devote to fighting. Your success will depend as much, if not more, on your social abilities as on your sword arm. Social abilities can be inherent to your hero, like *Charming*, *Intimidating*, or *Famous*. Just as effective are your relationships—connections to supporting characters, which you can draw on to overcome plot obstacles.

## Supporting Characters

Many relationships connect you to supporting characters controlled by the Game Master.

When you try to use one of these relationships to solve a problem, you contest with your relationship ability. You can't simply go to the supporting character you have a relationship with, stick them with the problem, and expect to see it solved.

If you succeed, the supporting character helps you solve the problem. If you fail, they don't. As with any ability, you must still specify how the contact goes about overcoming the obstacle. Calls on relationships are almost always simple contests.

In crucial situations, it may seem dramatically inappropriate for a hero to solve a problem indirectly, by working through others. Player heroes should be the driving force in any narrative. They should have to expose themselves to risk when overcoming pivotal obstacles. Where heroes seem to be taking the easy way out, Game Masters can simply provide plot justification for a very high difficulty level.

Alternately, the Game Master can expose the supporting character to serious risk. If the character dies or otherwise suffers a change of status that renders him useless to the hero, the player permanently loses the relationship ability. Permanent loss of an ability is a steep price to pay. It can also occasion scenes of dramatic angst, in which heroes are confronted with the terrible consequences of risking others' lives to achieve their ends.

Before putting supporting characters at serious risk, Game Masters should make sure the players understand the magnitude of the possible consequences. Players have a right to be annoyed if they think they're dispatching a hero on a minor errand, when in fact he's being sent into a meat grinder.

When supporting characters undertake significant risk, they may suffer a consequence of defeat commensurate with the level of the character's defeat in the contest of the relationship ability. Or it may simply be the heroes' relationship with them that is damaged or destroyed.

Supporting characters have their own agendas within the game world and mostly act independently of your hero. When they do so, the Game Master rolls on their behalf, using abilities she has assigned to them.

Like any ability, the sorts of problems a relationship can solve for you depend on how you describe it—in this case, how you describe the supporting character. (The chance of success is, also as always, determined by the rating). As a form of shorthand, useful relationships with supporting characters fall into three categories: allies, patrons, and contacts.

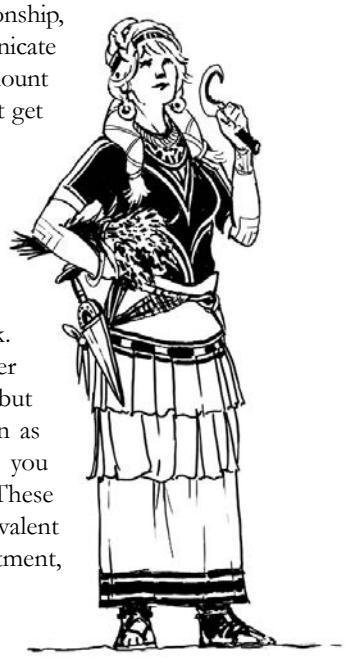
In order to make use of a relationship, you must be in a position to communicate with the supporting character. No amount of pull will help you when you can't get ahold of your friends in high places.

### Allies

An **ally** is a character of roughly the same level of accomplishment as you, often in the same or a similar line of work. You share a commitment to a broader goal. The ally likes or admires you but expects the relationship to function as a two-way street. For every favor you ask of him, he'll ask one of you. These reciprocal favors will be roughly equivalent in terms of risk, time commitment, difficulty, and inconvenience.

**Dragon Pass Priestess**

*Dragon Pass is colder and relatively poorer than Esrolia. This priestess wears a costume similar to the Esrolian priestess, but adapted for the climate and conditions. Her bodice is not fully opened to reveal the breasts and is looser than the Esrolian version. Her skirt is also more practical than the Esrolian bell-shaped skirt.*



### Samastina's Saga

While hunting in the Nochet Knowledge Temple for an old treatise, Orensulva finds an old, twisted, but strangely smooth green stone tucked behind a pile of scrolls and covered in dust. When she picks it up, she finds that it's like grasping a snake - the stone practically slithers and slides out of her grasp! She realizes that she's found a piece of Talosa's Bloodstone. She's not sure why it's been left there, but she's sure the Knowing God intended for her to find it! She spends a Hero Point and cements Talosa's Bloodstone as a breakout ability of her Earth Rune.

**Noblewoman**
*This Esrolian noblewoman wears a close-fitting tube dress, sewn at the side, and held up by two straps that attach behind the neck. The straps come together at the front and expose her breasts. The dress is made of fine linen or even silk. She wears a white-feathered cape over her shoulders.*

If you think of your hero as a character in a novel, an ally is a character who also has their own book, and is making a guest appearance in yours. Red Sonya is an ally of Conan.

## Patrons

A **patron** is someone of higher rank than you, be it a chief, king, priest, or even demigod. Patrons enjoy greater access to resources than you do, either through personal ownership (as in a Merchant Prince) or authority (as in the queen of an Esrolian city). They may lend you advice or provide you with resources but are too busy and important to personally perform tasks for you. They may hire you to do jobs, or issue orders within a command structure to which you both belong. A patron may feel considerable affection toward you, or perceive you merely as a useful underling, but in any case, their support isn't always guaranteed. When you roll your Patron relationship, the Game Master adjusts the difficulty depending on what you've done for him lately.

## Contacts

A **contact** is a specialist in an occupation, skill, or area of expertise. Although you must be able, if prompted, to explain how you cultivated these contacts, they needn't necessarily relate to your keyword or other defining abilities. Contacts provide information and perform minor favors, but will expect information or small favors from you in return. They may share your goals but are more likely to view them neutrally. The commitment a contact feels toward you is at best that of a friendly acquaintance. Perhaps he regards you as a valued customer or fellow enthusiast. Without powerful incentives, contacts won't stick their necks out for you.

You can describe a contact as being a particular individual, or as a group of similar individuals. If you draw on a group, you can expect to conduct normal business with them but not to get them to go the extra mile for you. Group contacts are most useful to get you in touch with classes of people who are otherwise difficult to contact.

## Followers

A **follower** is a secondary character that travels with you and contributes on a regular basis to your success. There are two types of followers: companions and retainers.

Followers need not be people, or sentient beings: a spirit guardian, magical item, or a well-trained animal are all examples of a follower.

### Companions

A **companion** is a secondary character under your control. Most of the time he stays at your side to render assistance, but he can also go off and perform errands or missions on his own. Even gods have companions. Mastakos, God of Movement is Orlanth's Charioteer. There are many examples of companions:

- A boon companion who fights with you
- An allied spirit, like a magical wind that swirls around you
- An intelligent magical item

Give your companion a name. Be prepared, when asked, to explain how the companion came to be your follower, and why he continues in that role.

Companions start with three abilities, one rated at 17 and the others at 13. Any of these abilities may be a keyword. At least one of them should indicate a personality trait.

If the companion is nonhuman or a member of an unusual culture, one of its three starting abilities must be its species or culture keyword.

Once you've determined the companion's base abilities, allocate 15 additional points between three of them, spending no more than 10 on any one ability.

These abilities, like those of your hero, can be improved through the expenditure of Hero Points. (As usual, it costs 2 points to raise a keyword).

You may use any of your companion's abilities as you would your own. Your companion can go off and do things without your hero.

### Why Don't Most NPCs have Ability Ratings?

As a general rule non-player characters played by the Game Master don't have ability ratings. When heroes need to use their abilities to overcome a non-player character, the Game Master handles it like any other obstacle. When two non-player characters are in conflict, the Game Master should just decide the result. The Game Master should avoid rolling dice against herself!

Followers are an exception to the rule; these are secondary characters under player control and their ability ratings are used to aid a player in overcoming obstacles.

Companions confer various benefits during extended contests, described on pages 80 and 82.

### Replacing Lost Companions

As a consequence of defeats in which they participated, companions can be killed or leave your service permanently. (Companions suffer worse consequences of defeat than your hero; page 64).

Defeat in physical contests can lead to literal death. Metaphorical deaths from non-violent contests indicate a break with the main hero. The companion may angrily withdraw from service, but is more likely to sorrowfully retire. You may be able to bring a companion back from metaphorical death by overcoming story obstacles. These should be difficult, most likely taking the main focus of an entire storyline within the series.

If you lose a companion, you may create a new one without needing to spend a Hero Point. You must explain how the new companion has come to be your new follower.

Heroes with retainers may find it convenient to promote them to companion status, giving them names and personalities, with a sudden boost in abilities and ratings to match.

## Retainers

A **retainer** is a more or less anonymous servant or helper. You may specify a single retainer, or, where appropriate to your character concept, an entire staff of them.

Like any other ability, a retainer ability allows you to overcome relevant obstacles by engaging in a contest. Sample retainers include:

- Bodyguards
- Bound spirits
- Mounts
- Servants

Retainers generally regard you with all the affection and loyalty due to an employer or master. If you treat them more poorly than is expected for your culture, the Game Master will increase the difficulty level of attempts to make use of their talents.

To model the contribution of combat-oriented retainers, such as bodyguards and spear carriers, to a fight, use them as an augment to your ability. Where appropriate, you and the Game Master describe the effect their presence has in the ongoing fight.

Other sorts of servants can likewise contribute to non-violent conflicts.

During a conflict in which you use retainers in a fight, the Game Master can rule that consequences of defeat apply to them. Retainers who are routinely Impaired in battle, or Injured even once, are apt to leave your service, even when well treated.

Retainers suffering non-violent consequences of defeat are less likely to depart, though it is still possible.

**Tarshite Noble**

*This nobleman from the capital city of Furthest is the height of Provincial aristocratic fashion. His long beard is well groomed, and has been curled with tongs to create hanging curls. He wears a long tunic that goes down to above his knees and leggings for riding. Over that he wears a long embroidered robe that goes down to his ankles, and has been split for riding.*

### Samastina's Saga

Neil decides he wants to give his hero an allied spirit as a companion. Allied spirits are specially awakened spirits or animals sent by a deity to aid cult members. As Vargast is a cultist of Orlanth Thunderous, Neil creates an awakened Air Elemental, giving it a Air Elemental as a keyword starting at 17. Neil thinks it would be cool if the Air Elemental could have fiery winds, like a "firenado" or fire whirl, and adds Winds of Fire starting at 13. He gives his allied spirit a Turbulent personality at 13. Neil then adds 15 ability points, raising the Air Elemental keyword to 4 and the Winds of Fire ability to 1.

Neil calls the allied spirit Firewind, and describes it as being one of the many umbroli servitors of Orlanth.

### Occupational Contacts

Any occupational keyword can be treated as a source of contacts. If you're a lawspeaker, it stands to reason that you will know many other lawspeakers, sages, chieftains, and probably kings as well. Mercenaries know other mercenaries, along with their employers. A priest knows fellow priests, various cultists, and maybe a devotee or two.

However, using an occupational keyword as a source of contacts will always be a stretch (see page 103). To more reliably draw on particular contacts associated with your profession, take an explicit ability.

If you lose retainers for any reason, you can replace them simply by providing a convincing explanation of how you go about it. Heroes who are notoriously hard on their retainers may have to overcome challenging plot obstacles to find another band of willing servitors.

## Relationships as Flaws

Certain relationships with supporting characters act as flaws. They impose obligations on you, prompting the Game Master to present you with obstacles you have no choice but to overcome.

### Dependents

A dependent is a person, usually a family member or loved one, who requires your aid and protection. Your Game Master will periodically create storylines in which the dependent is endangered.

Rather than taking a dependent as a flaw, you may find it more fruitful to specify the nature of your relationship as an ability, such as *Love for Wife* or *Love for Son*. That way, you still guide the Game Master to include the rescue of your loved one as a story motif, while also getting an ability you can use as an augment in appropriate situations.

### Adversaries

An adversary is a rival, enemy or other individual who can be relied upon to periodically disrupt your plans. Your adversary's goals are probably the opposite of yours, although he could be a bitter rival within the same community, organization, or movement. His antipathy for you is definitely personal, perhaps rooted in some past clash or slight.

Adversaries needn't be passively waiting for you to do things so they can obstruct you. Game Masters will give them plans and schemes you will discover and attempt to disrupt.

Because you have defined yourself in part by your relationship to your adversary, expect your Game Master to contrive to keep your adversary alive and kicking, even in circumstances when you could permanently dispose of similar opponents.

When one member of a group chooses an adversary, the other heroes usually wind up dealing with him, too. As such, you should consult with your fellow players before writing him into your series. The group may want to specify a single adversary for the entire party, or group their disparate adversaries together in the service of a single organization or cause.

**From left to right:** *Orensulva the Curious, Karganvale the Vengeful, Herrox Blue Llama, Samastina Delaeos, Magatheus the Sinister, and Vargast the Thunderer.*

To treat an adversary as an ability, rather than a flaw, describe your emotional response to him. Examples: *Hates Sor-eel*, *Fears Gimgim the Grim*, *Sworn Vengeance against Yazurkial Blue Llama*. That way, you still inspire the Game Master to add the plot elements you desire, but can use your antipathy toward the enemy to augment your target numbers against him.

## Name

Now provide your hero with a name. Each cultural keyword is provided with a list of sample names.

## Appearance

The abilities you choose will help you determine your hero's appearance. Visualize your hero, and jot down a quick description to repeat to the rest of the group. Listeners will tune out after a few details, so keep the list short and hit the high points first.

Alternately you can borrow images from classic paintings or photographs, bringing copies in to show the group. Or draw an image yourself, if your talents lie in that direction.

# The Heroes of Samastina's Saga

## The Ambitious Noble

Kris has made her heroine an ambitious noble from Esrolia, who wants to become queen of Esrolia. Kris asks Claudia for the name of one of the most powerful Esrolian noble clans – Claudia suggests the Delaeos clan, and says they are traditionalist Earth worshipers who are rivals of the current Esrolian queen. She takes noble as her occupation keyword at 17. Kris gives her heroine the Earth, Life, and Movement Runes at 1Ш, 17, and 13 respectively. She decides to start as an initiate of Ernalda. She then adds her distinguishing characteristic, which she decides is a breakout ability from her noble keyword.

Kris takes four additional abilities: literacy in the Theyalan scripts and an enchanted golden dagger (both breakout abilities from noble); and two magic abilities from the Earth Rune, the ability to have the earth open up and swallow things, and an ability she calls "Earth sovereignty". She spends 8 of her ability points to raise various abilities; she keeps 4 in reserve, "just in case."

Kris decides she wants her heroine to have two flaws, arrogant and an explosive temper. Looking over the list of Esrolian names, she chooses Samastina.

## The Proud Thane

Neil has made his hero Vargast the Thunderer, a proud thane from the Kingdom of Sartar. Neil has a copy of the Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes book and makes his hero from the Orlmarthing clan of the Colymar Tribe. Neil decides his hero has been exiled from his tribe after a private war with the Lunar Empire that began when his wife was murdered by Lunar soldiers. Neil decides he wants his hero to be a perfect

**HeroQuest Glorantha**

Hero: Samastina Delaeos the Ambitious Esrolian Noble from Nochet

Player Name: Kris
Campaign: Samastina's Saga

Benefits & Consequences:

Runes:

**Earth 4Ш**
Have the earth open up and swallow things +1
Earth sovereignty +1

**Life 18**

**Movement 13**

Distinguishing Characteristic: Ambitious 6Ш (from Noble)
Standard of Living: Prosperous

Keywords & Abilities:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Noble** | **4Ш** |
| Ambitious (wants to be Queen) +2 | |
| Read & Write (Theyalan script) +1 | |
| Golden dagger +1 | |
| **Esrolian Culture** | **13** |
| Community: Delaeos clan | 13 |

Flaws:
Arrogant 6Ш
Explosive temper 5Ш

Unspent Additional Abilities: 1 Ability Points: 4 Magic Points: 0 | Hero Points:

**HeroQuest Glorantha**

Hero: Vargast the Thunderer, Proud Thane of the Orlmarthing clan

Player Name: Neil
Campaign: Samastina's Saga

Benefits & Consequences:

Runes:

**Air 11Ш**
Devotee of Orlanth Thunderous (passionate, proud, unpredictable, violent)
Lightning Spear +1
Feat: Thunderer +1

**Movement 13**

**Mastery 17**
Proud +1

Distinguishing Characteristic: Proud 18 (from Mastery)
Standard of Living: Prosperous

Keywords & Abilities:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Noble (Thane)** | **17** |
| **Heortling Culture** | **13** |
| Community: Orlmarthing clan | 13 |
| Lunars killed my wife | 13 |

Companion: **Firewind (allied Spirit)**
**Air Elemental 4Ш**
Winds of Fire 1Ш
Turbulent 13

Flaws:
Hunted by the Lunar Empire 12Ш
Dependent: Baby son 12Ш

Unspent Additional Abilities: 1 Ability Points: 2 Magic Points: 0 | Hero Points:

**HeroQuest Glorantha**

Hero: Karganvale, Vengeful mercenary of the Orlmarthing clan

Player Name: Franziska
Campaign: Samastina's Saga

Benefits & Consequences:

Runes:

**Darkness 17**

**Death 6Ш**
Initiate of Humakt
(brave, cold, fatalistic, merciless, taciturn)
Neckchopper (Iron sword consecrated to Death) +3
Kill with bare hands +1
Sense assassin +1
Gift of Humakt:
Kill betrayer +1

**Truth 13**

Distinguishing Characteristic: Vengeful 17
Standard of Living: Common

Keywords & Abilities:

**Mercenary (Heavy Infantry) 17**
Coat of bronze scales that wards off blows and missiles +3

**Heortling Culture 13**

Community: Orlmarthing clan 13

Flaws:
Geas of Humakt: Never forgive a betrayal 9Ш
Incapable of love 7Ш

Unspent Additional Abilities: 1 Ability Points: 1 Magic Points: 0 | Hero Points:

**HeroQuest Glorantha**

Hero: Herrox, Energetic High Llama Spirit-talker of the Blue Llama clan

Player Name: David
Campaign: Samastina's Saga

Benefits & Consequences:

Runes:

**Water 1Ш**
(mercurial, capricious)

**Illusion 15**

**Spirit 5Ш**
Praxian Tradition
Waha spirit society
Thirstless spirit society

Distinguishing Characteristic: Energetic 17
Standard of Living: Poor

Keywords & Abilities:

**Spirit-talker 17**
Long dance +1

**Praxian Culture 13**
Trick rider +1

Community: Blue Llama clan 13
Community: Thirstless spirit society 13

Companion: **Zortan the Optimistic**
(Water elemental carried in Large skin)
**Water Elemental 1Ш**
Waterspout +1
Healing caress 1Ш
Optimistic 15

Flaws:
Various charm taboos

**Charms**
Spirit 5Ш
Sharp lance +1 (Waha society)
Taboo: smear self with blood from combat
Subdue fire +1 (Waha society)
Taboo: never turn his back to a fire
Move on water +1 (from Zola Fel, Thirstless society)
Taboo: swim daily when possible
Incredible leap +1 (from Frog Woman, Thirstless society)
Taboo: wear a dried frog around neck

Unspent Additional Abilities: 3 Ability Points: 0 Magic Points: 1 | Hero Points:

Orlanth cultist and gives him the Air, Mastery, and Movement Runes at 1Ш, 17, and 13 respectively. He adds his distinguishing characteristic, proud, as a breakout ability of his Mastery Rune. As additional abilities, Neil takes an allied spirit as a companion; a magical lightning spear (a breakout ability of the Air Rune); and a breakout feat from the Air Rune.

Neil decides that Vargast is going to be a devotee of Orlanth Thunderous and puts 10 ability points into the Air Rune, raising it to 11Ш! He gives Vargast two flaws based on his character concept – Vargast is hunted by the Lunar Empire and has a baby son as a dependent.

## The Vengeful Mercenary

Franziska wants to play a vengeful mercenary. She hears Neil's character concept and says she wants to play Vargast's kinswoman from the same clan, who accompanied Vargast into exile after helping him fight his private war against the Empire. Franziska wants to worship a god of death and war, and Claudia tells her about Humakt. Franziska agrees that is exactly what sort of god she wants her heroine to worship and gives her the Runes of Darkness, Death, and Truth, at 17, 1Ш, and 13 respectively, and makes her an initiate of Humakt. She adds her distinguishing characteristic of vengeful at 17. As additional abilities, Franziska gives her heroine an enchanted iron sword named Neckchopper as a breakout of her Death Rune; the abilities to kill with bare hands and sense assassin (also breakouts from the Death Rune); and bronze scale armor that wards off blows and missiles (a breakout from her mercenary keyword).

Franziska comes up with the name Karganvale for her heroine and gives her the flaw of being incapable of love. Claudia reminds her that as a Humakt initiate, Karganvale is entitled to a free gift of Humakt (and must take a geas of Humakt). Franziska says Humakt has given Karganvale the power to kill betrayers (as a breakout from the Death Rune) and gives her the geas of never forgiving a betrayal. She spends all but one of her ability points raising Karganvale's abilities.

## The Energetic Praxian Spirit-talker

David tells Claudia he wants to play a Praxian spirit-talker who is in the employ of Samastina as a magician. He remembers a reference in the *Guide to Glorantha* to the Blue Llama clan of the High Llama Tribe and picks that as his community, naming his hero Herrox. David gives Herrox the Water, Illusion, and Spirit Runes at 17, 13, and 1Ш respectively.

As a spirit-magician of the Praxian Tradition, David can make 5 free charms; he picks the Waha spirit society for the base of his Spirit Rune magic. David then adds energetic as his distinguishing characteristic at 17. He takes two additional abilities from the Thirstless spirit society (to broaden the range of charms available to Herrox); a trick rider ability as a breakout from his Praxian cultural keyword; a long dance ability as a breakout from his spirit-talker keyword; and an optimistic water elemental with healing powers as a companion. David names

four of Herrox's five charms (leaving one unnamed charm in reserve) and comes up with taboos for each. He adds 10 ability points, leaving two in reserve.

## The Curious Scribe

Christine says she wants to play a female version of an Ancient Egyptian scribe, and says her heroine is a curious scribe from Nochet. She takes the Earth, Truth, and Law Runes, at 13, 1Ш, and 17 respectively, and starts as an initiate of the Lhankor Mhy cult. Christine asks if there is a big temple library in Nochet, and Claudia tells her that the largest library in the world is the Lhankor Mhy temple in Nochet - Christine says that is her community. She then takes curious as her distinguishing characteristic at 17.

Christine has read the Sorcery chapter already, and chooses the Torvald Fragments grimoire as her free sorcerous grimoire, picking *Reveal Secret* and *Dismiss Confusion* as spells, and leaving three spells for later. She then creates another grimoire as one of her additional abilities – a catalogue of the Final Information Library - and creates a spell that lets her find the location of a specific book in a library. She adds another grimoire, *Secrets of the God Learners*, and creates a spell to *Identify God*. Christine then adds another breakout ability from her scribe keyword – know court secrets, and gives her heroine the mysterious ability *Fabuluous Quills of the Wyrms Friends* (which Christine doesn't have any idea yet to what they do, but figures it sounds cool and will define it during the game).

Christine names her scribe Orensulva and gives her a flaw that she covets forbidden knowledge.

## The Sinister Sorcerer

Ever the contrarian, Rick says he wants to play a sinister Lunar sorcerer from Tarsh. Neil protests saying his character hates the Lunar Empire, so Rick decides his Lunar sorcerer is outlawed by the Lunar College of Magic and is a retainer of Samastina's Delaeos clan. "I'm an anti-Lunar Lunar," says Rick. Claudia agrees that would work with the premise of the game and Neil says that would work fine with his hero.

Rick then picks the Moon, Disorder, and Law Runes at 1Ш, 13, and 17 respectively. Rick chooses the Full Moon Phase of the Moon Rune and decides his hero will start as an initiate of Irrippi Ontor (taking the Illusion specialization instead of Truth). He takes *the Light of Knowledge* as his free grimoire as a sorcerer, and creates three spells, leaving two uncreated in reserve to fill in later. He then adds sinister as his distinguishing characteristic at 17.

Rick decides to add another grimoire, *Practical Demonology*, as an additional ability. Rick decides that his hero (who he has named Magatheus) should have a breakout ability to blast minds from his Full Moon phase, and the ability to read and write New Pelorian as a breakout ability from his sorcerer keyword. Rick keeps one additional ability in reserve for later.

Rick gives Magatheus the flaw of being outlawed by the Lunar College of Magic.

**HeroQuest Glorantha**

Hero: Orensulva, Curious Scribe from Nochet

Player Name: Christine
Campaign: Samastina's Saga

Benefits & Consequences:

Runes:

- **Earth 15**
- **Truth 1Ш** (truthful, observant)
- **Law 1Ш** Initiate of Lhankor Mhy

Distinguishing Characteristic: Curious 17
Standard of Living: Prosperous

Keywords & Abilities:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Scribe** Know court secrets +1 | 17 |
| **Esrolian Culture** | 13 |
| Community: Nochet Knowledge temple | 13 |
| Fabulous Quills of the Wyrms Friends | 13 |

Grimoires and spells

- △ Law 1Ш
  - Y Grimoire: Torvald Fragments +1
    - △Y Reveal secret
    - △∴ Dismiss confusion
  - Y Grimoire: Index of the Final Information Library +1
    - Y Find specific book (summon Truth)
  - Y Grimoire: Secrets of the God Learners +1
    - YΔ Locate god in the monomyth

Flaws:
Covets forbidden knowledge 2Ш

Unspent Additional Abilities: 2 Ability Points: 6 Magic Points: 3 | Hero Points:

**HeroQuest Glorantha**

Hero: Magatheus, Sinister Sorcerer from Furthest

Player Name: Rick
Campaign: Samastina's Saga

Benefits & Consequences:

Runes:

- **Full Moon Phase 5Ш** Initiate of Irrippi Ontor (∴ Illusion & ʘ Fire) Mind Blast +1
- **Disorder 13**
- **Law 1Ш**

Distinguishing Characteristic: Sinister 17
Standard of Living: Common

Keywords & Abilities:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Sorcerer** Read & write New Pelorian +1 | 17 |
| **Lunar Tarshite Culture** | 13 |
| Community: Delaeos clan | 13 |

Grimoires and spells

- Φ Full Moon Phase 5Ш
  - Φ Grimoire: The Light of Knowledge +1
    - Φ∴ Glamours the blind Eyes
    - Φ Inspiration of Madness
    - ΦY Pierce lies with Light of Reason
- △ Law 1Ш
  - ● Grimoire: Practical Demonology +1
    - ● Summon Underworld Demon

Flaws:
Outlawed by Lunar College of Magic 6Ш

Unspent Additional Abilities: 2 Ability Points: 2 Magic Points: 2 | Hero Points:

## Tying the Heroes Together

Gloranthan heroes are rarely a bunch of disparate adventurers who met in a tavern. They often share kinship ties, belong to the same community, or owe allegiance to the same powerful patron.

The Game Master may ask the players to determine how they know each other. One method of doing this is to have each player identify another hero of the party that his hero has a connection to and describe the basis of it. The player of this second hero then states one thing that is not commonly known about the first hero. The player of the second hero then identifies a different hero to have a relationship to and describes the basis of that relationship. This continues until every player has gotten to create a relationship with another hero.

## Character Sheets

A character sheet is usually a piece of paper listing crucial information about your hero. You can easily use a simple piece of paper, but we also provide a sample character sheet, and have more that you can download from our web site.

Please visit: www.glorantha.com/heroquest/charactersheets

Every character sheet contains the heroes' name, abilities and their ratings, as shown in the previous examples.

# Game Mechanics

*The following chapter explains the basic mechanics of the HeroQuest rules system.*

## Overview

Adventure stories consist of a series of obstacles, which the heroes must overcome in order to reach their final goal.

A player's encounter with a plot obstacle presents a conflict that must be resolved, either as a success or a failure. The *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules present a number of different ways of resolving conflicts, which the Game Master chooses based on the conflict's relative importance to the story (see page 112).

In all cases, the player chooses an ability relevant to the conflict at hand, describes exactly what his hero is trying to accomplish, and how. The Game Master may modify these suggested actions to better fit the fictional circumstances, and may describe the actions of the antagonists or forces on the other side of the conflict. The player rolls a 20-sided die; the Game Master does the same. The Game Master compares the two results, arriving at a degree of success or failure. Armed with this knowledge, she describes the outcome of the conflict, and any Consequences of Defeat to either participant. (When players enter into conflict with one another, each rolls dice, and the Game Master interprets the results, as usual).

## Resolution Methods:

**Automatic Success:** The hero simply succeeds. Depending on the desired emotional effect, the Game Master may not require a die roll, or may pretend to engage in a simple contest (below), fudging her own result to grant a pass to the hero.

**Simple Contest:** The hero and Game Master (or hero and another hero) each roll a single die, for an immediate result.

**Extended Contest:** A sequence of die rolls, between one or more heroes and one or more supporting antagonists, breaks the conflict resolution into a series of actions. What this method loses in brevity of result, it gains in suspense and detail.

**Simple and extended contests can all resolve the actions of multiple heroes acting at once, on either side of the conflict.**

## Contests

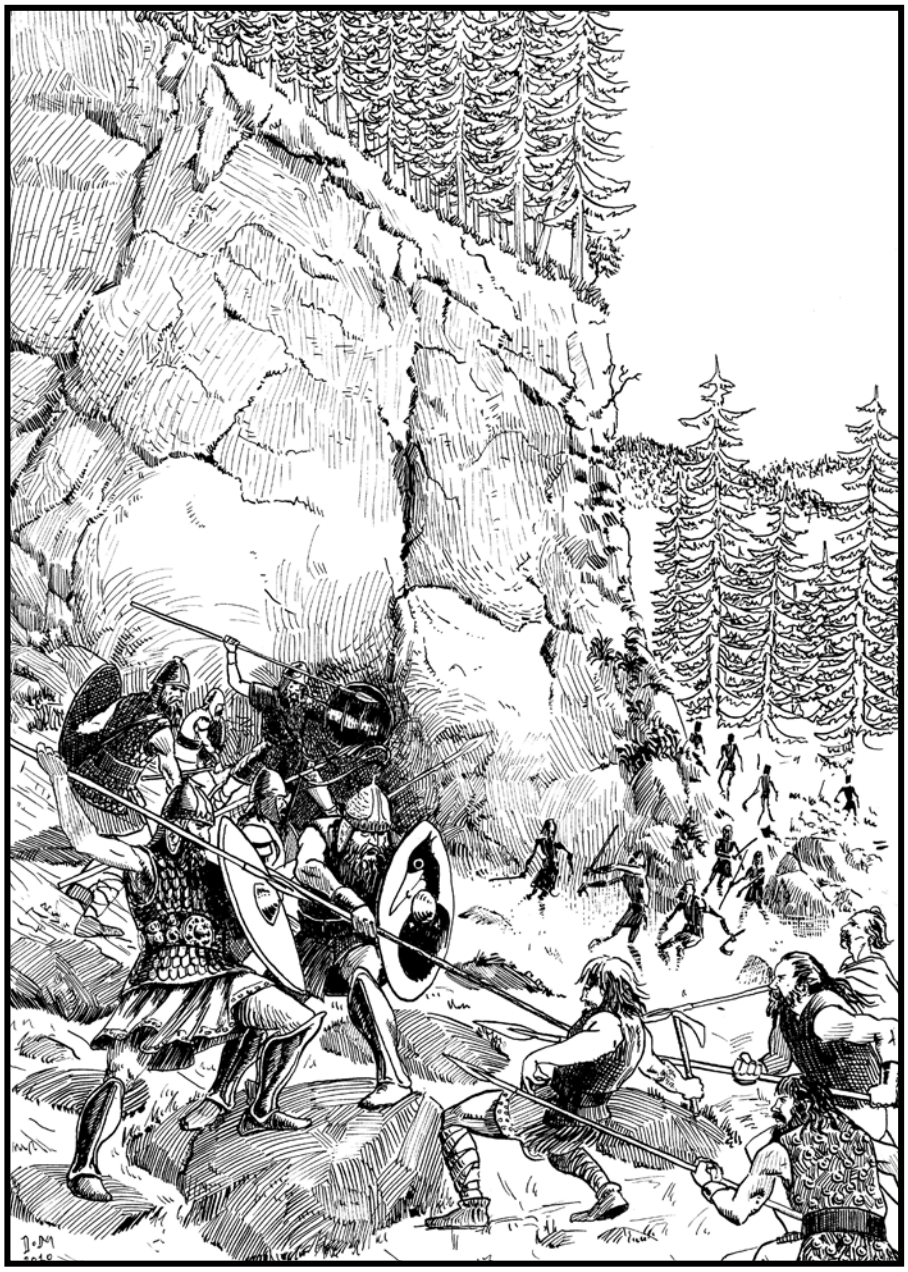
Although the various contest types differ in complexity and detail, they are united by the following common features:

- Game Masters and players start every contest by **framing** it.
- Abilities may be boosted or penalized by **modifiers**.
- Results are determined by comparing the hero's die roll to that of an opponent, or an abstract **difficulty level**.
- A hero's result can be increased by **bumps**. You get a bump if you enjoy a level of mastery over your opponent, or if you spend a **Hero Point**.
- **Degrees of success** provide the magnitude of victory—or defeat.

# Framing the Contest

Contests in *HeroQuest Glorantha* are more abstract than the resolution methods used in most other roleplaying games. They don't simply tell you how well you succeeded at a particular task: they tell you whether or not you achieved your entire goal.

The player(s) taking part in the contest and the Game Master start by clearly agreeing on 1) what specific **prize** is up for grabs and 2) what specific **tactics** they're using to try to get it. The Game Master then secretly makes the same determination for the opposition, if any. This process is called framing the contest.



**Naming the prize:** Game Masters start framing the contest by asking the involved player(s) what prize they're trying to win, or what goal they're hoping to achieve.

This may be a literal prize, like a gold cup, marriage with a priestess, or a chest of silver.

More often the prize is a metaphorical one, like access to a location—a treasure vault or the Dancing Jar of Asrelia.

In a struggle for resources, the winner gets control of something: an official appointment to a temple or from a city-state ruler, a supply of goods, or perhaps the assistance of an ally.

In a fight, the prize may be the opponents themselves, who the heroes are fighting to capture or kill. (Just as often they'll be seeking another goal and must incapacitate enemy combatants to get it. In this case, beating the enemy is the tactic, not the prize).

The stakes may be defensive in nature, as when the heroes try to stop supporting characters from doing something harmful, like summoning a Chaos demon, or assassinating the king.

Sometimes, especially as they get used to the system, the players' answers will be unclear, or will skip to how they're seeking the prize without first specifying what it is. When this happens, ask the question in concrete terms: "What are you hoping to get out of this?"

If you are having trouble figuring out what is actually being fought over, it may be a sign that the stakes are too low to justify an extended contest. Instead a simple contest, or group simple contest, is called for. (The types of contests are described on page 63). Conversely, you may find that they're all fired up over a situation you planned to resolve more simply. This is a sign that you should invest more focus and suspense into the sequence by using a group extended contest. Never deny the players the chance to feel passionate about events in your game!

**Tactics:** Here the player(s) describe *how* they're trying to get the goal. They name the abilities they intend to use, and describe how they mean to use them. If their suggestions seem unlikely based on the situation, the Game Master describes the circumstances more clearly or explains

why the suggested course of action won't work in the game world. When a suitable tactic and governing ability is chosen, the contest has been framed.

**Opposition/Difficulty:** After the contest is framed from the players' point of view, the Game Master decides what the antagonist's goal is, or what the opposite outcome will be (if the heroes are resisted by an abstract or impersonal force). The Game Master decides what this will be, and prepares to describe it in action.

## Default Ratings

If you enter a contest for which you have no relevant ability whatsoever, your base target number is a 6. Like ability ratings, it may be subject to modifiers. Thanks to keywords, this rarely happens unless the heroes are completely out of their element.

## Modifiers

Where an ability rating represents a general ability to succeed in the narrative, modifiers reflect specific conditions that may make it easier or harder to overcome particular obstacles. They are applied to your ability to get a final **target number**.

If the tactic you have chosen for the contest seems especially easy or difficult, or the governing ability only partially suited to it, the Game Master will assign appropriate modifiers. For more information on modifiers, see page 102.

## Difficulty Level

Most dramatic obstacles come in the form of supporting characters opposed to your goals, but obstacles can be things like a wall or abstract forces like a community's stubbornness. Whether you face personal, impersonal or abstract forces, the Game Master chooses a difficulty level to represent the difficulty of the obstacle.

Guidance for Game Masters on assigning difficulty levels appears on page 112.

### No Repeat Attempts

A contest represents all of your attempts to overcome an obstacle. If you are defeated it means that no matter how many times you tried to solve the problem with your ability, you finally had to give up. You can try again only if you apply a new ability to the task or your Game Master agrees that special circumstances exist.

## Die Rolls

To determine how well your hero uses an ability, roll a 20-sided die (d20). Compare the rolled number with the target number (ignoring masteries for now); high rolls are better than low as long as you succeed. At the same time, the Game Master rolls for the difficulty level.

*Critical*: If the die roll is a 1 (even when the target number is 1), you succeed so brilliantly that the Game Master may reward your hero with an additional, unexpected effect.

*Success*: If the die roll is greater than 1 and less than or equal to the target number, you succeed, but there is nothing remarkable about the success.

*Failure*: If the die roll is greater than the target number but not 20, you fail. Things do not happen as you hoped.

*Fumble*: If the die roll is a 20, you fumble (even when the target number is 20). This is the worst result possible, and you will suffer a disturbing or entertaining catastrophe. The degree of success or failure of the hero and Game Master's rolls are compared in either a simple or an extended contest.

## Bumps

A bump affects the degree of success or failure of the die roll. A bump up improves the result by one step, changing a fumble to a failure, a failure to a

### The Implied "I Try To"

When narrating their heroes' actions, players will often describe them in a way that suggests the outcome. For example: "I dart between the horse's legs and pull the arrogant Grazelander off his mount!"

Of course, the outcome is decided not by what the players say, but by the resolution system and the results it produces. However, Game Masters should beware the temptation to act as phraseology cops, slapping down the players whenever their descriptions seem to cross the line between an attempt and a result. It's sometimes hard to continually come up with colorful descriptions, and it's part of your job to enable the creativity of the players. Rather than correct them, read all such declarations as if they begin with the implied phrase "I try to…"

As in: "I try to dart between the horse's legs and pull the arrogant Grazelander off his mount!"

## Hero Points

Each hero starts each game session with a pool of 3 Hero Points. These are a precious resource, as they are used both to bump or boost heroes' contest results, and to improve abilities over the long term. For more on how Hero Points are awarded, and how they can be used to improve your hero, see page 105.

success, or a success to a critical. Bump ups come from two sources: masteries and Hero Points (applied in that order). A bump down reduces the degree of success of your opponent. Bump downs come from one source: masteries.

## Bump Up with Mastery

You get one bump up for each level of mastery your hero has greater than your opponent's. Opposed masteries cancel out (based on target numbers, not beginning ability ratings), so if your opponent has as many or more masteries as you do you will not get a bump up.

## Bump Up with Hero Points

You can spend a Hero Point to bump up any result by one step. You may only bump your own rolls, not those of other heroes or supporting characters - with the exception of your companions and retainers, which, as extensions of your hero, you may spend Hero Points on. You can decide to use a Hero Point for a bump after the die roll results are calculated (including any bump ups resulting from masteries).

You may spend only one Hero Point on any given dice roll. During extended contests, you may spend only one Hero Point per exchange.

The expenditure of a Hero Point represents that moment in a story where the protagonist pushes himself to the limit, marshals previously untapped reserves, or pulls a rabbit out of his hat. Strive to make this as exciting a moment in your game as it would be in the equivalent fiction. Describe exactly what extraordinary thing you're doing to bolster your use of the ability at hand. One useful approach is to look at your character sheet for other abilities you might be using to bolster this one, as if you were performing an augment (see page 102). When stuck for a solution, feel empowered to describe outside forces acting on your hero, making him the beneficiary of good fortune or convenient coincidence. Wherever you reach for inspiration, be creative and play up your big moment.

## Bump Down with Mastery

A bump down works like a bump up, but in reverse. It decreases the result by one step: a critical to a success, a success to a failure, or a failure to a fumble. If you have a critical and still have one or more "unused masteries," you can use them to bump down an opponent, since you cannot get a result better than a critical for yourself. The opponent receives one bump down for each level of mastery remaining. Bump downs come from masteries, never Hero Points.

## Degrees of Success and Failure

Sometimes all you need to know to interpret the results of a resolution is whether the hero succeeded or failed. In other instances, you'll want to know how well a protagonist succeeded, or how badly he failed.

All of the resolution methods yield degrees of success for the victor. The possible degrees of success, from the least to the greatest, are: Marginal, Minor, Major, and Complete. Ties are also a possible result. A success for one contestant means a corresponding failure for the loser. In more detail, the degrees are:

*Tie*: Tie means no result. Effort was expended, but the net result is that nothing consequential occurs, or else both sides lose or gain equally.

*Marginal*: A nominal victory or defeat, with little gain or loss. The victor gains only the immediate benefits of winning. The loser suffers no lasting effects of his defeat beyond the end of the contest.

*Minor*: A clear victory or defeat, with a significant but limited effect. The victor gains the immediate advantage of his victory, plus the defeat has some lasting effects, although they are typically annoyances. The loser suffers penalties that last for at least a day, possibly longer.

*Major*: A resounding victory or defeat, with serious consequences for all participants. The victor may gain fame or glory. The loser is prevented from pursuing his plans until he somehow counters the results, and he will likely suffer lasting penalties. For both, the effects are long-term, lasting weeks or even months.

*Complete*: A total victory or defeat, with momentous consequences for all involved. These repercussions are often permanent or irreversible; the Game Master might

make their removal the goal of an entire adventure or campaign. The victor will be famous (at least for a while). The loser suffers a severe penalty.

## Automatic Success

In an automatic success, the Game Master decides that the hero will succeed, and he does. The process breaks down as follows:

- The player describes what his hero is trying to do, and with what ability.
- The Game Master decides that the hero will succeed. If the degree of success matters, the hero scores a Minor Victory.
- The Game Master describes what happens as a result.

Automatic successes are appropriate when failure would seem peculiar or out of character, and in cases where the Game Master can't envision an interesting or entertaining plot branch arising from failure.

Automatic successes without a die roll create a sense of power and accomplishment for players. These may be appropriate for conflicts early in a story or session, which establish the protagonists' high level of competence in the face of minor opposition.

In instances where the player wants more than a Minor Victory, he can gain a Complete Victory by spending 1 Hero Point. (This desire indicates that the player has a stronger stake in the outcome than you'd anticipated, and that you probably should have at least run a simple contest. Oh well; you can't spot 'em all).

A hero can never gain automatic successes against another hero.

## Describing Results

*Use the Degree of Success to determine any Consequences of Defeat (see page 64) or Benefits of Victory (see page 69), but be sure to describe the success in narrative terms. The chart below offers some suggestions.*

### Combat

**Complete Victory:** Your opponent is down, probably dying; or he surrenders.
**Major Victory:** Your foe is badly injured and stops fighting.
**Minor Victory:** Your foe takes a significant wound.
**Marginal Victory:** Your opponent is slightly wounded, but otherwise intact.
**Marginal Defeat:** You are hurt enough to affect your ability and want to get out of the fight.
**Minor Defeat:** You are wounded enough to significantly affect your abilities.
**Major Defeat:** You are injured badly enough that your ability to escape is compromised.
**Complete Defeat:** You are dying.

### Romance

**Complete Victory:** She is like putty in your hand, besotted by you and eager to do whatever you want.
**Major Victory:** She smiles and stares into your eyes, rapt in your presence and eager to please you.
**Minor Victory:** She smiles at you and stares into your eyes.
**Marginal Victory:** She smiles at you.
**Marginal Defeat:** She turns away.
**Minor Defeat:** She frowns.
**Major Defeat:** She gives you a very cold look and makes an accusation of impropriety and insult.
**Complete Defeat:** She makes a detailed accusation of lewdness in front of a crowd, and wants you run out of town.

### Social Conflict

**Complete Victory:** You have driven your opponent from the company in disgrace.
**Major Victory:** You have acutely embarrassed your opponent in front of his peers.
**Minor Victory:** You made your opponent look foolish.
**Marginal Victory:** You seem to be right, but it is debatable.
**Marginal Defeat:** You are uncertain of your behavior.
**Minor Defeat:** You embarrass yourself.
**Major Defeat:** You are abashed and cannot look people in the eye. Your social standing is affected.
**Complete Defeat:** You are mortified to the point of having to leave or do something drastic. Your social standing is affected permanently, and you may face exile, demotion, or punishment of some kind.

### Finding Your Way

**Complete Victory:** You find a secret way or shortcut that lets you pass the way quickly and securely.
**Major Victory:** You are very sure of your way, and get there quickly and without problems.
**Minor Victory:** You know where you are going, and get there easily.
**Marginal Victory:** You get there, but it takes awhile.
**Marginal Defeat:** You thought you knew where you were going, but take a wrong turn.
**Minor Defeat:** You went off track somehow.
**Major Defeat:** You are utterly lost.
**Complete Defeat:** You are lost, and in a dangerous place.

# Rules for Contests

A contest may be resolved as a simple contest or an extended contest. Use the simple contests rules for most contests; the extended contest rules should be reserved for pivotal scenes.

Both simple and extended contests can resolve the actions of multiple characters acting at once, on either side of the contest.

Regardless of the method chosen to resolve it, a contest represents all of your attempts to overcome an obstacle. If you are defeated it means that no matter how many times you tried to solve the problem with your ability, you finally had to give up. You can try again only if you apply a new ability to the task or your Game Master agrees that special circumstances exist.

## Simple Contest

A simple contest unfolds as follows:

1. **Frame the contest**.

2. **Figure your target number using the ability rating and any modifiers**.
Your **target number** is the rating of your ability, plus or minus **modifiers** the Game Master may give you—especially if the ability is not well suited to the task. The higher the number (and the more masteries), the more capable your hero is.

3. **Game Master selects the difficulty level**.
The Game Master opposes your hero by giving the contest a **difficulty level**—the harder the task or tougher the opponent, the higher the difficulty.

4. **Roll a die to determine your degree of success or failure, then apply any bumps**.
The Game Master does the same. Roll a twenty-sided die for your action. At the same time, the Game Master rolls for the difficulty. Compare the number you roll with your target number to see how well you succeeded or failed with your ability, as described in "Die Rolls" on page 59. Remember to apply any bumps from masteries or Hero Points, as described previously under Bumps.

5. **Determine level of victory or defeat**.
Compare your success or failure with the Game Master's on the **Simple Contest Results table** to find your level of victory. It is possible for a hero to succeed at his die roll but still be defeated.

6. **Determine effects of Hero Point expenditures, if any**.
In a simple contest, heroes may spend any number of Hero Points to bump up their results. If they do so, their final levels of victory or defeat are modified accordingly.

7. **Determine contest consequences**.
Describe the result based on "Degrees of Success" on page 60. If necessary, compare the level of victory or defeat with the Contest Consequences table on page 64.

**SIMPLE CONTEST RESULTS**

| Roll | Critical | Success | Failure | Fumble |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Critical** | High roll = Marginal Victory, else tie | Minor Victory | Major Victory | Complete Victory |
| **Success** | Minor Victory | High roll = Marginal Victory, else tie | Minor Victory | Major Victory |
| **Failure** | Major Victory | Minor Victory | High roll = Marginal Victory, else tie | Minor Victory |
| **Fumble** | Complete Victory | Major Victory | Minor Victory | Tie* |

** In a group simple contest (see page 70), the Game Master may declare that both contestants suffer a Marginal Defeat to indicate that, although their results cancel out with respect to each other, their situation worsens compared to other contestants.*

## In a Nutshell: Simple Contest

1. Frame the contest.
2. Figure target numbers.
3. Game Master determines difficulty.
4. Roll the dice.
5. Determine success level:
6. Determine results of Hero Point expenditures, if any.
7. Game Master describes consequences:

# Consequences

Contests, in addition to deciding whether the hero gets the prize he was after, carry additional side effects, or consequences. These are negative if the hero loses, and positive if he wins.

## The Consequences of Defeat

When heroes lose contests, they may suffer consequences: literal or metaphorical injuries which make it harder for the heroes to use related abilities.

- In a fight or test of physical mettle, heroes wind up literally wounded.
- In a social contest, they may suffer damage to their reputations.
- If commanding a war, they lose battalions, equipment, or territories.
- In an economic struggle, they lose money, other resources, or opportunities.
- In a morale crisis, heroes may suffer bouts of crippling self-doubt.

From the least to the most punishing, the five levels of consequences are: Hurt, Impaired, Injured, Dying, and Dead. The first four are possible results of any contest. Dying heroes become dead, unless they receive intervention of some sort. In extreme cases, heroes may die immediately as a consequence of an extended contest (see page 72).

## Confusing Ties

Game Masters will find most tied results easy to describe—as inconclusive standoffs, in which neither participant gets what he wanted. However, in some situations, ties become difficult to visualize. Chief among these are contests with binary outcomes, where only two results are conceivable.

Game Masters resolve confusing ties in favor of the hero, awarding him a Marginal Victory. Contests between heroes tend not to be binary; in the rare cases where they are, award the Minor Victory to the hero with the highest number of unspent Hero Points. (This adjudication does not require the winner to spend any of those points).

## Secret Contests

In a few situations, being asked to undertake a contest spoils the suspense or reveals a secret. The classic example of this is a contest to see if a hero perceives something hidden and dangerous. You can play this as an ordinary contest; doing so creates a sense of unease, as a failed player wonders what would have happened if he had succeeded.

In a particularly grim or deterministic series, you may instead prefer to blindside the players by using secret contests. To stage a secret contest, check the heroes' sheet for the most relevant ability, and roll for both the hero and the difficulty. Reveal the results only on success.

Secret contests are always simple. When necessary, they may be group simple contests against a single difficulty (see page 70).

**CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT**

| Defeat Level | Consequence of Defeat | Penalty |
|---|---|---|
| **Marginal** | Hurt | –3 penalty to appropriate abilities |
| **Minor** | Impaired | –6 penalty to appropriate abilities |
| **Major** | Injured | Automatic bump down on uses of appropriate ability |
| **Complete** | Dying | No actions allowed |

## The Defeat of Starbrow's Rebellion

*It is late Fire Season 1613, below the rocky plateau called Larnste's Table. Lunar Governor-General Fazzur Wideread is accepting the surrender of several rebellious Orlanthi tribal kings.*

**Fazzur Wideread:** The Lunar General wears a cuirass with gold decorations and his greaves are decorated with images of the Moon Goddess. In his hand, he carries a golden mace as a symbol of his Imperial authority.

**Feathered Horse Queen:** Seated next to Fazzur is the high priestess and queen of the Grazelanders. She wears much jewelry with horse motifs as a common decoration, and an ornate golden necklace dripping with precious stones.

**Lunar Standards:** Behind Fazzur are two standards. The one to the right displays his rank as an Imperial Two Star General (giving him vast authority to command various regiments belonging to other kings, cities, and temples). Its banner shows the Red Goddess riding upon the back of the Red Bat and its pole carries the Moon Rune.

The standard to the left is of the Kingdom of Tarsh. On top of its pole is a golden statue of the Red Goddess; the flag suspended from the crossbar depicts the Lunar demigoddess Hon-eel.

**Lunar Provincial soldiers:** These soldiers from the Provinces are generally equipped with a large shield, spear, sword, and boiled leather armor (a linothorax, cuirass, or small breastplate). Most wear bronze helmets with three feathers at the crown.

**King Hofstaring Treeleaper:** The king is holding long leaf-shaped bronze sword. He wears an intricately decorated bronze helmet with cheek-pieces and bedecked with feathers. His coat of bronze scales reaches to his knees; a decorated scabbard and an axe hang from his belt. His bronze greaves depict a pair of war gods and his heavy-soled leather sandals are secured with a long lace winding up the leg.

**Kallyr Starbrow:** This heroic Orlanthi is a king in her own right. She wears a decorated bronze cuirass. On her brow is tattooed a large golden eight pointed star, giving off its own light. It holds the magic of a star and is clearly the source of her power.

## Healthy

Heroes who haven't suffered a defeat at all are considered healthy.

It is possible to seem banged up without suffering any measurable penalties. If you get into an extended contest during which you were at a disadvantage for a long time and finally came from behind for the win, you may seem bruised, winded, anxious, or otherwise the worse for wear. Although this apparent harm may yield you useful sympathy, it doesn't actually slow you down at all.

## Dazed

In some situations, the Game Master may rule that a hero is dazed. Dazed heroes are conscious but unable to initiate actions of their own. If another hero engages them in a contest, they can snap out of it and defend themselves.

## Hurt

A hurt hero shows signs of adversity and finds it slightly harder to do things related to his defeat. Either his flesh or pride may be bruised. If he's halfway sensible, he'll enter similar situations with some reluctance—at least until he recovers. Until he does, he suffers a –3 penalty to all related abilities.

Heroes may suffer multiple hurts to the same ability. These are cumulative until recovery occurs.

Unless the Game Master has a compelling dramatic reason to decide otherwise, hurts vanish at the end of a session, after one day of rest per accumulated hurt, or when in-game events justify their removal.

## Impaired

An Impaired hero has taken a jarring blow, physically, socially, or emotionally, and is much likelier to fail when attempting similar actions in the future. He suffers a –6 penalty to all related abilities. Impairments combine with hurts and with other impairments.

As bad as the hero's condition may be, there's nothing wrong with him that some prolonged inactivity won't fix. A single impairment goes away after one week of rest, or when an in-game event (like miraculous or extraordinary treatment) occurs to make their removal seem believable.

## Injured

An Injured hero has suffered a debilitating shock to the system, one which renders him all but helpless. To even participate in a contest, he must first succeed at a contest of motivation to rouse himself to action.

Appropriate abilities for contests of motivation might include:

**Physical action**: Endurance, High Pain Threshold, Grim Determination, etc.
**Intellectual activity**: Concentration, Iron Will, Love of Homeland, etc.
**Social humiliation**: Savoir Faire, Unflappable, Stoic Dignity

A contest of motivation faces a Moderate difficulty (see page 113).

Even if the Injured hero succeeds at the contest of motivation, he takes an automatic bump down whenever he uses any related ability in a contest. (The bump down does not apply to the contest of motivation itself). Where it seems apt, the Game Master may choose to ignore the bump down if the hero scores a Major or Complete Victory on the contest of motivation.

Any active hurts or impairments continue to be counted against him as well.

Physical traumas will impose these penalties on nearly all actions; severe pain makes it hard to concentrate on mental and social activities, too. Some mental injuries will likewise make it difficult to perform physically.

Certain other injuries are compartmentalized in effect: a particular subset of abilities is penalized, but others work as normal. Social injuries are a prime example: you may be unable to present your face in polite society, but that won't stop you from translating a secret text, shooting a bow, or sailing a ship.

Without magical healing, physical injuries take many weeks, even seasons, to recover from. Without treatment from a healer, they may become permanent, or even send the hero on a deteriorating spiral into eventual death.

The time it takes to recover from injuries to one's morale, social standing, and so on should be roughly equivalent to physical injuries. Use this reasoning with caution; players will probably find it unduly punishing. In fiction, emotional damage is healed only through cathartic events, in which the hero completes his so-called "story arc" and undergoes a redemptive transformation).

## Dying

A dying hero will, without rapid and appropriate intervention, soon expire. To save him, the heroes must typically overcome a story obstacle and/or succeed at a difficult contest. According to the conventions of dramatic storytelling, the hero typically has just enough time left for the other heroes to make this one attempt.

When it seems unbelievable for the time between dying and death to coincide with the time it takes for intervention to occur, Game Masters should choose a longer interval between dying and death. Contrive toward hero survival, except when players obviously prefer dramatic deaths over last minute revivals.

Minor supporting characters no one cares about saving typically die after a few perfunctory gasps, as do heroes having no chance of being saved.

Successful intervention usually leaves the hero injured. Depending on the narrative circumstances, a Complete Victory on the intervention attempt may leave him merely Impaired.

If intervention fails, the hero will die, but not necessarily immediately. Although irrevocably doomed, he may survive long enough to deliver a poignant final speech…or linger in his deathbed for agonizing months. He will be lucid enough to deliver dialogue but, unless the Game Master deems it dramatically appropriate, unable to perform any task complicated enough to require a contest.

Like other consequences, dying may be literal or metaphorical. Your standing in your city, tribe, or cult may be on the brink of permanent extinction. You may be facing mental death—a permanent lapse into madness or senility. For more on metaphorical death, see below.

Dying adversaries may, if rescued by their allies, be taken off for appropriate intervention, surviving to vex the protagonists another day.

If the Game Master chooses, a dying hero may be visited by the psychopomp of his religion (Issaries for the Orlanthi), by a messenger of his god (such as a dead Hero), or even the god himself. The dying hero may get insight into the nature of the cosmos, the paths into the Underworld, or even the gods' opinions of his deeds.

## Dead

A hero who dies as a result of physical injuries is dead. Your community and fellow heroes will mostly likely hold a funeral, or less likely find a way to resurrect the hero using powerful magic or Heroquesting into the Underworld.

If the dead hero is not resurrected, the player creates a new hero from scratch, and works out with the Game Master a way to integrate him into the ongoing series. Death from a non-physical contest will likely be metaphorical. If you die in an economic, social, spiritual, or artistic contest, you permanently lose entire suites of abilities.

Even if you're only metaphorically dead, the Game Master is within her rights to declare that your hero has undergone changes so dire as to make him unplayable from this point forward. He may be incurably insane, or so socially shamed that he retires to a life of obscurity or religious meditation. He may be shunned by all around him, sent into permanent exile, or sentenced to long-term imprisonment with no hope of escape.

## Samastina's Saga: Meeting with the Queen

Claudia starts her epic Hero Wars game in the great hall in the royal palace of Nochet; Queen Hendira has deigned to hold an audience with the heroes. Kris wants the queen's blessing on this venture to visit Cragspider and everyone agrees that it would be great to be the emissaries of a queen. Claudia shows them the Esrolian plate from the *Guide to Glorantha* and say, "This is what the court looks like.

Claudia begins framing the contest. "So," she asks the players, "what's your goal?"

"I want the queen to bestow emissary status on our group," Kris says.

"She's the Queen of Esrolia, and this is her court. Your clan and her Red Earth Alliance are at political and religious odds," Claudia says. "What abilities can you bring, despite the enmity between your two groups?"

"Isn't Samastina a noble?" asks Neil.

"Yes, and her distinguishing characteristic of *Ambitious* is broken out at +2, so she speaks in her best voice with power and eloquence asking Hendira that she grant this small request."

"Great," agrees Claudia. "So the goal is that you want the queen to bestow emissary status on our group."

Now that the prize is agreed upon, Claudia knows how to interpret the results, if they win their contest against the Queen — Everyone will be granted emissary status and receive a token of the queen showing this.

"Okay, and how are you going to accomplish this?"

"I have *Noble* at 4Ш," Kris points out, "with *Ambitious* at +2 making that 6Ш. I think we have a good chance. What is there to lose? She can only say no."

It's time for the contest to begin. The whole court of Nochet is waiting.

Claudia begins to formulate the difficulty of the task. She wants to highlight the political differences between the Red Earth Alliance and Samastina's Delaeos clan by humiliating her, so she wants Samastina to fail at this point, as it's the best outcome for her story plans. And given the fierce rivalry between Samastina's Delaeos clan and Hendira's Red Earth Alliance, Claudia decides it would be Nearly Impossible to get Hendira to publicly reward a rival in this manner. The base difficulty is 14 plus 2Ш2 (for being Nearly Impossible), bringing the difficulty to 16Ш2.

Claudia declares, "You have a difficulty of 16Ш2." Everyone gasps. "It is well known that Samastina's clan and Hendira's political faction are at odds with each other, and Hendira deeply distrusts this ambitious girl. You need to overcome the difficulty of 16Ш2 with your 6Ш, your mastery cancels out one of mine, giving me an 18Ш against your rating of only 6."

"Time to roll the dice."

Kris rolls a 12 on her d20 and Claudia a 1!

"Kris, 12 is a failure, you needed 6 or less, and my 1 is a critical success. But it gets worse," says Claudia. "I have a Mastery over you, remember you have only a 6 and I have 16Ш and so my mastery bumps your failure down to a Fumble."

The Game Master and players look at the Simple Contest Results table. Hendira has a Complete Victory, so Samastina has suffered a Complete Defeat in this contest.

Claudia reads from the Describing the Results table:

"*Complete Defeat: You are mortified to the point of having to leave or do something drastic. Your social standing is affected permanently, and you may face exile, demotion, or punishment of some kind.*"

Claudia says, "That's the worst possible result. Hendira is outraged at Samastina's request for the group. You know that Samastina and her entourage have been marked as enemies of the Red Earth Alliance, and you have no ability to influence them. Their mind has been made up."

The Queen speaks, "You ambitious girl do you think I'm stupid? Allying with dark trolls is clearly a play for power for the Delaeos clan. And no upstart from them will ever get my blessing. Leave now or face the wrath of the Red Earth Grandmothers!"

The players all go quiet. Claudia wonders if she's gone too far, she just wanted Samastina humiliated, and didn't consider this to even be a particularly dramatic moment (which is why she made it a Simple Contest). Now it looks like the entire party will have to flee the city of Nochet!

| BENEFITS OF VICTORY | |
|---|---|
| **Victory Level** | **Bonus** |
| Marginal | +0 |
| Minor | +3 |
| Major | +6 |
| Complete | +9 |

## The Benefits of Victory

Just as heroes who suffer defeat can suffer ongoing ill effects in addition to the loss of the prize at hand, heroes who win can gain extra benefits of victory.

Feel free to assist the Game Master by suggesting possible benefits, recognizing that she retains the final say. If the Game Master accepts your case, you get a bonus on the selected abilities, or in the specified situation, as determined by your victory level.

The bonus remains until you suffer a defeat on a contest using either the bonus or the ability with which you won the original contest. You can't decline the bonus because you might lose it; you must always use it in any contest in which it ought, in the Game Master's judgment, to apply.

Game Masters should keep a record of all active benefits of victory, to alert themselves to situations where they might be lost. When you lose benefits of victory, your Game Master may use them as inspiration for consequences of defeat.

At the end of a storyline, especially when a significant period of game-world time passes between the conclusion of one episode and the beginning of the next, the Game Master may declare that all benefits of victory have expired.

You may apply bonuses from multiple benefits to a single contest.

Game Masters should be alert to circumstances in which the benefit applies, even though the player doesn't know about it, or has forgotten to ask.

The Game Master is always free to assign benefits to supporting characters, including antagonists.

## The Fate of the Dead - An Orlanthi View

**Here is what happens when you die:**

Your soul separates from your body. For seven days the soul lingers near the body, drifting farther apart from it and developing spirit senses. It is like a yolk for the developing soul.

When it is ready, the soul flies inward into the heart space, which is a mirror that cannot be fully penetrated until you are dead, or have acquired a heroquest initiation.

On the other side of the mirror is an icy mountaintop. Though no stars, planets, or Sun light the sky, the newly dead can see. The soul joins in a parade of others, all bearing the marks of their life and death upon them. Thus some are old, and covered with sores, and in their bed clothes, while others are warriors fully armed, sometimes even borne by their noble steeds. No one speaks. Paths converge. Many smaller groups join with each other.

The procession descends through a vast mountain range whose peaks and cliffs are all piercing and jagged, like shattered obsidian flints laid on end.

At the bottom of the mountains, where the black sand lies in piles, the path meanders. At this place, the ghosts of broos, and things like them, depart.

A bridge made of bone spans a great chasm. At the bottom of the chasm roars the River of Swords, and the only sound is the horrible clashing of arms. On this bridge stands Janak, with a bone staff, who knocks all perjurers off into the suffering below.

The road leads to a great round tower, so vast that the edges of it cannot be seen from the road, nor can its top be seen. A hundred doors penetrate it, and the vast throngs of the dead enter the Court of Silence.

The crowd is silent, each awaiting their turn. At the front of the hall is the throne of Daka Fal, Judge of the Dead. He used to be Grandfather Mortal, the first person to be made and the first person to die. And in galleries around all the walls of the hall wait the gods and their servants. Each soul approaches him, to be recognized and judged. Daka Fal asks for history on the person from anyone present. The gods who wish to speak descend from the gallery to serve witness. Then Daka Fal assigns him to a fate, and the soul departs, appropriately escorted, through one of the hundred doors at the rear of the Court of Silence. Once past the Court of Silence, no one can return.

**Through those doors wait the places we might go:**

**Orlanth's Hall**, where the god himself awaits, eternally feasting and blessing, surrounded by plenty, and lucky are those who join his body of warriors.

**House of the Dead**, where all the pleasures and freedoms which are desired in life may be had, without any odious responsibilities.

**Humakt's Hall**, from whence no one ever returns. In this place they always fight more than feast, preparing for the next divine battle.

**The Tower of Ivory**, where the initiates of Lhankor Mhy sit at the feet of the Eternal Source of Knowledge.

Souls remain in their divine abode until they are reborn in the Middle World. Most are reborn as children in their ancestral clans and grow up to feed the dead and continue the cycle of Life and Death. The greatest are not reborn as mortals, but instead become powerful elementals, or even gods.

## Group Simple Contest

In the group simple contest, multiple participants take part in a contest, each of them rolling once. Use it when more than one hero takes part in a conflict which does not warrant the resolution time of an extended contest.

A group simple contest can pit all of the participating heroes against a single difficulty, representing one obstacle.

In a group simple contest, each player rolls a single time; the Game Master rolls the same difficulty value once per player. The two results are compared on the Resolution Point table, to get a numerical value that the winner then adds to his side's total. The side with the highest total scores a victory, the degree of which is determined by the difference between results, as seen on the Group Simple Contest Result table. If the results are tied, the outcome is inconclusive or mutually unsatisfactory.

The Game Master has everyone roll, and holds off on describing the action until all of the results are tabulated and combined. The relative contributions of the participants toward the victory are indicated by the number of Resolution Points they contributed to their team's final tally. You'll often find it easiest if you wait to describe the top scoring player or players' actions last.

Heroes are considered to act more or less simultaneously. (Where the participants would logically take turns acting, instead employ a series of simple contests, with order of action decided by the players, or by other factors arising from the logic of the fictional situation. That way the players can stop as soon as they succeed, which is not possible in a group simple contest).

Alternatively, a group simple contest can take place as a series of paired match-ups between two groups of contestants. Heroes forced to participate in more than one contest face the standard multiple opponent penalties (see page 81).

**Esrolian Factions**

*After the Masters of Luck and Death fail to replace the God-King of the Holy Country after his disappearance in 1616, the unity of the Holy Country is quickly torn apart. Esrolia is troubled by struggles between the pro-Lunar Red Earth Alliance of Queen Hendira, the anti-Lunar Old Earth Alliance of the priestesses of Ezel, and the ambitious Warm Earth Alliance, led by the Demiverge of Rhigos and her armies of savage spearmen. The conflicts between the factions grow in intensity until they break out into open warfare in 1622.*

**GROUP SIMPLE CONTEST RESULTS**

| Difference Between Results | Winning Group's Victory Level | Negative Consequences For Winner |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Marginal | Hurt |
| 2 | Minor | Unharmed |
| 3-4 | Major | Unharmed |
| 5+ | Complete | Unharmed |

**EXTENDED CONTEST RESOLUTION POINTS**

| Roll | Critical | Success | Failure | Fumble |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Critical** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| **Success** | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Failure** | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| **Fumble** | 5 | 3 | 2 | N/A |

## Boosting Results

Because they average together the results of multiple participants, group simple contests tend to flatten outcomes, making victories more likely to be marginal or minor than major or complete. In many cases this is dramatically appropriate; if the contest were really pivotal to the drama, you'd be running an extended contest instead.

To overcome this flattening effect, players are permitted, at the beginning of a group simple contest, to spend one or more Hero Points to purchase a boost. A boost assures a clearer victory, should they prevail. The cost of this varies by the number of heroes participating: 1 Hero Point for 1-3 heroes; 2 Hero Points for 4-6 heroes, or 3 Hero Points for 7-9 heroes. (Costs extrapolate from there for rare groups with more than nine heroes). Groups may spend twice as many Hero Points as required to gain a double boost. The points may be spent by any combination of players. They remain spent no matter how the contest resolves.

On a tie or a hero victory, a boost increases the collective victory level by one step: from tie to Marginal Victory, from Marginal to Minor Victory, from Minor to Major Victory, or from Major to Complete Victory. A double boost increases it by two steps: from Tie to Minor, from Marginal to Major, from Minor or Major to Complete Victory.

## Consequences and Benefits

Assign bonuses for benefits of victory according to the group's victory level, as per the Benefits of Victory table, on page 69. Assign penalties for negative consequences according to the resisting force's victory level, as per the Consequences of Defeat table, page 64. (Both tables also appear in the Quick Reference Appendix at the back of this book).

Depending on which approach seems to grow organically from the story, ongoing repercussions from group simple contests may be assigned to the entire group, or to individual members who performed either especially well, or especially poorly. Default to rewarding everyone. Resort to individualized repercussions only when a group reward defies

dramatic credibility, or when competition within the group is a pivotal dramatic issue.

In a social contest, all members of a winning group gain ongoing bonuses in upcoming interpersonal interactions. All members of a losing group suffer penalties.

In an intellectual contest, everyone on the winning side learns from the experience and gains a bonus, or becomes demoralized and suffers future penalties.

In a physical contest where the heroes win, benefits tend to be social or material, allowing everyone to benefit. If they were raiding for cows, everyone gets a share of the wealth or social bonus they were all fighting for. Or the group might gain a fearful reputation, applying a demoralization penalty to their next group of opponents. The crew of a ship that sailed down Magasta's Pool and returned gets to share in the fame of a heroic adventure, even if some of the group members contributed more to the success than others.

Physical contests in which the heroes lose tend, on the other hand, to break the mold. It's hard to justify why a competitor who overcame his obstacle would be hurt as badly as one who got his head handed to him. Here story logic will almost always require you to single out individual team members to bear the brunt of physical injury.

Separated results could also apply in cases where team members are working toward the same goal independently. They might always be appropriate in certain specialized series, where a grim sense of alienation or isolation overwhelms any sense of team effort. Examples of these might include Le Carré-style espionage trying to uncover Chaos cultists in a Lhankor Mhy temple or the Machiavellian intrigue in the court of the Red Emperor.

## Samastina's Saga: Leaving Nochet (part 1)

Franziska breaks the silence. "We need to leave Nochet. Now. Hendira is going to try and stop us leaving. She thinks Samastina is too ambitious and going for a troll alliance to use them to overthrow her. She's going to have us killed."

Kris says, "OK, we'll head back to the Delaeos Palace, and I tell the servants to get us ready to leave as soon as possible."

"So what's the frame of the contest then?" asks Claudia.

Rick says "To get out of Nochet without getting caught by assassins so we don't have to fight them. I bet they're those feared Blue Moon Assassins in the pay of the Red Earth Alliance faction."

Everyone agrees.

"So you are already to go now?" asks Claudia. Everyone says yes. "So tell me what abilities you are each going to use to facilitate this flight? I'm going to make this a group simple contest."

Kris says, "Samastina has Movement Rune at 13 and will use that to spur on her horse."

Neil says, "Vargast uses his Thane occupational keyword at 17 to ride quickly out of the city."

Franziska says, "Karganvale uses her *Sense Assassin* breakout from her Death Rune to choose a safe route out of the city. That's at 6Ш."

David says, "Herrox has a *Trick Riding* breakout from his Praxian cultural keyword to ensure the assassins won't catch up. That's 14."

Christine says, "Orensulva will use her Esrolian Culture of 13. All Esrolians know how to ride, right?"

Rick says, "Magatheus will use his Glamour from his *Blinds the Eye* spell at 6Ш so assassins cannot see us go past."

Claudia thinks about the abilities offered and says. "Yes, all of these will work. But Christine I'm going to make using your Esrolian culture a Stretch and impose a -6 penalty. Not all Esrolians can ride, so you aren't very good at it. Neil, I won't do the same for your Thane keyword as Heortling thanes are expected to be mounted."

"Franziska, your *Sense Assassins* ability is specific against the Blue Moon Assassins tracking you, so you get a Specific Ability Bonuses of +6, so you are at 12Ш."

"Rick, same for you. Your Lunar spell is specific against the Blue Moon Assassins as well, so you get the same Specific Ability Bonus as Franziska, bringing you up to 12Ш as well."

Christine says "A stretch! We're going to ride all the way to Cliffhome; I can't be a bad rider! I've got one unspent additional ability point. I want a grimoire called *The Horse and the Maiden*, with a spell called *Command Horse*. What runes should I use?"

"Sounds great, specific to women too. How about the Fire Rune for the grimoire and the Horse Rune for the spell?"

"There's a Horse Rune?"

"Yes, because you need to name your beast type. It looks like this", she says, drawing a stylized horse. "Make sure you add all of this to your character sheet. What's your total?"

"1Ш from the Law rune and +1 from the grimoire for 2Ш."

△ Law 1Ш
⊙ Grimoire: *The Horse and the Maiden* +1
Spells: ⌒ *Command Horse*

When singling out participants in a winning contest, heroes who posted positive Resolution Points to their side's result get the benefit corresponding to their level of victory, as seen on the Simple Contest Results table (page 63 or Quick Reference Appendix) and compared to the Benefits of Victory table (page 69 or Quick Reference Appendix).

In a losing contest, the heroes whose opponents won victories against them suffer penalties as per their defeat levels, also as per the Simple Contest Results table, as compared to the Consequences Of Defeat table (see page 64 or Quick Reference Appendix).

## Extended Contests

Most conflicts should be resolved simply and quickly, using the simple contest rules. However, every so often, you'll want to stretch out a resolution, breaking it down into a series of smaller actions, increasing the suspense the players feel as they wait to see if they succeed or fail.

Think of the different ways a story can choose to portray a given moment, depending on how important it is to the story, and how invested he wants us to feel in its outcome.

For example, in many of Robert E. Howard's Conan stories, the action is portrayed quickly. In *Red*

### Samastina's Saga: Leaving Nochet (part 2)

Claudia wants to make the contest a little challenging, but doesn't feel that the group must face the assassins. The story is already moving along well. As a result, she decides to set the contest to be of Moderate Difficulty. Consulting the Difficulty Level table, she sees that this would just mean they have to face the base resistance.

"You will be each rolling against a difficulty of 14. We will count up the resolution points gained based on your rolls to see how well your group does." She shows them the Resolution Points table.

Kris goes first, 13 versus 14, rolling a 12 against Claudia's 11 – both successes, but Kris rolls higher and gets the point. "That's a point for the heroes," she says, putting down a green poker chip. (1 Green total).

Neil goes next, 17 versus 14, rolling an 18 against Claudia's 8 – a failure for Neil and success for Claudia. "That's 2 points against the heroes," she says, putting down 2 red poker chips. "It appears that the streets are full with people from a Fertility festival." (1 Green, 2 Red total).

Franziska is the third to go. 12Ш versus 14. She rolls a 5 and so does Claudia. Both succeed, and Karganvale's mastery bumps her success to a Critical. "That's 2 points for the heroes," she says, putting down 2 green poker chips. "Karganvale is able to sense the spoor of the assassins permeating the festival and leads the group away from them." (3 Green, 2 Red total).

David has 14 versus 14. He rolls a 19, failing, and Claudia a 12, succeeding. "That's 2 points against the heroes," she says, putting down 2 red poker chips. "Karanvale has led you all deeper into the festival. Here the festival crowd is really clogging the streets. Your High Llama is becoming skittish in the throng." (3 Green, 4 Red total).

Christine, with 2Ш versus 14, rolls a 12 and Claudia a 9, she fails and Claudia succeeds, but her mastery bumps her failure to a success. Her 14 is higher than Claudia's 9 so she now succeeds. "That's a point for the heroes," she says, putting down a green poker chip. "I'll bet you are glad you got that new spell, otherwise you would have failed trying to ride on your Esrolian keyword with the Stretch penalty." (4 Green, 4 Red total).

Rick is the last to go. 12Ш versus 14, he rolls a 14 – fail that is bumped up to a success due to his Mastery – and Claudia rolls a 14 – a success. "It's a tie, both of you succeed but have the same score" Claudia says. "The final score is a is also a tie: 4 Green, 4 Red for and against."

Rick's been skimming the rules and says, "A tie's no good. We need to get away. I'm going to bump up my success to a critical with a Hero Point. A critical versus a success means we win by 2 points, getting a Minor Victory and we get no Negative Consequences."

Claudia replies, "You can't do that Rick. Bumping like that doesn't work for group simple contests like it does with simple contests. You need to use a boost. The cost of this varies by the number of heroes participating, it's 2 Hero Points for 4 to 6 heroes, and you can do a double boost for double Hero Points. Each Boost increases the result level. A single Boost gets you a Marginal Victory, with a Negative Consequence of a Hurt for the group. A Double Boost will get you the Minor Victory you mentioned. You need to decide what you want."

Rick says, "I was going to spend a Hero Point anyway so we've one, but I can't afford to spend more."

"I'll spend one," says Kris. "I feel a little guilty for getting you in to all this."

"That will work,' agrees Claudia, She looks at the Group Simple Results table. "That is a Marginal Victory. You escape the city, its festival crowds and Blue Moon Assassins, but are Hurt." Looking at the Consequence Of Defeat table, she says, "A Hurt is a –3 penalty to the appropriate abilities of the group, but the Hurt will vanish at the end of the session. " She thinks for a moment. "Your mounts are stressed and exhausted from pressing through the large crowds. Until you get some time to rest them, they just won't be as effective. Well done."

*Nails*, the fight between Conan and the mad Tolkemec is resolved in one paragraph – Conan threw his knife and "Old Tolkemec went down, truly slain at last, the hilt vibrating on his breast." The story is about a lost city and its degenerate inhabitants, resigned to their own destruction, and the fight between Conan and Tolkemec is tangential to the main point of the story.

In the *Iliad*, in contrast, the climactic moment of the story is the final fight between Achilles and Hector. Homer does not allow Achilles to succeed or fail in a few short moments. The fight is built up with gifts from the Greeks to Achilles and prophesies of doom. The gods themselves intervene, and when Achilles first confronts Hector, they whisk the Trojan away. The river god Skamandros confronts a pursuing Achilles, but the god is beaten back by a firestorm. Finally Achilles approaches Hector again – who then runs away. It takes the intervention of the goddess Athena for Hector to turn to face his opponent. Finally comes the duel. Achilles throws his spear and misses. As Pallas Athene retrieves Achilles' spear for him Hector throws his spear but also fails to hit his foe. The two combatants charge, Hector armed with his sword and Achilles with his spear. He drives it through Hector's neck and glories over his foe while the dying Hector reminds him of his doom to die in the war as well. Only then did Hector die.

Climactic moments of action, suspense or heightened drama, are resolved with extended contests. This contest type allows you to focus on important sequences, drawing them the suspense surrounding their outcomes. They can be exciting when employed sparingly, but lose their luster when overused. Most groups will find that the typical four-hour session should contain at most one or two group extended contests. Don't throw them in gratuitously, even if it means that entire sessions go by without any extended contests.

There is no action that is always by definition important. You may be tempted, for example, to adjudicate every fight with an extended contest, because fights seem like they should take a while and focus the players' attention. Doing this will dilute the impact of all of your fight scenes.

Let's go back to the Iliad. After Apollo whisked Hector away from Achilles, the champion of the Greeks takes out his wrath on any Trojans he can catch. In rapid succession, Achilles kills Dryops, Demuchus, Lagonus, Dardanus, Tros, Mulius, Echeclus, Rhigmus, and Areithous. These fights are dispensed of in a line each (with little more than a name and how Achilles slaughtered them), because they are tangential to the pivotal scene between Achilles and Hector.

Always know why you're using an extended contest. If you can't articulate to yourself why this is a pivotal scene in the current session, use simple contests instead.

If the stakes don't matter much, use simple contests instead.

If the players aren't emotionally invested in a situation, use a simple contest. Maybe you didn't lay enough groundwork, and need to go back and insert story development scenes in which they come to understand why this matters. Then come back to it and run it as an extended contest. Possibly the players have a different idea of what the story is about than you do, and you need to follow their lead. Find out what they care about, make the stakes of the drama revolve around that, and use one of the two extended contest mechanics to drive *that* sequence instead.

**Blue Moon Assassins**

*The mysterious Blue Moon cult is found among the trolls that live deep within the Blue Moon Plateau at the northern outskirts of the Lunar Empire. They are notorious as secretive assassins who lurk in darkness and move along secret paths uncomprehended by other beings. They are commonly believed to be the mainstay of the Red Emperor's secret police.*

## What Scores Represent

Your Resolution Point score tells you how well you're doing, relative to your opponent, in the ebb and flow of a fluid, suspenseful conflict. If you're leading your opponent by 4–0, you're giving him a thorough pasting. If you're behind 0–4, you're on your last legs, while your opponent has had an easy time of it. If you're tied, you've each been getting in some good licks.

In a fight, scoring 1 point might mean that you hit your opponent with a grazing blow, or knocked him into an awkward position. Scoring 2 points might mean a palpable hit, most likely with bone-crunching sound effects. A 3-point hit sends him reeling, accompanied by a spray of blood.

However, the exact physical harm you've dished out to him remains unclear until the contest ends. When that happens, the real effects of your various victories become suddenly apparent. Perhaps he staggers, merely dazed, up against a wall. Maybe he falls over dead.

In a debate before the city's assembly, a 1-point success might occasion mild head nodding from spectators, or a frown on your opponent's face.

A 2-point result would occasion mild applause from onlookers, or send a flush to your opponent's face. On a 3-point result, your opponent might be thrown completely off-track, as audience members wince at the force of your devastating verbal jab.

In interpreting the results of individual simple contests within an extended contest, Game Masters are guided by two principles:

1. No consequence is certain until the entire extended contest is over.
2. When a hero scores points, it can reflect any positive change in fortunes, not just the most obvious one.

## Extended Contest Sequence

1. Frame the contest.

2. Carry out one or more rounds, repeating as necessary.

An extended contest unfolds as a series of simple contests. At the end of each simple contest, the winning hero (or obstacle) scores a number of **Resolution Points** (RPs) to his tally, which varies between 1 and 5, depending on the result. Tied results leave the score unchanged.

An assist from another hero is a defensive action that can decrease or increase the number of Resolution Points scored against a losing hero by between -4 and +3. However, in any case the number of Resolution Points scored against a losing hero can never be reduced below 0.

The first of the contesting heroes to accumulate a total of 5 points wins; his opponent is knocked out of the contest and loses whatever is at stake in the storyline.

### Poker Chips

An alternate, more visual method of notation involves the use of poker chips. When one or more Resolution Points are scored against you, add the requisite number of red poker chips to a pile. Your pile of chips provides an immediate visual cue to all concerned, marking your current status. If an assist reduces your Resolution Points, remove that number of chips from your stack.

You can also track your opponent's status with a similar stack of green poker chips. Where group contests pit unequal numbers against one another, you may want to keep a stock of miniature figures (or other identifying tokens) on hand to identify which green stack belongs to which opponent.

If you do use poker chips, they also provide an excellent way to keep track of your Hero Points. Maintain a white stack of chips representing your current point total, turning them into the Game Master when you spend them.

Although it's more an entertaining flourish than an event that requires careful tracking, the Game Master might also plop down a blue poker chip to signal the expenditure of a supporting character's Hero Point.

The red and green chips are also useful in visually tracking Group Simple Contests (see page 70).

Colored beads or other tokens can work just as well as poker chips.

The number of Resolution Points the winner garners at the end of each exchange depends on the degree of victory he scored. He gets 1 point for a Marginal Victory, 2 for a Minor Victory, 3 for a Major Victory, and 5 for a Complete Victory. After using the following table for your first few extended contests, you'll quickly memorize these scores.

3. Determine Contest Consequences.

If you lose an extended contest, you probably suffer lasting consequences, depending on the number of Resolution Points your opponent (or, in some cases, opponents) scored against you.

Where it is appropriate for the loser(s) of an extended contest to suffer lasting consequences, they are determined in one of two ways, according to the contest's position in the overall narrative. The final scene typically has more serious consequences than those that lead up to it—it needs to resolve a story line, satisfyingly if not permanently.

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## Parting Shot

In the round immediately after you take an opponent out of the contest, you may attempt to increase the severity of the consequences they suffer by engaging in a parting shot. This is an attempt to, metaphorically or otherwise, kick your opponent while he's down:

- Striking an incapacitated enemy
- Attacking a retreating army
- Upping the amount of wergild compensation
- Demanding additional compensation from a trading partner
- Delivering one last humiliating insult
- Asking one last favor of a spirit

The ability you use must relate to the consequences the hero will suffer, but needn't be the same one you used to win the contest. If the loser is still in a position to use an ability, he does so; otherwise the Game Master rolls a suitable difficulty value.

If you succeed in your parting shot roll, you add the result from your roll to the final number of

## Samastina's Saga:

### Confronting the Firewitch (part 1)

After several sessions and much adventuring in Dragon Pass, the group arrived at Crabtown on the shores of Skyfall Lake. There they trade with a Dark Troll merchant called Sir Scissor. In payment he agreed to take them to Cliffhome and an audience with the troll demigoddess Cragspider the Firewitch. He tells that she is not impressed by gifts or martial abilities, but adds she's always hungry and is sure she would love to meet them.

The lair of Cragspider is deep within the bowels of the Black Dragon Mountain. Cragspider the Firewitch is astride a vast web that encompasses the cosmos and reaches into every Otherworld. Claudia shows the players a picture of Cragspider. In her dark chamber, Cragspider is the only source of light; a flickering flame that reveals hints of countless trolls and spiders around her.

Claudia begins to speak in a croaky voice, "Mortal flies have come to my web." Claudia asks the players how they feel about Cragspider's statement.

Kris says, "Samastina's not going to be her dinner, I'm going to straighten that out as soon as possible."

Neil says, "Vargast is proud and feels insulted."

Franziska says, "Karganvale knows today is a good day to die."

"Herrox is worried, but I'm sure my Subdue Fire and Water elemental will put her out," smiles David.

Christine says, "Orensulva doesn't hear the threat as she's staring at Cragspider and wondering what secrets she can pry out."

Rick adds, "Magatheus is wondering the same, she's clearly an Underworld demon and he would like her as an Ally."

"She's too powerful to be an ally, but may be a Patron," says Claudia.

"How should we address you?" Kris asks Cragspider.

Claudia thinks for a moment. "You are my prey, little flies," says Cragspider. Claudia adds, "and Kris how's Samastina's explosive anger doing? This looks like the time to test it."

"I bite my lip to control it!"

"Okay that's a good frame, so you need to overcome your explosive anger of 5. What do you use?"

Kris says, "I use my Ambitious, which is 3. That means the masteries cancel, right?"

Kris rolls a 3, and Claudia an 11, a success versus a failure.

"A Minor Victory, Cragspider is very powerful, she knows she is pushing your buttons, and respects your control, you now get a Benefit of Victory - Resist Cragspider's Manipulation +3."

"We mean no disrespect, as we have traveled here at your command," Kris continues.

"My command?" asks Claudia [as Cragspider].

Kris says, "You came to me in a dream and gave me glimpses of the Hero Wars to come. You showed me the Three Pronged King and the Lost Soul and commanded me to come in person to learn the future."

"That I did and you have done well to reach me. But are you worthy of my knowledge?"

Kris replies, "Of course - I am Samastina of the Delaeos clan."

Claudia says, "It sounds like you are now starting to convince Cragspider that you are worthy."

### Confronting the Firewitch (part 2)

"Yes, I need to hear the prophecy, that's why we've come here."

Claudia says, "Okay not only is this is an extended contest, it's a climactic scene – what you've been working towards. Cragspider is going to make you show your worth, so what's the frame?"

Kris says, "To gain the respect of Cragspider so she will tell us the prophecy."

"If you fail, you understand the consequences. Cragspider will devour you. The first one to 5 points is knocked out of the contest, what ability are you going to use?"

Kris looks at her character sheet, "I want to use my best ability, so that is my +3 Earth Sovereignty breakout from my Earth Rune which is 6Ш, that's a total of 9Ш."

Claudia reminds Kris, "You get to use the +3 benefit of victory you just won as you're dealing with Cragspider, so that is 12Ш."

Christine pipes in, "I'd like to augment her Earth Sovereignty with my *Secrets of the God Learners* Grimoire"

"We're clearly dealing with a demigoddess here, I have a spell that enhances dealing with gods. I want to cast *Trappings of Divinity* on Samastina."

"Excellent!" says Kris, "I'll look just like the Earth Goddess!"

Claudia says, "That sounds like a new spell, and it certainly tells us as about Orensulva's intentions."

"Yes, so I spend a Hero Point on it so that's my Law Rune at 12Ш with the grimoire at +1 so 13Ш. Augments are at Moderate difficulty and the Base Value table says that's currently 14."

Claudia says, "So your spell of 13Ш is against base difficulty 14."

Christine rolls a 7, and Claudia rolls a 15, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "A Major Victory, the Augment Results table gives a +9 to Samastina's 12Ш, so you now have 1Ш2. Gaining the respect of Cragspider so that she will tell you the prophecy is a Very High Difficulty, that's a +Ш to the base of 15, so 15Ш."

Kris says, "Masteries cancel, and I'm still at 1Ш verses 15."

Claudia writes in her notebook:

*Samastina 1Ш* *15 Cragspider*

Kris rolls a 6, and Claudia a 20, a success bumped to a critical verses a fumble.

Claudia marks 3 points against Cragspider, and writes:

*Samastina 1Ш* III *15 Cragspider*

"3 points against Cragspider, with Earth Sovereignty augmented by Trappings of Divinity. All see that Ernalda Queen of the Earth now stands before Cragspider! What do you say?" asks Claudia.

Kris blurts out, "I am Queen of the Earth, and I command you to tell me your name!"

Claudia replies, "Call me Firewitch, I am the Fire in the Darkness." Claudia then says, "Let's have another round."

Kris rolls 11, and Claudia rolls 12, a failure bumped to a success verses a success. Claudia's success is better than Kris'; Claudia marks 1 point against Samastina:

Resolution Points scored against the opponent in the exchange that removed him from the contest.

However, if the opponent succeeds, he takes the number of Resolution Points he would, in a standard exchange, score against you, and instead *subtracts* them from the number of Resolution Points scored against him in the exchange that removed him from the contest. If the revised total is now less than 5, he returns to the contest, and may re-engage you. The Game Master describes this as a dramatic turnaround, in which the victim's overreaching foe has somehow granted him an advantage allowing him to recover from his previous misfortune. The provisional consequences he suffered now go away, and are treated as a momentary or seeming disadvantage.

Where it makes sense in the narrative, unengaged heroes may attempt parting shots against opponents taken out of the contest by third parties. Defenders who are enabled to return to the group contest may rejoin the contest they previously lost, or start a new exchange, most likely against the over-reaching enemy who tried to harm them when they were down.

Heroes may not revive their teammates by using their lamest abilities to make parting shots on them; this, by definition, does not pass a credibility test (see page 102).

## Asymmetrical Exchanges

You may choose to briefly suspend your attempt to best your opponent in an extended contest, in order to do something else. An instance where one contestant is trying to win the contest and another is trying to do something else is called an asymmetrical exchange. In an asymmetrical exchange, a hero pursuing an objective other than victory does not score points against the other if he wins the exchange. Instead, he gains some other advantage. He still loses points if he fails. Often he will be using an ability other than the one he's been waging the contest with, one better suited to the task at hand. This becomes additionally dangerous when the rating associated with the substitute ability is significantly lower than the one used for the rest of the contest.

In addition to secondary objectives, as in the above example, heroes may engage in asymmetrical exchanges to grant augments (see page 112) to themselves or others. Disengaging requires success at an asymmetrical exchange.

## Disengaging

You can always abandon a contest, but, in addition to losing the prize under contention, you may also suffer negative consequences. Many contests

Mortal flies have come to my web.
You are my prey, little flies.
We mean no disrespect, as we have travelled here at your command.
I am Queen of the Earth, and I am no one's prey!
We have met before, Earth Queen. I am the Fire in the Darkness and the Keeper of the Web.
Tell me the future.
Tell me of the Hero Wars.

**The Praxian Founders**

*The Founders are called the Fathers of the Tribes, and are counted among the ancient sons of the Storm Bull. Before the Great Darkness, they and many other brothers (now dead and forgotten) marched with their peoples from the slopes of the Spike to Tada's Land. They led their folk against Ragnaglar and the Devil, and only a few returned. Though already dead, they taught the rituals and prayers to summon them to the Praxian khans, and then entered the realm of the gods. They are known to fight for their khans in times of war.*

will have no stakes other than the mutual intent to harm one another—each contestant is trying to attach negative consequences to the other. In such instances, you will always suffer negative consequences if you simply withdraw—unless you successfully disengage.

To disengage, make an asymmetrical exchange, usually using the ability relevant to the contest you're trying to wriggle out of. If you fail, your effort is wasted and the score against you increases, as it would have during a normal exchange. If you succeed, you escape the clutches, literal or metaphorical, of your opponent, without further harm.

You must describe your actions in a way that makes your enemy's inability to inflict further harm on you seem credible. In the case of a fight where opponents mean to hurt or kill you, you must definitively leave the scene of the battle. Less visceral conflicts may allow for a complete surrender without having to physically depart.

Your opponents may pursue you if you disengage, but will have to succeed in chasing you down, or otherwise forcing you back into the suspended conflict, before starting a new contest with you. Pursuits in this context should be resolved with simple contests. If your opponents are able to catch up with you and re-engage you immediately, with no intervening events to change the balance of power between you, the previous suspended contest resumes, with its original score intact.

If you disengage from a contest using the rising action method of consequence determination, you suffer no consequences from it.

In a climactic scene, however, Resolution Points scored during contests you disengaged from are still taken into account when determining consequences. In the case of a group contest, consequences against you are determined as soon as you disengage.

## Group Extended Contest

Group extended contests proceed as a series of extended contests between pairs of heroes, interwoven so that they happen nearly simultaneously. As in an extended contest between two heroes, only one exchange per pair of adversaries occurs each round. Usually the heroes make up one team, and their antagonists the other.

The classic example of a group extended contest is a skirmish between two groups. Other climactic situations that could be resolved with a group extended contest include:

- Defending a city during a siege
- A complex magical ritual with several key participants
- A battle involving hundreds, perhaps thousands, of troops
- Governing a tribe or city during turbulent times
- An entire war
- Taking over the criminal gang that runs the harbor district

As with any contest, the Game Master and players frame the contest and choose relevant abilities.

At the outset of the first round, the Game Master determines the initial pairings between heroes and their opponents. All else being equal, players generally have more fun when they can choose their own opponents. If you choose to do this, allow the players to act in the order of their ratings in the abilities they'll be using in the contest, from highest to lowest.

It is possible for one hero to wind up facing more than one opponent. In this case, he is considered to be part of two (or more) pairings.

Order of action doesn't matter much in a group extended contest. Unlike many roleplaying combat systems, where the chance to take the other guy out before he can hit you provides a big benefit, here there is no great advantage to acting first. Accordingly, Game Masters can resolve the various sub-contests that make up a group extended contest in the order they find most intuitive. Usually you'll find it most convenient simply to use player's seating order to determine the sequence in which the initial exchanges of a contest occur. Exchanges are always resolved in the same order from round to round.

Having determined the order in which the various pairings will be resolved, it's time to start the first round. Start with the first exchange in the order, and then go onto the second, and so on, until all pairings have resolved a single exchange. Once this happens, the round concludes, and a new one begins, starting over with the first exchange.

As in a single extended contest, each member of a pairing is trying to be the first to score 5 points against another. When a participant has 5 points scored against him by a single opponent, he is eliminated from the contest.

If defending against multiple opponents, it is possible to have more than 5 points scored against you in total, but remain in the contest. (Points scored against you by opponents who fail to eliminate you can come back to haunt you in resolutions using the Climactic Consequence/Results table).

## Confronting the Firewitch (part 3)

*Samastina 1Ш* **I** **III** *15 Cragspider*

Kris says, "A point against Samastina. I can take that."

Claudia [as Cragspider] says, "We have met before, Earth Queen, and you have acknowledged me as equal."

Claudia adds, "Roll again."

Kris rolls a 17, and Claudia a 4, a failure bumped to a success verses a success. Kris' success is better than Claudia's. Claudia marks 1 point against Cragspider:

*Samastina 1Ш* **I** **IIII** *15 Cragspider*

Kris asks, "If that is so Firewitch why are the Blue Moon trolls still hunting me?"

They roll again, Kris rolls a 19, and Claudia a 1! "That's a failure bumped to a success verses a critical," says Claudia and she marks 3 points against Samastina:

*Samastina 1Ш* **IIII** **IIII** *15 Cragspider*

"That's 3 points against Samastina," says Claudia. "The contest is now tied. Cragspider's Pillar of Fire envelops the two of you as your divine powers starts to shift the room into the Otherworld."

"Wait!" shouts David. "Herrox will give her an Assist, as we need to keep this in the Middle World. I release Zortan the Optimistic Water elemental to quench the magic fires."

"Cool" says Claudia, "Assists work like augments, but the outcome affects the Score Against Recipient, in this case Samastina. What ability are you going to use?"

David adds, "Water elemental at 1Ш plus Zortan erupts from my water skin with waterspout +1, so that's 2Ш."

Claudia says, "Assists are at moderate difficulty and the Base Value table says that's currently 15. So 2Ш verses the base difficulty of 15."

David rolls a 15, and Claudia a 14, a failure bumped to a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "A Marginal Victory, the Assist Results table says we drop Samastina's score by 1. It's now 3 verses Cragspider's 4."

Claudia adjusts the scores in her notebook:

*Samastina 1Ш* **III** **IIII** *15 Cragspider*

Claudia says, "That's enough to dampen her fire, but she still got 3 points against Samastina. Cragspider says: You have lost power since we last met Earth Queen. I cannot respect a weakling."

They roll again. This time Kris rolls a 1! Claudia rolls 12, a critical versus a success, which gets bumped down to a failure by Kris' mastery advantage.

Kris exults, "That's a Major Victory! 3 points!"

Claudia adjusts the score:

*Samastina 1Ш* **III** **IIIIIII** *15 Cragspider*

### Confronting the Firewitch (conclusion)

Claudia says, "Cragspider will be knocked out, by that last exchange. Do you want a parting shot?"

Kris replies, "I'm not going to take the risk." She adds, "Cragspider, I command you to stop the Blue Moon Assassins that are plaguing us."

"Cragspider replies: Of course Queen of the Earth, I am yours to command, consider it done."

Claudia looks at the points scored against both Samastina and Cragspider. Cragspider is the loser and so adds 1 to her total. Claudia then cross-references against the Climactic Scene consequence table.

"Okay, Cragspider has 8 points against her and so her Consequence of Defeat is Dying. Samastina has 3 points against her and so her Consequence of Defeat is Hurt. That will disappear at the end of the session, but right now you are just exhausted from the magical battle. Looking at the Climactic Scene Victory Level table, Cragspider's Dying means you have a Complete Victory. Samastina gets a Benefit of Victory - Respected by Cragspider +9. That can be combined with her previous Benefit of Victory: Resist Cragspider's Manipulation +3."

Rick says, "Although we've got a Complete Victory, I want to do a parting shot and get some magic for Magatheus from her."

Claudia asks, "You understand the risks? She could get back into the contest."

"She's two points over knockout, I'd have to screw it up badly. We won't ever get another opportunity like this," says Rick.

"The ability you use must relate to the consequence Cragspider will suffer. What's it to be?"

"I spend a Hero Point for a new spell from my Practical Demonology Grimoire: *Absorb Demon Power*. It's a Darkness Grimoire and Cragspider is clearly some kind of Darkness demon, so this should work.

Claudia says, "Okay sounds good, what's your ability score?"

Rick replies, "So it's my Law rune at 1Ш with the grimoire at +1 so that's 2Ш."

Claudia says, "So your spell of 2Ш verses the base difficulty of 15. You can have +6 as you are using a specific ability that's relevant against her, so 8Ш."

Rick rolls a 12, and Claudia a 6. A failure bumped to a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "Fortunately you won that, but only a marginal success, and so only increases the result by one, and that doesn't make any difference to the overall results. Magatheus can get a new ability at 13, but it still cost you a Hero Point. What's it to be?"

Rick smiles triumphantly, "I add Demon Fire at 13."

The contest is over, and Samastina has gained the respect of Cragspider. The players now listen as Claudia tells the whole prophecy.

As heroes are eliminated from the group contest, their victorious opponents may then move on to engage new targets, starting new contests, which are then added to the end of the existing sequence.

The group extended contest ends as soon as there are no active participants on one side of the conflict. The side with one or more participants left standing wins.

Consequences to all participants are then determined.

If using the Rising Action Consequence table, only the difference between scores in the exchange that felled the affected hero is taken into account.

When using the Climactic Consequence table, heroes total up all of the points scored against them by all heroes, including those from individual contests they won, and contests left incomplete at the time of their elimination from the group extended contest.

With the consequences determined, the winners are now free to claim their prize. In a contest to resolve the climax of the story, the claiming of the prize concludes it. Otherwise, the story develops further, taking into account the results of the winners' victory.

## Unrelated Actions

Heroes not currently enmeshed in an exchange—either after a successful disengagement, or after winning an exchange—may take actions within the scene that do not directly contribute to the defeat of the other side. These unrelated actions may grant an augment to themselves or to a teammate. They may achieve a secondary story objective.

They resemble asymmetrical exchanges, except that; as they are performed by heroes who are not targeted by any opponents, they impose no additional risk.

## Assists

A hero may take an unrelated action to grant an assist to a teammate enmeshed in an exchange. To make an assist, a hero engages in a simple contest, either against a suitable difficulty, or an applicable ability of an affected opponent.

Assists are subject to the same restrictions as augments (see page 102): they must be both credible and interesting.

By default, heroes making assists face Moderate Difficulty (as per the Difficulty Level table, page 113). Each subsequent assist attempt to the same beneficiary, steps up by one factor on the table: high, then very high, then nearly impossible. The difficulty escalation occurs even when a new

hero steps in to make a subsequent assist. In rules terms, this escalation allows the occasional dramatic rescue but makes it difficult for the players to prolong losing battles to excruciating length. Dramatically, it emulates the constant raising of the stakes inherent in a suspenseful scene. Like other *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules structures, the limitation mirrors a literary conceit, not a literal reality. The Game Master makes it seem credible by justifying the increasing difficulties with descriptions of ever-escalating countermeasures on the part of the opposition.

Game Masters should feel free to adjust the starting difficulty up or down by one step to account for campaign credibility or other dramatic factors. If an assist as proposed seems too improbable or insufficiently useful, Game Masters should collaborate with players to propose alternate suggestions which would face Moderate Difficulty.

The assist alters the score against your teammate according to the result of a simple contest:

**ASSIST RESULTS**

| Contest Outcome | Change To Score Against Recipient |
|---|---|
| Complete Victory | –4 |
| Major Victory | –3 |
| Minor Victory | –2 |
| Marginal Victory | –1 |
| Marginal Defeat | 0 |
| Minor Defeat | +1 |
| Major Defeat | +2 |
| Complete Defeat | +3 |

As the table reveals, assists are risky: if they fail, they can add to the score against the recipient, possibly even eliminating him from the contest.

Points from an assist can be applied to a single exchange only. Scores in exchanges can never be reduced below 0.

Remember that even in a fight, the relative scores of opponents in an exchange reflect only the relative strength of their positions. They may or may not track to physical damage, the real extent of which is determined at the end of the fight (see page 64). Players lending assists needn't describe them as actions that heal or help their comrades; they can also describe aggressive maneuvers against their friends' opponents.

In many roleplaying games, the smart thing to do when you finish off an opponent and want to help a comrade who's getting pasted is to join the fight and start reducing that opponent's hit points. In *HeroQuest Glorantha*, this may or may not be the tactically sound move, as you simply start a fresh exchange with the opponent. Depending on the situation, you may want to do this (perhaps allowing your ally to disengage), or to give your ally an assist.

## Engaging Multiple Opponents

If more than one opponent engages you, you take part in a number of contests equal to the number of opponents. For each extra contest you are forced to participate in during a given round, you suffer a cumulative -3 penalty.

Game Masters should resolve all engagements against a single hero at once, adjusting the order of action as necessary. The player can choose the order in which he engages his respective opponents. It's usually smartest to engage them in order of relative toughness, from highest to lowest rating.

Occasionally a new contestant may engage a hero later in the round (for example when that contestant's intended target is knocked out of the contest before he gets a chance to act). If the engaged hero has already been engaged, his penalty reflects the number of opponents he's already engaged this round.

If the Game Master's description of the contest places more than one opponent within striking range (literal or metaphorical) you may choose to engage multiple opponents, opening up exchanges against each. You suffer multiple opponent penalties of –3 per exchange, for each opponent after the first.

### Disengagement in Group Extended Contests

Original scores remain intact if you re-enter a group extended contest after having disengaged from it, assuming that your previous combatant(s) are now in a position to re-engage you. An engagement with fresh opponents is treated as any other new contest.

If an opponent attempts to disengage from you while you are also engaged by at least one other contestant, you suffer a penalty of –5 when you roll to counter to his disengagement.

## Followers

Players may choose to have their followers (see page 50) take part in group extended contests in one of three ways: as full contestants, as secondary contestants, or as supporters.

**Contestant:** The follower takes part in the contest as any other hero would. Players roll for their followers as they would their main heroes. However, followers are removed from the contest whenever 3 Resolution Points are scored against them in a given exchange. In a gritty campaign where companions routinely expire in the protagonists' arms, an additional 2 Resolution Points are then scored against them, increasing the severity of any consequences they suffer.

**Secondary contestant:** To act as a secondary contestant, the follower must have an ability relevant to the contest. The follower sticks by the hero's side, contributing directly to the effort: fighting in a battle, tossing in arguments in a legal dispute, acting as the trireme's navigator, or whatever. Although the player and Game Master describe this, the player does not roll for the follower. Instead, these efforts benefit the main hero in two ways:

When confronted by multiple opponents, the main hero may ignore the multiple opponent penalty for one foe for each follower acting as a secondary contestant.

The main hero may, at any point, shift any number of Resolution Points to a follower acting as a secondary contestant. Followers with 3 or more points lodged against them are removed from the scene. When a follower is removed from the scene, an additional 2 Resolution Points are lodged against them, increasing the severity of consequences they suffer. The main hero loses the protection against multiple opponents afforded by the follower.

**Supporter:** The follower is present in the scene, but does not directly engage the main hero's opponents. Instead he may perform assists and other unrelated actions.

Followers acting in any of these three capacities may be removed from the contest by otherwise unengaged opponents. To remove a follower from a scene, an opponent engages the follower in a simple contest of relevant abilities. On any failure, the follower is taken out of the contest. For consequence determination purposes, the follower has X+2 Resolution Points lodged against him, where X is the usual number levied by the Resolution Point table.

### Consequences and Group Extended Contests

In a Rising Action contest, if you win more than one exchange, you can theoretically be hurt multiple times - once for each contest you win with a difference between results of 1.

If you win more than one exchange in either Rising Action or Climactic contests, and then need to determine a final level of victory (to determine, for example, Benefits of Victory from the contest), use the victory level you attained against the hero who contested against you with the highest target number.

### Keeping Score

To maintain the sense of back-and-forth of a suspenseful scene, make sure you keep your players aware at all times of where they stand by reminding them of the scores after each exchange. You may even find it useful to mark the running scores on a whiteboard or (for the technically well-equipped) projected computer image. Of course, using poker chips makes this very easy to see.

Preserve consistency by always marking scores with the hero first and the supporting character second. When players contest against one another, list the scores according to seating arrangement, with the player to your left first.

# Rising Actions and Climactic Resolution

As with in any form of literature, a roleplaying adventure typically has a plot (even if that plot is created by the interaction of the Game Master and the players as the adventure progresses). The rising actions of an adventure are those contests that build up towards a climax.

For example, in the Odyssey Odysseus overcomes numerous dramatic obstacles along his way to back to Ithaca. Upon his return, Odysseus enters his palace disguised as a beggar, suffers abuse at the hands of the suitors, and then strings his bow and shoots it through the dozen axes. These are all rising actions in the story, and build the tension up to the climax: when Odysseus, with the help of Athena, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and Philoteus the cowherd, kills all the suitors of Penelope.

When these contests are resolved using the extended contest method, their consequences can be determined using the following methods:

| RISING ACTION CONSEQUENCE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Difference Between Result | Negative Consequences For Loser | Negative Consequences For Winner | Winner's Victory Level / Loser's Defeat Level |
| 1 | Hurt | Hurt | Marginal |
| 2 | Hurt | Unharmed | Marginal |
| 3 | Impaired | Unharmed | Minor |
| 4 | Impaired | Unharmed | Minor |
| 5 | Injured | Unharmed | Major |
| 6 | Injured | Unharmed | Major |
| 7 | Dying | Unharmed | Complete |
| 8 | Dead | Unharmed | Complete |
| 9 | Dead | Unharmed | Complete |

## Determining Rising Action Consequences

The term "rising action" refers to the events and complications that build towards the climax of a story arc. When assessing the consequences for a contest involving a rising action, use the Rising Action method to assess consequences.

Find the difference between the winner and loser's Resolution Point scores as of the contests conclusion, and cross-reference with the following table to find the severity of lasting consequences suffered by the loser. (As you'll see, in the case of a close-fought contest, it is possible for the winner to be Hurt, too).

The Rising Action method may slightly scuff up the contest winners, but nonetheless allows them to move quickly onto the next scene of the story without having to take significant time off for physical, emotional, spiritual or political recuperation. Losers, naturally, will emerge considerably worse for wear.

(If you want the heroes to suffer zero risk of lengthy recuperation, even if they lose, be sure to frame the contest so that it lacks lasting consequences).

Feel free to treat a hero's Dead result as Dying, if this better suits your story (and is acceptable to the player, who may feel a glorious death is entirely appropriate for his hero).

## Determining Climactic Consequences

For the final, climactic confrontation that wraps up your story, use the following, more punishing method of doling out consequences.

Take into account all Resolution Points scored against all participants. Winners and losers add up all Resolution Points scored against them by any opponent. Then the losers add 1 to their totals. The result is cross-referenced against the following table:

| CLIMACTIC CONSEQUENCE | |
|---|---|
| Total Resolution Points Scored Against Hero | Consequence |
| 0 | Unharmed |
| 1 | Dazed |
| 2 | Hurt |
| 3 | Hurt |
| 4 | Impaired |
| 5 | Impaired |
| 6 | Injured |
| 7 | Injured |
| 8 | Dying |
| 9+ | Dead |

**Light Against Darkness**

*In the Big Rubble, a ruined city in Prax, solar cultists dedicated to Yelmalio the Little Sun fight against a gang of dark trolls and trollkin. For both sides, such fights can have magical as well mundane stakes, as they repeat the endless battles of the Gods War in Time.*

In this determination method, even the winners may pay a horrible price for their heroism.

If used for climactic battles, this method can result in a scene resembling the conclusion of an Icelandic Saga. It is possible for a hero to win a series of fights, and then, just as he realizes his ultimate triumph, to slump to the ground, dead. Under this determination method, it is sometimes safer to be quickly knocked out of a fight with mere Impairment or Injury, than to get repeatedly hit during a series of triumphant but punishing skirmishes with various opponents.

To determine the winning side's victory level for a climactic scene, cross-reference with the second-worst consequence among the defeated opponents. If there is only one opponent, use his consequence of defeat.

| CLIMACTIC SCENE VICTORY LEVEL | |
|---|---|
| **Consequence** | **Victory Level** |
| Hurt | Marginal |
| Impaired | Minor |
| Injured | Major |
| Dead or Dying | Complete |

As is appropriate to a climactic confrontation, victories in this system skew toward greater decisiveness: the winner never scores less than a Minor Victory.

## Samastina's Saga:
**The Battle of Auroch Hills**

*Whitewall fell, and the gods were trapped in the Underworld by evil Lunar magic. The winter would not end and the gods could not be reached, even after our heroes quested to revive the Rebel King from the Ice Refuge. They rescued King Broyan the Vingkotling as part of the unfolding Cragspider prophesy.*

Claudia sets the scene for the climactic session.

"After giving Kallyr Starbrow command of his army, Broyan has you organize the defense of an important long planned ritual with his magicians and sworn men. The ritual starts with the Summoning of Evil atop an icy Honor Rock, and then Broyan, his men and magicians disappear into the Otherworld.

A few days later, scouts report back that at least seven Lunar regiments and a group from the Lunar College of Magic have marched from the new Lunar Temple and are heading towards you in the Auroch Hills. The ritual space has now been flickering with indistinct shadows and shapes for several days now. Scouts say that there is going to be a huge battle with the Lunar Army near here, and that a group of Lunar magicians has broken off from the main force and is heading towards the ritual space you are defending."

While the players digest that, Claudia adds, "A huge red bolt sears down into the trees around you, flaming branches and burning sky rains down, across the snowy landscape what are you going to do?"

"Excellent!" says Neil. "This is Vargast's moment, we begin the defense. I've a Benefit of Victory - Faithful to Orlanth +6 from a previous encounter. These guys are toast!"

"Whoa," says Franziska, "You've no powers, Orlanth is shackled in the Underworld since the fall of Whitewall. I'm in charge. I am a Humakti, these guys are mine."

Neil groans as he remembers his problems.

"So what's your plan? What sort of contest is it?" Kris asks.

"A group extended contest, and you've 25 or so other sworn warriors to fill the gaps," says Claudia.

"It's clear to me that we've got two warriors, and two magicians who are directly useful here. The rest can assist," says Franziska.

"Don't forget Tharg, my loyal Great Troll" says Kris. "He'll be a Contestant, to protect me."

"We don't have to assign Samastina, and Orensulva to specific opponents. They will be unengaged and fit in where they're needed," says David.

As non-combatants Kris and Christine both nod their acceptance of their unengaged assisting role.

"What's the contest frame?" asks Claudia.

Franziska says, "Let's keep it simple – we defend the ritual space. And remember everyone: today is a good day to die."

"What can we see happening?" asks Rick. "Can we see who it is advancing on us? As a Lunar magician I should know once I've seen them. What do I need to roll?"

"No roll required," says Claudia. "You easily recognize this as a unit of Major Class Magicians from the Lunar College of Magic by their diverse clothing. They have a company of University Guards protecting them as usual."

"Are they good?"

"The best," says Claudia looking up from the *Guide to Glorantha*. "Major Class units are composed of Illuminated Lunar magicians, each trained to master at least six of the seven phases, along with their University Guards who worship their dread war god Yanafal Tarnils and are sworn to defend their magicians to the death."

"I'm not sure what all that means," says Rick, "But Major Class magicians and a dread war god doesn't sound good!"

"Glowing with magic, the guards are rushing to engage you, two each. Three head for you Magatheus," says Claudia. "They yell, die traitor scum!"

Starting with Franziska, Claudia starts to go round the table asking, "what abilities are you using in this fight?"

Franziska says, "Karganvale uses her *Iron Sword Neckchopper +3*, broken out of her Death Rune for a rating of 12. Christine, do you have a good augment I can use?"

**Tharg the Loyal Great Troll**

*Kris created Tharg the Loyal Great Troll after the encounter with Cragspider. "Your future is easy to read, take one of my bodyguard with you as a sign of my support for your quest." Kris paid a Hero Point to cement the gift. She then decided on his keywords and abilities and divided 15 points between them, 8 on the Darkness Rune, 4 on Great Troll, 2 on Loyal, and finally a charm from his Darkness Rune - Shatter Thing with Maul +1.*

**Tharg the Loyal Great Troll**

*Great Troll 1*
● *Darkness Rune 1*
*Shatter with Maul +1*
*Loyal 15*

**Selenes**

*Selenes are spirits tied to the Blue Moon. They are typically formed from the strange glow produced by certain stones, fragments of the Blue Moon, dating from when she was shattered and much of her form fell to earth. Such stones are expensive and difficult to obtain. They attack with fear and madness.*

Christine says "Orensulva uses her *Trappings of Divinity* spell to make Karganvale appear to be Humakt, to fight the traitorous Yanafal Tarnils. That has a 13ᚳ rating."

"Hang on," says Franziska, "traitorous Yanafal Tarnils – I can use my *Geas of Humakt: Never forgive a betrayal* 9ᚳ, but it's a specific ability so can I get a Specific Ability Bonuses?"

"Sure", says Claudia, "+6 as its Specific Ability Bonuses against Yanafal Tarnils, the Hero that betrayed his god."

"That's 15ᚳ, better than what Orensulva has to offer, but I still need her to assist me."

"Ok, you are augmenting with your Geas of 15ᚳ versus the base difficulty of 15."

Franziska rolls a 19, and Claudia a 1, a failure bumped to a success versus a critical.

Claudia says, "A Minor Victory for me, the Augment Results table gives you nothing."

Claudia decides this should be a tough fight for the group, pushing them to their limits. She assigns a Very High Difficulty for this contest, currently 16ᚳ. She describes the Guards as being heavily supported by the magicians. Claudia notes down the contest values of both sides including Karganvale's Multiple Opponent (MOP) Penalty total against Guard 2.

| | |
|---|---|
| Karganvale 12ᚳ | 16ᚳ Guard 1 |
| -3 MOP = 9ᚳ | 16ᚳ Guard 2 |

"Okay Neil and Kris, remember Orlanth is chained and Ernalda has gone to sleep, so no Air or Earth magic."

Neil says, "Vargast uses his Thane occupation keyword to fight from horseback and augments by releasing Firewind to wreath himself in deadly magical fire. That's 17 to start with and I'm using Firewind's Winds of Fire ability of 1ᚳ to augment with."

"Isn't Firewind an air elemental, and so helpless in the Windstop?" asks Claudia.

Neil shows her his character sheet, "Yes, but Firewind's ability is the Fire Rune, not Air."

"Okay, so roll your Winds of Fire ability 1ᚳ versus the base difficulty of 15."

Neil rolls a 17, and Claudia a 19, a failure bumped to a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "A Minor Victory for you, the Augment Results table gives you +6, that's a total of 3ᚳ. Firewind is a companion, so you also need to decide how he is going to participate in the contest – as a Contestant, Secondary Contestant, or Supporter."

Neil says, "As Firewind has already augmented me, it makes sense for him to be a Secondary Contestant. It also means I can ignore the Multiple Opponent Penalties for the second guard."

Claudia notes this all down.

| | |
|---|---|
| Vargast 3ᚳ | 16ᚳ Guard 3 |
| | 16ᚳ Guard 4 |

Firewind (Secondary Contestant)

"Now Rick, the Moon is in Black Moon Phase – the worst for you. You can only use Lunar Magic to Augment, same for the attackers. What abilities do you use?"

"Magatheus has a Darkness spell called *Summon Underworld Demon* from my Practical Demonology Grimoire +1, and it's based on the Law Rune 1ᚳ so that's 2ᚳ to start with. So I'm going to Summon a massive Darkness elemental to engulf and kill them. I'll augment it with my *Inspiration of Madness* spell from my *Light of Knowledge grimoire* +1, it's Full Moon Phase 5ᚳ so a total of 6ᚳ."

"So your spell of 6ᚳ versus the base difficulty of 15." Rick rolls a 1, and Claudia an 18, a critical versus a fail.

Claudia says, "You still have a mastery left and so bump my fail to a fumble. A Complete Victory for you, the Augment Results table gives you +ᚳ, your spell seems to have summoned a powerful Blue Moon Selene, a type of weird Lunar darkness elemental. I'm going to give you a Specific Ability Bonus of +6 as you mentioned earlier you are using Lunar magic against the Lunars. They're not going to expect that. That's a total of 8ᚳ2."

| | |
|---|---|
| Magatheus 8ᚳ2 | 16ᚳ Guard 5 |
| -3 MOP = 5ᚳ2 | 16ᚳ Guard 6 |
| -6 MOP = 2ᚳ2 | 16ᚳ Guard 7 |

"David, what's Herrox going to do?" asks Claudia.

"This looks to be a big fight, so I'm going to release my Sharp Lance death spirit from its charm for an extra +3 bonus. So that's +1

for the charm, +3 for the bonus, and 5ᛞ for my Spirit Rune for a total of 9ᛞ. I want to augment it with my Illusion rune so I appear as a terrifying spirit roaring towards them accompanied by the with sound of a giant wave as I charge."

"Okay, your Illusion Rune is 15 versus the base difficulty of 15."

David rolls a 12, and Claudia a 14, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "I win, no augment for you."

"Okay, I spend a Hero Point, bumping to a critical."

"A Minor Victory for you, the Augment Results table gives you +6, you start to appear watery and fluid, so that's a total of 15ᛞ."

"What about your companion Zortan? Contestant, Secondary Contestant, or Supporter?" asks Claudia.

"I'll keep him as a Supporter, his healing or waterspout is bound to come in useful." David replies.

Herrox 15ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 8
-3 MOP = 12ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 9
Zortan (Supporter)

"Okay Kris, Tharg is acting as a Contestant," says Claudia. "What ability is he using?"

Kris says, "*Shatter Thing with Maul* at +1 off his Darkness Rune of 1ᛞ for 2ᛞ and he'll augment it with his Great Troll 1ᛞ. As he's massive he can bring his giant maul down with a big crunch."

"That's your *Great Troll* 1ᛞ versus the base difficulty of 15."

Kris rolls a 9, and Claudia a 16, a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "A Minor Victory for you, the Augment Results table gives you +6, that's a total of 8ᛞ. The powerful Darkness spirit inside his maul causes it to emanate darkness."

Tharg 8ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 10

Claudia checks that everything is ready:

Karganvale 12ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 1
-3 MOP = 9ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 2
Vargast 3ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 3
16ᛞ Guard 4
Firewind (Secondary Contestant)

Magatheus 8ᛞ2 16ᛞ Guard 5
-3 MOP = 5ᛞ2 16ᛞ Guard 6
-6 MOP = 2ᛞ2 16ᛞ Guard 7

Herrox 15ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 8
-3 MOP = 12ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 9
Zortan (Supporter)

Tharg 8ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 10

Unengaged
Samastina, Orensulva

**Round One**

"The guards run at you, their wicked looking blades flick out scything left and right to cut you down like weeds. Karganvale, you are first."

"I murder the traitorous Lunars," says Franziska. "None will survive my blade."

Karganvale 12ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 1
-3 MOP = 9ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 2

"Guard 1, masteries cancel."

Franziska rolls a 2, and Claudia a 14, a success versus a success. Claudia says, "I roll higher, a point against Karganvale. Guard 2, masteries cancel, and don't forget your Multiple Opponent Penalty."

Franziska rolls an 8, and Claudia a 17, a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "2 points against Guard 2."

Claudia updates her notebook.

Karganvale 12ᛞ I 16ᛞ Guard 1
-3 MOP = 9ᛞ II 16ᛞ Guard 2

Franziska looks up the results in the *What Scores Represent* text box: "Guard 1's given me a grazing blow, but there's bone-crunching sound from Guard 2." "Vargast?"

"With Firewind, my horse and I are a burning visage of wrath bearing down on the guards," says Neil.

Vargast 3ᛞ 16ᛞ Guard 3
16ᛞ Guard 4
Firewind (Secondary Contestant)

Claudia says, "Guard 3, masteries cancel."

Neil rolls a 12, and Claudia a 19, a failure versus a failure.

**The Blue Moon**

*The Blue Moon is ancient and mysterious, a daughter of Yelm and the Stygian waters conceived in the Underworld. She contained the paradoxes of dead and not-dead, of eternal dying, and unattained rebirth. The Blue Moon was active and important in the God Time, but when violence enveloped the cosmos, she was shattered and cast down from heaven. The Blue Moon Plateau northeast of the Lunar Empire is the single largest piece of her body that struck the Surface World.*

*Part of the Blue Moon remained in the sky, rising and falling in its own unpredictable pattern and controlling the tides of Glorantha. Secretive cults of both humans and trolls worship the Blue Moon.*

## The Battle of the Auroch Hills

*The Auroch Hills are rugged badlands on the border between Sartar and the Holy Country. The hills are about fifteen miles long and five miles wide. A single pass through the center of the hills is suitable for wagons or large formations.*

*The Auroch Hills are famed for their distinctive geological formations called "earth pillars". These rock formations are red, white, orange, and grey in color; they are the result of a Gods War conflict and are home to many malevolent spirits.*

### Fortified Villa

The Heortlings used this large, fortified villa belonging to a Volsaxi petty king as a base of operations.

### The Lunar Army

The Lunar Army was led by Half-Moon General Urtherion Tashkeventh, a Dara Happan aristocrat distantly related to the Red Emperor. General Urtherion was bringing the main Lunar Army in Dragon Pass, numbering approximately 6,000 professional soldiers, from Sartar to Heortland, to crush the Hendriki revolt.

The Lunar Army marched in good formation, but was hampered by a lack of skirmishers.

**A. Vanguard:** The vanguard consisted of the Arrowstone Cavalry, the Lasadag Lions, and the Raibanth Line (a unit of combined spearmen and archers). When the Sartarites began the ambush, the vanguard tried to flank them and were in return ambushed by the Hendrikings.

**B. Command Group:** The command group consisted of General Urtherion's bodyguards, priests, and three units from the Lunar Field School of Magic (composed of two Minor Classes and one Major Class). When General Urtherion realized the true scope of the Heortling ambush, he sought to quickly decapitate the rebellion by attacking King Broyan with the Lunar magicians and the remnants of the vanguard.

**C. Beryl Phalanx:** These disciplined hoplites bore the brunt of the Sartarite ambush.

**D. Tarsh Native Corps:** These mercenaries and auxiliaries included the Sun Dome Templars, the Furthest Foot and the Talfort Foot. They retreated after it became clear to their captains that the battle was lost.

### Heortling Army

The Heortling Army was led by Broyan the Vingkotling, the king of the Hendriki of northern Heortland and called "King of the Rebels" by the Lunar Empire. The Sartarite volunteers were led by Kallyr Starbrow, the queen of the Kheldon Tribe and another famous rebel. Their army numbered approximately 7,000 warriors, mostly militia.

**1. Command Group:** The command group consisted of King Broyan and his magician-priests, his bodyguards, the Stormwalker magicians from Old Wind Temple, and several groups of adventurers and powerful volunteers who were personally loyal to Broyan. They performed the magic that brought the Lunar Army into this pass and then fought and defeated the Lunar command group.

**2. Hendriki militia:** Volunteers from across Heortland flocked to Broyan's Sword and Helm. They were led by their chiefs and petty kings, Most were militia skirmishers, although several kings command large numbers of heavy cavalry. The Hendriki militia routed the Lunar vanguard and the Beryl Phalanx.

**3. Sartarite volunteers:** Volunteers primarily from across Sartar followed Kallyr Starbrow into battle. The Culbrea tribal army, nicknamed "the Headhunters", followed their king. The Sartarites began the battle when they ambushed the Lunar command group, forcing the Beryl Phalanx to form up to defend them and luring the Lunar vanguard into trying to flank them. When the Hendriki launched their ambush from the other side of the pass, the Lunar army was quickly routed.

Fortified Villa
D
C
B
A
1
2
3
Heortlings
1. Command Group
2. Hendriki militia
3. Sartarite volunteers
Lunar Units
A. Vanguard
B. Command Group
C. Beryl Phalanx
D. Tarsh Native Corps
Key to Units
Heavy Infantry
Skirmishers
Heavy Cavalry
Magicians
1/8
1/4
3/8
1/2
Miles
Ready Range
Danger Range (Magic)
N

Claudia says, "I roll higher, a point against Vargast. Guard 4, masteries cancel."

Neil rolls a 3, and Claudia a 2, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, so 1 point against Guard 4."

Claudia updates her notebook.

Vargast 3Ш I — 16Ш Guard 3
I 16Ш Guard 4
Firewind (Secondary Contestant)

"A grazing blow against you and Guard 4, but Guard 3 dodges your blows," says Claudia." Magatheus, your turn."

"The giant Selene moves to envelope the three Guards and drive them mad," says Rick.

Magatheus 8Ш2 — 16Ш Guard 5
-3 MOP = 5Ш2 — 16Ш Guard 6
-6 MOP = 2Ш2 — 16Ш Guard 7

"Guard 5 cancels one of your masteries."

Rick rolls a 1, and Claudia a 2, a critical versus a success bumped down to a failure.

Claudia says, "3 points against Guard 5. On to Guard 6, one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 13, and Claudia a 2, a failure bumped to a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, so 1 point against Guard 6. Now on to Guard 7. Again one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 5, and Claudia a 6, a failure bumped to a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "I roll higher, so 1 point against Magatheus."

Claudia updates her notebook.

Magatheus 8Ш2 I — III 16Ш Guard 5
-3 MOP = 5Ш2 — 16Ш Guard 6
-6 MOP = 2Ш2 — 16Ш Guard 7

Claudia describes the round; "One of Guard 5's eyeballs explodes in terror at the enveloping terror, while Guard 6 stumbles in its chill grip. Guard 7 avoids the horror and lands a blow with his wicked curved kopis."

"That Blue Moon Selene will certainly put the fear of Hell in them," says Rick.

"Herrox?" asks Claudia.

"I charge towards them like one of Poseidon's horses in those cool paintings," says David.

Herrox 15Ш — 16Ш Guard 8
-3 MOP = 12Ш — 16Ш Guard 9
Zortan (Supporter)

Claudia says, "Guard 8, masteries cancel."

David rolls a 16, and Claudia a 17, a failure versus a failure.

Claudia says, "I roll higher, a point against Herrox."

"Guard 9, masteries cancel."

David rolls a 4, and Claudia an 11, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "I roll higher, so that's another point against Herrox."

Claudia updates her notebook.

Herrox 15Ш II — 16Ш Guard 8
-3 MOP = 12Ш — 16Ш Guard 9
Zortan (Supporter)

"Two grazing blows against you, those guards easily avoided Herrox's charge," says Claudia.

"Oops," replies David. "Well Herrox is a shaman not a warrior after all."

Claudia asks, "Kris, what's Tharg doing?"

"He brings his maul down on the puny Lunar Guard," says Kris.

Tharg 8Ш — 16Ш Guard 10

**Lunar Minor Class Magician**

*This male magician from a Minor Class unit is an initiate of the Spindle Hag, whose cultists explore the diverse horrors and solaces concealed within the mysterious realms of darkness and insanity. He wears long robes, a goatskin cloak over his shoulders and ankle boots with long curved toes. His horned headdress is fashioned from goat horns and ears.*

"Guard 10, masteries cancel," says Claudia.

Kris rolls a 16, and Claudia an 8, a failure versus a success.

Claudia says, "Two points against Tharg. That Lunar is not so puny!"

Claudia updates her notebook.

Tharg 8Ⱡ II 16Ⱡ Guard 10

"The Guard dodges Tharg's maul and skillfully stabs the great troll in the gut with his kopis. One more point and Tharg's out," says Claudia.

"So Companions can only take three Resolution Points?" asks Kris.

"Yes," grins Claudia.

"Samastina and Orensulva are unengaged. Do they want to do anything?" asks Claudia.

"Samastina looks around, can she see what's happening with the bigger battle?

"Yes," replies Claudia, "But it's in the distance down the hill in the valley. It's a huge battle. Giant crimson-tinged shadowy forms loom over the fighting. It's not looking good for the rebels."

"I'm more concerned about what those magicians are up to", says Christine.

Claudia smiles and says, "They appear to be setting up a group of idols around a ritual area."

"Idols of what?" asks Christine. "I cast *Locate god in the Monomyth* from my Secrets of the God Learners grimoire.

"Okay, but spells are narrow yours says god not gods. It's a stretch, so the rules say - *it isn't possible at all*. Why don't you pick just one to identify?" asks Claudia.

Christine immediately replies, "The biggest or grandest looking one. My grimoire is at +1 off my Law Rune at 1Ⱡ, so 2Ⱡ."

"So your *Locate god in the Monomyth* 2Ⱡ versus the base difficulty of 15."

Christine rolls a 5, and Claudia a 12, a failure bumped to a success versus a success.

Claudia says "I roll higher, you've no idea what's the idol is. That leaves me only one thing left to do this round. I try to knock your Companions out of the contest."

"You can do that?" asks Neil.

"Yes, but only Companions and only in Extended Contests. Unengaged Guards can attempt this; your Companions oppose with a relevant ability. Magically augmented Moon arrows rain down on Firewind and Zortan," says Claudia.

Neil looks at Firewind's abilities, "It has to be the Winds of Fire 1Ⱡ, he's flaming at the moment."

"*Winds of Fire* 1Ⱡ versus a high difficulty of 1Ⱡ, masteries cancel," says Claudia.

Neil rolls a 17, and Claudia a 7, a failure versus a failure.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, the arrows burn up in the fire."

David says, "Zortan's not even out of his water skin, so he uses his basic Water elemental nature at 1Ⱡ."

"That's *Water elemental* 1Ⱡ versus a high difficulty of 1Ⱡ, masteries cancel."

David rolls a 14, and Claudia a 20, a failure versus a fumble.

Claudia says, "You get a Minor Victory, the water skin is magically protected by his Water powers, nothing gets through."

"Round 1 is over and no one has been knocked out of the contest yet," says Claudia.

**Round Two**

Claudia says, "Karganvale you've been grazed by Guard 1."

"He'll pay for that," says Franziska. "I'm going to try to chop off his head at the neck."

"Guard 1, masteries cancel."

Franziska rolls a 5, and Claudia a 10, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "I roll higher, another point against Karganvale. He taunts you, calling upon Yanafal Tarnils to defeat Humakt. On to Guard 2, and again masteries cancel."

Franziska rolls a 9, and Claudia a 2, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, a point against Guard 2."

"These guys are tough, I've no edge here and I am afraid they are going to slowly grind me down," Franziska says. Claudia updates her notebook.

Karganvale 12Ⱡ II 16Ⱡ Guard 1
-3 MOP = 9Ⱡ III 16Ⱡ Guard 2

Franziska says. "This is turning into a battle of endless cuts!"

**The God Learners**

*During the Second Age, a very powerful people came from the island of Jrustela. They were called the God Learners, and from their studies developed Jrusteli magicians and militarists that dominated the coastal lands of Glorantha for much of the Second Age, before nature sprang back and destroyed them. Despite their effective condemnation, the God Learners gave a coherency to the confusing cosmologies, and the Jrusteli understanding remained popular long after the Jrusteli demise.*

*The God Learners evolved the Mythical Synthesis Movement, an attempt to identify and define the gods, spirits, and other powers of the world, and arrange them into a coherent and knowable unity called the Monomyth. By doing this, the God Learners sought to reconstruct and impose their will upon the mythical realities of the God Time. In the process, they discovered that many religious contained remarkably similar myths and gods, even though the cultures had never met and were separated by oceans, mountains and languages. The God Learner Monomyth proved to be very popular, and eventually gained recognition (if not acceptance) in most civilized parts of the world.*

Claudia asks, "Neil?"

"Vargast continues towards the guards."

Claudia says, "OK, on to Guard 3. Masteries cancel."

Neil rolls a 3, and Claudia a 16, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "I roll higher, a point against Vargast. Guard 4, again masteries cancel."

Neil rolls a 12, and Claudia a 10, a failure versus a failure.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, so another point against Guard 4."

Claudia updates her notebook.

| | |
|---|---|
| Vargast 3Ш II | 16Ш Guard 3 |
| | III 16Ш Guard 4 |

Firewind (Secondary Contestant)

Neil says, "They're just going to wear us down with numbers. I've been very lucky so far, but unless something changes, I don't see how we can pull this off."

"Magatheus?" asks Claudia.

"My giant Blue Selene continues to fill them with horror," says Rick.

"Guard 5, one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 2, and Claudia a 17, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "Another 3 points against Guard 5. He drops his weapon, and runs away clutching his face and screaming. On to Guard 6, one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 13, and Claudia a 20, a failure bumped to a success versus a fumble.

Claudia says, "3 points against Guard 6, who starts screaming and frothing in terror. Now on to Guard 7. Again one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 11, and Claudia a 4, a failure bumped to a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, so 1 point against Guard 7."

Claudia updates her notebook, scores out Guard 5 and changes the values for the Multiple Opponent Penalty.

| | |
|---|---|
| Magatheus 8Ш2 I | ~~IIIII 16Ш Guard 5~~ |
| 8Ш2 | III 16Ш Guard 6 |
| -3 MOP = 5Ш2 | I 16Ш Guard 7 |

Rick exults and starts to sing:

*"I am the very model of a*
*modern Lunar sorcerer,*
*I've information vegetable, animal, and*
*minerer, (hey that's not a word!)*
*I know the kings of Aggar, and I*
*quote the fights historical*
*From Argentium to Boldhome,*
*in order categorical;*
*I'm very well acquainted, too,*
*with matters mathematical,*
*I understand equations, both the*
*simple and quadratical,*
*About binomial theorem I'm*
*teeming with lot o'news,*
*With many cheerful facts about the*
*square of the hypotenuse."*

Claudia and the other players clap and applaud. Claudia then says, "Herrox?"

"I need to do some damage here, my flood continues," says David.

"Guard 8, masteries cancel."

David rolls a 1, and Claudia a 17, a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "Three point against Guard 8. Guard 9, masteries cancel."

David rolls an 18, and Claudia a 12, a failure versus a success.

Claudia says, "Two points against Herrox."

Claudia updates her notebook.

| | |
|---|---|
| Herrox 15Ш IIII | III 16Ш Guard 8 |
| -3 MOP = 12Ш | 16Ш Guard 9 |

Zortan (Supporter)

"Herrox is going to be knocked out of the contest next round unless I do something," says David. "I'm going to get Zortan to assist in that last exchange."

"What's Zortan using to assist you?" asks Claudia.

"He bursts from his bag and washes over me with his *Healing Caress* of 1Ш," says David.

Claudia says, "As before, Assists begin at moderate difficulty and the Base Value table says that's currently 15. So 1Ш versus the base difficulty of 15."

David rolls a 5, and Claudia a 16, a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "That's a Minor Victory, the Assist Results table says we reduce Herrox's score by 2."

**Narrating Battles**

*The Battle of Auroch Hills is a good example of how to run a mass effort like a battle with the heroes as supporting contributors. Claudia decided the action around the heroes would be the decisive point in the battle - their success or failure would determine the result of the battle. Ancient warfare is ripe with examples of where actions on a single point determined the fate of the battle - this was often not where the dramatic breakthrough occurred, but an action that enabled that breakthrough to happen without disaster. Alexander the Great and his Royal Companions might have broken the Persian line at the Battle of Issus (333 BC), but it was the desperate struggle between Greek spearmen (on both sides) in the middle of the Pinarus River that made that possible.*

*This puts the heroes in the center of the action and keeps the Game Master from having to roll dice against herself. HeroQuest Glorantha is not a tactical skirmish game, and the Game Master should avoid the temptation to use it as such.*

Herrox 15Ⱳ II III 16Ⱳ Guard 8
-3 MOP = 12Ⱳ 16Ⱳ Guard 9
Zortan (Supporter)

"You feel refreshed and much less battered after Zortan's *Healing Caress*," says Claudia.

"That's much better," replies David

"Kris, what's Tharg doing this round?"

"Again he brings his maul down on the Lunar Guard," says Kris.

"Guard 10, masteries cancel."

Kris rolls a 2, and Claudia a 16, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "I roll higher, so 1 point against Tharg." Claudia updates her notebook.

Tharg 8Ⱳ III 16Ⱳ Guard 10

"Tharg crumples to the floor" says Claudia. "Your great troll is knocked out of the contest."

"Those Lunars must have magic that's good against trolls," says Kris.

Very likely," replies Claudia. "Yanafal Tarnils can do Darkness Rune Evocations."

"Samastina and Orensulva are still unengaged," says Claudia.

"Samastina is still watching the bigger battle," says Kris

"It's intensifying, some of the rebel units are falling back to higher ground," says Claudia. "The Lunars are pressing on with their numerical advantage."

"And the Field School magicians?" asks Christine.

"They've started a ritual, and a huge crackling void is opening in the middle of the circle of magicians and idols," says Claudia.

"I call on my Truth Rune at 1Ⱳ, to reveal to me what's going on," says Christine.

"I'm going to give you a situational modifier of +6 for reasons that may or may not become clear in a moment. So your *Truth* 7Ⱳ versus the base difficulty of 15."

Christine rolls an 8, and Claudia a 5, a failure bumped to a success versus a success; a Marginal Success.

Claudia says, "You feel ill and nauseated. There is something wrong in the cosmos – Chaos is entering the world."

Everyone looks horrified at Claudia.

Rick says, "It is obvious really – Claudia said it was the Black Moon Phase – the worst for Lunar magic – the Moon Rune can only augment during this phase. One of the magicians has permanently swapped his Moon Rune for the Chaos Rune. Anyone with a Moon Rune can do it, however in practice no one does. That gets them around the problem."

Cheerfully Claudia says, "And now I try to knock your companions out of the contest."

"This is just going from bad to worse," says Neil.

"Magically augmented Moon arrows are still raining down on Firewind and Zortan," says Claudia. "Same again?"

Neil and David nod.

Claudia says, "*Winds of Fire* 1Ⱳ versus a high difficulty of 1Ⱳ. Masteries cancel."

Neil rolls an 8, and Claudia a 3, a failure versus a failure.

Claudia says, "Again you roll higher, and the arrows burn in the fire."

"And now *Water elemental* 1Ⱳ versus a high difficulty of 1Ⱳ. Masteries cancel."

David rolls a 7, and Claudia a 3, a failure versus a failure.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, the arrows are washed away by his water."

"End of round 2. Tharg is down, but the rest of you are still in the battle," says Claudia.

**Round Three**

"As the Chaos Horror stumbles through from the void, there is a noticeable change in the air. A cool breeze causes Firewind to brighten. Small patches of snow on the Earth start to spontaneously melt. Karganvale," says Claudia, quickening the pace, "Guard 1, who you've never hit, is going to try to take you down. Masteries cancel."

Franziska rolls a 4, and Claudia a 19, a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "You score a 2 point blow against Guard 1."

"Guard 2, again masteries cancel."

Franziska rolls an 8, and Claudia an 18, a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "That's another 2 point blow. Guard 2 is knocked out of the contest."

Claudia updates her notebook.

**The partial liberation of the gods**

*Orlanth and Ernalda had been shackled in the Underworld since the fall of Whitewall, and the constellation called Orlanth's Ring, which regularly spiraled up the sky for seven days only to disappear for seven days before reappearing, had not appeared since then.*

*Across the continent of Genertela (and even beyond), many Orlanthi rituals culminated on Clayday/Disorder Week/Earth Season - the day of the battle. These rituals were not coordinated or planned to coincide, but like many Gloranthan magical events they just did. Some were minor, others, like the Quest of the Eleven Lights, King Broyan's heroquest, and the Battle of the Auroch Hills itself, were very dangerous and desperate indeed.*

*These actions partially liberated Orlanth and Ernalda. Those who participated in these rites (including the battle) were able to contact the gods and wield their magic, even though others could not.*

**Lunar College of Magic**

*A prominent superiority of the Lunar Army is their unique use of sorcerers shamans, priests, and Illuminates organized into permanent military units. The College of Magic is widely considered the decisive corps of the Lunar Army, and the primary reason for the Lunar Empire's military successes. Throughout Glorantha, every army is accompanied by its priests, or shamans, or by its sorcerers, but only Argrath's Sartar Magical Union managed to duplicate the Lunar tactic of combining all three.*

*Most magical units are assigned to the Lunar College of Magic, including, among others, the Field School of Magic, the Crater Makers, the Spell Archers, the Blue Moon School, the Seven from Vistur and the Crimson Bat. The notorious Broo Regiment and the dreaded Vampire Legion are assigned to the College of Magic when mobilized by the Red Emperor. The largest contingent of the Lunar College of Magic is the Field School of Magic, with its 4 Minor and 2 Major classes (some 1200 magicians in total).*

Karganvale 12Ⱳ II
-3 MOP = 9Ⱳ

II 16Ⱳ Guard 1
~~IIIII 16Ⱳ Guard 2~~

Franziska says, "I slice through both of them in a sweeping arc. Guard 2 retreats nursing his nearly severed arm."

"Neil," starts Claudia.

"Did you say there's a wind!" says Neil excitedly.

"Yes, Firewind is fanned by it and brightens noticeably," she continues. "You can also breath easier. You feel Orlanth returning."

Neil booms "**I am the Thunderer!**" and then continues, "I'm going to do my *Thunderer* feat at 12Ⱳ and destroy these Lunars with the crushing Great Sound."

"So this is a New Conditions, New Difficulty situation, you're changing your ability in the contest, what exactly does Vargast do?" asks Claudia.

Neil reads through the Thunderer feat and says, "I call upon the winds to come and bear me up, and ask the wind that is fire to shroud my body and bring down the Great Crushing Sound. I augment my feat with Firewind who is my fire that is wind."

"Awesome," says Claudia, "So Firewind's Air elemental rating is now 4Ⱳ versus the base difficulty of 15."

Neil rolls a 2, and Claudia a 17, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "A Major Victory, the Augment Results table gives you +9. However Firewind is already out and flaming, counting as prep for your feat, so I'm going to increase it to +Ⱳ. Add in your *Faithful to Orlanth +6* as well, and that gives you 18Ⱳ2. The difficulty drops a level to 2Ⱳ. As the wind catches the Guards' faces, you see them pale with worry."

"I unleash the crushing *Great Sound* against all the remaining guards we are fighting" says Neil.

"I'm going to say that as this feat is a Thunderclap and covers an area and it allows you to ignore the Multiple Opponent Penalty. Remember this is a new contest for all of them and the points scored against them by other players don't count."

Claudia starts a new section of her notebook so as not to mix the multiple contests up. She starts a new list for Vargast.

Vargast 18Ⱳ2

2Ⱳ Guard 1
II 2Ⱳ Guard 3
II 2Ⱳ Guard 4
2Ⱳ Guard 6
2Ⱳ Guard 7
2Ⱳ Guard 8
2Ⱳ Guard 9
2Ⱳ Guard 10

"One of your masteries gets cancel on each of them," says Claudia. "That leaves you with 18Ⱳ against a 2."

"Guard 1," she starts.

Neil rolls a 1, and Claudia a 3, a critical versus a failure bumped down to a fumble.

Claudia says, "Wow. Complete Victory, he's knocked out of the contest."

"Wow!" says Franziska.

"Guard 3," says Claudia.

Neil rolls a 7, and Claudia a 20, a success bumped to a critical versus a fumble.

Claudia says, "Another Complete Victory, another knocked out of the contest."

"Orlanth rocks!" says Kris.

"Guard 4," says Claudia.

Neil rolls a 15, and Claudia a 7, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "Major Victory, 3 points against Guard 4. You've already scored 2 against him, so he's out."

"Guard 6."

Neil rolls a 9, and Claudia a 14, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "3 points against Guard 6. He's not quite out."

"Guard 7."

Neil rolls an 8, and Claudia an 18, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "3 points against Guard 7. Again, he's not quite out."

"Guard 8."

Neil rolls a 1, and Claudia a 20, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "You don't get a more Complete Victory than that! Guard 8 is knocked out of the contest."

"What a waste of a critical," says Neil.

"I'm not complaining!" replies David.

"Guard 9."

Neil rolls a 19, and Claudia a 4, a failure bumped to a success versus a failure.

Neil says, "I spend a Hero Point to bump to a critical."

Claudia says, "3 points against Guard 9."

"Guard 10."

Neil rolls a 15, and Claudia a 5, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "3 points against Guard 10."

Claudia updates her notebook.

| | |
|---|---|
| Vargast 18Ш2 | ~~IIII 2Ш Guard 1~~ |
| | ~~IIIIII 2Ш Guard 3~~ |
| | ~~IIII 2Ш Guard 4~~ |
| | III 2Ш Guard 6 |
| | III 2Ш Guard 7 |
| | ~~IIII 2Ш Guard 8~~ |
| | III 2Ш Guard 9 |
| | III 2Ш Guard 10 |

"A huge peal of thunder smashes into the Guards and Magicians and echoes across the hilltop!" says an excited Neil.

"You start to hear other claps of thunder across the valley," adds Claudia, "and amongst them cheers."

"Magatheus, your turn," says Claudia.

"The giant Selene envelopes their heads to give them visions of madness," says Rick.

"Guard 6, one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 4, and Claudia a 19, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "3 points against Guard 6, who collapses, he's been knocked out of the contest."

"Guard 7, one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 13, and Claudia a 20, a failure bumped to a success versus a fumble.

Claudia says, "Another fumble, this die is rubbish. 3 points against Guard 7. His face is starting to contort in fear and terror."

Claudia updates her notebook.

| | |
|---|---|
| Magatheus 8Ш2 I | ~~IIIIII 16Ш Guard 5~~ |
| 8Ш2 | ~~IIIIII 16Ш Guard 6~~ |
| -3 MOP = 5Ш2 | ~~III 16Ш Guard 7~~ |

"I want to disengage to move the Selene to fight the chaos monster" says Rick.

"Sure," says Claudia, "that happens next round."

"Herrox, your turn."

"Okay, the wind is back, so this round I'm really going to smash them," says David.

"Guard 8 is down Guard 9, masteries cancel."

David rolls a 15, and Claudia a 12, a success versus a success.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, a point against Guard 9."

Claudia updates her notebook.

| | |
|---|---|
| Herrox 15Ш I | ~~III 16Ш Guard 8~~ |
| 15Ш I | I 16Ш Guard 9 |

Zortan (Supporter)

"Kris, the Earth is coming alive again under Samastina's feet, what's she doing?"

"As I'm unengaged, can I start a separate contest against the Lunar Magicians?"

"Sure, how do you want to frame the contest?"

"I want to break their ritual by having the Earth open up and swallow them."

"Sounds good, what ability are you using?" asks Claudia.

"I've got *Have the Earth Open Up and Swallow Things* +1 off my Earth Rune 4Ш for 5Ш, and I'll augment the Earth moving with my Movement Rune at 13."

"Even better," says Claudia. "Roll your Movement Rune at 13 versus the base difficulty of 15."

**Lunar Major Class Magician**

*This female magician from a Major Class unit is an Illuminated cultist of the Red Goddess, wielding sanity-warping secrets of the cosmos. She is one of the elite of the Empire, responsible only to the Dean of the Lunar College of Magic and the Red Emperor himself.*

*She wears extremely ornate clothing that shows her status and her power. She is mounted on a horse and carries a staff with a glowing red stone taken from the Red Moon attached to it.*

**University Guard**
*The soldiers of this guard regiments are Yanafal Tarnils (War God of the Lunar Empire) cultists sworn to defend the magicians of the Field School of Magic. University Guards wear a lamellar shirt of bronze and a bronze helmet. They carry a kopis, a small round shield, and a bow.*

*The University Guards fight as Light Infantry; they are fast moving strike troops and skirmishers, not hoplites. Their purpose is to defend the magicians of the Field School, not to fight in regular formation.*

Kris rolls a 1, and Claudia a 12, a critical versus a success!

Claudia says, "You've got to be kidding me! A Minor Victory, the Augment Results table gives you +6, added to 5Ш gives a total of 11Ш." Claudia adds another new section to her notebook beneath Vargast's.

Samastina 11Ш 2Ш Lunar Ritual

"Like Vargast you get the same difficulty. The Magicians' ritual is complicated by the Earth awakening. Their heroquesters might be in difficulty after this."

"What heroquesters?" asks Christine.

"They must have sent them after Broyan, who's now unchained Orlanth and awoken Ernalda," adds Rick.

"No one is out of danger yet," says Claudia. "Okay Kris, masteries cancel."

Kris rolls a 16, and Claudia a 15, a failure versus a failure.

"I spend a Hero Point bumping my failure to a success", says Kris.

Claudia says, "So that's 2 points against the Lunar ritual."

Samastina 11Ш II 2Ш Lunar Ritual

"The Earth starts to ripple and move beneath them," says Kris.

"Orensulva is still unengaged," says Claudia.

"Orensulva's not really suited to this kind of situation, I think it's time to use some of my unspent points. I'd like a new spell for my Secrets of the God Learners grimoires – Command Chaos. Probably should have the Truth Rune and Chaos Rune," says Christine.

"Uh, you sure about that?" asks Claudia.

"Yes", she replies. "I want to be able to turn Chaos back against these Lunars and use it against them. It doesn't make me Chaotic, it's - **Command**. Forcing a local manifestation of a Rune to act in a specific manner in accordance with its nature."

"Yes, but remember not everyone may see it that way," adds Claudia.

"I can live with that. This God Learner grimoire is not ever going to make me popular amongst other scholars," retorts Christine. "I'm going to try to turn the Chaos monster back on the Lunars to fight them. The grimoires is at 2Ш and I'd like to augment it with my Truth Rune's knowledge of obscure lore about commanding Chaos beings at 1Ш."

"Obscure lore about commanding Chaos beings is very obscure even for Lhankor Mhy, I'll let you have that at a stretch, so 15," says Claudia. "So your Truth Rune at 15 versus the base difficulty of 15."

Christine rolls an 8, and Claudia a 19, a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "A Minor Victory, the Augment Results table gives you +6, added to 2Ш gives a total of 8Ш."

Orensulva 8Ш 2Ш Command Chaos

"The monster is unaffected by the rising wind as it doesn't care, but the Magicians who are controlling it are now being disrupted by the wind and earth movements so it's still a High Difficulty," says Claudia. "Masteries cancel."

Christine rolls a 16, and Claudia a 19, a failure versus a failure.

Claudia says "I roll higher so a point against Orensulva."

"Hmm, I'm not very good at this control skill am I - the Lunars have clearly pushed my magic back at me and I'm a bit unbalanced by that" says Christine.

Orensulva 8Ш I 2Ш Command Chaos

"Finally it's time to knock your companions out of the contest," says Claudia. "Magically augmented Moon arrows are still raining down. Firewind is now part of your feat so I say he gets to use your 18Ш2 versus a high difficulty of 1Ш with one of your Masteries canceling."

Neil rolls a 9, and Claudia a 19, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "Again, the arrows are incinerated in the fire. And David, Water elemental 1Ш versus a high difficulty of 1Ш. Masteries cancel."

David rolls an 8, and Claudia a 2, a failure versus a failure.

Claudia says, "You roll higher, the arrows are washed away by his water."

Claudia summarizes, "Okay, End of round 3, Big changes as the Lunar Guards are dropping like flies. Vargast has unleashed his thunder, Samastina is trying to swallow the Lunars, Magatheus is going for a Selene versus a Chaos monster fight, and Orensulva is struggling to control the Chaos monster."

**Round Four**

"Karganvale has no opponents, thanks to Vargast's *Great Crushing Sound*," says Claudia.

"I hold back and assist where needed," replies Franziska.

"Is Vargast continuing his spree Neil?" asks Claudia.

"Of course!" says Neil excitedly.

"One of your masteries is canceled on all of them," says Claudia

"Guard 7," she starts.

Neil rolls a 4, and Claudia a 12, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "That's 3 more points, he's knocked out of the contest."

"Guard 9."

Neil rolls a 1, and Claudia a 6, a critical versus a failure bumped down to a fumble.

Claudia says, "Complete Victory. That's 5 points against Guard 9, he's knocked out of the contest."

"Guard 10."

Neil rolls an 18, and Claudia a 7, a success bumped to a critical versus a failure.

Claudia says, "3 more points against Guard 10, he's out of the contest. There's no one left!" Claudia updates her notebook.

Vargast 18Ш2 II ~~IIIII 2Ш Guard 7~~ ~~IIIIIII 2Ш Guard 9~~ ~~IIIII 2W Guard 10~~

"A final peal of thunder smashes down upon the Guards and magicians," says Neil.

"Magatheus, your Guards are all down," says Claudia.

"The Selene envelopes the Chaos Horror," says Rick.

"Okay, one of your masteries is cancelled."

Rick rolls a 1, and Claudia a 17, a critical versus a failure bumped to fumble.

Claudia says, "Complete Victory against the Monster, knocked straight out of the contest."

Claudia updates her notebook.

Magatheus 8Ш2 I ~~IIIII 16Ш Monster~~

"Phew," says Rick.

"Herrox, you have no opponents," says Claudia.

"I'll hold back and assist where needed as well," says David.

"Okay Kris," says Claudia. "It's Samastina's turn. Masteries cancel."

Kris rolls an 18, and Claudia a 5, a failure versus a failure.

"I spend another Hero Point bumping my failure to a success," says Kris.

Claudia says, "That's another 2 points against the Lunar ritual."

Samastina 11Ш IIII 2Ш Lunar Ritual

"The Earth is shaking around them," says Kris.

"Christine, the monster is gone. What do you want to do?" asks Claudia.

"Orensulva writes notes about what has just happened," replies Christine.

"The Magically augmented Moon arrows have stopped as the Guards are in serious trouble, so no attacks on you companions," says Claudia. "So the end of round is nearly the big finale, we just need to finish off Samastina and the ritual in the final round."

**Round 5**

"Vargast will start a contest against the magicians as well, there's a good chance I can knock them out of the contest," says Neil.

"Yes, but it is Samastina's big contest, so she goes first," says Claudia. "Okay Kris, masteries cancel."

Kris rolls a 3, and Claudia a 4, a success versus a failure.

Claudia says, "A final 2 points against the Lunar ritual, it's knocked out of the contest."

Samastina 11Ш IIIIII 2Ш Lunar Ritual

"The Earth crashes down on the magicians, their trappings and idols, swallowing them and dragging them beneath the surface," says Kris.

Claudia says, "At this point, the veil between the worlds is rent. King Broyan and his companions have returned!"

Kris says, "Samastina rushes to the king and tells him that the gods have awakened, but the king is needed to lead the Heortlings to victory in the battle below."

Claudia says, "The king tells Samastina he will not forget her deeds here and that he is deep in her debt. He then rallies those who can still fight and leads them into the fray. Who joins him? But before you decide, we should sort out any effects from this fight," Claudia says.

"First Karganvale and Guards 1 and 2. Karganvale took a total of 2 points and is Hurt, –3 penalty to appropriate abilities until the end of the scene. The losers add one to their totals, so Guard 1 took 2 points from you and 5 from Vargast for a total of 8: Dying. Guard 2 took 5 from you, so 6: Injured."

"I will send all the Lunar dead on to their rightful Hell," says Franziska.

"All of the Guards have received at least 5 points against them plus the loosing bonus makes that 6. So all are at least Injured, and Karganvale can finish them off."

Claudia adds, "Vargast also took 2 points and is Hurt."

"Magatheus took a point and so is just dazed. Herrox and Orensulva also took a point each and so are dazed as well," add Claudia.

"Samastina took nothing, and achieved a Major Victory over the Lunar Magicians."

"Finally Tharg took 3 points and is Hurt, he can be patched up for the next adventure."

Neil says, "We should follow Broyan into battle." Franziska and Kris enthusiastically agree.

Claudia says, "Vargast doesn't have much of an option. He is in the middle of a feat where he is the Thunderer. It says: His raging storms swept all before him until his wife tamed his anger with her love. You are Orlanth, you can't stop until Ernalda tames you."

"What!" says Neil. "Surely I just stop?"

"Sadly not," says Claudia. "Feats have a beginning, middle and an end. You are still in the middle. If you suddenly stop you'll get a penalty against future use of your Air Rune. Kris, do you want Samastina to pull him out of the feat?"

"Absolutely not," she says. "Vargast should fly out onto the battlefield and crush that army. He's much more use there. Besides he has shown himself to be more than a match for what the Lunars can throw against us."

Franziska says, "Nothing can keep Karganvale from this fight! To Death!"

"Anything else anyone wants to do before you all join the battle?"

Rick says, "I'd like to cement the Selene as a Follower for a Hero Point."

"Okay," says Claudia. "Write Selene 13 as a Retainer on your sheet. With that you charge with King Broyan into the thick of the fray."

Kris says, "Broyan owes me a debt? I want to cement that with a Hero Point. I've got a plan for how I am going to use that!"

## Epilogue

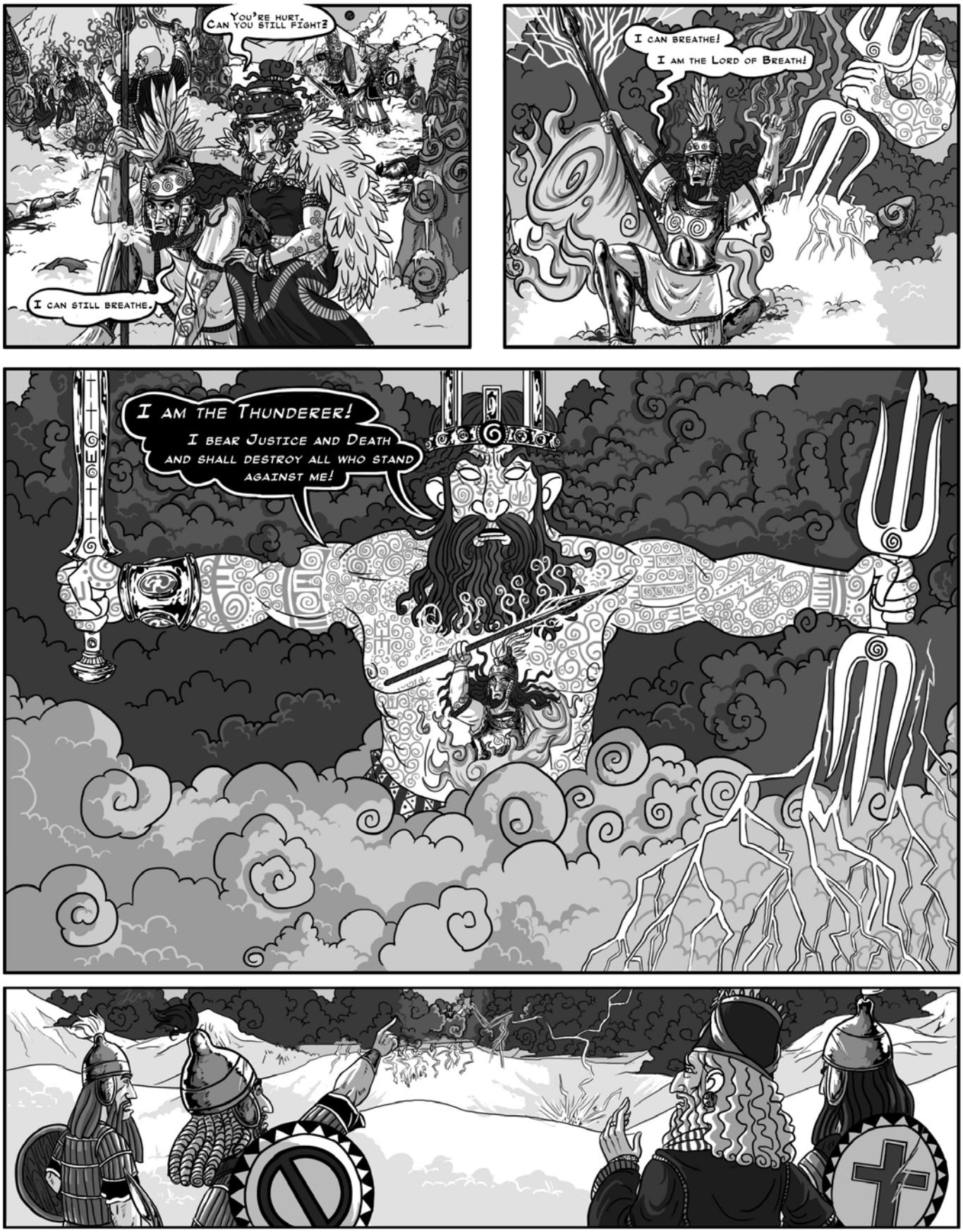
The Battle of the Auroch Hills ends up being a decisive victory for the Heortlings. The appearance of King Broyan and the heroes brings cheer to the Heortlings and panics the Lunar soldiers so badly that they break ranks and run. Some of the best units in the Lunar Army are destroyed and the whole of Hendrikiland rises in rebellion.

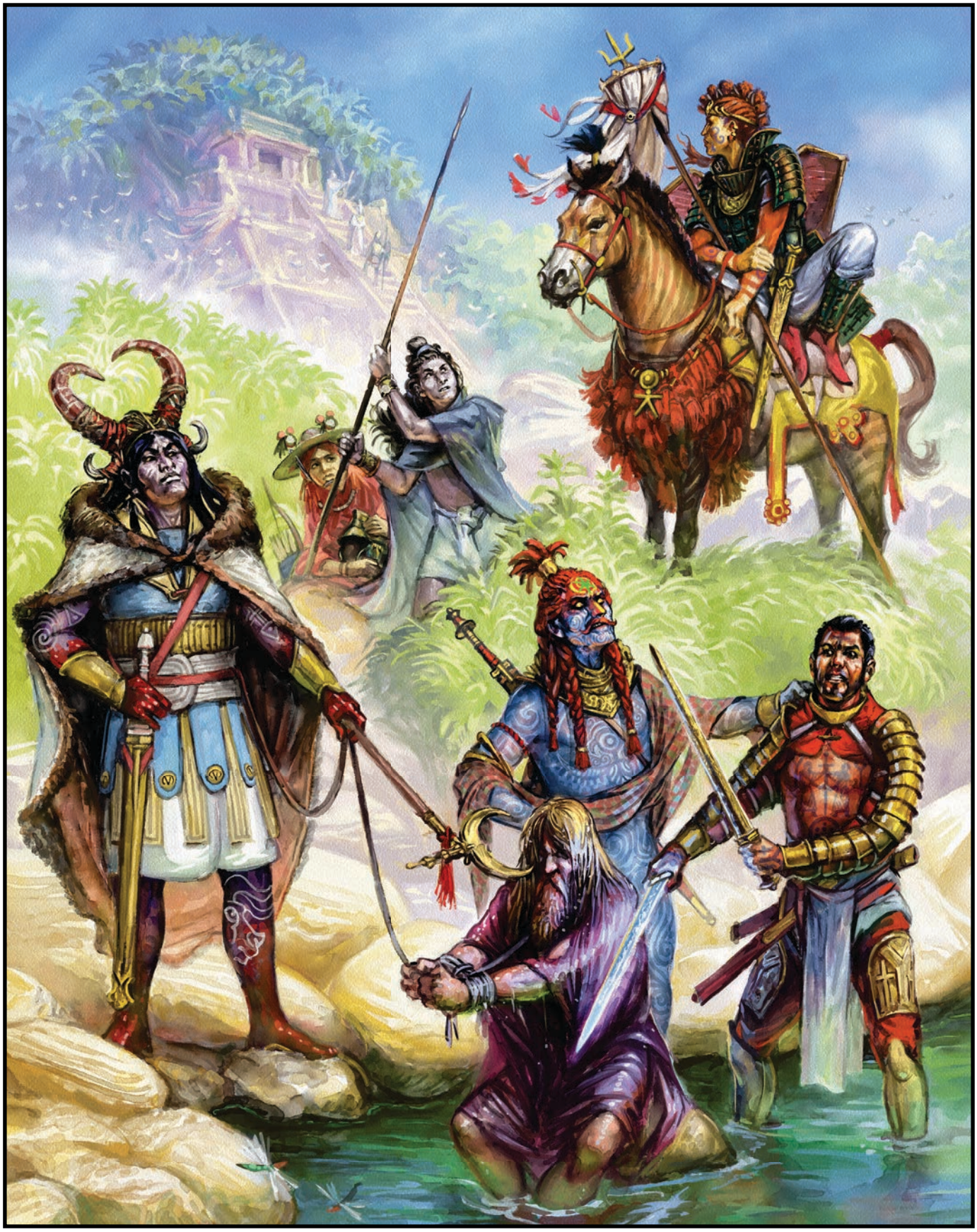
After the battle, King Broyan offers his thanks to the heroes. At the victory celebration, Samastina informs the King of the Hendrikings how he is going to make good on his debt to her: "You are going to help me become Queen of Esrolia!"

**Three Lights and then Eleven**

*A week after the Battle of the Auroch Hills, Orlanth's Ring had still not emerged from the Stormgate. Instead, three new stars appeared where Orlanth's Ring should have been. These new stars followed the path of Orlanth's Ring up the Sky Dome.*

*Orlanth was fully liberated in Sea Season 1624, during the Battle of Pennel. During the climax of that battle, Orlanth's Ring, now comprised of eleven stars instead of eight, triumphantly appeared out of the Stormgate and rapidly climbed a third of the way up the Sky Dome until it resumed its normal course. Orlanth was completely freed from his fetters and the wrathful Storm God sought vengeance on those who would have imprisoned him. Ernalda returned to her great temple in Esrolia and blessed all who had aided her with fertility and wealth.*


You're hurt. Can you still fight?
I can still breathe.
I can breathe!
I am the Lord of Breath!
I am the Thunderer!
I bear Justice and Death and shall destroy all who stand against me!



## Sartar Free Army

A group of Argrath's victorious warriors present their high-ranking Lunar captive from the city of New Pavis at the Praxian oasis of Pimper's Block. From left to right, counter-clockwise:

**Storm Bull Berserk:** This Bison Rider woman is initiated into the cult of the Storm Bull. She is tattooed with the runes of Air, Death, and Anti-Chaos (aka Eternal Battle) - she also has a white tattoo of a stylized White Bull (this is a Praxian secret society of great magical and military importance). She's painted her hands and feet red with blood.

She wears a leather helmet with two horns. She wears armor taken from the defeated Lunars - a hardened leather linothorox and bronze greaves and vambraces. Over all of this, she wears a bison hide wrap-around cloak.

**Sartarite Warlock:** This male warrior-mystic has long red-brown hair, that has practically formed dread-locks and is bound up in a top-knot. He is naked and covered in tattoos. Most prominent is the large stylized Thunderbird on his chest and abdomen. This tattoo shows that he is a member of the Eaglebrown Warlocks, a powerful magic secret society. The rest of his skin is painted with countless bright blue swirls. These swirls are his magical armor. His forehead is painted red with a yellow Air Rune painted over it. In the center of the Air Rune is a green six-pointed star.

Finally, he carries a bronze sword in a scabbard.

**Lunar captive:** The prisoner is Jotaran Longsword, who fortune has not treated well. Once the City Administrator of Pavis for the Lunar Empire, now he is an enslaved prisoner. The prisoner has unkempt blonde hair and a ragged beard. He wears a bronze slave collar around his neck and wears only a long solied robe.

**Humakti Sword Brother:** This male warrior has short-cropped dark hair and beard stubble. He has kohl around his black eyes. He is a master swordsman of the cult of Humakt the Death God and has a prominent tattoo marking him as a member of the Sword Brothers (a secret society famed for its master of Death and swordsmanship). The tattoo depicts a sword being held by two men, one on each side. Finally he has a tattoo of seven dots arranged in a circle (this shows that he has traveled into the Underworld from a Humakti holy place).

The Sword Brother wears bronze greaves and wears a bronze manica arm guards on each arm. He is not wearing a helmet. He carries two extremely well made (and sharp) bronze swords.

**Pavis Royal Guardswoman:** This woman has almost golden skin, and has blue eyes and red hair. She is tattooed with the Runes of Fire, Movement, and Man. She wears scale armor and is armed with a nomad bow, a kontos, and a bronze sword. She carries a standard of the Pavis Royal Guard.

**Note:** her zebra is actually a horse that has magically been given zebra coloring and markings.

**Pavis County Militia:** This man is clean-shaven in the style of Argrath, and wears only a skirt and a cloak. He is carrying the kontos of the Pavis Royal Guardswoman.

**Real City Militia:** This golden-skinned woman is from Zebra Fort in the Big Rubble. She wears an ornate broad-brimmed hat and is armed with a bow. She carries the helmet of the Pavis Royal Guardswoman.

# Tactical Options

Players who want more tactical choices in an extended contest can use these options.

## Risky Gambits

During an extended contest, a hero can attempt to force a conflict to an early resolution by making a risky gambit. If the hero trying a risky gambit wins the exchange, he lodges an additional 1 Resolution Point against his opponent. However, if the hero trying the risky gambit loses the exchange, his opponent lodges an additional 2 Resolution Points against him.

If both contestants engage in a risky gambit, the winner lodges an additional 2 Resolution Points against the loser.

Opting for a risky gambit should never be a purely mechanical request. Specify what you're doing that's so risky, and what bad consequences are likely to result if your gambit fails. If your proposed negative repercussions seem weak, your Game Master will worsen them when narrating consequences to match the actual outcome.

Supporting characters should use risky gambits sparingly, either as a response to a hero risky gambit, or when the Game Master feels that an extended contest has begun to drag.

## Defensive Responses

In an extended contest, a hero can make a defensive response, lowering the number of Resolution Points lodged against the losing party to an exchange. If the hero wins the exchange, the number of Resolution Points lodged against his opponent decreases by 1. If the hero loses, he lodges 2 fewer Resolution Points against his opponent. The total number of Resolution Points assigned by an exchange is never less than 0; there is no such thing as a negative Resolution Point.

Defensive responses are useful primarily in group extended contests, when you find yourself waiting for rescue as you struggle to hold your own against a stronger opponent.

Although it's always best to vividly narrate your actions, defensive responses can be hard to distinctively describe. Try to picture what's going on and paint a verbal picture. Are you hunkering down? Running away? Hiding behind your shield? In an argument, you might be obfuscating or changing the subject.

Because they allow inferior opponents to prolong extended contests, use defensive responses for supporting characters only when it makes a situation more exciting—which is to say, almost never.

## In a Nutshell: Choosing the Right Method

In an improvised story created with the collaboration of your players, it may not always be easy to gauge the weight to grant to a conflict resolution. Ideally, neither you nor the players know exactly where the story is headed. Sometimes you'll know instinctively which method to use, but when in doubt, the following general rule is your first resort:

*The degree of emotional investment the players have in a conflict determines the complexity of the resolution method used to resolve it.*

If, after you remind yourself of this, you're still stumped, break it down further with the following list of eight questions:

1. Do the players show little emotional investment in the outcome of the conflict? If so, consider a simple contest, or even an automatic success. If you expected this to be an important obstacle, but the players are lukewarm to it, you probably haven't established its stakes as sufficiently vital to them. You may want to improvise your way out of the current scene, allow them to find out why it should matter to them, and then return to your planned larger conflict later. Even better, figure out what the players really want to pursue instead of your planned conflict, and build a set of suitably entertaining obstacles to take them to that goal.
2. If the hero fails, can you think of no interesting resulting obstacle to branch toward? Use an automatic success, possibly disguising it as a simple contest (see page 63). Failed results are interesting when they build tension, which can then be released when the heroes achieve a success on the Pass/Fail Cycle. A failed result which results in a boring or annoying consequence deflates tension. Avoid staging conflicts that lead to tension-killing failures.
3. Would it seem peculiar for the hero to fail? If so, use an automatic success. Failure can seem peculiar when its results would be comic in what is meant to be a serious scene or when no equivalent character in fiction would ever fail to overcome so petty an obstacle. Failure at minor tasks, especially those directly related to a hero's defining ability, may seem out of character, and thus peculiar.
4. Is only the player directly involved emotionally invested in the outcome? Use a simple contest.
5. Are the stakes high for everyone? Use an extended contest.
6. Are the stakes low? Use a simple contest, if not an automatic success.
7. Will the outcome change the hero's circumstances, or long-established facts of the world, forever? Use an extended contest.
8. Have you already used a couple of longer contests during the current session? Use a simple contest. If this seems unthinkable, due to the great stakes involved, consider adjusting your pacing so that the extended contest occurs at the top of the next session. If, on the other hand, you have the time and everyone seems excited to go, use the extended contest.

**All of these questions can be rephrased as:**

> Can I get away with doing it more simply? If you can, do it.

### Target Numbers of 0 or Less

If penalties reduce a target number to 0 or less, any attempt to use it automatically results in a Complete Defeat. The hero must find another way to achieve his aim.

# Modifiers & Augments

This section contains additional information on modifiers. Modifiers add or subtract from a hero's final target number. Positive modifiers are called bonuses; negative modifiers are called penalties.

Bonuses, may raise an ability high enough to gain a mastery, in which case the hero gets the bumps up or down a mastery would normally supply.

Penalties, may lower an ability to the point where it loses one or more masteries. In this case, the hero loses the bumps up or down he would normally get.

Modifiers should only be used to alter a hero's target number to reflect unusual circumstances he helped to create, or has some control over. Unusual circumstances primarily affecting opponents result

in modifiers to their abilities. If an unusual situation applies to an obstacle, change the difficulty number. (As you'll see in the section on assigning difficulty levels on page 113, the best practice is to decide how difficult a task ought to be dramatically, choose a difficulty, and then, if necessary, invent modifying circumstances to account for any unusual or changed degree of difficulty). As modifiers complicate bookkeeping, it's always preferable to fold them into a difficulty whenever you can.

## Specific Ability Bonuses

Because players get to name their own abilities, a tension exists between the vivid, specific ability descriptions that make for fun and memorable heroes, and the dully non-specific ability names that increase the number of actions they can logically attempt. The system rewards creative and specific ability choices over all-encompassing abilities by awarding Specific Ability Bonuses.

When you contest against an opponent whose ability is less specific to the situation at hand than your own, you gain either a +3 or +6 modifier, with the higher modifier reflecting a larger gap between the specificity of the two abilities.

Broader abilities are penalized not to maintain a balance against the Game Master's world, but within the group, so that colorful choices are rewarded. Accordingly, when heroes contest against abstract forces, the Game Master uses the abilities of the other heroes as a benchmark of specificity. If another member of the group has a somewhat more applicable ability than the one you're using, you take a –3 penalty to your attempt. If the ability is vastly more applicable, you take a –6 penalty to your attempt.

This rule applies whether or not that hero is also using the same ability in a parallel contest. The hero being used as a benchmark needn't even be present during the current scene.

The ability to which yours is compared must share a common origin or general theme with it.

This rule is meant to apply only to obvious cases. Because they rest on language interpretation rather than math, they come down to gut instinct. If you can't decide between a modifier of 3 and a modifier of 6, default to the 3. If you can't make an easy snap judgment, the modifier is 0.

## Stretches

When you propose an action using an ability that seems completely inappropriate, the Game Master rules it impossible. If you went ahead and tried it anyway, you'd get a Complete Failure - but you won't, because that would be silly.

In some cases, though, your proposed match-up of action and ability is only somewhat implausible. A successful attempt with it wouldn't completely break the illusion of fictional reality - just stretch it a bit. If you saw the same scene in a book or movie, you might smile a little at the convenience of it all, but still remain engaged with the story.

Using a somewhat implausible ability is known as a **stretch**. If your Game Master deems an attempt to be a stretch, you suffer a -6 penalty to your target number. Further, any major or complete victories you might score are instead treated as minor victories.

A strong explanation can turn an implausible action into a mere stretch.

The definition of stretch is elastic, depending on the type of campaign. All sorts of crazy stunts ought to be possible in a campaign where the heroes are all high-flying draconic mystics. Conversely, even common cinematic conceits ought to be impossible in a realistic and gritty campaign of desperate adventurers eking out an existence as bandits in the Big Rubble.

Game Masters may allow stretches in contests for the same reason authors and directors do: to keep the story moving. If they disallow an action as implausible during one session, they can still reserve the right to rule it a stretch later on - provided they do some fancy justifying to explain the apparent internal contradiction.

Game Masters should not impose stretch penalties on action descriptions that add flavor and variety to a scene, but do not fundamentally change what the hero can do with his ability. These make the scene more fun but don't really gain any advantage, much less an unfair one, for the player.

## Augments

An augment is a bonus a hero gets to his target number as a result of a prior contest. This can be either a contest he took part in, or one performed by someone else, most likely a hero. Unlike the case of a Benefit of Victory, which is a side effect of a contest conducted for another reason, an augment contest is conducted for the sole purpose of gaining a bonus.

To grant an augment to a hero in an upcoming contest, you engage in a simple contest against the Augment Value found on the Base Value table (see page 113). Together with the Game Master, you frame the contest, making it clear how your action will assist the recipient (who might be you, or another hero).

In order to work, an augment attempt must be entertaining and memorable. The Game Master decides whether your description is entertaining, using the following criteria:

**Does it elicit an excited or emotional response?** If the rest of the group reacts to your description with obvious enjoyment—laughing, sincerely applauding, sitting forward in their seats, riffing on what you've just suggested, you have objectively proven it entertaining. This criterion trumps all others.

**Does it illuminate character?** Does your action reveal or confirm something about your hero, or your relations with the augment's intended recipient? If it does, without being tediously repetitive, your augment works.

**Does it create suspense?** If your augment attempt puts you at genuine risk—physical or otherwise—it will invest the group more heavily in your success, and thus deserves a chance to work.

**Does it help define Glorantha?** If your augment attempt reveals something about the setting or about how magic works it deserves a chance to work.

At first glance, it may seem that this rule puts the Game Master in the uncomfortable position of critiquing player performance. In practice, players can be counted on to step up to the creative challenge, and will, after a few tries, learn to propose entertaining augments.

Further, Game Masters should work collaboratively with players, using the "yes, and" principle (see page 130) to suggest ways that might make a mundane or repetitive suggestion into an entertaining action.

If the Game Master accepts the augment, you engage in a simple contest, and consult the Augment Results table. On any Victory there is a Bonus, and there is a small chance that on a Defeat, the recipient receives a penalty.

**AUGMENT RESULTS**

| Success Level | Bonus |
|---|---|
| Complete Victory | +Ш |
| Major Victory | +9 |
| Minor Victory | +6 |
| Marginal Victory | +3 |
| Marginal Defeat | +0 |
| Minor Defeat | +0 |
| Major Defeat | +0 |
| Complete Defeat | –3 |

**You get only one chance to receive an augment on any given contest.** Failure does not allow other augment attempts.

Augments can, however, combine with other modifiers, including those from benefits of victory and from plot augments.

It is impossible to augment an augment roll.

Augments last for the duration of a single contest, whether simple or extended. The story's internal logic will dictate whether a given augment has to be used right away (and is useless if the recipient is somehow delayed or interrupted), or whether the recipient can deploy it at will. In some cases, Game Masters may rule that an augment intended for one situation can be used for another.

## Quick Augments

Although some players like the uncertainty of rolling for augments, these rolls don't advance the story, and can slow down the game a bit. Game Masters may choose to run their game with calculated augments: divide the augmenting ability by 5 and round up.

All the other rules of augments apply.

Obviously the mathematical result isn't the same as for rolled augments. This isn't a problem - the difference is small, and you can take it into account when determining difficulty. (In fact, you could have your players divide by 10 if it's faster for them). But don't mix calculated and rolled augments in the same game.

**Situational Modifiers**

*Game Masters may also impose modifiers when, given the description of the current situation, believability demands that a hero should face a notable advantage or disadvantage. During an extended contest, they should typically last for a single exchange, and reflect clever or foolish choices by the hero. Assess modifiers of +6, +3, –3, or –6. Modifiers of less than 3 don't exert enough statistical effect to be worth the bother. Those higher than 6 give the situational modifier a disproportionate role in determining results.*

## In a Nutshell: Augments

An action that qualifies as an augment:

*Elicits an emotional response; or*
*Illustrates character; or*
*Creates suspense; or*
*Reveals something about Glorantha.*

Roll a simple contest, against the Augment Value found on the Base Value table. Moderate Difficulty or calculate a Quick Augment (Game Master's preference).

## Plot Augments

A plot augment is earned by overcoming a particular plot obstacle created by the Game Master. The magnitude of the plot augment is +3, +6, +9, or +Ш. The more challenging the plot obstacle, the higher the augment.

Unlike normal augments, plot augments probably require the heroes to succeed at a number of simple contests. They may fail a few, but still triumph in the end to overcome the obstacle. Some plot augments might be available simply through clever and interesting roleplaying, without a die roll in sight.

Game Masters introduce plot augments so that it is obvious that overcoming one obstacle will grant an advantage in a later one.

Player prompting may also suggest possible plot augment scenes to the Game Master. Depending on the story, a plot augment can modify the abilities of several heroes. They typically apply only to a single situation, going away when that situation is resolved.

Plot augments combine with other modifiers, **including other augments**. Multiple plot augments can be applied to a single contest.

# Hero Points

Hero Points are a resource players must carefully allocate. They can be used to improve the results of contests, as well as improving abilities over time. They are also used in a few unusual adjudications – such as resolving tied results between heroes (see page 64).

## Gaining Hero Points

At the beginning of every session, each hero gets 3 Hero Points. During the session, all Hero Points must be spent, either on improving contest results or character improvement.

At the climactic conclusion of a multi-session story arc, or a particularly climatic session, the Game Master can award additional Hero Points.

Some Game Masters choose to award directed improvements (see below) to all players at the end of each session based on their most interesting or amusing actions.

## Improving Your Hero

You may improve any ability by 1 point per session, at a cost of 1 Hero Point.

It costs 1 Hero Point to raise a single breakout ability under the keyword, or 2 points to raise the entire keyword or runic affinity by a point (multiply the costs of raising abilities by 2 if you want to raise a keyword more than one point at a time).

You can add a new ability by spending 1 point; it begins with a rating of 13. If the ability seems out of character for your hero, your Game Master will probably require you to come up with a believable explanation before approving it. The easiest way to get an apparently out-of-character new ability approved is to do something in the game to justify it.

You can add a new breakout ability by spending 1 point; it begins with a rating of +1 to the keyword it modifies. As above, if the breakout ability seems out of character for your hero, your Game Master will probably require you to come up with a believable explanation before approving it. The easiest way to get an apparently out-of-character new breakout ability approved is to do something in the game to justify it.

Conversely, events that occur in play often serve as inspiration for organic-seeming new abilities. If you befriend an interesting supporting character, you can acquire a Contact or Patron ability that ensures an ongoing relationship with him. (In some instances, your Game Master may ask that you not establish relationships with supporting characters she has other plans for). Likewise, you can make sure that you can permanently hold onto a new piece of equipment by buying it as a new ability. This process is called **cementing an experience**.

### Character Development

In many traditional roleplaying games, character development is evidenced through higher ability ratings, fighting different classes of monsters, new prestige powers, and so on. The story is a backdrop to justify continued increase in abilities, new classes of monsters, etc. *HeroQuest Glorantha* turns that upside down. Character development means development within the story as it progresses, and is evidenced not so much in the ratings or the type of monsters fought, but through the benefits of victory and in the consequences of failure.

## Catch-Ups

Players have a strong incentive to increase their biggest and most useful ability at the end of every session. Over time, this tends to leave their more colorful, but less versatile, abilities in the dust, languishing on the character sheet with their mournful starting values. This tendency reinforces itself; as the gap between highest and lowest abilities increases, they're even less likely to be used.

A package deal, called a catch-up, softens this tendency. Whenever you acquire a new mastery, up to three abilities or keywords of your choice also increase by 3 points apiece. Only abilities or keywords with values 5 or more points behind your newly adjusted rating in the raised ability qualify for a catch-up.

You can't raise abilities under a keyword, nor gain a catch-up when the effective value of a sub-ability reaches a mastery (since it's the keyword, not the abilities under it, which has a rating).

## Directed Improvements

On occasion a Game Master may increase one of your abilities, by one to three points, or give you a new ability, usually rated at 13. These are called directed improvements.

Ability increases are usually rewards for overcoming particularly important or dramatic obstacles. They happen immediately, rather than at session's end. Directed increases are not counted against you when determining the cost of an ability increase for that session. Post-session rewards often boost colorful secondary abilities.

New abilities are provided as logical outgrowths of the plot, and need not reflect success at a particular contest.

### Healing in an Extended Contest

Heroes with healing abilities may use them during extended contests. This should be treated as an assist (see page 80), and not by reducing the consequences.

This can be extremely advantageous. Through shrewd uses of assists, a healer can keep other heroes from being eliminated from an extended contest. Of course, an unlucky or inept healer might make matters much worse!

# Recovery and Healing

Consequences of Injured or less lapse on their own with the passage of time. However, you'll often want to remove them ahead of schedule, with the use of healing abilities.

## Healing Abilities

The ability used to bring about recovery from a consequence of defeat must relate to the type of harm sustained by the victim.

Physical injuries can be healed by medical or magical abilities. These include the ordinary healing practices available to the culture in question, and to the magical abilities of various cults, charms, and spells. Mental traumas, including those of confidence and morale, may be removed through appropriate magic. They might also be removed through a dramatic confrontation between the victim and the source of the psychic injury. Social injuries must be healed through social abilities. They probably require public expiation of some sort, often including a negotiation with the offended parties and the payment of reparations, either tangible or symbolic. Damage to items and equipment requires some sort of repair ability. A broken magic sword may require a ritual to reforge. Healing attempts will almost always unfold as simple contests.

### Medical Healing

In much of Glorantha, skilled medical healing is the province of specialized cults, priestesses, shamans, and sorcerers, as well as village wise women, and learned men. Medical healing incorporates herbalism, animal parts and minerals, and bone setting, alongside magical healing (with one often augmenting the other).

### Magical Healing

Physical injures can typically be healed with Life or Harmony runes. Other injuries may require a different Rune or not be amenable to magical healing at all.

### Difficulty

Default difficulty to remove the consequences of defeat are as follows:

| HEALING DIFFICULTY | |
|---|---|
| Consequence of Defeat | Difficulty |
| Hurt | Low |
| Impaired | Moderate |
| Injured | High |
| Dying | Very High |

Healing attempts, especially of dying heroes, provide splendid opportunities for plot augments (page 105).

## Consequences of Healing

A successful healing attempt removes one level of adversity for each level of victory. A Major Defeat increases the level of adversity by 1; a Complete Defeat adds an additional 2 levels of adversity.

## Death and Resurrection

Resurrection is possible but rare in Glorantha. The cult of Chalana Arroy has powerful magic that enables the White Healers to find the departed soul of the deceased and return it to its body for resurrection. The deceased must have died by wounds, disease, poison, or combat. It does not work on those slain by Death Rune magic or where the corpse is too destroyed to be healed. If the soul has been departed from the body for seven full days, resurrection is not possible. In any case, the departed soul resists resurrection. Even if successfully resurrected, the hero gains a new flaw associated with having been on the Path of the Dead, such as desiring to die again, fearful of death, fearful of life, and such.

A more dangerous method exists to resurrect a dead hero: the other heroes can travel into the Underworld, overcome its guardians and denizens, and persuade the soul to return with them to the land of the Living. A few particularly powerful Heroes have climbed back from the Underworld after being killed. Such deeds are the mark of Heroes!

# Running Contests

The secret of becoming an entertaining Game Master for *HeroQuest Glorantha* is to learn to bend the contest system to fit your style. This section contains further notes and options for running contests.

## Combined Abilities

On certain occasions you may rule that a hero can only hope to achieve his goal by using two disparate abilities. When this occurs, average the two ability ratings, then apply any modifiers, to arrive at the target number.

Having to combine abilities, rather than using the best one and augmenting it with the lesser one, is always a disadvantage to the hero. Only require combined ability use when story logic absolutely demands that the hero face a lower chance of success, because he has to do two things at once.

## Militia and War Gangs

Sometimes the heroes will face large numbers of individually inconsequential opponents. You can roll for each of them separately, taking note of the multiple opponent penalties they might incur against their enemies.

More simply, you can treat many as one. Divide the number of minor opponents by the number of contesting heroes. Treat each of these sections of the group as a single obstacle. They don't impose a multiple opponent penalty; instead, their numbers are factored into the difficulty rating you assign to them. When the group loses an exchange, describe individuals within it as being hurt or falling away. When it wins, describe them overwhelming the hero, or swelling in numbers.

## Mass Effort

Clashes of massive forces are resolved like any other contest, simple or extended, solo or group. These contests include battles, mass magical ceremonies, monumental construction, and other such mass events.

If the heroes are not participating in the contest and have no stake in its outcome, don't bother to run a contest. Just choose an outcome for dramatic purposes.

Otherwise, start by determining the degree of influence the hero or heroes have over the outcome. They could be any one of the following:

### Force vs. Words

Persuasive heroes will often try to talk their way out of fights. Depending on the situation, you may require the talker to defend with a combined ability (see body text), or stage a simple persuasion contest before the fight breaks out. In the latter case, the would-be combatant uses an appropriate ability to resist the persuasion, and, if successful, is then permitted to go on to a new contest to resolve the combat. If a fight breaks out, the would-be persuader must now defend with an appropriate physical ability.

**Central Player:** The success of the effort depends mostly on the heroes' choices and successes. For example, they might be military leaders facing a force of roughly equal potency. As all else is equal, the better general will win the day. In this instance, the hero or heroes contest a relevant leadership ability against those of opposing leaders.

Alternatively, the heroes might fight alongside or against one of the major Heroes of Glorantha (such as Harrek the Berserk, Jar-eel the Razoress, or Cragspider the Firewitch). Such demigods are more than a match for entire regiments of soldiers and even the gods tremble in their presence. In such a case, victory is on the side of the mightier demigod and not the better general.

**Supporting Contributors:** One of the forces enjoys a clear advantage over the others, but the heroes' efforts may tip the balance in favor of a chosen side. A player or players contest with a rating representing the strength of the force, but can augment its rating with a hero ability.

**Ordinary Participants:** The heroes have little influence over the outcome, but are stuck in the middle of the conflict and must struggle to prosper within it. The Game Master predetermines the outcome of the overall competition on dramatic grounds. (Game Masters wanting to surprise themselves with the outcome can secretly roll a simple contest between appropriate ratings). Each player contests against a rating determined by the Game Master, using the Pass/Fail Difficulty Assignment table if needed. Contest winners gain Benefits of Victory, while losers suffer the consequences of defeat.

## Extremely Extended Contests

There's no particular time scale associated with contests. Both simple and extended contests can resolve events that take seconds or seasons. Time is compressed into a simple (or extended) moment of drama. But some contests may by their very nature be a drama that can't be resolved at one point in the narrative. Examples include political campaigns, construction projects, or seductions. These can be resolved by extended contests where each round is conducted at an appropriate moment in your game, rather than sequentially. You'll need to keep track of the Resolution Points and the difficulty, though this might change as the context changes (a feud started by the players could impede their temple building plans). Commonly the challenges of each round will vary, and the player will use a different ability or augment the next time.

Ask yourself if dragging out the resolution increases the tension, or if the moment will be lost. Also be sure you can describe the results of each round without certain consequences. If in doubt, use a shorter contest, perhaps treating it as a series of flashbacks.

**Arduous Auto-Success**

*Use an arduous automatic success when your primary concern is for pacing. Simply allow the heroes to succeed without a contest, and then describe in sweat-inducing detail their hard-won victory. Unlike the standard automatic success, the objective here is not to make the group feel powerful and competent (though it may do that as well) but to emphasize the rigors of their grueling task, preserving suspension of disbelief.*

## Difficulty without Failure

Sometimes the heroes will encounter a challenge where the requirements of story logic and story pacing seem to be at complete odds with one another. Failure offers no interesting plot branches, or would prolong the story's pacing right when you need to cut to the chase and wrap things up for the session. At the same time, to maintain credibility or continuity with previously established story elements, you need to make the obstacle *feel* difficult.

Two distinct methods allow you to create a sense of difficulty without allowing for the prospect of failure: the arduous automatic success, and the costly success.

## Costly Successes

Use a costly success where failure offers no entertaining plot branches, but when you still want the group to work for victory, and to feel a sense of suspense over the outcome. In a costly success, the heroes succeed - but at a price.

Whether you tell your players in advance that they're entering a contest that may result in costly success is a matter of taste. Some groups will prefer to know, so they can adjust the resources they draw on. Others will find this an unwanted challenge to their suspension of disbelief, and would rather be surprised to discover the contest's true stakes.

Even if the players suffer a defeat, they still achieve the prize around which the contest is framed. They also, however, suffer a consequence of defeat to one or more abilities, in keeping with the defeat level.

The consequences of defeat might apply, as in an ordinary contest, to the abilities used in that contest. Usually, though, they apply to some other resource related ability, which may come to haunt the group later on. When in doubt, ask yourself if the penalty will cripple the group in dealing with contests arising from the costly success. If so, you haven't solved your uninteresting failure problem, merely kicked it down the road to stop your plot a few scenes later on. In this case, apply it to a resource or tangentially related ability instead. Ideally, target the ability the

group used to augment their attempt—assuming that a penalty to it won't stop the story dead a few scenes later.

Often you'll want to save the ill effects of the costly success until a later session. Fallout from past costly successes makes a fine springboard for new future stories.

Costly successes should almost always be simple contests; anything important enough to be played as an extended contest should lead to meaningful plot branches from both success and failure. (Or, rather, to put it the opposite way, if it doesn't branch in two directions, it's not pivotal enough to be an extended contest).

The use of costly successes, like most Game Master choices in *HeroQuest Glorantha*, is a matter of context. Just because an Other Side journey was played as a costly success last session doesn't mean you can't use a standard contest this time out, when failure isn't a story-stopper.

## Pyrrhic Victories

In a Pyrrhic victory, players boost their chances of success in a contest by accepting negative consequences at its end, even if they win the prize around which it is framed. The heroes each gain a mastery in the abilities they're using to prosecute the contest. At the contest's end, they suffer the following consequences of defeat:

| PYRRHIC VICTORY CONSEQUENCES | |
|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Consequence of Defeat** |
| Any defeat | Dead |
| Marginal Victory | Dead |
| Minor Victory | Dying |
| Major Victory | Injured |
| Complete Victory | Impaired |

As with any proposed action, the players must convincingly describe the potentially suicidal risks they're taking to achieve their objective. They must also show how these risks can bring them the awful victory they seek.

## Tricky Cases

Certain situations at first glance seem difficult to adjudicate using the contest rules. Thinking through these problems is generally a matter of taking a step back and focusing less on the scene's specific details and more on its overall dramatic purpose.

When in doubt, ask yourself, "How does this happen in books or movies?" Focusing on how like things work in reality often sidetracks you by inspiring you to organize your thinking from the details up, rather than from the narrative structure on down.

As a general rule, the simpler solution is the better solution. Don't overthink the mechanics if there is a Maximum Game Fun solution.

## Impersonal Foes

Running contests between players and an abstract or impersonal force such as a mountain or their own personality flaws may seem strange at first. Remember that you are not personifying this force, or granting it intentionality. The mountain is not thinking or acting. You are not playing the mountain as a character. You are simply describing a series of setbacks that the hero faces in his effort to get up the mountain.

If you think a contest with an impersonal force is likely and you know you will have problems thinking up possible setbacks on the fly, jot down a list beforehand:

**Mountain:** icy patch, especially steep bit, crevasse, high winds, rockslides, altitude sickness, aggressive mountain goats, demoralizing frozen corpse.

**Crossing Prax:** poisonous copper winds, lack of water, searing heat, stinging plants and biting insects, sunstroke, animals overheat.

**Fear of Dragons**: tales of the Dragonkill War, stories of the decadent Empire of the Wyrms Friends, ancestors were killed by dragons, alien draconic behavior.

## Missile Combat

Fights conducted from a distance may be more difficult to envision and describe than hand-to-hand combat, where each exchange is often described as an attempt to land a single blow. (Note that it needn't be this way, and close combat is often less a series of attacks and counterattacks than a methodical probing of weakness leading up to a single decisive point). In Glorantha, missile combat is not typically the province of sharpshooters (although they do exist) but of volleys by archers, javelins, or slingers, upon masses of infantry and cavalry.

However, dramatic missile combats do occur. The climax of the Odyssey witnesses an extended missile combat involving Odysseus and his companions against the Suitors of Penelope. Here is one of the exchanges of that contest:

*He [Eurymachus] drew his two-edged*
*sword, bronze, honed for the kill*
*And hurled himself at the king with a raw savage cry*
*In the same breath that Odysseus loosed an arrow ripping his*
*breast beside the nipple so hard it lodged in the man's liver.*

[Odyssey, 22:83-88]

Another example comes from the Icelandic *Njáls Saga*, when Gunnar defends his hall against Mord Valgardson and his allies. In a dramatic scene, Gunnar wards off attack after attack with a shower of arrows, until Thorbrand Thorleikssson leaps out of nowhere and slashes Gunnar's bowstring. When Gunnar is forced to switch to his hewing-spear, he is ultimately overwhelmed by the attackers and is killed (although not until after "he wounded sixteen men and killed two others.").

Neither of these contests are described arrow for arrow. Instead, significant foes are named as killed by the hero, and waves of anonymous foes are forced back by showers of arrows.

## One-Sided Missile Combat

Fights in which one side is armed with missile weapons and the other is not seem at first glance to pose a conceptual challenge: what happens if an unarmed party wins an exchange?

The answer, as always, is to refer back to the framing of the contest. What is the winning party hoping to achieve? If he's trying to defeat the opposition in combat, he achieves some kind of progress toward that goal. The most obvious advantage is that he's able to close the distance between himself and his opponent, and is thereafter able to engage him in close combat. On a big enough victory, he may not only close the distance, but then engage and strike his opponent. Forget the conventions of other roleplaying games: in *HeroQuest Glorantha*, a single result can be described as an entire series of actions toward the same end result.

The types of abilities used in such a fight will vary depending on your results interpretation. A hero may use Duck and Weave to run through a hail of missile fire, then Fisticuffs to trounce his opponent, who in turn might start with Archery and be forced to switch to Knife Fighter when the distance is closed.

A hero without missile weapons may simply be trying to escape harm. If so, a victorious exchange represents progress toward this goal: he gets further away from them.

Heroes may be pursuing other goals while enemies with missiles try to harm them: they might be trying to retrieve an object, get to a position, or rescue a person. When they win exchanges, they get incrementally closer to achieving the specified goal, to an extent proportionate to the size of their victory. When they lose, they're driven back or find the goalposts otherwise moved against them.

If the problem with your one-sided missile situation is that it threatens to yield impossible results, you're dealing not with a challenge of description, but a credibility issue. (See page 112 for more on credibility). For example, your Glorantha campaign may follow historical precedent by establishing that foot soldiers without missile weapons have essentially no chance of winning against mounted archers. If so, frame contests to avoid an improbable result—make them about the infantry's attempt to escape, versus the cavalry's effort to mow them down.

## Non-Lethal Combat

In almost every type of campaign, experienced combatants should have the option to restrict the harm they inflict on their opponents. To do this, players specify that their heroes are fighting to disable, not kill, before they land any blows.

If, at the end of any fight, an opponent is assessed as being Dying, and the hero who knocked him out of the fight was fighting to disable, the result is reduced to Injured.

The conditions of a fight may decrease consequence results, or prevent lingering harm outright. A fight with padded weapons will have a winner and loser, but will result in serious harm only if something goes horribly awry—perhaps as the result of a fumble.

Defeated foes often offer ransom (such as their arms and armor) rather than be killed or enslaved. A Game Master may decide that the benefits of victory for a non-lethal combat are applied to the hero's wealth!

## Mismatched and Graduated Goals

Most contests will be framed so that one of two possibilities pertains:

Hero A is trying to do something;
hero B is trying to stop him.
Hero A is trying to do something
bad to hero B; hero B is trying
to do the same to hero A.

In either case, the results of the contest are fairly easy to determine. In the first instance, hero A either succeeds, or doesn't, and negative consequences strike the loser. In the second, one side wins, the other loses.

Sometimes, though, the two sides in a contest may have goals that do not directly contradict one another.

A broo pursues a healer, who is trying to escape through the forest with two small children. The broo wants to kill the healer. The healer wants to save the children.

When encountering **mismatched** goals, your first job is to determine whether the mismatch is complete, or partial.

In a complete mismatch, neither side is at all interested in preventing the other's goal. A complete mismatch does not result in a contest; the Game Master asks what the heroes are doing, and then describes each participant succeeding at their goals.

In most instances, the contest goals are not actually mismatched, but **graduated**. One or more participants has both a primary and a secondary goal. In this case, the Game Master frames the contest, identifying which goal is which. To achieve both, the winner must score a Major or Complete Victory. On a Marginal or Minor Victory, he achieves only the primary goal.

## Joining Extended Contests

When a hero wishes to join an extended contest in progress, the Game Master determines whether the player accepts the current framing. If so, he can participate like any other contestant. In an extended contest, he simply selects an opponent and enters into a new exchange.

A new contestant who wants to achieve something other than the goal established during framing may instead perform unrelated actions, including assists and augments.

## Free For Alls

In a few situations, such as arena battles or attempts to grab a coveted item, group contests will not take place between two sides, but will be free for alls, where all participants hammer away at each other until only one is left standing. These play out as normal, with each hero initially choosing one or more opponents to enter into exchanges with, and seeking out new exchanges after knocking rivals out of the contest. Instead of ceasing when everyone on one side is out, they end when all but one contestant are down.

## Accepting Persuasion

When it comes to the use of persuasion, mundane or extraordinary, players exhibit a distinct double standard. They hate to lose autonomy over the actions of their own heroes, but are only too happy to take it away from others. Expect unhappiness when supporting characters do unto them as they hope to do unto others.

Although extraordinary powers may be defined differently, ordinary persuasion has its limits. In general, you can persuade someone to do something only by convincing him that it serves his own agenda. Unless he has a flaw that suggests he is susceptible to sudden conversion, you can't change his faith, ideology, or other deeply held beliefs with mere argument, rational or otherwise. Attempts to persuade people to behave in a manner that is completely out of character fail a credibility test. In order to proceed with a contest, the prospective persuader must alter his desired goals and talking points, so that both remain credible.

## Killing Helpless Foes

*HeroQuest Glorantha* combats, in keeping with most adventure fiction, tend to leave the losers incapacitated but not dead. Sympathetic protagonists do not go on to cold-bloodedly slaughter helpless opponents. They imprison them, turn them over to official justice, extract a ransom or leave them groaning on the floor and move on.

Roleplayers tend to exhibit a disregard for the lives of their fictional enemies. You can either embrace this as endemic to the form, or present players with reasons to act as sympathetically as their fictional counterparts.

To prevent them from jarringly engaging in callous murder, see to it that your settings contain the normal constraints that prevent such killings. If the heroes act like psychopaths, they'll be treated as such. Their clan may outlaw them or impose other penalties, such as the payment of wergild, for wrongful killing. Or the kin (or even the patrons or rulers) of their victims may seek to avenge the killings. Killers may face religious or social sanction; in many Glorantha cults, the wrath of the gods may have measurable effects. Certain cultures may provide incentives for keeping one's vanquished enemies alive, from ransoms to prisoner exchanges.

In certain contexts, like fighting against Chaos monsters such as broos, the efficient killing of helpless foes is perfectly appropriate and should not be penalized in this way. Even then, it is appropriate to depict it as distasteful, and to make the players feel that they're engaged in a dirty, if necessary, task.

Often what players really want is the chance to rightfully kill a bunch of bad guys in righteous combat. Satisfy this need by pumping up the results when they overcome anonymous or essentially interchangeable minor foes. Treat complete, major or even minor victories as viscerally satisfying instant kills.

Likewise, marginal or even minor victories may mean not that enemies are incapacitated, but that they flee the field of battle, removing themselves as threats. (Don't do this in cases where the heroes want to capture their enemies for ransom or interrogation).

## Explaining Difficulty Levels

First-time *HeroQuest Glorantha* Game Masters often find it initially difficult to grapple with what a specific difficulty level represents. The answer is deceptively simple: the difficulty level is just how difficult that obstacle is going to be for the heroes to overcome.

A **Very Low** difficulty level means that the obstacle is negligible. The hero will fail only if very unlucky, and even then the consequences are unlikely to be significant.

A **Low** difficulty level means that the obstacle is minor. The hero will fail if unlucky, but the consequences are unlikely to be significant.

A **Moderate** difficulty level means that the odds are likely somewhat in the hero's favor but there is a not insubstantial chance of failure and the consequences can be significant. When the Game Master has no idea what difficulty level to choose, this is the default.

A **High** difficulty level means that the obstacle is substantial and unless the hero is using a primary ability (such as their occupational keyword or best Rune), the odds are likely against success. The consequences of defeat can be substantial.

A **Very High** difficulty level means that the obstacle is likely comparable to the hero's best ability. The chances are about even that the hero will fail, unless they are lucky, have some relevant benefits of victory to bring into play, good augments, or have Hero Points to burn. The consequences of defeat can be substantial.

A **Nearly Impossible** difficulty level means just that. The hero is likely to lose this contest and the consequences are likely to be severe. But with enough luck, benefits of victory, good augments, and Hero Points to burn, the hero might just pull off a minor success.

# Assigning Difficulty

To choose a difficulty to overcome an obstacle, start by deciding whether you want the odds to lean toward failure or success, and to what extent. In short, assign a difficulty, and then justify it. Some Game Masters arrive at difficulty based purely on their own creative instincts. That's not only acceptable, but commendable. Your own experience as a Game Master should be granted greater weight than any set of guidelines.

Difficulty levels fall into the following six classes, from most to least daunting: Nearly Impossible, Very High, High, Moderate, Low and Very Low.

If the scene is a climactic one you've been building toward for the bulk of the session or story arc, assign High or Very High Difficulty.

If the action the hero proposes seems so unlikely as to strain credibility, but not quite enough for it to completely fail a credibility test, assign a Nearly Impossible Difficulty.

If the action attempts to leapfrog a series of interesting obstacles to solve the main problem of the story in a disappointingly abrupt fashion, assign a Very High Difficulty. (If they succeed, you must then find a new main problem arising from their solution of the one you were prepared for).

If you can envision story branches from failure, but they seem less entertaining than from success, assign a Very Low Difficulty. If you can't envision an interesting story branch from failure, make success automatic. Do not require a contest at all.

When the Game Master is assigning the difficulty for obstacle, she should be asking herself:

"Do I need to up the anxiety level?" If so, increase the difficulty.

"Do I need to restore some player confidence?" If so, lower the difficulty.

One potentially useful tool for helping to assign difficulty in *HeroQuest Glorantha* is the Pass/Fail Cycle, which is discussed in the next chapter. **Always remember that the Pass/Fail method for assigning difficulty is a fallback measure.** Use it when you have no strong answers to the questions listed above. Don't let it rigidly override your dramatic instincts, or sacrifice the broader credibility of the narrative to the pacing needs of the moment.

## In a Nutshell: Difficulty Levels

1. Use your judgment first.
2. Choose difficulty level (according to story needs, credibility, or with Pass/Fail table): Very Low, Low, Moderate, High, Very High, or Nearly Impossible.
3. Determine Base Difficulty using the Base Value table.
4. Use the Difficulty Level table to modify the Base and derive a final Difficulty.

Difficulty is derived from a base number, which is modified according to the difficulty level, as per the following table:

| DIFFICULTY LEVEL | |
|---|---|
| **Difficulty Level** | **Value** |
| Nearly Impossible | Base +Ш2 |
| Very High | Base +Ш |
| High | Base +6 |
| Moderate | Base |
| Low | Base –6 |
| Very Low | Base –Ш or 6, whichever is higher |

The base starts at 14. After four sessions of play, it increases by 1. After every subsequent four-session interval, it increases by another point. This rate for increasing the base is a guideline. It is derived from the assumption that the players spend on average 2 Hero Points per session on character improvement. If the players spend less than that the Game Master may want a slower rate of base increase (for example, increase by one every five sessions), or not even increase the base value at all, at her discretion.

All contests use the base number, except for contests to determine augments. Difficulty to augments increases at a slower rate (since heroes often augment with secondary abilities they don't increase as fast); it increases so augments don't become more influential as heroes improve.

| BASE VALUE | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Sessions to Date** | **Base Value** | **Augment Value** |
| 1-4 | 14 | 14 |
| 5-8 | 15 | 14 |
| 9-12 | 16 | 15 |
| 13-16 | 17 | 15 |
| 17-20 | 18 | 16 |
| 21-24 | 19 | 16 |
| 25-28 | 20 | 17 |
| 29-32 | 21 | 17 |
| And so on.... | | |

The "sessions to date" entry in the above chart includes the current session. It may be easier to keep track of your base values, changing them every three or six sessions, than to keep track of the current session number and then to refer to the chart every time you need to determine base value.

Depending on how frequently augments are used in your game, you may need to increase the base value slightly.

If you find that heroes in your campaign either succeed or fail with frustrating regularity, adjust the base value upwards or downwards until, through experimentation, you arrive at a number suiting your group's distribution of ability ratings. **Remember, the table is just a guideline, and the context of your story will always trump it.**

## Credibility Tests

The process of deciding whether a proposed outcome is possible is called a **credibility test**.

In works of fiction, the author maintains the illusion of fictional reality by presenting the reader only with events that seem credible within the rules of reality they've established for their world. Often this is an exercise in maintaining the line between the excitingly unlikely and the absurdly impossible.

As Game Master, you are never obligated to allow a contest just because two heroes have abilities that can be brought into conflict. If the hero's proposed result would seem absurd, you disallow the contest, period. If it seems possible but very difficult, assign a Very High or Nearly Impossible difficulty. Don't make the mistake of assigning a high difficulty to avoid an impossible outcome—lucky rolls and Hero Points can make your world seem suddenly ridiculous.

Players are typically as attuned to common sense narrative reality as you are, and will not routinely propose absurd actions. You'll find that they do almost all of your credibility testing for you. If anything, you'll face the opposite problem, where the players act with undue caution even though their heroes exist in a relatively forgiving high-adventure setting.

What constitutes a credible action may vary from one campaign to the next. A campaign centered around a group of desperate treasure hunters in the Big Rubble may have a different definition of credible than a campaign centered on the eschatological conflicts of the Hero Wars! After all, Your Glorantha Will Vary! However, campaigns should have a defined premise (see page 221) to help the Game Master and the players easily agree on what is credible.

*HeroQuest Glorantha* allows you to adjust the reality level you use for your campaign. In a realistic game, interpret results with a gritty adherence to physics. In an over-the-top game, describe the same outcomes as expressions of gravity-defying stunt work.

## Difficulty and Demigods

In many *HeroQuest Glorantha* campaigns, the heroes will interact with Heroes like Sir Ethilrist, King Broyan, or even demigods such as Harrek the Berserk, Jar-eel the Razoress, or Cragspider. Trying to overcome a demigod by going head to head against their defining characteristics is always going to be Nearly Impossible at best (if not flat-out Impossible). Harrek the Berserk can destroy entire regiments of soldiers – trying to engage him in combat or trying to magically overwhelm him is a suicide mission. However, other means of overcoming a demigod can be far easier. Harrek has been successfully persuaded, bribed, manipulated, or impressed; just not defeated in combat.

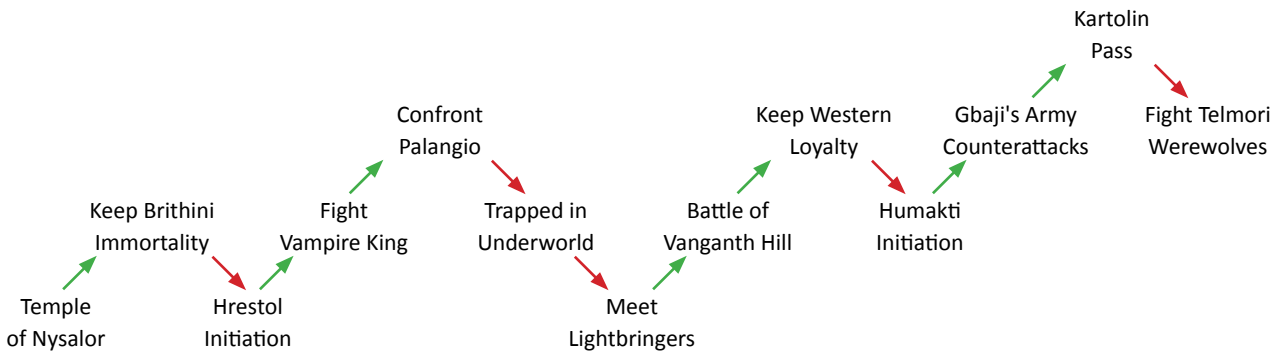
## New Conditions, New Difficulty

Difficulty levels are usually assumed to have all complicating or mitigating factors built into them, and under most circumstances require no modifiers. Even when the heroes re-encounter a previous obstacle, you can change the difficulty directly if dramatic or pacing reasons indicate that this is the most entertaining choice.

Make sure that you describe changing conditions so that the change in difficulty appears believable:

If you want a rematch contest against characters or creatures to have a markedly different chance of success, create conditions that mitigate for or against the opposition, altering their target numbers. Of course, it's even better if the players actively seek ways to alter the odds in their own favor, with plot

### Pass/Fail Illustrated: Arkat and Gbaji



and ability augments. That way, they'll have earned their triumphs, rather than merely becoming the beneficiaries of good fortune.

As the campaign develops, certain types of obstacles might get a new difficulty. For example, in an early adventure, a lion might be a Very High Difficulty and worthy of an extended conflict; defeating it is a significant personal triumph. Much later in the campaign arc, a lion might be something the hero hunts for a diversion, a Simple Contest of only Moderate Difficulty.

# The Pass/Fail Cycle

The structure that arises from a chain of obstacles is sometimes referred to as the Pass/Fail Cycle. At each obstacle, the protagonists either succeed, which grants them an advantage that eventually leads to a new obstacle, or fail, which puts them at a disadvantage and sends them up against another obstacle. When they fail, it is often due to an external reason, not because they are weak, mistaken, or incompetent.

## Pass/Fail: Arkat and Gbaji

For a Gloranthan example, let's break down the main events in the first part of Arkat's war against Gbaji as presented in the *Guide to Glorantha*.

First, we have the goal. The god Nysalor (called Gbaji the Deceiver by Arkat) has conquered most of the world and Arkat dedicates his life to destroy him.

Arkat and his army of Brithini soldiers must first reclaim Seshnela from Gbaji's followers. He *passes* this obstacle by invading the Temple of Nysalor in the capital city.

Arkat then must keep true to his Brithini code to maintain his immortality. He *fails* this obstacle, and becomes mortal.

Arkat must gather a new army to continue his war. He *passes* this obstacle by mastering the tests of the Men-of-All and discovering new insights into the workings of Gloranthan magic.

Arkat is challenged by Grachamagacan the Vampire King of Tanisor. He *passes* this obstacle, and defeats Grachamagacan.

Arkat then invades deep into Ralios and marches to Kartolin Pass seeking to invade Dorastor. He *fails* this obstacle completely and is killed by Palangio the Iron Vrok. Arkat is dismembered and his essence captured and imprisoned deep in the Underworld.

Arkat must somehow escape the Underworld. After several years of *failure*, he *passes* this obstacle when the Orlanthi hero Harmast Lightbringer rescues him.

Arkat comes to the aid of his new Orlanthi allies who are under attack by Gbaji's Bright Empire. He *passes* this obstacle when he defeats the Gbaji army at the Battle of Vanganth Hill.

Arkat tries to hold onto his army of Seshnegi Westerners. He *fails* this obstacle, and they return to Seshnela.

Arkat must rally a new army of Orlanthi and Ralians. He *passes* this obstacle when he initiates into the cult of Humakt and learns even deeper insights into cosmic reality.

A new Gbaji army launches a counterattack from Dorastor. Arkat *passes* this obstacle and liberates Ralios from Gbaji.

Arkat again tries to invade Dorastor. He *fails* this obstacle again, and is defeated at Kartolin Pass.

The Telmori werewolves take advantage of this defeat and try to destroy Arkat's army. Arkat *passes* this obstacle and drives the Telmori out of Ralios.

This pattern of successes and failures maps out as follows, with successes represented by upward arrows and failures by downward arrows as shown to the left.

Although often compared to a rollercoaster, the Pass/Fail Cycle, when mapped out, shows a gradual upward motion, with periodic swings downward.

In fiction, the author creates excitement by manipulating the rhythm of successes and failures. If the hero succeeds all the time, we, the audience, stops worrying about him, and disengage from the story. If he fails all the time, our desire for vicarious wish fulfillment is thwarted, and we turn against the narrative, feeling anything from annoyance to anxiety.

In Arkat's story, we see this principle in action. The Pass/Fail pattern goes like this: pass, fail, pass, pass, fail, fail, pass, pass, fail, pass, pass, fail, and pass. Note that successes outnumber failures by nearly two to one.

The Pass/Fail Cycle serves its purpose by allowing the author to orchestrate a pattern of tension and release. She creates tension by having the hero fail, or making it seem as if he will fail. Having built up tension and frustration, she releases it by allowing the hero to succeed. We, identifying with the hero, feel the adrenaline rush of excitement that comes with real-world success.

## Roleplaying Branches

If we could just exactly replicate the Pass/Fail Cycle of Arkat's story every time, our work here would be done. It's not that simple, though. Audiences need an unpredictable pattern of success and failure, and roleplayers want to see their own decisions driving the direction of the storyline.

**Pass/Fail for Each Hero**

*Extremely punctilious Game Masters may wish to keep separate Pass/Fail charts for each hero, or mark each hero's results with different colored pens. They can then use these to keep track of subplots or to spot when an individual player has gone for a depressingly long time without a win, even when the rest of the group has been performing superbly.*

The author of fiction enjoys an advantage over a *HeroQuest Glorantha* Game Master: she has to take into account only one possible outcome from any obstacle. She decides if the hero succeeds or fails, and then continues to plot the story in a linear fashion.

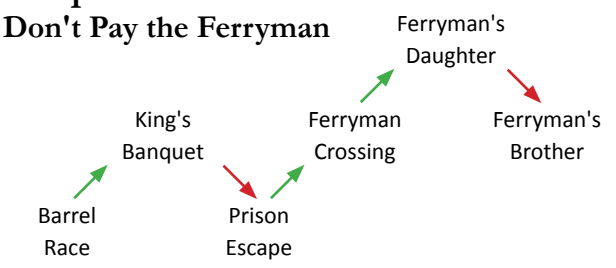
Game Masters, rather than creating a single plot line for the hero to move through, must anticipate that the heroes will either succeed or fail when confronted by any noteworthy obstacle. Either by preparing in advance or through improvisation, they must be prepared for the story to branch. With a branch at each significant obstacle, there are many possible stories. The decisions of the players, in tandem with the game's resolution system, determine which story actually takes place. The result is also a linear story, but the process must be at all times open-ended, so that the players have determining influence over the outcome of the story. They must not only be granted considerable power to drive the story, they must *feel* that they have it. Oddly enough, it is often easier to accomplish the former than the latter.

Although the branched story probably winds up revolving around successive confrontations with Arkat and Gbaji, as per the original, the series of obstacles, as well as the pattern of passes and failures, no doubt diverges substantially from the original plan. This is how it ought to be, especially when the divergences result from player choices.

## Tracking Pass/Fail

To use the Pass/Fail Cycle to help assign difficulty levels, look to the heroes' current position on the Pass/Fail Cycle. You can do this instinctively or mechanically.

**Sample Notation:**
**Don't Pay the Ferryman**




To measure instinctively, read the players' collective mood. Do they think they're doing well, and starting to get cocky? If so, hit them with a High Difficulty. Do they perceive that they're faring poorly, and growing disheartened? Give them a Low Difficulty. Does their mood seem neutral? If so, use a Moderate Difficulty. (Note that you, knowing what's going on in the world, may think that the players are doing better than they do. Make difficulty determinations based on their perceptions, no matter how misguided they might seem to you. Think of the players as the audience in a movie; if they're feeling pressured and depressed in what is meant to be an escapist adventure, it's time to lighten the mood. If they no longer feel a sense of urgency or jeopardy, tighten the screws).

To track the Pass/Fail Cycle mechanically, make a chart of the story as it progresses, measuring the result of each major obstacle. Typically major obstacles are those resolved with an extended contest, or even only rising actions (see page 82). You do not need to track tangential contests like augments, assists, or simple contests that may be important to a hero's personal narrative but not to the overall story.

The table consists of two elements: point-form descriptions of each obstacle as it is resolved, and connective arrows. If the heroes succeed, place an upwards-pointing arrow after the obstacle notation. If they fail, mark it with a down arrow. For an inconclusive result, use a level arrow. Mark major victories and defeats with double arrows.

When a group of heroes act separately but simultaneously to each overcome the same obstacle (as when scaling a cliff, bluffing their way through security, or moving silently through a secured area), note the worst outcome on your diagram.

Include on your diagram only the resolutions of major obstacles. Don't treat augments or other contests that set the stage for another resolution as separate contests. Also disregard obstacles tangential to the storyline, or of interest to only a single hero. A success gained by one hero on a matter of little importance to the others shouldn't increase the difficulty for a pivotal contest all of them are invested in.

A sample notation is shown to the left. As you can see, the heroes have had a victory, a Complete Defeat, two more victories, and then a defeat.

To use your Pass/Fail tracking chart in assigning difficulty, check the most recent pair of arrows against the Pass/Fail Difficulty table, below. Treat

each Major Defeat as two defeats, and each Major Victory as two victories.

| PASS/FAIL DIFFICULTY | |
|---|---|
| **Previous Two Results** | **Difficulty For Present Contest** |
| 3–4 Defeats | Very Low |
| 2 Defeats | Low |
| 2 Ties | Low |
| 1 Defeat + 1 Victory or Tie | Moderate |
| 2 Victories, 0 Defeats | High |
| 3-4 Victories, 0 Defeats | Very High |

In the example diagram, the two most recent results are a victory and a defeat. This means that the next difficulty, barring other factors, ought to be Moderate.

## Pass/Fail is a Fallback Measure

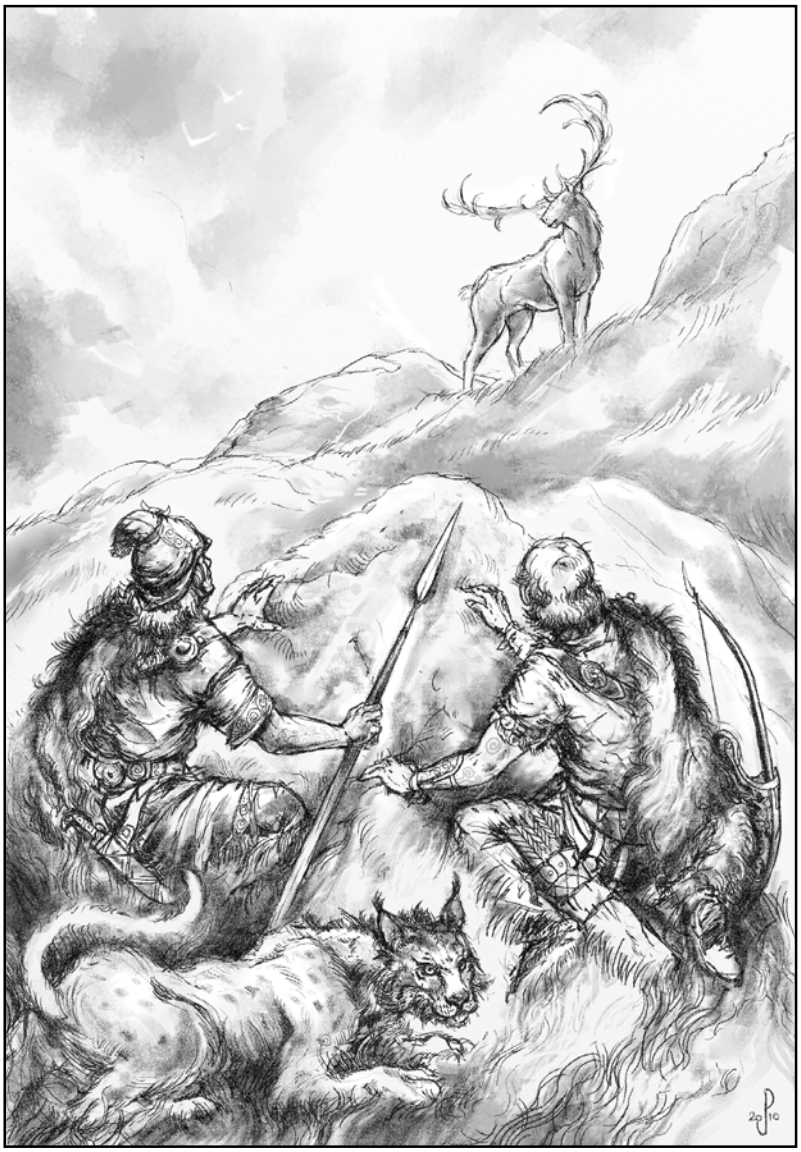
**Always remember that the Pass/Fail method for assigning difficulty is a fallback measure.** Don't let it rigidly override your dramatic instincts, or sacrifice the broader credibility of the narrative to the pacing needs of the moment.

For example, it might be a signature detail of your Glorantha that dragons are always extremely tough opponents. If the heroes confront a dream dragon, don't chuck your continuity out the window to make it suddenly an easy kill. Keep its difficulty values high. Instead, find some other way to give the party a much-needed win. Maybe they can frame the contest so the dragon has to rely on something other than its raw power. Perhaps the scene turns on a contest with some other character or impersonal force, to which you can assign the low difficulty suggested for by Pass/Fail tracking.

Likewise, some tasks should become easier over time, because it improves pacing and preserves the players' sense of growing mastery over their environment. The tribal chieftain who seemed like an impossibly imposing threat when they were first starting out can be defeated through an automatic action now that they're back from the wars with several masteries under their belts. (On the other hand, it might be equally entertaining to have the occasional important early antagonist stage a parallel rise in fortunes, so that he remains a viable villain throughout your series).

You may find the maintenance of a simple Pass/Fail tracking diagram a useful exercise even if you rely on story instinct rather than resorting to the table.

Are any of the players breaking the fictional illusion by openly speculating on what the difficulty of the current obstacle will be, based on the dramatic considerations we're describing here? Surprise them by setting a difficulty contrary to expectations, and by presenting them with a shocking (and probably undesirable) plot twist arising from the contest's outcome. If they're expecting a tough obstacle, use a Very Low Difficulty. If they're expecting an easy time of it, impose a Very High Difficulty. Being predictable all the time seldom makes for an interesting session or long term campaign.



## Three Lunar Regiments

**Marble Phalanx**

The Marble Phalanx is one of the ancient "Ten Wall Regiments" of Dara Happa and has been in existence since the Gods War.

The Marble Phalanx consists of heavily armored soldiers that fight in drilled, close order. Each soldier of the Marble Phalanx is equipped with bronze cuirasses and greaves, crested helmets that cover their entire face, heavy shields, and long stabbing spears.

The Marble Phalanx is amazingly disciplined and well trained. When maneuvering, the phalanx is composed of 10 ranks (lines of men side by side), each of which includes 100 files (lines of men front to back) at six-foot intervals. This leaves room for skirmishers to pass through the ranks before contact with the enemy. When the times comes to meet the enemy, the rear 5 ranks come forward into these gaps, present a solid wall of shields and weapons 200 men long and 5 men deep. The men in the front rank are veterans and the best soldiers in the regiment.

The war gods of the regiment are Urvairanus and Polaris. The regimental officers worship Yanafal Tarnils as well. The Polemarch (regimental commander) presides over worship of the regimental gods and is assisted by a regimental priest (one of the regimental staff offices).

**Silver Shields**

The Silver Shields are a modern Imperial unit created by the Conquering Daughter. Its recruits are drawn from across the southern reaches of the Empire and even the Provinces.

The Silver Shields are a superbly drilled regiment of hypaspists; nimble hoplites capable of fast marching and operating in difficult terrain. They carry long spears, kopis, and javelins, and their famous silver-plated bronze shields. They wear hardened leather breastplates and white tunics, brown trews, and red parade cloaks.

The Silver Shields is based around files of seven soldiers. Ten files plus a command group of 14 soldiers led by a centurion make up a company, a total of 85 soldiers. Ten regular companies, a command company, and a support company make up the full regiment, led by a Commander of the Thousand.

The war gods of the regiment are Yanafal Tarnils and Hwarin Dalthippa.

**Antelope Lancers**

The Silver Sable Lancers (better known as the Antelope Lancers) are a famous regiment that has been the Emperor's service since 1275.

The Antelope Lancers are a close ordered, drilled heavy cavalry regiment that ride only sable antelopes. The lancers wear bronze breastplates, bronze helmets with crests of red, yellow, and black, and greaves; their sable mounts often wear head protection as well. They use the lance, kopis, and flanged maces.

The Antelope Lancers are organized into 16 lances of 30 men plus an officer (who also serves as a priest of Yanafal Tarnils). The commander of the regiment is titled a "Khan" and is accompanied by a standard-bearer, a bodyguard, and a trumpeter.

The war god of the Antelope Lancers is Yanafal Tarnils. Most of the lancers worship the Twin Stars as well.

# Gloranthan Communities

*Many Gloranthan campaigns revolve around the relationship between a band of heroes and the community they protect. In defense of the community, they can bolster, expend, and juggle its various resources. This chapter provides tools for such community-centered campaigns.*

## Defining Your Community

Start by deciding what sort of community your heroes all belong to, and how it fits into your world. For the Esrolians, Heortlings, and Tarshites the clan is typically the most important community; in many campaigns, all heroes have a relationship to the same clan.

It is possible for heroes to belong to several communities. Some societies nest communities within communities: in the Orlanthi culture of Glorantha, you can belong to a bloodline (about thirty people), a religious cult (about three hundred), a clan (one or two thousand), and a tribe (five thousand or more). Other examples:

**Esrolia**: Queendom, City, Tribe, Clan, Temple, Guild, Mercenary Company, or Mercantile Association
**Heortling**: Kingdom, Tribe, Clan, Temple, Guild, or Mercenary Company
**Prax**: Warrior band, Magical Society, or Clan
**Tarsh**: Kingdom, City, Tribe, Temple, Guild, or Mercenary Company

Although heroes may have community abilities related to any or all of these, you'll be modeling only one level of community. Pick the level of community that provides the greatest dramatic potential from its competition for resources, friendly or otherwise, with its rivals.

The development of an intricate resource-tracking system measuring the interrelationships of multiple nested community levels is left as an exercise for extreme enthusiasts of economic-based play.

The Game Mastery chooses a suitable interval to mark changes in resources. In many campaigns that is a season, but it could be longer or shorter.

### Defining Resources

Just like *HeroQuest Glorantha* heroes, *HeroQuest Glorantha* communities can have any set of abilities their creators—in this case, Game Masters—care to define. It's best however to focus on no more than five or so broadly-labeled resource types, so that the heroes can care about, and have a chance of successfully managing, all of them. Most communities have variants of the following resources:

**Wealth** measures the community's material resources, whether counted primarily in food, silver, or cattle.
**Communication** is the ability to extract favors from other communities through trade or negotiation, while minimizing the cost of its reciprocal obligations. This highlights how well-liked they are by other communities. A low rating shows that the community is disliked or hated by other communities.

**Morale** is the community's belief in its ability to achieve its goals, and its willingness to follow the directives of its leaders.
*High Morale rating*: Unity, harmony
*Low Morale rating*: Disunity, internal conflict, derision, strife

**War** is the ability to defend itself from outside threats, and to aggressively achieve its own aims through force of arms. (For settings where communities of the size you're tracking field their own armed units).

**Magic** is the collective ability of its people to perform supernatural acts. The Magic resource of a community is traditionally housed in a physical thing, such as a prominent geographical feature or an artifact (or artifacts) such as a statue, standard, weapon, jewelry, throne, or other object.

Although you can probably imagine some intriguing exceptions, in general all communities in a single setting possess the same resource sets. By default you track only the resources of your focus community. In a series heavily dominated by economic and political conflict, you might enjoy tracking the relative resources not only of the hero's community but also of its rivals.

Having chosen the resources you're going to measure, you can either design the community yourself, or let your players do so by committee, aided by a questionnaire you create.

### The Questionnaire Method

One method of defining a community is to create a questionnaire asking the players to make choices regarding the history of their community. They can choose their multiple-choice answers by consensus, majority vote, or answer in round-robin fashion. Each question secretly assigns a score to one or more resource types. When you're done, rank the resources in the order of the scores, assigning the high ratings to the highest questionnaire results and the lowest to the low.

The questionnaire is a fun device: it serves up introductory exposition about your setting in a punchy, interactive format, and tailors the community to your players' desires, increasing their investment in it. For examples of creating a community using the questionnaire method, check out *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, *Pavis: Gateway to Adventure*, or the online clan questionnaire at: www.glorantha.com/site-apps/clan/sartar.html

## Assigning Ability Ratings

If you're assigning community ratings at the beginning of a series, you'll be distributing the following ratings between the five abilities: 12, 9, 18, 18, and 12. Note that the size of the group doesn't affect the ratings—the Lunar Empire has more power than a small clan, but it's more difficult to bring those resources to bear on a dramatic problem. But there are times when groups are more effective than individuals.

To add community resource tracking to a series already in progress, add 1 rating point to each of the above numbers for every four sessions you've already run. Adjust this as you would for calculating base difficulty values (see page 113).

Distribute the ratings between the five abilities either by assigning them yourself, according to your conception of the community and its role in the upcoming storyline, or by questionnaire.

## In a Nutshell:

## Community Design

1. Choose the scale of your community.
2. Describe your community.
3. Specify an interval.
4. Define around five community resources.
5. Assign resource ratings:
   a) to fit your concept
   or b) by player questionnaire

# Sample Communities

## Varmandi Clan

This small clan of the Colymar Tribe in Sartar is notorious for their bitter feuds with their neighbors in the Malani Tribe, and their violent responses to any affront. The Varmandi are feared as bandits, mercenaries, and killers, but are also traditionalist and pious Orlanth worshipers.

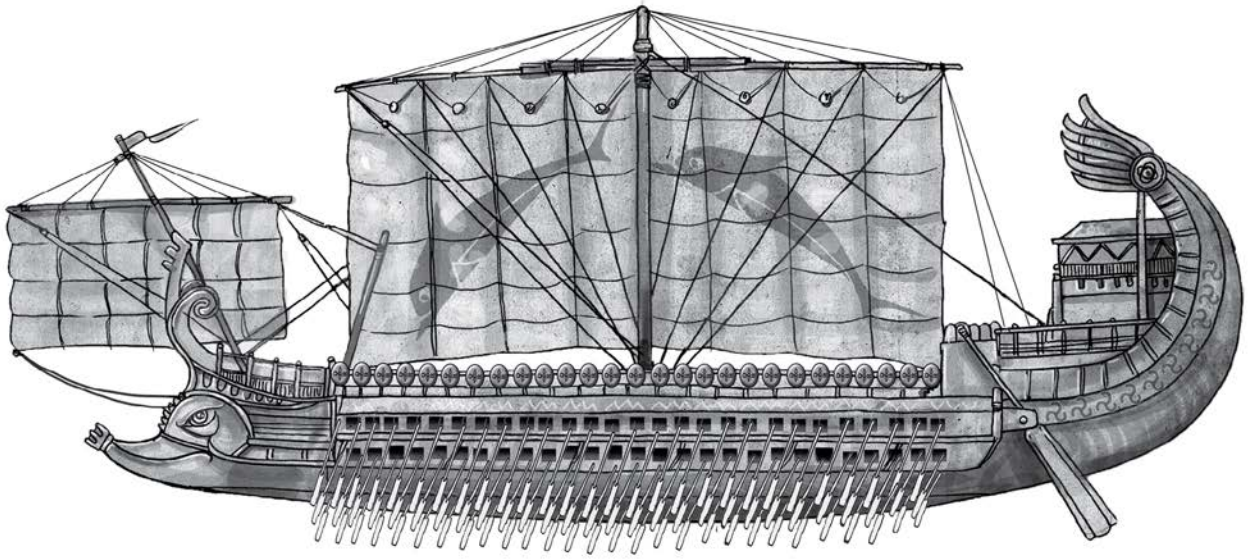
*Communication* 12: The Varmandi have a poor reputation throughout Sartar as bandits and killers.

*Magic* 9: The Varmandi are punctilious in their observation of religious rites to the Orlanthi gods and worship their heroic Founder at his grave beneath Vengeance Oak.

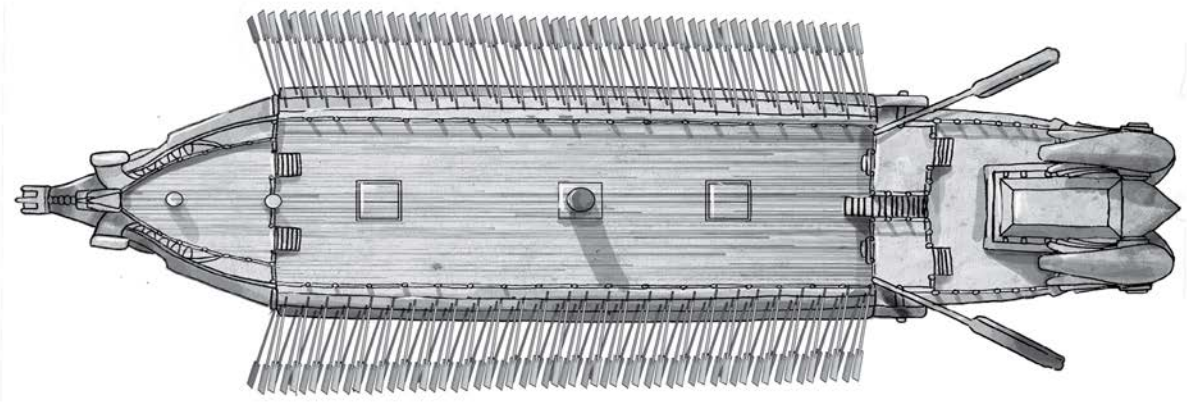
*Morale* 18: The Varmandi are divided between a more aggressively warlike faction and a faction that fears the clan is too weak to continue fighting.

*War* 12: The Varmandi are feared for their military prowess and their skill at ambushing larger enemies and defeating them.

*Wealth* 18: The Varmandi are not wealthy, but have surplus war booty from previous raids.



**Esrolian War Ship**
*This Esrolian trireme is a flagship, intended for more use in boarding actions than ramming and carries more marines than a typical trireme. It is about 150 feet long, with 170 rowers. The structure in the stern is used by the queen or her delegate and also contains shrines to protective deities. In the bow is a shrine to Dormal the Sailor.*



## The Trireme Delaeos

The trireme *Delaeos* is an Esrolian trireme owned by the noble Delaeos clan. It has a crew of about 200, made up of 170 rowers, 15 archers, and 15 deck-hands including the captain. The rowers are not slaves, but free Esrolians from the city of Nochet. The *Delaeos* is notable for having been in a naval battle against Harrek the Berserk and his Wolf Pirates and surviving.

*Communication* 18: The *Delaeos* is patronized by one of the ruling Esrolian clans who have friends throughout the Holy Country and beyond. Unfortunately they also have many enemies.

*Magic*: 12: The *Delaeos* guardian spirit is weak and primarily used to aid in the rituals to Open the Seas.

*Morale* 12Ш: The crew of the Delaeos are fanatically loyal to their captain.

*War* 9Ш: The *Delaeos* is a warship and attacks by maneuvering and then ramming into an enemy ship.

*Wealth* 18: The *Delaeos* is well stocked for local patrols but must often raid or trade for additional supplies on long voyages.

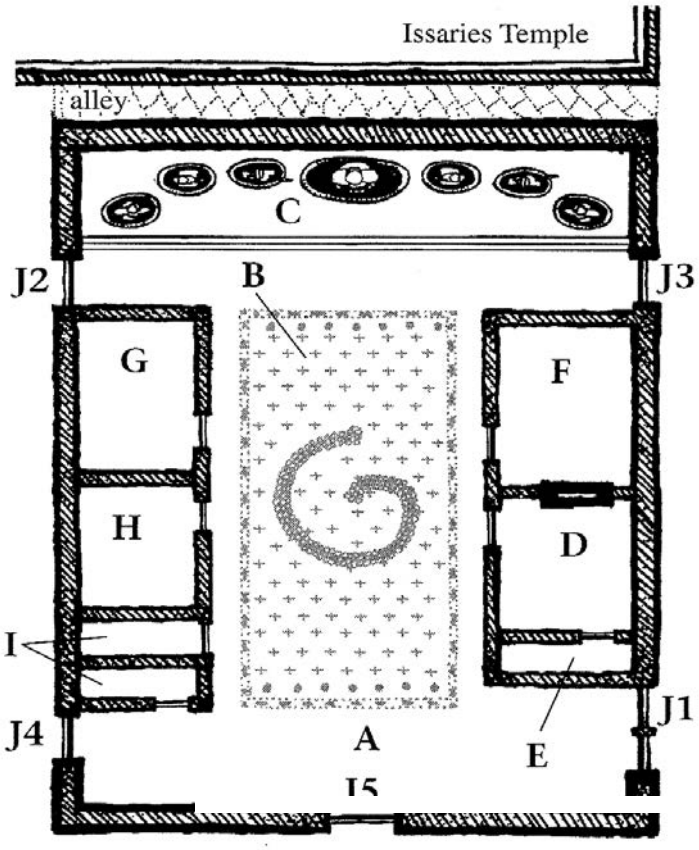
## Community Ratings

It may seem odd that a Sartarite clan might have the same War Rating as a Lunar Satrapy, but the resource ratings are not an objective rating of the raw military power a community has. Instead, resource ratings model how well that community overcomes appropriate obstacles within the context of a campaign. The Varmandi have a higher War Resource than the Delaeos, but the Varmandi cannot fight a naval action and the Delaeos cannot launch a raid against another Sartarite clan.

Different communities have different difficulties to overcome the same obstacle. Ambushing bandits might be **Easy** for the Varmandi, **Hard** for a Lunar Satrapy (whose regiments are better at fighting battles than ambushing bandits), and **Nearly Impossible** for the Delaeos. The Game Master must use her discretion and judgment when determining the difficulty level for a particular community.

# The New Pavis Air Temple

## Key Locations




**A. Narthex and Assembly Area:** *The congregation usually assembles here before proceeding into the courtyard. The floor is paved with bricks and is free from obstructions.*

**B. Courtyard:** *This courtyard, open to the air and exposed to the elements, is where the Orlanthi stand during worship ceremonies. The courtyard is paved with bricks, which are laid to form an Air Rune spiral.*

**C. Sanctuary.** *This is the domain of the priests of the cult. Statues of the various storm deities line the end wall; all inclined slightly to face and pay homage to the central cult image of Orlanth, which, at 7 feet high, is twice the size of the others. Several of the statues were damaged in some way during the Lunar sack of the city; but the Orlanth statue in the center is unharmed and Argrath replaced the worst damaged statues. Sacrifices are made here and votive offerings are displayed.*

**D. High Priests' Chambers:** *This is High Priest's audience chamber. The High Priest has a house in the Oldtown of Pavis.*

**E. Vestry.** *This small, dim room stores the cult treasures. The door is usually locked.*

**F. Storm Voice's Hall:** *The cult priests meet here.*

**G. Small sanctuary.** *Votive offerings and cult equipment are stored here.*

**H. Meeting Room:** *This room is used for non-ceremonial cult meetings. Its use was forbidden during the Lunar Occupation.*

**I. Latrines.**

**J. Entrances:** *The temple has four entrances. The original ceremonial gateway (J5) was reopened by Argrath. The new main entry (J1) is in the south-eastern corner. Both entries have double doors made of thick Heortland oak and bolted shut except on holy days. Two other doors (J2 & J3) open directly into the Sanctuary and remain locked except on holy days. The south-western door (J4) is used at all other times.*

## New Pavis Air Temple

The temple of Orlanth in New Pavis was the religious center of Pavis County before the Lunar invasion in 1610. Under Lunar rule, the cult is persecuted but too powerful to outlaw. The Lunars watch the temple and its priests carefully but do not molest them.

*Communication* 18: The Air Temple is persecuted by the Lunar Empire and has few allies outside of its own members and closely associated cults.

*Magic* 12Ш: The Air Temple is protected by powerful magical guardians and can summon deities to help its worshipers.

*Morale* 12: The Air Temple is divided by the conflict between its two most powerful priests. The High Priest is a foreigner and on reasonably good terms with the Lunar occupiers. Its holiest devotee is an adventurous rebel.

*War* 9Ш: The Air temple commands the loyalty of the clans of Pavis County, and its priests are fearsome warriors in their own right.

*Wealth* 18: Although much of the temple's wealth was taken during the Lunar conquest, the temple still receives support from its loyal members.

## Drawing on Resources

Heroes can use resources as their own after convincing their people to let them expend precious assets. This requires a preliminary contest using a social ability, most likely the hero's community relationship. Use a Moderate difficulty as your baseline, with higher difficulty when the heroes' proposals seem selfish or likely to fail, and lower ones when everyone but the dullest dolt would readily see their collective benefits. Increase difficulty if the group draws constantly on community resources without replenishing them.

As is always the case, both the lobbying effort and the actual resource use requires framing, a clear description of what the heroes are doing, and other details to bring them to fictional life.

Heroes can use resources directly, or to augment their own abilities. Unlike hero abilities, each use of a community resource temporarily depletes it. On a victory, the heroes win the prize specified by contest framing, and a penalty is applied to subsequent uses of the resource. On a defeat, the heroes lose the prize and a severe penalty is applied to subsequent uses of the resource. If the heroes fail to secure the prize

### Example: Clan Resources

*The clan is the basic social unit for many Gloranthan cultures. Individuals are expected to go to their clan when they need help. The clan is invested with the primary responsibility of interacting with those outside of the clan.*

**ᚺ Communications Resource**

**Legal Help:** Most clans maintain a lawspeaker, whose responsibility it is to know (through memorization and writing) the legal traditions of the clan. The lawspeaker can give shrewd legal counsel that can help the heroes avoid the legal ramifications of their actions (such as outlawry) or win a dispute with another clan or tribe.

**Guest Rights:** Many clans maintain reciprocal guest rights, where a guest from one clan is given food, lodgings, and protection from the host clan. Such rights can make travel across Dragon Pass far safer (and easier).

**ᚱ Magic Resource**

**Magical Help:** The clan can lend magical support to the heroes, such as casting Rune magic, teaching rites, lending artifacts, and assigned priests to accompany the heroes. The clan can even ask the clan magical guardian (or wyter) to accompany the heroes, although that poses grave potential risks to the clan itself.

**Ш Morale Resource**

**Advice:** The clan has experts and specialists in all facets of everyday life. The clan leaders give counsel and sage advice, and in special cases, a priest can even accompany the heroes to give continued counsel.

**Moral Support:** If the clan as a whole is willing to back the heroes' actions, then it provides a tremendous incentive and positive impetus to their ability to succeed.

**† War Resource**

**Clan Champion:** Many clans maintain an individual who specialized in dueling and combat. The champion can accompany the heroes to defend them, or could even personally intervene on their behalf.

**Military Help:** Every clan maintains a militia and a small number of elite professional warriors. The clan might permit volunteers to help the heroes, or might even send its entire military contingent along to help.

**ᛝ Wealth Resource**

**Get Food:** The clan council dispenses the clan land to its members and is responsible for keeping everyone fed. They can order surplus food or land to be redistributed within the clan territory.

**Spend Wealth:** The clan has a certain amount of surplus wealth and can simply order that someone be outfitted as a thane, for instance, with all the accouterments. They might grant food, supplies, money, or other treasure to help the heroes.

they sought, the depletion penalty is also applied to the heroes' social and community abilities when interacting with members of their community. This reflects displeasure at their fruitless expenditure. Penalties from the Resource Depletion table replace standard penalties for defeat; they do not add to them.

Like other modifiers to resources, depletion penalties end at the end of the current interval. These include depletion penalties applied to hero abilities. However, a depletion penalty left unattended at the end of the interval can result in a permanent drop in the relevant resource. (Game Masters wanting resource depletion to lead to longer-lasting social penalties can, at the cost of some extra bookkeeping, have the heroes shed a 3-point penalty at the end of each interval).

| RESOURCE DEPLETION | |
|---|---|
| **Contest Outcome** | **Depletion Penalty** |
| Complete Victory | 0 |
| Major Victory | –3 |
| Minor Victory | –3 |
| Marginal Victory | –3 |
| Marginal Defeat | -6 |
| Minor Defeat | -6 |
| Major Defeat | -6 |
| Complete Defeat | -9 |

## Nested Communities

Heroes may have relationships at multiple levels. In a campaign centered on the Colymar Tribe, Maniski Two Spears could have a relationship to his Orlmarthing clan, his Colymar tribe, and even the Kingdom of Sartar itself.

Maniski Two Spears can use any of these relationships in social situations or to augment. But since the Game Master has chosen to track the resources of the Colymar Tribe, the other communities remain abstract. Maniski can mobilize the warriors of his clan to chase a Lunar assassin through the Colymar Wilds (using *Community: Orlmarthing Clan* to augment his *Relentless Pursuit* ability). When the assassin escapes to Bagnot, Maniski rolls his *Community: Sartar* to see if he can use the kingdom's formidable War rating for a campaign against the Tarshites.

Although communities nest, resources don't. The Orlmarthing clan has many warriors, but no War rating.

## Required Resource Use

As part of your setting design, you may specify that certain actions in a setting always require the use of a community resource. For example, a ritual propelling chosen heroes to the Other Side might always include an expenditure of community Magic resources to have a chance of success.

Actions requiring resource expenditure are exempt from several of the general rules covering augments. Because the resource use is obligatory, it need not meet the usual criteria for entertainment value. Also, when the resource is used as an augment, the heroes can also add a second augment from some other ability, adjudicated according to the standard rules, including entertainment value criteria. (This way, the required resource use doesn't penalize you by forcing to augment with a low-rated resource when you could otherwise use a higher-rated ability).

## Bolstering Resources

Heroes can add bonuses to community resources by seeking out and overcoming relevant obstacles, specifying in the contest framing that the proceeds of victory go the community. If they succeed, bonuses from the Benefits of Victory table are applied to a resource instead of one or more hero abilities. (The Game Master may rule that the bonus also applies to heroes in social situations involving community members, reflecting gratitude for their efforts on behalf of the community).

## Preserving Resources

Threats to community resources act as a spur to hero action. The Game Master may rule that the penalty from any contest outcome may be applied to a resource. (It might at the same time be applied to one or more hero abilities).

When choosing a penalty arising from a player defeat in a simple contest, use the Consequences of Defeat table. For an extended contest, the penalty corresponds to the second worst consequence of defeat suffered by a defeated group member.

Groups voluntarily conceding a contest by retreating or withdrawing cause their communities to suffer a bump down. Although the hero may escape harm, their community will certainly suffer.

## Background Events

Changes to resources brought about by the hero take center stage in a series, but in the background all sorts of other events periodically alter the community's prosperity. These include the actions of other community members, who are depleting and replenishing resources all the time, as well as the unexpected intrusion of outside forces.

At the beginning of each interval, perform a simple contest of each resource against a difficulty equal to the average value of all resources. These contests model events outside of the hero's control or influence; they can't be augmented or bumped up with Hero Points.

The result of the contest may apply a modifier to a resource, as per the following table:

| RESOURCE FLUCTUATION | |
|---|---|
| **Result** | **Modifier** |
| Complete Defeat | -9 |
| Major Defeat | -6 |
| Minor Defeat | -3 |
| Marginal Defeat | 0 |
| Marginal Victory | 0 |
| Minor Victory | +3 |
| Major Victory | +6 |
| Complete Victory | +9 |

Invent specific reasons for each fluctuation and narrate them to the players. It is possible that such results may spur the players to action and generate future game session possibilities.

Except where the group is exceptionally keen on tracking resources, skip the background events process when the heroes are long absent from home. Feel free to rejigger them to serve your plot purposes when they return. You may also want to shuffle this process offstage when the heroes are occupied by epic events. This prevents them from having to flee from a climactic plot development to go home and tend to the barley harvest.

## Crisis Tests

When resources endure penalties, the Game Master conducts a crisis test at the beginning of each game session to see if trouble strikes the community. A high but penalized rating can still lead to crisis, because people have adjusted to the equilibrium it offers and feel squeezed when it shifts on them.

A crisis test is a simple contest (one for each penalized ability) of the Resource Rating against a difficulty equal to the average of all resource ratings. Like background event checks, these can't be augmented or bumped up by player action. On any defeat, the community starts to visibly suffer.

- On a Communication defeat, a former ally becomes an enemy.
- On a Morale defeat, a rebellion arises in the ranks.
- On a Magic defeat, demons plague the clan.
- On a Wealth defeat, people have to tighten their belts and go hungry.

Resource crises serve as a spur to action for the heroes, challenging them to find ways to bolster the affected resources (see above). When bolstered, the crisis is reversed. If the heroes neglect their duties or fail, the crisis worsens.

Use crisis tests only as needed, as a tool to generate story elements. If the group already has enough story on its hands, suspend them until you next need a new plot hook.

That said, one interesting dilemma to confront your players with is a choice between two compelling resource crises: do they deal with the demons and let the rebellion simmer, or worry about politics and hope the demons go away on their own?

**Counting Cows**

*Groups wishing to codify community resources even further can tie the more concrete of their resource abilities to particular numbers per rating point. You might decide that each point of Wealth rating indicates a certain amount of trade goods, twenty-five cows, or a chest of gold. Each point of War might indicate X number of fully equipped soldiers.*

You may find ways for resources to interrelate. Hauntings might increase the intensity of rebellious whispers, which simmer down on news of a successful exorcism.

## Cementing Benefits

Bonuses from background events are temporary, unless the heroes take steps to lock in their benefits. Doing so requires the group to achieve a major goal, perhaps taking focus for an evening's worth of play. If the heroes succeed, the background event bonus may, as per the next section, later solidify into a permanent increase in the resource's rating.

When heroes cement a background bonus, the Game Master changes her notation of that bonus, attributing it to them.

## Resource Notation

Keep track of modifiers to community resources with a copy of the following record sheet. List the names and ratings of your chosen resources in the first row. Under the total column for each, list the total current modifier. Under the Hero column, list bonuses resulting from hero activities (as opposed to uncemented background events). When heroes cement a background benefit, add its bonus to the Hero column.

When hero activity reduces a penalty but does not eliminate it, alter the entry under the Total column to reflect the reduction, but leave the Hero column blank.

Use a pencil, as the numbers will fluctuate.

## Changes to Resource Ratings

At the end of your chosen interval, review your resource notation table.

Any resource with a bonus of 3 or more in its Hero column increases, by 1 for each 3 points of bonus, for a maximum increase of 3.

Any resource with a penalty in its Total column decreases, by 1 for each 3 points of penalty, for a maximum loss of 2.

Any remaining modifiers are now reduced to 0.

Now start a new Resource Notation table, with resource ratings altered to reflect any changes from the above process.

| RESOURCES | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ᚺ Communication | | ᚱ Magic | | ᛁᛁᛁ Morale | | † War | | ⧖ Wealth | |
| Total | Hero | Total | Hero | Total | Hero | Total | Hero | Total | Hero |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Having made permanent changes to the community's resource ratings, you restart the cycle by again testing for a new set of background events.

You may wish to perform the necessary figuring during a break, between sessions, or when inter-party interactions occupy the group's attention.

## Changes from Plot Events

You may decide that certain remarkable triumphs or horrifying catastrophes may directly alter a resource rating, independent of the seasonal resource tracking system given here. For example, if, at the end of a major plot line, the trolls have overrun the group's clan lands, razing all of the buildings and hauling off half the population to toil as slaves, they've clearly lost much more than the maximum 2 points a season. The possibility of a dramatic swing in community fortunes should be made clear by the Game Master during contest framing, so that the players know the stakes and can pull out all the stops to secure victory or stave off defeat.

## Changing Scale

Game Masters can inject a jolt into their long-running series by switching the scale of the communities they track. A game based on clans can evolve into a game of tribes when the clans begin to confederate (surely with help from the heroes). At this point you can assign new values to each tribe. If the tribes later join into nations, you can adjust the level of the series again—provided that the heroes are now gaining benefits directly from their relationship to the bigger entity, rather than the small part of it they started out with.

# Gaming Tips

No matter what rules set you use, running an entertaining roleplaying game remains a fun and rewarding challenge. This chapter presents advice specific to the *HeroQuest Glorantha* system, as opposed to more general advice on applicable to all games.

## Collaboration vs. Authorship

A narrative-based roleplaying game like *HeroQuest Glorantha* takes interpretive power away from rulebooks full of specific descriptions of various powers and abilities, and gives it to the Game Master. In doing so, it also takes a sense of control from the players, who select these powers and use them to influence the game world. For this reason, it is incumbent on you to give them that power back, and more, in the form of creative input. It's easy to improvise with *HeroQuest Glorantha*; all you need to do to create a new supporting character or obstacle is to quickly jot down a few words and numbers on a piece of scrap paper.

The narrative style has a poor reputation among some players, who assume that it means an overbearing Game Master will impose on them a pre-determined story, the outcome of which their heroes are powerless to alter. These assumptions usually spring from their past bad experiences with uncollaborative Game Masters. It is not fun playing in a game where the plot is so rigid that the heroes are nothing more than cardboard cutouts. Address these expectations by allowing the player's choices to lead your narrative. You might start the game with at least one possible interesting storyline in mind, but should always be willing to abandon it when the players seize the reins and take it in an unexpected direction (the "*Petersen Principle*"). Your goal is to move the story toward *any* thrilling outcome, not a particular endpoint you've already envisioned.

It does no good to treat your players as creative collaborators if they can't detect their own influence on the developing story. Solicit their input. It is very important to make the decisions of the players matter. Leave gaps in the storyline that allow the heroes to pursue their own agendas.

Create scenes with built-in opportunities for players to detail portions of Glorantha.

When a player scores an impressive success and you aren't sure what he'd consider an ideal result, ask for suggestions.

### Samastina's Saga:

**The Siege of Nochet**

After forcing Queen Hendira to flee Nochet, Samastina (with the aid of the other heroes) had herself acclaimed queen of the Old Earth Alliance. Kris failed to get the priestesses of Ezel to acknowledge her as Queen of Esrolia, and so the heroes returned to Nochet to consolidate their position.

Claudia lets Kris spend a Hero Point to take a new breakout ability from her Noble keyword to be *Queen of Nochet* +1.

The next session, Claudia informs the players that rumors of a Lunar fleet assembling at Karse has reached the court of Nochet. With the aid of Magatheus' Network of Disgruntled Lunars ability, the heroes learn that Governor-General Tatius is launching a military invasion of Esrolia to put Hendira back on the throne.

"We need to bolster the resources of Nochet if we are to have any chance of stopping the Lunars," says Kris.

*(continued on next page)*

When players seem unhappy with a result interpretation, find out how it failed to live up to their expectations. If you realize that you've made a huge error of outcome interpretation, don't be afraid to hit the rewind button. It's better to nullify an event that causes players to become seriously dissatisfied with your game than to compensate for it or work around it. Don't worry about breaking the illusion of reality by taking back a conflict interpretation: it has already been broken, by the expectations disconnect between you and your players.

Sometimes you'll encounter a domineering player who tries to take advantage of your willingness to rewind by appealing a huge number of your interpretive calls, in which case you'll have to push back. However, it's much more common—and damaging—for players to suffer in silence because they don't want to seem whiny.

Some players are going to dislike the narrative style no matter what you do. Among them are tactically minded players, who enjoy reaping maximum control over a situation with

## Samastina's Saga:

Claudia allows the players to try to bolster the city's resources. Each resource was assigned a hero, leaving Herrox as a reserve for assists or augments. Samastina has a Major Success in rallying the city's flagging Morale, giving it a +6 benefit of victory. Karganvale gets a +3 benefit to the city's War resource by recruiting Humakti mercenaries. Remarkably, Vargast manages to persuade the city's Earth priestesses of the Nearly Impossible – to invite Broyan the Vingkotling's magicians to defend the city, bolstering the city's Magic resource by +3.

Unfortunately, Orensulva's attempts to bolster the city's Communication resource by writing to local queens met with a Marginal Failure and Magatheus' efforts to logically organize the city's supplies suffered a Minor Defeat, reducing Nochet's Wealth rating by -3.

After the heroes' efforts, the city's resources were changed as per the first table below.

The heroes' efforts came just in the nick of time, for the Lunar Empire sent an even larger army than had fought at the Battle of Auroch Hills the previous year. The Field School of Magic was joined by ranks of Sun priests from Dara Happa, and regiments of feared Heartland hoplites camped outside the city walls. The siege of Nochet had begun!

Claudia says, "We'll handle this as an Extended Group Contest, with each Resource being drawn on by a single hero, who can augment the Resource. One hero can remain in reserve to assist."

Kris says, "As queen, Samastina will coordinate the Morale of the city. I'd like Karganvale to lead the military defense of the city and Vargast to lead its magical defense." Franziska and Neil both agree.

David suggests that Herrox be held in reserve for assists. "Herrox shouldn't be in charge of any of the resources – he's a Praxian and knows little about cities. Orensulva is literate and should handle Communication." Christine agrees, although warns she isn't sure what she can augment with.

Rick says, "Although I didn't do too well bolstering the resource, Magatheus suggests that he still remain in charge of the city's Wealth resource." All the players agree.

The contest is long and difficult. Samastina and Magatheus manage to eke out Marginal Victories, while Vargast scores a comparatively impressive Minor Victory over the Lunars. However, Orensulva's efforts to maintain Communication gets a Marginal Defeat, forcing Magatheus to try to use the city's Wealth to conduct needed diplomacy. Worse yet, Karganvale gets a Major Defeat, and the Lunars breach the walls of the city until Vargast uses the city's Magic Resource to stop the Lunar assault.

Once the contest was concluded, Claudia says, "After four seasons - nearly a year – the Lunars get news that the Warm Earth Alliance is marching to fight the Lunar Army in Esrolia. Tatius lifts his ineffective siege and marches towards the southwest. Nochet survives!"

However, the siege depletes many of the resources of Nochet, as per the second table below.

The players agree that Nochet is too militarily weak, too exhausted, and too isolated to pursue the withdrawing Lunar Army.

| NOCHET RESOURCES - bolstered | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication | Magic | Morale | War | Wealth |
| 18 | 12 | 18 | 1 | 9 |

| NOCHET RESOURCES - after the siege | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication | Magic | Morale | War | Wealth |
| 12 (-6) | 9 (base) | 15 (+3) | 15(-3) | 6 (-6) |

minimal risk. Because they actively seek out anti-climactic results, they'll have trouble enjoying a game where difficulties arise from the Pass/Fail Cycle, which is designed to keep the protagonists in interesting trouble at all times.

## Five Principles of Gaming

**The Stafford Principle:** As a Game Master, it is important to maintain a sense of wonder in the world. It is not possible for any mortal to fully understand the workings of Glorantha, and to do so takes away from the pleasure of the unexpected. A dragonewt won't do the same thing every time you encounter one. Leave room in your campaign for the unexplained, the mystic and the mythic. No matter how much you learn and experience, there is always more to discover.

**The Petersen Principle:** As a Game Master, you should do things that make the campaign fun. If you have a choice between two courses of action, always choose the one that will bring the most enjoyment to the Game Master and the players. The players will come up with things you never expected, and these plans and explanations might not bear any resemblances to what you anticipated. So what!?! If the new explanations are more fun and overall consistent with your Glorantha, go with them!

**The Richard Principle:** As a Game Master, always be prepared to wing it and make stuff up. If it is Maximum Game Fun for everyone playing and creates a good story, then sometimes a dragon can be defeated with a talking flower, or a player can try to "spontaneously resurrect" by wandering the Path of the Dead and seeking the way out of the Underworld. The consequences of such unlikely successes often make the best and most memorable stories.

**The Robinson Principle:** As a player, be willing to Embrace Failure. Sometimes your hero will fail, and that is what makes the game more interesting. This is not a computer game or miniatures skirmish where you need to succeed each time to continue the story. Sometimes failing is the story.

**The Meints Principle:** As a player, be mindful that there are others, including the GM, trying to enjoy the game as much as you are. Making the game fun for everyone else while making it fun for you is its own reward. Always remember to listen more than you talk and that kindness costs you nothing.

## Saying Yes

Many of us have unconsciously trained ourselves to reflexively say no to the players. If they ask if there's a high priest in the temple, or a hungry look on that lion's face—we say no.

That said, most situations can be enlivened, and made more collaborative, when you say yes to the players. Where the question is of no great consequence, a simple yes will suffice. When saying yes would confer an unearned advantage, make the players work for it by adding a twist or complication. Say *yes, and…* This grants the player's wish, but requires him to overcome a newly introduced plot obstacle to get it:

Players who become familiar with this technique can use it to seamlessly point you toward desired story developments, making your game more collaborative.

Assuming that players are unfamiliar with Glorantha, a collaborative Game Master treats specific details she's created but not yet introduced to the players as provisional, altering them if necessary to say yes to the players. Remember, Your Glorantha Will Vary.

## Saying No

Although it's best to say yes whenever possible, there are a couple of limited instances where the answer to player queries about a situation should be a flat refusal.

**Preserving a story premise:** A particular dramatic situation may exist only under certain conditions.

**Preserving narrative consistency:** If you've already established that a fact or situation pertains in your world, it's more important to maintain believability by sticking to your continuity. (Look for ways to have your cake and eat it too, by thinking of a ways to adhere to continuity *and* give the player what he wants).

**Preserving Maximum Game Fun for all:** If a player's proposed action would negatively impact the fun and enjoyment of the other players.

## Player Responsibility

Collaboration is a two-way street. Although it's traditionally the Game Master's job to oversee pacing and narrative flow, encourage your players to be proactive, to find interesting objectives for their heroes to follow, and find ways to break through when they get stuck.

Do this by posing suggestions in the form of a question. If they're deadlocked over some decision, the query, "So what's the best way to resolve this dispute?" may spur players to move through the problem in their own way.

# Magic and Cults

*Magic pervades Glorantha, and every hero has the ability to manipulate the Runes to create a magical effect. HeroQuest Glorantha presents three distinct ways to conceive of magic:* **spirit**, **rune magic**, *and* **sorcery**. *Each approach to magic harnesses the magic of the Runes in its own ways. Practitioners of each approach admit the reality and power of other viewpoints and procedures but it is difficult to specialize in more than one type of magic.*

## Overview

For all three types of magic, the Runes are the ultimate source of power. Each of the Runes originally belonged to a member of the Celestial Court, the assembly of Old Gods who ruled the universe between its creation and the Gods War. Two types of deities were recognized within this assembly: the Powers and the Elemental Rulers. The Runes divided themselves into various specialized parts, creating the gods, and combined with other Rune powers. The Celestial Court was destroyed with the coming of Chaos and the Core Runes are now owned by the Great Gods, but lesser entities possess specialized Rune powers.

**Spirit magic** (also called animism) concerns communication with the spirits that reside in the natural energy currents of the world. These spirits serve the magician with a specialized Rune power.

**Rune magic** (also called divine magic or theism) involves the worship of gods to experience mythological events. Those initiated into this method of magic may worship a pantheon of gods or devote themselves to a single god (or even a single aspect of that god). In exchange for worship, initiates can wield some part of the god's Rune power.

**Sorcery** (also called wizardry) involves the study of the Runes as permanent and indestructible laws of the universe. This approach is logical and imposes the caster's will upon the material world.

**Lunar magic** is claimed by the Lunar religion to be a fourth type of magic, which appears to be a weird combination of all three magical systems. Only those with the Moon Rune can use it. Many non-Lunars claim that Lunar magic is simply Chaos disguised with a glamour.

## Cults

Cults provide communication between mortals and the cosmic entities known as deities. A cult is an association of individuals, dedicated to a particular deity, who maintain the cultic rituals and responsibilities of that deity. The word "cult" literally means the care owed to the god and its shrine. Each cult has at its very core the revelation of a mystery in the rituals of cult initiation and heroquests. There are secrets guarded from non-initiates that transform the lives of the initiates.

A cult can be dedicated to the worship of great deities, such as Orlanth or Ernalda, minor ancestor spirits, or anything in between. A hierarchy officiates at sacrifices and acts as the intermediaries between

### The Questions

Since the beginning, basic questions have plagued every sentient mortal. The three approaches to magic are a way of answering these questions. The basic questions are:

*Where did the world come from?*
*Where do we come from?*
*Why do we die?*
*What happens after we die?*
*Why am I here?*
*How do I do magic?*
*How do we explain the other approaches to magic?*

In each magic section is a boxed text where a specialist in that type of magic answers these questions.

the worshipers and the deity. The hierarchy gains magical power (and a good living), the god gains power from the sacrifices, and the worshipers get whatever the hierarchy feels obliged to give them.

Some cults cross the lines of tribe and nation. Other cults are confined to a single city, clan, or even family. Some cults have one or more variants, called "subcults", that can range from a local variation to additional mysteries acknowledged by all but whose secrets are known only to a few.

One deep need is assistance lent by the cult to the individual to protect his or her life during difficult times. Another need is some assurance or guarantee of immortality: death casts the weak and the strong alike into the powerful maws of the cosmic entities. Still another need is to provide worldly guidelines to the individual, which will aid in the search for safety and preservation of identity.

In short, a cult supports the individual's way of life. It gives him focus to find balance within himself and with others, and with the world, and defines his relation with the universe.

## What is Magic?

To grossly oversimplify, Gloranthan magic is the interaction of mortals existing within Time with the timeless and eternal powers of the God Time.

In the God Time, there was no division between the worlds of men and gods, between life and death, or body and spirit. The Gods War introduced the power of Death, which separated all with violence, death, and entropy. War entered the world and the endless beauty and harmony of the universe was destroyed. Reality was fractured.

The eternal gods would have ceased to exist but for the Cosmic Compromise, whereby the gods that still were, voluntarily abdicated their free will within the temporal world rather than lose their All into the maws of non-existence. The gods remained eternal at the cost of being limited to their God Time actions; their actions in Time are fixed in place. If they were ever to transgress from their fixed portions of the universe, they would enter the temporary world where Death and entropy would rob and destroy them.

Mortals exist within Time. The necessity of Death in the world of Time is another result of the Cosmic Compromise. Mortals are separated from the gods, are subject to both Life and Death, and upon death their spirit is separated from their physical body.

The dualistic worlds of eternal God Time and mortal Time are the basic polarities of Glorantha. From these poles of opposition come all of known reality. Magic is the result of the interaction of these two worlds.

## Notes on Terminology

Most Gloranthans distinguish between gods and spirits; however, such distinctions are not consistent and vary from religion to religion. The various ways gods and spirits are classified provide an example of the amount of diversity that exists concerning how they are perceived and understood by different cultures. And yet there is a certain amount of commonality, although the labels often cover different groups or mean different things.

For the sake of convenience, we use the Theyalan terminology for supernatural beings in the rules for *HeroQuest Glorantha*.

## Theyalans

The Theyalans (which include the people of Dragon Pass, the Holy Country, and Prax) traditionally classify the supernatural entities connected to the Otherworld as follows:

**Gods**: Entities we offer (or could offer) sacrifices and prayers to and who eternally exist in the God Time. They include such great powers as Ernalda, Orlanth, and Storm Bull, down to lesser powers like Vingkot, Waha, Yinkin, personal guardian deities, and so on.

**Spirits**: The discorporate entities that are present individually in all parts of nature – animals, plants, rocks, winds, fire, soil, waters, and so on. Sometimes they are servants of the gods (and confusingly, the personal guardian deities sent by the gods to protect priests and devotees are typically called "allied spirits"); more often, they are independent of the gods and serve nothing except their own needs.

**Heroes**: Also called demigods, these are mortals who also exist in some manner in the God Time. Examples include Arkat, Belintar, Harmast, Jaldon Goldentooth, and Sartar.

**Demons**: Malevolent and harmful entities that might otherwise be classified as gods, spirits, or even Heroes. Some evil people worship them as they would a god, spirit, or Hero.

## Jrusteli

The Theyalan system is hardly the only common classification scheme in Glorantha. The Second Age scholars called the God Learners popularized the widespread Jrusteli system, which classifies such supernatural entities as follows:

**Cosmic Court**: These are abstract personifications of the Elements and Powers. Traditionally numbered 12 or 13.

**Great Gods**: These are the current owners of the elemental and other runic powers of the Cosmic Court. Most are burtae (hybrid entities that combine

more than one rune power). Widely worshipped by barbarians and *krjalki*.

**Srvuli**: These are individualized portions of the Great Gods, lesser versions of the greater. Each Great God has their own *srvuli*, often several generations' worth. Each generation is successively devolved from the original Rune power, and typically weaker and less significant. Most are *hurtae* (hybrid entities that combine more than one rune power). Barbarians and *krjalki* often worship individual *srvuli*.

**Spirits**: The weakest *srvuli* and *hurtae* are the spirits, a lowly, mindless form of energy without identity or individuality.

## Vithelan

In the Far East of Glorantha, the Vithelans have a completely different scheme for classifying supernatural entities:

**High Gods**: Called the Avanparloth, these are the gods of the gods, the entities that created the world. They are too distant for mortals to meaningfully worship them.

**Gods**: Called the Parloth, these are the overseers of the world, beings of permanence and unchangeability who seek to perceive, record, and exist in harmony with the unchangeable laws of the universe. Examples include Karkal, Prosandara, Veldru, and Yothbedta.

**Anti-Gods**: Called the Adpara, these are changeable and impermanent entities that act within the unchangeable laws of the universe. Examples include Bandan, Dogsalu, Oorsu Sara, and Orlanth.

**Small Gods**: Called the Parondpara, these are the supernatural entities who are worshiped on their home islands but nowhere else.

**Spirits**: When embodied with a material form, spirits are the life energy. When disembodied they can be malevolent ghosts, unless appeased through rites, ancestor worship, and spirit magic.

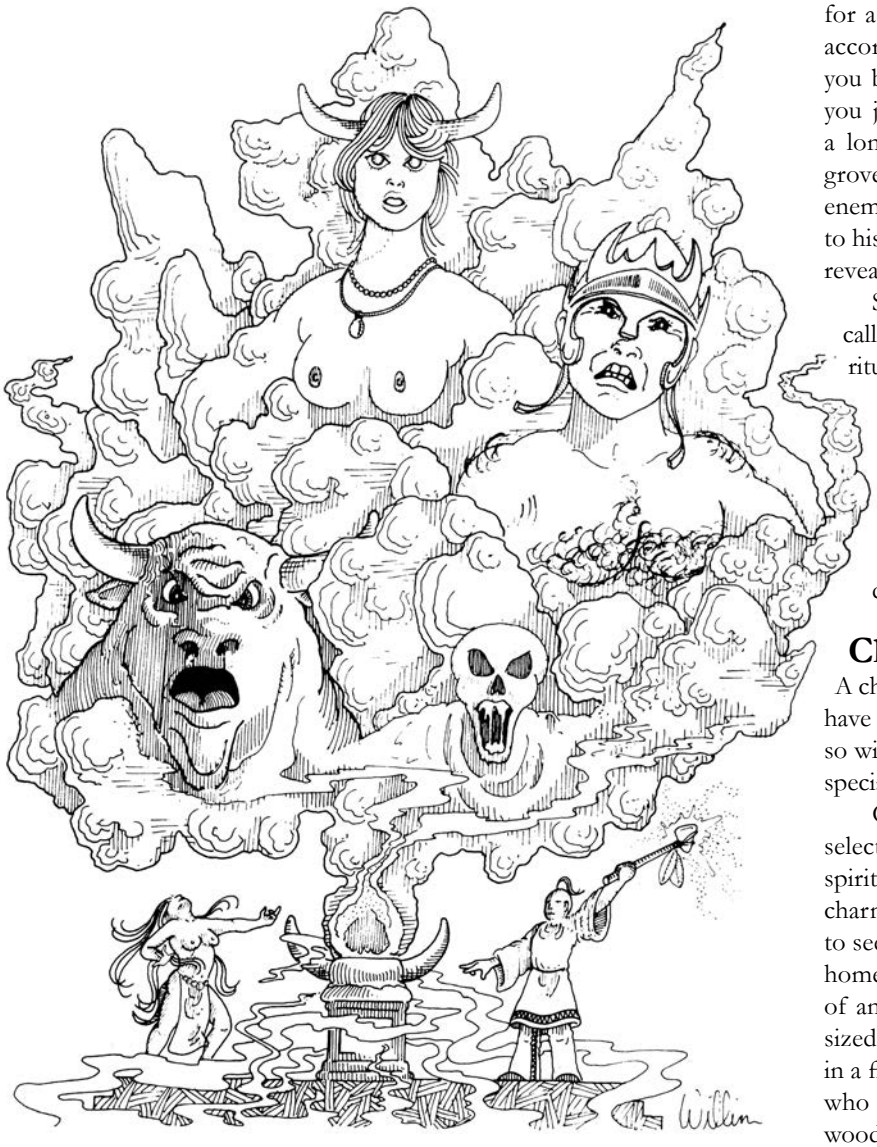
# Basic Magic

Some level of magic is available to nearly everyone in Glorantha. Upon completion of the rites that mark you as an adult member of your community, you can use your Runes to augment another ability, but cannot use them directly as an ability until you are an initiate of a cult. You cannot do anything overtly supernatural with it; you simply get magically better (in a manner consistent with the description of the Rune) at doing ordinary things.

For example, a hero with the Movement Rune might use that Rune to augment his fighting by attacking with "*blinding speed*". Or a hero with the Darkness Rune might use that Rune to augment her ability to sneak past the temple guards by "*staying in the shadows*".

You can spend points to create a breakout ability from a Rune. This breakout ability can be used directly, even if the full Rune cannot.

Magic in Glorantha is very much like the art of building bridges before Newtonian physics. Bridges were in fact built, and there were certain rough and ready rules for what was possible, but much of the theory was not worth reading. Similarly, in Glorantha it is known that this basic magic is done by the power of the hero, while active Rune magic is done with the power of the deity. Beyond that, ignorance reigns.



## Spirit Magic

To spirit magicians the world is alive and full of spirits – conscious entities who embody objects, places and creatures. Spirits are commonly placed into charms, which are used to perform magic. Anyone can possess and use charms.

Those with the Spirit Rune can communicate with spirits and are the specialists in spirit magic. The spirits speak to them and the spirit magicians learn to speak back, often by singing a simple song such as:

*Tell me your name, what do you do?*
*What do you want me to do for you?*

Whatever the exact words, the exchange revolves around a sense of mutual help and reciprocity. The spirit grants aid to the magician in exchange for a favor of like magnitude. Spirits grant power according to their natures. A rope spirit might help you bind things together. A frog spirit could help you jump, or render you fertile, or let you spend a long time in the water. The spirit of a willow grove might lend you shelter, warning you when enemies approach. A spirit magician's relationship to his spirit friends is personal, and not to be lightly revealed to others.

Spirit magicians participate in communities called **spirit societies** led by their shamans. Society rituals raise worship energy for the spirits and members receive communal benefits in return.

Your method of accessing spirit powers is culturally determined. Your community follows a broad **tradition** of worship, which includes several **spirit societies**. The spirits you revere and are experienced in dealing with define the tradition.

### Charms

A charm is something you have. All spirit magicians have the capability to interact with spirits, most do so with charms that are given to them. A charm is a specially prepared object that houses a spirit.

Objects used to make charms must be specially selected and prepared to house the appropriate spirits; this is part of working with spirits. When a charm is made, the maker negotiates with the spirit to see what it wants and part of this is always a fine home. Charms may take any form, size and be made of any materials, but generally are no more than fist sized. A spirit who can *Light Fires* may want to be in a firestick as it feels comfortable there, or a spirit who is *Sharp as a Bulls Horns* may be content in a wooden ring. Spirits have their own ideas of what

they want and they may or may not be the same as human needs or desires.

Unless you are a Spirit Worshiper, member of a Spirit Society, or a shaman, a charm is always a stand-alone ability that starts at a rating of 13. A charm should always list the Rune associated with it, its descriptive name and a taboo associated with using that charm. Players may also like to describe the object that holds the spirit for added color, but this is not required.

Calling upon the spirit of a charm requires spoken words and some type of formal body movement (usually a hand gesture). To use a charm, you must convincingly explain to the Game Master why a spirit of the sort you possess could aid you with the task you're performing. You know not to press a spirit into a task for which it is clearly unsuited, as this would release it from the charm, rendering it useless. The spirit is also released from its charm when you suffer a Complete Defeat on its

## Wisdom from the Shaman

**Where did the world come from?**
The dead gods made the world so long ago no one remembers. They were strong, and lived in a great garden. Rabbits came freely to the eating. If you dropped a seed you had to jump back when the tree sprang up with much fruit. But the dead gods failed at last – they tried to deal fairly with the Devil. The Devil slew the dead gods, blasted the land and killed everybody he could find. He made Chaos monsters to turn the earth into stone, so that the dead gods' garden could not return. Only Storm Bull and his friends fought, and Storm Bull finally imprisoned the Devil beneath the Block.

Waha is Storm Bull's son. He came out of the soil into a world of darkness and Chaos haunts. People still walked the blasted land, dazed and dying of stupidness. But Waha the Tracker gathered us and showed new ways to live. Waha Khan-of-Khans freed the Daughters of Eiritha from evil spirits so we could have herds. Waha Father-of-Khans founded many families of his own blood. Waha Killer-of-Chaos cleansed the land to make it safe. Through Waha's deeds, the yellowbellied god felt brave enough to come out of his hiding hole and began to shine on us again.

**What are the gods?**
The gods are the most powerful spirits we will meet. They are the masters of the Runes, who made Glorantha and then nearly destroyed it in the Great Darkness. Anyone who seeks the shaman's path will one day meet them and learn some of their secrets. Only shamans understand them fully. Priestesses and priests are the mere slaves of the gods.

**Where did I come from?**
At first, everything starved alike: bison, impala, high llama, sable and human. There was too little food. Then Waha made the Survival Covenant. Some became animals, able to eat thornbushes, weeds, and roots of the earth. Others, who became people, ate the plant-eaters. We gambled to see who would eat and who would be eaten. In every case but the Morokanth, who cheated, we humans won and became people. That is why we ride and eat the herd animals, and why Morokanth are people also.

**Why am I here?**
You are a relic from the Golden Age – you hold the holy life force. Your fathers and mothers lived through the Great Darkness and so, through them, did you. They lived, and you live, to fight Chaos and to spread life.

**Why do we die?**
Before Waha came, everything was dead or dying, and that is the way of the world. Waha taught us Death's secrets; how to use it for life. He taught us the Peaceful Cut to return our sister-animals to bliss within the womb of Eiritha, supplying our tribe with food from the Mother. Waha taught us the warlike blows, whereby we send our foes to dark hells.

**What happens after we die?**
Our spirits return to the Great Herd where Waha and Eiritha live and rule. Here we will watch over the herd of Waha, and when ready will re-enter the cycle of birth and rebirth for the good of the tribe.

**How do I do magic?**
The Horned Man came many years ago and taught our shamans how to talk to spirits from lost ages. These spirits do mighty magic, but the mightiest magic is done by our khan, who can call the Founder of our tribe to war.

**What is sorcery?**
Sorcerers are powerful magicians who have lost contact with the holy life force, and thus have no access to the pure magic of the spirits. They spend many years learning terrible arts which do not seem dangerous to them but which shrivel their spirits. When they die, their spirits are like ashes.

use; on a Major Defeat, you can't draw on the spirit again until the next session, as it must undertake a time-consuming journey back to the charm from its original home in the Spirit World.

## Taboos

Whatever a charm's size and power there are always special restrictions called taboos that originate from its spirit. This is another part of the negotiation when a charm is made. Taboos ensure the happiness of the spirit within and may not always make sense to humans. The spirit in the firestick's taboo may be to *Never Get It Wet*, the *Sharp as Bulls Horns'* taboo maybe to offer a piece of kidney from an animal it has helped kill to it - *Feed Kidney*.

Taboos should be colorful and should be created in cooperation with the Game Master and other players. Taboos should be narrow in scope, but applicable to the scope of play. A taboo of *Never Ride a Horse* is of no use in a land where no one rides horses.

The Game Master now treats your highest-rated Spirit Rune breakout ability (or the Spirit Rune itself if you have no breakout abilities) as a flaw. Any attempt to behave contrary to the taboo of a particular spirit helper results in a contest in which you must overcome this flaw to succeed. If you do succeed, you may act as you wish, but you suffer a Consequence of Defeat to use that spirit helper's magic.

## Spirit Worshipers

With the Spirit Rune, comes the ability to hear, see, and communicate with spirits, though it in and of itself grants you no special persuasive powers in dealing with them. The Spirit Rune alone simply allows you to interact with the spirits of objects, plants and animals as you would with any other supporting character.

Write after your Spirit Rune your specific tradition and its defining Runes. For example:

- Praxian Tradition
- Hsunchen Tradition
- Golden Bow Tradition
- Kolating Tradition

As a spirit worshiper, you possess a number of **charms**, fashioned for you by more potent and experienced spirit magicians. These are ritually crafted objects containing spirits associated with your tradition.

Give yourself up to five charm breakout abilities as part of your Spirit Rune rating. Define each of these by describing the type of magic it contains. Effects evoke the natural world or very simple technologies. Each spirit is in turn associated with a Rune, which is the source of the spirit's magic.

For spirit worshipers, a charm's innate power is based on the Spirit Rune rating although you can spend a Hero Point to improve a charm ability above your Spirit Rune rating. Write this as "+1" or whatever, like any ability within a keyword. Increasing a rating in a charm means you have deepened your relationship with its spirit.

Unless you are a member of a spirit society or a shaman you may use charms based on the Spirit Rune **only to augment**; they do not produce overtly supernatural effects. Charms that are stand-alone abilities may, of course, be used directly.

You are expected to participate in your community's rituals and contribute to its survival. If you fail to help, the Game Master may apply situation modifiers against your Spirit Rune.

## Spirit Societies

If you have at least a 1 rating in your Spirit Rune or in a charm, you may specify that you belong to a spirit society (if you meet any other prerequisites). Spirit societies are cults with special relationships to spirits that grant powers to its members. You may select one or more spirit societies of your culture's tradition, forming a bond to spirits who deliver magic of a particular type. In so doing, you also join a community, consisting of the local followers of your spirit society. Write your spirit society beneath your tradition:

Praxian Tradition
Waha spirit society

Your Spirit Rune ability grants you the power to open a window into to the Spirit World, allowing you to initiate rituals and communicate with the powerful spirits that reside there. You can even enter the Spirit World, but doing so without a *fetch* (a shaman's personal spirit) is extremely dangerous.

You may use the spirits in your charms to act directly rather than merely augmenting. You may also describe extraordinary effects. These effects correspond to the spirit types permitted by your spirit society. You may increase your ability in a charm or the spirit society keyword without limit. Depending on story pacing, the Game Master may require you to play out the acquisition of a new spirit, perhaps overcoming one or more story obstacles.

Once per session per charm, you may specify that you are releasing the spirit from its containing object as you draw on its power gaining a +3 bonus. However you can't draw on the spirit again until the next session, as it must undertake a time-consuming

journey back to the charm from its original home in the Spirit World.

You may take one or more free-roaming spirit helpers as companions. These spirit helpers also impose a taboo.

With your Spirit Rune, you may make charms for others. Once per session, conduct a simple contest of your Spirit Rune against a Moderate difficulty. On any success, you fashion a charm usable by any hero. If you give it to a player hero, the hero must buy a new ability, at the usual beginning rating, to make use of it. If you give it to a non-player character (not including your followers) you gain a social, economic or other benefit commensurate with your success level.

You are expected to devote time to support to your spirit society.

As a member of a spirit society, you may use abilities or keywords granting you divine magic or sorcery. You will face the disapproval of your community if these are not part of your tradition.

## Joining a Spirit Society

You may become a member of a spirit society during play. In addition to the mastery requirement, the Game Master may require you to overcome a plot obstacle to achieve acceptance by local adherents of your spirit society.

## Shamans

A shaman is a powerful spirit magician capable of traveling into the Spirit World. To become a shaman, you must:

- Have the Spirit Rune at 11 or greater.
- Overcome a major plot obstacle during an ordeal culminating with your first solo journey to the Spirit World to awaken your **fetch**.

Shamans are effectively members of a spirit society. In addition to the benefits of spirit society membership, shamans get the following abilities:

- A shaman has the abilities of a spirit society member in every spirit society associated with his Tradition that he is eligible to join.
- Once per session per charm, you may specify that you are releasing the spirit from its containing object as you draw on its power gaining a +9 bonus. However you can't draw on the spirit again until the next session, as it must undertake a time-consuming journey back to the charm from its original home in the Spirit World.
- A shaman may travel to the Sky World and the Underworld if prepared.
- A shaman may take up to a dozen others with him to the Spirit World.

As a shaman, you do not need to renounce magic from divine or sorcerous sources, or from other traditions, but you can't make use of them while you remain a shaman unless that is part of your tradition.

Your duties to community and practice increase along with your power; when contesting against your Spirit Rune as a flaw, you will always have a penalty of at least –6. Where time commitments are concerned, your Game Master will work to make them part of the hero's reality while ensuring that you always have something interesting to do in the story.

### The Fetch

A **fetch** is a special spirit that is an incorporeal second self. It stays behind to stand guard over your physical body when you leave it to journey in the Spirit World. It remains in the Middle World when you are in the Spirit World and vice versa. It renders you immune to multiple opponent penalties from spirits and other discorporate entities. With its aid, you can immediately escape from the Spirit World with a simple contest success against a difficulty no greater than Moderate, bringing any companions back as well.

The fetch is treated as a breakout from the shaman's Spirit Rune. If your fetch is somehow destroyed, you die, too.

## Spirit Traditions

A spirit tradition teaches a way of life and how to live amongst Nature without hostility. Each tradition identifies and describes various spirits that can be summoned, bargained with, or conquered. A tradition usually encompasses several spirit societies.

### The Praxian Tradition

The Praxian tradition is the most important religious practice for the nomad tribes of the Wastelands. It follows the standard *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules for spirit practices, with one notable exception; some spirit societies also act as Rune cults. For this reason spirit practitioners are called initiates in this tradition. The three main societies that have this duality are: Waha, Eiritha, and Storm Bull. A few minor societies also have this exception. If a hero with a Spirit Rune has a Rune of one of these cults, he may also use the matching Runes as well as all of the spirit society benefits.

### Mythos and History

When Waha was born in the midst of the Great Darkness, the world was breaking apart as Chaos exerted itself. He traveled the broken land of his parents, Storm Bull and Eiritha, freeing and gathering up the surviving inhabitants and parts of Genert's Garden; the peoples of the land, good spirits who were helping others survive, captured spirits whom he freed, and those who had been changed by the Gods War and the coming of Chaos.

### Nature of the Tradition

The Praxian Tradition knows many friendly spirits that form a hierarchy of spirit societies within the tradition. Chief among them are the Great Three: Waha, Eiritha, and Storm Bull. The three societies of the Old Friends form a second supporting tier: Helpwoman, Foundchild and Daka Fal. Finally there are dozens of smaller societies each filling a specialist niche, and many unaffiliated spirits that can be contacted with the right abilities.

Within the tradition there is the same gender split that is present throughout Praxian society that may limit the hero's choices. There is no room for change in this harsh land; heroes must fulfill their traditional roles. For each path, the tradition provides a broad understanding of the Spirit World.

The Praxian Tradition is the only path to shamanism amongst the Praxians. Within the tradition there are three main paths to becoming a shaman: Waha, (male only), Eiritha (female only), and Daka Fal (both male and female). All of the shaman paths consider other spirit societies as friendly, and may within certain limits lead their ceremonies. The limits are gender and taboo based.

The Wastelands are alive with spirits and in wandering their land they move through their Spirit World. Members of this tradition move easily between the worlds, caught in ancient patterns.

### Enemies

Wakboth the Devil is the main enemy of the tradition. Through his minions he launches attacks against the Praxians: Mallia, Spirit of Plague; Thed, Mother of Broos, and many other Chaos horrors. Many other spirits hate the Praxians because of actions during different ages and history. These hostile spirits include the Wild Hunter, Water Serpents, Hungry Ghosts, the spiritual cesspools of Thed, and many ghosts and unsettled entities from the Spirit World.

### Organization

The tradition is organized mostly along gender lines. Most men and women follow Waha and Eiritha, respectively. Both may instead follow Storm Bull, although few women do so. Some of both genders follow Daka Fal.

The tradition leaders are naturally the shamans. Each tribe has a tribal shaman of great power. Ranking is based on how many societies they lead and their personal power. Generally it is the leader of the Waha society who becomes the tribal shaman. In the Sable and Morokanth tribes, the leader of the Eiritha society is the tribal shaman. All other shaman form a hierarchy depending on the societies they lead. Spirit-talkers under certain circumstances can lead spirit societies; they are always ranked lower than a shaman, but higher than an initiate.

### Holy Places
The tradition has many sacred places in the Wastelands, the most sacred being the Paps and the Block.

## Other Dragon Pass Spirit Traditions
The human inhabitants of Dragon Pass follow several spirit traditions other than the Praxian Tradition of the Wastes.

### Golden Bow Tradition ᛟ⊙
The Golden Bow Tradition is followed by the Pure Horse People of the Grazelands. Its shamans can summon powerful spirits of Fire and Sky to aid them in their deeds so long as their people ride upon horses as brothers and herd no other animals.

### Hsunchen Tradition ᛟᛉ
The Hsunchen tradition differs from folk to folk in detail and philosophy but is consistent in its origin and spirit connections. Korgatsu the World Dragon (called Hykim and Mikyh by Western philosophers) is the leading figure in Hsunchen shamanism. The Hsunchen believe that their particular tribe is descended from an ancestral animal. They worship their totemic beasts and their spirit magicians can shape change into animal form. They are usually called Skin-walkers by the Theyalans. The Telmori Wolfrunners are the largest Hsunchen tribe in Dragon Pass.

### Kolating Tradition ᛟᛜ
The Kolating tradition is the most important source of spirit magic for the Orlanthi of Dragon Pass and the Holy Country. It follows the standard *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules for spirit practices. See the *Sartar Companion* for additional details.

# ᚱ Rune Magic
In Glorantha, the gods and their manifestations are real. Gods are the most potent beings in the universe. The most powerful of them are far stronger than any spirits.

There is a hierarchy among deities, ranging from Great Gods such as Orlanth and Ernalda down to tribal ancestors, wood nymphs, and local Heroes. Any of these may be the object of a Rune Cult, though a powerful god can lend far more power to its initiates than a weak one can.

Worship of a god consists of sacrifices to strengthen the deity, and guarantees that the god will deliver its magic when promised.

## Rune Cults
A Rune Cult is an association of individuals, dedicated to a particular deity, such as Orlanth and Ernalda, minor ancestors or Heroes, or anything in between. The cult maintains the rituals and responsibilities for its god. The word "cult" literally means the care owed to the god and its shrine.

A cult consists of initiates and a hierarchy (which may include priests, shamans, devotees, or even favored initiates). The hierarchy officiates at sacred rituals and acts as the intermediaries between the initiates and the god. The hierarchy gains magical power (and often a good living), the god gains power from the rituals, and the initiates get whatever the hierarchy feels obliged to give them. Each cult has at its very core the

revelation of a mystery in the rituals of cult initiation and heroquests. These are secrets that transform the lives of the initiates and are zealously guarded from non-initiates.

Initiates gather for sacred rituals and provide service and support to the god and the cult. Cults may be based at specific sacred sites, or may create a temporary one through a ritual. A single god may have several different cults dedicated to it. However, not all gods have cults; some cults are found only at a particular location or amongst a specific group of people.

Cults may be divided into three classes, depending on how widely worshipped the god is and how powerful it is. There are actually several interrelated factors, as a god draws power from being worshipped.

The first and most powerful type of cult is that of the great deities. These are the owners of the Runes, and are known throughout Glorantha. These gods usually have subsidiary deities associated with them and their initiates have access to up to three Runes. Examples of this sort of cult are the cults of Ernalda and Orlanth.

A major cult like this will have more than half a million worshippers throughout the world and a large hierarchy with many temples. They are quite formalized, and shamans have little to do with them.

The second type of deity has anywhere from fifty thousand to five hundred thousand worshippers, There are usually no associated minor deities. The initiates of such a deity have access to two Runes. The cult of Waha is an example of this type.

The third class of cult is composed of minor deities, subsidiary deities such as mentioned above, heroes, and powerful spirits who have not managed to make the jump to godhood. They often have only shamans interrelating with them, and no actual priesthood. Lanbril is an example of a minor cult.

## Staves from the Storm Priest

**Where did the world come from?**

*Dead the world 'til Umath the Free,*
*Broke the sun's curse and moved the world.*
*Umathsons and stalwart liegemen set*
*the world in its present ways.*
*Now all feel the world's winds at their backs.*

**Where did I come from?**

*Humans are wind-born, freest of free.*
*Orlanth Breath-giver gives your first lungful.*
*Follow the winds, like Orlanth before you.*
*Yours is the path-choice, make it and live.*

**Why am I here?**

*Life is for living, feel to your fullest.*
*Challenge the challengers, carve out your place.*
*Faithful to friends, relentless to foes*
*Loving to kith, fulfilling your wyrd.*

**Why do we die?**

*Stale the world was, unchanging and solid.*
*No one could die, so no one could live.*
*Orlanth and Humakt, brothers in bravery.*
*Brought Death to the world and gave life an edge.*
*Slew they the monsters who undying plagued us.*
*First of them unchange, who binds us to sloth.*
*Now there is Death, who prompts us to live life,*
*Slayer of foes who brings respite to friends.*

**What happens after we die?**

*Death is a comrade, a tool for our needs.*
*Orlanth found it, and fought it in turn,*
*Defeated Death fully, and brought the Sun out,*
*Fulfilled is Quest, the Lightbringers' glory.*
*Death is the divider, guide to last journey,*
*Carries you safe to the gods' brazen hall.*
*There presides Orlanth, his table for Heroes,*
*Tell him your stories, take your rightful place.*

**How do I do magic?**

*Great among gifters, storm gods gave magic,*
*Taught runes to priests, first among followers.*
*Filled with breath, we become one with Orlanth.*
*Magic lets all men work with the world.*

**What are spirits?**

*Great were the gods who fought Orlanth's gifts,*
*Many were broken or made to be small.*
*Now the survivors are spirits for bushmen,*
*Shamans coerce their small magic charms.*
*Notice and praise those spirits sundered,*
*Some can be helpful, perform useful deeds.*
*Do not give them worship, keep*
*from them your soulforce,*
*That is for Orlanth King, their conqueror and liege.*

**What is sorcery?**

*Woe to the atheists, they die without gods,*
*Their souls sink slowly, fall empty to hell.*

## Temples

A temple is a holy place, consecrated to and protected by a god or gods. They typically have their own guardian entity and sacred objects. A temple is also a community and an important source of specialized magical resources.

A temple does not have to be a building; many Orlanthi temples are natural places that provide access to the Otherworld such as hilltops, notable trees, standing stones, or unique geological features. Some are even mobile like the wheeled oxcarts to Orlanth Adventurous that travel from place to place. The temple itself is served and maintained by any full-time priests that are dedicated to the temple.

## Priests

Priests are holy people with a full-time occupation of leading magical activities. They are responsible for maintaining cult holy places and regalia; performing sacrifices and key rituals; performing divinations; and organizing the support of the cult. Priesthood is not a general status, but service of a specific god (or gods) in one particular temple.

All priests are important people in the community, supported by their cult members. The community chooses the priests; some priests owe their position to their devotion or magical affinities, others to their knowledge of cult rituals and myths, still others to their bloodline or reputation.

Priests are fully supported by their local community, being given land, herds, and some portion of all sacrifices made to the gods. Because of this, priests are in a position to devote their lives fully to their god so many become devotees. Some were devotees before they were appointed priests; others devote themselves to their god when they become a priest. All priests are expected to obey the chief priest of their local cult. Individual requirements vary depending on clan and temple politics.

Priests often have colorful or descriptive names — "Storm Voices" among the priests of Orlanth, or "Swords" between the Humakti, for instance. Priests do not have any set game prerequisites but they must meet whatever requirements needed to fulfill their community duties. A community that appoints a priest of Orlanth who lacks the Air and Movement Runes is foolish indeed!

## Gods of Dragon Pass

The following list is non-exclusive list of the main gods of Dragon Pass.

**Asrelia:** Goddess of the Earth's Wealth, which she keeps in a treasure chamber far beneath the earth. Each winter she collects everything and counts it, and each spring returns what she wishes to return.

**Babeester Gor:** Avenging Goddess and Guardian, she wields a deadly axe and drinks ale made with the blood of her victims.

**Barntar**: The Plowman, the peaceful farmer-god, and backbone of the clan. He is the son of Ernalda and Orlanth.

**Chalana Arroy**: Goddess of Health and Healing, and on a larger scale of Compassion and Mercy. She is one of the Seven Lightbringers.

**Daka Fal**: The Judge of the Dead, who reviews the lives of mortals and sends each soul to its proper and just reward.

**Donandar**: The Bard of the Gods, whose instrument is the small harp.

**Eiritha**: Goddess of the Praxian herd beasts and daughter of Ernalda.

**Elmal:** God of the Sun, he was rescued by Orlanth and married into the Storm Tribe. He is a loyal thane, and guarded the homestead when the Lightbringers departed.

**Ernalda:** The primary goddess. As Goddess of the Earth Powers she is head of a pantheon of agricultural entities. As wife of Orlanth and mother of many others; she is the Family Goddess as well, with a pantheon of household spirits. She is also the independent leader of the goddesses, and Queen of the Earth Tribe in her own right.

**Esra:** Goddess of Grains, more specifically the Barley Mother.

**Esrola:** Goddess of the Physical Earth.

**Eurmal:** Trickster God, Fool, Lawbreaker, Outlaw, and Scapegoat, he is nonetheless one of the Seven Lightbringers.

**Flamal:** God of Vegetation.

**Foundchild**: The Hunter God of the Praxians.

**Gustbran the Bonesmith**: Redsmith of the Gods, this is the metal smith who makes the magical implements of the immortals.

**Heler :** God of Rain, originally of the Water Tribe but now a loyal ally of Orlanth.

**Hon-eel :** The Artess, the Dancer, and Second Inspiration of Moonson, this New Goddess is the goddess of maize, fertility, and rebirth for the Lunar Empire. She is also the ancestor-patron of the ruling dynasty in Tarsh.

**Humakt :** Son of Umath, brother of Orlanth. God of War and Death, and of all Endings. He even severed his family connections with the Storm Tribe to maintain his purity of purpose. He is chaste and/or sterile.

**Issaries :** God of Trade and Travel, and also of Communication in general. He is one of the Seven Lightbringers.

**Kero Fin :** Goddess of Dragon Pass, the ancient name of the land was Kerofinela. She is also the Mountain Goddess inhabiting the great peak in the center of the land. She is the mother of Orlanth and Yinkin.

**Kolat :** A Spirit, and member of the Orlanth Tribe. He is the First Spirit-master, who commands the Wind Spirits and aided Orlanth during the Gods War.

**Lhankor Mhy :** God of Knowledge and Writing. He is one of the Seven Lightbringers.

**Maran Gor :** Goddess of Earthquakes and Destruction, she is Ernalda's sister.

**Mastakos :** Charioteer of the Gods, personal driver to Orlanth, and in general, the God of Motion.

**Odayla :** God of Hunting in all its fashions: the chase from horseback, the stalk with bow and arrow, the stampede of herds over cliffs, the capture of great monsters in pits or with humble traplines and deadfalls.

**Orlanth :** King of the Gods, and principle deity of the pantheon. He epitomizes all that a man can be in the Orlanthi society. He is the Chief of the Storm Tribe. He destroyed the world by loosing the power of Death, and he created it anew by leading the Seven Lightbringers to liberate Life and Light from Death.

**Pelora :** Goddess of Grain for the northern Orlanthi regions, more specifically the Wheat Mother.

**Red Goddess :** The Goddess of the Red Moon, Sister of Chaos, Lurker on the Veil, and Goddess of the Lunar Empire.

**Sartar :** Legendary hero and Founder of the Kingdom of Sartar, who performed his great deeds from 1492 to 1520.

**Seven Mothers :** The original secret council that restored the Red Goddess to the world receives popular worship throughout the Lunar Empire as New Gods.

**Ty Kora Tek :** Goddess of the Dead, and the Land of the Dead. She is a gaunt and wasted deity whose worshipers prepare corpses, preserve remains, and guard graveyards.

**Urox :** God of the Desert Storm, a potentially harmful wind which sometimes blows into Dragon Pass from the east. He is unruly and lawless, but has powers that are specifically useful to combat Chaos. He is usually called Storm Bull.

**Valind ᘏᓂ:** God of Winter, whose land is the wide realm to the north which is covered with ice forever. In winter the Valind Winds blow snow storms off the ice cap and south across the continent, so that they gather at Dragon Pass.

**Vinga ᔓᘏᗯ**: Goddess of Woman Adventurers. Worshipers dye their hair red. She is worshiped as part of the Orlanth cult.

**Waha ᚼᗯ**: God of the Praxians. He shows people how to survive in Prax and the Wastelands.

**Yelmalio ᘐᘐ:** God of the Winter Sun, Preserver of the Light. When Yelm traveled to the Underworld, Yelmalio preserved the dim, cold light until he returned. He also fought against Orlanth in the Gods War.

**Yinkin ᔓᐁ:** God of Alynxes, the feline companions of the Orlanthi people. Yinkin is sometimes Orlanth's secret perception in a story, which leads him to success.

## Lay Members

Most cults allow people to worship without pledging themselves to the god or learning its inner secrets. Such worshipers are referred to as Lay Members. It is not unusual to be a Lay Member of several cults. For example, even the most devout Humakti will take the opportunity to attend an Ernalda fertility festival if it offers itself. But the warrior will have become a Lay Member of Ernalda for the ceremony.

Some cults will offer substantial mundane benefits to its Lay Members such as room, board, healing, and so on. Most however, are minimal. There is no magical benefit to being a Lay Member beyond being able to use your Rune to augment other abilities.

## Initiates

Initiation into a cult is a serious step, for individuals pledge themselves body and soul to the deity. A potential initiate must be a worshiper of the god of the cult and must swear to follow the commands of the god as expressed by the cult hierarchy. An initiate must observe the cult holy days and other cult strictures, and is expected to provide material and spiritual support to the cult. Violating cult obligations or leaving the cult can result in serious consequences, even magical attacks from spirits of reprisal!

The Rune associations of a god affect the powers of the cult, and make its worshipers better at using the elements or powers the god is associated with. Worshippers will imitate significant deeds of the deity performed during the God Time and thereby magically partake of them. These mythic acts and the worshippers' lives will be similar.

If you share at least one Rune with a god at a rating of at least **1ᗯ** and meet any other cult requirements, you can become an initiate of that god's cult. Initiation into a cult is a serious step, for initiates pledge themselves to the focus of a single divine entity. You must swear to follow the commands of the god as expressed by the priests of the cult. You must observe the cult holy days and are expected to commit a proportion of your time and attention to the god alone. Any hero can start out as an initiate.

Initiates develop a personal divine connection with that deity. As an initiate, you aim to emulate the god and perform in its myths and rituals, gaining access to greater magic than common pantheon worshippers. They join a sub-community comprised of worshipers of the same god, known as a **cult**.

All gods are associated with one or more Runes by which they may be approached. As an initiate of the cult of a specific god, you approach your god through the highest appropriate Rune you share with the god. Write on your character sheet Initiate of (Deity) along with the highest eligible Rune you can use as your divine connection to the god (e.g. Initiate of Orlanth ᘓ). This Rune is called your **divine Rune affinity**. As an initiate, your divine Rune affinity may also be used:

- As a personality trait, to reflect your closeness to the personality of your god, as indicated by the cult description.
- As a knowledge ability, to recount knowledge of the myths, rituals, and other lore of your deity, as well as the deity's conflicts with other deities or spirits.
- As a flaw, as used by the Game Master to hinder you when you attempt to act in a manner contrary to the ethos of your god. The flaw may also be used when you want to undertake actions that conflict with the time obligations cult membership confers on you. Game Masters relying on this device should take care to make it dramatically interesting. Simply negating a plot line can be frustrating and lead to disconnection from the story, or worse. Instead, this flaw should be used to make the hero overcome an interesting, additional obstacle, or to direct to another equally compelling plot branch where his adventures further the cult's objectives.

Initiation increases your magical effectiveness. You may now use all your Runes you share with the god

directly, as you would any other ability. Further, you may describe actions and contest results as overtly supernatural. Use the Rune as you would any other ability, except that credibility tests do not apply to them as long as your use is within the scope of the Rune. However, the Rune describes a wide range of magic, so it is treated as a broad ability (see page 103).

Many gods can be approached via more than one Rune. For example, Orlanth can be approached via the ᚐ Air, ᚒ Movement and ᚓ Mastery Runes - each Rune forming an aspect of Orlanth. Thus, someone who approaches Orlanth from the ᚒ Movement Rune specializes in the Adventurous aspect of Orlanth. However, an initiate of Orlanth ᚒ Movement can still call upon Orlanth's ᚐ Air and ᚓ Mastery powers (assuming the hero has those Runes) – just at the (presumably lower) ratings of those Runes.

The virtues, flaws, and cult special abilities gained from Runes, may vary from local cult to local cult.

You may be an initiate of multiple deities, but only to mutually associated and friendly cults, and only when their Runes are compatible – you cannot initiate both to the warlike Death God Humakt and to the peaceful Healing Goddess Chalana Arroy! Keep in mind that each cult requires a significant contribution of your time and magic – if you are initiated into two cults, you are spending half your available time in cult activities and worship, which hardly leaves you much time after other community commitments.

## Using Runes as a Cult Initiate

As a cult initiate, you may directly use a Rune you share with your god to cast Rune magic. You rely upon the power of your god to create the magic. The direct use of the Rune must be within the scope of the god's power and is subject to any restrictions that the god himself has (e.g., Storm Bull initiates cannot use the ᚐ Air Rune to cast lightning or thunder). The cult write-up for each god gives the scope of what the cult members can and cannot do with a given Rune.

Your Runes are keywords describing a wide range of magic, so it is normally treated as a broad ability. You can always specialize in abilities within your Rune; for example, an Orlanth initiate can specialize in casting *Lightning Spears*, which he can improve for 1 Hero Point.

ᚐ Air Rune 3ᚓ
Lightning Spears +1

## Acting Like Your God

As an initiate, your Runes have a greater impact on your personality. Your Game Master should give you a Situational Bonus or even a Plot Augment (see pages 104-105) on your divine Rune affinity when you have been consistently acting in a manner in keeping with your god's personality. Similarly, the Game Master should freely assign penalties against your divine Rune affinities when you have not been acting like your god.

At times it is possible that the god will compel an initiate to do things without the hero being fully aware of what he is doing; he may try to resist but at the cost of penalizing his Runes. This compulsion is more common during religious rituals, on holy days, and at places of magical power.

## Joining a Cult During Play

You may become an initiate of a cult during play. In addition to the requirement of at least 1ᚓ in one of the god's Runes, the Game Master will usually require you to overcome a plot obstacle to achieve acceptance by your cult and make it part of the story.

## Leaving a Cult

Leaving a cult is not easy and results in magical attacks from the cult's spirit(s) of reprisal. Even if the apostate survives the attack, he remains the enemy of that god and often of its worshipers.

## Rune Masters

The highest religious status in the cult hierarchy is given to cult members with an intimate association with the deity. These holy people can range from the part-time village god-talkers to the Rune Masters – magical specialists such as priests and devotees who are maintained and supported by their temples.

### Runes and Their Magic

The short description of the Runes on pages 14-18 gives the basic associations of that Rune. The Air Rune, for example, is associated with: Air, breath, violence, weather, storm, and wind. Orlanth, the owner of the Air Rune, can grant the broadest range of Air magic to his worshipers – even enabling his cultists to walk on the winds! Lesser Air gods can grant more restricted subsets of that Rune. In contrast, Valind is the god of Winter and can use his Air Rune only to create snow, wind, and ice.

The mythology of a particular cult can give ideas as to how that deity uses that Rune. Many powerful gods courted Ernalda and her cultists can call upon the Earth Rune to be similarly desired. Feel free to come up with your ideas and insights to justify using your Rune in a particular manner to overcome an obstacle. Of course, your Game Master has the final word, after all Your Glorantha Will Vary.

Some Rune Masters primarily represent the god in the physical world, often serving as martial defenders of the cult. Many cults have colorful or descriptive names for their Rune Masters – "Swords" among the Humakti, "Wind Lords" for Orlanth Adventurous, or "Goldentongues", for the traveling holy merchants of Issaries.

## Priests

A priest or a priestess is the most common Rune Master, with a full-time occupation leading magical activities and performing sacrifices. Being a priest does not necessarily require magical prowess, although many priests are powerful Rune Masters.

## Devotees

A hero who wishes to be a devotee must be willing to dedicate his life solely to his god and must abandon all magic that does not come from his god. He must pass difficult tests given not just by the temple hierarchy, but also by the deity itself. He is tested on his piety, his knowledge of the deity's myths, and his virtue.

An initiate with a rating of 11 or more in a divine Rune affinity may attempt to become a devotee of the corresponding cult. This should be through a series of plot obstacles, ideally that involve the other players to keep them interested, or done quickly.

If the hero is accepted, he is marked by the god, gifted with special powers, and has limits imposed on his behavior. He is now devoted solely to that deity.

The devotee must renounce his initiate status to any other deities. The devotee may still perform basic magic associated with their Runes, but can no longer use them directly. He must also permanently lose the ratings and abilities of any spirit magic or wizardry he had. A hero can only devote to one cult. Devotees are Rune Masters and given honorific titles such as Rune Lord, Wind Lord, Earth Queen, Sword, etc.

## Supporting Yourself as a Devotee

As a devotee, your time commitment to your cult becomes all-consuming. To spend so much time in worship and ritual activities, you must have some outside source of support or income, be it your clan, your temple, or a rich patron. Everything you do must either emulate your god, or aid your cult organization. Where time commitments are concerned, your Game Master will work to make them part of the hero's reality while ensuring that you always have something interesting to do in the story.

## Feats

A feat is a repetition of one your god's mythic deeds. When you become a devotee you learn one feat straightaway, and can learn additional feats by overcoming a small plot obstacle (such as traveling to the Other Side to experience the myth) and spending a Hero Point. With a feat, you fully identify yourself with your god and perform his magic as though you were the god. When you use a feat to accomplish a goal, you use the Rune rating associated with the feat.

Using a feat literally channels the full power of your god or the myths associated with him. Using a feat is not an invisible act: the devotee always exhibits some form of manifestation of the magical powers at his disposal. He might appear to grow larger, burn with an inner glow, crackle lightning from his fingertips, or even start to physically resemble the commonly understood images of his god. This is known as heroforming, whereby the devotee becomes his god or Hero. When using feats, players describe how this power manifests.

Feats are breakout abilities of a specific Rune. Some feats are wide in scope and have many powers associated with them; however, they also place the most restrictions on the devotee's actions. Others are narrow in scope (fewer powers) and have few restrictions other than emulating the god's personality.

- **Air** 11 – devotee of Orlanth Thunderous Lightning Spear +1
  Feat: The Thunderer +1

## Using Feats

Devotees using the magic of their god as feats are becoming one with their god. The devotee typically chants verses which bring the god to his attention, then into his soul, and finally, to share his body. A devotee can try to enhance his feats with a situational augment by reinforcing his identification with his god, for example by arming himself with the accouterments of the god in the same manner that the god did.

To use a feat, you must state the objective of the feat as part of the preparations. Once the objective is attained, the feat ends of its own accord. You may use the feat for any activity within its scope; but once you have invoked the feat you must end the feat to take actions outside of it, As long as you follow the actions in the myth, your hero can use the feat.

Feats are always considered to be specific abilities (see page 103) – even if the myth has multiple activities. A feat that has been specifically prepared prior to use and is appropriate for the situation can result in a major bonus of up to +9. When the feat is performed on the Other Side this bonus can be as high as +.

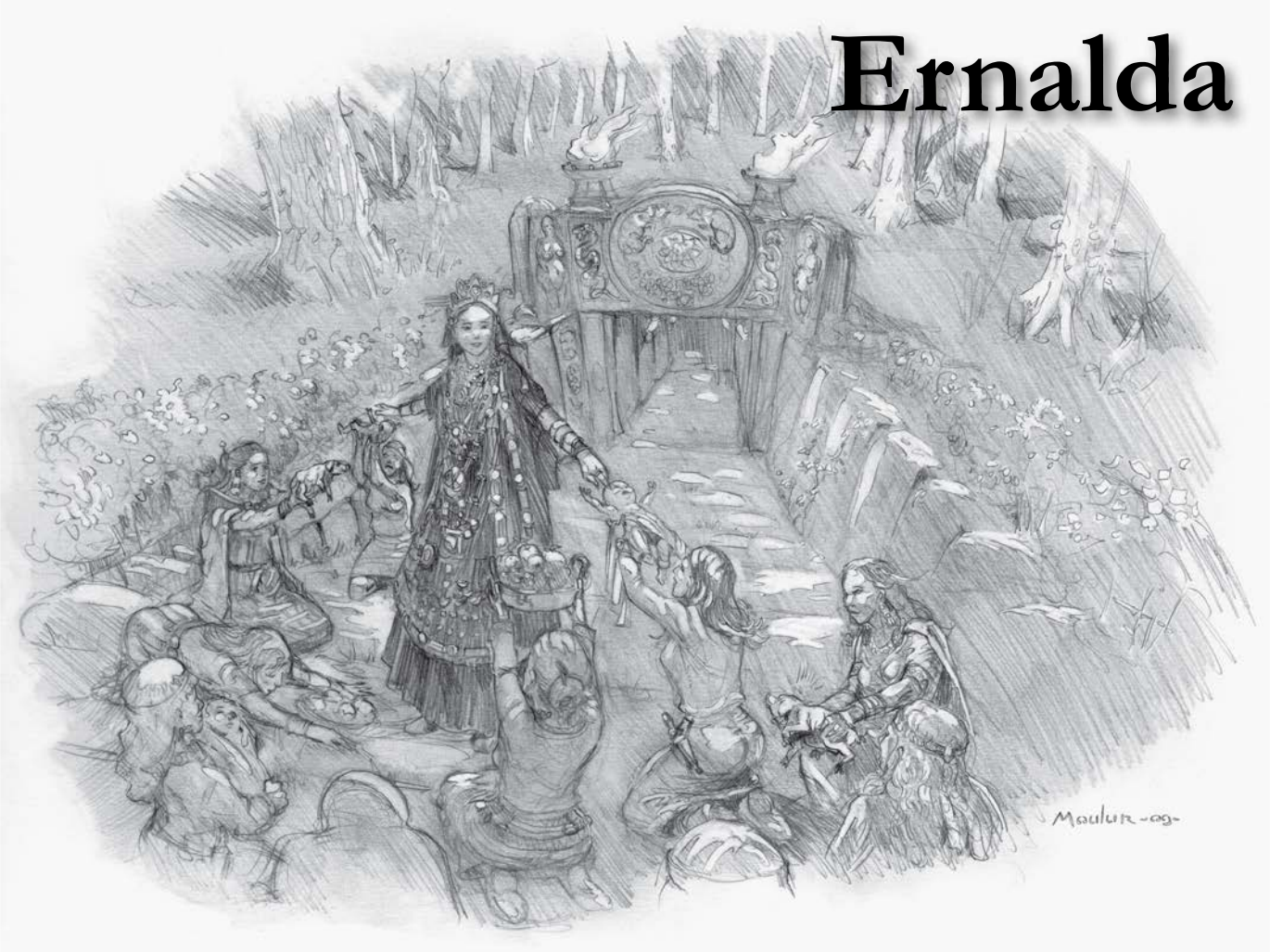
When you perform the feats of your gods, you **must** act as your god did in the myths or else weaken your magic. This is sometimes called an **identity challenge** – when you are forced to choose between acting as you want and as your god did. If you seek to do something outside of the feat, but not contrary to it, you must end the feat prematurely. At the Game Master's discretion you may suffer a Consequence of Defeat on the feat's Rune.

If you try to acting in a manner contrary to your god, your Game Master may force you to overcome your divine Rune Affinity. If you succeed, you may act as you wish – but your ability to use that Rune will be penalized by the degree of success. If you fail, you must act in a manner consistent with your god.

**Creating Your Own Feats**

*You can create feats that are appropriate to the myths of your cult. A feat should be described in a few sentences that give the scope of its powers and any restrictions on its use. A feat should have a starting point and an end.*

# Ernalda



## Ernalda

Ernalda is the Great Goddess, the goddess of women, sex, community, and all the things that live on and in the Earth She is the Earth Queen, the Life-Giver, Wife of Many, Supporter of All, and Midwife of Time. Ernalda is the owner of the Earth Rune and one of the most widely worshiped deities in Glorantha.

### Mythos and History

Once the seas covered all. But the world grew, and Gata, Empress Earth, emerged from the depths. Empress Earth joined the Celestial Court and birthed twin daughters Asrelia and Ty Kora Tek, who dwell deep inside the Earth.

Among Asrelia's daughters was Ernalda, whose beauty and bounty brought Life to the land. Many suitors vied for Ernalda's favors, and she gave them freely. With the God of Vegetation, she conceived Aldrya the Forest Goddess. With the Father of Beasts, she conceived Eiritha the Animal Mother.

From these goddesses came Life. Seeds spread everywhere during the Green Age, when everything was good. No drought or famine or violence visited the land. Everyone lived in peace and plenty all their lives, which went on forever. Asrelia gave Ernalda rule over the Earth and all who live from its bounty. With a myriad of lovers and magical activities Ernalda was responsible for most of the life on the Earth. Directly or indirectly, they are all dependent upon Ernalda.

After Ernalda's world-bearing was done, Emperor Yelm came and inaugurated the Golden Age. Yelm took Ernalda as his consort but sought to usurp her rule. Orlanth came to court Ernalda and proved he was worthy of her. With her aid, Orlanth vied mightily for her freedom and slew Yelm. Ernalda took Orlanth as her husband and together they ruled the gods. They had many children together, including Barntar, Voria, Voriof, and many others.

**Above**
*The Priestess-Queen at the Greenstone Earth Temple accepting offerings of food and fatlings, and blessing the children and mothers of local clans.*

During the Lesser Darkness, Orlanth protected Ernalda and her children, and when he could not, other gods fought for the privilege. In the terrible Great Darkness, when Chaos came to destroy the world and return it to its origins, Ernalda slept alongside the other Earth deities. Even in sleep, she mothered Babeester Gor, the Guardian Daughter.

When Orlanth came to her in the Underworld on his Lightbringers' Quest, Ernalda aided Arachne Solara and helped her weave the Great Compromise as the midwife of Time. The Earth Queen followed Orlanth and Yelm to Rebirth in Time with the Dawn. Even before she appeared, her daughter Voria went about the world with the promise of life, leaving a trail of flowers behind her,

Throughout Time, Ernalda has been acknowledged and embraced throughout Glorantha and all praise her gifts. In Orlanthi lands, the religion is properly called the religion of Orlanth and Ernalda. Other peoples who hate and fear Orlanth still lovingly offer sacrifices to Ernalda.

Ernalda saw the rise of the Red Goddess and neither acknowledged her nor fought her like Orlanth did. Although some Lunars suggest that Ernalda accepts the Red Goddess, the Great Goddess continues to provide strength and resources to Orlanth and his people in their fight against the Empire. In the late Third Age, priestesses of Ernalda throughout Glorantha have been gripped by visions of the coming Hero Wars, a second Great Darkness, and the Good Goddess once again leaving for the Underworld.

**Clockwise from center:** *Ernalda, Asrelia, Babeester Gor, Voria, Maran Gor, Ty Kora Tek*

## Runes

As the goddess of Earth, women, fertility, sex, and community, Ernalda initiates can make broad use of three Runes. Ernalda is one of the Great Gods of Glorantha, acknowledged even by many cultures that do not worship her.

□ **Earth Rune:** As the owner of the Earth Rune, initiates of Ernalda can make the broadest possible use of powers of Earth. A very incomplete list of the abilities Ernalda initiates have been known to use the Earth Rune for include: form, move, or shake the Earth, bless or curse growing things, bless or curse animals, bless or curse women, bless young, command or speak to any thing that lives on the Earth, corporeal love, enhance vigor, enhance female beauty, hide and preserve things in the Earth, hold things fast, pull things down to the Earth, have the Earth open up and swallow anything, learn secrets kept by the Earth, protect against magical and physical attacks, summon and command Earth elementals, and to draw strength and power from the Earth. The Earth Rune aspect of Ernalda is called the Earth Queen, and those with a strong affinity with this rune are pragmatic, prudent, and sensual.

⧖ **Life Rune:** As the Mother Goddess, Ernalda initiates can make broad use of the powers of Life. A very incomplete list of abilities Ernalda initiates have been known to use the Life Rune for include: bless birth, bless living things, bless mothers, induce or become object of lust and desire, accelerate growth of living things, make living things young, make living things reproduce, and multiply living things. The Life Rune aspect of Ernalda is called Life-Giver, and those with a strong affinity with this rune are generous, lusty, and vivacious.

Ⅲ **Harmony Rune:** As the Goddess of Community, Ernalda is the Binder and Weaver. An incomplete list of abilities Ernalda initiates have been known to use the Harmony Rune for include: join people and groups together, heal living things, heal relationships, heal places, create peace, guide her community, unite peoples, negotiate with others, find compromises, forge alliances, and find another way. The Harmony Rune aspect of Ernalda is called Binder and Weaver, and those with a strong affinity with this Rune are influential, sensible, and wise.

## Life after Death

Funeral rites for Ernalda cultists require interment into the earth or in a burial chamber. The corpse is cleansed, dressed, and given grave goods to assist them in the House of the Dead. In some communities the prepared corpse is burned and the ashes placed into an urn. The deceased's descendents then honor her with a funeral banquet, song, and dance.

After death, the soul resides in Ty Kora Tek's House of the Dead until eventually it is reborn in the mortal world. The dead are regularly offered food and drink by their descendents so they might continue feasting in the House of the Dead. Ernalda guarantees to her loyal initiates that she will go and get their soul even if the body is not treated with proper funerary rites. This way Ernalda cultists need not fear dying in a strange land among foreigners.

## Nature of the Cult

Ernalda is the Earth Mother. She and her daughters are the source of food, shelter, and society for most of life. Her worship is of vast importance everywhere. Ernalda is the head of a pantheon of Earth and agricultural deities, who serve her. These range from goddesses such as powerful Asrelia, Ty Kora Tek, Esrola, Maran Gor, and Babeester Gor to small household deities who protect the hearth and home.

Ernalda's husband is the King of the Gods, but she has taken many other lovers and husbands. The importance of each husband-deity varies with the deity and location, but all serve and aid Ernalda.

Among the Heortlings and Tarshites, most women worship Ernalda. Orlanth worshipers are ritually obliged to defend Ernalda and her worshipers.

In Esrolia, Ernalda is the prime deity. Orlanth is one of several husband-deities (including some not commonly associated with her elsewhere) worshiped by men. These husband-deities serve as Ernalda's guards and servants. Ernalda's priestesses exert tremendous influence on local government, which is a matriarchal theocracy.

## Particular Likes and Dislikes

Ernalda is the wife of Orlanth and the likes and dislikes of her worshipers match those of Orlanth's followers. All worshippers of Ernalda receive the protection of Orlanth and his worshippers, who are ritually, socially, and morally obligated to defend Ernaldan women. Priestesses of Ernalda can command Orlanth worshippers because of this relationship.

## Enemies

Ernalda is the Earth and was the ultimate prize of the Gods War. Many gods sought to share the Earth, and Ernalda blessed them all. Some gods sought to possess the Earth, and although they gained land they took nothing of worth. Even these gods are not Ernalda's enemies, for they cannot harm her.

A few gods sought to destroy the Earth when they could not possess it, and they are the enemies who plague Ernaldan rituals. Ernalda shares Orlanth's hatred of Chaos and his Chaos enemies are hers as well.

## Cult Organization

Each clan, tribe, and city has its own independent cult (and sometimes cults) of Ernalda, based around a holy place and with its own priestesses and sacred items. Worshipers from one community can and do worship at the shrine of another community, although clan and tribal feuds may make that dangerous. It is not unknown for clans or even tribes to fight over control of important holy places.

Some temples are more socially and politically important than others. In Esrolia, the cult is socially and politically dominant. Esrolia has the greatest temples of Ernalda in Glorantha and is the center of the cult. In Sartar and Tarsh, Ernalda is the most widely worshiped goddess and her priestesses are the equals of chiefs and kings. In Prax, the Ernalda cult is found only in the Paps or in the agricultural settlements of the River of Cradles.

## Center of Power, Holy Places

Ezel in Esrolia is considered by the cult to be especially sacred; for it is here that Ernalda makes her home (Ezel means "Her home") and rules as Queen of the Earth. It is a place of pilgrimage and heroquest, and has been a thriving great temple since the Dawn. There are countless holy places to Ernalda throughout the Holy Country and Dragon Pass (and beyond).

## Priestesses

A broad and diverse array of priestesses is devoted to Ernalda or her manifestations. These range from the solitary priestess of a clan or village Earth shrine to the dozen or more priestesses that may serve a major temple. The greatest temples have hundreds of priestesses.

Each temple has its own requirements for its priestesses. Some require a priestess to have given birth to a healthy child. Others require that the priestess first devote herself to Ernalda.

The chief priestess of a major temple has the same status as a clan chieftain or even a tribal king. Chiefs, kings, and Heroes compete for their favor.

## Initiates

All initiates of Ernalda must have the □ Earth Rune. However, the ⧖ Life Rune and the ≡ Harmony Rune are also important paths to Ernaldans.

All initiates of Ernalda must be women (although the Nandan subcult provides a means by which men can perform women's roles and participate in women-only rituals) and must seek to follow Ernalda's virtues of Harmony, Filial Piety, Prudence, and Compassion. Initiates spend a significant amount of time worshipping and offering sacrifices to Ernalda. If they are free women, they participate in the clan assembly; however, even slaves can worship Ernalda. Ernalda expects all her worshippers to emulate her in thought and deed. Initiates who fail to act properly and violate her virtues suffer her anger and may bring down divine retribution on their entire community.

## Devotees

An Ernalda initiate may dedicate herself completely to Ernalda and become a devotee of the goddess. A devotee must renounce her initiate status to any other divine cult and can only belong to one subcult or Ernalda. She must also permanently lose the ratings and abilities of any spirit magic or wizardry she may have.

A devotee of Ernalda is viewed as a manifestation of Ernalda, or more precisely of one of the many goddesses identified with Ernalda. An Ernalda devotee is held in reverence by all Orlanthi. She may call upon the Orlanth cult, its priests, and devotees for help and protection in times of distress. A devotee may be titled by the name of the divine feats she embodies, such as the Snake Goddess of Greenstone Temple.

## Feats

Devotees of Ernalda may perform magic feats, repetitions of Ernalda's mythic deeds. Some feats are universal to the Ernalda cult, others are associated with specific goddesses or subcults. Here are a few examples of Ernaldan feats, and hundreds more exist:

### Feat: □ Deep Earth Sight

Ernalda can see the deep secrets of Earth and can calculate what the long-term costs of an action will be. She can terrify men by showing them the ill consequences of their actions. She can also inspire men by showing them the beneficial consequences of her actions.

### Feat: □ Snake Queen

When the Foe of Ernalda came, Ernalda feigned sleep and sent part of herself into the Underworld in the form of a snake. She passed through the Underworld and traveled to Asrelia's Cave. By doing this, Ernalda survived the death of her body. When she chose to, she returned to the world unharmed and filled with Life.

### Feat: ⧖ Favors of the Earth

When Ernalda needed to tame the thundering lord, she smeared her breasts with saffron, adorned herself with a flower garland and with anklets and bracelets of fine gems. Atop her forehead she rested a jeweled crown and she wore her Golden Necklace around her throat. So attired, she clouded the minds of men. Gods competed for her favor; the man she bestows her favors on cannot oppose her and must fight to protect her.

### Feat: ≡ Peacemaker

Ernalda is the goddess who brought peace and compromise to angry men. She brought the men to her house and showed them her blessings and power. They took her gifts and, with her loom, she bound the feuding parties together; her magic then extracted from them a compromise that they held together.

## Healing with Magic

In Glorantha, disease has a magical origin, be it a sorcerous curse, divine disfavor, spirits of disease, demons, or other sources. Healing is done by forcing that entity to leave, overcoming the curse, appeasing the gods, or whatever is appropriate.

Not all healing magic is always appropriate. For example, Ernalda is a powerful healer but her magic may be at a disadvantage when dealing with disease caused by spirits of disease or sorcery. A shaman is very good at dealing with illness caused by spirits of disease, but near useless with many other sources. Only Chalana Arroy can heal all diseases with her magic.

## Husband-Protectors

Wherever Ernalda is found, Orlanth is her husband. Among the Heortlings and Tarshites, Ernalda is typically associated only with Orlanth.

However, Orlanth is not her only husband or lover. Many gods have been Ernalda's lover. In Esrolia, Orlanth is one of many husbands, along with Argan Argar, Flamal, Genert, Magasta, Urox, Veskarthan, and Yelm. In the Sun Dome Temples, Yelmalio is a husband of Ernalda. In the distant land of Umathela, Pamalt is a lesser husband of Ernalda as well.

# Orlanth

## Orlanth

Orlanth is the King of the Gods, Master of Storms, Death Wielder, and Bringer of Light. Orlanth is responsible for the cosmic order. He made the world what it is with his strength, and his virtues preserve the world. He claims, by right of his deeds, overlordship of the universe. He is the god of warriors, farmers, and rulers, all three. The dominant Genertelan culture is named Orlanthi after him.

### Mythos and History

Orlanth was the last born of the many sons of Umath. His mother was a mountain goddess named Kero Fin, and he has always been associated with mountains since then.

When he was newly born, he set off on his first adventure, armed only with a comb and a rattle. With those he challenged Emperor Yelm to a dancing contest. Orlanth did a war dance while Yelm did a ballet. The gods who judged the event were shocked at Orlanth's behavior and so awarded the prize to Yelm. Orlanth went away angry and disappointed, and so began the most famous struggle of God Time.

The rivalry of Orlanth and Yelm is known in mythologies that do not even worship these two gods. In their own mythologies the contest is central to worship. Many myths tell of one or the other god's victory. Three in particular, the contests of Dancing, Music, and Magic, are often cited. In all three cases the judges ruled in favor of Yelm rather than Orlanth. It was during these contests that Orlanth first courted Ernalda whom he swore to free from the clutches of the Bright Emperor.

The final contest is when the gods made weapons. Yelm made the silent and far-shooting arrow, inspired by the piercing effect of his rays. Orlanth got the sword that was inspired by the slicing of the wind through the world. Later the duel grew more serious and Orlanth took the new Power, Death, and used it only once and then to very good effect. He struck down Yelm, the Emperor and removed the single greatest source of Light from the cosmos.

**Above**
*With song and martial dances, a local Orlanth priest invokes the power of Orlanth Destor at Vestorfin's Hill.*

This brought the Storm Age upon the world. The Air gods seized more and more of the world. The cosmos was so shaken that the seas flooded the land and then were beaten back down by the Air gods. Orlanth led a strong army of gods with many allies. Orlanth fought dragons, Water gods, and his own rebellious kin. Orlanth fought both the remaining Fire gods and the growing forces of Darkness. Orlanth fought Yelmalio and defeated him, and then, when the Air God withdrew, Zorak Zoran ambushed the son of the Sun and wounded him even more. In this way the fires of the world were nearly extinguished.

Then it was that Chaos crept into the world upon the trail made by Darkness. Monsters and demons scouted through the cosmos, preparing the way for the Devil. Gods whose names are lost to us now died. Realms of beauty were lost, and there was fear among the gods when Flesh Man gibbered his visions of the future to them. Order slipped, Orlanth found his mother dead, saw his father suffering and chained between the earth and sky, and took upon himself the task to set right the wrongs which had brought such disaster about. He took what tools and weapons he could, called some friends and met others along the way, and undertook the Lightbringers' Quest to rescue the world.

## Orlanthi Flying

The Orlanthi have an active relationship with the wind, air, and storms that are Orlanth's body. Powerful winds of hurricane force or greater can be commanded to move people through the air. A few Orlanthi have an inborn ability to fly; most learn the *Vanganth's Breath* Feat, a technique of exhaling their breath to bear them aloft, invisible to the naked eye but visible to magic sight as a ram, hawk or alynx. All techniques involve using the Air Rune; ordinary Orlanthi use ritual magic to reduce the difficulty level, powerful Orlanthi can fly at will.

Orlanthi flight follows certain characteristics. Flyers must always be moving through the air and cannot normally hover. Flying does not allow one to carry much additional weight and an extra person is a debilitating load except for the most powerful flyers or those who know the Vanganth's Breath Feat. Good flyers can travel about an hour at 20 miles per hour before needing rest; pressed to cover greater distances, a flyer must go slower: 30 miles in 2 hours, 40 in 4, and 50 in 6. In the Second Age, there were Orlanthi societies like the Nardain Society that knew the secrets of long-distance flight, but that knowledge is now lost.

For his leadership of the Lightbringers and his acknowledged superiority over Yelm, Orlanth was confirmed as chief of the Air Gods. He also achieved the title of King of the Gods. That title is recognized by Lightbringers and some others, but not by all of the deities of the world.

The worship of Orlanth was known throughout most of the world in the Dawn Ages, and his worshippers brought the secrets of the Lightbringers down from the mountains to civilize the lowlands where the broken remnants of sun-worshippers struggled against the dark. But even within Time the ancient rivalry between the two deities rose again, and soon the worshippers of Orlanth in the hills and mountains were struggling with the worshippers of Yelm in the lowlands.

In the Second Age the Empire of the Wyrms Friends was a center of power for Orlanth worshippers, but the peoples turned to Dragon Magics and away from their old gods. Orlanth's people both rebelled and aided in the Wyrmish projects. In the end the Dragons had no mercy for any humans who fought them and destroyed thousands of people in the Dragonkill War of 1200. After that both Yelm and Orlanth were weak.

In the Third Age was born a new rival, the Red Moon. This goddess had some skills and magics like those of both Yelm and Orlanth, and others more arcane. Through the passage of time the worship of the Red Moon grew in Peloria, and spread southward into the highlands towards Dragon Pass. The northern gods of light fell before her march, and then she set herself against Orlanth as well, to struggle for the Middle Air. Through the years her worshippers have converted and conquered those of the storm god, and the gods themselves have been seen brooding anxiously over their children during the wars between men.

## Life after Death

Funeral rites for Orlanth cultists require the burning of the body while chanting a song to commend the soul to the wind, storm, and Air. A smoky fire is made and grave goods are included to assist the person in the Land of the Dead. Among his dead, some souls will know freedom for a while before returning to the mortal world in a new body, but others may join the winds or be chosen by Orlanth to serve in his band of Heroes.

Orlanth guarantees to his loyal initiates that he will go and get their soul even if the body is not treated with proper funerary rites. This way Orlanth cultists need not fear dying in a strange land among foreigners.

## Runes

Orlanth is the owner of the Air Rune and is also strongly associated with the Movement and Mastery Runes. As such, Orlanth is one of the Great Gods of Glorantha, acknowledged even by many cultures that do not worship him.

**Air Rune:** As the owner of the Air Rune, initiates of Orlanth can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Air. A very incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Air Rune for includes: bring rain; predict weather; change the weather; endure weather (snow, wind, rain, etc).; call down thunder and lightning; fertilize Earth, fight other elements; fly (carried by winds or upon their own breath); create a hailstorm; enchant silver; summon and command the winds; hear and speak at a great distance; summon and command Air elementals; and even improve their sword fighting (the sword is the weapon of the Air Rune). The Air Rune aspect of Orlanth is called Thunderous and those powerful with this Rune are passionate, unpredictable, and violent.

**Movement Rune:** As the one of the main gods of Movement, Orlanth initiates can make broad use of the powers of Movement and Change. A very incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Movement Rune for includes: change shape; move other object; fight with incredible speed and accuracy; leap great distances; move quickly; run faster than the wind; run over water; throw a rock or javelin impossible distances with accuracy; transform something; and even transport instantly to a distant location. The Movement Rune aspect of Orlanth is called Adventurous, and those powerful with this Rune are adventurous, dynamic, impulsive, and reckless.

**Mastery Rune:** Orlanth possesses the Mastery Rune but is not its source. This Rune is the source of leadership and self-mastery. An incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Mastery Rune for includes: awe crowd; command followers and community members; detect honor; invoke wyter; inspire loyalty; rally community; reciting poetry; silencing bellow; speaking words of power; and summon members of community. The Mastery Rune aspect of the Orlanth is called Orlanth Rex and those powerful with this Rune are just and proud.

## Particular Likes and Dislikes

Ernalda is Orlanth's wife and queen and together they rule the gods. She is queen of the Earth Family, she and Orlanth are the parents of the ancestors. He defends her, and she shares all of the bounty of the earth with him. He shares all of his sacrifices with Ernalda, and offers sacrifice to her Earth Family when appropriate.

Orlanth is King of the gods and is friends with many others. He made peace with all of the other Cosmological Gods and so made the world what it is today. He is leader of the Seven Lightbringers and their cults tend to defer to the priests and devotees of Orlanth. Most cults of the other Orlanthi gods treat the priests and devotees of Orlanth with great respect.

**Windlord**

*The devotees of Orlanth are mighty fighters and magicians as befit their powerful god. Alynxes are sacred to Orlanth, as the children of Orlanth's brother Yinkin.*

## Enemies

Orlanth hates Chaos in all its forms. Wakboth, the greatest Chaos god, is his personal foe. No peace exists or can exist between Orlanth and Wakboth. All of Orlanth's worshippers are obligated to destroy Chaos wherever they find it.

Many other gods are his enemies, but they are not like Wakboth. Most gods are part of the Great Compromise and must exist within the fabric of the universe. His most important rivals are Deloradella, Queen of the Darkness Tribe; Karjakan, King of Spirits; Magasta, Lord of the Water Tribe; Sh'harkazeel, the Cosmic Dragon; Yelm, Emperor of the Fire Tribe; and Zzabur, the Arch Sorcerer. When necessary, Orlanth cultists can cooperate with these mythological enemies in order to confront more dangerous or pressing foes.

One enemy in particular stands out: the Red Goddess. Her very existence violates the Great Compromise since she embraces Chaos. As a result, Orlanth has an abiding hatred for the Red Goddess, the Lunar Empire and all its deities and forces. This hatred is deep and mutual.

## Nature of the Cult

Orlanth is the Air that every living thing breathes. Mortals call him Breath of the World, Great Storm, Outer Wind, Lord of the Middle Air and Primal Air. He is the great storm at the center of Glorantha.

The breadth of the Orlanth cult's spread is extensive, and it is understandable that such diversity would spawn some differences of worship depending upon the local customs. It is common for people to speak of three or four well-known aspects of Orlanth as if they were comparing different gods. In some lands, they are treated as different gods with competing priesthoods. These overlappings are simply a sign of the complexity of Orlanth.

In general, four well-known forms of the god are recognized.

### Red-Haired Women

Although Ernalda is the Goddess of Women, Orlanth calls to some women through his manifestation as Vinga the Warrior Woman. During the Lunar Wars and Occupation, many Orlanthi men were killed; as a result, Orlanth has called an increasing number of women to him, including many widows. The Red-Haired Women are feared warriors of Sartar.

Orlanth Thunderous is Orlanth's aspect as the weather god. His attributes are primarily atmospheric phenomena such as cloud, wind, and the thunderbolt. His interests are primarily fertility and life-oriented, and he is a god of farmers and herders. He is worshiped with Ernalda as his wife. Heler, God of Rain, is always nearby.

Orlanth Adventurous is the martial aspect of the god. His attributes are mostly war-like, and he is most famous for the many foes he conquered. Ernalda is often present as only one of his many lovers. His friends are all battle companions, such as Humakt and Urox.

Orlanth Rex is the leadership aspect of Orlanth. He is important as the God of Society and Justice. The importance of this aspect cannot be underrated. Orlanth Rex is the King of the Gods, and the god of kings, nobles, and poets.

Orlanth Lightbringer, or Lifebringer, is the mystical and Heroquesting aspect of the god. It shows the god at his prime, in the midst of dangers that often cannot be beaten. He is tested and bested. His virtues are rent and tattered, but his vision holds true for all questers, and in the end the rewards are greater than all the pain and loss suffered to gain them. Lightbringers are a special part of the cult, used to adversity and outstanding in their intentions and efforts.

Orlanth is the model for all men. He is as comfortable with a plow as he is with a sword, crown, or thunderbolt. His worship includes everything an Orlanthi needs to know, whether farming, combat, leadership, or the wind. Orlanth is the god of hospitality, of gifts, and the protector of the Orlanthi people.

## Cult Organization

Each Orlanthi community (be it a clan, tribe, or city) has its own independent cult of Orlanth based around a holy place, with its own priests, and regalia. Worshippers from one community can worship at the shrine of another community, although clan and tribal feuds may make that dangerous. It is not uncommon for clans or even tribes to fight over control of important holy places.

The Orlanth cult is socially and politically dominant in Sartar and Heortland, and is significant in Esrolia. In Lunar Tarsh it has been suppressed, but is still popular among rural farmers and herders. Orlanth is politically dominant among the Wintertop Exiles.

## Center of Power, Holy Places

There are many special holy places to Orlanth in Dragon Pass and the Holy Country. Orlanth was born on Kero Fin Mountain, and that mountain is an important place of pilgrimage for the cult. Old Wind Temple, at the northern end of the Storm Mountains, is a holy place to all who revere Orlanth. Orlanth often visited Stormwalk Mountain, at the south end of the Storm Mountains. Especially sacred is the Hill of Orlanth Victorious as it was from there Orlanth began his Lightbringers' Quest.

The temples of Orlanth Adventurous often wander freely, with the cult regalia carried in a two-wheeled ox-drawn wagon (it may be a non-bovine ox such as a bison). When the occasion requires it, the priests may set up a temple in a few hours.

## Priests

Orlanthi priests are the Storm Voices. They are chosen by the members of their temple and leaders of the local cult; as a practical matter that normally means by the clan council or tribal assembly and the assembled holy people. Priests must spend much of their time performing proper rites to keep the winds blowing, bringing forth the fertilizing rain, and maintaining the spiritual health of the community.

Priests often have distinctive garb and accouterments; for example, the priests of certain Orlanth cults wear ornate bronze helmets with grand ram horns or sometimes place a pair of red feathers in their helmets.

## Initiates

All initiates of Orlanth **must** possess an affinity with the Air Rune ֍. The Air Rune is not, however, the only rune by which Orlanth may be approached – the Movement Rune ᔓ and Mastery Rune ᛘ are both important paths to Orlanth.

Furthermore, all initiates of Orlanth must be free men (although the Vinga subcult provides a means by which women can perform men's roles and participate in male-only rituals) and must follow his six virtues: Courage, Generosity, Honor, Justice, Piety, and Wisdom. They must honor their word and their debts.

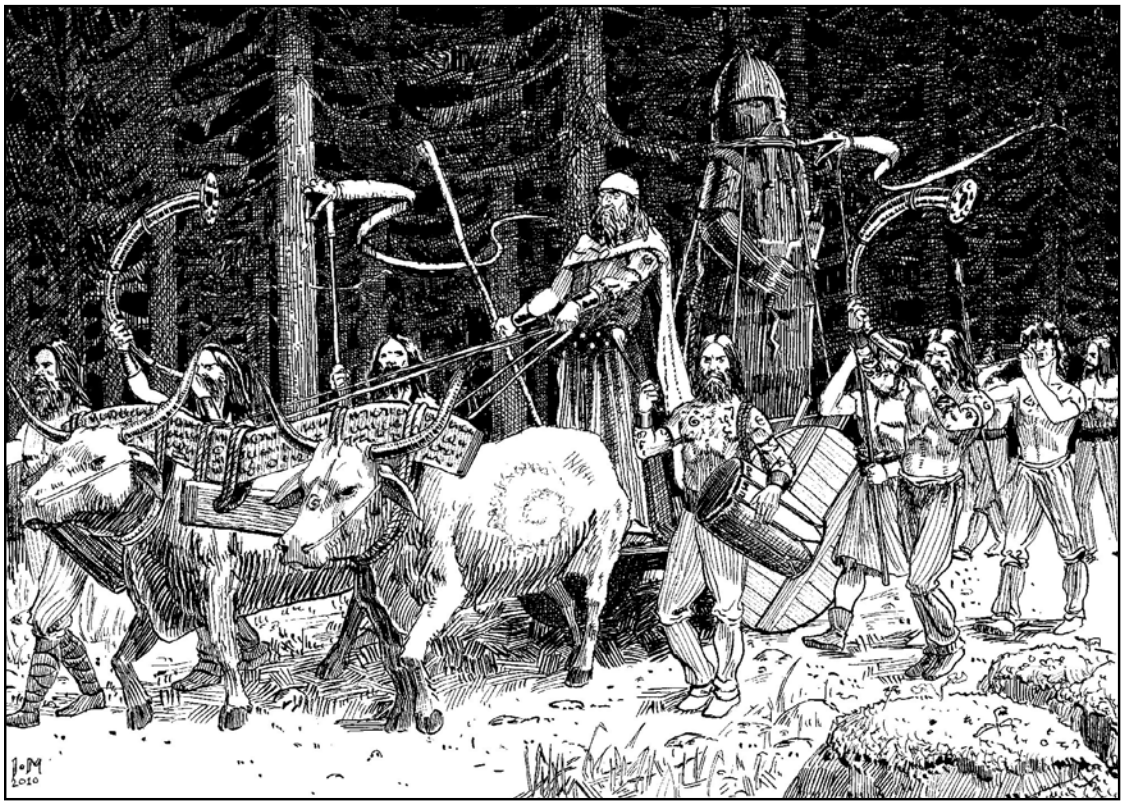
Orlanth expects all of his worshippers to emulate him in their thoughts, word, and deeds. Initiates who fail to act properly and violate his virtues suffer his anger and may bring down divine retribution against their entire community.

Initiates must spend a significant amount of time worshipping and offering sacrifices to Orlanth. They must participate in the clan militia and should possess a weapon. Initiates are free men and are entitled to participate fully in community decision-making.

**Wandering Orlanth Priest**

*Orvanlarnste Storm Voice is a priest and devotee of Orlanth. He travels Sartar in his ox-drawn wagon that serves as a holy place for Orlanth worship wherever it goes. Orvanlarnste was outlawed by the Lunars and there is a price on his head. Still he travels from hill to hill, supported by the locals and always one step ahead of the Lunars. Orvanlarnste is a powerful magician and a skilled warrior with his iron sword "My Reply".*

*In his wagon is a wooden and painted image of Orlanth known as "Little Great One", His thunderbolts are gilt with silver and garlands are strewn at the image's feet. Orvanlarnste says "He speaks to the Allfather for me and brings us the good rains or the destructive thunder storms." Orvanlarnste is typically accompanied by a throng of cultists. He can open the threshold to the Otherworld and can be persuaded to support Orlanthi heroquests.*



## Devotees

An Orlanth initiate may dedicate himself completely to Orlanth and become a **devotee** of the god. He must renounce his initiate status to any other divine cult and can only belong to one subcult of Orlanth. He must also permanently lose the ratings and abilities of any spirit magic or wizardry he may have.

The devotee becomes a manifestation of Orlanth, or more precisely, he is an incarnation of one of the Thunder Brothers. All Orlanthi hold Orlanth devotees in great respect. Devotees of the Thunderer aspect of Orlanth are often called "Thunder Brother," devotees of the Adventurous aspect of Orlanth are often called "Wind Lord." A devotee may also be called by the name of the divine feats he embodies.

## Common Orlanth Feats

Devotees of Orlanth may perform magical feats, repetitions of Orlanth's mythic deeds. Some feats are universal to the Orlanth cult, others are associated with specific Thunder Brothers or with various subcults.

### Feat: The Thunderer

Orlanth is the Thunderer, before whom all lesser beings flee. He bears Justice and Death and can destroy with the crushing Great Sound. Each foot is carried by a gale, and a wind that is fire is sworn to die for the Thunderer. His words can strike armies senseless and all winds obey him. His raging storms swept all before him until his wife tamed his anger with her love.

### Feat: Vanganth's Breath

Orlanth taught Vanganth how to master his Breath and ride his own soul into the Air, along with up to seven companions, at speeds and distances far greater than that of normal flyers.

### Feat: Four Magical Weapons

Before going to war, Orlanth's companions armed him with the Four Magic Weapons; the Sandals of Darkness allow him to walk in the shadows without being seen or heard; Yavor the Lightning Spear, which allows him to throw lightning; the Scarf of Mist, which shields him from the view of foes with an obscuring mist; and the Shield of Arran, which can parry and block any blow no matter how powerful. With these, Orlanth defeated his enemies.

### Feat: Justice-Bringer

When his kinfolk disagreed and fought, Orlanth pacified and protected the combatants. He gathered his kin, their friends, and all who were invoked divine guidance and determined whose claim was just and whose claim was unjust. All those who attended upheld the rights of the just, and those who challenged Orlanth's justice were cast down and broken.

## Wind Lords

Devotees of Orlanth Adventurous are called Wind Lords, and embody adventure. They are dedicated to performing deeds to honor Orlanth, and so roam the world seeking danger and strife, impetuously taking up quarrels and fearlessly defending friends. Wind Lords have honors to uphold, and the following challenges must be made.

When meeting a priest or holy man of Yelm, Yelmalio, or any related solar deity, the Wind Lord must challenge them to a contest by speaking the following verse:

*Wandering Sun, Jealous Uncle,*
*I have a new Toy here, see it?*
*Test me, Twice if you can.*
*A treasure for each right answer.*

The two then engage in a contest, of riddles or martial prowess. The loser of the contest must give a treasure to his opponent for each victory.

Upon meeting a priestess or devotee of an Earth goddess, the devotee must offer to fight on her behalf:

*Sweet Green Woman, Look at me!*
*I am come, the Conqueror!*
*None can stand before me.*
*I am yours, what Dark shall I fight?*

The priestess may order the Wind Lord to fight any darkness being or force that has troubled her. If she does so, the Wind Lord can make one demand upon her Fertility powers.

The greeting upon meeting another Lightbringer is:

*Good greetings in ill times, friend!*
*No person can risk the world alone.*
*Join others you can share with,*
*They need not be like you.*

The Wind Lord must greet Lightbringer priests and devotees as friends. He must aid them if they request it.

Upon meeting something of Chaos, a Wind Lord challenges it:

*Foul slime, curse of existence, begone!*
*Turn your back and flee from me.*
*I will kill you, you are evil.*
*Lie and whimper before me.*

If it does not do as told then the Wind Lord must kill it if possible. Those that do lie at his feet and beg are usually killed with no stain on the Wind Lord's honor. He is not required to fight Chaos that is too powerful, but must return with reinforcements to fight it as soon as possible.

# The Seven Lightbringers

There are seven beings numbered as Lightbringers. They are: Orlanth, Chalana Arroy, Lhankor Mhy, Issaries, Eurmal, Flesh Man, and Ginna Jar. The last two are not worshipped deities, while Eurmal is not worshipped in Prax.

Flesh Man was a mortal being, a grandchild of Grandfather Mortal, who was first-made Man and who lived on the slopes of the Spike. Save Humakt and Eurmal, he was the only witness to the death of Grandfather Mortal. This sight made him prophetic, but all his outcries and anguish failed to warn the greater beings of the cosmos. As the world slowly succumbed to the vices of Death the Flesh Man grew more and more crazed by the weight of his knowledge he fled, but found only the future wherever he went. Even a major healing effort by Arroin did not cure him, though the meeting provided him a valuable ally.

Chalana Arroy was a healing goddess who had sat by, passive save for her healing, while the world grew ill in the Gods War. She hoped to await the coming of the disease of the cosmos, but it did not come and she met Flesh Man instead. She chose to follow the mortal who said he was heading for the Great Doom, and so set off on the Lightbringers' Quest.

Orlanth, skilled in battle and friend to adventure, was the slayer of the sun. When Yelm, the Sun God, fell and went to the Underworld, it cast the world into the Lesser Darkness. After many other acts Orlanth decided to right this wrong he had done. His path crossed that of Flesh Man and Chalana Arroy and they all joined together.

Issaries was absent from his golden home on the Spike when the disaster struck and robbed him of home and kin. He traveled on through the dangers, rootless, ever protective of his own place. He met Lhankor Mhy, who was the holder of many secrets, and the two became friends.

Lhankor Mhy, son of the god Acos, was the holder of knowledge. When the Spike exploded, he began collecting many pieces of the stone, keeping its secrets as his own. He could use these secrets himself but was loath to give them up even in exchange. Even so, he contributed to the Quest.

Eurmal was the Trickster god. He had been a mischievous imp at first but grew to more dangerous proportions as the world aged. It was he who discovered the first sword, Death, hidden deep in the recesses of the Underworld and who guided Humakt to its place. He also helped Orlanth steal it from Humakt, then convinced Orlanth to lend it to Zorak Zoran, and several more times aided in passing the lethal weapon among gods and men.

He spread destruction without hesitation, for his runes include Disorder. As the world shook, he alone was at home. Flesh Man saw this, and chose to follow Trickster, but it was Orlanth who forced Eurmal to lead them on their chosen Path.

Thus the gods moved westward across the face of the earth, meeting and joining with the others along the way. The six were together when they reached the edge of the world where the ocean seeped across the land. Beyond that place, the lap of cold Chaos froze the very stuff of the world. There, upon the edge of the cosmos, they discovered the mysterious being called Ginna Jar. Throughout elder myths Ginna Jar remains an enigma, occasionally personified as either male or female, occasionally reaching out to assist or interfere, but never taking form. Its identity remained unknown, though many

**Amphora**

*This Esrolian black-figure amphora depicts several important Orlanthi myths. The upper row depicts great Ernalda dying on her bier. Around her five lesser goddesses mourn or defend the dead (or sleeping) Earth Queen. From left to right the lesser goddesses are: Babeester Gor, Ty Kora Tek, Asrelia, Maran Gor, and Esrola. The lower row depicts Orlanth and his Lightbringer companions confronting Yelm in the Underworld. From left to right they are: Ernalda, Ginna Jar (above), Eurmal (below), Flesh Man (above), Chalana Arroy (below), Lhankor Mhy (above), Issaries (below), Orlanth, Yelm, and King Griffin.*

cults claimed its revelation through Heroquests. The worship devoted to it was always desperate and usually ineffective.

Detailed research and speculation has indicated that Ginna Jar may have been the ghost of Glorantha, the Great Goddess of the Cosmos who had once headed the Celestial Court. There is no mention of Glorantha after her death at the hands of the Devil. But there is a mysterious goddess in Hell who combats the Devil and, with the aid of the other gods, defeats it and devours it, shortly afterwards giving birth to the force called Time. The mysterious goddess is called Arachne Solara in myths and worship and she is generally the vague force of Nature in the world. It is our contention that Glorantha, Ginna Jar, and Arachne Solara are the same being. The many differences in their worship is a measure of the wrack and ruin wrought upon the world at the end of God Time. This is still speculation and further research will surely shed light on the matter.

The Lightbringers at last reached Hell, though each suffered losses and learned much. On the journey Orlanth fought and fought well, but learned the lesson of defeat before he got to his ends. Eurmal tricked and joked his way through the falling cosmos but could not attain his goal until he was tricked and learned some logic and responsibility. Chalana Arroy received a wound which would not heal, Issaries lost his road, and Lhankor Mhy found a fact he could not know. But they all persevered and found their way.

The dead all fled the approach of the living Lightbringers, who nonetheless found their way to where Yelm ruled the end of the universe. There Orlanth and Yelm came to terms and contracted for harmony. Other deities agreed, so that when the Devil appeared, slain by Storm Bull in the Middle World, Arachne Solara trapped and devoured the Chaos god.

Armed with Time the gods could reassert themselves in the cosmos. They fought their way back to Being, reassembling the shattered world as they went. At last Yelm, preceded by his daughter called Dawn, returned to the world of the Living and released Time upon the cosmos.

Thus began History.

**Arachne Solara**

*Arachne Solara is the nickname of an otherwise unnamed deity who may be the Goddess of Nature in Glorantha. Her origins are mysterious, but there are strong indications that she is the ghost of Glorantha, the Mother of the Universe. Some claim that she even extracts respect from the greatest gods.*

*Arachne Solara first comes to notice in the tale of the Great Compromise, wherein Orlanth, Yelm, and the other deities in the Underworld swear pacts and oaths to preserve themselves. This plan is said to have been created by Arachne Solara, based upon mutual support between the entire remaining world.*

*Arachne Solara appears in one of two forms. In her dark aspect she has the form of a woman's body from the waist up, but mounted upon the thorax and bloated abdomen of a huge spider. Her face is beautiful, although her teeth are sharp, and her head is haloed in a gleaming white fire.*

*In her light aspect she is tall, slender, and radiantly beautiful. A great mass of jet black hair erupts from her head and writhes about her body. The hair obscures much of her body, but always reveals her face.*

# Issaries

## Issaries

Issaries is the Talking God, the source of Communication. Issaries established the Equal Exchange, showing people how to profit from strangers instead of just fighting them. Issaries is the patron of travelers, of speech and poetry, of orators and wit, of weights and measures, and of general commerce. He is an interpreter who bridges the boundaries with strangers and a psychopomp who escorts the Dead to the Court of Silence.

### Mythos and History

Issaries was the son of Larnste and Harana Ilor, both members of the Gloranthan Court who ruled over Change and Harmony, respectively. He was noted for his cleverness, smooth tongue, and his wanderlust. While still ignorant of his own powers he was found wandering in distant realms. One story says that he was the messenger carrying secret notes between Sky and Earth that led to the begetting of Umath.

Issaries was found in various places and roles during the Gods War. He was sometimes a conciliator, as when he settled an early argument between Yelm and Orlanth. He was sometimes aiding war, as when he taught Orlanth the magic of poetry in return for protection. He was often a mere spectator, as when he saw Humakt bring Death, or watched Eiritha be buried beneath Earth and magic.

When the Darkness closed in upon the world Issaries was not panicked, for he had seen the Darkness already in his travels. But the march of Death troubled his harmonious nature, and he sensed Chaos at the end of the trail. He prepared his Spell of Passage and set off to find the light of communication with which to rekindle the world. On his way, he met others, and they succeeded in their journey, becoming the Seven Lightbringers.

In the passages through Chaos and Darkness, Issaries was capable of making a small island of safety when the Lightbringers stopped to heal or prepare their great magic. His reliability was unbroken until they were in deep in the Halls of the Slain, and then failed. Issaries learned from this failure the secrets of motion and stillness, and when his tongue also failed him he learned the secrets and terrors of silence.

**Above**
*Issaries priest Joh Mith trading bronze swords from Sylila and other luxury goods from far away Balazar to a Sartarite chieftain.*

The cult of Issaries worships him as the god of language and speech, of communication in general, and of passage and transit, travel, trade, and roads. He is the Guardian of the Way. After the Dawn, Issaries went about the world to remind people of his secrets and to guide them back to civilization and safety. His children were left as guides, and each of these children developed into a specialized subcult, depending on local needs.

Where there were simple farmers, herders, hunters, or fishers there was a god called Harst, "Spare Grain." His appears as an old man, bearded and carrying a pot, a sack, and a carved amulet with the Trade Rune. He was in love with the daughter of Aryam-ya-Udram and sought her hand in marriage. Her father stated that no one could marry into his family who could not use his arts to provide for them all. Harst, who had taught the people of Dragon Pass to speak, went among his friends and asked for a handful of spare grain from each of them. With this he traded for a batch of clay pots from his brother, and then traded these to the people who'd given him grain, thus making another profit and repaying his friends at the same time. He got his wife, and established the method of trade among his people.

Garzeen, or "Middleman," is the name of the second son. He gained in popularity when there were towns or cities. At first people gathered there and could not speak, but he taught them his language (afterwards called Tradetalk) and passed among many different races. Some were willing to pay for Garzeen's special aid, and so he found his first profession. He took payment in money or in kind, and used those items to trade where they were needed or stored them until the need arose.

Garzeen looks rotund and bearded, and often shows his wealth and status with excessive dress or luxury. With this he once hoped to attract Fenela, a daughter of King Froalar in the west. She scorned such materialism, and even more distrusted the advances of a god, fearing infidelity after a time. She made him swear to fulfill a vow before she'd marry him, and then told him he must reassemble the body of the Chaos-slain god Genert.

Some fragments of that God Time deity were floating about in various guises, and there was a legend of a magical "growing ground" in the depths of the Wastelands. Assembling the whole god was impossible. But now, whenever any follower of Garzeen's way comes across such a piece they are obliged to depart for Genert's Wastes to try to fulfill the ancient vow. The only way to prevent the quest is by selling the fragment to a Desert Tracker or to die.

The third son was called Goldentongue, or "Trader Prince." Unlike his brothers he refused to stay in one place, and thereby exploited the ways of their father the most. He was a singer and wanderer at first, and in his travels met the daughter of Lhankor Mhy called Therelma, "Mother Language." They had one son named Thereltero the Herald, but the pair did not stay together. Goldentongue became the patron of wandering merchants, who travel the world and know no home but their caravans. One of his followers was Caarith, a woman Hero who was the first of the Desert Trackers.

In the Second Age, the cult of Issaries spread widely, carried to all corners of the earth by the Empire of Land and Sea and by the Empire of the Wyrms Friends.

There was also a daughter of Issaries named Etyries. After a thousand years, she decided to travel a great distance to hear the words of a young goddess of the far north. She left her family and went to listen. The goddess was the Red Goddess, still on earth and in mortal form. She corrupted Etyries and seduced her into guiding the Red Goddess through the secret paths. Etyries is now the Trade Goddess of the Lunar Empire and the laws of the Lunar occupation favor the worshippers of Etyries over those of Issaries merchants.

## Life after Death

The cult makes great promises to its worshipers. Lay members are guaranteed that they will be guided to their proper station in the afterlife, and that many opportunities exist in the afterlife. Lay members buried with their appropriate statue of Issaries will be assured that their case will be heard properly. Initiates are told that they can take some of their magical items and abilities with them beyond the grave.

Devotees and powerful cultists are allowed to try to map the Underworld while they still live, either through judicious trade with immortals or through dangerous heroquesting.

### Tradetalk

The Issaries cult language, Tradetalk, has been spread widely throughout the world. Although it is no one's native tongue, it is the most common second language in Glorantha. Tradetalk is a magical language and is easily understood and quickly learned even by foreigners and non-humans. It is a simple and effective tool of communication, although compared to Theyalan (see Appendix C) it is lacking in richness and abstract concepts.

For the Lightbringers' cults, the god Issaries Goldentongue is also the psychopomp, guiding the dead souls through the Underworld.

The Issaries cult defers to local custom for funeral rites, but prefers to include many grave goods for travel on the Other Side.

## Runes

Issaries is the owner and originator of the Trade Rune (indeed that rune is often called the "Issaries Rune"). He is also associated with the Movement Rune.

**Trade Rune:** Worshiping the owner of the Trade Rune, Issaries initiates can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Trade. A very incomplete list of the abilities Issaries initiates have been known to use the Trade Rune for includes: blessing a market, composing a poem, creating a neutral ground, convincing a listener, giving a mesmerizing speech, being understood by any listener, speaking to the dead, speaking to the gods, making a friendly greeting, blessing a transaction, getting a fair price for goods or services, and determining the value of goods or services. Those initiates who are powerful in this Rune are smooth-tongued, gregarious, and capable of understanding the motivations and perspectives of others.

**Movement Rune:** Issaries is the god of Travel and is associated with Movement. His initiates' use of this Rune is limited to travel-related abilities such as: to find the quickest or safest path, to detect ambush, to travel discretely, to escape, and to find a hidden way. Initiates who are strong in this Rune are filled with wanderlust and a desire to see new and strange things.

## Nature of the Cult

The worshipers of Issaries fulfill their appropriate functions in their society. Among rural folk, the priests of "Spare Grain" are the individuals who deal with outsiders. The very existence of trade and exchange rests upon the skills of middlemen, and civilization could not exist without this exchange. Goldentongue provides long-distance communication between the cult and far-flung parts of the world.

The social position of merchants is often unimportant in terms of official power, but the individuals are often of such obvious importance that their true sway exceeds their official position.

## Particular Likes and Dislikes

Issaries' cult generally attempts to maintain a stance of neutrality between contending parties, preferring to profit from both if possible. They generally shun war; however, they are skilled at fighting, and once decided will keep to their way. That being said, most Issaries cultists are not neutral when it comes to their clan and tribe loyalties.

**Harbor Market of Nochet**

*The Harbor Market of Nochet of Nochet is the greatest maritime commercial center in Glorantha. Wine, grain, gold, jewelry, bronze weapons, glassware, luxury goods, feathers, cloth, silk, dye, and spice are traded from across the world, along with exotic goods such as crystalized shards of gods' blood, magical charms, occult scrolls, sacred idols, dragon bones, and iron.*

Many among the Goldentongue subcult are especially adroit at neutrality and for this are trusted by many otherwise untrusting peoples. Issaries' cultists are especially sought after because the presence of their god eases the transmission of any communication – especially magical ones such as rituals and spells.

Issaries has a friendly rivalry with the cult of Lhankor Mhy. Both cults collect stories and lore, but Issaries worshippers exchange their knowledge and news freely.

Like all Lightbringers, Issaries' cultists hate Chaos. While Issaries cultists can be neutral about Darkness or Fire, they cannot be neutral about Chaos.

The cult has a dislike for hyenas, which are parts of the body of Genert and, if found alive by a Garzeen cultist, force him to make a dangerous, sacred trek into the Wastes. Thus the brothers of the Middleman kill hyenas on sight, if possible.

**Mules**

*Mules were first created by Issaries, conjured up in order to make something to sell out of nothing. Mules are useful both as work beasts and trade items. These beasts are 'not-horses' amongst horse haters, and 'horse-kin' amongst horse-lovers.*

## Organization

There is no monolithic mercantile network across the world, which is formally led by single group of merchants. Wherever possible, extensive trade networks are established, but these rarely acquire any permanent status. In the past the great Middle Sea Empire of the Second Age depended upon such a system, but neither now exists. Even among local groups organization is temporary, due to the democratic processes of the cult.

Temples to Issaries are rarely found except in cities or other major trade areas. Temporary temples are often created wherever many merchants meet. Temples are neutral grounds where communication and trade can take place between strangers in relative safety. Traditionally, priests are also merchants and an Issaries temple is often the center of a large trade ring that acts as a merchant guild.

In many Issaries temples, there may be more than one priest, and in such cases there will be an election among all the initiates present to select the High Priest of the temple. This must be renewed at least every year in a city.

Priests are allowed to organize their followers as they desire, and this most commonly takes the form of whatever organization most suits the individual priest-merchant.

The "Spare Grain" cult almost never has priests, and its members are most often mere lay members who worship Issaries on the side to aid in trading their surplus goods, should they have any.

## Center of Power, Holy Places

Many places claim to be where Issaries or his sons once facilitated communication. These spots are all markets, and often have some ancient statue of the god, but are places of power only when a priest of Issaries is present.

The most important Issaries temple in the world is the Great Issaries Temple on Harbor Square in Nochet.

## Holy Days

Holy Days of the cult are any market days (typically on Wildday), but like most Lightbringers cults they especially revere the Sacred Time.

## Priests

Priests of Issaries are responsible for constructing and maintaining their own neutral market ground and to use it as a base to communicate and trade with others. They or their followers make sure that merchants follow the rules of the market, check the weights and measures, and oversee disputes between merchants. Priests are traditionally merchants in their own right and often are very wealthy.

## Initiates

All initiates of Issaries must possess the Trade Rune and he is always approached from that rune. Initiates take an oath to treat those they deal with fairly and not cheat fellow initiates or outsiders. Membership is open to either men or women. All initiates can use the Trade Rune ⧺ to speak Tradetalk and to Create Tally to record transactions and debts.

## Devotees

An Issaries initiate may dedicate himself completely to Issaries and become a devotee of the god, subject to the normal restrictions.

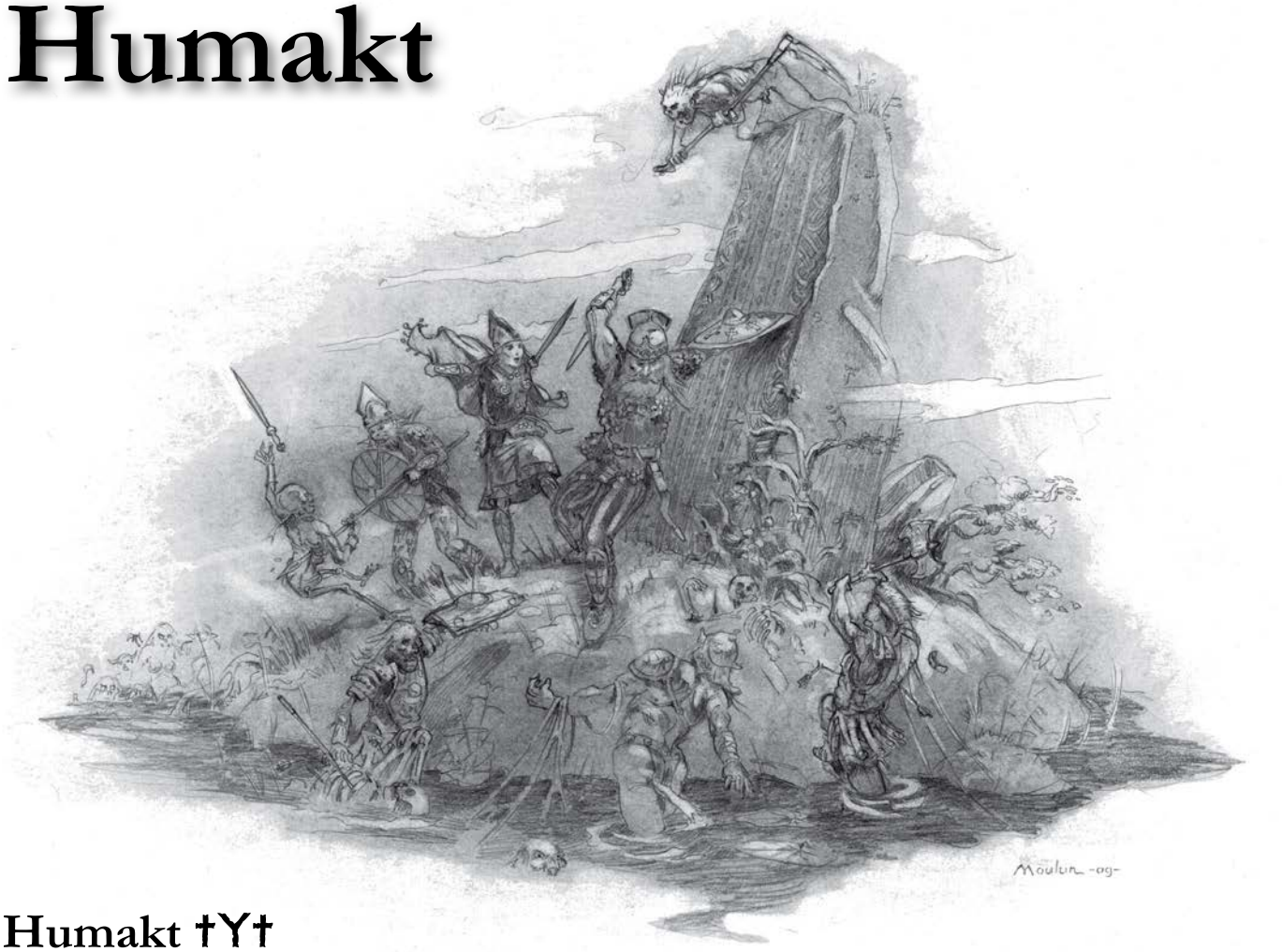
## Feats

Devotees of Issaries may perform magic feats: repetitions of his mythic deeds. Some feats are universal to the Issaries cult; others are associated with specific temples or subcults.

### Feat ⧺ Path Watch

When the world fell apart, Issaries prepared the Great Passage, which unerringly found the right path and made sure it was safe from ambushes and enemies. He used this to find the Hidden Way to his destination. Once Issaries set forth on the Great Passage he did not leave the path until he safely reached his destination.

# Humakt



## Humakt †Y†

Humakt is Death, the Separator and Divider. He is the God of War and the Keeper of Oaths. He is the Guardian of Hell, Bringer of Death, and the God of Endings. Humakt lives especially in swords; his magic is to fight, kill, and destroy. Humakt's worshippers are holy killers who are ordained to carry out their sacred tasks within a circumscribed role.

## Mythos and History

Humakt was the fourth son of Umath. In his youth, he lived upon the mighty Spike with the other gods. There he learned how to fight from Kargan Tor the God of Endings, but he was not satisfied with this. He traveled to the Gate of Introspection, entered, and spent a year and a day in that Deep Place. Therein he discovered his own true and ultimate power: the power of Death. Humakt showed it to another god, who we call Grandfather Mortal, who fell dead and had to flee to the Gates of Sunset and thence to the Underworld. When Humakt saw its power, he resolved to use it cautiously and wisely.

But Eurmal stole the power of Death for Orlanth, who used it incautiously and unwisely. This released the power called Old Death into the world. It traveled rapidly from hand to hand and people and deities began to be killed, to expire, and to die.

Theft between the Storm kin was forbidden, and since Orlanth broke that bond Humakt used his power as the God of Endings and severed their brotherhood forever. He set out across the world alone to recover Death. It had spread everywhere and the world was full of those poor creatures that were its victims, for they had no place to go. The living and the dead mingled and caused uproar and terror everywhere. Humakt separated the living from the dead and collected the latter into his special place, which is now called the Underworld. With each entity that he recaptured Humakt regained more of the Old Death and put it under his control, creating Death. The smaller entities were easy, the moderately powerful ones more difficult, but he got them all.

†

**Above**
*Humakti warriors fought a valiant but ultimately doomed assault against the Undead Army at the Isle of the Dead in 1615.*

At last Humakt confronted his greatest foe: his own former brother who had robbed him of Death and begun this disaster. Orlanth was King then, and so he resisted, demanding obedience instead. But Humakt enforced his own Truth that was stronger, and so killed Orlanth too. But Humakt showed the secret of his honor and justice and let his brother arise again through the Lightbringers' Quest. Afterwards Orlanth acknowledged Humakt's proper place among the gods.

Humakt has maintained his position as bringer of Death to all throughout Time. He is the god of mercenaries and warriors, and is often found on all sides in any conflict. He encourages honor and courage, and disdains pointless slaughter. He keeps the road to Hell well-populated by honorable warriors.

## Life after Death

Worshippers are never resurrected, for Death does not release his grip on those who love him. The cult cares little about what happens to the corpses of their dead, save that they not rise again in any fashion.

### The Humakt Duel

The Code of Humakt requires that worshippers settle any disagreement with a duel. The formal rules for these duels are simple:

1. *Always fight other Humakti fairly.*
2. *Honor the fallen.*
3. *Maintain strict truth and confidence.*

In practice, worshippers can interpret these rules as they see fit. In general, most worshippers adhere to the following principles during duels:

The code applies only to Humakti. All involved parties know that honor and trust are foremost in the minds of the fighters, and a Humakti will only accept a challenge from a non-Humakti if they are certain of his honor.

The combatants determine how long to fight. Generally, they fight to first blood, so that the contest ends as soon as one participant wounds the other. Humakti may fight to the death over serious matters if both parties agree, although some bands and temples prohibit lethal duels.

Humakti may use any magic. Occasionally worshippers have taken advantage of this by using foreign magic (such as by trading magic with the help of an Issaries worshipper).

The loser must pay some reward to the victor, agreed to beforehand. This prize absolves each of the combatants of any further obligations.

Orlanthi custom requires that they bury Humakti without cremating them. At funerals the Humakti stand aside, watching the Orlanthi work to honor Death. Humakti never go back to the site, and never mourn the dead. They stick the deceased worshipper's favored fighting sword into the grave, and these ancient blades stand amidst the fields of many Orlanthi cemeteries. No one touches them, for anyone who does so is cursed.

Initiates of Humakt can look forward to a special section of Hell reserved for them to practice and prepare for the next Gods War. By doing this they protect Hell from Chaos.

## Runes

Humakt is the owner of the Death Rune and is always also associated with the Truth Rune.

† **Death Rune:** Worshipping the owner of the Death Rune, Humakt initiates can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Death. A very incomplete list of the abilities Humakti have been known to use their Death Rune magic for includes: destroying the undead, terrifying their opponent, sensing Unlife, forcing dead things back to the Underworld, severing a spirit from its body, sword combat, cutting through elements, aiding victory in battle, destroying weapons or armor, and ending Life. Worshippers who are powerful in the Death Rune are brave, cold, fatalistic, merciless, and taciturn.

ᛉ **Truth Rune:** Humakt is associated with the Truth Rune but only regarding oaths and honor. An incomplete list of the abilities Humakti have been known to use the Truth Rune for includes: swear oath, recognize lie, sense ambush, raise morale, sever relationship, fight to the death, sense disloyalty and identify traitor. Humakt lacks the knowledge and literacy powers of the Truth Rune. Humakti who are strong in the Truth Rune are honorable, honest, and loyal.

## Nature of the Cult

Humakt is present in every weapon (especially the swords of his worshippers), in every military regiment, and in every oath. Wolves, ravens, and eagles, the scavengers of the battlefield, follow him.

Humakt's worshippers wield his power in the world. They are experts at fighting, killing, and bringing Death, and will die rather than break an oath. They are the Living Death, and everyone feels Humakt's presence when they are nearby.

The social position of Humakt worshipers varies with the area in which he is worshiped. In peaceful regions it is a relatively minor cult. In areas

of constant conflict, Humakt is well respected. Humakt is worshiped throughout Orlanthi lands and is the war god of Carmania and Safelster.

## Particular Likes and Dislikes

Humakt strictly forbids maintaining a body after the soul has left it. Demons, sorcery and spirits that create Walking Dead and other undead are anathema to Humakt, and his worshippers violently oppose any such actions. Delecti the Necromancer and the sorcerous cult of Vivamort are both particular targets of Humakt's wrath. Humakt even prevents the resurrection of his initiates, but has no particular qualm with others who are successfully resurrected.

Another great enemy is the Darkness God, Zorak Zoran, a bloody-handed slaughterer motivated primarily by hate and vengeance, but whose worst offense is regularly raising corpses to be Undead. Humakt and Zorak Zoran always fight when they meet, and their worshippers may never be on the same side of a struggle.

Humakt himself does not single out Chaos as a particular foe, for it is merely one enemy among many. Since most Humakti are Orlanthi however, the cult fellowship generally hates Chaos.

## Cult Organization

Humakt worship is organized into warbands, either organized within a clan, or as independent mercenary 'battalions' centered on independent temples. Large clan warbands are unusual, only areas that are regularly threatened by the undead, or that contain some other exceptional reason for a standing army of death-sworn protectors, can support many Humakt worshippers.

Most Humakt "temples" are actually just warbands, called battalions and led by warrior-priests called "Swords." They are autonomous; if cooperating warband leaders cannot agree on a course of action, they settle the matter with ritual combat. These warband temples are located where Humakt or his Heroes did their great deeds.

## Center of Power, Holy Places

Humakt has no particular center of power. Most holy places throughout Dragon Pass, Prax, and the Holy Country are minor shrines, such as the Tourney Altar in Prax.

Certain holy and magical swords are known be sacred to the god, such as the Unbreakable Sword of Arkat or Ironbreaker, the sword of the Talastar kings. These swords serve as mobile holy places of the god.

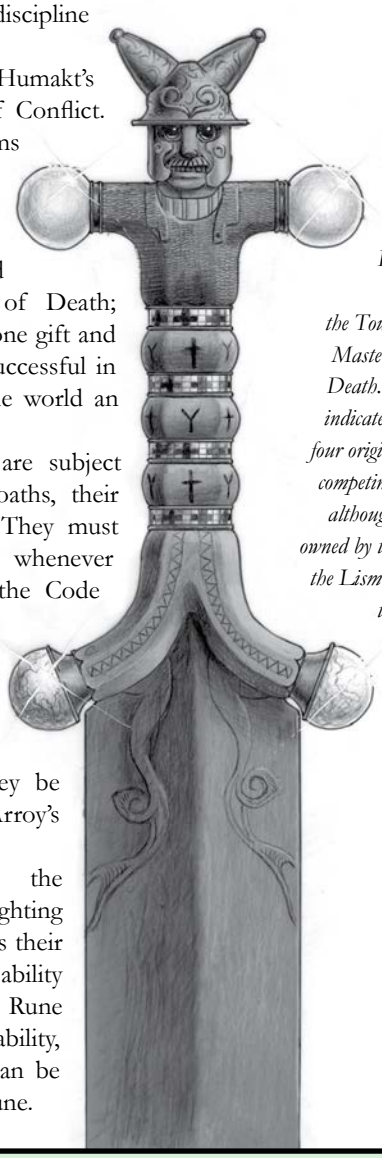
## Initiates

A prospective initiate must have a Death Rune of at least 1 and a Humakti initiate as a sponsor. The candidate must prove his skills and commitment to the leader of the warband. Humakt welcomes all, as long as they are warriors and swear to keep their Oaths regardless of the consequences. Few non-humans can maintain that discipline and so few join.

Initiation re-enacts Humakt's own initiation in the Pit of Conflict. The candidate then performs the Severing, cutting all relationships to his kinfolk and other deities. He wanders the mythic world searching for the power of Death; when he finds it, he takes one gift and a geas from Humakt. If successful in all things, he returns to the world an initiate of Humakt.

Initiates of Humakt are subject only to their god, their oaths, their temple, and their Sword. They must fight with the warband whenever called, and must uphold the Code of Humakt. They must fulfill any oath they swear or lose all their magic. Their corpses cannot be animated and turned into undead. Nor can they be resurrected by Chalana Arroy's power.

All Humakti have the Specific ability of Sword Fighting at least at the same rating as their Death Rune. Although this ability is linked to their Death Rune rating, it is an independent ability, improved separately, and can be augmented by the Death Rune.



*Humakti sword associated with the Tournament of the Masters of Luck and Death. The four jewels indicate that there were four original participants competing for the sword, although it is currently owned by the champion of the Lismelder tribe, from the region of the Upland Marsh in Sartar.*

### Humakti Swords

All Humakti bear the sword that is their manifestation of the Death Rune. Humakti take great care of their sword, as it is an extension of their soul. These swords are extremely well-crafted and obsessively polished and always named. Humakti heroes often take a breakout ability from the Death Rune to represent their focus with their particular sword.

## Humakt's Gifts and Geases

Humakt gives heroic powers to worshippers at the cost of terrible geases. Each gift grants a Specific ability based on the worshipper's Death or Truth Runes. However, each gift comes with a geas: an idiosyncratic taboo enforced by unbending, iron oaths.

The player and the Game Master should develop a hero's Humakti gift and geas together. Humakt's gifts should enhance the hero's Death or Truth abilities in some narrow fashion; Humakt's geases should make the gift a two-edged sword for the hero. The first gift and geas a Humakt initiate takes is free and does not cost a Hero Point or count against the five additional abilities taken during character creation. Epic geases include:

- The ruthless Humakti king Mad-Blood Malan was gifted by Humakt with a sword that always increased the consequence of defeat suffered by his opponents (see page 62). Malan vowed to never retreat or withdraw from any combat – which ultimately was his death.
- Huvendars the Silent was the fearsome bodyguard of King Tarkalor who was gifted with the power to defend his master from assassins and traitors. He could not speak except to make a vow sworn by his dread god.
- Jononral the Fearsome was given the power to kill with a glance but had to vow to kill all who feared Death. He killed everyone in three towns because they feared him. He shouted, "Fear me not or you fear Life itself!" Only Great Herand managed to stop him, for the Wind Lord loved Life and did not fear Death.
- The vengeful Hero Entarkval Hospitality-Breaker was given deadly powers by Humakt to strike down every member of the Bridgeford Clan. He vowed to kill every member of that clan he encountered as well as to drink no alcohol and eat no flesh.
- Each member of the Household of Death was given the power to inflict grievous harm on the Red Emperor and his household (a plot augment whenever fighting the Emperor or those who directly served him) but vowed to die defending Boldhome, which they did. Boldhome still fell.

A hero may take additional gifts and geases during play with the permission of the Game Master, who may require that the hero overcome a plot obstacle.

### The Severing

Kinship is an essential part of Orlanthi culture and religion. To be without kin is to be dead. Nonetheless, some deities' actions are contrary to Orlanth's laws. They include Babeester Gor, Eurmal, Humakt, Urox, and sometimes others. Those deities have dispensation to perform their unspeakable actions without accruing harm to themselves. To protect society from these acts, these cults have rites that sunder a person's normal social and divine bonds. After this severance, their kin are safe from reprisal for their criminal actions. The worshipper's kinsmen are not responsible in any way, and no divine wrath accrues to their community for any action the worshipper takes, whether cult sanctioned or not. Of course, if they commit crimes against Orlanth's laws that their god does not sanction, they may bring down divine wrath onto their temple, congregation, or warband.

A person who joins Humakt is Severed from the Living and truly erases his former relationships. As such, he does not receive anything that would normally come to him from his kin or community. Without kinship, a Humakti is not legally a member of a clan or bloodline. His former kin are not responsible for his crimes, nor can he collect wergild for crimes done to him. He does not help pay clan fines, nor does he collect anything when his bloodline receives gifts. Anyone who has a quarrel with a Humakti must deal with him directly, without the official support of Orlanthi law.

The worshipper also cuts contact with other gods, leaving Humakt as their sole source of magic, although they must still participate in community worship and play Humakt's role.

## Devotees

A Humakt initiate who dedicates himself completely to Humakt becomes a devotee of the Death God.

The devotee must take at least one more gift and geas from Humakt. Devotees are supported by their temple-battalion, by a patron, or by fighting in duels and wars. There is always a demand for the dread Swords of Humakt in war-torn Dragon Pass.

## Feats

Devotees of Humakt may perform magic feats: repetitions of his mythic deeds. Some feats are universal to the Humakt cult; others are associated with specific temples or subcults.

### Feat: † The Sword God

Humakt is the Sword God and the greatest warrior in Glorantha. His sword always strikes true and always kills those who cannot avoid his strike. He can cut anything, even that which cannot be seen or touched and his sword destroys lesser weapons that dare be used against him or to block him. He is the bodyguard of the Chief and is sworn to die instead of his liege.

# Waha

## Waha

Waha is the Butcher, Founder, and Great Khan of the Praxian nomads. The Waha spirit society is at the core of the male Praxian tradition with most men being members.

## Mythos and History

Waha is the son of Storm Bull and Eiritha. He was born at the end of the Gods War, after his father had slain the Devil and long after his mother was hidden beneath the earth.

He emerged from the earth to look upon a world of Darkness and lingering Chaos. People wandered through the blasted land, dazed and dying of stupidity. Some had followed lesser spirits or dark gods, but Waha taught them new ways to live. Within the bleak and hostile Darkness, Waha showed them how to survive.

Waha did many things to save the world; these Tasks of Waha bound the Wastelands together. His Tasks wove a huge net between the peoples, spirits and parts of the Wastelands, catching all that was drifting apart.

Waha freed the Daughters of Eiritha who were imprisoned by the forces of Darkness. Through the dark and dangerous ways he searched and fought, and returned to the world with the goddesses known as the Protectresses. With the Protectresses free, the women of the tribes could now contact Eiritha and so the people could gather their herds.

Waha the Butcher taught men the secrets of Death. He taught them the Peaceful Cut, whereby they could return their sister-animals to bliss within the womb of Eiritha, thereby supplying the tribes with provender from the goddess. He taught them the warlike blows, whereby men could send their foes to dark hells.

He fought Oakfed the Wild Fire and tamed it to be a friend to men. Waha cleansed the desert of the presence of the Devil. He used the Earth powers of his mother to dig a great channel through the earth, diverting a river to the place where the Devil lay. Waha ordered the river and its creatures to devour the putrid being, and the river did. When the body of the Devil was gone many souls were released from bondage, many of these were grateful and joined Waha who offered them solace and protection.

Once Waha had finished his Tasks, all of the Wastelands, its parts and occupants were rejoined. Waha's great-aunt, Spider Grandmother collected the drawstrings and closed the bag tight. Now the Wastelands could not drift away and they were part of Time.

The cult of Waha has survived intact since the Darkness, it never has been extinct among the Praxians, although from time to time it has fallen out of favor. During the First Age, many Praxian clans settled in Peloria as part of the Second Council.

Since the First Age the cult of Waha has suffered several defeats. The greatest of these was about 850, and was a victory for Pavis, who thereby established his own city. During the Second Age, Waha failed to protect Prax from the Empire of the Wyrms Friends, and the Praxians were forced deep into the Wastelands. In the Third Age, the mighty Lunar Empire, armed with its Chaotic magics and aided by treachery, has defeated Waha's people again.

## Life after Death

Waha promises his followers that their spirits or souls will return to the familiar lifestyle of the Wastelands after an undefined time spent in the gloomy, silent world of Death. Followers know that they will go to the Great Herd (where Waha and Eiritha live and rule). Here in this special place of magical power, they will spend years in comfort watching over the herd of Waha in a paradise where they cannot be slain. Then, when ready, they will re-enter the cycle of birth and rebirth for the good of the tribe. Only the immortal Heroes are spared the compulsory return to the mundane world.

Followers are burned after they die, and their ashes are spread to the plains and winds. In a prayer, those present ask that the departed's spirit stand watch over the Tribe, and its herds.

## Runes

Waha is associated with the Death Rune and the Mastery Rune. The spirits of Waha are worshiped through his spirit society.

† **Death Rune**: Although not the source of the Death rune, Waha is a god of Death and Fighting. Soon after his birth, he was honing his skills alongside his father in the Eternal Battle. His initiates are known to use the Death Rune to send the souls of herd beasts to the Afterlife, slay foes in battle, and to ward off the weapons of their enemies. Initiates strong in the Death Rune are resourceful, ruthless and coldly pragmatic.

Ш **Mastery Rune**: Waha is associated with the Mastery Rune and is the ruling god of the Wastelands. His initiates are known to use the Mastery Rune to command the elemental powers of the Wastelands (restricted to Darkness, Earth, Fire, and Water), and to invoke the ancient laws and covenants between men and Beast. Initiates strong in the Mastery Rune are righteous, commanding and self-assured.

### † The Peaceful Cut

After Waha rescued the Protectresses, the herds could return. He knew that if they were to be provender from the goddess, their spirits must return to his mother and the cycle of rebirth. Waha knew the correct way to kill an animal so its spirit would be unharmed. Using Foundchild's teachings he wove the songs to sing those spirits back to the bliss within the womb of Eiritha. He taught these to men as the Peaceful Cut. Each herd beast has its own distinctive song. All men of the Praxian tradition know the ritual. It is taboo for women to learn it.

### Waha Charms

In all Waha rituals, string, rope, twine and sinew are used to map out the world. Spirits are offered a house that is a cats cradle or knotted shape. The twine from the ritual is incorporated into the charm, and holds the spirit. Any other parts the spirit requires form the scaffold of the charm. Waha followers always carry loops of string ready for use.

## Spirit Magic

Waha cultists with a Spirit Rune of at least 1ᛇ belong to his spirit society and use charms to perform spirit magic. Charms are often practical items that reflect the charm's nature. Khans often have a ceremonial baton with charms that acts as their personal medicine bundle.

† **Death Rune Charms**: Waha's spirit society provides charms that relate to his use of the Death Rune. Sample charms include:

- † Kill Foreigner,
- † Javelin of Death,
- † Severing Blow,
- † In the Eye, and
- † Sharp Lance.

ᛇ **Mastery Rune Charms**: Waha's spirit society provides spirit magic charms that relate to Mastery ᛇ. Many of Waha's charms are associated with the *Tasks of Waha* in the Great Darkness. Examples of these are shown below:

*Subduing the elemental powers of Fire and Darkness:*

- ᛇ Subdue Fire Elementals
- ᛇ Drive off Darkness Creature
- ᛇ Exploit Troll Weakness

*Controlling the elemental powers of Earth and Water:*

- ᛇ Command Earth Elementals
- ᛇ Command Water Elementals
- ᛇ Fight Water Elementals

*Founding and establishing the customs of the tribes:*

- ᛇ Know Lineage
- ᛇ Know Tribal Custom
- ᛇ Impress Potential Wife
- ᛇ Form new community

*Befriending the spirits of the land:*

- ᛇ Befriend (Particular Spirit)
- ᛇ Know Spirit
- ᛇ Find (Helpful Spirit)
- ᛇ Placate Spirit

*Living in the Wastelands:*

- ᛇ Water Finder
- ᛇ Grazing Path
- ᛇ Watch for Danger

*The Survival Covenant:*

- ᛇ Beast or Man
- ᛇ Awaken Beast
- ᛇ Suppress Man

## Nature of the Cult

Waha teaches the basic lifestyle and survival needs for the men of the Wastelands. He carefully explains what each man must do to survive, and determines the social order within the tribe. His epic Tasks define the connections within the Wastelands and bind the land together.

The hierarchy of the Waha cult forms the hierarchy of the men of the tribes. All Khans claim some descent from Waha, as do most shaman of his spirit society.

## Particular Likes and Dislikes

Waha is the Protector of the Herds, and he dislikes any who would harm them. Waha considers any man in the Wastelands who does not know his Peaceful Cut to be a potential foe. Predators, or foreign men, are all considered enemies.

Waha remembers friends who aid him against evil, and is their friend afterwards, as long as they leave his peoples and herds unharmed.

Waha does not trust the Lightbringers, but honors them, as Orlanth is his uncle.

Waha dislikes horses, for they are animals of Yelm, the Sun God; they are not of Eiritha. His people have an ancient feud with the Pure Horse People, who are always enemies.

### The Empty

Those Praxians who do not have a connection to the Spirit Rune are called the Empty. They cannot appreciate all of the great mysteries of their land and are cut off from some of the understandings their brethren have. This does not make them social outcasts, just different with their outlook and ways of magic. The Empty can only interact slightly with the Spirit World, and are not blind to it, nor it to them. Nomads born without a Spirit Rune have no lesser reverence for the tradition spirits around them, as animism is part of their cultural belief and not dependent on individual ability. The result of the spirits' work is all around them.

Although heroes without the Spirit Rune cannot join spirit societies, they can still have spirit charms.

## Enemies

Waha hates Chaos in all its forms for Chaos destroyed Genert's Garden and made it into the Wastelands. All of Waha's worshipers are obligated to destroy Chaos wherever they find it.

## Cult Organization

Each tribe of nomads has its own High Khan for its entire people. Within the tribe, a chieftain, who is also a Khan, rules each clan. Other Khans exist within the tribes and clans, and serve as raid leaders, advisors, or independents vying for a leadership position. None of these has any real power over the others, and are outranked by the High Khan of Waha at the Paps.

The High Khan of the Paps has precedence over all other Khans, but only when in their presence. He cannot send orders from afar, although there may be magical promises or gifts to influence a tribal High Khan. The actual ability of the Paps High Khan to unify the tribes is usually very low. The Khans properly look out for their own followers first, except when in the Paps.

**Medicine Bundles**

*Waha's medicine bundle varies for each tribe in the Wastelands. Sometimes it is a golden heart of a tribal herd beast still beating, adorned with ribbons and trophies. Others have a small throne with a statue depicting Waha seated upon it. It grows and comes to life with the spirit of Waha on his holy days. It can give magic and answer questions. Many Khans carry ceremonial batons carved with their runes of power and containing many spirits. These personal medicine bundles may become clan or tribal medicine bundles when a new Khan is elected. Old medicine bundles are dismantled; their spirits and trophies are transferred to new ones, released and many are burnt with their previous owners when they die.*

## Center of Power, Holy Places

The center of worship for the cult of Waha is in the Paps. This is where Waha emerged from the Earth to lead mankind to the nomadic way of life. Also there are the major temples of the other surviving Earth deities of Prax.

There are many holy places for the cult. The most notable are Day's Rest, where the Protectresses once halted, and the Good Canal, which Waha dug.

## Initiates

Those who wish to join Waha's spirit society must be a male, and of the Praxian tradition. They must have a Spirit Rune rating of at least 1Ш, or a Death or Mastery Rune rating of at least 1Ш. The initiation ceremony normally takes place once the candidates have proved themselves to the tribal elders, around the age of 18 to 20. They must know how to ride and fight, and be knowledgeable about all the tribal herds, not just their own beasts.

All of the candidates then complete together a simpler version of one of Waha's Tasks. All are initiated who do not shame themselves or Waha.

Once initiated, members have greater responsibilities: They must always attempt to kill Chaos wherever found. If unable, they must do their best to alert the tribe. They are expected to sacrifice their lives fighting for the protection of the herd if needed, to follow every command from their Khans and chieftains, and to take responsibility for the lives of the uninitiated boys.

Initiates have much greater freedom to go along with their responsibility. They are allowed to marry a priestess of Eiritha if they are able. Unmarried initiates may eat at the Bachelor's Fire if they wish. They are allowed to go on war parties and raids.

Initiates receive the third choice of portions from a slaughtered animal. They have second choice of weapons from the traders. They are allowed to purchase the intoxicating mushroom drink from the Dark Elves of Shadows Dance.

Khans occasionally may order initiates on special missions. If it is a mission against known Chaos, the Khan may loan his *Spirits of Law* charm if he has one.

## Shaman

Candidates who would be leaders of the Waha spirit society must prove their descent from Waha and often have many ancestor spirits that will speak their lineage.

On Waha's Birth Night, his shaman takes the candidate through the Spirit World to Waha's birthplace. Here with the other spirit protectors, he must help guard Waha's birth from the spirits who would try to kill him. Bad Man always appears and singles out the candidate, directing the foes of the Great Darkness to tear him to pieces. The candidate's helper spirits take his pieces to Eiritha's womb. There the Horned Man, the Father of all shaman, pores over the pieces slowly fitting the candidate back together.

A Shaman initiated through Waha's path always has a fetch that is a female herd animal of the same type as his tribal animal.

A shaman may marry any from within his own tribe, providing he fulfills all of the usual requirements. Many marry an Eiritha spirit-talker, and those successfully completing the Waha and the Priestess Task will take a Herd Sister or High Priestess of Eiritha as a wife.

## Khans

The Khans of Waha are the warrior leaders of the tribe. They are the takers of life, for both friends and enemies.

All must be initiates who have proved themselves, and not be proven murderers, robbers, or cowards. Those who would become Khans must have a community (clan) rating of at least 11Ш, and must own a bronze weapon. A Khan must succeed in one of Waha's Tasks. Most commonly Waha and Death is the chosen Task, candidates travel weaponless and naked into the Devil's Marsh or Krjalki Bog to find Storm Bull's dropped weapon.

A reward for becoming a Khan, is that Waha awakens their favorite mount to sentience. If the mount dies it cannot be replaced, its spirit is transferred to a special charm. It is often in the form of a necklace of the animal itself made from its hide and horns. Awakened mounts are treated as companions.

All Khans strive to be Waha, and once a Khan, set the standard of behavior for all of Waha's followers. Most strive to repeat all of Waha's Tasks, and as such are the holders of Waha's stories from the Great Darkness. Khans are required to celebrate Waha's High Holy Day with other followers of Waha.

Khans have special taboos: they are not allowed ever to ride any but their own tribe's herd beasts; they may not marry any woman not a shaman or priestess of a Praxian goddess; they may not travel to the Sky as a friend, eat gold or golden food, or build a house. At least once in a lifetime a Khan must travel to the Devil's Marsh and kill a thing of Chaos. Even if their Khan Quest was that, most would happily return to the Marsh again.

Khans are allowed to have as many wives and concubines as they can manage, receive first choice of weapons from traders, and share the second portion of a slaughtered animal with the society shamans. Khans are allowed to lead a chosen party of initiates on independent missions away from the herds.

To become the chieftain of a clan, a Khan must succeed in defeating all other candidates with the hero's cultural (clan) rating in the Choosing ceremony of Waha. All clan members hear the candidate's deeds and choose accordingly. Becoming a tribal Khan follows the same pattern.

## Other Spirits

Shamans and Khans of the spirit society can learn to summon other special spirits:

**The Founders**. Waha is the heir to the secrets of the Founding Spirits who came down from the Spike in God Time with Storm Bull and who wed the Protectresses to create the race of people. These are very powerful spirits, each one is ancestor to one of the tribes of Prax. The legitimate High Khan of each tribe is able to lead a ritual that lets him incarnate its Founder, allowing the Founder to step out of the Spirit World and into the Wastelands. This takes at least a day to prepare, and is not always successful. The being so summoned is of awesome power, far beyond the normal scope of the nomads, appearing as a tribe member with the appropriate herd animal's head, standing up to 70 feet tall, with strength and abilities appropriate to that magnitude. Founders are called on rarely and then only for great tribal emergencies.

**Borabo Nightmare**. Borabo was one of the grateful spirits released at the Devil's death. He now serves as Waha's spirit of retribution. If a nomad leaves the Waha spirit society they are unexpectedly visited during their sleep, in a heroquest, or in the Spirit World by this spirit. They will have no choice but to fight it. Borabo always tries to sever the transgressor's spirit or if he now has none, to possess another to kill him.

**The Spirits of Law**. These were found by Waha in the Great Darkness in the place now called Ex. When the Block bounced here on its way to crush the Devil, a few Law spirits were shaken off and lost there. They were grateful to be found and shared with Waha the stability of Law against Chaos. As they never fought the Devil, his father Storm Bull has no interest in them and they are not part of his Anti-Chaos powers. Khans wishing to have one of these spirits must travel to Ex. Unusually each spirit knows a specific spell which it can use to neutralize Chaos. The taboo associated with these spirits is *Fight Chaos Now*.

## Devotees

A Waha initiate with a rating of 11 or more in the Death or Mastery Rune may dedicate himself completely to Waha and become a devotee of Waha. As devotees, they must give up their spirit magic. Devotees are rare except among the Empty.

## Feats

### Feat: Heroform Waha

Waha the Butcher was the savior of Prax. He emerged from the Paps to conquer the elements and led the remnants of his people to survival. He taught the people to eat; he made the river devour the Devil; he conquered the night demons, and sent them fleeing to the north; he banished the plagues; he fathered many sons; and he tamed both Oakfed and Wild Hunter.

Sorcery

## △ Sorcery

Sorcerers perceive an impersonal universe and believe that among its immutable laws there are exploitable qualities that can be conquered and used by conscious manipulation. Sorcery is the direct manipulation of the Runes by learning and reciting formulae called **spells** that always produce the same known effect. It is both rational and logical.

Sorcerers are often called humanists or materialists; specialists in sorcery are often called wizards. In the West, the Malkioni religion relies upon their wizards to shape the universe without consent from gods or spirits.

## Spells

Sorcery works around applying one of the following four logical principles to a Rune:

**Summon/Dismiss**. Calling forth or diminishing a specific manifestation of a Rune.

**Command**. Forcing a local manifestation of a Rune to act in a specific manner in accordance with its nature.

**Combine/Separate**. Combine the local manifestation of a Rune with another Rune or separate a Rune from the local manifestation of another Rune.

**Tap**. Convert a local manifestation of a Rune into raw magical energy.

The application of these principles to specific Runes creates formulae called **spells**. Each spell creates one very specific magical result. The Game Master enforces this by taking an unusually severe and literal-minded approach when evaluating your description of an attempt. If the result you're attempting with a spell seems like a stretch, *it isn't possible at all*. However, unlike other forms of magic, spells can always be used directly. For example, the sorcerer Dromal knows the spell *Create Wall of Flame*, applying the principle of Summoning to the Fire Rune. His rival, Enkelkorth the Blue, knows the spell *Create Rogue Waves*, combining the Disorder Rune with the Water Rune to create great rogue waves that swamp ships and drown men.

Spells can be learned and improved like any other ability. They may be single, stand-alone abilities or part of a grimoire.

## Grimoires

Grimoires are bodies of knowledge that explain, describe or otherwise analyze Gloranthan metaphysics. Most grimoires focus on a single Rune (often narrowed to have some defined subset of the

Rune) and contain formulae detailing permutations and combinations of that Rune with the four sorcerous principles described above.

For rules purposes, each grimoire is an ability that can be treated as a breakout of the Law Rune or another appropriate keyword, or as a stand-alone ability. A grimoire should be given a brief description on your character sheet to provide guidance for possible spells. Spell effects may be listed in the entries for each grimoire.

If you start the game with a free grimoire, choose (or create) five spells from the list of sample grimoire spells (if one exists) as those you have already learned. When you acquire additional grimoires, choose (or create) one additional spell. You may perform your spells directly, using your rating in the grimoire, and describe them as having obviously extraordinary effects. Unlike Rune and Spirit magic, Sorcery spells are very specific and limited. You use these spells at your grimoire's rating; these are not breakout abilities and cannot be independently raised.

You write on your character sheet the name of the grimoire and its core Rune; for each spell give a descriptive name. If the spell is based on the principle of **Combine/Separate**, include the Rune that is being combined with or separated from the grimoire's Rune.

## What the Wizard Says

**Where did the world come from?**
The Invisible God, the primordial being of pure immaterial energy, created the world through Thought and set its immutable Laws – the Runes. The world is the result of interactions between Rune powers. The original Runes devolved, multiplied, and combined with other Runes, creating the natural world whose mixed matter and energy follow the impersonal Laws of the Invisible God. Many forces of nature exist, working in extremely complex patterns. These energies have always existed and always will exist, and as we can demonstrate through methodical experimentation.

**Where did I come from?**
Your mother bore you as a result of natural reproductive processes. Everything in the world has a natural origin. What makes you different from an inanimate object is your life energy - that measurable part of you which gives you life.

**Why do we die?**
Death is a natural process of the mundane world. Everything changes its form and matter through participation in the mundane world. While our bodies can be maintained for many years, ultimately everything and everyone dies, even if only through happenstance.

**What happens after we die?**
After we die, we separate back into matter and energy. However, only the weak-willed among us face oblivion. Those enlightened ones, who learn to understand and master their place in the world, will be able to maintain their individual identity indefinitely.

**Why am I here?**
This question passeth beyond your understanding. Each man has only one life, and it is his responsibility to live as well as he can. Only thus can we come to appreciate the works of the Creator and earn the right to eternal fulfillment.

**How do I do magic?**
I am a sorcerer, wise and experienced in the laws of the universe. Magic is the process of manipulating natural energies through skill and the authority of the soul. I have learned and developed these skills myself and I depend on no one else to make them work. If you study with me, I will teach you how to use your innate power to manipulate the natural laws of the world to your own ends, making the world your slave.

**What are the gods?**
The gods are great and powerful entities who manifest one or more of the Runes. They are dangerous, for they wish mankind to serve them instead of being forced to serve men like us. Each god is limited in knowledge, and therefore, has weak, vulnerable places. Priests and priestesses are the leading slaves of the various gods. Worshipers are the pawns of the gods and the lackeys of the priesthood.

**What are spirits?**
Spirits are a lowly, mindless form of energy incapable of independent action, identity, or individuality. Spirits are usually unimportant to a sorcerer, though an individual spirit's power may grow to become great and dangerous. A shaman is one who doesn't fully understand his powers, and is therefore misled to follow spirits rather than striving to master them as we can.

*Example: Rodamarg has studied the Debaldan Grimoire, an ancient formulary of elemental spells associated with the Water Rune. He has learned four spells from the grimoire. His player has written on Rodamarg's character sheet:*

Law Rune 5

- **Debaldan Grimoire**: *+1 this grimoire contains spells pertaining to the seas and water vessels. Spells include:*
  - **Calm Waters** *combines Water with Harmony to calm the waters within earshot of the caster, making its surface placid.*
  - **Move Vessel Quickly Across the Waters** *combines Water with Movement to greatly increase the speed of a vessel the caster is aboard for as long as the caster can continue chanting the spell uninterrupted.*
  - **Create Rogue Wave** *combines Water with Disorder to create a great rogue wave that can swamp ships and drown men and follows simple voice commands ("drown the man in front of me", "swamp the ship to my right"). Once the wave has carried out its command, it dissipates.*
  - **Stop Vessel in the Water** *combines Water with Stasis to stop a vessel in the water for as long as the caster can chant the spell uninterrupted.*

You can't attempt to gain new spells within a grimoire until you have at least a 1 rating in the grimoire or associated keyword. You may have the rote formulae for a spell already in your book, but until you can interact directly with the forces you're harnessing, you lack the understanding to use them.

If you have a rating of 1 in a grimoire, you may spend 1 Hero Point to add a new spell to it.

## Tapping

Tapping is the sorcerous conversion of a local manifestation of a Rune into raw magical energy, which then can be used by the sorcerer to power other spells. For example, a sorcerer learned in the Stasis Rune, might tap the Stasis out of a rock, reducing it to dust, or another might tap the Life out of a tree, killing the orchard to get magical power.

Most sorcerers, except the Brithini, Vadeli, Waertagi, and Lunars consider Tapping to be immoral and evil. However, the principle is inherent in Malkioni philosophy and is easily derived from the logical techniques the Malkioni use to summon, command, or combine Runes.

## Designing your Grimoire

The Game Master and player should collaborate to develop the subject and scope of a given grimoire. How much detail a grimoire needs depends on the campaign and style of game; some Game Masters find it useful to list each spell contained in a grimoire, others need only know the Rune and a brief description of its subject and scope.

## Mage

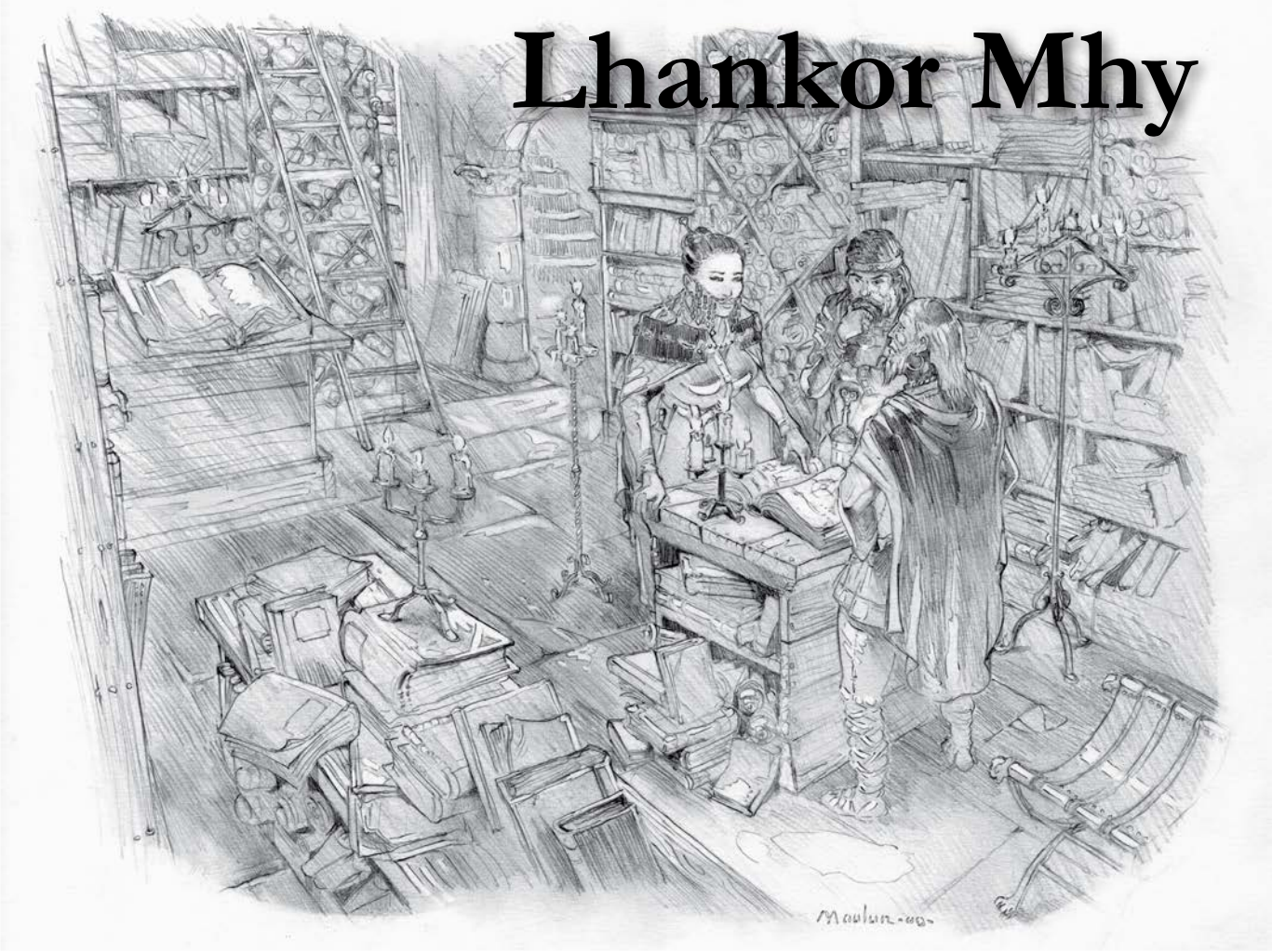
Once you've reached 11 in any grimoire, you may be considered for **mage** status. You must overcome at least one significant plot obstacle to win this rank from your senior colleagues.

At this level, you may gain, as new abilities, grimoires from any other wizardly organization.

You may create new grimoires. Begin by suggesting an appropriate theme, justifying it in terms of your school's philosophy. Examples include manipulating a different Rune, combining spells, or building upon ideas from other grimoires, etc. You must achieve intellectual union with the source of your magic (be it the One, the Great Mind, Logic, or whatever your philosophy holds to be so), overcoming at least one dangerous obstacle. If successful, you rediscover a forgotten philosophical truth. This epiphany allows you to complete the magical formula. You may now develop this grimoire, and teach it to others. Most schools insist that you teach new spells to their full members, and keep them secret from outsiders. If you fail to create your rediscovered grimoire, you suffer the Consequences of Defeat.

As a mage, your administrative and community responsibilities increase. Even the most free-ranging scholar is saddled with occasional teaching duties. However, you also gain considerable prestige within the organization, and can use your grimoire rating as an augment to social interactions when intimidating other sorcerers and browbeating students.

# Lhankor Mhy



## Lhankor Mhy ᛉᚣ

Lhankor Mhy is the god of Knowledge and Writing. He is the Seeker and the Sage, the Keeper of the Laws, and the Scribe of the Immortals. Lhankor Mhy knows all the laws, customs, and histories of people and gods. He invented the Three Sacred Scripts of writing so that others could remember knowledge.

## Mythos and History

Lhankor Mhy was born before the Gods War. His parents were two members of the Cosmic Court: Acos (The Law) and Orenoar (Mistress of Truth). He lived with them upon the great Spike of Law and sang songs of Knowledge and Power. Using the Marking Bone, Lhankor Mhy first inscribed the great Runes into the Eternal Book, giving definition and structure to the Cosmos. He remembered everything he ever saw or learned, though he was not asked to tell about anything until Orlanth, always seeking to fix what he had wronged, asked him. Lhankor Mhy could discern and state the Cosmic Law that rules gods, and the Law that worshippers must follow to survive. He invented writing to allow others access to his thoughts and wrote the Eternal Book that contains the foundations of all knowledge.

When Orlanth slew Yelm, all the gods and goddesses of Light went with the Bright Emperor to Hell. One of these was Elasa, the goddess of the Light of Knowledge, and Lhankor Mhy suddenly was bereft of inspiration. So were his worshippers, and so Lhankor Mhy invented the first of the Three Sacred Scripts to share himself with them. The Grey Sages hold these documents dear.

Lhankor Mhy set out during the Lesser Darkness to find the missing goddess. He suffered adventures along the way, and helped form the Lightbringers. He succeeded but also failed, wrote a perfect book that was flawed, was left speechless because he was right, and could not write because he proved he could. He encountered Jolsedar, the Brain Flayer who took knowledge and thought. Nonetheless, Lhankor Mhy

**Above**
*Sages Jorjera Latish and Tosti Runefriend consult with Minaryth the Purple in the Jonstown Library to interpret an obscure Second Age text.*

ᛉ

escaped its clutches for he had deeper wisdom that could not be touched by evil or corrupt beings. He provided the answer to Orlanth at the Riddling End, and so was the key to success of the Quest. He was present when Arachne Solara's web was spread and wrote the sacred Stone Scrolls, forged in the Underworld to hide the secrets of the Compromise from immature souls.

When they returned from their successful quest, Lhankor Mhy married Elasa, and all knowledge was his forever.

Lhankor Mhy retired to his Great Study, a stone building near Orlanth's Stead in the Storm Realm. He wears a grey robe and a long grey beard to designate his station. There he keeps the treasured Eternal Book, the Source of Knowledge.

While Lhankor Mhy was able to embrace all Knowledge, mortals have no such opportunity and have found ever since that, because mortal knowledge is always incomplete, what they know does not always apply to the problems at hand. Still Lhankor Mhy's cultists constantly quest for truth, for the thirst for knowledge remains. The worshippers of the Seeker and the Sage remain above petty quarrels and are impartial advisors to all.

## The Alien Combination Machine:

### The Orlanthi Key to Sorcery

During the Gods War, the Thunder Brothers plundered the enemy Fortress of Erroneous Law and a prize that Lhankor Mhy came away with was this strange contraption. Those Lhankor Mhy initiates with the Law Rune can use the Machine to read sorcerous grimoires from outside of the Lhankor Mhy cult and can learn this godless sorcery without polluting themselves spiritually.

The Alien Combination Machine consists of several discs inscribed with runes and symbols. The discs can be rotated in order to decipher a grimoire and purge it of its corruption, thereby restoring it as a fragment of the Eternal Book.

In the Second Age, many Lhankor Mhy sages were seduced by the God Learners and mistook their great Abiding Book as a fragment of the Eternal Book. Some temples rejected the God Learner sorcery, while others accepted certain grimoires. However, those who cooperated with the foreigners were deceived, for the God Learners served Gbaji and not the Seeker and the Sage.

The modern Lhankor Mhy cult is deeply suspicious of all things foreign. Completionists (called by others "forbidden temples") still collect foreign writings and allow the sages to study them. At the other extreme, Ivalists destroy all foreign sorcerous works. Others destroy the most dangerous sorcery but study that which is not tainted by Gbaji.

## Life after Death

The initiates of Lhankor Mhy know that they will travel to his Court inside the Tower of Ivory to sit at the feet of the Eternal Source of Knowledge. Their length of time in the tower will depend on how well they have fulfilled their lifetime quest within the cult: the amount of true knowledge they accumulated determines the time allowed in blissful contemplation before, as mortals once again, they take their place in the eternal circle of Life and Death.

Initiates prefer to be laid into stone tombs, whether natural or constructed; shaft graves are preferred. The poorer members are buried simply with a rock for a pillow. Members buried with cult rites always have long accounts of their knowledge and learning read during the funeral service.

## Runes and Grimoires

Lhankor Mhy is the source of the Truth Rune for the Orlanthi pantheon. He is also strongly associated with the Law Rune.

ϒ **Truth Rune**: Lhankor Mhy is a god of Truth Rune for the Orlanthi pantheon and his initiates can make a very broad use of the powers of Truth. A very incomplete list of the abilities Lhankor Mhy initiates have been known to use their Truth Rune magic for includes: determine omens, discover secret, knowledge of obscure lore, memorization, reading or writing in any script, revealing truth or falsehood, seeing the past, uncovering history. Initiates who are strong in this rune are exacting, studious, and truthful. All initiates of Lhankor Mhy may read the Three Sacred Scripts at their Truth Rune rating.

Δ **Law Rune**: Initiates with the Law Rune can learn wizardry spells from the temple grimoire and use the Alien Combination Machine to properly transcribe other grimoires into a usable medium. All true wizardry is grounded in the Law Rune and pertains to acquiring knowledge.

Δ **The Eternal Book:** The Eternal Book is the Great Grimoire of Lhankor Mhy. The book itself was lost during the Gods War but the sages of Lhankor Mhy are dedicated to reconstructing the original book detailing the Laws of the Cosmos. Each temple of Lhankor Mhy hoards and protects its fragments of the Eternal Book.

Δ **The Torvald Fragments:** The Torvald Fragments is one of the most commonly copied fragments of the Eternal Book and is found in many

Lhankor Mhy libraries. Here are some of its more commonly associated spells:

- ΔY *Analyze Magic*: This spell combines the Truth Rune with the Law Rune to give a true statement about a single magical entity, item, or substance.
- ΔY *Identify Runic Power*: This spell combines the Truth Rune with the Law Rune to identify the primary runes associate with a single magical entity, item, or substance.
- ΔY *Read Item's History*: This spell combines the Truth Rune with the Law Rune to read the past history of an item.
- ΔY *Recognize Otherworld*: This spell combines the Truth Rune with the Law Rune to find a point of reference while in the Otherworld.
- ΔY *Identify Demon*: This spell combines the Truth Rune with the Law Rune to identify a single Otherworld entity.
- Δ∴ *Dismiss Confusion*: This spell separates the Illusion Rune from the Law Rune, dispelling madness and other forms of confusion.
- ΔY *Logical Thinking*: This spell combines the Truth Rune with the Law Rune to create a valid syllogism.
- ΔR *Resist Godless Sorcery*: This spell combines the Law Rune with the Magic Rune to resist spells cast by sorcerers.
- ΔY *Divine Motivation*: This spell combines the Law Rune with the Truth Rune to determine the motivation of a person or entity.
- ΔY *Reveal Secret*: This spell separates the Illusion Rune from the Law Rune to reveal a secret that a person or entity had hidden from the caster.
- ΔIII *Speak Truth*: This spell combines the Truth Rune with the Harmony Rune to compel the victim to speak nothing but truth and answer all questions in a literal manner.

## Nature of the Cult

Lhankor Mhy is the Written Word. He is called the Seeker and the Sage, and his worshippers provide the same service to Men that Lhankor Mhy provides to the gods. The Grey Sages (as priests of the cult are called) provide information to all who pay for it, whether in money, service, or new knowledge. The cult is single-mindedly bent on the accumulation of information, eschewing any generalization and enunciation of abstract principles.

Scribes and sages worship Lhankor Mhy. His worshippers range from the advisors of wild hill chieftains to sedate urban librarians. Like their patron, his cultists try to avoid political power games with other groups. They may advise the ruling body of a community or region, but are rarely the rulers themselves.

This repression of involvement in outside politics often intensifies the constant intra-temple bickering of the cult. A temple may have a number of different factions from different areas that remain loyal to their clans, tribes, or cities, and their political infighting can be fierce.

## Cult Organization

The cult of Lhankor Mhy is not large, consisting of a well-established network of temples and literate families. Lhankor Mhy temples are always libraries, repositories of scrolls, books, and other written documents that require large staffs of apprentices and scribes to maintain.

The Lhankor Mhy cult consists of several large organizations that cooperate but do not obey each other. These organizations ignore tribal and national borders; each has its own temple hierarchy at a particular cult library. Although the network of Knowledge Temples is close and well established, large gatherings of sages from different temples are uncommon. The Holy Country temple scholars are highly regarded and often wield the most social influence. Any inter-temple discussion is presided over by the senior sage or scholar that specializes in the field under discussion.

## Center of Power, Holy Places

Prior to 1616, the largest center of power of the cult was the great library in the City of Wonders in the Holy Country. Since then it has been the Temple of Knowledge in Nochet, where Lhankor Mhy is said to have rested for a while with his bride the Light of Knowledge after Time began.

## Temple Libraries

Each temple library is essentially a building with a sacred shrine to Lhankor Mhy and all the books that the priests and sages who worship there have managed to accumulate. Each temple is its own center of learning; in communication with other temples but subject only to itself.

Although the cult of Lhankor Mhy is dedicated to the collection of knowledge, it has never developed a consistent classification system. Sages often spend years getting to know the collection so that they are familiar with the location of items relating to their

**Appearance**

*Particular temples of Lhankor Mhy adopt specific color schemes for all to wear. This does not limit ornamentation, and full members wear much in the way of gems, embroidered hems, and panels in their clothes and jewelry.*

*All full members must wear a beard, symbolic of Lhankor Mhy who is constantly in pursuit of the goddess Knowledge. Women and races without natural facial hair wear crafted beards that are often high ornamented. The usual color of a crafted beard is grey or white, the other worshippers often dye their real beards those colors.*

specialties. Often, they add to the confusion by starting their own private library from material they take from the main Library.

## Priests

Priests of Lhankor Mhy are called Grey Sages. They must prove their mastery of the greater corpus of knowledge in order to be deemed worthy of being supported by the temple. All priests are devotees and are covered in greater detail in that section.

## Initiates

All initiates of Lhankor Mhy must possess the Truth Rune (ᛉ) at a rating of at least 1ᛋ and that is always the initiate's divine rune ability with Lhankor Mhy. Initiates are taken on as apprentice scribes to the local Lhankor Mhy temple. They are taught to read and write the Three Sacred Scripts and may do so at their Truth Rune rating.

Once initiated, worshippers vow to write only the truth and to never pervert or otherwise misuse the written word. An initiate may not marry until he finishes his apprenticeship. Apprentices must follow the orders of any priest of Lhankor Mhy. Initiates are exempt from service in the clan, tribal, or city militia.

Service, study, and religious obligations take up most of an apprentice's time; unless the temple priests give them special sanction. In return, they have a place to sleep in the temple; the cult feeds them and gives them one set of clothes each year. Writing and reading for those with the ability to pay is an important source of income for apprentices.

Apprenticeship normally takes six years, after which the apprentice is required to demonstrate his knowledge to the priests (which requires overcoming a plot obstacle). If successful, the apprentice is recognized as a full member of the temple.

The Lhankor Mhy scribe is the ultimate cataloguer; compiling and copying painstakingly detailed lists of all the facts known about every imaginable subject. Often these lists simply comprise related words or phrases; sometimes they contain all names within a specific classification, such as all runes, trees, peoples, gods, or mammals.

## Devotees

A Lhankor Mhy initiate with a rating of 11ᛋ or more in the Truth Rune may seek to dedicate himself completely to Lhankor Mhy and become a devotee of the god. A devotee must pass an oral examination by the other priests to show his mastery of the Truth Rune. This requires the candidate to overcome one or more plot obstacles determined by the Game Master. If he passes, he is accepted as a Grey Sage of Lhankor Mhy and provided with the full support of the temple.

Grey Sages must never mix into individual quarrels nor participate in wars, unless the temple is threatened, a Lightbringer priest or devotee is threatened, or if against Chaos. They must spend half their time pursuing knowledge or instructing initiates; the split between the two depending on the needs of the temple and internal temple politics.

A Grey Sage may only marry other Grey Sages or those who would qualify as one if they joined. They must never allow written materials or other bodies of knowledge to be threatened or destroyed (sacrificing an item to Lhankor Mhy is not considered destruction). Any items of importance to the acquisition of knowledge must be gathered for the cult.

## Feats

Some feats are universal to the Lhankor Mhy cult; others are associated with specific subcults or heroes. The feat described below is simply an example.

### Feat: ᛉ Remember New Secret

Lhankor Mhy knows everything knowable. Orlanth once asked him how to overcome his enemies. The Knowing God sat alone through the night, with his head covered by a leather sheet, until he remembered the secret lore that would let Orlanth create a new Transformation and defeat his enemies.

### Godless Sorcery

The sorcerers of the western lands are powerful wizards, working magic stolen from the Eternal Book by Zzabur. Like the sages of Lhankor Mhy, the western sorcerers collect texts and information. However, the sorcerers revere a dead god called Malkion and are impious atheists who reject the worship of the gods. Their magic is corrupting without the use of the Alien Combination Machine. Sorcery is always dangerous and only the Lhankor Mhy cult knows how to cleanse it of its corruption.

The Malkioni are master sorcerers, divided into a number of competing sects and philosophical schools. They are organized into castes – Workers, Soldiers, Nobles, and Sorcerers.

# ☽ Lunar Magic

Lunar magic was a created by the Red Goddess and so can only be summoned by those with the ☽ Moon Rune. Her devoted followers say it is the fourth form of magic, a healed syncretic expression of the old ways of magic. Her vociferous enemies claim that Lunar magic is Chaos disguised with a glamour.

The Red Goddess is the deity of the Red Moon, a celestial body that appeared in the sky in the Third Age. In addition to ruling this heavenly body, the Red Goddess promises a self-awareness called Illumination, which gives initiates a special outlook on life. The Red Goddess herself began as a young human girl, unknowing of her own power. Once initiated by the Seven Mothers she undertook hazardous tasks to awaken and assert herself. The Red Goddess worked, danced, and fought her way into the fabric of the world. She ascended into the heavens in 1247. Gathering the very earth from about her the Red Goddess ascended into the sky, leaving behind a great empty spot called The Crater, into which no mortal may look or think without going mad, which is surrounded by a ring of impossibly tall crags. There she still sits in the sky, turning from black to red every seven days, still teaching her people her lessons and bestowing her blessings to all who bask beneath her light.

## The Red Moon

The Red Moon is at once the material form of the Red Goddess, the source of Lunar power, and a planet inhabited by a rich mix of new gods, Heroes, demons, and spirits. From below the Moon is visible as an orb whose surface color changes from red to black to red again in a weekly cycle. The red half is visible day and night, although viewers can only identify the black half at night by the stars and planets it obscures. The available power on which a worshipper can draw upon is determined by the phase of the Moon, which varies depending on where he is in Glorantha.

The Red Moon in the sky goes through seven distinct phases that are mimicked as sub-runes of the Moon Rune. Each phase is associated with an array of concepts, stories, runes, and Old and New Gods. Most associations are derived from the central mythology of her Goddess Quest, others by the subsequent actions of her Heroes who became New Gods.

### Phases of the Moon Rune

Those with the Moon Rune approach the Red Goddess through a specific phase of the Moon Rune. Each phase is a mask of the Moon Rune; mastery of all the phases is the sole purview of Lunar Illuminates. Outside of the Lunar religion there is little understanding of this separation. The phases are:

### ◑ Full Half Moon

**Goddess Quest station**: Descent into the World.
**Seven Mothers**: Teelo Norri ◑ᘏ
**Ancient Goddess**: Verithurusa the White Moon.
**Associations**: Youth, Innocence, and the desire to experience the world.
**Embodies**: Fire ⊙, Change ᘏ
**New God**: Etyries ◑ᚺ
**Lunes**: spirits of defense and purification manifesting as holy fires.
**Day of the Week (Dragon Pass)**: Godsday

### ◑ Crescent Go Moon

**Goddess Quest station**: Empty Victory.
**Seven Mothers**: Deezola ◑⧖
**Ancient Goddess**: Lesilla.
**Associations**: Birth and Motherhood.
**Embodies**: Earth □, Life ⧖
**New God**: Hon-eel ◑⧖
**Lunes**: Virtuous manifestations of innocence and fertility.
**Day of the Week (Dragon Pass)**: Darkday

## What the Lunar Priestess Says

**Where did the world come from?**
The Creatrix made the two races of gods first, the Celestial Court and the Tribe of Chaos. Neither understood the other, nor accepted the other's role in creation. From this initial conflict arose the imperfect world in which we live.

**Where did I come from?**
The Celestial Court and the Tribe of Chaos fought each other to destruction, and where they died lay a heap of ashes and slag. From that matter, Glorantha, goddess of compassion, fashioned First Woman. She bore the ancestors of all sentient races, whether they came from stone, dirt, wood, animals, or some human demigod. The races of people grew healthy and numerous, and you are of their descent.

**Why do we die?**
The disharmony of the Celestial Court and the Tribe of Chaos created an illness that sickened all creation. As a result, all the world must now die too.

**What happens after we die?**
All souls, living and dead, move within the compassionate harmony of the world. As a follower of the Lunar Way, when you die you shed the gross matter of your life and ascend to the Red Moon herself or some other paradise reflecting your personal patron. Hope that when you are again purged and whole you may be reborn into a new body for a new life.

**Why am I here?**
The races of mankind were created to restore health to the cosmos. We live to purify ourselves and, thereby, purify the wretched parts of the world. Our duty is to restore unity, harmony, and joy to the world of the living and the dead, heal the cosmos, and attain the bliss of immortality.

**How do I do magic?**
The world is filled with invisible powers. The Red Goddess places all those powers within your grasp, and you can integrate them in many ways: spirits may aid you, the New Gods can help you, or you can manipulate energy with your own force of will. All magic should be used to heal the world.

**Can you tell me the truth about other gods?**
All the gods who came before the Red Goddess' rebirth are hurt, incomplete and unwell, stuck in their old ways. The Red Goddess is the part of the cosmos that has already been healed. We worship her and the New Gods, her immortal followers.

**Tell me about the New Gods?**
The New Gods are the followers of the Red Goddess who achieved immortality and became demigods. The New Gods have been illuminated by the Red Goddess and teach us their path to the Lunar Way.

**Tell me about Chaos?**
The Life and Death duality of the mortal world is mirrored in the Divine and Chaos duality of the immortal world. The gods of Glorantha fear Chaos in the way that living mortals fear Death. But even Chaos can be conquered and harnessed, as proved by the Red Goddess. Each thing, monstrous or metaphysical, has its place for those who understand the entirety of the cosmos, even if only as a precautionary tale.

**Tell me about Sorcerers?**
The "invisible" god of the Westerners is visible to the Red Goddess. She alone has mastered its identity and secrets, and can use those natural powers called sorcery as her own. It is the unhealed cosmos itself, weakened and abused but still vibrant with potential.

**Tell me about Spirits?**
The multitude of spirits of the world are like the other organs inside your body. When healed each, like you, will be a god. Some are important now, but all are equal before Eternity. Nurturing them brings equal healing and friendship to you. Help them.

### ● Dying Moon

**Goddess Quest station**: Meeting.
**Seven Mothers**: Jakaleel ●ᛟ
**Ancient Goddess**: Gerra.
**Associations**: Madness, Woe and Suffering, the threshold between the Living and the Dead.
**Embodies**: Harmony ᛁᛁᛁ, Spirit ᛟ
**New God**: Yara Aranis ●ᛘ
**Lunes**: Mind-bending manifestations.
**Day of the Week (Dragon Pass)**: Waterday

### ● Black Moon

**Goddess Quest station**: Illumination.
**Seven Mothers**: She Who Waits ●
**Ancient Goddess**: Rashorana.
**Associations**: Illumination and Liberation. Only those who have achieved Lunar Illumination are affiliated with the Black Moon.
**Embodies**: The Black Phase does not embody any runes, but instead allows adoption of other Moon Phases.
**New Gods**: Great Sister ●, Nysalor ⊙ᛘ
**Lunes**: none.
**Day of the Week (Dragon Pass)**: Clayday

### ◐ Crescent Come Moon

**Goddess Quest station:** The Hunt.
**Seven Mothers**: Danfive Xaron ◐ᛁᛁᛁ
**Ancient Goddess**: Orogeria.
**Associations**: The Hunt for what is missing in order to be made whole.
**Embodies**: Air ᘏ, but cannot create any Middle Air magics (such as wind, rain, flying, lightning, and thunder).
**New God**: Hwarin Dalthippa ◐ᘐ
**Lunes**: Demons that are wild and passionate hunters.
**Day of the Week (Dragon Pass)**: Windsday

### ◐ Empty Half Moon

**Goddess Quest station**: Full Victory.
**Seven Mothers**: Yanafal Tarnils ◐†
**Ancient Goddess**: Natha.
**Associations**: Revenge, taking the injustices she has suffered and visits them upon the deserving.
**Embodies**: Darkness ●, Death †
**New God**: Jar-eel ◐†
**Lunes**: Demons of vengeance and balance.
**Day of the Week (Dragon Pass)**: Fireday

### ◍ Full Moon

**Goddess Quest station**: Return. Seven Mothers Teacher: Irrippi Ontor ◍ϒ or ◍∴
**Ancient Goddess**: Zaytenera.
**Associations**: Insight and Understanding. Insight can cause madness but understanding restores balance to a perturbed mind.
**Embodies**: Truth ϒ or Illusion ∴, Fire ⊙
**New Gods**: Red Emperor ◍ᛁᛁᛁ, Iphigios the Crafter ◍∴, Kana Poor ◍ϒ, Glamour ◍∴
**Lunes**: Sedate manifestations of the Divine Intellect.
**Day of the Week (Dragon Pass)**: Wildday

### ◍ Moon Rune (All Phases)

**Goddess Quest station**: The Red Goddessᛘ◍◍ᛝ herself.
**Seven Mothers**: None.
**Ancient Moon Goddess**: All.
**Associations**: all of the Moon Phases
**Embodies**: Darkness ●, Earth □, Fire ⊙, Air ᘏ, Change ᘐ, Life ᛝ, Death †, Truth ϒ, Illusion ∴, Harmony ᛁᛁᛁ, Spirit ᛟ
**New Gods**: Seven Mothers ◍ᛝ† (collectively).
**Lunes**: none.
**Note**: Available to Illuminates only.

## Glamours

The Lunar Way includes Spirit, Rune and Sorcery magic as previously presented. These magics are considered imperfect by the Lunars, and considered by Illuminates to limit the true understanding of the Cosmos. The Lunar Way has its own unique form of magic derived from the Red Goddess and her actions. Called glamours, these are the building blocks of Lunar Magic. Glamours may mimic affinities, spells, or charms, but are in truth something else – the power of the Moon. All glamours are tied to the waxing and waning of the Moon's Lunar Cycle.

### ◍ Moon Rune ◍

**Meaning:** *Illusion, cycles, balance.*

The Moon Rune is the manifestation of the Seventh Soul and the source of glamours, temporarily manifestations of the impossible nature of the Cosmos. The Red Moon is a mask that veils the real unity of the Cosmos. It is a neutral force without fear or favor.

Lunar initiates grasp only a fragment of the Moon's fullness and their magic is limited to their understanding of a specific phase of the Moon. Only the Illuminated truly understand the full implications of the Moon Rune.

## The Quest of the Red Goddess

*The quest of the Red Goddess is the most important secret of the Lunar religion. Here an incarnation of the Red Goddess teaches her student the stages of her quest. Clockwise from bottom left the stages of the Goddess Quest are:*

**The Red Goddess Enters God Time**
A woman is laying aside her cloak and clothing. Her hair is bound in a knot on top of her head. She maintains a belt with sickle knife, and a wreath upon her brow. Otherwise, she is naked. "I descended naked into this world of matter and illusion."

**The Empty Victory of the Red Goddess**
A hideous demon stands over the fallen form of the Red Goddess, holding a sword, but no shield. "In my innocence I was ambushed by Wakboth and sent to the Underworld."

**The Goddess Meets Arachne Solara**
The naked woman is sitting and listening to the woman opposite her. The spider-woman is Arachne Solara, and she is a shining goddess, humanoid, but with four extra arms coming from the sides of her cloak. The cloak appears to be star-flecked cloth, and she has a sunburst about her head. "I met Arachne Solara and learned that although Life is Suffering, Suffering is not Life."

**The Binding of Gbaji**
The Goddess holds a handsome but snarling deity with one hand holding his wrists, her foot standing on both of his, stretching him. "I freed Nysalor from Gbaji and achieved Illumination."

**The Goddess Riding the Sky Bear**
The Goddess, without weapons, is riding upon a giant bear. There is no ground underneath, but stars are visible in the background. "I hunted the Sky Bear and tamed him into submission."

**The Full Victory of the Goddess**
The Goddess and the demon have exchanged places. Here, the Goddess stands victorious over the prone form of the demon. She holds a spear and shield, no helm. "I defeated Wakboth and exchanged places with him."

**Return of the Goddess Triumphant**
Clothed, armed, and with no helm, the Goddess appears riding upon a bat. She is surrounded by a sunburst. "I rode the Crimson Bat back to this world in triumphant return."

Glamours are created by drawing upon the impossible nature of the Cosmos to create temporary reality. *A glamour is something you create.* Potentially glamours are unlimited in type and power, but in practice they are constrained by your own ability and understanding. Glamours create temporary realities that cause permanent effects, but which disappear upon the will of the maker. Any effect that the glamour has caused like a broken bone or a healed wound remains after the glamour has gone.

A Lunar magician can use her Lunar Phase to create glamours mimicking the runes that Phase can replace. The direct use of the Lunar Phase incurs a Stretch penalty of -6 (see page 103) – unless: (1) the Lunar is an initiate of a Lunar New God cult and is creating glamours in accordance with the teachings of that New God; or (2) is using a Lunar grimoire. The use of the Lunar Phase as an augment does not incur a Stretch penalty.

## Lunar Evocations

Lunar Evocations resemble Rune magic and are dependent on the Phase the kindled initiate is attuned to. The Lunars cannot channel the power of their New Gods through themselves due to the nature of the Goddess Quest - because of this the New Gods have no feats.

*Magatheus is an initiate of the Seven Mothers subcult of Irrippi Ontor and has the Full Moon Rune (Ⴔ) at 5Ш. He can use the Full Moon Rune to create glamours of Fire and Illusion. These glamours are subject to the Lunar Cycle but are not stretches as he is a member of a New God cult.*

## Lunar Grimoires

Aspiring Wizards in the heartlands of the Lunar Empire have a vast range of Grimoires available to them that can be based on any Rune or Moon Phase. The glamours produced by Lunar spells are often colored by their Moon Phase. Spells in a Lunar Grimoire are always used directly and perform one function very effectively. Even if the caster is not a member of a New God cult, their spells do not suffer stretch penalties. Any Lunar Grimoire that is based on or contains spells with the Moon Rune or Moon Phases is subject to the cyclical nature of the Red Moon.

*Magatheus is a kindled initiate of the Seven Mothers and has the Full Moon Rune (Ⴔ) at 5Ш. He has studied The Light of Knowledge Ⴔ (a grimoire tied to the Full Moon) and has learned the spell Glamours that Blind the Eyes (amongst others). Magatheus may create this glamour without a stretch penalty, but it is subject to the Lunar Cycle.*

**Yara Aranis**
*The Six-Armed Goddess of the Reaching Moon first fought against Argrath as the guardian of the Lunar borders and later served him during the Hero Wars as the Six-Armed goddess of Saird. This particular statue had two arms torn off during the Lunar Empire's conflict with Sheng Seleris and are thought to now be located somewhere in the Iron Forts of Kralorela.*

## Lunes

Lunes are Lunar Spirits that originate from the Red Moon and can be contacted by spirit magicians of the Lunar Tradition. They shift and vary in shape and power depending on the Lunar Cycle and Phase. They can create glamours that resemble Spirit Magic charms that are connected to their Moon Phase. Many types of Lune are known.

## The Lunar Cycle

The waxing and waning of the Red Moon affect the magical power of the Red Goddess upon the world. All Lunar glamours, regardless of the Lunar Phase their caster is attuned to, follow the Lunar Cycle as described below unless specified otherwise:

- ☽ **Full Moon**: All stretch penalties are cancelled. Praise the Goddess!
- ☽☽ **Full Half, Empty Half**: All glamours work normally as described in these rules.
- ☽☽ **Crescent Come, Crescent Go**: All glamours are treated as stretches. If a glamour is already a stretch then it may not be cast. Augments may be used as normal.
- ☽☽ **Dying Moon, Black Moon**: Only augments may be used.

Within the majority of Lunar Empire, the magical Glowline maintains Lunar magic, as if it were always the Half Moon. The newest conquests in Dragon Pass are not yet so fortunate. Phase restrictions are independent of the Lunar Cycle. A Lunar whose Moon Rune is tied to the Dying Moon still suffers penalties when the Red Moon is in the Dying Phase and benefits when the Red Moon is Full.

## Lunar Cults

Entry into the Lunar Way is normally through initiation into the cult of the Seven Mothers. This initiation rite is called *kindling,* and is considered a safe way for most to have their Moon Rune awakened. Many never move beyond the Seven Mothers, as the cult's many faceted family is all that they ever need.

Later, some push deeper and join the cult of a New God – one of the Illuminated demigods that serve a role in the Lunar pantheon. An initiate may join any Lunar cult that she shares a Lunar Rune of the correct phase with and has a rating of at least 1𒇽.

### Strictures

A Lunar cultist may use evocations, charms, or spells to create glamours appropriate to the teachings of her New God. Such glamours do not receive stretch penalties! However, cultists must follow strictures to keep themselves in contact with their New God's teachings. Strictures should be treated in the same manner as charm taboos, except based around actions of their New God's life. Depending on the New God, breaking a stricture can be result in punishment ranging from requiring a simple apology to death.

*Magatheus is an initiate of the Seven Mothers and has the Full Moon Rune (☽). He decides to join the subcult of the New God Irrippi Ontor, one of the Seven Mothers. He can use the Full Moon Rune to create glamours of Fire and Illusion, and to the extent these glamours are appropriate to the teachings of Irrippi Ontor they are not stretches as he is now a member of a cult of a New God. For example, Magatheus may cast glamours that deceive others or blind people with insight, but cannot (for example) create flaming spears since Irrippi Ontor never did such a thing. Moreover, Magatheus may never lie to a fellow Lunar initiate and cannot let a false statement go uncorrected – the strictures of Irrippi Ontor. His glamours are still subject to the Lunar Cycle.*

## New Gods

Several followers of the Red Goddess achieved immortality and became demigods. These New Gods carried forth the teachings of the Red Goddess and fill roles in the growing Lunar pantheon. Here is a list of some of the more widely known New Gods of the Lunar Empire:

**Seven Mothers:** The members of the original secret council that restored the Red Goddess to the world receive popular worship throughout the Lunar Empire. Their worshipers feed the poor and proselytize among them for initiates. Along with potato bread and soup, they reveal stories which compare the downtrodden with the Red Goddess, who had her own humble beginnings in a poorhouse tended by the wise folk who guided her to godhead. The various subcults of this religion act in concert to familiarize outsiders with the stories of the Red Goddess. Just as the original mothers taught the Goddess, so do these holy folk teach people about her. Individuals are initiated into the cult of the Seven Mothers and can enter any of the subcults.

**Danfive Xaron**, "Bridge for the Seeker". One of the Seven Mothers. A bloodthirsty outlaw from the south who volunteered for the most dangerous task in the ritual. His success earned him the position of Gatekeeper, Porter, and Night Watchman for the Seven Mothers.

**Queen Deezola**, "The Binder Within". One of the Seven Mothers. Formerly the ruler of lands on the Arcos River, she became the Keeper of Vows, the Avenger of Wrongs, and the Unshakeable One.

**Etyries**, "Messenger of the Goddess." Born the frustrated daughter of a southern merchant who went to hear the word of the Red Goddess. She became the goddess of merchants, messengers, and heralds.

**Great Sister**. This demigod is the daughter of the Red Goddess and sister of Moonson. She teaches Nysalorean Illumination and provides balance to the Red Emperor.

**Hon-eel**, "The Dancer". After the horse barbarians were defeated by the Red Emperor, Hon-eel appeared and renewed the Empire. She restored provincial lands, settled new lands, drove the last of the horsemen off, and discovered maize. Hon-eel danced her way to the end of the universe and brought back rich blessings of fertility for all who were wise enough to call on her.

**Hwarin Dalthippa**, "The Conquering Daughter". The favorite goddess of the Lunar Provinces, she founded the beautiful city of Jillaro, conquered the provincial barbarians, integrated them into the empire, and built the magical roads that today crisscross the Provinces.

**Irrippi Ontor** (or ), "The Brown Man." One of the Seven Mothers. Irrippi Ontor was an outlawed priest of Buserian, god of scribes. He came from Yuthuppa and was a friend of Yanafal Tarnils. He is the personification of wisdom and learning for the Lunar Empire.

**Jakaleel the Witch**, "The Spindle Hag". One of the Seven Mothers. Once a shaman-priestess from the mountains of Jord, Jakaleel became the Mistress of Black Magic, Keeper of Secrets, and Source of Mastery.

**Jar-eel**, "The Razoress". The newest New God, this demigoddess is the current incarnation of the Red Goddess in the Middle World and is still active in the Middle World.

**Nysalor** "The Bright One". The god of Illumination, Nysalor was created by the Broken Council at the end of the First Age. He was destroyed by Arkat but reawakened by the Red Goddess who was Illuminated by Nysalor.

**Red Emperor**, "Moonson". This demigod is the Moonson, Lord of the Four Quarters, Staff and Pillar to God, Leader of the Egi, Shah of Shahs, and the Bright and Illustrious Emperor of Dara Happa. The Red Emperor alone is capable of leading the many peoples of the Empire. He alone can wield Justice amongst them for he has no territorial origins. Though regions differ in customs and politics, he alone can coordinate them all with equality. The Red Emperor embodies and manifests the Lunar principle, We Are All Us.

"**She Who Waits**". One of the Seven Mothers. A mysterious, unnamed personage whose identity is unknown to outsiders.

**Teelo Norri**, "Young Life". One of the Seven Mothers. This young girl was chosen apparently at random from the many on Torang's streets for the ritual. She became the Cupbearer for the Goddess, and Spring of Eternal Youth.

**Yanafal Tarnils**, "Ram and Warrior". One of the Seven Mothers. An exiled nobleman from Yuthuppa, he became the Lunar God of War.

**Yara Aranis**, "Goddess of the Reaching Moon." This savage goddess was conceived to terrorize and slay the horse nomads.

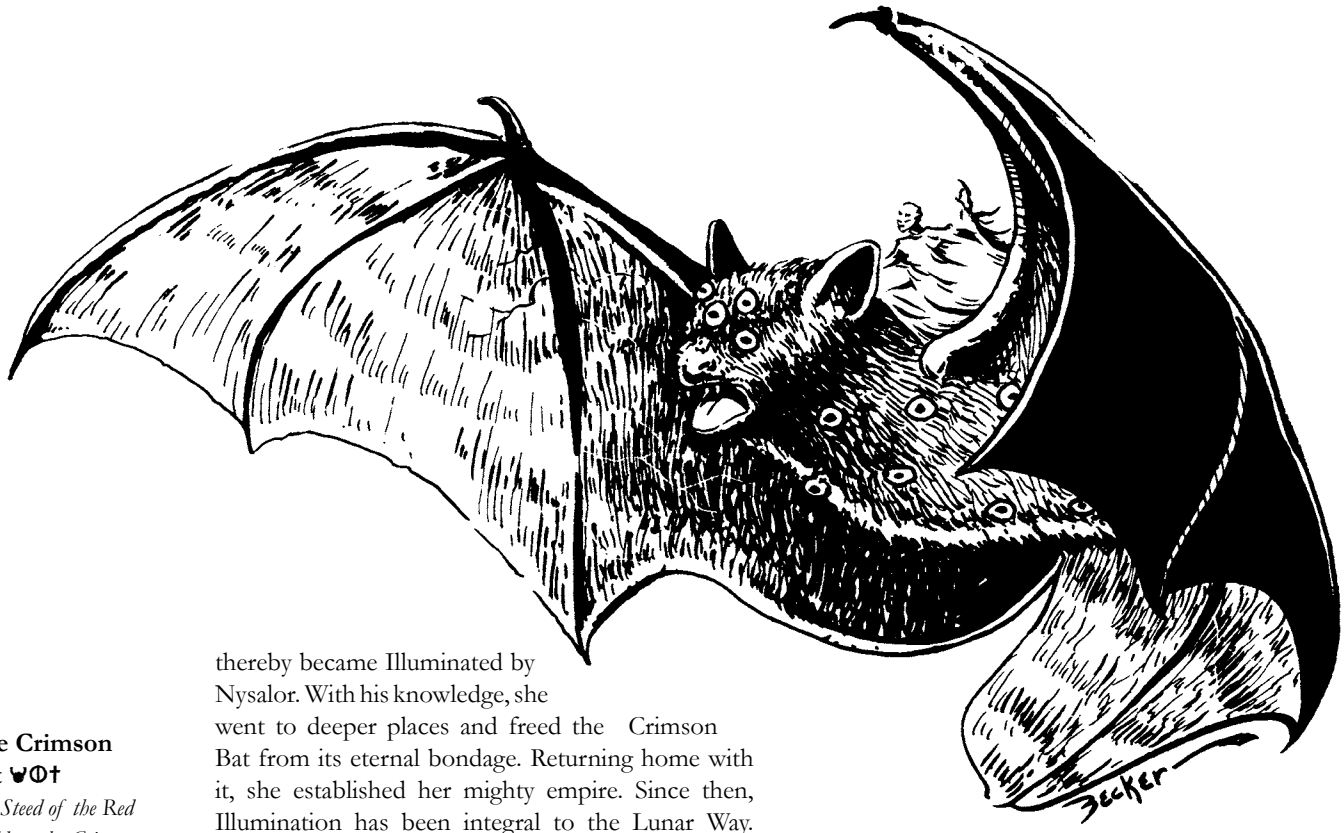
## Lunar Illumination

The Red Goddess encountered the god Nysalor during her Goddess Quest. She undertook a great path and in her journey sought passage beyond an empty shadow. She engaged it, defeated it, and

**What does converting feel like?**

*As related by a new convert to the Lunar Way:*

*"The feeling was strange at first. Like a bunch of ants creeping around inside my bones at first, and then a rather unpleasant itch under my skin that quickly gave way to warmth, flowing in ripples through my muscles, and then a huge happy feeling of profound relief. When the power started to wane for the first time, I felt dizzy, like the ground was shifting one way and the sky the other way, but slowly. Made me sick to my stomach, but when the power started to come back, I felt better, then good. Now when I go to the holy ceremonies, I still feel that profound relief, a wide happiness. I am only aware of it when I try to be."*




**The Crimson Bat ᛞΦᛏ**

*The Steed of the Red Goddess, the Crimson Bat is a Chaos demon alive in the Middle World and bound in service to the Red Goddess. It is the most awesome exotic magical weapon of the Lunar Empire, capable of devouring entire regiments and routing armies. The Crimson Bat generates its own Glowspot, extending approximately 10 miles in all directions. It is served by a cruel Chaos cult that keeps it fed with human victims.*

thereby became Illuminated by Nysalor. With his knowledge, she went to deeper places and freed the Crimson Bat from its eternal bondage. Returning home with it, she established her mighty empire. Since then, Illumination has been integral to the Lunar Way. Through Illumination, the Lunars have access to abilities and powers unreachable via normal deities.

Under the guidance of a New God, cultists maybe guided towards the Illumination Rites. These rites can be extremely dangerous and likely lead to death and madness. Illumination results in a peaceful and harmonious unification with the all. Those successfully Iluminated may transcend the normal barriers and separations of the world. They may embody contradictory runes such as Life and Death.

In game terms, the Illuminated (including Occluded) gain the Moon Rune (Φ) with their own Moon Phase and Black Moon Phase (●) as break-outs. Their Illuminated status is marked by placing an Infinity Rune (∞) next to their Moon Rune. This marks the start of their journey into the greater range of Lunar magic, or spiraling madness. The full details of Illumination are in the Illumination section beginning on page 202.

## Lunar Chaos ᛞ

Most Lunar cults have the stricture of never use Chaos in any fashion, however Lunar initiates can call upon the Chaos inherent in the Lunar Way to overcome an obstacle. A Lunar hero may swap her Moon Phase with the Chaos Rune to perform ANY magic effect as long as it can be described as perversion or corruption of the hero's original magic or as purely Chaotic magic. The hero now has the Chaos Rune instead of that Moon Phase.

*Halifijeem, a Lunar with a Empty Half Moon Rune of 15ш, is campaigning against Orlanthi rebels in the Aggar hills. Fighting against a Sword of Humakt, Halifijeem finds that his Death glamours are at a great disadvantage against the Humatki's Sword God Feat. Halifijeem decides to call upon the Chaos powers of the Moon and corrode away the devotee's sword with eldritch hellfire. He pits his new Chaos Rune of 15ш against the Humakti and gets a Major Victory! The Humakti's sword melts away into an unclean stinking mass. However, Halifijeem is now tainted with Chaos.*

Calling upon the powers of Chaos has its dangers. If the hero fails, she gets a Consequence of Defeat as the powers of Chaos warp and curse her (in addition to any other penalties she might receive from the contest). Perhaps she gains goat's horns or cloven hooves or the desire to eat flesh. The nature of the penalty should be worked out with the Game Master. On a complete failure, she is fully warped into a Chaos monster herself!

Even if successful, the hero is tainted with Chaos (having swapped her Moon Phase with the Chaos Rune). Lunar illuminates are able to conceal that taint from detection through the Black Moon Rune.

# The Seven Mothers

**The Seven Mothers**

*"She Who Waits" is a mysterious, unnamed personage in the myths whose identity was unknown to outsiders.*

*Irrippi Ontor is the "Brown Man" and was a priest of Lhankor Mhy. He came from Yuthuppa and was a friend of Yanafal Tarnils.*

*Jakaleel The Witch is the "Spindle Hag" and was once a shaman of the Blue Moon in the mountains of Jord.*

*Teelo Norri is called "Young Life" and she was drawn apparently at random from the streets of Torang for the ritual.*

*Queen Deezola was a ruler of lands on the Arcos River, and a priestess of Arachne Solara. She is called the "Binder Within".*

*Yanafal Tarnils is called "Ram and Warrior." An exiled nobleman from Yuthuppa who still ruled his lands.*

*Danfive Xaron was a bloodthirsty outlaw who volunteered for the most dangerous task in the ritual and is now called "Bridge for the Seeker."*

## The Seven Mothers ⧖⊕†

The Seven Mothers is the most important Lunar cult amongst the people of the Lunar Provinces. The cult provides a gateway between traditional religious practices, and the Lunar Way.

### Mythos and History

Before the coming of the Red Goddess, the lands of her birth were a dangerous frontier between the Carmanian Empire and the plains tribes of mounted nomads in Pent and the Redlands. Four conspirators (Queen Deezola, Irrippi Ontor, Jakaleel, and Yanafal Tarnils) secretly met and prepared the most incredible ritual of all time, and in 1220 they achieved their goal despite Carmanian interference. The four conspirators were joined by three others. Two were required victims of the ritual (Danfive Xaron and Teelo Norri), the third a mysterious entity otherwise unknown ("She Who Waits"). In searching the Otherworld, they had located the shattered pieces of an obscure, long-broken goddess. Inside the Wall of Time they managed to reconstruct her into a living entity. This was the birth of the Red Goddess. Those who wove the spell are called the Seven Mothers, and are worshipped together and independently.

In the year 1247 the Red Goddess attained her own immortality and proved it to the rest of the cosmos. Those who had aided in her creation were honored by her presence, and found their own way to divinity as well. Within 30 years of the Apotheosis of the Red Moon, they all had left the earth and joined the goddess in immortality as the first Lunar New Gods.

Throughout the rises and declines of the Empire in the four hundred years since it was founded, the Seven Mothers have performed the same function as they did while alive. During their own lives they were responsible for lighting the spark of the Lunar Way in the world, and now in their immortality they are responsible for kindling the Lunar spark in all persons who enter the cult.

The Seven Mothers are especially powerful at the edges of the Empire where they form instructive temples to serve as bases of operation. Thus they are ever at the beginning of the Empire just as they were at the beginning of the goddess. Even within the Empire there are many who are content with worshipping the collective Seven Mothers of the Red Goddess without joining their individual Immortal cults.

## Life after Death

The Seven Mothers does not promise anything except that there is certainly a Life after Death, and that they can teach a worshiper the gateway to the Red Moon, wherein lie all of the keys to the secrets of Life and Death. They point proudly to their own goddess' death, dismemberment, rebirth, disappearance, and subsequent return as proof of this.

Local preference always is given to burial functions. Some members prefer to have their bodies preserved until the Full Moon, but others will be taken care of right away. Both will have songs of creation sung during the rites, and have their souls commanded to the "Circles of the Moon, of Time, and of Being."

## Runes

This cult contains an unusual mixture of runes. Each of the seven subcults of the Seven Mothers is associated with a phase of the Moon and one other Rune. The collective cult is tied to the Moon Rune, while to either side are the runes of Life and Death; these normally incompatible runes are united by the power of the Moon.

### ⧖ Life Rune

The Seven Mothers balance the powers of Death with their powers of Life. Initiates make use of the Life Rune to do such things as: to heal body and soul, to overcome pain and suffering, and to restore youth and vigor. Those having a strong affinity with the Life Rune are generous, compassionate, and display benevolent love.

### † Death Rune

The Seven Mothers embrace the power of Death as a necessary part of life. Initiates have used the Death Rune to do such things as: fight with curved sword (such as kopis and sickle-sword), sever limb, terrify with fear, and shatter the weapons of a foe. Those having a strong affinity with the Death Rune are relentless, disciplined, and inflexible.

### ☽ Moon Rune

Only those who have awakened their Seventh Soul through initiation into a Lunar Cult (such as the Seven Mothers) can possess the Moon Rune.

## Antagonistic Runes

The Red Goddess can reconcile incompatible runes such as Life and Death or Truth and Illusion. The presence of the Moon Rune enables the Lunars to combine otherwise incompatible Power Runes. This has proven to be a decided advantage for the Lunar Way in its conflict with the Old Gods of Glorantha.

However, the Lunar Way is antagonistic to the Air Rune (☊), except when it is chained and bound as Danfive Xaron. The strife between the Moon and the Air is deep and permanent.

## Nature of the Cult

The Cult of the Seven Mothers is charged with guarding the spiritual welfare of the Lunar Provinces and borderlands. As such it seeks to suppress the foes of the Empire and to guide its friends. In the former role, the cult creates warriors, terrible in their fury. In the latter role, the cult teaches those wanting to awaken their Seventh Soul and meet the greater Red Goddess.

The Seven Mothers provide an avenue for converts to join the Lunar Way. As such, its form differs in different parts of the Empire, taking a shape that represents the easiest approach for people into the Lunar Way. The form represented here is that taken in Dragon Pass region and in civilized Prax.

The Seven Mothers may be worshipped individually or altogether (as presented here). The seven branches of the cult act in harmony to familiarize outsiders with the stories of the Red Goddess and the Lunar Way. Just as the original mothers taught the Goddess, so do their holy people teach outsiders about her.

## Particular Likes and Dislikes

The cult likes anything that likes the Lunar Empire, and dislikes anything that dislikes the Empire.

In philosophical terms the cult embraces all those who follow the principle of Lunar inclusiveness, "We Are All Us," that obey the Lunar cycle and acknowledge the Red Goddess. This means that even chaotic creatures are welcome

within the Lunar pantheon, a fact that makes enemies of Chaos-hating cults.

In practical terms the Empire likes anything that accepts the Lunar Way of cyclicism and subservience to their Red Goddess. This also can include Chaotic things. There also is an inherent and mythological conflict between the Air and Moon, and their cults, as they struggle for the Middle Air.

## Enemies

The only true enemy of the Seven Mothers is Orlanth, the Last Rebel, eternal enemy of peace and stability. Worship of this turbulent and barbaric deity is discouraged within the Empire, and its campaigns of conquest have been intended to break his power. Orlanth was not chosen as an enemy. The hostility is a cosmic process, and inevitable.

## Cult Organization

The missionaries of the Seven Mothers have brought many into the Lunar religion by teaching a simplified version of her faith. This is often closely aligned with the local gods and goddesses, and so easiest to understand. Through these teachings, the Seven Mothers bring the gift of *kindling* to provincial regions.

In Dragon Pass and Prax, the Lunar city of Furthest is the center of the cult activities. All Seven Mothers temples in the Lunar Provinces report to the General Guide for the Lunar Way in Mirin's Cross who in turn reports to the Lunar Provincial Overseer.

## Center of Power, Holy Places

The cult's center of power is the city of Glamour, where the Red Emperor rules the Lunar Empire. In the Lunar Provinces the center of power is the city of Mirin's Cross in the Lunar Province of Holay.

The cult's holiest place is a temple in the city of Torang, in the Satrapy of First Blessed. This is where the Red Goddess was born.

## Priests

Priests of the Seven Mothers are commonly titled priestesses, although people may use the masculine form if they desire. Both are used in this text interchangeably.

Once Sevened, most priests are able to lead the worship of the different Mothers with equal ease. High Priests of the cult typically come from either the Deezola or Yanafal Tarnils subcult, other priests sometimes dedicate themselves to their subcult or once Sevened are moved on to serve another aspect of the goddess.

## Lay Members

Most people who worship the Seven Mothers are lay members in the cult. They worship the Seven Mothers and the Red Goddess, but they do not have the Moon Rune. Lay members regularly give magical energies to the Seven Mothers temples, so that the priestesses can protect and bless the Provinces. For most people in the Lunar Provinces, this is enough.

Anyone can become a lay member of the Seven Mothers simply by attending worship ceremonies of the Seven Mothers and spending 1 Hero Point to develop a relationship to the local Seven Mothers Temple. The relationship is a breakout ability from whatever Rune the lay member chooses to approach the Seven Mothers from.

*Naskara is an initiate of Ernalda, and has the Earth and Movement Runes with a rating of 1 and the Harmony Rune with a rating of 16. After meeting a Lunar merchant, she excitedly decides to become a Lay Member of the Seven Mothers, basing the relationship on her Earth Rune.*

A lay member has few duties except for showing up at worship ceremonies, but may partake of the Poor Fund at any time, getting potato bread, onions, and red berries to eat, and a place to sleep under the roof of the outer temple.

## The Little Sisters

Individuals who do not possess the Moon Rune (Φ), may initiate to the Seven Mothers as though they were simply other gods, spirits, and philosophies. Many individuals do just this even though most of the Sevened agree that such worship is self-deceiving and delusional, ultimately blocking spiritual development within the Lunar Way.

These theistic cults are called The Little Sisters, and examples can be found in a variety of civilized lands. To join one of the Little Sisters, the initiate must share a rune with one of the Seven Mothers at rating of 1. This rune serves as her divine Rune affinity, tradition knowledge, or grimoire ability until she chooses to awaken her Moon Rune with the *kindling* rites. Although magical effects produced this way are not glamours and are not subject to the Lunar cycles, they are very limited.

*Selelmakt is from the Garhound clan (but is not an Orlanth initiate) and possesses the Truth Rune at 1 but does not have the Moon Rune. Selelmakt can initiate to the cult of the Little Sisters through the Truth Rune of Irrippi Ontor. He can evoke some of the magic of Irrippi Ontor through that rune. He cannot use the Moon Rune until it is kindled.*

**Depiction**
*Each of the Seven Mothers has its own individual iconic depiction.*

**Queen Deezola** *is shown as a queen, seated on a throne, wearing a crown and carrying a scepter, the badges of her rulership.*

**Yanafal Tarnils** *is a bearded soldier, clad in breastplate and helm, kilt, greaves and vambraces, carrying a scimitar in one hand and shield in another.*

**Irrippi Ontor** *wears a toga and a cap, and carries a sack of scrolls.*

**Jakaleel** *is depicted as an old woman; in one hand she holds a spindle. The shaft of her spindle is of bone.*

**Danfive Xaron** *wears a short tunic and has manacles on his wrists and ankles. He is prone; his prostrate body forms a bridge for the other mothers as to walk across.*

**Teelo Norri** *lies in repose, wearing the short simple dress of a poor maiden. She looks peaceful and expectant.*

**She Who Waits** *stands one leg, the other bent across her lap. Her palms press together in front of her chest. The pose is that of the mystic, meditating.*

## Initiates

All initiates of the Seven Mothers have the Moon Rune at a minimum of 1Ⓜ. As few outside of the Lunar Empire possess the Moon Rune, most need to have it awakened within them. This initiation rite is called *kindling* and it is the first step on the path towards *Sevening*, commonly called *Illumination* by outsiders.

Initiating into the deeper mysteries of the Lunar Way is not always a simple choice. A person may become an outcast among family, friends, and society as a result of this act.

However, the new convert gains protection and support from her Seven Mothers temple. An initiate must give at least one week a Season in service to the temple. The nature of the service varies, but does not include military service if the initiate does not wish it. An initiate should attend the weekly services, or sacrifice and meditate privately if that is not possible. An initiate is expected to show the Lunar attitude of inclusiveness – We Are All Us.

To be kindled and gain the Moon Rune, a prospective Lunar initiate should have a rating of at least 1Ⓜ with a Rune. The new Lunar initiate must choose a Seven Mothers subcult with a Lunar Phase that can replace that affinity. She replaces her Rune with the Moon Rune in that Lunar Phase and joins the appropriate Seven Mothers subcult for that Lunar Phase.

The Air Rune can only be replaced with the Crescent Come Moon through the Danfive Xaron subcult.

Newly kindled Lunar initiates cannot choose the Black Moon (which requires Illumination).

*Halifijeem is an initiate of Humakt, and has the Death Rune with a rating of 5Ⓜ and the Earth and Truth Runes with a rating of 16. He decides to initiate to the Lunar Way and replaces his Death Rune with the Moon Rune in its Empty Half phase (◐) which now has a rating of 5Ⓜ. Halifijeem is now an initiate of the Seven Mothers. Having lost his Death Rune he is no longer an initiate of Humakt and may suffer from the agents of reprisal. As an initiate of a Lunar New God, he may create Lunar glamours without a stretch penalty.*

It is possible to have your Moon Rune awakened outside the Seven Mothers and their restrictions, but that is beyond the scope these rules.

## Seven Mothers Subcults

Each of the Seven Mothers is associated with a Lunar Phase and a subcult. Each Phase (except the Black Moon) can replace one or two conventional Gloranthan Runes. All but one of these phases has an associated Seven Mothers subcult. Most initiates of the Seven Mothers join an appropriate subcult to get further teaching into the mysteries of the Lunar Way.

### ◐ Full Half Moon

**Seven Mothers Subcult**: Teelo Norri, "Young Life". This young girl was chosen at random from the streets of Torang for the ritual. She became the Cupbearer for the Red Goddess, and is the Spring of Eternal Youth. Her subcult is the source of the Poor Fund movement. There is little real development of her subcult. She is revered as the Lunar goddess of youth.

**Phase Associations**: Youth and Innocence, and the desire to experience the world.
**Replaces**: Fire or Movement Runes.
**Magic**: Evocations, Glamours, Grimoires
⊙ Fire: purification and the lighting of sacred fires
☯ Change: transformational rites of passage; births, marriages, and deaths, or escaping from harm.
**Strictures**: remain chaste, own no material possessions, serve the poor, and always wear white.
**Little Sister**: The Little Cupbearer. Initiates can use their Movement Rune (☯) to escape from harm.

### ◐ Crescent Go Moon

**Seven Mothers Subcult**: Queen Deezola, "The Binder Within".
This subcult is the favorite of nobles and poets, and is a source of Earth and healing magic. Formerly the ruler of lands on the Arcos River, she became the Keeper of Vows, the Avenger of Wrongs, and the Unshakeable One.

**Phase Associations**: Birth and Motherhood.
**Replaces**: Earth or Life Runes.
**Magic**: Evocations, Glamours, Grimoires
⧖ Life: healing and life giving
□ Earth: women's' magics, attraction, and blessings
**Strictures**: must not be a virgin, must belong to a noble family or held a position of authority, be generous to all poets, artists, and musicians, lead indirectly without coercion.

**Little Sister**: The Good Queen. Initiates can use their Life Rune (X) as an ability to heal wounds.

## ● Dying Moon

**Seven Mothers Subcult**: Jakaleel the Witch, "The Spindle Hag".

Once a shaman-priestess from the Jord Mountains, she became the Mistress of Black Magic, Keeper of Secrets, and the Source of Mastery. Her subcult explores the horrors and solaces contained in the secrets of the Dying Moon, and has some close associations with the Blue Moon.

**Phase Associations**: Madness, Woe and Suffering, the threshold between the Living and the Dead.
**Replaces**: Harmony, Spirit
**Magic**: Spirit Magic, Lunes. (The Dying Phase is used as the Keyword for the Lunar Tradition)
**Strictures**: None, charm or Lune taboos are used instead.
**Little Sister**: None.

## ◐ Crescent Come Moon

**Seven Mothers Subcult**: Danfive Xaron, "Bridge for the Seeker".

This bloodthirsty outlaw from the south volunteered for the most dangerous task in the ritual. His success earned him the position of Gatekeeper, Porter, and Night Watchman for the Red Goddess. His subcult is a last chance at rehabilitation for society's most desperate dregs. Criminals of any sort get refuge, but the cult has harsh regulations (looking at the opposite sex in the first year merits blinding and dismissal).

**Phase Associations:** the Hunt for what is missing in order to be made whole.
**Replaces**: Air.
**Magic**: Evocations, Glamours, Grimoires
G Air: tempered violence, strength, endurance, and hunting people or prey
**Note**: the Crescent Come Phase cannot create any glamours of the Middle Air (such as wind, rain, flying, lightning, and thunder).
**Strictures**: Strict discipline and unquestioning obedience to cult leaders.
**Little Sister**: None.

**The Lunar Provincial Survey Field Team**

*The Office of the Provincial Survey was a department of the Provincial Administration tasked with mapping and cataloguing ancient sites to insure that the Empire takes possession of any treasure or lore discovered in them. The Survey also provides the Provincial Administration with intelligence on frontier regions and communications with their inhabitants.*

### ◐ Empty Half Moon

**Seven Mothers Subcult**: Yanafal Tarnils, "Ram and Warrior".

This exiled nobleman from Yuthuppa became the Lunar God of War. His subcult resembles Humakt's in most respects, though it is less narrow-minded in its devotion to Death and Truth. High honor and bravery are upheld by the Yanafal Tarnils subcult.

**Phase Associations**: Revenge, taking the injustices she has suffered and visits them upon the deserving.
**Replaces**: Darkness, Death.
**Magic**: Evocations, Glamours, Grimoires
● Darkness: terrifying one's foes or confronting Darkness
† Death: combat or battle
**Strictures**: Be honorable in all thoughts and actions. Obey all orders from a military superior. Use only curved swords (kopis and sickle-sword).
**Little Sister**: Yanafalio. Initiates can use their Death (†) rune as an ability to fight in combat or battle.

### ◑ Full Moon

**Seven Mothers Subcult**: Irrippi Ontor, "The Brown Man".

This sage outlawed from the cults of Buserian and Lhankor Mhy became the Master of Secrets. He personifies wisdom and learning for the Lunar Way. His subcult is populated by scholars and madmen.

**Phase Associations**: Insight and Understanding. Insight can cause madness but understanding restores balance to a perturbed mind.
**Replaces**: Truth or Illusion, Fire.
**Magic**: Evocations, Glamours, Grimoires
ϒ Truth: finding secrets or reading any script
∴ Illusion: illusions, concealment, and lying
⊙ Fire: intellectual insight and bureaucracy
Kindled initiates with the Full Phase (Φ) may not use both the Truth (ϒ) and Illusion Rune (∴) together, but must choose one exclusively.
**Strictures**: Never lie to fellow Lunars. Never let a wrong statement go uncorrected.
**Little Sister**: The Brown Man. Initiates can use the Truth Rune (ϒ) as an ability to read anything.

### ● Black Moon

**Seven Mothers Subcult:** She Who Waits.

The identity of this mysterious entity is unknown to non-Illuminates.

**Phase Associations**: Illumination and Liberation. Only those who have already achieved Illumination are affiliated with the Black Moon.
**Replaces**: The Black Phase does not replace, but supplements existing Moon Phases.

## The Seven Mothers Cult after the Dragonrise

The Dragonrise of 1625 killed most of the leadership of the Seven Mothers cult in the Lunar Provinces. The New Lunar Temple was completely devoured, along with the thousands of gathered priestesses, sorcerers, and soldiers. Most Seven Mothers temples in Dragon Pass, except those in Lunar Tarsh, were destroyed in the subsequent conflicts. To add to the bad news, the most powerful Lunar factions in Tarsh are openly feuding, and the sons of Fazzur are openly supporting the rise of Argrath.

Rebellions destroyed many temples throughout the rest of the Lunar Provinces. Despite the near collapse of the Lunar Provinces, the Red Emperor ordered many of the surviving priestesses to return to the Heartlands so they might fight against the ongoing Pentan invasion. The cult organization in the Lunar Provinces has similarly suffered. The Red Emperor has not appointed a new Provincial Overseer to replace the death of Appius Luxius in the Dragonrise, let alone a new General Guide for the Lunar Way. Over the last two years, each temple has become largely autonomous, acknowledging the distant authority of Glamour, but left to fend for itself. Efforts to restore the Provincial system begin in earnest later in 1627, when Jar-eel the Razoress returns to rebuild the Lunar Provinces and restore Lunar rule.

As a result, the Seven Mothers cult in 1627 is very weak in Dragon Pass outside of its strongholds in Lunar Tarsh. Missionary work has largely ceased, and has been replaced by magical reconnaissance and preparation for the inevitable imperial counter-offensive to be spearheaded by Jar-eel the Razoress.

# Heroquesting

**Vanak Spear**
*This is one side of a silver cup made in Dragon Pass or Peloria in the early Second Age. The cup depicts Eringulf Vanak Spear at the Dancing Jar competing for Asrelia's treasures. He has already won the Happy Pig and the Making of Fine Horses, and is about to win the Blessing of Seeds from the Jar. Behind Eringulf are his dead companions, killed by Maran Gor.*

## Heroquesting ∞ᚱ

Heroquesting is a key characteristic of stories set in Glorantha. Gloranthan heroes can journey to the mythic realms and bring back some of the magic of the Gods Age. Heroquesting is a magical act wherein the quester can transform herself, her community, or even her gods. It is the source of the most powerful Gloranthan magic; however, all but the most routine Heroquests come with a high cost and a great risk to the individuals and communities involved, often with lasting consequences.

## Origin

Heroquesting did not exist in the Gods Age of Glorantha. In that Timeless age there was no division between the worlds of men and gods, of life and death, of body and spirit.

In the Gods War the power of separation, Death, sundered the Middle World from the Other Side. Reality was fractured. Worshipers prayed, but their energy went nowhere, for their gods were sleeping or dead. They opened their souls, but nothing replied. Gods sought their worshipers, sending their messengers and magics, but there were none to receive them, for their worshipers were gone. Empty fear loomed. Darkness reigned.

Some entities persisted. Some beings held out, and struggled, and resisted the Darkness to keep something of the old life force vital. They kept their contacts with the gods, or forged them anew by stalking across the Chaos-strewn ruins of the world to find them. Some gods remained and wandered looking for those to save; Star Captains fell from the heavens to seek out their worshipers, and sometimes found them or new followers. When gods and men performed those magical deeds they made the magic that saved the world.

After the Dawn, mortals found that they could re-enact those mythical deeds and bring back some of the magic of the Gods Age. This is called Heroquesting.

## What is Myth?

There is a great body of material known to most intelligent beings as myths. This is a massive, timeless compilation of common thoughts and memories of the entire conscious world, including the collective unconscious of all mortals.

This Great Mystery is explored by all sentients who seek purpose and meaning to their life. Each culture's poets and mythmakers recognize parts of the whole and interpret them for their societies to make a coherent and appropriate worldview.

Myth is the secret opening by which the inexhaustible energies of the Great Mystery pour

into the world of Time. Cults dedicated to a specific god typically have many more myths about the deeds and secrets of that god than does a cult who merely experiences that god as an ally or an enemy. The myths of the myriad cults in Glorantha may appear to contradict each other or even be incompatible; however, they are all true experiences of that Great Mystery. Thus the Heortling myths of Orlanth are experiences with that same great Air entity that the Dara Happans call Umatum or Rebellus Terminus, that the Fonritians call Baraku, that the Kralorelans call Wangbiao, or that the Malkioni call Worlath. All are parts of the whole.

## What is Heroquesting?

Heroquesting is the active exploration of Gloranthan mythology to return with a distinct boon for themselves and their world if successful. Heroquesting makes several simple assumptions in order to work.

First, Gloranthan mythology is real, and its events and denizens are true and exist. As a matter of definition, a real myth is one that is sacred, exemplary, and significant. This means, in general, that the myth tells how something came into being. Tales that do not fulfill these functions are less than real and do not return full rewards, but are still legitimate.

Second, this body of mythology is held static outside of normal mundane perceptions. It does not change unless acted upon by outside forces. The gods performed actions that made the world and they continue to maintain those actions in the world of myth.

Third, it is possible to enter into the mythical realm, which we call the Hero Plane, and to participate in the legends and myths that are otherwise in the eternal God Time. This interaction may or may not change the expected, recorded result of the primeval myth. In either case, however, the participant would be able to achieve different results from the original myth. For instance, a cultist of Yelmalio may go to the Hill of Gold and steal back the Fire powers that his god lost in the Gods Wars. This would not change the original myth, but the individual would benefit thereby.

The standard path of the mythological adventure is a magnification of the formula repeated in cult initiation rites: *separation – initiation – return*. As summarized by Joseph Campbell's indispensable *Hero with a Thousand Faces*:

> *A hero ventures forth from the mundane world into a realm of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons upon the community.*

This pattern is repeated over and over again in Gloranthan Heroquests. Arkat repeatedly entered the world of the gods and stole powers he used in his war against Gbaji. Harmast Barefoot went into the Underworld, followed the Lightbringers' Path, and returned with both Arkat and the power to free his people from the Bright Empire. The Seven Mothers walked lost and forbidden paths through the Sky and the Underworld to gather the shattered pieces of an obscure, long-broken goddess. They returned with the Red Goddess, who herself quested into the deepest recesses of the Underworld to return with full knowledge of herself and triumphant victory.

## Example: The Quest of Eringulf Vanak Spear

Near the settlement of Barntar's Sheaf lived a man named Eringulf Vanak Spear. His father was Brolarulf of the Great Leap, who was the son of Chieftain Rastalulf Vanak Spear, who was also called Rastalulf Harangson. Rastalulf was the first person to gain the Vanak Spear, taking it from a foe upon the Hill of Gold during the time of Haradangian Battles. Chieftain Rastalulf was a close advisor of King Haradangian, but his family was driven to poverty by the feud over the dowry of Rastalulf's second daughter. Lokamayadon interfered in this feud, siding against Rastalulf. At the fight between the mercenaries of Lokamayadon and the sons of Rastalulf was composed the "Immolation Song" which provided the clues for Brolarulf's son to regain the Vanak Spear.

One day Eringulf Vanak Spear visited Arifingor the Generous to seek a wife. The daughters of Arifingor were noted for their beauty, their piety, and

### Mythic Landscape

The mythic landscape of Glorantha is well described in the *Guide to Glorantha* and the forthcoming *Gods of Glorantha*. Game Masters wishing to run Heroquests are strongly encouraged to use those books as references and sources of inspiration. The books *King of Sartar, Glorious Reascent of Yelm, The Entekosiad, Revealed Mythology,* and the *Book of Heortling Mythology* contain collections of Gloranthan mythology and are good sources for Game Masters wishing to explore the mythic landscape of Glorantha.

their dowries. Arifingor had no sons and his lands would be passed back to the clan for redistribution, and since his daughters were the caretakers of his fields and pastures they would probably get them, as was customary in the clans.

Arifingor always made tests for the suitors of his daughters' hands. He sat in his high seat, sharing the dragon-carved throne with his wife, Alysyndra Yanktori's daughter, who was of the line of Vingkot. Their fifth daughter, Caranistrata the Red, had made her own test, though her father altered it slightly when he told the suitors what must be done.

"In the Ginijji are the Monster Rocks, placed in a circle around a lightless pit. Inside the pit are seven tunnels, and down one of them lies the trail to the Dark Plenty. In the Dark Plenty is the Hut of Asrelia. Inside the Hut of Asrelia is the Dancing Jar. Inside the Dancing Jar are twelve Bountiful Treasures and Seven Deadly Guardians. Bring back three of the Bountiful Treasures and one of the Deadly Guardians, each alive and controlled, and you may join with my daughter Caranistrata, with my blessing and hers, in the Woman's Concubine Marriage."

Eringulf Vanak Spear was not displeased with this. He had so little property that he would rightfully be flattered by Woman's Concubine Marriage to be part of the home of Arifingor.

Caranistrata's Quest was one that had daunted many men. Ordinary people refused to enter the Ginijji, a thick and wild place where some things from the Chaos Wars still lurk. The Orlanth priests chanted their best prayers as Eringulf descended through the pit. At its base was a Pit of the Jaws and Eringulf Vanak Spear searched his mind for knowledge, and he chose the right pit. In the Dark Plenty he got lost, as everyone always does, but he had no trouble because he had the Vanak Spear and the help of his six allies. He met Maran Gor before he met Asrelia, and though the pig-dogs that guard her doorway removed his six allies; they captured one of them, bound it with iron rope, and returned with it.

In Asrelia's Hut, Eringulf Vanak Spear bet his left arm and the way he threw his javelins that he could catch the Dancing Jar, and he won. At the same time, beyond the formula, he made two more wagers. The first stake was to wager the way that he could move through the forest against another reach into the Jar. The second was to wager his hard-won ability to see in the dark against a second try. Asrelia selected his opponents, and as usual they contested in silence. Eringulf won both times.

After the usual ceremony Eringulf Vanak Spear returned to the sacred grounds with the Blessing of Seeds, the Happy Pigs, and the Shield from Hailstones as marriage gifts, and he kept the Making Fine Horses for himself. He rewarded his six allies with gold after he returned.

When Eringulf returned to the stead of Arifingor all was being prepared for battle. The chief's wife hurriedly received the gifts and promised her daughter. Her husband said to Eringulf, "You can consider yourself married, and if the winged Sons of Gold can be driven off then you may celebrate it when you wish."

So Eringulf Vanak Spear armed himself again and prepared for battle. His six allies stood around him and he went to a grove of oak trees where the Chief had stationed some of his men. All of them had bows, charmed and armed for this fight. A woman named Varanassi asked if his spears would be useful in this fight.

"We must wait and see," said Eringulf Vanak Spear.

The beautiful birds of the winged Sons of Gold were easy prey for the enchanted Vanak Spear. The riders were quickly dispatched on the ground by groups of warriors. Although they tried to ignite the barns and long house only some small outbuildings were harmed as the women inside extinguished the fires with water and magic. No one expected a Firebird to come, but when one did come every mercenary of Arifingor hesitated and said a prayer for themselves and the clan. Eringulf Vanak Spear was the first to act. He cast the Vanak Spear to be the Ladder Spear, and climbed it across the sky to leap atop the fiery creature. With his sword Eringulf tore great holes into the bird so that the red-hot pieces fell to the ground as if the Sun was weeping.

Arifingor the Generous met the Black Dog again here. This time it had red eyes, and was aided by a pack of trolls. When he saw the trolls coming the chieftain knew his doom was upon him. He cursed the witch who had betrayed him and sang his death song. Arifingor the Generous killed the Black Dog again here, but received two fatal wounds from the trolls, all of whom were also slain. Arifingor and all of his mercenaries and allies were killed.

Eringulf Vanak Spear returned from his battle with the Firebird and saw the field occupied by proud lowland troops. They carried a tall banner with a golden griffin shown. Heads of conquered foes hung from the banner. They had taken the valuables from the houses and were setting fire to the buildings. The livestock was already being led away. The fields were already burning.

Eringulf Vanak Spear found his dying chieftain and received his last words. Afterwards, as was

customary, Eringulf cut off the head of his lord and carried it away to the woods. Thus the conquerors were robbed of their favored trophy, and the chieftain was preserved from a gruesome fate before his final death.

At this time Eringulf Vanak Spear swore vengeance against the slayer of his father-in-law. Afterwards he found some of his kinsmen, including his beautiful wife, Caranistrata the Red, and went to live at Vanak Spear Farm on the edge of the Ginijji, where no one could find him for years.

## Breaking Down the Heroquest into Stages

Each Heroquest can be thought of having five stages:

1. Preparation
2. Invocation
3. Road of Trials
4. Confrontation and Transformation
5. Return and Integration

The Heroquest of Eringulf Vanak Spear into the Pits of Ginijji provides good examples of each stage of Heroquesting.

### Preparation

Preparations are made beforehand. The narrative given here does not list them, but facts can be inferred from the compressed narrative style used. First, his mysterious spear accompanies Eringulf, which was itself obtained through a heroquest. Second, six allies accompany Eringulf, one for each direction (North, South, East, West, Up, and Down). Third, priests prepare his way by "chanting their best prayers" as he descends into the pit.

One part of the preparation is to determine the essential story that is to take place. A Game Master, usually the storyteller, does this. The start of this tale is included as the challenge of the daughter:

In the Ginijji are the Monster Rocks, placed in a circle around a lightless pit. Inside the pit are seven tunnels, and down one of them lies the trail to the Dark Plenty. In the Dark Plenty is the Hut of Asrelia. Inside the Hut of Asrelia is the Dancing Jar. Inside the Dancing Jar are twelve Bountiful Treasures and Seven Deadly Guardians.

Other stories, not included here, might tell us other things about the Ginijji, Asrelia, and how the Dancing Jar gives up various rewards to heroes. In fact, Caranistrata the Red has asked for nothing less than a suitor who has descended into the Underworld and returned.

### Invocation

To start the ceremony, the powers to be used are invoked and/or evoked to the quester's presence. These might be magical beings summoned from the Otherworlds, living beings volunteering to be assistants, assignment of magical artifacts, and pledges from groups to aid in some way appropriate to them.

Most Heroquesters go to their community (such as their clan, temple, tribe, or other relevant community) for support. Rituals known to the Orlanthi and Praxians (such as the 'Arming of Orlanth' ceremony) can grant the community's entire Magic Resource to the Heroquesters. However, this is extremely risky for everyone in the community. Spiritually, the entire community participates in the heroquest as supporters. If the heroes fail, the community will be terribly damaged, maybe even destroyed.

It is extremely difficult for the community's magic to cross over and interact with the Other Side. As a result, the Magic Resource can only be called upon directly to overcome one obstacle during the quest; using the Magic Resource as an augment has no such restriction.

Once the powers are gathered and invoked, the questers open a gate into the Other Side and physically cross over to a place in the Hero Plane. Some quests begin at a specific place in the Middle World, others from one of several possible sites; still others can begin from any temple or holy place. The passage may be through an actual gate or hole which forms in the air, through a cave or pit, by a magical fog which surrounds and blocks all senses, by falling, by immersion in a pool or river, being blown by a wind, being carried on the back of a beast, walking through flames, leaping off a cliff, or by subtle transitions beyond the ken of mortals.

Eringulf's invocation, like most Orlanthi Heroquests, started with an "Arming of Orlanth" ceremony, with the details differing in various stories. This activity might have been carried out at some Orlanthi temple or holy hill, after which the group travels en masse to the ritual site. Alternatively, they may have traveled to the Ginijji, and then began this invocation there.

### The Road of Trials

Having gathered companions and powers, the Heroquester must cross the threshold to the Road of Trials. This is the most variable stage in length, nature of episodes, and so on. Often the quester must move through a magical landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, and must survive a succession of

obstacles. The quester may be aided by the powers previously gathered and invoked.

Successes and failures throughout the Road of Trials should carry forward directly to the Heroquest's climax as a Benefit of Victory or even a plot augment. If an obstacle defeats the heroes, the Game Master may allow them to try to make a second attempt, perhaps by upping the stakes and using another ability.

Decisive defeat by an obstacle can endanger the heroes' ability to complete the quest and could even force them to end the quest immediately. In some myths, however, the quester *must* fail at a task to pass an obstacle, because that is what happened in the myth. In many myths, the god's defeat is what provides the insight needed for ultimate victory in the quest. Without that defeat, the heroes do not gain the necessary magical insight. A hero suffers a penalty if he succeeds at such an obstacle, but gains a bonus by failing!

In Eringulf's Quest the Road of Trials is a comparatively simple journey to the Underworld with some commonly encountered denizens and obstacles there:

*Obstacle 1*: Ginijji, a foreboding region that is better known as Snakepipe Hollow. The almost casual reference to this place is typical Orlanthi understatement, as Ginijji is a seething Chaos region.

## Expect Surprises

*The Gods War is a cycle of terrible violence, change, and recovery. Surprise events occur all the time, these are examples; feel free to make up your own:*

**Beast War Skirmish Draws Close:** An aggressive alliance of spirit beasts is at war with the beast allies of the gods. Emissaries from their army, often wolves or badgers, insist every animal identify its Otherworldly allegiance, including your pack beasts and bestial followers. They attack every beast that does not agree to join them – a decision that will have lasting ramifications.

**Census Dwarves:** They are counting everyone and tabulating what Rune they belong to.

Chaos: Chaos creatures are common in the Great Darkness, and can appear without warning in the middle of almost any story. They must always be destroyed.

**Dry Now:** Your ocean, river, or lake is not here now. It might have been down there once, but now that is all just land. You will have to search for some secret water source.

**Elemental Concentrations Appear:** A huge body of water pours in without warning. A fire leaps out of control and takes over valleys and hillsides, burning without apparent fuel. Shadows flow out of caves or crevices, clinging to the trees and hanging from clouds and ragged air.

**Fat God's Party:** No one knows his name, nearly everyone approves of his presence. During his carnival many days, weeks or even years may pass unnoticed. He almost never comes back.

**Flooding:** An ocean, bitter and salty, is rising to fill up the area. Everyone flees, makes rafts, or climbs high.

**Forest Turns into Ghosts Overnight:** What should be wood and leaf have turned into translucent images, now fading away.

**Gigantic Animal Ancestor:** Hares and rats the size of a house, wolves the size of a hill, or a bear the size of a small mountain. They are always of one of the worlds, usually the animist or theist.

**Heaviness Grounds Everyone:** Everything is much, much heavier than usual. Nothing can fly. It is even hard to walk around.

**Help Needed:** A statue claims it is really a true being, and needs your help to return to its natural form. Just sacrifice to it in the ways that it says, and it will be freed. You know this is a dangerous and foolhardy thing to do. Evil and destructive things are often entombed that way.

**It is Gone:** The place you knew is not there. Not uncommonly, known places change to be something else. Fields become badlands, perhaps a marsh with a village of frog people in it, or a lake populated with talking rowboats.

**New Hill Rises:** A burst of god energy causes an Earth Goddess to grow into life from ordinary earth.

**New River Flows:** A water being invades where it should not be, filling in gullies to move the stream uphill. Little streams do this, as do huge rivers.

**Overflight of Luxites:** Powerful celestial beings with spears and magic fly in formation overhead. They seek shadows, ghosts, Darkness, or other rebels to banish. Today, they are looking only for enemies from: Darkness, Water, Earth, or Air (choose one).

**Sudden Death:** All nearby plants suddenly expire. They turn brown and wither, branches drop off dead, and may even molder and rot. Animals take fright and run away, then die of hunger.

**Sudden Life:** All the nearby area (even barren rock and burning surfaces) blooms with flourishing plant life, flowers and fruits teeming within only moments. The change may last forever, or even progress to have trees sprout and roar into fullness.

**Too Early:** The fortress or barn is not yet built; the person to meet is still a child; the artifact sought is not yet made.

**Unusual or Extinct Animal:** Often these are huge animals, some like dinosaurs, and others like mammalian megafauna, and others like only themselves.

*Obstacle 2*: Pit of Jaws. Here the priests "sing their best prayers." This shows us that it is the real site of the ceremony. There the priests close the final gap between the worlds to allow Eringulf to go to the mythic landscape. Had they failed, Eringulf would have been swallowed by the giant ant lion at the bottom of the pit. As it was, he still had to choose which one of seven gates was the correct entry. His ability at this was probably his own skill, either knowing which one or perceiving the right one.

*Obstacle 3*: Dark Plenty. One of the names for the limitless Darkness of the Underworld, which sometimes has no dimensions at all. Eringulf's apparent easy passage is another understatement, even though aided by the Vanak Spear which (according to other tales) "points ever to the breast of the foe." The six allies mentioned here were empowered as the six directions, which was commonly enough combined with their fighting functions. Finally, Eringulf has a "hard won ability to see in the dark" which he later wagers.

*Obstacle 4*: Maran Gor. Among other things, Maran Gor is a fighting guardian of the Underworld. The pig-dogs mentioned here do not normally appear with her, but do normally appear in the Underworld. The combat here was obviously fierce, as Eringulf lost all six allies. However, he gained one of the pig-dogs, "bound with iron rope, and returned with it." This creature, which was a dog-shaped pig in the mundane world, was the Deadly Guardian required of the quest, and its capture saved Eringulf another reach into the Jar. Unstated, but assumed, is the deadly combat between Eringulf and Maran Gor, which he must have won. Once past this guardian, Eringulf entered the Hut of Asrelia.

## Heroquest Surprise

Something unexpected, not part of the myths known by the participants **always** happens during a heroquest. These Heroquest Surprises can be as extreme as the geography of the Otherworld changing, replacing a sea with mountains, or a city with a wasteland, or a key tool gathered during the heroquest having no effect, or as minor as an unexpected encounter or obstacle. The Road of Trials may be experienced in a different order than presented in the story or some expected obstacles may be missing. To make things even more dangerous, the heroes' enemies may actively oppose their heroquest – resulting in deadly magical ambushes and unexpected obstacles.

## Confrontation & Transformation

When all the barriers and trials have been overcome, the hero reaches the climax of the quest. Confronting this final obstacle, the hero is transformed in the process. This is often rendered in five different ways:

1. Confrontation with one's opposite (the hero's own unsuspected self).
2. Sacred marriage with the source of power.
3. Atonement with the natural order from which the hero has been removed.
4. The annihilation of the ego and the overcoming of opposites (such as Life and Death, or Change and Stasis).
5. A contest of power. Instead of a slow progress through the mysteries with the good will of the powers, often this is a violent seizing of power – usually followed by a flight from those powers that were not appeased on the way.

### Heroquest Challenges

Some Heroquests contain formal contests called Heroquest Challenges in which a hero pits a portion of his very self in a magical battle against an opponent. The Heroquest Challenge is a key element of Heroquesting. Heroquest challenges are highly ritualized, and are very difficult, more so if the quester does not follow the steps exactly. The story is always the starting point. A myth will tell how an entity or Hero obtained a great power. A hero can re-enact that story by going to the same location in the Gods War and being the story's protagonist.

Before the quest starts the hero must declare the ability he will stake, and prepare the invocation ahead of time. At the climax of the Heroquest, the hero must pay 1 Hero Point and name the ability that he declared before the quest. The hero risks a portion of his very being in the challenge by wagering his entire rating in that ability, which can be anything on his character sheet with its own rating. This ability is wagered against the boon, which is either stated in the myth or otherwise determined by the Game Master.

The Heroquest Challenge is in an Extended Contest using the ability wagered.

If victorious, the results for the hero depend on his stated goal when he began the quest. If he performed the quest for community gain, the power taken becomes a specialized ability within the community's Magical Resource ability. If the quest was done for personal benefit, the victor gains a new magical ability with a rating equal to the wagered ability.

If the hero loses, the entire wagered ability is lost. The loser may also suffer further penalties as Consequences of Defeat.

However, all of five themes are well represented in Gloranthan myths and Heroquest. Eringulf's Quest culminated in simple contests of power as a Heroquest Challenge:

In Asrelia's Hut, Eringulf Vanak Spear bet his left arm and the way he threw his javelins that he could catch the Dancing Jar, and he won. At the same time, beyond the formula, he made two more wagers. The first stakes were to wager the way that he could move through the forest against another reach into the Jar. The second was to wager his hard-won ability to see in the dark against a second try. Asrelia selected his opponents, and as usual they contested in silence.

Here, in the climax of the ritual, we have a strange gambling game and a strange power, the Dancing Jar. It was actually a contest of power, in which Eringulf wagered portions of his own being against a reach into the realm of Asrelia, Mother of Treasures, and the Keeper of Life. His contest is wagered against unspecified denizens of Asrelia's Hut, who would be various powers of the Underworld. Had they won, they would have gained the benefits of his wager.

The results of Eringulf's efforts were to acquire some benefits from the Jar. He has no choice in these. First he got the Blessing of Seeds and the Happy Pigs, fertility blessings that increases the number of both. The Shield from Hailstones was another blessing for crops, preserving them from this blight. The blessing of the Making Fine Horses is something that later allowed Eringulf to breed the finest horses around. All of these treasures are natural to the Hut of Asrelia.

## Return and Integration

When the Heroquest has been accomplished, the Heroquester still must return back to the mortal world with the results of the quest, both good and ill. This reward can take many forms, including: a new function for the community guardian, a Benefit of Victory, special knowledge, or a relationship between the community and another group (whose friendship itself is the result of the quest). In a Heroquest Challenge, the ability gained in the challenge often *is* the reward.

If the reward is a bonus, its value is a Benefit of Victory determined by the Victory Level at the Confrontation and Transformation stage. Thus, if the main hero achieves a Minor Victory against the Rain Dragon, his community gains a bonus of +3 to its Magic Resource for *Rainmaking*.

Although the magnitude of the bonus is based on the hero's Level of Victory, the duration cannot be, since a hero on an easy quest will almost always achieve a better victory level than one attempting a hard quest. Instead, adjust the bonus based on the hero's stated goal. If he sought a one-time blessing to make a baby, it might be appropriate to triple the final bonus for a single use. If he sought a long-term bonus, perhaps an annual blessing on the crops or an ability the community guardian can use this year (only), the bonus given above is appropriate. If he sought a *permanent* benefit for the community, such as an ability permanently added to its guardian, the bonus should be divided by 2 or more to determine the final value. This may result in a bonus of less than +1, in which case the desired permanent blessing is not obtained, even though the quester succeeded in the quest. Such is the difficulty of bringing powerful magic back from the Other Side.

### The Law of Synchronicity

The magic of the heroquest draws appropriate encounters and opponents that tend to match the known or expected inhabitants of the Gods War. Strangers can be drawn into heroquests, usually as opponents, although sometimes as helpers. Personal enemies repeatedly get drawn into the heroquests of their rivals; they may be encountered in different roles at different times – perhaps in one heroquest the heroes encounter their adversary as a Star Captain who opposes them at the Gate of Heaven, another time as Yelmalio atop the Hill of Gold, and later as Yelm in the Court of Judgment.

The individual identities of the participants are hidden by the power of the myth, and the actual foes usually remain unknown. Only unusual magic or a great deal of heroquesting experience allows the participants to discern the underlying individual.

Some heroquesters try to "stack the deck" by bringing specific individuals (sometimes even capturing strangers that might fit the bill) along to serve specific roles in the heroquest, either as helpers or as enemies.

**Opposite:**
*In the depths of the Great Darkness, the Chaos demon Osboropo drove the Maggot of Chaos deep into the womb of the Earth Mother in Dragon Pass. The Chaos Maggot killed the storm god that defended the Earth Mother, and Osboropo killed his queen after she had given birth to the storm god's child. But the new godling Baroshi rose from his cradle and went on the trail of the worm. Aided by the spirits of the dead (sent by Babeester Gor, the grim goddess of divine vengeance), Baroshi killed and decapitated the Chaos Demon Osboropo and wounded the Chaos Maggot, who in fright, turned and burrowed straight down.*

Eringulf's return to his world was abrupt. Note that three of the four gifts he gained were given to his wife's family (which was subsequently wiped out, wasting much of his generous effort). The third was kept for himself. The fate of the pig-dog is not given here. Normally, however, the results of a quest like Eringulf's would bring great wealth to the recipient clan. They would be stronger, and more likely and able to help Eringulf out some time later, maintaining the reciprocal relationship.

# Types of Heroquests

## Cult Worship

Normal worship rituals for all Gloranthan religions are re-enactments of ancient creative myths to maintain the flow of magical energy in the world. With the priests' invocations on holy days come real spirits, gods, and demons within the sacred temple precincts. The sacred magic is performed again, invested with the presence of the immanent gods and spirits.

Some things that the gods did are too intense for the uninitiated, who are unused to dealing with powerful spiritual forces. Thus there are "secret rites" for every cult, known only to initiates, where the roles of the gods are enacted by the individuals of the greatest power. Those are Heroquest rituals, such as those performed during the Sacred Time rituals of many Gloranthan religions.

## Established Heroquest Paths

Every cult has its own established Heroquest paths through the mythical terrain of Glorantha derived from the mythology of their own gods. Deities of a pantheon share several significant pathways, often going through an entire story together. Thus we often find that Yelm, in one form or another, accompanies Lodril, Dayzatar, Shargash, and Erissa on quests.

On an established path, the Heroquesters seek mythical landmarks to follow a known, ritually prescribed path wherein certain opponents, friends, and other heroes appear according to the sequence of the god's myth. However, the myths are not an objective reality, but subjective by their very nature. They are mutable, and no individual can know all variations of even one myth. Therefore, any Heroquest will always bring surprises, unexpected challenges, unforeseen dangers and undreamt of perils and opportunities.

To minimize the dangers to all concerned, cults stress adherence to the known paths and ways of the gods. The object of the worshiper is to relive the exact experience of their god, to understand the god's triumphs, sufferings, and problems to the limits of their mortal comprehension. Priests of all cults relate stories of terrible disasters when questers deviated from the pathway into the unknown magical world surrounding the myth. The least that may occur is a lingering curse that continues to trouble the cultist in the Middle World. A common consequence of wandering away from the core myth is to weaken the cultist's community or empower an enemy. A very bad event is to be transformed into something foul, and a truly terrible fate is to be dismembered, body and soul, into components which are scattered across the Other Side. But the worst disaster is to become the captive of Chaos, for that means an eternity of terror and torture preceding the utter and irrevocable oblivion of mind, soul, spirit, energy, and body, the annulment of every thought, memory or action.

Not all results of these Heroquests are beneficial, even when the Heroquest is performed perfectly. For example, Yelmalio gains immortality on the Hill of Gold Quest. Yet he must suffer terrible woes on his journey - Orlanth wounds him and steals his weapons; Zorak Zoran appears and breaks his thighs; Inora, the White Princess, leaves him spurned and frozen immobile. Some have negative effects that seem - to an outsider - to outweigh the benefits. For instance, Orlanth must always accompany an Issaries Desert Tracker on a Heroquest to the empty Halls of Genert to stand guard against hopeless odds while the Tracker, and others, perform a reconstruction rite.

Such gifts gained at the end of a cult Heroquest are magical in nature. They vary widely, but always with one constant: the greater the prize, the more dangerous the quest.

## Creative Heroquesting

Most Heroquests carefully follow the established paths known to their cults. A few intrepid or desperate individuals have Heroquested outside of these paths, seeking landmarks stolen from the secrets of other cults or even from previous Heroquests. This is known as creative or experimental Heroquesting.

Arkat Chaosbane was the first person to realize and experience the breadth and depth of the magical world of the Other Side. Throughout Arkat's war to destroy Gbaji he performed many cult Heroquests he learned from his new gods.

During this period Arkat discovered the Secret Paths. Arkat, alone of all mortals then living, underwent so many Heroquests that he realized some overlapped. Boldly, he departed the set cult paths, despite the warnings of priestly elders. Courageously, he went where only fools had dared. And he was

eminently successful in obtaining weapons, tools, and allies to help his fight against the forces of Gbaji.

Arkat went on to explore other cults during his war against Gbaji. He and his followers mapped portions of the Hero Plane, naming the denizens and routes.

In the Second Age, an informal fellowship of sorcerers and priests in Jrustela, called the God Learners, set out to discover all they could about the Other Side and its powers and denizens. Ecumenical and experimental, these researchers welcomed Heroquesters from all around the world. The God Learners lacked the morality of the Arkat cult. They stemmed from Malkioni philosophers who insisted on the ultimate impersonality of the universe, and feared no taboo or curse. Their courage and power were unquestionable, and they performed magical deeds previously unknown even to the gods.

The God Learners performed experimental Heroquests in order to identify and define the gods, spirits, and other powers of the world, and arrange them into a coherent and knowable unity. By doing this, the God Learners sought to reconstruct and impose their will upon the mythical realities of the God Time. In the process, they discovered that many religions contained amazingly similar myths and gods, even though the cultures had never met and were separated by oceans, mountains, and languages.

During most of the Third Age creative Heroquesting was widely considered evil, because the God Learners were so enthusiastic about it. Cults purged themselves of unusual rites, denounced certain knowledge, and destroyed records. A general religious conservatism resulted in a stunted understanding of the religious experiences offered by each deity.

Nonetheless, creative Heroquesting is still practiced by some religions, and by many of the Heroes who populate the later Third Age. The Lunar Empire actively pursues creative Heroquesting, as the Lunar philosophy urges each person to seek their own Heroquest, and the highlights of their history are lit by individuals who combined material and spiritual success. In the Holy Country, Belintar and the Masters of Luck and Death are widely believed to have secured rule of that land through a series of creative Heroquests. Such Heroes as Harrek the Berserk, Jar-eel the Razoress, Ethilrist, Meriatan, Garundyer, and, of course, Argrath Dragonlord, are all past masters of creative Heroquesting.

# Illumination

*This Seventh Wane Lunar painting can be seen at the Temple of Mysteries in Ganharri. The picture depicts Arkat's assault on Dorastor. On the left side, riding a storm cloud, is the semi-human Arkat, carrying the Unbreakable Sword, the Mace of Hatred, and wearing his Necklace of Skulls and Lost Heart. He is iconographically similar to how the Dara Happans depict Rebellus Terminus, except with black skin, flaming hair, and the three eyes. Below Arkat is a horse-riding Ralian. Riding on a lesser storm cloud is a Heortling ally from Dragon Pass. Leading the attack on Dorastor is a club-wielding dark troll. On the right side, within great fortifications raised by his Cry for Castles is the meditating figure of Nysalor. Note his third eye and his halo of illumination forming a Moon Rune and a Chaos Rune (both likely Lunar touches). In the center is a Pelorian archer. To the right is a remarkably civilized broo, and to his left an allied dragonsnail or walktapi. This is consistent with how Chaos is depicted elsewhere in Lunar art.*

## ∞ Illumination

The philosophy of Illumination is one espoused by various Gloranthan cults, schools, and individuals. Although associated with a divine being or beings variously identified as Rashoran, Nysalor, Gbaji, and Arkat, Illumination is not strictly speaking a cult. Illuminates have no initiates, priests, or devotees. There are no worship ceremonies, and no magics are available for believers. Neither Illuminates nor scholars agree on the basic tenets of the philosophy, nor do they agree on the practices and special gifts sometimes attributed to the philosophy's followers.

### Mythos and History

Some say that a goddess called Rashorana, who was either the last of the gods born, or the first of the Chaos creations, was the first to develop and teach this philosophy. She is said to have been killed by the god of entropy during the Great Darkness.

Near the end of the First Age, the mortal races successfully built a new god, Osentalka, "The Perfect One," later called Nysalor, "The Bright One." In western Genertela and Dragon Pass, the divine being came to be called Gbaji, a vulgar word meaning "The Deceiver" or "Damned Liar."

The new god and his disciples, commonly known as Riddlers, spread their version of this philosophy across much of Genertela, since, except in Kralorela, much of Rashorana's teachings had been long since forgotten.

Arkat the Liberator fought a great war against Nysalor and his followers, spending three generations in the task, and in the end leaving a trail of cinders across the continent before his final victory. Almost all believe the god was destroyed but all agree that the philosophy of Illumination survived. Some contend that worship of Gbaji continued in secret from the First Age to this day, while Nysalor is revered in today's Lunar Empire.

In the Second Age, Nysalorean Illumination was banished, forbidden, and destroyed. However, other beliefs that shared many of the same characteristics (most specifically the extraordinary state of mind

that fundamentally transforms the individual): Umbarism, EWF draconic consciousness, Kralorelan draconic mystics, Vithelan mysticism, the Umathelan Cult of Silence, and even some God Learner schools all provided liberation similar to that of Nysalorean Illumination. Many Gloranthan scholars consider all of these philosophies and practices to fall within the rubric of Illumination, and, at least for purposes of game mechanics, so do the writers.

In the Third Age, the Red Goddess undertook a great quest and in her journey sought passage beyond an empty shadow in the Underworld. She engaged it, defeated it, and in the process became Illuminated by the god Nysalor. Since then, the beliefs of the cult of Nysalor, including the philosophy of Illumination, have become integral to the cult of the Red Goddess. As a result the philosophy has spread throughout Peloria, and a number of different cults and schools exist each espousing its own particular philosophy of Illumination. In the Lunar Empire, the philosophy is widespread among worshipers of the Red Goddess, the Seven Mothers, and the White Moon, and is flirted with by many others.

Rarely is Illumination openly professed, so reckoning the scale of its influence is highly speculative. Most common in Peloria, Illumination is known throughout Glorantha, most notably in Kralorela, but also East Isles, Ralios, Jrustela, and Vralos. The Near Ones or Friends of Pamalt are also thought to be Illuminates by some. Even Argrath is believed to teach a form of Illumination, based on Arkat's teachings instead of Nysalor's.

## Becoming Illuminated

An Illuminate is one who has gained special insight into the Gloranthan cosmos. This insight always completely alters that individual's perceptions of the world, as well as her place in it. How she interprets and interacts with the gods, the Runes, and the cosmos is fundamentally and forever transformed.

The insights of Illumination are gained through many methods, the most widely known being the study of the Nysalorean Riddles. Mystical apprehensions and spiritual doubt gained through Nysalorean Riddles can fundamentally transform the individual. Within the Lunar Empire, the Sevening Rites are the primary path towards Illumination. Overseen by priestesses of the Red Goddess called the Illumination Examiners, these rites assault the candidate's personal worldview with deliberate and conscious assaults by demons, gods, and the universe itself. The candidate survives only through the teachings of a Lunar New God that binds, protects, and preserves her as she dissolves into the All.

Similar insight may also be gained through contemplation of certain poems, pieces of art, parables, dramatic events, and remarkable objects. The secret magical insights Argrath teaches his warlocks should also be considered a form of Illumination.

## Gaining the Infinity Rune ∞

For purposes of the *HeroQuest Glorantha* rules, a hero may become Illuminated in one of two ways. First, she may start out Illuminated, using one of her 5 additional abilities. Second, she may become Illuminated, with Game Master approval, through such means as studying Nysalorean Riddles, the Sevening Rites, successfully communicating with a True Dragon, learning secret magical insights from a Hero like Argrath, and so on, and then spending one Hero Point.

### Nysalorean Riddles

Each Nysalorean Riddle consists of a formal question and a formal answer, and is generally accompanied by extensive commentary. The questions, answers, and commentary are believed to have been handed down orally through the periodic Second and Third Age suppression of the Nysalor cult. Though still transmitted orally in many places, a number of written versions are studied in the Lunar Empire. The most common version lists 133 Riddles; other versions list as few as 117 and as many as 144.

#### Example: Riddle 19

**Source:** Order of Day

The Questioner asks: *"What is the difference between virtuous intention and virtuous action?"*

The Answerer places his fist over his heart and replies: *"Power."*

The Commentary observes straightforwardly that good intention is worthless – in fact, not manifest in the world – without the Power to exercise that intention. It denies that Will is necessary, for Will is perceived and defined only by the evidence of Action.

Further, the Commentary examines the multiple and interconnected natures of Power, of physical, spiritual, moral, and magical Power, and through examples illustrates the failure of Real Power in the absence of all its subsidiary elements.

Finally, the Commentary suggests that many Chaotic individuals lack virtuous action because they do not control their Power. Through parables, the Commentaries demonstrate how a Chaotic individual discovers and controls his own Power, thus revealing his unrecognized but essential virtuous intention through nonvirtuous action.

The Illuminate marks her status by adding the Infinity Rune (∞) to whatever Rune best describes her path to Illumination.

*Samastina gives Argrath hospitality in her palace after the Battle of Pennel Ford and she spends many hours listening to the enigmatic adventurer and pondering his insights into Gloranthan myth. Kris decides that Argrath is challenging her assumptions about the cosmos, and asks Claudia if she can spend a Hero Point to add Illuminated to her Earth Rune. Claudia agrees and Kris put an Infinity Rune (∞) in front of her Earth Rune so that it now reads ∞□ 5Ш. Samastina is now Illuminated.*

## Illumination as a Set of Abilities

Illuminates gain certain powers as a result of the enlightenment. These abilities can be used like any other HeroQuest ability to overcome obstacles.

The exact nature of these powers appears to vary from Illuminate to Illuminate, and may depend on factors such as the teachings learned (which vary from sect to sect) and how receptive the Illuminate was to the teachings. A hero who struggles against or otherwise denies her Illuminated state may manifest less reliable powers, or may deny or fail to recognize the powers she has.

The powers attributed to Illuminates appear below, in order of most to least common. Most Illuminates possess one or more of powers 1-5. These may be used as abilities to overcome obstacles like any other ability (using the rating of the Rune modified by the Infinity Rune). Not every Illuminate possesses all of these powers, and others may possess entirely different powers. In the case of an Illuminated hero, the GM should work with the player to decide which of these powers the hero acquires and the extent of the hero's own awareness and understanding of her powers.

1. **Secret Knowledge**. An Illuminate *knows* as truth that Chaos is, in and of itself, neither evil nor inimical. It makes the person free from automatic fear of Chaos. Likewise it frees creatures of Chaos of the hate that rules their existence. This secret knowledge can be used to overcome fear of Chaos, and even fear of True Dragons, the Void, and the extinction of the Self.

   Illumination gives this knowledge, but it is not necessary that she change her life is she has other, stronger, beliefs which intervene. Many schools of Illumination seek to provide such foundational beliefs as part of their teachings. Viewed as a curse by some, this secret knowledge is the most common power gained by Illuminates, and almost all gain it.
2. **Ability to Sense Illumination in Others.** Only an Illuminate can recognize another Illuminate. The Illuminate's special perception permits her to deduce the status of another Illuminated for evidence that the unillluminated cannot appreciate.
3. **Immunity to Attempts by Others to Determine Whether the Illuminate is Chaotic**. The Illuminate is not tainted by Chaos even if she possesses a Chaotic feature!
4. **The Ability to Ignore Cult Restrictions**. Cult restrictions can be ignored by some Illuminates without divine retribution. For instance, an Illuminated Orlanth initiate may awaken his Moon Rune while remaining in the Orlanth cult. Or an Illuminated devotee may be an initiate of another cult. A hero using a feat may even use her Illumination ability to defend against an identity challenge.

   An Illuminate would still need to gain a Humakti gift or become a shaman in the usual way. However, once the Illuminate gained a Humakti gift (for example), she could use her Illumination ability to freely ignore the associated geas with no ill effects from the god.
5. **Immunity to Divine Retribution**. The Illuminate is not automatically subject to divine retribution or spirits of reprisal, even if she has ignored cult restrictions, disobeyed cult rules, or quit the cult.
6. **Ability to Illuminate Others**. Only the Illumiated may present the teachings of Illumination properly and effectively. The exact process of Illuminating others varies accord to the teacher. It may take a season's study, long meditation, or a magical procedure.
7. **Ability to Combine Incompatible Runes.** Some Illuminates are even able to combine within themselves incompatible Runes such as Life and Death, or Truth and Illusion.

The exact metaphysical nature and function of Illuminated powers are often paradoxical and not subject to logic. This leads most scholars to conclude that these powers reflect a fundamental change in the nature of the Illuminated individual, or may be in some way divine gifts (the source is not clear).

## Involuntary Illumination

Can one who is ignorant of the history and philosophy of Illumination become Illuminated simply through the contemplation of Nysalorean Riddles or other Illuminated teachings? Can one who deliberately refuses to contemplate Illumination still become Illuminated through such means?

A number of persons claim to have become Illuminated simply by hearing a single Nysalor Riddle or contemplating a single piece of art. One individual claims he became Illuminated after being held captive and forced to listen to the recitation of Nysalorean Riddles. There is no reason to doubt these testimonies.

A GM may, at her discretion, decide to grant Illumination status on a hero - whilst requiring a Hero Point be spent by the player. A hero who engages in Riddle Contests or journeys through a spiritual maze created by an Illuminate should expect what they get!

## Gaining Illumination Without a Teacher

Tradition holds that interacting with a living Illuminated teacher is necessary to inspire Illumination, and that study of written Nysalorean

## A Note on Mechanics and Game Effects

*The writers despair of capturing the flavor of a revolutionary mystical philosophy in any game mechanics. Most Gloranthans dogmatically believe that Chaos equals evil. To propose otherwise would be analogous to suggesting that rape and murder are perfectly acceptable. Thus, becoming Illuminated in Glorantha is shocking and madness-inducing. Once you are Illuminated, there is no way to turn back. Mass murderers, mad prophets, hysterics, atavists, catatonics, and all sorts of raving loonies are common products of the profound dislocation that results from Illumination.*

## Maintaining Your Sanity

Illumination is madness inducing. Only the strongest or most grounded minds and wills can retain the mask of normality after this shattering epiphany. When the GM believes it is appropriate, she may require that an Illuminated hero treat his Illumination ability as a Flaw, and must overcome it with some other ability. If he fails, she acts in matter that is demonstrably insane or aberrant to any non-Illuminate. Perhaps he kills innocents, reveals that he believes Chaos is not evil, blurts out an invocation to an enemy god or even a Chaos deity, or acts in a manner obviously incompatible with traditional cult teachings.

*Now Illuminated, Samastina seeks to build new alliances to defend Nochet's interests. She summons her council to discuss potential allies – the other players suggest they treat with Western Barbarians, the Grazelanders, and the Wolf Pirates, but Kris is not sold completely.*

*Claudia decides this is a moment Samastina's Illuminated status could get her in big trouble. She tells Kris that she has forgotten one potential ally – the Scorpion Queen Bagog Two-Barb of Larnste's Footprint, a Chaotic demigoddess.*

*"We can't ally with her!" Kris says. "She's a Chaotic monster!"*

*Claudia replies, "Then you need to overcome your own Illumination – you are willing to accept Chaos. The difficulty is 5Ш, same as your Illumination, and you need to find an ability other than your Earth Rune. Otherwise you will suggest that to your own court."*

*"Samastina is ambitious and knows that saying something like that would greatly endanger her position as queen. She's going to oppose with her Ambitious (wants to be queen) characteristic, which has a rating of 6Ш."*

*Claudia says, "Masteries cancel, now roll the dice."*

## Illumination and Heroquesting

Illumination is less significant as a mechanical set of rules and far more important as a source of roleplaying opportunities – especially when it comes to heroquesting. An Illuminate can willingly take choices that his cult might reject, but that the Illuminate believes would be in the best interest of his community (or himself). This is a key step towards getting players away from the mentality of rote repetition of myths and towards the creation of new myths out of the old.

*Needing to awaken a sleeping goddess, Samastina went to Argrath seeking advice. Argrath had been to the Court of Silence before ("several times, mainly thanks to Harrek's short temper," he confided). He advises Samastina that, although the story the heroes always leave with the goddess, she should not. Instead, Argrath advised her that she should confront the goddess Asrelia and invoke her right to reach into the goddess' Dancing Jar three times. She must stake wagers that would cost her dearly if she fails; but if she succeeds, the boons she would gain would greatly aid her queendom.*

*Samastina listened carefully to Argrath and slowly she realized that Argrath's words applied to all myths and all quests – there are other perfectly valid options she could follow instead of the time-honored path of tradition. Not all were wise, not all would be successful, but the choice was hers…*

Riddles (or other such Illuminated teachings) is insufficient. However, there are a few substantiated accounts of scholars becoming Illuminated in the process of studying recorded Nysalorean Riddles or other similar teachings. These accounts are peculiar in that in all cases the Illumination was an unintended accident resulting from study of the texts for other reasons.

## Public Views of Illumination

Most Genertelans know the basic stories of Nysalor and Gbaji. Except in Peloria or Kralorela, Illuminates are typically hated and feared, and those who ask strange questions are often suspected of being Illuminates. It is impossible for non-Illuminates to accurately identify what is or is not an Illuminated teaching. Thus one may be exposed to the teachings of Illumination, even may become Illuminated, and not realize that is the nature of one's transformation.

Several cults have taken upon themselves the destruction of Chaos and things Chaotic, and they often count the followers of Nysalor and his doctrines among their foes. Some of their specialized anti-Chaos tools may not work against the Illuminated (such as the Storm Bull berserk's Anti-Chaos Rune), but if such a cultist recognizes, suspects, or receives reports of people asking odd questions or acting in a Socratic manner, they may strike out of hand to destroy the presumed Chaos before it spreads.

## Talking to True Dragons

Communicating with True Dragons (as opposed to their dreams or their immature offspring) results in a transformative mental and spiritual state called draconic consciousness that is functionally equivalent to Illumination. For game mechanic purposes, draconic consciousness is treated the same as Nysalorean Illumination, as it also liberates from fear of Chaos and True Dragons, and grants the same set of abilities as Nysalorean Illumination. Many scholars believe that draconic consciousness is somehow different from Illumination, although Argrath is said to have said they are just different paths to the same place.

## Illumination: A Summary of Game Mechanics

By liberating from the boundaries and separations, the Illuminate is always a powerful entity. But in terms of raw game mechanics, Illumination simply adds some additional characteristics to a specific Rune keyword, albeit with a few twists:

1. The ability to work with Chaos or Dragons while still worshipping the gods of the world.
2. The ability to ignore cult restrictions without magical repercussions - but unless the Illuminate belongs to a Lunar cult, there is going to be social sanction (and sometimes even with Lunar cults).
3. The ability to spend points on what would otherwise be incompatible Runes (Air and Moon, Life and Death, Movement and Stasis, etc).
4. If the Illuminate is a Lunar, Illumination includes the ability to use the full range of Lunar magic to create glamours of any phase.

It takes the strongest wills or most grounded minds to retain the mask of normalcy after achieving Illumination. As a result, Illumination may often serve as a Flaw that threatens to compel the Illuminate to say or do apparently insane things.

## A Note on Lunar Illumination and Occlusion

The Lunar Sevening Rites, which use Nysalorean Riddles as explained by the New Gods of the Lunar Way, are the easiest and most common path to Illumination in the Third Age. Illumination is central to the Lunar Way, and full use of the Moon Rune requires Illumination. Illuminates are respected and honored within the Lunar Empire, and most of the elite of the Empire are Illuminated. The Empire even tolerates the use of Chaos (and even open display of Chaotic features) as long as such activities do not threaten or harm the Empire itself.

As a result, there is little within the Lunar Way to ground a Lunar Illuminate for acting on his Illuminated impulses. The only limitation on a Lunar Illuminate is taking actions that the Red Emperor (an Illuminated demigod) or other powerful Lunars (also likely Illuminated) consider to be insane. The Lunars call those who are driven insane by their Illumination "Occluded," but there exists no bright line division between Occluded and non-Occluded. Some prominent Lunar Illuminates have claimed there is no such thing as Occlusion, merely small-minded refusal to accept the full possibilities of Liberation. It is worth adding that such statements are commonly believed to be proof of Occlusion.

## The Gods War

This mystic diagram is from the House of Black Arkat in the Esrolian city of Arkat's Hold. It depicts an Illuminate who has been guided by Arkat's teachings to transcend the struggles and woes of the Gods War. She is seated at the symbolic Axis Mundi and holds Arkat in her left hand. With her right hand she makes a mystic gesture of reassurance and blessing.

Surrounding her is a traditional depiction of the Gods War. Clockwise from the lower left are:

Ernalda, Orlanth, Yelm, Humakt, Grandfather Mortal, Argan Argar, and Lodril. They are locked in the cycle of mythic events known as the Gods War and each represents a passion that the Illuminate meditates to transcend.

This diagram is remarkable in the amount of iconographic details shown on the various deities, and for the tribal and temple tattoos on the Illuminate, who can clearly be identified as an Ernalda priestess from the temple at Ezel.

# Gloranthan Creatures

*Glorantha is a world with many races other than mankind. Many different gods have created intelligence in their own image, and the images have not always been humanoid. Due to the constant contact between different species, xenophobia among the common races is virtually unknown on Glorantha. Specific races, such dwarves and elves, dwarves and trolls, and elves and trolls, are engaged in constant warfare, but the reasons are based on ancient treacheries and religious differences.*

## Overview

The most prevalent race on Glorantha is mankind. Men are prolific, and they have spread throughout the Middle World. The dragonewts are slowly dying through evolution, the elves are too tied to their forests, and the surface world holds no appeal for the dwarves. The ancient curse resulting from the Gbaji Wars has turned the slow-breeding trolls into a fading race. Into this vacuum, mankind has stepped. Human philosophers theorize that only humanity has truly adapted to the onset of Time and made the transition from the God Time before the Great Darkness.

Yet, during the time of the Hero Wars, there are still many strange intelligent beings on Glorantha. For convenience, they have all been lumped together in this chapter. Many can be played as player heroes.

### Notes on Intelligent Creatures

Many monsters should not be played as heroes immediately. Players should accustom themselves to the play of human characters before trying the exotics. Referees desiring a certain reality in their campaign should realize that these are mostly very reclusive or rare races who stick to their own and rarely venture out amongst humanity, unless it is to fight it. Thus, the adventuresome dragonewt, ogre, or morokanth is a rarity and a campaign in which every player chose to be an exotic would be very strange indeed.

However, the occasional morokanth, baboon, or newtling makes a refreshing change, lending an enjoyable whimsical quality to the game play.

## Elder Races

Several Elder Races predate humanity. They ruled Glorantha before the rise of men, and brought it to destruction in the Great Darkness that ruined them. They harbor permanent resentments against each other and have warred since Time began.

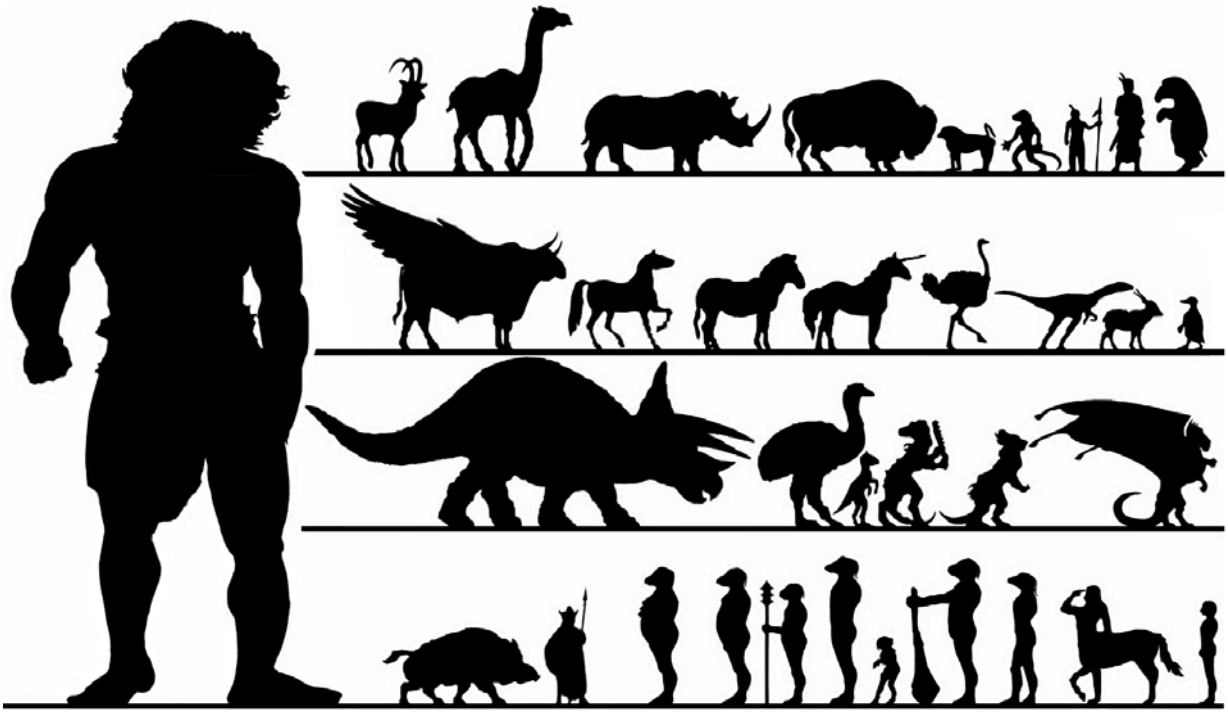
The Elder Races are divided into several sub-groups with different characteristics. The following are descriptions of attributes common to each of these races. Specific characteristics of each sub-group will be given in the individual creature descriptions.

### Aldryami

The race known as the Aldryami consists of elves, dryads, pixies, and runners. They are connected to the Plant Rune, and claim a kinship to plants. Like their eternal enemies, the trolls, the Aldryami are vulnerable to iron, the "new metal" and cannot handle it. Any damage from an iron weapon penetrating their armor will do extra damage.

### Dryads

A totally female race which breeds with elves for continuance. They form the core of the priests for the Aldryami cult. They specialize in magic, having little inclination toward fighting. They are always tied to their tree of birth, and any affliction suffered by the tree is felt by them, and vice versa. They are rarely found as heroes, preferring to remain in their safer forests.



**Comparative Creature Sizes**

*Top row: morokanth, human, pygmy, newtling, baboon, bison, rhino, high llama, and sable antelope. Second row: duck, impala, bolo lizard, ostrich, unicorn, zebra, horse, and sky bull. Third row: full priest, tailed priest, beaked dragonewt, crested dragonewt, demi-bird, and triceratops. Fourth row: human, centaur, sea troll, great troll, trollkin, cave troll, dark troll, mistress race (male), mistress race (female), tusk rider, tusker. Far left: giant.*

## Elves

These are the Aldryami most often seen by outsiders. They are still tied to their forest in ways incomprehensible to other races. It is possible that certain trees must grow for the elves to live. It is also possible that they are the mobile guardians and gardeners for the mysterious forest deities. Except in cases where their homes have been utterly devastated, elves do not migrate from their forests, although individuals seem free to come and go at will.

The most common elves in Dragon Pass and the Holy Country are brown elves and green elves. Brown elves are associated with deciduous trees; green elves with conifers. A typical brown elf weighs about 120 pounds and stands a little over 5 feet tall. Green elves are a little taller than this.

Elf warriors carry the famed Elf-bows, living plants that they wield with deadly accuracy.

## Runners

Stunted and degenerate Aldryami, the runners have their own culture in the trees of an Aldryami forest. They wield "whipsticks," a club-like weapon that, in the hands of a runner, can be made to curl around and bind an enemy. They will not willingly leave the branches of the trees of their forest. They wear no armor or clothes, being covered by a very soft moss-like fur. If they do fight, it is with mass attacks of screaming runners pouring out of the trees.

## Dragonewts

The dragonewts are an incredibly ancient race, so ancient as to have their own Rune. They are warm-blooded reptiles but humanoid in shape, with differing appurtenances (wings, tails, etc) appearing and disappearing, depending on their stage of development. Even among those of the same stage of development, their skin colors may be different, although it is suspected that this may be simple paint or tattoo.

When a dragonewt dies, whether in battle or otherwise, it is reborn, with all memories or experience intact. However, a dragonewt must go through the stages described later, in order, and are far more regimented than humanity or most other humanoid species.

All dragonewts are left handed. If they die, they are reborn in the "nests" of their own home city.

## Crested Dragonewt

The crested dragonewt is small (between 4 and 5 feet high and weighing about 100 pounds), short-tailed, and has an arched crest upon the head. A vegetarian, it prefers leaves and fruit. Missile users and skirmishers, they apprentice in the philosophy of dealing with problems, and adversaries, by avoiding them. When forced to fight, they rely on bows, slings and javelins.

**Dragonewts**
*Clockwise from top: A beaked dragonewt riding a demibird; a Full Priest; a Tailed Priest with klanth and gami; and a crested dragonewt speaking with ducks. In the background a beaked dragonewt rides a triceratops.*

## Beaked Dragonewt

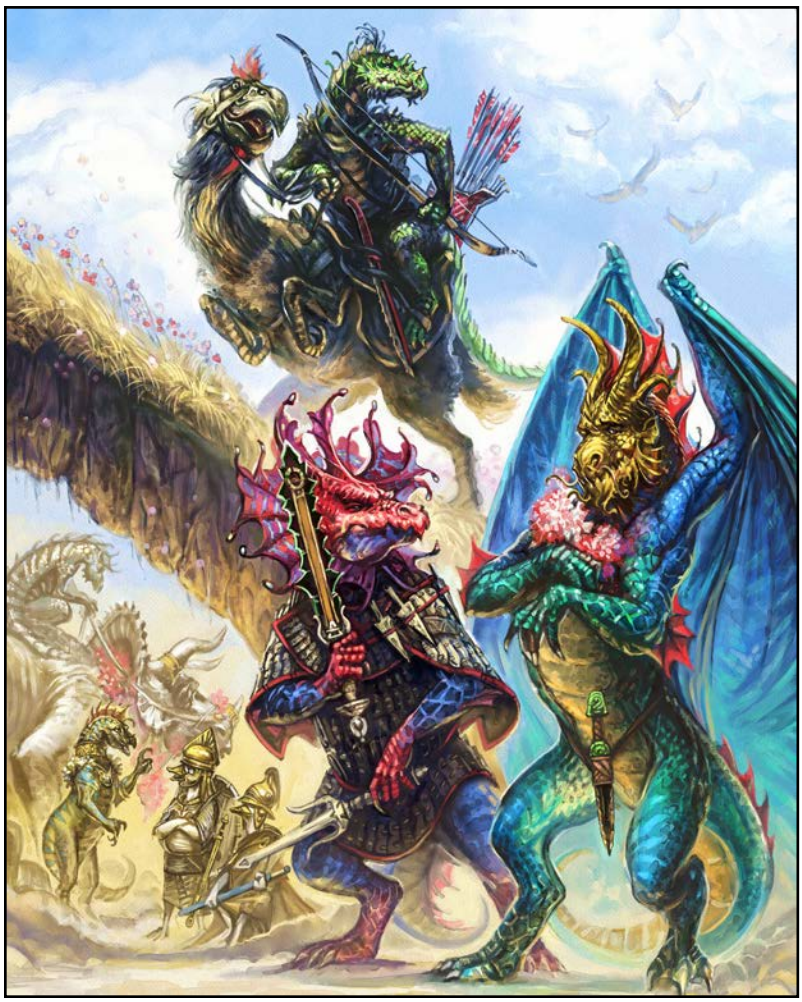
Once they earn it, through some bizarre criteria, crested dragonewts are reborn as beaked dragonewts. The beaked dragonewt is larger than the crested (between 6 and 7 feet high and weighing over 300 pounds) and is carnivorous.

The beaked dragonewt rides a fighting Demibird. The beaked dragonewt is an embodiment of the philosophy of assailing all problems with force and brushing them out of the way.

They retain the missile-fighting skills of their crested stage, but now wield the klanth, a large obsidian-edged sword.

## Tailed Priest

The next rebirth of a dragonewt is to the stage of tailed priest. Now smaller than the beaked dragonewt (less than 6 feet tall and weighing around 175 pounds), they are omnivorous. They are experts at living peacefully with the outside world, and start to focus on learning the secrets of dragon magic through the Dragonewt Rune.



## Full Priest

When the tailed priest gained enough experience, it will next be reborn as a full priest, one steeped in Dragonewt magic. The full priest is larger than the tailed priest (over 7 feet tall and weighing about 500 pounds) and has wings that grow increasingly large with age. Unlike mere tailed priests, they focus on both magic and martial skills. Once reaching this level, the dragonewt begins its progression towards Hero status.

When the full priest has attained Hero status, he will be reborn as the Inhuman King, of which only one is awake and alive at any time. A slain Inhuman King is reborn as a dragon, and flies off to join the ancestral dragons, wherever they may be. At that time, one of the reserve eggs, containing a full priest/Hero, in the Dragon's Eye (capital of the dragonewts) is hatched and the occupant stands revealed as the Inhuman King, gaining wings and, again, a tail.

It is necessary that a replacement for the Inhuman King be hatched very soon, for as long as there is no Inhuman King, dragonewts will not be reborn, and their spirits will leave the cycle, never to be reborn.

Also, if the egg nests of the dragonewt's home city are destroyed, it will not be reborn until the full priests go through a months-long ritual to cleanse and recreate the nest. Both home city and Inhuman King must be present upon Glorantha for a dragonewt to be reborn.

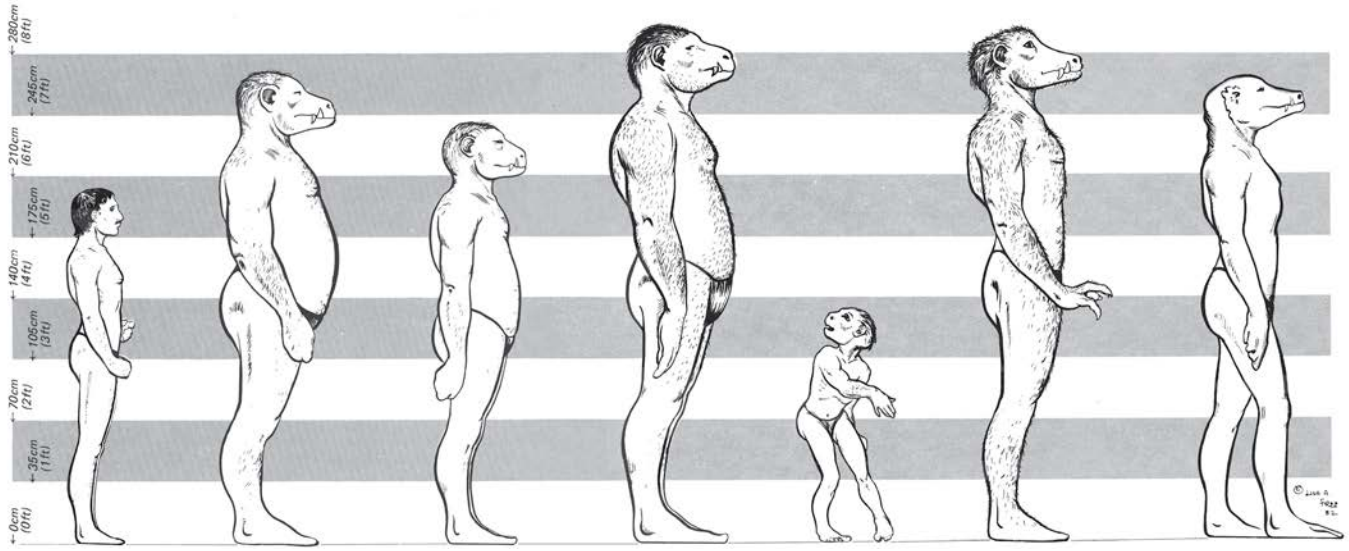
## Mostali

Also called dwarves, the Mostali are underground dwelling artificers, regarded as the best crafters in Glorantha. They are continually at war with the elves and no friend to trolls. The enmity between elf and dwarf is long standing and reaches back to their separate creations. However, both are basically worshippers of Earth (though in two entirely different aspects) and will combine against the forces of Darkness, as represented by trolls. The byword of their relationships at all times is mutual distrust.

Dwarves are stocky, gnarled humanoids from 2 to 4 ½ feet tall and weigh from 22 to 165 pounds. They do not die of age (although they can be slain or die of disease) as long as they follow the ways of Mostal.

The dwarves have the ability to see in the dark. They were the discoverers of iron and were the first to learn to work it. They are powerful sorcerers and do not worship gods or spirits.

Dwarves are notoriously avaricious and like treasure to stay in their halls once it has entered




them. The dwarves are divided into occupational castes. Only the soldier caste – the Iron Dwarves – is regularly seen outside their underground cities.

A dwarf uses an axe or war hammer for tunnel fighting, and a crossbow for ranged fighting.

## Uz

Uz are called trolls, dark men, or Men of Darkness by humans. It is an ancient race, tied to the Darkness Rune, and was old in God Time, when age could not be measured. Since the coming of Time to Glorantha, the race has withered. Since the time of the Broken Council, when the combined curses of the humans and elves assailed both dragonewt and Uz for their supposed treason, the trolls have suffered. The dragonewts called on a True Dragon to devour the curse, but the Uz were not so lucky. As a result, they have been doomed to give birth to trollkin, a stunted mockery of the mighty troll frame.

After the Dragonkill War, trolls took refuge in Dragon Pass and Shadows Dance, retreating into Shadows Dance when more humans moved back into the pass. They are now principally a mountain-dwelling race, at perpetual war with elves and dwarves, and dealing with man as the occasion demands. The initial dispersion of trolls was so great after the Dragonkill Wars that several distinct breeds arose, as well as one blasphemous crossbreed with men.

All trolls have the same aversion to the "new metal" iron, as elves, refusing to handle it and taking extra damage if hit with a weapon made of it.

Trolls are able to move in the darkest night, due to their stygian origin. They have a perception, "Darksense," not available to other races. Darksense combines hearing, smelling, feeling, and some non-specific sensing abilities, and allows trolls to maneuver as though humans in sunshine.

Though trolls hate the light, that element does no direct harm to most trolls. Cave trolls and trollkin, however, are affected by light.

### Dark Trolls

Dark trolls are the current basic stock of the uz, deferring only to Mistress Race trolls for positions of authority. They are fully intelligent and use all weapons and magic. Thirty percent of any troll community will consist of dark trolls, with most of the rest being trollkin. Mistress Race and great trolls (and the occasional despised cave troll) make up no more than 3% of any community.

An average male dark troll stands 6 feet, 6 inches tall and weighs around 285 pounds. The average female is somewhat larger, standing 6 feet, 9 inches tall and weighing about 340 pounds. Stronger than humans, they tend to fight with heavy clubs and maces after performing an ambush from the shadows with slings.

### Great Trolls

This breed of Uz was created by Cragspider the Firewitch for her personal bodyguard. At least half the great trolls alive on Glorantha are a direct result of her breeding program.

They are larger than the dark trolls that spawned them (a typical great troll stands nearly 8 feet tall and weighs 550 pounds, but can grow over 9 feet tall and weigh almost 1000 pounds), but have lost somewhat in intellect and fertility. Unlike cave trolls, they are capable of using weapons and armor, preferring chain mail and long weapons such as great swords and halberds.

**About the Study**

*This Lhankor Mhy study depicts the comparative size of: a human, a Mistress Race troll, a dark troll, a great troll, a trollkin, a cave troll, and a sea troll.*

## Mistress Race Trolls

These are the original uz, from whom all others derive. Due to the Great Curse, their numbers have steadily dwindled, and only a few thousand are left in all of Glorantha. There are isolated tribes of trolls who have never seen a Mistress Race troll. Where they do exist, Mistress Race trolls will hold the positions of power.

Mistress Race trolls are magically powerful and tend to rely on those talents above all others, but when they must they can call upon terrifying physical strength and power as well. Only a True Hero would dare confront a Mistress Race troll.

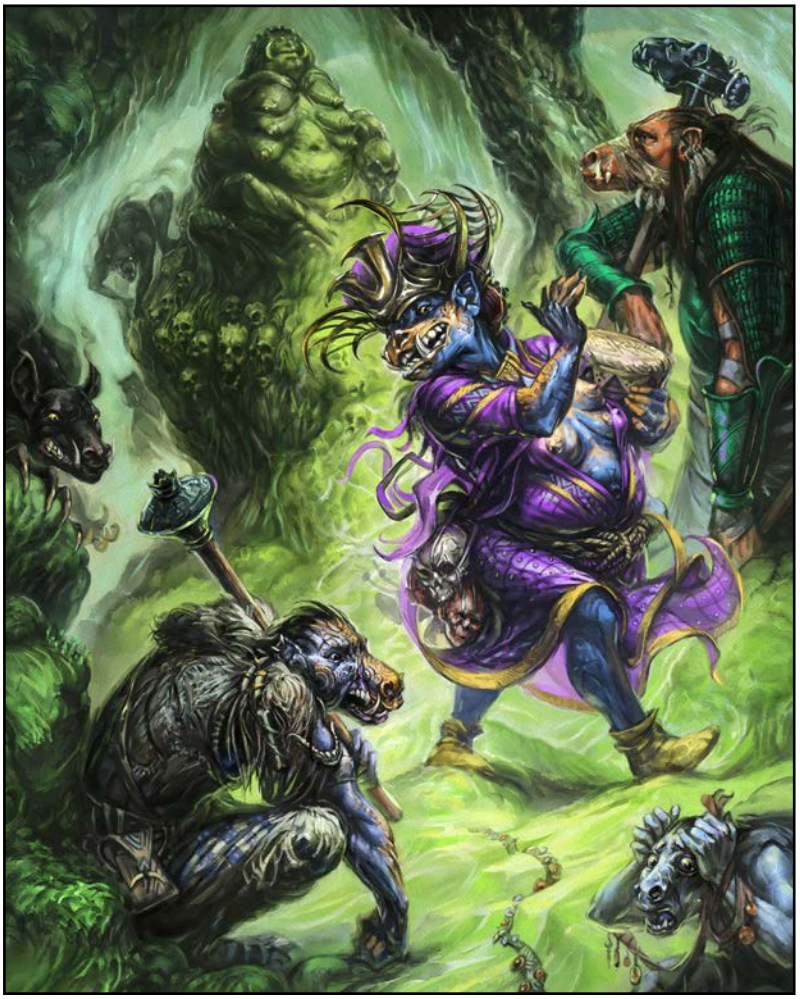
## Trollkin

The most degenerate of the trolls in size, these are, thanks to the Great Curse, the most numerous of the troll race. If they could stand erect, they would be less than 5 feet tall, weighing maybe 120 pounds. In their usual cowering squat, they rarely exceed 3 feet in height. They are continually being born to other kinds of trolls as well as their own breed. Trollkin themselves normally breed true, but many are born dead.

They dislike sunlight and will avoid it whenever possible. They have the ability common to trolls and other Darkness creatures of guiding themselves in the dark with a sonar-like sense of hearing. They are very loath to risk their skins in hand-to-hand combat, mainly because they are always forced to do so by their larger brethren. They use slings, and spears if equipped.

**Uz**

*In the center we see a dark troll priestess. To the right is a great troll bodyguard. On the lower left is her dark troll son. Several pitch black dehori have approached the ceremony, while in the foreground a pathetic trollkin slave grips its head in fear.*



## Cave Trolls

This monstrous, bestial species is descended from trolls mutated by Chaos in the Great Darkness. Though tainted by Chaos, they are admitted to the kinship of other trolls who do not persecute the species, but can even be found herding them like dogs. They have inferior Darksense to the dark trolls and are terrified of the light. They are not considered to be true trolls and live like wild animals in the wilderness.

# Lesser Elder Races

Beyond the Elder Races known throughout Glorantha, there are many less important non-human species. They are typically classified among the Elder Races although of little importance.

## Baboons

Baboons are intelligent animals who dwell in plains and hilly areas. They are the victims of a curse. Like their unintelligent cousins, they travel in family groups of 15 to 20 individuals, including males, females, and children. Their weapon use is limited to slings and spears, but they are proficient with claws and teeth. They may wear armor, but must buy it from humans. They can use all common magic. They are beasts, and any magic they use will be slanted toward the Beast Rune. They are said to have a cult worshipping a monkey god with all the usual cult attributes. Baboons rarely enter human cults since it is a rare temple which will accept a baboon as a member.

## Beast Men (and Man Beasts)

In Glorantha, the Beast Men and Man Beasts live mostly in Beast Valley. They worship at the Wild Temple and their king is the centaur Hero, Ironhoof, son of the Mistress of Animals. There are many forms of these strange hybrids, but we will deal with the principle varieties of centaurs, manticores, and Minotaurs. The Runes of the Beast cult are Fertility and Beast.

## Centaurs

Centaurs are the leaders among the beasts, known for their musicianship and archery. They are also formidable when charging with lances. Another standard technique is to kick with their hooves while fighting with weapons. Young male centaurs are frequently driven from their herds by the local stallion and often wander far, either alone or in a small bachelor herd.

## Ducks

These small (around 3 feet tall and weighing some 75 pounds), feathered humanoids have the heads, bills and webbed feet of ducks. Their plumage comes in a wide variety of different colors. They reside mostly at Duck Point (in Sartar), around the Upland Marsh, and along the River of Cradles river valley. They are accounted one of the tribes of Sartar.

The ducks were cursed by the gods during the Great Darkness for not joining with them to fight versus the forces of Chaos. It is unknown whether they were originally human and became feathered and web-footed, or originally ducks cursed with flightlessness and intelligence. For arcane reasons, they tend to join certain Air or Death Rune Cults as other cults have a tendency to treat them with distrust. They are excellent swimmers, though they cannot fly, having arms instead of wings. Most metal armor is too heavy for them.

Duck fight with slings and short swords suited to their small size. They are expert sailors of small river craft, including reed boats.

## Manticores

Manticores are lion-bodied with a scorpion tail, topped off by a human-like head. They are a surly, independent lot, usually hiring out as bodyguards to humans and others who will pay their asking price, and having little to do with their fellow beasts. They rarely use magic, preferring brute strength.

Manticores fight with their powerful front claws and poisonous sting.

## Minotaurs

One of the Beast Folk, these creatures have a large humanoid body with a bull's head. They often go berserk in combat, ignoring parrying and any defense they may have as the focus on dealing terrible blows. They normally disdain magic, except for Healing or Fertility spells.

They carry great axes and can gore and charge with their horns.

## Giants

An extremely surly and untrustworthy race. They have a fondness for human flesh. At full growth of 50 feet in height, the giant is a truly formidable creature. Fortunately, most giants are not that large. They often use great clubs or even tree trunks in battle, with the ability to sweep and hit many opponents at once.

Giants are so naturally contrary that any magical attempt to influence their actions or emotional response will fail.

Giants are actually tied to the Disorder Rune, not Chaos. Many people, including Giants, cannot tell the difference.

## Newtlings

Newtlings are a race similar to dragonewts, and thought to be related to them. However, the connection is remote, as the species is primarily amphibian rather than reptilian, storing water in their tails for use in dry territory. They do not have a reincarnating cycle like the dragonewts, but grow from huge tadpoles to sexless "bachelors" and finally returning to their villages to breed. Almost all contact will be with bachelor newtlings.

However, they are very like a crested dragonewt in stature and can be mistaken for one at a distance.

Newtlings would prefer to hide in the water or escape rather than fight, but if they do, would use trident and sling. Newtling boats ply the Zola Fel of Prax, transporting goods and people up and down the great river. They are creatures of Water.

## Skin-walkers

Skin-walkers are shape-changers, and disdainful of civilization. Few know whether they are animals who can take on human shape, or humans capable of assuming the shape of an animal. In either case, they can assume the strength and senses of the animal form at the expense of some intelligence (varying as to species), with its natural weapons.

All skin-walkers can change form at will. However, the Telmori change involuntarily into wolf form every Wildday.

The skin-walkers known in Dragon Pass and the Holy Country include Bearwalkers, Tiger Sons, Tusk Brothers, and Wolf Brothers. Only the Wolf Brothers are described in further detail here. The God Learners classified them as a type of primitive men they called Hsunchen or Hykimi. There are dozens of different types of Hsunchen throughout the rest of Glorantha.

**Ducks**

*Ducks have been a part of Glorantha since almost the very beginning. While some players disagree with their inclusion, they occupy only a very small part of the Gloranthan landscape. Regardless, they shall always remain.*

**Elder Races**
*This wall painting from the Holy Country depicts various lesser Elder Races associated with Dragon Pass. Upper level: Two wind children displaying their "swordsticks". The wind children are common to the high mountains around Dragon Pass and the Holy Country. Lower level (from left to right): Two ducks, a centaur, a minotaur, and two newtlings. These species are common to the area called Beast Valley in Dragon Pass.*

### Wolf Brothers
Also known as Telmori, they are the Gloranthan werewolves. They are commonly found with their wolf companions. The Telmori Wolf Brothers are tainted by Chaos, and on Wildday, which happens to be the night of the Full Moon in Dragon Pass, the Telmori must change to their beast form and roam the countryside. In animal shape the Wolf Brothers are immune to the effects of bronze weapons, which bounce off their hides. Only enchanted Runic metals can harm them, as well as magic. Because of their magical nature, one Wolf Brother can wound another. Poison will affect a Wolf Brother, if the skin of the creature is penetrated. Telmori are especially feared because of their immunity to regular weapons when in wolf form. Despite their Chaos taint, the Telmori Wolf Brothers are one of the tribes of Sartar and loyal to the House of Sartar.

### Tusk Riders
The actual origins of the tusk riders are unclear. That they have human ancestry is obvious, but the mark of the trolls is upon them as well. Their Cult of the Bloody Tusk demands blood drinking and further abominations.

The tusk riders ride tuskers and fight with lance and spear. They are will hire as mercenaries to any who meet their price of cash and blood.

### Wind Children
Extremely humanoid except for the magnificent feathered wings they fly with. The wind children are tied to the Air Rune and disdain close combat and armor, using missile weapons and spells.

They are extremely claustrophobic and will not go underground. A very rare race, mostly found only in Sartar and other areas around Dragon Pass. Wind children Rune Priests are particularly adept in the use of *kolati*, or Air Elementals.

## Animals

### Demi-birds
The mount of the dragonewts, they are in perpetual mental link with their riders and follow their every order. They are feathered, bipedal, beaked, and lay eggs, but their bones are solid and they have vestigial arms, not wings. This gives them the name "Demi-birds." They are fearless and carnivorous.

When attacked, a Demi-bird will kick and peck.

### Horses
Dragon Pass is home to some of the finest horse breeders in Glorantha, the Grazeland Pony Breeders. For other peoples, horses are valuable and an indicator of wealth. Horses with the size, stamina and skill of a trained warhorse are few and far between. They are

also quite expensive. The zebras used by the people of Pavis are in all ways like horses, except that they are tolerated by the Praxian nomads.

### Cavalry Horses

The cavalry horse is trained to stay calm in battle and carry its rider where he wants to go amidst the noise and hubbub of a battle. They are not trained to fight in battle and because of this, they cost less to train. A cavalry horse can be trained to fight, at which time it becomes a warhorse (see below). However, as a cavalry horse it is not trained to fight in coordination with its rider, and a rider would have to make Riding rolls and do nothing else if the horse commenced fighting for any reason. A cavalry horse can be depended on to stay steady in the face of most monsters.

### Riding Horses

The riding horse includes nearly everything we think of today as being a horse. It can carry a rider and gear for a goodly distance during any given period if it is given adequate care and feeding. Any horse (or any of the other vegetarian riding animals mentioned later) is an inefficient fuel engine when working on grass. Oats and other high-energy grains will keep a horse used to them going longer, but this usually has to be carried. A riding horse will not fight unless cornered or engaged in a territory fight with another horse. They almost never fight to kill another horse.

### Warhorses

The warhorse is a highly specialized animal, trained to respond absolutely to the demands of its rider and ignore outside influences. They are also trained to fight on their own. A warhorse is almost always a gelding. Despite all the adventure novels, stallions are totally unreliable as warhorses because they are far more interested in mares. Mares can be used for warhorses, but are usually too small to be used for the kind of close-in fighting a warhorse is used for.

A warhorse, or similarly trained mounts, will not panic and bolt at the sight and/or smell of a monster, or other form of riding animal.

The single most important cost factor in a warhorse is training. A horse must be trained to coordinate these attacks with its rider. A warhorse can be trained to do three types of attacks: kick with the foreleg; bite with the teeth; and rear and plunge. It will attack whatever is in front of it that it is either directed to attack or which attacks it. Unless specifically directed, it will not attack another mount.

## Praxian Riding Animals

The nomad tribes of Prax each ride distinctive animals, whose attributes are similar in some ways to horses, but in others are quite different. Praxian nomads will only ride the animal of his tribe, and would never touch a horse, not even to eat it. Horses are taboo on the Plains of Prax.

The riding animals of the nomads of Prax include the bison, the bolo lizard, the high llama, the impala, the ostrich, the rhino, the sable, and even the rare unicorn.

### Bison

Resembling the North American bison, this is a surly and intractable beast, save in the presence of its rider. Its thick skin gives it some protection and its basic attack is the charge. They also butt and trample. Bison riders are one of the great five tribes of Prax.

### Bolo Lizards

These are large dinosaur-like creatures that run on their two hind legs, bearing a small rider. The lizards will avoid direct combat whenever possible, but bite when they must. Bolo Lizard riders are one of the lesser Praxian tribes.

### Impalas

Small deer ridden by a tribe of pygmies, they will not fight unless cornered. They usually kick while running away. Impala riders are one of the great tribes of Prax.

### High Llamas

These Praxian animals look like Peruvian llamas, but are of great height, giving their riders an edge in combat by allowing them to strike down at opponents. They are also noted as being the fastest mounts in all of Prax.

The llama itself is no slouch, with a nasty bite and big kicks. High Llama riders are one of the great tribes of Prax.

### Rhinos

The juggernauts of Prax, these vicious creatures are fortunately rare in the wild. They have all the usual characteristics of the African rhinoceros, including bad vision and a penchant for the headlong charge.

Rhino riders are one of the lesser tribes of Prax.

### Sables

Antelope are also known as "Lunar Deer" for the shape of their horns. When pressed, sables will butt, bite, and kick. Sable riders are one of the great tribes of Prax.

### Shadowcats
Varying in size from housecat to jaguar, usually of dark coloration, these beasties are very quick and quiet. Also known as shimmer cats because they are extremely hard to hit.

They rarely attack anything larger than themselves. However, when cornered or threatened, they will attack, jumping onto a foe and holding with the forefeet while biting and ripping with both hind legs at once. In Dragon Pass, a shadowcat is also called an Alynx. All are sacred to Orlanth.

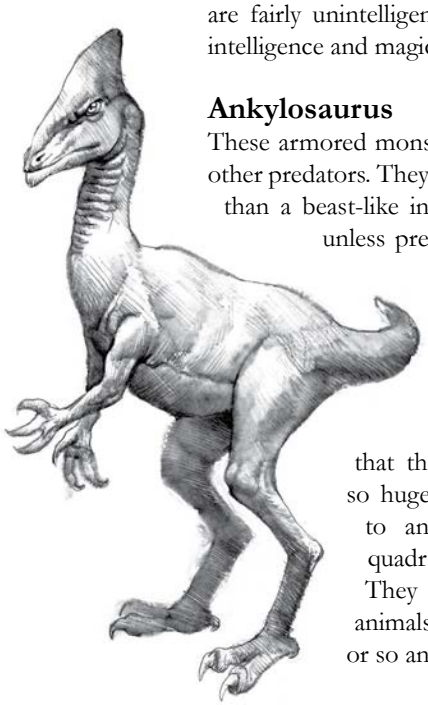
**Magisaur**
*Sometimes a crested dragonewt fails or refuses to metamorphose into the beaked dragonewt stage. The result is a sentient dinosaur-like creature known as a magisaur. They use all types of magic (except draconic magic) and are unaggressive.*

### Sky Bulls
They are the offspring of the Storm Bull (Storm God of Prax) and mortal heifers. Large flying bulls, they are fierce vegetarians. They are prized by griffins as meat and by humans as mounts. When attacking, a Sky Bull will swoop down and stomp.

### Tuskers
Gigantic boars as big as buffalo, ridden only by tusk riders. These beasts are fierce and ill-tempered, but love their masters beyond all comprehension. They gore and trample.

# Monsters

## Dinosaurs
Dinosaurs are a neotenic species descended from failed dragonewts who became entrapped in material flesh. They are associated with the Earth Rune and are sacred to the Maran Gor cult. Most dinosaurs are fairly unintelligent, but some have a malicious intelligence and magical powers.



### Ankylosaurus
These armored monsters have little fear of men or other predators. They roam singly, and have no more than a beast-like intelligence. They will not fight unless pressed; but if engaged in battle, they can maneuver and bring their club-like tail to strike a foe in front of them.

### Brontosaurus
The dinosaurs are so mindless that they are immune to magic and so huge that they are nearly immune to any physical attack. They are quadrupeds up to seventy feet long. They are peaceful, slow-moving animals, traveling in herds of a dozen or so animals.

### Hadrosaurus
These dinosaurs are intelligent and good magicians, but unsuited for personal combat. They are vegetarians and try to avoid outsiders.

### Triceratops
These horned dinosaurs are beaked and tough-skinned. They are as large as elephants and live in herds of several dozen. They are pugnacious and often fight each other.

## Dragons
The true dragons for which Dragon Pass is named are immense creatures whose main occupation is sleeping, dreaming of greater days during the God Time, and entertaining emissaries of the warring factions of the area. If the dragon likes an emissary, he joins its side. If he doesn't, he eats him.

True dragons cannot be bothered by individual Heroes or even small armies. And since they are above such things as the collection of gold, they have no hoards to tempt the unwary.

However, the mind of a dragon is a powerful thing. While it dreams, its baser nature, the suppressed desires for blood and gold, comes out. The dreaming thought of a dragon can wander about the entirety of Glorantha at will, and when blood and gold are available to those thoughts, a dragon may stir. His dreams take tangible form as a sort of "mind child" of the dragon.

### Dragons, Dream
The dream dragon has physical form, created by the mind of the true dragon. Taken from the subconscious mind of its creator it cannot match the true magnitude of an awake dragon. The full dragon thinks of its creation as a dream, of course, but dragons have traditionally been unable to separate dream from reality. Like a human dream, the dream dragon may manifest all the unfortunate subconscious traits of its creator, expressed in greed and bloodthirstiness. They are usually found alone, sitting on a heap of money and gems. Their usual form is serpentine with four legs and a pair of wings. They often have a fiery or poisonous breath. There is no way to tell just what a particular dragon can or cannot use as a "breath weapon," as each is individually created at the whim of a full dragon's subconscious. They are called dream or pseudo dragons by sages acquainted with their origins. Others call them serpentine dragons, or just dragons.

Those that attack dragons face their terrible claws and horrible breath, be it poison, fire, or frost.

### Griffins
An ancient and powerful race, rarely mixing in the affairs of men. They know basic magic, but have no wish for any runic ties. They have the heads, wings, and forelegs of eagles, and the muscular body and hind legs of a lion, a combination of all that is regal in both breeds.

Griffins will leave anyone alone unless he tries to take the griffin's hoard of gold. Its favorite mode of attack is a swoop down from above. They are found in family "prides" of as many as a dozen, of which half will be immature.

The large griffin fights with claws and peck different foes at the same time. They can easily carry a man away in its claws.

### Wyrms
The result of a misguided attempt by the Second Council to create new dragons after the ancestral dragons either went away or went to sleep. The result was much less than hoped for, and rapidly went its own way. It is a great legless serpent with wings, high intelligence and great power. They continue to grow until they die. They congregate in family groups of two adults and not more than two children.

If attacked, they will respond with a nasty bite.

### Wyverns
No one can be sure of the origins of the wyvern. Dreams of immature dragons? Natural beasts? No one knows. They are rare beasts, but seem to breed and reproduce normally. They are somewhat dragonish in shape, but have only two legs.

A wyvern will swoop down, bite, and attempt to sting with its venomous tail. Larger ones may try to carry their prey away in their talons.

## ᛟ Spirits
### Disease Spirit
Disease spirits possess living things and cause illness. There are hundreds of types of disease spirits. Their effects range from mild inconveniences to deadly afflictions that can kill a victim in hours. Some wicked shamans send diseases as curses. Broos and other Chaos horrors worship the evil goddess Mallia, and regularly spread disease.

### Elementals
Elementals are spirits of one of the Elemental Runes (Air, Darkness, Earth, Fire, and Water) that have been embodied in the local environment. The lesser ones are not truly sentient but can be summoned and controlled by powerful magicians (most commonly those of appropriate Rune Cults). More powerful and sentient elementals are known; such entities are usually servants of the gods or even lesser gods in their own right.

There are also Lunar elementals, but they require a moon rock from the surface of the Red Moon in order to be summoned.

#### ൭ Air (Kolati)
Air elementals (commonly called *kolati*) resemble mobile whirlwinds. All are capable of raising a wind; even the smallest can lift and throw small objects. The largest can throw human-sized objects or can carry them aloft in the air.

More powerful and sentient Air elementals are called *umbroli* and are living winds. The strongest *umbroli* are minor gods, such as the Seven Winds of Dragon Pass, and are worshiped by local clans and tribes.

#### ● Darkness (Dehori)
Darkness elementals (commonly called *dehori* or shades) are pools of darkness, and are supernaturally cold. Any fire, heat, or light source taken within a *dehori* (and weaker than it) is extinguished by its Darkness. *Dehori* attack by filling its victim with such terror they cannot move, causing them to collapse, or even die of fear.

More powerful and sentient Darkness elementals are also called *dehori*. They are worshiped by the trolls as their ancestors. It is widely believed that the huge shadows that wander around Shadow's Dance are immense *dehori*.

#### □ Earth (Talosi)
Earth elementals (commonly called *talosi*) can shape the earth in almost any way: they can create pits, tunnels, or walls, expel objects, and even plow fields. They can carry things through the soil. They usually attack beings standing on the earth by opening a pit beneath them and crushing them. The *talosi* can suffocate the victim by dragging it completely underground.

More powerful and sentient Earth elementals are the lesser goddesses and gods of the Earth, and have countless names. They are worshiped by local communities.

#### ⊙ Fire (Urzani)
Fire elementals (commonly called *urzani*) animate an existing flame, which immediately flares up, but then requires no fuel to continue burning. They are harder

to extinguish than normal flames and can move and even jump from object to object. They ignite any flammable object they touch. They can heat metal (and eventually melt it), bake stone, set fires, and, of course, burn people.

More powerful and sentient Fire elementals live in the Sky World. They are commonly called *Luxites*, *shanassae*, or *certami*, and are worshiped by many Sky cults.

### Water (Veredthi)

Water elementals (commonly called *veredthi*) may form from any liquid that is at least 90% water. They move through the water like a living ripple or current, but flow over land like a huge liquid amoeba. It can purify itself of sediment, insoluble oils, or particles, but not dissolved chemicals or miscible liquids. They can push a ship through water and can carry things entirely underwater, or partially exposed (to permit air-breathing). Water elementals attack on land by engulfing foes and forcing themselves into mouths and lungs. In water, they can drown foes, smash them against the water, and even suffocate water-breathers by drawing oxygen away from gills.

More powerful and sentient Water elementals live the oceans, and in rivers and lakes. They are commonly called *manthi* and are the powerful beings of water that oversee and manipulate its powers for its inhabitants. They are worshiped by the merfolk and other aquatic races.

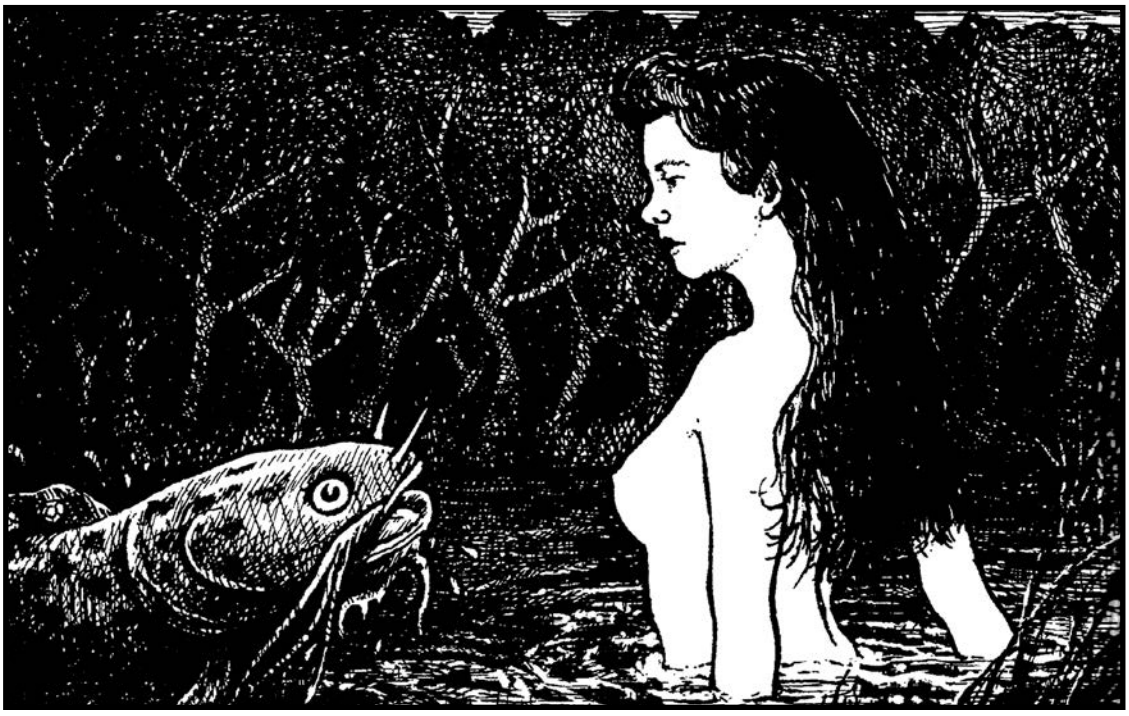
## Ghosts

Malign spirits of the dead, they are specially bound as guardians of a specific area or thing. They manifest as a shadowy image of their former self, often with any fatal wounds visible. They have insubstantial bodies that can be harmed by magic, but which nothing physical can touch.

## Nymphs

Nymphs are feminine manifestations of the consciousness of various places of nature such as a hill, lake, meadow, or river. At will, a nymph can form (or dissipate) a human-like body from the substance of her home. They usually take the form of a beautiful and desirable female of whatever species they are speaking with. Nymphs adeptly manifest the primal magic of fertility and desire, and so most nymphs appear sexually attractive to sentient beings. Malevolent nymphs reflect a deep sense of rejection and are correspondingly hideous and violent.

Nymphs are lesser goddesses. They can sense all spirits within their home area and usually rule the spirits of their home. They can command nonsentient beings that reside within their home. Some nymphs are so powerful that they are worshiped by shamans or a local Earth cult. At regular or special times, such a nymph is called forth to share herself with worshipers who offer wine, dance, and songs. Such events are well attended and sometimes the subject of songs or poems.



# Chaos Horrors

Glorantha is fragile bubble of stability in an infinite maelstrom of Chaos. That stability is precarious, as the Gods War proved. Only the Cosmic Compromise prevented Chaos from consuming the universe.

Chaos tends to reestablish itself. This threatens the existence of Glorantha and the deities. Though Chaos is itself formless and structureless, mutual corruption of Chaos and Order occurs at the weakened seams of the world where Chaos leaks in.

Chaos can enter Glorantha in any of several ways. Spontaneous appearances are rare but possible. As the world randomly arose from Chaos, so Chaos may randomly reassert itself. Once in the world, Chaos will spread.

However, Chaos can also enter the world through the actions of people. Chaos can be deliberately summoned, as when the Unholy Trio allowed Wakboth to enter Glorantha. Tragically, even the best of people, desperate to save themselves and the things they love, unwisely invite evil into the world in this way.

## Broos

Human-bodied and goat-headed, the broos (or goatkin) are tied irrevocably with the Rune of Chaos. They are given to atrocities and foul practices, and carry numerous loathsome diseases. Broos are known to kill and eat all forms of sentient life. They will hire out for pay, but tusk riders are more desired as mercenaries, and that is saying something. They are immune to all poisons and diseases.

Broos generally fight with clubs and spears and have a nasty head-butt. Human and dwarf smiths will not sell them armor or weapons, what armor they have is usually scavenged from their victims. They are larger, stronger and more resistant to pain than humans.

## Dragon Snails

Created in the Great Darkness of the Gods War when the Spire of Law exploded and the Devil was pinned in the Plains of Prax beneath the fragment known as The Block. These are giant, dragon-headed snails, often having two heads. They are

## Chaotic Features

Many creatures of Chaos have been warped, corrupted, and perverted by the Chaos Rune. An arm may be replaced by a mass of poisonous tentacles; bones may be replaced by metal; blood and other fluids replaced by acid; the creature might have an extra limb or two; or they might have abilities that simply defy the laws of nature. Not all Chaos features are beneficial for the creature. A monster might scream in agony every time it moves, or have its bones replaced with a rubbery material.

## Chaotic Horrors

Chaos monsters frighten normal, sane people. Everyone knows that Chaos nearly destroyed the world. A few have seen the blasphemous, foul monsters themselves. It takes a brave (or foolhardy) person to stand and fight when faced with Chaos. People tolerate the Storm Bull cult precisely because they regularly stand against Chaos foes.

The first encounter against a Chaos horror should always be a simple contest to see whether the hero will stand and fight. Failure means that the hero's objective in any subsequent contest will be to flee the horror if possible. In addition the Consequences of Defeat or Benefits of Victory from the results carry forward to checks to stand against future encounters with a Chaos horror. A hero that suffers a Complete Defeat will always flee Chaos in the future. A Complete Success means no further checks to stand against Chaos are needed.

The Storm Bull cult has magic that allows them and others to stand against Chaos.

found in marshes and watery areas and will eat anything organic. These are Chaos creatures with many individual characteristics known as Chaotic Features. They are known as pieces of the "Parts of the Devil."

Each head of the Dragon snail can bite different opponents.

## Ghouls

Half-dead creatures who maintain their status by eating the dead. They look as if they have stepped from a week-old grave. Any armor they may have is looted from graves, and they usually fight with claws and their own poison bite.

The howl of a ghoul is terrifying, weakening all but the most stalwart opponent. They would use this as an unrelated action at one point during a contest to reduce the combat abilities of the heroes.

## Jack O'Bear

Humanoid in shape, this strange creature has what seems to be a pumpkin for a head and an exotic talent not to be sneered at.

The Jack O'Bear can ensnare another's mind with their gaze, grabbing one victim after another. Those victims who are overcome are frozen in place and helpless unless the Jack O'Bear dies and the spell is broken. Jack O'Bears are Chaotic, and their ensnaring power is the Chaotic feature they have as a result.

## Krarshtkid

Krarshtkids are underground horrors that riddle the earth with tortuous burrows. These crab-like arachnids are never seen aboveground, serving Krarsht and her worshippers in the tunnels. They are eye-less, asymmetrical creatures with a Hunger sense that directs them to prey.

Most surface folk have never heard of these monsters, let alone seen them and they are the lucky ones. Krarshtkids have a paralytic bite, can spit an immobilizing weblike substance called pratzim, strike out at a distance with their whiplike acid tongue, and even tear flesh and bone with their digging claws.

## Ogres

Ogres look very human, generally passing for human in all walks of human civilization. They are thought to have originated as a human tribe which took the side of Chaos during the Great Darkness. They are quite rare. Their teeth are very sharp and they are very strong. They can look very handsome and beautiful. They can join any Rune Cult but their outlook on life is always tainted with Chaos. They are known to be fond of human flesh. It is said that cannibalism will turn you into an ogre. Other intelligent creatures of Chaos will recognize them by their aura and usually not attack them. Some Ogres have Chaotic Features.

## Scorpion Men

More scorpion than men, they are a sort of man-scorpion centaur, with the chest, arms, and head of a man, but the abdomen, tail, and rear six legs of a scorpion. Not being fully mammalian, they are not considered to be among the Beast Men.

They are a Chaos breed, left over from the Great Darkness, and live in small villages in the high mountains. They know little magic, for no one will teach it to them. They make their living raiding and hiring out as bodyguards to optimistic employers who forget their essentially Chaotic nature. Some have visible Chaotic Features.

Scorpion men fight with human weapons and their tail stinger at the same time. They are well protected by their carapace.

## Walking Corpses

Dead beings animated by Rune magic or Sorcery. They are programmed or even directed by the mage who created them, but cannot motivate themselves. They are strong and tough, but a clumsy opponent, but capable of doing real damage when it hits.

They fight with whatever weapon they are given.

A walking corpse must be destroyed by destroying every limb or its chest or it will continue to fight. Destroying the head, of course, destroys its ability to see an opponent and it will cease action.

Delecti the Necromancer is the most famous creator of walking corpses in Dragon Pass.

## Walktapi

With man-like bodies and heads similar to a large octopus, these are an extremely Chaotic race. They can attack with all eight tentacles, using the human arms for balance, permitting them to fight as many as four foes at once. A Walktapus can also squirt out a poison gas cloud similar to the effect of an octopus squirting ink.

Walktapi have a Chaotic ability to regenerate. Every portion of their body which is severed from the parent will grow into a new Walktapus. Not even fire will permanently affect this, though it will slow down the growth rate by several days. Only extremely powerful "exotic" Rune magic will permanently harm a Walktapus.

Treat the poison attack as an unrelated action that is used to weaken the heroes.

# Gaming in Glorantha

*Glorantha is a world of colossal proportions and complexity, and has plenty of room for all your ideas. If you wish to put orcs on some island in Glorantha or invent a new cult for a city, feel free. Your Glorantha Will Vary, and really should vary to match your group's play style. With those caveats, here are some suggestions for running games set in Glorantha.*

## The Importance of Community

Heroes fill the needs of their community, be it a band of hunters, a clan of farmers and herders, a temple, or a cosmopolitan city-state. Without a community, a hero is nothing more than a destructive outlaw. Within a community, they are avatars, personifications of a million dreams, prayers, and curses, and the hopes and fears of the future made flesh. Keep this in mind when planning the background of your game.

Give your heroes families, complete with siblings, parents, and other kin. Having a few of the heroes be directly related either by blood or by duty helps reinforce that sense of community. Give them connections to their community and a reason to care about it.

A side effect of link the heroes to a community is responsibility. Players will think twice about having their heroes be destructive killing machines when they have to worry about the consequences.

## Keeping it Bronze Age

Unlike most fantasy settings, Glorantha is firmly set in the ancient world or even prehistory. It is for the most part a Bronze Age setting, characterized by the use of bronze, writing as the preserve of a narrow professional elite (such as the Lhankor Mhy cult), and some urban civilizations (such as Nochet, Boldhome, and Furthest). Kinship groups or city-states are the usual form of social organization; a chieftain, king, queen, or other supreme authority holds power. The ruler is usually a priestly figure as well, and priest-kings are the norm in much of Glorantha. Temples are usually the most powerful institution in any Gloranthan community!

Most Gloranthan societies are pragmatically polytheist, and recognize multitudes of gods. Religions rarely proselytize. A person belongs to the cult of her people by virtue of birth, social position, or occupation, and a notion such as "conversion" makes little sense to most Gloranthans. One can leave

one's cult or join another, but one rarely completely abandons old gods for new; far more common is to add a new god to the existing multitude.

The Bronze Age elements of Glorantha are a good source of color for the Game Master and players. Bronze armor is as much about (if not more) about displaying status as it is about protection. Buildings are often brightly (even garishly) painted. Wine and other liquids are not stored in barrels but ceramic amphorae, which are sometimes decorated with painted designs or ornamentation.

## Keeping it Fantastic

Glorantha is a magical and fantastic world. Demigods as powerful as regiments of soldiers transform battlefields in ways that have no equivalent to terrestrial warfare. The Lunar Empire has magical weapons such as a colossal flying Chaos demon that devours entire armies, and units of magicians who can call down comets to decimate their foes. Dragon Pass is dominated by Kero Fin Mountain, which at nearly eight miles high is far taller than Mount Everest and looks more like a needle than a mountain. There are sleeping dragons many miles long that the locals have long mistook for a strange range of hills. There are talking ducks and baboons, flying bulls, sentient fish, and numerous immortal beings and races. The landscape is dotted with the ruins of previous civilizations, and the ruins of ancient God Time places.

Let your imagination go wild. Ignore that voice that demands rational thought and empirical data, and draw upon your unconscious fantasies. Draw upon dreams, folklore, and mythology. Your Glorantha Will Vary, just keep it fantastic.

# Creating Adventures

This section describes one method for creating an appropriately Gloranthan adventure, using a brief reference in the Dragon Pass chapter of the *Guide to Glorantha* as a starting point.

Please read the rest of *HeroQuest Glorantha* thoroughly before trying to create your own Gloranthan campaign. You may want a copy of the *Guide to Glorantha* to help with inspiration points. Other Moon Design publications are recommended as well, particularly *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* and *Pavis: Gateway to Adventure*. Most importantly, a powerful imagination will prove invaluable.

Of course, if you are already an experienced Gloranthan Game Master it is likely that you already have your own way of doing things. Feel free to rearrange, ignore, or discard any of the steps below. We are just giving you a way to think about Gloranthan adventures.

## Step 1. Inspiration Point

This is the easiest phase. Simply select something from Glorantha that interests you. A short passage from the *Guide to Glorantha* can inspire entire campaigns. Don't worry if the Guide or other books offer only a moderate amount of information on what you find interesting.

### Sample Inspiration Point

For this sample scenario, we have selected the passage in the Sartar Uncommon Events chapter from the *Guide to Glorantha* that reads as follows:

> **Rare Events**
> **Sign from the gods** – impromptu fertility festival.

This is a typical brief entry, but has enough data to go by, as you will see.

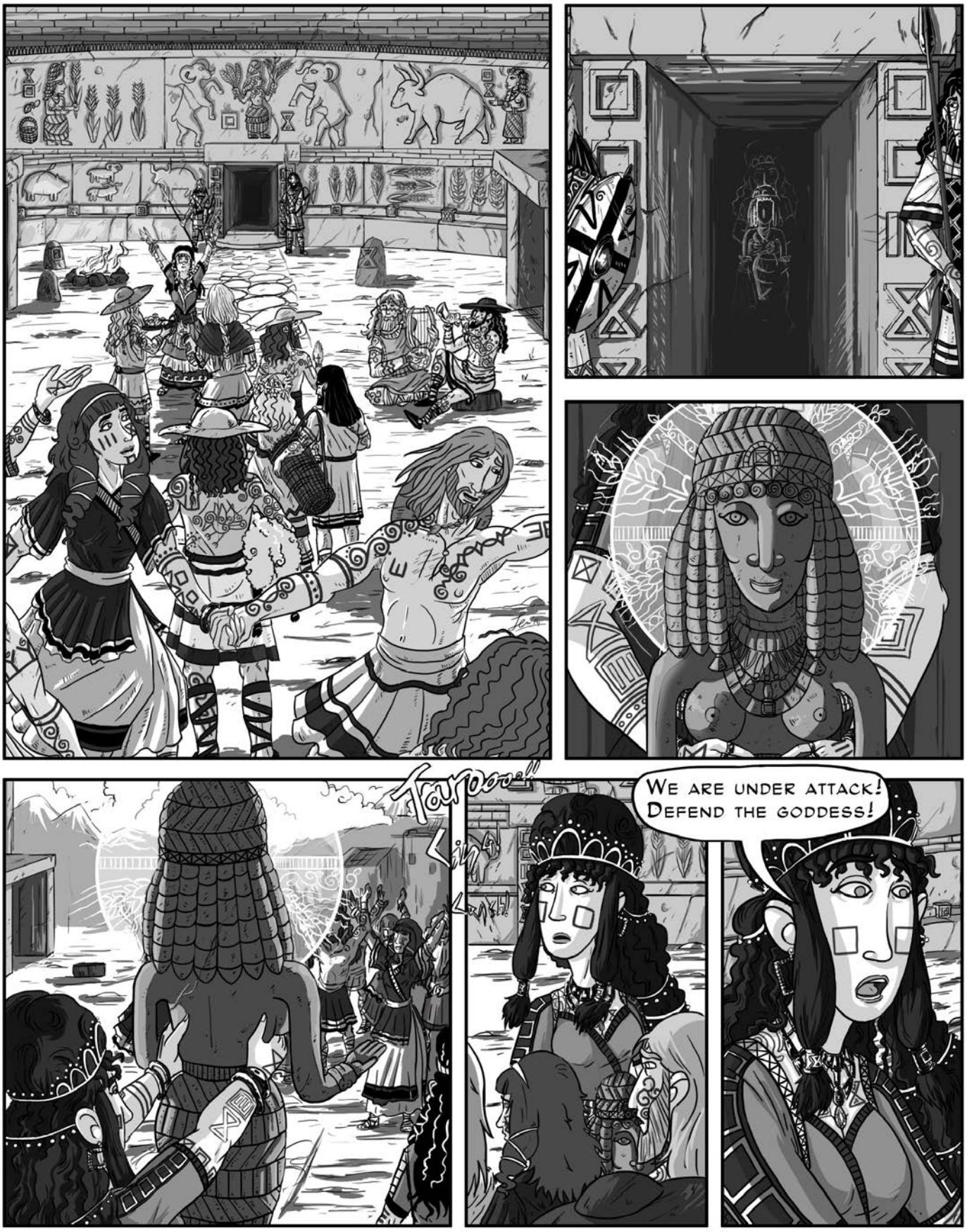
## Step 2. Your Story Line

A common Gloranthan adventure is one of exploration and discovery. The heroes go on a quest for secret knowledge, meet strange new creatures, are the first to see an ancient relic from the God Time or the Gbaji Wars, journey to a place known to their people only in legend, and so on. This concept links well with Step 1, in which you selected a reference from the Guide as your inspiration point, since much of the text of the *Guide to Glorantha* is in the form of descriptions of different peoples and places.

Determine an overall story line for your adventure that relates to your heroes' particular situation and interests, while still creating an opportunity for the heroes to find out more about the point that interests you. A group of Humakti mercenaries would be looking to fight in a battle or war, and adventures for such a group should have a martial setting. Were such heroes offered the task of trading with another community or appeasing the local Earth temple, they would likely disdain the opportunity. Similarly, a group of Ernalda priestesses would be looking out for the magical health of their community and might reject an invitation to fight in a distant war.

### Sample Adventure Story Line

Our adventure's basic story line will be that they are sent by their community into the Otherworld to restore the community's relationship with a local Earth Goddess. The heroes should be the sort that the community leaders might reasonably send on a magical and likely very dangerous adventure.


Taroo!!
WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!
DEFEND THE GODDESS!

## Step 3. Theme

A proper Gloranthan adventure needs a mood, a moral, or a point of view as well as a basic story line to be faithful to the sophisticated cultures, myths, and events of the setting. When we refer to such things as a mood or a message we are really talking about the "theme" of the story: the point the storyteller is trying to make, if you will. It should be something very simple and obvious, recurring throughout the adventure. For example, you could run an adventure where the heroes were tempted to behave in a dishonest fashion. If they were punished for this, the theme of the adventure would clearly be "crime does not pay." More sophisticated themes are possible with a little more work.

It must be stressed that Glorantha is not a static world, devoid of anything but monsters and treasures to loot. On the contrary, it is filled with intelligent, active inhabitants who are part of living, dynamic societies with real concerns; concerns far beyond those of simple adventurers out for plunder. Even those regions where monsters and rumors of treasure abound individuals will be encountered that have valid reasons for their actions.

A theme is usually enough to draw attention to this point and make an adventure Gloranthan in nature. There is no need to force your players to actually play crafters, farmers, herder, and town elders unless they really want that. Of course, you might find such a campaign worth trying sometime.

A theme can be a way of personalizing a basic story line. It allows you to showcase your ideas about Glorantha. It can clarify the roleplaying aspects of the adventure both for you and the players. A powerful emotional theme creates an adventure that is memorable and not predictable for your players, even though the basic story line is one you've used many times before. You can also refer to your theme to help you make difficult decisions during the adventure.

Determine a simple theme for your adventure that is appropriate for your inspiration point and chosen story line. It should be one that helps you tell the story more dramatically. With luck, your theme will reveal something about your personal ideas about Glorantha.

The overall theme of Glorantha itself is **the interaction of man and myth**. Glorantha is a magical world and many interesting points flow from this fundamental reality. Your theme may include reference to the significance of myths, legends, gods, spirits, magical items, cults, or some other mythic component. This may be a positive or a negative reference: perhaps you feel that magic is a fearful thing, especially the magic that comes from spirits? Use this as a common theme on several adventures, and watch your players learn and react to your idea. Generally, long running campaigns tend to weave in multiple overlapping themes, while a single session game really only have time for one. Other traditional Gloranthan themes include:

**The duality of Time and the Gods Age**. The Gods Age is eternal and endless; it always was, always is, and always will be. Historical time is mutable, finite, and cyclical. Yet the events of the Gods Age echo into historical time and the cycles of mortal time repeat the mythic conflicts of the gods.

**The coming of the Hero Wars**. The Third Age is prophesized to end with a terrible magical war that could restart the Gods War. Many cults fear this doom of the Third Age is coming soon or has already begun.

**Speaking with monsters**. At many times in history, men have cooperated with the Elder Races, the dragons, giants, and even broos. Great empires have been founded with the secrets learned from non-humans. But the curse of knowledge is that once you learn something new you endanger the certainty of old truths.

**The dangers of arrogance and pride**. The rise and fall of the Broken Council, the God Learners, the Empire of the Wyrms Friends, and even the Lunar Empire are examples of this theme. Great empires rise in Glorantha, determined to change the world forever, only to fall into ruin.

**The price of success is new conflict**. The seeds of the next war are planted in how we ended the last war. Success always comes at a price, and that bill always eventually comes due.

**The microcosm is the macrocosm**. Feuds between neighboring villages can be echoes of cosmic conflict.

**The paradox of the Hero**. The Hero is endowed with exceptional powers and uses those gifts to battle against enemies who would endanger the peace and well being of the community. And yet, the Hero is not bound by the rules and restrictions of the civilization they defend, and is rarely at home in the civilized world.

## Sample Adventure Theme

The theme of our sample adventure is the efforts and sacrifices a community needs to make to maintain their relationship with their gods. The deities are one of the most important things in the lives of most Gloranthans. Many of the actions taken by a Gloranthan community are performed to maintain or repair their relationship with them.

The deity worshipped in this case is a local Earth Goddess, the source of the community's wealth and prosperity. Maintaining the relationship with her is the top magical priority of the community. When the goddess is angered or offended, the community is willing to go to great lengths to appease her through additional sacrifices, festivals, dedications, hymns, and dances.

Sometimes the typical means of appeasing the deity is not enough and a community must perform a heroquest to re-enact the deeds by which the deity was first returned from the Underworld. Such is the case here, where after offending the goddess, the heroes must heroquest into the Underworld to bring her back to their community. Such a heroquest to bring Life back from Death constitutes one of the most basic myths in any Gloranthan culture.

## Step 4. Plot

Now that you have both a basic story line and an appropriate Gloranthan theme for the story, you can generate a plot. Getting too involved here is fruitless, since the heroes will naturally have their own unpredictable ways of doing things (see the *Petersen Principle*). For example, if you set up a plot that depends on the heroes making friends with someone, and they decide to kill that person instead, then the whole plot falls apart. Flexibility is the order of the day. Also, your players rightly expect that they are the central actors in the story and permitting them a certain amount of free will is not only fair but necessary.

Sketch out a general set of events, and allow the players to react to them. Don't worry if their reactions are anything like what you expected. Keep the *Petersen Principle* in mind, and let the plot develop like a character.

### Basic Plot Summary

A local Earth Goddess has an ancient relationship with the heroes' community. In the God Time, a mortal persuaded the goddess to leave the Underworld to which she had withdrawn, and return to bless the dying world with her fertility. This relationship is the source of the community's wealth and prosperity, and the community maintains it with regular sacrifices, hymns, and dances.

In response to signs from the gods, the heroes' community holds an impromptu fertility festival to the local Earth Goddess in which the heroes participate as is appropriate. During the festival outsiders attack the community. After the ensuing combat, the goddess withdraws into the Underworld and will not grant her customary blessings to the community.

The withdrawal of the goddess triggers a Crisis Test for the community's resources. Soon the community elders decide that the heroes must perform a heroquest to repeat the God Time deeds that brought the goddess to the community.

The heroes must enter the Underworld and overcome its guardians. Once in the Underworld, they cross it, seeking the House of the Dead. The heroes must somehow enter the House of the Dead; once there, they must persuade her to return to the community. If successful, they return to their community with the goddess.

### Setting

This adventure can be set anywhere in Dragon Pass or the Holy Country. It can easily be set at the Paps in Prax with minor changes: the goddess might be one of the daughters of Eiritha; only women would dance and sacrifice to her; a herd beast and not a cow would be sacrificed; and meat instead of grain would be offered. The theme and basic plot are universal throughout Glorantha; with a little work, the adventure can be adapted to almost any Gloranthan location. The Game Master should tailor the name of the mortal hero (or heroine) and many of the adventure obstacles to fit the location of the campaign.

It is important that at least most of the heroes have a relationship to a local community that the Game Master and players should create together. Ideally they are members of the community, by birth, marriage, or patronage. The community might be a clan, a small city, or tribe; with some work other communities could be adapted to this adventure.

The adventure starts in late Earth Season, shortly after the harvest has finished.

### The Background

The heroes' community is blessed by its relationship with a local Earth Goddess called Hara Orane ("Beloved Orane"). In the Gods War, Hara Orane fled from the violence and destruction of the Lesser Darkness and withdrew into Ty Kora Tek's House of the Dead. During the Greater Darkness, a mortal sought to save its community by traveling through the Underworld to the House of the Dead, overcoming many guardians and denizens of the Underworld in the process. At the House of the Dead, the mortal persuaded Hara Orane to return to the Middle World, ensuring the survival of the mortal's community.

Everyone in the heroes' community knows this myth, and the players should be told it as part of the description of Festival.

### The Festival

The adventure begins with the priests and holy people of the community holding a festival after the harvest to Hara Orane at the local Earth Temple. The entire community gathers before the temple to sacrifice a white cow to Hara Orane and offer her grain, wine, and other gifts. The worshipers (including the players) sing hymns and perform dances honoring the goddess, seeking to persuade her to emerge from within the temple to bless her worshipers.

The Game Master should ask the players what role they have in the ceremony. Are they singing hymns of praise, performing dances, or offering the goddess gifts? Or perhaps some heroes are guarding the ceremony? Are any of the heroes a priest or initiate who go into the inner sanctum of the temple, where the goddess lives?

After much singing and dancing, the priests and initiates emerge from the inner sanctum carrying the cult image of the goddess – a small, painted statue of a woman with a long skirt and bare breasts. The goddess resides within the image and those initiated into her cult can see her divine power of Earth and Fertility. The worshipers sing in triumph and joy!

### The Attack

But before the goddess can bless the community, the worshipers hear horns and shouts of alarm. The ceremony is under attack! The priestesses cry out: "Defend the goddess!"

Let the heroes determine how they intend to defend the goddess. This can be handled as a Group Simple Contest, or even as a Group Extended Contest if the players appear to find the attack suitably dramatic and significant (in which case, the consequences should be determined as a Rising Action). The difficulty level should be set by the Game Master as explained in the *Game Mechanics* Chapter: with a Moderate Difficulty the heroes are likely to successfully defend the goddess; with a High Difficulty they run a significant chance of failure; and with Very High Difficulty they are more likely than not to fail.

## Who are the attackers?

*The identity of the attackers are chosen by the Game Master based on what she thinks will work best for her campaign. If any of the heroes have specific rivals or adversaries, use them. Otherwise, some options to consider include:*

### Nonhumans

Nonhumans often attack human communities throughout Dragon Pass, the Holy Country, and Prax. Examples include:

**Dark Trolls:** A band of dark trolls and trollkin might seek to feed themselves on the goddess' bounty. The trolls attack with a swarm of screaming trollkin and then heavily armed dark trolls charge in. They seek the food and gifts offered to the goddess; if particularly successful they might try to take the goddess herself.

**Broos:** A band of Chaos horrors assault the ceremony, attracted by the goddess' fertility. They seek to murder, rape, and eat the worshipers, and to desecrate the Earth temple through abominable rites.

**Undead:** Walking corpses assault the ceremony, attracted by the goddess' power of Life. They seek to kill the living, bringing a few survivors back to their master (who might be an evil sorcerer, a vampire, or even hate-filled dark trolls).

### Humans

The attackers could be just as easily humans from a different community.

**Esrolians:** Esrolia is divided into hostile warring factions (a pro-Lunar faction, a faction centered on Ezel, and a faction centered on Rhigos). If the campaign is set in Esrolia, soldiers of an enemy faction could attack during the ceremony seeking to take the goddess for their own.

**Grazelanders:** The Pure Horse People often raid this region. This attack consists of a band of horse archers led by a heavily armed noble horseman and his companions. They seek plunder and to steal the goddess.

**Lunars:** The Lunar Empire has conquered Dragon Pass, Prax, and much of the Holy Country. Lunar soldiers (either infantry or cavalry) could attack the ceremony for plunder, for magical reasons, or to collect tribute.

**Praxians:** The Praxians are notorious raiders in Dragon Pass, the Holy Country, and of each other. A band of warriors belonging to a Praxian tribe could attack the ceremony for plunder or to steal the goddess.

**Sartarites:** The Sartarites are war-like people who raid throughout Dragon Pass, the Holy Country, and Prax – and even raid other Sartarites. Sartarite bandits are a plague throughout the region. Sartarite raiders could be seeking plunder or could be trying to steal the goddess.

**Tarshites:** The Tarshites are war-like people who raid throughout Dragon Pass, the Holy Country, and Prax – and occasionally other Tarshites. Tarshite mercenaries are common throughout the areas ruled by the Lunar Empire. Tarshite raiders could be seeking plunder or could be trying to steal the goddess.

**Western Barbarians:** The tribes west of Esrolia often raid into the Holy Country. They could be seeking plunder or to steal the goddess.

If the heroes as a group successfully defend the goddess, the Game Master can decide that they should get a benefit of victory on the ability used or in a specified situation, as determined by their individual victory level. The attackers withdraw, perhaps taking some plunder. On a Major or Complete Group Victory, the heroes inflict substantial casualties on the attackers and take several attackers captive.

If the heroes as a group fail to successfully defend the goddess, they will suffer Consequences of Defeat as determined by their individual level of defeat. More the community will suffer a Consequence of Defeat based on their group level of defeat. On a Major or Complete defeat, the attackers steal or destroy the cult image of the goddess – a terrible blow to the community!

## The Goddess Departs

Regardless of whether the heroes fail or succeed in defending the cult image, the priestesses and initiates of the Earth temple cry out in lamentation and horror! The goddess no longer resides in the cult image and the statue is now dead and lifeless. If the attackers stole the goddess, her departure is not discovered until the cult image is returned to the community.

This departure of the goddess is a terrible disaster for the community, and imposes a substantial penalty to the community's Magic, Morale, and Wealth resources:

- -3 if the goddess was successfully defended by the heroes;
- -6 if the heroes failed to defend the goddess; or
- -9 if the attackers stole the goddess

The Game Master should trigger a Crisis Test of the community's Magic, Morale, and Wealth resource representing the next season or so as the community starts to visibly suffer. The Game Master should invent specific reasons for each test:

*Magic*: Without the presence of Hara Orane, the magic of the clan is significantly weaker. Evil spirits, ghosts, and demons plague the community.

*Morale*: Without the presence of Hara Orane, divisions grow within the community. Community leaders squabble and fight, and the community finds it increasingly difficult to unite even when necessary.

*Wealth*: Without the presence of Hara Orane, the grain does not store, livestock do not give birth, and fruits will not ripen. The community experiences hunger and privation.

After the Crisis Test is resolved, the heroes may try to take actions to bolster the affected resources (see page 125). These can be anything from Simple Contests by the heroes to full-fledged adventures in their own right. The Game Master should make it clear to the players that these bolstering actions are temporary stopgap measures. Eventually, the community must find a way to replace or return the goddess.

Once the Game Master feels that the players are desperate (or at least desirous) that the goddess return, she should announce that the community leaders have reached a consensus: the heroes must undertake a heroquest into the Underworld to repeat the myth where Hara Orane was persuaded to return to the Middle World.

Alternatively, heroes may decide to replace the goddess with a new patron deity, perhaps even one of the Lunar New Gods. To do so may require a heroquest like that to return the goddess (but involving a different deity, different myth, and maybe a trip to the Sky or the Middle Air, etc, instead of the Underworld) or may require inviting representatives of the new deity to the community. However, the specifics are beyond the scope of this sample *HeroQuest Glorantha* scenario.

## Beginning the Heroquest

At the start of Sacred Time, the community gathers before the Earth Temple. The priestesses and other holy people ceremonially bathe, dress, and arm the heroes. The priestesses present the heroes with the

**CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT**

| Defeat Level | Consequence of Defeat | Penalty |
|---|---|---|
| **Marginal** | Hurt | –3 penalty to appropriate abilities |
| **Minor** | Impaired | –6 penalty to appropriate abilities |
| **Major** | Injured | Automatic bump down on uses of appropriate ability |
| **Complete** | Dying | No actions allowed |

sacred cult image of Hara Orane, which houses the community's Magic Resource during the Heroquest. The heroes must carry the cult image with them in to the Underworld and present it to the goddess in the House of the Dead.

The members of the community sing about the deeds of the mortal Hero who persuaded Hara Orane to return to the Middle World. This is a good time for the Game Master to remind the players of the myth.

The priestesses tell the heroes that according to myth they must offer some part of themselves to the goddess, such as the strength of their Runes, their loyalty, their love of their family, and so forth. The heroes can choose to make this a Heroquest Challenge and actually wager that portion of their very self. Before the quest starts a hero seeking to invoke a HeroQuest Challenge must declare the ability they will stake, and the priestesses prepare the invocation ahead of time.

The community has gained the aid of several priests of Humakt for the ceremony. The priests sacrifice black bulls, black rams, and a black rooster by hacking the beasts to death with their swords. The women of the community mourn and sing lamentations about the coming of Death as the priests beat their swords together.

### Entering the Underworld

The Earth priestesses tell the heroes to enter the Earth Temple and go to the inner sanctum, even if they are not initiates of the Earth Goddess. The walls of the corridor are covered in brightly colored frescoes of gods and goddesses, heroes and demons and other figures, and the corridor seems to go endlessly down into the darkness. After a seeming eternity, the heroes reach the antechamber to the inner sanctum. Within the chamber is a single figure armed with a sword and already in a combat-ready stance: a manifestation of the Death God Humakt.

## Optional Subplot: Stealing Back the Goddess

If the attackers steal the cult image of the goddess, the community will ask the heroes to follow the thieves back to their lair and take the cult image back. Given the wide range of potential attackers, the specific details of their lair, its location, and its defenders are beyond the scope of this sample adventure.

The rescue effort can easily be an adventure (or series of adventures) in its own right, or be handled as an Extended Group Contest (and with the consequences determined as a Rising Action). Fighting inside an Earth temple runs the risk of offending even more powerful Earth goddesses. Even sneaking inside the sanctum of another goddess could anger that goddess and trigger her divine wrath. Here are a few potential staging ideas:

### Nonhuman Attackers

**Dark Trolls:** Dark trolls take the cult image back to their underground lair and offer it to the Darkness. Rescuers will need to sneak or fight their way into the lair, or find something to exchange with the trolls (tribute, large quantities of foodstuff, or even human sacrifices) for the cult image.

**Broos:** Broo attackers take the goddess to some evil place to defile with foul and obscene rituals. The cult image must be rescued before the ritual reaches its climax.

**Undead:** Undead attackers take the cult image back to their master who likely intends to perform some evil ceremony involving the cult image.

### Human Attackers

**Esrolians:** Esrolian soldiers take the cult image back to their own local Earth Temple. Rescuers need to sneak or fight their way in, or to persuade priestesses loyal to their enemy to return the cult image.

**Grazelanders:** Grazelanders take the cult image back to their own local Earth Temple. Rescuers need to sneak or fight their way in, or to persuade the Grazelander priestesses to return the cult image.

**Lunars:** Lunars take the cult image back to their regimental headquarters to become a trophy, or perhaps to be given to the Lunar College of Magic.

**Praxians:** Praxians take the cult image to either ransom back or to bring to the Paps. Rescuers need to ransom the image, sneak or fight their way into the Paps, or to persuade the Paps priestesses to return the cult image.

**Sartarites:** Sartarites take the cult image back to their own local Earth Temple. Rescuers need to sneak or fight their way in (which runs the risk of offending even more powerful Earth Goddesses), or to persuade the local priestesses to return the cult image.

**Tarshites:** Tarshites take the cult image back to their own local Earth Temple. Rescuers need to sneak or fight their way in (which runs the risk of offending even more powerful Earth Goddesses), or to persuade the local priestesses to return the cult image.

**Western Barbarians:** Western Barbarians take the cult image back to their own local Earth Temple. Rescuers need to sneak or fight their way in (which runs the risk of offending even more powerful Earth Goddesses), or to persuade the local priestesses to return the cult image.

The grim figure informs the heroes: "To cross my path requires Death."

The particular Death is not important. It can be one of the heroes at the hands of Humakt, or the Humakti guardian. Whatever the case, only one person can engage in combat with the guardian. One of the two combatants must die.

If the Humakti guardian is killed, he salutes the heroes and tells them that they can pass on into the Underworld.

If the hero is killed, the guardian permits the heroes (including the defeated hero) to pass on into the Underworld. The dead hero can continue with the quest, but now belongs to the Underworld and cannot easily return to the world of the living.

## Crossing the Underworld

The Underworld is a confusing, irrational place, mysterious and fearful. Places move around, and change shape and size. Certain places are always present, but their relative location may change wildly. No Sun, stars, or planets light up the sky. Indeed, there is no sky above, only a vast empty blackness. The air is either stagnant and poisonous, or howling and malevolent. The landscape is broken and treacherous, following no geographical rules. Jagged mountains like obsidian flints laid on edge coexist with dismal swamps, deserts of black dust, and bottomless chasms.

The heroes must cross the Underworld to the House of the Dead. Finding their path through the Underworld is best handled as a Group Simple Contest with each hero's dice roll representing a new obstacle or encounter. Each round should be assigned to a different hero to choose an ability to use based on the obstacle or encounter described.

Examples of the obstacles for a particular round include:

**The Dark Eater**: A nightmarish black nothingness wanders towards the heroes. It is a senseless emptiness, dullness past emptiness, endless, bottomless, and all consuming with hunger. It seeks to devour the hero.

**Nightwood**: The path enters the edge of an immense dead forest, filled with spider webs and the ghosts of hate-filled Aldryrami. It is shadowy and gloomy, and patches of fog drift about, odd lights appear and disappear.

**Heroquest Surprise**: The heroes see a bright golden light wandering about, dispelling the Darkness around it. On closer inspection, it is a large golden disk that spins and sings merrily in the Darkness. If the heroes can find a way to communicate with it, it can guide them on their path. If this round results in the end of the extending contest, then the golden wheel guides them to the Hall of the Dead.

**The Army of Darkness**: The sound of ten thousand drums of all sorts alert the heroes to a huge host of trolls and demons assembled in a deep valley beneath them. The heroes must someone find a way around the Army of Darkness.

**Six-Legged Goat**: A hideous mass of boiling and festering Chaos forms out of nearby shadows. Its misty form coalesces at times, forming body parts, tentacles, mouths, and six short legs ending in cloven hooves.

**Summons of the Maggot Liege**: In a deep pit, the heroes see the dead Sun God – the Maggot Liege and Emperor of Hell – atop his high throne. The heroes are drawn to the Maggot Liege, as the Dead Emperor summons all beings of the Underworld to his throne and surrender to his authority. The heroes must find a way to rebel against the summons of the Maggot Liege.

At least one round (probably the second or third round) should be the Heroquest Surprise.

## The House of the Dead

At last the heroes make their way to the entrance to the House of the Dead. It is a great stone tomb, with Gloranthan runes carved on the entry amidst depictions of mortals entering the House of the Dead.

### If You Die in the Underworld

It is entirely possible that one or more heroes will get lost or die during their quest through the Underworld. If this happens, the hero will become one of the Dead, doomed to inhabit the Underworld until their scattered pieces can be brought back to the Court of the Dead for judgment. The hero will be restored during the Sacred Time ceremonies but will bear magical scars from the time in the Underworld as determined by the Game Master.

If all the heroes are lost in the Underworld, the quest is a failure.

### Oathbreakers, Kinslayers, Violators of Women, and Those who Desecrate the Earth

Babeester Gor does not permit oathbreakers, kinslayers, violators of women, and those who desecrate the Earth to pass into the House of the Dead. Those who try must get past the axe of the Avenging Daughter – a Nearly Impossible obstacle. Those who fail are killed in the Underworld.

A ferocious war goddess – Babeester Gor - bars the entrance. Her eyes are red with intoxication and in absolute rage, her hair is disheveled, and her blood-red tongue lolls drunkenly. Her skin is black, but her hands and feet are red with blood. Around her neck and waist she wears garlands of grisly trophies - scalps, hands, and severed genitals. She carries a terrible double-headed axe decorated with even more grisly trophies. The grim goddess says:

*"I am the Avenging Daughter of Earth and the sacred guardian of my Mother.*

*I was born from my Mother's corpse, axes in hand, my body already scarred to carry deadly magic.*

*I destroy all kin-slayers, all oath-breakers who swore by my mother, violators of women, and everything that desecrates the sacred places of the Earth.*

*Who are you then?"*

Babeester Gor waits for the heroes to name themselves. She responds:

*"If you are [heroes' names], why have you come to my Grandmother's House of No Return?*

*By my mother's name why should I let you pass?"*

Let the players determine how they intend to pass Babeester Gor. If the heroes try to fight Babeester Gor, the difficulty should always be Nearly Impossible. Otherwise the difficulty should be as determined by the Game Master. This can be a Group Simple or Extended contest, depending on the players' interest (if it is an Extended Contest, it is a Rising Action).

If the heroes show Babeester Gor that they carry the cult image of Hara Orane, they should get a +Ш plot augment to get past her. Those who are initiates of Ernalda, Babeester Gor, or other Earth cults can always enter the House of the Dead (unless they are an oathbreaker, kinslayer, violator of women, or have desecrated the Earth).

If the heroes fail in their effort to get past Babeester Gor, the Avenging Daughter demands that the heroes must offer her a sacrifice: a male hero must give her his organ of masculinity to join her collection of grisly trophies.

Once past Babeester Gor, the heroes can enter the House of the Dead. Within it a vast silent cavern, where those dead who have been honored with the funerary rites of the living joyously banquet upon food and drink or dance with abandon and pleasure. However, those dead who have been forgotten by their descendents gibber silently and watch the heroes with blank eyes.

At the Game Master's discretion, the heroes may meet and speak with dead family members, ancestors, friends, or famous people. Examples include:

- A gibbering shade demands to be recognized by one of the heroes. It is a dead family member or beloved friend who has not been given proper funerary rites and tells the hero that it now suffers in gloom and darkness.
- Honored ancestors speak to the heroes and as appropriate either: (1) warn them of some threat to the community (determined by the Game Master with an eye to future adventures); (2) criticize some violation of tradition made by the hero; or (3) praise the hero for adhering to tradition and for honoring their ancestors.
- A gibbering shade says that it was dead ruler or great warleader in life, before getting killed by powerful enemies of the heroes' community (in many campaigns this would be the Lunar Empire). The shade informs the hero where its body lies and asks them to find it and give it proper funerary rites, hinting of the treasures it carried in life.

In the center of the cavern are two high thrones. Seated atop one throne is a gaunt old woman, wrapped up in a funerary shroud. Her hair is of serpents and her face is that of a grinning skull.

## Game Master Tip

The extended contest for Crossing the Underworld is simple to run. The Game Master should choose a starting obstacle and ask which hero is going to try to overcome it in a simple contest. After that, the Game Master chooses a new obstacle and asks for a different hero to overcome it. Each simple contest scores Resolution Points for the extended contest based on the level of success. This is repeated until either the heroes succeed or are lost in the Underworld (see So You Died in the Underworld).

The individual heroes get benefits of victory or consequences of defeat based on their simple contests. The group gets a benefits or consequences based on the result of the extended contest. As this is a rising action, the heroes may suffer consequences of the extended contest even if the group is successful.

## The Importance of Funerary Rites

The House of the Dead is an opportunity for the Game Master to explain to the players the importance of their heroes receiving proper funerary rites. Those dead who receive funerary rites from their descendants may feast, drink, and dance in the afterlife. Those who have been forgotten by their descendents gibber in gloom and dust.

Any Earth cultist recognizes her as Ty Kora Tek, the Queen of the Dead.

On the other is an ugly hag bedecked in endless necklaces and rings, and cloaked in robes studded with precious metals. Shining jewels, sparkling flints, living stones, and numberless coins blanket the ground at her feat. Any Earth cultist recognizes her as Asrelia, the Grandmother of Wealth.

Standing below them is Hara Orane. The Earth Goddess is beautiful and filled with Life. She is nude, garbed only with a dazzling necklace of gems and gold, golden earrings, and an ornate headdress. Her eyes are shadowed with kohl and she carries sheaves of barley in each arm.

### Courting the Goddess

When the heroes approach Hara Orane, the Earth Goddess sadly asks:

*"Death stalks the Middle World;*
*I am Life and new Birth.*
*What place do I have*
*where violence and destruction rule?"*

The heroes must offer the goddess some part of themselves to persuade her to return with them to the Middle World. Courting the goddess is the climax of this adventure and should be handled as a group extended contest.

Those heroes who invoked a Heroquest Challenge at the beginning of the quest must pay 1 Hero Point and name the ability that he declared before the quest. The hero risks a portion of his very being in the challenge by wagering his entire rating in that ability, which can be anything on his character sheet with its own rating.

The abilities offered and the results of the contest define the community's new mythological relationship with the Earth Goddess. The Game Master should determine the levels of success for both the group and for the individual heroes. The group success determines the benefit of victory (or consequence of defeat) to be applied to the community's Magic resource and to each hero's relationship with the community. The individual successes (or failures) are applied to the individual heroes.

### The Return

If the heroes are successful, Hara Orane agrees to return to Middle World with the heroes. Hara Orane tells her Grandmothers:

*"Do not let your daughter die in hell,*
*Do not let Life and Earth die in hell!"*

Ty Kora Tek fastens her eye sockets on the heroes, the Eyes of Death. But before the Queen of the Dead can speak a sentence, Grandmother Asrelia hastens to speak:

*"Return my daughter, you may return,*
*I grant leave to my daughter to return.*
*Return to those who respect*
*and worship her."*

Ty Kora Tek says nothing, and Babeester Gor does not prevent Hara Orane (and the heroes) from leaving the House of the Dead.

Once the heroes leave the House of the Dead, they find themselves back in the inner sanctum of the Earth Temple. The cult image of Hara Orane is now filled with the divine presence of the goddess, now visible to all the heroes. No more than a week has

## Boon of the Goddess

A hero who has been victorious with their Heroquest Quest challenge gains a permanent boon from Hara Orane. This boon becomes a personal ability at the same rating as the ability wagered in the Heroquest Challenge and is associated with the Earth or Life Rune.

*The specific boon is up to the Game Master but it should be some extension of Hara Orane's powers of Earth and Life, for example a boon might include such powers as:*

- To compel males to fight to defend her (⧗);
- To demand the aid of Earth priestesses (□);
- To bless crops, animals, or childbirth (⧗);
- The strength and endurance of Earth (□)

The boon likely takes the form of a piece of jewelry or kohl from the goddess, or in some other form as the Game Master determines is appropriate.

## Failure

It is entirely possible the heroes failed in their heroquest. The consequences to the community are dire as they suffer the consequences of defeat with a penalty to their Magic Resource determined by the level of defeat.

The Game Master should continue to impose Crisis Tests on the community, possibly destroying the community or resulting in its conquest by a nearby rival. Or the heroes may seek to find a new patron deity for the community giving the community a new basis for its Magic Resource.

passed and the heroes appear with the goddess during the climax of the Sacred Time rituals.

A community feast honors the heroes (whose relationships with the community now receives a bonus determined by the benefit of victory in the climactic contest).

The heroes have been changed as a result of their quest through the Underworld. They carry magical markings and scars from their conflict and may have some changes in their personality as well; these are the tangible manifestations of the benefits and consequences they may have gained as a result of their experiences in the Underworld. The heroes are a source of wonder and fear among friends and enemies alike; they have been to the Underworld and returned. The Game Master may want to give directed improvements to reflect these changes.

The heroes may have made magical allies and enemies during their quest in the Underworld. The Game Master should explore the ramifications of their actions in future adventures.

## Extending the Campaign

This adventure can easily be the first part of a greater campaign arc. Potential further adventures include:

- The enemy who raided the Earth Temple strikes back, this time with new allies.
- The heroes' actions in the Underworld have consequences in the mortal world. Did they fight their way through Nightwood, offending the living Aldryami? Did they fight the Dark Eater, offending the trolls? Did they rebel against the Maggot Liege, marking them as rebels to worshipers of Yelm and the Red Emperor?
- A powerful local ruler (perhaps the ruler of a great city, kingdom, or even the local Lunar governor) summons the heroes. The ruler offers gifts to the heroes, but demands a service from them.
- The Hero Wars comes to the heroes' land, and local leaders ask that the heroes take a leadership role in defending the community. More dangerous, one of the demigod Heroes of the Hero Wars demands that the heroes aid them against their foes. Even more dangerous, two rival demigods make the same demand!

# Appendixes

## A: Calendar

Uniform dating in Glorantha often is chancy, for many dates are based on local circumstance, such as "the sixteenth year of the Reign of King Sartar," etc. A universal calendar is found in many places, however, and this is used for general dating throughout the records.

One convention is the order used to set down a date. In general, chroniclers list the day of the week first, then the week of the month, then the month or season, then the year. Two ways are commonly used to record the actual dates. One is by inscribing the Runes appropriate to the day, while the other is to note the date numerically. In the latter system, numerals are used to denote season. Thus 2/2/2/1614 is the same as ☉/Ⅲ/♒/1614 that is the same as Fire Day, Harmony Week, Sea Season 1614.

The most common dating system begins with the Dawn, when the Sun rose into the sky and inaugurated the age of history. First used by the Theyalans of Dragon Pass, this system is called Solar Time (ST) and is the most common time-measurement system used in the world. There are many variant calendars, although only one – Lunar Time – is relevant in Dragon Pass, the Holy Country, and Prax. The current year is 1621 ST.

### Day

One day on Glorantha is the time needed for the Sun to traverse the sky from east to west. One night is the time needed for the Sun to traverse the Underworld from west to east again.

### Week

One week is made of seven days, named for the five elements, one Godsday, and one 'Wild' day. Elemental influences vary in intensity by the day of the week. Windsday will have more airy energies available than usual, for instance.

Wildday is an unformed piece of time, often propitious to various Chaos magics. The influences vary widely, however, and depend on location, history, pre-arranged conditions, and more factors. The most powerful local deity may be worshipped on this day.

Godsday may see the most worship and meditation. The most important holy ceremonies may occur on this day. The deities will be more influenced to receive worship on Godsday.

### Season

A season is made up of eight weeks, named after the eight Powers: Disorder, Harmony, Death, Fertility, Stasis, Movement, Illusion, and Truth.

Sea Season compares to our spring. This season follows the rebirth of the Sacred Time, and during it the young gods of the new age are free to exert their influences on the world.

Fire Season is like our summer. This is a time of warming and ripening, when the plans and schemes of men mature and bear fruit, as do herds and fields. Energies are ripe for activities, intellectual pursuits, and outward expansions.

| Day of the Week | Phase of the Moon | Week of the Season | Season of the Year |
|---|---|---|---|
| ● Freezeday | 6 | Ⅸ Disorder | ♒ Sea Season |
| ♒ Waterday | 1 | Ⅲ Harmony | ☉ Fire Season |
| □ Clayday | 7 | ✝ Death | □ Earth Season |
| ☋ Windsday | 2 | ⧖ Fertility | ● Dark Season |
| ☉ Fireday | 3 | ⌓ Stasis | ☋ Storm Season |
| ⊼ Wildday | 4 | ☭ Movement | Sacred Time |
| ✳ Godsday | 5 | ∴ Illusion | |
| | | ϒ Truth | |

Earth Season compares with our fall, with harvest and food gathering against the hard weather to come. The forces of life draw to themselves, leaving the fields and pastures to the soon appearing cold and darkness, but this also is the time of the greatest plenty, and a period of festivity and joy.

Dark Season is like our winter, and there is great hardship and gloom across the world. Weaker beings should hide now, hoarding their food and spouting cheerful stories before their crackling fires. Only the boldest go forth.

Storm Season is the time of greatest violence and danger. The Air Gods rule this season, and their energies always are of a violent and unpredictable nature. This time is like the War of the Gods; this bloody season can undo the effort of a whole year, and troubles begun here often inadvertently allow Chaos forces to slip into the world.

Sacred Time equals two weeks in length, but officially is listed as 14 days instead. Normal activity halts, and the world ritually and really re-enacts the death and rebirth of the cosmos in order to replenish the world, for incorporating the entropy of Chaos into the living world is agreed to in the Great Compromise. To live, one must descend into death and be reborn. The participation of all beings in these annual ceremonies and their commitment to them integrates the participants with an unconscious understanding of the cosmic balance - a major factor in the high level of mana generation and use in Glorantha.

The Theyalan calendar lists the day of the week first, then the week of the season, then the season, then the year. Two ways are commonly used to record the actual dates. One is by inscribing the Runes appropriate to the day, while the other is to note the date numerically. In the latter system, numerals are used to denote season. Thus 4/6/3/1614 is the same as g/s/e/1614, that is, the same as Windsday, Movement Week, Earth Season 1614.

### Solstices and Equinoxes

The Spring Equinox comes in the middle of Sacred Time, on Waterday of the second week of Sacred Time. On this day, Yelm rises in Youth. Day and night is exactly the same length, twelve hours long.

The Summer Solstice is Yelm's High Holy Day: Fireday of Harmony week in Fire Season. This is Midsummer's Day, the longest day of the year: the night only lasts eight hours.

The Autumn Equinox is on Waterday of Stasis week in Earth Season. Day and night is exactly the same length, twelve hours long.

The Winter Solstice is on Fireday of Illusion week in Dark Season. This is Midwinter's Day, the shortest day of the year, when the night is sixteen hours long.

## Why Are Prices Provided?

The players and the Game Master are not encouraged to provide a detailed accounting of the heroes' financial affairs. That being said, many players enjoy directly spending silver on material items. Moreover, it is consistent with the sword and sorcery genre to be motivated by "a fistful of silvers". Prices have been provided in this appendix to facilitate having that level of detail and fun.

When in doubt, always go with the option that results in Maximum Game Fun for the Game Master and the players.

## Buying Items with Wealth

The Game Master may choose to let the heroes buy goods or services with a relevant ability. The price of the item sets the default difficulty level (but subject to change dependent on the pacing or plot needs of the Game Master). For example:

**Very Low:** 1 Lunar or less.
**Low:** 10 Lunars or less
**Moderate:** 20 Lunars or less
**High:** 100 Lunars or less
**Very High:** 500 Lunars or less
**Nearly Impossible:** Over 500 Lunars

These numbers are ballpark figures and can be changed based on the style of the campaign. If the Game Master wants to have the players easily purchase land, animals, and equipment then the difficulty should be reduced. Remember, if an item is to be used as an ability, it needs to be cemented with a Hero Point. If an item is simply to enable the use of another ability, no Hero Point is needed.

# B: Equipment

The following is not an exhaustive list of items that can be bought in Glorantha. They provide color for the sort of equipment and gear heroes in this area of Glorantha might have. Approximate weight has been included for credibility purposes and for color.

Weight for armor is based on a large athletic man; smaller sizes are somewhat lighter.

Price is based on the cost to purchase the item in the frontier city of New Pavis.

## Examples of Weapons and Armor

*HeroQuest Glorantha* models arms and armor like it does everything else: any piece of gear, if sufficiently important to even mention, is treated as an ability to overcome problems. That being said, weapons and armor affect the plausibility of actions. For example, having inappropriate equipment can result in an action being treated as a Stretch.

More importantly, many players enjoy kitting their heroes out with weapons and armor. If it adds to their fun, the Game Master should run with it. If it does not, the Game Master should simply assume the heroes have appropriate weapons and armor for their abilities.

## Common Armor Types

**Bronze Greaves.** These are bronze plates molded to protect the lower leg. They either "spring" into shape or are strapped on. They are heavy and make sprinting difficult. Weight: 7 pounds a pair. Price: 50 Lunars

**Leather Vambraces**. These bracers of boiled leather protect the forearm. They are sometimes reinforced with strips of bronze. Weight: 1 pound a pair. Price: 2 Lunars

**Linothorax Cuirass.** This cuirass is made up of numerous layers of linen or leather glued together to form a stiff shirt. It is often reinforced with metal plates or scales. The linothorax is much lighter and much less expensive than the bronze plate cuirass. Weight: 11 to 22 pounds, depending on the number of plates. Price: 10 to 30 Lunars (depending on the number of plates)

**Leather Lamellar Cuirass.** This cuirass consists of hundreds of boiled leather plates that have been laced together. The plates are often lacquered. It is lighter and much less expensive than a scale hauberk. Weight: 13 pounds. Price: 6 Lunars

**Scale Hauberk.** This hauberk consists of hundreds of bronze plates that have been laced together and then fastened onto a backing. Weight: 40 pounds. Price: 65 Lunars

**Bronze Breastplate.** This consists of disc and square bronze plates on the front and back, connected by side and shoulder pieces. The plates are often highly decorated. Weight: 18 to 22 pounds. Price: 100 Lunars

**Bronze Cuirass.** This consists of front and back plates of bronze joined together by leather straps. They are typically designed to mimic an idealized human physique. They provide superb protection but are quite cumbersome and heavy. Weight: 24 pounds. Price: 250 Lunars

**Conical Helmet.** This simple bronze helmet rises to a point at the top and is often decorated with plumes and feathers. It may or may not have nose protection. Weight: 4 pounds. Price: 2 Lunars

**Open Helmet.** This is the conical helmet with bronze cheek-pieces attached. It is usually decorated with plumes and feathers. Weight: 6 ½ pounds. Price: 10 Lunars

**Full Helmet.** This close-fitting helmet has elongated cheek-pieces to protect the wearer's mouth and throat. A nose guard protects the nose and eyes. It offers excellent all-round protection but suffers by severely limiting vision and hearing, as well as being hot and stuffy to wear for long periods Weight: 9 pounds. Price: 20 Lunars

## Common Weapons Types

**One-handed Axe.** This common hafted weapon has a semi-circular bronze blade and may be one or double headed. Weight: 3 to 4 pounds. Price: 20 Lunars

**Two-handed Axe.** This long-hafted bronze axe may be single or double headed. Weight: 6 ½ to 9 pounds. Price: 30 Lunars

**Broad Sword.** This bronze sword is long (usually between 2½ and 3 feet long), leaf-shaped and flat or lozenge-shaped in cross section. The point is long and sharp enough to be deadly in thrusting, while the curved edge is ideal for slashing. Broad swords are often decorated and are famed as the weapons of Orlanthi Heroes and noblemen. Weight: 4 ½ pounds. Price: 50 Lunars

**Dagger.** These triangular shaped blades are designed for thrusting. They are often decorated. Most adult males in Dragon Pass carry a dagger. Weight: ½ pound. Price: 10 Lunars

**Kontos**. This is a long cavalry lance about 12 to 14 feet long used with both hands. Weight: 12 pounds. Price: 25 Lunars.

**Kopis.** This curved single-edged sword was introduced to the Pelorians by the Pentan horsemen. It may be curved back or forward. It is now the defining weapon of the Lunar Empire. Weight: 4 ½ pounds. Price: 50 Lunars

**Pike**. This long thrusting spear is between 10 and 25 feet long. Weight: 15 pounds. Price: 25 Lunars.

**Praxian Bow.** Despite its name, the Praxian bow has been used by the Orlanthi for centuries. A composite bow made out of wood and horn to give it more rigidity, it retains some flexibility. It requires more strength to use than a self bow. The Praxian bow is ideal for mounted archery. Weight: 2 pounds. Price: 40 Lunars

**Rapier**. This long and slender bladed sword is used for thrusting. They require considerable skill to use. Weight: 2 pounds. Price: 100 Lunars

**Short Sword.** This sword has a leaf-shaped blade like the broad sword, but is somewhat shorter in length. Like the broad sword, the short sword is ideal for both cutting and thrusting. Weight: 3 pounds. Price: 25 Lunars

**Self Bow.** A simple bow made out of one or two pieces of wood. Surprisingly effective for most non-mounted purposes, the self bow is nearly useless for mounted archery. Weight: 1 ½ pounds. Price: 10 Lunars

**Sickle-sword**. Also called a Moonsword, this sword has a curved single-edge blade used for slashing and for disarming an opponent. Popular with elite soldiers in the Lunar Heartlands. Weight: 4 ½ pounds. Price 60 Lunars.

**Sling**. A simple leather thong with a cup to hold a rock. A sling stone can reach incredible velocity in the hands of an expert. There is a minimum range of 15 feet. Weight: negligible. Price: 10 Clacks

**Throwing Spear.** This short spear is between 3 and 6 feet long and balanced for throwing, although it can also be used for stabbing. They are used both in close-combat situations and while hunting. Weight: 2 pounds. Price: 15 Lunars

**Thrusting Spear.** This long spear is between 6 and 10 feet long and usually used with both hands. The spearhead is long and leaf-shaped. Weight: 4 ½ pounds. Price: 20 Lunars

## Type of Beasts

The beasts available in New Pavis are largely Praxian in derivation, although some Sartarite livestock have been imported.

Zebras underwent a renaissance when the Sartarites came. Now, the Lunar puppets in charge of the Rubble-based Zebra tribe use all their skill to increase the herds. More and more people are buying cavalry zebras rather than horses, and the market for war zebras is very high. The empire has brought specialty animal trainers from the heartland to aid the project and their expertise has increased zebra births. All zebras must be bought through representatives of the Pavis Royal Guard.

Horses are despised by the nomads, and so are usually kept apart, around the zebra pens inside the Rubble. There, they are not necessarily immune from nomad attacks, but they are safer. Some horses are kept within the walls of New Pavis, but not many.

### Meat Beasts

Meat animals are untrained beasts normally usable only for food, milk, hauling, and breeding. They are unfit for other purposes until trained.

**Bison**. Price: 20 Lunars
**Herd-man**. Price: 6 Lunars
**High Llama**. Price: 30 Lunars
**Horse**. Price: 40 Lunars
**Impala**. Price: 5 Lunars
**Sable Antelope**. Price: 15 Lunars
**Zebra**. Price: 45 Lunars

### Riding Beasts

Trained animals are suitable for riding (except for herd-men, which are trained in some other simple task), but would never fight in a battle.

**Bison**. Price: 30 Lunars
**Trained Herd-man**. Price: 15 Lunars
**High Llama**. Price: 55 Lunars
**Horse**. Price: 65 Lunars
**Impala**. Price: 10 Lunars
**Sable Antelope**. Price: 25 Lunars
**Zebra**. Price: 70 Lunars

### Cavalry Beasts

Cavalry animals carry their owner into a conflict, but do not fight themselves.

**Horse**. Price: 130 Lunars
**Impala**. Price: 20 Lunars
**Sable Antelope**. Price: 50 Lunars
**Zebra**. Price: 140 Lunars

### War Beasts

War beasts enter a battle and fight for their master, using the appropriate weapons of that species.

**Bison**. Price: 90 Lunars
**Herd-man**. Price: 45 Lunars
**High Llama.** Price: 165 Lunars
**Horse**. Price: 195 Lunars
**Rhino**. Price: 1000 Lunars + (extremely rare)
**Sable Antelope**. Price: 75 Lunars
**Zebra**. Price: 210 Lunars

### Other Animals

Several other animals (mostly of Sartarite origin) are available for purchase. Sheep are available, although they tend to die from hoof rot and wool canker. Native beasts have largely replaced the role of sheep, especially sables for meat and impalas for hair.

One common animal that is not available for purchase are shadowcats (alynxes). Shadowcats are not owned (and thus not available for sale) but permitted by custom and tradition to freely choose their companions and hunting areas.

**Mule**. Price: 35 Lunars
**Cow**. Price: 20 Lunars
**Bull**. Price: 30 Lunars
**Prax Hound**. Price: 2 Lunars
**Chicken**. Price: 1 Clack
**Goose**. Price: 3 Clacks
**Pig (yearling).** Price: 2 Lunars
**House Cat.** Price: 1 Lunar
**Domestic Duck.** Price: 1 Clack
**Sheep.** Price: 3 Lunars
**Wild Hawk**. Price: 35 Lunars

## Conveyances

**Two-wheeled cart.** An open, wooden vehicle drawn by a single beast of burden. Price: 4 Lunars

**Four-wheeled wagon.** An open, wooden vehicle for transporting heavy loads. It requires two beasts of burden to draw it. Price: 10 Lunars

**Palanquin**. A wheelless vehicle consisting of a chair with a canopy to keep out the sun and dust. Two to four bearers, often trained herd-men, carry it. Price: 5 to 20 Lunars

**3-man Boat.** A Riverfolk boat made out of reeds. Price: 5 Lunars

**10-man Boat.** A reed or even wooden flatboat. Price: 20 Lunars

**Duck Patrol Boat.** Swift and well armed. Price: 50 Lunars

## Tools

Tools can usually be bought from general stores or directly from craftsman. Many tools are home-made and can be bought from other residents of New Pavis.

**Hammer.** For knocking in nails and spikes or breaking up objects. Often made of stone and wood. Price: 4 Clacks
**Fish Hooks.** Made of bone, stone, or (rarely) bronze. Price: 1 Bolg
**Woodworking Tools.** A collection of tools including adze, axe, chisels, pull saw, and bow drill. Most of the heads are made of bronze. Price: 20 Lunars
**Writing Tools.** Goose feather quills, sharpening knife, and ink made out of burnt bones, tar, soot, and pitch. Price: 4 Clacks
**Shovel.** Made of wood, stone, or bronze. Price: 1 to 5 Lunars
**50 feet of Rope.** Made from hemp or other plant fibers. More rarely made out of corded leather. Price: 2 Clacks
**Mallet.** Made of wood or rawhide. Price: 6 Clacks
**Parchment (sheet).** Made from the carefully treated hide of various meat animals. Price: 1 Clack
**Stonemason Tools.** Mallet, bronze chisels, hammer, and trowel, straightedge, and chalk line. Price: 25 Lunars
**Hasp Locks.** A bronze clasp fastened by a bronze lock. Price: 1 to 25 Lunars
**Pick.** Sturdy bronze head with a spike and counterweight for prying. Price: 10 Lunars
**Stone Knife.** Price: 1 Clack

### Expedition Gear

**Bronze Pot or Pan.** Price: 1 Lunar
**Lamp.** This is a clay or bronze lamp used to burn olive oil or clarified butter. Often highly decorated. The amount of area illuminated by a lamp depends on its size and construction. Price: 1 to 2 Lunars
**Candle.** Price: 1 Clack
**Blanket (hide).** Price: 2 Clacks
**One-man Tent.** Price: 2 Lunars
**Three-man Tent.** Price: 8 Lunars
**Five-man Tent.** Price: 10 Lunars
**Climber's Pack.** Rope, bronze grappling hook. Price: 2 Lunars
**Lamp Oil.** Made of olive oil or clarified butter. Price: 1 Clack (per load)
**Small Leather Sack.** Price: 1 Clack
**Large Leather Sack.** Price: 2 Clacks
**Cooking Gear.** Price: 2 Lunars
**Firestarter.** A bow drill and fire board. Price: 2 Clacks
**Back Pack.** Price: 1 Lunar
**Wicker Torches.** Price: 1 Clack

## Exotic Goods

Exotic goods are available from the merchants of New Pavis, most imported from Dragon Pass or the Holy Country.

**Dyes (per batch).** Derived from plants, insects, or minerals, these are most commonly red, brown, orange, blue, yellow, and green. Black, crimson, scarlet, and purple are significantly pricier. Price: 1 to 10 Lunars
**Mordents (per batch).** These are used to "fix" color caused by dyes, Price: 1 to 10 Lunars
**Good Salt (1 ounce).** Price: 1 Lunar
**Sweetgrass Spice.** Price: 2 Clacks per bunch
**Praxian Spiceroot.** Price: 4 Clacks

## Musical Instruments

**Bagpipes.** An instrument consisting of a blowpipe, an animal skin or stomach bag, drones, and a changer. Price: 10 Lunars
**Bugle.** A circular bronze blowing horn without finger holes. Price: 3 Lunars
**Kithara.** A stringed instrument with a deep wooden sound box. Price: 50 Lunars
**Lur Horn.** A long, bronze blowing horn without finger holes that sounds rather like a trombone. A lur horn can be straight or curved. Price: 10 Lunars
**Lyre.** A wooden stringed instrument with a sound chest and two raised arms connected by a crossbar. Price: 10 to 25 Lunars
**Nose Flute.** Carved wooden flute played with nose instead of the mouth. Price: 1 Clack
**Reed Pipes.** A double-reeded woodwind instrument. Price: 2 Clacks
**Skin Drums.** A wood or bronze drum with a stretched animal skin head. Price: 1 Lunar

## Clothing (suit of clothes)

The most common clothing in New Pavis is Sartarite with Praxian touches. Many men forego the tunic during the day heat. Sleeved robes are worn by many officials, priests, and other wealthy individuals.

Linings, exotic furs, and fancy stitching or brightly dyed cloth indicate wealthier clothing. The price varies depending on the material:

**Local Linen.** Price: 2 Lunars
**Imported Linen.** Price: 7 Lunars
**Wool (Llama).** Price: 3 Lunars
**Imported Wool.** Price: 12 Lunars
**Tanned Hide.** Price: 15 Clacks
**Leather Garments.** Price: 2 Lunars
**Cotton.** Price: 2 Lunars

## Winter Cloaks

Winter cloaks are common protection against wind and night chills. Most are made of animal hide. The cloak is normally pined over the shoulder with a fibula.

**Antelope.** Price: 2 Lunars
**Bison.** Price: 3 Lunars
**Falangian Ermine.** Price 100 Lunars
**High Llama.** Price: 5 Lunars
**Impala.** Price: 2 Lunars
**Woven Hair.** Price: 10 Lunars
**Zebra.** Price: 6 Lunars

## Other Clothes and Fashion

**Broad Hat**. The study broad-rimmed felt or leather hat of the Sartarite farmers. Price: 10 Clacks
**Esrolian Bodice**. This is a tight bodice, which is sewn to fit the torso. Priestesses and noble women traditionally wear it open

to below their navel to reveal their breasts. Price 15 to 35 Lunars, depending on decoration and style.

**Esrolian Dress.** The flounced and pleated bell-shaped skirt worn by noble women and priestesses. Price 15 to 35 Lunars depending on decoration and style.

**Girdle**. Narrow belt worn around the waist. Often decorated with tassels or an apron. Price: 1 Lunar

**Henna.** Henna is used to decorate the body for ceremonies or important events; it fades through exfoliation in about twenty to thirty days. Price: 5 Clacks per application

**Kohl.** Kohl is a black powder used by men and women to rim the eyes, paint eyebrows, and darken eyelashes. Price: 5 Clacks per small container

**Sandals**. Heavy-soled leather sandals with a long lace wound up the wearer's leg. Price: 5 Clacks

**Sword Belt**. A leather belt worn over the shoulder and then fasten around the waist. Often decorated with bronze plates. Price: 1 Lunar

**Tall Headdress**. Tall embroidered headdresses popular with wealthy Sartarite women. Often elaborately decorated with gold, silver, and gems. Price: 10 to 100 Lunars or more

**Veil**. Yelmalion women cover their head and face with a linen veil. Price: 2 Clacks to 5 Lunars

## Riding Gear

Saddles tend to be of the Praxian style, each beast having its own distinctive saddle type.

**Saddle.** Price: 1 to 15 Lunars

**Tack.** Price: 1 to 5 Lunars

## Land Values

Farm land is measured in very practical terms by the Orlanthi – areas are measured in terms of how long it takes to work with a plow team of four to eight oxen. The plowman (usually the carl or senior farmer) and the ox-driver (usually his wife or son) guides the plow. Many lands also include small fruit orchards and vineyards.

An **acre** is the amount of land tillable by one ox-team in one day.

A **hide** is an amount of land that one ox-team can plow in a year and is considered sufficient to support an Orlanthi *carl* and his household (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 33). It is between 80 and 120 acres and there approximately 5 hides to the square mile. It is usually Very Difficult to acquire a hide of land; the Lunars value a hide at 25 Wheels for census purposes.

**Five hides** is the amount of land considered sufficient to support an Orlanthi *thane* and his household. This much land typically requires four or five tenant families to work; the tenants are *cottar* clients of the thane. Five hides are approximately a square mile of land. It is usually Nearly Impossible to acquire this much land; the Lunars value five hides at 125 Wheels for census purposes.

# C: Languages in the Dragon Pass Region

Many languages are spoken in the Dragon Pass region, although Theyalan languages are the most important (at least among Men).

## Theyalan Languages

Sometimes called "Therelmic" (after the goddess Therelma, the Mother of Language) or "Mannish," Theyalan is a family of closely related languages spoken by the people of Kerofinela and Kethaela at the Dawn. Theyalan languages can be found throughout southern Peloria, Ralios, Maniria, Fronela, and even in Umathela. All Theyalan languages are written using the Three Sacred Scripts of Lhankor Mhy.

In the Dragon Pass region, the vast majority of humans speak the following Theyalan languages:

## Southern Theyalan

Also called "Heortling," "Esrolian," "Sartarite," the "Old Tongue" or just "Theyalan," Southern Theyalan is spoken by the people of Sartar, Heortland and Esrolia, as well as places settled by those folk like Pavis. There is no standard spoken version of Theyalan, as every region and city has its own dialect. However, most dialects are mutually understandable, and a person from Boldhome can understand and be understood by people from Nochet.

## Tarshite

Also called "Hillspeech," "North Mannish" or "Sairdite," Tarshite is a group of Northern Theyalan dialects spoken in southern and western Peloria, Wintertop, and the Far Place. It diverged from Southern Theyalan about 500 years ago when the Dragonkill divided the Theyalan speakers of Dragon Pass. It has many borrowings from Dara Happan, Talastaring, Carmanian, and New Pelorian.

## Tradetalk

The Issaries cult language, Tradetalk, has been spread widely throughout the world. Although it is no one's native tongue, it is the most common second language in Glorantha. Tradetalk is a magical language and is easily understood and quickly learned even by foreigners and non-humans. It is a simple and effective tool of communication, although compared to other Theyalan languages it is lacking in richness and abstract concepts.

## Tusker

The Tusk Riders of the Stinking Forest speak an ancient Theyalan language with many borrowings from Darktongue.

## Stormspeech

Another magical language, Stormspeech is the language of the beings of the Air Rune (such as Air Gods and wind children) and that rune is used to speak and understand the language. Some philosophers believe that it is the magical ancestor of Theyalan. It is spoken in many Orlanthi rituals.

## Foreign Languages

Several non-Theyalan languages are spoken in Dragon Pass. These languages are not mutually intelligible, although New Pelorian is related to Dara Happan.

### Grazelander

This is the remnant of an ancient language once known as "Pure Horse Speech." It is spoken only by the Grazelanders as a primary language but is very similar to the languages of the Pentan horse barbarians. Grazers use it only among themselves, preferring Tarshite, Southern Theyalan, or Tradetalk with outsiders. It has no written version.

### Dara Happan

This is the cult language of the Solar religions of Peloria and also the language of the ancient city-states of the Oslir river valley. It is derived from the language of the ancient Solar Empire of Yelm. Primarily priests, scholars and nobles learn it. Most religious literature is written in Dara Happan, even though much is now translated into New Pelorian. It has its own written script of ancient origin.

### New Pelorian

This is the official language of the Lunar Empire, and the native speech of the common people of the Oslir river valley. Throughout the Lunar Empire, educated people and nobility are likely to speak this as their primary tongue, regardless of whatever is common among rural or common folk. It has its own written script related to Dara Happan.

### Praxian

This language is spoken by the Beast Riders of the Wastes. All the tribes there speak dialects, including the nonhuman Morokanth. It has no written script, although the Praxians do record some information with a complicated system of knots.

## Non-Human and Extinct Languages

### Aldryami

The native language of the various elves, this is spoken by brown, green, and yellow elves. Each forest has a different dialect. Aldryami prefer to use the most convenient local human language to speak with non-elves, even if the non-elves show off their knowledge of Aldryami.

### Auld Wyrmish

Spoken by dragonewts and their kin, no human can achieve much more than a basic understanding of the spoken language. Dragonewts do not write, but during the Empire of the Wyrms Friends a written form of Auld Wyrmish was devised by clever sages using a variant of the Three Sacred Scripts. Many Second Age documents were written in this tongue, and it is still popular among pedants.

### Beastspeech

The language of the Beast Folk of the Beast Valley (although the durulz speak their own Theyalan dialect), this can be a very difficult language for humans to speak.

### Darktongue

Spoken by the dark trolls and the cult language for many Darkness Rune cults, this language is very ancient. It employs a very curious system of writings and some texts in Darktongue exist from before the Great Darkness.

### Jrusteli

This extinct language was used by the blasphemous God Learners of the Second Age. It employs a written script related to those of the far West of Genertela.

### Mostali

This is the language of the dwarves. Mostali is little used by outsiders, and even dwarves prefer to speak some other language when outside their mines.

# D: Glossary

*Ability*: Anything a hero can use to solve problems or overcome obstacles can be an ability. Abilities have a numerical rating which determine how well the hero can use them to do these things.

*Adversary*: Any entity that opposes the heroes.

*Ally*: A supporting character comparable in accomplishment to the hero.

*Augment*: A bonus a hero gets to his target number as a result of a prior contest.

*Benefits of Victory*: Heroes who win a contest can gain bonuses on specific abilities in future contests. These last until the hero suffers a defeat on a contest using the bonus.

*Breakout Ability*: Specialized abilities that have been separated out from broader keywords.

*Broad Ability*: An ability described in a non-specialized manner that increases the number of obstacles that the ability can be logically used to overcome.

*Campaign*: A series of adventures played over a period of time.

*Charm*: A ritually fashioned object containing a spirit associated with a Tradition. A charm always has a taboo associated with its use.

*Climactic Scene*: The final climactic confrontation that wraps up an adventure or campaign.

*Community*: A community the heroes belong to and which has greatest dramatic significance in the adventure or campaign.

*Companion*: A secondary character under the control of one of the players.

*Consequence of Defeat*: When a hero loses a contest, they may suffer penalties to use related abilities as a consequence of that defeat.

*Contact*: A supporting character that enables the heroes to overcome obstacles by providing them with information and minor favors.

*Crisis Test*: When a community Resource endures penalties, the Game Master conducts a contest of the Resource against a resistance equal to the average of all resource ratings.

*Cult:* A cult is an association of individuals, dedicated to a particular deity, such as Orlanth and Ernalda, minor ancestors or Heroes, or anything in between. The cult maintains the rituals and responsibilities for its god. The word "cult" literally means the care owed to the god and its shrine.

*Dependent*: A supporting character that requires the aid and protection of one of the heroes.

*Dragon Pass*: This rugged region is perhaps the most strategically important places in Glorantha and is the center of the world for many world myths. It is populated by Heortlings, Tarshites, and the Pure Horse People, as well as being the birthplace of the dragonewts and a major troll stronghold. The Lunar Empire conquered Dragon Pass less than a generation ago. Great events, magical and religious, are occurring there now and many predict that the Hero Wars shall begin in Dragon Pass, if it hasn't already started.

*Divine Magic*: See Rune Magic.

*Elder Races*: These nonhumans predate the appearance of humans. They include many small, strictly local, or otherwise insignificant creatures. Those Elder Races powerful enough to dominate significant parts of the world are broos, dragonewts, dwarves, elves, merfolk, and trolls.

*Evocation*: Lunar magic derived from a specific phase of the Moon Rune.

*Flaw*: A characteristic of a hero that is always detrimental to the hero.

*Follower*: A secondary character that travels with the heroes and contributes on a regular basis to their success. There are two types of followers: companions and retainers.

*Glamour*: Any use of Lunar magic whether it is an evocation, a grimoire, or a spirit.

*Glowline*: The Lunar Empire has built Temples of the Reaching Moon to spread the Red Moon's power. The Glowline is the area subject to the magical influence of these temples.

*Grimoire*: Grimoires are bodies of knowledge that explain, describe or otherwise analyze Gloranthan metaphysics. They are the main source of sorcerous spells in Glorantha.

*Hero*: When written as "hero" the word refers to a player character. When written as "Hero" the word refers to demigods between gods and men.

*Hero Point*: A resource that players can use to heighten their victories, dull their defeats, improve their existing abilities, and acquire new abilities.

*Heroquest*: A reenactment of the mythic events of the God Time that enables the participants to bring back some of the magic of the Gods Age. A heroquest can take place largely in the Middle World (although infused with magic from the Other Side) or entirely in the Other Side.

*Hero Wars*: The great magical-mythical conflict fated to end the Third Age of Glorantha in terrible cataclysm.

*Holy Country*: Also called Kethaela, this rich land south of Dragon Pass was long unified by the God-King Belintar. However, with the disappearance of the God-King, the Holy Country is now torn apart by war and invasion.

*Illumination*: A special insight into the universe that completely alters one's perceptions and powers.

*Keyword*: Broad abilities that include entire packages of abilities associated within a given occupation, culture, or Runic archetype.

*Krjalki*: A word used by the Westerners to describe Chaos, the Elder Races, or those humans allied with either.

*Lunar Empire*: The mighty Lunar Empire rules the lands of Peloria and Dragon Pass. It has more recently conquered Prax and has even more recently invaded the Holy Country. The head of the Lunar Empire is the Red Emperor, an immortal, ever-reincarnating son of the Red Moon Goddess.

*Lunar Magic*: Lunar magic is claimed by the Lunar religion to be a fourth type of magic, which appears to be a weird combination of all three magical systems. Only those with the Moon Rune can use it.

*Mastery*: An ability with a rating above 20 is noted with the Ш Rune (e.g., 21 is denoted as 1Ш). Multiple mastery is marked with a number to the right of the Ш symbol. If a hero has a rating of 10Ш2, he has two masteries, and so on.

*Patron*: A supporting character that enjoys greater access to resources than the heroes do and may aid the heroes to overcome obstacles by lending advice or providing them with resources, but are too busy and too important to personally perform tasks for the heroes.

*Plot Augment*: A bonus earned by overcoming a particular plot obstacle created by the Game Master.

*Prax*: This chaparral wasteland east of Dragon Pass and the Holy Country is inhabited by the Praxian Animal Nomads.

*Retainer*: A more or less anonymous servant or helper that lets a hero overcome relevant obstacles.

*Rising Action*: Any plot event or complication that leads to the climax of an adventure or campaign.

*Rune*: The Runes are the magical building blocks of Glorantha. They are the symbols, archetypes, embodiments, and actual matter or energy of the world.

*Rune Magic*: Also called Divine Magic, Rune Magic involves the worship of gods to experience mythological events. Those initiated into this method of magic may worship a pantheon of gods or devote themselves to a single god (or even a single aspect of that god). In exchange for worship, initiates can wield some part of the god's Rune power.

*Situational Modifier*: A bonus or penalty imposed by the Game Master when, given the description of a given situation, believability demands that a hero should face a notable advantage or disadvantage.

*Sorcery*: Also called materialism or wizardry, this method of conceiving magic involves the study of permanent and indestructible Runes. This approach is logical and imposes the caster's will upon the material world.

*Spell*: The application of certain logical principles to specific Runes creates a formula called a spell. Each spell creates one very specific magical result.

*Spirit Magic*: Also called animism or naturalism, this method of conceiving magic involves integration with the spirits who embody the animals, plants, places, and objects they dwell within. Each culture has its own traditions of spirit magic, which includes spirit societies, animist cults with special relationships to powerful spirits, and individual shamans who explore this world.

*Spirit Society*: Spirit societies are cults with special relationships to spirits that grant powers to its members.

*Stretch*: A penalty imposed by the Game Master when a player proposes an action using a somewhat implausible (but not completely inappropriate) ability.

*Supporting Character*: A non-player character connected to a hero through a relationship ability.

*Tradition*: A broad system of spirit worship, which includes several spirit societies. Each tradition is defined by the spirits it reveres and is experienced in dealing with.

# E: Bibliography

A complete bibliography of our favorite fantasy and historical books would be too extensive for this appendix. This list contains those we felt exemplary or exceptional.


Apollonius of Rhodes. "*The Voyage of the Argo*" – the story of Jason's voyage in quest of the Golden Fleece.

Black, Jeremy and Green, Anthony. "*Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*" – an illustrated dictionary of the gods, goddesses, demons, monsters, magic, myths, religious symbolism, ritual, and spiritual world of ancient Mesopotamia. The updated and expanded second edition is particularly recommended.

Daniélou, Alain. "*The Myths and Gods of India*" – A classic on the study of Hindu religion. Very useful for grasping Gloranthan religions.

Ferdowsi, Abolqasem. "*Shahnameh*" – The great national epic of Persia, it begins in the mythic time of creation, through the heroic age of that lineage of champions - Sām, Zāl, Rostam, and Faramārz - to the conquest by Eskander (Alexander, the legitimate Persian king, according to the story), and continues forward to the Arab invasion. Its central figure is the hero Rostam, a demon-killing champion who is half demon himself.

Foote, Peter (ed.). "*The Saga of Grettir the Strong*" — this saga from the Age of Heroes in Iceland details the life of one of the great anti-heroes of medieval literature, Grettir the Strong. Grettir is a mighty warrior, who defeats the undead draugr Glámr, but, in his moment of victory, he is cursed. Grettir is bad-tempered and rebellious, and is eventually condemned to outlawry. For nearly 20 years, he survives as an outlaw until his final show-down atop a lonely, fortress-like island off the northern tip of Iceland.

George, Andrew (translator). "*The Epic of Gilgamesh*" – the poem of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, is the world's oldest heroic epic. Gilgamesh is the proto-typical hero; a demigod king who goes on a great adventure with his sidekick Enkidu to slay the great monster Humbaba, in order to gain fame and renown. Upon his return, Gilgamesh spurns the advances of the goddess Ishtar, and angers the goddess. And that's when things start getting interesting. Life, death, the Underworld, why men are doomed to mortality - all of that and more makes its way into this epic.

Heaney, Seamus (translator). "*Beowulf*" – the great Anglo-Saxon epic, Beowulf is a wonderful glimpse into the heroic age.

Herodotus. "*The Histories*" – Herodotus narrated the wars between the Persian Empire and the Greek city-states led by Athens and Sparta, and the histories leading up to those wars. And at the same time described the entire fantastical world known to the classical Greeks. Lots of story ideas in here as well as colorful descriptions of the classical world.

Homer. "*Iliad*" and "*Odyssey*" – the greatest of all epics, Homer has it all. Adventures, battles, gods, sorceresses, love, vengeance, victory, tragedy - you name it, it is in these two epics.

Howard, Robert E. "*Conan*" (and others) — the archetypical noble and savage barbarian written with muscle and guts; his notes have been finished with less gusto by other writers as well.

Kerényi, Károly. "*Gods of the Greeks*" and "*Heroes of the Greeks*" – a classic overview of Greek mythology.

Kinsalla, Thomas (translator). "*The Táin*" - the epic of early Irish literature, it tells of a war against Ulster by the Connacht queen Medb and her husband Ailill, who intend to steal the phenomenally fertile bull Donn Cuailnge, opposed only by the hero Cú Chulainn.

Leiber, Fritz. "*Swords in the Mist*" (and others) — a basic source of modern fantasy; the stories about Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser are classics.

Lönnrot, Elias. "*The Kalevala*" - the great Finnish epic, which, like the Iliad and Odyssey, grew out of a rich oral tradition with prehistoric, roots. The Kalevala helped inspire both Tolkien and Moorcock; both writers took the idea of the hero with the cursed sword who drinks the blood of the blameless from here. Plus, it has shamans, journeys to the Underworld, magical contests and adventures, and so much more.

Magnusson, Magnus (ed.). "*Njáls Saga*" — an excellent look at a Dark Ages culture, and some rousing fighting besides. Plus some of the most violent legal lawsuits in literature!

Moorcock, Michael. "*Elric of Melnibonê*" (and others) — a basic source of the fantasy genre. Elric doesn't get that much attention any more, but Moorcock's pale anti-hero still makes a great read. Clearly inspired by *The Kalevala*'s Kullervo (who also inspired Tolkien's Tùrin Turambar), Elric rejects his royal birthright, is responsible for the destruction of his homeland, the death of his love, and thanks to his cursed sword that thirsts for the blood of the blameless (see *The Kalevala* again!), he is the murderer of his wife and friends, and doomed to herald in the end of the world.

Sandars, N. K. (translator). "*Poems of Heaven and Hell from Ancient Mesopotamia*" - includes the Babylonian Creation and Inanna's Journey to Hell. A classic work of ancient mythology.

Scudder, Bernard. "*Egil's Saga*" – perhaps the most readable of the Icelandic Sagas. Egil is a poet, a magician, a killer, a pirate, and a scoundrel. Egil would make a great character in Glorantha.

Smith, Clark Ashton. "*Hyperborea*" (and others) — more standards of fantasy fiction, which everyone should at least taste.

Sturlusson, Snorri. "*Heimskringla*" — a superb epic tale of kings and heroes by Iceland's most famous saga writer, proving you do not need fantasy to create legend.

Tolkien, J. R. R. "*The Lord of the Rings*" and "*The Hobbit*"— modern fantasy classics. Tolkien is rightfully accorded as the Master of fantasy, and if you have not yet read "*Lord of the Rings*" or "*The Hobbit*", please do yourself a favor. Of his other works, see also "*The Silmarillion*" — notes of the Master compiled posthumously by his son, Christopher, that chronicle the earlier ages of Middle Earth. Also check out "*The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun*" – his retelling of the Volsung Saga.

Vance, Jack. "*The Dying Earth*" (and many others) – a prolific fantasy author noted for imaginative settings, sumptuous writing, and being the inspiration for many enduring tropes of adventure gaming.

# F: Other Gloranthan Material

Glorantha is the discovery of Greg Stafford, who has accumulated that universe's myths, legends, history, and other lore since 1966. In that time he has written over a million manuscript words about Glorantha. Some material has appeared previously, but they now are out of print and no longer available. This appendix is a guide to currently published sources.

*The Guide to Glorantha*: The complete, two-volume encyclopedia of Glorantha with cosmology, culture, geography, history, mythology, people, and places all explored in never before published detail. Hundreds of maps and illustrations bring the setting to life. By Jeff Richard, Greg Stafford, and Sandy Petersen.

*Argan Argar Atlas*: A companion book to *The Guide to Glorantha* with all of the regional maps of Glorantha collected in a single reference volume. By Colin Driver and Jeff Richard, based on Greg Stafford's original hand-drawings.

*King of Sartar*: The story of Prince Argrath, as pieced together from a collection of ancient Gloranthan manuscripts. Now revised and expanded. By Greg Stafford, and revised by Jeff Richard.

*Pavis: Gateway to Adventure*: Maps, personalities, heroes, local cults, and other material centered on the city of New Pavis in Prax during the Lunar Occupation. Includes four full-length scenarios.

*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*: The definitive guide to the classic setting of Dragon Pass during the Lunar Occupation. It contains everything you need for a HeroQuest campaign set amongst the storm-worshipping tribes of Dragon Pass, as well as an epic campaign arc for your heroes.

*Sartar Companion*: The sequel to *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*. A huge setting and scenario book that gives you the opportunity for countless hours of sandbox adventure in the Kingdom of Sartar. Play through seven campaign scenarios, dozens of encounters, and experience many locations and cults.

*Wyrms Footprints*: The Moon Design house organ, a periodical containing notes on other books, and features on Glorantha.

*Prince of Sartar:* The Gloranthan webcomic, *Prince of Sartar* is the story of Argrath, Jar-eel and Harrek the Berserk. Published weekly at (www.princeofsartar.com).

**Gloranthan Classics:** These are the classic Chaosium Glorantha publications, repackaged with extra details and information.

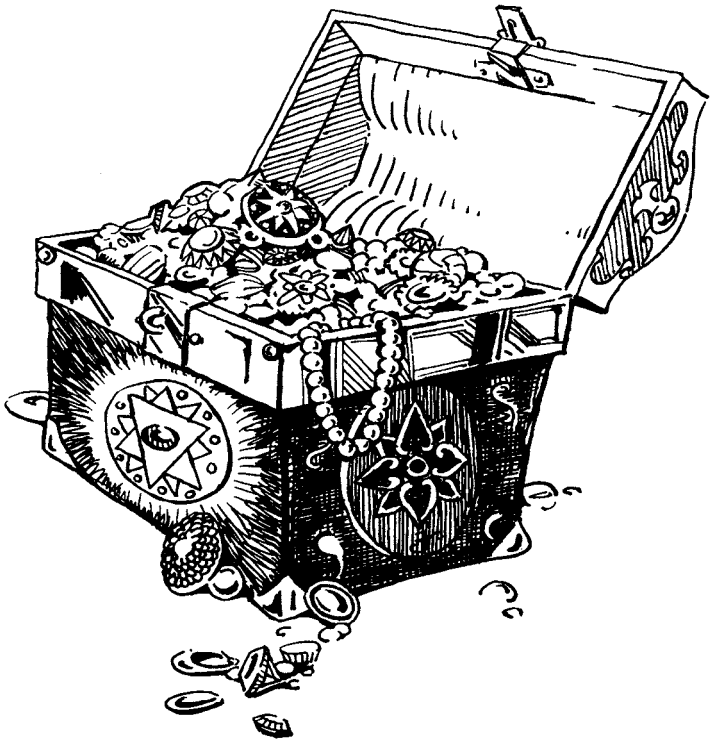
*Pavis & Big Rubble*: An updated and reformatted re-issue of the two original Chaosium boxed sets, organized together.

*Griffin Mountain*: An expanded reprint of the original sandbox campaign for beginning characters set in Balazar.

*Cult Compendium*: Over 40 cults from *Cults of Prax*, *Cults of Terror*, and *Trollpak* are detailed here. Additional cults from *Wyrms Footnotes* and *Different Worlds* magazine are also included.

*Borderlands & Beyond*: This is an updated and reformatted reprint of all the original Chaosium *Borderlands* boxed set, *Plunder*, and *Runemasters*. It is ideal for beginning characters, with a link to joining it with the *Griffin Mountain* campaign.

We also maintain a list of Gloranthan readings on the Glorantha web site (www.glorantha.com), complete with reviews. For an updated list of the Gloranthan Readings, just go to http://www.glorantha.com/readings/.



# G: Quick Reference

| SIMPLE CONTEST RESULTS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Roll** | **Critical** | **Success** | **Failure** | **Fumble** |
| **Critical** | High roll = Marginal Victory, else tie | Minor Victory | Major Victory | Complete Victory |
| **Success** | Minor Victory | High roll = Marginal Victory, else tie | Minor Victory | Major Victory |
| **Failure** | Major Victory | Minor Victory | High roll = Marginal Victory, else tie | Minor Victory |
| **Fumble** | Complete Victory | Major Victory | Minor Victory | Tie* |

* In a group simple contest (see page 70), the Game Master may declare that both contestants suffer a Marginal Defeat to indicate that, although their results cancel out with respect to each other, their situation worsens compared to other contestants.

| CONSEQUENCE OF DEFEAT | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Defeat Level** | **Consequence of Defeat** | **Penalty** |
| **Marginal** | Hurt | –3 penalty to appropriate abilities |
| **Minor** | Impaired | –6 penalty to appropriate abilities |
| **Major** | Injured | Automatic bump down on uses of appropriate ability |
| **Complete** | Dying | No actions allowed |

| GROUP SIMPLE CONTEST RESULTS | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Difference Between Results** | **Winning Group's Victory Level** | **Negative Consequences For Winner** |
| 1 | Marginal | Hurt |
| 2 | Minor | Unharmed |
| 3-4 | Major | Unharmed |
| 5+ | Complete | Unharmed |

| EXTENDED CONTEST RESOLUTION POINTS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Roll** | Critical | Success | Failure | Fumble |
| **Critical** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| **Success** | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Failure** | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| **Fumble** | 5 | 3 | 2 | N/A |

| CLIMACTIC CONSEQUENCE | |
|---|---|
| **Total Resolution Points Scored Against Hero** | **Consequence** |
| 0 | Unharmed |
| 1 | Dazed |
| 2 | Hurt |
| 3 | Hurt |
| 4 | Impaired |
| 5 | Impaired |
| 6 | Injured |
| 7 | Injured |
| 8 | Dying |
| 9+ | Dead |

* Losers add 1 to their totals.

| RISING ACTION CONSEQUENCE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Difference Between Result | Negative Consequences For Loser | Negative Consequences For Winner | Winner's Victory Level / Loser's Defeat Level |
| 1 | Hurt | Hurt | Marginal |
| 2 | Hurt | Unharmed | Marginal |
| 3 | Impaired | Unharmed | Minor |
| 4 | Impaired | Unharmed | Minor |
| 5 | Injured | Unharmed | Major |
| 6 | Injured | Unharmed | Major |
| 7 | Dying | Unharmed | Complete |
| 8+ | Dead | Unharmed | Complete |

| BENEFITS OF VICTORY | |
|---|---|
| Victory Level | Bonus |
| Marginal | +0 |
| Minor | +3 |
| Major | +6 |
| Complete | +9 |

| CLIMACTIC SCENE VICTORY LEVEL | |
|---|---|
| Consequence | Victory Level |
| Hurt | Marginal |
| Impaired | Minor |
| Injured | Major |
| Dead or Dying | Complete |

| ASSIST RESULTS | |
|---|---|
| Contest Outcome | Change To Score Against Recipient |
| Complete Victory | –4 |
| Major Victory | –3 |
| Minor Victory | –2 |
| Marginal Victory | –1 |
| Marginal Defeat | 0 |
| Minor Defeat | +1 |
| Major Defeat | +2 |
| Complete Defeat | +3 |

| AUGMENT RESULTS | |
|---|---|
| Success Level | Bonus |
| Complete Victory | +Ш |
| Major Victory | +9 |
| Minor Victory | +6 |
| Marginal Victory | +3 |
| Marginal Defeat | +0 |
| Minor Defeat | +0 |
| Major Defeat | +0 |
| Complete Defeat | –3 |

**Option**: Games using Quick Augment: divide ability by 5 and round up.

| HEALING DIFFICULTY | |
|---|---|
| Consequence of Defeat | Difficulty |
| Hurt | Low |
| Impaired | Moderate |
| Injured | High |
| Dying | Very High |

| PASS/FAIL DIFFICULTY | |
|---|---|
| Previous Two Results | Difficulty For Present Contest |
| 3–4 Defeats | Very Low |
| 2 Defeats | Low |
| 2 Ties | Low |
| 1 Defeat + 1 Victory or Tie | Moderate |
| 2 Victories, 0 Defeats | High |
| 3-4 Victories, 0 Defeats | Very High |

| DIFFICULTY LEVEL | |
|---|---|
| Difficulty Level | Value |
| Nearly Impossible | Base +Ш2 |
| Very High | Base +Ш |
| High | Base +6 |
| Moderate | Base |
| Low | Base –6 |
| Very Low | Base –Ш or 6, whichever is higher |

| PYRRHIC VICTORY CONSEQUENCES | |
|---|---|
| Outcome | Consequence of Defeat |
| Any defeat | Dead |
| Marginal Victory | Dead |
| Minor Victory | Dying |
| Major Victory | Injured |
| Complete Victory | Impaired |

| RESOURCE FLUCTUATION | |
|---|---|
| Result | Modifier |
| Complete Defeat | -9 |
| Major Defeat | -6 |
| Minor Defeat | -3 |
| Marginal Defeat | 0 |
| Marginal Victory | 0 |
| Minor Victory | +3 |
| Major Victory | +6 |
| Complete Victory | +9 |

| BASE VALUE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sessions to Date | Base Value | Augment Value |
| 1-4 | 14 | 14 |
| 5-8 | 15 | 14 |
| 9-12 | 16 | 15 |
| 13-16 | 17 | 15 |
| 17-20 | 18 | 16 |
| 21-24 | 19 | 16 |
| 25-28 | 20 | 17 |
| 29-32 | 21 | 17 |
| And so on.... | | |

| RESOURCE DEPLETION | |
|---|---|
| Contest Outcome | Depletion Penalty |
| Complete Victory | 0 |
| Major Victory | –3 |
| Minor Victory | –3 |
| Marginal Victory | –3 |
| Marginal Defeat | -6 |
| Minor Defeat | -6 |
| Major Defeat | -6 |
| Complete Defeat | -9 |

| RESOURCES | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ᚺ Communication | | ᚱ Magic | | Ш Morale | | † War | | ⧖ Wealth | |
| Total | Hero | Total | Hero | Total | Hero | Total | Hero | Total | Hero |
| | | | | | | | | | |

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