

# BLUE ROSE COMPANIONS



# BLUE ROSE<sup>TM</sup> COMPANION

## A SOURCEBOOK FOR BLUE ROSE: THE ROLEPLAYING GAME OF ROMANTIC FANTASY

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• POWERED BY THE TRUE20<sup>TM</sup> SYSTEM •

Printed in U.S.A.

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# INTRODUCTION

**E**very hero can use a companion, someone to provide aid and advice. In the same way, the *Blue Rose Companion* provides optional rules to supplement the rules in *Blue Rose*. This book offers new options for creating heroes, from detailed heroic paths to new feats and arcane abilities. It provides game systems for arcane rituals, places of power, and creating arcane items. It also offers a selection of new arcane items and an expanded bestiary of monsters for your heroes to fight.

The *Blue Rose Companion* is broken down into four chapters:

**Chapter I: Heroic Roles** looks at hero creation and things your heroes can accomplish. It begins with a section of heroic paths, different archetypes for the three heroic roles of adept, expert, and warrior. If you want to create a thief, swashbuckler, spirit dancer, or merchant, this section shows you ways to do it quickly and easily.

**Chapter II: Heroic Abilities** offers new things heroes can do with their various skills and new feats to round out a hero's capabilities.

**Chapter III: The Arcane Arts** expands on the arcana system in *Blue Rose*. The chapter provides advanced uses of existing arcana, like Mind Touch and Mind Shaping; some new arcana; and new game systems. It includes systems for arcane rituals and crafting arcane items, along with a selection of premade arcane items you can use in your games.

**Chapter IV: Advanced Bestiary** offers additional fantastic and dangerous creatures to challenge your heroes. It includes new types of creatures, like vermin (from swarms to giant insects), and it introduces creature templates, ways of modifying existing creatures to create new ones, such as all kinds of unliving creatures.

With these expanded tools in your hands, you are ready to take your character on new and even more exciting adventures in the world of Aldea.

**FOR ALDIS!  
AND THE QUEEN!**

# CAT'S EYE

The cooking smells wafting from the fire at the heart of the Roamer camp were spicy and familiar, but they made Zhira shudder with fear and revulsion. She was hungry; who wouldn't be after a day spent slogging through endless swamp? Everyone was hungry and tired—and frightened. But she lingered at the pony lines and pretended not to hear her mother calling her for dinner.

The treacherous Veran Marsh was friend to no one. Even the deviously built and brightly painted Roamer wagons were mired down. The road they were supposed to be following appeared and disappeared—tricking the eye with what should be shallow puddles that turned out to be deep, sucking mud pits—and even the sun was a chancy companion, often hidden in such thick mist it was impossible to judge distance or direction. Zhira's back ached from a day of digging her mother's blue and red striped wagon out of ruts. Her voice was ragged from hours spent coaxing the skittish ponies as they stumbled from weariness, and her hands were cut and bruised from hauling on harnesses in hope of providing the exhausted beasts some relief. All the while her head had turned around, as if on strings, to stare fearfully out at the dripping trees and stinking mists of the forbidden swamp. She was sure there had been times when she'd caught sight, from the corner of her eye, of something staring back. Zhira could not describe it, nor point it out to her older brother sitting guard with his crossbow on top of the wagon, but she knew it was there. Her spirit told her what her eyes could not. The swamp knew they were trespassers and had turned its evil awareness on them.

Zhira was Roamer born and bred; dark gleaming eyes and the black hair now tangled and dotted with mud were as much her heritage as the yellow and green skirts she wore. Ever since she'd been old enough to walk, Zhira had tasted the dust of a dozen different kingdoms and watched her mother and the other women of her clan dance for coin and pitied the out-dan peasants who died within sight of where they were born. There was no river too wide to cross, no mountain too high to climb, no rocky road could defeat the shaggy coated ponies and stubbornness of her Roamer blood. The sky was all the roof she needed, and every open field was a Roamer's homestead. But no Roamer clan traveled the twisting paths of the Veran Marsh. It was a land long abandoned by her people. Wicked children who didn't do their chores were threatened with tales of the iron-clawed spirits of the marsh, which would steal them away. Zhira stared fearfully out at the darkness, while also fearing the warm fires and cheerful conversation at her back.

"Easy, Snip," she whispered to the oldest and deverest of the harness ponies. Snip snuffled along Zhira's sleeve, looking for the treats she usually carried. But there was nothing there tonight. There was nothing extra for the hard-working Roamer ponies, no extra food, shelter, or kindness. If not for the luck of the hunters, one of the ponies would have been slaughtered so the dan could eat. Zhira patted Snip's soft nose. Perhaps even Snip.

"Zhira!" Her mother's voice, clearly annoyed now, rose over the sing-song voices of her dan.

"Coming!" Zhira patted the pony once more and glanced out at the dark trees. The animals were uneasy. Even the thin, hungry dogs were ignoring the bloody bones tossed their way, sniffing instead out into the tangle of dead trees with their hackles raised. The half-seen branches and lumpy, moss-covered trunks made her as uneasy as they did the beasts. Guilt lay heavy in her stomach and seemed to fill the darkness around the camp. The damp evening breeze breathed accusations on the back of her neck.

With slow steps, Zhira made her way back to the firelight and her family.

"Come on child!" Her mother said with exasperation in her voice. "Sit and eat, the stew is nearly ready."

"Yes, Zhira. Come sit here." Eharan gave her his broken grin and patted the upturned log next to his. "I've got a place all warmed up for you."

Zhira went to sit next to her second uncle. "Thank you, Uncle."

Eharan only laughed and tossed an arm about her shoulders, giving her a rough hug. "So formal? What, gone off and gotten yourself queened now have you, Zhira? Look who's gone all noble on us!"

Her twin cousins laughed and made bobbing bows toward her, popping up and down like gophers from their holes, while they begged to be made her generals and councilors. Bright laughter rose around the fire. Cheer was easy to come by now, after the struggle and grief of the last few months. With a warm fire, and the stew sending a mouthwatering fragrance into the night, the empty places among them could be forgotten for a time.

But beneath all the light banter and relief was something dark. Zhira didn't know what it was, but it had been growing ever since they'd stepped into the marsh, as if the watching shadows under the trees and filling the murky pools had somehow crept into the hearts of her cousins, her uncle, and even her own mother. Zhira struggled to dismiss her fears as foolish. The familiar faces around her, pinched and suspicious looking in the flickering firelight, were her family. The shadows were only the echoes of hunger and hardship. Zhira clung to that belief and pushed aside the worry gnawing at her heart like the hunger in her belly.

It had been a bad year. Sickness in the Theocracy of Jarzon made the farmers and townsmen poor and angry. What coin they could spare went into the alms boxes of the Temples of the Light. Instead of coin, they threw curses and mud at Roamer tinkers and jugglers. Some even blamed them for poor harvests and plague. Then the sickness struck Zhira's dan. As if some evil intent guided it, the sickness sought out the strongest and healthiest first: her father, her older brothers, the dan headman. All went down under the ground after a blessedly few days of gut pain and sweating chills.

Without the headman and his knowledge of the hidden paths, the dan suffered hard roads and harder times. The sickness never quite left, stealing someone away every now and then, and hunger began to pinch the faces of the children. The mother's milk dried, and the babies went hungry to bed. Some died.

Eharan led the dan now, but with ambition rather than wisdom. Contemptuous of the traditions he felt had kept him from the respect he deserved, Eharan took the dan off the familiar roads they'd walked all their lives. There were richer towns in Aldis, a land of peace where peasants and townsmen were all fools and their hands full of silver for Roamer dancers and tinkers. Only the marsh stood between them and that fabled land of plenty. Hungry, sick, and frightened, Zhira's family listened to Eharan's promises and turned out of Jarzon to enter the fearful marsh.

A warm bowl was placed in her hands. Zhira stared at the thick stew, full of onions and wild herbs and heavy with meat. Her stomach churned, and she could find no sharp-tongued retort for her unde's friendly teasing. All she could see was soft wise eyes, wide with shock.

Then glassy with death.

There were many reasons to fear the Veran Marsh. The creatures within it were one of them: ghost cats and golden deer that spoke, spider-folk, and ghost lights that lured travelers to their deaths.

"C'mon, niece." Eharan hugged her again, gently this time. There was concern in his voice but that lingering darkness as well, as if she were being judged on a simple meal. "We were waiting on you. There's no need for us to go hungry this night."

He put the carved wooden spoon in her hand and patted her wrist. "Eat."

Head hanging and black hair tumbling down to hide her face, Zhira numbly put the spoon in the bowl. The smell of herbs and rich meat rose around her. It had been so long since they'd had a full meal, never mind one with meat in it. The strange marsh deer had been a gift from the ancestors, as Eharan had said, coming back to camp with it slung bloody and limp over his shoulders. She glanced around. She got the terrible sense, looking into the glitter of dark Roamer eyes, that they were all watching her. Waiting.

Her gaze fell on Eharan's wagon, the white pelt tacked over it to cure, the single pearlescent horn, stump still bloody, near it. Worth its weight in gold, Eharan had said — and proof their luck was turning. Soon they'd all be as rich as kings. Suddenly Eharan's arm around her shoulders felt like a weight imprisoning her, and the joking faces of her family were the mocking faces of enemies. Cold crept through her blood, and she felt as if something beyond the familiar firelight waited, watched, and judged.

Zhira couldn't tear her eyes away and the bowl trembled in her numb hands. "No—".

"Zhira—" Her mother's voice was distant, like a ghost. And the marsh seemed to grow silent around the camp. The mist weighed heavily on Zhira's mind, and her fingers curled around the handle of the spoon. There was a sense of sickly triumph, like cruel laughter, and Zhira could feel her own panicked heart beating like a bird in a cage.

"No!" She leapt up, throwing aside the spoon, and on sudden desperate impulse, she lunged forward and, in a scattering of sparks and smoke, pulled over the tripod holding the communal stewpot over the fire. Steam shot up with the stink of burning

vegetables and wet wood. The frozen stillness was shattered.

"Zhira!" Eharan bellowed, flushing red with rage as everyone scattered, shouting, from the boiling stew spilling across the muddy ground. "Dammit, fool girl!"

"It's wrong, it's wrong!" She yelled at her cousins, staring at her in shock; at her mother's pinched, hungry face; at Eharan's fury.

"No!" Zhira yelled again, unable to explain but knowing in her heart her dan had been on the edge of committing a terrible crime.

Zhira fled to the familiar comfort of her bed, slamming the door of the wagon against her mother's worry and Eharan's angry shouts. She burrowed into the piled quilts and comforters, as brightly patterned as her own clothes. Smelling of pennyroyal, the worn cotton accepted her tears without protest.

It was her fault. She curled around her misery, muffling her sobs into her pillow. She had been the one to see the creature, so like a miracle, especially in the dull Veran Marsh. If only she had remained silent, the beast would still be alive. Zhira shuddered. It would be alive, and the darkness in the marsh would not have gotten a stranglehold on her family.

The mists had been heavy and frightening, clammy on Zhira's skin and cold in her throat.

"Heeya, Snip. C'mon, Jebbi." She had tiredly coaxed the ponies along the lumpy track Eharan called a road. She and the ponies both were knee-deep in mud. Behind her other wagons creaked and squealed as they struggled wearily along.

A faint hint of blue sky made Zhira pause. It felt like forever since she'd seen the sun. The mist turned gold in the brief sunbreak, and her heart lightened. Suddenly it seemed the Veran Marsh was not so terrible after all. Then in the glowing mists a flash of silver made Zhira's black eyes widen in delight and awe.

Standing on a hillock, not far from the straggling line of Roamer wagons, was the strangest, most beautiful creature she'd ever seen. Like a milk-white deer, but bigger, and with a single twisting horn. The animal's eyes were the deepest, wisest blue and looked deep into Zhira's soul with pure love.

"Oh . . ." Zhira breathed, dropping the pony lead and stepping blindly off the track toward the creature. It shifted, bowing its dainty head as if inviting her closer. "Look . . . so beautiful . . ."

"What, Zhira?" Her brother's voice above her made her turn and point to the wondrous creature.

"Look, Kahaen!" she said excitedly. "Isn't it beautiful!"

But it wasn't beauty her brother saw. Zhira's eyes barely had time to widen in horror. "No, Kahaen! No!"

Her brother was quick with the crossbow; he'd won more than a few shooting contests. Kahaen had his bow out, already knocked in fear of the marsh shadows, and his arm snapped up in a flurry of yellow sleeves.

"No!" Zhira screamed, whirling toward the beast, its eyes now wide in almost disbelieving alarm. "Run! Oh, run!"

And it ran, but Kahaen's arrow was swifter. The bright blossom of blood on the creature's white haunches made Zhira shriek as if she'd been the one shot.

Still the beast ran, struggling into the mist, and the excited shouts of her brother and the rest of the clan drowned out her protests. The dogs were released to bell and chase, her brother and the other hunters swiftly following.

It had been Eharan who had claimed the kill. Bloody and triumphant he'd brought back the carcass, and all the beauty and nobility Zhira had seen standing like a king on the hill was now just a bloody pelt, and dinner.

Zhira's stomach lurched at the memories, and she groaned, sick with weeping. Struggling to master her sobs, she heard voices outside.

"Damn that girl!" Eharan ranted outside. His voice was harsh, control over his foul temper clearly fraying. "We've no need of phantoms and fancies to trouble us now! What — we should starve over the life of a deer? That was all the meat we had! We'll have to hope the snares I set this afternoon bring tomorrow's dinner. She's your daughter, Nahri. Settle her down!"

"Don't fret, Headman," Nahri said soothingly, using the title Eharan never truly earned. "She's just weary — we all are — and young. Rest will bring her good sense back. Zhira's a good daughter of the clan."

"Get some solid food into her." Eharan's voice deepened and was almost cruel, though his words were concerned. "That beast was nothing more than an animal. It bled and died like one. Her foolishness is troubling the children. Get some food into her." Zhira shuddered at the clatter of dishes outside the wagon. "And get her calmed down and reasonable."

The door creaked open a few moments later, and Zhira listened to her mother's slow steps, like the tread of an executioner. She lay very still and pretended to sleep.

Her mother came to her bedside, and all of Zhira's pretense nearly shattered as she felt the familiar caress of her mother's hand on her unkempt hair. Then her mother spoke, whispering softly, and Zhira's eyes squeezed shut, as if she were still a little girl afraid of ghosts. It was her mother's voice but different in some way, darker, almost cruel.

"Eat, my dear, and grow strong." Her mother's gentle hand on her hair contrasted sickeningly with the cold tone in her voice. She knew Zhira was awake. "There is no room for weakness here. When you are done with your dinner, you can come out again."

Zhira remained very still as she heard her mother set the bowl down next to the bed and turn away, wagon swaying slightly with her steps. Wide eyed, she heard the rasp of the bolt as her mother closed the door behind her, locking Zhira inside.

She would not eat. She would not. Zhira stared at the food as she crouched next to the sturdy, and locked, door of her mother's wagon. She could hear the curses and groans of her kin outside, feel the shudder and jerk of the wagon as they continued the seemingly endless journey through the marsh.

"Mama," she whispered, too hoarse to shout any longer. "Let me out." She spent much of the day pounding on the door, yelling and screaming to be let out, and the clan ignored her, leaving her locked up inside the wagon as if she were some madwoman to be hidden from sight.

The long day passed, and the wagons stopped for the night. Zhira heard voices outside, as fires were kindled, and the clatter of another sparse meal. She overheard the anger and blame in the clan's complaints as they were forced to settle for wild herbs and moldering vegetables, rather than the fresh meat she had wasted. She should have felt guilty for the hunger she'd caused, but instead she felt relief. Her clan had barely avoided a terrible fate. The only meat left was here with her: the bowl of stew she'd rejected last night. Zhira stayed pressed in the corner, arms wrapped around her knees, and stared, exhausted, at the simple clay bowl of cold stew. She heard the camp quiet, as her kin bedded down. Wearily, Zhira shut her eyes and let her head fall to her knees. Surely her mother would let her out tomorrow. Wouldn't she?

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*Running, she was running for her life, sides heaving, body aching. Behind her she could hear the voices of hounds and feel the drag and agony of her wounded side. She wore no skirts, but ran on silver hooves and knew the twists and turns of the ancient, cursed marsh like she knew her sad fate had arrived.*

*Weary, she finally turned to see the shadow-touched who hunted her. She ignored the hounds circling her, baying but not daring to attack, and she glared proudly at the twisted face of the fool who'd led his people into this tragedy. Only one, terribly young, remained free of the taint consuming the travelers who'd trespassed the marsh. One fragile hope. Then the hunter's bolt sought her heart....*

Zhira woke with a choked scream, hands pressed to her chest to staunch the life blood flowing from her. Her hands clutched at wool and cotton, not white fur. Not her blood but that of the strange creature her uncle had killed. Not her life lost but a wise and precious life, one more worthy than she, Zhira was sure.

She panted in the close dark of the wagon and realized, remembering the coldness in her mother's voice and the subtle changes in her uncle's face, that they would never let her out. Not until she ate. Ate, filled her belly, and let the shadows into her heart. Shadow had already fallen over the spirits of her kinsmen, a darkness she'd been too fearful to recognize. Now, with the fragments of the terrible dream in her thoughts, her eyes were opened and Zhira could not pretend any longer.

She had a choice now: the darkness or the light. The darkness would be easier, comfortable, warm with the welcome of her mother's arms. Her kin to shelter her, cousins to tease her — truly things would go on much as they always had. They'd travel the endless roads, dance and gamble for coin. Zhira could see it in her mind's eye, as she'd seen the dream. There'd be little difference, and if sometimes her kin stole from honest men, or sold poisonous herbs instead of folk cures, well, that was something many did. It would be a lifetime of small sins, dragging down her spirit until darkness finally claimed her.

The light ... here Zhira's vision failed her. The light would have its price, a hard road and a strange one. All she was sure of was she would not travel it alone.

And those two roads were before her now, in this moment. She had to choose.

Still trembling from the dream, Zhira pulled herself to her feet. She shook out her skirts and fumbled for the tiny lantern hanging from the curved and painted ceiling. She ignored the cold bowl of stew and searched in the cabinets and chests holding everything her family owned. She changed her skirts and colorful vest for her brother's hunting clothes. They were big, except at the hips and breasts, but not uncomfortable. She packed a travel bag and braided her hair to keep it from her face, moving without thought because she was afraid, if she paused, her courage would fail her. Her hands were already shaking as she finished binding her hair.

Finally, she pulled aside the rugs on the floor. She had one of the wagon-wheel tools in hand and struggled to wedge it into the floorboards. Her father made this wagon when he'd married her mother, and Zhira's eyes watered with grief as she fought now to tear a hole in it.

Sweating and praying to Goia for artifice, Zhira finally pried up one of the narrow boards. Soon there was a hole large enough for her to crawl through. She sat for a time, staring at the mud beneath the wagon. She'd never left the safety of her dan, the circle of familiar faces. Zhira could hardly believe she was planning on leaving the only home she'd ever known. It seemed strange, unnatural, to abandon her life all for the sake of a marsh deer. Above her, the lantern light flickered, dimming as the shadows crept close.

An unearthly, agonized wail rose above the quiet sounds of the swamp. Zhira jumped, shuddering at the pain in it. Outside one of the dogs barked, and the others joined in, baying a challenge to whatever had made terrible sound.

"Shaduup!" someone yelled, voice muffled from inside a wagon, and the dogs quieted with uneasy whines. Zhira remained where she was, heart pounding in her chest, waiting for her mother to walk in and discover her. But the camp grew silent again, and the soft chirps and clucks from the swamp were the only sounds in the night. Frightened to go but more frightened to remain, Zhira slipped through the hole, forced to creep on her belly like a newt as she crawled under her mother's wagon. The dogs outside only wagged their tails at her from under their masters' wagons, familiar with her scent.

Zhira slung the travel bag over her shoulder and slipped out of the camp. As the faint firelight was lost behind her, she knew there was no going back. If they had been willing to lock her in a wagon until she starved, surely the punishment for running away would be worse. It wasn't long before Zhira also realized that even if she wanted to go back she couldn't. She was lost.

If the so-called track they had been following through the marsh had been treacherous, the lands around it were more than treacherous; they were deadly. Zhira had a small hand lamp, but it did little good, revealing nothing but rotting tree stumps, the gleam of murky water, and the everpresent, doying mists. Roots seemed to reach up for her booted feet — she'd measured her length in the mud more

than once — and branches snared her hair and dawked at her face. The eerie wail, full of pain and despair, rose several more times from the darkness, so close Zhira was sure she would soon stumble on the poor creature making it. Once, face down in a foul puddle, she'd lifted her face to see a swamp serpent hissing and rattling scarcely an inch from her outstretched hand. Zhira did the only thing she could think of, lying frozen in the stinking mud until the agitated snake slithered off into the dark. When the cold dark gave way to a gray and chill morning, Zhira was slumped on a damp hillock under a dead tree, too exhausted to go on.

Zhira knew she'd not traveled far enough and needed to go on. But she was so tired, too tired to lift her hand, let alone stand and crawl through more endless muck and filth. She stared dully at her dotted boots as the light grew, though she could not actually see the sun. The daylight did not seem to quiet the creature, whatever it was, that had been crying in the night, for Zhira heard it again as she rested, even louder now.

She blinked. Beside her left boot, filled with water, was an enormous footprint. In shape it was the same as the small, dainty tracks of the cats the townsmen kept as pets. Zhira could even pick out the prick of claw tips. Dainty perhaps, but not small — the footprint was larger than her own hand. Zhira's head filled with the child's tales, of ghost cats, the spirits of lost travelers that returned to haunt the living. Wide eyed, she stared into the growing morning. The beast that made that track had to be as large as she was.

That wail came again and the pain in it was clear. Swallowing hard, Zhira scrambled to her feet. She couldn't go back, she knew. She might as well go forward. Looking around her in the dim morning, Zhira stopped running away.

She had not stopped her brother or Eharan when they'd slaughtered the beautiful white deer, but perhaps she could ease the suffering she was hearing now and try to somehow balance the scales.

The Veran Marsh was not appreciative of her newfound determination. Zhira stumbled, tripped, and crawled toward the cries. Fighting her way through a bramble, the ground suddenly gave way beneath her, and she slid down a muddy slope, dutching at wet grasses and thorny vines. Ending in a heap in a mud puddle, she pushed her filthy hair back, raised her head, and met wide, wild eyes like sapphires.

Gasping, she froze. Those eyes were set in a furred face, full of frustration and pain. She was barely arm's length away from an enormous ivory-furred cat with paws as large as her hands and fangs as long as her fingers. Its cinnamon-colored tail lashed angrily in the mud. Even as Zhira sat there stunned, the cat's fanged mouth opened wide and that eerie wail rose again.

The cat was beautiful, but covered in muck and filth. As it thrashed, Zhira scrambled away from it with a yelp of fear. The cat lay there, writhing in the mud at the bottom of the gully, but even filthy and trapped, it lost none of its nobility, its great pride, the hint of glory surrounding it. The shadows could not touch its luminous blue eyes, and tendrils of fog seemed to draw away from it. Even the endless chill of the swamp somehow seemed less persistent near it, and Zhira found herself drawn closer, despite the danger of the wicked claws and gleaming fangs the cat revealed as it panted in frustration.



Zhira peered at it, searching for what trapped the cat. It was easy to pick out the snared front paw, and Zhira pressed a muddy hand to her mouth in shock. She recognized the clever snare — two sturdy roots anchored in the ground and pinched hard around the cat's paw — as her brother's work.

Truly, she had not gone far. Here was more of her responsibility: the snares and traps set by her family to fill again the pot she spilled the night before.

"I'm sorry," Zhira whispered, while the cat let out another wail of frustration and then began to wrench and drag at its trapped paw. She flinched at the noise, pushing herself back from the trapped animal's struggles but somehow unable to simply turn and flee. Zhira knew, if she left, the beautiful creature would be killed. The memory of the slaughtered deer came to her, as well as the dream of the previous night. Her own brother might murder this creature, staining his hands with more blood. Her eyes flicked up to where the mists were turning pale silver as the sun rose higher. There wasn't much time before the camp woke. Soon they would find her gone and the hunters would check their snares and traps. If Eharan found this cat, all he'd see was the glorious pelt and the gold it would bring. The thought of another bloody skin — this one all cream and cinnamon — tacked to the side of a Roamer wagon turned Zhira's stomach. She had to do something.

Zhira slid a closer to the wild cat, squishing through the rank mud of the marsh. The cat turned its great head toward her, and she froze, staring at those long white fangs. Terror hammered at her, and her heart leapt into her throat. She could hardly breathe. All she wanted to do was run — run and run until she was home and safe and the marsh was nothing but a dream. But she didn't run, and the cold, damp, and fear making her hands shake were no dream. She pushed herself another arm's length closer.

"Don't eat me," she breathed, trying to soothe the cat as she did the friendly Roamer ponies. Her voice shook. The cat could kill her with a single blow from those huge paws or rip her in two with those teeth. She was close enough now that she could feel the cat's hot breath stirring the muddy curls of her hair. "Please . . . I'm sorry . . . don't eat me. I'll . . . I'll help you, I swear it. Just do not eat me."

Zhira crouched in the mud beside the cat. Perhaps, she hoped, her soft voice was soothing, for the beast didn't move. It simply stared at her, panting. She kept on talking, whispering promises of freedom, as she reached out with shaking hands for the snare pinning the cat's front paw. Wrapping muddy fingers around it, Zhira pulled. It would not budge. Whimpering in fear and frustration, she pulled harder, yanking and twisting at the strong roots and rawhide straps.

With a sob, Zhira slumped down, tears making clean trails on her mud-smeared face. The cat lay quietly, only the restless flick of its tail revealing its impatience. She could not free it. She bit her lip, holding back a curse of frustration — of course she couldn't simply pull the snare off! If she could have, the cat would have long ago broken free on its own and wouldn't need her at all.

The cat shifted, and its wide cinnamon-tipped ears pricked up. Zhira lifted her head, shuddering as she heard the distant baying of dogs. The camp was awake.

She glanced around frantically. She'd done her best. If her clan caught her now, she knew her punishment would be worse than being locked up in her mother's wagon. She needed to run, now, if she wanted to live. She scrambled frantically up the slope, hearing the cat shift and snarl behind her. Her hand closed on a short, thick branch, and she slid back down to where the cat lay. She could hear the hounds. They had triumph in their voices. They had her scent, or the cat's, she didn't know which.

"Easy, easy," she panted, glancing nervously to the cat. She wedged one end of the branch in next to the cat's bloody and swollen paw, prayed breathlessly to Felisar, god of travelers, patron of the Roamers, and to any of his brethren who'd care to help, then leaned her weight on the free end of the branch. She could feel it creaking in her hands. The roots were creaking and twisting, too. She scrambled in the mud for more leverage, splinters biting into her skin, and the calls of the hounds growing louder with every breath. The branch snapped, one end stabbing her hand, and she cried — triumph and pain both, as the rawhide broke.

The great cat growled, pulled free, and rose to its feet, while Zhira crouched in the mud, clutching her bloodied hand. She stared at it, shaking. Now that the cat was free, surely its instincts would return and the odd moment of truce they'd had would pass. It was free, wild, and powerful, as it was meant to be, and Zhira knew her clan would not have this creature's blood on their hearts, at least. She lifted her eyes to the cat's face, seeing again how beautiful it was. If she had to die, at least it would be by an animal's simple instincts and not the hands of her own tainted people.

The cat stood over her, tail lashing, and stared down at her, proud as any king on his throne. Blue as a summer sky, those eyes met her dark Roamer ones, and like a clean wind through the stifling Veran mists, her heart and mind opened to the rhy-cat.

Love poured into her, like cool, clean water, cleansing her of the creeping shadow of the tainted marsh. Purpose filled her, flowing from the pure heart of the great cat, strengthening her limbs, and setting her heart beating proudly in her chest. Zhira felt the touch of wisdom and knowledge, great power tempered by a noble spirit, and knew this creature was no mere animal, no matter the shape it wore. Though it — though he — walked on four legs and she on two, the spirit behind those sapphire eyes was, as intelligent her own.

"I am here. I will not leave you." The voice, purring velvet over steel, filled Zhira's mind and heart.

"Yanar," she whispered. "Your name is Yanar..." and she knew it was true, as if she'd heard it every night of her life. She pulled herself to her feet and put her arm around Yanar's neck, feeling the warmth of his soft, silky coat under her sore hands. Suddenly, she was crying, sore and hungry, covered in mud, and so tired. But not alone. Hearing the hounds drawing close, she caught a glimpse of that road, the hard road she'd chosen when she'd fled her mother's wagon. She was on that road now, but not alone.

"I'm here. I will not leave you," she whispered into the pointed ears tipped back to catch her words.

Whatever happened, they were not alone. They were bonded and would never be alone again.



J. MEYER

"I'm here. I will not leave you," she whispered into the pointed ears tipped back to catch her words.

Whatever happened, they were not alone.

They were bonded and would never be alone again.







# CHAPTER I: HEROIC ROLES

The *Blue Rose* rulebook provides you with the resources to create your own heroes. This chapter expands on that information. The chapter includes detailed heroic paths, showing how heroes of the same role can develop in different ways.

Although heroes in *Blue Rose* fall into one of three roles—adept, expert, or warrior—they follow many different paths in their development. This section looks at various heroic paths, from 1st level all the way up to 20th level, and how heroes can develop as they progress along them. Each path also describes the typical qualities of heroes following it, providing guidelines and inspiration to create your own heroes.

## PATHS

There are different paths for each of the three heroic roles.

The adept paths are as follows:

- **Animist:** An adept specializing in the forces of nature, particularly plants and animals, and the arcana of the Animism Talent
- **Arcanist:** An arcane generalist, studying a wide range of useful arcana to help unlock the secrets of the arcane arts
- **Contemplative:** A hero focusing inward on the capabilities of body and mind, the arcana of the Meditative Talent
- **Healer:** A revered practitioner of the healing arts, sworn to aid and protect life
- **Psychic:** A master of the mysterious powers of the mind, wielder of psychic arcana
- **Shaper:** An adept able to shape the physical world and its forces at will, using the various shaping arcana

- **Seer:** A visionary or prophet blessed, or cursed, with the ability to see beyond sight and to know things no one else knows

The expert paths are as follows:

- **Bard:** A traveling musician and performer, also a bearer of news and sometimes obtainer of knowledge, both overt and covert
- **Infiltrator:** A spy who insinuates herself into enemies' ranks, learning their secrets and weaknesses from within
- **Merchant:** A businessperson able to move and sell goods and make bargains to ensure his livelihood
- **Noble:** A leader and guide of society, directing towns, cities, and even nations
- **Scout:** A daring explorer and investigator of the unknown, from a hardy trailblazer to a wilderness guide to a military lookout

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- **Spirit Dancer:** An arcane student of the mystic Eternal Dance and its many manifestations in the world
- **Thief:** A cunning expert in relieving others of the burden of their valuables.
- **Clan Warrior:** A warrior of the more primitive peoples of Aldea, devoted to honor and prowess in battle
- **Crusader:** A warrior sworn to upholding a cause, from the divine will of the Purist Church to the triumph of the Lich King over the world
- **Knight:** A mounted master of arms in a knightly order, like the Knights of the Rose in Aldis and the Knights of the Skull in Kern
- **Ranger:** A canny hunter and tracker skilled at surviving in the wilds
- **Soldier:** A military man or woman dedicated to defending their nation and, perhaps, to expanding its territory and influence abroad
- **Swashbuckler:** A devil-may-care fighter specializing in acrobatics, finesse, and style above all

The warrior paths are as follows:

## ANIMIST

Adrepts who feel drawn to the wilderness and its creatures often specialize in the Animism Talent and its arcana. Sometimes hermits, sometimes self-appointed champions of all living things, animists vary in outlook and temperament. They may hunt, protect, harvest, cultivate, or breed their charges, but only the Shadow-tainted among them will ever sacrifice those charges without good cause.

### Adventures

With their affinity for all things that swim, crawl, prowl, or stretch toward the sun, animists can't help but become adventurers. Even those who live quiet lives tending gardens in small villages may one day hear a call for help from a neighbor needing to find a lost, beloved pet—a pet who may actually be a bonded rhy-cat or a familiar taken captive by bandits or Kernish spies. With areas of land like the Veran Marsh and the Pavin Weald, where the land and its creatures are wild and dangerous, animists frequently find themselves acting as guides for others wishing to pass through. Some animists feel a calling to hunt down darkfiends and their ilk to protect the populace, while others advocate the healing of corrupted creatures and regions in the aftermath of sorcery. A Shadow-aligned animist could be a terrifying force with an army of shadowspawn at his command, requiring a Light-aligned animist to stop him. Animists don't always go looking for adventure because it tends to find them.

### Traits

Animists are frequently wise and charismatic individualists, sometimes preferring the company of animals to fellow humanoids. Those living outdoors tend to hone one or more of their physical abilities, the better to survive or get along with the creatures they cherish. An agile body or hardy constitution is well suited for enduring the hazardous conditions sometimes thrown their way. Some animists may pursue more intellectual avenues, sharpening their minds in hopes of studying plants and animals to learn how to better cohabitate or even communicate with them.

When their arcane abilities begin to manifest, animists have often already developed a knack for handling animals or cultivating plants. The few who haven't do at

least have a feeling of connectedness with or a yearning to explore the wilderness, whether they live in a city or at the edge of civilization. As they grow older, these feelings tend to cohere into a particular path, and the animist's skills develop accordingly. For example, a hunter may raise dogs and develop his ability to handle them, using feats and arcana to leave no trace of his passage, speak mind-to-mind with animals, move swiftly, and read the terrain for clues of his prey's destination. He may opt to learn how to calm his prey in order to capture it, or use wildlife to herd it to safer locations. Those who become Shadow-aligned try to dominate the world's creatures to serve their own ends.

### ANIMIST PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Wildwalk
3	Skill Training (Concentration, Sneak)
4	Meditative Talent
5	Arcane Training (Body Control, Beast Speech)
6	Skill Training (Knowledge (nature), Notice)
7	Second Chance (environmental hazards)
8	Arcane Training (Beast Summoning, Enhance Self)
9	Immunity to Poison
10	Skill Focus (Survival)
11	Arcane Training (Battle Dance, Beast Messenger)
12	Trackless Step
13	Arcane Training (Beast Link, Enhance Senses)
14	Canny Defense
15	Self-Healing
16	Arcane Focus (Animism)
17	Widen Arcana
18	Arcane Speed
19	Arcane Training (Nature Reading, Plant Shaping)
20	Greater Arcane Focus (Animism)

## Background

Of all the adept paths, animists are the most flexible where it concerns their backgrounds. They come from every walk of life. Even those societies and cultures that

do not formally accept animists come to grudgingly allow the Light-aligned to live in peace among them because the animists' capabilities are so useful.

Animists who come from common stock may start out as farmers, farriers, hunters, gardeners, woodsmen, or apprentices of the same. They aren't often formally schooled, but either develop their skills over a long period of time or find themselves taken under a mentor's wing. Fortunate animists may have a family with similar abilities that can teach them what they need to know. Those luckier still might catch the eye of a noble patron, who may employ the animist's skills to beautify gardens, groom horses, or tend hunting birds. A particularly generous patron might pave the animist's way into joining the Sovereign's Finest.

Noble animists usually have better access to teachers and mentors, where the training may be difficult but may not take as long as a commoner finding his own way. Depending on their aspirations and ambitions, noble animists may do anything from pursuing a quiet intellectual life caring for the animals in the Aldis zoo to voluntarily throwing themselves into danger as a Rose Knight adept. Some of the most successful Aldin noble animists are traveling nobles, solving common border problems, such as raids, marauding creatures, and blights.

Training under a mentor lasts for several years at least and can be harsh. Even domesticated animals have a different set of standards and morals than humanoids, and a mentor will be sure to teach her budding apprentice this lesson first of all. Emphasis is given to strengthening the animist's bond with all living things, teaching respect for life, and using that bond to earn respect from the creatures she wishes to befriend. An animist is typically taught the properties of local flora and fauna and sometimes those of other regions as well, if she is expected to travel. In addition, it is not unheard-of for a potential animist to spend some time apprenticed to a healer, shaper, or psychic, lasting a year or more depending on the animist's interest and talents in those areas.

Aldins, of course, accept and embrace animist adepts within their society. The few who may have reservations are Jarzoni refugees, who view all arcana with suspicion, except healing. Animists growing up in Aldis have little trouble finding tolerance for their abilities. In Jarzon, however, potential animists only find acceptance as priests of the Church of the Pure Light. Otherwise, Jarzoni shun them at best or immolate them at worst. Reviled animists sometimes find refuge in the wilds of the Veran Marsh and beyond.

Animists may also come from the islands, where they might find kinship with dolphins in combing the ocean for its bounty. Those growing up in Kern find ways to hide their talents from the greedy eyes of the Lich King, who would use them to locate more shas crystals or shadowgates. The Rezeans, with their love of horses, embrace animist arcane arts in breeding and raising their herds, sometimes using these talents to hunt elk and bison. The Pavin Weald's wild ways and its denizens ensure an animist's magic will always be needed



and rarely turned away. Roamer adepts tend to be seers, but as the Roamers are a nomadic people, animists can be found within their wagons as well.

Among the vata'an, there are a fair number of animist arcane talents. It is said that this ability in vata'an can be traced all the way back to the mythic age. Animist abilities are less likely to be found in vata'sha, but still not uncommon. Some non-vata'sha believe the appearance of the vata'sha during the age of the Sorcerer Kings is an indication of their unnatural, sorcerous ties and use that to explain why animism is rare among them. Night people are the least likely to develop this arcane talent, since they are usually neither wise nor charismatic. Those that do are regarded with distrust, owing to the widespread belief that night people are still Shadow-touched and would twist their arcane abilities into sorcery. Rhydan that prefer to spend more time in the wilderness than among two-legged civilizations tend toward animist arcana more than any other arcana.

## Religion

Followers of the animist path frequently revere the Primordials, or gods of Twilight, most of all, recognizing their influence in all living things. Animists are mostly Twilight or Light-aligned, loving or respecting life in all its forms, and sometimes pay respect to one or more of the gods of Light. Prayers are given most of all to Selene, Braniel, Maurena, Hiathas, Gaelenir, and Athne. The few animists among the Jarzoni priests call upon Maurena, while the animists of the Pavin Weald include Felisar among the gods they particularly revere. Shadow-

aligned animists whisper terrible hymns to Tyrexus for unbalancing the Wheel of Reincarnation, or pay homage to Mytaxx while laying plans to gather and dominate as much land as possible.

## Team Role

Animist members of the Sovereign's Finest may be helpful in locating shadowgates and dealing with shadowspawn, aberrations, and darkfiends. To this end, they may also aid the Rose Knights or Jarzoni priests. They can help thwart Jarzoni raids into Aldis by altering the terrain to make it too difficult for raiders to pass through or by convincing Jarzoni mounts and dogs to refuse to aid their masters. An animist may be of special help when an army or scouting team needs a spy, using animals and the land itself to report on troop movements or the location of a sorcerer. This is particularly true of missions in Kern. Animists sometimes team up with shapers and healers when a rare plant might be needed to cure a mysterious ailment or to find the source of pollution in an area where everything is sickening and dying. An animist might find herself alongside a shaper and islander warriors, repelling pirates or deadly kraken from attacking their vessels or coastal villages.

## Game Information

Animists have the following game traits.

**Role:** Adept

**Starting Skills:** Handle Animal, Survival

**Starting Feats:** Animism Talent, Arcane Training (Beast Reading, Enhance Self), Familiar, Wild Empathy

# ARCANIST

**A**rcanists are the jacks-of-all trades of adepts, studying and practicing several arcane arts instead of specializing like their colleagues. While this gives them greater flexibility, allowing them to draw from a pool of varied arcana to handle a wide range of problems, it comes at the cost of mastery. While some may consider them dabblers and dilettantes, they regard themselves as explorers, broadening their knowledge base and always searching for more.

## Adventures

Curiosity and a thirst for knowledge are hallmarks of the arcanist, which almost always plunge her into adventure. Not all knowledge can be found in dusty libraries; some must be actively sought in foreign temples or buried ruins, where forgotten lore waits to be rediscovered. Naturally, these are most often difficult to locate or lie in dangerous territory, necessitating the help of friends and allies.

While arcanists rarely become masters of their arts, their help is sought regardless. Sometimes what one needs is a broad range of talents to accomplish unusual goals, and arcanists fit that requirement admirably. If the end result nets the arcanist the chance to practice her arcana or learn some arcane secret, she is even more likely to go adventuring and thank you for it, even if she is used to spending her days in study and contemplation.

## Traits

Intellectual pursuits thrill the arcanist, stimulating her prodigious mind. She leavens that excitement with sensibility and thoughtful planning, but she is happiest when someone else can take over those duties. She is also charming enough that she can apply charm where needed. The arcanist can be stubborn, using all her patience and will to learn the arcane arts. No matter their alignment, arcanists do their best to get their way: Light-aligned through persuasion and ethical means and Shadow-aligned via any means they consider effective.

Arcanists are curious, even as children. They want to know everything, and they want to know it now. The more they learn, the more questions they have. Over time they discover they may not get to learn everything, but they can certainly narrow the field to their particular areas of interest. They may develop close mental or emotional ties to a friend, familiar, or other loved one, someone who will support and encourage their interests while nudging them toward a path best suited to the arcanist's needs.

Sometimes circumstance, not inclination, leads an adept down the path of the arcanist. In places where certain types of arcana are forbidden or frowned upon, an adept may seek them out to discover why or learn them solely because of their forbidden nature. A native of Jarzon not



inducted into the priesthood, for example, may secretly practice psychic and shaper arts whenever he can find a discreet teacher or mentor. Kernish arcanists learn anything and everything they can in hopes of bettering their lives or escaping. A wandering adept, whether Roamer or traveling noble, might sample the arcane arts commonly practiced wherever he settles for more than a few days.

## Background

Arcanists tend to arise from one of two opposite backgrounds: either poor and desperate or well off in

every way. While it's always possible for an arcanist to grow up within a perfectly average household, the majority of them either have time and leisure to study as they will or must study what they can with what, or who, is available at the moment.

Schooling is a similar issue. Where there are schools and a plethora of teachers to consult, arcanists will be found flitting from subject to subject or intensely absorbing several of particular interest. Where there are few or no schools, arcanists make do with what they can find, no matter how tough to find. They will learn from anyone, but fellow arcanists understand them best of all and have on occasion been known to apprentice a few students.

It's difficult to pinpoint how long an arcanist's training will last; he learns as much as he needs or wants and then moves on, whether his lessons have lasted three days or three years. On average, however, it takes an arcanist several months to a year to learn the basics of any one art. Multiply that by every art he chooses, and he may spend quite a few years simply picking up the essentials. Kernish arcanists take even longer because of the need to hide, in addition to scarce opportunities.

Rare are the times and places in Aldis where a school or mentor can't be found, so arcanists there can expect to find the knowledge and teaching they seek. Some may opt to become teachers themselves. Others become envoys, supplementing the arcane arts with lessons in diplomacy. There is a wide range of opportunities for followers of this path.

In Jarzon arcanists are a rare breed, found only outside the priesthood, if at all. They are true dabblers. Committing themselves to study usually means committing to discovery and censure. Rezeans, islanders, and forest folk alike have little use for dabblers. A practical lot, they need useful adepts. Adepts among them may learn arcana outside of their specialties, if the arcana supplement the adepts' core talents, and they possibly become arcanists later in life. Roamer arcanists are often entertainers, using their talents to elicit coins and smiles. In Kern, one usually becomes an arcanist out of necessity, rather than desire.

Vata are as capable and inclined to be arcanists as any other race. Rhydan, however, are predisposed toward this path, the better to be prepared for anything that comes their way. Some sea-folk adepts are arcanists, but they are more likely to follow other adept paths. Night people, if they are able to study the arcane arts at all, often become arcanists out of no other choice.



## Religion

To be an arcanist is to believe in abundant possibility. Arcanists' thoughts frequently turn toward the Sea of Possibility, from which the Primordials created the world. Because of this, arcanists tend to follow the Primordials. Selene as the Keeper of Secrets is the most beloved among them.

On the other hand, the gods of Light are the architects and keepers of many individual interests, so many arcanists revere them as well. Gaelenir is a particular favorite as the Great Sage and Teacher. Many a wild scheme has been concocted to discover the Well of Knowledge he lives by. Others alternately hope or fear for the consummation of Gaelenir and Selene's love because no one knows if all knowledge will be released or disappear forever.

Among Shadow-aligned arcanists, Gravicarius is most often invoked, although sometimes inadvertently. The same can be said of Ulasta and Mytaxx, for pride, envy, and greed can easily rule an arcanist's life if he spends all of his time hoarding and abusing the knowledge he seeks. Some Kernish adepts walk this path with open eyes, tired of hiding and scraping by.

## Team Role

In a tight situation, an arcanist may be just the member of the team to know what to do, whom to see, and when. With access to a variety of arcana and versed in assorted lore, these adepts often adroitly fill in a team's holes. The Sovereign's Finest may even use a team of nothing but arcanists in a tricky arcane situation, hoping their abilities will overlap and cover every possible avenue.

## Game Information

Arcanists have the following game traits.

## ARCANIST PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Arcane Training (Sense Minds, Ward)
3	Brew Elixir
4	Iron Will
5	Arcane Training (Mind Reading, Earth Shaping)
6	Empower Arcana
7	Imbue Stone
8	Arcane Training (Water Shaping, Wind Shaping)
9	Summon Elemental
10	Arcane Training (Fire Shaping, Cold Shaping)
11	Comprehend
12	Skill Training (Knowledge (any), Notice)
13	Arcane Training (Sleep, Suggestion)
14	Imbue Weapon
15	Quicken Arcana
16	Subtle Arcana
17	Arcane Training (Heart Reading, Heart Shaping)
18	Widen Arcana
19	Arcane Training (Illusion, Light Shaping)
20	Arcane Focus (Psychic or Shaping)

**Role:** Adept

**Starting Skills:** Concentration, Knowledge (arcana)

**Starting Feats:** Arcane Training (Mind Touch, Psychic Shield), Arcane Training (Manipulate Object, Move Object), Psychic Talent, Shaping Talent

## CONTEMPLATIVE

Contemplatives straddle the line between expert and adept as they explore the arcane potential within themselves. Through intense focus and concentration, contemplatives achieve a control over themselves rivaled only by spirit dancers. The meditative arts are the source of their power, whether they exercise it in daily service to others or lead quiet, introspective lives in isolation.

## Adventures

Contemplatives often don't go adventuring, but when they do, it is either to find a mentor to help them expand their abilities or to serve as a living weapon against an ally's enemies. They constantly strive to improve themselves, seeking out training or experiences they feel will contribute to their inner mastery.

Contemplatives are often confused with spirit dancers, especially those who choose to live among the dancers and try to learn their ways. Shadow dancers seek out contemplatives to subvert, trick, or destroy them. Other people, from noble to commoner, seek them out

for insight or instruction. Where a spirit dancer is not available, some nobles hire contemplatives as personal bodyguards and counselors.

## Traits

Contemplatives are seen as gurus among adepts. Being a contemplative often requires not only wisdom, but mental and physical discipline as well. Developing and honing these abilities brings these adepts a feeling of serenity and completeness difficult for them to find elsewhere. Bringing themselves to this state is the work of years and usually their ultimate goal.

Striving for self-sufficiency, contemplatives do not veer from difficult situations, for they wish to learn how to overcome them. They may already possess a restless spirit and allow it to carry them wherever they feel needed. Whether it is surviving on choppy seas for weeks at a time or dealing with the constant demands of a life at court, contemplatives find ways to master themselves.

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Some contemplatives are loud and cocky as children, masking their insecurities with boisterousness. Others are exceptionally quiet and withdrawn. The world is full of unknowns to them, and they are not as eager as their peers to run out and embrace them. Either early trauma or inherent shyness makes them reluctant to take life as it comes; they would rather be in control, starting with themselves. Other contemplatives begin life with a community of spirit dancers, discovering that, while they may not be in tune with the spirit dance, they are in tune with their bodies and minds and satisfied with bringing them into harmony. Still others are simply fascinated by the mystical connections between mind



and body and begin exploring from a young age, setting themselves to meditate in front of a candle for hours on end or discovering how to withstand hardships without discomfort.

Older contemplatives approach life with less and less fear, having conquered personal trials and adversity. They learn how to survive in many conditions, mental and physical. Many take this knowledge and teach it to others, taking on an apprentice or joining a school. Others retreat to a life of solitude, content to have others seek them out.

### Background

Contemplatives, like many adepts, can be difficult to pin to any one background. Commoners don't often have time for introspection, having so much occupying them, yet many contemplatives grew up as poor villagers. The wealthy are more prone to rumination, having more time on their hands, but unless they are Light-aligned and not already serving the community, their deep thoughts are often only of their own concerns. Some contemplatives have, nevertheless, left behind pampered lives in order to go within and bring out their inner strength.

Contemplatives either apply for formal schooling with spirit dancers or at academies established specifically for followers of this path, or they become a master's apprentice. Rarely do they learn entirely by themselves, yet the teaching requires many inward journeys of self-discovery. The training itself is rigorous, demanding many exercises in learning how to control one's body. Overcoming hunger, thirst, general discomfort, and sometimes sleep is typical, as is dealing with distraction while attempting to meditate or defend against psychic attack.

Apprentices typically start training in their teens and are released three to five years later, depending on how fast they learn. This release, however, comes with a mandate to the contemplative to spend a year or more traveling. The contemplative returns afterward and demonstrates what she has learned to her mentor, sharing her experiences and sometimes teaching something in turn.

Although many contemplatives begin in Aldis, not all stay there. Still there is a sizable community of contemplatives, and they are most often found among spirit dancers, bodyguards, teachers, or as hermits tucked away in the corners of the country.

Jarzoni contemplatives are almost always priests, hardened by the hardships of their land. Often in seclusion, when they appear it is to accompany the Knights of Purity on missions or to serve as secret police for the Hierophant. Many in Jarzon fear the contemplatives most of all, right behind the psychics, because they can be anyone and anywhere.

Foreign contemplatives are welcomed in Rezea, where they might learn how to pair their abilities with Rezean fighting, horseback riding, and hunting. Contemplatives growing up in Rezea will have already learned these skills. Rarely does a contemplative in Rezea travel alone for a significant amount of time.

Elsewhere, such as in the Pavin Weald, Kern, the Veran Marsh, and the islands, contemplatives are not especially reviled or welcomed. Adepts either take up residence somewhere out of the way or quietly sign onto a merchant or noble's retinue. The harsh conditions or environments serve as good testing grounds for newly released apprentice contemplatives.

Night people, having been created for brute work and fighting, are not particularly suited to be contemplatives, although they may seek some of the path's training to come to terms with their natural inclinations. It is not uncommon to find vata and sea-folk mingling among the human students in various training schools. Rhydan see little use, personally, in following this path. Some dolphins and rhy-wolves accompany contemplatives out of curiosity, and rhy-horses sometimes work with Rezean contemplatives as they train.

## Religion

Contemplatives, while they learn to rely upon themselves, also foster veneration in the gods to guide them throughout their lives. In addition, they sometimes personify their personal troubles as various Shadow exarchs and emphasize the need to defeat them.

Jarzoni look primarily to Leonoth, while Aldin contemplatives revere him in addition to Felisar, Aulora, and Hiathas, the Lord of the Dance. Rezean contemplatives look to the Primordials as their role models, believing these gods to possess the qualities they should mirror within themselves. Selene as Wise Woman and Anwaren as Warrior King are especially venerated. Adepts from other lands pray to either the gods of Light or Twilight, and include Anwaren, Hiathas, and Felisar. The Shadow-aligned lose their inner battles, letting one exarch or another win. Most often they call upon Tyrexus.

## Team Role

It might seem contemplatives would have a difficult time fitting into a group. Their tendencies toward working alone may appear as a liability in a team of the Sovereign's Finest. It is this self-sufficiency, however, that makes contemplatives fitting back-up warriors when fighting is fierce and desperate. When scouts are not available,

## CONTEMPLATIVE PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Iron Will
3	Endurance
4	Improved Balance
5	Canny Defense
6	Skill Training (Acrobatics, Escape Artist)
7	Skill Training (Notice, Sneak)
8	Arcane Balance
9	Improved Strike
10	Second Chance (falling)
11	Improved Initiative
12	Immunity to Poison
13	Skill Focus (Concentration)
14	Great Toughness
15	Uncanny Dodge
16	Arcane Strike
17	Arcane Expertise
18	Arcane Speed
19	Immunity to Disease
20	Arcane Expertise

they can fill in, able to withstand the elements and move silently or quickly without notice in various conditions. Contemplatives are also the quiet and insightful voices, instilling calm into what may be an otherwise excitable group and offering tactical or strategic advice.

## Game Information

Contemplatives have the following game traits.

**Role:** Adept

**Starting Skills:** Concentration, Heal

**Starting Feats:** Arcane Training (Body Control, Psychic Shield), Arcane Training (Enhance Self, Enhance Senses), Meditative Talent, Self-Healing

## HEALER

Regardless of where they come from, healer adepts are welcomed wherever they go. Skilled in many aspects of healing, from curing diseases to mending the most fatal of wounds, healers are said to fathom the secrets of life and death. While it is whispered that some use their abilities for darker purposes, by and large healers are beacons of hope in even the most pain-filled lives.

## Adventures

Healer abilities are useful everywhere, so healers' opportunities for adventure are vast. Whether they seek out conflict or get swept up in it, it is there they shine. Healers tend to the wounded after battle, seek cures for mysterious ailments, or identify the poisons

used to debilitate or destroy their patients. They may attach themselves to a household, travel between several villages, or settle down as herbalists, apothecaries, or midwives. No matter what, trouble tends to find them, and they are soon embroiled in someone's schemes, elbow-deep in blood and sometimes intrigue.

## Traits

Healers are sympathetic individuals, hoping to use their abilities to help the sick. They can be insightful, noting seeming unrelated symptoms and activities and coming up with the right solution to treat an illness. While they mix their herbs and practice the healing arts on their patients, healers often soothe away their patients' worries

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as well, putting them at ease with a smile or the right words. Because healers often need to study the healing properties of a variety of substances or how to set a bone properly, they need to be mentally sharp as well.



Some healers practice as field surgeons, mending the broken and dispirited before sending them back into battle. Other healers prefer to tend patients in their own homes, finding the root causes for a sudden illness or common problem. Other healers rarely tend patients but concoct potions and poultices for sale or gather herbs and materials for use in such. Each have different needs and equally differing abilities, with only the ability to heal the common thread among them.

When they are very young, most healer adepts look after sick animals, get help for a hurt companion, or exhibit interest in items used to improve life. They may have a knack for easing another's pain, turning tears into smiles. Many parents are quick to realize that their children possess arcane healing talent and send them to school to develop it.

Only a few potential healers tread down darker paths, hoping to wrest away life and control the dead, and these are greatly feared. These Shadow-aligned adepts are deceptive, manipulating the goodwill of people around them to gain what they want until it is too late to resist them.

### Background

Healers belong to all people; they go wherever there is need. Even those cultures that look askance at the arcane arts in general, like the Jarzoni, welcome healers. They are accepted everywhere.

Healers with formal schooling study for an average of five years. During this time, healers study not only the arcane arts related to their calling but practical skills to supplement them, such as herbalism, brewing, and sewing. They may also absorb a little diplomacy and heraldry, if they intend to treat nobles; basic wilderness survival skills, if they wish to take to the road as itinerant healers; or defensive skills, if they plan to accompany soldiers into battle.

An apothecary or herbalist may need four years of training, while a simple village healer dealing with childbirth or kicks from livestock could pick up the skills needed in two. Specializing allows healers to have a greater depth of knowledge in their areas of expertise, while sacrificing a broader knowledge base. Many of the healers who studied at the Royal College have some area of specialty: diseases, poisons, monster anatomy, and such.

### Religion

As protectors of life, healers frequently pay homage to the Primordials. Braniel, especially in his aspect as Green Beard, is the most favored among them. Selene as Wise Woman follows closely behind. Healers have a special respect for Felisar of the gods of Light, though, and are often heard invoking the Bringer of Miracles while treating those terribly sick or near death. Sometimes Hiathas, as a bringer of hope and the consort of Braniel, is invoked as well. In Jarzon, Leonoth as Liberator is the patron of healers.

The few twisted healer adepts following Shadow pay homage to Gravicarius. It is pride that leads them to imagine they could summon and control the dark forces that drain away life or grant unnatural life to the unliving. They also recognize Tyrexus, for it was he that spun the Wheel of Reincarnation out of its natural track and allowed the unliving to exist in the first place.

## Team Role

Any team would count itself lucky to have a healer, particularly teams that are likely to see a lot of combat or will be faced by disease or poison. Healers can also be useful in the game of intrigue. They tend to have strong intuition about others' feelings, and they are often exposed to more information than other adepts, speakers believing either that the healer is not paying attention or will not violate their trust. Doing the latter is a tricky maneuver for members of the Sovereign's Finest, which usually deals ethically with enemies, but more than once exceptions have been made.

## Game Information

Healers have the following game traits.

**Role:** Adept

**Starting Skills:** Concentration, Heal

**Starting Feats:** Arcane Training (Body Control, Cure), Arcane Training (Mind Touch, Psychic Shield), Healing Talent, Psychic Talent

## HEALER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Sensitive
3	Brew Elixir
4	Skill Focus (Heal)
5	Cure Disease
6	Immunity to Disease
7	Cure Poison
8	Immunity to Poison
9	Cure Blindness/Deafness
10	Favors
11	Truth-Reading
12	Arcane Training (Calm, Sleep)
13	Imbue Life
14	Arcane Expertise
15	Empower Arcana
16	Arcane Training (Mind Reading, Ward)
17	Arcane Expertise
18	Quicken Arcana
19	Severance (see page 64)
20	Widen Arcana

## PSYCHIC

Psychics, able to uncover a person's most treasured thoughts and feelings, are the most feared adepts of all. Theirs is the art dedicated to the mind and its twists and turns. Their arcane abilities allow them to communicate at long distances, making them more effective messengers than couriers on horseback. The temptation to control minds awaits even the most scrupulous psychic, but it is the ability to know and feel what others do that usually keeps psychics from abusing their powers.

## Adventures

Most, if not all, psychics develop a sense of responsibility, feeling a need to use their abilities in service to others. This, in addition to being sought out simply because they are adepts, is what drives psychics toward adventure. Psychics can serve as messengers, investigators, or defend the vulnerable on dangerous quests.

Sometimes psychics are asked to solve mysteries that have no solution but the application of the psychic arts. Aldins are careful to use them as a last resort. Jarzoni tend not to use them at all, unless Purist sanctioned, but many others have no such reservations and use them freely. Aldins, Jarzoni, and others do not hesitate to use these arts against the forces of the Lich King or against sorcerers who have activated a shadowgate or built a hidden fortress.

## Traits

If psychics seem preoccupied, chances are it's because they are; they're busy having a conversation over a long distance or attempting to maintain an illusion. Not everyone understands this, however, and treats psychics as if they were a bit air-brained. Some adepts get used to it; others resent the treatment. Despite this, psychics tend to be rather charismatic, ready to set others at ease or offer a sympathetic shoulder.

With the ability to read thoughts, psychics often understand the ways of the world. People, from generals to peasant farmers, tend to ask for a psychic's perceptions before taking action, giving the psychic further insight into how things work.

As much as they may wish to avoid it, conflict frequently comes to psychics, whether mental or physical. Good reflexes and defensive capabilities stand them in good stead. Those who do not already have these qualities develop them during training and long nights spent fighting a foe or finding shelter in the wilderness. Some deliberately supplement their martial use of the arcane arts with physical weaponry and training to better prepare themselves for the world's rigors.

## Background

Psychics sometimes manifest their abilities very young. Others need the traumatic teen years to trigger their

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powers, while others never realize what they have at their command until later in life. Regardless of when it happens, most understand they need schooling as soon as possible to master their abilities, before those abilities get them into trouble. Others, like the Jarzoni, believe that, unless psychics are Light-aligned and shuffled off to the priesthood, they are a danger to society.

Nearly all psychic training is given in a formal setting, particularly in Aldis, where the privacy and sanctity of the mind is respected and given priority. The last thing any Aldin wants is a rogue psychic wandering around, inadvertently looting others' minds without awareness of what is happening. Training is firm, ensuring at the very least that psychics can control their gift. This can take up to a year. If more is

needed or desired, however, training becomes even more stringent, emphasizing ethics as well as skill mastery. Additional training can take at least two more years, and the most promising students are often recommended for positions within the Sovereign's Finest.

In Jarzon, psychics are immersed in as much training as they can handle, which can take up to three years and sometimes more, if they are to work directly for the Hierophant in any capacity. It is not unheard of for Jarzoni psychics to become the Hierophant's master spies. Those that fail him are sent to supplement border raids or to work as a member of the secret police in smaller villages.

Kernish psychics are rare; if the Lich King and his forces have not ferreted them out, they are in hiding. Training takes much longer for them than any other Kernish adept, as a result. Rebels welcome psychics and hoard them, using their abilities sparingly to work with the Sovereign's Finest on raiding or spying missions.

In all cultures, many people view psychic adepts with mistrust, unable to believe those with the power to see into their minds will show any restraint in its use. Only the Roamers, comfortable as they are with their own seers, give psychic adepts true leeway. Even so, any Roamer capable of learning how to block out a psychic is usually taught as soon as possible. All psychics are capable of arcana that might be used in a sorcerous manner, and most try to carefully balance the need to use them against their corrupting influence.

All races are capable of developing psychic abilities; it is simply to what degree that is different among them. Night people, for example, are always on the low end of potential, while rhydan and vata seem to garner the largest share. For rhydan, the psychic arts are no different than the ability to use a weapon or tool, as natural as breathing. But some humans see the psychic talent as a curse or no better than sorcery. Others, like sea-folk and vata, simply incorporate their use into everyday life with care not to abuse them.

### Religion

Psychics aren't always religious, but those who are tend to favor the gods of Light. While some look to Gaelenir, the Great Sage, many revere prudent Goia and wise Aulora. They fear the possibility of going mad, something all too easy to occur if psychics cannot master their gift. As Goia and Aulora soothed Anwaren, so do they hope for similar beneficence. As in all other aspects of Jarzoni life, Jarzon psychics hold steadfast to Leonoth and Maureнна. They see these gods as the role models of stability and harmony and hope to live by their example.



Shadow-aligned psychic adepts knowingly court madness when they petition the exarchs of Shadow. Some of them try to follow in Anwaren's footsteps when he became the Lord of Madness, hoping that Gravicarius or some other entity out of Shadow might grace them with the power they seek. Others hope that, despite her fight with Shadow, Selene as Keeper of Secrets might be tricked into giving them the insights they seek.

## Team Role

Psychics wear different hats in the Sovereign's Finest: messenger, fighter, spy, and others. Most of the time they are wanted for their ability to truth-read, probe surface thoughts, send psychic messages, or shield a team from prying eyes. On occasion they may be asked to send psychic blasts, forcibly calm a person, or deeply probe a mind beyond its surface.

## Game Information

Psychics have the following game traits.

**Role:** Adept

**Starting Skills:** Concentration, Sense Motive

**Starting Feats:** Arcane Training (Mind Touch, Psychic Shield), Arcane Training (Mind Reading, Illusion), Iron Will, Psychic Talent

## PSYCHIC PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Sensitive
3	Skill Training (Bluff, Diplomacy)
4	Truth-Reading
5	Comprehend
6	Arcane Training (Heart Reading, Second Sight)
7	Psychic Weapon
8	Erase Signature
9	Psychic Shield Penetration
10	Arcane Focus (Psychic)
11	Fortune's Favor
12	Arcane Training (Sleep, Suggestion)
13	Subtle Arcana
14	Psychic Reflection (see page 62)
15	Arcane Training (Mind Shaping, Ward)
16	Arcane Expertise
17	Quicken Arcana
18	Empower Arcana
19	Arcane Training (Bliss, Calm)
20	Greater Arcane Focus (Psychic)

## SHAPER

Shapers have the ability to mold the raw stuff of nature, crafting everything from the very simple to the complex. Given enough time, a shaper adept can build a boat or a simple wand. Most are content with this, but a few extend their powers to manipulate flesh as well, forcing it to assume any shape they wish. Destruction is also possible, whether used for good or ill.

## Adventures

Shapers are highly sought after for their abilities to build and destroy. Many shapers are consummate artisans, and some are able to imbue items with arcane power. These latter shapers are often on the lookout for arcane artifacts, hoping to study them and learn how they were made. Since many Old Kingdom artifacts are in dangerous places, these shapers bring others with them to hunt the artifacts down.

Some shapers apply their skills to protecting and beautifying their communities. Islander shapers, for example, can control the winds and the seas to an extent. When a storm is brewing or a coastal village is under attack, a shaper's skills are called to bring a boat to safety or repel raiders from the shore. Some shapers are known for wondrous gardens, crafting plant sculptures or encouraging incredible growth.

## Traits

Shapers tend to be more intelligent and determined than charismatic and wise. Wisdom comes with age, as they

come to understand the underpinnings of the world, the elements. Whatever their other traits, shapers require a deft touch in all that they do, whether it is to direct the wind to blow a certain way or bend a rod or tree branch to their will.

Although not as curious as their arcanist brethren, shapers also thirst for knowledge. They desire to know how everything works. They take things apart and put them back together, either as they were or somehow improved. They treat every object they come across as a potential building block, something to help them create the visions in their heads.

## Background

Although a few shapers have been known to come from rich families, especially those who have made their fortune and reputation through crafting fine objects or cultivating pleasure gardens, most shapers tend to come from common stock. Whether it is, as some say, a closer tie to the elements or simply a matter of the odds favoring a common background, no one is entirely certain.

Shapers don't often attend a school for their talent, unless theirs tends toward arcane items or pieces of artistry. When they do go to school, their studies focus on the practical aspects of their arcana, such as the properties of the materials they work with or proper care for the results. Most shapers serve as apprentices, sometimes twice. Often the initial mentor teaches the apprentice





the basics of the shaping arts, while a second teaches the intricacies of working with a particular element. The amount of time spent training is determined by each mentor. For some apprentices, a year may be all they need; for others, a whole lifetime could be spent never satisfying the teacher. Some teachers require their apprentices to fashion a masterwork object or perform a great feat of shaping, like diverting a river or restoring a woodland, before releasing them.

The shaping arts occupy an important place in Aldis. Some of the most sought-after artisans and gardeners are shaper adepts. Arcanists and shapers work together to decipher the uses of Old Kingdom artifacts. Shapers and animists are in high demand as guides or protectors on hunting expeditions, raids on Kern, or searches for shadowgates.

Forest folk, sea-folk, islanders, and Roamers welcome shapers as they would anyone with a useful skill. Life is often rough and dangerous for these folk, and any tool that makes it easier is welcomed. Shaping talent sometimes runs through families in these groups; some for a long time have been known to be able to “whistle up the wind” or find safety anywhere they go.

Rezeans are suspicious of the shaping arts and have little to do with them. It is rare to find a shaper adept among the Jarzoni priesthood for the same reason; fears from the past make them hesitant to deal with these arts. Vata, both dark and light, have an innate talent for shaping and are judicious in its use. Many rhydan don't particularly care for it but accept its usefulness. Night people either fear the shaping arts or embrace them with a passion, for the Sorcerer Kings used those arts to fashion their race.

## Religion

Shapers generally venerate the Primordials above all other gods, for the ancient four are the lords of the elements, with which they shaped the world. Shapers with a particular elemental affinity reserve the highest honor for the god associated with that element: Selene with air and cold, Braniel with water and plants, Maurena with fire and light, and Anwaren with earth. Whatever elements they shape, shapers recognize that the cycle of life and death, creation and destruction, relies on the interplay of all elements, so many shapers wear symbols of all four Primordials: the sword, the chalice, the rod, and the pentacle.

Artisan shapers look to Goia as their model, seeking to emulate her wisdom, artistry, and prudence. On occasion, Hiathas, Athne, and Gaelenir are invoked, particularly where hope, good fortune, and learning are needed.

Shadow-aligned shapers are nightmarish. They use their understanding of the elements to horribly distort or utterly destroy. Given to nihilism, they feel no remorse at reshaping things and people at their whim.

## Team Role

Having a shaper adept around is like having someone able to produce the right tools at the right time, especially if the shaper can manipulate more than one element. In a

team of the Sovereign's Finest, where it's never known for sure what the group will face, this sort of quality is a blessing.

In specific scenarios, the right sort of shaper is needed. An adept who works primarily with plants will not work well on a ship, and those who adore artifacts will not take to wading through swampland or high banks of snow unless there is an item or necessary component buried underneath. Still, in a pinch, shapers can use their abilities creatively, moving beds of seaweed to choke a ship's rudders or inducing the earth to move swaths of snow from the team's path. Pairing a shaper with another adept, whether a fellow shaper or another type, works exceptionally well, for they can play off each other's strengths.

## Game Information

Shapers have the following game traits.

**Role:** Adept

**Starting Skills:** Concentration, Craft (any)

**Starting Feats:** Arcane Focus (shaping), Arcane Training (Manipulate Object, Move Object), Arcane Training (choose two of Earth Shaping, Fire Shaping, Light Shaping, Plant Shaping, Water Shaping, or Wind Shaping), Shaping Talent

## SHAPER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Skill Focus (Craft)
3	Arcane Training (two more shaping arcana from the Starting Feats list)
4	Brew Elixir
5	Skill Training (Knowledge (arcana), Notice)
6	Imbue Stone
7	Summon Elemental
8	Ritualist (see page 63)
9	Arcane Training (two more shaping arcana from the Starting Feats list)
10	Arcane Focus (Shaping)
11	Iron Will
12	Elemental Pact (see page 58)
13	Imbue Weapon
14	Empower Arcana
15	Widen Arcana
16	Windwalk (see page 65)
17	Master Elementalist (see page 62)
18	Tireless Summoner (see page 64)
19	Great Fortitude
20	Greater Arcane Focus (Shaping)

## SEER

Predicting the future is fraught with perils only seers can truly appreciate. While some do it for gain and others out of religious fervor, some cannot help doing what they do, struggling each day with the extraordinary knowledge they are blessed or cursed to receive. Adepts who practice the visionary arts are often seen as veiled in mystery, yet able to push beyond the curtain concealing the future.

## Adventures

Seers either spend time hiding from the future or striding forth to meet it. Seers who seek adventure are usually of the latter sort, sometimes hoping that by taking action they may change things or, depending on the situation, help bring their visions to pass.

Visionaries of Aldis hope to bring insight and caution to the adventurers they accompany, acting as counselors or sages, or even interfering with or averting events of a potentially horrific nature. Purist priests use the visionary arts as a means to further the Hierophant's agenda, serving as prophets of Leonoth. Some of the greatest seers are Roamers, their visions interpreted using the symbols of the cards of the Royal Road. These seers serve as guides on the Roamers' journeys, both physical and spiritual, and sometimes offer their insight to the Sovereign's Finest or to seekers willing to pay to

have their fortunes read. Others use visionary arcana as a means to entertain or trick their more gullible clients and sell their talents to the highest bidders. Many an ambitious noble or merchant has consulted a seer to find out if he will gain or lose the power and reputation he seeks.

## Traits

Seers tend to be the wisest of adepts, having learned much about the workings of the heart and mind as they practice their art. They are innately, sometimes unusually, perceptive even before they begin their studies, whether they have their feet on the ground or their eyes to the skies. Visionary adepts also sometimes possess a strange personal magnetism, attracting people to their side even if everything else about them is repellant. Seers looking for money deliberately cultivate an air of trustworthiness, the better able to inspire others to confide in them. Others combine a keen intellect with wisdom, making for excellent philosophers to consult in hard times.

As children, seers may have many playmates, but if their visionary talents develop early, they may lose their playmates because of the uneasiness their talents engender. Seer children raised in cultures where visionary talents are accepted, such as among the Roamers, are

assisted in honing their vision. Others are not so lucky and are told to stop daydreaming about the future and focus on the problems of today. As a result, some visionary adepts are better educated than others, having spent more time honing, not hiding, their abilities.

## Background

Seers rarely catch any sort of training at all, but a lucky few find someone to teach them. Young seers especially need someone who understands what they're going through, someone who can teach them that they can't always change what they foresee.



In Jarzon, seers in the priesthood are taught how to interpret their visions in accordance with their faith. Roamers also teach their seers, giving them an apprenticeship. They are taught to read the cards of the Royal Road and to see meaning in the stars, tea leaves, and other phenomena.

In Aldis, seers often make a living in small shops or join the Sovereign's Finest, eventually ending up as court advisors. Some serve as priests in the kingdom's temples, looking toward a future where all things will return to the bliss of the Eternal Dance.

Adepts talented in the visionary arts try very hard to stay away from Kern because no one wants even the possibility of handing the Lich King a potential advantage. Still, from hovel to hovel seers are welcomed among the living, for the simple reason that they represent hope for a future free of the unliving.

## Religion

There are predominantly two schools of thought among seers. The first believes the future is immutable; the gods will it so, and no one can really change it. The second says the future, like the present, changes every time someone moves or breathes; action creates its own results, so just one small pebble could change the course of a river.

Selene is the preeminent god for seers. It is commonly believed that she alone knows all that will come to pass, and foresight is one of her gifts to the world—a double-edged gift, to be sure, like her Blade of Wisdom.

Tales are filled with seers going mad upon feeling the blade's stab. Gaelenir is the face of gentler foresight, of reasoned conjecture, of seeing the far-off. When seers wish for plenty and happiness, either for themselves or others, they smile at the thought of Athne. When the future looks its most bleak, their tears entreat Felisar to console the world and Aulora to make it right, and when their hearts glow with hope, their imagination is filled with the beauty of Hiathas.

Shadow-aligned seers revere the exarchs of Shadow as a group, calling each in turn to bring the marks of Shadow to the world and to steer its future toward the seers' wishes. These seers are often doom makers as much as they are doomsayers.

## Team Role

Seers are not only practiced at foretelling the future, but they can also pick up an object and tell you who owned it last and what events transpired around it. For a team of the Sovereign's Finest that needs to investigate a mystery or find out where an artifact came from, seers are exceedingly useful. In addition, when the visionary arts are applied to fighting, it becomes easier to survive when the seer can block attacks or snatch arrows from the air before they hit their targets. Seers paired with psychics present a formidable combination when every investigative resource is needed. Seers paired with shapers and animists could plot out where a new palace should be built and the like.

## Game Information

Seers have the following game traits.

**Role:** Adept

**Starting Skills:** Notice, Sense Motive

**Starting Feats:** Arcane Training (Psychic Shield, Second Sight), Arcane Training (Scrying, Visions), Fortune's Favor, Visionary Talent

## SEER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Canny Defense
3	Skill Training (Bluff, Diplomacy)
4	Blind-Fight
5	Iron Will
6	Skill Training (Knowledge (arcana), Sneak)
7	Deflect Arrows
8	Improved Initiative
9	Uncanny Dodge
10	Psychic Talent
11	Arcane Training (Mind Touch, Ward)
12	Arcane Training (Calm, Object Reading)
13	Taunt
14	Improved Uncanny Dodge
15	Favors
16	Lightning Reflexes
17	Wealthy
18	Arcane Training (Heart Reading, Heart Shaping)
19	Empower Arcana
20	Arcane Training (Illusion, Mind Reading)

## BARD

Even before the people of Aldea mastered the arcane arts, they had a need to communicate and keep track of their traditions. Where libraries and magic failed, bards stepped in to fill the void. On first sight, bards are little more than traveling entertainers, but by spreading word of all they have seen and heard, plus reciting stories and legends, they keep tales and traditions alive. Because of their mission as wandering historians and bearers of news, bards enjoy the protection of ancient laws of hospitality and safe passage, allowing them to concentrate their efforts on bettering their performance and understanding, instead of training to defend themselves during a life on the road.

## Adventures

Bards see adventures as opportunities to expand their repertoire of tales and legends, not only because they can come in contact with new ones, but also because they can forge their own. Bards are inquisitive by nature and generally live on the road, so a life of adventuring is almost a given.

## Traits

A bard's main focus is the ability to entertain and communicate. They develop their art to levels lesser performers can only dream of. Most bards learn to touch the feelings of others through their performances, whether they are musicians, storytellers, or more physical

performers, such as acrobats and jugglers. Many consider arcana an art like any other, and while bards never reach an adept's level of expertise, they perform their arcana ably, their roles as informal messengers and keepers of lore complemented by their arcane abilities.

## Background

While it is not strange to find members of the upper classes among bards, the wandering entertainers often come from more humble origins. Bards often cut ties to their place of birth, which is easier when those ties are not laden with obligations. Bards embark upon their vocation by apprenticing with an older bard or joining a troupe. Many bards spent some time at the Royal College in Aldis, and no self-respecting bard has remained clear of the Royal Library.

They enjoy a great deal of respect in Aldis. In central Aldis, bards are romantic figures, and their arrival is celebrated in most cities and villages. This welcome occurs in the Aldin borderlands, as well, although it has different connotations there. In the north, bards are a vital way for settlements to keep track of one another. In the east, bards have been working hard to lighten the lives of the immigrants there, and they are at the forefront of the queen's efforts to assimilate Jarzoni immigrants into Aldin culture, whether the bards know it or not.

In Jarzon, bards are welcomed, as per the ancient customs. Bards are especially beloved if they sing of victories

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against the Sorcerer Kings, of the love of Leonoth and Maurenna, and of hope for a better future. They are politely asked to leave if they begin to sing and tell stories that conflict with the Purist faith. In Kern, the Lich King

considers bards rabble-rousers; anyone professing the bardic profession is in for thorough questioning by the Lich King's agents. Despite this, the long-suffering humans of Kern shelter bards in exchange for stories and news of the world beyond the Ice-Binder Mountains.

Rezea treats bards with the same, or even more, respect than Aldis. Rezean bards are keepers of clan lore and are accorded all due honor, as a result. Roamers are among the most accomplished bards; they are already used to a life on the road and have many entertainers among them, plying their trade in every settlement they visit.

Vata'an bards are tasked with remembering and retelling the stories and dreams of their nearly destroyed culture. Rhydan bards are rare, as the intelligent creatures prefer to live in the here and now and find music in the sound of the wind blowing through trees and grass. Night people love bards and must work long and hard to become one, given their racial limitations, but the prospect of expressing things other than rage motivates them.

### Religion

Bards approach religion in an informal and carefree manner; they commend their souls and well being to a deity of their choice, but more as a friend asking for a favor than in pious worship. Bards often pray to Hiathas for their art, Felisar for their travels, and Gaelenir for their adventures and their stories. Several among them go directly to following Braniel, but there are a few that place their faith in Maurenna.



### BARD PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Inspire (courage)
3	Inspire (competence)
4	Arcanum (Mind Touch)
5	Fortune's Favor
6	Suggest (Perform)
7	Arcanum (Sleep)
8	Arcanum (Calm)
9	Skill Training (Acrobatics, Disguise)
10	Skill Focus (Perform)
11	Comprehend
12	Inspire (complacency)
13	Arcanum (Illusion)
14	Inspire (awe)
15	Arcanum (Cure)
16	Arcanum (Heart Reading)
17	Improved Feint
18	Inspire (rage)
19	Arcanum (Heart Shaping)
20	Arcanum (Bliss)

## Team Role

When traveling as part of a group, bards are information brokers and impromptu diplomats, taking roads into information normally barred to nobles because of their high position. Even if they are from noble stock, bards are folk of the people and mingle easily with them, and commoners and nobles alike are usually well disposed toward them. Their dedication to a gentle trade hides their usefulness in battle, where they serve their companions as tactical support, bolstering the morale of the group while playing tricks against their enemies.

## Game Information

Bards have the following game traits.

**Role:** Expert

**Qualities:** Good saves (Reflex, Will)

**Starting Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (history), Perform (stringed instruments), Sense Motive

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (light), Fascinate (Perform), Sensitive, Taunt

# INFILTRATOR

As anyone who navigates the social and political landscape of Aldea knows, knowledge is power, particularly knowledge of things others would keep secret. Infiltrators are specialists in acquiring this knowledge, whether for their own advancement or that of a cause.

Throughout the lands of Aldea, spies, sentinels, and covert agents are lauded by their homelands as brave and daring and denounced by their enemies as conniving and deceitful, all while the enemy's own spies and infiltrators are at work. With such move and countermove, suspicion and intrigue, little wonder the agents of the Kingdom of the Blue Rose call infiltration and espionage the Great Game.

## Adventures

Infiltrators are always in the thick of danger, leading lives of subterfuge that put them at risk should their true purpose be discovered. The situations they find themselves in run from social situations and scams to heart-pounding incursions into forbidden places. Infiltrators operate in the shadows, driven by curiosity and tempered by caution. They must avoid saying the wrong thing, and stepping on the wrong tile in a darkened corridor. Their successes are usually unknown, their failures often public disasters.

## Traits

Infiltrators develop skill in stealth not only because they must be able to enter places unnoticed, but also because they must be able to tail others in order to hear what they are saying. They learn to deactivate traps and open locks, and this ability to bypass barriers grows as they learn arcana to work at a distance and to hide their presence.

Infiltrators also become accomplished liars and judges of character, masters of disguise and manipulation. They can cross a doorway pretending they belong inside with the same ease as sneaking through alternate entrances. Experienced infiltrators accumulate a wealth of contacts, favors, and information.

## Background

Heroes often find their way to becoming infiltrators from a life of crime, either as swindlers who learned to sneak or

burglars with a touch of social grace. A few merchant and noble houses foster the subterfuge an infiltrator needs to be successful.

The reasons heroes have for becoming infiltrators vary according to their origins, but they have in common an inquisitive nature. Envy is sometimes the motivator for low-born heroes who want to experience things normally out of their reach, sneaking into the parties of the wealthy and powerful. On the other end, boredom and a desire for excitement drive scions of wealth and influence into infiltration.

It is not strange to find an interesting story behind an infiltrator's arrival upon this path; one may have followed a paramour and discovered a dark affiliation to a Shadow cult, another made a habit of pretending to be a baker's

## INFILTRATOR PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Inspire (complacency)
3	Surprise Attack (+2)
4	Fascinate (Bluff)
5	Skill Training (Knowledge (any))
6	Arcanum (Sense Minds)
7	Improvised Tools
8	Arcanum (Sleep)
9	Surprise Attack (+4)
10	Arcanum (Move Object)
11	Suggest (Bluff)
12	Arcanum (Light Shaping)
13	Trapfinding
14	Arcanum (Manipulate Object)
15	Surprise Attack (+6)
16	Arcanum (Mind Reading)
17	Talented (Bluff, Disguise)
18	Blind-Fight
19	Skill Mastery
20	Arcanum (Scrying)

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apprentice to steal bread for his family, while another may have a history of feigning arcane talent to steal texts from an adept. There is an infiltrator among the Sovereign's Finest who came to her position by fooling everyone into

believing she was the daughter of a traveling noble who had died in the wilderness months before.

In Aldis, mercenary infiltrators sell their services to anyone who can afford them; they have worked for members of the different ruling councils, for merchants who want to know the secrets of a competitor's trade, for nobles who wish to have an advantage in politics, and for individuals who simply want to find out the secrets others hold from them.

More principled infiltrators serve as agents of the crown, not from a desire for wealth, but out of a sense of duty and loyalty to the ideals of Aldis and its sovereign. Among other things, they act as counterintelligence, blocking the attempts of other infiltrators to uncover the sovereign's affairs and countering saboteurs and assassins.

The Silence also recruits and trains infiltrators, sometimes hiring them out. Most clients do not realize that the secrets they're buying usually find their way to the Prince, giving the Silence new strings to pull in society.

Kern is well known for having spies and agents everywhere, at home and abroad, usually in the guise of ordinary citizens of other nations, traveling merchants, minstrels, or other folk who attract little undue attention. The Lich King handsomely rewards those who provide him with valuable information or assistance, but those serving Kern abroad risk terrible punishment if their true allegiance is uncovered. While Aldis strives to treat even spies of the Lich King fairly, it's not unknown for authorities pursuing a suspected spy to become overzealous and for the spy to never make it to trial.

While the priesthood of Jarzon bristles at any implication of espionage, the theocracy has two sorts of infiltrators in its service. The first are usually priests or priest-adepts trained to gather intelligence on other nations, usually while visiting in the guise of a merchant, wandering healer, mendicant priest, or the like. Other Jarzoni infiltrators are ever vigilant sentries against the forces of Shadow and corruption that may try to worm their way into the lives and homes of the good people of Jarzon. Aldins denounce the theocracy's practice of spying on its own people, but to the Jarzoni, it is a matter of public safety and necessity, for the greater good.

Rezeans have little use for spies, and the curious among them tend to end up as scouts and rangers, rather than learning the arts of stealth and social manipulation. If the Rezeans need information, they consult the auguries of their witches or send forth scouts. Suffice it to say, Rezeans do not treat spies in their territories with any kindness, considering espionage a grave insult to their hospitality.

Roamers are natural infiltrators, with their charm, reputation for wandering, and their hereditary talent for visionary arcana. In truth, Roamer infiltrators and spies are far less common than most people believe, but they are among the finest of their profession.

Although few rhydan serve as spies for anyone, they can be quite effective at it with their talent for psychic arcana. In particular, rhy-horses can and do masquerade as mundane horses, allowing them to pass virtually unnoticed by most people. Rhy-horses are proud, however, and generally consider such things beneath them. Vata, sea-folk, and night people tend to be too noticeable to be completely



successful as infiltrators, but nothing stops them from using preconceptions about their race to their advantage.

## Religion

Many infiltrators consider Gaelenir their patron, blessing their efforts to uncover that which is secret and hidden. Others place their faith in Selene, petitioning her to reveal her secrets to them, just as they ask Gaelenir for stealth and success in their endeavors. Jarzoni infiltrators tend to see themselves more as bearers of Leonoth's divine light of truth, shining it in the dark places where evil hides. Mercenary infiltrators aren't especially religious, but as the saying goes, more prayers are offered in danger than at rest, and infiltrators lead dangerous lives.

## Team Role

The infiltrator opens doors, both literally and metaphorically. They prefer to remain in the background

and even apart from the rest of a group, slipping in unnoticed while their companions draw all the attention. By remaining hidden, they provide their group with a wild card when things go awry. They are the intelligence specialists among the Sovereign's Finest, assigned to thorny diplomatic missions to safeguard against deception and for when diplomacy and direct action are not enough.

## Game Information

Infiltrators have the following game traits.

**Role:** Expert

**Qualities:** Good save (Reflex), +1 Defense

**Starting Skills:** Bluff, Disable Device, Disguise, Notice, Sense Motive, Sneak

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (light), Low-Light Vision, Arcanum (Mind Touch), Favors

# MERCHANT

**A**ldis owes its prosperity to the hard work of its people as much as it owes it to the purity of its defenders. After the Great Rebellion and the fall of the Sorcerer Kings, trade and honest effort allowed the different nations to rebuild and recover. Merchants are at the forefront of this recovery. The vocation of merchant is one of the most flexible, from the artisan shaping pottery with his hands (and sometimes the shaping arts) to the rich mercantile lord owning dozens of caravans transporting goods from one point of Aldea to the other.

## Adventures

Ordinary merchants are loath to go on adventures, but the trade of some requires them to do so. Ox drivers must brave dangerous roads to deliver their cargo, and crafty scholars must swallow their fears if they want to learn secrets buried in the ruins of the Old Kingdom. Zealous artisans set forth to learn new techniques to become the best at their craft or to find the best materials. They embark on adventures to expand their horizons, their expertise, their influence, and their profits.

## Traits

Merchants constantly seek to learn new crafts, embark on fresh enterprises, and forge new partnerships. They end up knowing much about many things and cultivate a resourcefulness that sees them through many sticky situations. Regardless of their trade, merchants have to deal with people with many different dispositions and goals, and even the grumpiest blacksmith learns to be a good judge of character if he does not want to be fooled during a sale.

## Background

Merchants usually grow up immersed in the trade they will practice as an adult. They apprentice with an expert in the field. A future gourmet cook might begin her career as a scullery girl, while a great scholar might begin sweeping the

floors of the Royal Library. A rich merchant could inherit his father's business and simply continue on, learning from his father and his associates. Whether they climb through the ranks of their profession or land on their current position from the start, merchants must learn the secrets of their craft or lose miserably against the competition. Good merchants prosper, while mediocre ones struggle in the shadow of their more accomplished peers.

## MERCHANT PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Sensitive
3	Skill Training (Sneak, Ride)
4	Arcanum (Psychic Shield)
5	Arcanum (Mind Touch)
6	Favors
7	Talented (Craft, Diplomacy)
8	Fascinate (Diplomacy)
9	Skill Training (Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (nobility))
10	Skill Affinity
11	Inspire (competence)
12	Arcanum (Second Sight)
13	Skill Focus (choose one)
14	Arcanum (Object Reading)
15	Skill Training (choose two)
16	Wealthy
17	Suggest (Diplomacy)
18	Arcanum (Ward)
19	Second Chance (being mentally controlled)
20	Wealthy



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In Aldis, merchants can have as much say in the government of the nation as nobles do, and they have fewer restrictions. They must simply be good at what they do, and they must campaign extensively with their fellows in order to gain a position in the Merchant Council. Even a lone cobbler in a small village is a merchant, but only those with a very serious approach to their profession can be members of the Merchant Guild.



The guild is divided into several subguilds to reflect the great variety of professions involved in Aldin commerce.

Merchants from the city of Aldis and the central valleys are varied in profession, as well as background. They are in the world's trade hub, where there are many success stories, almost as many as the stories of failure. Hard work has a way of earning its own reward, and merchants who ply their trade with honesty and dedication find prosperity calling at their doors sooner or later. Central Aldis sees the greatest concentration of experts of more scholarly trades, offering service and knowledge instead of manufactured goods or transport.

Near Aldis's borders, merchants become more specialized in the activities best suited for their regions, and traders are common. Forest folk merchants are mostly traders who exchange the forest's natural materials for worked goods, although a few of them specialize in crafting the different tools and weapons their hardy people use for survival. Also in the north, merchants maintain mining outposts, where workers may become sufficiently efficient in their work to someday have a business of their own. Scholars explore the Ice-Binder Mountains in search of places of power and relics.

In the south, merchants are the fishers and sailors keeping shoreline communities alive, moving goods and people back and forth. The best captains come from the merchant vocation, for they take the time to understand the language of the tides and the currents. Typical merchant heroes from the south begin their careers as cabin boys and girls, learning the ways of the sea from a young age.

The people of eastern Aldis are hard-working and disciplined, producing some of the most precise craftsmen in Aldis. They learn their trade from parents or close friends in the community. With solid values and a strength increased by adversity, eastern merchants are inching their way into posing serious competition to the merchants of the central valleys.

In Rezea, merchants travel alongside warriors. They ride with scouts when making contact with other tribes or with envoys from Aldis, complementing the scouts' diplomacy with their bargaining skills and their eye for goods. The Rezeans have the best horse breeders and trainers, and their leatherworkers produce sturdy cinches and belts. Rezean bowyers and fletchers make great bows and arrows, excellent for hunting and fighting on horseback.

Merchants in Kern must tiptoe around the Lich King's need for goods and his tendency to seize rather than purchase them. Jarzon produces similarly disciplined artisans and savvy merchants as eastern Aldis.

Roamers excel at many trades, producing unique crafts and haggling with the best. They also are accomplished tinkers, capable of repairing the goods produced by others, and producing replacements for what they cannot repair.

For obvious reasons, rhydan make poor merchants, except for trades involving knowledge, something they can cultivate unimpeded, even if their areas of

expertise are limited to herbalism, geography, and other nature-related matters. Night people and vata produce unique crafts, but they trade minimally with others. Seafolk are outstanding seafaring merchants, and many of their artisans create exquisite jewelry out of shells and pearls.

## Religion

Most merchants look at Goia as their patron and utter Athne's name when hoping for riches. Religious faith among merchants exists in different degrees. Jarzoni and eastern Aldin merchants pray daily for good business and safe travels, while those from central Aldis often only offer a simple prayer of gratitude with the day's first sale or transaction.

## Team Role

In a team, merchants can back everyone up with their expertise and are ideal advisors in many situations. The arcana that merchants master make them good negotiators, and their wealth and influence can open many doors.

## Game Information

Merchants have the following game traits.

**Role:** Expert

**Qualities:** Good saves (Reflex, Will)

**Starting Skills:** Bluff, Craft (any), Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (local), Sense Motive

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (light), Jack of All Trades, Skill Mastery, Wealthy

# NOBLE

**N**obility is a recognized status in all of the nations of Aldea. It grants those who hold it the right to rule over the common folk, but also imposes a responsibility to look after them. Nobles are born or destined to take upon great responsibilities, but that is about the only thing they have in common. Leaders of their people, they can be as gracious as a traveling noble of the Aldin court, harsh but honorable as the chieftains of the Rezean people, pious and strict like the hierarchs of Jarzon, or cruel and demanding like the regional governors of Kern. Nobles do not need a title to rule; they only need the recognition of their people and their acceptance of their leadership, whether this acceptance comes out of divine right, heredity, appointment, or just plain effort.

## Adventures

Nobles are not common adventurers, for they have responsibilities they cannot avoid, even if they can put them off. Adventuring nobles tend to be traveling nobles and the like, people with the loyalty and talent to take on the duties of being an agent of the sovereign, but not quite suited, or willing, to administer a territory, and definitely too young and inexperienced to be on the Noble Council. Traveling nobles are sent to the corners of the kingdom to communicate the edicts of the council, to bring back news from the furthest villages, and to help solve problems they encounter. Most of the traveling nobles embark on these adventures voluntarily, eager to prove their worth to their peers.

## Traits

While a few nobles find ruling through fear suits them, most prefer to develop the art of diplomacy and subtle negotiation, using guile and charisma to get their way. In Aldis, nobles must start out pure of heart and intention and dabble in the arcane arts that suit their position, with most learning to touch others' minds and guard their own. In other cultures, nobles develop the personal qualities and skills valued by their people so they can rule by example as well as by appointment, earning the respect of their followers and becoming paragons of what their

culture represents. Jarzoni nobles become knowledgeable in matters of faith and the battle against Shadow, the governors of Kern develop the ability to strike fear in their subjects, the hearth leaders of the Scatterstar Archipelago are accomplished sailors, and Rezean chiefs are great riders and warriors.

## Background

The status of a noble depends greatly on the form of government. In Aldis, where they are chosen by merit and purity, nobles can come from the humblest of origins,

### NOBLE PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Weapon Training
3	Sensitive
4	Arcanum (Mind Touch)
5	Arcanum (Psychic Shield)
6	Leadership (see page 61)
7	Arcanum (Heart Reading)
8	Skill Training (Intimidate, Language)
9	Mounted Combat
10	Pure-Hearted
11	Master Plan
12	Skill Training (Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local))
13	Rhy-bonded
14	Improved Initiative
15	Estate (see page 58)
16	Canny Defense
17	Skill Focus (Diplomacy)
18	Improved Demoralize
19	Arcanum (Mind Reading)
20	Inspire (awe)

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as long as they devote themselves to hard study and work, pass the necessary tests, and are confirmed by the Noble Council and the Blue Rose Scepter. Despite the accessibility of nobility in Aldis, most of the kingdom's nobles come from affluent families, as they have more time to devote to study than most other citizens.

Potential nobles from the central valleys follow the usual rules and seek recognition by the Blue Rose Scepter as soon as possible. Potentials in other parts of the country also seek the scepter's approval, although many communities are content to be led by people of noble stature who have not felt the scepter's touch. The forest folk are often led by those who have earned the respect of their people and their rhy-wolf allies. The refugees in the east trust their religious leaders to guide them, yet a small number of them have been accepted by the scepter. They strive to be representatives of both their people and the ideals of Aldis. In the south, hearth leaders have family ties that give them the right to lead, and few are willing to abandon their responsibilities to their hearth in order to study and take the tests in the capital.

Outside of Aldis, the model of nobility is considerably different. The nobles of Jarzon are faithful followers of the Church of the Pure Light. Without the guiding light of the Blue Rose Scepter, the Jarzoni hierarchy has no way to guarantee the purity of their nobles, so corrupt leaders have tarnished the image of the theocracy, even when most of them do have their people's welfare at heart.

The regional governors of Kern achieve their positions by appointment and hold on to them by sheer ruthlessness and political savvy. The status of nobility is shaky for the governors, who must show favorable results in their provinces in the areas of agricultural and mineral production. Some of the nobles of Kern are sorcerers, students of the Lich King and under his close supervision.

Rezean nobles are almost indistinguishable from their warriors, except for some elaborate piece of jewelry or clothing to show their status. They are expected to accompany their warriors into battle, unless they are very old. While heredity is important, merit has equal weight, for the proud riders balk at the orders of a poor rider or cowardly warrior. While the Rezean witches hold considerable power, leadership about worldly matters belongs to the nobles.

Roamer nobles, often called princes and princesses, rise from the ranks of their families and attain their position when they prove they are responsible enough to lead. They are the children of family elders and are expected to take the reins of leadership when their parents pass them on or pass away, but they must prove they are worthy and often use adventuring as a way of testing themselves.

Nobility is hazy among nonhumans. Vata who live in their own communities have an informal concept of nobility; they have no true aristocracy, their ambassadors and sages being the closest thing to nobles they have left. Rhydan have no system of government; the few nobles among them are pack leaders or nobles in the societies of their allies, like the rhy-cats who are Aldin nobles. Night people, sea-folk, and vata join the Aldin nobility under the same conditions as anyone else, proving their worth

in Aldis or laying their claim to leadership among their communities. Sea-folk nobles are often hearth leaders, rather than nobles of the kingdom.

## Religion

As community leaders, nobles look to Anwaren, Aulora, and Maurena for guidance. Also, as they strive to reflect the values of their culture, nobles' attitudes toward religion tend to follow those of the people who follow them. A noble from Jarzon, for example, is deeply involved in the Purist faith, while a Kernish noble offers lip service, if not sincere worship, to the exarchs of Shadow.

## Team Role

Nobles easily assume the role of leader in any group of adventurers. They often lead a team of the Sovereign's

Finest, appointed by the director or even the queen herself. Nobles are expected to represent the group as a whole, and have the ability and training to coordinate and direct the efforts of their fellows in many situations, from tense negotiations to pitched battles. The most competent nobles know to ask for advice and to defer to others when appropriate.

## Game Information

Nobles have the following game traits.

**Role:** Expert

**Qualities:** Good saves (Reflex, Will)

**Starting Skills:** Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (nobility), Notice, Sense Motive, Ride

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (light), Favors, Inspire (competence), Wealthy

# SCOUT

Explorers and pathfinders, scouts find the roads others will travel later and make first contact with people before more seasoned diplomats. Scouts are used to being the first at many things, leading the way for others to follow. They engage more in explorative diplomacy than reconnaissance, and their training in both exploration and negotiation make them excellent envoys to far-off settlements and heralds to keep tabs on what happens in even the most remote part of a realm.

## Adventures

Scouts are ideal adventurers. They go off into the wild places and are thrilled to overcome the toughest challenges that nature has to offer. They then arrive back in civilization to exchange underbrush for rumor-mongering and wild beasts for rivals. The wanderlust driving their feet takes a rest to let the scout's social nature have its share of the fun.

## Traits

Scouts divide their attention between abilities that help them find their way in the wilderness and those that help them find their way in society. They may not be as proficient as some adepts and warriors in mastering the raw power of the wild and may not navigate the social jungle with the same ease as nobles and bards, but their combined talents make for a very versatile whole. Many scouts learn arcana to help them in both areas.

## Background

Scouts hail from many backgrounds. What they all have in common is a curiosity to find out what lies over the next hill and the ingenuity to carry them over the horizon. They love the road and the destination.

In Aldis, many scouts call the regions near the borders home, but just as many come from the central valleys, coming to their vocation through boredom or undying curiosity. The forest folk have the best scouts in the land, for they have the privilege of being trained by rhy-

wolves. The scouts from the east are usually experienced wayfarers who led their people from Jarzon across the Veran Marsh, passing on their trade to children in their communities. In the south, scouts are sailors and navigators, cultivating friendships with dolphins.

The Sovereign's Finest is always on the lookout for good scouts, completing the training in social matters for those already versed in wilderness survival and vice versa. Aldis ceased expanding long ago, so scouts are necessary mainly for vigilance and as couriers, as well as deputy ambassadors or as ambassadors themselves. During those

## SCOUT PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Arcanum (Body Control)
3	Arcanum (Second Sight)
4	Sensitive
5	Skill Training (Diplomacy, Language)
6	Improved Speed
7	Endurance
8	Arcane Speed
9	Arcanum (Sense Minds)
10	Canny Defense
11	Surprise Attack (+2)
12	Trackless Step
13	Uncanny Dodge
14	Talented (Notice, Sense Motive)
15	Improved Uncanny Dodge
16	Evasion
17	On the Run
18	Arcanum (Enhance Senses)
19	Arcanum (Enhance Self)
20	Surprise Attack (+4)

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rare incursions into Jarzon or Kern, a scout's services are invaluable to take a group to its destination and back safely. Scouts also find employment with the Merchant Guild, guiding its caravans.

Kern scouts are most often in the advance party of a raid, their expertise valuable to the Lich King's bandits.

Rezeans hold scouts in as much esteem as they do their warriors. They have the task not only to ride ahead of the main group to recognize opportunities and threats, but also to maintain the links between the different clans, riding back and forth bearing the messages and



requests of their chieftains. As is to be expected, Rezean scouts are excellent riders who travel light and fast, and practically know every blade of grass in their territory.

The scouts of the Scatterstar Archipelago, many of them seafolk, command or work on seafaring vessels, itching to chart new trade routes and serving the same role as their Rezean counterparts by bearing tidings among the various islands.

In Jarzon, scouts are heralds of the church, carrying the Hierophant's proclamations to distant villages and keeping an eye out for threats, especially from the Veran Marsh and the Shadow Barrens. These scouts often become investigators and inquisitors, delving into the secrets of people's lives to find the tendrils of Shadow and root them out.

Roamer scouts travel ahead of their caravans to measure the trails and make sure they are safe. The post of scout is a great responsibility, only given to the completely trustworthy in skill and intent.

Rhydan are almost scouts by nature, perfectly suited for surviving in the wild, even if they stumble a little when it comes to dealing with other intelligent beings. Most rhydan found among other races are scouts.

Many vata feel like outsiders and become scouts out of a desire to remain apart from their human parents and communities. Night people scouts are often torn between their desire to fit into Aldin society and a desire to lead a life alone in the wilds.

### Religion

Scouts often pray to the Primordials, asking for fair weather and smooth travels. Of the gods of Light, Felisar and Gaelenir share scouts' devotion. They ask for Felisar's protection as they wander on and off the roads of the world and request Gaelenir's vision as they seek out undiscovered pathways. In practice, many scouts are easy-going and a little opportunistic about religion, not giving a second thought to divinity when things are going their way and becoming quite devout when faced with danger.

### Team Role

Scouts are tasked with traveling ahead of their companions to see what awaits them. Theirs is the task of setting guards, scouting the terrain, and making sure the heroes do not become lost. They are also adept at uncovering secrets and serve as decent spies, as well as heralds. It is also the scout's responsibility to test the waters for a group of the Sovereign's Finest, advising whether they should reveal themselves to the people or arrive incognito to better perform their mission.

### Game Information

Scouts have the following game traits.

**Role:** Expert

**Qualities:** Good saves (Fortitude, Reflex)

**Starting Skills:** Notice, Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Sneak, Survival

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (light), Arcanum (Mind Touch), Track, Wild Empathy

## SPIRIT DANCER

The spirit dancer tradition has survived a turbulent history relatively unscathed, despite the Sorcerer Kings' efforts to stamp it out. The spirit dancer art is meant to echo the Eternal Dance, which is older than the world itself. Spirit dancers are wont to enter trances they claim put them in contact with the divine, granting them a glimpse of eternity and the secret to rejoining the Dance in a flash of enlightenment. Their dances are charged with power, and they have developed many to move with the beat of the battlefield, finding the rhythm of conflict to dance their way to victory.

### Adventures

Of the different expert paths, spirit dancers are the only ones with a common mission, although they walk different roads. Spirit dancers become adventurers to further the cause of the Light, pure and simple. All spirit dancers devote a period in their lives to travel, finding wrongs to right and lessons to learn, deepening their understanding of the world and the Eternal Dance. It is the choice of each hero whether to continue pursuing the cause of Light on the road, to turn inward to a life of contemplation, or to train disciples.

### Traits

Spirit dancers exude power and wisdom, cultivating their awareness of the world as well as the strength of their personality. The dances they practice also hone the body,

granting them great agility and bolstering their health. The discipline needed to learn their dances gives them exceptional abilities in combat, letting them dance their way through a battle to strike with inner force as well as physical strength.

### Background

Spirit dancers cannot start upon their path without guidance. Except for the rare prodigy, people cannot improvise the steps of the Eternal Dance. The spirit dancer academies in Aldis welcome earnest apprentices who prove themselves capable of handling the harsh training and the deep truths of the teachings. Some experienced spirit dancers roam the land, actively looking for apprentices or trusting fate to guide their steps to where a student is ready for a teacher.

In either case, novice dancers are in for long and arduous training, and many drop out within a couple of years, unable to keep up with the discipline their teachers demand of them. Those trained in academies lead cloistered lives, not shunning but definitely avoiding contact with the outside world as they immerse themselves in the truths of the Eternal Dance. They perform all kinds of menial tasks to learn humility and appreciate the ways the dance expresses itself in the details of life.

Each academy practices a particular style of the dance according to the tradition of its teachers. Many dancers and scholars can recognize where spirit dancers were trained by observing their movements and performance style.

There are a few loose ranks in an academy, with advanced students taking on more responsibilities as they advance in their practice. Each academy elects a master from among its teachers, who is that particular academy's leader.

### SPIRIT DANCER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Stunning Attack
3	Canny Defense
4	Evasion
5	Deflect Arrows
6	Arcane Strike
7	Improved Balance
8	Arcanum (Enhance Self)
9	Self-Healing
10	Improved Evasion
11	Slow Fall
12	Skill Training (Climb, Swim)
13	Arcane Speed
14	Arcane Balance
15	Arcanum (Second Sight)
16	Immunity to Disease
17	Arcanum (Psychic Shield)
18	Snatch Arrows
19	Immunity to Poison
20	Skill Mastery

### SHADOW DANCERS

A perversion of the spirit dancer tradition, shadow dancers are the descendants of those who fell under the Sorcerer Kings' influence and hid when their sorcerous masters met their end. As their name implies, shadow dancers lurk in shadow, except in Kern, where some serve the Lich King openly. Spirit dancers fight them at every turn.

Shadow dancers train in places tainted by Shadow, their dance a distortion of the Eternal Dance. The only truth they touch through their dance is the truth of madness and sorcery, but they are as effective as their spirit dancer enemies. They are almost always Narrator characters.

The shadow dancer progression is different from the spirit dancer progression in the following ways: *2nd level* — Arcanum (Pain); *5th level* — Arcanum (Psychic Blast); *12th level* — Arcanum (Harm).



Spirit dancers taken under the wing of a wandering teacher approach learning the dance a bit differently. They too perform many petty tasks at their master's behest, but they are much more in contact with the world. Their lessons are meant to teach them how the Eternal Dance manifests in every turning of the leaves and every smile on a busy city square. Wandering students learn a more eclectic style, as their teachers encourage them to find their own truths, yet their style inevitably resembles their teachers'.

After years of discipline and instruction, students are released from their mentors' care. The academy's leader asks the graduate to go into the world to practice the dance. Students of wandering masters wake one day to find the master gone, a note of congratulations encouraging them to embark on their own journeys.

As the core of the resistance against the Sorcerer Kings, spirit dancers are legendary. Aldis grants them the same respect given to priests. Even the fiercely independent forest folk welcome spirit dancers into their villages, trusting them even if they are night people. Spirit dancers often double as entertainers, their preternatural grace shining through their performances.

They participate in many festivals throughout Aldis, giving in to good-natured pleas for a dance.

In Rezea, spirit dancers have a status similar to witches, revered regardless of their age, but things are different in Kern and Jarzon. The Lich King has ordered that any spirit dancers found in his domain are to be executed, drawn, and quartered, not exactly in that order. They are seen as dangerous revolutionaries, and any of them wishing to lend their aid to the beleaguered people of Kern must do so clandestinely. Jarzon does not persecute spirit dancers with such zeal and violence, but the priesthood considers them disreputable, taking attention away from more sober spiritual paths. Nonetheless, spirit dancers travel Jarzon in search of new apprentices and chances to lend a hand to the Jarzoni.

Of the nonhuman races, rhydan never become spirit dancers. They appreciate and ally with them, but their bodies dance to a different tune. Vata are intrigued by spirit dancer doctrine, but they prefer other forms of expressing their arcane heritage. Night people see the spirit dancer tradition as a chance to gain the inner peace and acceptance they crave.

## Religion

At some point, all spirit dancers meditate on the beauty of Hiathas, seeking to emulate his incomparable grace, to learn the gestures and steps of his dances. Ultimately, though, their spirits turn toward the Eternal Dance itself, as they strive to embody it in their dancing and find that moment of bliss, where enlightenment is attained by immersing in the dance's disciplined yet passionate movements.

## Team Role

Spirit dancers are superb warriors in their own right, melding arcane power with strong and agile movements. Their Battle Dance is an exotic fighting style many have difficulty countering. Because they do not rely on weapons and armor to fight, they can stealthily spring an ambush and tip the balance of an encounter in their companions' favor. Despite their martial prowess, spirit dancers are more comfortable acting as a team's moral compass and wild card.

## Game Information

Spirit dancers have the following game traits.

**Role:** Expert

**Qualities:** Good save (Reflex), +1 Defense

**Starting Skills:** Acrobatics, Concentration, Escape Artist, Jump, Perform (dance), Sneak

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (light), Arcanum (Battle Dance), Arcanum (Body Control), Improved Strike

# THIEF

That Aldis has a fair and just culture does not mean it is free of crime or that its values are upheld through all levels of society. Thieves walk outside the borders of law, earning their keep at the expense of others. Thieves are not brigands waylaying caravans; they rely on stealth and trickery to steal without being noticed, so they thrive in cities where they can vanish among the populace and where the fattest and easiest prey is found. From con artists to daring burglars, thieves elevate stealing to an art form.

## Adventures

The thief's life is an adventure, for it depends on taking risks. The wise thief knows what marks to pursue and which to leave alone, but accidents happen and sometimes thieves need to leave home in search of greener pastures, preferably pastures where their head does not have a price. A thief can become an adventurer out of curiosity or as an excuse to evade authorities or dangerous creditors. Some embark upon their illegal activities with the best of intentions, seeing no other way than crime to bring about a greater good, especially in lands like Kern.

## Traits

Thieves live by their skills and therefore must nurture the physical prowess that allows them to palm purses and duck around corners when pursued. Stealth and trickery are their main tools, and they develop ways to evade any threat and achieve the maximum results with minimal effort.

## Background

Thieves come from all walks of life, but they are more common among the lower classes, where financial need drives many to a life of crime. Ballads do speak of bored or adventurous scions of rich families who have adopted a roguish alter ego to jump across rooftops and slip inside maidens' chambers to steal their valuables, along with their hearts.

There is no school of thievery—save for the school of hard knocks—and mentors are few and far between. A professional thief learns from trial and error, or by applying knowledge and training acquired elsewhere.

One source of training for thieves is the Silence, the criminal cartel overseeing crime in Aldis. Most thieves who spend a few years at their trade will eventually

encounter the Silence, and they have to pay a cut of their loot if they want to keep their legs in working order. The Silence is the closest thing a thief has to a guild or academy, but the syndicate is far from a friendly fellowship. Thieves count themselves fortunate if they actually make any friends within its ranks.

In Aldis, master thieves have a divided image, depending on how they go about their business. Petty thugs and cutpurses lead a rather ignominious life avoiding the watch, but cat burglars and so-called gentlemen and lady thieves sometimes become the protagonists of exciting tales, becoming public figures without really intending to. The profession of thief is more common in the cities of the central valleys, with the greatest number in the capital, but wherever there is need or greed, there are thieves.

Thieves in northern Aldis must contend with the swift and harsh justice of their communities. There are very

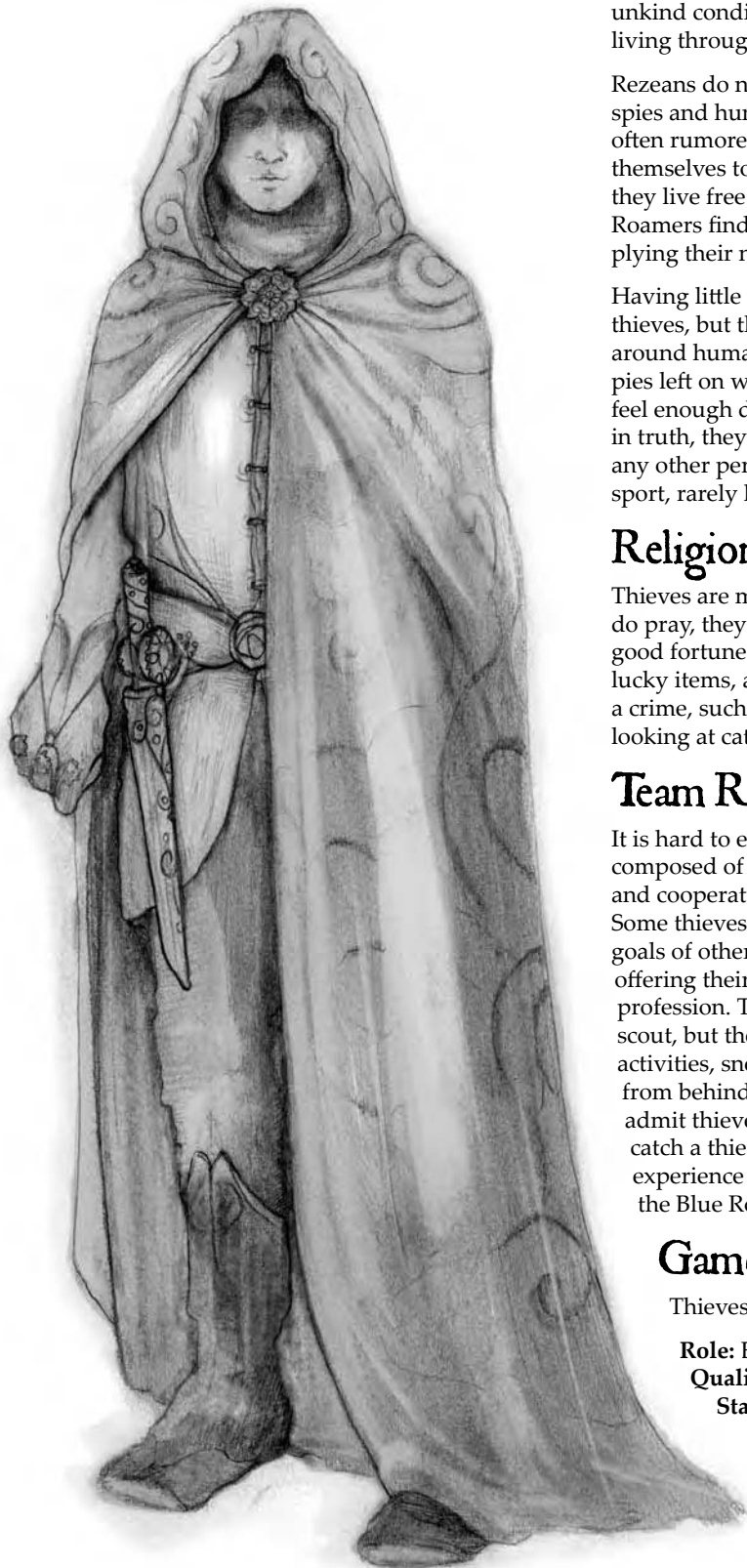
## THIEF PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Evasion
3	Surprise Attack (+4)
4	Uncanny Dodge
5	Second Chance (traps)
6	Surprise Attack (+6)
7	Improved Climb
8	Improved Uncanny Dodge
9	Surprise Attack (+8)
10	Defensive Attack
11	Talented (Disable Device, Search)
12	Surprise Attack (+10)
13	Crippling Strike
14	Improved Feint
15	Improvised Tools
16	Improved Evasion
17	Weapon Finesse
18	Skill Mastery
19	Second Chance (being mentally controlled)
20	Wealthy



## — CHAPTER I: HEROIC ROLES —

few thieves in southern Aldis, where most people have the support of a hearth. Theft within a hearth is punished within the bounds of the family, and those who steal from other hearths create trouble for all their relatives. Pirates do trouble coastal communities but are rarely from those communities themselves.



Thieves in Kern run the gamut from petty criminals to revolutionary heroes. The former just add to the people's misery, while the latter steal from the Lich King's forces to distribute goods among the poor and oppressed. In Jarzon, thieves have a bit of the apostate inside them, for their crimes defy the laws of the church and the Hierophant. Some remain devout but are driven by the unkind conditions of the Jarzoni lands to scratch out a living through crime.

Rezeans do not tolerate thieves, but a few of their best spies and hunters have similar abilities. Roamers are often rumored to be thieves. Their wandering ways lend themselves to such perceptions, people believing that they live free from law and responsibility. Although a few Roamers find thievery attractive, most are too content plying their normal trades to have any interest in crime.

Having little use for property, rhydan rarely become thieves, but thief abilities serve them well if they live around human settlements, even if their theft is limited to pies left on window sills. Vata'sha and night people often feel enough disenfranchisement to become criminals, but in truth, they are no more likely to become thieves than any other person. Vata'an thieves pursue crime mostly for sport, rarely keeping anything they steal.

### Religion

Thieves are more superstitious than religious. When they do pray, they whisper most often to Athne, asking for her good fortune. Many thieves have a varied collection of lucky items, as well as little rituals they perform before a crime, such as tying the right boot before the left or looking at cats for a sign of Athne's favor and protection.

### Team Role

It is hard to envision a thief as part of a group not entirely composed of thieves, but sometimes thieves are caught and cooperating is the only way to retain their freedom. Some thieves do have honor and sympathize with the goals of other heroes, hiring themselves out or simply offering their services, posing as scouts or some other profession. Their role in a group is similar to that of a scout, but they play a more active hand in the team's activities, sneaking around and striking at enemies from behind. The Sovereign's Finest do not usually admit thieves into their ranks, but it takes a thief to catch a thief, and many reformed criminals lend their experience in the finer points of crime to the agents of the Blue Rose Scepter.

### Game Information

Thieves have the following game traits.

**Role:** Expert

**Qualities:** Good save (Reflex), +1 Defense

**Starting Skills:** Climb, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Search, Sleight of Hand, Sneak

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (light), Canny Defense, Surprise Attack (+2), Trapfinding

## CLAN WARRIOR

The clan warriors of Rezea are fierce fighters who throw the full weight of their emotions into battle. They give in to rage and ferocity just as other warriors rely on complex martial training, and most believe their true strength comes not from their muscles or their weapons but from the fire in their hearts.

Clan warriors, like most Rezeans, are deeply emotional and not afraid to let their emotions come to the surface. They are particularly fierce opponents when defending something they hold dear, fighting to the death for their homes and families. Since they are unencumbered by a reliance on the comforts of more civilized life, clan warriors have a closer relationship to nature than other fighters. For this reason, most clan warriors are excellent horsemen and animal trainers.

While clan warriors are most common on the plains of Rezea, they also work as mercenaries in other lands and are not an unusual sight within great cities like Aldis.

### Adventures

Clan warriors often become adventurers out of necessity, after some event forces them from their lands or threatens their lives or loved ones. Many a Rezean hero has become entangled in grand adventures out of a desire to protect their land and people, rather than out of a desire for fame, fortune, and glory. There are some young plains folk who go out into the world seeking these things, however, and adventuring provides abundant opportunities for them. Occasionally the Sovereign's Finest calls upon a clan warrior to provide insight into Rezean problems or to bring special skills and their famed ferocity to a team.

### Traits

Clan warriors spend a great deal of time learning to harness and focus their emotions to become more powerful fighters. Most clan warriors exhibit their emotions freely, whether they are positive or negative. Even the strong, silent clan warrior becomes a whirlwind of fury when thrust into battle.

In their training, they learn, as much as any mortal can, to accept death. Most Rezean warriors see death as simply the next step in their journey through the Wheel of Reincarnation and seek a meaningful and honorable one. Once they have harnessed their rage and their fear of death, clan warriors focus mainly on their ability to deliver punishment to their enemies. They spend many hours honing their martial abilities. While some clan warriors go on to become leaders of their people, others always seek out the next great battle, giving meaning to their lives through the rush of dangerous combat.

### Background

Most clan warriors live in close-knit family groups or small communities, meaning they are very close to

their friends and family and value them greatly. Rezean warriors learn the art of combat from an early age, for on the great plains there are dangers to guard against, from predatory animals to shadowspawn to darkfiends that slip into the world. Given that Rezean communities do not have the benefit of standing armies or stone walls to protect them, most clan warriors have many opportunities



## CLAN WARRIOR PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Skill Training (Jump, Ride)
3	Power Attack
4	Cleave
5	Uncanny Dodge
6	Great Cleave
7	Improved Uncanny Dodge
8	Diehard
9	Endurance
10	All-out Attack
11	Ride-By Attack
12	Rage (extended)
13	On the Run
14	Spirited Charge
15	Rage (+3)
16	Iron Will
17	Tireless (see page 64)
18	Arcanum (Enhance Senses)
19	Rage (+4)
20	Arcanum (Enhance Self)

to practice the art of combat, following the example of their elders and other warriors.

### Religion

Like most Rezeans, clan warriors tend to give primacy to the Primordials as the makers and sustainers of the world.

The young gods of the Light are given their due but are seen more as the deities of civilization than the wild and untamed plains.

Clan warriors are often very ritualistic, going to great lengths to prove their devotion through ceremony and sacrifice. Even those clan warriors worshipping the same gods as their city-dwelling companions have different methods of worship. Some clan warriors perform elaborate rituals with candles, incense, and idols, while others simply offer sacrifices and prayers to their patron deities. Regardless of their practices, most clan warriors use religion as a means of understanding, and controlling, their intense emotions.

### Team Role

Like other warrior types, clan warriors make excellent front-line combatants. Additionally, their fervor makes them perfect for desperate situations where the odds are stacked against a team. Clan warriors also make excellent defenders. Since they rarely back down from a fight and always fight to the full extent of their ability, clan warriors often find themselves making stands against seemingly insurmountable odds. Fiercely loyal to any cause they champion, they can be relied upon to support a team no matter what the danger involved. They often form the core around which a team is built, using their passion and devotion to keep the team working together.

### Game Information

Clan warriors have the following game traits.

**Role:** Warrior

**Starting Skills:** Intimidate, Survival

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (all), Great Toughness, Rage (+2), Weapon Training

## CRUSADER

Primarily hailing from the Theocracy of Jarzon, crusaders are warriors of faith. Imbued with devotion to their religion, crusaders use their martial prowess to fight the enemies of their beliefs. In many ways the crusader is similar to the knight, acting as a paragon of a set of beliefs and adhering to a strict behavioral code. For the crusader, however, that code is not merely something to give one's life order and honor; it is something handed down from the gods.

From an early age, most crusaders receive extensive training from a seasoned warrior and from a priest, giving them an edge in their combat prowess and religious knowledge. Crusaders are culled from the best and brightest youth. Although it is disparagingly whispered that crusaders are chosen for being the most malleable, the truth of the matter is that most crusaders are strong-willed and have genuine faith. Of course, some crusaders merely use their religious beliefs as a facade to hide their violent natures.

### Adventures

Most crusaders embark on adventures to fight the foes of Light, or the foes of Shadow, if a crusader's sword is pledged to the exarchs. Adventuring offers an opportunity to punish those who reject the faith and to deliver the crusader's own brand of justice. Violence is a part of the crusader life, and seeking out and destroying the sources of opposition to the faith is seen as a noble and justified goal.

### Traits

While crusaders spend much of their lives focusing on martial prowess, it is equally important to them to have a deep understanding of their faith. A trait particularly common among Jarzoni crusaders is the ability to deliver a rousing sermon. Crusaders are almost as learned as priests when it comes to their religion, although crusaders focus more on morality than theology.

## CRUSADER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Arcanum (Body Control)
3	Shield Training
4	Immunity to Disease
5	Skill Training (Ride, Sense Motive)
6	Arcane Weapon
7	Immunity to Poison
8	Favored Foe
9	Weapon Focus
10	Leadership (see page 61)
11	Power Attack
12	Favored Foe
13	Great Fortitude
14	Weapon Specialization
15	Arcanum (Cure)
16	Commission
17	Great Commission
18	Second Chance (being mentally controlled)
19	Pure-Hearted
20	Estate



## Background

Even though Jarzoni crusaders are the most well known, crusaders hail from any land where warriors are driven by faith. Rarely ending up in rustic areas, crusaders often begin their lives in them, finding themselves hand-picked for training by a religious leader. Most crusaders are educated at a major center of worship of their religion, meaning that most crusaders spend a good deal of their youth in towns and cities. Crusaders receive the best training and have the finest equipment available to them, making it much easier for them to concentrate on their training without having to worry about food, clothing, or shelter.

Many crusaders have access to some of the finest teachers in the land. It is not uncommon for them to be taught to read and speak several languages, allowing them to converse freely in foreign lands and discuss the tenets of their faith. Crusaders learn much about the art of war and undergo extensive schooling in military history and tactics, all in the name of better preparing them to act as agents of the gods on the battlefield.

## Religion

Regardless of their particular beliefs, crusaders are frequently the most devout followers of their religion. To the crusader, faith is a matter of life and death. They not only devote their lives to the gods, but they are also respectful toward the gods' priests. Most crusaders are devoted to one deity above all others, yet they still honor other gods, when appropriate. Crusaders are often given titles that refer to their gods: Crusader of Leonoth, Champion of Aulora, Dawn Sword of Hiathas, and the like.

Crusaders can be both zealous and stubborn. Trying to convert a crusader to another religion is like trying to move a mountain with a feather—impossible.

## Team Role

Crusaders often find themselves in leadership positions in any team due to their natural charisma and extensive training. Their grasp of strategy extends beyond the battlefield, often into politics and other workings of the world, making them natural planners and leaders. Although their primary goal is to serve their faith, some crusaders work as agents for governments so long as their mission does not conflict with their own beliefs. A

crusader's prestige and reputation can be a great asset to a team. Some crusaders have substantial material resources at their disposal and can help overcome certain obstacles without hefting a weapon.

## Game Information

Crusaders have the following game traits.

**Role:** Warrior

**Starting Skills:** Knowledge (religion), Intimidate

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (all), Favored Foe (darkfiend, shadowspawn, or unliving), Smite Foe, Weapon Training

# KNIGHT

**K**nights are the elite warriors of a realm. They use heavy armor and the highest-quality weapons and are skilled in both hand-to-hand and mounted combat. The image of the knight charging into battle atop his trusted steed is indeed apt, for most knights prefer to wade into combat while mounted and only descend to the ground under great need. Knights may be honorable or wicked, heroic or villainous. Regardless of their morals, knights are some of the most effective warriors on a battlefield.

Most knights belong to a knightly order. Those who do not belong to one spend their days as knights-errant, traveling from one town to the next in the hope of righting wrongs, or committing them. Knights are both allies to be counted upon and enemies to be feared. Some knights,

particularly those devoted to Shadow, travel a dark path. Even the most stalwart warrior has reason to hesitate when facing a knight who serves the dark powers, for dark knights' combination of martial skill and shadowy devotion makes them formidable and terrifying enemies. In contrast, heroic knights shine as paragons of chivalry and are mighty warriors.

## Adventures

Many knights seek out adventure to hone their abilities and test their own mettle. After all, you never really know how good you are unless you challenge yourself—a favorite knightly motto. Some knights become adventurers to extend their own influence and advance their political station. Although knights are often seen simply as the elite warriors in a military unit, the truth of the matter is that they represent a higher order even in the most common armies and bring with them a certain amount of political clout.

Duty is a key element in a knight's life, and many knights become adventurers because of it. Whether they're assigned to a task by their ruler or simply standing up for their beliefs, knights undertake missions in the face of grave danger if they believe it is their duty to do so. Few are as devoted as a knight, and when knights set their minds to doing something, there is little that can stand in the way.

## Traits

Knights are considered elite warriors because they can do what many others cannot. While many armies will have standard cavalry units composed of soldiers who receive special training, the knight is the undisputed master of mounted combat and will charge into battle on the back of a powerful steed, leaving a path of devastation that is unmatched by any other rider. Knights use their mounted combat ability to act as one-warrior fighting machines, taking out dozens of enemies and clearing a path for the common soldier to come in and clean up the remnants. It is for this reason that knights train extensively in the use of heavy armors, for when knights charge ahead of their army into a group of opponents, inevitably they find themselves the target of retaliatory attacks.

## KNIGHT PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Shield Training
3	Power Attack
4	Ride-By Attack
5	Spirited Charge
6	Trample
7	Skill Training (Intimidate, Sense Motive)
8	Leadership (see page 61)
9	Improved Disarm
10	Pure-Hearted
11	Improved Initiative
12	Defensive Attack
13	Skill Focus (Ride)
14	Commission or Estate
15	Improved Sunder
16	Weapon Specialization
17	Improved Critical
18	Favors
19	Greater Weapon Focus
20	Greater Weapon Specialization

Most knights are trained to lead and act as commanders in military forces. While the crusader is an inspiration and a talented tactician, the knight is a leader of men and can rally even the most rag-tag forces to victory. The knight is in many ways a lord among soldiers. Whether they're nobles or of common stock, knights watch over the soldiers under their command and ensure that they acquit themselves admirably on the battlefield.

## Background

Although it is true that most knights are of aristocratic birth, more than a few have risen from the ranks of the common people, thanks to their inborn talent for heroism. From an early age, knights receive training in horseback riding, melee combat, fighting with a lance, and the proper use of heavy armor.

Since the aristocracy has access to the finest horses, the most talented instructors, and the most skilled artisans, knights of aristocratic birth have an advantage from a young age. Knights of common stock are more likely to become knights-errant, partly because they are unlikely to have ancestral lands or an estate to manage. Knights of aristocratic birth spend a great deal of their time focusing on the social and political aspects of knighthood.

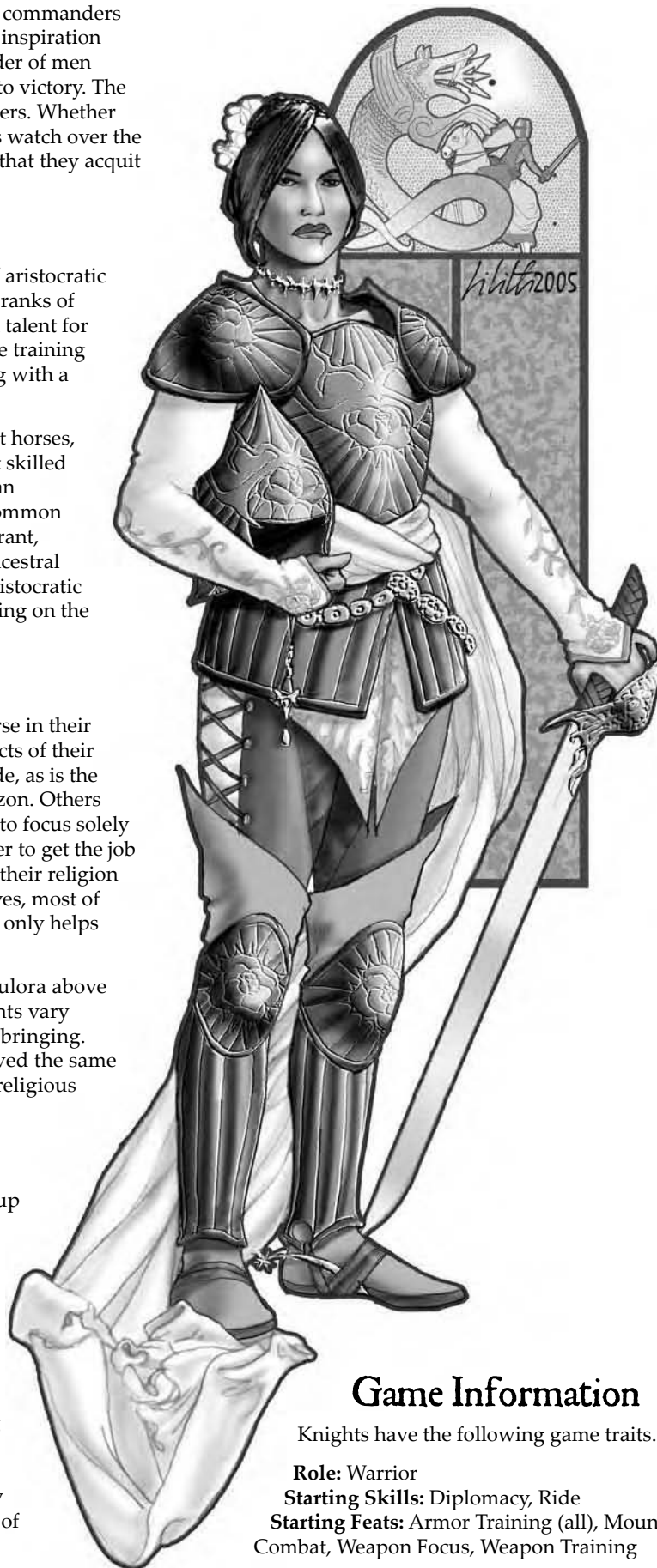
## Religion

Like most other warriors, knights are diverse in their religious beliefs. Some knights weave aspects of their religion into the fabric of their knightly code, as is the case of the Knights of the Pure Light in Jarzon. Others practice their religion privately, preferring to focus solely on their martial talents and abilities in order to get the job done. Regardless of whether knights wear their religion on their gauntlets or keep faith to themselves, most of them agree that devotion to a god or cause only helps them remain focused and chivalrous.

Most heroic knights revere the goddess Aulora above all others. Beyond this, the beliefs of knights vary depending on their place of origin and upbringing. Two knights in the same order, who received the same training, might have drastically different religious beliefs.

## Team Role

Like the crusader, the knight is often a group leader. However, just as the knight takes orders from a commanding officer, knights also work well in supporting roles in a team. Their belief in order and organization makes them excellent aids and executors. Even if a knight disagrees with the decisions of a leader, he often will simply bite his tongue and obey for the sake of preserving order. Knights will often volunteer to be the first ones into battle and the last ones out, seeing themselves as elites with a duty to use their skills to ensure the completion of a mission.



## Game Information

Knights have the following game traits.

**Role:** Warrior  
**Starting Skills:** Diplomacy, Ride  
**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (all), Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus, Weapon Training

## RANGER

While some warriors prefer the protection of thick metal plates of armor and the heft of a massive sword, others make use of stealth and speed to provide their edge in combat. The ranger is one such warrior, a

master of the natural world and a warrior whose skill with the bow often goes unmatched. Rangers spend much of their time in woodlands, preferring them to the clamor of civilization. Above all, rangers travel lightly and swiftly, relying only upon themselves and their closest allies and reveling in the independence they go to great lengths to protect.

Most rangers are talented woodsmen and hunters, making them perfect guides and scouts. Rangers are not limited to forests and other green environments; many rangers are just as comfortable in the mountains and tundra as they are in the more verdant reaches of a realm. Rangers can survive for days without man-made supplies, save for what they create themselves, for most of their food, clothing, and even medicine can come from the land. Additionally, most rangers are so familiar with their natural surroundings that they can move like ghosts, making almost no noise and leaving hardly the faintest trace of their passing.

Rangers prefer ranged weapons, particularly bows, to melee weapons. The sniper hiding high in the trees, blending in almost entirely and hardly making a sound, can be just as dangerous as an entire army of rank-and-file soldiers. Some of the more villainous rangers find themselves a much sought-after commodity when the need arises for an assassin or a wilderness ambush. Rangers prize stealth and a familiarity with the natural world in order to give them an edge over their opponents.

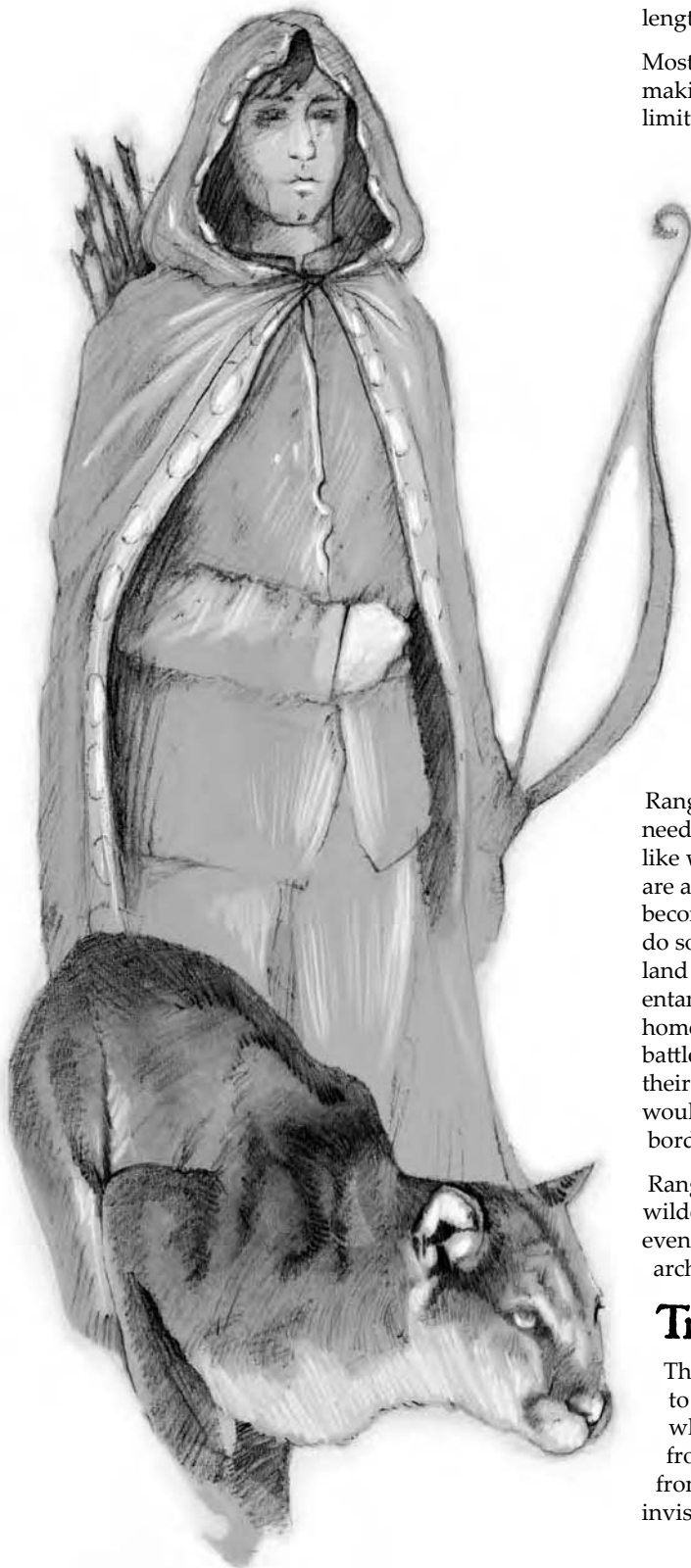
### Adventures

Rangers frequently undertake adventures because of a need for their services and talents. As experts on subjects like woodcraft, hunting, tracking, and survival, rangers are a valuable resource. This means that rangers often become adventurers simply because they are hired to do so. As lovers of nature and warriors who use the land to their advantage, rangers also sometimes become entangled in adventures because of some threat to their homes or the lands they inhabit. Not all rangers leap into battle over a fallen tree, but some see encroachment on their lands as reason to take action, just as any nation would seek to repel an invading army that crossed its borders.

Rangers tend to prefer adventures that take place in the wilderness, where their skills can best be put to use, yet even in cities they are valuable as trackers, spies, and archers.

### Traits

The most common trait shared by rangers is their ability to use the natural world to their advantage. Rangers who hail from regions covered by forests can move from tree to tree with a ghostly silence, while rangers from the plains can vanish in an open field, becoming invisible when there is hardly any cover to be found.



Rangers can move quickly over lengthy swaths of terrain, using their unobtrusive nature to serve as advanced observers for both armies and smaller adventuring teams.

Rangers learn to tread lightly in all their affairs. Some of the most skilled rangers can sneak into and out of an enemy encampment without ever raising an alarm, while others can observe a scene while remaining completely motionless, camouflaging themselves against detection and disciplining their bodies not to give them away.

## Background

Rangers come from any background that prefers spending time in the wilderness to time in the city. It is rare for members of the nobility to become rangers, for they are often reluctant to give up their comforts. Most rangers come from common stock, particularly from families of woodsmen or farmers. The instruction of a parent or an elder in the arts of hunting, woodcraft, tracking, and wilderness survival is often enough to set a ranger's future into motion.

## Religion

Rangers revere the natural world and the gods who created it. Their prayers therefore rise toward the Primordials more than to the other gods. Each season, rangers' thoughts turn to its deity: Selene in winter, Braniel in spring, Maureнна in summer, and Anwaren in autumn. At night, they travel by the moon and stars of Selene and Braniel. In the mountains, they ask Anwaren to make their steps sure. As they cross great plains and feel the sun overhead, they thank Maureнна and ask her to be merciful. When they care for an animal, or take its life, they sing in their hearts to Braniel. In all places and all seasons, a ranger is faced by the work of the Primordials' hands.

When rangers do give honor to the younger gods, Felisar and Aulora receive it most. The former on their long journeys, and the latter when they wish their arrows to fly true.

## Team Role

Even though many see rangers as loners, in a team the ranger can be a valuable ally. When traveling, the ranger becomes invaluable in ensuring the team's survival

## RANGER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Skill Training (Handle Animal, Notice)
3	Weapon Focus
4	Endurance
5	Favored Foe
6	Weapon Specialization
7	Wild Empathy
8	Precise Shot
9	Trackless Step
10	Arcanum (Beast Speech)
11	Favored Foe
12	Far Shot
13	Skill Focus (Survival)
14	Hide in Plain Sight (see page 60)
15	Arcanum (Beast Summoning)
16	Favored Foe
17	Improved Precise Shot
18	Arcanum (Plant Shaping)
19	Improved Ranged Disarm
20	Favored Foe

and health, providing food, shelter, and even natural medicines for those team members who cannot provide for themselves. When the team needs to hide from their enemies in the wilderness, the ranger makes this possible. When the team needs a sniper to take out enemy guards, the ranger climbs up a tree and rains death down upon them from above. The ranger is a complex and flexible ally.

## Game Information

Rangers have the following game traits.

**Role:** Warrior

**Starting Skills:** Sneak, Survival

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (all), Point Blank Shot, Track, Weapon Training

## SOLDIER

A soldier is the base unit in any army, representing both the officers and the volunteers or conscripts that make up the infantry. Additionally, elite units in some armed forces, such as mounted cavalry, employ soldiers as well as heavily armored knights. Soldiers can also represent loosely organized militiamen, mercenaries, and brigands. Regardless of the level of organization, the soldier is the fundamental building block of any effective combat unit.

## Adventures

Soldiers take to a life of adventure for a wide variety of reasons. Some become adventurers because they are

ordered to by their commanders, others because they are trying to scratch out a life for themselves, and others because they simply revel in the thrill of battle. Since soldiers are one of the most diverse types of warriors, their motivations for becoming adventurers are equally diverse.

Soldiers are best put to use in dangerous situations where combat is expected, and they gravitate toward adventures of this nature. They are the most useful when engaging in battle, whether that means fighting one on one, with a few opponents in a skirmish, or as part of a clash between opposing armies.



## Traits

Soldiers come in all shapes and sizes. From hand-to-hand combat proficiency to expertise with an array of missile weapons, soldiers generally have the skills necessary to sway martial conflicts in their favor.

Some soldiers specialize in one aspect of combat or another, but others are just as comfortable using many different kinds of weapons. It is that flexibility that makes them useful.

Flexibility aside, one trait common to most soldiers is their battlefield composure.



They remain alert to threats at almost all times, keeping careful watch for their opponents, and rarely allowing themselves to be taken by surprise. Soldiers are trained to react to almost any eventuality, so even if a battle doesn't go quite the way they expect, they have the wherewithal to turn the tide.

## Background

Soldiers come from all walks of life, ranging from conscripts and volunteers from the poorest regions to officers drawn from the ranks of nobility. They can be found in every land. Even the smallest town has guards, and the vast armies of Aldis, Kern, and Jarzon are composed of a diverse array of soldiers, each devoted to their own causes and ideals. Some soldiers happily spend their entire lives in the army of their choice, while others only choose to be soldiers out of necessity or obligation. In mercenary units and bands of brigands, soldiers make up the bulk of the forces. Some mercenaries are former members of an army, while others might be brutes who have made a life's work out of using their skills to take advantage of the weak.

Soldiers generally receive the most well-rounded training of all warriors. Whereas knights focus on mounted combat and rangers spend their time practicing archery, the well-rounded soldier learns how to use an array of weapons, eventually specializing in one or two. Likewise, though most soldiers prefer to don armor that provides protection without limiting mobility, any given soldier might be an expert in heavy armor or might limit himself to only leathers and pads.

### SOLDIER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Defensive Attack
3	Shield Training
4	Power Attack
5	Cleave
6	Arcane Weapon
7	Skill Training (Intimidate, Sense Motive)
8	Diehard
9	Leadership (see page 61)
10	Endurance
11	Great Cleave
12	Uncanny Dodge
13	Greater Weapon Focus
14	Improved Critical
15	Blind-Fight
16	Improved Demoralize
17	Great Fortitude
18	Improved Initiative
19	Improved Sunder
20	Greater Weapon Specialization

Most, if not all, soldiers undergo some sort of formal combat training early in their lives. This is where they learn the discipline necessary not only to master martial skills but also to control themselves in the heat of battle, learning how to cope with the terrifying nature of war.

## Religion

Given that death is a constant presence in the life of a soldier, it comes as no surprise that many soldiers are deeply religious. Despite this, there is no set religion that soldiers follow. Much like the civilians whom they protect, the ranks of soldiers are filled with a wide variety of faiths and customs, often within the same army or unit. Of course, there are exceptions; the armies of Jarzon certainly conform to the same religious principles, and the forces of Kern typically revere the exarchs of Shadow. In other cases, particularly in the armies belonging to the Kingdom of the Blue Rose, the religious differences between the soldiers lend themselves to an interesting medley. Some soldiers worship no gods at all, relying only on themselves, and not faith, for protection.

## Team Role

Soldiers' diverse training makes them valuable in any number of situations, and teams often find themselves relying on a soldier in all sorts of combat situations. Although they can be leaders, soldiers often work better in supporting roles, preferring to be the member of the team that gets things done, rather than formulating the plan. In any given day, a soldier might be a bodyguard, a raider, a scout, or a defender. Sometimes soldiers will fill two roles at once, such as raiding a stronghold while protecting the team's adept.

## Game Information

Soldiers have the following game traits.

**Role:** Warrior  
**Starting Skills:** Notice, Ride  
**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (all), Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, Weapon Training

# SWASHBUCKLER

Swashbucklers are warriors who are both quick with the sword and with their wits, using intelligence, dexterity, and an eye for tactics to achieve victory. Most swashbucklers have a reputation as rogues at best and loose cannons at worst. Many do not adhere to any formal code or training, and even if they are experts in a particular style of swordsmanship, it is often overshadowed by their seemingly reckless attitudes.

Swashbucklers are rarely found in militaries. They tend to gravitate toward fringe organizations, often becoming pirates or bandits. When they are benevolent, they lean toward vigilantism. Swashbucklers tend to operate outside the law, a fact that gives them their reputation as scoundrels. The few who become military officers sometimes bend, or break, the rules to protect their soldiers.

Swashbucklers prefer lighter weapons, such as short swords and rapiers, because they allow them to remain fast and mobile. Some swashbucklers even stick strictly to knives and daggers, preferring weapons they can both throw and use in hand-to-hand combat. Swashbucklers almost never wear armor, as it does not provide enough freedom of movement. They enjoy using the environment and arena of battle as weapons and are often found leaping from one wall to the next, swinging on chandeliers, or toppling columns onto unsuspecting foes. Swashbucklers also tend to be charismatic, or at the very least arrogant, leading them to taunt and jest during battle in a way that unnerves and irritates their opponents. Tricksters and devilish warriors, swashbucklers fight with unmatched flair.

## Adventures

Swashbucklers often undertake an adventuring life simply for the excitement. Always thrilled by a chance to live on the edge and face danger at every turn, the swashbuckler revels in the fact that opportunities to cheat death could be around any corner. This makes them somewhat

reckless, but also makes them well suited to adventuring. Additionally, many swashbucklers are quite enamored with themselves, and any chance to seek out fame and glory certainly appeals to them. In truth, the swashbuckler will usually seek out the most dangerous and exciting adventures, if only because they wish to have themselves immortalized in heroic tales.

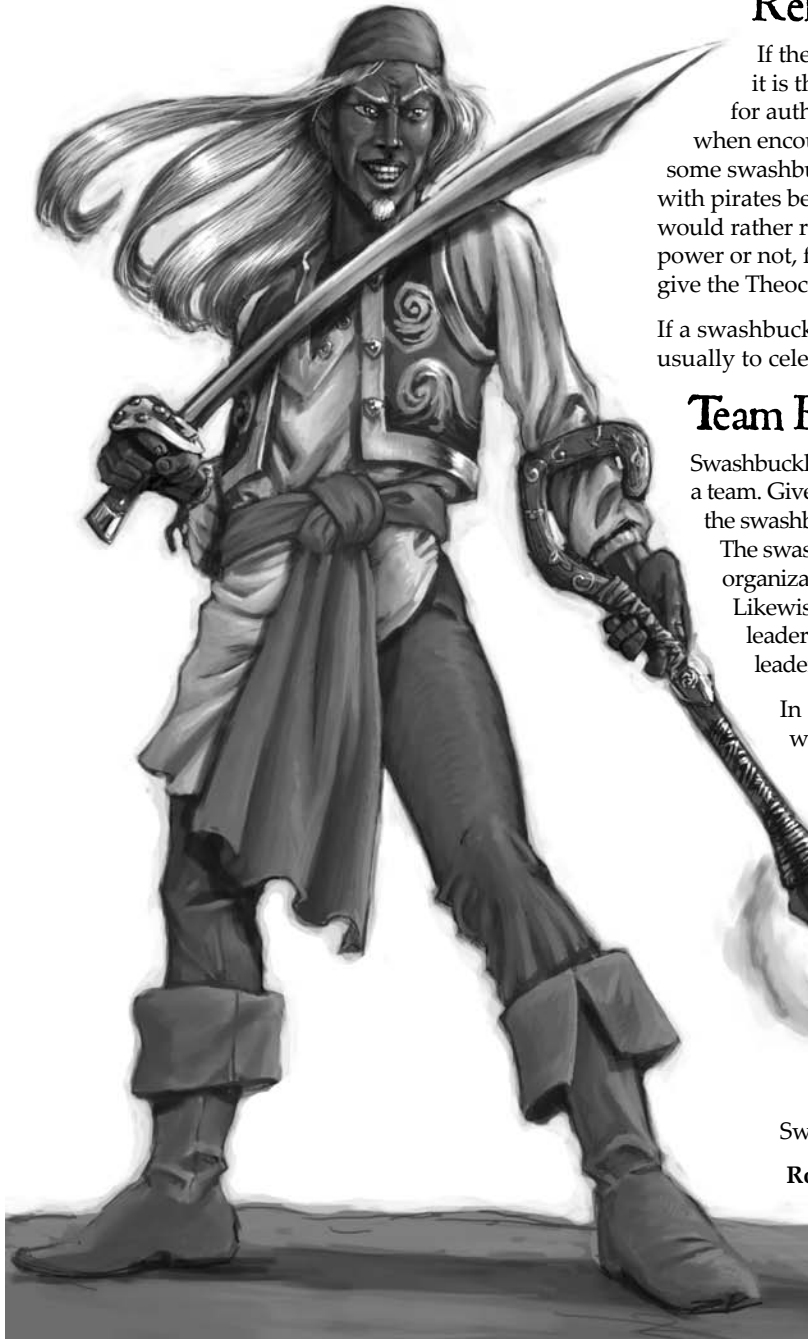
## SWASHBUCKLER PROGRESSION

Level	Feat
2	Canny Defense
3	Improved Disarm
4	Weapon Focus
5	Skill Training (Ride, Sense Motive)
6	Taunt
7	Two-Weapon Fighting
8	Fortune's Favor
9	Improved Feint
10	Improved Balance
11	Improved Initiative
12	Lightning Reflexes
13	Uncanny Dodge
14	Improved Trip
15	Two-Weapon Defense
16	Improved Uncanny Dodge
17	Arcane Weapon
18	Greater Weapon Focus
19	Weapon Specialization
20	Greater Weapon Specialization

## Traits

Swashbucklers are creative and unorthodox. Most spend a considerable amount of time training their bodies, focusing on their nimbleness. Their acrobatics can amaze even the most talented thieves. Their constant movement is often enough to unbalance an enemy, much as their cavalier attitude and brashness often unbalance people in social situations.

If swashbucklers were merely acrobatic they would be little different from thieves; it is their skill with weapons that makes them stand out. Swashbucklers are often legendary duelists and can use their blades and mobility to devastating effect. The trait that defines the swashbuckler best is swiftness, both of wit and with the sword.



## Background

Many swashbucklers grow up as pirates or thieves. Some come from noble blood, often in the form of brash young nobles who strike out into the world to make a name for themselves. These nobles-turned-swashbucklers are usually quite skilled in the social aspects of the path. Swashbucklers from common stock usually rise up through the ranks of criminal organizations or become vigilantes in their communities.

Most swashbucklers learn their combat skills from a trainer or group of teachers. This training is rarely formalized. Most swashbucklers develop their own fighting styles, believing their own creativity is just as valuable as any organized instruction.

## Religion

If there is one type of warrior that flouts religion, it is the swashbuckler. The swashbuckler's disdain for authority and organization often reaches its peak when encountering the formal religions of Aldea. While some swashbucklers revere the gods in their own way, with pirates being a particularly superstitious lot, most would rather rely on themselves and no one else, divine power or not, for help. Needless to say, most swashbucklers give the Theocracy of Jarzon a wide berth.

If a swashbuckler happens to be in a prayerful mood, it is usually to celebrate the joy of life embodied by Athne.

## Team Role

Swashbucklers often find themselves as the social face of a team. Given their charm and talent, many teams rely on the swashbuckler's glibness to bypass certain obstacles.

The swashbuckler may even lead the team. If so, its organization is loose, with a fluid chain of command. Likewise, swashbucklers tend to chafe under strict leadership and can be disagreeable should the team's leader try to impose strict discipline and order.

In any team, swashbucklers perform best when they are free to be extravagant when solving problems and deadly with their blades. Swashbucklers' bravado, and some would say bravery, often makes them great heroes to have in a supporting role, given that they can bolster a team's morale and perform spectacular feats of agility in a fight.

## Game Information

Swashbucklers have the following game traits.

**Role:** Warrior

**Starting Skills:** Acrobatics, Bluff

**Starting Feats:** Armor Training (all), Accurate Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Training



# CHAPTER II: HEROIC ABILITIES

Heroes in *Blue Rose* choose from a number of abilities that differentiate them from each other and from common folk. This chapter expands on the abilities given in the *Blue Rose* game. It includes different tricks your heroes can perform with skills, as well as a number of new feats, ranging from heroic acts of derring-do to more advanced powers and secrets of the arcane arts. Like the rest of this book, these new abilities are optional; Narrators may include them (or not) in their *Blue Rose* games as they see fit.

## SKILLS

In *Blue Rose*, heroes use skills for more than just overcoming obstacles thrown up by the Narrator. Skills provide opportunities for characters to take control of a situation and turn it to their advantage. One way to do this is with a *trick*, a special application of a skill.

Example tricks follow. They can be used by anyone using the associated skills. To develop your own tricks, think of an action that uses one of your skills and helps you or your companions. Using the examples below as guidelines, the Narrator assigns a Difficulty or Difficulty modifier to the trick.

### Knacks

Some characters are especially good at some tricks. If you take the Skill Knack feat (see page 64), you can choose tricks that you excel at. These special tricks are known as *knacks*. Any of the tricks listed below can be chosen as knacks. You can design new tricks and choose them as knacks, as long as the Narrator approves.

You can always take 10 with a knack, even in situations where you cannot normally take 10. If you want better results, you can also make a skill check with a knack. If your die roll is less than 10, you are considered to have rolled a 10.

Skill Knack is primarily for adepts and warriors, for it is more advantageous for an expert to take the Skill Mastery feat.

### Trick Descriptions

Each entry on this list presents a skill and the tricks associated with it. Each trick has a Difficulty or Difficulty modifier. To perform the trick, you make a check with the associated skill, against the listed Difficulty, or use the associated skill as normal, applying the trick's Difficulty modifier to the Difficulty of whatever task you're attempting.

### Acrobatics

- *Difficulty 10:* Stand on one foot or one hand for a number of minutes equal to your Constitution score, if greater than +0. Stand or walk on two hands for as long as you want.
- *Difficulty 15:* As a move action, flip off a surface 10 feet above an opponent and land next to him unharmed. If you attack with a standard action during the same round, you gain a +2 bonus to hit.

## — CHAPTER II: HEROIC ABILITIES —

*Difficulty 15:* Increase your speed by 10 feet for one round by jumping from or swinging on a convenient object (such as a table or a chandelier).

- *Difficulty 20:* Slide down a banister or other sloped surface, moving up to double your speed and arriving at the bottom upright and unharmed.

*Difficulty 20:* Perform a passable imitation of any dance step you've seen in the last hour.

- *Difficulty 25:* Drop prone as a reaction to avoid a ranged attack, increasing your Defense by 4. Then stand as a free action at the beginning of your next round. The usual benefits and drawbacks of being prone apply.

*Difficulty 25:* Grab a character and carry her with you through an acrobatic move. The character you grab must be willing, and you must still make a skill check for the move itself.

- *Difficulty 30:* Use a move action to distract up to six opponents with a flashy tumble, giving them a -2 penalty to hit or Defense. You choose which, and the effect lasts for one attack, either till they attack or are attacked.

### Bluff

- *Difficulty 15:* Fake any accent you've ever heard.

*Difficulty 15:* Identify the likeliest prospect for a seduction or con job.

- *Difficulty 20:* Insult another person in a way that is obvious to everyone but him. The target still gets to make a Sense Motive check to notice the insult, at a Difficulty equal to your check result.
- *Difficulty 25:* Cast doubt on the word of another. If you succeed, you force listeners to make a Will save or Sense Motive check to believe that person. The Difficulty of their save or check is equal to your result.

*Difficulty 25:* Create a rumor so irresistibly juicy that it will be passed around any social gathering by that gathering's end and be known throughout the community within a week.

- *Difficulty 30:* Prepare an alternate identity so thoroughly that, while you play the role, you are convinced of its truth, thereby fooling effects like Mind Reading.

### Climb

- *Difficulty 15:* As a move action, rappel down a rope at your full speed.

*Difficulty 15:* As a standard action, secure yourself so that you do not have to make a Climb check if you take damage. You retain this benefit as long as you stay where you are.

- *Difficulty 20:* Improvise climbing tools out of ordinary room furnishings.

*Difficulty 20:* Raise or lower a creature or object that is too large or heavy for one character to haul alone.

This skill check requires appropriate equipment, such as ropes. The creature or object can be moved up to 20 feet per round.

*Difficulty 20:* Secure a rope at the top of a climb so that you can pull it down and recover it when you reach the bottom.

### Concentration

- *Difficulty 15:* Remember a helpful detail (supplied by the Narrator) from a previous scene.

- *Difficulty 20:* Meditate for one hour to recover from being winded.

*Difficulty 20:* Memorize complicated information so as to recall it perfectly later.

- *Difficulty 25:* Meditate for two hours to recover from being fatigued.

- *Difficulty 30:* Meditate for one hour to ignore the effects of damage to one mental ability (Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma) for one day.

### Craft

- *Difficulty 15:* Make a shoddy item of simple or moderate complexity. The Wealth Difficulty of this item is reduced by 5, and the item is created in half the normal time. A shoddy item provides a -1 penalty when used and may break at the whim of the Narrator.

*Difficulty 15:* Make a normal item appear valuable or rare. Alternatively, make a shoddy item appear to be of normal quality.

- *Difficulty 20:* Build hidden compartments or secret features into an item you are crafting. The result of your check is the Difficulty of the Search check required to find the secret feature.

*Difficulty 20:* Make a shoddy item of complex or advanced complexity. The Wealth Difficulty of this item is reduced by 5, and the item is created in half the normal time. A shoddy item provides a -1 penalty when used and may break at the whim of the Narrator.

- *Difficulty 25:* Make a normal or shoddy item appear magical.

### Diplomacy

- *Difficulty 15:* Speak so loudly and clearly that everybody in a room can hear your words. You can only be drowned out by magical silence.

- *Difficulty 20:* Offer a bribe or other incentive in a way that will not cause offense, even if the incentive is refused.

*Difficulty 20:* Plan the details of a formal event, making sure that the guests are dealt with according to their station and that all issues of etiquette are considered.

- *Difficulty 25:* Speak in a way that defuses tension when a character commits a gaffe or provokes

another character. The offended character is mollified or amused and ignores the offense.

*Difficulty 25:* Convince an intelligent character to stop attacking and parley for at least one round, even if that character is hostile or shares no common language with you. You and your allies must not attack the character during the round you attempt to parley.

## Disable Device

- *Difficulty 10:* Jury-rig a broken item of simple or moderate complexity so it works for one more scene, then is destroyed and cannot be repaired.
- *Difficulty 15:* Jury-rig a broken item of complex or advanced complexity so that it works for one more scene, then is destroyed and cannot be repaired.

*Difficulty 15:* As a free action, determine how much time will elapse before a trap you have triggered goes off.

- *Difficulty 20:* Identify the area affected by a trap so that it can be observed or triggered from a safe distance.

*Difficulty 20:* Rig a disabled trap to reset and become operational again after a delay of your choice.

- *Difficulty 25:* Eliminate all signs of tampering with a lock or other device.

*Difficulty 25:* Reconstruct a trap with a bypass so that the bypass method triggers the trap.

## Disguise

The Difficulties below represent the difficulty of creating a disguise that will pass casual inspection. The result of the Disguise check should always be saved in case a suspicious person examines the disguise.

- *Difficulty 15:* Choose or create clothing that will help you blend in with your surroundings, providing a +2 bonus on a Sneak check in a later scene.
- *Difficulty 20:* Create a disguise that will be remembered by anyone who sees it without compromising your true identity.

*Difficulty 20:* Create a disguise and make it part of a repertoire of favorite disguises. If you have the contents of your disguise kit, you can don this disguise in one minute. The number of disguises you can have in your repertoire is equal to your Intelligence score.

*Difficulty 20:* Copy the appearance of another character so closely as to appear to be her twin. The copied character must be present to serve as a model.

- *Difficulty 25:* Create a disguise an another character can use and recreate several times. The effectiveness of the disguise is determined by the result of your check and decreases by five each time the disguise is used.



## Escape Artist

- *Difficulty 15:* Slip through a mob of people without being hindered by it. This mob must be non-hostile, such as a crowd at a marketplace.

*Difficulty 15:* Twist or stretch your limbs or body to reach an object that is at an inconvenient angle or a few inches beyond your normal reach.

- *Difficulty 20:* Remove your armor in a number of rounds equal to the armor's protection bonus.

*Difficulty 20:* Fit yourself into a container or other space that's too small for a person your size.

- *Difficulty +5:* While freeing yourself from manacles, ropes, or other bonds, maintain the appearance of still being confined.

## Gather Information

- *Difficulty 15:* Discover who are the most reliable sources of information in a group you are interacting with.

- *Difficulty 20:* Discover who else, if anyone, has been looking for the information you have gathered.

*Difficulty 20:* Learn specific information through subtle inquiries that do not reveal your interest in the information to others.

## — CHAPTER II: HEROIC ABILITIES —

*Difficulty 20:* Learn the source of your informant's information.

- *Difficulty 25:* Befriend a contact who will keep a look out for information you may be interested in and send it to you.

### Handle Animal

The tricks you teach an animal are not the same as skill tricks; however, the ability to teach an animal a specific trick is a skill trick, as is the ability to train an animal for a particular purpose. You can take either ability as a knack.

Tricks you can teach an animal include the following:

- *Come:* Teach an animal to come to you, even if it normally would not do so. *Difficulty 15.*
- *Down:* Teach an animal to break off from combat or back down at your command. An animal that doesn't know this trick continues to fight until it must flee or its opponent is defeated. *Difficulty 15.*
- *Fetch:* Teach an animal to fetch something. If you do not point out a specific item, the animal fetches a random object. *Difficulty 15.*
- *Heel:* Teach an animal to follow you closely, even to places it normally wouldn't go. *Difficulty 15.*
- *Perform:* Teach an animal to perform a variety of simple tricks, such as sitting up, rolling over, barking on command, and so on. *Difficulty 15.*
- *Seek:* Teach an animal to move into an area and look around for anything that is obviously alive or animate. *Difficulty 15.*
- *Work:* Teach an animal to push or pull a medium or heavy load.
- *Stay:* Teach an animal to stay in place and await your return. The animal does not challenge other creatures that come by, but it defends itself if it needs to. *Difficulty 15.*
- *Attack:* Teach an animal to attack apparent enemies. An animal that has been trained to attack will, if able, attack the creature that you order it to attack. *Difficulty 20.*
- *Defend:* Teach an animal to defend you or stand ready to defend you if there is no obvious threat. The animal will take actions to attack or hinder any creature that poses an obvious danger to you. *Difficulty 20.*
- *Guard:* Teach an animal to stay in place and prevent others from approaching. *Difficulty 20.*
- *Track:* Teach an animal to follow a scent that has been presented to it. The animal must have the Scent ability. *Difficulty 20.*

The purposes you can train an animal for include:

- *Combat Riding:* Teach an animal to bear a rider into combat. Includes the tricks attack, come, defend, down, guard, and heel. *Difficulty 20.*

- *Fighting:* Teach an animal to engage in combat. Includes the tricks attack, down, and stay. *Difficulty 20.*
- *Guarding:* Teach an animal to guard people, objects, and locations. Includes the tricks attack, defend, down, and guard. *Difficulty 20.*
- *Hunting:* Teach an animal to hunt for objects and prey. Includes the tricks attack, down, fetch, heel, seek, and track. *Difficulty 20.*
- *Performance:* Teach an animal to perform tricks on cue. Includes the tricks come, fetch, heel, perform, and stay. *Difficulty 20.*

### New Tricks and Purposes

You can develop a new trick or purpose and teach it to an animal. This takes four weeks, after which the new trick or purpose is taught at its own *Difficulty* and in its own time. *Difficulty 25.*

- *Difficulty 15:* Inspect an animal to determine its overall health and well-being.
- *Difficulty 25:* Calm a wounded or frightened animal so that it will allow you to approach and provide assistance.

### Heal

- *Difficulty 15:* As a move action, assess the current damage state of one opponent. If successful, you determine whether the opponent is normal, bruised, dazed, staggered, unconscious, hurt, wounded, disabled, dying, or dead. (Some conditions may be more obvious than others.)

*Difficulty 15:* Prepare medical supplies that other characters can use to gain a +2 bonus to a recovery check, without you needing to be present. One day of preparation produces enough supplies for 5 uses.

*Difficulty 15:* Identify a known disease, its effects, and the best course of action to treat it.

- *Difficulty 20:* Identify actions that will improve a community's chances of surviving an outbreak of disease, such as quarantines or eliminating infectious animals. If these actions are taken, members of the community gain a bonus equal to half your Heal rank to saving throws against the disease.

*Difficulty 20:* Instruct nurses or other assistants to provide care for others under your supervision. Patients under the care of the nurses receive a bonus to their recovery rolls equal to half your Heal rank. Each assistant can care for up to 5 patients.

- *Difficulty 25:* Identify an unknown disease, its effects, and the best course of action to treat it.

### Intimidate

- *Difficulty 15:* Distract others with your menacing presence, causing them to suffer a -2 penalty on their next Notice check.

*Difficulty 15:* Startle a room full of characters into silence, causing them to give you their full attention.

- *Difficulty 20:* Once per scene as a move action, shout a battle cry or threat that causes opponents to hesitate, reducing their Initiative check by 2. You can affect one opponent for every level you have.

*Difficulty 20:* Threaten an opponent as a standard action. If you succeed, your target must succeed on a Will save to attack you next round. The Difficulty of the Will save is equal to your result on the Intimidate check.

- *Difficulty 25:* Terrify a shaken opponent as a standard action, causing him to panic and flee. The opponent's level must be two or more levels below yours.

## Knowledge

- *Difficulty 15:* Remember who the best, or nearest, expert is who can answer a difficult question for you.

*Difficulty 15:* Determine whether an archive of information, such as a library or museum, holds the answer to a difficult question that you are trying to answer. This check requires a brief conversation with a librarian or curator, or an examination of the archive's indexes.

- *Difficulty 20:* Compose a formal document—such as a contract, treaty, or academic treatise—making sure that all known issues are considered and that the document is legally and logically sound.

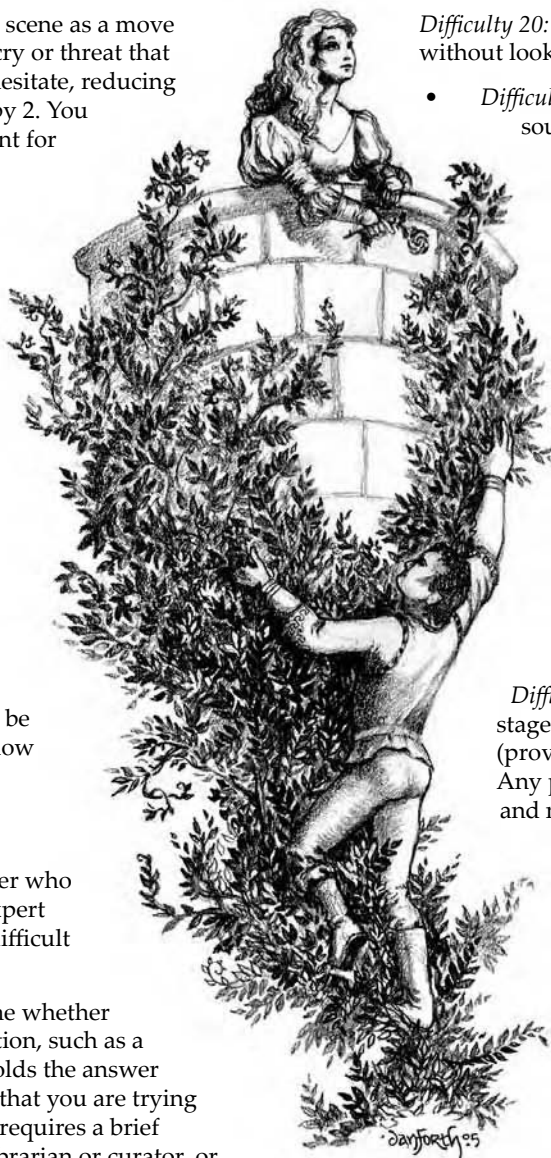
*Difficulty 20:* Identify a weakness of an object or person by drawing on a related knowledge specialty (engineering for a bridge, for instance, or nobility for a famous member of court).

- *Difficulty 25:* Review a book or other body of knowledge and figure out what kind of information has been distorted or omitted from it.

## Notice

- *Difficulty 15:* Memorize the most important details of a face or object after seeing it for a few seconds.
- *Difficulty 20:* Detect a subtle poison slipped into food or drink.

*Difficulty 20:* Pinpoint changes that have occurred in a place since you last visited it.



*Difficulty 20:* Intuit what's going on behind you without looking first.

- *Difficulty 25:* Navigate through a dark room by sound and touch without bumping into or disturbing anything.

## Perform

- *Difficulty 15:* Gather the attention of a passing crowd or sway the opinion of your audience. You get a +2 to interaction checks for every 10 points your check exceeds the Difficulty.
- *Difficulty 20:* Present a scene that audiences think is real, with one or more fellow performers. The average of all the performers' checks must equal or exceed the trick's Difficulty.

*Difficulty 20:* Construct props or dress a stage set that will enhance a performance (providing a +2 bonus) or trick an audience. Any props or structures constructed are light and nonfunctional; use Craft to build real things.

- *Difficulty 30:* Fake a composition or a style of performance that you have no training in.

## Ride

- *Difficulty 15:* As a free action, stand in your stirrups to gain a +1 to hit, for higher ground, against a character who is sitting in a saddle.

*Difficulty 15:* Ride a mount while facing or firing a ranged weapon backward.

- *Difficulty 20:* As a move action, jump from one mount to another.

*Difficulty 20:* As a reaction, jump from a falling mount and land up to 10 feet away from it.

- *Difficulty 25:* As a reaction, leap into your saddle as your mount moves by you.

## Search

- *Difficulty 15:* Confirm whether or not the interior dimensions of a room or object match the exterior dimensions (suggesting the presence of secret or hidden passages, for example).

*Difficulty 15:* Identify similarities and differences between two locations or objects.

- *Difficulty 20:* Determine whether objects have been shifted or moved, based on dust patterns and other signs of disturbance.





*Difficulty 20:* Identify the creature type of a location's most recent occupants.

- *Difficulty 25:* Deduce the most recent physical actions taken in a location, such as a fight or movement through a room.

## Sense Motive

- *Difficulty 15:* Determine whether the character you are interacting with is making small talk or is ready to discuss serious matters.

*Difficulty 15:* Evaluate the emotional state of a character you are interacting with.

- *Difficulty 20:* Determine how important the interaction you are having with another character is to that character.
- *Difficulty 20:* Evaluate how the character you are interacting with feels about the interaction and whether that interaction is progressing toward that character's goals.

*Difficulty 20:* Study the reactions of characters you are interacting with. If the interaction goes sour during the scene, you realize it in time to take one free action, one move action, or one standard action. Roll this check once as a free action at the beginning of the interaction.

- *Difficulty 25:* As a move action, study the actions of your opponents. If successful, you determine the general strategy they are following, as well as their most likely actions for the next two rounds.

*Difficulty 25:* While interacting with another character, deduce what offer will persuade that character to help you accomplish your goals.

## Sleight of Hand

- *Difficulty 15:* Communicate with subtle hand motions to an ally. Any opponents may make a Notice check to detect the attempt.

*Difficulty 15:* As a move action, subtly prepare a weapon so that it may be drawn the next round as a free action. Opponents may make a Notice check to detect the attempt.

- *Difficulty 20:* Switch two apparently identical objects of Tiny or smaller size without anybody seeing you do it.

*Difficulty 20:* Drop an item of Tiny or smaller size without anybody seeing you do it. If you're close enough, you can also surreptitiously replace an item you've just been caught stealing.

- *Difficulty 25:* Keep one item of Tiny or smaller size hidden from a character who is searching you, no matter how good the other character's Search check is.

## Sneak

- *Difficulty 15:* Without making any noise, ease a door open or move an object smaller than you.

*Difficulty 15:* Evaluate several possible routes to find the one that gives you the best chance of escaping notice.

- *Difficulty 20:* Create or locate a hiding place that other characters can use. While using the hiding place, their Sneak check is considered to be the result of your check to create or locate the hiding place. If you take this trick as a knack, roll your check; the minimum result of the check is equal to the Difficulty.

*Difficulty 20:* Pad a set of armor so as to halve the armor check penalty (round down) applied to the wearer's Sneak check. The speed of the character wearing the armor is reduced by 10 feet.

- *Difficulty 25:* Lead a mount or companion so that both of you escape notice. If you succeed, the result of your check is the Difficulty of any Notice check made by a suspicious opponent.

## Survival

- *Difficulty 15:* Build a fire that lasts 12 hours and keeps you and your companions from suffering the effects of cold. Add 5 to the Difficulty for bad weather or if there is a shortage of materials to burn.

*Difficulty 15:* Locate and preserve enough food and water to supply four people for three days. This action takes six hours to complete.

- *Difficulty 20:* Examine the landscape and find the best opportunity for shelter within it. This could be a cave, a thick stand of trees, a kelp bed—anything that will keep rain and predators out.

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*Difficulty 20:* Gather herbs or other natural materials that can substitute as tools for one Heal check. This action takes ten minutes to complete.

*Difficulty 20:* Evaluate the overall health of the landscape and identify any imbalances or aberrations in the flora and fauna around you.

- *Difficulty 25:* Choose the fastest and easiest route for traveling a distance of at least one mile. You and your companions cover one and a half times the distance you would cover at the pace you have selected. The effects of this action apply to a single day's travel.

### Swim

- *Difficulty 15:* As a free action, examine the watery terrain ahead of you to locate natural hazards and the safest places to swim or step.

*Difficulty 15:* Orient yourself in deep water so that you know roughly the direction you are swimming and the direction of the surface.

- *Difficulty 20:* When falling from a height into water, enter the water with a controlled dive. When checking for damage, treat the distance fallen as if it were half the actual distance.

## FEATS

**F**eats determine a hero's special abilities in *Blue Rose*. This section expands the selection of feats available to heroes, including some new arcane feats and feats granting arcane abilities. Narrators should feel free to allow players to choose from these feats for their heroes as their roles and advancement permit.

Some of the feats in this section use the advanced rules for arcana found in **Chapter III**. Consult those rules for further information on using these feats.

### Aggravate (General)

You tend to attract an enemy's attention. As a standard action, you can make a Bluff check against your target's Sense Motive check or Will saving throw, whichever has the higher bonus. If you succeed, your target must attack you next round, if it is possible to do so. Targets get a +1 on their check or save for each time, after the first, this feat is used against them in the same encounter (successful or not).

A target not already engaged in combat can make a Will saving throw (in addition to the Sense Motive check or Will save to resist the feat). If successful, the target shows enough restraint to attack you verbally, not physically. Targets engaged in combat (with you or someone else) do not get this save.

You can take this feat a second time (Improved Aggravate), allowing you to make the Bluff check as a move action, rather than a standard action.

### Arcane Expertise (Arcane)

Choose one or two arcana in which you are trained. If you choose one, you gain +3 ranks with that arcanum. If you choose two, you gain +2 ranks in each. You gain all the normal benefits of your increased arcana ranks.

You can only apply the benefits of this feat once to any given arcanum (whether a 2 or 3 rank increase). Each time you take this feat, you must select different arcana.

### Attunement of Art (Arcane)

**Prerequisite:** Adept level 3

When attuning a single Item of Art (see **Arcane Items**, page 82), you may reduce the effective rating of the item by your Wisdom or Intelligence (your choice). This may

not reduce an item below half of its normal rating, and you may not have more than one item bound through this feat at a time.

You may purchase this feat multiple times. Each time, you may attune an additional item with it.

### Attunement of Skill (Expert)

**Prerequisite:** Expert level 3

When attuning a single Item of Skill (see **Arcane Items**, page 82), you may reduce the effective level of the item by your Dexterity or Charisma (your choice). This may not reduce an item below half of its normal rating, and you may not have more than one item bound through this feat at a time.

You may purchase this feat multiple times. Each time, you may attune an additional item with it.

### Attunement of War (Martial)

**Prerequisite:** Warrior level 3

When attuning a single Item of War (see **Arcane Items**, page 82), you may reduce the effective rating of the item by your Strength or Constitution (your choice). This may not reduce an item below half of its normal rating, and you may not have more than one item bound through this feat at a time.

You may purchase this feat multiple times. Each time, you may attune an additional item with it.

### Charitable (General)

**Prerequisite:** Wealth +1

You share your wealth gladly. When you have an opportunity to give to a beggar or a charitable cause, you may reduce your Wealth score by 1 to gain a point of Conviction. You may neither use this feat to reduce your Wealth score below +1 nor to gain more than one point of Conviction per day.

### Cloak Dance (General)

**Prerequisites:** Sneak rank 10, Perform (dance) rank 2

You are skilled at using optical tricks to make yourself seem to be where you are not. You can take a move

## — CHAPTER II: HEROIC ABILITIES —

action to obscure your exact position. Until your next turn, you have the benefits of concealment. Alternatively, you can take a full-round action to entirely obscure your exact position. Until your next action, you have total concealment.

### Commission (Martial)

**Prerequisites:** Leadership, Reputation +3

You, your followers, and any associated allies comprise a military unit recognized by governments and other authorities. You may be part of a national military or police force, or you may be independents, such as a mercenary unit or privateer fleet.

Your unit has a Reputation score. When you take the Commission feat, that score is set at 2 less than your current Reputation. Members of the unit, including yourself, making a Reputation check may substitute the unit score for their own.

The unit's Reputation increases or decreases according to the unit's actions. Each time the unit accomplishes a notable deed—a great victory, a great loss, a feat never before achieved—the unit's Reputation increases by 1. Every six game months that pass without the unit accomplishing a notable deed decreases the unit's Reputation by 1.

Once per game month, you may spend a Conviction point and make an inspiring speech to the unit as a whole. For the next day, each member of the unit gains a bonus to attack rolls and Will saves equal to half the unit's Reputation score.

### Cross Attunement (General)

**Prerequisite:** Attunement of Art, Attunement of Skill, or Attunement of War

You are not penalized when attuning an item associated with a role other than your own. Choose a category of bound item not associated with any of your roles: Art, Skill, or War. Items of this category may be bound at their actual rating, rather than double their rating (see **Bound Items**, page 82).

You can take this feat twice, once for each type of item associated with a role other than your own.

### Elemental Pact (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) rank 6, Summon Elemental

You have a pact with an elemental power, whether as an oath of mutual service or an innate kinship. Your arcane power has become more attuned to the power of one element, granting you a +1 bonus to both summoning and shaping arcana checks involving that element.

Additionally, you gain the ability to use one arcanum untrained. It is considered a shaping arcanum for you, including the option to learn it as a trained arcanum under the Shaping Talent. The arcanum varies, depending on the element you choose:

- *Air:* You are in tune with the psychic nature of the element of air. You may use Mind Touch untrained, and it is considered a shaping arcanum for you.

- *Earth:* You are in tune with the innate strength of the element of earth. You may use Enhance Self untrained but only to augment Strength, and it is considered a shaping arcanum for you.
- *Fire:* You are in tune with the raging power of the element of fire. You may use Battle Dance untrained, and it is considered a shaping arcanum for you.
- *Water:* You are in tune with the healing currents of the element of water. You may use Cure untrained, and it is considered a shaping arcanum for you.

### Elemental Resistance (Arcane)

**Prerequisite:** Shaping arcanum for the affected element

Choose an element you are trained in shaping. You have a +10 bonus on all saving throws against harm from that element and suffer only nonlethal damage from it so long as you are conscious and capable of exerting the minimum will required to resist the element's effects.

You may acquire this feat multiple times. Each time, it affects a different element you are trained in shaping.

### Elemental Strike (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** 6th level, plus Cold, Earth, Fire, Water, or Wind Shaping

You can strike a foe with a focused blast of elemental force. Your Elemental Strike is a normal ranged attack with a range increment of arcanum rank times 10 feet and a maximum range of ten increments (arcanum rank times 100 feet).

An Elemental Strike inflicts damage equal to half your arcanum rank, rounded down. Water and Wind Shaping strikes inflict nonlethal damage. If you apply the Widen Arcana feat to an Elemental Strike, targets can make a Reflex saving throw (Difficulty 10 + the strike's damage bonus). If the save is successful, the strike's damage bonus is halved.

Elemental Strike is fatiguing, with a fatigue save Difficulty of 10 + the strike's damage bonus.

### Elusive Target (Expert)

You are expert at dodging and weaving around your foes, making you an elusive target while you're engaged in a melee. When you are fighting in melee combat, others attempting to target you with ranged attacks are at a –8 penalty rather than the usual –4 penalty for shooting into melee combat.

### Estate (General)

**Prerequisites:** Leadership, Wealth +15

You hold title to a manor house and the surrounding land. Your estate has a staff of followers equal to the number of followers you have from the Leadership feat. This is in addition to the followers you have from the feat. Estate followers remain at and care for your estate.

Once every three game months, you or a designated follower must make a Diplomacy check. The Difficulty is equal to your current Wealth score + 5. If the check is

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successful, your Wealth score increases by 1. If the check fails, your Wealth score decreases by 1. If your Wealth score falls below +15, you must take action to increase your Wealth or risk losing your estate.

Followers assigned to estate duties are essential to the functioning of the estate and cannot leave their duties for more than a few days at a time. However, you can detach your followers from your estate and assign them to other duties once per game year for up to three game months. If you do this, your next quarterly Diplomacy check for the estate has its Difficulty increased by 5 (current Wealth score + 10).

### Exarch-Devoted (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) rank 6, Summon Darkfiend

You have devoted yourself to exemplifying the vice of one of the exarchs of Shadow, living up to the impossible wickedness of that being as best a mortal can. You must perform one transgression against the Light per month in keeping with the vice embodied by your patron exarch.

In return for doing so, you gain a +2 bonus to both summoning and sorcery arcana checks. Additionally, darkfiends in the service of your exarch recognize you as kin and are unlikely to attack you; though, they may seek to embroil you in their machinations. They have an initial attitude of indifferent toward you (see **Influencing Attitudes** in *Blue Rose*, page 147).

### Fire Mastery (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Shaping Talent, Fire Shaping

You have complete mastery of any flames under your control. You are immune to damage from any flame controlled or sustained by your Fire Shaping arcanum.

### Flame Aura (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Shaping Talent, Fire Shaping

As a standard action, you can surround your body with an aura of fire, causing no harm to you or anything you are wearing or carrying. Anyone touching you while you are aflame suffers +1 fire damage. The flame aura lasts one minute (10 rounds) per use. Flame Aura is fatiguing, with a fatigue save Difficulty of 14.

### Flaming Weapon (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Shaping Talent, Fire Shaping

As a standard action, you can cause the melee weapon you wield to burst into flames, without harming either the weapon or yourself. The weapon does +2 fire damage, in addition to its regular damage. Each use of this feat causes the weapon to burn for one minute (10 rounds). Flaming Weapon is fatiguing, with a fatigue save Difficulty of 14.

### Ghost Touch (General)

**Prerequisite:** Body Control rank 9

As a standard action, you can focus your arcane powers to imbue yourself, or a weapon you wield, with the power



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to touch and interact with incorporeal creatures as if they were solid for one minute (10 rounds). Ghost Touch is fatiguing, with a fatigue save Difficulty of 14.

### Great Commission (Martial)

**Prerequisites:** Commission, Reputation +4

You command a military force large enough to defend or overthrow a kingdom. Leading this force is a full-time job; though, you can spare some time for other matters.

Your followers and associated allies comprise an elite unit and remain subject to the rules for the Commission feat.

Before each battle, you may make a Leadership check (d20 + your Leadership score) against Difficulty 20. If you have not been leading the unit full-time for the last month, the Difficulty increases to 25.

If you succeed, each member of the force who is not part of your elite unit gains a bonus to attack rolls and Will saves equal to half your Reputation score. If you fail the check, each member of the force suffers a -2 penalty to all checks, including attack rolls and saving throws. This bonus or penalty lasts for the duration of the battle.

### Great Estate (General)

**Prerequisites:** Estate, Wealth +20

You hold title to a castle and the territory assigned to it. Your great estate has a staff of followers equal to the number of followers you have from the Leadership feat. This is in addition to the followers you have from the Leadership and Estate feats. Great Estate followers remain at and care for your estate.

You or a designated follower must make a Diplomacy check every three game months. This check and its consequences are identical to the Estate feat, except failed checks lower your Wealth score by 2 instead of 1.

Followers assigned to the castle staff cannot leave their duties for more than a few days at a time; however, you can detach your followers from the castle and assign them to other duties once per game year for up to six game months. While your followers are detached, your quarterly Diplomacy checks have their Difficulty increased by 5 (current Wealth score + 10).

### Helpful (General)

Your assistance is particularly valuable. When you make a check to aid someone (see **Aiding Others** in *Blue Rose*, page 11), you may choose a higher Difficulty for the check and provide your companion with a greater bonus. Some Difficulties require you to reach a certain level before you can choose them.

HELPFUL		
Difficulty	Bonus	Minimum Level
15	+3	1st
20	+4	5th
25	+5	10th

### Hide in Plain Sight (General)

**Prerequisite:** Sneak rank 15

Choose a particular environment: urban, wilderness, nighttime, and the like. You can make Sneak checks in that environment even while being observed and without any cover or concealment. You can acquire this feat multiple times. Each time it applies to a different environment.

### Honest (General)

**Prerequisite:** Untrained in Bluff and Disguise

Your word is your bond. You may add half your Reputation score (round down) to your Diplomacy checks. If you ever gain Bluff or Disguise as a known skill, you lose the benefit of this feat.

### Icy Weapon (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Shaping Talent, Cold Shaping

As a standard action, you can cause a metallic melee weapon you're wielding to become intensely cold. The weapon inflicts +2 cold damage, in addition to its regular damage. Each use of this feat causes the weapon to inflict the icy damage for one minute (10 rounds). Icy Weapon is fatiguing, with a fatigue save Difficulty of 14.

### Imbuement of Art (General)

You are capable of imbuing items with the enchantments of arcane artistry, creating Items of Art. Although this feat is not limited to adepts, it creates items most easily bound by adepts. See **Arcane Items** in **Chapter III** for details.

### Imbuement of Skill (General)

You are capable of imbuing items with the enchantments of adroitness, creating Items of Skill. Although this feat is not limited to experts, it creates items most easily bound by experts. See **Arcane Items** in **Chapter III** for details.

### Imbuement of War (General)

You are capable of imbuing items with the enchantments of battle, creating Items of War. Although this feat is not limited to warriors, it creates items most easily bound by warriors. See **Arcane Items** in **Chapter III** for details.

### Improved Aggravate (General)

**Prerequisites:** 4th level, Aggravate

As Aggravate, except you may attempt to aggravate a number of targets equal to half your level (round down) all at once. Make one Bluff check; each target makes a separate resistance check.

### Improved Escape (General)

You're skilled in escaping grapples and have a +4 bonus on grapple checks to do so.

### Improved Inspire (Expert)

**Prerequisites:** Inspire, Leadership

You can inspire all your followers at once. When you use your inspire abilities on your followers, you are not subject

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to the half-your-level limit on how many subjects you can affect.

If you have the Great Commission feat, you may spend a Conviction point to extend your inspire abilities to all the members of the military force that you command. They are still subject to the rules for social interactions and must be able to see and hear you to be inspired by you.

### Improved Pin (General)

Your grappling attacks are particularly difficult to escape. Opponents suffer a -4 penalty on grappling checks against you.

### Improved Taunt (General)

**Prerequisites:** 4th level, Taunt

You may apply the effects of your Taunt feat to a number of targets equal to half your level (round down). Make one Bluff check; each target makes a separate resistance check.

### Infuriate (General)

**Prerequisite:** Aggravate or Taunt

You can inspire blind rage in an opponent. As a standard action, you can make a Bluff check against your target's Sense Motive check or Will saving throw, whichever has the higher bonus. If you succeed, your target automatically attacks you and suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and Defense but has +2 damage against you. This lasts one round. Targets get a +1 on their resistance check per Infuriate attempt against them in the same encounter (successful or not).

You can take this feat a second time, allowing you to make the Bluff check as a move action, rather than a standard action.

### Leadership (General)

**Prerequisite:** 6th level

You attract loyal companions and devoted followers, subordinates who assist you. See the table below for what sort of companion and how many followers you can recruit, based on your leadership score.

Several factors can affect your Leadership score, causing it to vary from the base score, which is equal to your total level plus your Charisma:

LEADERSHIP	
Leader's Reputation	Modifier
Great renown	+2
Fairness and generosity	+1
Special power	+1
Failure	-1
Aloofness	-1
Cruelty	-2

Other modifiers may apply when you try to attract a companion:

### COMPANION LEADERSHIP MODIFIERS

The Leader . . .	Modifier
Has a familiar	-2
Is rhy-bonded	-2
Recruits a companion of a different alignment	-1
Caused the death of a previous companion	-2

Followers have different priorities from companions. When you try to attract followers, the following modifiers apply to your leadership score:

### FOLLOWER LEADERSHIP MODIFIERS

The Leader . . .	Modifier
Has a stronghold, base of operations, guildhall, or the like	+2
Moves around a lot	-1
Caused the death of other followers	-1

Cross-reference your final adjusted leadership score with the table to determine the level(s) of a companion or any followers you attract.

### COMPANION AND FOLLOWERS

Leadership	Companion Level	Number of Followers by Level					
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1 or lower	—	—	—	—	—	—	
2	1st	—	—	—	—	—	
3	2nd	—	—	—	—	—	
4	3rd	—	—	—	—	—	
5	3rd	—	—	—	—	—	
6	4th	—	—	—	—	—	
7	5th	—	—	—	—	—	
8	5th	—	—	—	—	—	
9	6th	—	—	—	—	—	
10	7th	5	—	—	—	—	
11	7th	6	—	—	—	—	
12	8th	8	—	—	—	—	
13	9th	10	1	—	—	—	
14	10th	15	1	—	—	—	
15	10th	20	2	1	—	—	
16	11th	25	2	1	—	—	
17	12th	30	3	1	1	—	
18	12th	35	3	1	1	—	
19	13th	40	4	2	1	—	
20	14th	50	5	3	2	—	
21	15th	60	6	3	2	1	
22	15th	75	7	4	2	1	
23	16th	90	9	5	3	1	
24	17th	110	11	6	3	1	
25 or higher	17th	135	13	7	4	2	

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- *Leadership Score:* Your base leadership score is your total level plus your Charisma. In order to take into account negative Charisma scores, this table allows for very low Leadership scores, but you must still be 6th level or higher to acquire the Leadership feat. Outside factors can affect leadership score, as detailed above.
- *Companion Level:* You can attract a companion of up to this level. Regardless of your leadership score, you can only recruit a companion two or more levels lower than your total level. You can try to attract a companion of a particular background, role, and alignment, but you take a leadership score penalty if you recruit a companion of an alignment different from your own.
- *Number of Followers by Level:* You can lead up to the indicated number of characters of each level. Followers are similar to a companion, except they're generally low-level. When your hero attains a new level, consult the leadership table above to determine if the hero acquires more followers, some of which may be higher level than the existing followers.

### Light Sleeper (General)

You do not suffer the +10 Difficulty modifier to Notice checks for being asleep. This means you're much less likely to be caught by surprise while sleeping. You can also act normally immediately upon waking. Other characters are normally dazed for one round after waking (taking no actions, but defending normally).

### Lightning Call (Arcane)

**Prerequisite:** Weather Shaping

You can call down bolts of lightning from storms (natural or summoned by Weather Shaping). Each round, you can take a full-round action to call and direct a bolt of lightning. It lances down from the clouds to strike a chosen target in your line of sight. The bolt inflicts damage equal to your adept level. The target can make a Reflex saving throw (Difficulty 10 + half your adept level, rounded down) to halve the damage.

Calling lightning is fatiguing (save Difficulty equal to 10 + half the bolt's damage, rounded up). Each successive bolt called in the same encounter increases the Difficulty of the fatigue save by +1.

### Low Profile (General)

You're less well known than you might be. Reduce your Reputation score by 3 each time you acquire this feat. Your Reputation cannot decrease below +0.

### Master Elementalist (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Charisma +3, Knowledge (arcana) rank 9, Summon Elemental

You are skilled at cajoling the spirits of the elements into manifesting and serving you. A summoned elemental remains in your service for one hour per adept level you possess, rather than the normal one round per level.

### Menacing (General)

**Prerequisite:** Untrained in Diplomacy and Gather Information

You frighten people. You may add half your Reputation score to your Intimidate checks. If you ever gain Diplomacy or Gather Information as a known skill, you lose your menacing edge and the benefit of this feat.

### Mind Over Body (General)

You can exert great mental control over your body. When you make Constitution checks, you can substitute your Wisdom score for your Constitution score, so long as you are conscious.

### Organized (General)

You perform tasks quickly. You may make a Wisdom check (Difficulty 15) to organize a task requiring a skill check and taking more than one round. This task may be performed by you or another character under your guidance. If you succeed at the check, the task is completed in half the usual time.

### Perfect Recall (General)

You have perfect recall of everything you've experienced. You have a +4 bonus on all checks to remember things, including saving throws against effects that alter or erase memories. Your head for trivia allows you to make any Knowledge skill check untrained, meaning you can answer questions requiring even difficult or obscure knowledge you may have read, seen, or heard before.

### Prone Fighting (General)

You suffer no penalties on your attack rolls for being prone, and opponents do not gain any bonus to hit you with melee attacks while you are prone. Opponents making ranged attacks against you still have -4 on their attack rolls. You can crawl at half your speed rather than the usual 5-feet per move action.

### Psychic Reflection (General)

**Prerequisite:** Psychic Shield rank 9

You can reflect psychic arcana back at their originator. When your Psychic Shield successfully blocks a psychic arcanum directed at you, you can make another Psychic Shield check against the attacker's check. If you succeed, the psychic arcanum directed at you affects the attacker instead, using the attacker's bonus. You do not suffer any fatigue for the reflected arcanum (the attacker does), but you are in control of the effect, even if you are not trained in the arcanum. You must maintain the arcanum yourself (if necessary), and it has its normal effect and duration. The attacker may defend and save against the reflected arcanum normally but cannot also reflect it using Psychic Reflection. Any attempt to do so simply causes the arcanum's effect to dissipate.

### Psychic Trap (General)

**Prerequisite:** Trained in Psychic Shield

You can psychically act against anyone who tries to overcome your psychic defenses. When an opponent

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attempts to use a psychic arcanum against you and fails to overcome your Psychic Shield, you get an immediate psychic arcanum use against that opponent as a reaction. This can be any psychic arcanum you can use as a standard or move action, but not a full-round action. If the arcanum requires mental contact, you are considered in mental contact with your opponent for the purposes of using it. You only get one free psychic arcanum use per opponent per round, regardless of the number of attempts to overcome your Psychic Shield. The reactive psychic arcanum has its normal Difficulty and fatigue.

### Reputation for Excellence (General)

**Prerequisite:** 6 ranks in chosen skill

Your skill is respected by others. Choose a skill. For every three ranks you have in this skill, you gain a +1 bonus to your Reputation in situations where your expertise is relevant.

You may choose this feat more than once. Each time you do, it is applied to a different skill.

### Ritualist (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) rank 4, one arcane talent feat

You have been trained in the techniques of arcane rituals, drawing upon the inherent power in rare items, specific times, and unique places. You are capable of creating rituals channeling no more Élan than your adept level plus your Wisdom and Intelligence. You may use rituals that channel more Élan should you find a written copy of the ritual or are taught it by another ritualist. See **Arcane Rituals** in **Chapter III** for more information.

### Quick Draw (General)

You can draw, ready, or reload a weapon as a free action, rather than as a move action.

### Renown (General)

You are well known, granting a +3 increase to your Reputation score. You can take this feat multiple times, gaining a +3 increase each time.

### Self-Shaping (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Meditative Talent, Body Control rank 12

You can reshape your body to assume the form of another creature. The new form must be a humanoid or animal, with a level no greater than your total level.

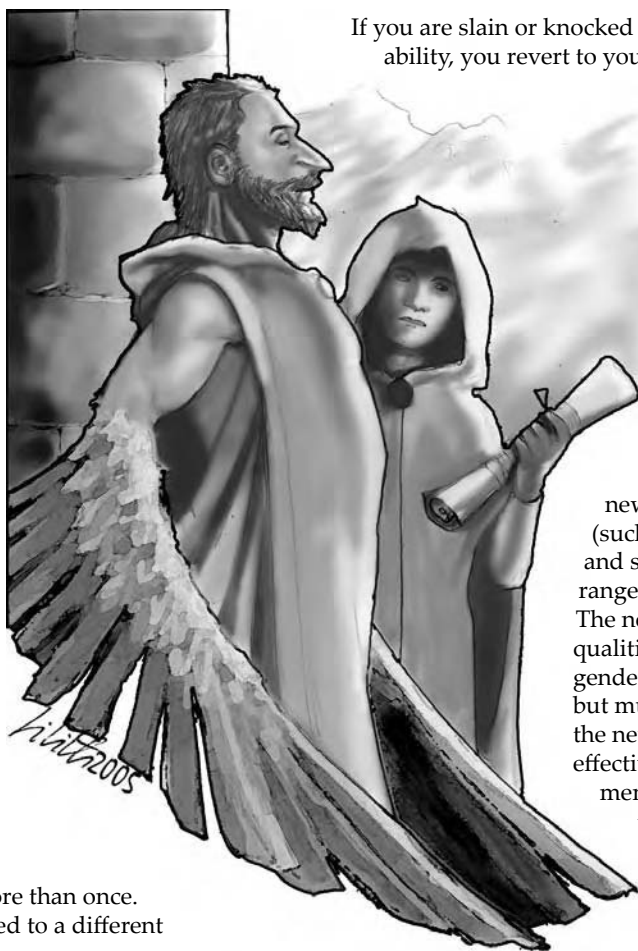
If you are slain or knocked unconscious while using this ability, you revert to your original form. You gain the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of the new form but retain your own Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. You also gain the new form's speed and qualities, and you retain your own base attack bonus, Defense, saving throws, and skills (modified by your new ability scores).

You can freely designate the new form's cosmetic qualities (such as hair color, hair texture, and skin color) within the normal ranges for a creature of that type. The new form's significant physical qualities (such as height, weight, and gender) are also under your control, but must fall within the norms for the new form's species. You are effectively disguised as an average member of the species. If you use this ability to create a disguise, you get a +10 bonus on your Disguise check.

Your equipment is not affected by the transformation. Any clothing or equipment that cannot be worn by your new form drops off. Likewise, when you return to your normal form, you have only what you are carrying or wearing. This usually leaves you naked if you were in animal form.

Self-Shaping is fatiguing, with a fatigue save Difficulty of 15. It requires a full-round action to undergo a transformation, during which you can do nothing else. The transformation lasts for one hour per level, but you can make an additional fatigue save to maintain a form for another hour per level.

Assuming an animal shape poses an additional danger: each hour you must make a Will saving throw (Difficulty 15) or lose a point of Intelligence. If your Intelligence score drops to the natural level for that animal (usually -4 or -5), you become that animal in mind, as well as body. The effect of your Self-Shaping becomes permanent, and your normal identity is lost. You remain trapped until someone else achieves a Difficulty 30 Mind Touch to reach and reawaken your normal self, allowing you to return to your normal form.





Note that rhydan using Self-Shaping can assume humanoid forms, and they are affected by assuming animal forms the same as anyone else. Some legendary rhydan mastered the ability to turn into humanoids, and even found humanoid lovers or mates, but most rhydan find humanoid forms clumsy, uncomfortable, and vulnerable (needing to wear clothing and armor, for example).

### Severance (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Psychic Talent, Ward rank 13

You can remove another creature's arcane talents. You must be in mental contact with the subject. Make a Ward check (Difficulty 30) as a full-round action to deprive the subject of arcane talents. The target makes a Will saving throw against your arcanum. If the check succeeds and the Will save fails, the subject loses use of all arcane talents and arcana, while retaining knowledge of those abilities. The target gets an additional Will save each day to regain those abilities, and a use of Mind Shaping or another use of this feat can reverse the effect (Difficulty 30). Severance is fatiguing. You can take 10 on the Ward check if the target is helpless and unable to resist you, but you can't take 20.

### Skill Knack (General)

There are aspects of a skill that you excel at. Pick three tricks from the **Skills** section starting on page 51. You can choose your tricks from the same skill or from different skills, but the Difficulty of each trick must be no more than 10 greater than your skill bonus with the relevant skill.

The tricks you choose become knacks. You can always take 10 with a knack, even in situations where you cannot normally take 10. If you want better results, you can also roll a skill check with a knack. If your die roll is less than 10, you are considered to have rolled a 10.

### Startle (General)

You can make an Intimidate check rather than a Bluff check to feint in combat (see **Bluff** in *Blue Rose*, page 78). Targets can resist with Intimidate, Sense Motive, or Will and gain a +1 bonus on their resistance check per startle attempt against them in the same encounter.

### Stylish (General)

You may spend a Conviction point to apply half the purchase Difficulty of your clothing (round down) as a bonus to one Bluff, Diplomacy, or Gather Information check.

### Tireless (General)

**Prerequisites:** Constitution +1, Endurance

You have tremendous energy reserves. You suffer no penalties from being winded or fatigued, although you still gain fatigue levels normally. This feat has no effect on exhaustion.

### Tireless Summoner (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Charisma +1, Summon Elemental or Summon Darkfiend

You have great practice at shunting away the energy backlashes that normally cause exhaustion among summoners. Subtract your Charisma from the summoned creature's level when determining the Difficulty for the fatigue check of a summoning.

### Unbalance Opponent (Expert or Martial)

You are skilled at keeping opponents off balance. Each round, choose one opponent. That opponent's Strength does not apply to melee attack rolls to hit you, but does still apply to damage. You can select a new opponent each round or continue to keep the same one off balance.

### Weather Shaping (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Shaping Talent, trained in Water and Wind Shaping

You can shape the complex forces controlling the weather. More than just commanding the winds, you can change the weather to suit your will. A use of Weather Shaping affects an area with a diameter in miles equal to your adept level, centered on you.

It takes 10 minutes for the effects of Weather Shaping to manifest. You can call forth weather appropriate to the climate and season of the area you are in.

#### WEATHER SHAPING

Season	Possible Weather
Spring	Tornado, thunderstorm, sleet storm, or hot weather
Summer	Torrential rain, heat wave, or hailstorm
Autumn	Hot or cold weather, fog, or sleet
Winter	Frigid cold, blizzard, or thaw
Late winter	Hurricane-force winds

You control the general tendencies of the weather, such as the direction and intensity of the wind. You cannot control specific effects of the weather—where lightning strikes, for example, or the exact path of a tornado. When you select a certain weather condition, the weather assumes that condition 10 minutes later, changing gradually over that time. The weather continues as you left it for a number of hours equal to your adept level plus 4, or until you use a standard action to designate a new weather condition, which fully manifests 10 minutes later. Weather Shaping can do away with weather conditions (naturally occurring or otherwise) as well as create them.

Weather Shaping is fatiguing, with a save Difficulty of 17. Each change in weather counts as a use of this feat.

### Wellspring Adept (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) rank 6, one arcane talent feat

You know the techniques for drawing upon the power of wellsprings (see **Places of Power**, page 76). You must be located in a wellspring to draw from it. Using arcana augmented by a wellspring is a full-round action and requires a Concentration check (Difficulty 10 + the power rating of the wellspring).

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You can detect wellsprings at a distance equal to your adept level times 150 feet, with no penalty for distance. You have a +5 bonus on Second Sight checks to do so.

### Wellspring Master (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) rank 10, Wellspring Adept

Not only are you skilled at using the natural flows of power in a wellspring, but you are capable of attuning your spirit to that wellspring.

Once attuned to a wellspring, you are treated as though you were constantly standing in the middle of its flows, allowing you to tap its energy and augment your arcana regardless of where you are. An arcanum can only be augmented by a single wellspring at a time.

You may attune yourself to up to your adept level in wellsprings at one time. A wellspring may have any number of adepts attuned to it.

Finally, with a Heart Reading, Nature Reading, or Object Reading check (Difficulty 10 + the power rating of the wellspring) you can determine how many people are attuned to a wellspring. If you personally know any of them, or have used Heart Reading or Mind Reading on them in the past, you can identify them.

### Windwalk (Arcane)

**Prerequisites:** Shaping Talent, trained in Wind Shaping

With a successful Difficulty 30 Wind Shaping check, you can walk on air at a speed of 5 feet times your Wind Shaping rank, with perfect maneuverability. The effect ends when your feet next touch the ground. Windwalk is fatiguing (make the fatigue save when your use of this



ability ends) and requires concentration (a free action each round) to maintain. If your concentration lapses for any reason, you fall.

You can take 10 or take 20 on a Wind Shaping check for Windwalk. Taking 20 requires two minutes preparation and increases the fatigue save Difficulty by +20.





# CHAPTER III: THE ARCANE ARTS

The world of Aldea is rich in magic, and the arcana described in **Chapter V** of *Blue Rose* describe only part of the mystic arts available to adepts. There are more advanced applications of some basic arcana, as well as sophisticated uses of the art such as arcane rituals and the creation of items imbued with magical power. This chapter describes these advanced arcane arts for use in your *Blue Rose* games.

## ADVANCED ARCANA

Some of the arcana in *Blue Rose* describe only their basic or most common uses. Masters of the arcane arts have more advanced, complex, and difficult applications of arcana, discussed here. These advanced applications are a normal part of the arcana, requiring no special training or other prerequisites, other than the ability to use the arcanum and a sufficiently high rank to accomplish certain difficult effects.

### Mind Shaping

- *Implant Knowledge:* You can use Mind Shaping to implant knowledge of a particular skill in a subject's mind. You can implant knowledge of any skill you know, up to your rank in that skill or your Mind Shaping rank, whichever is lower. It takes one hour per skill rank to implant this knowledge. The subject uses his own ability score with the implanted skill. Implanted skills fade at a rate of one rank per hour until they are gone.
- *Personal Psyche Alteration:* In some cases, a character may wish to perform Mind Shaping on himself. This is usually to conceal particular information or memories from a mind reader or to enhance a disguise, allowing the character to really believe he is who he claims to be, for example. The Mind Shaping check Difficulty is 10 lower than usual, since the

character is performing the alterations on himself, and the character can take 10 on the check.

The character may set up a particular trigger to undo the alterations, restoring his mind to normal. This may be the passage of a particular amount of time or a particular stimulus, such as a code word or seeing a particular person. When the trigger is activated, the character makes another Mind Shaping check against the original Difficulty (requiring no time or fatigue). If it succeeds, the alteration is undone immediately. If it fails, the alteration remains for 24 hours. After that, the character may be exposed to the trigger again and attempt another Mind Shaping check. On a natural roll of 1 on the check, the trigger fails entirely. The alterations are permanent unless another character uses Mind Shaping to undo them.

When someone else uses Mind Shaping to undo self-imposed alterations, the Difficulty is not reduced, so it is more difficult for someone else to eliminate them than for the character to eliminate them himself.

### Mind Touch

- *Psychic Grappling:* You can initiate a psychic grapple with any creature you are in mental contact with,

a mind-to-mind struggle. Likewise, a Mind Touch subject aware of you can initiate a psychic grapple against you. See **Psychic Grappling**, later in this section, for details.

## Psychic Shield

- *Damaging Psychic Shields:* In addition to using extra effort to overcome a psychic shield, a psychic attacker can directly damage a psychic shield in order to weaken it. The Psychic Blast and Psychic Weapon arcana can target an opponent's psychic shield rather than attacking the opponent directly. The target of the attack saves against it normally, but without the benefit of the shield. If the save fails, the attack's damage bonus is subtracted from the defender's Psychic Shield bonus rather than dealing damage to the target. The psychic shield operates at the reduced bonus until it recovers. A damaged psychic shield recovers one point of its bonus per minute (10 rounds) until restored to normal.
- *Extending Psychic Shields:* You can extend your Psychic Shield to protect others at the cost of fatigue and a reduction in effectiveness. The subjects must be in your line of sight or in mental contact. Extending a psychic shield is a full-round action and causes fatigue. Each additional subject reduces the shield's bonus by 2. A psychic shield cannot be reduced below a bonus of +1. All protected subjects receive the normal benefits of the Psychic Shield at the reduced bonus, and the shield user controls the entire shield. The extended shield can be maintained by making a fatigue check every additional minute (10 rounds), and you can withdraw any or all of the extended shield at will as a free action.
- *Deathblock:* In extreme cases, a Psychic Shield user can prevent mental tampering of any sort by setting a deathblock. This requires a full-round action. Thereafter, if the character fails both a Psychic Shield check and a Will save against a psychic arcanum, his mind collapses in on itself rather than bend to the invading psyche. In essence, the user dies rather than allowing the psychic arcanum to affect him. Among other things, this prevents the user from being psychically interrogated, controlled, or altered in any way.

Deathblocks are considered a last line of defense. Another psychic who achieves mental contact with the user can tell there is a deathblock in place, unless there's a deliberate attempt to hide it, in which case a Second Sight check, opposed by Psychic Shield, is required to detect it.

A psychic can set a deathblock for specific circumstances, such as to protect a specific piece of information or only to guard against specific arcana (such as Mind Reading or Dominate). The character who set the deathblock always chooses whether or not to activate it and can choose to deactivate it at the last second, if necessary.

## ARCANA RANKS

*Blue Rose* explains on page 107 that adepts have a rank of adept level plus 3 in all trained arcana. Experts and warriors have a rank of total level plus 3, divided by 2 and rounded down, in all trained arcana, and mixed-role heroes use the better of the two values when determining their arcana ranks. The **Arcana Rank** table shows these values for different levels for ease of reference.

ARCANA RANK		
Level	Adept Rank	Non-adept Rank
1	4	2
2	5	2
3	6	3
4	7	3
5	8	4
6	9	4
7	10	5
8	11	5
9	12	6
10	13	6
11	14	7
12	15	7
13	16	8
14	17	8
15	18	9
16	19	9
17	20	10
18	21	10
19	22	11
20	23	11

## Second Sight

- *Psychic Eavesdropping:* A character trained in both Second Sight and Mind Reading who senses a use of Mind Touch can attempt to listen in on the mental conversation. This requires a Second Sight check to detect the mental contact, followed by a successful Mind Reading check (Difficulty 15) to eavesdrop on the conversation. This eavesdropping isn't detectable unless one of the participants in the mental contact also has Second Sight and detects the eavesdropper's Mind Reading. This means many psychics are cautious about broadcasting their thoughts when they know other psychics are around and may be listening in.
- *Psychic Tracing:* You can trace the origin or the target of any arcanum use you detect. Each requires a separate check. The Difficulty is 10 or the result of the subject's Psychic Shield check, whichever is higher. Distance is not a factor, but you must have detected



the psychic ability use before it can be traced. When used on psychic signatures, this gives you the ability's origin and target at the time it was used; it doesn't provide you with information as to their current whereabouts. Any subject you psychically trace is considered casually familiar to you while you maintain Second Sight (see **Familiarity** in *Blue Rose*, page 108). Psychic tracing is fatiguing.

## Ward

Although Ward is a psychic arcanum, wielders of other talents often acquire it using the Arcanum feat, since it is a most useful ability in countering the arcane arts. If the Narrator wishes, Ward can be made available to all arcane talents rather than just Psychic Talent, allowing adepts to acquire it more easily, using the Arcane Training feat.

## Psychic Grappling

Just as characters can grapple physically, characters with Mind Touch can grapple opponents psychically, initiating a struggle of two minds locked in mental combat. Psychic grappling is a useful means of occupying an opponent, or of putting opponents into a position where you can more easily use other arcana on them, but it involves a measure of risk, particularly where strong-willed opponents are concerned.

## Grapple Checks

Repeatedly in a psychic grapple, you need to make opposed psychic grapple checks against an opponent. A psychic grapple check is made using your Will saving throw bonus, including your Wisdom score.

## Starting a Psychic Grapple

To start a psychic grapple, you must be in mental contact with the target. Attempting to start a psychic grapple is a standard action. Make an opposed psychic grapple check against your opponent. If you win, you and your opponent are locked in mental combat. If you lose, the opponent may break off the psychic grapple or may choose to grapple you, with the normal results.

## Joining a Psychic Grapple

If your target is already psychically grappling with another opponent, you can attempt to psychically grapple normally. The target still gets an opposed psychic grapple check against you. Multiple characters can attempt to psychically grapple the same target.

## If You're Psychically Grappling

While you are psychically grappling, regardless of who started the grapple, you make an opposed psychic grapple check each round as a standard action. If you win that round, you can do one of the following:

- **Damage Your Opponent:** You deal nonlethal damage equal to your Wisdom score. The target makes a Will save against the damage, rather than a Toughness save.
- **Psychically Pin Your Opponent:** Your opponent is rendered immobile for 1 round. Attackers get a +4 bonus on attack rolls against your pinned opponent. Your opponent can make an opposed psychic grapple check as a standard action on the next

round. If successful, your opponent escapes the pin but is still psychically grappling.

- **Psychically Influence Your Opponent:** You can use a psychic ability on your opponent requiring less than a full-round action. If the ability normally grants a saving throw, your opponent is at a -4 penalty, since you have a mental advantage.
- **Break Another's Pin:** You can break the psychic pin an opponent has over an ally.
- **Break Mental Contact:** You escape the psychic grapple and break off mental contact. You can take whatever movement you normally get. If more than one opponent is psychically grappling you, your psychic grapple check has to beat all of them in order to escape and break off mental contact. (Opponents don't have to try to maintain contact if they don't want to.) Once you have broken mental contact, your opponent must reestablish it to psychically grapple you again.

## Other Actions While Psychically Grappling

Taking any other action while psychically grappling requires a Concentration check (Difficulty 15). Failing the Concentration check means you automatically lose the opposed psychic grapple check that round. Taking another standard action while psychically grappling also means you lose the opposed psychic grapple check that round, since the psychic grapple check requires a standard action.

You can attempt to use arcana while psychically grappling. Doing so requires a Concentration check (Difficulty 20). A failed check means the attempt to use the arcanum fails. A

Concentration check is not required if you win the psychic grapple check that round, have your opponent psychically pinned, and use the ability on that opponent.

## Multiple Grapplers

Multiple attackers can attempt to grapple a single opponent. Additional grapplers can aid their friends with the aid another action, granting a +2 bonus to that character's psychic grapple checks for the round.

## Psychic Grappling Consequences

While you're psychically grappling, your ability to act, attack, and defend yourself is limited.

- **Required Standard Action:** The psychic grapple check requires a standard action each round. If you choose not to take the psychic grapple action each round, you automatically fail the opposed psychic grapple check. Since the psychic grapple check is a standard action, you can choose to take a move action before or after, but not during, the psychic grapple check. You must make a Concentration check (Difficulty 15) to do so and failure means you automatically lose the opposed psychic grapple check that round.
- **No Dodge Bonus:** You lose your dodge bonus to Defense while you are psychically grappling. If you choose to psychically grapple on the defensive, you retain your dodge bonus but must make a Concentration check (Difficulty 15) each round. Failure means you automatically lose any opposed psychic grapple check that round.

# NEW ARCANA

The following new arcana are subject to the normal arcana rules from *Blue Rose*, including guidelines on learning and using the arcane arts. Narrators may introduce these arcana into the game as regular arcana or may wish to make access to them more limited, revealing them to the players and the heroes as the game progresses.

## Arcane Insight (Int)

*Visionary*

You can learn things from visions and reading omens, such as cards, sticks, or stones. You can choose to make an Arcane Insight check in place of any Knowledge check, reading the result as if that Knowledge skill was known to you. The Narrator decides what questions Arcane Insight can answer, but it is generally limited to what a normal person with that Knowledge check result would know. Thus it doesn't automatically turn up secret or obscure knowledge. Still, visionaries with Arcane Insight can know far more than their non-arcane studies would suggest.

**Special:** You can take 10 on Arcane Insight checks, but cannot take 20.

**Time:** Arcane Insight requires at least 10 minutes.

## Cloud Minds (Cha)

*Psychic, Fatiguing*

You make yourself completely undetectable to other creatures (no matter what sense they are using) by erasing all awareness of your presence from their minds. This arcanum has the following effects.

First, you are invisible and inaudible to any subjects failing a Will save against your Cloud Minds arcanum. They cannot detect your presence by any means, including arcana.

Second, the subjects remain unaware of your actions, provided you do not make any attacks or cause any obvious or directly threatening changes in the subjects' environment. If you attack a subject, the effect ends for that subject.

If you take an action creating a sustained and obvious change in the subject's environment—for example, attacking a creature aside from the subject or moving a large or attended object the subject can see—the subject immediately gains a new saving throw. An ally of the subject able to see or perceive you can use a move action to warn the subject, granting an immediate new saving throw.

**Time:** Using Cloud Minds is a standard action. Each use lasts for one minute (10 rounds).

## Dreaming (Wis)

*Psychic or Visionary*

You can psychically enter the dream world by making a successful Dreaming check (Difficulty 15). You can enter the dreamscape of another person, which counts as being in mental contact with them for the purposes of other arcana, and for a Psychic Shield blocking you. In the dream world, you have your normal abilities, but this arcanum allows you to influence things and events there.

You can also attempt to use this arcanum when you are asleep.

### DREAMING

Difficulty	Task
5	Realize you are asleep and dreaming
10	Wake up from a dream or nightmare
15	Change an aspect of your dreamscape
15	Move from one dreamscape to another
20	Change your dream-self's appearance
20	Change an aspect of another's dreamscape

Changing a dreamscape allows you to alter features of the setting, such as terrain, weather, lighting, and so forth. You cannot cause harm, but you can make an otherwise pleasant dream into a nightmare. When you attempt to change someone else's dreamscape, the subject can make a Will save or Dreaming check to resist the change; you must beat a Difficulty of 20 or the subject's result, whichever is higher, to affect the dreamscape.

You can change your appearance in the dream world at will with a Difficulty 20 Dreaming check. Imitating a specific individual's appearance requires a Disguise check, but a successful Dreaming check provides a +10 bonus on the Disguise check.

**Special:** You can take 10 or take 20 on Dreaming checks.

**Time:** Entering the dream world is a full-round action. Uses of Dreaming within the dream world are move actions. Once you have entered the dream world, you remain until you choose to awaken.

## Empathic Feedback (Cha)

*Psychic, Fatiguing*

You can forge an empathic link with a subject with whom you are in mental contact. As long as the feedback link lasts, you and the subject feel each other's pain. If one of you takes damage, the other must make a Toughness save against nonlethal damage of the same amount, using Will in place of Toughness. So, if one of you is stabbed for +3 damage, the other makes a Toughness saving throw, using Will, against +3 nonlethal damage. You and the subject also suffer the following conditions affecting the other: dazed, nauseated, shaken, and stunned.

**Time:** Empathic Feedback is a standard action. It lasts as long it and mental contact are maintained. It requires concentration to maintain.

## Shadow Shaping (Int)

*Shaping, Fatiguing, Sorcery*

This sorcerous art commands the stuff of pure Shadow. It is not just the absence of light, but the darkness of spirit made manifest. It normally appears like a thick, impenetrable mist or a viscous, tarry liquid, as the sorcerer chooses. This Shadow-stuff vanishes instantly at the touch of Purifying Light. Still, a sorcerer can do a great deal with it.

**Shroud:** You fill an area with shadows, making it darker and more difficult to see. The Difficulty is 5 per 10-foot radius, creating concealment for all in the area. You are unaffected by the concealment created by this shroud. By increasing the Difficulty by 10, you create total concealment in the area, absolute blackness.

**Stealth:** You can make a Shadow Shaping check in place of a Sneak check to hide, even if you have no cover or concealment, since your sorcery provides you with shadows to hide within.

**Shapes:** You can create images or shapes of shadow. The base Difficulty is 10 for a 10-foot cube, plus 5 for each additional 10-foot cube the image occupies. Those seeing the image must make a Will save to determine that the Shadow-shapes are not real.

**Special:** You can take 10 on Shadow Shaping checks.

**Time:** Shadow Shaping is a standard action.

## Startling Revelation (Cha)

*Visionary*

Using your visionary insight, you can pull unpleasant images from a subject's past or future. You can substitute your Startling Revelation bonus for your Intimidate bonus when attempting to intimidate a subject, including attempts to demoralize or use feats requiring Intimidate checks.

**Time:** Startling Revelation requires the same time as an equivalent Intimidate check.

## Suffocate (Wis)

*Healing or Psychic, Fatiguing, Sorcery*

You interfere with a subject's breathing. You must be touching or in mental contact with the subject, who makes a Will save against your arcanum. If the save fails, the subject can still continue to breathe, but only by taking a standard action each round to gasp for breath.

The subject can take actions normally, instead of consciously breathing, but at the end of each round must succeed on a Fortitude save against the arcanum's Difficulty. The Difficulty increases by 1 in every consecutive round after the first one that goes by without a breath; it drops back to its original value if the subject spends an action to take a breath. If the Fortitude save

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fails, the subject is disabled and then, on the following round, dying.

**Time:** Suffocate is a standard action. It requires concentration to maintain.

### Touchsight (Wis)

*Visionary, Fatiguing*

You can extend your sense of touch to feel your surroundings out to 60 feet in all directions. Within that range, you can make Touchsight checks instead of Notice checks. You ignore the effects of invisibility, darkness, and concealment, but not cover. Comparing what your mundane senses tell you with what you learn with Touchsight is often enough to tell the difference between visible, invisible, illusory, hiding, and concealed creatures. For example, illusions are invisible to your Touchsight, telling you they aren't really there.

**Time:** Touchsight is a free action. It lasts for one minute (10 rounds) per use.

### True Vision (Wis)

*Visionary, Fatiguing (see below)*

Your insight is difficult to fool. You can use your True Vision bonus in place of your Sense Motive bonus to resist Bluff attempts. You can also use it in place of your Will save bonus to overcome Illusions and other arcana that fool your senses. These benefits operate automatically for you once you have learned the arcanum.

If you take a full-round action, you can make a True Vision check, opposed by the bonus of any illusory or concealing arcanum or the Disguise or Sneak bonus of any creature. If you win the check, you see the subject as it truly is, ignoring the effects of any disguise, illusion, or concealment. This effect is fatiguing and requires concentration to maintain.

**Time:** True Vision normally requires no effort to use, operating automatically.

### Wayfinding (Wis)

*Visionary*

You are able to find and navigate the paths of the world more easily. You can use Wayfinding in place of Survival when making checks to navigate, track, or determine direction and in place of Notice to detect potential dangers along your path, like ambushers.

With a Difficulty 20 check, you can find the shortest or safest route to a particular place, not a person or object. You can only focus on following one route at a time. If you change destinations, the previous route is lost to you, unless you have written it down or drawn a map of it.

**Special:** You can take 10 or take 20 on Wayfinding checks that substitute for skill checks if the skill normally allows you to do so. You cannot take 10 or take 20 on a check to find a route to a place.

**Time:** The same as the appropriate skill, or a full-round action for finding routes.

## ARCANE RITUALS

Adepts are capable of amazing feats of magic with their minds alone. They also know that it is the mind that limits arcana; fatigue, the difficulty of perceiving a target, and other such limitations exist because of the limits of the mortal mind.

Through the use of carefully performed rituals, an adept with plenty of time and the necessary training is capable of overcoming even these limitations. The rituals are expansive performances of arcane channeling, which take time, special materials, and sometimes require other things, such as a certain time of year, alignment of astrological bodies, or a specific place. Ultimately, ritual magic permits adepts to perform feats of magic beyond their normal capabilities.

In order to use the ritual magic rules in this section, an adept must have the Ritualist feat, introduced in this book. Ritualists incorporate a number of ritual requirements into their arcana in order to build up a pool of energy called *Élan*, reflected by a pool of points. These points are spent on *Élan Traits* (see page 74), which augment arcana in a variety of ways. Ritualists can only lead arcane rituals involving their trained arcana, not arcana they can use untrained.

The following sections are a selection of ritual requirements that ritualists may incorporate into their

ritual arcana. Only Increased Time is required for all rituals. As more of these requirements are incorporated into a ritual, the *Élan* available to the ritualist increases.

A ritualist cannot create a ritual that channels more points of *Élan* than his adept level plus the sum of his Wisdom and Intelligence. However, many rituals are written down, and if a ritualist has a copy of a ritual created by a more powerful adept, he may still perform that ritual, with a Knowledge (arcana) check (Difficulty 10 + the total *Élan* channeled by that ritual). An adept with access to an arcane library may gain bonuses to the Knowledge (arcana) check to understand the rite, and no check is necessary if he is taught the ritual by someone capable of using it.

### Increased Time

By their very nature, every use of ritual casting is dependent on this requirement. Some rituals may take longer than others. A healer who takes a handful of heartbeats longer to focus his healing energy while working on a grievous wound and the adept performing a mighty invocation over a full day meant to read the dreams of an arcanelly defended noble are both using this ritual requirement.

This time requirement is assumed to be above and beyond any normal time necessary to activate an arcanum, so that



an adept increasing his casting of Flesh Shaping by 30 minutes and making extensive cosmetic changes with the arcanum (10 minutes) will require 40 minutes.

Performing arcane rituals can be exhausting. Most adepts have enough stamina for up to an hour of invocation. Rituals of an hour in length or longer, however, require a Concentration check, with a Difficulty depending on the length of time (consult the table). This is a single check, and failure means that the ritual itself fails.

If the adept rolls a natural 1 on this Concentration check, not only does the ritual fail, but the gathered Élan is released in a dangerous burst of raw magical energy. Such instances manifest in a variety of ways, depending on the arcanum being ritually cast, but inflicts damage with a damage bonus equal to the intended gathered Élan of the spell. Thus, a ritual designed to gather 12 Élan that goes awry inflicts +12 damage.

### INCREASED RITUAL TIME

Increased Time	Base Élan	Concentration Difficulty
One minute	1	—
Ten minutes	2	—
Thirty minutes	3	—
One hour	4	10
Three hours	5	12
Six hours	6	14
Twelve hours	8	16
One day	10	18

## Ritual Materials

Rituals may incorporate strange materials. The precise nature of those materials depends not only on the arcanum being cast but also on the culture and magical training of the ritualist. A scholarly ritualist is likely to use a circle scribed with painstakingly researched glyphs and runes, where a tribal ritualist may use the smoke of rare herbs and woods burned in a sacred fire.

In game terms, ritual materials have a Wealth Difficulty cost. The rarer and more useful the material is for rituals, the more it costs. These costs assume the use of materials in the appropriate culture; they are often more expensive elsewhere.

There are also unique materials, special materials that can't properly be expressed through the use of the Wealth mechanic. These are often unique items or materials that are only of real use in the performance of a ritual. The Orb of Brill'kan, for instance, is highly coveted by those who perform ritual Scrying. Unique materials are rated by how much additional Élan they provide to a ritual. The Orb of Brill'kan has a rating of Scrying (5), meaning that it adds 5 Élan to any ritual casting of Scrying. Though many unique materials do nothing but add Élan to a ritual, no small amount of arcane items and artifacts act as unique materials in addition to their other abilities.

### RITUAL MATERIALS

Ritual Materials	Élan Added
Wealth 10	1
Wealth 15	2
Wealth 20	4
Wealth 25	6
Wealth 30	8
Wealth 35	10
Wealth 40	12
Unique Material	1+

## Ritual Timing

Some rituals make use of a specific time, designed to allow the adept to attune to certain flows of energy that rise and fall at various times of the day, week, month, or year. There are five basic kinds of timing, organized by how often those times occur.

*Daily* events occur at least once a day, sometimes twice. These include times such as sunset or sunrise, or a specific hour attuned to certain kinds of magical work. Each tradition of magical lore generally teaches its adepts a certain hour is better for a given kind of magic; players and Narrators are encouraged to decide what hour or event of the day is associated with each of a ritualist's trained arcana.

*Weekly* and *monthly* events are similar. Working magic ritually on a particular day of the week or month is common in every magical tradition. While some focus on natural occurrences with longer cycles, such as the phases of the moon, others are based around religious calendars or days associated with particular energies or other events.

*Yearly* events tend to be things such as solstices and equinoxes, as well as yearly holidays. Many adepts find magic dealing with health, fertility, and animals is best performed ritually at the height of the summer solstice, while magics dealing with the dead and spirits tend to be augmented during the Feast of Anwaren.

Finally, *unique times* happen less frequently than once a year. These are usually cyclical events that happen in multi-year cycles, or great astrological conjunctions that only happen once every five centuries. For the purpose of gathering Élan, these are considered unique times, as they are unlikely to happen more than once in a lifetime.

### RITUAL TIMING

Ritual Timing	Élan Added
Daily	1
Weekly	2
Monthly	4
Yearly	6
Unique Time	10

## Place Magics

Many rituals are best performed at a specific location. There are three classifications of place magic requirements. The first, *common*, is easily found and almost never unique. These are requirements such as being indoors or in a forest. These are rarely difficult to find and fulfill, though specific enough that it may take some arranging to do.

*Uncommon* locations tend to be more specific variations on common locales (for example, being in a temple, rather than simply indoors, or beneath an oak tree, rather than simply in a forest). *Unique* locations are far more specific and often noteworthy. Rather than simply any temple, the temple where a miracle of resurrection occurred might best provide Élan for a ritual of healing, and beneath the lightning-struck Oak of Strathlin might provide powerful Élan for weather or air rituals.

*Places of power* can be tapped for appropriate Élan. A place of power is considered a unique ritual location, as long as the energies of the place are attuned to the arcana being worked. Thus, in a True Wellspring, any ritual can be worked and gain the Élan benefit of a unique ritual location, but only a ritual casting of Visions may be worked in the crystal cavern that is an Arcane Wellspring for the Visions arcanum. For more information, see **Places of Power** later in this chapter.

### PLACE MAGICS

Ritual Location	Élan Added
Common	1
Uncommon	3
Unique	5

## Group Ritual

Implicit in the use of ritual is the knowledge of how to channel the efforts of others who seek to aid the ritualist in the endeavor she is undertaking. The most ideal circumstance for this is a gathering of other adepts all trained in the use of the arcana to be cast. However, even those without a trace of arcane ability can be led in focusing their will toward a ritual's success. There are three categories of participant for the purpose of this: non-adepts, adepts, and trained adepts. A ritualist can lead no more than his adept level worth of participants. A non-adept counts as one fourth of a participant, an adept counts as half, and a trained adept counts as one. This means a 4th-level adept could lead four non-adepts, two adepts, and two trained adepts in a ritual, or some other combination equaling 4.

- *Non-adepts* have no arcane feats. They must have some kind of investment in the ritual at hand in order to be able to contribute meaningfully, whether they are loyal retainers of the adept, adherents to a religion performing a rite of faith, or patriots aiding in the performance of a ritual that aids the sovereign of their nation. As the ritual is performed, non-adepts must make a successful Concentration check (Difficulty 10).

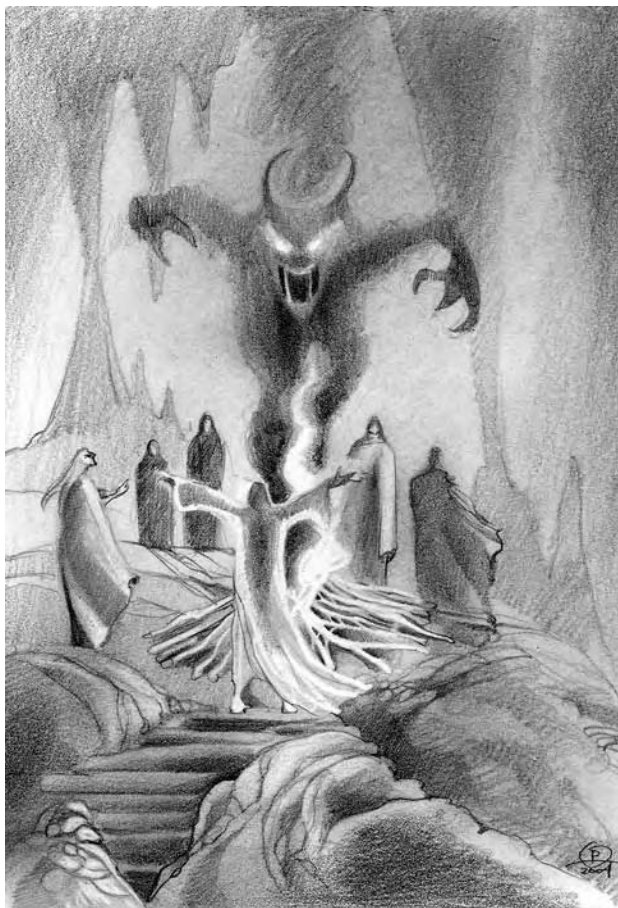
- *Adepts* have arcane feats. Such characters provide more than the raw will of non-adepts; they can actually augment the flow of magic in the ritual, even though they themselves do not know the arcana being cast. As the ritual is performed, adepts must make a successful Concentration check (Difficulty 12).
- *Trained adepts* know and can themselves cast the arcana being performed. As the ritual is performed, trained adepts must make a successful arcana check (Difficulty 15). If the use of the arcana has other effects, such as fatigue checks or checks against Corruption, each trained adept must make these checks individually at the end of the ritual.

### GROUP RITUAL

Ritual Participant	Élan Added
Non-adept	0.5
Adept	1
Trained Adept	2

## Drawing upon Shadow

This option is normally only used by sorcerers who have fallen to Shadow, for it is terribly corruptive. The Élan gained from such an action is utterly tainted and may even warp items and places used to perform the Shadow-tainted ritual.



Essentially, the adept choosing to draw upon Shadow for Élan must incorporate some transgression that draws Shadow into the ritual. Ritual sacrifice is one of the best-known means of accomplishing this, but lesser transgressions involve using stolen ritual items or deceiving someone into participating in the ritual.

If the Élan gained from a transgression is greater than that gained from the use of an item or from performing the ritual in a specific location, that item or location may become Shadow-tainted. To determine this, roll a d20 against Difficulty 20. If you hit the Difficulty, the item or location is Shadow-tainted. The roll has a modifier equal to the Élan provided by the transgression minus that provided by the place or item. If the item or place was integral to the performance of the transgression, double the final modifier.

For example, if the Orb of Brill'kan, a unique material with Scrying (5), is used in a Scrying ritual incorporating a ritual sacrifice (a major transgression generating 10 Élan), there is a +5 bonus to the check to see if the orb is tainted by Shadow. If the orb was actually used to kill the sacrifice in some manner, the bonus would double to +10.

Performing a transgression to draw upon Shadow requires a Corruption check. All arcana that ritually draw upon Shadow are sorcery, even if the arcana are not sorceries themselves. This means all uses of drawing upon Shadow cause two checks for Corruption: one for the use of sorcery and another for the transgression. The act of tainting a place or item is cause for a third check.

### RITUAL TRANSGRESSIONS

Ritual Transgression	Élan Added
Minor (lying, petty theft)	1
Significant (torture, treachery)	5
Major (murder, rape)	10
Mortal (murdering a unicorn, betraying a rhy-bonded companion)	15

### ÉLAN TRAITS

Élan Trait	Élan Cost
Arcana Focus	1
Arcana Mastery	3
Area Mastery	2 per reduction
Augment Concentration	3
Conjunction	2 per reduction
Fatigue Resistance	1 per +2 bonus
Greater Aptitude	2 per +1 bonus
Greater Power	2 per level
Inhibit Resistance	3 per +2 bonus
Light-Affirming	2 per +1 bonus
Maintenance Loop (Minor)	2 per hour
Maintenance Loop (Major)	10 per day

## Channeling Ritual Élan

Once the ritual has been performed and the Élan gathered, the adept casts the arcanum and channels the Élan into his weaving, altering it and easing the casting, augmenting it in ways he might never be able to manage otherwise. The gathered points may be spent on any of the following Élan Traits. Some Élan Traits may be purchased multiple times.

### Arcana Focus

This Élan Trait permits the caster to take 10 on arcana that do not normally permit the use of the take 10 rule. Arcana so altered are eligible for the Arcana Mastery Élan Trait. This costs 1 Élan.

### Arcana Mastery

This Élan Trait augments use of the take 10 rule for an arcanum. When taking 10 on this arcanum, the adept is considered to have rolled a 20, rather than a 10. This does not count as taking 20. This costs 3 Élan.

### Area Mastery

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased for a ritual casting of an arcanum, the Difficulty increase for using the arcanum on multiple subjects is reduced by 2. This may be purchased multiple times to reduce the Difficulty increase to 0. This costs 2 Élan per reduction.

### Augment Concentration

This Élan Trait changes a total concentration-duration arcanum to a concentration-duration one. Arcana so altered are eligible for the Maintenance Loop Élan Trait. This costs 3 Élan.

### Conjunction

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased for a ritual casting of an arcanum, the familiarity Difficulty (see **Familiarity** in *Blue Rose*, page 108) of that use is reduced by 5. This may be purchased multiple times to reduce the familiarity Difficulty to 0. This costs 2 Élan per reduction.

### Fatigue Resistance

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased, it grants a +2 bonus to the Will save against the fatigue caused by the ritually cast arcanum. This may be purchased a maximum number of times equal to the adept's level. This costs 1 Élan per +2 bonus.

### Greater Aptitude

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased, the caster gains a +1 to the arcana check when casting the arcanum. This may be purchased a maximum number of times equal to the adept's level. This costs 2 Élan per +1 bonus.

### Greater Power

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased, the caster's adept level is considered to be one higher for the purpose of any

single trait in the ritually cast arcanum that depends on the adept's level. This can increase things like the number of beasts summoned with Beast Summoning, the area of the earthquake ability of Earth Shaping, or the radius of a Ward. This may be purchased a maximum number of times equal to the adept's level. This costs 2 Élan per level.

## Inhibit Resistance

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased, the Difficulty to resist the ritually cast arcanum is increased by 2. This may be purchased a maximum number of times equal to the adept's level. This costs 3 Élan per +2 bonus.

## Light-Affirming

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased, the adept gains a +1 to the Fortitude save to resist the corruption of Shadow. This may only be purchased for arcana that are designated as sorcery and may only be used if the ritual does not involve a transgression against the Light. This trait may be used when a ritual is performed in a place corrupted by Shadow, which may result in a Corruption check. This may be purchased a maximum number of times equal to the adept's level. This costs 2 Élan per +1 bonus.

## Maintenance Loop, Minor

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased for a ritual casting of an arcanum, the trait maintains a concentration-duration arcanum for one hour without the adept actually having to maintain concentration. Once the purchased duration is over, the effect ends. This costs 2 Élan per hour.

## Maintenance Loop, Major

This Élan Trait works like Minor Maintenance Loop, save that it maintains a concentration-duration arcanum for one day for each time the trait is purchased. This costs 10 Élan per day.

## Sample Rituals

Many rituals have been recorded and passed down the generations. These are some of the most common rituals known.

### Rite of the White-Lit Altar

Perhaps the best-known ritual of the Church of the Pure Light, this rite is almost exclusively practiced by Purist priests; though, adaptations of it have found their way to other lands. This ritual augments the Cure arcanum, casting it on the wounded faithful gathered for prayer and vigil. Though they are the subjects of the spell, the faithful also contribute as a group. It is always performed at high noon, in a temple to the god of the priest performing the rite. When the ritual is handed down, it is assumed to affect four people, who are contributing to the ritual as non-adepts.

**Arcanum:** Cure.

**Knowledge (arcana) Difficulty:** 21.

**Ritual Elements:** Increased Time (30 minutes), Ritual Materials (Wealth 15: incense and white candles), Ritual Timing (Daily: noon), Place Magics (Uncommon: temple), Group Ritual (2); *Total:* 11 Élan.

**Élan Traits:** Arcana Mastery, Fatigue Resistance (+2), Area Mastery (6); additional Élan is generally used to increase Area Mastery.

### Circle of the Ninefold Wreath

Those who have used the Circle of the Ninefold Wreath are invariably remembered, for their workings of Plant Shaping are always significant. This ritual uses a crown woven with the Nine Sacred Woods, each one growing into the next so they form one entire symbol of the sacredness of plant life, as well as a variety of rare blossoms and herbs that are woven into the wreath.

**Arcanum:** Plant Shaping.

**Knowledge (arcana) Difficulty:** 33.

**Ritual Elements:** Increased Time (6 hours), Ritual Materials (The Ninefold Wreath: Unique Material—Plant Shaping (10), plus Wealth 15 rare herbs), Ritual Timing (During the full moon), Place Magics (Common: in a forest); *Total:* 23 Élan.

**Élan Traits:** Arcana Mastery, Greater Power (+10 levels).

### Rite of the Red-Drenched Altar

A blasphemous perversion of the Rite of the White-Lit Altar, this ritual was first seen performed by the White-



Handed Minister, necromancer-adept and master of the White Hands, an order of assassins who operated from a mountain citadel far to the east of Aldis. In the ritual, the necromancer establishes a black altar in a graveyard and sacrifices a pure white doe, while intoning the Rite of the White-Lit Altar backward. After an hour of this, the corpses of the dead around the altar animate and claw their way to the surface to obey the necromancer.

**Arcanum:** Imbue Unlife feat.

**Knowledge (arcana) Difficulty:** 22.

**Ritual Elements:** Increased Time (One hour), Place Magics (Uncommon: graveyard), Drawing upon Shadow (Significant); *Total:* 12 Élan.

**Élan Traits:** Fatigue Resistance (+8), Greater Power (+4 levels).

## PLACES OF POWER

Many adepts know there are natural places of power where arcane energy surges up from the earth, like a spring of water. These are referred to as *wellsprings*, for the power inherent in the land flows and shifts like water, moving around obstacles yet changing them.

Wellsprings have power ratings between 1 and 10. Most wellsprings tend to range from 3 to 6. Weaker wellsprings are usually impermanent and eventually dry up if they do not strengthen into a greater flow. Stronger wellsprings exist, but they are rare and powerful, and their presence rarely goes unnoticed.

Wellsprings can be sensed with a Second Sight check (Difficulty 20 – the power rating of the wellspring). Every 30 feet from the center of the wellspring to the adept imposes a –1 penalty on the check.

It is the rare adept who can do anything other than sense wellsprings. These few are potent wielders of the arcane arts, for they are capable of tapping into flows of power to augment their own arcana. Adepts with the Wellspring Adept feat, introduced in this book, can draw upon the power of a wellspring either to augment their casting of an arcanum or to wash away fatigue from wielding their arts.

An adept with the Wellspring Adept feat standing in the area of a wellspring may choose to use the wellspring to augment an arcanum aligned with that wellspring (see **Types of Wellsprings** later in this section for more information on arcana alignments and wellsprings). Doing so is a full-round action and requires a Concentration check (Difficulty 10 + the power rating of the wellspring). If this check is successful, the adept gains a bonus equal to the power rating of the wellspring and applies it either

to the check to use the arcanum or to the Will save to resist fatigue, whichever the adept chooses.

Because of the power wellsprings offer to adepts and others who wield arcana, they are hotly contested and sought after. Sorcerers seek to gather as many under their banners as they can, and the servants of the Light seek to keep them from being used for wicked ends. Many rhydan wish to keep such places from being exploited, for wellsprings are the ultimate expression of natural power.

### Miscellaneous Wellspring Traits

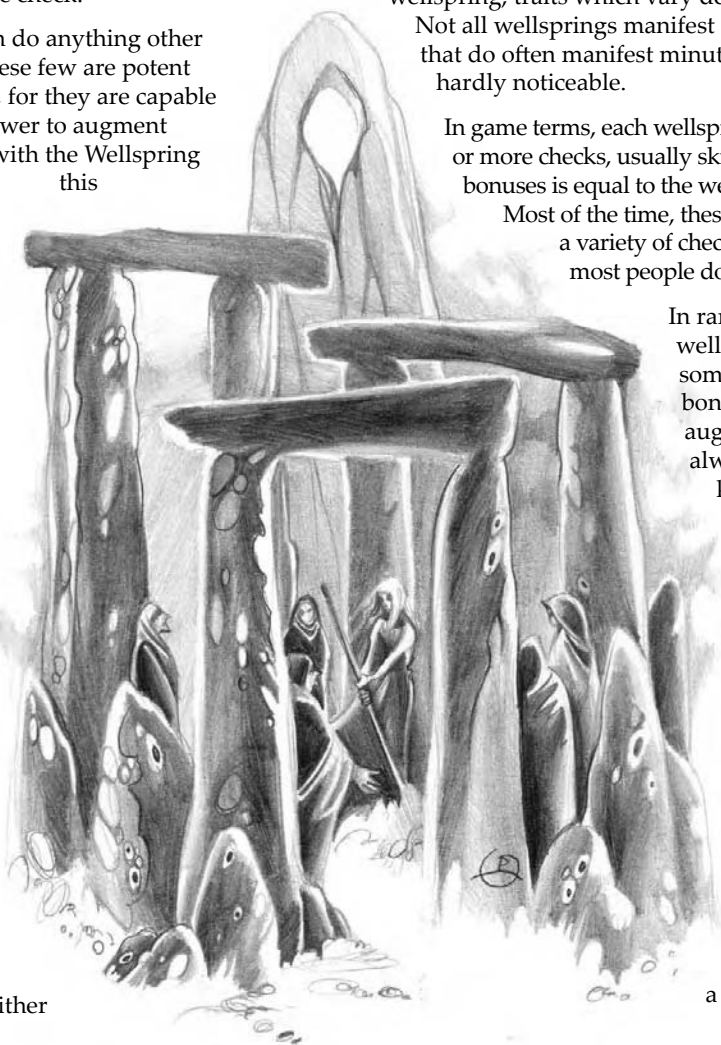
Some wellsprings manifest their flows of energy in ways other than through simple raw energy. Some sites have magical traits that manifest in the vicinity of the wellspring, traits which vary depending on that site.

Not all wellsprings manifest these traits, and those that do often manifest minute changes that are hardly noticeable.

In game terms, each wellspring gives bonuses to one or more checks, usually skill checks. The total of the bonuses is equal to the wellspring's power rating. Most of the time, these bonuses are +1 or +2 to a variety of checks and are so subtle that most people don't notice them.

In rare circumstances, a wellspring will augment some check with a higher bonus than normal; these augmentations almost always manifest in some kind of distinctly supernatural manner. It is rare for a wellspring to have more than one of these manifestations. Most wellsprings have a handful of tiny bonuses, with only a single strong manifestation.

Anyone with a Wisdom score greater than 0 automatically benefits from these bonuses, upon entering a wellspring. Those with a Wisdom of 0 or lower



may eventually become attuned to a wellspring by spending time there; they must spend one hour in the wellspring for every point their Wisdom is below +1. For example, the warrior Marshanith, with a Wisdom of -2, must spend 3 hours in a given wellspring before he gains its bonuses.

Some common wellspring bonuses follow:

- *Bonuses to Skill Checks.* These are the most common bonuses. When one of these bonuses is higher than +2, it is accompanied by a supernatural manifestation: trees grow handholds that grant a bonus to Climb checks, animals seem suddenly very docile in wellsprings that grant a bonus to Handle Animal, the senses sharpen to almost perfect quality in places that grant a bonus to Notice, and shadows bend and grasses silence in places that grant a bonus to Sneak.
- *Bonuses to Saving Throws.* These are fairly rare bonuses and usually do not exceed +1 or +2. These bonuses apply only to a single save type and generally are limited to a single situation in which that save is made. Examples are a wellspring of great health that provides a bonus to Fortitude saves against disease or a wellspring that blunts the sharpness of swords, granting a bonus to Toughness saves against slashing weapons.
- *Bonuses to Abilities.* These are the rarest of the bonuses. The ability bonus at a wellspring usually applies to one ability score. These bonuses are worth twice what the other bonus types are, so a +2 ability bonus would use up all the bonus points available at a wellspring with a power rating of 4. These bonuses apply to everything that the ability score applies to, including skill checks, saving throws, attack rolls, and the like.

## Cultivating and Destroying Wellsprings

Wellsprings do not exist independently of the places around them. In fact, it can be said that they are manifestations of the physical world's soul. Just as proper care of a body can cause the soul to flourish, and destruction of the body can cause the soul's flight, the health of wellsprings is dependent on the condition of the physical environment.

This isn't to say that a forest fire or something similar will destroy a wellspring. Far from it, for places that contain wellsprings often renew themselves quickly. After great fires or other disasters, the first places to return to normal are wellsprings, with healing spreading out from these centers. Wellsprings maintain themselves and the land around them. Cutting down every tree in a sacred grove might lessen the power of the wellspring there, but it will be only a matter of months before that wellspring returns to normal strength.

In game terms, even the most dramatic destruction of a wellspring's environment only reduces its power rating in half. For each month that passes thereafter, it regains one point of its rating until it has returned to normal. Enacting greater change, whether to increase or decrease the power of a wellspring, requires much time, effort, and dedication. As is true with other things, creation is more difficult than destruction.

Cultivating a wellspring requires years. To increase the power rating of a wellspring by 1 requires a number of years equal to the current power rating of the wellspring. But time isn't enough. Cultivation also requires that the environment of the wellspring remain intact the entire time. Destructive storms, fires, poisoned water, and the like cause the time to reset, once the wellspring returns to full health. Moreover, the wellspring must remain untapped by any adept during that time. All of its energy must be allowed to gather in order for it to increase.

Destroying a wellspring is much easier. To decrease the power rating of a wellspring by one requires a number of months equal to the current rating of the wellspring. This decrease requires the wellspring's environment to be defiled. The defilement must be maintained by constantly clearing away new foliage, shattering newly developed crystals in a cavern, chasing out animals, and the like. Whether or not the wellspring is tapped by an adept during this time is irrelevant. Reducing a wellspring's power rating by one point is considered a major transgression against the Light, requiring a Corruption check (Difficulty 20).

The complete destruction of a wellspring—that is, the reduction of its power rating to zero—is a mortal transgression, requiring a Corruption check (Difficulty 30). Moreover, every rhydan and adept within a distance of one mile per power rating of the original wellspring feels the destruction of the wellspring and suffers 1 round of nausea. This is accompanied by a psychic deathcry of a part of the land itself, requiring rhydan and adepts to make a Will saving throw or Psychic Shield check (Difficulty 20) to avoid being dazed for 1 round.

There are many wellsprings the world over, most of them far from civilization. In the present age, it is not possible for mortals to create new wellsprings intentionally. There are tales, however, of some legendary events creating new wellsprings, such as the sacrifice of the adept Parilian, which allowed a mother unicorn and her newborn twins to escape the sorcerer Horntaker. Parilian's death at Horntaker's hands created the Silver Grove, sacred to unicorns to this day.

## Ley Lines

The comparison of magical energy to water is apt. Often simply referred to as streams, ley lines are paths of arcane energy that flow from one wellspring to another.

Ley lines can be tapped by adepts with the Wellspring Adept feat. Ley lines are limited to no more than power rating 3, and most of them are only power rating 1. Additionally, ley lines can only be tapped to gain a bonus, equal to the ley line's power rating, to fatigue checks.

## Types of Wellsprings

Not all wellsprings are the same. To this day, adepts do not know what causes the differences in wellsprings, but they do know that they exist. The three most common kinds of wellsprings are categorized as true wellsprings, aligned wellsprings, and arcane wellsprings.

## True Wellsprings

The rarest wellsprings, a true wellspring is a source of power for all arcana. Places of the purest magic, true wellsprings are usually power rating 6 or higher. All known power rating 9 and 10 wellsprings are true wellsprings and may be used to augment the arcana check or the save against fatigue for any arcana. These wellsprings are also the ones most likely to have obvious supernatural manifestations.

## Aligned Wellsprings

The most common wellsprings, aligned wellsprings tend to range from power rating 3 to 8. Each aligned wellspring is associated with a single arcane talent and can be tapped by knowledgeable adepts to augment the casting of any arcana associated with that talent.

Aligned wellsprings often have miscellaneous traits appropriate to the arcane talent with which they are aligned. Healing wellsprings tend to be calm, nurturing places; animistic wellsprings are often untamed; psychic and visionary wellsprings tend to be very mysterious or serene; and shaping wellsprings are often shifting places where things never seem to remain the same.

## Arcane Wellsprings

The weakest wellsprings found in Aldea, arcane wellsprings range from power rating 1 to 5. Each arcane wellspring is attuned to a single arcanum and can be tapped by knowledgeable adepts to augment their castings of that arcanum.

An arcane wellspring often has traits in keeping with the arcanum it augments. A Battle Dance wellspring may have footstep patterns in a stone floor, Dominate Beast wellsprings may cause animals to cower before humans, Fire Shaping wellsprings may have ever-burning natural flames, and reflective pools or crystals may figure prominently in Scrying wellsprings.

Arcane wellsprings attuned to sorcerous arcana are often vaguely sinister in feel. The shadows tend to be a little deeper, and the wellspring's environment tends to be a little colder than the surrounding area. These wellsprings are not innately evil, however.

## Shadow-Touched Wellsprings

There are two kinds of Shadow-touched wellsprings. The first of these are the dreaded Shadow-wells, places of black energy that feed sorcery. The other, far more insidious than the wicked Shadow-wells, are corrupted wellsprings, waiting to trap the unwary.

There are many wellsprings that are corrupted, or full-blown Shadow-wells, thanks to the corruptions of the Sorcerer Kings. Their taint remains behind in the lands and its places of power to this day, making the use of these sites dangerous to adepts.

## Shadow Wells

Referred to as corrupt places in the *Blue Rose* rulebook, Shadow wells were once normal wellsprings, but the presence of Shadow eventually caused them to become horribly corrupted, feeding sorcerous arcana while weakening other arcana. Shadow wells are horrible places but tempting in power, for all adepts may tap them, even without the Wellspring Adept feat.

Shadow wells can be tapped to augment sorcerous arcana. Each well grants a bonus, equal to its power rating, either to the arcana check or to the Will save to resist fatigue, whichever an adept chooses when using a particular sorcerous arcanum. Moreover, Shadow wells inhibit nonsorcerous arcana in their vicinity, inflicting a penalty equal to their power rating to the arcana checks and fatigue saves associated with nonsorcerous arcana.

This penalty may be overcome by accepting the power of the Shadow well into one's spirit. As a free action, adepts have the option of deliberately opening themselves to the power of the Shadow well. By doing so, an adept gains the Shadow well's power rating as a bonus either to arcana checks or to fatigue saves, whichever the adept chooses when using a particular arcanum. Any arcanum used under such a circumstance is considered sorcery and requires a Corruption check.

## Corrupted Wellsprings

Corrupted wellsprings are the most insidious Shadow-touched wellsprings. A corrupted wellspring began its existence as a normal wellspring of another type. The presence of either Shadow-tainted adepts or adepts tapping the wellspring to commit transgressions against the Light eventually tainted the wellspring itself.

A corrupted wellspring seems to be a normal wellspring, only revealing its taint once it is tapped by an adept with the Wellspring Adept feat. When this is done, the pit of Shadow at the wellspring's center surges into the spirit of the adept, requiring a Corruption check. The Difficulty of the Corruption check is determined by the power rating of the wellspring.

### CORRUPTED WELLSPRINGS

Power Rating	Corruption Difficulty
1–3	10
4–6	15
7–9	20
10	30

Note that this Corruption is in addition to that caused by sorcery. Thus, a corrupted wellspring that is used to augment sorcery calls for two Corruption checks: one for tapping the wellspring and the other for using sorcery.

## Cleansing Taint

Cleansing the Shadow from a wellspring, whether it is a corrupted wellspring or a full-blown Shadow well, is difficult.

In order to cleanse a corrupted wellspring, an adept must resist Corruption by tapping the wellspring once for each of its power rating points and by succeeding on the Corruption check required each time. If the adept fails one of these Corruption checks, the process must be restarted. This process is often done over an extended period, using ritual magic heavy with the Light-Affirming Élan Trait. Additionally, the process must incorporate either a worthy sacrifice (usually the adept suffering a terrible blast of Shadow energy as the last arcanum is cast, inflicting damage equal to the power rating of the wellspring) or a redemption of evil (usually by using the magics channeled for Light-affirming purposes or to fight those aligned with Shadow).

Cleansing a Shadow well is a more difficult task. First, cleansing a Shadow well requires the redemption of evil. Usually, this means not only fighting the forces of Shadow that have taken up residence at the well, but also righting the wrongs that originally created it. For example, in the case of a sorcerer who sacrificed innocents to corrupt a wellspring, redeeming evil may mean overthrowing the sorcerer and returning the remains of his victims to their families. In the case of Shadow wells created by the Sorcerer Kings, it takes some research to discover what caused the wells, and the evils may prove to be too extensive or old to redeem.

The next step is for an adept to attune with the Shadow well and resist its Corruption. The adept must have the Wellspring Adept feat for this. The process of attunement takes a number of minutes equal to the power rating of the Shadow well and then requires a Corruption check (Difficulty 30). If the adept fails this check, the process must be restarted.

Once the adept succeeds on the Corruption check, the Shadow well fights back, attempting to kill the adept. The adept must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 15 + the power rating of the Shadow well). Failure means death for the adept, while success indicates that the adept must succeed on a Toughness save versus damage equal to Shadow well's power rating. Whether or not the adept dies, the cleansing is successful.

The redemption of a Shadow-touched wellspring is always dramatic, accompanied by a physical transformation as well as a psychic wave that spreads outward, causing all adepts and various creatures (rhydan, elementals, treants, unliving, and darkfiends) within a number of miles equal to the power rating of the wellspring to become aware of a victory over Shadow. All attunements to the wellspring are instantly severed, with all attuned adepts becoming instantly aware that the site has been redeemed.

## SUMMONING

The art of summoning is one of the most obvious manifestations of arcane power in the minds of the common folk. The ability to read minds, to heal by touch, and to command beasts seem extraordinary to non-adepts, certainly, but those with the power to summon up alien intelligences and bind them into service are truly wielders of potent and terrifying forces. Few have forgotten the tales of the Sorcerer Kings summoning great and terrible creatures, the likes of which no adept in this era could even name.

Characters learn to summon elementals or darkfiends through the Summon Elemental and Summon Darkfiend feats. These feats are only the beginning of the potential power to be wielded by dedicated summoners.

### Summoning Specific Creatures

Normally, the act of summoning pulls a creature that meets the summoner's needs, without consideration of the creature's identity. Both darkfiends and elementals are unique individuals, though not in a fashion mortals understand. A summoner who learns the name of a darkfiend or elemental is able to shape a summoning to focus on that individual, crafting a tight bond of intention and power, rather than the broad net most summoners cast.

In game terms, as long as an adept knows the name of the creature in question, and it is a name that the

creature itself would answer to, the Difficulty to summon the creature is 10 plus the creature's level, rather than double its level. If the creature is already summoned by another adept when the summoner tries to summon it, the summoning fails, yet the adept must still resist fatigue for the effort. The creature is aware of the summoning attempt, but it does not know the identity of the summoner.

Another benefit of summoning specific entities is that they can share some of the secrets they've been privy to over the centuries. Many an adept has discovered the secrets of an ancient adept by uncovering the name of one of the darkfiends or elementals that luminary summoned and then questioning that favored servant.

The names of darkfiends and elementals can be discovered through researching arcane lore or from other adepts who have already summoned such beings.

### Ritualist Summoning

Those who are skilled in ritual magic, and thus possess the Ritualist feat, are capable of using rituals to augment their summoning attempts. Indeed, truly powerful elementals and darkfiends are only truly safe to summon ritually, for their power is overwhelming.

Ritually summoning an elemental or darkfiend uses the same methods as other rituals for gathering Élan (with the following notes taken into account). This Élan is then spent on Élan Traits that specifically augment summoning.



## Gathering Élan

**Increased Time:** As normal.

**Ritual Materials:** As normal. There are unique materials in the world that are made specifically for the purpose of augmenting summoning, such as the Golden Brazier of Malketh, a Summon Fire Elemental (8) item that was long considered lost from the age of the Sorcerer Kings, before it turned up in the hands of the mad fire shaper Dorillia Thal. Most unique materials used to summon darkfiends are also corrupt items (see **Corrupt Items** in *Blue Rose*, page 126).

**Ritual Timing:** As normal, although elementals rarely have unique times associated with them. Daily, wind elementals favor dawn, fire elementals favor noon, water elementals favor twilight, and earth elementals favor midnight. On a yearly basis, the summer solstice is best for summoning fire elementals, and the winter solstice empowers the summoning of earth elementals. The spring equinox favors wind elementals, while the autumn equinox empowers water elementals.

Individual elementals may have certain yearly ritual times, based on a variety of historical precedents.

The times associated with darkfiends tend to range dramatically. Generally speaking, one hour after midnight, the so-called thirteenth hour, is the best time for summoning darkfiends. There are also yearly times for summoning specific kinds of darkfiends, which are apparently based on ancient holidays and festivals from the days of the Sorcerer Kings.

**Place Magics:** As normal. Elementals tend to favor environments where their element dominates, whether that is a windswept steppe for wind elementals or deep in a cavern for earth elementals. Darkfiends tend to prefer sites where atrocities or extreme expressions of their exarch's favored vice have occurred.

**Group Ritual:** As normal.

**Drawing upon Shadow:** Elementals can never be summoned by rituals that include drawing upon

Shadow for Élan. Most darkfiend summoning rites, by comparison, invariably include it in some form.

## Élan Traits for Summoning

The following are the Élan Traits that can be purchased with Élan generated by summoning rituals.

### Area Knowledge

The elemental summoned with this Élan Trait has an intimate knowledge of the area where it was summoned. It is capable of answering questions posed about the area as though it were a normal resident of it. Deeper secrets require it to make a level + Intelligence check, with the Difficulty set by the Narrator, depending on how widely known the information is. This costs 3 Élan.

### Assassin Daemon

The darkfiend summoned with this Élan Trait has a special purpose, to stealthily assassinate whomever its master wishes. Darkfiends summoned with this purpose gain Climb and Sneak as known favored skills,

and their attacks are poisoned (Fortitude save Difficulty 10 + half darkfiend's level, initial damage 1 Constitution, secondary damage 3 Constitution). A darkfiend may have only one special purpose. This costs 5 Élan.

### Binding Circle

The ritual incorporates the use of a binding circle, which lessens the entity's ability to resist it. This may only be purchased in rituals that are at least an hour in length. This Élan Trait reduces the base Difficulty to summon the being by 5. This costs 5 Élan.

### Daemon Talents

This Élan Trait grants a summoned darkfiend the ability to use one of the summoner's known arcana, as an adept of its level. This may only be applied to darkfiends that have been summoned with the Familiar Élan Trait. This costs 5 Élan.

### Elemental Longevity

This Élan Trait permits the summoned elemental to remain for a number of days equal to the summoner's



## — CHAPTER III: THE ARCANES ARTS —

adept level, rather than rounds. Doing so increases the Difficulty to summon the elemental by 5, however. This costs 2 Élan.

### Familiar

This Élan Trait empowers a darkfiend to aid the summoner in using sorcerous arcana. As a full-round action, the darkfiend may grant its summoner a bonus equal to half its level to the arcana check for any sorcerous arcana. Additionally, the summoner may foist the result of a failed fatigue save onto the darkfiend, but to do so, the summoner must succeed on a Concentration check (Difficulty 10 + double the level of the darkfiend). If the check fails, the darkfiend is released from service, becoming free to pursue its own agenda (which likely includes plans of revenge against the summoner) without being banished back to the realm of Shadow. This costs 5 Élan.

### Fatigue Resistance

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased, it grants a +2 bonus to the fatigue save caused by the ritually cast arcanum. This may be purchased a maximum number of times equal to the adept's level. This costs 1 Élan per +2 bonus.

### Greater Aptitude

Each time this Élan Trait is purchased, the caster gains +1 to the arcana check or level check when performing the summoning. This may be purchased a maximum number of times equal to the adept's level. This costs 2 Élan per +1 bonus.

### Guardian Daemon

The darkfiend summoned with this Élan Trait has a special purpose: defending its master from harm. Darkfiends summoned with this purpose gain Notice and Sense Motive as favored known skills. When adjacent to their summoner, they also have the ability to interpose themselves between the summoner and incoming attacks by succeeding on a Reflex save (Difficulty 10 + the level of the attacker). If they succeed, they become the target of the attack. A darkfiend may have only one special purpose. This costs 5 Élan.

### Last Word Unspoken

The summoner may choose to leave the last word of the summoning unspoken. The word may be spoken at any time within the next month to complete the summoning. Many summoners who use this do so in order to have a defender on tap, ready to be called up at a moment's notice. The invocation is a full-round action, and if the summoner has another being summoned at that time, that being immediately vanishes. This costs 3 Élan.

### Manifestation of Air

This Élan Trait may only be applied to air elementals. Air elementals summoned with this trait gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity. The Difficulty to resist their whirlwind power also increases by 2. This costs 2 Élan.

### Manifestation of Earth

This Élan Trait may only be applied to earth elementals. Earth elementals summoned with this trait gain +1 to both

## ÉLAN TRAITS FOR SUMMONING

Élan Trait	Élan Cost
Area Knowledge	3
Assassin Daemon	5
Binding Circle	5
Daemon Talents	5
Elemental Longevity	2
Familiar	5
Fatigue Resistance	1 per +2 bonus
Greater Aptitude	2 per +1 bonus
Guardian Daemon	5
Last Word Unspoken	3
Manifestation of Air	2
Manifestation of Earth	2
Manifestation of Fire	2
Manifestation of Water	2
Mastery of Element	5
Seducer Daemon	5
Shaper Elemental	5
Soldier Daemon	5
Vizier Daemon	5

Strength and Constitution and a +2 natural armor bonus to Defense. This costs 2 Élan.

### Manifestation of Fire

This Élan Trait may only be applied to fire elementals. Fire elementals summoned with this trait gain +1 to both Strength and Dexterity and +2 to their fire damage bonus. This costs 2 Élan.

### Manifestation of Water

This Élan Trait may only be applied to water elementals. Water elementals summoned with this trait gain +1 to both Dexterity and Constitution. The Difficulty to resist their vortex power increases by 1, and they gain +1 on the level check to dispel arcane fire with their drench power. This costs 2 Élan.

### Mastery of Element

This Élan Trait may only be applied to elementals that have had the appropriate Manifestation Élan Trait applied to them, Manifestation of Fire for fire elementals and so forth. An elemental so empowered is capable of aiding its summoner at shaping its element. As a full-round action, the elemental may grant its summoner a bonus equal to half its level to the arcana check for the appropriate elemental shaping arcanum. Additionally, the summoner may foist the result of a failed fatigue save onto the elemental, but to do so, the summoner must succeed on a Concentration check (Difficulty 10 + double the level of the elemental). If the check fails, the elemental is released from service and vanishes. This costs 5 Élan.

### Seducer Daemon

The darkfiend summoned with this Élan Trait has a special purpose: appearing as a creature of stunning beauty and seducing those indicated by its summoner. (Some summoners, as in the decadent days of the Sorcerer Kings, use the darkfiend for their own pleasure.) Darkfiends summoned with this purpose gain Diplomacy and Performance (any one) as known favored skills, and they have the ability to make themselves appear as an attractive person of either gender and of any race. They cannot use this ability to pose as a particular person. A darkfiend may have only one special purpose. This costs 5 Élan.

### Shaper Elemental

The elemental with this Élan Trait must have the Mastery of Element Élan Trait. The elemental is considered to be trained in the shaping arcanum appropriate to its element, with its elemental level treated as its adept level. This costs 5 Élan.

### Soldier Daemon

The darkfiend summoned with this Élan Trait has a special purpose: battling the foes of its master on the field of battle. Darkfiends summoned with this purpose gain Acrobatics and Intimidate as known favored skills, and they gain +1 Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. A darkfiend may have only one special purpose. This costs 5 Élan.

### Vizier Daemon

The darkfiend summoned with this Élan Trait has a special purpose: offering the summoner advice and lore. Darkfiends summoned with this purpose gain three Knowledge skills (summoner's choice) as known favored skills, and they have the ability to read any language. A darkfiend may have only one special purpose. This costs 5 Élan.

## ARCANE ITEMS

There are few items in Aldea that are arcanelly empowered. These items are regarded as great treasures, and those heroes who possess them are often well known for having them.

There are two kinds of arcane items: unbound items and bound items.

### Unbound Items

The stones and elixirs from the *Blue Rose* rulebook are the best-known types of unbound items, as are weapons empowered by the Imbue Weapon feat. Anyone can use unbound items.

To determine the function of an arcane stone, make a Knowledge (arcana) check with a Difficulty equal to the cost of the stone. To determine the function of an elixir,

make a Craft (elixir) or Knowledge (arcana) check with a Difficulty equal to the Difficulty to make the elixir.

### Bound Items

There are three kinds of bound items: Items of Art, Items of Skill, and Items of War. These items require users to attune their spirits to them. While some adepts know a special ritual to accomplish this, most characters must use the item and keep it near them for a length of time, becoming accustomed to its presence and power.

In game terms, it requires a number of days equal to the rating of the item to become attuned to it. These days must be spent actually using or wearing the item; a weapon must be worn and used (whether in actual combat or practice), armor and jewelry must be worn

## OBJECT READING AND ARCANE ITEMS

Through the use of the Object Reading arcanum, an adept is capable of understanding a great deal about the history of an item, as well as its innate capabilities. This is doubly useful when dealing with arcane items.

### Identification

Any successful use of the Object Reading arcanum on an item will, in addition to any other information, tell the adept if the item is imbued with magic. Once an item has been determined to be magical, the adept may attempt to probe the item to discover its arcane traits. The traits of unbound items are discovered automatically by the adept. Discovering the traits of bound items requires another Object Reading check (Difficulty 15 + the rating of the item), which is fatiguing. Success on this check gives a full understanding of the item's traits; though, some artifacts and Shadow-tainted items are capable of giving false readings.

### Rites of Attunement

Once an adept has successfully used Object Reading to read a bound item and determine its magical traits, the adept may be able to devise a specialized ceremony to allow a specific user to attune to that item quickly. Each such ceremony is unique to the item and user. Designing this ceremony takes a full day and requires a Knowledge (arcana) check (Difficulty 10 + the rating of the item). Success in this check results in a specialized ceremony that may be used to bind the item in a number of hours equal to the rating of the item, rather than the days normally required. At the end of this ritual, the one binding the item must make a fatigue save (Difficulty 10 + the rating of the time).



daily, and other items must be kept beside the character. Until this time has passed, the item functions as a nonmagical object. The time can be reduced by using the Attunement of Art, Attunement of Skill, or Attunement of War feat.

Some adepts are capable of reading magical items, becoming attuned to their flows, and devising rituals to more quickly bind them. See the sidebar **Object Reading and Arcane Items** for more information on this process.

Characters may not bind more levels of items than their total level. Thus, Joshen, a 3rd-level adept/5th-level expert, may have up to 8 levels of bound items attuned to him.

Items of War are associated with the warrior role, Items of Skill are associated with the expert role, and Items of Art are associated with the adept role. When binding an item that is not associated with any of your roles, the rating of that item is doubled for the purpose of binding it. Any levels in the appropriate role allow a character to bind the item at the normal rating, even if the rating of the item is higher than the character's levels in the role.

## Creating Arcane Items

To create an unbound item, use the Brew Elixir, Imbue Stone, or Imbue Weapon feat. Imbuing a weapon increases the cost and the Difficulty to craft a weapon by 10 (this includes the masterwork quality). Elixirs are brewed with the Craft (elixir) skill. To imbue a stone, the

creator must fulfill certain prerequisites, like being trained in certain arcana.

To create a bound item, use the Imbuement of Art, Imbuement of Skill, or Imbuement of War feat. See the bound items later in this chapter for the kinds of items you can make. Each item has several qualities: rating, aspect, activation, Craft Difficulty, Wealth Difficulty, and time. (A few items also have a prerequisite listed, which is for making them, not using them.) The qualities of several items can be combined to create items of exceptional power.

### Rating

The rating of an item measures how powerful it is. A number between 1 and 10, the rating measures the effective level of the item. The rating of an item determines the Difficulty to resist its effects, the bonuses it grants to certain abilities, and the like.

An item cannot have more total rating points than its creator's level. When combining the qualities of various items into one, add the ratings of the individual items together to determine the rating of the item with the combined qualities.

### Aspect

Aspect determines what feat is needed to create an item, as well as what role can most easily bind it. There are three aspects: Art, Skill, and War.

There are three sub-aspects: tools, regalia, and structures. Tools must be used in some fashion. Regalia are worn.

## — CHAPTER III: THE ARCANE ARTS —

Structures are too large and unwieldy to be carried around, and doing so would destroy their magic. They are parts of buildings and other structures imbued with magic. Most structural items can be bound at a lower cost than other bound items and can be bound by multiple people.

A single item may be imbued by different aspects (Art, Skill, or War), as long as the creator has the appropriate feats.

### Activation

This determines how the item's powers are invoked.

- **Arcanum:** The item is activated through the use of a particular arcanum.
- **Conviction:** The item is activated with the expenditure of a Conviction point.

### ARCANE ITEMS

#### ITEMS OF ART

##### Tools of Art

Ardhame

Chalice of Invocation

Bull-Roarer

Seer's Crystal

Wardblade

##### Regalia of Art

Adept's Pouch

Healer's Amulet

Union Rings

##### Structures of Art

Fountain of Glory

Portalstones

#### ITEMS OF WAR

##### Tools of War

Aegis

Bane-Blade

Blessed Blade

Dark Mountain Blade

Dawnlit Banner

Fortune's Smile

Ghost's Edge

Ghost Shield

Hawkbow

Horizon-Seeker

Impact

Iron Ram

Keen

#### ITEMS OF SKILL

##### Tools of Skill

Antlered Staff

Jorushan Tools

Named Instruments

Ranger's Cord

##### Regalia of Skill

Boots of the Finest

Homilist's Stole

Mantle of Regency

##### Structures of Skill

The Glorious Ballroom

The Masterwright's Forge

Keep Shields

Light-Touched Weapon

Nightblade

Scar-Maker

Shadow-Edge

Thunderaxe

##### Regalia of War

Azure Spurs

Bane Armor

Blessed Armor

Envoy's Garb

Light-Shining

Scout's Mantle

Tireless Barding

##### Structures of War

Terror Gates

Table of Accord

- **Feat:** The item is activated through the use of a particular feat.
- **Skill:** The item is activated through the use of a particular skill.
- **Trigger:** The item has a specific set of circumstances that trigger it.
- **Used:** The item is being used by the character or, in the case of some War items, by the character's subordinates.
- **Worn:** The item is being worn.

### Craft Difficulty

This is the modifier to the Difficulty for crafting the item (see the Craft skill in *Blue Rose*). This is added to the normal Difficulty to craft the item, and all bound items must be of masterwork quality in order to be imbued.

The Craft Difficulty modifier is the item's rating. Structures increase this by 10.

When combining the qualities of various items into one, the Difficulty modifiers are added together to determine the final Difficulty modifier for the item.

### Wealth Difficulty

This is the modifier to the Difficulty for purchasing the materials for the item (see the Craft skill in *Blue Rose*). This is added to the Wealth Difficulty of the item to be imbued.

The Wealth Difficulty modifier is twice the item's rating. Structures increase this by 10.

The Narrator may rule that special materials harvested for the purpose of enchanting an item give a bonus to the Wealth check. For example, the horn of a darkfiend, used as a special material in the enchanting of a magical sword, might grant a +3 bonus to the Wealth check.

When combining the qualities of various items into one, the largest Wealth modifier plus half the total of the other modifiers are added together to determine the Wealth Difficulty modifier.

### Time

This is the modifier to the base time for creating the item (see the Craft skill in *Blue Rose*). When combining the qualities of various items into one, all the time modifiers are added together.

An item's rating determines the time modifier. A structure's time modifier is its rating in days.

#### TIME

Rating	Time
1-3	Rating in hours
4-6	Twice the rating in hours
7-9	Five times the rating in hours
10	100 hours

## ITEMS OF ART

**Associated Role:** Adept

Items with the aspect of Art are created with the Imbuement of Art feat. These items tap the raw power within their creators, in the same fashion that adepts tap the power inherent in the world.

### Tools of Art

#### Ardhame

A black-hilted knife whose handle is etched with runes and glyphs, the ardhame is a boon for those who battle summoners. With a full-round action, the bound wielder can make a check to banish a summoned creature. The check is the same as for summoning the creature and is fatiguing. With a successful check, the creature is banished. The wielder must have knowledge of the art of summoning.

If the summoner of the creature is present when the banishing attempt is made, the summoner may make a check as well, which is fatiguing. If the result of that check is higher than the banisher's, the creature is not banished.

*Rating: 5; Aspect: Art; Activation: Feat (Summon Elemental or Summon Darkfiend); Craft Difficulty: +5; Wealth Difficulty: +10; Time: +10 hours.*

#### Chalice of Invocation

This chalice is dedicated to a particular deity. When using it to channel arcana, the adept gains a +5 bonus to an arcana check when the target of an arcanum is another person dedicated to the deity, whether a priest or an especially devout layperson.

*Rating: 5; Aspect: Art; Activation: Arcanum (any); Craft Difficulty: +5; Wealth Difficulty: +10; Time: +10 hours.*

#### Bull-Roarer

A specially shaped stone strung on a length of leather or hemp cord, the bull-roarer is used by animists to aid Beast Summoning checks and to communicate with other animists. With a full-round action, the animist whirls the stone, causing a strange, whining roar sound that can be heard for quite a distance (the animist's adept level in miles). When using this item to augment a Beast Summoning check, this item adds its rating to the adept's level for the purpose of using that arcanum. Additionally, the bull-roarer can be used to communicate

simple concepts to other characters who are trained in any animism arcana and who are close enough to hear the bull-roarer. This requires a Beast Summoning check (Difficulty 15).

*Rating: 1–10; Aspect: Art; Activation: Arcanum (Beast Summoning); Craft Difficulty: +rating; Wealth Difficulty: +rating times 2; Time: +rating times 2 hours.*

#### Seer's Crystal

Often a smooth orb of clear crystal or a flat pane of black obsidian, the seer's crystal is an aid to those who use the Scrying arcanum. The crystal gives the scryer a +5 bonus on the Scrying check to avoid being detected. If the scryer is detected, the crystal is considered present, not the scryer.

*Rating: 4; Aspect: Art; Activation: Arcanum (Scrying); Craft Difficulty: +4; Wealth Difficulty: +8; Time: +8 hours.*

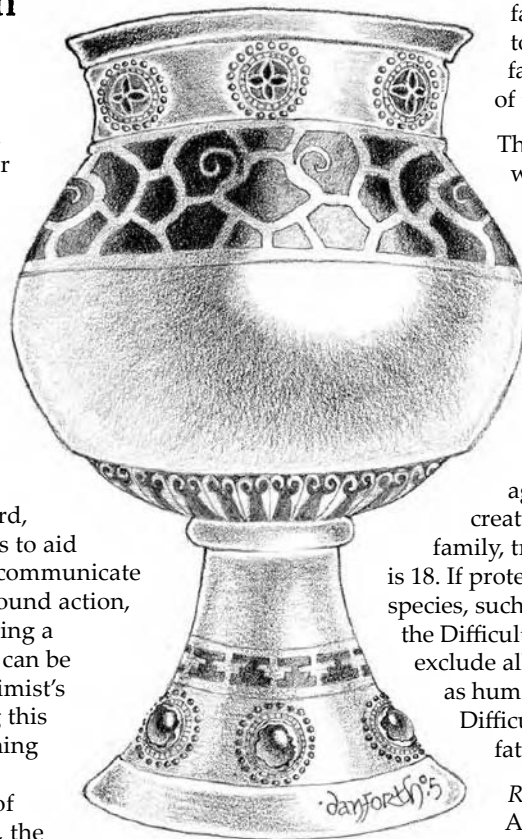
#### Wardblade

The wardblade is an impressive masterwork sword, decorated with the finest materials. The wielder uses it to outline an area to be protected by the Ward arcanum. This requires one full-round action per 5 feet in the radius of this area, which can be up to 10 feet times the wielder's adept level.

Instead of automatically suffering a fatigue result when other adepts try to pierce the ward, you may make a fatigue save (Difficulty 10 + the level of the opposing adept).

The wardblade can be used to create wards to keep creatures out of a given area. Creatures attempting to get through the ward must make a Will save (Difficulty 10 + half the user's level in adept + the user's Charisma). Creating such a ward requires a Ward check, with a varying Difficulty. If the ward is protecting against a single named entity, the Difficulty is 15. If protecting against a small classification of creature, such as members of a given family, tribe, or organization, the Difficulty is 18. If protecting against creatures of a specific species, such as humans, ghosts, or rhy-horses, the Difficulty is 20. If the ward is crafted to exclude all creatures of a specific type, such as humanoids, darkfiends, or animals, the Difficulty is 25. Creating such a ward is fatiguing.

*Rating: 8; Aspect: Art; Activation: Arcanum (Ward); Craft Difficulty: +8; Wealth Difficulty: +16; Time: +40 hours.*



## Regalia of Art

### Adept's Pouch

These pouches are known by a variety of names by the adepts who use them. They are usually crafted of leather or fine cloth and decorated with symbols and materials appropriate to the arcane practice of the adept. They are filled with mementos of important events, such as initiation ceremonies, vision quests, and important works of arcana. For example, healer bags are often filled with herbs and small bits of bone, while the spirit-pouches of animists contain small stones, feathers, and other natural materials.

Each bag is attuned to a single arcane talent (or to sorcery), which is chosen when the bag is created. When using arcana of that talent, the adept to whom the bag is attuned receives a +4 bonus to resist fatigue from those arcana.

*Rating: 2; Aspect: Art; Activation: Worn; Craft Difficulty: +2; Wealth Difficulty: +4; Time: +2 hours.*

### Healer's Amulet

The healer's amulet is well known by most folk. Crafted of silver, featuring an open hand in the center of a disk, these amulets are the universal sign of those who are willing to heal others without compensation. The amulet allows healers to channel their powers more swiftly. With a Difficulty 10 Cure check, which is a move action, the adept who has bound this item may use Cure as a standard action for one hour.

*Rating: 1; Aspect: Art; Activation: Arcanum (Cure); Craft Difficulty: +1; Wealth Difficulty: +2; Time: +1 hours.*

### Union Rings

Since the days of the Old Kingdom, these rings have been created by adepts for their loved ones. Always created in pairs, each ring must be bound by a different person. Then, the two people swap rings. For as long as they wear the rings, they are considered to be in touch contact for the purpose of using arcana on each other.

*Rating: 2; Aspect: Art; Activation: Worn; Craft Difficulty: +2; Wealth Difficulty: +4; Time: +2 hours.*

## Structures of Art

Structures of Art have a unique trait; when built on a wellspring and imbued by an adept with the Wellspring Master feat, they may be bound not to a single owner but to the wellspring as a whole. When this is done, any adept attuned to the wellspring through the Wellspring Master feat may draw upon the powers of that structure without personally binding it. A wellspring may support a number of structures whose total ratings do not exceed the rating of the wellspring itself.

### Fountain of Glory

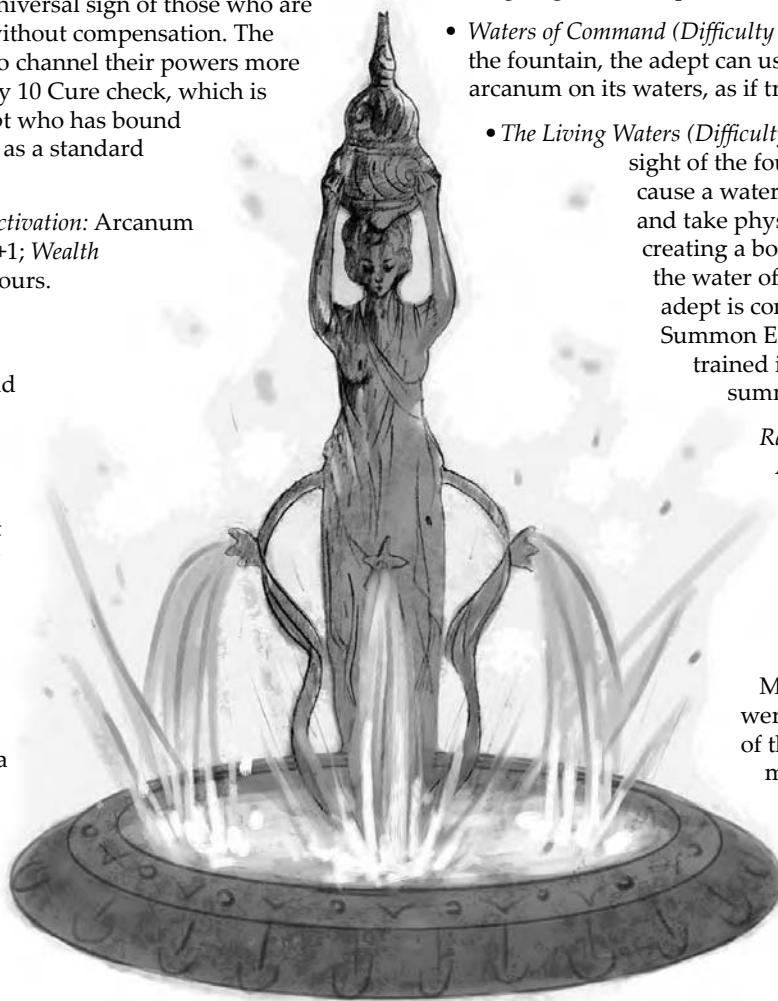
Many keeps that once belonged to the Sorcerer Kings boast these powerful arcane structures. Crafted of arcanelly sensitive items, like shas crystals, and inlaid with designs, these fountains channel magical energy into the waters themselves. This can have a number of effects, each of which is activated by the bound adept with a check (d20 + half the user's level in adept + the user's Charisma), with a variable Difficulty:

- *Waters of Healing (Difficulty 20):* By drinking the water direct from the fountain or giving it to another to drink, the adept can cause the water to heal wounds, as with the Cure arcanum. This is fatiguing to the adept.
- *Waters of Command (Difficulty varies):* Within sight of the fountain, the adept can use the Water Shaping arcanum on its waters, as if trained in it.
  - *The Living Waters (Difficulty varies):* Within sight of the fountain, the adept can cause a water elemental to rise up and take physical manifestation, creating a body for itself out of the water of the fountain. The adept is considered to have Summon Elemental and to be trained in Water Shaping when summoning the elemental.

*Rating: 5; Aspect: Art; Activation: Arcanum (special); Craft Difficulty: +15; Wealth Difficulty: +20; Time: +120 hours.*

### Portalstones

Many of these stones were in use during the age of the Sorcerer Kings, and many wellsprings still have them buried somewhere, hidden after long ages of neglect. A portalstone is some six feet in diameter, with runes etched



## UNIQUE RITUAL MATERIALS

To create a unique ritual material which increases the Élan generated by a ritual, the creator must conduct research, pay a cost, and modify the Craft Difficulty appropriately.

### RESEARCH

If the adept makes a Knowledge (arcana) check with a Difficulty of 25, plus the Élan level of the unique ritual material, no research is needed. Failing this, he must undertake research in an appropriate library for a number of days equal to the difference between the Difficulty and the adept's Knowledge (arcana) bonus. For example, it takes an adept with Knowledge (arcana) +11 a total of 17 days to research a Difficulty 28 ritual material.

### COST

Add the Élan level of the unique ritual material to the Wealth Difficulty of an item to be created. Thus, a longsword (Wealth Difficulty 11) that is both masterwork (+5 Difficulty) and is intended as a Pain (7) unique ritual material has a Wealth Difficulty of 23.

### DIFFICULTY INCREASE

Add the Élan level of the unique ritual material to the Craft Difficulty of the item. Thus, the masterwork longsword would have a Craft Difficulty of 32 (base 20 + 5 for masterwork + 7 for the Élan level).

around its perimeter and lines, which represent ley lines, crisscrossing its surface. These stones must be bound to a wellspring to function and can only be bound by those who have attuned themselves to that wellspring.

In order to use a portalstone, an adept must attune with the stone by making a Knowledge (arcana) check (Difficulty 20). The adept must then choose another portalstone to which he or she is attuned. Doing so creates an arcane connection between the stones, and a portal of

scintillating energy appears over both of them. At either stone, the portal may be stepped through by anyone, who appears at the other stone. The portal permits up to three people to pass through per round, and an adept can hold the portal open for one round per adept level. This is fatiguing.

*Rating: 3; Aspect: Art; Activation: Skill (Knowledge (arcana)); Craft Difficulty: +13; Wealth Difficulty: +16; Time: +72 hours.*

## ITEMS OF SKILL

**Associated Role:** Expert

Items of Skill are created with the Imbuement of Skill feat. These items are empowered by adroitness in creation. The skillful artisans who fashion these items practically work magic.

### Tools of Skill

#### Antlered Staff

A six-foot masterwork quarterstaff of oak or ash, topped with a set of impressive antlers, this staff is used by spirit dancers for some of the folk dances performed by those who follow the ways of the Old Dances. The character who has bound this item gains a +2 to all Perform (dance) checks. Moreover, when activating the Battle Dance arcanum, the character may use Perform (dance) to resist fatigue, instead of Will.

On the proper festival nights when the Old Dances are performed, the character may cause the smoke and sparks of the festival bonfires to swirl up, creating an elaborate illusion of ghostly dancers performing the Old Dances. This requires a Perform (dance) check (Difficulty 22).

*Rating: 5; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Use, Skill (Perform (dance)); Craft Difficulty: +5; Wealth Difficulty: +10; Time: +10 hours.*

#### Jorushan Tools

Named for the notorious thief Jorush, Jorushan tools are a set of masterwork thieves' tools, which grant a +2 bonus on Disable Device checks, as normal. In addition, with a Disable Device check (Difficulty 15), the character who has bound these tools can cause a lock to silently lock and unlock for the rest of the day, by mental command, up to a mile from the lock. Additionally, the character may use Disable Device checks in place of saving throws when resisting the effects of traps triggered while using these tools.

*Rating: 6; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Disable Device); Craft Difficulty: +6; Wealth Difficulty: +12; Time: +12 hours.*

#### Named Instruments

Each named instrument is unique. Some say the creator of each one is inspired by Braniel with the design and name in a dream. A musician who binds the instrument and plays it for the first time receives mental knowledge of the instrument's name from its spirit. Indeed, these items can



be Mind Touched, but their spirits are not sentient. Those who psychically contact these instruments only hear the songs that have been most skillfully played on them. A number of old songs thought lost have been recovered this way.

By making a Perform check (Difficulty 30), the musician to whom the instrument is bound may mimic the effects of the Heart Shaping arcanum. The arcanum functions as normal, except that the musician's Perform ranks are used in place of Heart Shaping ranks and it takes a minimum of 10 minutes of performance, not a standard action, to use Heart Shaping with the instrument.

Whenever the musician plays the instrument, a listener must make a Will save, with a Difficulty equal to the musician's Perform check, to interrupt the performance.

*Rating: 8; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Perform); Craft Difficulty: +8; Wealth Difficulty: +16; Time: +40 hours.*

## Ranger's Cord

A length of cleverly crafted rope made from some kind of natural fiber and possessing the flexibility of ivy and the strength of oak branches, the ranger's cord is a simple but effective tool in the hands of a survivalist. Pieces of the rope can be cut off with a sharp blade, and the pieces rejoined by tying them together and allowing them to sit overnight outside; by morning, the pieces will have grown back together.

With a Survival check (Difficulty 15 + 1 per additional person sheltered), the character may rig up a simple but effective shelter that is concealed in the surroundings and can hold up to five people. Treat the Survival check result as the Difficulty to spot the character while in the shelter, as though it were a Sneak check. This Difficulty is reduced by 5 for every other person that the shelter is designed to hold, for it is harder to hide larger shelters.

When this rope is used to bind someone, the Difficulty for an Escape Artist check is increased by 10.

*Rating: 6; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Survival), Use; Craft Difficulty: +6; Wealth Difficulty: +12; Time: +12 hours.*

## Regalia of Skill

### Boots of the Finest

Given to members of the Sovereign's Finest who are on delicate missions of stealth, these boots grant the bonded wearer a +5 to all Sneak checks. With a Sneak check (Difficulty 25), the boots can also completely erase any tracks, including scent, made by the user for one hour. This reduces the user's movement speed to half normal and can only be attempted once per hour.

*Rating: 7; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Sneak); Craft Difficulty: +7; Wealth Difficulty: +14; Time: +35 hours.*

### Homilist's Stole

Emblazoned with the symbols and colors of a given faith, this stole is draped over the shoulders of a priest.

By making a Knowledge (religion) check (Difficulty 15), the priest who has bound the stole may invoke its powers, becoming audible to all who are gathered with the intention of hearing the priest speak. This allows the priest to deliver homilies in massive temples or at large outdoor gatherings easily.

With a Knowledge (religion) check (Difficulty 20), the priest can become audible to any other priest of the same faith within a mile, either choosing individuals by name or speaking to all fellow priests within range.

*Rating: 2; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Knowledge (religion)); Craft Difficulty: +2; Wealth Difficulty: +4; Time: +2 hours.*

## Mantle of Regency

An impressive cloak of deep purple or crimson, usually lined in ermine at the collar and heavily embroidered with symbols of state, a mantle of regency is only used by royalty; though, some examples of the item have fallen into nonroyal hands over the years. With a Diplomacy check (Difficulty 20), the bound user may force someone to obey a single command, so long as the command is for the good of the wearer's nation or people. This may be resisted by a Will save (Difficulty 10 + half the wearer's level in expert + the wearer's Charisma).

*Rating: 3; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Diplomacy); Craft Difficulty: +3; Wealth Difficulty: +6; Time: +3 hours.*

## Structures of Skill

### The Masterwright's Forge

This is the legendary forge that has created many precious swords over the centuries. No one knows where it lies, or if they do, they are keeping that secret well. The masterwright's forge allows a bonded smith to create a masterwork item without adding anything to the Craft or Wealth Difficulties when creating the item. The forge must be primed, however—a process that requires one hour and a Craft (weaponsmithing) check (Difficulty 20).

*Rating: 2; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Craft (weaponsmithing)); Craft Difficulty: +12; Wealth Difficulty: +14; Time: +48 hours.*

### The Glorious Ballroom

Just outside the city of Garnet, the villa of Temendair is renowned for many things: its gracious servants, its tasteful decor, its luxurious grounds. But most of all, it is known for its glorious ballroom, an immense room under a soaring vaulted dome, with ample balconies and alcoves to accommodate the politicking and romancing that goes on in such places. Its walls are covered in mirrors, which conceal the strange glyphs that make up the core of this magical structure. When the bonded master of the ballroom—who must be the lord or lady of the villa, a member of the family, or the head servant—makes a Bluff check (Difficulty 25), everyone within it gains a +2 to Bluff and Perform (dance) checks, while in the ballroom. Select individuals within the chamber,

who must be chosen by the bonded user, may be made immune to having the Bluff bonus used against them. The bonuses last till the bonded user dismisses them as a standard action.

*Rating: 3; Aspect: Skill; Activation: Skill (Bluff); Craft Difficulty: +13; Wealth Difficulty: +16; Time: +72 hours*

## ITEMS OF WAR

**Associated Role:** Warrior

Items of War are created with the Imbuement of War feat. The secret of wielding magic is in intention, and it is focused martial intention that imbues these items, which are weapons and armor, battle standards, defensive structures, and the like.

### Tools of War

#### Aegis

Added to blessed blades and bane-blades, the aegis imbue allows the wielder to spend 1 Conviction point to lower the weapon's imbued attack or damage bonus, or both, and add the same number to Defense. The Defense bonus can be no higher than the weapon's imbued attack or damage bonus, whichever is lower. The penalty and bonus last until the wielder spends another Conviction point to change them. In the case of bane-blades, the bonus to Defense only applies against the weapon's bane creatures.

Thus, a warrior with a bane-blade with +3 to attack and +4 to damage may spend 1 Conviction point to give himself up to a +3 bonus to his Defense, reducing the attack or damage bonuses by a like amount.

*Rating: 1; Aspect: War; Activation: Conviction; Prerequisite: Battle Dance arcanum; Craft Difficulty: +1; Wealth Difficulty: +2; Time: +1 hour.*

#### Bane-Blade

These blades are the bane of one type of creature. A type must be chosen: aberration, animal, construct, darkfiend, elemental, humanoid, plant, rhydan, shadowspawn, unliving, or vermin. Such weapons are treated as blessed blades, but only against the chosen creature type. Like blessed blades, they are restricted to a maximum of +5 to hit and +5 to damage. Such weapons are known by a variety of names, from Hunter's Friends (animal) to Shadow Blades (rhydan) to Murder Edges (humanoid) to Daemonbane (darkfiend).

*Rating: 1–5 (half of total bonuses, rounded up); Aspect: War; Activation: Use; Prerequisite: Harm arcanum; Craft Difficulty: +rating; Wealth Difficulty: +rating times 2; Time: See Time, page 84.*

#### Blessed Blade

There are many such blades scattered throughout the world, having been crafted by skilled smiths from age to age. Each has a unique story and background to it, as



## — CHAPTER III: THE ARCANE ARTS —

well as some kind of discerning mark. Such blades grant bonuses to attack and damage, up to +5 in each. These bonuses need not be the same; indeed, some weapons have bonuses to attack but none to damage, while others inflict terrible wounds but are no surer than others.

While these items are referred to as blades, this imbue ment can be applied to any weapon that has had the Imbue Weapon feat used upon it.

*Rating:* 1–10 (total of bonuses); *Aspect:* War; *Activation:* Use; *Prerequisite:* Battle Dance arcanum; *Craft Difficulty:* +rating; *Wealth Difficulty:* rating times 2; *Time:* See **Time**, page 84.

### Dark Mountain Blade

The Dark Mountain Rebels, mountaineers who have fled the domination of the Lich King in Kern, have a skilled smith on their side creating these powerful weapons. When a Dark Mountain Blade is used to inflict damage on one of the unliving, the unliving creature must make a Will save (Difficulty 10 + the rating of the weapon) or be utterly destroyed.

*Rating:* Varies; *Aspect:* War; *Activation:* Use; *Prerequisite:* Imbue Life feat; *Craft Difficulty:* +rating; *Wealth Difficulty:* +rating times 2; *Time:* See **Time**, page 84.

### Dawnlit Banner

A dawnlit banner is a powerful item of magic, used by generals and the like. It bears the insignia of a military company or brotherhood. When the warrior to whom



this item is bound spends 1 Conviction point, the people under his or her command who have sworn allegiance gain a +4 bonus against all fear effects, as well as a +1 bonus to attacks.

*Rating:* 10; *Aspect:* War; *Activation:* Conviction; *Prerequisite:* Heart Shaping arcanum; *Craft Difficulty:* +10; *Wealth Difficulty:* +20; *Time:* +100 hours.

### Fortune's Smile

The stories about this masterwork short sword indicate that it has either changed hands many times or that there are multiples of it. In either case, the weapon is recognizable to most who have heard tales about it: hilted in white leather, with ancient coins inset all up and down the steel of the blade. The wielder of Fortune's Smile is lucky in battle; once per day, the bonded wielder may reroll any single attack roll, choosing the better result.

*Rating:* 3; *Aspect:* War; *Activation:* Use; *Prerequisite:* Conviction 10+; *Craft Difficulty:* +3; *Wealth Difficulty:* +6; *Time:* +3 hours.

### Ghost's Edge

Many are the ghost hunters who have sought out weapons with this imbue ment. It permits the bonded wielder to strike incorporeal creatures as if they were corporeal. If the bonded wielder is incorporeal, it can use the weapon against corporeal targets without becoming corporeal itself.

*Rating:* 2; *Aspect:* War; *Activation:* Use; *Prerequisite:* Sorcerer's Grasp; *Craft Difficulty:* +2; *Wealth Difficulty:* +4; *Time:* +2 hours.

### Ghost Shield

This mighty shield, crafted with a death's head motif and mother-of-pearl, is a source of trepidation for those who see its deathly appearance. In combat, the shield tries to interpose itself between the attacks of foes and the warrior to whom the shield is bound. This functions like a regular shield, and the bonded character takes all the normal penalties of using a shield (ghost shields can be any type of masterwork shield), except that the wielder's hands are free. This shield remains animated for one hour after the bonded character spends 1 Conviction point.

*Rating:* 3; *Aspect:* War; *Activation:* Conviction; *Craft Difficulty:* +3; *Wealth Difficulty:* +6; *Time:* +3 hours.

### Hawkbow

The Rezean hawkbows are shortbows of great beauty, each end of the bow depicting a hawk with its wings arched above it and its talons clutching the leather-wrapped grip. The very tips of these stylized wings form the ends of the bow, where the string is attached. This masterwork bow negates the normal penalty for firing a bow from a horse, even if it is galloping. Additionally, spending a point of Conviction doubles the range increment of the bow and negates penalties to hit from poor vision. These benefits last for a number of shots equal to the archer's warrior levels.

*Rating: 8; Aspect: War; Activation: Feat (Mounted Combat), Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +8; Wealth Difficulty: +16; Time: +40 hours.*

## Horizon-Seeker

An imbue ment only added to ranged weapons, this allows a bound wielder to spend 1 Conviction point to increase the range of the weapon. For one minute per warrior level, the weapon's range increment is doubled. For example, a shortbow's range increment would increase to 120 feet from 60 feet.

*Rating: 2; Aspect: War; Activation: Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +2; Wealth Difficulty: +4; Time: +2 hours.*

## Impact

This doubles the critical threat range of a bludgeoning weapon.

*Rating: 2; Aspect: War; Activation: Use; Craft Difficulty: +2; Wealth Difficulty: +4; Time: +2 hours.*

## Iron Ram

A mighty battering ram, this item consists of an iron ram head set into a trunk of iron-banded wood. The magics of the ram do not augment its ability to destroy fortifications; the ram itself is sufficient for that. Rather, it defends those who wield it, granting a +2 to their Defense, for it is said that the greatest weakness of any battering ram is the people wielding it. This item must be bound by a siege engineer or other person who commands the people using the ram.

*Rating: 4; Aspect: War; Activation: Use; Craft Difficulty: +4; Wealth Difficulty: +8; Time: +8 hours.*

## Keen

This doubles the critical threat range of a slashing or piercing weapon.

*Rating: 2; Aspect: War; Activation: Use; Craft Difficulty: +2; Wealth Difficulty: +4; Time: +2 hours.*

## Keep Shields

The Blackhounds, a mercenary company on the borders of Aldis, have made their reputation fighting raiders. One of the secrets of their success has been the employment of keep shields, so called because those who use them claim that being protected by one is as good as hiding behind keep walls. While not strictly true, the shields certainly do have their advantages. The wielder of this shield gains a +2 bonus to Defense against ranged attacks and is treated as having the Deflect Arrows feat. (The user deflects arrows with the shield, not a free hand.)

*Rating: 4; Aspect: War; Activation: Use; Craft Difficulty: +4; Wealth Difficulty: +8; Time: +8 hours.*

## Light-Touched Weapon

These weapons, which are favored by those who consider themselves crusaders for the Light, are often crafted by priest-adepts dedicated to the gods of Light. Though most

often found as swords and hammers, any weapon can be Light-touched. When facing darkfiends, unliving, or anyone with a Corruption score, the weapon gleams as though it were highly polished and in direct sunlight, regardless of the weapon's condition and surroundings. The bound wielder gains a +3 damage bonus against such foes.

Moreover, by touching the target of an ongoing sorcery (like Dominate, Heart Shaping, Mind Probe, and Pain), the wielder may spend 1 Conviction point and make an attack roll with the weapon against a Difficulty equal to the check result used to cast the sorcery or equal to the sorcery's saving throw Difficulty. Success indicates that the weapon has broken the sorcery in question, and the sorcerous effect ends.

*Rating: 9; Aspect: War; Activation: Use, Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +9; Wealth Difficulty: +18; Time: +45 hours.*

## Nightblade

Originally crafted by the Sorcerer Kings, nightblades are still wielded by the agents of the Lich King, particularly his finest vata'sha warriors. Crafted of a strange midnight-black iron and set with obsidian, nightblades can be any kind of slashing weapon. Nightblades inflict an additional +2 damage when used in at least moderate darkness by their bound wielders. Moreover, when a foe is injured by a nightblade, the wielder may spend 1 Conviction point to double the penalties the target is suffering from darkness (concealment, reduced movement, and the like). This is resisted by a Fortitude save (Difficulty 15).

*Rating: 7; Aspect: War; Activation: Use, Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +7; Wealth Difficulty: +14; Time: +35 hours.*

## Scar-Maker

Scar-maker weapons are terrible cleaving weapons, which leave horrid bleeding wounds. Anyone who has taken damage from a scar-maker weapon is bound to end up scarred and is more difficult to heal with arcana; adepts using the Cure arcanum upon those who have been struck with these weapons receive a -2 to the arcana check. Additionally, by spending 1 Conviction point, the wielder can inflict 1 point of Constitution damage with each successful hit. This ability lasts for 10 rounds and applies to every strike in that duration. Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to the effects of this imbue ment.

*Rating: 4; Aspect: War; Activation: Feat (Power Attack), Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +4; Wealth Difficulty: +8; Time: +8 hours.*

## Shadow-Edge

Terrible weapons of Shadow, shadow-edge weapons are always slashing weapons, and their cut burns like acid, inflicting +2 damage to those who are not Shadow-aligned. Once per day, a wielder of a shadow-edge weapon can substitute Corruption for Strength when inflicting damage on a Light-aligned enemy.

Twilight- and Light-aligned characters who pick up one of these weapons must succeed on a Will save (Difficulty

14) to avoid dropping the weapon. This can be prevented by a layer of stout cloth or leather between flesh and the Shadow-tainted metal.

*Rating: 6; Aspect: War; Activation: Use; Craft Difficulty: +6; Wealth Difficulty: +12; Time: +12 hours.*

## Thunderaxe

This greataxe is crafted with a lightning motif, with jagged edges along the axe-head itself and amber set in the hilt crafted of lightning-struck oak. Those who have been struck by this weapon claim that they heard a sound like far-off thunder when they were hit. This weapon is used in Rezean thunder dances. It grants the bound wielder the ability to mimic the effects of the Battle Dance arcanum, as if trained in it. The wielder uses warrior level in place of adept level. This lasts for one hour and must be activated by the expenditure of 1 Conviction point, plus the performance of the thunder dance, which takes 10 minutes.

*Rating: 6; Aspect: War; Activation: Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +6; Wealth Difficulty: +12; Time: +12 hours.*

## Regalia of War

Though many of the imbuelements here refer to armor, they are not necessarily limited to being applied to protective wear; many uniforms bear the blessed armor or bane armor imbuelement, for example.



## Azure Spurs

Decorated with silver filigree in blue-tinted steel, these spurs are given, once a year, to Knights of the Blue Rose who exemplify the ideals of the order. The knight who has bonded a set of the spurs gains +1 to attack while mounted, and making Ride checks is a free action, rather than a move action. By spending 1 Conviction point, the rider can negate any arcane effect that reduces the ability to control his or her mount, including fear effects, sleep effects, and effects that inhibit movement.

*Rating: 5; Aspect: War; Activation: Feat (Mounted Combat); Craft Difficulty: +5; Wealth Difficulty: +10; Time: +10 hours.*

## Bane Armor

Bane armor dissipates certain kinds of harmful energies or substances. Each suit of bane armor is a particular type:

- *Firebane:* This reduces the damage modifier of a fire attack by the bane armor's rating. As a side effect, it reduces the Difficulty to resist heat-based effects by the same amount.
- *Coldbane:* This reduces the damage modifier of a cold attack by the bane armor's rating. As a side effect, it reduces the Difficulty to resist cold-based effects by the same amount.
- *Acidbane:* This reduces the damage modifier of an acid attack by the bane armor's rating. As a side effect, the armor is immune to rusting attacks and never needs polishing.
- *Levinbane:* This reduces the damage modifier of an electricity attack by the bane armor's rating. As a side effect, all of the possessions of the wearer become nonmagnetic.

There are many other possible bane armors; the Narrator is encouraged to come up with others, using these as examples.

*Rating: 1–10; Aspect: War; Activation: Worn; Craft Difficulty: +rating; Wealth Difficulty: +rating times 2; Time: See Time, page 84.*

## Blessed Armor

This grants an armor bonus to Defense. The bonus is between +1 and +5. Like other imbuelements, this may only be used on masterwork armor, shields, and the like.

*Rating: bonus times 2; Aspect: War; Activation: Worn (armor) or Use (shield); Craft Difficulty: +rating; Wealth Difficulty: +rating times 2; Time: See Time, page 84.*

## Envoy's Garb

Though all who serve as one of the Sovereign's Finest receive a uniform, those who prove themselves with exemplary service, sacrifice, and loyalty to the sovereign and people of Aldis may receive this imbuelement as a reward. The wearer of the uniform gains a +5 bonus to Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with citizens and allies of Aldis and a +5 bonus to Intimidate checks when dealing with anyone else. Moreover, this

imbuement ensures the uniform remains clean and presentable, even when the envoy has been to hell and back in it.

*Rating: 4; Aspect: War; Activation: Worn; Craft Difficulty: +4; Wealth Difficulty: +8; Time: +8 hours.*

## Light-Shining

Any time the wearer is flat-footed and subject to an attack, the armor suddenly gleams in the eyes of the attacker, who must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 10 + light-shining rating times 2) or be blinded for a number of rounds equal to the amount by which the save fails. The attack is still made, but the attacker is blind.

*Rating: 1–10; Aspect: War; Activation: Worn; Craft Difficulty: +rating; Wealth Difficulty: +rating times 2; Time: See Time, page 84.*

## Scout's Mantle

This is a set of masterwork studded leather armor (often with the blessed armor imbuement) that aids its wearer in establishing ambushes. The wearer gains a +2 to Sneak checks for the purpose of establishing an ambush. He gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls during the surprise round of a combat (see **The Surprise Round** in *Blue Rose*, page 155). The wearer does not give off a scent and so cannot be tracked by scent.

With the expenditure of 1 Conviction point, the benefits of this armor can be extended to one ally per warrior level of the wearer. Allies must be in line of sight of the wearer on the round they receive the armor's benefits, and the benefits last for the rest of the encounter.

*Rating: 6; Aspect: War; Activation: Worn, Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +6; Wealth Difficulty: +12; Time: +12 hours.*

## Tireless Barding

This imbuement, normally applied to either barding or tack and harness, allows riders to spend 1 Conviction point to urge their mounts on. For a number of hours equal to the Charisma of the rider, the mount may move at full gallop without tiring or stumbling. This is a favored item among the Sovereign's Finest and the riders of Rezea. It may be used to benefit a rhy-horse; indeed, the rhy-horse may bind the item.

*Rating: 3; Aspect: War; Activation: Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +3; Wealth Difficulty: +6; Time: +3 hours.*

## Structures of War

Only those who hold a position of authority in a given place may bind structures of War: nobles, captains, and the like.

## Terror Gates

Reputedly in use throughout the tower of the Lich King, terror gates create a terrible fear in those who approach them without the authority to do so. Those who have not been given explicit permission by the character to whom

the terror gate is bound must make a Will save (Difficulty 20) to pass through the doorway. If the save fails, the subject feels too much fear to pass, as if struck by the Heart Shaping arcanum. The bonded character may spend 1 Conviction point to increase the Will save Difficulty by his or her Charisma for 1 hour; doing so increases the Difficulty of all gates bound to that character. The ratings of multiple terror gates within a single keep may be added together and the whole treated as a single item for the purpose of feats such as Attunement of War.

*Rating: 2; Aspect: War; Activation: Trigger (approaching doorway), Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +12; Wealth Difficulty: +14; Time: +48 hours.*

## Table of Accord

This item can only be bound by rulers, diplomats, ambassadors, and the like. At any time, the person to whom the item is bound may spend 1 Conviction point to gain a +3 bonus to Diplomacy checks. Furthermore, all results of hostile or unfriendly on any interaction checks in the table's chamber are treated as indifferent; the magic of the table prevents ill-feelings from marring the delicacies of diplomacy. The table's effects last until the current meeting is over. One of these tables is used frequently at the Royal Palace in Aldis.

*Rating: 1; Aspect: War; Activation: Conviction; Craft Difficulty: +11; Wealth Difficulty: +12; Time: +24 hours.*





# CHAPTER IV: ADVANCED BESTIARY

This chapter is an expansion of the bestiary in *Blue Rose*, offering new creatures for your adventures, as well as templates for modifying existing creatures. It also presents new creature qualities and two new creature types: constructs and vermin. Constructs are artificial creations of the arcane arts, while vermin are mindless creatures like insects and similar creepy-crawlies, often found in swarms or enlarged to unnatural size by sorcery. By combining templates with existing creatures, you can create all sorts of new challenges for heroes in your game.

## NEW QUALITIES

Some of the creatures introduced in this chapter have qualities not described in the *Blue Rose* core book. These new qualities are detailed here.

### Amphibious

An amphibious creature is naturally aquatic but can also survive indefinitely on land. It can breathe both air and water without difficulty.

### Dependent

The creature needs a particular substance to survive, much like humans need food, water, and air. When denied what it needs, the creature suffers the effects of starvation, dehydration, or suffocation (see *Blue Rose*, page 169), depending on how dependent it is on the substance.

### Light Blindness

Abrupt exposure to bright light (natural or magical light equal to full daylight) blinds the creature for round. On subsequent rounds, the creature is dazzled (–1 on attack rolls, Notice checks, and Search checks) while operating in bright light.

### Mimicry

The creature can imitate sounds and voices, giving it a +20 bonus on Bluff and Perform checks to fool others into believing its mimicry is real.

### Sensitivity

The creature is sensitive to a certain substance and must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 15) when coming in contact with it to avoid suffering a level of fatigue. The creature must repeat the save attempt every 10 minutes it remains in contact with the substance.

### Tremorsense

A creature with tremorsense automatically detects the location of moving object (living or non-living) that is in contact with the ground and within range of the sense. If no straight path exists through the ground from the creature to those it's sensing, then the range defines the maximum distance of the shortest indirect path. The creature itself must be in contact with the ground, and the creatures sensed must be moving. As long as the other creatures are taking physical actions, they are considered moving.

## TEMPLATES

A *template* is a set of modifications for creating a certain type of creature. In most cases, the template is added to an existing creature to change its traits. For example, if someone dies and becomes a ghost, you can apply the ghost template to the living person's traits to determine the ghost's traits. Similarly, an animal tainted by darkfiends adds the fiendish template, transforming from a natural creature to a twisted monster. Templates make it easy to create new creatures and allow you to create a variety of distinct creatures sharing basic traits of their type.

Each template is specific to its type and explains how to modify existing creatures, or create new creatures, of that type. Just take the creature and change its traits as instructed. If a trait is not mentioned in the template, it stays the same. Thus, even if five characters all become ghosts at the same time, they each remain distinct because they still have many of their former characteristics.

The format for a template is as follows:

**Type:** Templates usually change a creature's type, so a fiendish giant wasp is no longer vermin but fiendish, for it has the fiendish template. The creature gains all traits of the new type, but retains features of its old type unless those are specifically modified.

**Size:** Templates may change the creature's size. If a template changes a creature's size, the creature's other traits may change as well.

**Speed:** If a template modifies a creature's speed, the template states how that happens. More commonly, a template adds a new mode of movement.

**Defense:** Some templates increase or decrease Defense, either because the creature's physical defenses, like its skin, change or because it gains some arcane protection.

**Attacks:** Templates can change the creature's attack bonus and add or remove attacks.

**Damage:** Damage may change with Strength, attack type, or qualities.

**Qualities:** A template may add or remove qualities. The template description gives the details of any qualities a template provides, including how to determine saving throw Difficulties, if applicable.

Even if the qualities entry is missing from a template description, the creature still gains any qualities associated with its new type (see the description of that creature type for details).

**Saves:** Templates rarely change saves directly. Usually such a change is a side effect of altering the creature's ability scores. In some cases, however, a template grants a bonus to particular saves, like saves against fire for a fire template, for example.

**Abilities:** If a template changes one or more ability scores, the changes are noted here.

**Skills:** Most templates do not change skills directly but may offer the creature a bonus to certain skill checks. In a few cases, the template applies penalties, like a penalty to Sneak checks.

**Feats:** Some templates grant one or more feats.

**Alignment:** Usually the same as the base creature, unless the template is associated with a certain alignment.

**Advancement:** Usually the same as the base creature.

Templates are described as either *acquired* or *inherited*. An acquired template is something added to an existing creature. For example, ghost is an acquired template because creatures do not start out as ghosts; they die and then become ghosts, at which point they acquire the template. An inherited template is something a creature is born with. Fiendish is an inherited template because the creature is created that way. A giant wasp did not become fiendish; it was corrupted, and its offspring were born fiendish. It is possible for a template to be both acquired and inherited. For example, amphibious could be both because some creatures are born amphibious but others become amphibious through *arcana*.

It is possible to apply more than one template to the same creature. For example, a creature could be both fiendish and a ghost or a lich. This works particularly well if one template is inherited and the other acquired. If you have more than one acquired template, decide which change occurred first and apply that template first, then apply the second, and so on. Keep in mind, however, that each new template supersedes the previous ones. For example, if one template increases the creature's Intelligence by +2 but the next template states the creature's Intelligence drops to -5, the creature now has an Intelligence of -5.

## ANIMALS

This section provides information on animals found in Aldea, in addition to the animals in *Blue Rose*. These are suitable for use as pets or base creatures for various templates. They also provide ideas for animism *arcana* involving animals, like *Beast Summoning*.

### Badger

Badgers are squat and powerful, covered in short thick fur. Their strong forearms have long claws designed for

digging. An adult badger is 2 to 3 feet long and weighs 25 to 35 pounds.

In combat, badgers attack with their sharp claws and teeth. They are not normally aggressive to larger creatures, however.

Badgers have a +4 bonus on *Escape Artist* checks, which is reflected in the stat block. They get *Rage* and *Track* as bonus feats.



## BADGER

Small 1st-level animal; Initiative +3; Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; Defense 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Attack +4 melee (+1 damage, claw); Qualities: Low-light vision, scent; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str +1, Dex +3, Con +2, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha -2; Skills: Escape Artist +7, Notice +5; Feats: Rage, Track, Weapon Finesse; Advancement: Small (2nd level).

## Donkey

These long-eared, horselike creatures are surefooted and sturdy. Donkeys make excellent pack animals and have Strength +1 when determining their carrying capacity.

## DONKEY

Medium 2nd-level animal; Initiative +1; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Attack +1 melee (+1 damage, hoof); Qualities: Low-light vision, scent; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; Str +0, Dex +1, Con +1, Int -4, Wis +0, Cha -3; Skills: Notice +5; Feats: Endurance; Advancement: —.

## Lizard

These small, nonvenomous lizards are most often found in warm forests and places like the Veran Marsh. They are

usually 1 to 2 feet long, including tail, and vary widely in color. Lizards will avoid combat whenever possible.

Lizards use their Dexterity instead of their Strength for Climb checks. They also have a +8 bonus to Acrobatics checks for balancing. They have a -2 penalty to Toughness saves, which is reflected in the stat block.

## LIZARD

Tiny 1st-level animal; Initiative +2; Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; Defense 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex); Attack +4 melee (-3 damage, bite); Qualities: Low-light vision; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough -2, Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str -4, Dex +2, Con +0, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha -2; Skills: Climb +14, Notice +4, Sneak +11; Feats: Weapon Finesse; Advancement: —.

## Lizard, Monitor

Unlike their smaller cousins, monitor lizards are aggressive and deliberately attack other animals. They use their powerful jaws to tear chunks of meat from their prey. Most monitor lizards are 3 to 5 feet long, including their tails. They have a +4 bonus to Sneak checks, which increases to +8 in forested or overgrown areas.

## LIZARD, MONITOR

Medium 3rd-level animal; Initiative +2; Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; Defense 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); Attack +5 melee (+7 damage, bite); Qualities: Low-light vision; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +5, Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +2; Str +3, Dex +2, Con +3, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha -3; Skills: Climb +6, Notice +4, Sneak +6, Swim +11; Feats: Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes; Advancement: Medium (4th-5th level).

## Manta Ray

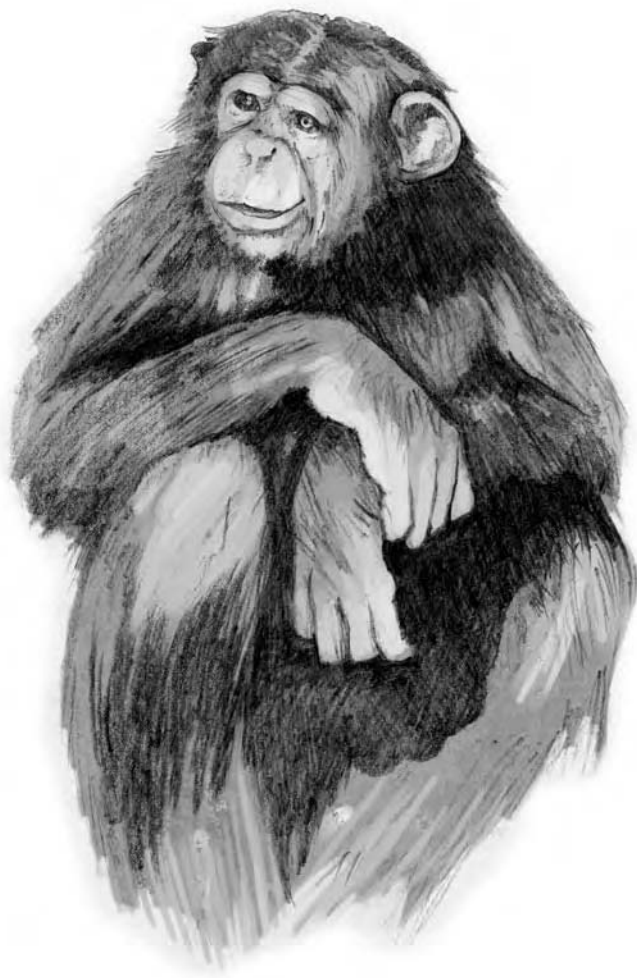
These flat, wide-finned fish are not aggressive and avoid most creatures their own size or larger. They eat by swallowing tiny sea creatures. A manta ray attacks by ramming its opponents head-on, but only does so when threatened.

## MANTA RAY

Large 4th-level animal; Initiative +0; Speed swim 30 ft.; Defense 12 (-1 size, +3 natural); Attack +4 melee (+4 damage, ram); Qualities: Low-light vision; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +4, Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str +2, Dex +0, Con +0, Int -5, Wis +1, Cha -4; Skills: Notice +8, Swim +10; Feats: Endurance, Great Toughness; Advancement: Medium (5th-6th level).

## Monkey

These small arboreal monkeys are found in most warm forests or jungles, such as the islands of Lar'tya. They vary widely in coloring, markings, and fur length, but all have prehensile tails and feet and surprisingly expressive faces. If attacked by something larger than they are, most monkeys flee to the trees. If cornered, however, they become vicious fighters.



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Monkeys have a +8 bonus to Acrobatics checks, which is reflected in the stat block. They use their Dexterity instead of their Strength for Climb checks.

### MONKEY

Tiny 1st-level animal; Initiative +2; Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; Defense 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex); Attack +4 melee (-4 damage, bite); Qualities: Low-light vision; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +0, Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str -3, Dex +2, Con +0, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha -2; Skills: Acrobatics +10, Climb +14, Notice +4, Sneak +11; Feats: Weapon Finesse; Advancement: Small (2nd–3rd level).

### Mule

Mules are the result of crossbreeding a donkey and a horse. They are roughly the same size as a light horse, but stronger. Mules can be temperamental, and they have a powerful kick.

Mules have a +2 bonus to checks to avoid slipping or falling.

### MULE

Large 3rd-level animal; Initiative +1; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Attack +4 melee (+4 damage, hoof); Qualities: Low-light vision, scent; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +6, Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str +3, Dex +1, Con +3, Int -4, Wis +0, Cha -2; Skills: Notice +6; Feats: Endurance, Great Toughness; Advancement: —.

### Octopus, Giant

Giant octopi are aggressive and territorial hunters, with tentacles reaching 10 feet or more in length, studded with barbs and sharp-edged suckers. They are found in coastal and deep waters all around Aldis, including the Scatterstar Islands. They have the same qualities as their smaller cousins (see **Octopus** in *Blue Rose*, page 191).

An opponent can attack a giant octopus's tentacles with a sunder attempt as if they were weapons (see **Sunder** in *Blue Rose*, page 166). A giant octopus's tentacles each have a hardness of 2. Severing one of a giant octopus's tentacles inflicts a hurt result to the creature. A giant octopus usually withdraws from combat if it loses four tentacles. The creature regrows any severed limbs in 10–20 days.

A giant octopus can change colors, giving it a +4 bonus on Sneak checks to hide. It has a +10 bonus on Escape Artist checks, which is reflected in the stat block.

### OCTOPUS, GIANT

Large 8th-level animal; Initiative +2; Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; Defense 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural); Attack +10 melee (+6 damage, tentacles), +15 grapple (+12 damage, constrict); Qualities: Constrict, ink cloud, jet, low-light vision; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +8, Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +3; Str +5, Dex +2, Con +1, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha -4; Skills: Escape Artist +12, Notice +4, Sneak +9, Swim +13; Feats: Great Toughness, Improved Grab, Skill Focus (Sneak); Advancement: Large (9th–12th level), Huge (13th–20th level).

### Toad

These diminutive amphibians live most often in swamps and jungles. They are both harmless and useful, as they eat insects.

Toads have a +4 bonus to Sneak checks and a -2 penalty to Toughness saves, which are reflected in the stat block.

### TOAD

Diminutive 1st-level animal; Initiative +1; Speed 5 ft.; Defense 15 (+4 size, +1 Dex); Attack —; Qualities: Amphibious, low-light vision; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough -2, Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; Str -5, Dex +1, Con +0, Int -5, Wis +2, Cha -3; Skills: Notice +6, Sneak +20; Feats: Skill Focus (Sneak); Advancement: —.

### Wolverine

Wolverines look much like badgers, but they are larger, stronger, and more aggressive. They're most often found in the Pavin Weald and the foothills of the Ice-Binder Mountains.

Wolverines get Track as a bonus feat.

### WOLVERINE

Medium 3rd-level animal; Initiative +2; Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; Defense 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Attack +4 melee (+3 damage, claw); Qualities: Low-light vision, scent; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +7, Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str +2, Dex +2, Con +4, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha +0; Skills: Climb +16, Notice +7; Feats: Great Toughness, Rage, Track; Advancement: Large (4th–5th level).

## PLANTS

This section describes some additional unusual plant creatures, all creations of the Sorcerer Kings or the wild magical forces unleashed by their destruction in the Shadow Wars and the Great Rebellion. Unusual plant creatures like these are most common in the Veran Marsh, where the plants can be even more dangerous than the swamp's animal inhabitants.

### Shrieker

Shriekers are simple, mindless plants. They are a type of fungus, usually blue or reddish blue in color and roughly 5 feet high. Shriekers are found only underground, in damp, dark places. Ruins and old dungeons are ideal for them.

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A shrieker is quiet and motionless most of the time. Whenever it senses light or movement, however, it emits a piercing shriek with a 50 percent chance of attracting any other creatures in the area. Shriekers do not attack. They lure creatures close enough for the neighboring violet fungi to kill them, then feed on the remains.

### SHRIEKER

Medium 1st-level plant; Initiative +0; Speed 5 ft.; Defense 12 (+2 natural); Attack —; Qualities: Blindsense (30 ft.), low-light vision, plant immunities, resistance to cold and fire +2; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +1, Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +1; Str +1, Dex +0, Con +1, Int —, Wis +1, Cha —1; Advancement: —.

### Tendriculos

A tendriculos is a large vegetative mass, which looks like a very small hill covered in leaves and short, thick vines. It can reach a height of 15 feet and weigh as much as 3,500 pounds. A tendriculos is mobile, however, and wanders through deep forests and other heavily foliated areas, searching for prey.

When it sees a victim, a tendriculos charges. It uses its tendrils to ensnare the victim and swallow it whole. Then the tendriculos's digestive juices can paralyze its prey, and it can feed. Animals and other plants are frightened by

the tendriculos and will avoid it and any place it has been within the last 24 hours.

### TENDRICULOS

Huge 9th-level plant; Initiative -1; Speed 20 ft.; Defense 16 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +9 natural); Attack +13 melee (+13 damage, bite), +8 melee (+6 damage, tendrils); Qualities: Low-light vision, paralysis, plant immunities, regeneration (per round), swallow whole, vulnerability to fire; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +14, Fort +12, Ref +2, Will +4; Str +9, Dex -1, Con +6, Int -4, Wis -1, Cha -4; Skills: Notice +1, Sneak +1; Feats: Great Toughness, Improved Grab, Iron Will, Power Attack; Advancement: Huge (10th-16th level), Gargantuan (17th-20th level).

*Paralysis:* Any creature swallowed by a tendriculos must make a Fortitude saving throw (Difficulty 20) to avoid being paralyzed for a minute. Paralyzed creatures suffer +4 acid damage each round they are trapped inside the creature.

*Vulnerability to Fire:* A tendriculos suffers an additional +5 damage from fire-based attacks

### Violet Fungus

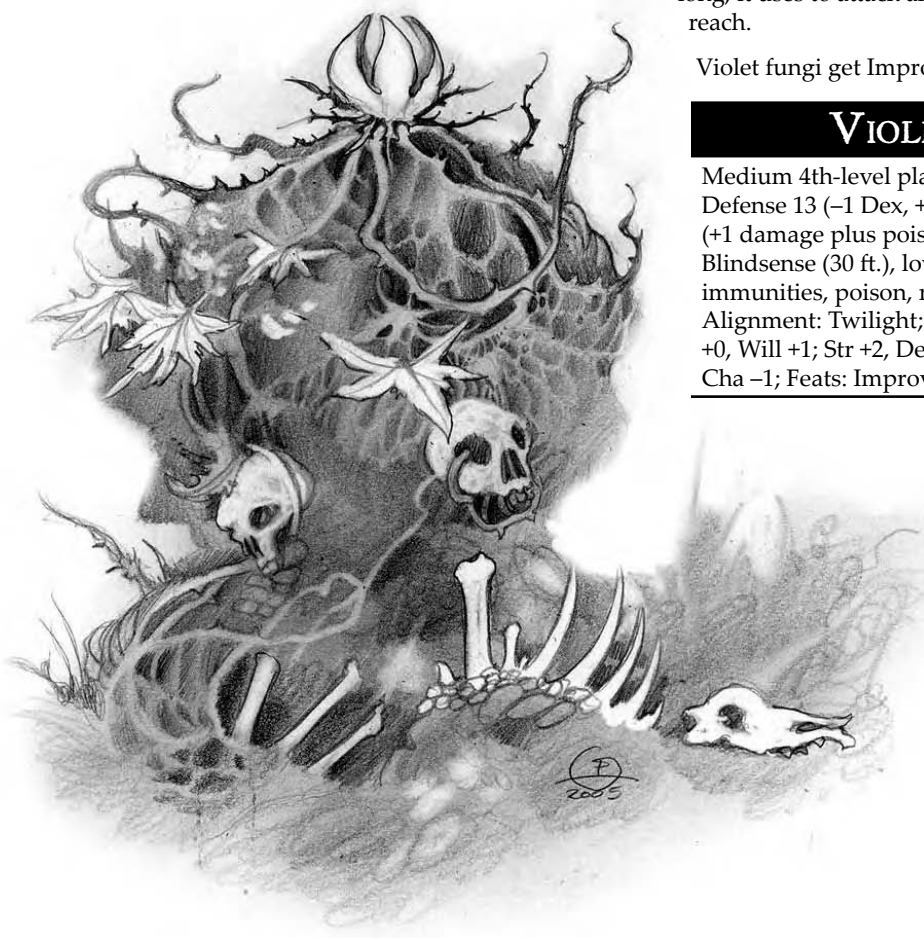
Violet fungi resemble shriekers but are more reddish, and the two plants are usually encountered together, since they complement each other's existence. Violet fungi range from 4 to 7 feet tall, with tendrils, up to 4 feet long, it uses to attack any animal that comes within reach.

Violet fungi get Improved Grab as a bonus feat.

### VIOLET FUNGUS

Medium 4th-level plant; Initiative -1; Speed 5 ft.; Defense 13 (-1 Dex, +4 natural); Attack +5 melee (+1 damage plus poison, tendrils); Qualities: Blindsense (30 ft.), low-light vision, plant immunities, poison, resistance to cold and fire +2; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +5, Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str +2, Dex -1, Con +2, Int —, Wis +0, Cha -1; Feats: Improved Grab; Advancement: —.

*Poison:* A violet fungus's tendrils excrete poison (Fortitude save Difficulty 14, initial and secondary damage 1 Strength and 1 Constitution).



## ELEMENTALS

**B**lue Rose describes smaller forms of each elemental. They are mere younglings, however, a century or two old at most. As an elemental matures, it increases in size, strength, power, and wisdom. These elder elementals rarely reveal themselves to humanoids and other creatures. Instead they spend time pursuing their own interests. Some sorcerers have tried enslaving these mature elementals, but the attempts usually end in failure, and the vengeance of an elemental is severe.

The statistics below are for mature elementals. Beyond them are elder elementals, whose awesome power is rivaled only by their impressive wisdom. Few mortals have ever seen an elder elemental, and many do not believe such creatures even exist.

### Mature Air Elemental

Mature air elementals are not as agile as their younger relatives, but they are bigger and stronger.

#### MATURE AIR ELEMENTAL

Large 8th-level elemental; Initiative +11; Speed fly 100 ft. (perfect); Defense 21 (–1 size, +7 Dex, +4 natural, +1 dodge); Attack +12 melee (+6 damage, slam); Qualities:

Air mastery, darkvision (60 ft.), elemental immunities, whirlwind; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +9, Fort +5, Ref +13, Will +5; Str +2, Dex +7, Con +3, Int +1, Wis +3, Cha +0; Skills: Escape Artist +18, Notice +14, Sneak +14; Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse; Advancement: Large (8th–15th level), Huge (16th level+).

*Air Mastery:* Airborne creatures have a –1 penalty on attack rolls and damage against an air elemental.

*Whirlwind:* An air elemental can transform into a whirlwind once every 6 minutes and remain in that form for 1 round for every level it has. In this form, the elemental can move through the air or along a surface at its fly speed.

The whirlwind is 10 feet wide at the base, up to 60 feet wide at the top, and up to 100 feet tall. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 15 feet.

Another creature might be caught in the elemental's whirlwind if it touches or enters it, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space. Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental may take damage when caught in the whirlwind and may be lifted into the air. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the whirlwind or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful winds, automatically taking the damage each round. A creature that can fly is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the whirlwind. The creature still takes damage but can leave if the save is successful.

The Difficulty for saves against the whirlwind's effects is 10 plus half the elemental's level plus the elemental's Strength score. Damage is according to the elemental's size: +1 at Small, +2 at Medium, +4 at Large, and +6 at Huge.

Creatures trapped in the whirlwind cannot move, except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind. Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must succeed on a Concentration check (Difficulty 15) to use arcana. Creatures caught in the whirlwind have a –2 penalty to Dexterity and a –4 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the whirlwind at one time as will fit inside the whirlwind's volume. The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the whirlwind happens to be.

If the whirlwind's base touches the ground, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the whirlwind's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 10 feet. Creatures 10 feet away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment. Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (Difficulty 15) to use arcana.

An elemental in whirlwind form cannot make slam attacks.

### Mature Earth Elemental

Mature earth elementals are larger and smarter than their younger relatives. They are not any stronger, but they are tougher and actually faster and more agile. A mature earth elemental often uses this heightened speed to surprise its foes, pretending to move more slowly until the perfect moment.

#### MATURE EARTH ELEMENTAL

Large 8th-level elemental; Initiative +4; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 17 (–1 size, +0 Dex, +8 natural); Attack +8 melee (+7 damage, slam); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), earth glide, earth mastery, elemental immunities; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +9, Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +4; Str +3, Dex +0, Con +3, Int –1, Wis +2, Cha +0; Skills: Intimidate +7, Notice +6; Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack; Advancement: Large (8th–15th level), Huge (16th level+).

*Earth Glide:* An earth elemental can pass through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth, except metal, as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel, hole, ripples, or other signs of its presence. Earth Shaping used on an area containing a burrowing earth elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning it for 1 round unless it succeeds on a Fortitude save (Difficulty 15).



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*Earth Mastery:* An earth elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

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## Mature Fire Elemental

Mature fire elementals are larger and stronger than their younger relatives, but the most impressive change is their minds. A mature fire elemental is extremely intelligent, and has learned to temper its savagery with tactics. These older fire elementals still love burning creatures and objects to ash, but they now delight in taunting their foes, burning just enough to slow them down, and forcing them to despair before the final blow.

### MATURE FIRE ELEMENTAL

Large 8th-level elemental; Initiative +6; Speed 60 ft.; Defense 16 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 dodge); Attack +7 melee (+2 damage, plus +2 fire damage, slam); Qualities: Burn, darkvision (60 ft.), elemental immunities, immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +7, Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +4; Str +1, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +3, Wis +2, Cha +0; Skills: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11, Jump +12, Notice +13; Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse; Advancement: Large (8th–15th level), Huge (16th level+).

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*Burn:* A fire elemental's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the elemental's flaming body. Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save or catch on fire (Difficulty 12 + half the elemental's level + the elemental's Constitution). A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

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*Vulnerability to Cold:* A fire elemental suffers 50 percent more damage from cold effects than normal.

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## Mature Water Elemental

Mature water elementals bigger, stronger, faster, and tougher than their younger relatives, but more importantly they are smarter and wiser. Mature water elementals can also stray up to 250 feet from their body of water, a fact they conceal from land creatures until necessary or useful. Fortunately, mature water elementals are less interested in mindless destruction than they were when young. They prefer to watch the other creatures in their vicinity, and learn everything they can about the individuals, races, and societies around them.

### MATURE WATER ELEMENTAL

Large 8th-level elemental; Initiative +2; Speed 30 ft., swim 100 ft.; Defense 18 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural); Attack +8 melee (+6 damage, slam); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), drench, elemental immunities, vortex, water mastery;

Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +8, Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str +3, Dex +2, Con +2, Int +1, Wis +2, Cha +0; Skills: Jump +14, Notice +13, Sneak +9; Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack; Advancement: Large (8th–15th level), Huge (16th level+).

*Drench:* The water elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames if they are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel arcane fire it touches with a level check (d20 + level) against the controlling adept's level check.

*Vortex:* A water elemental can transform into a whirlpool once every 6 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remain in that form for 1 round for every level it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the

water or along the bottom at its swim speed. Other than the fact that its vortex form is limited to a body of water, the effects are the same as a mature air elemental's whirlwind form.

*Water Mastery:* A water elemental gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls and damage if both it and its opponent are touching water. If the opponent or the elemental is touching the ground, the elemental takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.) A water elemental can be a serious threat to ships. An elemental can easily overturn small craft (5 feet of length per level) and stop larger vessels (10 feet long per level). Even large ships (20 feet long per level) can be slowed to half speed.

## SHADOWSPAWN

The *Blue Rose* rulebook describes several of the more common shadowspawn, but they are by no means the only ones still stalking the edges of Aldis and other lands. Here are a few more shadowspawn the Knights of the Blue Rose and their allies might be called upon to defeat.

### Doppelganger

Doppelgangers are frail-looking humanoids with gangly limbs; pale, hairless skin; bulging yellow eyes; and half-formed features. Most are only 5.5 feet tall and weigh around 150 pounds. But their appearance is deceiving, for these creatures are very durable and surprisingly quick. Few ever see the doppelganger's true form, however, because they are shapeshifters and take on the appearance of those they encounter. The doppelganger's favorite tactic is to spy upon a group of people, wait until one of them is alone, and then attack and kill that person. Then the doppelganger takes on the form of its victim and infiltrates the group. If it cannot get one alone, it often assumes the shape of one member and then confronts the group, accusing the real person of being an imposter. Doppelgangers enjoy manipulating others and have no concern for anyone else's health or safety.

Doppelgangers have a +4 bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks, which is reflected in the stat block.

#### DOPPELGANGER

Medium 4th-level shadowspawn; Initiative +1; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 16 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +1 dodge); Attack +5 melee (+3 damage, slam); Qualities: Arcana, change shape; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +4, Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; Str +1, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +1, Wis +2, Cha +1; Skills: Bluff +12, Disguise +5, Notice +9, Sense Motive +9; Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude; Advancement: By role.

*Arcana:* A doppelganger is considered to be trained, as an adept of its creature level, in Heart Reading, Mind Reading, Mind Touch, and Psychic Shield.

*Change shape:* A doppelganger can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. In humanoid form, a doppelganger loses its natural attacks. It can remain in

humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new form. A doppelganger reverts to its true form if killed. When using its change shape ability, a doppelganger gains a +10 bonus on Disguise checks.

### Gargoyle

These creatures look like stone statues of gnarled winged monsters. Gargoyles can perch indefinitely without moving and do not require food, water, or air. They often sit on the eave of a building, pretending to be a statue, and then suddenly pounce when someone walks beneath them. Although they do not require meat, gargoyles often eat their fallen foes.

A gargoyle's claws and teeth are treated as arcane weapons for purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Gargoyles have a +2 bonus to Notice and Sneak checks, which is reflected in the stat block. Their Sneak bonus increases by +8 when they are concealed against a stone background, as when they perch on the edge of a stone building.

#### GARGOYLE

Medium 4th-level shadowspawn; Initiative +2; Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); Defense 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural); Attack +6 melee (+3 damage, claws or bite); Qualities: Damage reduction +4/arcane, darkvision (60 ft.), freeze; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +8, Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4; Str +2, Dex +2, Con +4, Int –2, Wis +0, Cha –2; Skills: Notice +9, Sneak +4; Feats: Great Fortitude, Great Toughness; Advancement: Medium (5th–6th level), Large (7th–12th level).

*Freeze:* A gargoyle can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. An observer must succeed on a Notice check (Difficulty 20) to tell that the gargoyle is actually alive.

### Hag (Green)

Green hags look like twisted human women, but with green skin and wild, matted dark green hair. Their skin is warty and wrinkled. Green hags prefer dark forests

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and isolated swamps, where any visitors are usually solitary or in pairs. The hags attack at night, using their darkvision, and usually distract their targets and then strike from hiding. They often attack from the water, where most creatures cannot match their speed.



### HAG (GREEN)

Medium 9th-level shadowspawn; Initiative +1; Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; Defense 22 (+1 Dex, +11 natural); Attack +13 melee (+5 damage, claws); Qualities: Arcane resistance 18, darkvision (90 ft.), mimicry, weakness; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +9, Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +7; Str +4, Dex +1, Con +2, Int +1, Wis +1, Cha +2; Skills: Concentration +13, Notice +13, Sneak +13, Swim +12; Feats: Arcanum (Illusion +14), Arcanum (Mind Touch +14), Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude; Advancement: By role.

*Mimicry:* A green hag can imitate the sounds of almost any animal found near its lair.

*Weakness:* A green hag can weaken a foe with a special touch attack. The opponent must succeed on a Fortitude save (Difficulty 16) or lose 1 point of Strength per point the saving throw failed, to a maximum of 4. Lost Strength recovers at a rate of 1 point per day.

### Hag (Sea)

Sea hags are basically weaker, uglier amphibious versions of green hags. A sea hag is the same size as a human female but hideously ugly, with scaly green-gray skin and green-blue hair. Sea hags live in seas and overgrown lakes, usually in underwater caves. When attacking, they often hide until all of their foes are together, and then use their appearance to distract and weaken, and leap in to attack. Once combat has begun sea hags are not subtle, and other than the initial ambush, they are not very good at trickery.

### HAG (SEA)

Medium 3rd-level shadowspawn; Initiative +1; Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; Defense 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural); Attack +7 melee (+5 damage, claws); Qualities: Amphibious, arcane resistance 14, evil eye, horrific appearance; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +4, Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; Str +4, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +1, Cha +2; Skills: Notice +7, Sneak +7, Swim +12; Feats: Arcanum (Mind Touch +8), Great Toughness; Advancement: By role.

*Evil Eye:* Three times per day, a sea hag can cast its dire gaze on a single creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a Will save (Difficulty 13) or be dazed for three days, although a use of Mind Shaping (Difficulty 18) can restore sanity sooner. In addition, the affected creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (Difficulty 13) or immediately die from fright! Creatures immune to fear are also immune to a sea hag's evil eye.

*Horrific Appearance:* The mere sight of a sea hag is so revolting that anyone who sets eyes upon one must succeed on a Fortitude save (Difficulty 13) or instantly suffer weakness, losing 1 point of Strength per point the saving throw failed, to a maximum of 3. Lost Strength recovers at a rate of 1 point per day. Anyone affected by this power, or successfully saving against it, is immune to that hag's horrific appearance for the next 24 hours.

## Sea-Fiends

The Scatterstar Archipelago is home to both humans and sea-folk. Long ago the Sorcerer Kings decided that the sea-folk would make useful soldiers—and slaves. They captured a band of them and corrupted them, turning them into a new race, which lived for conquest and destruction. They named this new race sea-fiends to reflect their twisted purpose. Pleased with their creations, the Sorcerer Kings released the sea-fiends into the sea to do their bidding. Since that time, these aquatic shadowspawn have wreaked havoc upon other sea creatures, particularly the sea-folk.

Sea-fiends are sleek humanoids with slick, rubbery green skin. They often have dark stripes, bands, or spots, and their backs, heads, hands, and feet are usually darker than their bellies, arms, and legs. An adult male sea-fiend is roughly 6 feet tall and weighs about 200 pounds.

Like sea-folk, sea-fiends are completely at home in water and suffer if they do not immerse themselves at least once each day. Unlike sea-folk, sea-fiends favor saltwater and are not comfortable in freshwater. Their eyes, accustomed to the darkness of the depths, cannot handle bright light, and sea-fiends do not leave the water in daylight unless utterly necessary.

Sea-fiends live to fight, and they attack each other when no one else is around. They prefer to attack by surrounding a target in the water and then striking from all sides.

When underwater, they have a +4 bonus to Notice, Sneak, and Survival checks. They also have a +4 bonus to Handle Animal when working with sharks or fiendish sharks. Sea-fiends get Rage as a bonus feat.

### SEA-FIENDS

Medium 2nd-level shadowspawn; Initiative +1; Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.; Defense 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural); Attack +4 melee (+5 damage, trident), +3 ranged (+4 damage, heavy crossbow); Qualities: Blindsight (30 ft.), darkvision (60 ft.), dependent on water, light blindness, sensitivity to freshwater, speak with sharks; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; Str +2, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +2, Wis +1, Cha +0; Skills: Handle Animal +5, Notice +6, Sneak +6, Ride +6, Swim +10; Feats: Great Fortitude, Rage; Advancement: By role.

*Speak with Sharks:* Sea-fiends can speak with sharks and often use them as steeds. More powerful sea-fiends have alliances with fiendish sharks, and sea-fiend colonies may have bands of these dark creatures as guards.

## ABERRATIONS

Shadowspawn, or their ancestors, were once normal humanoids, before being corrupted. Aberrations were never normal and did not exist before the Sorcerer Kings began their experiments and wars. The *Blue Rose* rulebook offers several aberrations, but more are discovered all the time, whether because new aberrations are appearing or because most have been hidden from view, no one can say.

### Athach

The athach is a hulking, misshapen biped with a sloped brow and a third arm affixed to the middle of its chest. An adult stands some 18 feet tall and weighs about 4,500 pounds. Athachs are flesh-shaped creations of the Sorcerer Kings, living and breeding in isolated places like high mountains and swamps.

Athachs charge into combat unless their opponents are out of reach, in which case they throw rocks. They sometimes try to overrun armored opponents to reach unarmored opponents in back ranks. With its first few attacks, an athach tends to flail about indiscriminately. After a few rounds, it concentrates on the foes hitting it most often.

### ATHACH

Huge 14th-level aberration; Initiative +1; Speed 35 ft. (in hide armor), 50 ft. base; Defense 20 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +3 hide armor, +8 natural); Attack +16 melee (+14 damage, morningstar, or +13 damage plus poison, bite), +9 ranged (+12 damage, thrown rock); Qualities:

Darkvision (60 ft.), poison; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +16, Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +10; Str +8, Dex +1, Con +5, Int –2, Wis +1, Cha –2; Skills: Climb +9, Jump +18, Notice +7; Feats: All-out Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Toughness, Power Attack; Advancement: Huge (15th–20th level).

*Poison:* An athach's bite is poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 22, initial damage 1 Strength, secondary damage 3 Strength).

### Chuul

A horrible mix of crustacean, insect, and serpent, the chuul is an aberration that lurks submerged or partially submerged, awaiting intelligent prey to devour. Although amphibious, chuuls are not good swimmers and actually prefer to be on land or in very shallow water when they attack. A chuul is about 8 feet long and weighs 650 pounds.

Perhaps the most horrible thing about chuuls is not their appearance, but the fact they are intelligent. Chuuls can speak humanoid languages, and some are even talented mimics, speaking in a humanlike voice to lure prey.

A chuul prefers to wait by the shore, submerged in murky water, until it hears nearby prey (in or out of the water) it can attack from surprise. A chuul grabs with its claws and constricts its foe, then passes the opponent to its paralytic tentacles. It tries to always have one claw free, so if it faces a large number of opponents, it drops a paralyzed or dead victim and continues attempting to grab, constrict, and paralyze the rest.





## CHUUL

Large 11th-level aberration; Initiative +7; Speed 30 ft., swim 20 ft.; Defense 22 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +10 natural); Attack +12 melee (+9 damage, claws), +17 grapple (+11 damage, constrict); Qualities: Amphibious, constrict, darkvision (60 ft.), immunity to poison, paralytic tentacles; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +12, Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +9; Str +5, Dex +3, Con +4, Int +0, Wis +2, Cha –3; Skills: Notice +16, Sneak +17, Swim +13; Feats: Blind-Fight, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative; Advancement: Large (12th–16th level), Huge (17th–20th level).

*Paralytic Tentacles:* A chuul can transfer grabbed victims from a claw to its tentacles as a move action. The tentacles grapple with the same strength as the claw but deal no damage. However, they exude paralytic venom. Anyone held in the tentacles must succeed on a Fortitude save (Difficulty 19) each round on the chuul's turn or be paralyzed for 6 rounds. While held in the tentacles, paralyzed or not, a victim automatically takes +5 damage each round from the creature's mandibles.

## Grick

Gricks are ugly, rubbery creatures with large bodies and long tentacles. They are close to 8 feet long when fully grown and weigh about 200 pounds. Their skin is dark, except for their pale underbellies.

Gricks live underground and actively hunt prey. They like to find a shadowed location on a well-used path and then

hide in the shadows. As soon as a creature gets within range, the grick attacks with its tentacles. Gricks have relatively weak jaws, and drag anything they kill back to their lair to eat later.

A grick's tentacles are treated as arcane weapons when dealing with damage reduction.

They have a +8 bonus to Sneak checks in rocky areas. They get Track as a bonus feat.

## GRICK

Medium 2nd-level aberration; Initiative +2; Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; Defense 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural); Attack +3 melee (+3 damage, tentacle); Qualities: Damage reduction +4/arcane, darkvision (60 ft.), scent; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str +2, Dex +2, Con +0, Int –3, Wis +2, Cha –2; Skills: Climb +15, Notice +6, Sneak +3; Feats: Great Toughness, Track; Advancement: Medium (3rd–4th level), Large (5th–6th level).

## Otyugh

Otyughs are hideous creatures with bloated bodies, three thick legs, three eyes on long stalks, two large ridged tentacles, and a huge mouth right at their center. Their skin is hard and gray-brown and looks and feels like rock. Most otyughs are about 8 feet in diameter and weigh about 500 pounds.

Otyughs are usually covered in dung because that is their primary food. They attack living creatures when hungry,

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but if no one is around they are content to eat waste. They live within piles of dung and waste, with only their eyes exposed. Otyughs are often found in the same dungeons and ruins as other aberrations or shadowspawn and have pacts with their neighbors; the otyughs do not attack them and in return get to eat any available dung and waste.

Otyughs have a +8 bonus to Sneak checks in rocky areas or in waste.

### OTYUGH

Large 6th-level aberration; Initiative +0; Speed 20 ft.; Defense 17 (-1 size, +8 natural); Attack +4 melee (+2 damage, tentacles), -2 melee (+1 damage plus disease,

bite), +8 grapple (+2 damage, constrict); Qualities: Constrict, darkvision (60 ft.), scent; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +6, Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6; Str +0, Dex +0, Con +1, Int -2, Wis +1, Cha -2; Skills: Notice +6, Sneak +0; Feats: Great Toughness, Improved Grab, Weapon Focus (tentacles); Advancement: Large (7th–8th level), Huge (9th–18th level).

*Disease:* When attacking, an otyugh uses its tentacles to slash and squeeze foes and drag them into its mouth. Anyone bitten must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 14) or become infected by the otyugh's disease. After 2 days, the infected character takes ability damage, 1 Dexterity and 1 Constitution.

## VERMIN

Vermin include insects, arachnids, other arthropods, worms, and similar invertebrates. Most of the giant vermin found in Aldea were created by the Sorcerer Kings. They now nest, breed, and hunt in places like the Pavin Weald and the Veran Marsh.

**Attack:** Expert

**Toughness:** Expert

**Good Saving Throw:** Fortitude

Vermin share the following traits:

*Blindsight:* Most vermin without visual sensory organs have blindsight with a range of 60 feet.

*Darkvision:* Most vermin with visual sensory organs have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

*Immunities:* Vermin are immune to mind-influencing effects, including animist and psychic arcana.

*Mindless:* Vermin have no Intelligence score.

### Giant Bee

Although growing to a length of about 5 feet, giant bees behave generally like their smaller cousins. Giant bees are generally not aggressive except when defending themselves or their hive.

Giant bees have a +4 bonus on Notice checks, which is reflected in the stat block.

### GIANT BEE

Medium 3rd-level vermin; Initiative +2; Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (good); Defense 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Attack +2 melee (+0 damage plus poison, sting); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), poison, vermin immunities; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str +0, Dex +2, Con +0, Int -, Wis +1, Cha -1; Skills: Notice +5; Advancement: Medium (4th–6th level), Large (7th–9th level).

*Poison:* A giant bee's sting is poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 11, initial and secondary damage 1 Constitution). A giant bee that successfully stings pulls away, leaving its stinger behind. The bee is then dying.

### Giant Mantis

The giant mantis is a hideous, patient carnivore, able to remain completely still as it waits for prey. It hunts in the depths of the Pavin Weald and the Veran Marsh.

A giant mantis has a +4 bonus on Notice and Sneak checks, which is reflected in the stat block. Its natural camouflage gives it a +12 Sneak bonus when surrounded by foliage. It gets Improved Grab as a bonus feat.

### GIANT MANTIS

Large 4th-level vermin; Initiative -1; Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); Defense 14 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +6 natural); Attack +6 melee (+7 damage, claws); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), vermin immunities; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +5, Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +3; Str +4, Dex -1, Con +2, Int -, Wis +2, Cha +0; Skills: Notice +6, Sneak -1; Feats: Improved Grab; Advancement: Large (5th–8th level), Huge (9th–12th level).

### Giant Spider

Giant spiders are aggressive predators, using their poisonous bites to subdue or kill prey.

Giant spiders come in two types: hunters and web spinners. The stat block is for a web spinner. Hunters roam about, while web spinners wait for prey to come to them. Hunting spiders can spin webs to use as lairs, but cannot use their webs as weapons the way web spinners can. A hunting spider has a base speed of 40 feet rather than 30 feet.

Giant spiders have a +4 bonus on Notice and Sneak checks, which is reflected in the stat block. Hunting spiders have a +10 bonus on Jump checks and a +8 bonus on Sneak checks. Web spinners have a +8 bonus on Sneak checks when using their webs. Giant spiders get Weapon Finesse as a bonus feat.

### GIANT SPIDER

Medium 2nd-level vermin; Initiative +3; Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; Defense 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); Attack +4 melee (+2 damage plus poison, bite); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), poison, tremorsense (60 ft.), vermin



immunities, web; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str +0, Dex +3, Con +1, Int —, Wis +0, Cha —4; Skills: Climb +13, Notice +4, Sneak +7; Feats: Weapon Finesse; Advancement: Medium (3rd level), Large (4th–7th level), Huge (8th–15th level), Gargantuan (16th–20th level).

**Poison:** A giant spider's bite is poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 12, initial and secondary damage 1 Strength).

**Web:** Both types of giant spiders often wait in webs or in trees, and then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Web spinners can throw a web up to eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective

against targets up to Large size. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (Difficulty 12) or burst the web with a Strength check (Difficulty 16). Both are standard actions. The web has a hardness of 2.

Web spinners often create sheets of sticky webbing 5 to 60 feet square. They position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a Notice check (Difficulty 20) to detect the web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has a hardness of 2.

A giant spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web using tremorsense.

## Locust Swarm

A locust swarm is a cloud of thousands of winged vermin that devours any organic material in its path. The swarm has a 10-foot radius. It surrounds and attacks any living prey it encounters, inflicting +4 damage to any creature within the swarm each round. The swarm does not have to make an attack roll.

A locust swarm has a +4 bonus on Notice checks, which is reflected in the stat block.

### LOCUST SWARM

Diminutive 6th-level vermin; Initiative +4; Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); Defense 18 (+4 size, +4 Dex); Attack melee (+4 damage, bites); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), distraction, immune to weapon damage; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +3, Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str —5, Dex +4, Con —1, Int —, Wis +0, Cha —4; Skills: Notice +4; Advancement: —.

**Distraction:** Any creature inside the locust swarm must succeed on a Fortitude save (Difficulty 12) or be nauseated for one round.

**Immune to Weapon Damage:** Normal weapons inflict no damage on a swarm. Energy attacks, like fire and cold, and area attacks inflict their normal damage. This includes flaming torches and arcana such as Cold Shaping and Fire Shaping.

## CONSTRUCTS

In the days of the Old Kingdom, adepts had tomes and artifacts that required powerful protection. Living guardians required sustenance and sleep, which made them vulnerable. Something more reliable was needed. Several of the mightiest adepts worked together to devise a new creature, a magical construct that was not truly alive but was animate and sentient enough to follow orders. It was the perfect guard. These constructs became popular among adepts, who soon developed other types for other purposes. Some constructs were

messengers, while others were soldiers, laborers, or forms of transportation. When the Old Kingdom fell, the secrets of creating constructs were lost. Most of the constructs themselves were also destroyed, but a few remain.

**Attack:** Expert  
**Toughness:** Expert  
**Good Saving Throw:** Fortitude

Constructs share the following traits:

**Ability Scores:** A construct has no Constitution or Intelligence score.

**Darkvision:** Most constructs have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

**Extra Tough:** Constructs are hard to destroy. A construct larger than Tiny has a bonus to Toughness based on its size: Small +2, Medium +4, Large +6, Huge +8, Gargantuan +12, Colossal +16.

**Fast Healing:** Most constructs can heal anything short of severed limbs, given enough time.

**Immunities:** Constructs are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and mind-influencing effects. They are not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, or any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless the effect also works on objects.

**Special:** Constructs are not truly alive, so they cannot be raised from the dead.

**Damage Reduction +2/Bludgeoning:** Constructs lack flesh or internal organs.

**Darkvision:** Constructs have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

**Fast Healing:** Constructs make recovery checks once per minute.

**Immunities:** Constructs are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and mind-influencing effects. They are not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, or any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless the effect also works on objects.

**Immunity to Cold and Heat:** Constructs are not affected by cold or heat.

**Saves:** A construct has the same Toughness as an expert of its level. If it is larger than Tiny, it has a bonus to Toughness based on its size: Small +2, Medium +4, Large +6, Huge +8, Gargantuan +12, Colossal +16.

## Construct (template)

Constructs are animated objects, automatons built for a particular purpose. Most constructs are humanoid, but some are shaped like beasts or have a unique configuration. Constructs are most often shaped from stone and metal, although they can be wood, bone, or any other solid material. Constructs do not wear clothing. Their bodies are often shaped like pieces of armor, however, and they may have symbols carved into their surface or embedded there. Constructs have no free will, existing only to follow the orders of their creator.

**Construct** is usually an inherited template, applied to magically created automata. It can be an acquired template, however, if added to a creature (referred to as the base creature) whose soul is magically transferred into a previously inanimate shell. This template can be used to create new constructs shaped like existing creatures, by using those creatures as base creatures. A construct shaped like a horse could be built with this template by using a horse as the base creature.

**Type:** The creature's type changes to construct. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Speed:** Winged constructs can't use their wings to fly. They can fly magically, however, if given that ability.

**Defense:** Constructs gain a +5 natural armor bonus, plus additional bonuses based upon material and size. See the tables at right for details

**Attacks:** A construct retains the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon training of the base creature. A construct has the same base attack bonus as an expert of its level.

**Damage:** Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. The damage bonus of natural attacks is modified by the construct's size. See the table at right for details.

**Qualities:** A construct gains the following qualities.

### MATERIAL BONUS TO DEFENSE

Material	Natural Armor Bonus
Soft wood	+0
Bone	+1
Hard wood	+2
Soft metal	+3
Soft rock	+5
Hard metal	+8
Hard stone	+10
Arcane material	varies

### SIZE BONUS TO DEFENSE

Size	Natural Armor Bonus
Tiny or smaller	+0
Small	+1
Medium	+3
Large	+5
Huge	+7
Gargantuan	+9
Colossal	+10

### SIZE MODIFIER TO DAMAGE

Size	Damage Modifier
Diminutive or Fine	-4
Tiny	-1
Small	+0
Medium	+1
Large	+2
Huge	+3
Gargantuan	+4
Colossal	+6

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Its Fortitude is a good save, and Reflex and Will are normal.

**Abilities:** A construct's Strength increases by +2, it has no Constitution or Intelligence score, and its Wisdom changes to +0.

**Skills:** A construct has no skills.

**Feats:** A construct loses the feats of the base creature.

**Alignment:** Twilight.

**Advancement:** None. Constructs cannot improve.

### Guardian

Guardians look like oversized suits of full plate armor. They are usually 9 to 10 feet tall and weigh more than 1,200 pounds. Their helmets have either blank fronts or elaborately carved masks, but no eyeholes, breathing holes, or gaps of any kind. Most guardian armor is heavy and very efficient but also ornate, with curving plates and decorative barbs and curls.

These constructs were used long ago to guard sites of particular importance. Once created and assigned to a location, a guardian never wavered in its duty. Its creator and those present during the initial activation were allowed to pass unchallenged. If anyone else approached, the guardian stepped forward to block their way, greatsword in hand. Those who gave the proper code (a word, sign, or item established by the caster during activation) were allowed to pass. Otherwise the guardian

did not move. If the intruders continued to advance, or attacked, the guardian fought them. Once the intruders were dead or had fled, the guardian returned to its post.

Guardians are methodical in combat. They attack the closest intruder and continue to attack that same target until it is dead or out of range, or until a more dangerous opponent appears. Guardians are not capable of subtlety, but they are infinitely patient.

Most guardians have long since crumbled to dust or been destroyed, but a handful remains, guarding ruins for masters whose lines have long since faded from history. Some sorcerers believe that, if they can find or figure out a guardian's command words, they can switch its assignment and gain a valuable bodyguard or door warden. Thus far no one has succeeded. A few have tried destroying the guardian's site, hoping to release the construct from its task, but the guardian itself became inert, a mere statue. It did not regain mobility until the site had been restored.

### GUARDIAN

Large 15-level construct; Initiative +0; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 24 (-1 size, +15 natural); Attack +16 melee (+10 damage, greatsword, or +9 damage, slam); Qualities: Arcane resistance 10, construct immunities, darkvision (60 ft.), fast healing (per minute), low-light vision; Alignment: Twilight; Saves: Tough +17, Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +5; Str +6, Dex +0, Con —, Int —, Wis +0, Cha -5; Advancement: —.

## UNLIVING

*Blue Rose* describes several unliving as specific creatures. Here are the templates for creating those same creatures and modifying existing creatures to match. This allows you to design your own ghosts, liches, skeletons, vampires, and zombies and create armies of the unliving to throw against the defenders of Aldis and its neighbors.

### Ghost

Ghosts are the spectral remnants of intelligent beings who, for one reason or another, cannot move on in the Wheel of Reincarnation. A ghost resembles its corporeal form in life, but often with some telltale sign of its ghostly nature: foggy wisps where its legs once were, an eerie blue glow, a chill aura, and the like.

*Ghost* is an acquired template that can be added to any aberration, animal, humanoid, rhydan, shadowspawn, or plant. The base creature must have a Charisma score of at least -2.

A ghost uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

### Ghost (template)

**Type:** The base creature's type changes to unliving. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skills.

**Speed:** Ghosts have a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), unless the base creature has a higher fly speed.

**Defense:** Natural armor is the same as the base creature's but applies only to incorporeal encounters. When the ghost manifests, its natural armor bonus is +0, but it gains a bonus equal to its Charisma score or +1, whichever is higher.

**Attacks:** A ghost retains the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not incorporeal like the ghost.

**Damage:** Against corporeal creatures, a ghost usually cannot deal physical damage at all. However, the ghost can use its special attacks, if any, when it manifests.

**Qualities:** A ghost retains all the qualities of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect corporeal creatures. The ghost also gains the manifestation and rejuvenation qualities and one to three other qualities described below. The save Difficulty of a ghost's qualities is 10 plus half the ghost's level (round down) plus the ghost's Charisma, unless otherwise noted.

*Corrupting Touch:* A ghost that hits a living target with this incorporeal touch attack deals +2 damage.

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*Drain Vitality:* The ghost is considered trained in the Drain Vitality arcanum and can use it with its incorporeal touch.

*Frightful Moan:* A ghost can emit a frightful moan like the fear effect of the Heart Shaping arcanum. Doing so causes the ghost no fatigue.

*Horrific Appearance:* Any living creature within 60 feet that sees the ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save or immediately take 1 point of damage to all physical ability scores. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

*Malevolence:* Once per round, the ghost can merge its incorporeal form with a living creature by touch. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (Difficulty 15 + the ghost's Charisma). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that ghost's malevolence for 24 hours, and the ghost cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the ghost vanishes into the target's body and controls it as if using the Dominate arcanum.

*Manifestation:* Every ghost has this ability. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the world of the living and becomes visible but incorporeal (see **Incorporeal** in *Blue Rose*, page 186). A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, arcane weapons, or arcana, with a 50 percent chance to ignore any damage from these sources. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. When a ghost manifests, it can use any arcana it possesses on corporeal targets, provided the arcana do not require touch.

*Move Object:* A ghost can use the Move Object arcanum as a standard action (adept level 12th or equal to the ghost's level, whichever is higher). Ghosts cannot expend fatigue on Move Object.

*Rejuvenation:* It's difficult to destroy a ghost through combat; the destroyed spirit restores itself in two to eight days. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (d20 + ghost's level) against Difficulty 16. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a ghost for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

**Abilities:** Same as the base creature, except the ghost has no Constitution score and its Charisma score increases by +2.

**Skills:** Ghosts have a +8 bonus on Notice, Search, and Sneak checks.

**Ghostly Equipment:** When a ghost first forms, all its equipment and carried items usually become incorporeal along with it. In addition, the ghost retains items it particularly valued in life (provided they are not in another creature's possession). The equipment passes harmlessly through corporeal

objects or creatures. An arcane weapon, however, can harm corporeal creatures when the ghost manifests, but any such attack has a 50 percent chance to fail unless the weapon is a ghost's edge (see page 90).

The original material items remain behind, just as the ghost's physical remains do. If another creature seizes the original items, the incorporeal copies fade away. This loss invariably angers the ghost, which stops at nothing to return the items to their original resting place.

### Lich

Liches are unliving sorcerers who have used their arcane powers to extend their existence unnaturally. A lich is a gaunt, skeletal humanoid with withered flesh stretched tight across horribly visible bones. Its eyes are lost to decay, but bright pinpoint of crimson light burn in the empty sockets.

*Lich* is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature), provided it can create the required phylactery.

A lich has the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

### Lich (template)

**Type:** The base creature's type changes to unliving. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skills.

**Defense:** A lich has a +5 natural armor bonus to Defense or the base creature's natural armor bonus, whichever is better.

**Attacks:** A lich has a touch attack it can use once per round.

**Damage:** A lich without natural weapons has a life-draining touch attack that deals +4 damage to living creatures; a Will save (Difficulty 10 + half the lich's level rounded down + the lich's Charisma) halves the damage.

**Qualities:** A lich retains the base creature's qualities and gains those described below. Save Difficulties are equal to 10 plus half the lich's level (round down) plus the lich's Charisma, unless otherwise noted.

*Damage Reduction:* A lich's undead body is tough, giving the creature damage reduction +6/bludgeoning and arcane. Its natural weapons are treated as arcane weapons for overcoming damage reduction.

*Fear Aura:* Liches are shrouded in a dreadful aura of evil. Creatures in a 60-foot radius that look at the lich must succeed on a Will save or be affected by the fear effect of the Heart Shaping arcanum. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same lich's aura for 24 hours.

*Immunities:* Liches have immunity to cold, electricity, and flesh shaping, although they can use flesh shaping effects on themselves.

*Paralyzing Touch:* Any living creature a lich hits with its touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude save or be permanently paralyzed. A Cure check against the save Difficulty can restore the victim. Anyone paralyzed by a lich seems dead. A Notice check (Difficulty 20) or a Heal check (Difficulty 15) reveals the victim is still alive.

**Abilities:** A lich's mental abilities all increase by +1. Being unliving, a lich has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Liches have a +8 bonus on Notice, Search, Sense Motive, and Sneak checks.

**Arcana:** Liches can use any arcana they knew in life. They start with a Corruption score of 16.

**Alignment:** Shadow.

**The Lich's Phylactery:** An integral part of becoming a lich is creating a phylactery in which the sorcerer stores his life force. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a lich for sure is to destroy its phylactery. Unless its phylactery is destroyed, a lich reappears within ten days after its apparent destruction.

Each lich must make its own phylactery, which requires a unique Craft Phylactery feat. The sorcerer must also have an adept level of 11th or higher. The phylactery has a cost Difficulty of 35 and a level equal to its creator at the time of creation. A phylactery can be any small item, typically a ring, amulet, circlet, or the like. It has hardness 16, regardless of composition.



## Skeleton

Skeletons are the animated bones of the dead, mindless automatons that obey the orders of their creators. A skeleton is seldom garbed in anything more than the rotting remnants of whatever clothing or armor it was wearing when it died. A skeleton is completely mindless and does only what it is ordered to do.

*Skeleton* is an acquired template added to any living, corporeal creature with a skeletal system (referred to as the base creature). It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

### Skeleton (template)

**Type:** The base creature's type changes to unliving.

**Speed:** Winged skeletons can't use their wings to fly. If the base creature flew magically, so can the skeleton.

**Defense:** Natural armor bonus changes to a number based on the skeleton's size:

NATURAL ARMOR BONUS BY SIZE	
Size	Natural Armor
Tiny or smaller	+0
Small	+1
Medium or Large	+2
Huge	+3
Gargantuan	+6
Colossal	+10

**Attacks:** A skeleton retains the natural weapons, manufactured weapons, and weapon training of the base creature, except for attacks requiring flesh. A creature with hands gains a claw attack. A skeleton's base attack bonus is the same as an expert of its level.

**Damage:** Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. A claw attack deals damage depending on the skeleton's size. (If the base creature already had claw attacks, use the skeleton claw damage only if it's better.)

CLAW DAMAGE BY SIZE	
Size	Claw Damage
Diminutive or Fine	-4
Tiny	-1
Small	+0
Medium	+1
Large	+2
Huge	+3
Gargantuan	+4
Colossal	+6

**Qualities:** A skeleton loses the qualities of the base creature, although it retains any qualities that

improve its melee or ranged attacks. A skeleton gains the following qualities.

*Damage Reduction +2/Bludgeoning:* Skeletons lack flesh or internal organs.

*Immunity to Cold:* Skeletons are not affected by cold.

**Saves:** A skeleton has the same Toughness as a warrior of its level. Its Will is a good save, and Fortitude and Reflex are normal.

**Abilities:** A skeleton's Dexterity increases by +1, it has no Constitution or Intelligence score, its Wisdom changes to +0, and its Charisma changes to -5.

**Skills:** A skeleton has no skills.

**Feats:** A skeleton loses all feats of the base creature and gains Improved Initiative.

**Alignment:** Shadow.

**Advancement:** As base creature (or none if the base creature advances by role).

## Vampire

Second only to liches, vampires are the most powerful and feared of the unliving, and also the most desired. Those seeking the immortality of unlife often seek to become vampires in order to retain their living appearance (and perhaps influence, if they can conceal their condition).

Vampires appear just as they did in life, although their features are often hardened and feral, with the predatory look of wolves, and their skin is usually pale (except immediately after feeding).

Like liches, vampires often embrace finery and decadence and may assume the guise of nobility (if they were not already in life). Despite their appearance, vampires can be recognized by the fact that they cast no shadows and no reflections in mirrors.

*Vampire* is an acquired template added to any humanoid or shadowspawn (referred to as the base creature).

A vampire uses all the base creature's statistics except as noted here.

### Vampire (template)

**Type:** The creature's type changes to unliving. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skills.

**Speed:** Same as the base creature. If the base creature has a swim speed, the vampire retains the ability to swim and is not vulnerable to running water.

**Defense:** The base creature's natural armor bonus improves by +6.

**Attacks:** A vampire retains the attacks of the base creature and gains a slam attack if it didn't already have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the vampire retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains them. A vampire fighting without weapons uses its slam attack or its natural weapons (if any).

**Damage:** Vampires have slam attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value for the vampire's size (see the table). Creatures with natural weapons retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the table, whichever is better.

SLAM ATTACK DAMAGE	
Size	Slam Damage
Fine	-4
Diminutive	-1
Tiny	+0
Small	+1
Medium	+2
Large	+3
Huge	+4
Gargantuan	+6
Colossal	+8

**Qualities:** A vampire retains the qualities of the base creature and gains those described here. The save Difficulty of a vampire's qualities is 10 plus half the vampire's level (round down) plus the vampire's Charisma, unless noted otherwise.

*Alternate Form:* A vampire can assume the shape of a bat or wolf as a standard action. While in its alternate form, the vampire loses its natural slam attack and dominate ability, but it gains the natural weapons and attacks of its new form. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might allow other forms.)

*Blood Drain:* A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, draining 1 point of Constitution each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the vampire gains a recovery check with a bonus equal to the Constitution drained.

*Children of the Night:* Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth a rat swarm, a bat swarm, or a pack of wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive within a minute and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

*Create Spawn:* If a vampire kills a victim with blood drain, the victim returns as a vampire in three days. The new vampire is under the command of the vampire that created it and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time a vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own level; any spawn exceeding this limit are created as free-willed vampires. An enslaved vampire may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master vampire can control a large number of lesser vampires in this fashion. A vampire may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave new spawn, but once freed, a vampire cannot be enslaved again.



**Damage Reduction:** A vampire has damage reduction +4/silver and arcane. A vampire's natural weapons are treated as arcane weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Dominate:** A vampire is considered to be trained in the Dominate arcanum. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

**Fast Healing:** A vampire makes a recovery check from damage each round. If dying, a vampire automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin within two hours or be utterly destroyed. (It can travel up to nine miles in two hours.) Any damage dealt to a vampire forced into gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in its coffin, a vampire is helpless. It becomes disabled after an hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of one recovery check per round.

**Gaseous Form:** As a standard action, a vampire can assume gaseous form at will and can remain gaseous indefinitely. It has a fly speed of 20 feet (perfect) in gaseous form and is immune to physical harm, but it is unable to make attacks or use any of its special abilities.

**Resistance:** A vampire has +4 resistance to cold and electricity.

**Spider Climb:** At a speed of 20 ft., a vampire can climb sheer surfaces with no Climb check and no chance of falling.

**Weaknesses:** For all their power, vampires have a number of weaknesses.

**Repelling a Vampire:** Vampires cannot tolerate the strong odor of garlic and will not enter an area laced with it. Similarly, they recoil from mirrors or strongly presented holy symbols. These things don't harm the vampire; they merely keep it at bay. A recoiling vampire must stay at least 5 feet away from a creature holding a mirror or holy symbol and cannot touch or make melee attacks against the creature holding the item. Holding a vampire at bay takes a standard action each round.

Vampires are also unable to cross running water, although they can be carried over it while resting in their coffins or aboard a ship. They are unable to enter a home or other building unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so. They may freely enter public places, since these are by definition open to all.

**Slaying a Vampire:** Reducing a vampire's condition to disabled incapacitates it but doesn't always destroy it. However, certain attacks can slay vampires. Exposing any vampire to direct sunlight disorients it; it can take only a single move or standard action and is destroyed utterly in the next round if it cannot escape. Similarly, immersing a vampire in running water causes it one level of lethal damage each round until its condition is disabled, then it is automatically destroyed. Driving a wooden stake through a vampire's heart instantly slays

it. However, it is disabled if the stake is removed and will recover, unless the body is destroyed. A popular tactic is to cut off the creature's head and fill its mouth with garlic, or to burn the body.

**Abilities:** Increase the base creature's abilities as follows: Strength +3, Dexterity +2, Intelligence +1, Wisdom +1, Charisma +2. As an unliving creature, a vampire has no Constitution.

**Skills:** Vampires have a +8 bonus on Bluff, Notice, Search, Sense Motive, and Sneak checks. Otherwise their skills are the same as the base creature.

**Feats:** Vampires gain Improved Initiative and Lightning Reflexes, in addition to the base creature's other feats.

**Alignment:** Shadow.

**Advancement:** By role.

## Zombie

Zombies are corpses animated through sorcery. Because of their utter lack of intelligence, the instructions given to a newly created zombie must be very simple. Zombies do nothing except what they are commanded to do.

**Zombie** is a template added to any living creature with a skeletal system (referred to as the base creature). It uses the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here. If the base creature has more than 10 creature levels, it can't be made into a zombie.

## Zombie (template)

**Type:** The creature's type changes to unliving.

**Speed:** If the base creature can fly, its maneuverability drops to clumsy.

**Defense:** Natural armor bonus increases based on the zombie's size:

NATURAL ARMOR BONUS BY SIZE	
Size	Natural Armor Bonus
Tiny or smaller	+0
Small	+1
Medium	+2
Large	+3
Huge	+4
Gargantuan	+7
Colossal	+11

**Attacks:** A zombie has the same base attack bonus as an expert of its level. A zombie retains all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon training of the base creature. A zombie also gains a slam attack.

**Damage:** Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. A slam attack deals damage depending on the zombie's size. Use the base creature's slam damage if it's better.

**SLAM DAMAGE BY SIZE**

Size	Slam Damage
Fine	-4
Diminutive	-1
Tiny	+0
Small	+1
Medium	+2
Large	+3
Huge	+4
Gargantuan	+6
Colossal	+8

**Qualities:** A zombie loses the qualities of the base creature, although it retains any qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks. A zombie gains the following quality.

*Single Actions Only:* Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move or standard action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it charges.

**Saves:** A zombie has the same Toughness as a warrior of its level. Its Will is a good save, and Fortitude and Reflex are normal.

**Abilities:** A zombie's Strength increases by +1, its Dexterity decreases by 1, it has no Constitution or Intelligence score, its Wisdom changes to +0, and its Charisma changes to -5.

**Skills:** A zombie has no skills.

**Feats:** A zombie loses all feats of the base creature and gains Great Toughness.



**Alignment:** Shadow.

**Advancement:** As base creature (or none if the base creature advances by role).

## DARKFIENDS

**B**lue Rose discusses the four known types of darkfiends: watcher, whisperer, soldier, and servitor. But darkfiends are as varied and numerous as sins. Here are four additional types:

### Meddler

These small, nasty darkfiends exist to bring ruin to others. They break valuables, steal money, hide important documents, delay those in a hurry, and find other ways to make life more difficult and more miserable, thus increasing a person's despair. Anything that is normally described as bad luck could be the work of a meddler.

### Peddler

These darkfiends look human and walk among the people of Aldea. Each peddler claims a particular trade, like carpentry or tailoring, and carries the appropriate tools and products. But the peddler's true trade is not in goods but in emotions and souls. They prey upon the weak-willed, offering them a sympathetic ear and then giving advice to ease their troubles. But the advice of a

peddler is never good, always leading to the ruin of one or more people. Sometimes peddlers even offer aid, in the form of weapons or money or other items, and these are invariably cursed as well.

### Pummeler

These large brutish darkfiends are the least intelligent of the darkfiends and the most unrestrained. Pummelers exist merely to hurt and destroy, but unlike soldiers, they attack anything they see, without caution or plan. Pummelers are released into the world by the exarchs and allowed to create havoc by rampaging across an area and destroying everything in their path. This often distracts heroes from a larger threat.

### Shadowcaster

These powerful darkfiends are sorcerers in their own right. They devise and cast arcana designed to spread Shadow across Aldea. Many shadowcasters engage in a constant war with mortal adepts, attacking them and their allies. Shadowcasters rarely leave the protection of their lairs.



Other darkfiend types exist, particularly within the realm of Shadow itself, where some darkfiends serve the exarchs directly and never have contact with the world.

## Darkfiend Meddler

Meddlers are the smallest darkfiends, and that, coupled with their speed and Light Shaping, makes them almost impossible to detect and even harder to catch or injure. A meddler will usually target a particular person and then cause everything to go wrong for them, crushing all their hopes and dreams until they turn to Shadow out of desperation.

### DARKFIEND MEDDLER

Tiny 3rd-level darkfiend; Initiative +3; Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); Defense 20 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural); Attack +8 melee (+1 damage plus poison, sting); Qualities: Arcana, darkvision (60 ft.), immune to acid and poison, mind touch, poison, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str +0, Dex +3, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +1, Cha +2; Skills: Acrobatics +9, Climb +6, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +8, Notice +10, Search +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Sneak +14; Feats: Skill Focus (Notice), Weapon Finesse; Advancement: Tiny (4th–5th level), Small (6th–10th level).

*Arcana:* A meddler is considered to be trained, as an adept of its level, in Light Shaping and Heart Reading.

*Poison:* A meddler's sting is poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 11, initial and secondary damage 1 Wisdom).

## Darkfiend Peddler

Peddlers do not look like darkfiends. In fact, they all look like ordinary humans a little past their prime, with worn but friendly faces and callused hands. It is only in certain lights, and only for an instant, that people may notice the red gleam in the peddler's eye, or the fact that its smile seems too wide, as if it had too many teeth.

Peddlers are as insidious as whisperers, but work out in the open, speaking directly to people and instigating all manner of chaos. Peddlers convince their new clients and neighbors to give in to their base emotions and encourage them to act selfishly. Often a peddler can enter a quiet, happy little town and leave with the entire place in flames and most of its inhabitants dead or insane.

### DARKFIEND PEDDLER

Medium 9th-level darkfiend; Initiative +2; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); Attack +10 melee (+5 damage, claws or bite); Qualities: Arcana, arcane resistance 14, darkvision (60 ft.), immune to acid and poison, mind touch, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +7, Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +9; Str +1, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +3, Wis +3, Cha +4; Skills: Bluff +16, Concentration +15, Craft (any two) +15, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +16, Gather Information +16, Intimidate +16, Notice +18, Sense Motive +18, Sneak +14; Feats: Skill Focus (Notice), Skill Focus (Sense Motive); Advancement: Medium (10th–15th level).

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*Arcana:* A peddler is considered to be trained, as an adept of its level, in Heart Reading and Heart Shaping.

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## Darkfiend Pummeler

These stats are for a typical darkfiend pummeler. Darkfiend pummelers are usually humanoid, with tough armor-like skin, powerful claws and fangs, and a variety of horns, barbs, and other inhuman features. Some are insectile, while others look like the bastard child of several different animals. Pummelers are not very intelligent and simply wander around, smashing everything in their path.

### DARKFIEND PUMMELER

Large 3rd-level darkfiend; Initiative +2; Speed 40 ft.; Defense 17 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural); Attack +7 melee (+7 damage, claws; +4 damage plus poison, bite; or weapon damage + Str); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), immune to acid and poison, mind touch, poison, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +7, Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +1; Str +5, Dex +2, Con +4, Int –2, Wis –2, Cha –3; Skills: Climb +11, Intimidate +3, Jump +11, Notice +4, Swim +11, Survival +4; Feats: Great Toughness, Rage; Advancement: Large (4th–9th level), Huge (10th–15th level), Gargantuan (16th–20th level).

*Poison:* A darkfiend pummeler's bite is as poisonous as its soul (Fortitude save Difficulty 15, initial damage 1 Strength, secondary damage 2 Strength).

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## Darkfiend Shadowcaster

Darkfiend shadowcasters are usually tall humanoids with dark complexions and shadowy features. They are powerful sorcerers dedicated to tapping and increasing the arcane side of Shadow. Shadowcasters concentrate on corrupting Light-aligned adepts and destroying those they cannot corrupt.

### DARKFIEND SHADOWCASTER

Medium 12th-level darkfiend; Initiative +4; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural); Attack +12 melee (+2 damage plus poison, claw or bite); Qualities: Arcana, arcane resistance 17, darkvision (60 ft.), immune to acid and poison, mind touch, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +11, Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +9; Str +0, Dex +4, Con +2, Int +4, Wis +1, Cha +0; Skills: Bluff +15, Concentration +16, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (religion) +19, Notice +16, Search +19, Sense Motive +16, Sneak +19; Feats: Arcane Focus (psychic), Empower Arcana, Psychic Talent, Shaping Talent, Widen Arcana; Advancement: Medium (13th–20th level).

*Arcana:* A shadowcaster is trained in the following arcana, as an adept of its level: Cold Shaping, Dominate, Fire Shaping, Heart Reading, Illusion, Manipulate Object, Mind Probe, Mind Reading, Mind Touch, Move Object, Pain, Psychic Shield, Second Sight, and Sorcerer's Grasp. A shadowcaster may know different arcana, at the Narrator's discretion.

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*Poison:* The shadowcaster's bite and claw attacks are poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 18, initial and secondary damage 1 Strength and 1 Dexterity).

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## Darkfiend Servitor

Servitors are usually humanoid and resemble powerfully built men and women but with a gruesome combination of insectile, reptilian, and bestial features. Their heads are obscured in a shadowy cloud, allowing others to catch only brief glimpses of their features, but whenever a servitor looks at someone, its glowing red eyes pierce the veil like crimson daggers. The attributes given here represent the typical servitor.

Servitors are the nobles of the realm of Shadow and exist to organize other darkfiends. Servitors are often referred to as kings, queens, princes, dukes, lords, and generals. Many of them have their own schemes and constantly fight one another for the exarchs' favor.

### DARKFIEND SERVITOR

Medium 10th-level darkfiend; Initiative +4; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural); Attack +14 melee (+7 damage, psychic weapon) or +12 melee (+4 damage plus poison, claw or bite); Qualities: Arcana, arcane resistance 15, darkvision (60 ft.), immune to acid and poison, mind touch, poison, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +10, Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +11; Str +2, Dex +4, Con +3, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +4; Skills: Bluff +17, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Notice +15, Search +15, Sense Motive +15; Feats: Fascinate (Diplomacy), Improved Critical (psychic weapon), Iron Will, Psychic Weapon; Advancement: Medium (11th–15th level), Large (16th–20th level).

*Arcana:* A servitor is considered to be trained, as an adept of its level, in every arcanum. Sorceries are the most common, followed by psychic arcana and then visionary arcana.

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*Poison:* The servitor's bite and claw attacks are poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 18, initial and secondary damage 1 Strength and 1 Dexterity).

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## Darkfiend Rageblade (Soldier)

These darkfiend soldiers are known for their proficiency with their jagged-edged, rusty-bladed bastard swords. The weapons and the soldiers alike are known as rageblades, and they are among the most feared of the darkfiend soldiers. Rageblades are tall and powerfully built humanoids with faceted insectile eyes, pig snouts, bat ears, and boar tusks. Their skin is thick, red, and covered in short, sharp quills, and their armor is usually heavy plate as rusty as their swords. Rageblades are always in the front line during a battle, which is good because they become enraged the minute combat starts and will attack anyone in front of them.

Rageblades get Great Toughness and Rage as bonus feats.

## DARKFIEND RAGEBLADE (SOLDIER)

Medium 7th-level darkfiend; Initiative +6; Speed 30 ft. (in full plate), 40 ft. base; Defense 23 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +8 full plate); Attack +11 melee (+6 damage, claws, or +4 damage plus poison, bite) or +12 melee (+8 damage, bastard sword); Qualities: Darkvision (60 ft.), immune to acid and poison, mind touch, poison, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +10, Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str +4, Dex +2, Con +4, Int -1, Wis +1, Cha -2; Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +8, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Notice +11, Swim +2, Survival +11; Feats: Great Toughness, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Rage, Weapon Focus (bastard sword); Advancement: Large (8th–12th level), Huge (13th–16th level), Gargantuan (17th–20th level).

*Poison:* A rageblade's bite is as poisonous as its soul (Fortitude save Difficulty 17, initial damage 1 Strength, secondary damage 2 Strength).

### Darkfiend Eye (Watcher)

These watchers look like a gigantic floating eye with a diamond-shaped slit pupil. The pupil is also the eye's mouth, and in the right light anyone looking closely can see multiple rows of very sharp teeth inside. Eyes fly around their targets, swooping overhead like strange fat birds, constantly searching for any sign of weakness. Despite their size and appearance, eyes are very good at avoiding notice, and most of their subjects never realize the darkfiends are there.

Darkfiend eyes get Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.

## DARKFIEND EYE (WATCHER)

Medium 2nd-level darkfiend; Initiative +7; Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect); Defense 17 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge); Attack +3 melee (+4 damage, bite); Qualities: Arcane resistance 7, darkvision (60 ft.), dazzle, immune to acid and poison, mind touch, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +2, Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4; Str +1, Dex +3, Con +1, Int +4, Wis +1, Cha +1; Skills: Bluff +6, Concentration +6, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Notice +6, Search +9, Sense Motive +6, Sneak +8; Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative; Advancement: Medium (3rd–8th level), Large (9th–15th level).

*Dazzle:* The darkfiend eye can unleash a flurry of shadows, colors, or other effects. If onlookers fail a Will save (Difficulty 12), they are dazzled (-1 to attack rolls, Notice checks, and Search checks) for 2 rounds.

### Darkfiend Bloodmonger (Whisperer)

Bloodmongers are among the lowest of the darkfiend whisperers. Unlike many of their brethren, the bloodmongers do not have sweet voices; their psychic speech is rough and grating, but it fires the bloodlust of

listeners and incites them to violence. Bloodmongers look like small starved wolves with blood-matted black fur and human hands, feet, and eyes. They sneak around their targets, encouraging them at every turn to give in to anger and lash out at the world. Bloodmongers are unsubtle and persistent. They are agents of Tyrexus, the exarch of wrath.

## DARKFIEND BLOODMONGER (WHISPERER)

Small 2nd-level darkfiend; Initiative +4; Speed 30 ft.; Defense 18 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural); Attack +3 melee (+1 damage, claws or bite); Qualities: Arcana, darkvision (60 ft.), immune to acid and poison, mind touch, resistance +4 to cold, electricity, and fire; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +1, Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +5; Str +0, Dex +4, Con +0, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +0; Skills: Bluff +5, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +5, Intimidate +5, Notice +7, Search +7, Sense Motive +7, Sneak +9, Survival +7; Feats: Taunt; Advancement: Small (3rd–4th level), Medium (5th–10th level).

*Arcana:* A bloodmonger is considered to be trained, as an adept of its level, in Heart Reading and Heart Shaping.

### Fiendish (template)

*Fiendish* is an inherited template that can be added to any corporeal aberration, animal, humanoid, plant, rhydan, shadowspawn, or vermin (referred to as the base creature).

A fiendish creature uses all the base creature's abilities except as noted here.

**Type:** The creature's type becomes darkfiend. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skills.

**Qualities:** A fiendish creature retains the qualities of the base creature and also gains the following.

Arcane resistance equal to the creature's level + 5 (maximum 25).

Damage reduction (see the table).

Darkvision out to 60 feet.

Resistance to cold and fire (see the table).

### DAMAGE RESISTANCE AND REDUCTION

Level	Resistance to Cold and Fire	Damage Reduction
1–3	+2	—
4–7	+2	+2/arcane
8–11	+4	+2/arcane
12 or more	+4	+4/arcane

*Smite Light:* Once per day the fiendish creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its level (maximum of +20) against a Light-aligned foe.

If the base creature already has one or more of these qualities, use the better value.

If a fiendish creature gains damage reduction, its natural weapons are treated as arcane for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Abilities:** Same as the base creature, but Intelligence is at least -4.

**Alignment:** Shadow.

## Fiendish Giant Spider

Fiendish giant spiders have crimson streaks along their black bodies and legs, and their fangs and talons look as if they had been dipped in fresh blood. They are aggressive predators, using their poisonous bites to subdue or kill prey.

Fiendish giant spiders are hunters, rather than web spinners. They spin webs, but only for use as lairs.

### FIENDISH GIANT SPIDER

Medium 4th-level darkfiend; Initiative +3; Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; Defense 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); Attack +6 melee (+2 damage plus poison, bite); Qualities: Arcane resistance 9, damage reduction +2/arcane, darkvision (60 ft.), poison, resistance to cold and fire +2, smite light, tremorsense (60 ft.), vermin immunities, web; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +4, Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str +0, Dex +3, Con +1, Int -4, Wis +0, Cha -4; Skills: Climb +15, Jump +10, Notice +4, Sneak +15; Feats: Weapon Finesse; Advancement: Medium (5th level), Large (6th–9th level), Huge (10th–17th level), Gargantuan (18th–20th level).

*Poison:* A fiendish giant spider's bite is poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 13, initial and secondary damage 1 Strength).

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*Web:* Fiendish giant spiders often wait in webs or in trees, and then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. A fiendish giant spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and, using tremorsense, can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

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## Fiendish Giant Wasp

These fiendish creatures resemble normal wasps, although their coloring is darker and their wings are shot through with red streaks. They are very aggressive and actively attack any living creature they see. They often carry dead or immobilized foes back to their lairs to serve as food for their young. Fiendish giant wasps grow as large as 6 feet in length.

Fiendish giant wasps have a +8 bonus on Notice checks, which is reflected in the stat block.

### FIENDISH GIANT WASP

Medium 7th-level darkfiend; Initiative +1; Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); Defense 14 (+1 Dex, +4 natural); Attack +9 melee (+2 damage plus poison, sting); Qualities: Arcane resistance 12, damage reduction +2/arcane, darkvision (60 ft.), poison, resistance to cold and fire +2, smite light, vermin immunities; Alignment: Shadow; Saves: Tough +7, Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str +4, Dex +1, Con +2, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha +0; Skills: Notice +9; Advancement: Large (8th–10th level), Huge (11th–17th level).

*Poison:* A fiendish giant wasp's sting is poisonous (Fortitude save Difficulty 15, initial and secondary damage 2 Dexterity).

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