

# CHAPTER ONE.

## THE RULES

This chapter contains the complete rule system for the 10th Anniversary edition of the Talislanta fantasy role playing game. It includes:

- Introduction: overview of the basics of role playing. If you're an experienced role player you can skip this part and begin with Materials.
- Overview: The Action Table: an explanation of the single rule that's used for all actions in the game
- Character Creation: designing characters for the game
- Attributes: rules for using Attributes and abilities related to Attributes (Hit Points, Movement, Encumbrance, Healing)
- Skills: rules for using Skills
- Combat: rules for using Combat
- Magic: rules for using Magic, Counterspells, limits on Enchanted Items

## INTRODUCTION

Talislanta is a role playing game (or RPG for short) designed for two or more players. One person must play the part of the Gamemaster (called the GM), while the others take on the role of Player-Characters (called PCs).

## OBJECT OF THE GAME

Role playing games are like simulations of your favorite movie or television series. The Gamemaster helps establish the setting and the basic premise of each adventure, while the Players take on the roles of the series' main characters. Together, the participants will create an ongoing series of adventures called a campaign. A Talislanta campaign is open-ended, and can last as long as the Gamemaster and Player-Characters like. The only object of the game is to have fun.

## THE ROLE OF THE GAMEMASTER

The Gamemaster plays a vital part in the Talislanta game, serving as a combination narrator, moderator, and role-player. As narrator, the GM must set the stage for each adventure the Players will undertake, helping to describe what the PCs see, hear, and sense about their surroundings. As moderator, the GM is required to judge the results of all actions undertaken by the PCs and to remain fair and objective at all times. As role-player, the GM must play the parts of all non-player characters (NPCs) and creatures that the PCs meet during the course of their game careers.

GMs have to know the rules of the game, as well as the Talislantan milieu. They have to be creative, and they should always remember that the PCs are the focal point of the campaign. If the players are enjoying the game, the GM is doing a good job.

## THE ROLE OF THE PLAYER

The main role of each player is to choose and create a Player-Character that will serve as his or her game persona. Because every PC must interact with the Talislantan milieu, you should be familiar with your character's culture, homeland, and profession. Develop a personality for your PC: is he brave or cowardly, selfish or altruistic? What are his likes and dislikes? What is he afraid of, and what does he believe in? Does your PC have a goal in life? The more you know about your PC, the more interesting he or she will be to you and to the other players in the game.

Players should learn the basic rules of the game, particularly those that pertain directly to their character's Skills and Equipment. The guidelines in the Character Creation section will tell you everything you need to know about making a good PC.

## MATERIALS

To play the Talislanta RPG you'll need at least one twenty-sided die (called a d20), and a ten-sided die (d10). Pencil and paper usually come in handy, too. Everything else you'll need to play has been provided in this book.

## GETTING READY TO PLAY

Like most RPGs, Talislanta is not a "pick-up and play" type of game. To get the most out of your Talislanta campaign, the Gamemaster and players should spend some time looking through the Traveler's Guide section of this book, which describes the continent of Talislanta and its diverse inhabitants. The Gamemaster's Section in Chapter 6 contains advice on planning a Talislanta campaign that will be best suited to your group. The GM should read this section and discuss it with the players before beginning play.

## OVERVIEW: THE ACTION TABLE

All actions in the Talislanta game are resolved by a single, simple procedure:

1. Compare the character's Skill or Attribute Rating with the Degree of Difficulty (the relative ease or difficulty of the action).
2. Take the difference (positive, negative, or zero) and add it to a d20 roll.
3. Consult the Action Table for the result.

That's all you really need to know. All the rules in this book are just variations of the above procedure. Players contribute by describing the Intent of their character's actions to the GM. Then it's the GM's job to interpret the outcome of the Action Table and how it effects the particular scene the player characters are involved in.



## THE ACTION TABLE

Die Roll	Result
0 or less	Mishap
1-5	Failure
6-10	Partial Success
11-19	Full Success
20+	Critical Success

### ACTION TABLE KEY

**Mishap:** Not only does the attempted action fail, but it fails miserably and may have additional negative consequences (accidental damage to the character attempting the action, opposite of the intended effect, etc.). It's the GM's job to determine the actual results of any Mishap, based on the circumstances surrounding the attempted action.

**Failure:** The action fails to achieve the intended result.

**Partial Success:** The action is only moderately successful, achieving part but not all of the intended effect (such as half-damage from an attack or partial effect from a spell, for example).

**Full Success:** The action achieves the intended result.

**Critical Success:** The action is even more successful than intended, achieving the player's stated intent and also yielding additional benefits of some sort (attack causes a Critical Wound that disables the opponent, increased effect from a spell, etc.). It's the GM's job to determine the actual results and extent of any Critical Success, based on prevailing circumstances.

### ACTION TABLE MODIFIERS

Action Table die rolls may be subject to bonuses or penalties for any of the following modifiers:

- Attribute
- Skill ratings
- Intent
- Degree of Difficulty
- Opposing Attributes or Skills
- Multiple actions
- Non-proficiency penalty

### ATTRIBUTES

Attributes represent natural abilities, such as strength, intelligence, and dexterity. Each has a numerical value, referred to as its Attribute Rating. In the Talislanta game, the Attribute Rating for a humanoid of "average" ability is "0"; an attribute rating of +1 or greater is above average, while a rating of -1 or lower is below average.

Attributes can be used as modifiers to specific Skills by adding the Attribute's numerical value to the level of the Skill (the total is referred to as the Skill Rating; q.v.). Attributes can also be used to determine the result of actions for which there is no specific skill; for example, bending iron bars (a function of the Strength Attribute) or trying to locate a lost item (a function of the Perception attribute). Whenever an Attribute is used by itself for an Action Table die roll, it is always doubled. Note that this applies to negative-rated Attributes as well. Zero-rated Attributes remain the same.

## SKILL RATINGS

Skills are abilities acquired through training and practice, such as combat and magic. There are two terms used to describe Skills: Level and Rating. Skill Level indicates the character's degree of training, with "0" representing a basic level of proficiency. A Skill's Level can be improved with training and experience (see Improving Skills, in this section).

Skill Rating is the combination of a character's training (Level) and natural ability (a related Attribute). Each Skill has an Attribute that acts as its modifier; for example, the modifier for the Thieving talent, Picking Pockets, is Dexterity. To determine the thief's overall Skill Rating, add the level of the Skill plus its Attribute modifier. Whenever a Skill is used for an Action Table die roll, always use its Skill Rating.

### INTENT

Intent is a player's description of what his or her Player-Character hopes to accomplish by a particular action. This helps the Gamemaster determine the chance of success for the attempted action, as well as its actual outcome. For example, the Intent of an attack might be to injure, disarm, trip, or any of a dozen other stratagems. If the player informs the Gamemaster beforehand of the character's intentions, the GM will be better prepared to interpret the Action Table die result. Intent is also important in helping the GM establish an action's Degree of Difficulty.

### DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

Degree of Difficulty is a modifier determined by the Gamemaster. It is based on the GM's appraisal of how hard or easy it would be for an individual with an Attribute or Skill Rating of "0" to attempt a given action. The Degree of Difficulty modifier typically ranges between +10 and -10, with easy actions being given a bonus (+1, +2, etc.) on the Action Table die roll, and difficult actions being given a penalty (-1, -2, etc.). The character's Intent and any extraordinary circumstances surrounding the proposed action are also factors in determining Degree of Difficulty.

### OPPOSED ACTIONS

Whenever a character attempts an action that is directly opposed by another individual or creature, the opponent's ability rating is used as the Degree of Difficulty. In such cases, the Degree of Difficulty will either be the opponent's Skill Rating or an Attribute Rating, whichever is most appropriate.



For example, a thief tries to use her Stealth skill to sneak past a sentinel. Because this is an Opposed Action, the Degree of Difficulty is the sentinel's ability to detect the thief. If the sentinel possesses the Guard skill, the GM applies its Skill Rating (the level of the Guard Skill plus its modifier, which in this case is Perception Rating) as the Degree of Difficulty for the thief's Action Table die roll. If the sentinel did not have an appropriate Skill, only his Perception Rating (doubled, as per the rules for Attribute Rolls) would be used.

### MULTIPLE ACTIONS (OPTIONAL)

As a basic rule, each character is allowed to take one action per round. Optionally, this rule can be modified to allow characters to take Multiple Actions in a single round. To do so, the character must declare the number and type of actions that will be attempted before rolling on the Action Table, and accept a cumulative penalty of -5 per extra action.

For example, if the rogue Fayd Danniken states that he will try to pick a pocket and cut a purse in one round, he receives a penalty of -5 on the first roll and -5 on the second roll. Note that a result of Mishap on any Multiple Action die roll prevents any additional action from being taken in that round. For example, if Fayd's first die roll results in a Mishap, he does not get to attempt the second action.

### NON-PROFICIENCY

Any time a character attempts to use a Skill that he or she does not know, the character must accept a Non-Proficiency penalty for that action. This requires the character to use a d10 for the Action Table roll instead of a d20, and to use an Attribute in place of the unknown Skill (see Procedure for Attribute Rolls, in this section).

For example, if a character who has no thieving Skills attempts to pick a lock, he must take a Non-Proficiency penalty for the action and roll a d10, using only his Dexterity Rating as the modifier. As with all Attribute rolls, the would-be lock picker's Dexterity Rating is still doubled. However, the Degree of Difficulty would also be greater, reflecting the character's lack of proficiency at picking locks.

### OTHER MODIFIERS

Combat, Magic, and some of the more complicated Skills have additional rules and modifiers that the Gamemaster and players should know about. For more information see the corresponding chapters in this book.

### NOTE TO PLAYERS AND GAMEMASTERS

The heart and soul of the Talislanta game system is the interaction between the players and the Gamemaster. It is the GM's job to help simulate in the game those things which make real life so unpredictable: a stroke of good fortune, a freak accident, the strange occurrences that defy all odds or lay waste to the most carefully made plans.

Players can help the Gamemaster by offering specific information on their character's Intent before rolling on the Action Table. It is also important for players to allow their GM to embellish Action Table results without interfering in the course of the game. Gamemasters will earn the trust of their players by being fair and objective, and by maintaining a degree of moderation in their renderings. Imaginative and inventive narration is fine, as long as it's not overdone.

### TIME IN THE GAME

In the Talislanta game, time is measured in discrete units, called rounds. A round is roughly six seconds long, enough time for a character to trade blows with an opponent, cast a spell, or do anything else that can be accomplished in six seconds or less.

Except in combat and similarly critical situations, it is usually not necessary for the Gamemaster to keep such strict track of time. For example, a day's ride can be covered by the GM in a single sentence, if nothing special is planned for that day. The Gamemaster should feel free to take a flexible approach about time in the game and use detailed round-by-round descriptions of the action only as needed. Similarly, the Action Table can be used to cover a few seconds of action, or an entire day of warfare.

### EXPERIENCE POINTS

In role playing games such as Talislanta, characters earn Experience Points (XP for short) for their accomplishments. These points can be used to increase the level of a character's Skills, as explained later in this chapter. Experience points are awarded by the Gamemaster, as follows:

- 1-20 XP per adventure or gaming session, based on the difficulty of the adventure and the style of campaign being used by your group, as explained in the Gamemaster's Section in Chapter 6.

- Bonus of +1-3 XP for good role playing, based on the persona that the player has created for his or her character. The GM may elect to increase or reduce this figure based on the style of the group's campaign.

- 1 XP per each game week that a character devotes to training, which can be used to improve the Skill being practiced.



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# CHARACTER CREATION

The following outline provides a general overview of the procedure for character creation. More specific information can be found in the corresponding sections, as indicated.

## CHOOSE AN ARCHETYPE

The Traveler's Guide section of this book contains over a hundred different archetypes, each representing a type of character that hails from a particular Talislantan culture. Over half of these are specifically designed to be used as Player-Characters, and are designated with the abbreviation, PC. Those designated as NPCs are Non-Player Characters, designed primarily to be used by the Gamemaster. As such, they may not be suitable for use as PCs in a beginning-level game (check with your GM).

Each PC archetype represents an average member of the type described, and requires only a few modifications in order to be ready for use in the game (NPCs can be used by the GM as is, or modified as desired). After looking over the various PC archetypes, choose one that you'd like to play.

## RECORD THE ARCHETYPE'S INFORMATION

Using a pencil, record the archetype's Physical Characteristics, Attributes, Skills, Special Abilities (if any), starting Equipment, and Wealth on the Character Sheet included in the Appendix (you may photo-copy this for personal use). Choose your character's height and weight based on the range of measurements described in the archetype.

## PERSONALIZE YOUR CHARACTER (OPTIONAL)

If you want, you can personalize your character by any of the following methods:

**A)** Further embellish the description of your character by adding distinguishing features and detailing the outward appearance of the character, as desired. For example, you may decide that your character favors flamboyant attire, has a wicked-looking scar over one eye, affects a sinister demeanor, or whatever you choose.

**B)** To make your character different from other characters of the same archetype, increase any Attribute (or Attributes) by a total of up to two points, and reduce any Attribute (or Attributes) by a total of two points. For example, a player creating a warrior-character might decide to increase the Warrior's Strength by +2, and decrease his Intelligence and Charisma by -1 each.

**C)** To create personality traits for your character, review the entry for your character's homeland in the Traveler's Guide section and decide how your character differs from the typical member of her society. For example, you might choose to have your character be brave, cowardly, greedy, generous, shy, or outgoing. Traits can also have a basis in the character's personal history. For example, ever since his encounter with a werebeast, Miramus the Magician has been afraid to be alone in the woods at night.

## DETERMINE ABILITIES RELATED TO ATTRIBUTES

Review the section on Attributes in this chapter, and follow the guidelines to determine your character's Hit Points (HP), Movement, and Encumbrance ratings.

## CHOOSE YOUR CHARACTER'S SKILLS

If your character's archetype includes a choice of Skills, review the Skill descriptions in Chapter 3 and choose the Skills you want. If the archetype includes a choice of magical Orders or Modes, review the chapter on Magic and decide which ones you prefer. You'll need to choose a Background skill, based on the type of culture in which your character was raised (Nomadic, Rural, Urban, etc.). You're also allowed an additional Common Skill of your choice.

Note that Language Skills for beginning characters are based on degree of proficiency, as follows: Basic: Level 0, Fluent: Level +3, Native: +10.

To simplify things it's best to figure out the Skill Ratings for each of your character's Skills in advance, before you begin your first adventure. To do so, add each Skill's level to its Attribute modifier and write down the totals in the appropriate column on your Character Sheet.

## RECORD YOUR CHARACTER'S EQUIPMENT AND WEALTH

If your character's archetype includes a choice of weapons, review the chapter on Equipment and make your selections. Record any important information about your character's possessions, such as the Damage Rating of any weapons and the effective Range of any missile weapons your character may possess. See the Equipment section in Chapter 7 for information on weapons, shields, and armor.

Record your character's starting Wealth. The figures included in the archetypes are meant as guidelines, and the GM may decide to increase or decrease your character's available funds according to your character's particular background. If you want to buy additional equipment before the game begins, check the price lists in the Equipment chapter to see what's available and what your character can afford.

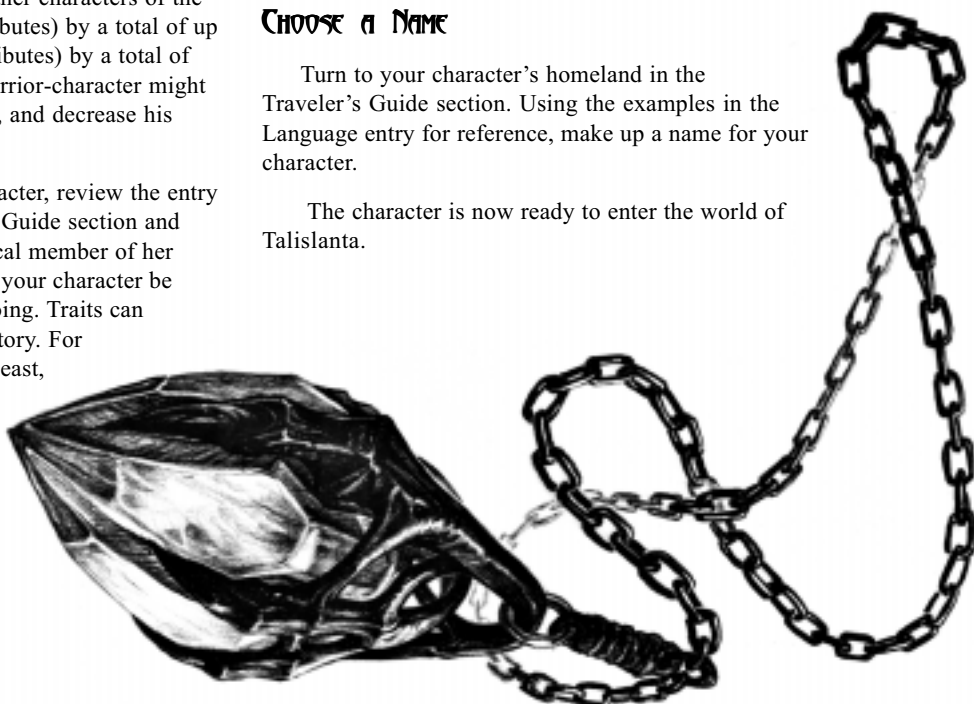
## CREATE CONTACTS AND CHARACTER HISTORY

Ask your GM to provide some Contacts (acquaintances) for your character. With the GM's assistance, fill in some of the details of your character's past and the circumstances under which your character will begin his or her game career (see Character Creation and the GM, in the Gamemaster's Section).

## CHOOSE A NAME

Turn to your character's homeland in the Traveler's Guide section. Using the examples in the Language entry for reference, make up a name for your character.

The character is now ready to enter the world of Talislanta.



# ATTRIBUTES SECTION

In the Talislanta game system, there are eleven different attribute ratings:

- Intelligence Rating
- Perception Rating
- Will Rating
- Charisma Rating
- Strength Rating
- Dexterity Rating
- Constitution Rating
- Speed Rating
- Combat Rating \*
- Magic Rating \*
- Hit Points

\* Note: in the 10th Anniversary edition, the terms Combat Rating and Magic Rating are Attributes, and are based on a character's natural aptitude in the areas of Combat and Magic.

## INTELLIGENCE RATING (INT)

This is a measure of the individual's intellect and powers of reason. Intelligence is the deciding factor whenever an individual attempts to deduce the basic meaning of obscure or unfamiliar maps, dialects, or writings, appraise the relative value of goods, solve puzzles and mysteries, and so forth.

## PERCEPTION RATING (PER)

This is a measure of the individual's sensory awareness, taking into account the abilities of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, plus such intangibles as instinct, intuition, and psychic talents. Perception is the deciding factor whenever an individual attempts to detect unseen presences or ambushes, detect illusions, locate lost or hidden articles, notice important details or changes in surroundings, or utilize any sensory ability.

## WILL RATING (WIL)

This is a measure of the individual's willpower, determination, faith and wisdom. Will Rating determines how well a character is able to resist temptation, bribery, seduction, torture, coercion, interrogation, or spells of Influence.

## CHARISMA RATING (CHA)

This is a measure of the individual's powers of persuasiveness, including such intangibles as leadership and the ability to command the respect of others. Charisma Rating affects a character's ability to lead or persuade other individuals, make a favorable impression, negotiate, bargain, or haggle.

## STRENGTH RATING (STR)

This is a measure of an individual's physical power. Strength Rating determines how much weight a character can carry or lift, how much damage a character does with a hand-held weapon, and so forth. It is also the deciding factor in attempts to bend or break objects, force open or hold shut a door, and restrain other characters or creatures.

## DEXTERITY RATING (DEX)

This is a measure of the individual's agility, coordination and maneuverability. Dexterity Rating is an important factor in most physical skills and determines how well a character can perform acts of manual dexterity, dodge or evade an attack, keep his or her balance, or catch a thrown object.

## CONSTITUTION RATING (CON)

This is a measure of the individual's endurance, stamina, and durability. Constitution Rating determines how well a character can resist the effects of disease, wounds, poisons, toxins, exposure, hunger, and thirst.

## SPEED RATING (SPD)

This is a measure of how swiftly an individual is capable of moving, either on land, in the water, through the air, or by other means. Speed Rating determines Initiative in combat, as well as attempts to pursue others or escape pursuers.

## COMBAT RATING (CB)

This is a measure of a character's natural ability in combat situations. It reflects a combination of physical and mental attributes, cultural and social factors, biological traits, and personal inclination. Combat Rating serves as the modifier for most combat-related skills and as a substitute for any such skills that a character does not possess.

## MAGIC RATING (MB)

This is a measure of a character's natural ability to perform magic. Like Combat Rating, it reflects a combination of natural, cultural, and personal factors. Magic Rating serves as the modifier for using magical Orders and Modes and as a substitute for such skills in some circumstances.

## HIT POINTS (HP)

This is a measure of a character's ability to sustain injury before dying. The average number of hit points that an individual or creature possesses is determined by race and archetype. This total is modified, one time only for beginning characters, by adding or subtracting a number of points equal to the individual's Constitution Rating. Thereafter, Hit Points do not increase. They can decrease temporarily as the result of combat damage and other physical harm. Hit Points are not used as an Attribute Modifier or to make Action Table rolls.



THE RULES

## OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR ATTRIBUTE ROLLS

Anytime a character uses an Attribute to determine the result of an attempted action, use the following procedure:

1. Player states Intent (which Attribute is to be used, and what is the character trying to accomplish?)
2. Double the Attribute's numerical Rating
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the Degree of Difficulty or opposing factors)
4. Player rolls to attempt the action
5. GM judges result.

## ATTRIBUTE ROLLS

### 1. Stating Intent

Before rolling on the Action Table to use an Attribute, the player needs to state his character's intent. Tell the Gamemaster which Attribute you're using, and what it is you're trying to accomplish.

### 2. Double the Attribute's Numerical Rating

Whenever an Attribute is being used as the primary modifier for an action it is always doubled first. This rule applies to plus-rated (positive) and minus-rated (negative) Attributes. Zero-rated Attributes remain the same (two times zero = 0).

### 3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates which Attribute is being used and describes the character's intent, the Gamemaster must determine if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls on the Action Table.

First, take the character's doubled Attribute Rating and apply it as a modifier — positive, negative, or zero. Then, you'll need to determine the Degree of Difficulty. If the character's action is being opposed by another individual or creature, decide which of the opponent's abilities will be used as the Degree of Difficulty. If it is a Skill, the opponent's Skill Rating is used for this purpose. If it is an Attribute, the opponent's Attribute Rating is doubled and used as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the action is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent. For example, if a character is trying to lift a heavy object, the object's weight determines the Degree of Difficulty. Other factors that may apply include the character's physical condition (wounded, tired, etc.), the footing (slick, unstable, etc.), and so on.

Comparing applicable bonuses and penalties, the GM arrives at a single figure. This is the modifier that will be applied to the player's Action Table roll.

### 4. The Attribute Roll

To determine whether the Attribute is used successfully or not the player rolls a d20 on the Action Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

### 5. Judging the Result

With all Action Table rolls, it is the GM's job to translate the results, taking into account the modified die roll total and the player's stated intent, and any other relevant factors. Review the information of Action Table results in this chapter for examples.

## SUBSTITUTING ATTRIBUTES FOR SKILLS

If faced with no other recourse, a character can attempt to use an Attribute in place of an actual Skill. When substituting for a Skill the Attribute is still doubled, but the character must apply the standard Non-Proficiency penalty to the attempt (roll with a d10 instead of a d20) plus a penalty for the Degree of Difficulty. If the Skill being attempted is especially complex, the penalty for Degree of Difficulty should be quite substantial: -10 or worse.

For example, the magician, Antarion finds a scroll written in old Phaedran, an archaic language seldom used during the New Age. Antarion is literate and intelligent (INT +2), but is not proficient in Phaedran. To decipher the scroll he could substitute his Intelligence Attribute for the skill, Phaedran. To do so, the Gamemaster doubles Antarion's INT Rating (making it +4), then adds a penalty based on Degree of Difficulty: in this case, -12 could be appropriate, given the complexity of the attempt. To see if the action succeeded, Antarion's player rolls a d10 at a penalty of -8 (+4 plus -12 = -8) and consults the Action Table.

## ATTRIBUTES AS MODIFIERS

Attribute Ratings are also used as modifiers for applicable Skills, increasing or decreasing the affected skill accordingly. The total of Skill level and its Attribute modifier is always referred to as the Skill Rating. For example, Djuna has a level of +3 in the skill, Acrobatics, and a DEX of +2 (DEX is the modifier for the skill, Acrobatics). Djuna's Skill Rating in Acrobatics is therefore +5.

## ABILITIES RELATED TO ATTRIBUTES

### REACTION ROLLS

The first impression that a character makes on any new acquaintance is determined by making a CHA roll on the Action Table. Failure indicates an unfavorable or even hostile reaction; Success indicates acceptance (or at least ambivalence), while Critical Success will always yield the most favorable response possible under the prevailing circumstances. At the Gamemaster's discretion, reaction die rolls can be employed for encounters of almost any sort. In some situations, skills such as Fashion can be used for reaction rolls, depending on the nature of the individuals being encountered, their native culture, and other factors.

### MOVEMENT

Individuals and creatures can move up to 100 feet in one round's time, plus twenty feet per +1 Speed Rating or minus ten feet per -1 Speed Rating. This rate of movement assumes an even surface, a straight course of travel, and limited encumbrance. When using a character's or creature's Speed Rating to determine distance traveled, remember that one mile per hour is equivalent to about nine feet per round. Normal walking speed for most humanoid creatures can be considered to be about 20 feet per round.

### ENCUMBRANCE

The maximum amount of weight that a Talislantan humanoid with average ("0" Rating) Strength can carry is fifty pounds, plus twenty-five pounds per each additional +1 Strength Rating or minus ten pounds per each -1 Strength Rating. At maximum encumbrance, individuals suffer a penalty of -5 on all Action Table die rolls related to movement of any sort. Encumbrance figures for quadrupeds are quadrupled.

### COMBAT DAMAGE

Damage totals for physical attacks employing natural or other weaponry are modified by adding the attacker's Strength Rating to the weapon's Damage Rating (DR). Damage totals for device-propelled



missile weapons such as arrows are not modified by the user's STR, although hand-thrown weapons such as javelins are. For more information on Damage Ratings see the chapter on Combat.

## HEALING

The average individual or creature heals at the rate of 5 Hit Points per day, plus one additional point of healing per +1 Constitution Rating. Individuals with negative Constitution Ratings heal at the rate of 5 HP per day, minus one point of healing per -1 CON Rating (the minimum rate of healing is one point per day).

## LIFE AND DEATH IN THE GAME

Individuals or creatures reduced to zero or less Hit Points are rendered unconscious and on the verge of death. Should this happen the Gamemaster must roll on the Action Table, using the victims Constitution Rating and current Hit Points as modifiers. The total will yield one of the following results:

**Mishap:** Barring a miracle of some sort, the victim's career has come to an untimely end. If the victim was a PC, the player can create a new character.

**Failure:** Things are looking grim. The victim is fading fast and will need to make another CON roll every minute at a cumulative penalty of -1 per minute. At best, the victim will suffer a permanent injury of some kind (as per a result of Partial Success).

**Partial Success:** The victim will recover, but will suffer some sort of permanent injury. Possibilities include disfiguring scars, a 1-point reduction of one of the victim's Attributes, amnesia, or some other disability appropriate to the circumstances surrounding the victim's "near-death experience" (GM's ruling).

**Full or Critical Success:** The victim will recover completely, with or without medical attention, and suffer no permanent damage.

## SKILLS SECTION

There are ten categories of skills in the Talislanta game, each related to a particular aspect of the character's background and training. These are:

- Common
- Language
- Combat
- Performing
- Scholar
- Thieving
- Trade
- Wilderness
- Magical
- Special Abilities

## OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR SKILL ROLLS

Anytime a character uses a Skill to determine the result of an attempted action, use the following procedure:

1. Player states Intent (which Skill is to be used, and what is the character trying to accomplish?)
2. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the character's Skill Rating and the Degree of Difficulty or opposing factors)
3. Player rolls to attempt the action
4. GM judges result.

## SKILL ROLLS

### 1. Stating Intent

Before rolling on the Action Table to use a Skill, the player needs to state his character's intent. Tell the Gamemaster which Skill you're using, and what it is you're trying to accomplish. Don't forget: Skill Rating (Skill level + Attribute modifier) is always used for any type of Skill roll.

### 2. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates which Skill is being used and describes the character's intent, the Gamemaster determines if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls on the Action Table.

Apply the character's Skill Rating as the modifier for the attempted action. Then determine the Degree of Difficulty. If the character's action is being opposed by another individual or creature, decide which of the opponent's abilities will be used as the Degree of Difficulty. If it is a Skill, the opponent's Skill Rating is used for this purpose. If it is an Attribute, the opponent's Attribute Rating is doubled and used as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the action is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent. For example, if a character is trying to pick a lock, the complexity and condition of the lock determines the Degree of Difficulty.

Comparing Skill Rating and Degree of Difficulty, the GM arrives at a single figure. This is the modifier that will be applied to the player's Action Table Skill roll.

### 4. The Skill Roll

To determine whether the Skill is used successfully or not the player rolls a d20 on the Action Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

### 5. Judging the Result

The GM interprets the result, taking into account the modified die roll total, the player's stated intent, and any other relevant factors.

## IMPROVING SKILLS

As players earn Experience Points (XP) for adventures, they can use accumulated XP to improve their characters' Skills. The cost in XP to improve a Skill is equal to twice the new Skill level (not the total Skill Rating, which is the combination of Skill plus Attribute modifier). For example, the Cymrilian magician, Etarre, has the Skill, Arcane Lore, at a Level of +5. To improve her Skill Level to +6, Etarre must spend 12 XP — twice the new Skill Level of +6.

Skills can only be improved one Level at a time. Though PCs can improve more than one Skill at a time, the same Skill can only be improved once per each week of game time.

## ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS

Experience Points accumulated though adventuring can also be used to acquire new skills. Additional Skills can be acquired at a cost of one XP per each week of time required to learn the new talent, as indicated in the Skill's description (see the Skills Chapter for this information).

If a new Skill is completely unrelated to the PC's archetype, he or she may need to hire a qualified person to teach the new talent. For example, if a magician wanted to acquire the Skill, Tracking, he might have to hire a tracker or hunter to teach him this talent (see Hirelings, in the Gamemaster's chapter, for details on hiring a qualified instructor).

Once the necessary XP and time have been expended, the player can add the new Skill to the PC's Character Sheet. All new Skills have a beginning Level of 0, and can be raised to +1 Level at a cost of 2XP. After this, the cost in XP is equal to the twice the Level of the skill, as explained in Improving Skills.

## A NOTE ABOUT SPECIAL ABILITIES

Though some Special Abilities are used much like Skills, they can not be acquired as additional skills. Rather, Special Abilities are talents derived as a result of an individual's race, background, or culture. Those Special Abilities with a Skill Level and an Attribute Modifier can be improved, as per the rules of Improving Skills.

## SKILL RATINGS FOR CREATURES

The creatures included in the Traveler's Guide section of this game use a simplified system for determining the extent of their abilities. In place of the assortment of Skills that PCs and NPCs possess, creatures are rated according to their overall Ability Level, which is used as an Action Table modifier for almost every situation. Additionally, Constitution Ratings have already been added to Hit Point totals, and Strength Ratings have been factored into Damage Ratings.

# COMBAT SECTION

Like all actions in the Talislanta game, Combat results are determined by rolling a d20 on the Action Table. However, the level of detail required to simulate Combat in the game is significantly greater for Combat than for Skills or Attributes.

As with all Skills, Combat Skills also have an Attribute Modifier, which is called Combat Rating (CR for short). The term, Combat Skill Rating, always refers to the combination of a Combat Skill's level plus the character's CR modifier.

## COMBAT ROUNDS AND TURNS

During combat, time is measured in rounds. A round is roughly six seconds long: enough time for combatants to draw weapons and exchange attacks, move up to the maximum allowable distance based on their Speed Rating, or cast a spell. During a combat round, each character is given a chance to take action.

A single character's action within a round is called a turn, as in "it's Gor's turn to attack." Once all characters involved in the combat have taken their turn, the round is over.

## DAMAGE RATING & PROTECTION RATING

In the 10th Anniversary edition of the Talislanta game, it is no longer necessary to make a separate die roll to determine how much damage an attack does. Instead, weapons and other forms of attack do a set amount of damage based on their Damage Rating (DR for short), and the Action Table die roll.

Protection Rating (PR) describes the protective value of armor. In the Talislanta game, armor is rated according to the number of Hit Points it absorbs per attack.

For more information on Damage Rating, Protection Rating, weapons, and armor, see the chapter on Combat.

## OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR COMBAT

Anytime a character engages in Combat, use the following procedure:

1. Combatants roll for Initiative (each makes an Attribute roll using Speed Rating; the opponent with the highest roll goes first)
2. Player states Intent (what kind of tactic is the character attempting, and what is its specific intent?)
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the character's and opponents Combat Skill Ratings, and other factors)
4. Player rolls to attempt the action
5. GM judges result.

## COMBAT ROLLS

### 1. Rolling for Initiative

At the beginning of any Combat situation, each combatant makes an Attribute roll using their respective Speed Ratings. This is called rolling for Initiative. The character with the highest Initiative total is allowed to act first, and may choose a Tactic based on the slower opponent's Intent (see #2). The combatant with the next highest total goes next, and so on until all the combatants have taken their turns.

If you prefer a high degree of detail in your game, combatants can roll for Initiative each round. If you prefer a simpler approach, have the combatants roll for Initiative only for the first round of Combat, to establish who goes first, second, and so on. Then have all opponents proceed in turn for the remainder of the fight.

### 2. Stating Intent

Before rolling for Combat the character must state his character's Intent. This is done by choosing a weapon or Combat Skill, and a Combat Tactic. There are four categories of Combat Tactics in the Talislanta game: Attack, Defend, Movement, and Stunt. Each has a number of variations, as described in the chapter on Combat. For example, a character's Intent might be to throw a spear, parry with a shield, retreat, or try to trip or distract an opponent.

The winner of the Initiative roll can choose to declare Intent first or wait until other combatants have done so, in order to anticipate their opponents' moves and act accordingly. Either way, the individual who has the Initiative rolls first.

### 3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates the weapon and tactic being used and describes the character's Intent, the Gamemaster determines if any bonus or penalty will be applied before the player rolls on the Action Table.

Apply a bonus based on the Combat Skill Rating chosen by the character. To save time during the game it's a good idea to have players figure their characters' modified Combat Skill Ratings in advance and record these numbers on their Character Sheet.

Apply a modifier based on the Degree of Difficulty. If the Combat tactic is being opposed by another individual or creature, the Degree



of Difficulty is always based on the defender's abilities. Decide which ability is most appropriate, based on the following considerations:

- If the defender is using a weapon, use the defender's Skill Rating in that weapon as the Degree of Difficulty
- if the defender is unarmed, use the defender's **Brawling** or **Martial Arts Skill Rating**. If the defender has no such talent, use his or her basic **Combat Rating Attribute** as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the attack is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent. For example, if Dayn The Forgotten is trying to hit an unwary opponent with an arrow, the Degree of Difficulty would be based on such factors as the targets' range and degree of cover, not the opponent's combat abilities.

Compare applicable bonuses and penalties, and use the total as the modifier that will be applied to the player's Action Table Combat roll.

#### 4. The Combat Action Roll

To determine whether the Combat action is successful or not the player rolls a d20 on the Action Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

#### 5. Judging the Results

After the player rolls, the GM will interpret the Action Table result, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding of the action, and other factors. Combat actions intended to cause damage will produce one of the following results:

**Mishap:** The attack fails due to a mishap of some sort; the attacker stumbles and falls, hits himself, hits an unintended target, breaks the weapon being used, etc. (GM's ruling)

**Failure:** The attack misses the intended target

**Partial Success:** The attacker scores a glancing blow that only does half the attack form's total Damage Rating (rounded-up to the nearest whole number).

**Full Success:** The attack does its full Damage Rating.

**Critical Success:** The attack does full Damage Rating and achieves the attacker's stated Intent. If the Intent was to injure or kill, the victim suffers a **Critical Wound**; see the section on **Combat** for more information of **Critical Wounds**.

## MAGIC SECTION

In Talislanta's New Age, there are many different types of Magic being practiced, each with its own traditions, theories, and techniques. And these are only the faded descendants of the great arcane disciplines of old, evidence of which can still be found among the many ancient ruins scattered across the continent.

Talislanta's very existence, peoples, and geography are products of magic. Magical storms still sweep the continent, leaving sorcerous mutations in their wake. Impossible and fantastic creatures inhabit all corners of the world. Magic, in some form or another, is part of every Talislantan's life.

### ORDERS

An Order is a field of Magic, like Wizardry or Necromancy — think of it as a character's field of magical expertise. There are ten Orders practiced by Talislantan magicians of the New Age, described in detail in the chapter on Magic. Though each interprets magic in a different way, a set of common, underlying principles governs its

effects. Note that Orders are not Skills, and are not used for Action Table die rolls.

Players should concentrate on learning all about the Magical Order (or Orders) their characters have studied. This information describes how magic works for members of that Order, and how such spell casters view the practice of Magic. Additional Orders can be acquired at a cost of 100 Experience Points (XP) and 100 weeks of training.

### MODES

A Mode is a general type of spell-effect, such as Illusion, Conjunction, etc. There are twelve different Modes that together describe all the powers and abilities of modern magicians, described in detail in the chapter on Magic. Players should be familiar with the Modes that their characters know, as this tells them the kind of spells they can cast. GMs should know about how Modes work as well. Modes can be aquired like any other Skill, at a cost of 20 XP.

### SPELLCASTING

In the Talislanta game a spell can either be cast from memory or from a written work such as a scroll or book. The following sections explain how these two methods work in the game.

#### OVERVIEW: CASTING SPELLS FROM MEMORY

The following is an overview of the procedure for casting spells from memory. Each of the steps is explained in detail below.

1. Player states Intent (what is the spell's Mode & intended effect?)
2. Player chooses Spell Level (how powerful will the spell be?)
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the character's Mode rating, spell level, and other factors)
4. Player rolls to cast spell
5. GM judges result.

#### CASTING SPELLS FROM MEMORY

##### 1. Stating Intent

Decide what kind of spell you want to cast, based on the Modes your character knows; if your character doesn't know the Mode, you can't cast a spell of that type. Keep in mind your character's magical Order, how its members cast their spells, and whether or not they use material components or rituals of any sort.

Once you've done this you can describe the type of spell the character is casting and it's intended effect. Is the spell attacking something nearby? Is the magician cooking up a diabolical curse? Is she waving her arms and chanting? Is she drawing arcane runes in the dirt? The important thing is to state your Intent clearly, so the GM and other players can picture your action in the scene.

##### 2. Choosing Spell Level

Each time a spell is cast from memory, the player must decide how much energy his character will invest in it. In game terms, the quantity of energy behind a spell is known as its Spell Level. Magicians can usually cast a spell at any level desired. However, the higher the Spell Level, the more difficult the spell is to cast, and the greater the chance of a magical Mishap.

### 3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the magician-character has describes the spell he will attempt to cast and its desired effect, the GM must determine if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls to cast the spell.

Use the character's modified Skill Rating in the chosen Mode as the primary modifier. Then apply a penalty of -1 per level of the spell that is to be cast as the Degree of Difficulty. Compare the two figures to get the modifier that will be applied to the player's Action Table roll.

### 4. The Casting Roll

To determine whether the spell is successful or not the player rolls a d20 on the Action Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

### 5. Judging the Result

After the player rolls, the GM interprets the Action Table result, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding of the action, and other factors, as follows:

**Mishap:** The spell fails, resulting in potentially disastrous consequences (see Magical Mishaps, in this section)

**Failure:** The spell fails

**Partial Success:** The spell has half the intended effect, range, duration, or potency (GM's ruling based on the type of spell cast).

**Success:** The spell works as intended.

**Critical Success:** The spell works even better than planned, yielding increased effect, range, accuracy, duration, potency or some other benefit (GM's ruling based on the type of spell cast).

## CASTING SPELLS FROM WRITTEN WORKS

Magicians can also cast spells by reading them directly from magic scrolls or spellbooks. There are benefits and drawbacks to this method. When casting a spell from a written work, the magician receives a bonus of +5 to her casting roll. However, this type of spell casting requires a minimum of 1 minute (10 rounds) per Spell Level to cast.

Scrolls are lightweight and easily carried, and can be reused any number of times. However, a scroll can only contain a single spell. Spellbooks can contain hundreds of spells, but are usually cumbersome and ill-suited for travel. Most magicians are careful to guard their books from those who might want to steal their secrets.

## MAGICAL MISHAPS

There are few things a magician dreads more than a Magical Mishap. Here is a list of possible Magical Mishaps that originally appeared in the first edition of the Talislanta game, back in 1987.

- No noticeable effect (50% chance of side-effect occurring later)
- Spell rebounds upon caster
- Spell strikes unintended target (random direction)
- Reverse spell effect (rebounds upon caster)
- Reverse spell effect (random direction)
- Static spell effect; area charged with magical energies (5-foot radius around the caster)
- Wandering spell effect, 5-foot radius charged with magical energies, moves at random
  - Phase-shift: caster teleported to random location
  - Black hole effect: caster and any individuals within 20 feet are drawn into another dimension

- Temporal rift: caster falls backwards (or forwards) in time
- Random spell effect (Gamemaster's choice)

## COUNTERSPELLS & ANTI-MAGIC

Any spell or magical effect can be dispelled by casting a counterspell of the same Mode. If the counterspell is of a different Order than the original spell, the magician must use a d10 for her casting roll, as per the standard penalty for Non-Proficiency. Counterspells have the same range and duration as regular spells of the same Mode.

Whenever a magician attempts to counter another caster's magics, roll on the Action Table using the level of the counterspell as a positive modifier and the level of the spell or magic to be countered as the Degree of Difficulty. Full or Critical Success means the spell has been countered, and its effects negated. Partial Success means the spell's level and its effects have been reduced by half. Failure means the counterspell has no effect, while a Mishap may actually strengthen or extend the duration of the target spell (GM's ruling).

For example, Torren casts a Level 9 spell that creates a Wall of Fire around his rival, Cyrila the swordmage. However, Cyrila is proficient in this Mode, and is of the same Order as Torren. She casts a counterspell at Level 8, hoping that this will be sufficient to dispel her opponent's magics. Cyrila's player rolls a d20 at a penalty of -1 (her level 8 counterspell minus Torren's level 9 spell = -1). She rolls a 17, for a result of Full Success. Torren's fiery barrier sputters and dissolves before his eyes.

## SPELLCASTING AND THE SPELL PENALTY

Casting spells from memory is mentally exhausting. Each time a spell is cast, the magician incurs a cumulative penalty of -1 on further spell casting die rolls for that day, with one exception: spells that result in a Critical Success do not contribute to this penalty. A minimum of seven hours of rest is required to recover normal spellcasting abilities. "Rest" includes sleep, meditation, or any other form of relaxation.

### EXAMPLE: SPELL PENALTY & SPELLCASTING

Torren the Wizard wants to cast "Arkon's Bolt of Destruction." He has had a busy day, however, and has already cast three spells in the last few hours. In addition to the other Action Table modifiers, Torren suffers a -3 Spell Penalty. After the spell is cast, Torren's player notes on his character sheet that Torren's new Spell Penalty is -4.

A short time later, he casts another spell, "Sassan's Fiery Motes." Now he must endure a -4 modifier to his Action Table roll. His new Spell Penalty for subsequent spells is -5. Torren then decides to meditate and relax for seven hours. At the end of that time, his Spell Penalty is back to zero.

## ENCHANTMENT

Rules for Enchanting Items can be found at the end of the chapter on Magic, following the lists of Modes and Orders.

### ENCHANTED ITEMS: THE SEVEN-ITEM LIMIT

Should an individual attempt to carry more than seven enchanted items on his or her person at a time, each will cancel out the other and all will temporarily cease to function. Only by reducing the number of items being carried to seven or less will the remaining devices return to normal operation. Note that potions, powders, and other alchemical concoctions are not enchanted items, and do not count towards the seven-item limit. For more information, see the rules for Enchantment, at the end of the chapter on Magic.

# THE SEVEN KINGDOMS

The territories designated as the Seven Kingdoms encompass a diverse range of terrain types, from arid desert and rocky canyons to deep forests, swamps, and jungles. The Axis River forms the western border, while the waterless Dead River canyon performs the same function in the east. To the north stand the mountains of southern Urag; to the south, the dense swamps and mountains of Mog and Jhangara.

The Seven Kingdoms represent a loosely organized confederation of seven separate major settlements, each ruled by its own king. Established during the New Age by the descendants of various peoples displaced by the Great Disaster, the Seven Kingdoms share a common government, known as the Council of Kings. The Seven Roads link the capitals, and are a vital east-west link for the trade caravans of Talislanta. The seven member-states of this unique confederation are: Astar, Cymril, Durne, Kasmir, Sindar, Taz, and Vardune.

## THE SEVEN ROADS

This system of one underground and six overland roadways connects each of the Seven Kingdoms to the capital of Cymril, and intersects with such important systems as the Phaedran Causeway and the Wilderlands Road.

While the Seven Kingdoms are among the safest and most stable of Talislantan lands, travel along the Seven Roads can present difficulties. The territories that lie beyond the city-states continue to serve as home to miscreant wizards, highwaymen, and predatory beasts. The civilized versions of these menaces – namely peddlers and charlatans – likewise pose a nuisance to travelers.

## THE EASTERN BORDERLANDS

The Seven Kingdoms jointly maintain three small, fortified outposts located along the confederations' eastern border (see Wilderlands of Zaran, The Borderlands). These installations are manned by contingents of the Borderlands Legion, a military force comprised mainly of mercenaries, foreign refugees, and outcasts.



## THE KINGDOM OF ASTAR

Astar is a land of sylvan glades, lakes and streams. Idyllic forests drape the land, opening into clear fields and meadows of wildflowers in all the colors of the rainbow. Here, in this enchanted sylvan setting, dwell the last of an ancient and enchanting race of beings known as the Muses.

### THE MUSES

Muses are among the most beautiful of the humanoid races. Their bodies are slender and lithe, their features delicate and exquisitely fashioned. They dress in translucent robes shaded in hues complementing the colors of their skin, hair, and butterfly wings: pastel blue, aquamarine, turquoise, violet, and rose, to name just a few.

#### Ancestry

Muses are descended from an archaic race of forest nymphs, possibly of magical origin; the ancient Archaeans often summoned such creatures for their pleasure, and their couplings occasionally yielded unexpected results.

#### Society

The Muses have no actual settlements, but tend to congregate in groups of varying size and composition; individuals come and go as they please. Muse children are raised by the group's whisps, who teach them how to fly and to find food. Young Muses must develop telepathic powers for themselves, as these talents are never taught.

Muses erect no permanent dwellings, shunning physical labor as tedious and uninspiring. They have a near-symbiotic relationship with the race of woodwhisps, who serve them as "translators" (see Customs) and by gathering food and erecting impromptu tent-pavillions of gossamer and flowering vines, which in Muse society pass for domiciles. In return, whisps are rewarded with stimulating telepathic visions and the pleasure of the Muses' company. Every Muse has at least one whisp companion.

#### Customs

To other Talislantans, Muses often seem distracted, disinterested, and aloof. In fact, they are contemplative by nature, and are highly perceptive as regards their surroundings. Muses rarely speak, preferring to communicate via telepathy, or thought-images, which are used to convey information and emotions. When Muses wish to conserve telepathic energy, they have their whisp companions speak for them. Given the animated and occasionally sarcastic nature of whisps, communications of this sort can yield unusual results.

Muses are promiscuous, and may take numerous sexual partners – including non-Muses, though such unions rarely bear offspring. These trysts may be of long or short duration, but are always intensely passionate (at least from the Muse's point of view). Sometimes the attraction is such that a Muse will telepathically "bond" with the object of his or her affection. While the obsession lasts a Muse will follow the beloved one anywhere he or she goes, sharing all that they experience together. The infatuation may pass as quickly as it began, though Muses always remain sentimental as regards their former lovers.

### Telepathic Defense

Because the Muses of Astar are delicate and sensitive creatures, they are regarded by many other Talislantan races as weak and defenseless. Nothing could be further from the truth, as anyone who has ever made the mistake of threatening or angering a Muse can attest. While Muses stringently avoid the use of weapons or physical violence, they are by no means as defenseless as they may appear. The ability to project mental images via telepathy can be a powerful, and even deadly, weapon.

At the first sign of danger, Muses will often project a form of imagery intended to warn or frighten potential aggressors; usually, at less than full strength, as Muses are averse to causing pain if it can be avoided. The effects of this type of telepathic projection may be instantaneous, like a sudden premonition of doom, or may escalate over the course of several moments. Warning imagery can cause the subject to experience feelings ranging from a disturbing sense of insecurity or inadequacy to a nameless, deep-rooted dread. If the intended target has a great deal of willpower, these feelings can be overcome or ignored. Should this occur the Muse may project the warning again and again, each time increasing the amount of mental power used.

Should repeated warning imagery fail to achieve the desired result, the Muse may have no choice but to use the most dangerous form of projection: telepathic hallucination, a concerted assault upon that part of the attacker's brain that controls the senses. Using telepathy, the Muse can alter the subject's perception of reality in any way desired, creating terrifying illusions, crippling phobias, or impairing one or more of the subject's senses. A sustained attack of this nature can render the subject utterly insane, bereft of his or her senses, or trapped in a hallucinatory reality from which there is no escape.

### Government

The Muses have no full-time King or Queen. Instead, they draw straws once each month to determine who is to represent their people at the Council of Kings in Cymril. The holder of the short straw is then temporarily crowned King or Queen. Muses observe no formal laws or customs, and generally do as they please. Petty jealousies are not unknown, and may result in squabbles. Most are handled by those involved, occasionally through intercession by whisps. Muses who commit a serious offense, such as the improper use of telepathic abilities, may be banished from the group.

### Magic & Religion

Muses are natural telepaths, able to communicate by means of thoughts and images. All possess this unusual ability, the range and scope of which increase with practice. Muses can sense the strong emotions of others, broadcast and receive thoughts, project mental images, sense the presence of living beings, and even influence others' emotions. Muses have no formal religion, but revere nature spirits of all sorts and have a great love of life. The death of a Muse or a whisp-companion is regarded as a great tragedy, requiring an elaborate funeral that may go on for days after the deceased has been laid to rest.



### The Arts

Muses possess a natural talent for all artistic pursuits. They create enchanting musical instruments, tapestries of colored gossamer, and other fine goods, but only when stricken by inspiration. The making of telepathic "paintings" and vistas, among the most ephemeral of arts, is also a specialty of these people. The music of the Muses tends to be soft, sweet, lyrical; stringed instruments are preferred. Muses do not sing songs, though they may project telepathic images as a form of accompaniment to their music.

### Language

Muses are fluent in High Talislan and Sylvan, but regard common speech as coarse and unaesthetic. They much prefer to communicate telepathically,

and will often use whisp "translators" to put their thoughts into words. Muse names are based on flower-names, such as Lilyandre and Aramantus.

### Defenses

Muses have no weapons or armies, and in fact are averse to physical violence. However, they are by no means defenseless, as many an intruder into Astar has discovered, to his or her regret (see sidebar).

### Commerce

Muses care nothing for riches, though they are attracted to things of beauty, music, and sweets. Such things as they require are readily available from the surrounding environs: pollen, blossom nectar, and honey for food; gossamer for clothes, rare woods for musical instruments. The gossamer tapestries and other artistic wares that they sometimes create are treasured throughout the Seven Kingdoms and beyond.


### Worldview

The Muses of Astar remain as they always have been – aloof, and seemingly preoccupied with their own concerns. Attitudes towards these folk have begun to change, as the full extent of their extraordinary telepathic powers begins to be understood by the other members of the Seven Kingdoms.

### Places of Note

#### Lake Zephyr

This scenic body of water is a favorite trysting place of the Muses. Diaphanous-winged crystal moths, waterwhisps, and many colorful species of avian and aquatic creatures are common to the region, as are less benign creatures such as skalanx. On the far eastern banks of Lake Zephyr is a docking facility comprised of ornate wooden barges tethered together and moored to the shore. Here, Dracartan merchants come to trade sweet crystalline powders and nectar to the Muses. In return, they are allowed to take drinking water, which the Dracartans transmute into solid blocks, load onto their wagons, then begin the long trip by caravan and land barge back to the Red Desert.

	<b>MUSE TELEMPATH</b>		<p><i>"He wants me to ask you where you plan to drag us both next, 'dear thing.'" [as "translated" by a Whisp companion]</i></p> <p><i>Are you truly as aloof and frivolous as you appear to others? That is not a matter that you would ever deign to discuss. There is little that you find interesting enough to drive you to speech. Your voice and the languages of the other humanoids are such limited tools. You find yourself frustrated when forced to rely upon them. Such moments are rare, for your whisp companion accompanies you always, translating from your telempathic projections for those confused by them. The being with whom you have bonded has long since grown accustomed to the images and emotions you send and responds with thoughts for you to perceive. This confidante, your friend and lover, has led you upon experiences that other Muses will never know, unless you choose to show them through the telempathic images that you compose to complement your music. There is a vicarious thrill, it is true, in experiencing this other being's life through your bond. There is a sense of aesthetic value in the ripples of historical tide that you witness. There are the vivid impressions from which you derive your art. Yet this obsession may be as ephemeral as your creations. Your bond-mate, you are certain, fears as much. If it is to be, it will make a grand lament indeed.</i></p>
	<p>INT +3      STR -3      CR -5                  PER +3      DEX +3      MR +4                  WIL -2      CON -3      HP 17                  CHA +2      SPD -1*</p>	<p><b>Homeland:</b> Astar</p> <p><b>Physical Characteristics:</b> 5'6"-6', 80-140 lbs. Skin, hair, and butterfly-like wings in pastel hues (blue, aquamarine, turquoise, violet, rose), delicate features, lithe body.</p> <p><b>Special Abilities:</b> Natural Telempathy; Limited Flight – may remain airborne for two minutes per level of ability, then must rest for at least twice as long before flying again; infatuated with one specific being (choose during character creation).</p>	
<p><b>Equipment:</b> Translucent gossamer robe of pastel colors, one or more musical instruments, pouch (pigments, blossoms, nectar), whisp companion.</p> <p><b>Wealth:</b> None; whisp companion may have 25 gold lumens.</p>	<p>Natural Magic      Art +4                  Three Modes of choice +1      Music +4                  Telempathy +2      Herb Lore +1                  Limited Flight +4      High Talisman, native                  Artificer +4      Sylvan, native</p>		

## WHISP

Whisps are a diminutive and mischievous variety of minor elementals who dwell in the forests of Astar and other woodland areas. There are three known types: The brownish woodwhisps, who know secret things about the woodlands in which they dwell, and are fond of Muses, for whom they sometimes serve as interpreters; the aqua-colored waterwhisps, shy creatures who make their home in woodland streams and ponds, living in fanciful "castles" made of air bubbles and gossamer; and the smoky gray nightwhisps, the most obnoxious of the species, who come forth at night to play cruel pranks on other creatures.

All whisps know a dint or two of magic, and are fascinated by enchanted items. They are partial to cakes, sweetmeats, and blossom nectar, which can be used to gain their favor or cooperation. If attacked, whisps will flee, only to return later with reinforcements. Some folk claim that the best way to be rid of annoying whisps is to ignore them until they become bored and leave. Others suggest ample doses of whispbane, live serpentine and yellow stickler, or noxious magics as a more certain remedy for these tiny trouble-makers.

Size: 6," 1-6 oz.

Attributes:

INT +1    PER +4    WIL -2  
 CHA +1

STR -10    DEX +8    CON -1  
 SPD +8

Ability Level: 3+

Attacks/Damage:

Diminutive weapon at DR 1, or as per spell employed

Special Abilities: Natural Magic with three Modes of choice at Ability Level, flight, swimming (Waterwhisp only), may converse in humanoid languages

Armor: None

Hit Points: 2



## DRYAD BUSH

This slender and graceful variety of flowering shrub is found primarily in Astar of the Seven Kingdoms. Late at night, dryad bushes undergo an uncanny metamorphosis, becoming beautiful green forest nymphs. The transformation lasts only until dawn, after which the nymphs return to plant-form. The esteemed botanomancer, Viridian, once professed to have been married to a forest nymph, whom he saw only between the hours of sunset and sunrise.

Size: 5'-6'

Attributes:

INT +1\*    PER +2\*

WIL +3    CHA +7\*

STR -2\*    DEX +2\*

CON +2    SPD +1\*

\* in nymph form; otherwise, not applicable

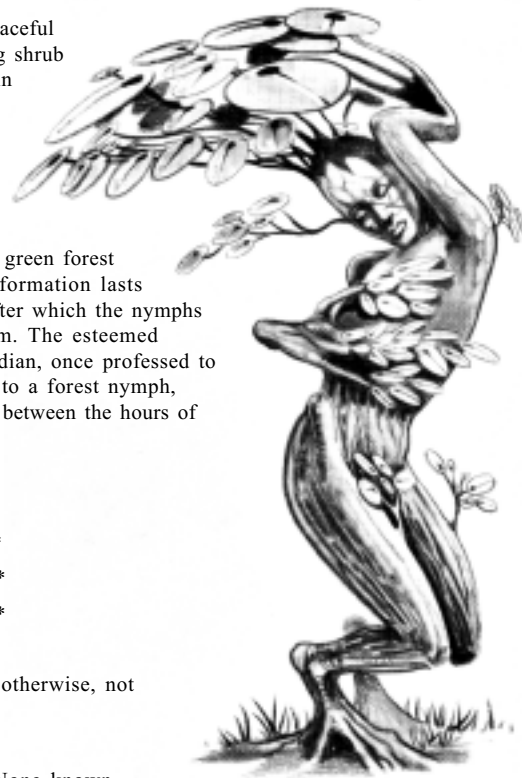
Ability Level: 1+

Attacks/Damage: None known, though attacks may be possible in nymph-form

Special Abilities: Metamorphose from plant to nymph form, possible Natural Magic skill

Armor: Bark, PR 4

Hit Points: 16



# THE KINGDOM OF CYMRIL

Cymril is the capital of the Seven Kingdoms, this due as much to the country's central location as anything else. Sweeping hills and light forest dominate much of the Cymrilian countryside, large portions of which remain uninhabited to the present day. The greatest part of the population lives in the enchanting capital of Cymril, a city of crystalline spires and archways. This is the home of the Cymrilians.

## THE CYMRILIANS

Tall and slender in stature, Cymrilians have pale green skin and hair, with golden eyes and handsome features. All types of exotic apparel are in vogue, with magical enhancements used to alter appearance as desired.

### Ancestry

The Cymrilians are descended from the Phandre, a people related to the ancient Archaens. Exiled from the old Phaedran Empire, the Phandre fled eastwards and settled in the woodlands of Cymril. In time they established an independent citystate, which came to be known as Cymril.

### Society

Cymril is a fabulous city of crystal towers, domes, and elevated causeways. Here, the Cymrilian magicians practice their arts, creating wondrous windships, potions, powders and other magical adjuncts. Most Cymrilians live in the city, in fanciful homes made of translucent crystal. A small percentage of the population lives in the countryside, dwelling in rustic stone cottages or tower keeps. Cymrilians tend to have small families. Couples usually wait until they are in their late twenties or thirties before they wed. The young enjoy romantic affairs, typically of short duration, until such time as they are prepared to settle down. Children are raised by both parents; by Cymrilian law, both bear equal responsibility for raising and caring for offspring.

### Customs

The Cymrilian people are divided into three political groups, each of which had their origins among the ancient Phandre. The most numerous are the moderates, or Koresians, who comprise about 95% of the population. These folk are flexible in their views, and have no great attachment to the old ways of their ancestors. The conservatives, or Tanasians, make-up less than two percent of the population. Once the ruling class of Cymril, they are known for their strict adherence to tradition and stern views regarding magical lore, which they believe should not be shared with other peoples. Following an unsuccessful attempt to usurp control of the monarchy, most Tanasians were exiled or fled to distant lands. The few who remain in the citystate are regarded with some suspicion by other

Cymrilians. The third group, comprising about three percent of the population, is known as the radicals, or Pharesians. Most Pharesians left the citystate long ago, protesting against the discriminatory practices of the conservatives. Many became peddlers of magical paraphernalia, traversing the Cymrilian countryside and beyond.

### Government

The ruler of Cymril is known as the Wizard King, or Wizard Queen, if a female. The King represents Cymril in the Council of Seven Kings. He is assisted by the members of the Cymrilian Cabal, a pentad of five advisors chosen from the faculty of the Lyceum Arcanum, Cymril's institute of magic. Usually the most capable of Cymril's spell casters, the Wizard King is elected by popular vote, and serves a term of seven years. If he is a reasonable sort of person, the populace will allow the Wizard King to remain in power for the full term, and may even allow him to run for an additional term. If not, he can be ousted by a majority vote from the Cymrilian Cabal. Cymril has a court system which guarantees individuals accused of criminal offenses access to legal representation. Crimes involving magic are regarded as serious offenses, and may result in the offender being placed in stasis or banished to another dimension.

The Seven Kingdoms' Council of Kings meets once a month at the Royal Palace in Cymril.

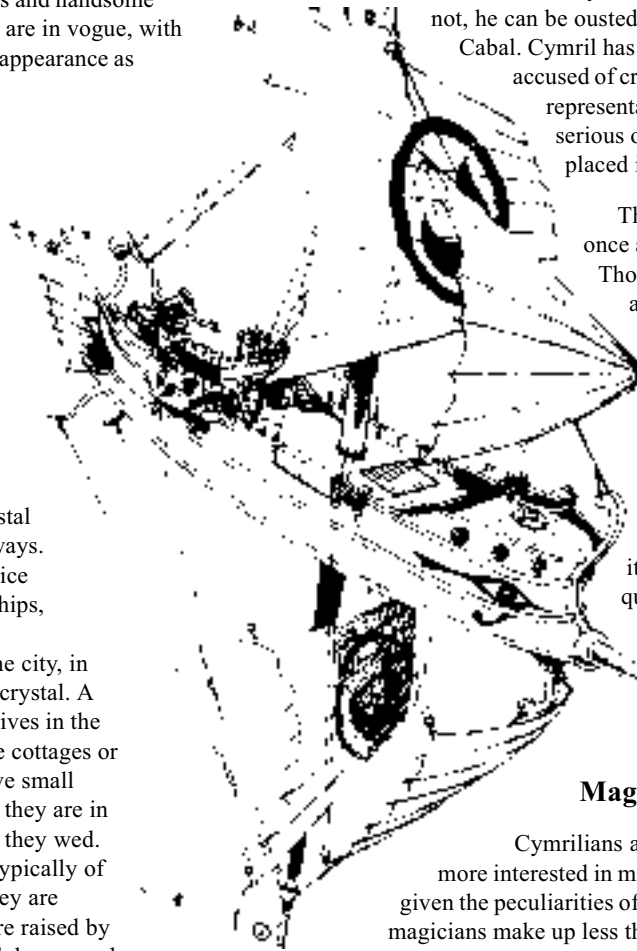
Though relations between the member nations are usually good, the Seven Kings seem to be constantly squabbling over petty laws, tariffs, boundary lines, prices for trade goods, and so forth. A majority vote decides all issues, except in the case of a four-to-three decision, known as an "impasse." Whenever a Council vote ends in an impasse, there is no official ruling on the subject, and each kingdom is free to establish its own laws and guidelines on the issue in question until the following Council. As might be expected, this often leads to incredible confusion. Laws can change abruptly, curfews or new tariffs may be instituted, and prices for goods or tolls may fluctuate wildly.

### Magic & Religion

Cymrilians are not an especially devout people. Most are more interested in magic than religion, which is not surprising given the peculiarities of Cymrilian culture. Though practicing magicians make up less than one-tenth of the populace, Cymrilians of all ages possess an insatiable curiosity as pertains to magic (see sidebar).

In the year 603, the Wizard King ordered the magicians of the Lyceum Arcanum to open the institute's secret archives, which had been sealed for centuries. Inside were found numerous artifacts from the Forgotten Age, including the Archaen Codex, a repository of magical secrets that may predate the Forgotten Age. Cymrilian scholars estimate that it could take decades to decipher and analyze the complete contents of the archives.

Cymrilians inter their dead in crystal sarcophagi, a practice that goes back hundreds of years to the founding of the nation-state. The color of the crystal used in the making of these funerary devices has varied from one age to the next, though until recent times variations of green and yellow were the most popular hues.





## The Arts

Cymrilians enjoy a wide variety of artistic pursuits, including painting, sculpture, decorative crafts, and the creation of illusory panoramas. Cymrilian music employs exotic magical instruments of many types, and ranges from traditional windship sailors' songs of the bygone Archaen Age to more modern and abstract compositions.

## Language

Cymrilians converse in either High or Low Talislan, depending upon their profession, level of education, and purported degree of sophistication. Common names are derived from old Archaen nomenclature, as in Celene, Cirelle, Califax, Merdigan, and Pandaran.

## Defenses

Cymril is protected by a powerful armada of windships and airborne troop carriers, which are commanded by skilled swordsmages. The confederation's forces are augmented by several divisions of Thrall infantry and mangonel lizard cavalry, Blue Aeriad scouts, Gnomekin infantry, Kasmir engineers, and Sindaran alchemists.

## Commerce

Cymril is the continent's leading supplier of magical wares, and of such commodities as amberglass and aquavit. Caravans from many lands come here to trade for Cymrilian products and goods from across the Seven Kingdoms. A brisk trade in minor charms, elixirs and potions is done throughout the city, and across the countryside. The Lyceum Arcanum, Cymril's school of

magic, produces the skilled enchanters, alchemists, and magicians who are such a vital part of the Cymrilian economy. Once each year, the city of Cymril hosts the Magical Fair, a colorful spectacle lasting two weeks and attended by folk from all across Talislanta.

## Worldview

Cymril plays an important role in the Seven Kingdoms, both as a supplier of magical wares and as an integral part of the confederation's defenses and diplomatic efforts. Cymrilian ambassadors represent the Seven Kingdoms' interests in many foreign countries, including Carantheum, the Independent Citystates, the Western Lands, and even the Kang Empire.

## Cymrilian Settlements

### The City of Cymril

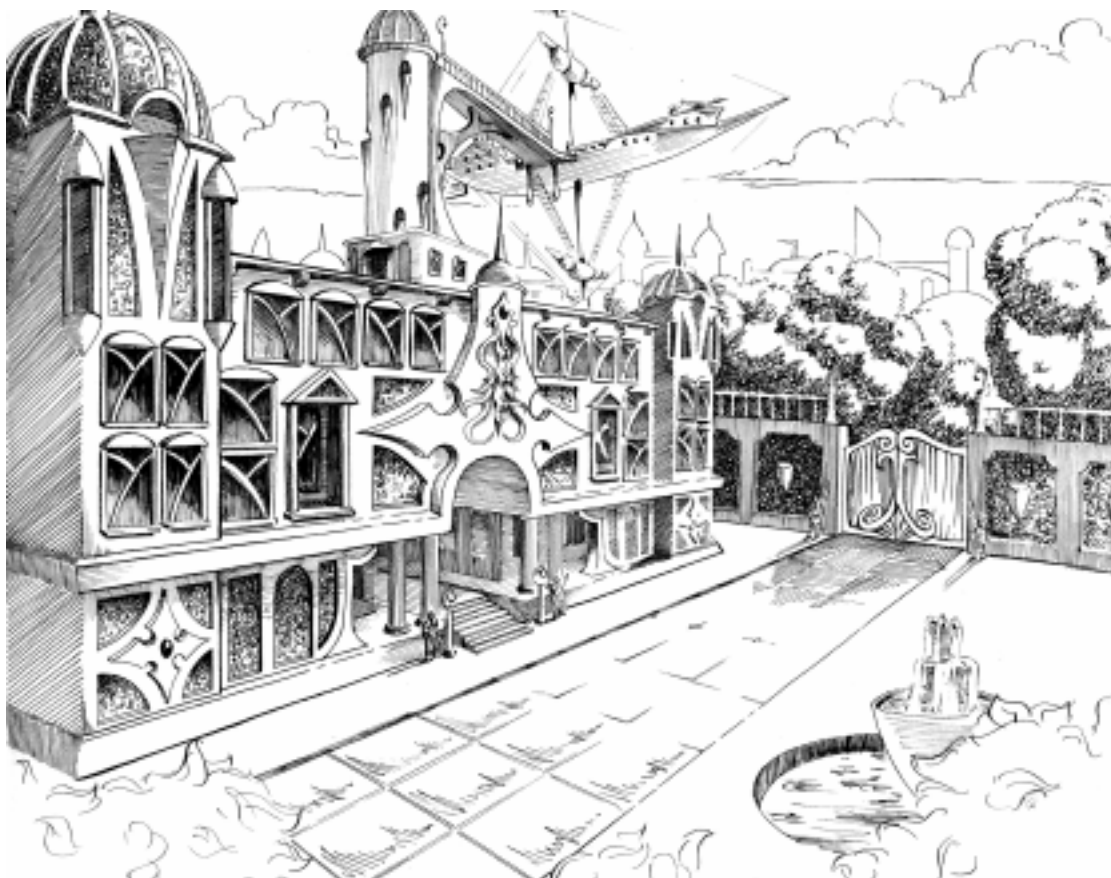
The Crystal City of Cymril is widely regarded as Talislanta's single most influential center for trade and cultural exchange. People from almost every part of the continent and surrounding environs can be found here, from merchants to travelers, pilgrims, refugees or expatriates from foreign lands, and wayward adventurers. The city is also known for the Lyceum Arcanum, Talislanta's foremost institute of magic. Surrounding the city are many small farms, vineyards, and country estates. Most of these are owned by Green Aeriad, who work the land with exceptional skill. The fruits of their labors are transported by wagon to Cymril or sold at roadside stands.

## Magic in Cymrilian Society

Cymrilians are enamored of Magic in all its myriad forms, many of which have become integral to the culture of these people. Almost every Cymrilian owns at least one magical adjunct, and often more. The majority of these items are typically of limited power, and are either practical or frivolous in nature. Young children favor magical toys, such as dolls that "speak" a few simple phrases, or miniature animal-constructs that move of their own volition. Among adolescents, enchanted boots or slippers that levitate the wearer a foot or two above the ground are very popular, as are magical enhancements used to alter the color of the skin or hair, enchanted garments that sparkle or glow in the dark, and so forth.

Adult Cymrilians also use enhancements, though generally of a more elaborate and expensive sort; substances or items that enhance the user's intelligence, memory, resistance to disease, sexual performance, or desirability are most popular. So are enchanted garments that confer protection from the elements, always appear freshly pressed and laundered, exhibit a variety of changing hues and patterns, and so forth.

Many popular forms of entertainment are also influenced by the Cymrilian love of magic. Among those held in the highest esteem are exhibitions of enchanted art, such as animate sculpture, paintings done with magical pigments that change colors or move about the canvas, prismatic arrangements that emanate holographic images or whorls of color, and so on. Illusionist-artists are also held in high regard for the fantastic panoplies of color, sound, and imagery that they create. One of the most accomplished artists of this sort was the great Faluche, whose works incorporate three-dimensional illusory images with the music of the renowned Bodorian composer, Sola.



"I have studied at the Lyceum Arcanum. Can you truly imagine that you rival my skills?"

You are riding the crest of ancient Archaen knowledge into a glorious new era for your people. You are a Cymrilian, and you are a member of the most enlightened and advanced civilization on the continent, the rising star of Talislanta. You would never think to leave the other six Kingdoms behind, of course. They are your valued allies, and you wish for them to share in the coming prosperity. They will contribute to it substantially, you realize, with their own skills of combat and alchemy, horticulture and finance. Yet it is your magic that will lead the way. It will be the means for your personal success, as well, and you strive ever to improve your skill and enhance your knowledge. Whenever you quest abroad, for whatever purpose, you never ignore an opportunity to acquire ancient texts or artifacts. Whenever you meet a mage of talents different from your own, you barter your lore and lose hours in abstract conversation. You have made a solemn promise to visit in your lifetime the other cities of magic: Carantheum, Altan, Rhin, Jacinth, Cabal Magicus. Yet it is always the Crystal City that calls to you. One day, perhaps, you will be elected to the throne of the Wizard King, at the center of that city and at the center of the world. You have every reason to believe.

### CYMBILIAN MAGICIAN

INT +3	STR -1	CR -1
PER +1	DEX 0	MR +6
WIL 0	CON -1	HP 19
CHA 0	SPD 0	



**Homeland:** Cymril

**Physical Characteristics:** 6'-6'4", 120-160 lbs. Pale green skin and hair, golden eyes, slender build, handsome features; may alter appearance with magical enhancements.

**Special Abilities:** None.

Magic Order of choice	Etiquette +5
Six Modes of choice +3	Fashion +4
Magic Order of choice	Ride +3
Five Modes of choice +1	High Talislan, native
Arcane Lore +5	Low Talislan, basic
	Archaen, fluent

**Equipment:** High-collared cloak and robes of spinifax in various colors, dyed leather boots, assorted jewelry, leather- and silver-bound spell book, pouch, three potions in amberglass vials, three magical trinkets.

**Wealth:** 80 gold lumens in gold pentacles.

### CYMBILIAN ROGUE MAGICIAN

"Some call me the greatest thief in Cymril. I would not think to challenge their honesty."

Some Cymrilians study magic to attain knowledge and power, to teach young adepts, or perhaps to learn the swordmage's art. But you are different. You see magic as the swiftest means of acquiring wealth, status, and the finer things in life. Let others spend their lives struggling just to earn a few gold lumens. You prefer to use magic and guile, to move unseen and unheard, to seduce and cajole, and to take what you want from life. Certainly, there are risks to consider, but you are no common thief. You are a rogue magician, and with your magics all that you desire is within your grasp. Perhaps you will become an adventurer, and join a band of companions with aspirations similar to your own. Maybe you will travel to distant lands, where people know little of magic and are even more susceptible to your particular combination of talents. With spells to alter your appearance, you can pass as a noble, a vagabond, or any semblance that you can imagine. No one need know anything about you that you do not care to reveal. Riches and wealth can be yours, and someday, a life of ease. After all, is that not what magic is for?

INT +2	STR -1	CR +2
PER +2	DEX +1	MR +3
WIL 0	CON 0	HP 20
CHA 0	SPD 0	



**Homeland:** Cymril

**Physical Characteristics:** 6'-6'4", 120-160 lbs. Pale green skin and hair, golden eyes, slender build, handsome features; may alter appearance with magical enhancements.

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Note:** Rogue Magicians may be of pure Cymrilian blood or may have one or more ancestors from other Talislantan races, such as Batrean, Dracartan, Gao, Phantasian, Rahastran, Sarista, Zandir.

Magic Order of choice	Thieving Skill of choice +3
Four Modes of choice +4	Arcane Lore +2
Weapon of choice +2	Etiquette +3
Brawling +2	Fashion +4
Deception +5	Ride +4
Stealth +4	High Talislan, fluent
	Low Talislan, native
	Archaen, fluent

**Equipment:** High-collared cloak, breeches, and tunic of various colors, dyed leather boots, leather-bound spell book, choice of weapon, pouch, shoulder bag, two magical trinkets, equus steed.

**Wealth:** 50 gold lumens in gold pentacles and other currencies.



### CYMRILIAN SWORDSMAGE

INT +1	STR +1	CR +3
PER 0	DEX +1	MR +3
WIL +1	CON 0	HP 22
CHA 0	SPD +1	

**Homeland:** Cymril

**Physical Characteristics:** 6'-6'5", 130-200 lbs. Pale green skin and hair, golden eyes, slender but muscular build, handsome features; may alter appearance with magical enhancements.

**Special Abilities:** None.

*"The wind is a force today. It would toss a windrigger around like a leaf. I'm up for it."*

*It's difficult not to love magic. You are not so enamored of the theories behind it or the beauty of its form, as so many Cymrilians are. You love it for its effects, for the way in which you can use it in your chosen profession – as a swordmage. You train intensely to improve your skill with the sword, and you have great respect for warriors such as the Thralls. Yet your arcane blade provides you with a keen advantage over others, and your own Order is a more potent weapon yet. The windship is your passion. Since you were a youth, fresh to the armada, you learned to climb riggings, care for levitationals, consult navigational charts, pilot riggers and skiffs. Someday you may take the time to visit other lands. Perhaps you and the companions you find will buy your own vessel to cross the skies for commerce or adventure. Such a life would hold many glories. Or perhaps you will become a captain of your own windship of war, leading the Seven Kingdoms into battle against its enemies. In the skies over fields of battle, you will show the world why you love magic.*

**Equipment:** High-collared cloak and garments of spangalor (metallic cloth), dyed leather boots, assorted jewelry, leather- and silver-bound spell book, pouch, +1 longsword, dagger, two magical trinkets; swordsmages based in Cymril may have access to a windship.

**Wealth:** 50 gold lumens in gold pentacles.

Wizardry or Elemental Magic Three Modes of choice +2	Arcane Lore +4
Longsword +3	Etiquette +4
Dagger +2	Fashion +4
Brawling +2	Ride +4
Pilot – Windship +5	High Talisman, fluent
	Low Talisman, native
	Archaen, fluent



### PHARESIAN PEDDLER

INT +2	STR 0	CR 0
PER +2	DEX +1	MR +3
WIL 0	CON 0	HP 20
CHA 0	SPD 0	

**Homeland:** Cymril

**Physical Characteristics:** 6'-6'4", 130-160 lbs. Lime green skin and hair dyed with bright iridescent colors, slender build.

**Special Abilities:** None.

*Cymril? It is a nest of chasm vipers. Conservatives, moderates – both are equally haughty, and equally absurd. You are a Pharesian, and so they marked you as different. Your people were looked down upon as radicals, and forbidden to study at the Lyceum Arcanum. They said you were fit only to serve as merchants, shop owners, and magician's assistants. And so you packed-up your amulets and talismans, your powders and potions, your lockets and periapts. You left Cymril as so many of your people did before you, to seek your fortune on the open road. Now you travel across the Seven Kingdoms to the Western Lands and back again, selling your wares to those you chance to meet along the way. There, just up ahead – a band of adventurers, far from their homes. Lucky for them that you are here, and not still in Cymril.*

**Equipment:** Patchwork cloak and robes of bright colors, staff, satchel (filled with salves, concoctions, charms, curiosities), spell book, alchemical equipment.

**Wealth:** 50 gold lumens in coins and wares.

Wizardry Four Modes of Choice +3	Merchant +4
Alchemy – Elixirs, Powders +3	Appraiser – Curios +4
Alchemy - Medicinal Mixtures +4	Oratory +3
	Streetwise +3
	Low Talisman, native

Sample NPC

Cilmorrior has spent many years traversing the Seven Roads, and claims to know every trail, track, inn, and roadside tavern in the Seven Kingdoms. He specializes in miraculous cure-alls and restorative elixirs, the source of which is a secret that Cilmorrior prefers not to reveal. A man of middle years, he never goes anywhere without his enchanted cape: a cloak of ever-shifting hues, which Cilmorrior claims once belonged to an apprentice of the legendary illusionist, Cascal.



THE SEVEN KINGDOMS

## EQUS

Equs are a hybrid of mammal and reptile prized as steeds throughout the continent. They are quite intelligent, and have their own language, called Equan. Some few are even able to speak the languages of humanoids, though a natural tendency toward secrecy forbids most equs from boasting of this ability. In the wild, they travel in herds of up to about sixty individuals.

There are four sub-species of equs: The common and reliable graymane; the swifter but less durable silvermane; snowmanes, built to endure frigid climes and sure-footed on ice or snow; and coal-black darkmanes, aggressive and spiteful creatures who often attack other equs on sight.

Size: 5'+ at shoulder, 400-600 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -3 PER +3 WIL +4 CHA -3\*

STR +3 DEX +3 CON +2\* SPD +7\*

SPD +8 for silvermanes; CON +1 for silvermanes; CHA -5 for darkmanes.

Ability Level: 5-8

Attacks/Damage: Kick: DR 13, Bite: DR 5 (darkmanes only)

Special Abilities: Ability to converse in Equan (some few Equs are also known to speak humanoid languages), immune to cold (snowmanes only)

Armor: Scaly hide, PR 2

Hit Points: 35

## SORCERER TREE

This rare conifer is found only in woodland regions such as the light forests that cover the outskirts and borders of Cymril. The tree is notable for its "mantle" of dark green foliage, which gives it the semblance of a tall hooded man. Hybrids created back in Archaen times, sorcerer trees may have been used to frighten-off superstitious tribes of wild folk. The wood of the sorcerer tree is still used in the making of enchanted staves and wands, and is thought to possess magical virtues.

## MONITOR IMP

Monitor imps are tiny creatures of extra-dimensional origin and considerable intellect. On their home plane they sometimes serve greater devils as scribes, spies, look-outs, and snitches. Talislantan spell casters often summon monitor imps and use them for similar purposes. When bound to service, the creatures possess the additional virtue of being unable to utter an untruth. Unfortunately, tact is not an attribute normally associated with monitor imps, who can be sarcastic when they feel they are being worked too hard.



Size: 1"-4" in height, 1-4 oz.

Attributes:

INT+2 PER +5 WIL 0 CHA -2

STR -5 CON 0 DEX +5 SPD 0

Ability Level: 1-4

Attacks/Damage: Bite: DR 1

Special Abilities: Detect invisible/astral/ethereal presences, literate in humanoid languages, read magical scripts on INT roll

Armor: None

Hit Points: 2

THE SEVEN KINGDOMS

# THE KINGDOM OF DURNE

Durne is a land of grassy knolls, gently rising hills, and sparse woodlands. Herds of wild greymanes, durge, and muskront forage along the slopes, wary of exomorphs or malathropes on the hunt. Scoured by black winds during The Great Disaster, the soil of this region is too poor to farm, and supports little in the way of vegetation. However, the territories that lay beneath the surface are rich in natural resources, from crystals and minerals to root-crops and clear underground lakes. Here, in the subterranean city of Durne, live a people known as the Gnomekin.

## THE GNOMEKIN

The Gnomekin are a diminutive folk who average just over three feet in height. They have nut-brown complexions, muscular bodies, and wide-eyed, almost childlike features. Both the males and females have a crest of soft, black fur running from the center of the forehead to the small of the back.

### Ancestry

Gnomekin claim to be descended from an ancient subterranean race related to the Gnorls of Werewood. However, some Talislantan scholars believe that the forebears of the Gnomekin may have been a people who originally lived on the surface, but fled underground in order to escape the effects of The Great Disaster.

### Society

Gnomekin live in underground colonies, each comprised of a number of single-family dwellings known as nooks. Gnomekin nooks are like small caves, lined with carpets of soft and sweet-smelling moss; furnishings are spare and made from polished stone covered with moss for comfort. Underground streams and brooks provide fresh water. Phosphorescent fungi provide a faint illumination – enough for a Gnomekin to see clearly, though outsiders sometimes have a hard time getting acclimated to the gloom.

Gnomekin are a warm and friendly folk, possessed of an almost childlike innocence. Their families are close-knit, and often quite large. It is not uncommon for a Gnomekin couple to have a dozen or more offspring (see sidebar). Gnomekin subsist on mushrooms, tubers, roots, and lichen; many tasty dishes are made from these simple ingredients. A sweet and nutritious syrup, made from the sap of certain roots that extend far below the earth, is a favorite drink of the young. Adult Gnomekin prefer mushroom ale.

### Customs

Of all the Talislantan races it is likely that none knows more about the Underground Highway than the Gnomekin. The Gnomekin began a concerted effort to

map the full extent of the Underground Highway in the year 607. To date, they have charted most of the tunnels that extend beneath the Seven Kingdoms, and have surveyed parts of the system extending as far east as the Volcanic Hills, as far north as the borders of Narandu, and as far south as the borders of the Dark Coast. Maps and geomantic studies of the Underground Highway may be purchased in the city of Durne.

### Government

Durne is ruled by a pair of hereditary monarchs known simply as the King and Queen of Durne. The Gnomekin Queen is the matriarch of all Gnomekin families. She is responsible for determining fair prices for the goods produced in Durne's subterranean gardens, which are delivered to Cymril via the Underground Highway. The King of Durne serves as commander-in-chief of the country's small but fierce army.

Crime is unknown among the Gnomekin, who would never dream of doing anything to harm their friends, family, or neighbors. Foreigners who cause problems in Durne are arrested and detained in cave-cells until one or both of the monarchs has time to review the case. The most common punishment is expulsion for life from Durne.

### Magic & Religion

Gnomekin have a deep reverence for the earth and for the earth goddess Terra, who is revered as their people's benefactor. They are not much for dogma or formal ceremonies, but prefer simple prayer services conducted in sacred caverns by the female priestesses of the Great Mother. Gnomekin inter their dead deep in the earth, or as they say, "close to the Goddess."

Crystalomancy is a field of magic practiced extensively by the Gnomekin. They consider crystals to be a gift from Terra.

### The Arts

Gnomekin are experts at growing, polishing, cutting and appraising all types of crystals and gemstones. Decorative crystal gardens can be found throughout any Gnomekin settlement, and the art of growing colored crystals into beautiful shapes, called crystal sculpture, is practiced by many Gnomekin. The underground panoramas created by the best of these artists are said to be quite breath-taking. Gnomekin music is soft and pleasant to the ear, and is something of a family affair. The lilting melodies, sung by children and adults together, are based on a five-tone scale and have no words. Wind instruments made from tubular fungi and "drums" made from the caps of large mushrooms are used for accompaniment.

### Language

Gnomekin are so modest and unassuming by nature that they almost never refer to themselves in conversation. For example, among these folk "Am pleased to see you" means "I am pleased to see you."

### All in the Family

"The Gnomekin are well known for their devotion to family and love of children. In combination, these two qualities result in family groups of incredibly large size. It is not uncommon for a Gnomekin child to have as many as two dozen siblings, forty aunts and uncles (their parents' siblings), and over five hundred first cousins (their parents' siblings' siblings). Throw in parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, and a veritable army of second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh cousins, and a Gnomekin's extended family may easily number into the thousands.

Marriage is yet another aspect of Gnomekin culture that contributes to the growth of the family. For when Gnomekin of different families marry, each of the groups adopts the entire other clan as part of its family. In fact, it is said that a Gnomekin who chanced to meet another of his or her people anywhere in Talislanta can usually be assured the two of them are related in one manner or another, whether through blood ties or marriage. So it is not necessarily an exaggeration when Gnomekin say that they are all part of one big family."



Gnomekin speech sounds much like purring. Common names have a lilting sound, such as Abo Ebo, Eno Erobia, Aba Edaba, and Obo Orabio.

## Defenses

The Gnomekin Army is a small but highly competent force comprised of light infantry and durge cavalry. They excel at all aspects of subterranean combat, and move swiftly and silently underground.

## Commerce

Crystals of many sorts are Durne's primary export and source of income. Shipments of these goods are conveyed by durge-drawn wagons along the Underground Highway to Cymril, and from there to the rest of the Seven Kingdoms and beyond. Other exports include gems, minerals, mushrooms, fungi, edible roots and tubers, root syrup, and mushroom ale.

## Worldview

Gnomekin mark the Ur and their allies as enemies, and have good reason to be wary of the Satada and Subterranooids. They enjoy excellent relations with the other member states of the Seven Kingdoms, but otherwise have few contacts with other countries.



The extraordinarily sharp crystalblade, pictured above, is a traditional weapon of the Gnomekin.

## Gnomekin Settlements


### Subterranean City of Durne

The Gnomekin have but a single settlement, the subterranean city of Durne. Constructed some two hundred feet below ground, the settlement consists of numerous moss-lined cave dwellings, pools, and grottoes, connected by a complex maze of tunnels. Large caverns are used for the growing of mushrooms and tubers, underground lakes serving as hatcheries for several species of subterranean fish and molluscs. The Gnomekin also grow amber crystals, raw materials useful in the making of magical orbs and scrying devices.


### Places of Note

#### The Underground Highway

The Underground Highway is a vast network of tunnels, subterranean rivers, and passageways that extends throughout the continent of Talislanta. The section connecting the city of Durne to Cymril is suitable for use by wagons and mounts, has been used as a major trade route for over two hundred years. This passage intersects with two other serviceable roadways, one leading to Vardune and Taz, and the other to Sindar, Kashmir, and Astar. The Highway is by no means uniform in construction or design. Some of the tunnels are barely five feet in diameter; others are wide enough to allow passage of a land ark. Some run at a consistent depth for miles on end, while others run uphill and down, winding like serpents through the subterranean depths.

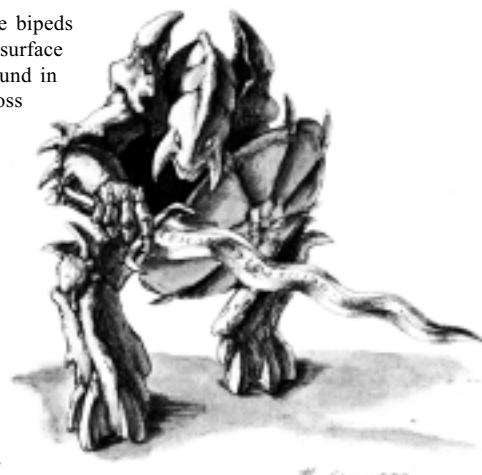
	<b>GNOMEKIN CRYSTALOMANCERS</b>		<p><i>"Terra's seed is within this crystal. It will nurture you to health again."</i></p> <p><i>You feel the presence of your goddess within the crystals of your homeland. Under the phosphorescence of the cavern fungi, emerald is the green of your mother's eyes, and amber is the gold of the lesser sun setting. Crystal is to be nurtured, honored, shaped, and put to use. Perhaps more than mollusk, mushroom or tuber, it is crystal that sustains your people. Certainly, your craft has helped the Gnomekin emerge as a true partner in the Seven Kingdoms. Your crystals now aid in powering the Cymrilian windships and their other magics. The Sindarans covet your wares for their alchemy, the Kashmirans for their traps, and the Thralls respect the keen edge of the crystalblade. You are happy to share with these, your friends and neighbors, although you are uncertain how to acknowledge their gratitude and praise. The suns have not shone upon you so brightly for long generations. It is a curious experience, to be noticed so, and you take care to bring no shame upon your family and monarchs. You are generous in trade, courteous in greeting, respectful of customs, and amiable with everyone you meet. Above all, you are excited by everything new you encounter, as surprising as the ever-shifting sparkle of diamond, as familiar as the presence of Terra.</i></p>
	INT +2      STR 0      CR 0 PER 0      DEX +4      MR +4 WIL 0      CON +6      HP 26 CHA +2      SPD 0		
<b>Equipment:</b> Cloak, knee-length smock, pouch with assorted crystals for spell-casting and for sale, amber cusps, flask of mushroom ale.  <b>Wealth:</b> 100 gold lumens in crystals and gold pentacles.	<b>Homeland:</b> Durne  <b>Physical Characteristics:</b> 2'10"-3'6", 60-100 lbs. Nut-brown complexion, wide green eyes, childlike features, muscular physique, crest of soft black fur from center of forehead to small of back.  <b>Special Abilities:</b> Night vision; natural climbing ability (+5); poor vision in sunlight (PER -3) without amber cusps.	Elemental Magic –      Appraiser – Crystal +5 Crystalomancy      Merchant +4 Six Modes              Geography +6 of choice +4            Climbing +1 Agriculture –          Durnese, native Crystal +4              Low Talislan, fluent Artificer +4	



	<b>GNOMEKIN PROTECTOR</b>		<p><i>"Pardon for this disturbance, but must ask you to identify yourself and drop the war axe."</i></p> <p><i>You have spent your life traveling the Underground Highway, and much of it is as familiar as your parents and fifteen siblings. Other sections are foreign to your people, and it has been your task to explore and map them. Two generations ago, even, your people had no need for these maps, as you rarely traveled beyond Durne. But the Subterranoïds have emerged from your dark legends, and the Satada have migrated westward. Beyond those threats, the Highway is crucial to the Seven Kingdoms, and the Queen sends caravans weekly these years. You have emerged from a long slumber back into the light of history, and that light, as the glare of the two suns, blinds you. Yet, just as you wear cusps to shade your eyes from the suns, you wear your faith in Terra and in yourself to shield against fear of your people's rising status. To meet this fear, you travel in the world above to find your place among the other humanoid peoples. Their beds are never as comfortable as the moss of your nook, they know nothing of cooking fungi, and they have little sense of modesty. There is good in almost all of them, though, and you probe gently to locate this hand of Terra upon their souls. You are a part of their world, now, and you are, quietly, proud to be Gnomekin.</i></p>
	INT 0      STR +1      CR +4 PER +1      DEX +4      MR 0 WIL 0      CON +6      HP 28 CHA +2      SPD 0	<p><b>Homeland:</b> Durne</p> <p><b>Physical Characteristics:</b> 2'10"-3'6", 60-100 lbs. Nut-brown complexion, wide green eyes, childlike features, muscular physique, crest of soft black fur from center of forehead to small of back.</p> <p><b>Special Abilities:</b> Night vision; natural climbing ability (+5); poor vision in sunlight (PER -3) without amber cusps.</p>	
<p><b>Equipment:</b> Scale armor over rough linen tunic, cloak, crystalblade, sling, pouch of twenty stones, four pottery vials of stenchroot sap and/or orange fungus, choice of weapon, amber cusps, flask of mushroom ale.</p> <p><b>Wealth:</b> 50 gold lumens in crystals and gold pentacles.</p>	Crystalblade +4      Geography +5 Sling +4      Guide +5 Weapon of choice +3      Weaponer +4 Evade +4      Armorer +4 Tactics +3      Climbing +3 Scout +5      Durnese, native Cartography +5      Low Talislan, fluent		

## SUBTERRANOÏD

Subterranoïds are massive bipeds who dwell far below the surface of Durne, and may be found in underground regions across Talislanta. Bands of subterranoïds sometimes tunnel up from the depths to prey on Gnomekin settlements, or to ambush travelers along the Underground Highway. In combat, subterranoïds wield strange looking swords made of an unbreakable black metal. Despite numerous attempts, Talislantan metallurgists have as yet been unable to identify this substance. Almost nothing is known of the subterranoïd's lifestyle, habits, or customs, though it has been observed that these creatures are unaffected by heat or flame. Able to see in total darkness, they are sensitive to strong light, which causes them pain.



Size: 6'-7', 300-400+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT -2    PER +1    WIL +4    CHA -5

STR +5    DEX -2    CON +5    SPD -2

Ability Level: 6-15

Attacks/Damage: Tusks: DR 9, or Sword: DR 15

Special Abilities: Immune to heat and fire, see in darkness, -5 to all Action Table rolls in strong light

Armor: Exoskeletal plates, PR 6

Hit Points: 34

## SCARLET SPOROZOID

The scarlet sporozoid is a blood-red variety of mushroom found only in dark, damp environs such as swamps, ancient crypts, and the subterranean tunnels around Durne and other regions. If disturbed or approached carelessly, the fungus will expel a cloud of crimson spores. Each of these tiny spores is a living, feeding organism that will greedily devour organic substances of any sort, including hide, flesh, and even bone. The spores feed continuously until the unfortunate victim is dead, at which time new scarlet sporozoids begin growing from the unwitting host's corpse.

Fire will kill a sporozoid or its malignant spores, though a medicinal purge is the preferred treatment for victims of a sporozoid attack. Radiant magical light, cast directly upon a scarlet sporozoid, will render it temporarily unable to expel its deadly spores.

Size: 2"-12," 1-6 oz.

Attributes: All negligible

Ability Level: 1

Attacks/Damage: Spores: DR 4 per round

Special Abilities: Rendered impotent by radiant light, spores harmed only by fire/acid/anti-parasitic purge

Armor: None

Hit Points: 1 (mushroom)



# THE KINGDOM OF KASMIIR

Kasmir is an arid region bordered to the south by the Jaspur Mountains and to the east by the Wilderlands of Zaran. A barren land swept by sandstorms throughout much of the year, Kasmir presents a terrain of ever-shifting proportions, its dunes swelling or receding according to the prevailing winds. By day the twin suns beat down upon the desert sands without surcease; by night, the temperature drops, and an icy chill descends across the desert. The harsh environs are home to a desert people known as the Kasmirans.

## THE KASMIRANS

The Kasmirans are short and lean with odd-looking, shriveled features. They dress in hooded cloaks, loose robes, and curl-toed boots or slippers, apparel well-suited to the extremes of their environment.

### Ancestry

Originally a nomadic folk displaced by The Great Disaster, the Kasmirans are a wealthy people, though how they acquired their fortune is unknown; some say they were once partners of the Djaffir. They established settlements in the Kasmir desert around the beginning of the second century.

### Society

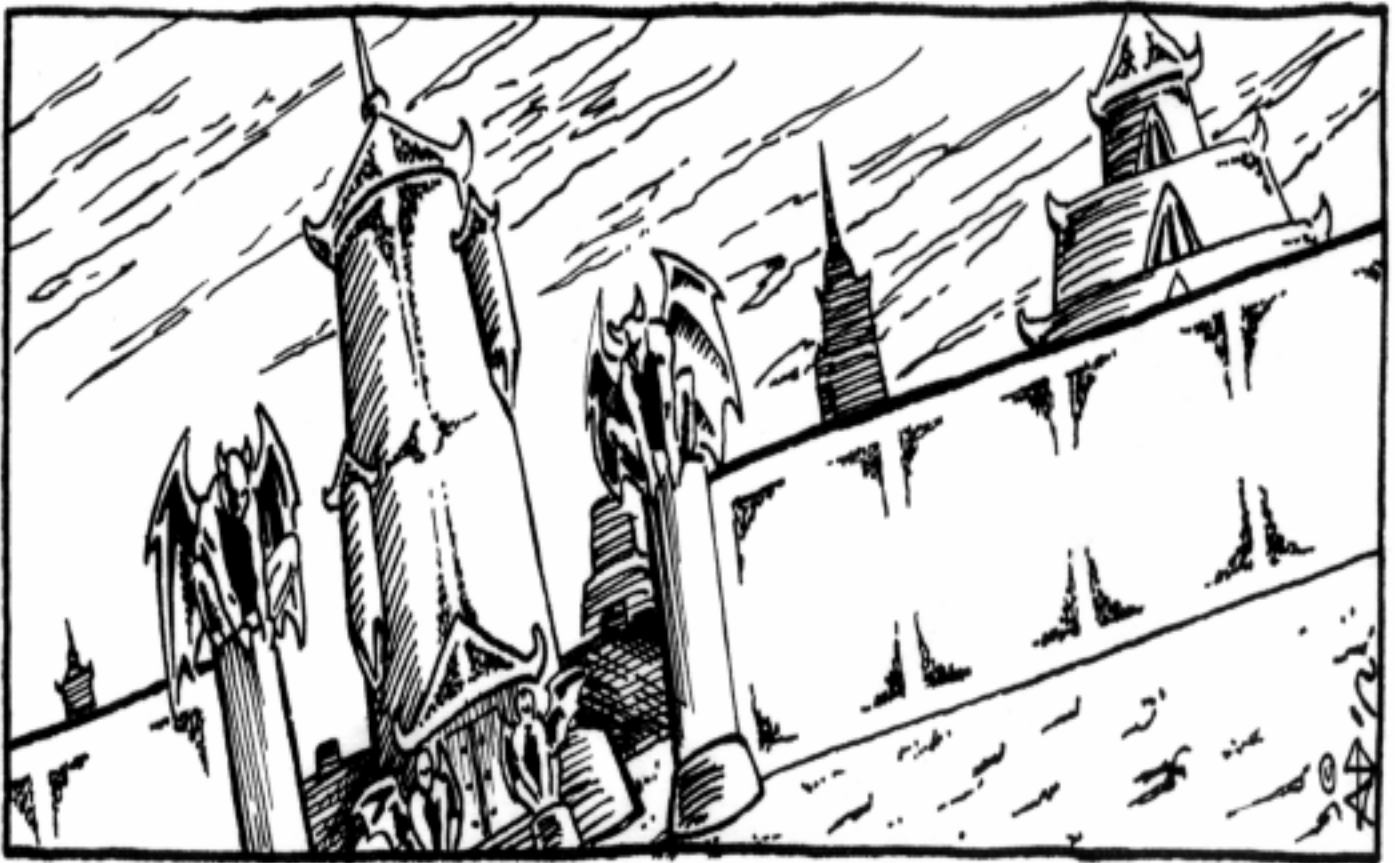
Kasmirans live in windowless stone towers, their doors barred and locked to protect against thieves. Spy-tubes are used to scan the surroundings before allowing any visitor to enter. They subsist on a

simple diet of coarse black bread, desert palm fruit, a type of hard erd's cheese called kasmara, and cups of steaming-hot mochan. Kasmiran families are insular by nature and suspicious of outsiders. Only members of the same family and ancestral clan truly are trusted; a Kasmiran's lineage is evident in his or her name, which among Kasmirans serves as an individual's references (see Language). Cooperative endeavors with other families can be achieved, though usually only through protracted negotiations. Kasmirans marry late in life, and never divorce. No marriage is allowed to take place without the permission of both families. The husband is the nominal head of the household, though a wife who earns more than her husband may surpass him in influence. Children are raised by the parents until age three, when they are sent to a guildschool to learn a profession.

### Customs

The Kasmirans are renowned throughout the continent as misers, and as crafty negotiators. The Djaffir merchant tribes, who still do business with the Kasmirans from time to time, commonly refer to them as tu-beshal, which means "blood-suckers," though the term carries certain lewd connotations as well. In truth, the Kasmirans are not cheap or stingy; they are just extremely frugal (see sidebar). This is an old habit acquired from the days when the ancestors of the Kasmirans were poor desert nomads, homeless and destitute. In order to ensure that such an occurrence could ever happen again, Kasmirans made it a practice to save and safeguard their money, which they keep in personal vaults warded with multiple locks and trap-mechanisms.

In many ways, Kasmirans are different from the other mercantile peoples of Talislanta. Unlike the Ispasians, Kasmirans are hard-working folk who are not afraid to get their hands dirty. They tend to be fiscally conservative, and don't like to invest in large scale commodities or risky ventures. Unlike the Farad, Kasmirans never deal in drugs, stolen goods, or dangerous contraband. Though they can be shrewd and crafty, most



Kasmirans are scrupulously honest, and are sticklers for detail; their contracts are interpreted exactly, to the letter. Still, it is wise to read the fine print before signing a contract with a Kasmiran, in order to avoid the possibility of unpleasant surprises.

## Government

The ruler of these people, known simply as the King or Queen of Kasmir, is elected by a form of popular vote. However, only the heads of the one hundred most influential families are allowed to cast ballots. The King or Queen is allowed to remain in office only so long as the wealthy Kasmiran moneylenders feel he or she is effectively representing their best interests. Any ruler who fails to live up to their expectations is quickly replaced. In Kasmir, individuals accused of a criminal act have the right to obtain legal counsel, at their expense. Reneging on a contract is a very serious offense, punishable by fines, reparations, and/or imprisonment. Kasmirans employ mercenaries to collect on bad debts, and in extreme cases, may even hire Arimite Revenants to find those who flee in order to escape their responsibilities.

## Magic & Religion

A small percentage of the Kasmiran population practices magic, mainly for its financial benefits. Kasmirans are atheists; they have no religion, and revere no deities. Some say that the ancestors of the Kasmirans abandoned their god after The Great Disaster, believing that he had forsaken them. Kasmirians bury the dead along with a portion of their wealth in locked stone vaults warded with traps of many sorts. The buried wealth is considered an investment, and a hedge against inflation or other financial calamities. The traps are a necessary safeguard against tomb-robbers.

## The Arts

Kasmirans practice few crafts that do not have some immediate practical value. Most feel that their time is best spent at work. The Kasmirans have no known musical tradition.

## Language

Kasmirans are fluent in Low Talislan and the old Nomad tongue. Kasmiran names are a combination of personal (first) name, family name, and ancestral clan name. For example, Azi al Din means “Azi of the al family, of the Din tribe.” Other common names include Abn na Fal, Abas el Adin, Kafa da Nir, and so on.

## Defenses

Kasmir has no army of its own, but is protected by a mercenary force comprised mainly of Thrall mangonel lizard cavalry and Blue Aeriad scouts. Most of these troops are stationed in fortified barracks facilities located within a few miles of the eastern border of Kasmir. Though the country as a whole has no organized system of fortifications, even the lowliest Kasmiran tower-dwelling is like a fortress, capable of withstanding a small siege force for several days.

## Commerce

Money-lending is the business of the kingdom, and Kasmir’s money-lenders, appraisers, and auditors are unexcelled in their respective crafts. They finance caravans, buy and sell quantities of trade goods, and lend money to fund small-to-medium-sized ventures of many different sorts — but only after careful scrutiny and negotiation of contracts. Money changers are available in any Kasmiran settlement, and will gladly convert foreign currencies at current rates of exchange in return for a fee of just one percent. Kasmir is also known for its artificers, who create intricate mechanisms such as puzzle locks, security devices, and clock-work devices of superior quality. Their services are in demand throughout the continent of Talislanta.

## Worldview

Kasmirans are concerned about the wild tribes that inhabit the territories on Kasmir’s eastern border and beyond. Some believe that the Borderlands Legion could not repulse a large-scale assault, and that the three border outposts provide insufficient protection for their country. Accordingly, the King of Kasmir has recommended that funds be raised for the construction of a so-called Wilderlands Wall, which would extend from Sindar to the southern border of Astar. The project would cost millions of gold lumens, however, and some Kasmirans have already begun to grumble about having to bear such an expense.

## Kasmiran Settlements

### City of Kasmir

The walled city of Kasmir serves as the country’s capital, and as an important center for commercial and financial ventures of all sorts. Built on the ruins of a forgotten citystate, the city is a collection of windowless stone towers arranged in haphazard fashion, their doors barred and locked against thieves. The streets are little more than alleys, running in every direction at odd angles. Mercenary Thralls patrol the city and guard the main gates.

### Kasir

West of the capital lies the wealthy Kasmir settlement of Kasir, notable for its artificers, who are considered unsurpassed in skill. Kasir is also a regular stopping point for caravans traveling the Seven Roads. The settlement resembles a smaller version of the capital.



## Kasmiran Etiquette

The Kasmirans observe a great number of ancient traditions, some of which may seem strange and even bizarre to outsiders. When in the company of these folk, outsiders would do well to familiarize themselves with certain important rules of etiquette, which may be expressed as follows:

If you are invited into a Kasmiran’s home, knock once on the door and wait patiently for a response. This may take several minutes, as it is likely that your host will first scrutinize you thoroughly through a combination of peepholes and spy-tubes. Do not take offense; this is the usual custom among all Kasmirans. When all locks have been undone, you may enter your host’s home. Again, be patient, as this may take a few moments. Visitors to a Kasmiran abode are expected to sit on the floor, as the Kasmir do themselves. A rug or mat will always be provided for this purpose; take care not to wipe your feet on it when you enter, as this is regarded as a great insult. Your host will offer one or more cushions for you to lean upon. Take it with your thanks; such perquisites come free of charge. If a Kasmiran host offers you more than one cushion it is a sign that he or she regards you as a “valued customer” – in Kasmiran terms, one with whom the host hopes to do business.

While visiting with your host never request food or drink unless it is offered to you. To make such a request is considered poor manners; what if the Kasmiran has only enough food and drink for himself? Should refreshments be offered, the polite response is to offer monetary compensation to your host.

The host should take only enough to pay the cost of purchasing, transporting, storing, cooking, and serving the food – any more than this would be impolite. Do not complain about the lack of light inside a Kasmiran abode. For economic reasons, Kasmirans rarely use more than a single candle or small lantern to illuminate a room. This may do little to dispel the gloom, for the typical Kasmiran abode has no windows. However, keep in mind that the lack of windows is due to the Kasmiran fear of thieves, and complaints associated with this subject may reflect poorly upon your own intentions.

"Certainly, I can disarm the spring-needle in that lock. For a price."

Your family, one of the eleven clans of the Barred Tower of Kasir, has constructed mechanisms for the protection of valuables since the nomadic years. It has improved its proficiency in every generation through your own. Across the continent, the engraved emblem of your clan has turned away thieves – the devices you leave unmarked have had more direct results. Even the Yassan respect your craft sufficiently to accuse you of stealing their secrets. Outsiders refer to you as a "trapmage." They do not understand the subtleties of your profession nor the extent of your expertise. You are a wizard, yes, and an artificer of mechanical surprises. You are also a locksmith and an engineer, a person of business and of politics. Litigation, as well, is a mechanism you master, and you enjoy the artful sparring of words with its layered deceptions. On occasion, when your observations have detected defects in security, you are as much the collector as any Sindaran. Your own subject of acquisition is money, and you protect it not only from theft but from waste. Away from Kasmir, when business calls, you are sickened by the indulgence of other peoples and disturbed by the rampant invitations to theft. Windows, indeed. On the back of the lumen, you have found that you get the best of any deal with a foreigner. Yes, you do find the benefits of travelling.

### KASMIRAN TRAPMAGE

INT +3	STR -1	CR 0
PER 0	DEX +3	MR +3
WIL +1	CON 0	HP 19
CHA -1	SPD -1	

**Homeland:** Kasmir  
**Physical Characteristics:** 4'6"-5', 70-110 lbs. Mahogany brown skin, shriveled features, hunched posture.  
**Special Abilities:** None.

Cryptomancy Five Modes of choice +3	Engineer - Security structures +6
Spring-knife +3	Merchant +6
Blade-staff +3	Litigator +3
Locks +6	Stealth +1
Traps +10	Low Talislan, native
Artificer - Security devices +6	Nomadic, native



**Equipment:** Hooded cloak, loose robe, curl-toed boots, slippers, concealed coin purses, heavy brass key-ring affixed to belt via chain, spring-knife with pouch of six blades, blade-staff, assorted trap- and locksmith tools, locking iron-bound spell book and ledger.  
**Wealth:** 1,000 gold lumens (hidden in vaults).

The Djaffir call you tu-beshal, "blood-suckers." They never understood you, even in the old days. They enjoy a life of risk; you are a people of caution. They play loose with the laws of other peoples; you are meticulous about following a contract to the letter. That is the way things are done in Kasmir. It doesn't bother you that you are regarded as a miser. It is the highest compliment that a business acquaintance could give. It means you are good at what you do. You protect your family's fortune. You tend to it, as one tends to the sick or to a cherished desert palm. You help it to grow, and you are both stronger for it.

### KASMIRAN MONEYLENDER

INT +2	STR -1	CR +1
PER 0	DEX +2	MR +1
WIL +2	CON 0	HP 19
CHA -1	SPD 0	

**Homeland:** Kasmir  
**Physical Characteristics:** 4'6"-5', 70-110 lbs. Mahogany brown skin, shriveled features, hunched posture.  
**Special Abilities:** None.



**Equipment:** Hooded cloak, loose robe, curl-toed boots, slippers, concealed coin purses, heavy brass key-ring affixed to belt via chain, spring-knife with pouch of six blades, blade-staff, locksmith's tools, locking iron-bound ledger.  
**Wealth:** 2,000 gold lumens (hidden in vaults).

#### Sample NPC

Even by Kasmiran standards, Kado al Nar is considered a recluse. Among the wealthiest money lenders in the city of Kasir, the elderly Kasmiran lives alone in a fortified tower, shut off from all outsiders. Once each day his armed guards come to bring him food and drink, which they pass through a slot in the door. In return, they receive the daily list of instructions, which they deliver to Kado's subordinates and business associates. Despite considerable speculation among his rivals, the reason for Kado's peculiar behavior is not known.

Spring-knife +4	Locks +4
Blade-staff +4	Traps +4
Moneylender +8	Administrator +3
Merchant +7	Low Talislan, native
Litigator +4	Nomadic, native

## LAND KRA



Land kra are a species of giant, segmented eels related to the ocean dwelling kra (see The Southern Rim, Imria). A full grown specimen may exceed forty feet in length, and can weigh as much as five tons. Land kra are burrowers, using their powerful jaws to tear their way through rock, soils, and sand. In desert regions such as Kasmir, these creatures can sometimes be spotted by the long “wyrrm-trails” that they leave in their wake. Otherwise, a land kra may inhabit an underground region for decades, or even centuries, without ever being seen by the inhabitants of the upper realms.

Land kra normally prey upon other subterranean creatures, but will come to the surface when such food is scarce. Like the aquatic species, land kra are blind, sensing prey by vibration.

Size: 20'-50'; 4,000-10,000 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -9 PER +2 WIL +7 STR +12 DEX -4 CON +8 SPD +2

Level: 5-20

Attacks/Damage: Bite: DR 20

Special Abilities: Burrowing

Armor: Segmented plates, PR 5

Hit Points: 40 +1 per foot

## DESERT PALM

The common desert palm is native to such arid lands as Kasmir, Djaffa, Faradun, Rajanistan and Carantheum. The tree is exceptionally hardy, and can thrive in regions where there is little rain or ground water. A layer of spiny, overlapping plates covers the entire length of its trunk, conferring protection from the claws and teeth of grazing herbivores. The spiny plates also make it difficult to climb the tree, particularly as regards novice climbers. Desert palms are valued for their meaty fruit, which may be eaten fresh or preserved by drying. A single oasis may support up to 20 of these valuable trees.

# THE KINGDOM OF SINDAR

Sindar is a land of towering mesas, arches, and strange configurations of time-worn stone. Underground springs and geysers are the only sources of water in this region, which is bordered to the east by the barren canyons of the Dead River. A branch of the Seven Roads follows a winding route through deep ravines and outcroppings of weathered stone to the settlement of Nankar, where there is a bridge that provides access to the Wilderlands of Zaran. Here live a curious people known as the Sindarans.

## THE SINDARANS

Sindarans bear little resemblance to any other humanoid species native to the continent. They stand over seven feet in height, emaciated in build, with wrinkled, sandy-colored skin. All Sindarans have a row of horn-like nodules running from the crown of the head to the back of the neck, and a curved spur of cartilage protruding from beneath the chin. They dress in cloaks, loincloths, and sandals, with earrings, wrist bracers, and ankle bracers for decoration for both genders. Sindarans are dual-encephalons; they have two brains, each capable of independent function.

### Ancestry

The Sindarans are descended from the Neurians, a race that is alien to Talislanta and originated from another world or dimension. Long ago a Neurian vessel accidentally arrived in Talislanta, possibly through a gate or rift created by the sorcerers of ancient Archaeus. Stranded in a strange world, the Neurians settled on a distant continent, where they lived until the coming of The Great Disaster. They attempted to escape the destruction of their adopted homeland in a great sky-spanning ark, but met with disaster and crash-landed on the continent of Talislanta. After a period of wandering the survivors settled in their current home, where they became known as the Sindarans.

### Society

Sindarans live in mesa-top communes composed of elegant tiered structures, each built around a structure of carved stone blocks and hardwoods imported from Vardune and Taz. Gossamer curtains, dyed various shades of orange and burnt umber, serve as the walls of the Sindarans' pavilions, and provide a measure of privacy while retaining a feeling of wide-open spaces. Communication between Sindaran communes is made possible by means of large reflective crystals, which are mounted on tripods and used to flash coded messages from one outpost to the next.

Sindarans choose their mates on the basis of intellect; intelligence is a measure of “beauty” to these folk. They wed in a simple ceremony, the two vowing to remain both together and separate; the essence of dual-encephaly. Both the male and female share all responsibilities of the household and family. Sindaran young measure over three feet tall at birth, and are so thin as to nearly be translucent. With the exception of newborn Kasmirans (who are as shriveled and wrinkled as adult Kasmirans), Sindaran young are arguably among the least attractive babies of any humanoid species. Fortunately, this is not a factor as regards the parents, who lavish considerable attention and affection upon their children.

## The Collectors

Of great importance to every Sindaran is his or her collection.

Indeed, to the Sindarans collecting is not simply a hobby, or even an obsession. It is a means of personal expression, and of developing those virtues held in the highest regard by the Sindaran people: pandidactism, persistence, and patience.

Before obtaining a single collectible the neophyte collector may spend months or even years researching numerous fields of study, ranging from naturalism to numismatics, cosmology, metaphysics, linguistics, antiquities, and so forth. After much study the aspiring collector will eventually settle upon a single field of study, and choose a specialty within his or her chosen field. Once the specialty has been chosen, the collector will begin a second period of research, intended to uncover all available information on the subject.

During this phase a Sindaran may spend many months scouring libraries and archives throughout Sindar, sometimes even traveling to foreign lands.

Once a collection is begun, the collector will never be completely satisfied until it is complete in every detail. This does not mean that a collector must personally acquire every single object or artifact that falls within his or her specialty.

Rather, completion can be achieved as long as the collector has located and at least studied every item relevant to his or her collection. To Sindarans, material acquisition is not as important as intellectual acquisition. In fact, completing a collection is a rare thing indeed. Many collections are works in progress, handed down from one generation to another. Happy is the day when a Sindaran completes such a collection, fulfilling his or her personal goals and the aspirations of his or her ancestors as well.

Another rationale for the Sindarans' interest in collecting may also exist. No less a personage than the naturalist Thystram speculated that the Sindarans collect things because they are searching for fragments, traces, or clues to the location of the Neurian ark that crashed somewhere in Talislanta during The Great Disaster. Thystram believed that this ship may well contain lost secrets that would allow the Sindarans to return to their homeworld.

Sindarans subsist on a diet of vegetables and tubers, supplemented by certain powdered minerals and crystals. These substances are required to meet Sindaran nutritional needs, which are different than those of native Talislantans. Skoryx, a potent liquor of rare qualities and multiple taste sensations, is a favorite drink.

## Customs

Sindaran culture is influenced by the concept of Duality, or the attraction of opposites. The ability of Sindarans to follow two lines of thought simultaneously is both alien and somewhat disconcerting to most Talislantans. Further complicating matters is the propensity of Sindarans to argue both points of any issue before arriving at a single decision. Sindarans may lose their dual-encephalic abilities through accident, injury, or attempting to practice magic. Individuals who have suffered such a fate often become irrational and unpredictable, and are called "Sindra," a respectful yet condescending term meaning "demented one."

Sindarans have two passions: trivarian and collecting. Trivarian is a test of skill that requires an exceptional degree of intellect and abstract reasoning, and is virtually impossible for anyone but dual-encephalons to comprehend. Sindarans say that it is inaccurate to refer to trivarian as a "game," as it is much more than that. The physical components of trivarian include a pyramid-shaped crystal, which is suspended above a table. Orbs of colored crystal, engraved with complex symbology, are inserted into various slots in the pyramid, producing patterns of colored light which have great significance to the contestants. Trivarian tournaments are held throughout Sindar, and are considered events of great importance by the Sindarans. Wagering is popular, the odds often wildly fluctuating with each turn.

Second only to trivarian is collecting (see sidebar). Sindaran collectors are completists who find it difficult to resist indulging in their obsession. One should never touch a collector's cherished wares unless specifically invited to do so, as this may be construed by a Sindaran as attempted theft.

## Government

Every third year, a five-day trivarian tournament is held to determine the best player in the land. The victor assumes the rulership of the kingdom, and the title of Nadir Absolute. Sindarans of successively lower trivarian rank serve as governors of the settlements, advisors, or magistrates. Sindaran law guarantees the right to a fair trial. Sindaran litigators are the most skilled in Talislanta. Trials are presided over by a pair of Sindaran Magistrates, and are exceedingly long affairs – the opposing counsels are likely to present the "pros" and "cons" not only of their own side, but also of the opposing side.

## Magic & Religion

Sindarans revere a deity similar in some respects to the Talislantan Creator, but known to Sindarans as "The Duality," signifying the joining of mind and spirit. Sindarans relate the "heavens" to the stars, where they believe their lost home world can be found. Sindarans do not bury their dead. Instead, following a short ceremony, the body of the deceased is disposed of by dissolution in alchahest, leaving not so much as a trace.

## The Arts

Sindarans possess some talent for metallurgy, creating decorative jewelry and other items of silver, a metal found in quantity in Sindar. Sindaran metalwork is exceptionally well-crafted, and of strange, though by no means unattractive, design. Sindarans have no musical tradition of their own, but have a great appreciation for music of all sorts, particularly the complex music of the Bodor.

## Language

Sindarans are fluent in both High and Low Talislan, and frequently combine elements of both dialects in order to express contrasting concepts. They tend to be verbose, and are partial to the use of multi-syllabic words. If given the opportunity, a Sindaran can go on for hours about almost any subject. Sindaran nomenclature is based on gender, "personal" name, and family name. Common personal names for males include Taj, Nas, Dar, Naj; female personal names are similar, but end in an "i," as in Taji, Nasi, Dari, Neji. Family names are the same for both sexes. The most common include Modan, Nadar, Motas, Najar, and Narune.

## Defenses

A folk enamored of subtlety and intrigue, Sindarans prefer to disguise the defensive capabilities of their mesa-top settlements. Popular tactics and devices include concealed weapons that can be employed versus airborne attack, and the use of secret tunnels, through which Sindaran defenders can launch surprise counter-attacks upon would-be invaders. Sindaran militias patrol the territories around their settlements on foot and in light windskiffs, which they obtain from Cymril.

## Commerce

Sindarans produce silver, which is sold in ten-pound ingots or worked into various decorative and useful goods. They also make and sell many different types of alchemical mixtures, medicines, and remedies. Most Sindaran wares are shipped to Cymril for sale throughout the Seven Kingdoms and elsewhere, though considerable savings can be had by purchasing direct from the Sindarans themselves.

## Worldview

The Sindarans play an important role in formulating policy for the Seven Kingdoms, but prefer to keep a low profile as pertains to relations with foreign lands. Sindarans have interests apart from those of the confederation, but in diplomatic matters they generally abide by the decisions of the Council of Seven Kings – after first presenting their own views in detail, of course.



## Sindaran Settlements

### Nankar

The largest Sindaran settlement, Nankar is the capital of Sindar. Several Sindaran institutes of learning are located here, attracting scholars with an interest in alchemy and metaphysics. The settlement is accessible via winch-platform from the southwest, and from the northeast via the Bridge at Nankar, which spans the Dead River chasm and leads to a branch of the old Wilderlands Road.

### Nadir

Nadir is home to many of the Sindar's foremost Trivarian players, who are also known as "nadirs"; the term refers to the base of the pyramid-shaped "board" on which trivarian is played, a position over which only the most skillful players can attain mastery. Built atop a mound of stone two hundred feet in height, the settlement is favored for its cool breezes and splendid view. A natural geyser provides abundant water for the inhabitants.

### Sahar

Sahar is little more than an outpost, famed only for the moonstones found in the nearby canyons. Unfortunately, chasm vipers, satada and the fearsome opteryx also dwell among the ravines.



### SINDARAN COLLECTOR

INT +8	STR -1	CR +2
PER 0	DEX 0	MR -5
WIL +4	CON 0	HP 18
CHA 0	SPD 0	

*"It is relevant to our situation that my predilection towards acquiring obsidian sculptures has imparted knowledge of fracture patterns among... 'Get to the point,' you request? Certainly. I believe that the columns directly above you will soon collapse under the weight of the ceiling."*

#### Homeland: Sindar

**Physical Characteristics:** 7'-7'4", 180-220 lbs. Rough, sandy-hued skin, emaciated build, row of horn-like nodules running from crown of head to back of neck, curved spur of cartilage protruding beneath chin.

**Special Abilities:** Dual-Encephalon.

*There are two aspects to your identity that account for an expansive percentage of your temperament: you are a dual-encephalon, and you are a collector. The former quality provides intellectual capacities that demarcate you from other sentient beings; you have found that you pity mono-encephalons for their mental impediment and for their compulsion to sleep, although you have admiration for what they accomplish with such sparse resources. The latter quality defines your objectives in this existence, more so than any supposed profession. Alchemy, artisanship, administration – these are menial talents practiced to meet physical and biological necessities. Political maneuvering, military strategy, and scholarship may offer significant challenges, but the veracity of the matter is that such professions are vehicles for the process of acquisition. Your own preoccupation has consumed your meditations from your earliest memories of childhood within the umber pavilion of your parents. You have other passions: drinking skoryx stimulates the senses, and mastering Trivarian is a process that reflects your lifelong cerebral development. Yet your collection is what propels you repeatedly towards obscure locations with companions who will never entirely comprehend your musings and fixations. Conversely, you have discovered no valid justification not to edify them further, despite their protestations.*

**Equipment:** Cloak, loincloth (males) or caftan (females), sandals, silver earrings and necklace, wrist and ankle bracers, bandoleer pouches with ten amberglass vials of various powders, rod of alchemy (projects vials of powder), Trivarian game, collection, flask of skoryx, alchemical apparatus, assorted tomes.

**Wealth:** 1,000 gold lumens in assorted currencies and collectibles.

Rod of Alchemy +4  
Collector +4  
Alchemy +3  
Five Scholar Skills of choice +3  
Two Trade Skills of choice +3

Brewer/Vintner – Skoryx +2  
Trivarian +1  
High Talislan, native  
Low Talislan, native

*"A being of your nature may conceive that one has the capacity to commit such a crime without detection and retribution. Yet, only one who exhibits the thought capacity of a durge would believe so."*

*You are of the most intelligent species living on Talislanta, and your profession is to penetrate mysteries; no being could be more suited to one's task in life. Since your skin was still translucent, you have been drawn to puzzles, and your toys as a small child would confound most other beings. Before you had attained the age of ten years, you had come to the conclusion that you would train with the Order of Mesa Security at its primary facilities at Nankar. Under the tutelage of four successive Effectuator Nadirs, you have developed proficiency sufficient to predict before they occur infractions of public ordinances. More difficult, typically, is resisting the desire to advance your collection at the expense of your investigations; primary among the lessons taught to students of the Order is the ability to resist the inevitable attempts at bribery along this tangent. You presently pursue enigmas to which you are unaccustomed – the veracity of pseudo-historical mythologies among the other humanoid populations, perhaps, or the current locales of artifacts from Ages prior to the Great Disaster. You are confident that you will discover mysteries that will astound even one such as yourself, and equally certain that few things you encounter will exceed your powers of comprehension.*

### SINDARAN EFFECTUATORS

INT +8	STR -1	CR +2
PER +2	DEX 0	MR -5
WIL +4	CON 0	HP 18
CHA 0	SPD 0	

**Homeland:** Sindar

**Physical Characteristics:** 7'-7'4", 180-220 lbs. Rough, sandy-hued skin, emaciated build, row of horn-like nodules running from crown of head to back of neck, curved spur of cartilage protruding beneath chin.

**Special Abilities:** Dual-Encephalon.

Rod of Alchemy +5	Tracking +3
Weapon of choice +3	Pilot – Windskiff +4
Collector +2	Stealth +4
Cryptography +4	Scholar Skill of choice +3
Analysis +4	Trivarian +1
Interrogate +4	High Talislan, native
Litigator +3	Low Talislan, native
Underworld +3	



**Equipment:** Cloak, loincloth (males) or caftan (females), sandals, silver earrings and necklace, wrist and ankle bracers, bandoleer pouches with ten amberglass vials of various powders, rod of alchemy (projects vials of powder), choice of weapon, Trivarian game, collection, flask of skoryx, assorted tomes.

**Wealth:** 1,000 gold lumens in assorted currencies and collectibles.

*You sleep now, and you know what it is to dream. It is a struggle between your two minds; since the accident that injured your sensorium, they function erratically. Now your own kind regard you as one of the "Sindra" – the Demented Ones. They treat you with pity and fear; the former because you have "fallen" to the level of other humanoids; the latter because it reminds them that the same fate may yet befall them. They do not understand the freedom, the rapidity with which you can now make decisions, the emotions that sway you, released from the double-binding logic of your people. Your inability to play Trivarian – that is something to pity. But they cannot imagine what it is to dream.*

### SINDRA "DEMENTED ONE"

INT +4	STR -1	CR +2
PER 0	DEX 0	MR 0
WIL -2	CON 0	HP 18
CHA -1	SPD 0	

**Homeland:** Sindar

**Physical Characteristics:** 7'-7'4", 180-220 lbs. Rough, sandy-hued skin, emaciated build, row of horn-like nodules running from crown of head to back of neck, curved spur of cartilage protruding beneath chin.

**Special Abilities:** No longer Dual-Encephalon; requires sleep; prone to violent mood swings and bouts of dementia.



**Sample NPC**

The Sindra, Dasi Navan, is well-known to Sindarans who live in the mesa-top city of Nankar. She can often be seen wandering the streets at all hours of the day and night, wrapped in a tattered brown shawl, muttering incessantly to herself. Respectful of her condition, most Nankarans ignore her, or nod politely as they continue on their way. Only a few are aware that before her unfortunate accident, Dasi Navan was an expert linguist. In fact, the Sindra speaks no less than eleven ancient and long-dead languages, sometimes switching from one to the other in mid-sentence.

Rod of Alchemy +4	Trade Skill of choice +2
Collector +3	High Talislan, native
Alchemy +2	Low Talislan, native
Two Scholar Skills of choice +2	

**Equipment:** Cloak, loincloth (males) or caftan (females), sandals, silver earrings and necklace, wrist and ankle bracers, bandoleer pouches with ten amberglass vials of various powders, rod of alchemy (projects vials of powder), collection, flask of skoryx, alchemical apparatus, assorted tomes.

**Wealth:** 1,000 gold lumens in assorted currencies and collectibles.

## SATADA

Satada are a race of reptilian predators found in hot and arid regions from Sindar of the Seven Kingdoms to the Red Desert and the Kang Empire. The great range of these intelligent creatures is attributed to the widely held belief that groups of satada regularly traverse the length and breadth of the continent, following the extensive maze of subterranean tunnels known as the Underground Highway. Satada are particularly numerous in Sindar, where they are known to attack travelers headed to and from the Sindarans' mesa settlements. They feed on warm and cold-blooded creatures of most sorts, including humanoid beings. An ancient and malefic race, satada converse in a variation of the Sauran tongue.



Satada employ iron tools and implements of unusual design, including the capture-bow, a heavy and unwieldy weapon resembling an oversized crossbow. The weapon fires a barbed, iron-tipped bolt similar to a harpoon; a rotating spindle wound with a hundred feet of stout whipcord allows the wielder to "reel-in" the unfortunate victim.

Size: 7'-7'6," 300+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT +1 PER +2 WIL +3 CHA -6

STR +4 DEX +2 CON +5 SPD +2

Level: 5-12

Attacks/Damage: Bite or Claws: DR 6, Tail: DR 8 (may be used to simultaneously defend from rear assault), Capture Bow: DR 8, or as per weapon employed

Special Abilities: Capable of speech (dialect of Sauran, possibly other languages), cold inflicts double damage

Armor: Scaly hide, PR 2

Hit Points: 33

## CHASM VIPER

Chasm vipers are metallic-scaled serpents indigenous to the canyons of Sindar, the Wilderlands, and other arid domains. They are expert rock-climbers and normally prey on small avians and vermin, though they will attack larger creatures if threatened or startled. The venom of the chasm viper is not particularly potent, but it possesses properties that make it useful in the concocting of poison antidotes. For this reason chasm vipers are valued by Sindaran alchemists, though elsewhere the creatures are regarded as vermin and exterminated on sight.



Size: 1'-8", 2-16+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT -7 PER +1 WIL -3 STR -1 DEX +5 CON 0 SPD +3

Ability Level: 4-7

Attacks/Damage: Bite: DR 2, plus DR 2 poison damage

Special Abilities: Poison bite, ability to climb rock surfaces

Armor: Metallic scales, PR 5

Hit Points: 4 +1 per foot

# THE KINGDOM OF TAZ

Taz is a land of heavy jungles to the north and low-lying swamps to the south. It is bordered to the west by the Axis River, and to the east by the forests of Astar. A branch of the Seven Roads winds its way through the jungle, connecting the capital of Tor to the city of Cymril. Virulent species of plants and animals — such as mantrap, alatus, aramatus, and bog devils — haunt this region, which is home to a warrior-race known as the Thralls.

## THE THRALLS

Thralls are uniformly tall and muscular of build. Hairless and devoid of pigmentation, they are distinguishable only by sex; otherwise, all Thralls look exactly alike. In defiance of this inbred genetic trait, Thralls decorate their bodies from head to toe with elaborate tattoos, thereby attaining some degree of individuality. Males dress in sandals and loincloths; females in vest, loincloth, and sandals.

### Ancestry

A hybrid race created long ago by the sorcerers of some ancient and forgotten kingdom, Thralls were bred to serve as an army of slave warriors. After The Great Disaster they were freed from servitude, and spent many years wandering in the Wilderlands of Zaran. They eventually settled in the jungles of Taz, and later joined the Seven Kingdoms confederation.

### Society

The Thralls of Taz live in settlements ringed by high palisade walls constructed of cut stone blocks. Each village is a fortified camp, with sheds for supplies and provisions, stables for mangonel lizard mounts, a foundry for making weapons and armor, and communal barracks. Thrall society is based upon the military chain of command. The family is like a platoon; a settlement comprised of many families operates like a division, while the race of Thralls functions like an army. Males and females form "alliances" rather than marrying, remaining steadfastly loyal to each other until death. Their young are raised in separate training facilities, and learn to fend for themselves quickly (by eight years of age, Thralls are fully-grown). Thrall children remain loyal to their parents throughout their lives, but also forge a strong sense of duty from their common link to the division to which they belong.

### Customs

Bred for combat, Thralls know no other way of life. While their talents are limited to martial abilities, they have developed a unique culture that sets them apart from the other warrior peoples of Talislanta. Unlike the Kang, Thralls excel both at offense and defense, and are never ruled by their passions. Unlike the Danuvians, they have no elite units, and never discriminate on the basis of gender.

Thralls are skilled strategists and careful planners. The chain of command is rigidly adhered to, and their troops are always disciplined and highly motivated. Thrall units are never demoralized or routed; if required to retreat, units always do so in an orderly fashion. Thralls are skilled tacticians who possess an instinctive ability to grasp even the most complex military strategies. Conversely, Thralls have little interest in other skills and professions, which they generally do not comprehend. The highly specialized nature of Thralls has led some folks to assume that they are dull-witted or ignorant. However, it is a grave mistake to underestimate a Thrall.

## Thrall Tattoo Symbology

Thrall tattoos, while colorful in appearance, are not just a form of decoration. Nor are the designs simply a means of instilling a sense of individuality into a race whose members otherwise look exactly alike. Instead, the intricate symbology utilized in Thrall tattoos provides a

virtual record of the wearer's life and history. In order to obtain some idea of how to read Thrall tattoos, one must understand the importance of the tattoo's location, color, and symbolism.

The location of a tattoo determines the general type of information it conveys. For example, the tattoos on a

Thrall's head depict an individual's name, rank, and such personal embellishments as he or she prefers. Name and rank are indited on the forehead, for easy recognition. Promotions and commendations appear along the sides and back of the head. Personal embellishments are primarily decorative in nature, and are located in the areas around the eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, ears, and neck. Place of birth and clan alliance are recorded on the shoulders.

The torso is used to delineate the wearer's lineage: his or her ancestors, their place of origin, and their accomplishments. The individual's own achievements and skills are indited upon the arms, legs, hands, and feet. Colors are used to indicate clan alliance, and to provide more specific information about the wearer. Each clan uses its own color combination, which is incorporated into the traditional shoulder-designs. The use of bright colors make such designations easier to read at a distance. The vertical forehead-designs used to show rank are also based on color: gold is the highest rank, followed by green, violet, blue, orange, red, and white. Color is also used to indicate specific types of battle commendations: green for valorous conduct, blue for tactical expertise, gold for command excellence, etc.

More specific information is contained within the actual symbols used in each tattoo, each of which is an ideogram expressing a word, phrase, or concept. Arranged in a variety of different combinations, the lines, patterns, and geometric shapes used in Thrall symbology convey the entire story of a Thrall's life.

## Government

The Thralls are ruled by an individual known as the Warrior King or Warrior Queen of Taz; essentially, Commander in Chief of the Thralls. The position is open to challenge by duel once every year, with the winner awarded ruling status. The government is organized like a military chain of command, with commanders, sub-commanders, platoon leaders, and soldiers. Military Tribunals handle all legal matters, which are adjudged in the manner of a military court martial. Offenders may be demoted in rank, or in extreme cases, thrown in the brig. Due to the Thralls innate devotion to duty and respect for rank, serious offenses are extremely rare.

## Magic & Religion

Thralls possess no talent whatever for magic. They revere the warrior-spirits of their early ancestors, whose names live on in tales passed from one generation to the next. Thralls have no illusions as to their origins. They know that their race was created by sorcery, rather than some deific being. Thralls cremate their dead in a simple but moving ceremony. To die in battle, defending one's beliefs, is considered the highest honor.

## The Arts

Thralls practice no arts or crafts that are not related to the military, though long ago they adopted the practice of decorating their bodies with tattoos. These markings represent the individual's place of birth, clan affiliation, rank, and achievements, and constitute a great source of pride. Thralls can "read" the tattoos of others of their race, and by doing so, learn much about them without the need for verbal communication (see sidebar). When off duty, Thralls enjoy physical sports such as Tazian wrestling and meleé.

## Language

All Thralls converse in Low Talislan. Despite the stereotype, Thralls do not speak poorly; rather, they speak simply, and often movingly. As befits their culture, Thrall nomenclature is also simple and direct. Short names of one or two syllables are favored, such as Ramm, Axa, Kaz, Taza, and Krin. When one Thrall

is introduced to another, each will include his or her common name, rank, and military unit (as in "Ramm, Artillerist, Borderlands Legion"). This is what Thralls refer to as their "full name".

## Defenses

The Thralls maintain one of the best-trained and most efficient military forces in Talislanta. In essence, the entire adult Thrall population is part of the military. Each unit has its own logistical operations and responsibilities: supply, recon, artillery, the construction and maintenance of fortifications, heavy cavalry, infantry, and so forth. Thrall forces play an integral role in the defense of the Seven Kingdoms, particularly in the Borderlands Legion, which guards the eastern border with the Wilderlands of Zaran.

## Commerce

Taz is mainly self-sufficient, producing most of the equipment and provisions necessary to maintain its populace. When there is a surplus of goods available, Thrall supply units export these wares to Cymril for sale or trade. When provisions run short, they import materials from outside sources. Several of the Seven Kingdom countries hire Thralls units as mercenary defenders, providing an additional source of revenue.

## Worldview

Taz is an active and integral part of the Seven Kingdoms confederation, planning strategies for national defense and helping keep the Seven Roads safe for merchants and travelers. Thralls rarely get involved with foreign relations or diplomatic matters, preferring to leave such concerns to the Cymrilians or other members of the confederation.

## Thrall Settlements

### The Fortress of Tor

A fortified communal complex, Tor serves as the capital of Taz. Situated in the midst of the jungle, the city consists of a number of squat, rectangular structures built of stone blocks, surrounded by double walls and a defensive network of interconnected towers. Mangonel lizards, greymanes and marsh striders are maintained in stables for military use.


### Trang

Located in the eastern jungles on the border with Astar, the fortress city of Trang is built on a hilltop overlooking the border of Astar, to the east. It is accessible via a branch of the Seven Roads and the Underground Highway.

### Targ

The Thrall community of Targ lies on the western fringes of the swamp. Like most Tazian settlements, the city comprises a number of simple stone dwellings set within a walled enclosure.



	<b>THRALL WARRIOR</b>		<p><i>"Enough talk. I will crush the enemy myself."</i></p> <p><i>You are a Thrall, and your life is warfare. It is true that you ache for the sensations of war. That is why your people have chosen Taz for their home. The jungles and swamplands are teeming with such sport as bog devils and aramatus to keep your senses and skills keen. Yet you left the stone barracks of home, a fully grown warrior of eight years, to join the legions of the Seven Kingdoms. For the core desire of a Thrall is to protect your nation and your allies. You've fought in battles and performed with honor. You earned your tattoos for courage and service. You wield the greatsword and the garde with skill and strength. If you consumed a few too many mugs of fire-ale during times of quiet, what of it? New challenges await you now, as a soldier or a mercenary, as the continent grows tense with the drums of war. Others may believe that you lack the wit to feel fear or to mark a true threat, But you understand war better than any of them. You are confident of victory for your people. To you personally, it may bring honor, glory, injury, death. Regardless, the Thralls and the Seven Kingdoms will triumph.</i></p>
	INT -3*      STR +4      CR +6 PER 0        DEX +2      MR -5 WIL +2        CON +4      HP 30 CHA 0        SPD +1	<p><b>Homeland:</b> Taz</p> <p><b>Physical Characteristics:</b> 6'8", 300 lbs. (males); 6'4", 200 lbs. (females); Hairless, devoid of pigmentation, muscular build, all members of each gender are identical in appearance, body covered with elaborate tattoos.</p> <p><b>Special Abilities:</b> Immune to fear (magical and natural); INT +3 for tactical and combat matters and situations; unable to comprehend magic.</p>	
<p><b>Equipment:</b> Loincloth, vest (females), sandals, garde (parrying armor/weapon), greatsword with shoulder sheath, choice of additional weapons, flask of Tazian fire-ale, mangonel lizard or graymane steed.</p> <p><b>Wealth:</b> 50 gold lumens in gold pentacles and assorted currencies.</p>	Tazian Combat +4 Greatsword +4 Four weapons of choice +2 Mounted Combat +3 Tactics +4 Command +2	Guard +4 Weaponer +2 Ride +5 Low Talislan, native Understand Tattoos, native	

## MANGONEL LIZARD

A relative of the land lizard, the mangonel lizard is a denizen of the jungles of Taz and the Borderlands region. Highly aggressive, these creatures have a sinuous tail that terminates in a knob of spiked bone and gristle. The mangonel can use its tail as an effective battering weapon, and so it is shunned by all but the most fierce or desperate predators. Mangonels are herbivorous creatures who generally travel in herds of twenty to eighty animals. Both the males and females will defend their young to the death.



The Thralls of Taz favor mangonel lizards for use as steeds. Though they are difficult to capture and tame, mangonels can be made to serve well in this regard. Their usefulness as steeds depends upon how well the creatures have been trained; a poorly trained mangonel lizard is as much a danger to its rider as it is to any other creature or being.

Size: 8'-10', 2,000-2,800 lbs.  
 Attributes:  
 INT -6    PER -2    WIL +4    STR +8    DEX 0    CON +5    SPD +3  
 Ability Level: 6-10  
 Attacks/Damage: Tail: DR 20, Bite: DR 12  
 Special Abilities: None  
 Armor: Thick hide, PR 3  
 Hit Points: 55

## TAZIAN FLY

This noxious variety of biting insect is native to the jungles of Taz (hence its name), as well as other swamps and jungle regions. The Tazian fly is believed to be a carrier of such virulent diseases as yakuk and the Red Death. Its iridescent wings and bright red coloration make it easy to spot; swarming in hordes ten thousand strong during the spring months, the Tazian fly is less simple to avoid. For some unknown reason, Thralls are rarely bothered by these insects, possibly because Tazian flies find Thralls unpleasant to the taste.



## STRANGLEVINE

Stranglevine is a rugged species of parasitic plant found in Taz and many jungle and forest regions. In its native environment, the plant is difficult to detect, for it intertwines itself in the branches of other trees and shrubs. When an animal or other creature passes within a few feet of a stranglevine, the plant sends forth a whip-like tendril in an attempt to ensnare its prey. If successful, the plant drops more tendrils about its victim, seeking to immobilize and strangle it in its tough, fibrous coils. Only the strongest creatures can hope to break free once entangled in this manner, for the vines are resistant to cutting and, to a lesser extent, burning. The plant's root system is far more vulnerable to damage, though it can be difficult to locate in a crisis.

Stranglevines draw nutrients directly from the decomposing corpses of slain victims, the remains of which often provide a grim clue as to the location of these dangerous plants. A mature stranglevine can have as many as six tendrils; an ancient plant, up to twelve.

Size: 10'-80'+, 1 lb. per ft.  
 Attributes: STR +3, SPD + 1 (all other attributes are negligible)  
 Ability Level: 3-5  
 Attacks/Damage: Constriction: DR 9 per round, one attack per tendril  
 Special Abilities: Limited motility  
 Armor: Tendrils, PR 5; Roots, None  
 Hit Points: Tendrils: 6 points each; Roots: 8

# THE KINGDOM OF VARDUNE

Vardune is a densely forested region bordered to the west by the Axis River, a wide but shallow waterway that can be safely navigated only by flat-bottomed skiffs, barges and small watercraft. Vardune is divided into two great woodlands: Northwood and Southwood. Both regions are covered in verdant foliage, with old-growth forest predominating in the north and cultivated crops and orchards most common in the south. Populated by great flocks of avir, exotic plant species, and wild beasts, the land of Vardune is also home to a semi-avian people known as the Aeriad.

## THE AERIAD

There are two sub-species of Aeriad: Green Aeriad, who seldom exceed five feet in height, and the taller and somewhat more aggressive Blue Aeriad. Both species are slender and frail in stature, and have skin that glistens with a metallic sheen. A crested cox-comb of feathers adds to the distinctive appearance of these folk. By contrast, their manner of dress is simple and austere, typically featuring a short tunic, loin cloth, and a cape of plain viridian linen.

### Ancestry

The Aeriad claim descent from a race of avians who fled from a far-distant land following The Great Disaster, eventually landing in Talislanta. Formerly a race of sky-roving hunters and gatherers, the Aeriad were forced to abandon their traditional way of life when their ancestral homeland was annexed by the forces of the old Phaedran regime. They settled in the forests of Vardune and built a number of small settlements along the eastern banks of the Axis River.

### Society

Aeriad society is divided along color lines. Green Aeriad live in Southwood, and Blues live in Northwood. There does not seem to be any prejudice or animosity between the two peoples; that is just the way Aeriad society functions. All Aeriad live in tree-dwellings of elaborately woven vines and branches, and subsist on a diet of seeds and vinesap. Extended families of several generations often live together in the same tree-dwelling, called a "family tree." Bridges of woven vines connect different tree-dwellings together, forming small settlements.

Aeriad couples mate for life, and are very devoted to each other and to their young. Elders run the household and help raise the young. Green Aeriad tend to be agriculturalists, botanomancers, scribes, historians, or scholars. Blues tend to be hunters, gatherers, scouts, and rangers.

The Aeriad race is in the process of changing from an avian to a ground-dwelling species. Their vestigial wings, once used for flying, have atrophied from disuse. For the majority of Aeriad, these appendages are now more decorative than functional, though they can still be used for gliding short distances. The Aeriad attribute the process of devolution to the after-effects of The Great Disaster, and believe that the problem is irreversible.

### Customs

Though they are of the same species, Blue and Green Aeriad have different outlooks on life. Blue Aeriad identify more closely with their avian ancestors. To these folk, their species' gradual transmutation is a form of "devolution," indicative of the decline of a once-great people. Blue Aeriad yearn to recapture the glory of the past, when their ancestors flew free upon the winds. To this end Blues sometimes seek the companionship of Gryphs, an avian species to whom Aeriad are closely related. Some Blues have even been known to mate with Gryphs in an attempt to reinvigorate their line, or at least retard its further devolution.



Green Aeriad regard the transition of their species as "evolutionary," rather than "devolutionary." While they also have great respect for their ancestors, Greens tend not to dwell upon the past. They believe that the future of the Aeriad is among other ground-dwelling peoples, such as the Cymrilians and Sindarans. Like Blues, they are protective of the natural riches of their forest home, though most Green Aeriad express this through their interest in horticulture and botanancy. By enriching their environment and increasing Vardune's natural resources, they hope to ensure the future survival of their species.

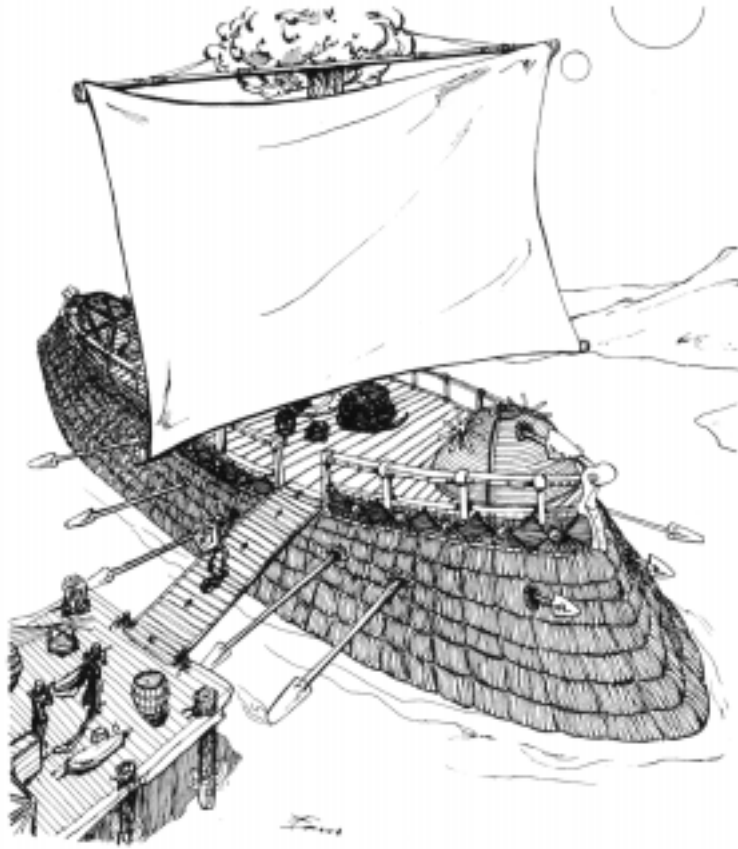
### Government

Green and Blue Aeriad are each governed by their own Councils, both of which are comprised of a group of nine elders, called Ministers. The Green Council governs Southwood, and the Blue Council governs Northwood. Each Minister is responsible for a specific aspect of Aeriad society, such as Defense, Trade, Wildlife, Agriculture, and so forth. The Green and Blue Councils meet together once each month to discuss matters pertaining to the country as a whole. The Chief Ministers of their respective Councils take turns representing Vardune in the Council of Seven Kings.



## Magic & Religion

Blue and Green Aeriad revere the deity called Creator, whom they depict as a great winged humanoid with rainbow-colored plumage. Blues and Greens gather together to roost in the branches of great span-oak “temples” and raise their voices in the ancient songs of their ancestors. Many of these songs are about the “Tree of Life,” which Aeriad believe is the ancestral home of the first avian race, from whom the Aeriad and Gryphs



are descended. When an Aeriad dies, his body is covered with a shroud of woven vines and laid to rest amidst the uppermost branches of a great viridia tree; a ritual signifying the Aeriad’s connection to the Tree of Life.

Green Aeriad botanomancers are members of a respected fraternity that takes as its inspiration the great Viridian; a fabled sorcerer of ancient times, who is credited with the creation of the viridia plant and many other useful hybrids. The Green Aeriad’s efforts to replant forestlands and create new and useful plant species reflects the environmental policies espoused by their mentor.

## The Arts

Aeriad music is primarily a function of religion, and sounds not unlike the warblings of songbirds such as the avir. Crafts and artforms include weaving, decorative and practical horticulture, and a form of runic calligraphy inscribed into bark tablets.

## Language

Aeriad speech is characterized by a slight stutter, evident only on words which begin with a hard “C” or “K” sound. This occurs because the Aeriad’s vestigial beak has not yet evolved (or devolved) sufficiently to allow for all nuances of the Talislan tongue. Common names tend to sound like bird-calls, as in Kree-Kya, Cha-Chik, Kee-REE, etc.

## Defenses

Blues Aeriad scouts and rangers are protectors of the forests of Vardune and its borders. A fleet of heavily armed barge-forts, manned primarily by Blues, guards the Axis River along the western border of Vardune.

## Commerce

Green Aeriad produce most of Vardune’s marketable wares, including its most important crop, the massive viridia plant. Its vines are woven into rope; its six-foot long pods are filled with a fibrous down which can be spun into a fine cloth called viridian linen. The empty pods are cured, cut, lacquered, and used as building and roofing materials. The Aeriad trade with the other members of the Seven Kingdom, Mog, Jhangara, and to a lesser extent, Arim.

## Worldview

Located far to the west, Vardune feels less threatened by the presence of the Za and other Wilderlands tribes than most of the other states in the Seven Kingdoms confederation. Even so, Blue Aeriad often volunteer to serve as aerial reconnaissance in the Borderlands Legion and throughout the Seven Kingdoms.

## Aeriad Settlements

### The River City of Vashay

Vashay is renowned as a producer of useful herbs and plants, which the Aeriad export to the other members of the Seven Kingdoms confederation and elsewhere. Boats made of dried viridia pods ply the river alongside the larger barge-forts of the Blue Aeriad. The nearby Bridge of Vashay spans the Axis River and leads to the Western Lands.

### Valanis

A fortified river port situated in Northwood, Valanis is the largest Blue Aeriad settlement. There are docking facilities here for Aeriad barge-forts, which are used to patrol the Axis River, and for merchant ships and barges.

## A Change of Lifestyle

Whether it is referred to as devolution or evolution, there is no disputing the fact that the Aeriad are losing their avian abilities. Both Blue and Green Aeriad believe that this condition was caused by The Great Disaster. Some say that the Aeriad were affected when their ancestors, fleeing their doomed homeland at the onset of the Disaster, passed through a cloud of magical mists or vapors and were contaminated in some unknown way. Others believe that contamination may have occurred after the Aeriad migrated to the continent of Talislanta.

Whatever its genesis, the change has had a profound effect on the Aeriad. By robbing them of the ability of true flight, it has forced their people to change from avian hunter-gatherers to a ground-based, primarily agrarian society. Needing large tracts of arable land to grow food, the Aeriad were forced to establish permanent settlements, instead of the small seasonal nests that their species used in their original habitat. To obtain adequate sources of water for their crops, the Aeriad constructed these settlements along the banks of the Axis River. Knowledge of irrigation, boat building, and waterborne navigation skills soon followed.

With large settlements came the need for a more structured form of government, and more efficient forms of trade, transport, and communication. To adapt to these needs, the Aeriad built roadways, canals, and networks of elevated causeways allowing easy access to and from their tree-dwellings. They learned to speak Talislan and became proficient in the use of a written language, which enabled them to write laws and keep detailed records. Once they acquired the ability to read, the Aeriad were able to use books, and eventually, to learn Magic. So it is that adaptation to change has resulted in the intellectual and cultural evolution of the Aeriad.

"I am no less a hunter than my ancestors. That is the sort of insult that c-can get a land dweller k-killed."

You still think of yourself as a bird of prey, sibling to the nighthawk and Gryph, true children of the Aeriad. It irritates you that you must wear enchanted bracers to keep you aloft, angers you to have the Cymrilians to thank. Still, it's your own skill that makes you a graceful flyer, and your own deft aim that puts your tri-bow bolts and crescent knives into the flesh of your quarry. You love the hunt, because it's in your blood and it fills your mind with a hunger. You love the forests of Vardune, and you watch over them as a ranger. The Greens understand, even if they have their own path now. The Thrall understand it, too, but most of the others you meet think you're high-strung and aggressive. And they don't appreciate a juicy waterbug or a glass of fine ripe vinesap neither. That's the problem outside of Vardune – nothing's really made for you. If the other races could fly, they'd never build houses on the ground, like rows of cages. You try to explain this to them, but to no avail. They're your friends and your allies, even if they see things differently. They're just lucky to have you covering their backs.

### BLUE AERIAD RANGER

INT 0	STR -1	CR +4
PER +2	DEX +4	MR 0
WIL 0	CON -1	HP 20
CHA 0	SPD +2	

**Homeland:** Vardune

**Physical Characteristics:** 5'5"-6', 80-120 lbs. Blue skin and plumage with metallic sheen, slender stature, sharp bird-like features, crested coxcomb of feathers, vestigial wings.

**Special Abilities:** Gliding up to twenty-five yards, wind permitting; with Bracers of Levitation, can fly at constant SPD +2 and at SPD +8 for short periods of time.

Tri-bow +4	Tactics +4
Dart-thrower +4	Guard +4
Crescent Knife +4	Weaponer +1
Aerial Combat +4	Low Talislan, native
Scout +5	



**Equipment:** Short tunic, loincloth, and cloak of plain viridian linen, Bracers of Levitation, sandals, two crescent knives, dart-thrower with pouch of ten darts, tri-bow with five clips, belt pouch, stoppered gourd flask of vinesap.

**Wealth:** 50 gold lumens in gold pentacles and assorted currencies.

"Yes, an interesting specimen indeed. I suppose I c-can study it later, after I prevent it from choking you to death."

Botanomancy is not a skill to be mastered, it is a path of life to be explored. Your teachers encouraged you to immerse yourself in the reflections of the Green World all around you. You spent your childhood gliding among the viridia trees and pondering lotus blossoms. Gliding still fills you with joy, yet you see the Great Change as a gift that has brought your race closer to its purpose. Once you flew above the plant world, using the trees for rest and shelter. Now you dwell on the ground with the trees and plants, and you understand more fully their needs and desires. It is to that end that you study the bark runes of your sages and the texts of the great Viridian. Your studies have led you time and again away from your home. Your companions often seem concerned that you spend so many hours consulting books and speaking with plants. You enjoy their company: scholarly discussions with Sindarans, contemplation of the natural world with Gnomekin and Muses. You are happy to explain your latest attempt at hybridization or the healing drought you are concocting. Yet you need that quiet space away from words where you can become immersed in floral scents and dig your fingers into moist soil. Cultivation of the self, your teachers named it. You are still young, still the sapling.

### GREEN AERIAD BOTANOMANCER

INT +3	STR -3	CR 0
PER 0	DEX +2	MR +4
WIL +1	CON -3	HP 17
CHA 0	SPD 0	

**Homeland:** Vardune

**Physical Characteristics:** 4'10"-5'2", 70-90 lbs. Green skin and plumage with metallic sheen, slender stature, sharp bird-like features, crested coxcomb of feathers, vestigial wings.

**Special Abilities:** Gliding up to fifty yards, wind permitting.

Botanomancy +5	Brewer/Vintner -
Alchemy -	Vinesap +4
Plant-based only +4	Artificer +3
Agriculture +5	Low Talislan, native
Herb Lore +5	



**Equipment:** Short tunic, loincloth, and cloak of plain viridian linen, sandals, wooden staff, scroll case for writings, pouches (seeds, reed pen, inkwell, five vials of plant-based concoctions), several small plant samples, assorted tomes, stoppered gourd flask of vinesap.

**Wealth:** 100 gold lumens in gold pentacles and assorted currencies.

## PLANT DEMON



Plant demons (also known as plant grues or woodgrues) are entities from the lower planes known as the Demonrealms who feed upon the life energies of plants, trees, and other living things. Passing through gates or holes in the dimensional fabric, these insidious creatures follow the root systems of ancient trees upwards into the material plane, drawn to the life force that emanates from woodland regions. Here, a plant demon will establish its lair, typically in the bole of a large, dead tree.

Once it has established itself, the demon will begin to absorb elemental energies from the lifeforms that inhabit its surroundings, with deleterious effects. All forms of vegetation within the plant demon's sphere of influence will gradually mutate, wither, and die; living creatures will begin to fall sick, developing strange ailments or aging at an unnaturally rapid rate. Meanwhile, the demon grows in power, as it absorbs the life energies of its victims.

Plant demons are a particular source of concern in Vardune of the Seven Kingdoms, which derives much of its income from the sale of fruits, vegetables, and other crops. The Gnorls (see Western Lands, Werewood) claim to know how to make a potion that is capable of reversing the effects of the plant demon's aging ability, a condition for which there is no other known cure.

Size: 4'-5', 70-90 lbs.

Attributes:

INT +5    PER +6    WIL -2    CHA -6  
STR -3    DEX -2    CON +3    SPD -1

Ability Level: 3-10

Attacks/Damage: Touch: DR 2 per Ability Level (successful CON roll to resist results in half-damage); or as per spell-like ability employed

Special Abilities: Natural Magic with four Modes at Ability Level, regenerate damage from non-enchanted weapons (two points per level, per round), sense living things (range: 100 ft. per level), susceptible to fire (inflicts double damage)

Armor: Bark, PR 3

Hit Points: 30

## ROOT GRUB



These eyeless, fanged larvae live below ground in Vardune and many woodland and jungle regions. They feed on the roots of large plants and trees, and they pose a threat to cultivated crops, vineyards, and orchards. An adult root grub may grow up to two feet in length, with a diameter of eight inches or more; a truly repulsive sight, which the creature's deathly pale coloration does little to diminish. Green Aeriad employ trained avir to locate and kill these subterranean vermin, which are responsible for a considerable amount of crop damage in Vardune each year.

## VIRIDIA

A hybrid plant with many practical uses, viridia was developed several hundred years ago by the legendary botanomancer, Viridian. Seeking to create the ideal cultivated plant, Viridian spent over forty years isolating, categorizing and combining plant essences. The result of the fabled magician's labors was a plant of uncommon virtues.

All parts of the viridia plant are useful. The root is a nutritious tuber, and can be ground into flour for baking. The tree discards a fourth of its older branches once a year, yielding a plentiful supply of wood for construction or fuel. The young leaves can be boiled to make an herbal tea, and the old ones used as roofing material or compost. The viridia's six foot-long pods are of use as one-man skiffs, and the fibrous down found in these pods can be woven into a fine, supple linen.

Perhaps one of Viridian's finest achievements, the viridia plant is not without certain minor flaws. Developed to be hardy and long-lived, viridia grows with wild abandon, sometimes forcing out other forms of vegetation. Viridia bark is resistant to fire, and its root system grows so deep in the soil that the plant is practically impossible to remove or kill once it has attained a height of four feet or more.

