

for EABA™

Ythrek™

honor, family and survival...

 **BTRC**

greg porter

Ythrek™ v1.1

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Chapter 4 quote adapted from "Prince of Darkness" by the Indigo Girls

Dedicated to: Cathy

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INTRODUCTION

In the last days, the Ancients grew proud and claimed unto themselves those powers reserved to the gods. And the spirits were wrath, and sought to wreak vengeance upon the lands of Men. But the gods stayed the hand of their servants, saying "Men shall have what they desire, and it shall be punishment enough." And it was so, for while the gods were born to power and knew its perils, the Ancients were but men who thought themselves gods. And their doom came upon them so swiftly that they had not even the time to realize themselves foolish.

Book of Endings and Beginnings , 1:1

▼ **INTRODUCTION** -The world of Ythrek is one of new powers and ancient cataclysms. At one time in the distant past it was composed of a number of powerful empires, all shattered by a disaster or disasters of such magnitude that even the survivors were left unsure of what happened, and thus were only able to record what they called the Cataclysm in fragmentary form. These empires had names, some of which are even remembered by name, but by and large they are just called the Ancients.

No one knows how many perished in the Cataclysm, or even how many Ancients there were. Sages know that no more than one person in one hundred survived, and some claim to show by mathematics that no more than one person in a million survived. The scholarly debate is mostly whether those who perished did so immediately, or in the weeks and months afterward when they starved or otherwise fell because their Ancient magics no longer supported them. Novomad tradition states that the six Families were the only survivors of the Ancient city across the Charmed River, a mound of buried rubble some kilometers across. Some claim that the Ancients perished entirely, and that those who claim the mantle of civilization were little more than their pets. This theory is largely discounted, as the ruins and tools that have been found are all of a scale for human hands and bodies.

The artifacts and knowledge of the Ancients were almost entirely lost in the Cataclysm. What is known is that once freed from the pre-conceptions of generations past, the survivors of the Cataclysm eventually learned to harness the powers within and without themselves. The sages call these powers a harnessing of the "metaphysical vacuum", but most people just call it "magic". It is a tradition that goes back to well before the Cataclysm, though there is some evidence to suggest the Ancients had abandoned these powers for things even more mysterious. The scanty records of the Cataclysm survivors were largely lost, edited or modified to suit the religious or political purposes of subsequent generations, which leaves the present-day inhabitants of Ythrek little solid evidence of what happened to the Ancients, or of how to avert it should that dread circumstance once again threaten to come to pass.

The civilizations of Ythrek rebuilt themselves far from the ruins of the Ancients, it is said because the seas rose and covered them, though those seas have largely receded now, leaving unearthly forests of coral-encrusted towers as mute monuments to lost greatness. Some places of the Ancients were spared the inundations, but suffered earthquakes, looting, fire or pillage, plus the ravages of centuries of weather. And some places were poisoned by Ancient powers gone awry, and remain a danger to the unwary to the present day. Life has been harsh in the many centuries since the Cataclysm, and only in the past century has survival been simple enough that people have dared explore lands outside the immediate safety of their villages or cities. For every square kilometer where men have tread in the past century, there are a hundred that they haven't...

EABA

▼ **FOR THE GAMEMASTER** - Ythrek is a not-quite generic fantasy setting, a world you can expand and populate as needed, with a stable cultural center at Novomad, which has enough intrigue of its own to be the focus of many adventures. It shouldn't take a lot of work to unravel or modify the background to suit your fancy. Even Ythrek's history is mutable, with several options to choose from to explain its mysterious past. For the novice game-master it is fairly simple and forgiving, with enough familiar elements to be understandable, yet enough mystery to keep adventurers guessing for a while. It is a world full of normal people, just trying to get by, but also with mages of great power and heroes of superhuman skill. Empires are being built and toppled. Ancient secrets are being unearthed, including those that should have stayed buried. And of course, the full spectrum of human emotions and motivations remains the same as it has ever been, and which is the ultimate fount from which most adventure material springs.

▼ **FOR THE PLAYER** - Ythrek is a place to have fun. To adventure, solve puzzles, research secrets and get into fights on occasion. Well, get into fights fairly often, but only get into *serious* ones on occasion. There are enough people in the world that you can pick and choose your challenges, and the **EABA** system is forgiving enough that you can make some early mistakes and have your adventurer survive to tell the tale. This isn't to say that those mistakes won't come back to haunt you later. The central locale is not big enough to get lost in, and the people you annoy will know where they can find you. That's part of life, and part of adventuring in Ythrek.

▼ **GROUND RULES** - Ythrek has a lot of flexibility, and you of course can twist it around any way you want, but for long-term play it was designed with a number of things in mind.

1. *Over the lifetime of a given adventurer, things are not going to change all that much.* For denizens of the early 21st century it is hard to imagine a time when the tools and technologies available when you were born would be the only ones available by the time you died, yet for most of human history that has been the case. It is also the case in Ythrek. The most advanced places in Ythrek are on a par with the late 17th century on Earth. There are unlikely to be any technological breakthroughs that make life, war or magic significantly different than they are at the start of the campaign. This is not to say that clever or wealthy adventurers can't bypass this for some personal advantage, but by and large such changes will not be financially viable, or will tend to disrupt the social order and be quietly discouraged by those in charge. If a campaign runs through several generations of adventurers, then yes, significant change can be expected.

2. *Environmentally, the world is a very harsh place, and will stay that way.* Without draft animals or heavy machinery, *all* labor is hand labor. Agriculture is a barely sustainable proposition, and then only in limited areas. Vast areas are as desolate as the Andean plateaus where there has been no measurable rainfall in centuries, and the oceans provide little bounty. Communities everywhere in Ythrek are physically limited in size by the tiny amount of arable land available. Within a few generations, Novomad will reach its limit, and either have to engage in large public works to increase their arable land, or begin to suffer from famine. Even now, people in power are working to reap the greatest benefit should either come to pass.

3. *Something very bad looms on the horizon.* Every campaign needs an overall theme, and a threat to the security of Novomad or even the world should be lurking in the background. There are gods, though they are largely silent. There are still the visions of holy men and cryptic prophecies. Trade brings strangers to town, not all of whose motives are charitable. Mages seek adventurers to recover things that have lain hidden for centuries, and remain tight-lipped about exactly "what for", and "why now?".

▼ **THE BOOK OF ENDINGS & BEGINNINGS** - Quotes from this tome head some chapters of **Ythrek**. To adventurers from Novomad, it is a quasi-holy writ. Not associated with any single religion or spirit worship, it is nonetheless revered by all, and its moral and social dictates have shaped the law, or even have the force of law in some cases.

In casual use, it is simply known as the Book, with an emphasis on the capital "B" that is hard to mistake even in verbal use. The Book describes its own origins, a history written by the survivors of the Cataclysm, combined with transcriptions of words passed from on high by various spirits. Each of the Families of Novomad has a patriarch (or matriarch) who supposedly authored a chapter, and the admonishments of that chapter are taken very seriously by the members of that Family. The Book is arranged into chapters, along the following lines:

Chapter One: The Ancients, their abilities and society are described in wonderfully vivid but frustratingly vague terms, laced with forebodings of what is to come. *As Spirits they were, commanding the very elements with words and gestures, raising what was low, bringing low what was high, even to cutting through mountains to spare themselves walking around them. And the Spirits looked upon the Ancients with sorrow, for in thinking they knew all, they were thus unready for the unknown.*

Chapter Two: The Cataclysm is described in gruesome detail, but detail that centers mainly on describing horrible ways to die rather than exactly who or what was doing the killing. It also extols the wisdom and foresight of the original Families, how they survived the Cataclysm, and a lot of stuff that ends up being the basis for the modern divisions of labor and other Family traits. *And the third demon touched Mardak, and his lungs turned to dust and his eyes to red-hot coals. His windows of diamond and doors of iron protected him not, and so he opened them to flee elsewhere. But the fourth demon was waiting at the threshold, and it touched him, and his bones turned to water, and he died.*

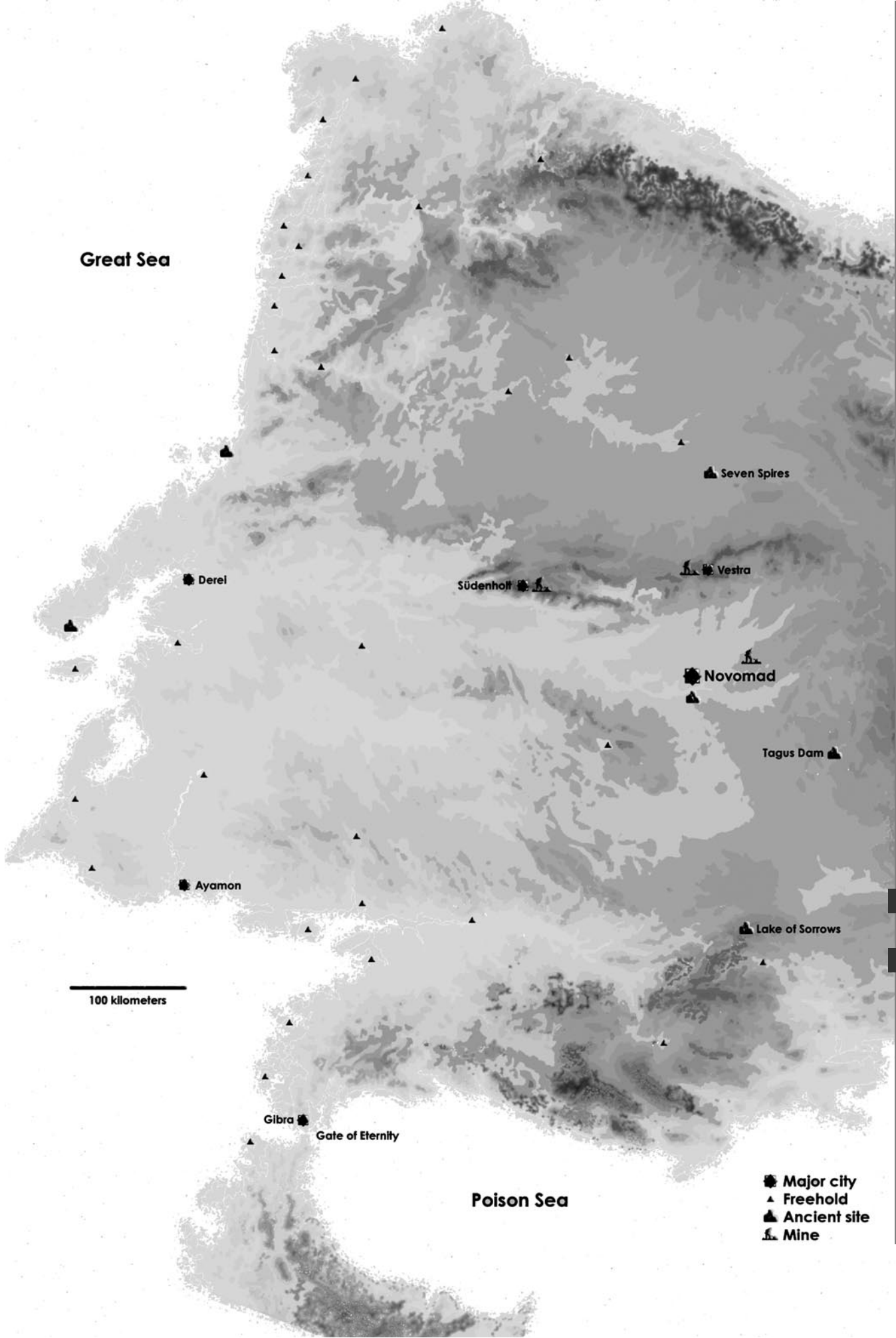
Chapter Three: The early life of the Matamoros family after the Cataclysm. Describes most of the clan in glowing if not supernaturally gifted terms, paragons, builders without equal, the only reason people still aren't living in mud huts, and so on. *And Karno watched the stones of the home flow like mud beneath the Hungry Rain. He scooped the mud into his hands and squeezed the rain from it, and it turned back into stone, and the Hungry Rain ate it not. And he capered naked in the Hungry Rain and laughed like a man possessed, for he now knew the Cataclysm would have an end, and the Families would have shelter from the unfriendly skies.*

Chapters Four through Eight: Similarly glowing prose about the Nichevos, Bandos, Heifos, Conceros and Francos families.

Chapter Nine: Visions sent by the various Spirits. The style of writing indicates there were several authors and that at some point an effort was made to reconcile their different styles. Each Family has legends of how one of their ancestors was the sole original author and a quite plausible tale as to how and why the chapter is in its current form. The only thing known for sure is that the source material is indeed of supernatural origin (just ask the Spirits, they'll tell you so). *And the Gods conferred among themselves. Never again would men be allowed the powers of Creation and Destruction, as had the Ancients. And such was passed to the Spirits, to be passed to men. But not all the Spirits were pure, and some were jealous of men, who had come into such powers without being created by the gods. And they planted the seeds of the Cataclysm in the hearts of men, that someday it might grow again, wiping the world clean of man, and leaving the Spirits the most favored of the Gods.*

In reality, no one knows exactly how much of the Book is accurate, its original authors, degree of spiritual inspiration or even if it dates to shortly after the Cataclysm. The first compiled edition dates to centuries later, though fragments are known to be older. Since each of the ruling Families in Novomad has some stake in the authenticity of the Book, no one really wants to cast the matter into doubt, and anyone who dares to do so (even with evidence) isn't going to get much support. On the other hand, expeditions are regularly financed to investigate the truths in the Book, especially those which actually have non-Book evidence to support them. Usually, these investigations are to support one Family claim or the other. The political gain to be had is often more important than the truth of the matter.

The gamemaster can make up obscure quotes from the Book to cover just about any situation. An allegory may be based on ancient events, with just enough detail to be tantalizing, but not enough to pursue without a lot of background work. Treasure hunters have volumes of annotations on the Book, listing and correlating what is known with what the Book says. Of course, the best of the annotations are kept secret, but enough treasure hunters have gotten rich (or come to gruesome ends) to make the more common annotated editions a bane to spiritual leaders and a popular reading item and discussion topic for long winter nights.



And in the final days, the Families, judged the most wise and pious by the gods, were given warning of the Cataclysm in signs and portents. These they heeded, though no others would follow, and many did mock them for leaving safety and comfort for nothing more than disturbing dreams. They mocked not when the last days came, and the skies rained blood and iron. Death and Ancient magic walked the land side by side, and even though blessed by the gods, many of the Families fell, to rise no more.

Book of Endings and Beginnings, 2:3

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Every campaign or game world needs a focus, a place known to everyone, with at least a semblance of stability. In Ythrek, this is the Novomad region, the largest population center for several hundred kilometers in any direction, and a hub for the budding trade of goods and the exchange of knowledge that is just now ending centuries of isolation.

▼ **NOVOMAD REGION** - Ythrek is a large and largely unexplored world, with plenty of room to "fill in the blanks", but everyone needs a place to start. The center of the Ythrek campaign area is the city of Novomad, in the province or country of the same name. The term "country" is a misnomer, since the explored area around the city only extends for a hundred kilometers or less, and the "borders" will probably expand until explorers, homesteaders or traders cause a serious incident with neighboring civilizations.

The occupied areas of Novomad comprise a lozenge-shaped fertile plain bounded by the Guardian Mountains to the north and the Charmed River to the south. The mountains rise as high as three thousand meters, and while Hilfök are not native to the region, in past centuries a few clans have settled on the southern slopes and are busy mining for ore and simultaneously digging new homes for the coming harsh years. The Guardian Mountains shield Novomad from the worst of the harsh northern winds, making the valley marginally habitable during the worst times of the year. The Charmed River is so named because it never runs dry, a requirement for any area where people are to live during the summer decades. Underground springs and snowcap runoff provide usable flow even during the peak of summer, though the river does evaporate into nothing a few kilometers downstream of Novomad because of the demands made on it. There is not enough flow in the peak of summer to irrigate fields to support the entire populace, but enough to make some farming possible. Combined with stored food, it is enough, though this will not be the case in another generation or two of population growth, a situation which the Families are aware of and trying to make plans for.

The valley supports a population of perhaps one hundred thousand people, of which perhaps thirty thousand live in the city proper. The rest are Family estates, small towns or tiny villages surrounded by farmland, getting progressively smaller towards the less arable ends of the valley. From one end of the valley to the other is about a hundred kilometers, and it is about thirty kilometers north to south. Roads extend to all but the furthest ends of the valley, making it at most a two day walk from the furthest reaches to the city proper. The two minor towns are situated about midway, and are the only places outside the city where one can find an inn or tavern.

The most important thing to remember about Novomad is that it controls the single largest piece of arable land for several hundred kilometers in any direction. The map on page 2.1 is in shades of yellow and brown for a reason. *It's mostly desert.* Nowhere else within that radius can support a population of more than several thousand year-round, good weather or poor, and this after nearly a thousand years of effort. That is a measure of how important Novomad is, and how absolutely harsh and unyielding Ythrek is. Novomad, small as it is, is *the* center of known civilization, the city where the "waters always flow and no one goes hungry". If someone in a godforsaken Freehold has heard of any legendary, faraway place, it is Novomad, and its glory and bounty seem to increase the worse one's own conditions are.

Only the harsh travel conditions in the best of times prevent Freeholders from leaving their marginal lands to come to "the big city". That, and the fact that the main urban centers of Novomad have a well-developed bureaucracy whose various permit and paperwork requirements alert authorities to undocumented workers (who are quickly given the options of near-slavery as a plow horse or of leaving town).

While it doesn't directly affect the average person's way of thinking, this "center of the world" mentality does go to the head of officials, who tend to see themselves as more important in the scheme of things than they really are. It's the "big fish in a small pond" principle. Within Novomad, it is hardly noticeable except perhaps as a little too much civic pride, but officials have an unfortunate tendency to belittle, underestimate or condescend to anyone from outside the region. This attitude will come back to bite them in the ass eventually, but not just yet...

Back to geography. A little over three hundred kilometers to the south of Novomad is the edge of the Poison Sea, a great body of water so salty that nothing can live in it, and large enough that one side cannot be seen from the other. It extends to the east some hundreds of kilometers, and its exact extent is unknown except to the Plainsfök. Far to the southwest of Novomad, the Poison Sea meets the Great Sea, salty, but with enough life to sustain small communities here and there where currents and geography provide a meager but self-renewing bounty.

A waterfall kilometers high and wide falls from the Great Sea to the surface of the Poison Sea, across a gap which the Plainsfök call the Gate of Eternity. They consider it a singular honor if when they die their body can ride this torrent to the Poison Sea far below. The polytheistic religious town of Gibra is on the north side of the Gate of Eternity. They subsist by netting fish from the fringes of the falls and otherwise harvesting the surplus from the ecosystem of this unique location. Gibra also has a cable car that runs over the torrent to the south side. Its normal use is carrying bodies out to the center of the torrent, but it can also carry up to six travellers on the hour-long trip for a moderate donation.

A few small, hardy communities live off the meager bounty of the Great Sea, but they are usually insular and wary of outsiders. The coasts of the Great Sea are no longer favored as places to live. The waters provide little food, much danger in acquiring it, and the coastal lands are often salty and bear few crops, a side effect of a great but temporary rise in sea level after the Cataclysm. And sometimes things wash upon the shore that should have stayed beneath the waves forever...

If one goes far enough north, west or south, one runs into the Poison Sea or Great Sea. To the north-east, the land narrows somewhat and leads to areas known better by the Hilfök. Across the Gate of Eternity lie the edges of Plainsfök lands. Across the Charmed River to the north of the main city lies a great broad hillock that is the remains of an Ancient city, supposedly the one from which the founders of Novomad came. Explorers and treasure seekers routinely dig tunnels into the hill (after buying permits from the city, of course!), but few have ever found more than valuable fragments of Ancient metal or small works of art. Bits of bone, scraps of cloth or pieces of Ancient books found quickly turn to powder when exposed to the air, but fragmentary knowledge is often gained from them in that short interval.

▼ **NOVOMAD PROPER** - The city that gives its name to the region was founded sometime shortly after the Cataclysm. It started on the southern bank of the Charmed River, and expanded in haphazard fashion for several centuries up and down the south side of the river. The north side of the river near the Ancient city will still will not support agriculture, despite best efforts. Eventually, Novomad gained a low stone wall (about 3 meters high), which remains the city limits to this day. Regulations prohibit building anything within a hundred meters of the outside of the wall, and this verge is used for farming by various households of the Heifos family. Access to Novomad is usually through one of three gates, or by boat anywhere along the Charmed River (the northern boundary of the city). This is not a very secure arrangement, but it was enough to keep out abominations in the first several centuries after the Cataclysm. While the city gates are manned, this is a formality and sneaking in and out of the city is trivially easy in most cases. Patrols by the City Guard can make it a secure perimeter if the coming and going of people needs to be monitored for some reason, but there is normally no reason to do so.

The ruins of the Ancient city the Families are thought to have come from starts about a kilometer north of Novomad, on land that is still blasted, barren and lived on only by those who have absolutely nowhere else to go.

Novomad has a handful of straight, broad thoroughfares, usually running through the center of a particular Family's section of town, but it also has more than its share of narrow, winding streets, back alleys and those narrow gaps between houses that may or may not be a shortcut to someplace useful. Most of the property boundaries are centuries old, making any sort of urban renewal and efficient street planning a financial and political nightmare. So, the situation remains as it is and the poor souls who have to maintain the streets, water lines and sewers deal with it as best they can.

In the center of town is a small, grassy park, one of the few remaining patches of green inside the walls. This is supposedly where the Families made their first common homestead after the Cataclysm. In the park, a great wedge of Ancient metal protrudes from the ground. Legend has it that the wedge was somehow involved with the founding of the city, but no clear record remains. An effort was made to dig it up some centuries ago, but nothing ever came of it. It is now surrounded on three sides by a flower bed. Children use it as a sliding board and malcontent youths dull their blades trying to scratch graffiti in its surface.

Surrounding the park is a paved city square, fronted by the central offices of the Novomad government:

The Librotecha, which houses the city records, stores of knowledge and acts as a museum for Ancient relics and meeting place for the handful of individuals who are Novomad's senior sages and mages. The Ancient relics are usually items of an artistic nature, though the city boasts of having recovered secret Ancient powers with which to destroy its enemies. Since Novomad has no enemies at this time, the boast has never had to be backed up with proof. However, there are things recovered from the Ancient ruins which have been delivered to the Librotecha under guard, and never seen again.

The Palaco, a grand stone structure four stories tall (with two basement levels). This houses Heads and Heir Designates of the six ruling Families. By tradition they have always lived near the center of the city, though each has a separate residence elsewhere. Apportionment of space in this structure changes every several years, so that each Family in turn lives facing the central square. Admittance to each wing of the Palaco is limited to those who live there or have invitations to visit.

The Justic, a sprawling cluster of buildings fronted by the Justic Majoro, the highest court of Novomad. Other buildings handle the civil cases, paperwork, permits and the other side effects of central government. There is a temporary holding area for prisoners awaiting trial, but the main jail is outside the city, close to the labor farms where the handful of prisoners work off their sentences. The Justic also holds the Forum in which the ruling Council debates new laws and other matters of importance.

Last is the **Areno**, an amphitheater capable of holding some tens of thousands of people (almost the entire adult population of Novomad). It is used for a variety of public spectacles, from entertainment to judicially sanctioned duels, sometimes both at once.

Outside the city square, Novomad is split into six irregular segments, each one populated by a majority from one Family. There is some overlap, but Family politics means it is easier to open a business in your own Family's district, you are more likely to get customers from your own Family, and so on. Family and Family politics rule the system, as you will find out shortly.

▼ **NOVOMAD SOCIETY** - Life in Novomad revolves around honor and family, and in the Novo language, *both* of those words are capitalized. Your Family is your identity, and Honor is what carries you through life. Hilfök and Plainsfök have these concepts, but do not revere them like the Novos do. To a Novo, you cannot have honor without a Family to bring it to, nor have Family unless you work to bring it honor.

The reason family is so important goes back to the founding of Novomad, when only six families out of several million survived the destruction of the Ancient city. Novos are taught from birth about the hardships and perils their ancestors faced, and the importance of supporting to the utmost those you share your life with. Even if those tales are largely legend, and personal ambitions sometimes conflict with familial loyalty, it is still the driving cultural force in this region.

Virtually every Novomad native is related by blood or marriage to one of the six ruling Families. Business contracts, irrigation rights, legal disputes, all go through the Families, and if you have no Family ties, you have no chance of gaining status or economic success. One can of course make a living by working for a Family, but all the *best* jobs are Family-only. Most Hilfök or Plainsfök would have one level of decreased **Wealth** for 3S, because they cannot get good jobs in the Novomad region.

Duelling - A side effect of Novo beliefs is that they are *extremely* touchy about matters of pride, principle and lineage. To insult a Novo's honor or Family is an offense that demands satisfaction. A simple apology would be seen as a sign of weakness... There is a strict written code of how an offense can be made and responded to, with clear laws on the nature of duels. For instance, challenges cannot be made or accepted until a person's sixteenth birthday. Pregnant women may not challenge, but may accept any challenges made, and are required to accept challenges two months after giving birth. A person recovering from a duelling injury may do so before accepting a challenge. A person with an incurable illness may challenge, but not be challenged. And so on and so forth.

Basically, the person insulted or dishonored may challenge the perpetrator of the outrage to a duel. The person *making the challenge* gets to choose the weapon and the format. If you deliver an insult, *they* get to decide the nature of the duel. Novos usually don't go out of their way to provoke duels, but the option is always there.

There is probably not an adult (man or woman) in all of Novomad who doesn't have a duelling scar or two (even with magical healing, most people leave at least one visible scar). There are probably a few dozen duels taking place on any given day. *It's a part of life*. Life is too hard for any *really* destructive traditions to gain a foothold. People regularly get hurt in duels, but hardly anyone is ever killed or permanently crippled. In Novomad, individual duelling takes the place of organized warfare. Differences are settled between individuals as they happen, without resorting to organized military force. In Novomad, tempers flare quickly, but cool just as fast. Almost anyone can duel. Even husbands and wives occasionally duel, though the ancient tradition of screaming and throwing crockery at each other until blood is drawn is the norm.

Usually, an offense must have been publically witnessed to be formally duelable. If someone insults you in private, too bad. You can always insult them in public to force a duel, but then they get the choice of weapons and format. Which may have been their intent all along...

Duels are always done with no armor or enhancements (real or magical), normally to "first blood". This is where the duel ends after the first injury doing lethal damage, though the injured party is usually allowed to follow through on an attack in progress. Quite often in knife duels, "first blood" is simultaneous, which is quite alright. It's not about winning or losing, it's about honor being served. Particularly serious offenses to honor can go to "second blood" or even "third blood". Like many other aspects of duelling, this is regulated and only certain offenses can qualify for a more serious duelling format. How much pain can be expected from a "first blood" duel depends on the weapon the challenged party chooses to duel with. The concept of a duel implies that lethal injury is possible, and since blood must be drawn for there to be a victor, edged weapons are traditional. There are exceptions. The "bloody nose" duel with bare hands, for instance.

Since duels are usually done with knives, bearing them is the closest thing to a god-given right the people of Novomad have. Unless a crime of violence has been committed with one, even prisoners keep their knives. Though the insulted party always has choice of weapon, the usual purpose of a duel is just to make a point, not to kill. Pistols at twenty paces are coming more and more into fashion among the wealthy, especially when you *really* want to hurt someone. New duelling regulations limit the pistol types that can be used (up to 1d+1 damage), and each party only gets one shot. Even if both people miss, honor is still served.

Once a duel is completed, the matter is considered resolved by both parties (and their relatives or possibly heirs) and life goes on as if the duel had never taken place. Normally there is a 50Eur fee for a duelling permit, which may be bought in advance (you never know when you'll need one). Normally, the person slighted will be the one buying or using the permit, but if money is tight, it is almost always possible to get a loan or use someone else's blank permit. That, or swallow your pride and take the insult (how humiliating!). In a situation where no permit is available, the matter is considered emotionally resolved, and the actual duel will take place at some other time ("I will let that pass, for now. But we *shall* settle it later..."). If the insult is *outside* Novomad territory, the two parties may settle it without needing permits.

Happy indeed is the boy or girl who receives their first duelling permit as a sixteenth birthday present. They'll usually be on good behavior so they can find "someone special" to have their first duel with. Caution needs to be observed. Important people don't like to be troubled with minor duels and tend to choose more lethal duelling forms to discourage them ("I choose the two-handed sword. You say you have no skill with that weapon? Then you should not have challenged me...").

While people have a propensity to bet on anything remotely competitive, Novos seem to draw the line at duels. A crowd watching a duel is almost indistinguishable from a crowd watching a golf game. Somber, quiet, with muted applause if a particularly good move is made, and a few restrained cheers for the victor when it is over. While there is no law against it, Novos don't wager on duels, and look askance at any outsiders who do.

Duels are usually held in the small public parks, but anyplace the insulted party wishes can be a duel site, provided the owner of the location consents. For the time being, pistol and most other projectile weapon duels are held outside the city walls for safety purposes. An official witness from the city government costs 50Eur extra, and for a very large fee, one can rent space in the Areno. If the duel is among people of sufficient importance, a duel can be quite profitable, as nominal (1Eur) admission fees can be charged, which are split between the winner(s) and the city government. Areno duels are usually scheduled so there is at least an hour's worth of action going, with higher profile duels going last.

Failing to duel if challenged is unthinkable in Novomad. In addition to causing embarrassment to your Family, it is actually a crime. Typical punishment if found guilty is that the offender has a choice of becoming a Renunciate or doing forced labor until they accept the duel. If the person who made the challenge dies before a duel can be scheduled, a government duelist will be designated for the occasion.

Hilfök don't have this duelling tradition, but understand it. Plainsfök find it incomprehensible. Freeholders tend to fight for keeps, and sometimes have problems stopping at "first blood". All however are bound by Novomad law while in its territory and have shown themselves to be quite capable of handling themselves in such cases. Novos seem to take it in stride that outsiders are generally "less cultured", and generally cut them more slack than they would their own people ("If you were not an outsider, I would assume you meant to insult me and I would be forced to defend my honor."). Novomad explorers have had more trouble in other lands, none of which have this particular tradition.

Courts - Other civil matters are handled by a small, very nepotistic bureaucracy. Criminal and civil cases are handled by a six judge panel, one judge from each Family. They are sworn to be impartial, but Family rivalries almost always play some part in ambiguous cases. Normal punishments are forced labor or fines, the latter almost always being the case for anyone with levels of Status. Some crimes have punishments involving physical disfigurement, like whipping or branding, and a few involve public humiliation, like the stocks or the cage. There is no formal death penalty in Novomad. Life is not revered, but after the Cataclysm it is seen as precious enough not to be wasted. However, a sufficiently vile offense can result in a challenge to a duel by the Council as a whole, which is to "third blood" with longswords. The Council proxy in such events seldom loses, and the "third blood" is almost always fatal. It also draws a "standing room only" crowd to the Areno.

Citizenship - Anyone born of a marriage where at least one of the partners is a Novomad citizen, is a Novo by birth. Citizenship can also be conferred by a majority vote of the Heads, though this is extremely rare. The last way of obtaining citizenship is to buy it. This requires a fee, donation, extortion or bribe, depending on how you want to view it. The amount is approximately sixty *thousand* Eur, plus a few thousand extra to cover ancillary paperwork. This method isn't used very often either, and is really just a nigh-impossible hurdle to keep outsiders from calling themselves Novos.

Aside from equal treatment under the law (a quite tangible benefit), what citizenship is "worth" is to reap the minor benefits of Novomad's primitive welfare system. If you are too old, infirm or sick to work for a living, basic food, shelter and medical care is provided at one of two run-down facilities (one for men, one for women). Since most people have Family to care for them in time of trouble, these facilities really end up caring for temporary outcasts, people afraid or ashamed to go home for some reason, or Family members whose mental condition or physical needs are beyond what the Family can provide. Imagine a nineteenth century asylum crossed with a homeless shelter and you will have it about right. While Novomad is where "no one goes hungry", they *really* mean where "no Novo goes hungry". But it doesn't mean you are well-fed...

Marriage - As mentioned earlier, there are six Families in Novomad. This arrangement has worked, albeit with some friction, for as long as records have been kept. Family loyalty is very strong, but to keep inbreeding from becoming a problem, virtually all marriages are *outside* one's Family. This is a tradition that goes back to the founding of Novomad, and while it is no longer necessary, it remains law none the less. Rather than a simple sexual division where marriage makes the wife a part of the husband's Family, who joins whose Family is based on an arcane formula that measures wealth, status and their prior accomplishments (gamemasters take note!).

Whoever has the best aggregate score keeps their Family name. In the rare case of a tie, the bride and groom duel for it. Any cheating on scores is discouraged if not eliminated by the intricately detailed and specific guidelines, which are calculated by a third Family agreed on by both other Families. The desire to keep one's name is a powerful motivator to anyone considering marriage. Since the calculated wealth of the "loser" becomes part of the "winning" Family's holdings, the technique of granting lavish gifts to your own Family's suitors *can* backfire. Casual espionage to determine how much a Family has invested in a son or daughter is common.

While some marriages are because of true love, many marriages are arranged, and of mismatched status. It would do not good for a Guildmaster and Guildmistress of different Families to marry, since one of them would effectively have to resign because of Family conflicts regarding proprietary knowledge.

However, when the dust settles and all is said and done, everyone lives cheerfully with the result. Honor would not be served if a person kept loyalty to their old Family. This does not mean that old friends and acquaintances are abandoned, but in matters which are "Family business", it is understood that questions of that type will go unanswered and to even ask them is considered an insult. Even the children learn this very early. For instance, there are separate words for "grandmother in my Family" and "grandmother from another Family", and the youngsters quickly learn who is who, and what should not be talked about in mixed company. If someone answers your question with "It's a Family matter.", that's a sign to let the inquiry drop. *They aren't going to tell you.* As a matter of principle, the phrase is not misused.

Divorce - With marriage comes the possibility of divorce. Because of the way Novo marriages are arranged, divorce can be *extremely* messy. Usually, assets are reassigned based on the original percentages, with pre-defined adjustments based on professional promotions and "value added" contributions like children (which add to the *mother's* score). One way or the other, the Family being left has to cough up the money to pay off the person who is leaving. Because of the professional and financial disruptions divorce causes, Novomad law has strict guidelines on what constitutes legal justification, and these may be overruled by waivers in a marriage contract. Normal grounds for divorce are infidelity (provable in court), cowardice (don't refuse duels) and dishonoring your Family. The last only applies to the person who married into the Family (don't piss off your in-laws).

Language - While the culture of Novomad is remarkably egalitarian, the language shows that it may not have always been this way. The lack of any pre-Cataclysm historical or cultural records means that language is the only surviving indicator of what Ancient civilization was like. From this, scholars assume that there was a greater division of the sexes, or that there was some inherent male-female dualism that pervaded daily life. Many words end in "-o" or "-a" (plural "-oz" and "-az"), the former having a male connotation and the latter a female one. Which one is the stronger word depends on the context. Usually, if the word is destructive or harmful in context or use, the male suffix is considered the stronger form. If the context is protection or defense, the female suffix is the stronger form. For instance, in the spells "Perfora" and "Perforo", "Perforo" is considered the stronger, but if comparing the spells "Pentagrama" and "Pentagramo", "Pentagrama" is the more powerful. Words that end in neither are genderless, either because the word has equal elements of both or it just seemed inappropriate.

An "-ita" or "ito" suffix is usually a diminutive, either something physically smaller, younger or significantly less powerful than a normal form of the word. In many contexts, its use would be an insult.

EXAMPLE: "Guer" (pronounced "gher") is the word for fighting, trouble or war. A man who fights might be a "guerro" (literally, one who fights like a man). To call him a "guerrito" (one who fights like a little boy) would not be seen as a compliment. To call him a "guerrita" (one who fights like a little girl) would be an outright insult.

▼ For the gamemaster and players, the Novo language can be based off of Latin or its derivative languages. Obviously, most players will be speaking English, so use of proper Novo forms is going to be limited to things like spell names, job titles, places and insults. But, that's enough to get the feel across.

▼ **THE FAMILIES** - Each Family has developed and honed particular talents over the centuries, and society has adjusted itself to members of certain Families usually getting the best jobs of a certain type. Competitiveness keeps the level of skill high, and nepotism tends to keep it within a Family. This is not to say that these careers are the *exclusive* province of one Family. No one would stand for that. However, the *best* positions usually stay within one Family. People have been known to give up their name through marriage just to be able to get a promotion within their field. *And this works, once they become part of that new Family.*

In *practical* terms, an adventurer will need a compelling background to explain why they would have more than a 5d+2 skill roll in something that is obviously another Family's specialty.

All Family names end in "-os". No one knows exactly how far back the tradition goes, but it is assumed that it meant "from this region". What the "-os" originally meant is unknown, but since all the Family legends place their origins near Novomad, the ending has come to mean "from the Novomad region". For instance, Matamoros is "the Matamor Family from Novomad". Outsiders are not allowed to tack this suffix onto their surnames, and if by chance their surname actually ended in "-os", they are required to delete it for all legal and even all conversational purposes. If the Family names themselves had some meaning in the language of the Ancients, that knowledge has been lost.

Matamoros - The Matamoros tend to be best at civil engineering, mining and any other large scale construction or destruction projects. They designed, built, manage and maintain the Novomad valley's irrigation system, roads, local mining and crude refining of ores. Permits for exploration of the Ancient city usually require a sign-off by a senior Matamoros engineer as well as some Conceros functionary. Someone not of either Family usually finds their safety precautions and/or paperwork are inadequate, causing extensive delays and extra filing fees. Hiring a Matamoros "consultant" usually clears the problems up amazingly quickly (and keeps the Matamoros informed of any significant finds).

Nichevos - The Nichevos are best known for precision craftsmanship, whether jewelry, sculpture, or fine furnishings. If it is a precise mechanical device, it is probably a Nichevos design. This Family is also responsible for the design and manufacture of the flintlock muskets and pistols currently in use, and their techniques and alloys are proprietary Family knowledge. While flintlocks are mechanically simple and other Families discreetly copy Nichevos designs, the Nichevos weapons are measurably superior in their damage and long-term reliability. The Nichevos are also the Family for the Illuminator's Guild, which is responsible for the manufacture of gunpowder and fireworks. Lacking any threats that require such weapons, cannons and heavy rockets are virtually unknown at this time. And without any need, large cannons are unlikely for the foreseeable future. While perfectly functional and practical, flintlock pistols and rifles are as much status symbols as anything else (and are priced accordingly). For many, they are just a new type of weapon to duel with, though explorers and traders are finding some merit with them. The largest consumers of gunpowder are the Matamoros, who use it for mining, though many tasks are still handled by specialized magery.

Bandos - The Bandos are the main weavers and textile merchants of Novomad. All forms of clothing come from various Bandos guild shops, as does most dyeing and trade in raw fabric. They are as skilled as anyone in making clothing to suit Ythrek's extreme climatic cycle. Most simpler types of armor are also Bandos products, including cloth, leather and scale armors. They are at the moment trying to decipher the exact process used to lacquer several layers of cloth into a form of lightweight armor, from a small piece brought back by a recent trading expedition (its origin unknown). The heavier chain and plate armors are typically Francos products, and customizing or decoration of either usually goes to a Nichevos craftsman.

For reasons lost to antiquity, the Bandos (rather than the Conceros) are the main commentators on the Kelveno Cycle, a manuscript that dates back to within the first few generations of the Cataclysm. While the text of the manuscript itself is complete, how it came to be found, who Kelveno was and why no other record of him exists are conspicuously absent from ancient Family records. The original copy has long since crumbled to dust, making even magical attempts to ferret out its history impossible. As to the manuscript itself, over the generations it has been seen as prophecy, a history or the cryptic ravings of a madman. The Kelveno Cycle is not a sequential document, but strings of visions that may or may not be related to each other in theme, time or space, and part of the interpretation problem is to figure out which sentences go in what order. It is clear that he was trying to say something important. Commentaries indicate the last several pages of the original manuscript were penned in Kelveno's own blood after he ran out of ink, and the last sentence is incomplete, though there is no record that Kelveno died at that point. The Bandos and Conceros argue over the interpretation of the other assorted texts and fragments of texts relating to the Cataclysm. Possession of the original document lends authority to one's arguments, and possession often changes hands by means questionable, though no one ever admits stealing or having been stolen from.

Heifos - The Heifos are the farmers and sources for many durable goods and simple mechanical devices. Pushcarts, pedalwagons, food, wine, leather, furniture, wire, glass and so on are either made in the city proper, or in small mills in the outer communities. Wire for chain mail is made by the Heifos from Matamoros ingots and sold to the Francos. Most lodging is run by a Heifos, since they can get the best prices for supplies. Heifos are more likely to have had dealings with outsiders, since farm labor and related industries are always in need of strong backs (at low wages). As love conquers all, this may lead to marriages with outsiders. Some members of other Families may look down their noses at a Heifos who is not of pure Family blood.

Since Novomad relies on agriculture to survive, the Heifos are the numerically largest Family in the region. Their total wealth is no more than that of the other Families, tending to make them individually less well off. Though the Novomad valley is not that large, Heifos are still seen as "country folk". It doesn't mean they can't handle themselves in a duel, on a dance floor or a debate on the Ancients.

Conceros - The Conceros tend to concern themselves with the preservation of knowledge and continuance with the past. While any secrets in the Librotecha are known of by all the Heads, any understanding of them probably lies with the Conceros. The Conceros tend to occupy many bureaucratic positions in the Justic. If something needs an official seal on it, a Conceros hand is probably holding the stamp. This makes them exceptionally well-informed about anything which requires official sanction. They also have an estate outside the city from which extremely bizarre smells and noises are sometimes heard, even more so than the usual for mages. In addition to being papermakers and bookbinders, they also make perfumes, medicines, some extremely potent liqueurs, as well as acids for etching, a bit of rat poison and a handful of other chemicals. They also manage the minting of Novomad's currency, though each Family has members to oversee the process and bookkeeping just to make sure there are no discrepancies between bullion in and currency out. The Conceros are numerically the smallest Family in Novomad, but tend towards individual wealth, usually spent on knowledge-based luxuries like books.

Francos - Fighting is the forte of the Francos. They have by default become the generals of Novomad's military. A tiny military, since it has no known enemies. The term "general" doesn't really exist in Novomad. The closest is Captain of the Guard, who oversees law enforcement and routine patrols of the border areas to make sure nothing untoward tries to make a meal of citizens or their crops. This does happen from time to time, and they are quite competent at handling the problems. Aside from the uppermost ranks, the City Guard is fairly free of Family entanglements. Anyone who wants to fight with heavy weapons (or have the opportunity to) can be in the City Guard. The City Guard tends towards longswords as a standard weapon. Individuals with particular weapon talent are assigned where they can do the most good (archers, crossbowmen). Some musketeers are in the ranks. Officers are tending more and more to carry a flintlock pistol or two, and everyone has a utility knife. Armor depends on the season and assignment. A minimum is provided by the City Guard, but this is typically just a loan until the person can buy some of their own. The Francos are also the blacksmiths and armorers of Novomad, making heavy armor and most melee weapons as well as tools, nails and household fittings, some of which goes to Nichevos guilds for final assembly or fitting.

▼ **DAILY LIFE** - Within the Novomad region, things go on largely as they have for generations, with incremental improvement as conditions improve.

Housing - The normal dwelling in Novomad is the same, either in the city itself or on an outlying farm. It is a sturdy structure with thick stone walls, or two layers of brick with a later of earth between them. The lower floor is either set about a meter below ground, or earth is ramped up against the sides to about the same height, the former being more common in the city. Flooring is usually wood, stone or brick. The roofs are steeply pitched and either faced with slate or tile. Glass is rare, the normal window just having heavy wooden shutters and a selection of curtains, gauzy ones for summer to let in light and air, heavy ones in the winter to keep out drafts. Some homes have thin marble sheeting in the shutters. It cannot be seen through, but does let in a diffuse light. This home design sheds the heavy winter snows, and keeps the lower level cool in summer. The inside floor plan is largely open, with the center of the ground floor dominated by a large masonry fireplace massing several tons, backed by a smaller kitchen stove. The kitchen is a separate room, with food storage, tables, a locked spice cabinet, and sometimes an icebox or barrel to keep live fish in. The streetside coal/wood chute usually empties into a kitchen alcove.

Many homes have indoor wells, sometimes with a cistern and pump-operated indoor plumbing. In urban areas, there is more likely a tap to the city water supply, or a cistern which is regularly refilled from the water pumps spaced about a block apart. Normally, the city water supply feeds a ground-level storage tank, and water is pumped out of that as needed. Better-off residents have a separate piping supply run through the fireplace to provide warm or hot water on demand, and may have a magical pump to provide constant water pressure to upstairs taps. Sanitation is crude but effective. Most homes have primitive flush toilets. In rural areas, this is spread to a septic field. In the city, piping will carry waste to a central reclamation facility. In both cases, the processed material is used as fertilizer. This is used in Family fields, or used in marginal areas to make the soil better able to sustain crops.

In the city, homes are clustered tightly together. Most streets are about four meters wide, paved in stone or brick for the most part. There is a tendency for homes to spread out above the streets, blocking off the sun even more than normal. This is illegal, but still happens, especially if the home belongs to a **Nepo** (page 3.4). City homes are two stories tall in the poorer areas, and three or even four stories tall in more prosperous ones.

The head of the household will live on the lowest and most comfortable level. Any doors or windows will be solid and can be barred from the inside. Their business will be on the second story, accessible from the street by a short, steep staircase. This staircase is usually hinged and can be pulled up at night into the building and the door closed behind it. Upper floors are for other family members, storage or servants, in that order. Household servants usually live in the attic space, which is hottest in the summer and coldest in the winter.

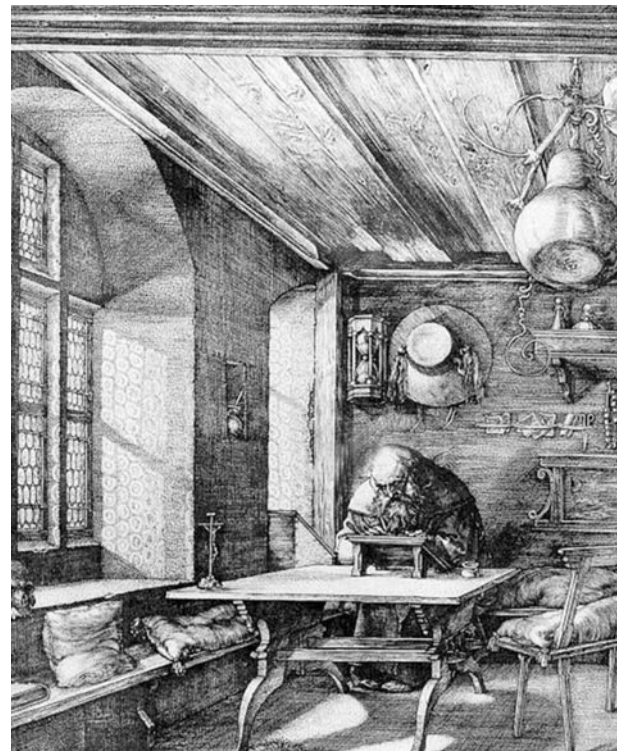
Urban Life - Novomad is almost entirely paved, with either stone or brick, depending on the section of town. While the layout of Novomad is somewhat haphazard, certain zoning regulations have come into being. Construction is as detailed earlier, not just because it is a good design, but because people recognize the risk of fire. Most streets have two clay pipes under them, one for water and one for waste beneath it. These are set deep enough to prevent freezing in the winter, and coincidentally also allows downhill drainage for toilets in the basement level of the average home. In the city, more people use the central water supply than wells. Some quarters still just have a central square with a common well or tap to the central supply, but as a matter of Family pride, these areas are being improved as quickly as time and money permits (it may still be decades). Because of privacy concerns, construction and maintenance is handled within the Family.

Streets are of two mandated types, main and side. Main streets are six meters wide, side streets are four meters wide. Pushcarts and pedalwagons have a mandated width of one and half meters, which means that main streets have a passing lane. Since draft animals are extinct, the problems of animal waste and excessive vehicle size are non-existent. Traffic snarls do occur at certain times of day in some parts of town, and the press of humanity, push carts and pedalwagons means you can't move faster than a walk. No one wants to lose a meter of their building to widen a street, so the problem is unlikely to be solved anytime soon.

Novomad has all the facilities you would expect in a good-sized town. There is not a hospital, but there is one building where several doctors work together, with temporary patient lodging. There are taverns, public baths, two houses of ill repute, two gambling establishments and one moneylender (most Families usually lend money only to other Family members). All of the more odiferous industries Novomad might support are kept outside the city proper and usually downwind as well.

Magical refrigeration has not caught on in a big way, but there are huge warehouses, underground and lined with ice. These are used for food storage, both as a convenience, and for the summer years where certain crops and produce simply are not available. Most urban families still do their shopping on a daily basis, picking up the fresh food they will need for the day's meals, like gôtesmilk, poultry, fish, fresh vegetables and so on. These are trucked in by pedal-wagon early each morning from outlying areas. Richer families will have supplies delivered to their door by travelling vendors, which also includes the ever-present coal pedal-train and its sooty crew.

Prevailing winds carry most smoke away from the city, but ash and soot are everywhere, since every building has at least one fire going at least once a day, and fires burn all the time in the winter. This accumulation gives Novomad a grayish cast that builds up until the rain or snow washes it away or covers it up for a while. The city has a smell all its own, but it is far better than any Earth city up to the end of the nineteenth century.

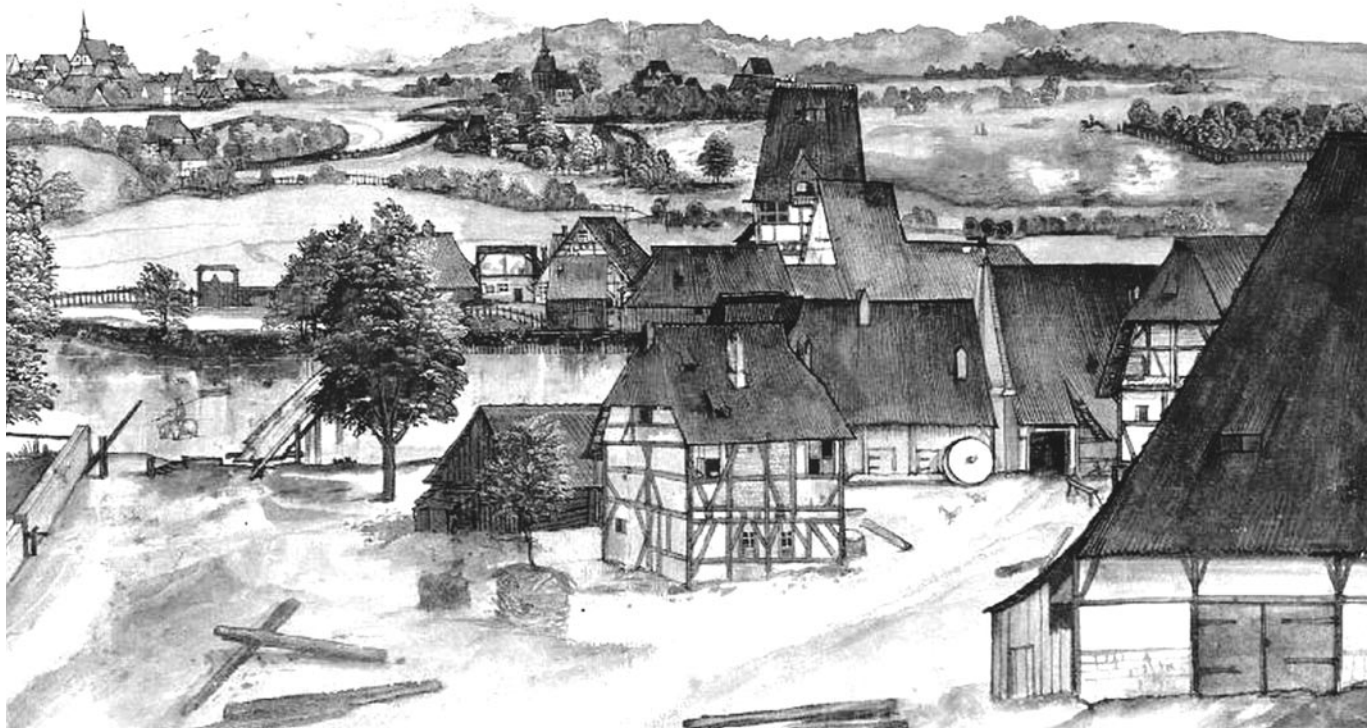


Rural Life - Outside the city are farms, plantations and the occasional "factories", where guilds do work associated with their trade secrets. Buildings are put on land unsuitable for agriculture, like rocky outcroppings, steep hills and such. Any land suitable for agriculture is used for it. As a result, farms consist of tightly clustered and often haphazard groups of houses, barns and outbuildings, surrounded by wide expanses of fields or forest (tree farms). How many buildings and what size depends on the size of the family and its relative prosperity. Most homes have a large south facing with an adjustable overhang. Glass or marble sheeting lets in enough light and heat to grow summer fruits and vegetables in all but the coldest and darkest months. In the summer, the area is used as a drying shed.

With family and workers clustered so close together, larger farms are mini-communities, and economize by having certain common facilities. The farm may have a common bathhouse, mess hall, laundry, nursery or even a swimming pool. You may live in the same large house your entire life, simply moving into different rooms at different stages of your life. Everyone has responsibilities and learns them at an early age. While men and women are equal, there is a division of labor along sexual lines. Men end up doing the heavy lifting and dirty work far from the house, and women tend to get the jobs that are lighter (if no less dirty) and closer to the home. This is not a hard and fast rule, and there is no real notice taken if the roles are reversed, it just ends up "men in the fields, women at home" most of the time.

It is impossible to keep secrets for any length of time on a farm (at least within one's gender), since gossip is a major form of entertainment. Loyalty to one's farm is second only to one's Family, and there are numerous informal sporting events between farms. These have great social importance, even though the only prize is bragging rights.

▼ **MONEY - EABA** uses Credits as a generic unit of currency. In Novomad, the unit of currency has the same value, but is called the Eur (pronounced "Yur"). The Eur is largely an abstract. Since until recently, Novomad has had little outside trade, a variety of loan and credit documents have been used instead of gold or silver for large transactions. Once notarized by proper officials, these are considered as good as any other form of exchange. An adventurer might pay for a flintlock with a piece of scrip that says it can be exchanged at Atmar Heifos's farm for two sheep. The gunsmith might trade that scrip to a Francos blacksmith for barrel metal, and the blacksmith trade it to a Matamoros miner for pig iron. And everyone is happy with that. Lesser debts are paid with copper and copper-silver coinage of varying denominations, up to the 5 Eur coin. These are standardized and consistent in their metal content.



EABA

For ease of reference, both wages and prices of goods in Novomad are comparable to modern figures and salaries for a given level of skill use the standard **EABA** scale (with any penalties that might apply if your adventurer is an outsider). Guilds and lack of heavy industry may make some goods disproportionately expensive, but they are not completely out of line with wages.

Of late, the idea of trade with distant regions has become possible, so "hard currency" in larger denominations has been minted, including the 10 Eur silver piece (50 grams) and the 100 Eur gold piece (10 grams). These coins are part of a long-term strategy to increase the reach of Novomad influence. These have gained acceptance among the outside cultures that value precious metals, though many just get melted down and made into jewelry. All the coinage comes with six different faces (one for each Family), with a common reverse side listing the denomination and date of issue.

▼ For reference, it is the Novomad year 803AC (ante-Cataclysm). Historians may argue whether or not this is exactly accurate, but it matters in a real sense to very few people. This calendar is of course only used by the people of Novomad. The calendar used by Plainsfök and Hilfök is based on local events that happened some decades after the Cataclysm. Plainsfök measure in terms of how many migrations they have made (two per Turning (see **Climate**, page 2.19)), while Hilfök use a terminology based on the number of Turnings since the Cataclysm and the number of years since the deepest winter of the Turning. For the Plainsfök it is Year 3 of Migration 46, though they have a form of shorthand to make the recording less unwieldy. For the Hilfök it is year 24:4. These cycles do not exactly match the Novomad dating system, but are close enough for most purposes.

▼ **TECHNOLOGY** - Novomad is Middle Basic Era in outlook and deed, with a little boost from Ancient know-how. The people of Novomad know the Ancients had more of everything: more knowledge, more magic, more resources. All were lost in the Cataclysm. Concepts remain, modified by the experience of daily life. The stars are known to be distant relatives of the sun, and the planets other worlds like Ythrek, assumed to have life like Ythrek, but no one truly knows. Weather and other natural phenomenon are capricious and only sometimes predictable, but are known to have an underlying logical basis and only rarely manifest the will and intent of greater spirits. However, Novomad is a major center of civilization. Such enlightened attitudes are not necessarily found elsewhere.

Sanitation is primitive in construction, but quite practical. Diseases and illnesses are treated as such, not as evil spirits or vile humours. There are still the unknown maladies sometimes associated with the Cataclysm, but even they are treated as best as is possible. Medical equipment may be primitive, but it is backed up with magic, so healing of both duelling and surgical injuries is rapid for those who choose to spend the money on it.

Metalworking and stoneworking are well advanced, though machines more complex than a hand-crafted clock are not a part of daily life. The metal of choice is iron, mined from the Guardian Mountains in small quantity and smelted by blacksmiths and armorers to get steel of varying properties. Firearms are a cooperative venture between a handful of armorers and jewellers, the armorers providing the barrels and rough castings, and the jewellers finishing the lockwork before subcontracting to the furniture-makers guild for the stocks or grips. The plethora of skilled artisans involved makes guns about four times as expensive as they should be.

There are not as many growing things as there used to be, but herblore is detailed for what little remains. There are numerous concoctions of varying effectiveness as antibiotics, sedatives, painkillers, hair dyes, cosmetics and, of course, poisons.

Books are uncommon, but can be produced in quantity if needed. The limiting factor is not the supply of wood pulp for paper, but that there are just too few compelling titles for the limited literate market that Novomad represents. Every licensed Guild shop needs a copy of its own particular regulations, and most homes have a copy of the Kelveno Cycle and maybe a commentary, just because it is one of the more popular philosophical topics to debate when the weather is too foul to do anything else.

There is *no* heavy industry in the Novomad region. There are a few waterwheels along the Charmed River and on streams in the Guardian Mountains, used for various light industrial work (milling, trip hammers, fulling, pumping), and windmills in the countryside for milling and pumping, but everything else is done by human labor. This makes certain engineering projects extremely difficult, even with magical assistance. All public works and industries have to deal with Ythrek's extremes of climate. Waterwheels on the Charmed River have to be able to handle very low flow in the peak of summer, and heavy ice jams in the dead of winter. Water pipes have to be well below the frost line. Exposed parts have to be able to handle heavy winds and ice loads, as well as extreme heat and blowing dust.

There are *no* heavy draft animals, all having died in the Cataclysm (as far as anyone knows), so all transport is done by human labor. Even dogs are extinct (though cats, rats and roaches made it). In the city and along the stone roads to the outlying communities, pedalwagons are used for transport. These range from one-person vehicles like a primitive bicycle, to small vendor wagons or taxis, up to "trains" pedalled by up to ten people, used to carry several tons of coal in a number of standard one and a half meter wide cars. Fortunately the Novomad valley is almost flat, and the road from the main coal mine is mostly downhill to the city. Especially heavy cargoes may be magically compressed, and re-expanded upon reaching their destination. This depends on the distance and the profit margin. Sometimes it is just cheaper to hire extra pedalers.

No one has gotten around to making a rail line to the various mines yet, but proposals are circulating among potential investors. Magical enhancement of human effort has proven more economical than attempts to directly use magic as a power source in all but a handful of applications. Labor is cheap (cheaper than magic, anyway), and expensive enchantments can be disenchanting by your unscrupulous competitors. In areas without paved roads, you get yourself and your goods there by walking or by pullcart, the latter of which usually has wide wooden tires to stay on top of the mud in unpaved areas.

Fortunately, most of the livestock available can move itself from place to place, so herding and transport of gôtes, sheep and swine is not a problem if they were properly lamed when young, and poultry can be easily carted or carried. Livestock is bred to the land's capacity to support in the good decades, and slaughtered down to minimal levels for the poor years, the surplus meat dried or otherwise preserved to carry people over until conditions improve.

Plowing fields is more difficult. Many crops only require light tilling, but others do better if the soil is turned deep. It may take ten men to pull a plow for a deep furrow, and it is not easy work. The shortage of labor has been partially solved by the Novomad judicial system. Fines and punishments are meted out in terms of Eurs or kilometers, depending on the defendant. Eurs are the units of currency, equal to a Credit. Kilometers are worth about 100 Eurs, and are just the length of a furrow that has to be plowed as part of a sentence. A defendant given a fine of 1,000 Eurs or 10 kilometers can choose to pay the fine, or to get harnessed into a plow team (when summoned) until he or she has helped plow 10 kilometers of land. If a fine is chosen, the money is split between the Families, with a larger proportion going to the Heifos, which is used to subsidize salaries for people willing to be "plow horses".

As a side note, the default fine for being an undocumented worker (i.e. illegal immigrant) is 1,000 Eur. A lot of fields get plowed this way, and the Novomad government doesn't seem that interested in kicking these individuals out of town. They would rather just keep catching them breaking the law, at least until summer or winter sets in and no real agriculture is possible...

▼ **TRADE** - Outside trade is a new thing. It just got started last fall, and stopped when the long winter started. Now that it is spring again, plans to renew old contacts and make new ones are underway. Trade caravans, such as they are, run across old footpaths or the ruins of Ancient roads. These are usually large pullcarts, sometimes with several men in harness. These men also rotate guard duty, also walking, but at least not pulling a cart loaded with goods. On good trails or roads, a good day will see twenty kilometers of travel. That aren't that many good trails or roads, though. Ten is closer to average for a loaded caravan, and in hills or mountains it is half this, often with long delays while teams double up to pull one cart to the top of a hill, then walk down the hill to get the next cart. In addition to trade goods, the wagons also carry some of the food and all the camping supplies for the caravan, making the load doubly heavy. Trade goods are almost always magically compressed for efficiency on the outgoing trip, though the mages who know this spell are not often willing to leave the comfort of the city in order to help compress goods for the long return trip.

There only a handful of ships plying trade, along the coast of the Great Sea to Plainsfök settlements south of the Gate of Eternity. These are operated by Plainsfök on a seasonal basis, depending on which cities are currently occupied. The Charmed River is not navigable for large stretches, and it has to date been impractical to use it for trade. A small, magically propelled barge runs some goods from one end of the valley to another when the river conditions permit.

As might be expected, any imported goods have an extremely high overhead. The salaries of the laborers, many of whom have military training, plus the hazards and losses associated with this risky business, make imported goods many times more expensive than normal (something the gamemaster should consider for the equipment list). If the trade chain is more than one merchant long, prices will absolutely skyrocket. For instance, silk comes from somewhere to the far east, far beyond Novomad's fledgling trade routes, and is worth several times its weight in silver.

Goods imported into Novomad (from various directions) include quality flints for flintlocks, small ingots of nickel for alloy steel, rare spices, salt, uncut gems, ivory, silk, obscure artifacts and magical knowledge. Many of these items have value only because they can be used as signs of status. Silk is tremendously expensive and no one knows exactly where it comes from, therefore simply having it is a sign of ostentatious wealth.

Goods exported from Novomad include most manufactured goods, like knives, swords, generic armor sections (mail links, scale plates), tools, small telescopes (a popular item), books, paper, needles, glass beads, cut gems, and a small selection of magic items or potions. Flintlocks are banned for export at this time, though "personal" weapons often end up being sold for a significant profit.

Current trade routes are limited to a few Hilfök and Plainsfök settlements, with possible side trips possible based on knowledge gained from these journeys.

▼ **TRAVEL** - There are three ways to get around on Ythrek: You walk, you take a ship, or you use magic. Very few have the luxury of the latter. The Ancients did have draft animals for riding or pulling loads, but they did not survive the Cataclysm. There are small, mean-tempered food animals known as gôtes, but they can do no more than pull a child-sized cart and don't work well in teams. There are wild and *really* mean-tempered animals known as bisonts, but all attempts to tame or domesticate them have failed. While one can do the pulling work of ten men, it requires a mage to spell the beast into tractability, and bisonts seem to have an inherent resistance to this sort of control, always seeming to break free of control and wreak havoc at the worst possible times. The lack of draft animals means what bulk trade exists in Ythrek is handled by ships, and there really isn't a lot of that. No populated area needs goods from outside to survive, so trade is only in luxury items. Few sailing vessels ply the Poison Sea, for no one lives on its shores. The salt poisons the nearby land so crops will not grow, and the water itself has no fish. The villages along the coast of the Great Sea do not often produce or need luxuries from other places. As a result, there are only a handful of merchant ships in the entire region known to Novomad sages, and these usually sail from a town near the Gate of Eternity down the coast to Plainsfök settlements.

In the Novomad region, there are no inns, taverns or other places to rest on a trip except in towns or cities. In the wilderness, adventurers are on their own. Travellers from outside an area are rare enough that if hospitality is available in a village, it will be given in exchange for news, knowledge or some reasonable token of appreciation.

People in Ythrek stay close to known areas for a reason, and don't really like to travel outside these areas. There are many perils in the unexplored regions. There are for lack of a better word, monsters. Anything that can reliably survive the harsh seasonal changes does so by being able to eat anything that comes its way, and being able to take on the worst that nature can throw at it. Poisonous or carnivorous plants, armored diggers, lurking pouncers and herds of aggressive herbivores that would just as soon trample you as look at you. Wild swine are notoriously defensive of their territory and their young, and are positively incensed by the smell of bacon. There are dragons in the Guardian Mountains, scaly winged beasts of significant power, but by and large they avoid humans except when very hungry. They are capable of speech, though poorly and few use the talent. *Hilfök* know how to deal with them better than most. Areas long inhabited have had these creatures dealt with, though there are occasional problems in outlying areas.

The seasonal extremes of Ythrek's climate are a travel hazard in themselves. In the worst summer months, extreme hardness and excellent area knowledge are required to cover a significant distance without overheating or running out of water. In the worst winter months, bitter cold, howling winds, twenty or more hours of darkness each day, and a near lack of firewood in most areas make long distance travel just as hazardous. The ocean freezes for several kilometers out from shore in most places, and fishing communities survive only by long experience at fishing through holes carved or melted in the ice. Of course, magic can ameliorate a lot of these seasonal problems, if you can afford the price and find a mage who wants to travel in conditions like this.

Then there are Ancient pitfalls. Leftover effects of the Cataclysm linger on, even after centuries have passed. Invisible poisons in the soil, water or air have claimed entire homesteading families, sometimes by surprise in a single night, sometimes when they find they are barren or their children are born deformed. Legends of evil spirits or animate agents of the Cataclysm are told to scare children, but groups of well-armed explorers *have* disappeared for unknown reasons, no traces ever found. Some areas known only as vague spots on a map are still considered dangerous to approach, though none have been there in living memory. There are tales of ruins where a man might lie down to sleep and wake to find all his possessions stolen by spirits and his body shaved clean, of land so evil that even to turn the soil is to invite death, or creatures neither alive nor dead but willing to feed on both.

Last, there are other people. Inbreeding and isolation are well-known dangers. Novomad was supposedly founded by six families and only strict rules about lineage prevented inbreeding during the early generations after the Cataclysm. Other surviving groups may have been a single family at first. After countless generations, a certain amount of degeneration will have set in, either genetically or behaviorally. Cannibals are known of, as are clans who kill outsiders on sight. There are credible reports of towns or even small cities who all stem from a single family, worship a depraved spirit, or who share some obscure magical ability. Shortly before the last winter, a decimated trade delegation returned to Novomad with tales of a freehold whose people changed form at will and drank the blood of animals. And as it turned out, the blood of visitors as well.

War among the "civilized" peoples is unknown at this time. There are just not enough people for large armies, nor will the land support them on a long march. And most importantly, few areas have so many people that conquest is the only means of supporting them. Most violence is a matter of culture or survival, not of empire building.

▼ **ANCIENT THINGS** - It is known the Ancients were numerous, and built cities the likes of which have not been seen since the Cataclysm. The magic they used is either vanished or of a type no longer fathomed by the people of Ythrek, but that does nothing to keep them from trying to unravel its secrets.

The only Ancient secret thus far of practical use is Ancient metal. It is found in sizes from flakes barely visible to chunks as large or larger than the wedge in Novomad's central square. Though it looks and feels much like steel, it is almost as hard as diamond, and cannot be worked in a forge nor altered by, created by or detected by magic. *Sometimes*, it can be cut into smaller pieces or shaped with diamond-tipped tools, a laborious and expensive process. A few wealthy individuals in Novomad own blades that are fashioned from or edged with scraps of Ancient metal. Their hardness and sharpness lets them act as armor-piercing against anything except Ancient metal (subtract 1d+0 from armor). An item made from Ancient metal would be perhaps a hundred times the cost of its regular equivalent, more if it was a complex shape.

Any largely intact items of Ancient metal are generally called "artworks". While their form might be convenient to the hand, they are oddly shaped and seldom can one figure out what they are or what they did. Attempts to use magic to make them work again have been either fruitless or disastrous. Mages who come across such items are permitted to tinker with them all they want, but after an incident that leveled several houses two centuries ago, experimentation with magic is only allowed outside city walls. Of those items locked in the vaults of the Librotecha, several hum when exposed to sunlight, one is always cold to the touch, there is a graceful arch of Ancient metal that points northeast regardless of efforts to pivot it, an irregular orb with a glowing opening whose blue emanations cause a corruption of the flesh, and a man-sized cylinder that is always kept with its flared end facing the floor because it gives forth a white-hot blast on an irregular basis that causes whatever it intersects to simply cease to exist (the gently sloped hole in the floor is now over 700 meters long). The magical attempts to gain information on these and other devices have given answers of concepts beyond understanding of Novomad's sages, or in terms that have no meaning in the Novo language ("The spirits say it is a 'conflicular zokori giflop'. When I asked for more, I found it was used to 'reflak the umbiquito by means of bataflaktic akronicity'. Does this help?").

Sites of note - Traces of Ancient roads and structures exist, but little more. The Cataclysm was more than thorough, and time has taken its toll on anything that was not destroyed outright. One can say "a building once stood here", "this was a road of some kind" or "this was once a city". Oddly stained soil might betray where some Ancient thing eventually turned to dust, and in a few places there are useless wonders. There are countless places that are considered dangerous because of violent weather, tainted water, foul air and other hazards associated with the Cataclysm. Only a few have a distinctly identifiable focus.

Tagus Dam - If one follows the trail of stone-like stumps that extend southeast of the Ancient city outside of Novomad, they will eventually lead to a great dam in another set of mountains. Hundreds of meters high, what was once a lake is now completely filled with silt, and whatever river once flowed into it is now but a trickle. Though the surrounding countryside is dry, a forest of sorts grows from the near-vertical face of the dam, surviving on hidden moisture. As the largest known Ancient structure around Novomad, it is considered a wonder of sorts. Expeditions have tried to excavate its interior, but recurring outbreaks of an unknown sickness have prevented any progress. Even the trees growing on its face cannot be harvested for lumber without risk of illness and the wood itself retains some Ancient taint. The structure is named for what is thought to have been the Ancient name for the river that once flowed through this area.

The Seven Spires - Situated on a dusty plain about a hundred kilometers north of the Guardian Mountains, these are seven spikes of Ancient construction, twice the height of a man, jutting from a bed of some material harder than rock but softer than Ancient metal. Melted and deformed like inverted icicles in a windstorm, their "flags" point to some horrific event to the west. Deformation of lesser artifacts elsewhere converge at a point some five hundred kilometers off, near the shore of the Great Sea. This area is a vast salty swamp except for a ruined city on a perfectly circular island in its center. Predators, disease, distance and the sheer size of the city have prevented more than a cursory examination or the return of any artifacts of significant size.

Ancient Roads - Remnants of these criss-cross Ythrek, sometimes usable, sometimes just chunks of paving sticking out of the ground. The actual substance is unknown. It is harder than steel, lighter than stone, and brittle as glass. It has little use in Novomad except as arrowheads or spear points, but a few large slabs have been worked into things like vault doors.

No one has found a way to work it. Magical shaping causes it to lose its inherent hardness and pieces thin enough to be used as armor or swords are too brittle to stand up to the punishment they would take in normal use. A knife made from it would be about a quarter the mass of a normal knife, but would have no special abilities.

The Ancient roads were of varying but standard dimensions. They range from six meters wide at the narrowest, to three separate but parallel roads of twenty-four meters each. Rarely does one find any trace of structures along the roads, but given that in many sections the roads appear to have been melted completely through their one meter depth, this is not too surprising.

Abomination Grass - Abomination grass is not a wonder, but something the Ancients were responsible for one way or the other. It is a hardy desert grass that ekes out a pitiful living in places where nothing else can. By some adapted or created quirk of its nature, it thrives best in places most poisoned by the Cataclysm. Over the centuries, an entire ecosystem has developed around it, specialized insects, lizards, rodents, herbivores and carnivores feeding on it and each other. This would be useful to Novomad if this ecosystem weren't poisonous to people and their domestic animals (and vice versa). A simple blood-sucking insect bite can leave a festering sore that takes weeks to heal, and the fact that the insect was poisoned by your blood is little consolation. Any injury caused by a creature from this ecosystem is counted as a crippling injury for purposes of healing time, and even effects that would not normally be noticed by a person have 0d+1 damage (like thorn bushes or insect bites). Magical attempts to remove the poison from plants or meat also apparently removes their nutritional value. While tolerant to Cataclysm poisons, the abomination grass ecosystem is not immune to them, and grossly malformed and/or dangerously large and violent creatures sometimes occur in areas where this is common. Abomination grass serves as a warning to travellers to "don't eat the food, don't drink the water..."

Lake of Sorrows - Centered in a bowl-shaped depression on a hilltop several hundred kilometers south of Novomad, it appears to be a crystal-clear and glass-smooth lake several hundred meters across. However, the "water" almost instantly dissolves anything dipped in it, as though it were the strongest of acids. Only Ancient metal seems to be immune to the effects. The bed of the lake appears to be that of a normal lake, though perfectly smooth and obviously devoid of life. A sample taken with a container of Ancient metal was found to be ordinary water once removed from the lake's vicinity. It is unknown then why the water level remains constant, neither evaporating in summer or freezing in winter. It is widely assumed that this location contains some still-active agent of the Cataclysm and the entire area is generally avoided.

Dragon Eggs - These are teardrop shaped lumps of rock about the size of a person's head, sometimes uncovered on dusty plains after a bad windstorm. Most of the time they are just rocks, but sometimes if broken they contain encapsulated fragments of the Cataclysm. Released, they cause days to weeks of decay, death, mutation and madness anywhere the wind blows their dust. Everyone gives them a wide berth. Plainsfök mark their location with cairns, and especially brave Plainsfök will make authorized pilgrimages to carry a dragon egg to the Poison Sea and dump it in the depths where it can cause no harm. Individuals that survive this pilgrimage may wear a distinctive tattoo as a mark of honor. No culture that knows of dragon eggs allows their possession for any purpose other than immediate transport to a recognized place of disposal. The Lake of Sorrows is not used for disposal since the one time a Dragon Egg reacted with the Lake to form a killing fog that hung over the region for years.

▼ **CLIMATE** - Ythrek is a world of gradual climactic extremes. Years of brutal drought, warm winters and violent winds gradually change to years of normal seasons, which slowly turn into years of short, cool summers and long, harsh winters. A full cycle takes thirty-two years, and is known as a Turning. One can usually tell about what year a stranger was born in, not only from apparent age, but because children born in the long winters grow up looking slightly different than those born during the drought years. Hilfök are generally not seen at all in the worst winter years. They kill their surplus livestock and hole up in their mountain fortresses, returning to the surface only when the ice has melted. Plainsfök wander with the climate. In harsh summer years they move north, crossing the Poison Sea to reach cooler plains. Before the coldest years they move south, to plains that are too hot to live in during other parts of the Turning. Novos just stay in one place, building homes banked with earth to keep out blistering sun and winter chill, storing the bounty of spring years for the years when harvests are poor or even non-existent.

Ythrek's climate has several overlapping and interfering cycles. First is the normal orbital tilt of the planet, responsible for seasons much as on Earth. This gives four seasons per year. Second is a wobble in this orbital tilt. This varies on an eight year cycle and gives extreme changes in day length at the far end (twenty or more hours of day or night). Third is a slight irregularity in its orbital distance around the sun, varying on a thirty-two year cycle. Combined with the second, this gives a long-term cycle of harsh summers and warm winters, grading slowly into harsh winters and cold summers. Both of these are believed to be a result of the Cataclysm. Last is an irregularity in the weather itself, similar to the El Niño and La Niña phenomena (caused by cyclical changes in warm ocean currents). This is a fairly regular sixteen year cycle, but can fluctuate wildly. Every so often, the worst summers are wet and cool enough for farming, and sometimes winters are so cold it can't even snow. The seasons are named normally, with the regular season the first part of a special word for the sixteen possible seasons in an eight year orbital tilt cycle.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Orbital tilt	Cold	Cold	Avg.	Avg.	Hot	Hot	Avg.	Avg.	Cold	Cold	Avg.	Avg.	Hot	Hot	Avg.	Avg.
Orbital distance	Cold	Cold	Cool	Cool	Cool	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Hot	Warm	Warm	Warm
Ocean currents	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Warm	Warm	Warm	Warm	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Cool	Cool	Cool	Cool	Avg.
Harvests(1-10 scale)	0	0	3	8	9	7	10	10	7	7	9	10	9	9	9	8
Year	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Orbital tilt	Cold	Cold	Avg.	Avg.	Hot	Hot	Avg.	Avg.	Cold	Cold	Avg.	Avg.	Hot	Hot	Avg.	Avg.
Orbital distance	Hot	Hot	Warm	Warm	Warm	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Cool	Cool	Cool
Ocean currents	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Warm	Warm	Warm	Warm	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Avg.	Cool	Cool	Cool	Cool	Avg.
Harvests(1-10 scale)	9	9	6	4	1	2	7	10	7	7	8	8	9	8	5	2

There is no special term used for the orbital distance part of the seasonal cycle, but an archaic term is found in early manuscripts. People found that naming over a hundred possible seasons was too cumbersome. Anyone who needs to will just put a number after the season to note which part of the cycle it is in. Each orbital tilt season lasts two years, and each regular season lasts about three months.

Orbital tilt	Season			
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Winter	-deep	-lost	-fail	-gone
Spring	-break	-hope	-rise	-back
Summer	-mild	-full	-fire	-dry
Fall	-grown	-last	-fade	-stark

EXAMPLE: The seasons starting at the first Winterdeep would be: Winterdeep, Springlost, Summerfail, Fallgone, Winterdeep, Springlost, Summerfail, Fallgone. This is years 1-2 on the chart below. Then you would move to a slightly warmer orbital tilt and distance, which would give the seasons Winterbreak, Springhope, Summerise, Fallback, Winterbreak, Springhope, Summerise, Fallback. This is years 3-4 on the chart below.

Most Ythrek campaigns will start in Springhope². This is year 4 on the chart below (years 3-4 contain Springhope¹ and Springhope², while years 11-12 contain Springhope³ and Springhope⁴). This is the first year in a Turning when harvests are sufficient to feed the population. Many good harvests will follow before the terrible summers begin (game master preference). People who had been hunkered down to survive the cold years begin exploring again, things best left buried are unearthed by the rains, and evil plans made over the past several years now have a chance to unfold. People only use seasonal suffixes in records or conversations about times past or times to come. In the present, everyone knows what season it is and what part of the cycle, so in common usage, the current season would just be "Spring" instead of "Springhope".

▼ **Note** - The "harvest" scale is a general number, subject to the whims of the weather, and of course augmentable by magic. A harvest of "7" would be barely enough to get by.

The calendar is based on thirteen months, using a twenty-eight day cycle of Ythrek's lone moon, each month having four weeks of seven days, one of which is set aside as a day of rest, worship or entertainment. The months are Janiero, Febrio, Marco, Avri-la, Maya, Juna, Julio, Austo, Sevrilo, Octobra, Nuvem-bra, Deciem-bra and Selenid.

The daytime *summer* temperature for Novomad will reach about -5°C (23°F) in Winterdeep (years 1 and 2 of the cycle). Summer days reach 70°C (158°F) during Summerfire (year 21 of the cycle). Nighttime temperatures are 5-10°C lower, and exceptional weather will usually bring at least one week-long spell that is 5-10°C more or less than normal. Hilfök are used to even worse winters, and Plainsfök move north rather than endure the even hotter summers they would otherwise face. Both winter and summer parts of the orbital cycle are dryer than normal, with most precipitation (still meager) occurring in spring and fall years. Cultivation is all but impossible during the hottest and coldest years of a Turning, and people must rely on what has been stored from previous harvests, and slaughter livestock as conditions require. In fact, for the worst years of a Turning, almost all outdoor activity stops. People abandon the upper floors of a dwelling to be closer to the moderating effects of their earthen basements, travelling outdoors only when they have to. These are good times for adventurers to pick up some training should a campaign last long enough to worry about it.

▼ **HOLIDAYS** - Novomad has a handful of holidays, which usually do not intersect with those of Hilfök or Plainsfök. There are secular yearly holidays like Founder's Day (Avri-la 23), and religious yearly holidays like those for Inla (Recon-cil, Juna 12) and Santo (Dividen, Sevrilo 28). There is also Calendar Day (Selenid 0), which is used for reconciling the slight discrepancy of a 364 day calendar and slightly more than 365 day celestial year. Some years (once every century or two) may have more than one Calendar Day. Calendar Day does not exist on the records. No business is done, no duels are fought. Traditionally, gifts of some value are exchanged between close family and friends. The astronomical turning of the seasons is recognized on the calendar, but such days are not holidays.

There are also Turning-based astronomical dates, which are celebrated as holidays of some significance and with quasi-religious overtones, a sort of solstice based on orbital distance. There are only four of these per Turning. These are Darknight (Deciem-bra 28, Winterdeep¹), Daybreak (Marco 7, Springlost³), Burnloss (Juna 14, Summerfail⁵) and Firefade (Sevrilo 21, Fallgone⁷). These would be during years 1, 9, 17 and 25 on the previous table.

▼ **RELIGION** - There are two main deities in Ythrek, the same ones worshiped by the Ancients. They are referred to by a number of names in different languages. In the Central tongue Novomad uses, they are Cipher and Hoowha, lords of chaos and order. Both are given due lip service and respect as opposing forces that are both required for the universe to function. There are a few extremists in each camp, but they are largely ignored. Religion is one of the few things that is *not* dueled over in Novomad. One's worship is a private, personal matter that is none of your business as long as that worship does not violate other laws (like human sacrifice...). To insult someone else's religion is to demean yourself. This does not prevent scholarly argument on spiritual topics, but it *does* prevent these discussions from getting too ugly...

The deities are unseen, unknowable and unavailable. They no longer work in the world of mortals save indirectly through their holy writ. The business of guiding mortals is left to their Spirits, each representing some different aspect of the deity, and who are minor deities unto themselves, such as Osof, the spirit of commerce, to whom merchants pray for good business, or Poxa, the spirit of disease, whom one carefully beseeches if they want an enemy to come down with boils or warts. Each of these spirits has their own chapters of teachings which add to or elaborates on the holy writ of Cipher or Hoowah. The most common spirits have some aspect of each deity, and may be seen as a single spirit, or as two spirits, one for each side of a given aspect. These spirits generally do not directly manifest either, but have been known to. They are not all-powerful or all knowing, nor are seen as such by the common man. However, they are a lot more powerful than the common man, and are given (and expect) due respect. They are also proof that life exists beyond the mortal body, and that there is something in each of us that continues past this plane of existence. Both Cipher and Hoowah have their own forms of the afterlife. Each has one for those who serve their Spirits well, and one for those who don't. Each deity's teachings portray the other's "heaven" as false advertising (the "hells" are generally accepted as bad). Cipher's "heaven" is said by Hoowah to be a place of eternal struggle and no reward, while Hoowah's "heaven" is said by Cipher to be a sterile and changeless realm where all that is not mandatory is forbidden. Each Spirit or aspect of Cipher and Hoowah apparently has its own domain within these afterlives, with some variation on the overall theme. The truth is a mystery. Even the summoned spirits of the departed remain mute on the matter.

Normally when it comes to the spirits, one just prays and hopes. The more aggressive spirits may grant boons or powers to the especially faithful, who are seen as priests of that spirit and use those gifts for the furtherance of that spirit's ends. The rarity of these gifts is attested to by there only being two priests in all of Novomad, one for Inla, Cipher's spirit of strife and reconciliation, and one for Santo, Hoowha's spirit of death and rebirth. Both are highly respected outside of normal Family ties, a unique exception to the normal power structure. Both spirits are of obvious importance given the nature of Novomad's reliance on agriculture and its marginally stable form of government. There is little chance of a spirit ever manifesting for an adventurer unless that adventurer has done something that affects the spirit's power or performance of its duties for the deity. And such an adventurer had better hope what they did was good for the spirit in question.

There is no formal dice-rolling mechanism to invoke the presence or direct aid of a greater spirit. Lesser entities are within the power of a mage to summon and coerce with spells. For greater spirits it is always a gamemaster decision based on the adventurer and circumstance. Such are the things legends are made of.

Other, less beneficial spirits exist, and have their own followings in other parts of the world. Mogo the Childslayer, Roeno the Unseen and Vorta the Stormbringer are among those whose worship is forbidden under Novomad law, but who may have strong followings elsewhere.

The main text regarding the spirits and matters religious is the Book of Endings and Beginnings. All the big spirits have something to say in chapter 9 of that work, and any text which disagrees with the Book of Endings and Beginnings doesn't carry much weight among the faithful. There are texts of varying authority on particular spirits, some seen as holy writ by splinter groups and apocryphal works by everyone else, other texts just as commentaries or the historical record of events where the spirits were present or were otherwise involved. There is no work equivalent to the Book of Endings and Beginnings among the Plainsfök or Hilfök. They have much smaller tomes about the spirits they prefer to worship, and many will have a small copy of one of these among their personal possessions.

▼ **OTHER CULTURES** - Novos are not the only civilized people around, though they might act that way sometimes. Novomad is simply the largest and most advanced area within a thousand kilometers. Within that area are two other significant cultures (Hilfök and Plainsfök) and a small but widely diverse type of subculture (Freeholds).

Hilfök - The nearest Hilfök settlements are a few thousand people on the slopes of the Guardian Mountains. These are half a dozen communities from a few hundred to up to a thousand Hilfök, all within about a day's walk of the closest other settlement in good conditions. In a few years decent trails will have been carved through the difficult parts of the mountains, making travel possible in all conditions. Difficult and not particularly pleasant, but possible. These communities have "transient" villages on their lower slopes, within a few day's travel of Novomad. These are heavily earth-bermed, sturdy structures, but they are only used during the spring and fall parts of a Turning. In the hottest and coldest years, they shovel earth over the sunken doorways and securely bar all the windows before retreating back to their permanent dwellings cut into the mountains. The Guardian Mountains are not nearly as high and cold as the ones they are used to, but the high plateaus are significantly cooler than the lowlands during the hottest times, and harsh enough during the coldest that they don't come out to see the sun for several months at a time.

The closest large Hilfök communities (several thousand people) are several weeks to the northeast, along paths that often follow Ancient roads up through the wide isthmus that connects the landmass containing Novomad to a large and largely unexplored continent. Here the Hilfök live around and in the rugged snowcapped peaks. Their tunnels and vaults were originally made by Ancient magic, but have since been repaired, maintained and expanded with Hilfök labor. Each greatly extended family claims a particular mountain and its valleys, and they are largely at peace. Their fighting prowess comes not from warfare, but from defending their herds and fields against predators, including the bands of devolved humans that live in the poisoned mountains and valleys that the Hilfök wisely avoid. Hilfök lands are most productive during the blistering summer years, when their cold valleys become fertile oases. They grow crops of varying kinds depending on the year, but they take their herds and surplus underground to wait out the long winter years.

Hilfök spirit worship is generally tied to the season of one's birth. One born in winter is more likely to feel a kinship for Aphe, spirit of cold and endless night, while one born in summer may feel an affinity to Fasci, spirit of cooperation and strength. As in Novomad, the spirits don't actually involve themselves much in daily life, but offering prayers never hurt anyone. All the spirits of great importance to Hilfök are genderless or dualistic, having both male and female nature in equal parts, though men and women tend to empathise with the part that reflects their own gender.

Within Novomad society, Hilfök are considered outsiders. They are friends and allies, just not Family. That is, they are nice people, but you wouldn't want your sister (or brother) to marry one. Hilfök are more used to living in close quarters for extended periods of time, so they are less prone to take casual insult. While they have a reasonable sense of tact, it is generally not enough to avoid the occasional grate against delicate Novomad egos. As a result, most duels with Hilfök are ones initiated by Novos, which means that Hilfök are often at slight disadvantage, knife fighting not being their main melee skill.

Plainsfök - Plainsfök are more nomadic. They have permanent communities, but rather than radically altering their way of life with the seasons, they simply move to where the seasons are more in tune with their way of life. The few large Plainsfök cities are significantly smaller than Novomad proper, more comparable to the small towns elsewhere in the Novomad valley. Sited near some useful resource, Plainsfök towns are inhabited for perhaps half a Turning, and left largely empty for the remainder, designated or volunteer caretakers riding out the worst years. Each sixteen years, the rest of the population just moves north or south to a city that is productive at that point of the Turning. The majority of Plainsfök cities are several weeks walk south of Novomad, though there is a small but permanent quasi-religious community on the north side of the Gate of Eternity. When it comes time for the weather-induced migrations, Plainsfök pack up what they can carry on pulcarts and herd their flocks down Ancient roads to the shores of the Poison Sea. After basic maintenance on ships drydocked there by the previous generation, they sail across the Poison Sea, mothball the ships, and then walk north to cities in the plains east of the Hilfök lands (or south to cities south of the Poison Sea). There, they move into their family homes and begin life again. The migrations typically occur during Summerfail³ and Summerfail⁷, but can vary by a season or more, depending on the omens and fluctuations in the weather caused by distant ocean currents.

The Plainsfök have done little exploring outside the lands and the travel corridors they call home. Building a new city in unknown lands is a great undertaking, and it must be fully inhabited long enough to know if there are any dangers that could befall it at any time of the year or Turning. The main reasons a new city is considered would be overpopulation of the old cities, or some societal schism or divisive belief that encourages a large enough segment of the population to seriously consider a separate community where everyone believes the same thing or lives by the same creed. The Plainsfök know there are places safe, places dangerous, and places unknown. They avoid both of the latter when possible, preferring to let Ancient secrets lie.

Plainsfök spirit worship is pragmatic. They will pray to whoever seems to be the likely Spirit that attends to a place or season. The only priests they have are a handful aligned with Hedra, spirit of chance. Knowing that they have often been cursed for the sins of the Ancients, they rely heavily on gifts of divination sometimes granted to priests of Hedra for scheduling major events or making decisions that will affect a community.

Like Hilfök, Plainsfök are considered outsiders in Novomad. There are fewer Plainsfök living in Novomad than there are Hilfök. This is perhaps because the larger Plainsfök settlements are further away, or because Plainsfök have acquired a rootless tendency, needing to travel on occasion, even if only to another familiar place. Plainsfök intellectually understand the societal underpinnings and uses of the Novomad duelling tradition, but they have no "feel" for it. Since anyone living in Novomad is subject to Novomad law, Plainsfök are not exempt from duelling, but they never duel among themselves. Many of Novomad's Plainsfök have adopted a "passive resistance" strategy, simply allowing themselves to be cut without offering any defense, supported by a few Plainsfök healers who will treat these injuries at no charge. This painful but passive strategy meets all the legal requirements of a duel, yet does not offer the "feel" of a genuine fight, leaving the Novomad citizen the victor, but without the emotional release a duel normally provides. As a result, many Novos are simply choosing to "not be insulted" by the unintentional transgressions of Plainsfök, rather than cutting one up in a duel and *still* being angry afterwards.

Freeholds - Freeholds are the generic name for any community that isn't a major Hilfök or Plainsfök settlement. These run from several dozen individuals living and dying on a tiny patch of arable land, up to communities of several hundred to a few thousand, barely capable of supporting a few specialized professions like blacksmiths or healers. Genetically speaking, Freeholders are a racial mish-mash, and while long-term selection may make particular Freeholders distinctive, racially they are neither Centrals (like Novomad), Northerns (like Hilfök) or Southerns (like Plainsfök). They are all, and none of the above.

For small freeholds, the entire patch of arable land may have been walled or palisaded in to protect it and the crops from outside predation. For larger ones, the population is usually clustered in a protected area such as a cave network, walled town or hill fort. Like Novomad, Freeholds live through the full Turning in one location, so it has to have protection from winter cold, summer heat, and a reliable water supply year-round. The maximum population of a freehold is limited by the number of mouths they can feed. Over generations, this number has usually reached its maximum, and may be sustained with aquaculture, fungiculture, crude hydroponics, animal husbandry, magic and extremely efficient if low-tech agricultural practices. The usual limiting factor is the water supply. There is some optimum combination of agriculture, animal husbandry and basic human needs that can be met with a certain amount of water, and that is what determines a freehold's maximum carrying capacity. Since water supply varies with season and year, all freeholds have large water cisterns or underground storage, saving any surplus from good times to tide them over the bad times. Water management is very well developed, and water theft or waste is typically a severe social or criminal offense.

Once the maximum carrying capacity of an area is reached, a freehold simply cannot increase the community size without starving to death. As a predictable result, their society is often strange, and may include practices that outsiders would find abhorrent (infanticide, ritual cannibalism). They are always wary of outsiders, and they live at a Late Primitive level of technology (at best). Some have wisely developed tenuous communication lines with other Freeholds to bring in new blood, but many have been inbred for scores of generations, with physical abnormalities and mutations being common.

The fact that most Freeholds live on the edge of sustainability leads to inevitable population crashes. A crop blight, sustained drought, loss of a water source or other calamities can cut a Freehold's population by half in a matter of months. Freeholds hoard any surplus against such misfortune, which usually keeps the worst effects from happening more than once or twice a century. All Freeholds will have tales and parables relating to dark times, and they are part of every Freeholder's childhood education. These are not the sugar-coated tales told to modern children, but harsh lessons in life. Tales of infants given drugged milk for a final sleep, grandfathers stepping into a winter's night so the family had one less mouth to feed, a brother and sister drawing straws to see who gets one water ration, desperate battles against cannibals, and the survivor's struggles to avoid becoming what they just defeated. Cheery tales like this are what Freehold children are weaned on, so keep this in mind when considering how a Freeholder thinks and acts.

The larger Freeholds are usually on the coasts, where they have some fresh water from seasonal rivers, plus the ability to harvest some fish and aquatic plants. Most of these Freeholds are in the northwest, and a few are close enough to trade with each other. This also makes them close enough to covet each other's resources, so relations are always slightly touchy and a fair amount of ritual and protocol has developed to avoid and deflect misunderstandings. A few of the closer communities are on reliable good terms, and regularly exchange commodities and genes, to the benefit of both.

The power structure in a small Freehold is usually fixed, a person at the top with absolute authority, sometimes tempered by a revered elder, mage or shamanic type. Absolute deference to the leader is expected if not demanded, and use of force or coercion common. The fear of being banished to a desolate wasteland (or being killed and eaten) keeps everyone in line and nips in the bud any challenges to the established order. Small Freeholds are not used to dealing with outsiders, especially groups of them, and will at first expect them to know of and submit to the established order of things.

Freeholds of several hundred or more may be the same, but have a better chance of some form of rotating or semi-representative government. A council of elders, an elected governor or other leader with some checks on personal power could exist, which is easier for Novos to understand and deal with. Regardless, Freeholds are always dangerous territory, even when you think you have good relations.

Even if there is established trade or friendships, Freeholders are first and foremost loyal to themselves. If conditions have radically changed since the last visit, so might the quality and amicability of the reception Novos are given.

The religious beliefs of Freeholds are often old, unknown or distasteful. Spirits whose worship is banned by other folk may have found footholds in these little groups, and some Freeholders may even have semi-divine blood in their veins, from rituals whose content can be imagined but is not often spoken of. If their patron spirit tells them to do something, they *will* do it. Freeholders live their entire lives in conditions that are harsh even for Ythrek, and should never be underestimated. Freeholders are also eminently practical. If a particular area worships a particular spirit, and there is a tangible benefit to be had from this worship, then a Freeholder will join in pray as long and devoutly as someone born to that faith by birth. A lot of communities are not fond of this "I'll believe as you do as long as it works" mentality, but in the end it is really only important how the Spirits feel about it...

Freeholders as adventurers - Most adventurers are expected to be members of a Novomad Family, or perhaps one of the slightly exotic but still well-known Plainsfök or Hilfök. But, if the gamemaster and player are willing to put in a little extra effort, a Freeholder can be an adventurer, as long as the player is willing to accept certain limitations. Freeholders have few intrinsic bonuses or penalties because of who they are. Most of their problems come from the people they have to live with...

First, the adventurer will probably need to be a Novomad resident. Since most adventures begin in Novomad, and the nearest Freeholds are several days travel away, continuing to live on the Freehold is not a viable adventure proposition. Living in Novomad means the adventurer not only needs to have an employable skill, they also have to be employed. There *are* exceptions. An adventurer could have just gotten into town. They might also be an "unofficial" resident, an undocumented worker taking odd jobs for less than normal wages. Not very secure, but it happens all the time. This would normally cause the Town Guard to be a minor **Enemy (EABA, page 2.12)**. Any encounters with the Guard are likely to cause problems if someone asks for papers or work permits. It would also be good for two levels of reduced **Wealth (EABA, page 2.18)**.

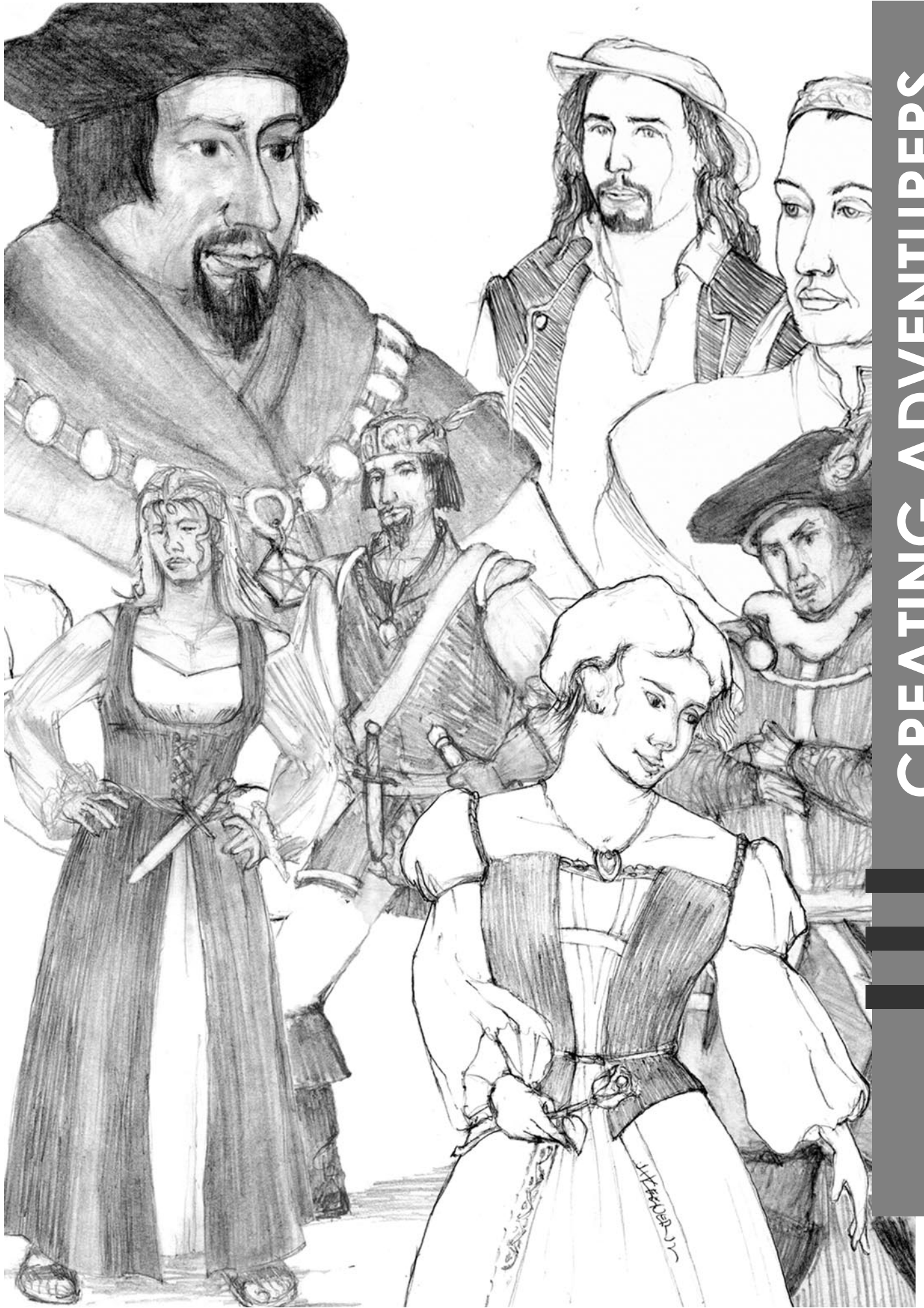
Second, the adventurer will be an outsider in Novomad society. Even Hilfök or Plainsfök will look askance at a Freeholder. Advancement or high rank in the Novomad power structure is never going to happen.

Marriage prospects within Novomad society are almost unthinkable and would cause scandal for years (but the courtship would be rife with adventure potential!). A normal, legally resident Freeholder would have one level of reduced **Status** and one level of reduced **Wealth (EABA, page 2.17 and 2.18)**.

Third, a Freeholder is going to lack a certain level of cultural and technological familiarity with things that Novos take for granted. At first, firearms will seem magical, and flush toilets bizarre. When the death of someone on a Freehold means more food for everyone else, the idea of *not* duelling to the death may take some getting used to, as will the idea that pieces of paper are actually used as a means of exchange (currency). They will get over this ignorance in short order, but it is a stereotype that they will have to put up with for years ("*Hey savage! Don't let the lid hit you when you're taking a drink...*"). Since Freeholders don't have the Novomad duelling mentality, some Novos think they can get away with insulting them. If the Freeholder is known to be a competent duellist, a little more respect is likely to be given... Freeholders also have the cultural advantage that they are not taught from birth to consider blades or pistols as the only "proper" duelling weapons. Freeholders can (and sometimes do) choose odd weapons because they know that Novos consider them uncivilized barbarians that "just don't know any better". Besides, there is a perverse satisfaction to beating someone up with a live gôte...

This is not a Trait or disadvantage, it just means that a Freeholder has a different set of free skills and cultural familiarity than a Novo, and it will take time and experience to get over this. A Freeholder who has lived in Novomad a while might want to spend 5S on the "free skills" package that Novomad adventurers get for free.

A Freeholder's background means they may have certain Traits that other adventurers cannot. In particular, the isolation and harsh conditions may have selected for certain magical abilities or inherent powers that would be rare or non-existent in Novos, Hilfök or Plainsfök. This includes a possibility of being Gifted, or knowing magic spells that have unique limits like "can only be learned by Freeholders". Freeholder adventurers will have to pay for an unusual background among other things, but the player and gamemaster can work out a plausible background and explanation for any unusual Traits or talents that can be agreed upon.



CREATING ADVENTURERS

Should the question arise, blood shall be declared in a duel if a wound can leave a trace of blood on the paper of a duelling permit. Only wounds inflicted by the opposing combatant qualify for blooding. Those caused by accident or incidental contact with the walls or floor of the dueling area do not apply, exception being made if a combatant deliberately forces an opponent into a wall, floor or other obstacle with the clear intent of causing injury by that secondary means and not by the action itself.

Dueling regulat, section 2.4

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Ythrek is a magical world, and one where the powers of technology are not that great. The most advanced devices are simple flintlock pistols and muskets, firing one shot at time and cumbersome to reload. The pistols have the advantage of being compact and cheaper than magic, and are more prevalent in urban areas. A few elite units in the armies of Ythrek use muskets, but largely rely on archery and specialized mages. Other technology is Middle Basic as well, and is likely to stay that way for the next few lifetimes.

Adventurers - Adventurers in Ythrek are Heroic in scale, with a base of 100A and 100S, making them a cut above the normal person. Not counting points from Traits, this is enough for one Attribute at 11(3d+2) and the rest at 8(2d+2) (total of 101A). About eighty percent of the population is Low Normal. Maybe eighteen percent are Normal. About two percent are Heroic, with a fraction of a percent being Grand Heroic and a rare person with Superheroic potential. In the Novomad region, this means there are up to two thousand people with the same potential as the adventurers. These people will naturally gravitate towards the more important positions and levels of wealth. Of these two thousand, maybe two hundred are significantly better, and of these maybe two are really, *really* talented. If the gamemaster doesn't want the adventurers to start off this talented, they can adjust starting points down to Normal levels, putting adventurers in the top twenty percent rather than the top two percent. Without points from Traits, this is still enough for one Attribute at 10(3d+1) and the rest at 7(2d+1)(total of 82A).

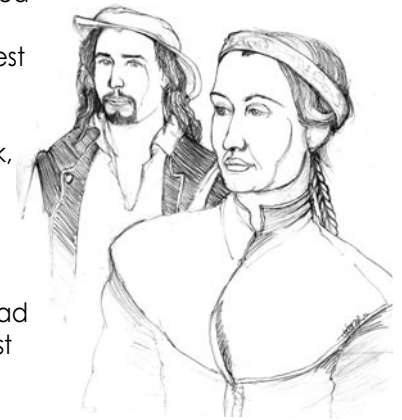
▼ **THE RACES OF YTHREK** - Everyone in Ythrek is human, more or less, biologically compatible in whatever way you measure it. There are great differences in physical nature based on origin, and as civilizations meet and mingle, people of every type can be found in every country. They largely keep with their own kind for familiarity's sake, but only a few places require this by law. The population of Ythrek is still only a tiny fraction of what it once was, and ninety-nine percent of the land is still unclaimed except in name, sometimes the same land claimed by budding empires who have no idea the other even exists.

Centrals - So named by the other races, as they are located closest to each of the others. We would call them standard human stock, average skin color, height and ability. Centrals as a racial grouping generally dominate the Novomad region, having the best overall climate and access to resources.

Centrals in the Novomad campaign area are generally called Novos by the other races. Educated or well-off Novos have access to Middle Basic technology and understand it as well as anyone. The founding Families of Novomad were all Centrals in origin.

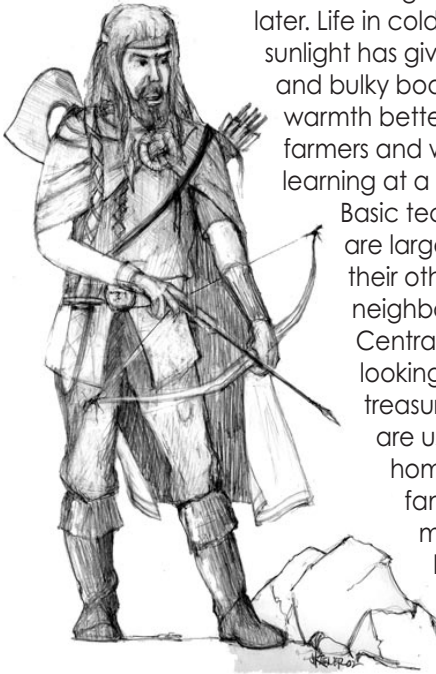
Visualization - Someone outfitted in middle-class Renaissance clothing, not exceptional in their appearance one way or the other.

Skills - Adventurers from Novomad are more likely to have Urban Scrounging and Firearms skills, and a Knife specialization on Blade skill or a separate Short Blade skill (as opposed to a Long Blade skill for things like swords). Novomad natives are less likely to have first-hand knowledge of hazards and ruins outside of the immediate Novomad region, but are more likely to have academic knowledge of distant places.



EABA

Northerns - Usually called Hilfök by the other races. After the Cataclysm, their ancestors fled to inhospitable mountains and deep caves, coming back into the sunlight only generations later. Life in cold climates with less sunlight has given them pale skin and bulky bodies that retain warmth better. They are herders, farmers and warriors, living and learning at a Late Primitive or Early Basic technology level. They are largely at peace with their other Northern neighbors. Those seen in Central empires are largely looking for work, glory or treasure, the fruits of which are usually taken back home to their extended families. Northerns are much more likely to have very high physical Attributes (Gifted), but are also generally less able to use magic (Weakness on Fate for casting any spells and Weakness on Awareness for learning magic).

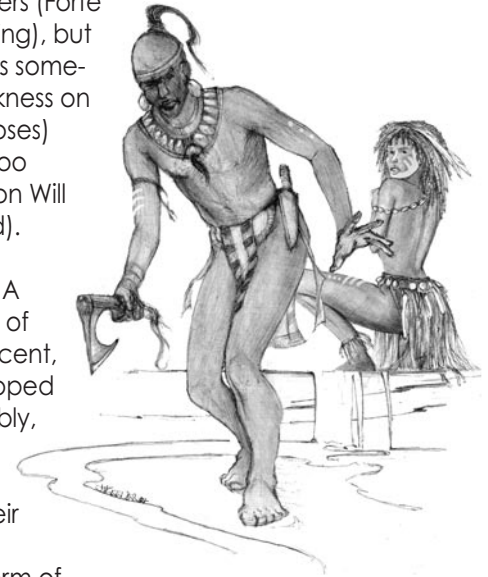


Visualization - A Nordic or Scots strongman from the sixteenth century. Not necessarily a warrior, but taller than average and solidly built.

Skills - Northern adventurers are more likely to have Mountain Scrounging and Archery, and an Axe specialization on Blade skill. What knowledge they have of hazards, ruins or unusual happenings is often based on rumor and oral tradition, but this knowledge can be quite extensive. Keen vision, hearing or memory are good things to have for someone who watches flocks and lives in extended cave networks, and a good Awareness is common among Hilfök.

Southerns - Also called Plainsfök. Their Ancient ancestors lost more than others, leaving these people with little save their lives. Those who did not learn to live off the fruits of the land perished, and their descendants maintain a strong naturalist streak to this day. Plainsfök are generally darker of skin as an adaptation to outdoor life, and are compact and lean. Many mistake their slightly smaller stature as a sign of weakness, which is almost always a mistake. Most Plainsfök are familiar with and use only Primitive era technology. Their archives of knowledge are significantly less than the other races, but they usually have a greater magic potential. Southerns often have more powerful magics (Forte on Fate for spell effects), and great recuperative powers (Forte on Health for healing), but see their people as somehow cursed (Weakness on Fate for luck purposes) and tend to trust too much (Weakness on Will for being suckered).

Visualization - A wiry and fit person of mixed African descent, dressed and equipped sparingly but sensibly, except on special occasions. For these, much of their portable wealth is displayed in the form of elaborate personal adornment.



Skills - Southern adventurers are more likely to have Plains Scrounging and Sorcery, and an Axe specialization on Throwing skill. Their wanderings take them by many hazards and ruins, but outside this limited set, their knowledge is fragmentary. Much of their knowledge of the Ancients is in the form of oral traditions. These may be lacking in dry facts, but contain a lot of symbolism, allegory and inferences that can be interpreted in a very practical sense by a scholar of the tradition.

Free skills - All adventurers have +0d skill in their native language and +0d skill in an Area Knowledge for their region, both as free skills. An adventurer is not considered to be literate unless they have +1d skill in a language, meaning adventurers will have to spend 5S to increase their native language to this level if they want to know how to read. The game-master may elect to give other free skills at a +0d level as part of a cultural package. For instance, Novos might have a +0d skill in Diplomacy, Plainsfök could have +0d Running and Hilfök could have +0d Armorer.

▼ **TRAITS** - The Traits available to adventurers in and around Novomad are the same as those for any other adventurer for the **EABA** system. The world background, history and culture will color how some of these traits apply.

Gifted - Adventurers may be Gifted so their Attributes can exceed normal maximums for their age, but may not be Gifted with supernatural power. These are the province of magic, whose abilities are purchased using the guidelines in that chapter of the rules. An adventurer can also be Gifted so they can also understand and work with technology at an Industrial Era level. Remember that this ability is *non-transferable*. You may be some kind of mutant genius who can understand the principles behind a modern firearm or a primitive airplane, but you can't teach this to anyone else, and anything you make has to be entirely by your hand. Every single bullet for an Industrial Era gun would have to be handmade. Having a knowledge that you can't explain or which no one else can understand can look remarkably like insanity. It would be unbalancing to have the gameworld change appreciably in tech era terms by one adventurer's efforts unless that is the *only* thing they did, and they wouldn't be doing much adventuring then, would they?

Status - The gamemaster has free rein to figure the social structure of Hilfök and Plainsfök in the Novomad region. The Novos have a fairly sharp set of delineations for respect and authority.

Head (three levels of Status) - One member of each Family is the Head. Collectively, the Heads are the Council, which makes all important decisions regarding the city. Their authority over their own family members is absolute, within the boundaries of the law. Their authority over others is less absolute, but still considerable, though more likely to be influenced by politics. By law, a Council member cannot duel. They can challenge or be challenged, and send a proxy to settle the matter for them (all of the proxy duelists for the Heads are professional fighters of at least Grand Heroic stature).

Heir Designate (two levels of Status) - Next in line, each family will have several Heir Designates. They usually hold important public offices and have a lot of leeway in interpreting the laws of that office. One of the Heir Designates will become Head of Family, usually through a document revealed only after the Head's death. They constantly jockey for favor, and only the uncertainty of who will succeed the Head keeps their ambitions in check. The priests of Inla and Santo are outside the normal power structures, but are treated in all ways as though they had two levels of Status.

Nepos (one level of Status) - People with a fairly close tie by blood or marriage to a Head or Heir Designate. A sense of familial obligation is strong enough that the average person doesn't want to cause a Nepo trouble, as it may cause some official wrath. Nepos are by and large unliked, though given respect. They usually hold minor offices or positions of importance, or may be merchants who have profited greatly by their position in the Family. Guildmasters are usually Nepos, and would normally be experts in their field (total skill of 6d+0 or more). The two priests of Inla and Santo have a handful of acolytes or lesser priests, and they would also be considered to have one level of Status.

Citizen (zero Status) - The average person, member of one Family or another, not enough to grant a bonus or cause a hardship in most cases.

Outsider (one level reduced Status) - Someone not related by blood or marriage to a Family. Most Hilfök or Plainsfök are Outsiders. The system is geared to protect the Family, and you're not part of one. It's harder to get permits, officials know they can be rude to you, legal judgements may go against you for no apparent reason, and so on. A Freeholder would be an Outsider, but does not have the advantage of being part of a large and powerful group that is important to Novomad or which could take offense in the event of mistreatment.

Renunciate (two levels reduced Status) - A Renunciate is a person who was a member of a Family, but who deliberately renounced Family ties or committed some act so heinous that their Head publically renounced them. No one likes Renunciates in Novomad, and the city is small enough that everyone knows who is and isn't one. Life is generally hard enough on a Renunciate that they leave the area and live someplace where no one knows them. Even Freeholders get more respect than Renunciates.

Status does not put a person above the law, but it sure helps. In any sort of questionable matter, status makes all the difference. The word of a person with high status carries more weight than that of someone with low status. Positive or negative levels of status can increase or decrease the difficulty of getting permits, waiting time for manufactured goods, the chance of being found guilty of a crime and its punishment, and so on. In general, if Status can make a difference, each level is worth a one row shift (two points) in the difficulty of the task.



MAGIC

Practitioners in the manipulation of the metaphysical vacuum (hereafter referred to as mages) shall be bound by both the Regulat and Family tradition, Regulat superceding Family tradition save in cases where exception is explicitly made by the Council or the Regulat. Subsections 1.11 through 1.19 list the restrictions upon and privileges of mages.

Section 1.11: No magic shall be used upon an unwilling citizen, save as part of a licensed duel where both duelists agree to its use.

Mages regulat, section 1.1

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Virtually everyone in Ythrek has the capability to learn magic, though most do not exploit this capability. To learn the basic skills underlying the use of magic is a year's work, and another year's work to learn a single spell. Not many people have the luxury to do this unless they are going to try and make a living from the talent. There are perhaps a thousand individuals capable of spellcasting in the Novomad valley (out of a population of about one hundred thousand). Of those one thousand mages, ninety percent of them know only one spell, and use it somehow in their daily work, like a healer. Ninety percent of the remaining one hundred mages are where most adventurers will fall, and the remaining ten mages are quite powerful, quite wealthy and mostly retired from gallivanting about the countryside. They will be engaged in making specialized magic items and engaging in skull-duggery in support of their Family, both tasks which can involve adventurers in some way. Most younger mages are working mages, like adventurers. Older mages are the ones who teach young mages the art, and who may hire young mages to go seek things for them. Having made their fortunes, they are content to enjoy the rewards of wealth and let others risk their necks.

▼ **LEARNING MAGIC** - In Ythrek, Sorcery skill is the basic knowledge of how to cast spells, while the Enchantment skill is used to put a spell into an object. Each actual spell learned is either a +0d or +1d specialization of that skill and a spell cannot be cast at all without that knowledge. Each spell is just a skill that costs 5S or 10S.

EXAMPLE: A mage with a 2d+0 Awareness roll and +2d Sorcery has a 4d+0 Sorcery skill roll, but they still cannot cast any spells until they get a +0d specialization to represent a *particular* spell.

Many Ythrek spells have a very high difficulty. Remember that adventurers can reduce the difficulty by two if they spend four times the normal time on it (**EABA**, page 3.3). They can do this no more than twice, reducing difficulty by four by spending sixteen times the normal time on the spell.

Spell Types - Ythrek's magic falls into a handful of categories. These are not spells, just a natural aptitude with a certain flavor of magic that a spell will fall under.

Cognio - Spells relating to the gathering of information. Scrying, divination or foretelling would be Cognio spells.

Energio - Spells relating to the creation/manipulation of energy. A fireball would be an Energio spell.

Magio - Spells relating to the nature of magic itself. A spell to dispel or affect another spell is a Magio spell.

Vito - Spells relating to the manipulation of living things. Spells to heal a wound or cause a plant to wither would be Vito spells.

Atomo - Spells relating to the fundamental nature of matter and its properties, or spells relating to the motion of invisibly small objects. Turning lead to gold or making stone soft enough to work with your bare hands would be an Atomo spell. Creating a breeze or filtering the impurities from water or air would be an Atomo spell.

Macro - Spells relating to the motion of visibly large objects. Hurling a rock or locking a person's limbs in place would be a Macro spell.

Animo - Spells relating to the spirit, emotions or psyche. Any form of mental control, compulsion or illusion would be an Animo spell.

EXAMPLE: A player decides their adventurer with a Fate of 9 (default Fate roll of 3d+0) will be strong in spells with a mental effect, but weak in those dealing with the tangible world. They give the adventurer a Forte in "Animo" and a Weakness in "Macro". Their default Fate roll for the strength of Animo effects is now 5d+0, but their roll for Macro effects is only 3d+0. If the mage had Enchantment skill, these modifiers would also apply to the strength of any objects made for that type of magic.

An adventurer may have a Forte or Weakness on Fate relating to an ability to use or resist a certain type of magic. Any spell that falls into that category can be cast by the adventurer at +1d or -1d *effect (not skill)*, based on whether the adventurer has a Forte or Weakness. Some spells may fall into multiple categories. An adventure will use any Forte or Weakness that applies in this case.

Global modifiers - All magic in Ythrek is physically draining, and will have the penalty "Damages Hits" (-10 points). Any time a spell is *successfully* cast, the user takes 1d hits of non-lethal damage. Of course, an adventurer can always use their Fate to roll 1d less damage, which will be successful the first few times they cast something in an adventure. What it means in practical terms is that a mage who has to cast a number of spells in quick succession will be doing so with a -1d penalty on their rolls. Once they take the first -1d penalty, further casting just does 1 hit per spell. It will take the mage a few hours to recover from the exhaustion. Many mages will know the "Respira" spell, which can help them magically recover some lost hits, but not all, since the damage is done *after* the spell's effect is generated.

▼ Depending on the gamemaster, players and type of campaign, allowing a mage to use magic to recover hits taken from spellcasting can be too powerful. If this is the case, simply say that magic can't be used to recover spellcasting hits. This will slow down the rate of spellcasting quite a bit...

This penalty does not have to apply to the use of magic items. An enchanted item may or may not do hits to the user, at the enchanter's preference. Most of course do not, because this makes them extremely useful. However, all magic items in Ythrek are a "consumable focus". This may be one use, or up to eight uses, and the item can be recharged. The item can also have just one use, but have a spell duration of "permanent". But, items which can turn on or off an effect by will alone, which never wear out and have no cost to the user? *Not in Ythrek.*

Mundane items cannot be *created* with magic in Ythrek. Spirits can be summoned or living beings commanded to appear, but no one has found a way to make something from nothing. Even the "creates a living item" effect requires that the living item simply be summoned from elsewhere rather than being made from nothing. Things can be transformed from other things, but only to something the same size or *smaller*. A fist-sized lump of gold could be turned into a copper coin, but the reverse is not possible. Similarly, physical transformations are not possible on unwilling targets.

Hierarchies - For the Ythrek gameworld, certain power modifiers are harder to learn than others, and this will be represented by the color code for how "unbalancing" that power modifier is deemed to be. Within any type of power (Vito, Macro, etc.), an adventurer should (but is not required to) learn the ones with the fewest number of ■ or ◆ factors before they can progress to the more difficult spells.

If you prefer, this can be a part of Novomad's "old boy" network, where a mage is not deemed ready to progress to certain spells until they complete the lesser ones. This also (coincidentally) keeps the lesser mages from economic competition with the better ones, or at least delays it a while.

EXAMPLE: The Energo spell "Firebolt" has a ■ factor in it, so it cannot be the only Energo spell a mage knows. To learn or be taught Firebolt, they have to first learn a lesser Energo spell like "Stun".

The gamemaster can decide that within a hierarchy, spells with a ■ factor cannot be learned until a spell with nothing but ● factors is known, nor a spell with a ◆ factor learned until a spell with a ■ factor is known. Frustratingly, adventurers may find that they can't learn some spells at all, because there are no progressions that allow it (the Cognio hierarchy, for instance). This can be interpreted by the gamemaster in one of two ways. The first is that a mage must just learn the simplest or easiest to cast spells in that hierarchy first.

The other way to interpret it is to say that those spells are "known", but that those who know them only teach them to a select few for one reason or another. Adventurers either have to be part of that select group when they start the game, or somehow gain their favor at a later time (or just find a way to steal the information somehow).

EXAMPLE: The Cognio spell "Alarma" is known of, but is not taught. The priest and acolytes of Inla know the spell, and will bestow its benefit on those they deem worthy, though in most cases a lame excuse and generous donation will suffice.

▼ **MAGES FOR HIRE** - The time it takes to cast many useful spells is trivial. Less than a second to even a minute or so isn't that much work, and the average person tends to resent the prices that commercial mages charge for their services. Part of the mage's cost is the fact that they take non-lethal hits from spellcasting (they get tired), and may have to spend time to recover. The other factor is that they spent several years learning their trade and almost certainly had to pay another mage for that training or apprenticeship. A mage not only has to make a living, they have to pay off their "college loans". For most spells, the cost is as follows:

Spell difficulty	Cost
Average or less (7-)	20Eur
Challenging(9)	30Eur
Hard(11)	50Eur
Formidable(13)	80Eur
Heroic(15)	120Eur
Superheroic(17)	170Eur
Impossible(19)	230Eur

Modifiers	Amount
Spell takes an hour to cast	plus 20Eur
Spell takes 10 hours to cast	plus 200Eur
Spell takes 2 days to cast	plus 500Eur
Spell takes 3 weeks to cast	plus 3,000Eur

Mage has Fate of 7-	times 1/2
Mage has Fate of 8-9	times 1
Mage has Fate of 10-11	times 1 1/2
Mage has Fate of 12+	times 2

Service requested is illegal	times 5
Spell is triggered (used in <1 day)	times 2
Spell is triggered (used in <1 week)	times 5

Additive modifiers apply to the cost before the multiplicative ones. Triggered spells bought using the equipment list prices are of the "<1 week" variety.

EXAMPLE: The spell "Alarma" is Hard(11), takes less than an hour to cast and is a triggered spell, so the cost to hire someone to cast it would be 250Eur if the casting mage had a Fate of 8-9. Mages with a higher Fate charge more because they give better results, and mages with a lower Fate charge less because their results are not as good and they have to accept a lower price to get any business at all.

A mage on a simple salary (that is, working for someone else) will just get paid an amount appropriate to their skill, just like adventurers.

EXAMPLE: If a mage with a 6d+0 roll for the "Compress" spell is hired to magically compact coal shipments, their salary is the same as an adventurer with a 6d+0 employable skill.

▼ **MAGIC ITEMS** - The cost of a magic item to adventurers depends on how long it takes to make. Assume the enchanter has a skill roll of 6d+0, which means they have a weekly wage of around 1,250Eur (about 30Eur per hour). This is what the mage makes after other production costs are taken into account, so the cost to an adventurer is probably closer to 1,500Eur per week of work (about 35Eur per hour). If it takes the enchanter 50 hours to make the item, then the labor cost to the adventurer is about 35Eur x 50 hours equals 1,750Eur. That is in addition to the cost of the item, and assumes the enchanter succeeds on the first attempt.

Using the casting time modifiers in **EABA**, assuming the enchanter gets it right the first time and has a skill roll of 6d+0:

Time spent	Labor cost
1 hour	35Eur
10 hours	350Eur
2 days (50 hours)	1750Eur
3 weeks (500 hours)	17,500Eur
6 months (4000 hours)	140KEur

Economically, this means that items which can be enchanted in an hour are within the reach of anyone. This would be items using a consumable focus like a scroll or potion. Practically, the number and type of these items is limited in Novomad, as of the mages that commercially enchant things, few want to be bothered with trinkets and trifles that have a negligible profit margin. Such items are usually made by a lesser enchanter who knows how to make one or two items, and that is their source of livelihood. A serious enchanter's real profit comes from things that they can enchant in a couple days, assisted by an apprentice who boosts their flagging endurance after a night or two of lost sleep. Most enchanters usually make a few extra Eur by charging an "inspection fee" to make sure any item offered is suitable for enchantment, or supplying the raw materials themselves and tacking on a ten percent profit margin.

EXAMPLE: If you bring in a 300Eur sword to be enchanted, in addition to the labor charge, there will probably be a 30Eur surcharge to inspect the sword. If you let the mage supply the sword, the 300Eur sword would cost you 330Eur. They get you either way.

▼ **SPELL LIST** - Following is a list of commonly known spells in Novomad, including those normally used only by Plainsfök or Hilfök. These spells can be acquired by adventurers before play starts, or learned afterwards. Since a spell is at least a 5S skill and represents a fair amount study, gamemasters should feel free to limit the number of spells a starting adventurer can know. No more than one per year of age past 15 is a reasonable limit, and remember that if a mage is spending a lot of time studying, they aren't spending a lot of time at a job to earn money or accumulate their starting equipment.

There are other spells not publically known, and spells which adventurers can make up with game-master permission (**EABA** has a power design system for a reason). And of course, there are also magics unknown in Novomad, but well known elsewhere. Any of the spells that would be useful to enchant into objects probably have variants to do so. Remember that most magic in Novomad is used because someone can turn a profit with it. Given how long it takes to learn a spell (the better part of a year), a mage has to balance this against how many people will pay to have it cast. If there is no market for it, no one learns the spell.

A side effect of this spell list is that everyone who is anyone also knows these spell effects, and if they need protection, they will know the magical or mundane countermeasures to defend against these spells. All of the normal and most of the clever means of using these spells have already been exploited in Family intrigues. Novices may think they have come up with a new use, and maintain that illusion right up until the time they are caught and sentenced to a chain gang that has to pull some farmer's plow for six months.

As an idea of the number of mages in Novomad know a particular spell, base it on the factors that make up the spell.

Spells are listed by their general type, followed by the difficulty to cast them, then a description of the spell and the factors that went into its design. If successfully cast, most spells will have a second roll for the effect, and this will be listed in the description. Effects are almost always based on the adventurer's default Fate roll, but remember that casting bonuses (-4 difficulty for -1d effect) or penalties (+4 difficulty for +1d effect) can be taken to alter the number of Fate dice rolled on most spells. Also remember that if no duration is specified in the power formula, you can assume it lasts for an instant (+0 cost).

Learning Spells - It takes an absolute minimum of 10S to be a "mage", 5S for Sorcery skill (required for all magery) at +0d and 5S more for a spell at +0d (each spell is a separate specialization). This gives the adventurer a skill roll of their default Awareness roll (probably a total of 2d to 3d). Using standard **EABA** rules, 10S will take about ten months of full-time study under a teacher, or two and a half years of work in your spare time. So, while it is not something you take on casually, it is something that a determined self-study can accomplish, if a player wants their adventurer to be a "non-mage" who happens to know one or two spells anyway. The adventurer may not have had enough potential for a "real" mage to waste time on, so they bought books and did their studying after work or during the long winter nights, and finally, finally managed to make a spell work. So what if their skill roll is only 2d+1 and their effect roll is 1d+2? *It's still an edge that could save your life...*

A dedicated mage will probably have their Sorcery skill at a higher level (+1d or +2d for 10S or 20S), and for a spell they really rely on, knowledge of it at a +1d level, for another 10S. For a mage with an Awareness of 9(3d+0), this gives them a total skill roll of perhaps 6d or 7d, which gives a 50-50 chance to cast spells of even Superheroic(17) difficulty. This level of skill would require about twenty months for the Sorcery skill, and ten more months for each spell, if done full time under a teacher. Adventurers as mages can easily have skill rolls that reach the "exceptional human" level of 8d+2, allowing them a decent chance of casting spells of Impossible(19) difficulty.

Now, the actual knowledge of spells is almost always a "trade secret", but anyone can reverse engineer a spell and create it from scratch. This would always be done at the self-study rate of 1S per three months. But, if you want to learn from someone who already knows it, there are usually guild and/or Family guidelines. *Anyone who teaches you a commercially useful skill has just increased the number of their business competitors.* As a result, a lot of spells are only taught from master to apprentice, and then with legally binding "non-compete" clauses in the apprenticeship contract. Some spells are legally restricted so that only Guild members can use them for business, and one can only get Guild certification if the spell was learned from someone in that Guild. The businesspeople of Novomad are not fools. Any form of magic that can be used to make money (legally or otherwise) has probably got either laws, regulations, Guild or Family traditions in place to prevent young upstarts from coming in and disrupting the market.



COGNIO SPELLS

Ythrek

Detecto**To cast:** Hard(11)

On success at a Hard(11) task with their adjusted Fate roll, the mage can sense whether an object within melee range is magical, the target of an ongoing spell, or if it has been the target of magic that has expired within the past day. If something is hard to figure out, the mage uses their adjusted Fate roll as an Awareness against the difficulty of the task.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Power conveys information** (+15 points)
Up to 24 hours in the past (+20 points)

Muestro**To cast:** Hard(11)

On success at a Hard(11) task with their adjusted Fate roll, the mage can get a glimpse of the last person to touch the object which is the target of the spell, provided it happened within the last week. The target of the spell can be a discrete object like a knife, or a conceptual object, like a footprint. The image given by the spell is that of the person at that time, and the spell does *not* penetrate disguise or illusion. The spell takes a minute to cast and requires the mage be within melee range of the target of the spell.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Power conveys information** (+15 points)
Up to 1 week in the past (+40 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Alarma**To cast:** Hard(11)

On success at a Hard(11) task with their adjusted Fate roll, the mage can give *someone else* within melee range an ability to sense immediately impending hazards to themselves (the special effect gives the target a spell benefit normally given to the caster). It is cast much like a benediction, taking about 10 minutes, using gestures and chanting. The threshold of the hazard can be specified when the spell is cast (minor, major, life-threatening, poison, your ex-wife, etc.).

The foretelling only "looks" a few minutes into the future. The beneficiary of the spell has to make a Hard(11) Fate roll any time such an event would happen, but the spell gives them +1d on their Fate roll for this purpose. The spell lasts only until the first time it *successfully* triggers. In gameworld terms, the adventurer gets a Fate roll to avoid something that they would *not* have otherwise noticed, like a trap, ambush, poisoned drink, etc. The gamemaster can either let the event happen for a turn and then replay it, with the adventurer now knowing the exact nature of the danger, or the gamemaster can just give a fairly specific warning that the adventurer can heed or ignore ("You suddenly get a very bad feeling about the man walking towards you...").

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 1d effect** (+10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- ◆ **Power conveys information** (+15 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Takes 10 minutes to activate** (-15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Siento**To cast:** Formidable(13)

Allows a mage to sense auras, allowing a fairly accurate assessment of health and emotional state of anyone within 15 meters. While it is targeted like a ranged attack, its normal use is the same as looking at someone in a non-combat situation and a targeting roll is usually unnecessary. Conflicting or incompatible auras may indicate the influence of a spell on that person's psyche, or some severe mental illness. The effect of the spell is to allow the mage's Fate roll to count as Awareness for seeing these normally unseen quantities. The spell lasts as long as the mage stays awake or wishes the effect to continue. To allow covert use of the spell, it is not normally visible, but it can be detected magically. The mage simply needs to cast it in private so that the gestures required are not seen, and then maintain it as needed.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Power conveys information** (+15 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+15 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Profeta

To cast: Formidable(13)

On success at a Formidable(13) task with their adjusted Fate roll, the mage gets a glimpse of the future for a single person within melee range. It gives a notion of the best or worst thing that is likely to happen to the person in the next week. It takes ten seconds to cast, and the effect lasts but an instant, an eyeblink vision of the circumstance. How vague this prediction is depends on the circumstance. If what that person intends to do is clear, then the vision will be clearer than if a number of decisions can be made that could have different outcomes.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Power conveys information** (+15 points)
Up to 1 week in the future (+40 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

EXAMPLE: If an adventurer was taking the only road around, and it led to a village of xenophobic cannibals, the vision would be a lot clearer than if the adventurer was just slumming around Novomad.

Vermago

To cast: Impossible(19)

This spell looks at the residual magical energy left at the site of any spell cast within the past day, and gives the location of the mage who cast it (as a direction and fairly accurate distance). The spell works only if the mage is still within 125 kilometers, and the default Fate roll of the tracing mage must match or beat the difficulty of the current range of the mage being tracked. Fortunately, the spell gives the mage +4d effect to make long range tracking possible. Unfortunately, a side effect of the spell is that if it fails, it destroys or irrevocably confuses the magical trail, making further use of the spell useless. The difficulty of the spell means that only the most skilled of Novomad's mage have a reasonable chance of successfully casting it.

EXAMPLE - A mage with an adjusted Fate roll of 7d+0 is trying to track a mage who is 20 kilometers away. A range of 20 kilometers is a difficulty of 31, so the tracking mage has to reach or beat a total of 31 with their 7d+0 roll. If they fail, the spell returns an "out of range" feeling, and nothing more.

Since the spell does not finger a particular individual, law enforcement needs to figure out who of the people at the location is a likely suspect, and then see who doesn't have an alibi for the time of the crime. The spell doesn't do *all* the work for you.

This spell was specifically developed for use in tracking criminal magery within Novomad, and its existence is not public knowledge. Only the Heads, Heirs, a handful of Conceros mages and the Captain of the Guard know of it. When a criminal mage is apprehended, the official report usually lists "witness accounts", "informants" or "evidence left at the scene" as the reason the perpetrator was located and apprehended. If you are going to commit criminal magery in Novomad, either make sure it isn't discovered for more than a day or that you get well out of the area quickly, and in such a way that it isn't noticed by anyone.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Power conveys information** (+15 points)
Up to 24 hours in the past (+20 points)
- **Additional 4d effect** (+40 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+80 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 8** (-10 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Takes 10 minutes to activate** (-15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-5 points)

Borrata

To cast: Hard(11)

This spell is designed to thwart the Vermago spell;. The mage casts the spell through a pouch or handful of hair, skin, or fingernail clippings from several people. The spell simply generates a magical residue for the next day that will cause the tracing spell to point in several different directions at once and often just fizzle out. One of these directions *is* the actual caster (if they are still in range), but that can't be helped. The mage's default Fate roll plus 1d is a penalty to the effect generated by any mage trying to track a spell. If the tracking mage fails their roll, no useful information is found from use of the Vermago spell. Since few people know of the existence of the Vermago spell, even fewer know Borrata. The only weakness of the spell is that its effects *can* be dispelled before a Vermago is cast.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 1d effect** (+10 points)
- **Specialized effect** (+20 points)
- **Requires consumed focus** (-20 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Power lasts 2.5 days** (+35 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Espejo**To cast:** Heroic(15)

This is an object tracking spell. Using a fairly accurate copy of the object to be found as a focus, the spell indicates the direction and approximate distance of the nearest copy of that object within 1 kilometer. The copy just has to be a visual facsimile, it does not have to function or be made of the same materials. People with valuable or unique items will often have cosmetic copy made in order to track the original if it is stolen. A costume jewelry copy of a valuable necklace would be an example.

Unlike the Vermago spell, this spell has no time limits, so a mage can simply wander around Novomad with the copy until they sense when the original is within a kilometer.

This spell makes the theft of valuable items a risky proposition. The thief either has to have a buyer whose estate is big enough that the spell can't reach it from the edge, have a buyer *outside* Novomad, or store the item in a pentagram to block the Espejo spell. The last option is to take an intrinsically valuable item and just melt it down or dismantle it for its precious metals or jewels. Once this is done, it no longer mirrors the copy, and the spell will not track it.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Power conveys information** (+15 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+45 points)
- **Requires focus** (-10 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

ENERGO SPELLS**Aterdea****To cast:** Hard(11)

On successful casting, the mage uses their spell dice to hit a target up to 15 meters away. On a hit, this does non-lethal damage of their adjusted Fate roll, but the ease of casting the spell means many skilled mages add difficulty to get extra effect dice. Since the spell uses no gestures, voice or extra time, it is especially useful in short range combat and can be reliably cast even when injured or exhausted.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Non-lethal damage** (+20 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+15 points)
- **Power lasts an instant** (+0 points)

Incendia**To cast:** Formidable(13)

On successful casting, the mage uses their spell dice to hit a target up to 63 meters away. This does half-lethal damage equal to their adjusted Fate roll minus 1d. It can be cast as a single action, but does require some quick gestures. It has the advantage that it counts as fire, and can set things ablaze with about the same effectiveness as a burning arrow.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Half-lethal damage** (+30 points)
- **Reduced 1d effect** (-10 points)
- **Acts as a natural phenomenon** (+5 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+25 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Conmotio**To cast:** Hard(11)

The mage delivers a blast of sound that does damage like a non-lethal kick in the teeth to any target in melee range. The damage counts as blunt trauma and also knocks the target back up to seven meters. It can also shatter glass and leave victims temporarily deaf. A skilled mage can deal a hefty hurting with this spell, but it requires a two-handed pushing gesture with open palms (generic penalty) and a shouted power word to complete.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Non-lethal damage** (+20 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Acts as a natural phenomenon** (+5 points)
- **Conveys movement** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-5 points)

Infierna

To cast: Superheroic(17)

On successful casting, the mage fills a line of hexagons up to 15 meters long with flame, doing half-lethal damage equal to their adjusted Fate roll. This line of fire begins just beyond the mage's hands, and is blocked by any mundane or magical barriers it might intercept before reaching its maximum range. While the name of the spell may imply heat or fire, it is just magical damage with no particular special effect and will not set things ablaze. It takes a skilled mage to cast it reliably, but it is quite effective if you can do so.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Half-lethal damage** (+45 points)
- **Power fills an area 8-15m** (+40 points)
- **Power acts like a line** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Campodolo

To cast: Superheroic(17)

This is an area denial spell. It just fills an area up to 15 meters across with unbearable heat, and it can be cast at a range of up to 7 meters (to the nearest edge of the effect). The effect is only a few meters high and seems to emanate from the ground (generic penalty). Anyone entering or staying in the area takes the mage's adjusted Fate roll in half-lethal damage each turn. The effect lasts as long as the mage maintains concentration on it. Objects in the area that take damage are assumed to be warped or damaged by heat. Flammable objects will probably ignite in after a turn or two, possibly turning the area into a natural inferno that will remain even after the spell expires. If the mage fails to successfully cast Campodolo, the magical energy is all dumped into the mage, who takes half-lethal damage as though they were in the area of the spell's effect. No armor or magical protection will mitigate the side effect damage.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Half-lethal damage** (+45 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+10 points)
- **Power fills an area 8-15m** (+40 points)
- **Acts as a natural phenomenon** (+5 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 11** (-15 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-5 points)

Teragolpa

To cast: Impossible(19)

A very specialized and destructive spell that is not believed to be known by any Novomad mages. It simply does the mage's default Fate roll in lethal damage to the ground and anything touching it (generic penalty) in a 60° fan up to 16 meters long. It is quite capable of shattering foundation stones, breaking legs and collapsing less sturdy dwellings. The fan of damage begins just beyond the mage's reach and the effect lasts for just a single pulse of damage. While extremely difficult to cast, the nature of the spell is open to modification and can be cast at lesser effect by lesser mages.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+60 points)
- **Power fills an area 16-31m** (+50 points)
- **Power acts like a cone** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-10 points)

Exploto

To cast: Impossible(19)

Prior to the introduction of gunpowder, this was the main spell for demolishing things, quarrying or mining. Once cast upon an object in melee range, the mage has a few minutes to leave the area before a lethal explosion occurs at the site, with a magnitude of the mage's adjusted Fate roll. The normal use is to shatter rock formations into rubble to allow easy removal, and the commercial mages using it almost always have a forte in the Ergo spell type. While they are only half-lethal, black powder explosions can be larger than most mages can generate, and are certainly more useful when multiple explosions are needed simultaneously at different places.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+60 points)
- **Power fills an area 4-7m** (+30 points)
- **Power acts like an explosion** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Takes ten seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Trueno**To cast:** Impossible(19)

This is like Conmotio, but acts as an explosion up to 7 meters across and can be cast anywhere within 15 meters of the mage. Variants are known that take more time or have other modifiers to make the spell easier to cast. The best known one is triggered but takes ten minutes to cast and is Superheroic(17) difficulty. Note that this version is cast at the target location ahead of time (like a trap), and goes off when the trigger condition is met.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Non-lethal damage** (+30 points)
- **Ranged damage** (+15 points)
- **Power fills an area 4-7m** (+30 points)
- **Power acts like an explosion** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Acts as a natural phenomenon** (+5 points)
- **Conveys movement** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-5 points)

Manotrueno**To cast:** Superheroic(17)

This is an enchantment spell which spells an item with four uses and a password which activates at the end of the action after the password is uttered by the person holding it (say it, throw it). It is sort of a "retrievable grenade", doing 6d half-lethal damage as an explosion up to 7 meters across (if enchanted by a mage with a 3d Fate roll). The Novomad town guard has several of these in storage. They are mainly used to clear rooms, blow down doors or disperse unruly mobs. Since this happens so seldom in Novomad, no one actually knows the spell anymore, but it is available to be learned if anyone cares to spend the time at it. As long as the last charge is not used, it can be recharged as a Formidable(13) task in the same time it took to generate the original enchantment. The enchantment requires a magical laboratory to complete (requires focus or spellbook).

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Half-lethal damage** (+45 points)
- **Additional 2d effect** (+20 points)
- **Power fills an area 4-7m** (+30 points)
- **Power acts like an explosion** (-10 points)
- **Requires mundane skill to use** (-5 points)
- **Requires spellbook or focus** (-10 points)
- **Requires consumed focus** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Independent focus** (+60 points)
- **Password** (+5 points)
- **Takes two days to activate** (-30 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Ythrek**Taladro****To cast:** Impossible(19)

This is a relatively recent spell, developed for mining with gunpowder. The spell bores a narrow, well-defined hole (generic bonus) through up to 3 meters of stone or most other non-living substances (generic penalty), sufficient to pack in a quantity of gunpowder. The spell is simply maintained until a hole of sufficient depth is drilled. One enterprising quarry apprentice discovered it could also bore the locks right out of a door in short order, but he was also caught in short order and no further incidents of this type have been reported. However, stonecutter graffiti and rude sculptures will now greet any visitor to the quarries and mines. One check on misuse of the spell is that the version currently taught requires a specific focus to both make it easier to cast, and whose owner will be registered with the proper authorities by any reputable artificer. Even with the focus limitation, most mages will spend extra time (sixteen seconds) on the spell to reduce the difficulty to manageable levels (Heroic(15) without the listed version, Formidable(13) with the focus-required version).

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+60 points)
- **Power fills an area 2-3m** (+20 points)
- **Power acts like a line** (-10 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Generic limit** (-10 points)
- **Generic bonus** (+10 points)



MAGIO SPELLS

Quita

To cast: Formidable(13)

On successful casting and targeting, the mage generates an effect that damages ongoing magic in or on the target. The mage's adjusted Fate roll (plus 2d for the spell) is used as a skill vs. the difficulty of the magic targeted. If the attack on the magic is successful, it is dispelled. If not, the magic is not affected. Remember that spells cannot be undone unless both the difficulty of the dispel *and* the adjusted Fate roll meet or exceed the target spell. In this case, only magics with a difficulty of 13 or less to cast can be affected unless the spell is cast with extra dice and difficulty. This spell has a range of up to 63 meters and can be cast as a major action.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Specialized damage** (+20 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+25 points)
- **Additional 2d effect** (+20 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Quito

To cast: Heroic(15)

Almost identical to Quita, but limited to melee range and with additional dice of effect. The mage gets their adjusted Fate roll plus 4d to dispel the target magic, and it can be cast as a major action.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Specialized damage** (+20 points)
- **Additional 4d effect** (+40 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Perforo

To cast: Hard(11)

This spell is cast on any type of weapon within melee range of the caster. The *next* attack made by the weapon ignores any *magical* barriers that would hinder the passage of the weapon. The spell is triggered by this attack, and lasts until this event happens. If cast on a ranged weapon, it needs to be loaded *before* the spell is cast on it.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Extraordinary range** (+20 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires mundane skill** (-5 points)

Pentagramo

To cast: Formidable(13)

This spell is cast on an area up to 3 meters across within melee range of the caster. It makes a barrier of the mage's adjusted Fate roll that acts like armor against the dice of *any* magical effect that tries to cross the edge of the area. It has no effect on the passage of mundane matter. Its normal use is to temporarily protect a mage from hostile entities of a purely spiritual nature. Its special effect is that it is *not* affected by the Perfora spell or any spell which has a special effect of bypassing a single magical barrier.

EXAMPLE: A Pentagramo cast by a mage with a Fate die result of 9 would have a default "armor" of 3d+0. Any magical effect cast across the edge of the area would lose 3d+0 from its effect before hitting the target. This *does* include any attempts to dispel it.

The Pentagramo requires both chanting and gestures as the mage takes an hour to physically draw the mystic wards on a surface, but once the spell is complete, these lines are no longer needed. As it is being constructed, the mage chooses the permeability of the ward. It can block magic going in, magic coming out, or both.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Prevents damage** (+30 points)
- **Specialized damage** (+20 points)
- **Power fills an area 2-3m** (+20 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Power lasts 1 hour** (+25 points)
- **Takes an hour to activate** (-20 points)
- **Requires spellbook or focus** (-10 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Cannot be altered** (-10 points)

Anatema

To cast: Average(7)

This spell is cast on any type of weapon within melee range of the caster. The spell lasts for a minute. It does no damage, but makes the regular attack of the weapon capable of harming things normally immune to physical damage. The weapon still does normal damage to mundane objects.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- ◆ **Extraordinary range** (+20 points)
- **Power lasts 1 minute** (+15 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires mundane skill** (-5 points)

Pentagrama**To cast:** Impossible(19)

The Pentagrama is a permanent version of the Pentagramo spell, with the added bonus that it stops conventional damage (and thus most matter) from passing across the boundary. The special effect is used to block magic-piercing effects, and the generic bonus allows whoever has the "key" to cross without being affected (or trapped). The Pentagrama is capable of being used as a magical prison, and Novomad has a few, though these special cells are seldom used. The spell is extremely difficult to cast and multiple mages cooperate in order to reduce the difficulty. Even so, there are side effects if the casting is failed, and limitations that require precise timing, fairly expensive consumed components and a confluence of magical energies that only occurs once a year.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Prevents damage** (+30 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+60 points)
- **Specialized damage** (+20 points)
- **Power fills an area 2-3m** (+20 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- ◆ **Power lasts forever** (+70 points)
- **Takes three weeks to activate** (-35 points)
- **Requires spellbook or focus** (-10 points)
- **Requires minimum Fate of 11** (-15 points)
- **Power can be jointly activated** (+5 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Requires consumed focus** (-20 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Generic bonus** (+10 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-15 points)

Fortuno**To cast:** Formidable(13)

The mage shifts the spiritual balance between order and chaos in the target's favor. The Fate of a target in melee range for purposes of luck is skewed upwards by the dice of effect, up to double its base amount. The spell lasts for ten hours. A mage can use this on themselves if desired. There is also a luck reducing spell that skews Fate down to a minimum of zero for the same duration, and a mage-hindering spell that reduces Fate by up to half for both luck and spell effect purposes for the same duration.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power adds to Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts ten hours** (+30 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 points)

Ythrek**VITO SPELLS****Respiro****To cast:** Heroic(15)

On successful casting, the mage causes a target in melee range to recover lost non-lethal hits equal to the mage's adjusted Fate roll. This applies to exhaustion, bruises and lost hits from spellcasting (optional), but note that the effect happens *before* the mage takes damage from casting it, so there is no way for a mage to fully recover their own lost hits (unless they use Fate to take -1d damage from the spell).

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reverses damage** (+30 points)
- **Non-lethal damage** (+20 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Respira**To cast:** Impossible(19)

Similar to Respiro, but affects everyone in a 3 meter circle centered on the caster. Those affected apply the mage's adjusted Fate roll separately.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reverses damage** (+30 points)
- **Non-lethal damage** (+30 points)
- **Power fills an area 2-3m** (+20 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 points)

Sano**To cast:** Heroic(15)

On successful casting, the mage causes a target in melee range to recover lost lethal or non-lethal hits equal to the mage's adjusted Fate roll. This applies to any form of damage, but does not cure any underlying problem that may have generated the damage. It will heal poison damage, but not remove the poison. It can seal a wound, but not restore an amputated limb.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reverses damage** (+30 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 8** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 points)

EABA

Sana

To cast: Heroic(15)

This spell is like Sano, but it *can* reattach recently amputated limbs, undo any permanent effects of crippling injuries and often negates any underlying external causes of injury. For instance, it might purge poison or cure disease, but would not prevent a person from being poisoned or infected again. It cannot heal any condition that is a side effect of aging, though it can treat the symptoms.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reverses damage** (+30 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 11** (-15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Takes an hour to activate** (-20 points)
- **Generic bonus** (+15 points)

Curacio

To cast: Superheroic(17)

This spell is the most expensive and difficult of the curative magics known in Novomad, and it is simply not available for everyone. It can cure or heal just about anything that is curable or healable. It can remove growths, purge poisons, start a regeneration process for lost body parts, and boost the Health of the spell's recipient until the healing process is complete. The drawback is that the spell requires a skilled mage, some components that cost a few hundred Eur, and the magical energies that allow the spell to work only happen four times a year. So, while casting of the spell may theoretically only cost around a thousand Eur, the price is really what the market will bear, especially if there are more people in need of healing than there are healers who know it (currently there are only two).

One of them has an exclusive contract with the Head of the Nichevos Family, a truly ancient man going into his fourth Turning. His failing body is kept alive only by seasonal application of this spell to purge him of the poisons that build up due to his failing organs (note that while Curacio *can* regenerate lost organs, it regenerates them appropriate to the age of the person they belong to). The other mage who knows the spell makes a comfortable living as a regular healer, and bonus money from the occasional serious injury or illness. As spring comes around and adventurers, traders and travellers come back battered and bruised, there will no doubt be competition for her services.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reverses damage** (+30 points)
- **Additional 1d effect** (+10 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Power adds to Attribute** (+30 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 11** (-15 points)
- **Requires consumed focus** (-20 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Takes ten hours to activate** (-25 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)
- **Generic bonus** (+20 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-10 points)

Piespiedra

To cast: Superheroic(17)

Cast on an area up to 7 meters across, it subtracts the mage's adjusted Fate roll from the Health of anyone who enters the area (touching the ground), for movement purposes only. This usually means that running movement is needed to move at all, and even this will be slower and require more attention (running takes a major action, meaning that people affected will have increased difficulty in doing anything except moving). In addition, anyone entering the area at speed has to make an adjusted Agility roll against the mage's effect (a special effect). Failing the roll means the sudden deceleration trips them up and they take a tumble. This spell lasts ten seconds, which is usually enough time to get a head start on a getaway or resolve the situation.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Power fills an area 4-7m** (+30 points)
- **Power subtracts from Attribute** (+45 points)
- **Power lasts ten seconds** (+10 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-10 points)

Corro

To cast: Hard(11)

On successful casting, the mage increases the Health of a target in melee range by their adjusted Fate roll (up to double its normal dice). This bonus to Health only applies to increasing the target's movement. Any competent mage can cast this well enough to allow a person to walk at double their normal rate, quite useful in a world with no riding animals.

EXAMPLE: An adventurer with a Health roll of 2d+1 could have it increased to 4d+2 for movement purposes. This would increase their walking, running and sprinting speed by 2 meters per turn.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power adds to Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)

Encanto

To cast: Formidable(13)

This is a moderately useful enchantment spell. What it does is enchant a small talisman so that it provides a 1d bonus to the very next Attribute roll of a particular type that the wearer makes. After that, its magic is used up. For instance, a "lucky charm" would provide a 1d bonus to the wearer's Fate roll the next time they roll to be lucky. A "protection from poison" amulet would give a 1d bonus to Health the next time the wearer is exposed to a toxic substance. If you don't want a charm to trigger accidentally, don't wear it until you are likely to need it. While the various charms can be made with several charges, most enchanters only sell single-use versions to the average person. Multiple-use charms are usually only sold to "elite" customers (those with **Status**), at inflated prices.

Each type of charm is a separate spell, so learning a full complement of charms could take several years. Charms dealing with Fate are probably Magio spells, but the rest qualify as enhancements to natural abilities and fall into the Vito category. Making the charm requires a small alchemical laboratory (the non-consumed focus), and the different charms are best made not only without disruption, but with actual solitude. Competition in the market makes the price of a talisman around 50Eur. Ones that will work for several uses take longer to enchant (a separate spell), and are around 200 Eur (if your supplier thinks you are the right kind of people).

▼ **Note** - Since the Fate used to power the charm is *in* the charm, it does *not* count towards the triggered spells the enchanter can have active at one time.

Ythrek

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reduced 2d effect** (-20 points)
- **Power acts as Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power adds to Attribute** (+30 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Requires spellbook or focus** (-10 points)
- **Requires consumed focus** (-20 points)
- ◆ **Independent focus** (+60 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Takes ten minutes to activate** (-15 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-5 points)

Aumento

To cast: Hard(11)

This spell lets the mage add their adjusted Fate roll to their Strength for one action, with a maximum benefit of one and a half times their normal Strength for the whole body (rounding up), or double normal Strength for something specific like a punch or kick. Whether the boost is general or specific is based on the variant of the spell learned. The spell is triggered by the utterance of a power word, so it can be cast well before it is needed. Like many such spells, a mage cannot gain the benefit of multiple triggered spells at the same time. Only the largest on each Attribute will count, even if several go off at once. Remember that a mage cannot have more "triggered" spells than the full dice of their default Fate roll (e.g. a mage with a Fate roll of 2d+1 can only have two triggered spells ready at any one time). Normally, the effect is visible, just like all other spells, but there are variants with no visible effects. It is suspected that some legendary "non-mages" had an invisible version of this power to let them perform incredible feats of Strength when needed.

There are multiple variants of the spell, both in the Attribute affected and the specificity of the spell, but Strength is the most useful one. Note that if a boosting spell is used on a mental attribute, insights gained during a superhuman enhanced state may not be understandable later, causing confusion and possible mental unbalance.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power adds to Attribute** (+30 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Takes one minute to activate** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)



ATOMO SPELLS

Perfora

To cast: Average(7)

This spell is cast on any type of weapon within melee range of the caster. The next attack made by the weapon counts as armor-piercing (it ignores 1d of the target's armor). The spell is triggered by this attack (including hitting a shield), and lasts until this event happens. If cast on a ranged weapon, it needs to be loaded *before* the spell is cast on it, and only works for the next shot fired.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires mundane skill** (-5 points)

Teleporto

To cast: Formidable(13)

On successful casting, the mage can teleport themselves anywhere within line of sight up to 31 meters away (if their adjusted Fate roll matches the lifting ability of the weight they want to move). Since the spell requires no gestures, voice or extra time, it is useful as a quick getaway, but it requires a powerful mage to cast it.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Power acts like an Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power conveys movement** (+25 points)
- **Works on self only** (-5 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 11** (-15 points)

Transformo

To cast: Average(7)

On successful casting, the mage can make alterations to the form of an item, but not its size or composition. The spell lasts until the item takes enough damage to visually mar its appearance. If the mage's adjusted Fate roll is 4d+0 or better, virtually any shape within the caster's artistic talent is possible. The spell only works on inanimate objects.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 1d effect** (+10 points)
- **Power alters form of item** (+15 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-10 points)

EXAMPLE: A mage wants to impress some guests, so they use this spell on a block of ice. It remains a block of ice, but is now a perfect copy of a famous sculpture the mage also happens to own.

Conprima

To cast: Formidable(13)

On successful casting, the mage can shrink an item no larger than human-size. The first full 2d in the mage's adjusted Fate roll will make a minor change in the appearance of the item, like smoothing off rough edges or delicate parts, or adjusting the item's proportions for better durability. Each full 2d in the mage's adjusted Fate roll after that will reduce the item's size by a factor of about one and a half, and its mass by a factor of about four (narrow objects like swords are reduced in size closer to a factor of two). The spell gives an additional 3d to this roll. The spell's effect lasts until the compressed item is struck a sharp blow on a particular part (0d+2 damage), at which point it reverts back to normal size. The spell is useful for packing items that are to be shipped a long distance, and also very useful for concealing large weapons or making people small enough to get into tight spaces. Note that this spell and most other Ythrek magics are *not* cumulative. Multiple attempts to use this spell on an item will just apply the *best* result, not all the results.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 3d effect** (+30 points)
- **Power alters form of item** (+15 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Takes 10 minutes to activate** (-15 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

EXAMPLE: A bravo hires a mage to cast this spell on a longsword. The mage has a Fate of 9, for a 3d+0 roll. The spell gives another 3d for an effect of 6d+0. This means the longsword is adjusted in appearance slightly and compressed twice, which gives it a final mass of one-sixteenth normal and a length about one-quarter normal, making it a long, narrow knife that can be turned into a longsword by rapping the pommel on a hard surface.

Conprimo**To cast:** Hard(11)

Similar to Conprima, but it can work on a single large object or group of small ones that is less than 3 meters across. The main use in Novomad is to compress coal shipments for economical transport.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 2d effect** (+20 points)
- **Power fills an area 2-3m** (+20 points)
- **Power affects single large object** (-20 points)
- **Power alters form of item** (+15 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Takes 10 minutes to activate** (-15 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

EXAMPLE: A pile of coal 3 meters across and a meter or two high (about fifteen tons) is affected by this spell, and the mage has an adjusted Fate roll of 4d. Using the guidelines on page 6.20 of the **EABA** rules, this can alter the mass of the pile by a factor of sixteen, and its dimensions by a factor of two and a quarter. So, the pile now masses only about a ton and is only a little more than a meter across. It will stay this way until whacked good with a hammer, at which point it will puff out to normal size and mass.

Animorpho**To cast:** Average(7)

The Animorpho spell allows the mage to turn any *willing* subject in melee range into some creature of approximately the same size, provided they have an adjusted Fate roll of at least 4d+0. The +2d in the spell and the minimum Fate requirement mean that the spell almost always works. The mage retains their intelligence and magical abilities for the one hour duration of the spell, though they likely lose the ability to chant or gesture. Carried or worn items do not change form with the adventurer and may take a few seconds to get free from. Only creatures the mage has personal experience with are possible with this spell, and there is a separate spell for each creature type. The most common version of the spell turns the mage into a wild swine.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 2d effect** (+20 points)
- **Power alters form of item** (+15 points)
- **Power lasts 1 hour** (+25 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 8** (-10 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)

Ythrek**Refuerzo****To cast:** Average(7)

This spell is cast on some small device in melee range that stores mechanical energy, like a crossbow. The device itself is strengthened and tightened. For the one turn duration of the spell, the Strength of the item is increased by the adjusted Fate roll of the mage, up to one and a half times normal (rounding up). This usually translates directly into increased damage, and the duration means the spell can be cast one turn and the weapon used immediately or on the next turn. The spell can be used on a bow only if the person using it can use a bow of the increased strength.

EXAMPLE: A heavy crossbow has a normal damage of 2d+2. This spell could increase that damage up to 3d+3, which would become 4d+0.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power affects only small targets** (-5 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 5** (-5 points)
- **Power adds to Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts 1 turn** (+5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Veopaso**To cast:** Heroic(15)

Veopaso simply grants the mage an Awareness equal to their adjusted Fate roll, but this awareness is capable of seeing through the *first* mundane barrier it encounters. So, you could (and would) see through a door, wall, clothing, etc. Possibly because of the last barrier type, the spell designed to be invisible while in normal use, and its very existence sometimes gives mages a lecherous reputation ("Stop staring at me!"). However, it is easily countered by wall hangings, multiple layers of clothing, etc. Also, the mage needs to be careful, as if they are not careful they can walk into a closed door or other barrier that they can see right through.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power acts as an Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- ◆ **Extraordinary range** (+20 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Works on self only** (-5 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

EABA

Luzluna

To cast: Formidable(13)

A basic amplification of light that lets the mage grant to anyone in melee range a bonus to their Awareness for negating darkness penalties. The spell lasts for an hour.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power adds to Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts 1 hour** (+25 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Porto

To cast: Impossible(19)

This spell somehow ties into a largely unknown network of Ancient portal circles. If a mage is at such a circle, has a portal key (a separate Ancient focus) and knows this spell, they can teleport themselves and whatever else is in the circle to any other portal circle they know of within several thousand kilometers, with a total mass limit of the mage's adjusted Fate roll as an equivalent Strength (remember the 4d bonus). Multiple mages may cooperate to reduce the difficulty of casting the spell (see **EABA**, page 6.26). The spell is known of, and the texts needed to learn it are available (though centuries old). However, the few known portal keys are missing, as are the maps of known portal circles. Records of the period indicate that one morning the maps, the keys and all the mages who knew the spell simply weren't there anymore. That was approximately seven hundred years ago. The knowledge of the spell itself remained in a single overlooked text, which was quickly copied lest the knowledge be completely lost. This event is one of the "great mysteries" of Novomad's ancient past, and is still the subject of debate and investigation.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Increased 4d effect** (+40 points)
- **Power grants movement** (+110 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 11** (-15 points)
- **Power fills an area 4-7m** (+30 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Power may be jointly activated** (+5 points)
- **Requires a focus (key)** (-10 points)
- **Requires a focus (circle)** (-10 points)
- **Takes one minute to activate** (-10 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-20 points)

Blindo

To cast: Hard(11)

This spell is cast upon an item of up to human size, and it permanently strengthens the material, just like it was a layered armor. If the spell fails, the item is as if it was cast upon explodes from the stress, doing a lethal explosion of the mage's adjusted Fate roll. The first thing enchanted by a mage who knows this spell is a "bomb suit" to protect them in case they fail a later casting...

EXAMPLE: A chain mail armor has a protection of 1d+2, and a mage casts **Blindo** on it with an effect of 3d+2. As a layered armor (**EABA**, page 4.9), the smaller armor is halved, in this case to 0d+3, so the combination is 3d+5, which becomes 4d+2 armor.

This spell is powerful enough that virtually any material (even normal clothing) can have an armor of 4d+0 or more. However, relying on this spell as protection could leave a person lethally vulnerable if the spell were to be dispelled. The extra protection is a magic barrier, so spells like **Perfora** that negate magical barriers *will* bypass this protection.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Prevents an effect** (+30 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- ◆ **Power lasts forever** (+70 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 14** (-20 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires a focus** (-10 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Takes ten hours to activate** (-25 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)

At the moment there is apparently no mage in Novomad powerful enough to meet the minimum requirements for casting this spell (or if there is, they aren't advertising it), but there are a handful of items from previous generations that had this spell cast upon them.



MACRO SPELLS

Ythrek

Levita

To cast: Formidable(13)

On successful casting, the mage can usually automatically target and lift any item within melee range that could be lifted if their adjusted Fate were a Strength. If it can be lifted, it can be moved up to 3 meters per turn. If an item actively resists being lifted, it can try to break the spell's grasp with a Strength vs. Fate roll. The spell lasts as long as the caster can maintain their concentration, but there are no other restrictions on the spell.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power acts like an Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power conveys movement** (+10 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Danzo

To cast: Hard(11)

This is a form of apportionation. It conveys no movement ability, but just negates all but fraction of the caster's weight. The caster needs to have a Fate high enough that their lifting capacity is within 10 kilograms of their total weight, otherwise the effects are reduced significantly. The special effect on the spell covers all the useful tricks that this spell allows. Any adventurer under the effect of the spell can leap or bound horizontally a number of movement levels equal to their Strength, and manage vertical leaps of a distance level equal to their Strength minus 3. However, any use of enhanced movement requires an Agility check against a number equal to the Strength used. Failure means the poor mage mis-steps and slams into something, taking damage equal to the *distance* level covered.

EXAMPLE: A thief casts this spell to assist in an escape. They have a Strength of 7 and an Agility of 8. The thief makes a bound across a plaza, covering 23 meters (movement level 7) in a single turn (83 kilometers per hour). But, the thief fails a difficulty 7 Agility check with their 2d+2 Agility roll, and the gamemaster decides they *just* missed the next rooftop, and slam into the wall instead. A distance of 23 meters is a *distance* level of 12 (4d+0 damage), so our hapless thief takes a 4d+0 half-lethal smacking, plus any insult to injury they take from falling to the ground afterwards.

This spell was originally created by a troupe of dancers, and they have done an excellent job of keeping it within their numbers. Other mages have recreated the spell over the centuries, but it is still uncommon.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Power acts like an Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Works on self only** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)

Acelera

To cast: Average(7)

On successful casting, the mage can add 1d+0 to the damage of any projectile if their adjusted Fate roll is 1d+1 or more. It is easily cast on an arrow or thrown object right before using it, but this spell does not work for musket balls because it is too difficult to target them while in the weapon.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power affects only very small targets** (-10 points)
- **Reduced 1d effect** (-10 points)
- **Power acts like an Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power conveys movement** (+15 points)
- **Power lasts 1 turn** (+5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Campa

To cast: Heroic(15)

This utility spell just generates a translucent force dome a few meters across with an armor of a maximum of 1d+0. It takes a mage with an adjusted Fate roll of at least 7 to cast the spell at the minimum level of effect (0d+1). It is enough to keep out bugs and most weather, and lasts until the next sunrise or sunset or until it is broken by damage (generic penalty). Air does not pass across the barrier, but the shape of the dome has a "doorway" to allow ventilation. A cloak can be draped over the opening as needed. There is a variant that can be cast by mages with a Fate as low as 5, but once learned it cannot be modified (has the "power cannot be altered" modifier).

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Prevents an effect** (+30 points)
- **Half-lethal damage** (+45 points)
- **Reduced 2d effect** (-20 points)
- **Power fills an area 2-3m** (+20 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- **Takes ten seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-10 points)

Paredagio

To cast: Superheroic(17)

The Paredagio spell generates a wall of force that tends to block the passage of any form of damage over a circle up to 15 meters across. This protection includes magical forms of damage, and the barrier can be designated as permeable in one direction or neither direction when it is cast. The power lasts as long as the mage maintains concentration on it. To protect such a large area from damage requires an extraordinary amount of magical energy, which can be harnessed only through a dedicated magical focus constructed for this purpose. If the activation of the spell is failed, a force bubble is created that collapses upon the mage, crushing them into a tiny ball with half-lethal damage equal to their adjusted Fate roll. This damage is *not* blocked by armor or other protection.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Prevents damage** (+30 points)
- **Half-lethal damage** (+45 points)
- **Power fills an area 8-15m** (+40 points)
- **Boundary effect** (-10 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires spellbook or focus** (-10 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Takes ten seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)

Catapulta

To cast: Hard(11)

An annoying, effective and often crippling spell. The mage just gestures at anyone within 15 meters, and if the spell hits (and the mage's adjusted Fate is sufficient to lift the target's weight), the target (man-sized) flies up to 7 meters straight up (or in any direction) as if launched from a catapult. Of course, if they go straight up, they fall back down the next turn and take 2d+2 half-lethal damage to a random location, plus wasting another turn to get back on their feet if they weren't incapacitated by the fall. The spell is especially fun indoors where low ceilings almost guarantee damage is taken on the head (+1d damage). A mage can also use the spell on themselves or friends to leap onto or over obstacles.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Increased 1d effect** (+10 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+15 points)
- **Power conveys movement** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Protega

To cast: Heroic(15)

On successful casting, the mage generates a magical shield which is wielded exactly like a normal shield (+2 on blocking) and lasts as long as the mage maintains concentration. Its armor is the mage's default Fate roll minus 1d. It has no Hits, but is not damaged by being penetrated. Unlike the Protego spell, the Protega can be brought into being with but a syllable or two and a quick gesture, so it is better in surprise situations.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reduced 1d effect** (-10 points)
- **Prevents damage** (+30 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Requires mundane skill** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Generic penalty** (-5 points)

Protego

To cast: Heroic(15)

On successful casting, the mage generates a magical armor around themselves or someone else in melee range, with an effect of the mage's adjusted Fate roll minus 1d. This would count as the outer layer of armor if any defenses are underneath it (EABA, page 4.9). It requires gestures and a minute to bring into being, but after that it is maintained simply by effort of will.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reduced 1d effect** (-10 points)
- **Prevents damage** (+30 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 difficulty)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 difficulty)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 difficulty)

In the hands of any competent mage, this armor is far superior to any mundane armor, and is more or less impervious to mundane weapons. As a result, countermeasures of varying effectiveness are widely known, such as disenchanting spells, magic-piercing attacks, immobilization, and so on.

Repentina**To cast:** Superheroic(17)

On successful casting, the mage puts a triggered magical shield on a target within melee range. This lasts until the target would take damage at or past the threshold stated in the spell. At this point, it activates, providing an armor of the caster's default Fate roll minus 1d for that attack only, after which it dissipates. This counts as a layered armor, and is typically cast on a person, so they get whole body protection. Almost everyone who feels the need for protection and who can afford it will have this spell cast upon their armor or themselves, typically at a 3d+0 threshold. The nature of the magic is such that layering this spell would not work. All spells that would trigger on a given attack will trigger, even if one is "under" the other. A person could have a 2d+0 Repentina and a 3d+0 Repentina, and while a 2d+0 hit would only trigger one, a 3d+0 hit would trigger both. Remember that the mage casting this spell can only have a certain number of triggered spells ready, so the total number of Repentina spells in circulation is fairly small, and most of them are probably on various Heads and Heirs.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Reduced 1d effect** (-10 points)
- **Prevents damage** (+30 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- ◆ **Power is triggered** (+10 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Purifiqua**To cast:** Average(7)

This spell is cast on an object up to the size of a person, and separates out a particular *known* impurity, or separates a pure substance from a host of impurities. This could separate silt from water, gold from ore, or poison from a person. It requires a minimum adjusted Fate roll of 4d+0 or better to be completely successful, so the spell is often cast at increased difficulty for extra effect. Once the separation is complete, any impurities must be manually removed from the item to make sure they do not recombine when the spell expires. Note that removing something from a complex mixture may alter its properties in unexpected ways...

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power alters form of item** (+15 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Power lasts 10 minutes** (+20 points)
- **Takes 10 seconds to activate** (-5 points)
- **Requires minimum Fate of 8** (-10 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Ythrek**ANIMO SPELLS****Somnola****To cast:** Hard(11)

On successful casting, the mage uses their spell dice to hit a target up to 15 meters away. The effect is the mage's default Fate roll, which subtracts from the target's Awareness, making them feel drowsy and less aware of their surroundings (down to half their normal Awareness roll, rounding down). The spell's special effect is that it is not audible or visible. It is a complex spell, requiring both quick gestures and a command word, but it is subtle and leaves no traces, the target usually unaware that they have even been targeted.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+15 points)
- **Power subtracts Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts 10 seconds** (+10 points)
- ◆ **Requires minimum Fate of 8** (-10 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)

Inveo**To cast:** Heroic(15)

This spell subtracts from the visual Awareness of anyone who looks at the caster, with the special effect that the spell has no visible or audible traces. The Awareness of onlookers can be reduced down to zero, but only for purposes of seeing the caster, who can still be heard, touched or smelled or otherwise noticed.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Sensory targeting** (+20 points)
- **Power subtracts Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts as caster wills** (+15 points)
- **Works on self only** (-5 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)

EABA

Apatia

To cast: Formidable(13)

On successful casting, the mage uses their spell dice to hit a target up to 31 meters away. The effect is the mage's adjusted Fate roll, which subtracts from the target's Will. Like the Somnola spell, it is normally invisible and inaudible. If the result reduces the target's Will to 0d or less, they are incapable of action, though they remain somewhat aware of their surroundings. Events or actions that threaten the life of the target or trigger mental traits may give them extra dice of Will, allowing them to act, but if left alone, they simply remain where they were when the spell took effect. If the spell does not reduce the target's Will to 0d, they may act normally, but the reduced Will may cause them delays or trouble in making complex decisions. If the casting of the spell is failed, the caster suffers the penalty to their own Will for the spell's duration.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Power has special effect** (+10 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+20 points)
- **Power subtracts Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts 10 seconds** (+10 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

Doloro

To cast: Hard(11)

On successful casting, the mage uses their spell dice to hit a target up to 15 meters away. The effect is the mage's adjusted Fate roll, which subtracts from the target's Will for resisting pain. If the result reduces the target's Will to 0d or less, any injury that passes a damage threshold will cause them to black out. If the spell does not reduce the target's Will to 0d, the reduced roll will still make it harder to avoid being stunned or knocked unconscious. If the casting is failed, the caster suffers the spell's effect for the normal duration.

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 1d effect** (+10 points)
- **Ranged effect** (+15 points)
- **Power subtracts Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Power lasts 10 seconds** (+10 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)

Convoquo

To cast: Hard(11)

This is a number of spells, each one designed to summon a particular type of creature or being, or perhaps a specific named being. This requires the mage have an accurate "mental template" of whatever it is they are summoning. This is a mundane skill roll on the knowledge of that entity, with a difficulty based on the nature and power of the entity in question. This involves arcane concepts like "true names", and may also require some actual fragment or artifact closely tied to that entity.

The summoned being is generally subservient to the caster, and remains until it performs one service (or dies). It must be capable of understanding and completing the service requested. Any being that is or thinks it is more powerful than the mage may attempt to harm the mage instead of performing the service (hence the Pentagrama and Pentagramo spells). Only if such an attack is futile will it agree to the service. If the summoning attempt is failed, the summoned creature (or its big brother) will still appear, and it will be hostile to the mage, will not agree to any service and is unsummoned only if it is killed or chooses to leave.

The default spell can summon a creature with at least 11d split between its six attributes and skills, each 10S in skills costing 1d. The caster can always choose to take extra difficulty to get extra dice in the effect. However, it is the gamemaster who designs the creatures which are available to be summoned, not the player.

EXAMPLE: A mage wants to summon a lesser spirit to answer an obscure magical question. The gamemaster creates a lesser spirit with 2d in three attributes, 1d in the other three, and 20S in skills (one at +2d and two at +1d).

- **Framework base:** (-10 points)
- **Additional 8d effect** (+80 points)
- ◆ **Power creates living item** (+10 points)
- **Requires minimum Fate of 11** (-15 points)
- **Takes 10 minutes to activate** (-15 points)
- **Side effect** (-20 points)
- **State-based duration** (+15 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires vocalization** (-5 points)
- **Power cannot be altered** (-10 points)

Remember that in Ythrek, items cannot be magically created. This spell can only summon an entity that already exists, though it does not have to exist in the material world. This spell can (with gamemaster permission) be used to "summon" a person from anywhere in Ythrek to where you are, if you can meet the requirements of the spell.

▼ **MAGES AND SOCIETY** - Mages within Novomad have a host of regulations on what they can do and under what circumstances, mainly for public safety and economic stability. Outside Novomad, these restrictions do not apply, but can still be used if the mage applies magic against a Novomad citizen outside the confines of a sanctioned duel. And of course, other areas may have their own laws, regulations, taboos and traditions regarding magic.

In combination with low-tech but enlightened medicine, most injuries that are not immediately fatal can be healed, and healed fully if you have the money. The close ties to Family mean that this money is often available as a gift or loan if the person who needs care cannot afford it. The limits on medical magic are just that the number of practitioners may not always be able to meet the demand, especially with some specialized healing magics. But, by and large, the main cause of death in Novomad is from the maladies of old age.

Novomad is at peace, and its main concerns are its internal industry and trade. Much of the magic known is used to enhance these, taking the place of technology. Spells to help mining of coal and shipping of heavy items are listed, but it seems reasonable that any guild whose trade could be enhanced by spells would tend to use them. The flexibility of magic is the main reason that technological development is slow. A skilled mage can do anything a complex machine can. While a machine can do it without tiring, machines don't breed more machines, machines wear out, and machines use more scarce resources. Even if something like steam engines existed, they would not be widely adopted. Guilds involved in transport would object. The system of forced labor as a legal penalty would be undermined, and so on.

The most important thing is to understand how mages and non-mages interact. An adventurer who is a mage can project force and influence well beyond the reach and range of a non-mage adventurer. In any one-on-one encounter, a well-trained mage should be able to defeat a well-trained fighter. Because there have been anti-social mages and occasional magical threats, those without magical talent have learned a variety of tricks and techniques to deal with what we in role-playing call the "helicopter gunship problem", i.e. the flying, magically armored mage with a whopping big ranged attack.

The citizens of Novomad deal with this through a combination of numbers and gadgets. Many magical defenses can be knocked down, or are designed to prevent a mage from being taken down by a surprise attack. Multiple attacks take down the outer layer of defenses, leaving the mage open to later attacks, while at the same time having to deal with multiple attackers who are smart enough to not cluster together as an easy area-effect target. Making the mage cast lots of spells can simply tire them too much to continue the fight.

Gadgets are going to be part of any serious mundane force that expects to deal with mages. Magic-piercing projectiles or blades, weapons with enhanced damage, and enchanted items whose only purpose is to disrupt ongoing magics. If you've got a flying mage thirty meters up and you either stun them or take away their ability to fly, gravity solves the rest of the problem for you... So, the gamemaster should feel free to design things like independent "disenchant" wands, a single use charm that simply reflects the first spell to hit it back at the caster, and so on.

Last, since everyone has the potential to be a mage, there is always the small possibility that someone in a crowd is going to know a spell that can ruin a mage's day, or at least throw a monkey wrench in their plans.

All that said, mages can still be remarkably effective at a number of roles. But since everyone knows what those roles are and how the mages go about it, it's not as easy as it might be. If people know mages can fly and teleport, mundane defenses will take this into account. Windows can be closed to prevent anyone seeing in, rooftops will not provide easy access, inside courtyards will still have sturdy, locking doors, and so on. If guards can be made drowsy, maybe multiple guards will be used, or guards stationed so they can see each other, making it hard for one to be affected without alerting the other. Invisible mages can be thwarted by "airlocks", or closely spaced doors that only allow one person through at a time, and each door can only be opened if the other is closed. *Be creative.* For every magical trick, there is usually a fairly simple mundane countermeasure.



My greatest hope, my greatest cause to grieve,
and my heart flew from its cage and it bled
upon my sleeve.

The cries of passion were wounds that needed
healing, but I could not hear them for the
thunder.

I was half the naked distance between hell and
heaven's ceiling, and he almost pulled me
under.

By grace my sight grows stronger and I will not be
a pawn for the prince of darkness any longer.

- Found upon fragment of Ancient metal

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Novomad is the center of the Ythrek campaign world, but it is a *tiny* portion of the world itself. The Novomad region is perhaps a hundredth of a percent of the world's land area, and the total region occupied by the various races is still only about one percent of the world's land area. It has been left undescribed for a reason. Meanwhile, what drives adventurers to adventure, either in Novomad or elsewhere?

▼ **ADVENTURES IN NOVOMAD** - A large majority of the population is involved with agriculture, either directly with crops or food animals, or indirectly through marketing or related products (leather, candles, cloth, etc.). Most of the skilled crafters are part of small guilds, like the Furniture Guild, the Armorer Guild and so on. These are tightly knit, secretive organizations that teach their trade only to those who are apprenticed to guild members. Certain information specified as "Guild secrets" are generally protected by law. For instance, it would be *illegal* for an adventurer to just start teaching people the recipe for sword-quality steel. Aside from getting you into duels with every swordsman in the Armorer Guild, you would also face hefty fines for potentially cutting into their livelihood. Cross-disciplinary tech advances and discoveries don't happen very often in Novomad...

Ythrek

Of the minority of working people remaining, they are split between the administrators of the city, the small but full-time City Guard, with a sprinkling of sages, mages, explorers, professional troublemakers and of course a good supply of children and home-makers. This minority also represents where a lot of adventures will start. An adventurer talks to a stranger and is suddenly being chased by the City Guard. A sage has a theory and he needs someone to escort him to an Ancient site. A mage wants eye of dracon for a potion and the stores are all out. A prospector is looking for either backers or strong backs to carry things. A goon from the Banker's Guild is after your no-good cousin, and since you signed on the loan note, you either have to find him or pay the debt yourself. Etcetera, etcetera.

Politics - The six Families are always jockeying for position. Almost every type of adventure can have some form of politicking behind it, with some Family as friends and some as enemies. Duels, thefts, espionage, sabotage, blackmail, bribery, the works. Sometimes, things are done just to "count coup" on another Family or cause embarrassment without any overt political goal in mind. There can be plenty of things to do without ever leaving town. The nearby ruins of the Ancient city can always help combine exploration and politics. Several kilometers of tunnels have been dug over the centuries, and Ancient tunnels extend for kilometers more. There are always rumors circulating about what is or isn't being found there, and someone strikes it rich just often enough to make people forget just how dangerous and unpredictable those ruins actually are.

The politics of Novomad were designed with adventure in mind. Lots of intrigue, not too many fatalities, opportunities for espionage, sabotage, theft, psychodrama, current events, possible outside agitators or spies and lots of skeletons in closets that people want to keep there.

▼ **ADVENTURES OUTSIDE NOVOMAD** - Novomad is the hub of the campaign setting, but plenty of things are happening outside the fertile valley.

Exploration - Quite deliberately, there is a *lot* of unexplored real estate out there, and adventures can occur on the way out, while you're there and on the way back. Someone might have found clues to an Ancient treasure and be looking for partners or hirelings. This could be for something as esoteric as Ancient magic, or as tangible as gold and jewels. For all their greatness, the Ancients still valued precious metals and gemstones for adornment, and these are among the few things that survived them. Exploration by others can also uncover things better left buried. This could be as simple as some Ancient information that could still prove embarrassing to one of the Families, or as devastating as releasing some manifestation of the Cataclysm to once again ravage the land.

Conquest - Novomad may decide to expand the region it controls by making a long-term occupation of nearby territory, regardless of whether that territory is already occupied. This is a new thing, and likely to be done poorly. Only in recent years has the Novomad valley contained enough people that feeding them over the lean times could be a problem. Colonists and soldiers will arrive in force, and have to set up and defend a viable colony by the time the weather turns. The reverse is also true. Novomad is not all that large a city, and some greater power from a distant land may be looking for new territory of its own. The productive and relatively normal climate will last for several more years, a lot of time to raise an army and mount a conquest. Agents provocateur will be in Novomad fomenting rebellion, causing unrest or otherwise weakening the city's ability to defend itself. This could be a backdrop for a decade-long campaign, culminating in a final make-or-break conflict as the long spring years end and the hot summer years begin.

Evil Returns - The effects of the Cataclysm are a hazard of travel outside the valley, so it can be said the Cataclysm never really ended. At the same time Novomad is understanding the simplest of Ancient secrets, Ancient evils are again awaking. Another long-term campaign option, adventurers are the front line of defense in a conflict everyone hoped would never happen. Whatever brought about the destruction of the Ancients is weak, but awake and looking to finish the job it started eight hundred years ago...

▼ **YTHREK'S SECRETS** - In the distant past, Ythrek was a prosperous, peaceful and stable world. Then, one day about a thousand years before the present gameworld, something really, *really* bad happened. The end results you have already seen. How exactly they came about is another matter entirely. The gamemaster can decide on any of the following scenarios they want, or make up their own.

Scenario one: Ythrek was a technologically advanced culture, with well-developed inter-planetary travel and numerous in-system habitats and research stations. Then, an early experiment with nanotechnology goes horribly wrong. Nanotech is microscopic machines, which can be programmed to replicate much like living cells. However, nanotech can disassemble just about anything in order to make more of itself. Buildings, cars, power lines, computers, you name it. The outbreak lasted for only a few weeks, during which there was no choice but to release experimental new nanotech to fight the old. By the time the situation stabilized, almost everything on the planet was destroyed, including the people. Only those who actually had the defensive nanotech in their bodies survived being consumed, and they would be lucky if they still retained the clothes on their backs. The heat generated by the nanotech war caused dramatic climate changes whose reverberations are still felt, along with something that altered the polar tilt and orbit of the planet.

People desperate to escape in the last days accidentally took both forms of nanotech into space with them on whatever spaceships they could find, and spread the problem to space habitats and planetary colonies alike. Most were completely wiped out, their environmental seals opened to the vacuum of space, but a few terraformed planetary oases survived, much like Ythrek. If they still survive, they have not regained any advanced technology, and their culture and perhaps even biology would be alien to Ythrek.

To this day, elements of both deadly and protective nanotech exist in the environment, with the protective forms dominant and completely capable of protecting conventional lifeforms from disassembly. In some areas the protection is not quite perfect, and can cause adventurers some problems.

Nanotech, like life, can evolve. The pervasive presence of nanotech in *everything* slowly became a Gaia-like entity, self-regulating and everywhere. Intelligent, but fragmented, multiple personalities with conflicting goals, able to communicate with other parts of itself and generate useful amounts of energy by harnessing the microscopic output of countless nanomachines to the task. Those who found out they could actually manipulate this force with their own will were called mages. The electrical currents of their mind can influence the local nano-environment to do just about anything.

Technology - The technology of the Ancients was almost completely consumed by rogue nanotech, leaving only ruins. Ancient metal is the only substance not affected, and this is because it is not matter at all, but a form of stabilized energy that was not recognized as "food" by the nanotech. However, this was a very expensive substance, and only used for specialized purposes that required a superhard "material" capable of withstanding extreme temperature and stress. Ancient artifacts made of this substance are usually just a leftover fragment of a larger device, like perhaps the core of a small antimatter battery. Mages who somehow manage to manipulate the material with magic find they simply dissolve it into a great ball of energy which cannot be reformed back to its original state. The wedge of Ancient metal in the city square of Novomad is actually a "time capsule", a container impervious to nanotech that houses a treasure-trove of intact Ancient material. It is not the only such treasure trove, and one opened on the other side of the continent a century ago has turned its controllers into a fearsome military force bent on recovering all the Ancient troves, troves whose location was conveniently placed in each of the buried capsules. The idea of an expanding military empire that will eventually threaten Novomad is a good long-term plot for any Ythrek campaign, regardless of the Ythrek's origins.

Magic - The nature of magic available to adventurers in this scenario will be different than the guidelines presented earlier. Specifically, inanimate things can be assembled or disassembled from templates like a reduced size version of the item, but directly using nanotech to fly or teleport an item is out of the question. Note that "creating" an item just assembles it from existing matter, which means something else in the area has to be disassembled as part of the process. This could be a general focus limitation for some types of magic. That is, you can say that doing anything with magic requires that you start with some kind of matter appropriate to the final effect and how powerful it is. To make a blast of fire, you start with something flammable, like a piece of wood or lump of coal. An illusion might require a handful of mica or glitter (to reflect and shape light). A mental compulsion might need some raw neurotransmitters or their precursors, perhaps from dried animal glands. People will not actually understand the exact reason why they need certain raw materials, and will explain it in terms of magical similarities. Alchemists will be secretive and eccentric, secretive because of their valuable distilling and refining knowledge, and eccentric from long exposure to exotic and dangerous substances.

Nanotech also generates a lot of heat when called upon to do work, and having a spell effect that causes the user to take some extra non-lethal damage could be appropriate from the heat stress, or make some magics only usable in the cold of winter.

Nanotech "magic"

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Starting cost	0
●	Requires consumed focus	-10
●	Damages non-lethal hits	-10
	Framework base	-20

Scenario two: Ythrek has *always* been a world of magic, climate extremes and squabbling empires, reaching an Industrial Era level of development about a thousand years ago. The most ancient of prophecies predicted a unholy conjunction of the stars and planets that would awake the great and ancient evils. But Ythrek had embraced magic as a science, discarding old superstitions like religion. They were "civilized" and ignored the prophecies, to their eternal sorrow. Things of horror and legend burst into the polar skies from caves and fissures never explored by man. They rode the auroras across the world, dropping into the cities of Ythrek like a rain of madness. By the time the unholy conjunction had passed and the evils returned to their dens for another thousand years, little was left of Ythrek. Its cities lay waste, its people dead or worse and even the gods maimed or killed.

Not all the evil returned to its frightful lairs to sleep. Some remained behind. *Some always does.* Now that another cosmic cycle is drawing to a close, things that should have slept are beginning to wake. The bonds upon them weakened by their previous victory, they once again walk the lands of men, men who know not what they are about to face.

Not all in Ythrek are born and die in ignorance. Here and there a few survived who remembered why the world was laid waste, and when it will happen again if it is not stopped. Even now they send emissaries to the known centers of civilization, seeking aid in averting a catastrophe that few even believe in, and like Ythrek of old, ignore at their peril. The remaining centuries have turned into decades, and the decades grow short.

Technology - The Ancients had no advanced technology. They were finally making practical use of steam engines when the Cataclysm occurred. They had no stainless steel or aluminum or carbon composites that would stand the test of time, and what was left of their civilization quietly rusted away.

Magic - The Ancients knew secrets of magic that are lost forever. Some spells can only be learned if the person carries the natural talent for that spell, and so many died in the Cataclysm that none have been born since with that talent. The making of Ancient metal is one of those talents, as is the way of powering magical artifacts from this substance. In their final moments, the Ancients sought to shield what they thought valuable from the horrors around them, never considering that the way of working and shaping this magical material would be forever lost, or that no one would be able to recharge their devices. Some of these artifacts might still work a few times if one knew the words or ways to command them, but the recharging or making of them is a talent now gone from the world. The spell list given can work as written with this background and power framework, so you can assume that this scenario is the default background for Ythrek.

Fantasy magic

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Starting cost	0
●	Damages non-lethal hits	-10
	Framework base	-10

Scenario three: Ythrek is the interstellar colony of a homeworld now lifeless. Sublight ships carrying artificial intelligences, frozen adults and frozen embryos travelled for centuries to reach this planet. Upon arrival, machines set to building towns for the new populations soon to be born. In time, these colonists grew and prospered, building a peaceful and happy civilization.

But centuries after the colony ships left, their homeworld was rocked by bitter internal struggle centered around old and largely discredited beliefs. Demagogues stirred up the wrath of the poor and disenfranchised, taking advantage of the lethargy of a system that could not respond to rapid change. Violent revolution followed, leading to a short reign of terror by the victors, turning the surviving government forces into freedom fighters. Eventually, these freedom fighters won back the hearts, minds and cities that had been lost, but the revolution decided that if it could not rule, there would be nothing left to rule. Before they launched weapons resulting in the complete destruction of the biosphere, the leaders of the revolution launched interstellar probes to destroy all of the "deviant" cultures disseminated by their ancestors.

A thousand years ago these probes arrived at Ythrek. Some carried or were weapons of mass destruction, crashing into Ythrek at a good fraction of the speed of light. Other probes carried disease, others were designed to corrupt computers and electronics. The onslaught was quick and devastating. Only a handful of people survived, along with a handful of orbiting terror probes and corrupted artificial intelligences, the latter two of which fought each other until they no longer had any offensive capability.

Over the centuries, the survivors rebuilt as best they could, with no robots or industry to help them. Ythrek's orbit, tilt and climate had been disrupted. Genetic alterations caused by plague viruses gave a small portion of the population mental powers, which were assumed to be magic. Eventually these genes spread through the survivors, giving everyone at least the potential to do these things. A few found they had the ability to tap into the communications of the still functioning orbital facilities. Corrupted intelligences faster and vaster than their own were seen as gods or spirits. The terror probes seized the opportunity to spread more chaos, while the fragmented Ythrek computers saw themselves as defenders of humanity.

Aside from the ability to see the world they orbit and channel some tiny portion of their energy through the mental link to the world below, they can directly do little and require human proxies to spread their messages.

Now that the weather is improving and returning to as close to normal as it will ever get, both good and evil are exhorting their minions to act. "Evil" is more focused, but has less of a foothold, and each probe has its own idea of what is "best" and will interfere with the others if given a chance. "Good" has a much greater following, but damage to its fundamental programming keeps it from putting together a cohesive plan, and its lesser satellites retain some of their autonomy and interpret commands in their own peculiar way. Servants of evil have been given secrets known only to the Ancients, and even now are building cults on the lines of the extinct revolutionaries, and learning to make magics and build machines that will let them take over the world. Servants of good only know that evil exists, but not what it is up to. Will they be able to survive?

Technology - The hazards of Ythrek are mostly technological leftovers from an extremely dirty and vicious war. Toxic chemicals, poisonous spores, radiation, mutated humans and animals, and so forth. Ancient metal is just a superhard cerametal, one of the few substances that didn't rust or decay over the centuries. Lesser materials fell prey to metal and plastic-eating bacteria which fortunately died off several years after the initial assault due to a lack of food, though in some areas they have simply gone dormant, waiting for a meal to come along. Most of the cerametal that remains is pieces of larger tools or items. If a diagram or plans for the item could be found, it is conceivable that the missing parts could be made from lesser materials like steel, restoring function of a sort. Powering the reconstructed item would be another matter entirely.

Magic - The way magic works in this world background makes it impossible to create, shapeshift or destroy an item by magic alone, nor is teleportation possible. Just about everything else is, though.

Psionic augmentation "magic"

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Starting cost	0
◆	Requires minimum Fate of 8	-10
●	Reduced 1d effect	-10
Framework base		-20

In this scenario, only those with a high psychic potential can contact the "higher powers", and even then, their effects are not extraordinarily powerful. Mages are fewer than in the other scenarios, but probably feared or respected more. Religion will be more active than in the other scenarios, and rituals or other means of increasing power effects will be a fairly standard practice.

Scenario four: Ythrek is what happens to a world where people have superpowers. One day, about a thousand years ago, a villain of unimaginable magnitude built a Domsday Device and held the world hostage with it. A band of superheroes tried to stop him...and failed. The device went off, destroying all civilization and nearly all life on the planet, shifting its orbit and tilt, melting the icecaps and causing havoc beyond imagining. Only in the past few centuries have the metagenes that control superpowers reactivated in the population, and the emerging powers are being used for good...and evil. The more powerful gravitate to or seize positions of leadership, and rule or defend their communities with varying degrees of effectiveness. Novomad's ruling council is the one extremely gifted individual from each of the ruling Families, and each Family has a particular talent that they seem to be more adept at than anyone else.

Technology - A world with superheroes is one with gadgets and gizmos. Anything outside the bounds of Middle Basic technology would be constructed as a magic item or gadget, but the basis behind the item can be technological, some fragment of Ancient powers regained or retained, but poorly understood.

Magic - Unlike the default scenario, the gifted individuals in this Ythrek may have inborn powers, abilities and defenses. They do not need to invoke ancient names, pore over dusty scrolls and the like. They just will something to happen and it does. Inherent defenses or super-humanly fast healing would be a good idea. Remember that the Trait of being Gifted does not apply to any sort of actively controlled power, but it can work in the background as a passive defense or extraordinary sub-ability of an Attribute. For instance, a person with a Gifted of "Adds to Health" might be a very fast runner.

"Conventional magic" and psionics still work. These are also standard parts of a superhero game. The amount of points the gamemaster allows for creation of adventurers will determine whether the gameworld is just heroic in a different way, or a battered world about to get battered some more by high-powered, knockdown fights between crusaders for good and evil.

Superhero "magic"

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Starting cost	0
◆	Power costs +6A	-20
	Framework base	-20

▼ **FALLING STAR (short adventure)** - To the average person, stars are just something that is "just there". The less educated view them with a sense of superstition, especially the so-called "cursed stars".

To the person with some education, it is known that the stars are some incredibly distant versions of the sun, perhaps with worlds of their own. The "wandering stars" are known to be planets, but whether they are inhabited or not is unknown. They are to date beyond the reach of magic to gather information from or travel to. The stars and planets make their way across the sky like the hands of a vast celestial clock, and that is the only use most people have for them.

Last are the "cursed stars". These are faint, but they zip across the heavens in well under an hour. There are at least dozens of them, possibly hundreds, crossing the sky in different directions, and seldom crossing in the same direction twice. This makes it hard to determine their exact number. They are just close enough that the most skilled of mages have been able to confirm that some are of Ancient origin, or at least of an age that placed them in the sky before the Ancients fell. There is not enough information to tell if they are Ancient magics, tools, aspects of the gods, or agents of the Cataclysm.

Among the common folk, to look up in the night sky and see a cursed star is a bad omen. It is common before doing something important to look at the night sky directly above you, and if there is a cursed star crossing your path, you should decide to do something different. Weddings have been cancelled, business deals soured, all manner of interference caused by this superstition. Mages try to keep themselves above "common superstitions", but more than one has found an excuse to delay an important casting because they saw a cursed star while contemplating it.

They are called "cursed stars" for a reason. Sometimes they fall from the sky, leaving a sparkling trail of fire that lingers in the heavens for a space. The last one that fell within reach of a Novomad expedition drove them all mad, an insanity that was so contagious that all who manifested it had to be killed. But the one before that yielded up a treasure that made the sole survivor of the expedition wealthy for life. Whatever it was, it disappeared into the vaults of the Librotecha, and of those who know, no one has ever told what it was, or why it was worth so much.

As a side note, when the explorer finally died of old age, his entire collection of personal possessions was immediately bought by the Family Heads. These have never been seen again either.

A cursed star falls from the heavens over Novomad perhaps once every hundred years, and presumably, they fall elsewhere as well. A few of the Librotecha mages cast spells to determine if the event has happened anywhere within notice, for it would be unseen if the sky was overcast or if it happened during the day.

Sometimes, it is unambiguous. In the spring of the year, and the spring of the Turning, a cursed star falls across the night sky of Novomad. It is seen by hundreds, if not thousands (who immediately change whatever plans they were making), and its glowing trail lasts long enough for those who missed its passing to at least glimpse its remnants. It then disappears silently, somewhere to the southeast.

In the following days or week, some number of "adventurers" will be working on plans to investigate the region where it presumably fell. Motives will vary, from greed, to scientific or magical curiosity, to religious reverence, and for each motive, there may be a person who would rather stay at home, but who is willing to underwrite the cost of an expedition in exchange for the lion's share of whatever good comes from it. This is where the adventurers come in. Either they are trying to get there themselves, or their talents are such that someone else is trying to recruit them as hired help.

How the gamemaster handles the adventure and the vast number of possible permutations is beyond the scope of a short adventure outline. What we can do with this adventure and the next one is to provide you with an interesting plot and some relevant details that you can run with.

In Novomad - The distance of the impact from the city is about two hundred kilometers. Depending on the quality of the magical help they can find, the resting place of the cursed star can be narrowed down to either a multiple kilometer stretch on a particular compass bearing, or a radius of some kilometers. A highly skilled mage might get the number of kilometers as low as five, while a less talented one would make it as high as twenty. Either way, this is a *lot* of ground for a small number of people to search. Adventurers should pack for a trip of several weeks duration, and have some idea how they will narrow their search down once they get to the right area.

Ythrek

Another preparation would be deciding what kind of precautions to take in the event the cursed star is *genuinely* cursed. No one wants to be burned to a cinder, turned inside out or driven stark raving bonkers. How do you protect yourself? *Good question*. If people had a foolproof answer, an awful lot of Cataclysm leftovers could be negated.

Reliable maps of that area are non-existent. Available maps only cover the area leading to the Tagus Dam (page 2.15), and the presumed location of the cursed star is at least fifty kilometers past that. Vague topographical descriptions can be had by piecing together reports from other travellers, but the best that can be found is the knowledge that there are some low ridges, a few small canyons, maybe with good water at this time of year, and Freeholds of unknown type wherever life could possibly exist throughout a Turning.



Harke Francos

Strength 3d+0
 Agility 3d+0
 Awareness 2d+2
 Will 2d+2
 Health 2d+2
 Fate 2d+0

Harke is a City Guard officer just "coincidentally" assigned to an expedition being funded by a wealthy member of the Francos Family. Harke is used to leading groups of men, and is quite competent with a knife or sword (+2d skill), fairly good with most other weapons (+1d skill) including flintlocks, but only passable at unarmed combat (+0d skill). He has been issued one of the reusable grenades from the city armory. He has the discretion to keep this to himself, and the sense to know if and when it would be useful. Harke has no special authority outside city limits, but he is willing to bluff and claim he does if the situation warrants it.

His goal is to get there first, and if there is a threat to Novomad, make sure that it is properly dealt with. He might not know how to deal with it, but he can organize labor, tools and tasks for anyone that can. If there is some knowledge, political or military advantage to be had, he is going to get it at any cost short of killing or maiming a Family member. We won't know if this same reticence applies to outsiders unless push comes to shove.

Outside Novomad - For any expeditions that leave at about the same time, it is a race of sorts to get there ahead of the competition. But, it is a race with a lot of mental and political strategy. In the hostile wilderness, there is safety to be had in numbers, but also an opportunity for some subtle espionage or sabotage. Accidents can happen, but no one is going to do something that would cause an outright disaster. Everyone lives in the same town, and payback's a bitch. Dueling injuries might slow someone down, and even if magical healing is available, wearing down the fatigue of a competing mage is also a possibility.

The hazards on the route to Tagus Dam are well known, and if not easily avoided, at least they can be prepared for in advance. Violent spring dust devils, crustsand, nests of wingvipers and the occasional territorial herd of bisonts (normal or abomination grass variety) are the deadly but known perils of this particular region. What is crustsand and what are wingvipers? We have no idea, but they are incapacitating or deadly to the unprepared. *Be creative.*

At least the route is well marked. The stumps of what is assumed to be an Ancient aqueduct lead unerringly to Tagus Dam.

There are no permanent residents of the dam area, but there may be ruins of the temporary structures once built there as part of the aborted logging or exploration attempts. Clever mages or sages may think they have a way to avoid the debilitating (but not permanent) sickness brought about by getting too close, but they're probably wrong. Scaling the several hundred meter height of the ridge where the dam is will be the labor of an entire day unless some heavy lifting magic is used.

The only other option is to go completely around the ridgeline, which would be a few days walk at best. Once on top of the ridge, adventurers head into truly unknown territory. Smart adventurers will try to find a way to make a good map, or keep a detailed log. These things are always useful for future reference, and can also be worth money to the right individual.

Tobin Freehold - As luck and adventurers would have it, the cursed star fell within sight and a day's walk of Tobin Freehold, a slightly inbred community of about fifty, about two days' walk past the upper edge of Tagus Dam. They subsist on a cluster of springs that feed the trickle which eventually soaks into the dam, shifting their irrigation channels from one spring to another as they dry up and flow with the changing seasons. Hidden in a small canyon, they are protected from the worst heat, and their homes carved into the stone walls shield them from the worst of the cold. Some primitive fungiculture and aquaculture help them get enough food to survive, but not enough to flourish. While adventurers in centuries past may have come this way, the Tobinite clan has stayed well hidden. But with several competing expeditions combing the area, the Tobinites are sure to be found eventually.

Tobin Freehold is ruled by the Matriarch, a quite capable woman of advancing years. Toothless and wrinkled, she is nonetheless hard as flint, pragmatic, smart and ruthless, just like the previous Matriarchs. When food reserves are not enough to cover the inevitable bad times, she is the one who decides who eats and who starves, who may have children and who is permitted to marry whom. While cannibalism is thankfully *not* one of the Tobinite practices, they do recycle *everything* and waste nothing. While their Middle Primitive weapons (bows and bronze blades) are not a match for well-equipped adventurers, they do know the terrain like their lives depended on it, and they probably do have numerical superiority. Over the centuries, their magical talents have disappeared except for talents that help them manage in their ecological niche. They can carve stone, make themselves invisible to hostile animals, neutralize animal and vegetable poisons and make small but intense magical fires sufficient to smelt metals (they have no coal and very little wood). They have no ceremonial duelling tradition. In extreme cases, disputes may be settled by combat, but this is *mortal* combat.

The Tobinites are not *completely* isolated. They do not stray too far towards Novomad, since their streams quickly become foul in some subtle way that they cannot detect short of drinking the water and becoming ill. In the other directions they know of three other tiny freeholds, each about two day's fast walk from Tobin Freehold and each other. One is a very devolved group that practices ritual cannibalism and other abhorrent rites. They give that group a wide berth. Outright warfare with them is impossible due to the logistics of getting that many people across the distance with sufficient supplies. The other groups have an unwritten code of limited hospitality with the Tobinites.

Once a year, a man or woman from another Freehold may visit, and stay until he or she gets someone with child or gets with child, at which point they must return home, sometimes with a new mate, sometimes not. Thus is new blood introduced into each Freehold.

How the Matriarch reacts to the first reports of Novos in her domain will depend on how they carry themselves. It is obvious they are looking for something, and equally obvious it is the blessed star that it took a dozen men to carry back to the freehold just a few days ago. While they covered their tracks as a matter of habit, the Matriarch curses herself for not thinking to somehow *magically* cover her people's tracks, or thinking that powerful strangers might come looking for *their* star.

When it becomes clear that the Freehold *will* be found in time, she will decide to align herself with one group or the other, and try to play them against each other, salvaging as much as possible from the situation or even turning it to her advantage. To that end, scouts will try to observe all the groups trying to recover the cursed star to determine who is best to align the freehold to. Not all scouts will be successful at remaining hidden, but those who are caught will remain silent unless magically coerced, and even then they will speak a very mangled version of the Novo tongue that is quite difficult to understand.

Those who are welcomed into the Freehold will be less than the full complement of a party. The well-defended entrances can enforce this short of an all-out assault. The Tobinites will view outsiders with a mixture of curiosity, fear and awe. They knew that others survived the Cataclysm, and have occasional contact with other Freeholds, but never have they met anyone who has clothes sewn with the precision of a sewing machine, or who casually wears a fortune in metal (iron no less!), both armor *and* weapons. While there are formalities, titles and trying to understand each other's thick accents, the meat of the matter is the cursed star (or blessed star, depending on which side you're on).

The star is currently in the working area of the freehold's metalworkers, who have been trying to generate enough magical heat to melt off pieces of it. When adventurers hear of this, the reaction may vary from astonishment to alarm. *Inla alone knows what might happen if some agent of the Cataclysm were released by the Tobinite's primitive meddling!*

Alas, there is no danger, though the gamemaster can play on the adventurer's fears as needed. The cursed star is nothing more than an iron meteorite massing several hundred kilograms. A rarity, and truly older than the Ancients, but with no magic or Ancient taint. As nearly a metric ton of iron, it is worth a fortune to the iron-poor Tobinites who lay claim to it. But in the relatively iron-rich Novomad economy it might only be worth a thousand Eur, a goodly sum, but probably not worth the hassle of transporting it all the way back to Novomad. Even compressed, it would still be a load for two people.

Magic or simple backtracking will confirm that the meteor is indeed the one that left a small crater some kilometers to the north. If the Tobinites and adventurers get along without hostilities, then members of other expeditions might get a "guided tour" to prove to them that the cursed star is not worth the effort it would take to remove it by force. Perhaps with magic, a few pieces of it can be splintered or broken off, just so everyone goes home with something. Pieces of an object from beyond this world should be enough to keep expedition backers from being too disappointed, and such a rarity might also be the basis for unique spells or powerful magical foci. The Tobinites will probably want compensation for these pieces, but something like a steel belt knife would be ample for a several kilogram chunk of the meteor.

Aftermath - The Tobinites really have nothing that would make trade with them worth the risk and travel, and only curiosity would drive a Tobinite to take the journey to Novomad. A long as adventurers agree to bring their own food and provide tokens of appreciation for shelter, some sort of "travel treaty" can be worked out, making the Freehold a possible way station for future adventures.

Tobinites as adventurers - It is possible that a Tobinite could be a starting adventurer, perhaps a scout who is encountering Novos for the first time. The Tobinites were designed in such a way as to be primitive, but not having any social or cultural practices that would make it impossible for them to live among Novos. The religious practices of the Tobinites are left ambiguous for the gamemaster or player to flesh out as needed.

▼ **THE CLAW OF GITHREK (short adventure)** - About a Turning ago, there were six grisly murders, all using an Ancient artifact stolen from the Librotecha. The artifact had been known simply as the Claw, but the perpetrator of the crimes left taunting messages written in the blood of the victims, and signed "Githrek". Thus, the missing relic is now known as the Claw of Githrek. The horror and outrage has faded over the past thirty-two years, and the murders are now just an unsolved mystery, and the Claw of Githrek a tale told to frighten misbehaving children. If you know the "ghost story" of the "hook-handed killer", a variant of that is a good lead-in to this adventure, a tale told around a campfire as a bit of advance information to get the player's attention.

The Claw - About the size of a large man's hand, and similarly articulated, but with many fewer joints. It is made entirely of Ancient metal, with clearly visible socketed joints between the segments that make up its "fingers". What the Claw does is rather simple. It can be activated by anyone holding it who makes a Hard(11) Sorcery skill roll. Once activated, it snaps closed until it encounters resistance, at which point it hesitates, and then slowly and inexorably closes into a "fist". While there is no apparent machinery, no sound or visible power source, the Claw closes with a force that treats stone like a clod of dirt, and steel like wet clay. The only thing strong enough to stop the closure is Ancient metal. Once the Claw has completely closed (or encountered uncrushable resistance), it simply snaps back open.

The six victims of Githrek were all Heirs, one from each Family, and all had their skulls crushed by the Claw, a process that was both excruciating and no doubt took several minutes.

This morning, Armena a'Banderos, Heir of Family Banderos, was found in an empty barn outside the city limits, bound hand and foot, her skull crushed as though by a giant hand. A note written in her blood simply said "Githrek returns". If the murder occurred last night, it would have been exactly thirty-two astronomical years after the first murder. The Claw of Githrek has returned. The citizens of Novomad are ready to panic...

The situation varies depending on your point of view. There is the political situation, the official stance, the unofficial stance and the views of the average person on the street.

Political situation - When Githrek struck thirty-two years ago, it almost tore Novomad apart. Only after each Family had suffered a loss did people accept that no Family was behind the matter and outright civil war was only narrowly averted. While it is possible, no one *really* believes that any Family would perpetrate such an outrage on one of its own members. That this sort of serial killing could occur in Novomad was bad enough, but until each Family had an Heir murdered there was a lot of suspicion and recrimination behind closed doors. This time, that recrimination is less likely. The Heads will assume that the killing is the work of an outsider, but they will hedge their bets until either more killings happen or the perpetrator or perpetrators are caught. The Heirs are being kept under the tightest of security, and they aren't complaining about it. Each is never left alone except for things where privacy is demanded (use your imagination). Even then, any room where an Heir will be alone is thoroughly searched and all entrances and exits are guarded by whatever physical and magical security the Family can bring to bear.

Senje Heifos
 Strength 2d+0
 Agility 2d+2
 Awareness 2d+0
 Will 2d+2
 Health 2d+1
 Fate 1d+0



Senje is a Nepo of the Heifos Family, daughter of the late Aikoro Heifos, the last victim of Githrek, some thirty-two years ago. As a young girl, she is the one who found her father's mangled corpse, and the shock left a permanent scar on her psyche. With the new Githrek killings, she is on the edge of sanity. She has her own outlandish theory on what is happening, and is on the streets every day telling it to people and getting into their personal space to do it. She will aggressively provoke or demand duels with anyone who slights her, ignores her or disagrees with her. Her Family has a healer following her around full-time to patch up the damage, but they can't really stop her from doing what she is doing without trampling on some of Novomad's most sacred traditions. Her quite passable knife skill of +2d means she is winning more duels than she loses, which only confirms her belief that she is right. While her theory that Githrek has come back from the grave to return himself to life is magically impossible, she is closer to the truth anyone else...

Official stance - The official pronouncement as reported in the various news sheets is the basic description of the tragedy without the gory details, a call for calm, a warning to be alert, and while the Heads do not explicitly name an outsider as the culprit, it is certainly implied. Anyone travelling between Novomad's communities can be expected to be questioned, and the name and time of entry or exit to a community will be noted. The low walls of Novomad will be patrolled by the City Guard to catch anyone who tries to enter or leave other than at the gates.

Unofficial stance - Mages have already been called in to perform investigative or forensic magic. Like before, all they are able to reveal is the slow, horrible death caused by the Claw. The location of the Claw or its owner is still unknown. The only thing that is sure is that the Claw was used and to the best of their knowledge, this Githrek is the same Githrek who did the killings thirty-two years ago. This near-lack of useful information is being concealed from the public by masking its absence with a barrage of less useful info.

Armand Conceros

Strength 2d+2
 Agility 2d+2
 Awareness 2d+0
 Will 2d+1
 Health 3d+0
 Fate 1d+1

Not all Conceros are bureaucrats, mages, or sages. Some just aren't cut out for it. Armand joined the City Guard when he figured out that he just wasn't suited for the path of magery. He's never going to rise to a high rank, but he does have a job that he's pretty good at and proud to do. He's more or less a "beat cop", wandering around and showing the city colors to help stifle petty crime. He has a knife, longsword, leather armor over padding (1d+0) on the torso, and the usual tools of the trade (manacles, loud whistle, truncheon). Most of his skills are only +1d, but he has a fair number of them, and he isn't stupid. But, he has never run into anything like Hredo. Armand can be used as a typical City Guardsman that adventurers might run into.

The best of Novomad's mages are sure that no sort of reincarnation is possible (and they're right), so Githrek is the same actual individual as before.



Since the last murders were thirty-two years ago, the official investigation is focusing on a certain age group. Obviously, anyone under thirty-two can't be a suspect, and practically, anyone under forty-five isn't even considered. Likewise, former suspects who are now dead have been removed from the list, and dry, bureaucratic letters are being sent to their Families to confirm this (just for sake of Family honor). Since the Claw requires someone with magical talent to use, and Githrek's previous murders almost certainly required the use of several magics, the list of possible suspects is mages at least forty-five years old, probably an outsider, but anyone of that age is a potential suspect, known mage or not. Since the feeling is that an outsider is responsible, investigation and round-up of suspects focuses there, which in turn influences public perception. Outsiders of any type (especially Freeholders) are not real popular right now. Any Renunciates in town are probably being rounded up just on general principle.

The Man on the Street - Is woefully uninformed, doesn't think things through, and is easily influenced by rumor. Outsiders will be viewed with suspicion, even ones obviously too young to be Githrek. *Arguing with idiots is always a good way to get into a duel.* When confronted with obvious facts that contradict their preconceptions, most people will become defensive, hostile or make poor excuses to cover their realization that they were being stupid ("Hey, it could be a cult. Githrek might have his unholy spawn working for him..."). Oddly enough, this *could* be the case. The official investigation is focusing on a lone madman (or madwoman), and has not really considered the idea that Githrek might be the leader of a group. The situation is ugly, but not quite ugly enough to turn into looting mobs out to lynch anyone who looks like an outsider mage. *But it is isn't too far off.*

The Truth of the Matter - All men seek immortality. *Some go further on this quest than is wise.* Hredo was an Outsider, a mage of middle age when he came out of the wilderness and into Novomad. Despite his considerable talent and innate power, his skills were not recognized, and he achieved neither fame nor fortune. However, as a mage, he had permission to pore through the tomes held by the Librotecha, including the catalogs of Ancient artifacts that were public knowledge. Perhaps with some knowledge he brought from outside, or in a scrap of information from the Librotecha, Hredo discovered that the Claw or something much like it could be used as the focus for a magic that had never been attempted, never thought possible, or would be considered an abomination to even try.

The Claw does not only crush things, it absorbs some part of the essence of what it crushes. The material it holds in its grasp is lessened somehow. It is this, *not* an immense strength, that enables the Claw to crush all mundane substances with ease. That said, the Claw is quite strong enough to crush a human skull, special ability or not. When it clasps something alive, it temporarily absorbs part of that life, and a skilled mage can take that life and add it to their own. This is what Hredo sought to do.

Resentful of the way he was treated, underpaid and underappreciated despite his superior talent, Hredo decided to repay the Families for their years of unkindness. Rejected by each of the Families, he took his vengeance on each in turn, taking from each Family one of their most important people, the Heirs. If he didn't know the exact means by which such deeds could be traced, he at least was smart enough to know the theory and take precautions. The Claw itself was Ancient metal, a cipher untraceable by magic. Hredo used other magics to shield his identity, leaving only cryptic notes signed "Githrek", a reference to an obscure figure in the Kelveno Cycle, a Renunciate-type figure whose original Family ties are never mentioned.

With each victim, Hredo grew stronger, until the final victim made the unnatural ritual complete. Despite his years, Hredo now had the added vitality of the ritual to add to his own, making him a physical powerhouse and a mage unequalled in his generation. But, his vengeance complete and his lost years seemingly restored, he vanished into the wilderness again, never suspected, never to return.

This would have been the end of it, but Hredo did not *fully* understand what he had accomplished. He had added the vitality and life force of several people to his own, but it only added to his own, it did *not* combine with it. His own Attributes faded with age, and while still strong and alert, one day he simply keeled over from a heart attack and died. Hredo had died of old age, *but what he gained with the Claw remained*. Hredo has no soul and no life, but he is animate nonetheless, with knowledge, power and memories. What was Hredo is now more than an automaton, and less than a person. It does things, does them well, with cunning and creativity, but it does not know why. It feels nothing, neither joy, pain nor remorse. It only knows that a new Turning has come, the stars are in proper alignment, so it must again perform the ritual it performed thirty-two years ago. It will do so with considerable skill and the cleverness of a lifetime's experience.

Hredo is incredibly talented. While he gained no skill after his death, he did have nearly sixty years of experience as a mage before that happened. While his current form is that of a wizened mummy, he can conceal his appearance with magic to match any likeness he wants. He entered Novomad in this way, as a young man. He has since taken the guise of a Hilfök day laborer, another young man, whose body has been compressed and dumped into the sewers. Hredo can also teleport, fly, project magical energy, dispel most enchantments, become invisible and daze the unwary mind. He can probably cast any spell in the spell list. The only thing he cannot do is heal himself, since he is no longer alive. Hredo never developed any spells for repairing mundane objects, so he cannot repair his non-living body. There are mages in town who can do this, and if Hredo needs to, he may track down and coerce the service of such a mage (before killing them).

Hredo *does* suffer non-lethal hits from casting spells, but he ignores non-lethal hits from bruising and mundane exertion. His stamina is boundless, and he has a hit bracket of seven instead of a normal person's four (see **EABA**, page 2.17). His Attributes are simple: 4d+1 in everything (after the first murder). Each time he completes a stage of the ritual, his Attributes go up by one, and should he complete all six murders, he gains an *additional* three (+1d) on each Attribute.

Hredo's magical skills are a +3d in Sorcery and any spell he casts is at another +1d, for a normal spellcasting roll of 8d+1. His skill with weapons and martial combat is thorough, but rudimentary, only +1d, and he retains most other skills at a +1d level. This makes his mundane combat skill rolls a 5d+1 and most other skills are 5d+1 as well. He does not wear armor or have any triggered spells when in a guise where these would be inappropriate, but he will use any and all tools that would help when he is on his way to the next victim.

The Timetable - Each victim must be killed within an hour of a certain phase of the moon. Armena a'Banderos was killed on the full moon, and the last victim must die on the new moon (fourteen days later). This means the remaining murders will take place at intervals of about two days and eight hours, so they will occur both day and night. While all six murders must take place as described for the ritual to be complete, failing to complete one will not stop Hredo from *attempting* the rest. Hredo is simply acting out the scenario of the past, with a new cast of victims. The gamemaster can make the cycle from full moon to full moon if desired to slow the pace, which would separate the murders by four days and sixteen hours.

Hredo arrived in town several weeks ago, more than enough time to find out who the Heirs are, their normal habits and so on. Remember that each Family has *several* Heir Designates, giving Hredo nearly fifty victims to choose from. After the first murder, all the Heirs are naturally concerned, though the remaining Banderos Heirs are breathing a sigh of relief that their part in the affair is over. *Or so they think.* Hredo may not be so particular this time...

Adventurers - Even if no adventurer is an Heir, any member of any Family takes these events as a *personal* affront to their Family honor, and so everyone is investigating things or at least keeping an eye out for suspicious activity. Adventurers of significant reputation or status may know more than the average person, or even be officially involved in the investigation. Each Family has its own private reward offer in addition to the public reward of ten thousand Eur for information leading to the capture (alive) of Githrek. It is a matter of Family pride that this heinous criminal be brought in by one's own Family.

Outsiders may be suspect, but they also take this very seriously. Githrek is giving *all* outsiders a bad name, and while outsiders may only mutter it among themselves, they are the only ones who seriously consider that Githrek might be a deranged member of a Novo Family. After all, Githrek of the Kelveno Cycle was a Renunciate, which meant Githrek was originally Family, *not* outsiders.

Signs and sigils - Also known as clues. While cunning, Hredo is not perfect. He may cover his tracks in a magical sense, but he does leave physical traces. How many of these are available to the adventurers depends on their position in the community. The first and most important one is the corpse of the Hilfök worker, which will be found on the third day after some rats nibble it enough to cause it to re-expand to full size and clog a sewer pipe (euuuw!). While badly mangled, someone will eventually recognize it (by the third day), and Hredo will be forced to take a new identity. Interviews and tracking of when people entered the region can narrow the list of suspects, but since Hredo can change appearance at will, his only concern is having his magical disguise disrupted. By itself, this will restrict his identities and movement through the region. His response to anyone who seems to find him suspicious or penetrates his disguise is to quickly kill them and flee the scene in their guise. There will be a number of random and magical murders during the next month, and their location and the types of individuals killed will be clues to Hredo's weaknesses and whereabouts.

The biggest hurdle for Hredo is the selection of Heir victims. Some may simply be too well guarded. Others will have personal foibles that can be taken advantage of. He is quite capable of teleporting into a toilet and snatching a victim faster than they can cry for help, posing as a trusted guard or friend long enough to get close, or skulking about invisibly until an opportunity arises to make a move. Hredo will try to find a lair, a place where victims can be stashed until their time comes.

Ironically, he may choose an unused holding cell in the Justic, warding it so that people avoid it, and to make it soundproof. Were he still alive, he would find it amusing to conceal a victim in the bowels of the city's legal complex. Other hiding places can be unused farm buildings, mausoleums, storm sewer junctions or any type of lodging where the owner is not going to be in residence for a few days (or won't be missed). The important thing is that the place needs to be quickly accessible when you have a potentially struggling victim to secure. In the current panicky climate, it is possible that he might snatch a victim, but be forced by the hue and cry to abandon them before getting to the hiding place.

Resolution - Adventurers may be the ones to finally bring Hredo to bay. *Maybe not.* If they don't, he will disappear after the new moon and not be seen again, at least not for another thirty-two years. Since Githrek's reign of terror will last from two weeks to a month, adventurers could arrive from out of town midway through, or there could be another adventure running concurrently, with the increased alertness and paranoia in town causing both interference and opportunity for the other adventure.

If the Claw is recovered in any sort of public forum, it will be confiscated and whisked away to the Librotecha, where it will be secured in a manner to hopefully prevent a repeat theft. If adventurers recover the Claw but keep it to themselves, what happens depends on the gamemaster and how often the adventurers use it. They may find that the Claw itself is "haunted", and whoever handles it the most finds themselves thinking evil thoughts and researching rituals best left unknown...

And last, where did Hredo live? If Hredo is no more, what sort of magical lore or goodies did he have stashed away somewhere in the wilderness? How can it be found, and what would it be worth?



- Body armor
- Heavy boots
- Waterskin
- Food
- Sparkcaster
- Cloak, shelter or tent
- Pistol or rifle(if available)
- Sword or axe
- Magical talismans(if available)
- Medical supplies
- Some means of identifying your remains

- Checklist for travel outside city limits

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Ythrek is a resource-poor and labor-intensive gameworld. This limits the selection of items available, and makes complex manufactured goods several times more expensive than normal. Trial and error has given people a good idea of what works and what doesn't, and the slow pace of technological progress has kept the conventional wisdom in vogue for dozens of generations.

Income - Novomad uses the standard **EABA** income scale, which means an average professional (4d+0 skill roll) makes about 29,000Eur per year (560 Eur per week), from which all their living expenses and taxes have to be paid. The normal tax rate and guild dues total about twenty percent of income. Some professions are more or less in demand than others and will vary the income for a particular level of skill. Jobs normally relegated to outsiders typically pay less than their skill level would indicate.

Weapons and armor - Most weapons and armor from the Primitive or Basic Eras are available. The **EABA** list is repeated (with adjusted costs), and a few new items are added. As mentioned earlier, flintlock firearms are only now becoming common among Novomad's elite. They have the advantage that no non-magical armor is appropriate, so their low damage is offset by the ability to penetrate many armor types. Firearms are the only significant new weapon that has come along in a great while. People are still experimenting with their practicality, uses and which weapon is best for which situation. Someone, somewhere is certainly experimenting with cannons, but until there is need for them the experiments will probably not go very far.

Almost everyone carries a knife, both as a tool and a weapon. Different professions will prefer different types of knife, which may generate slightly different fighting styles, but they all work about the same. The melee accoutrements of choice are the longsword or axe and a small shield. The preferred ranged weapon is a bow or crossbow. Hilfök prefer crossbows for power, while Plainsfök prefer bows for lightness and rate of fire. There are exceptions, though. Remember that bow and crossbow damage is based on punching damage, which is 1d less than your default Strength roll. To draw a 2d+0 bow or cock a 3d+0 crossbow requires a 3d+0 Strength roll. A crossbow that uses a windlass to reload gives +2d to the user's punching damage for purposes of reloading, so a 3d+0 crossbow with a windlass could be reloaded (slowly) by an adventurer with 2d+0 Strength (1d+0 punching damage). Most people within city limits don't wear armor or heavy weapons of any kind unless they are in a profession that requires it, or are planning a trip outside the safety of known areas. A person in the more populated parts of the Novomad valley who isn't in the City Guard and regularly wears a sword or armor is looked upon much like a person wearing a flak vest and carrying a rifle would be. It might be legal, but it's still suspicious and conspicuous. The City Guard might find an excuse to run you in, just as a matter of principle. A person with just a heavy weapon might be dismissed as on their way to a duel, but not if they are seen carrying it every day. However, having some above average level of status allows one to get away with things that the average person cannot. Nepos and Heirs (Nepos mostly) are often seen strutting about with duelling sabers, but most of them aren't very good with them. Light chain mail can be worn under normal clothing, especially in cold seasons, but it still jingles and rustles. Those who feel the need for some form of concealed physical armor will wear a light form of scale armor (1d+0), which can be form-fitting and flexible enough to be invisible under most clothing. Such people would often back this up with some form of triggered magical protection.

The type of armor worn when visible armor is appropriate depends on the adventurer's wealth and the time of year. During the spring, any type is viable. Preference is for chain mail with a padded cloth underlayer (2d+0 protection). Those with conspicuous wealth and good strength may choose plate armor, again with padded underlayer (2d+1 protection). Those on lesser budgets will use scale armor with padding (1d+2 protection) or hardened bison leather with padding (1d+0 protection). Individuals of legendary strength might have very heavy plate armor, or wear it with chain mail underneath (2d+2 or 3d+0 protection). And of course, there is always the potential to have magical protection or to have some armor enchanted to be stronger than normal. It is conceivable that scale armor could be made with tiny plates of Ancient metal. This would be truly magnificent, but no one in Novomad has spent the time or money this level of extravagance would require.

Chain mail is inappropriate against arrows, firearms and blunt trauma and is really meant to protect against cutting and slashing weapons. Scale or leather is stiff enough to be effective against blunt trauma, but is inappropriate against arrows and firearms. Plate armor is the strongest, and is only inappropriate against firearms. Scale armor with padding may seem better than chain mail with padding, but remember that fractional protection has no effect vs. full dice. A 2d+1 arrow hitting 2d+0 chain mail does 1d+1 damage because the chain loses 1d for being inappropriate. A 2d+1 arrow hitting 1d+2 scale armor does 2d+0 damage, since the armor loses 1d for being inappropriate and the +2 remainder only stops the +1 fractional damage.

In the summers, the plate armor and thick padding are set aside, and the air circulation through chain mail makes it the armor of choice (with a very light cloth underlayer and overlayer to protect the skin and keep the mail from heating up in the sun). The full helms of winter through spring give way to more skeletal designs that provide protection against cutting and slashing, and also have good ventilation. In winter, the large metal surface of plate armor makes it too cold to wear, and the preferred combination is scale armor and cloth padding, with full helms that are well insulated and have no exposed metal parts that can freeze to the skin. Most fighting adventurers over about 25 years of age would be expected to have two sets of armor at this point, a "winter" set and a "spring" set. In a few years, they will need to think about a "summer" set as well.

Hilfök generally favor scale or chain, as it is more flexible and they are used to needing their agility in the rugged terrain they call home. Novos vary with the season. Plainsfök tend to go with lighter armor, or armor that only has partial coverage. In their native regions, visibility is long and most threats can be met frontally. Torso armor covering only the front is common (half listed weight and cost), sometimes with a light shield slung over the back. Depending on situation, it is used as a shield, as partial armor, a sunshade or partial cover to hide behind. Both Novos and Hilfök often use half protection on the legs and arms to cut down on weight, but usually armor front and back of the body.

Other gear - Most other items are fairly self-explanatory and largely repeated from the **EABA** equipment list.

Sparkcaster - A spring-wound firestarter, often with a small reservoir of oil and a wick. It does double duty as a fast lighting lantern and a means of starting campfires in wet conditions.

Magic - Single use magical items or spells cast on a person or item as mentioned under a spell description. The cost listed is an average for Novomad and may vary depending on demand and the skill of the mage casting it.

Laboratories - Some skills will require specialized workshops in order for the craftsman to ply their trade. The cost listed is a general figure for a minimal lab, workshop or craft setup for the listed profession, including a starter set of any consumable supplies. An adventurer with a business in town may require this expense in addition to the actual business location. For the lab to be portable is the same cost and it will be about a quarter the weight. It will have fewer specialized tools, but can perform most functions of the full lab, even if it takes a while longer. Some portable labs may forego items on the assumption that something suitable can be found on-site. The total mass of a portable lab also includes sturdy transport cases and well-designed padding for fragile components. This is sufficient to protect against rough handling or maybe a small fall, but anything like a tumble down stairs (anything doing more than 1d+0 damage) will certainly damage something expensive in most labs.

Real estate - Novomad real estate is only going up in value, though the increase is neither fast nor exorbitant. The rental prices listed were generated by the cost of living rules (**EABA**, page 7.6), and actual home purchases would be about a hundred times the monthly rental prices. The low end of land prices are for barely arable rural parcels inside the Novomad irrigation network.

PRIMITIVE ERA RANGED WEAPONS

NAME	USES	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	SHOTS HELD	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Light bow	arrow	3	1d+0	1 internal	1.2kg	130Eur	1d+1	4	Reliable
Heavy bow	arrow	3	1d+2	1 internal	1.7kg	170Eur	1d+1	4	Reliable
V. heavy bow	arrow	3	2d+1	1 internal	2.4kg	200Eur	1d+1	4	Reliable
Light crossbow	quarrel	3	2d+0	1 internal	3.4kg	170Eur	1d+1	4	Reliable
Heavy crossbow	quarrel	2	2d+2	1 internal	5.1kg	220Eur	1d+1	5	Reliable
V. heavy crossbow	quarrel	2	3d+1	1 internal	6.6kg	300Eur	1d+1	5	Reliable, windlass

BASIC ERA RANGED WEAPONS

NAME	USES	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	SHOTS HELD	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Duelling pistol	12mm ball	1	1d+1	1 internal	1.1kg	750Eur	2d+0	3	Unreliable
Heavy flintlock pistol	12mm ball	0	1d+2	1 internal	1.3kg	600Eur	2d+0	3	Unreliable
Flintlock musket	19mm ball	1	2d+2	1 internal	4.4kg	560Eur	2d+1	7	Unreliable
Flintlock rifle	12mm ball	2	3d+0	1 internal	4.8kg	600Eur	2d+1	7	Unreliable
Flintlock scattergun	18mm ball	0	2d+2	1 internal	3.0kg	430Eur	2d+1	6	Unreliable, does two 1d+1 attacks
Light cannon	60mm ball	3	7d+2	1 internal	200kg(2.5)	15kEur	4d+0	12	Unreliable, may also fire shot

PRIMITIVE ERA MELEE WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Brass knuckles	punch+0	Half-lethal	short	.3kg	5Eur	1d+2	2	balanced
Utility/duelling knife	punch-1	Lethal	short	.3kg	45Eur	1d+1	2	balanced
Shortsword	punch+1	Lethal	medium	1.0kg	175Eur	1d+2	3	balanced
Longsword	punch+2	Lethal	long	1.5kg	250Eur	1d+2	3	balanced
Axe	punch+3	Lethal	medium	2.5kg	125Eur	1d+2	3	unbalanced
Small club	punch+1	Half-lethal	short	.6kg	10Eur	1d+2	2	balanced
Club	punch+2	Half-lethal	medium	1.4kg	170Eur	1d+2	3	balanced
Staff	punch+3	Half-lethal	long	1.5kg	45Eur	1d+1	3	balanced, uses two hands
Spear	punch+3	Lethal	long	2.0kg	250Eur	1d+2	4	balanced, uses two hands

BASIC ERA MELEE WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Greatsword	punch+5	Lethal	long	4.0kg	700Eur	2d+0	5	unbalanced, uses two hands
Duelling saber	punch+2	Lethal	long	1.5kg	250Eur	1d+2	3	balanced
Rapier	punch+1	Lethal	long	.8kg	125Eur	1d+2	3	balanced
Mace	punch+2	Half-lethal	medium	1.5kg	175Eur	1d+1	4	balanced
Flail	punch+5	Half-lethal	very long	3.0kg	350Eur	1d+2	4	unbalanced, uses two hands

PRIMITIVE ERA OTHER WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Thrown rock	punch-1	Half-lethal	-	.5kg	0Eur	1d+1	2	Accuracy of 0
Thrown knife	punch-2	Lethal	-	.3kg	45Eur	1d+1	2	Accuracy of 0
Thrown axe	punch+2	Lethal	-	2.5kg	125Eur	1d+2	3	Accuracy of 0
Thrown spear	punch+2	Lethal	-	2.0kg	175Eur	1d+2	3	Accuracy of 0

BASIC ERA OTHER WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Grenade	2d+1	lethal explosion	-	.5kg	10Eur	1d+2	2	Unreliable
Gunpowder bomb	3d+0	half-lethal explosion	-	.5kg	5Eur	1d+0	2	Unreliable, see EABA page 5.5

PRIMITIVE ERA PERSONAL ARMOR

NAME	ARMOR	COVERS	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Padded cloth	0d+1	Body	1.5kg	90Eur	Worn over or under clothing
Hardened leather	0d+2	Body	6.0kg	250Eur	Worn over clothing
		Head	2.0kg	90Eur	
		Arms	4.0kg	130Eur	
		Legs	4.0kg	175Eur	
Light scale armor	1d+0	Body	8.0kg	350Eur	Front of legs only This piece may be worn under clothing
		Head	2.5kg	125Eur	
		Arms	5.0kg	180Eur	
		Legs	5.0kg	500Eur	
Scale armor	1d+1	Body	10.0kg	350Eur	Front of legs only Worn over clothing
		Head	3.0kg	125Eur	
		Arms	6.0kg	180Eur	
		Legs	6.0kg	250Eur	
Small shield (6 hits)	1d+1	-	4.0kg	65Eur	User is +2 difficulty to be hit in melee.
Large shield (8 hits)	1d+2	-	6.0kg	125Eur	User is +4 difficulty to be hit in melee.

BASIC ERA PERSONAL ARMOR

NAME	ARMOR	COVERS	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Mail armor	1d+2	Body	12.5kg	700Eur	Worn over or under clothing or armor
		Head	4.0kg	250Eur	
		Arms	8.0kg	350Eur	
		Legs	16.0kg	1000Eur	
		Legs	8.0kg	500Eur	
Plate armor	2d+0	Body	12.5kg	500Eur	Front of legs only Worn over clothing or armor
		Head	4.0kg	175Eur	
		Arms	8.0kg	250Eur	
		Legs	16.0kg	700Eur	
		Legs	8.0kg	350Eur	

PRIMITIVE ERA STUFF

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Basic clothing	2.0kg	100Eur	1d+0	8	Includes footgear with 0d+2 protection. The armor only protects the clothing from damage, not the wearer.
Luxury clothing	3.0kg	500Eur	1d+0	6	Includes footgear with 0d+1 protection.
Scroll tube	.1kg	10Eur	1d+0	2	Weatherproof protection for small items.
Waterskin(full)	4.3kg	10Eur	1d+0	2	Holds four liters of water. Enough for one person for a day of moderate activity.
Travel rations	.8kg	5Eur	1d+0	2	Dried or semi-perishable food that carries well. Enough for one person for one day of moderate activity.
Rope, 25 meters	2.0kg	10Eur	1d+0	2	Strong enough to hold a person and worn or carried items.
Torch	.8kg	5Eur	1d+1	2	Negates darkness penalties out to 4 meters, -2d penalty per range band after this. Lasts 2 hours.
Sewing kit	.5kg	50Eur	1d+0	2	Needles, thread, leather stitching, buttons, patches.

BASIC ERA STUFF

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Camping gear	12kg	200Eur	1d+1	8	One person's share of the weight for a tent, blankets that count as a layer of winter clothing, stove and personal items. This can be part of a large tent and kit, or personal-size items.
Camping kit	6kg	100Eur	1d+1	4	A spring/summer camping kit that includes an oiled cloth awning/tent, light blanket and personal toiletries.
Small book	.2kg	5Eur	1d+0	2	Equivalent to small reference book or spellbook.
Large book	1.0kg	50Eur	1d+0	3	Equivalent to large reference book or spellbook.
Small pack	1.5kg	20Eur	1d+0	3	Holds 10kg of normal density items.
Large pack	6.0kg	100Eur	1d+0	6	Holds 90kg of normal density items.
First aid kit	2.0kg	200Eur	1d+0	3	Suitable for treating non-crippling injuries.
Lantern	.8kg	30Eur	1d+0	2	Negates darkness penalties out to 4 meters, -2d penalty per range band after this. Refill with .3kg oil each night.
Headlamp	.3kg	50Eur	0d+2	2	Negates darkness penalties out to 2 meters in front arc, -2d penalty per range band after this. Refill with .2kg oil each night.
Sparkcaster	.3kg	30Eur	0d+2	2	For lighting fires. Acts as lantern with half range and duration, lights up in one action, holds .1kg oil.
Oil flask	.7kg	10Eur	0d+2	2	Metal oil can with non-drip spout. Holds .6kg of oil.
Armory lab	1000kg	1000Eur	-	-	Anvil, forge, hammers, other tools, protective clothing.
Jeweler lab	100kg	2000Eur	-	-	Fine lenses, hand tools, workbench, small forge, texts
Alchemy lab	200kg	2000Eur	-	-	Glassware, burners, cabinets of chemicals, texts
Enchanting lab	500kg	15,000Eur	-	-	Soundproofed area, reference texts, obscure components
Carpentry lab	500kg	1000Eur	-	-	Various hand tools, workbench, reference texts
Medical lab	100kg	2000Eur	-	-	Specialized tools, medicines, bandages, reference texts

MAGIC

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Encanto(talisman)	-	100Eur	0d+2	1	Provides a single 1d bonus to an Attribute. See page 4.14
Alarma(triggered spell)	-	250Eur	-	-	Forsees danger. See page 4.6
Espejo(spell)	-	120Eur	-	-	Tracks an object. See page 4.8
Quito(spell)	-	120Eur	-	-	Dispels magic. See page 4.11
Perforo(triggered spell)	-	250Eur	-	-	Makes a weapon magic-piercing. See page 4.11
Suerto(spell)	-	80Eur	-	-	Adds to your luck roll. See page 4.12
Sano(spell)	-	120Eur	-	-	Heals wounds. See page 4.12
Aumento(trig. spell)	-	250Eur	-	-	Triggered Attribute boost. See page 4.14
Compressa(trig. spell)	-	400Eur	-	-	Alters size of item. See page 4.15
Compresso(trig. spell)	-	250Eur	-	-	Alters size of large item. See page 4.16
Repentina(trig. spell)	-	850Eur	-	-	Triggered magical armor. See page 4.20
Convoquo(spell)	-	75Eur	-	-	Summoning spell. Does not include the cost of protective wards. See page 4.21

REAL ESTATE

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Small craft shop	-	1000Eur	-	-	One person workspace
Medium craft shop	-	2000Eur	-	-	Two or three person workspace
Large craft shop	-	4000Eur	-	-	Four to eight person workspace
Small apartment	-	250Eur	-	-	One person (two if cramped)
Medium apartment	-	500Eur	-	-	Two person (four if cramped)
Large apartment	-	1000Eur	-	-	Four person (eight if cramped)
Land (100m x 100m)	-	≥10kEur	-	-	Depends on location and quality

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