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INTERMEDIA

# Rune Stryders™

magic and mecha between the ages...



 BTRC

matt drake  
mike fiegel





## **EABA Rune Stryders™ v1.0**

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Dedication: for Cathy

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"You're late," said the Ambassador, speaking far too loudly for his own good. It was bad enough that the overweight, oversized beast of a Divaran had apparently come straight from a ball, dressed as he was in garish shades of red and gold that screamed "wealthy noble." Now he seemed determined to call down the wrath of the Skint's inhabitants as well, which was suicidal. Pulling attention to oneself in this part of town was a good way to grow a second smile, courtesy of the sharps lurking nearby...

▼ **SHADES OF RED** - Thomis knew that all too well, had learned the hard way. As he watched several shapes shift in the shadows at the end of the alley, he nodded silently, thumb and forefinger nervously massaging the scar that ran along his neck from ear to ear; *were it not for that passing Magus...but* he shook off the memory; now was no time to reminisce.

*It was time for business.*

"Yes sir," he whispered in return, hoping the daft fool took his cue and followed suit. "I apologize for my lateness. I was...delayed." He indicated his swordbelt, which lacked its peace-ties, a sure sign that he'd drawn it for one reason or another in the recent past. In a better part of town, that alone would be enough to earn a trip to jail. *But not here, and not now.* "I see," said the Ambassador, more quietly this time. "I suppose I can forgive it - this time." Thomis released his breath, thankful that the fool evidently lacked anything beyond basic Runic lore.

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If he'd been better trained, he might have whispered a *Bei-ess*, might have easily discovered that Thomis had simply broken the peace-ties himself, that the sword hadn't even been drawn, much less bloodied. His lack of Runelore meant this would all go a little easier. Thomis reminded himself, however, not to let too much slide. Underestimating an employer was more dangerous than underestimating a dedicated foe. And all too often, lately, the two turned out to be the same thing when the deal was done.

"Let's get this over with, then," said the Ambassador, reaching into his coat pocket.

Thomis reacted with apparent horror. "No, not here." He quickly scanned the rooftops, half for show, half out of real caution. "We need privacy. The streets have sharp eyes, and sharper tongues." As he said this last, he drew his thumb across his throat, wincing as he did so. The wound still hurt in places, even after all these months.

"I see," said the Ambassador with obvious impatience. "Then where?"

Thomis already had a room prepared, but he paused to consider all the same. No need to let on anymore than he had to. After a moment, he seemed to brighten, and tugged the Ambassador along down the alley, past a dozen nondescript doors, stopping at one that resembled the others in every respect, save one: the dim red lantern hanging over the doorway. The Ambassador backed away, shaking his head. "I cannot allow..."

Thomis ignored his babble, busily focusing on using his right index finger to carefully trace the faint impression of a Rune beside the door. A simple *Nhet-eq*, the sort designed to deliver a deadly shock to anyone not knowing how to disarm it. Which he didn't. Fortunately, it wasn't a real Rune; it merely resembled the real thing, closely enough that (he hoped) the Ambassador wouldn't be able to tell the difference. He needed to keep his edge here, and if that meant making himself out to be a Runemaster of sorts, so be it. If the fat turd bothered to think about it, he might wonder how a building in *this* neighborhood could come by a Runic inscription like this, the price for such a carving being well beyond the reach of most individuals. Fortunately, the Ambassador said nothing, and before he could inspect the false carving more closely, Thomis opened the door and steered him inside.

The Ambassador immediately tried to push his way back out. "I cannot be seen in a place like this," he insisted. "I..."

"That's precisely why we're here," Thomis countered. "No one will see us, or hear us. I can assure you of that."

"And what about...them." The Ambassador gestured broadly, indicating the young girls lounging around in the main room. Thomis waved to several, and they returned his gesture. "They will no more talk than we will, because if they did they would bring down half the city council, including some that sit higher than you, Ambassador." This much was true, and they both knew it. "Now, shall we? I have just the room in mind."

The Ambassador scowled, but followed him in silence up to the second floor and down the hall to Room 21. Thomis noted with a smile that the Ambassador flushed slightly as they entered, but he said nothing; evidently the rumors about Room 21 were truer than he'd thought. Except for tonight, of course; as he'd arranged, the room was empty but for himself and the Ambassador, the bed and other usual "implements" having been replaced with a single table and two wooden chairs. Ignoring decorum and the chairs, he shut the door, then leapt on the table and sat crosslegged.

The Ambassador remained standing, grasping for words. Thomis helped him along. "Who's the target?" he asked bluntly.

The Ambassador flushed, cleared his throat, and reached into his coat pocket, pulling out a small envelope which he tossed on the table. Thomis made no attempt to retrieve it, maintaining eye contact. The envelope could easily be Ruined, either in the wax seal or on the vellum itself, in invisible ink of some sort. He'd check it out later, in privacy. The Ambassador paced, sweaty and uncomfortable in the stifling heat of the windowless room, stalling for gods knew what reason. "Who's the target?" Thomis repeated. "His name is Jonan," he answered. "Full name." The Ambassador hesitated. Thomis made a show of leaping off the table, reaching for the door. "No, no, don't go."

"Fine," said Thomis, leaning against the doorframe, arms crossed. "Then talk. I don't work unless I know what I'm getting into." "The target's name is Jonan Marle-Thon," he began at last, and then the dam broke, and he spilled the rest. Thomis listened only half-heartedly, amusing himself with the sounds coming from across the hall.

Ambassador Adour here wanted one of his opponents removed before an upcoming vote, hoping to sway the decision towards terms more favorable to his own position. He wanted this done relatively permanently, and with a fair amount of noise, hoping to scare others into backing down at the same time as he removed his most powerful opponent. Thomis had heard the entire story before. From Jonan himself, in fact, with a few of the names reversed. He'd almost taken that job, in fact. He had backed out at the last minute.

*However, Ambassador Adour had deeper pockets.*

Still, a thing about this particular conversation was nagging at him, something about "the elder" and "the younger." He raised a hand, and the Ambassador broke off. "Back up a second. There are two?" The Ambassador nodded. "The father and his son, yes." This, he had to admit, was news to him. And he didn't like surprises.

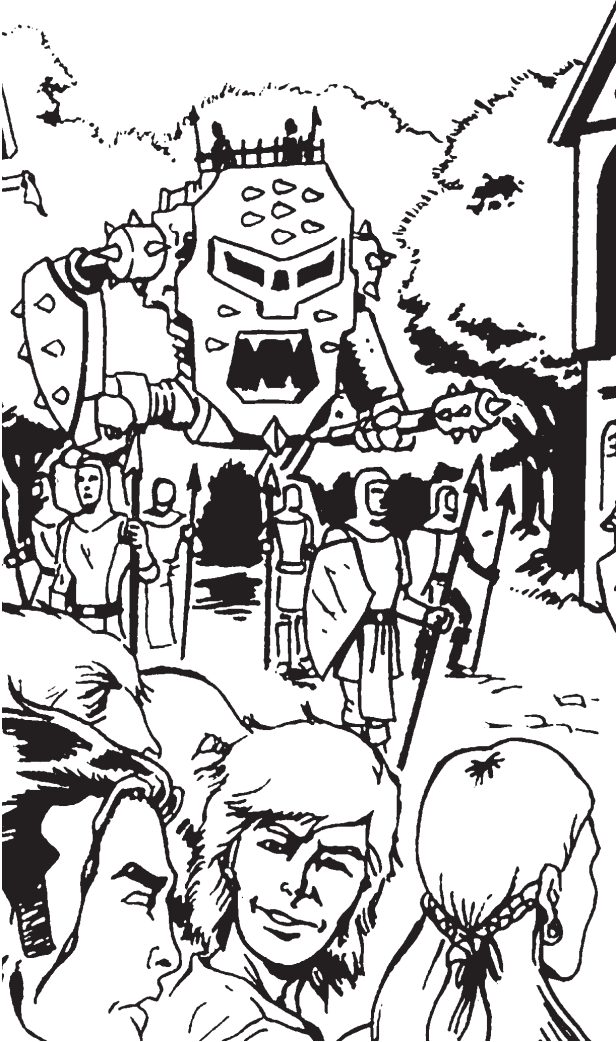
"And which is the target?" The Ambassador hesitated. Thomis didn't push him to speak. It wasn't necessary. And, to be quite fair, not altogether surprising. Thousands of sons disappeared every day, some at the hands of soldiers, others at the hands of people like Thomis. This shouldn't be enough to make the old man pale, unless...Thomis suddenly recalled something about the elder Marle-Thons, something about him being the youngest Ambassador in the history of Divar. Which meant...

"Exactly how old is the target?" he asked. The Ambassador stumbled over his words, finally managing to spit it out. Thomis said nothing. He shut his eyes, pursed his lips, lowered his head, tapped his foot. He cursed silently, considered his options. The Ambassador waited, and sweated, and stank. Finally, after several long seconds, Thomis raised his head and looked the old man in the eye. "When?" he asked. "Tonight," said the Ambassador. Thomis considered. "I'll do it," he said at last, "for double the fee. Half now, half after."



"Done," said the Ambassador, too quickly, and Thomis cursed himself for giving in so easily. But even so, the fee was enough to keep him in wenches and brew for weeks to come, high pay even for killing a dangerous, well-armed, full-grown warrior. Of which this target was none of the above.

Somewhat ironically, that made it exponentially more difficult. They shook on it before he could back out. "Good doing business with you," said the Ambassador, leaving the room. "Yeah," said Thomis to no one, picking up the envelope, rolling the coins inside between his fingers, considering. It was a full ten minutes before he checked the package for Runes, slit it lengthwise and pocketed the money. Then he pulled out a charcoal stylus from his pocket and traced a simple Ull-ess, runes he *did* know, mouthing the syllables to himself a few times to get it right. As the envelope began to grow warm, he dropped it, quickly stepping back from the table as the contract burst into flames. There were some things even *he* wouldn't do. But now that he had the Ambassador's money, he had to do *something*. It was his head on the line now. But he couldn't do what he'd been paid to do, not ever, and if not, then what? He knew only one thing for certain. *Things were going to get ugly.*



## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **WHAT IS IT?** - **Rune Stryders** is a setting for a role-playing game. Like other fantasy games, **Rune Stryders** features powerful magic, exciting combat, and fantastic monsters. And like in other roleplaying games, **Rune Stryders** allows you, the player, to adopt the role of the adventurers that reside in this world, making their decisions and driving the action forward. If you have gamed before, you probably know enough about the basic concepts to enjoy and understand **Rune Stryders** as well.

**About the format** - **Rune Stryders** is designed to appeal to a wide variety of gamers, and although it is not especially designed for use by novice players, there is no reason why anyone with at least a basic knowledge of gaming cannot enjoy it, either as a standard tabletop roleplaying game, using miniatures, hex mats, and so on. The tactical combat rules are designed for ease of play in both cases.

**Rune Stryders** can also be used in component form, allowing you to add specific elements of the setting to your own existing fantasy roleplaying game. You can choose to add the mighty Stryders by themselves, or incorporate Runic magic as well, or even include some of the character concepts featured within. To make this easier, **Rune Stryders** has been divided up into different chapters, each of which contains information about a *specific* element of the game, and each of which can be used in connection with the others, or on its own in your own game setting. Though numbered for organizational purposes, the chapters are not necessarily meant to be read in any particular order. In general, game mechanics are presented in earlier chapters, and world or setting information comes later. While it is possible to enjoy **Rune Stryders** without playing within the gameworld provided, you may wish to read through **the World** chapter all the same, as the information contained therein does help to explain many of the concepts described elsewhere.

If you do choose to use the world of Rhun as your campaign setting, you will find everything you need here, including adventurer archetypes, skill lists and detailed adventurer generation rules.

**About the setting - Rune Stryders** is medieval, in the sense of being in-between two ages: a recent mythological past and an uncertain future; and fantastic, in the sense that it contains strange elements that make it very different from our own real world. **Rune Stryders** is not a traditional medieval setting. To be certain, you will find swords and armor, castles and catapults - these are the tools of war, and the nations of the **Rune Stryders** setting are in constant conflict with one another. But the peoples and places of Rhun developed in a vastly different situation than our own real world, the world upon which medieval fantasy settings are typically based. Its mythology, traditions, the origin of the world itself and how man sees himself fitting into that world, all of these are different from the world we know. All of the action in this rulebook takes place in Rhun (pronounced *Roon*), a world filled with warring city-states, political intrigue, back-alley dealings and bold maneuverings on the field of battle. The name Rhun means many things to many people, at once describing the continent, the planet and the universe within which the inhabitants reside.

It is impossible to understate the importance of all aspects of what Rhun means in the gameworld. Rhun is language, identity, place and for many, their purpose in life. It is also magic, and everyone in Rhun has the potential to use it.

The most novel feature of the **Rune Stryders** setting is the presence of the Rune Stryders themselves. These huge war machines are created by expert craftsmen, brought to life through powerful Runic magic, and manned by expert warriors trained to pilot them from within. Stryders come in many shapes and sizes, some forged from steel, others carved from stone, still others grown from living plants. All are powerful in their own right, highly prized and jealously guarded by their pilots, crews and patrons. However, the Stryders are merely immobile suits of armor without the addition of the Runes, the powerful arcane symbols that make all magic possible. Since Runes are based on language, every living being capable of speech or writing has some ability to manipulate Runes to their advantage. But only the most powerful Runic Masters can summon up forces greater than simple charms and curses, conjuring storms, hurling meteors, and, of course, bringing the powerful Stryders to life.





**What you need to play** - To play the game you will need these rules, pencils, paper, several six-sided dice, and miniature figures (or other tokens) to represent your adventurers on the field of battle. Since this is a gameworld for **EABA**, you'll also need that too, but you probably figured that out already. Hex mats, a whiteboard, or sheets of paper on which you can scribble will also come in handy if you are planning on playing the game tactically.

Having friends is also a boon; **Rune Stryders** is best enjoyed in gaming groups of three to six people, with one acting as the gamemaster and the others playing one or two characters each.

**Using the material elsewhere** - Although **Rune Stryders** deviates from the norm of fantasy rpg's in some quite dramatic ways, it is intentionally designed in such a way that you can easily alter some key facets of the setting in order to fit it more easily into existing campaigns. The most notable example of this design characteristic is in the available character archetypes. Divided into six Nations, the people of Divar are all described in human terms, and indeed, they are all very much human in most respects. Just like in our own world, people from different parts of the world have varying physical characteristics that set them apart from one another, such as skin color, hair color, height, weight, language. In other words, there are no dwarves or elves in **Rune Stryders**; there are only humans of varying sorts. Should you wish to use this material in a campaign setting that incorporates alternative races, simply swap those races in where they seem appropriate for your own campaign world. Likewise, in the case of magic, **Rune Stryders** dispatches with the oft-used mechanic of wizards in pointy hats memorizing spells. Here, the only spells are Runes, and the Runes are words, and those words can be used by anyone, without the need to laboriously memorize spells every few hours. Needless to say, such a switch makes for a different style of gaming than usual. Thus, if you are more comfortable with a more familiar mechanic, it is a simple matter to restrict the use of Runes to wizardly or sorcerous classes, or to apply other limits to them as deemed necessary.

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▼ **A CRY IN THE DARK** - The damned infant wouldn't stop wailing, half the team was missing, and there was blood on Thomis' hands. And the worst part was, he didn't know if it was his or not. *It had been that kind of a night.*

In retrospect it was foolish to consider, but he nevertheless found himself wondering if he would have been better off refusing the job. He could have said no, could have walked out and left the Ambassador out in the cold. Of course, then he'd have had to deal with the Ambassador's bodyguards, who would no doubt have tried to keep him quiet, the permanent way. But that would have been preferable to the cluster of nightmares that this job had since turned into. Besides, it would have been somewhat pleasant to wrap his fingers around the throat of that overfed, overambitious...

But it was all moot, and far too late to back out now. *The deed was done.* Half a dozen lay dead, dying and wounded (some of his own among them) and stuffed in a sack at his waist was little Jonan. All because that stinking, bloated chunk of excrement wanted to keep the infant's father from voting against him in some upcoming session about some inconsequential issue. Thomis didn't even pretend to understand the machinations involved. It was politics, and politics was in many ways dirtier, bloodier and fouler than war. Which was what he would much prefer to be doing, all things considered.

He had stopped counting alleyways when the first bolts had zinged by his head, Marle-Thon's angry guards in pursuit, the plan gone all to hell, and he was thus now quite thoroughly lost in the twisted, tangled morass of streets that abutted the Skint. He had been hoping that as he approached the neighborhood he called home he would begin to recognize landmarks, would be able to get back on course, but at this point he had given up watching for signs and just started looking for sewer caps. He might not be able to find his way any better down there, but it was a sure way to throw his pursuers off the trail.

At least long enough for him to resurface, rendezvous with the surviving members of his little collective, and then get back to the Stryders to make their getaway. The Stryders were, of course, the key to all of this. Marle-Thon's goons might pursue on foot, but without Stryders of their own they would be hard pressed to keep up with his team once they got out onto open ground. Nothing in this city could move as fast as a Stryder.

*Running away*, he thought. That's what I've been reduced to. Considering the circumstances, however, the thought did not fill him with regret or embarrassment in the least. There was simply no other choice. Up ahead, in the center of a broad intersection, he spotted what he had been looking for - a sewer grate, almost invisible in the street save for the faint wisps of foul-smelling steam escaping from below, glowing yellow in the faint light from the lamps hung on poles in the nearby park. Not bothering to scout the situation first, he plunged headlong into the intersection and knelt by the grate, fingers sliding into the grooves around the edge. He prayed it wasn't rusted shut, as so many were.

"Ngei-ess", he uttered, a small charm for luck, and pulled hard. With a soft sucking sound, the grate swung up and away. In a flash he swung his legs down and quickly dropped into the murky darkness below, landing with a splash in water meter deep just as the iron rang out on the flagstones above, announcing his escape. Quite inconsequential, all things considered. It didn't matter if they knew he had come down here. There was no way they would follow. He was counting on that. Few came down here any more, afraid of the ghosts of those who lived here in ages past, in the old city, perhaps fearing the wrath of some long-dead ancestors, enraged that the living now saw fit to turn their once great city into a dung heap. The real dangers were far more tangible: the streets ran thick with sludge from above, making footing unstable at best.

Shards of shattered glass and broken metal lay half buried in the muck, every step bringing with it the risk of tearing one's leg open. Though the wound might not be fatal itself, the disease-ridden filth that would inevitably seep into the wound would almost certainly be. And then, of course, there were the living that actually made the old city their home. As if summoned by his thoughts, eyes, seen and unseen, began to peer at him from the near-blackness of the sewer, a few glowing in the dim light from above, others glowing with a light of their own. He ignored them all as he picked a random direction and began wading through the foul muck, his splashes now muffling the infant's continued sobs and wails. His seeming lackadaisical attitude had nothing to do with bravado, however; inside, he quivered and shook, every instinct telling him to get back above, out of the darkness, away from the abominations which lived down here.

Rather, two things kept him moving: the fact that he no longer had a choice (a more powerful force than bravery in most situations, he firmly believed), and the Runic talisman he wore around his neck, which he had bought off a huckster just a few hours ago. He knew enough about Runes to recognize that the piece was genuine (or else he would not have bought it), but not enough to know exactly what it was capable of. The shopkeeper had insisted *Tin-ej* was proof against vermin, and still had a few months left in it. So far, it seemed to be doing the trick. He had not even felt a fleabite since donning the charm, and the rats (and worse) down here did seem to be keeping their distance. That left only humanoid enemies to worry about. Which made his odds about even.

Which was pretty good odds for him, all things considered. He had slogged onward through the muck for a good quarter hour, all of it in near-blackness, before he realized what it was he had not been hearing for quite some time - the child's cries. In a sudden (and, considering the job, inappropriate) panic, he lifted the sack from his belt and opened it, bringing the child closer to his face. Though unable to see, he could definitely hear the child's breathing, labored but steady, and he released the breath he had not realized he was holding. His sudden relief at hearing the child breathe, however, gave him reason to pause, and he stopped moving altogether, considering. He had been ordered to abduct the child, and he had done that. Unspoken, but nevertheless certain, was the fact that he had been expected to do away with the child as well. That much he could *not* do.



This realization, however, did little to solve the problem at hand. Which was, namely, that if he had no intention of killing the child, and could not return the child to its family, he was left with the absolutely untenable option of taking the child with him. A fourth option suddenly crossed his mind, a flash of dark insight so immediate and so obvious that he immediately began moving again before he thought twice about it. Now that he was in more familiar territory, it was only a few twists and turns until he found the place, one of the few areas of the sewer actually lit by *Nhet*-lamps.

The old orphanage was one of the few dry spots in the entire Undercity, having been built on a hillock beside a stream, now clogged with waste from above, that sluiced its way around three sides of the building. In a dozen years, perhaps fewer, the foundation would certainly be worn away, sending the building tumbling into the muck. For now, though, it was good enough to serve as home to... Well, he refused to think too much about that one. He could feel the stares from above as he strode up the stone dais in front of the building, placing the infant at the top in front of the building's iron doors. As the child's back came into contact with the slick, cold stone, it began once again to wail. He could not help but to take a moment to dote on it, opening the sack and lifting the cold, frail thing into his arms.



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As if human touch were enough to chase away the darkness, the child quieted instantly, peering up at him through the thick, dank gloom. "I don't know," he replied to the unspoken question. And then, tears be damned, he set the child down on top of the sack and walked away, ignoring its plaintive wails. Others were not of a similar mind. Within moments of his disappearance, the infant found itself surrounded by child-like shadows, clamoring around curiously. Three, in fact, all wasted, naked and thin, covered in filth, scab and sore. Less than a minute later, the child was gone, back in the sack, once again tracing a path through the sewers, now strapped to the back of a creature the child's mother had, ironically, sung to it about just that night. A song to lull stupid infants to sleep, and to scare older children into silence. A *lullaby*.

*Shush-a baby  
Hush-a baby Sleep, now, sleep  
Safe and warm  
under quilt and sheet  
Till the beasties come  
and grab your feet  
Cry not, sigh not Sleep, now, sleep  
Else into your room,  
Dras will creep  
Your soul they'll take,  
fore'er to keep*

For the first time that night, the baby slept soundly and dreamt of home, lulled to sleep by the gentle rocking and bouncing of a Draslander's uneven gait.



ADVENTURERS

Are you a mighty warrior, charging across the field of battle with a defiant scream? Or a skulking thief, taking advantage of others in order to carve your own path through the world? Perhaps you prefer instead to delve into the secret lore of Runes, uncovering arcane secrets not meant for man. Or maybe you are one of your country's Stryder pilots, guiding your construct onto the field of battle in search of glory?

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Before you can begin playing in the world of **Rune Stryders**, you will need to decide what sort of adventurer you want to play. The usual way to go about this, and the one we recommend, is to read the **Roles** chapter. Find a role you think you will like, and make a note of the Skill and Attribute suggestions listed in the template that follows it. If you do this, keep in mind that these Roles are only suggestions, and are in no way meant to limit the way in which you can develop your adventurer. Alternately, you can proceed without choosing a role at all. This is recommended only for players who are already familiar with the **Rune Stryders** setting, or those who truly like to customize their adventurer from the ground up, with no assistance whatsoever. At the very least, you should have a rough idea of your character in mind, and you should look at the **Roles** chapter during adventurer creation.

In either case, it is important to realize that the sorts of adventurer you will be generating in **Rune Stryders** is not an ordinary peasant or merchant. The world of Rhun is a world that has been in an almost constant state of upheaval, and after centuries of hardship and suffering, only those tough enough to survive the ravages of war, disease and famine have remained. The net result of this strengthening of bloodlines is that the average individual is of fairly sturdy stock, and the sorts of people likely to be able to manipulate world events, seek out dangerous adventures, and lead armies into battle are even hardier and more capable. It is these sorts of adventurers that you will be playing, and the adventurer generation system is designed with this in mind.

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▼ **ATTRIBUTES** - Attributes are a measure of a adventurer's most basic abilities, used on their own to determine the results of tasks involving feats of strength or raw intellect, and in conjunction with skills to determine the results of more specific actions. The six Attributes are used in the standard **EABA** ways, with Fate covering the power available for creating Runic effects, and is also usable for luck.

There are two ways to generate an adventurer's Attribute scores. The first is to choose one of the following selections of numbers:

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
<b>Strength</b>	11	6	8	8	7	6
<b>Agility</b>	9	7	8	10	7	6
<b>Awareness</b>	6	9	8	7	9	9
<b>Will</b>	7	8	8	6	9	9
<b>Health</b>	7	6	8	8	8	6
<b>Fate</b>	4	9	5	7	5	10

These are all based on slightly more than the number of points in the point-based generation of Attribute scores, and lets you jump into things much faster.





# EABA

Skills can be chosen the same way if you want. Again, these are worth a little more in the way of points than the point-based way of choosing skill levels. Different skill packages will work better with different Attribute sets. The ones below do tend to work best with the Attribute package of the same number. These skill packages are all worth about 65S, or slightly more than the default starting amount for point-based adventurers.

## Skill package #1

Heavy blade	+2d
Roguary	+1d
Unarm. combat	+1d
+combat style	+0d
Light blade	+0d
Stealth	+0d
Politics	+0d
Literacy	+0d

## Skill package #2

Runelore	+1d
+seven runes	n/a
History	+1d
Archaeologist	+1d
Light blade	+0d
Throwing	+0d
Literacy	+0d
Second lang.	+0d

## Skill package #3

Heavy blade	+1d
Stealth	+1d
Runelore	+0d
+three runes	n/a
Unarm. combat	+1d
+combat style	+0d
Leadership	+0d
Running	+0d

## Skill package #4

Bonding	+1d
Stryder combat	+1d
Runelore	+0d
Tactics	+1d
Leadership	+1d
Light blade	+1d
Unarm. combat	+0d
Second lang.	+0d

## Skill package #5

Entertainer	+2d
Runelore	+0d
+three runes	n/a
Diplomacy	+1d
Politics	+1d
Unarm. combat	+0d
Light blade	+0d
Roguary	+0d

## Skill package #6

Runelore	+2d
+twelve runes	n/a
Staff	+0d
Navigator	+0d
Literacy	+0d
Second lang.	+0d

After you determine Attributes and skills, choose one package of Traits for the adventurer's background (see the **Traits** section), choose some gear and your adventurer is ready.

The second way to determine Attributes and skills is with the standard **EABA** point-based method. **Rune Stryders** adventurers start with 80A and 60S, plus up to 35A or S from Traits. And the last way is to go to **Chapter 6** and simply choose from one of the many pre-designed adventurer templates there.

▼ **SKILLS** - Skills further define your adventurer, setting them apart from others in the world, including those who may share the same role (see the **Roles** chapter) by specifying what they have learned to do over a lifetime. If you are creating an adventurer from scratch, without a Role, you get 60S to spend however you like, although skills may not be bought at more than +2d for starting adventurers. If you are using a Role from that chapter, a list of skills is provided with each Role.

**Rune Stryders** will use the following skill list instead of the normal **EABA** list, though many of the skills are the same or will act in the same way. With gamemaster permission you can make up your own skills or borrow skills from other **EABA** gameworlds. Note that many Trades are listed as Awareness skills, but some can also be bought as Agility skills. The skill will operate in the same way, but the focus of the adventurer's talents runs in a different direction.

For instance, an adventurer with Roguary and a specialization in Forgery might be someone who has a steady hand and a good eye for detail (Agility), or someone who has an encyclopedic knowledge of the different sort of documents, materials or techniques used in forging items (Awareness). The gamemaster will determine if a particular application of the skill works with the chosen Attribute, and apply a -1d penalty to the skill roll if it does not.

Or, you can look at combinations of Skills and Traits as the "definition" of certain professions. For instance, someone with Status and the skills Sailor and Leadership would be a "ship captain".

Many skills on the list are not the usual things adventurers would seem likely to know. But bear in mind that a good knowledge base can provide bonuses in some situations (a complementary skill bonus). Knowing architecture might help you case a building you are planning to burgle. Being an appraiser might help you spot a fake item, or being an artist might help you carve or draw runes better. And so on. The other skills can also help adventurers gain mundane employment, perhaps because they simply need the money, or as part of some other less legal plan they are hatching.

**Free skills** - All adventurers are assumed to have for free: spoken fluency in their native language at a +0d level, and knowledge of one city and the surrounding area at +0d. These skills can be bought up to higher levels for the difference in cost between a +0d skill and the level desired.

### ▼ AWARENESS SKILLS (Academic)

**Language** - Divaran is the main language of Rhun, and all of Rhun's languages are to some extent derived from it. However, an adventurer's national/racial background is what determines their native tongue. All other languages can be spoken or listened to with a -1d penalty, which clearly marks a non-native speaker as an outsider. Spoken fluency in your native language at a +0d level is free for all adventurers. Adding extra languages at +0d fluency costs 5S per language, and adding +0d literacy in a language is also 5S (so having +0d spoken and written fluency in your *native* language costs 5S). Speakers with +1d skill or more in a non-native language are fluent enough to pass as native speakers in most cases. The languages of Rhun are written up in more detail in the **World** chapter.

**Memorization** - The adventurer is exceptionally good at committing items to memory, within limits. If they say they are committing something to memory, they can recall it without error for as long as they want. This is *not* a substitute for learning a skill, but it can serve some of the same functions. For instance, you might be able to memorize the sound of a handful of particular foreign words, which serves some language functions, or a complicated set of directions, which would be like a use of Navigation skill. This is rote memorization rather than learning and comprehension, so it *cannot* be used to temporarily memorize knowledge that requires comprehension in order to use (like runes).

The adventurer can commit to memory one item for each full die of Awareness they have, and that item can have an information content of the adventurer's Awareness, +4 for each +1d in the skill. Memorizing something new often entails forgetting something old.

**EXAMPLE:** An adventurer with an Awareness of 8 (2d+2) and +1d of Memorization skill could flawlessly remember two items with an information level of +12 each (about 80 words). Normal adventurers could manage this, with a bit of work, but this adventurer can remember the material as fast as they can read it or hear it.

Those with talent in this skill are often employed as couriers, able to pass long messages word-for-word, and able to commit them to memory as fast as they hear them.

**Tactics** - The adventurer knows the proper way to deploy military units, and tactics appropriate to a particular situation. As an opposed skill, or in any sort of mass combat, the loser in the compared skill test will be at some sort of disadvantage. This skill can be specialized for particular types of military units. *Specializations: Battle, Guerrilla, Sabotage, Small Unit, Stryder.*

**Runelore** - This is the skill required for the casting of Runic magic. Runelore covers the theory and technique required, and comprehension of each rune is also a separate skill. Anyone with literacy can recognize runes and know the meaning of the rune, but they cannot predict the exact magical effect that will be generated. They can make an educated guess that the rune combination *Nhet-eq* is somehow going to be harmful, but not exactly how.

A +0d skill in Runelore gives an understanding of runes sufficient to understand what a visually displayed (written, carved) rune is supposed to do, can tell the difference between powered and mundane runic inscriptions, and is a sufficient level of skill to cast minor runic magic. A skill level of +1d, +2d or more allows an adventurer to cast more sophisticated runic spells, or to figure out the details of more subtle or complex runic writings or engravings.

A +0d and each +1d in the skill gives the adventurer knowledge of *one* of the five activation runes (*eq, ej, ess, ex, and ett*). This means that starting adventurers (who are limited to +2d skill) will not know all five activation runes, and only someone with a +4d skill will know all five of the activation runes. These activation runes are "free" in the sense that they come with the level of skill. If the skill is improved in play, part of the improvement requires finding a teacher for a new activation rune.

An adventure can specialize their skill in Runelore, though it is not usually economical to do so in terms of skill points. A +1d with one particular rune combination (like *Ahn-ess*) is +10S. An adventurer can have as many specializations as they want. Each rune that is part of a previous specialization is worth 5S towards another rune combination that includes that rune.

**EXAMPLE:** An adventurer with a specialization in *Ahn-ess* could get another specialization in *Mhet-ess* for +5S, since they already some specialization effort put towards the -ess rune.

Aside from activation runes, each rune an adventurer wants to know (and there are forty-five of them) will cost 2S to learn, either from their starting points, or in experience or time spent being taught, presuming that someone can be found to teach it. Most adventurers knowing runelore will have several runes at their disposal, though many people get by just fine with only one or two as magical backup in critical situations.

Much more information on runes and runic magic is found in the **Runes** chapter.

▼ **Note** - Unlike in many fantasy backgrounds, Runelore is a readily available skill, and virtually anyone can acquire the basics of one control rune and one other rune in about the same time as they could learn to read, or gain passable proficiency in another language. Not everyone in Rhun knows Runelore, but everyone can know it. Many people go without, just because they know several friends or family members that can cast a rune they need and so never bother to learn how to themselves. The only question is which control rune and which other runes a low-level runecaster has at their disposal.

To figure out the level of Runelore a starting adventurer might want, use the following guidelines. Rune combinations whose default spoken difficulty is zero to 5 will be considered "easy", those of difficulty 6 to 10 will be considered "medium", those of difficulty 11 to 15 will be considered "hard", and anything more than that will be "very hard". A caster's Runelore roll is reduced by the Will of the target, and this averages about 2d+0. So, with a -2d penalty on your Runelore roll, you need the following skill roll to have the listed chance of making a roll in the middle of the difficulty range listed. A rune that is designed to be cast on a willing recipient will generally be about a category easier. Each extra success the caster hopes to acheive would be about like an increase in the success chance.

Runes	Skill needed for success chance		
	≈25%	≈50%	≈75%
Easy	2d+2	3d+0	3d+1
Medium	3d+2	4d+1	5d+0
Hard	5d+0	5d+2	6d+2
Very hard	6d+2	7d+2	8d+2

**EXAMPLE:** An player looks at the starting runes their adventurer wants, and sees the rune combination they are likely to need the most falls into the "medium" category. If they want a 50% chance of being able to cast it on an average person, they will want a starting skill roll of around 4d+1. If they want a 75% chance of being able to cast it just on themselves with one success, a 3d+0 roll would be enough (one row easier), and if they want to cast it on an average person with a decent chance of getting an extra success for effect or range, they would want a starting skill roll of at least 5d+0 (one column harder).

You can see that to be a dedicated runecaster takes a lot of points, for a high Fate (for effect), for a high Awareness (to base Runelore off of), a good Runelore skill, and any extra runes the adventurer knows, leaving very few points for anything else.

▼ **Note** - If a mage is to cast runes by any means except speaking them, they will need to have at least a +0d proficiency in any skill used for the inscription process (engraver, artist, tattooist, etc.), otherwise they take a -1d penalty on their runelore roll. If their artistic skill bonus is equal to their runelore skill bonus, they get +1d on their runelore for that particular inscription type.

**History** - Rhun has an ancient history that is not fully understood, but the ancient past, creation myths and cultural legends are often keys to discovering or deciphering new runes. Knowledge of the more recent past can also provide insight into political or military conflicts of the present.

**Healer** - This skill is much the same as standard medical skills in **EABA**, covering the basics of diagnosis, surgery and wound care. Skill levels of +0d are only sufficient for first aid purposes or stabilizing injuries, while levels of +1d or more are sufficient to attempt surgery or more difficult procedures. This skill can be specialized for different kinds of medicine, diagnosis or procedure. *Specializations: Battle wounds, Midwife, Herblore.*

**Politics** - Knowing who is allied with and/or is enemies with whom, and more importantly, why, is a constantly shifting landscape. Politics as a skill covers keeping up with this, as well as the national and cultural factors that contribute to these alliances and conflicts. Knowing *why* something is likely to happen is often more important than simply knowing that it is going to happen. This skill can be specialized to the politics of a particular region. *Specializations: a particular nationality or city-state.*



### ▼ AWARENESS SKILLS (Trades)

**Roguary** - This skill covers forgery, gambling, locksmithing and traps or alarms, and can be specialized in one of these aspects if desired. It is a broad set of skill that is almost always learned "on the job", and demonstrating proficiency in any aspect except possibly gambling is going to color people's perceptions of you. *Specializations: Forgery, Gambling, Locksmithing, Traps/Alarms.*

**Appraiser** - An appraiser has a fairly broad knowledge of markets and commodities legal and illegal, and can use this skill instead of Awareness when buying or selling in any sort of opposed situation (i.e. haggling). This takes more time than a straight transaction, but the winner of the deal can get a 10% better price for each 2 points they beat their opponent's roll by. What the "base price" would be depends on the situation. For instance, the starting price for a hard to dispose of stolen item might be far less than its actual value. *Specializations: Fence(stolen goods), Gems/Metals, Bulk commodities, Runes, Weapons/Armor.*

**Archaeologist** - An archaeologist in **Rune Stryders** is both an scholar *and* a businessman. The buried past is a source of knowledge, and sometimes that knowledge can be bought and sold. Discovering a new rune would be an example. Archaeological finds can also be used for political gain, undermining or enhancing family or national legends, and more than one inconvenient truth has been reburied and lost, along with its unfortunate discoverer.

**Architect** - Those who know how to design buildings also know their weaknesses. In the case of a older property, the new owner might not know the full details of a structure's past, and could hire an architect to examine it for vulnerabilities or secrets, or simply to suggest enhancements that will increase the social stature of the new owners.

**Carpenter** - A skill useful for making wooden tools or items. The skill can be specialized for a particular craft, like furniture, buildings, etc. *Specializations: Buildings, furniture, tools, vehicles.*

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**Cook** - In addition to being an under-rated skill for any group that has to fix its own meals, a cook also has a better chance to notice poisons, or the sorts of flavors and dishes used to mask particular poisons, and can also make the most efficient use of a limited food supply.

**Farmer** - The subsistence farmer is what a lot of Rhun's inhabitants do for a living. Not a glamorous job, but a very necessary one. Having any skill in this may give an adventurer a better social reaction when talking to or dealing with farmers (like if trying to find a dry barn to sleep in on a rainy night).

**Lawkeeper** - The equivalent of a policeman. Authorized to carry certain weapons or use runes in areas that would be otherwise prohibited. Lawkeepers are chronically underpaid, and tend to earn additional income through bribes, paid either to ignore the law, or to uphold the law on someone else. An adventurer with this skill knows a fair amount of the written law in a particular area, and has an advantage in any sort of negotiation about questionable legal matters. High levels in this skill might indicate a judge or other legal arbiter or mediator. *Specializations: A particular type of law, or a particular nation's laws.*

**Miner** - A miner in Rhun is also a prospector, knowledgeable about where to search for mineral wealth, as well as how to extract it. Higher skill levels give more proficiency with both, though the skill can be specialized in either. *Specializations: Mining, Prospecting.*

**Hunter** - Hunting does not imply skill with a weapon, though a hunter is usually competent with some sort of ranged weapon. Hunting skill is about finding game in its native environment, and getting close enough to make an attack without being spotted. It can act as a complementary skill with a weapon suitable for taking down game animals. The skill roll can also be used to oppose spotting attempts, but it is not the same as Stealth. Hunting is often specialized for a particular area or type of prey, and this can include human environments (an urban hunter can shadow people with less chance of being spotted). *Specializations: Woodlands, Desert, City, Swamp, Plains.*

**Entertainer** - At low levels of skill, this represents a general ability to be entertaining, in terms of storytelling, singing voice, acting, or ability to use a musical instrument. At higher levels, it is almost always specialized to one of these aspects. This skill set can also include specific training in just about any subset of the craft, including costuming and disguises, accent or dialect changing and mimicry, or other skills that could be useful when trying to pretend you are someone else. *Specializations: Storytelling, Singing, Acting, a musical instrument.*

**Navigator** - A navigator combines a general knowledge of an area or environment with some practical techniques to get from one point to another, avoid getting lost, and some ability to predict the weather. An adventurer who is literate and has this skill is also "map-literate", and can read and draw maps. Someone who is used to wandering in the trackless wilderness probably has some level of skill as a navigator.

▼ **Note** - Bear in mind that for many skills, the skill itself is often not enough. Just as you need a heavy blade to use "heavy blade" skill, a rogue or musician or archaeologist will have specialized tools or items that are required to do some of the tasks that their skill qualifies them for. Most of the time a task will have a difficulty that assumes an average quality tool for the job. Trying to do the job without the tools will often be impossible, and improvised tools will be used at a minimum of +4 difficulty, while high-quality tools will at best be a -2 to the difficulty of the task. Keep this in mind for certain adventure situations. If you set a task at a certain high level of difficulty, it becomes impossible unless certain conditions are met. For instance, a lock with a difficulty of 22 to bypass is impossible to pick without skill *and* the highest quality tools (or someone with a Larger than Life ability to use their skill).

## ▼ AGILITY SKILLS (Trades)

**Metalsmith** - This covers the manufacture of most sorts of functional metal items. At higher skill levels, it is usually specialized to a particular sort of tool or implement. Larger runic items made of metal would likely have their basic structure built by a metalsmith, even if the runic engraving is done by someone else. *Specializations: Tools, weapons, armor, vehicles.*

**Jeweler** - This covers the manufacturer of small, delicate or ornamental metal items, with or without precious stones, and also includes engraving techniques. Smaller runic items or small runic parts on larger items would often be made by a jeweler. Small runic metalworks could be made and/or inscribed by a jeweler, and a person with Jeweler and Runelore skill can get a complementary skill bonus when making small runic engravings in metal or precious stones. *Specializations: Gadgets, Jewelry, Gemwork.*

**Artist** - An artist has a general talent with the visual representation of objects or concepts, whether painting, drawing or sculpture. At higher levels, the skill is usually specialized. A person with both Artist and Runelore skill may qualify for a complementary skill bonus when drawing, painting or tattooing runes. *Specializations: Painting, Tattoos, Sculpture, Drawing.*

**Stonemason** - This skill covers the finding and extracting of slabs of stone for construction or aesthetic purposes, as well as the stones used in some types of Rune Stryder. A person with Stonemason and Runelore skill can get a complementary skill bonus when engraving runes into any sort of normal stone.

**Tailor** - A tailor can make and repair most sorts of garments, and may also be involved in the construction of concealed armors, either their construction in the case of fabrics, or their fitting for other armor types. While it is very uncommon (it takes several times as long to do), runes can be embroidered as a variant of drawing or painting them, and a tailor might qualify for a complementary skill bonus with Runelore in this case.

**Sailor** - Sailors know how to handle sails and rigging, and oars or other means a ship has for getting about. They may have some sense for the weather, currents or hazardous water conditions in areas they are familiar with as well.

### ▼ AGILITY SKILLS (Combat)

**Axe** - Covers the use of unbalanced hafted weapons like axes, maces, picks and halberds, and can be specialized for one of these if desired. This skill also covers use of shield in combination with the weapon. *Specializations: Axe, Mace, Pick, Halberd.*

**Light blade** - Light blades are knives, dirks, stilettos and just about any blade shorter than a man's forearm. Not as solid as a larger blade, combat styles tend to involve evasion and parrying instead of the more common blocking techniques used with heavier blades.

**Heavy blade** - This skill covers the use any sword from short sword to two-handed swords, and can be specialized to a particular blade type. This skill also covers use of shield in combination with the weapon. *Specializations: Longsword, Shortsword, Two-handed sword.*

**Spear/Staff** - This covers the melee use of a weapon like a spear or staff. Thrown spears and other hurled melee weapons use Thrown weapon skill. *Specializations: Spear, Staff, Enan.*

**Bow** - Bows of varying styles are common ranged weapons in Rhun. This skill covers most types of bows an adventurer might encounter.

**Crossbow** - Crossbows are not used in all parts of Rhun, but they are well-known weapons, either alone or with runic enhancement. This skill covers the operation of any sort of handheld crossbow and any associated equipment or tools. Handheld runethrowers generally use this skill.

**Sling** - Slings are not common military weapons for several reasons, but slingstones are still potent weapons. This skill covers the use of regular slings and staff slings. *Specializations: Sling, Staff sling.*

**Chain** - Chains and other entangling weapons are uncommon in Rhun. While military units may not use them, individuals may be proficient in their use for one reason or another. This skill covers the use of most types of entangling weapon. Successful use of an entangling weapon usually reduces the target's Agility by -1d until the entangling weapon is removed, and the user of the weapon can do an opposed Strength check to pull the target off balance, off their feet, or disarm them of a weapon if that was the target of the entanglement. *Specializations: Chain, Bola, Lasso, Whip.*

**Thrown** - This is a general skill used for any sort of precision throwing, instead of the normal Agility -1d default. This can be used with spears, throwing axes or knives, rocks, or thrown runic weapons.

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**Unarmed combat** - This covers all forms of weaponless hand-to-hand fighting, and is a rather freeform mixture of punches, kicks, holds, trips, eye gouges, ear bites, arm locks and the occasional nut shot.

### ▼ ADVANCED TOPIC: COMBAT STYLES

In **Rune Stryders**, these are separate skills, that are complementary skills for use with unarmed or armed combat, and have no use by themselves. If you have a particular style at a level within 1d of your unarmed combat skill, you get a +1d bonus on your unarmed combat skill for the maneuvers associated with that fighting style. In game terms, this can make a style cheaper than an overall level of proficiency. For instance, a +1d overall skill and +0d in a style gives a +2d roll in that style's maneuvers, but costs 15S, less than the 20S for overall +2d proficiency. The available unarmed styles are:

**Divaran Kickwrestling:** Emphasizes use of the legs. Gives a bonus to kicks, leg-based grabs, holds or pins, or to making two kick attacks in a single turn (the +1d bonus offsets the -1d penalty for taking two major actions). This style also offsets the -1d sequencing penalty for using kicks, but making two kick attacks would still be a -1d to sequencing checks.

**Myndwar Stonefist:** Training in deceptive and precise hand motions. Gives a bonus to feint maneuvers, and to called shots to the face. A successful called shot to the face with this style does normal damage, and if the target takes any impairment from the attack, the penalty on their perception rolls is increased by -1d for a number of time levels equal to the amount the "to hit" roll was made by (stonefist style attacks are designed to temporarily blind a foe).

**EXAMPLE:** If you strike someone in the face, they cross the -1d damage threshold from the effect, and you made your "to hit" roll by 4, your opponent takes an additional -1d to all their spotting rolls for a time level of +4 (4 seconds). The total penalty on their spotting rolls is -2d (-1d for injury, -1d for temporary blinding).

This style also gives a bonus to making two punch attacks in a single turn (the +1d bonus offsets the -1d penalty for taking two major actions).



**Zokili Nervestrike:** This is a more defensive and non-lethal fighting style. It gives bonuses to try to blind an opponent, like the Myndwar Stonefist style. It also gives bonuses to blocking or parrying maneuvers, and gives the fighter +1d damage with punches, if the punch does only non-lethal (instead of half-lethal) damage. A practitioner of this style can also do a combination maneuver of grab/Strength test at no penalty. This is always called shot to a weapon arm (+4 difficulty), and if the Strength test is won, the opponent loses their grip on whatever weapon they are holding (two-handed grips are at +1d to defender's Strength).

**Kantarin Skytackle:** This is a full-body wrestling style, that grants bonuses to disarming like the Zokili Nervestrike, and also to kick, grab, throw or bash maneuvers.

**Sivatagi Bladefist:** This is a highly mobile, defensive style. It grants bonuses to blocking and parrying. The constant motion of the fighter means they have no blind sides where an opponent would get a sequencing or targeting bonus. In addition, the fighter gets a bonus and may use a major action to catch a thrown weapon or arrow aimed at them. The difficulty of doing this is the converted damage or size of the object, whichever is larger.

**EXAMPLE:** An arrow with a damage of 2d+2 would be a difficulty of 8 to catch.

Of course, the fighter has to know the attack is coming in order to make such an attempt, and each attempt is a major action. Failure to make the catch means the attack may hit normally (if it made its "to hit" roll).

**Draslander Kneebiting:** This is a heavily leg-based style, giving bonuses to kicks. Kick damage can also be increased by +1d if the damage is made non-lethal instead of half-lethal. Practitioners of this style can also do a combination maneuver of grab/Strength test at -1d penalty. This is a leg maneuver that binds and trips the opponent if the Strength test is successful. A prone opponent has a -1d on their initiative rolls, -1d on Agility for purposes of Dodging, and -1d on their melee or unarmed combat skill rolls. It takes a major action to get to your feet, and this would be done as a movement action rather than a combat action.

A person can know more than one fighting style, but can only use the benefits of one particular style in a single turn.

**Armed styles:** This operates the same way as the unarmed styles do, but for a particular weapon or set of weapons.

**Divaran Duelling:** This is a multiple-weapon style, usually involving two heavy blades (one-handed weapons). It grants bonuses to feints and blocks, a weapon bind/disarm maneuver that operates like the Zokili Nervestrike, and a special two-weapon combination attack that is performed at no penalty. This attacks with both weapons (make two skill rolls, comparing each to the defender's one roll). If they both hit, damage is compared to Armor separately, but is added together for determining critical wounds, stun or other combat effects.

**Myndwar Doublestrike:** This is an aggressive two-weapon style using a pair of light axes or similar weapons. It gives a bonus on attacks, feints and parries, and to all-or-nothing attacks (**EABA**, page 5.3).

**Zokili Risingsun:** Another two-weapon style, using two light blades. It gives bonuses to attacks, blocks, feints and parries. It can also be used to make attacks with no bonus and +2 difficulty to ignore the first 1d of a target's armor (which would be cumulative with any other armor-piercing effect). This style's inherent moves are designed to strike in ways and places normal armor does not cover adequately.

**Kantarin Deathdancing:** This style is based on shield and heavy blade or one-handed axe. It gives bonuses to block, bash (with shield), all-or-nothing attacks, and offsets penalties for being prone. In addition, this style can go from prone to standing position as a combat action rather than a movement action, using weapon and shield as leverage points.

**Sivatagi Mounted Combat:** This style works with heavy blade, axe or spear, but only while mounted and against unmounted opponents. When using this style, the fighter has no blind spots and takes no sequencing penalties for where they are being attacked from. They also get a bonus to bashing attacks, all-or-nothing attacks, and can make attacks at no bonus and +2 difficulty to ignore the first 1d of a target's armor, using their height to spy weak spots or vulnerabilities (which would be cumulative with any other armor-piercing effect).

**Draslander Disarmament:** This is a weapon and shield technique with a defensive slant. When using a Draslander shield, it gives a bonus to blocks and bashes. The edges of Draslander shields are designed to catch and bind weapons, and someone using this style can force a Strength vs. Strength check after successfully blocking an edged weapon. Success means they have wrenched the weapon from their opponent's grasp (two-handed attacks get +1d on attacker's Strength). This however, makes the shield more difficult to use (it loses at least 1 point of its bonus, depending on the size of the weapon embedded in it). This style can also be used to "catch" thrown or missile weapons just like the Sivatagi Bladefist style.

### AGILITY SKILLS (Other)

**Acrobatics** - In **Rune Stryders**, a skill roll in Acrobatics can substitute for Agility when figuring how much or how well an adventurer can Dodge. This skill can also be used for contorting in or out of tight places, or as a complementary skill when trying to do something fancy with other Agility-based skills. Steeplejacking (moving across an urban area by rooftop) can also use this skill roll, and Acrobatics can be specialized in it.

**Stealth** - Making a Stealth roll against an Average(7) difficulty makes you +2 harder to spot, making it against a Challenging(9) difficulty makes you +4 harder to spot, and so on, but you cannot increase the difficulty by more than half the difficulty for range. Stealth can also help when a person is trying to make a "silent kill".

**EXAMPLE:** If you are at a range level of +8 (6 meters) from a guard, you cannot get more than +4 difficulty for use of Stealth.

**Stryder Combat** - A Stryder pilot can use their regular combat skills with Stryder-sized weapons or fists or feet, but takes a -1d penalty on these rolls. To avoid this penalty they must have a +0d skill in Stryder Melee Weapon, Stryder Ranged Weapon or Stryder Unarmed Combat. Simply having the appropriate skill at a +0d level negates the penalty. If the pilot has a higher level in the appropriate Stryder skill than the regular skill, they may use the highest applicable skill for their Stryder weaponry.

**EXAMPLE:** If you have Unarmed Combat at +0d and Stryder Unarmed Combat at +1d, you would use the +1d skill when punching or kicking with the Stryder.

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### WILL SKILLS (Other)

**Bonding** - This skill is unique to Stryder pilots, and represents their ability to merge with their construct to control its actions. This skill is actually four separate skills, and the adventurer has to choose which of the skills they are proficient in, which will depend on the nature of the Stryder or creature in question. A person can have proficiency in more than one aspect, but they have to train in (i.e. pay skill points for) each aspect separately. The four aspects are Stryder Pilot, Animal Empathy, Plant Empathy and Spirit Empathy. In the case of the Sivatagi, the Animal Empathy skill is used to control their mounts. A Stryder can never operate at a higher Agility than what it is built with, but the pilot's skill roll can substitute for Agility up to this level.

**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder with 2d+1 Agility and a -1d penalty from damage would roll 1d+1 for Agility. If the pilot had a 3d+0 Bonding skill roll, the Bonding roll with a -1d penalty would be 2d+0 and could be used instead of Agility. The pilot is using skill and force of will to compensate for the damage.

Plant empathy is used by the Kantarin the same way as Stryder Pilot, and Spirit Empathy substitutes for a Will roll when communicating or trying to gain information from spirits, an ability restricted to one of the Draslander roles (page 6.32).

**Leadership** - This is an Advanced Skill in **Rune Stryders**. When rolled by someone leading a group, if it beats the average Will roll of that group, everyone in that group gets a 0d+1 bonus to their Will, and another 0d+1 for each 2 points the roll was made by. This helps morale in combat, and the benefit lasts as long as that battle, encounter or event, provided the leader stays in command. In **Rune Stryders** this benefit is especially important, as the increased Will can provide an extra defensive benefit against hostile magic.

**Interrogation** - Interrogation is not just a matter of techniques, but is also a contest of wills. This skill roll is compared to the Will of the target, adjusted by the interrogation methods and their desire to keep their secrets. A target normally gets a default of their Will roll plus 10, plus any positive or negative modifiers, vs. the skill roll of the interrogator. Time spent in the interrogation does not affect the roll, except indirectly as part of the time spent for a particular interrogation method. Only one roll is allowed for any particular set of modifiers, and the modifier for interrogation type has to be increased in order to allow another roll.

**Teaching** - In **Rune Stryders**, teaching skill is not required to impart knowledge to someone else, but it can make the process more efficient. Normally, a teacher can only teach a skill level 1d less than their own, but if the teaching skill is high enough to give a complementary skill bonus, the teacher can teach up to a skill level equal to their own.

**Diplomacy** - Traditionally, the art of saying "nice doggie" while you search for a big stick. Diplomacy and politics are related, but not the same. Diplomacy is about negotiation, either between you and someone else, or you acting as a mediator between two or more other people or groups. The skill is generally used to adjust the emotional reaction or impression between groups, and while it is normally used to make things easier, it can also be used to inflame passions and make things uglier.

## ▼ HEALTH SKILLS (Other)

**Running** - This is an Advanced Skill, and having it at +0d or more increases your Health by +1d for determining your base movement rate. This can also include any use of Health for jumping distance.

**Carousing** - This skill can be used instead of a Health roll to avoid "overdoing it" when socializing with intoxicating substances. The skill can also assist in making good impressions or influencing attitudes in many social situations.

**Swimming** - This skill does not affect your base swimming movement rate, but does substitute for Health when trying to stay afloat in difficult conditions.

## ▼ AWARENESS SKILLS (Other)

**Siege Weapons** - This skill covers the use and general tactics of siege weaponry, and to some extent, their construction, though that is usually a specialization of the skill. This skill can cover conventional siege weapons like catapults, or the more esoteric ones like large rune throwers.

**Area Knowledge** - In addition to simply knowing your way around, there are potential applications during combat or the performing of any task that might depend upon the knowledge of one's surroundings. When in familiar surroundings, things tend to be somewhat easier. When in unfamiliar terrain, tasks become harder. The choice of a home turf as represented by the free +0d skill in knowledge of an area is meant to convey this difference in an easy fashion. When dealing with a group of people who are all from the same area, no modifiers usually apply. But, if someone has a home field advantage and can figure out a way to use it, they should be able to alter the difficulty of a task by up to  $\pm 2$ . They might not be able to shoot straighter, but they can lose pursuit easier, take shortcuts that only a local would know about, etc.

For the most part, a adventurer's turf is merely a matter of idle conjecture. Adventurers are free to move in and out of various turfs, and will almost certainly encounter one or more during the course of a particular adventure. However, each also carries with it potential role-playing applications. Adventurers accustomed to a particular turf will almost always be able to locate sufficient food and water for themselves, and may be able, given time, to provide the same for their compatriots. Knowledge of a particular turf also carries with it the ability to better find shelter, clothing, weapons and other materials, as well as any other applications, as deemed appropriate by the gamemaster. Any area knowledge that is associated with a particular geography can give a complementary skill bonus for any Scrounging skill used in that area.



**Scrounging** - In most cases, this skill is about finding food, water and shelter, but it can also relate to acquiring, finding or making tools from what can be found in that environment. The difference between Scrounging and Area Knowledge is that Scrounging covers a class or type of area, while Area Knowledge covers a particular area, which might have several classes or types of area within it.

**EXAMPLE:** A Scrounging skill might cover "Swamps", while an Area Knowledge might cover "Dras territory". You could use the one in any swamp, the other in any part of Dras territory, and both in a swampy part of Dras territory.

Scrounging is always specialized to a particular type of area, and each type would be considered a separate overall skill, so "Desert Scrounging" would be a different skill than "Forest Scrounging". The regions for Scrounging in **Rune Stryders** are:

**Desert:** Little water or vegetation, rocky or sandy terrain mostly devoid of civilization or large life forms. In Rhun, almost entirely limited to the Mideast portion of the continent, inhabited mostly by the Sivatagi but also by some Divaros and Zokili.

**Flatlands:** Wide, open green lands and pastures, whether cultivated farmland, open prairie or plains. Mostly found in the Midwest and Mideast (south of the desert) portions of the continent, and populated mostly by Divaros and Zokili.

**Forest:** Temperate woodlands characterized by a prevalence of tall trees and little ground cover. Typically found in the Northwestern portions of the continent, with smaller forested areas to the Southeast. Populated mostly by Divaros and Zokili, along with some few Kantarin.

**Highlands:** High plains and plateaus, with vegetation usually consisting of scrub brush and dry grass. Generally found in the Northeast continent, populated mostly by Zokili, with some Highland areas populated by Divaros and Myndwar found along the Southern shoreline as well.

**Jungle:** Tropical woodlands characterized by high trees, a thick canopy and often heavy ground cover. Almost entirely limited to the Kantarin Jungles of the Southwest continent, with some areas spread out across other Southern areas. Also home to some few Myndwar and Draslander.

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**Mountains:** Not just the peaks of these high areas, but also the valleys and uneven terrain between them. Though some areas are found to the Southwest, typically refers the Spine, which runs down the middle of the continent from North to South. Typically populated by Myndwar, with some Divaros and Zokili.

**Sea:** The open ocean, or any broad body of water that requires significant time and effort to cross. Surrounds the entire continent. Permanent home to no Nation, the Divaros have come closest to mastering the waves, with the Kantarin also at home, mostly closer to shore.

**Subterranean:** Underground caves and caverns, man-made and natural. Found everywhere, though particularly beneath the mountainous areas of the Spine and below older urban areas. Most at home in such areas are Draslander and Myndwar.

**Swamp:** Marsh and mire, quicksand and vine, low, broad trees and heavy, tangled ground cover. Found everywhere in low-lying areas, most often associated with the large swamps of the Draslander, found in the South-Central portion of the continent.

**Urban:** Civilized, built-up areas, even amongst areas listed above, with roads, walls and other structures. Most typically identified with the Divaros and the larger cities of the Northwest continent, but found everywhere and to some degree in all cultures except the Dras and Kantarin.

An adventurer who is not native to a particular area or type of terrain can still have an appropriate Scrounging or Area Knowledge, but it may require some explanation in their background. These are the sort of skills that require lengthy hands-on experience to learn, so the adventurer will have had to spend some of their life in the region or terrain for the skill, and this is a bit of history that the gamemaster can find useful. If you can't come up with the adventurer's background right away, don't worry about it. But keep it in mind or the gamemaster may make something up and spring it on you...

# EABA

▼ **TRAITS - Rune Stryders** adventurers can have most of the Traits listed in the **EABA** rules. If you are using the quick adventurer generation rules, choose one of the packages of Traits below. Packages with a *negative* point total mean the player should add Traits like a Motivation for 5A or 5S, and levels in a Personality (5S per level) to make up the difference.

## Trait package #1(fighters)(-10A/-10S)

Age: Physical prime(+5/+5)

Enemy: Minor(+5/+0)

Friend: Powerful(-5/-10)

Experience: Wearing armor(+0/-5)

Toughness: (-10/+0)

Pain tolerance: (-5/+0)

## Trait package #2 (runecasters)(+0A/+0S)

Age: Adult(+0/+0)

Forté: +1d on three runes(-5/+0)

Status: One level within profession(+0/-5)

Personality: Two levels curiosity(+0/+10)

Secret: Minor(+5/+0)

Friend: Minor(+0/-5)

## Trait package #3 (generalists)(+0A/+0S)

Age: Physical prime(+5/+5)

Forté: +1d on one Attribute(-5/+0)

Gifted: Fresh runic tattoo(-10/+0)

Personality: Two levels overconf.(+10/+0)

Experience: Heat(or cold) tolerant(-5/+0)

Enemy: Minor(+5/+0)

## Trait package #4 (young adven.)(+0A/+0S)

Age: Young adult(-10/-10)

Personality: Two levels brash/rebel(+10/+0)

Forté: +1d on Health(stamina)(-5/+0)

Forté: +1d on Awareness(sight)(-5/+0)

Weakness: -1d on Will(impulsive)(+10/+0)

Wealth: One level negative wealth(+0/+10)

## Trait package #5 (older adven.)(+0A/+0S)

Age: Middle Aged(-20/+15)

Weakness: -1d on Health(stamina)(+10/+0)

Forté: +1d on Will(stoic)(-5/+0)

Enemy: Powerful(+15/+0)

Friend: Minor(+0/-5)

Wealth: One level positive wealth(+0/-10)

## Trait package #6 (researchers)(+0A/+0S)

Age: Mature(+0/+10)

Forté: +1d on Awareness(thorough)(-5/+0)

Personality: Two levels elitist(+10/+0)

Enemy: Minor(+0/+5)

Friend: Major(-5/-5)

Wealth: One level positive wealth(+0/-10)

Things like enemies and friends will have to be fleshed out by the player and gamemaster, but do not have to be decided upon immediately. You can play the adventurers for a little while to see what will work best for them.

Special notes on *particular* Traits are below, and would be more useful for those building adventurers from a point base. If you choose a template from the **Roles** chapter, note the Traits and check here or in the main **EABA** rules for details on any that you are not familiar with.

● **Age** - Adventurers may be any age, but only get *half* of any age-based bonuses, and take *double* any age-based penalties that happen after adulthood is reached. Use of runes may extend lifespan somewhat, but life in Rhun is still hard.

◆ **Blessing/Curse** - There are very few of these in Rhun, and none of a magical nature. The gods of Rhun do not meddle in the day-to-day affairs of mortals and so do not bestow supernatural gifts on either man or beast.

■ **Enemies** - Adventurers can have all sorts of enemies. The scope and power of the enemies should be appropriate, and there should be a good reason for them that matches the adventurer's level of skill and their personality.

■ **Experience** - Any experience appropriate to a low-tech or fantasy world is possible. Adventurers might consider experiences that offset certain tactics their foes might use. For instance, Draslander Kneebiting is big on knocking people down. An adventurer who has fought a lot of Draslanders might buy an Experience to offset the penalties for fighting while prone. The weight of mundane armor is going to be a penalty on actions for many fighters, who might want to buy an Experience with wearing armor to reduce the penalty. Areas of extreme heat, cold or altitude will have penalties that those with long experience of the region may be able to compensate for.

■ **Forte** - Most of the standard Fortes are possible. Fortes on Fate can include a bonus to the effect when using three particular runes (other than control runes), and Fortes on Will can include an increased ability to resist magical attack.

The different nations/races of Rhun have a general set of physical and mental characteristics and attitudes which you can read in the **World** chapter. However, *individuals* can vary widely from the norm, so there are no racial templates or mandatory physical characteristics. You could be a dwarfish Divaros or a two meter tall Myndwar. Such a deviance from the norm will set the adventurer apart from their fellows, and might require an **Unusual Background**, but adventurers are not locked into a particular appearance because of their place of birth.

■ **Friends** - As for enemies. Friends will most certainly be asking adventurers for inconvenient favors in exchange for favors that the adventurers ask of them...

◆ **Gifted** - This generally does not apply in the **Rune Stryders** universe. However, for 10A an adventurer can start play with a freshly tattooed rune combination of their choice (but with game-master approval). This can be done only once. Other rune tattoos will have to be acquired during play. You will need to look at the **Runes** chapter to see which rune combinations are possible and useful for your adventurer.

◆ **Larger than Life** - Generally not used in the **Rune Stryders** universe. However, certain very powerful individuals behind the scenes of Rune Stryder creation may have it, and there might be yet unknown, powerful runes that *require* this Trait in order to use them.

● **Looks** - As per the normal rules, this is only worth points if it is exceptional enough to affect your die rolls when interacting with other people.

● **Motivation** - Always useful, and a no-penalty source of points if building an adventurer from the ground up.

◆ **Mythic Archetype** - May be used in the **Rune Stryders** universe.

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● **Pain Tolerance** - Always useful, and the **Rune Stryders** universe is no exception.

● **Personality** - Adventurers are not required to have Personality, but it does make things more interesting, and if you are going to play an adventurer in a certain way anyway, you might as well get points for it.

■ **Secret** - Rhun is a world with lots of secrets, so there is no problem if adventurers have a few of their own. These do not have to be defined immediately, and can be worked out after the first few play sessions between the player and gamemaster.

■ **Status** - Status is measured in different ways in the various parts of Rhun. There is status based on birth (nobility), that based on political influence (which is not necessarily hereditary), status based on leadership in a government organization (police or military), non-government organizations (like guild masters), or informal status based on personal reputation. Status generally only applies fully within your own sphere of influence and anything directly subject to it. Each level of separation from your "power base" drops your ability to use Status by a level, as does each level of broader Status you would attempt to influence.

**EXAMPLE:** Having three levels of Status within a trade guild gives you a lot of influence in that guild. It gives you less influence with other guilds. They respect your position, just not as much as your own guild members do. It gives you even less influence with the government, since a government level of Status is broader (more costly in points) than your own. And you would have next to no Status effect with a different government that had no relations with your guild.

Adventurers should not have more than two levels of a very limited Status at the start of play, and this would represent achievement or rank, or possibly a useful reputation of some kind or an important relative whose influence colors the way other people treat you.

If your adventurer is of a race or class that is looked down upon in the starting campaign area, you can take an overall level of negative Status (worth 10A or S) to reflect the extra difficulty this will cause you in any sort of dealings outside your own group.

# EABA

◆ **Toughness** - Adventurers may buy one level of this Trait if they wish.

◆ **Unusual background** - This is not really needed in **Rune Stryders**, but if the player wants something very unusual for their adventurer, this would be a good surcharge in addition to the normal cost for whatever it is they want. An example might be an unusual background to account for knowing two different racial fighting styles.

■ **Weakness** - As for Fortes, many different types of Weakness are possible for adventurers.

■ **Wealth** - Adventurers can start with more or less wealth than normal for their level of skill, either general wealth or limited levels. How this wealth came into the adventurer's possession is something that should be figured out before play starts.



▼ **STARTING GEAR** - Many adventurers have no true home, being wanderers and warriors, always on the move. Thus, since what you carry with you often accounts for the entirety of your possessions, the right gear is crucial to a successful career. You will find an assortment of gear in the **Gear** chapter. The *actual* currency is the Divaran Vel, a steel coin which is the most widely used form of exchange, but can be 1:1 exchanged with Credits as needed.

There is a limited amount of wealth in Rhun. For all its age, there is little that qualifies as industry, and squabbling between the nations consumes a lot of resources that would otherwise be able to enrich the society as a whole. Starting levels of assets and cash on hand are divided by sixty-four from normal **EABA** amounts. You can use the table below to figure cash and assets. Ask the gamemaster about the skill you are using for your income at game start. If the skill is in high demand, go down a row, if low demand, go up a row. Soldiers, mercs and low-status outsiders are almost always down a row (but mercs and soldiers may be supplied with a weapon & armor). Adventurers can start play with no more than two rune-enchanted items (see **Gear**).

Best skill roll	Cash	Assets	Daily wage (≈10hr)
1d	5Vel	25Vel	1/3 Vel
2d	20Vel	100Vel	1 Vel
3d	50Vel	250Vel	2 1/2 Vel
4d	90Vel	450Vel	4 Vel
5d	140Vel	700Vel	7 Vel
6d	200Vel	1000Vel	10 Vel
7d	270Vel	1350Vel	13 Vel

If you want to worry about detailed gear later, just grab some stuff below and fill in the blanks later.

Item	Cost	Weight
Light melee wpn(punch-1)	20Vel	.3kg
Avg. melee wpn(punch+1)	125Vel	1.3kg
Hvy. melee wpn(punch+4)	370Vel	2.5kg
Light shield(1d+1)	30Vel	2.5kg
Hvy. shield(1d+2)	50Vel	3.5kg
Bow & arrows(2d+1)	170Vel	1.5kg
Crossbow & quarrels (2d+2)	500Vel	5.0kg
Rogue's tools	50Vel	1.0kg
Light body armor(1d+0)	310Vel	6.5kg
Med. body armor(1d+2)	350Vel	13kg
Hvy. body armor(2d+1)	1150Vel	17kg
Research books	50Vel	2.0kg
Writing tools	10Vel	1.0kg
Normal clothing	2Vel	2.0kg
Upper class clothing	15Vel	3.0kg
Personal effects	10Vel	.5kg
Medium pack	2Vel	1.0kg
Large pack	3Vel	2.0kg
2 person tent	2Vel	8.0kg
Camp sundries	.5Vel	.5kg



▼ **FINISHING UP** - If you are going to be doing any roleplaying, you'll probably want to polish up the adventurer concept. This is a very fluid and individualized process, and can take anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours to truly get it right. Here are some things to think about:

**Name:** The **World** chapter has some sample names to get you started, and if you do not like what is listed then you can check out the linguistic hints and tips to help you come up with something new. Try to avoid anything anachronistic or silly, because you'll almost certainly regret naming your warrior "Bob" after a few sessions.

**Background:** Use your imagination to make your adventurer more fully-fleshed out and interesting, taking into account the mythology, history and society of the **Rune Stryders** world. When in doubt, make things up after checking with your gamemaster; chances are that they will welcome your assistance in coming up with names for villages and families that you may want to include in your personal history.

**Appearance:** Using the basics provided with each **Role** category, decide how your adventurer looks. Things to decide include height, weight, eye, skin and hair color, and any special distinguishing marks (like tattoos, speech impediments and scars).

**Runes:** If your character possesses at least +0d in Runelore skill, make sure you have chosen the control Rune or Runes your adventurer knows, and make sure you bought a few other useful Runes as well.

**Attitude:** Rhun's nations are constantly at war with one another over land, resources, political differences and the like. What opinions does your adventurer's have of their neighbors, their nation's enemies, their countrymen, and neutral parties? This might be the most important decision you make, so choose wisely - you'll need friends eventually, so be sure not to make everyone your enemy.

**Goals:** It is one thing to merely exist, but it is another to truly try to shape the world you live in. What drives your adventurer forward? Is he or she looking for greater knowledge and martial skill, or searching for Runic secrets, long since lost? Work closely with your gamemaster on this.

**Turf:** If you chose a Role, write down the "Home Turf" mentioned with that Role. If you have not picked a Role, take a moment to browse through the **World** chapter to read up on what turfs are available, and how familiarity with them can help your adventurer.

▼ **TRIAL BY FIRE** - Thomis pushed the trap door aside and emerged into blackness, fumbling for the *Nhet* rune he knew was on the table, which he knew was in the corner, which he knew was three paces from the trap door in the floor. Unfortunately, there was no Rune. Nor was there a table. Instead, after three paces, he found himself in a bare corner, fumbling for emptiness.

"*Ull-eq.*" A voice rasped in the darkness, the runeword resounding through the room. He knew the Rune - Fire - and he knew what it could do in the hands of a master. He immediately turned to leap back down the trap door, expecting to feel the heat as the flames singed his hair and back. He didn't get far. As he turned, two spears materialized from the shadows, dancing inches away from his face.

With nowhere to run, he slowly raised his hands above his head and surveyed the situation, somewhat amazed to be alive. The spears were connected to two men in black leather armor, heads and faces shrouded in darkness not entirely natural. Behind them, a large portion of the wall was ablaze, the wood charring and snapping. Standing just inside the door, well away from the action, was a third individual, armored like the others, his hood drawn back, his hand outstretched. Middle-aged, weathered and scarred, his eyes narrowed. The caster, he assumed. Though by the look of them, any of the three could have cast the Rune.

He knew what they were. He suppressed a shudder. "*Magi.*" He cursed softly. No doubt Marle-Thon had set them on his trail. He should have expected as much from one so highly ranked. "You know, then, that the Rune was not mis-cast," said the one in the doorway. "If I had wanted, you would be aflame instead." As if punctuating the statement, the wall sizzled and snapped, scattering embers across the room. Thomis flinched unconsciously, nodding. "Bring him," said the caster. The spears were lowered, and rope produced. He knew better than to resist. He might be headed for death, but fighting back here and now would bring the end about sooner.

And if he wasn't headed for execution, he had a better chance biding his time. He could always escape from a prison cell (and had on several occasions already), but he couldn't escape three Magi. Or six, as it turned out - as he was led out of the room at spear point, he saw the others, crouched just outside in the shadows. Even had he made it past the three inside (sheer impossibility), he would have been gutted, eviscerated and cremated before he got two steps out the door.

As if to emphasize the point, one of the Magi jabbed him with a spear, urging him to move a bit faster. He winced as the tip of the short spear bit through his cloak and shirt, piercing his flesh, enough to bleed and scar, more than enough to poison (or worse) if the spear was Runed, but not enough to cause serious damage. He gritted his teeth and moved on, refusing to show pain or fear, though he felt both. There was a time for cowardice and panic, and this was not it. Not among these sorts.

He was certain the stories were only half true, but even if that were the case, the half that was not mere hearsay and folk tale (pick a half, any half) was enough to frighten even a well-seasoned warrior. Most of the mercenary companies who fought for Divaros in some form were dangerous, deadly, and highly skilled with weapon and Rune alike. But among them, the Magi were the best of the best. And, at the same time, the worst of the worst. He had heard plenty of stories, had told some himself. Of the small contingent of Magi who snuck behind enemy lines during an extended campaign and harassed the enemy for months, killing ten times their own number before being discovered. Of the small encampment, guarded by two dozen armed mercenaries, and the pair of unarmed Magi who slew them all barehanded. Of the single Magi who escaped from the island prison colony of Sisian, swimming the entire way through predator-infested waters to eventually track down and kill the man who had imprisoned him.

He was sure most of it was nonsense. But he wasn't sure which parts weren't. And he wasn't about to ask. Several of the Magi escorting him ("Where?" he wondered at last, nearly making the mistake of asking aloud) looked as if they may have been the subjects of some of those stories. They marched in silence and darkness for what seemed like hours, until finally they reached familiar territory. By the time he recognized where he was, and briefly pondered risking the wrath of the Magi, it was too late. He turned a corner and found himself face to face with the elder Marle-Thon. A moment later, he was on the ground, bleeding from a gash on his cheek. The diplomat, as it turned out, had a nasty right. And left - before he could recover from the punch, Marle-Thon was atop him, hands at Thomis' throat, thumbs pressing on his windpipe, expertly. Diplomats were expert in a variety of forms of diplomacy, it seemed. "Where is he?"

Thomis tried to answer, but found no words, no air, could only gasp helplessly. One of the Magi tapped Marle-Thon with a spear, gently. The diplomat looked angered, but took the hint, and released his grasp, standing. For a moment, he and Thomis both did nothing but breathe and gasp, both for their own reasons. Thomis shifted into a seated position, shuffling back towards the wall. "He's dead, isn't he?" said Marle-Thon at last. A knife appeared from his sash, glimmering in the faint light from a far-off Nhet-lamp. Thomis shook his head, surprised to see no reaction from the diplomat. "Sold?" "No," said Thomis. He would have killed the child before selling him off into slavery. "He..."

"What?" demanded Marle-Thon. "Tell me." Thomis told him. To his credit, the diplomat's face betrayed no sign of emotion, even as several of the Magi around him raised their brows. When he had finished, Marle-Thon turned, facing the lead Magi. Thomis took advantage of the distraction to shuffle a bit closer to the wall, finding the sharp rock he had noticed when he first hit the ground. He began to work at the rope, hoping none of the Magi would notice. "No," he heard the hooded Rune caster note. "They have moved on."

"Where?" said Marle-Thon. "To where?" "South and east," came the answer. "They..." There was more, but Thomis felt the rope give, was already on his feet and preparing to move when the conversation was swallowed beneath the low roar of a guard's horn. Within seconds, the plaza outside Marle-Thon's home was filled with mercenaries. He, the Magi, and Marle-Thon himself were surrounded. Thomis was only half surprised to see Ambassador Adour push his way through, flanked by Judges, their sturdy Enan ready to deal out painful Justice if need be. Adour's flabby jowls bobbed as he moved, shiny new golden chains of office glimmering in the torchlight. "Ah, Jonan. Associating with the rabble, are we? Perhaps that's why you missed the vote tonight." Thomis half-listened, eyes and ears scanning the rooftops, alleyways, and nearby windows for any chance of escape. Unconsciously, he attempted to burrow further into the shadows behind him. Adour noticed, but said nothing, perhaps pretending not to recognize him. "You are responsible for this, aren't you?"



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"I have no idea what you mean," said Adour. "I only heard about your tragic loss just now, and came to offer my condolences." Jonan shot a look at Thomis across the alley, curiosity and confusion evident even in the darkness. "The other Diplomats will certainly be understanding. After all, how could a father not miss a key vote after discovering that his son was murdered?" Thomis nodded slightly to Jonan, acknowledging the unspoken question. He had nothing to lose; he was dead anyway. May as well be honest about it. "Truly a sad day," said Adour. "Indeed," said Jonan, stepping forward. His eyes shone with hatred, reflections of the knife in his hand. "Though I find it curious how you heard of my son's demise. Especially seeing as he still lives." Adour's face crumbled, the fat noble making no attempt to conceal the flurry of emotions that roiled through him. His eyes shot daggers at Thomis before turning back to scan Jonan, the six Magi arranged behind and around him, defensively. "You imply something?"

"I imply nothing," said Jonan. "You are responsible. And I will have justice." "Justice," said Adour. "Yes." A subtle gesture, a flick of his head, and the dozen warriors who had accompanied him closed ranks, forming a tight semi-circle behind him as the Judges stepped forward. "Let the Judges bear witness that Jonan Marle-Thon, and all in his employ, are hereby found guilty of falsely accusing the city's chief Ambassador of a heinous crime. Also of public display of unlicensed weaponry. Also of unregulated use of Runic magic within city limits. Do you dispute these charges?"

"I do," said Jonan quietly. As his Magi mercenaries raised their spears, Thomis scrambled on the ground, mumbling a Rune for luck as he desperately searched behind him for that sharp rock he'd bumped into a moment ago. He had the feeling he was going to need it. *And more.*



# RUNES





The Divaros word Rune (or its archaic form, Rhun) means, simply, language. This is in part because the Runes known to the world today formed the basis for earlier written languages; all modern tongues are derived from this earlier, divine tongue. Each Rune is not only a symbol, but also a representation of a particular sound, a container to help in the pronunciation of the sound itself. Runes can thus be spoken aloud, or inscribed in stone, steel or flesh. However, Runes are never used as a spoken or a written language in the present day.

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - People use the basic Runic sounds in their languages, but they don't go around speaking Runic. Think of it as the difference between using "fire" in a sentence, or shouting "Fire!" in a crowded theater. They are the same sound, but one clearly has more power (and can get you in a lot more trouble) than the other. Runes are much more than mere sounds and scratches in stone. Each one is a complex magical symbol that represents a particular set of words and ideas, thoughts made form, energy locked in matter, waiting for release.

A single Rune can represent dozens of things, from abstract ideas to concrete concepts such as numbers, colors and letters, depending on how it is used in context with other Runes. Thus, while it is true that anyone capable of language can *technically* use Runes just by learning the proper pronunciation, *true* understanding of the Rune and its meaning in relation to specific situations is necessary to gain mastery of the art. Even the simplest peasant can manage to chant a blessing over his family at dinner, but handling more complex magic is best left to the masters. The Runes go much deeper than mere language. They form the foundation for culture, society and, indeed, most of existence.

▼ **Note** - Before you go any further, this chapter is over a hundred pages long! As a gamemaster or player, you should probably just note which pages deal with the runes you know, and leave a full reading for later. It is not complicated, just very in-depth, doing the gruntwork so you don't have to.

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Rhun is not only a word for language. It is also the name of the land, of the continent, and of the entire planet. Rhun surrounds and supports and makes everything possible. Runes are a means to unlock the secrets of the Universe, stolen and secreted beneath the earth, later uncovered and unlocked by the Myndwar and their allies in ages past. These Runes were sound turned into matter, the literal act of creation inscribed into stones, later transferred onto the first Rune Stryders. Runes are the literal words of the gods, the syllables that created the Universe and will one day destroy it.

**Special rules - EABA Rune Stryders** uses a special variation of the normal "best three" rule for magic skill rolls. When you roll for the success of a runecasting, making the appropriate skill roll (activating the runes) is a "success". Each 2 points you make the skill roll by is an extra success. Conversely, if you do not make your skill roll to activate the runes, each "1" you roll is a "failure". Failing to activate the runes is a failure, and each "1" in that entire skill roll (not just the best three) is an extra failure.

**EXAMPLE:** If you roll 6d+2 against a difficulty of 14, and roll 6,6,5,4,3,1, you would normally just keep the 6, 6, and 5, then add +2 for a total of 19. This is one success for making the difficulty of 14, and two more successes for making the difficulties of 16 and 18, so this rune casting had *three* successes.

If a runecasting has a specific, non-dice effect, a runecaster may, *before rolling*, give themselves one extra success for each full die of Fate they allot to the roll. However, these extra successes only happen *if* the runecasting skill roll is a success. If the runecasting has an effect based on Fate, the runecaster may similarly give themselves one extra success for each full die of Fate they subtract from the effect.

**EXAMPLE:** If a runecaster had a Fate of 3d+1 and was casting *Hei-eq* to try to control someone, a success on the runecasting grants this control, *regardless of the runecaster's Fate*. However, a more powerful runecaster can get extra range or duration for these runes by applying their Fate dice to it. In this case, the runecaster could give themselves a maximum of 3 extra successes (1 per full die in Fate), which would apply *if their runecasting skill roll was successful*, and these extra successes would add to any successes from a good skill roll. If the skill roll was *not* made, these potential extra successes from Fate would not apply at all.

# EABA

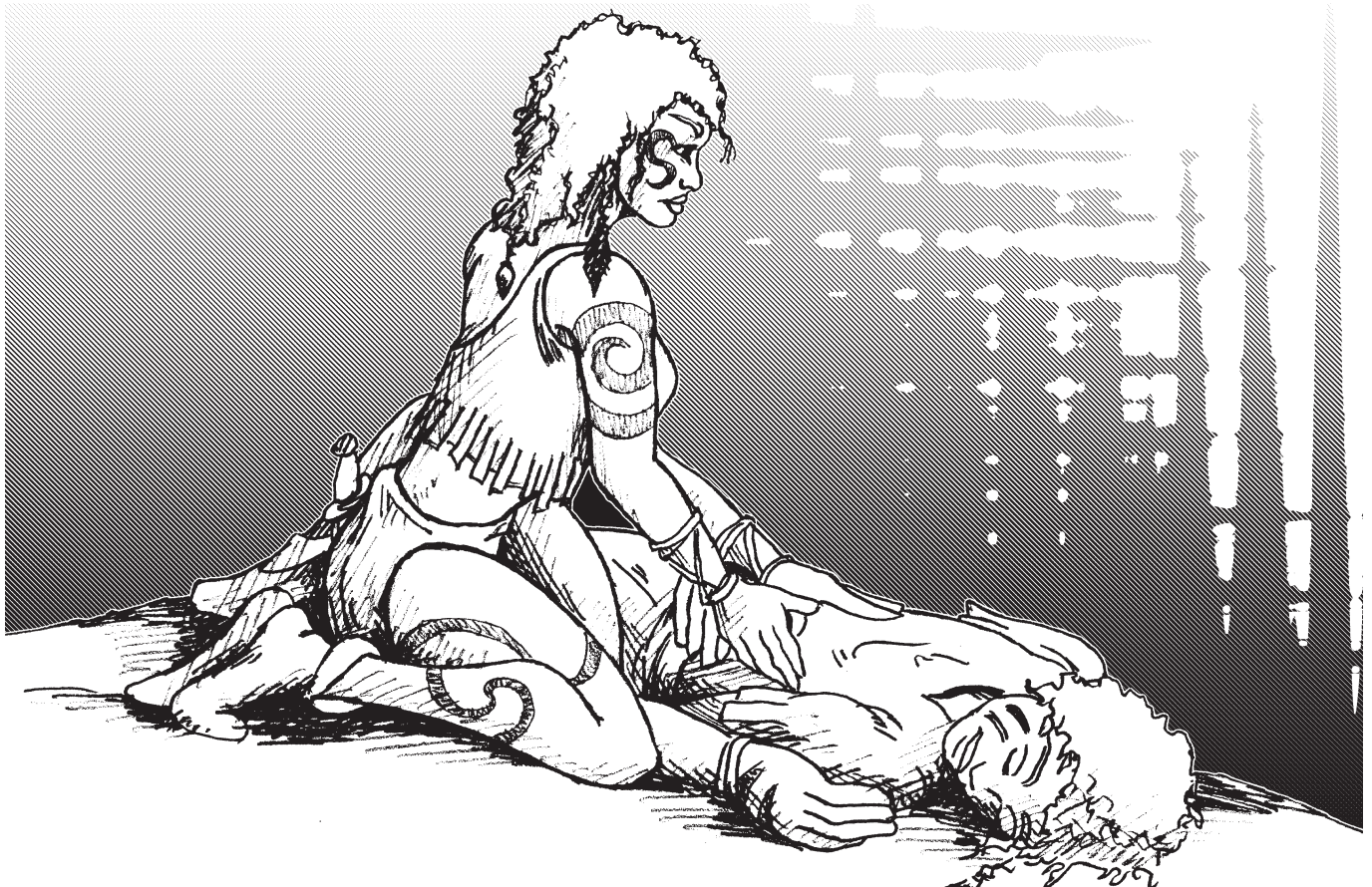
**Duration** - A rune can be created similar to an **EABA** enchantment, creating a continuing effect. In **EABA Rune Stryders**, coming into the area of effect of an inscribed or written rune (and some spoken runes) will cause a person or thing to be affected by it, but the duration of the effect is not the same as the duration of the enchantment, and the effect can continue once the area of effect is left. Something with a dual duration (enchantment duration/effect duration) will have a duration modifier for the sum of the durations, with an additional +2.

**EXAMPLE:** A rune on a door that commands "leave!" might last for weeks, but the compulsion to leave might only last minutes. A rune with duration of a minute and melee range might affect anyone coming close, but the effect does not continue once the target leaves the proximity of the effect.

If a runecasting has a duration on its target that is shorter than the duration of the runecasting as a whole, any special modifier for the duration on the target is described for that rune combination. Most runecastings will have an effect on a target of an instant, a minute or an hour, increased by any extra successes.

▼ **RUNIC LAW** - Each Rune carries a particular meaning, and can only be used in accordance with the rules that govern that particular Rune; a Rune of Fire will always create fire in one form or another. However, certain general rules govern the way all Runes function, and practitioners of the Runic arts must learn those laws if they are to achieve mastery (and survive past their first casting). The six Runic Laws are each named for one of the world's gods.

**Zeï's Law(the Law of Chaos)** - Runes are a swirl of chaos, momentary syllables that must be carefully shaped before they will work. Gathering such chaos is not easy, particularly when one is attempting to catch the chaos in matter, to trap it and shape its power. The Law of Chaos affects casting time, the amount of time it takes to properly shape the Rune so that its power can be released. Casting Runes verbally by speaking them takes relatively little time, and tracing Runes atop other matter (as with sketches and drawings) is a relatively quick process. However, actually carving a Rune into other material takes more time and effort to get right. The casting/ inscription time increases with the relative hardness of the material, with those materials which are more orderly being more difficult to inscribe. Because some materials take such a long time to inscribe, they cannot effectively be inscribed in the midst of a combat situation. In all cases, it is assumed that the caster possesses a useful tool to do the type of inscription needed.



The chaotic nature of Runes means they must be started and completed in a single instance in order for the Rune to function properly. Thus, a Runic utterance must be started and finished in a single breath; it cannot be begun and then “stored” for later completion. Likewise, a Runic carving must be started and worked on continuously, without interruption. Any break in construction or inscription ruins the Rune, and it must be abandoned and started anew.

▼ **Note** - As a matter of practicality and dealing with runecasters, the implications are obvious. Interrupt the runecaster or make it so they cannot cast runes at all. Since rune usage is available to everyone, everyone also has a pretty good idea of how to keep a prisoner from using runes to get free, or the best way to stop a runecasting in progress. Think of carving a rune like playing an instrument, but if you miss a single note in the song, you have to start over again from the beginning.

**Hei's Law(the Law of Order)** - Runes must be “perceived” in order to be effective. They must be spoken aloud or inscribed visibly, taking actual form in sound or material. They cannot be invoked with a thought or a gesture, and they cannot be made invisible or inaudible. Because of this, rune effects are limited to a specific range, within which others can perceive them, and thus be affected, based wholly on the skill of the caster during the casting process, and the number of successes rolled. The default range is a Range level of +5 (2 meters), with +2 levels (double the range) per success in the runecasting. This makes runes a fairly short range phenomenon (making your runelore roll by eight, for four extra successes, only increases the range of your runes to 32 meters).

The perception of runes is both a physical *and* mystical matter. A person cannot become immune to spoken runes simply by covering their ears, nor become immune to inscribed runes by closing their eyes. Similarly, runes can affect inanimate objects, which cannot perceive at all. Probably the best way to consider the perception of runes is if the target or the runecaster could perceive each other sufficiently at the place *where the runes are invoked*. A spoken rune has to be within range of being heard, and an inscribed rune has to be within range of being seen. The magical energy involved in both can make *either* range far more than would be possible for mundane speech or inscriptions.

Runes inscribed on a surface can affect the material upon which they are scribed, though if the runes manipulate or damage the surface, they can be ruined by the effect.

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Inscribed Runes cannot affect things around corners or on the other side of doors, and a caster cannot hide behind a shield while runecasting, since they usually need to see their target *during* the runecasting process. However, the things that a Rune creates are not subject to this limitation. Once the Rune is used, the products of its casting are physically present in the real world, and can affect any and all things, including the caster.

**EXAMPLE:** A Rune that summons a giant boulder whenever someone looks at it is carved onto a stone at the top of a steep hill. It will not be triggered by a man on horseback riding by the bottom of the hill, since he cannot see the Rune. However, it can be triggered by a man on the top of the hill, and the boulder then summoned could easily roll down the hill and crush the man and his horse, despite the fact that he never saw the Rune. The specifics of what can be affected by a Rune are up to the gamemaster, based on the particular circumstances at hand and the nature of the Rune.

**Mheta's Law(the Law of Matter)** - Spoken Runes tend to be highly unstable, energetic and explosive, quickly moving towards expending their energy as the Rune is spoken. Runes that are physically inscribed in stone, flesh, wood or steel, however, trap the Chaos within Order for a period of time. How long an inscribed Rune will remain viable is dependent on the type of material inscribed. This can be extended by separating the components of a runic phrase, so that the effect is only active when the parts are combined. Note that for an active runic effect, the maximum duration shown is for a Rune that remains undisturbed. It is quite possible for a Rune to be destroyed merely by erasing the mark that forms it; more on how to destroy Runes can be found in the **Advanced Rune Usage** section of this chapter.

**Nheta's Law(the Law of Energy)** - The amount of energy a Rune can expend is based wholly on the amount of energy the caster can put into it, and is thus dependent on the skill of the caster during the runecasting process, and the number of successes rolled. The energy released is not easily dampened, and while it is possible to do so, the caster himself suffers the penalties. Should a rune caster roll more successes than is prudent for the circumstances, they may take some of this energy back on themselves.



**Lheta's Law(the Law of Life)** - A caster's own knowledge and potential limit the power and potential of a Rune. No living thing is capable of wielding or controlling more energy than is already present in his or her body at any one time. Thus, while the effects that individual Runes have are always the same, the degree of those effects varies in direct relation to the individual's own knowledge, skill and luck.

This directly applies to the controlling, wearing and inscribing of Runes on the body. No individual or Stryder may carry, wield, control or have on their body (via inscription or tattoo) more Runes than their full Awareness dice plus their full Fate dice; additional Runes carried or inscribed merely fail to function. An inanimate object can only have one combination of runewords inscribed into it.

**EXAMPLE:** A person with an Awareness of 2d+1 and Fate of 3d+0 could have no more than five runic effects going at any given time. A rune-engraved sword could only have one combination of usable runewords on it. Even if these runewords can be mechanically "turned off", they will interfere with any other runewords carved into the blade.

Furthermore, the energy of a Rune is constantly at odds with other Runes. Two Runes from the same school of Runic magic cannot be active on or by the same target at the same time.

**EXAMPLE:** A Runemage cannot command both a *Nhet* and *Mhet* Rune at the same time, since both are from the Prime school. A target cannot harness the power of both *Ull* and *Un* Runes simultaneously, since both are from the Elemental school.

▼ **Note** - This does not mean a person cannot suffer the effects of two runes from the same school, it just means they cannot be the target of two runes from the same school. It is important to understand the difference. Having a rune on you that protects you from elemental attacks does not mean you cannot be targeted by elemental runes. It does mean that you cannot utilize any other elemental runes for any purpose. You can target a stone with two different elemental attacks, but you cannot inscribe two different elemental runes on it.

Not only that, but the same Rune cannot be applied twice with different Control Runes, so a creature cannot be at once protected by *Ull-eq* and armed with *Ull-ess*. If a second, illegal Rune is applied to a target, it cancels out the first, and all continuing effects of the first Rune will cease. If the first Rune was spoken, it simply ends. If it is written or inscribed, the first rune is deactivated as long as the second one is active. Basically, no person or thing can simultaneously be the target of two runes from the same school.

▼ **Note** - If you have the right rune at your disposal, this provides you with a quick way to negate other runic effects. Simply cast a different effect on the target with the same rune to temporarily or even permanently stop the other. Just remember that this only works against ongoing runic effects and does nothing to reverse effects that have already happened.

**Dheta's Law(the Law of Death)** - Each Rune can be represented safely in only one precise way. Since many Runes sound and look similar to others, care must be taken not to accidentally trace or pronounce an incorrect Rune (called a Corruption) during the tracing or speaking of it (accidentally using the Rune on oneself while trying to curse someone else could result in disaster!). In most cases, mispronunciation or mis-inscription of a Rune will have no effect, since the magic associated with that Rune was simply never tapped. However, in some cases mistakes can be disastrous, and even deadly. When a Rune is badly miscast, the energy inherent in the Rune releases against the caster. The caster takes damage according to how wrong the spell went. The more powerful the rune mage, the greater the potential damage.

In addition to the rune mage being harmed by a miscast rune, a written or inscribed rune that is miscast will usually have some sort of side effect upon the surface used for the rune. Weapons or armor could warp, shatter or lose their temper, the rune might activate in a perverse manner upon the surface, or at the very least, that item or spot on the item might be rendered useless for further runic inscriptions. It depends on the nature and size of the item, the power of the runes and degree of failure. A glass goblet might shatter on any failure, but to seriously damage a Rune Stryder with a botched rune might require a failure severe enough to kill the mage making the inscription.



▼ **HOW RUNES WORK** - The use of **Rune Stryder** runes within the **EABA** rules requires a specific power framework, and some special modifiers applied to the use of magic and the way skills associated with the paranormal work. The actual framework is below, with explanations following.

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Starting cost	-20
●	Resisted	-5
●	Requires vocalization or gestures	+0
●	Success-based range	+5
●	Success-based effect	+5
●	Success-based duration	+5
●	Side effect	-20
●	Requires total concentration	-10
	Framework base	-40

**Resisted** - All magic in Rune Stryders is resisted, but it has elements of resisted *and* thresholded. The resisted part is a comparison of the caster's skill to the Will of the target. The caster's skill roll is reduced by the Will of the target, with a few exceptions. If the caster is casting runes upon themselves, the spell is only resisted by 0d+1 per full die in the caster's own Will. If the target is willing, the spell is resisted by 0d+2 per full die in the target's Will. The exceptions are for runes cast to affect inanimate objects, which resist with a "Will" of 2d+0, and runes that have no real target, which simply require a runelore roll against the difficulty of the runes. For instance, *Ull-es*, which creates a supply of fresh water, has no target, so it is not resisted. However, "resisted" is *still* part of that spell's framework.

There are also no restrictions on target size in runecasting. Unless a rune specifically restricts itself to a size range of targets, runes can be cast on any target that is appropriate. However, larger targets require more energy to affect, and resist being affected to a greater extent. For anything larger than a human, the target gets +2 to their Will for each -1 they would normally be to hit. For runes cast upon a target that *can* be willing, like a friendly Rune Stryder, the extra difficulty is halved.

**EXAMPLE:** The smallest Rune Stryders are a -4 difficulty to be hit by mundane weapons because of their size. A Rune Stryder or inanimate object of this size would get +8 to its Will roll to be affected by hostile runes. If it was the target of a friendly rune or runic inscription, the modifier would only be +4. Remember that this applies only to direct effects of runes. If you create fire and hurl it, it is mundane fire and acts like mundane fire.

Usually, tiny targets are not easier to affect, but the gamemaster can choose to give -1 or -2 to the "Will" of small objects that are the target of a rune.

Once you take the caster's runelore skill and adjust it, you roll against the difficulty of the runes. If the Will-adjusted skill roll is insufficient to activate the runes, the spellcasting fails. If it is sufficient to activate the runes, the spellcasting is a success, and the target or targets takes the full effect, which would be the thresholded part. The skill roll is resisted, but if you make the adjusted skill roll, the target takes the full effect.

**EXAMPLE:** A runecaster with a skill roll of 4d+2 and a Will of 3d+1 casts the same rune four times, 1) on themselves, 2) on a rock, 3) on a willing friend with a Will of 2d+2 and 4) on an unwilling foe with a Will of 2d+2.

- On self:** Runecaster rolls 3d+2 (subtract 1d+0)
- On rock:** Runecaster rolls 2d+2 (subtract 2d+0)
- On friend:** Runecaster rolls 3d+1 (subtract 1d+1)
- On foe:** Runecaster rolls 2d+0 (subtract 2d+2)

The *difficulty* of the spell is the same in all four cases, but the dice the runecaster rolls are different based on how the spell is resisted.

The comparison of runecasting skill and Will is done whenever the Runes are activated, which in the case of runic inscriptions could be long after the runecaster has left the scene. So, for such items the gamemaster needs to note the skill of the person who prepared it for later reference.

**Requires vocalization or gestures** - Runes must be perceived. They must be spoken and heard (vocalization), or drawn or carved into something (gestures). The material and method a drawing or carving is done with will have mandatory effects on the casting time, which we'll get to later. This will be mentioned in the description for each rune along with the modifier cost, but it is mentioned here just so you know that all runes may *only* be cast in one of these two ways. A mage who is unable to speak or draw can cast no spells, period. They could activate **mechanical rune words** (page 3.115), however.

# EABA

## Known runes

Name	Letter	Pronunciation	School	Symbolism	Modifier
Hei	H	h as in he	Prime	Order, Law, Stability, Structure, Solid, Male	+20
Xhei	K,C	k as in ark	Prime	Chaos, Disorder, Movement, Fluid, Female	+10
Nhet	N	n as in run	Prime	Energy, Sun, Bright, Shiny, Red, Male	+20
Mhet	M	m as in him	Prime	Matter, Moon, Dull, Yellow, Sleep, Dreams, Female	+20
Lhei	L	l as in ill	Prime	Life, Creation, White, Male	+20
Dhei	D	d as in odd	Prime	Death, Destruction, Black, Female	+30
Shrai	Shr	shr as in shred	Prime	Time	+10
Ain	A	a as in ale	Elemental	Sky, Above, Up, Light Blue, 6	+15
Ott	O	o as in ought	Elemental	Earth, Stone, Below, Down, Dark, Brown, 10	+15
Ull	U	u as in full	Elemental	Flame, Heat, Light, Orange, Many but separate	+15
Un	U	u as in up	Elemental	Ocean, Water, Cold, Dark Blue, Many as one	+15
Aan	A	a as in an	Elemental	Wood, Plants, Trees, Green, 3	+15
Khet	Kh	kh as in ankh	Elemental	Shadow, Darkness	+15
Zhei	Z	z as in azure	Sensory	Sight, Vision, Visibility	+20
Zei	Z,S	z as in buzz	Sensory	Hearing, Sound, Noise, Thunder	+20
Shei	Sh	sh as in fish	Sensory	Smell, Odor, Disease	+20
Chei	Ch	ch as in much	Sensory	Taste, Flavor, Poison	+20
Rhün	R	r as in run	Sensory	Speech, Language	+30
Enn	E	e as in bet	Sensory	Hard, Impervious, Rough, Coarse, Stable, Steady, 8	+25
Ean	E	e as in eat	Sensory	Soft, Giving, Yielding, Flexible, Enstable, 7	+25
Frei	Fr	fr as in fray	Sensory	Thought	+20
Awn	A	a as in all	Life	Self, Me, 4	+25
Gai	G	g as in egg	Life	Other, You	+20
lin	I	i as in it	Life	Living Things, Man, Animals, 2	+20
Pei	P	p as in up	Life	Power, Strength, Fortitude	+30
Fas	F	f as in if	Life	Speed, Agility, Fast	+30
Thei	Th	th as in thy	Life	Mind, Thought, Knowledge	+30
Sen	S,C	s as in sin	Life	Spirit, Soul, Heart, Wisdom	+30
Dron	Dr	dr as in drag	Life	Unliving things	+20
Ngei	Ng	ng as in sing	Conceptual	Blessing, Luck, Fortune, Fate	+40
Wei	W	w as in woe	Conceptual	Curse, Bad Luck, Misfortune	+40
Thürm	Th	th as in thin	Conceptual	Pain, Hurt, Suffering, Harm	+40
Yon	Y	y as in yet	Conceptual	Pleasure, Healing, Laughter	+30
Bei	B	b as in ebb	Conceptual	Truth, Honesty, Justice	+30
Whin	Wh	wh as in when	Conceptual	Lies, Falsehood, Betrayal, Concealment, Secrecy, Stealth	+30
Vel	V	v as in ev	Conceptual	Valuable, Expensive, Precious, Dear, Loved, Cherished	+30
Blei	Bl	bl as in blue	Conceptual	Worthless, Cheap	+30
Oun	O,U	o as in do	Spatial	Open, Door, Window, Portal, 9	+30
Ahn	A	a as in arm	Spatial	Closed, Barrier, Wall, Enclosure, 5	+30
Ite	I	i as in ice	Spatial	Straight, Line, Beginning and End, Finite, Near, 1	+20
Owt	Ou	ou as in foul	Spatial	Circle, Round, Far, Infinity	+20
Ote	O	o as in ode	Spatial	Absence, Void, Nothingness, Ø	+30
Jin	J	j as in jet	Spatial	Large, Giant, Big, High	+30
Tin	T	t as in it	Spatial	Small, Minuscule, low	+30
Grei	Gr	gr as in grey	Spatial	Motion	+30
-eq	Q	eck as in peck	Control	Attack	+40
-ej	J	ej as in edge	Control	Defend	+30
-ess	SS	ess as in essence	Control	Manipulate	+20
-ex	Ex	ex as in exit	Control	Defend with	+30
-ett	Et	et as in bet	Control	Shape, Manipulate	+30

**Success-based range** - Spells cast in **EABA Rune Stryders** have a Range level of 5 (2 meters) for a spell that has one success, and +2 Range levels (double the range) for each extra success. You do *not* use a range-based difficulty for targeting spells. You simply have to succeed at the runecasting well enough to project the effect to the range you want.

**EXAMPLE:** A rune caster trying for a difficulty of 12 and rolling a 14 has two successes, which means their spell has a Range of +7, or 4 meters (range of +5 for success, +2 range for the second success).

So, it is quite possible to aim a spell at someone and successfully cast it, but to have it fizzle out before it reaches its target. Remember that you can trade dice in Fate for extra successes. Each die of Fate you sacrifice from the effect gives +2 Range levels (doubling the range per success).

**Success-based damage** - Spells with a dice effect (like damage) have a default effect of the caster's adjusted Fate. You do not adjust the difficulty of the spell to get extra damage. Rather, each success after the first adds +1d to the caster's adjusted Fate. Successes can add significantly to a spell, but can never generate an effect of more than +2d over the base effect of the spell, nor can an item ever have more magical bonus than its own inherent nature, or +2d whichever is *smaller*.

**EXAMPLE:** A rune caster trying for a difficulty of 12 and rolling a 14 has one extra success, which means their spell has an effect of +1d.

**EXAMPLE:** An armor is inscribed with runes that make it tougher. If the mundane armor was 1d+1, it could never be runed stronger than 2d+2.

Not all spells have dice-based effects. In these cases, each full die in Fate can be used to count as an extra success if the runecasting skill roll is made.

▼ **Note** - The effect of successes on range and effect are especially important for inscribed runes. The gamemaster or player needs to note the skill roll of the person who inscribed a particular set of runes, as this is the roll used when the runes are activated.

**Success-based duration** - Spells that have a duration longer than an instant get +2 time levels (double the time) to their duration for each success past the first in the runecasting. Spells of instant effect get no extra duration from extra successes.

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**EXAMPLE:** A rune caster trying for a difficulty of 12 and rolling a 14 on a spell with a default duration of one minute (time level of +12) has two successes, which means their spell has a duration of two minutes (time level of +14).

▼ **Note** - Successes are *not* split between the duration, range and effect. If you get an extra success, it applies to each part of the runecasting appropriate to the runes used. So, on a runecasting that does damage over a duration, one extra success adds +1d damage, +2 to the time duration and +2 to the range it can reach. Having a good runelore skill roll is key. If your adventurer is going to rely on runes, make sure you have a runelore skill roll of at least 4d+2, preferably more, remembering that your roll will be reduced by the Will of your target...

**Requires concentration** - The casting, writing or inscribing of runes requires *total* concentration. For spoken runes, this is for two seconds. The caster cannot defend in combat or do anything other than minor actions like walking or maintaining a marginal awareness of their surroundings. They can maintain concentration while under the effect of a friendly Rune that moves them or provides defenses of any type. Anything that would do damage or require any Attribute roll will disrupt the rune mage's concentration and ruin the casting. Obviously, if you are doing an inscription in hard metal (which takes 12 hours) you don't want to be disturbed!

**Side effects** - Unlike many **EABA** gameworlds, use of magical power in **Rune Stryders** does not have any inherently fatiguing effects. However, if you *fail* to activate the runes, the energies can backlash on the caster. Each failure drops Will and Awareness by 1 point.

**EXAMPLE:** A rune caster with an adjusted skill roll of 4d+1 trying for a difficulty of 14 and rolling a 4,3,2,1 only has a "best three" total of 10, and has two failures, one for failing to activate the runes, and one more for the "1" in the total skill roll (not just the "best three" part). This runecaster will temporarily lose 2 points on their Will and their Awareness. This loss on Awareness does reduce their runecasting skill roll until it heals.

This backlash damage heals like lethal Hits, and if an adventurer has both lethal hits and damage to Attributes, they usually split any recovery evenly between the two.

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In addition, if a rune caster gets more successes than they want in a casting, they can back off on the casting, losing 1 point of Awareness and Will for each 2 successes they wish to negate. The extra energy has to go *somewhere*, and the runecaster takes it back on themselves. This is an uncommon circumstance, and might be done with something like a damage spell if you realized you had the wrong target, or you didn't want to incinerate a target you wished to keep alive...

These are the *required* modifiers for the power framework. In addition, powers in **Rune Stryders** will have certain mandatory casting time and duration modifiers, depending on how the spell is cast, and what it is cast on. In addition, individual runes will have specific modifiers on their duration, which can be independent of the duration of the overall spell.

**EXAMPLE:** By the table below, *Hei-eq* sketched with chalk would last for one hour after the sketch was complete (a time level of +24). However the *Hei-eq* description says it has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), and you always defer to the rune description.

The table below lists the appropriate times, with the spell construction modifier in parentheses.

Verbal(-5)	Cast time	Duration	Total
Spoken	2 sec.(-2)	Instant(+0)	-7
Spoken	2 sec.(-2)	1 minute(+17)	+12

Drawing(-5)	Cast time	Duration	Total
Sketch	30 sec.(-10)	1 hour(+29)	+14
Drawing	1 min.(-12)	5 hours(+33)	+16
Tattoo	1 hour(-24)	1 year(+55)	+26

Inscription(-5)	Cast time	Duration	Total
Leather	10 min.(-19)	1 day(+38)	+19
Clay	30 min.(-22)	1 week(+44)	+22
Soft stone	30 min.(-22)	2 weeks(+46)	+24
Living wood	60 min.(-24)	1 year(+55)	+31
Soft wood	60 min.(-24)	1 week(+44)	+20
Hard wood	90 min.(-25)	1 week(+44)	+19
Chitin	2 hours(-26)	1 year(+55)	+29
Bone	2 hours(-26)	1 week(+44)	+18
Brick	4 hours(-28)	2 weeks(+46)	+18
Hard stone	4 hours(-28)	2 weeks(+46)	+18
Soft metal	3 hours(-27)	3 months(+51)	+24
Hard metal	12 hours(-31)	6 months(+53)	+22

Special(-5)	Cast time	Duration	Total
Embroidery	6 hours(-29)	2 months(+50)	+21

**EXAMPLE:** A rune inscribed (-5 modifier) into leather will take ten minutes to do (-19 modifier), and will last for one day unless the rune description says otherwise (+38 modifier). The modifier total for this particular combination is +14 (+19 for the casting time and duration, +5 for the inscribing).

▼ **Note** - Some rune effects are far more powerful or difficult than others. While *most* runic inscriptions will last for the durations above, some will have markedly shorter total durations. See *Lhei-ex* for an example of this. Something with a dual duration (enchantment duration/effect duration) will have a duration modifier of the sum of the durations, with an additional +2. One way for the gamemaster to quickly adjust the power and utility of particular runes is to adjust the default durations, especially for inscribed runes. If you want more long-term magic, increase the durations, if you want less, decrease the durations.

The actual difficulty of casting a particular rune or rune combination is usually just going to be the result you get in **EABA** for the power framework, plus the way in which it is cast, plus any modifier for a particular rune or rune combination.

**EXAMPLE:** The overall power framework for **Rune Stryders** magic is -40. *Hei* is a modifier of +20 and *eq* is a modifier of +40. A spoken version of *Hei-eq* would look like this:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Hei</i>	+20
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
	Modifier total	+30
	Runecasting difficulty	12

So, a runecaster has to get a minimum result of 12 with their runelore skill roll, after subtracting the Will for the nature of the target.

A player only needs to figure out the difficulty for a particular rune and casting combination once, since this amount will not change.

**EXAMPLE:** *Hei-eq* carved into leather will always have the same difficulty.

As a quick and dirty guideline, an experienced, professional runesmith will have a runelore skill roll of 6d+0 or more, and will charge at least 2-3 Vel per hour for their services, with a normal minimum of a 1 Vel charge for any rune drawing or etching. See [page 8.3](#) for more information.



▼ **Note** - Many runecastings will have very low casting difficulty! This is usually for spells that are inscribed into a difficult material but also have a much shorter duration than the norm for a rune carved into that material. Such low difficulty spells are within the grasp of even the most marginally skilled apprentice, and are often created as mechanically separated runes (see page 3.115). The number of successes that can be gotten with these low difficulty runecastings makes these items quite powerful, if of limited duration.

The spell modifier and related difficulties is repeated below from the information on page 6.4 of **EABA**, which as a reminder is the same number as the points spent for a given level of an Attribute.

Modifier total	Difficulty to cast
≤0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4-5	4
6-7	5
8-9	6
10-12	7
13-15	8
16-18	9
19-22	10
23-26	11
27-30	12
31-35	13
36-40	14
41-45	15
46-51	16
52-57	17
58-63	18
64-70	19
71-77	20
78-84	21

▼ **ADVANCED TOPIC: FADING RUNES**

As an option on the duration of inscribed Runes, the gamemaster can reduce each default duration by 2 Time levels (half duration), but say the effect of the runes drops by 1d each 2 Time levels after the duration expires.

**EXAMPLE:** Instead of a rune having a default duration of an hour (time level of +24), you would say it has a default duration of half an hour (time level of +22), and then the rune loses 1d of effect after an hour(+24), after two hours(+26), four hours(+28), etc.

This way, inscribed rune effects slowly fade away rather than completely disappearing in an instant. The skill roll used for the runes remains the same, the effect just weakens.

▼ **Note** - Whether a gamemaster or player, stop for a minute and consider the reality of how runes operate in the game. Only the most advanced of rune mages would even know about all the rune combinations in this chapter, much less have any experience in using all of them. Part of what makes the rune system in this gameworld so flexible is its depth. *Or vice versa.*

In terms of how people view any knowledge of runes they have, it is often not "what runes do I need to learn?", but "in what new ways can I use the runes I already know?" Except for the control runes, most runes have about four separate meanings, so a simple combination like *Nhet-ess* could be:

- Manipulate energy
- Manipulate sun(light)
- Manipulate bright(ness)
- Manipulate shiny
- Manipulate red
- Manipulate male

So, those two runes could be used for the quite different tasks of bending sunlight to shine it down a dark mineshaft, take the sheen off a piece of armor so it does not draw attention, hide bloodstains or help a temptress seduce someone. But the spell list is only going to deal with one of the possible interpretations of *Nhet-ess*. With fifty runes, most of which have multiple meanings, and the further ability for skilled mages to put them in combinations of three or more runes, it means that even using the known runes, there are thousands of possible spell effects, many of which have never been done before.

*This chapter is not meant to be read (or printed) off in its entirety. Find the pages that deal with your adventurer's runes or the antagonists or extras that will interact with the adventurers and use just those parts. The thousands of other rune combinations can wait for another day...*

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▼ **OTHER MODIFIERS** - The actual rune descriptions will have a variety of standard **EABA** modifiers. A few are worth noting for the way in which they are implemented.

**Dice and modifiers** - Some spells have effects measured in dice of effect, like damage, while others may be a fixed modifier per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. In general, a full die of adjusted Fate converts into a  $\pm 2$  modifier for spell effect purposes. At gamemaster option, a +2 remainder on a Fate rating (like  $3d+2$ ) is good for a  $\pm 1$  modifier.

**EXAMPLE:** A rune which gives keen distance vision might offset range penalties on sight Awareness rolls. In this case, each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate would reduce the effective spotting range by 2. If the gamemaster allowed, this means an adjusted Fate of  $1d+2$  would be good for a 3 point range offset (2 for the full die and 1 more for the +2 remainder).

● **Casting aids (-5 to -10 cost)** - Normally, spoken runes have to be spoken in two seconds, and inscribed runes in a time appropriate to the material and the writing or inscribing tools used. However, in addition to the normal modifiers for a runecasting, a mage can take up to a -5 modifier for extra time spent (up to +5 Time levels over the normal time). This still requires total concentration. For a spoken rune, the mage is mentally reciting the rune and preparing themselves before they actually utter it, and for inscribed runes, the mage is simply being extra careful. Use of this modifier is optional. The mage does not have to learn the rune with the extra time modifier, they can simply take it in the situations where they feel they need the edge. Note that if the mage is interrupted while preparing to use the rune, there are no side effects other than having to start over.

In addition, for spoken runes a mage can have a parchment, tablet or other writing surface with mnemonic aids, pronunciation guides or other simple *visual* material that aids their concentration during or before the speaking of a rune. This is also worth a -5 modifier. This modifier is part of the way the rune is learned, and if the memory aid is not available, the final difficulty of the rune is increased by +2 from what it would be if the memory aid was available.

So, in cases where time is not an issue and visual aids are available, up to an extra -10 modifier. For spells of medium difficulty (say from difficulty 11 to 16), a -10 modifier will usually drop the difficulty by 2. For spells of higher difficulty it may only drop the difficulty by 1, and for easier spells it will drop the final difficulty by 3 or more.

● **Reduced effect(-10, -15 or -20 cost)** - Some runes will have a reduced effect. However, instead of being the normal **EABA** penalty like -1d, the runes take a penalty so that the effect is *proportional* to the caster's adjusted Fate, and may be specific to the target type. A -10 modifier drops the effect to 2 points per full die in adjusted Fate (and 1 point for a +2), a -15 modifier is the default, and is for a rune that operates at half the caster's Fate, rounding up, and the -20 modifier drops the effect to 1 point per full die in adjusted Fate (no fractional amounts). If the spell is less effective against a class of targets, the modifier is an extra -5, and if it is more effective, it is an extra +5.

**EXAMPLE:** *Ean-eq* reduces the Attributes of a living target by half the caster's Fate, but affects the Armor of non-living targets at the level of only 1 point per full die of Fate. In this case, the effect is a -20 modifier (-15 for half effect, -5 more for being even less effective against a class of targets. If a caster had an effective Fate of  $3d+1$ , the runes would have an effect of  $1d+2$  on a living target (half of  $3d+1$ ), but only  $1d+0$  against armor (1 point per full die of Fate).

You cannot have an extra reduced effect on something that is already at a two-thirds reduction.

■ **Acts as a natural phenomenon(+5 cost)** - This modifier is for effects which act like something natural, like fire or water, or whose effects on an item have natural side effects. For instance, a deafening sound will have an instant effect, but the effect will gradually wear off. In cases like this, the effect of the spell normally wears off at the rate of 1 point per Time level after the exposure ends. That is, 1 point at a Time level of +1, 2 points at a Time level of +2, 3 points at a Time level of +3, and so on.

**EXAMPLE:** So, if you got hit by a blinding flash of light that did an instant effect of an 8 point subtraction to your sight Awareness, it would not completely wear off until a Time level of +8 (16 seconds).

If the spell does continuing damage due to a natural effect, like setting something on fire, the effect drops by 1d of damage per Time level, and the target takes damage of the reduced amount each Time level.

**EXAMPLE:** So, if you got hit by a 3d+1 blast of fire while wearing something flammable, you would take 3d+1, then 2d+1 at a Time level of +1, 1d+1 at a Time level of +2 and 0d+1 at a Time level of +3.

If a non-damaging effect has a default duration of longer than an instant, the effect wears off at the Time levels *after* the exposure. That is, at a Time level of the exposure+1, exposure+2, and so on.

**EXAMPLE:** So, if you got hit by a blinding light that did an 8 point subtraction to your sight Awareness and you were exposed to it for a full minute (Time level of +12), it would not completely wear off until a Time level of +20 (15 minutes).

■ **Created item**(+50 cost) - This duration modifier is mostly for created items that are real, but created or summoned out of thin air. They are not magical, and act just like any other real item. If you create a cup of water, it never vanishes and cannot be dispelled, though it could be dispersed or affected in the same way any other cup of water could. The "lasts forever(+70 cost)" modifier is used for spells whose magical *effect* is continuous, while "created item" is for a spell effect that happens in an instant, but whose effect (the created item) lasts forever as a non-magical item.

**EXAMPLE:** *Chei-eq* generates poison in or on the target of the runes, like a cup or blade. The poison is real, not a magical effect, and can be countered or treated like any other real poison. The poison cannot be dispelled, and damaging the runes that created it has no effect.

■ **Lifetime change**(+40 cost) - This is like "lasts forever", but with a subtle difference. A "lifetime change" is for an effect of short duration, but whose passive effects can continue without any further magical effect for the life of the recipient. An example would be *Lhei-ett*, which can be used to make fundamental changes in the development of a young creature. The change is made very quickly, but the effects endure for the life of a creature. If hair color is changed, it is changed permanently, and is not a magical effect that can be later dispelled.

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■ **State-based duration**(+15 cost) - This duration modifier is for metastable magical constructs that are usually permanent, but can be disrupted, at which point they revert to their natural state (or just disappear). For instance, *Khet-ett* allows a shadow to be permanently shaped, but the spell is dissipated if the shadow is exposed to conditions that would disrupt it (like a very bright light).

State-based durations can also be applied to mundane matter that is manipulated by magic into a different shape, but with no change to its composition. A pile of dirt that can be shaped magically for a duration, and then acts like a normal pile of dirt in that shape after the duration, would have one duration for the *manipulation*, plus "state-based" to reflect that it retains the last shape it had when the spell expires. This is far cheaper in modifier terms than "lasts forever", which in this case would be a pile of dirt that continually tries to reform and maintain the last shape it had been given.

■ **Affects multiple Attributes**(+30 or more cost) - There are two ways a rune cost can be affected by these modifier. If a modifier like "affects an Attribute (+30 cost)" is taken once to apply to multiple Attributes, the caster's adjusted Fate is divided evenly among them, with any fractions applying to the Attribute with the highest value. Or, a modifier like "affects an Attribute(+30 cost)" can be taken multiple times, making the spell *much* more difficult, but allowing the caster's full adjusted Fate to apply to one Attribute for each time this modifier is taken.

● **Side effects**(varies) - Sometimes a beneficial spell will have a negative side effect, and that side effect duplicates a different spell effect. In this case, half the modifier for that spell effect applies *in reverse*. That is, if the spell modifier for the side effect was normally a +30 modifier on a spell, making it more difficult, as a side effect it would be a -15 modifier, making the spell easier.

**EXAMPLE:** *Enn-ess* makes the target's body harder, granting it extra armor. However, the spell also penalizes the target's Agility. The modifier "subtracts from an Attribute" is a +30 modifier, but since in this case it is an undesirable side effect on a beneficial spell, it is a -15 modifier instead.

Think of the side effect as a mini-spell, which can have its own modifiers that apply only to the side effect. Any modifiers that affect *only* the "side effect" are at full value. If they make the side effect worse, they make the spell easier, and if they mitigate the value of the side effect, they make the spell more expensive.

**EXAMPLE:** Normally, the *Enn-ess* side effect in the previous example would drop the target's Agility by the adjusted Fate of the caster, and would be a -15 modifier. If it penalized the Agility of the target by the caster's adjusted Fate minus 1d, this would be the side effect with a "reduced 1d effect" modifier. That reduces the severity of the side effect, so it makes the side effect worth less, in this case a +10 modifier. The side effect and the slight mitigation would combine to be a -5 modifier.

- **Melee range(+0 cost)** - Many spells using the -ex rune have melee range. This is *not* "anyone in melee with the target of the spell". It is "anyone in within 2 hexagons of the target of the spell". With a polearm or other long melee weapon it is possible to strike the target of a melee range spell without personally being affected by it. This is especially true for runes that only affect people. If the gamemaster wants to say the effect requires being in the same or adjacent hexagons, or attacking the target of the rune in melee, they may. A spell with a defined melee range does *not* get extra range for extra successes.

- **Multiple durations(varies)** - Most runes will have a fixed duration, but a few have a duration for the total effect, and a shorter duration during which the effect can be tweaked. For instance, the inscribed version of *Lhei-ett* allows the runecaster to adjust the growth of a living thing. The changes made will affect the target of the rune for the rest of its life, but modifications and adjustments to these changes can only be made for a period of one week after the rune is finished.

The best way to handle this is to add the two durations together, find the modifier for the *total* time, and apply a +2. The exception to this is if one of the durations is "instant". This would be the case for things like an inscribed damaging rune, where the effect can be triggered at any point during the duration, but the damaging effect when triggered only lasts an instant. *Ull-eq* would be an example of this. This sort of dual duration is implied in the rune and does not cost extra.

**EXAMPLE:** A rune that had a total duration of two weeks that you could manipulate for the first hour would have the time modifier for a duration of two weeks and one hour, which is *also* a modifier of +46, with another +2 tacked on for the advantage of the dual durations, for a final modifier of +48.

If one of the durations involved is "state-based", you simply use the modifier for whichever duration costs more and add +2 to the modifier.

**EXAMPLE:** The spoken version of *Ahn-ett* has a duration of one minute in which the effect of the rune can be manipulated, but the effects of the manipulation are counted as state-based duration. Since a duration of one minute is a modifier of +17, and state-based is +15, you use the more expensive of the two with an additional +2 modifier, for a total of +19.

- **Perimeter effect(+0 cost)** - Many inscribed runes will affect an area, and will have their effect on any target that enters the area. The default for such runes is that everything entering the area is targeted, but any given target will only take the effect of the rune once, even if they leave and re-enter the area later. Note that this means they have to suffer the effect to be immune to *further* effects. Simply being targeted by the runes and having the runes fail to work does not count. This modifier is *assumed* in runes that affect an area and will not be listed. Similarly, a duration of instant is implied in these effects and does not cost extra as a "dual duration" modifier. Durations of *effect* longer than an instant that happen during the duration of an inscribed rune do count as dual duration effects. These extra durations would last when leaving the area of effect of the rune.

▼ **Note** - To get very subtle effects over an area using runes often requires a rune word of three or more syllables, and this will naturally increase the difficulty, as well as requiring knowledge of the additional rune or runes and how to apply them.



On many runes, the option exists for an inscribed rune to affect a single target instead of having a perimeter effect (if the rune is inscribed on the target). In this case, the effect on the single target may be at +1d effect (if successful) at no extra difficulty penalty. Whether or not the gamemaster allows this effect will be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis after looking at the rune's effects.

▼ **Note** - The main reason for this particular rune modifier is not so much to limit damage as to stop the stacking of beneficial effects by repeatedly entering and leaving the area of a beneficial rune.

Normally, any continual effect of a rune that affects anyone who enters an area will end when the person leaves the area. Note that this is for continual effects only. A damage or healing rune does its thing once, and so the effect remains when the area is left. A rune that boosts or penalizes an Attribute has this effect fade when the area of the rune's effect is left. It is possible to have such a rune's effect continue after the area is left, but this usually requires the application of an additional rune (like *Owf*), making the rune spell more difficult.


▼ **Note** - Don't let all this intimidate you. All the rune combinations are fully described, ready to use and you don't have to deal with the interactions you're reading about here. These nuts and bolts are what is behind the ready-to-go stuff, for when you want to go beyond the pre-designed material and start customizing runes for a campaign.





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▼ **CASTING RUNES** - As noted earlier, simply speaking a Rune or scribing it is not enough to release the magical energy within a Rune. In addition to supplying the energy required to power a Rune, a caster must define the effects they wish to create.

Runic energy cannot be tapped without a control Rune. Control Runes shape and focus the power of a Rune, and release it in a useful form. Without a control Rune, a Rune will be nothing more than a syllable. There are currently five known control Runes: *-eq*, *-ej*, *-ess*, *-ex*, and *-ett*. One of these five *must* be added to a Rune to invoke its power. Each creates a different effect, and by changing the control Rune, a caster can create a variety of effects with the same Rune. Knowledge of a single control Rune can take years to learn, and only the most dedicated Runemages ever learn all five.

 The *-eq* control Rune translates roughly to attack. Runewords ending in *-eq* are commonly used to damage an opponent. For example, *Ull-eq* can damage an opponent with a ball of flame. The *-eq* rune is a spell modifier of +40.

 The *-ej* control Rune is used to defend. Finishing a Runeword with *-ej* defends against the effect of the Rune. For example, *Ull-ej* protects its bearer against flame. It does not create a barrier of flame to protect the target, as commonly believed among the ignorant. The *-ej* rune is a spell modifier of +30.

 The *-ess* control Rune allows a caster to use in subtle or precise ways the effects of the Rune. Typically, a Runeword ending in *-ess* will be easier to control and have more beneficial effects than either of the other control Runes. For example, *Ull-ess* will create a small fire, and can be used to cook a meal, light a torch or warm a hearth. The *-ess* rune is a spell modifier of +20.

 The *-ex* control Rune allows a Runecaster to defend a target with a Rune's effect. For example, *Ull-ej* allows a Runecaster to increase his defense against fire, while *Ull-ex* wraps the caster in a sheath of flame that damages all who come close enough to strike them. The *-ex* rune is a spell modifier of +30.



At first glance, the *-ett* control Rune may appear to be similar to the *ess* Rune. Rather than using the subject of the Rune, however, the caster using *-ett* may shape or manipulate the subject. The caster does not gain power over the subject, except to mold it. In some cases this is very similar to the effect of the *-ess* Rune, but allows for more precise or longer lasting effects. The *-ett* rune is a spell modifier of +30.

As noted in the skill description, +0d skill and each +1d of skill in Runelore allows a adventurer to select one control Rune to add to their Runic vocabulary. So, an adventurer with +2d in Runelore could have knowledge of three of the five control Runes, but not be able to truly unlock the power of the Runes until they attain a +4d skill.

**Runic Attacks** - Some Runic effects are simply damage-causing attacks. A bolt of flame, a spear of ice, or a blast of energy all reduce a target's Hits. In these cases, the opposed Runelore skill check is rolled as normal. The base damage caused is equal to the caster's Fate, and is increased by +1d for each extra success, up to +2d. *Remember that range is not important when trying to activate runes. Hitting the target is not the problem.* Rather, you have to succeed well enough to have the effect reach the target before fizzling out.

After a brief reading of these rules, it should become obvious that Runes can grant enormous benefit in combat. The option to mix a devastating blow with a disabling Rune makes a rune-skilled fighter dangerous indeed. However, it should be noted that releasing a Runeword takes more than mouthing the words. Energy must be summoned and controlled, and an adventurer that releases a Rune can do nothing else for two turns while they concentrate on the release of magical power. This includes defending themselves, which means that few warriors will take the time out to cast a Rune while in the middle of a duel. Another consideration for casting Runes during combat is the possibility of interruption. If an adventurer takes any direct damage at all during the first action of casting a Rune, the Rune fails. The interrupted adventurer may act normally on the second action, assuming they have not suffered enough damage to merit a difficulty modifier.

Last, many runic effects are fairly short range, at least compared to say a crossbow. It does you little good to be supremely powerful, but unable to get close enough to a target to use that power.

▼ **THE RUNES** - The forty-five Runes presently known to the peoples of the world are believed by many to be merely a fraction of those left behind when the god Nheta stole his father's secrets and hid them beneath the earth. A constant search goes on for new Runes. *Keep in mind that the table on page 3.7 is more than 45 Runes, so some of those listed have not been discovered yet!*

In the meantime, scholars and mages focus on categorizing and understanding the Runes they do know about. By grouping like concepts with one another, the known Runes can thus be divided into six broad categories. Those practiced in the arts of magic start off with mastery of one or more control Runes of their choosing. See the **Adventurers** chapter for more information. Gamemasters who are interested in experimenting with new Runes in their campaign should feel free to introduce new, unknown Runes as they see fit.

This is a *long* section of the rules, since it describes in detail the combinations of all the control runes with the things they can control, plus the **EABA** terminology involving in defining these effects. The important things to remember are:

- spells have the caster's Runelore skill reduced by the *Will* of the target.
- spells have a default range of 2 meters.
- spells get their listed effect on a successful Runelore roll, with double range, double duration *and* +1d effect (up to +2d) for each 2 points the roll is made by.
- A caster can always sacrifice 1d of Fate for effect purposes to get +1 success, but it only applies *if* the adjusted Runelore roll is made, and they have to give up the Fate before making their Runelore roll. You can't sacrifice Fate to turn zero successes into 1 success.
- The duration and difficulty listed for *inscribed* runes is *usually* for soft metal. Runes can be inscribed or drawn in many ways, and these will affect the casting time, difficulty and duration of the effect.
- In general, if a spell can affect an object or a number of objects in the same way a person could affect them. In this case, the spell will have an appropriate Attribute level of the adjusted Fate of the caster, or the total number of objects affected is the Fate of the caster, or possibly both. This means that both skill and Fate are important, one to get successes, the other for a good effect from those successes.
- In general, to affect a large target with a rune meant for a person-sized target, its "*Will*" to resist is increased by twice the size difference between a person and the object.

Remember these points, and you should be fine with the information provided for each rune combination.

▼ **Note** - In terms of **EABA** game mechanics, each rune will generally represent one or more of the standard power modifiers. So, if a rune combination has an effect and you do not see the modifier for it, that is probably the reason. For instance, the *-eq* rune is offensive in nature and does harm, and its +40 modifier cost is the same as the "lethal damage" modifier, and about the same as the "subtracts from Attribute" or "subverts Attribute" modifiers, which are also offensive or harmful in nature. Half-lethal effects using *-eq* are probably going to be at +1d, and nonlethal ones at +2d, as part of the +40 modifier for *-eq*. Or, the half-lethal damage might have a built in +10 modifier for a special effect, or a non-lethal damage might have a +20 modifier that bypasses armor. *Shrai* is a rune for "time", but the rune combinations using it generally use time as a special effect, so *Shrai* by itself is the same modifier as "special effect", or +10. *Frei* is the rune for "thought", so its +20 modifier includes a built-in factor for "can only affect things that can think". We are *not* going to list what factors into each of the runic definitions, but you get the idea.



# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **PRIME RUNES** - These six Runes are named for the six gods of Rhun, and represent an assortment of core concepts, some intangible, some very real. They are among the most powerful Runes, capable of creating and taking life with a sound, but are also among the most unpredictable and chaotic. As such, casters versed in their use must take extra care, for a mispronunciation could easily result in the immediate death of the caster and his allies.



**Hei**

**Order, Law, Stability, Structure, Solid, Male** (+20 cost)

**Offensive(Hei-eq):** The target must obey the caster. The caster may give the target of the rune one command per success, which the target must obey to the best of their ability. "The best of their ability" means like they *really* mean it, not just going through the motions to abide by the letter of the command. Each command may be only one word, though since the inhabitants of Rhun do not speak English, you can sometimes fudge it a little and allow a little conceptual leeway. Nouns can be "verbified", concepts like "rage" or "love" can be embodied, or the words "go", "do" or other short activators can be part of the command on the assumption that there may be a single word that covers the concept.

**EXAMPLE:** The command "leave" works, but so would "go away". "Fratricide" (an attack that kills or wounds an ally) is a noun, but the two word command "do fratricide" might be acceptable, as it is more specific than simply "attack" or "kill". Or, the gamemaster might simply say that such a specific command might require an extra success to add a word to the command.

The caster's control lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). Remember that the spell modifier for durations is the time level +5. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
	Modifier total	+30
	Runecasting difficulty	12

# EABA

The "Personality" modifier is an adjustment to the "resisted" modifier in the framework. If the target of the runecasting has an aspect of their personality that would resist (or aid) the command given, each level in the Personality subtracts or adds to the runecaster's roll, as appropriate. Self-preservation would be a +10 to the target's Will to resist the spell, so only the most skilled of runecasters could hope to give a command that would clearly result in the death of the person affected by the runes.

For the written or inscribed version of *Hei-eq*, the caster concentrates on a single-word command while scribing this Rune. Any living creature able to see the Runic phrase must obey the command to the best of their ability. This control lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). If written on a living creature, the effect is only on that creature and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Hei</i>	+20
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Personality modifiers	+0
■	Sensory targeting	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The drawn version of the runecasting on a *person* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Hei</i>	+20
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 minute to cast	-12
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+32
Runecasting difficulty		13

A one-word command has to be something that is possible for the target in order for it to have any effect, and the command has to be something that the target can *voluntarily* do, so "sleep" or "die" are not valid commands, but "be apathetic" or "ignore me" *would* be valid.

**Defensive(*Hei-ej*):** The target is able to fight the effects of any sort of mind control, whether that control is Runic or not. The target will be able to think for himself, ignoring the effects of brain-washing or societal norms. The spell gives the target a bonus to their Will resistance roll of the caster's adjusted Fate. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Hei</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**EXAMPLE:** A mage with an adjusted Fate of 2d+1 casts *Hei-ej* on a friend with a Will of 2d+0. Then, a foe casts *Hei-eq* on that person, and they have a Runelore skill roll of 5d+2. Without the benefit of *Hei-ej*, the opposing mage would roll 3d+2 to activate their *Hei-eq* (their skill minus the target's Will). But, the defensive benefit of *Hei-ej* means the opposing mage only gets to roll 1d+1 (their skill minus the target's Will plus the adjusted Fate behind the *Hei-ej*). Since the difficulty of the spoken *Hei-eq* is 11, there is no way the opposing mage can succeed with a 1d+1 roll, and their attack fails.

The inscribed version of *Hei-ej* acts like the spoken version, but affects a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes. If this Rune is written on a living creature, it targets only that creature, but the base effect lasts for one hour (time level of +24), after which time the Rune fades away. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Hei</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		-5
Runecasting difficulty		0



The drawn version of the runecasting on a person is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 minute to cast	-12
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Control(Hei-ess):** This Rune rarely targets living things, instead it causes chaotic elements to organize on their own. Papers may arrange themselves in order, bricks will stack neatly, a deck of cards will arrange itself in an orderly fashion. The maximum weight that can be ordered is that which a Strength equivalent of the caster's *adjusted Fate* could lift. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

This spell normally only affects objects in a one hexagon area, though if the ordering process is completed in an area before the runecasting expires, the runecaster may move it to another area within the range of the spell. The runecasting does what it does several times faster than a person could perform the same task, and the runecaster can control subtle aspects of the ordering, like ordering a deck of cards by number or by suit, or stacking bricks by size or color. Ordering that is not stable will fall apart when the runecasting expires. A pile of sand made into a pillar will collapse into a heap, a broken vase reassembled will fall apart again. An unstable configuration can hold as much weight as the Strength equivalent of the caster's *adjusted Fate*, so a pile of sand or paper or feathers could be made into a staircase that would hold a certain total weight. It is a gamemaster call as to the size or shape limits of an unstable configuration. The spell is useful for *conventional* repairs, putting all the pieces of a broken object together for gluing.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

For written or inscribed versions of *Hei-ess*, the object will effectively cast the spoken *Hei-ess* rune on anything placed on top of or near the object. It can also cause the object inscribed to revert to or stay in a particular ordered state. For instance, a coin that always flips "heads", or a thrown knife that always lands point first. This effect lasts for the duration of the writing or inscription (as long as the an object is in range of the rune effect, it will constantly try to be in the ordered state the rune describes). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+14
Runecasting difficulty		8

**Defensive control(Hei-ex):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Xhei-ej*. The spoken version is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The written version of *Hei-ex* also acts the same as *Xhei-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12



**Manipulation(Hei-ett):** By casting this Rune on every element within a group which the caster wants to order, the caster may manipulate the order of the objects for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). It is very similar to *Hei-ess*, but lasts longer and is based on the object, *not* the area an object is in. The number of objects so ordered is up to the Fate of the caster. However, any Strength greater than zero required to lift the collection of objects subtracts from the effective Fate. The spoken version is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced effect(half)	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**EXAMPLE:** Cast with an effective Fate of 7, *Hei-ett* could manipulate up to seven objects. If one of those objects weighed 20 kilograms (which requires a Strength of 2 to lift), then only a total of five objects could be manipulated.

For written or inscribed versions of *Hei-ett*, the collection of objects is inscribed as a group. As long as the caster is within range of the spell, they can order the position of those objects at will (as a minor action). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Hei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced effect(half)	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+14
Runecasting difficulty		8

**Offensive(Xhei-eq):** The mind of the target is seized by chaos. The target suffers uncontrollable fear, rage or confusion, and acts appropriately. The target may strike out against his allies, wander aimlessly, run away, or simply curl up on the floor and cry. The target's Will is reduced by the caster's adjusted Fate for purposes of their attention span. If Will is reduced to zero or less, the target's actions are random. Everything in their environment is equally interesting, and they have no self-control. If Will remains greater than zero, the target must make an Easy(5) Will task each turn to stay focused on any particular task, otherwise something else has become more interesting, at least for the moment. The *gamemaster* determines the exact nature of the effect, which lasts a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

Written or inscribed versions of *Xhei-eq* act like the spoken version, but affect a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24) and applies only to that target. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		-5
Runecasting difficulty		0

The drawn version of the runecasting on a person is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-eq	+40
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 minute to cast	-12
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+22
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Defensive(Xhei-ej):** The target's mind is calmed. The chaotic effects of fear, rage, or sadness are removed. All Will rolls to resist against chaotic thoughts or emotions are increased by the caster's adjusted Fate. The maximum increase to a target's Will is an amount equal to their normal Will, with any extra amounts being lost. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

Written or inscribed versions of Xhei-ej act like the spoken version, but affects a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24) and applies only to that target. The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-ej	+30
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		-15
Runecasting difficulty		0

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The drawn version of the runecasting on a person is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-ej	+30
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 minute to cast	-12
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Control(Xhei-ess):** As with Hei-ess, this Rune generally targets inanimate objects. The objects so targeted will scatter randomly and be impossible to order while the spell is in effect. Cards will fly in random bursts and bricks will fall in chaotic patterns. Xhei-ess is not powerful enough to inherently destroy anything with an Armor of more than 0d+1, but it can make heavy objects fall on delicate ones, or knock delicate ones off tables, and so on. It can cause untold misery to a scholar, alchemist or bureaucrat. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+0
Runecasting difficulty		0

For written or inscribed versions of Xhei-ess, the object will effectively cast the spoken Xhei-ess rune on anything placed on top of or near the object. This effect lasts for the duration of the Rune, objects in the area of effect constantly subject to chaotic forces. The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-ess	+20
●	Personality modifiers	+0
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+9
Runecasting difficulty		6



**Defensive control(Xhei-ex):** The effects and costs of this Rune are identical to Xhei-ej.

**Manipulation(Xhei-ett):** Chaos is, by definition, random. In general, those who cause chaos will not be able to control the results of that chaos. However, using this Rune, the caster may control a *already existing* chaotic effect or state. The chaos must exist in order to be manipulated, but the caster may place certain items where they desire them, or cause specific chaotic effects. The Rune lasts for one use - the clutter in a disorderly room may be moved around once, or the birth defects of a Draslander may be altered a single time. As a result, the duration of the spell is simply until the ordered item or items are disordered again, the range of the spell is the maximum distance within which things can be ordered, and the equivalent Strength gives the *total* weight that can be moved. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute/state-based	+22
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of Xhei-ett is written as a combined casting on every element within a group that the caster wants to control. As long as the caster is within range of the spell, they may increase the chaos of the objects at will (as a minor action). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Xhei	+10
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

▼ **Note** - Remember that every element in the group has to have some portion of the Xhei-ett inscribed on it. These objects would act as a magical whole, despite being physically separated. Damaging the rune on any object will end the rune effect.

**Offensive(Nhet-eg):** The caster hurls a beam of pure energy. This does a half-lethal damage of the runecaster's Fate minus 1d to the target, and the damage ignores the first material barrier between the runecaster and the target, which can include any number of layers of personal armor, though a shield will count as a barrier, allowing worn armor to act normally. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Nhet	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced 1d effect	-10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
Modifier total		+23
Runecasting difficulty		11

For written or inscribed versions of Nhet-eg, the Rune discharges against the closest target within range, any turn the target is in range, for the duration of the rune. The runecaster has to set some sort of target type when casting this rune, which can be fairly specific (within the perceptive limits of the runecaster). This could include parameters like "anyone but the caster". The attack operates identically to the spoken Rune. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Nhet	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced 1d effect	-10
◆	Triggered power	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+56
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
Modifier total		+75
Runecasting difficulty		20

▼ **Note** - This is an example where the spell as described is not very useful. Few runecasters can make a resisted roll with a difficulty of 20. A sketch would be an easier way of doing it, or the game-master can adjust the default duration of the written or inscribed version down to a shorter period or make the duration state-based (until it triggers once). Or, the extraordinary range modifier could be removed for the inscribed version, dropping the modifier total and the casting difficulty.



**Defensive(Nhet-ej):** The target receives Runic armor against any magical attack that *directly* causes damage. It would work against *Nhet-eq*, but not against a magically thrown rock, unless that rock was itself magical in some way. The target of the runes receives an Armor of the runecaster's adjusted Fate, and the protection lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Nhet</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Only affects animate objects	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
	Modifier total	+15
	Runecasting difficulty	8

If inscribed, *Nhet-ej* can work one of two ways. Either a number of targets within range of the spell gain its protection as long as they stay within range, or a *single* target is protected so long as it wears the runes or has them otherwise affixed to it. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Nhet</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Only affects animate objects	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
	Modifier total	+24
	Runecasting difficulty	11

**EXAMPLE:** If this were inscribed on an object by a runesmith with a Fate of 2d+2 and an intent to protect an area, and the runelore skill roll had one extra success, then everyone within 4 meters of the runes would have an inherent 3d+2 armor against direct magical damage (the range of 2 meters is double by the extra success, and the effect of 2d+2 gets +1d for the extra success).

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Control(Nhet-ess):** This Rune creates a small field of shimmering energy that glows with a white light. This Rune can be cast and the resulting energy attached to a staff or pole, resulting in a Runic torch. The light lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12), and in general provides usable light in a radius of the adjusted Fate in distance (e.g. a Fate of 7 would offset all darkness penalties out to a distance level of +7).

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Nhet</i>	+20
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
	Modifier total	+10
	Runecasting difficulty	7

The inscribed version of *Nhet-ess* creates a field of energy that lasts for a much longer time. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Nhet</i>	+20
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+46
	Modifier total	+17
	Runecasting difficulty	9

**Defensive control(Nhet-ex):** The target is wrapped in a cloak of energy that harms all who approach within melee range. This does not provide any protection versus damage and does not distinguish between friend and foe. It simply causes the caster's adjusted Fate in half-lethal damage to anyone who comes too close, and the protection lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Nhet</i>	+20
●	<i>-ex</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
	Modifier total	+20
	Runecasting difficulty	10



If inscribed, the effect is the same as the spoken version of *Nhet-ex*, but the effect lasts for a much longer time. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Nhet</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Manipulation(*Nhet-ett*):** The caster may shape raw energy from a distance. A beam of light may be focused or dispersed, or a tongue of flame may be spread or contained. The caster can shine light into dark corners, or make dark corners darker, make a path through flames, or shape flames to block a path. The energy in moving objects cannot be manipulated, so it will not stop arrows or melee blows. The ability to shape energy lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Nhet</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

If the energy in question causes damage, the maximum energy that can be manipulated is the adjusted Fate of the caster. If a form of energy is tied directly to a significant quantity of matter, only the energy is affected. One could contain the energy in a flaming catapult projectile, but not deflect the projectile itself.

Obviously, this Rune cannot be written directly onto energy in order to manipulate it. It is therefore impossible to use the written version of this Rune.

**Offensive(*Mhet-eq*):** This ranged attack disintegrates matter and affects only inanimate objects. It does lethal damage of the caster's adjusted Fate to the target. This is a good way to get through a door, though it is not very subtle. This spell will not disintegrate matter worn or carried by a person or animal or Rune Stryder that has a pilot who can use their own Will roll to protect it. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Mhet</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
●	Only affects inanimate objects	-10
Modifier total		+3
Runecasting difficulty		3

The inscribed version of *Mhet-eq* disintegrates its way through the inanimate object it is inscribed upon. It acts much like the spoken version, but tends to last only until it has done damage to the object it is inscribed on, thus destroying the inscription as well. However, if the caster is on hand, they can continually touch up the rune, thus allowing for a continued effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Mhet</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
●	Only affects inanimate objects	-10
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Mhet-ej):** The target is granted increased Runic armor against all *physical* attacks of their adjusted Fate minus 1d, and this lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). This rune only affects *living* things. The spoken version of the runcasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Only affects animate objects	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
●	Reduced 1d effect	-10
	Modifier total	+4
	Runcasting difficulty	4

The inscribed version of *Mhet-ej* grants the protection of the spell to a given number of a particular class of targets, for as long as they stay within the range of the spell, or it provides protection to a single target that is inscribed with the runes or has the runes attached to it. A class of targets is defined when the rune is inscribed, so an inscribed *Mhet-ej* might only protect Draslanders in the area of effect. The inscribed version of the runcasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Only affects animate objects	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
●	Reduced 1d effect	-10
	Modifier total	+14
	Runcasting difficulty	8

If inscribed on a Stryder, it counts as a layered armor, meaning that the lower of the rune or the Stryder's armor is halved before adding the two.

**EXAMPLE:** A 2d+2 effect on a Rune Stryder with an mundane Armor of 3d+0 would generate a combined effect of 4d+1.

**Control(Mhet-ess):** The caster can repair inanimate objects by weaving the matter of which they are composed. Each full die of the caster's adjusted Fate restores 1 Hit of direct damage caused to walls, doors, shields, armor, or other inanimate objects. Remember that the size of the object repaired will adjust the "Will" it resists with. This repair is permanent. The spoken version of the runcasting is below:

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Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ess	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Only affects inanimate objects	-10
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	State-based duration	+15
	Modifier total	-12
	Runcasting difficulty	0

The repair is evenly distributed across the object, and any given source of damage can only be affected once. So, if an item lost 2 Hits from each of three separate attacks, a repair that fixed 3 Hits would fix 1 Hit from each attack. The damage that remains cannot be magically repaired.

The inscribed version of *Mhet-ess* works like the spoken version, except it continually works to regenerate damage on the object it is inscribed upon, repairing Hits each turn equal to the full dice in the caster's adjusted Fate (remembering that there is only one repair per source of damage). Note however that an attack which strikes the runes and does any damage to them will end the effect, so the runes are usually inscribed in a protected spot. The inscribed version of the runcasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ess	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
●	Only affects inanimate objects	-10
●	State-based duration	+15
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
	Modifier total	+24
	Runcasting difficulty	11

▼ **Note** - If this rune was inscribed on very large objects like a ship or Rune Stryder, it would be more difficult because of the size of the object. Also, the effect would be reduced to a maximum of the Damage Limit for the vehicle (per turn). A vehicle with a Damage Limit of 0 or less could not be repaired with either the spoken or inscribed *Mhet-ess* without another modifier of some kind tacked on to offset the Damage Limit.

# EABA

**Defensive control(Mhet-ex):** A wall of matter protects the target, who cannot see through this wall, and attackers cannot see the target. As a magical barrier, this blocks runic targeting, and also can be used against someone to confine them, or against a hostile rune to prevent it from being seen. The wall can be partially or completely enclosing, but no part of the wall can exceed the range of the spell. It has an Armor of the adjusted Fate of the caster minus 1d, Hits of its (size level + 8) and default length and height of 2 meters (size level of +0). In order to damage (or see) a protected target, the wall must be breached. In general, assume normal damage that hits the wall does up to 2 Hits to the wall on its way through, while area effects do what is left of their damage after penetrating the wall's Armor. The wall lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12), after which it vanishes into thin air. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
●	2m long wall	+10
●	Reduced 1d effect	-10
●	Acts as a natural phenomenon	+5
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of Mhet-ex works like the spoken version, but it lasts based on the nature of the inscription. The inscription must be *inside* any enclosed area. For instance, a doorway could be blocked from *either* side, but to make a prison cell would require the inscription to be *inside* the cell. The inscriber would also be trapped there upon completion of the rune! The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
●	2m long wall	+10
●	Reduced 1d effect	-10
●	Acts as a natural phenomenon	+5
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13

**EXAMPLE:** A wall cast by a mage with a Fate of 2d+2 who got two successes would have an Armor of 2d+2 (-1d for spell effect, +1d for successes), a Size of +2 and 10 Hits. If struck by a 5d+0 attack, the wall would stop 2d+2, lose 0d+2 more in Hits taken to the wall itself (dropping it to 8 Hits), and leave 1d+2 to go through and possibly hit something on the other side.

**Manipulation(Mhet-ett):** The caster may shape any form of matter from a distance. The caster may shape up to an amount they could lift with a Strength equal to their adjusted Fate (so it would require an adjusted Fate of 8 or 9 to affect most people). The effects of this Rune are permanent, but can be reversed with this rune and possibly others. Shaping a living target causes damage. The target suffers 1 Hit per success, regardless of armor or protection against physical or mundane energies. The ability to usefully shape inanimate objects depends on other skills the caster may possess, like making a statue might require some level of artistic skill, or turning a bar or steel into a sword might require some ability as an armorer. The ability to manipulate matter has a default duration of one second (time level of +0).

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Secondary damage effect	+10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	State-based duration/1 second	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of Mhet-ett works like the spoken version, except the inscribed item can be shaped at will (as a minor action) for the duration of the inscription. As long as the rune is not damaged, shaping can include repairing lost Hits on the inscribed item. However, any shaping that alters the inscription immediately ends the effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Mhet	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Secondary damage effect	+10
●	State-based duration	+15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+54
Runecasting difficulty		17





## Lhei

*Life, Creation, White, Male*  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Lhei-eq):** The target instantly ages by a default of one month (a time level of +42). Hair and nails grow longer in moments. On most people, this effect is disconcerting, but for some, it can be deadly. The sudden onset of aging can cause older targets to experience heart attacks, liver failure or other damaging effects. The gamemaster should determine the exact nature of such an attack, though those affected drastically should be fairly old. This rune provides most of the magical energy to sustain the target during the accelerated aging process, and it can be used as a way to accelerate the natural healing process, forcing a month or more of healing in an instant...at the cost of permanently aging the target.

This Rune can be used on vegetation or animals as well as people. It could be used to raise a forest from a field of saplings, or turn a baby animal into a full-grown (but untrained and behaviorally immature) beast. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Lhei	+20
●	-eq	+40
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Acts as a natural phenomenon	+5
Modifier total		+38
Runecasting difficulty		14

▼ **Note** - The **EABA** modifier of "extraordinary range" is used to represent the aging effect, since this allows the rune to affect the flow or perception of time. It is not an easy spell to use on a resisting target, but it is extraordinarily powerful in the right (or wrong) hands. To prevent abuse of the rune, it is suggested that the effect cannot be duplicated on a target until the actual duration of the aging has transpired (e.g. if you were artificially aged 1 month, further attacks using this rune would fail for the next month).

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The inscribed version of *Lhei-eq* creates a field around the inscribed object with the same effect as the spoken version of the spell. However, a target is only affected by the field once, regardless of how many times they cross the threshold. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Lhei	+20
●	-eq	+40
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
●	Acts as a natural phenomenon	+5
Modifier total		+64
Runecasting difficulty		19

**Defensive(Lhei-ej):** The target is immune to aging of any sort for a default of one month (a time level of +42). Unfortunately for those who would use such an effect to make themselves immortal, it has detrimental side effects if used repeatedly for too long. The target begins to suffer insanity if this Rune is used for more than about two continuous years, and quickly becomes irrevocably mad. At best, use of this rune can safely double normal lifespan, using it once every other month. In most cases, *Lhei-ej* can reverse some or all of the effects of *Lhei-eq* (if done soon enough). This *would* undo any healing granted by the use of *Lhei-eq*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Lhei	+20
●	-ej	+30
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 month	+48
Modifier total		+71
Runecasting difficulty		20

The inscribed version of *Lhei-ej* has the effect of the spell for a number of targets of a particular type that are in the range of the spell. If inscribed directly upon something, it negates aging for the duration of the spell, but as for the spoken version, extended use can cause madness. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Lhei</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 month	+47
Modifier total		+48
Runecasting difficulty		16

▼ **Note** - This is one of the cases where the *Awr* rune can be used to good effect. See the multiple rune words rules on page 3.110.

**Control(*Lhei-ess*):** The caster can use this Rune to heal the wounded, using a more subtle form of accelerated aging that simply speeds natural healing in the injured area. While not quite the same as a purely magical repair, it also has the unique effect that magical injuries with a duration are more rapidly expired, at the same rate of time as *Lhei-eq*. The default success gives the benefits of up to a month of normal, natural healing, using the current condition of the patient in terms of rest and surroundings. You could use this to stop a bleeding injury or other draining condition, as only the injured tissue itself is accelerated in time. It could also quickly restore a properly set broken bone. If the injury healed would normally leave a scar or deficit, this magical effect would leave the same.

This Rune can be used on any living thing, so blighted trees or wounded animals can also be restored (provided they could naturally recover from their injury or blight). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Lhei</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Acts as a natural effect	-5
Modifier total		+3
Runecasting difficulty		3

The inscribed version of *Lhei-ess* focuses its energy more specifically. It can affect a given number of a class of targets, healing them upon entering the range of the spell, healing any given injury no more than once. It can be inscribed on the dead as well. Count all Hits on a dead person as lethal Hits and count them as having a Health roll of 1d+0. If enough successes are achieved to bring the target back to 1 undamaged Hit, the target returns to life. Every day that the target has been dead reduces the number of successes by one, so a target that has been dead four days will need five successes at a minimum to be revived.

In addition, the duration of the spell needs to be very long, since the inscription itself is subject to temporal acceleration. Tattooing is the only means known at the moment to inscribe the runes needed for resurrection. After being revived, a target will sleep for one full day and need rest for a full week regardless of any other magical healing done. No knowledge of anything that might have transpired beyond life is remembered, though cryptic visions and nightmares are a common side effect of resurrection. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Lhei</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 year	+55
●	Only on souled targets	-5
Modifier total		+41
Runecasting difficulty		15

▼ **Note** - Since you are drawing the soul back from wherever it goes and the afterlife does not give up its tenants easily, the spell is resisted as though the target were alive and *fully* resisting it. There is said to be variant of this runeword that can restore someone else's soul to a body, or even an animal's soul. Use of either of these effects would be anathema in all of Rhun's cultures, so its actual existence is hard to confirm.

**Defensive control(Lhei-ex):** The target is wrapped in an invisible field of negative life force. Anyone touched by the target or approaching within melee range is affected as per the spoken version of *Lhei-eq* and this field lasts for a default of one second (time level of +0). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Lhei</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 second	+6
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Lhei-ex* acts like the spoken version, but has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Lhei</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

**Manipulation(Lhei-ett):** The caster may manipulate new life. Newborn creatures and sapling plants may be manipulated at a basic level. The caster may not open vast bleeding holes or split plants in two, but he may direct the growth of the target. Blonde babies can be made brunettes, or the caster can make them more or less attractive or intelligent. Trees may be directed to grow tall or short, thick or wide, and the caster can dictate the shape of their leaves. They may change one element of a target with a single casting of this Rune, and the effects of this Rune are permanent. In case of catastrophic failures, the target will almost certainly be permanently damaged or destroyed. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

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Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Lhei</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
■	Alters form of item	+15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Only on young living things	-15
●	Only rearranges Attributes/Traits	-10
■	Lifetime change	+40
Modifier total		+33
Runecasting difficulty		13

In game terms, each success in the casting can alter the default adult level of an Attribute by 1 point, by altering a different characteristic by an equal amount. So, instead of someone growing up to have an average Strength and Awareness of 6, one success could have them grow into a Strength of 7, at the cost of perhaps an Awareness of 5. Each two successes can simply adjust an Attribute up or down by 1 with no penalty. Penalties or adjustments can be taken in non-Attribute form, like Traits worth the same amount of points. This is an extremely powerful rune effect, so the gamemaster is free to add limits on its use as needed to maintain game balance.

The inscribed version of *Lhei-ett* acts like the spoken version. It is inscribed on the target of the effect, and allows continual adjustment at a fine level. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on hard wood* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Lhei</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
◆	Alters form of item	+15
●	Only on young living things	-15
●	Only rearranges Attributes/Traits	-10
■	Lifetime change/1 week	+42
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 90 minutes to cast	-25
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7



## Dhei *Death, Destruction, Black, Female* (+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Dhei-eq):** The caster destroys life.

The living tissue of the target decomposes as if they were dead. The spell bypasses the first material barrier it encounters, and the damage done is counted as critical damage (takes four times as long or four times as much effort to heal). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Only on living targets	-10
■	Counts as critical damage	+10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
Modifier total		+43
Runecasting difficulty		15

Some versions of the runecasting are known to lack the ability to bypass a material barrier. These generally require the caster of the runes to touch an unprotected part of the target, but the runes only have a base difficulty of 11 to cast.

The inscribed version of *Dhei-eq* acts like the spoken version, but affects anyone who enters the range of the spell, but it only affects a given target once. If inscribed directly on its intended target, it has +2d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Only on living targets	-10
■	Counts as critical damage	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+69
Runecasting difficulty		19

Most inscribed versions of *Dhei-eq* are on materials of greater ease to draw or inscribe, with correspondingly shorter durations and much more accessible difficulty numbers.

**Defensive(Dhei-ej):** The target gains a limited ability to deny death's grip. Success grants the target a bonus to their Health of the caster's Fate for the purposes of resisting illness or disease, up to double their normal Health. The rune effect adds to Will to resist the effects of *Dhei-eq*. The effect lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Only on living targets	-10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+32
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Dhei-ej* acts as the spoken version, but affects up to the effective Fate of the caster in targets that are within range of the spell, and the bonus lasts as long as they stay within the spell's range. If inscribed on its intended target, it only affects the target. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Only on living targets	-10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Control(Dhei-ess):** A *formerly-living* target dries out. Cut flowers wilt and wither, wood cracks and splits, hides crumble. This spell does lethal damage of the caster's adjusted Fate to the item, which gets its normal Armor against the attack. Items held or worn close to a living creature are immune to the effects of the rune, so it would not affect leather armor a target was wearing, but it *could* crumble much of a wooden shield the target was holding. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Only on formerly living targets	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
Modifier total		-12
Runecasting difficulty		0



The inscribed version of *Dhei-ess* acts like the spoken version, but affects only the item it is inscribed on, and has +1d effect. The effect lasts until the rune expires or the inscribed item is destroyed. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *hard wood* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Only on formerly living targets	-15
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+24
Runecasting difficulty		11

**Defensive control(*Dhei-ex*):** The target is wrapped in an invisible field of death. Anyone approaching within melee range is affected as per the spoken version of *Dhei-eq*. The field lasts for a default of one second (time level of +0). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Only on living targets	-10
■	Counts as critical damage	+10
●	Melee range	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 second	+6
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Dhei-ex* acts like the spoken version, but has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Only on living targets	-10
■	Counts as critical damage	+10
●	Melee range	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

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**Manipulation(*Dhei-ett*):** The caster may shape newly dead creatures or animals. The target must have died within one hour of when this Rune is cast. The target may be altered to be more attractive or ugly in death, wounds may be opened or closed, or the caster may disguise the cause of death. One alteration may be made per casting of this Rune, and the effects are permanent (but the spell does not prevent decay). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Only on recently dead targets	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
■	Lasts 2 weeks	+46
Modifier total		39
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Dhei-ett* acts like the spoken version, but allows continual adjustment of the target for the duration of the runes. Note that if the rune is being used to deceive regarding the cause of death, then the runes themselves need to be hidden somehow. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dhei</i>	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Only on recently dead targets	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
■	Lasts 1 year	+55
Modifier total		+26
Runecasting difficulty		11

## 3 Shrai

**Time**  
(+10 modifier)

**Offensive(Shrai-eq):** The target perceives time as passing much slower for them than for others. The effect is to make the target much slower in relation to those around them. All uses of Agility, Awareness (for general thought processes) and Health (for movement) are each reduced by 0d+1 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. In practical terms, each 1d lost alters the apparent flow of time by a factor of 2. The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The Rune obviously has little effect on stationary, inanimate objects, which cannot perceive and respond to the passage of time, but the rune could conceivably be used to slow a moving object. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-eq	+40
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on animate targets	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Shrai-eq* acts like the spoken version, but affects a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes, but each target is only affected once. If inscribed on the intended target, it only affects that target, but the effect lasts for the duration of the inscription. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-eq	+40
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on animate targets	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+44
Runecasting difficulty		15

**Defensive(Shrai-ej):** The target perceives time as passing much faster for them than for others. At high levels of effect, the rest of the world seems to be moving in slow motion. All uses of Agility, Awareness (for general thought processes) and Health (for movement) are increased by 0d+1 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The Rune obviously has little effect on stationary, inanimate objects, which cannot perceive or respond to the passage of time. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-ej	+30
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on animate targets	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Shrai-ej* acts like the spoken version, but affects a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes, but each target is only affected once. If inscribed on the intended target, it only affects that target, but the effect lasts for the duration of the inscription. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-ej	+30
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on animate targets	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+45
Modifier total		+28
Runecasting difficulty		12

▼ **Note** - While the inscribed version of *Shrai-ej* can be very powerful as a long-term effect, the target is also aging at the same accelerated rate, and technically speaking, requires proportionately more air, food and water because of their altered flow of time.

**Control(Shrai-ess):** The target is able to compress their actions into smaller amounts of time, covering ground faster and gaining more time to commit to their efforts. They may gain bonuses to some actions, though this Rune may not be applied to combat-related tasks. For instance, one might appear to move faster, but this conveys no extra ability to bash opponents. The effect of the rune is to add the caster's adjusted Fate to the target's Health for movement purposes, with a maximum effect of double the target's normal Health. The effects are more subtle than the other spoken versions, but last longer. The effect lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The Rune obviously has little effect on inanimate objects. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-ess	+20
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on living things	-10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+32
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Shrai-ess* acts like the spoken version, but affects a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes, but each target is only affected once. If inscribed on the intended target, it only affects that target, but the effect lasts for the duration of the inscription. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-ess	+20
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on living things	-10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Defensive control(Shrai-ex):** The target is wrapped in a field of time distortion. Anyone who is within melee range of the target has Agility and Awareness (thought processes) and Health (for movement) reduced by 0d+1 per full die of the caster's adjusted Fate. The effects apply only to those within melee range - ranged attacks are not affected. The protection lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). Unlike the other spoken versions of this Rune, this Runeword can be cast on an inanimate object, as it effects those physically interacting with the target, and not the target itself. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-ex	+30
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on animate targets	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Shrai-ex* acts like the spoken version, but only affects the inscribed target. The effect lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shrai	+10
●	-ex	+30
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Only on animate targets	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Manipulation(*Shrai-ett*):** Shaping time itself is a tricky task. The runecaster does not specify a target when casting this Rune. Rather, they may alter time itself by either slowing or speeding the passage of time around themselves. The caster may not reverse time, but they may cause time to speed up or slow down considerably. The area of effect is tied to the caster, so anyone or anything leaving the area is instantly subject to the normal rules of time. The amount by which time may be manipulated is a ratio based on the adjusted Fate of the caster - 1d allows time to be either doubled or halved, with each additional full die adding one to the ratio. In other words, an adjusted Fate of 3d would allow the caster to reduce the passage of time to one-eighth its normal speed or speed time to eight times normal speed. Unfortunately, the alteration of the flow of time makes it more difficult to effectively interact with the outside world. Anything that the caster does that affects something outside the area of the rune is reduced by the caster's adjusted Fate, and vice versa.

**EXAMPLE:** If the target of this rune has an adjusted Fate of 2d+0, then they have altered the flow of time by a factor of four, and get four actions in the same time that everyone else gets one. If they nock and fire an arrow, it leaves their bow at full speed within the area of the spell, but once it leaves the area, it is distorted into "normal" time. It loses 2d+0 of damage (the caster's adjusted Fate), and possibly just drops to the ground a few meters from the caster.

This effect applies to any magic that is cast within the area and targets something outside it.

The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12) per success, and the duration is measured *outside* the affected area (so if you have altered the flow of time four-fold, the rune lasts only fifteen seconds as far as the outside world is concerned).

In game terms, the caster gets no inherent bonuses on their skills or Attributes. They simply get more actions in the same amount of time. Because of the way the caster interacts with the rest of the world, it makes a great "getaway" rune, but is not that great in combat.

There are many possibilities with this Rune. A caster waiting for a specific event may wish to speed up time for themselves, thus keeping them from cramping or growing tired while waiting. A caster wishing to fire arrows at a group outside the area may wish to slow time, giving them additional turns to aim. Note that it is difficult to use this for melee purposes, as closing with an individual will bring them into your temporal frame of reference (you and they act at the same speed). It can however, adjust the speed with which you fight someone to a level that makes outside interference difficult (they might see you and your opponent fight several rounds before they can do a single thing about it).

This is a tricky spell to interpret, but remember that those within the area are for all purposes moving faster or slower than outside observers, so any combat modifiers based on apparent speed or motion will be adjusted. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Shrai</i>	+10
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Usable on self only	-5
●	Melee range only	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Shrai-ett* is not possible. As time is such a nebulous concept, and not one upon which a Rune may be written, it is impossible to cast this Rune by writing it.



▼ **ELEMENTAL RUNES** - These six Runes represent the core elements of Rhun's universe - Sky, Stone, Flame, Water, Wood, and Shadow. As is typical with Runes, they also represent various colors, numbers and directions, and are commonly used with other Runes to create additional effects (see **Advanced Rune Usage**). The elemental forces they control and manipulate are not magical in any way; they are ordinary manifestations of that particular element, and will thus react with the world in ordinary ways (water soaks things, fire burns things), and will remain even after a particular Rune has burned out. The cost for each elemental rune is assumed to include the "acts as a natural effect" modifier.



## Ain

**Sky, Above, Up, Light Blue, 6**  
(+15 modifier)

**Offensive(Ain-eq):** The caster summons a powerful wind that frenzies the air around a target, slamming it forcefully against them. This is both a non-lethal attack of the adjusted Fate of the caster and a temporary subtraction to Strength of the adjusted Fate of the caster. If the target's Strength is reduced to zero or less, they are bowled over by the attack, regardless of whether it does any damage to them. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-eq	+40
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		38
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Ain-eq* acts like the spoken version, but affects a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes. If inscribed on the target, the effect only applies to that target and is increased by +1d.

The nature of the winds may be generally specified by the caster (left to right, swirling, in to out, etc.). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-eq	+40
■	Affects Attributes	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Ain-ej):** The caster surrounds the target in stilled air, increasing its armor and Strength against any incoming damage caused by strong winds. This can be applied to an inanimate object, making sails droop even in a strong wind or keeping a single piece of parchment from blowing away. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Ain-ej* acts like the spoken version, but affects a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster within range of the runes. If inscribed on the target, the effect only applies to that target and is increased by +1d. The effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

# EABA

**Control(Ain-ess):** The caster creates a breeze that they can control. This can be used to clear a room of noxious fumes or fill a sail. The breeze lasts for a default duration of one minute (time level of +12) and is not strong enough to do any sort of damage. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+5
Runecasting difficulty		4

The inscribed version of *Ain-ess* summons a breeze atop the item on which the Rune is carved. The item may fly away, depending on the strength of the casting. The effective lifting Strength of the wind is the caster's adjusted Fate, and any leftover amount becomes a movement level. The caster is frequently the target of this Rune, allowing them to fly. The inscription has a default duration of ten minutes (time level of +19). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-ess	+20
■	Acts as an Attribute	+30
■	Conveys movement	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 10 minutes	+24
Modifier total		+47
Runecasting difficulty		16

**Defensive control(Ain-ex):** The target is surrounded by a funnel of wind. Melee attacks against the target are made at a +2 difficulty per full 1d of the caster's adjusted Fate, and ranged attacks are made at a +2 difficulty per full 1d of the caster's adjusted Fate. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Ain-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but the inscribed item is protected for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the rune-casting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

**Manipulation(Ain-ett):** The caster may shape wind and direct it. A wind must be present in order for this Rune to work, but it need not be much more than a gentle breeze. The caster may determine the direction of the wind and increase or decrease its strength by up to their Fate in effect. A ship at sea may be stalled when the wind in its sails reverses direction, or a brisk sirocco whipping through an alleyway may be slowed to a breeze. The wind may not cause damage directly, though targets may suffer from the wind indirectly (for example, if the wind blows a sign over on top of a person). The gamemaster should exercise discretion in allowing casters to use this Rune - a slow breeze may not be turned into a typhoon, and a monsoon gale may not be reduced to a harmless breeze. The caster may shape the wind for a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ain	+15
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

As it is impossible to write on the wind, this Rune may not be cast by inscribing it.



Ott

Earth, Stone, Below, Down,  
Dark, Brown, 10(+15 modifier)

**Offensive(Ott-eq):** The target is turned to stone, though it takes much power to make such a transformation complete. To completely petrify a target requires the caster's adjusted Fate be at least 4d+0. Extra successes do count towards this (each success is +1d effect). Note that this is not a damaging rune, and mundane armor affords no protection. If the target is not completely petrified, their Agility is reduced by 0d+2 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, and this effect wears off at the rate of 0d+1 per time level. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ott	+15
●	-eq	+40
■	Alters form of item	+15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 second	+6
Modifier total		29
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Ott-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, when they enter the range of the inscribed rune. If inscribed on the target, it only affects that target, and at +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ott	+15
●	-eq	+40
■	Alters form of item	+15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

▼ **Note** - It is up to the gamemaster as to how "dead" petrification is for their own particular campaign. It might be like suspended animation, a way to preserve the dying, it might be just plain dead, or it might be something that can be reversed, but only if done so within a certain amount of time. Someone who is *completely* petrified by this spell is genuinely turned into stone and does *not* slowly revert back on their own. The exact details are left to the gamemaster.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Defensive(Ott-ej):** A caster may use this Rune to reverse the effects of petrification, with the caster's adjusted Fate negating the Agility penalty. If this is sufficient to raise the victim's Agility to above zero, they will eventually fully recover (if the petrification had not actually killed them). However, this Rune is more often used as armor against metal or stone weapons. The target gets an Armor of the caster's adjusted Fate against metal or stone (this would count as layered armor if in addition to other protection). The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ott	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Ott-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, but the protection or effect extends to a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscribed runes. If the inscribed item is the target, the effect is only on the target and is at +1d effect. The protection lasts for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ott	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

▼ **Note** - Again, it is a gamemaster call as to the nature of the transformation or reversal. This rune alters the structure of the target, not so much providing armor as it is making the attacking weapon ineffective by transforming it. Since the weapon was originally metal or stone, the effect is not as pronounced as it would be if the weapon had originally been something else, but it is easy to imagine this spell causing deformation or damage to metal or stone weapons. This rune can turn something that has been magically or naturally petrified back to its original state, though whether it restores life is another matter entirely...

**Control(Off-ess):** The caster summons loose stone and earth, allowing them to instantly build a rough wall. The wall thus summoned has a length sufficient to surround a diameter of the caster's adjusted Fate in Size levels. These dimensions can be manipulated - a wall created this spell can be any shape, so long as it involves about the right amount of material. A wall or mound created with this spell is permanent, though not particularly sturdy. The shaped earth may assume an unstable shape or be used to lift things with a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate, but unstable shapes will instantly crumble the turn after they are created. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Off	+15
●	-ess	+20
■	Fills an area, boundary effect	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant/state-based	+17
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Off-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but the effect is at +2d effect, and the rune is immediately obliterated by the shaping of the surface it is inscribed on. Note that this can be inscribed on two pieces of stone which can then be joined to generate the effect envisioned at the time of the inscription (like an instant rampart or ramp of earth). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft stone* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Off	+15
●	-ess	+20
■	Fills an area, boundary effect	+30
●	Increased 2d effect	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts an instant/state-based	+20
Modifier total		+38
Runecasting difficulty		14

**Defensive control(Off-ex):** The target is covered with magical armor made from stone and dirt. The spell adds the caster's adjusted Fate as armor (counts as layered armor) and lasts for a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The armor is created by magic, but the material from which it is made is not magical, and this armor is therefore not proof against magical attacks (it provides armor against magically created damage like fire, but does not count as a magical barrier). If the target is soaked with water before the effect expires, the armor loses half its bonus, rounded down (the dirt softens or washes off). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Off	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Vulnerable to water	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Off-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24) and is at +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Off	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Vulnerable to water	-5
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

With a minor adjustment to the rune, this rune can also expel all dirt from an object, instantly cleaning it of dirt and mud.



**Manipulation(Ott-ett):** The caster may shape earth or stone as they sees fit, like *Ott-ej*, but on a continual basis, which allows them to maintain unstable shapes for the duration of the spell. The spell lasts for a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The effects are permanent, but are still vulnerable to erosion or other forms of damage. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ott</i>	+15
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
■	Fills an area, boundary effect	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute/state-based	+17
Modifier total		45
Runecasting difficulty		15

The inscribed version of *Ott-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The runes are not inherently damaged by the manipulation unless the caster desires it. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft stone* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ott</i>	+15
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
■	Fills an area, boundary effect	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour/state-based	+31
Modifier total		+39
Runecasting difficulty		14

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



**Ull**  
*Flame, Heat, Light, Orange, Many but separate* (+15 modifier)

**Offensive(Ull-eq):** The caster hurls a burst of flame, scorching their target. This is a lethal attack with damage of the caster's adjusted Fate. If flammable, the target will be on fire after the attack. In this case, the damage makes an attack at a cumulative -1d effect each time level. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ull</i>	+15
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+8
Runecasting difficulty		6

The inscribed version of *Ull-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, on up to a number of targets equal to the adjusted Fate of the caster, whenever they enter the range of the inscribed runes. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ull</i>	+15
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour/instant	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

*Ull-eq* is a powerful and simple combination, and would likely be in the arsenal of any combat-oriented runecaster. It is also one of the main reasons why *Ull-eq* runecasters do not often get taken prisoner if they are on the losing side of a battle...

Remember that the range of nasty runes like this is limited by the number of successes. Against a target with a Will of 2d+1, a passable 4d+2 runelore roll is only going to get 2 successes on average, for a range of only 4 meters. In a battle, such a runecaster has to be right behind the front lines in battle to be of any use, and is vulnerable to attacks every time they become defenseless to concentrate on casting the runes.

# EABA

**Defensive(Ull-ej):** The target is resistant to flame. The spell grants the target armor equal to the caster's adjusted Fate against any incoming damage caused by fire or heat, which layers with any existing armor. The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ull	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+13
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Ull-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, on up to a number of targets equal to the adjusted Fate of the caster, whenever they are within the range of the inscribed runes. If inscribed on the target, it affects only the target and has +1d effect. The spell lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ull	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Control(Ull-ess):** The caster summons a flame, though the fire is seldom large enough to cause significant damage on its own (it only does 1 point of damage per full die of Fate in the effect). The caster could light a torch or campfire, or simply warm their hands. Once created, the fire is bound by the natural laws of physics. If it does not have fuel, the flame will vanish in moments, but the spell is so simple that even novice casters can usually maintain the flickering flame for several seconds, or project it out to enough range to give a distant person a hotfoot. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ull	+15
●	-ess	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 second	+6
Modifier total		-16
Runecasting difficulty		0

The inscribed version of *Ull-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but the created flame can be maintained, even without a fuel source. If inscribed upon a weapon, the weapon gets a separate attack of the rune's effect, which applies after armor.

**EXAMPLE:** If a blade had a 1d+1 *Ull-ess* effect on it and the blade failed to penetrate armor by 1d, the flame would do its 1d+1 through the remaining armor and end up doing 1 Hit to the target. If the blade *had* completely penetrated armor, the flame would do 1d+1 extra damage as a *separate* lethal attack.

If inscribed upon the target of the spell with an intent to do damage, the target will take a cumulative attack of the rune's effect each time level, which resets back to minimum damage each time the item loses a Hit. It can eventually burn through about anything, but will disrupt itself once the item has taken sufficient damage to disrupt the runes, which depends on the item.

If an inscribed item is left in a wound, it does 1 Hit each time level. Any inscribed version of *Ull-ess* can be done in such a way as to exactly control the nature of the burning. For instance, a line could be drawn on an item, and only the line would be burned, cutting a plug out of the item instead of burning a hole in it. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ull	+15
●	-ess	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+4
Runecasting difficulty		4

**EXAMPLE:** If the rune had an effect of 0d+1, and it was inscribed on a door with an Armor of 2d+1 and 4 Hits, the door would take 1 Hit each 8 time levels (or about 16 seconds).

**Defensive control(Ull-ex):** The target is sheathed in a ring of fire that damages all those who come within melee range. The flame does the caster's adjusted Fate in lethal damage and sets flammable items alight. This will do the original damage with a cumulative -1d penalty per time level that has elapsed. The spell has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ull	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of Ull-ex acts the same as the spoken version, but has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ull	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Manipulation(Ull-ett):** The caster manipulates the shape, size and color of a flame or fire, allowing it to be used as an attack or for other purposes. The fire will not cause more damage than if it was not altered, and it will not gain the ability to burn without fuel. However, the caster can cause a common campfire to turn into an brilliant green demon that flies into the air and explodes dramatically, or other less fantastic effects. The caster may affect fire up to the range of the spell. The size of fire they may alter depends on their adjusted Fate. A Fate of 0d+1 would allow a caster to shape a candle flame, 1d+0 would allow them to shape a campfire, while 5d+0 would allow them to easily change the shape of a fire consuming a large house. A Fate lower than that needed to shape a fire simply allows shaping of a smaller portion of the fire, like manipulating a candle flame's worth of a campfire. The default duration of the shaping is one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

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Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ull	+15
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

Even if the caster were able to shape this Rune in flame, the transient nature of flame would obliterate the Rune before the caster could affect it. It is therefore impossible to use this Rune by writing it.



**Un Ocean, Water, Cold, Dark Blue, Many as one (+15 modifier)**

**Offensive(Un-eq):** The caster hurls streams of high-pressure water at the target. This is a non-lethal attack with a damage of the caster's adjusted Fate plus 2d, and will have the normal effects of that quantity of water. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Un	+15
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

The inscribed version of Un-eq acts the same as the spoken version, against a number of targets up to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed upon the intended target, it affects only that target, at +1d to the normal effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Un	+15
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		-12
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive(Un-ej):** A shield against moisture surrounds the target. Rain or water will evaporate or be deflected before it touches the target, and the target gains the caster's adjusted Fate in armor against any form of water-based attack. The target of the runes can breathe under water for as long as the protection is in place, with a maximum usable Health of their adjusted Fate (or their own Health, whichever is lower). The spell has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Un	+15
●	-ej	+30
■	Acts as an Attribute(Health)	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+12
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Un-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, against a number of targets up to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed upon the intended target, it affects only that target, at +1d to the normal effect and a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Un	+15
●	-ej	+30
■	Acts as an Attribute(Health)	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour	+24
Modifier total		+32
Runecasting difficulty		13

**Control(Un-ess):** The caster summons a small amount of clean, pure water. An adjusted Fate of 2d is sufficient to provide a person with enough water to survive a single day, and double this amount for each additional 1d of adjusted Fate. If this water is not summoned into a water-tight container, it will fall on the ground. The created water is normal water, has no magical properties and does not disappear when the spell ends. Remember that this rune has no real "target" and thus is not resisted. Just use the runelore roll vs. the difficulty of the runes. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Un	+15
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
■	Creates mundane item	+50
Modifier total		+38
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Un-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but is at +1d effect if successful. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Un	+15
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
■	Creates mundane item	+50
Modifier total		+28
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive control(Un-ex):** The target is surrounded by a swirling column of water. Melee attacks against the target are made at a +1 difficulty per full 1d of the caster's adjusted Fate, and ranged attacks are made at a +2 difficulty per full 1d of the caster's adjusted Fate. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Un	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+12
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Un-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but the inscribed item is protected for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:



Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Un</i>	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Manipulation(*Un-ett*):** The caster may shape water or water-containing liquids. The caster may make a hole in a wave, create a temporary sculpture from a pail of beer, or send a stream of whiskey into a fire. They may affect water up to the maximum range of the spell, and shape water up to a Strength of their adjusted Fate. They may not make the water disappear, aside from moving it to a different location. For example, the caster could send the contents of a keg into a bonfire, effectively eliminating it, but he cannot simply empty the keg into thin air. The spell does not do any damage, but can have incidental effects like soaking things or dousing fires, or the side effects of moving water that is in a solid container (like a keg of beer). The spell has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Un</i>	+15
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Un-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but the inscribed item must be a solid that is mostly ice, and the target is usually shattered by any manipulation other than moving it as a solid chunk. The inscribed item can be manipulated for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on ice* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Un</i>	+15
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

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## Aan

Wood, Plants, Trees, Green, 3  
(+15 modifier)

**Offensive(*Aan-eq*):** The caster targets a living thing, which begins to take on the aspects of wood. Thorns poke through flesh, skin becomes rough and twisted, and roots grow out of the target's feet and sink into the ground. The adjusted Fate of the caster is a penalty to the target's Health (for movement) and Agility (for skill use), which wears off at the rate of 1 point of penalty per time level. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Aan</i>	+15
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Aan-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, on up to a number of targets equal to the adjusted Fate of the caster, whenever they are within the range of the inscribed runes. If inscribed on the target, it affects only the target and has +1d effect. The spell lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Aan</i>	+15
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Defensive(Aan-ej):** The target is protected from wood and plants, allowing them to pass through thorny foliage without harm (wood can resist their passage, they just take no damage from foliage or side effects like poisonous sap). Furthermore, the target gains an armor of their adjusted Fate versus wood weapons, which acts as a layered armor. Note that this only protects against wood or plants. Weapons with a wood handle but a steel head will still cause normal damage. Iron-bound staves and similar hybrids are protected against to half the caster's adjusted Fate. This protection lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Aan	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of Aan-ej acts the same as the spoken version, on up to a number of targets equal to the adjusted Fate of the caster, whenever they are within the range of the inscribed runes. If inscribed on the target, it affects only the target and has +1d effect. The spell lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Aan	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Control(Aan-ess):** The caster gains some very slight control over a targeted plant. A tree can be compelled to bend slightly to offer shade or drop its fruit, or a vine could loop downward to be used as rope. The plants will not move fast enough to harm anyone who could avoid them, and will only act as guided by the caster. The spell lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). Remember that the large plants will be harder to target. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Aan	+15
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+5
Runecasting difficulty		4

The inscribed version of Aan-ess acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. The spell lasts for the duration of the rune. The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Aan	+15
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+14
Runecasting difficulty		8

**Defensive control(Aan-ex):** The target is covered by a suit of created wooden armor. The armor is created by magic, but the material from which it is made is not magical, and this armor is therefore not proof against magical attacks. The target's Armor is increased by the adjusted Fate of the caster. If the armor is penetrated by a fire-based attack before the effect expires, the armor loses half its effect, rounded down. The spell lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Aan	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Aan-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Aan</i>	+15
●	<i>-ex</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

**Manipulation(*Aan-ett*):** The caster may shape any wood, alive or dead. They may burrow through wooden doors, weaken wooden beams, or force plants into improbable configurations. If this Rune is used against a manned Stryder, the pilot may resist the effects as if he were the target. The caster may affect wood up to the range of the spell, and he may shape wood up to a mass they could lift with a Strength of their adjusted Fate, or penetrate barriers with an Armor + Hits of equal or less than their adjusted Fate. The spell lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Aan</i>	+15
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Aan-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The effect ends if the inscribed item is altered in a way that alters the inscription itself. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft wood* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Aan</i>	+15
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 minutes to cast	-22
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

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**Khet**

**Shadow, Darkness**  
(+15 modifier)

**Offensive(*Khet-eq*):** The target is enveloped in darkness. The target's sight Awareness is reduced by the caster's effective Fate. This penalty can be offset by equal amounts of natural or magical light. For instance, casting this outside on a sunny day might be at -1d effect, while if done at dusk or in poorly lit indoor conditions it might get a +1d bonus. The spell has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Khet-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. If inscribed on a single target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Defensive(*Khet-ej*):** The target may dispel any darkness around them, as if they had a light by which only they can see by. Difficulty modifiers for darkness are reduced by the adjusted Fate of the caster. Obviously, if the lighting is only poor enough to provide a +1 Difficulty, high levels in the spell are unnecessary and Fate should be shifted to simply provide extra successes. The absence of darkness is not visible to anyone else, does not provide any bonuses for the target's foes, and does not actually eliminate shadows or darkness. The spell has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Khet-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. If inscribed on a single target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

**Control(*Khet-ess*):** The caster may summon shadows to help them hide, or to hide objects within the darkness. This effect is best used where shadows already exist, as a person hidden in a shadow is somewhat conspicuous in an open field on a sunny day. The depth of the shadows depends on the adjusted Fate of the caster, with each full die of adjusted Fate being a +2 bonus to stealth and hiding-related skills. The shadows last for a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+5
Runecasting difficulty		4

The inscribed version of *Khet-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. The entire area of the effect is blanketed in shadows to a visibly unnatural extent. If inscribed on a single target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-8
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(*Khet-ex*):** The target is wrapped in a cloak of shadow, which shuns light for a small area around them. They can see normally, as can all within melee range of them. But, ranged attacks against the target receive a +2 Difficulty penalty per full die of the caster's adjusted Fate, as the target is difficult to discern. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Khet-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. The entire area of effect is blanketed in visibly unnatural shadows. If inscribed on a single target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Khet</i>	+15
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2



**Manipulation(Khet-ett):** The caster may shape target shadows to alter their appearance. Shadows may be shaped to resemble objects other than those casting them, or they may simply be larger or smaller than possible given lighting conditions. A caster could even alter a shadow to be smaller than a coin, reducing the chance of a person being spotted by their shadow. The caster may shape an area of shadows up to a Size of their adjusted Fate, and changes last for the duration of the spell. However, if the shadow disappears or reforms drastically, as it might if exposed to a powerful light source, the effect is dispelled. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Khet	+15
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+5
Runecasting difficulty		4

The inscribed version of *Khet-ett* is only possible by using the spoken version to write the runes out of shadow itself, so it is fairly impractical to do so. The effect lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24), but dissipates if the shadow is shaped in such a way as to alter the runes. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a sketch is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Khet	+15
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

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▼ **SENSORY RUNES** - These eight runes relate to the senses that living things use to perceive the world around them. They produce effects that can deceive and challenge the limits of those senses, and used in combination with other Runes can be used to create stunning and often unpredictable effects (see **Advanced Rune Usage**). The potential for such Runes to be used for devious purposes (or to uncover the same), particularly in urban settings, has led to their use being banned or restricted in many cities, especially during legal proceedings, trade negotiations and political gatherings.



**Zhei**

**Sight, Vision, Visibility**  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Zhei-eq):** The caster floods the target's sight with a burst of visual stimulation. The target sees a barrage of images and extraordinarily bright lights, which are a subtraction on sight Awareness of the caster's adjusted Fate. This wears off at the rate of one point per time level after the attack. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+13
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Zhei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. If inscribed on a single target, the effect is only on that target, has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12) and wears off at the rate of one point per time level after it expires. The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		-12
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive(Zhei-ej):** The target automatically compensates for glaring lights, and cannot be blinded by bright lights. The adjusted Fate of the caster offsets any subtractions to sight Awareness caused by other magic. The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Zhei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. If inscribed on a single target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Control(Zhei-ess):** The target is able to ignore penalties caused by poor visibility. Sandstorms or pitch darkness, blazing light or swirling smoke, the target can see through it. The spell offsets 2 points of difficulty on sight Awareness for each full adjusted die of the caster's Fate. The effect lasts for a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Zhei-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. If inscribed on a single target, the effect is only on that target, has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ess	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Defensive control(Zhei-ex):** The target is able to see in every direction, and cannot be surprised for the duration of the Rune. They take no sequencing or skill penalties for being attacked from outside their normal vision arc. The effect lasts for a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Zhei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but against a number of targets up to the adjusted Fate of the caster, within range of the inscription. If inscribed on a single target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Manipulation(Zhei-ett):** The caster may alter the target's vision. Each success allows the target to increase or decrease the target's sight Awareness by their adjusted Fate. If this is reduced to zero or less in this manner, the target is effectively blind. The maximum *increase* would be to double their natural sight Awareness roll. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Zhei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zhei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

▼ **Note** - Remember that effects which *cancel penalties* and those which *affect Attributes* do not counter each other. A person who has a sight Awareness of zero doesn't care that difficulty for range has been negated, and a person in total darkness can't see, no matter how high their sight Awareness is. The first person needs a non-zero sight Awareness to see at all, and the second person needs the darkness penalties to be offset, and these are two *different* spell effects.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



**Zeirun**

**Hearing, Sound, Noise, Thunder** (+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Zei-eq):** The caster overwhelms the target with a blast of noise. The target is deafened, losing the caster's adjusted Fate from their hearing Awareness for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The blast also does non-lethal damage of the caster's adjusted Fate. The damage is reduced by normal armor and other protections, but the deafening effect is only mitigated by magic or earplugs. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zei	+20
●	-eq	+40
■	Special effect	+10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Zei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zei	+20
●	-eq	+40
■	Special effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Zei-ej):** The target cannot be deafened by loud noises, and is able to ignore any penalties caused by loud explosions, screaming crowds, or other sounds. The rune offsets new penalties to hearing by the adjusted Fate of the caster. It does not negate the effects of any prior deafening. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zeī	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Zeī-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zeī	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Control(Zeī-ess):** The target gains excellent clarity of hearing. The target gains the caster's adjusted Fate as a bonus to hearing Awareness, up to double the target's natural hearing Awareness roll. Loud noises may still overwhelm the target, but they are not amplified, simply sorted out. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zeī	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Zeī-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zeī	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-3
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(Zeī-ex):** The target is able to hear and pinpoint movement all around them, negating any sequencing or skill penalties for things happening outside their vision arc. This also allows the target to fight in melee or aim ranged attacks in total darkness, out to the range of the spell, as though they could see with an Awareness of the caster's Fate. Called shots may be difficult unless the item aimed at is making noise. You could sense where a person was well enough to aim at a particular body part, but you could not aim at a rune on their armor. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zeī	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Zeī-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zeī	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5



**Manipulation(Zei-ett):** The caster may alter the target's hearing. The adjusted Fate of the caster can increase or decrease the target's hearing Awareness score, down to a minimum of zero or up to double its natural level. The nature of how things are heard may also be adjusted. Normal speech could be made to sound like gibberish, or a dog's bark made to sound like a word. If hearing Awareness is reduced to zero in this manner, the target is effectively deaf or the caster has complete control over how things are heard. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Zei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



## Shei

**Smell, Odor, Disease**  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Shei-eq):** The caster assaults their target with a searing cloud of noxious gas, which burns directly up the target's nose and into their lungs. This does non-lethal damage of the caster's adjusted Fate, a damage which ignores the first mundane barrier it encounters. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shei	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+13
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Shei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and is at +1d effect. This rune can be inscribed or drawn for virtually any duration desired, but if it is for longer than an instant, the effect is impossible to conceal. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shei	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		-12
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive(Shei-ej):** The target cannot smell anything. They can breathe normally, but their sense of smell is totally inert. Filthy sewers and dead bodies may look disgusting, but they do not stink. The net effect is to reduce the difficulty of any Will tasks associated with noxious or nauseating smells, by the caster's adjusted Fate. It does *not* provide armor or protection against physically damaging or poisonous vapors. It does, however, protect against *Shei-eq*, which is a magically generated stink rather than a created poisonous vapor. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Shei</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Shei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Shei</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Control(*Shei-ess*):** The target gains an extraordinarily sensitive sense of smell. They can use this heightened sense to reduce the difficulty of any scent-based Awareness rolls by 2 points per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This can give the target a discriminatory sense of smell as good as that of a tracking animal and can let them use their Awareness as a "complementary skill" on any skill roll that could be enhanced by this. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Shei</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Shei-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Shei</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-3
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(*Shei-ex*):** The target can smell diseases and airborne poisons and pinpoint their location, allowing them to stay out of the dangerous areas. This spell counts as an Awareness against such hidden hazards equal to the caster's adjusted Fate. Optionally, the extra sensitivity may give warning of potentially damaging vapors, allowing the target to cover their mouth and nose in time to mitigate the effects. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Shei</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Shei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Shei</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Manipulation(Shei-ett):** The caster may alter the target's sense of smell. Each success allows the caster to increase or decrease the target's scent-based Awareness rolls by the caster's adjusted Fate, down to zero and up to double its natural level. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Zei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Shei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Shei	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



**Chei**

**Taste, Flavor, Poison**  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Chei-eq):** This Rune is not always immediate in effect, but it is often quite deadly. The caster poisons an object, which can be like a weapon, a glass of wine or a plate of food. If the target consumes the item or takes lethal damage from a targeted weapon, they are immediately poisoned. The victim takes half-lethal damage of the caster's adjusted Fate, and this amount with a cumulative 1d penalty each succeeding time level. The created poison is permanent, but it can be washed off weapons and any damage done by the poison can be healed normally or magically. The poison created by this spell is readily identified by anyone who knows these runes by the nature of the symptoms, and with sufficient sensory acuity, by its scent or a tiny taste of the poisoned food. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Chei	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Created item	+50
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+63
Runecasting difficulty		18

The inscribed version of *Chei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, they are poisoned, and suffer the effects as though they were struck by a poisoned weapon with +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Chei	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Created item	+50
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+38
Runecasting difficulty		14

▼ **Note** - *Chei-eq* is cast on a item to be poisoned, and the item is what resists the rune. The Will of the person consuming the poison does not matter.

**Defensive(Chei-ej):** The target cannot taste anything, no matter how vile or delicious. Travelling Runemages often use this Rune to allow them to eat foreign foods by which they would otherwise be repulsed. Of course, having no ability to taste indicates no Perception at all as related to taste-based Perception checks. Like *Shei-ej*, it reduces the difficulty of any Will tasks associated with noxious or nauseating tastes, by the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Chei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Control(Chei-ess):** The target has incredibly sensitive taste. They can taste a drop of poison in a glass of strong wine, or sample a dish to determine the ingredients. Fine foods taste much better, bad foods taste absolutely vile. The target gains a bonus to their taste-based Awareness rolls of the caster's adjusted Fate, up to double their natural roll for this. Their sense of taste is sufficiently acute to give them a good chance to detect poisons without consuming enough to feel any of the effects. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Chei-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-4
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(Chei-ex):** The target gains the ability to eat or drink poisoned food or drink with little or no ill side effect. The poison is simply filtered out and neutralized. Damage caused by ingested poison is reduced by the caster's adjusted Fate. If the caster knows the nature of the poison before casting the runes, this spell can also negate the damage of poisoned weapons or other toxins. Simply knowing that *Chei-eq* was used is sufficient for *Chei-ex* to negate it. It does not heal damage, but it can prevent further damage. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	<i>-ex</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10



The inscribed version of *Chei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Manipulation(*Chei-ett*):** The caster may alter the target's sense of taste. The spell allows the caster to increase or decrease the target's taste-based Awareness score by the caster's adjusted Fate, down to a minimum of zero or a maximum of double its natural level. In addition, it can have sense-altering effects, like making good things taste vile, or vice versa. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Chei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Chei</i>	+20
●	-eq	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



## Rhun

**Speech, Language**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(*Rhun-eq*):** The target's language becomes total gibberish, unintelligible to anyone listening. The target also cannot write intelligibly, and even sign language or charades will be garbled. Obviously, the target cannot cast Runes. The caster's adjusted Fate is a subtraction to the target's Awareness for purposes of communication of concepts and ideas, or for use of runes. If reduced to zero, no communication or rune casting is possible. If reduced but is still above zero, communication is still possible, but communication skills cannot be used at a level of higher than current Awareness. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Rhun</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

**EXAMPLE:** If a target with an Awareness of 3d+1 and a communication-based skill of +2d (normal skill roll of 5d+1) were struck by a -2d penalty from *Rhun-eq*, their Awareness for communication would be dropped to 1d+1, and the maximum skill bonus would also be 1d+1, for a maximum skill roll of 2d+2.

The inscribed version of *Rhun-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Rhun</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Rhun-ej):** The target gains an instant mastery over language. The target can speak, write and understand one additional language per success, at an effective Awareness of their Fate. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Rhun	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Rhun-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Rhun	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Control(Rhun-ess):** The target can store and recite any speech heard within the range of the Rune. If the target of the rune is an object that cannot speak, the speech can be played back by recasting the Rune before it expires. The total information level that can be stored by the rune is the adjusted Fate of the caster. The memory of the speech recorded by the rune is lost when the effect ends. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Rhun	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Rhun-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Rhun	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Defensive control(Rhun-ex):** The target becomes very eloquent, able to win over listeners or defend his position in an argument. The target effectively gains a bonus on their Will of the caster's adjusted Fate, applicable only for use of persuasive skills. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Rhun	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Rhun-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Rhun</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Manipulation(*Rhun-ett*):** The caster may alter the target's speech. Every word out of the target's mouth may be altered by the caster to any other word desired. The target will realize immediately that their speech is being altered, but they will be unable to say anything other than what the caster decides to make them say. If the target chooses not to speak, this Rune is ineffective (it cannot force the target to speak, merely changing what they do speak). At gamemaster option, the effects of this rune can apply to all forms a communication attempted while under its influence. This rune is not necessarily resisted, as a person could be a *willing* mouthpiece for another. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Rhun</i>	+30
●	- <i>ett</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Rhun-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but the effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Rhun</i>	+30
●	- <i>ett</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



**Enn**

**Hard, Impervious, Rough, Coarse, Stable, Steady** (+25 modifier)

**Offensive(*Enn-eq*):** The target's body begins to stiffen. Every move is a struggle. The target loses Agility and Health each equal to half the caster's adjusted Fate, with any remainder applying to the greater of Agility or Health. If the target has Agility or Health drop to zero, they may not defend themselves or take any actions aside from dull muttering or blinking slowly. The effect lasts for a default of one second (time level of +0). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Enn</i>	+25
●	- <i>eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 second	+5
Modifier total		+23
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Enn-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Enn</i>	+25
●	- <i>eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

# EABA

**Defensive(Enn-ej):** The target becomes incredibly agile and flexible, as joints and cartilage loosen. The target gains Agility and Health each equal to half the caster's adjusted Fate, with any remainder applying to the greater of Agility or Health. However, the loose connections of the body make the target weaker, and the target loses 1d from their Strength roll while the rune is in effect. The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Enn-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Control(Enn-ess):** The target actually becomes physically harder and more difficult to break. If cast on a person or animal, the target gains the caster's adjusted Fate as an inherent armor (which layers normally). If cast on a piece of armor, the armor is increased up to double its natural value. The effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Enn-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

**Defensive control(Enn-ex):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Ean-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Enn-ess* acts the same as the inscribed version of *Ean-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7



**Manipulation(Enn-ett):** The caster may manipulate the durability of physical objects. They may not actually manipulate the target itself, just its hardness. An animal or human target gains Health equal to the caster's adjusted Fate, but only for purposes of adjusting Hits and in the case of living targets, Hit Brackets. Items gain Hits of the caster's adjusted Fate, up to double their natural amount. The target is harder to damage or destroy. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Enn-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but it has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Enn	+25
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

If a target is damaged while under the effects of *Enn-ett*, the actual Hits lost will be proportional to the Hits under the influence compared to the natural level.

**EXAMPLE:** A person with 14 Hits gained 6 Hits under the influence of *Enn-ett*, but took 5 Hits of damage. Their normal Hits were 14, but under the influence they had 20 Hits, so their natural total is about two-thirds their rune-adjusted total. So, when *Enn-ett* wears off, they keep about two-thirds of any damage taken in the interval. In this case, the 5 Hits they took turn into 3 Hits after the rune wears off.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



## Ean

**Soft, Giving, Yielding, Flexible, Unstable** (+25 modifier)

**Offensive(Ean-eq):** The target becomes soft. If cast on a person, their bones refuse to support them, and they lose half the caster's adjusted Fate from each of Strength and Agility, with any remainder applying to the greater of the two. If cast on armor or a weapon, it loses 0d+1 Armor for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ean	+25
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Ean-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ean	+25
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+22
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Defensive(Ean-ej):** The target's muscles harden, granting a bonus to each of Strength and Health of half the caster's adjusted Fate, with any remainder applying to the greater of the two. The bonus to Strength and Health applies to all uses of these Attributes, but cannot boost them to more than one-and-a-half times their natural level. As a side effect, the target also becomes less flexible, losing 0d+1 Agility per full die of the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Ean-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Control(*Ean-ess*):** The target becomes soft and pliable, easily reshaped with bare hands. The Rune affects the Armor of a single object up to what could be lifted with a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate, so a skilled Runemage could dig doors out of stone walls or shape handholds in a cliff face. The rune drops the Armor of the target by 0d+1 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. Artisans sometimes use this Rune to shape stone or even precious jewels. If cast on flesh, any direct damage caused to the target is increased by 0d+1 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate (up to double normal damage) for the duration of the Rune. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Ean-ess* is somewhat problematic. By writing this Rune on a target, it will become pliable as with the spoken version. However, if the Rune is disturbed in any way, it will warp and become useless immediately, and the target will return to its original consistency. Within these limitations, the rune has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	-ess	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

**Defensive control(*Ean-ex*):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Enn-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The effects of the inscribed version of *Ean-ex* are the same as the inscribed version of *Enn-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Manipulation(*Ean-ett*):** The caster may manipulate the durability of physical objects. They may not actually manipulate the target itself, just its softness. The target loses 1 Hit for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. Inanimate objects reduced to zero Hits will crumble if any damage penetrates their Armor, while living things will suffer various damage effects based on their new level of Hits. Hit Brackets are not affected, but unconsciousness or other thresholds may be adjusted.

**EXAMPLE:** A person with 14 Hits who had taken 6 Hits is injured, but functional. If *Ean-ett* reduced them to 6 Hits or less, they would fall unconscious or possibly go into shock, depending on whether their injuries were non-lethal or lethal in nature.

This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Ean-ett* has the same effect as the spoken version, but has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ean</i>	+25
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

An item destroyed after being reduced to zero Hits is not repairable or even magically restorable. The rune has practical use for recycling, allowing scrap metal to be easily pulverized for easier removal.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



Frei

**Thought**  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(*Frei-eq*):** The target is attacked by a barrage of thought not their own. This is a non-lethal attack that ignores the first physical barrier it encounters, thus negating any worn armor. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+13
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Frei-eq* has the same effect as the spoken version, but strikes a number of targets up to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		-12
Runecasting difficulty		0

This rune word can be inscribed for almost any duration, but each attack is a separate instant effect.

**Defensive(*Frei-ej*):** The target may shut out thought and emotion, preventing them from reaching the surface. They are stone-faced and emotionless. The target's Will is increased by the caster's adjusted Fate for purposes of resisting any magical attempts to read or project into their thoughts or disturb their emotions (such as with *Frei-ess* or *Frei-eq*). This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Frei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Control(*Frei-ess*):** The caster may sense the thoughts of the target. The effect may be resisted as normal, though unless the caster is obvious in the attempt, the target may not know that they are resisting. Only surface thoughts may be read - the caster will not glean facts about which the target is not currently thinking. The sophistication with which thought can be read is like an Awareness or language skill of the caster's adjusted Fate. The effect lasts for as long as the caster concentrates on the target, with a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**EXAMPLE:** If the caster succeeded but only had an adjusted Fate of 1d+0, then the "language" of the thoughts would be like having 1d+0 skill in a language (**EABA**, page 2.9). In this particular case, thoughts would come across as single syllable words or concepts, regardless of how complex the thoughts actually were. If the target were thinking "I'd really like a nice single-malt whiskey on the rocks", it might come across as "want cold strong drink". However, an adjusted Fate of 2d+0 or more *would* get the exact thought across...

The inscribed version of *Frei-ess* must be written on a thinking target to be useful. It acts the same as the spoken version, but has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24) and nearly unlimited range, with the limitation that the rune must be activated within touching range of the caster. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+14
Runecasting difficulty		8

**Defensive control(*Frei-ex*):** The target may read the immediate surface thoughts of those around him, though the depth of knowledge gained is very shallow, much less than with *Frei-ess*. However, the *intent* of those thoughts is read more quickly, and the caster gains a significant advantage when time is of the essence. In game terms, up to the caster's adjusted Fate in nearby targets are affected at the caster's adjusted Fate minus 1d, with similar effects to *Frei-ess*. The target may wait to announce their action until they hear what every other combatant affected by the spell is going to do, and then do their action *first*. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10



The inscribed version of *Frei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Manipulation(*Frei-ett*):** The caster may manipulate the thoughts of a target person or animal. This affects thoughts, *not* actions, and the target is not compelled in any way to act on those thoughts. The target *will* know that the thoughts are not their own. This is a good way to communicate silently, though it is also an exceptionally good way to frighten a person who does not realize what is happening. The caster may also communicate with intelligent animals with this Rune, though it may take time to train the animal so that it does not react in fear or ignore the unexpected thoughts. The caster may use this ability on only a single target per casting, though they may cast it multiple times to communicate with multiple targets. The effect grants a language communication ability appropriate to an Awareness of the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Frei</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

As it is impossible to write on a thought, this Rune may not be cast by writing or inscribing it.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **LIFE RUNES** - These eight Runes all have to do with living animals and the qualities they possess. Casters specializing in these runes are masters of their own bodies, and often the bodies of others, possessing the ability to alter physical and mental attributes and even control minds, to a limited extent. Though these runes seem limited, they are likely to have the greatest effect on adventurers during the course of a campaign, since they have such great ability to alter the body.



**Awn**

**Self, Me**

(+25 modifier)

**Offensive(*Awn-eq*):** The caster hurls their consciousness into the target and seizes control of the target's body. The caster can control the target's movements from within the body to a maximum Agility of the caster's adjusted Fate. An adjusted Fate of equal or more than the target's Agility means the caster has complete control, anything less than this means there is some struggle going as the target resists the attempt and prevents full usurpation of their physical actions.

Once a level of control is gained, it is maintained until conditions that might improve the Will of the target force a re-roll of the spell. For instance, commanding a target's body to jump off a cliff will trigger self-preservation and give the target a huge bonus to their Will to overcome the spell, while simply commanding the body to close its eyes and not move at all is unlikely to be any harder than the initial control roll.

The caster cannot control their own body and the target's body simultaneously. This runic effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Awn</i>	+25
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Awn-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, but it has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24) and must be inscribed on the target of the spell. The inscribed version of the runecasting *as a drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Awn	+25
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 minute to cast	-12
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+37
Runecasting difficulty		14

**Defensive(Awn-ej):** The theory of this Rune is a little strange. The caster theoretically repels the target from itself. Since this is not actually possible, the caster creates a mirror image of the target. In fact, one mirror image is created per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. These mirror images are completely illusory, all standing near the target and mimicking the target's every move in type, if not in exact detail (e.g. they might all be in combat stance, but striking different poses). The images will vanish on a successful attack, but the target cannot be struck until all the images have been removed, as the illusions will seem to shift to protect the target for as long as any exist. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12) or until the illusions are dispelled or destroyed, whichever comes first. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Awn	+25
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of Awn-eq acts the same as the spoken version, but it has a default duration of ten minutes (time level of +19) and generates a number of illusions equal to the caster's adjusted Fate. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Awn	+25
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 minute to cast	-12
●	Lasts 10 minutes	+24
Modifier total		+22
Runecasting difficulty		10

▼ **Note:** While the target of this rune cannot be directly targeted until the last of the illusions is popped, the target and all the illusions can be struck by an attack that fills an area. If a rune effect attacks a number of targets, even if that rune is not directly controlled by a person, it will still tend to target the illusions created by this rune, possibly leaving the real target unscathed.

**Control(Awn-ess):** The caster exerts their will against the environment, and can manipulate small objects without touching them. The control extends to the range of the Rune, and lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The caster can move objects like they had a Strength of 0d+1 per full die in their adjusted Fate, as if they were holding them in their hands, good for opening latches, picking locks or even sketching runes. These objects may be used with any skills the caster possesses, with a penalty on the skill roll equal to the range level from the caster to the object being manipulated. Note that this rune is always cast upon the runecaster, not upon other targets. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Awn	+25
●	-ess	+20
●	Usable by self only	-5
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		-10
Runecasting difficulty		0

The inscribed version of Awn-ess acts the same as the spoken version, but it has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Awn	+25
●	-ess	+20
●	Usable by self only	-5
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-20
Runecasting difficulty		0

The major advantage of the low difficulty is that this rune often can have tremendous range and duration compared to other spells.

**Defensive control(Awn-ex):** The caster may interpose their soul between the target and an attacker. The caster's soul counts as a barrier versus spells or abilities that ignore the first barrier they encounter, and the caster reduces all mundane or magical effects on what they are protecting by 0d+1 for each full die of the their adjusted Fate. However, each point they reduce an effect by is taken by the caster as non-lethal damage. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12) or until the caster decides to drop it. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Awn	+25
●	-ex	+30
●	Usable by self only	-5
●	Side effect	-10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of Awn-ex acts the same as the spoken version, but it has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Awn	+25
●	-ex	+30
●	Usable by self only	-5
●	Side effect	-10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+0
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Manipulation(Awn-ett):** No apparent effects are generated by this Rune in either spoken or inscribed form. Some say that it distorts elements of the caster's own beliefs and memories, but no proof exists for this theory.

▼ **Note:** If the rune does have an effect, then it would be a useful tool for "becoming" a role, temporarily believing you are someone or something else, rather than merely acting the part.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



## Gai

**Other, You**  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Gai-eq):** The target loses all their confidence and remembers all of their past failures and faults, especially with regard to the current situation they are in. The target's Will for confidence and decision-making purposes is reduced by the caster's adjusted Fate. Any sort of decision or multiple choice action forces the target to make an Easy(5) Will task, and if their Will is reduced to zero or less, they are crippled by fear or indecision and more or less unable to act. As with other Will effects, changes to a situation can allow them to overcome or temporarily break the effect. Someone who is paralyzed by indecision in combat might still find the will to dive out of the way of falling crate, but still be paralyzed by indecision after they do. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Gai	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of Gai-eq acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Gai	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Defensive(Gai-ej):** The caster selects one target, and gains increased awareness against any attack by the target, physical or otherwise. All tasks pertaining to harm from the target to the caster are increased in difficulty by +2 for each full die in the adjusted Fate of the caster. This has no effect on damage, only the probability of success. Note that since the *Gai* rune is "other", this spell will only work on things that have at least a rudimentary concept of self. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Gai-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ej	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Control(Gai-ess):** The caster gains the ability to manipulate the mind of the target. It increases the target's difficulty to avoid non-harm actions like bluffs, intimidation, persuasion or any attempt of the caster to project their will upon the target. The target's Will is reduced by the caster's Fate for these purposes. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Gai-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-4
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(Gai-ex):** The caster forces another person to interpose his soul between the target and any attacks. It is very similar to *Awn-ex*, except someone else is doing the interposing, and the maximum effective Fate that target interposes with is the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Gai-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but with a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of *Gai-ex* must be inscribed on the target to be affected. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+24
Modifier total		+5
Runecasting difficulty		4

**Manipulation(*Gai-ett*):** The effects of this Rune seem to be identical to *Gai-ess*. This effect lasts for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Gai-ett* seems to be the same as the inscribed version of *Gai-ess*. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Gai</i>	+20
●	-ett	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-4
Runecasting difficulty		0

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



**Living Things, Animals, 2**  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(*lin-eq*):** The caster summons the nearest small animals to attack the target. This can vary from being annoying (the caster summons a mouse) to deadly (the caster summons a nest of venomous snakes). The caster has no control over the creature summoned; the nearest creatures simply arrive and attack the target. One creature will be summoned for each success. The size or threat level of the creatures is also dependent on the caster's adjusted Fate:

Fate	Creature size
1d	Small(mice, bats)
2d	Medium(rats, cats, dogs)
3d	Large(alligator-sized)
4d	Very large(top of food chain)

The creatures will stay to fight for a default of one turn (time level of +0), or until slain. In general, the creatures can make a lethal or half-lethal attack with a damage of the caster's Fate and a skill of the caster's Fate. The gamemaster can select creatures appropriate to the region or roll a die and consult the table below.

Roll(1d)	Species (setting dependent)
1-2	Bats or birds
3-4	Amphibians or reptiles
5-6	Mammals

The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Acts as a natural phenomenon	+5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 second	+5
Modifier total		+22
Runecasting difficulty		10

As a matter of practicality and game drama, summoned creatures appear from the closest practical source, and probably do not do so instantly. The delay should be timed for some mean between optimum effect and any real-world considerations. Coincidence can be invoked as needed (a cage of birds falls off a passing wagon, or an escaped animal from a travelling show is in the area).



# EABA

The inscribed version of *lin-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription, and summoning one creature per target per success. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Acts as a natural phenomenon	+5
●	Takes 1 minute to cast	-12
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

**Defensive(*lin-ej*):** The target becomes fearsome in the eyes of animals, and any animal must overcome a Will check in order to attack the target, including the Stryders of the Sivitagi. This is an opposed roll of the animal's Will against that of the target, and the target's Will is increased by 0d+1 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *lin-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Control(*lin-ess*):** The caster gains the trust and friendship of the target animal. This can be used to calm a wild beast, get close to hunted prey, or befriend an angry guard animal. The target animal's Will is reduced by the caster's adjusted Fate, and the caster has to succeed against an opposed Will roll to avoid agitating the animal. As with other Will-affecting spells, changes in situation can adjust the animal's Will and give it a chance to overcome the spell's effect, even if temporarily. The mood of the animal targeted is only adjusted for the caster, not anyone around them. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *lin-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but it must be inscribed on the intended target, has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-3
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(*lin-ex*):** The caster summons the nearest small animals to protect him. The animals will not attack unless they or the caster are threatened, but they will do their best to block attacks, confuse attackers, or otherwise keep the caster from harm. One creature is summoned per success. The size and nature of creatures summoned is the same as for *lin-eq*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *lin-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but the target of the spell can be anything, and the summoned animals will attempt to prevent all approach to the target. This effect has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

**Manipulation(*lin-ett*):** The caster may shape living things. The caster must physically touch the target. If used on an unwilling target, the target gets the normal resisted Willpower roll. If used to cause damage, the Rune causes 1 lethal Hit for each full die of the caster's Fate. The effect is permanent, but the manipulation can continue for the duration of the spell. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+12
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

▼ **Note:** Damage can only be done once per casting of the spell, but the effects of the manipulation are permanent. For instance, a caster with an adjusted Fate of 2d+0 could do 2 Hits to a target by giving them a right angle bend in the middle of their forearm. If the spell ended then, the 2 Hits of damage would heal normally, but the forearm would *still* have a permanent right angle bend in it that could only be reversed with magic. A hostile controlled use of the spell can give an utterly crippling and permanent impairment to use one or more body parts. Angry friends and relatives of the victims usually attempt to give the caster some crippling and permanent impairments of their own...

The inscribed version of *lin-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but the manipulation can continue for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lin</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5





## Pei

**Power, Strength, Fortitude**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Pei-eq):** The target loses Strength equal to the caster's adjusted Fate. If Strength is reduced to a level where what they are wearing exceeds their maximum lifting capacity, the target collapses, unable to move at all. Intermediate levels of effect will cause varying amounts of encumbrance penalty, depending on what is being worn and carried. This spell does not affect the target's Hit Brackets or Hits. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Pei	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Pei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Pei	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Pei-ej):** The target may ignore penalties to Strength from fatigue or damage. The target may ignore full dice of penalties up to the full dice of the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Pei	+30
●	-ej	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Pei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Pei	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Control(Pei-ess):** The target gets a bonus to Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate, but not to more than one-and-a-half times the target's natural Strength. Hits and Hit Brackets are not affected by this spell. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Pei	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Pei-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Pei</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		2

**Defensive control(*Pei-ex*):** The target's Strength is increased by the caster's adjusted Fate, but only for the purposes of opposed rolls using Strength or Strength skills. However, the adjusted Strength can be up to double the target's natural Strength. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Pei</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Pei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Pei</i>	+30
●	-ess	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

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**Manipulation(*Pei-ett*):** The target gets a bonus to Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate, but not to more than one-and-a-half times the target's natural Strength. Hits, Hit Brackets and any other secondary stats are affected by this spell. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Pei</i>	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Pei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Pei</i>	+30
●	-ett	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12



**Fas**

**Speed, Agility, Fast**  
(+30 modifier)

As with the *Pei* Rune, but the Attribute affected is Agility.



**Thei**

**Mind, Thought, Knowledge**  
(+30 modifier)

As with the *Pei* Rune, except the Attribute affected is Awareness.



**Sen**

**Spirit, Soul, Heart, Wisdom**  
(+30 modifier)

As with the *Pei* Rune, except the Attribute affected is Will.



## Dron

### Unliving Things (+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Dron-eq):** The target is assailed with whatever rocks, metal, or other unliving material is nearby. This is a half-lethal attack with a damage of the caster's adjusted Fate. While magical in nature, it is still a physical attack and may be blocked by armor. The damage or lethality of the attack may be changed depending on the environment and availability of unliving detritus - a rubble-strewn street might increase the damage by +1d, while a verdant forest might reduce it by -1d or make it non-lethal. Casting this Rune inside an armory or smithy might make the damage lethal instead of half-lethal. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Damage based on local material	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+8
Runecasting difficulty		6

The inscribed version of *Dron-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Damage based on local material	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		-14
Runecasting difficulty		0

This effect can be inscribed for any duration, but the side effects tend to be an accumulation of dirt around the inscribed object, even if the rune word is not active.

**Defensive(Dron-ej):** The target gains inherent armor versus any weapons made of stone or steel. Armor of the caster's adjusted Fate is gained vs. unliving weapons, and this armor layers normally with worn protection. Weapons made of bone, wood or other organic materials do damage as normal, though a metal head on a wooden shaft is considered to be unliving. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Dron-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5



**Control(Dron-ess):** The caster may summon unliving material to him. Each full die of the caster's adjusted Fate acts as 0d+1 of Strength, and the total lifting capacity is what the caster can summon. The exact material summoned depends on the environment. It will not strike the caster, but does end up within easy reach. The force with which loose material can be pried from its current situation is the Strength the caster has with the spell. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 second	+5
Modifier total		-2
Runecasting difficulty		0

**EXAMPLE:** A caster with a Fate of 2d+0 can draw what a Strength of 0d+2 can lift, or 20 kilograms. If the material is not loose on the ground, it can be pulled loose like the caster had a Strength of 0d+2. So, a small rock stuck in the mud could probably be pulled out, but a stone in the middle of a wall or a stake pounded into the ground could not.

The inscribed version of *Dron-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, drawing unliving material towards the rune. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), and can draw the appropriate amount of material each second during that duration, provided there is sufficient quantity. For instance, it could be used to draw water out of the bilge of a ship or pump it out of a well. The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		-15
Runecasting difficulty		0

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**Defensive control(Dron-ex):** The target is encased in armor created from whatever unliving material is nearby. The armor has a rating of the caster's adjusted Fate, and layers normally with other armor. While the material of the armor is mundane, the force that holds it in place is magical, so it reduces the effect against damage and non-damaging magical attacks. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Dron-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a tattoo is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Dron</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

# EABA

**Manipulation(Dron-ett):** The caster may shape whatever inorganic material is at hand, though they must physically touch the item as they shape it. The effects are permanent, and once shaped, the material keeps its form. The maximum Armor + Hits that the caster can manipulate is the caster's adjusted Fate (counting each full die as 3, and remainders as normal). The reshaping of an object can easily destroy it in terms of its ability to function as designed, like a sword with its blade tied into a knot or a rope shaped into a solid ball of fiber. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Dron	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**EXAMPLE:** A caster with a Fate of 2d+1 could manipulate an item whose Armor and Hits added up to 7 or less, or a subset of a larger item whose Armor and Hits added up to 7 or less. For instance, they might not be able to shape a stone wall, but they could shape a piece of it.

The inscribed version of *Dron-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but it must be inscribed on the intended target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Dron	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+7
Runecasting difficulty		5

▼ **CONCEPTUAL RUNES** - These eight runes deal with intangible concepts with little or no presence in actual physical reality. Although they cannot always be physically represented, there can be no doubt that they play a major role in everyday life. The caster who can control these runes can have great influence over the lives of others, both subtly and quite directly.



## Ngei

**Blessing, Luck, Fortune, Fate**  
(+40 modifier)

**Offensive(Ngei-eq):** In most cases, attack Runes are detrimental to the target. This Rune is the exception. The target of this Rune erases one mark on their Fate track for each full die of the caster's Fate, allowing the target to use Fate more effectively or more often. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), and if the restored Fate is not used by then, it is lost and the Fate track reverts to where it was before the spell was cast. Use of Fate to more than where it was at the time of the spell adds normally. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ngei	+40
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

**EXAMPLE:** A target with two marks on their Fate track and had them both temporarily erased by this spell. If they use Fate zero, once or twice during the spell, after the spell ends they will still have two marks on their Fate track. If they use Fate three times, they will have three marks on their Fate track after the spell ends.

The inscribed version of *Ngei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ngei</i>	+40
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Defensive(*Ngei-ej*):** Most defense Runes protect their targets, but by warding off a blessing, the target actually suffers. Each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate acts as an *extra* mark on the target's Fate track, making it harder for them to use luck. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), and then Fate track reverts to where it was before the spell was cast, as for *Ngei-eq*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ngei</i>	+40
●	-ej	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Ngei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

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Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ngei</i>	+40
●	-ej	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Control(*Ngei-ess*):** The world just seems to work in the target's favor. The target gains a -1 to the difficulty of all tasks for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ngei</i>	+40
●	-ess	+20
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Ngei-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ngei</i>	+40
●	-ess	+20
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+0
Runecasting difficulty		0

▼ **Note** - To avoid possible unbalancing effects of the *Ngei* rune, the gamemaster may wish to say that it cannot be inscribed at all, limiting its use to the short-term effects granted from speaking it.

**Defensive control(Ngei-ex):** For the duration of the Rune, the target gains a level (or an extra level) of "Larger than life" on their skill and Attribute rolls. The total number of times this can be done is the full dice in the caster's adjusted Fate. The Larger than life ability may only be invoked on a failed roll, allowing the target to add another die to their normal total, like giving them "best four" instead of "best three". This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12) or until the dice available have been re-rolled, whichever comes first. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ngei	+40
●	-ex	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**EXAMPLE:** If the target of the rune needs to roll a 14 on a skill with 5d+1 and rolls 6,4,2,2,1, their normal total is 13, using the 6, 4, 2 and a +1. Since this is a failed roll, they may choose instead to invoke the ability of the rune and get a total of 15, using the 6, 4, 2, 2 and a +1.

The inscribed version of *Ngei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ngei	+40
●	-ex	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Manipulation(Ngei-eff):** The caster may alter their own good luck, saving it until they need it. They may roll dice equal to their full dice in adjusted Fate, recording the result or setting the dice aside. These individual dice may be substituted singly or as a group at any time, either as part of a normal roll or as dice from use of luck. Any dice that affect the adventurer can be affected, so they can use high dice for their own skill rolls, and low dice for any damage they might take. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), and then these dice are lost. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ngei	+40
●	-eff	+30
●	Works on self only	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Ngei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version. It must be inscribed on the intended target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ngei	+40
●	-eff	+30
●	Works on self only	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

**EXAMPLE:** A caster with an adjusted Fate of 3d+0 casts this rune and gets two successes. So, they roll four dice (their Fate plus the extra success). They can substitute these dice results for any roll that they make or which affects them. So, if they rolled 6,4,3,1, they might substitute the 6 in a roll where they needed to make a skill roll, and if they take a die of damage, substitute the 1 for that die.

Remember that a person cannot be under the influence of this rune more than once, so they have to use up the dice or have the rune expire before they can take advantage of it again.



## Wei

*Curse, Bad Luck, Misfortune*  
(+40 modifier)

**Offensive(Wei-eq):** The target is saddled with terrible luck. The spell is identical to *Ngei-ej* in effect. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Wei	+40
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Wei-eq* acts the same as the inscribed version of *Ngei-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Wei	+40
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+24
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Defensive(Wei-ej):** The target gets to avoid extra marks being added to their Fate track from hostile magic, up to one mark for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. The rune does not remove marks to give good luck, it is simply used to prevent bad luck. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Wei	+40
●	-ej	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The inscribed version of *Wei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Wei	+40
●	-ej	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Control(Wei-ess):** The target of the rune suffers general misfortune and gets a +1 difficulty on all tasks for each full die in the caster's Fate. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Wei	+40
●	-ess	+20
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7



# EABA

The inscribed version of *Wei-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Wei</i>	+40
●	-ess	+20
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+0
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(*Wei-ex*):** The target may force anyone within melee range to reroll any one die for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This reroll must be in such a way as to *reduce* the success of the target, and may only be done once per roll. For instance, the best die in a successful skill roll or damage roll could be rerolled to possibly cause a failure or reduce damage from an attack. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Wei</i>	+40
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Wei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Wei</i>	+40
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Manipulation(*Wei-ett*):** The caster may alter their own bad luck, saving it until it hurts less. He may save and reroll one die for each full die in their adjusted Fate. The die roll in question must have been a failed roll or be a die with a "1" result in order to be saved (this allows you to re-roll poor damage results). The gamemaster has control of the die result that was replaced, and can use it at will on any rolls the adventurer makes after the spell has ended, with a limit of one die substitution per roll made by or against the adventurer. The rolls should be used as immediately as possible, but the gamemaster should ignore any rolls the player deliberately makes to try to invoke them. It is *bad* luck, after all... This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12) or until all the dice available have been used. Note that the duration is the duration in which the *player* may re-roll dice. The duration the *gamemaster* can hold onto these dice for later use is unlimited. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Wei</i>	+40
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Wei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but it must be inscribed on the caster and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Wei</i>	+40
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7



# Thurn

*Pain, Hurt, Suffering, Harm*  
(+40 modifier)

**Offensive(Thurn-eq):** The target suffers horrible pain, and takes a non-lethal attack of the caster's adjusted Fate. This attack ignores the first physical barrier it encounters, such as worn armor. The pain is real and its side effects can last for hours, but never does lethal Hits, no matter how much damage is done. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Thurn	+40
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+33
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Thurn-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and is at +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Thurn	+40
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+8
Runecasting difficulty		6

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Defensive(Thurn-ej):** The target can ignore debilitating pain. They can ignore penalties due to the pain of injuries or magical attacks equal to the full dice of the caster's adjusted Fate. Dice penalties from crippling injuries may not be negated for physical actions, as this is not a matter of pain but physical trauma (the injured part doesn't work anymore). The spell would, however, counter the pain for purposes of performing non-physical tasks. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Thurn	+40
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Does not affect crippling injury	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts for 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Thurn-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Thurn	+40
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Does not affect crippling injury	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts for 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

**Control(Thurn-ess):** The target is shocked with an instant of sharp pain. The pain causes no damage, but it can shock a target badly. Count the spell like *Thurn-eg*, except the damage lasts only until the end of the turn and bypasses the first mundane barrier between the caster and target. So, it can stun someone or even knock them out, but has no lingering effect. The shock of pain can also be used to wake a sleeping target or clear a target's mind. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Thurn</i>	+40
●	-ess	+20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts for an instant	+0
●	No aftereffects	-15
Modifier total		+18
Runecasting difficulty		9

The inscribed version of *Thurn-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and is at +1d effect. If inscribed on a weapon, it does the spoken effect any time the weapon does damage to a person through their defenses, and the effect lasts for the life of the rune on the weapon. Note that this makes an excellent deterrent tool against unarmored targets like prisoners, which cannot be turned against armored guards. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Thurn</i>	+40
●	-ess	+20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts for 3 months	+46
●	No aftereffects	-15
Modifier total		+39
Runecasting difficulty		14

**Defensive control(Thurn-ex):** Every thinking creature coming within melee range of the target suffers stabbing pain. The suffering creatures take non-lethal damage of 1 point for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, and this attack ignores the first physical barrier like worn armor. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Thurn</i>	+40
●	-ex	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts for 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Thurn-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Thurn</i>	+40
●	-ex	+30
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts for 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Manipulation(*Thurn-ett*):** The caster may relocate the target's pain. The target must already be in some form of pain, but the location of that pain is moved to another part of the target's body at the caster's discretion, with the maximum penalty offset equal to the caster's adjusted Fate. A comrade may have a headache moved to a leg in order to clear his mind, or an opponent may have the pain from a stab wound to the shoulder moved to a hand in order to cause the target difficulty modifiers. How useful this is depends on the level of detail the gamemaster applies to damage. In the simplest case, penalties for a *particular* action from damage can be increased by 1d by shifting an existing penalty to concentrate its effect. The Rune does not inflict extra damage. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Thurn</i>	+40
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts for 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Thurn-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Thurn</i>	+40
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts for 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

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**Yon**

*Pleasure, Healing, Laughter*  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(*Yon-eq*):** The target's mind is flooded with pleasurable hallucinations, and they become highly susceptible to suggestion. The spell drops the target's Will by the caster's adjusted Fate. The hallucinations will cloud a target's mind, forcing them to succeed at a Will task for every round in which they want to act. This difficulty could range from Automatic(1) in a combat situation to Average(7) in a peaceful, non-threatening situation. If their Will is zero or less, they are simply lost in a pleasurable daze until their circumstances change. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Yon-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Yon-ej):** The target becomes immune to the allure of temptation. For resisting any form of temptation, their Will is increased by the caster's adjusted Fate, up to double their natural Will. Temptations can be of any kind, be it alcohol, eating, sex, or anything else that brings the target pleasure. This protection has the unhappy side effect of preventing the target from *enjoying* pleasure in any form, but at least as long as the spell is in effect, they can at least resist the temptation to drop the effect and enjoy themselves. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of Yon-ej acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Control(Yon-ess):** The target is blanketed with soothing bliss. The target recovers 1 non-lethal hit for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, and is able to relax for the duration of the effect, which is as long as they are undisturbed. This Rune can be used to ease suffering, allowing targets to sleep despite their injuries or think clearly past their pain. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	State-based duration	+25
Modifier total		+28
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of Yon-ess acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and is at +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	State-based duration	+25
Modifier total		+3
Runecasting difficulty		3



**Defensive control(Yon-ex):** Every sentient creature within melee range of the target is distracted by blasts of overwhelming pleasure. The spell gives targets an increased difficulty to all tasks equal to the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts for 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Yon-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

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**Manipulation(Yon-ett):** The caster may relocate the target's pleasure. The target must already be enjoying some form of pleasure, but the location of the sensation is moved to another part of the target's body at the caster's discretion, with the maximum penalty offset equal to the caster's adjusted Fate. This Rune could be used to cause an aphrodisiac effect on a person who is merely enjoying a tasty beverage, or it could be used to alter the effects of physical intimacy. How useful this is depends on the situation. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Yon-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Yon	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9



## Beirune

### Truth, Honesty, Justice

(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Bei-eq):** The target finds it harder to lie, especially to do so convincingly. Any attempt to lie is a Will task against the caster's adjusted Fate. On a failure, they will be totally unable to speak, write or even sign if they are lying. Anything they choose to speak will be the truth, and even if they win the Will task, any close result means they are visibly trying to overcome the spell. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+12
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Bei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Bei-ej):** The target gains resistance to interrogation, torture, or any other methods of questioning. The target gains a bonus to their Will of the caster's adjusted Fate, with a maximum Will of double their normal level. This bonus only applies to Will rolls related to interrogation (magical or mundane). This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Bei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Control(Bei-ess):** This Rune is typically cast upon an item or person about which the caster would like to learn. The Rune will give the caster information about the item or person, revealing one truth about the target per success. The exact nature of the truths revealed is left to the gamemaster's judgement, but should begin with the most important and relevant facts. Normally this spell is always opposed like it was cast on an object, but at the gamemaster's discretion, some people could be allowed an opposing Will roll to reduce the successes, and some objects may have an unusual origin that increases their resistance to the spell. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+3
Runecasting difficulty		3

The inscribed version of *Bei-ess* can be written on a durable surface, such as stone or steel, and anything placed upon the Rune grants the *caster* knowledge, as with the spoken effect. The *caster* does not have to be the person placing the object on the Rune. As long as the *caster* is in range of the Rune, they are granted the knowledge. If the *caster* is not in range, this Rune has no effect. By writing this Rune directly onto a person or object, the rune is at +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours	-27
●	Lasts 3 months	+51
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive control(Bei-ex):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Whin-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of this rune are identical to the inscribed version of *Whin-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

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**Manipulation(Bei-ett):** The *caster* may manipulate the truth. The message being shaped must be truthful, but the *caster* may alter its delivery or phrasing in such a way as to alter how it is received or perceived. This Rune could be used to put a positive spin on ugly truths, or to put the truth in its ugliest light. If the target is a person, the words that come out of his mouth or pen are subtly twisted, but still true. If the target is a book or other written message, anyone reading the message for the duration of this Rune will read the message as the *caster* intends it, not as it was written. The net effect is to require an Awareness roll against the *caster's* adjusted Fate. If the Awareness roll is failed, the desired spin is given, otherwise the recipient of the information sees to the actual truth beneath. The *caster* may control the target's verbal messages for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The effect is permanent on permanently recorded truths - after the Rune expires, written messages will not revert to their original wording. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Bei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but it lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). At gamemaster option, an object inscribed with the runes can twist the truth of anything in contact with it. The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Bei	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9



## Whin

**Lies, Falsehood, Betrayal,  
Concealment, Secrecy, Stealth**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Whin-eq):** The caster creates illusions in the mind of their target. The target to some degree believes the illusions to be real. The caster controls the illusions, and may direct them however they see fit. The illusions can never cause damage, though they can frighten a target considerably. Having the illusions do things that jar with reality may give the target a new Will roll against the spell.

The spell subverts the Awareness of the target. If the caster's adjusted Fate is equal or greater than the target's Awareness, the illusions are perceived as real. If the adjusted Fate is lower than the target's Awareness, the target can use the difference for normal Awareness rolls. In general, one illusion or illusory concept can be created per success. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

**EXAMPLE:** If the caster had an adjusted Fate of  $2d+1$  and the target had an Awareness of  $3d+2$ , the difference is  $1d+1$ . So, the target can attempt to see through or around the illusions, but they are still there, and the target's Awareness for all sensory and perception purposes will only be  $1d+1$ .

The inscribed version of *Whin-ex* imbues the target of the inscription with a specific illusion or illusions that will appear to number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. These illusions are pre-programmed and act like a recording that is played back for each target. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Whin-ej):** The target can detect falsehoods. They can detect lies, disguises, illusions, or secret doors. They gain a bonus to their Awareness for detecting these equal to the caster's adjusted Fate, up to a maximum Awareness of double its natural level. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Whin-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Control(Whin-ess):** The caster places a disguise on the target. The disguise is quite believable, giving all who see the target the caster's adjusted Fate as a difficulty penalty to Awareness tasks relating to seeing through the disguise. The target may alter their voice, height, weight, clothing, or any other personal details. If the disguise is emulating a specific person, the gamemaster may reduce the penalty for those who are familiar with the person being imitated. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Whin-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Defensive control(Whin-ex):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Bei-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Whin-ex* acts the same as the inscribed version of *Bei-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

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Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13

**Manipulation(Whin-ett):** The caster may manipulate falsehoods. The message being shaped must be untrue, but the caster may alter its delivery or phrasing in such a way as to alter how it is received or perceived. It can make lies seem more believable, or seem absolutely unbelievable. If the target is a book or other written message, anyone reading the message for the duration of this Rune will read the message as the caster intends it, not as it was written. The net effect is to require an Awareness roll against the caster's adjusted Fate. If the Awareness roll is failed, the desired spin is given, otherwise the recipient of the information sees to the actual falsehoods beneath. The caster may control the target's verbal messages for a default of one minute (time level of +12). The effect is permanent on permanently recorded truths - after the Rune expires, written messages will not revert to their original wording. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Whin	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12



The inscribed version of *Whin-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but it lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). At gamemaster option, an object inscribed with the runes can twist the falseness of anything in contact with it. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Whin</i>	+30
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9



## Vel

**Valuable, Expensive, Precious,  
Dear, Loved, Cherished**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Vel-eq):** The target becomes devoted to the caster. The target must make a Will roll against the caster's adjusted Fate to do anything that might harm the caster. This is situationally dependent and may also have modifiers based on Personality Traits. If the Will roll is failed, the target will do absolutely nothing that might harm the caster, and will do everything in their power to aid the caster. This does not mean that the target will follow orders, merely that the target will attempt to preserve the well-being of the caster by any means necessary. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Vel</i>	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		14

The inscribed version of *Vel-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). In either case, the devotion of the targets is towards the caster of the rune, who must be within range of the rune for it to have any useful effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Vel</i>	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+46
Runecasting difficulty		16

**Defensive(Vel-ej):** This Rune can be cast on either a person or object. It disguises the appearance of the target, making expensive vases look cracked and pitted, swords look cheap and chipped, and people dirty and ugly. By casting this Rune on an item, a caster could conceal a valuable Runed weapon or expensive amulet in plain sight. Note that the target is recognizable for what it is, a sword is still a sword, and a woman is still a woman. They are just cheaper, dirtier, and more used. In general, anyone viewing the object has to make an Awareness task against the caster's adjusted Fate to see the actual quality of the object. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Vel</i>	+30
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Vel-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the object to be disguised, and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Vel	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13

**Control(Vel-ess):** When cast on an object, this Rune polishes, shines, dusts and otherwise makes the object appear more valuable. A simple metal coin will gleam bright, drab clothes will be clean and attractive, and weapons will be sharp and meticulously kept. Any person who sees the target item will place a higher on the item, possibly more than it is really worth. The caster's adjusted Fate counts as a skill or a complementary skill (whichever gives the best bonus) for any negotiation involving the targeted item. It also increases any Personality or positive situational modifiers that the observer feels towards desiring the item by 1 point per full die of the caster's adjusted Fate. When cast on a living creature, the target becomes much more attractive, with perfect hair, clean skin, and flawless skin. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), but mundane effects such as cleaning or dusting remain after the spell expires. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Vel	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of Vel-ess acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a sketch is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Vel	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+24
Runecasting difficulty		11

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **Note** - This is a good point to remind you that inscribed runes with mind-bending effects are best done in a way to reduce their visibility. Anyone who picks up an item and sees Vel-ess inscribed on it is naturally going to be suspicious of their own appraisal of the item.

**Defensive control(Vel-ex):** The effects of this Rune are identical to Blei-ej. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Vel	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of Vel-ex acts the same as the inscribed version of Blei-ej. The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Vel	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13

**Manipulation(Vel-ett):** The caster may alter the appearance of an item or person, twisting the ways in which it is valued. For example, a precious stone on a piece of jewelry will still be present on the target, but the caster may move it to a less obvious location, making the item appear less valuable. Conversely, a poorly placed marble tile may be swapped with another to improve the appearance of a room. The game effect is subtle, but could be a +1 difficulty to any appraisal tasks for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, or concealing 1 Hit of damage on the object per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate (within common-sense limits). The flaws or valuable parts of the item are still there, they just take a little more work to find. If the caster can manipulate the item while it is being examined, they could conceivably maneuver flaws or valuable bits so they are constantly in or out of sight as the object is viewed or inspected.



The ability to manipulate the target has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), but the effects of the manipulation remain when the spell expires. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Vel	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced two-third effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Vel-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and the manipulation ability lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Vel	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced two-third effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+14
Runecasting difficulty		8

**Offensive(Blei-eg):** The target becomes much less attractive and disreputable. While this has no effect in combat, it can seriously damage a politician or public speaker. The target gains +1 difficulty on all social skills per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. If cast on a non-living target, the target becomes uglier and less valuable for the duration of the Rune, a +1 to the seller's negotiating ability when trying to sell the item. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced two-third effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Blei-eg* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). In either case, the devotion of the targets is towards the caster of the rune, who must be within range of the rune for it to have any useful effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Reduced two-third effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+24
Runecasting difficulty		11

**Defensive(Blei-ej):** The target becomes immune to effects that would worsen its appearance or devalue it, such as staining or chipping. This is not the perfect armor - if cast on a living thing, the target can still be harmed. They just will not bleed on their clothing. The same theory applies to armor itself - it may not look any worse for being punctured by an arrow, but the arrow penetrates all the same. A human target who crawls through mud after a successful application of this Rune emerges clean, but he can still be damaged by sharp rocks in the muck. In general, the spell negates the visually marring effects of a number of Hits taken equal to the caster's adjusted Fate, within reasonable limits. This would usually be no more than half the item's Hits, rounding down. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), but items retain their appearance at the time the spell expires. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Blei-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, but lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Control(Blei-ess):** The target suffers damage that devalues it. Metal will rust or become brittle, wood will split and splinter, and living things will grow warts or sores on their tongues or general debility and joint pain. The effect is to 0d+1 lethal damage to the item for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, and this damage bypasses the *inherent* Armor of the item or the first mundane barrier. Items can be completely ruined or living things killed (remember that reduced effect from injury modifiers applies to damage on living things, so a living thing with a -1d injury penalty will be hard to do more than 1 Hit of damage on with this spell). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ess	+20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+23
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Blei-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the target and has +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting *as a sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ess	+20
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

**Defensive control(Blei-ex):** The target appears to be worthless or insignificant, though this is an illusion. A living target may augment a disguise, pass as a peasant, or be overlooked by opponents seeking a more worthwhile foe. A sword with this Rune may look like cheap junk, even if it is a powerful runesword. The effect is to either require an Awareness roll against the adjusted Fate of the caster to see the true value, or at gamemaster option, to apply a negative level of Status to a target for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate to reflect the way a targeted person is perceived. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Blei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13

**Manipulation(Blei-ett):** The caster may alter the appearance of an item or person, twisting the ways in which it is devalued. For example, rust on a sword will still be present, but the caster may move the rust to a less obvious location on the weapon. Conversely, a mole beneath a person's hairline may be moved to that person's nose, making him appear much less attractive. The caster may affect an item up to what a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate could lift. The game effect is subtle, but could be a +1 difficulty to any appraisal tasks for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, or concealing 1 Hit of damage on the object per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate (within common-sense limits). The flaws of the item are still there, they just take a little more work to find. If the caster can manipulate the item while it is being examined, they could conceivably maneuver flaws so they are constantly in or out of sight as the object is viewed or inspected. It can also be a convincing disguise, changing hairlines, moving distinctive scars and so on.

The ability to manipulate the target has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), but changes made remain after the spell expires. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced two-third effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Blei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and the manipulation ability lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24), but once it expires, the changes stay. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Blei	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Reduced two-third effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+14
Runecasting difficulty		8



▼ **SPATIAL RUNES** - These eight Runes affect the real world, dealing with dimensions, distance, space and existence in general. On one end of the scale, such Runes are rather mundane and are often used to perform such ordinary tasks as opening doors and windows. However, these same Runes also offer the potential to truly shift a person's place in the world, and are not to be taken lightly.



**Oun**

**Open, Door, Window, Portal**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Oun-eq):** The caster forces a breach in a wall, creating an opening where none exists. It does lethal damage equal to the caster's adjusted Fate, with anything penetrating the barrier's Armor crumbling a volume appropriate to its Hits. In general, a hexagon of material (a meter high and a meter thick) has the following approximate Armor and Hits:

Material	Armor	Hits per hexagon
Dirt	1d+0	10
Brick	2d+0	10
Wood	1d+2	11
Wood & iron	2d+1	11
Stone	2d+2	11
Stone & iron	2d+2	12
Iron	3d+1	12

Some generic items likely to be encountered would have the following Armor and Hits

Item	Armor	Hits
Normal door	1d+1	6
Reinforced door	2d+1	9
Wood interior wall	1d+2	5*
Brick interior wall	2d+0	9*
Stone interior wall	2d+2	10*

\*per hexagon of area

This can be adjusted for varying areas and thicknesses. Each time you halve the volume, you subtract 2 Hits (down to a usual minimum of 2 Hits), and each time you double the volume you add 2 Hits.

**EXAMPLE:** An iron-bound wooden door two hexagons high would have the listed Hits (11 Hits) if it was half a meter thick. Doors normally are *not* this thick, though. If the door was an eighth of a meter thick (12cm, or about 5 inches), this would be one-quarter the material, so it would have 4 fewer Hits. So, that door would have an Armor of 2d+1 and 7 Hits. A use of *Oun-eq* cast at 2d+2 Fate with one extra success (3d+2 effect) would do 1d+1 Hits to the door per use. One use of *Oun-eq* would probably not destroy the door's 7 Hits, but two uses almost certainly would.

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The material removed, which may be stone, wood, glass, steel, or any other material, is turned to dust and rubble. The spell can be used multiple times to gradually enlarge a hole that is made by previous damage. This spell only works on non-living barriers and materials, and these must also be unshielded by the proximity of living material. For instance, a vine- or slime-covered wall or armor on a person would not be targetable with this spell. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Only on non-living targets	-10
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
	Modifier total	+13
	Runecasting difficulty	12

The inscribed version of *Oun-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and has +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Only on non-living targets	-10
●	Increased +1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts an instant	+0
	Modifier total	+15
	Runecasting difficulty	8

**Defensive(Oun-ej):** The target portal, which is capable of closing, closes, locks and fuses into a seamless whole, and will not open until the effect ends or the portal is battered from its hinges. It does not add to the normal Armor and Hits of the portal, it merely makes the portal un-openable by any means except destruction of the portal. The maximum weight of the portal affected is what a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate could lift. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+12
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *Oun-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the target, is at +1d effect and lasts for the life of the inscribed rune. The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Increased +1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+24
Modifier total		+24
Runecasting difficulty		11

**Control(*Oun-ess*):** The target of this Rune must be a door, window, chest, or the pilot hatch of a Stryder; any target that can be opened and closed, and whose mass is what a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate could lift. The target opens, releasing one lock per success. If the portal has been locked magically (as with *Oun-ej*), this rune will undo the effect if the caster's adjusted Fate is equal or more than that used to apply the magical lock. If the caster's adjusted Fate is insufficient, each doubling of this spell counts as +1d effect.

**EXAMPLE:** If a door was locked with a 3d+0 use of *Oun-ej*, a 2d+0 use of *Oun-ess* would have to be done twice, or a 1d+0 use of *Oun-ess* would have to be done four times.

The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		-12
Runecasting difficulty		0

The inscribed version of *Oun-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and has +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Increased +1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		-10
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(*Oun-ex*):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Ahn-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Oun-ex* acts the same as the inscribed version of *Ahn-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Manipulation(Oun-ett):** The caster may alter the height and width of an opening, such as a doorway or breach in a wall. The opening is not enlarged by this Rune, but it may be reshaped to allow or deny access. For example, a round hole just big enough to grant access to a person may be reshaped to be long and narrow, making access impossible, or a barred window may be reshaped to push the bars to one corner, allowing escape. The target may be manipulated if the caster's adjusted Fate exceeds the Armor of the material, and the speed with which it can be manipulated depends on how much effect is left over after Armor is taken into account.

**EXAMPLE:** A 3d+0 effect on a 2d+2 stone wall means that only 1 Hit's worth of material can be manipulated each turn. To completely adjust the nature of a portal 1 hexagon wide would take 11 Hits worth of effort (see table under *Oun-eq*).

The ability to manipulate the target has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), but changes made remain after the spell expires. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Oun-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and has a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Oun</i>	+30
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

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## Ahn

**Closed, Barrier, Wall, Enclosure**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Ahn-eq):** The caster forces an opening to seal over. This is not a shutter or door swinging closed; the material of which the wall is made grows over the opening, removing the portal altogether. Bricks materialize to grow over the opening, planks lengthen and stretch, and metal flows over the hole. The area that can be sealed over depends on the material in question (see table under *Oun-eq*). The total Hits of the portal area are unaffected. A large hole in a thick brick wall might become a sealed but thinner brick wall. The effects of this Rune are permanent. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
■	State-based duration	+15
Modifier total		+23
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Ahn-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and has +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
■	State-based duration	+15
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

**Defensive(Ahn-ej):** The caster can use this Rune to seal a portal open. The portal, be it a door, window or dresser drawer, will be very difficult to shut, requiring a Strength check opposed by the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect can be cancelled with successes with *Ahn-ess*. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Ahn-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and the effect lasts for the life of the inscribed rune or until it is magically countered. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Control(Ahn-ess):** The target, which must be something that can open and close, snaps shut. It requires a Strength roll against the adjusted Fate of the caster in order to pry open the portal once closed in this fashion. If the portal snaps shut on a person, they can roll Agility against the adjusted Fate of the caster to avoid it, possibly taking some sort of damage if they have a body part caught in the opening when it shuts. If the portal has been sealed with *Ahn-ej*, this spell can fully or partially counter it. The effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+5
Runecasting difficulty		4

The inscribed version of *Ahn-ess* acts the same as the spoken version. If it is inscribed on the portal, it will continually try to close the portal for the life of the rune, even if the portal has been successfully opened. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Defensive control(Ahn-ex):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Oun-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	<i>-ex</i>	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Ahn-ex* acts the same as the inscribed version of *Oun-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Manipulation(*Ahn-ett*):** The caster may manipulate the dimensions of a portal, whether that portal is a door, window shutter, or the lid of a chest. The caster may rearrange the material to make the portal thicker or thinner, adding or subtracting 1 Hit for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, up to a maximum of double the item's normal Hits or minimum of half (round down) the item's normal Hits. Each Hit added subtracts 0d+1 from the item's Armor, and each Hit subtracted adds 0d+1 to the item's Armor. The ability to manipulate the portal has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12), but the effects of the manipulation are permanent. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
■	Lasts 1 minute/state-based	+21
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *Ahn-ess* acts the same as the spoken version. If it is inscribed on the portal, it can be manipulated for a default duration of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ahn</i>	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Only on portals	-15
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
■	Lasts 1 hour/state-based	+31
Modifier total		+21
Runecasting difficulty		10

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



Ite

*Straight, Line, Beginning and End, Finite, Near*  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(*Ite-eq*):** All physical attacks against the target enjoy increased accuracy. The effect does not come from the attacker, but from the target. Each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate makes the target -2 difficulty to be hit. To observers, the target seems somehow larger or visible in more detail. Note that for an attacker to gain the benefit, they have to be within the maximum range of the spell from the target. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ite</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Ite-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *drawing* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ite</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13



**Defensive(*lte-ej*):** The target becomes difficult to strike, the opposite of the *lte-eq* effect. The target gains a +2 difficulty to be hit for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, and appears smaller or in less clarity. This utility of this spell is also dependent on the distance between the target of the rune and an attacker. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *lte-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Control(*lte-ess*):** The target enjoys increased accuracy on all physical attacks. The difficulty of all Agility-based attacks is reduced by 2 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. Unlike a simple increase in Agility, this spell can drop normally impossible difficulties into the realm of the possible. In melee, the spell subtracts from an opponent's roll, the caster's increased accuracy uncannily avoiding a foe's defenses. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of *lte-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+0
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(*lte-ex*):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Owt-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-ex</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *lte-ex* acts the same as the inscribed version of *Owt-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-ex</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Manipulation(*lte-eff*):** The caster may alter the nature of the target's accuracy. Whenever an attack is successful, the caster may move the location of the hit. Each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate can alter a rolled hit location (3d+0) by up to ±2 points or adjust the precision of a called shot by +1 difficulty.

**EXAMPLE:** A caster with an adjusted Fate of 2d+0 could alter a rolled hit location by up to 4 points, or turn the precision of a +2 difficulty called shot to either a +0 shot (no aiming at all) or a +4 difficulty called shot (far more precise).

Such alterations cannot turn a hit into a miss, but they can deflect it to the least harmful location that matches the attacker's intent. So, a hit to a person could not be deflected to hit their gear. The attack does not do any more incoming damage, though it might hit in such a way as to ignore armor. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-eff</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of *lte-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>lte</i>	+20
●	<i>-eff</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+24
Runecasting difficulty		11

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



**Owt**

**Circle, Round, Far, Infinity**  
(+20 modifier)

**Offensive(Owt-eq):** The target suffers a reduced ability to strike opponents, as their attacks tend to veer off. The target suffers a +2 to the difficulty of all physical attacks for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Owt</i>	+20
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Owt-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Owt</i>	+20
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+34
Runecasting difficulty		13

**Defensive(Owt-ej):** The target's attacks stay on course over much longer distances. The difficulty for range on physical attacks is reduced by 2 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. Remember that this cannot drop the difficulty for range to less than zero, and it does not increase the actual maximum range of a weapon. An arrow might be exceptionally accurate, but fall short of its target. You might be able to toss a grapple to land exactly where you want, but you have to be able to toss it that far to begin with. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Owt	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

The inscribed version of Owt-ej acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Owt	+20
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Control(Owt-ess):** An object thrown or fired by the target returns to them one turn later, unless destroyed along the way. Weapons embedded in a target will yank themselves free to return to the caster's hand, and will strike anything or anyone in the way on the return flight, causing damage to their targets. Whether or not this happens is purely a matter of chance, and an object stopped from returning because it struck something will not continue to return (one return attempt per item). Also, in order for the object to return, it must be within range of the rune.

The incoming damage caused by a returning weapon is based on a Strength equal to the caster's adjusted Fate, and can be more than the weapon did on the way out. The target will have one object return per success. Catching items returned by this rune is a minor action and an Easy(5) Agility task. These items will be the last items thrown or fired; the target may not choose to save one for later. If a weapon gets stuck in a target, the spell will try to pull it free with a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Owt	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

The inscribed version of Owt-ess acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and is at +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Owt	+20
●	-ess	+20
●	Increased 1d effect	+10
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Defensive control(Owt-ex):** The effects of this Rune are identical to *Ite-ej*. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Owt	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+12
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Owt-ex* acts the same as the inscribed version of *Ite-ej*. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Owt</i>	+20
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Manipulation(*Owt-ett*):** The caster may alter the nature of the target's inaccuracy. When an attack is unsuccessful, the caster may control where the missed attack hits, though they may not redirect the attack to make it successful. For instance, the caster could direct an arrow that misses a foe in a thick crowd to fly over the heads of the innocents, rather than striking an unarmed civilian. If the caster wished to relocate a missed attack to strike a nearby target, the caster must perform an attack roll, using their adjusted Fate as a skill roll against the difficulty the original attacker would have to hit that target. The target of the spell is usually the object making the attack, like an arrow or blade. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Owt</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+33
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Owt-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Owt</i>	+20
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+10
Runecasting difficulty		7

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



**Ote**

**Absence, Void, Nothingness, 0**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(*Ote-eq*):** The caster teleports the target, sending them in a random direction. The target is sent a random distance up to the range of the rune, even into physical objects. The target and everything directly touching them (except the ground) teleport together, up to a mass a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate could lift. Should the caster's Fate be insufficient to lift this much, the teleport fails. It is possible to teleport someone out of the water, but not out of a solid material. Should the target be sent into a physical object, their body will to some extent merge with the object. In most cases, this does the caster's adjusted Fate in lethal damage that ignores all worn or inherent armor.

To determine distance and direction of a random teleport, roll 1d for the direction, and another 1d for the fraction (out of 6) of the maximum possible distance.

**EXAMPLE:** If a teleport could be out to a range of 16 meters, you roll 1d for direction, with "1" being north and going around one hex facing clockwise from there. If the distance roll was "3", then you would teleport the target  $\frac{3}{6}$  (or half) the maximum distance.

The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ote</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+43
Runecasting difficulty		15

The inscribed version of *Ote-eq* must be inscribed on the target and has +1d effect. The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ote</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Increased +1d effect	+10
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+45
Runecasting difficulty		15

**Defensive(*Ote-ej*):** The target may set their feet down and be totally immovable. Neither strong winds, powerful blows or towering waves will move the target against their will if the rune is powerful enough, though they may suffer damage. The target of the spell has their effective weight or Strength increased by the caster's adjusted Fate, whichever would be more applicable to keeping them in place. For instance, compared to a bashing attack, Strength might be more appropriate, while against being lifted or teleported, extra weight would be a more useful effect. This spell has no detrimental effect on the target. They do not feel heavier, nor are they rooted to a spot against their will. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ote</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Ote-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ote</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Control(*Ote-ess*):** The target teleports to a location carefully predetermined by the caster. The caster may send the target and everything they are directly touching. As with *Ote-eq*, the amount of material teleportable is determined by the adjusted Fate in the spell, but the *range* gets +3 successes (8x range). Everything teleported must be able to fit in an open area at the destination. This Rune requires the caster get three successes with their skill roll in order to teleport an *unwilling* subject. The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ote</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Increased +1d effect	+10
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+33
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Ote-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target and gets +9 successes for *range* purposes (500x range). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Ote</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
◆	Extraordinary range x 3	+60
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts an instant	+0
Modifier total		+38
Runecasting difficulty		14

Note that because the effect is instantaneous, completely inscribing the rune without actually setting it off requires special techniques that increase the cost and rarity of such items.



**Defensive control(Ofe-ex):** The target is able to shift his position instantly with a thought, but only a tiny amount. For each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate they get a bonus of +2 to their Dodge, with only a -1 penalty to Agility. Invoking this defense causes the target to teleport several centimeters, in a direction chosen by the target. The target may choose not to shift if attacked. This rune cannot be used to teleport through doors or bars, and has similar mass limitations to other uses of the *Ofe-* rune, so it cannot let a target teleport out of manacles or other restraints. But, a manacled person could move themselves *and* their manacles a few centimeters independent of other objects. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ofe	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Ofe-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Ofe	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+20
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Manipulation(Ofe-eff):** Technically, this Rune does allow the caster to shape void. However, since the caster is shaping nothing, there is no practical effect to this Rune. Theoretically, it could be cast on a target that was the target of a different *Ofe-* rune in order to manipulate the nature of the teleportation done, or to manipulate the void in an area to prevent teleportation in or out, but it has yet to be successfully cast for such purposes.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



Jin

**Large, Giant, Big, High**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Jin-eq):** A portion of the target swells and grows disproportionately. A target's head may swell, or one arm may distort dramatically. The pain of the unnatural growth will cause non-lethal damage of the caster's adjusted Fate and this damage bypasses the first mundane barrier. The target will also suffer a +2 difficulty penalty to all physical tasks for each die in the caster's adjusted Fate as their grossly distorted body becomes desperately uncoordinated. If the target is wearing armor or any other binding attire, it can have secondary effects, usually in the form of severe pain or further physical restriction. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Jin	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+35
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Jin-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Jin	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+22
Runecasting difficulty		10

**Defensive(*Jin-ej*):** The target gains protection from crushing or blunt trauma damage. The target gains Armor of the caster's adjusted Fate against incoming damage caused by blunt weapons, crushing, being struck by large objects or striking large objects (including falling). This can be particularly helpful to those who are likely to be in combat against Rune Stryders, which tend to defeat human-size opponents by simply stepping on them. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Jin-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *sketch* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	<i>-ej</i>	+30
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+29
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Control(*Jin-ess*):** The target grows in size and mass. The target suffers no pain because of the growth, and gains 0d+2 Strength and 0d+1 Health for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. The target doubles in size for each full two dice in the caster's adjusted Fate (each doubling of size makes them -2 difficulty to be hit). The growth is smooth and painless but very quick, taking a time level of the full dice in the caster's adjusted Fate to reach the full augmented size. Just as with *Jin-eq*, however, the target may take damage if they are wearing armor or any other binding attire. Increased Strength will adjust the target's total Hits and Hit Brackets. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+12
Modifier total		+23
Runecasting difficulty		11

**EXAMPLE:** If cast with a Fate of 2d+0 and two extra successes, the target would become four times normal size, have +8 to their Strength and +4 to their Health, and have increased Hits, Hit Brackets and running speed based on this increased Strength and Health. They will almost certainly be completely naked as well.

The inscribed version of *Jin-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting *on soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	<i>-ess</i>	+20
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 30 seconds to cast	-10
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+19
Runecasting difficulty		10

▼ **Note:** This spell can make people the size and power of Stryders, and the effect can be limited by the gamemaster to no more than double normal size as a game balance measure.

**Defensive control(*Jin-ex*):** All living creatures within melee range of the target feel disproportionately sized. Their actual size is unaffected, but they might feel like their boots are three times bigger than their feet and at the same time their hands nearly the size of their sword. Their actions are more clumsy as they attempt to adjust to the sudden change in perceived size. Their Agility is reduced by the adjusted Fate of the caster. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	- <i>ex</i>	+30
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Jin-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	- <i>ex</i>	+30
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7

**Manipulation(*Jin-ett*):** The caster may increase the size of the target and what they are wearing or carrying. The target may doubled in size for each two full dice in the caster's adjusted Fate. Each two dice in the caster's adjusted Fate gives the target an extra +2 Strength and Health and all self-contained ranged weapons (like crossbows) have their damage increased by the same amount. For the duration of the effect, the caster may resize the target as often as desired, though he may not make the target smaller than its original size. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

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Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	- <i>ett</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Jin-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and the manipulation process lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting as a *tattoo* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Jin</i>	+30
●	- <i>ett</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 1 hour to cast	-24
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

▼ **Note** - At gamemaster option, the effects of either the spoken or inscribed *Jin-ett* can be permanent. The target (and their gear) stays at their altered size. This would adjust the cost with a dual duration and the reversal would be if the target is subject to any dispelling or size-altering rune to dispel the effect. That is, you would set the rune up with a short duration in which the effect could be adjusted, and a longer duration once the effect is fixed in place. The spell with a normal duration allows the caster to adjust the target up or down in size at will any time during that duration.



## Tin

**Small, Minuscule, Low**  
(+30 modifier)

**Offensive(Tin-eq):** A portion of the target shrinks disproportionately. A target's chest may shrivel, or a leg may shrink to half its normal size and length. The body revolts against this unnatural distortion, causing non-lethal damage of the caster's adjusted Fate and this damage bypasses the first mundane barrier. The target will also suffer a +2 difficulty penalty to all physical tasks for each die in the caster's adjusted Fate as their grossly distorted body becomes desperately uncoordinated. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Tin-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-eq	+40
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Tin-ej):** The target gains protection from very small attacks. Any attack with a weapon smaller than a person's thumb is protected against with an Armor of the caster's adjusted Fate. Many Divaros diplomats favor this Rune's protection against poison darts or rune throwers, and the Rune is widely used among the Kantarin, who use it to protect themselves from the mosquitoes, gnats, wasps, ants, and other insects native to their forest homes. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Tin-ej* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

There are many runes that can be used to repel vermin. *Tin-ej* just happens to be useful against a few types of weapons as well.

**Control(*Tin-ess*):** The target shrinks in size and mass. The target suffers no pain because of the change, but loses 0d+1 Strength and Health for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This affects Hits, but wounds are proportionately smaller, so the same fraction of Hits in damage applies, not the actual number. The target halves in size for each full two dice in the caster's adjusted Fate (each halving of size makes them +2 difficulty to be hit). The reduction in size is smooth and painless but very quick, taking a time level of the full dice in the caster's adjusted Fate to reach the fully reduced size. Armor and clothing do not shrink with the target, so if the target is not careful, he could suffocate inside his own clothing. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+15
Runecasting difficulty		8

The inscribed version of *Tin-ess* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+2
Runecasting difficulty		12

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**Defensive control(*Tin-ex*):** All living creatures within melee range of the target feel disproportionately small. Their actions are weaker as they attempt to adjust to the sudden change in perceived size. Their Strength is reduced by the caster's adjusted Fate for all Strength-based effects or skills attempted while in melee range of the target. The protection lasts for one minute per success. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+25
Runecasting difficulty		11

The inscribed version of *Tin-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Only on living targets	-5
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+12
Runecasting difficulty		7



**Manipulation(*Tin-ett*):** The caster may reduce the size of the target and what they are wearing or carrying. The target may halved in size for each two full dice in the caster's adjusted Fate. Each two dice in the caster's adjusted Fate takes away 0d+2 Strength and all self-contained ranged weapons (like crossbows) have their damage reduced by the same amount. For the duration of the effect, the caster may resize the target as often as desired, though he may not make the target larger than its original size. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+28
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Tin-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Tin</i>	+30
●	<i>-ett</i>	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+48
Runecasting difficulty		16

▼ **Note** - At gamemaster option, the effects of either the spoken or inscribed *Tin-ett* can be permanent. The target (and their gear) stays at their altered size. This would adjust the cost with a dual duration and the reversal would be if the target is subject to any dispelling or size-altering rune to dispel the effect. That is, you would set the rune up with a short duration in which the effect could be adjusted, and a longer duration once the effect is fixed in place. The spell with a normal duration allows the caster to adjust the target up or down in size at will any time during that duration.

**Offensive(*Grei-eq*):** The target loses the ability to control their momentum. Every action is greatly exaggerated. A living target will suffer considerable difficulty in stopping their movement, resulting in overstepped attacks or dodges that hurl the target to the ground. The target suffers no penalty on the first action after this Rune is successful, but incurs a +2 difficulty penalty for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate on all physical actions taken after the first action resolves. A non-living target would not be affected unless it is moved by an outside force during the duration of the Rune, in which case it will move much farther than normal (+1 distance per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate). This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Grei</i>	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+40
Runecasting difficulty		13

The inscribed version of *Grei-eq* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Grei</i>	+30
●	<i>-eq</i>	+40
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+27
Runecasting difficulty		12

**Defensive(Grei-ej):** The target is able to compensate for movement-related modifiers. For each full die of caster's adjusted Fate, the target negates +2 in modifiers related to their own motion or relative motion, like fighting atop a moving platform, firing an arrow in an earthquake, or throwing knives while sprinting, for example. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Grei	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of Grei-ej acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Grei	+30
●	-ej	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Control(Grei-ess):** The target gains the ability to move objects by force of will. The target of the spell may move objects like they had telekinetic hands. The maximum amount that can be lifted is the capacity for a Strength of 0d+1 for each full die in the caster's adjusted Fate, at up to the range of the rune. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Grei	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+0
Runecasting difficulty		0

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The inscribed version of Grei-ess acts the same as the spoken version, affecting a number of targets equal to the caster's adjusted Fate within range of the inscription. If inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on soft metal is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Grei	+30
●	-ess	+20
●	Reduced two-thirds effect	-20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		-13
Runecasting difficulty		0

**Defensive control(Grei-ex):** The target moves with random motion. This erratic movement makes them exceptionally difficult to strike, granting a +2 difficulty per full die in the caster's adjusted Fate to any attack that targets them. Since the target knows which way they will move next, they take no penalties on their own actions. If the target's movements are constrained by narrow quarters, the benefit of the spell is halved. If cast on a non-living target, the object will begin to shudder and dance in place with much the same effect, whether it is capable of motion or not. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	Grei	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

# EABA

The inscribed version of *Grei-ex* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Grei</i>	+30
●	-ex	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

**Manipulation(*Grei-ett*):** The caster may force the target to change its speed or direction of movement. A target that is not moving when the Rune is cast will not be affected. The target may be forced to run into a wall or run very slowly, or the target may be able to move much faster. The power of the effects are determined by the adjusted Fate of the caster. Any amount greater than the Strength needed to lift the object can subtract from its damage or movement level (down to zero), or add to it, but not more than double the original movement or damage level. The minimum Strength needed to lift an object is  $0d+0$  for purposes of this spell.

**EXAMPLE:** A caster with an adjusted Fate of  $3d+1$  could "lift" a 100 kilogram person with  $3d+0$  of the effect and then speed it up or slow it down by  $\pm 1$  distance level. A .1 kilogram arrow would take a Strength of  $0d+0$  to lift, so the spell could decrease its damage by  $3d+1$ , or increase it by  $3d+1$  (but not to more than double its normal value). Note that small objects may be harder to target because of their size, and trying to target a small object in flight may be next to impossible.

The changes to movement are at the whim of the caster, not the target, so if the caster loses sight of the target, the effects end. This effect has a default duration of one minute (time level of +12). The spoken version of the runecasting is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Grei</i>	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires vocalization	-5
●	Takes 2 seconds to cast	-2
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
Modifier total		+30
Runecasting difficulty		12

The inscribed version of *Grei-ett* acts the same as the spoken version, but must be inscribed on the intended target, the effect is only on that target and lasts for a default of one hour (time level of +24). The inscribed version of the runecasting on *soft metal* is below:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Grei</i>	+30
●	-ett	+30
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 3 hours to cast	-27
●	Lasts 1 hour	+29
Modifier total		+17
Runecasting difficulty		9

Using this rune to guide an object is subject to normal rune limits. The caster and the object must remain in line of sight, or the object will simply continue on its path until it hits something and stops, or the rune expires. Finely manipulating an object at range has a difficulty of at least the difficulty for the range between caster and object.

▼ **ADVANCED RUNE USAGE** - Novice practitioners of the Runic arts will find it easiest to use simple spells, typically consisting of two syllable, Rune-plus-control-Rune spells and inscriptions. Thus, a beginning Magus with mastery of Elemental Runes could relatively easily produce two-syllable incantations, according to the rules laid down for that particular Rune. *Ull-ess*, for instance, would produce a simple flame, or *Un-ess* could produce water for drinking.

The exact uses of the effects produced vary from caster to caster, and this is where a true Rune Master is distinguished from those who merely know a few Runes. A Master will understand that summoning fire can produce a variety of effects, limited only by the number of functions that fire itself might serve. He could cook food, boil water, burn down a village, harass his enemies, frighten animals, cauterize wounds, melt ice, provide light, or merely dazzle some children, all with a single Rune and a little creative application. The intelligent use of control Runes separates the novice from the professional. Beyond creativity, however, Runes can also be used in a variety of other advanced ways.

**Combining Runes** - Just as single Runes can represent simple concepts and ideas, Runes strung together can form more complex ideas. More experienced Runic Masters can thus produce far more spectacular combinations with even a limited supply of Runes by combining Rune sounds and symbols to form Rune Phrases.

Not all the phrases are necessarily empowered; not only do Runes only work if they are pronounced or inscribed *precisely*, but since they function in much the same way as language, random combinations of syllables will not necessarily produce meaningful results. When Runes are combined, the order in which they fall in the Runic phrase determines their meaning as part of the whole phrase; A+B is not the same as B+A. Thus, for any two-Rune combination, there are four combinations, each unique: AA, AB, BA and BB.

For example, given the letters O and T, the following combinations are among those possible:

O, OO, OOO, ...  
 OT, OTT, OTTT, ...  
 T, TT, TTT, ...  
 TO, TOO, TOOO, ...

Of the twelve examples above, only two really have actual meaning in the English language (TO and TOO).

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All are combinations of letters, but those other combinations hold no special power or meaning. Certainly, there are other combinations that make sense that are not shown (TOT, TOTO, TOOT, etc.), but the vast majority (approaching infinity) has no special meaning.

In much the same way, given the known Runes, it is safe to say that most combinations will be completely meaningless, without effect of any sort. Thus, random experimentation by Rune Scholars will likely prove to be a waste of time for the most part, and impressively dangerous should they happen to stumble upon a word that actually works (since the effects would be unknown and unpredictable).

However, over the years, Rune Masters have discovered a series of Rune Words that *do* hold special power, functioning in ways different from their component Runes. Most of these are simple three-Rune Words, some going as far as stringing four together. Although there is no theoretical limit to how many can be put together (some theorize that it is these long strings of Runes that the Gods used to create the Universe), the limits of human experimentation keep things to just a few in a row.

**Runic Syntax** - For simple Runes, a caster need only pronounce the effect Rune and the accompanying control Rune. However, for longer strings of Runes, casters must follow an *exact* set of rules. Casting a lengthy Rune in the wrong order could result in terribly unpredictable results, or fail to produce an effect at all.

The first Rune in a Rune Word defines the effect of the Rune, and is thus called the effect Rune. In *Ull-eq*, *Ull* is the effect Rune. It can be controlled more narrowly by mod Runes, additional Runes placed *between* the effect Rune and the control Rune which activates the Rune Word. After any desired mod Runes are added, the caster must finish the Rune Word with a control Rune. Without a control Rune, a Rune Word is merely a collection of sounds. The Rune Word will have no effect until the control Rune is pronounced or written.

A few Runes serve particularly well as mod Runes. Most of the Spatial Runes can be used to specify a direction, shape, duration, size, or motion of an effect. They can be used to make a Rune more powerful, or to reduce the energy of a Rune Word. A gamemaster is encouraged to consider the alternate definitions for a Rune when deciding the effect of a Rune Word.

Failing to cast a normal rune causes loss of a point of Will and Awareness for failing and another point for each "1" in the total roll. In the case of Advanced Runes, however, the stakes are higher. Losses are 2 points on a failure and for each "1" rolled. A *catastrophic failure on a long Rune Word could kill the caster instantly!*

Lheta's Law prohibits a target from bearing multiple Runes of the same category. This is not applicable with mod Runes, however. A complex Rune Word may contain Runes from the same category as the effect Rune, and may contain multiple mod Runes from the same category. The only limitation on mod Runes is that a single Rune Word may not contain two of the same Runes, whether those Runes are effect or mod Runes.

A few particular Runes make exceptional, all-purpose mod Runes. The following list describes the mod Runes most popular among the very talented Runecasters who can use advanced Rune Words.



**Owt**

**Circle, Round, Far, Infinity**  
(+20 modifier)

This Rune can effectively increase the duration of a Rune Word. While many Runes take place instantly, the majority of Runes are ruled by the longevity of their effects. By adding *Owt* as a mod Rune, the caster may dictate a longer effect. In game terms, spoken Rune Words cast using *Owt* as a mod Rune last for +4 time levels for each success past the first instead of +2.



**Ite**

**Straight, Line, Beginning and End, Finite, Near, 1**  
(+20 modifier)

This Rune can be used to decrease the duration of a Rune Word. Each success using *Ite* as a mod Rune *reduces* the default duration of an effect by -2 Time levels per success. This could also apply to rune effects that decrease the duration of other continuing rune effects.



**Jin**

**Large, Giant, Big, High**  
(+30 modifier)

On many occasions, a larger effect may be desired. *lin-eq* summons an animal to attack an opponent, such as a rat or small bird. *lin-Jin-eq* will automatically summon a larger creature, or bring a large creature to the summoner by magical means normally beyond the scope of the spell. Two or three successes might even summon a handful of dusk hunters. As the effects of Runes are wildly different, increasing the size of an effect will act differently for different Runes.



**Tin**

**Small, Minuscule, Low**  
(+30 modifier)

Sometimes, smaller is better than larger. A standard Rune used to start a campfire would not be practical for lighting a pipe. By using *Tin*, the caster may shrink the size of the effect. The exact results are up to the gamemaster to determine, as different Runes will be affected different ways. A good example might be to adjust the default area of a spell, making it smaller than normal but concentrating the effect within that area for extra dice of effect.



**Dron**



**iin**

These Runes may be used to limit the effects of a Rune to a specific category of target. For example, by protecting with fire, but only against living things, a target may be wrapped in a sheath of flame that only harms living creatures, leaving furniture, papers and curtains unharmed.



**Ain**



**Ott**



**Ull**



**Un**



**Aan**



**Khet**

Possibly the most interesting mod Runes are those from the Elemental category of Runes. Adding an elemental Rune also adds the element to the effect of the Rune. If the mod Rune is compatible with the effect Rune, a more powerful Rune may be created. On the other hand, if the mod Rune has little in common with the effect Rune, or if the two tend to cancel each other out, the effects may be very different indeed.





**Awn**

**Self, Me**  
(+25 modifier)

The Awn rune is one of the few runes that can make a runecasting easier instead of harder. Adding Awn to many rune spells means the spell can only target the caster of the spell. This is more efficient than simply inflecting the other runes to only affect the caster. Someone using a rune combination that normally affects only themselves can add Awn to it and get a -15 modifier instead of the normal -5 for "self only". Normally, the Awn rune is not *actually* used, but it must be *known* in order to specifically inflect the other runes so that the spell is only capable of affecting the caster.

The Awn rune is typically used as a way for a caster to make an extraordinarily difficult spell like *Lhei-ej* a bit easier to cast. If used to *add* to the difficulty of a spell (at +25 modifier) it can be used to *exclude* self from the effects of an area effect spell or do odd permutations of including and excluding self from a spell, either being cast or one already in effect.

**Sample Rune Combinations** - Some examples of possible Rune Combinations follow. These are only examples; should a gamemaster and/or a player wish to experiment with additional Rune Words, they should work together to come up with effects that make sense for that combination.



**Off-Xhei-eq**  
Earth + Chaos + Attack =  
Earthquake

The earth trembles violently for the default one second duration of the spell, which fills an area equal to the spell's range. This shaking is a penalty of the caster's adjusted Fate to the Agility of everyone on the ground, and if a person's Agility is reduced to zero or less, they fall down and are unable to rise. All structures within the spell's range take damage equal to the caster's adjusted Fate each turn.

By writing or inscribing this Rune on a patch of stone or earth, the caster focuses its power and creates a violent quake. The quake will be particularly powerful, at +2d effect. Buildings may crumble, and huge cracks may open in the earth. However, since the Rune will be at the center of the quake, it will be destroyed quickly.

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**Vel-lin-eq**  
Earth + Living + Attack =  
Lure

The target, which is usually an object but can be a person or animal, becomes alluring to anyone who can see it. Every person and animal within the spell's range must roll on their Will and beat the adjusted Fate roll for the spell. If they fail, they find themselves inexorably attracted to the Lure. They may perform other actions, defend themselves, etc., but will make all possible attempts to reach the Lure, putting it above all else in their minds. They will not do suicidal actions like stepping off a cliff to reach the item, but they *will* do dangerous things like trying to climb down that cliff without a rope. Once they have touched the Lure, the effect is dispelled, though others may be affected. The effect lasts for a default of one minute.

The written version of the Rune functions identically to the spoken version, but the effect lasts for a default of one hour and the rune must be written or inscribed on the item that is the Lure.



**Un-Ull-ess**  
Water + Flame + Use =  
Steam

A swirling cloud of steam rises up in an area equal to the spell's range, reducing all vision in the area. Ranged attacks into, through or out of the cloud of steam are at a penalty of +2 for each die in the caster's adjusted Fate due to the dense cloud of steam. The steam remains in place for a default of one minute and then dissipates. The area will have the natural effects of a steam-filled area. Things will get damp, it will mask normal heat signatures, it will be uncomfortable humid and warm, etc.

The written version of the rune is the same, except it churns forth enough steam to fill the area for default duration of one hour.

# EABA



**Vel-Nhet-Of-ess**  
 Value + Shiny +  
 Earth + Use =  
 Metal

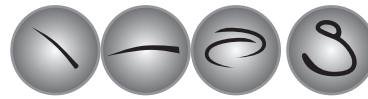
These runes cannot be properly spoken. Rune scholars have been unable to determine why. However, an item thus inscribed will transmute into a form of metal, as determined on the chart below. The amount transmuted is up to a mass the caster's adjusted Fate could lift (as a Strength); the remainder of an object that encompasses more material than this will remain as it was. *Note that this will typically kill any living thing.* Pure metals are very heavy, on average eight to eleven times as dense as water. A two liter skin of water (full) would turn into twenty-two kilograms of lead! The item thus transmuted permanently remains metal. The transmuted nature of the item can be detected magically, and the created metal is not entirely natural and may act in unusual ways if other runes are used on it.

Metal thus inscribed will transmute into a different type of metal if appropriate; if the same type is indicated, no change occurs. Roll 1d for each success, add them and see the table below:

Roll	Metal created
1-4	Lead
5-8	Tin
9-12	Copper
13-16	Iron
17-20	Silver
21-24	Gold

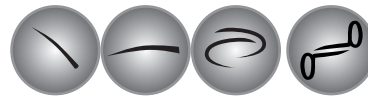
**EXAMPLE:** A mage who got three successes would roll 3d+0 and see the table. A result of 13 would transmute the object into iron.

This spell in the hands of a skilled mage could easily unbalance the regular or industrial economy of Rhun, so the gamemaster can add limits to it as needed. In particular, the simplest fix is to say that the transmutation only lasts as long as the runes do, and that pieces that are broken off from the whole revert back to their previous nature. This prevents buckets of gold from being created and melted down for coinage. It does allow interesting things like a mage having a repair part for a Stryder carved out of wood and then turned into a useful metal replacement part.



**Aan-Ain-Ull-ess**  
 Wood + Flight +  
 Flame + Use =  
 Flaming arrows

This Rune has no effect when spoken. But, inscribed on an arrow, spear or other such wooden projectile, this imbues that missile with the ability to burst into flames as it flies through the air. The chance of ignition is a cumulative. Such flaming projectiles deal out 0d+2 of lethal flame damage to anything they strike for each die in the caster's adjusted Fate, and have an Average(7) chance of igniting combustible items they contact, based on the damage done. Damage done by the flaming arrow is applied after Armor is taken into account, and items on fire take a cumulative 0d+1 damage until their Armor is penetrated, at which point they take 1 Hit and the process resets.



**Aan-Ain-Ull-ej**  
 Wood + Flight +  
 Flame + Defend =  
 Heat shield

This unique Rune Word was developed by the Kantarin, and then forgotten due to the possible devastation it could potentially wreak in their jungle homes. Upon uttering the Rune, the air within the spell's range around the Caster shimmers with heat waves. All wooden projectiles travelling through the heated air (spears, arrows, bolts, etc.) have take 0d+2 for each die of the caster's adjusted Fate, turning the shafts into cinders that fall harmlessly to earth. Anything wood that isn't on the ground, attached to the ground or with a person is affected. A spear thrust would not be affected, but a thrown spear would burst into flame and ash the moment it left the thrower's hand. The effect lasts for a default of one minute.



**lin-Jin-eq**  
 Living + Larger + Attack =  
 Summon monster

The caster summons large creatures to attack their foes. The Rune functions similarly to *lin-eq*, but the animals summoned are larger. Each success increases the size of the creatures summoned. The gamemaster should choose an appropriately-sized creature or abnormally-mutated small creature based on the successes rolled. The animals remain until their target is dead, or for a default of one minute, whichever is shorter.



**Ull-Jin-eq**  
Fire + Large + Attack =  
Searing bolt

The caster hurls an enormous burst of flame at their target. This is treated as armor-piercing (reduce Armor by 1d before applying damage) and automatically gets 2 extra successes for range only, but is otherwise identical to *Ull-eq*.



**Shei-Yon-ess**  
Smell + Pleasure + Use =  
Perfume

The target is cloaked in a very pleasurable odor. This is basically a magical perfume that each person affected perceives differently, but always in a positive way that cannot always be put into words. The target gains -2 to the difficulty on any socializing tasks for each die in the caster's adjusted Fate roll. The effect lasts for a default of one minute.



**lin-Ote-eq**  
Living + Void + Attack =  
Removal

The target, which must be a living thing, simply disappears. The target has no perception of time or place while gone, and reappears in the same relative spot after the duration of the effect. The effect lasts for a default of one minute in the caster's original frame of reference. The maximum size of an object that can be displaced is based on a Strength of the caster's adjusted Fate.



**Pei-Owt-ess**  
Strength + Infinity + Use =  
Enhanced Strength

The target enjoys the benefits of the *Pei-ess* Rune for a number of uses equal to a roll of the caster's adjusted Fate, over any period of time.

**EXAMPLE:** A 3d+1 roll of 13 would mean the target could use the enhanced Strength thirteen times, whether this takes thirteen seconds or thirteen years.



**Zhei-Thurn-eq**  
Sight + Pain + Attack =  
Eyeburn

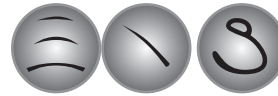
The target experiences pain whenever they open their eyes. Any turn that the target has their eyes open, they suffer 0d+1 non-lethal damage per die in the caster's adjusted Fate. This damage cannot become lethal. The effect lasts for a default of one minute.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>



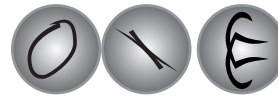
**Ain-Xhei-ess**  
Sky + Chaos + Use =  
Summon storm

The caster summons a storm. One success may cause a localized rain cloud, while five might summon a full-blown tornado. The storm lasts for one minute per success, and once summoned, is outside the caster's ability to control.



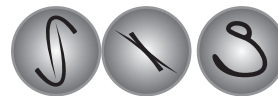
**Enn-Aan-ess**  
Hard + Wood + Use =  
Ironwood

The target, which must be wooden, becomes hardened. The caster may items up to a size that the caster's adjusted Fate in Strength could lift, and the wood gains 0d+1 Armor per success. The effect lasts for a default of one minute.



**Ote-Rhun-eq**  
Earth + Chaos + Attack =  
Nullify

Since language is the basis of Runic magic, by voiding the language of a target Rune, a caster may nullify the lingering effects of a Rune. The caster targets a Rune effect, not the bearer of the Rune effect. However, if the bearer of the Rune effect is enjoying the effect, they may wish to resist the caster with a Willpower roll. The caster nullifies one success on the initial Runecasting roll per success, provided the caster's adjusted Fate is higher than that of the Rune being targeted. If all the successes are negated, the opposing Rune is dispelled. This Rune may not be used to reverse permanent or transmutation effects, as these effects are no longer magical after their initial effect expires.

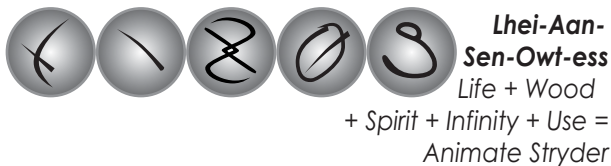


**Zhei-Rhun-ess**  
Sight + Language + Use =  
See magic

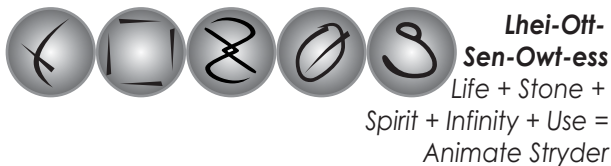
This advanced Rune allows a caster to view the magic affecting an item and determine the power and duration of the effect. A single success on this roll allows the caster to determine if the target item is under the influence of a magical effect - magical items glow slightly to the caster's eyes. Two successes shows the caster more information, from which they can determine the number of successes rolled when writing the Rune.

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A third success allows them to discern the effect's duration and time remaining. A fourth success lets the caster see a signature of sorts, which may reveal the identity of the original caster, assuming the caster of this Rune is familiar with the original caster's work. Each success also reveals one of the actual runes, so two successes is sufficient to identify most effects.



or



This is the basic Rune Word used to animate a Stryder. Other complex Runes must be utilized to cause it to move, sense its surroundings, or interact with a human pilot, but without this particular Runes, a Stryder is only a statue. Even with this Rune, Stryders require weekly maintenance to rescribe the Runes and extend the life of the Stryder, as every Rune eventually fades (see **Mheta's Law**, page 3.4). Most adventurers responsible for maintaining Stryders will be able to renew fading Runes, keeping them intact, but would be unable to create them without considerable assistance. Maintaining engraved runes in use is simply a matter of knowing the rune and making an Average(7) Runelore check about once a week to keep them from fading. The amount of time it takes depends on the maintenance interval, and the difficulty may be higher for longer intervals as well. Failure means the Rune Word in question is damaged, which would be a catastrophe for a Stryder, so maintaining runes is done very carefully and very conscientiously. Obviously, the runes necessary to the operation of a Stryder are not only engraved inside the Stryder, but usually protected by physical and magical barriers to prevent sabotage.

▼ **MECHANICAL RUNE WORDS** - It should be obvious that there are some difficulties involved in inscribing many Rune Words. For instance, many Runes affect an area, and when completed, it is quite likely that the caster will be in that area, and thus affected by the Rune. This can be problematic in the case of attack Runes meant to damage all within range.

Another consideration with written Rune Words is time delay. In many cases, the caster may not want the Rune to activate immediately. For example, a Rune that causes a sword to be lined with flame is going to be most useful during a battle, at which time the bearer of the sword may not have the time to wait and write on his weapon.

For this reason, many Rune Scholars write the entire Rune out on two separate pieces of material. The Rune must still be written or inscribed in one sitting, but if the component Runes are separated, or if the control Rune is written elsewhere, the Rune will not take effect until the pieces are brought together. This allows a scribe to write a trap Rune onto two pieces of stone, then set them into place from a safe location. A Rune may be inscribed into two different pieces of steel, then attached to a switch allowing it to be activated at a later time.

Another common use of mechanical rune words is in traps or alarms. Rather than relying on a rune of long duration or high complexity, a simpler or shorter duration rune is inscribed, and it is completed when a mechanical trigger puts the pieces together. This could be a tripwire, clockwork device or other simple means of putting the pieces in contact with each other. This can extend the useful life of an inscribed rune to nearly indefinite levels.

**EXAMPLE:** An inscribed rune with a duration of merely an hour could be useful for centuries if only tripped for a few seconds at a time on an irregular basis.

Mechanical rune words are not limited to metal or stone. They could be drawn on a scrap of paper that is activated when folded, a pattern sewn into a garment that activates when it is buttoned or laced, or a tattoo that works when you cross your fingers or make a fist just so, or be a tattoo spread across several people who must all be present to make the rune work.

**Rune Swords** - Most Rune weapons are created through advanced Rune usage, using advanced Rune Words to lengthen the duration of the effect. For some Runed weapons, however, this is not entirely practical. It may be problematic to have a flame-lined sword that will not go out, for example. Delayed effects can be achieved by the use of a simple metal switch. A narrow sheath of steel at the base of the blade can be slid into place next to a control Rune carved into the blade. When the switch is slid into place, the Rune takes effect, and when it is slid out of place, the effect ends. Another way of doing this is by a spring-loaded catch on the scabbard of the blade, automatically connecting the runes when the weapon is drawn. This method may also be used to prolong the life of a Rune while the Rune itself lasts its ordinary duration. As per the Law of Mheta, the effects will ordinarily be used up in a matter of hours. By turning off the Rune Word, the effects can be preserved for another day.

**Rune Throwers** - Rune Throwers are a creation of the Sivtagi Masasan, seen rarely elsewhere in the world, but with growing frequency as time passes. They are mechanisms consisting of a sturdy, somewhat flattened barrel (typically steel) with Runes inscribed inside the base of the barrel, along the shaft's side. Specially constructed, Rune-inscribed bars (also typically steel, though often stone) are custom-fit for the barrel, made to fit snugly inside so they can slide down to the bottom of the barrel.

At the bottom, a thin piece of metal separates the two Rune Words. When this strip is removed, the steel bar or disc is free to contact the Rune Word inside the barrel. This collision of the two Rune Words forms a new, longer Rune Word that has a very specific function - to create a small explosion in the barrel that sends the projectile out of the barrel at immense speeds. Some Rune Throwers use pistons, gears or other means of connecting the runes, and each craftsperson touts the superiority of their own particular type of weapon.

Smaller Rune Throwers are capable of being carried by foot troops and have better armor-penetrating ability than crossbows. Larger versions (Rune Cannon) can be toted by Rune Stryders, and have been used to lay siege to fortresses.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Ammunition for Rune Throwers is one of several incompatible types, each "brand" having their own special ammunition, with each shot costing about one four-hundredth of the weapon cost. So a 500 Vel Rune Thrower costs a little more than 1 Vel per shot to use, while a 4,800 Vel Rune Cannon costs 12 Vel per shot.

Rune Throwers are reloaded in a manner similar to muzzle-loading firearms are on Earth. However, the process is somewhat faster (on par with a crossbow) and the loaded weapons are not vulnerable to wet weather.

Unfortunately, for all their power, Rune Throwers have numerous points of failure that have made them somewhat unreliable. The power of the explosion can make the barrel-engraved rune less reliable. Any foreign material in the barrel will act as a separation between the runes and prevent their combining. Rune Throwers are assumed to be Unreliable(7). On any failure to activate, the unreliability increases for future shots by the number of "1's" in that total roll. This penalty remains until the weapon is cleaned, but one point of any extra penalty always remains.

**EXAMPLE:** A Rune Thrower that has suffered an increase from Unreliable(7) to Unreliable(9) could be cleaned out and have this number reduced to Unreliable(8). If it suffered later problems and went to Unreliable(11), it could be cleaned out again and brought down to Unreliable(9).

That is, some of any problems with a Rune Thrower are accumulated physical damage that cannot be repaired mundanely or magically.

Rune Throwers also carry a potential chance for catastrophic failure. If at any time an attack roll is all "1's", the barrel shatters and cracks, dealing out the weapon's normal damage plus 1d as a lethal explosion. The weapon is of course destroyed beyond all repair.



# EABA

The secrets to create Rune Throwers are known only to a select few Rune Scholars, most of them Sivatagi Masasan, and as such the specific Runic combinations for creating one are not listed here. Adventurers may have access to such devices, but should not be able to make them themselves. Even the runes used on the projectiles are fragments of multiple runes. Without an understanding of the entire rune word they are meant to embody, they cannot be duplicated (though many are actively trying and there is a significant reward for the first to do so). The weapons and ammunition embody money-making trade secrets and are not only nearly impossible to disassemble and reverse-engineer, they often include mechanical rune words that violently self-destruct the weapon if disassembly is even attempted, the Rhun equivalent of "no user-serviceable parts inside".

▼ **RUNE STRYDERS** - Rune Stryders (described fully in the **Book of Stryders**) are, as with Rune Throwers, quite rare, quite powerful, and filled with Runic secrets not known to the general populace. The particular combination of Runes and Rune Phrases that turn a heap of metal and stone into a true Rune Stryder are much more complex than can be handled by any single Rune Master, and the inscriptions take months, if not years, to complete properly. As such, individual players are highly unlikely to actually be involved in the creation of a Stryder. While a Stryder Crew (of which players might be a part) are certainly capable of patching Rune Stryders up, fixing small Rune problems, etc., it is unlikely they could put a Rune Stryder together from scratch, and bring it to life, during the course of most campaigns.

▼ **RUNE MASTERS** - There are those who use Runes like common peasant charms, and there are those who study Runes more intently, using them to further their own ends. These latter include any of the sorts found in the Book of Roles, including the Divaran Runescribe and Magus. However, none of these (and, indeed, no other Role presented herein) are truly considered to be Rune Masters.

These mysterious, reclusive few (perhaps less than one-hundred in all), are rarely seen and even more seldom heard. They are responsible for crafting the key Runic components in items such as Rune Stryders and some varieties of Runed armor and weapons, using complex Runic phrases that are impossible for most to even comprehend, much less master. Because of their secretive nature, it is impossible to fathom how much knowledge they possess. Some claim each has mastery over all the known Runes, while others claim that they have access to unique Runic secrets. More likely, each knows the dozen or so Runes necessary to craft those items needed by the Rune Master's sponsor, typically a rich warlord or high-ranking politician. Even so, this is a remarkable achievement; very few individuals ever master even a handful of Runes.

One thing that is not known is how the Rune Masters can spend weeks or months or even years on a rune, when total concentration is required for all other runic magic. *Have they a secret rune that allows them to pause a rune casting or engraving? Do they have a special trait granted only to a few? Or something else entirely?* No one except the Rune Masters knows, and they aren't telling.

Interaction with Rune Masters, if it happens at all, will be a once-in-a-lifetime event. Masters will typically communicate through an army of servants, go-betweens and underlings, perhaps fearing for their own lives (many would seek to destroy an opposing country's Masters), perhaps merely refusing to debase themselves by interacting with unworthies. Nearly everything a typical individual will "know" about the Masters will be rumor and legend, those few who truly know a piece of the truth tending to keep that information to themselves. Those who have sold secrets about the Rune Masters to others have tended to meet sudden, unusually painful deaths. One thing that is probably true is that Rune Masters have much more political influence than the titular leaders of a nation would publically admit. After all, if your personal expertise is an integral part of your nation's military prowess, your ability to sway national policy is going to be significant.

Rune Masters have to tread a fine line. They have to train their own successors, but still have to make themselves irreplaceable. Anyone who makes it to the rank of Rune Master is not only supremely skilled in runelore, but also in politicking, secrecy, manipulation and ruthless self-interest.

In game terms, it might be that some degree of the Larger than Life trait is required to have any chance of succeeding at the most difficult of rune words, and all nations actively (and secretly) search for such prodigies and spirit them away as children, recruit them with the promise of riches, or if all else fails, kill them to prevent their talents from falling into unfriendly hands...

Or perhaps this, too, is merely rumor, meant to scare off the unwary. The exact role that Rune Masters will play in a campaign is up to the gamemaster. Examples of rumors that might circulate are found here; some, most, all or none of these may be true in any given campaign.

**Divaros:** Divar has a high council of seven Rune Masters who meet every month to share knowledge and craft those complex Runic items needed by the country as a whole. The Prime Chancellor is a Rune Master, and hides his knowledge lest his enemies have another reason to kill him. The last true Rune Master vanished under mysterious circumstances after the death of the others. Some say she killed them all herself and kept their knowledge. Others claim she fled to avoid the same fate.

**Zokili:** Anyone can become a Rune Master through deep meditation on the Runes themselves, the knowledge already present in every individual, merely waiting to be untapped. The Zokili have three Rune Masters, one of whom has been taken prisoner by the Divaros. The leadership refuses to acknowledge this event, as it would surely lead to open warfare that would destroy the country. The secret Runes that activate a Stryder number twelve, and include all six of those Runes named for the Gods.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Myndwar:** The Myndwar Rune Masters have another seven Runes not commonly known anywhere else in the world. They know their function and choose not to reveal their secrets for fear that it would bring about the world's end. The Myndwar Rune Masters have stumbled across the giant corpse of the fallen Dead God, her corpse resting atop a mound of thousands of Runes, each unique. Her resting place lies far to the South, near Draslander country. There are ten Myndwar Rune Masters, but they will not reveal their true nature even to each other, lest any try to kill the others. However, one of the ten knows who the others are, and is plotting their demise.

**Kantarin:** There is but one Rune Master among the Kantarin, and he wanders the small islands between the mainland and the subcontinent, acting in accordance with a prophecy he himself has discovered. The Kantarin Stryders are actually Rune-less, requiring no interaction from Rune Masters, and function entirely due to the special bond between the Kantarin people and the jungle they dwell in. The Druid Kantar was the last true Rune Master. When he died in exile, all hope for the people of Rhun died with him.

**Sivatagi:** The Sivatagi Rune Masters have discovered a form of insect life naturally inscribed with Runes of power, and have cultivated these beasts into giant war steeds. The Rune Thrower actually has nothing to do with Runes, and is instead a chemical concoction involving secret spices and minerals found only in the inland desert, or is a combination of Runes and chemistry, explaining why none outside the Sivatagi have managed to duplicate the feat. Sivatagi Rune Masters trace immense Runes in fortress walls to decimate armies that would march against them.

**Draslander:** A small Divaros child found by the Draslander has immense Runic knowledge, which he bestows upon these otherwise ignorant individuals, and is in turn worshipped like a god. The Draslander have no Rune Masters, as they are illiterate and incapable of the intense study necessary to be one. All Draslander Rune Masters are female, and they kill off all other females in the swamp to maintain control.

**Collaborative Runecasting** - Given the limitations of casting advanced Rune Words, it would require extraordinary skill to release even a four-Rune phrase. Only a Runemaster of legendary ability could hope to successfully scribe the most basic Runes needed to power a Stryder. When a complex Rune Word is required to be inscribed, several Runecasters may pool their abilities and increase the chances of success. All contributing Runecasters must have at least +1d skill in Runelore. This ability is inherent to all runecasting and assumed to be part of the framework cost.

Each doubling of Runecasters reduces the point cost for the difficulty of the rune by 5 points or adds +1d to the effect. It may be possible that only one of the runecasters has to be involved, allowing the runecasters to work in shifts, so long as the runecasting process is continuous. Only one caster rolls the skill check, so it should be the caster with the highest Runelore skill.

The number of doubling of casters who may contribute to the scribing of a spell is equal to the number of Runes. After that point, the casters would simply be in each other's way.

**EXAMPLE** - A four-rune word could have up to eight people working on it. This would be three doublings and would be good for a -15 on the modifier total.

This is the method used to create Stryders. The original Runes were discovered by Runemasters now lost to time and history, and those artisans and Runecasters who make Stryders must cooperate simply to make it possible to accurately scribe the intensely complicated Runes that power Stryders.

These rules only apply to written Runes. Casters may not work together to reduce the difficulty of spoken Runes, and so many complex Runes *must* be written to be effective.

▼ **RUNED ITEMS** - The real problem with Runed items is that any Rune creating a magical effect eventually fades. Not even the powerful Runes scribed into Stryders are immune to this effect – such Runes must be maintained regularly if the Stryders are to continue to operate. However, there are several ways to work around this shortcoming and lengthen the durability and duration of Runes.

The first way to lengthen the life span of a Rune is to mechanically separate the individual parts, as mentioned earlier. This is the method used on Rune Swords, Rune Throwers, and many other Runed items. The Rune is carved into a piece of metal, at which time the caster makes their Runelore skill check to see if it was done correctly. The rune must be activated, if only momentarily, to determine success. The Rune is then split in two, so that the control Rune is separated from the effect Rune. The two halves of the Rune remain intact, since the Rune is not active. When the pieces are joined, the Rune releases, and both the effect and the durability of the Rune begin to fade. Once the effect is no longer needed, the two pieces are separated again, and the countdown ends. Using this method, an inactive Rune could theoretically last indefinitely.

Another method used to prolong the life of a Rune is simple maintenance. An adventurer with at least +0d Runelore skill, knowledge of the runes used and the appropriate drawing or inscribing skill can retrace the Runes, prolonging and renewing them. The time needed to maintain a Rune is perhaps one-tenth the time it took to create the Rune in the first place. The maintenance must occur before the Rune fades completely. Once the Rune's durability expires, it must be rescribed from scratch. This method only lengthens the durability of the Rune, not its effect. That is, separating the runes and retracing them can make them as good as new, but will not increase the duration of the runes once they are activated again.

The final method for lengthening the durability of a Rune has more to do with the substance upon which the Rune is carved than the process of carving it. The rules describe different Rune durations based on the material used, but there is one very rare material not listed – precious stones. The small, hard stones can hold Runes for up to one-hundred years, as long as the effects of the Runes do not expire because of the nature of the rune itself.

The drawbacks to using precious stones are obvious – tiny work areas mean that incredible precision is required to carve a Rune, and the stone itself must be very large to accommodate a Rune. Such large precious stones are very expensive and relatively rare. A final concern is the actual difficulty involved in carving a Rune into a precious stone. The time required is significant, and the skill required is legendary. For these reasons, Rune-inscribed precious stones are very rare and extraordinarily valuable.

While Runed items can be very valuable and powerful, they are not infallible. Success in using one is based on the skill of the caster who scribed the Runes, not the end user, placing a buyer at the mercy of the seller's honesty about the quality of the item.

It is not difficult for a charlatan to create items that appear to be Runed, but which have no value. Of course, this only works for items that cannot easily be tested. A person selling Runed items depends heavily on his reputation, as there is little besides his word to assure his customers regarding the reliability of their purchases.

**Light Rod:** These handy devices do little more than provide light on demand. Light rods can come in many shapes and forms, from simple wooden planks to ornate gold wands. Regardless of the form, however, they all operate on the same basic principle. A *Nhet-ess* Rune is carved into two pieces of material, which are then separated to preserve the effect. The individual Runes are mounted on a rod with a slider or switch that joins them and releases the Rune, creating light. The switch can also be used to separate the two halves of the Rune, saving the light for another day. Many incorporate other features such as hoods to focus the light or colored glass to color the light. The value of a light rod varies greatly, depending on the material used, the decorations on the device and the extra features. In general, however, a light rod will cost anywhere from 2 to 20 Vel.

**Attack Icons:** A large band of foes can spell trouble for many mercenaries, and items that release attack Runes will often affect everyone in range, including the wielder. Zokili mercenaries were the first to use attack icons to deal with such difficulties, but the use has spread to most of Rhun. At their most basic, attack icons are simply attack Runes scribed onto two different pieces of material. When the pieces are joined, the Rune releases the attack against anyone within range. However, users would most likely want to be a ways away before the Rune is joined, or the Rune would also attack them. Therefore, attack icons include a small spring-loaded mechanism that joins the Runes when the icon strikes a solid obstacle. An easily-removed safety is inserted between the two halves to prevent accidental discharge, and removed before the Rune is thrown. Effectively, an impact-fuzed magical grenade.

The array of Runes used on attack icons is impressive. Elemental Rune attacks are popular, as are many Prime Runes. Many thieves use Sensory Runes to improve their chances of escape, and even some Life, Conceptual and Spatial Runes are sometimes used in these icons.

Attack icons are not absolutely reliable. Their mechanical nature makes them liable to breakdown and failure. If they land on or strike something hard, they almost always release as intended, but if the ground is too muddy, or if it lands in water, the spring mechanism may not snap properly, and the Rune could fail to discharge, leaving it armed and in enemy hands. Foes could recover the icon and throw it back!

Removing the safety from an attack icon is a major action, as is throwing the item. The user then makes a Throwing skill check (or Agility minus 1d) with standard difficulty, modified for range. If the roll is successful, the Rune usually releases properly, either by striking the ground, a wall, or an opponent. If the roll is a 7 or less, the Rune does not release. If the roll is all 1's, the Rune snaps closed before it is out of range of the user, and affects the thrower and anyone close to them.

The gamemaster should determine the skill level of the scribe of the attack icon, since the Throwing roll merely determines if the rune activates, not whether it affects the target. Attack icons are not cheap. The mechanism upon which they are carved is difficult to produce without delicate engineering, and once made, a competent Runecaster must scribe the attack Rune. These portable attack Runes tend to have a cost based on their difficulty plus about 5 Vel for the mechanical parts.

**Personal Charms:** Many of the people of Rhun wear jewelry, such as bracelets, necklaces or rings. These otherwise harmless decorations can be equipped with sliding Rune Words, turning the most innocent of bracelets into a charm designed to boost the wearer in some way.

Most charms are created on the underside of jewelry, facing the user so that they are the only target. For example, a Rune might be scribed on the inside of a bracelet, activated when the user slides the control Rune into place. Some few Runes are worn more prominently, in order to offer their effects to anyone close enough to enjoy the benefits.

The most popular Runes to adorn such charms are *Pei-ess*, *Fas-ess*, *Thei-ess*, and *Sen-ess*, Runes that boost attribute scores temporarily. Defense Runes are also common, with *Nhet-ess* (defense against any magical attack) being the most popular defense Rune.

The effects provided by charms are very fleeting, but they can be released with a minor action and an Average(7) Agility roll. The effects last as described in the written description of the Rune, so their durations are usually only one minute per success. However, when a combatant needs a quick edge, these charms can be very handy. Once a user no longer needs the effect, they can separate the Runes, saving the balance for another day.

The cost of personal charms varies depending on the quality of the jewelry and the successes achieved by the Runescribe. They are rarely less than 15 Vel, with a maximum price limited only by the value of the jewelry and quality of the Rune.

***Ite- Weapons:*** The *Ite* Rune is ideal for fighters, as it can increase the accuracy of attacks, making them more deadly in combat. A few lucky mercenaries wield weapons charmed with the *Ite* Rune. In order for the *Ite* Rune to affect the weapon, not the wielder, the weapon must be properly scribed. That is, *Ite* inscribed onto an item makes the item more accurate. Without will and volition, this is useless, so the weapon must be given such. The Runescribe creating an *Ite* weapon must first prepare the weapon. The weapon must be scribed in a manner similar to that used to create Stryders. A shortened version of the Rune Word used to power a Stryder is carved into the weapon, usually in a location that can be covered or hidden within the weapon. The *Ite-ess* Rune is carved upon the same material as the animating Rune, and both are separated so that they can be joined with a switch. The Rune is generally covered by the weapon's handle, so that it is protected from damage that might occur in a melee.

When the switch is activated, the weapon is animated on a very basic level, and the *Ite-ess* Rune is allowed to affect the weapon instead of the wielder. The weapon actually guides the hand of its wielder, interpreting the desire of the wielder, increasing the accuracy of attacks according to the number of successes rolled on the initial Runescribing attempt.

Rumors of legendary warriors carrying these weapons have been grossly exaggerated. Some mercenaries talk of warriors swinging talking axes, or blades that actually twist or elongate to strike multiple foes. These stories are not true – *Ite- weapons* are not sentient. They merely possess enough animation to allow the *Ite-ess* Rune to take effect.

Since very skilled Runescribes must make these weapons, they tend to carry very significant accuracy bonuses. The difficulty for attacks made using *Ite- weapons* is usually reduced by at least 4, but 6 or even 8 point modifiers are not impossible. An *Ite- weapon* made with 5 successes is a truly wondrous weapon, capable of incredible feats of military prowess.



*Ite-* weapons are difficult to create. The *Ite-ess* Rune itself is not particularly difficult, but the Rune used to animate the weapon is a four-syllable advanced Rune Word, and can be a challenge for even the most skilled Runescribes. Therefore, these weapons are rarely sold. When they are sold, they generally fetch up to one-hundred times the value of the basic weapon from which they are made.

**Mhet- and Nhet- Armor:** The incredible defensive powers of the *Mhet-ej* and *Nhet-ej* Runes are somewhat offset by their very short durations. Writing the Runes grants an improvement in the duration, but the target must be an animate item.

This limitation can definitely be overcome, however, and the result is very expensive but useful armor. As noted under the particular runes, *Mhet-ej* strengthens versus all physical attacks, while *Nhet-ej* protects against any magical attack. The bonus provided is significant, and so is highly valued. *Mhet-ej* and *Nhet-ej* Runes are sometimes scribed into armor to allow those unskilled in Runelore to enjoy the benefits of these Runes.

Both Mhet and Nhet armors are generally metal armor. The armor is rigged with *Mhet-ej* or *Nhet-ej* Runes, and one complex Rune as used in *Ite-* weapons. To activate the protection, the user activates the animating Rune and then one of the protection Runes. Each activation takes a minor action and an Average(7) Agility roll. In addition to the greatly increased mundane protection such an armor can provide, it also actively works to protect the wearer. Attacks designed to get through chinks or gaps in armor find those gaps closed before the attack strikes.

A suit of armor may include both *Nhet-ej* and *Mhet-ej* Runes, though only one form of protection will work at a time. Mhet and Nhet armors are very expensive. To determine the cost of a suit of armor, start with the base price of the armor, add the cost of the *Mhet-ej* or *Nhet-ej* Runes included in the armor, and 1000 Vel for the animating runes allowing the armor to be the target of the runes.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Ote- Wafers:** These wafers are actually thin metal disks the size of a small plate. They come in two halves, each with half of an *Ote-ess* Rune. Each half has a handle. The user holds each half tightly and places them together, after which the wafer (and the user) teleport to the location previously determined by the Runescribe who created the wafer. The user does not determine the location, and once the wafer is created, the location is fixed. The wafer will not function if carried outside the range of the Rune, and so these disks have very limited usefulness. However, when created by a skilled runescribe, ranges of several kilometers are possible, possibly much further if only the wafer itself is sent. The cost of an *Ote-ess* wafer is usually just the price of the metal used to scribe it, plus fifty-percent more than the fee for scribing the Rune. The wafers are usually custom made, so that the user may dictate their exact destination (which the runescribe must have visited).



▼ **NEW RUNES** - As an option, the gamemaster can decide to disallow some of the Runes provided or limit knowledge of certain Runes to isolated areas. The players may be surprised the first time they encounter a Kantarin Runecaster who surrounds himself in a cloak of flames, or they might be amazed when they meet night watchmen who walk the city carrying light rods instead of torches. The adventurers might be able to gain access to these "rare" Runes or they may be limited to admiring them. A player who sees a new, powerful Rune must push to learn it themselves, and limiting the players' access could frustrate them considerably.

Runes can also be used as powerful enticements. Any Runecaster would be delighted to be the only living person with knowledge of a new control Rune. Entire adventures could be built around finding these new Runes or items. Finally, some Runes and items might initially only be found in the hands of the players' opponents. A foe armed with an unknown Rune or a powerful *lte*-weapon could be a great challenge to the players and provide for all manner of exciting confrontations. Defeating the foe might allow the players to take the knowledge for themselves, providing extra incentive.

The Runes presented are by no means the only Runes you may use in your game. You may want to create new Runes, for any of the uses presented above. While this is not a particularly difficult process, there are some guidelines you may want to follow to keep them consistent with existing Runes.

### 1. Select a Definition for the Rune

The first step in creating a new Rune is to decide what kind of Rune you want to make. The Rune should be general enough to be flexible, but not so vague that it is difficult to define. At this stage, you only need a basic concept.

For example, we have decided to create a Rune, and we think that gravity is a cool and flexible idea.

### 2. Determine a Category for the Rune

New Runes should fit into one of the categories – Prime, Elemental, Sensory, Life, Conceptual, Spatial, or Control. Since a target may not have more than one Rune from a given category active at the same time, it is important that the Rune belong to only one category. Use the existing Runes to help you decide on a fitting category. The spell design modifier for the rune should be close to the most compatible **EABA** power modifier.

For example, gravity is a powerful Rune, and a very global concept, so it could fit nicely as a prime Rune. However, it is a concrete enough concept, and could easily be considered an elemental Rune. Given the effects we're considering for the Rune, we decide that the elemental category is the best fit. Gravity and lifting things (or holding them down) are pretty close to Strength, so we give the rune the same power modifier as "acts as an Attribute (Strength)".

### 3. Name the Rune

Your new Rune needs a name. The name is generally based on a sound found in language. You should decide on a spelling and pronunciation of the Rune.

For example, the name of our new gravity Rune will be *Kit-*. It is based on the sound made when a k sound is next to a t, as in *pact*.

### 4. Determine the Effects of the Rune

There are three requirements when creating the effects for a new rune. The first is to determine a general effect which is consistent with every control Rune. The effects will vary, but they should all follow a common theme.

For example, we have decided that the gravity Rune affects a target's weight. The various control Runes will alter the target's relationship with the ground.

The second requirement is to apply different control Runes to the effect Rune. As mentioned above, these should all be consistent in theme.

For example, we now decide on the different effects caused by combining the gravity Rune with control Runes.

**Attack with gravity (*Kit-eq*):** The target is slammed with the force of gravity, pulling them painfully toward the ground.

**Defend against gravity (*Kit-ej*):** The target becomes lighter than air, able to float above the ground or counter effects of *Kit-eq*.

**Use gravity (*Kit-ess*):** The target becomes heavier and more difficult to move.

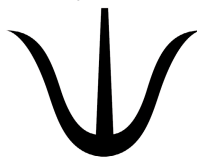
**Defend with gravity (*Kit-ex*):** The target is surrounded by a field of gravity. Incoming attacks are drawn to the ground.

**Shape gravity (*Kit-ett*):** The caster may manipulate the weight of the target, making the target either heavier or lighter.

The final requirement is to decide on specific game effects. Use the existing Runes to determine damage, protective effects and durations. In general, very powerful Runes have shorter durations. Look at the potential effect the rune can have not only on battle, but on politics and the economy. Also figure out how people will respond to the new rune, and what counter-measures are possible against it and how quickly they can be figured out.

### 5. Draw your Rune

This step is largely optional, but adds playability and a sense of depth to your Rune. Find a pattern compatible with the existing Runes, and sketch the Rune. For example, We have decided to draw the *Kit*-Rune as follows:



## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **SQUELCH** - Three shadows made their way through the sewer, deftly avoiding every single dry spot along the way, somehow managing to coat themselves head to toe in the muck until they were nigh indistinguishable from their environment. The noises they made as they moved might easily have been mistaken for those made by small rodents, or, upon closer investigation, small children, the sort of babble-speak that twins might concoct in idle hours.

"Yaw inant."

"Anot"

"Ahsaw. Yadid juswat wetol yanot tado."

"Shadup. Bochu."

The third, the tallest, ended the argument with its interjection. As its utterance resounded through the dank sewer, mingling with the drips and drops from above, one listening more closely might have discerned, in the echo, the fact that this was not mere gibberish, but the Divaros tongue, perverted and twisted. Not the squeaks and growls of an ignorant predator, but an argument between two cohorts about who was at fault for some recent transgression.

All too human, in other words.

Alas, the only other ears to hear the chatter were not nearly old enough to appreciate the similarity, for they belonged to the youngster strapped in a bundle to the back of the tallest Draslander. "Tallest" being relative, of course, for even he, one of the largest of his kind, was still shorter than most Divaros children. Fortunately, this had its advantages in the present circumstances, for all three of the Dras had been navigating their way through progressively smaller and tighter areas of the sewer system, through areas all but impassible to larger folk.

Unfortunately, it had also gotten them completely lost.

"Weda bindere bynow ifya hajust listent."

"Eyetol jutoo tashu tup, yagid?"

"...lp..."

"Ifya donsh tupi gonta haf..."

"Shadup. Lissen."

The leader stopped, holding out his flaking fingers in front of the other's face to emphasize the point. All three stopped their squirming, holding deathly still as only a Dras could, the only sound the gentle breathing of their youngling cargo and the drip of water from their shins.

"Idun hearnuttin."  
"Shhhh."  
"Help..."

The call came again, clearly humanoid, in what sounded like the Divaros dialect. Faint, distant. Three pairs of keen Draslander ears honed in on the sound, pinpointing the source. No words were necessary, each as sure as the other two that he knew exactly where the voice was coming from. However, agreeing on how to react to this shared knowledge was a different matter entirely.

"Weesha go. Runnaway."  
"No, gosee whotis."  
"Yahgosee, ankillim."

The argument took some time, the Draslander philosophy that life was not a series of journeys, but a series of locations. One was always exactly where one was supposed to be, and thus why should there be any hurry to leave? In this case, the argument was over whether or not the place to be was here, near the voice, or elsewhere. Each having its merits, all being related to the fact that these Dras knew very well they were being hunted down even now. To run, investigate, or eliminate a possible enemy? In the end, it came down not to who had the most convincing argument, but who had the largest club in their hand. This happened to be the one carrying the child, and so it was that the trio found themselves altering their previous course to investigate the noise, two with broken noses.

The path (if it could be called a path, being merely yet another series of filth-clogged sewers) led them into larger and larger chambers, not quite back along the same route they'd been taking. Ten minutes and twelve arguments later, they found themselves outside a chamber. From within they could hear the faint sound of breathing, the splash of a shifting body struggling to find comfort where none could be found.

"Esindere."  
"Oklesgosee."

Without another word, the smallest of the group pulled out a narrow rusty dagger and forged onward. Too late, his tall compatriot noted the Runes carved over the chamber's entrance.

"Nodongo..."

The shortest Dras turned, confused, opening his mouth to disagree. And was torn apart by a charge of electricity, spasming forth from the Rune to ricochet within the chamber entrance. Several breaths later, naught remained of him but an echo of a scream, disappearing down the pipes.

"Toljoo," said the leader, standing to brush clumps of muck off his clothing. He checked the baby on his back, remarkably still sleeping despite the chaos, and then looked around for his other companion, knowing better than to bother looking for remnants of the one who had been torn apart by the *Nhet-eq* Rune in the doorway. The other was nearly as bad off; having been caught in the edge of the wave of energy, he lay quivering and blackened on the floor of the sewer. Alive, but barely.

The lead Dras sighed. This was not going well. Nevertheless, he had led them this far to see who was in this chamber, and he was even more determined now than ever to see for himself. Runes be damned. He stepped back, ignoring the further pleas for help that came from the man inside the chamber and his shattered compatriot. He took the time to carefully scan the ground, walls and ceiling for other Runes. He found several, faded and burned, dead Runes from years past, but otherwise the area was clean. Now to deal with that pesky *Nhet-eq* Rune, he thought.

The Rune's shape gave it the power it held, power that was released when activated by, say, someone passing nearby, or touching it. Destroy the shape, and you made the Rune powerless. The trick was destroying the Rune without coming close enough for it to do the same to you. Whoever had put the Rune atop that chamber entrance had been clever, placing it out of reach of whoever was obviously trapped inside, preventing them from easily destroying the Rune without first triggering it. Being on the outside, however, such a task was much more easily accomplished.

The Dras was no Rune Caster, but he knew the proper procedure. He settled down crosslegged across from the Rune, and scrounged in his pouch for several smooth stones, the sort designed for inscribing Runes. He carefully eyed the Rune, murmured to himself, and began hurling stones at the Rune.

He missed a lot, but he had more than enough stones.

After about a half hour of this, he was fairly satisfied that he had done enough damage to the *Nhet-eq* Rune to render it inoperable. For a moment, he considered pushing his crispy friend through first to test the theory, but decided that such a thing would somehow, in some way, be wrong of him. And so he shrugged, set the child down beside the other Dras, and strolled through the chamber opening. Where he was instantly tackled to the ground, his arm wrenched behind his back painfully. Under normal circumstances, on an average sized foe, this tactic might have resulted in a broken bone, a dislocated joint. However, the Dras' opponent was not expecting such a small intruder, and as such the larger man's grip was too loose, misplaced. The Dras quickly wriggled backwards out of his grip, drew his stout club, and smashed upward and away. With a grunt, his attacker was down on the ground tending to a bloody lip.

The Dras raised the club high, intending to stave his foe's head in, but paused as the man raised a hand, meekly attempting to ward off the blow. The Dras saw that the man's left arm was broken, the split end of the forearm jutting forth from the skin. His face was bruised and bloodied, not from the club blow but from repeated pummeling earlier in the night. And he appeared to be missing most of his left ear.

The Dras knew the club didn't do that.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

"No, stop... please." The human spoke with a broken mouth, many teeth loose or missing. He spat blood and looked up, pleadingly, knowing it was hopeless. Dras were not known for mercy. They were bloodthirsty, cunning little savages, known for cannibalism, torture and defilement. The best he could hope for was a quick death.

Yet the Dras paused, amazing them both. He lowered the club and considered his situation. He needed to keep moving. But he was lost, and overburdened. Outside the chamber, he had not only a baby to carry but also a wounded clanmate. He could not possibly carry both, nor could they remain here. Here, he had a wounded Divaros man, obviously not a threat to one of his caliber, not in his condition. If he was down here for some reason, there was a chance he knew his way around. Perhaps they could help each other.

The Divaros man would hardly have thought it possible that a Dras savage could have such thoughts. And even if he had assumed ignorance, the Dras' broken speech would have erased all doubts.

"Youcomin itme, cha?"

Through trial, error, several minutes of fumbling around and another brief thrashing with the club, the Dras managed to convince the Divaros man that it was in his best interest to come along. And then the stupid Divaros mentioned that he had lost a baby. Just like these foolish tall folk. Losing their children. Imagine, two in one night?

"Funnysat, ynow?" he said. "I gotsa bebbie outder now. Youwannit?"





STRYDERS

*Stryders are generally built primarily of wood and leather, with steel armor plates in key places. Certainly, much more powerful than any human enemy, a Stryder could decimate an enemy soldier with a single well-placed strike. But a group of smaller, more maneuverable enemies could easily swarm beneath and over even the largest Stryder. For all the Stryder's strength, it is the smallest foes who pose it the greatest danger.*

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**The Stryders of other Genres** - In studying Stryders, comparisons to other, similar creations in science fiction and fantasy will inevitably be made, and thus it is first crucial to understand what Stryders are not. Stryders are *not* advanced technology capable of human agility, superhuman speed and the ability to engage in agile, highly complex actions. That they can function at all is a miracle, and they do so only because magic is the power source, and all of the complex functions that would require a computer or highly sophisticated mechanical parts are handled by the pilot-Stryder interface. For all of this, Stryders are fairly slow, a hard and jarring ride, and generally have the agility of a drunken sailor.

**Mecha:** The Mecha of Japanese anime and games are, for the most part, little more than giant anthropomorphic machines designed for war, or using the original definition, any sort of machine at all. Stryders are *not* machines. They are not driven by fuel, nor do they contain cogs, gears, electrical wiring or steam-driven turbines. They are magical constructs that function only by way of Runic magic and a bond with their Pilot.

**Automatons:** Robots and other automated mechanical creations are much like Mecha, but for the fact that they are self-propelled and capable of independent action and (depending on the setting) a degree of free will. Stryders have no cognitive ability without their Pilots. With some few notable exceptions, a Stryder in the absence of its Pilot is merely an inanimate hunk of matter, no more alive than a pile of bricks or a mound of wood.

**Golems:** Originating in Jewish mythology, and then translated into standard fantasy fare, a golem is a construct of clay, stone or other material that is brought to life by means of magical, divine or scientific intervention. In some cases this is the application of a rune or spell; in others (as with Frankenstein's monster), it is a mysterious brew of chemicals and other agents. While Stryders are given potential for life through the application of Runes, they are generally not self-directed or self-aware. They cannot be given orders to dumbly follow; they are not merely ignorant, they are completely lifeless and mindless without their Pilots.

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Stryders are massive, towering constructs of wood, metal, leather, rock, bone, or chitin, created by humanity for the purpose of waging war. Certainly, Stryders have been put to use in other, less military occupations. Lacking large beasts of burden in most parts of the world, people have used Stryders to plough fields, carry goods, tear down trees and raise the walls of homes and castles, though these non-combat roles are only possible for the wealthiest of merchants or land-owners. In other areas, Stryders have taken on an almost mythic stature, as with the Kantarin, who revere their Stryders, formed of living wood, as deeply as they revere the forest in which they dwell. Among the Myndwar, Stryders are put to the task of burrowing beneath the earth, hewing stone and steel from the ground itself much faster than human hands could manage. And for the Sivatagi, whose Stryders are very much alive, the relationship between man and mount takes on a whole new meaning. Yet despite the exceptions, there can be no doubt that the primary purpose of Stryders is waging war, whether the intent is to conquer one's enemies or defend one's homeland. These constructs are built to destroy, and to withstand destruction, and for that reason they are at once treasured, feared, loved and reviled by all who encounter them. Well-built Stryders literally carry the stench of battle with them for years, the blood and smoke of conflict lingering about their bodies long after the war has ended. No one who has encountered one in battle can ever forget the experience.

**The Stryder-Pilot Bond** - A Stryder without a Pilot is not a Stryder. It is merely an empty shell, devoid of life (except among certain nations), much as a suit of armor or a crossbow is powerless and useless unless wielded by an expert warrior in combat. The Stryder Pilot is responsible for initiating all of the Stryder's actions, acting as its brain, nervous system and, some would have it, its soul. But despite the common moniker, the Stryder Pilot is much more than a driver or taskmaster. If all he did was steer, anyone could hop in the seat and take it for a spin. On the contrary, becoming a Stryder Pilot involves much more than study and practice. It involves an ability to more deeply bond with the Stryder itself, achieving a symbiotic relationship in which the Pilot becomes a part of his Stryder, and vice-versa. The Pilot's own consciousness and "heart" extend to the Stryder itself, bestowing it with a sort of shared intelligence, and creating, in a sense, a new form of life that is greater than either the Pilot or the Stryder on their own. For this reason, the relationship between Stryder and Pilot is much less akin to that of a brain and its body, and more appropriately compared to that of a pregnant mother and her unborn child. Certainly, without the presence of the child in her womb, the mother would continue to exist; but she would be a woman, and not a prospective mother. The presence of the child bestows on her a new sort of identity, one in which she has reciprocal responsibilities for the child inside (protection, nourishment), without which the child could not exist.

The Stryder Pilot gives the Stryder itself existence of a sort, and in return for benefiting from that existence, the Stryder protects (and in some cases nourishes) the Pilot within, enhancing and extending the bond. The two become one. The closeness of the bond can, and often does, have a psychological effect on the Pilot, though the intensity of the bond varies depending on the technologies of the different nations. In all cases, Pilots will spend much of their spare time around and inside their Stryders, looking after the construct or enhancing the bond.

In the most extreme cases, some go so far as to remain within their Stryders for weeks at a time, emerging only to eat and perform other essential tasks. A few become so attached to their Stryders that they ultimately refuse to emerge at all, instead lumbering off into the wilderness to pursue an independent existence that can only, in most cases, end in tragedy, with the wasting death of the Pilot, and thus the gradual decay of the thus inanimate shell of the Stryder. This is a particular issue with the Kantarin people, whose bond with their Stryders is at once dangerous and addictive.

▼ **STRYDER CONSTRUCTION** - Legend has it that the Stryders were originally developed to battle the Deijin, the giants who enslaved humanity in ages past. Images and imaginings of these first Stryders bear little resemblance to the Stryders used to wage war in the modern age, these older constructs being much taller, much broader, and, as any engineer will tell you, much more impossible. Time, after all, has a way of making things larger than life. Were these early Stryders a score of meters tall, capable of tearing up mountains and bringing down the moons? *Certainly not*. But time also has a way of revealing truths, for those who choose to look. The remains of the earliest Stryders, built centuries and generations ago, can still be found, on occasion, buried beneath piles of stone, crouched in fetid swamps, submerged in shallow lakes and rivers, their legs broken and shattered, ankles and feet crushed and mangled, torsos split in two. Their flaw was not necessarily in being too large, but rather in trying to mirror too closely the proportions of the human form (i.e., eight heads high), with the center of mass where the legs met the body. Were these first Stryders made of flesh, blood and bone, they might have managed more than a few feeble steps before collapse. However, the stone, metal and wood that they were made of consistently proved too heavy for their bodies to carry, and inevitably resulted in years of wasted effort and, quite often, the death of their Pilot and/or creator. It is still a mystery how the very first Stryders managed to defeat the Deijin giants at all (see **the World**), considering that their lumbering, ungainly bodies seemed destined for collapse. Not so coincidentally, this is often one of the points raised by those who believe that the Deijin are a mere figment of mythological imagination. Allowing that the first Stryders were used to fight the Deijin, however, perhaps it was some combination of the element of surprise, as well as some ancient Rune, yet to be re-discovered, that allowed them to defy the laws of nature, and to fight as well as stand and walk.

▼ **CREATING A STRYDER** - While all Stryders are designed for war, each Nation on the continent has a somewhat different method for creating Stryders, and each uses vastly different materials and methods. In all cases, the process of creating a Stryder is a complex one, requiring anywhere from months to years to complete, and is not easily role-played in real-time. However, a group of players that includes a Stryder Pilot will also need a Stryder, and as such it is important to decide what sort of Stryder is available. The following few sections thus outline the creation of Stryders among the various nations, giving the Pilot's player some idea of what went into its making. Since the methods vary so much, it is best to examine how each race goes creating Stryders individually.



**The Confederated Nations** - Having built an empire spanning the continent, Divaros learned that standardization was the key to effectively equipping and maintaining a larger army. The Divaran engineering tradition was built on a process of construction, fielding, and repair that needed to be sustainable regardless of distance. Therefore, Divaran Stryders tended to be (and still are) utilitarian and uniform in construction. The Divaros have the advantage of larger forces and widely available spare parts to repair damaged Stryders. On the other hand, Divaran military engineers are dogmatic and conservative, and shun innovation outside a careful, derivative progression. After hosting the armies of Divaros on their path to conquest, as allies, and at times even as foes in battle, the Myndwar and the Zokili were heavily influenced by the Divaran way of Stryder construction.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The Myndwar and Zokili learned most of what they know about modern Stryder construction from the Divaros. Many years have passed since their first Divaran-copied Stryders were built, however. While the Divaran influence is still obvious, over time both nations gradually evolved their own distinct traditions, and learned a few things on their own. Confederated Nation Stryders have in common their general use of a central body, with articulated limbs for locomotion. The Pilot almost always resides in an internal Rune Chamber, which is designed to facilitate the runic magic-based link between he and his Stryder. Confederated Nation fighting Stryders are almost all humanoid, while other types of supporting and siege Stryders often follow loosely turtle- or spider-shaped constructions. These may or may not have a head; if one is present it is mainly aesthetic. In keeping with Divaros tradition, the Confederated Nations classify all of their Stryders (and many of those belonging to others) into categories, to keep the logistics chain manageable. These four Stryder categories are organized according to basic body design, as follows.

**Valley Rat:** These Stryders are commonly used when tactical ability is more crucial than raw offense. The most flexible of Stryders, Rats are well-rounded, but not suited for a single function.

**Meadow Fox:** The agile Meadow Fox is most often used as a scout or forward spotter. Its trim design and upright stance allow it to move quickly in any direction, avoiding attacks easily and rarely returning them. They are the only Confederated configuration capable of leaping into the air.

**Black Dog:** These workhorse Stryders are built low to the ground, with four legs and no arms. They are designed to haul soldiers, siege engines or other heavy items, and do not have exceptional mobility. They are able to cover ground very rapidly, and often wear considerable armor to compensate for their inability to defend themselves.

**Iron Wolf:** These powerful, low-slung Stryders are strictly war machines, capable of punching huge stone or steel fists through enemy soldiers, Stryders, or stone walls. Built for power, not utility, they are not very useful outside of combat.



**Divaran Stryders** - The Divaros build their Stryders in central guildhalls known as Runehalls, where many technical and Runic experts are gathered together. Runehalls are large walled compounds containing numerous buildings including workshops, barracks, mess hall facilities, homes, libraries, pubs, and other support facilities, much like a self-contained town. Runehalls are typically isolated by distance and heavy security. The Divaros guard their technology fiercely and actively control communication. The Runehalls provide little room for inventiveness, being primarily concerned with production of existing models. A Chief Mage-Engineer oversees each Runehall, and he has nearly complete power over his charges. His main purpose is to ensure that the quality of the Stryders remains to standard. Beneath him, high-ranking Artisans and Runescribes are tasked with supervising day-to-day production and, if necessary, coordinating improvements with other Runehalls. Below them, in turn, are journeymen and apprentices with specialized, limited, knowledge, who perform most of the actual construction.

The Divaros use many traditional construction materials in creating their Stryders - mostly wood, metal, leather, and rope. A typical Divaran Stryder consists of a wooden frame, with leather skin, wood planks, or metal sheeting forming another shell, depending on type. Because parts are standardized, Divaran Stryders mostly use one of a handful of body types, with semi-modular limbs in an arrangement selected for specific kinds of missions. Divaran Stryders are still magical creations, but the Runic magic involved in their creation is used in a strictly utilitarian way. Divaran Stryders are maintained and repaired in the field by specialist mage-engineers, highly trained Runescribes who are among the workers in the army's camp followers. These Runescribes are given just enough information to make basic repairs to the Stryders, but could provide little information of use in building a new Stryder if captured. Even so, these specialists are closely monitored, and any found to learn enough about Stryders to become an information risk are quickly relocated to a Runehall. Divaran Stryders follow tried-and-tested configurations when determining size.

Rather than replicate the mistakes of the past, modern Divaran Stryder engineers and mechanics have since thrown out the ancient human ratio of upper to lower body (4:4) and settled on a much more functional ratio of 3:4. This has proven stable, durable and functional, and many have gone so far as to suggest that Stryders built in accordance with it are actually superior in form and function to the obviously inferior human form. Others have even posited that the Deijin giants, or even the gods themselves, are formed in such a ratio, further calling into question the supposed superiority of humanity. The 3:4 ratio finds its way into the construction of a Stryder in various guises, sometimes appearing as a figure, proportion or calculation to guide Stryder design, in other places appearing as a general organizational theory. Divaran Pilots (known as Homunculi in the Divaran military) have little to no influence on the construction of the Stryders they will pilot. In many cases, a Homunculus might pilot several Stryders over the course of a campaign, although in some rare cases, veteran Homunculi might grow particularly attached to a specific Stryder, and refuse to allow anyone else to pilot it.

**Myndwar Stryders** - The Myndwar, who contributed the first Runic discoveries to the creation of the Rune Stryder, initially built their own Stryders in the same fashion as the Divaros. However, over the years their widespread cultural use of stone led to their beginning to substitute greater and greater amounts of rock in their Stryders main parts. This is not to say that their Stryders are completely made of stone. A solid stone Stryder would be an impossible feat. However, they use stone in more ways, and in greater quantities, than any other Nation. The Myndwar found several advantages in constructing stone-based Stryders. Few materials retain Runic magic as well as rock. Wood and even most metals are not nearly as sturdy over the long run.





Stone structures also support more weight than other types of Stryder bodies, and therefore can be built larger and carry more. In fact, the Myndwar boast the largest Stryders anywhere. Their legendary Mountain Guardian Stryders are nearly thirteen meters tall. The disadvantages of stone lie mainly in slow construction time, lessened mobility, and extreme weight, but because the Myndwar hold the mountains, these problems matter less than they would elsewhere. The hard ground of the broad mountainous valleys the Myndwar call home has little trouble supporting several tons of Stryder, even though such creations would sink immediately on a Divaran plain or in a Draslander swamp. Aside from stone construction, the biggest difference between Myndwar and Divaran Stryder construction is philosophy. The Myndwar are a nation with a tradition of craftsmanship, and the concept of blindly mass-producing Stryders as quickly as possible is alien to them. Additionally, the sheer durability of a Myndwar Stryder in combination with their isolationist outlook means that a Myndwar Stryder, once built, will be likely around not just for a single campaign, but perhaps for generations. While Myndwar and Divaran Stryders share common features, Myndwar do not design theirs with cheap replacements in mind. Each Myndwar Stryder is a unique piece of art, its construction a labor of love largely undertaken by the Myndwar Pilot (known as a Jacker) and their extended family over several years, even decades in the case of larger types. Naturally, in this system the Jacker must be a skilled craftsman as well as Runesmith; novice Jackers are therefore carefully apprenticed by an experienced Jacker (often a father or close relative) for many years before ever wielding their own mount. The result is an intensely strong bond between Jacker and Stryder, surpassed perhaps only by the Kantarin Stryders living bond. The destruction of a Myndwar Stryder most often means the death of the Jacker; if they somehow survive an event that led to their Stryder's destruction, they are often a broken person, never quite whole again. This bond makes them very fierce in battle, but also pragmatic. They will not stay for a lost cause, but will withdraw to fight another day.

As with the Divarans, those Myndwar who actually know the secrets of animating a Stryder stay close to home, and are never the pilots or otherwise seen abroad.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Zokili Stryders** - Zokili lack the resources in sufficient quantity to produce metal-armored Stryders like the Divaros. In fact, they are lucky to be able to spare metal for tools and weapons. Thus forced to use other materials as a substitute, wood and leather feature far more predominantly in Zokili Stryders than in Divaran types. As a result, Zokili tend to focus on agility and speed, although some of their heavier wooden Stryders can, in numbers, easily hold up to metal or stone types. Like the Myndwar, the Zokili are a nation that appreciates craftsmanship, but in a somewhat different sense. While a Myndwar sees a Stryder as an enduring piece of himself, the Zokili prefer a uniquely carved and decorated Stryder for more aesthetic and psychological aspects, which they feel are nearly as important as the Runes that animate their creations. The destruction of a Stryder is expected eventually, but is not seen as a deterrent to producing Stryders with distinct character and identity. Stryder Pilyts are known for going to great lengths to have the best artists ornament their creations, preferring fearsome and intimidating designs. Zokili have borrowed the idea of using standardized limbs from the Divaros to make maintenance easier, but have no qualms about improvising or modifying to gain an advantage. It is not uncommon to find uniquely equipped Stryders in Zokili armies, at the cost of having to abandon broken pieces and spend additional time and effort creating or adapting a replacement. Zokili engineers are more restricted in the overall shape and size of a Stryder than even the Divaros, given the materials they have to work with. Zokili Stryders rarely reach seven meters in height, and are rarely able to carry very heavy weapons.

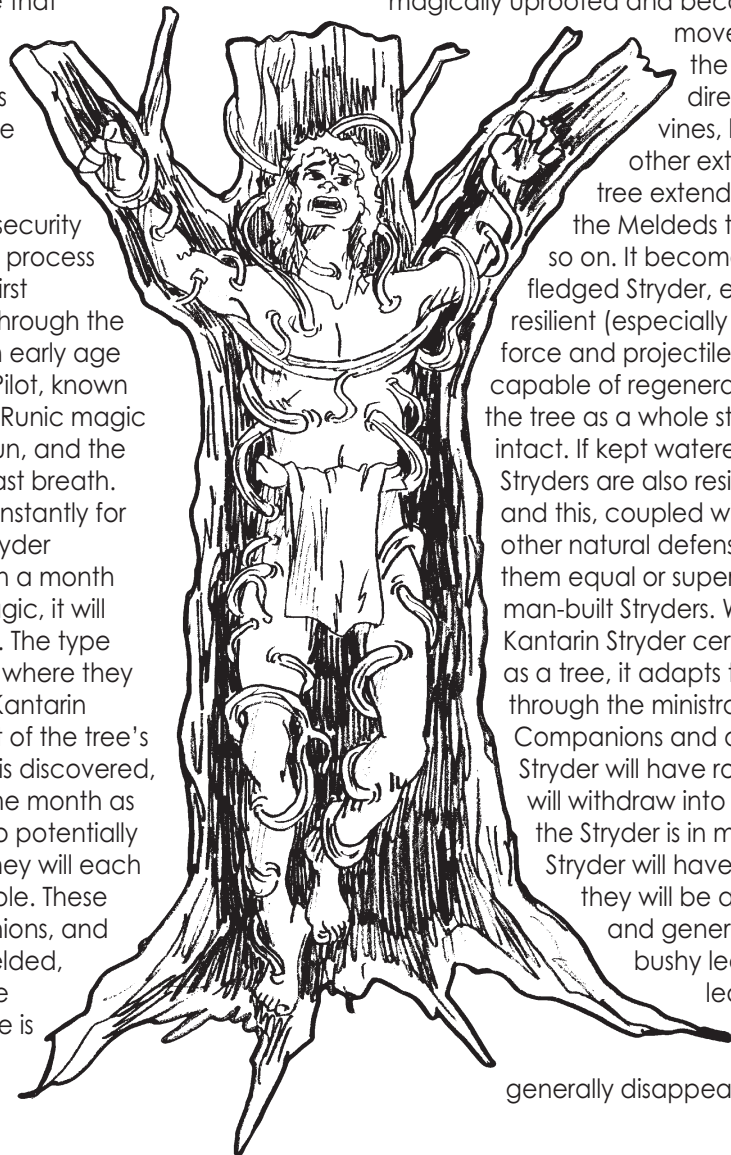
However, as Zokili Pilyts tend to be among the shortest and lightest of the Pilots of all Nations, they can afford to whittle some of the bulk away. As a result, Zokili Stryders are generally the fastest around, their agility contested only by some Sivatagi Stryders.

**The Outcast nations** - The Stryders of the Outcast Nations vary greatly in size, shape and function, straining and in some cases breaking the rules that the Confederated Nations adhere to in the construction of their own Stryders. The Kantarin use living trees as their Stryders, their Pilots (called Melded) literally bonding with the Stryder in a way well beyond what other Pilots experience. The Sivatagi do not build or grow their Stryders, instead taming and training the giant insects that roam the deserts they call home. And the Draslander make their Stryders from the cast-off materials of other Nations, putting together piecemeal Stryders that are as fearsome and unpredictable as they are likely to fall apart in the midst of battle. Many citizens of the Confederated Nations refuse to acknowledge that the Stryders of these other Nations are truly Stryders at all. For all intents and purposes, however, they are treated as Stryders, and considered as such by the people that use them.

**Kantarin Stryders** - Kantarin Stryders are created from a specific type of tree native to their home region, through a process the Kantarin Shapers jealously conceal both out of concern for their security and for the well being of the trees. The process is extremely special, beginning at the first sprouting of a sapling, and continues through the entire lifecycle of the tree, which at an early age becomes intertwined with that of the Pilot, known among the Kantarin as a Melded. The Runic magic involved is known nowhere else on Rhun, and the Kantarin will carry their secret to their last breath. Kantarin Shapers search the woods constantly for the specific type of tree suitable for Stryder cultivation; if the new plant grows even a month without being prepared with Runic magic, it will never grow to be suitable for a Stryder. The type doesn't grow in orchards or anywhere where they are planted by hand, and thus many Kantarin believe that their Stryders are the result of the tree's own will to become one. Once a tree is discovered, three Kantarin children born in the same month as the new sapling sprouts are selected to potentially become the future Stryders Melded; they will each train throughout childhood to fill that role. These three are known as the tree's Companions, and although only one will become the Melded, all of them are Runically bonded to the tree, and participate in its care. The tree is prepared by ritual Runic magic over a period of several years, allowing it to manifest the specific characteristics of the Stryder desired.

The individual aspects of the tree combine with the Runes to determine what kind of Stryder the tree will grow to become. Certain trees are raised to become light and agile; others are cultivated for strength. Various types of natural defenses are encouraged to grow such as carnivorous trap-flowers, thorny vines, thick spikes, shooting quills, poisonous saps, heavy limbs, or other such protection. After a period of fifteen to twenty years, the tree is large enough to begin the process of symbiosis with the Melded. Each of the three Companions stands around the tree, and one of them is chosen (some say by the tree itself). This one, the Melded, then undergoes an excruciatingly painful ritual whereby the plant extends tendrils under their skin. Subsequent separations and reunions with the Stryder, while not as painful as the initial bonding, still hurt intensely. However, the resulting euphoric warmth and sense of completeness the Melded feels while connected to the tree always makes him advocate the ritual as well worth the cost. While joined, the tree and the Melded are essentially one being. The tree is

magically uprooted and becomes able to move around at the Melded's direction. The vines, limbs, and other extensions of the tree extend and swing at the Melded's thought, and so on. It becomes a full-fledged Stryder, extremely resilient (especially against blunt force and projectile attacks), and capable of regeneration as long as the tree as a whole stays relatively intact. If kept watered, Kantarin Stryders are also resistant to fire, and this, coupled with their many other natural defenses, make them equal or superior to those of man-built Stryders. While a Kantarin Stryder certainly begins as a tree, it adapts to its new form through the ministrations of its Companions and a Shaper. The Stryder will have roots, but they will withdraw into the legs when the Stryder is in motion. The Stryder will have limbs, but they will be articulated and generally free from bushy leaves. The leaves at the crown of the tree will generally disappear or fall off.



The trunk is no longer straight and thick, it narrows and reforms to allow for a flexible and agile form. The Kantarin Stryder grows to be sleek and deadly, and is rarely mistaken for a tree once it uproots and begins its existence as a Stryder. The Melded can stay connected with the Stryder for only so long before he must be removed/severed, really to be fed and recover from the symbiosis to prevent risk to his body and mind.

The Melded cannot do this himself, and requires assistance from Kantarin Shapers or from the Companions. Runes protect the Melded from ill effects for awhile, but if he is not eventually separated, the Stryders own life-force will eventually overcome him and he will go insane as the suppressed natural needs of the tree become dominant and guide his will. If the Melded is ever killed while joined to the tree, it also results in the death of the tree. As the separation process is painful and the bonding process so addictive, Kantarin Melded must struggle to separate, but the potential death of the tree provides a powerful motivation. At the same time, the Stryder still requires nourishment and sunlight as other trees do, albeit less frequently than normal flora. After the Melded is severed from the Stryder, the Stryder re-roots to feed until rejoined with its Melded. In this phase the tree can be killed without physical risk to the Melded, although the Melded (and the two other Companions) will experience emotional anguish as deep as the loss of any human loved one. However, if the Stryder is killed while the Melded is joined, the Melded will also die. In return for their sacrifices, the tree provides all three Companions with long life; a Kantarin Stryder can live for as long as two-hundred years and the Companions can live out their natural lives or until the tree dies, whichever lasts longer. Their health is intertwined with the trees health from the point of the Meldeds first joining with the Stryder, and if the tree becomes diseased or is injured seriously, the Companions will experience fatigue and malaise accordingly, in a way that Rune Scholars have yet to adequately explain (conventional Rune Scholars dismiss the notion that the Kantarin Forest is in some way a single living entity).

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Sivatagi Stryders** - The Sivatagi follow a sharply different tradition in their Stryders than the other races. They have subjugated the large insect races of the desert and have adapted them for uses including domestic labor and combat. This development stems from the necessity posed by limited conventional construction materials available in their desert homeland and from their tradition of utilizing things on hand.

The Sivatagi use three main breeds of insect as Stryders. The Horlac, a kind of giant beetle, is the least common of the three but prized because of its nearly impervious carapace. The Sindle, a burrowing, nesting insect, is individually not very dangerous but fast and deadly in numbers. The Shmul is a swarming bug with stinging barbs on its front limbs and razor-sharp mandibles. All three are raised on farms by the Sivatagi Reavers, and with the exception of the Shmul, are also used (especially with smaller varieties) for a wide array of domestic purposes. The smallest of the three, the Sindle, is over two meters long and a meter high. The Horlac are even larger, about the size of a small horse cart. The Shmul is the largest of the three, growing as big as five meters tall and ten meters in length, though most adult Shmul are about three meters tall. All the species are extremely strong, capable of moving weight many times their own mass, and must be dealt with cautiously, even by their masters. All the Sivatagi insects rely on a pheromone-based method of communication and possess little intelligence of their own. They would be just ordinary bugs were it not for their size. While the Sivatagi carve Runes on their insects carapace in order to subdue them for use as Stryders, most of the time the Sivatagi simply use herding tactics involving either following instincts or natural plant essences that repel or attract each species to control them. Sivatagi Reavers know these creatures in and out, and are experts at selecting the best of the breed to be Stryders. The biggest single advantage to using the insects is the ability to breed them by the dozens. From gestation to hatching, a brand new Stryder insect is ready in mere months, not years as the other nations Stryders require. The Sivatagi Reavers have the least amount of connection with their mounts of any Pilots on Rhun, a fact reflected in their un-enhanced bareback riding position.

Insect Stryders are considered expendable, especially because the natural life cycle of the insects ranges only from a few months (Sindle) to a few years at most (Horlac and Shmul). Sivatagi Reavers on Rune-carved insects do have a mental bond with their mounts, but at a much more superficial level than do other kinds of Stryder Pilots. They can do little more than lead the direction their mounts travel and provoke the creatures natural instincts, although the insect's instincts do include some useful skills.

Sivatagi Reavers are still a trained elite. They are skilled in combat tactics and taught every nuance of their insect's behaviors, making up for many of the disadvantages of riding their Stryders exposed. The key tactic of the Sivatagi Reaver is to use a Stryder insect to command a larger group of the same species, multiplying the effectiveness of a single insect. Facing down Sivatagi insects on foot is a terrifying (and probably fatal) experience for any opponent foolish enough to do so. Even in armored, enclosed Stryder, the prospect of being eviscerated by a swarm of giant bugs worries those who know what is good for them. Since Sivatagi Stryder breeds are insects, there is not much one can do to customize their construction. However, the ever-resourceful Sivatagi have developed a few types of equipment and weapon packs that can be harnessed to the insects. Many of the add-ons include simple spikes and blades that attach to the insect's limbs, enhancing the creatures natural fighting abilities, while the most complex add-ons include heavy weaponry designed to be carried on the back of a Horlac, making it a mobile siege machine. Even without them, however, the insect's own inborn defenses are as formidable on the offense.

**Draslander Stryders** - Having no permanent settlements, trained engineers, refining or finishing facilities, or anything else the Confederated Nations might consider essential to Stryder construction, the Draslander are forced to rely on salvage to build Stryders. Fortunately, the swamp conceals many wrecks, pieces, and even whole Stryders stuck in the murk or washed downriver. Through the bounty resulting from centuries of combat across the continent and uncounted attempts to subdue the swamps, the Draslanders always seem to find just enough. An aspiring Dras Pilot (called a Stomper) does not have many options. Though the Dras know that Stryders are required if fighting is to be done with any modern force, the Stomper is still essentially stuck with whatever he or she can find. Therefore, all Dras Stryders are by necessity misfit creations, and the Dras are skilled at improvising and lashing together whatever they find.

Choice in construction usually boils down to whether to give up using the one piece found by exhaustive searching and trade it to someone else, or somehow make it work by adding in something else either begged, borrowed or stolen. Rune Chambers are usually designed for people a fraction of a meter taller than most Dras, so most often the Rune Chamber will have a handmade basket for the Stomper to ride in. Dras Stryders rarely move the way the parts were originally intended to move, and it is usually anyone's guess how they get around, but somehow when the Dras actually do manage to get a whole Stryder together, they make it work. They may not be pretty, but Dras can come up with some pretty inventive methods for getting Stryders to function. One unique feature of Draslander Stryders is the use of bones in some of their Stryders. While there are no large domestic herd animals in Rhun, there is no shortage of large predators in the swamps. While constructing a Stryder totally out of the bones of such creatures is unlikely, using bone structures like limbs or entire jaws is not unheard of, particularly for weapons or for structural effect. Among the Confederated Nations, stories circulate of skeletal monsters running off with children in the night. Chances are, these old wives tales, minus the children, were based on encounters with these nightmarish Stryders. A chomping reptilian skull attached to a marauding war machine will test the mettle of *any* opponent.

Since they are so hard to come by, Dras Stryders rarely get used except for surprise attacks and emergencies. Usually, that is the moment when an overconfident fighter thinks he has just about wrapped up his raid on the hapless Draslanders, only to find his force suddenly demolished by an impossible contraption appearing out of nowhere.



▼ **BUILDING STRYDERS** - The **EABA** supplement **Stuff!** is used for creating the Stryders in **EABA Rune Stryders**, though the simple vehicle design rules in **EABA** are used as much as possible. While you can design and modify Stryders using just these rules, you'll need your regular copy of **EABA** for the particulars of how to utilize this info and what the various terms mean.

**Design exceptions** - Using runic inscriptions as the power source and a means of magical augmentation completely eliminates the need for a conventional power plant. The runic magic, the nature of the Stryders and a few other genre-specific items will generate some exceptions to the normal design rules, as follows.

**Power:** Mechanical Stryders are powered by runes, and do not use or need a conventional power plant. The default runic inscriptions act as a base Strength of +20. This can be increased at some cost, which will be detailed in **Modifications** (page 4.16). While there is no power plant to take up space, the mechanical workings of the Stryder will occupy one third (round to nearest full hexagon) of the total hexagons in the Stryder. These hexagons are not usable for other purposes.

**EXAMPLE:** A Valley Rat with 16 hexagons of volume has 5 hexagons taken up by structure. An 8 hexagon Meadow Fox has 3 hexagons taken up by structure.

**Strength & Agility:** Most Stryders have a default Agility of 3d+0. Kantarin Stryders have default Agility of 3d+1, and Dras Stryders have default Agility of 2d+2. All Stryder Agility rolls and skills use this as the default, not the pilot's Agility. Heavier or more armored Stryders move more ponderously and will adjust this default Agility downwards.

A heavy Stryder is using more of its rune-based Strength simply to move its massive body and limbs, and has less left over for lifting and striking, but these heavy limbs still strike much harder because of the sheer weight behind them. So, while a light Meadow Fox has a lot of Strength left over for movement and powering its limbs, its relatively frail limbs are not going to pack the wallop of those of a slow but massive Iron Wolf.

Specifically, the Agility penalty on a Stryder is half (round up) the Strength penalty for its mass. A Stryder's Strength for making melee attacks is half of its (rune Strength plus the Strength penalty for its mass). The Strength penalty for mass adds to rune Strength for melee attacks (heavier Stryders hit slower but harder). Each  $\pm 3$  is a difference of  $\pm 1$  d.

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**EXAMPLE:** A Valley Rat with a -4 to Strength because of its mass will have an Agility of 2d+1 (default of 3d+0, less half the Strength penalty, which is -2). It will have a Strength for melee purposes of  $(20 + 4) / 2 = +12$ , or 4d+0. It can wield a weapon with no more Strength than that of an exceptional human.

**EXAMPLE:** An Iron Wolf with a -12 to Strength because of its mass will have an Agility of 1d+0 (default of 3d+0, less half the Strength penalty, which is -6). It will have a Strength for melee purposes of  $(20 + 12) / 2 = +16$ , or 5d+1. It can swing more than twice as hard as the strongest man alive, and kick as hard as a horse, and the damage is considerably more lethal.

**Armor:** Stryders have a default Armor of +21 (7d+0) for design purposes. This includes the strength of the basic materials and the natural strengthening provided by the runic inscriptions. This is adjusted up or down by the weight of extra Armor they have mounted, and decreased by the penalty for their size, as per normal **EABA** rules (**EABA**, page 7.18). Sivatagi insect Stryders have a natural default of about one-quarter their empty weight in armor. This amount can be added to with regular armor. The default Armor listed on the chart on page 4.11 may be slightly misleading. The listed number is the amount when you take the +21 default and factor in the size of the Stryder. Adding less than 1 ton of armor actually *subtracts* from the default rating.

**EXAMPLE:** A Meadow Fox has an empty mass of .8 ton, a loaded mass of 1.6 tons and a default Armor of +12 (or 4d+0). But, it really only has the ability to carry half a ton of armor, which is a -3 penalty, which would give it a final Armor of +9 (or 3d+0). On the other hand, an Iron Wolf only starts with a default Armor of +3 (or 1d+0), but it can add 8 tons of armor to this, which is a +9 bonus, giving it a final Armor of +12 (or 4d+0). In addition, the Iron Wolf has more Hits and a better Damage Limit.

In addition, because of their size and the more distributed nature of the runic magic that powers them, there are no tiny vital spots on a Stryder. No radiator to punch a hole in, no tire to blow out, no ignition module to destroy or air intake to plug. Only attacks that are *physically* large do normal damage. This would be Stryder punches and kicks, Stryder-wielded weapons, siege weapons or rune cannons. All other attacks count as though the Stryder's Damage Limit was 2 points less.



**EXAMPLE:** An Iron Wolf has a Damage Limit of 2. Against human-wielded weapons like swords, bows or crossbows, the Iron Wolf has a Damage Limit of 0, so it is absolutely impervious to such weapons, regardless of the damage they do. Even an unarmored Iron Wolf has structural members tough and redundant enough that no sword or axe or any weapon a human can wield is going to do any noticeable damage to the Stryder, though weapons can still puncture it and harm the crew.

**Hit location:** Since Stryders have no power plant or fuel, and are usually anthropomorphic or animal-shaped, they will have a different hit location table and effects. Details of this are under Stryder combat (page 4.35).

▼ **CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE** - A gamemaster or player building a Stryder needs to do the following:

1. Choose a template. There are only a handful of body types available. Some nations will have options that others do not.
2. Add crew and weapons. How do you want the Stryder to be armed, and how much space will it take for the crew for these weapons?
3. Add armor. Most of the Stryder's remaining capacity you will want to devote to protection.
4. Add options. There are options and enhancements that can be part of the original design, or added later. Some of these may require going back to step 2 or 3 to find the space or weight to include them.
5. Generate stats. The previous steps will give you the Strength, Agility, Hits, Armor, movement and so on for the Stryder. Now you simply write it all down.

**Templates** - The basic Stryders are on the table at the bottom of this page. Variants with an "M" are the heavier Myndwar versions. Note that the living Stryders of the Kantarin and Sivatagi will not have standard "build" or "repair" costs. Sivatagi insects cannot adjust their default armor, but will otherwise act as Stryders in most respects. Top speed is as for other vehicles in **EABA**, using the rune Strength, loaded mass and suspension modifiers, rounding up to the next highest speed. Adjusted Agility is based on the notes from the previous page.

Strength remaining	Top speed
-12 to -8(-4d+0)	1m/turn (4kph/2mph)
-7 to -5(-2d+1)	1.5m/turn (5kph/3mph)
-4 to -1(-1d+1)	2m/turn (7kph/4mph)
+0 to +2(0d+0)	3m/turn (11kph/7mph)
+3 to +5(1d+0)	4m/turn (14kph/9mph)
+6 to +7(2d+0)	5m/turn (18kph/11mph)
+8(2d+2)	6m/turn (22kph/13mph)
+9(3d+0)	7m/turn (25kph/16mph)
+10 to +11(3d+1)	8m/turn (29kph/18mph)
+12(4d+0)	9m/turn (32kph/20mph)
+13(4d+1)	10m/turn (36kph/22mph)
+14(4d+2)	11m/turn (40kph/25mph)
+15(5d+0)	13m/turn (47kph/29mph)
+16(5d+1)	14m/turn (50kph/31mph)
+17(5d+2)	16m/turn (58kph/36mph)
+18(6d+0)	17m/turn (61kph/38mph)
+19(6d+1)	19m/turn (68kph/43mph)
+20(6d+2)	21m/turn (76kph/47mph)
+21(7d+0)	23m/turn (83kph/52mph)
+22(7d+1)	25m/turn (90kph/56mph)
+23(7d+2)	28m/turn (101kph/63mph)
+24(8d+0)	30m/turn (108kph/68mph)
+25(8d+1)	33m/turn (119kph/74mph)
+26(8d+2)	36m/turn (130kph/81mph)
+27(9d+0)	40m/turn (144kph/90mph)

**EXAMPLE:** A normal Black Dog at maximum weight will have a movement Strength of +5 (runes of +20, -9 for mass, -6 for suspension), for a top speed of 5 meters per turn.

Stryder	Hexagons	Rune strength	Empty mass	Maximum mass	Default armor	Suspension	Build cost	Repair cost(1 Hit)	Max Hits	Damage Limit	Size
Valley Rat	16	+20	1.6 ton(-2)	2.4 ton(-4)	+9	very enh.(-6)	+4	-8	12	4	-1/-4
Valley Rat <sup>M</sup>	16	+20	1.6 ton(-2)	3.6 ton(-5)	+9	enhanced(-3)	+5	-6	14	4	-1/-4
Meadow Fox	8	+20	.8 ton(+1)	1.6 ton(-2)	+12	very enh.(-6)	+4	-9	11	5	+0/-3
Meadow Fox <sup>M</sup>	8	+20	.8 ton(+1)	2.4 ton(-4)	+12	enhanced(-3)	+4	-8	12	5	+0/-3
Black Dog	48	+20	4.8 ton(-7)	8 ton(-9)	+4	very enh.(-6)	+8	-4	16	3	-3/-6
Black Dog <sup>M</sup>	48	+20	4.8 ton(-7)	12 ton(-11)	+4	enhanced(-3)	+9	-3	17	3	-3/-6
Iron Wolf	64	+20	6.4 ton(-8)	16 ton(-12)	+3	very enh.(-6)	+10	-2	18	2	-3/-6
Iron Wolf <sup>M</sup>	64	+20	6.4 ton(-8)	24 ton(-14)	+3	enhanced(-3)	+11	-1	19	2	-3/-6
Vine Cat	24	+20	2.4 ton(-4)	4.8 ton(-7)	+7	very enh.(-6)	+7	n/a	15	3	-2/-5
Bramble Bear	36	+20	3.6 ton(-5)	7.2 ton(-8)	+6	very enh.(-6)	+9	n/a	16	2	-2/-5
Swamp Gnat	20	+20	2.0 ton(-3)	4.0 ton(-6)	+8	extr. enh.(-9)	+5	-8	14	4	-1/-4
Rock Beetle	12	+20	1.5 ton(-2)	2.4 ton(-4)	+5	very enh.(-6)	-2	n/a	13	4	+0/-3
White Mantis	10	+20	1.2 ton(+0)	1.6 ton(-2)	+5	very enh.(-6)	+0	n/a	11	5	+0/-3
Shin Spider	4	+20	.5 ton(+2)	1.0 ton(+0)	+6	very enh.(-6)	-2	n/a	10	6	+1/-2

The acceleration of a Stryder is an optional stat, and is the amount the Stryder can change speed each turn. This can be figured according to normal **EABA** rules, but for most purposes, assuming it is one-quarter of the current top speed (rounding up) will be sufficient.

Remember that when a Stryder takes a -1d penalty from any damage, this subtracts 1d from its Strength for mobility purposes, dropping its top speed and acceleration.

**Crew & Weapons** - While this can be modified later, the pilot and each crew member with room to use weapons will take 3 hexagons of space and add .1 ton of load to the Stryder. Pilots or crew who ride on the outside of the Stryder (or on a platform on the Stryder) only count as taking 1 hexagon of space each and add .1 ton of load to the Stryder. Remember that the internal workings of a Stryder take up one-third of the Stryder's hexagons (rounding up).

**EXAMPLE:** A Black Dog has 48 hexagons of space, of which 16 are used up by the skeleton of the Stryder. An enclosed pilot compartment, one protected weapon crew man and a platform for four soldiers would take up 10 hexagons of space (6 for the pilot and crew, 4 for the soldiers), and add 1 ton to the empty weight of the Stryder. This leaves 22 hexagons of space for anything else the builder wants to add.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Stryder weaponry falls into three categories, that used by the Stryder itself, like a giant club or a punch or kick, weapons mounted on the Stryder and used by its riders, like crossbows or light siege weapons, and natural weaponry that would be associated with Kantarin tree Stryders or Sivatagi insect Stryders. Though they could use a Kantarin thorn branch if needed, races other than the Kantarin may not use the thorn vine, quill shooter or thorn net.

**Inherent weaponry:** All Stryders can use punches and kicks, or the Stryder equivalents for their particular configuration. The Strength for these attacks is based on the rune strength used to power the Stryder, adjusted as described on [page 4.10](#). A Stryder with big bulky feet can't kick as fast, nor a Stryder with heavily armored arms punch as quickly. Punches and "hand-held" weapons use the piloting roll of the Stryder pilot, and are at -1d to normal Strength of those limbs. Kicks do damage based on Strength, but lose -1d off the skill roll. Because of the size and material of a Stryder, punches, kicks and hand-held weapons all are considered to do lethal damage, even if they are blunt objects.

Stryder melee weapons	Accuracy	Damage	Type	Mass	Armor	Hits	Cost	Notes
Stryder knife	-	punch+0	cutting	.05 ton	2d+1	8	400 Vel	
Stryder sword	-	punch+2	cutting	.1 ton	2d+2	9	800 Vel	
Stryder mace	-	punch+2	crushing	.1 ton	2d+1	8	800 Vel	
Stryder axe	-	punch+3	piercing	.1 ton	2d+1	8	800 Vel	Unbalanced
Stryder spear	-	punch+3	piercing	.1 ton	2d+1	8	800 Vel	Uses both hands
Stryder club	-	punch+1	crushing	.1 ton	2d+1	8	200 Vel	
Siege ram	-	punch+6	crushing	.1 ton	2d+1	8	800 Vel	-1d skill, arc limits both hands
Thorn branch	-	punch+2	crushing	.1 ton	2d+1	8	-	
Thorn vine	-	punch+0	cutting	.1 ton	2d+0	7	-	Entanglement, unbalanced

Stryder ranged weapons	Accuracy	Damage	Type	Mass	Armor	Hits	Cost	Notes
Hurler	7	7d+2	crushing	.2 ton	2d+0	8	1,600 Vel	Requires 2 crew
Rune cannon	5	6d+2	piercing	.3 ton	2d+1	10	4,800 Vel	Requires 1 crew
Rune mortar	2	8d+2	crushing	.5 ton	2d+1	11	6,000 Vel	Requires 3 crew
Siege crossbow	3	6d+0	piercing	.1 ton	1d+2	7	800 Vel	Requires 1 crew
Stryder spear	1	punch+3	piercing	.1 ton	2d+1	8	800 Vel	Requires hands
Quill shooter	1	0d+2	piercing	.1 ton	2d+0	8	-	Poison effect
Thorn net	0	-	special	.1 ton	2d+0	8	200 Vel	Entanglement
Thrown rock	0	punch+0	crushing	.05 ton	1d+1	7	-	

Stryder defense	Accuracy	Protection	Material	Mass	Armor	Hits	Cost	Notes
Small shield(+2 to block)	-	+1d	wood	.1 ton	2d+0	8	200 Vel	
Large shield(+4 to block)	-	+1d	steel	.2 ton	2d+0	10	400 Vel	

**Stryder weapons:** All Stryders can have their combat functionality upgraded with the addition of Stryder-sized handheld or mounted weapons controlled by the pilot, or crew-served weapons permanently mounted on the Stryder, but controlled by the crew. On a Stryder with normal or low-quality limbs, held weapons are pinned or bolted into place and cannot be dropped or exchanged in combat. Trading one weapon for another requires the same time as repairing 1 Hit of damage, and doing this has no cost in Vel unless you have to pay some grunts to help you maneuver the massive weapon into place for a few minutes. Stryder melee weapons are *heavy*. They have to withstand the massive forces involved in being wielded by a Stryder, and the impact of striking one. A Stryder requires a melee Strength of at least 2d+0 to wield the smallest of these weapons, and 3d+0 to wield the rest.

The exception to this is the siege ram, which is really just a modification to the entire arm. It is wielded with a -1d skill penalty and can only attack targets immediately in front of the Stryder. As long as the arm itself is usable, the siege ram is usable.

Handheld weapons designed expressly for piercing a Stryder will be counted as armor-piercing, and reduce the target's Armor by 1d before damage is applied. A weapon that is listed as "unbalanced" can only be used every other turn, as it takes time to recover from swinging it. It can be used every turn, but at a -1d skill penalty.

Stryder weapons are simply very large versions of conventional melee weapons, and can also be Stryder-sized versions of crossbows, bows, slings or chains. These can be quite heavy and do count towards the fully loaded mass of a Stryder. One benefit is they can be readily dropped to lighten a Stryder's load if the Stryder has enhanced limbs. Carried or externally mounted weapons *do* count towards the hexagons of space available in the Stryder, but not as much as internal ones.

**EXAMPLE:** If we look at a full weight (16 ton) Iron Wolf template, it ends up with a melee (arm) Strength of 4d+1. *How did we figure this?* On page 4.10 it says the melee Strength of a Stryder is half (the rune Strength plus the Strength penalty for its weight). The rune Strength is +20, and the "penalty" for 16 tons is +12 (it adds, not subtracts). This adds up to +32, and half of that is +16, or 5d+1. Arm strikes are at -1d effect, so the Stryder has a lethal punch damage of 4d+1.

This is sufficient to carry any melee weapon, so we choose a Stryder mace, which does punch+2 crushing damage.

Rune strength x 1/2	+10
Weight "penalty" x 1/2	+6
Punch damage	-3
Stryder mace	+2
Total	+15

This gives us a final damage of +15, or 5d+0 lethal damage, with a "crushing" special effect.

Stryder ranged weapons are simply mounted siege weapons, catapults, cannons, ballista, etc. These are mounted on the Stryder in a location of the designer's choice, which will have special effects regarding the aiming and use of the weapon. For instance, a hurler mounted on the body of a four-legged Stryder would not be able to shoot at targets underneath the Stryder, and a Rune cannon mounted on an arm would be rendered useless if the arm was taken out of commission. Within these limits, Stryder-mounted ranged weapons can shoot in any direction and often will have the benefit of shooting down and can thus shoot over low obstacles that would block ground level attacks. Stryder ranged weapons other than the spear and rock have no minimum Strength requirement. The Stryder simply has to be able to carry the weapon and have room for the crew. A Stryder without hands can still lob rocks like a catapult if its fist is replaced with a cup-like appendage and there is a crew to reload it.

Most Stryder-mounted weapons will require one or two crew members to handle the reloading of the weapon. Reloading a Stryder weapon in four turns in the heat of combat is a Hard(11) task based on the lowest appropriate skill roll among the crew for the weapon, but this difficulty is modified by the time spent on the reloading attempt. Trying to reload with 1 crew on a 2 crew weapon is at +2 difficulty.

**EXAMPLE:** A Rune cannon is a difficulty of 11 to reload in 4 turns (a Time level of +4). Spending 8 seconds (a Time level of +6) reloading will drop this difficulty to 9.

There are Stryder designs built as mobile field artillery. They do not carry crew for their weapon, but instead simply park in one place and are reloaded by a separate ground crew. So, one could mount a hurler on a Meadow Fox, but it would have to be reloaded by a ground crew after each shot.

Stryder ranged weapons typically have an Accuracy, but *only* against Stryder-sized targets. A Hurler is not a sniper weapon for use against people, but an accurate weapon to use against large targets. A carried shield requires an "arm" to carry it, limiting it to Stryders which only walk on two legs. Note that certain ranged weapons require either manual dexterity or extra crew.

Stryder-carried shields tend to blunt attacks rather than completely stop or deflect them. The shield is usually penetrated by large attacks, but the attack has less force remaining when it hits the Stryder. The smaller shield requires a minimum melee Strength of 3d+0 to wield it, and the larger requires a melee Strength of 4d+0. The larger includes straps and counter-balance weights for that arm to help offset the load.

A shield provides a bonus to the appropriate melee skill roll of the pilot to block another melee attack. If the attack was blocked because of the shield's bonus, then the attack hits the shield and then the Stryder, counting as a normal attack, but the Stryder gets +1d armor against it (remember, it would act like a layered armor if penetrated). A shield can be interposed to stop projectiles if the pilot is aware of the attack and can see it coming, or to protect a particular hit location against all attacks.

**Mounted weapons:** Stryder-mounted weapons can be oversized versions of regular weapons, like a siege crossbow mounted on a Stryder's troop compartment instead of on a castle wall. Or, they can be full-sized siege weapons like ballista, catapults or even large rune-powered projectile weapons. These weapons have normal crew and size that counts towards the load on the Stryder. Stryders can mount the equivalent of crossbows or rune cannons directly to their bodies, and these are aimed and fired by the pilot as described earlier. Specialized limbs or other rune-powered devices are used to aim and reload such weapons, normally at the rate of one shot per eight seconds.

Mounted weapons fired by crew take two forms. Those that are protected by armor are in the passenger/cargo hit location of a Stryder. They have smallish firing ports and are hard to hit or damage without also hitting the Stryder. Space to rotate a hurler, Rune cannon or siege crossbow around to various arcs while remaining protected means they will take up about 6 hexagons of space each, plus any space for their crews. Weapons that are mounted on less protected external platforms only count as using 2 hexagons of space, and can readily be targeted and hit without damaging the Stryder itself.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Personal weapons, even heavy ones, generally count as part of the mass of the crew, and their cost is merely the cost of the weapon itself. Remember that personal weaponry, even heavy crossbows or personal rune throwers will have much less effect on Stryders.

Last, the natural weaponry of Kantarin Stryders is usually natural equivalents of carried weaponry, like using a reinforced vine as an entangling weapon instead of a chain, or a massively thorned branch instead of a spiked club. These weapons have normal weight. Sivatagi insect Stryders will have lethal attacks based on their Strength, and this is typically:

Attack	Damage	Skill roll
Mandibles	Strength-6	+0d
Major claw	Strength+0	-1d
Minor claw	Strength-3	+0d
Tail strike	Strength-6	-1d

These attacks are part of the Stryder and have no inherent weight. Some attacks are clearly less useful than others, but than can have synergy with each other. A scorpion-like Stryder could pin a foe with a claw and then bludgeon it with a spiked tail, or block with one claw and attack with another. Some of the conventional Stryder designs have heads with biting jaws, or enhanced limbs that can have bladed claws.

Obviously, weapon cost does not apply to found or improvised items, and shields are a more disposable item and only have a quarter the fabrication cost. Note that whether a Stryder can use punches, kicks or both depends on its configuration and cargo. A Stryder designed to go on four legs can only do kicks. A Stryder that walks on two legs does punches with the arms and kicks with the legs. A Stryder that can stand up and walk or walk on four legs can choose to kick with the front appendages if desired, when it is using four-legged locomotion. The trick here is that such a Stryder can only have carried crew use their weapons in one configuration or the other.

That is, a Stryder that walks on two legs and carries crossbow-wielding troops is going to have the crew compartment tilt into a far less useful position if the Stryder goes down into a four-legged gait. Similarly, mounted siege weaponry is only going to be able to fire from one position or the other.



**Armor** - Since Stryders are animal-like or anthropomorphic, they will not use the standard front, rear, right, left, top, bottom way of describing armor placement. Instead it will be: arms (or front legs), legs (or rear legs), torso<sub>1</sub>, torso<sub>2</sub>, passenger/cargo and pilot. Torso<sub>1</sub> and torso<sub>2</sub> can be upper and lower torso, front and rear torso or upper surface and lower surface, as needed for a particular configuration. The pilot location covers the pilot's compartment from all angles, and passenger/cargo covers any compartment for carried items or fighting crew.

**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder that walks on four legs would have front leg and rear leg armor, armor that protects the underbelly of the main body, armor on the upper surface of the main body, armor for the pilot's compartment, and armor for any crew, passengers or cargo.

The overall armor bought for a Stryder covers each section equally. You can increase any given area's protection by 0d+1 or +1d by reducing it somewhere else by 0d+2 or -2d. This can be taken from more than one spot. So, you could increase armor in one spot by 0d+1 by reducing it in two other spots by 0d+1.

Armor	Overall armor
Stryder default armor	+21 Armor
No armor	-15 penalty
.06 tons armor	-12 penalty
.12 tons armor	-9 penalty
.25 tons armor	-6 penalty
.5 tons armor	-3 penalty
1 ton armor	+0 bonus
2 tons armor	+3 bonus
4 tons armor	+6 bonus
8 tons armor	+9 bonus
16 tons armor	+12 bonus
Each 25% extra mass (max +50%)	+1 bonus
Each 25% less mass (max -25%)	-1 penalty

Stryder size	Damage limit	Armor effect
.5 hexagon	9	+3 bonus
1 hexagon	8	-0 penalty
2 hexagons	7	-3 penalty
4 hexagons	6	-6 penalty
8 hexagons	5	-9 penalty
16 hexagons	4	-12 penalty
32 hexagons	3	-15 penalty
64 hexagons	2	-18 penalty
125 hexagons	1	-21 penalty
Each doubling	-1 additional	-3 penalty
Each +25% extra (up to twice)		-1 penalty
Each -25% less (once)		+1 bonus

A Stryder with zero extra armor takes a -15 on the default amount, plus any adjustment for its size, but never has a final Armor of less than 1d+0.

**EXAMPLE:** You can use this table to see how Stryders get their base Armor values. For instance, the Valley Rat is a 16 hexagon Stryder. It starts with the +21 default armor and then takes a -12 for its size, leaving +9 (or an Armor of 3d+0). However, this +9 is further adjusted by how much armor is actually added. A Valley Rat really only has room for half a ton of armor, which is a -3 modifier, so a standard Valley Rat is unlikely to have a final Armor of more than 2d+0, or 2d+1 at best. A 16 hexagon Stryder has a Damage Limit of 4 (2 vs. handheld weapons) and about 12 Hits, so it is something that can be taken out by infantry with a little bit of work.

**Armor special effects:** The different nations tend to use different armor materials, and these will interact with weapons and damage types in particular ways. A Stryder can be built with whatever armor material that nation favors. Any given location on a Stryder is assumed to have one type of armor for special effect purposes. So, a Stryder with a layer of iron sheeting over wood would either be classified as wooden or metal armor, not both, and which type you would use depends on how thick the metal was.

**Stone:** Stone armor is very fireproof. Stone armor is at +1d effect against all attacks based on flame or heat. However, stone is also brittle. Even if layered on in small pieces, a crushing attack can pulverize large sections of it. Stone armor will take a -1d penalty against crushing attacks. Crushing attacks would be blunt handheld weapons, fists or feet that are also armored with stone, or thrown boulders or catapult projectiles.

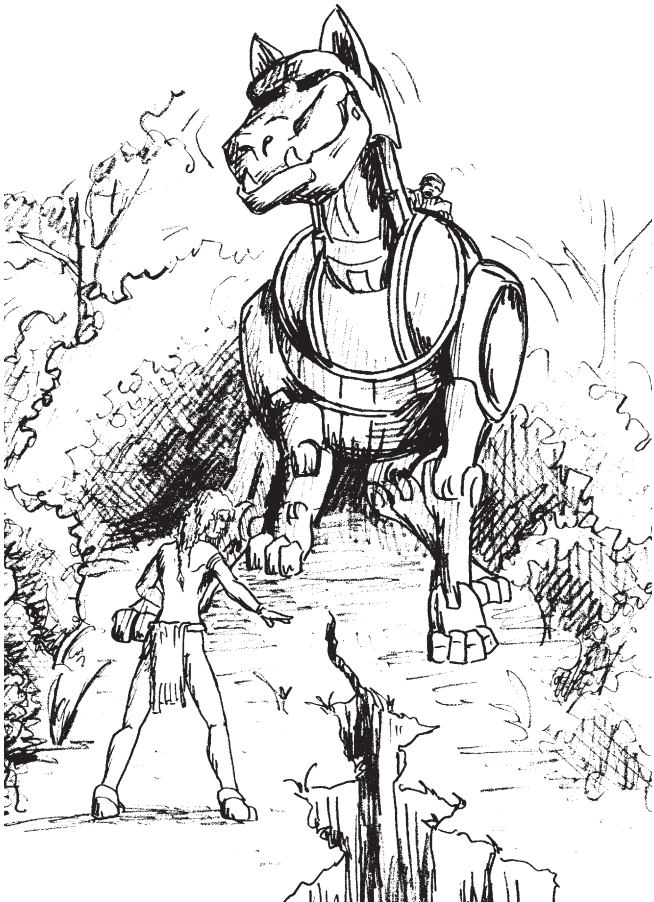
**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder with 4d+0 stone armor counts it as 5d+0 against flame and 3d+0 against crushing attacks.

**Metal:** Metal armor has hardness and some flexibility, and is at +0d effect against virtually all forms of attack. Attacks get no bonus or penalty against metal armor.



**Wood/leather:** Organic armor materials like wood, bone and leather have a lot of resiliency, but are more vulnerable to fire. Wood armor is at +1d effect against crushing attacks. If a heat or fire attack causes a wood-armored location to cross a Hits threshold, the Stryder has usually been set on fire. If it fails, it has been set on fire. It will take 1 additional Hit each 3 Time levels until the flames are extinguished or the Stryder is destroyed (that is, at a Time level of +3, +6, +9, etc). A sufficiently large source of water will douse a flaming Stryder immediately. To try to douse flames during combat is a Hard(11) task, adjusted up by the total number of Hits of extra fire damage taken (how much the fire has spread). The Stryder pilot gets 3d+0 less any dice penalties from damage, and plus the time they spend making the roll. Carried crew get 1d+0, and +1d each time the number of crew involved in firefighting is doubled, plus the time they spend making the roll.

**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder that is on fire and at a -1d penalty from Hits taken would need the pilot to roll 11 or more on 2d+0 to immediately extinguish the flames. If the pilot spent 4 seconds (a Time level of +4) doing nothing but trying to extinguish the flames, they would only need to roll 7 or more on 2d+0. Of course, in this amount of time the Stryder will have taken 1 additional Hit from spreading flames, which would make the task 1 point harder (an 8 or more).



## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Stryder options** - Stryders are typically a pretty complete package. But, there are extra cost items that can be applied to most designs. For any enhancement that adds to the overall Cost level of a Stryder, *total* cost is based on the *most expensive* of the enhancements. Each two overall Cost adjustments after the largest one (round down) will be a further +1 to the cost. The total overall modifier to cost *also* applies to the cost of all repairs.

**EXAMPLE:** If you have increased Strength at +2 cost, increased Agility at +2 cost and a quality cockpit at +1 cost, the total modification to the cost is +3 (+2 for the largest, +1 for two more overall adjustments after that). All repairs to the Stryder are also at +3 to their normal cost.

Modifications with an overall cost made *after* a Stryder is built will cost the difference between the total adjusted cost and the amount already spent. All modifications will have an adjusted cost based on the largest one and the extra amount for each two smaller ones.

**EXAMPLE:** If you have a Stryder with a base Cost level of +8 and sometime after it is built, you add something with a +2 to overall cost, your cost is the difference between a +8 cost (16,000 Vel) and a +10 cost (32,000 Vel). If you later add something else with a +2 cost, the later one only adds +1 to the cost, so your cost would be the difference between a +10 cost (32,000 Vel) and a +11 cost (45,000 Vel).

Modifications to cost made during construction of the Stryder add no time to the construction, just cost. Modifications with an overall cost adjustment made *after* a Stryder is built will take time as though repairing 8 Hits, plus the addition to cost. The short form is that this would be a Time level of the Stryder's total Hits + 26 + overall cost adjustment. There is no additional cost in Vel for this "repair", as it is factored in already, and all normal adjustments to repair time will affect how long it takes to make an upgrade. Modifications that have a *fixed* cost will have a modification time the same as some number of Hits, which will be based on how intrusive the modification is. Both of these times assume that the skilled labor to make the parts is readily available.

**EXAMPLE:** Adding a pair of high quality arms to a Stryder is a +1 to overall cost, which means installing them takes a Time level of the Stryder's base Hits + 27.

**Quality cockpit:** This is a pilot compartment that is equipped with conventional and runic enhancements to increase the sensory capabilities of the pilot. In general, it gives the pilot +1d to all their sight and hearing Awareness rolls (and possibly even the sense of touch through the Stryder). This adds +1 to the overall Cost level of the Stryder.

**Quality limbs:** The default limbs on a Stryder have the equivalent of a shoulder, elbow and wrist (for arms) and hip, knee and ankle (for legs). They do not have gripping hands, but only a fist-like lump at the end of the limb. To "hold" a weapon requires that a ground crew lift and bolt or pin the weapon in place, a process that generally takes as long as repairing 1 Hit of damage on the Stryder.

Stryders can have limbs that are more or less sophisticated than this. If a Stryder configuration has four legs, all the legs must have the same limb sophistication. Because this also relates to the sophistication of the runes that control the Stryder, limb sophistication affects overall Stryder cost. Less sophisticated limbs generally have one less joint, lose 1d from their normal Agility and cannot purchase increased Agility. A Stryder cannot have mobility limbs with an Agility of less than 0d+1, so not all Stryder configurations and masses can use reduced sophistication on their mobility limbs. Each pair of reduced sophistication limbs is -1 to the Cost level of the Stryder, with a maximum cost adjustment of -2 levels. Optionally, using wheels instead of legs (on a four-legged Stryder) counts as a full set of reduced sophistication limbs. This is only a +0 modifier to Strength for top speed purposes, but is only a "normal" suspension for purposes of cross-country use. Obviously, kicking attacks are not possible for a wheeled Stryder.

Limbs of increased sophistication add "hands" capable of grasping and wielding items. This adds utility to the Stryder, but does not inherently increase the Stryder's Agility. It just lets it use its Agility in a more flexible manner. Each pair of increased sophistication limbs is +1 to the Cost level of the Stryder, with a maximum cost adjustment of +2 levels (as one +2 item for gauging improvement cost). Increased sophistication is seldom used for legs, but it is possible. It does not directly add to movement rate, but it does provide a -1 to the difficulty of long-term travel, as the extra sophistication makes for a smoother ride.

**Extra limbs:** The default Stryder has four limbs, either four legs or two arms and two legs. Stryders can have one or two extra limbs in addition to this, which can be for combat use, or something as simple as the equivalent of a crane for a cargo-carrying Stryder. A pair of extra limbs weighs one-quarter the empty, unarmored weight of the Stryder. It has the same armor rating and type of whatever location it is attached to, and suffers penalties equal to the damage threshold crossed or the worst side effect of that location being damaged, whichever is worse.

**EXAMPLE:** An extra arm attached to the "pilot" area of a Stryder will take a -1d penalty on use if the Stryder has taken 5 Hits. However, if crossing the -1d threshold causes a Stryder control failure, the arm shuts down just like everything else does.

A Stryder with extra limbs cannot use any more handheld weapons or shields than normal (the pilot can only concentrate on one thing at a time), but the extra limb can provide other options. For instance, a Stryder might have a sword in one hand, a shield in another and a boulder in a third hand, giving them the option of making a melee attack or a ranged attack without having to switch weapons. In addition, extra limbs can be used for minor actions at no penalty. So, a Stryder could attack with one limb while aiming a ranged weapon attached to an extra limb. A Stryder that has six legs (four normal and a pair of extra limbs) will have a smoother gait and is a -1 to the stress roll for the pilot and crew for long-term travel.

Extra limbs have the same sophistication as the limbs they are being used as (arms or legs). A pair of extra limbs is an overall +1 to the Cost level of the Stryder.

**Redundancy:** The internal structure of a Stryder normally takes one-third of its total hexagons of space. If you increase this to one-half the hexagons, you are adding extra mechanical tendons and bones, making joints and pivots larger and generally decreasing the likelihood that any particular attack will cripple the Stryder. This is an overall +1 to the Cost level of the Stryder, but decreases its Damage limit by 1, down to a minimum of 1. This modification may only be taken once.

**Stryder head:** When a Pilot is bonded with his Stryder, they can magically perceive the world around them as if they were standing on the field of battle, regardless of whether or not the Stryder itself has a head. Many Stryders, therefore, do not have heads at all, utilizing the space at the neck for other things, such as missile platforms or siege weaponry. In some cases, heads are added for mere decorative effect, and in other cases the head itself can be modified so as to gain additional functionality. Heads are not included in the base weight of a Stryder. A head is one-eighth the empty (i.e. unarmored and unequipped) weight of the Stryder and has a negligible cost if it is a Stryder's only enhancement. Count it as a +0 overall adjustment to cost.

A Stryder head is counted as part of the crew/cargo hit location. The addition of a head allows the Stryder to bite for lethal damage, doing the same damage for its melee Strength as a Sivtagi insect strider would with a mandible attack. A Stryder head combined with a quality cockpit adds additional sensory runes to the head, allowing the pilot a 1d+0 sight Awareness roll under all conditions, even in total darkness or smoke or magical obscurement to normal sight.

**Asymmetrical Strength:** A Stryder with two arms and two legs can have its runic enchantments set up so that more power is available to the legs. This will give the Stryder up to +1d Strength for top speed purposes (and kicking damage), at the cost of -2d Strength in its arms, making weapon use by those arms much less effective. This has no effect on Stryder cost. This alteration may be done at a lower level, each 0d+2 subtracted from the arms giving 0d+1 extra to the legs. The Strength taken from a pair of arms does not have to be equal, but it does have to add up.

**EXAMPLE:** If a Stryder had an overall Strength of 4d+2, it could lose +2 from each arm (dropping them to 4d+0) to get a +1 on each leg (raising them to 5d+0). The builder could also lose +4 from one arm (dropping it to 3d+1) to do the same, giving the Stryder a Strength on each leg of 5d+0, with one arm at a Strength of 4d+2 and the other at 3d+1.

Asymmetrical Strength has a negligible cost if it is a Stryder's only enhancement. Count it as a +0 overall adjustment to cost.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Extra Strength:** The runes that power a Stryder are the optimum level of strength, a level found through centuries of trial and error. Not enough Strength, and the Stryder can't move. Too much and it breaks itself in half. However, the optimum level can be boosted *slightly*. A Stryder's overall Strength for both mobility and melee purposes can be boosted by +2 or +4, at an adjustment to the overall Cost level of +1. This will boost a Stryder's top speed by twenty to forty percent, and potentially give it over a full die of extra damage with its attacks.

The problem with this is that the materials which make up the Stryder are also at their limits, and these cannot be further boosted. So, using this extra Strength puts undue wear and tear on the Stryder. In general, using extra Strength will do half that amount of Hits in damage to the Stryder (1 or 2 Hits for +2 or +4 Strength). This damage would be taken no more than once a day, if the added Strength was used at all. Exactly when the stress damage is taken is up to the gamemaster. A Stryder on a forced march at +4 Strength might take 1 Hit halfway through the day and the other Hit at the end of the day. A Stryder using a +2 Strength in a single battle might take 1 Hit as an addition to the first damage it takes in combat, or at the end of the combat should it get through unscathed. This damage is not usually to a single component, but is just general wear and tear that requires a lot of extra maintenance by the crew.

**Extra Agility:** As with Strength, the runes that give a Stryder its coordination are optimized, but can still be tweaked a little. The Agility of a Stryder can be boosted by +2 for Stryders with standard limbs, or +4 for Stryders with superior quality in *all* its limbs, at an overall Cost increase of +1 or +2. Its limbs can swing faster and with more precision, making it more surefooted in movement and more accurate in combat. However, this speed makes it possible to move a limb faster than it can be readily stopped, making it hit the end of its natural travel and possibly breaking something, giving the Stryder the equivalent of a pulled muscle or sprain. If a Stryder with extra Agility uses it and *fails* whatever roll they were trying to make, the pilot has to make a Hard(11) piloting task or the Stryder takes 1 Hit. This is not to any particular location or system. Like damage from use of extra Strength, it is general wear and tear that has to be dealt with.

**EXAMPLE:** Let's say you have a Stryder with a basic Cost level of +8 (16,000 Vel) and you want to add all the bells and whistles to it. This would be:

Enhancement	Cost
Quality cockpit	+1
Enhanced limbs	+2
Extra arms	+1
Stryder head	+0
Extra Strength(+4)	+2
Extra Agility(+4)	+2

This would be a total cost adjustment of the most expensive modification (a +2), and +1 for each two additional modifications. Since there are four additional mods, this would be another +2, for a total modification to Cost of +4 (the fifth mod rounds down and doesn't count). This pushes the Cost level from +8 to +12, or from 16,000 Vel to 64,000 Vel! This would not add any time to the construction of the Stryder. If the Stryder were upgraded from its base configuration to this level, it would take a Time level of the Stryder's base Hits + 30 to complete. For a Black Dog with 16 Hits, this would be a Time level of +46, or 3 months of work.

**Add-ons** - The previous modifications all dealt with the inherent function of the Stryder, and thus adjusted its overall cost. The following modifications are things that are merely "bolted on" and will have a *fixed* cost, regardless of the type of Stryder they are fitted to.

**Battle Runes:** In addition to the basic Runes required to make the Stryder function, many choose to adorn their Stryders with additional Runes to enhance their function and extend protection to support troops. These Battle Runes function in accordance with the specific details as described in the Book of Runes. The short form is that only two-rune combinations are allowed, and these must be a control rune and an effect rune.

Battle Runes are typically scribed so that they can be separated and rejoined to release or contain their effects. Because they are scribed onto a surface that is not entirely inanimate, and yet not entirely living, the effect of such Runes is based on the spoken version of the Rune, with range and effect (but not duration) at +2 the normal amounts.

Attack Runes are the most popular Runes scribed onto Stryders. Defense Runes are also used regularly, though they are limited in scope. Use Runes are rarely seen on Stryders, since they are either low-powered or may affect a Stryder beyond utility. For example, Runes that increase attributes are not useful at all, since they generally result in the Stryders eminent destruction as it attempts moves of which it is not physically capable. Runes to adjust the Strength or Agility of a Stryder are possible, but touchy and are part of the overall rune combinations that activate the Stryder as a whole.

Battle Runes can only be released if the pilot knows the Rune. The activation roll for the Rune is based on the pilot's Runelore skill. Because the Runes that power a Stryder are so complex, no Stryder may bear more than three Battle Runes, otherwise they interfere with the operation of the Stryder. Stryders may also not have more than one Rune from any one Rune school (prime, elemental, sensory, life, conceptual, spatial).

While the pilot must actually know the rune for a battle rune to be used, the power of that rune is still based on that of the runemaster who inscribed it.

The cost of scribing a Battle Rune onto a Stryder is based on the difficulty of the Rune. Because of the intensive advanced Rune scribing that goes into creating the Stryder, Battle Runes are limited to two-syllable (effect Rune and control Rune) Rune words. The time it takes to inscribe the runes depends on the armor material they are inscribed into. Offensive runes are often inscribed into arms or head, for easier aiming of the effect, while defensive runes are more often inscribed on the pilot's compartment.

▼ **Note** - Because even a massive Stryder can be laid low by a well-placed Rune, one thing that all mercenary groups do is actively seek intelligence on other groups and their Stryders. If you know a foe has Rune Cannons, you have your Runescribes paint some temporary protection against this sort of thing the morning of the battle (unless the Stryder is already too Runed to handle it). Adventurers can be assigned intelligence duties if they are part of a mercenary group, spying, bribing, infiltrating or even engaging in sabotage or assassination. And of course, they have to be on guard against the same sort of thing happening to them.



▼ **Note** - It is important to note that almost all defensive battle runes are going to require a casting or inscribing modifier to include the full size of the Stryder. This is going to be:

Stryder	Defensive rune modifier
Valley Rat	+10
Meadow Fox	+0
Black Dog	+20
Iron Wolf	+20
Vine Cat	+10
Bramble Bear	+20
Swamp Gnat	+10
Rock Beetle	+0
White Mantis	+0
Shin Spider	+0

Common battle runes are *Ull-eq* (a lethal fire blast), *Ull-ej* (+1d armor against fire damage), *Nhet-eq* (half-lethal damage that bypasses armor, good for hitting crews), *Nhet-ej* (protection against all direct runic attacks), *Mhet-ej* (increased armor against all purely physical attacks), and various uses of the *Zhei* (vision) rune, like blinding a foe or being able to see in all directions or in poor conditions.

**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder can have three Battle Runes at most. It could not have both *Ull-eq* and *Ull-ej*, since that would be two uses of *Ull*. Nor could it have *Ull* and any other elemental rune. It could have *Ull-eq*, *Nhet-ej* and *Zhei-ess*. It is allowed to have more than one rune from the control category, and can duplicate the same rune in that category if desired, so both *Ull-eq* and *Nhet-eq* would be legal.

**Crew compartment:** Passengers who are merely passive observers take up 1 hexagon of space each and .1 tons of weight. Combat crews take up 3 hexagons of space and .1 ton of space each (this weight *includes* the person carried). This has no effect on Stryder cost, but refitting a Stryder to carry combat crew or passengers will take as much time as repairing 3 Hits for the first person, and +1 hit each time you double the number of people.

**EXAMPLE:** Adding a crew compartment where there was none would be like repairing 3 Hits for one person, 4 Hits for two people, 5 Hits for four people, 6 Hits for eight people, etc.

Simply adding some handholds for people to desperately cling to only takes the time for repairing 1 Hit.

Amenities for the crew or pilot take extra space and cost more. The default is simply a place to sit, stand or use weapons from that is protected by the Stryder's armor in that area (the cargo/passenger hit location). If there is not enough space in the Stryder's volume for this, combat crew can ride on the *outside* of the Stryder, on a partially armored platform. This gives them the equivalent of 3 hexagons of movement room, but only takes up 1 hexagon of internal space in the Stryder. Such external crew get the Stryder's armor from the waist down. Aiming at them to avoid the armor is at +2 difficulty. Sivataji riders typically get no armor protection and simply have a flat place to stand with a low railing to keep them from falling off.

There are two levels of increased amenities for a pilot and crew, and one level of decreased amenities. The cheapest possible configuration for a pilot and crew is just cramming them into whatever space is available with no thought for comfort. This saves a cost of 50 Vel per person over the base Stryder cost, but increases the difficulty of Health rolls for long-term endurance by +2. This option does not save any space in the Stryder. If a Stryder simply has seats or harnesses for infantry to use while it is walking, this is probably how they would do so. In addition, it costs nothing and no internal space for "storage racks" to be mounted on the legs of a Stryder. As long as the Stryder can carry the weight (typically not more than .2 tons), infantry can put polearms, tents and water jugs on a Stryder's legs for easy access.



These provide no additional protection, and there is a 50-50 chance anything stored on that leg is destroyed if that leg is struck by a weapon capable of doing damage to a Stryder.

The first level of increased amenities includes seating or standing arrangements with some shock absorbing capacity, better ventilation (possibly rune-powered), some space for a primitive toilet and storage for some rations and water. This adds 1 hexagon to the space required per person, and gives riders or pilot a -1 to the difficulty of Health rolls for long-term endurance. This option adds 100 Vel to the cost of the Stryder per person supported.

The best level of amenities in a Stryder is like the first level, but with space for hammocks, a small stove, and a fold-down table and stools that can be used for eating or planning while the Stryder is stationary. This adds 2 hexagons of space per person supported, but is a -2 to the difficulty of Health rolls for long-term endurance. A Stryder so equipped is the equivalent of a walking motor-home. A pilot could live in their piloting chamber for weeks like this. This option adds 250 Vel to the cost of the Stryder per person supported. While such amenities are uncommon on a large scale, a military commander might have a Stryder so equipped as a mobile command post.

Amenities do not have to be of an overall level. A pilot might have a luxurious compartment, while the combat crew does not.

**Stryder tools:** Stryders are used in non-combat roles, and can be equipped with farming, mining or other tools. Stryders used for such roles generally have no additional armor, and are unsuited for combat. Their cost is about half that of combat Stryders. Unless adventurers are going to be mining ore or pulling stumps, the exact capability of Stryder-mounted tools is left to the gamemaster. Note that non-combat Stryders cannot readily be upgraded to combat models. While they have the same basic structure and mobility, they are not designed for carrying heavy armor. Any armor added to a non-combat Stryder only gives half the benefit it would to a combat Stryder.

**EXAMPLE:** If you take an unarmored non-combat Stryder and add 2 tons of armor to it, you only get the benefit of 1 ton of armor.

**Generate stats** - At this point, you have the final cost, weight, armor, Hits and particulars of crew, mobility Strength, melee Strength, Agility and so on. All that remains is to write it all down.

**EXAMPLE:** We'll go through the complete design for a Valley Rat, and then show its stats.

**Step 1: Choose a template.** We already know this, we're using a Valley Rat. This has an empty mass of 1.6 tons and a loaded mass of 2.4 tons, leaving us a total of .8 tons of things we can do with it. Its internal structure takes 6 of its 16 hexagons of space, which leaves us 10 hexagons of room.

**Step 2: Add crew and weapons.** A Valley Rat doesn't have a lot of room for either. We decide to go with the pilot and one combat crewman, who rides an exposed platform on top of the Stryder. We add a siege crossbow, which takes up .1 ton, and because it is external and operated by the crew, it takes up 2 hexagons. For pilot, crew and weapon, we take up .3 tons and 6 hexagons of space, leaving us .5 tons and 4 hexagons of space.

**Step 3: Add armor.** We have .5 ton of carrying capacity left, and we devote it all to armor. This is a -3 modifier on the default, giving us an overall Armor of +6 (or 2d+0). We'll say that the armor is wood, which make the Stryder vulnerable to fire, but less vulnerable to crushing attacks.

**Step 4: Add options.** Since we're out of carrying capacity, the only options we can use are those which just take up space. Adding redundancy to reduce the Damage Limit of this Stryder will take up 2 more hexagons of space and is an overall Cost modifier of +1. We also adjust the Strength, shifting +1d to the legs at the cost of -2d to each arm. This is an overall Cost modifier of +0.

**Step 5: Generate stats.** Our Valley Rat has a rune Strength of +20, with -4 to this from the weight and -6 for its suspension, but +3 because we shifted some arm Strength. This gives a movement Strength of +13, for top speed of 10 meters per turn (36kph). Leg melee Strength is 4d+2 (half of (rune Strength (+20) plus shifted Strength(+3) plus Strength penalty for weight(+4)). Arm melee Strength is 3d+0 (half of (rune Strength *minus* shifted Strength plus Strength penalty for weight)). Agility is default of +9, minus half the Strength penalty for its weight(-2), for a final Agility of +7 (or 2d+1). At full weight, a Valley Rat has 12 Hits. It normally has a Damage Limit of 4, but we bought redundancy to get that down to 3. Our Armor is 2d+0, and we did not rearrange it, so each location has this amount. The normal Cost of a Valley Rat is +4 and we have an overall +1 to this, making its Cost +5, or 5,600 Vel. We're done!

**Design Exceptions** - The Myndwar, Kantarin, Sivatagi and Draslanders each have some adjustments to their Stryder design process.

**Myndwar:** Myndwar skill with stonework means they can make their Stryders more massive, but at the cost of reduced mobility outside their rocky homeland. They do not have to make heavier Stryders, but if they do, they must have an "enhanced", rather than a "very enhanced" suspension. They can make wheeled Stryders, but very seldom do.

**Kantarin:** Due to their flexibility, Kantarin Stryders will automatically count as having increased sophistication limbs. Their solid, monolithic nature means they also count as having redundancy, with a lower Damage Limits than normal for their size (this still uses up half the Stryder's hexagons). Obviously, their only allowed armor material is wood, and they cannot make wheeled Stryder designs. Kantarin can have increased Strength and Agility, with the normal cost and side effects.

Kantarin Stryders are generally only meant to use Kantarin weapons, the shooting quill, thorn branch, thorn vine and thorn net, though there is nothing except Kantarin tradition to prevent them from using other weapons.

**Sivatagi:** Sivatagi Stryders have only their default Armor. Their default stats include the protective ability of their carapaces. Armor plates can be added to these insects to improve their default Armor in the normal way. Sivatagi always ride in unprotected positions on the outside of their Stryders and their Stryders may have no internal components. The hexagons of space listed for a Sivatagi insect merely give an idea of how much riding room there is on one, or how big a platform can be attached to the back of one. Sivatagi insects always have the number of limbs in their description, and the natural weaponry of that species. Improvements, downgrades, or alterations in the abilities and number of limbs are not allowed. In addition, as living creatures, Sivatagi insects do not get the additional increase in Damage Limit against handheld weapons that magically powered Stryders do.

**Draslander:** Each Draslander Stryders is unique, and can be adjusted in just about any way. But, all Swamp Gnats have oversized feet for use in marshy conditions, must have the "extremely enhanced" suspension modifier, and they may not have wheeled Stryders. Enhanced Strength or Agility are only possible if they were part of the Stryder being scavenged by the Dras building the Stryder.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **CONSTRUCTION & REPAIR BASICS** - The time and labor it takes to construct a Stryder is a Time level of the Stryder's Hits, plus 36. The *minimum* construction or repair crew is going to be about a quarter that listed for a particular Stryder's construction, but using less than the normal crew takes longer.

Task	Time Level
Build a Stryder	Hits+36
Repair 1 Hit	Hits+10
Each additional Hit	+2
Full repair/construction facility	+0
Adequate facility	+2
Barely adequate facility	+4
Jury-rigged repair	-4
Reconstructed parts	+6
Full set of repair parts available	-2
Cosmetic repair	+6
Skeleton repair crew	+4
Half repair crew	+2
Normal repair crew	+0
Double repair crew	-2

These modifiers are fully listed in the Vehicle chapter of **Stuff!** if you need more detail, but for Stryder purposes the basic concepts are sufficient.

A jury-rigged repair is one that is made with no expectation that it will hold up under stress. Most Draslander Stryders will have some key components held together with jury-rigged repairs. It isn't strong, but it is quick to put together.

Reconstructed parts are those that are made from bits of other parts, cobbled together. This would be the equivalent of tearing apart several wrecked cars to get the parts needed to make one working car. It takes time to get everything to work together properly. Draslander Stryders often have reconstructed parts as well as jury-rigged ones.

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The quality of a repair facility depends on the nation and situation. The only "full repair" facilities are where the Stryders are actually assembled. Draslanders have none of these. All other facilities are of lesser quality.

▼ **Note** - All the Stryders usually have the "double repair crew" modifier on their described construction time, and the construction crew number listed for a Stryder takes this into account.

**Divaros:** Because they keep their best people under tight supervision at centralized Runehalls, their field repairs are always considered "barely adequate". But, because of their standardization and organization, they usually have full sets of repair parts available, full repair crews in the field and double crews at their Runehalls.

**EXAMPLE:** Valley Rats have a maximum of 12 Hits. This means it takes a Time level of +46 to build one (Hits + 36, -2 for double repair crew), or about six months. To repair 1 Hit of damage in the field might be a Time level of +24 (base of Hits + 10, +4 for a barely adequate facility and -2 for a full set of parts), or about 4 hours.

**Myndwar:** Myndwar can have adequate field repair facilities (but do not always do so). The personalization and bond they have with their Stryders makes it more likely that they operate with a tightly-knit but minimum repair crew, and Myndwar Stryders often will apply a +1 "artistic embellishment" modifier to the construction time of a Stryder to reflect the attention to detail and art of their Stryder. However, the construction time usually has double the normal crew, as separate artisans can be working on the details while others are doing the structural work.

**Zoklili:** Like the Myndwar, the Zoklilil put a lot of effort into the aesthetics of their Stryders, but since they are less massive, it takes them less time to do so. They can adequate field repair crews and facilities. They generally take the "cosmetic repair" modifier for construction, and like the Myndwar can have double the normal crew for construction purposes. In the field, normal repair crews are usually available, as crews of undamaged Stryders will gladly chip in to help.

**Kantarin:** These Stryders are grown rather than built, and so many of the normal rules do not apply. The time and effort required to grow a Kantarin Stryder has already been outlined. A Kantarin Stryder repairs itself, and is given a Health attribute, which it applies just like a person would, getting bonuses or penalties based on conditions for its regeneration (adequate water, sunlight and soil, etc.). A Kantarin Stryder is effectively a big walking monster and its abilities and limitations are more those of a living being than an inanimate machine.

**Sivatagi:** The Sivatagi mounts are, like the Kantarin Stryders, large living creatures. This means that they are to some extent self-repairing, and the only mechanical repairs are the replacement of damaged weapons and other items harnessed or attached to the insect. Replacing or repairing a damaged external attachment usually takes the time it would take to repair 1 Hit on a mechanical Stryder of the same size.

**Draslander:** Their Stryders are almost entirely scavenged, and usually constructed wherever the biggest spot was found. Draslanders often have double the normal crews available for repair or construction, but always have barely adequate facilities for doing so. In addition, they usually take both the "jury-rigged repair" and "reconstructed parts" modifiers. In game terms, the builder has to choose one key system on the Stryder. Using this system is at +4 difficulty, and if it takes any damage from combat or abuse, a roll is by the lead builder/repairer, made against a difficulty of the Stryder's (Hits - 10), with a minimum difficulty of Average(7). Failing this roll means the jury-rigged system completely fails and the Stryder takes 1 extra Hit of damage.

**Quick reference:** You will want to use the full Universal Chart for figuring things out, but some useful values from it are below:

Level	Time	Money	Level	Time	Money
-10	-	32 Vel	+20	16 min	-
-9	-	45 Vel	+21	23 min	-
-8	-	64 Vel	+22	30 min	-
-7	-	90 Vel	+23	45 min	-
-6	-	125 Vel	+24	1 hr	-
-5	-	175 Vel	+25	1.4 hr	-
-4	-	250 Vel	+26	2 hr	-
-3	-	350 Vel	+27	3 hr	-
-2	-	500 Vel	+28	4 hr	-
-1	-	700 Vel	+29	6 hr	-
+0	1 sec	1K Vel	+30	8 hr	-
+1	1.4 sec	1.4K Vel	+31	11 hr	-
+2	2 sec	2K Vel	+32	16 hr	-
+3	3 sec	2.8K Vel	+33	1 day	-
+4	4 sec	4K Vel	+34	1.5 day	-
+5	6 sec	5.6K Vel	+35	2 day	-
+6	8 sec	8K Vel	+36	2.5 day	-
+7	11 sec	11K Vel	+37	4 day	-
+8	16 sec	16K Vel	+38	5 day	-
+9	23 sec	23K Vel	+39	8 day	-
+10	30 sec	32K Vel	+40	11 day	-
+11	45 sec	45K Vel	+41	16 day	-
+12	1 min	64K Vel	+42	22 day	-
+13	1.4 min	90K Vel	+43	1 mo	-
+14	2 min	125K Vel	+44	45 day	-
+15	3 min	175K Vel	+45	2 mo	-
+16	4 min	250K Vel	+46	3 mo	-
+17	6 min	350K Vel	+47	4 mo	-
+18	8 min	500K Vel	+48	6 mo	-
+19	11 min	700K Vel	+49	8 mo	-

**EXAMPLE:** A repair that takes a Time level of +10 (11 days) with a normal repair crew takes +2 time for a reduced repair crew, which is a Time level of +12 (22 days).

▼ **Note** - It is likely that sometime in a campaign, adventurers will have the opportunity to take possession of a wrecked Stryder. Whether they have the skills, money or ability to repair it, or even move it is another matter. And if they can do none of the above, someone who can will either take it from them by force, or generously offer them a pittance of its value as a "finder's fee" just to avoid a dust-up. Adventurers who find or acquire a damaged Stryder should generally keep the matter to themselves if they want to keep it. And if they do manage to get it working, the only way they will be able to afford to keep it working is to hire it out, risking further damage. There's a reason the best Stryders are in national forces, not in private hands...

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Construction & Repair Costs** - Stryders are considered to have a base Cost level of +2 (2,000 Vel) for 1 ton, +2 Cost each time you double this, and +1 Cost for any fractions that are at least half the way to another doubling.

**EXAMPLE:** A Valley Rat with a mass of 2.4 tons would be one doubling of 1 ton and a fraction of another, for a final Cost level of +4 (base of +2, +2 for the one doubling of mass. The heavier Myndwar variant is 3.6 tons, which is more than halfway between 2 and 4 tons, so it gets an extra +1 to cost, giving it a final Cost level of +5.

Repairing a Stryder has a cost for parts and labor equal to a Cost level of -20, plus the total Hits of the Stryder. This is the cost of repairing 1 Hit of damage. Add +2 to the Cost for each additional Hit to be repaired. If you do the math, you'll find it can cost more to repair a badly damaged Stryder than to build a new one from scratch (akin to replacing a car totalled in an accident). This is where surplus parts come from.

**EXAMPLE:** If a Valley Rat took 1 Hit of damage, it would be a Cost level of -10 (base of -22, +12 for the total Hits of the Stryder), or about 32 Vel. If the Valley Rat had taken 3 Hits of damage, it would be +4 Cost to complete the repairs, or 125 Vel.

Naturally, if adventurers are part of the repair crew they can deduct the cost of their own time and resourcefulness in finding parts, which can cut repair costs by up to half (-2 to the cost). Or, adventurers could over time, accumulate a supply of spare parts and happen to have exactly what they need on hand, for a parts cost of zero.

**Stryders and Terrain** - Stryders are very mobile. As legged vehicles, they can go just about anywhere a person can walk. If equipped with arms and hands, they can even climb anything a person can climb. However, they are very heavy, and can get bogged down in certain terrains.

Stryders will have a "suspension", which is compared to the type of terrain you are going through to see how likely you are to get stuck. For instance, a bicycle can run just fine on pavement, but not so well in mud. "Suspension" is a game term, and is an optimistic word to use for the harsh and jarring ride a Stryder has. With neither tires nor springs nor shock absorbers, and legs whose mass can be measured in tons, the gait of a Stryder is a pounding beat that wears on both pilot and riders.



▼ **STRYDER BODY TYPES** - Although every Stryder is different from every other, those most commonly seen can be broken down into ten basic archetypes. There are four configurations used among the Confederated Nations, two basic types used by the Kantarin, three insectoid mounts most often seen among the Sivatagi, and the iconoclastic Draslander configuration that seems to defy classification. A designation or code word identifies each template. These terms of reference are most often used among veteran Divaros Pilots and their crews, but can be a useful tool for quickly referring to an enemy Stryder. A Stryder resembling a known configuration will most likely have many of the same characteristics, allowing a team to prepare a proper offensive and defensive strategy for dealing with it. The first thing to do when constructing a Stryder is to choose a template. Each of the following templates contains general information about the Stryder, including their typical usage, crew, and weaponry. These factors may change from one Stryder to the next, depending on options chosen, but the basic construction stays the same regardless of modifications.

▼ **Myndwar note:** A template usable by the Myndwar can be up one-and-a-half times as heavy as listed. However, any mass higher than the norm will require stone armor on all hit locations and an enhanced suspension (-3 to Strength) rather than a very enhanced (-6 to Strength) or extremely enhanced (-9 to Strength) one (they're heavy and get bogged down in soft terrain).

▼ **Draslander note:** Any template used or adapted by Draslanders must have an extremely enhanced suspension (-9 to Strength). Draslanders put big, wide, slow feet on their scavenged Stryders so that they can cross marshy ground without getting stuck.

While a Stryder needs no space for a power plant, it does have some of its internal volume occupied by the structural elements and mechanical linkages that make up the body of the Stryder. One-third (round up) of a Stryder's hexagons are assumed to be unusable, and these are mostly in the arms and legs of the Stryder. Any useful space is usually in the pilot or combat crew areas, which are usually in the torso of the Stryder.

**Valley Rats** - These are the chameleons of the Confederated Nations, the jack-of-all-trades Stryders. They are adaptable, easy to repair, and adjust easily to a wide variety of circumstances. They have strong hind legs that will support their weight when standing, and long front arms that can drop to the ground and allow them to run on all fours. One or more Valley Rats supports nearly every mercenary company, as they can be used to patch holes in defensive patterns, deliver supplies, or scout potential battlefields. The Valley Rat is generally among the smallest of the Confederated Nations Stryders. Not designed for extended periods of intense combat, it is built of more lightweight materials to enable it to move across terrain with great speed. The Stryder generally has a low-to-the-ground configuration, often with a hunched back, allowing all four limbs to be used in locomotion when speed is necessary.

The Valley Rat often features hands on its upper/front limbs, capable of manipulating and gripping a wide assortment of weapons and tools. Their relatively small size and good Agility means they can be used by an army like very large construction workers, able to lift and place logs or stones for field fortifications. Most Valley Rats lack a head, often replacing it with a crew compartment/basket featuring mounted ballista or pair of crossbows. The Pilot compartment is generally located in the belly of the beast.





**Construction:** Valley Rats are about six meters tall when standing straight up, though they are usually found hunched over or squatting on all fours. They are composed mostly of wood planks molded over a wooden skeleton for the best combination of durability and speed.

**Mission:** Valley Rats tend to have small crews, numbering between two and five individuals. All tend to be lightly armored and capable of quick movement. The Zokili in particular are fond of using such Stryders, as they can carry more crew members atop the Stryders body, enabling an even quicker getaway while providing support fire from atop the construct. Such tactics assume flat, open terrain, as in the Zokili highlands or the northern plains. Their ability to move relatively unseen through the shallow valleys common in such areas gives them their name. Variants on the standard configuration are used by the Myndwar in subterranean capacities, often for mining and recovery of artifacts.

**Assembly and Repair:** Construction takes a crew of ten people six months, including torso, limbs, Rune scribing, and other modifications. The normal cost of an unmodified Valley Rat is about 4,000 Vel. Repairs cost about 65 Vel for the first Hit, and double this for each additional Hit.

Valley Rats are a 16 hexagon vehicle (6 hexagons of internal structure), with a maximum mass of 2.4 tons, a Damage Limit of 4, and at maximum mass, 12 Hits. Myndwar Valley Rats can be up to 3.6 tons, a Damage Limit of 4 and at maximum mass, 14 Hits. Normal top speed is around 8 meters per turn (29kph) and default Agility is around 2d+1.

**Armament and Armor:** These Stryders often carry a missile platform on the Stryders neck or upper back (generally paired crossbows, or a single hurler) and a pair of small bladed weapons grasped in the Stryder's front limbs. As these are the most versatile Stryders, however, they are often equipped with a large variety of options, including digging or farm-working tools or small baggage carts, for example. Armor is optional depending on the intended use of the Stryder, but wooden armor is more common than steel or stone. The maximum overall armor on a Valley Rat is normally no more than 2d+1, and is often 2d+0 or 1d+2. Combined with their fairly weak Damage Limit, Valley Rats are fairly vulnerable to conventional infantry attacks and will not operate in a pitched battle without their own supporting infantry.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Meadow Fox** - Slightly taller than a Valley Rat, though not nearly as bulky or large as other Stryder configurations. One of its primary functions is often to act as a spotter, scout or missile support for other troops, it generally sacrifices melee capabilities and armor in order to maximize speed and agility. Their strong legs are disproportionately large compared to other Stryders, especially when compared with their relatively small torsos. Meadow Foxes generally have a head, often containing space for an archer or an observation platform. The Pilot compartment is generally located in the chest of the Stryder, though it may extend into the head to take advantage of the advanced observation capabilities included in a head.

**Construction:** Meadow Foxes are roughly six meters tall and are composed mostly of leather stretched over a wooden skeleton, a configuration optimal for speed.



**Mission:** As Meadow Foxes are often advance scouts or spotters. They do not always function with weapon crews, as no creature alive can keep up with a Meadow Fox at full speed. However, when they are necessary, crews number up to three individuals, plus the Pilot, but these crew are merely riders and do not have room to use weapons. Consider them a small group of infantry to enhance the limited offense and defense of the lightweight Meadow Fox. Zokili and Myndwar are fond of using such Stryders along border positions, particularly on higher terrain or along ridges where the additional height gives them a decided advantage, although the Divaros also use these Stryders, typically as part of larger contingents.

**Assembly and Repair:** Construction takes a crew of ten people six months, including torso, limbs, Rune scribing, and other modifications. The normal cost of an unmodified Meadow Fox is about 4,000 Vel. Repairs cost about 45 Vel for the first Hit, and double this for each additional Hit.

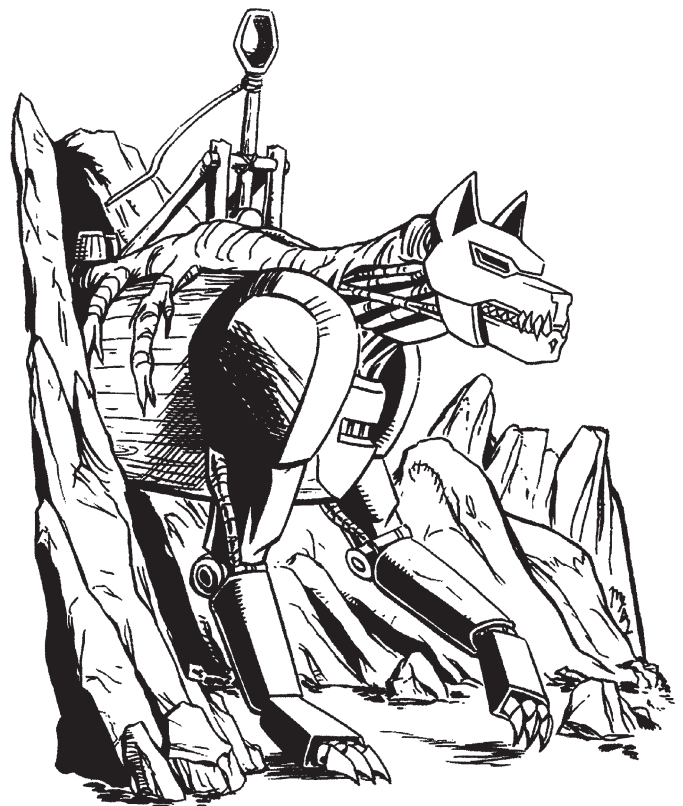
Meadow Foxes are an 8 hexagon vehicle (3 hexagons of internal structure), with a maximum mass of 1.6 tons, a Damage Limit of 5, and at maximum mass, 11 Hits. Myndwar Valley Rats can be up to 2.4 tons, a Damage Limit of 5 and at maximum mass, 12 Hits. Normal top speed is around 9 meters per turn (32kph), but variants with enhanced leg Strength can do 13 meters per turn (47kph). Myndwar variants on optimum terrain have been clocked at over 20 meters per turn (72kph), making them the fastest means of transport anywhere in the world. Their default Agility is around 2d+2.

**Armament and Armor:** Meadow Foxes are typically equipped with a high-quality head that increases the observation capabilities of the pilot. They are often armed with a single Stryder knife, though the fastest variants have no melee weapon at all, and may have a crewman atop the shoulders manning a heavy crossbow. While they are not exceptional in combat, Meadow Foxes are still more than capable of dealing with small numbers of infantry, so when sent into combat, they are often girded with wooden armor. However, as armor adds considerable weight, slowing the Stryder, many Meadow Foxes do not bear armor of any kind. The overall Armor of an unarmored Meadow Fox is only 1d+0, but one with only a pilot, a knife and as much armor as it can carry will have an overall Armor of 3d+1.

**Black Dog:** A working machine, commonly used to carry cargo and troops or pull heavy wagons. It is useful in combat as a mobile siege engine, carrying ballistas, catapults and battering rams into position with little concern for the battle raging around. Black Dogs are built on four legs, though they may sometimes mount an extra pair of arms to add versatility. Their torsos are horizontal, and provide a great deal of space atop the Stryder to mount siege engines, combat crews, or cargo, and their bodies are sufficiently large to keep a smaller amount of crew and weapons under armor protection if desired.

**Construction:** Black Dog Stryders are typically about four meters high and nine meters long. They are composed mostly of heavy wood and metal with additional metal plate in key areas, a construction that grants a great deal of durability without adding too much weight.

**Mission:** The four legs of a Black Dog grant it extraordinary mobility, and Black Dogs often have improved quality legs. A Black Dog can cover ground fairly quickly, and is often used as cargo or passenger transportation. Crews number between one and ten individuals, plus the Pilot. For battle-ready Black Dogs, the crew consists of several pairs of heavily armed swordsmen and/or Runecasters who provide additional firepower and defense, with one or two crewmen atop the Stryder and operating a heavy ranged weapon mounted on its back.



If used more domestically, the Black Dog may be supported solely by a skilled repairman. Black Dogs are used most often by the Divaros, though they are not uncommon amongst Myndwar and Zokili ranks either.

**Assembly and Repair:** Construction takes a crew of twenty people a full year, including torso, limbs, Rune scribing, and other modifications. The normal cost of an unmodified Black Dog is about 16,000 Vel. Repairs cost about 250 Vel for the first Hit, and double this for each additional Hit.

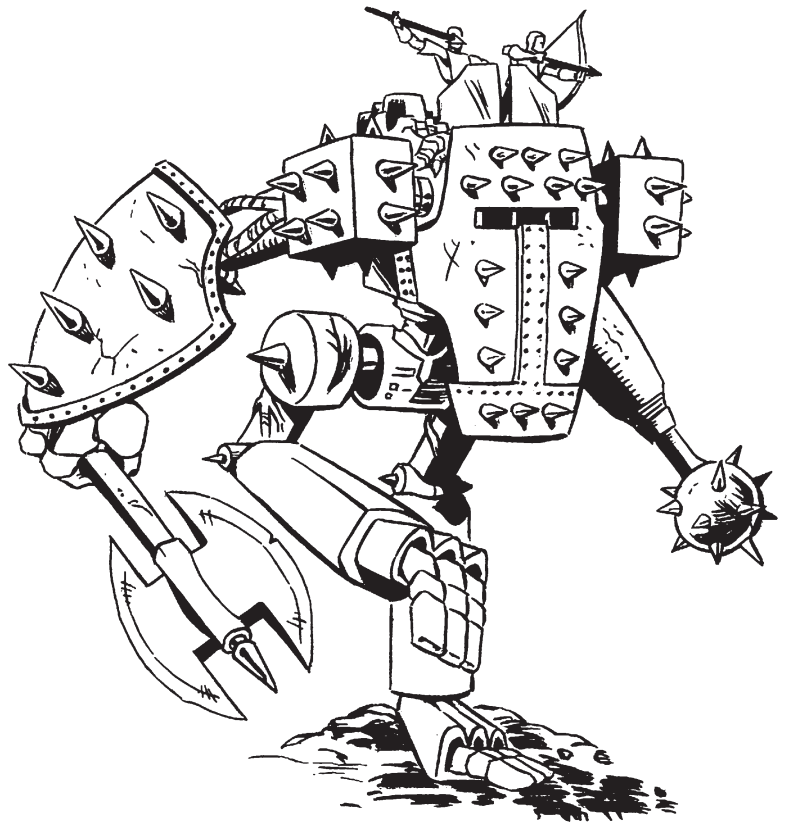
Black Dogs are a 48 hexagon vehicle (16 hexagons of internal structure), with a maximum mass of 8 tons, a Damage Limit of 3, and at maximum mass, 16 Hits. Myndwar Black Dogs can be up to 12 tons, a Damage Limit of 3 and at maximum mass, 17 Hits. Normal top speed is around 5 meters per turn (18kph) and default Agility is around 1d+1.

**Armament and Armor:** When they carry melee weapons (which is rare, since they do not usually have arms), Black Dogs with extra arms carry weapons like swords. They are more likely to be equipped with siege engines, however, especially hurlers or siege crossbows on their backs. If they need additional armor beyond their powerful frame, they typically wear steel or stone plates to deflect incoming attacks. A combat Black Dog with a crew and weapons still has sufficient carrying capacity to have an overall Armor of 2d+1. Combined with its effective Damage Limit of 1 against handheld weapons, it is almost immune to regular infantry attacks (and can be made completely immune if it invests in redundancy to improve its Damage Limit by 1).

Black Dogs often have a head and an improved quality pilot compartment to add extra sensory capability. These heads will usually have working jaws which can be used as a weapon if necessary.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Iron Wolves** - Thick, powerfully built Stryders, broad-shouldered and often riddled with spikes and plates beyond the point of utility. They are giant steel warriors, designed to cause and absorb tremendous damage. Generally having four limbs and no head, they are humanoid (and thus have two arms and two legs), though with a pronounced crouch that lowers their center of mass and provides additional stability. Many feature a single, solid compartment atop the shoulders for a pair of archers or spearmen. The Pilot generally rides inside the belly area.



**Construction:** Iron Wolves are roughly eight meters tall, and extraordinarily powerful. They are constructed of stone slabs over a steel frame, making them incredibly solid but terribly slow.

**Mission:** Crews are typically large, numbering between five and fifteen individuals, plus the Pilot. This includes any assortment of heavily-armored individuals, typically armed with swords or axes designed to strike at the most determined foes. More lightly-armored crew members in shoulder-mounted compartments often carry spears or crossbows. Iron Wolves are used quite often by the Myndwar in the defense of narrow passes, though the Divaros are fond of them as well.

**Assembly and Repair:** Construction takes a crew of twenty people two full years, including torso, limbs, Rune scribing, and other modifications. The normal cost of an unmodified Black Dog is about 32,000 Vel. Repairs cost about 500 Vel for the first Hit, and double this for each additional Hit.

Iron Wolves are a 64 hexagon vehicle (22 hexagons of internal structure), with a maximum mass of 16 tons, a Damage Limit of 2, and at maximum mass, 18 Hits. Myndwar Black Dogs can be up to 24 tons, a Damage Limit of 2 and at maximum mass, 19 Hits. Normal top speed is around 4 meters per turn (14kph) and default Agility is around 1d+0.

**Armament and Armor:** Iron Wolves generally rely on melee weapons to do their damage, typically carrying one in each hand, fixed by a crew and swappable between engagements. Weapons are typically large-bladed weapons such as swords or axes, though clubs and maces are not uncommon, and the usual weapon complement gives them one piercing weapon and one crushing weapon. A normal Iron Wolf with a mace does a lethal crushing attack of 5d+0, sufficient to damage just about anything.

A fully crewed and weaponed Iron Wolf can still carry enough armor to give it an overall rating of 4d+0. Combined with its good Damage Limit, they are completely invulnerable to hand-held weapons and have amazing amounts of endurance against heavy weapons. They are, however, clumsy in combat and unless increased Agility is bought, have a maximum possible skill roll of 2d+0 (Agility of 1d+0 and +1d of pilot skill).

In addition to handheld weapons, the combat potential of an Iron Wolf can be enhanced with an armored parapet on top, and a combat crew compartment in the torso, where armor-protected soldiers can fire siege crossbows or other weapons through numerous firing ports. Because of their size, Strength and durability, an Iron Wolf is the preferred Stryder to mount a battering ram to.

**Vine Cats:** Although there are a wide variety of trees the Kantarin can use to create their Stryders, they can be roughly split into two categories based on age and size. Many mercenary crews refer to the smaller of the two, known among the Kantarin as Saplings, as Vine Cats. These are the type most frequently encountered along the fringes of Kantarin society, and are more commonly seen grouped together than their larger cousins. They possess two upper limbs and two lower limbs, causing them to have a humanoid appearance that can be unsettling to those unused to them. Although it is not Kantarin habit to ride on their Stryders, Vine Cats can easily support a pair of riders on their upper limbs. The Pilot rides in the center.

**Construction:** Vine Cats are usually about eight meters tall. They are composed almost entirely of living wood, with leather and other materials added for ornamentation.

**Mission:** Kantarin do not mass Stryder crews as such, with their Stryders generally attacking and defending as part of a larger whole. In times of crisis, the Melded may call on his other two Companions to provide additional defense of the Stryder itself. This additional crew will fight with light armor and weaponry, emphasizing agility over power.





**Gestation and Repair:** It takes the three Companions and a half dozen other Kantarin to assist in the growth of a Sapling over a period of fifteen years, costing the equivalent of 11,000 Vel in material and development. As the Stryder is able to heal itself, repair costs are not an issue.

**Armament and Armor:** The primary weapons of such Stryders are their two sturdy arm branches, wielded like clubs to pummel opponents. Blades and spikes of various sorts are often affixed to these limbs to cause additional damage, with other plants such as vines and shooting quills grown on the tree itself to offer additional attack methods. They may also wield enormous hardened wooden swords or spears, custom created by Kantarin Shapers. Adding additional armor in the form of leather skins and metal plates is theoretically possible, though most Kantarin would scoff at the idea of doing anything like this.

A Vine Cat with room for the pilot and both Companions, a pair of melee weapons and two Quill shooters has enough carrying capacity left for an overall Armor of 3d+0. Remember that Kantarin Stryders get a 1 point bonus on their Damage Limit, at the penalty of requiring half their total hexagons devoted to internal structure. The Armor of a Vine Cat is determined when it is grown and its inherent armor is not readily modified, though it can carry a shield if needed.



**Bramble Bears** - The Elder Stryders of the Kantarin jungle are among the largest to stalk the earth, though rarely seen to non-Kantarin eyes, as they tend to lurk near the center of the jungle where they provide service and defense (as necessary) for the heart of Kantarin civilization. Towering among their smaller sapling brethren, they typically have between two and four main arm limbs and two solid leg limbs. Although it is not Kantarin habit to ride on their Stryders, these Stryders can easily support two pairs of riders among their upper limbs. The Pilot rides in the center, as always.

**Construction:** Bramble Bears are usually about eleven meters tall. They are composed almost entirely of living wood - with leather and other materials added for ornamentation.

**Mission:** Kantarin do not mass Stryder crews as such, with their Stryders generally attacking and defending as part of a larger whole. In times of crisis, the Melded may call on his other two Companions to provide additional defense of the Stryder itself; these will fight with light armor and weaponry, emphasizing agility over power.

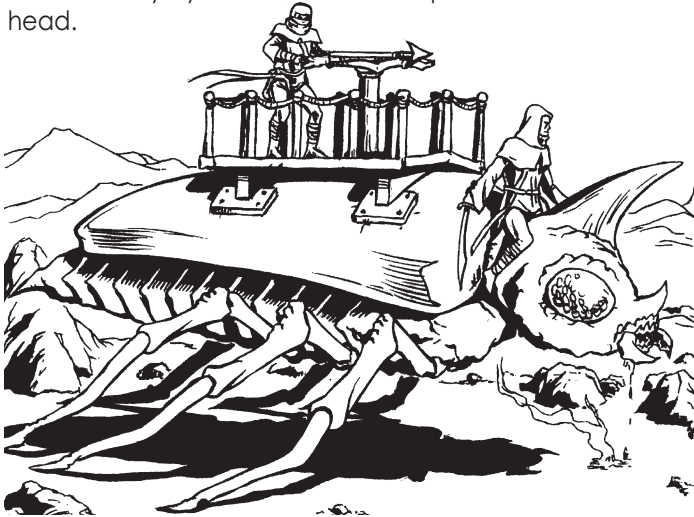
**Gestation and Repair:** It takes the three Companions and a half dozen other Kantarin to assist in the growth of an Elder over a period of twenty-five years, costing the equivalent of 23,000 Vel in material and development. As the Stryder is able to heal itself, repair costs are not an issue.

**Armament and Armor:** The primary weapons of such Stryders are their four sturdy arm branches, wielded like clubs to pummel opponents. Blades and spikes of various sorts are often affixed to these limbs to cause additional damage, with other plants such as vines and shooting quills grown on the tree itself to offer additional attack methods. They may also wield enormous hardened wooden swords or spears, custom created by Kantarin Shapers. Adding additional armor in the form of leather skins and metal plates is theoretically possible, though most Kantarin would scoff at the idea of doing anything like this.

A Bramble Bear with room for the pilot and both Companions, a pair of melee weapons and two Quill shooters has enough carrying capacity left for an overall Armor of 3d+1. The Armor of a Bramble Bear is determined when it is grown and its inherent armor is not readily modified.



**Horlac** - The Horlac (called a Rock Beetle by non-Sivatagi) is the least common but most powerful of the Sivatagi insect Stryders, filling a role not unlike that of the Confederated Nations Black Dog. The Horlac always has the same basic shape: a long, oval body with six legs of equal size and a head equipped with small (but sharp) mandibles. The sturdy back of the Rock Beetle can support up to three or four riders, though most commonly it is manned only by its Pilot, who sits atop it behind the head.



**Construction:** Mature Horlac suitable for grooming as Stryders are about five meters long, and two meters tall. Despite their relatively small size and weight compared to other Stryders, they are extremely powerful. A thick chitinous shell provides good protection and durability, and their powerful legs allow them to carry tremendous weight.

**Mission:** Sivatagi fight in swarms with dozens of warriors and insects collaborating. When necessary, between two and five Sivatagi may assign themselves to a particular Stryder, but more often the Pilot is the only crew to speak of, defending his Stryder with a long spear or pike, or a missile weapon. These Stryders are generally used in more of a defensive capacity, as other types of insect are used for more offensive strikes.

**Gestation and Repair:** A single Sivatagi Reaver can hatch and cultivate a Horlac to adulthood over a period of a single month. The tradeoff for such rapid growth is that a Horlac's life expectancy is only about two years, at most. The cost in training and feeding a Horlac over that period of time is approximately 5 Vel per week. As the Stryder is able to heal itself, repair costs are not an issue, although it will cost an additional 5 Vel per week to buy food and supplies and keep it in good health until it heals and can forage on its own.

**Armament and Armor:** A Horlac has no punch or kick attack. Its primary weapons are its strong mandibles, capable of splitting bone, metal or even stone, with those objects not destroyed being slowly dissolved by the creatures digestive enzymes. Aside from weapons carried by the Reaver himself, siege engines or crossbows can be mounted on platforms atop the Horlac's broad back. The Stryder is naturally armored with thick chitin, which if damaged, regenerates along with its Hits at a rate of 1 point per day. Additional armor of leather or steel can be added, and many Horlac sport some sort of extra protection. Remember that Sivatagi insects are assumed to have a quarter ton of armor already applied as their natural protection. Any additional armor adds to this quarter ton to determine the final Armor level.

**EXAMPLE:** The default Armor on a Horlac is 1d+2. With a pilot, one combat crew and mounted weapon it can still carry an additional half ton of armor, good for another +4, raising the final Armor to 3d+0.

A Horlac's mandibles do a lethal piercing damage of 2d+0. In addition, its acidic digestive enzymes add 0d+1 to the damage for each Time level the Horlac continues to grip its target.

**ShMul** - The ShMul (or White Mantis) is a killing machine, raised to hunt and attack by the Sivatagi, and has little use in domestic applications. It is vaguely mantis-shaped, with four sturdy back limbs carrying it along, and two barbed claws on an upright forward torso topped with a small head equipped with razor-sharp mandibles. Though formidable, the ShMul is only capable of carrying one or two riders, and typically carries only its Pilot, who rides directly in front of its forward legs, behind the upper torso.



**Construction:** Mature ShMul suitable for grooming as Stryders are five meters long, and about two meters tall. Though more deadly in combat than other Sivatagi Stryders, their body construction means that they are not capable of carrying much weight.

**Mission:** Sivatagi fight in swarms with dozens of warriors and insects collaborating. With the ShMul, Sivatagi wandering nearby may easily fall prey to the hungry insects' attentions, so more often than not the Pilot is the only crew to speak of, defending his Stryder with a long spear or pike, or a missile weapon (and occasionally backed up with a copilot carrying a similar weapon). These Stryders are only ever used in an offensive capacity. They are not usable in urban areas, unless you have no objection to the ShMul snatching random people off the street when hungry.

**Gestation and Repair:** A single Sivatagi Reaver can hatch and cultivate a ShMul to adulthood over a period of three months. The tradeoff for such rapid growth being that a ShMul's life expectancy is only about two years, at most. The cost in training and feeding a ShMul over that period of time is approximately 10 Vel per week in cash or the equivalent effort on the part of an adventurer. As the Stryder is able to heal itself, repair costs are not an issue, although it will cost an additional 10 Vel per week to feed it and keep it in good health. ShMul are smarter and more aggressive than Horlac, and require more work and better care to keep them trained and in fighting form. You do not want them biting off the hand that feeds them.

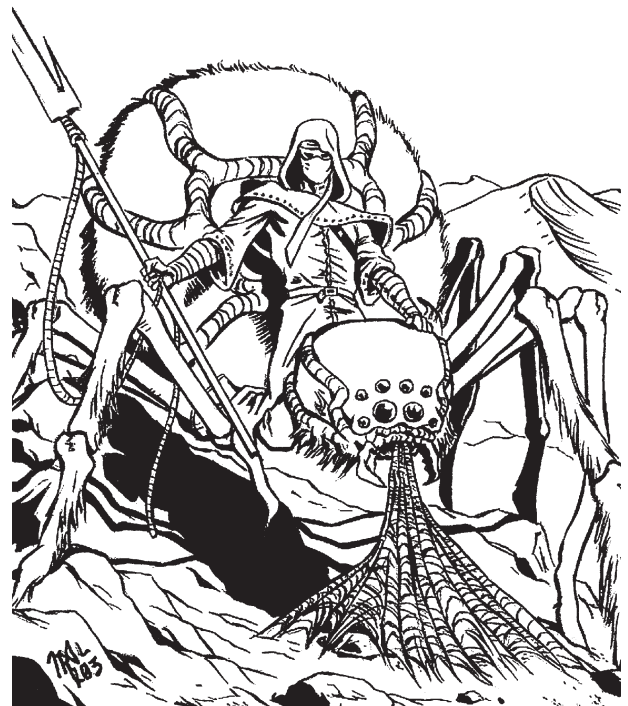
**Armament and Armor:** The ShMul's primary weapons are its powerful barbed claws, capable of rending flesh and steel alike or crushing bone. A quick-moving head capped with powerful, razor-sharp jaws backs these up. The Stryder is naturally armored with thick chitin, which if damaged, regenerates along with its Hits at a rate of 1 point per day. Additional armor of leather or steel can be added, though such armor is rare on a ShMul. The default ShMul has an Armor of 1d+2, a lethal bite attack of 1d+2 and a lethal claw attack of 2d+2. They are not exceptionally powerful in an anti-Stryder role, but the front claws, combined with the Reaver's personal weapon and the swarm of unmounted ShMul that the rider commands make them a formidable force against regular ground troops.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Sindle** - The Sindle (or Shin Spider) is a relatively small burrowing insect found across the entirety of the Eastern desert. Built low to the ground, its eight legs carry it quickly across the desert sands, the two foremost legs slightly thicker than the rest and also used for digging its burrows and spreading its web, which is secreted from the insects mouth like saliva. Most Sindles are far too small to be ridden, but the largest varieties, chosen for their size, are capable of carrying a single rider on their backs.

**Construction:** Sindles that are suitable for grooming as Stryders are two meters long, and about one meter tall. They are valued for their speed and deadly attacks, but can carry little more than their own weight and their Reavers. At most they carry the Reaver and one additional crew armed with a hand-held weapon.

**Mission:** Sivatagi fight in swarms with dozens of warriors and insects collaborating. Sindle also tend to swarm with their own kind, smaller types following the larger ones and acting in kind. Thus, while the Sindle's Pilot is the often only crew to speak of, defending their Stryder with a long spear or pike, it is likely that the Sindle will also be surrounded with up to eighteen other (roll 3d+0) smaller Sindles who will eagerly attack the nearest non-insectoid target at the Reaver's direction.



**Gestation and Repair:** A single Sivatagi Reaver can hatch and cultivate a Sindle to adulthood over a period of one month, the tradeoff for such rapid growth being that the Sindle's life expectancy is only about six months, at most. The cost in training and feeding a Sindle over that period of time is about 10 Vel per week. As the Stryder is able to heal itself, repair costs are not an issue, although it will cost an additional 10 Vel per week to feed it and keep it in good health. The cost of maintaining a Sindle also includes the cost of maintaining its "herd" of smaller cousins. The Sindle by itself would have a maintenance cost of a third of this.

**Armament and Armor:** The Shin Spiders main weapon is its mandibled jaw, small yet powerful, and capable of spreading a thick, sticky weblike fluid over its prey as it attacks, reducing that target's movement and actions. It can also attack with its front forelimbs, which have sharp, irritating hairs that can penetrate skin and non-metal armor. The Stryder is naturally armored with chitin, which if damaged, regenerates along with its Hits at a rate of 1 point per day. Additional armor will have little effect, since adding enough to make a difference would weigh the Stryder down too much for it to be useful. The normal Armor of a Shin Spider is around 2d+0. The Shin Spider's mandibles do a lethal bite damage of 1d+1, and its front forelimbs can strike for a lethal damage of 2d+1.



**Swamp Gnat** - Rather than referring to a specific, exact configuration, the term Swamp Gnat is used more generally to refer to any of the small, generally laughable Stryders manned by the Draslander Nation. These Stryders are generally masses of spare parts, lacking one or more limbs and frequently covered in moss, mold and other detritus. However, used with surprise by clever Dras, they can be formidable opponents, striking with lighting-like efficiency in irritating hit-and-run attacks and then quickly blending back in with the terrain. They are almost always manned by a single Pilot who may ride anywhere inside or atop the Stryder, although as many as a half dozen Dras may also pile atop it to enjoy the ride.

**Construction:** Swamp Gnats are typically about five meters tall, since the Dras would have difficulty boarding one that was any taller. They may be made from nearly any material, though the sad maintenance and shoddy construction of these Stryders means that they all suffer from very low durability. In game terms, one hit location and everything at that location is counted as a "jury rigged" repair, which means that if it takes any Hits it has to make a 3d+0 Will roll (adjusted by damage) against a difficulty of 5 to keep that system from suffering a malfunction.

**Mission:** Swamp Gnats are typically surrounded by anywhere from two to ten Draslancers, plus the pilot, all of whom are lightly armored (if at all) and carrying an assortment of light weapons. They generally attack together in a swarm, Dras fighting beside the Stryder to attack the same foe, be it human or Stryder, using hit-and-run guerrilla-style tactics rather than a full-frontal assault.

**Assembly and Repair:** Construction can take a lifetime, as a Draslander Stryder is almost never truly complete or fully functional. In general, it takes a crew of two to four Draslancers some six months to get a salvaged Stryder up and running, using about 5,600 Vel in material (mostly stolen or scrounged from the swamp). Repairs cost about 60 Vel for the first Hit, and double this for each additional Hit.

**Armament and Armor:** A Swamp Gnat's weaponry generally consists of one or two melee weapons wielded relatively ineffectually by the Pilot. All weapons, from a bare arm to a large sword, are swung like clubs at a foe. If available, Dras may add armor to their Stryders in the form of scavenged metal, wood or stone. A Swamp Gnat with half a dozen riders can carry sufficient armor for a final Armor of 2d+2, and it will have a lethal punch damage of 3d+2.

▼ **SAMPLE STRYDERS** - The following Stryders were created using this worksheet and the rules listed above.

### Merc

<b>Arm Strength:</b>	3d+0	1	-0d
<b>Leg Strength:</b>	4d+0	2	
<b>Agility:</b>	2d+1	3	
<b>Hits/Damage Limit</b>	12/4	4	
<b>Top speed:</b>	8 meters	5	-1d
<b>Acceleration:</b>	2 meters	6	
<b>Empty weight:</b>	2.1 tons	7	
<b>Crew:</b>	Pilot, 2 crew	8	
		9	-2d
		10	
		11	
		12	
		13	-3d
		14	
		15	
		16	
		17	-4d
		18	
		19	
		20	
		21	-5d

<b>Armor</b>	
<b>Pilot</b>	2d+0
<b>Arms</b>	2d+0
<b>Cargo</b>	2d+0
<b>Torso front:</b>	2d+0
<b>Torso back:</b>	2d+0
<b>Legs:</b>	2d+0

**Armament:** sword, crossbow  
**Battle Runes:** *Ull-eq, Enn-ess, Zhei-eq*  
**Modifications:** enhanced rune chamber  
**Approx. cost:** 7,200 Vel (not incl. runes)  
**Repair(1st Hit)** 90 Vel

A very common configuration for the versatile Valley Rat is the Merc, a unit that takes advantage of the speed and strength combined in the Stryder's body type. While this is not the fastest or the strongest Stryder available, it is commonly used in small mercenary companies because of its adaptability. A common variant has slightly less inherent armor and adds a head to maximize the capabilities of the enhanced rune chamber.

**Details:** Base cost is +2 for 1 ton of Stryder, +2 more for its total empty weight and +1 for the enhanced cockpit, a total cost of +5, or 5,600 Vel. The weapons are 800 Vel each, for a final cost of 7,200 Vel. The normal repair cost for the first Hit lost is -8, but this is increased to -7 because of the quality cockpit, or 90 Vel.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

This Meadow Fox Stryder is stripped down and fast. It carries no armor or weapons, and is used when time is of the essence. Time-sensitive messages and valuable packages are this Stryders most common cargo. The Fleetfoot will almost never stand and fight, not even against simple soldiers. With its upgraded arms and legs, the Fleetfoot is the fastest thing on feet, often outpacing even flying birds.

### Fleetfoot

<b>Arm Strength:</b>	1d+0	1	-0d
<b>Leg Strength:</b>	4d+0	2	
<b>Agility:</b>	3d+0	3	
<b>Hits/Damage Limit</b>	10/5	4	
<b>Top speed:</b>	14 meters	5	-1d
<b>Acceleration:</b>	4 meters	6	
<b>Empty weight:</b>	.8 tons	7	
<b>Crew:</b>	Pilot, 1 crew	8	
		9	-2d
		10	
		11	
		12	
		13	-3d
		14	
		15	
		16	
		17	-4d
		18	
		19	
		20	
		21	-5d

<b>Armor</b>	
<b>Pilot</b>	1d+0
<b>Arms</b>	1d+0
<b>Cargo</b>	1d+0
<b>Torso front:</b>	1d+0
<b>Torso back:</b>	1d+0
<b>Legs:</b>	1d+0

**Armament:** none  
**Battle Runes:** *lte-ej*  
**Modifications:** enhanced rune chamber, quality arms & legs  
**Approx. cost:** 4,000 Vel (not incl. runes)  
**Repair(1st Hit)** 90 Vel

The Fleetfoot has room for one or two non-combat passengers protected from the weather, or a few cases of documents or critical supplies. Some variants dispense with the arms entirely for the sake of speed. Variants with wheels have been found to be dangerously fast. Plus, pilots dislike the concept and rune scribes familiar with the variant runes for this mode of travel are harder to find, making it more difficult to repair or maintain the Stryder.

**Details:** Base cost is +2 for 1 ton of Stryder, and +2 for the enhanced arms and legs, a total cost of +4, or 4,000 Vel. The normal repair cost for the first Hit lost is -9, but this is increased to -7 because of the quality cockpit, or 90 Vel. Note that the improved cockpit does not add to the cost because you only count the most expensive option unless there are three or more options (see [page 4.16](#)).



▼ **STRYDER COMBAT** - Because of the anthropomorphic nature of Stryders, the pilot-Stryder bond and the size of Stryders, combat involving them is a hybrid between normal and vehicle combat. When you add in the combat potential of the combat crew and battle runes, there are a number of special cases to consider.

**Size:** Stryders are large. Consider small vertical Stryders to occupy a full hexagon on a map, plus the surrounding hexagons. Larger vertical Stryders fill a two hexagon radius, and four-legged Stryders occupy a space as per their description, with an additional hexagon around them for the legs. Anything occupying one of these hexagons is in immediate danger of being stepped on. Anything within another one hexagon is in reach of fists or feet, and anything within two hexagons is in reach of a Stryder melee weapon.

Stryders are also somewhat clumsy. Their limbs are too massive, and made of materials that would snap if swung with sufficient force to move with the grace and speed of a person. Stryders only count modifiers for size relative to each other. There are two size modifiers listed for each type of Stryder. The first is the modifier that is applied to the difficulty of combat tasks in relation to other Stryders. The second number is how easy it is for infantry with hand-held weapons to target the Stryder.

**EXAMPLE:** A Valley Rat is listed as a size of -1/-4. This means that other Stryders attacking it do so at -1 to the normal difficulty, and that any infantry attacking it do so at -4 to normal difficulty. *It's pretty hard to miss if you're swinging an axe at its legs.*

In addition, Stryders attacking non-Stryders or similarly small targets (anything that does not completely fill a hexagon) does so at +3 to normal difficulty. So, a person attacking a Valley Rat does so at -4 to normal difficulty, while the Valley Rat trying to strike back does so at +3 difficulty. However, this does not apply if collateral damage is not a concern. Except for the Sivatagi Stryders, a Stryder's fists or feet fill a full hexagon. If they just want to smash everything standing in a hex, they just make an attack with a fist or a stomp and do so, hitting everything in the hexagon. The only way to avoid this is to get out of the way. This would be handled like a normal melee combat roll, but the person being attacked has to be able to move to an adjacent hexagon.

**Pilots:** The pilot of a Stryder (except for the Sivatagi) operates it as an extension of their body. While they do not feel debilitating pain when the Stryder is struck, they still have an awareness of the Stryder like their own body. The pilot uses their applicable melee or ranged weapon skills, using the Stryder's Agility instead of their own. Moving half or less of a Stryder's top speed counts as a minor action, while moving more than this is a major action.

Ranged combat is handled normally, using the range, enemy Stryder size and the movement of the Stryders as normal. Melee combat is handled like it would be between normal (though greatly oversized) adventures. Stryders can use their Agility to dodge, just like adventurers can, with the same limits.

**EXAMPLE:** A Valley Rat with a pilot controlled siege crossbow moved a distance of 4 meters, and is taking a shot at another Valley Rat 40 meters away. The Valley Rat has an Agility of 2d+1 and the pilot has a skill with siege crossbows of +1d. Under normal **EABA** rules this would be:

Modifier	Difficulty
Range of 40 meters	14
Attacker movement	+2
Target size	-1
Total	15

The pilot will roll 3d+1 and try to get a 15 or more. If the pilot had aimed for a turn first, they would have been able to subtract the siege crossbow's Accuracy of 3, and so would only need a 12 or better to hit.

**EXAMPLE:** The same Valley Rat is armed with a sword and has a pilot with a skill of +1d. If attacking another similar Valley Rat in melee, it rolls 3d+1 for the attack (its Agility of 2d+1 with a +1d for skill). The opposing Valley Rat rolls 3d+0 on defense (since its -1 target size is a penalty on its defense). If the attacker has the higher modified roll, it's a hit. Otherwise it is a miss.

**EXAMPLE:** Same example as before, except the defender has a small shield, which gives a +2 on defense. This means the defender rolls 3d+2 (3d+1 for skill, -1 for size, +2 for the shield). If the defender beats the attacker by 2 or less, this means the shield made the difference, and the attacker still hits, but the defender gets +1d to their Armor. If defender beats the attacker by more than 2, the attack is deflected or is a clean miss.



**Crew:** Combat crew manning mounted weapons or using personal weapons will take double the movement penalty of the Stryder. If they are using mounted weapons they use the Stryder vs. Stryder size modifier. If they are using hand-held weapons they use the other size modifier (a weapon held in the hands can compensate for a Stryder's lurching movement easier and be aimed more precisely). Combat crew suffer the same penalties as the Stryder if it is dodging.

**EXAMPLE:** Using the same situation as the previous example, we have a combat crew firing a mounted siege crossbow, and another crew firing a hand-held crossbow. Both have skill rolls of 3d+2. First, the siege crossbow:

Modifier	Difficulty
Range of 40 meters	14
Attacker movement	+4
Target size	-1
Total	17

The crew does not have the inherent feel for the Stryder's movement that the pilot does, so they take double the normal movement penalty and end up needing to roll 17 or more on 3d+2 to get a hit. If they aimed for a turn they could subtract the siege crossbow's Accuracy of 3 and only need a 14 or more to hit. Then, the regular crossbow crew:

Modifier	Difficulty
Range of 40 meters	14
Attacker movement	+4
Target size	-4
Total	14

The crew firing a normal crossbow only need a 14 or more to hit, but their weapon does far less damage and the Stryder gets the bonus on its Damage Limit against the attack. If they aimed, they would get their crossbow's Accuracy of 2 and only need a 12 or more to hit.

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**Called shots:** Most attacks on a Stryder will hit a specific location and have a specific effect. This location can be rolled randomly or aimed at.

### Stryder hit locations (roll 1d+0)

Roll	Location	Called shot
1-	Pilot	+6
2	Arm/front leg	+4
3	Cargo	+2
4	Torso <sub>1</sub>	+2
5	Torso <sub>2</sub>	+2
6+	Leg/rear leg	+4

In the case you make up a Sivtagi Stryder with a tail of some kind, a rear leg hit has a 50-50 chance of hitting the tail. In the case where it makes a difference which arm or leg is hit, there is a 50-50 chance for each side. Just roll another die or flip a coin.

Upright Stryders (two arms and two legs) add 1 to the 1d+0 roll for random location when attacked by melee weapons from the ground or if being kicked by another Stryder. The pilot's chamber is out of reach of swords and spears and cannot be hit. Because of the low nature of Sivtagi Stryders, if they attack a normal or Kantarin Stryder in melee, they also take this modifier. Upright Stryders attacking other upright Stryders with fists (no melee weapon) subtract 1 from the roll for random location. They generally cannot punch the lower extremities of another Stryder.

**Damage Limit:** It is important to remember a Stryder's Damage Limit. This is the maximum amount of Hits it can lose from a single attack. Explosions, falling and collisions are not subject to Damage Limit or are less affected by it. Stryders colliding with each other or solid objects deliver and take lethal damage.

**EXAMPLE:** If the Valley Rat in a previous example was hit by a siege crossbow for 6d+0, this would exceed any armor it could possibly carry by a large amount, but a Valley Rat has a Damage Limit of 4, so this hit would never do more than 4 Hits to the Valley Rat.

**EXAMPLE:** Two Valley Rats with a top speed of 8 meters per turn charge into each other. A collision at a speed of 16 would be a lethal damage of 3d+2. Any of this damage that penetrated Armor would not be subject to Damage Limit.

**Damage effects:** Damage effects in terms of dice penalties are not cumulative. Rather, you just apply the worst of all penalties taken. So, if you take a -1d mobility effect and then take a -2d mobility effect, you only suffer a -2d effect, not a -1d and a -2d effect. Also remember that damage taken from attacks is affected by this penalty, just as for normal adventurers, and any attack that does lethal damage through armor does a minimum of 1 Hit, regardless of the damage penalty. If a Stryder and its pilot are operating under dice penalties, you use the worst of the penalties for Stryder operation, not the sum of them.

**EXAMPLE:** A Valley Rat with an overall Armor of 2d+0 has taken 6 Hits, putting it in the -1d bracket for damage effects. The pilot takes a -1d on all skill and Attribute rolls. Melee Strength stays the same, but mobility Strength is reduced by 1d for figuring top speed. Then the Valley Rat is hit by another attack that does 3d+0 lethal damage. Normally, the Valley Rat would take 1d+0 damage with a maximum of 4 Hits lost (its Damage Limit). But, the damage penetrating Armor is reduced by the -1d bracket it is in, dropping it to zero. But because lethal damage *did* penetrate Armor, the Stryder still has to take a minimum of 1 Hit. So, it is still in the -1d damage bracket and has taken a total of 7 Hits.

**Location effects:** Because the runic magic that powers a Stryder is distributed across it, damage to a particular spot on a Stryder usually but does not have to impair its functioning proportional to that damage. A Stryder will have a total number of Hits that it can take before its runes have been disrupted to where the pilot can no longer control the Stryder. Damage of less than this amount will likely affect the functioning of that particular area.

When a Stryder takes damage, it takes Hits of the appropriate amount. If the damage crosses a threshold, then the location hit may suffer a specific debilitating effect. Stryders have a "Will" roll of 3d+0 and a difficulty of Easy(5) to avoid these effects, but the Will roll is adjusted by any damage penalty taken.

**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder that takes its first hit crosses the -0d threshold and has a 3d+0 roll against a difficulty of 5 to avoid side effects of that hit. A Stryder that has taken 5 Hits crosses the -1d threshold and has to make that same roll, but only gets 2d+0 to make it, and a Stryder that has taken 9 Hits crosses the -2d threshold and has to make that difficulty of 5 with a 1d+0 roll.

Only a Stryder's pilot can use Fate to get an extra +1d on these side effect rolls. Sivatagi insect Stryders take damage and effects as any other Stryder, or the gamemaster can treat them as normal creatures and use rules like stunning, unconsciousness and so on. Targeting a specific part of a Sivatagi Stryder or its crew is handled normally.

Each location on a Stryder will have different potential effects. Remember that most of the time, these effects only happen if the damage done by the hit crosses a particular damage threshold (including the -0d threshold on the very first Hit taken).

**Pilot:** Any damage penetrating the head area is split between Hits done to the Stryder and damage done to the pilot, rounding any extra Hits to the Stryder. Any armor worn by the pilot is halved (rounding up) before applying this damage.

**EXAMPLE:** If a Stryder with 3d+0 Armor on the pilot's chamber is hit by a 6d+2 attack, then 3d+2 penetrates. The Stryder takes 2d+0 Hits (up to its Damage Limit) and the pilot takes a 1d+2 attack. If the pilot was wearing armor with a rating of 1d+0, their Armor would be halved to 0d+2, and the pilot would take 1d+0 damage.

If a damage threshold on the Stryder is passed, the pilot has to make a Will roll for the Stryder using the current damage penalty on the pilot or Stryder, whichever is higher. If failed, some key runes may have been damaged and the pilot is unable to compensate for it. The Stryder grinds to a halt and may fall over. Everything that is controlled by the pilot is now inoperative. Manually operated weapons and any manually operated runes may still be used by the crew, but runes that require movement of the Stryder's limbs are no longer aimable or operable.

**Arm:** If a damage threshold is crossed, a roll must be made. Failing this roll causes that limb to lose function. If it is an arm, it cannot attack, block or use weapons or devices, though the other arm may still be useful. If it is a front leg required for mobility, the Stryder loses Strength for mobility purposes of the damage threshold crossed. In any case, skill and Attribute rolls made by an arm will take the overall damage penalty, even if the arm remains functional.

Obviously, which arm has been hit will be important and has to be determined. If a called shot is made to an arm, the attacker gets to choose which arm they are hitting.

**Cargo:** This covers any area with passengers, combat crew or crew-served mounted weapons. Determine how full the cargo area is, then roll 1d+0 to see if the attack hits empty or occupied space. Any damage penetrating the Cargo area is split between Hits done to the Stryder and damage done to the passengers, crew, cargo, weapons (or a miss into empty space that just passes through), rounding any extra Hits to the Stryder. Any armor on a struck item is halved (rounding up) before applying this damage. For passengers or crew that are on armored parapets (they only take 1 hexagon of space, they have a 50-50 chance of being protected by the Stryder's armor. If they are not protected, the Stryder takes no damage from the attack and the item struck takes the full damage. There are exceptions to this. Explosions will affect everyone who is not protected by armor, and the Stryder will take the full damage (that penetrates its armor) as well. Attacks made to an armored parapet from above can avoid any armor protection of the Stryder for the passenger or crew, and then hit the Stryder *after* hitting the person.

To determine the "fullness" of the cargo area, look at the total number of hexagons associated with cargo, crew, passengers and crew-served weapons. If the area is full, then *something* is going to get hit. If the area has at least 1 person's worth of empty space, then there will be at least a 1 in 6 chance that the occupants are missed.

**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder with 4 hexagons of space devoted to two crew in an armored parapet and a siege crossbow (1 hexagon each for the crew and 2 hexagons for the crossbow) would have half the space occupied by the weapon and half by the crew. So, on a "Cargo" hit, roll 1d+0. On a 1-3, the siege crossbow is hit, and on a 4-6 one of the crew is hit and you can roll another die to see which of them it is. In either case, there is a 50-50 chance that the Stryder's armor protects whatever is hit.

**Torso<sub>1</sub>:** The functioning of *both* arms or *both* front legs takes a skill or Attribute use penalty equal to the highest damage threshold crossed. Hits done to the Stryder are as for any other damage.

**Torso<sub>2</sub>:** The functioning of *both* legs (or both rear legs) takes a skill or Attribute use penalty equal to the highest damage threshold crossed. Hits done to the Stryder are as for any other damage.

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**Leg:** If a damage threshold is crossed, a roll must be made. Failing this roll causes that limb to lose function. On a four-legged Stryder, the Stryder loses Strength for mobility purposes of the damage threshold crossed. On a two-legged Stryder, the Stryder loses virtually all mobility (top speed of 1) and cannot do kicks with either leg.

▼ **SPECIAL COMBAT FORMS** - The Kantarin and Sivataji have weapons or tactics that operate under normal **EABA** rules but which need some special explanation.

**Runes:** Runic attacks against a Stryder count as handheld weapons, which means that for damage effects the Stryder's Damage Limit is 2 points better than normal. The Will of the Stryder is the Will of the pilot for purposes of resisting runes cast against the Stryder. Runes that affect the entirety of a target have to have a modifier for the size of the target sufficient to encompass a Stryder (apply the defensive rune modifier on [page 4.20](#) if you want to adjust a rune to affect a Stryder). A rune designed to trip up a human-sized sentry will have *no effect* on a house-sized Stryder. Anyone in the Stryder is protected against such effects, which have to hit the Stryder first. Crew or pilots in exposed positions can be targeted normally.

**Kantarin Thorn Vine:** This weapon has a reach that is four hexagons beyond the boundaries of the Stryder. It can be used as a normal melee attack, or aimed at +2 difficulty to entangle a target. On a successful entangle, the Stryder and its target can engage in a pulling match, with the target getting its leg melee Strength, and the Kantarin getting its arm melee Strength plus 1d, plus the amount it made its "to hit" roll by. Four-legged (or more than four-legged) Stryders get their leg melee Strength plus 1d to reflect their lower center of gravity.

The loser of this roll is pulled off balance and falls down, taking 1d+0 Hits in the process (regardless of Armor). The pilot and crew also take 1d+0 in non-lethal damage (regardless of Armor). A fallen Stryder can make an Average(7) Agility roll to get back up, using the Time level spent as a modifier to the difficulty. Getting up from a deliberate prone position is an Easy(5) task.

**EXAMPLE:** A Stryder with a normal Agility of 2d+0 that has taken a -1d penalty from damage would have a 1d+0 roll against a difficulty of 7 to get up from an uncontrolled fall. So, it is not possible to do this in one turn. Trying to do it in 2 turns (a Time level of +2) would be a difficulty of 5, and doing it in 4 turns (a Time level of +4) would be a difficulty of 3. Each roll is separate and made at the end of the time period. Trying to get up quickly and failing means the time you spent is reset to zero. Better to make one slow and sure attempt than many quick attempts that are likely to fail.

**Kantaran Thorn Net:** This is a thrown weapon that requires enhanced arms to use, as it requires hands to be thrown effectively. The maximum range of the net is a Range level of the Stryder's arm melee Strength minus 3. On a hit, the enemy Stryder has all its skill and Attribute rolls and mobility reduced by 1, plus the amount the roll was made by. This penalty also applies to all weapons wielded by any combat crew. The thorn net can be automatically hit by the combat crew or the Stryder, but it only takes damage from a Stryder's arm melee Strength or cutting attacks, each of which is at a -1d penalty on normal damage. When the net has lost all its Hits it falls off. If the 2d+0 armor of the net cannot be exceeded, the Stryder stays entangled until someone else can free it.

In addition, any time an entangled Stryder moves, it has to make an Easy(5) Agility roll or it tangles the net in its legs and takes a fall, with effects the same as if it had been pulled over by a thorn vine.

**EXAMPLE:** The Merc sample Stryder has a sword with a damage of 3d+2. This is reduced to 2d+2 for the task of freeing itself, so it does 2 Hits to the net each round. It will take four rounds to free itself and will be able to act normally on the fifth.

**Kantaran Quill Shooter:** Some Kantaran Stryders carry a particular variety of carnivorous plant that can sense the heat signatures of large warm-blooded creatures. When one of these plants detects such a target, it fires a number of poisonous quills, each about one inch in length. Each quill does only 0d+2 of lethal damage, but counts as armor-piercing and can thus harm anything with 1d+1 or less of armor. The quills have a normal maximum range of 32 meters, after which they start losing velocity and accuracy, though they could still harm an unarmored person a hundred meters away.

The listed mass for the quill shooter is a few dozen of these pods (30 to be exact), each of which is expended after use. The pilot can direct the entire set of pods to regenerate new quills in the same time as it would take to repair 1 Hit of damage to the Stryder. Each pod fires several quills and counts as an autofire attack. In addition to Hits of damage each quill does, they are poisonous and each one that does damage causes a -1 penalty to Agility rolls and Agility-based skills. This toxin is slowly flushed from the system and heals at the rate of 1 point per Hit recovered. The quills have no effect on Stryders, but if they could penetrate a Sivatagi insect's carapace, they would have the listed effect on Agility.

The pilot of the Stryder can fire up to three quill pods at once, at the same target or targets in adjacent hexes, allotting one quill pod per hex. Because of the flexible nature of the Kantaran Stryder and the ability to shield the sensing arc of the pods with leaves, the pilot can also set a perimeter or certain arcs where the quill pods automatically trigger if anything large and warm-blooded enters.

**EXAMPLE:** A Vine Cat's pilot sets his quill pods to automatically fire on anything that crosses an invisible line eight meters away from the Stryder. Any enemy (or friendly!) infantry that crosses that line in either direction gets fired on by one quill pod, until the Stryder runs out of quill pods.

In addition to combat uses, the pilot can set the quill pods to a certain arc and range before dismounting, making it an automated perimeter defense for a campsite each night.

**Horlac Acid:** The Horlac secretes powerful digestive acids. When its mandibles bite something, they can latch on and begin to dissolve whatever they are clinging to. This gives the Horlac an automatically successful attack on the following rounds with a damage bonus of the Time level it has been clinging. There are a number of other good and bad side effects of this. Whatever the Horlac is clinging to is slowed down by having a two ton insect hanging off of it. This is usually going to be a mobility and Agility penalty:

Horlac is:	Penalty
less than one-eighth target weight	none
up to one-quarter target weight	-1
up to one-half target weight	-3
up to target weight	-6
heavier than target	-all

No more than one Horlac can be latched onto one limb or hit location of a Stryder. If multiple Horlac are attached to a Stryder the penalty is based on the total weight of the Horlac involved.

**EXAMPLE:** A 2.4 ton Horlac latches onto a 16 ton Iron Wolf. This is more than one-eighth and less than one-quarter of the Iron Wolf's weight, so the Iron Wolf takes a -1 to its mobility Strength and Agility rolls related to movement or leg use. If two Horlac were latched on, the total weight would be more than one-quarter, so the penalty would be -3.

On the negative side, a Horlac latched onto something is considered a stationary target with regard to whatever it is attached to, and cannot dodge. A Horlac can be pried loose by a Stryder with hands if it can beat a 3d+0 roll by the Horlac. The Stryder doing the prying can get a +1d bonus if it uses both hands.

As a special effect, unless a Stryder target is prone, a Horlac's mandibles will usually hit the legs. Under direction of its Reaver, a Horlac can rise up and bite the lower torso of most Stryders.

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**Sindle Web:** The Sindle has a sticky, web-like secretion that it can spray on anything it latches onto. Like the Horlac, the effectiveness of this increases with time, and is reduced by the size difference between the Sindle and the target.

Sindle is:	Web
less than one-eighth target weight	+4
up to one-quarter target weight	+3
up to one-half target weight	+1
up to target weight	-2
heavier than target	-4

**EXAMPLE:** A 1 ton Sindle latches onto a 16 ton Iron Wolf. This is less than one-eighth the Iron Wolf's weight, so the Iron Wolf takes no initial web effect. The Sindle would have to stay attached for a Time level of +5 (6 seconds) to spray enough web to give the Iron Wolf a -1 penalty. The odds of it surviving that long are not very good.

In addition, the weight of the Sindle clinging to a target will be a penalty on the target in the same way a Horlac is. Prying a Sindle loose is the same as prying a Horlac loose, but the Sindle only has a 2d+1 roll.

**Sivatagi mass attacks:** In addition to directly controlling their mount, a Reaver can also generally direct a number of lesser insects of the same type. The quantity is usually two for a 1d+0 skill roll, and doubled for each +1d.

**EXAMPLE:** A Reaver with a skill roll of 3d+0 for their mount can control eight other insects of the same type.

These insects are usually lesser or immature versions of the same species, will have stats 1d less than the Reaver's mount in most respects (armor, movement, damage), and an attack skill roll of 3d+0 from their natural instincts. The Reaver cannot direct them in specifics, but can give general orders that will be followed as long as the Reaver remains conscious. Also, the Reaver needs to be aware of the targets of his commands so that the pack understands the commands.

**EXAMPLE:** A Sindle Reaver could not tell his pack to aim for specific hit location, or to go into a building and attack whoever is inside. He could say to immobilize rather than kill, or to attack Stryders instead of infantry, or to form a protective screen and attack anyone who gets close.



# EABA

**Pikes:** Pikes are long, heavy wooden poles with a pointed blade on the end. Any Stryder with a fighting parapet or compartment 3 meters or less from the ground can attack the ground with pikes, or be attacked from the ground with pikes. Because of their length, they are considered unbalanced weapons and can only be used once every other turn. Pikes can also be set butt-first into the ground to brace against a charge by a Stryder, in which case they have a damage of 2d+0, plus the movement level of the charging Stryder. A mass of pikes can get a maximum of 1 attack on a charging Stryder per hexagon of width in the path the Stryder makes (either 3 or 5 hexagons).

**EXAMPLE:** A brace of pikes set against a charging Valley Rat going at a speed of 8 (Movement level of +4) would do a 3d+1 lethal attack, with a maximum of three attacks for each hexagon of depth in the pikes.

A Stryder can of course stop before hitting a wall of pikes and try to sweep them away with its arms or weapon, but this stops the Stryder and makes it an easier target for other weapons.

The opposite use of pikes is the lance of a Sivatagi Reaver. This is couched horizontally and braced in an armored socket on the Reaver's mount. This does a damage of 2d+0 plus the mount's Movement level. This attack is not very accurate and is done at -1d to skill. It also requires charging at the target and a miss leaves the Reaver and mount vulnerable to flank attacks.

▼ **STRYDER SKILL USE** - As mentioned during the adventurer creation chapter, Stryder pilots need a Stryder variant of melee, ranged and unarmed combat skill in order to use a Stryder at full effectiveness. Any other skills the pilot has can be used within the limits of the Stryder and the space inside the Stryder. A Stryder pilot might sew a tear in his tunic while inside a Stryder's rune chamber, but the Stryder is not going to be threading any needles, no matter how agile it is.

▼ **STRYDER TRAVEL** - A Stryder can run at full speed for months. A Stryder pilot and passengers lack this level of endurance. Stryders are the most mobile battle units in Rhun, but are terribly expensive. So, they often are in short supply and have to travel rapidly to where they are needed, since there aren't enough to keep sufficient force everywhere at once. In addition, tactical or strategic maneuver may require a Stryder force to push deep into enemy territory on short notice. All of these can be physically punishing to the pilot and crew. Even the smoothest gait by a Stryder is a constant jarring that can give the inexperienced the same seasickness you would get on the rolling deck of a ship. For long term travel, the pilot and everyone on board have to make a Health roll against a difficulty of the Time level minus 20 (a Time level of +20 is fifteen minutes). The roll is made whenever a time level is passed. Failing the roll means that person takes a non-lethal Hit that cannot begin to be recovered until the Stryder stops. There are a number of modifiers to this difficulty:

Adjustment	Modifier
Low-quality seating	+2
Average seating	+0
High quality seating	-1
Very high quality seating	-2
Quality legs	-1
Six legs	-1

**EXAMPLE:** The "Fleetfoot" Stryder (page 4.34) has quality legs, for a -1 to the difficulty on travel. So, after four hours of travel (Time level of +28), the pilot and passenger only have to make a difficulty 7 Health task to avoid fatigue.

Each Stryder also has a "suspension" type (see the templates on page 4.11). Each suspension type has a default terrain the vehicle can normally operate in. Getting through this terrain safely is a roll of 2d+0 against a difficulty of 1, which is automatic success. Any terrain more difficult than this is at +2 difficulty for each row of difference. This roll is made once per kilometer of travel in that terrain, or upon entering a shorter stretch of such terrain and failure means you get stuck beyond the vehicle's ability to get unstuck. It will have to be pulled out of its predicament by someone else before it can resume travel.

Suspension	Stryder Strength	Terrain
Normal	+0	Roads
Enhanced	-3	Solid off-road
Very enhanced	-6	Soft off-road
Extr. enhanced	-9	Any off-road

**EXAMPLE:** A Divaros Valley Rat has a "very enhanced" suspension, which means it can handle most types of off-road terrain (automatically makes a 2d+0 roll against a difficulty of 1). Taking it into a Draslander swamp (one terrain type more difficult) would require a 2d+0 roll against a difficulty of 3, made each kilometer of travel or each time the Stryder hits a soggy spot. Failure means the Valley Rat gets mired in the muck. A Myndwar Valley Rat only has an "enhanced" suspension. It can carry more armor, but puts more weight on its feet and can only operate safely on roads and hard-packed or rocky soils. Taking one of those into a Draslander swamp (two terrain types more difficult than its default) would require a 2d+0 roll with a difficulty of 5, made for each kilometer of travel or each time the Stryder hits a soggy spot. The Myndwar Valley Rat is more than three times as likely to get stuck as the Divaros version.

Note that there is a "normal" entry for Stryder suspensions. Stryders can be made as *wheeled* vehicles, like the illustration on [page 4.5](#). This option is only possible for mechanical Stryders, not the Kantarin or Sivatagi living versions, and only for Stryders that operate using four or more legs. Balancing on two wheels is out of the question for Stryders. A wheeled Stryder is only suitable for use on roads, and would certainly get mired down eventually in any sort of off-road use. These wheeled Stryders are however, the fastest of their kind. Wheeled Stryders are non-traditional and are not used in combat roles by any nation of Rhun. They exist and there is no physical reason that is preventing their adoption, but they are not accepted by a majority of Rhun's people, if for no other reason than there aren't that many unbroken stretches of quality road to make them viable as a means of transport. Major cities will have paved streets, and the roads within several kilometers are also usually paved, or at least graveled. Major cities that are close to each other may have quality roads for the entire distance between them, but most roads are the minimum quality required for trade and travel in the normal weather conditions for that area.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **CONVERGENCE** - "Isa bigun, ya?" Thomis did his best to shield his eyes from the blinding sun, with little success due to the fact that his good arm was tied painfully behind his back, and his broken arm was splinted to his chest. The Dras had decided that he would be less likely to harm anyone that way. Thomis didn't bother telling the little bugger that he had already loosened the knot enough to slip his hand out. It seemed best to play along, especially considering the fact that his recent ordeal had left him weak, to say nothing of the broken arm.

He had no idea how the Dras had managed to find this long-forgotten entrance to the city's sewer system, spilling out into what must have once been a small river before damming had diverted its course and left it to the weeds. To be honest, he didn't care. He was glad to be out of the stink, out in the real world again. Though tempted to raise a hand to fend off the light, blinding after being underground for so long, he resisted. He instead blinked away the pain as he looked around in circles for whatever it was the Dras was talking about. He assumed "bigun" meant "big one," but to one as short as the Draslander, everything (including the infant child, gods be thanked he was well) was a "big one."

Then he spotted what it was the Dras was talking about. It was, indeed, a big one. He did a slow circle around the behemoth standing before him, details becoming clearer, shapes becoming shadows becoming colors becoming...a Rune Stryder.

It was not of Divaran make; of that he was sure. Well, relatively sure. Not being a 'Monkey himself, he was no expert on Stryders, but he'd seen his fair share, and this was not a typical configuration for a Divaros pilot. For one, it was smaller than others he'd seen, about eight enan high at the shoulder. Big, certainly, nearly thrice his own height, but nowhere near the fifteen-enan monsters he'd stood next to in the past. The general shape was the same, and it followed the human convention in that it had two legs and two arms, but this lacked a head, and seemed altogether more squat than any Stryder he'd seen before.

It resembled an amphibian, he decided, complete with (as he discovered upon reaching the tail end of the beast) a vestigial tail. No doubt serving some purpose beyond being merely decorative, but exactly what that might be was beyond him.

A sudden bleat from the infant, currently being tended to by the Dras (they'd been taking turns), broke him out of his reverie, and reminded him that they needed to be moving. He retraced his steps and turned, expecting to see the Dras once again rocking the feeble human child in a futile attempt to quiet it.

"Dhhhhhhhei-eq," came a throaty whisper, a nearly inhuman growl from the back of a throat. He didn't stick around to see who it belonged to, knowing full well that the Rune was Death, and that the best place for him to be was out of sight. He abandoned all pretense of being restrained and dove for the bottom of the dry creek bed, landing between the legs of the Stryder in a small patch of what he hoped was mud, wincing in pain as the earth reminded him of his broken arm. Overhead, nothing happened, which was a good sign; either the Rune had misfired, or it had affected someone else. In either case, all that mattered was that for the moment, Thomis was alive. Now, to make sure that remained the case. His good hand reached out for a stone, small enough to throw, large enough to do a good bit of damage. His hand closed around it and he pulled, trying to loosen the earth around it in order to pull it free. He was quite surprised when the rock moved of its own accord, along with the earth on both sides of him.

A half second later he was peering down the shaft of a nocked crossbow bolt.

The crossbow was connected to the stout arm of a Zokili mercenary, one of two who had, moments ago, been lying in the mud beside him, unseen. Even now that they were moving, low to the ground, he could barely see them, so thoroughly camouflaged were they, covered in mud and filth, weeds and grasses woven through their clothing. But it had to be them. As tall as a Dras, but altogether more...human, these two moved with an unnatural grace, effortless. One of the two leaned back and stared at him, a slight head wiggle indicating some movement to the other. The crossbow never wavered.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the other Zokili creep towards higher ground, craning her neck to listen more closely, catching sounds on the air. She seemed to sniff the air, shutting her eyes. And then it was as if the earth moved beneath her, thrusting her up and out in one smooth movement, her crossbow descending, her finger pulling the trigger, releasing the bolt. The missile was barely off the bow when she threw it down and rushed up and out of the gully, hand reaching for her dagger. And then she was gone.

Beside Thomis, the second Zokili had not even blinked.

Several long moments went by, broken only by a large fly buzzing its way onto his upper lip. Irritated, he blew it away, and it flew across and landed on the forehead of the Zokili mercenary. He did not react. Thomis began to wonder if, perhaps, the chap had died, when suddenly from outside the gulley came a shrill whistle, quite obviously unnatural.

"Up," said the Zokili, without moving. Thomis did his best to obey, managing to attain a half-crouch beneath the Stryder that loomed overhead while the Zokili stood fully on his feet. "Out," again without emotion, the crossbow never wavering. Thomis complied, scrambling out of the gulley, heading towards the second Zokili, who stood staring down at a spot in the tall grass. He walked until he heard "Stop" from behind him, and then stopped, peering curiously ahead as the second Zokili walked past him to stand beside his partner.

Lying in the grass was, as he had already guessed, one of the late Jonan Marle-Thon's Magi. He was not dead. The bolt had merely pierced the flesh and sinew at the side of the Mage's neck, missing major arteries as well as the Mage's voice box (which would have been a fate worse than death). He was bleeding like a stuck Lodo, a bright red pool already forming beneath him, but the wound was not necessarily fatal if he were tended to. The Zokili, however, seemed quite content to watch him die.

Thomis considered whether he could do the same, and in spite of himself, and the fact that mere moments ago the Mage had tried to hurl a Death Rune, he decided he could not.

"You can't let him die," he said. The Zokili did not react, so he spoke louder. "Killing him is one thing. If you're going to kill him, kill him. But don't let him die like that."

The male Zokili turned, aiming his bow at Thomis. "Why do you care, Divar? He would do the same to you."

For a moment, Thomis wondered how much the two Zokili knew about his recent problems, which had led to the battle in the alleyway, the elder Jonan's death, and his being tossed in a Rune-guarded chamber in the sewers and left for dead. But then he realized the Zokili was speaking more generally about the habits of the Divaros as a whole. And Thomis would have been hard pressed to refute those beliefs. Still, he could not watch a man die like this. Not even a Mage.

"Either kill him, or let me tend to him."

The two Zokili stared at one another wordlessly, and then the male lowered his bow, pointing it again at the Mage. For a moment, Thomis thought he would fire, but then the Zokili looked at him and, with a nod of his head, indicated that he should approach.

He took two steps forward and fell to his knees as the earth shook beneath him. He calmly crawled the rest of the way to the Mage, familiar enough with the sensation to know that it was no earthquake; merely the Zokili Stryder beginning to move. Evidently its Pilyt had been inside the whole time, observing, and only now that things had shaken loose did the frog-like construct make a move towards higher, more stable ground, much better terrain for a Stryder to fight on, if it came to that.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

"Who are you?" rasped the Mage. Thomis ignored him, tending to the wound as best he could with one hand, knowing that the Mage was speaking to the Zokili, knowing with equal certainty that the Zokili would not reply. He was, however, somewhat surprised when the Dras suddenly emerged, bedraggled and dirty, from a nearby mudhole he'd taken cover in. Seeing the dripping wet Draslander, Thomis nearly leapt at his throat out of concern for the child, but then he saw the child, safe and dry, bundled within an oilcloth sack the Dras had been secreting away.

The male Zokili eyed the Dras curiously, keeping his crossbow pointed at the Mage's forehead the entire time. Could it be that this well-trained warrior had never seen a Dras before? His answer, the obvious one, he thought, came a moment later. The two obviously knew each other.

"What are you doing with that thing?" asked the Zokili.

"Disa bebbie," said the Dras. "Ewas inda swar, widdis guy heyah."

"I know what it is," said the mercenary. "Kill it."

Thomis' heart sunk momentarily, but quickly the Dras clasped the child to his chest.

"Ono," he said. "Isabebbie, noway."

The Zokili rolled his eyes and looked down at Thomis and the mage, obviously weighing which matter required more of his attention at the moment. Satisfied that neither of the Divaros was going anywhere, he turned the bow away and wandered off to argue with the Dras.

"What the hell is going on here?" asked the Mage, wincing in pain. "Dras? Zokili? A Stryder? What the..." He broke off, coughing. It was just as well that he was unable to finish his question.

Thomis had no answers.



## Map Key

- Red: Nations and national boundaries
- Black: States or regions
- Yellow: State boundaries
- Blue: Trade routes
- Grey: Major cities
- Green: Lowlands
- Brown: Highlands



THE WORLD



*Before life, before time, before anything,  
there was Xhei, she called Chaos, raw and  
primal and shapeless, formless and conscious  
of one thing only – that she was alone. In the  
supreme act of self-sacrifice, Xhei tore herself  
asunder, and existence as we know it began  
in earnest as from the countless came the  
counted, from infinity came the finite, from the  
one-who-was-many came one. Hei, he called  
Order, leapt into existence, becoming the  
consort of Xhei, and with him came law, and  
language: "Rhun"... the very stuff of creation.*

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Much enamoured with one another, Hei and Xhei spent millennia in each other's arms, and before long they brought forth twin offspring who Hei named Mheta, the daughter called Matter, and Nheta, the son called Energy. Xhei embraced her children and doted on them to the exclusion of all else, occupying their time with games and play, forgetting, for a time, her consort. Hei grew furious, and desperate to regain the attentions of his beloved, he decided to give the twins a playground with which to occupy themselves. *So was created the Universe.*

The two god-children were quite pleased, and quickly scurried here and there, creating and destroying for their own amusement. Soon they grew bored, however, and in a desperate attempt to regain the attention of their parents (who had resumed their amorous activities), they engaged in a competition. Mheta took a shapeless sphere that had been a toy ball and created a planet, and Nheta created the sky around it. Mheta created oceans, and Nheta condensed them into clouds. When their game had finished, the god-children disobeyed Order. Eager to demonstrate what they had created, they intruded upon their parents.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Mheta, by far the braver of the twins, boldly strode into her parents' abode, interrupting the two in the middle of their creative couplings. Hei, furious at the intrusion, leapt up with a roar, inadvertently splashing his daughter with the primordial stuff of Creation. He chased her across the Universe, right down to the world that she had created in order to please him. The pursuit was long, and by the time they touched down, Mheta was quite pregnant, and gave birth to a son just as Hei reached her side, intent on destroying her. Overcome with compassion at seeing his offspring, however, he instead named the child Lheta, he who brings Life, and left mother and child to fend for themselves as he returned to his beloved.

Unbeknownst to any of them, Nheta had remained behind in his mother's presence, and when the others left, his mother called out for companionship. Nheta, desperate for attention, disguised himself as his father and entered her presence. When he ultimately revealed his true nature to his mother, she feared for his life, knowing that Hei would surely kill him. She urged him to flee where his father would never find him, giving him a handful of his father's Rhun to protect him. And so he fled, hiding himself beneath the surface of the world he and his sister had created, sulking in misery and solitude while on the surface his sister and her son brought Life to the world: plants, animals and other living beings. This was the Twilight age, before the sun, before death, before misery, when the world lived in peace and eternal life.

*It was not to last forever, however.* The secret tryst of mother and son could not go long hidden, for Xhei soon became pregnant herself, and gave birth to a sickly, squealing baby girl. She attempted to hide the child beneath her bedcovers, but Hei's amorous attentions soon shook the baby from her sleep, and she cried out with great zeal. Hei tore back the bedsheets in a rage, grabbed the infant, named her Dheta (the Dead god), and hurled her down to earth, where she plummeted underground, shattering the hiding place of her father and brother, the wayward son Nheta. Mountains split and spat fire, the earth cracked and shook, and millions died instantly as Death entered the world. The child god wept for his fallen offspring, then left behind his father's stolen Rhun and leapt skyward, determined to kill his father. His sister Mheta and her child Lheta followed behind, realizing that his assault was in vain, and that he would be destroyed.

# EABA

Indeed, the battle between father and son, Order and Energy, was brief and brutal, and it was only through the combined intervention of Mheta, Lheta and Xhei that Hei's hand was stopped. Hei allowed himself to be convinced that his children should not be destroyed. Determined to keep them from causing future trouble for anyone, divine or mortal, he set them in place around the world they had created, able to look down but unable to meddle in affairs above or below. Hei, the fiery son, was set in the day, and mother and child were set as guardians of the night, becoming the planet's two moons.

Ceaselessly, they chased each other through the sky, bickering and squabbling with one another, while their children did the same on the surface. And forgotten below the earth, where the dead god called Dheta slumbered eternally amongst her brother's stolen Rhun, lay those who survived the apocalypse that brought her to them. Worshipping her lifeless form, ignorant of the meaning of the powerful Rhun that surrounded her and them, these Deijin, the giant children of Death, built up their strength, and let their anger, impatience and fury fester and boil as they waited for release.

*Thus began the Age of Mortals, and the dawn of recorded history.*



## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

**-5,000DR (Divarosh Reckoning):** The Myndwar inadvertently awaken the giant Deijin who, though they only number in the thousands, enslave the smaller, more peaceful races. Historical records of this period are sparse at best.

**-2,300DR:** Amidst thousands of years of slavery and heartache, some among the small races (led by the Myndwar) seek refuge below the earth, and stumble upon the secret writings of Hei known as the Rhun. They are soon able to learn what even the giants cannot. But even the power of the Rhun is not enough. The small races cannot stand up against the large Deijin without an equalizer. They get to work.

**-2,250DR:** The smaller races trick the giants by constructing a tribute: large statues arranged around a great stadium, where the lesser races propose to fight and die to amuse the giants. On the Day of Reckoning, the giant Deijin gather to watch the smaller races. The statues are unveiled to great fanfare. Suddenly, the smaller races clamber inside the heads and chests of the giant creations, and the statues come to life. Though highly primitive and capable of only limited maneuvers, they are the first true Rune Stryders, having been created in secret by the Divaros, piloted by the Zokili, and powered by the Myndwar Rhun. Although the Deijin win the battle, the smaller races learn from the experience and build better, faster Stryders. The tide gradually shifts in their favor. The Great War has begun.

**-2,000DR:** After nearly two-hundred and fifty years of war, the lesser races defeat the last of the giants. From the skies above, they receive a terrible punishment. Nheta, furious that his own Rhun have been used to defeat his giant Deijin children, bakes the earth with heat, bringing forth a great famine and melting the glaciers. The heart of civilization is lost beneath the rising waters of what will become the Inner Sea, and the surviving members of the smaller races are scattered across the land. Knowledge of the Rhun are lost. The sun's fury lasts for only a few months, a single season, but the suffering that ensues lasts for two thousand years.

**-175 DR:** The races crawl out of a second dark age. Knowledge of the Rhun (now called Runes) begins to resurface. National boundaries are laid. The Old Divarosh Calendar counts this as year one, based on the election of their first king, Pietr Jyoldenshire, a brutal warlord who unites the country with the promise of conquering the world and making the Divar the strongest people on earth. *He keeps his word.*

**-150DR:** The Divaros, ever expanding, wage war against the nation of Kator, wiping out most of its people. Under the leadership of the Druid Kantar, who claims to be descended from the god Lhei himself, the survivors retreat into the jungles to found a new civilization. In the Kantarin calendar, this is year one.

**1DR:** The Divaros and the Sivtagi struggle for power. The Sivtagi are defeated, driven across the mountains and into the desert wastelands. The Sivtagi count this as year one in their calendar. The Modern Divarosh calendar calls this year one based on the significance of the defeat. The Myndwar and Zokili also accept this year as year one as part of their agreement to form the Confederated Nations with Divar.

**100DR:** After centuries of exploration, ten Runes are finally recovered in some form, including some of the ones that allow Stryders to be rebuilt and reactivated. Using this newfound strength, the Divaros drive the Draslander into the swamps. The Draslander people call this year one, and mark the occasion with tears.

**295DR:** The Divaros fight the Myndwar, but are defeated when the Myndwar and Zokili join forces with the Kantarin to keep the Divaros in check. The Confederated Nations nearly fall apart. Many years of war follow. Detailed records from this era are mostly lost, due in part to historical cover-ups, and in part due to the burning and scouring of several prominent libraries and record halls.

**335DR:** The Divaros broker a peace deal with the Kantarin. The Zokili and Myndwar vote to include official homelands for Draslander and Sivtagi. The Divaros refuse. Several rebellious Divar countries break out of the union. Struggles for power remain as local politicians are killed and militias formed.

**341DR:** The present day. Year 341 in the Divaros calendar, year 241 for the Dras, and year 491 for the Kantarin. Forty-five runes are known. Many maintain that there are many, many more to be discovered. Parts of the Divaros empire are in open rebellion. War looms on the horizon.

▼ **Note** - It is worth noting that the table on page 3.7 has fifty runes, so it could be that five of the runes in that chapter are not yet accessible to Rhun's inhabitants. This is especially useful if the gamemaster thinks one or more of them may be unbalancing.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **GEOGRAPHY** - Our own planet Earth has been roiling and boiling for millions of years, and has had plenty of time for continents to shift, mountains to rise, and oceans to fill. However, the world of Rhun, and the universe in which it exists, is very young. Only several thousand years old and created rather than naturally formed, Rhun's geography does not follow traditional "Earth-based" models.

**Mountains:** Rhun's mountains were not created by two large continental masses colliding, but rather by the whim of the gods. They are relatively small, with broad valleys between them, as befits a younger, single-continent planet. The tallest peaks on Rhun (perhaps a half dozen) are less than three-thousand meters high. However, the air at the top of these low peaks is still too thin to breathe, so passes through the mountains are the only real way to cross them. Most of the world's mountains fall within the central Spine that runs down the center of the main continent. Once a rough cross (its southwestern leg shattered in the cataclysmic events of the past), the Spine now more or less bisects the world, dividing the most civilized and prosperous societies of the north and west from the frontier lands of the south and east. Smaller ranges can be found on the islands of the southwest.

**Highlands and Hills:** The high, frigid plateaus of the north are home to the heart of society, split roughly in two between the Divaros to the west and the Zokili to the east. War, fire and civilization have long since cleared most of the greenery away, and the lands are subject to erosion in times of drought. Luckily, their northern placement and several large rivers allow irrigation to keep farmlands fertile enough to grow staple crops. Lower plateaus on the continent's southern tip offer a less bleak lifestyle, as befits a temperate climate.

**Lowlands and Swamps:** The lands along the continent's southwestern edge, ringing the Inner Sea, are generally swampy, ever covered by a few meters of water, with tidal forces inundating some areas beneath several meters of water several weeks out of the year. Areas further to the north tend to be nearly impassable, filled with all variety of strange plants, biting insects, venomous reptiles and the Draslander. Further south and west, near the Kantarin sub-continent, the waters grow too deep for all but the tallest trees. However, the presence of sand bars and small islands (which prevent ships from sailing in all but a few areas) make it *theoretically* possible to walk a Stryder straight across the sea.

**Forest and Jungle:** Vegetation of some sort is present in every part of the continent, ranging from scrub grasses and small hardwoods to the north, to copses of citrus to the southwest and east, to tough cacti and burrowing trees in the Desert. In higher elevations one finds clumps of evergreens (conifers to the north, willows and the like to the south, nearer the swamps). But there is truly only one large forest to be found - the Kantarin Rain Forest. Covering nearly all of the Kantarin sub-continent, the thick canopy of these one-hundred-fifty meter tall trees covers the land below in perpetual darkness and mist. To the east and north, the living forest actually sends roots beneath the Sea, spreading its grasp to the main continent and making shipping a nightmare in some areas. The Kantarin people who live within the forest say that the entire area is one living creature.

**Desert:** As if balancing the lush vegetation of the Kantarin rain forest, the desert home of the Sivtagi, known only as The Desert by the people of Rhun, is the only true desert on the continent. Covering nearly a third of the eastern continent, it is a dry and harsh realm of venomous creatures and savagery. The northeastern part of the desert is home to several mountainous outcroppings, including the fortresses the Sivtagi call home. To the west, ringed by mountains, rivers and lakes turn portions of the desert into oases for much of the year, making the area a prime target for battles waged over resources.

**Waterways:** On an older planet, rivers and rainwater would have time to erode the land, breaking down minerals and salts that then make their way to the oceans which, over millions of years, become salty. On Rhun, there has not been enough time for this to happen. Thus, the rivers, flowing down to bring salty deposits from the mountains, are rich in minerals (and, in some higher elevations, too salty to drink safely), but the oceans are still mostly fresh and generally safe for drinking. As such, coastal settlements have plenty of fresh water for their people, but inland areas (particularly to the east) tend to be more arid and less densely populated. Irrigation pipelines are just as likely to run inland from the ocean as they are to run downhill from higher elevations.

▼ **COSMOLOGY AND TIME** - Rhun's solar system consists of a single sun (called Ntheta), around which the lone planet of Rhun revolves. Rhun itself is approximately 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles) in diameter at the equator, compared to our own solar system's Earth ( $\approx 13,000$  kilometers) and Mars ( $\approx 7,000$  kilometers) in size. The world's sole continent (along with its sub-continent) stretches about 5,600 kilometers from north to south, and 4,000 kilometers east to west at its widest point.

Rhun has two satellites, or moons: Mtheta (the larger) and Ltheta (the smaller). These two objects are the only sources of light in the night sky; the gods have not gotten around to creating other solar systems yet, and as such there are no stars in the sky. Needless to say, this makes practices such as astrology entirely unheard of, and navigation a bit trickier (it is still accomplished by observing the positions of the moons relative to one another and prominent landmarks).

Rhun's day and year are approximately the same length as in our own world. The planet completes a revolution of the sun every 350 days, within which are ten months of thirty-five days each (each month divided into five weeks of seven days). A month is determined based on a complete cycling of the larger moon, Mtheta, since the smaller moon has a somewhat erratic cycle not in line with an easy division of day and night. The New Year is observed on the first day of the month Mhetite (literally, Month One), named after the Rhun of the Beginning and the End. Other months are named for various number Runes (Mhetiin, Mhetaan, Mhetawn, Mhetahn, Mhetain, Mhetean, Mhetenn, Mhetoun, and Mhetott).

The day (based on a single rotation of the planet around its axis) is divided up into twenty-five hours, the division of hours into minutes and seconds corresponding to that in our own world (i.e., sixty minutes per hour, sixty seconds per minute) as decreed by Pietr Jyoldenshire, the first Divaran king. Each day begins when the sun rises over the Divaros capital city, and as the hours are counted from that point, which shifts throughout the year, the keeping of time across the world is rather arbitrary and hardly an exact science. There are no time zones, so the start of the day is only at sunrise in the regions directly north and south of the capital. Again, since timekeeping is usually an approximation, this is seldom a concern.

▼ **WEATHER AND CLIMATE** - Due to the lack of a planetary tilt, there are no seasons as such on Rhun. Northerly climes tend to be cold year round, those near the equator much hotter all the time. Weather patterns and tidal forces do sometimes bring snows further south, or droughts further north, but for the most part weather patterns are predictable. There are no growing seasons, no autumn or winter. What lives in a given region is adapted to a year-round climate of that type, wet, dry, hot, cold, whatever. In the wild, animals breed and plants tend to bear fruit in particular months for no reason that has yet been determined, but those domesticated by man can have these cycles adjusted. Most crops are planted, grown and harvested year-round, each field in a different stage of development.

Snow falls year round in the higher elevations of the northern Spine and across the northern highlands, rarely reaching further south except in rare occasions, and only melting when it slides down to lower elevations. As a result, many areas are permanently buried under snow and ice, with glacial expanses and regions in which long-term habitation is all but impossible, as there is nothing but snow and ice, and no growing season. Those who live near such areas have long-since learned the paths of avalanches and their warning signs, and know well to avoid them. Temperate climes are generally found across much of the central continent, growing steadily hotter towards the equator, where the thick forests of the west eat up most of the moisture, leaving the dry eastern Desert to bake beneath the sun, surviving only on the infrequent and unpredictable downpours of the region. Southern climes are similar to those of the north, though more temperate and generally more rainy than snowy, though higher elevations may have snowcaps.

Tidal forces and the rare hurricane bring frequent flooding to the lowlands of the southwest and parts of the southeast, although even these are predictable enough that those living in such areas can prepare for them ahead of time. Rhun is, however, subject to unpredictable earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, particularly in the southernmost parts of the Spine. Such rumblings are often attributed to Deijin, trapped beneath the earth, or the Dead God coming back to life to seek vengeance on the living.

▼ **RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY** - As the world of Rhun was created and populated only a few thousand years ago by a family of divine beings, history and mythology is essentially the same thing in Rhun. There is no guesswork when it comes to who's who in the heavens, and as such there is no belief in a single deity, nor in a hundred different gods for every aspect of society and nature. There are six gods and goddesses, and everyone knows their names.

Since religion is typically based on faith and belief, and the people of Rhun do not need faith (they know for a fact that the gods exist, because not all that long ago those gods walked the earth), there are no large organized religions. Power in the form of runes is at hand for *all* people, no matter what they believe, so there is little reason to worship divine powers. This line of somewhat apathetic thinking is exacerbated by the fact that the gods are not the sort of deities who demand attention, respect, sacrifice and worship. There is little point in asking for favors, begging for forgiveness, or cursing your enemy; the gods are otherwise occupied.

The net result of all this is that there are no real clerics, priests or religious leaders in Rhun, nor any sort of organized state religions. Even the druids, who once emphasized reverence of nature and life, are mostly a part of mythology now. There are minor superstitions about the Deijin. While historical, no one is really sure if they are extinct, imprisoned in the earth or merely biding their time, but most people have more pressing things to be worried about, and tales of the Deijin are mostly used to frighten children. To be certain, there are rogue cults, atheists and other fringe groups who purport to gain power by the worship of the gods anyway (the worshippers of the dead god Dheta in particular), but they are mostly viewed as kooks and troublemakers by the powers that be. Most of these cults are quickly done away with as soon as they crop up, as they often represent a nucleus for dissent in an already chaotic society. *And nobody mourns their passing.*



▼ **THE NATURE OF WAR** - If Rhun has a religion at all, it is the religion of battle. The political and geographical landscapes are littered with the corpses of the warriors who died in the service of their employers, warring over resources, boundaries and many more petty concerns.

These are not the mounted French and English knights of the latter half of the Middle Ages, as popularized in film and fantasy fiction. Nor are they the heavily armored spearmen and longbow archers who turned the tide in many battles of that period. A far better analogy for the mercenary companies of Rhun would be the smaller bands of warriors who did battle in the early Middle Ages, before the development of heavy plate armors and more powerful weapons. Here, there were few who called themselves professional warriors, and these relied more on tactics and the element of surprise, and less on heavy armor and weapons. Leather and mail armor was common enough, but to arm oneself head to toe in custom-fitted plate mail would have been beyond the reach of any but the wealthiest lord.

In the true medieval period, these warrior companies evolved technologically to keep pace with their foes, using the developments they had available to wage war more effectively. The presence of horses, and the development of the saddle and stirrup, made cavalry possible. Heavier suits of full plate armor, developed to a great extent in reaction to the dangers posed by ever-stronger crossbow and longbow technology, helped bring the knight as we know him into being. And of course, the presence of a strong, unifying religious force, and the centralization of power and money in the hands of a powerful few, throughout this period cannot be understated.

Rhunic mercenaries, however, lack *all* of these things. As all except the Sivatagi lack suitable large mounts (there are no horses), mounted warriors and cavalry tactics are unheard of. Lance charges, mounted archers and the like are nonexistent, for the most part, as are heavy suits of full plate armor. Certainly, there are dangers on the battlefield, but without the need to wrap oneself in sheets of steel, plate armor technology has been restricted, for the most part, to wrapping the torso with a breastplate (and even this is quite limited and expensive for most warriors). Heavily armored military forces numbering in the thousands are a completely fanciful idea in Rhun, and would be unlikely to work even if someone were to field such a force.

**Rune Stryder Tactics** - The general availability of Runes to all members of the population acts as a great equalizer, giving power to anyone with the devotion and interest in studying and learning to master its power. Battlefield injuries that might have been crippling or fatal can, in many cases, be cured with the correct application of a Rune at the right time. And the importance of using Runes as part of battle cannot be overemphasized.

At the center of any major battle are the Rune Stryders themselves, giant constructs standing, on average, between five and ten meters in height. Layered with heavy armor, guarded by Runes, and armed with giant weapons of war, they storm across the battlefield to do battle with one another and an opponent's troops.

Surrounding the Stryder, right in the midst of the battle, are the Stryder's support team, typically consisting of between ten and twenty individuals whose job it is to keep enemy troops away from the Stryder, so that the behemoth can do its damage. Several of these individuals carry massive shields and spears, keeping enemies at bay so that the lightly armored, quick-moving archers with crossbows and war bows can scurry around into position and snipe away at their foes. Along with them are one or more Runescribes, whose job it is to maintain the Runes that adorn the Stryder inside and out, keeping the magic flowing and the Stryder alive. And thrown into the mix are several more heavily-armored (but still quite mobile) warriors with axe, club, and sword, doing their best to destroy the support troops at the feet of the opponent's own Stryder. And all of these people may have some minor runic talent of their own.

An entire mercenary company may consist of between two- and five-hundred individuals, with a ratio of one Stryder to every forty or so fighters, with about one support person for each ten fighters (cooks, doctors, various craft professionals, etc). For companies with fewer Stryders, tactics necessarily shift, with some companies preferring to keep men back to provide missile and siege engine cover for their front lines, others focusing instead on stealth and trickery, sending cloaked and dangerous Magi behind enemy lines. The ratio of fighters, Stryders, Magi, scouts, camp followers and so on really depends on the terrain, the major nationality of the force and how well-off it is. Mercenary companies are, after all, a business. They have to charge enough money to pay all their soldiers, not just for a given contract, but with enough to tide them over to the next contract and cover their expenses. The person running the show must be a shrewd businessman as well as a military leader.

Of course, even the most novice mercenary groups realize that sometimes the best way to win the battle is not to be there at all. Many work with saboteurs, spies, and even politicians and diplomats to help wage the war off the battlefield, assaulting the enemy with political machinations, kidnappings, assassinations and sabotage.

Understanding exactly why warfare is fought in this way requires one to have a good overview of the political landscape as it exists at the present time. The following pages lay out the major players, and point out many of the current trouble spots.



## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

▼ **THE NATIONS OF RHUN** - The world is split into two camps, roughly divided between north and south (with some exceptions) by the mountainous Spine. The Divaros, the Myndwar and the Zokili, collectively known as the Confederated Nations, primarily control the northern lands. In the scattered lands to the south, large parts are held by the Kantarin, Sivatagi and Draslander, known as the Outcast Nations, so called because their inhabitants were long ago driven from their homelands into lands then deemed uninhabitable.

However, the actual truth of the matter is that things are not nearly as clear-cut. Spying, political machinations, roguery, assassination and unofficial military strikes against neighboring countries mean that the Confederated Nations are not nearly as united as their lofty name might suggest. And the Outcast Nations are hardly mere victims and refugees, representing a political, economic and military force to be reckoned with, individually and collectively.

National and state borders generally follow natural boundaries (mountains, rivers, coastlines), and in some cases the lines are more theoretical than realistic. Those living closest to the borders are generally the least concerned with them in times of peace (though most concerned in times of war). One might easily find borders shifting as easily as allegiances do, sometimes as much as hundreds of miles, as fits the whims of the world's leaders and diplomats.

## The Divaros

*plural, Divaros, also Divarosh, Divarans or Divari; Literally, "City-Dwellers", from Deve (City) and Osen (To Inhabit)*

The Divaros are a proud people, with reason to be so. Of Rhun's inhabitants, they are the most numerous, having won this place through clever politicking and when necessary, warfare. They are steely-eyed, muscular and narrow-jawed, often cold and harsh in nature and attitude yet quick to defend their families, countries and beliefs. They are imperialistic, driven and hard, their walled cities and powerful armies testament to their capabilities.

The average adult male Divar is approximately one point nine meters in height and eighty-two kilograms in weight. Most (90%) adult females are approximately one point six meters in height and eighty kilograms in weight. This makes them the tallest and strongest of all the peoples of Rhun, giving them a reputation (off deserved) of being large, loud-mouthed brutes.

Divaros almost always have dark hair, which they keep throughout their lives. Elder Divaros rarely get gray hair. Those that do go gray are considered in the same vein as blonde Divaros, and said to be blessed. Red-haired Divaros are usually considered bad luck. Fairer hair is more common in those that reside farther to the north. Skin color varies widely; Divaros living farther north tend to have fairer skin and longer hair, while those living near the equator have deeply tanned, brown skin and shorter hair. Divaros tend to favor pale or neutral tones splashed with color rather than bold, broad strokes. White, pale yellow, beige and gray are typical, with blue and gold the most popular accent colors.

The Divaros people are united, at least in name, under a single nation, called Divaros. The nation is in turn divided up into five countries, each in turn divided into a number of separate states. The Prime Chancellor rules the Nation as a whole, chosen by his peers from among the Arch-Chancellors who oversee each country. These Arch-Chancellors in turn are chosen from amongst the Chancellors who oversee each individual state. Divaros society is patriarchal, aristocratic in theory and name but more plutocratic (i.e., ruled by the wealthy) in actual practice. However, Divaros was a monarchy up until a few decades ago, and so the bulk of the nation is still digging itself out from under outdated habits and practices, for better or worse.

Exceptions to the norm can be found in the breakaway state of Rorach (democratic), the southernmost country, Tiso (matriarchal monarchy) and the large southeastern state of Neatha, which is theoretically allied to Divaros but is mostly an anarchic state ruled by petty monarchs and dictators.

The flag of Divaros features a golden *Nhet* rune (symbol of the Sun) centered in a blue-bordered white field. Because of their flag, the Divaros are sometimes called People of the Sun by other nations, often disparagingly, despite the fact that most live in northern climes that do not see much sun at all.

## Divar

The country of Divar is the largest in both population and land area, home to some 75% of Divaros people and more than half of the world's population, mostly settled along the western coast of the continent. It is also arguably the world's preeminent military power, as well as a leader in technological innovation and Runic research. The country is divided into nine states, eight of which fully support the central government, and one of which is currently in a state of open rebellion, having expressed its desire to secede from the country and nation. Divar has not recognized this secession.

**Jebrun:** The northernmost Divaros state, this is a cold, blustery and nearly inhospitable land made livable mainly by the fact that it is home to some of the most important fisheries in the world. Its major city, Llansing, is one of the continent's largest ports, occupying a strategically important position on the country's west coast in a deep-water port that remains ice-free year round. High on the plateaus along the coast, it is accessible only by difficult-to-travel roads, and sees more shipping traffic than foot traffic in the cold season. The state imports most of its food and other goods, exporting fish and other seafood as well as shipping materials and some timber.

**Divar:** The largest of the Divar states, from which the country gets its name. This is the most populous state in the world, home to an estimated 20% of all the peoples on the continent. The coastal city of Engedy, located between the sea and Engedy Bay, is the largest city in the known world, larger even than the Nation's capital. Most of the world's main trade routes run through here, and the hefty taxes and tariffs collected from all those who pass through represent the single largest source of income for the state as a whole. Having been nearly deforested in years past to accommodate the growing needs of its population, the state is quite heavily dependent upon trade to provide raw goods needed for even the most basic of needs, including timber for housing, clothing and food. The state exports many manufactured and finished goods, including armor and weaponry, and is known as a source for manpower as well, home to many of the world's mercenaries and hired hands.

**Sisian:** Considered part of the Divar state as a whole, the island of Sisian is mostly uninhabited, notable mostly for the fact that it is of strategic military importance, and is home to the world's largest prison colony. It is said that more politicians, ambassadors and diplomats have visited its shores than any other country in the world. It is also said that they did not visit willingly, and that they were never heard from again. The truth can only be known by those inside its impenetrable stone walls.

**Kioch:** Although less than 20% of its borders touch the Sea, the state of Kioch is one of the Divaros Nation's mightiest naval powers. Its broad rivers and deep inland lakes represent a safe harbor for the Nation's fleet and an easy way to transport men and materials from deep inland to northern waters in times of need. The capital of Norbay is a bustling port city even though it sits well inland, benefiting from broad, deep waters that remain ice-free year round. The bay into which those waters spill, however, must be kept open through expeditious use of Runed icebreakers, massive, expensive, steel-hulled ships that keep these most important of waters open to traffic as needed. Like Divar, the state is a manufacturing center rather than a source of raw materials, and it imports most of what it needs to get by, including the raw materials necessary for shipbuilding and smithing.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Siene:** The capital of the country of Divar and the Nation of Divaros, this city-state is the unofficial center of the known world. This small slice of land is a free state, overseeing the entirety of the Divaros holdings around the world, and technically owes allegiance to no one but itself. Divar, however, tends to disagree, and so the country maintains a standing militia in and around the area in case anyone would choose to force their opinion. All the major northern trade routes converge on this city, making it a true hub of commerce. Surprisingly, although countless armies have marched through it on the way to battle, the city itself has never seen war, and is heralded by its citizens as the safest place on earth (albeit under a heavy police presence with a habit of "disappearing" those who would threaten its peace or stability).

**Kiar:** The state of Kiar is in an uneasy position. Kiar must not only deal with the many travellers passing along the main northern trade routes which run through its narrow environs, but also facing the difficulty of dealing with the breakaway Divaros state of Rorach to the northeast, which recently declared its independence from Divar. Though the secession has benefited the area in terms of trade, it has not been altogether pleasant from a military standpoint, as Divar has increased the number of troops stationed along its borders. Somewhat isolated from the general mayhem are the capital of Ravon, which sits along the narrow slice of land that touches the northern sea, and the southeasterly trading hub of Oriva, closely allied with its sister city across the border in Zokili lands. The southern regions of the state are rich in natural resources, most of which are shipped north and used within the state itself to avoid the heavy tariffs involved with interstate commerce.

**Rorach:** This breakaway Divaros state declared its independence from Divar and is now in an uneasy state of alliance with its neighbors. Rorach tries to play both sides of the fence for all it can get, reducing tariffs and striking military alliances with the Zokili while denying the same to their mother country of Divar. All the while Rorach still attempts to avoid open warfare (which would certainly lead to much bloodshed and almost certain defeat). Divar's interest in the state is obvious, since it represents an important stretch of northern coast, as well as long borders with two of Divar's trading partners, the Zokili and Myndwar homelands. The capital of Kusset sits in a particularly strategic spot along the northern coast, through which a major northern trade route passes on its way southeast to the Zokili homeland, through the border city of Portage. The southern two-thirds of the state is rich in timber and wildlife, the northern reaches scarred and depleted from years of warfare and the ever-expanding needs of human civilization.

**Glanti:** The coastline and southern border of this Divar state are both heavily guarded by both state and national militia on an almost constant basis, due to the ever-present risk of open conflict with the Kantarin to the south. Though the state's capital of Ortens lies rather far from the borders of the rain forest, it has seen its fair share of blood over the decades. Troops have fought within and without the city's walls, as its plentiful ports and position along the coast represent key strategic positions well worth fighting for. Modern conflict is mostly over natural resources. The Kantarin want the Divaros to stop their logging and expansion, and the Divaros feel the Kantarin are trying to keep them from doing what comes naturally. Thus far, the best that can be said is that an uneasy truce has been struck, the people of Glanti given limited permission to travel within restricted portions of the Kantarin Forest. The area is rich and fertile, and produce many foodstuffs which are exported across Divaran lands.

**Streland:** The only landlocked state in the Nation of Divar, Streland contains numerous important trade routes. Most of these routes run along its borders, keeping the center of the state isolated and even primitive by the standards of other Divaros. The southern portion of the state is covered with thick forests. The central and eastern areas are dominated by farmlands and pastures that provide much of the food for the rest of the Nation.

The capital of Strefan, along the northern border, sits at the crux of several important trade routes, and is one of the wealthiest cities in this part of the world despite the fact that most of the State's citizens live in relative poverty, at the level of subsistence farming. Thurn, the state's largest city, is heavily dependent on trade from the east and south, which has been greatly reduced in recent years by the growing threat of war.

**Chevon:** Surrounded by the Kantarin to the west, the Myndwar to the northeast and the Draslander to the southeast, the people of this southern Divar state are a mixed and wild bunch, quick to battle, xenophobic and hostile to outsiders. Much of the land is uninhabited and overgrown, the thick forests to the west giving way to lowlands and swamps to the east where the many waterways from the mountains make their way south to the Sea. The main port city of this area, Shivvy, is a known haven for pirates, who scour the Inner Sea for booty. This rough city is more open to outsiders than the rest of the country, and counts some Draslander and Kantarin among its trading partners. Along with Glanti and Streland, this area is the region formerly known as the nation of Kator, from which the Divaros drove the ancestors of the Kantarin people into exile in years past.

**Ess:** Nominally a part of the nation of Divar, Ess has grown more independent and isolated since the state of Rorach declared its independence, shutting off one of the main lines of communication between Divar and these eastern environs. Settled only a century or so ago, its people have already found that they appreciate being a bit removed from central authority, while still respecting the military might of their parent nation of Divaros. Close trading partners and allies with the Zokili to the north and the Myndwar to the west, the three states of this country are more open to outsiders than anywhere else on the continent.

**Bellin:** Its northernmost port city of Kymenn is actually shared with the Zokili, and is governed by a consortium of both peoples. However, since the city technically falls within Bellin's borders, the Divaran Chancellor usually gets a final say on most matters. Most of the people of this state reside along the deep, broad river that links the continent's interior with the Sea, and many actually make their homes on the water, living out most of their lives on houseboats as they travel from the inland lakes out to the mouth of the River Bel. Exports include seafood, lumber and finished goods (particularly woodcraft), with most of the other basic necessities of life imported from the West.



**Elsa:** Though surrounded by forks of the Lensa River, this island city-state is linked to the mainland by so many bridges that the river itself is practically subterranean at some points. Tight control over the flow of water through this area has made dealings with the Myndwar to the west difficult at times, since damming to create artificial bays and sources of power for the island's great mills has caused flooding in some of the nearby valleys. The entire island is densely and evenly populated, the entirety of the state being, in effect, one large city. While the area has a bustling economy, it produces and manufactures little, and in many ways is little more than a giant warehouse, with most goods imported from one area and exported to another (after being purchased, often in mass quantities) shortly thereafter.

**Essen:** This easternmost Divaros state shares its name with the country's capital city. Essen is quite possibly the most important port city on the eastern continent due to its importance in the continuance of eastern trade routes. Though the area is often besieged by Sivatagi and Divaros pirates, who prey on the richly laden ships that ferry goods almost constantly between Essen and more southern lands, the state itself is on good (if shaky) terms with the Sivatagi along their southern border, with whom they share mostly non-military goods and information. The southern inland portions of the state are rather dry and arid, and though grassy are subject to sand-storms blowing off the dunes not so far to the south. Essen is known as a source for rare minerals and other rarities gleaned from the desert, but is rather food-poor and thus depends a great deal on its northerly neighbors.

**Celwin:** The second largest Divaros country, this southern realm is somewhat independent of the main Divaros conglomerate, through benefit of being mostly cut off from the influence of most of the Nation's politicians. Ranging from arid and hot in the north to comfortable in the southern highlands, the people of this area are a disparate bunch, known for nothing except the fact that they are unpredictable. Three large cities exist in this area, lying along the main trade routes. The rest of the area's people are scattered evenly among smaller villages and towns, many no larger than a dozen small shacks around a temporary well. The interior of the country, surrounding the Celwin Sea, is more hospitable than other areas, benefiting from the broad River Cellis that connects the area to the Inner Sea.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Thuss:** Technically a part of the broad eastern Desert, which lies just north of its borders, Thuss is a dangerous state, inhospitable, arid and dry, and quite unwelcoming of outsiders. Frequent skirmishes with Sivatagi over territory and goods are common, particularly along the northeastern border, where the state's large port city (and capital) of Fleir connects the eastern trade route with the country of Ess to the north. As such, the city is heavily policed and utterly xenophobic. Non-Divaros are usually restricted to their ships or forced to sleep in the dunes outside the city walls. The area produces little, importing almost everything it needs, being little more than a buffer zone to keep the Sivatagi away from the richer lands to the south.

**Neatha:** Theoretically allied with the Nation of Divaros, Neatha is an anarchic state ruled by an assortment of petty monarchs and dictators, most of whom refuse to acknowledge the rule of their chosen Chancellor, for whom the country and the state's capital city of Celwin are named. Traversing any of the trade routes which crisscross the state, one is likely to encounter at least a dozen toll booths and check points, each set up by a different governing body which claims dominion over a particular tract of land. Celwin has repeatedly asked the Nation of Divar for additional military support to help put down these rogue governments, but the Nation has larger military problems closer to home, and as such the state as a whole is slowly sinking into open rebellion. In theory, the region is rich in natural resources, and is more than capable of feeding its own citizens as well as exporting a good deal of goods. Sadly, the complex political situation in the region means that many go hungry, some farmers are paid to destroy their crops, and others are pushed off their lands for arbitrary reasons.

**Trill:** Though landlocked, Trill's largest city of Teos is the largest Divaros port in the southern hemisphere. Understanding its importance, the Divaros nation keeps a strong naval presence here, only several days sail from reaching any conflict that might erupt in the Inner Sea. The people of Trill are not altogether pleased with this arrangement, preferring to stay as neutral as possible with regards to national affairs (particularly because of their close relationship with the Myndwar and Zokili, with whom they share borders). Luckily for the state's inhabitants, most of the land is rather rugged and steep, and not easily patrolled, meaning that Divar military patrols generally keep to the Sea and leave the rest of the state alone.

**Tiso:** The southernmost country of the continent is a colony of wealthy politicians seeking to escape colder northern climes, and maintains a large garrison that far exceeds its needs. Somewhat hostile to the Zokili to the north, the people of this area tend to feel they are superior to others by virtue of their wonderful lot in life. It is arguably the most beautiful country on the continent, rich in natural resources and wealth and an important stop for all sea-going vessels that must traverse this area. Unlike other Divaros lands, Tiso is matriarchal, with both of its states overseen by Queens rather than the typical male Chancellors. The region's main exports include rare spices, finished goods and several varieties of citrus fruits.

**Nortiso:** Somewhat more liberal in philosophy than its southern neighbor, Nortiso is the newest Divaros state, having been formed (on paper, at least) only a decade or so ago. This division came about partly due to the perceived need for a buffer state (to keep the problems of Celwin's anarchic bickering away from the capital) and partly due to the general outlook of the area's inhabitants, who were somewhat more tolerant of their Zokili neighbors. The state's capital of Koloma sits precariously on the border shared with Celwin, and has already seen incursions by several mercenary groups from the north. As such, the capital itself is somewhat less tolerant than the rest of the state. Along with Tiso, Nortiso is one of only two states to be overseen by females, ruled by Queen Abril, sister of the Tisan Queen.

**Tiso:** A part of the Divaran Nation in name only, Tiso may as well be an entirely different world. Queen Marinda has ruled the country and the state since she seized power in a bloody coup several decades ago, driving out the corrupt Chancellor who preceded her. Before she took control, Tiso was on the verge of economic collapse (its capital city of Tisano a forgotten last stop on a little-needed southern trade route). Under Marinda's rule (which is tolerated if not blessed, by the Divaros government), the country has become home to many of the world's richest and most powerful politicians and diplomats. At present, the state is possibly the wealthiest on the planet, as well as one of the most exclusive, as the ruling body is xenophobic and utterly intolerant of non-Divaros. Divaran citizens of wealth and power are treated like royalty. Non-Divaros are refused entry at the border, and persecuted and/or executed if they are found within the state's borders.

## Kantaran Sub-continent (colonies)

The Divaros living here are generally seen as unwelcome hostiles by the Kantaran people, which is why they maintain a large naval garrison in the two port cities here, protecting trade interests and policing the Inner Sea. Though mostly independent of the larger Divar state, the politicians here readily kowtow to the main country, and are politically and militarily little more than an extension of Divar. The Divaros interest here is purely economic - they see the area as being rich with natural resources (primarily timber, but also the wide assortment of flora and fauna available nowhere else on the planet), and thus ripe for the picking.

**Corland:** Named after the pompous and weak Chancellor who currently governs this colony, Corland is more of an idea than an actual state. The border here is tentative at best, and the Kantaran do not accept it as viable in any way. Conflicts are common throughout the entire area, and all areas are deemed unsafe save for the most heavily fortified and cleared areas on the coast, and the heavily patrolled trade route with the Myndwar along the subcontinent's southern coast. Recent skirmishes with the Kantaran, and losses to pirate attacks on the Inner Sea, have left Corland somewhat weakened, and there is rumor that the stronghold city on the coast, known as Charliss, is in danger of open rebellion. Its people are beginning to fear for their lives.

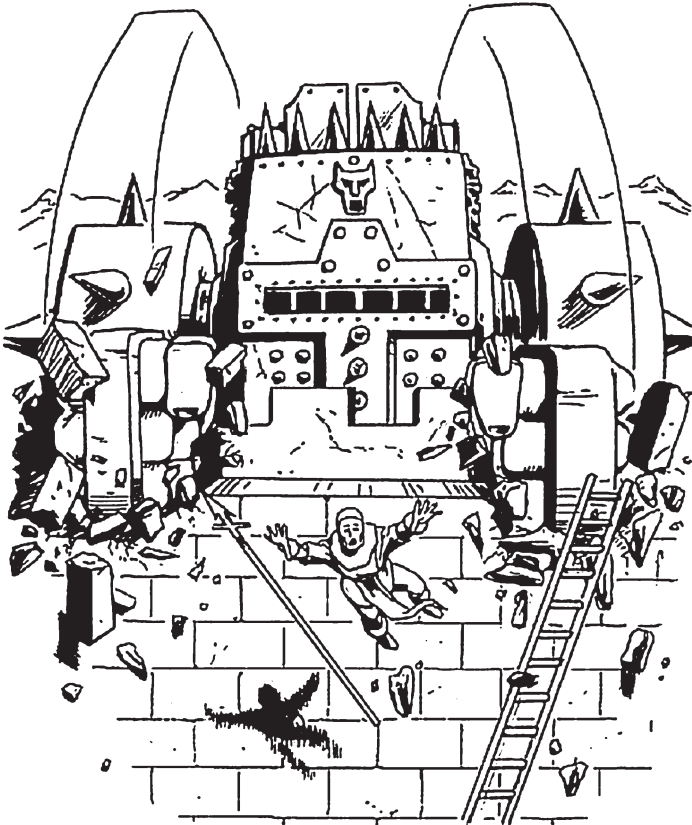
**Coria:** Called merely "Dhei" by the Kantaran people (i.e., "Death"), this seismically unstable island is mostly unpopulated, overrun by thick jungle to the east and volcanic mountains to the west. Relatively untouched by habitation, it is a haven for strange animal life. The Divaros maintain a military outpost on the extreme northern tip of the island, though losses to the elements and the island's inhabitants (including some of the more feral among the Kantaran) have kept expansion to a minimum.

## The Myndwar

*plural, Mrdnwar; Literally, "Middle People", from Myd (Between) and Waar (People)*

The Myndwar are centrists in almost every way that can be imagined, and it is this sense of precarious balance that defines them as a people. Geographically, they mostly live in and control The Spine, the central mountain range that splits the continent in two. Physically, they are also in the middle, taller than their close cousins the Zokili, but not nearly as tall as the Divaros. Politically, spiritually, emotionally - in all these things they consciously place themselves right in the center, believing that only through balance can their goals be achieved.

The typical adult Myndwar stands between one point two and one point five meters tall in height and weighs approximately fifty-five to sixty-eight kilograms, males slightly taller and heavier than females. They tend to be dark-haired and dark-eyed, most (90%) having black hair and eyes, with some few tending towards brown or gray, even in youth. In the northern climes, and especially among those who live at the higher elevations, long hair is the norm for males as well as females, with the men also tending to wear thick beards. Further south, nearer the equator, the Myndwar wear their hair much shorter, and the men tend towards moustaches and sideburns instead of full beards. Regardless of climate, all Myndwar are dark-skinned, tone varying from a dark tan to nearly black.



## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Among those who have never travelled through Myndwar lands (and especially among the more xenophobic Divaros), the typical belief is that the Myndwar are bizarre mole-people who live underground, literally "in the mountains." In actual fact, the proper phrase would be "among the mountains," for while the Myndwar do reside in caves in some areas, the bulk of the population lives in the broad, high valleys that lie between The Spine's tallest peaks. In these areas, they build stone-walled fortifications and wooden homes, just like the Divaros, the main exception being the Myndwar tendency to use geography to their advantage. Cities are multi-tiered and three-dimensional, some areas built on nearby plateaus and hills, some extending into cavern systems nearby. It is this clever use of the land around them that has allowed the Myndwar to gain control over the key mountain passes and trade routes that run through their countries.

The fact that they wield such tremendous economic and political power with such ease has also given the Myndwar a reputation for being an extremely powerful and militant people. *After all, how else would they have gained so much control and influence over their neighbors, if not through outright force of arms?* While there is some truth to this, and the Myndwar did field an extremely large military in the past, most of it is propaganda, rumor and outright lie. The truth of the matter is that the Myndwar are a generally peaceable, neutral people who make the best of their lot in life, and their position in the world. They are not opposed to warfare, but neither do they seek it out.

At the same time, however, there is no denying that Myndwar warriors are among the most highly trained, most loyal and best disciplined soldiers in the world. The Myndwar stress quality over quantity, and keep with the Myndwar philosophy that if you are going to do something, you should do it right. They train their soldiers from a young age, giving them the knowledge and skill necessary to properly defend their homeland. Some even travel to other lands, joining other armies for periods of time, to give them a better, broader understanding of the arts of war. The end result is a numerically small, but highly skilled and efficient army, capable of quickly gathering to repel almost any assault. Efficiency makes the Myndwar military seem larger than it is, and the Myndwar do little to dispel the myth, as the rumors only help to bolster their position.

There is no centralized Myndwar government. The people deal with local politics by means of a rather democratic system of government, without elected leaders of any sort. In dealings with other nations, the Myndwar typically nominate the most wise and experienced among them, typically Seers and Valley Mages, to represent the people as a whole. Such leaders hold no permanent office, however, and this constant shuffling of representation can make dealing with the Myndwar a chore.

The Myndwar favor colors which blend in with their surroundings, clothing thus tending to be a rather drab collection of grays, browns and blacks which only serves as a visual indication of the Myndwar outlook on life. Splashes of color, typically reds and blues, are used when necessary to indicate military rank, on signposts, etc., but even the official Myndwar flag is merely a gray field with a black stripe.

## Myddn

The Myndwar Nation consists almost exclusively of the continent's central mountain range, along with the broad valleys between them and the plentiful highlands that surround them. Taken in total, the area is generally known as Myddn, particularly when dealing with outsiders in political terms (for most Myndwar living there, it is simply called home). It is difficult to name the regions within Myddn states, as they are generally unconcerned with internal borders. There are nevertheless some geographical and philosophical differences that make divisions more readily noticeable. Names given to these regions are Myndwar-derived, but only out of a need to interact with other peoples. The Myndwar themselves almost never refer to these particular regions themselves. In general, Myndwar are self-sufficient, importing and exporting little, tending to grow only what they need. The prevalence of ore, rare minerals and ancient Runic artifacts in the mountains, however, has led the Divaros to increase their interest in the area, both economically and militarily, and in exchange for such goods the Myndwar often trade for favors instead of tangible goods.

**Ouws:** This westernmost region of Myddn is generally seen as being politically and militarily aligned with Divaros on most matters. Myndwar residing in this area come in frequent contact with Divaros, as the main pass connecting the north-eastern and southern portions of the country of Divar cuts through the main valley of this area. This main valley is many hundreds of miles wide and heavily populated by Myndwar. The mountains in the northwestern portion of this region are generally low and rolling, with many high, broad valleys and lakes, while those to the southeast are steeper and higher, some permanently snowcapped. The main pass splits off to the east and leads to the Valley of Tears, presently held by the Sivatagi, and so named because it was through this pass that the Sivatagi were driven into exile by the Divaros many years ago. The largest Myndwar villages in this area lie along the midpoints of these two passes, Ouwston guarding the more western pass, and Teason the east.

**Nnos:** The northeastern region of Myddn is often viewed by the Divaros as a trouble spot, as these Myndwar are more neutral in their outlook towards Divar and thus generally more friendly with the Zokili, non-aligned Divaros states and even the Sivatagi. Many Myndwar hailing from this area train and serve among Zokili armies, enhancing their already formidable military prowess. The bulk of the population lives along the single broad valley that bisects the region, creating a valuable pass connecting Divar with the eastern country of Ess. As eastern states are seen as less of a threat, the Myndwar military presence in this area is focused nearer the hot spot along the Divar border in a permanent military enclave known as Tenna.

**Ghes:** The broad, fertile valley of this region is home to the bulk of the Myndwar people. The main pass through the area travels south into more dangerous Sivatagi-controlled territory, and it is little used by Divaros traders. This keeps the area relatively isolated from outside influences, and as such the people here are relatively apolitical, concerned more with their own families and villages and preferring to avoid external conflict whenever possible. The largest city in the area, Crix, is actually an unpopulated ghost town most of the year. The peoples of the surrounding villages come together here during the first week of every month to exchange news and information, deal with interpersonal matters and discuss political issues as needed, then leave the town afterwards and head back to their homes.



The Myndwar of this region control three key southern passes, connecting various coastal regions around the Inner Sea with the southern regions of the main continent. Though not as heavily trafficked as the more northerly passes, they are nevertheless of strategic importance, and the ability of the militant Myndwar residing in this area to hold them against enemy incursion has swayed the balance of war in the past. Surrounded by the Sivatagi to the northeast and the Draslander to the Southwest, the area is quite dangerous, and those living here are generally suspicious of outsiders, particularly those who are not of Myndwar stock. The key cities of Shisan, along the most northern pass, and Nokil, at the midpoint of the central pass, are veritable fortresses, cleverly channelling traffic through narrow ravines alongside the area's otherwise broad valleys in order to keep caravan movement tightly controlled.

**Kantarin Sub-continent (Kantir):** At some point in the distant past (perhaps prior to the cataclysm that shattered the continent, creating the Inner Sea and the Kantarin Subcontinent), a group of Myndwar settled in the mountain valleys along the southern coast of this region. Those dwelling in this area are considered somewhat savage, even by other Myndwar, adopting many of the habits and customs of their Kantarin neighbors, with whom they are friendly. All other borders are closed, and incursions by Draslander or Divaros (or even other Myndwar from the continent) usually result in quick, painful (and often fatal) lessons being taught. They remain insular and thus are largely unknown. Few of them leave to explore the rest of the world, and those who do cannot be considered representative of the rest. There are plenty of rumors, but few facts, and since they are out of the way and not involved in anyone else's politics, few aside from their Kantarin neighbors have any interest in dealing with them.

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### The Zokili

*plural, Zokili; Literally, "Small Ones", from So (Small, Little); literally, "the little people of Kili" (plural, Zokili)*

The last mistake many large folk make is underestimating the capabilities of their smaller cousins, the Zokili. This slight, apparently peaceable people who reside in the hills and plateaus along the continent's coastlines appear to be simple folk, more concerned with making windmills and waterwheels than waging war. But the same skills that give the Zokili their flair for technology give them great skill in warfare, especially when it comes to defending their homeland. Of all the countries on the continent, only the Zokili can boast of never having been subject to invasion by the same force twice. This is because the invading force has not been simply driven out, but hunted down and destroyed, to a man. *Zokili take no prisoners.*

Zokili tend to be much smaller than their larger Divaros cousins, averaging around one to one point two meters in height and about forty kilograms in weight. Though small in stature, most Zokili tend to be well muscled for their sizes, though not overly so, with skin darkened and leathered due to their love of long hours of toil under the sun. Zokili hair tends to be brown or black, some few having reddish-brown hair. Eye color tends to match, being brown or black almost all of the time. Exceptions are looked upon with a curious eye, but tolerated and accepted with a shrug (at least in public). Zokili males are naturally rather hirsute - those who can afford it often growing beards that they have to tie around their waists, lest they trip over them. Zokili females follow suit, often growing their hair to twice their height. However, in times of war, Zokili generally rid themselves of all unneeded encumbrances, including excess clothing and hair. A Zokili with a shaved head and face is not someone you want to cross. *He means business.*

Business among the Zokili can mean a wide variety of things, all treated with the same degree of devotion, single-mindedness and creativity. At home, Zokili are always concerned with the welfare of their village and state, repairing fences and walls, manufacturing new tools or helping to improve farming techniques. Some become full-fledged inventors or technologists, experimenting with new ways to improve current techniques. All are required to be members of the militia, many choosing to officially join the military in one capacity or another.



For some, this means a life as a Stryder Pylit, a truly exciting way to serve one's people, while others are content serving in less glorious capacities. The Zokili Elyte are perhaps the deadliest warriors on the continent, feared for brutal efficiency, silent killing techniques and a lack of compassion or mercy to fallen foes.

Yet in all things, including war, Zokili adopt a rather distant, high-level view on the world. To be certain, they are devoted citizens, dedicated inventors and ruthless killers, yet everything they do is done with a detached, selfless view of the world. This comes across to other races as somewhat pointless and apathetic, but to the Zokili it is more along the lines of modesty. A good example of this is in the Zokili attitude towards magic and runes. Like everyone else, they use both on a regular basis. But ask a Zokili about magical knowledge and he will shrug off the question; certainly, any talents he possesses are no greater than those of anyone else, and hardly worth mentioning. Surely, anyone can achieve the same results, with or without magic, if they merely apply themselves properly to the task at hand. The same could be said for just about every profession, from farmer to assassin. And with the Zokili, you never know. That farmer might have been an assassin at one point...

Understandably, Zokili society thus tends to be rather socialistic, with some areas tending towards communism (from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs). Politically, they are represented by those chosen for their wisdom and experience in such matters. These Sages are accepted as speaking not only for a given village, but also for the entirety of Zokili society. There is a level of implicit trust here that the Divar in particular cannot understand. They are both suspicious of it, and do not take it properly into account in their intrigues.

As is appropriate for their outlook on life, the preferred colors of the Zokili are muted and sedated, typically brown, gray and white (their national flag bears equal stripes of these three colors). When color is used, it is typically cool, being either green or blue.

**Kili:** The Nation of the Zokili is split into two countries, lying on opposite ends of the continent, yet united in philosophy and government. A constant flow of information, by way of couriers and messengers (and the occasional Myndwar runner), by land and by sea, keeps both regions in close touch with one another. News makes the journey of several thousand kilometers in a matter of several weeks. Too slow to be of military use, but fast enough for one group to maintain a social link with the other. The Zokili also seem to be able to get smaller amounts of vital information across the distance much faster than a courier should be able to travel, but the Divar have not yet figured out whether this is actually the case, or if it is merely a Zokili mind game being played upon them.

Much like the Myndwar, the Zokili tend to be self-sufficient and nearly solipsistic in some respects, often dealing with political events around them by merely ignoring them. The Zokili hardly lead a perfect life, however. The theory of treating everyone as equals, and making sure that all citizens get what they need, is not quite the same as the practice, and in truth many Zokili, particularly on the fringes of the country, suffer greatly. Few complain, however, turning their hardship into a reason to strike off on their own, either joining the Zokili military on a permanent basis, or leaving the country to find their way elsewhere in the world. Either journey is looked upon as a fine way to spread the Zokili message to the rest of the continent.

The Zokili homeland lies on the high plateaus and rolling hills of the far north, a beautiful but somewhat blustery and inhospitable area, made livable only through the hard work of the Zokili people. They control an important trade route that runs along the southern border of their lands, through the capital city of Kyar in the nation's center and the nation's largest city of Rikyr in the southwest. The northernmost portion of the region is actually a sort of northern desert, where little grows. This keeps the marauding Divaros from the break-away state to the west from being much interested in incursions, and has kept the northern port city of Shikyr out of the path of war thus far. The country is not divided into states or regions, as the Zokili trust their national governing body to maintain peace and prosperity.

**Sokili:** The southern-dwelling Zokili are similar to their northern cousins, being slightly more militant and somewhat less studious. Though they share much politically with other Zokili, they tend to be a bit more liberal and self-sufficient, placing greater emphasis on the value of the individual and his contributions to the greater good than is found in Kili. The capital city of Llykis is the largest port on the Celwin Sea, despite the fact that most Zokili in the area are neither sailors nor shipwrights, preferring to serve as hired hands and armed escorts rather than captain their own ships. The western-most part of this southern country is shared with the Draslander. Although the Zokili maintain the semi-permanent city and trading post of Drachyr on the coast, the surrounding marshy area is filled with Draslander, and friendly only to the Dras. Treated as inferiors by neighboring Divaros, the inhabitants of Sokili are somewhat more defensive and quick to anger, particularly towards Divaros, regardless of their country of origin.

### The Kantarin

*plural, Kantarin, Kantarins; Literally, "Kantar's Trees", from Kantar (name of Jungle) and Aan (Woods/Trees)*

Official Kantarin history does not record when exactly the Druid Kantar led his followers out of the lands of the Divaros and into the rain forests that would one day carry his name. But then, Kantarin history does not record much of anything at all. Kantarin society will acknowledge the present, remember the past and looks forward to the future, but they have never seen a need to commit any of their nation's memories or history to written record. As such, much of what is known about them comes from one of two camps, both equally biased for their own reasons. One includes the historians of other cultures, who have a tendency to portray the Kantarin people as backward savages incapable of ever living in an organized society. The other group is that of the Kantarin people themselves, who are not usually forthcoming with those who ask too many questions.

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Adult Kantarin (both male and female) stand between one point five and two point one meters in height. Those who reside further south tend to be somewhat taller and heavier than their northern cousins. All are somewhat lanky and thin, weighing between forty and seventy-five kilograms, their bodies retaining little fat, their muscles fine but strong, like bowstrings. Kantarin wear their hair long, braided with feathers, twigs and other small fetishes and runes twined throughout. Often referred to derogatorily as "ghost people", they are pale of skin tone, their hair typically white, blonde or the palest brown. Their eyes tend to be either pale blue or green, either being of a peculiar shade that seems to glow in the moonlight. However, as Kantarin tend to dye their skin and hair with animal and vegetable-based pigments, it may be difficult to tell what color they really are beneath their kaleidoscopic camouflage (if one can see them at all).

Though they are not true natives of the rain forests where they reside, the Kantarin have quickly made it their home, thriving underneath the eternal twilight of the jungle's canopy. Within the confines of their forest, they consider themselves always at home, and while they do erect semi-permanent and permanent structures throughout the jungle, they have little belief in a concept of personal space and property. A family might live in a particular shelter for several days, then move on, while another family moves in right behind them. Neither do Kantarin believe that physical trinkets hold much value. While they do adorn themselves with a variety of items that they treasure for aesthetic reasons, they do not trade shiny rocks and coins for goods. They operate on a barter basis when hunting and gathering fails them.

Because of their somewhat simple lifestyle, the Kantarin are often accused of being savages, manhunters and cannibals, particularly by the Divaros with whom they have a longstanding feud over land rights and natural resources. While the Kantarin are not pacifists, they typically avoid conflict whenever possible, acting out only when necessary to defend their rights and beliefs. If this means making a pre-emptive strike from time to time, so be it. Kantarin are not opposed to bloodshed, and if they have a say in the matter, they much prefer that the blood that is shed be that of someone else.

In political matters (on the rare occasions when such an opportunity arises), the Kantarin people are typically represented by those they call Vines, perhaps the closest thing to a religious leader found anywhere in the world. Actually more like social workers, the Vines work among their people, dealing with interpersonal conflicts, offering advice and strategy to those they meet and, when necessary, doing their best to head off conflicts with external forces. To say that Vines truly represent their people, however, is incorrect. They may negotiate a deal with other nations, but following through on such a deal is left to the Kantarin people as a whole to decide for themselves. In most cases, negotiation is an impossibility from the start.

Kantarin clothing is generally drab, selected from the materials of the rain forest, and hence blending in well with the terrain. Greens, browns and grays dominate, with splashes of color throughout for ceremonial or decorative effect. These same colors appear in the dyes that the Kantarin use to tattoo their skin, often permanently. The Kantarin have no national flag, symbol or color, although other nations use a green *Aan* rune to refer to them as a group.

**Kantar:** The Kantarin people as a whole are often described as being of the Nation of Kantar, though this in itself is a misnomer, as it suggests that the people recognize a centralized government which represents them in the international arena. Geographically, at least, the people reside in the region known as the Kantarin Rain Forest, a broad canopy of towering trees, tangled vines and thick underbrush that covers perhaps a tenth of the entire continent. Like the people themselves, the jungle stretches from the main continent's western shores to cover nearly the entirety of the Kantarin Subcontinent, concealing within its nearly impassable shroud all assortment of villages and towns, each governed as those Kantarin see fit. As they have little use for anything from outside their own realm, the Kantarin are the only group that does not actively participate in trade with other nations (although barter still takes place on an individual basis).

**Continental Kantar:** Much more open to interaction with other societies, the Kantarin who reside in the rain forest on the main continent are still considered by most to be, at best, rude and unfriendly. This is based mostly on the fact that they steadfastly refuse to deal with outsiders on any large-scale basis, turning away all efforts to trade. Trespassers are typically escorted out of the area; hostile trespassers are killed, no questions asked. This rather xenophobic attitude, however, is not without just cause, for it was the Divaros who, centuries ago, drove the Kantarin people out of Divaros lands in the first place. The fact that the Kantarin people maintain a footing on the main continent is a source of great displeasure to Divaran rulers.

**The Kantarin Sea:** A large portion of the Kantarin Rain Forest is in actuality a vast wetland (not unlike Brazil's Pantanal). It covers thousands of square kilometers between the main continent and the Kantarin sub-continent (which is why the latter is properly a portion of the main body of land, and not a true island). A tangled network of vines, roots and submerged plant life links the entire ecosystem together, creating, in essence, one immense living creation. Based on the whims of the tides, and the growth of plants, some areas of the Kantarin Sea may be submerged under several meters of water one month, and left high and dry the next. Needless to say, this makes travelling by ship through the area quite difficult, which is why most shipping routes avoid the area entirely. The Kantarin themselves are more familiar with the area, and use small canoes and rafts to venture between the islands of the area. Four permanent islands remain intact throughout the year, although their shorelines shift from day to day. The largest of these, nearest the main continent, is the home of one of the few permanent Kantarin settlements, called simply "Home" by those who reside in the area.

**Kantarin sub-continent:** The true homeland of the Kantarin people is this portion of the rain forest, which covers some seventy-five percent of the subcontinent. In addition to the Kantarin people themselves, the jungle is home to hundreds of small streams and rivers, an immense variety of plant life, and thousands of species of animals of all shapes and sizes. Being so rich in untamed natural resources, the area is, of course, a prime target for expansion by the more militaristic nations of the northern continent, many of whom have begun attempts to take the area by force. The Kantarin people have done their best to stave off such invasions of their homeland, but are in many ways fighting a losing battle.

The Kantarin people of this area are split into two camps. Those occupying the bulk of the rain forest, to the north, are fairly aloof and xenophobic, keeping to themselves and out of the business of others as much as possible. They get along fairly well with the Myndwar who share the Subcontinent, but dislike the presence of the Divaros and refuse to have any dealings with them aside from bloodshed. Their unofficial capital city, as yet unseen by any non-Kantarin eye, is rumored to be located in the darkest, thickest part of the jungle.

Those Kantarin living on the shores of the broad Lake Emeros (a Divaran name) at the southeastern edge of the subcontinent are somewhat more open to dealing with their neighbors. They even engage in trade of sorts with the Divaros to the north of them, and act as guides and navigators for those who wish to explore the rain forest further. Though many other Kantarin sees them as traitors, they themselves feel that they are simply making the best of a bad situation. Some, being more comfortable on the open seas than their northern cousins, hire on as deckhands for the ships plying the southern trade routes. However, most reside in the area's only permanent village (also bearing the Divaran-given name of Emeros), built on stilts above the surface of the nearby lake.

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### The Sivatagi

*plural, Sivatagi; Literally, "Homeless Ones", from Siva (Home) and Agi (Without)*

Centuries ago, the Sivatagi lived in the high, grassy plains of the north, gradually adopting the customs, and then the rule, of the Divaros, who swept through the area and claimed it all for themselves. Lacking a central government or an army, the Sivatagi were gradually moved aside as the Divaros had their way. Perhaps they should have learned from the lesson of the Kantarin, who had years since been pushed aside and forced to flee into inhospitable jungles. They chose instead to stand up for their people and fight back, guerrilla warfare style. Some gained the support of other nations, as well as many among the Divaros themselves. But to no avail; the greater strength of the Divaros nation won out, and the Sivatagi were forced to flee across the mountains, marching onward until they came to the great eastern desert. There they settled, at first living on the fringes of the wasteland where green still touched the earth, and then gradually spreading out over its entire expanse, from The Spine to the ocean.

The Sivatagi stand about the same height as the Divaros, weighing slightly less on average and thus appearing somewhat gaunt by Divaran standards. Their skin is typically dark brown or black, wrinkled and mottled from the sun and of a leathery feel. Their eyes are typically sunken and morose, of a deep blue or black color, and their white or blonde hair, when worn at all, is typically close-cropped, and often tipped with dyes of bright, gaudy colors. When riding into battle, or in need of stealth, the Sivatagi dress for the terrain, typically wearing tan or white colored garments that blend in with the sand around them. When dressed for ceremonial occasions, their true colors show, and they are quite fond of deep blues, reds and violets, both on their clothing and on their skin. In all cases, both men and women typically go veiled at all times when out of doors, to protect their faces from the driving sand and blistering heat. Many warriors also top this off with helmets made from the bleached bones and skulls of fallen animals, which has given rise to the rumors that the Sivatagi are fierce, monstrous tusked creatures.

Out of necessity, the Sivatagi frequently raid outlying towns for food and other resources, although whenever possible they will attempt to cooperate and trade with those around them. In any case, they are a people of great honor, and while they take pride in their ability to be brutal, bloodthirsty and savage when engaged in battle, they will never go back on their word. If they say that they wish to parlay a truce, they mean just that, and if they say that they wish to trade for goods, they mean just that. Lately, the Sivatagi have seen the benefit of becoming a seafaring people, and they are no longer merely a scourge to desert travellers, but also to those making voyages by ship as well. Lacking a large supply of wood, however, most of their fleet consists of captured ships, or those purchased from shady dealers.

The Sivatagi have no central government or national leaders, relying on strength of arms and the experience of their caravan leaders to keep order amongst the individual tribes. In dealings with other nations, Sivatagi are typically represented by their Traders. However, since non-warlike relations with other countries happen infrequently at best, such opportunities for political discourse are few and far between.

Sivatagi have a habit of referring to people not by proper name, but by their occupation. A hunter named Ch'hkra might simply be called Hunter or The Hunter. Were more than one hunter present, he might additionally be pointed to or gestured at, or context would make it clear who was being spoken about. Seldom does conversation involve those who are not present, as it is considered rude to speak about someone else when they are not around to participate in the conversation. As a corollary to this, Sivatagi do not give their children names at birth, allowing the child to choose his own name when he is old enough to speak (typically two to three years old). Undoubtedly, Sivatagi parents guide their child in this decision-making process, but tradition holds that no one may choose a name but the named himself.

**The Great Eastern Desert:** With some few exceptions, all Sivatagi call the Eastern Desert their home, and although they themselves recognize that they, as a people, form the nation of the Sivatagi, the actual physical boundaries of that nation tend to shift with whim and wind. The Eastern Desert is immense, encompassing much more than mere sand dunes. In its center, the sand gives way to bare rock, including the immense outcropping known as the Masa, upon which the Sivatagi stronghold (and capital) of Masasan ("Sha'sakh" in Sivatagi) stands tall. To the west, in the narrow valley ringed by mountains, seasonal streams and runoff from storms creates a verdant land dotted with oases several months out of the year. And along the northern and southern borders, the irrigated lands of the neighboring Divaros countries offer some Sivatagi the chance to grow crops of their own (or at the very least steal from their neighbors). Most Sivatagi are wanderers and nomads, semi-permanent encampments most commonly found along the coast, near other sources of fresh water, and along the trade routes that wind their way through and near the desert.

### **The Draslander (or Dras)**

*plural, Draslander, Draslanders, Dras; Literally, "Swamp-dwellers", from Dras (swamp, marsh)*

The Dras are cast-offs, leftovers, the unwanted offspring of ancestors who were defeated by the Divaros long ago, pushed out of habitable lands to certain death in the poisonous swamps that ring the Inner Sea. But some faint flicker of inner courage kept those early Draslanders from perishing, and they quietly and slowly built themselves up from a rag-tag collection of invalids and mutants into a powerful force. Though relatively weak and short of stature, the Draslanders are strong of heart and health, and possess raw cunning that no other race can match. Pushed from civilization into brutal, animal savagery, they took the best qualities of both existences and forged a new life for themselves in the mud and the muck. The swamps known simply as "the Dras" are barely habitable. The Dras have managed by almost becoming one with the ecosystem, tolerating a level of stunted growth and sometimes deformity from swamp toxins that would drive the other peoples of Rhun out of the Dras in a single generation.

As a despised people in a land that no one wants or can settle in, there are countless rumors and tales about the Dras. They are cannibals, baby-stealers, they are not actually capable of thought, only mimicry, things like that. The further you live from the Dras, the more outlandish the tales are, and the more likely people are to believe them.



The average adult Draslander stands no taller than one-and-a-quarter meters tall, most averaging between two-thirds and one meter in height. Being quite slender and residing in hot, humid climates, they retain little body fat or muscle, and as such typically weigh around thirty to forty kilograms, in general shape akin to young (but somewhat malnourished) Divaros children. As Draslanders do not nurse their children like the other races, males and females appear quite the same from the waist up, in all regards. Their skin is typically mottled with disease and bruise, varying in shade from pale gray to yellowish purple, more often than not covered in some sort of fungus or mold that gives them a greenish cast. Their hair and eyes are always black, the former worn long and braided, tied back until it reaches significant length, then shorn off and used for making rope and clothing. Their teeth are often harvested in like manner, the larger canine tusks in particular serving good use in their weapons. In most other respects the Draslanders resemble sicklier, smaller versions of the taller races.

A persistent rumor about Draslanders is that they were, in antiquity, closely related to the Zokili. Most refuse to believe such nonsense, although it is worth noting that neither the Zokili nor the Dras will entirely deny the possibility. Indeed, while the Dras are scorned by the other races, the Zokili maintain an uneasy truce with them, even going so far as to share territory and trade goods at times. The other races will either attack Draslanders on sight or simply refuse to acknowledge that they exist, seeing them as just one more form of vermin to be eradicated.

Indeed, to a certain extent the comparison is valid. Draslanders do live like other "vermin," building their homes and villages among the rats, snakes and insects of the swamps, making no attempt to shut nature out as the other races do. This embrace of their situation has had several effects. From a physical perspective, it has made the Dras more capable of living effectively in their environment, toughening their skin as proof against bug bites, giving them immunity to many natural toxins, and allowing them to blend in with their environment to a startling degree. From a societal perspective, such an allegiance with nature has made the Dras much more communal, with several tribal leaders loosely controlling a large area within which extended families basically take care of themselves; again, comparisons to the communal lifestyle of the Zokili are not unwarranted.

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When they wear clothing at all, Draslanders tend to favor colors that come from and mirror their surroundings: black and gray, green and violet. Cloaked in swamp moss, vines and the bones of their enemies, a Draslander can be a terrifying sight - if you see him coming in time, that is.

**Continental Dras:** Most Draslander live in the stagnant swamps that sit where the rivers from the north spill their refuse into the Inner Sea. Many nations claim portions of the area, collectively known merely as The Dras, as their own, though only the Draslander are permanent residents in the area. The swampy areas more or less hug the coast, although they delve fairly far inward to the north, where the Myndwar often skirmish with bolder Draslander looking for building materials and scraps, and south into Zokili lands, where they are accepted as trading partners of a sort. Though none of their ramshackle villages and towns qualify as permanent cities of any sort, a fair number of Draslander reside in the shattered ruins of an ancient nameless city on the coast, which they refer to as Ollun.

The Inner Sea is dotted with countless small islands, many swampy, vine-covered tangles barely visible above the waves, others higher, rocky outcroppings, lending credence to the legends which say that long ago a great cataclysm shattered the area. Draslander are good swimmers, and many live on and among these islands, posing added danger to sailors willing to risk their cargo by sailing through the area.

Although no one can explain quite how, at some point in the past a group of Draslander found their way to the far western shores of the Kantarin Subcontinent, where they have flourished and lived in relative peace, well removed from the persecution of the Divaros. Much more primitive than their continental cousins, these Draslander get along well with their Kantarin neighbors and share many of their customs, including habits such as body tattooing and a reverence for nature.

▼ **LANGUAGES** - Language and magic are both based upon the Runes, the few score of basic syllables and sounds that combine in various forms to make up not only powerful incantations, but everyday speech as well. Modern tongues are far enough removed from the specific Runic pronunciations to prevent disastrous mistakes, such as burning down the bakery while buying a loaf of bread, of course, but they are close enough to their roots that people still acknowledge the power of words.

Divaran (the language of the Divaros) is the base tongue spoken by all peoples in Rhun, and the most closely derived from the original Runic, a mix of harsh, clipped syllables and more free-flowing vowel sounds. Since all languages are derived from this base, characters that speak different tongues can usually understand one another. Although there are some slang terms that do not cross cultures easily, for the most part language is not a barrier. For purposes of flavor, however, the following notes on language should be noted.

Myndwar is also the name of the Myndwar tongue, which shares ninety-five percent of its lexicon with Divaran. Myndwar tends to be somewhat more guttural and raw, sprinkled with older language more closely related to the old Runic tongue, and more than a few words seemingly constructed only of consonants that other peoples have a difficult time conceiving of, much less pronouncing. There are some who believe that Myndwar precedes Divaran as a language, and is itself closely related to the ancient tongue of the giants that once enslaved the smaller races. This could be true in part, since most accept that it was the Myndwar who first discovered the Runes, and helped teach its language to the other races.

The Zokili have some dialectic peculiarities, most notably the Zokili tendency to replace an internal long I or long E sound with a Y, stretching the sound in such a way as to sound out both I and E at the same time. Those ignorant of this shift often ask Zokili why their name is not Zokyly, the response either being a long diatribe on the specifics of the Zokili dialect, or a shrug and a shake of the head. Their choice of words has also led to a general softening of speech, sounds swallowed or muted. This can give the Zokili the appearance of speaking with a hushed whisper at times, and adds somewhat to their mystique. Zokili are quite fond of language, especially analogy and synonym. In speaking about war, for example, a Zokili can probably find a hundred different ways to say war without ever uttering that word itself. Saying what you mean without actually saying it is a mark of pride for some Zokili.

For the most part, the Kantarin simply speak Divaran. On their own, however, they also use a loose collection of hand gestures and animal sounds called Kantarin Signing to communicate. Broad, sweeping gestures and head wiggles are used to communicate over distances, with rapid-fire finger flicks and hand movements used at close range, for more detail. In most cases, even non-speakers can understand the gist of a conversation. For example, the index finger is used to point out the subject being referred to. An index finger pointing at one's own chest represents the concept of self; the same finger pointed at someone else represents that person as subject. All of this is accompanied by a variety of clicks, whistles, grunts and chirps, all mimicking the noises of the jungle. Kantarin Signing is almost never used in mixed company.

The Sivatagi have altered language out of necessity. Since they go most of the time wearing veils, low, guttural sounds can easily be lost. Better heard are the louder clicking and chattering sounds that originated with the Sivatagi Reavers, in attempts to communicate with their insect-like Stryders. For the most part, this is a simple substitution of harsher, louder sounds where muffled, guttural sounds would normally appear. For example, the sounds for M, N, and R all sound remarkably alike through a veil in the middle of a sandstorm, and so these are typically swapped out for Sh, Kh and Ch, respectively, with Kh pronounced at the back of the throat and the others pronounced normally. In writing, the second of double vowels are replaced by an apostrophe, and repeated syllables are dropped altogether (barbarian becomes barian).

Drash (the language of Draslander) is a crude form of Divaran combined with the sounds of the swamp to form a rhythmic bayou language that sounds like gibberish and baby-talk to many outsiders. Consonant sounds are run together or slurred, vowel sounds shifted, extra syllables added for no apparent reason. Two Draslenders might pronounce the same sentence differently, yet each would understand the other perfectly. Half of learning to speak Dras is learning what not to listen to, filtering the signal from the swamp noise. Worth noting for those who support the ancestral Zokili theory is the Dras habit of sprinkling their vowels with additional Y sounds.

**Sample Names** - The following names are the most popular among their respective races, and provide a good example of the differences in language. Spelling often varies from city to city and country to country, though pronunciation remains remarkably similar, even amongst different dialects. In other cases, names shift, dropping initial or terminal letters and adding new ones to create similar, but different, names. Examples of such shifting are found amongst the examples below, variations following the most commonly used root.

Names in Rhun are gender-neutral; males and females share all names in common, and while in some areas particular variations are used more often with one or the other, there are no hard and fast rules. A male named Misha and a female named Mitchel is as likely as the reverse. For the most part, names are also race-neutral. In some areas, Divaros children are often given Myndwar or Zokili names, and vice-versa. However, those shown below are the most common to each race.

#### Divaran Names

Adour, Doure, Doir, Benet, Bennet, Bennik, Cadelant, Cadelan, Caterin, Candin, Kendin, Quinton, Coydn, Corlan, Cyrillin, Dalpeth, Dalspeth, Alspeth, Dane, Deni, Denis, Gavin, Gevinn, Kaven, Halder, Helder, Keller, Johan, Jonan, Jonen, Macon, Marin, Marinda, Marlen, Morlen, Marle, Robius, Robian, Romin Rolf, Wolf, Ulf, Thomis, Tomis, Mich.

#### Draslander Names

Brbl, Birbel, Barbl, Dzeni, Xene, Jeni, Grblg, Grbil, Gorbl, Jelnn, Jallin, Gelin, Lillth, Lilt, Lillik, Nittk, Nittik, Nitpik, Nyka, Nika, Nikke, Shlek, Shilk, Shael, Vol, Voyle, Val, Wini, Huinni, Weni.

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#### Kantarin Names

Calim, Calin, Carin, Cenai, Cenay, Senay, Ismel, Ismael, Mael, Kemel, Kemet, Kemilt, Misha, Mishel, Mitchel, Oriss, Moris, Morissa, Semmil, Semle, Cemil, Shil, Sill, Syle, Tyler, Tailler, Talle, Uma, Umo, Umich.

#### Myndwar Names

Brun, Brum, Rume, Dmitri, Demi, Mitri, Flohur, Florr, Florin, Gormar, Gorim, Gorbar, Hendel, Handel, Honn, Hoag, Hirc, Heirc, Joachim, Yakim, Yaki, Mikil, Mikel, Mikelt, Vane, Vanir, Vinicent, Xandre, Sandre, Zander.

#### Sivatagi Names

Ca'chish, Ca'chikh, Ca'chikh, Ch'kha, Ch'hkra, Sh'krha, Isshech, Issha'ch, Sha'ch, Keshech, Keshet, Keshicht, Ochiss, Shochis, Shochissa, Sesh'ich, Sesh'che, Cesh'ich, Shich, Sich, S'che, Shisha, Shishech, Sh'tchech, T'chech, Ta'chech, Ta'che, U'sha, U'sho, U'shich.

#### Zokili Names

Abril, Abryl, Abrys, Danil, Daneel, Danyl, Elys, Elyse, Elise, Foirey, Forey, Fyr, Pietr, Piytr, Pytt, Tasryn, Tasryr, Tasyll, Yalith, Yawith, Yowyth, Yasyk, Yasmyn, Yasmynda, Zhim, Zim, Symm.

▼ **Note** - Surnames are generally formed from the name of one's father (or mother, in some cases) along with a root indicating that one is the offspring of that person. Hyphens and articles are often inserted, but are considered optional in most cases. The most common roots include:

Bin/ban/bane/byn (Cyrillin Malbin is "Cyrillin, Mal's child")

Kin/kind/kyn/kynn (Abril Fyrkin is "Abril, Fyr's child")

Son/sinn/shin/shir (Pietr Jyoldenshire is "Pietr, Holden's child")

Thon/thin/than/thym (Jonan Marle-Thon is "Jonan, Marle's child")

Van/vin/win/wyn (Dane the Shadwyn is "Dane, Shad's child")

▼ **Note** - Titles vary from place to place, and are as often assumed by oneself as they are bestowed or earned. A Lord may outrank a Baron in one country, but not in another. As such, titles are of somewhat questionable import, except among one's own people. Those often-seen include:

Baron/Hald-Baron/Barren

Count/Comte/Viscount-Dane/Dyn/Wardane

Duke/Duik/Dyk-Lord/Overlord/Povitt-Lord

▼ **ECONOMY AND MEASUREMENT** - In most cases, measurements in Rhun are roughly equivalent to those in our world. One hundred centimeters equals a meter, one thousand grams is a kilogram and so on. Rhun has its own units that are not equal to our units. One fathom is not quite two meters, and the enan is one-third of a fathom (about six-tenths of a meter). Most commonly found in Divaros lands, the enan is also the name for the heavy cudgel carried by law officers, diplomats and judges there. It is exactly one enan in length, weighs two-and-four-tenths kilograms and contains twenty-four notches, allowing easy measurement of length as well as weight. The enan is used in all manner of ways - children who do not measure up to an enan's proportions (weight equal to ten times height) are considered poor specimens (a notable exception is in choosing Homunculi). And as the tool is also sturdy enough to crack skulls when diplomacy fails, it often serves as a weapon as well.

**Coinage** - Although frontier lands have yet to catch up, within the northwestern Divaros lands minted coin has been circulating with more and more frequency since its official introduction nearly a century ago. Based on traditional methods of payment for mercenaries (see Veile armor), the rectangular steel Divaran coin known as the Vel is the currency most likely to be used as a standard, even in cultures that have not begun to accept it in exchange for goods and services. The coinage of any particular Vel will bear the stamp of that city's mint. Vel are typically accepted at face value no matter where they are spent in Divaros lands, but outsiders bearing coinage from a distant city are much more likely to be cheated on a deal, their Vel giving them away as outsiders.

The Vel, made of an alloy composed mainly of steel, also contains metals which carry a slight magnetic charge, meaning that the coins can be stuck together and stacked into larger ingots, or split into smaller fragments, giving an array of denominations based off the same standard coin:

- Ten Vel stacked side by side, making a bar twelve centimeters long, is called an O'Vel.
- A single Vel is a rectangle one-and-two-tenths centimeters thick by two-and-a-half centimeters wide by five centimeters long.
- A half Vel, known as a Ha'VeL, is two-and-a-half centimeters square. Two Ha'VeL equal one Vel, obviously.
- A quarter Vel is a triangular coin made by slicing a Ha'VeL diagonally. Four Qa'VeL equal one Vel.

The name itself comes from the Veile armor worn by some Divaran mercenaries, which is composed of metal bars similar to the Vel itself. Tradition holds that a mercenary would receive one Vel a week for his service, which he would use to augment his armor. Thus, a warrior's worth and value could be determined by the current state of his armor, with long-term professional veterans having many Vel. For purposes of comparison, a single Vel will pay for a week's lodging in a sub-par inn or hotel in a typical city, not including any luxuries such as extra security, access to a bath, etc. Additional Vel will pay for a week's worth of rations, or two meals a day for a full week.

Among the Myndwar, the most commonly used and accepted coin is the Slag. A Slag is a brassy-colored rectangular coin of iron, copper, tin, zinc and other trace metals that is approximately twice as long as a Vel, but only half as thick (six-tenths of a centimeter thick by two-and-a-half centimeters wide by ten centimeters long). Literally composed of scrap metal and shavings left over from the forge, it is not widely used except in the largest Myndwar villages, and then only as a convenience when barter fails. Generally the Slag is used intact, but as with the Vel, it is often split apart to produce smaller denominations of varying size. As it is not minted by any central body, the Slag carries no official seal or stamp.

Northern-dwelling Zokili use a circular coin they call the Chi, which is approximately two-and-a-half centimeters in diameter and six-tenths centimeters thick. Though the Chi is coated in steel, the center of the coin is made of wood, making it extremely light for its size. All Chi are minted from the Zokili city of Rikyr, and bear the mark of the Zokili Sheiwin. Chi are distributed to the populace according to need, intended for use as mere tokens for the exchange of food, clothing and other necessities. Because of its relatively low value as raw material, the Chi is not widely accepted outside of Zokili lands, except in those areas directly bordering them.

Inhabitants of other areas (including the Kantarin, the Sivatagi, the Draslander and many frontier peoples dwelling to the south) may or may not accept any or all of the above coins, and in any case do not mint their own coinage.

Due to the erratic and unpredictable political climate, the exchange rate between the coins of different natures can change on a weekly basis. Within the coin's land of origin, one coin will always equal one coin, but when travelling the following chart should be consulted when characters arrive at a new city (or other populated area). Roll 2d+0; the value determined will hold for one week's time, or until the characters leave the city, whichever is sooner.

Roll	Divaros		Myndwar		Zokili	
	Slag	Chi	Vel	Chi	Vel	Slag
2-3	∅	∅	∅	10:1	∅	1:10
4	4:1	25:1	1:4	15:1	1:25	1:15
5-6	∅	20:1	∅	∅	1:20	∅
7	3:1	15:1	1:3	10:1	1:15	1:10
8-9	12:1	∅	1:2	∅	∅	∅
10	1:1	10:1	1:1	15:1	11:10	1:15
11-12	1:2	5:1	2:1	5:1	1:5	1:5

**EXAMPLE:** Roll 2d+0 and get a result of 4. If entering a Divaros city, it means that 1 Vel is worth 4 Slag, or 25 Chi. If you were entering a Myndwar city, it means that 1 Slag is worth one-quarter of a Vel or 15 Chi. If a result of ∅ is shown, that type of coin will not be accepted as currency, due to the political climate, a state of war, etc.

**Barter** - At some point, adventurers ultimately will have to haggle, barter and trade their way to what they want, oftimes by exchanging services for goods, or goods for services rendered. Outside of large cities, the economy of Rhun is still mostly based on trade and barter, rather than exchange of coin, and as such the science of precise measurement is tied inextricably to things of value, including entertainment and information. It is not uncommon to trade a bag of salt for a sword, or a story for a night's stay in a hotel.

However, it is difficult to put specific values on items. What might be of importance to one individual or community could very well be totally worthless to another, and across most of the land, the Divaran Vel is not yet widely accepted as a standard currency. Thus, in order to provide a baseline for trade, the following list gives some indication of what items and services might be of value to a member of a given community. This is only a guide; ultimate discretion is given to the gamemaster.

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### Divaros barter values - Average(1 Qa'Vel or less)

**Goods:** Fruits and other foodstuffs; weapons or armor in good condition; furs and animal skins, tanned or untanned; herbs, fresh or dried; small animals; raw ore.

**Services:** Entertainment (song, poetry); manual labor (cleaning, farm work, etc.)

### Divaros barter values - High(1 Vel or more)

**Goods:** Rune-inscribed items; rare hardwoods not available locally; exotic animals and plants (live); captive Draslander (alive or dead).

**Services:** Information about Myndwar or Zokili technology; military service/law-enforcement.

### Dras barter values - Average(1 Qa'Vel or less)

**Goods:** Preserved meats and foodstuffs; bread; small animals, dead or alive; weapons or armor in any condition; animal skins, tanned; any bits of workable metal or hardwood; pieces of Stryders.

**Services:** Manual labor (lifting heavy items); assisting in the recovery or reconstruction of Stryders.

### Draslander barter values - High(1 Vel or more)

**None:** all Draslander are considered Average, as none possess wealth.

### Kantarin barter values - Average(1 Qa'Vel or less)

**Goods:** Bread, sweets; metal or stone weapons or armor; raw ore.

**Services:** Entertainment (song); information about the surrounding terrain; rare herbs, fresh or dried; information about nearby Divaros military movements.

### Kantarin barter values - High(1 Vel or more)

**Goods:** Rune-inscribed items; exotic animals and plants (live)

**Services:** information about the political climate in the Confederated Nations.

### Myndwar barter values - Average(1 Qa'Vel or less)

**Goods:** Foreign fruits and vegetables; weapons or armor in excellent condition; furs and animal skins, tanned or untanned; small animals; raw ore.

**Services:** Entertainment (tales of adventure); manual labor (mining, construction); military service; Information about nearby terrain.

### Myndwar barter values - High(1 Vel or more)

**Goods:** Rune-inscribed items; wooden items such as furniture.

**Services:** Military service; manual labor (mining).



# EABA

## Sivatagi barter values - Average(1 Qa'Vel or less)

**Goods:** Fruits, vegetables and other foodstuffs, especially sweets; water (inland only); metal weapons or armor; large quantities of rare stone; animal skins, tanned; herbs, fresh or dried; small animals.

**Services:** None - Most Sivatagi believe it would be a sign of weakness to have others do work for you.

## Sivatagi barter values - High(1 Vel or more)

**Goods:** Rune-inscribed items; wood of any sort, particularly in large quantities; exotic fabrics, particularly of bright colors.

**Services:** Information about Divaros, Myndwar or Zokili military movements; information about trade routes, caravan schedules, etc.

## Zokili barter values - Average(1 Qa'Vel or less)

**Goods:** Fruits and other foodstuffs not available locally, especially bread and other grains and sweets; weapons or armor in excellent condition; exotic clothing or fabrics.

**Services:** Entertainment (song, poetry); manual labor (cleaning, farm work, construction, etc.); military service (assassination, sabotage).

## Zokili barter values - Average(1 Vel or more)

**None:** All Zokili are considered Average, as none possess wealth (at least not publically).

▼ **WEAPONS** - All weapons come with a sheath and/or harness and a whetstone, as appropriate and applicable, and all missile weapons include twenty-four missiles of an appropriate type, and a quiver or pouch to hold them.

Weapons in Rhun have not followed the same evolutionary path as in a typical medieval setting. For one, the inhabitants of Rhun have not gone through a lengthy Stone Age, Bronze Age, and so on; with hands-on help from their gods, they quickly evolved through primitive weapons such as the axe, spear and club and into new and exciting ways of killing one another. Secondly, since they have not experienced a Dark Age or Renaissance as such, some weapons traditionally associated with the medieval era have not appeared. Thirdly, the lack of horses or other steeds (with some few exceptions) has led to a general lack of development of the sorts of weapons used in mounted combat (and to defend against it). War on Rhun is a brutal, straight-to-the point business, and the weapons used in battle are simple and effective.

Nevertheless, gamers will probably be familiar with the terms used to describe medieval weapons, and so those terms are provided below, where applicable, in parentheses following the Rhun weapon class they most closely fall into.

**Axe:** A wedge-shaped blade connected to a stout wooden shaft, sometimes paired with a second blade of equal or lesser size opposite, or sometimes a spike instead of a blade on the opposite side. Shorter than a spear, it is designed for more close-quarters fighting, and is most often between one-half meter and one meter in overall length. The wedge shape puts great power behind the swing, allowing it to cleave armor and bone alike. In **EABA Rune Stryders** an axe can either do cutting damage, or piercing damage of 2 points less. Piercing damage may ignore 1d+0 of some armor types. Changing from one damage type to another takes a major action. These weapons are usually unbalanced.

**Long Axe:** Essentially an axe blade at the end of a longer shaft, typically two meters to two-and-a-half meters in length, used to hack at enemies from a distance. Contrary to what one might think, the blades on such axes tend to be small, allowing them to better pierce through armor. The primary blade is often backed up with numerous spikes and knobs, and the opposite end of the shaft often contains a heavy counterweight. This is a two-handed weapon. (Glaive, Halberd, Poleaxe, Voulge)

**Throwing Axe:** A short, light, relatively small-bladed axe designed for hurling, but relatively useless as a melee weapon due to its impracticality in parrying attacks. Mostly ineffective against an enemy aware of the attacker's presence, best used against an unaware or distracted opponent. In **EABA Rune Stryders** the throwing axe may be used as part of a normal melee defense, but if the attack is blocked, the throwing axe usually takes the full damage of the attacking weapon (count as a normal hit against the Armor and Hits of the weapon). (Francesca)

**War Axe:** Generally a little more than one meter in length, distinguished by the fact that the single blade of the weapon typically occupies a full third of the weapon's overall length, giving it a tremendous capacity for damage during close quarters fighting when in the hands of a skilled warrior. A war axe is a two-handed weapon. (Bardiche, Lochaber, Sparth)

**Back Sword:** So called because the blade, generally between one-half meter and one meter in length, has only a single, typically straight cutting edge. The back of the blade is somewhat thickened. This imparts greater strength to the weapon as a whole, gives the cutting edge more strength, and allows the wielder to use the blunt (and somewhat softer) edge of the weapon for more effective parries. Designed to be wielded with one hand, the infamous Zokili Sheiwin is among the swords in this subcategory. (Falchion, Katana, Reitschwert, Saber)

**Great Sword:** A double-edged sword of such great length as to make it impossible to use with a single hand, generally between one-and-a-half meters to two meters in length from tip to pommel, with a hilt of up to one-half meter in length. Though quite capable of cutting and slicing, the great length and weight of such swords means that they are primarily used for piercing and stabbing attacks, defending small areas with spear-like tactics, as opposed to chopping and cleaving. Generally features broad, wide hilts designed to help protect the fingers. (Claymore, Dopppehander, Estoc, Flambard, Two-Handed Sword)

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**Sword:** The sword is by far the most frequently encountered weapon on any Rhun battlefield, and as such covers a broad array of shapes, designs and sizes. The typical Rhun sword is between one meter and one-and-a-half meters in length, featuring a long, straight double-edged blade and a simple cross-guard hilt that allows the user to wield the weapon with either one or two hands, as the situation warrants. Using the weapon in both hands precludes use of a shield, but does +2 damage. (Bastard sword, Hand-and-a-Half sword, Longsword, Spatha)

**War Sword:** Certainly, all swords are used in war, but the War Sword was designed with mass warfare in mind. Generally speaking, a War Sword is a straight-bladed double-edged sword about one meter in length with an ornate and protective hilt, consisting of a series of intricate wire loops, that form a basket around the hand. The hilt itself is typically augmented and ornamented with spikes and additional small blades, allowing it to be used to punch and slice at opponents within close range. (Espadon, Schiavona)

**Club:** Perhaps the simplest of all weapons, consisting of a stout wooden shaft or stick, often (but not always) thickening towards the business end. Varies in length, but typically about one-half meter in length. In a pinch, any stick or stick-like object can be treated as a club. (Belaying Pin)

**Mace:** One step up from a club, at its simplest this is merely a stone or steel head atop a club, added to inflict more damage to an enemy. More often seen are versions that add flanges, studs or spikes to the steel head. Generally about one-half meter in length, on occasion banded with metal down its entire length. (Morningstar)

**Maul:** Essentially a long mace, this heavy-headed weapon consists of a steel ball or block atop a one to one and a half meter long shaft, used for crushing stone, or the skulls of enemies. (Sledgehammer)

**War Club:** A mace with a loose steel head (or multiple heads) connected by a hinge, swivel or chain, so that the head can be swung independently of the shaft. The head is often knobbed or spiked, and can consist of anything from a plank of wood with steel bands wrapped around it to several spiked steel balls or rods connected by chains. Generally between one meter and one-and-a-half meters in overall length. (Flail)

**Fork:** Like most of the other weapons in this category, the Fork was originally designed as a non-military tool, in this case intended for use in shoveling loose materials around a farm. Two, three or four stiff metal tines up to half a meter in length jut forth from a wooden shaft, the overall length of the weapon somewhere between one and one and a half meters. Some versions intended solely for military use lengthen and significantly reinforce the shaft. You may treat such weapons as getting one extra hit for each two points the attack was successful by. (Pitchfork, Trident)

**Hammer:** At its simplest, a hammer is just a metal head on a wooden shaft, designed for pounding nails. Larger hammers, however, can just as easily crack skulls and split armor, and it is these versions of this tool which make up this category. Generally, hammers have a relatively narrow pick-like head, designed more for splitting through armor, though some (much heavier) versions feature a much broader head, of more use against unarmored foes. Overall length is typically between half a meter and one and a half meters, with broader-headed weapons having shorter shafts.

**Pick:** Derived from the picks used in mining to dig rocks and gemstones from inside caves, the pick was adapted for military use by the Myndwar. Specifically, military picks generally have a longer shaft (up to one meter in length) all with a narrow spike-like projection on one side intended to pierce armor and skull alike. (Crowbill)

**War Pick:** This weapon combines the features of the hammer and the pick to create a long-shafted (up to three meters in length) weapon capable of piercing armor from a great distance, and with great power. The tip of the weapon generally contains at least two pick-like or hammer-like projections, typically opposite from one another, as well as an awl or spike on the top of the weapon to increase its versatility and a counterweight on the other end for balance. (Bec de Corbin, Bec de Faucon)

**Spear:** A spear is essentially a dagger-shaped blade atop a long pole. Designed primarily for stabbing, thrusting and piercing, some variations with broader, longer blades can also be used for slashing at foes from a safe distance. The generic form of spear here is a weapon between two and three meters long, topped with a blade up to a third of a meter long and often backed up with a butt spike.

**Long Spear:** Double the size of a spear, and you have a Long Spear. Typically used in clustered formations to keep an enemy at bay, this weapon is relatively ineffective when used by itself, and can never be thrown. A significant portion of the haft just below the tip is usually shrouded in metal, to prevent the top from being cut off. Of special note in this category is the Sivatagi War Pike, a six meter long, broad-bladed weapon used from atop a Sivatagi mount to skewer enemies. (Awl Pike, Craoseach, Lance, Sarissa)

**Throwing Spear:** A long, narrow, barbed steel head connected to a wooden shaft, between one and a half and two meters long overall. Ineffective against an enemy who is aware of the hurler's presence, is best used in ambush situations from higher ground, or against non-human prey while hunting. The Zokili Boom Spear (named for the sound its hollow tip makes as it flies through the air) falls in this category. Note that no one is surprised by a Boom Spear, but it can be used as a distraction, or in quantity, as an intimidation tactic. (Angon, Pilum, Javelin)

**War Spear:** A long, broad-blade tip connected to a comparatively short (two meter long) wooden shaft, much of which is banded with metal strips. Designed as more of a melee weapon, the blade often takes up as much as a fourth of the weapon's length, and is typically augmented with an assortment of spikes, hooks and axe-like blades. (Partisan, Spetum, Ranseur, Trident)

**Crossbow:** A bow mounted on a thick stock, using mechanical means (winches and cranks) to cock the bow into place. Fires a short arrow called a bolt. Slow compared to other bows, but significantly more powerful over short distances. Can easily pierce thick armor and even wooden structures, splintering bone and piercing organs. It takes at least four seconds to reload it and an Average(7) task to avoid delays. (Arbalest)

**Blowgun:** Not properly a bow, as it lacks a string, but included in this broad category because the actual missile involved, and the means of attack, are similar. The blowgun consists of a hollow tube, typically of wood but also potentially of metal, within which a dart (varying in size and shape) is placed. The dart is then expelled towards the target by means of a puff of breath. Incapable of causing more than 1 Hit of damage, darts are almost always tipped with some form of toxin that causes paralysis, sleep or death in the victim. Blowgun darts are typically able to penetrate fabrics or materials with an Armor of 0d+1.

**Hunting Bow:** Generally about half the height of the user, a Hunting Bow is often little more than a flexible stick with a string of treated vine or sinew tied around each end. Better quality Hunting Bows are available, typically made entirely of wood, but one of the main advantages of this type of bow is that it is easy to piece one together from materials available in nature, and as such it is popular among the Kantarin and Draslander peoples. As the primary use of such bows is hunting animals for food, it can be relatively ineffective against an armored foe.

**War Bow:** A powerful bow formed of a composite of wood, bone, horn and sinew, designed for use in combat and skirmish situations against human foes. It is thus much stronger than other bows its size (typically only about one meter long) due to its permanent recurve shape and better construction. Rather than being used to hail arrows upon an enemy from a distance, the War Bow is designed for use within skirmish-style combat situations, allowing archers to move quickly about a battlefield offering support fire. It can be fired in confined spaces and is even used from atop mounts by the Sivataji, many of whom have mastered that art. (Composite, Compound, Recurve)

**Bolas:** From two to four cords, tied together at their centers and fastened to weights (often spiked or hooked) at the ends. The weapon, popular among hunters (and particularly among the Sivataji) is used by swinging it over the head to gain momentum and then hurling it at the legs of the target (typically a fleeing animal). Rarely capable of killing, it can quickly incapacitate a foe. Each success on an attack with a Bola reduces the target's Agility by 2, to a minimum of zero. A target with zero Agility cannot move.

**Garrote:** Any cord, wire, rope or other flexible material capable of being formed into a noose, typically a little more than half a meter long. The garrote is a stealth weapon, typically used by sneaking up on an opponent from behind and winding the cord around their throat, then pulling tight enough to choke, suffocate and, in some cases, crush the windpipe. Quite popular among Diplomats and Ambassadors of various countries.

Most garrote attacks will be uncontested, as the victim will rarely know of the attack. Each success on the attack causes +1 damage, but if the victim is aware of the attack, the Difficulty of the attack is 13, and the victim is allowed to Dodge as normal.

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**Net:** A tapestry of vine, rope or cord, typically between three and five meters in diameter, often weighted around the edges. Used in much the same way as Bolas, it is hurled at an enemy with the intent of entangling their limbs in the loose weave of the net, allowing the then-helpless opponent to be more easily dispatched. The addition of small hooks, thorns or shards within the weave itself, however, can easily make the Net itself a potentially deadly weapon in the right hands and circumstances.

Each success on the attack roll reduces a target's Agility by 2. A combatant with an Agility of zero cannot take actions or defend himself. A person entangled with a bola or net can attempt to cut or maneuver their way free. This attack on the bola or net is at a difficulty of 7, and each success removes 2 points of Agility penalty. When the penalty is reduced to zero, the person is free of the net or bola. Even a person completely entangled can spend extra time to reduce the difficulty and eventually get free. Nets or bolas with barbs to hold them in place are a difficulty of 9 to extricate one's self from. Each success only negates 1 point of Agility penalty, and failing an attempt does 1 lethal hit to the person so entangled.

**Whip:** With the general absence of mounts or large beasts of burden in Rhun, the whip instead finds most use in the hands of authority, used for punishing slaves and criminals. Rarely used in warfare due to the fact that it does little damage to an armored foe, it can be deadly when wielded properly. A whip is capable of not only entangling or disarming an enemy, but seriously wounding him if the leather, vine or rope whip has been adorned with shards of metal, thorns or other sharp materials (sometimes laced with poison).

Each success on the attack roll reduces an opponent's Agility by 1 in addition to inflicting damage as normal. The Agility penalty is removed as soon as the attacker recovers the whip.

**Dagger:** Essentially a knife shaped like a sword, with a straight, double-edged blade (between six to eighteen inches in length) and a hilt fitted with pommel and guard. Designed mostly for stabbing, but also capable of slashing at a foe, albeit within extremely close range. The Zokili Sheitin falls in this category. (Basilard, Cinqueda, Dirk, Main-gauche, Misericorde, Rondel)

**Knife:** Generally describes any small bladed instrument attached to a handle, distinguished from daggers in that a knife generally has only a single cutting edge and tends to be somewhat smaller. Most knives also lack a guard or pommel on their hilt, although there are some exceptions. (Bowie, Sax)

**Quick Sword:** A long (typically around one meter), slender-bladed and double-edged sword, designed for use with a single hand and typically featuring an ornate basket-style hilt to protect the hand from errant thrusts. Though the blade is capable of delivering brutal slashing cuts, most attacks tend to be thrusts and jabs aimed at kinks in armor or particularly vital portions of the anatomy (including the face and chest). The Divaran Rapier falls into this category, distinguished from others of its kind by a wavy-bladed style that offers a slight advantage when parrying an opponent's blade. (Flamberge, Rapier)

**Short Sword:** A shorter and lighter version of a Sword, generally half as long (around two-thirds of a meter in length) but featuring the same double-edged, straight blade, and a hilt with pommel and guard. The line between a Dagger and a Short Sword is a fine one, but generally speaking a Short Sword has a stouter, broader and longer blade designed more for slashing and parrying. (Arming Sword, Dussack)

**Enan:** Always exactly six-tenths of a meter in length, two-and-a-half centimeters across and two point seven kilograms in weight, the Enan is the tool of the Divaran Judge, used to calculate and measure throughout Divaros. The thick, sturdy tool is also a handy way of dealing out justice when necessary, its polished wooden surface capable of breaking bones in the hands of a trained user.

**Staff:** A shaft of wood, often as thick around as a man's wrist and between two and three meters in length. Generally used in combat in one of two ways, either by holding the staff closer to one end and using the other end to poke and strike an opponent (quarter-staffing) or by holding it halfway down its length and using both ends to parry and strike (half-staffing). (Quarterstaff, Bo)

**Long Staff:** As with a staff, though generally at least a third again as large (between three and four meters in length), and always used with the quarter-staffing technique, as it is too cumbersome to use otherwise.

**Short Staff:** Essentially the same thing as a staff, although typically shorter than its user, averaging between one and two meters in length, and somewhat narrower. (Jo)

**Rocks and Stones:** Without a doubt, the most basic of all weapons: find a fist-sized stone, pick it up, and throw it at your enemy (especially his head, if you can manage it). However, the same basic skills involved in throwing stones are also used in hurling more advanced weaponry: the Draslander Spell Flingers hurl Rune Stones; the Kantarin toss toxic roots; and the Sivatagi have been known to throw bags full of blinding sand and dust.

**Rune Thrower:** An advanced weapon, difficult to obtain or use effectively, the Rune Thrower is a development of the Sivatagi nation. A metal plug is engraved with a particular Rune, which is then dropped into a steel tube designed to fit it. At the base of the barrel is a second Rune, carved into the barrel itself, the two Runes separated only by a thin spacer. When the spacer is removed, the two Runes (usually) slide next to one another, forming a Rune Word that (usually) results in an explosion that propels the Rune out of the barrel with enough force to shatter bone, armor or fortress walls. They fly far faster than arrows and ignore the first 1d of most armors.

**Sling:** Taking stone technology to the next level, the sling places the missile inside a strip of leather or cloth, fastened at both ends with cord. The cords are held tightly as the sling is whirled over the head, and then one cord is released, hurling the missile towards the enemy with great force, flying farther and inflicting more harm. Relatively useless in melee combat, or against an aware and intelligent opponent, but useful against groups or when used by a large group simultaneously.

**Sling Shot:** Similar to the sling, except the two cords are much shorter and more elastic (due to the inclusion of rubberized material from trees found in the Kantarin Rain Forest), and fastened to a forked rod of wood or metal. The pouch is drawn back and released, hurling the missile more or less directly at the target. The Sling Shot has a much shorter range than the Sling, but is capable of being used within melee, as it requires less room to use effectively, and does not require the user to arc the missile.



**Siege Weapons** - Siege weapons are generally not available on the open market, nor to the sort of small groups that player characters are likely to form. Because they are difficult to construct, move and operate, most are either mounted on Stryders or given permanent placement in critical areas. However, the use of siege engines to assault enemy troops, encampments and walled structures is not unheard of, and as such characters may encounter such devices on either side of the battlefield in the course of a campaign.

**Hurler:** The generic Rhun name for any large device used to hurl large missiles in an arc through the air. Generally this is accomplished by using tension or a counterweight to hurl a boulder or similar object at a fixed structure. Hurlers have the greatest range of any siege weapon, but they are relatively useless against mobile targets, or anything within a minimum range. (Catapult, Manganel, Onager, Trebuchet)

**Rune Cannon:** The Rune Cannon is a larger, fixed version of the Rune Thrower, and is most often seen in and around the Eastern Desert, almost always as part of the defenses of a Sivtagi fortification. In such cases, they are typically mounted on turrets which allow those operating them to swivel the cannon to aim at any approaching masses of troops or, more commonly, enemy Stryders. Rumor has it that some Rune Stryders have appeared with smaller versions of this device mounted on their bodies.

**Rune Mortar:** This is like a Rune Cannon, but the runed item that would be the projectile is more like a piston that cannot exit the weapon. Instead, the force of this piston is used to loft a large payload at low velocity. This is usually a large quantity of metal darts, though it can hurl rocks large or small, or just about anything that will fit into the wide opening at the mouth of the weapon. Rune Mortars are too heavy to be fired from Stryders, and are usually only seen at fortifications, though a Stryder with a platform could transport one, then dismount it for sieging a fortification. A good Rune Mortar crew has all likely targets pre-ranged and these are at -4 difficulty to hit. Note that a Rune Mortar's payload lands up to several turns after it is fired, giving plenty of time for small targets to get out of the way, but still good against enemy siege weapons or massed troops. In general, a mass of darts will fill an eleven hexagon diameter and every human-size target has a Challenging(9) chance of being hit by a 2d+1 armor-piercing attack (metal). If you are paying attention to the sky, you can apply any dodge bonus to decrease this hit chance or interpose a shield.

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**Siege Bow:** Essentially a larger, mounted version of the crossbow, the Siege Bow launches a large bolt at its target in a generally straight path. Aside from the potential for damage, the device can also be used to raise siege ladders or ropes, spread nets over a wide area, or tether a Rune Stryder in place. Creative uses like these are more commonly seen among the Zokili and those dwelling in the south-eastern part of the continent. Note that particular users may prefer metal, wood or blunt stone-tipped bolts, depending on the sort of target they expect to face. (Arbalest, Ballista)

**Siege Ram** - At its simplest, a siege ram is little more than a large piece of wood. At its most complex, it can be an ornately carved construction of metal, wood or bone. In all cases, the ram itself features a sturdy head that is used to batter down large, typically wooden objects. Most often, the target is a large gate or door, but rams have been used with mixed amounts of success against Stryders as well. The amount of damage a ram can do (i.e., its "punch damage") is based on the number of people using it, and is determined by the average Strength and adding +1d each time the number of people is doubled (e.g. two people is +1d, people are +2d, etc.) . Most rams have straps and fastenings enough for use by four to ten people. The minimum Strength to effectively use a given ram is +6 over the Strength needed to lift it. So, a 25kg ram could be lifted by a Strength of 3, but requires a Strength of 9 to use as a ram.

A siege ram cannot be used practically against a person, or even a Stryder unless it has been immobilized or surprised. The damage for a siege ram is technically half-lethal. It is a very blunt object after all. However, against large inanimate objects the damage can be counted as lethal.

▼ **ARMOR** - Armor in Rhun varies quite a lot from place to place, each region developing and customizing variations on the same basic themes. Mail is armor composed of links or scales of a rigid material, and Plate is large pieces of rigid material. In general, though, the following holds true for all types of armor:

- All types have at some point found favor, even if they are heavier or more expensive than an armor with comparable protection. It is a question of circumstance, and available skills and resources of local armorers.
- Wherever metal is mentioned, one may substitute wood, bone or any other material that could conceivably be made into armor. Likewise, if a specific material is mentioned, one might easily substitute another. Iron, steel, brass, bronze and other materials such as bone or wooden rings are used somewhat interchangeably across the land, just as an undergarment of leather might easily be made of canvas or cotton. This will affect the weight and protective value of the armor.
- Armor does not interfere in any way with the vocalization of Runes. However, it is not possible to trace or inscribe Runes while wearing armored gloves or gauntlets. If one is wearing gloves composed of a similar armor, these must be removed (requiring several seconds) before inscribing or tracing can take place. Shields and weapons may be held provided one hand remains free.
- In general, it takes a few minutes to put on anything except the simplest of armors, and armors are not comfortable enough to sleep in without taking penalties for lost sleep and stiff muscles the next day. With the assistance of a squire or compatriot, the time to armor up can be cut in half. In general, anyone caught without armor when battle ensues either fights without armor or avoids the fight, as the skirmish style battles that are fought in Rhun do not take very long.
- The weights given for various pieces of armor below assume Divaros proportions. These can and should be sized down appropriately for Myndwar(3/4), Zokili(1/2) and Draslander(1/2), although Sivatagi and Kantarin are close enough in size that the same figures can be used for them as well. It is a quirk of the gods that the smaller races are often no less strong than the larger, allowing them to wear more protective armor than their larger cousins.

## Basic Armors

Quilted or leather caps and hoods are typically worn in various combinations with the armors listed in this category, as appropriate and dependent on the weather. Flaps may offer some protection to the ears and neck, but the face is almost always completely exposed, and in any case such features offer little protection against heavy bludgeons or missile attacks. If climate allows, such padded cloth can be worn under other armors to add 0d+1 to its value, at the penalty of adding an insulated layer that could be counter-productive in warm climates.

**Boilerplate:** Armor constructed primarily of leather, chemically tanned and then boiled in water or oil to stiffen it. The torso, shoulders and upper arms are more heavily protected, with softer, more flexible leather and other fabric protecting the groin and upper legs with skirting or kilting. So named because the most common variety of this armor, used by the Divaros, is often shaped and dyed so as to resemble metal plates. Weighs around five to eight kilograms. (Cuirbouilli, Leather)

**Buff Coat:** Unlike other leather armors, the buff coat is composed of supple, flexible leather, relying on the strength of the tanned leather itself to provide protection. The armor covers, at a minimum, the torso and upper arms, with some varieties (particularly in northern climes) featuring longer sleeves that protect the lower arms, as well as skirting or flaps to protect the legs as well. Shorter varieties are often used during Divaran fencing bouts. Weighs two to three kilograms.

**Jack:** A thick quilted short coat (i.e., jacket) of linen or canvas, stuffed with cotton and other material to cushion blows to the torso and upper arms. The lower arms and legs are typically bare, although skirting or kilting of leather or thick woolen fabric is typically worn along with it to protect the groin and upper thighs. Weighs five to six kilograms. (Aketon, Gambeson, Padded, Quilted)

**Rawhide:** Most often found in more rural areas, this is literally leather hide that has been naturally tanned over a period of months through exposure to the elements. The final product of this process is a stiff white leather that can be shaped into armor only through great effort, with tufts of hair sometimes left in place for decorative effect. The Kantarin people color their Rawhide armor with vegetable dyes to match the foliage around them, making it more difficult to spot them in their natural terrain. Weighs eight to ten kilograms. (Hide)

### Mail Armors

Mail armor is rings of metal, typically iron, steel or bronze, formed by wrapping wire around a steel rod or punching rings from metal plate and then riveting the loose ends. Quite flexible, the armor is capable of turning aside most slashing and stabbing attacks, with a thick base of padding beneath to offer some cushioning against blunt force trauma. While somewhat costly to manufacture, it wears well and is easily repaired and maintained. Chain armor varies in length and coverage, with weight varying between eight to twelve kilograms, based on material, number of links, and the density of the weave.

Mail head protection consists of some combination of a loose metal chain hood (coif), worn underneath or attached to a helm or kettle hat of bronze or steel. These are almost always open-faced, many worn above the ears, thus offering protection without hampering vision or hearing. (Bascinet, Coif)

**Coat:** The chain coat is composed of twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand rings, and covers the entire torso. Chain sleeves cover the arms down to the wrists (with some coats having chain mittens that cover the hands as well), and long skirting (split at the sides) covers the legs down to mid-shin. The chain coat is typically belted with leather at the waist to take some of the weight off the shoulders, and worn properly it offers decent mobility. Layers of chain doubling often covers the upper torso to add extra protection and, unfortunately, extra weight. (Hauberk)

**Jacket:** The chain jacket consists of ten thousand to twelve thousand rings, covering primarily the torso, groin and upper arms, with the weight carried on the shoulders. The weave tapers off at points just above the elbows and mid-thighs, giving good range of motion while still protecting critical areas. Occasionally plates are added at shins, forearms, elbows and knees, with additional layers of chain doubling at the shoulders, and a kilt of leather and chain at the groin, to provide additional defense against missile attacks. (Byrnie, Lorica Hamata)

### Scale Armors

Thin discs or teardrops of iron, steel or bronze, attached by wire or riveted to one another before being sewn onto a base of canvas or leather. The net result is a thin, fairly light and somewhat flexible suit of scales that will turn aside many slashes and offers good protection against many missile attacks. The armor focuses on protecting the torso, groin and upper arms, with the lower arms and legs left bare (aside from, perhaps, some leather or plate padding in key areas) to allow adequate mobility. Since most suits of scale mail overlap the scales downwards, errant thrusts occasionally find their way up into the armor. A better (and more often seen) solution is to overlap the scales upwards, which makes the armor somewhat more uncomfortable but enhances its protectiveness. Scale is less protective than chain, but is easier to manufacture, and thus cheaper. Scale can be made with minimal tools of just about any available material (wood, chitin, hardened leather), though its protective value will be less than metal versions. Weighs around ten kilograms. (Lorica Squamata)

### Ring Armors

Though technically not mail (which is defined by its weave of interconnected metal pieces), ring armor is included in this category as it is essentially constructed of the same basic elements, being a series of small steel rings sewn to a backing of leather or canvas. Often supplemented with a leather kilt sewn with rings, and shoulder epaulets of hardened leather. Less protective than true mail, it is more flexible and somewhat lighter, and quite a bit easier to construct, maintain and repair, thus making it more readily available in most areas, even as it is shunned by wealthier professional mercenaries as sub-par, mostly because the larger rings can allow penetration by arrows, bolts, stiletos or quickswords. Weighs around five to eight kilograms.

**Veile:** Developed and worn almost exclusively by Divaran mercenary forces, this is a variant on scale mail, replacing the thinner, teardrop-shaped scales with three hundred to five hundred bars of iron or steel, which are riveted or tied together vertically with wire and attached to a soft leather or canvas base. Though really a form of transitional plate, Veile is still quite mail-like in that it is composed of smaller pieces of metal, and as a whole is thus still somewhat flexible. The coat typically covers the entire torso from neck to thigh, with somewhat lighter protection for the upper arms. Somewhat heavier than other types of mail, it makes up for the weight with enhanced protection, significantly reduced manufacturing time, and easier maintenance and repair. The Divaran unit of currency, the Vel, is based upon a standard bar from one of these suits (although in actual practice, the bars on the armor vary in size and shape). Weighs twelve to fourteen kilograms. (Bronya, Kalantar)

## Plate Armors

Head protection in this category consists of a helm covering the entire head. Facial protection varies, but generally consists of added protection for the cheek and nose, with some helmets enclosing the face completely behind narrow slots and/or hinged visors. Chain coifs are often worn beneath some larger helms to offer additional neck protection. Vision and hearing are somewhat hampered with all such helms. An adventurer wearing such headwear is at -1d on Awareness for sight and hearing purposes.

**Banded Mail:** Consists of overlapping bands of layered metal sewn onto a base of mail and soft leather. The armor protects the torso and upper arms, with leather or chain killing and arm protection covering the rest of the arms and upper legs. The bands almost always run horizontally; older, inferior versions of this armor (no longer made, but possibly around in some areas) have the bands (or splints) running vertically. The bands and plates of metal on the armor offer good protection against slashing and bludgeoning attacks. However, due to the fact that there are small gaps in the armor between the bands, spears and missile weapons may find their way into vulnerable areas. The armor is also somewhat cumbersome and restricts movement. Weighs fourteen to sixteen kilograms. (Banded Mail, Splint Mail)

**Brigandine:** So named because of its popularity among outlaws, pirates and thieves (i.e., brigands), this is the lightest and cheapest of the common plate armors. At a glance, it often appears to be merely leather armor filled with studs or rivets. This is because metal plates (either round or rectangular) are riveted to the inside of the leather or canvas, sandwiched between a second layer of leather, and thus hiding the fact that the armor's primary protective qualities come from plates. The armor covers the torso and upper arms, with chain or leather extensions to cover the lower arms and upper legs to the knees. The plates within are small enough to allow good range of movement, yet strong enough to offer good protection from most types of attacks. Weighs eight to ten kilograms. (Brigantine, Coat of Plates)

**Lamellar:** Overlapping rectangular plates of sheet metal (known as lames), fitted to follow the contours of the torso, laced together with wire or leather straps and buckles, commonly worn over an undergarment of soft leather or chain. The armor generally consists of between forty and fifty such plates, differing in size depending on what part of the torso they cover. Additional protection is added at the neck and shoulders, with a long skirt or kilt of chain or leather to cover the upper legs. Because of the way it is articulated, such armor offers good range of motion and flexibility, the overlapping plates moving with the body, yet offering excellent resistance to slashes, thrusts, missile weapons and bludgeoning attacks. Relatively inexpensive to manufacture, easy to maintain and comparatively lightweight, it is favored by many mercenaries. Weighs five to eight kilograms. (Lorica Segmentata)

**Plated Mail:** Large sheets of metal, shaped to fit the body of the wearer, are attached to a lattice of chain mail and leather with straps and wire, thus forming a thick carapace of between one and four plates of solid metal around the torso. With fewer gaps between plates, the armor offers significantly increased protection, turning aside most slashes and thrusts, and even stopping many bolts and arrows. Additional plates are added to the mail below on the lower arms, about the neck, and on the lower legs, with chain mail filling in the gaps. Thicker plates are used in some areas to afford added protection from the advancing technology of the crossbow, but in general, mobility on the battlefield is more important than encasing oneself in a shell of metal, and so a good balance between protection and movement is usually struck. However, as the plates must be custom fit to a user, this armor is quite expensive and takes a long time to manufacture. Weighs twelve to fourteen kilograms. (Breastplate, Plate Armor, Field Plate)

## Shields

**Skirmish Shield:** A light shield preferred by troops in the field for its balance of maneuverability and protection. Generally between half a meter to a meter at its widest point, it takes a variety of shapes, and is made from a variety of materials, depending on the particular part of the world it is used in. Among the Divaros, the Skirm, as it is affectionately known, is shaped like a small Tear Shield, with a peaked top and a narrowing, oblong shape, but among the Zokili and Myndwar, a smaller, rounder shield (often of steel) is favored. The shield itself is typically made of wood, with leather or metal covering the edge and/or front surface. Some mercenary companies display their insignia on the front of their shield, others augment it with spikes or a mirrored shine to give them an advantage in battle. A shield of this size gives its user +2 to their melee roll to block an attack, and if they succeed in their roll because of the shield, the shield takes the brunt of the attack. This can still penetrate the shield and harm the wielder, but the shield subtracts its Armor from the damage before applying it to the wearer's other Armor or protection. (Heater, Pelte, Rondella)

**Target Shield:** The lightest of the major shield variations, the Target is so-named because in the course of actual use the wearer must usually actively seek out the weapon of his opponent. Typically only a third of a meter in diameter, and generally round, the shield is almost always made of metal-edged wood. The surface is sometimes augmented with bars and hooks to catch an enemy's weapons, edges and center occasionally spiked or bladed, turning the small shield into an effective off-hand weapon. As it is so small, it is generally not seen on the field of battle, confined mostly to urban battles and duels. A shield of this size gives its user +1 to their melee roll to block an attack, and if they succeed in their roll because of the shield, the shield takes the brunt of the attack. This can still penetrate the shield and harm the wielder, but the shield subtracts its Armor from the damage before applying it to the wearer's other Armor or protection. (Buckler, Rondash, Targe)

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**Tear Shield:** A large, generally teardrop shaped shield (hence the name) averaging over a meter in length, constructed of wood, covered with leather or hide and reinforced with metal strips and plates to augment its strength. It is carried with the point down, giving more protection to the upper body. Somewhat awkward to use in close quarters, it is more commonly seen by those using spears or other pole weapons, allowing the user to maintain a defensive distance while harassing an enemy. The shield can be spiked and mirrored like others, but cannot be effectively used as a weapon, due to its size. A shield of this size gives its user +3 to their melee roll to block an attack, and if they succeed in their roll because of the shield, the shield takes the brunt of the attack. This can still penetrate the shield and harm the wielder, but the shield subtracts its Armor from the damage before applying it to the wearer's other Armor or protection. (Kite, Norman, Thureos)

**War Shield:** This massive shield, constructed in a fashion similar to that of a Tear Shield, is more of a movable wall, used by archers and siege crew to advance on a target relatively unscathed. The smallest of the type generally covers the entire body from neck to ankle, allowing the wielder to crouch behind it. Larger varieties can conceal the wielder behind the shield entirely. Due to its bulk, it is rarely used in actual skirmish combat, and is typically abandoned if the going gets rough. A shield of this size gives its user +5 to their melee roll to block an attack, and if they succeed in their roll because of the shield, the shield takes the brunt of the attack. This can still penetrate the shield and harm the wielder, but the shield subtracts its Armor from the damage before applying it to the wearer's other Armor or protection. (Argive, Pavise, Scutum, Tower, Wall)

▼ **Note** - Some of these weapons and armors can have **EABA**-specific special effects that the game-master can use if desired. For instance, armors with gaps in their coverage due to their type might allow some attacks to be counted as armor-piercing. Or, they may have slightly different armor values on different hit locations. This level of detail is not included in their stats, but can be added for gamemasters and players who want the extra detail.



▼ **EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES** - Certainly, it would be impossible to compile a list of every single item and service an adventurer might need during the course of a campaign, and nearly as difficult to try and surmise the situations a character might get into during that period of time. However, most adventurers generally need a fairly small variety of items to get by, and those items most likely needed are presented here. Items not seen here may still be available, taking into account the local economy, the region of the world in which the character is presently, etc.

### **Clothing(Confederated Nations)**

The average person has between one and three changes of clothing at any given time. Poorer citizens are usually confined to the clothes on their backs, while wealthier citizens have different clothing for each day of the week, and special outfits for specific events. The general outfit across the continent consists of a shirt or tunic, covering the torso and upper arms, and either pants, kilt or skirt, as warranted by climate and local custom. Most utilitarian clothing is unisex, with both men and women dressing in similar garb. Those who pursue careers that involve a great deal of physical labor typically outfit themselves in coarser, sturdier fabrics, while those who have a more sedentary lifestyle wear lighter, looser clothing. Just about every color and style can be found somewhere on the continent, those living further north tending towards heavier, warmer, more drab colors, and those to the south favoring lighter, more colorful fabrics.

### **Clothing(Outcast Nations)**

Sivatagi attire is similar to that of other races, with the exception of their preference for large, voluminous robes of a neutral, sandy color (the better to protect them from the desert climate). The Kantarin wear little clothing, as their Rain Forest home offers a climate suited to scant clothing. Kantarin men and women alike typically restrict themselves to wearing simple strips of fabric to protect and bind sensitive areas, along with whatever armor may be necessary for their current situation. Draslander rarely wear clothing at all, although their long hair, patches of fur and mottled skin covered with moss and mold of various sorts can offer just as much coverage and protection. Draslander who venture out of their homeland for some reason are often outfitted in simple breechcloths.

Outfitting oneself in basic subsistence-level clothing can be done for free (if you can hunt), but such clothing will be uncomfortable and impermanent (hides will tend to rot, etc.), and those dressed in such a fashion will be treated as outsiders within civilized areas.

A complete set of normal clothing (shirt/tunic/dress, pants/kilt/skirt, undergarments, stockings and simple footwear) has a cost of approximately 2 Vel. Such clothing is fabric-based, made of canvas, cotton, wool and similar fabrics, and is typical of that worn by the average citizen. Outerwear to protect the wearer from minor cold, rain and other elements (cloaks, coats, etc.) has a value of an additional 2 Vel. Clothing heavy enough to turn light blades (Armor of 0d+1) yet not be too obvious about it costs about 20Vel for a full set. Some jobs are dangerous enough that a set of reinforced clothing is normal for those that can afford it.

Richer clothing made of pricier fabrics, cut in more impressive styles, or designed for special events typically attended by the upper crust of society, costs at least 20 Vel for an outfit, or more. Such clothing will generally not long survive the rigors of life on the road. However, the wealthy can afford very heavy duty clothing for hunting trips or other expeditions, fashionable (to an extent) yet more durable than the average workman's clothes. Such gear would cost about 20 Vel more than the normal upper-class garb for a full outfit.

### **Food and Drink(Confederated Nations)**

Edibles in the Confederacy are generally divided into four groups: grain, meat, produce and spice. Grains include bread (typically rye and wheat, of varying colors and often seasoned with seeds, honey and nuts, which are also included in this group), oatmeal and gruel, and any other product made from grain flours, including various cakes and pies. Fermented, grains are used to produce beer and ale, staples of the Divaros diet in particular. While cattle, horses and other large domesticated animals are non-existent, meat is still prevalent in the diet. Sheep, pigs, lodo and other smaller animals (fish, rabbits, ducks, etc.) provide mutton, pork, milk and other meat products, most of which (including milk) are heated before eating, or salted away for later use. Fermented milk (in the form of a thin sour cream beverage) is also enjoyed in some parts of the north. Fruits and vegetables alike (i.e., produce) are typically cooked as part of a meal, or eaten raw by themselves. Most prevalent are turnips, potatoes, and other root vegetables, an assortment of leafy vegetables like cabbage and lettuce, fruits from trees and berries, all treated similarly in regards to preparation.

Apples and pears are popular in the north, while the south provides wine from fermented grapes and citrus fruits, salted to survive shipping to the north. Spices are added to all of the above, with the main difference between the cuisines of various parts of the world being which spices are used. Most prevalent are salt and salt-like minerals (gleaned from inland streambeds, rich in minerals), various forms of pepper, garlic and onions (treated as spices, and never eaten by themselves).

### Food and Drink(Outcast Nations)

The diet of other peoples is similar to that of the Confederacy, with some regional peculiarities worth noting. The Sivatagi use wheat and other grains much less extensively, supplementing that part of their diet with mushrooms and other fungi, nuts and a grainy breadfruit-type cactus found in the desert. They also eat much less meat, instead getting much of their protein via a slightly fermented drink of milk and blood, taken from the bodies of goats kept alive for this purpose. Produce is particularly sought after in the desert, and Sivatagi will trade for such items whenever possible. The Kantarin diet is much the same as that of the Divaros, save for the fact that much of their food is eaten raw, including meats from jungle animals and fish. Draslander share this habit of eating their food raw, although they do it with a bit less discretion, eating everything from rats to bugs, mushrooms to mold.

Subsistence-level nutrition can be achieved easily in most parts of the world at no cost, merely by grazing, fishing and hunting. However, unless several individuals are cooperating, fully half the day may be spent merely looking for food.

Normal quantities of food and drink, sufficient to keep an individual healthy and whole, cost approximately 1 Vel per week. This represents two meals per day (at dawn and dusk), the tradition in Divaros lands, and includes meat, grain and produce at each sitting, proportions and quality to vary with the culture and season. This same amount also represents a week's worth of hardtack, dried fruit and other preserved foods, as well as a skin of water, for a mercenary on the go.

Wealthier individuals who can afford to do so eat more, and more often. Meals of this type also include delicacies not found in the local area, such as candied fruits shipped north from the southern part of the continent. A single meal of this sort can cost from 1 to 5 Vel, or more.

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### Field Gear(Confederated Nations)

The types and quantities of equipment that individuals carry into the field on military expeditions away from populated areas vary from area to area, but generally consist of items that make life a little easier. Blankets of wool or cloth, hammocks and tents, torches and oil lanterns are fairly standard, and any mercenary group will generally want to have enough of these items to keep the entire group somewhat comfortable throughout the night. Regular use means these items are constantly wearing out, and newer recruits tend to get the most threadbare and worn items in a company's inventory.

### Field Gear(Outcast Nations)

The Kantarin and Draslander tend to operate on a subsistence level, taking what they need from the land, and as such they tend not to concern themselves with extra gear unless absolutely necessary. The Sivatagi, on the other hand, operate at the other end of the spectrum, preferring to carry as much as they can with them in their journeys across the desert sands.

Light sources are among the items most needed on those nights when the moons are not out (as there are no stars in the sky to provide light), which is about half the time. Cheap (albeit dim and uneven) light can be had by creating torches from tinder, old rags and stout branches. A lantern of metal, complete with oil enough for a week's worth of burning, as well as flint and steel, can be had for 1 Vel each. On the expensive side, 24-hour candles made from beeswax (often scented with perfume) can be had for 1 Vel each. These will blow out in anything greater than a gentle breeze, but small candle lanterns for outdoor use are available.

Sleeping materials are of arguable necessity; in many parts of the world, a dry patch of grass or a stout tree limb is enough to get one by. A pair of warm blankets and a floorless two-person tent can be had for 2 Vel, and serves most mercenary companies quite well. Expensive and comfortable rope and canvas hammocks cost 1 Vel each, and larger tents capable of housing more individuals cost 2 Vel per person, up to a maximum of twenty people (40 Vel).

Cooking gear is commonly found in the camps of Divaros and Zokili soldiers, less often among others. Many get by without it, subsisting on hardtack and other dry rations that do not require heating. For those that choose to cook hot meals, a large cooking pot, metal bowls and utensils enough for five people can be had for 5 Vel. A more extensive set of cooking gear, which includes several pots and pans, metal dishes, drinking cups, costs 10 Vel plus 1 Vel per person past five to be served.

Fishing and hunting equipment is often carried along on expeditions that will take a party away from civilization for an extended period of time. Basic hunting and gathering, of course, requires no additional equipment, but the addition of some simple snares, fishing line and fishing hooks (costing 2 Vel) will make it much easier to feed the troops (and is worth -1 to the difficulty for tasks where they would be of assistance). Large nets, suitable for larger snares and for fishing, cost 5 Vel each.

Arrows, bolts and darts for bows and blowguns cost 2 Vel for twenty-four missiles. Such items can also be scrounged from the surrounding environment, but it is a Hard(11) task and four hours of work to fashion just six such missiles, and they are never more than utilitarian in appearance and quality. Spending four times the price gets a balanced, matched set that is good for +1 Accuracy as long as they are used together and regularly (you need to have practiced with them to get the benefit).

Climbing gear is essential for campaigns heading into uneven terrain (or over the wall of a private residence). With access to strong vines, one can fashion a crude and heavy but passable rope for free. Purchasing a stout hemp rope is much easier, and costs 2 Vel per fifteen meters. The same amount of silk rope, which is lighter, stronger and more flexible, can be had for 5 Vel in the southern part of the continent, where it is made, or 10 Vel anywhere else. A steel grappling hook can be added to the package for an additional 1 Vel. A grappling hook can be thrown a vertical distance of Strength+2 in distance levels, or Strength+4 if there is room and time to twirl it around like a sling.

Containers are handy for transporting goods from one place to another. Since there are no large pack animals or horses, the carting of goods is generally relegated to small lodo-drawn carts. Such carts cannot be very large, as four lodos are required to pull a cart big enough for carrying just one person. Therefore, carting goods is also often done on a person's back. Creating a container from nature is a lengthy process and generally not worth doing. It is much easier to purchase a sack for 1 Vel or backpack of leather or canvas for 2 or 3 Vel. Larger crates and casks of wicker or wood vary in size, and can be had at a cost of 1 Vel per fifty kilograms of goods to be carried within. Cages for transporting livestock or captured animals cost 5 Vel per meter diameter. Bottles, vials and flasks of glass are generally 5 Vel per liter of capacity, while those of glazed pottery are a fraction of a Vel.

▼ **Note** - One thing that will quickly shape the course of adventures is how to get where you are going in any sort of style. Gear is heavy, and there are no draft animals, either to carry things or tow wagons. Mercenary companies can pack things onto Stryders, and merchants who travel overland will need cargo Stryders. It is impractical to use people as beasts of burden for anything but the best-funded of expeditions, and you know what the native bearers do at the first bit of trouble, anyway. The point is that adventurers who go off the beaten track on their own will have to figure out how to carry their possessions, plus the weapons, armor, shelter and food. Until they gain the wealth to do this, the gamemaster can simply keep them close to their supply source (like the aforementioned mercenary company).

### Jewelry(Confederated Nations)

Gemstones and precious metals are quite rare on Rhun, as the planet is not old enough to support such items naturally. The gods who created the planet have strewn playthings and baubles across and beneath the surface, however, and these gems and veins of precious metal are very highly valued, especially among the Divarans. Jewelry made from these priceless items is very rare and extraordinarily valuable. Those who have the skills to work them are few and far between, and those who can usefully rune-enchant them rarer still.

Art objects made of steel, bronze and brass are more common, their intrinsic value coming not from the material from which they are formed, but from the skill with which they are crafted. In addition, some small gems, consisting of oddly colored stones, as well as coral and pearls from the ocean, accent some items, making them slightly more sought after.

## Jewelry(Outcast Nations)

Outside of the Confederacy, body decoration is much more important than jewelry, and so tattooing, dying of skin and braiding of hair into intricate patterns is more often seen than the simple wearing of a ring or a necklace. There are some exceptions, however. Items found in nature, such as ivory (which comes from the tusks of several large animals) may be worn as trophies, and objects of aesthetic value may very well be carried due to a practical function they also have, such as an ornamental bronze dagger inlaid with pearl. As is usually the case, while part of jewelry is the basic aesthetics of the item, part of the reason is the rarity of the item or its components. The best jewelry has both.

Cheap jewelry includes things such as steel, brass or bronze earrings, simple copper rings, brass closures, clasps and buckles for cloaks and belts. Such items generally cost between 5 and 15 Vel. Note that this is *jewelry*. The basic clasps required for regular clothing are part of the cost of the clothing.

Average jewelry consists of larger and more intricate pieces, requiring more effort to put together: chain necklaces of small bronze links, circlets and tiaras, etc. Cost is between 20 and 50 Vel.

Expensive jewelry includes minerals and materials that are extremely difficult to find. Examples might include pearl earrings, a ring composed of steel and pink coral, or an ivory headband. The value of such items is almost always 100 Vel or more.

Priceless jewelry is made of gems and precious metals, the playthings of the gods, and will cost at least 1,000 Vel and as much as 10,000 Vel, assuming the current owner is willing to part with it. Note that runes can be inscribed into gems for the greatest permanence, and so the intrinsic value of many gems is further enhanced by runic inscriptions. Of course, a failed runic inscription not only mars the gem, but may shatter it, so such things are only done by accomplished specialists.

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**Specialized Tools** - Some skills will require additional tools to perform effectively. These are listed here, according to the most appropriate skill for those tools. This is not to say that these items are otherwise useless; only that adventurers are most likely to need them to perform skilled actions.

Juggling can be performed without special equipment, but for 1 Vel a character can acquire a set of balanced juggling balls and/or blunted knives. 5 Vel will also get the character a set of small steel torches that can be ignited repeatedly as well as a set of small steel hoops.

Steeplejacking, a skill that involves clambering among the towers and spires of tall city buildings, is often done without benefit of ropes or nets. For 20 Vel, an adventurer can purchase a safety harness, thirty meters of silk rope and a fifteen meter wide safety net that will make practicing the skill a bit safer.

Art requires little save creativity, but for those who truly wish to produce a masterpiece of one sort or another, 15 Vel will get them a complete set of brushes, pencils, inks, pigments, etc.

Disguise can be achieved through application of completely free materials, such as various clays, muds and, of course, stolen clothing, but the purchase of a disguise kit for 25 Vel will give the character access to an assortment of makeup, wigs and false noses. Of course, discovery of such a kit without the cover of being a known performer is likely to arouse suspicion.

Music can be performed *a cappella*, without accompaniment from instruments and without additional cost. An average quality instrument can be had for 25 Vel. A top-notch instrument of fine quality will cost 100 Vel, and will give the character a -3 Difficulty check on Music rolls. Compare the cost of an average instrument to the income of an average performer, and you will see why musicians tend to be protective of their instruments.

Navigation can be performed with no special equipment, but the addition of a spyglass to magnify distant areas twofold (-3 to difficulty of Sight Awareness checks) for 50 Vel might aid in spotting distant landmarks. Those navigating by sea might wish to purchase a detailed book of maps for 100 Vel. Such maps are generally very useful, as the coasts and landmarks of Rhun are well-known and accurately mapped.

Trading and Appraising can both benefit from the purchase of an accurate set of scales and weights, costing 75 Vel. These usually include some form of runic inscriptions to preclude cheating their owner through impure coinage or magically altered weight. Trading, of course, is more about the ability to haggle, but knowing what an object is *really* worth can be of great benefit during negotiations.

Runelore requires writing or engraving implements if a character wishes to scribe Runes. A set of chalks and charcoals costs 1 Vel. Ink and a Quill pen will cost 10 Vel. Hardened steel tools suitable for engraving wood, metal or bone cost 50 Vel.

Forgery requires no special tool but for writing implements (10 Vel) if one is going to forge someone's handwriting or an official document. Forging an official seal, or counterfeiting a specific type of coin, costs up to 100 Vel to produce a duplicate mold, depending on the complexity of the item being forged, and who the forgery will have to fool. The most advanced document seals are runes that guarantee the authenticity of the document, and possibly cause harm to any unauthorized person breaking the seal.

Gambling can be done without special equipment, even if one wishes to have an edge by counting or nicking cards. However, the purchase of a deck of cards (regular, 1 Ha'Vel; marked, 3 Vel) or a set of dice (regular, 1 Qa'Vel; loaded, 2 Vel) will give an extra edge. Any sort of gambling prop that can be used to cheat with will have a detection threshold. An opponent whose natural skill roll meets or exceeds this amount once will be suspicious. Matching or exceeding this amount a second time will convince them that cheating is going on, and a third success will give them what they need to prove it to anyone else who is playing. Poorly made cheating props will have a threshold of around 14, enough to swindle the unskilled, while the highest quality ones will have a threshold of 18.

Locksmithing tools can occasionally be cobbled together from spare wire and metal bits, but a good set of lockpicks (10 Vel) will ease things greatly. Without such lockpicks, the Difficulty check for any Lockpicking attempt is at +4 difficulty.

Trapwork can be practiced with nothing more than access to spare bits of rope, twine and such, but spending 10 Vel for an assortment of springs, metal wire, snare triggers and the like will make the trap creation process much easier.

Archaeologists, historians, lawkeepers and politicians may find it helpful to purchase access to a library of historical and legal documents in a major city to facilitate them in their work (2 Vel for a single session or day, 10 Vel for a month's access, 50 Vel for a year's access).

Architects can perform most of their duties without additional tools, but purchasing a set of accurate measuring sticks (5 Vel) and writing utensils (10 Vel) will ease the process.

Carpenters could theoretically beg, borrow and steal their tools, but they will find it much easier to perform their duties with tools of their own. A complete set of workable hammers, chisels, saws, and other woodworking tools (usable but poorly suited for use as weapons) is worth 25 Vel.

Cooks will find that in addition to possibly purchasing a set of pots, pans and utensils (20 Vel), the purchase of an assortment of rare spices and flavorings (40 Vel) will be worth the purchase (giving the character a -3 Difficulty on cooking checks). Refilling a spice rack is done slowly, as individual spices run low and will cost a few Vel here and there, depending on how often they are used.

Farming obviously requires a great deal of time, not to mention property and the resources to start things off. Seed and fertilizer for the first year of a single crop's life costs 50 Vel, after which the crop should be self-sustaining. A single animal (pig, goat, etc.) costs 5 Vel and can provide fertilizer as well as milk, wool or eventually, meat. A hectare of farmland costs 50 to 200 Vel, depending on quality and location, unless the farmer chooses to squat on unclaimed territory, which is cheaper, but also riskier.

Healers can scrounge around for what they need to assist the healing process. However, a set of herbs and ointments (of which only about half will have any real effect) can be had for 50 Vel, and will contain enough material to treat one person for a year, or ten people for a month.

Hunters obviously require materials with which to hunt. In addition to appropriate gear, as listed above under Field Gear, appropriate tools for skinning, cleaning and tanning animal skins will come in handy, and can be had for 35 Vel. A trained hunting dog can be purchased for 20 Vel.

Miners will find that having access to light sources (see Field Gear above) will be quite helpful. In addition, the purchase of a set of mining picks and shovels (15 Vel) will facilitate matters.



Sailors require little more than their own strength to serve aboard a ship. Should an adventurer become ambitious enough to want to purchase their own vessel, however, the gamemaster should work with the player, within the context of the campaign, to determine a fair price. At the very least, a fishing boat with a crew of ten to twelve will cost at least 1,000 Vel, plus the crew's wages and bonuses (fishing crews will get some share of the haul in addition to any fixed wage).

Smiths, both of metal and stone, require specialized tools to accomplish their jobs effectively. An investment of 50 Vel will set either type of smith up with the basic tools required to run a field operation (but not the means to cart it around), and 150 Vel will provide a large kiln or forge (which requires a permanent location). The lack of draft animals mean that portable smithies are *barely* so, and usually require several people to carry, or three or four to haul on a cart. Portable smithies are seldom seen outside of mercenary companies, which can assign a Stryder to carry the substantial weight.

A metal smith can typically use their skills and time to make replacement tools, but a stonemason may have to replace up to a quarter of their tools per year due to wear or breakage. A quarry that is not near a town will often have its own metalsmith simply to make and repair tools. As a side note, remember that without draft animals, the practical size of stone blocks that can be moved at a profit is fairly limited, unless the quarry and the destination are both close to a navigable river.

Tailors need only needle and thread to perform minor repairs on clothing, both readily available for negligible amounts. A larger assortment of threads (of various colors and thicknesses), fabric bolts and needles (of various sizes) can be had for 40 Vel, as can a loom suitable for making various types of cloth from thread. This is sufficient for any number of minor repairs, or to make several sets of moderately fine clothing. Bolts of rough cloth as needed for common garb are 1 Vel, sufficient to make several sets of rough clothing.

▼ **Note** - In general, you can say that 50 to 100 Vel should be sufficient for the tools of the trade for most professions, assuming it is one person doing the work, and they already have a building in which to do it. The more esoteric or specialized the skill, or the more expensive the raw materials, the more likely that the setup costs will be higher, sometimes much higher.

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**Services** - Adventurers cannot do everything, and eventually they are going to have to call on the services of a specialist to aid them in one way or another. The costs below are for a standard level of service, and, where applicable, assume that the "expert" being called upon has the equivalent of a 4d+0 skill in the applicable area. If adventurers wish to seek out someone more experienced (which offers a better chance of success, in some cases), multiply the cost shown by two for each +1d of skill. Thus, if a service costs 10 Vel, an expert with that skill at 6d+0 would charge 40 Vel.

Artists will generally expect to be paid a portion of their fee up front, mostly because many of them live day to day, and need the money. Generally, to hire someone to do a painting, sculpture, drawing, etc. will cost between 5 and 25 Vel, depending on the project's complexity. Noted professionals or specialists in a particular art form can charge more.

Entertainers will often work for free, expecting to make a great deal on straight tips. However, if tips are uncertain, or the characters' motives are in question, a juggler, musician, dancer, etc. might very well ask 1 Vel for a day's worth of performing (plus they still keep any tips).

Innkeepers often charge 1 Vel for a week's room and board, with no discount given for staying fewer nights, knowing full well that most travellers will be in and out within a few nights, allowing the inn to re-rent the room sooner and thus technically double-rent the room. Those who do offer a discount on the price will often charge a Qa'Vel for a single night's stay. Meals typically cost a Qa'Vel or a Ha'Vel, and include an unlimited supply of a (cheap) beverage of choice.

Mercenaries (the category into which most adventurers will fall) have traditionally worked for a fee of 1 Vel per week, plus room and board, and any equipment necessary to complete the task. By "necessary equipment", we mean anything other than weapons and armor and clothing for the climate. Hiring an entire squad will increase the cost tenfold (ten times the number of mercenaries in the group). Mercenaries are actually "paid" more than 1 Vel, but the mercenary company deducts food, lodging and a "maintenance fee" for any non-owned weapons or armor. A mercenary of better skill who has their own tent, weapon, armor, etc. will be paid more. And of course, mercenaries share in the value of any battle loot (depending on their rank and length of employment).

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Porters will generally work for room, board and tips, happily carrying equipment around within city limits if they are fed and given a place to stay for the night. Travelling between cities, whether over sea or land, will require a larger payment, typically around 2 to 4 Vel per week.

Runescribes are the most highly sought-after service providers, and also the most expensive. Not only is the often uprated skill-based cost fairly high, but it is increased based on the level of success rolled during the scribing process (see the **Book of Runes**).

Specialists (those with skill in a particular Knowledge skill) generally work for between 1 and 10 Vel per day, as determined by the nature of the service to be provided. In general, the more academic skills tend to be more highly valued in urban areas. Salaries can typically be negotiated down quite a bit during bartering, as many Specialists will be keen on finding long-term work.

Stryder Pilots for hire are almost always tied to a specific mercenary company, and so in addition to the 5 Vel per day cost of hiring the Pilot and his Stryder, one must typically also pay the mercenary guard that comes along with him. If the Stryder is to be involved in combat at any point, the fee doubles to 10 Vel per day. Exceptional Stryder Pilots (or negotiators) can get repair costs or a fraction of them factored into their contract.

Transportation over a long distance must be provided either by a Stryder equipped for such travel (see above) or a ship. Most ships are quite shallow-keeled, sticking close to shore when they head out on the ocean and equally capable of plying their trade down most of the continent's deep rivers. A standard fee of 1 Vel per week is usually charged if the character agrees to assist on board the ship (hoisting ropes, rowing if necessary, fighting off pirates, etc.). Should the character decline, the fee is 1 Vel per day (7 Vel per week). This is an easy way to gouge anyone considering themselves beneath manual labor.

▼ **FAUNA** - The animal life of Rhun is shaped not only by what exists, but what does not exist. As has been mentioned elsewhere, there are no large domesticated herbivores on Rhun, which means an absence of horses, cows and similarly-sized creatures. In this case, humanity as a whole has taken a different path, coming to rely instead on Stryders for transportation of heavy items, and on other animals as sources for materials that would otherwise have come from these creatures. Leather, for example, is taken from a wide assortment of animals that do exist on Rhun, including pigs, goats, sheep, rabbits and many large cats.

Here is a general overview of animal life as it exists on Rhun, along with some examples of particularly interesting fauna most commonly known to people. Although not all are widely found, and some may never be seen during the lifetime of a person, most people have heard of them and both a ten-year old child and an animal specialist would likely be able to describe any of them in detail.

**Amphibians** - Amphibians are quite prevalent in Rhun, and among land-dwelling creatures they are arguably the most populous. The Kantarin Sub-continent and the swamps that ring the Inner Sea are filled with a wide assortment of venomous frogs, toads, newts, salamanders, proto-lizards and other, stranger creatures. Some dwell inland along riverbanks, and many have migrated along wide stretches of coast.

## Goab

*Proliferation:* Less Common  
*Range:* Coastal Wetlands and Swamps  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+1/11/+1

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

**Skills:**  
Flight +1d  
Bite +1d

**Notable Traits:**  
Barbed tongue(0d+2 lethal)  
Venom(see text)  
Bite(0d+1 lethal armor-piercing)

Species of these flying amphibians are found among the more inundated areas of Rhun, and generally live off insects or small mammals. Sizes of goab species are comparable to hawks, although goabs tend to hunt by remaining almost totally submerged, then bursting from the water to seize prey using a cartilage-barbed tongue. Most goabs are poisonous and aggressive, and can inflict painful piercings on larger creatures that stray too close. During mating seasons, goabs will sometimes spontaneously form swarms and actively fly over distances (the goab mates in flight); in these times they are sometimes known to attack large animals as a group, with females temporarily growing fangs and cutting teeth to consume meat as nourishment for reproduction.

For its poison to take effect, the goab must penetrate the target's armor with tongue or fangs. If this happens, the target must make a Health roll at Average(7) difficulty each 2 time levels for 12 time levels(out to 1 minute). Each failed roll does 1 non-lethal hit. For a human-sized creature the venom is very painful, but unlikely to be fatal unless the victim is already weakened or has been swarmed by many goab.

### Creeper

*Proliferation:* Common  
*Range:* All Regions

These harmless amphibians are found widely and in too many varieties to name, although few are much bigger than a housecat and most are about a finger-length. Most of these odd amphibians have six legs and an articulated tail (which does not detach), and eat insects or plants. As they are amphibians, they tend to congregate in damp areas near ready supplies of water, to which they flee if frightened. The most common species are drab colored, typically gray or brown, but some can be brightly multi-hued. Nearly every species can be eaten, and are a prime source of food amongst the Draslander and Sivatagi populations.

Even the biggest creeper is no threat to anything larger than a mouse, and so statistics for these creatures are largely irrelevant. When they come up in conversation it is generally in negative terms, as it reflects how poor a hunter one is if this is all they can catch, or how poor one is in terms of wealth if this is all they can afford to eat.

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### Strangler

*Proliferation:* Extremely Uncommon  
*Range:* Swamps and Deep Lakes  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 2d+2/28/-4

**Strength:** 4d+2  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 2d+1  
**Will:** 4d+2  
**Health:** 4d+2  
**Fate:** 3d+0

**Skills:**  
Grab +1d

**Notable Traits:**  
Tentacles(3d+2 half-lethal crushing)

This armored amphibian lurks in swamps and the deepest parts of lakes, hunting by means of long and powerful tentacles. Once it ensnares its victim, the strangler drowns and crushes its prey to death. Then, it consumes the carcass with a very hard, crushing maw that it uses to grind its meal into digestible form. Rarely seen, the strangler resembles a crocodile-skinned nautilus or squid with a lobster-like tail for locomotion. But beneath its shell, it has the delicate skin of an amphibian, and needs to be submerged most of the time, lest its skin dry out. The strangler is feared by most but sought by elite poachers for its maw, which surpasses even metal in resilience and is extremely valuable.

In game terms a strangler attempts to attack by surprise, making a skill roll to grab a victim, who can be up to four meters from the water's edge. Roll two hit locations to see what body parts are grabbed (this can affect how well the victim can try to get free). If the grab is successful, on following turns it makes a Strength roll against the victim to drag it into the water. Two successes is sufficient for this, after which it begins to crush and drown the victim. If the victim gets two successes before the strangler does, it gets free before being dragged under. Once in the water, beating the strangler's Strength is required to surface long enough to breathe, otherwise they will take 1 non-lethal Hit from exertion each 15 seconds. A strangler will release its victim if it crosses a damage threshold because of attacks. The crushing damage from a strangler's tentacles is counted as armor-piercing against armor that is not rigid, and Strength rolls against a strangler are reduced if the victim is suffering any sort of injury penalty.

**Birds** - The birds of Rhun are greatly varied, appearing in a wide spectrum of sizes, shapes, and colors. The dazzling colors of Kantarin Rain Forest birds contrast starkly with the subdued grays of the Divaran doves in the far north. Very few of the birds of Rhun are much larger than a small hawk, and none are raised as pets or hunting animals. A few varieties may be hunted for food or kept as pets, but none are technically domesticated.

## Razorwing

*Proliferation:* Rare  
*Range:* All regions  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+1/10/+2

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

**Skills:**  
 Slash +1d

**Notable Traits:**  
 Talons/razors(0d+2 lethal, 2 attacks)

One of the most aggressive birds on Rhun is the razorwing, a large carnivorous bird with stiff bony protrusions along its wings and needle-sharp claws and beak. Thankfully, the razorwing is a solitary bird, only sharing territory in order to mate. Its swooping attacks can tear the flesh from a creature below, and it often rips flesh off a living creature and consumes it, leaving its victim bleeding but usually alive. The razorwing's attack is only effective against unarmored victims, as its claws will not penetrate any kind of armor. The swooping strike is meant only to tear a strip of flesh from a victim, not kill or incapacitate. Of course, if the strip of flesh is large enough, and the victim small enough, the victim will still die.

A razorwing prefers to attack small targets, but will not hesitate to attack something larger if it is hungry or it feels its territory is being threatened, relying on surprise to attack and escape retribution (difficulty 5 to hit). Once it has made an attack against a perceived intruder, it will be quite vocal and threaten further attacks in an attempt to drive the intruder away. A successful attack will tear a pair of gouges through the flesh of the target, usually by a pair of talons or a talon and a wing edge.

## Sandrunner

*Proliferation:* Uncommon  
*Range:* Deserts

The sandrunner is a small, flightless bird, slightly smaller than a domestic chicken, found mostly in the Desert of the Sivatagi. Its wide feet negotiate the sandy dunes with ease, and its rounded body can hold enough water to maintain the 'runner for up to five days. The sandrunner is remarkably fast, but is still good hunting for the Sivatagi, as its meat is quite tender.

Even the biggest sandrunner is no threat to any living thing, and so statistics for these creatures are largely irrelevant.

## Candlebird

*Proliferation:* Common  
*Range:* Kantarin Rain Forest

These gorgeous and colorful birds are native to the Rain Forests of the Kantarin subcontinent, though they can occasionally be found in the Rain Forest on the main continent. Their feathers exude a brightly phosphorescent essence that makes them glow in a wide gallery of colors. They do not glow at all if killed and their meat is tough and sparse. However, many of the more civilized people of Rhun value them highly as pets. They are no larger than a sparrow, and feed primarily on insects and very small mammals or amphibians.

Even the biggest candlebird is no threat to anything larger than a mouse, and so statistics for these creatures are largely irrelevant.

**Reptiles** - The majority of the reptiles native to Rhun reside in the Kantarin Rain Forest, though they are scattered to lesser extent across the continent. They are, for the most part, analogous to the lizards, snakes and turtles familiar to the reader, though there are a few notable exceptions.

### Kroll

*Proliferation:* Rare  
*Range:* Kantarin Rain Forest  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+1/14/+0

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

#### Notable skills:

Stealth: +1d  
Bite: +1d  
Claw: +1d

#### Notable Traits:

Bite(1d+2 lethal or 2d+2 crushing half-lethal)  
Claws(0d+2 lethal, 2 attacks)

Krolls are savage, violent, and deadly pack lizards that maraud through the Rain Forest. They hunt in packs, employing a variety of group tactics that are nearly always guaranteed to bring down prey. These vicious lizards run quickly on hind legs or all fours, and have cruel talons on their front legs. Rows of jagged teeth in a long mouth can snap through bone with ease. Roughly one meter tall, krolls rely on disabling attacks to bring prey down, such as biting through leg muscles or slashing tendons. Once their prey is unable to run, it rarely takes more than two krolls to tear a victim to bits.

A pack of krolls will usually attempt to distract prey, sneak up, or otherwise make their first attack when the victim is unaware of their presence, thus guaranteeing that prey does not get to adequately defend (surprise attack would be an Easy(5) task). They ordinarily target a victim's legs (+2 difficulty), trying to immobilize the victim and get their prey closer to the ground, where their powerful teeth can reach the head and neck for a quicker kill. Krolls are clever, but not intelligent. If they see a group of people, they will treat it like a group of animals and try to separate out the "weakest" member of the herd as a target. If the tactics of a target "herd" make it clear they cannot win, they will retreat, but may follow, hoping any wounded will die or fall behind. Kroll packs who have run into people before will adjust their tactics accordingly.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

### Chameleon Snake

*Proliferation:* Uncommon  
*Range:* All regions  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+0/7/+4

**Strength:** 0d+2  
**Agility:** 2d+0  
**Awareness:** 1d+1  
**Will:** 2d+1  
**Health:** 1d+2  
**Fate:** 2d+2

#### Skills:

Bite +1d

#### Notable Traits:

Fangs(0d+1 lethal armor piercing)  
Venom

These virulent vipers are masters of disguise, able to resemble clumps of grass, dry twigs, or sprigs of fir. The chameleon snake can adapt its colors to match its surroundings, and spiny protrusions along its back can stretch or shrink to resemble blades of grass or pine needles. The snake is no more than 25 centimeters long, but carries an incredibly powerful poison sac. Chameleon snakes are almost totally blind, only able to sense a passing creature if it is within a handspan of its face. This means that while it rarely drops its disguise to strike, it also rarely misses. Its prey is normally small mammals or reptiles. Encounters with large creatures are mainly because they didn't see the snake and its attack is merely self-defense. It does not make unprovoked attacks on large creatures.

Under most circumstances, a victim will be surprised and unable to dodge a chameleon snake's attack. If the attack is successful (an Easy(5) task on surprise), and strikes an unarmored victim, the venom requires a Challenging(9) Health roll each 4 time levels for 24 time levels (1 hour). Each failed Health roll does 1d+2 lethal hits, and a successful Health roll still results in taking 1 Hit. The result is usually enough to kill a normal person, though an anti-toxin developed by the Kantarins can give a victim a +1d on their Health roll. Of course, this is most effective if given before the victim starts taking penalties on their Health roll from the venom's effect. Using a tourniquet on a bitten extremity will not stop the poison, but will add +1 to the time intervals and the maximum duration of the effect, giving the victim more time to come up with a treatment.



**Fish** - There is little variation in Rhunic fish species' bodies, with differences mostly in color, size, and jaw structure. Most fish bear a long tail similar in cross section to an eel's, with the main body most closely resembling rays or skates. Few are edible, although the more common river and ocean varieties are quite nutritious, and are favored in certain regions. Some tidal and river-dwelling species exhibit remarkable chameleon-like camouflage. Rhun fish populations grow inversely to the species' size, with the largest fish populations being huge schools of tiny bacterium-feeders and the largest being solo-hunting saw toothed predators that eat smaller animals. Sailors often spin stories of multi-jawed predator fish large enough to swallow a person whole.

## Leviathan

*Proliferation:* Rare  
*Range:* Deep Oceans

Thought to be related most closely to the amphibians but neither land-dwelling nor air-breathing, the leviathan is a creature of frightening legends amongst sea-going men. Little is known about the leviathan - even its shape is subject to much speculation, though generally agreed to be whale-like - except that it is huge, perhaps up to a hundred meters long, and capable of devouring ships. Such tales would hardly be believed were it not for the proof lent by a leviathan skin displayed in the Divaran fortress of Holdenforge, the only such skin known to exist. Legends have it that the leviathan was put in the oceans by the gods to keep men from journeying too far from land. This, and the generally accepted belief that there are no islands anywhere except around the main continent means that Rhun's vast ocean remains largely unexplored. It is possible that there are scattered islands in this uncharted reach, even inhabited ones, but none are known or even hinted at in legends.

It is ridiculous to attempt to define, in practical terms, a creature of a leviathan's magnitude. It can swallow two men whole, crush the mightiest ship with a single blow from its tail, and take hundreds of arrows without feeling a thing. A leviathan should be used as a plot device, not a combat encounter.

**Insects** - Insects occupy the dominant position among Rhunic species, accounting for some ninety percent of all animal life on the planet. Most of these bugs are analogous to those of other worlds - mosquitoes, gnats, flies, wasps, bees and spiders, all of typical size. However, insects have also achieved remarkable leaps along the evolutionary ladder. In the central Spine, rumors abound of kilometer-long webs created by as-yet-unseen spiders, possibly one single giant species, or possibly a swarm of thousands, working with a hivemind-like unity. Further to the south, where the land becomes marshy, one might very well find fifteen meter tall constructs, the mud and clay creations of colonies of termites and wasps. And to the west, as many are frightfully becoming aware, several species of insect have been cultivated to grow to tremendous size, becoming the Stryder mounts of the Sivatagi. Certainly, insect life is among the strangest, most varied and most deadly that characters might encounter.

## Builder Bug

*Proliferation:* Extremely Common  
*Range:* All Regions

Possibly Rhun's most industrious natural creatures, tiny arachnid builder bugs construct hive mounds from vegetation they collectively cut down and gather. Living together in these nests, Builders Bugs often create fanciful and unique structures, sometimes up to a thirty meters tall depending on species, which many consider beautiful. An infestation of Builders in one's home is quite another matter, however, and many a homemaker has complained about having Builders, and there are any number of runic and alchemical cures and wards against them, of varying effectiveness.

As the builder bug is not a threat to any living thing, there is little point in defining its combat statistics.

## Cyclops Bug

*Proliferation:* Common  
*Range:* Arid Regions

Growing as large as a hand, this biting insect is called a cyclops bug for its prominent single eye. Travelling with wings or legs similar to those of mosquitoes and wasps, the bug has large mandibles that inflict a painful sting if provoked. Generally regarded as useful because they prey on smaller bugs, the cyclops bugs are liked by farmers as long as they maintain their distance.

A swift boot heel is enough to kill a cyclops bug, but they do have a potent and painful bite if provoked. Anyone bitten by a cyclops bug takes 1 lethal hit, mostly due to swelling and pain, or 1 non-lethal bruising hit through armor of 0d+1 or 0d+2. Fortunately, they are not aggressive, but one is well advised to check their boots in the morning and their bedding at night to avoid unpleasant surprises.

### Copper Dancer

*Proliferation:* Common  
*Range:* Inland Wetlands

An unusual and graceful insect, common near rivers and lakes, the copper dancer is commonly found using its thin but flightless wings and surface tension to glide across the water's surface. The dancer's main food source is nutrients in water runoff or evaporation-created mineral deposits. The copper dancer uses a mild acid to extract nutrients and mineral deposits from soil, giving a bronze or coppery hue to the insect's carapace. Large amounts of metal can sometimes draw swarms of dancers, however, which then corrode entire metal objects in hours; cities are careful to keep dancer populations in check. As the copper dancer is not a threat to any living thing, there is no point in defining its combat statistics.

### Hindwalker

*Proliferation:* Less Common  
*Range:* Temperate Climates

This wispy and harmless four-legged bug, also called an echo bug, walks upright to about thumb-height and is a favorite among children, especially young boys. Although they possess no measurable intelligence, their natural communication involves an uncanny ability to recall and mimic short sounds including bits of human speech. Many a sentry has been infuriated by a false alarm raised because of the hindwalker's ability. As the hindwalker is not a threat to any living thing, there is little point in defining its combat statistics.

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### Rainbow Fly

*Proliferation:* Infestation  
*Range:* Equatorial Belt to Lower Latitudes

Similar in general appearance to a butterfly, but with a wasp-like, proboscis-tipped head and long tail, this swarming parasite is named for the sheen of its refractive silvery wings but despised as a pest. The species perpetuates itself by laying eggs in virtually any mammal species, including people. It injects a neurotoxic venom into the skin causing an immediate open sore (painful but rarely lethal), and lays eggs into the site through a probe in its tail. This is not instant, a potential host usually has time to slap or shoo the fly away, but not all animals have that ability. Generally, the victim will suffer an infuriatingly itchy rash for a day or so, until the skin erupts with a handful of new butterflies from each site. Rainbow fly stings carry a social stigma in several parts of the world, and can cause a person to be ridiculed for days, so people are careful to avoid them. The only real conventional treatment is to keep the wound from getting infected, as cutting the wound open to remove the larvae would cause as much damage as the larvae themselves. Various rune words designed to heal, remove impurities or separate "self" from "other" can be used to treat the sting.

Scars from rainbow flies reduce the value of hides, and they do render animals more susceptible to other problems. While they are a chronic problem in some areas, their numbers sometimes balloon to dangerous levels, and they can sometimes panic herd animals. Creatures that can often try to cover themselves in mud as protection, and any creature with an inherent armor of 0d+2 or more is safe from rainbow flies.

Aside from the disgusting wound and itchy rash caused by the rainbow fly, they are not a physical threat, and therefore no combat statistics are provided.

**Mammals** - As has been indicated elsewhere, the greatest difference between mammal life on Rhun and in traditional fantasy settings is that there are no large herbivores. The top of the evolutionary ladder undoubtedly belongs to the great cats of the Kantarin jungles, who prey upon small mammals and amphibians, as well as unfortunate human travellers who should happen to cross their paths.

## Bats

*Proliferation:* Extremely Common  
*Range:* All Regions

These mammal fliers are as common and diverse in Rhun as birds are on Earth. Rhun bats, however, are keen-sighted and do not possess echolocation, and are more closely (although distantly) related to Rhunic cats than rodents. Most species are harmless and welcomed by people. Some few are even naturally friendly and kept as pets. Colors are diverse, ranging from drab to rainbow-toned, and size ranges greatly with the vast majority of species ranging between pigeon- to chicken-sized. The little tiger-striped meekbat, about the size of a golf ball with its wings furled, is the smallest species, while the largest by a wide margin is the rare and majestic Great Stone Bat that lives in remote mountains and has a gigantic wingspan reaching fifteen meters.

## Great Stone Bat

*Proliferation:* Rare  
*Range:* Mountains  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+1/12/-3

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 2d+2  
**Awareness:** 3d+1  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 1d+1  
**Fate:** 2d+1

**Skills:**  
Grab +1d  
Bite +1d

**Notable Traits:**  
Fangs(1d+2 lethal armor-piercing)

Because much of its body is just membranous wings, any piercing weapon that does not strike the head or torso only does 1 Hit of damage. The great stone bat generally attacks by swooping down on prey and carrying it away, quickly dispatching it with a spinal bite, but waiting until it lands to begin eating. It prefers creatures no larger than a small goat, but is capable of carrying an adult male. A successful attack roll indicates that the bat has grabbed its prey and flown off. It rarely makes more than one attack on a single target, preferring to select another prey if its first attack fails. Note that a prey which fights back with sufficient vigor will usually just be dropped, often to its death.

## Cats

*Proliferation:* Less Common  
*Range:* All Regions

Cats make up the bulk of Rhun's mammalian predators. Species can be found everywhere, and are most common in temperate or cold regions. Almost all are solitary but not territorial, with mated pairs ranging out from a burrow or den. Rhun's cats have four eyes, giving them superb vision, and most lack tails. Almost all have lipless primordial jaws filled with twenty-five to forty razor-sharp interlocking fangs, from which they derive their nickname of "grinners". Rhunic cats cannot be domesticated and will attack if disturbed, but will acclimate themselves to human surroundings if the prey is plentiful. Cats are found from sizes as small as rabbits to the largest species, the forest-dwelling dusk hunter, whose shoulders are a man's height and a half again. Most cats have terrain-matching striped or dappled markings in green, beige, grayish blue, brown and/or gray.

## Dusk Hunter

*Proliferation:* Uncommon  
*Range:* Kantarin Forests  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+1/21/-1

**Strength:** 3d+1  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 3d+0  
**Will:** 3d+0  
**Health:** 3d+2  
**Fate:** 2d+2

**Skills:**  
Stealth +1d  
Claws +1d

**Notable Traits:**  
Claws(1d+2 lethal, 2 attacks)  
Bite(2d+1 lethal or 3d+1 half-lethal crushing)

Because of its size, a dusk hunter has a huge range which almost always includes a large body of water, as Rhun's aquatic life tends to be larger and the dusk hunter is an excellent fisher in shallow water. Even a pack of krolls will give a dusk hunter a wide berth, as the dusk hunter considers kroll an excellent meal.

**Fowler**

*Proliferation:* Uncommon  
*Range:* Plains, Desert, Certain Mountain Ranges  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+1/8/+2

**Strength:** 0d+2  
**Agility:** 2d+2  
**Awareness:** 2d+2  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 2d+0  
**Fate:** 2d+2

**Skills:**  
 Stealth +1d  
 Bite +1d

**Notable Traits:**  
 Bite (0d+2 lethal armor-piercing)

Agile pack hunters about the size of big jackrabbits, these kangaroo-like predators with canine snouts are small but vicious and dangerous. Living together in feral groups of thirty to fifty animals (of which about a third are hunters), they rely on stealth and tactics to capture their prey, which usually consists of bats or lodo but sometimes includes much larger animals. Fowlers almost always keep their distance around groups of people, but are oft blamed for the disappearance of children or unwary travellers.

**Lodo**

*Proliferation:* Extremely Common  
*Range:* All except Swamplands  
*Armor/Hits/Size:* 0d+1/10/+0

A nimble grazing animal, lodo are Rhun's predominant mammal herbivore. All species eat both grass and leaves and need little water. Lodo appear in numerous sizes, although the largest is only a meter at the shoulder. Most have drab, short fur, solid or mottled and ranging from green to gray in most cases. The smallest variety, living on highlands and mountainsides, is the mouse-sized mountain baby that has a cry resembling a human infant's. The largest and most populous is the common lodo, domesticated and used for its velvety gray pelt, meat, and milk. The common lodo is also kept on many farms as a working animal, capable (in teams) of pulling a small cart or plow (or carrying a small person).

While lodo can grow to be as large as a small pony, they are incredibly docile. Their only reaction to an attack will be to run or cower, and so no combat statistics are provided for them save for how many Hits are needed to take one down.

**Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>**

▼ **AGENDA GAP** - The two Zokili dropped easily to the ground beside the Stryder, where they had been riding on its broad shoulders and back until they spotted activity ahead. Things had been clear initially, and so they thought they would get away clean. Apparently that was not to be the case.

"Lotsadem?" asked Nit, the Dras. Thomis had finally managed to extract his name from among the rambling swamp-talk, but the full monosyllabic name was far too much of a mouthful, and apparently even the Dras' two Zokili compatriots preferred the abbreviated version. They stepped over confidently.

"We can take them," said Yasyk. He glanced at his sister, Yasmyn, who silently nodded her assent. Both gripped their razor-sharp short swords tightly, anticipating a coming battle.

"That wasn't the qu.." tried Joachim, failing on a harsh syllable. The Mage choked on his words, his throat still gravelly from the wound inflicted just hours ago. As the Mage's hands were bound behind him, Thomis took it upon himself to step over and wipe a trickle of blood from the wound at his throat. It would heal, if the damn Mage would stop trying to overexert himself. Thomis understood that the Mage, one of Divaros' most elite mercenaries, had something to prove to himself, and to everyone else. But now was not the time nor the place.

"Seven," said Yasyk. "There are seven, Divar."

That didn't sound so bad...

"And a Stryder."

That did.

"Are you insane?" asked Thomis. He stepped forward as far as the ropes around his ankles would let him, the hemp growing taught as it caught against the steel loops embedded in the Stryder's waist.

"Irrelevant," said Yasyk. "They block our way."

"We can go around."

"Around will take too long. We will lose the light. We must go now."

Without another word, Yasyk scrambled back up the Stryder, gripping steel rungs in the back of the beast's legs to make his way up towards the back, where he could better communicate with the pilyt inside (who had not yet revealed himself). Counting the pilyt, their little group numbered seven as well, but only if they were counting little Jonan, who was busy sleeping, against all logic. They were outnumbered and, this close to the city, likely outmatched. Any Divar patrol that included a Stryder would no doubt be a top-notch mercenary group. And what were they?

This gave Thomis pause. It was a good question. What they were, if you boiled it down, was this: two Zokili mercenaries, evidently brother and sister; a Maje who was currently incapable of casting Runes, much less speaking in complete sentences; a Draslander whose skill in anything at all was in question; a Stryder that looked as if it would be more at home in a swamp; its mysterious pilyt, who Thomis could only assume was also a Zokili; an infant child; and Thomis, broken arm and all, who knew himself well enough to know that the only conflict of which he wanted a part of was one he was running away from.

Hardly what Thomis could consider a force to be reckoned with. Especially when he considered the fact that nearly half of them were Divaros who were currently being held against their will. Of course, that wasn't entirely true; it wasn't like the child was roped to the legs of the Stryder. For all Thomis knew, the baby would be better off with this rabble. Back in the city, he would already have been put to death.

It was that thought which kept Thomis going along with this, instead of bolting. He may have been kept against his will, but at least his captors were moving in the same direction he would have been heading anyway. Namely, away from town, as quickly as possible. Through bits and pieces of conversation, mostly gleaned from the Draslander, he and Joachim had put together a fairly plausible explanation for why a group of Zokili was so deep into Divaros territory. About the time he was meeting to plot little Jonan's abduction, Joachim had seen the elder Marle-Thon meeting with a Zokili Ambassador about some matter or other. Not entirely unusual, but it gave the other Zokili reason to be here.

They had thus far denied any knowledge of such a person being with them, just as they had denied knowing anything about any of the other Draslander, who most certainly had come along with them. What was certain is that their presence here had not been friendly. One generally did not lurk outside a city with a Stryder and two well-trained killers while a group of Draslander skulked about in the sewers doing gods knew what.

The loss of the Draslander Thomis knew about, nearly first hand; Joachim had confirmed that the others were all dead, including the straggler who Thomis had carried on his back for several hours before realizing the little warrior had died. The Maje had also confirmed that he had made his way into the sewers to find Thomis, though he had not yet revealed why. This was perhaps the biggest mystery. If Joachim had truly been with the Majes working for the late Jonan Marle-Thon (and Thomis was not altogether certain this was the case), then why would he still be on the trail? And if he had been determined to kill Thomis a scant few hours ago, why now was he suddenly happy to go along with this flight?

Perhaps he, too, had something to run away from.

The spear that was thrust into Thomis' good hand broke him from his reverie. "What's this for?" he heard himself asking, even though he already knew the answer. Which was just as well; Yasmyn wasn't answering, hadn't spoken a word at all since he'd met her. She merely grabbed another long spear from the Stryder's shin and handed it to the Mage before turning back to unstrap a pair of shields. Oh, yes. Thomis knew exactly what was coming.



It was, in fact, precisely how he had gotten himself into this whole mess in the first place. Thomis set his spear down and stepped over to help the Mage strap on his shield, tightly binding the leather to his arm to prevent him using it for anything but defense. As he finished and stepped back, he noted that Joachim seemed uncertain about the shield.

"Too tight?" he asked as he strapped his own shield on with some difficulty, wincing as he bound it to the broken arm, hearing the bone grind against the metal. Just as he had done it before, years ago, the first time he served as a member of a mercenary company. Joachim shook his head.

"It's fine. I'm just not used to them. We...I don't go for this sort of thing."

Thomis nodded. Neither did he, though that was a lesson hard learned.

"Here's how it works," he began, moving over to demonstrate to the Mage, but Joachim again shook his head, twirling the spear in his free hand like a shortstaff.

"I know how it works," he said. "But that's not how I work."

There was no time to argue. Without any further preparation, the Stryder shuddered and took a step forward, forcing the two Divaros to move along with it, lest they be dragged behind. Their rope collars gave them about three meters of leeway in any direction, forcing them to remain near the Stryder, where their job was now to use spear and shield to keep the enemy out from beneath the Stryder, which was its blindspot and therefore its weak point.

In the early days, two Stryders would march across the field like giant gladiators and batter at one another with weapons. That ended when the Zokili introduced on-field guerrilla tactics, rushing beneath the enemy's Stryder and setting it ablaze with torches and Runes, or clambering aboard and hacking their way into its Rune Chamber. Contrary to popular belief, the great beasts were not made of solid stone or metal; such constructs would be capable of little save sinking into the soft terrain beneath their feet. Rather, Stryders were generally built primarily of wood and leather, with steel armor plates in key places. Certainly, much more powerful than any human enemy.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

A Stryder could decimate an enemy soldier with a single well-placed strike. But a group of smaller, more maneuverable enemies could easily swarm beneath and over even the largest Stryder. For all the Stryder's strength, it was the smallest foes who posed the greatest danger.

Mercenary companies were quick to adapt to this threat, however, placing small teams of defenders, armed with spear and large shields, beneath the feet of the Stryder. Normally, as in the company Thomis had once been a part of, there were at least four, in turn surrounded and defended by a half dozen or so skirmishers, armed with a variety of weapons, and often backed up by lightly armored crossbowmen, trained to fire their missiles from within the close confines of melee combat.

The swordsmen and crossbowmen would engage the enemy's own defenders and try to find a weakness while, above, the Stryders maneuvered to gain an advantage, striking at one another and at the comparatively weak enemies skirmishing below. To the untrained eye, it resembled sheer chaos. But to Thomis, who'd seen it up close, it was a dance. A deadly dance, to be certain, but nevertheless beautiful to watch.

Preferably from a distance, but then, he didn't have much choice here, did he?

Bits of tactics trickled back into his head as they moved up and out of the shallow, heading straight for what they all assumed was an enemy. Thomis found himself plotting his strikes, his lunges, recalling when to plant the spear against a charge, when to risk hurling it. Across the field, he saw the opposing team preparing itself, spearmen strapping on their shields, swordsmen fanning out, preparing to flank them. And then he looked around at his own "team."

"We're doomed," he said aloud.



# ROLES

The various peoples of Rhun all hail from the same root stock. Dividing them up amongst racial categories is thus somewhat arbitrary, based partly on size differences and variance in skin color, but mostly on geo-political differences. Such differences have led to the generally agreed-upon understanding of six racial types, perhaps more appropriately called nations, even if they are not always separated by political and geographical boundaries..

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - History is written by those who win the war, and thus it is from a Divaros point of view that the following distinctions and naming conventions come. Non-Divaros people will often see things in a different light, and those considered Outcast almost never refer to themselves in such a way. In all cases, it is important to realize that all of these people are what we in the real world would call human. The variances in height, weight, skin tone and so on are just as great as among the various races of our own world, and are by no means intended to indicate that any of them are demi-human or sub-human in any way.



## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

They are all different, yes. *But they are also all human.* Within each of the six divisions, one will find seven Roles, each roughly corresponding to one another in form, function and general position within society. These Roles are certainly not meant to cover the entirety of a society's occupations and positions, but are rather meant to portray a good cross section of those sorts who might very well be involved in the life-or-death adventures in which adventurers tend to find themselves. These are only guides, and players (with gamemaster consent) should feel free to develop new Roles if such a deviation would better fit their adventurer concept.

It is possible to roughly align each Nation's roles with specific classes, as follows:

- A Stryder pilot
- A warrior/fighter
- An elite special operative
- A rune master/magician
- An artisan/smith
- A wise man/sage
- A rogue/spy

# EABA

However, the lines are not always so clear cut as that. While each of the seven Roles is roughly analogous to matching Roles found amongst other Nations, some Roles meet more than one of the above broadly-defined archetypal criteria, and some are interpreted in ways that other peoples would find strange.

Each Role description features a basic overview, followed by a list of suggested starting Attributes (see the Book of Creation), Skills and Skill levels, and a typical Turf. These are only a guide, but are also useful for getting started quickly, as they provide a good core foundation for a solid, well-balanced adventurer.

**Using the roles** - If you have reached here from **Chapter 2**, looking for pre-designed adventurers, you are in the right place. Each of the roles has a name, followed by a number in parentheses from (-1) to (+0), along with the A/S cost of the template. These roles are typically the stats an extra would have, and that could be more than an adventurer. Most roles listed are elite or specialized, and are as competent or more competent than a starting adventurer. Ones that are equal to an adventurer have (+0), and all stats and skills are used as listed. Ones that are more powerful than a starting adventurer have a (-1). An *adventurer* taking this role reduces *all* the listed Attribute levels by 1, and reduces the *best* skill (player's choice in case of ties) that role has by 1d. Remember that a starting adventurer has 80A and 60S, plus Traits, so the difference between this and the cost of the role must be made up in Traits of some kind.

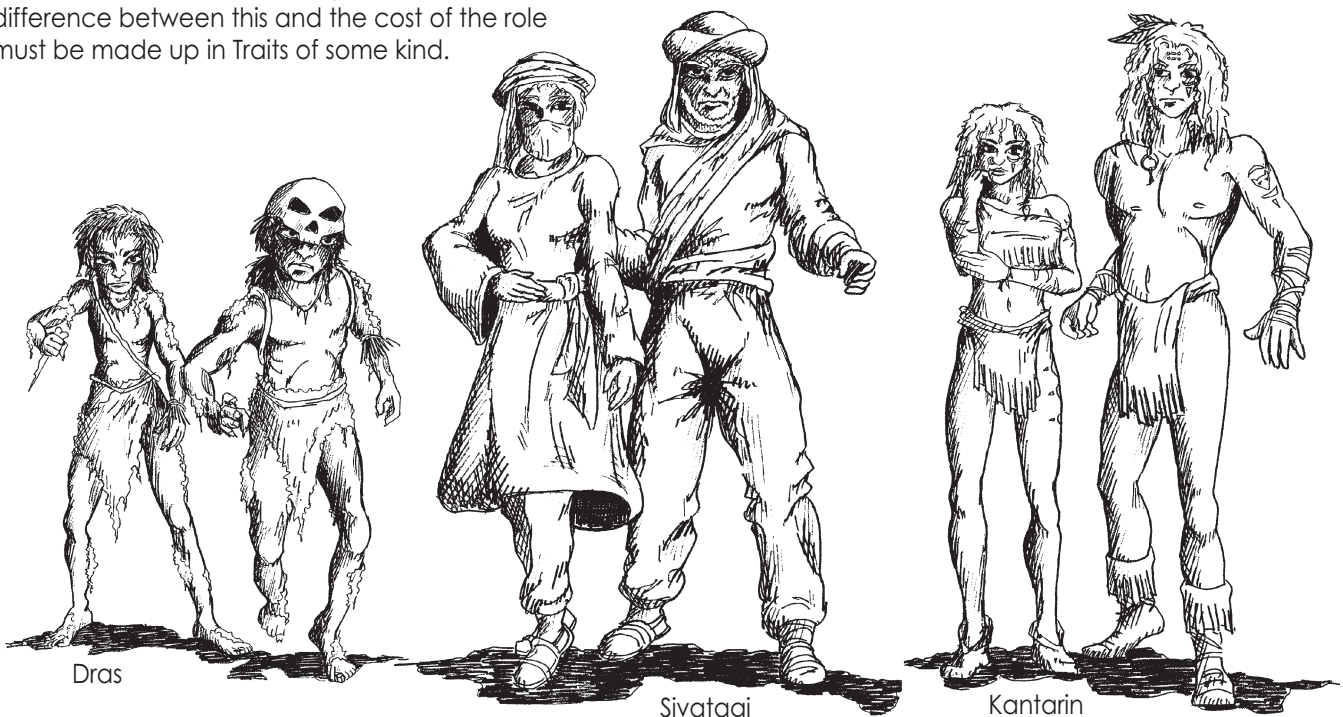
**Note** - If you want to convert a **RuneStryders** adventurer to **EABA**, the general conversion is:

Attribute levels		Skill levels	
RuneStryders	EABA	RuneStryders	EABA
1	1d+1(4)	1	+0d
1.5	1d+2(5)	2	+1d
2	2d+0(6)	3	+2d
2.5	2d+1(7)	4	+3d
3	2d+2(8)		
3.5	3d+0(9)		
4	3d+1(10)		
4.5	3d+2(11)		
5	4d+0(12)		

Attributes	EABA
RuneStryders	
Strength	Strength
Agility	Agility
Intellect	Awareness
Heart	Will
(Strength+Heart)/2	Health
(Intellect+Heart)/2	Fate

**Example:** A **RuneStryders** to **EABA** conversion:

RuneStryders	EABA		
Strength	3	Strength	2d+2(8)
Agility	2	Agility	2d+0(6)
Heart	3	Awareness	4d+0(12)
Intellect	5	Will	2d+2(8)
		Health	2d+2(8)
		Fate	3d+1(10)





## Divaros Roles

**Homunculus** (*plural, Homunculi; slang, Monkey's Uncles*) - The Homunculi are the elite pilots who control the steel Stryders of the Divaros armies. They spend years in training, and have exceptional reflexes and a degree of magical skill. Despite their skill, they rarely receive acclaim or praise, but most of these diminutive riders are happy to shun the spotlight anyway.

Because the space inside a Divaros Stryder is very tight, Homunculi are typically shorter than normal. This means that most Divaros pilots are female, because women are generally smaller than men. However, this is not an absolute – men with slight builds are also found in the ranks of the Homunculi.

### Divaros Homunculus(-1)(93A/75S)

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

**Skills:**

Stryder sword	+2d	Zokili(spoken)	+0d
Stryder pilot	+2d	Tactics	+1d
Carousing	+0d	Light blade	+1d
Runelore	+1d	Scrounge(flat)	+0d

**Traits:**  
 None, but 13A and 15S of Traits are required

Almost all Homunculi, regardless of gender, shave their heads for a variety of reasons (see below). Due to the tight space constraints inside their Stryders, Homunculi also tend to wear close-fitting garb when piloting, if they wear clothing at all. Various Runic tattoos decorate their bodies, enhancing their ability to control their Stryders with magical discipline and concentration. The Divaros Stryders themselves are built to channel and amplify the magical power of the Homunculi, but they must be capable of casting the spells that the Stryder releases in order to utilize their full potential.

▼ **Note** - Most of the roles will be enhanced by literacy, however, none of them are listed as having it. Adventurers taking one of these roles and wishing to be literate will need to find an extra 5S over any listed requirements. In addition, players who take roles with Runelore only get the activation runes as mentioned on page 2.4. Other runes will cost extra. As a gamemaster-controlled adventurer, these roles will have runes as needed for the situation the gamemaster had in mind.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Warriors** - The powerful Stryders may get much of the glory, but all are aware that the blood that lubricates the gears of the powerful Divaros war machine comes from the bodies of its warriors.

### Divaros Warrior(-1)(83A/60S)

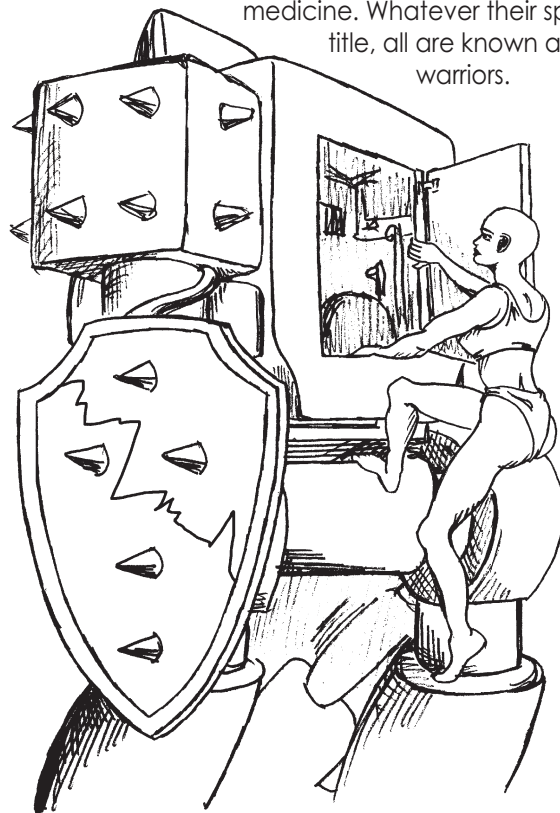
**Strength:** 4d+0  
**Agility:** 2d+2  
**Awareness:** 2d+2  
**Will:** 2d+1  
**Health:** 3d+0  
**Fate:** 2d+1

**Skills:**

Running	+0d	Tactics	+1d
Heavy blade	+2d	Scrounge(flat)	+0d
Bow	+1d		
Div. kickwres.	+1d		

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 8A and 0S of Traits are required

The fighting men and women of the Divaros have many different designations and purposes, varying from state to state and country to country, and ranging from infantry and artillery to support functions such as scouting, navigation and field medicine. Whatever their specific title, all are known as warriors.





# EABA

Even if they will likely not actively partake in open warfare, Divaros warriors are trained to be fast, strong and capable in battle – capable often defined as cruel and merciless. Whether an officer or front-row cannon fodder, all are trained to fight, and trained to kill. Divaros military leaders may not lead from the front, but neither do they lead from safety miles away. If a Divaros army is on the march, its leader will be among the troops.

Off the field of war, warriors are often assigned as bodyguards to diplomats or judges, or as caravan guards travelling along dangerous trade routes.

In all cases, most warriors shy away from the overt practice of magic, although like all people, most dabble with Runes and minor magics, curses and blessings. Knowing how to cast a healing enchantment can save a warrior's life on the field of battle, after all.

**Magus**(plural, *Magi*) - Sword and Stryder alone are often not enough to win the battle, particularly when conflict springs up on short notice in distant locales. In cases where a bit more firepower or fleetness of foot is necessary, the Divaros often call on a Magus for assistance.

## Divaros Magus(-1)(90A/75S)

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

**Skills:**

Div. duelling	+1d	Tracking	+2d
Light blade	+1d	Tactics	+1d
Bow	+0d	Scrounge(forest)	+0d
Runelore	+2d		

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Additional 15A and 10S of Traits are required



The Magi are the true masters of lightning quick strikes and powerful assaults, considered elite soldiers by those who call upon them, and ruthless adversaries by the few victims who survive their onslaught. Combining powerful magics with precise military strategies and combat skill, they are used to crack tough enemy resistance, perform rescue missions, sabotage enemy positions or recover stolen artifacts. In short, they perform non-standard, highly dangerous military missions, spending most of their time waiting and watching, readying themselves for the single, decisive action that can turn the tide.

As their name suggests, Magi are devoted to the study of magic and Runes, though unlike Runescribes they focus not on perfection and inscription, but clever and devastating use of their knowledge. Magi typically learn through practice, which makes them even more dangerous to some when they are not actually on a mission. Magi do not study magic by reading books in tall towers; they study by finding targets and practicing in live fire exercises.

**Runescribe** - As is clear from their name, Runescribes are responsible for inscribing runes on things, most notably the massive Divaros Stryders. As such, much of their work is done off the field of battle, preparing the Stryders for action beforehand, and assisting in the initial manufacture and creation of the sub-sentient Stryders. Whether they pore over dusty tomes, perform experiments in dark laboratories or journey the land seeking truth, they are renowned for their expertise and education.

**Divaros Runescribe(-1)(89A/65S)**

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 2d+1  
**Awareness:** 4d+0  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 2d+2  
**Fate:** 3d+1

**Skills:**  
Mace +0d Myndw(spoken) +1d  
Staff +0d History +1d  
Runescribing +2d Scrounge(urbn) +0d  
Runelore +2d

**Traits:**  
Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
Additional 14A and 5S of Traits are required

However, Runescribes are not merely inactive recluses scrawling with sticks in the mud. Far from it. Since the Runes on a Stryder are prone to wear and damage, Runescribes often must travel along with a Stryder contingent, ready and capable of quickly fixing damaged Runes to keep Stryders in top shape. In some cases, this means they must strap on armor and wade into the thick of battle, steel stylus and charcoal stick in hand, applying their own brand of field medicine to wounded or incapacitated Stryders.

Stryders are not the only recipients of Runes, either. Enchanted weapons and armor, favored by the elite guard, are also enchanted by Runescribes after having been forged by artisans. Some also dabble in the Kantarin arts of body Runing, which knowledge they apply to assisting the Homunculi in tattooing their bodies.

**Artisan** - Before a Homunculus can bond with a Stryder, and before a Runescribe can inscribe it with Runes, a Divaros Artisan must first create the construct from raw materials. Or, more correctly, a team of Artisans must do so. While all Artisans are by nature generalists of a sort, and while a single Artisan could probably craft a Stryder on his own, in practice teams of a dozen or more work together on a series of Stryders, assembly-line style. This allows each to specialize and further hone his craft, and also makes the entire process more efficient.

**Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>****Divaros Artisan(-1)(98A/75S)**

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

**Skills:**  
Stealth +0d Merchant +1d  
Sleight of hand +1d Zokili(spoken) +1d  
Light blade +1d Gambling +0d  
Carousing +0d Carpentry +3d  
Scrounge(urbn) +0d (or other trade)

**Traits:**  
Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
Additional 18A and 20S of Traits are required

The typical Artisan is most skilled in sculpting and/or working with metals, the raw materials that go into crafting Divaros Stryders. With the proper materials at hand, and the proper tools to work with, a team of a dozen Artisans can construct a fully functional (but unenchanted) Stryder in about a month's time. Of course, even a slight mistake in the runic inscriptions can cause part of or the entire Stryder to be corrupted, suitable only for melting down for scrap.

Not every Artisan creates Stryders. Some may instead focus on crafting weapons and armor, or tools and clothing. In general, an Artisan picks a specific type of item when he begins their training as a child, and sticks with it for the rest of their life.

Not all Artisans know much about Runes. Since the items they produce must almost always be in pristine and unmarked condition, suitable for enchantment in a variety of ways, they have little opportunity to inscribe or use Runes themselves. Small enchantments and basic Runes that suit their particular needs (creating fires, etc.) are not uncommon, but larger magics are often unknown to them.

**Judge** - While high-ranking politicians squabble with the leaders of other countries, making and changing laws as they see fit, it is the responsibility of the Divaros Judges to enforce and interpret the law on a daily basis among the land's people.

With the possible exception of the military, the Divaros Judiciary (the loosely aligned collective of Judges) is the most powerful organization in Divar, not in terms of number but certainly in terms of influence and, some allege, in terms of wealth as well. Judges have their hands in almost all aspects of daily life, trafficking busy wayfares, policing busy markets, chasing down criminals and advising the citizenry on proper behavior. They are not a formal police force, per se; warriors and Stryder contingents do a major part of the policing, even internally. But among the back alleys, inside shops and in most non-military matters, they are a force to be reckoned with.

### Divaros Judge(-1)(98A/75S)

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

**Skills:**  
 Staff +1d      Runelore +0d  
 Diplomacy +1d      Law +2d  
 Interrogation +1d      Memorization +1d  
 Leadership +1d      Scrounge(urbn) +0d

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Status(law enforcement)  
 Additional 18A and 15S of Traits are required

Because laws and alliances can change on a daily basis (thanks in part to the function of Diplomats), Judges are typically sought after whenever a decision needs to be made on a problem that has no clear solution. In many cases, learned Judges are up to date on current law and regulation, and can give an informed answer, or provide a quick measurement with their Enan. In other cases, wise Judges who do not necessarily know the law will make a quick determination based on the needs of the present time, researching the matter later.

Because of their role, Judges are also called upon to escort military troops, even onto the field of battle. Judges enforce order among the troops, ensure that battles are fought according to the current rules of engagement, and report any any discrepancies found to their superiors. As their duties typically bring them into contact with a wide array of people and situations, many Judges also know a fair share about magic, and can cast at least simple healing and defensive spells when necessary. Most are also trained in arms and armor.

**Diplomat** - In a general sense, diplomats are those men and women who represent their countries in affairs of state. Divaros Diplomats, however, are more closely associated with the term known as spy, since their duties include not only discussions with other nations, but the utilization of bribery, deceit and other underhanded tricks to gather information on their states and nations.

### Divaros Diplomat(-1)(98A/60S)

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

**Skills:**  
 Running +0d      Diplomacy +2d  
 Stealth +1d      Myndw(spoken) +1d  
 Light blade +0d      Zokili(spoken) +1d  
 Disguise +0d      Scrounge(urbn) +0d

**Traits:**  
 Keen senses(+1d Awareness to spot things)  
 Status(gov't representative)  
 Additional 18A and 5S of Traits are required

Many other nations are aware that Divaros Diplomats are quite roguish in nature, and treat them accordingly, which of course requires that Diplomats resort to even shadier tactics to get their jobs done. Others switch sides at the drop of a hat, knowing full well that if their country of origin truly wants the information they possess, they will be willing to pay a high price to win the Diplomat's allegiance once again. They have no shame in being bought and sold like this; they do it to other people, after all.

Whereas Judges are the public arm of the Divaros government, dedicated to enforcing and interpreting laws, the Diplomats are much more focused on serving the concept of government, and the interests of the state as a whole. Sent along to report on a military squadron's efficiency, they might ignore a slew of minor indiscretions, including treachery, murder and insurrection, reporting "all clear" if, at the end of the day, the squadron managed to complete its mission effectively.

Importantly, Divaros Diplomats are *de facto* representatives of their government, and as such they are empowered to enact and interpret law, on the fly, as they see fit and as the situation warrants. The use of this tactic requires great care and tact, of course. Threatening an enemy nation when you are surrounded by a group of their Stryders will have little meaning if they can squash you before anyone else hears what you said. But speaking aloud in a public forum can certainly be an effective tactic, since thousands of ears can hear what new law you have just enacted, and anyone who breaks that law will suffer the consequences.

Because their name is so slandered by many, most Diplomats will not readily share the nature of their duties with others, including close friends. Their skills at disguise and deceit means that they can pass themselves off as just about anyone else and they often have government connections to support whatever false identity they are using as their public face.

▼ **Note** - Both Judges and Diplomats will have one or more levels of Status, depending on their rank and connections. Adventurers in one of these roles will probably not have more than one level of such Status.

# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

## Myndwar Roles

**Jacker** (*plural, Jacks; also called Jagger, Jigger, Jacke, Jake*) - In other cultures, the term Jack, or its more commonly seen incarnation, Jack-of-all-trades, is typically used to refer to a person without special rank, standing or specialization. For this reason, it is difficult for non-Myndwar to understand the particular place that their Jackers fit in society. While the name carries the same basic connotations (ie., a person outside of society, a laborer, one of many skills), among Myndwar such a multi-faceted individual is a source of particular pride, especially since their broad skillset makes them the only ones who still know how to construct, maintain and operate the Myndwar Stryders.

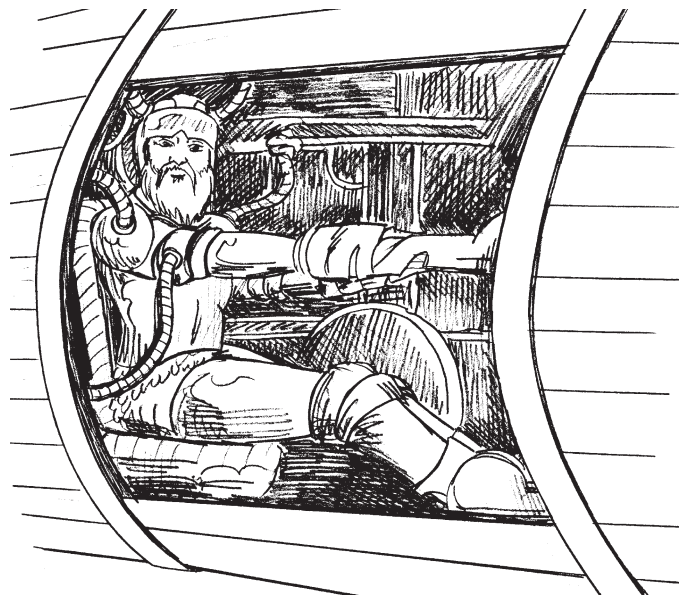
### Myndwar Jacker(-1)(98A/85S)

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

**Skills:**

Axe	+1d	Runelore	+1d
Light blade	+0d	Metalsmith	+2d
Stryder axe	+1d	Stoneworking	+1d
Stryder pilot	+2d	Scrounge(mtn)	+0d

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1 d Will vs. runes)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 18A and 25S of Traits are required



Each Stryder is the possession and responsibility of a single Jacker, typically either passed down from generation to generation, and thus particularly ancient, or constructed laboriously from scratch, and a masterpiece of cutting-edge craftsmanship. Either way, it is highly prized and protected. Unlike other societies that split up duties among those who pilot, build, or maintain Stryders, Myndwar Jackers take on all three responsibilities themselves. They personally assist in the location of raw materials, personally create the Stryder, personally take part in inscribing its runes, and personally pilot it when needed. Many jackers who have inherited their Stryder may not be able to do *all* these roles, but they will at least be capable of maintaining and repairing the Stryder they do have (or they would not have been deemed worthy to inherit it).

Jackers are also named in part because they have a more direct connection with their Stryders, jacking into it by means of steel protrusions and indentations on the peculiar armor they wear when inside a Stryder. This allows them a greater degree of control over the finer movements of their large creations, making them superior in almost every way to the Stryder pilots of other countries.

In part due to the fact that the Myndwar need fewer troops to defend their territory (thanks to the area's geography), and in part due to the fact that the Myndwar Stryders are so treasured, Jackers are typically not needed on a regular basis. They are often forgotten about until they are needed for something, a situation with which they are only too happy. With plenty of time to themselves, Jackers can place extra attention on their Stryder, running it through tests, researching new Runes, or tracking down raw materials to improve its functionality.

However, when they *are* called upon, Jackers are usually able to spring into action with rabbit-quick speed, and so when needed they are typically the first on the scene and ready for action. Such a call-to-arms is not always of a military sort. Since Jackers are broadly skilled in a variety of useful arts, they often serve as smiths, armorers, watch captains, advisors and farmers for the villages they live nearest. Some (particularly those who reside nearest the main trade routes) tend to stick close to the same area for lengthy periods of time, assuming they will be needed. Others are wanderers, casting their shadow over the length of Myndwar territory and beyond, selling their services (and their Stryder) to the highest bidder in exchange for money, materials and experience.

**Mercenary** - The Myndwar fighting force is composed entirely of mercenaries, a concept that makes most nations wonder how the Myndwar nation can possibly hold itself together. But Myndwar mercenaries are not typical mercenaries. It is true that they are a loosely aligned bunch of warriors, owing direct allegiance only to the leaders of their small squads and groups, or at best a specific village or valley. However, the truth of the matter is that this sort of organizational structure best suits the needs of the Myndwar people.

Since Myndwar territory is somewhat scattered and spread out, running nearly the entire length of the continent along the mountain ranges that make up the central Spine, amassing a centralized army under one command structure would be nearly impossible. Differences in climate, terrain and political situations add to the difficulty in grouping all military structure under one organizing body. As such, individual villages and areas are responsible for raising their own militias, training those troops, and defending their own areas as needed.

## Myndwar Mercenary(-1)(97A/60S)

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

**Skills:**  
 Heavy blade +2d      Running +0d  
 Myndw. stonef. +1d      Scrounge(mtn) +0d  
 Myndw. dblstr. +1d  
 Tactics +1d

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Keen senses(+1d Awareness to spot things)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 17A and 0S of Traits are required

Myndwar are among the finest mercenaries on the continent, best suited to performing a wide variety of military tasks with speed, efficiency and skill without asking a whole lot of questions. Their willingness to serve in a variety of ways which helps defend their home territory also means they are readily willing to broker agreements with nearby nations.



This often leads to Myndwar Mercenaries serving alongside the armies of the Zokili or the Divaros, in exchange for a variety of intangible services that ultimately benefit the Myndwar military strategy (peace agreements, preferable trading status, access to better materials, etc.) In short, by providing mercenaries to surrounding, potentially hostile nations, the Myndwar ultimately win many battles by ensuring that they never happen in the first place.

This does not mean that Myndwar Mercenaries are a rag-tag bunch of second-hand fighters who never see action. This could not be further from the truth. Since they are not tied down to a specific area or duty, they often have little downtime, and are always bouncing from one hot spot to another, serving as front line troops here, bolstering the city guard there, assisting in the exploration of some cave systems in a third place. No matter what, Myndwar Mercenaries are legendary for their loyalty and devotion to duty. No Myndwar has ever been remembered as having quit a post, failed in his duty, or betrayed an employer. Myndwar serve the terms of their contracts until they are satisfied, or unto death, whichever comes first.

**Cave Jumper** - Myndwar Cave Jumpers come closest to fitting the stereotypical description of the Myndwar who spends his life living underground in dark, dank passages, miles below the surface. In truth, Cave Jumpers live on the surface like most everyone else. But unlike most Myndwar, they seem to have an unhealthy fascination with the secrets to be discovered beneath the surface, and often they will spend days, weeks, even months without seeing sunlight, all in pursuit of the unknown, jumping from one cave to the next.

The direct ancestors of the earliest Cave Jumpers were rumored to be the Myndwar who found the very first Runes, helping start the chain of events that led to the creation of the Rune Stryders, and the release of the smaller races from beneath the tyrannical enslavement of the Deijin giants. It makes sense, then, that one of the primary tasks the Cave Jumpers lay out for themselves is the continued search for new Runes, and other ancient secrets long since forgotten in the darkness below. Most claim that all the Runes and secrets have already been found, but Cave Jumpers are having none of that. There are plenty of secrets to be discovered – you just have to look for them.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Cave Jumpers are more than just seekers of Runes, however. Because they have a familiarity with the ancient world that few others can match, they are also among the world's predominant archaeologists and historians, capable not only of telling you how your ancestors lived, but showing you firsthand. If a cave painting is buried somewhere that prophesies the coming of a great king in your nation, they will know where to find it, and if someone lost an artifact a century ago, they have probably stumbled across it somewhere in their journeys.

### Myndwar Cave Jumper(-1)(80A/95S)

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 2d+2  
**Will:** 2d+1  
**Health:** 2d+1  
**Fate:** 2d+1

**Skills:**

Hvy. wpn.(pick)	+2d	Runelore	+1d
Climbing	+2d	Throwing	+0d
Acrobatics	+1d	Trapwork	+2d
Navigation	+1d	Scrounge(cave)	+0d

**Traits:**

Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 0A and 35S of Traits are required

Even if they have not found your missing item, they have the skills to go looking for it. Cave Jumpers are more than just scholars and diggers. They are also skilled in the arts of the very Runes and magics they seek and study, and so most Cave Jumpers are able to call up the power of the Runes they are most familiar with. This knowledge greatly extends the amount of time they can survive in inhospitable conditions without support. With even just a handful of Runes at their disposal, they can provide themselves with light, food, and water for weeks, not to mention the ability to defend themselves in extreme situations.

**Valley Mage** - The predominant practitioners of the Runic arts among the Myndwar are known as Valley Mages, a simple enough name that speaks for itself. The mountainous terrain of the Myndwar country is dotted with valleys, large and small, wide and narrow, high and low, within which the bulk of the population lives. And in many of these valleys, a single Myndwar of particular skill will lay claim to his terrain, offering his protection and knowledge to the people of that area in exchange for the exclusive right to call that valley his own.

## Myndwar Valley Mage(-1)(91A/60S)

**Strength:** 2d+1  
**Agility:** 2d+2  
**Awareness:** 4d+0  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 2d+1  
**Fate:** 3d+1

### Skills:

Myndw. stonef.	+1d	Runelore	+2d
Staff	+1d	Drasl.(spoken)	+0d
Leadership	+1d	Scrounge(flat)	+0d
Carousing	+1d		

### Traits:

Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Additional 11A and 0S of Traits are required

From time to time, two or more Mages will appear in the same Valley, but inevitably all but one are driven away. Valley Mages may all work for the same ultimate goal, but they do not work well with others of their kind. This is based in part out of practicality, and few fault the Mages for their attitudes. Not only are there many valleys in need of protection and assistance, necessitating the spreading out of magical talent, but since Valley Mages often serve as leaders of the community they serve, two Mages is often one too many when quick decisions need to be made.

There is too little room for disagreement or debate, and certainly no time for squabbling or competition when lives are on the line. Thus, the Valley Mages' somewhat self-centered outlook on life is embraced and accepted as a necessity, and their hostility towards one another is overlooked as an idiosyncrasy amongst the wealth of benefits they bring to a community.

Valley Mages make no secret of the fact that they are constantly in search of greater power and knowledge. The fact that this power allows them to better protect their community is an obvious benefit, and so the people they serve are all too willing to assist the Mage in his efforts. In particular, Valley mages will often contract with Augers and Cave Jumpers to seek out new magics for them to master, trading some of their community's wealth for access to such secrets. Most communities are perfectly willing to assist in this way, and those that are not are typically too afraid to say anything. There is no record of a Valley Mage ever harming his own people for disagreeing with him, but since Valley Mages tend to teeter on the fine edge of sanity, most will agree that there is a first time for anything, and they would rather not set the precedent.

There are more than a few Valley Mages without permanent homes, wandering from valley to valley and town to town, never settling down in any one place. Even more than the others, these Mages are feared by the Myndwar people as dangerous outcasts and loners; not because they are any more powerful, but because they are unpredictable.

**Auger** - Augers are the backbone of Myndwar society, providing the raw materials needed to construct everything from weapons to Stryders, from farms to fortresses. Obvious materials thus provided include stone, metal, gemstones and the hardwood of the trees that grow on the steep slopes of The Spine, but also included are the Augers themselves. They do not just find and recover the materials, they also play an active role in every part of its design and construction.

Take any wall along a Myndwar border, and there is an Auger who can tell you where he found the stones, how well they fit together, and how heavy they were to carry.

### Myndwar Auger(-1)(90A/80S)

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

**Skills:**

Hvy wpn(pick)	+2d	Tactics	+1d
Climbing	+2d	Mining	+1d
Acrobatics	+0d	Architecture	+1d
Runelore	+0d	Scrounge(cave)	+0d

**Traits:**

Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 10A and 20S of Traits are required

Augers are quite happy to work in teams to drill new mines, clear areas of forest, dam rivers and perform all of the other tasks necessary to get their jobs done. They respect solitude as much as other Myndwar, but see definite advantage in sharing tasks with others, as the scale of the tasks they are set to are often far greater than could ever be handled by one individual.



## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Unlike Cave Jumpers, Augers typically avoid the existing cave structures of the Myndwar territory, since those tunnels and caverns are for the most part already wiped clean of useful raw materials. Augers are responsible for new construction and excavation, and if they should happen in their digging to come across an older tunnel or natural cavern, they will typically stop digging and turn the area over to the Jumpers. They have no interest in the past, only the present.

Their constant manual labor means that Augers are typically in fine physical shape. Their knowledge of underground structures means that it is not uncommon for a team of Augers to accompany a Cave Jumper on a jaunt, long spears in hand to assist in skewering any strange beasts that might wish to waylay underground travellers. Cave Jumpers bring the brains, Augers bring the brawn, and everyone gets out in one piece.

Augers are also sought after by neighboring countries for their skills, not only in mining and the construction of defensive fortifications, but in demolition and destruction as well. It is not unheard of for one group of Augers to be hired to reinforce a fortress, and another group to be hired by an opposing army to knock the same fortress to the ground. Augers placed in such a situation will typically do their jobs as best they can while trying to minimize Myndwar casualties in the process. Should they all survive, they never hold a grudge; they were all just doing their job, and now that the job is done, everyone can laugh about it and get back to other work.

**Seer** - The term Seer is used somewhat ubiquitously among many races, referring to those peculiar sorts of individuals who claim the ability to see into the future. Among the Myndwar, Seers are revered more than reviled, and looked up to as valuable sources of information, practical and tangible as well as mystical. Myndwar Seers do not claim to be able to see the future. They do, however, have an uncanny knack for predicting future events, based not on strange visions but on intellect, observation and meditation on the interplay between order and chaos, pattern and unpredictability.

## Myndwar Seer(-1)(100A/75S)

**Strength:** 2d+0  
**Agility:** 2d+1  
**Awareness:** 4d+0  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 2d+2  
**Fate:** 3d+2

### Skills:

Climbing	+1d	Tracking	+1d
Steeplejacking	+0d	Leadership	+0d
Throwing	+1d	Runelore	+2d
Diplomacy	+1d	Zokili(spoken)	+1d
Scrounge(mtn)	+0d		

### Traits:

Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Additional 20A and 15S of Traits are required

At a basic level, Seers are lookouts, manning the tall towers that perch near the top of the higher peaks of the Myndwar mountain ranges. Chosen for their keen eyesight and observational skills, they are often the first to spot the movements of anyone encroaching on Myndwar territory, and as such serve as a sort of first line of defense. So positioned, Seers also serve as an extremely fast means of communication across the vast Myndwar territory, using flashes of light and other signals to quickly relay coded information from one tower to the next. In such a fashion, messages can be sent over hundreds of kilometers in just a few minutes.

As they spend long stretches of time alone, Seers tend to be quiet, meditative and sedate. They have plenty of time to think about life and their place in it, and are all too happy to share their thoughts with others when they do have a chance opportunity to spend time with others. Myndwar leaders also respect the fact that the Seers have plenty of time on their hands, in secure locations, to put their powerful minds and creativity to work, and Seers are often given battle plans and strategies to ponder, and codes to break. While often somewhat unorthodox, the solutions they often come up with work startlingly well in many instances, helping the Myndwar military retain its reputation for being unpredictable and deadly. Seldom will Myndwar prepare for an assault without first consulting a Seer, or even bringing one along with them if possible.

Seers are also very adept in Runic magic, as they have plenty of time to practice and meditate on the meaning of the ancient language. They have been known to venture forth from their towers from time to time in search of more knowledge of this sort, happy to trade what they know in exchange for yet more knowledge.

**Spine Runner** - While Myndwar Seers are often capable of sending messages among their towers with great speed, their reach is limited, both in range as well as in dispersion. When messages need to be carried between mercenary groups, or when important news needs to be transmitted among the entire populace, Spine Runners are called into action.

## Myndwar Spine Runner(+0)(99A/65S)

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 2d+0  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 3d+0  
**Fate:** 2d+1

### Skills:

Running	+0d	Navigation	+1d
Climbing	+1d	Memorization	+1d
Steeplejacking	+1d	Scrounge(mtn)	+0d
Light blade	+1d		

### Traits:

None, but 19A and 5S of Traits are required

Spine, of course, refers to the common name for the massive series of interconnected mountain ranges that divide the continent in two. Since this is where the Myndwar dwell, for the most part, most of the running that these Spine Runners do is along the length of this Spine. However, Runners are also used for other functions, accompanying armies on excursions out of Myndwar territory, or sent to deliver urgent personal messages to foreign governments. In all cases, the Runners always work on foot, and are capable of incredible endurance. Tales tell of Runners who ran for four days and nights without food, water or sleep, only to collapse and die after delivering their message.

Not trained extensively in the combat arts, Spine Runners are often accused of lacking courage, as they will often be seen running away from attack, or ducking and hiding until the coast is clear. The flipside of the story is that Spine also refers to the Runners' remarkable courage and determination.

They are perhaps more fearless than any other Myndwar, heedless of danger as they clamber down sheer cliffs, plunge into dank caves, or scurry across bloody, chaotic battlefields in order to complete their assigned tasks. If they choose to avoid conflict or danger in a particular instance, it is only because they are doing their best to complete their assigned task. If they are dead, after all, they cannot deliver the message.

Aside from carrying messages, Spine Runners also serve an assortment of related functions. Many carry small packages from place to place, serving as quick, efficient couriers and thus giving the Myndwar some semblance of a centralized mail service. Being familiar with the lay of the land, they also serve as scouts and trailblazers, either passing information to others as needed or leading parties on excursions through Myndwar territory.

**Zokili Roles**

**Pilyt** - All Zokili join the military at some point in their lives, but only a chosen few (typically the smallest of the bunch) are chosen to become Pilyts. Once chosen, often at a very young age, Pilyts train for years to manipulate the complex controls inside a Stryder, either perfecting the skill quickly or quickly falling out of the program and returning to normal military duty.

**Zokili Pilyt(+0)(94A/80A)**

**Strength:** 2d+0  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 3d+1  
**Will:** 2d+0  
**Health:** 2d+0  
**Fate:** 2d+2

**Skills:**

Swimming	+0d	Runelore	+1d
Acrobatics	+1d	Tactics	+2d
Stryder spear	+1d	Scrounge(high)	+0d
Stryder pilot	+2d		

**Traits:**  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 14A and 20S of Traits are required

**Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>**



Zokili Stryders are smaller than those of almost all other races, including the diminutive Draslander. This has several obvious effects. First, it improves the agility and speed of the Stryder, allowing combat maneuvers that other, larger Stryders simply cannot handle. Secondly, it improves control, since the Stryder's extremities are much closer to the Pilyt inside. Thirdly, a direct extension of this last, it opens the Pilyt up to more serious injury, both from his own Stryder and from without. Pilyts are typically suited up in padded, flameproof armor, as their compartments are often pierced in one way or another during combat, and many tend to carry weapons and tools in case they are forced to abandon their Stryders to fight on foot.



# EABA

Some few Pilyts work in teams of two, both operating the same Stryder from within. In these cases, the Stryder in question typically features an extra set of limbs, either doubling the offensive capability (in the case of a simple extra pair of arms) or altering the Stryder altogether. Common variants include variations on the arachnid or crustacean theme, with six legs and two claw-like appendages, or eight legs, offering unmatched speed and agility on the field of battle. For these more complex machines, most highly sought after are Zokili twins, who appear once in every thousand or so births. Twins working together inside the same Stryder achieve such a degree of mastery that the two are often treated as one being, sharing a name and an identity (and a life; when one dies, the other typically dies as well, often by their own hand.)

**Elyte** - Many among the taller races snicker when they see a Zokili Elyte contingent march by in formation, little men dressed in their beige uniforms carrying weapons nearly as large as themselves. Those few lucky enough to see the Elyte in action know the truth of the matter. Despite appearances, the Zokili Elyte are possibly the finest and most savage warriors on the face of the continent.

## Zokili Elyte(-1)(96A/80S)

**Strength:** 3d+1  
**Agility:** 3d+1  
**Awareness:** 1d+2  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 3d+1  
**Fate:** 2d+1

### Skills:

Heavy blade	+2d	Tracking	+0d
Zokili nervestrike	+2d	Tactics	+0d
Stealth	+1d	Scrounge(high)	+0d
Zokili risingsun	+2d		

### Traits:

Keen senses(+1d Awareness to spot things)  
 Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 16A and 20S of Traits are required

Drafted from amongst the tallest and strongest (but not necessarily brightest) Zokili children, the Elyte are trained in combat and tactics from the time they can walk. Since strength and size are to some degree genetic, there is a good chance that if a father was an Elyte, his sons and daughters will also be Elyte.

However, the ranks are open to all who qualify, regardless of parentage. Those who fail to perform up to standards are usually pushed into normal military service instead, but since being an Elyte is such an honor, and failing such a disappointment, many who fail either take their own lives or plunge themselves into self-exile, unable to face their families.

▼ **Note** - The Sheiwin of the Elyte are large angled knives with razor-sharp double-edged blades, varying in length but typically a full Enan or more in length, and often as long as the Zokili wielding it is tall. Kept razor sharp at all times, they are capable of cutting through steel, and have even been known to slice through the heavy armor of enemy Stryders. The name Sheiwin translates as Whisper, literally meaning Secret Breath, from the runes Shei(breath) and Whin (secret).

Those who succeed are trained, via secret techniques and indoctrination, in the art of quickly and ferociously killing their opponents in battle. This is a significant departure from the training techniques used by most armies. Most ordinary warriors are taught how to win a battle, how to defend a city, how to assault an outpost. The Elyte are taught only to kill. Their single-minded devotion to this task is what makes them so feared, although the body of mythology that has built up around them because of it also plays a major role in this attitude.

Among those who see them in action, there can be no doubt that much of the rumors are true. One story relates a contingent of Zokili Stryders unable to retreat from deep within enemy territory, with support far away, too far to be of any use. Fearlessly, a dozen Zokili Elyte walked over to their razor-sharp angled Sheiwin, and without a thought, they charged, *en masse*, into the midst of the enemy, shouting "Iyi Zokili!" the entire way. The enemy did not expect a charge, and was taken aback. Those too dumbfounded to get out of the way were cut down in their place, many neatly decapitated. Those foolish enough to actually react did not last much longer. In the end, nine of the twelve Elyte lost their lives in the charge, but they took fifty enemies with them, and managed to break a hole in the line that enabled their Stryders to escape.

**Saboteur** - Zokili warriors are brilliant strategists and honorable opponents on the field of battle, but they are also pragmatists at heart, and they will use whatever advantages they can to achieve their objectives. They thus make no secret about the fact that their military forces include a large number of specially trained Saboteurs, whose mission it is to infiltrate enemy territory and sabotage their equipment, plans and Stryders.

Saboteurs are not well-liked or trusted by other races, as they are seen as an affront to the normal business of war. Since it is easy to postulate how the Zokili might gain from the sabotage of anything, the open presence of a Saboteur anywhere in public is often met with overreaction. Zokili acting suspicious around important equipment are often rounded up and shuffled off, and those who might dare possess hand tools within a stone's throw of a Stryder might even be thrown in jail as a precautionary measure. Arrest first, and let the Diplomats handle it later, is often the credo. Zokili (or anyone else, for that matter) caught sabotaging a Stryder is assumed to be a spy and saboteur and will likely be executed as soon as someone with sufficient authority to order an execution is found to judge the situation.

**Zokili Saboteur(-1)(87A/85S)**

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

**Skills:**  
 Stealth +1d Sabotage +2d  
 Light blade +1d Trapwork +1d  
 Carousing +2d Tactics +0d  
 Runelore +1d Scrounge(urb) +0d

**Traits:**  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 7A and 25S of Traits are required

The truth of the matter, alas, is that any Zokili seen in such a situation is almost certainly not a Saboteur (or at least, not a good one). Saboteurs are trained not only to efficiently sabotage equipment and battle plans, but to do so secretly. They are capable of silently infiltrating guarded areas, spying upon enemy positions, doing their damage and then getting back out, all without being seen or heard. As the saying goes, if you can see a Zokili Saboteur, it probably means they're dead. And even then, you cannot be too sure; more than one Saboteur has been known to feign death in order to make good an escape at a later time.

**Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>**

Since Zokili often need to mingle with enemy troops and manipulate heavy equipment, they are typically amongst the tallest members of their society. Of course, that could be just a rumor, too, to throw unsuspecting opponents off their guard. Only the Zokili know for sure.

**Enginyr** - Zokili are not so naive as to disbelieve in the existence of magic and runes. They have seen enough of the world to recognize that magic exists, and since they played a major role in the creation of the very first Stryders, they know all too well how vital a part runes play in their function. And yet despite this, outside of Stryder Pilyts, very few Zokili will openly admit to using runes or runic technology. Among the masses, this might not seem surprising, but among the Enginyrs who construct and maintain the Zokili Stryders, the thought is somewhat surprising.

**Zokili Enginyr(-1)(91A/60S)**

**Strength:** 2d+1  
**Agility:** 2d+2  
**Awareness:** 4d+0  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 2d+1  
**Fate:** 3d+1

**Skills:**  
 Hvy wpn(mace) +1d Roguery +0d  
 Light blade +1d Metalsmith +2d  
 Runelore +1d Scrounge(urb) +0d  
 Tactics +1d

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Additional 11A and 0S of Traits are required

At a basic level, the bulk of an Enginyr's work goes into gathering raw materials, researching, and then constructing the body of a Stryder. Since this can take months, if not years for particularly complex models, to an Enginyr it simply makes sense that this is where the emphasis should lie. Why then do the other races place so much importance on runes? Runes are simply little carvings that are placed on the Stryder after it has been built. It takes a few days, perhaps a week, and then it is done. It is important, to be sure, but more important than all the rest? Enginyrs do not think so.

# EABA

Part of the reason they feel this way is that, like the Myndwar, they want to control the creation and maintenance of a Stryder from start to finish. Among other races, there are typically two or three types of individuals involved: someone to gather the material, someone to construct the Stryder, and someone else to inscribe the runes. The Zokili Enginyr does not trust anyone else to get involved, so they just do it all themselves. Zokili Enginyr are experts in metallurgy and smithing, and can be called upon for a wide variety of tasks, thanks to their knowledge of all aspects of a creative effort. They can forge a weapon, sharpen the blade, and inscribe runes on its hilt. Practically speaking, they *will* cooperate on the most difficult aspects of a Stryder, particularly the rune carving, but this is a matter of necessity, not of personal pride. They do take a special pride in their work, the pride of the craftsman, but they are not particularly proud of any one aspect of that work. After all, it took them a great deal longer to gather the steel and forge the blade, then shape and sharpen it, than it did to trace the rune into the metal.

It should come as no surprise that Zokili Enginyr name all of their Stryders, though it might seem surprising to hear them tell you that the Stryders know their own names, and answer when called. Perhaps there is something to that mad scientist rumor after all. Zokili Enginyr are seldom seen outside their fortified workshops, which is probably a good thing. Their social skills are not all that great.

**Medic** - Zokili medics are among the most efficient healers on the continent, partly because they train amongst the rest of the soldiers and can thus understand tactics on a deeper level. And like other Zokili, they have applied the lessons of technology to the old runic magic, in order to improve their methodology.

## Zokili Medic(+0)(101A/75S)

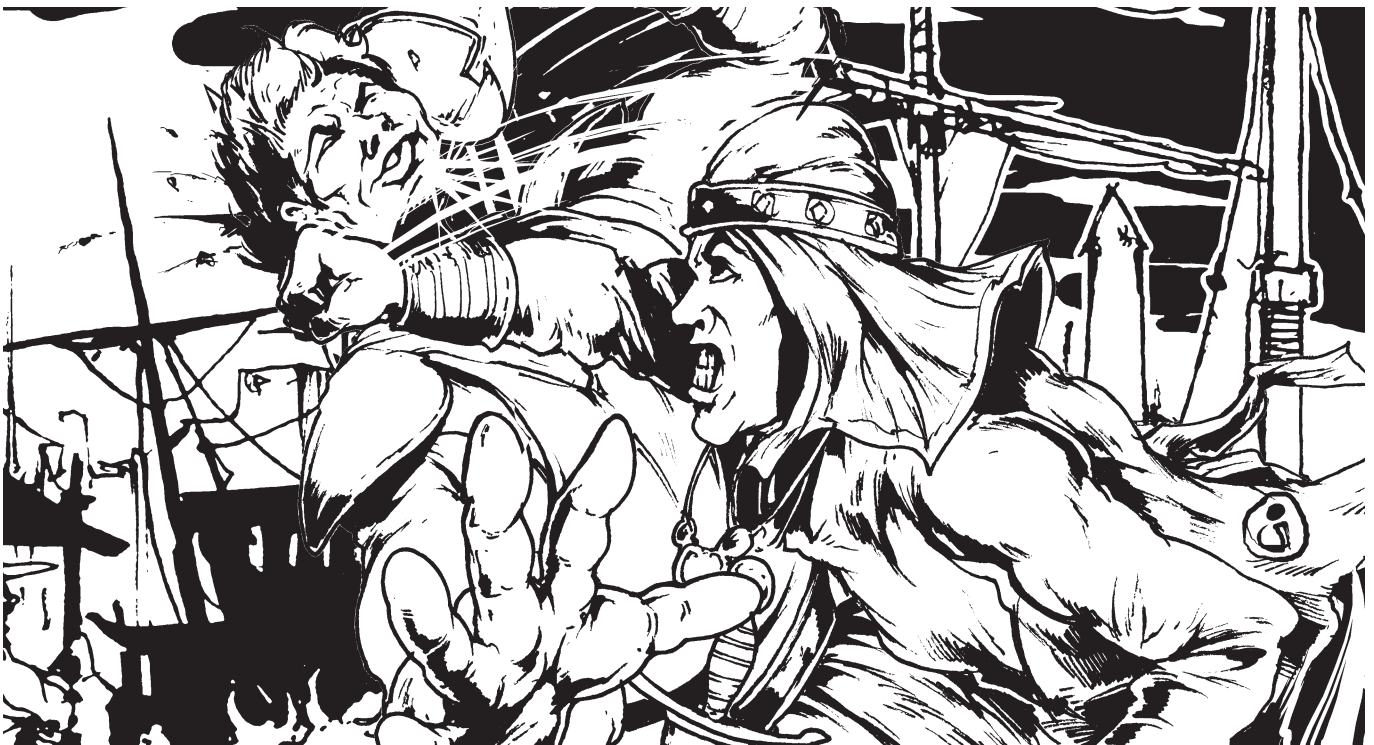
**Strength:** 1d+1  
**Agility:** 3d+0  
**Awareness:** 3d+1  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 2d+1  
**Fate:** 3d+1

**Skills:**

Running	+0d	Tactics	+0d
Light blade	+1d	Medic	+2d
Drasl. disarm.	+1d	Scrounge(high)	+0d
Runelore	+1d		

**Traits:**  
Experience(wearing armor)  
Additional 21A and 15S of Traits are required

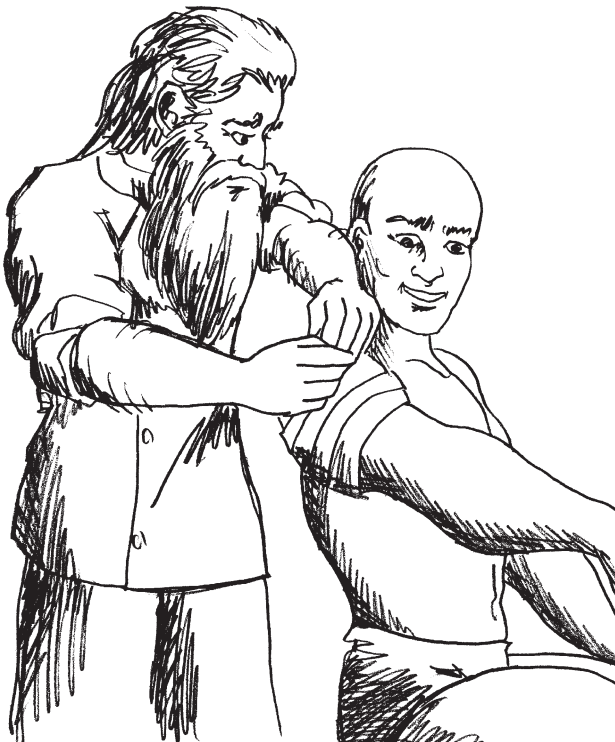
Anyone can mumble a simple healing spell to dull the pain of a twisted ankle, or lessen the swelling from a bug bite. More skilled wielders of magical power can repair a broken bone or halt bleeding with a word and a rune traced onto the skin.



But the Zokili medic heals more indirectly, instead using runic magic to imbue various bandages, poultices and concoctions with healing power beforehand, and then using those items as needed over the days and weeks that follow the preparation. The simple transfer of power from rune to a new medium falls well within the laws of magic as accepted by most people, but outside of the Zokili few see the need to do so. If magic can be applied directly, they argue, how can anything be improved by adding indirection?

Among the Zokili, however, the desire to share knowledge and benefit among the community is a driving force, and by imbuing items with healing power, a Medic can thereby share those items with others around him, allowing them to heal while he prepares yet more items. This is not to say that a Zokili Medic is little more than a pharmacist, doling out drugs. Many a Zokili Medic follows his troops onto the field of battle, bandaging wounds as the swords clash overhead and the blood sprays just a footstep away. But that same Medic knows in his heart that should he lose his life, the materials and knowledge he leaves behind can be used by others to continue his work.

Zokili Medics are not above trading their goods to other people for profit, although any such transactions are usually accompanied by the usual warning – using items imbued with runes is always risky and unpredictable, especially if the user does not know what he or she is using. Knowledge of power is always essential when trying to use that power safely. And for this reason, Zokili Medics are as prized as the materials they imbue.



# Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Sage** - Zokili Sages are widely accepted among their own people as the wisest individuals around, and yet in spite of that fact (or perhaps because of it), Sages are never among the leaders of Zokili society. Instead, these wise teachers choose to wander among their people, and the world, spreading what they know and ever seeking out new knowledge that they can then share with others, to the benefit of all.

## Zokili Sage(-1)(101A/75S)

**Strength:** 2d+1  
**Agility:** 2d+1  
**Awareness:** 3d+0  
**Will:** 4d+0  
**Health:** 3d+0  
**Fate:** 3d+2

**Skills:**

Running	+0d	Leadership	+1d
Zokili nervestrike	+1d	Diplomacy	+1d
Zokili risingsun	+0d	Preaching	+0d
Storytelling	+1d	Runelore	+1d
Scrounge(high)	+0d		

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Additional 21A and 15S of Traits are required

Zokili Sages rarely carry weapons of any sort, and generally shy away from battle altogether when possible. They are not pacifists, recognizing that battle and warfare is an essential part of society. Neither are they cowards; many a Zokili Sage has stood his ground under insurmountable odds, giving his life to prove his determination to a cause. Rather, Sages avoid conflict and battle because they feel that life is preferable to death, and violent combat brings the possibility of death much

This is not to say that Sages shy away from conflict. On the contrary, they seem to delight in placing themselves in and around situations where conflict is a certainty, hoping to learn from the situation and offer their own views on the situation to help resolve matters if they can. Because they see so much in their travels around the world, and are careful observers and great students of life, they often have much to offer, and many a Sage can quietly defuse a situation with a gentle, wise assessment of the situation before things devolve into violence.



Of course, like all Zokili, Sages are great pragmatists, and they recognize that not all violent situations can be avoided. As such, placed into the midst of violence, they are quite ready and willing to defend themselves if need be, preferring not to kill their opponents but ready to do so if they need to in order to protect themselves or others. They value life, including their own, and will take life if it means protecting that which they cherish. Because they choose not to carry weapons (since weapons provoke violence, which is best avoided), they often learn to fight without weapons at all, or are skilled in acquiring weapons quickly if things get bad.

Their devotion in life has a noticeable effect on those around them, and Zokili Sages are often sent along with troops to raise morale and spirits. The tales they can tell of journeys undertaken and lessons learned can lighten the mood around a tense campfire better than any quantity of liquor.

**Ambassador** - Whereas the Divaros Diplomats are generally seen by the outside world as being manipulating, double-dealing weasels, Zokili Ambassadors are often sought after as being wise, fair and just in their dealings with all races and in all situations. For the most part, this estimation is true. The Zokili are certainly fair and even-handed, and their Ambassadors are trained to uphold these attitudes and beliefs at all times. But what many fail to appreciate is the fact that the Zokili always put their own well-being first and foremost, and the non-violent way in which they manipulate others in order to achieve their goals is through their Ambassadorial staff.

Ambassadors are trained in the arts of manipulation as well as law and etiquette. They know not only the proper way to act in a situation, and the proper statute to quote at the appropriate time, but how to carefully word their phrases to get others to react in a way that favors their situation. They are always full of good cheer and a willingness to attend social gatherings and official functions where they can shake hands, smile and nod. They are also more than willing to attend less social gatherings in the dark of night, in back alleys or secret passages, if brokering such deals is in the best interests of their people.

Ambassadors are not fools, however. Like all in their society, they are trained in the arts of war for part of their life, and this gives them an advantage over many in both of the aforementioned situations. In official gatherings, Ambassadors bring to the table not only a wealth of knowledge, but a warrior's attitude, an unwavering devotion to winning a piece of the pie for themselves, no matter what it takes. In shadier dealings, they are always wary of danger and double-dealing, know when to lie and when they are being lied to, and always know the way to the quickest exit if things go bad.

## Zokili Ambassador(-1)(98A/70S)

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

**Skills:**  
Stealth +0d Divaros(spoken) +1d  
Light blade +1d Myndw(spoken) +1d  
Diplomacy +2d Scrounge(urb) +0d  
Preaching +1d

**Traits:**  
Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
Experience(wearing armor)  
Status(government representative)  
Additional 18A and 10S of Traits are required

Ambassadors are also trained in less publicly acceptable tactics and practices as well, in keeping with Zokili philosophy. Just as Saboteurs are trained to destroy enemy equipment in order to help win battles in the future, so are Ambassadors trained to manipulate deals in order to get things to go their way. Sometimes a lie or a threat is enough to get the other side's man to sign the deal, and when that does not work, there are always more violent ways to make people see the Ambassador's point of view. It is all part of the overall effort to help Zokili society.



## Kantarin Roles

**Melded** - Other peoples build their Stryders; Kantarins grow theirs. As such, the Kantarin attitude towards their Stryders is reverential and respectful, and the constructs are treated in the same way as the Kantarins treat the plants and trees around them. Stryders are tended, silently revered, and mourned when they are lost. In part, this is because the Kantarins respect the life of the rain forest. It is also because of the Melded.

Those who pilot the Kantarin Stryders, known as Melded, have a unique bond with their construct, one which goes far beyond that attained by any other race. The bond begins when a Kantarin chooses to raise a Stryder from a seedling, nurturing the sprout, working with Shapers to see that it grows tall and strong, finally severing it from its roots and taking it into their personal care for the rest of their life.

### Kantarin Melded(-1)(95A/60S)

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

#### Skills:

Climbing	+1d	Navigation	+1d
Light blade	+1d	Runelore	+0d
Stryder weapon	+1d	Scrounge(jung)	+0d
Plant empathy	+2d		

#### Traits:

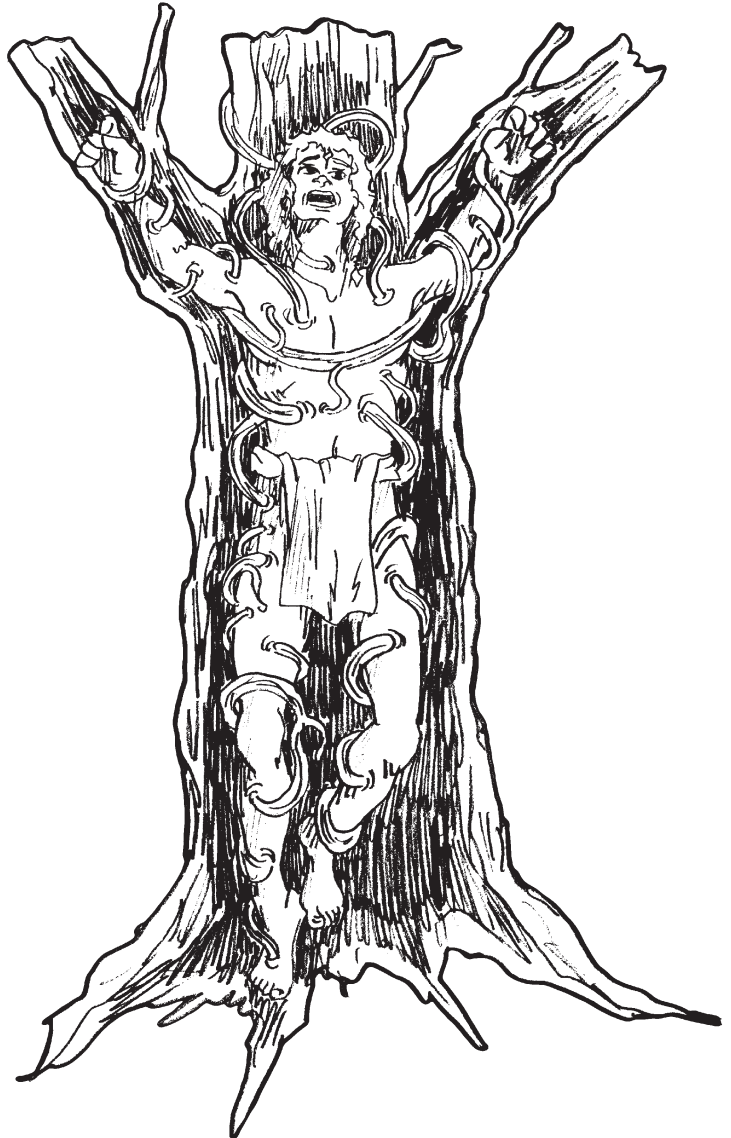
Strong will(+1d Will vs. runes)  
 Additional 15A and 0S of Traits are required

Throughout the process, the Melded takes the responsibility as seriously as a mother protecting her child, and often when a Stryder is lost for one reason or another, the despondent Melded will take their own life, ceremonially and with the support of the Kantarin people. For the Melded, the possibility of such a sacrifice is but a minor concern, considering the benefits gained from being thus bonded with a Stryder.

Many others see only pain, witnessing the tiny scars and blisters that often crisscross a Melded's entire body. Among Kantarins, however, such scars are a badge of honor, replicated by the ritual scarification and tattooing in which all Kantarin participate. None can truly replicate the Melded's marks however, since they are inflicted in a unique way.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

When a Kantarin Melded climbs into their Stryder and settles in, small roots crawl out from the walls around him, piercing their skin as they seek direct connection with his mind and body. Often, a mossy down grows over the Melded's arms as he literally becomes one with the construct, blood mingling with the lifesap that flows through the Stryder. The process is, of course, intensely painful, but the pleasure the Melded feels from being linked in this way with a greater living being quickly drowns out any painful memories. It also means that Kantarin Stryders are the fastest and most agile Stryders, since they respond directly to the mental commands and desires of the Melded inside, rather than through control linkages or runes. Kantarin Stryders have a default Agility 1 point higher than normal.



# EABA

Of course, since the two are bonded, pain felt by one is felt by the other while they are bonded, and so in battle the Melded has a lot at stake. They cannot just rush in, take their lumps and rush home for repairs. Removal from the Stryder is also painful, both because of the scarring and because it means leaving the close bond behind. After heavy bonding with their Stryders, some Melded actually go too far, permanently fusing with their Stryders as freelike beings who wander into the jungle, often never to be seen again. Such beings are at once feared and revered by the Kantarin people.

**Nettle** - The primary source of food and protection among the Kantarin are the Nettles, quick, precise and silent hunters who are trained from a young age to silently track down their prey and kill it quickly, often with a single stroke from one of their wickedly barbed, broad-bladed spears. A small group of Nettles can typically feed ten times their number in Kantarin citizens, making their skills as hunters highly prized and cherished by all.

## Kantarin Nettle(-1)(86A/70S)

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 2d+1  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 2d+2  
**Fate:** 3d+0

**Skills:**

Running	+0d	Bow	+2d
Spear	+1d	Tracking	+1d
Steeplejacking	+1d	Kant. sign lang.	+0d
Stealth	+1d	Scrounge(jung)	+0d

**Traits:**  
None, but 6A and 10S of Traits are required

Although they master their arts by hunting animals in the jungle, and fishing in the ocean, the skills of a Nettle obviously apply equally well to prey of a more humanoid sort. Nettles often trail strange visitors, ambush unsuspecting enemies and kill those who pose a threat, typically before the stranger ever knows what hit them. If there are survivors left alive after a Nettle strike, they are typically left incapacitated or dazed, often slowly suffering from one of the many vegetable poisons commonly used by the Kantarin on their blades.

Nettles also serve as the first line of defense should larger conflicts arise. They form an invisible wall of defenders around the perimeter of the Kantarin rain forest, making it seem as if their homelands are left completely undefended. Woe to the unsuspecting warriors who wander in with swords sheathed, expecting an easy conquest.

Of course, Nettles are not trained as heavy infantry, and when faced with overwhelming odds or other less than optimal situations, they are not afraid or ashamed to bolt for cover so they can alert other Kantarin to the danger. In many cases, this will allow Kantarin families time to pick up and move before the threat arrives on their doorstep. If necessary, however, Nettles will remain behind to buy time for other Kantarin. Many have laid down their lives in this manner, the few sacrificing themselves so that the many may live.

Like most Kantarin, the Nettles are fond of tattooing their skin and braiding foreign objects into their hair. Some have a tradition of adorning themselves with trophies from their kills, taking teeth, bones, feathers and hair from fallen prey, and some even go so far as to scar themselves with runes drawn by piercing their skin with needles dipped in the blood of their foes.



**Thorn** - Where Nettles are known for their subtlety and speed, the Kantarin Thorns are known for their power. The Thorns are not trained to hunt. They are trained to kill known threats to the Kantarin community, be they of the humanoid sort or otherwise. Since killing is not necessarily a full time duty, Thorns also serve as second tier guards and watchmen, serving as elite guards for Kantarin of higher standing, and acting as unofficial police for larger Kantarin villages throughout the jungle.

Thorns are typically amongst the largest and heaviest members of their society, some standing up to two meters in height. Due to the slender, lean physique shared by all Kantarin, they hide their strength well, weighing less than many Divaran warriors of equal height yet capable of greater feats of strength. Wiry muscles rippling like steel cable, a single Kantarin Thorn is easily capable of holding their own against several enemies at once. In part, this is due to their great strength and size. But it also has a lot to do with the way they fight.

### Kantarin Thorn(-1)(93A/70S)

**Strength:** 4d+0  
**Agility:** 3d+2  
**Awareness:** 2d+1  
**Will:** 2d+1  
**Health:** 3d+0  
**Fate:** 2d+0

**Skills:**

Spear	+2d	Kantarin signing	+0d
Kant. skytackle	+2d	Scrounge(jung)	+0d
Bow	+1d		
Kant. deathdan.	+2d		

**Traits:**

Keen senses(+1d Awareness to spot things)  
 Additional 13A and 10S of Traits are required

Kantarin Thorns do not believe in the concept of honor, especially when it comes to an enemy who is trying to kill you, and who you are trying to kill in turn. As such, Thorns are often called dirty fighters by those who have faced them in combat. They will roll on the ground, flip in the air, throw weapons, furniture, debris, dirt and more at their enemies to serve as a distraction, kicking and striking with a flurry of blows before moving in for the kill with any of an assortment of wickedly bladed weapons, usually coated with a toxin of one sort or another. Combat is almost always to the death, for Thorns do not believe in the taking prisoners or showing mercy.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Part of the Thorns' skill and power comes from the many Runes tattooed across their bodies, often taken to such an extreme that little of their flesh shows anywhere from head to toe. Carving themselves with Runes of power, strength, death, pain and more, they mentally and physically prepare themselves for death, both their own and of their enemies. They do not fear pain or death. They live, train and exist only to kill those who need to be killed. A more bloodthirsty sort of warrior does not likely exist on the continent.

**Burr** - Kantarin Burrs are the eyes and ears of the Kantarin people, serving as spies, scouts, navigators and forward observers in all facets of life. Since stealth is of primary importance to them, they are typically among the smallest of their people, with some being mere children when they are first asked to join the ranks of the Burrs.

Most of the time, the Burrs roam about semi-independently, sometimes in small groups but often alone, simply scouting out the jungle and reporting their findings to any Kantarin villages they happen to come across. Most of the time, such reports are fairly mundane, but no less useful for being ordinary – Burrs tell of animal movement and activity, potential sources of vegetable sustenance, good campsites, changes in the weather, and other happenings that the average Kantarin is all too happy to know more about.



Their skills also make the Burrs invaluable when it comes to situations where the Kantarin are threatened from without. Small, stealthy and more silent than even the Nettles, the Burrs are capable of observing enemy armies, slipping behind enemy lines to lay traps, or simply tailing strangers through the jungle to keep a closer eye on them. Preferring to avoid direct combat, Burrs become skilled in the art of snares and ambush, able to quickly dig pits, lay spike traps, and distill poisons from plants in order to effectively disable enemies without needing to be present.

## Kantarin Burr(+0)(109A/65S)

**Strength:** 2d+0  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 2d+0  
**Will:** 3d+2  
**Health:** 2d+2  
**Fate:** 2d+2

**Skills:**  
 Stealth +2d Drasl.(spoken) +0d  
 Steeplejacking +1d Myndw.(spoken) +0d  
 Light blade +1d Scrounge(jung) +0d  
 Kantarin signing +1d

**Traits:**  
 Keen senses  
 Additional 29A and 5S of Traits are required

Since they spend so much time alone, in silent solitude and hiding, many Burrs adopt somewhat antisocial and animal tendencies, shirking concepts such as language and clothing and giving themselves over entirely to the jungle in which they live, alone, like an animal. They still interact with other Kantarin, and are still capable of communication and the exchange of information, but Burrs who have allowed themselves to go feral like this are often treated like pets rather than humanoids by other Kantarin. Since the Kantarin respect and revere all life within the jungle, this is not much of a change, but given a choice between saving the life of a Burr gone feral, or another Kantarin, most would choose to let the Burr fend for himself.

**Vine** - Tales tell of the day when Kantar, the last of the Druids, made his final stand with the people of Kator. Badly outmatched in battle, and facing certain annihilation, Kantar led them to the outskirts of the thick and deadly jungles that bordered the civilized world. They could go no further. The Divaran army closed in, and made their demands. Those who resisted would be slaughtered. Those who surrendered would be sent into permanent exile, just as the Sivatagi and Draslander had been exiled years before. Kantar liked neither option, and moving among his people through the night, came up with a third.

## Kantarin Vine(-1)(104A/70S)

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

**Skills:**  
 Climbing +1d Carousing +1d  
 Axe +1d Runelore +1d  
 Kant. deathd. +1d Kantarin signing +0d  
 Storytelling +2d Scrounge(jung) +0d

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Additional 24A and 10S of Traits are required

When dawn broke, the Kantarians had vanished. The jungle had swallowed them whole. The people put their faith in Kantar, and he in turn promised to teach them what they needed to know in order to survive. He led them south across the forested islands that lay on the equator, teaching them to hunt, and to hide, and to swim. And then he led them further south, into the thickest parts of the jungle, where the canopy was so thick that the sun never shone and the vines wept rain. And there, Kantar turned, and smiled, and died.

Initially, there was panic and doubt, but this soon gave way to the understanding that Kantar had taught them the one final lesson they so desperately needed to learn: that they must make their own destiny. And so they buried Kantar beneath the thick white vines that would come to be known as Kantar's Tears, and they began rebuilding their lives.



The teachings and lessons taught by Kantar are remembered by those the Kantarin call Vines, a descriptive term that explains how they move throughout the community, always connected to their past, yet always looking forward, and always in need of support from below in order to maintain shape and strength. They are the leaders of the Kantarin people, always in motion, always circulating among the masses, spreading their teachings, maintaining order, but never dwelling in any one area for too long, lest the people forget Kantar's final lesson: that they must think for themselves.

The Vines are given to wandering, with no particular mission in the rain forest other than to teach and lead others (as little as possible, of course, in keeping with Kantar's wishes). They spend much of the time by themselves, learning yet more secrets of the forest, always eager to share what they discover with others. Of all the Kantarins, they are the most skilled and gifted in the arts of healing, knowing which herbs can cure, and which can kill with just a taste. They are also skilled in Runic lore, often visiting the borders of their lands in order to mark the ground and the trees there with fresh Runes that the trees have begun to heal.

Thanks to their ceaseless wandering, the Vines are also in fine physical form, and since they hunt their own food, and defend themselves from wild beasts, they are more than capable of defending themselves in violent situations. When the Kantarin people are in danger, the Vines often lead the warriors in charge from the front lines.

**Adorned** - Most Kantarin people live within the rain forest, moving among the trees, interacting with the beasts, and generally acting as if they were a part of one, immense living organism. For most, this is as close as they ever get, and they are quite content to live out their relatively ordinary lives in such a manner. For the select few Adorned who actually become a physical extension of the living, breathing jungle, life is different.

Many a Kantarin mother weeps when she glimpses a Rune upon her newborn's forehead, half in joy because her child has been chosen by Kantar himself, and half in despair, because she knows that her child will one day leave her, and all the Kantarin people, to wander endlessly, serving the jungle's needs. This is in part for their own good; when young, the Adorned cannot fully comprehend or control the magics inside, but upon nearing adulthood, the young one soon discovers that it is safest for all concerned if the choice to wander is taken up as soon as possible.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The Adorned have the full power of the rain forest at their disposal, learning to master a variety of Runes that draw directly on the jungle's own energy. The obvious forces of earth, wood and water are often quick at hand, but as it nearly always storms somewhere over the rain forest, and the fire always flows beneath, these, too, are at the command of the skilled Adorned.

### Kantarin Adorned(-1)(96A/80S)

**Strength:** 1d+2  
**Agility:** 3d+1  
**Awareness:** 3d+1  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 2d+1  
**Fate:** 3d+1

#### Skills:

Climbing	+1d	Navigation	+1d
Swimming	+1d	Runelore	+3d
Staff	+0d	Scrounge(jung)	+0d
Bonding	+2d		

#### Traits:

Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Gifted(cannot be affected by one rune)  
 Additional 16A and 20S of Traits are required

The Adorned is peculiarly limited in that his spells must always relate in some way to the Rune with which they were marked at birth. If marked with Fire, all his magics must involve fire, even if in combination with other Runes; for this reason, no two Adorned ever cast quite the same spell. The tradeoff for such a limitation, however, is that the Adorned can never be affected by the Rune with which he is marked, neither by his own hand nor by another's, neither for good or for ill intent. Those marked with Healing runes can heal others with ease, but can never benefit from the same; those marked with Death runes are often feared by even other Kantarin, for they are seen as deathless bringers of doom. Some few are marked with Runes yet unnamed, and none know what powers they possess.



# EABA

In all cases, the powers of the Adorned are often at the whim of the rain forest, and most never travel far, or for long, away from their homeland unless they are specifically called to do so. The constant flux of energy between their bodies and minds, and that of the jungle, also takes a serious toll on them, mentally and physically, and many find themselves drained, pained and suffering from early deaths, all in service to a greater power. Most are happy to do so, knowing that they have contributed, in some small way, to the life of the jungle.

**Shaper** - The armies of other nations rely on their blacksmiths and stoneworkers to craft immense machines of steel and rock, suits of chain and plate armor, and hardened weapons of destruction. The Kantarin know that the most durable materials are not to be dug from the ground, but to be shaped and harvested from above it. A tree can resist the blow of an axe better than most metal armors, and even a blade of grass, over time, can burrow through solid stone. All Kantarin are aware of this, but only the Shapers among them have truly mastered the arts of harvesting such power for general use.

Shapers are always growing, tending, planting and harvesting, most of their work done while the item they are working with is still a living part of the jungle, rooted to the ground in one form or another. In a variety of ways (Runes, bamboo poles, ropes, clever watering cycles), they carefully, over weeks, months and years, manipulate the growth and development of those items to form the desired shape.

Knowledge of what plants grow in what ways is also key, for if the Shaper does not start with the correct material, they will not wind up with the correct end product. Kantarin bows, powerful, flexible and hard as steel, can be grown, fully formed, in a matter of weeks from the stalks of one variety of plant that grows deep in the heart of the Kantarin rain forest. Kantarin shields and armor are formed from the thick, spiny leaves of a certain tree, which, when layered properly, can turn aside sword and spear alike. Less powerful and resilient weapons and implements can even be grown overnight with the proper seeds and herbal fertilizers, allowing a Shaper to arm an entire cohort in a matter of days.

While the rain forests of the Kantarin are filled with natural resources, there are no great quantities of metal or stone. Skilled Shapers are adept at not only finding the traces of these materials, but cleverly incorporating them into the objects they tend, grow and shape. Many Kantarin arrows appear to be made of nothing but wood and feathers, but are actually lined with razor sharp fragments of stone and steel, grown into the wood itself by the Shapers. Likewise, the Kantarin Stryders, carefully worked over many years with the assistance of the Melded, are not mere living trees, but conglomerations of wood, bone, rock, metal, and all the elements of the jungle combined. In many cases, the joints between different elements are so fine that no one other than a Shaper can discern where one truly becomes another.

## Kantarin Shaper(-1)(10A/70S)

**Strength:** 2d+1  
**Agility:** 2d+1  
**Awareness:** 3d+1  
**Will:** 4d+0  
**Health:** 3d+0  
**Fate:** 3d+2

**Skills:**

Climbing	+1d	Tattooing	+0d
Axe	+0d	Runelore	+0d
Light blade	+1d	Farming	+0d
Bonding	+3d	Healer	+0d
Scrounge(jung)	+0d		

**Traits:**  
Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
Additional 24A and 10S of Traits are required

Shapers are great thinkers, and when they are not tied down to their shapings, they are often on the move, wandering and searching for new plants and other natural items that they can shape in new ways. Some even venture far beyond the limits of the rain forest, recognizing that a whole world of strange new plants exists beyond, just waiting to be discovered and shaped.

▼ **Note** - There are many, many sorts of toxins available. In general, they will have a time level after which effects begin, and an effect that happens each time level after that, out to some maximum time. If you make a roll of a given difficulty on Health, the effect at a given time level is negated. Most poisons will do Hits, apply penalties to an Attribute, or both. If an Attribute is reduced to zero, it generally incapacitates a person. How nasty and how common you make toxins is up to you, as is who uses them and any sort of social stigma or legal backlash that can follow.

## Sivatagi Roles

**Reaver**(*Che've'ch in Sivatagi*) - Stryders are traditionally created from inanimate material, be it stone, wood or steel, and with two exceptions this holds true across the continent. Among Kantarin, the line between life and death blurs a bit, since they use living wood to shape their creations, and believe their entire ecosystem is one immense living being. But the Sivatagi are unique in that they use the creatures of the desert as their Stryders, taming, but neither creating nor growing the beasts.

### Sivatagi Reaver(-1)(90A/70S)

**Strength:** 3d+1  
**Agility:** 3d+1  
**Awareness:** 2d+1  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 3d+1  
**Fate:** 2d+1

**Skills:**

Spear	+1d	Anim. empathy	+1d
Riding	+1d	Navigation	+1d
Bow	+1d	Runelore	+1d
Siv. mtd comb.	+1d	Scrounge(des)	+0d

**Traits:**

Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 10A and 10S of Traits are required

The vast majority of the Sivatagi flock consists of giant arachnids and beetles, some of which are desert creatures, and some of which are mountain-dwelling or subterranean animals that the Sivatagi have bred desirable traits into. Collectively known as Pei'kh, these creatures are used by the Sivatagi for everything: some serve as pack animals, others as livestock, and still others as mounts and guard beasts. The largest of these latter are those chosen by the Sivatagi as their Stryders.

Reavers are those who break the spirit of these great beasts, training them and taking control of their movements. This is done in a variety of ways, the simplest being basic animal husbandry, and an understanding of the drives and desires of the Pei'ki. Subterranean varieties can be steered quite adeptly merely by covering up the eye(s) on one side of the creature, its instinctive desire to seek darkness causing it to veer in that direction. Other tricks involve other forms of sensory manipulation, leashes and collars, and, of course, Runes, used mostly on those creatures with chitinous carapaces that can better withstand the inscribing process.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Other nations do not consider the Reavers to be true Stryder Pilots, since they ride atop or even walk alongside the Pei'ki they control. However, the strong bond formed between a Reaver and their mount is just as strong and powerful as that formed between any other Stryder and the individual within. In addition, it is important to note that the Reavers often augment the capabilities of their mounts not only with Runes, but with additional armor, spikes and other deadly weapons, in much the same way as other nations modify their own Stryder contingents.

Reavers are most often seen riding at the edge of a tribe's domain, ensuring that the beasts within stay within, and those without keep their distance. As such, they seldom wander far, but at least once in every Reaver's life they undergo a ritual of adulthood, travelling far and alone to capture a beast, tame it and make it their personal Stryder. While Reavers can and often do ride many different Pei'ki as the times require, this first bond is stronger than any others, and given a choice a Reaver will always choose to remain with their own Stryder.

**Hunter**(*Hukh'tech in Sivatagi*) - Though portions of the land inhabited by the Sivatagi are lush and fertile (particularly the Great Valley to the west), most reside in and move through the bleak landscape of the Eastern Desert. The harsh terrain makes life difficult, but not impossible, for there are those among the Sivatagi people trained to track down and draw out resources from beneath the sand, salt and stone, including water, food and more.

### Sivatagi Hunter(+0)(92A/75S)

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 4d+0  
**Awareness:** 2d+0  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 2d+2  
**Fate:** 2d+1

**Skills:**

Stealth	+1d	Mimicry	+1d
Spear	+1d	Tracking	+1d
Bow	+1d	Scrounge(des)	+0d
Entanglement	+2d		

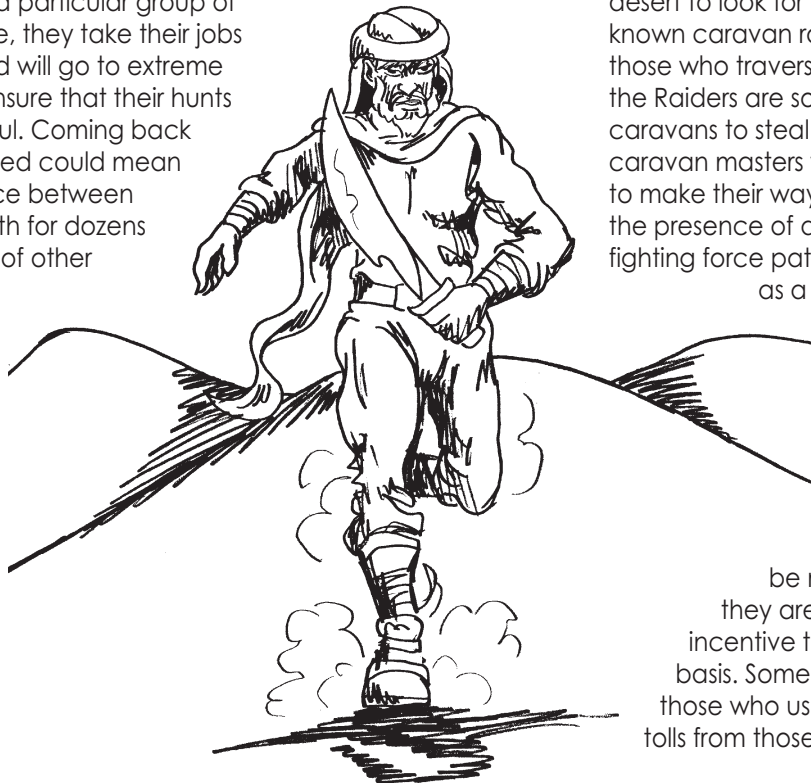
**Traits:**

Experience(wearing armor)  
 Keen senses  
 Additional 12A and 15S of Traits are required

Sivatagi Hunters are quick and smart, their skills based as much on acquired knowledge and experience as raw instinct. Chosen from among their peers for their quickness and willingness to learn, much of their youth is spent among other Hunters, in the desert, removed from the rest of their people. This crash course means that the new Hunters must learn quickly (as death is often being the price for failure). They also quickly learn to bond with their fellow Hunters in Packs, learning to work as a unit with their trusted fellows. Even when among other Sivatagi, Hunters rarely exchange pleasantries, preferring only the company of other Pack members. Often lots must be drawn to determine which of them will actually deal with others when such conversation is needed.

The duties of a Hunter are varied. The most obvious task is hunting down animals and insects, to be killed and used for food, shelter and clothing, or captured for use as mounts or livestock. However, Hunters also hunt down most everything else the Sivatagi need. They track down oases and can find water reserves beneath the sands, they gather fruits and berries from the scattered shrubs around the desert's edges, and they collect scraps of stone, metal and wood for use in building weapons, armor and larger structures.

As Hunters are often solely responsible for keeping a particular group of Sivatagi alive, they take their jobs seriously, and will go to extreme lengths to ensure that their hunts are successful. Coming back empty handed could mean the difference between life and death for dozens or hundreds of other people. Failure is never an option.



**Raider** (*Cha'dech in Sivatagi*) - Not everything the Sivatagi need can be obtained from the desert, particularly in lean times. Believing that the needs of their own people come before those of others, the Sivatagi are thus not averse to taking what they need from those passing through their area. Those Sivatagi who perform these rather unseemly duties are known among their people, and the rest of the world, as Raiders.

## Sivatagi Raider(-1)(105A/60S)

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

**Skills:**  
 Heavy blade +2d      Tactics +1d  
 Sivatagi bladef. +1d      Scrounge(des) +0d  
 Bow +1d  
 Tracking +1d

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Keen senses  
 Additional 25A and 0S of Traits are required

Strong and proud, yet willing to flee from battle if it goes against them, Sivatagi Raiders operate independent of any outside direction, roving the desert to look for easy prey and patrolling along known caravan routes. This is a mixed blessing to those who traverse such routes. On the one hand, the Raiders are sometimes prone to attack such caravans to steal needed goods, leaving the caravan masters with just enough food and water to make their way back to civilized lands. However, the presence of a semi-organized, highly skilled fighting force patrolling the trade routes also serves as a means of security and protection.

There are worse dangers in the desert than the Sivatagi Raiders, and it is not unheard of for a group of Raiders to actually come to the rescue of a caravan under attack by the giant beasts that roam the desert. Of course, Raiders might be much more open to assisting if they are given financial and material incentive to do so, particularly on a regular basis. Some of the most successful Raiders are those who use the threat of violence to collect tolls from those passing through their lands.

For several obvious reasons, Sivatagi Raiders are primarily encountered along the fringes of their territory, where their lands border those of others. There would be little point to raiding their own towns, after all. Because they live and operate on the outskirts of the deserts, Raiders thus tend to be somewhat more open to new ideas and customs. Many learn to speak the languages of others, or adopt unusual habits of dress and mannerisms. In some cases, this is a sign of a particular Raider's willingness to deal with those outside of his own kind. In other cases, it is merely one more way a cunning Raider can lure outsiders close enough for the rest of his crew to assault them.

While Raiders do keep some of their booty for themselves, most of what they gather is either given to the Sivatagi they meet in their journeys, or carried back to the main Sivatagi stronghold at the heart of the desert. Once there, the loot can be sorted and then distributed more evenly across Sivatagi lands, usually with the assistance of other Raiders.

**Masasan** (*Sha'sakh in Sivatagi*) - It is from the term Masasan that the Divaros derive their word assassin, meaning one who kills other individuals for money. In the Sivatagi tongue, however, the word refers to the immense stone plateau that, by itself, rises up out of the heart of the Eastern Desert. It was this great rock, known as the Masa (a variant of the Divaran word mesa), upon which the Sivatagi built the fortress known as the Masasan (from Mesa + Sen, Soul), a towering palace of stone, sand and glass symbolizing the spirit of the people who lived within. Early on, most of the Sivatagi fled to the Masasan to escape the pursuit of the Divaros, but over time, as they spread across the surrounding desert, the fortress became more of a symbol, and less of a place of refuge.

Now, as then, those who guard and protect the Masasan bear its name for themselves, the individuals being considered an extension of the fortress, an extension of the rock, an extension of the very desert itself, and thus a symbol of everything the Sivatagi stand for. Throughout its history, the Masasan has been assaulted at least a dozen times, but it has never fallen, its sturdy, multi-layered walls, steep rock face and remote location making it difficult to assault.

The strength of the fortress also has much to do with the skills of the Masasan themselves, trained from youth in the arts of both siege and defense, the argument being that one must know how to break in before one can know how to prevent entry.

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The Masasan architects maintain the fortress's outer walls, as well as the labyrinth of trapped tunnels that lie beneath it, with defenses changed on a weekly basis to keep potential spies from learning its secrets. Because of the nature of their devices, Masasan are also experts in the art of trapmaking, the intricacies of poison, and the use of a variety of weapons.

### Sivatagi Masasan(-1)(87A/85S)

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

**Skills:**

Heavy blade	+1d	Runelore	+1d
Siv. bladefist	+1d	Tactics	+1d
Bow	+1d	Trapwork	+1d
Interrogation	+1d	Stonemason	+1d
Scrounge(des)	+0d		

**Traits:**  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 7A and 25S of Traits are required

Their reputation as silent killers is not entirely unfounded, although it is certainly overstated. Since the Masasan are well-versed in how to keep intruders out of a fortified area, they are equally skilled in breaking into such areas, and this, coupled with their skill with weapons and venoms of all sorts, means that they are, from time to time, called upon to remove high-ranking enemy officials from power, permanently.

Somewhat paradoxically, the Masasan are also widely sought-after, both among their own kind and among other nations, for their skill with stonework (the term mason being a derivation of their name). Often, a Masasan will assist in the planning and construction of someone else's stronghold. This is a risky proposition for both employer and employee; the Masasan, after all, would then have knowledge of how to enter an enemy stronghold, putting that employer at risk. Likewise, the Masasan himself might be at risk of accidental death, since his employer might seek to bury his secrets with him, beneath tons of stone. Woe to the person who attempts such betrayal, and fails in the attempt. A *Masasan never forgets*.

**Sorcerer(Soch'ech in Sivatagi)** - The shifting sands of the Eastern Desert are not a place one often finds Runes or Runic magic. While the Sivatagi recognize the power of Runes, and know how to use them, there is simply not much cause to do so, the desert itself serving as ample defense in most situations. For some few Sivatagi, however, the call of the Runes is powerful, and they cannot ignore it. These Sorcerers will spend their lives searching the desert for secrets, answering the call of the magic within by seeking the magic without.

Sorcerers are dark, powerful and dangerous, to themselves as well as their enemies. The Runic magic they wield is as wild and unpredictable as the shifting sands they walk upon, the power coming on like a sandstorm and vanishing like a mirage thereafter. The unpredictable nature of the Runes is coupled by the fact that the Sivatagi intentionally shift the sounds of their language to better meet the needs of their anatomy and their surroundings. Since Runes are based on sounds, shifting the sounds in this manner can result in dangerous changes in the way the Runes function. At times, they will not work at all; at others, they will work with such potency as to threaten the life of the Sorcerer wielding the power.

As the Sivatagi are not keen on a written language, and since the desert sand is not a good place to inscribe magical carvings, Sorcerers never truly master the art of writing Runes. There are two notable exceptions. The first is in the case of Stryders, where Reavers and Sorcerers often work together to inscribe Runes into the thick carapaces of their mounts, giving them additional powers. The second is in the case of the Sivatagi stronghold at Masasan, where the guardians of that fortress labor constantly to inscribe immense runes in the sheer face of their citadel. In both cases, the Sorcerer requires the assistance of more patient hands to get things right. Many do not know how to write at all, and others are so enraptured by their magic that they have difficulty holding their hands still enough to inscribe properly.

## Sivatagi Sorceror(-1)(91A/75S)

**Strength:** 2d+1  
**Agility:** 2d+1  
**Awareness:** 4d+0  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 2d+2  
**Fate:** 3d+2

**Skills:**

Running	+0d	Preaching	+1d
Throwing	+1d	Mace	+1d
Carousing	+2d	Scrounge(des)	+0d
Runelore	+2d		

**Traits:**  
 Speaking forte(+1d on spoken runes)  
 Writing weakness(-1d on inscribed runes)  
 Additional 11A and 15S of Traits are required

Despite the fact that they are often seen as dangerous loners, Sorcerers are often the leaders of their particular tribes, as the Sivatagi recognize that with great power comes great intelligence, even if it also tends to breed insanity. In any case, such leaders are often absent from the day-to-day affairs of their tribe, being more concerned with trackless wandering in the desert in search of Runes.

▼ **Note** - Sivatagi Sorcerers gain one extra success on any spoken Rune as long as the attempt is successful, but lose one success on any attempt to scribe a Rune.

**Trader(T'chadech in Sivatagi)** - Filling the broad gap between the Hunters (who find food and materials) and the Raiders (who steal it from others) are the Sivatagi Traders. Their primary task in life is to trade for the goods and resources that the Sivatagi need to survive, but as a direct result of this they must always have on hand goods that others are willing to trade for. Thus, these wily, conniving, manipulative merchants have become known across the continent for two things: the unmatched ability to barter and the nearly magical power to always manage to find whatever it is others are looking for.



**Sivatagi Trader(-1)(107A/65S)**

**Strength:** 1d+2  
**Agility:** 3d+2  
**Awareness:** 3d+2  
**Will:** 3d+2  
**Health:** 2d+1  
**Fate:** 3d+2

**Skills:**

Mace	+1d	Zokili(spoken)	+1d
Navigation	+1d	Divaran(spoken)	+0d
Carousing	+1d	Roguery	+0d
Merchant	+2d	Scrounge(des)	+0d

**Traits:**

Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Additional 27A and 5S of Traits are required

Traders travel in caravans, their retinue ranging in size from just a few assistants and bodyguards up to several hundred Sivatagi. The smaller caravans are most likely to make the frequent journeys to and from the Masasan, dropping off goods for distribution throughout the desert, and picking up stores of goods that they can trade to others along the edges of the desert. The largest caravans are the most often seen outside of the desert, often travelling for days into other countries in order to set up outside of major cities.

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In these places, the Sivatagi are seen as somewhat of a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they have attained a reputation as being thieves and scoundrels, dragging rogues, fortunetellers, pickpockets and other debauchery in their wake. On the other hand, a Sivatagi caravan always seems to give a boost to the economy when it arrives, laden with precious materials that the Traders are all too willing to let go in exchange for food, clothing and other mundane items.

The truth of the arrangement, as most Sivatagi and some others are aware, is that the Traders are often merely selling back goods that Raiders and other Sivatagi have taken by force and guile in the past. Steal the king's crown and then sell it back in exchange for food, in other words. Even those who know what is going on tend to overlook it, however, for the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. Far better to deal with Traders than to try and track down Raiders, who can vanish into the desert like a stray breeze. Also, the Traders are savvy enough to not sell "acquired" goods in the same town that they originated from. Competing Traders will often cross paths in the wilderness and exchange goods and information, deciding what rumors to spread about each other, and trading goods amongst themselves that they cannot trade elsewhere.

For instance, two Traders who regularly visit two different towns, may have an arrangement where neither will ever visit the other's "territory". So, while people in the towns know that Raiders often hit their caravans, the people in one town know that "their" Trader is a "good guy", because he never has anything for sale that was stolen from their town. Their plundered goods are always in the hands of that rotten so-and-so who trades with the *other* town.

*And vice versa.*

Because they are fond of companionship, color, noise, and dealings with non-Sivatagi, the Traders are often looked down upon by others of their kind. They prefer not to use violence or power to get what they need, and this makes them weak in the eyes of some. For those who truly know what a skilled Trader can do, however, there are no such accusations. These wiser men know that the Traders are the lifeblood of the Sivatagi people. The desert cannot provide everything that the people need, and the Traders are there to fill in the gaps.

**Wanderer**(*Vakh'dech in Sivatagi*) - The Sivatagi Sorcerers often venture out into the desert in search of magic and power, and return wreathed in chaos and insanity. The Wanderers also seek power and wisdom in the desert, but they walk in the opposite direction. Or, as a Wanderer would say, "The Sorcerer walks along the path to find wisdom; the Wanderer sits and lets the path walk beside him."

## Sivatagi Wanderer(-1)(98A/65S)

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

### Skills:

Running	+0d	Scrounge(des)	+1d
Siv. bladefist	+2d		
Staff	+2d		
Runelore	+1d		

### Traits:

Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 18A and 5S of Traits are required

Wanderers are far from mere slogan-spouting mystics, however. They are powerful ascetics, made strong in mind, body and spirit from their deep, lengthy meditations and exercises among the sand. A Wanderer might vanish into the desert wearing nothing but a loincloth, and return two months later, having not only survived by eating nothing but scorpions and beetles, but having learned from the experience. Such wisdom is not the same sort that the Sorcerer seeks – quite the opposite. Where the Sorcerer seeks power and magic that he can wield, the Wanderer seeks union with the world, allowing the power to work through him, allowing the desert winds to wield them.

The origins of such deep spirituality among such Sivatagi are unknown, but the effects of this deep, heartfelt union with nature cannot be denied. Sivatagi Wanderers have powerful minds and spirits, and can withstand immense amounts of pain and physical abuse, going for weeks without eating or drinking, and even shaking off sword thrusts or injuries that would incapacitate or kill others. They are also capable of great physical feats, moving with the speed of the desert wind, and acting with the strength and power of blasting sand.

Sivatagi Wanderers are not, however, prone to rash actions or quick decisions. They do not believe in revenge or retribution as most see it, preferring to think about the ramifications of their actions before they go through with them. If attacked, they will certainly defend themselves, but if they have the chance to meditate on the choices that lie before them, they will always do so.

One story tells of a young female Wanderer who watches her entire family killed before her eyes before she herself was violated by Divaros soldiers. Left to die, she wandered into the desert to meditate on life. Five years later, she reappeared, quietly tracked down the soldiers one by one, and killed each with a small twig she had stumbled across among the sand.

Wanderers are greatly respected by other Sivatagi, even if their actions are not entirely understood. In part, they are treated thusly because they do not preach, do not lead by sermon or parable. They lead by example, believing that the path to wisdom can only be found inside, by those who choose for themselves. Though those who choose to follow are welcome to tag along, though all must learn for themselves, and ultimately, all must walk alone in life.

### Suggested Runes

Control: *Ej* and *Ess*  
 Effect: *Nhet* (energy), *Lhei* (life), *Enn* (hard),  
*Pei* (power), *Fas* (speed), *Thurn* (pain)



## Draslander Roles

**Stomper** (*Styompah in Dras*) - Draslanders have access to a plethora of natural resources, but not of the sort that enables them to make good Stryders; vines, hair and snakeskin only hold together until the core materials rot and decay, after all. For this reason, the Dras are almost entirely dependent on scavenging, theft and trade (the latter quite infrequent) to gather the raw materials they require to make Stryders.

### Draslander Stomper(-1)(90A/85S)

**Strength:** 3d+1  
**Agility:** 3d+1  
**Awareness:** 2d+1  
**Will:** 3d+1  
**Health:** 3d+1  
**Fate:** 2d+1

**Skills:**

Running	+0d	Acrobatics	+1d
Swimming	+0d	Throwing	+2d
Mace	+1d	Stryder club	+1d
Dras.kneebiting	+1d	Bonding	+1d
Scrounge(swp)	+0d		

**Traits:**  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 10A and 25S of Traits are required

Since the materials to which they have access come from the Stryders of other nations and peoples, the most immediate and obvious problem is one of size. Draslanders are quite a bit smaller and skinnier than any other race, and as such most of them are, in fact, too small to effectively operate a Stryder. For this reason, in exactly the opposite fashion of other races, those chosen to man the Draslander Stryders are the largest and strongest of their kind. Topping the scales at over forty kilograms in weight and up to one point three meters in height, they are so massively proportioned when compared to other Dras that they have been given the only appropriate moniker - Styompah (or Stomper).

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Though they are quite large and strong for their kind, Styompahs are still typically a bit undersized for the Stryders they are given to ride, many dug out of swampy pits into which lost pilots have wandered and drowned. Though the piecemeal captured machines are often sized down, extra padding is usually needed to keep the poor Styompah from rattling around in the cockpit (rumor has it that the deceased former pilots of the Stryders make excellent padding).

Coupled with the fact that the Stryders, rusting and molding, are often held together with second-hand parts, vines, ropes and twigs, the lifespan of a captured Stryder is usually quite short. As such, the machines are usually put into use the moment they are captured, sent on raids and suicidal missions as suits the times.

This particular combination of circumstances puts the Styompahs in an uneasy situation. On the one hand, they are forced to plunge into battles in Stryders with little training or practice, hoping that the machine holds together long enough to make it to and from the target. On the other hand, should their Stryder seize up or fall apart, the strong, capable Styompahs are the best suited to defending themselves deep within enemy territory.

Because of all this, Styompahs are excellent warriors as well, typically suited with heavy armor and an assortment of weapons, both homegrown and captured. Taking out a Styompah's Stryder is only half the battle - the easy half, in many cases.

**Sword Swinger** (*Syowd Wingah in Dras*) - The Draslanders have no easy access to metal of any sort, or even wood or stone. Many of the weapons with which they have the most practice are natural ones - tooth and claw, both their own and those stolen from the slower, dumber inhabitants of the swamp. In addition, most Draslander prefer to resort to trickery and guerrilla-style fighting, using hit-and-run tactics, toxins and poisons and cunning to win the day and then run away.

# EABA

But these sorts of weapons and tactics are no match for a full-fledged assault on the enemy, nor a last-stand defense of their home environment. When necessary, there are always a few Draslanders around who have spent extra time practicing with the stolen and pilfered weapons of their enemies, or crafting and shaping their own devices from the pebbles and driftwood that wash up on their swampy shores. Known as Syowd Wingahs (Sword Swingers), they are often the difference between total defeat and a chance for the future.

## Drasl. Sword Swinger(+0)(107A/60S)

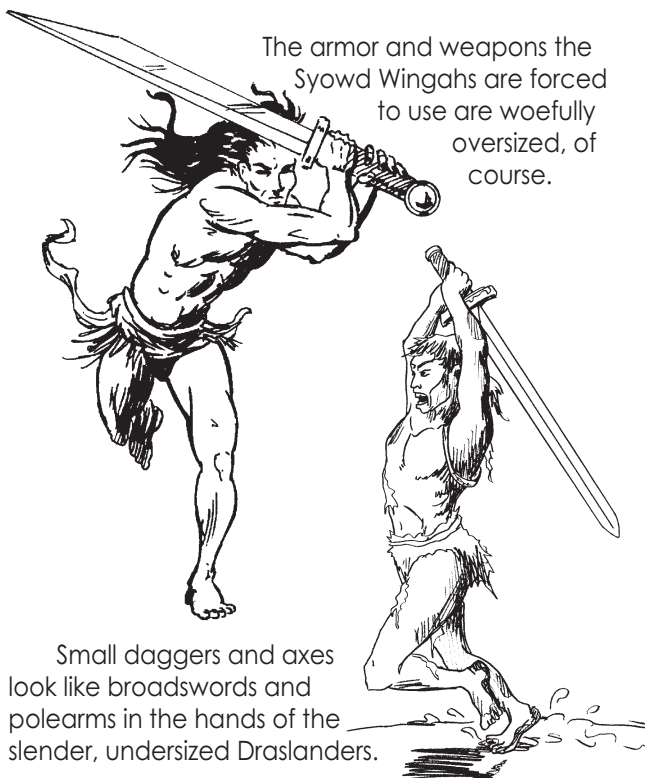
**Strength:** 3d+1  
**Agility:** 3d+1  
**Awareness:** 2d+2  
**Will:** 2d+2  
**Health:** 3d+0  
**Fate:** 2d+2

### Skills:

Dras. kneebiting +1d      Scrounge(swp) +0d  
 Light blade +2d  
 Dras. disarm. +1d  
 Tactics +1d

### Traits:

Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 27A and 0S of Traits are required



Larger swords are often taller than the Dras wielding them. At first glance, the pitiful little Syowd Wingah lurching out of the swamp wielding a sword twice his own size seems a laughable sight, but when that Draslander wields the sword with a degree of skill and splits your skull in half, who gets the last laugh? Probably no one; the Syowd Wingah will not have time to laugh, since he will be happily pilfering your corpse for new weapons.

Syowd Wingahs are no match for the better-trained, better armed, better armored fighters of other armies, and they will be the first to admit it.

They prefer to run away rather than charge into battle, to dodge and hide instead of attack, to lead their pursuers into a swampy morass and then chop at their heads when the playing field has been leveled. To other races, they are dirty little fighters. Among their own kind they are heroes.

**Spell Flinger** (*Spyef Lingah in Dras*) - The Draslanders are known for being illiterate, baby-talking primitives. Most people would not consider them capable of using Runes, as their language and speech impediments prevent their forming even simple rune words.

## Draslander Spell Flinger(+0)(107A/70S)

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

### Skills:

Running +0d      Throwing +1d  
 Spear +1d      Runelore +1d  
 Stealth +1d      Tactics +0d  
 Acrobatics +1d      Scrounge(swp) +0d

### Traits:

None, but 27A and 10S of Traits are required

These people would be mistaken. While it is true that the Dras have a very twisted dialect and are nearly incomprehensible to members of the other races, a rare few of the outcast swamp-dwellers have studied Runes, and can be quite dangerous. They pore over texts and scrolls stolen in raids or provided by Tall Talkers, copying these texts onto wood planks and stone tablets to store their knowledge for future generations. The sons and daughters of Spyef Lingahs are often the most likely candidates to study the Runic arts, carefully shaping the words of power and scrawling them on tree bark or bone.

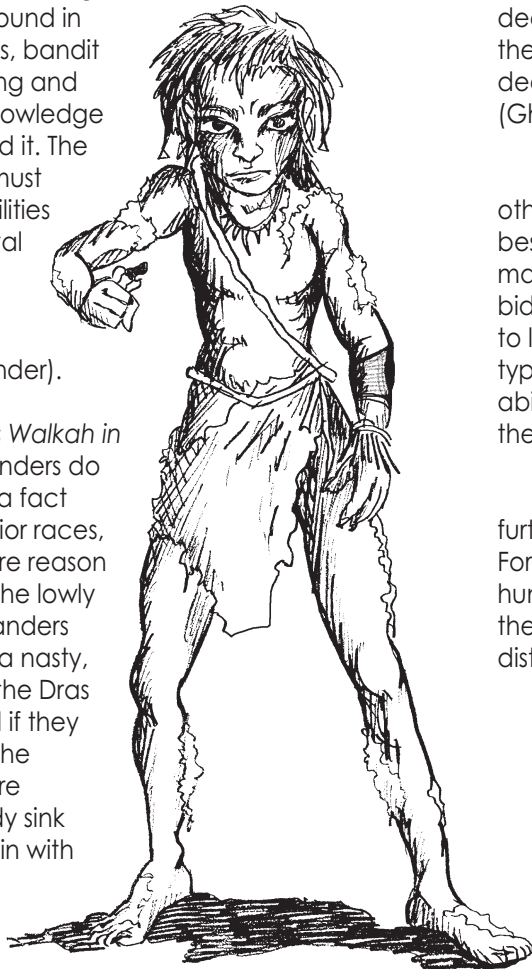
It should be noted, however, that Spyeſ Lingahs still speak in the stunted slang of the Dras. They just know how to pronounce the Runes properly, having trained relentlessly to carefully speak these few powerful phrases. Since they have to study so hard to master them, they often speak them clearer and with more understanding than the other races do.

Learning new Runes can be very difficult for a Spyeſ Lingah. The Runes to which they have access are limited by what they can steal or glean from teachers. The Runes scrawled onto wood or bark quickly deteriorate in the swamp, and the general disorganization of the Draslanders as a whole makes it difficult to retain even the stone tablets used to store this knowledge for the future.

The role of any particular Spyeſ Lingahs depends entirely on the Runes they know. Those with a preponderance of attack Runes may accompany Sword Swingers or Stompers on raids, while those with more utilitarian Runes may service their tribes in a support capacity, keeping fires burning or healing the sick.

A few Spyeſ Lingahs are turned out by their tribes to learn more Runes and bring the knowledge back to the Dras. These roving adventurers may be found in mercenary companies, bandit gangs, or simply running and hiding and stealing knowledge wherever they can find it. The roving Spyeſ Lingahs must possess a range of abilities that ensure their survival outside their native swamps, and are generally very well rounded (for a Draslander).

**Ghost Walker** (*Gos Walkah in Dras*) - That the Draslanders do not bury their dead is a fact known to all the superior races, serving as yet one more reason to scorn and despise the lowly beasts. That the Draslanders eat their own dead is a nasty, untrue rumor. In fact, the Dras would bury their dead if they could, but residing in the swamp, it is simply more efficient to let the body sink into the morass to rejoin with nature.



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### Draslander Ghost Walker(-1)(98A/75S)

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 2d+2  
**Awareness:** 2d+1  
**Will:** 4d+0  
**Health:** 3d+1  
**Fate:** 3d+0

**Skills:**  
 Running +0d      Tracking +1d  
 Swimming +0d      Leadership +1d  
 Stealth +0d      Spirit empathy +3d  
 Mace +1d      Scrounge(swp) +0d

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Additional 18A and 15S of Traits are required

Despite their somewhat too-practical view on the relative unimportance of the physical body, Draslanders, like the other races, do believe in and respect the presence of a spiritual body within the physical shell. Some few Draslanders even claim to be able to see, and to communicate with, their deceased brethren. Those who wander amongst the decomposing bodies, communing with the dead, are appropriately dubbed Gos Walkahs (Ghost Walkers).

Being able to thus see and communicate with otherwise invisible and inaudible spirits does not bestow upon the Gos Walkah any other special magical power. They cannot force spirits to do their bidding; neither can they summon the dead back to life, or create an army of undead shadows. As is typical of Dras society, the advantages of their ability are much more practical and appropriate to their situation.

The spirits of the dead are bound to wander no further than the area they covered while they lived. For most Draslanders, this is an area of a few hundred square yards of swampland, but for some the distance covered can be immense, ranging to distant shores and deep into enemy territory.

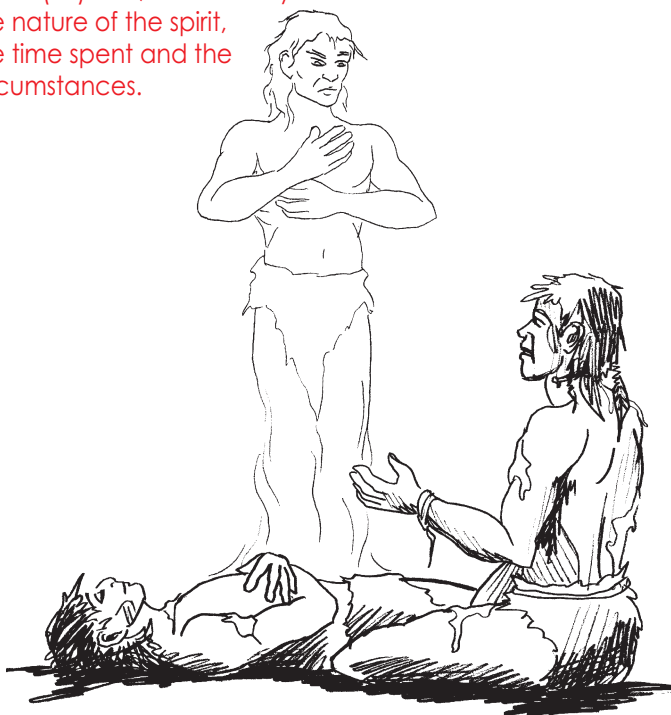


# EABA

Gos Walkahs are thus able to gather vast quantities of potentially useful information from even the recently deceased, coordinating the attacks of warrior Dras more effectively, hunting down materials, runes and enemy Stryders lost within the swamps, and moving their people safely when necessary; as the Draslanders say, "When danger teems, the swamp screams."

Gos Walkahs know this is literally true. Because of their ability to organize and direct based on exclusive information, and because they tend to be wanderers, moving around the swamp to commune with their dead brethren, the Gos Walkahs are often among the unofficial leaders of Dras society. The dead share what they know, and the living are all too eager to listen and follow orders from those who know more than they do. Non-Draslanders often assume that the Gos Walkahs are mere tricksters and con artists, but the Draslanders themselves believe when they are told that danger is near. Because a Gos Walkah is almost always right.

▼ **Note** - The "Spirit Empathy" skill of a Ghost Walker is closer to a Gifted ability than a skill, and can only be learned by a Dras. It allows the Dras to sense the spirits of Dras that have chosen to remain in this world, but they cannot be coerced. The Dras uses their skill to convince a sometimes reluctant, distracted or incoherent spirit to give up useful information. Assume the default difficulty for this is a Heroic(15) task, modified by the nature of the spirit, the time spent and the circumstances.



▼ **Note** - The peoples of Rhun have no real belief in an afterlife. There is no eternal reward, no eternal rest, no eternal punishment. They believe (correctly) that the gods have little interest in the affairs of men, and the notion that the gods cared enough to create an eternal home for human souls is so preposterous to Rhun's peoples that it has never even been considered.

However, there is no denying that magic and the supernatural do exist, and while most think that Dras ghost talkers are merely frauds, spirits of the dead do exist as a transient phenomenon. They tend to have more personality and durability if they ended their lives with something yet undone, but they have no power in the corporeal world, only those with Spirit Empathy can even detect them, and they slowly fade with time.

The peoples of Rhun do believe in the soul or something like it, but they believe that it, like everything else, is recycled, in this case into a spiritual, rather than biological ecosystem. Nothing so specific as reincarnation, merely the notion that the animating force of life is like the air they breathe, and it finds a new home in new life.

**Hoodoo Healer**(*Hodo Heeyah* in Dras) - When a Draslander is wounded, they are often left for dead. Nearby Draslander are typically not in a position to carry their wounded comrades to safety, being busy fleeing for their lives, and at any rate few possess the healing knowledge or ability to mend bones and bind wounds. For a small Draslander, even a relatively minor wound such as a broken limb can be fatal. But for the lucky few within reach of a Hodo Heeyah (Hoodoo Healer), there is hope for a slightly longer life, and a second chance.

Like Spyef Lingahs, Hodo Heeyahs are rare in their knowledge of Runes. But where a Spyef Lingah learns a wide variety of Runes, and voraciously hunts new ones, the Hodo Heeyah focuses their talents in a particular field – healing. Hodo Heeyahs learn their magical power from their teachers, who in turn got it from a Draslander before them, and so on back to the days long ago when Draslanders walked among the taller races, and knew the secrets of all the Runes. Since the knowledge would have invariably been lost to a people who possess no true written language, the ancient Dras chose instead to inscribe the secrets of the Runes in the one place that they knew would not rot, or be lost, or be forgotten: in the flesh of their students.

**Drasl. Hoodoo Heeler(-1)(98A/75S)**

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

**Skills:**

Running	+0d	Tattooing	+0d
Light blade	+1d	Teaching	+0d
Entanglement	+0d	Runelore	+2d
Bonding	+1d	Diplomacy	+0d
Healer	+1d	Scrounge(swp)	+0d

**Traits:**

Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Additional 18A and 15S of Traits are required  
 Permanently limited rune knowledge

Many races are known for tattooing runes upon their bodies in various inks, but only among the Dras has this devolved into ritual scarification and self-mutilation. With a sharp implement, an elder Hodo Heeyah literally traces the Runes from his own body onto that of his student. The student knows only a small handful of Runes, and will never learn more, but they are extraordinarily good at the few they know.

Since the teaching requires actual physical tracing and bloodletting, it can be a quite uncomfortable and painful process for the Hodo Heeyah's student, and many Draslanders would thus prefer to take up another occupation rather than be subject to the carving and hacking of a Hodo Heeyah. However, Draslander society provides considerable benefits for a Dras marked with the obvious Runes of a Hodo Heeyah, for there is almost always someone suffering from fever, snakebite, or infections in the swamp.

A Hodo Heeyah may be kept by a single tribe, with no responsibilities outside the physical well-being of their benefactors. All meals and lodging are provided, and all in the village give respect and honor to the person who could mean the difference between life or death for themselves or their families. Though they are not generally required to do so, a Hodo Heeyah assigned to a single tribe often shares with a Taw Tawkah the responsibility for teaching the tribe's children.

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Many Hodo Heeyahs are assigned to raiding parties or defensive groups, providing their abilities to keep their soldiers fighting. Some few, rare Hodo Heeyahs may even wander the swamps, providing their unique gift to any living creature they find.

A Hodo Heeyah starts with the ability to release any seven of the following Rune phrases at no cost in points, and may not learn any more:

*Xhei-ej* (Defend Chaos), *Nhet-ess* (Use Energy), *Lhei-ess* (Use Life), *Dhei-ej* (Defend Death), *Ain-ess* (Use Air), *Ull-ess* (Use Fire), *Un-ess* (Use Water), *Shei-ess* (Use Scent), *Chei-ess* (Use Taste), *Enn-ess* (Use Hard), *Ngei-eq* (Attack Blessing), *Thurn-ej* (Defend Pain), *Thurn-ess* (Use Pain), *Yon-ess* (Use Pleasure)

They may increase their Runelore skill, but this does not provide anything more than additional dice on Runelore skill checks.

**Tall Talker**(*Taw Talkah* in Dras) - Contrary to popular belief, not all Draslander are content to spend their entire lives in the fetid swamps they call home. Some choose to wander the lands of the larger races, either for self-gratification or for the benefit of Dras society. They are the Taw Talkahs (Tall Talkers), those who bring back stories of the taller races to their people. Half of what they bring back is valuable information. Half is pure bunk and fantasy, tall tales to entertain young Draslanders. Both sorts of information are highly prized.



These few who leave to wander the outside world are typically among the tallest and most normal looking of their kind, able to pass for a Divaros child or a tall Zokili citizen through benefit of normal skin tones (or the ability to disguise themselves more effectively). More than a few Taw Talkahs are known to those they walk amongst as Draslanders, either having been captured for entertainment or torture, captured and used as a slave, or, rarely, befriended by those more tolerant than society at large.

Taw Talkahs are much more skilled at language than normal Dras, and are able to learn and mimic the languages of others quite effectively. Some few are even able to learn to write, and thus to inscribe and use Runes; such knowledge is more highly prized than anything, and is typically brought back to those who can better use it, such as Spyef Lingahs and Hoodoo Healers.

### Draslander Tall Talker(-1)(92A/70S)

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

**Skills:**

Mace	+1d	Carousing	+1d
Sleight of hand	+1d	Divaran(spoken)	+0d
Light blade	+1d	Any trade	+1d
Storytelling	+1d	Scrounge(swp)	+0d

**Traits:**

Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Additional 12A and 10S of Traits are required

Taw Talkahs also learn a lot more from those they live amongst, picking up the habits and skills of those they observe, for good and ill. Since they tend to skulk in the shadows, more than a few learn to become thieves and criminals of all sorts. Those who live in more hospitable conditions might learn a wide assortment of other skills, from farming to forgery, from Stryder construction to castle construction. They have a voracious appetite for information and knowledge, and will never turn away from an opportunity to learn more about the world from which they have so long been excluded.

**Grub Grower**(Gub Gowah in Dras) - Other races have stonemiths and metalsmiths, each specializing in the construction and formation of equipment and devices that are of use by other members of their societies. Since Draslanders lack a steady supply of natural resources, relying instead on scavenging for spare parts, they have no need for such an artisan in their society. Filling such a niche are those who can provide the one thing that Draslanders truly need more than anything else - food. They are the Gub Gowahs (Grub Growers).

Despite the name, Gub Gowahs do not necessarily grow anything, and neither do they necessarily cultivate grub (or grubs; in the case of the Draslanders, grubs are often good grub). Being natural pragmatists, many areas of Dras society are intermingled, and so providing food goes hand in hand with providing many of the other needs that a Dras village might have.

### Draslander Grub Grower(+0)(104A/70S)

**Strength:** 2d+0  
**Agility:** 2d+2  
**Awareness:** 2d+0  
**Will:** 4d+0  
**Health:** 3d+0  
**Fate:** 3d+0

**Skills:**

Swimming	+1d	Light blade	+0d
Climbing	+0d	Bonding	+1d
Axe	+1d	Mimicry	+0d
Stealth	+0d	Farming	+1d
Hunting	+0d	Scrounge(swp)	+0d

**Traits:**

Strong will(+1d vs. runes)  
 Additional 24A and 10S of Traits are required

For example, a Gub Gowah might tend a group of giant lizards, raised not only for their meat and eggs, but for their thick, scaly hides, used for shelter and clothing, and for their tough teeth and nails, used as weapons and building materials. Another Gub Gowah, or perhaps the very same, might also choose to cultivate a patch of mushrooms or glowing fungus, providing not only food but a source of healing or light (respectively). Others might specialize in capturing and milking snakes for their venom, to be used on weapons, or in attracting swarms of insects, used to provide protein as well as to attract larger beasts who feed on the bugs, and who in turn are fed on by the Dras.

The truth of the matter is that many Dras do not really understand how their Gub Gowahs come by the products they provide to the village, and most do not care. Gub Gowahs use their innate cunning and skill to do what needs to be done, and to think up new ways to do it when the old ways fail. They are the first to explore new territories, and thus often the first to come across dangerous situations that need to be reported. Considered strange even amongst their own people, typically covered in strange fungi or surrounded by a swarm of biting insects, they are often able to escape from danger simply because they are so unpredictable and unusual.

▼ **USING THE ROLES** - With very little modification, these roles can be used for most of the people adventurers will meet. Most of them are slightly more able than starting adventurers, making them good for use as a superior officer in a mercenary company, local officials, competent guards, skilled crafters or smiths and so on. For the roles which are not specialized in combat, it is a simple matter to adjust the primary skill to reflect a particular profession, or add a few specific runes to give the person an interesting twist. Making less competent extras is simply a matter of dropping key attributes by a point and key skills by -1d.

When using a role, either as an extra or as a template for an adventurer, remember the context of their location. If the campaign is beginning in Divaran territory and you are playing a Kantarin role, why? What brings you into Divaran territory, and how will you get by? Given the antipathy many nationalities have for each other, you may often need a well-thought out reason to play an outsider in a possibly hostile land. Again, this is where mercenary companies come in handy as a tool for the gamemaster. If someone hires a company, they hire the whole company, even if individual members are "undesirables". Other potential cover could be diplomatic status, official messengers, merchants (or their guards) and so on.

The gamemaster and players should work together to figure out why everyone begins the campaign where they are. And where it goes from there is anyone's guess...

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▼ **BREACH** - "Dead," said Adour, staring in the mirror. He repeated it, liking the sound. "Jonan Marle-Thon is dead." He turned to face the Zokili in the chair across the room, smiling as he walked slowly back over, sipping at his celebratory drink. He raised the glass in a mock toast, dribbling some of the imported wine, heavy, thick, and expensive, on his chest, where it ran like blood onto the floor.

"Lovely wine, Adour. Thank you for bringing it. Unfortunately, it has a tendency to stain." He wiped it away, smearing it into the weave, smiling. The Zokili grinned back.

It had not gone perfectly, but then, these things never did. There were always mistakes. The first had been entrusting that wretch Thomis and his gaggle of hired hands to make the initial hit. That had nearly been the end of it, half of his crew being taken out in the first few seconds by the town guard, the other half scrambling for cover when it got heavy. Exactly how Thomis had managed to actually snatch the child in the midst of the chaos was a mystery, and was the only reason he had not killed the man outright.

Which, in retrospect, would have been a much better idea. He should never have let Joachim convince him to leave the man in the sewer. He may have deserved a slow death, but it was a loose end, and now with Thomis and the Mage both gone missing, it was getting looser by the second.

But of course, not everything had gone badly. In fact, all things considered, it had gone better than it should have. The child was gone, probably still alive, but out of the picture all the same. That had caused his father to miss the all-important vote, albeit in a different way than had been expected. And quite unexpectedly, the elder Jonan had succeeded in getting himself killed altogether, along with a major portion of his power base. If nothing else, the entire night had been worth it just for that.



But there was something else. The reason behind it all in the first place.

Adour pulled a chair from beneath the table, reversing it to sit in front of the Zokili.

"Jonan is dead, and the vote is cast. And that means the Zokili will get their tariff reduction, as we agreed." He tossed back the rest of his drink, and threw the empty glass across the room, where it shattered beside the fireplace.

"Unfortunately, Ambassador Danyl, you won't be one of the beneficiaries of that agreement." The Ambassador grinned back. At his side, a half empty mug hung, limply.

"I know you can hear me in there, Danyl. That's how the Rune works. Taints the wine, which taints the mind. You can't move, can't speak, can't do anything but listen, and grin your stupid grin."

In a fit of anger, Adour leaned forward and slapped the Zokili in the face. His body fell to one side, striking the armrest of the chair, the mug of wine sloshing onto the floor, spilling its last on the carpet.

"Nothing personal, of course," said Adour, standing to stagger back towards the wine bottle. "I just can't have anyone knowing the particulars of our little arrangement. It's bad enough I've got two of my own out there with ideas in their heads. Ideas they can't prove."

He paused to select another wine glass, carefully pouring the thick red fluid into the glass, spilling some more in his drunkenness. Unsteadily, he set the bottle back down and lifted the glass to his lips, spilling yet more on himself in the process.

"No, I can't let you live, Danyl," he said without turning.

"I'm so sorry to hear that," said Danyl.

Adour's eyes widened. In the mirror, he watched the Zokili Ambassador stand up, straightening his coat as he spoke.

"To think, we were such friends too. Oh, wait." Danyl paused, as if considering. "No we weren't." Adour turned, spilling the rest of his wine, forgotten. "You...the..."

"Please, Adour. What do you take me for? I may be half your size, but I'm twice your age. Runed wine mug? *Please.*" Danyl kicked at the mug that lay on the floor, spraying wine across the floor. "All one has to do is scratch the Rune before pouring. Easily done when a drunkard like you has his back turned.

Adour fumbled for words, his lips numb from wine and shock. He took a step forward in confusion and stumbled to his knees, eyes widening as the realization set in. He leaned back heavily against the counter, his eyes straining to peer up towards the bottle of Zokili wine which sat on the shelf. *How?* He had checked it himself. And it was of glass; where was the...

"The cork, in case you're wondering," said Danyl. "Very tricky. Hard to get right. But I know a young Kantarin fisherman who's perfected the art. Did you know they actually carve Runes into their flesh down there, Adour? Into trees, animals, fish, probably. Now that would be a sight. Runed fish."

He grinned. Adour did not; he was beyond being able to move, could only watch dimly, limply, as Danyl spoke, taking his time wandering across the room. He paused beside a wooden table, considered it, and then grabbed it by the legs, flinging it across the room to shatter on the far wall.

"Here's what happened, since you won't be around to figure it out. You were drinking heavily, celebrating your success with the vote. And quite unexpectedly, a group of Draslander assassins found their way up through the sewers, into your water closet. Where they came in here, found you drunk, and slit your throat."

"Like this."

Slowly at first, throbbing with Adour's fading heartbeat, the blood came, mingling with the wine on his clothing, pushing out through the razor-thin line on his throat. Adour could do nothing but die, staring at the Zokili standing above him. Danyl ignored his plight, considering the dagger.



"Honor to one's homeland, Adour. Loyalty, tradition, acting for the good of the whole. These are things you Divar know nothing about. Betraying your own kind, killing one another. It's shortsighted. You fail to see beyond yourself, to the future. A future in which you are no longer dominant."

Danyl crouched before Adour, lifting the fat man's throat to let the blood run freely, quickening his death. Then he settled back on his haunches and opened his shirt, baring his chest.

"I'm old, Adour. Old enough to have seen how far things have come over time. You think in years, but my people think in lifetimes. The change may not have come in my lifetime, but it will come with the next. And it will start here."

Without hesitation, Danyl reversed the dagger in his hand and drew it diagonally across his chest, cutting deep. He winced unconsciously, but committed to the cut. Whether or not Adour was still conscious enough to perceive this was now irrelevant. This was not for Adour. This was not even for Danyl. This was for the Zokili. *For the future.*

Danyl's second slash cut across his stomach, deeply, almost too deep, causing him to buckle in pain, nearly losing his grip on the now blood-slickened blade. Before the pain grew too great, he slashed at his own hands, then his face, finally falling on the dagger, piercing his heart and collapsing to the ground. With the last vestiges of his fading strength, he drew the dagger out and hurled it across the room towards the unlatched window, where an assassin might have fled. And then he collapsed.

The Draslander had stumbled across not only Adour, but the Zokili Ambassador as well. A battle ensued. Danyl fought bravely, wounding several of the Dras, before his own blade was wrestled from him and used against him. The Dras fled, no doubt heading towards their homeland with a stolen Zokili Stryder, leaving a clear trail to follow. The two Zokili Elyte he'd come with knew what they had to do. And Danyl trusted that they would do it, regardless of this nonsense about a Mage and a missing baby. They would do what was best for the Zokili. And, if necessary, they would give their lives to do so.

*As Danyl had given his.*

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It was several hours before the bodies were discovered, but only minutes from that point until Adour's supporters had gathered their forces, spreading out through the surrounding countryside to find the killers. Mercenary crews were enlisted in numbers never before seen by local residents. Mages broke down doors and interrogated the ignorant, petrified inhabitants. Diplomats quickly enacted new legislation to support the effort. Stryder crews fanned out to look for signs of an enemy Stryder that had been spotted in the area.

And then came the reports of one mercenary team, caught offguard by the killers, the sole survivor being the Stryder pilot himself. The Homonculus was questioned extensively, spilling a story of a powerful Mage, a one-armed monster, and a horde of tiny, slashing, fanged monsters who spilled from within their toad-shaped Stryder to decimate his entire crew in seconds. *Dras?* He thought so. Yes, but was he certain? Were they *Draslander?* Yes, they must have been.

A consensus was reached. The trail was hot. The largest mercenary contingent ever seen in the area was put together, to be headed by Judge Dexin himself, a brute of a man who wielded his measuring-staff with ruthless effectiveness. It was said he could split a man's skull with one blow, and he himself was heard to say, as the force moved out of the city, heading south for Dras lands, that he was eager to see how it fared against *Draslander* heads. Together, they would strike a blow for Adour.

It would be weeks, possibly months before the force would return. And it was within that time that the Zokili would strike their own blow. Not against the Dras, nor against the true prey.

*Against an undefended city.*



SCENARIOS



*The most likely path for a typical group of adventurers to take in the world of Rune Stryders is that of a group of mercenaries, either a small military company unto themselves, or a small part of a larger whole. Even if they never officially acknowledge this themselves, any group of individuals who wander the countryside selling their swords and talents to others are, in fact, mercenary in nature. Calling a spade a spade merely helps push things along down a road that makes sense in the world of Rhun*

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Adventurers who are from nations outside the Confederacy are also more likely to be welcomed as members of a mercenary company than anywhere else. Since most mercenary groups operate without permanent allegiance to any one Nation, they are quite open to accepting people from other cultures within their ranks. However, adventurers who are Draslander, Kantarin or Sivatagi should be careful not to openly flaunt their national origin too much; not all members of a company may be as open as others, and outside of the group, those of Outcast status will face severe persecution in some areas. An alternate solution is for gamemasters to restrict the choice of adventurers to those hailing from the Confederated Nations, at least until later in the gaming session, when it may become somewhat easier to introduce such adventurers.

▼ **WHAT LIES AHEAD** - There are no large standing armies in Rhun. Countries and city-states hire mercenary armies of professional soldiers to do their dirty work. At this moment in time, with the Confederacy trying to hold itself together, the Sivatagi massing in the Desert, and breaks from within tearing the Divaros nation apart, mercenary companies are needed more than ever. Some would have them try to hold the pieces together. Others would have them further widen the rifts to push things over the edge into open war. The path the adventurers take is up to them.

**Starting up** - The adventurers need not have met before the start of any of their adventures. Assuming that they are all members of a larger mercenary company, it is quite conceivable that they may simply have been picked from among the troops for a specific duty assignment. This allows the characters to already have a common goal when they meet, but still affords the group the opportunity to go through the paces as their characters meet one another, talk about themselves, and get to know one another.

▼ **SCENARIOS** - The following seven adventure scenarios are provided in a somewhat unique format, without specific statistics or descriptions, without numbered encounters leading adventurers along a path to an inevitable end. The nature of war in Rhun means that many different outcomes are possible, and the gamemaster should do his best to allow the players a great opportunity to truly shape events. These scenarios need not play out in any specific way, nor do they need not happen in the order they are presented. Each of these scenarios features the following information:

**Situation:** This lays out the circumstances and events that have led to the current situation at hand, and the reason for the adventurers getting involved at all. This is information that the characters may very well be given before they actually arrive.

**Mission:** What the characters have been sent in to accomplish. Depending on the actions of the various participants, the actual outcome may change, of course.

**Background and Nuances:** A list of items detailing bits of information the adventurers may discover, suggesting possible motives for the actions of non-player extras involved in the Scenario, and offering several different possibilities for outcomes that may result from the adventurers' involvement.

Specific statistics for involved parties, lists of weapons and armor, etc. are not provided in these scenarios because the intent is to offer the gamemaster the most flexibility in crafting the Scenario in the direction he wishes to take it. Non-player extras in these scenarios should be adjusted to match the capabilities of the party. For instance, some skilled Rune users might find things too easy unless antagonists have appropriate defenses or countermeasures. Likewise, with the exception of Scenario Three (The Prison), the scenarios are not given any specific geographical locations; this allows a gamemaster to place the events wherever they feel would be most appropriate for the particular campaign they are running.

For your reference, statistics for several generic non-player extras can be found after the scenarios. For more specific or skilled opponents, select an appropriate role from the **Book of Roles**.

## The Iron Mine

**Situation:** The Ryversyde Iron Mine is an important regional industry and is the root source of income for most of the surrounding settlements. The mine property includes the mine excavation itself, an ore-refining furnace facility (called a bloomery), and a small village that houses and supports the workers.

However, this key resource is the subject of conflict. Recently, a scourge of raids began, conducted by armed and organized men whose identities have yet to surface. Initially, the raids just resulted in some pilfering from the mine's precious wrought iron production. Recently, a critical rise in the size of the thefts and even the deaths of several workers at the raiders' hands signaled the crisis is only intensifying. A serious labor dispute, underway before the raids began, has flared in the midst of the increasing danger.

The local authorities, a small handful of company-employed men and the Country Magister's tiny force of troops, are not combat professionals and are unable or unwilling to deal with the raider mercenaries.

The owner of the mine, the wealthy landholder Povitt-Lord Dane the Shadwyn, has posted notice seeking hired men to protect the mine from the raiders. A significant financial reward is offered.

**Mission:** The players' stated mission is to protect the mine property, the workers, and the raw refined wrought iron it produces from further attacks. Lord Dane suggests that if the raiders repeatedly face armed opposition they will likely abandon their raids and move on to other lands in search of easier prey.

**Background and Nuances:** The mine's laborers are quite vocal about their demands for higher wages, and though not exceptionally organized, they are a thorn in Lord Dane's side. They will share their grievances with anyone who cares to listen, and their demands are quite well known and sympathized with throughout the region. Direct force against them would only result in losing his labor pool and as a result the collapse of the Mine, so Lord Dane has so far had no choice but to deal with them.

The raiders are mercenary men-at-arms, lightly armored but armed with quality weapons and professionally trained. They should present a serious challenge to the players if ever directly challenged. However, they will try to avoid direct conflict. Neither Lord Dane nor the laborers will admit to knowing who the raiders are, although both parties in fact do know.

The laborers and raiders are co-conspirators in a scam targeted at Lord Dane. The labor force ringleaders, which include the company men supposedly acting as law enforcement officials, are using the raids as leverage to get higher wages from Lord Dane, and are taking a cut of the proceeds from the stolen iron. The laborers already enjoyed higher-than-average wages prior to the raids and have been given generous increases since, as Lord Dane still makes enormous profits from the mine. However, both the miners and raiders are getting greedy, and Lord Dane is no longer willing to concede to their demands.

All but a limited number of miners are aware of the arrangement and are motivated to keep quiet as it directly profits them. However, there are honest men among them who believe too many lines have been crossed. Unfortunately for them, the ringleaders and raiders are more than willing to kill any dissenters; anyone presenting such a risk to the scheme has been coincidentally killed during the raids.

The raiders themselves are being paid by a third party, Lord Cadelant Vinicent of Erwayne. Lord Vinicent has financial interests which compete with the mine, and struck the original bargain which brought the raiders there. Though it was largely through luck that he happened to approach the very group of mercenaries about to set the scheme above in motion, the raiders made Lord Vinicent's choice easier by deeply underbidding all other competition. Of course, Lord Vinicent was and is completely unaware of the scam, and had no idea the raiders were going to do the same thing he was hiring them to do anyway.

A final involved party, Lord Jeln Heldervan, has laid formal claims to land near and above the mine, with strong historical credentials, that place most of the mine's choicest veins within his holdings. Lord Dane and Lord Jeln have publicly and bitterly contested this on many occasions, and most everyone is quite aware of their conflict. Lord Jeln plans to quietly approach the players with a lucrative offer to compensate them should they be less than successful in protecting Lord Dane's mine. The deal will be doctored to appear to originate from Lord Vinicent, though Lord Dane will assure the players that this is merely a precaution.

Though unaware of the scheme between the miners and raiders, Lord Dane is quite aware of Lord Vinicent's hiring the raiders, having been informed by another group of mercenaries who were bitter about being undercut. Lord Dane is working to twist this information toward his own favor. If he proves Lord Vinicent's involvement before the County Magister, especially with evidence implicating him as hiring men who have murdered others for pay, then Lord Vinicent will be stripped of his holdings, wealth, and title and jailed for piracy. Of course, Lord Dane would receive the lion's share of that fortune as compensation, which would be no small windfall. Of course, Lord Vinicent will go just about any length to prevent his own undoing, while Lord Dane is will to undergo a bit of risk and expense to cause it.

Secretly, Lord Dane and Lord Jeln are blood relatives and have intertwining fortunes that are more valuable if kept separate. They work hard to conceal this secret and staging public battles has thus far been a very successful tactic.

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Having been unable to connect the raiders to Lord Vinicent (or even get close enough to the raiders to invent the proof), Lord Dane has actually hired the players to take the blame and draw in Lord Vinicent. Lord Jeln's offer is calculated to make the players appear to be in conspiracy with the raiders and Lord Vinicent. If Lord Jeln is accused, he could easily deny his involvement because the obvious outcome (transfer of Lord Vinicent's fortune to Lord Dane) would hardly be believed to be in Lord Jeln's interest as Lord Dane's bitter opponent. Furthermore, by taking Lord Vinicent's wealth for himself, Lord Dane believes he will be drying up the raider's real source of income.

Should the adventurers not take up Lord Jeln's offer, Lord Dane will eventually seize upon any adventurer successes as an plausible excuse to blame them as conspirators. Any connection of the adventurers to Lord Vinicent will make them party to piracy as well, with similar consequences.

The laborers would be more than happy to have the adventurers take the blame for the raids; after all, any outside intervention only cuts their profits and influence. Several laborers would swear to the adventurers cooperation with the raiders given the opportunity.

If captured, the raiders would even fall in line, becoming especially cooperative and quite willing to point to the adventurers as the masterminds behind the whole scheme, especially if it meant lighter punishment. Aside from the obvious danger involved, it is for this reason that the raiders will be unwilling to attack the adventurers directly.

If the adventurers are ever put on trial, all parties will point out how coincidental it was that the adventurers showed up to offer assistance just as the scheme was growing more dangerous. Of course, if the situation does not look like it will resolve favorably for a particular party, having the adventurers caught and punished would "resolve" the situation, making further action of some kinds hard to justify (since the "masterminds" are all locked up). So, in some cases that turn out badly for the adventurers, a convenient escape might also be engineered. If the adventurers disappear from the area and escape "justice", blame for further actions can still be pinned on them, allowing the plots to continue even if the adventurers have fled to another part of the country.



## The Heirloom

**Situation:** The Star of Duandor is an exquisitely crafted family heirloom in the possession of Cyrillin Malbin, Esquire, and Municipal Secretary of the Exchequer.

Malbin's family line was once nobility of some importance but lost standing through the betrayal, mismanagement, and excesses of successive generations. Malbin is now the last of his line and heirless, struggling in a relatively lowly post as a civil administrator, and barely holding on to what little social standing he has left.

The Star of Duandor is a brooch, rich in jewels and charged with Runic magic, which has been passed from generation to generation in Malbin's family. Weighing more than half an Enan in precious stones and metals, the Star is very valuable as an art piece alone. But due to the powerful Runes engraved in the face of the jewels, the value of the Star is even greater. The Runic inscriptions are intended to be activated with a set of long-lost command words, the effects of which, though now unknown, are supposedly very potent and favorable for the Star's possessor (the game master can come up with a suitable effect that ties in with any long-term plot threads they have in motion).

The Star of Duandor is the last extraneous possession in Malbin's estate with any value, and with creditors knocking he has decided to sell it to keep the end at bay for a little while longer. Malbin arranged the sale of the Star of Duandor to the County Regent, Viscount Morlen Slestreven IV. The Regent is well-versed in Runic history and is known as an eccentric collector of runic artifacts.

Unbeknownst to Malbin, the Regent, while away on travel, heard the legend of a Runic charm, lavished with jewels and said to have the power to ensnare another person's affections. According to the legend, the power of this charm was so overwhelming that person would even face death rather than risk the love of the charm's wielder. While the account the Regent heard was vague, the Star of Duandor certainly might fit the description of the legendary charm.

The potential value of such an item to a Regent is so great that Slestreven could not bear to miss the chance to obtain it, however slim. Upon hearing Malbin intended to sell the Star, the Regent placed a bid that most might consider ludicrous. Strapped for currency, Malbin was more than eager to close the deal without considering any other offers. He arranged a secret deal with Slestreven and is preparing to make the transfer.

**Mission:** Macon Baddleport, a local merchant with some skill at dislodging secrets, has learned of the transfer through a well-placed informant in Malbin's estate. Having also learned of the connection to the charm legend, Baddleport has decided to lay hands on the Star and has even arranged a buyer. Baddleport has offered the adventurers an impressive sum of money (no doubt less than the Star's negotiated price) to obtain the Star for him. The adventurers are to be paid on delivery and Baddleport is not likely to put any money up front, to encourage them to follow through on a high payoff all-or-nothing proposition. Also, if things do not turn out well, if he has paid nothing to the adventurers, he can say under any form of compulsion that he never "hired" them.

**Background and Nuances:** The Star of Duandor is supposedly being transferred from the city to one of the Regent's manors in the nearby countryside, about two days' journey. Malbin's trusted men are said to be moving the Star by strongbox. Baddleport believes that the escort will be light, since Malbin cannot afford a large complement. Besides, the whole deal is supposed to be a secret.

Unfortunately for the players and the merchant, Baddleport's informant has been doubled - Malbin caught him passing information and threatened to have him executed unless he agreed to help Malbin. Having no loyalties other than financial gain, the informant quickly agreed. Malbin is therefore aware the merchant is after the Star, and has taken some precautions. Although the escort will be light, Malbin will send the strongbox with a rock inside. Having been the victim of Baddleport's theft before, (as have most persons of any kind of wealth in the region) Malbin has included a well-concealed and lethal trap in the strongbox, in hopes that the merchant will open the box and be done away with for good.

Malbin is cautiously awaiting the outcome of the strongbox delivery before he turns over the real Star of Duandor to the Regent.

Having little shame and plenty of greed, Baddleport's informant is also under the employ of the Regent. Since the Regent has the most money to keep him quiet with, the informant has so far kept this fact from Baddleport and Malbin. Even though Malbin knows the informant has access to his secrets, he has not learned how yet; the informant may still be able to supply the Regent (and even Baddleport) with useful information.

The Regent's bid is large, although within his financial means, but he does not intend to actually pay it. The bid is intended to allay suspicion if the Star is stolen. The Regent knows Baddleport is planning to steal the Star, and that Malbin is arranging alternate transportation for it. This information has created quite the opportunity for him; having Baddleport to blame for the theft is the perfect cover for his own people to steal the Star. In order to prevent the adventurers from falling into Malbin's trap and losing Baddleport as a scapegoat before the Star is exposed, the Regent will probably slip the adventurers a warning about the strongbox switch.

If the strongbox goes through unscathed, Malbin may lose faith in his informant. Realizing this, the informant will try to find something of use. If the players are not cautious, the informant may discover their involvement and offer this information up to save his own skin. Even so, the informant is likely to learn of the real delivery and that information should get to the players.

Malbin's security will never be adequate everywhere at once, since he cannot afford to pay for it. He has to choose between mediocre everywhere or strong in one place at a time. If they discover this, the players should be able to pick and choose a way to get access to the Star. If they do not pay attention, however, the players could face stiff resistance.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

Strongly believing that the Star is the legendary charm, the Regent will be very persistent about getting it. Even if the players do manage to obtain the Star from Malbin, the Regent might end up taking it from them in some way. The Regent's resources are expansive, although he cannot do anything too overt without drawing suspicion. The Regent plans to get someone else to take the blame in any case, so will be very cautious about how he goes about getting the Star.

Once the Star is taken, the only safe way to get rid of it will be through Baddleport's buyer. If the players try to do it anywhere else in the region, the Regent will find out. The players should be able to realize the danger through some kind of warning. However, getting the Star there should be a more difficult problem.

Anyone other than the Regent caught stealing the Star will be tried - by the Regent. Conducting court as the local authority, the Regent will certainly find in his own favor, whatever that may be. If the Regent is discovered, he will try to shift the blame to whoever is most convenient. Meanwhile, the Star might happen to disappear.

The Star of Duandor may or may not be the legendary charm. And, even if it is, the proper command words may never be discovered. *Or maybe they will.* In any case, the Star's Runes are very strong since they are engraved in precious stones.

### The Prison

**Situation:** The Isle of Sisian (See-shin) is a relatively uninhabited and extremely unfriendly piece of real estate far from the coast of the main continent. Known largely for the impenetrable and deadly wilderness covering nearly every part of it, the island is generally regarded as a place to avoid at all costs. It is often said that no one who has ever set foot there has ever returned alive. The few that others say have been there refuse to talk about it.

That is why a maximum security prison has been constructed on Sisian. The Fortress of Balin, a place where the unwanted and unredeemable are sent to be forgotten, has for many years been kept a total secret. The only free men who know of the prison are the powerful elite with the ability to condemn men there and the guards who are quietly recruited to preside over that hell made of stone.

One month ago, however, the secret ship that delivers Balin's prisoners and carries communication between the island and the mainland left and did not return. A second ship sent to investigate met with the same fate. The adventurers have been discreetly hired by the few who know of Sisian's skeletons to go to Sisian and discover what happened. Those few powerful men want to be certain that the existence of Balin remains a secret.

**Mission:** If possible, the adventurers are to restore order. If they are not successful, an invasion force is mounting to bury Balin's secrets forever.

**Background and Nuances:** The Isle of Sisian is every bit as deadly as the rumors suggest. Vicious and lethal creatures, plants, and terrain cover most of the island. Straying too far from the fortress is a good way to meet a quick death. The terrain and creatures are so much nastier than the mainland that the few who are inclined to ruminate on it think it might be an "evil" place, some forgotten or unknown part of Rhun's creation story, a place where things that "didn't work out" were exiled to, rather than simply being uncreated.

The Fortress of Balin is cut into the side of a rocky cliff, and from the outside has no visible outworks, just a handful of narrow arrow slits that look like pitting. The only distinguishing feature is a jagged rock just offshore that conceals a cave that is above water only for a few hours at low tide. The cave contains a landing and the main entrance to the fortress. It was the custom of the fortress guards to set a bonfire in the cliff above to signal the communications ship. However, when adventurers arrive they will find the smashed and charred wreck of the second ship at the base of the cliff instead.

Balin contains numerous twisting corridors, stairwells, chambers, and of course, prison cells, all tunneled from the rock. There are two entrances, one on the top of the cliff, and one in the sea cave landing. The guards knew other secret passages in and out, but they are no longer talking.

The prisoners of Balin are divided into two categories: heinous villains too dangerous to keep elsewhere, and people who have not committed any real crimes but are political liabilities. The former are responsible for the current situation in the prison - a complete takeover of the fortress by the prisoners - and have slaughtered the guards to a man.

The two classes of prisoner were kept separate and even prior to the prison break were aware of the differing reasons for their confinement. The political prisoners were also able to escape during the takeover, but the two groups have now split into hostile factions and are warily living in and around the fortress plotting escape from the island. Both sides are armed with light armor and weapons taken from the fortress stores.

The fortress itself has become just as dangerous as the outlying wilderness because of the fighting between the two sides, and both sides have dwindled to small groups of roughly twenty men each. Their fighting has turned to a slow battle of attrition and stalking.

When the adventurers arrive at the boat landing, the prisoners will stop fighting until they learn what the adventurers want. The landing (which contains the only truly feasible means of escape, the adventurer's boat) has become a no man's land to both sides, who each control half of the passages leading to it. As the water below the landing is teeming with predator fish, the bodies left after several skirmishes to secure the landing are now washed away and devoured.

Both factions have become paranoid that should they escape, the other would betray them once order inevitably became restored. Both sides have decided that they must eliminate the other before they can successfully leave. Neither side knows the true strength of the other, but both are convinced they are dealing with a small handful of survivors.

Both parties will recognize that the adventurers are a relief force for the powers that be, and may try to convince them that they are the guard force trying to recover the fortress after the prison uprising. Since they all have the guards' weapons and equipment, it should be hard to discern the truth, or even tell whose side anyone is really on. The corpses of the guards have been thrown into the ocean, never to be seen again.

If they are discovered to be prisoners, the two parties will use different tactics. The criminal prisoners will try to divide the party up through distractions and seemingly logical suggestions to kill them off one at a time. The political prisoners, on the other hand, will try to convince the players (truthfully) that they were unjustly imprisoned and will try to convince the adventurers to help them, especially since they were not the ones who killed the guards.

If the players help either faction, they will probably be enough to tip the scales against the other side, but it will be a hard fight for either faction.

If either side wins, the invasion force of which the adventurers were told will just be arriving. The invasion force has overwhelming strength and orders to leave no one alive. The powers-that-be have decided that the fortress has been a liability too long, and are shutting it down for good.

If the adventurers try, some of them might escape, although they should rapidly be made to realize that the arriving force has no plans to spare their lives either. Any prisoners left in the adventurer faction will probably be killed in the ensuing battle.

If the adventurers do not join either side, they will probably become a mutual target, although the political prisoners may still give them quarter in hopes of winning them as allies. In any event, the invasion force will still arrive eventually with the same orders as above, and the adventurers efforts to fight the prisoners will not matter to them.

### Liberation

**Situation:** Ten years ago, the small independent province of Antwryn was the scene of a political coup by Duke Robius II and mercenary forces loyal to him. Using deft military action, Robius staged a bloodless takeover of power from the three members of the Antwryn Republican Council who had ruled the province, ordered them into permanent exile, and established a hereditary throne. Since then, the members of the Council have been planning a counter-coup, establishing an underground movement in the countryside, and preparing for their return to power.

In the last four years, misfortune has fallen over Antwryn. A succession of crop failures, trade woes, and other financial troubles has sapped much of the province's prosperity and people are beginning to suffer. The Council places the blame directly on the head of Duke Robius, and feels that if nothing is done to stop the Duke, the people will face ruin.

The councilors have finally built up a solid resistance organization within the province that they feel is ready to begin direct action against the Duke's forces. The force is small but highly motivated. The Council believes if they succeed using hit and run tactics, they can gain enough support and volunteers to win.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The Duke's men are all professional men-at-arms, numbering a few hundred across the whole province. The largest garrison is located at the Duke's palace, about one hundred fifty picked men, but most garrisons are much smaller and oriented toward maintaining the peace as the town guard. The Duke's men are heavily dependent on their supply chain, largely consisting of a depot system at four of the largest towns and one more at the palace. Overall, the Duke's forces are well kept and in excellent fighting order.

**Mission:** The adventurers have been hired to train the resistance forces in armed combat skills and help them widen the network to overthrow the tyrannical Duke. The adventurers will receive a small stipend while aiding the resistance, and a large reward if the resistance succeeds.

**Background and Nuances:** The resistance presently consists of only a dozen men, but all of them are loyal to the Council and true believers in the former Republic. Outside this core group, there are a number of sympathizers who will either support the resistance with food, shelter, or supplies, and many more who will simply look the other way. The resistance is concentrated in the important town of Ybern, and is not yet widely known.

The adventurers will need to use caution in approaching the resistance; until they gain the trust of the resistance, they will be treated as potential spies for the Duke. The Duke is already aware of the formation of the resistance, but does not know where or who they are yet. The Council will provide the adventurers with a contact in Ybern, but the adventurers must be discreet.

The resistance will initially be uncooperative and perhaps even hostile until the adventurers can establish rapport and trust. The resistance fighters are only accepting the Council's aid (via the adventurers) out of their loyalty to the council, because they believe they are already capable fighters (and do not need outside assistance). They are not well-trained, however, and if adventurers are able to provide them with useful expertise they will begin to open up. On the other hand, the resistance members are resourceful, despite their lack of real training, and are in no way hapless bystanders. The resistance leadership will accept the adventurers suggestions for operations they should undertake, but will quickly veto anything too stupid or risky.

The Duke will respond to attacks against the guard or his holdings with increasing levels of curfews, stronger force and reprisals against any persons or towns that he believes are supporting the resistance. This will make the people cautious, but spark sympathy and earn volunteers for the resistance, especially from among the most supportive members of the population. His primary motivation is the stability of the regime, not outright revenge, although the resistance will certainly spin any type of action as another example of the Duke's thuggery.

The recent misfortunes of Antwryn are generally *not* the fault of the Duke, but are instead the result of outside influences beyond anyone's control gradually building up. Some factors in the troubles are actually the responsibility of the Council's meddling from when they were in charge and during their exile. Deeper investigation into these problems should uncover this, although the resistance is unlikely to appreciate anything that undermines their cause.

The Duke's leadership of the province is actually fairly moderate by Rhun standards and the Duke himself is relatively just. In truth, the Council was once known to be corrupt and petty, part of the reason the Duke chose to overthrow them. Again, the resistance will never acknowledge any of this, firmly believing in an imagined utopian past; the adventurers may discover this on their own through the course of events.

The Duke will attempt to send informants into the resistance, although if an effort is made to find them, with some common sense such men will be easily found out. However, no matter how successful the adventurers are, some portion of the population will still be loyal to the Duke and the resistance may still be betrayed without informants in their midst. As (and if) the adventurers and resistance become more successful, they will have to keep an increasingly low profile to prevent capture. The Duke is not in a position to hire additional forces, but he should have enough to keep the heat on the resistance if they are not careful.

If captured, the adventurers will probably be exiled and resistance members jailed. The Duke will certainly attempt to turn anyone in his custody toward becoming an informant in exchange for leniency. The resistance should slowly move from hit-and-run to overt actions, but will never adopt the stand-and-fight-to-the-last mentality of a regular army. Whenever possible, they will use surprise, cover, darkness, or whatever resources they have to tilt the odds in their favor.

The adventurers should eventually be able to get enough fighters after a series of successful actions to assault the Duke's palace. If cornered, the Duke will volunteer to leave the province with his men. Afterward, the Council may resume power. Whether the players are actually paid is another story. The pragmatic Duke may be interested in their services later on, however.

## The Bridge

**Situation:** A key pass crossing the lower mountains has become the main area of fighting between two local warring factions, placing a stranglehold on regional trade. The lynchpin is a bridge spanning the wide and unnavigable Stonegauntlet River, the only such crossing suitable for moving goods within a great distance in any direction. Since the leaders of the two sides are unwilling to either negotiate with each other or halt their attacks, no end is in sight, and the greater economy is in jeopardy.

The region, supposedly under the jurisdiction of the Confederated Nations, has a history of dispute going back eleven hundred years and is in practice subordinate to no one. The Confederated Nations do not have the military or political reach to keep order here.





In reality there are at least seven separate parties with power aspirations in the area, and at present all seven parties are aligned with one of the two main factions. Each faction is led by a high chieftain. Overlord Hoag Armigand holds the north side of the pass, and Hald-Baron Gevelan Semmilbane is on the south.

The Great Bridge of Nathare as it is known, stretches across a wide chasm with a fierce and rocky river below at the crux of the Cogswallow Pass. It is a massive and ancient stone arch bridge said to have been built in the time of giants, and has withstood numerous attempts to destroy it, often with great misfortune falling upon those who attempted it. It is said by some that the great bridge has actually gotten stronger with age. In better times the bridge was frequently visited for its breathtaking and dramatically beautiful view. The view is still dramatic, but no longer beautiful.

Smoke and char have replaced all beauty. The two factions stand off in armed camps some distance from each of the two shores. The area around the bridge is strewn with debris and corpses, and has become a wasted no-man's land of nightmarish proportions. Any exposed person approaching the bridge is liable to catch an expertly aimed arrow or rune from an unseen sniper. Any mass assault will draw a rain of naphtha and stones from the other faction's war engines.

**Mission:** The Regional Council of Merchants met recently to discuss solutions to the situation and decided to hire the adventurers to break the stalemate. The Council, well informed through its extensive network of informants, can provide a great deal of information about the warring parties, but has decided to leave the choice of which course of action to take for the adventurers to decide.

**Background and Nuances:** The leader from the south, Hald-Baron Semmilbane has three loyal factions behind him and controls all villages in the area surrounding the southern half of the pass. Beneath him are warrior-chiefs from each of the three factions, who have outwardly agreed to support him, but who individually have their own agendas. Each of these warrior-chiefs in turn has the nominal loyalty (through sub-chiefs) of up to a thousand fighters including a mix of professional ex-soldiers and militia volunteers. The key advantage of this faction is its control of most of the nearby freshwater sources and most of the archaic but maintained siege engines left behind by long-departed conquest armies.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The northern leader, Overlord Armigand, has four factions behind him, but in an even more tenuous alliance. Their fielded numbers are greater but are composed almost entirely of militia and conscripts. However, they control the wooded areas on the northern side of the pass, and the value of the wood supplies in them cannot be understated.

Both sides are engaged in brutal, total warfare, engaging in scorched earth tactics and the wanton slaughter of their enemies. Most of the nearby villages have been reduced to burnt husks and unburied or spike-impaled corpses are scattered across the countryside. The surviving villagers are scarcely seen anywhere within kilometers of the fighting because of the random violence likely to be visited upon them.

Overlord Armigand lives in a stronghold surrounded by well-armed bodyguards. He does not see anyone and has standing orders to send any volunteers directly to the front. He lives lavishly and operates on protection money extorted from areas under his control, with trusted lieutenants sent out to carry out his orders.

The southern chieftain moves from residence to residence, his actual location masked by no less than four look-alikes also moving from place to place. He operates clandestinely, using a web of spies and assassins to maintain order in his forces. His warrior-chiefs direct their own men and raise troops, but do so under the seemingly omnipotent watch of Hald-Baron Semmilbane.

While trade is not possible, there are other crossings across the Stonegauntlet River that can be used to bypass the bridge. However, most are guarded by the forces of one faction or the other, who extort tolls made up at whim. A local guide may be useful in finding one of the less apparent (and possibly unguarded) routes across. All routes across are risky in some way, even if that way is not immediately obvious.

Eliminating the head of either faction will result in the disintegration of that force as a coherent entity. The other side will almost certainly be able to take the bridge with its opponent divided, and will probably win the conflict. If that happens, trade may be able to commence, although violence is certain to continue given the length of the conflict.

Eliminating the heads of both factions will create utter chaos. The sub-factions will most likely begin fighting each other, since each of them has different aspirations and are unlikely to just throw down their weapons after all that has transpired. If the forces divide, the stalemate at the bridge will be broken, but nowhere in the region will likely be completely safe.

## The Discovery

**Situation:** A Myndwar cave jumper named Vorg exploring previously unseen lands stumbled upon a lost Rune, but was unable to bring it back to civilization with him. Rumors of the newly discovered Rune have reached a wealthy politician, who invites the cave jumper to his home to learn more. The politician is Lord Tandin Quickbreath, a Divaran ambassador with a thirst for power. He wants to be the only person with knowledge of this new Rune.

Vorg found the Rune while exploring a previously uncharted valley deep in the Spine. He stumbled across a band of forgotten Myndwar barbarians living in the wilds of the valley, high above the rest of the world and all but inaccessible. Only Vorg's curiosity and skill allowed him to find the tribe at all.

For a few days, Vorg was able to simply observe the barbarians, and noted their use of a strange Rune with which he was unfamiliar. Its effects were strange, but as he is not a Runic scholar, he had no idea that he was seeing an unknown Rune at work. Before he could investigate further, he was discovered. The barbarians hunted him like a wild animal, attempting to kill him before he could betray them to the outside world. Vorg barely escaped with his life, much to the chagrin of the barbarians.

Vorg reported the strange effects to his friends back in his home town, and was overheard by one of Tandin's spies. The spy brought Vorg back to Tandin's home with an invitation and the promise of a considerable payment.

**The Mission:** Lord Tandin hires the adventurers to retrieve the Rune. He realizes that it will be a difficult task, and provides them with Vorg's map of the area. He promises them a sizeable financial reward for the return of the Rune, but makes it clear that he wants the mission to remain secret and that he wants no one else to learn the secret of the Rune. While the adventurers are meeting with Tandin, Vorg is not mentioned, and he is kept out of sight.

**Background and Nuances:** The cave jumper, Vorg, was made very comfortable upon his arrival at Tandin's home and was well paid to boot. However, Lord Tandin has no desire to allow others to learn more of the Rune, and is keeping Vorg prisoner. Vorg is allowed free movement within Tandin's home, but the guards will not allow him to leave under any circumstances. Tandin has told Vorg that he may go once the Rune is in Tandin's library.

Tandin does not trust the adventurers, and has hired a second mercenary team to trail them. This group is to ambush the adventurers as they leave the valley (presumably with the Rune) and kill all but one, bringing the captive back to Lord Tandin. The second mercenary team is composed of highly-trained assassins and trackers, and Tandin has not told them about the Rune. He has told them to bind and gag the prisoner, ostensibly to prevent them from casting Runes. Tandin's real purpose behind gagging the prisoner, however, is to prevent them from relating their secret to the assassins.

Unfortunately for Tandin, his spy was not the only person to hear Vorg's story. A library in Siene has also hired a team of mercenaries to procure the Rune. Unlike Tandin, the purpose of the library is to impart the knowledge of the new Rune to any who would ask for it. The rival group is not interested in stopping the adventurers, and is more than willing to help them recover the Rune as long as both groups gain knowledge of the Rune. Such cooperation is outside the mandate of the adventurers mission, however, and if they wish to remain true to their employer, these mercenaries are rivals or enemies.

Lord Tandin is incautious about his meeting with the team of assassins. Vorg overhears enough of Tandin's plan to figure out that the players are in significant danger. He also figures out that the Rune he saw is new, and understands its value. Finally, he has decided that Tandin will more than likely have him killed once the diplomat has the Rune. A few days after the adventurers leave on their mission, Vorg engineers an escape and sets out after them.

The mercenaries hired by the library in Siene are competent and well trained; they see no reason to make enemies of the adventurers unless provoked. The two groups will most likely have some contact before they reach the valley, especially in the Myndwar villages and cities in the mountains.

The barbarians of the valley have been residing in their hidden valley for hundreds of years, since they fled to escape the Deijin. They do not know that the Deijin are gone, and wish to protect their valley against intrusion and detection at all costs. When Vorg escaped, they were distraught. They have slain the dozen or so explorers who found their valley in the past, and will continue to defend their secret to the best of their abilities.

The barbarians have mastered the use of the *Khet* Rune, which they discovered deep within a cave upon their arrival in the hidden valley. They have a rudimentary knowledge of other elemental Runes, but are particularly skilled with *Khet-eq*, *Khet-ej*, and *Khet-ess*. Because of their affinity for the shadow Rune, they call themselves the Shadow Warriors. They have a barbaric and violent culture, a result of their isolation and the harsh conditions in their icy mountain home.

The valley itself is located among some of the highest peaks of the Spine. The floor of the valley is higher in elevation than nearly any other location in civilized lands, and is covered in snow nearly year round. A sparse evergreen forest grows in the valley, and is home to the indigenous animals the tribe hunts for food. The barbarians carve their homes into the walls of the valley, living deep within caves in the mountains surrounding the valley.

The valley is all but inaccessible except for a series of natural caverns that run beneath the towering monoliths surrounding the valley. Passage over the mountains is nearly impossible, with vertical cliffs and bone-chilling storms. If adventurers have Vorg's map, they should have little trouble navigating through the caves, but the mercenary company hired by the library in Siene is not as well-equipped. The adventurers may be forced to decide whether or not to save the rival mercenaries if they decide to head over the mountains.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The *Khet* Rune is only written in two places in the valley. The Rune is still inscribed in the wall of the cave in which it was discovered. The Shadow Warriors take it upon themselves to maintain the Rune from time to time to make sure that it does not fade with time and erosion. The cave itself is surrounded by the homes of many barbarians, and is under constant guard.

The other written *Khet* Rune is kept on a small sheet of steel carried by the head shaman, a powerful Runecaster responsible for training the tribe in the use of the Rune. He will not willingly deliver his secret under any circumstances, but if he is captured and searched, the adventurers will easily find the Rune hanging from a leather strap around his neck.

In order to ascertain the spoken pronunciation of the *Khet* Rune, adventurers will have to hear it spoken. They can do this by spying on Shadow Warriors or by engaging them in combat. When in a combat situation, the Shadow Warriors will almost always invoke the *Khet* Rune in some form. Combat may actually be unavoidable, unless adventurers are incredibly adept at sneaking and hiding, since the barbarians are intimately familiar with every bit of their ancestral home.

If the adventurers are in serious danger, the gamemaster can have Vorg join them in the valley to apprise them of the presence of the assassins hired by Tandin. Vorg knows an alternate exit from the valley that was not on the adventurers map, and if he trusts the adventurers, may lead them out to avoid the ambush.

### The Armorer

**Situation:** Jyngo the Armorer is a famous smith capable of producing the highest quality Runic weapons and armor. He has done a brisk business with the Confederated nations, supplying magical armament to the armies holding back the tide of outcast nations attempting to secure their freedom.

A wealthy merchant, Adelton, has just purchased a sizeable order of Jyngo's Runic armor. The order cost several hundred thousand Vel, and Adelton needs an escort for the caravan that will carry the armor to his buyer.

**The Mission:** The adventurers are hired by Adelton to escort the caravan, and will be paid upon the arrival of the armor at its final destination.

**Backgrounds and Nuances:** Jyngo has been working for years with a group of raiders from an outcast nation. Depending on the geography of the game, this group could be Sivitagj, Kantarin, or even Draslander. Jyngo has been selling failed or weak Runes to his contacts in the Confederated nations, in small enough quantities to prevent his exposure.

As with any adventure involving adventurers guarding a caravan, the wagons will be attacked. The bandits will pose a serious threat, and Adelton will offer the adventurers use of some of the buff coats he has just purchased. After all, it is better to lose one or two suits of armor than all of them. Unfortunately, the armor is not completely functional. It may operate for a few rounds before failing, or it may not work at all. The armor itself is sturdy and as protective as it should be, but the Runes adorning the armor are inadequate. The adventurers will have a tough time defending the caravan, especially when their magical armor fails them. Assuming he survives, Adelton is furious with Jyngo for providing him with substandard armor. He pays off the adventurers contract and hires them to return with him to Jyngo for a reckoning.

Jyngo is not totally unprepared for an angry customer. He is ready with his usual group of excuses about variations in quality, and is prepared to buy back any armor that is not functioning as desired. He is not willing to pay full price for armor that has already been worn, however, and Adelton may be difficult to pacify without a full refund. If Jyngo feels particularly threatened, he will call upon his several layers of defense. First, he lives and works within a virtual fortress, and can retreat deep inside his home, protected by traps both mundane and Runed. Second, he employs a handful of highly trained and very loyal bodyguards, all wearing excellent Runed armor and wielding powerful Runed weapons.

Finally, Jyngo has a small *Ote* wafer given to him by the raiders. The raiders recognize the smith's value, and would be loathe to lose him should his double-dealing be exposed. The *Ote* wafer will not transport Jyngo, but it will teleport itself to a contact with the raiders, thus alerting them that Jyngo is in trouble. They will make all haste in travelling to Jyngo's home to help him. If Jyngo escapes, he will almost certainly have to go live with the raiders, where he will most likely continue to make Runed armor, this time depriving the Confederated nations of his considerable expertise.

▼ **COMBAT TIPS** - The gamemaster has the unenviable task of tracking the combat readiness of several combatants at once, while the players need only concern themselves with their own adventurers. Some of the following tips may help to speed combat and reduce complex accounting.

**Average Extras:** There will almost certainly come a time when the players will encounter an extra that the gamemaster has not generated ahead of time. In these cases, if the included non-player extras are not appropriate, the gamemaster can assume that non-player characters have a skill score of +1d or +2d in relevant skills and base attributes of 2d+1(7).

For example, players have stumbled across a dive bar where they are to meet their contact. However, instead of crossing to their contacts' table, they question the bartender, and attempt to negotiate for a reduced cost for a room. The bartender may be assumed to have Will of 2d+1 and Carousing or Trading of +1d, for a roll of 3d+1 against any dickering the adventurer tries to do.

**Group Combats:** It can be very tedious to track every hit in a large combat. A simple alternative is to give every grunt a damage threshold equal to their first -1d penalty. If an attacker causes this much damage or more in one blow, the grunt goes down. They may not be dead, but are out of the fight. If the attack does less damage than this, the grunt is unharmed. The gamemaster may be free to describe bloody noses or scrapes, but the grunt stays up until someone causes at least enough damage to cross the -1d penalty threshold in one hit. This rule is really only appropriate for weak combatants, because stronger or better armored fighters will be able to withstand more than one solid blow.

**Non-Player Extras** - From time to time, the gamemaster will want to produce extras who are, for the most part, faceless fodder. These may be allies backing the players or they may be opposing armies. The following non-player extras do not include full stats, though there are enough here to manage a standard combat encounter.

**Poorly-Trained Fighter:** This is the average person with no combat training who should present little danger to players except in large groups. Examples are conscripted peasants or rioting thugs.

### Poorly-Trained Fighter

**Strength:** 2d+1  
**Agility:** 2d+0  
**Awareness:** 2d+0  
**Will:** 2d+0  
**Health:** 2d+0  
**Fate:** 1d+2

**Skills:**  
 Brawling +0d  
 A weapon +0d

**Traits:**  
 None

This is the sort of extra that starting adventurers should be able to take on two or three at a time. They would typically be encountered in groups, and have an exaggerated sense of their own ability until it is proven otherwise, after which they will typically rout, especially if whoever is leading them goes down.

**Average Footsoldier:** The character generation rules assume that the characters are better-trained than the average citizen, elite members of their society. The average footsoldier does not share that privilege, however. Examples of the average footsoldier include members of organized gangs or town guards.

### Average Fighter

**Strength:** 2d+2  
**Agility:** 2d+1  
**Awareness:** 2d+0  
**Will:** 2d+1  
**Health:** 2d+0  
**Fate:** 2d+0

**Skills:**  
 Brawling +1d      Runelore +0d  
 A weapon +1d      (knows two runes)

**Traits:**  
 Experience(wearing armor)

These extras are not as good as most combat-oriented roles, but they are not total pushovers either, and are likely to have passable quality armor and may even know a rune or two (though their skill level is nothing to speak of).

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Skilled Veteran:** These are tough soldiers, combat-hardened and skilled. They should be able to hold their own against starting adventurers in a one-on-one fight, and trounce them if enjoying advanced numbers.

### Skilled Veteran

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

**Skills:**  
 Brawling +1d      Runelore +0d  
 A weapon +2d      (knows four runes)  
 Tactics +1d      Area knowl. +1d

**Traits:**  
 Experience(wearing armor)  
 Strong will(+1d vs. runes)

These extras have formal training, good morale and some common sense. They will not break and run, though they are capable of reading the writing on the wall and retreating in good order if needed.

**Runecaster:** This is a generic, moderately skilled runecaster who might be employed against the adventurers in an adversarial role.

### Average Runecaster

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

**Skills:**  
 Brawling +1d      Runelore +2d  
 A weapon +1d      (knows eight runes)  
                          Rune-related +1d  
                          (inscribing, etc.)

**Traits:**  
 Strong will(+1d vs. runes)

The exact nature of the runecaster will match the role they are cast in. One who is part of a wealthy household will have a different outlook than one working with a RuneStryder merc company.





GEAR



Rhun is fairly static. While politics might change the landscape of who controls what, the nature of technology and runes have settled into a rut. Barring discovery of the occasional new rune, the gear used now is probably the same as gear used a generation ago, and will be the same as that used a generation hence. It is not in the nature of the created peoples of Rhun to be scientifically curious or to explore for the sake of exploring.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Generic gear** - In the event that you need the Armor and Hits of a random item, from a pocket sundial to a chunk of stone wall, use this guide.

Approximate mass	Base Hits
.5 kilograms	0
1 kilogram	1
2 kilograms	2
4 kilograms	3
8 kilograms	4
16 kilograms	5
32 kilograms	6
64 kilograms	7
125 kilograms	8
250 kilograms	9
500 kilograms (fills about a hex)	10
each 2x	+2

Item is	Hits modifier
Fragile due to construction (glass)	-1
Fragile due to delicacy (clockwork)	-1
Average construction (wood)	+0
Durable due to constr. (steel, stone)	+1
Durable due to separate items (tool kit)	+1
Durable due to distributed function (blanket) or	+2
Item is monolithic (sword)	+1
Item can reasonably take damage and still function	(min. of 2 Hits)

Armor of an item	Armor
Base amount	1d+0
Each 4 Hits (round down)	+1

Material	Armor
Leather	-1
Wood	+0
Stone	+1
Steel	+2
Item is hardened or heavy-duty	+1
Item is lightweight or light-duty	-1
Armor and function are separate (like a clock)	-1
Armor and function are combined (like a sword)	+0
Item is inherently unprotected	-1
Item is an inherently weak material	-1

**EXAMPLE** - A steel tool massing two kilograms would have 4 Hits (2 for its mass, +1 for steel, +1 for being monolithic), and an Armor of 2d+0 (1d+0 base, +1 for 4 Hits, +2 for steel). A hex of stone wall would have 12 Hits and an Armor of 2d+1.

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - The big difference between the weapons and armor and personal gear used in Rhun and other fantasy worlds is that runic enchantment is fairly easy to come by, albeit expensive at times. The suit of armor worn by a commander might be made of the same materials as that of a normal soldier, but have runes that make it as effective as a suit of armor weighing two or more times as much. Weapons can be similarly deadlier, and so there is very much a class difference in terms of combat prowess. A skilled, wealthy fighter will usually beat an equally skilled but less wealthy opponent. The gear lists will attempt to cover this in a shorthand way, by giving approximate costs for weapon and armor enhancements at the bottom of the table. As far as personal magical gear goes, your creativity is the only limit, and the only price guide will be based on the complexity of making or inscribing the runes.

**Weights and measures** - **EABA** uses the metric system and a generic Credit, while Rhun uses its own standards of weights, distances, and money (called Vel). The gear list has weights in kilograms and prices in Vel. Because of the lack of industrial manufacturing and generally smaller economy of Rhun, all wages are reduced as mentioned on [page 2.15](#), but all goods prices comparable to other **EABA** supplements are about half normal. That is, labor is very cheap (the money supply is 1/64 normal, and wages are 1/32 normal), but no mass production means it takes more mundane labor to make things, so prices are only 1/2 normal. So, the prices here may not translate directly over to other gameworlds.

**Runic enhancement** - Weapons and armor are often the subject of runic enhancement, though many rune combinations can be applied to non-combat objects as well. That category is far too large to deal with on an individual basis. However, we can deal with some of the better known weapon and armor rune combinations. In general, good steel weapons will hold inscribed runes for six months, lesser quality metal weapons for three months, stone for two weeks, wood for one week and leather for one day. Sketched runes last for no more than an hour, while detailed drawn runes can last for up to five hours. All of these can have longer duration from extra successes). Some possible rune combinations are unstable, regardless of the nature of the inscription, and are used up within a handful of seconds or whenever they trigger. In the case of a weapon, the runes would be activated and then trigger upon a weapon strike, while for armor they would trigger upon being struck. For runes that have only an instant effect, the weapon would be inscribed with a mechanical rune word that triggers when the weapon strikes something (or the user presses a trigger), whereupon the rune effect happens to whatever was struck. Because of the cost and difficulty of most runes inscribed into hard metal, these enchantments are very often mechanical rune words, where they are activated only when needed. If a rune sword is going to be set aside for a few months, the pommel is twisted to disengage the rune words, or an armor has a dial on the inside turned to an inactive state so that the pricey engraving and enchantment does not slowly go to waste. In this way, a rune word with a normal life of several months can last a lifetime or even be an heirloom.

The difficulty of inscribing many of these rune words into hard metal is not trivial, and with side effects on a failed inscription, it takes a skilled engraver to do them with a good chance of success, and even then they tend to spend a lot of time on it. This will make most of the effects that follow the playthings of the rich. Your average soldier or adventurer is not going to be able to afford paying a runesmith a few weeks of their wages for a single runeword on a sword or armor. And remember that unless you have the secrets of a Rune Master, the engraving must be done in a single sitting, so the engraver may need to be enchanted so they can forego the need for sleep.

For pricing and effects, these enhancements are assumed to be cast at an effective skill of 4d+2 (6d+2 skill less 2d for the resistance of the object), and have a 3d+0 default effect unless otherwise stated. So, you are paying for a skilled professional to do this. Even so, the normal time of 12 hours for inscribing runes on hard steel may not be enough. The inscription must be done in one sitting, but with preparation a runesmith can spend up to 24 hours of near-continuous work on a project, which is good for a -2 to the listed difficulty.

It might still take a multiple tries for a runesmith to get it right, with a few days of recovery between failed attempts. So, the most difficult of runic engravings might take upwards of a month and leave a dozen failed inscriptions on damaged and warped weapons and armor in their wake.

You can increase the chance of success by finding a runesmith with a higher skill roll, but the increased efficiency is balanced by the fact that such skilled runesmiths are harder to come by and charge proportionately more. A less competent rune smith would charge less, but also creates a less competent product.

A way to get around this is to simply have the runes drawn or sketched on the item to be enchanted. This might only take an hour or less to accomplish and be substantially easier, but the runes are more easily disrupted and might only last days rather than months. In any case, a runesmith of 6d+2 skill can demand between 2 to 3 Vel per hour of work, depending on the runes to be inscribed or drawn. Taking into account extra time, rest time and recovery from failed inscriptions, such a runesmith would tend to charge the following amounts for an inscription into hard metal (count as minimum of 12 hours of labor plus cost of a suitable object for the engraving):

Difficulty	Cost	Difficulty	Cost
4-	25 Vel	14	50 Vel
5	25 Vel	15	65 Vel
6	25 Vel	16	90 Vel
7	25 Vel	17	140 Vel
8	25 Vel	18	275 Vel
9	25 Vel	19	600 Vel
10	27 Vel	20	1500 Vel
11	30 Vel	21	-
12	35 Vel	22	-
13	40 Vel	23	-

Even with extra time and favorable modifiers, only runesmiths who have a Larger than Life ability with their skill will dare to attempt rune engravings with a difficulty of 21 or higher, and prices start at 1500 Vel and go up from there.

The chance of getting it right (with an effective roll of 4d+2) on the first try in 12 hours of work (which can be important in critical game situations), is:

Difficulty	Chance	Difficulty	Chance
4-	100%	13	74%
5	99%	14	62%
6	99%	15	49%
7	99%	16	36%
8	99%	17	24%
9	98%	18	13%
10	95%	19	6%
11	90%	20	2%
12	83%	21	0%

Remember that a single target cannot be the target of more than one rune from a particular school. So, you cannot have a blade or armor with *Nhet* and *Mhet* runes on it (both are Prime school).

▼ **Note** - The prices are not terribly high for magic items, as is often the case in fantasy supplements. In Rhun, anyone is capable of magic if they put their mind to it. Anyone with a little runelore and a set of tools can eventually learn to carve the runes they know into a blade. So, prices can't be astronomical, and there are more people capable of minor runic enchantment than there are weaponsmiths or armorers. Anyone who charges too much will find themselves undercut. If you want rune-engraved blades and armor to be less accessible, you can require the **EABA** rules for "enchantment labs" to mandate that rune smiths for stone and metal use the proper facilities (and get a bonus to their abilities), allowing them to complete enchantments in less time and with less peril. This also centralizes production, and forces buyers to travel to where the items are made for any sort of custom work.

For runes which have an effect on the target of a weapon, it is assumed the effect happens only on a solid hit. A parry or a miss does not affect the target, and a strike to a shield will often only affect the shield. In these cases, the effect of the runes is assumed to be cast on the target with a 6d+2 skill roll, less Will or other subtractions for the target type.

**EXAMPLE:** The *Lhei-ex* blade does an aging effect, rolling 6d+2 skill, less the target's Will, against a target number of 8. On a success, it has the listed effect, and it can have multiple successes. On a failure, it simply does not activate.

Taking Attribute damage from a failed runic enchantment only happens on failed skill rolls *during the enchantment*. If the roll to affect a target fails, it just fails. Neither the one who inscribed the runes nor the one wielding them suffers side effects if the *successfully inscribed* runes fail to work on a target.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

The last thing that is necessary to figure out hard it is to create a runic enchantment is to get the modifier total for the rune word being engraved or inscribed or whatever. This is the same as in the main **EABA** rules, as below:

Modifier	Difficulty	Modifier	Difficulty
≤0	0	23-26	11
1	1	27-30	12
2	2	31-35	13
3	3	36-40	14
4-5	4	41-45	15
6-7	5	46-51	16
8-9	6	52-57	17
10-12	7	58-63	18
13-15	8	64-70	19
16-18	9	71-77	20
19-22	10	78-84	21

**EXAMPLE:** The very first spell listed is *Hei-eq*, a runeword of command. As an engraving, one particular command must be decided upon. A good one might be "ignore me". To engrave this rune into hard metal would look like this:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Framework base	-40
●	<i>Hei</i>	+20
●	-eq	+40
●	Personality modifiers	+0
■	Sensory targeting	+20
●	Requires gestures	-5
●	Takes 12 hours to cast	-31
●	Lasts 1 minute	+17
	Modifier total	+21
	Runecasting difficulty	10

This means a runecaster with an effective 4d+2 roll has a 95% chance of getting it right on the first attempt, and would charge about 25 Vel for the work, or about a full week's wages for a low-level professional. In modern terms, the equivalent cost of a medium-quality pistol, low-end laptop, or high-quality digital camera. Affordable, but not an impulse buy. Especially when you consider the item will have a useful lifetime of several minutes at best.

To use it, the owner mechanically activates the rune word and chooses a target. A 6d+2 roll is made, resisted by the Will of the target, against a difficulty of 10. If successful, *and* the number of successes put the target in range, then the *Hei-eq* works and the owner of the rune is totally ignored until the rune runs out or the rune word is mechanically deactivated.

## Known weapon and armor enhancements

**Hei-ess(never-lose blade):** This makes a weapon self-sheathing. The runes do not hinder normal use of the weapon, but if it is dropped or knocked from the user's grasp, it immediately and precisely resheathes itself. Increasing levels of success with the runes merely increases the distance the weapon will return from. *School: Prime. Base duration: 6 months. Difficulty(hard metal): 9.*

**Nhet-ej(resistance blade):** The weapon gets an Armor against all direct forms of magical attack. It does not protect against indirect attack (it would stop a magical fireball, but not a magically hurled rock). This counts as a layered Armor when applied to an object. Remember that the final effect cannot do more than double the mundane Armor of the item, or add +2d, whichever is smaller. Not particularly useful on a weapon, but quite useful on an armor. *School: Prime. Base duration: 6 months. Difficulty: 12.*

**Nhet-ess(glowing blade):** The weapon glows, not bright enough to blind, but enough to provide good illumination out to a little more than 10 meters, after which extra distance levels would add to the difficulty of sight Awareness rolls. *School: Prime. Base duration: 6 months. Difficulty: 12.*

**Mhet-ej(strong blade):** The weapon or armor has increased resistance to mundane attacks, with a base effect of 2d+0. This counts as a layered Armor when applied to an object. The final effect can double the mundane Armor of the item, or +2d to its Armor, whichever is smaller. *School: Prime. Base duration: 6 months. Difficulty: 9.*

**EXAMPLE:** A Mhet-ej effect of 2d+0 applied to a steel armor of 1d+1 would make the combination 2d+2, not 3d+1, since the layering means that the smaller Armor only counts half (it adds 0d+2).

**Mhet-ess(self-forging blade):** The weapon or armor repairs itself when damaged, provided the damage is not total or damages the runes. The item can normally repair up to 3 Hits of damage on itself each turn. Vault doors and other important mundane barriers might have this to prevent or delay break-ins, with the runes being on the inside, of course. *Base duration: 6 months. School: Prime. Difficulty: 7.*

**Lhei-ex(decrepitude blade):** The weapon ages any living thing it strikes by one month per strike. This is the same as naturally aging a month, with the energy required to sustain life supplied by the spell. Beards grow, wounds heal (or fester), and so on. *Base duration: 2 minutes. School: Prime. Difficulty: 8.*

**Shrai-ej(dervish blade):** The weapon speeds up the wielder. Their Agility, Awareness for making decisions and Health for movement purposes are all increased by +1d. *Base duration: 6 months. School: Prime. Difficulty(hard metal): 13.*

**Ain-eq(wind blade):** The weapon delivers a blast of wind to anything it strikes. This does 3d+0 non-lethal damage in addition to the weapon's damage, and if the target has a Strength of 3d+0 or less they are bowled over by the blast. *Base duration: 2 minutes. School: Elemental. Difficulty(hard metal): 12.*

**Off-eq(petrification blade):** A blow from the weapon can petrify a living target, subtracting 0d+2 from their Agility for each die the 3d+0 Fate of the weapon exceeds the target's. Multiple strikes have cumulative effect, and extra successes against the Will of the target increase the effective Fate of the weapon, up to a maximum of 5d+0. An incomplete effect wears off at the rate of 0d+1 per time level, but someone reduced to an Agility to zero or less is permanently turned to stone. *School: Elemental. Base duration: 1 hour. Difficulty(hard metal): 11.*

**Ull-ess(flame blade):** The weapon flickers with flames that act as a separate 1d+0 attack, which would act in full if the normal weapon effect penetrates armor, otherwise they apply to armor as a separate attack. Note that the ease of this enchantment means it will usually have at least two extra successes, for a damage of 1d+2 and a duration of several years. *School: Elemental. Base duration: 6 months. Difficulty(hard metal): 2.*

**Aan-eq(thorn blade):** The weapon causes the target to become tree-like, rooted to the ground and sprouting branches and thorns. A successful strike and skill roll against the target's Will causes them to take a -3d penalty to their Agility, and to their Health for movement purposes. This wears off at the rate of 0d+1 per time level. *School: Elemental. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 7.*



**Aan-ett(doorbreaker blade):** The weapon cleaves through any wooden barrier or item of less than 200 kilograms or with Armor + Hits of equal or less than a 4d+0 roll. It magically parts the wood before it, but it only acts as a normal weapon against wooden items or structures larger than this. *School: Elemental. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 7.*

**Khet-eq(darkness blade):** The weapon surrounds the target with magical darkness, which is a -3d penalty to see through. The effect lasts for up to 2 hours or until the rune is turned off. *School: Elemental. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 7.*

**Zeieq(sonic blade):** The weapon delivers a deafening blast of sound that does a base of 3d+0 non-lethal damage, and is a -3d penalty to hearing Awareness for a default of 2 hours. *School: Sensory. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 11.*

**Shei-eq(pungent blade):** The weapon delivers a noxious blast of gas that does a base of 3d+0 non-lethal damage, which bypasses the first mundane barrier it encounters. *School: Sensory. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 8.*

**Chei-eq(poison blade):** When activated, the runes cover the weapon with poison. If it was activated by striking a target, that target is automatically poisoned if the weapon did any Hits. The effect is 3d+0 half-lethal damage, followed the next turn by 2d+0 half-lethal damage and then two turns later, 1d+0 non-lethal damage. Since the poison is created on the blade, the target does not get to resist the effect. *School: Sensory. Base duration: Instant. Difficulty(hard metal): 13.*

**Ean-eq(liquifaction blade):** The weapon reduces the rigidity of anything it strikes. If it affects a person, they lose 1d+1 from each of Strength and Agility as their bones and muscles lose strength. If it strikes a weapon or armor, that item loses 1d+0 from its Armor rating. A person reduced to a Strength or Agility of zero or less falls down and cannot move or defend themselves, and an item whose Armor is reduced to zero takes Hits from any form of damage. This effect lasts for a default of 2 hours or until the rune is deactivated. Note that while using this on a large target like a Rune Stryder is possible, the normal size difference between even a Stryder and a person makes such an attack unlikely to succeed (the smallest Stryder would be +8 to the normal difficulty). *School: Sensory. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 10.*

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**Ean-ej(fortitude blade):** The wielder of the weapon gains strength and stamina. If they are successfully targeted by the blade, they gain 1d+1 to each of their Strength and Health, up to a maximum of one-and-a-half times their normal levels in these Attributes, but they also lose -1d from Agility. The increase to Strength and Health will increase the Hits and Hit brackets of the wielder as long as the runes are in effect. This is normally +2 to Hit brackets and +8 to Hits. *School: Sensory. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 7.*

**Frei-eq(confusion blade):** A strike from the weapon confuses the target and causes a sensory overload that does a default of 3d+0 non-lethal damage, damage which ignores the first mundane barrier it encounters. *School: Sensory. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 8.*

**Gai-eq(fear blade):** The weapon tends to cause fear and uncertainty. A strike from the weapon and successful skill roll causes a target to take a -3d penalty to Will. If this drops their Will to zero or less, they panic and are unable to remain in any conflict situation. The effect lasts for a default of 2 hours or until the runes are deactivated. *School: Life. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 8.*

**lin-eq(rat blade):** Anything struck by the weapon immediately becomes an object that attracts and enrages small animals, who appear from the nearest possible source and attack. Normally, the skill roll of the runesmith is resisted by the Will of the target, and one animal is eventually summoned per success. See the notes on the *lin-eq* runeword for details. *School: Life. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 8.*

**Pei-eq(weakness blade):** A strike by the weapon and a successful skill roll causes the target to take a -3d penalty to their Strength. If this drops their lifting capacity to less than what they are wearing, they immediately fall down, immobilized by their own gear. The effect lasts for 2 hours or until the runeword is deactivated. *School: Life. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 11.*

**Pei-ej(endurance blade):** The weapon grants the wielder an immunity to exhaustion. The wielder of the blade ignores the first -3d of exertion or injury penalties to their Strength. Other Attributes are still affected by these penalties. There are identical combinations of this effect for each Attribute, but they cannot be combined in a single rune word or as separate rune words to protect more than one Attribute at a time. *School: Life. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 8.*

**Fas-eq(clumsiness blade):** A strike by the weapon and a successful skill roll causes the target to take a -3d penalty to their Agility. If this drops their Agility to zero or less, the next time they would have to make any sort of Agility roll, they lose their balance and fall over, unable to get up without a great deal of effort. The effect lasts for 2 hours or until the runeword is deactivated. *School: Life. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 11.*

**Dron-eq(dirt blade):** Whatever is struck by the weapon is instantly assailed by all small objects in its vicinity, like dirt, rocks, dishes or whatever. This acts as a 3d+0 half-lethal attack. *School: Life. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 7.*

**Ngei-ej(unluck blade):** The weapon decreases a target's ability to use luck. On a successful hit and runelore skill roll, the target marks off 3 boxes on their Fate track, just as if they had used luck 3 times. This effect lasts for up to 2 hours or until the runes are deactivated. *School: Conceptual. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 4.*

**Ngei-ess(luck blade):** The weapon makes the wielder unnaturally lucky. Everything they do is reduced in difficulty by 3 points. As a gamemaster note, the Ngei rune can be unbalancing in its general adjustments to reality and you may want to prohibit any permanent expressions of it. *School: Sensory. Base duration: 6 months. Difficulty(hard metal): 9.*

**Ngei-ex(puissance blade):** The weapon grants the wielder the ability to be Larger than Life three times, to use "best four" instead of "best three" for a skill or Attribute roll. *School: Conceptual. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 4.*

**Ngei-ett(chance blade):** When the runes are activated, the wielder rolls a base amount of 3 dice, which are set aside and saved. Any or all of these dice may be substituted in any die roll that person makes, but once a die is used, it is gone and the runes expire when the duration expires or the last of the dice are used. *School: Conceptual. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 10.*

**Wei-ess(oaf's blade):** The wielder of the blade can force the re-roll of up to a base of 3 dice rolled by the target as long as the runes are in effect. These re-rolled dice must be the highest dice in any roll, so the effect is always trying to reduce the level of success. The duration of this effect is up to 2 hours or until all the replacement dice are used. *School: Conceptual. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 11.*

**Thurn-eq(pain blade):** Anyone struck by the weapon experiences horrible but non-lethal pain of 3d+0 damage, which ignores the first mundane barrier it encounters. This damage can never do lethal Hits, even if it does more Hits than the target has. *School: Conceptual. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 13.*

**Whin-ess(chameleon blade):** The weapon or armor makes the wielder look like someone else, an appearance which is fixed at the time of the inscription. When the runes are activated, all Awareness rolls related to seeing through the disguise are reduced by -3d. The apparent size, gender and accent of the wielder can all be altered. Only the wielder can be changed, allowing them to wear any sort of clothing, or the wielder and their clothing and gear can be disguised, but then they are stuck with that one set of clothing for the duration of the runes. *School: Conceptual. Base duration: 6 months. Difficulty(hard metal): 12.*

**Ite-eq(damage magnet):** This is typically inscribed into something like an arrowhead, which is then fired at a target that can stick into. The weapon itself becomes remarkably easy to hit, as does what it is embedded in as a side effect. The target is -6 to be hit by any weapon. However, any attack that would actually hit the arrowhead will destroy the runes and end the effect. In general, an attack which makes its to hit roll by 4 or more probably strikes the arrowhead (-6 from the runes, +10 difficulty for the very small target). This rune is not cumulative. *School: Spatial. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 8.*

**Owt-eq(distortion blade):** The weapon or armor distorts the sense of space around the wielder, and all attacks against them are at +6 difficulty to hit. *School: Spatial. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty (hard metal): 8.*

**Ote-ej(rooted blade):** The weapon or armor grants the wielder the ability to be immovable in the face of pressure. They may add +3d to their Strength or +9 levels to their weight, whichever would be more effective at keeping them from being moved against their will. This effect does not keep them from moving on their own. *School: Spatial. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 8.*

**Jin-eq(mutant blade):** A blow from the weapon causes the part of the body to balloon in size, becoming impossible to use, being crushed by armor, etc. The grossly uncoordinated body of the target takes a +6 to the difficulty of all physical tasks. The effect lasts for 2 hours or until the rune is deactivated. *School: Spatial. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 11.*

**lin-ote-eq(banishment blade):** A strike from the weapon and a successful skill roll displaces the target from reality for 1 minute per success. When the time expires, the target reappears in the same spot, having experienced no time during the interval. *School: Life/Spatial. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 15.*

**Ote-rhun-eq(dispelling blade):** The weapon dispels any active runic effect on whatever it strikes, negating a base of 3 successes. If the runes are active on a person, that person may resist the dispelling with their Will, otherwise the runes are resisted as an inanimate object. If the target has multiple rune effects on it, it applies to the one with the most successes and then the greatest difficulty. It will not erase engraved runes, but will counter them for the duration of the *Ote-rhun-eq* effect. *School: Sensory/Spatial. Base duration: 2 hours. Difficulty(hard metal): 17.*

▼ **Note** - Remember that these combinations can be inscribed with varying usefulness on more than just weapons, and more weapons than melee weapons. They could in some cases be inscribed on arrowheads or rune thrower projectiles, though this could be very expensive for an item that might be damaged, destroyed or lost on its first use. They would be a good investment as anti-Stryder weapons, and Stryder crews would invest in them as counter-technology against anti-Stryder runes. Dealing with anti-Stryder runes like *Ite-eq* is part of what a Stryder's ground support crew is supposed to be doing in a battle.

## Rune Stryders<sup>v1.0</sup>

**Other runic items** - Anyone who thinks it will give them an edge in a life or death situation will likely have runic items for that particular edge. Fighters may increase their Strength or Agility, those afraid of assassins may boost their defenses or have extra mobility, diplomats may want to see through subterfuge, and so on. The means by which these things can be done are myriad, depending on the runes and their duration. A long-term effect might simply be in a piece of jewelry that only targets the wearer. A person might have a pair of rings whose rune word is activated when they clench their hands into a fist, or a multiple part tattoo. Runes can be embroidered into clothing to act as armor or disguise the wearer, carved into cups to neutralize poison, made into mechanical "rune grenades", and so on.

The gamemaster and players always need to remember that while Rhun is a low-tech world, its people are not stupid. They have an immense advantage in what they can accomplish with runes, and enough imagination and creativity to put these runes to good effect. The only reason they haven't done everything possible yet is that there are so many different combinations of runes and so many different ways to make use of and activate them. This constant give and take, measure and counter-measure is part of what makes Rhun so interesting. No matter how clever the adventurers (or their foes) are with runes, someone will eventually figure out a way to neutralize that advantage with other runes.

**Final notes** - EABA is a fairly coarse system, so many weapons or armor may be similar in stats. Quality for the listed items is average. Cheaper versions are certainly available. You don't need to spend 40Vel to get a serviceable club. You can just rummage through the trash or the forest and pick something that will work. Maybe not as well as a polished and balanced one, but good enough.

Also remember that there are gameworld specific interactions between weapons and armor, and the lengths of the weapons may also provide an edge or hindrance in certain situations. For instance, blunt attacks are often counted as armor-piercing against flexible or soft armor types, or that in a match between a short sword and a sword, the extra reach of the sword gives its wielder a +1d bonus when determining who acts first, or that an unbalanced weapon takes a -1d penalty in the same situation, allowing those with faster weapons to act first in a turn.

▼ **ENDS** - Thomis found Yasyk by the stream, washing blood from his sister's face. He approached tentatively, stopping a respectful distance away. For several minutes, he just watched, listening to the babble of the water over pebbles, watching the water downstream cloud with blood, then clear. "I'm sorry," he said at last.

There was no reply. Just silence, the wind and the birds and too much blood. He turned to leave.

"Why?" He turned back, confused. Yasyk had moved away from his sister, and stood staring at him. "Why are you sorry?" He clarified. "She was not under your protection. Her role was to protect you." "She died for me."

"No!" said Yasyk sharply, stepping forward. Far too short to look Thomis in the eye, he settled for staring up at him. It was no less imposing. "She did not die for you," he continued. "She did not die for me, or for the Zokili, or for anyone else. She died. That is all. That is enough."

Thomis was taken aback. "I..." he began, but Yasyk waved him off, turning back towards his sister. Sensing that the exchange was well over, Thomis turned and headed back towards the others, who were grouped around the fire. He walked up to young Jonan and smiled down on the boy.

"How's the shoulder healing?" he asked.

"I think I'll live," said Jonan. He smirked, reaching across to rub at the bandages. A scrape, but it was the boy's first blood, and it meant a lot.

"You sure?" asked Thomis, sitting heavily on his own bedroll. "I can't have you guarding left flank with a bad shoulder. No, until you're fully healed, I can't let you back into action."

"It's fine," said the boy, attempting to sit up. He put his weight on the bad arm, and winced in pain. Thomis raised an eyebrow.

"How will you hold a shield?"

"You can strap it to my arm," said Jonan. "I'll spear with one arm."

"Will you?" Thomis leaned back, trying to let sleep take hold, recalling a day, almost forgotten, when he'd done the same, fighting a battle they should have lost. Fifteen years. Had it been so long? It must have been. So much had changed since then. And so few left now. Of the seven who set out that day, all that remained were Thomis, Jonan, and Yasyk.

It seemed a miracle that the three of them could have made it alive through even half of what the past decade had thrown at them.

He lay there remembering for a while, listening to the boy gently snore, then gave up on sleep and stood, stretching. He moved his way through the encampment, past the Mages, seemingly always awake, eying him suspiciously, heading towards the Stryders, arrayed in a semicircle facing north, the most vulnerable approach. Crossbowmen stood in armored cupolas atop the tallest of these, Runes enhancing their sight, allowing them to keep an eye out for anyone approaching from the field. The field on which so many had fought, on which Yasmyn had died yesterday, taking a mace blow to her head that would, *should* have caved in Thomis' skull. He should be dead, not her.

He quickly dismissed this line of thought. He had gone down that road countless times already, each time he lost a man, one who served willingly under his leadership. It had been hard won, but ultimately it had been the fact that he respected them all as individuals, and trusted that each would do the right thing, that had led them to nominate him as their leader so long ago.

*What now?* Would the next few years hold more of the same? A flurry of battles, moving from one town to another, picking up odd jobs, trying to hold together the pieces of a continent that was slowly fraying at the edges? Would the Kantarin Melded stay beyond tomorrow morning, or would they and their Stryders head back to Kantar? Would the Myndwar remain, or would they be called home to defend their villages from the incursions of Divar? He was never sure. He always doubted. And still, they remained.

Certainly, a few had left his employ for one reason or another, but the great majority had never left of their own accord. They had given their lives for Thomis and their fellow crew. How many more would die, he wondered, staring up at the darkness above, the two moons peering back at him from the inky blackness. How many more? And for how long? Would this ever end?

He stood there for a long while, until finally sleep crept up on him, and he wisely gave in, heading back to his bedroll for a few hours of shuteye before the battle began. And for those few hours, he stopped worrying about the future, about tomorrow.

*There would be time enough for that in the morning.*



## MELEE WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Knife	punch-1	lethal	short	.3kg	20Vel	1d+2	2	balanced
Dagger	punch-2	lethal	short	.2kg	30Vel	1d+2	2	balanced, armor-piercing
Quicksword	punch+0	lethal	long	.8kg	65Vel	1d+2	2	balanced
Short sword	punch+1	lethal	medium	1.0kg	90Vel	1d+2	3	balanced
Sword	punch+1	lethal	long	1.3kg	125Vel	1d+2	3	balanced
Back sword	punch+2	lethal	long	1.5kg	180Vel	1d+2	3	balanced
War sword	punch+2	lethal	long	1.8kg	220Vel	2d+0	4	balanced
Great sword	punch+4	lethal	long	2.5kg	370Vel	2d+0	4	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
Throwing axe	punch+1	lethal	short	1.0kg	45Vel	1d+1	2	unbalanced, throwable
Axe	punch+2	lethal	medium	1.3kg	65Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced
War axe	punch+3	lethal	medium	2.5kg	90Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced
Long axe	punch+5	lethal	long	4.0kg	250Vel	1d+2	4	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
Short staff	punch+1	half-lethal	medium	.8kg	20Vel	1d+1	2	balanced
Enan	punch+3	half-lethal	medium	2.7kg	120Vel	2d+0	3	unbalanced
Staff	punch+3	half-lethal	long	1.5kg	40Vel	1d+2	3	balanced, uses 2 hands
Long staff	punch+4	half-lethal	very long	2.0kg	60Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
Club	punch+1	half-lethal	medium	1.5kg	40Vel	1d+2	3	balanced
Mace	punch+2	half-lethal	medium	2.0kg	120Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced
Maul	punch+4	half-lethal	medium	2.5kg	170Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
War club	punch+4	half-lethal	long	3.0kg	250Vel	1d+2	4	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
Fork	punch+0(x2)	lethal	long	1.5kg	60Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced
Trident	punch+1(x2)	lethal	long	2.0kg	90Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
Hammer	punch+1	half-lethal	medium	1.2kg	60Vel	1d+2	3	balanced
Pick	punch+2	lethal	medium	1.8kg	90Vel	1d+2	3	unbalanced, armor-piercing
War pick	punch+4	lethal	long	5.0kg	370Vel	2d+0	4	unbalanced, armor-piercing, uses 2 hands
Throwing spear	punch+1	lethal	long	1.0kg	90Vel	1d+2	2	balanced
Spear	punch+2	lethal	long	2.0kg	170Vel	1d+2	3	balanced
War spear	punch+3	lethal	long	3.0kg	250Vel	2d+0	4	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
Long spear	punch+4	lethal	very long	4.0kg	250Vel	1d+2	4	unbalanced, uses 2 hands
Garrotte	punch+0	special	short	.1kg	10Vel	1d+1	1	see rules

## RANGED WEAPONS

NAME	USES	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	SHOTS HELD	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Light hunting bow	arrow	1	1d+2	1	.8kg	90Vel	1d+0	1	Strength 6
Hunting bow	arrow	1	2d+0	1	1.0kg	120Vel	1d+0	1	Strength 8
War bow	arrow	2	2d+1	1	1.5kg	170Vel	1d+1	1	Strength 10
Heavy war bow	quarrel	1	3d+0	1	2.0kg	250Vel	1d+2	2	Strength 12
Crossbow	quarrel	2	2d+2	1	5.0kg	500Vel	1d+1	3	Str 8/reload(10s)
Heavy crossbow	quarrel	3	3d+1	1	8.0kg	700Vel	1d+2	4	Str 11/reload(10s)
Small rune thrower	special	1	1d+2	1	1.2kg	500Vel	1d+2	2	armor-piercing
Large rune thrower	special	3	3d+1	1	4.0kg	1,400Vel	1d+2	4	armor-piercing
Throwing axe	n/a	1	punch+0(lethal)	1	1.0kg	45Vel	1d+1	2	
Throwing spear	n/a	1	punch+0(lethal)	1	1.0kg	90Vel	1d+2	2	
Sling	sling stone	1	punch+1 (half-leth)	1	.3kg	10Vel	1d+0	1	
Slingshot	sling stone	1	punch-1 (half-leth)	1	.2kg	20Vel	1d+1	1	
Blowgun	dart	1	0d+1	1	.2kg	20Vel	1d+0	1	armor-piercing
Bola	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1.0kg	30Vel	1d+1	2	see rules
Net	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3.0kg	90Vel	1d+2	4	see rules



# EABA

## PRIMITIVE ERA PERSONAL ARMOR

NAME	ARMOR	COVERS	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Rawhide	0d+2	all	7.0kg	175Vel	Rigid

## BASIC ERA PERSONAL ARMOR

NAME	ARMOR	COVERS	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Reinforced clothing	0d+1	torso & arms	3.0kg	10Vel	Flexible, can be worn under other armor
	0d+1	legs	2.0kg	10Vel	
Cold weather clothing	0d+1	torso & arms	2.0kg	Vel	Flexible
	0d+1	legs	1.3kg	Vel	
Boiler plate	1d+1	torso	5.0kg	100Vel	Rigid
	1d+1	upper arms	1.5kg	50Vel	
	1d+0	upper legs	3.0kg	100Vel	
Buff coat	1d+0	torso	3.0kg	125Vel	Flexible
	1d+0	upper arms	1.0kg	60Vel	
	1d+0	upper legs	2.5kg	125Vel	
Jack	0d+2	torso	3.0kg	80Vel	Flexible, can be worn under other armor
	0d+2	upper arms	1.0kg	40Vel	
	0d+2	upper legs	2.5kg	80Vel	
Mail coif	2d+0	skull & neck	1.5kg	90Vel	Rigid on skull, flexible on neck
Mail coat	2d+0	torso	7.5kg	350Vel	Flexible
	1d+2	arms	3.5kg	175Vel	
	1d+2	upper legs	5.0kg	250Vel	
Mail jacket	2d+0	torso	7.5kg	350Vel	Flexible
	1d+2	upper arms	2.0kg	150Vel	
Scale	1d+2	torso	7.5kg	150Vel	Rigid
	1d+1	upper arms	2.0kg	75Vel	
Ring	1d+1	torso	5.0kg	100Vel	Flexible
	1d+0	upper legs	3.0kg	75Vel	
Veile	1d+2	torso	7.5kg	150Vel	Rigid
	1d+1	upper legs	5.0kg	150Vel	
Plate helm	2d+1	head	3.5kg	150Vel	Rigid
Banded mail	2d+1	torso	7.5kg	300Vel	Rigid
	2d+0	upper arms	2.0kg	120Vel	
	1d+2	upper legs	3.5kg	200Vel	
Brigandine	2d+0	torso	6.0kg	200Vel	Rigid
	1d+1	upper arms	1.0kg	60Vel	
	1d+1	upper legs	3.0kg	125Vel	
Lamellar	2d+1	torso & neck	7.5kg	250Vel	Rigid
	1d+1	upper legs	2.5kg	100Vel	
Plated mail	2d+2	torso	6.0kg	400Vel	Rigid, hardened
	2d+1	arms	3.0kg	250Vel	
	2d+1	legs	6.0kg	350Vel	
Skirmish shield	1d+1	+2 to block	2.5kg	30Vel	Rigid, 4 Hits
Target shield	1d+0	+1 to block	1.2kg	20Vel	Rigid, 3 Hits
Tear shield	1d+2	+3 to block	3.5kg	50Vel	Rigid, 5 Hits
War shield	2d+0	+5 to block	10.0kg	90Vel	Rigid, 6 Hits
Gauntlets	0d+2	hand & forearm	1.2kg	10Vel	Flexible
Heavy gauntlets	1d+0	hand & forearm	1.5kg	20Vel	Rigid
Boots	0d+2	feet & shins	1.5kg	10Vel	Flexible
Heavy boots	1d+0	feet & shins	2.5kg	20Vel	Rigid

## BASIC ERA STUFF

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
2 person tent	8.0kg	2Vel	1d+0	6	Armor of 2d+0 when rolled up
Camp sundries	.5kg	1Vel	1d+0	2	
Map tube	.5kg	1Vel	1d+1	2	Mostly waterproof
Water skin	4.5kg	1Vel	1d+0	2	Holds 4 liters, masses .5kg empty
Hammock	1.0kg	1Vel	1d+0	2	Fine mesh, with bug screen
Basic cooking gear	3.0kg	5Vel	1d+1	4	Sufficient for up to five
Full cooking gear	8.0kg	10Vel	1d+1	6	Sufficient for up to five, with more cooking/dining options
Survival snares	.5kg	2Vel	1d+1	2	Wire, cord, fishing hooks, etc.
Fishnets	5.0kg	5Vel	1d+0	4	Also sufficient for medium game (including people)
Arrows, 24	2.0kg	2Vel	1d+0	1	Hits are for each arrow
Engraving tools	2.0kg	50Vel	1d+1	3	Suitable for rune engraving and maintenance
Drawing tools	1.0kg	10Vel	1d+0	3	Chalks, charcoals, pens and ink
Carpentry tools	10kg	25Vel	2d+0	5	Basic tools
Stoneworking tools	20kg	50Vel	2d+0	6	Basic tools
Metalworking tools	20kg	50Vel	2d+0	6	Basic tools
Candle lantern	.5kg	1Vel	1d+0	2	Illuminates 1 hex radius at no penalty, lasts 2 hours
Oil lantern	1.0kg	1Vel	1d+0	2	Illuminates 2 hex radius at no penalty, lasts 4 hours
Oil can	2.0kg	1Vel	1d+1	1	Refills a lantern ten times, costs a half-vel to refill
24 hour candle	.5kg	1Vel	1d+0	2	Illuminates 1 hex radius at no penalty, does not fit lantern
Nhet-ess runelight	.5kg	25Vel	1d+1	1	Lasts for 3 mo. use, illuminates 4 hex radius at no penalty
Medical supplies	2.0kg	5Vel	1d+0	3	For most non-critical needs of up to a dozen wounds
Crate or barrel	10kg	2Vel	1d+1	5	Holds 100kg of stuff
Sack	.5kg	1Vel	1d+0	2	Holds 10kg of stuff
Medium pack	1.0kg	2Vel	1d+1	3	Holds 20kg of stuff
Large pack	2.0kg	3Vel	1d+1	4	Holds 30kg of stuff
Hemp rope, 15m	3.0kg	2Vel	1d+0	3	Holds the weight of one person & gear
Silk rope, 15m	2.0kg	5Vel	1d+1	2	Holds the weight of two people & gear
Grapple hook	1.0kg	1Vel	1d+2	2	Does punch+0 half-lethal as an improvised thrown wpn.

## OBSTACLES & ITEMS

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Heavy lock/padlock	1kg	-	2d+1	2	Hard(11) to pick
Light wooden door	10kg	-	1d+1	6	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Heavy wooden door	25kg	-	2d+0	7	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Reinforced door	50kg	-	2d+1	9	Takes no hits from most cutting or puncturing attacks
Vault door	200kg	-	3d+2	12	Takes no hits from most cutting or puncturing attacks
Portcullis	250kg	-	3d+0	12	Takes no hits from most cutting or puncturing attacks
Mug, plate, bottle	.5kg	-	1d+0	1	Does punch-1 half-lethal as an improvised weapon, once
Chair	8kg	-	1d+1	4	Does punch+2 half-lethal as an improvised weapon
Table	20kg	-	1d+2	5	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Heavy table	100kg	-	2d+0	8	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Rug or tapestry	15kg	-	1d+0	6	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Glass window	5kg	-	1d+0	2	Anything breaking through takes 1d+0 lethal damage
Shutters	5kg	-	1d+1	4	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Heavy shutters	15kg	-	2d+0	5	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Iron window bars	15kg	-	2d+2	5	Puncturing attacks only strike it on a 3d+0 roll of 14+
Tile/slate roof, 1 hex	50kg	-	2d+0	8	Takes no hits from most puncturing attacks
Brick wall, 1 hex	150kg	-	2d+0	9	Takes no hits from most cutting or puncturing attacks
Stone wall, 1 hex	500kg	-	2d+2	12	Takes no hits from most cutting or puncturing attacks
Th. stone wall, 1 hex	2000kg	-	3d+0	16	Takes no hits from most cutting or puncturing attacks
Dirt, 1 hex	1500kg	-	1d+0	14	Is not damaged by attacks, only rearranged
Water, 1 hex	750kg	-	0d+0	13	Is not damaged by attacks, only rearranged

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**Arm Strength:** d+  
**Leg Strength:** d+  
**Agility:** d+  
**Hits/Damage Limit** /  
**Top speed:** meters  
**Acceleration:** meters  
**Empty weight:** tons  
**Crew:** Pilot, crew

### Armor

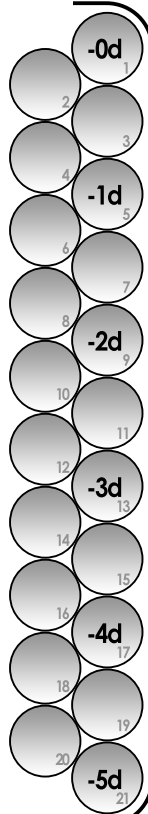
**Pilot** d+  
**Arms** d+  
**Cargo** d+  
**Torso front:** d+  
**Torso back:** d+  
**Legs:** d+

**Armament:**

**Battle Runes:**

**Modifications:**

**Final cost:** Vel  
**Repair(1st Hit)** Vel



**Arm Strength:** d+  
**Leg Strength:** d+  
**Agility:** d+  
**Hits/Damage Limit** /  
**Top speed:** meters  
**Acceleration:** meters  
**Empty weight:** tons  
**Crew:** Pilot, crew

### Armor

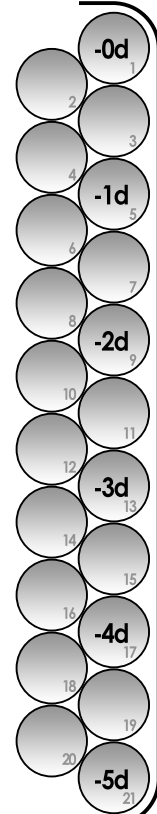
**Pilot** d+  
**Arms** d+  
**Cargo** d+  
**Torso front:** d+  
**Torso back:** d+  
**Legs:** d+

**Armament:**

**Battle Runes:**

**Modifications:**

**Final cost:** Vel  
**Repair(1st Hit)** Vel



**Arm Strength:** d+  
**Leg Strength:** d+  
**Agility:** d+  
**Hits/Damage Limit** /  
**Top speed:** meters  
**Acceleration:** meters  
**Empty weight:** tons  
**Crew:** Pilot, crew

### Armor

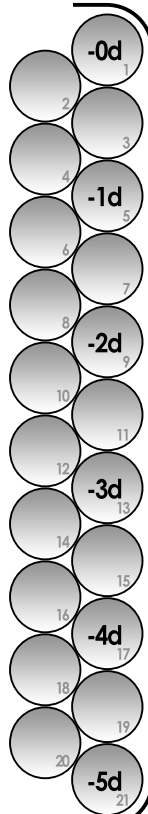
**Pilot** d+  
**Arms** d+  
**Cargo** d+  
**Torso front:** d+  
**Torso back:** d+  
**Legs:** d+

**Armament:**

**Battle Runes:**

**Modifications:**

**Final cost:** Vel  
**Repair(1st Hit)** Vel



**Arm Strength:** d+  
**Leg Strength:** d+  
**Agility:** d+  
**Hits/Damage Limit** /  
**Top speed:** meters  
**Acceleration:** meters  
**Empty weight:** tons  
**Crew:** Pilot, crew

### Armor

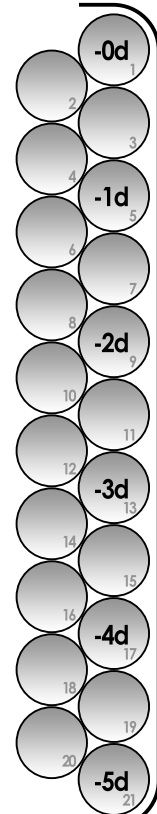
**Pilot** d+  
**Arms** d+  
**Cargo** d+  
**Torso front:** d+  
**Torso back:** d+  
**Legs:** d+

**Armament:**

**Battle Runes:**

**Modifications:**

**Final cost:** Vel  
**Repair(1st Hit)** Vel



# Extras

<b>Strength:</b>	d+	<b>Hits:</b>	○○○○ -1d
<b>Agility:</b>	d+		○○○○ -2d
<b>Awareness:</b>	d+		○○○○ -3d
<b>Will:</b>	d+	<b>Armor:</b>	
<b>Health:</b>	d+	<b>Head</b>	d+
<b>Fate:</b>	d+	<b>Torso</b>	d+
		<b>Arms</b>	d+
		<b>Legs</b>	d+
<b>Skills:</b>			
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
<b>Traits:</b>			
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

<b>Strength:</b>	d+	<b>Hits:</b>	○○○○ -1d
<b>Agility:</b>	d+		○○○○ -2d
<b>Awareness:</b>	d+		○○○○ -3d
<b>Will:</b>	d+	<b>Armor:</b>	
<b>Health:</b>	d+	<b>Head</b>	d+
<b>Fate:</b>	d+	<b>Torso</b>	d+
		<b>Arms</b>	d+
		<b>Legs</b>	d+
<b>Skills:</b>			
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
<b>Traits:</b>			
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

<b>Strength:</b>	d+	<b>Hits:</b>	○○○○ -1d
<b>Agility:</b>	d+		○○○○ -2d
<b>Awareness:</b>	d+		○○○○ -3d
<b>Will:</b>	d+	<b>Armor:</b>	
<b>Health:</b>	d+	<b>Head</b>	d+
<b>Fate:</b>	d+	<b>Torso</b>	d+
		<b>Arms</b>	d+
		<b>Legs</b>	d+
<b>Skills:</b>			
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
<b>Traits:</b>			
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

<b>Strength:</b>	d+	<b>Hits:</b>	○○○○ -1d
<b>Agility:</b>	d+		○○○○ -2d
<b>Awareness:</b>	d+		○○○○ -3d
<b>Will:</b>	d+	<b>Armor:</b>	
<b>Health:</b>	d+	<b>Head</b>	d+
<b>Fate:</b>	d+	<b>Torso</b>	d+
		<b>Arms</b>	d+
		<b>Legs</b>	d+
<b>Skills:</b>			
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
<b>Traits:</b>			
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

<b>Strength:</b>	d+	<b>Hits:</b>	○○○○ -1d
<b>Agility:</b>	d+		○○○○ -2d
<b>Awareness:</b>	d+		○○○○ -3d
<b>Will:</b>	d+	<b>Armor:</b>	
<b>Health:</b>	d+	<b>Head</b>	d+
<b>Fate:</b>	d+	<b>Torso</b>	d+
		<b>Arms</b>	d+
		<b>Legs</b>	d+
<b>Skills:</b>			
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
<b>Traits:</b>			
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

<b>Strength:</b>	d+	<b>Hits:</b>	○○○○ -1d
<b>Agility:</b>	d+		○○○○ -2d
<b>Awareness:</b>	d+		○○○○ -3d
<b>Will:</b>	d+	<b>Armor:</b>	
<b>Health:</b>	d+	<b>Head</b>	d+
<b>Fate:</b>	d+	<b>Torso</b>	d+
		<b>Arms</b>	d+
		<b>Legs</b>	d+
<b>Skills:</b>			
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
_____	+ d	_____	+ d
<b>Traits:</b>			
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

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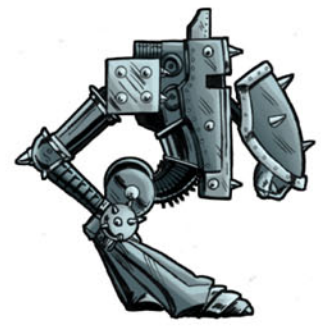
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