

# Familiars

the RPG of magical pets



Written by Andrea Sfiligoi



# Familiars

The RPG of magical pets, homunculi  
and other small but dangerous critters

Second Edition

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The map of Mevania is based on the Italian town of Bevagna, with apologies to its current inhabitants.  
For updates, errata and additional materials, please visit the Familiars blog at <http://familiarsrpg.blogspot.com> or contact the author at [andreasfiligoi@gmail.com](mailto:andreasfiligoi@gmail.com)



## Ganesha Games

<http://ganeshagames.blogspot.com>

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## Introduction

*Familiars* is a fantasy roleplaying game. Players take the role of magical spirits in the body of an animal. Familiars are sent on secret, dangerous missions by their masters and are in continuous empathic contact with them.

*Familiars* is set in the fantasy world of Awria, a medieval culture where magic is illegal but widespread. The characters are the pets and messengers of powerful mages belonging to secret guilds and schools. The mages are involved in lengthy, complex rituals and use the characters to perform errands and to deliver items and messages to each other.

The adventure in this book will give you a taste of what the world is like - seen from the perspective of a small animal bound to a magic user's soul.

### Humorous or serious

We play RPGs to have fun. The intent of *Familiars* is no different - to provide a set of fun, simple make-believe rules allowing you to play a magical animal. The game can be played as a deathly serious spy-magic adventure, as a "just-for-laughs" diversion from other serious RPGs, or something in between. The GM should take care that the seriousness level of the campaign fits the tastes of the participants. Having said that, some humorous tone should appear even in the most serious adventure, if nothing else to alleviate the tension and to make the dramatic parts grittier by comparison.



## The Nature of Familiars

A familiar is a supernatural spirit who manifests in the body of an animal. Alternatively, a familiar may also "inhabit" a constructed body, an animated rag doll or statuette called a homunculus. The relationship between the familiar's spiritual nature and his animal body is twofold - the spirit gives uncanny intelligence and magical abilities to the animal body, and the animal form instills part of the animal's instincts in the familiar. So a cat familiar will have distinctively feline attributes, wishes and instincts, and at the same time will be much more intelligent (and sometimes stronger) than a "normal" cat.

Familiars cannot manifest on Awria without the help of a medium - a magic-user (or, in some cases, a witch) who bonds his soul to the familiar, and helps the familiar find a body. Familiars are not demons in the classical sense of the word - they are not evil (well, a few of them are... more about that later). Familiars are as varied as humans in intent, personality and morality.

Familiars have no special knowledge of the afterlife, or of the dimension they come from. They know as much as humans do of the secret workings of the universe and of the ultimate purpose of life - that is, very little. They are "born" in the body of a newborn animal (or a freshly-sculpted homunculus) when the magic-user performs a ritual. They grow as the animal body grows, and generally go through the same experiences of a regular animal. When they are adults, their magical gifts start to manifest, and the magic-users begin to send them on missions.

## Familiars and Death

If the animal body dies, the spirit returns to the spiritual world and all memories of his mortal existence are erased. Free of the mortal burden of his memories, the familiar is ready to reincarnate in yet another body when another magic-user calls him on earth.

## The Bond

Familiars and magic-users are bonded by their souls. The familiar will not leave a magic-user's service unless dismissed. If the magic-user sends the familiar away, the familiar suffers a tremendous shock and often dies of heartbreak. Familiars who survive the experience of being cast away from their summoners become stray familiars - developing an agenda of their own and generally having bitter feelings for their former "masters". Sending away a familiar is not something that a mage worth his salt would do lightly.

When a familiar is killed, the magic user suffers a tremendous shock, too. While there are stories of wounds opening on magic-users' bodies when their familiars are killed, these are exaggerations. The magic-user suffers a psychological trauma like the loss of a loved child or sibling. The wound opens in the soul, not in the body.

## Duties of Familiars

Magic-users are constantly busy with magical research and performing long, complex rituals to increase their mystic knowledge. Familiars are sent on errands to acquire ingredients, watch over the magic user's mundane business and stand guard over his possessions and house. Familiars that pass as "regular" animals are perfect spies - if caught, they won't talk or betray the magic-user.

On Awria, and especially in the town of Mevania where the game is set, magic is illegal, not only for the demonic implications of some types of magic, but also because it is seen as a fickle force, too powerful to be handled by mortals. Having unnoticeable servitors/spies that won't talk if caught has saved many a magic-user's life.

Magic users often engage in spiritual battles against other magic users or extra-dimensional entities. Sometimes, these creatures send their "agents" (such as imps or giant insects) to distract the magic-user. In these cases, the familiars perform invaluable duties as guardians and protectors of the magic-user's body while he is in deep trance or concentrating on a complex spell.

## Keeping a low profile

This game assumes that the player characters are willing to keep a low profile. Magic is illegal and the very existence of familiar spirits is seen as a threat to humanity. PCs must be very careful not to raise suspicion that they are more than ordinary animals. This is especially true when they are using their supernatural powers - nobody minds a cat in the lord's bedchamber, but if the same cat is seen walking through walls people will reach for their weapons and call for help.

## Familiars and Communication

Familiars can talk among themselves magically, using what they call the spirit tongue. They can converse with each other normally, but to a human onlooker they would look like animals hissing, snorting, growling and meowing at each other. Homunculi do not "talk" but emit sounds like rustling leaves or hisses, depending on what was used to stuff their bodies.

Familiars can communicate with their master through their empathic link, but this is done only in emergencies as the master may be occupied by complex rituals. Interrupting a ritual could prove a disaster, and may cause the master's death or, even worse, a failed bargain with an extra-dimensional entity. This "emergency" communication is represented in game terms by the expenditure of HUMPs. See HUMPs on page 7.

Familiars communicate normally with animals of their "species" - so a rabbit familiar is able to converse with "normal" rabbits, a cat familiar with cats, and so on. Of course, familiars are extremely more intelligent than regular members of their species, so the conversation between a dog familiar and a dog would be limited by the dog's intelligence. Familiars wishing to communicate with animals of other species must use the Animal Speech Gift.

Familiars understand the speech of humans but are not able to converse with humans unless they use the Manspeech Gift. They understand all human languages spoken by their master. A familiar may learn additional languages by taking a Knowledge Gift in that language. See Gifts, page 13.

## Breeding

Familiars can interbreed with other familiars and with "regular" animals of the same species. Although the latter practice is somewhat frowned upon, it is common as familiars are few and far between, and mating instincts are strong.

The offspring of familiar and familiar, or of familiar and "natural" animal, is in 50% of the cases a normal animal, and in the other 50% an "exalted" animal. An exalted animal has superior intelligence that sets him apart from other members of its species. It is not as intelligent as a familiar, though, and this can prove dangerous - too intelligent to be just an animal, but not smart enough to "act dumb" in front of humans, the exalted animal often falls prey to the Inquisition. This keeps the exalted population low. Many "familiars" caught and killed by the Inquisition are just exalted animals - the general populace doesn't know the difference.

## The Nature of Magic

Magic is an extra-dimensional energy that can be “summoned” by rituals and incantations. Magic works because people know it is real and fear it. In a way, the superstitions of people and the magic users’ belief in magic fuel magic itself and make it real. All supernatural creatures and spirits originate on other dimensions (other “planes of existence” as mages call them). Some of these planes contain malevolent beings, but mages know well the difference and they generally avoid the most unpleasant ones. Sometimes, spell go wrong and truly malignant entities step over into the material world.

On Awria, there is only a major Church, which is actually a rationalistic theology that wants to eliminate magic. Members of the Church believe that magic is irrational, fickle and uncontrollable, and therefore too dangerous for man. The Church knows that, by making magic illegal and persecuting mages (and burning them at the stake), people will fear magic less and less, therefore diminishing its power. A world without magic will be rational, predictable and, above all, controllable. Isn’t that what everybody wants?

To make sure that everything goes as planned, the Church instituted the Inquisition, a branch of fanatical lawyers, law-enforcers and detectives especially trained to contrast magic in all its forms. Inquisitors are the most powerful form of opposition player characters will meet.



## RULES

### Basic game mechanic: the rule of thirteen

*Familiars* uses a simple mechanic to resolve all actions: roll two six-sided dice, add the character’s relevant score and subtract the action’s difficulty or other situational modifiers. If the result is a 13 or better, the action is successful.

A roll containing doubles (two 5s, two 2s, etc) is a special success or a terrible failure. The details of this special success or failure (sometimes called “critical success” or “critical failure” in RPG parlance) are improvised by the GM and can even be suggested by the other participants.

*Example: a dog is trying to force a door open. The door is stuck and the GM decides that the dog must succeed in a Strength roll to push it open. The player rolls two dice, and adds his character’s Strength score of 4. The dice results are a 4 and a 3, so the character’s final score is  $4 + 3 + 4 = 11$ , a failure. The GM rules that the dog doesn’t manage to open the door but he can try again in the following turn.*

*The player rolls again, this time getting two sixes on the dice. An outstanding success! Since he rolled a double (6 and 6), the GM rules that not only the door opens, but it also comes off its hinges and crashes in the room.*

*Later in the adventure, the dog finds another closed door and tries the same trick again. This time, the player is not lucky and rolls two 3s. Not only this is a failure, it counts as a special failure because the player rolled a double. The GM rules that the door stays closed and the dog strains a muscle.*

### Opposed Actions

Opposed actions (when a character tries to do something bad to another character, or when two characters want different things and dice are rolled to see who gets his way) use a similar mechanic. Both characters roll dice and add their attributes and situational modifiers, and the higher roll wins the conflict. Ties go to the character who initiated the contest or, in some cases, mean that nobody won the contest for the moment (the GM may rule that the conflict will be resolved later). Rolling doubles accounts for special successes or failures as in regular, unopposed actions.

*Example of opposed action: a cat is trying to sneak his way past a human guard. The GM rules that this must be resolved with an opposed action between the cat’s Dexterity and the guard’s Perception. The GM decides that on a tie the cat wins since he initiated the contest.*

*If the cat wins the contest, he can move past the guard unnoticed. If it fails, the guard sees or notices something with the corner of his eye and the cat must run away or be seen. If the cat fails badly (rolling doubles) or the guards succeeds spectacularly (rolling doubles), the cat is caught.*

Situational modifiers play an important part in opposed actions. In this case, the cat has the Silence Gift, which gives +3 to his roll. The GM can also state that the guard is distracted (for example, because another player character is throwing pebbles on the opposite corner of the room) and give a -1 or -2 situational modifier to the guard's Perception roll.

## Examples of Opposed Actions

A tries to persuade B to do something - Aura vs Aura

A tries to shove B - Strength vs Strength

A tries to go unnoticed by B - Dexterity vs Perception

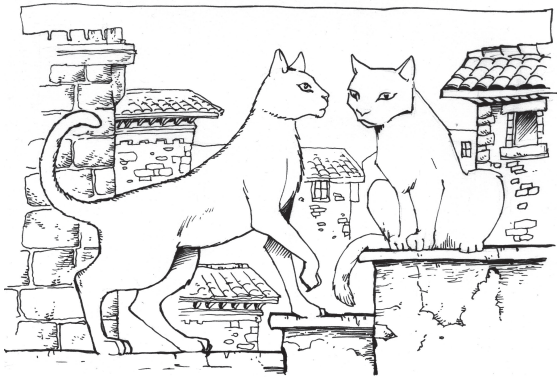
A tries to outwit B in a game of skill - Mind vs Mind

A tries to con B - Aura vs Mind or Aura

Combat is a special case of opposed action. Since it is frequent in adventures, it has slightly more detailed rules. See p. 18.

## Do not Roll Dice for Everything

Lots of actions will succeed automatically. A cat lifting a kitten in her mouth, a mouse barking to wake up his master, a dog barking to wake up a haystack, a dove flying through a window.. these are all examples of actions that normally should not require a die roll to succeed. Bad situational modifiers could do the difference - for example, a severely wounded cat might fail to lift the kitten; a dove could be required to make a Dexterity roll to fly through a broken window without hurting herself on the glass shards; and the dog would have a hard time waking up a drugged master. As a rule of thumb, the GM should not require dice rolls for something that an animal routinely does in the real world. If it is important to perform the action fast, or in adverse conditions (bad weather, lack of light, under stress or attack, etc) then a dice roll is in order.



# Character Creation

Characters in *Familiars* can be Toads, Cats, Doves, Ravens, Rabbits, Dogs, Snakes, Lizards, Owls, Bats, Mice, Magpies, Shrews and Homunculi. Each form has associated advantages and disadvantages. The abilities of the animals reflect mythology or folklore and are not based on scientific fact. We all know that in real life bats do not stick to people's hair but in the context of this fantasy game they do!

More playable animal types (including foxes, ferrets, moles, cockerels, newts and squirrels) with different powers will be added in a future supplement.

## Attributes

Characters are described in game terms by five basic attributes (Dexterity, Strength, Mind, Aura, Perception) and three secondary attributes (Size, Speed, and HUMPs).

The basic attributes are given numerical values at character creation with a point spend system (every type of character has a certain amount of points to spend in these areas).

All Attributes have a minimum value of 1.

Size is based on the character's type, for example all Mice are Size 1.

Speed is the sum of Size and Dexterity.

HUMPs (see below) is set at 5 at character creation.

Attributes may increase or decrease during play, within certain limits, because of experience, magical effects, wounds etc.

**Dexterity** is a measure of the character's agility, speed and coordination. Characters with high Dexterity will be fast and efficient in combat.

**Strength** is a measure of a character's physical endurance and power. Strength is used in close combat, and also to lift or push heavy things. A character's Strength has a maximum of one point more than the character's Size (so a character who is size 2 can have a Strength score of 1, 2, or 3).

Strength may be reduced by wounds. When a character's Strength score drops to 0, the character passes out. If the score is negative (-1 or worse) the character will eventually die unless it receives medical care. If the Strength score goes fully negative (say, it becomes -4 when it originally was 4), the character is dead.

**Mind** is a measure of the character's intelligence and knowledge. Rolls are made to see if the character knows or remember things, or is able to follow complex instructions, and so on.

**Aura** is a measure of the character's charisma, will and magical power. Some magic Gifts will require an Aura roll to work. Aura is also used to persuade others and it is also a measure of the character's "cuteness". Characters with high Aura are natural leaders, look good and attract the

attentions of the opposite sex.

**Perception** is a measure of the character's senses, both natural and preternatural. Perception rolls are made to see if a character notices something weird, manages to follow footprints, track by scent, see through a magical illusion, and so on.

**Size** depends on the character's type, as obviously a toad is smaller than a dog and so on. Smaller animals are more difficult to hit in ranged combat and can more easily hide in small corners. Bigger animals are easier to hit and spot but they are also more imposing and stronger in combat. Larger creatures are more difficult to hurt.

**Speed** is a measure of how many yards the character can run or fly in one action. A character's Speed is the sum of his Dexterity and Size. For example, a cat with Dexterity 5 and Size 3 can move 8 yards per turn. A mouse with Dexterity 4 and Size 1 can move 5 yards per turn. Flying characters halve this speed when crawling or running on the ground on their legs, and treble it when flying on their wings. So a Dove with Dexterity 3 and size 2 runs at 2 yards per turn but flies at 15 yards per turn.

If a character has any Pain tokens (see the Combat section for details), the number of pain tokens is subtracted from Speed, down to a minimum Speed score of 1.

**HUMPs** is an acronym for "Help Us, Master!" Points.

Every character starts with 5 HUMPs. HUMPs are used to telepathically ask for help from the character's master when the going gets tough. HUMPs are added to a dice roll and if the result is 13 or better, the master will send some form of help. The player must state how many HUMPs he's using before making the roll.

HUMPs are burned when used. Lost HUMPs can be bought back with experience. A character with no HUMPs cannot attempt a HUMPs roll.

The GM should decide, based on the current situation and what the character's master is doing, what kind of help the master can give. At a minimum, the master will give psychological comfort or suggestions that will give a +2 to the next die roll attempted by that character.

In many cases, the master will be able to cast a spell through the character's eyes and get him out of trouble. This may seem too good to be true but there are limits to what the masters can do (for example they will never do something that could get them caught by the Inquisition). And remember that HUMPs are gone when used!





## Gifts

Every character will have one or more Gifts at character creation, and can gain more with experience. These are natural abilities of the animal body or supernatural powers coming from the aura of the character.

A character begins with the Gifts listed on his profile, plus one chosen by the player from that character's list of available Gifts.

Gifts, no matter if natural or magical, do not work inside of Pentagrams. Some Gifts will have other restrictions (for example, the Death Omen Gift can be used only at night, and the Bad Luck power can be used only once per day on the same target). See the descriptions of the individual Gifts for rules and restrictions.

## Flaws

Some characters will have Flaws. Flaws are inborn or magical limitations. For example dogs have the Slave Mind and Colorblind Flaws, meaning that they must obey the orders of humans (not always, but often enough to be a nuisance) and they cannot tell one color from another ("I told you to bring me the purple powder, not the pink one, you stupid dog!").

The GM may allow starting characters to take one Flaw to "pay for" an additional Gift at character creation. This can be especially useful in an advanced campaign, when most characters have become powerful and have lots of Gifts and one player has to create a new character either because his character died or because the player just joined the campaign.

The flaws detailed in these rules are just examples. Players and GMs can have fun inventing new ones. Anything that limits a character's freedom of action can be taken as a Flaw -- for example, a character may be too fond of food, and therefore take unnecessary risks to get a tasty morsel. Just call it "Glutton" and state that, in emergencies, the character may resist this urge by making an Aura roll.

The idea of Flaws is not to make the characters weaker, but more likable and unique. Most psychological Flaws can be resisted by making an Aura roll. Of course, the player will be getting a few extra experience points when he chooses to bring the Flaw into play and disregards the Aura roll altogether!

## Character Types

Here's a list of the commonest animal types that can be played in Familiars. The GM is free to invent new ones, using these as examples. Beware of making one character type too powerful -- the game is more fun for everyone involved if every participant plays a different animal. When creating a new animal type, start by modifying the type which is closest -- for example, suppose you want to do turtledoves. Start from the Dove profile, and see what you can do to differentiate a turtledove from a dove. You might want to add a different starting combination of Gifts, for example, to make sure they play differently.

More animal types will be described in a future supplement.



## Bats

The character can be Size 2 or 3 (player's choice) and can spend up to 17 points on his attributes. Bats have the Clinging, Flying and Echolocation Gifts.

When fighting a human, a bat has the option to stick to his hair (at +1 if the target is long haired). This does no damage but sends the human into a panic - he must make a Aura roll every turn. If a loud sound is caused (a bell, explosion or sound of thunder), the bat will automatically lose its grip on the character's hair.

This ability can be used on a large (size 4+) hairy animal like a dog, but the animal will not panic (it might even not notice the Bat if the bat wins a Stealth roll!)

Bats may feed on insects, fruits or blood - this is chosen at the beginning of game and cannot change later. Vampire bats suck the blood from large mammals like cows by biting them while they sleep and lapping the blood from small cuts.

Bats may learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

### Roleplaying Notes

Bats are nocturnal creatures. Roleplay them as slack fellows in daytime.

# Cats

Cats are size 2 or 3 (player's choice) and can spend up to 16 points on Attributes.

Cats are apt climbers when climbing up (+2 to Dexterity) but less skillful when climbing down (-1 to Dexterity).

All cats have the Silence, Night Vision and Catfall Gifts, plus one additional Gift depending on the cat's color. Black cats have Bad Luck. White cats have Talisman. Tabby cats have Nine Lives. Ginger cats have Call Rain. Other cats have See Invisible. Cats may learn the Silence Gift twice, giving them +6 on any Stealth rolls (see Stealth, page 20)

Cats get +2 on Intimidation rolls against Mice and Lizards, and +1 against Doves.

Cats may learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Call Rain, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Nine Lives, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

## Roleplaying Notes

Cats are fiercely independent and will generally react badly to any attempt to put them to do things they don't want to do. They do not get along well with dogs.



# Dogs

Dogs can be of any Size from 2 to 5 (player's choice, where 2 is a chihuahua and 5 a St. Bernard or Great Dane). Dogs can spend up to 19 points on Attributes.

Dogs have the Keen Smell and the Sense Evil Gifts. They also have the Slave Mind and Colorblind Flaws. Dogs get +1 on Intimidation rolls against cats, and +2 against Rabbits.

Dogs may learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Tunnelling, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

## Roleplaying Notes

Dogs do not get along well with cats. They tend to take leading position in groups of familiars, generally acting as protectors of the smaller ones.

# Doves

Doves are Size 2. They can spend up to 18 points in Attributes.

Doves have the Heal and the Flying Gifts. They can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

## Roleplaying Notes

Doves are the embodiment of peace and avoid conflict at all costs. They often play a mother figure role to other familiars.

# Homunculi

A homunculus is a construct, a small humanoid artificially created by a magic user mixing clay, water, bodily fluids, straw and rags. A homunculus has a roughly humanoid shape and is Size 3. A homunculus has 17 points to spend on Attributes.

The homunculus is sculpted by the magic user. Since only a few mages have the patience to learn sculpting, most homunculi look like crude dolls or statuettes.

While all other familiars can easily pass for normal animals, a walking voodoo doll made of clay, rags and straw will undoubtedly be recognized as a magical thing.

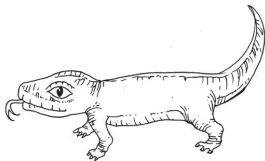
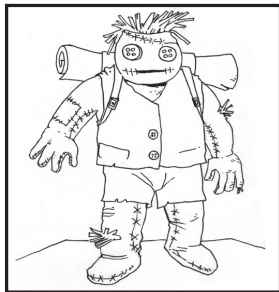
A homunculus has the ability to play possum when he fears that he's being watched by a human. He will lay down and do his best to look like a rag doll. While "playing possum", the homunculus feels no pain - his spirit is actually leaving the construct and floating a few inches above it. Of course, injuries to the body are retained so if the body is destroyed, the homunculus is not be able to return to it and dies.

Homunculi are immune to poison, disease (including vampirism) and mind affecting spells. They have the Gift of Manipulative Hands. This gives them the ability to make, use and repair simple tools. A homunculus may use a small weapon, such as a pocketknife or a large needle, in combat.

Homunculi can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

## Roleplaying Notes

Homunculi speak by blowing air out of their tiny mouths. Their voices sound like whistles or rustling leaves and straws.



# Lizards

Lizards are Size 1 and have the Clinging and Silence Gift. They have 18 points to spend on Attributes.

When lizards bite, they may decide to lock their jaws around the target. The only thing that can remove a lizard in "lockjaw" is application of fire, or killing the lizard. This ability can be useful, for example, when following someone (the lizard can stick to a cape or to the rim of a boot) or also to drive a bigger animal mad (imagine a dog with a lizard locked on his ear) with no chance to be thrown or lose one's grip.

Lizards can learn the following Gifts: Amphibian, Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Tunnelling, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength, Venom.

## Roleplaying Notes

Lizards are cold and unfazeable. They tend to become lazy and slow-witted in cold weather.

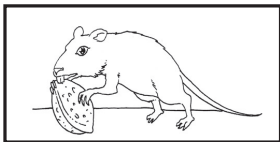
# Magpies

Magpies are size 2. They can spend up to 19 points on Attributes. They have the Gifts of Flying and Bad Luck, and the Compulsive Collecting Flaw.

Magpies can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

## Roleplaying Notes

A magpie tends to be a real gossip. They love to chat and do so to themselves when listeners aren't available.



## Mice

Mice are size 1. They can spend up to 18 points on Attributes. They have the Gifts of Luck and Silence, and the Flaw of Music Weakness. Mice are rodents and, given time, they can chew through wooden boards, leather covers, walls and such. Mice can hide in nearly anything - regardless of dice rolls, it might prove impossible to locate a mouse hiding into a haystack.

Mice can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Traps, Tunnelling, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

### Roleplaying Notes

For obvious reasons, mice do not get along well with cats and owls. Mice love cheese and are constantly obsessing about food.

## Owls

Owls can be any size from 1 to 4. They have the Gifts of Flying, Night Vision and Omen. They can spend up to 17 points on Attributes. Owls are natural predators for mice, shrews and rabbits, and get +3 on Intimidation rolls against them.

Owls can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

### Roleplaying Notes

Owls are the living embodiment of wisdom. They speak slowly and take decisions only after careful, long deliberation.

# Rabbits

Rabbits are size 2 (dwarf or regular rabbit) or size 3 (giant Flemish rabbits). They can spend up to 19 points on Attributes. Rabbits have the Talisman and the Tunnelling Gifts and the Curiosity Flaw.

They are born with eyes open, and their eyelids are too small to cover them, so when they sleep they fold their long ears over their eyes.

Rabbits can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Call Rain, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

### Roleplaying notes

A rabbit is an insane mixture of compulsive curiosity and poltroonery. When a rabbit sees something scary or unnerving, he can't help thumping the ground with his back feet, both to warn others of the danger and to relieve tension. A happy rabbit clicks his teeth much like a cat would purr.





## Ravens

Ravens are size 2. They can spend up to 18 points on Attributes. They have the Gifts of Flying and Omen.

Ravens can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

### Roleplaying Notes

Ravens are fault-finders, always complaining about someone or something. They do not get along well with other birds.

## Shrews

Shrews are size 1. They can spend up to 17 points on Attributes. They have the Gifts of Luck and Silence, and the Flaw of Music Weakness. Given time, they can chew through wooden boards, leather covers, walls and such. Shrews can hide in nearly anything - regardless of dice rolls, it might prove impossible to locate a shrew hiding into a haystack.

Shrews are extremely aggressive for their size and get +3 to their Aura for purposes of any Intimidation roll.

Shrews can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Echolocation, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Traps, Tunnelling, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

### Roleplaying Notes

Shrews are bad tempered, aggressive and foul mouthed. Despite their size, with their sarcasm and mean disposition they know how to keep much larger opponents at bay.

## Snakes

Snakes are size 2 or 3 (player's choice). They can spend up to 18 points on Attributes and have the Gifts of Venom and Silence. Alternatively, a player may choose a water snake who is Amphibian but has no Venom.

Snakes can learn the following Gifts: Amphibian, Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Nullify Poison, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength.

### Roleplaying Notes

Snakes resent the bad press they have and tend to be over sensitive and touchy in social matters.



## Toads

Toads are Size 1 and they can spend up to 18 points on Attributes. They have the Amphibian and Nullify Poison Gifts.

Toads can learn the following Gifts: Animal Speech, Bad Luck, Call Rain, Clinging, Danger Sense, Darkness, Fury, Gift-Giving, Heal, Keen Sight, Keen Smell, Knowledge, Invisibility, Luck, Magical Knowledge, Manspeech, Night Vision, Object Read, Omen, Resist Pain, See Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Silence, Spirit Form, Talisman, Terror, Toughness, Traps, Tunnelling, Unnatural Dexterity, Unnatural Strength, Venom.

### Roleplaying Notes

Toads are hard-working, down-to-earth fellows who like a good joke and the company of others. They tend to be slow and sleepy in cold weather.



# Gifts

## Amphibian

An Amphibian character is able to breathe, move and operate normally under water. The character does not suffer from modifiers because of water.

## Animal Speech

This gift allows the character to talk with one specific animal species in addition to his or her own. For example, a dog may take this Gift to be able to talk to horses. This Gift may be taken multiple times, once per "language" known. The quality of communication will of course be limited by the animal's intelligence. Most animals will understand only basic ideas such as food, danger or mating.

## Bad Luck

This is the ability to make bad things happen to others. To use this Gift, the character must win a contest of Aura against his victim. The victim must be in sight or the ability won't work. If the character wins, the victim will be immediately hit by a stroke of bad luck. Examples of effects include: slipping, tripping and falling, fruits coming loose from branches and falling on a target's head, doors jamming, swords getting stuck in their scabbards, bowstrings breaking, and in general anything that could cause minor discomfort, loss of balance or a temporary distraction. If the character loses the Aura contest, he can't use the power for one hour. Bad Luck can be used as often as the character wants, but only once per day against any one "victim".

## Call Rain

The character can cause a sudden rainstorm within a one mile radius. The storm lasts one hour and comes with thunders and strong, cold winds. An Aura roll is needed. If the roll fails, the power can't be used in the same area for one full day. If the roll is successful, the character can continue to call rain hour after hour until he fails.

## Catfall

If the character with this Gift makes a Dexterity roll, he avoids all falling damage. If the roll fails, the damage is rolled at -1. Only on a terrible failure the cat will take full damage. Only cats have this Gift.

## Clinging

The character can automatically climb vertical walls or even ceilings with no chance of falling.

## Danger Sense

The character is alerted by a special tingling or a "hunch" when danger is approaching. The GM makes a secret Perception roll for the character before the character falls into a trap, is attacked or puts himself in any risky situation. If the roll is successful, the GM will give a warning to the player.

## Darkness

The character can create a shroud of unnatural darkness in a 5 yards radius from his body. The area of darkness stays where the character has created it, and torches and lanterns will not work into the area. Characters without the Night Vision Gift or Echolocation will have -3 on Dexterity, and will not be able to attack in ranged combat or to do much more than walking cautiously. The Darkness lasts for 10 minutes. This Gift can be used once per day.

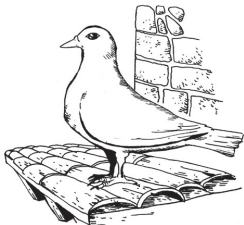
## Echolocation

The character can "see" the immediate surroundings, even in pitch darkness or at his back, by emitting a high pitched sound and picking up the shape and direction of objects by hearing the sound bouncing off objects. Echolocation cannot see colors. A Perception roll is needed to notice small details. Only bats may have this Gift.

## Flying

The character can fly. Flying speed is three times the character's basic speed in yards. A Dexterity roll is required to attempt any dangerous or acrobatic maneuver in flight, such as avoiding tree branches or other obstacles. A critical failure in flight means that the character bumps into an obstacle, taking one damage roll at +2. A flier that bumps into a branch or the like must make another Dexterity roll or be forced to land. Only winged creatures have this Gift.

A Flying character can carry another character whose Size is the same or lower than the flying character's Strength. If the carried character's Size is lower, the flying character can move normally. If the Size is the same as the Strength of the flying character, his flight speed is reduced to speed x 2 yards. A flying character can lift a heavier character by making a Strength roll but he can carry him only for very short periods, and flying at basic speed. Make one Strength roll per turn, and when that fails the flyer must land or to drop the carried character.



## Fury

The character has +2 to Dexterity for purposes of attacking and +1 to damage rolls in close combat only.

## Gift Giving

The character can temporarily pass one of his Gifts to another character by touching him. The Gift disappears from the character and "transfers" to the touched person for one hour. The person receiving the Gift may use it as if the Gift were his own. Note that the Nine Lives Gift cannot be transferred.

"Gift Giving" itself cannot be transferred. Note that in the case of some Gifts, the receiver's body may be altered to allow the Gift to function. For example, a character receiving the Gift of Flying will sprout wings, with a wingspan proportional to his size.

## Heal

The character can heal wounds and disease by touch. If the character makes an Aura roll, the target is instantaneously and completely healed of any wounds, scratches and ailments he might have. Poison is expelled from his blood, any Strength points lost are restored and any Pain markers (see Combat) are removed.

Heal can be used only once per 24-hour period. Heal does not work on undead creatures (note that in Familiars Vampires are NOT classified as undead) and it does not work on Homunculi.

## Nullify Poison

Poison does not work within three yards from the character. Poison that has been already injected or swallowed will become harmless, and even poison kept in containers or smeared on arrowheads or blades will be nullified. Characters with the Gift of Poison who move within three yards of the character will lose the ability for one hour. Only Toads may have this Gift. This power still works if the toad is dead and is preserved with a simple ritual - this is why many magic-users use toads as amulets against poisoning.

## Keen Sight

The character has +2 to all Perception rolls when he's trying to spot hidden things or characters, notice details, etc.

## Keen Smell

The character can recognize people by smell alone and even follow them through a crowd or track them by scent. A Perception roll is needed to track by scent. Smell is unique and the Gift of Keen Smell will see through disguises and even magical illusions. Other strong smells, like perfumes and the smell of garlic, may distract the character - make another Perception roll not to lose the track when a strong smell is encountered. Examples of situations that may require a roll: moving through a crowd, entering a bakery, perfumery or a flower shop, running through a lavender field, entering water.

## Knowledge

There is a separate Gift for many areas of Knowledge. Example includes Knowledge of Plants, History, Dancing, Animals, Politics, and so on. Any human science, skill or craft can be treated as a Knowledge Gift. Players are encouraged to be inventive.

A character with a Gift of Knowledge has superior information about a field of study and receives +2 on any Mind roll made to remember that information. The better the roll, the more information the GM will hand out to the player.

Remember that Familiars is set in a world with the technological level of European early Renaissance - so modern skills cannot be taken. Also remember that characters in animal bodies will not be able to perform many skills even if they have the theoretical knowledge of it. *For example, a toad familiar with Knowledge of Pottery will be able to recognize clay types, kilns, firing techniques, shaping tools and colors used in ceramic production, and may recognize specific schools of pottery by their design or the technique used, but he will not be able to sit at the potter's wheel and fashion a bowl.*

Knowledge Gifts can be taken more than once, up to 5 times per field of knowledge, to represent a deeper study and understanding of the subject. Every "level" of the Gift gives an additional +2 to the relevant roll.

*Example: a player wants his Cat to be an expert on Roofs. He knows every detail on roof construction, materials used, how much weight they can support, and so on. The player takes three times the "Roof Knowledge" Gift and the character has +6 to any roof-related Mind roll.*

## Invisibility

The character can become invisible for ten minutes once per 24-hour period. The character receives +6 to any Stealth roll if people are trying to spot him with their eyes. Character with See Invisible can see and target the character normally.

Any attack against an invisible attack is at -4 and can be attempted only if the attacker passes a Perception roll to have a general idea of where the character is.

Invisibility requires constant concentration and it is cancelled if the character lifts a heavy weight, attacks, uses another Gift or performs any other action that, in the GM's opinion, could break his concentration.

An invisible character may be made visible by throwing a bag of flour or bucket of paint at him. This will require a Perception roll to locate the character and a successful ranged attack.

## Luck

The character can reroll any one dice roll, once per hour of play time (play time is the time spent by the player sitting at the table, not by the character in the game world). Luck cannot be used on HUMPs rolls. The decision to reroll must be announced immediately after failing a roll. The result of the reroll must be kept even if it is worse than the original roll.

The GM may decide that Luck applies in other cases of pure chance. For example, if a character runs into a dark room and risks stepping on some glass shards on the floor,

the GM may rule that the character avoids the shards by sheer luck. This "uses up" the character's Luck for one hour of play time.

## Magical Knowledge

The character may make a Mind roll to recognize spell effects, magical inscriptions and symbols, and so on. Like all knowledge abilities, this Gift can be taken up to five times, giving +2 to the Mind roll for every "level" taken.

## Manipulative Hands

The character can use hands with the same accuracy of a human. The character can write, fold paper, pull the trigger of a crossbow, use tools and generally do things that are impossible to characters with paws or claws. Only homunculi can have this Gift.



## Manspeech

The character can converse with humans for ten minutes. This Gift can be used once per 24-hour period. The character's voice will bear a resemblance to the animal's cry - a raven will talk in a distinctively croaking voice, a mouse will have a squeaky voice, and so on. Note that familiars understand talking humans even without this Gift - this is used only if the familiar wants to say something.

## Night Vision

The character can see perfectly in the dark and has no modifiers to Perception rolls because of darkness.

## Nine Lives

Only cats may have this Gift. Tabby cats have it automatically, and other cats may learn it with experience.

The character can negate all damage from one source, be it an attack, a fall, a trap, or whatever. This ability can be used once per hour. Each use of this Gift uses up one of the character's "Nine Lives". When all Nine Lives have been used, the character loses the Gift forever. The character cannot re-learn this Gift through experience.

## Object Read

The character with this Gift can "read" an object's aura, gaining insight into the history of the object and the thoughts and emotions of the people who handled it recently. Object read requires a Perception roll. Only one try per object is allowed. If the roll fails, the character cannot read the object's aura. Violent emotions connected with the object may give a bonus to the roll at the GM's discretion.

## Omen

The character will have visions and omens every time he meets people who are fated to die soon, or anything something traumatic is going to happen. If the character is sleeping, the vision may come in the form of a dream. This ability will work automatically every time that the GM thinks it should. In addition, a character with this Gift may try to "foresee the future" intentionally. For example, before taking a decision, the PC may roll to receive hints about which course of action to take. Only one try per 24-hour period is allowed, and the character must succeed in a Perception roll to receive a hint about the future.

## Resist Pain

The character ignores the first (and only the first) Pain marker he receives in a day. This ability does not work if the character has any Pain markers. See the Combat section for more about Pain markers.

## See Invisible

The character can spot invisible beings, spirits and ghosts by making a Perception roll. If he fails, he can try again to spot the same invisible being after one hour. If the first roll is successful, the character can see the invisible person normally.

## Sense Evil

The character can sense the presence of undead, evil spirits or tormented ghosts in a location with a Perception roll. If the roll fails, the character can roll again after one hour. This ability can be used to notice if a character is possessed or mind controlled by any evil entity.

## Sense Magic

The character can detect the presence of magic with a Perception roll. For example, he may notice a faint aura around a person who is under a spell, or realize that an object is magical, or tell a familiar from a normal animal. Only one roll per object, place or person is allowed.



## Silence

Character has +3 on any Stealth rolls made to avoid being heard. Cats may learn this Gift twice for a total bonus of +6.

## Spirit Form

Character can, once per 24-hour period, become immaterial like a ghost and move through walls. The Spirit Form can be retained for 10 minutes. While in spirit Form, the character cannot be harmed by any physical attack and can freely move through walls and other obstacles. Like any other Gift, though, Spirit Form is negated by pentagrams, so the character will not be able to move through walls protected by pentagrams.

A character in Spirit Form cannot affect the world in any physical way - he cannot touch other characters or pick up objects. Any object held or carried by the character will fall on the ground when the character assumes his Spirit Form. Magical attacks, and attacks by some magical weapons, will affect the character.

A character in Spirit Form cannot be targeted by any Gift or magical power that requires the target to be touched. The character can interrupt his Spirit Form at any moment. If the character returns to his physical form while crossing an obstacle, he automatically receives one wound and is thrown back out of the object (as two physical bodies cannot exist in the same space). No ill effect is applied to the object or person - only the character takes damage if he tries to become solid inside a physical object.

Two immaterial characters can touch each other as if they were solid beings - so a character may use Spirit Form to physically attack a ghost, for example.

A character in Spirit Form cannot carry another character unless he is in Spirit Form, too.

## Talisman

The character negates all uses of the Bad Luck Gift in a 10-yard radius. This power is always working and is automatic - it cannot be turned off to let a friend use his Bad Luck ability.

Magic users may create such a Talisman from the character's feet or ears - characters with the Talisman Gift are often hunted for this reason.

## Terror

The character can project an aura of terror. Any human or animal looking at him will have to make an Aura contest against him. If the character wins, the affected person cowers in fear or tries to run away. The aura can be used once per day and its effects last for ten minutes. Supernatural creatures like ghosts, vampires and spirits, and other characters with the Terror Gift, are immune. A character who successfully resists the Terror Gift is immune to other Terror attacks from the same character for a 24-hour period.

## Toughness

The character can absorb damage easily, and resist many attacks unhurt. Any damage roll against the character is at -2. The Toughness Gift does not work if the character is wounded - the ability is restored as soon as the wound has healed.

## Traps

A character with the Traps Gift has +2 to any roll made to detect, avoid or set up mechanical traps like snares, pitfalls, foothold traps, etc.

## Tunnelling

A character with this Gift may burrow through soft earth at the speed of one foot per turn. Only creatures the same size or smaller than the character can fit into the tunnel.

A character with the Tunnelling Gift automatically recognizes the burrows and tunnels made by his own species and receives a +2 to any Mind roll to recognize the burrows of other animals.

## Unnatural Dexterity

The character can boost his Dexterity score by +4 for 10 minutes. This Gift can be used once per 24-hour period. The character's Speed score is increased accordingly.

## Unnatural Strength

The character can boost his Strength score by +4 for 10 minutes. The Gift can take the character's Strength above his maximum. This Gift can be used once per 24-hour period. At the end of the 10 minutes, the character's Strength level goes back to normal. Any wounds the character has are retained, so it is possible for a character to die because of accumulated wounds when the duration of this Gift expires.



## Venom

The character has a poisonous bite. Every character bitten must make a Strength roll modified by the Size of the character (bigger creatures have more powerful venom) or fall under its effects after 1-6 turns. A poisoned character is helpless until he receives medical aid. If the person rolls a critical failure (a double on a failed Strength roll), the poisoning is fatal and he will die unless given a proper antidote within a few minutes (the poisoned character can also be saved by the Heal and Nullify Poison Gifts).

A character has only one dose of Venom - after he uses it, another dose will form in about ten minutes. Venom should be used sparingly in the presence of humans who tend to overreact to poisonous animals.

## Flaws

Some characters have inborn flaws. Flaws are like anti-Gifts - they are problems or quirks that hinder the character but make him more interesting to play.

## Colorblind

The character cannot differentiate between one color and another.

## Compulsive Collecting

Whenever the character sees any shiny object, regardless of its value, the character feels compelled to steal it and to hide it in his nest or burrow. The character can resist the temptation by making an Aura roll.

## Music Weakness

Whenever the character hears music, he must make an Aura roll or stop whatever he's doing and start dancing. The dance will continue until the music ends or if the character is attacked.

## Rut

It's always mating season for the character. Anytime the character comes in contact with a member of the opposite gender of the same species, the character will do his best to court and woo the prospective partner. The mating instinct can be temporarily resisted with an Aura roll.

## Slave Mind

The character has -2 against Intimidation rolls made by humans.

## Curiosity

The character cannot resist looking into boxes, opening up packages and letters, and so on. Only when there is a certainty of being caught, the character can suppress this irrational urge by making a successful Mind or Aura roll.

## Experience

The GM will distribute experience points after every adventure. Characters may use experience points to increase their attributes or to learn a new Gift. 10 points will buy a one point increase in an Attribute (including HUMPs) or a new Gift. Size cannot be increased. Strength cannot be increased beyond Size +1.

The GM sets the experience reward for any adventure, but he can use the following table as a general guideline.

### Suggested Experience Reward Table

| Action                           | Exp. reward |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Any action that solves a problem | 1           |
| Making the players or GM laugh   | 1           |
| Defeating an inferior foe        | 1           |
| Defeating a dangerous foe        | 2-4         |
| Solving a mystery                | 2-4         |
| Acting in character              | 1           |
| Playing own Flow                 | 1           |
| Saving another character's life  | 1           |

## Actions

### Lifting, Pushing, Breaking and Shoving Things

Characters will often make Strength rolls to force a door open, to break a lasso or a net that trapped a friend, and so on.

Strength rolls can also be made to see if a character can lift an object. The GM will assign a weight score to objects and subtract it from a character's Strength roll to see if the character manages to lift, shove or push the object. If a character is trying to lift or drag another character, for example a wounded friend, use the character's Size as a measure of its weight.

No matter how many guidelines we can give, the GM will have to rely on his common sense to adjudicate whether a character can lift or shove something. Remember that animals use their muscles differently from humans, and regardless of a character's Strength score, some actions will be utterly impossible for certain animals.

On the other hand, familiars are intelligent creatures and will use their muscles in ways that animals wouldn't think of -- for example, using levers, pulling door handles, and so on.

### Carrying Other Characters

Sometimes small characters will hitch rides on larger ones. For example, a snake may coil around a dog's neck, a bat may hang onto his hair, and a mouse may even accept to be carried in the claws of a friendly owl or raven.

A character can carry another character whose Size is the same as or lower than the character's Strength. If the carried character's Size is lower, the carrying character can move normally. If the Size is the same as the Strength of the carrying character, his speed is halved (round down). A character can lift a heavier character by making a Strength

roll but he can carry him only for very short periods, at Speed 1. Make one Strength roll per turn, and when that fails the carried character must be dropped.

For flying characters, see the Flying Gift.

## Order of Actions

In critical moments, such as combats and chases, it helps to break down the character's actions in a turn by turn schedule. This avoids confusion and makes sure that everybody gets a chance to act. Characters with high Dexterity have faster reaction speed than others, so they are at an advantage here.

Characters declare actions in order of reverse Dexterity (from the lowest to the highest) but perform actions in order of Dexterity (from the highest to the lowest). *Example: a cat and a dog are chasing a boy who is running away with a precious scroll stolen from their master's library. The boy is Dexterity 2, the cat is Dexterity 5 and the dog is Dexterity 3.*

*The boy (a NPC played by the GM) must declare his actions first, having the lowest Dexterity. The GM states "the boy tries to run through a door and to slam it in your face". Then the dog declares his action ("I'm trying to bite the boy's leg"), and then the cat does the same ("I'm using my Bad Luck Gift on the boy").*

*Then the actions are resolved. The cat acts first, and the result of his actions (if successful) may prevent other characters from performing theirs. For example, the cat may use his Bad Luck power on the door and state "The door is locked", so if the Bad Luck roll is successful, the boy will not be able to run through it.*

*When this happens, a character can change his course of action, but if the new action requires a dice roll, this is made at -3.*

*The boy (played by the GM) may for example state that he's turning to attack the cat. In this case, the attack will be at -3 because the boy initially stated a different action (running away).*

## Chases

There are two ways to handle a chase in game terms. The complicated way is to draw a map on hex paper, drawing all obstacles and such, and to use miniatures or counters to move the characters. A convenient scale is one yard per hex. A character with a Speed of 9 will move 9 hexes and so on. Characters will have to make Dexterity rolls to avoid or jump over obstacles, and those who fail the rolls must stop for a turn, or move at half speed for that turn (depending on the nature of the obstacle).

The less complicated way is more abstract. All characters involved roll two dice and add their Speed score. The GM may assign modifiers based on the character's positions, the actions they are performing, and the obstacles that are present. For example, a flying character will be faster than a runner on difficult ground because the flying character can avoid obstacles, but the situation is reversed in a wooded area with lots of trees and low branches that force the flyer to be more cautious. The character rolling higher wins the chase and manages to get away, or to catch the fugitive. A special failure means a fall, or a sudden stop against a branch, or any other unfortunate event as suggested by the GM's sense of drama.

## Close Combat

Close combat happens when two characters grapple, bite or claw at each other. An attack can be made with the intent to subdue or hurt. When a character is trying to subdue another, or to knock a human down, the action is performed as a contest of Strength (both characters roll dice and add their Strength score, the winner knocks down or subdues the other). Note that humans are extremely strong compared to most characters and only the bigger dogs can be their equals in a shoving match. In addition, when humans are prepared they will often employ weapons which make them lethal. Most characters will have to resort to cunning, tricks and the clever use of their Gifts when facing prepared, armed humans in potential combat situations.

The damage of attacks made to hurt others depend on the comparative Size of the characters and on the Strength of the attacker. A cat's bite, for example, would be almost negligible for a human but may prove fatal for a mouse. Small size makes you harder to hit but easier to damage, and large size makes you harder to damage but easier to hit.

To hit someone, you must make a Dexterity contest, using the target's Size as a positive modifier. If you win the contest, you then roll on the Damage Table, adding to the roll your strength and the difference in size between you and your target.

*Example: a dog (Strength 4, Size 2, Dexterity 4) is trying to bite a man (Dexterity 5, Size 7). The dog rolls 2d6 +11. The Human rolls 2d6 +5.*

*If the dog wins, he managed to bite the man's leg and makes a damage roll at -1 (+4 for Strength, -5 for difference in size)*

*Example 2: a dog (Strength 4, Size 2, Dexterity 4) is trying to bite a cat (Size 2, Dexterity 6). The dog rolls 2d6 +6. The cat rolls 2d6 +6.*

*If the dog wins, he makes a Damage roll at +4 (+4 for Strength, +0 for difference in Size).*

*Example 3: a dog (Strength 4, Size 2, Dexterity 4) tries to bite a Toad (Size 1, Dexterity 2). The dog rolls 2d6 +5. The toad rolls 2d6+2. If the dog wins, he makes the damage roll at +5 (+4 for Strength, +1 for difference in size).*

## The Damage Table

When someone is hit in combat, roll 2d6, add the attacker's damage bonus (Strength plus Size difference) and consult this table:

|       |                         |
|-------|-------------------------|
| 1-3   | No effect               |
| 4-7   | Pain                    |
| 8-11  | Extreme Pain            |
| 12-15 | Extreme pain + 1 wound  |
| 16+   | Extreme pain + 2 wounds |

## Pain

A "pain" result means that the character receives a "pain" marker. The character has -1 on all actions (including attacks, defenses and anything that requires to roll dice) per every Pain marker he has, until he had time to rest and nurse his wounds.

## Extreme Pain

Extreme Pain has the same effects, but the character receives two Pain markers. A human suffering extreme pain will drop any object held in his hands and generally run from the character who inflicted the pain. A character in precarious balance (such as a man walking on a window ledge) will fall.

## Wounds

Wounds represent more serious injuries that could be infected, cause blood loss and even death. A character has -3 on all rolls for every wound he has, until the wounds are fully healed. Healing under normal circumstances requires one week per wound lost. A character whose wounds exceed his Strength score is comatose and will die unless he receives immediate medical care. A comatose character is helpless and is killed if he receives any further wound.

A character dies if his Strength goes fully negative (for example, it becomes -3 when it originally was 3).

## Effects of Pain

The negative modifiers from Pain, extreme Pain and Wounds are cumulative. So, for example, if a character received a Pain result, an Extreme Pain result and a Wound, the character's actions will be at -6 until he is healed (-1 from the Pain, -2 from the Extreme Pain, and -3 from the Wound, for a total of -6).

Whenever a character with any Pain or Wound markers rolls a modified 3 or less, the character is subdued - he loses the will to fight and can only crawl in agony on the ground.

*Example: a toad receives two Pain markers and an Extreme Pain marker, for a total modifier of -4. The character then attempts a Dexterity roll to hit his opponent. He is Dexterity 2 and his dice roll comes up 5, for a total of 7. 7-4 (from the Pain) is 3, so the character loses the action and is subdued.*

## Critical Effects in Combat

Whenever an attacker hits with a double on his dice, he has scored a critical effect. Critical effects depend on the size differences between attacker and defender. In general, someone receiving a critical from a smaller opponent loses his balance and must make a Dexterity roll or fall. Someone receiving a critical by a larger opponent passes out and receives one wound (in addition to any other effects as per the damage table). The GM may assign other effects based on the circumstances. A fallen character has -2 on his Dexterity until he spends one action to stand up. Note that Snakes cannot fall unless they are caught in combat while climbing - they receive an additional Pain marker instead.

## Going for the Eyes

Some attackers (cats, snakes, homunculi and all flying characters) may declare that they are going for the opponent's eyes. The opponent must be maximum one point of Size bigger, or fallen down, for this to be an effective technique. Flying characters may always go for the eyes no matter what the opponent's size. This attack is at -2 but the opponent is temporarily blinded if hit. If hit by a critical success, the eye is taken out and blindness is permanent.

A character blinded in one eye will permanently be at -2 on all physical actions where sight is needed. A character blinded on both eyes is effectively helpless. Permanent blindness can be healed only by magic.



## Weapons and Armor

An armed human is an extremely dangerous opponent. Humans armed with a blade (like a sword or a dagger) always add +1 to their combat score when attacking, and humans employing a shield add +2 to their combat score when defending. If a human is wearing armor, there's -2 on the damage roll made against him. A human armed with a weapon adds +1 to +3 (depending on the size of the weapon) on his damage roll.

### Damage roll modifiers for weapons

knife, dagger, arrow +1  
mace, morning star, flail, short sword, crossbow bolt +2  
broadswords, longswords, and even bigger weapons: +3

## Homunculi and Weapons

Homunculi may be armed with small weapons like pocketknives or large needles, adding +1 on damage. Homunculi found with large needles on them will be mistaken for voodoo dolls. Homunculi cannot get any protection by wearing "armor" of any kind.

## Ranged Combat

In general, player characters will rarely make ranged attacks. Most of the times, it will be a human such as a hunter who will try to hit a character with a bow or a thrown object. When a human tries to hit someone in ranged combat make a Dexterity vs Dexterity contest. The attacker uses the following modifiers:

- 3 insufficient light
- 1 per 3 full yards of distance from shooter to target after the first three yards (so -1 at 4-6 yards, -2 at 7-9 yards etc) with thrown weapons;
- 1 per 5 full yards of distance from shooter to target after the first five yards, with bows and crossbows (so -1 at 5-9 yards, -2 at 10-14 yards, etc)
- + add the Size of Target
- +1 if a full turn is spent aiming (assuming the shooter is not distracted or hit)
- 1 if the target is protected by light cover (a bush, leaves etc)
- 2 if the target is behind hard cover (the corner of a building, the railing of a tower, a boulder, etc)
- 1 if the target is Flying
- 1 if using an improvised throwing weapon

*Example: a man (Dexterity 4) is shooting a bow at a flying raven (size 2) 10 yards away.*

*The man modifies his roll as follows: +4 (his Dexterity) +2 (size of target) -1 (flying target) -2 (target is 10-14 yards away) for a total modifier of +3. The GM rolls dice, gets a 7, so his total is 10.*

*The raven defends. His Dexterity is 3, and he rolls a 8, so he barely manages to dodge the arrow (8+3=11).*

## Bombing

Flying characters may "bomb" other characters by dropping objects on them. Treat this as a special case of ranged attack with no modifiers for range. It is not possible to bomb other flying characters, and there is no benefit to be gained by aiming.

Damage from a falling object will generally be standard for a rock or a brick, -1 for lighter objects.

Creative characters may drop packets of flour or a small bucket of paint (to detect invisible opponents), ground pepper (to harass and distract humans), embers (to set a house on fire), eggs or other "natural" droppings (to embarrass enemies), or even "airborne troops" (smaller characters or, even better, beehives).

Bombers having access to an alchemist's lab may become extremely dangerous, dropping acid, poison or even magical potions (shrinking fluids, potions of love, sleep gases, etc) on their unsuspecting foes. Of course, use of magic items should be restricted to emergencies as there's no better way to get the Inquisition's attention.

## Stealth

Stealth rolls are made when a character wants to go unnoticed, either skulking in the shadows, or following someone without being heard. Resolve the action as a contest of the stealthy character's Dexterity versus the other character's Perception, with the following modifiers:

- +3 if at night
- +2 if the character being followed is distracted
- +3 if the character has the Gift of Silence
- the character's Size (big characters make more noise and are easier to spot)

If the Stealthy character wins or ties the contest, he has gone unnoticed. If the other character wins the contest, he has noticed the stealthy character. Note that a cat may learn the Gift of Silence twice, representing a supernatural talent at stealth. A character has +2 on his Dexterity if he attacks someone who didn't notice him.

When a group of characters is trying to go unnoticed, make the roll using the worst Dexterity in the group.

Humans will generally not notice animals skulking in the shadows unless the presence of that animal is unusual in that area, or they have reason to watch out for animals. In many cases, a guard will stand watch against other humans, and will ignore a bird flying by or not even notice a stray dog or a cat. In all these cases, the GM may rule that attempts to use stealth on humans are automatically successful. Of course, members of the Inquisition know about familiars and always keep an eye on any unusual "animal" activity.



## Intimidation Rolls

Generally, fights in the animal kingdom are either lethal predator-and-prey affairs that end with an animal eating another, or non-lethal scuffles that end when one animal bullies the other into submission. The latter can be represented in the game by the Intimidation roll.

To make an Intimidation roll, characters make a contest of Aura plus Size. For example, a dog with Aura 2 and Size 4 will roll at +6.

Animals who are natural predators/enemies of the target they are trying to intimidate receive a bonus - see the following table:

- Cat versus mouse or lizard: +2
- Owl versus mouse, shrew or rabbit: +3
- Dog versus cat: +1
- Snake versus toad or mouse: +1
- Hawk versus dove: +3

A regular animal defending his own territory (such as a badger defending his sett) has +2 on Intimidation rolls. This applies to player characters only when they are defending their master's sancta sanctorum.

An intimidated animal will run or cower, or keep quiet in a corner, depending on the situation. An intimidated animal will generally avoid any escalation of a conflict, and will run away at the first opportunity.

# Dangers of the World

## Falling

Most characters will be able to survive falls of three yards or less unhurt. Longer falls may be dangerous. Characters receive a damage roll, at +1 per every yard fallen (up to +10).

Flying characters will never take falling damage unless they are knocked out cold in midair. Cats have special rules, see the Catfall Gift.

If a character receives any wound marker from a fall, he has broken a leg (or a wing in the case of a flying character) and must be carried by other characters. The character passes out until his pain markers are healed. Unless magic is used, the broken leg will take at least one month to heal (make a Strength roll, at +2 per month passed, and the leg is fully healed when the roll succeeds). A two-legged character with a broken leg can hop at half speed. A four legged character with one broken leg loses two points of Speed. A flying character with a broken wing can't fly until the wing heals.



## Traps and Snares

When moving in the wilderness or in the countryside, Familiars risk falling into traps devised for common animals. Many legends about witches assaulting farms and small villages in the woods are actually rescue missions to free familiars from traps and snares.

Different traps work differently on characters of different sizes. Generally a trap is designed with a certain target size in mind, for example jaw-traps and foothold traps may be designed to catch wolves and foxes, but a mouse would probably walk over them without setting it off.

In general, a character can make a Perception roll to notice a trap. This roll should be made secretly by the GM. Some times, such as when running through a forest and stepping into a snare, noticing the trap won't necessarily help the character: in those cases, the GM may also require a Dexterity roll to avoid the trap at the last moment.

A trap's effect is to inflict pain and restrain the character's movement.

The typical snare is set for models of sizes 2 to 5. A random snare may be generated rolling 1d6 and counting results of 1 as 3 and 6 as 4. It's a wire noose, with a weight anchoring it to the ground, hidden in the grass. It tightens around the neck of the character. Toads, shrews, mice and snakes can't be caught by snares. A snare made of rope or flexible branches can be easily chewed through by mice, shrews, rabbits and dogs, other character types will find it difficult to help a trapped friend.

Birds may accidentally walk or land over birdlime traps. Birdlime is any viscid, sticky substance that is applied over a branch or piece of bark to catch birds. A bird gets one attempt only at getting free with a Strength roll, if he fails he is stuck on the birdlime until helped out by someone.

It requires a lever and a Strength roll to open a foothold trap. If the roll fails, the character receives a Pain token and may try again. If the rolls fails badly (i.e., the character rolls doubles and fails), the character receives two Pain tokens. If a character is subdued by a trap, he loses all hope to break free and can do so only with the help of others.

Nets can be suspended to catch flying characters. Use the same rules as for a snare: a Perception roll to notice the trap before it's too late, and a Strength roll to break free if caught.



## Pentagrams

A Pentagram is a magical inscription, generally circular, that (among other things) prevents familiars' Gifts from working. Pentagrams are usually employed by magic users to protect their libraries and their houses, stopping spirits, elementals and demons at the door.

Gifts, including those who seem part of the familiar's nature such as a raven's ability to fly, will not work inside of a Pentagram. Homunculi will not be able to trespass a Pentagram, becoming a lump of inert clay and straw if forced to do so (the homunculus will come back to life when taken out of the Pentagram). Other characters may walk inside the Pentagram but will lose their Gifts and have a terrible headache giving them -1 on all Mind and Aura rolls.

## Ghosts

Both humans and animals can turn into ghosts after death. When any character dies in tragic circumstances over cursed ground, the GM may roll a chance of the character to become a ghost.

Ghosts have only Mind and Aura scores. They appear to be made of swirls of smoke and ectoplasm, until they coalesce into a transparent version of their living selves. They have the Bad Luck and the Terror Gifts and can use them at will, but one character who resists their Terror is immune to further uses of Terror from the same ghost for a day. Ghosts are treated in game terms as if they had the Spirit Form Gift always "on". In addition, Ghosts can affect the physical world only through limited telekinesis, moving small objects, creating cold drafts and producing eerie noises. Their memory of speech is limited so they have trouble understanding spoken languages or producing meaningful sounds.

Ghosts cannot be affected by physical attacks and most magic spells will just go through them. Ghosts are undead creatures who remained on Earth because of some unfinished business, and the best way to get rid of them is to make sure that whatever they left unfinished is completed.

There is no such thing as a typical ghost - the extent of their powers will vary based on their cause of death, and their nature before death. Characters with the Spirit Form Gift may engage ghosts in physical combat as if they were material beings - see the Spirit Form Gift for details.



## Goblins

Goblins are small, humanoid scavengers who hide in the outskirts of human civilization. They survive by stealing food and tools (which they are incapable of producing) from humans. A goblin looks like a bald, scrawny human kid with a big head and large pointed ears. Their skin tones range from grey to bluish. With clothes, a hat and a cape on, a goblin may pass for a human child from a distance. Goblins generally speak a debased version of whatever language is spoken by humans in the area where they live.

The existence of goblins is accepted although chances are that the average human would never see a live goblin in his life (some freak shows have goblin desiccated heads and goblin skeletons in jars). A few magic users employ them as servants, but goblins are generally too untrustworthy to be of any use except as guinea pigs for magical experiments.

One night per month, on the first night of the full moon, goblins are possessed by some form of "moon madness" that makes them hyperactive and almost megalomaniac. During this phase, goblins have +4 to all Mind rolls. Unfortunately, whatever cunning plans they make to conquer the world quickly fall apart at daybreak, when their intelligence drops to its usual abysmal level.

### Typical Goblin

Dexterity 3, Strength 3, Mind 2, Aura 1, Perception 1, Size 5, Speed 8

Gifts: Moon Madness (+4 to Mind on Full Moons),

Silence

Flaws: inability to invent or construct tools

# Googans

Googans are goblins who steal the breath of unsuspecting sleeping humans. A googan is a small (size 2), thin, hairy humanoid with black skin and pointed teeth. Googans live in the houses of humans, generally unseen, and can be appeased by letting a few drops of milk or some dry bread in a plate on the floor. When this doesn't happen, the googans start to visit their victim every night, sitting on his chest and taking his breath away. The victim will have nightmares, feel tired and lacking in vitality in the morning. A magic user may recognize that the condition is caused by a googan by making a Mind roll. If the googan is not sent away or killed, the victim will invariably die within a fortnight.



**Gift of Spider Form:** Googans can shapeshift into spiders if the need arises. The transformation takes one action and is automatic. They can maintain the spider form for about one hour per 24-hour period. In spider form, they are Size 1 and Strength 0, they have the Clinging Gift and +3 on any Stealth rolls. If killed while in spider form, the googan stays dead and does not revert to his true shape. They generally use the spider form to hide or cling to ceilings, sometimes to reach their victims, but they cannot steal breath while in spider form.

Googans are afraid of cats and rabbits and avoid houses where they are kept as pets.

## Typical Googan

Dexterity 2, Strength 1, Mind 4, Aura 3, Perception 5, Size 2, Speed 4

Gifts: Spider Form, Steal Breath, Stealth

Flaws: cats and rabbits have +2 to Intimidate googans

# Gremlins

Gremlins are smaller, naturally invisible goblins who have a fascination with technology of all kinds. Gremlins are always trying to take machines apart, getting inside windmills or clock tower to satisfy their compulsive curiosity. Unfortunately, their curiosity has little practical use as they never accomplish anything more complex than pulling a random lever or getting crushed by a machine's gears.

Gremlins have brittle bones and feeble muscles, and any attack against them is at +1 on damage roll.

## Typical Gremlin

Dexterity 3, Strength 2, Mind 3, Aura 2, Perception 3, Size 4, Speed 7

Gifts: Invisibility (continuous-- they cannot become visible)

Flaws: Curiosity for machines, weak body

# Imps

Imps are small demonic creatures that in some special circumstances can be summoned as familiars by evil magicians. Imps are more mischievous than truly evil, although many of them are capable of heinous acts of cruelty.

An imp looks like a small human baby with bat wings. The baby's face is misshapen and his body bloated and hairy. An imp's eyes glow in the dark.

## Typical Imp

Dexterity 5, Strength 3, Mind 4, Aura 4, Perception 3, Size 4, Speed 9

Gifts: Flying, Night Vision, Darkness, Terror, Magic Knowledge

Flaws: Demon, feared and hated by humans

Notes: Imps are often intelligent and knowledgeable, and often have one or more levels of Knowledge in magic theory, alchemy and other "forbidden" areas of knowledge.

# Stray Familiars

Stray familiars have lost their master or have been sent away by him and somehow managed to survive the emotional shock. Stray familiars do not bond with other magic users and generally develop an agenda of their own. Some, like the infamous black stray cat Nightwhisper (see "the Overworld"), become leaders of animal-familiar communities.

# The Overworld

There is a cat "overworld" over the rooftops of Mevania, the capital city of Awria, run by an extremely powerful stray familiar cat named Nightwhisper. The organization works like a criminal cartel or protectorate, defending cats and generally making sure that felines get the best in terms of food, lodging and care.

Nightwhisper is rumored to have made a pact with sinister forces that allow the organization to affect and infiltrate human society. Their ultimate goal seems to be the "uplifting" of all cats; whether this means giving them better intelligence through interbreeding with familiars, magic or taking control of the city remains to be seen. But the organization is powerful and any activity on the rooftops (including chases and fights) might attract its attention.



# The Inquisition

The Inquisition is the armed branch of the Church of Pure Thought, the positivist philosophy that is trying to shape the future of the world by eliminating magic.

Inquisitors are fanatics armed with the best knowledge and legal enforcement powers, allowing them to arrest and detain people under suspicion of magic. A known magic user may be legally tortured and, once proven guilty, will be asked to abjure magic, turn in his books and magical equipment and kill or turn in all of his familiars.

## Typical Inquisitor

Dexterity 5, Strength 7, Mind 4, Aura 5, Perception 4, Size 7, Speed 12

Gifts: Knowledge of Traps, Torture +2, Magic Knowledge x 3. Inquisitors are highly feared and have +4 on all attempts to Intimidate humans.

Flaws: fanatical

Notes: armed with sticks or knives (+1 on damage rolls).

## Hunter

A typical human hunter, armed with a short bow and a knife or club, would have the following stats:

### Typical Hunter

Dexterity 5, Strength 6, Mind 2, Aura 3, Perception 4, Size 7, Speed 12

Gifts: Knowledge (Hunting), Traps

Flaws: afraid of the supernatural (must make an Aura roll when confronting the supernatural or flee).

Notes: armed with a club, stick or knife, and a short bow (+1 on damage rolls), quiver with 12 arrows.

# The Larrant Estate

The Larrant Estate is a safe haven for all familiars in need of a rest or medical care. Lord Larrant himself, although easily passing for a human, is actually a fox familiar who is able to shape change into near-human form (a successful Perception roll will notice something "weird" about Larrant). No-one knows which master Lord Larrant is serving. More information about fox familiars will appear in a future supplement.

The Larrant Estate is guarded at all times by d6+2 powerful mastiffs

## Mastiffs

Dexterity 5, Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Mind 1, Aura 1, Perception 4, Size 5, Speed 10

Gifts: Keen Smell, Fury

Flaws: Slave Mind, Colorblind



# Vampires

Vampires are sick creatures who gain supernatural powers when drinking blood or eating raw flesh (this unfortunately includes the blood and flesh of familiars and animals).

Vampirism is a disease that can be cured (albeit with difficulty) through herbal medicine and a strictly vegetarian diet. When bitten by a vampire, a living creature must make a Strength roll or contract the disease. The creature will develop a sincere hatred of light and running water, willing to bathe only in stagnant water, and the desire to drink flesh and have his meat raw-- preferably bitten off a live victim. The disease has an incubation period of about 48 hours.

Vampires are repulsed by the smell of garlic, the most important ingredient in the herbal concoctions made to cure vampirism. An efficient method to avoid being bitten is smearing oneself with garlic. The vampire will have to make an Aura roll to resist the smell and come close to the character. Of course, other characters will react badly to the foul garlic smell.

Vampires will avoid running water, although immersion in it is not fatal to them as some legends imply. Powers gained by vampires include Bad Luck, Invisibility and Clinging. Animals (and familiars) can contract vampirism as well as humans.

# Fool's Gold

An introductory Adventure (GM's eyes only)

This is a simple, introductory adventure for beginning characters set in Mevania. It's short enough to be played in the same session where the players design their characters. The goal of this adventure is to give you a taste of the game world, and function as a springboard for a campaign. Read the adventure once before running it and learn the details as you go.

An experienced GM can change any details of the adventure as he sees fit. For example, the adventure assumes that all characters belong to the same magic-user. This is not mandatory. It is possible to play satisfactory campaigns where the PCs belong to friendly mages, or even conflicting mages who cooperate temporarily against some greater evil or towards some common goal.

## The Patroness

The characters all work for the same magic user, a young woman named Lystra. Lystra is a tall, pale noblewoman with long straight red hair and a gentle if slightly melancholic expression on her face. She generally wears a silk robe with magical inscriptions when she is in her Sancta Sanctorum. Lystra is pictured on the cover of this book.

Lystra lives in the suburbs of Mevania, in a two story villa surrounded by a large garden and an orchard. Her Familiars (including the PCs) generally live outside. Cats, dogs and rabbits may be allowed inside. Birds may have nests on the roof or on the trees. All other types are either kept in the Sancta Sanctorum or live free in the fields. She has six human servants who take care of the mansion and the surrounding fields: two watchmen who take turns at watching the villa's gate, a cook, a gardener, and two ladies who take care of cleaning and other household chores.

The humans live in a smaller house and do not know that Lystra is a magic user. The servants are instructed not to kill or catch any animals they find in the open, and get poultry and other meat from the market (Lystra herself is a vegetarian and does not allow meat in the house, but the servants occasionally eat meat and fish).

## The Manor's Defenses

The manor's most outstanding feature is its vast array of magical defenses. Every brick in the Sancta Sanctorum has been inscribed with a small Pentagram to prevent spirits and immaterial familiars from entering. The pentagrams are set in such a way that Lystra's familiars are unaffected.

The outer walls of the house are protected by a spell called the Spirit Watchdog. If anyone with evil intent approaches the house, the Spirit Watchdog starts to bay (it sounds like a regular dog barking at the distance to human ears, but characters with Magic Knowledge will recognize the warning).

## Lystra's Story

Lystra is 26 and is a widow. She was married to a much older man, Devago, himself a powerful magician, who was killed two years ago in a magical duel with Kermadar, a practitioner of the black arts, and left her a huge collection of magical textbooks. Devago's body was not found and officially died in an accident (crossing a lake on a boat during a storm).

Lystra, who was already learning magic under Devago's tuition, continued to study on her own. She has a plan to avenge her dead husband and lay her hands on Kermadar's library at the same time. She is not a mere apprentice anymore, but she is nowhere near Devago's power level.

Lystra is a gentle, caring mistress who is more than a little overconfident. She's getting caught in a game much bigger than she is. This should be obvious to PCs after some time. After all, if Kermadar was much more powerful than Devago, who was Lystra's teacher, how can she hope to defeat him with only a couple of years of magical training under her belt? Anyway, Lystra will not discuss the matter directly with her familiars, gently but firmly refusing to answer any question relating to Kermadar. But the PCs have an empathic link with her and can make Perception rolls to understand that she's not telling the whole story.

## Campaign Developments

If Lystra is to survive the campaign, she will need all the help that the player characters can get. A major plot twist that can be introduced later in the campaign is that Devago is not actually dead - he was enslaved by Kermadar and turned into a huge black dog (the fantasy version of a Rottweiler) who obeys every command from his master. He is not a familiar - he's a human shapeshifted into dog form. He kept a small part of his magical powers: nothing compared to what he had, but still enough to be more than a match for the player characters. Subduing him, and finding a way for him to regain his human form and reunite with Lystra could be the epic conclusion of the campaign.

Lystra tried to use divination spells to know about her husband's fate, and she got the (wrong) impression that he is dead. Actually, that is just a false impression planted into her mind by Kermadar. Kermadar is much more powerful than Lystra and considers her to be just a nuisance.

## Introduction and Briefing

Lystra calls the PCs for a briefing. She's just begun a magical ritual that will keep her busy for a full night. She told her servants that she is sick in bed and shouldn't be disturbed. Meanwhile, she wants the PCs to collect a few ingredients that she'll need at the end of the ritual. It is very important that the characters get the ingredients in time, or all her work will be wasted. Anyway, getting the ingredient is easy (at least so she thinks!) so she's confident that her familiars will have no problem in getting them in time.

Lystra ordered the ingredients from Aptus, a man who works as a glassblower by day and alchemist by night. Aptus lives and works in town, in the craftsmen district. Lystra gives the PCs the address and a small cotton pouch to carry the ingredients. The pouch has a string and can be worn like a pendant around the neck of a large character. A small character can carry the pouch in his talons, beak or mouth.

The PCs are instructed to keep a low profile. Aptus is waiting for them. All they have to do is show up at his place and collect the stuff. Really.

## Aptus

Aptus is an amateur alchemist and an excellent glassblower - he sells retorts, alembics, vials and purified elements to other alchemists and magic users to finance his own studies. He has no magical talent besides knowing the common incantations needed to make alchemical tools. Unknown to Lystra, though, Aptus has recently captured a leprechaun - a fey creature who knows the secret to turn base metals into gold.

Aptus is not greedy - he wants the secret of magical gold for entirely intellectual motivations.

## Mevania by Night

Almost no one travels around the city after sunset. The only exceptions are town watchmen, criminals of all kinds, drunkards and animals. Anyone going around after sundown must have good reason to do so and is required to identify himself immediately - otherwise watchmen will assume that he is a criminal and arrest him.

Familiars will not attract too much attention as long as they skulk in the shadows and do not travel as a group. Fliers go generally unnoticed. Nobody notices a small pack of like animals - a bunch of stray cats or a pack of dogs, or even mice would not attract attention. But a dog, a cat, a magpie and a snake travelling together will undoubtedly look unusual and even a sleepy watchman could decide to call Inquisitors.

## Going Downtown

Lystra's manor is just outside town and it will take just 40 minutes for the PCs to reach the town and locate the building where Aptus works and lives. They will immediately notice that something is wrong.

Aptus' shop is a two-storey building. The glass blowing shop is on ground level, and the living quarters are upstairs. At the corner of the building, a small tower rises for another two storeys. The top of the tower is shiny, as if it were covered in gold paint. Actually, something like gold paint seems to be dripping from the mullioned windows.

A murder of magpies is cawing around the tower. On a successful Perception roll, a PC will notice that the magpies are attracted to the shiny "paint" but at the same time they dare not touch it. In fact, any flying PC may notice a magpie standing on the inside ledge of a window - a magpie entirely made of gold! A magpie PC (or a PC with the appropriate Animal Speech ) may talk to the magpies, but the birds don't know more than what the characters can see with their own eyes: it seems that the tower is turning into gold, and one of the magpies turned to gold when she

landed to collect a little of the shiny stuff. The magpies continue to fly around the tower, being at the same time attracted to the shiny metal and afraid of ending up like their friend.

## What Happened

Aptus captured a leprechaun in the countryside and brought him here to extort the secret of turning base metals into gold. He got more than he bargained for. The leprechaun cast a spell which turned him into a statue of gold and is quickly turning the whole building to gold. If the spell is not stopped, the building will collapse under its weight. When the characters inspect the building, they notice that the ceiling seems to bend under its own weight. Only the leprechaun can stop the spell, but the leprechaun has been kidnapped by an exalted cat (see below).

The transformation into gold lasts for one hour. Any character realizing that the building is turning to gold gets a Mind roll to understand that the building will collapse and kill Aptus before the effect wears off. A man made of gold is Size 10, entirely out of the carrying capacity of the characters (unless someone uses the Unnatural Strength Gift) and will surely attract the attention of anyone seeing him!

## The Ingredients

The characters may think they can get the ingredients Lystra needs and just leave. Remind them that they do not know what ingredients they need. In fact, Aptus was expecting the characters and he had a pouch ready for them. Unfortunately, the pouch is tied on his belt and is made of solid gold at the moment.

## The Pot

The source of the leprechaun's spell is a small pot, not unlike a miniature cauldron, uninterruptedly spewing "liquid gold" on the floor. Anything or anyone touched by the liquid turns into solid gold in a matter of seconds. A character stepping on the liquid gold or touching the cauldron must make a Strength roll or be instantly transformed into gold. If the contact continues, roll again. The gold is not hot - it feels like molasses to the touch.

A character turned to gold is effectively out of the adventure, unless he makes a HUMPS roll asking for Lystra's help. In that case, Lystra stops her ritual and instructs the other PCs to take away the "golden" character. She will explain telepathically that the effect will wear out in one hour. Of course, once you have a character who looks like a statue of solid gold, the adventure can take a very different course -- all you need is a greedy thief that notices the character and decides to "steal" the golden statue.

## Leprechaun Boots

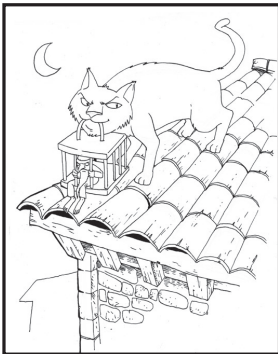
A small pair of leprechaun sized boots can be found on a shelf of the lab. Rau, an exalted cat part of the Overworld was spying on Aptus. Rau has kidnapped the leprechaun and he's carrying him (in a cage he carries in his mouth) to Nightwhisper. He hopes to gain a promotion for this.

The leprechaun is dropping a few specks of gold dust here and there, so following his tracks is easy. It is evident that the cat jumped from the window (which is still open) onto a nearby roof and ran away from there.

### Rau, exalted cat

Dexterity 4, Strength 2, Mind 2, Aura 1, Perception 4,  
Size 3, Speed 7

Gifts: Silence, Night Vision, Catfall



## Cat Fight

If the characters follow Rau, they will end up in a turf ruled by cats. The cats are mean and any attempt to step into their territory will degenerate into a fight unless the characters back off. These are regular cats, so telling them that the community is endangered by the leprechaun or something to this effect won't work. Regular cats will understand only matters of food, mating and territory. There are as many cats as the characters, minus one.

### Mean Tomcats

Dexterity 5, Strength 3, Mind 1, Aura 2, Perception 4,  
Size 3, Speed 6

Gifts: Silence, Night Vision, +2 to climbing rolls

Notes: regular animals; they resist Intimidation at +2 because they are defending their home

A fight on a rooftop will require bulkier characters to keep their balance. Every time a character bigger than Size 3 is hit, it must pass a Dexterity roll or start to slide down the roof. A character who slides twice or gets a critical failure falls down the roof into the street, taking a damage roll at +3.

As the characters fight, one or more of them may continue to pursue Rau. Make a contest of Speed between the pursuer and the cat, and if the pursuer wins, he can catch Rau before he reaches Nightwhisper.

If Rau wins, he reaches Nightwhisper before they can catch him. The characters will have to parley with Nightwhisper and persuade him that the leprechaun is dangerous.

## Nightwhisper

Nightwhisper is no fool and he knows that he doesn't have the power to keep a Leprechaun under his control. The prospect of having gold is sweet to his ears, though - his cats frequently steal jewels and coins, and he uses them to bribe men or even to buy food for the cats.

### Nightwhisper, stray cat familiar

Dexterity 8, Strength 3, Mind 9, Aura 10, Perception 7,  
Size 3, Speed 11

Gifts: Silence x2, night Vision, Animal Speech (bat language), Animal Speech (mouse language), Animal Speech (dog language), Catfall, Manspeech, Knowledge: Bribery x 4, Keen Sight, Knowledge: Human Society x2, Invisibility, Bad Luck, Tough, Nine Lives

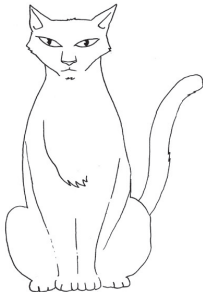
Flaw: Power Hungry

Assaulting Nightwhisper is almost a suicide - his guards, also known as the Furies, are among the best fighters in the city, and the roofs where he resides are full of traps (like artfully weakened tiles that collapse under the weight of anything heavier than a cat). The best tactic would be to show him that the gold is temporary and returns to its original nature after one hour.

### Nightwhisper's Furies, exalted cats

Dexterity 6, Strength 3, Mind 3, Aura 3, Perception 5,  
Size 3, Speed 9

Gifts: Fury, Tough, Night Vision, Nine Lives, Silence, Catfall



## The Leprechaun

Assuming the characters get the leprechaun from Rau or from Nightwhisper (probably at a cost - Nightwhisper may require some form of privilege or payment), the characters must persuade the leprechaun to break the spell, then scold Aptus for what he did, get the ingredients and get back home in time before Lystra finishes her ritual. And all in a night's work...

The leprechaun's name is Jambacolantrimorakalkek, but luckily he will tolerate his name to be shortened to "Jamba".

### Jambacolantrimorakalkek, Leprechaun

Dexterity 4, Strength 1, Mind 8, Aura 9, Perception 7, Size 1, Speed 5 (15 if wearing his magical boots)

Gifts: Magical Knowledge x3, Manipulative Hands, Alchemy x2, Knowledge: Hat Making, Knowledge: Shoe Making, Fool's Gold magic, Enchant Boots magic

Flaws: Fear of Insects

Jamba's reactions to the characters depend a lot on how he is treated. He's far from home and scared (a past experience with an anthill left him with an irrational fear of insects). In addition, without his boots and magical pot of gold (the miniature pot that is spewing Fool's Gold back at Aptus' lab), his magical powers are reduced and even a single cat is too much of a challenge for him. He will not touch any animal for the fear of contracting fleas or lice.

If the characters treat him well and give him back his boots, he will have back some power (his Speed becomes 15 when he's wearing them) and he may be persuaded to stop the Fool's Gold spell that turned Aptus to gold before the building collapses and Aptus dies.

With Aptus back to normality, the characters will be able to recover the ingredients they need for Lystra. Jamba will run home (to a hill just a few miles out of city)



## Experience Rewards

Ideally, players who cooperated and solved the adventure should receive around 10 experience points each. Use the following guidelines:

- 1 point for participating in the adventure;
- 1 point for making other players laugh;
- 3 points for picking up the boots in the lab;
- 1 point for defeating Rau;
- 3 points for defeating the tomcats;
- 3 points for dealing with Nightwhisper;
- 5 points for freeing Jamba;
- 1 point for scolding Aptus for what he did;
- 1 point for bringing the ingredients to Lystra in time.



## Continuing The Adventure

This adventure can be played as a one-off scenario or as the springboard for a campaign.

The reason why Jamba could be easily caught by a human is that something bad happened in the Leprechaun community. Actually, a bunch of evil leprechauns have stolen Jamba's main source of power and plan to invade the world of men. Their nefarious plot will continue in *Foxfire*, the first sourcebook for *Familiars*.



# Familiars



Player's Name:

Character's Name:

Type:

Description:

Dexterity  
Strength  
Mind  
Aura  
Size  
Perception

Speed (Siz+Dex)  
HUMPs

Character Portrait

Experience:

Flaws:

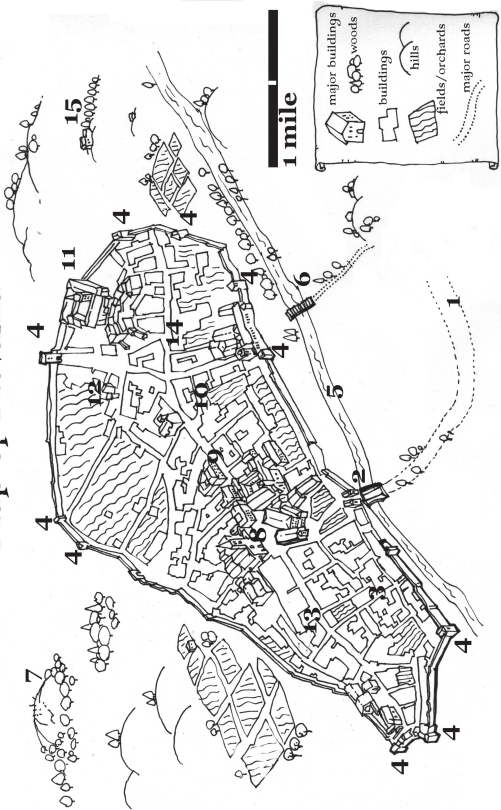
Gifts:



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# Map of Mevania



# Map Key

- 1) Wine Road (major road)
- 2) Bridge and main gate to town
- 3) Silk merchants' district
- 4) Watchtower
- 5) Clytun River
- 6) Wooden bridge
- 7) Barren Hill
- 8) Church of Pure Thought
- 9) Town Hall
- 10) Smiths' district
- 11) Monastery/ Inquisition training facilities and headquarters
- 12) Larrant Estate
- 13) Candlemakers' district
- 14) Glass blowers' district
- 15) Lystra's Manor

## A Few Notes About the Town

Mevania has a population of 15,000.

Climate is temperate, with warm but windy summers and mild winters.

Market is held once per week, in areas 13, 3, 8, 9, 10, and 14. On market days, the town is filled with foreigners.

The Town Hall is the main administrative power. A Town Council of 20 Elders and 10 representatives of the Arts and Crafts Guild rule the town. Public speeches are held in the square in front of the Town Hall, or in the main square in front of the Church of Pure Thought (8).

Mevania has two competing paper-making businesses, a scroll-maker (which makes expensive vellum used for Church documents) and a paper mill which makes high quality general use paper out of linen rags. Both are in area 8.

The best smiths and jewellers of the country reside in Mevania, in the Smiths' district (10).

Mevania is famous for its sweet and powerful mulled red wine, which is sold all over the country.

Orchards and fields within the city walls provide vegetables and fruits for the needs of the town. Grains and grapes are cultivated outside the city limits.

The river Clytun is a source of fish, especially trout. The hills and woods around the city provide game (especially pheasant, quail, capercaillie and wild boar, which the Mevanians make into spicy sausages and ham). Berries, mushroom and truffles are picked by peasants and then sold on market days.



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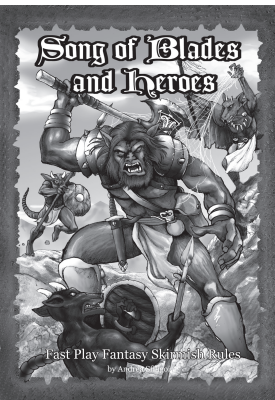
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