Rune Companion

A Magical Sourcebook for

RUNE STRYDERS

RUNE STRYDERS

RUNE COMPANION

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The scholars of Rhun have labored for centuries to compile the list of known Runes used across the world. The thirty-six known effect Runes and three control Runes have been used in countless skirmishes, and continue to power Rune Stryders to this day. For most, these known Runes have always been sufficient for any magical need.

But not everyone is satisfied with the accumulated knowledge. Rune hunters scour the planet, searching for the one new Rune that could give them incredible power or unimaginable wealth. For those who seek to dominate their fellow men, or who simply seek a life of excess, the promise of undiscovered Runes is a powerful lure.

Using This Book

This book is divided into four separate sections. The first section is entitled New Runes, and details just that—six new effect Runes and two new control Runes, complete with full spell descriptions. The second section, Advanced Runewords, expands upon the Runeword possibilities in the core book by presenting a larger group of advanced Runewords for your exceptionally skilled Runecasters. The third section, Runic Artifacts, provides a variety of Runed items to challenge or reward your players. The final chapter, Finding Runes, provides the gamemaster with several new ideas for working these Runes into a campaign, as well as a few adventures.

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Politically Incorrect Games' Collaborative Site allows you to create pages with your own material for Rune Stryders. Share your new runes or stryders with other fans of the game or look for new contributions to add to your own campaign—instantly save this information to *pdf* format and print it out. Best of all, it's free—simply register to maintain your own page of new content:

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Chapter 1
New Runes

This chapter details eight new Runes, split into two categories. The first Runes are two new control Runes, Ex and Ett, which may be added to a character's repertoire when he gains levels of Runelore. This makes a total of five control Runes available to Runecasters, which means that a Runelore skill of 5 or better is required to master them all.

The second category is new effect Runes. There are six Runes in this category. Their complete descriptions and effects are included below, as are updated Rune descriptions for the thirty-six effect Runes in the core book as modified by the new control Runes.

Control

Ex
Defend with

The Ex control Rune allows a Runecaster to defend his target with a Rune's effect. For example, Ull-Ej allows a Runecaster to increase his defense against fire, while Ull-Ex wraps the caster in a sheath of flame that damages all who come close enough to strike him.

Ett
Shape, Manipulate

At first glance, this Rune may appear to be similar to the Ess Rune. However, rather than using the subject of the Rune, the caster using Ett may shape or manipulate the subject. The caster does not gain power over the subject, except to mold it. In some cases this is very similar to the effect of the Ess Rune, but allows for more precise or longer-lasting effects.

Prime

Shrai
Time

Spoken

Shrai-eq: The target perceives time as passing much faster for himself than for those around him. The effect is to make the target much slower in relation to those around him. All skills related to quick action, such as Initiative, Dodge and Melee, are reduced by 1 for each success on the roll. The effect lasts for one minute per success. The Rune obviously has little effect on inanimate objects, which cannot perceive the passage of time.

Shrai-ej: The target perceives time as passing much slower for himself than for those around him. All skills related to quick action, such as Initiative, Dodge and Melee are increased by 1 for each success on the roll. The effect lasts for one minute per success. The Rune obviously has little effect on inanimate objects, which cannot perceive the passage of time.

Shrai-ess: The target is able to compress his actions into smaller amounts of time, covering ground faster and gaining more time to commit to his efforts. He may gain bonuses to his actions, though this Rune may not be applied to combat-related tasks. The effects are more subtle than the other spoken versions, but last longer. The effect lasts for one hour per success. The Rune obviously has little effect on inanimate objects.

Shrai-ex: The target is wrapped in a field of time-distortion. Anyone within melee range of the target has all skills related to quick action reduced by 1 per success. The effects apply only to those within melee range—ranged attacks are not affected. The protection lasts for one minute per success. Unlike the other spoken versions of this Rune, this Runeword can be cast on an inanimate object, as it effects those physically interacting with the target, and not the target itself.

Shrai-ett: Shaping time itself is a tricky task. The runecaster does not specify a target when casting this Rune. Rather, he may alter time itself by either slowing or speeding the passage of time around himself. The range of this Rune is ten yards per success. The caster may not reverse time, but he may cause time to speed up or slow down considerably. The area of effect does not move with the caster, so anyone or anything leaving the area is instantly subject to the normal rules of time. The amount by which time may be manipulated is a ratio—one success allows time to be either doubled or halved, with additional successes adding one to the ratio. In other words, three successes would allow the caster to reduce the passage of time to one-quarter its normal speed or speed time to four times normal speed. The Rune lasts for one minute per success, and the duration is measured outside the affected area.

There are many possibilities with this Rune. A caster waiting for a specific event may wish to speed up time for himself, thus keeping him from cramping or growing tired while waiting. A caster wishing to fire arrows at a group outside the area may wish to slow time, giving him additional turns to aim.

Written

Shrai-eq: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Shrai-ej: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Shrai-ess: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Shrai-ex: Regardless of whether the Rune is written on a living or unliving target, the effect lasts for one hour per success.

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

Elemental

Khet
Shadow, Darkness

Spoken

Khet-eq: The target is enveloped in darkness. Each success on the roll adds +1 Difficulty to all of the target's actions that involve sight. The effect lasts for 1 minute per success.

Khet-ej: The target may dispel any darkness around him, as if he had a light by which only he can see. Difficulty modifiers for darkness are reduced by 1 per success. Obviously, if the lighting is only poor enough to provide a +1 Difficulty, multiple successes are wasted. The absence of darkness is not visible to anyone else, and does not provide targeting bonuses for the target's foes. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Khet-ess: The caster may summon shadows to help him hide, or to hide objects within the darkness. This effect is best used where shadows already exist, as a person hidden in a shadow

is somewhat conspicuous in an open field on a sunny day. The depth of the shadows depends on the successes gained, with more successes adding to stealth and hiding-related skills. The shadows last for one minute per success.

Khet-ex: The target is wrapped in a cloak of shadow, which shuns light for a small area around him. He can see normally, as can all within melee range. Ranged attacks against the target receive a +1 Difficulty penalty per success, as the target is difficult to discern. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Khet-ett: The caster may shape target shadows to alter their appearance. Shadows may be shaped to resemble objects other than those casting them, or they may simply be larger or smaller than possible given lighting conditions. A caster could even alter a shadow to be smaller than a coin, reducing the chance of a person being spotted by his shadow. The caster may shape up to ten square feet of shadow per success, and the changes are permanent. However, if the shadow disappears or reforms drastically, as it might if exposed to a powerful light source, the effect is dispelled.

Written

Khet-eq: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Khet-ej: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Khet-ess: The area around the Rune is covered in shadows regardless of the time of day, providing the bonuses described in the spoken version. The shadows last for one hour per success.

Khet-ex: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Khet-ett: The only way that this Rune may be written on a shadow is through the use of the spoken version of this Rune. The caster may manipulate the shadow for one hour per success, but as with the spoken version, the effect ends immediately if the shadow is drastically reshaped by environmental conditions.

Sensory

Frei
Thought

Spoken

Frei-eq: The target is attacked by a barrage of thought not his own. This is a Strength 2 magical attack, ignoring armor, but the attack causes Mind damage rather than Body, and cannot be reduced by Endurance.

Frei-ej: The target may shut out thought and emotion, preventing them from reaching the surface. He is stone-faced and emotionless, and any attempts to read his thoughts (such as with Frei-ess) suffer a +1 Difficulty per success. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Frei-ess: The caster may sense the thoughts of the target. The effect may be resisted as normal, though unless the caster is obvious about his attempt, the target may not know that he is resisting. Only surface thoughts may be read—the caster will not glean facts about which the target is not currently thinking. The effect lasts for as long as the caster concentrates on his target, up to one minute per success.

Frei-ex: The target may read the immediate surface thoughts of those around him, though the depth of knowledge gained is very shallow, much more than with Frei-ess. However, he can read those thoughts more quickly, and therefore gains a significant advantage when time is of the essence. In game terms, the target may wait to announce his action until he hears what every other combatant is going to do. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Frei-ett: The caster may manipulate the thoughts of a target person or animal. This affects thoughts, not actions, and the target is not compelled in any way to act on those thoughts. The target will know that the thoughts are not his own. This is a good way to communicate silently, though it is also an exceptionally good way to frighten a person who does not realize what is happening. The caster may also communicate with intelligent animals with this Rune, though it may take time to train the animal so that it does not react in fear or ignore the unexpected thoughts. The caster may use this ability on only a single target per casting, though he may cast it multiple times to communicate with multiple targets. The caster may use this effect for one minute per success.

Written

Frei-eq: The Rune discharges against any target within range. The attack operates identically to the spoken Rune.

Frei-ej: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Frei-ess: When written on a living target, the caster gains access to the target's surface thoughts at will, as long as the caster is within 1 mile per success. The effect lasts for one hour per success.

Frei-ex: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Frei-ett: As it is impossible to write on a thought, this Rune may not be cast by writing it.

LIFE

Dron
Unliving Things

Spoken

Dron-eq: The target is assailed with whatever rocks, metal, or other unliving material is nearby. This is a Strength 4 magical attack, thought it may be blocked by armor. The Strength of the attack may be changed depending on the environment and availability of unliving detritus—a rubble-strewn street might make the attack a Strength 5 attack, while a verdant forest might reduce the attack to Strength 2. Casting this Rune inside an armory or smithy might even increase the attack to Strength 6.

Dron-ej: The target gains armor versus any weapons made of stone or steel. Each success grants 1 point of Endurance versus unliving weapons. Weapons made of bone, wood or other organic materials do damage as normal, though a metal head on a wooden shaft is considered to be unliving. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Dron-ess: The caster may summon unliving material to him. Each success calls one cubic foot of material, though the exact material summoned depends on the environment. The material will not strike the caster, but will wind up within easy reach.

Dron-ex: The target is encased in armor created from whatever unliving material is nearby. A single success grants 1 point of increased Endurance, and every 2 successes thereafter increase Endurance by 1. Five successes would therefore grant 3 additional Endurance versus any attack. As this armor is created using a Rune, it is proof against both magical and physical attacks. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Dron-ett: The caster may shape whatever inorganic material is at hand, though he must physically touch the item as he shapes it. The effects are permanent, and once shaped, the material keeps its form. The caster may shape the material for one minute per success.

Written

Dron-eq: The Rune discharges against any target within range. The attack operates identically to the spoken Rune.

Dron-ej: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Dron-ess: The Rune draws unliving material to itself. Each success calls one cubic foot of material, which sits close to the Rune. If the material is removed, more will take its place for as long as the Rune is active. As with the spoken version, the actual material summoned depends largely on what is available nearby.

Dron-ex: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Dron-ett: This Rune must be written directly on the target material. The caster may manipulate the target material for one hour per success.

CONCEPTUAL

Blei
Worthless, Cheap

Spoken

Blei-eq: The target becomes much less attractive and disreputable. While this has no effect in combat, it can seriously damage a politician or public speaker. The target loses 1 level of skill in all socializing skills per success. If cast

on a non-living target, the target becomes uglier and less valuable for the duration of the Rune. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Blei-ej: The target becomes immune to effects that would worsen its appearance or devalue it, such as staining or chipping. This is not the perfect armor—if cast on a living thing, the target can still be harmed. He just won't bleed on his clothing. The same theory applies to armor itself—it may not look any worse for being punctured by an arrow, but the arrow penetrates all the same. A human target who crawls through mud after a successful application of this Rune will emerge clean, but he can still be damaged by sharp rocks in the muck or diseases. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Blei-ess: The target suffers damage that devalues it. Metal will rust or become brittle, wood will split and splinter, and living things will grow warts or sores on their tongues. The effect becomes more pronounced with more successes, though the exact result is up to the gamemaster.

Blei-ex: The target appears to be worthless or insignificant, though this is an illusion. A living target may augment a disguise, pass as a peasant, or be overlooked by opponents seeking a more worthwhile foe. A sword with this Rune may look like cheap junk, even if it is a powerful runesword. The protection lasts for one round per success.

Blei-ett: The caster may alter the appearance of an item or person, twisting the ways in which it is devalued. For example, rust on a sword will still be present, but the caster may move the rust to a less obvious location on the weapon. Conversely, a mole beneath a person's hairline may be moved to that person's nose, making him appear much less attractive. The caster may effect up to 2 Enan (ten pounds) of material per success. The caster may manipulate the target for one minute per success. The effects of this Rune are permanent.

Written

Blei-eq: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Blei-ej: The target gains the protection as per the spoken version of this Rune, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Blei-ess: The target suffers much more than cosmetic damage. Each success on this Rune reduces the target's Endurance by 1.

Blei-ex: The target gains the protection as per the spoken version of this Rune, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Blei-ett: The Rune must be written directly onto the target. The caster may manipulate the appearance of the target for one hour per success.

Spatial

Grei   *Motion*

Spoken

Grei-eq: The target loses his ability to control his momentum. Every action is greatly exaggerated. A living target will suffer considerable difficulty in stopping his movement, resulting in overstepped attacks or dodges that hurl the target to the ground. The target suffers no penalty on the initial action after this Rune is successful, but incurs a +1 difficulty penalty on all actions taken after the first action resolves. A non-living target would not be affected unless it is moved by an outside force during the duration of the Rune, in which case it will move much farther than normal. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Grei-ej: The target is able to compensate for movement-related modifiers. The target negates 1 difficulty level modifier for each success when fighting atop a moving platform, firing an arrow in an earthquake, or throwing knives while sprinting, for example. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Grei-ess: The target gains the ability to move objects by force of will. The target may move objects at a distance equal to five feet per success. The objects must weigh less than 1 Enan (five pounds) per success, and may be moved as if the target were holding them in his hands. The Rune obviously has no effect when cast on a non-living target. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Grei-ex: The target moves with random motion. This erratic movement makes him exceptionally difficult to strike, granting a +1 difficulty modifier per 2 successes to any attack that

targets him. Since the target knows which way he will move next, he suffers no such modifiers himself. If cast on a non-living target, the object will begin to shudder and dance in place, whether it is capable of motion or not. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Grei-ett: The caster may force the target to change its speed or direction of movement. A target that is not moving when the Rune is cast will not be affected. The target may be forced to run into a wall or run very slowly, or the target may be able to move much faster. The power of the effects are determined by the number of successes rolled and the size of the object—it may require only one success to double the speed of an arrow, while it might require five successes to slow the advance of a falling boulder. The changes to movement are at the whim of the caster, not the target, so if the caster loses sight of the target, the effects end. As long as the caster stays within sight of the target, the effects last for one minute per success.

Written

Grei-eq: The target is affected as per the spoken version of this Rune, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Grei-ej: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for 1 hour per success and applies only to that target.

Grei-ess: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for 1 hour per success and applies only to that target.

Grei-ex: The target is affected as per the spoken version of this Rune, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Grei-ett: The Rune must be written directly onto the target. The caster may manipulate the motion of the target for one hour per success.

Ex	Grei	Frei	Shrai	Dron	Blei	Khet	Ett
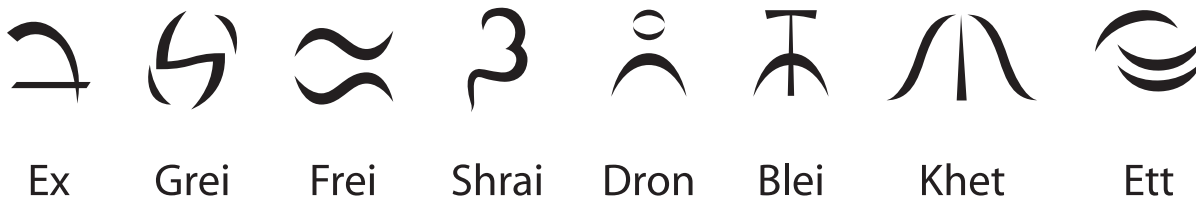
Name	Letter	Pronunciation	School	Symbolism
Ex	X	ve**x**	Control	Defend with
Ett	Tt	le**tt**er	Control	Shape, Manipulate
Shrai	Shr	**shr**ed	Prime	Time
Khet	Kh	an**kh**	Elemental	Shadow, Darkness
Frei	Fr	**fr**ay	Sensory	Thought
Dron	Dr	**dr**ag	Life	Unliving Things
Blei	Bl	**bl**ue	Conceptual	Worthless, Cheap
Grei	Gr	**gr**ay	Spatial	Motion

Using Ex and Ett

The previous chapter introduced new runes and the effects of combining them. In this chapter, the following entries describe the effects of combining *Ex* and *Ett* with the original Runes listed in the core rules.

Hei-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Xhei-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 52*).

Hei-ett

Spoken: The caster may re-order previously ordered items. For instance, a set of tiles containing names and tiles may be organized in many different ways—by first names, last names, or order of importance. By casting this Rune, the caster may decide exactly how those items should be ordered, and cause the target items to re-order as he desires. The objects must already be in some order for this Rune to succeed—the Rune does not create order from chaos, it simply alters the order that has already been determined.

Written: By writing this Rune on every element within a group which the caster wants to order, the caster may manipulate the order of the objects for up to one hour per success.

Xhei-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Hei-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 52*).

Xhei-ett

Spoken: Chaos is, by definition, random. In general, those who cause chaos will not be able to control the results of that chaos. Using this Rune, the caster may control a chaotic effect. The chaos must exist in order to be manipulated, but the caster may place certain items where he desires them, or cause specific chaotic effects. The Rune lasts for one use—the clutter

in a disorderly room may be moved around once, or the birth defects of a Draslander may be altered a single time.

Written: By writing this Rune on every element within a group which the caster wants to control, the caster may manipulate the chaos of the objects for up to one hour per success.

Nhet-ex

Spoken: The target is wrapped in a cloak of energy that harms all who approach within melee range. The protection does not provide any protection versus damage. It simply causes 8 points of incoming damage per success to anyone who comes too close. The protection lasts for one round per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Nhet-ett

Spoken: The caster may shape raw energy from a distance. A beam of light may be focused or dispersed, or a tongue of flame may be spread or contained. The caster may shape energy from five feet away per success, and he may affect five cubic feet of energy per success. The effects of the Rune are permanent, but given the impermanent nature of raw energy, will still probably not last very long. The caster may shape energy for one round per success.

Written: Obviously, this Rune cannot be written directly onto a target. It is therefore impossible to use the written version of this Rune.

Mhet-ex

Spoken: A solid shield of dense matter protects the target. The target cannot see through this wall, and attackers will not be able to see the target. In order to damage the target, attackers must break through the protective barrier, which has an Endurance of five (5) times the number of successes and a

Body of ten (10) times the number of successes. The wall lasts for one round per success, after which time it simply dissolves away.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Mhet-ett

Spoken: The caster may shape any form of matter from a distance. A living target is allowed a Willpower roll to resist the effects. The caster may shape up to one cubic foot per success, at a distance of five feet per success. The effects of this Rune are permanent. If used to cause damage to a living target, the target suffers 1 direct damage per success. The caster may manipulate matter for one round per success.

Written: The caster may shape the target for up to one minute per success, though the duration ends immediately if the Rune itself is altered in any way. The effects of this Rune are otherwise identical to the spoken version.

Lhei-ex

Spoken: The target is wrapped in an invisible field of lifeforce. Anyone approaching within melee range is affected as per the spoken version of Lhei-eq. The field lasts for one round per success.

Written: The target is encased as per the spoken version of the Rune, but the effect lasts for one minute per success.

Lhei-ett

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

Written: By writing this Rune on a target, the caster may continue to manipulate the development of the target for the duration of the Rune (see Mheta's Law in the core rulebook, *page 49*).

Dhei-ex

Spoken: The target is wrapped in an invisible field of death. Anyone approaching within melee range is affected as per the spoken version of Dhei-eq. The field lasts for one round per success.

Written: The target is encased as per the spoken version of the Rune, but the effect lasts for one minute per success.

Dhei-ett

Spoken: The caster may shape newly dead creatures or animals. The target must have died within one hour of when this Rune is cast. The target may be altered to be more attractive or ugly in death, wounds may be opened or closed, or the caster may disguise the cause of death. One alteration may be made per casting of this Rune, and the effects are permanent.

Written: By writing this Rune on a target, the caster may continue to manipulate the target for the duration of the Rune (see Mheta's Law in the core rulebook, *page 49*).

Ain-ext

Spoken: The target is surrounded by a virtual tornado of wind. All melee attacks against the target are made at a +1 difficulty per 2 successes, and all ranged attacks are made at a +1 penalty per success. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Ain-ett

Spoken: The caster may shape wind and direct it. A wind must be present in order for this Rune to work, but it need not be much more than a gentle breeze. The caster may determine the direction of the wind and increase or decrease its strength. A ship at sea may be stalled when the wind in its sails reverses direction, or a brisk sirocco whipping through an alleyway may

be slowed to a breeze. The wind may not cause damage directly, though targets may suffer from the wind indirectly (for example, if the wind blows a sign over on top of a person). The gamemaster should exercise discretion in allowing casters to use this Rune—a slow breeze may not be turned into a typhoon, and a monsoon gale may not be reduced to a harmless breeze. The caster may shape the wind up to ten feet from himself per success, and he may shape the wind for one minute per success.

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

Ott-ex

Spoken: The target is covered with magical armor made from stone and dirt. The armor adds 1 Endurance per success and lasts for one minute per success. The armor is created by magic, but the material from which it is made is not magical, and this armor is therefore not proof against magical attacks. If the target is soaked with water before the effect expires, the armor loses half its Endurance bonus, rounded down.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Ott-ett

Spoken: The target may shape earth or stone as he sees fit. He may shape stone up to ten feet away per success, and he may affect up to three cubic feet of earth or stone per success. The effects are permanent, but are still vulnerable to erosion or other forms of damage. The caster is able to shape earth or stone for one minute per success.

Written: The caster may shape the target for up to one hour per success, though the duration ends immediately if the Rune itself is altered in any way. The effects of this Rune are otherwise identical to the spoken version.

Ull-ex

Spoken: The target is sheathed in a ring of fire that damages all those who come within melee range. The flame causes 5 points of incoming damage per success and sets the offender aflame. The offender takes half the damage on the following round, and a quarter of this damage on the third round.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Ull-ett

Spoken: The caster may manipulate the shape, size and color of a flame or fire. The fire will not cause more damage than if it was not altered, and it will not gain the ability to burn without fuel. However, the caster can cause a common campfire to turn into an brilliant green demon that flies into the air and explodes dramatically, or other less fantastic effects. The caster may affect fire up to ten feet away per success. The size of fire he may alter depends on his successes as well—a single success would allow a caster to shape a candle flame, two successes would allow him to shape a campfire, and five successes would allow him to easily change the shape of a fire consuming a large house. The caster may continue to shape the target for one minute per success.

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

Un-ex

Spoken: The target is surrounded by a swirling column of water. All melee attacks against the target receive +1 difficulty per success, while all ranged attacks receive +1 difficulty per 2 successes. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Un-ett

Spoken: The caster may shape water or water-based liquids. The caster may make a hole in a wave, he may create temporary sculptures from a pail of beer, or he may send a stream of whiskey into a fire. He may affect water up to ten feet away per success, and he may shape three cubic feet of water per success. He may not make the water disappear, aside from moving it to a different location. *For example, the caster could send the contents of a keg into a bonfire, effectively eliminating it, but he cannot simply empty the keg into thin air.* The caster may shape water for up to one minute per success.

Written: The only way that this Rune may be written in water is through the use of the spoken version of this Rune. Since the written Rune will disappear once the duration of the spoken Rune ends, there is no real benefit to casting it by writing it.

Aan-ex

Spoken: The target is covered by a suit of wooden armor. The armor is created by magic, but the material from which it is made is not magical, and this armor is therefore not proof against magical attacks. The target's Endurance is increased by one per success, and the effect lasts for one minute per success. If the target is the subject of a fire-based attack before the effect expires, the armor loses half its Endurance bonus, rounded down.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Aan-ett

Spoken: The caster may shape any wood, alive or dead. He may burrow through wooden doors, weaken wooden beams, or force plants into improbable configurations. If this Rune is used against a manned Stryder, the pilot may resist the effects as if he were the target. The caster may affect wood up to tenfeet away per success, and he may shape up to three cubic feet of wood per success.

Written: The caster may shape the target for up to one hour per success, though the duration ends immediately if the Rune itself is altered in any way. The effects of this Rune are otherwise identical to the spoken version.

Zhei-ex

Spoken: The target is able to see in every direction, and cannot be surprised for the duration of the Rune. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Zhei-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the target's vision. Each success allows the target to increase or decrease the target's

Perception score by 1 for all vision-related Perception checks. If Perception is reduced to 0 in this manner, the target is effectively blind. Unlike many other uses of the Ett Rune, the effects are not permanent. They last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Zei-ex

Spoken: The target is able to hear and pinpoint movement all around him, allowing him to apply his entire defense against attackers behind or flanking him. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Zei-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the target's hearing. Each success allows the target to increase or decrease the target's Perception score by 1 for all hearing-related Perception checks. If Perception is reduced to 0 in this manner, the target is effectively deaf. Unlike many other uses of the Ett Rune, the effects are not permanent. They last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Shei-ex

Spoken: The target can smell diseases and airborne poisons and pinpoint their location, allowing him to stay out of the dangerous areas. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Shei-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the target's sense of smell. Each success allows the target to increase or decrease the target's Perception score by 1 for all smell-related Perception checks.

Unlike many other uses of the Ett Rune, the effects are not permanent. They last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Chei-ex

Spoken: The target gains the ability to eat or drink poisoned food or drink with little or no ill side effect. The poison is simply filtered out and neutralized. Damage caused by ingested poison is reduced by 2 per success, and this protection applies every round in which the effect is active. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Chei-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the target's sense of taste. Each success allows the target to increase or decrease the target's Perception score by 1 for all taste-related Perception checks. Unlike many other uses of the Ett Rune, the effects are not permanent. They last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Rhun-ex

Spoken: The target becomes very eloquent, able to win over listeners or defend his position in an argument. The target effectively gains +1 to every social skill for the duration of the Rune, which lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Rhun-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the target's speech. Every word out of the target's mouth may be altered by the caster to any other word desired. The target will realize immediately that his speech is being altered, but he will be unable to say anything other than what the caster decides to make him say. If the target does not speak, this Rune is ineffective. Unlike many other uses of the Ett Rune, the effects are not permanent. The caster may affect the target's speech for one minute per success. Casting this Rune on an unwilling target allows the target a Willpower roll to resist.

Written: The caster may alter the target's speech as per the spoken version, but he may control the target's speech for one hour per success.

Enn-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Ean-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 59*).

Enn-ett

Spoken: The caster may manipulate the hardness of physical objects. He may not actually manipulate the target itself, just its hardness. The target gains 1 Endurance per success. As with other Sensory Runes, the effect is not permanent. It lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the caster may manipulate the target for one hour per success.

Ean-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Enn-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 59*).

Ean-ett

Spoken: The caster may manipulate the softness of physical objects. He may not actually manipulate the target itself, just its softness. The target loses 1 Endurance per success. As with other Sensory Runes, the effect is not permanent. It lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the caster may manipulate the target for one hour per success.

Awn-ex

Spoken: The caster may interpose his Soul between the target and an attacker. All damage received by the target is subtracted from the caster's Soul before affecting the target's Health or Body. The damage will not carry over to Mind; any damage caused in excess of the caster's Soul begins to affect the target's Health. The protection lasts for one minute per success, or until the caster decides to end the effect.

Written: The target gains the protection as per the spoken version for one hour per success.

Gai-ex

Spoken: The caster forces another person to interpose his Soul between the target and any attacks. The spell effectively has two targets—the person whose Soul score is depleted, and the person enjoying the protection. The protected target does not receive a Willpower roll to resist being protected, but the target whose Soul is being used as armor is allowed a Willpower check to resist being used as a proxy. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: If the caster wishes to invoke the written version of this Rune on any target other than himself, the Rune must be written on both targets. The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the protection lasts for one hour per success.

lin-ex

Spoken: The caster summons the nearest small animals to protect him. The animals will not attack unless they or the caster are threatened, but they will do their best to block attacks, confuse attackers, or otherwise keep the caster from harm. One creature is summoned per success. The creatures summoned stay for one round per success, or until slain. The gamemaster can select creatures appropriate to the region, or simply roll a die on the table below.

Roll	Species
1-4	Bats/fliers (including birds, depending on the setting)
5-7	Amphibians (and/or reptiles, depending on the setting)
8-10	Mammals (mouse, rat, ferret, rabbit, squirrel, etc.)

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success. The target may be anything or anyone—casting this Rune on a doorway will make it difficult for anyone to approach.

lin-ett

Spoken: The caster may shape living things. The caster must physically touch his target. If used on an unwilling target, the target gets a Willpower roll to resist. If used to cause damage, the Rune causes 1 direct damage per success. The effect is permanent, though the caster may manipulate the target for up to one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the caster may work with his subject for one hour per success.

Pei-ex

Spoken: The target's Strength increases by 1 per success, but only for the purposes of opposed rolls using Strength skills. The target gains this bonus for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Pei-ett

Spoken: The target's Strength is increased by 1 for every two successes. The increase affects derivative stats as well, so for every 1 point increase in Strength, the target also gains +1 Body, +1 Endurance and +2 Health. The bonuses last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Fax-ex

Spoken: The target's Agility is increased by 1 per success, but only for the purposes of opposed rolls using Agility skills. The target gains this bonus for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Fax-ett

Spoken: The target's Agility is increased by 1 for every two successes. The increase affects derivative stats as well, so for every 1 point increase in Agility, the target also gains +1 Body, +1 Endurance, +1 Perception, +1 Soul and +2 Health. The bonuses last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Thei-ex

Spoken: The target's Intellect is increased by 1 per success, but only for the purposes of opposed rolls using Intellect skills. The target gains this bonus for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Thei-ett

Spoken: The target's Intellect is increased by 1 for every two successes. The increase affects derivative stats as well, so for every 1 point increase in Intellect, the target also gains +1 Mind, +1 Perception, +1 Health, and +2 Soul. The bonuses last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Sen-ex

Spoken: The target's Heart is increased by 1 per success, but only for the purposes of opposed rolls using Heart skills. The target gains this bonus for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Sen-ett

Spoken: The target's Heart is increased by 1 for every two successes. The increase affects derivative stats as well, so for every 1 point increase in Heart, the target also gains +1 Mind, +1 Endurance, +1 Perception, +1 Health, and +2 Soul. The bonuses last for one minute per success.

Written: The effect is the same as the spoken version, but the effect lasts for one hour per success.

Ngei-ex

Spoken: For the duration of the Rune, the target may reroll any one check per success. He must fail at the roll in order to invoke this protection. The protection lasts for one minute per success or until the target has rerolled his limit.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Ngei-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter his good luck, saving it until he needs it. He may save and reroll one check per success. The check must succeed in order to be saved. The number of successes on the saved roll is noted, and the check is rerolled. When the caster wants to invoke his altered luck, he may accept the successes on the saved roll in place of rolling another check. The caster can save rolls for one minute per success. If the caster has unused rolls saved when the effect ends, those rolls are substituted for his next checks. He will not roll again until the saved rolls are used up.

Written: The Rune must be written onto a living target. The target gains the benefits of the spoken version of this Rune, but has one hour per success to use the saved rolls.

Wei-ex

Spoken: The target may force anyone within melee range to reroll any one check per success. The character who has to reroll must succeed at the first roll in order for the caster to invoke this protection. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Wei-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter his bad luck, saving it until it hurts less. He may save and reroll one check per success. The check must fail in order to be saved. When the caster wants to invoke his altered luck, he may accept the failed roll in place of rolling another check. The caster can save rolls for one minute per success. If the caster has unused failures saved when the effect ends, those failures are substituted for his next checks. He will not roll again until the saved rolls are used up.

Written: The Rune must be written onto a living target. The target gains the benefits of the spoken version of this Rune, but has one hour per success to use the saved rolls.

Thurn-ex

Spoken: Every sentient creature within melee range of the target suffers stabbing pain. The suffering creatures lose one action and 1 point of Health per success. This damage will not transfer to Body. The protective effect lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Thurn-ett

Spoken: The caster may determine the location of the target's pain. The target must already be in some form of pain, but the location of that pain is moved to another part of the target's body at the caster's discretion. A comrade may have a headache moved to a leg in order to clear his mind, or an opponent may have the pain from a stab wound to the shoulder moved to a hand in order to cause the target difficulty modifiers. The Rune does not inflict extra damage. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune must be written onto a living target. The caster may manipulate the target's pain for one hour per success.

Yon-ex

Spoken: Every sentient creature within melee range of the target is distracted by a burst of overwhelming pleasure. The creature so affected loses one action due to the extreme distraction. The protective effect lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Yon-ett

Spoken: The caster may determine the location of the target's pleasure. The target must already be enjoying pleasure on some level, but the location of that pleasure is moved to another part of the target's body at the caster's discretion. This Rune could be used to cause an aphrodisiac effect on a person who is merely enjoying a tasty beverage, or it could be used to alter the effects of physical intimacy. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune must be written onto a living target. The caster may manipulate the target's pleasure for one hour per success.

Bei-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Whin-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 64*).

Bei-ett

Spoken: The caster may manipulate the truth. The message being shaped must be truthful, but the caster may alter its delivery or phrasing. This Rune could be used to put a positive spin on ugly truths, or to put the truth in its ugliest light. If the target is a person, the words that come out of his mouth or pen are subtly twisted, but still true. If the target is a book or other written message, anyone reading the message for the duration of this Rune will read the message as the caster intends it, not as it was written. The caster may control the target's message for one minute per success. The effect is permanent on permanently recorded truths—after the Rune expires, written messages will not revert to their original wording.

Written: The caster may manipulate the truth of the target's message for one hour per success.

Whin-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Bei-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 63*).

Whin-ett

Spoken: The caster may manipulate falsehoods or lies. The message being shaped must be untrue, but the caster may alter its delivery or phrasing. This Rune could be used to make lies sound more believable, or it could be used to make the target sound absolutely unbelievable. If the target is a person, the words that come out of his mouth or pen are subtly twisted, but still a lie. If the target is a book or other written message, anyone reading the message for the duration of this Rune will read the message as the caster intends it, not as it

was written. The caster may control the target's message for one minute per success. The effect is permanent on recorded truths—after the Rune expires, written messages will not revert to their original wording.

Written: The caster may manipulate the lies of the target's message for one hour per success.

Vel-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Blei-ej, as listed on page 7.

Whin-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the appearance of an item or person, twisting the ways in which it is valued. For example, a precious stone on a piece of jewelry will still be present on the target, but the caster may move it to a less obvious location, making the item appear less valuable. Conversely, a poorly placed marble tile may be swapped with another to improve the appearance of a room. The caster may manipulate the target for one minute per success. The effects of this Rune are permanent.

Written: The Rune must be written directly onto the target. The caster may manipulate the appearance of the target for one hour per success.

Oun-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Ahn-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 65*).

Oun-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the height and width of an opening, such as a doorway or breach in a wall. The opening will not be enlarged by this Rune, but it may be reshaped to allow or deny access. For example, a round hole just big enough to grant access to a person may be reshaped to be long and narrow, making access impossible, or a barred window may be reshaped to push the bars to one corner, allowing escape. The caster may manipulate the target for one minute per success. The effects are permanent.

Written: By writing this Rune directly onto the edge of a target, the caster may shape the target for up to one hour per success.

Ahn-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Oun-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 65*).

Ahn-ett

Spoken: The caster may manipulate the dimensions of a closure, whether that closure is a door, window shutter, or the lid of a chest. The caster may make the closure thicker or thinner, adding or subtracting 2 Endurance per success. The effect is permanent, though the target may be manipulated for only one minute per success.

Written: By writing this Rune directly onto the target, the caster may shape the target for one hour per success.

Ite-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Owt-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 66*).

Ite-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the nature of the target's accuracy. Whenever an attack is successful, the caster may move the location of the hit. The attack does not do any more incoming damage, though it might ignore armor. The caster may ignore 1 point of armor-based Endurance per success on all attacks that hit the target. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

Written: By writing this Rune on a target, the caster may manipulate the accuracy of the target as per the spoken version of this Rune, but for one hour per success.

Owt-ex

The effects of this Rune are identical to Ite-ej, as listed in the core rules (*page 66*).

Owt-ett

Spoken: The caster may alter the nature of the target's inaccuracy. When an attack is unsuccessful, the caster may control where the missed attack hits, though he may not redirect the attack to make it successful. For example, the caster could direct an arrow that misses a foe in a thick crowd to fly over the heads of the innocents, rather than striking an

unarmed civilian. If the caster wished to relocate the missed attack to strike a nearby target, the caster must perform an attack roll, substituting the number of successes on this Rune for the relevant combat skill. The caster may *push* the missed attack by up to three feet per success, and he may do so for up to one minute per success.

Written: By writing this Rune on a target, the caster may manipulate the inaccuracy of the target as per the spoken version of this Rune, but for one hour per success.

Ote-ex

Spoken: The target is able to shift his position instantly with a thought, but only up to a few feet. For each success, the target may add 1 to his Dodge skill check to avoid an attack. Invoking the extra defense causes the target to move up to 6 inches per success instantly, in a direction chosen by the target. The effect of such a defense can be fairly disorienting, however, and so the target loses 1 from all other skill checks on a turn when he activates this defense. The target may choose not to shift if attacked. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Ote-ett

Technically, this Rune does allow the caster to shape void. However, since the caster is shaping nothing, there is no practical effect to this Rune.

Jin-ex

Spoken: All living creatures within melee range of the target feel disproportionately large. Their actions are more clumsy as they attempt to adjust to the sudden change in perceived size. Agility is reduced by 1 per success for all skill checks attempted while in range of the target. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Jin-ett

Spoken: The caster may increase the size of the target. The target may be increased in size by 10% per success. Every two successes (or 20% increase in size) grants the target +1 Strength, +1 Endurance and +2 Health. For the duration of the effect, the caster may resize the target as often as desired, though he may not make the target smaller than its original size. The effects of this Rune are permanent.

Written: By writing this Rune on a target, the caster may manipulate the size of the target as per the spoken version of this Rune, but for one hour per success.

Tin-ex

Spoken: All living creatures within melee range of the target feel disproportionately small. Their actions are weaker as they attempt to adjust to the sudden change in perceived size. Strength is reduced by 1 per success for all skill checks attempted while in range of the target. The protection lasts for one minute per success.

Written: The Rune affects every target within range, applying the spoken effect. If written on a living creature, the effect lasts for one hour per success and applies only to that target.

Tin-ett

Spoken: The caster may decrease the size of the target. The target may be decreased in size by 10% per success. Every two successes (or 20% increase in size) costs the target -1 Strength, -1 Endurance and -2 Health. For the duration of the effect, the caster may resize the target as often as desired, though he may not make the target larger than its original size. The effects of this Rune are permanent.

Written: By writing this Rune on a target, the caster may manipulate the size of the target as per the spoken version of this Rune, but for one hour per success.

CHAPTER 2

ADVANCED RUNE WORDS

The core rules presented a small sampling of Rune Words available to characters with a Runelore skill of 4 or better. Since these are exceptionally difficult and available only to a select few, the core rules presented only those most commonly known. This section presents several new advanced Rune Words, as well as a more lengthy discussion on their nature.

As discussed in the core rule book, Runecasters with a Runelore skill of 4 or better may combine multiple Runes to create vastly more varied and powerful effects. These advanced Rune Words follow a very strict syntax, and mispronouncing an advanced Rune Word can have very *dramatic* and *dangerous* side effects.

A RECAP OF RUNIC SYNTAX

As stated on *page 70* of the core rules, the first Rune in a Rune Word is the effect Rune that determines the basic nature of the Rune Word. No matter how many Runes follow the Rune Word, the initial Rune determines the general effect of the Rune. Mod Runes can modify the effect Rune, and often change the way in which it will be released, but they cannot, for example, cause a fire Rune to act like a water Rune.

In order for a Rune Word to be released, it must be finished with a control Rune. The control Rune dictates how the Rune Word will be applied. As seen in the previous chapter and in the core rules, the difference between *Use Fire* and *Attack with Fire* is significant. This difference is more extreme in the case of advanced Rune Words, which have the capacity for much greater effects.

PENALTIES OF FAILURE

The core book describes the penalty for failing in the casting of a standard Rune. As stated, catastrophic failures cause the caster to take 2 direct damage to Mind for every 1 rolled on the check. In the case of Advanced Runes, the stakes are higher. If a caster rolls a catastrophic failure on an advanced Rune Word, he takes 2 direct damage to Mind for each 1 rolled, plus an additional 1 direct damage to Mind for each mod Rune in the Rune Word (also for each 1 rolled). A catastrophic failure on a long Rune Word could kill the caster instantly.

Mod Runes Revisited

Lheta's Law (*core rules, page 49*) prohibits a target from bearing multiple Runes from the same category. However, this is not applicable with mod Runes—a complex Rune Word may contain Runes from the same category as the effect Rune, and may contain multiple mod Runes from the same category. The only limitation on mod Runes is that a single Rune Word may not contain two of the same Runes, whether those Runes are effect or mod Runes.

A few particular Runes make exceptional, all-purpose mod Runes. The following list describes the mod Runes most popular among the very talented Runecasters who can use advanced Rune Words.

Owt

This Rune can effectively increase the duration of a Rune Word. While many Runes take place instantly, the majority of Runes are ruled by the longevity of their effects. By adding Owt as a mod Rune, the caster may dictate a longer effect. In game terms, spoken Rune Words cast using Owt as a mod Rune last for a number of minutes equal to the number of successes squared—three successes allows the Rune to last for nine minutes, while five successes will cause the effect to linger for twenty-five minutes. This is not a universal rule—the durations of shorter Runes will still be dramatically increased, but they will not last as long as other Runes. Take, for example, Nhet-ej. The effects of Nhet-ej last for one round per success. The effects of Nhet-Owt-ej would last for a number of rounds equal to the square of the successes earned. Written Runes containing Owt as a mod Rune obviously last much longer.

Ite

This Rune can be used to decrease the duration of a Rune Word. Each success using Ite as a mod Rune reduces the duration of an effect by 50% per success.

Jin

On many occasions, a larger effect may be desired. Iin-eq summons a single small animal to attack an opponent, such as a rat or small bird. Iin-Jin-eq will summon a larger creature.

Two or three successes might even summon a handful of dusk hunters (*see core rules, page 172*). As the effects of Runes are wildly different, increasing the size of an effect will act differently for different Runes.

Tin

Sometimes, smaller is better than larger. A standard Rune used to start a campfire would not be practical for lighting a pipe. By using Tin, the caster may shrink the size of the effect. The exact results are up to the gamemaster to determine, as different Runes will be affected different ways.

Iin & Dron

These Runes may be used to limit the effects of a Rune to a specific category of target. For example, by protecting with fire, but only against living things, a target may be wrapped in a sheath of flame that only harms living creatures, leaving furniture, papers and curtains unharmed.

Elemental Runes

Possibly the most interesting mod Runes are those from the Elemental category of Runes. Adding an elemental Rune also adds the element to the effect of the Rune. If the mod Rune is compatible with the effect Rune, a more powerful Rune may be created. On the other hand, if the mod Rune has little in common with the effect Rune, or if the two tend to cancel each other out, the effects may be very different indeed.

New Advanced Rune Words

Iin Jin-eq   *Living Things + Large + Attack*

The caster summons large creatures to attack his foes. The Rune functions similarly to Iin-eq, but the animals summoned are larger. Each success increases the size of the creatures summoned. The gamemaster should choose an appropriately-sized creature based on the successes rolled. The animals remain until the target is dead, or for one minute per success.

Ull Jin-eq   *Fire + Large + Attack*

The caster hurls an enormous burst of flame at his target. This is treated as a Strength 6 magical attack, but is otherwise identical to Ull-eq.

SheiYon-ess
Smell + Pleasure + Use

The target is cloaked in a very pleasurable odor. This is basically a magical perfume. The target gains 1 in every Socializing skill for each success. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

linOte-eq
Living Things + Void + Attack

The target, which must be a living thing, disappears. The target has no perception of time or place while gone, and reappears after the duration of the effect. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

PeiOwt-ess
Strength + Infinity + Use

The target enjoys the benefits of the Pei-ess Rune for a number of minutes equal to the number of successes squared.

ZheiThurn-eq
Sight + Pain + Attack

The target experiences pain whenever he opens his eyes. Each round that the target has his eyes open, he suffers 1 point of direct damage per success to Health. This damage cannot spill over to Body. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

AinXhei-ess
Sky + Chaos + Use

The caster summons a storm. One success may cause a localized rain cloud, while five may summon a full-blown tornado. The storm lasts for one minute per success, and once summoned, is outside the caster's ability to control.

EnnAan-ess
Hard + Wood + Use

The target, which must be wooden, is hardened. The caster may affect up to 2 Enan (ten pounds) of wood per success, and the wood gains 2 Endurance per success. The effect lasts for one minute per success.

OteRhun-eq
Void + Language + Attack

Since language is the basis of Runic magic, by voiding the language of a target Rune, a caster may nullify the lingering effects of a Rune. The caster targets a Rune effect, not the bearer of the Rune effect. However, if the bearer of the Rune effect is enjoying the effect, he may wish to resist the caster with a Willpower roll. The caster nullifies one success on the initial Runecasting roll per success. This Rune may not be used to reverse permanent effects, as the effects are no longer magical after their initial effect expires.

XheiRhun-ess
Sight + Language + Use

This advanced Rune allows a caster to view the magic affecting an item and determine the power and duration of the effect. A single success on this roll will allow the caster to determine if the target item is under the influence of a magical effect, as magical items will glow slightly to the caster's eyes. Two successes will show the caster a wider array of glows, from which he can determine the number of successes rolled when writing the Rune. A third success will allow him to discern the duration of effects on the item, and how much time is left on them. A fourth success lets the caster see a signature of sorts, which may reveal the identity of the original caster, assuming the caster of this Rune is familiar with the original caster's work.

LheiAanSenOwt-ess
Life + Wood + Spirit
+ Circle (Infinity) + Use
or
Life + Stone + Spirit
+ Circle (Infinity) + Use

This is basic Rune Word used to animate a Stryder. Other complex Runes must be utilized to cause it to move, sense its surroundings, or interact with a human pilot, but without this particular Runes, a Stryder is only a statue. Even with this Rune, Stryders require weekly maintenance to rescribe the Runes and extend the life of the Stryder, as every Rune eventually fades (*see Mheta's Law in the core rules, page 49*). Most characters responsible for maintaining Stryders will be able to renew fading Runes, keeping them intact, but would be unable to create them without considerable assistance.

COLLABORATIVE RUNECASTING

It should be obvious that, given the limitations of casting advanced Rune Words, it would require extraordinary skill to release even a four-Rune phrase. Only a Runemaster of legendary ability could hope to successfully scribe the most basic Runes needed to power a Stryder. When a complex Rune Word is required, several Runecasters may pool their abilities and increase the chances of success. All contributing Runecaster must have at least 1 level of Runelore.

Each additional Runecaster after the first reduces the difficulty of the Runelore check by 2. Every caster contributing must be working simultaneously and for the entire casting time. Only one caster rolls the skill check, so it should be the caster with the highest Runelore skill.

The number of casters who may contribute to the scribing of a spell is equal to the number of mod Runes, plus one. After that point, the casters would simply be in each other's way.

This is the method used to create Stryders. The original Runes were discovered by Runemasters now lost to time and history, and those artisans and Runecasters who make Stryders must cooperate simply to make it possible to accurately scribe the intensely complicated Runes that power Stryders.

These rules only apply to written Runes. Casters may not work together to reduce the difficulty of spoken Runes, and so many complex Runes must be written to be effective.

CHAPTER 3
RUNIC ARTIFACTS

The real problem with Runed items is that any Rune creating a magical effect eventually fades. Not even the powerful Runes scribed into Stryders are immune to this effect—such Runes must be maintained regularly if the Stryders are to continue to operate. However, there are several ways to work around this shortcoming and lengthen the durability and duration of Runes.

The first way to lengthen the life span of a Rune is to mechanically separate the individual components. This is the method used on Rune Swords, Rune Throwers, and many other Runed items. The Rune is carved into a piece of metal, at which time the caster makes his Runelore skill check to find the number of successes that will determine the strength and duration of the Rune. The Rune is then split in two, so that the control Rune is separated from the effect Rune. The two halves of the Rune remain intact, since the Rune is not active. When the pieces are joined, the Rune releases, and both the effect and the durability of the Rune begin to fade. Once the effect is no longer needed, the two pieces are separated again, and the countdown ends. Using this method, a Rune could theoretically last indefinitely.

Another method used to prolong the life of a Rune is simple maintenance. A character with at least 1 level of Runelore skill can redraw the Runes, prolonging and renewing them. The time needed to maintain a Rune is equal to one-tenth the time it took to create the Rune in the first place. The maintenance must occur before the Rune fades completely. Once the Rune's durability expires, it must be rescribed from scratch. This method only lengthens the durability of the Rune, not its effect. The effect can be prolonged mechanically by separating the components of the Rune, but it cannot be lengthened through maintenance.

The final method for lengthening the durability of a Rune has more to do with the substance upon which the Rune is carved than the process of carving it. The core rules describe different Rune durability based on the material used (*Mheta's Law, page 49*), but there is one very rare material not listed in the core rules—precious stones. The small, hard stones can hold Runes for up to one-hundred years, as long as the effects of the Runes do not expire.

The drawbacks to using precious stones are obvious—very small work areas mean that incredible precision is required to carve a Rune, and the stone itself must be very large to

accommodate a Rune. Such large precious stones are very expensive and relatively rare. A final concern is the actual difficulty involved in carving a Rune into a precious stone. The time required is significant, and the skill required is legendary. For these reasons, Rune-inscribed precious stones are very rare and extraordinarily valuable.

Runic Items

While Runed items can be very valuable and powerful, they are not infallible. Only the caster who scribed the Runes into the items knows how many successes he achieved on his Runelore skill check, and so the market for Runed items is not particularly stable. It is not difficult for a charlatan to create items that appear to be Runed, but which have no value. A person selling Runed items depends heavily on his reputation, as there is little besides his word to assure his customers regarding the reliability of their purchases.

Light Rod

These handy utilitarian devices do little more than provide light on demand. Light rods can come in many shapes and forms, from simply wooden planks to ornate gold wands. However, regardless of the form, they all basically operate on the same principle. A Nhet-ess Rune is carved into two pieces of material, which are then separated to preserve the effect. The individual Runes are mounted on a rod with a slider or switch that joins them and releases the Rune, creating light. The switch can also be used to separate the two halves of the Rune, saving the light for another day. Many incorporate added features such as hoods to focus the light or colored glass to color the light. The value of a light rod varies greatly, depending on the material used, the decorations on the device and the extra features. In general, however, a light rod will cost anywhere from 5 to 200 Vel.

Attack Icons

A large band of foes can spell trouble for many mercenaries, and items that release attack Runes will affect everyone in range, including the wielder. Zokili mercenaries were the first to use attack icons to deal with such difficulties, but the use has spread to most of Rhun.

At their most basic, attack icons are simply attack Runes scribed onto two different pieces of material. When the pieces are joined, the Rune releases the attack against anyone within range. However, users would most likely want to be a ways away before the Rune is joined, or the Rune would also attack them. Therefore, attack icons include a small spring-loaded mechanism that joins the Runes when the icon strikes a solid obstacle. An easily-removed safety is inserted between the two halves to prevent accidental discharge, and removed before the Rune is thrown.

The array of Runes used on attack icons is impressive. Elemental Rune attacks are popular, as are many Prime Runes. Many thieves use Sensory Runes to improve their chances of escape, and even some Life, Conceptual and Spatial Runes are sometimes used in these icons.

Attack icons are not absolutely reliable, unfortunately. Their very mechanical nature makes them liable to breakdown and failure. If they land in the middle of a group of opponents, they almost always release as intended, but if the ground is too muddy, or if the icon lands in water, the spring mechanism may not snap properly, and the Rune could fail to discharge. This is especially problematic if the user is standing on firm land, since the foes could recover the icon and throw it back.

Removing the safety from an attack icon is a single action, as is throwing the item. The user then makes a Throwing skill check with standard difficulty, modified for range. If the roll is successful, the Rune releases properly, either by striking the ground, a wall, or an opponent. If the roll fails, the Rune does not release. If the roll is a catastrophic failure, the Rune snaps closed before it is out of range of the user, and affects him and anyone close to him.

The gamemaster should determine how many successes are contained within an attack icon, unless the icon is crafted by a player who makes the Runelore skill check himself. These successes determine the power of the Rune, and should be noted when a player carries such an item.

Attack icons are not inexpensive to create. The mechanism upon which they are carved is difficult to produce without delicate engineering, and once made, a competent Runecaster must scribe the attack Rune. These little portable attack Runes thus cost anywhere from 50 to 250 Vel, based on the skill of

the Runescribe and the successes achieved when carving the Rune.

Personal Charms

Many of the people of Rhun wear jewelry, such as bracelets, necklaces or rings. These otherwise harmless decorations can be equipped with sliding Rune Words, turning the most innocent of bracelets into a charm designed to boost the wearer in some way.

Most charms are created on the underside of jewelry, facing the user so that he is the only target. For example, a Rune might be scribed on the inside of a bracelet, activated when the user slides the control Rune into place. Some few Runes are worn more prominently, in order to offer their effects to anyone close enough to enjoy the benefits.

The most popular Runes to adorn such charms are Pei-ess, Fas-ess, Thei-ess, and Sen-ess, the Runes that boost attribute scores temporarily. Defense Runes are also common, with Nhet-ess (defense against any magical attack) being the most popular defense Rune.

The effects provided by charms are very fleeting, but they can be released with a single action. The effects last as described in the written description of the Rune, so their durations are usually only one minute per success. However, when a combatant needs a quick edge, these charms can be very handy. Once a user no longer needs the effect, he can separate the Runes, saving the balance for another day.

The cost of personal charms varies depending on the quality of the jewelry and the successes achieved by the Runescribe. They are rarely less than 15 Vel, with a maximum price limited only be the value of the jewelry and quality of the Rune.

Ite Weapons

The Ite Rune is a powerful Rune for a fighter. It can increase the accuracy of a user's attacks, making him much more deadly in combat. Therefore, a few lucky mercenaries wield weapons charmed with the Ite Rune. In order for the Ite Rune to affect the weapon, not the wielder, the weapon must be properly scribed.

The Runescribe creating an Ite weapon must first prepare the weapon. Since the Ite Rune only affects living things, the weapon must be scribed in a manner similar to that used to create Stryders. A shortened version of the Rune Word used to power a Stryder is carved into the weapon, usually in a location that can be covered or hidden within the weapon. The Ite-ess Rune is carved upon the same material as the animating Rune, and both are separated so that they can be joined with a switch. The Rune is generally covered by the weapon's handle, so that it is protected from damage that might occur in a melee.

When the switch is activated, the weapon is animated on a very basic level, and the Ite-ess Rune is allowed to affect the weapon instead of the wielder. The weapon actually guides the hand of its wielder, increasing the accuracy of attacks according to the number of successes rolled on the initial Runescribe attempt.

Rumors of legendary warriors carrying these weapons have been grossly exaggerated. Some mercenaries talk of warriors swinging talking axes, or blades that actually twist or elongate to strike multiple foes. These stories are not true—Ite weapons are not sentient. They merely possess enough animation to allow the Ite-ess Rune to take effect.

Since very skilled Runescribes must make these weapons, they tend to carry very significant accuracy bonuses. The difficulty for attacks made using Ite weapons is usually reduced by at least 2, but 3 or even 4 point modifiers are not impossible. An Ite weapon made with 5 successes is a truly wondrous weapon, capable of incredible feats of military prowess.

Ite weapons are difficult to create. The Ite-ess Rune itself is not particularly difficult, but the Rune used to animate the weapon is a four-syllable advanced Rune Word, and can be a challenge for even the most skilled Runescribes. Therefore, these weapons are rarely sold. When they are sold, they generally fetch up to one-hundred times the value of the basic weapon from which they are made.

Mhet and Nhet Armor

The incredible defensive powers of the Mhet-ej and Nhet-ej Runes are somewhat offset by their very short durations. Even writing the Runes only grants a small improvement in the duration, and even then, the target must be a living creature.

This limitation can definitely be overcome, however, and the result is very expensive but useful armor.

As noted in the core rules (*page 53*), Mhet-ej strengthens Endurance versus all physical attacks, while Nhet-ej protects against any magical attack. The bonus provided is significant, if short-lived, and so is highly valued. Mhet-ej and Nhet-ej Runes are sometimes scribed into armor to allow those unskilled in Runelore to enjoy the benefits of these Runes.

Both Mhet and Nhet armors are generally metal armor. The armor is rigged with several Mhet-ej or Nhet-ej Runes, and one complex Rune as used in Ite weapons. To activate the protection, the user activates the animating Rune and then one of the protection Runes. Each activation takes one round. The protective Runes are not designed to be deactivated, as their effect is too short-lived. A Runescribe may be employed to scribe new Runes into the empty slots on the armor, once all the existing Runes are used up. A suit of armor may include both Nhet-ej and Mhet-ej Runes, though only one form of protection will work at a time.

Mhet and Nhet armors are very expensive. To determine the cost of a suit of armor, start with the base price of the armor and multiply it by one-hundred for the animating Rune. Then add 100 Vel per Mhet-ej or Nhet-ej Rune included in the armor, or 20 Vel per Rune if the Runes have been activated. Rescribing the protective Runes costs, on average, 50 Vel per Rune.

Ote Wafers

These wafers are actually thin metal disks about the size of a dinner plate. They come in two halves, with half of an Ote-ess Rune written on each half. Each half has a handle. The user holds each half tightly and places them together, after which the wafer (and the user) teleport to the location previously determined by the Runescribe who created the wafer. The user does not determine the location, and once the wafer is created, the location is fixed. The wafer will not function if carried outside the range of the Rune, and so these disks have very limited usefulness.

The cost of an Ote wafer is usually just the price of the metal used to scribe it, plus a small fee for scribing the Rune. The wafers are usually custom made, so that the user may dictate his exact destination. Typical wafers cost 40 Vel, though they may be more expensive if the user wishes to travel to a range requiring extra successes. At least two successes on the Runelore skill check are required to carry a human, and anything farther than eight-hundred yards away requires more successes. Failure simply means the disk leaves and the user stays.
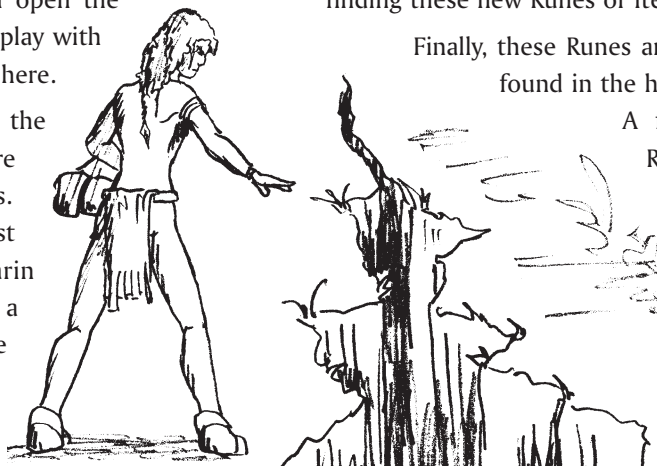
Chapter 4
Finding Runes

The Runes and techniques presented in this book can be used in a variety of different ways. The information can be used to expand the possibilities of a new campaign, add flavor to an existing game, reward players or challenge them.

If you are starting a new game, the information in this book can be integrated from the outset. Simply state that players may select any of the new effect or control Runes in addition to those listed in the core book. You might decide to disallow some of the Runes, or even open the floodgates and allow players to begin play with one or more of the Runed items listed here.

If you are playing an existing game, the Runes, techniques and items listed here might be found only in isolated areas. The players may be surprised the first time they encounter a Kantarin Runecaster who surrounds himself in a cloak of flames, or they might be amazed when they meet night watchmen who walk the city carrying light rods instead of torches. The characters might be able to gain access to these extras, or they may be limited to admiring them. Fair warning, however—a player who sees a new powerful Rune may push to learn it himself, and limiting the players' access could frustrate them considerably.

If you decide not to adopt the entire contents of this book in one fell swoop, you can use elements of the book as powerful enticements. After all, any Runecaster would be delighted to be the only living person with knowledge of a new control Rune. Entire adventures could be built around finding these new Runes or items.

Finally, these Runes and items might initially only be found in the hands of the players' opponents. A foe armed with an unknown Rune or a powerful Ite weapon could be a great challenge to the players and provide for all manner of exciting confrontation. Defeating the foe might allow the players to take the knowledge for themselves, providing extra incentive.

Inventing New Runes

The Runes presented here and in the core book are by no means the only Runes you may use in your game. You may want to create new Runes, for any of the uses presented above. While this is not a particularly difficult process, there are some guidelines you may want to follow to keep them consistent with existing Runes.

1. Select a Definition for the Rune

The first step in creating a new Rune is to decide what kind of Rune you want to make. The Rune should be general enough to be flexible, but not so vague that it is difficult to define. At this stage, you only need a basic concept.

*For example, we have decided to create a Rune, and we think that **gravity** is a cool and flexible idea.*

2. Determine a Category for the Rune

New Runes should fit into one of the categories (Sensory, Life, Spatial, etc.) listed in the core book. Since a target may not have active more than one Rune from a given category at a time, it is important that the Rune belong to only one category. Use the examples from the core book to help you decide on a fitting category.

*For example, gravity is a powerful Rune, and a very global concept, so it could fit nicely as a prime Rune. However, it is a concrete enough concept, and could easily be considered an elemental Rune. Given the effects we're considering for the Rune, we decide that the **elemental** category is the best fit.*

3. Name the Rune

Your new Rune needs a name. The name is generally based on a sound found in language. You should decide on a spelling and pronunciation of the Rune.

*For example, the name of our new gravity Rune will be **Kit**. It is based on the sound made when a <u>k</u> sound is next to a <u>t</u>, as in pa<u>ct</u>.*

4. Determine the Effects of the Rune

Their are three requirements when creating the effects for a new rune. The first requirement is to determine a general effect which is consistent with every control Rune. The effects will vary, but they should all follow a common theme.

*For example, we have decided that the gravity Rune **affects a target's weight**. The various control Runes will alter the target's relationship with the ground.*

The second requirement is to apply the different control Runes to the effect Rune. As mentioned above, these should all be consistent in theme.

For example, we now decide on the different effects caused by combining the gravity Rune with control Runes.

__Attack with gravity (Kit-eq):__ The target is slammed with the force of gravity, pulling him painfully toward the ground.

__Defend against gravity (Kit-ej):__ The target becomes lighter than air, able to float a few feet above the ground.

__Use gravity (Kit-ess):__ The target becomes heavier and more difficult to move.

__Defend with gravity (Kit-ex):__ The target is surrounded by a field of gravity. Incoming attacks are drawn to the ground.

__Shape gravity (Kit-ex):__ The caster may manipulate the weight of the target, making the target either heavier or lighter.

The final requirement is to decide on specific game effects. Use the existing Runes in the core book to determine damage, protective effects and durations. In general, very powerful Runes have shorter durations.

For example...

Kit-eq: *This is a Strength 4 magical attack. In addition to any damage caused, the target loses 1 Agility per success for the rest of the turn and the entire next turn.*

Kit-ej: *The target may float one foot above the ground per success, and may move over any surface, including water, mud or boiling lava. He may move forward at half his regular walking pace with 1 success, at a standard walking pace with 2 successes, at running speed with 3 successes, at a sprint with 4 successes, and he may move faster than a man can run with 5 successes. The effect lasts for one minute per success.*

Kit-ess: *The target effectively gains weight and density, so wood may sink or a sheet of paper may stay flat in a strong wind. The caster may affect up to 2 Enan (ten pounds) of material per success. The effect lasts for one minute per success.*

Kit-ex: *All incoming projectile attacks suffer a +2 Difficulty modifier per success. The protection lasts for one minute per success.*

Kit-ett: *The target's weight may be changed by 10% per success. The target does not change in form, merely density, so fat people will still be fat, just lighter, and thin slivers of wood will not become thicker, just heavier. The caster may manipulate the target's weight for up to one minute per success, and the effects are permanent. However, the target is altered by the effect—a 1 point increase or decrease in endurance accompanies each 10% change in weight. If the target is a person, his strength decreases by 1 for each point gained in endurance, and increases by 1 for each point lost.*

5. Draw your Rune

This step is largely optional, but adds playability and a sense of depth to your Rune. Find a pattern compatible with the existing Runes, and sketch the Rune.

For example, We have decided to draw the Kit Rune as follows:
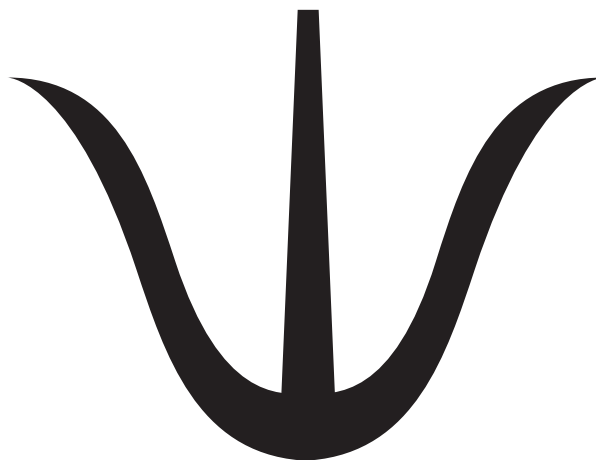
Scenarios

The Discovery

Situation

A Myndwar cave jumper named Vorg exploring previously unexplored lands stumbled upon a lost Rune, but was unable to bring it back to civilization with him. Rumors of the newly discovered Rune have reached a wealthy politician, who invites the cave jumper to his home to learn more. The politician is Lord Tandin Quickbreath, a Divaran ambassador with a thirst for power. He wants to be the only person with knowledge of this new Rune.

Vorg found the Rune while exploring a previously uncharted valley deep in the Spine. He stumbled across a band of forgotten Mydwar barbarians living in the wilds of the valley, high above the rest of the world and all but inaccessible without a map. Only Vorg's curiosity and skill allowed him to find the tribe at all.

For a few days, Vorg was able to simply observe the barbarians, and noted their use of a strange Rune with which he was unfamiliar. Its effects were strange, but as he is not a Runic scholar, he had no idea that he was seeing an unknown Rune at work. Before he could investigate further, he was discovered. The barbarians hunted him like a wild animal, attempting to kill him before he could betray them to the outside world. Vorg barely escaped with his life, much to the chagrin of the barbarians.

Vorg reported the strange effects to his friends back in his home town, and was overheard by one of Tandin's spies. The spy brought Vorg back to Tandin's home with an invitation and the promise of a considerable payment.

The Mission

Lord Tandin hires the players to retrieve the Rune. He realizes that it will be a difficult task, and provides them with Vorg's map of the area. He promises them a sizeable financial reward for the return of the Rune, but makes it clear that he wants the mission to remain secret and that he wants no one else to learn the secret of the Rune. While the players are meeting with Tandin, Vorg is not mentioned, and he is kept out of sight.

Background and Nuances

The cave jumper, Vorg, was made very comfortable upon his arrival at Tandin's home and was well paid to boot. However, Lord Tandin has no desire to allow others to learn more of the Rune, and is keeping Vorg prisoner. Vorg is allowed free reign within Tandin's home, but the guards will not allow him to leave under any circumstances. Tandin has told Vorg that he may go once the Rune is in Tandin's library.

Tandin does not trust the players, and has hired a second mercenary team to trail them. The second company is to ambush the players as they leave the valley (presumably with the Rune) and kill all but one, bringing the captive back to Lord Tandin. The second mercenary team is composed of highly-trained assassins and trackers, and Tandin has not told them about the Rune. He has told them to bind and gag the prisoner, ostensibly to prevent him from casting Runes. Tandin's real purpose behind gagging the prisoner, however, is to prevent him from relating his secret to the assassins.

Unfortunately for Tandin, his spy was not the only person to hear Vorg's story. A library in Siene has also hired a team of mercenaries to procure the Rune. Unlike Tandin, the purpose of the library is to impart the knowledge of the new Rune to any who would ask for it. The rival group is not interested in stopping the players, and is more than willing to help them recover the Rune as long as both groups gain knowledge of the Rune. Such cooperation is outside the mandate of the players' mission, however, and if they wish to remain true to their employer, these mercenaries are rivals or enemies.

Lord Tandin is incautious about his meeting with the team of assassins. Vorg overhears enough of Tandin's plan to figure out that the players are in significant danger. He also figures out that the Rune he saw is new, and understands its value. Finally, he has decided that Tandin will more than likely have him killed once the diplomat has the Rune. A few days after the players leave on their mission, Vorg engineers an escape and sets out after them.

The mercenaries hired by the library in Siene are competent and well trained, and they see no reason to make enemies of the players unless the players' group provokes them. The two groups will most likely have some contact before they reach the valley, especially in the Myndwar villages and cities in the mountains.

The barbarians of the valley have been residing in their hidden valley for hundreds of years, since they fled to escape the Deijin. They do not know that the Deijin are gone, and wish to protect their valley against intrusion and detection at all costs. When Vorg escaped, they were distraught. They have slain the dozen or so explorers who found their valley in the past, and will continue to defend their secret to the best of their abilities.

The barbarians have mastered the use of the Khet Rune, which they discovered deep within a cave upon their arrival in the hidden valley. They have a rudimentary knowledge of other elemental Runes, but are particularly skilled with Khet-eq, Khet-ej, and Khet-ess. Because of their affinity for the shadow Rune, they call themselves the Shadow Warriors. They have a barbaric and violent culture, a result of their isolation and the harsh conditions in their icy mountain home.

The valley itself is located among some of the highest peaks of the Spine. The floor of the valley is higher in elevation than nearly any other location in civilized lands, and is covered in snow nearly year round. A sparse evergreen forest grows in the valley, and is home to the indigenous animals the tribe hunts for food. The barbarians carve their homes into the walls of the valley, living deep within caves in the mountains surrounding the valley.

The valley is all but inaccessible except for a series of natural caverns that run beneath the towering monoliths surrounding the valley. Passage over the mountains is nearly impossible, with vertical cliffs and bone-chilling storms. As long as the players have Vorg's map, they should have little trouble navigating through the caves, but the mercenary company hired by the library in Siene is not as well-equipped. The players may be forced to decide whether or not to save the rival mercenaries if they decide to head over the mountains.

The Khet Rune is only written in two places in the valley. The Rune is still inscribed in the wall of the cave in which it was discovered. The Shadow Warriors take it upon themselves to maintain the Rune from time to time to make sure that it does not fade with time and erosion. The cave is surrounded by the homes of many barbarians, and is under constant guard.

The other written Khet Rune is kept on a small sheet of steel carried by the head shaman, a powerful Runecaster responsible for training the tribe in the use of the Rune. He will not willingly deliver his secret under any circumstances, but if he is captured and searched, the players will easily find the Rune hanging from a leather strap around his neck.

In order to ascertain the spoken pronunciation of the Khet Rune, players will have to hear it spoken. They can do this by spying on Shadow Warriors or by engaging them in combat. When in a combat situation, the Shadow Warriors will almost always invoke the Khet Rune in some form. Combat may actually be unavoidable, unless the players are incredibly adept at sneaking and hiding, since the barbarians are intimately familiar with every inch of their ancestral home.

If the players are in serious danger, the gamemaster may elect to have Vorg join them in the valley to apprise them of the presence of the assassins hired by Tandin. Vorg knows an alternate exit from the valley that was not on the players' map, and if he trusts the players, may lead them out to avoid the ambush.

the Armorer

Situation

Jyngo the Armorer is a famous smith capable of producing the highest quality Runic weapons and armor. He has done a brisk business with the Confederated nations, supplying magical armament to the armies holding back the tide of outcast nations attempting to secure their freedom.

A wealthy merchant, Adelton, has just purchased a sizeable order of Jyngo's Runed armor. The order cost several hundred thousand Vel, and Adelton needs an escort for the caravan that will carry the armor to his buyer.

The Mission

The players are hired by Adelton to escort the caravan. They will be paid upon the arrival of the armor at its final destination.

Backgrounds and Nuances

Jyngo has been working for years with a group of raiders from an outcast nation. Depending on the geography of the game, this group could be Sivitagi, Kantarin, or even Draslander. Jyngo has been selling failed or weak Runes to his contacts in the Confederated nations, in small enough quantities to prevent his exposure.

As with any adventure involving players guarding a caravan, the wagons will be attacked. The bandits will pose a serious threat, and Adelton will offer the players use of some of the buff coats he has just purchased. After all, it is better to lose one or two suits of armor than all of them. Unfortunately, the armor is not completely functional. It may operate for a few rounds before failing, or it may not work at all. The armor itself is sturdy and as protective as it should be, but the Runes adorning the armor are inadequate. The players will have a tough time defending the caravan, especially when their magical armor fails them.

Assuming he survives, Adelton is furious with Jyngo for providing him with substandard armor. He pays off the players' contract and hires them to return with him to Jyngo for a reckoning.

Jyngo is not totally unprepared for an angry customer. He is ready with his usual group of excuses about variations in quality, and is prepared to buy back any armor that is not functioning as desired. He is not willing to pay full price for armor that has already been worn, however, and Adelton may be difficult to pacify without a full refund.

If Jyngo feels particularly threatened, he will call upon his several layers of defense. First, he lives and works within a virtual fortress, and can retreat deep inside his home, protected by traps both mundane and Runed. Second, he employs a handful of highly trained and very loyal bodyguards, all wearing excellent Runed armor and wielding powerful Runed weapons.

Finally, Jyngo has a small Ote wafer given to him by the raiders. The raiders recognize the smith's value, and would be loathe to lose him should his double-dealing be exposed. The Ote wafer will not transport Jyngo, but it will teleport itself to the raiders, alerting them that Jyngo is in trouble. They will make all haste in traveling to Jyngo's home to help him.

If Jyngo escapes, he will almost certainly have to go live with the raiders, where he will most likely continue to make Runed armor, this time depriving the Confederated nations of his considerable expertise.